The Feminine in Body, Language and Spirituality

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Abstract
This thesis is prompted by the question, what do we mean by ‘the feminine’ and how does this relate to women, especially through language and through dwelling in a body sexed as female. Further, in what way might women’s spirituality be different from those who are sexed as male? Corollary to this question, are traditional patriarchal religious forms suited to women? I aim to extract thinking from a dependence on the masculine symbolic with its dualistic assumptions, and simultaneously expose the necessity for a new identity not embedded in it. Throughout, my primary interlocutors are C. G. Jung and Luce Irigaray, because they each frame a spirituality and subjectivity for women as distinct from both patriarchy and the concerns of men.

In chapter one I interrogate the concept of ‘the feminine’ and ‘women’ through such lenses as archetypes, Jung’s anima and animus, and the semiotic. I argue that Luce Irigaray’s insistence on sexuate difference provides a fertile possibility for inquiry into the nature of the feminine and the experience of women. The concept of ‘sexuate’ difference articulates the different modes of being and becoming for men and women, in bodily, social, linguistic, aesthetic, erotic, and political and religious forms. Further, Luce Irigaray’s genealogy reveals stylistic variations of a feminine way, and allows for multiple expressions of femininity. Having established sexuate difference as foundational, I begin an in-depth critical analysis of how this applies to the body, language and spirituality of women.

In chapter two, I argue that spirituality is available through the senses, through the sensible self, and that both body and mind need to be cultivated. Following this point, I argue for Luce Irigaray’s concept of the sensible/transcendental, and the cultivation of the senses and the body especially through the breath. For both Irigaray and Jung the aim of cultivation is to establish a connection between above and below, spirituality and carnality; I equate Irigaray’s use of cultivation with Jung’s notion of Individuation. I elaborate other aspects of ‘cultivation’ employed by Irigaray to support my emphasis on conscious feminine becoming;
namely the cultivation of ethical relations with the other, the cultivation of language suited to the feminine subject, and the cultivation and spiritualization of the body and the senses, ultimately towards ‘becoming divine’.

In chapter three I argue that phallogocentrism misrepresents the feminine, and that women require a transformed language through which they are incarnated, in which they might establish a feminine dwelling. Following a Jungian discussion of *eros* and *logos*, I put forward *erotic logos* as a form that operates through the means of *eros*/love, rather than *logos*/power, and use the tale of Sherezade to illustrate this understanding.

In chapter four I reject androcentric projections and attributions of ‘God’, and instead argue that the mystical is both dependent on the existence of a female deity and the site on which she can be apprehended. I develop Jung’s ideas around the *numinosum* to argue for a feminine which avoids a dualistic trope, because it is outside the Symbolic. I argue that religious doctrine cannot be assumed to be gender-neutral. Emancipatory speech about God and about self are intertwined; the lived experience of women is essential to their specific, non-stereotypical feminine theology.

By way of extending my analysis of the feminine, I devote my final two chapters to an exploration of myth and fairy tale. I show how this narrative form presents the issues raised in the work so far in poetic and allegorical language, which can convey more than the text, and present a new horizon. In analysing the tale of the Handless Maiden, I employ philosophy, Jungian psychology and theology to argue for the necessity of the subjectivity of women, to which I apply key elements of Luce Irigaray’s work; specifically the notions of self-affection, virginity, solitude and silence, the sensible/transcendental, and sexuate difference.
In conclusion, I argue that a lack of understanding of ‘the feminine’ has led to an impoverishment of not only women, but our entire culture, specifically in how we approach and exploit the environment, and in this I relate ‘the feminine’ and ‘environment’. Ethics ‘in the feminine’ would encompass both women and nature, and result in a revolution in how each is viewed and experienced. Throughout, I revisit the question as to whether so-called ‘feminine’ experiences might also be available to men, and depart from Irigaray’s position on this point. I do so by appealing to different archetypes or paradigms as operating simultaneously, that of sexuate difference and mystical spirituality, for instance.
Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

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some part of us always
out beyond ourselves
knowing knowing knowing
are we all in training for something we don't name?
Adrienne Rich¹

Women have been thinking in and as female bodies within a language-structure bequeathed by Western androcentric culture. I intend to discover and express that which has been unthought for, or by, women within phallogocentric culture. This is the horizon to which I am oriented. Hence Adrienne Rich’s poem; women are “in training for something we don’t name”, and which we are as yet unable to name. Yet we are guided by “knowing, knowing, knowing”. I aim to translate this knowing into thinking and speaking as a female subject, independent of the masculine symbolic. I argue for a new identity not embedded within it.

The questions that prompt this study are, in summary:

1. What do we mean by ‘the feminine’ - assuming that it has meaning - and how does this relate to women, through language and through the body sexed as female?

2. In what way might a woman’s subjectivity and spirituality be different from those sexed as male?² Corollary to this, are traditional patriarchal religious forms suited to women?³

¹ (Rich, 1982, p. 45)
² My definition of ‘spiritual’ will be revealed accumulatively throughout this work. A provisional definition is that spirituality involves a developed interiority, a relation to or awareness of the numinous, and a developed sense of ethics in relation to oneself and others.
³ In so doing, I contribute to a rectification of past attitudes, and hold, as does Hilde Hein, that “matter and spirit are not exclusive, that intellect and spirit are not identical, that neither men nor women have a monopoly on spirituality, but an analysis of the relationship of women to spirituality is warranted in order to rectify the philosophical biases of the past” (Hein, 1996, p. 310).
**Context**

What, then, is the most favourable way to inquire into ‘the feminine’, women’s subjectivity, and divinity-in-the-feminine? Mary Collins proposes that “one of the best gifts for the critical mind and for living tradition is the gift of the new question” (Collins, 1985). This is the mode I follow, in that I continually question received ‘truths’, and attempt a new way to read old texts, as advocated by Le Doeuff, for instance (Le Doeuff, 1989).

What suppositions must I challenge? In what ways might women be connected to ‘the feminine’? Is the very concept of ‘the feminine’ a patriarchal invention, an ideal projected onto women by men? Could it be that the notion of ‘the feminine’ is a depersonalized androcentric abstraction, which functions as a defense against the actual presence of embodied women? In order to promote understanding of women’s spirituality, an androcentric divine must be challenged, and unexamined presuppositions must yield to inquiry. I do not aim to replace androcentric projections and attributions of a gendered God with equivalent feminine notions, which would merely be another side of the existing dualism. I will argue that we need to move beyond the notion of equivalence of masculine and feminine attributes of the divine in theology. In speaking of a feminine divine, I do not mean to anthropomorphize God in feminine terms of nurturance, for instance, but rather to reveal what can be known of the divine from the point of view of the feminine and women. All else is idolatry - the image, or ideal,

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4 Using the terms true and false self, Donald Winnicott argued that in order to pose a true question, we must be situated in the true self. Answers are too easily provided by the false (enculturated) self (Winnicott, 1965). An example of the importance of posing the question is provided by the Grail myth, where the knight Perceval only has to pose the question, “Who does the Grail serve?” (E. Jung & von Franz, 1998). He is not required to provide the answer. The question, however, eludes him. As I argue in this thesis, women have been offered a false self via the masculine/Symbolic, so it is imperative that the (correct) question be asked. “Deliverance as the result of the right kind of question is itself a universal, i.e. an archetypal, motif” (E. Jung & von Franz, 1998, p. 44). Emma Jung and von Franz equate posing the question to bringing something that has been unconscious into consciousness. The situation of ‘the feminine’ and women is that which I seek to bring to consciousness.

5 "Irigaray defines patriarchy as a historical and masculine system devoid of value in the feminine” (Martin, 2000, p. 53). It is a system in which certain males are privileged to exploit or objectify women, children, and some other males.
becomes more important than that which it represents.⁶ Emancipatory speech about God and about self are intertwined; while women’s experience has been absent or derided within androcentric theological systems, the lived experience of women is essential to their specific, non-stereotypical feminine theology.⁷ For Luce Irigaray, “the ‘divine’ raises the vital question of the continuity between nature and culture, the body and spirit, whereas ‘religion’ raises the question of a link without necessarily challenging their dichotomous status” (Irigaray, 1996, p. 223).⁸ This continuity between nature and culture, between body and spirit, is fundamental to my argument. According to Morny Joy, “epistemology has been found wanting in its avoidance of the interrelatedness of mind and body, of reason and emotion, of abstract and concrete (Joy, 2011b, p. 7). My project involves interweaving and interrelating these dichotomous pairs.

My discussion of feminine spirituality includes the difference between male and female desire and the relation of this desire to theistic beliefs; how desire and knowledge are woven together is about what a woman is. How do we discover a woman’s desire?⁹ For Irigaray, desire and pleasure are “cultivated by and for each sex with the intention of accomplishing the perfection of its gender” (Irigaray, 1996, p. 28). This perfecting involves “the responsibility to work at each instant for our own evolution, transformation, transfiguration or

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⁶ Luce Irigaray describes idolatry as “a paralysis of energy. And, the more the stasis of energy takes place at a spiritual level, the more difficult it will be to release it. …no energy remains truly free to openly exchange with the other, in search of a future even more spiritual than that in which each one believes” (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 356).
⁷ According to Patricia Lynn Reilly, “our search for a God who looks like us begins in our own lives. She will be found there” (Reilly, 1995, p. 3).
⁸ Luce Irigaray expressly requests that her full name be used in citations, and I have adhered to this request throughout. Her purpose is to state her sexuate status as a woman, and thus not be subsumed within a neuter position. The importance of this will become clear when I discuss her ideas on sexuate difference later in this chapter.
⁹ Derrida points out that logocentrism privileges reason while excluding desire. “Pure theoretical reason”, he says, “assumes the exclusion of all that is not theoretical knowledge: the affect” (Derrida, 2002, p. 412). Morny Joy’s critique of Levinas is that he situates women’s desire, assigns women their position, rather than allowing them the right to question or to choose their ‘feminine’ role, to have their own desire (Joy, 2006, p. 67). Pamela Sue Anderson argues that “desire will have a different relation to men from that which it has to women [and] what makes women’s desire sexually specific [sexual difference] has been repressed” (P. S. Anderson, 1998, p. 24).
transubstantiation” (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 3). I demonstrate feminine transformation in my interpretation of the fairy tale in chapters five and six.

I will argue for feminine spiritual experience and a feminine divine not tied to the logic of belief, or the worship of the father. A woman’s experience and knowledge must be respected, as Luce Irigaray insists, as it is how she relates to different sexuate others, including her own children: “The corporeal and spiritual experience of a woman is singular, and what she can teach of it to her daughter and to her son is not the same” (Irigaray, 2002, p. 60), thus emphasizing that a woman responds to her male and female children according to their sexuateness. I will elaborate sexuate difference later in this introduction, but briefly it is a term of Luce Irigaray’s that clarifies the difference between men and women, which is evident in all aspects of their respective lives. As much as Luce Irigaray’s ideas, especially on sexuate difference, have attracted critique, I employ them here because in my view such vitally creative ideas are still valid in this exciting time of transition and exploration of feminism.

I recognize the maleness of prevailing knowledge, but also argue for other knowledge that will be an amplification of the feminine. And, as Jean Byrne says, “for women to be epistemological subjects the hidden male subject of epistemology must be revealed” (Byrne, 2008, p. 68). A feminine epistemology is thus partly achieved through a critique of masculine epistemologies, and the underlying unconscious assumptions, for which both psychoanalytic and analytic psychological approaches prove useful; that is, by making these epistemologies

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10 Pamela Sue Anderson’s recent publication, Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion: Reason, Love and Epistemic Locatedness, (P. S. Anderson, 2012) gives a contemporary account of this critique.

11 As Elizabeth Grosz says, “the masculinity or maleness of knowledge remains unrecognized as such because there is no other knowledge with which it can be contrasted” (Grosz, 1995, p. 38).

12 When used in a Jungian context, especially in relation to interpretation of dreams, amplification means not only to intensify and provide further explanation, but also to think laterally about, and discover hitherto unthought, probably unconscious, associations. Jung says: “The amplificatio is always appropriate when dealing with some obscure experience which is so vaguely adumbrated that it must be enlarged and expanded by being set in a psychological context” (1977, Volume 12, §403). I intend that my amplification will bring to light previously unthought associations regarding the feminine.
a subject of analysis.\footnote{13} Most important, in my view, is the establishing of distinctly feminine epistemologies, by women and for women, which avoid comparisons with masculine styles. Further, according to Grosz, “knowledge is an activity; it is a practice” (Grosz, 1995, p. 37), that is, it is experiential,\footnote{14} and not merely a contemplative or speculative reflection. My approach is twofold: The first is committed to the introduction, analysis, and affirmation of ‘women’ and ‘the feminine’ - and the distinction between them - as viable subjects of knowledge, and the second is to parler femme, to speak as a woman.

I argue for a feminist epistemological emphasis which focuses on fair and equal access of women to, and their participation in, the institutions and processes through which knowledge is generated and transmitted. However, I also investigate the possibility that there are specific ways in which only women can acquire knowledge, menstruation and giving birth being the most obvious examples, which would thus promote a feminine perspective. Thus I tend towards epistemologies that differ from masculine forms of inquiry, or are specific to the feminine, female and women. For Irigaray, feminine epistemology must be grounded in the body and experience, because this will firmly anchor a woman in her sexuate difference.

From the perspective of analytical psychology, being clear about my own perspective before approaching the other is in agreement with Luce Irigaray’s ideas around the ethical approach to the other.\footnote{15} She asks us – she is speaking to women - to “discover a relation of intimacy with ourselves that can be called

\footnote{13} The term psychoanalysis is applied when discussing the work of Freud, and the many who follow him including Lacan, Kristeva and Luce Irigaray (for a time). The approach of Jung and the post-Jungians is referred to as analytical psychology.

\footnote{14} Simone de Beauvoir, for instance, recognized the influence of knowledge in her body. For her, knowledge is passion. In chapter three we encounter parler femme, and in my view one ‘comes’ to knowledge as one ‘comes’ to writing, as jouissance. De Beauvoir said “if a theory convinced me, it did not remain external to me; it changed my relation to the world, and coloured my experience. … philosophy was for me a living reality” (de Beauvoir, 1981). I develop this thought throughout this work. She also said, in 1948, “In truth there is no divorce between philosophy and life” (de Beauvoir, 1963a, p. 12). She believed that philosophy should be filled with passion.

\footnote{15} For Luce Irigaray’s discussion of the ethical approach to the other see: (Luce Irigaray, 1993a, 1996, 2001a, 2003, 2004c, 2008b).
self-affection” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 6). This self-affection, “then, refers to an ability to remain within oneself, as in a home before any other sort of dwelling. Self-affection alludes to a state of gathering with oneself and of meditative quietness” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 6). This capability for peacefully staying within and returning to oneself “allows us to meet with the other as other without losing ourselves nor annihilating the otherness of the other” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 6). As a woman scholar, I appeal to a reliance on self-affection, which engenders respect for the self and the other, and entails not losing one’s-self in the other - including the epistemologies of the male other, or even female other. As I will discuss in chapter three, women’s “house of being” might not be language as Martin Heidegger proposed, but the ability to “remain within oneself, as in a home before any other sort of dwelling,” into which Luce Irigaray invites us, above (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 6). The notion of self-affection as applied to scholarship is a unique extension of Luce Irigaray’s concept, and contributes to an understanding of feminine subjectivity.

I speak to and among women, but I cannot speak for women, as to imagine that all women are going to think the same is a collective fantasy. My project is to articulate a singular female subjectivity. Christine Downing holds a similar position (Downing, 1992, p. 19), and claims we cannot “essay anything so definitive as a psychology of women, but that we must renounce the very project of reducing the plurality of voices to one” (Downing, 1992, p. 21). However, by speaking in my own voice, as a singular subject, I also contribute to the many. Kristeva demonstrates a similar position, when she notes that for the feminine subject, the focus needs to be on singularity, the particular woman, rather than on collectivity, because women are emerging from a collectivity imposed by the masculine symbolic (A.-M. Smith, 1998, pp. 86-89).16 Speaking in the singular,

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16 The terms symbol and symbolic are given a different gloss by the different thinkers to which I allude. In Jung’s view, for instance, a sign stands for something known, as a word stands for its referent. Insignia on uniforms, for instance, are not symbols but signs that identify the wearer. He contrasted this with symbol, which he used to stand for something that is unknown and that cannot be made clear or precise. “Every psychological expression is a symbol if we assume that it states or signifies something more and other than itself which eludes our present
“I”, is a most important step towards separating from the collective, and the even more insidious ‘other of the same’; Irigaray is concerned with the possibility of “woman-for-herself” instead of woman simply as ‘other of the same’” (Whitford, 1991c, p. 159) that is, forever linked to the masculine subject. I find in Luce Irigaray a voice that articulates women’s subjectivity par excellence.

**Luce Irigaray**

The two main theorists with whom I engage in this thesis are Luce Irigaray and Carl Gustav Jung. My primary interlocutor is Luce Irigaray, (born 1932), and although she is undoubtedly a contentious theorist for both philosophers and feminists today, (for instance Michèle Le Doeuff (2007), Pamela Sue Anderson (2007, 2012), Patrice Haynes (2008), and many others), she nevertheless provides very useful concepts upon which I frame my argument. She writes as a philosopher, psychoanalyst and linguist and articulates women’s subjectivity, sexuate identity and spirituality within the symbolic and the imaginary, as well as the living reality of the flesh. She incorporates the feminine body through her emphasis on the breath and her own practice of yoga; that is, she does not artificially separate philosophy and personal experience. For Irigaray, knowledge then becomes subjective, embodied and physical. Thus when she proposes a **sensible/transcendental**, I believe that she is giving voice to something she knows from her own life to be true and possible. She passes on, through female genealogy, strategies for feminine becoming and cultivation. This strategy is practical and subjective, differentiating her from the objective approach of knowledge” (Volume 6, C. G. Jung, 1977, §817). An example of a symbol in this sense is Christ as a symbol of the archetype called *Self*. To think symbolically, is, for Jung, a capacity that we develop, and is not aligned with logic or rationality. For him, a symbolic process reveals an invisible and hard to discern but all important and life-giving tendency in the psyche that is intent on creating meaning. For Lacan, who systematically developed Freud’s ideas, the Symbolic is a set of differentiated signifiers, including language itself; it is the Real that is unsymbolized, and always present, much in the way that Jung thought of symbols and the symbolic. “Lacan's phrase ‘symbolic order’, refers to the customs, institutions, laws, mores, norms, practices, rituals, rules, traditions, and so on of cultures and societies (with these things being entwined in various ways with language)” (A. Johnston, 2013).

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17 Luce Irigaray uses the term symbolic to emphasize representation, and the imaginary for unrepresented processes.
18 The **sensible/transcendental** is as available to men as women, each according to their own sexuate rhythms. Thus it is both universal, and particular. The **sensible** aspect is indistinguishable from the flesh. The **transcendental** aspect is not opposed to the sensible, but contiguous with it.
academia. Luce Irigaray facilitates annual seminars where she mentors doctoral students who use her theories. These seminars are an exceptional example of this dialogue, a transmission of embodied knowledge. What Irigaray does, in my view, is to initiate and promote “a new mode of knowledge transmission which emphasizes both embodiment and experience” (Byrne, 2008, p. 173). Sharing knowledge in this way is a “sharing of flesh, of blood, of breath – of life”, and in this sharing “the sensible, matter is always already spiritualized” (Pluhacek, 2002, p. 54).

This leads me to another most important aspect of her work, namely her regard for spiritual life, and women’s relation to the divine as fundamental in articulating female subjectivity and corollary to this, sexuate difference - difference is still important in a liberated era, and contributes to further liberation. She regards a female divine as necessary for women to go beyond the patriarchal culture that excludes them. Luce Irigaray is careful to define her style of thinking, especially in relation to the divine, and with this I concur: “all thinking that misunderstands its natural roots and resources is not true thinking but rather a threat to life,” rather thinking is valuable providing it “respects nature, and micro and macrocosm” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 86). I take up many threads of Luce Irigaray’s thought, the most important being sexuate difference, the sensible/transcendental, cultivation of the breath and application of the modes of

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19 I was privileged to be included in the 2010 seminar at Nottingham University.
20 Luce Irigaray’s mode of communication and community follows a long tradition in both East and West. Andrew Cohen puts it this way: “There is something so incredibly life-affirming about the kind of joy and fellowship that emerges when many human beings, inspired by spiritual values and a higher sense of purpose, come together. The Buddha, when asked if association with like-minded people was a part of the holy life, is reported to have declared: "Association with like-minded people is not a part of the holy life, it is the whole of the holy life… The spiritually enlivened and awakened life—if it's to have any real impact on the world—is about creating and sharing higher values with other human beings… The potential of a new, more enlightened world emerges here and now" (Cohen, 2012). I believe that Luce Irigaray provides a model for the “spiritually enlivened and awakened life” for women in the arena of philosophy through her seminars.
21 Luce Irigaray is here making a distinction between a notion of the sublime as aesthetic pleasure in a masculinised form, which is marked by the male gaze, and a feminine one, which includes and respects nature. "Debates over the nature and concept of sublimity gave rise to feminist debates over whether one can discern in the history of literature an alternate tradition of sublimity that counts as a ‘female sublime’” (Korsmeyer, 2008).
self-affection, virginity, solitude and silence, which I develop through all chapters. While I mostly agree with her propositions, I have some argument with the extent to which she applies sexuate difference; I believe she takes it so far as to create a conceptual rigidity, which leaves very little room for development, and I express this concern throughout.

Luce Irigaray utilizes a language of matter, via the elements, which enables her to create a continuum between the material and the philosophical. Thus, as Mary Beth Mader says, “it doesn’t make any sense to hold that thinking has no material antecedents; ‘matter’ nourishes the thinking body; therefore, matter nourishes thinking” (Mader, 2002, p. 33). There is no dissociation, for Irigaray, between the body and thought, which is in accord with my own understanding that each holds and fertilizes the other, and a body sexed as female will then hold thought differently. A number of male philosophers, among them Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, also take the body and intersubjectivity to be fundamental, but I place the additional emphasis on female body, and female experience.

Luce Irigaray can be read on many levels and through many perspectives. In different texts, (or even the same texts) I read Luce Irigaray as a philosopher, a psychoanalyst, a radical theologian, a social and cultural commentator, innovator, poet and more. Although I engage with various thinkers critical of Luce Irigaray, I am primarily focussed on her ideas, because of their range and fluidity. Her ideas also provide a modern counterpoint to Jung. Likewise, Jung has a broad range of scholarship, which, although not privileged in the academy, provides much thought-provoking material, which I now outline.

22 Although Luce Irigaray does not claim to be a theologian, she nevertheless “expects the divine”, as she said in her response to Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s In Memory of Her (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1995) in Equal to Whom? (Schor & Weed, 1994a, p. 63) In Alison Martin’s opinion, she “does not argue as a theologian but as a philosopher, though one prepared to advance her own emotional investment in the divine rather than merely subject it to the objectivist critiques of philosophy” (Martin, 2000, p. 3). I read Irigaray as a radical theologian because she reviews received concepts, such as doctrines of the Catholic Church and interprets them in a new way.
C. G. Jung

My other soloist is Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). My reference to his theories throughout this work requires some explanation. His huge body of work represented radical thinking at the time, in diverse fields, and he provided an alternative voice which went against the general current, and I believe that this voice is still worthy of consideration. As with Luce Irigaray, I do not attempt to take up an extensive critique of Jung’s work, but choose to stay with the essential elements of his thought. I here enumerate the aspects that I will refer to throughout this work.

Jung’s theory of the psychological types allows for both analytic and synthetic thinking styles - for imagination, feeling, logic and the sensate; he does not privilege logos. Indeed, he criticizes logocentrism, claiming that we have made a god of logos. Unlike Freud, Jung claims the unconscious as creative and numinous, and not merely a receptacle of the repressed. He defines libido as life-energy, rather than the purely sexual force of Freud. He persistently criticizes Christian teaching for ignoring the gender plurality of the divine, and he insists on including the feminine. Jung claims that the divine feminine is not transcendent to the world, thus anticipating Luce Irigaray’s feminine divine, to the extent that he figured it as a structure in or of consciousness, and not necessarily goddess. Jung’s investigation into mediaeval alchemy, including the Latin terminology that he utilizes, provides a means of undoing binary forms through the process he termed individuation, and which I equate to Luce Irigaray’s ‘becoming’; both Jung and Irigaray argue for the individual extricating themselves from collective/Symbolic values and emphasize instead the responsibility of the individual. In Irigaray’s words, each individual has “the responsibility to work at each instant for our own evolution, transformation, transfiguration or

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23 In my work as a depth-psychologist, Jung’s thinking removed me from a reliance on Freud’s psychoanalytic theories, which structure women pejoratively.
24 Jung’s writing is indeed dense, voluminous, enigmatic, contradictory, multifaceted, and open to many varied analyses and interpretations; I do not claim that these views cited are his only or consistent views. I have (mostly) resisted the temptation to rely on secondary interpretation of Jung, and have adhered to his original writings.
transubstantiation” (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 355). Jung also offered, as a codicil to his theories, that “nothing offers the assurance that they may ultimately prove correct” (1977, vol. 13, § 551), indicating an openness to development and change, which I define in this work as necessary to the feminine position. Luce Irigaray confirms this when she says “no theory or practice is ever complete” (Irigaray, 2002, p. 22), in fact it must not be, if it is to remain alive. Both Luce Irigaray and Jung provide me with the means to pursue a specific methodology.

One of my key discussions is the necessity for separate spiritual paths for men and women. Jung is unique because he insists upon sexual difference and proposes a separate subjectivity and spirituality for men and women, from within masculine theory.25 In some of his most enigmatic writing he provides remarkable insights into this necessity. In the fifth sermon of Seven Sermons to the Dead,26 he described differentiation as an act of creation.27 He deemed necessary a differentiation between the sexes, specifically in regard to spirituality and sexuality. He claimed that man and woman must “separate their spiritual paths, for the nature of created beings is always of the nature of differentiation” (1916). He goes on to say that the “sexuality of man goes to that which is earthly; the sexuality of woman goes to that which is spiritual”. According to him, man and woman become diabolical to each other if they do not differentiate between their two forms of sexuality. Jung continues by applying similar and associated definitions to spirituality, namely that the “spirituality of man is more heavenly … On the other hand, the spirituality of woman is more earthly”. He described it as “deceitful and devilish” when these two become confused; “each is to go to its own place”. Jung’s florid language makes it quite clear that he believed in a

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25 While traditional philosophy and psychoanalysis fail to think sexual difference, Jung does - at least some of the time!
26 Jung’s Seven Sermons to the Dead were originally published without date and location, but the earliest notes discovered are dated 1916.
27 Jung uses the alias “Basilides in Alexandria”, Alexandria being “the City where the East toucheth the West”, thus posing a similar fecundation of East/West as Luce Irigaray in Between East and West (Irigaray, 2003). Basilides was a historical figure, a writer of Gnostic texts from Alexandria in the Second Century AD. He classed himself as a Christian theologian. Gnosticism was characterized by wisdom, Sophia, essentially a divine feminine. (C. G. Jung, 1916)
difference between men and women, which is necessary to their spirituality and sexuality, at the very least. This differentiation of sexual difference is fundamental to the work of Irigaray. While it is clear that a man’s spirituality has been traditionally directed toward heaven and transcendence, it would be “devilish” or, in Irigaray’s terms a ‘sin’, for a woman’s to be so, because it constitutes a flight or dissociation from the body. I am not claiming that Jung and Irigaray have identical ideas about sexual difference, but the fact that Jung even considered sexuate difference is important; he does not privilege masculine or feminine modes.

Jung’s discussion is interesting to me for several reasons: firstly, he makes clear differentiation between men and women, that is he specifies sexuate identity; secondly, he attributes different spiritual identities to men and women, notwithstanding other writing where he does not make this differentiation, or he does not make it clear; thirdly, he maintains that these laws of spirituality and sexuality are “manifestations of the Gods”, thus to posit a masculine and feminine divine is possible and even necessary as part of the process of differentiation; fourthly, that if separation between the paths of men and women is not made, they become “a devil to each other” that is, their becoming or individuation is confused or hampered; fifthly, to take the woman’s case, her sexuality is spiritual and her spirituality is more earthly. It is this last point that I wish to elaborate particularly here.

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28 Barbara Newman likewise proposes that there is a radical difference between the theology of the masculine, and the theology of the feminine. “In a theology of the feminine, “male” and “female” are understood ... as ontological categories that are first distinguished within the divine realm and only then embodied in the physical, psychological, and cultural polarity of male and female” (Newman, 1987, p. 266). This concurs with Luce Irigaray’s opinion that discovery of divinity precedes discovery of subjectivity.

29 “Irigaray suggests that it is the fundamental duality of the dissociation between human and divine which is itself ‘sinful’, in the sense that it errs against the incarnation which she believes woman is proposing” (Martin, 2000, p. 178).

30 This passage of Jung’s invites much further discussion, such as what then would constitute a man’s spiritual identity, (with due respect to Luce Irigaray, perhaps the transcendental/sensible?) but it is beyond the scope of this thesis.
What would constitute the spiritual sexuality and earthly spirituality for women, as directed by these concepts of Jung? My aim is to avoid that which creates duality-schisms of any kind. I also wish to avoid a subsuming of identity, sexuality or spirituality into that which is categorized either as essentialism or social construction. I believe that Jung’s assessment avoids such categorization. Jung makes clear that female spirituality is a spirituality of her own, not to be confused with or subsumed into masculine parallels. I believe further clarification of Jung’s meaning is required, however; does “spiritual sexuality” mean ‘spirituality experienced through sexuality’, or a ‘spiritualizing of sexuality’? What does ‘earthly spirituality’ mean? Does it mean that the aspects usually thought of as transcendent are experienced rather as material or earthly? All of these possibilities hover around the terms ‘spiritual sexuality and earthly spirituality’, and thus Luce Irigaray’s sensible/transcendental. It is however, the sexuality/spiritual convergence that interests me most here, in the experience of, and discovery of, a specific feminine divine.\textsuperscript{31} What form then, will my enquiry take, which will be most suited to the subject of the feminine, and the feminine subject?

\textit{Methodology}

The style of philosophical inquiry which I adopt is one of sympathetic understanding and development of my subject, where resonance with, and amplification and consolidation, might lead to something suited to a feminine being, or, as Luce Irigaray would say, becoming.\textsuperscript{32} Rather than a linear argument, I prefer a method that is open and fluid, with answers that are implicitly

\textsuperscript{31} I choose to read Jung as thought provoking on this point, rather than pejorative and merely reinforcing the feminine/earth and masculine/spirit trope. I prefer to set aside the possibility that his comments could be read as reflecting the social constructions of the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, rather than, as he claims, as differentiation between masculine and feminine attributes, firstly because Jung himself was ambiguous on these issues, and secondly because to take up Jung in this way provokes a fertile reading of him, and brings his scholarship into contemporary debate.

\textsuperscript{32} Since the acquisition of knowledge, including "scientific knowledge, is always based on an imaginary understanding, and since the imaginary is always bodily and material, in [Luce Irigaray's] view it is important to imagine the body and the imaginary in terms appropriate to the female. She thus articulates the feminine in relation to the female body, which is always an imaginary reality in a pre-given form" (Martin, 2000, p. 151). The notion of pre-given form anticipates my discussion of archetypes in chapter one.
provisional.\(^{33}\) I believe that going deeper is in accord with my project, and might well lead to an understanding of what philosophy and its ethics might look like when sexuate difference is established. I write, or hope to write, from a non-oppositional stance,\(^{34}\) and in this I follow the style Luce Irigaray adopts in her later work, particularly *The Way of Love* and *Sharing the World*, (Irigaray, 2004c, 2008b). Any other style would misrepresent my subject and myself. For my work, the adversarial approach is not acceptable. Janice Moulton critiques ‘the adversary method’, the style of philosophy which subjects views to the strongest possible counter-arguments (Moulton, 2003). She claims that the use of this method limits and distorts the range of philosophy, because it works best in well-defined areas, and isolated arguments, thus narrowing the scope of philosophical concerns. Moulton argues that as a style among many, the adversary method is a useful strategy, but as a paradigm of philosophy it excludes too much. She is also skeptical of the ideals of ‘value-free’ reasoning and objectivity contained within the adversary method (Garry, 2011). I utilize philosophical methods that are compatible with my enquiry into the feminine, where the rational intellect is not held apart from the experiencing body.\(^{35}\) I do not mean that I take an anti-rationalist stance, but rather that which includes the sensuous and the mind, the sensible and the transcendental.\(^{36}\) I intend to apply a method of critique, which is respectful of difference, while simultaneously rigorous in approach.

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\(^{33}\) This style is evident in Eastern philosophical tradition, where linear argument is replaced by a circumambulation around the subject: each section adds to the whole. This is evident in *The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory* (Yuasa, 1987), for instance.

\(^{34}\) By non-oppositional I mean positioning my arguments for women and the feminine *in their own right*, rather than by comparing and contrasting with, masculine norms. Sexuate difference, which speaks for each sex individually, rather than woman as ‘other of the same’ is one way of achieving this. I do not mean to suggest that either Luce Irigaray or I do not, at times, use deductive reasoning.

\(^{35}\) Such as those demonstrated by philosopher David Abram, in *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a more-than-human world*, (Abram, 1997) and “All Knowledge is Carnal Knowledge” (Abram & Jardine, 2000). Following a similar thread is David Jardine in “Birding lessons and the teachings of cicadas” (Jardine, 1998).

\(^{36}\) Apart from insinuating yet another dichotomy, to abandon rationality would be to ignore the historic advances which rationality has made in attempts to modify a chaotic world.
One of the methods I use, in chapters three, five and six is that of narrative, specifically the narrative of myth and fairy-tale. These chapters consist in an epistemological style that engages the emotions and entices through a form of discourse that I have called ‘erotic logos.’ Narrative is important to philosophic writing because it introduces the subject-position, which I elaborate in these chapters. Outside of literary criticism and the psychological sciences, narrative as a basis of research has been underutilized, perhaps because methods of ‘masculine’ acquisition of knowledge have been favoured over ‘feminine’ cognitive styles. Adriana Cavarero in Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood claims that the split between narration and philosophy, between logos/mythos is itself an affect of masculine phallocentrism. She argues that “the tragedy of the ordinary scission between the … discursive order of philosophy and that of narration – is an entirely masculine tragedy” (Cavarero, 2000, p. 53).

Another method I employ is to cross-fertilize fields of study, and to compare and contrast their epistemologies, for example, that of philosophy and psychoanalysis/analytical psychology. For me, cross-fertilization has been a life-long approach, which has led to a study of psychoanalysis, as well as analytic psychology, for instance. In my practice as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist this has been invaluable. Additional philosophical and feminist studies have brought a fresh approach to my understanding of the psychologies, and continually

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37 Narratives as inquiry into life’s dilemmas arguably precede philosophical formations; each provides a distinctive way of ordering experience. Paul Ricoeur’s lengthy investigation (Ricoeur, 1984-1988), and C. G. Jung’s analysis of myth in order to understand the human soul, are notable examples.

38 Martha Nussbaum likewise argues for the inclusion of emotionally engaging “good” literature in developing narrative imagination, which informs ethics. She argues that “certain truths about human life can only be fittingly and accurately stated in the language and forms characteristic of the narrative artist” (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 5). She links narrative with moral philosophy (Kallhoff, 2001; Nussbaum, 2001) and I will argue that the specific narrative of fairy tale educates us in ethics.

39 I hesitate to use ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ in this context, but they have been categorized thus by others. I prefer that we aim for a society in which we have ceased to categorize logic, conceptualization and rationality as ‘masculine’, but not one from which these virtues have been expelled altogether as ‘unfeminine’.
promote new questions and analysis.\footnote{Iris Marion Young likewise does not align her “theorizing with one systematic school of thought”. Rather, she treats “the conceptual frameworks and ideas of others as tools for building an account or solving a problem” (I. M. Young, 1997, p. 5).} I do not adhere to any one school of thought, and gather concepts and ideas and put them together to shed new light and bring vitality to existing problems, especially in regard to the feminine and women. I am aware that this approach of cross-fertilization might well attract criticism, especially from those who are specialists in the various epistemologies I employ. However, I take this risk because I believe the various epistemologies constitute specialities that might well gain by taking note of each other rather than defending their own approach. I am therefore drawing upon each epistemology as a filter or lens rather than an absolute perspective.

Another risk inherent in taking a broad approach is that terms and words have different meanings and applications in different epistemologies, an example being the different use of ‘symbol’ and ‘symbolic’ by, say, Jung and Lacan. I have anticipated this difficulty by applying footnotes and definitions to allay confusion. One of the problems for researchers who use a multi-disciplinary approach, is that it might be unclear which discipline they are referring to. For example, I believe the multi-disciplinary approach explains some of the confusion in relation to Luce Irigaray, when she uses a term such as withdrawal of projections, which is a term borrowed from psychoanalysis. A further criticism I anticipate is that my approach is not (sufficiently) ‘feminist’. Indeed, I believe that feminism runs the risk of becoming a dogma, or a \emph{credo} and this I wish to question and challenge. My thesis can even be approached as a promotion of ‘the feminine’ and women, rather than of feminism per se. I believe that feminism in general runs the risk of employing masculinist psychology,\footnote{Masculinist is a term I use to denote an anti-feminist position, as does Grace Jantzen in \textit{Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion} (Jantzen, 1998)} which position I will challenge. Finally, one might ask if the approaches of analytic psychology and feminine spirituality are compatible with philosophy and feminism. While there might be some confusion of terms, which I attempt to clarify, drawing upon these differing epistemologies
serves a major purpose of avoiding a closed approach to knowledge, or knowledge as an absolute.

Morny Joy (Joy, 2011a), specifically addresses the dual disciplines of comparative philosophy and comparative religion, and such inclusion reflects my own need to cross disciplines. I do not presume to privilege a Western approach, although this work has taken place within a firmly Western institution. My own polyvalent and pluralist approach demands I acknowledge non-Western religions, philosophies and traditions, which are relevant to my argument, for example the philosophy of Yasuo Yuasa and the Arabian tale of Scherezade. My belief is that “appropriation” is only to be interpreted pejoratively when seen from the perspective of a mono-truth, into which other things are incorporated, or to which others are beholden. A notion of plurality, in my view, avoids appropriation by according otherness and other traditions and perspectives their own sovereignty.

My method is postmodern in that it does not privilege rationality, objectivity and the belief in stable self-identity. Instead I rely on multiple voices, a choir, a tutti. Made of fragments, a chimera perhaps, flexible, diverse, slippery and hard to catch, except in sideways glances, nothing too head-on, lest it melt from too much insistence that it reveal itself. This position gives me the flexibility to critique the theorizing of women contained within masculinist philosophy, whether implicit or explicit.43 However, I also claim, in contrast with postmodernist deconstruction, that a sexed, stable subject is possible, at least for long enough to discuss what new paradigms of the feminine might be.44

42 While ‘postmodern’ might be essentially undefinable, its methods are used to destabilize concepts such as presence, identity, certainty, progress and univocity of meaning (Aylesworth, 2012).
43 For example, when I discuss Heidegger’s ‘handedness’ of thinking in chapters five and six, an understanding of the sexuate difference of corporeality enables me to argue for the sexuate difference of thinking: Heidegger himself takes a sex-neutral position.
44 Luce Irigaray puts it like this: “Does not deconstruction, including through its recourse to innumerable linguistic ruses, remain trapped in a secular manner of know-how, and does it not imprison there reason itself, to the point of leading it to a nihilistic madness as the ultimate Promethean gesture? Would it also be too mental, too exclusively mental, wanting to ignore that the sensible-intelligible and corporeal-spiritual dichotomies are one of the reasons for the
Because my subject is ‘the feminine’, I inevitably draw on feminist scholarship of many kinds. However, Luce Irigaray decries the term ‘feminist’, because this does not truly represent her project - she does not wish to be subsumed by an ‘ism’. I select from the many feminisms those that support the diversity and open-ended exploration that is essential to my project. I acknowledge the diversity of feminist approaches, and that “feminist philosophers are readily aware that contemporary feminists continue to disagree about their own self-definition”, as stated by Pamela Sue Anderson. “Nevertheless, a common feature of every form of feminism is ultimately to remove the patriarchal structures which oppress women’s lives; eradicate the structures which devalue women’s acting, thinking, feeling and …writing their own ideas” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 5). These specifics differentiate a feminist (or even feminine) text from a patriarchal one. My central focus is the concerns of women. My methodology differs from patriarchal scholarship, or male-dominated research, and as such I believe it contributes to the development of feminist theory. Feminism is a major and continuing revolution; I will examine existing research, and develop my own contribution. Like Mary Daly, I aim to contribute to “an ontological, spiritual revolution, pointing beyond the idolatries of sexist society and sparking creative action in and towards transcendence. The becoming of women implies universal becoming. It has everything to do with the search for ultimate meaning and reality which some would call God” (Daly, 1973, p. 6). That the ongoing

disturbing character of man and his world? And does not the technical cleverness of the deconstructor risk accelerating, without possible check or alternative, a process that appears henceforth almost inevitable?” (Irigaray, 2002, p. 5). Luisa Muraro, Irigaray’s Italian translator and a philosopher, says: “The deconstruction of received cultural forms is never one of Irigaray’s aims” (Burke, Schor, & Whitford, 1994, p. 323).

45 Alison Martin proposes that Irigaray “be understood as a French thinker who supports a form of universalism - divine universalism” (Martin, 2000, p. 5).

46 P.S.Anderson identifies the five streams of feminism as socialist, radical, liberal, difference and poststructuralist (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 8)

47 Elizabeth Grosz argues for the notion of feminine knowledge in her chapter “Bodies and Knowledge”, (Grosz, 1995).

48 Many advances for women have come about within patriarchal scholarship and male-dominated research. I believe both female-centred and male-centred scholarship is relevant and to maintain otherwise would be to create the kind of duality-schism that I am trying to avoid.
revolution articulates a space for the divine, specifically a feminine divine, is intrinsic to my inquiry.

Feminism, especially as characterized by Mary Daly, (Daly, 1973) has identified a feminine that is wounded by the male, because of the male or because of the patriarchy, and this can no doubt be construed as accurate, but it is an assessment that is dependent on the patriarchy. My intention is, where possible, to find ways of elucidating the feminine without recourse to comparisons with, or reactions to, the patriarchy and the masculine. Michèle le Dœuff, for instance, claims that we can use philosophy to undo or rethink the very same “masculine-feminine divisions that philosophy has helped to articulate and define” (Le Dœuff, 1989, p. 101). Indeed, much of Luce Irigaray’s earlier work does this, especially through mimesis, or taking on androcentric forms and reframing them in a feminine voice. This informs my premise that transformation can and must occur from both within and without (language itself, philosophy as a practice, the institution, etc.) My aim is to discover interiority and experience, in the feminine subject, which has not been subsumed within, or seen through, the masculine Symbolic.

Although this work is cross disciplinary, in the areas of philosophy, feminist philosophy of religion, women’s studies, theology, psychoanalysis and analytical

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49 As Carol Christ says, “we seek to heal the wounds of patriarchy” [http://www.goddessariadne.org/carolwords.htm](http://www.goddessariadne.org/carolwords.htm)
50 Luce Irigaray takes on Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Irigaray, 1993a), and, through mimesis resubmits women to stereotypical views of women held by men, in order to call the views themselves into question. In mimesis she uses the methodology of psychoanalysis, where negative views can only be overcome when they are exposed. I cite a specific instance of Irigaray’s use of mimesis in chapter one.
51 Some thinkers, such as Morny Joy, question whether “philosophy of religion, as it has functioned within a normative and solely rational perspective, is no longer appropriate or even viable” (Joy, 2011b, p. 3). She argues that Continental philosophy (since Kant) has not categorized philosophy of religion as a separate discipline, but “rather boundaries between disciplines and their ideas are much more fluid” (ibid., p. 2). But “in the English-speaking domain, philosophy of religion is principally identified with analytic philosophy, where the universal presumptions of an abstract reason” (ibid., p. 1). Based on this evaluation, my references to philosophy of religion tend more to the Continental and ‘feminist’ styles, rather than analytic philosophy and abstract reason.
psychology, these disciplines both inform and critique each other. Inevitably, because of my background in several of these fields I apply them in a somewhat idiosyncratic way. For instance, psychoanalysis and analytical psychology challenge philosophy through promoting the unconscious and its effects on the subjectivity and experience of an individual.\textsuperscript{52} This has influenced my discussion on the nature of experience in chapter one. Likewise psychoanalysis and analytical psychology must submit themselves to a postmodern deconstruction in order to understand the unchallenged presuppositions inherent in their structures. This is evident in my discussion of ‘the feminine,’ especially in regard to Jung’s notions. The intersection of psychoanalysis with philosophy is a particularly fruitful one, and a good reason why each discipline would do well to know something of the other; Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray - all of them both philosophers and psychoanalysts - have explored this interface.

I assume that my cross-disciplinary perspective can achieve an integration, which will open a discourse that avoids exclusion and duality. I argue that a dialogue between these fields is needed in order to continue to dynamically re-think and re-situate ‘women’ and ‘the feminine.’ I hold that it is possible to claim a female subject, without reaffirming essentialism on one hand, or claiming allegiance to social construction on the other. I will take a middle position, and in this I follow Kristeva and Irigaray who undermine the distinction between biological essentialism and social construction.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{52} Luce Irigaray says, of the unconscious of philosophy, that “we need to pay attention to the way the unconscious works in each philosophy, and perhaps in philosophy in general. We need to listen (psycho)analytically to its procedures of repression, to the structuration of language that shores up its representations, separating the true from the false, the meaningful from the meaningless, and so forth” (1985, p. 75).

\textsuperscript{53} The essentialist/social constructionist debate is one that I acknowledge as an important discussion of the last few decades. Luce Irigaray’s work has been received by some as essentialist, which position she categorically rejects. Labelling a thinker as essentialist is tantamount to dismissing their work. I believe the debate has taken on such force as to constitute a new duality.
I need to address the question of duality, and put borders around my use of it. ‘Dualism’ has a variety of uses in the history of thought, but I am using the term to mean a situation where there are two fundamental paired opposites, such as Good and Evil in theology (Robinson, 2012, p. 101). Each of these two requires the other - or the repudiation of the other, to define itself. Therefore in a dualistic system, men and women are seen as these opposites, which both define and repudiate each other. This is the situation that I am attempting to avoid and replace, and Luce Irigaray’s sexuate difference provides one way for me to explore this, somewhat provisionally, and I address this provisionality in my Conclusion. The fundamental question is whether I can discuss ‘men’ and ‘women’ without relying upon, or repudiating, the other. Especially when I speak of woman I aim to speak of her as herself, not as adjunct to man, which has a long history in Western theology and philosophy. How can I think of woman alone, without having as background her creation out of Adam’s rib, so to speak, and therefore the presumption that she occupies a secondary position? This question has many precedents, including Lucrezia Marinella who was a Venetian author of the sixteenth century, who published philosophical polemics (Deslauriers, 2012). Her work *The Nobility and Excellence of Women*, published in 1600, was one of the first treatises written by a woman as part of an ongoing debate about the nature and worth of women. She rejected the idea of the inferiority of women, and argued vehemently for their superiority. This is not my project, but she does initiate the debate of sexuate difference, by claiming the evidence from bodies that the sexes have different natures, thus the sexuate argument has an antecedent of at least 400 years. In chapter four I refer to the work of Jean Byrne on non-dual thinking as a feature of mystical experience.

Does my work rely upon philosophy of religion, or is it theological? In order to attend to a recurring theme in this work, namely Luce Irigaray’s

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54 Philosophy of religion examines the central themes and concepts involved in religious traditions, using metaphysics, epistemology, logic, ethics and value theory, the philosophy of language, philosophy of science, law, sociology, politics, history, and so on. It also includes an investigation into the religious significance of historical events, the laws of nature, the emergence of conscious life, widespread testimony of religious significance, and so on. It is fundamentally belief-neutral (Taliaferro, 2011). Theology is a study of the question of God and the relation of
sensible/transcendental, I will intentionally move fluidly between these disciplines. I prefer to use the term ‘spiritual’ rather than ‘religious’, when investigating feminine spiritual experience, because the former allows for experience outside an established religious framework, while the latter relies upon it. Speaking of her own spirituality, Irigaray emphasizes that her spiritual progress and becoming is informed by the “idea that I was born a woman but must become the spirit or soul of this body I am” (Irigaray, 2007b, p. 116). The borders between the spiritual and psychological are blurred for Luce Irigaray. When I do use a theological approach, I do not intend to align myself with a patriarchal theological position, but rather aim to articulate that which would reflect the specific subjectivity of women, and direct her towards a feminine divine. When I use various terms, such as transcendence, I will do so in order to explore and develop this in feminine terms, in contradistinction to the existing masculine ones. Indeed, I introduce my own term, embodied transcendence as a working definition of women’s spiritual experience. How will I elaborate my methodological and theoretical approach to make clear the ontologies I utilise?

First, I will argue for a return to a pre-linguistic, pre-gendered position, through which a new identity both outside and within the symbolic might be forged. This pre-linguistic position has been termed the ‘Father of pre-history’ (Freud), or the

God to the world of reality. It is a branch of philosophy, i.e., a special field of philosophical inquiry having to do with God. However, the term is widely employed to mean the theoretical expression of a particular religion. Theology need not have any necessary reference to religion; it may be a purely theoretical discussion about God and God’s relation to the world on a disinterested plane of free inquiry.

55 I agree with Jung who said, “philosophical criticism has helped me to see that every psychology - my own included - has the character of a subjective confession… I know well enough that every word I utter carries with it something of myself - of my special and unique self with its particular history and its own particular world. Even when I deal with empirical data I am necessarily speaking about myself … I try to free myself from all unconscious and therefore uncriticised assumptions about the world in general” (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 4, § 774). Descartes’s methodological text also reminds us “that we must - at least once in our lifetimes - question all our convictions. The point is not to become involved in criticizing others; rather, the aim is to question one’s own preconceptions, to take responsibility for one’s own beliefs and convictions through self-criticism” (Heinämaa, 2003, p. 5). I would however, describe this process as self-analysis rather than self-criticism. Having read Simone de Beauvoir’s extensive autobiographies, it is clear to me that The Second Sex is the result of her own examination of uncriticised assumptions about the world, the place of women, and her own complicity.
‘semitic’ (Kristeva). I will utilize this approach as a means to posit a feminine identity, which can be founded prior to the phallogocentric Symbolic. However, both men and women have access to a pre-gendered, pre-symbolic semiotic, and so equally have the possibility of accessing this position outside the symbolic. Because the masculine/symbolic is the site of women’s dereliction, I investigate how the semiotic position might be seen to trace a nativity for women.

Second, I will argue against the notion of sameness; that there has been to date a pretence that only one gender exists, the masculine, by which women’s subjectivity - ‘this sex which is not one’ - has been eclipsed.\textsuperscript{56} This is the mainstay of Luce Irigaray’s critique. Another version of the idea of sameness is that only among women can women have either parity or true intimacy.\textsuperscript{57} On each count, I will argue for the otherness of both the other who is sexed differently, following Luce Irigaray, and the one who is sexed the same, somewhat departing from Luce Irigaray. I also specify that to redefine one gender necessarily redefines the other.

Third, I will argue against the idea of complementarity, where one gender seeks the other gender for healing, completeness and wholeness. I will repeatedly disassemble this idea in my discussion of the development of distinct and whole subjectivity of not only both sexes, but also each person.

Fourth, I will argue against the idea of hierarchical difference, which depends upon a dualistic trope of inferior/superior along sexual lines. This in turn relies on a predilection for antithetical thinking. In contrast I argue for parity between the sexes, and this theme is continuous throughout all chapters. My project is to

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\textsuperscript{56} \textit{This Sex Which Is Not One} is the title of Luce Irigaray’s book (Luce Irigaray, 1985)

\textsuperscript{57} “Any single explanation for “woman’s” status is simply another instantiation of so-called “phallogocentric” thought: that is, the kind of “male thinking” that insists on telling as absolute truth one and only one story about reality. Women must, in the estimation of postmodern and third-wave feminists, reveal their differences to each other so that they can better resist the patriarchal tendency to centre and congeal thought into a rigid truth that always was, is, and forever will be. To become themselves, women must embrace conflict, even self-contradiction; they do not have to follow any script, including a self-imposed one, throughout their lives” (Tong & Williams, 2011).
discover a voice beyond dualism. Dualism has been convenient to the notions of Christianity where a presumed split (between carnality and spirituality, human and divine, for instance) is reconciled, through redemption.\textsuperscript{58} I discuss Christianity because it specifies our cultural particularity of a divine ideal, and refer only occasionally to other cultural divine ideals.\textsuperscript{59} Although I make use of Christian doctrines and dogmas, my project is not primarily theological.

I affirm the project of sexuate difference, and in so doing acknowledge the failure of the past to provide a space and time for women as women, which has resulted in prevailing forms of knowledge representing only males. Thus, my project is dedicated to other ways of knowing, other ontologies and epistemologies, which conceptualize a feminine subject’s relation to the world, beyond the phallic, beyond the patriarchal, and beyond the paradigm of hierarchies of the sexes as they have been - and still are - upheld. Luce Irigaray explains that we need to recognize that “the other is forever irreducible to me or to mine because he or she is different from me. Different must not be understood, this time, as quantitative evaluation - the other is neither superior nor inferior to me - but as the fact that the other dwells in a different world from mine” (Irigaray, 2007a, pp. 358, emphasis mine). Much of this thesis develops specific aspects of feminine sexuate difference, in language and spirituality for instance.

Fifth, I argue for diversity, which acknowledges the difference between men and women, without hierarchical evaluation and also accords more attention to the differences within sexes. Diversity “celebrates plurality, variety, polyphony”\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{58}Irigaray’s method is to reverse and reclaim many Christian concepts rather than merely reject them. Thus, along with Nietzsche she rejects the Christian notions of sin and redemption if they assume a duality of worlds in which salvation from the inherent errors of this world is promised in the form of redemption in the beyond” (Martin, 2000, p. 177). Instead, Irigaray’s project depends upon a transcendental that is contiguous with the sensible, which in turn is available in the here and now. Like Irigaray and Jung, I prefer to reconsider Christian concepts, rather than reject them as being so androcentric as to prejudice feminist concerns. However, I too “reverse and reclaim” the Christian concepts to which I refer.

\textsuperscript{59}Julia Kristeva, in New Maladies of the Soul, writes: “We should read the Bible one more time. To interpret it, of course, but also to let it carve out a space for our own fantasies and interpretive delirium” (1995, p. 126). I believe that women need an “interpretive delirium” in order to re-vision subjectivity and divinity. To this end I apply religious tradition, myth and fairy tale.
(Downing, 1992, p. 38). This fifth idea more clearly defines my overall project, and informs my argument at every turn. In general, I regard myself as a pluralist, because I place some emphasis on multiple categories, as I have already alluded to in these six different methodological paradigms that I employ in this work. My use of archetypes, for instance, supports polyphonic variation, because archetypes promote multiple possibilities, which do not cancel each other out, but rather coexist. I find the archetypes of a masculine and feminine divine specifically enable me to discuss different divinities without engaging a dualistic trope. Further, plurality refers not just to gender-difference but to theoretical approaches in general. Thus, although I focus on the work of Luce Irigaray and Jung, I contrast and support their ideas with the work of other theorists.60

Sixth, I argue for the idea of a human continuum, at least in part.61 The continuum maintains that we share our humanity, before we distinguish ourselves as women and men. Because I rely on female morphology, I will argue, following Luce Irigaray, that the thinking, feeling and experiences, which arise from this gendered morphology are distinctly feminine. However, I will also argue that some ‘feminine’ experiences are also possible for men, should they acquire a particular position in their own psychology which would enable it; in this way ‘feminine’ is not dependent upon morphology. That women take on ‘masculine’ characteristics is also clear, but not without problems: I will discuss Jung’s concepts of anima and animus in this context. I do not believe that this weakens my development of the feminine, but rather precludes the forming of another duality and hierarchy, which would privilege women at the expense of men.

In my discussion of male hegemony throughout this work, I occasionally use ‘patriarchy’ (the rule of the fathers), but more frequently ‘androcentric’ (man at the

60 As Bertolt Brecht commented: “A man with one theory is lost. He needs several of them, four, lots! He should stuff them in his pockets like newspapers ... If you are to get on, you need to know that there are a lot of theories” (quoted in Fuegi, 1987, p. 174). While it is possible his remark is ironic, I believe that the many theories to which I refer preclude philosophic fundamentalism, and allow for polyphonic variation.

61 Mary Daly, however, would not agree; she equates “human being” with a patriarchal mono-voice. http://www.enlightennext.org/magazine/j16/daly.asp?page=2
centre of things), and also ‘phallogocentric’ (the phallic signifier, the logos, which insists on the one and only truth), and even ‘masculine paternal’ (the grouping of ideas around male dominance). I acknowledge there are historical developments at work in these terms – Mary Daly for instance used ‘patriarchy’ exclusively - but also that each reflects a different nuance. Androcentrism, for example, has been critiqued in the area of science and research, for privileging entrenched practices, which then marginalize other sources such as diaries, oral tradition, personal papers, and the like. This is somewhat countered by feminist standpoint theory,\textsuperscript{62} which modifies the ‘view from nowhere’ by introducing the situatedness of the knower/researcher which includes sex/gender difference. Having established my methodology, I now introduce key terms and fundamental assumptions that I rely upon throughout this work.

**Key Terms and Fundamental Assumptions**

My investigation of the feminine does not hinge upon the essentialism/social constructionist argument; I discover in both Irigaray and Jung a middle position. An example is Jung’s notion of archetypes and I discuss the interface between them in relation to the category of ‘experience’, which is necessary for my discussion of feminine spirituality in chapter four. It is clear that difference is a problem from the standpoint of essentialism because it relies on an inherent essence that we are born with, and because difference, between and within each sex, is crucial to my argument, essentialist theory has little to offer.

The difference in philosophical positions between essentialism and social construction can be summed up by the question: “Is woman born or made?” For an essentialist, woman is born not made; “for an anti-essentialist like Simone de Beauvoir, woman is made not born” (Fuss, 1989, p. 3). That is, for Beauvoir, woman “is not a fixed reality but a becoming” (de Beauvoir, 1989, p. 66) And likewise for Luce Irigaray, she becomes a woman: “I am born a woman, but I must still become this woman that I am by nature” (Irigaray 1992, 168). She

\textsuperscript{62} Feminist stand-point theory has been developed by Nancy Hartsock (Hartsock, 1983), and Sandra Harding, (S. Harding, 2004).
further proclaims “the transformation of ourselves into a work of art” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 15). This is clearly a non-essentialist perspective - women are not already made.\(^6\) Irigaray is alluding to her idea of *cultivation*, and development of what it is to be a woman. So, definitively for me, “it is not nature that defines woman; it is she who defines herself by taking on nature in her affectivity” (de Beauvoir, 1989, p. 69) ‘Becoming’, an activity, overcomes the particular dichotomy of essentialism/social construction. Women must “renounce the [socially constructed] environment that has constituted and bound us” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 127), and be contiguous with our own affect. In that the constructions of the social are indistinguishable from the patriarchal/symbolic, Irigaray is calling for a removal from this symbiosis.

I need to set some predicates for my use of the terms ‘feminine’, ‘female’ and ‘women’, at least provisionally, as much as these terms seem to resist definition. Is it possible to imagine or discuss ‘male’ and ‘female’, (including when they are conflated with ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’) without invoking the pairs of opposites that have been present in western philosophy since Pythagoras?

Let me attempt a definition of ‘feminine’ first. Margaret Whitford suggests that Irigaray's work should be seen as "philosophy in the feminine," (Whitford, 1991b) actively opposing the complicity of philosophy with other social practices which exclude or marginalize women. How do I discuss ‘feminine’ and ‘the feminine’ as subjects of philosophy without entering a kind of colonization and appropriation, which has already been done (Whitford, 1991b, p. 29)? Does a woman, speaking in and of ‘the feminine’, speak intrinsically differently than a man? Would a female view of ‘the feminine’ render it as unrepresentable as it is presumed to be, historically, for a man? That is, can a woman speak of a feminine not founded in,

\(^6\) In *Conversations*, Luce Irigaray strongly disagrees with the charges that she is essentialist. She says, "the relations between the two subjects [masculine and feminine] are found from their different ways of relating to the self, to the other(s), to the world. They then exclude the existence of immutable values or essences which could be shared by all people". In answer to the specific attribution of strategic essentialism, she continues: "I search for specific ways of cultivating a feminine identity. Could it be this task that is confused with essentialism by some people? It was realized in order to reach the possibility of being two" (2008a, pp. 78-79).
or incorporated into, a male imaginary? In other words, is it possible to speak of ‘feminine’, and ‘the feminine’ without assuming masculine representations, in a male hegemony? On the other hand, does ‘the feminine’ refer to a specific ‘feminine’ libido? Does ‘feminine’ return us to the feminine-maternal, as specific drives pertaining to the female body? Do ‘feminine’ or ‘femininity’ signal a stereotypical perception of how women might behave and how men should not? Is it a mistake to even try to define ‘feminine’? Is ‘feminine’ a ‘natural’ definition, or a political one? I aim to answer these questions about the feminine by opening ‘her’ to new imagination, to new images, and to ‘air’ the current and past associations and attributions of and to ‘feminine’.

Many feminists have understood ‘woman’ as a gender term that depends on social and cultural factors. In so doing, they distinguished sex (being female or male) from gender (being a woman or a man). So sex/gender theories, and essentialism/social construction, are intimately intertwined. In regard to sex/gender theory, I tend to agree with Toril Moi, that it is “simply irrelevant to the task of producing a concrete, historical understanding of what it means to be a woman (or a man) in a given society” (Moi, 1999, p. 4). By contrast, Luce Irigaray’s argument of sexuate difference relies on articulating two distinct subjectivities, which do not rely on gender distinction, which I discuss further below.

The category of lived body is an attempt “to liberate the word ‘woman’ from the binary straightjacket that contemporary sex and gender theory imprisons it in” (Moi, 1999, p. ix). The ‘lived body’ avoids the essentialism/social construction debate, and moves us towards sexuate difference; it “is the unified idea of a physical body acting and experiencing in a specific sociocultural context; it is body-in-situation” (I. M. Young, 2005, p. 16). For Young, the lived body means

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64 By ‘air’ I intend a reference to Luce Irigaray, and her insistence on ‘air’ as the element that gives life, to women and to philosophy itself (Irigaray, 1999, pp. 5-6). I give a full account of this association in chapter three.

65 For a concise discussion see Mikkola Mari’s excellent article (Mikkola, 2012).
that we are considering “a specific kind of body and the meaning that concrete body has for the situated individual. This is not the equivalent of either sex or gender” (I. M. Young, 2005, p. 18). I prefer the notion of the lived body because it avoids the sex/gender dichotomy - the lived female body is different to the lived male body, both in biology and life-situation. Young indeed clarifies this:

The idea of the lived body thus does the work the category ‘gender’ has done, but better and more. It does this work better because the category of the lived body allows description of the habits and interactions of men with women, women with women, and men with men in ways that can attend the plural possibilities of comportment, without a necessary reduction to the normative heterosexual binary of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ (I. M. Young, 2005, p. 18).

Thus theorizing a lived body allows for individual difference of every kind, in itself and for itself, without recourse to binary comparisons, or to post modernism, where it is erased. I have some caution, however, about the use of the terms ‘body’. Luce Irigaray prefers to use the term ‘flesh’, because there is confusion as to which body we are talking about; the body of discourse, the political body, the body of scientific investigation; the female body. When using the term ‘flesh’, there is no doubt that a fleshly subject has a sexuate body.

Rather than a sex/gender distinction in order to discover what ‘feminine’ and ‘women’ might be, Luce Irigaray proposes sexuate difference, which “represents the most basic and universal place of otherness, and it has to be respected in order to respect the other kinds of otherness becoming possible” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 19). Luce Irigaray makes a distinction between ‘sexual’ and ‘sexuate’, and Rachel Jones puts it this way: “‘sexuate’ signals the way that sexual difference is articulated through our different modes of being and becoming, that is, in bodily, social, linguistic, aesthetic, erotic, and political forms” (R. Jones, 2011, p. 4). Further, sexual difference is that which “western culture has forgotten and which Luce Irigaray seeks to recover, while the sexuate involves

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66 I will refer to identity that is not based on gender assumptions in the work of Jean Byrne, and the necessity for sexuate difference in the work of Luce Irigaray.
taking up a positive relation to sexual difference by acknowledging it as the irreducible difference which inflects every aspect of our being” (ibid.) As such, sexuate difference does not map onto pre-existing biological difference, nor onto linguistic or other human structures of culture. Thus, Luce Irigaray’s sexuate difference avoids either the essentialist or the social construction argument. Sexuate difference is a concept that I rely on throughout this thesis, and in chapter one I discover in Jung support for this view in his ideas of sexual difference. A logical question to ask, as does Anne-Marie Mulder, “is how the irreducible difference of each member of a couple or the distinction between each pole of a conceptual pair can be guarded and maintained when they enter a relationship” (Mulder, 2006, p. 209). How is this done without a duality, which I aim to avoid? My answer is that when a duality operates, the two are presumed to constitute two halves of the whole; each is required to make up that whole. In sexuate difference, the between, the *copula* for Luce Irigaray, that place of air, creates a breathing-space where projections are withdrawn, and the other is seen as other, not as complement (opposite/dual) to ones-self. In my view this creates a new paradigm for same-sex relations as well, because it is in the opening of sexuate difference (and then to all other difference, as emphasized by Luce Irigaray), that psychic growth, flexibility and *love* can actually arise.

Patrice Haynes critiques Luce Irigaray’s vision of sexual difference and argues that this “results in a gulf between male and female subjects such as that the two are unable to work towards the mutual recognition necessary for love and social transformation” (Haynes, 2008, p. 279). Haynes’ further critique regards transcendence, as she believes that by posing an ontologically based sensible transcendental, Irigaray unintentionally creates the same gulf (ibid., p. 281). I cannot agree with Haynes, because although Irigaray does not develop the male side of sexuate difference as fully as she does the female, (arguably this should be done by men for themselves, rather than by women for men), nevertheless Irigaray develops the relation ‘between’, and details how each can approach the other (both sexuate other, and same sex other), particularly in *Sharing the World,*
The Way of Love, and Ethical Gestures Towards the Other. I also argue that ‘relations between’ extends to our attitudes towards the natural world. That men and women would experience and cultivate the sensible/transcendental differently is approached through my discussion of the difference between male and female spirituality and sexuality posed by Jung.

While I argue that the categories ‘women’, ‘female’ and ‘feminine’ need to be open-ended, and allow for the possibility of change, is there a point at which these categories become so unstable as to destabilize women subjects in their personal and social identities? While deconstructionist questioning might help to disenchant us from received ideas of femininity, the “anti-essentialism of deconstruction” (Schor, 1995, p. 45) can “make the word woman slim down to nothing” (Moi, 1999, p. 7) and eliminate the category ‘woman’ entirely.67 Where is the line between flexible identity and loss of identity? I argue that it is easier to dismantle that which maims, mutilates and misrepresents, than to represent one’s self independently. The first is a repudiating, reflexive action where the reacted-to other is pivotal, in the second the pivot is one’s self. My project is the promotion of feminine becoming, rather than a reflexive critique of androcentric structures.

However, there are some advantages in deconstructive approaches to feminist theory, which have opened greater possibilities for thinking a plurality, thus destabilizing rigid categories of both biological sex and gender identity. For example, Penelope Deutscher (Deutscher, 1997) underscores the usefulness of deconstruction for interpreting the function of gender in the history of philosophy, which is an important prelude to extracting ourselves from philosophical sex/gender presumptions. But I argue that deconstruction is only useful if these theories do not take us further away from embodiment, from lived experience in the body. I agree when Christine Downing says “there is something false about

67 While this question has been posed before, for example by Denise Riley in 1988 in Am I that Name? Feminism and the Category of ‘Women’ in History (Riley, 1988), it needs to be asked repeatedly.
deconstructionism” (Downing, 1992, p. 34), and what is false is that it moves us away from the body. Phenomenology, however, ideally remains true to the body. Toril Moi suggests that we refer to the lived body of existential phenomenology because it promises to tell us something of a lived feminine life, rather than a category that precedes it and provides a theoretical structure (Moi, 1999). Having established my key terms, I now provide an overview of this thesis, and a summary of each of my chapters.

**Chapter Overview**

My thesis, in summary is: that ‘the feminine’, notwithstanding androcentric projections, has contemporary meaning, including - although by no means exclusively - for women as sexed-female subjects. Furthermore, I argue that female spirituality differs from male spirituality, and my contribution to the development of a feminine divine is the notion of mysticism as feminine divine, namely that mysticism is both dependent on the existence of a female divine and the site of the experience itself. A provisional definition of mysticism is needed here; by mysticism I mean the response of an individual to immediate divine presence, a non-rational state which is often a response to the numinosum, namely that which is beyond conception or understanding, extraordinary and unfamiliar. I propose that Poïesis and erotic logos are forms of language more suited to a feminine speech and becoming, and I argue that these forms escape the dominance of logos. Theoretically, a position outside the symbolic is also possible for men, if they discover in themselves a liminal capacity, rather than identify with phallogocentrism. I use liminal, from the Latin word limen, meaning "a threshold", to mean a quality of ambiguity and disorientation, a departing and an arriving. In this way, both poïesis and erotic logos are liminal.

In Chapter One: “Interrogating ‘the Feminine’” I differentiate between ‘the feminine’, both historically and in the present, and women as sexed female subjects. I consider whether archetypes might be a form of essentialism, an a priori claim on (one’s) being, but conclude that they nevertheless contribute to a
contemporary understanding of women and the feminine. I explore the notion of women’s experience, and women’s religious experience specifically. I argue for the inclusion of all women’s experience, while I simultaneously allow that experience might be contaminated by patriarchal beliefs, structures, and language.

In Chapter Two: “Cultivating the Feminine Body” I ask how our notions of body and experience in the body would change if we were to put aside the body/spirit trope, that is if we did not separate bodily experience from spiritual experience. I demonstrate that a woman’s experience of/in/as her body should be understood as a body/spirit continuum when viewed through the lens of Luce Irigaray’s sensible/transcendental. I argue for the importance of cultivating the body, which enables me to reinstate (and restate) the divinity of carnality, or the spiritualization of the flesh, and this position further supports my use of Luce Irigaray’s sensible/transcendental.

In Chapter Three: “Language” – It Takes My Breath Away”, I propose that women find a language that provides a free dwelling, (Heidegger) rather than a prison (Simone Weil). I challenge the idea of dualism in the philosophy of mind, that is the posing of body and mind as opposites, so I take female morphology, in both the linguistic and biological sense, and argue them as a continuum. That is, the form and structure of the human being sexed as female influences the structure and process of the language she uses. This chapter elaborates this theme. I discuss erotic logos as a language for women, and investigate the story of Sheherazade and the Thousand and one Nights to discover how women might speak, and still remain alive (in the symbolic). I am dedicated to (finding and using a) language that is not ‘disembodying’ but ‘incarnating’. I argue that language needs to arise from myself and not merely though the logos of another, especially a sexuate other. While language is a product of the Symbolic Order, I follow Lacan in asserting that language can critique (or undermine) itself, in a similar way that one has an ego but at the same time one has to withstand the
demise of its (psychotic) supremacy. Lacan claimed this as the ‘feminine’ position. I demonstrate ways in which Luce Irigaray achieves this position; she poetically inhabits the elements, for instance, to demonstrate how philosophy has ignored the material, especially air, in favour of the metaphysical.

In Chapter Four: “Mysticism as Feminine Divine”, I discuss mysticism as a direct response - or access to - the numinous, and propose this as a means by which women (or, possibly, men) can avoid the constructs of meaning of the symbolic. I define, discuss, and amplify what mysticism might be for feminine spirituality, both past and present. I contrast the possibility of a feminine divine apprehended and experienced in the mystical with a masculine divine enclosed within the symbolic and codified in religious dogma/theory. I take a position that equates feminine jouissance with divinity in the feminine. As I define it, mysticism is a body/spirit confluence, an experience of Luce Irigaray’s sensible/transcendental. My argument for the mystical as feminine divine avoids the need for the Christian paternal God. I am not arguing for a theist God (or Goddess) at all, but rather for an experience which does not automatically become translated through a priori assumptions about God, (including ‘his’ existence) and the rational foundations of true belief. I claim that a contemporary philosophy of religion does not need a loyalty to the notion that religious belief must be rationally justified as true, as in the phallogocentric system.

In my last two chapters I show more clearly the points for which I have been arguing by applying them to the narrative of a fairy tale.

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68 I will use the term ‘ego’ sparsely in this work, partly because of the slippery and contentious nature of the term, and partly because Eastern and Western notions of ego differ considerably. Luce Irigaray avoids the term, through utilizing the notion of ‘breath’. For example, rather than imagine egos communicating with each other, she claims that it is “the breath, as vital or spiritual matter of a human being, corresponds to (a) third ground from which we can appear as humans and relate between us” (Irigaray, 2000, p. 20). This strategy also enables her to bypass the projections of a masculine imaginary proposed by Lacan as implicit in the formation of ego (Lacan, 1977).

69 The association I am making here with jouissance is apt in several ways, including, as Jean Byrne puts it, that Irigaray “wants the mother and the father to be able to engage in imaginary intercourse, and this meeting of the two is the sensible/transcendental” (Byrne, 2008, p. 88).
In Chapter Five: “The Handless Maiden: Femininity Derogated”, I take up a fairy tale and apply a contemporary analysis. Husserl’s idea of philosophy was a “radical inquiry that proceeds with the help of imagination and fiction” (Heinämaa, 2003, p. 15). This fairy tale aids our imagination, and as such it enables a development of philosophy. I argue that the handless state of the young woman represents the position in which all women find themselves. Without recourse to philosophy, theology or psychology, the particular genre of fairy tale proposes a cause, amplifies the details of her/women’s predicament, and most remarkably, proposes a course of action not only for the young woman herself, but also for those around her and in contemporary culture.

Chapter Six: In my final chapter “The Handed Maiden: Femininity Restored”, I continue an interpretation of the fairy tale, and we shall see how, through the image of her hands growing back, she demonstrates the retrieving of female subjectivity and spirituality. Through the young woman’s sojourn in the cottage in the forest, accompanied by the virgin white as snow and the angel, through solitude/silence, I imagine her discovering her virginity/self affection. It is important to include this discussion of a fairy tale, because many, if not all the subjects of my argument in earlier chapters are demonstrated in this story. As such, the last two chapters constitute a summary and amplification of the thesis.

I now begin by interrogating ‘the feminine’, and discussing various ways in which it is construed.
Chapter One: Interrogating ‘The Feminine’.

“The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them” (Attributed to Albert Einstein, 1879 - 1955).

Introduction

In this chapter I investigate some of the key ideas around ‘the feminine’, female and woman. I do this in order to understand the cultural, spiritual, psychological and philosophical assumptions upon which these ideas are built. I claim that ‘the feminine’ is undeveloped, resists definition and can be difficult to access. This is, at least in part, because the categories of ‘the feminine’ and ‘woman’ have historically been predicated upon the category ‘the masculine’ and ‘man’ in a dualist trope. It has been argued that theories (and the beliefs which subtend them) about the feminine, and women, influence women’s experience of themselves. As an example, the ‘otherness’ of women has been concealed in the patriarchal Symbolic, through the simple device of woman as man’s Other. As Luce Irigaray says, “the other then remains imperceptible, not because of otherness, but because of that which conceals otherness” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 126). For theorists such as Luce Irigaray, this is a problem. Following Irigaray, I undertake to think ‘the feminine’ and ‘woman’ in a different way. In other words, if the category ‘woman’ is based on an androcentric ‘other of the same’, as suggested by Irigaray in her reading of Freud, it might be argued that the claims around the idea of the other of the same need to be undermined; this position underlies the following discussion.

I first examine some of the more universal ways in which the feminine is construed, such as ‘the eternal feminine’ and the ‘feminine principle’ as well as Jung’s concepts of anima and animus. Jung adheres to the notion of

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70 Placing ‘the feminine’, ‘eternal feminine’, ‘feminine principle’ and ‘woman’ within quotations allows me to mark them as the provisional subject of my inquiry; they may not, as we will see, prove to be reliable terms, and therefore subject to change, or even deconstructive erasure.

71 While animus is not strictly a feminine construct, Jung nevertheless held that animus is a contra-sexual part of a woman’s psyche. He described it as corresponding to “the paternal Logos” (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 9ii, §29). On the other hand, he said the animus “gives to
archetypes as a foundation for his work: I examine archetypes to discover if they are a relevant form through which to explore ‘the feminine’. Are archetypes a form of essentialism, for instance, and therefore an a priori claim on (one’s) being? I propose that an archetype of ‘the feminine’ might be interpreted differently in different cultures, and thus offer a useful category differing from both essentialism and social construction, but carrying inflections of both.

I then argue for the personal and particular notions of women’s experience. In order to re-imagine woman as subjects, I pay some attention to Luce Irigaray’s ideas concerning a transformed genealogy for women, and the need for a women’s Imaginary to be founded on feminine rather than masculine morphology.

Departing from Irigaray’s ideas, I raise the question as to whether men might access ‘feminine’ experiences. Irigaray disagrees that ‘the feminine’ is accessible to men, because her insistence on sexuate difference would preclude this possibility. I, however, will argue that other issues influence experience, in addition to sexuate difference.

The notion of the Eternal Feminine is my first inquiry, of which both de Beauvoir and Mary Daly have made an extensive critique.

**The Eternal Feminine**

An exact delineation between the ideas of Eternal Feminine and Feminine Principle is difficult to determine, as the terms often appear to be interchangeable and hard to define, illustrating, in my view, how fundamentally problematic these ideas have become. We can think, for example, of The Eternal Feminine as captured in images such as Sophia, the wisdom behind all life. Let me linger on the figure of Sophia. Plato places Socrates as the quintessential philosopher who is both a lover of wisdom (sophia) and discussion (logos) (Reeve, 2011). For woman’s consciousness a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self-knowledge” (C. G. Jung, 1977, pp., volume 9 part two, §33).
Aristotle, Sophia was one of the five principles of thought (Parry, 2008). Judah Abrabanel (1437-1508) constructed a dialogue between Philo, an accomplished philosopher who is the male character and Sophia, the student of philosophy, the female character. Le Doeuff will have something to say about this particular male/female relationship shortly. Their discourse is on the nature of love as both a sensual and cosmic principle. Sophia contributes substantially to the development of the philosophical ideas in their discourse, and is placed as both lover of Philo himself, as well as of philosophy (Hughes, 2008). In this discourse, Sophia is given a strong and arguably equal voice. In chapter three, we will see Sheherazade similarly placed, as both lover and philosopher when she creates a subject-position for herself in and through discourse. The question must be asked whether this is a true subject-position, or an instance of “erotic-theoretical transference … and is therefore “an equivalent to an absence of any direct relationship of women to philosophy” (Le Dœuff, 1989, p. 104), as Le Dœuff poses in relation to Elizabeth and Descartes.

If women’s access to philosophy is indirect, and “only through the mediation of a man” (ibid.), how does a woman gain direct access to theoretical discourse? Le Dœuff laments that women have been subject to “a massive exclusion that has caused philosophy to remain the prerogative of a handful of the [male] learned” (ibid., p. 100). She asserts that it is a mistake to imagine that this long suppression is overcome by contemporary rhetoric to the contrary. An even greater mistake, in her view, is that women voluntarily choose not to engage with the philosophical realm because it is riddled with masculine values. In this regard, Le Dœuff argues that a feminism of difference presents a danger in that it may be “produced by the very structures against which it is protesting” (ibid, p. 101). The problem, as Le Dœuff articulates, is to know whether we want to remain within those structures “and be dominated by them, or whether we can take up in relation to them a critical position, a position which will necessarily

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72 Plato’s dialogue *The Symposium*, is a possible model for Judah Abrabanal’s work.
involve the deciphering of the basic philosophical assumptions latent in discourses about women” (ibid.).

Le Dœuff argues that if “women are necessary to their masters” (ibid., p. 107), in this transferential philosophical arrangement, then they are being used as commodities, a situation which Luce irigaray argues is a mainstay of the function of the patriarchy (Luce Irigaray, 1985). In chapter five I argue that the handless maiden/every woman is able to, and indeed must, resist commodification. Psychologically speaking, the removal of this transference is akin to the dismantling of the Oedipal complex, when one no longer operates through or against the other, but for ones-self. Le Dœuff firmly rejects any idea of separatism, and in particular ‘difference’ as a basis for her feminism, and argues rather for open-endedness in debate instead of the presumption of a closed system of knowledge. I believe the removal of separatism is a necessary adjunct to philosophy, but that there is still a need for Luce Irigaray’s sexuate difference, or two separate subjectivities, which allows women to operate for themselves, notwithstanding their position within masculinist institutions and paradigms. Irigaray takes this further, to propose a philosophy in the feminine (Whitford, 1991b). This is heavy labour, however, not merely theoretical maneuvering, and has some relation to the idea of women accepting masculinist projections and then transforming them and asserting their own position. In chapter five, my discussion of Heidegger’s notion of the ‘handedness’ of thinking develops this debate.

A further question must be approached, and that is whether the academy itself, that is the university and its philosophy school, acts as a substitute for a man, or indeed the means by which a masculinist view might be enforced upon women. Is subjugation in this way the ransom for amateurism or exclusion, as protested by Le Dœuff? For Le Dœuff, “overinvestment of the desire to philosophize in the ‘academic’ or ‘institution’ is no solution to subjugation, for her (Le Dœuff, 1989, p.
128). Do women feel obliged to take on the academy because it can “appear as a conquest, when an institutional relationship to philosophy has been forbidden for so long” (ibid., p. 120)? I argue that rather than exhibiting a love of philosophy by the woman, such a struggle might well be yet another way in which she finds herself as a commodity for the patriarchal mill. If so, her love (of philosophy) has been commodified. Le Dœuff challenges the patriarchal institutions by avoiding a closed approach to knowledge, or knowledge as an absolute which is owned by the (patriarchal) institution, and instead seeks a “new rationality, in which relationship to the unknown and to the unthought is at every moment reintroduced” (ibid., p. 128). This approach accords with my own contention that open-ended thought is needed for development of a feminine epistemology.

I now continue with a brief historical account of the use of the feminine. In the Romantic movement of the 18th and 19th centuries, ‘the feminine’ was exalted. In the final lines of his second Faust, Goethe celebrates redemption through the “eternal feminine”: that which cannot be described, here finally completes itself. It is the eternal feminine, always attracting us to the higher (Goethe, 1839, p. 207).

These examples demonstrate that which is seen as the feminine. I point out that in both cases the speaker is a man. Is this idea of the eternal feminine equally potent for a feminine as well as a masculine subject? If so, why is this sense of the absolute, that which draws man to “the highest”, seen as feminine? Is this the foundation of the projections by men upon women? To attempt to answer these questions I engage with Jung and his ideas.

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73 Commodification within or by the institutional system is not, of course, gender specific and therefore confined to women. However, in this context I relate it specifically to women, and women in philosophy in particular.

74 Sometimes translated as ‘ever feminine’.
For Jung, the “Eternal Feminine” is “the ultimate principle of the unconscious” (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 18, §237), and a prenatal realm of “immemorial archetypal possibilities” (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 5, §508). “At a certain level, therefore, woman appears as the true carrier of the longed-for wholeness and redemption” (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 14, §500). Here we see an elision of eternal, unconscious properties attributed to, or projected upon, women. But Jung has more to say; for him, integrating this prenatal realm is a way of bypassing dominance of the ego/culture in one’s conscious personality, a way of evading logocentrism. But as this is a process he deems necessary for both men and women, is it related at all to embodied women, or to ‘female’ as sex or gender? Is the naming of principles as masculine and feminine a projection of human sex/gender roles onto processes that are sex/genderless? If so, are these primordial ‘feminine’ processes associated with (or even synonymous with) embodied women? If not, how are they related?

Contrary to the idea of human projections of sex/gender difference onto divinity or principles, Jung had strong ideas on sexuate difference, and claimed that one does “not possess spirituality for oneself or sexuality for oneself; rather one is subject to the laws of spirituality and sexuality”. He regarded them as “mighty demons, manifestations of the gods” (C. G. Jung, 1916). In this view, these ontological categories of male and female are initially patterned within the divine realm and only then embodied in the physical, psychological, and cultural polarity of men and women; thus, for Jung, the divine is male and female and human beings are patterned upon this divinity. Is this conception of Jung’s of the eternal feminine innate and given, and ‘there’ in all women, regardless of culture? I return to the notion of divine patterning shortly when I discuss archetypes.

How is the ‘eternal feminine’ related to embodied women? Simone de Beauvoir includes a criticism of the ‘myth of the eternal feminine’ in *The Second Sex*, and

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75 Whether we then take the divine realm to be within, without, or dependent upon human interaction is a point I take up later.
specifically rejects the notion of it being an unchanging timeless essence.\textsuperscript{76} For Beauvoir, the eternal feminine is not related to the primary question, “What is a woman? If her functioning as a female is not enough to define woman, if we decline also to explain her through ‘the eternal feminine’, and if nevertheless we admit, provisionally, that women do exist, then we must face the question” (de Beauvoir, 1989, p. xxi). Beauvoir claims that when she uses the terms woman and feminine in the context of her question “what is a woman”, she refers to “no archetype, no changeless essence whatever” (de Beauvoir, 1989, p. xxxvi). But is an archetype a ‘changeless essence’? In the project to remove women from essentialist suppositions, do we need to remove her from archetypal ideas completely? I discus these questions shortly.

For Jung, ‘the feminine’ was a pivotal principle, and his discussion of it is vast and contradictory. In my reading of him, his references to ‘the feminine’ are often ambiguous, sometimes referring to embodied women, and sometimes to a feminine principle. Useful to my inquiry in this thesis is his claim that ‘the feminine’ had been culturally repressed over centuries, and he defined this repression as neurotic. Much of his emphasis on the feminine is an attempt to counter the masculine, Logos-dominated world. Fundamentally for him, ‘the feminine’ represented a style of being and relating, as expressed through \textit{eros}. \textit{Eros} was held by Jung to convey more than expressions of love, including carnal love, and full emotional involvement, which also encompasses spirituality (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 7, §31-33). \textit{Eros}, the guiding style of ‘the feminine’, is often seen as the balancing force of \textit{thanatos}, the death drive; (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 7, §33) and this dichotomy is at work in the \textit{thanatos}-orientation of androcentric religious forms, including Christianity, where redemption is accomplished through death. Because it better represents their sexuate identity, I argue that, for women, feminine gynocentric religious themes where natality and birth predominate would be better able to create a new feminine imaginary based on

\textsuperscript{76} In chapters five and six, I elaborate on the nature of myth, and investigate its deep meaning. In this chapter I leave de Beauvoir’s dismissal of myth unchallenged.
birth, life, and potentiality. For Jung ‘the feminine’ is also available to men, but he held it to be more naturally or completely available to, or representing, women, because it constitutes their ego-identity (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 9ii, §29). Here again, he elides ‘the feminine’ and women, and exhibits a phallogocentric view, because his claim for a different path for women and men is not maintained, and he imagines their capacities are more or less the same. I merely note this for the moment, and we will discover how important it proves to be.

I find support in my insistence on plurality of the divine in Jung, as he argues that divinity encompasses a feminine element. He is critical of Christian teaching for ignoring the feminine. He explores Mediaeval Alchemy, because the alchemists placed the feminine at the centre of their opus, because it is unknown, or at least undiscovered. Jung interprets what alchemists practiced in terms of psychological processes, and holds that ‘the feminine’ is equivalent to the unconscious. In other explorations of the feminine, Jung takes the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary⁷⁷ as a demonstration of both the achievement of a feminine divine, and the timeliness of the feminist movement.⁷⁸ Jung argues that “the logical consistency of the papal declaration [of the Assumption of Mary] cannot be surpassed, and it leaves Protestantism with the odium of being nothing but a man’s religion which allows no metaphysical representation of women. …The feminine, like the masculine, demands an equally personal representation” (C. G.

⁷⁷ The importance of Mary as an archetype for women has been amply developed by Luce Irigaray, and Tina Beattie (Tina Beattie, 2004). This has drawn criticism from P.S.Anderson, who argues that Irigaray’s basis for gender ideals “arguably derives from pre-modern theology, especially Roman Catholic Mariology” (P. S. Anderson, 2007, p. 363). Perhaps this is because Anderson is more interested in reframing the “social identity” of women who lack “rational authority” (ibid.) beginning with Eve. Anderson, “as an avowedly Protestant and Kantian feminist philosopher of religion” challenges “any mysterious, potentially mystifying statements about Mary as the moral exemplar for women in becoming divine” (ibid., p. 366). By contrast, I argue for the mysterious (although not the mystifying), the poetic and evocative, which cannot be found in rationality, but which help “the philosophical capacities for reflective, imaginative and interactive under- standing”, so passionately desired by Anderson (ibid., p. 364). The figure of Mary can, I believe, be revisioned both outside and within Catholic dogma, both outside and inside the Western rational model.

⁷⁸ “The Assumption is really a wedding feast, the Christian version of the hierosgamos [sacred marriage]… Alchemy throws a bright light on the background of the dogma, for the new article of faith expresses in symbolical form exactly what the adepts recognized as being the secret of their coniunctio” (C. G. Jung, 1977, Vol. 14, § 664 ).
Jung, 1977, Vol. 11, § 753). Here Jung exhibits a view which is not phallogocentric, and with which I can agree, because it allows for a “metaphysical representation of women”, and therefore a feminine divine, and moreover it affords both the feminine and the masculine “equal representation”, thus positing a sexuate, rather than hierarchical difference.

Much of Jung’s theorizing centres on notions of the opposites, and this dualism, where ‘the feminine’ is in a binary trope with ‘the masculine’, is what I seek to avoid. However, in rejecting the binary trope, how then do I approach both ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’? The Jungian theorists Anne Ulanov and Marion Woodman discuss the notion of the feminine from a Jungian perspective. Ulanov defines ‘the feminine’ as “a distinct category of being and a mode of perception inherent in all men, all women, all culture” (Ulanov, 1971, p. 13). But do women have a chosen and privileged relation to ‘the feminine’ - does the feminine principle specifically promote women? Woodman agrees with Ulanov when she claims that “the word ‘feminine’... has very little to do with gender, nor is woman the custodian of femininity” (Woodman, 1985, p. 10); this definition of the feminine clearly separates it from female and woman. She too follows Jung in this principle being equally available to men as to women.

Woodman also elaborates the connection between ‘the feminine’ and the unconscious. She says, “what we now call the unconscious is in psychological reality a consciousness that has simply been underground for too long” (Woodman, 1982, p. 80) She goes on to say the unconscious also includes the Dea Abscondita, the hidden ‘feminine’ in matter, returning us to Jung’s claims. Of this feminine, she says:

We already know God in his outward manifestation, by his laws, his

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79 Luce Irigaray questions the notion and construction of opposites. She says that prior to and including Socrates, opposites referred to natural differences such as day and night, hot and cold. These could be seen as part of a continuum, however, as these concepts also include dawn and dusk, and coolness and warmness - the intermediate states. After Socrates, the supposed opposites became more and more artificial, and were used to contrast between things. She suggests that difference, rather than opposition, is a more useful proposition, which includes both rather than an either/or (Irigaray, 2010b).
commands, his works. That is the Logos, the masculine side of God. What we await in the Second Coming is what we lack: God’s inner dynamic or process. This - God in his creativeness rather than in his creation - is the essence of the feminine, traditionally enacted in the ancient Mysteries. The return is, therefore, the emergence of the feminine side of God, which has been gradually taking shape for centuries in what we call the unconscious (Woodman, 1982, pp. 80, emphasis mine).

In this reading, we see no reference to women, but rather to a hidden process that has been developing gradually, and which is thought of as a feminine face of God. We see something that is framed as a “return”, or “a Second Coming”- but not of “Logos, the masculine side of God”. In a word, the advent of a different way of seeing and being, a different perspective, a feminine perspective, which is an inner dynamic.\textsuperscript{80}

To further develop the notion of ‘the feminine’ as principle, and how, or by whom, this might be accessed, I refer again to Jung who held that we have access to two sources of knowledge; the \textit{Lumen Dei}, which light proceeds from the unmanifest Godhead, the other is \textit{Lumen Naturae}, the light hidden in manifest matter and the forces of nature (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 12, § 356). He argued that humanity must redeem nature, through psychological alchemy and a change of mind and heart, to liberate the light inherent in physical creation, in matter. In my reading of Jung, this redemption is not merely an acceptance of the miracles of nature \textit{per se}, but a spiritualization of nature or more particularly the spiritualizing of our attitude towards it. That is, instead of seeing nature as a commodity and resource, that we see it as a source of ‘the feminine’ light, \textit{Lumen Naturae}. In this view, it is clear that matter and the body are by no means to be equated with evil and darkness (or women), in the traditional trope, but rather that it is a light which is hidden from rational view. For Jung, the \textit{Lumen Naturae} includes the elements fire, air, water and earth, “the elements which untiringly render service” (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 13, § 198) and nature’s light, a soft or ‘moon’ light, is released or accessed when the elements are properly attended; this dark light is

\textsuperscript{80} In chapter four I argue that this different perspective is mysticism as a feminine divine.
that which illuminates itself. For Jung, “the Lumen Naturae is [a] source of mystical knowledge” (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 13, § 256). Thus one is able to “act in the Light of Nature and to rejoice in it as divine despite being mortal” (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 13, § 148). I argue that this divine/mortal is what Luce Irigaray has framed as the sensible/transcendental and introduces grounds for my argument for mysticism as feminine divine in chapter four. It also embellishes Irigaray’s celebration of nature via the elements, of which more later.

Archetypes, which include archetypes of the feminine, have been considered as a way of understanding how things are since at least the time of Plato. I will now explore how useful this idea might be to promote an understanding of ‘the feminine’ and women.

**Feminine Archetypes**

Many, if not most, feminist scholars dismiss archetypes, as we have already discovered in de Beauvoir. In my view, archetypes, of which Jung is a proponent, offer a non-dual position between essentialism and social construction. Archetypes are a foundational concept in Jung’s theories, and have become a mainstay of the method of inquiry sustained by contemporary Jungians. Jung claimed that “the archetypes of the unconscious can be shown empirically to be

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81 I contend that Luce Irigaray’s philosophical attendance upon the elements thus leads us towards a spiritual view of the natural light of nature, and to celebrate a mortality that is also divine.

82 Feminist scholars such as Naomi Goldenberg have examined Jung’s use of archetypes, and dismissed them as Platonic disembodied forms, which only serve to distance women from their bodies (N. R. Goldenberg, 1989, p. 249). However, in my view archetypes do not have to involve separation of mind from body, and it is a mistake to apply the notion of archetype to metaphysics only. Nevertheless, Goldenberg called for feminists to undertake a formal critique and revision of the Jungian archetypes, because in her view everything is thus predetermined, and we no longer have freedom to create new images for ourselves as women. Goldberg later returned to Jung and his notion of archetypes, and recommends that women can use Jung’s practice of active imagination, which involves a creation of images or “dreaming the dream onward”, to form a satisfying psycho spiritual community (N. Goldenberg, 1992, p. 226). Susan Rowland, speaking of archetypal psychologists, says that they “reject the idea of the prior existence of the archetypes. The image alone is real. The archetypal image (which can be any psychic image) is the archetype and is the primary reality” (Rowland, 2002, p. 77). From this point it is clear that image is archetype, not metaphysics, and from this we can say that even the images that arise in active imagination have an archetypal basis. Further, that archetypes have an existence, which is brought to our attention through images.
the equivalent of religious dogmas” (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 12, §20). However, dogmas are not stable; elsewhere, he argues, “the ultimate fate of every dogma is that it gradually becomes soulless. Life wants to create new forms, and therefore, when a dogma loses its vitality, [we must discover a new form] to express the mystery of the soul” (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 14, § 488). There are two points to make from these last two quotations; first, that archetypes arise from the unconscious, and second that they become dogmas, and as dogmas, they lose their vitality, and must be re-thought. What I am doing here is first of all defining archetypes and then determining if they have vitality, and finally proposing new and more vital ways of understanding them. Jung described archetypes as having a fascination “that emanates from them” (Abram, 1997; C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 18, §547), suggesting that we are in their thrall, or at least identify with them. He regarded it as a mistake to deny the existence of archetypes, or to “treat them as if they were mere images and forget that they are living entities that make up a great part of the human psyche” (C. G. Jung, 1977, vol. 18, §596). For him, the foundation of consciousness is the archetypes (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 10, §656). With specific reference to the “archetype of the feminine”, Jung said that “the anima first appears in the mother and then transfers itself to the beloved” (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 5, §514).

Jung was no doubt influenced in his understanding of archetype by ‘idea’ in Platonic usage, which was developed by The Cambridge Platonists; among them Henri More (1614-1687), who believed that knowability in the world is enabled by archetype and ectype, form and copy. Thus, the divine archetype is the form of which the material world is a copy, reflected in his view that humans follow a divine archetypal form (Hutton, 2008). Likewise, the human mind is the ectype of the divine mind. For Jung, then, ‘knowability’ is informed by archetype. He took up the notion of archetypes as a means of understanding both personal
psychology, and the repeated patterns in the external world. His first use of the term is in 1919, having previously employed the term “primordial image”, an *a priori* form (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 8, §270n). However, in his description of the *function* of archetypes, he claims that without them, important foundational elements of consciousness would be marginalized and overlooked, in a dangerous one-sidedness (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 9i, §276-277). For Jung, that which has been excluded inevitably returns, through the action of the archetypes. (The heroine in “The Handless Maiden”, my subject in chapters five and six, can be seen as the means by which that which has been excluded - the feminine/women – is returned (or discovered). That is, the archetypes of the feminine help to redress the emphasis on the masculine in patriarchal culture.) I have already claimed that ‘the feminine’ is undeveloped, resists definition and can be difficult to access. I argue that my discourse on ‘the feminine’, woman, and female, is founded on an imbalance which has resulted in both psychological and social distress, for both men and women, and which I (and many others) seek to redress. Jung’s idea is that it is the feminine archetypes that are behind this inquiry into the inferior position currently afforded the feminine and women, which prompt humanity to steer towards a balance between, in this case, men and women, and male and female.

The contemporary post-Jungian, James Hillman, in his development of Archetypal Psychology, has taken up archetypes. In Hillman’s view, we see archetypes because we *expect* to see them - we view things archetypally (Hillman, 1977). We thus try to make sense of the world through recognizable patterns, or archetypes. For Northrop Frye, the Canadian literary theorist and critic, an archetype is a “recurring image”, and a “social fact” (Frye, 1957, p. 99), constructed *by* culture. For him, then, archetypes are purely socially constructed – culture constructs them, rather than being based on them. His method was to view a text as pointing to an (unacknowledged) archetype behind it, as a way of

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83 The mythologist Joseph Campbell, influenced by Jung, traced archetypal patterns in the mythologies of all cultures. (Campbell, 1988) In 1959 Campbell published an articulate defense of Jung’s ideas on the archetypes (Campbell, 1959, pp. 50-131).
discovering how a society indoctrinates its citizens. Using his method, I argue that we can interrogate archetypes of ‘the feminine’, and *anima*, among others, in order to discover the ways in which our culture indoctrinates, and to propose a more vital way of expression. In this way, although archetypes can be seen as a tool of social construction, we can examine and deconstruct them, to unmask their unconscious influence upon us, and proceed to build conscious change.

In a similar way, although with a very different application, Marie-Louise von Franz wrote several volumes on the archetypes, arguing, as did Jung, that an understanding of the collective unconscious as demonstrated in archetypal images enables interpretation and understanding of dream-images, and the structure of the psyche. The archetype of ‘the feminine’ is one of the most prominent. Nevertheless, although Jung too holds that archetypes have always existed, he is emphatic that archetypes “develop through the ages” (C. G. Jung, 1977, Volume 9 Part II, § 142) and, departing from the Cambridge Platonists and Fry, he regards it “a mistaken notion that an archetype is *determined* in regard to its content” (C. G. Jung, 1982, pp. 122, my emphasis).

Are archetypes, then, a relevant form through which to explore women and the feminine, or are they, as Frye suggests, a means of deconstruction? Or are

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84 Von Franz’s works include: *Archetypal Patterns in Fairy Tales* (1997), *Animus and Anima in Fairy Tales* (2002), and *The Feminine in Fairy Tales*, (1993)
85 Barbara Newman, speaking of the archetype of the divine feminine, states that “there never was when She was not” (Newman, 1995, p. 1). She cites women in the Old Testament who had their own feminine deity, and resisted the patriarchal insistence that they change allegiance.
86 Jungian archetypes refer to nuclear underlying forms from which emerge images and motifs such as the mother, the father, and the trickster. It is history, culture and personal context that shape these manifest representations or *images*, giving them their specific *content*. However it is common for the term archetype to be used interchangeably to refer to both the action or contents, and archetypal images. I will be referring to both aspects of the archetypes in this discussion. For Jung, archetypes are not “essentialist”, because “it is not … a question of inherited ideas but of inherited *possibilities* of ideas” (Volume 9i, C. G. Jung, 1977, §136, my emphasis). Therefore “we are confronted, at every new stage in the differentiation of consciousness to which civilization attains, with the task of finding a new interpretation appropriate to this stage, in order to connect the life of the past that still exists in us with the life of the present, which threatens to slip away from it” (Volume 9i, C. G. Jung, 1977, §267). I contribute to an interpretation of the feminine appropriate to contemporary times. Lacan, representing relatively contemporary thinking, disagreed with the aspect of “the thought of Jung, where the relation between the psychical world of the subject and reality are embodied under the term archetype” (Lacan, 1994, pp. 152-153).
archetypes a form of essentialism, an *a priori* claim on one’s being? But Jung stressed that an “archetype is an inborn *potential*” rather than ‘essence’. Thus we see that Jung’s use of archetypes combines an *a priori* claim, or a frame of one’s experience, but is also subject to history, culture, the individual and time (Rowland, 2002, p. 29). Archetypes are interpreted differently in different cultures, and by different individuals.87 ‘Woman’ as archetype is therefore open to both personal and cultural difference and development in an open-ended act, or ever-becoming, to use Luce Irigaray’s phrase. It contributes to who a woman is, or at least who she perceives herself to be, and the as-yet unknown of whom she can become.88 As such, I have shown that archetypes span the essentialist/social construction argument, by incorporating elements of both. Therefore, at this point I can say that the notion of archetypes is useful to my inquiry into the feminine, because some of the essentialism/social construction debate can be bypassed. This point is provisional however. It depends upon the possibility of new or hitherto unexpressed archetypal forms, such as the mystical archetype,89 which would allow for women to not only critique past archetypal feminine forms, but to experience or *imagine* new ones.

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87 According to Jung, an archetype is a powerful autonomous process, and a human being can be overwhelmed by it (‘archetype- possessed’) and lose one’s humanity. He argues, for instance that when “Mary is elevated to the status of a goddess… [she] consequently loses some of her humanity” (C. G. Jung, 1977, Vol 11 § 625). Also, according to James Hillman “we burden ourselves when we identify personally with archetypal figures” (Hillman, 1989, p. 10).  

88 There is a clear difference in meaning between stereotypes, and archetypes: a stereotype is an oversimplified category of behaviour, verging on caricature; an archetype is part of the collective unconscious and is an unlearned tendency.  

89 By mystical archetype, I am referring to the ‘Unitive/Transcendent and Shamanic/Animism’, which Mike King argues as one of the five spiritual archetypes in the human psyche, both historically and in the present (King, 2009). I elaborate this theme later in this chapter.
Classical Greek culture provided a multiplicity of feminine forms - many archetypes of the feminine - in the form of Goddesses.\(^{90}\) This multiplicity enables me to argue for “plurality, variety, polyphony” (Downing, 1992, p. 38), which I promoted in the Introduction. So, I can ask, “Through what goddess [or archetype of the feminine] am I looking? when confronted with this ‘multidimensionality of the female point of view” (Downing, 1992, pp. 28, my interpolation). I argue that these goddesses are not “objects of worship but figures through whom we might discover the varied archetypal aspects of the feminine” (Downing, 1992, p. 7 ), as does Downing.

Jean Shinoda Bolen (Bolen, 1984), is among those who have made a detailed analysis of the psychology of these variations by taking up seven portraits of Greek goddesses. Others have also covered the subject of the multiplicity of feminine psychological and spiritual archetypes in some detail.\(^{91}\) I provide a brief over view of these archetypes here:

- Penelope, Odysseus’ patient wife, “sitting by the hearth and weaving, saving and preserving the home while her man roams the earth in daring adventures, has defined one of the Western cultures basic ideas of womanhood” (I. M. Young, 2005, p. 123). It is notable that Penelope provides the most visible archetype of the feminine in our culture.
- Demeter represents the celebration of the fusion of the mother-daughter bond, for whom separation is unthinkable.
- Persephone is the mother’s daughter and venturer into the underworld, the explorer of the liminal. In Persephone the mother-daughter bond is refigured, and she gains her autonomy.
- Hestia represents hearth, temple, wise woman and aunt, autonomy and a virginal quality. Hestia represents one of the ‘stylistic variations’ (Heinämäa, 2003, p. 85) of the feminine archetype, in this case a woman who does not have children .
- Artemis celebrates the feminine as a natural biological reality not dependent on social context or definition, and thus represents the essentialist position.
- Athena disparages all that is conventionally feminine. She calls women to identify with traditionally masculine pursuits and attributes.

\(^{90}\) This discussion of the Greek goddesses also appears in my joint paper with Zeena Elton, (Elton & Gersch, 2012) although in a different form.

\(^{91}\) (C. G. Jung, 1977), (M. E. Harding, 1990) (Downing, 1992)
• Aphrodite’s concern is for relatedness, for that which occurs *between* individuals in relationships.

The purpose in including this brief reference to the Greek Goddesses is to claim a polyvalent interpretation of feminine identity. These archetypes allow a possibility of discovering many ways of female embodiment, and I argue that they add further nuances by allowing for multiplicity, without displacing sexuate difference.

However, because Christian monotheism has excluded the multiple possibilities, and the figure of the Virgin Mother dominates ideas of female subjectivity, I now interrogate one specific archetype, that of mother, to clarify the relationship between an archetype (a collective, albeit unconscious idea) and an individual. Jung insisted, and Emma Jung reiterated, that the biological necessities of childbearing did not obviate the necessity of a woman giving birth to herself in individuation. In other words, a woman’s role as mother should not define her, and she can live other archetypes additionally, and maybe even simultaneously. However, patriarchal culture *has* defined and colonized the mother’s body, so one task for a woman is to avoid “the male-defined mother’s body” (Tilghman, 2008, p. 48). Emma Jung says that archetypes “will never really coincide with an individual…individuality is really the opposite of the archetype” (Emma E. Jung, 1957, p. 11). I emphasize that an archetype informs a collective ideal, but individuation and becoming involve specifically personal variation. I argue that the mother archetype informs us as to this particular role for women, (there are other possible roles as well) but how an individual woman lives it is subject to infinite variation.

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92 A woman giving birth to herself is given voice in Luce Irigaray’s insistence upon self-affection and virginity. I develop these themes in chapters five and six.

93 The figure of the mother often looms large in the dreams of both men and women. Jung said he attributes “to the personal mother only a limited aetiological significance.” He attributes the influences to that of “the archetype projected upon her … which gives her authority and *numinosity*” (C. G. Jung, 1982, p. 126).
Other philosophical and psychological theorists also attempt to clarify ‘the feminine’, and the notion of mother as archetype. How might they respond to Jung’s ideas? I begin with Julia Kristeva, and her notion of the semiotic. For Kristeva, the semiotic is not ‘the feminine’, but is defined as that which is marginalized by the patriarchal symbolic. (Although, in my view, ‘the feminine’ is marginalized by the patriarchal symbolic.) The resolution to this disagreement is partly met by the development in Kristeva’s work. In her earlier work, (Kristeva, 1974) Kristeva posits the feminine as not sexually specific to women but available to either sex. For her, upon our entry into the symbolic, the semiotic is repressed, yet it remains within to disturb and challenge symbolic representations. I argue that ‘the feminine’ does indeed disturb and challenge symbolic representations, and that this is both the purpose and definition of what ‘the feminine’ might be. To further add weight to this proposition, Kristeva holds that non-linear women’s time is ‘time in the feminine’ ('Womens' Time', in Kristeva, 1995, pp. 201-220). That is, linear time as depended upon by rationality/the Symbolic, is not that which is relied upon by ‘the feminine’. Note that Kristeva does identify “women’s time” with ‘the feminine’ in this instance, although in her later work she most often turns her attention to elaborating the difficulties of identity/subjectivity for real women, rather than theorizing the semiotic. This highlights a confusion between, or elision of, ‘women’ and the ‘feminine’, which I am attempting to unravel in this chapter. I propose that it is this position of the semiotic that Jung theorized as the prenatal realm of the ‘Eternal Feminine’, and which therefore has, as both purpose and definition, that which disturbs and challenges the Symbolic and with it patriarchy. In chapters two, three and four, I return to the notion of the semiotic as a site of renewal independent of the Symbolic, which undermines the monoculture of the patriarchy.

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84 Jung associates the feminine (and the anima) with non-linear time; as he said, “anima is outside time as we know it” (C. G. Jung, 1982, p. 161). Jung associated ‘non-linear’ with circularity. So, following Jung, we can connect the feminine with circularity. Circularity is associated with the notion of ‘wholeness’ for Jung, so we can say that ‘the feminine’ is one aspect of, or must be included for, ‘wholeness’. This discussion on the circular and its connection with ‘feminine’ is developed further in chapter four, under the section “What is ‘natural’ to women?”
Kristeva moves from theorizing the semiotic to the subjectivity of fleshly women and the role of mother. In “Stabat Mater” she says “we live in a civilization where the consecrated (religious or secular) representation of femininity is absorbed by motherhood. If, however, one looks at it more closely, this motherhood is the fantasy that is nurtured by the adult man, of woman” (Kristeva, 1987, p. 234). In the terms I am using here, this fantasy is the action of the archetype. Kristeva also reminds us of the impersonality of an archetype when she says “the humanity of the Virgin mother is not always obvious” (ibid., p. 235, emphasis mine). And she also asks: “is there something in that Maternal notion that ignores what a woman might say or want” (ibid., p. 236)? I conclude that the archetype is not, in effect, based on what an individual wants. Kristeva also comments that the Virgin Mary “is one of the most powerful imaginary constructs known in the history of civilizations” (ibid., p. 237). I equate ‘powerful imaginary constructs’ with archetype - and a masculine imaginary, as I will discuss further below. Kristeva also noted that in Freud’s analysis Christianity comes close to “a preconscious acknowledgement of a maternal feminine” (ibid., p. 254), and to my mind, this preconscious (Jung would say unconscious) acknowledgement is an archetype, in this case, that of the mother. The main problem here is that an archetype represents a typical or idealized pattern, but not the individual lived lives of particular women, that is their subjectivity. My focus here is not on the pattern but how the individual woman lives it.

My aim is to stress the subjectivity of women, as I develop fully in chapters five and six, and I argue that it is not just the mother archetype that can pose a risk for the subjectivity of women. Cynthia Eller comes to the conclusion that to “the extent that a woman becomes the embodiment of ‘the feminine,’ she gains an archetypal identity but loses a human one” (Eller, 2000, p. 67) Eller’s claim emphasizes my view that ‘the feminine’ is an archetype into which women can

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95 On the other hand, Patricia Berry claims that “an archetypal idea per se is an over-valued idea that must be seen through and placed in perspective” (P. Berry, 2008, p. 40). Downing, like Berry, is critical of the notion of archetypes proposed by Jung and Esther Harding on this count. (Downing, 1992, p. 18)
collectively disappear. Conversely, however, Sara Heinämaa suggests that each woman contributes as much to the archetype as she receives, when she writes as follows:

Thus every individual woman is a singular stylistic variation of ‘feminine existence.’ As such, she both realizes the feminine way of relating to the world, and modifies it. And accordingly, we can speak about feminine eroticism and feminine literature. Similarly, every individual man is a variation of ‘masculine existence’, and contributes to the constitution of the general [archetype. And together, these variations form the general mode of human life (Heinämaa, 2003, pp. 85, my interpolation).

Heinämaa situates an individual woman as a ‘stylistic variation’ of a ‘feminine way’ thus suggesting there is an archetypal pattern, but each woman lives it her own way, and my discussion of the multiple forms of the Greek Goddesses informs these variations. I discuss this further below when I introduce Luce Irigaray’s notion of genealogy, when women appropriate and rework existing cultural interpretations of femininity.

As an example of the feminine at work in an archetypal way, as the feminine principle, I turn to the Indian physicist and ecofeminist, Vandana Shiva, who maintains that the death of the ‘feminine principle’ in Western patriarchy results in ‘mal-development’. For her, the feminine principle’ is an expression of a dualistic trope with the masculine/patriarchal, and is integrating, motivated to life, promotes women, is based on the preservation and non-exploitation of nature, supports diversity and is cooperative. She asserts that the modern model of development being imposed by the West is inherently patriarchal because it is fragmented, ‘anti-life,’ opposed to diversity, exploitative, dominating, and delights in ‘progress’ based on nature’s destruction and women’s subjugation (Shiva, 1988, pp. 14, 219). Does the feminine principle, in these terms, offer an ideal, perhaps an imaginary, which includes women and natality, and which promotes life-force - libido - through the preservation and cultivation of all forms of nature? Shiva’s ideas about a feminine principle are close to Jung’s, as we shall see. Yet, could it be that ‘the feminine’, especially as ‘principle’ is a depersonalized
abstraction, figured dualistically with ‘the masculine’? Does this leave women to be a ‘divine other’ for men, rather than being-for-themselves, both as divine and carnal?

Let me now direct our discussion of archetypes along different lines. I do so because it could be argued that the paucity of archetypes active in our culture is problematic, rather than any issue with archetypes themselves. As I argue for diversity, including religious diversity, then one way of liberating theological debates from both gender and sectarian bias is to recognize different archetypes of spiritual life. P.S. Anderson argues that a feminist philosophy of religion perspective “more often than not allows for religiously diverse solutions” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 222), an idea which is encompassed by multiple archetypes of spirituality.

Mike King argues for five different spiritual archetypes, which he posits as being both historic throughout culture, as variants within any one culture at any time, and also possible valences within a single individual. He claims that these five archetypes are “powerfully different spiritual impulses, recapitulated within all people at all times. Like the Jungian archetypes, they are conceived of as universals, but which may come into play more in one individual than another and more in one culture than another,… they are five personal spiritual impulses, or five modalities of the spirit” (King, 2009, p. 154). These modalities of the spirit, five different archetypal forms, are Goddess polytheism, Warrior Polytheism, (Abrahamic) Monotheism, Unitive/Transcendent and Shamanic/Animism, which he claims are all “present in our psyches today” (ibid., p. 155). In this way, Jung’s idea that archetypes steer us away from one-sidedness is given form. For King, these modalities of the spirit are not drawn on sexuate lines, but both Jung and Irigaray’s insistence on sexuate difference especially in regard to spirituality, would undoubtedly influence the direction of these spiritual impulses. But sexuate difference would provide only one nuance among many. Perhaps we can say then that sexuate difference is an archetype in and of itself, but that if it
were to be the only referent, it could become, like monotheism, a form of intolerance of difference, and unable to account for diversities of all kinds. Here the spiritual archetypes move from one (monotheism) to two (sexuate difference) to many. In my view, King’s position enhances my own in terms of so-called ‘feminine’ experience being available to men, because it allows for fluidity in spiritual and religious approaches, between and within both men and women, without discounting the benefits of Irigaray’s sexuate difference. By benefit I mean specifically that sexuate difference removes women from being the other of the same. Jung interestingly develops the theme of the ‘other of the same’ in his notion of anima and animus. Let us see how this works.

**Jung’s Anima and Animus**
A central idea of Jung’s is that of a contra-sexual other in men and women. For him, the anima or soul of men is feminine, and the anima is an unconscious aspect of a man’s psyche. Similarly, animus, referring to spirit or mind, is an inner masculine part of a woman’s psyche. However, I question if this reinforces a distorting dualistic trope. Jung acknowledges this when he claims that “most of what men say about … the emotional life of women is derived from their own anima projections and distorted accordingly” (C. G. Jung, 1982, p. 57). Thus we might attribute the unsustainable cultural prejudices within Jung’s writing to the distortions of his own anima. The contemporary Jungian writer, Claire Douglas, is critical of the terms anima and animus, and argues that they carry the early twentieth-century gender roles encoded in their descriptions by Jung (Douglas, 1990). Following this point, I argue that the most immediately real feminine available to men might not be women themselves, but the distortion of their own anima. This raises the question as to whether anima consists in immutable feminine characteristics, any more than the animus consists in

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96 For Jung, both anima and animus are archetypes.
97 Jung readily acknowledges how women’s conceptions of men are derived from their own animus projections and similarly distorted. Of this distortion, Jung writes: “The assumptions and fantasies that women make about men come from the activity of the animus, who produces an inexhaustible supply of illogical arguments and false explanations” (C. G. Jung, 1982, p. 57). If we take up this view, women might well become aware that they project patriarchal attributes upon individual men.
immutable masculine characteristics (Ulanov, 1971, p. 123). To imagine so would be a reifying of ‘the feminine’ through the patriarchy, rather than a development of what the feminine might be or become, for women themselves. As it stands, anima risks being the projection by men of patriarchal attitudes - both idealized and denigrated - onto women.

Other contemporary Jungians offer a further critique of anima/animus assumptions, based on theories of different psychological development in men and women. In Jung’s theorizing, the animus was far less developed than anima. He relied on women such as Emma Jung, Toni Wolff, and Marie Louise von Franz to develop these ideas (E. Jung, 1957; von Franz, 2002; Wolff, 1956). Ruth Anthony El Saffar claims that Jung’s idea of animus is gynophobic for a woman, because it “pulls her away from herself, and it is only by heroic efforts” that a woman extricates herself (El Saffar, 1994, p. 14). She argues Jung’s concept constitutes “yet another captivated and diminished expression of women, one that is nothing more than a reflection of a male psyche” (ibid., p. x). El Saffar is so convinced that Jung’s concepts reinforce a patriarchal culture that she is “led to call into question the process of individuation described by Jung, at least as that process is applied to women” (ibid., p. 5). Likewise, Frances Gray questions “the gendered nature of individuation” (Gray, 2008, p. 38). In her view, “women can be individuated only if they are able to establish a speaking position that is genuinely their own” (ibid., p. 155). If the animus is merely the parroting of a patriarchal voice, it cannot reveal women as subjects. Hence, we can see that much of Jung’s theorizing reflects a patriarchal perspective.

If we admit the existence of anima/animus distinctions, and the properties of each archetype that render them masculine and feminine, we have a problem.

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98 For instance, Christine Downing claims that women “experience the encounter with the anima as the rediscovery of what is already our self rather than as the discovery of an unknown ‘other’ within” (Downing, 1992, p. 6).

99 Yet in Jung’s schema it is the animus itself, which “gives to a woman’s consciousness a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self knowledge” (C. G. Jung, 1977, Volume 9 part 2, §33).
Briefly, in this traditional trope, the ‘feminine’ is seen to be passive, aligned with the moon, diffused, soft, irrational, relational and adaptive; ‘masculine’ is seen to be aggressive, focussed, aligned with the sun, hard, penetrating, rational, directional; anima is based on feminine qualities, and is also said to be moody and petulant; animus is conversely based on masculine qualities. I argue that if men’s view of the feminine and women is founded on distortions of their own anima, then it follows that women’s view of man and the masculine is based on distortions of their own animus, an animus that consists, according to Jung, in “the sum of conventional opinions” (C. G. Jung, 1982, p. 196), about men and presumed to be held by men. This is a doubly-serious situation for women; if patriarchal culture itself is a distortion of what men and the masculine might be or become, when women ‘develop their animus’ - a contentious point in itself - they would be internalizing that culture, a culture in the masculine. Is it possible to make a distinction between masculine symbolic/patriarchy as it currently stands, (“the sum of conventional opinions”) and a re-imagined and transformed masculinity, based on the sexuate difference of Luce Irigaray? Until that future time, Irigaray's approach is to attempt to remove women completely from patriarchal influence, while at the same time promoting a respect for sexuate difference, in effect a bilateral development. This leads me to engage both Irigaray and Kristeva’s ideas of ‘the feminine’.

Is Irigaray right to be “extremely suspicious of any use of the term ‘feminine’ by men and its ascriptions to women? She understands these associations as an inevitable symptom of a male ordering of the world” (Joy, 2006, p. 66) Many Jungian writers agree with Irigaray’s position; Christine Downing, Esther Harding and Irene Claremont de Castillejo argue that the ‘soul image’ of women is feminine, not masculine, (that is, not animus) and James Hillman attempted to disconnect anima/animus from contra-sexuality. For both Harding and Luce Irigaray, the conscious ego-orientation of both men and women may be ‘masculine’, and thus aligned with patriarchal culture, “and both men and women may need to struggle to access their more undeveloped and unknown ‘feminine’
potential, their *anima*” (Downing, 1992, pp. 5, my emphasis). However, Luce Irigaray disagrees that ‘the feminine’ is accessible to men, as will become clear. Luce Irigaray acknowledges that the dominance of phallogocentric culture might be as damaging to men as it is to women, when she frames an ethical relation *between* men and women not founded on male supremacy. However, she firmly advocates sexuate difference as a constant difference between men and women. The idea of *anima* and *animus* are far from her discussion. I now put *anima/animus* aside, while I consider other theorizing around the notion of the feminine, and I begin with feminine identity. I then move on to consider a feminine genealogy, the feminine imaginary, and feminine experience.

**Feminine Identity**

What do I mean by ‘feminine identity’, and identity as woman? Irigaray does not think she can say what a woman is or what femininity is (Zakin, 2011). Although *woman* and *women* are central to Luce Irigaray’s work, she does not attempt a definition. Similarly, Beauvoir does not mention feminine ‘identity’ once in *The Second Sex*. A discussion of the merits of using *identity* as against *subjectivity* has little use for my purposes here.100 Rather, I argue for a notion of feminine subjectivity that is multiple, shifting and changing, and possibly at odds with fixed notions of culture, language, race, class, sex and gender, or even sexuate difference.101 In the following exploration, I do not expect to discover a fixed feminine identity.

This section would not be complete without mention of Jaques Lacan, and his notions of a ‘feminine position’. I will elaborate this idea in chapter three, when I

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100 Briefly, the concept of *identity* has its roots in a modernist discourse where the core of an individual is seen as stable – an accomplished fact - and is founded on developmental psychology. *Subjectivity* on the other hand is founded on a postmodern and poststructuralist discourse and focuses on the making of the subject, who knowingly expresses meaning.

101 A Buddhist approach to the question of identity engages Luce Irigaray’s *sensible/transcendental* where the limited self of the body (the sensible) and the unlimited not-self (the transcendental) are held to coexist. The Buddhist terms of ‘self’ and ‘not-self’ are not oppositional but rather co-existing. And, as Jean Byrne points out “our true nature is therefore understood as not tied to notions of male and female, but as interdependent, unconditioned and nongendered” (Byrne, 2004, p. 6). This disengages us from a dualistic trope, and gives us a broader and inclusive language to discuss both identity and spirituality.
discuss language in relation to the Symbolic, and give the case of Schreber who in Lacan’s view took the feminine position, that is a position outside the Symbolic. In a patriarchy which remains stable, or tries to remain stable and fixed, through establishing *credo* in the Symbolic, I argue that it is women, or those taking the ‘feminine’ position, (such as Schreber) who try to find a new way through, to frame being by means of freedom rather than the constraints found in language, the Symbolic, *credo*. Those who take the feminine position are willing to take the risks of change because the symbolic, the status quo, does not preserve or secure their identity in the same way as those taking the masculine or patriarchal position. According to Lacan, those who take the feminine position know what the phallic position is but they see through it. This alludes to the story of the Emperor’s clothes. Recognizing that the emperor is naked is not a good thing (or even possible) for those who adhere to the patriarchal/Symbolic order, but it is necessary for - ‘and natural’ to - women. From my perspective, this opens an immense possibility for women; why crave definition (or a position) if it is conferred by the Phallic, for it’s own purposes? The ‘feminine position’ is also related to *jouissance*, which I will elaborate in chapter four.

In summary to this point, although my definition of ‘the feminine’ is no longer provisional, (the point at which I began this chapter) I have not been able to discover a stable or absolute definition, but multiple possibilities. Nevertheless, ‘the feminine’ clearly has to do with bodies, and flesh, that is, embodiment. A more elaborate definition will emerge as I proceed. Another way of positing the feminine, with multiple possibilities, is through the notion of a feminine genealogy.

102 Lacan, in his Seminar on *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, makes the point that in the symbolic the Emperor wears clothes, but that women see his nakedness ‘under his clothes’ - under the symbolic. Women are the not-duped ones. Psychoanalysis also unmask, in a way that women already know (Lacan, 1992, p. 231; 1998). According to Lacan, psychotics are also not-duped ones (along with mystics). From Lacan’s point of view, that is the point of view of the masculine/symbolic, the non-duped err because they do not come under the Name of the Father. From the perspective that I am arguing here, that is of the feminine, the not-duped one does not err, but escapes the imprinting of the patriarchal/Symbolic. This is, of course, a threat to the cohesion of the masculine/symbolic and the authority of the Name of the Father.
Genealogy

A further exploration outside the essentialism/social construction debate proposed by Luce Irigaray, is that of a separate genealogy for women. Recall Heinämaa’s situating of an individual woman as a ‘stylistic variation’ of a ‘feminine way’. It is Le Doeuff who encourages women to recognize their part in a collective feminine history (Le Dœuff, 2007, pp. 126-133, 193-194, 224-230), rather than focus on a narcissistic singularity. P.S. Anderson urges us to be aware of this collectivity as a necessity in cultivating “the appropriate spiritual dispositions”, which in her view include “hope, love, and joy in their liberation” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 183). The recognition of collective history can be seen as a genealogy. For Irigaray, a maternal genealogy needs to take its place alongside and in conjunction with, the traditionally recognized paternal genealogy, where “women’s desire could be represented for itself” (Whitford, 1991c, p. 28). Firstly, a woman would situate herself with respect to her mother “in order to mediate relationships between themselves”. Further, “the divine and maternal genealogy, are conditions for ending women’s status as sacrificial objects” in androcentric culture, through paternal genealogy (ibid., p. 159). Women would, through having a genealogy of their own, not sacrifice their own name and lineage, and would no longer be attached to the male genealogy. Ultimately, women’s lineage would extend to a feminine God, just as men’s is to a masculine God. While this idea represents Irigaray’s earlier work, the two genealogies continue to be essential to sexuate difference.

One of the thinkers who has developed Irigaray’s concept of genealogy as a way of interpreting femininity for women is Alison Stone, who places it in the context of the essentialism and anti-essentialism debate. When women “have a ‘genealogy’, women always acquire femininity by appropriating and reworking existing cultural interpretations of femininity, so that all women become situated within a history of overlapping chains of interpretation” (Stone, 2004, p. 135, my emphasis). Stone argues that all women are located on this ongoing chain, and the genealogy arises because the process is both a “history of concepts of
femininity, but is also, simultaneously, a history of women themselves, as individuals who become women by taking on and adapting existing concepts of femininity” (ibid., p. 150). Such adapting of existing concepts calls to mind Jung’s idea of archetypes, *which change through the ages*, and are adapted by the way we live. For Stone:

> each reinterpretation of femininity must overlap in content with the interpretation that it modifies, preserving some elements of that pre-existing interpretation while abandoning others. Through the resulting process of attrition of meanings, each woman will find herself in a series of gradually diminishing connections with women of previous generations. Moreover, within a single generation, each woman’s reinterpretation of femininity will overlap in content, to varying degrees, with other women’s reinterpretations (ibid., p. 150).

Here, “women remain connected indirectly by long chains of reinterpretation of femininity” (ibid., p. 152). Each woman is then aware of *interpreting* the culture in her own way, mediating it. Thus women are able to experience themselves as agents of change, to “undertake transformative reinterpretations of the meanings of femininity that have become sedimented within their own cultures” (ibid.). The major contribution of this approach for women, and as women, is that women can experience themselves both as individuals and as a collective. In other words, within this model of genealogy, a singular woman does not misrepresent other women when she speaks ‘as a woman’, and as herself. However, Luce Irigaray herself is cautious about the genealogical relation because it can rely on the sustaining of family dynamics, (albeit within a group of women) in the form of ‘umbilical’ attachment, and argues that women need to move beyond this (Irigaray, 2010b). Irigaray’s proposal of a feminine genealogy re-imagines women in a context that removes them from patriarchal genealogy. Let us now interrogate the imaginary itself for further understanding of how this might serve feminine becoming.

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103 For Irigaray, female genealogy represents a stepping-stone where she elaborates culture inherited from the feminine line. She believes that we cannot stop with this elaboration, lest we remain children and must therefore move outside a genealogical relation, but respect it even as we leave it behind. It constitutes a vertical axis, and her further development of sexuate difference develops a horizontal axis. (Irigaray, 2010b)
Feminine Imaginary

As a further inquiry into ‘the feminine’, I turn to the feminine imaginary. Luce Irigaray employs the Lacanian imaginary body in her discussions about Western culture’s bias against women. She argues that cultures project dominant imaginary schemes, which then affect how that culture understands and defines itself. According to Irigaray, in Western culture, the imaginary body that dominates is a male body, and therefore a feminine imaginary needs to be developed which privileges women’s morphology, in both the anatomical and linguistic meanings, which I will discuss later. As it stands, according to traditional psychoanalysis, women are regarded as defective men, reflecting the defectiveness and poverty of the imaginary itself. The imaginary is a prelude to the symbolic, and thus women are inadequately symbolized, or symbolized only in male terms. Irigaray works towards stimulating the social imaginary to display feminine representations, which she also intends will alter the Symbolic. Although Irigaray asserts that there is a female imaginary, she does not outline exactly what the female imaginary is because, “this is something which women still have to create and invent collectively” (Whitford, 1991a, p. 9). The concept of genealogy, which I just discussed, is one way of developing a feminine imaginary, and if we view it in this way it still has value. My chapter four, “Mysticism as Feminine Divine”, also contributes to a feminine imaginary.

I argue that women have primarily relied upon a masculine imaginary, based upon the ideals of men, including their divine ideal. Thus woman, conceived in this way, is a product of man’s ideal, not of her own ideals, or her own becoming. So our understanding of what ‘woman’ is, is based upon an appropriation of her subjectivity. Corollary to this, what we can recognize as an extreme ‘masculinisation’ – the patriarchy - equates the image of God in man with male supremacy, and women with derogation. This patriarchal assumption of

\[\text{\footnotesize{104 Lacan’s work centred on a triad of ideas: the Symbolic is a set of differentiated signifiers, including language itself; the Imaginary serves as a mediator between internal and external worlds, and is oriented towards cohesion; the Real is that which is unsymbolized, always present, and outside language. For Lacan, all of these can be seen as spaces in which certain aspects of subjectivity operate.}}\]
supremacy lives on the *human imagination* (Daly, 1973, p. 19), and I emphasize that it is through the imaginary, and the images on which we rely, where change begins.

How, in this context, are Jung and Luce Irigaray connected? As I flagged in the Introduction, I will now discuss how Luce Irigaray proposes that through *mimesis* she resubmits women to stereotypical views held by men, in order to call the views themselves into question. In mimesis she uses the methodology of psychoanalysis, where negative views can only be overcome when they are exposed; she takes on androcentric forms and reframes them in a feminine voice. This inevitably alters the discourse - and the relationship - between men and women, which she intends as therapeutic. As Jean Byrne puts it, “her idea is that by receiving and interpreting the male unconscious women/Irigaray can help man to know himself and break free from his narcissistic imaginary” (Byrne, 2008, p. 59).

Naomi Schor (Schor & Weed, 1994b, pp. 40-62) discusses Luce Irigaray’s use of mimesis, describing her strategy as an instance of Derrida’s term, paleonomy, “the occasional maintenance of an *old name* in order to launch a new concept” (ibid., p. 51). Margaret Whitford sympathetically defends Luce Irigaray’s use of mimesis because the feminine role must be assumed deliberately. Thus by mimesis a form of subordination is converted into an affirmation, and thus begins to thwart it (Whitford, 1991b, p. 71). When questioned about the value of mimesis, Luce Irigaray said it was a strategy useful to her past thinking (Irigaray, 2010b). Although mimesis is no longer useful to Luce Irigaray, I nevertheless argue that it has specific value in the instance I am defending here. When Luce Irigaray uncovers “what she calls the ‘feminine imaginary,’ the repressed [i.e. unconscious] underside of masculine subjectivity and rationality” (Hollywood, 1994, p. 168), she is revealing what Jung termed the *anima*, in other words, the way the imaginary functions in Western androcentric culture. Thus, in my view, Luce Irigaray’s repressed feminine imaginary correlates to Jung’s *anima*. This is
the way that men have imagined women, (as a feminine ideal, the *anima*) and projected this imagination upon women. As Jung says, “the effect of projections is to isolate the individual from his environment, since instead of a real relation to it, there is now only an illusory one. Projections change the world into the replica of one’s own unknown face” (C. G. Jung, 1982, p. 190). The replica of one’s unknown face, for a man, is the *anima*, or his inner concept of how a woman should be. (And conversely, if we allow this argument, the unknown face of a woman would be the *animus*.) Jung continues; “every beloved is forced to become the carrier and embodiment of this omnipresent and ageless image...It belongs to him, this perilous image of Woman” (ibid., p. 194). This is the ‘narcissistic imaginary’ and it is this “omnipresent and ageless image” that man (and, it must be said, patriarchal culture in general) projects upon woman, which must be challenged in two ways. First, by becoming aware of the projection and withdrawing it, and second by resisting and transforming the projection. Women can do this by living an authentic life of their own, in response to their individual embodiment, rather than a collective ideal, as I will outline shortly. Fundamentally the authentic life is *individuation* for Jung and *becoming* for Luce Irigaray.

For Luce Irigaray, individuation is also the foundation for the “horizontal couple”. She stresses that men and women “have to discover a new way of differing as human by entering into communication as two different subjectivities” (Irigaray, 2004b, p. xii). This requires that neither men nor women project upon the other, but allow not only a sexuate becoming, but also a specifically individual becoming.\(^{105}\) One of the essential ways in which this can be done is by becoming aware of *anima/animus* projections, either given or received, for one’s own freedom, as well as the freedom of the sexuate other. As Irigaray says, “solicitude for the other thus partly amounts to suspending *all projections* or plans

\(^{105}\) Equally, I believe that women project *anima* upon each other, notwithstanding Jung’s argument that the anima is only projected by men upon women (C. G. Jung, 1982, p. 205).
about them” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 79, my emphasis). ‘Projections’ here would, in my view, be unconscious, and ‘plans’ conscious.

In refusing the anima-projection of men, women subvert the role prescribed for them in patriarchal culture, via the masculine imaginary. Irigaray, has more to say in this regard. She proposes that, through the strategy of mimesis, women temporarily occupy the male unconscious because she believes that men need a person to enable them to understand themselves and find their limits. Only women can play this role… In their role as analyst of the male imaginary, women have temporarily to occupy - but just as a technique this time – the unconscious position of the male psyche. Just as the analyst first receives and then interprets the unconscious projections of the analysand, women have to be for men what they cannot be for themselves (receive the projections) and then interpret their phantasies (Whitford, 1991b, p. 36).

It is through this device of mimesis that Irigaray believes that women could transform “women's masquerade, her so called femininity into a means of reappropriating the feminine” (Schor, 1995, p. 53). However, reinterpreting a narcissistic imaginary is a perilous activity for an individual’s subjectivity. According to Irigaray, the ‘holding of one’s own breath’ allows us to pay attention to the other in a suspension of our own becoming. Because if such a task were to be the only one to which one devotes oneself, one would soon stop being. Holding one’s breath in order to listen to the other without a project or an a priori, other than to help the other to be, exceeds our possibilities as living beings if such a gesture intends to be permanent and univocal. In the meeting with the other, it belongs to each one to keep on hold one’s own becoming in order to lend assistance to the other’s becoming. …We have not yet reached such a coexistence with the other, or we have already forgotten it (Irigaray, 2008b, pp. 128-129).

I argue that this “holding one’s breath” would mean initially accepting the anima-projections of men, and Luce Irigaray stresses that this can only be done for a short time. Accepting the projections implies that one recognizes the projections as projections, and Jung poses this as “a moral achievement beyond the ordinary” (C. G. Jung, 1982, p. 189). The next stage is, as Jung argues, the
“requirement that projections should be dissolved” and that by doing so we are “entering upon new ground” (ibid., p. 200), and that we must be prepared for “the moral and intellectual exertions that are needed to dissolve them” (ibid., p. 202). Ultimately, according to Irigaray, “woman has to separate off from the world that is imposed on her”, the anima projections, and then “found a world of her own”; furthermore, she must find “the means of coexisting with a world irreducible to her own”, lest she still remain “dwelling in and subjected to the world of the other” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. xvii). So, women must not only transform the projections upon them, but also not impose animus projections upon men, thus achieving Irigaray’s ideal of coexistence. In so doing, a woman is transforming projections into something that truly reflects her rather than a counterfeit, and then educating the man’s notion of the feminine/anima through the life she lives, and thus changing his ‘ideal’, and living her own. My concern is that this is a very circuitous way of developing a subject-position for women, via a woman transforming the way the masculine views her. However, given that the unconscious projections/imaginations of both sexes are internalized by the other, it is perhaps starting with the situation as it currently stands.

An example of Irigaray’s use of mimesis in transforming androcentric forms is virginity. Taking the phallocentric valuing of literal virginity (an intact hymen), she refigures female virginity not only as the basis for female sexuate rights, but also as a concept of feminine integrity, which is physical and even spiritual. I develop the theme of virginity fully in chapters five and six, where, through the fairy tale of the Handless Maiden, I demonstrate the transformation of the projected androcentric ideal into a feminine value of self-realization.

In the following chapters, I will argue for women’s lived experience in body, language and spirituality. But what do I mean by experience?

Genevieve Lloyd, in “The Man of Reason” summarizes experience thus:
Experience is always mediated by the location of experiencing subjects within a certain time, place, culture and environment, and it is always shaped as much by unconscious considerations and motivations. It is, arguably, also shaped by the gender of the experiencer. But stereotypes constitute a particular sort of knower-overlay upon these structures, of whose effects one can become aware, and which one can work to rethink and restructure (Lloyd, 1989, p. 160).

This passage brings to our attention the problem that experience is always mediated by situation. Likewise, unconscious considerations and motivations will both affect and effect lived experience. Further, that experience is sexuate, shaped by the sex of the experiencer.¹⁰⁶ I point out that we can become aware of stereotypes, and differentiate them from genuine, or creative experience. I will later consider experience as intersubjective, and question how authoritative we can assume experience to be. But before I examine these questions in more detail, I define the two aspects of experience.

There are two complementary accounts of experience; namely the ‘first person’ stance, which is subjectively lived, phenomenologically described, and felt rather than explained; and the ‘third person’ stance, which is impersonal, explanatory, and discursive (Kruks, 2001, p. 141). These two accounts bring to mind the two strands of feminist theory I mentioned in the Introduction, namely as parler femme, to speak as a woman, namely the first-person (libido) stance of primary experience, and women as viable subjects of knowledge, that is the third-person stance (credo) of interpretation and theorizing.

¹⁰⁶ That experience is socially constructed by a male hegemony, and awakening into the sexuate-specific women’s experience is conceived by Patricia Lynn Reilly thus: “Whether shouted at women in the religious institutions of their childhoods or whispered to them in the culture, the religious words and images of Father God, of judgement and punishment, of unworthiness and shame, of a sinful Eve and an obedient Mary linger in women’s memories. Whether recited weekly in Sabbath School or experienced daily in the design of their parents’ relations, the religious myths of the exclusively male God, of Original Sin, and of the necessity of a male saviour are deeply ingrained within women’s lives. These remnants of our religious past pursue us into adulthood and interfere with the development of a self-defined spirituality. In the company of women, our imaginations will be freed from the crippling effects of these childhood myths and our courage will be awakened as we name our own gods and design our own women-defined spirituality” (Reilly, 1995, p. 3).
I will rely on these two positions - *libido* and *credo* - in chapter four, *libido* being the primary experience, and *credo* being cultural-linguistic interpretation. The first person stance represents the *libido* aspect, because it is phenomenological, it is *lived*. As part of lived experience, there are modalities that elude speech and "which we come to 'know' through non-intellectual, embodied, cognition. For we experience not only what is unspoken but even unspeakable” (Kruks, 2001, pp. 13-14). Knowing through the body is something I consider in the next chapter. This leads me to privilege the lived feminine body, as does Kruks, and to consider “'female experience’ as an irreducible given grounded in female embodiment” (Oksala, 2004, p. 100).

As we have already seen, experience is ‘situated’, and the working of the representational system in which women’s experience occurs is part of that experience (Scott, 1992). That is, our interpretation of the experience will be influenced and informed by the culture in which it occurs. It is also informed by archetypes and stereotypes, of which we can become aware. I argue, however, that finding new terms, a new imaginary, new language - inflected with the feminine rather than the masculine/Symbolic – is as important as knowing the limitations of the cultural interpretations of experience.

One way in which a ‘feminine inflection’ is discerned is through the possibility that women arrive at knowledge differently to men, as discussed by Luce Irigaray and Carol Gilligan (Gilligan, 1982) and that women’s direct experience, in contradistinction to women’s belief, is a source of that knowledge. In an attempt to retrieve women from invisibility, 1970s feminist theorists held that experience was the irreducible starting point for understanding the situation of women, and differentiating it from the situation and experience of men.

Let us see how a differentiation between the experiences of men and women might be made, keeping in mind the sexuate difference so important to Luce Irigaray. Does the appeal to the authority of both sexuate and personal
experience promote discussion, or halt it, if the experience of each is held to be absolute and unquestioned? Can this result in a kind of tyranny of experience? In contrast, should any experience be precluded from the production of knowledge? Does one run a risk in appealing to experience as the ultimate test of all knowledge, as the most reliable way in which knowledge is received? Does experience overlook the many mediations involved in the process, through belief, culture, gender, body and personal psychology? One of the benefits of post-structuralist thought is that through it experience can be examined. As Fuss says, “the category of ‘female experience’ holds a particularly sacrosanct position in Women’s Studies programs, programs which often draw on the very notion of a hitherto repressed and devalued female experience to form the basis of a new feminist epistemology” (Fuss, 1989, p. 113). This is understandable, because ‘female experience’ has hitherto been derogated and subsumed in a masculine hegemony. In critiquing the cultural influences on experience itself, we must nevertheless maintain respect for the category of individual experience, and not demolish or diminish it entirely. Does the social constructionist argument “shift from the singular to the plural in order to privilege heterogeneity and to highlight important cultural and social differences” (Fuss, 1989, p. 4)? I argue that if it does, then the heterogeneity becomes that ideal/God, a multiplicity to whom the individual is oriented. Does heterogeneity refute biological determinism, and promote infinite variation? Toril Moi, is vigilant to expose ideological dangers, from which “no one word can serve as talismatic protection” (Moi, 1999, p. 32). She is warning that elements of biological determinism and social construction are concealed or embedded in most concepts we use, and merely getting the terms right will not absolve us of the task of examining our confusion. She argues that individual women’s experience will be influenced by more than sexual difference (Moi, 1999, p. 35).

A further consideration in discussing women’s experience is that of women’s standpoint, which enables women to view their position in relation to the
collective that they are critiquing. Sandra Harding (1991) developed this distinct approach and stresses the embodied personal perspective rather than ‘the-view-from-nowhere’. Feminist standpoint theory emerged from a need to distinguish the production of knowledge from the practices of power (S. Harding, 2004). Luce Irigaray, however, claims that this position is exclusionist and essentialist in that it proposes women’s standpoint in contradistinction to that of men. For Irigaray, certainly in her later writing, the place in which a successful future will blossom is between these two sexuate distinctions, in all fields, from personal relations to scientific research.

I recognize, as does Genevieve Lloyd, that there are two “central, interconnected tasks that face feminist philosophers working in theory of knowledge”, namely “that of finding appropriate ways of knowing women’s experiences and the structures that shape them; and that of developing theoretical accounts of knowledge that retain continuity with those experiences” (Lloyd, 1989, p. 157). That is, by valuing accounts of both poles of experience. I ask the question again, can ‘only women understand feminine experience’, as held by Luce Irigaray for instance? Is exclusion a necessary part of sexuate difference? Feminists are “unlikely to tolerate a theory that rejects or denies personal experience” (Schemen, 1996, p. 29). The idea of genealogy, which I have already discussed, where each woman represents a variation on a feminine style, allows for both sexuate difference and the primacy of individual experience, and thus avoids the stereotyping of experience. Likewise phenomenology, which relies on lived and individual experience.

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107 The work of feminist philosopher of religion Pamela Sue Anderson offers a good example of the feminist standpoint theory approach to religion and gender (P. S. Anderson, 1998). She sets out to revise and reform philosophy of religion by using feminist standpoint epistemology as developed by Sandra Harding in philosophy of science. A feminist standpoint is not the same as a woman’s experiences, situation, or perspective. Applied to philosophy of religion, feminist standpoint epistemology involves thinking from the perspective of women who have been oppressed by specific monotheistic religious beliefs (Frankenberry, 2011).
108 Seminar discussion with Luce Irigaray (Irigaray, 2010b).
Central to Luce Irigaray’s work is relationality; she proposes an ethics-between, rather than an ethics toward. In this view of experience, an ‘other’ who is forever outside my grasp, is always present. Michèle Le Doeuff is concerned that by arguing for sexuate difference one agrees “to the exclusion of reciprocal equality for each and every human being”, which is the conclusion reached by poststructuralist difference feminists, specifically Luce Irigaray. (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 183). Anderson fears either “an extreme altruism, or on the other hand, debilitating narcissism; each ultimately render the ethical perspective of intersubjectivity impossible” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 183). What I am arguing here is that it is through difference that a space between is created so the other can be approached. Child psychiatrist Donald Winnicott was prominent in object-relations theory. For him intersubjectivity and experience go together. He situates human experience “in the space between inner and outer worlds, which is also the space between people - the transitional space - that intimate relationships and creativity occur” (Winnicott, 1953, p. 150). For Winnicott, the in-between is a relational space - relations with one’s self, and outer relations with the other. Here, one learns to “keep inner and outer experiences simultaneously separate and interrelated” (Thandeka, 1997, pp. 87-88). In this model, it is in the experience of the in-between that self and other are discovered. Thus the two subjectivities in a couple, heterosexual or otherwise, are both preserved and discovered in the “in between”. Luce Irigaray takes this further and places the relation with self, and between self and other, as constituting the divine, which is realizable in the present moment rather than in an ever-deferred future. The important emphasis is that this divinity is discovered in the between, it is relational.

This brings to mind the copula of Luce Irigaray. She uses the notion of air, as copula, to posit the shared space of a couple without loss of identity of either. Here air is “indispensable matter for life and for its transubstantiation into spirit”

Winnicott also subscribed to the mediating aspect of air: For him, “this space is best conceived of as an environment, the self’s oxygen, its breath of life. Without it, the psychoic health of the baby is asphyxiated; its emotional life becomes contorted” (quoted in Thandeka, 1997, p. 88).
In her exultant hymn of praise to the air, Irigaray attributes to it a maintaining of boundaries: “you who flow between one and the other but without destroying either’s boundaries proper.” And that you “always keep yourself between us, whose distance allows us to approach each other” (Irigaray, 2001, p. 116). It is this distance, this interval, which allows for ethical relations.

An important consequence of a woman accepting her own experience is that it is a prelude to accepting otherness. As Luce Irigaray articulates, a hitherto unrecognized part of our truth “can be revealed to us thanks to the other, if we are willing to partially open our own horizon in order to perceive and welcome the other as other without intending to dominate, colonize, or to integrate this other” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 132). This is not only a concept of openness, but is experienced. This two-fold acceptance gives women an authority, according to Anne Ulanov, which “engenders respect for other’s experiences and allows us to be open and at the same time clearly defined” (Ulanov, 1971, p. 133). This relational framework - relation with the self, relation with the other - is a means of “conceptualizing women’s experience in a more open-ended, historicized manner”, as Serene Jones comments (S. Jones, 1997, p. 38).

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have argued for the feminine and woman in categories of their own, outside the normative phallogocentric poles of masculine and feminine. I relied on Luce Irigaray’s work on sexuate difference, through which she effectively erases the most persistent dogma of androcentrism, where the female has been subsumed in the male.

I conclude that although women’s experience is subjected to, and a product of, cultural influences, women’s experiences are the fundamental ground of their life as women, biologically and spiritually. Elizabeth Grosz refers to the ‘primacy of corporeality’, that is, moving the body from the periphery of woman-as-subject and making it the “very stuff” of subjectivity (Grosz, 1994, p. ix). This category of
feminine embodied cognition might well elude the discursive upon which the masculine symbolic relies.

In the next chapter, “Cultivating the Feminine Body”, I ask how might women’s *embodied* cognition be cultivated so as to incorporate the ‘becoming’, which is so important to Luce Irigaray, including ‘becoming divine’. My emphasis is that becoming is a project unique for each woman, which involves fleshly subjectivity and the spiritualization of that flesh. In chapter four I will build on this point further to develop the notion of spiritual experience as a fleshly mysticism. My argument centres on the application of Luce Irigaray’s *sensible/transcendental* in the embodied life of women.
Chapter Two: The Feminine Body as Transfigured Flesh

Introduction

My purpose in this chapter is to discuss various ways in which the feminine body can be cultivated. According to P.S. Anderson, “a crucial feminist challenge in philosophy of religion is to free minds to affirm their bodily life within an ever-greater perfection” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 140), thus the necessity for me to argue for the affirmation of bodily life. I argue for the fundamental assumption that what all women share is female morphology,110 in both the linguistic and biological sense.111 In the biological sense, female morphology deals with the form and structure of the human being sexed as female, and in the linguistic sense, morphology relates to the structure and process of language.112 For some theorists, such as Luce Irigaray, language and its morphology is sexuate, which I discuss in the next chapter.113

In this chapter, I interrogate various epistemologies to discover some of the ways that the feminine body is theorized and experienced.114 ‘The’ body and ‘my’ body already position some of those differences.115 I argue that women have been

110 Is it essentialist to suggest that all women have the same body or that women share particular physical features (breasts, vagina, etc)? I am by no means inferring that women are then all the same in terms of other characteristics. That women are ‘embodied’ is important, because the world is, arguably, experienced and known only through bodies. However, the fact that all bodies are positioned constitutes part of the infinite variation.
111 Elizabeth Spelman, in the chapter “Now you see her, now you don’t”, (Spelman, 1988, pp. 160-187) asks, “Is there something all women have in common despite (or maybe even because of) their differences?” (ibid., p. 160). She goes on to propose many answers to this question, but not the one that I would give, that is, their fleshy bodies as female in variable details of race, biology, physiology, endocrinology, life-stage, etc.
112 Merriam-Webster dictionary on-line.
113 Luce Irigaray conducts linguistic experiments, the purpose of which is “to demystify the seeming neutrality of linguistic forms by uncovering the different, sexuate relations that inform the use of language by men and women respectively” (Hirsh & Olson, 1995, p. 343). “Lacanian psychoanalysis is interested in the body as a ‘speaking body’. The real body and the textual body are of a similar nature insofar as they are embodied in language” (Prud’homme & Légaré, 2006).
114 Morris Berman asks “how is it then, that things such as emotions, or more generally the life of the body, gets left out of academic history?” (Berman, 1988, p. 108).
115 Diana Fuss notes the difference between ‘the’ and ‘my’ in relation to the body: “The body connotes the abstract, the categorical, the generic, the scientific, the unlocalizable, the metaphysical; my body connotes the particular, the empirical, the local, the self-referential, the immediate, the material” (Fuss, 1989, p. 52).
encouraged to abstract themselves from the body, beginning with Plato.\textsuperscript{116} Furthermore, the feminine body is deprecated in the masculine-symbolic.\textsuperscript{117} I give only passing reference to those epistemologies which abstract the female body, because I am concerned with the experiences of fleshly, bodily women.\textsuperscript{118}

I want to argue for a cultivation of the body based on the immediate experience of that body, so the body is my starting point.\textsuperscript{119} P.S. Anderson reminds us of Amy Hollywood’s endeavour to introduce feminist philosophers of religion to the development of subjectivity through bodily and ritual practices, rather than through a focus on belief (P. S. Anderson, 2012, pp. 183-184). Thus I argue that it is through the body and body practices that a woman’s subjectivity is developed. I focus on the cultivation of the breath as spiritual practice and its relation to the sensible/transcendental as a way of reinstating the carnality of the divine. I develop Luce Irigaray’s ideas on cultivation because they represent a practical strategy for women’s becoming and are directly related to an experience of the sensible/transcendental.

\textsuperscript{116} The “reification of disembodiment, not surprisingly, influences the extent to which philosophers of religion are able to see the realm of the body as of any real philosophical interest” (P. S. Anderson & Clack, 2004, p. 151).

\textsuperscript{117} Much scholarship has been devoted to these subjects. See Luce Irigaray Speculum of the other woman (1985); Elizabeth Grosz Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism (1994) and The Force of Sexual Difference (2006); Margaret Whitford Irigaray’s Body Symbolic (1991a); Jean Byrne Enlightenment Between Two: Luce Irigaray, Sexual Difference and Nondual Oneness (2008).

\textsuperscript{118} That the corporeal body might provide a stable foundation from which to examine the body is discussed by Susan Rowland as follows: “Theorists suspicious of the anti-foundationalist stance of post-modernism have often turned to the body as a source of secure meaning. Surely the body provides grounds for some truths now that the mind and subjectivity are no longer reliable? Feminisms can be tempted to resort to the sexed body as an unproblematic source of truth. The corporeal is so self-evidently fixed in contrast to the instabilities of postmodern gender” (Rowland, 2002, p. 133).

\textsuperscript{119} Feminist theological inquiry must, I believe, include the body/flesh. For example, Janet Soskice asks “why should disengagement from the society of the emotional and sensual world be our path to spiritual excellence?” (Soskice, 2004, p. 215). Here the emotional, sensual world and the ‘animal’ responses of the body are claimed to be important guides to spiritual development. Irigaray also contributes to this position when she says: “It is significant in our cultures man thinks or prays by estranging himself from the body, and that thinking or praying does not assist him in becoming incarnate, in becoming flesh. Yet if thinking means becoming aware of one’s natural immediacy, that does not mean that it has to be sacrificed” (Irigaray, 1996, p. 40).
I pause to consider the word ‘cultivation’ itself, because it is a key concept in Luce Irigaray’s work. ‘Cultivation’ has an agricultural background, so to speak, with implications of preparation, development, improvement, tending and caring; the metaphors associated with it are those of nature, thus fulfilling Irigaray’s own requirement that metaphor reflect the natural world. Cultivation implies ‘to come to have gradually’, and thus avoids reaching “too quickly to the highest summit” (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 364), as Irigaray cautioned. Hence its suitability for what I have argued as a feminine mode, that of a process and ‘becoming’, rather than positing and achieving a fixed goal.

Beginning with Western cultivation practices which support this view, I then move to Eastern ideas as does Luce Irigaray in her ‘Eastern turn’, represented by her text Between East and West (2003).

**Cultivating the Feminine Body**

In Simone de Beauvoir’s scholarly analysis of the situation of women in history and her own time, The Second Sex, the experience of the feminine body is considered in its entirety; changing hormones, pregnancy and childbirth make women’s experience of body entirely different to how a man experiences his body. For Beauvoir it is clear that men’s theories either assume that women live their bodies in the same way as men, or that women’s mode of experience is seen as a deviant form of the male. Beauvoir is not satisfied with Merleau-Ponty’s claim, in Phenomenology of Perception; “so I am my body, in so far, at least, as my experience goes, and conversely my body is like a life-model, or like a preliminary sketch, for my total being”. For de Beauvoir, there is a dissonance between her intentions and the female body, which is “dominated by fatality and shot through with mysterious caprices” (de Beauvoir, 1989, p. 598), namely hormonal changes, which make her body seem unreliable and an obstacle to her own purposes. Neither is Beauvoir satisfied with Heidegger’s idea of body as “an assemblage of implements...intermediate between [a woman’s]

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120 Quoted by Beauvoir as a footnote (de Beauvoir, 1989, p. 29).
will and her goals” (ibid.). She makes her point that “woman, like man, is her body; but her body is something other than herself” (ibid., p. 29). In de Beauvoir’s view, Heidegger’s being-in-the-world revealed a masculine view of usefulness and suitability, a practical world ready to hand, not experienced by women.

So, in Beauvoir’s view, a woman's body is different from a man's and thus gives rise to a different kind of experience of the world. For Beauvoir, specific bodily experiences constitute a different bodily consciousness for men and women, who live in their different ways the strange ambiguity of existence made body. For, as Beauvoir says, “the body being the instrument of our grasp upon the world, the world is bound to seem a very different thing when apprehended in one manner or another” (ibid., p. 32). Thus the body sexed as female apprehends the world in a very different way than one sexed as male. So woman's body is her starting point and man's his. The biological differences are constitutive of different experience and its expression in the world. I argue that a woman's body, through such hormonal mediations as menstruation, pregnancy, lactation and menopause, introduces her to a specific female way of “becoming divine.” Later, I will argue that Beauvoir's notion of the world being apprehended differently in “one manner or another” can be applied not only to the sexed body, but also to the ‘cultivated’ and ‘uncultivated’ body.

Building on Beauvoir, feminist thinkers such as Betty Friedan propose that women will be liberated when “they choose the painful growth to full identity” over ‘femininity’, and when they are allowed and encouraged to do the things that men have done, and which avoid tasks done by or for the body in traditional women's roles (Friedan, 1963, pp. 181, 338-378). Friedan represents those feminists whose attitude to the body was what we might think of as quite traditional masculinist views. An extreme example of this view, aligned with Plato’s, is expressed by Shulamith Firestone, whose whole work centres around claims that woman's essential self lies in her mind, and not in her body, thus privileging mind
over body and freeing her from the tyranny of the body (Firestone, 1970). She argued that technology could be assigned tasks previously performed by the body.

Adrienne Rich provides a view to the contrary, and points out that a woman’s distancing herself from her body, and the body/mind distinction itself, prevents an adequate description of women’s experience. Her emphasis is not liberation from one’s feminine body, but liberation within one’s feminine body. Rich argues that rather than being seen through the patriarchal view of being “pure Nature”; women can regard their physicality as "resource, rather than a destiny". Rich argues that in order to live a fully human life “we require not only control of our bodies (though control is a prerequisite); we must touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, our bond with the natural order, the corporeal ground of our intelligence” (Rich, 1977, p. 39). In this view, bodily life and bodily tasks are neither insignificant nor undignified. Rich’s approach sees a woman’s path as separate to and distinct from patriarchal assumptions. I argue that this approach allows for the possibility that the body can be celebrated, rather than denigrated, and in a specific feminine way. In this regard, Rich’s work presaged that of Luce Irigaray.

The French philosopher Simone Weil, a contemporary of Beauvoir’s, was influenced by Eastern Philosophy, and in this way anticipated the work of Luce Irigaray. She tries to reconcile the despised body of Western philosophy and culture, with the idea of redeeming the body through spiritual practice. Weil wishes to “construct a philosophy of bodily, or somatic, practices” based on a “life

\[121\] This has very specific application to somatophobia, or ‘flesh-loathing’, which is expressed in Western thought since Plato. Here the body or flesh, is loathed, by men of women, (and consequently by women of themselves) or where the wearer of one colour flesh is loathed by the possessors of another colour of flesh. Luce Irigaray claims that if a respectful for sexuate difference is cultivated, then other body-based difference such as race will be accepted without prejudice, and somatophobia thus loses its power (Deutscher, 2002, p. 187).

\[122\] In this analysis of Simone Weil, I rely on the paper by Ann Pirruccello, “Making the world my body: Simone Weil and Somatic Practice”, (2002), whose research links Weil’s work to Eastern philosophy and practice.
lived in wakeful attentiveness” (Pirruccello, 2002, p. 480). Her aim is to “understand which practices might break open the human perspective and free it from a history of mediocre moral and religious conditioning” (Pirruccello, 2002, p. 480). This “mediocre moral and religious conditioning” I later refer to as what is learned by the body unconsciously, the uncultivated body. Weil’s perceptual and conceptual lives were linked closely with the practical activities of everyday. Her approach is important because her particular interest is “in epistemology and the importance of knowing with or through the body” (Pirruccello, 2002, p. 481). Weil thinks, “the body is a lever for salvation. But in what way? What is the right way to use it?” (Weil, 1970, p. 330). She concludes that a “certain quality of attention is linked with effective movements, without effort or desire” (Weil, 1956, p. 170). Her idea of attention already posits a kind of cultivation. Her notion of “paying attention” (Weil, 1973, pp. 146-147) is so central to her thought that she experiences paying attention to another, or nature, as co-creating their very existence. She believes that there is a rhythm to life, bound up in the seasons; “through this rhythm we remain linked with the sun and the stars. We must feel them through the medium of this rhythm, as through the stick of a blind man” (Weil, 1956, p. 22).

Weil’s need to keep herself anchored in nature is reflected in Irigaray, who requires that women do not divide themselves from the seasons, from nature, for in nature “the body becomes spirit and the spirit body, or, rather, they both become flesh, and each by the other” (Irigaray, 2004a, p. 30). However, when Weil describes a mystical experience she achieved while reciting the Lord’s Prayer, she relates that “the very first words tear my thoughts from my body and transport it to a place outside space” (Weil, 1973, p. 72). If this is the ecstasis that Luce Irigaray equates with a distancing from her body,123 rather than an experiencing in and of the body, then it represents a flight from the body. If, however, an ecstatic experience is a move from ego-identity to that of the

123 *Ek-stasis*, or *ecstasy* comes from the Greek to stand outside one’s self. Irigaray is suspicious of ecstasis because it takes one *away from* embodiment. For her *enstasis*, staying with the body, is preferable.
liberated self, this is not flight from the body but a radically different experience of the body, which I discuss further in chapter four.

Weil’s thought is useful because of her insistence that any change in one’s manner of thinking is an illusion if the body has not participated. The profound change of perspective that requires more than reflection or intellectual work alone, has resonance with my notion of cultivation of the body (Weil, 1956, pp. 23-24). There is however, one very specific difference in Weil’s conception of how this body-cultivation might be achieved, and my view. For her, the involvement of the body is inevitably based on suffering and asceticism – “carnal privations” (Weil, 1956). There is no hint of the need for suffering in the Eastern approach, or in Luce Irigaray’s, as we shall see. In spite of her emphasis on body-based practices, Weil assumes that the “body is separate from, and inferior to, spirit and ideas” (Pirruccello, 2002, p. 497).

I believe Weil’s attempts to place her own body in a spiritualized position was ultimately, at least in practice, thwarted by entrenched Western attitudes of the abnegation of the flesh. Yet Weil gives us a paradigm for a somatic practice, which enables body and spirit to intermingle. Her notion was that bodily practices, disciplines, and a certain kind of attention were necessary to provide tranquility and receptivity. How might these ideas be applied to Luce Irigaray’s notions of cultivation?

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124 This notion of intentional practice and body movement is met in the practice of yoga, but there is no evidence that Weil was a yoga practitioner.
125 It must be pointed out, however, that one of the precepts of Buddhism is that life - specifically the uncultivated life - is suffering.
126 According to Irigaray, “suffering does not in any way constitute a perfection, it is merely a means of restoration... Suffering, if it lasts more than a redemptive moment, is simply a denial of the divine” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 66). She links suffering to an androcentric ideal, inappropriate to women.
127 Hildegard of Bingen likewise demonstrated an oscillation “between a joyful affirmation of the world and the body, and a melancholy horror of the flesh” (Newman, 1987, p. 21).
128 “Nothing acts more immediately on the soul than the body” (Clément, 1994, p. 29), says Clément, articulating the influence of the body.
Transfigured flesh

First, let us consider why cultivation is so important to Luce Irigaray. For her, sexuate difference is the difference between men and women and constitutes the most fundamental difference, which extends to the way that sexual difference is evident in bodily, social, spiritual, linguistic, aesthetic, erotic, and political forms. Her emphasis is on ethical relations between men and women, based on sexuate difference. Fundamental to this view is her notion of the sensible/transcendental. How does the ‘sensible’ aspect, via the lived female body, better evade the phallogocentrism of language, and the male specular emphasis embedded in the patriarchy? How does this inform the argument?

Luce Irigaray proposes the cultivation of the body as spiritual practice. For her, this practice relies more on Eastern traditions than the West, although I will later give examples of some Western traditions, for instance Jewish Hassidic ecstatic prayer - where the body is cultivated in a similar manner. Let me begin with an exploration of Luce Irigaray's idea of the cultivation of the body as a contrast to the idea of leaving the body through repression and sublimation.

Luce Irigaray prefers to focus on growth, on cultivating the possibilities of what women might become (Irigaray, 2003, p. vii) rather than to accept identities already discovered in history, psychology and sociology. It is with this purpose that she directs us towards eastern philosophy and practice, towards a “spiritualization of the body and the senses” (Irigaray, 2003, p. ix). In taking up a

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129 See The Way of Love (Irigaray, 2004c); Sharing the World (Irigaray, 2008b); “Ethical Gestures towards the Other” (Irigaray, 2010a).

130 For all the benefits of the framework of Eastern mind-body cultivation, and the inherent lack of gender bias in this process itself, the social reality is that it has been historically difficult for women to pursue a traditional Eastern path of training. In the East, as much as in the West, women have had to insist upon their inclusion, with much resistance from the patriarchal powers.

131 One way in which the body is derogated, is through the notion of sublimation. Freud defines sublimation as the turning of sexual and aggressive impulses toward ‘higher’ and more socially useful goals, and we can see the influence of Plato in this thinking. I follow Norman O. Brown, however, who argues that sublimation is a bogus category, and that it is not a substitute for repression but a continuation of it (Brown, 1959, p. 307). The idea of sublimation — moving from something ‘lower’ to something ‘higher’ - involves shunning the potentialities of the body, and privileging the ‘higher’, thus reiterating a hierarchy between mind and body, and even more problematic for my argument, an orientation beyond the body and embodiment.
developmental perspective, she departs from classical psychoanalysis, which looks backwards into our past, and instead has more in common with Jung's emphasis on future possibility.\(^\text{132}\)

Luce Irigaray's notion of cultivation is multifaceted; namely cultivation of sensory perception and the body; of breath; of relatedness; of virginity and self-affection; of one’s self as woman; and ultimately ‘becoming divine’. The aspects of cultivation that is most important here is cultivation in and of the body. Irigaray, in proposing the sensible/transcendental, returns us to our senses as a matter of priority. Before proceeding with the ‘sensible’ aspect, I focus on the ‘transcendental’ aspect. This is an integral part of my own term, *embodied transcendence*, which I introduced briefly in the Introduction.

My term, *embodied transcendence* is intentionally ambiguous, and encapsulates a number of ideas appropriate to, or appropriated by, women’s spirituality. It seeks to counterbalance “one of the problems of modern theologies of experience that all the eggs of the theological basket are in a transcendental ground of human experience” (Briggs, 1997, p. 176), where the embodied aspect is overlooked or undervalued. Here is an overview of ideas on transcendence and embodiment which support my use of the term: First, that “God cannot be seen apart from matter, and He is seen more perfectly in the human *materia* than in any other, and more perfectly in woman than in man” Ibn Arabi (Quoted by Schimmel, 2011, p. 431). This opinion accords with my own emphasis, that in arguing for the material body, I simultaneously argue for the spiritual. I do not privilege female embodiment over male embodiment, but rather argue for the divinity of human materiality, or embodied transcendence. This gives us grounds to imagine that humanity is not subject to transcendence, but rather a subject of transcendence, or belonging to transcendence in their materiality.

\(^{132}\) Jung, for instance, in discussing dreams says: “Unconscious thinking would be quite inadequately characterized if we consider it only from the standpoint of its historical determinants. For a complete evaluation we have unquestionably to consider its teleological or prospective significance as well” (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume four, §452). While Jung is not proposing an aim in advance, he clearly advocates a forward-looking perspective, informed by the unconscious.
Feminist philosophers of religion, such as Nancy Frankenbury, take a similar view; “contemporary women’s articulation of a relation between God and the world depicts the divine as continuous with the world rather than as radically transcendent ontologically or metaphysically. Divine transcendence is seen to consist in total immanence” (Frankenbury, 2004, p. 11). Thus the immanence of embodiment is simultaneously transcendent. It follows that divine ‘transcendence’ does not take us away from our embodiment, but rather situates us within it. As Patrice Haynes argues, “material immanence is thus the revelation of divine mind in the realm of finitude: time, limit, and history. This means that the material world is shot through with divine transcendence” (Haynes, 2009, p. 71). This brings to mind the terms “resurrection of the body” used by Norman O Brown, (Brown, 1959, p. 307), and “the resurrection of the flesh” (Adorno, 1973, p. 207), the intention in both cases being to advance the focus on the body rather than focus on absolute transcendent spirit. The notion of embodied transcendence also subverts the past tradition of associating women with body and immanence, in opposition to transcendence.

‘Transcendence’ (going beyond the present and that which is known) and ‘transcendent’ (a regulating principal) are often conflated in modern usage, “and have come to stand for the principals of thought or symbols of authority that organize the way we think about and experience the present as well as the way we project ourselves into the future” (Howie & Jobling, 2009, p. 2). Luce Irigaray and others create a further complexity by introducing both ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’ transcendence. It is problematic that the very term ‘transcendence’ enters into the binary immanence/transcendence of patriarchal Christianity, and is held to be an attribute of ‘God’, rather than an aspect of experience. Mike King argues that women’s spirituality needs a “broader language of the spiritual than monotheism can provide” (King, 2009, p. 153), and for this reason I find this trope limiting. Regarding transcendence, Luce Irigaray says:
the gods are far away - in us. It is not by searching for them far outside that we will discover them. To be sure, we will perhaps discover in foreign lands traces of gods that we are lacking. But without a journey in ourselves, to celebrate with them will not be possible... It is in the intimate of ourselves that a dwelling place must be safeguarded for them, a dwelling place where we unite in us earth and sky, divinities and mortals (Irigaray, 2004c, p. 51).133

Here she also emphasizes the centrality of interiority in spiritual life. This is echoed in Karl Jaspers, who says, “The transcendence before which I stand is the measure of my own depth” (Jaspers, 1969, p. 45), particularly if we hold that ‘interiority’ and ‘depth’ are conceptualizing the same thing. Jaspers notion certainly bridges the human/divine split, as does my term, embodied transcendence.

Having thus established the foundation for my use of transcendence, I now detail Luce Irigaray’s understanding of the sensible, and also note other thinkers who have examined some of the possibilities around her viewpoint. It is through the body that we perceive sensual awareness, through vision, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting, as well as other more subtle sensory perceptions.134 As a means of returning to one’s senses, Irigaray advocates the practice of yoga, which “has brought me back to the innocence of my natural perceptions” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 15). She relies on yoga sutras to teach “that cultivating sensible perceptions can be a path to reach concentration, contemplation, and even Samadhi”. When she claims the same sutras teach that “listening to the song of birds can represent a help for the one who is in search of one’s spiritual becoming” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 15), she indicates that she values a heightened use of the senses, cultivated towards a spiritual aim. For Irigaray, the cultivation...

133 Irigaray is here employing an explicitly Heideggerian stance, namely the concept of fourfold and dwelling place, as developed in his later writings; “the caring-for (of dwelling) is fourfold” and involves earth, sky, gods and mortals (quoted in J. Young, 2002, p. 100).

134 Coming to our Senses is the title of a 1998 book by Morris Berman, which advocates a return to the sensate self (Berman, 1988). Prior to this, Merleau-Ponty introduced the idea of the return to the senses in The Visible and the Invisible, (Merleau-Ponty, 1968b), and the Phenomenology of Perception (Merleau-Ponty, 1968a). Merleau-Ponty shifted the prime focus of subjectivity from the human intellect to what he called the “body-subject” or “the flesh” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968a, p. 267). His ideas overcome the Descartian mind-body split.
of sensible perceptions assists “reaching autonomy, for spiritual becoming and better relations with the other(s)” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 16) and being ‘touched by grace’ (Irigaray, 2010b). Thus we have established that there are practices that involve the body and sense perception, which can assist in the development of women's consciousnesses as women, in both sensible and transcendental ways.

Irigaray extends her ideas on sensory perception to include the bodily perception of the other, and the relation between. She emphasizes that one essential if we are to achieve a universal ethic is respect for the perceptions of every man and woman as conditions of physical and spiritual life. *If we lose the use of our senses, we die* … Without the senses, thought is impossible, it becomes pure automatism, heedless of liberty or of intention (Irigaray, 1993b, pp. 145, my emphasis).135

Thus, for Irigaray our senses mediate our humanity; they “stand at the juncture between the individual and the social, the private and the public” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 145).

Is there a conflict here, between Irigaray’s reliance on phenomenology through the sense, and her aims of cultivation? Cultivation of ethical relations with one’s self, and the other, are for her, not achieved “through this only phenomenal dimension” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 16). She argues that the phenomenological, is, by itself, not enough, and requires the addition of an ethical dimension. I have further concerns that Western phenomenology runs the risk of detailing a morphology of the untransformed or uncultivated self. If we were to ask, for instance, “what is a woman?” from the perspective of the ‘transformed’ self,136 the answer would be different from that of the “ego-consciousness which functions actively toward the world” (Yuasa, 1987, pp. 63-64), that which is oriented to the patriarchal/symbolic. I argue that the cultivated self achieves, or is intrinsically oriented to, a radically different perspective than the uncultivated self; this will

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135 Heidegger’s friend Medard Boss asked him why he ignored the phenomenology of the body, and he answered, “because this is the most difficult thing” (Craig, 1988; quoted by Hunt, 2003, p. 206).
136 As proposed by Jean Byrne (Byrne, 2004).
become clearer as we proceed, in this and later chapters. De Beauvoir’s critique of women and the position in which they find themselves is a critique of the culture, rather than of the cultivated self, argued for by Irigaray, which is not tethered to social norms.

For Luce Irigaray the goal of cultivation is women’s liberation from the very things that de Beauvoir critiqued; through prolonged, assiduous cultivation one conditions oneself to achieve spiritual freedom and aesthetic creativity. Likewise, representing an Eastern tradition, Yuaso Yuasa demonstrates exceptional personal development or cultivation by exemplary individuals in the achieving of body-mind confluence, resulting in liberation (Yuasa, 1987, p. 2). Another way of framing this is to say that one’s psychology needs to be sufficiently mature to enable non-dual thinking. “Cultivation is a practice that attempts, so to speak, to achieve true knowledge by means of one’s total mind and body” (Yuasa, 1987, pp. 25-26). The relationship between the body and mind changes through the process of cultivation, which is reflected in the lived experience of the cultivators themselves.

Emphasis on the body and touch is important, because it evades logos, and includes the carnal self (Irigaray, 2001, p. 94). It grounds my term, embodied transcendence, and provides the basis for Luce Irigaray’s sensible/transcendental. Yuasa too, stays with the primacy of the body because the “essence of the self as human subject disappears in the rarefied atmosphere of a logic that disregards the body” (Yuasa, 1987, p. 59). The presence of the body is required because it allows for the presence of the carnal feminine subject, and also for cultivation of that carnal feminine subject.

Irigaray’s argument for cultivation of sensory perception ultimately incorporates

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137 This liberation is “psychophysically attained” (Yuasa, 1987, pp. 9-10), according to Yuasa, emphasizing the mind-body experience.
138 “The traditions of logos …run the risk of repressing our bodily and sexuate existence, and our sensible or carnal relationships” (Irigaray, 2004b, p. 99).
“becoming divine” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 68). Some spiritual traditions are very body-focussed, and work on cultivating the body toward divinization.\textsuperscript{139} This dwelling in and use of the senses, is supportive of the feminine project towards becoming divine.\textsuperscript{140} However, I agree with Luce Irigaray that in Western culture the “body is not educated to develop its sensible perceptions with a spiritual aim in mind, but to detach itself from the sensible dimension, to overcome it for a more abstract, more speculative, more sociological culture” (Irigaray, 2010a, pp. 15, emphasis mine).\textsuperscript{141} To counter this cultural tendency, Luce Irigaray commends the “practice of respiration, of diverse kinds of breathing” because it “grants more attention to the education of the body, of the senses” (Irigaray, 2003, p. 7), with a spiritual aim in mind. As she says, spiritual progress “is therefore not separated off from the body nor from desire” (Irigaray, 2003, p. 9).\textsuperscript{142} I will attend to the cultivation of the breath later in this chapter.

The Japanese philosopher Kukai (774-835), emphasizes that cultivation is toward the goal of ‘becoming a buddha \textit{in this very body}…the ‘body your parents gave you’, that is, ‘in the flesh’”(Yuasa, 1987, pp. 148-149, my emphasis).\textsuperscript{143} He also claims that a particular attitude is required - that of wonder.\textsuperscript{144} A sense of

\textsuperscript{139} Fabrice Dubosc makes an important point when he compares Islamic and Christian traditions in relation to the body. He observes that “in Islam …theophanic manifestations, revelations of the divine nature … express a radical \textit{divine awakening in the reality of bodily experience}” (Dubosc, 2000, pp. 79, emphasis mine). He compares this with the central theme in Christianity, where the dimensions of the body are heroically transcended, and that this begins with “the control and denial of the senses” (Dubosc, 2000, p. 83).

\textsuperscript{140} Through the bodily senses and direct engagement with nature the senses can be so heightened as to "blaze." There is no ascent in this "ecstasy"; all of life is sacred, not just "heaven" (Berman, 1988, p. 311).

\textsuperscript{141} For Jacob Needleman, the real Christianity that got lost in the first century AD was “the experience of yourself, \textit{not} the experience of God” (Needleman, 1980, p. 310), and that this experience of self requires one’s bodily, sensate self.

\textsuperscript{142} Hood and Hall, in their study of mystical and erotic experience note that there is a difference between the experiences of highly developed ‘self actualized’ people, and those who are not. For the developed people, the connection between bodily senses and spiritual/mystical experience is clear - “erotic experiences were common triggers of mystical experience for highly self-actualized persons” (Hood & Hall, 1980, p. 197). Thus cultivation and development result in a more highly awakened sense of both erotic response and spiritual experience.

\textsuperscript{143} Kukai’s philosophy may be termed “\textit{metapsychics}, which has a theory of the body as its pivotal point” (Yuasa, 1987, p. 156).

\textsuperscript{144} I use ‘wonder’ in the sense of astonishment, admiration and rapt attention. Merriam-Webster dictionary on-line.
wonder is necessary in order to exceed the limits of our imagination, and wonderment turns the mind to the “generosity of the bodhisattva” (Quoting Kukai in Yuasa, 1987, p. 152), to a further developed spiritual sense. I can argue then, that wonder leads to the divine, to “becoming divine”, a divine that is experienced, which is my theme in chapter four.¹⁴⁵

To summarize my argument to this point: the body, and the sense-perceptions of the everyday self, are tied to conventions, and thus the Symbolic, the very orientation where women are denied subjectivity. I argue that Beauvoir’s critique was of the everyday self, which is tied to the conventions, to social construction. Cultivation, therefore, is required for a woman’s subjectivity, to become intimately aligned with her freedom, her liberation. She begins with the every-day, which is framed in the social norms, and then, through the senses and through inquiry and practices of cultivation, develops an individual and conscious cooperation between the senses and the transcendent, towards a sensible/transcendental. Ethical relations toward self and other are part of the spiritualization of the senses, which I develop fully in my exposition of the tale of “The Handless Maiden” in chapters five and six.

To accept cultivation, therefore, is to choose a way of life not oriented to social norms. This is the same aim as Jung’s idea of individuation, because he likewise advocates an orientation toward an individual development, rather than

¹⁴⁵ Many philosophers prioritize wonder, for instance Descartes, who said that “it appears to me that wonder is the first of all the passions” of the soul (Descartes, 1955, p. 358). Caroline Bynum Walker Bynum, concludes her paper on Wonder with the statement claim that “every view of things that is not wonderful, [full of wonder] is false”(Bynum, 1997, p. 26). (Walker Bynum, 1997, p. 26). For Luce Irigaray wonder is “indispensable not only to life but also or still to the creation of an ethics” (Irigaray, 1993a, p. 74). It is, or allows for “the advent of the other”, as she frames it (Irigaray, 1993a, p. 75) She situates wonder as a necessity or precursor to the sensible/transcendental when she says wonder is “still in the world of the senses (‘sensible’), still physical and carnal, and already spiritual. It is the place of incidence and junction of body and spirit” (Irigaray, 1993a, p. 82). We must cultivate wonder - it is a process which is accumulative, and is a cultivation which never ceases (Irigaray, 2010b). Marguerite la Caze maintains that “people should regard each other as ‘irreversible,’ or not mirrors of each other” (La Caze, 2008, p. 119), in order to cultivate wonder. Arguably the last word on wonder is provided by Rudolph Otto, who describes the encounter with the numinous as “sheer absolute wondrousness that transcends thought” (Otto, 2004, p. 81).
adherence to social norms. As long as we are in the everyday mode, it is “natural” that “we dominate the body through the spirit” (Yuasa, 1987, p. 119) and therefore enquire into existence in this way. I argue that the (Western) idea that the mind ought to dominate the body is based upon the fact that the mind does dominate the body under ‘normal’ circumstances, when one is oriented to the conventions.

*My Flesh Shouts with Joy:*

“My heart and my flesh shout with joy” (Rav Kook Orot #61, in Orot, p 208, quoted by Michaelson, 2007).

Can Luce Irigaray’s notion of the sensible/transcendental be intentionally cultivated in the sense outlined above? I argued in the introduction for the cultivating of the body as spiritual practice, notably through the breath, which enables me to reinstat (and restate) the divinity of carnality, and this supports my reliance on Luce Irigaray’s sensible/transcendental.

Let us look at an example of a Western religious tradition in which the body is celebrated in the form of prayer as embodied practice. In Hassidic prayer, it is said that ‘the flesh shouts with joy’. Jay Michaelson proposes prayer as an embodied practice, which

> is hidden in open view ... its liturgy uses the body as a focus, and, when done in an ecstatic way, its manifestation is a highly energetic, embodied experience. It’s not yoga in the narrow sense of a systematic series of precise movements. But ecstatic prayer is yoga in the wider sense: an embodied spiritual practice (p. 21).

He argues that “the body affects the mind” (ibid, p. 22) through the body-position taken in prayer. He contrasts this with a purely intellectual point of view, where prayer is considered in a disembodied way, in which case body-position would make no difference. Michaelson advocates that one become a “connoisseur of the minute fluctuations of your body. Davening [he is referring to a particular healing prayer of Moses] is not reciting, not reading, and not worshipping. It involves the yearnings of the heart, the words of the text, the realization of spirit,
and the movements of the body” (ibid, pp. 22-23, my emphasis). Here we see the flesh, the actual body and bodily organs and structure, the carnal being, as an integral part of prayer, which includes ‘the realization of spirit’.

Michaelson speaks of the bowing rhythmic prayer, the *shuckling*, as a demonstration of ecstatic activity, not as ecstasis - out of the body, but as enstasis - in the body and as the body (ibid., p. 26). Irigaray’s concern is that ecstasy is an escape from the body, but here the flowing, sensual, dancing movements of Hassidic ecstatic prayer is experienced in the feminine mode of the circle. This body-practice of prayer, which dates back at least two thousand years, is close to that of the *jouissance* of (female) Christian medieval mystics, who we will meet in chapter four. In the meanwhile, I can argue that there are forms of spiritual experience and practice, which could be designated as feminine, whether practiced or experienced by men or women, which constitute embodied spirituality. I will continue to address the apparent contradiction of ‘feminine’ modes being available to and expressed by men, as I proceed, and will propose a resolution both later in this chapter, and in future chapters.

My argument thus far has been a preparation for a discussion of the cultivation of the breath. I have been relying on the notion of ‘learning with the body’, which is developed by Bourdieu; although this approach is implicit in much of my previous discussion, I will make it explicit here. There are two opposed aspects of ‘learning with the body’; the first is an unconscious learning, which, Bourdieu claims, is “not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 73). He discusses habits and

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146 In positing the circle, and especially a circular dance, as evoking the feminine, I recall Luce Irigaray and her observations that the little girl creates a circle around herself, by spinning, whirling and dancing. I relate this circular, rhythmic dance to the semiotic. “A sort of ‘dancing body’ (from the Greek *khoreia*, meaning ‘dance’), the semiotic chora is in perpetual motion. … Just as dance allows the dancer to explore an infinite chain of body movements, the semiotic chora is an infinite potential for creating signifying movements” (Prud’homme & Légaré, 2006). In this way, movements of the body evoke a semiotic space, the means by which renewal is discovered which is not already founded in language. As such, these experiences of a semiotic space would be available to both men and women.
patterns that have been established since childhood, that have been acquired more or less unconsciously and which tie us to our culture. I will argue that by cultivating the breath, (among other methods) one can overcome patterns that have already been learned, unconsciously, by the body. The second mode of learning with the body is familiar with practitioners of conscious cultivation practices, including breathing techniques, where the body learns in a way that bypasses, or precedes the mind, which I have already touched upon in my discussion of the semiotic. So we see that there are at least two different accounts of “learning with the body”: the first is unconscious and automatic, and reflects the everyday cultural norms and is without conscious choice; the second is via conscious choice and assiduous cultivation. An especially important conscious cultivation for Irigaray is that of the breath; here, she is able to incorporate the unconscious and automatic (the natural breath, which sustains physical life) into the cultivated breath, which sustains spiritual life. P.S. Anderson takes up what I agree is a timely emphasis “to focus on the roles of incarnation and intersubjectivity” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 185), specifically through body practices. I believe the emphasis on the spiritualization of the breath, as advocated by Luce Irigaray and outlined by me here, fills these requirements for both men and women, and the in-between.

**Cultivating the Breath**

As I have already acknowledged, Luce Irigaray advocates many aspects of what she terms “cultivation”. For her, cultivation is not collective, but an individual pursuit. The cultivating of human perception enables the body to be educated to develop its sensory perceptions with a spiritual aspect in mind. Cultivation of one’s own breathing is an opening into spiritual life. For Irigaray, the breath corresponds to the first autonomous action of life, taking charge of one’s life, cutting the umbilical cord, so we live well, rather than creating another placenta through which one breathes through the group, the collective, the Symbolic (Irigaray, 2010b). Taking charge of one’s breath undoes the “umbilical attachment”, or unconscious conditioning. For Luce Irigaray, the cultivation of the breath is the cultivation of the soul. The forgetting of breath leads to
separation of body and soul; conversely, cultivation of the breath leads to integration of body and soul (Irigaray, 2010b). Thus breathing becomes the interface between the corporeal and the spiritual, namely the sensible/transcendental. Luce Irigaray summarizes my approach:

The divine appropriate to women, the feminine divine, is first of all related to the breath. To cultivate the divine in herself, the woman … has to attend to her own breathing, her own breath, more even than to love … Why want to eat the forbidden fruit to gain knowledge, instead of cultivating one’s own breath? Breathing itself invites to an awakening, and the divine knowledge is in me (Irigaray, 2004b, p. 165).

The close association between ‘feminine divine’ and ‘divine feminine’ is demonstrated here by Irigaray, as she articulates - in the same breath so to speak - a “divine appropriate to women, the feminine divine”, as well as directing a woman to “cultivate the divine in herself”, that is the ‘divine feminine’. My own emphasis is that these two processes are indeed inextricably related.

Although Irigaray does not state the antecedents to her emphasis on the breath, the idea of spiritualizing the breath, or the Sacred Breath is found in several traditions. Within the Christian tradition, Neil Douglas-Klotz reads the sayings of Jesus through the original Aramaic and discovers the centrality of the breath (Douglas-Klotz, 1990, 1999). He traces meditation, breathing practices and “body prayers” to traditions established in the Middle East, which link body, breath and spirit (Douglas-Klotz, 1999, p. 8). In one practice, “Breathing with the First Beginning”, the breath is focused on returning the meditator to the beginning of existence and to all

147 Cixous’ notion of voice is a “as a pre-symbolic fusion of body and breath” (Walker, 1998, p. 138), in the semiotic. Luce Irigaray’s cultivation of the breath can be read, then, as a rediscovering of one’s individual (semiotic) voice, and a confirmation of body as site and necessity of subjectivity.

148 A further example is St Teresa of Avila, in The Interior Castle, “This magnificent refuge is inside you. Enter. Shatter the darkness that shrouds the doorway. Be bold. Be humble. Put away the incense and forget the incarnations they taught you. Ask no permission from the authorities. Close your eyes and follow your breath to the still place that leads to the invisible path that leads you home”(quoted on St Teresa of Avila, my emphasis).

149 Incidentally, these Middle Eastern practices link the Jewish, Muslim and Christian traditions.
created beings, where one is “one creature among many, not the dominant force... feeling community with every other being” (ibid., pp. 38-39). This is not the narcissistic self-absorption claimed by P. S. Anderson. Following Douglas-Klotz’s reading, when one meditates upon the breath in this way, it is with the understanding that “Holy Spirit” equals “Holy Breath”. Here “the separations between spirit and body, between humanity and nature... begin to fall away” (ibid, p. 42). In this way, awareness of the breath, or the sacred breath, connects us with the element of air, which supports all life. It connects us irrevocably with others. Indeed, “to breathe with an exclusive focus on one’s small self – the individual ‘I’ disconnected from the sacred “I”...is the definition of egotism” (ibid., p. 45). Douglas-Klotz goes so far as to claim that egocentric breath is the ‘unforgivable sin’, and the ‘sin against the Holy Spirit’ (ibid.). This sin occurs when we “fail to breathe with a sense of connection to other people and our surroundings” (ibid., p. 46). Douglas-Klotz calls upon “one of the earliest Jewish mystical practices where practitioners try to re-experience the descent of spirit and breath into form”, which is what I pose as the transfigured body.

Douglas-Klotz provides several “body prayers”, the aim of which is to “celebrate the connection of your breath to all that breathes, and to the Sacred Breath itself” (ibid., p. 53). It is therefore an interpenetration, or “continuum that connects the ‘heavenly’ or vibrational aspect of being with the ‘earthly’ or particular aspect” (ibid., p. 116). This spiritualization of the breath is, I believe, why Luce Irigaray develops the breath as a direct and achievable application of the sensible/transcendental. While the criticism could be made that this does nothing to release women from oppression, historically these techniques were, in fact, used in order to transform the effects of discrimination, inequality and class distinction, by connecting with the inner life rather than outer conditions (ibid., p. 52). From a
psychological point of view, this orientation to the inner life undoes the oppression, at least from the perspective of the oppressed. When one side of a dynamic is changed, this will to some extent effect change in the other. This of course does not absolve us from striving to change all instances of oppression and injustice in outer life, but that is not the topic of this thesis.

P.S. Anderson is critical of Luce Irigaray’s emphasis on the breath as a means towards self-affection, autonomy and the sensible/transcendental. She says that Irigaray’s account of breathing, “excludes all questions of social and historical relations making up the real oppression of a woman’s situation. …How many women would agree that a woman’s bodily subordination to men and to a masculine divine can be completely sorted out by learning to breathe differently?” (P. S. Anderson, 2009, p. 41). My perspective is that social constructions and conventions must be challenged in order to maintain and create freedom, by both men and women, as a constant vigilance. Anderson too easily dismisses, however, the importance of a woman centring her locus of action in herself, rather than attributing it to an outside agency. In the defining and achieving of sexuate difference, a woman’s position is in relation to herself, initially, rather than to another. Anderson determines self-affection as ‘narcissistic’, which runs the risk of isolation, whereas Irigaray establishes virginity, self-affection, the breath and silence as modes that extricate a woman’s energy and orientation from the masculine/symbolic as well as masculine subordination.

The breath negotiates the relation between the ego and the Self, in Jungian terms, and this is a subject worthy of further inquiry, which would develop Luce Irigaray’s emphasis. This has been taken up by Judith Harris, in Jung and Yoga: The Psyche-Body Connection (Harris, 2001), and her discussion on the Kundalini is especially relevant to Irigaray’s work. Jung is sceptical of the benefits of yogic practice for Westerners however, and cautions against it, because he associates it with an emphasis on transcendence at the expense of body awareness. He
says, “the great mistake which Western people make is imitating the Eastern yoga practices, for they serve a need which is not ours; it is the worst mistake to go higher and higher. What we should do is to establish a *connection* between above and below” (C. G. Jung, 1997, p. 598). He maintains that, “if I remain so critically averse to yoga, it does not mean that I do not regard this spiritual achievement of the East as one of the greatest things the human mind has ever created. ...My criticism is directed solely against the application of yoga to the peoples of the West” (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 11, §876). Jung believed that “the split in the Western mind ... makes it impossible at the outset for the intentions of yoga to be realized in any adequate way” (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 11, §867). Thus he makes it clear that it is not the practice of yoga itself which he sees as a problem, but the application of an Eastern approach to the Western psyche. His further reservations refer to the proclivity of Western man “to turn everything into a technique” (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 11, §871). His fears that yoga *suppresses* the activity of the ‘dark’ psyche or the unconscious, are countered by the work of Yuasa, who espouses the view-that ‘dark’ consciousness is primary. It is not only Jung who cautions against the possible negative effects of yoga practice, as “the dangers of such a path [Kundalini yoga] are enumerated throughout yogic texts. A relation to the body must be maintained at all times. Missing the link with the physical level is both uncomfortable and potentially dangerous” (Harris, 2001, p. 116). Irigaray, too, cautions against reaching “too quickly to the highest summit” (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 364), through the awakening of body energies.

How might we understand a relationship between breath and the “highest summit”? Integral to Irigaray’s approach to feminine *becoming* is her discussion on air, and the breath, *pneuma*.¹⁵⁰ *Pneumatikos* is a suitably ambiguous word of Greek origin, containing as it does the element of air, the human inspiration of air

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¹⁵⁰ Irigaray’s discussion on air is predominant in her interrogation of the elements (Irigaray, 1999). Her other elemental discussions are: water (Irigaray, 1991a) and earth (Irigaray, 1992). In all cases she is the interlocutrix of the unconscious, or dismissed aspects of the element, which philosophy has overlooked, beginning with the Greeks, specifically Plato.
as in breathing, and to be filled with holy air, the divine spirit.\(^{151}\) There is also an historic connection. The Gnostics of the first and second centuries divided people into three classes, which represented different modes of being.\(^{152}\) One of these classes was the *pneumatic*, which were thought to be the bridge between the temporal and the eternal, between body and spirit. The *pneumatic* class were not religious in the sense that we would refer to a clergy, but were individuals who were intrinsically led to a particular way of being.\(^{153}\) They were the gateway between carnality and spirituality, in Irigaray’s terms, the *sensible/transcendental*. Thus, in this way, we can see the breath as the gateway between the carnal and the spiritual, integral to both.

Irigaray has further use for cultivating the breath, which she attributes to the becoming of women. For her, breathing can engender virginity - her view is that women “become virgins” as part of cultivating their lives - where women are capable of “autonomous and free breathing, a breathing …which always includes a spiritual dimension” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 96). She says this free breathing “is equivalent to taking charge of our life… in order to respect and cultivate life for ourselves and for others” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 4). Here we see the uniqueness of Irigaray’s vision, which simultaneously allows for love-of-self and being with the other. Autonomous ‘breathing’ enables both the becoming of women in their own sexuate identity, as well as cultivating respect for, and awareness of, the true

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\(^{151}\) There is also the Hebrew precedent, *nephesh*. It is noteworthy that the breath of life – *neshamah* – in breathed into man, and as a result he *becomes* a living soul, that spiritual life is not a given, but a *becoming*. Some of the Jewish references to this are: “The world was created with breath-the breath of God. Divine breath is the sustainer of life. If breath is lacking, life is lacking. *Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Likutei Moharen* 1, 8:1. Our sages said, let every soul (*neshamah*) praise God (Psalm 150)-this means praise Him with every breath (*neshamah*). Or *HaGanuz HaTzaddikim*, p 45 Translated by Buxbaum in *Jewish Spiritual Practice* p 109. Kol *haneshama t’hallel yah*-every breath praises God; it’s not necessary to force it or make it special (all quoted by Michaelson, 2007, p. 38).

\(^{152}\) (Singer, 1990)

\(^{153}\) The three classes for Gnostics, as discussed by June Singer, were: the *hylic* class, derived from the Greek word *hyle*, meaning matter, fleshy, or earthly. The second was called *psychic*, and referred to the soul or mind. The third state or class was the *pneumatic*. The people in this last category were considered to be the bridge between the temporal and the eternal (Singer, 1990).
otherness of the other.\textsuperscript{154} For Luce Irigaray, to be virginal would be “to keep the \textit{chakra} of breathing free and alive, to keep a part of breath available for a relation of interiority with the self and for a language of communication and exchange” (Irigaray, 2004b, p. 162). This breathing is not just the means of survival, but “can become the medium of love and grace [when] the flesh is transformed into the place of a divine incarnation of love” (Irigaray, 2004a, p. 48). We are left in no doubt that for Irigaray breathing is a form of cultivation which enables the senses/body to be infused or suffused with divine mysteries embedded in the flesh, for \textit{embodied transcendence}. I argue that the cultivation of the breath towards a spiritual aim can be just as true for men as it is for women, but Luce Irigaray focuses upon it as a specifically feminine task. This does not weaken my endorsement of sexuate difference, because, as Irigaray emphasizes, each person, both the male and female sexuate other, engages in “this cultivation of the senses and consciousness” (Joy, 2009, p. 111). Later I will demonstrate how this cultivation is also available to men, and how Irigaray relies on the cultivation of \textit{each} person, in order to create a bridge between two.

Irigaray goes further, and more controversially, to claim that woman, in contradistinction with man, “rests in greater harmony with the cosmos, and this allows her to more easily inhale or exhale that which nourishes the vital breath: air” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 5). So women, according to Irigaray, intrinsically have access to, and an innate understanding of, the quality of air, \textit{pneumatikos}, because she “rests in greater harmony with the cosmos”. Even more radically, Irigaray claims that woman can

\begin{center}
lead the breath of the man, as her own, from natural vitality to a more subtle breathing at the service of the heart, of listening and speaking, of thinking. Thus love, including carnal love, can be a spiritual path for humanity, the flesh becoming soul and spirit thanks to the body itself,
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{154} I understand Luce Irigaray to be speaking metaphorically in relation to autonomous breathing, but also to be observing a profound change in psychological position, where women gain their own libidinal flow, rather than receiving it via a man, or the symbolic. However, this autonomy is relational, rather than narcissistic, that is, it is ‘between’ independently autonomous individuals, beginning with men and women - whether in fact or in principle - and extending to, or including, \textit{all} relations.
as body respected and loved in its difference(s), especially at the level of breathing (Irigaray, 2010a, pp. 5, my emphasis).

Irigaray is stating that woman is more ‘naturally’ inclined to situate herself in the sensible/transcendental, and, through cultivating her breathing, can lead the way for men. This is a radical reversal of the situation where the spiritual/man and carnal/woman are situated in the patriarchy. However, it poses some risk to suggest that either man or woman would lead the other, because of the hierarchical and dichotomous undertones. Moving from the patriarchal situation where man is presumed to have primary, if not exclusive, access to the spiritual/transcendental, to presuming that woman might in fact lead, runs the risk of privilege in favour of woman. It would be preferable that each sexuate identity progresses in their own way as insisted by Jung and Irigaray, as I have already noted above.

I cannot agree with Irigaray’s claim that a women can – and maybe should – lead the breath of a man, and argue that a woman leads herself via the cultivation of her own breath, which would be more in accord with Irigaray’s own project for women. Does such a contentious claim on the part of Irigaray weaken her case for sexuate difference? Is she not arguing for sexuate (women’s) privilege? Irigaray appears to contravene her own insistence that it is the between, the copula, which constitutes relatedness, for a couple. And further, that each person in the couple has “the responsibility to work at each instant for our own evolution, transformation, transfiguration or transubstantiation” (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 355) rather than rely on - or lead - the other. My contention is that cultivation is a necessity required of both men and women, and that neither can claim exemption or privilege. I develop a notion of what might be ‘natural’ to women, which avoids such hierarchical suppositions, in chapter four.

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\[155\] Jung was likewise clear that, “as far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being” (C. G. Jung, 1963, p. 326), that is to move towards a spiritualization of being.
Irigaray has further proposals for the cultivating of the breath, when she intimates the possibility that ‘flesh becomes soul and spirit’ in relation with the other, through a loved and loving body, through a loved and loving breath, a bodily love based on sexuate difference. However, Irigaray claims that the full realization of this ethics of sexuate difference remains in the future, that “we have not yet reached such a coexistence with the other, or we have already forgotten it” (Irigaray, 2008b, pp. 128-129). Yet she directs us to this ethics to come. She says that we must tend to our own breathing while simultaneously attending to the needs of the other, through reserves of “pure breath? Of which the reserve - the soul?” (Irigaray, 2008b, pp. 128-129), that is, through spiritual reserves.

Irigaray continues this thought, when she clarifies that the cultivation of breathing moves from that which is completely natural to the body, (in this sense biological/carnal) the ‘vital’ breath of survival, to that which cultivates to a level which can at this point only be imagined:

Our task would be rather an assumption of our nature as it is and a progressive transformation, transubstantiation of this nature by a cultivation of breathing that, from being firstly a vital breath in the service of survival, becomes the vehicle for love, for speech, for listening, for thought (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 358).

Furthermore, this concept of breathing engenders autonomy, which frees us from a collective ‘placenta’. If we are “breathing in a conscious and free manner… we no longer form with others a sort of mass in which each individual has not yet conquered one’s personal life” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 4). In this section on the breath, we have seen a particularly clear demonstration of Luce Irigaray’s emphasis on cultivation of a vital function required for survival, so it becomes a vehicle of transformation.

**Conclusion:**

In this chapter I argued for ‘coming to our senses’, and cultivating the bodily intelligence of the female body through intentional practice. This enables me to position women outside of a binary trope in which she is seen as deficient, to a divinity of carnality, which is essential to the sensible/transcendental. By retaining
a connection to the rhythms of the natural world, and through focus on her own senses and the cultivating of them to reach concentration and contemplation, a woman can then achieve an active realization of Luce Irigaray’s sensible/transcendental, that is, in ‘becoming divine’. The cultivation of the breath, a specific cultivation that evades theorizing, is the link between the sensible and transcendental. Is it possible that language could likewise be cultivated to represent women’s subjectivity and divinity?

In the next chapter, I propose a discourse that is linked to and arises from, the body, which incarnates the possibility of vital communication through and with the body, rather than a discourse that makes the body disappear. This discourse will challenge the dominance of a phallic signifier, and one way in which I do this is to introduce the notion of erotic logos to intentionally marry two concepts, logos and eros that have previously been seen as intrinsically separate. Thus erotic logos can occupy the same paradoxical position as Irigaray’s sensible/transcendental, that is, embodied word.
Chapter Three: Language - It takes My Breath Away.

**Epigraph**

As I read do I experience a homecoming or an exile? Reading is not a cool, detached thing, but something hot, sometimes almost unbearable. Reading gets right into my body, I eat it, it enters my bones.\(^{156}\) I can’t tell right away if this is nourishing or perhaps poisonous, so I keep this uncomfortable thing inside myself long enough for my body to decide.\(^{157}\) I am woken up, as if from a long sleep; this is the kind of writing that satisfies me, when the wheels catch fire from their own motion, to adapt Coleridge’s phrase.\(^{158}\) Sometimes I just can’t read one more word, or have to skip to another writer. My thoughts are trimmed or grow overnight when I read, so I hardly recognize the landscape. The landscape of my body. In palimpsest. And deeper. Deepest. Where do I house my thoughts, these new thoughts, which gained entry? I ask again, is this a homecoming or an exile? I have a Jungian residence, dignified and well known, but I only inhabit it now on weekends and special occasions. The rest of the time I’m on the road, a gypsy, itinerant, of no fixed address - as often as not, not knowing where I will spend the night. I can’t retrace my steps, they are erased, the only movement is onward.\(^{159}\) So I walk… (Personal reflections on researching this thesis, Kaye Gersch, 2011).

**Introduction**

Is it possible for a woman to speak and write as a woman? If so, what would that mean? If the structure of language itself is phallogocentric, that is to say that language is tethered to a phallic signifier, the logos, which insists on the one and only truth, and stable meaning is anchored and guaranteed by the phallus, then isn't everyone who uses language taking up a position as 'male' within this structure? Is there such as thing as a ‘feminine voice’? Are “women’s voice” and

\(^{156}\) Terry Threadgold is referring to Barthes when she says that “to read is to make our body work (psychoanalysis has taught us that this body greatly exceeds our memory and our consciousness) at the invitation of the text’s signs, of all the languages which traverse it and form something like the shimmering depth of the sentence” (Threadgold, 1997, p. 31).

\(^{157}\) Luce Irigaray says, “we need to discover a language that is not a substitute for the experience of corps-a-corps as the paternal language seeks to be, but which accompanies that bodily experience, clothing it in words that do not erase the body but speak the body” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 91).

\(^{158}\) “The wheels take fire from the mere rapidity of their motion” (Coleridge, 1983, p. 72). He is attributing power to the words of the poets, rather than the incidents described.

\(^{159}\) Julia Kristeva, in Stabat Mater, laments the loss of a position in the Law, which is the price of jouissance thus: "I yearn for the Law…. In sensual rapture, I am distraught. Nothing reassures, for only the law sets anything down. Who calls such a suffering jouissance? It is the pleasure of the damned" (Kristeva, 1987, p. 250).
“the feminine voice”, the same thing? Could it be that poetry, or more correctly, *poïesis* carries the feminine voice? Can *poïesis* bring forth from that which is unsymbolized, a language that serves the feminine? Or is *poïesis* the feminine voice itself? Can language, via *poïesis*, carry *libido* (life energy) rather than be an exclusive vehicle for *credo/Symbolic*? When Lacan says, “the function of language is not to inform but to evoke” (Lacan, 1977, p. 86), can we speculate that *poïesis* carries this evocative aspect of language?

In this chapter, I will attempt to answer these questions. My purpose is to break open phallogocentric discourse to explore the possibility of a feminine discourse. Through this radical rupture might women find a free dwelling rather than the prison spoken of by Simone Weil? I argue for a language in which women can recover themselves, a place of liberation. This language is not ‘disembodying’ but ‘incarnating’; it does not disregard or ignore the body, but rather imbues it with spirituality, thus evoking an *embodied transcendence*.

I propose *erotic logos* as a language for women, which provides a *coniunctio* between *eros* and *logos*. I follow Irigaray, who “believes that, in academia, abstract *logos* rules”, and my proposition challenges the authority of this *logos*. A single *logos* “deprives writing of its life-blood and breath, which, for Irigaray, are representative of the visceral, emotional and imaginative dimensions of existence that she wishes to incorporate in her work” (Joy, 2006, p. 2). I argue that a marriage between *eros* and *logos* will enable visceral, emotional and imaginative dimensions in writing and speaking. I believe *erotic logos* answers the lack voiced by Drucilla Cornell, when she lamented something is missing in both the limited formal equality for women found in the United States and in the social equality provided women in the socialist states… What has been missing is the protection of each person’s imaginary domain, that psychic and moral space in which we, as sexed creatures who care deeply about matters of the heart, are allowed to evaluate and represent who we are (Cornell, 1998, p. x).

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160 “At the very best, a mind enclosed in language is in prison” (Weil, 2000, p. 89).
The imaginary, moral domain that includes matters of the heart is framed by *erotic logos*.

I take Sheherazade, in *The Thousand and One Nights*, as a mistress of *erotic logos*. This language - born from a deep encounter between *eros* and *logos* - is a child carrying the genes of both parents. I argue that such a position carries the same valence as Luce Irigaray’s *sensible/transcendental*, because it encompasses the body and the word, the sensible and the transcendent.

Throughout this chapter, I use the phrases ‘language in the feminine’, or feminine language, to discuss a style of language which *could* be used by men or woman, referring for instance to poetry, and to the idea of a feminine principle which I discussed in chapter one. ‘Women’s language’ I use to denote language by anatomical women, not men, referring to exclusive language-use as required by Irigaray along sexuate lines.

If we take the biological body as distinct from the culturally nuanced body as pre-discursive, and the body as a fundamental expression of sexuate identity, then it is clear we can differentiate male and female bodies. I argue, therefore, that this is a very important variable in terms of both experience and expression. In other words, the feminine body is both pre-discursively and discursively feminine. So an *incarnating* language is one that which will enable women to constitute themselves as subjects, in the flesh. As such, I join in Cixous and Clement’s “dream of a transformed language/literature” (Cixous & Clément, 1986, p. xviii). My argument for a transformed language is twofold: on the one hand, a language arising from female flesh, from feminine morphology, and on the other a language arising from *cultivation* in the sense which Luce Irigaray proposes, which I have discussed in chapter two, and which I will attend to further on. Briefly, language can either be an every-day conveyance, or “the exceptional uses achieved by poets and religious figures” (Yuasa, 1987, p. 3). This exceptional language witnesses our coming into being, and is, “at the bottom of
each word, [where] I am a spectator at my birth”, (Bosquet, cited in Bachelard, 1971, p. 27) and is thus the language through which my project speaks; the birth and becoming of ‘women’.

In what way can language be used for women and their becoming? To begin, is the category ‘woman’ an eternally compromised noun, (Riley, 1988, p. 98) or is it an eternally changing becoming? Would ‘woman’ be better represented by an adjective, which qualifies the noun/woman, or a verb, which asserts something about the subject/woman? In this way, Luce Irigaray’s claim about ‘becoming’ a ‘woman’, when becoming is used as a verb, is pertinent, in that it implies that woman is perpetually ‘on the way’, rather than arrived. I argue that language-in-the-feminine must reflect this becoming. The form of feminine enquiry must not close a question reductively. It must keep questions open, even as they are answered. Kristeva, for instance, consistently insists “upon keeping ambiguity alive in her work. … (She refuses) the simple binary logic that would settle the matter for all time” (Walker, 1998, p. 124). The binary logic which is essential to the functioning of the technical world, or that of commerce is not the specific use of language upon which I am focussing here. A number of feminist theorists have explored the idea of a feminine language, such as Daly, hooks, Cixous and Clément (Cixous, 1993; Cixous & Clément, 1986; Clément, 1994; Daly, 1973; hooks, 2008). My primary focus, however, is on Luce Irigaray's work.

I begin by engaging with Heidegger, and his notion that language is the house of being.

A fundamental question, especially important for women, is whether language shapes experience or experience shapes language. How does the way we speak about human bodies shape our experience of them? If women use phallogocentric language, that is, language relying on the phallus as a universal signifier, does this effect how they experience themselves as women? Heidegger firmly believed that "language remains the master” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 215),
even while we think that we are the shapers and masters of language. For postmodernists, the problem is, “put simply, language constructs ontology: language establishes the conditions of being. … Not only does language construct ontology, but the limits of language are set by our ontological understandings and commitments. Language is a condition for the construction of ontology, which is in turn a condition for language” (Gray, 2000, p. 231). Is this a double bind and a self-referential paradox, or an attempt to understand and interpret linguistic and non-linguistic expression, and even more fundamentally, an interrogation of human life and existence as such?

Heidegger claims “language is the house of being. In its home man [sic] dwells. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 193). It follows that bringing being into manifestation through language is compromised when the language itself is inadequate. This is specifically true if the language women use is morphologically misrepresenting them. While language has the task to manifest the unmanifest at any time, this has particular importance for women: their coming into being is deficient if language is unable to speak to and from a woman’s position. When Simone Weil says that, “at the very best, a mind enclosed in language is in prison” (Weil, 2000, p. 89), is she speaking as a mystic, or as a woman constrained by phallogocentrism? Both could be true, but the point I make here is that Weil maintains that one is capable of more than language can offer. For Weil, the fetter is language.

Irigaray takes up Heidegger’s notion of dwelling161 when she argues that as mortals abiding on earth, we already dwell, that “dwelling is the fundamental trait of Being” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 67) and therefore prior to, or independent of language. Thus, for Irigaray, we do not need language in order to dwell. She explains Heidegger’s associating of language with dwelling as maternal by

161 “To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell” (quoted in Wisnewsk, 2013, p. 156).
saying that “language would exist as a substitute for the mother, or rather as a substitute for the relation with the mother. Hence, the fact of comparing it to a shelter, a house” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 122). If Irigaray is situating “the relation with the mother” in the semiotic, then she is placing language as pre-discursive, and this converges with Kristeva’s view.

In regard to his idea of language as dwelling-place, Heidegger goes on to say that “guardianship accomplishes the manifestation of Being insofar as they bring the manifestation to language and maintain it in language in their speech” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 193). According to this argument, women are their own guardians and create their own dwelling. The establishment of an ethics of sexuate difference is prerequisite to a woman’s access to her own language. This language in turn challenges all structures of the Symbolic, including binary oppositions. A move from logos to poiesis might well be part of this changed structure, in our task of renovating language. The work of Irigaray’s angels intersects here; Tilghman claims that their “gestures herald the embodiment of a multiplicity of ideas and figures that will never be contained by ordinary language or orthodox representation” (Tilghman, 2008, p. 47), thus proposing a renovation of language.

For Irigaray, the current structure of language “is phallogocentric to the point where there can be no feminine subject in language at all, and ‘this sex which is not one’ is also a (grammatical) subject which is not one” (Threadgold, 1997, p. 86). Irigaray believes that the gendered nature of language reveals sexuate difference. For her, to speak is never neutral (Irigaray, 2002). Her recourse is linguistics "when she argues that the patterns of speech favoured by men and women bear witness" to sexual difference in our culture (Deutscher, 2002, p. 142).162

162 However, the question remains as to whether girls and women are acculturated to use language differently, or naturally use language differently. With her insistence on sexuate difference extending to language use, is Irigaray suggesting that men and women should use language differently?
Rather than accept a phallogocentric language-house built without consultation to its suitability, which “consists of an intertwining of meanings which constitute a sort of prison,” Luce Irigaray proposes a “world that each of us could consciously build for oneself and the world … while respecting our respective otherness. ‘Together’, then, no longer means participating in a common world that is already there and imposed on the two” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 9). So Irigaray calls for a discursive system in which women could ‘dwell’ within their bodies, which would not alienate them from themselves. Irigaray’s proposal achieves two aims; first, it allows for sexuate difference which extends to a use of language specific to women, and second, it enables the future not to be a replication of the past, although Irigaray admits that this new house “is not yet built” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 7). She writes us examples of parler femme, women’s language, in a number of her books, specifically Elemental Passions, where she uses grammar and syntax not conventionally used, intentionally to disrupt and to evoke a feminine voice (Irigaray, 1992).

**Phallogocentrism**

Arguably, phallogocentric language creates a certain permanence of existence, but is it an aid in becoming? Because “outside of his language there is nothing” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 39), must women choose that nothing, and take the risk that they will then be able to “translate fluid realities into discursivity” (ibid., p. 3)? Must women evade, again and again, the “single language, the one he has already appropriated, and that he reappropriates for himself endlessly” (ibid., p. 37), as Luce Irigaray says of the masculine nature of language? Even the “uncontrolled exploitation of air by language and by systems of representations” (ibid., p. 10) in philosophy itself, must make way for a breathable future, where air is freely available. In order to create a breathable future, the notion of a universal signifier, the phallus, must be challenged.
For Saussure, language is understood as a system of signifier and signified, which gain meaning from their relation with each other; that is, there is no universal signifier that is more important than the rest. He explains: “In a sign, what matters more than any idea or sound associated with it, is what other signs surround it” (Saussure, 1962, p. 118). While Lacan agrees with Saussure that all signifiers in language are related, he holds that the signifier that quilts them all together is the phallus: “The phallus is the privileged signifier of that mark in which the role of the logos is joined with the advent of desire. It can be said that this signifier is chosen because it is the most tangible element in the real of sexual copulation” (Lacan, 1977, p. 287). However, it is clear that this desire is expressed from the point of view of male desire. Thus the conclusion that language is phallogocentric. I agree that, if we take sexuate difference as a starting point, the phallus as the universal signifier represents only the masculine. What woman would propose this? How, then, can women find a place in language? One way is to bypass Lacan and return to Saussure, who argues against any universal signifier. We can then allow that phallus is a dominant signifier in our culture, but not a universal one, as Grace Jantzen argues. “A dominant signifier can be resisted and perhaps dislodged; whereas if the Phallus really were a universal signifier, there would be no hope” (Jantzen, 1998, p. 52). When the position for women is not foreclosed by the phallus, movement in language is possible. Indeed Luce Irigaray speaks of a chain of signifiers, rather than language being constructed around a universal ‘male’ signifier thus: “A world that language ceaselessly would construct and reconstruct, of an architecture incapable of completion” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 124).

Irigaray argues that women’s language is crucial because, “women have no language sexed as female, they are used in the elaboration of so-called neuter language where in fact they are deprived of speech” (Irigaray, 1993a, p. 107), and thus their place - or displacement - in language is a sign of their dereliction and lack of subjectivity. Further, according to Irigaray, the “essence of language [langage] should thus be understood as a shelter for man’s essence” (Irigaray,
1999, p. 91), but it does not shelter a woman, it is not her house of being. Instead, “she is like a still-living tissue connected to the production of his language [sa langue] … and feeding this language, but herself being used in line with a project of his own, and, by passing through his technology, losing the movement of breath and life” (ibid., p. 92) Irigaray asks: “What if he who gives you air…gives you death? …The vacuum that they create by using up the air for telling without ever telling of air itself” (ibid., p. 7). For Irigaray, then, women need a language that does not take our breath away, but which fosters breath and life.

I have already referred several times to Luce Irigaray’s use of the word air. For Irigaray, air is “this unthinkable that exceeds all declaration, all saying. No wonder philosophy dies - without air. Did Being, at least, keep some in reserve? Hence: the clearing of the opening. This field, or open space, where air would still give itself” (ibid., pp. 5-6). In her terms, the challenge to philosophy is not to kill being, especially the feminine being, by forgetting air and by disappearing into metaphysics, thus neglecting the elements that constitute our flesh. She asks, “what if he who gives you air…gives you death? …The vacuum that they create by using up the air for telling without ever telling of air itself” (ibid., p. 7). Language in the feminine, including in feminine philosophy, requires air and spaciousness, in order to “say differently”. “This saying cannot be already said or foreseen by a previous discourse” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 12), as Irigaray clearly states, and demands another way of speaking, which is “without the screen of a language foreign to dialogue” (Irigaray, 2008b, pp. 14-15). Irigaray plays with language, syntax, grammar and style in order to rework meaning, or retrieve meaning, to more adequately represent a feminine subject.\(^{163}\)

Irigaray is unequivocal, as Anderson puts it, “that sexually specific discourses on female desire are expressed strictly by women” (P. S. Anderson, 1998, p. 109). Like Kristeva, Anderson imagines that this discourse might emerge “from the pre-\(^{163}\)

\(^{163}\) The question of language arises for Irigaray because of the central significance she attributes to language as a cultural medium for the constitution of the subject and of identity” (Martin, 2000, p. 15).
oedipal position. Problematically, this position may only break through the symbolic in holiness or hysteria, mysticism or madness, in the form of what ‘returns’ but should be repressed” (ibid.). We can also see that it is problematic, if we try to establish a connection between a discourse arising from the semiotic and women, that this ‘breaking through’ is as likely achieved by men as women - women do not have a monopoly on madness, for instance.

One use of language that concerns Irigaray is metaphor. Clearly, both men and women use metaphors, but some feminist thinkers distrust the use of metaphor, because it takes language away from the subject at hand, in ever-increasing distance "through all sorts of comparisons and images supposedly able to do better than life itself and which turn into poison for body and soul" (Irigaray, 2004a, p. 49). Thus, for Irigaray, metaphor refers back to the symbolic, to the interpretation rather than the source. It is preferable, she says "to receive words from nature itself, listening to what it really says" (ibid., p. 35). With respect to nature, which she advocates as the source of metaphor, “it would be better to avoid metaphors and allegories which assimilate it to our world” (ibid.).

Towards this end she recommends the use of words that are “closest to the real. Words that respect sensibility, movement, and that work to espouse it without distortion” (ibid., p. 43). Irigaray prefers metonymic rather than metaphoric terms; both figures involve the substitution of one term for another, but in metaphor a substituted term is based on similarity, whereas, in metonymy, the substitution is based on contiguity (Kruse, 1991, p. 457).

Caroline Walker Bynum comments on the use of metaphor in the second century as being close to nature. “Their metaphors were naturalist images of return or repetition: the cycles of the seasons, the flowering of trees and shrubs, the fertility of seed” (Bynum, 1994, p. 219). Since then, much metaphor which has

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164 Carolyn Merchant says that “a society’s symbols and images of nature express its collective consciousness” (Merchant, 2010, p. 19). Even to construe nature as a commodity, rather than as the source of life in which we are embedded, demonstrates a very different world-view.

165 In her earlier work, Luce Irigaray referred to the Lacanian Real, but later, her use of the real is, as here, referring to the natural world, in contradistinction to the constructed world.
become imbedded in language is associated with mechanics and science, or even war, and not suited to Irigaray’s intent of staying close to nature. For Luce Irigaray, woman’s place in language is a sign of her dereliction, and must be replaced “through a language and an ethics that is ours” (Irigaray, 1993a, pp. 129, my emphasis).

**Parler Femme**

How would language embody women’s subjectivity and spirituality? I argue for ways that include the body, which “incarnate the body and the flesh”, as Irigaray requires (Irigaray, 2004c, p. 15). In this way discourse can incarnate, rather than annihilate, women. In arguing for embodying, incarnating discourse for women, I make several points. First, as Luce Irigaray’s **sensible/transcendental** is foundational, the connection between word and the flesh must be maintained, and **Word/logos** as exclusively metaphysical must be challenged. Second, **Logos** as fixed certainty – logocentricity – must be questioned. Third, that **parler femme** and **écriture feminine** be developed as practices of speaking and writing as **women**, in defiance of the patriarchal logos that harnesses and suppresses for its own conceptual and theoretical purposes (Martin, 2000, p. 13).

My concern here is a specific use of language that can carry women’s subjectivity and spirituality. Luce Irigaray proposes a way open to women and men, of remaining alive in the symbolic by finding air, “the still silent space of speech. Where the voice of things can be heard” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 73), the space where life has not been already codified, as I have discussed above. Luce Irigaray puts it this way: “But the word is also what can incarnate the body and the flesh that one wants to say to the other. …Not a part of the body but a flesh that goes beyond the body without destroying it, amputating it” (Irigaray, 2004c, p. 15).

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166 Notwithstanding the above, I acknowledge that in western intellectual and theological history, the **incarnating Word** has already been pivotal; for example, Yahweh speaks existence into being. The tradition of incarnated word/discourse also emerges in the Annunciation when Mary says “may it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38), and further, in reference to Christ, “the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us” (John1:14). My emphasis does nothing to diminish these traditions of the Word as embodying.
We see that Irigaray advocates the freeing of language for both men and women; she has specific concerns that women’s language be related to their bodies. Irigaray tells us “as a woman, I ought to discover and cultivate a language of my own, and to create bridges between this language and my body. I do not believe that passively receiving the word(s) of the other will suffice to incarnate myself” (Irigaray, 2004b, p. 145). It is a birth, in which no one can substitute for one’s self, for one’s body, and I demonstrate this through “The Handless Maiden” fairy tale in chapters five and six. In speaking of incarnating ones-self, Irigaray addresses the personal, rather than collective action of language, used not to convey culture, commerce and community, but the incontrovertible singularity of individual being. In order to refashion language, Luce Irigaray’s parler femme, based on female morphology, will undermine the patriarchal assumptions of western thought. So what might parler femme, speaking as woman, actually be? How can women display themselves in linguistic forms, which demonstrate the experience of a woman’s body? What identifies women’s language, and “how

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167 Kristeva also says that “ethic values will be resolved in smaller and smaller groups”, and “it may be the individual discourse which will acquire greater importance” (Kristeva, 1984, p. 85), emphasising the individual and personal importance of language over the collective uses (and abuses) of language.

168 Irigaray unveils these patriarchal assumptions (Irigaray, 1999). She “criticises Heidegger’s interpretation of the principle of identity as instantiating the same neglect of sexual difference that has been inscribed throughout the history of Western metaphysics” (Leeuwen, 2010, p. 111). Irigaray’s critique of Heidegger is that he has conflated human identity with the identity of a single, neutral and thus univocal being. From this univocity, discursivity is conflated with a mono-logical or homo-logous understanding of language: a potentially dia-logical exchange is reduced to a tautology, “a monologue in two voices” (Irigaray, 2004c, p. 8). As Irigaray tells us, “the two beings and Beings of the human species have become the two poles of a single human being who, in fact, does not exist. Invented by a masculine thinking and according to its necessities, this more or less ghostly being presents rather the characteristics of a masculine subject” (Irigaray, 2004c, p. 107). It is against this background that she proposes parler femme. As Leeuwen argues, “Being is always already stripped of its carnal vestiges, then the possibility of interrogating the meaning of Being in terms of carnality or materiality has been disallowed from the outset” (Leeuwen, 2010, p. 120). Thus follows the necessity for Irigaray to insist upon sexuate difference, a difference which is not specified in Heidegger’s notion of dwelling.
is the gendered and differentiated body implicated in the relation between text and context?” (Threadgold, 1997, pp. 97-98).

In chapter two, I argued for continuity between word and body. For Luce Irigaray, there is a wedding between words and the body, which is fruitful if the words are appropriate for the body. Women must cultivate the right language; to take care of the tone of voice, and the choice of words that will aid the becoming of the self and the other. She advocates choosing language which is non-judgemental and non-hierarchical (Irigaray, 2010b).

Following Irigaray, we could argue that the kind of language that she requires for transcendence or feminine spirituality occurs “before or beyond any word” (Irigaray, 2004b, pp. 15, my emphasis). Irigaray claims that ‘she’ “cries out from where there are yet no names” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 50), that is from the pre-symbolic, pre-discursive. Sonia Kruks is also searching for “an account of the subject which acknowledges that it exceeds the boundaries of the discursive”, in modalities of experience that elude speech, which we come to ‘know’ “through non-intellectual, embodied, cognition. For we not only experience what is unspoken but even unspeakable” (Kruks, 2001, pp. 13-14). In this sense, much of mystical experience is ‘unspeakable’, as I will maintain in chapter four. Hildegard of Bingen, for instance, “insists on bringing art or symbolic expression into all that she did and wrote. … She is aware that words cannot bear the weight of the treasure of her deep experience. Thus she turns to symbols - music, paintings, poetry – to express her truest self” (Fox, 1987, p. xviii), cultural forms which are not discursive. However, these forms are non-discursive, rather than pre-symbolic, that is, while they do not rely on logos, they have meaning.

Are there, then, modalities of experience and expression that elude speech, which nevertheless we know through non-intellectual, embodied cognition? Can there be an account of the female subject that acknowledges that it exceeds the

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169 Foucault argues that discourse does not underlie all cultural forms. For him, forms such as art and music are not discursive (Foucault, 1967, p. 284).
boundaries of the discursive? Merleau-Ponty, for instance, says that “bodily expressions do not form a linguistic system but rather give the basis for all such systems” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968a, p. 203). So for Merleau-Ponty, the body is being posited as the prediscursive zone. Catherine Keller, too says that the “nondiscursive zone of sentience, sensation, and sentiment presents itself at any given moment as the prediscursive zone of human consciousness” (C. Keller, 1997, p. 74).

One speaks with one’s body before one opens one’s mouth. Male and female bodies constitute a prediscursive (but nevertheless embodied) difference, which results in a difference in the discourse by and between them. In Irigaray’s later work, she emphasizes that speaking as a woman is not as important as speaking between subjects. I argue that the two projects are complementary however; as we shall see with Sheherazade, for there to be a dialogue between, there must be two subjects, and for there to be two subjects there must be sexuate difference, and for sexuate difference to be achieved, women must be able to speak as themselves, rather than in the monologue of patriarchy. The challenge of Irigaray’s model is that the two sexes must share love and language to enable exchange between them, but love and language must take different forms for each sex if absolute otherness is to be recognized and respected. For Irigaray language is central because she sees it as the medium through which subjectivity and identity are achieved.

I will now approach language through the notion of feminine jouissance, which has been taken up as ‘coming’ to writing and speech, by Irigaray and others (Cixous & Clément, 1986). To do this I interrogate Lacan and his ideas around foreclosure and jouissance.

Foreclosure and Jouissance
For Lacan, femininity is a position that can be taken by men as well as women, so this does not serve Luce Irigaray’s project of sexuate identity as extending to linguistic use. Indeed, Lacan postulates the feminine position, including
Jouissance, as existing outside language (Moi, 2004, p. 844). Lacan’s feminine position, related to feminine desire, is “the attempt to once again become unviolated and complete within ourselves by merging back into the real” (Schroeder, 1998, p. 292). Lacan frames the ‘not all’, the ‘not-yet’, the ‘something-more’ - that is the real - as that which “might be briefly glimpsed by taking on the position of the Feminine” (Schroeder, 1998, p. 289). One may infer, then, that the feminine position can be both accessed and recovered in or through the real. However, Lacan argues that, through the mechanism of foreclosure, we all repudiate, reject and preclude the very possibility of the existence of certain things, by way of the absence of the signifiers, which would enable us to say ‘not that.’ Through his notion of foreclosure, I raise a problem that is central to both psychoanalysis and philosophy. As language is masculinised, or is designed for - and situates - a masculine subject, and feminine signifiers are missing, where can a woman find herself? Would this mean, then, that she is excluded from, or (doubly) negated by, the very language she uses, or cannot use? But what of the feminine position that Lacan places outside language?

The famous case of Schreber will help us here. Schreber, a High Court judge, fantasized that he was becoming a woman, psychologically and bodily. In his psychosis he believed that only by doing this would he be able to hear God’s word directly, and even to become a conduit for God’s word, and thus redeemed. That which was foreclosed (for Schreber and the Symbolic), according to Lacan, was the feminine position, which would enable direct access to the divine, through jouissance, or specifically feminine enjoyment. Thus Schreber, through

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170 Michelle Walker comments that “the contradictions of the symbolic are inscribed on the body, but whose body?” (Walker, 1998, p. 110). I argue that Schreber exhibited these contradictions. While the body that exhibits them is usually the feminine body, the feminized body of Schreber did the same.

171 Etymologically, jouissance is related to the French verb jouir, which translates into English as “to enjoy, to revel”. Contemporary French idiom uses jouissance as a common term for orgasm. Its connotations have been developed by various French theorists to explore the relationship between meaning, pleasure and language (Graybeal, 1990, p. 15). This includes Cixous’ emphasis on women “coming” to/in writing (Cixous & Clément, 1986).
his fantasy, was attempting to access, or ‘to come’ to meaning outside of the phallus. *Jouissance* may be thought of as the fulfillment of desire in the sense of the breakdown of the (phallogocentric) subject/object distinction. "*Jouissance* is the experience of the feminine object for herself, as opposed to the feminine object as the object of exchange of masculine subjectivity" (ibid., p. 288).

*Jouissance*, then, is breaking out from the symbolic and of achieving direct, unmediated contact with the real.¹⁷² Although anatomical men are capable of *jouissance*, *jouissance* requires one to take on the position of the feminine, that is it requires them to give up their (implied) place in the Symbolic, and become (temporarily/impossibly) unsymbolized (Lacan, 1982, pp. 144-145). Thus *jouissance* - the experience of the real - is by definition not symbolic and therefore is outside language (Schroeder, 1998, p. 288).

So, what relevance does the case of Schreber have for a vivifying language for women? Schreber, prior to his psychosis, was an enforcer of the Law and jurist, and ensconced in a multifaceted phallic position, where he operated exclusively through the masculine/Symbolic where access to the real was denied, as it is for everyone in this position. His access to *logos* was unquestioned, but his access to *eros* was problematically foreclosed. His feminized body was a radical way of undoing the foreclosed access to *eros/jouissance*. Women, in their own feminine bodies, can likewise claim a radical access/excess. My emphasis here is the recovery of a feminine position for women, not via psychosis or hysteria - which are both ways of trying to claim legitimacy in an economy which proclaims them as illegitimate (the Symbolic) – but by ‘redeeming’ or lifting the foreclosure. My issue with Lacan is that he posits this as possible only through madness. Kristeva, in her critique of Lacan, and development and of his ideas, extends this to mysticism and poetry, via eruptions from the semiotic.

Lacan viewed the repudiation of signifiers as the cause of psychosis, and this is

¹⁷² I employ *jouissance* as access to a feminine divine in the next chapter.
the feminine position. This would seem problematic. However, Schreber’s repudiation of signifiers gave him access to the real, through *eros/jouissance*. I maintain that Lacan’s theory can be applied to Schreber’s delusions as access to a *necessary* (*eros*)-speech for women; that is, the Lacanian "Name of the Father" (the Phallus) as chief signifier can be seen as the patriarchy which women (must) refuse in order to claim a subjectivity not predicated upon masculine desire. Schreber achieved this, albeit in a delusional way. Anything that is outside the Symbolic will tend to be seen by those within it as delusional and those without it as freedom. Such is the paradox for someone outside the Symbolic - the ‘not-dupter’ of Lacan. Much remains to be explored at another occasion on the fertile subject of foreclosure and the feminine position. Relevant to my exploration of language is that for Lacan, psychotics have a different relation to language (and the symbolic) in that they speak more than they say, because their speech has the same relation to the unconscious as a dream. My point is that woman’s language requires such valence for their embodiment, for their own legitimacy. In other words, while remaining in the phallic/Symbolic, although not acknowledged by it, women (and those who take up the feminine position, like Schreber) also intrinsically have access to the real, which then informs their relation to the Symbolic. It enables them to see through it, because they are not quilted within it. How might language convey the position of the ‘not-dupter’, of those taking the feminine position, if language itself is already presumed to foreclose that very position?

**Poïesis as Revelation of Self**

In this section I argue that the feminine position is *evoked* through *poïesis*. *Poïesis* from the ancient Greek term ποιέω, means ‘to make’, and infers an action that transforms and continues the world beyond the temporal. Heidegger used *poïesis* in the sense of ‘bringing forth’ in its widest sense; (Heidegger, 1977) in all begetting and bringing forth upon the beautiful there is a kind of making/creating or *poïesis*. He explained *poïesis* as the blooming of the blossom, the emerging of a butterfly from a cocoon, the plummeting of a waterfall.
Mary Daly stresses that language is “potentially alive with meaning”, (Gray, 2000, p. 232) but I argue that language in the feminine is *alive with potential meaning*. Once meaning is attributed, hasn’t it lost its potential now it is fixed in the Symbolic? I argue that it is necessary to retrieve and open language to potential once again, to remove foreclosure, to retrieve the real at the bottom of the word. There is a place for the mutable in language, so that language can change in our mouths, between our lips (Irigaray) and speak itself ever new. Then we can speak ourselves into becoming. This sort of speech “would flower because it flowers”, and would have no care to ensure consistency, or “upright conduct in a permanent posture”, but speaks for “all growth and flowering that is still in silence” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 143).

While Ralph Waldo Emerson considered that “every thought is a prison; every heaven also is a prison”, he also maintained that “therefore we love the poet … who unlocks our chains, and admits us to a new scene” (Emerson, 2010, p. 76). Emerson is alluding to a universal, rather than sexuate condition, which operates as a foreclosure from which we need to be unlocked. It is the poet, and the poetic voice, which opens language - and undoes the foreclosure - so that it actually says something, clears and loosens something “in language itself in order to allow the appearance of that which prevents language letting loose in new utterances. To let rise the yet unspoken. The yet to be revealed” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 132). Thus every ideal needs to be open-ended in order to access renewal, to create a radical rupture in which a new form of discourse for women might emerge, and continue to emerge.

Poetry was for Heidegger more important than the other arts. He was especially fascinated by the works of Hölderlin. "Poetry proper is never merely a higher mode (*melos*) of everyday language," Heidegger wrote in his essay 'Language', dealing with Georg Trakl's poem 'A Winter Evening'. "It is rather the reverse:

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173 Language use and development is necessarily a continuously evolving process. What I am arguing for here is a vivifying language, which counters Irigaray’s lament, that “nothing is able to be seen through language any longer” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 131).
everyday language is a forgotten and therefore used-up poem, from which there hardly resounds a call any longer” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 208). If everyday language is a mere dried husk, then our house of being is indeed impoverished. Irigaray emphasizes the discovery of hidden meanings in the equivocal terms (or symbols) of ordinary language. Lockhart suggests that it is not the language which has lost is vitality, but “it is we who have failed the word, we who have lost contact with the imaginal realm beneath and beyond the exterior of the word” (Lockhart, 1983, p. 89). Poiesis and erotic logos bring us to the interior, to the imaginal world.

I now argue that poetry is an expression of the unconscious, which therefore evades castration by the symbolic, and is thus suited to a woman’s voice.

When Luce Irigaray asks if “the philosopher [has] become the poet he has always disdained?” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 9), she is undoubtedly speaking of herself, especially in her later work, which includes Everyday Prayers (Irigaray, 2004a), a collection of poetry. It is through this poetic language that she seeks to speak the spirit as flesh and the flesh as transcendental, through retrieving the neglected flesh in philosophy and marrying it with spirit. Thus the poet keeps open the threshold, she “lives in the between-the-two” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 114), not only the two lovers, but between the sensible and transcendental, which returns us to ponder the notion of poïesis as that which transforms and continues the world beyond the temporal.

Irigaray describes poetic language as capable of expressing “the most real of the real” (Irigaray, 2004a, p. 37), and therefore of the pre-Symbolic. It “becomes a medium that seeks to be available to everything that there is to say” (ibid., p. 30). She claims that the “beginnings – the real foundation? - of a culture are poetic, or at least artistic” (ibid., p. 29). Luce Irigaray’s poetic language is a revelation of a feminine way of perceiving and thinking, (ibid., p. 31) a foundation of women’s culture. She further defines a consistent difference in form between masculine
and feminine poets and poetics: the masculine is filled with suffering and tragedy, the feminine she expresses “prepare[s] a love more loving and happy” (ibid.), that does not dwell on suffering. She “calls on the poetic voice to speak the revival of nature, of meeting, in words that reunite differently earth and sky, the human and the divine” (ibid., p. 39). The reuniting “differently” of “the human and the divine” suggests the awakening of a feminine voice, a feminine logos, which Luce Irigaray recognizes in “the pre-Socratics, but in the feminine, a feminine which expresses itself at that time more than today” (ibid., p. 47). Of the pre-Socratics, one of her favoured thinkers is Sophocles, for his account of Antigone. For Irigaray, “Antigone’s example is always worth reflecting upon as a historical figure and as an identity or identification for many girls and women living today” (Irigaray, 1994, p. 70). In my use of erotic logos, I argue that it is a retrieval of a feminine that is prior to being subsumed within the folds of the masculine symbolic.

Poetry recalls the elements, and is therefore closer to nature and our material foundations. Luce Irigaray contrasts this with “our day-to-day speech”, which steers “clear of the elements, moving through and forward with a language that forgets the matter it names and by means of which it speaks” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 58). Poetic language, by contrast, is where “I find the words which will allow a new stage in my thinking” (Irigaray, 2004a, p. 29). The poetic writing of Luce Irigaray seeks to preserve and promote a “becoming, which does not divide itself from nature. Form does not claim to dominate matter; it serves its blossoming, its growth. …The body becomes spirit and the spirit body, or, rather, they both become flesh, and each by the other” (ibid., p. 30). The “flesh” makes it clear that we are not talking about a disembodied notion of body, but a body which lives and breathes as living flesh. Thus, the feminine language, which she advocates for women, is not only poetic, but also a vehicle of the sensible/transcendental.

174 Although unacknowledged by her, Irigaray is again clearly paraphrasing Heidegger’s fourfold, that is the earth, sky, human and divine, which is his concept of dwelling. See also footnote 133.
Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei speaks of an elusive aspect, accessed through poetics, which ruptures an “epistemological appropriative horizon” (Gosetti-Ferencei, 2004, p. 238). The glimpsing of this elusive aspect requires a dwelling in uncertainty, unknowing, and doubt because it is outside symbolic representation. As Rimbaud noted of himself, “the poet makes himself a visionary through a long, prodigious and rational disordering of all the senses … he will need all his faith…For he arrives at the unknown!” (Rimbaud, 1957, p. xxx). It is the arrival at the unknown/unconscious, where new thoughts (outside the Symbolic) are possible, and where a new framing of the feminine is possible. These are the “new forms that inventions of the unknown demand” (ibid., p. xxv), which allow new thinking for Luce Irigaray. Rimbaud also anticipates her intention with his remark that “poetry will no longer accompany action, but will lead it” (ibid., p. xxxii). This possibility of being led by poetry, suggests a locus outside the symbolic. Lockhart uses poesis to convey dreams into words, ”letting the dream go into poetic speech” (Lockhart, 1983, p. 105). Luce Irigaray also speaks of the still onieric quality of words, which allows language itself to dream, to be a dream that is not framed in the Symbolic.

Scientific discourse engages the symbolic, and via rationality, represses the semiotic. Conversely, “poetic text is one of the privileged sites of the semiotic…Poetry…will privilege and highlight the semiotic to the point of sometimes erasing any discernible symbolic framework” (Walker, 1998, p. 106). Kristeva claims that poetic language is “the only language that uses up transcendence and theology to sustain itself” and that it is “therefore knowingly the enemy of [patriarchal] religion” (Kristeva, 2000, p. 71). Unlike Kristeva, I argue that poetic language both revitalizes and situates itself in the crevice/interstices that then later become religion, or are appropriated by religion. This is seen in Peguy’s famous statement that ‘what begins in mysticism ends in

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175 Throughout this work, I use the terms unconscious and conscious in a Jungian sense, unless otherwise stated. So the unconscious contains repressed material, but also all that which has not yet come into being, that has not been made conscious.
politics’ - or religion. However, can poetic language really be subsumed into religion, or does it resist being subsumed into theology, like ducks that live in water but are water-resistant? Moi takes up the theme of poetic language being profoundly a-theological, when she says that it “may appear as an argument complicitous with dogma” because religion makes frequent use of poetry, “but [it] may also set in motion what [patriarchal] religion represses. In so doing [it] no longer acts as instinctual floodgates within the enclosure of the sacred and becomes instead protestor against its posturing” (Moi, 1986, p. 112). We could say that poetics, then, continually introduces the repressed (feminine) into (phallogocentric) language, including the language of religion, whereas logos would prefer to posture, and remain exclusively masculine/Symbolic.

In defining what language in or for the feminine might be, I conclude that the poetic voice is suitable because of its approach to the unknown, that which is outside the 'kingdom' of the symbolic. However, the notion of erotic logos enables all language to be touched by (Irigaray’s) angel’s wings and thus undoes language to speak again for each separate subject and the between.

**Erotic Logos**

The Persian legend of *The Thousand and One Nights* dates from the Islamic Golden Age (c.750 CE - c.1258 CE) and concerns Sheherazade, who marries a king who is known to execute his bride the morning after the wedding night.

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176 Although often quoted, I have been unable to discover the original source of this quote.  
177 One Thousand and One Nights is a collection of Middle eastern and South Asian stories and folk tales compiled in Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age (c.750 CE - c.1258 CE). The story concerns a Persian king, Shahryar, who marries a succession of virgins only to execute each one the next morning, before she has a chance to dishonour him. Eventually the vizier, whose duty it is to provide them, cannot find any more virgins. Sheherazade, the vizier's daughter, offers herself as the next bride and her father reluctantly agrees. On the night of their marriage, Sheherazade begins to tell the king an intriguing tale, but does not end it. The king is thus forced to postpone her execution in order to hear the conclusion. The next night, as soon as she finishes the tale, she begins (and only begins) a new one, and the king, eager to hear the conclusion, postpones her execution once again. So it goes on for 1,001 nights. Her language is innovative and includes rich poetry and poetic speeches, chants, songs, lamentations, hymns, beseeching, praising, pleading, riddles and annotations. Notable is her knowledge and exposition of abstract philosophical principles or complex points of Islamic philosophy. (This synopsis is compiled from various internet sources, including: [http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/1999/12/Scheherazade-Feminist-Icon.aspx](http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/1999/12/Scheherazade-Feminist-Icon.aspx), and
Sheherazade, however, who is educated in all the wisdom of the land, spins a tale that is so compelling that her husband postpones her execution so he can hear the next episode the following night.

Fabrice Dubosc describes Sheherazade’s language as *erotic logos*, that is, incorporating both *logos* and *eros* in the Jungian sense (Dubosc, 2000). If we apply the assignations of *logos* to men, and *eros* to women, then *erotic logos* provides a far too facile *coniunctio*, or marriage of these traditionally paired opposites. However, if we imagine that this might be an eroticising of *logos/language* itself, then we have a far more interesting proposition; *erotic logos* could then be said to occupy the same paradoxical position as Irigaray’s *sensible/transcendental*, that is, embodied word. Therefore I argue that these two terms are equivalent. Thus, I argue that language can carry the valence of both *eros* and *logos*, body and spirit. In *erotic logos*, rather than the power/logos trope of phallogocentric language, from which women have been erased, love/logos creates a *coniunctio*, an embodied word. In the broadest sense, *erotic logos* encompasses both desire and belief, *both libido* and *credo*, and thus moves us towards a feminine divine.

http://www.wisegeek.com/who-is-scheherazade.htm

178 Jung borrowed the term *coniunctio* from the alchemists and applied it to the process of individuation, where traditionally paired opposites are harmonized, so that either/or categories become neither/both.

179 Judith Still takes up Luce Irigaray’s term, *poetic nuptials*, where Irigaray engages philosophy without entering into traditional philosophical critique. As Still says, “poetic nuptials are an alternative to ways of reading such as critique which demand a particular distance between what become subject and object” (Still, 2002, p. 7). Irigaray’s work consists of many different styles, with poetic expression, and multiple layers. Likewise, Sheherazade’s *erotic logos* is ambiguous and varied. More importantly, for Still, *poetic nuptials* “is a term for a different thinking of relationality, not an oppositional one which claims no encounter is possible” (Still, 2002, p. 7). This relationality is not just between two ‘others’, but between the text and the reader, and between different aspects of the text. As Still says of Irigaray’s writing, “sections, even words or expressions, (such as that of *poetic nuptials*) can be lingered over at length so that layer upon layer of connotation becomes apparent and it is the relationship between these connotations which is crucial”. She further suggests that *poetic nuptials* “can take place between elements of the text; they can be a mode of intertextual relationship” (Still, 2002, p. 7). Thus for me, *erotic logos* and *poetic nuptials* are parallel terms describing parallel situations.

180 I take the Jungian meaning of *libido* as life-energy rather than sexuality exclusively.
When Luce Irigaray eroticizes traditional philosophic discourse through sensual poetic imagery, she demonstrates a marriage between *eros* and *logos*; she disrupts assumptions about both, and weaves instead a new relation between them. This is an effective way for women to “re-create alterity”, that is, they must, as Tilghman argues, “re-work from inside the language they already have” (Tilghman, 2008, p. 51). Mary Daly also commits herself to use language against language and does it “within the horizon, which necessarily must change, of existing philosophical and theological discourses” (Gray, 2000, p. 231). This is what Sheherazade does. *Erotic logos* is itself a refashioning of language. Russell Lockhart says we need to “revivify our relation to the word by developing an Eros relation … *in words*” (Lockhart, 1983, pp. 89, my emphasis). Lockhart holds that an essential aspect of Eros is “the great principle that connects us to things beyond our ego” (Lockhart, 1983, p. 89).

I argue for *erotic logos* as a suitable language-form for women, which encircles their subjectivity and also performs the dialogue between two separate subjects. As Luce Irigaray says, “the becoming of consciousness, of culture, cannot be entrusted to one subject alone; it is engendered in the interaction between two subjectivities irreducible to one another: that of man and that of woman. Thus there no longer exists one sole logos” (Irigaray, 2002, p. 99). It is women’s *logos* that I am attempting to articulate. In this *logos, eros* and narrative are intertwined (Cavarero, 2000).

Sheherazade uses *poïesis* in its broadest sense, in bringing forth life. Ultimately, the poetic voice uses “words that reunite differently earth and sky, the human and the divine” (Irigaray, 2004a, p. 39). Sheherazade reunites differently the human and the divine, and also transforms the relation between two. She uses a (dialogic) language against (monologic) language; that is she develops a language that includes two, which incorporates women’s subjectivity and sexuate

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181 Adriana Cavarero also interrogates this story of the Arabian Nights to discover subjectivity. She says that “narration and conjugal love go together step by step … the tale not only stops death” but weaves a bond of love and respect on both sides (Cavarero, 2000, p. 123).
difference. What did Sheherazade achieve in *erotic logos*? Dubosc utilizes this tale to discuss the masculine position, where the King is redeemed from his revenge against women by the feminine, thus seeing it as a story for men, and the traditional role of muse/saviour/inspiratrix is assigned to women. In my reading, Sheherazade moves from masculine monologic totality, to female subjectivity, to discourse between two, through which the king is changed, transformed. But the emphasis is that she does this on her own terms and creates her own subjectivity. Her language could be described as poetic, but more than that, she finds and uses “the poetic at the bottom of every word” (Lockhart, 1983, p. 97). This is because ‘the poetic’ represents a perspective or state of mind, and carries this valence. Thus poetic use of words is more than representation, and brings us close to the unconscious, rather than distancing us from it. Poetic use speaks something that has not already been said, which has heretofore been hidden from view in plain sight – that is, unconscious. The unconscious motives of the king are revealed to him through the narrative Sheherazade weaves. “Poetry”, (and poïesis) according to Cixous, “exists only by taking strength from the unconscious … where the repressed [women] survive” (Cixous & Clément, 1986, p. 98). Thus according to Cixous, women are close to poetry and the unconscious, and are therefore more than the symbolized. Women and poïesis are able to bring forth that which has not already been spoken, and in so doing they will trouble that which is already codified or understood. This access also allows Sheherazade to speak that which is repressed; this is two-fold, firstly speaking her own position, and secondly she speaks to or for the unconscious of the King, because she sees from this perspective. Being close to the unconscious is an advantage for women/Sheherazade, because they/she can be outside the jurisdiction of the Symbolic and its (mis)representations. I remind the reader that I discussed Luce Irigaray’s idea that women can take on the anima-projections of men, and transform them. The tale of Shererazade can be read as an example of this.
Sheherazade does not merely reproduce the many language-forms available to her, but weaves something unique, clever, and entertaining and reveals the unconscious of the king. I propose Sheherazade as an exemplar for women\textsuperscript{182}, and an archetypal feminine, “older and newer than every history, [who] stays within beginning’s awakening” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 107). My emphasis here is on Sheherazade as lover; she is lover twice over - she is lover of the other, as well as ‘amateur’ philosopher, in that she engages philosophy in a learned way, albeit outside the academy. Le Doeuff (Le Dœuff, 1989) addresses the situation of women who have been relegated an amateur relationship with philosophy by the patriarchal institutional system.\textsuperscript{183} Here ‘amateur’ is a pejorative term, to mean less than serious, not skilful or professional, and possibly part-time and unpaid as well! However, I defer to the Latin origins of the word amateur, meaning ‘to do for the love of’, for pleasure, to be an admirer or devotee, which then returns us to the Latin roots of philosophy, which means lover of wisdom. Emmanuel Lévinas likewise suggests that philosophy should be “the wisdom of love at the service of love” (Lévinas, 1991, p. 162).

In the tale, Sheherazade’s discourse is nocturnal - she weaves her spellbinding stories till just before dawn. There is a risk in placing Sheherazade’s discourse quite literally in the night, however, because it too easily places her in a binary trope of male/day and female/night. This is an instance of Luce Irigaray’s quest to protect the language, subjectivity and divinity of women, “this there, this she there, could be called night. But to do so already would be to catch her up too much, or to invoke her too much, in a language that could not be her own” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 107). Yet Irigaray frequently uses images of the night. For

\textsuperscript{182} Some contemporary Muslim women claim the story of “Scheherazade demonstrates that women need not ‘Westernize’ to expand their rights and roles within their societies, and that Islamic history and literature may provide the most effective tools against Muslim zealots. … To look at Scheherazade anew is to see Muslim women’s life before male-centred customs and interpretations of the Koran consigned girls and women to second-class citizenship” http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/1999/12/Scheherazade-Feminist-Icon.aspx.

\textsuperscript{183} However, she also claims that we can use philosophy to undo or rethink the very same “masculine-feminine divisions that philosophy has helped to articulate and define” (Le Doeuff, 1989, p. 101). This is important to my premise that transformation can and must occur from both within and without (language itself, philosophy as a practice, the institution, etc.).
example, “it is in darkness that we met with one another. Scarcely having built a rudimentary common dwelling – thanks to a few words - we entered into the night” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 44). It is in this night, this darkness that ‘the between’ can begin to grow. Irigaray speaks of “a manner of seeing, speaking and acting that is accompanied by a nocturnal luminosity” (Irigaray, 2010a, pp. 16-17, my emphasis). Such nocturnal luminosity lends itself to the other revealing themselves to us, rather than an impatient imposition upon the other. It is in this nocturnal luminosity that Sheherazade spins her tales.

For Luce Irigaray, the woman’s voice occurs “beyond his language [langue]. …She forever comes and recalls from her place of disappearance: she cries out at night” (Irigaray, 1999, pp. 49, my emphasis). It is not by chance that her disappearance and her emergence are at ‘night’. According to Marie Louise Von Franz, the soft reflected and reflective light of the moon,184 metaphorically speaking, does not hurt the feminine, while the harsh masculine light of day/rationality can be damaging.185 Many things need a dimmer form of light, lest becoming is destroyed. Plants germinate in the dark, and only when they already have a hold on life do they emerge into the light; too much light too soon will kill them. In Arabic al samar ‘speaks in the darkness of the night’, at the edge of ‘normal’ discourse, where identity in the Symbolic is dimmed, and eros sweetly opens a way. This speaking in the darkness of the night is where heart, mind and body open (Calza, 2007). The whole of Sheherazade’s opus is al samar, evening stories, and erotic logos.186 After 1001 nights, Sheherazade and the King emerge into full daylight; the King, representing patriarchal authority, has of his own accord changed many of his attitudes, especially to women, and Sheherazade has woven a subject-place for herself, which had not been available to her before.

184 In chapter five I will engage with the motif of reflectivity, as a necessary activity for women in order to achieve subjectivity. I associate this with the moon and silver, as does the fairy tale, which I analyse in that chapter.
185 In conversation with von Franz’s archivist and translator, Dr Barbara Davies, Zurich 2006.
Sheherazade is not seized by the king and incorporated into his phallogocentrism; instead, she keeps a space open, a threshold. And according to Irigaray’s discussion of the role of the woman, ‘she’ “remains threshold. In what comes to pass in-between - that’s where she stays. … In this world of in-between: light and dark, highest and lowest, this world of threshold where the whole entwines” (Irigaray, 1999, pp. 109-110, my emphasis). Sheherazade is a threshold dweller; she maintains her own subjectivity simultaneously with an awareness of his. To continue night-metaphors, her task is to ‘awaken’ the king; “she still draws him out of sleep: an interruption of present absence that rends his language” (ibid., p. 51). That which rends the language of the king/ symbolic is *erotic logos*; Sheherazade acts as the not-duped one and thus straddles the real and the Symbolic, and undoes the rule of the sky-Father, through a discourse of love, based upon exchange between two different subjects, rather than the monologue of a single subject under which all her predecessors were killed. The exchange is one of love and respect, through words that convey this, and have meaning to both. I argue that contemporary women can apply this understanding as follows: by keeping open a ‘threshold’ (to the real) women can remain in the symbolic, as does Sheherazade, and not be ‘killed’ by it, because one crafts one’s own subjectivity and insists upon it. Through this opening an exchange between two is possible, which is, or becomes, the place of love, through flesh, gesture and word. Cavarero argues, in relation to this tale, that “narration and conjugal love go together step by step … the tale not only stops death” but weaves a bond of love and respect on both sides (Cavarero, 2000, p. 123).

Sheherazade’s simultaneous acceptance and tactical transgression of the Law is akin to Kristeva’s technique of double writing in ‘Stabat Mater’, where she expresses her own subject-position at the same time as expounding the

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187 Cixous, following Lacan, notes that women and men enter into the Symbolic Order, into language as structure, in different ways, or through different doors, and therefore the subject positions open to either sex within the Symbolic are also different. Sheherazade illustrates the way the subject sexed as female does so.
Law/Symbolic. Sheherazade practices a subtle form of double writing, in that her intriguing tales, all of which are taken from the lexicons of the time, also undermine the patriarchal structure from which they are taken. For instance, one of the tales Sheherazade tells is of "Hasib and the Queen of Snakes". It describes the difficulties a young man experiences in his psychological separation from his mother and is full of insights into the difficult confrontation between men and women. The tale shows how Hasib moves from a collective masculine attitude to being able to make up his own mind, and not behave according to the conventions. So Sheherazade has introduced a feminine subject-position, and the ethics toward this subject. Her introduction of these positions simultaneously enables the king/Symbolic to change through his introjection of them.188

Sheherazade avoids execution. By keeping her stories going, she engages the masculine symbolic on her terms, that is by creating a subject-position for herself. And so she lives to see another day, another exposure to the blinding light of the symbolic. The night provides renewal, through her discourse. She ends each narrative with suspense; we must turn the page, must come again tomorrow night.189 The masculine has survived another night too. She avoids the

188 One of Luce Irigaray’s strategies to break open phallogocentric language to include feminine discourse is that of mimesis. This inevitably alters the discourse - and the relationship - between men and women, which she intends as therapeutic. As Jean Byrne puts it, “her idea is that by receiving and interpreting the male unconscious women/Irigaray can help man to know himself and break free from his narcissistic imaginary” (Byrne, 2008, p. 59). In such a way, then, Sheherazade receives, interprets and enables the King to know himself and break free from his narcissistic imaginary.

189 Narrative is a seductive mode of discourse, persuading by an enticing invitation to take up the perspective of the narrator, which excites one's imagination and feeling. Its operations are more like love than war, and thereby follows a mode of persuasion considered to be more suitable for women. These phenomena raise numerous epistemological questions: does the quest for 'masculine' prestige by using 'masculine' methods distort practices of knowledge acquisition? (Addelson 1983; Moulton, 1983) Are some kinds of sound research unfairly ignored because of their association with "feminine" cognitive styles (E. F. Keller, 1985)? Do ‘feminine cognitive styles yield knowledge that is inaccessible or harder to achieve by 'masculine' means? (E. Anderson, 2011; Duran, 1991) While there are undoubtedly different ways of acquiring knowledge - I am relying on different styles in this chapter for instance - I nevertheless believe that to construct these styles along gender lines is problematic; although sexuate difference could indeed account for such difference, (indeed Irigaray would prefer it so) I argue that such knowledge-acquisition is available to both sexes. Furthermore, when certain such knowledge acquisition styles are
foreclosure of a system, which has excluded her and in which is inscribed her death. Sheherazade has created a “world that language ceaselessly would construct and reconstruct” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 124). Unlike phallogocentric language, this renewal is continuous – there is never a time when it is absolutely achieved. However, after 1001 nights the king officially acknowledges what he has been gradually accepting, that is, he acknowledges her separate existence and no longer seeks to kill her.

In chapter one I introduced the idea of multiple archetypes of the feminine, and pause to consider the archetype which Sheherazade might represent. Is it a virginal archetype, such as Hestia? Or a relational archetype such as Aphrodite? What might this tale, and the Handless Maiden in chapters five and six, say to women who identify as lesbian, or who have no relations with men? I argue that the whole phallogocentric culture to which both men and women, (Sheherazade, the handless maiden) are ‘wed’, is the problem, not individual men, marriage per se, or relations with men. Because Luce Irigaray posits sexuate difference as the first and fundamental difference, it enables women to separate from phallogocentrism, and to achieve subjectivity regardless of their sexual preferences. I argue, therefore, that sexuate difference is primary, and the (other) feminine archetypes are secondary. Luce Irigaray, because of her insistence on sexuate difference, has been accused of creating a feminine stereotype, by Amy Hollywood, for instance, who asks, “does Irigaray fetishize women and sexual difference?” (Hollywood, 2002, p. 340). Morny Joy, too, wonders if Irigaray’s insistence on “sexual difference becomes reified in a way that privileges women and their ‘feminine’ spirituality and identifies them with an affirmative ontological ideal” (Joy, 2006, p. 141). Is Luce Irigaray proposing a new feminine stereotype, which is heterosexual and conservative, notwithstanding her earlier concerns for elaborating a multiplicity in the expression of female forms? On the one hand, Irigaray’s multiplicity of singular

privileged, such as ‘pure reason’, and others such as narrative, myth and fairy tale are denigrated, and the denigrated styles are associated with women, this is problematic.
feminine experiences as genealogy contributes to the feminine imaginary, where an individual woman can see her own life as one of the many possibilities of female embodiment. On the other, I contend that Irigaray’s project of establishing sexuate difference does run the risk of being prescriptive (proscriptive?) and definitive, in the following particular way.

As Morny Joy says, “Denial [of any pairing that is not heterosexual] only serves to restrict the diverse ways in which a divine can become manifest in a world that respects differences, and that does not attempt to exclude them, because they threaten one’s own circumscribed worldview” (ibid., p. 160). To imagine that her sexuate difference is heterosexual at all, limits Irigaray’s own definition of sexuate. As Luce Irigaray states, sexuate difference “represents the most basic and universal place of otherness, and it has to be respected in order to respect the other kinds of otherness becoming possible” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 19). If, as Irigaray claims, ‘sexuate’ is articulated through spiritual, bodily, social, linguistic, aesthetic, erotic, and political forms, it is describing women, (and men), not the sexual intercourse in which they may or may not be engaging. Irreducible difference between the sexes, does not equate to lack of difference within each sex. I conclude then, that Luce Irigaray has so reinforced sexuate difference that she appears to cultivate it by privileged heterosexuality. However, a divine which is only, or preferably, modelled on the heterosexual couple risks being as exclusive of difference as a patriarchal, androcentric male God. I argue that a truly feminine subjectivity and divinity is inclusive of all difference. I believe, however, that Irigaray is not as categorical as she appears, (or has been interpreted) but in her concern to develop sexuate difference as a necessary cornerstone to her work, other aspects of her work, which would qualify or modify this position, can be too easily overlooked or diminished. For instance, Irigaray argues for “at least two, male and female”, in regard to the sexes (Irigaray, 1996, pp. 37, my emphasis). This “at least two” is open to conjecture, articulation and development, outside of (or within) sexuate difference. This opens the possibility
for fluid multiplicity in feminine sexuality, which is not merely the opposite of a man’s (Luce Irigaray, 1985, p. 139).

Although my project centres around the feminine, in this chapter focusing on feminine language, and intentionally and inevitably privileges women, I argue that the renewal of language for women will inevitably free men as well, because it frees untapped resources of communication. In the speaking between two, _erotic logos_ will inevitably “develop the relations with oneself and with the other rather than to master the world, especially the living world, through words” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 13). The King was open to Sheherazade’s speaking, his world-view was “questioned by the existence of other words, which open[ed] again the house of language in which [h]e dwells” (ibid., p. 12) My view is that it is in the opening of sexuate difference (and then to all other difference, as emphasized by Luce Irigaray), that psychic growth, flexibility and _love_ can actually arise.\(^ {190} \)

Furthermore, Sheherazade is finally seen as _subject_ - the King sees her _for and as herself_, and in this subjectivity she is no longer objectified. He no longer sees her as representing all women who (might) betray him, but as this particular women who he is now able to love.

I have based this analysis on two different sexuate identities, so we can view Sheherazade as a feminine mode or style, which simultaneously undoes and exists parallel to, the masculine symbolic. Although the symbolic serves a masculine purpose, men suffer various foreclosures of their own which must be undone so they are available for the encounter between two. As I have already articulated, each must “keep on hold one’s own becoming in order to lend assistance to the other’s becoming. …We have not yet reached such a coexistence with the other, or we have already forgotten it” (Irigaray, 2008b, pp. 128-129). In chapter six I argue fully for Luce Irigaray’s ideas on self-affection,

\(^{190}\) In “Belief Itself”, Luce Irigaray’s positions angels as mediators of love, in the ‘between’ (Irigaray, 1993b, pp. 23-53).
(one’s own becoming) as taking precedence; both parties need to attend to their own becoming, as well as being aware of the needs of the other.

**Conclusion**

This chapter evokes that which shimmers beneath language or that which constitutes the nativity of language.\(^{191}\) Without this discussion, the subjects I cover in the other chapters lack an anchor. Yet a paradox remains; that while one is more than one’s words, in that much of experience is pre-linguistic, or non-discursive, one is reliant on words to express or evoke. Simultaneously, words can become the Gods, the fixed idols spoken of by Jung, which can only betray becoming.\(^{192}\) For Luce Irigaray ambiguity is necessary, so that the saying never gets completely said, so that both language and one’s self are ever coming into being, becoming. This I place as the essence of feminine language. *Erotic logos* communicates (between two), and does not merely transmit information in the manner of the language required and disseminated by science and technology.

Is a radical departure from phallogocentric images of the divine possible, toward something specifically suited to women? In the next chapter, “Mysticism as the Feminine Divine” I return to the notion that men and women have different spiritual paths, and suggest that feminine spirituality must be founded on experiences, and framed by theories, that provide a container for the specific imaginary, language, interiority and psychology of women.

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\(^{191}\) A specific conflict arose while writing this chapter: the academy privileges objectivity, where the subjectivity of the writer disappears. Yet the task of Sheherezade was to insert her subjectivity, so she would not disappear within the Symbolic that excluded her. Is it the case, then, that as a woman describes the experience of *jouissance* by speaking it, she re-enter the symbolic order and loses her *jouissance*? Is it “impossible to sing the dream of the Feminine within the inadequate masculine speech” (Schroeder, 1998, p. 290)?

\(^{192}\) Jung sees the Word as a “pathologizing deity because religious literalism and historicism have severed the Word from the abyss which precedes it and so reduced it to an empty rationalism” (Dourley, 2006, p. 175).
Chapter Four: Mysticism as the Feminine Divine

“Another world is not only possible, she is on the way. On a quiet day I can hear her breathing.” Arundhati Roy

Introduction

This chapter is a radical gesture towards stating a feminist philosophy of religion, namely one that does not posit a feminine subject within a masculinist religious framework or philosophy, which emphasizes instead the lived experience of an embodied feminine subject. I propose that mysticism is a direct response or access to the numinous, that is to say an affective, living experience that overflows the boundaries of the ego. Rather than rely on customs and habits of the past, which are based on a masculine imaginary, I aim to use a female imaginary toward a new relation with the divine. We are indebted to Michèle Le Dœuff for her inquiry into the ‘philosophic imaginary’ in which she investigated “the problematic conception of women and the ideals of divine knowledge which have silenced women within the long tradition of western philosophy” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 10).

I argue that mysticism as a feminine divine is a means by which women can discover a feminine divine which “establishes her contact with the divine outside the masculine framework” (Filipczak, 2004, p. 213), that is, a feminine transcendence. I define, discuss, and amplify mysticism as feminine spirituality. I contrast the possibility of a feminine divine apprehended and experienced in the mystical with a masculine divine enclosed within the symbolic and codified in religious dogma/ theory. I do not necessarily draw these distinctions on gender lines, however. I argue that mysticism is a manifestation of the feminine divine,

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194 See Le Dœuff’s The Philosophical Imaginary (Le Dœuff, 1989).
195 Pasolini, in his film Medea, “understands Medea’s ‘spiritual catastrophe’ - and it stands for the spiritual catastrophe of all women as they come under the subjugation of patriarchal tradition (King, 2009, p. 160).
and spell out what it means and how it is possible. I introduced the terms ‘divine feminine’ and ‘feminine divine’ in the Introduction. I defined the ‘feminine divine’ as that which Luce Irigaray calls for in the form of a divine of their own for women, and the ‘divine feminine’ as that which she calls for in “becoming divine” for women, namely their spirituality (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 68).¹⁹⁶ Both of these concepts are integral to this chapter, and are related to the transformation of the divine, which I also explore.

I have prepared the way for this discussion. In chapter one, I detailed the specifics of feminine experience as prelude to mysticism as spiritual experience. In chapter two I argued for the inclusion of women’s body and flesh in considering spirituality, to lay the foundations for a sensible aspect. A bodily experience - one’s own breath - underpins my current discussion. In chapter three I argued that jouissance is a feminine position, which enables direct access to the divine.

I begin by providing a definition of (feminine) spiritual experience, and then proceed to discuss what ‘God-in-the-feminine’ might be. This leads us to a definition of mysticism and the numinous, which are both key concepts in this chapter and provide the fulcrum around which all other discussion is balanced. I equate a feminine mystical spirituality with libidinal energy, in contrast with the masculine spirituality of credo; I suggest that feminine jouissance is associated with divinity in the feminine. As I define it, mysticism is a body/spirit confluence, an experience of the sensible/transcendental as articulated by Luce Irigaray, and I argue that mysticism expresses a continuum between women and a (feminine) divine.

¹⁹⁶ Howie and Jobling note that, increasingly, the ‘divine’ is “emerging from feminist theology as a central category of critical thought” (Howie & Jobling, 2009, p. 2), so my discussion of the ‘divine’ contributes substantially to contemporary feminist theological inquiry.
Before I begin my discussion, let me note that there are many different mystical traditions, both theistic and non-theistic.\textsuperscript{197} Although my comments relate to Christian mysticism, it can be argued that mysticism is actively cultivated in the esoteric aspects of most, if not all, religious systems.\textsuperscript{198} The Sufis, for instance, constitute the esoteric branch of Islam, where direct experience of the divine is courted. In Hinduism and Buddhism, direct experience is part of the daily practice of cultivation.\textsuperscript{199} Broadly speaking,\textsuperscript{200} mystical traditions might be characterised by experiences of the numinous, ineffability,\textsuperscript{201} states of loss of ego-awareness often described as one-ness or unity, with a concomitant change in attitude to life as a whole,\textsuperscript{202} and possibly states of ecstasy.

I am going to focus on the \textit{numinous}, namely a strong spiritual quality indicating or suggesting the presence of a divinity, which seems to be present in many, if not all, traditions. I argue that the intense experience of the \textit{numinous} does not equate with a belief in ‘God’, especially the male God of androcentric religious

\textsuperscript{197} This is Eric Neumann’s assessment of mystical forms: “The mystical man [sic] may be designated as religious, since all his life he consciously or unconsciously confronts the numinous: but he need not necessarily be a believer in God. Our insight into the scope and ubiquity of the mystical phenomenon shows that there are theistic, atheistic, pantheistic and panentheistic, but also materialistic and idealistic, extraverted and introverted, personal and transpersonal forms of mystical experience. The experience of God as a sacred adventure represents only one specific, experimental, form of mysticism; it is by no means the most common and perhaps not even the most significant. But all mystical forms have in common the intensity of experience, the revolutionary, dynamic impetus of a psychological event, which takes the ego out of the structure of consciousness; and in all of them the numinous appears as the antithesis of consciousness. Mysticism is not a religious experience as such” (Neumann, 1969, p. 381).

\textsuperscript{198} This is supported by Roberts Avens, when he says: “Historically, gnosis constitutes the esoteric in the official or exoteric religious traditions of the world” (Avens, 1984, p. 132).

\textsuperscript{199} Direct experience does not necessarily presume direct experience of a divine \textit{object}, however. Hinduism and Buddhism cultivate different modes of direct experience, and address different issues, for example seeing things as they really are in comparison to merging with Brahman.

\textsuperscript{200} As outlined by William James in \textit{The Varieties of Religious Experience} (James, 2008).

\textsuperscript{201} “Ineffability is a nearly universal feature of mystical experience. There can be no doubt that such experiences are indescribable in language. Neither can it be denied that such experiences do not consist only in the expression of language” (Penner, 1983, p. 83). I will question this assumption of ineffability.

\textsuperscript{202} According to John Sanford, who uses a Jungian framework to discuss mysticism, “certain deep elements of the psyche can only be known through ecstasy, through experiences through which the ego, paradoxically, ‘loses’ its usual self in order to know its deeper Self” (Sanford, 1995, p. 108), and from which a new perspective naturally arises.
systems, and this distinction helps to extract women’s spirituality from an androcentric system, while still retaining their experience of the numinous. As Eric Neumann points out, however, although an encounter with the numinous is often, if not invariably, described in religious language, it is an experience which is not religious as such (Neumann, 1969, p. 381).

As I have already argued, woman’s spirituality necessarily encompasses the sensible/transcendental, and because this includes female sexuate difference, I argue that it will be intrinsically different from that of men. But, if mysticism is manifestation of the feminine divine, various questions must be asked. Is experience of the feminine divine available to men as well as to women? Is this question parallel to asking if the masculine divine is available to women as well as men? Are male and female divine then, to be drawn on sexual or sexuate lines? If we do not draw sexuate lines, do we create the confusion of men and women being ‘devil to each other’ as claimed by Jung? If not, what other differentiations are adequate? I pose these questions because they frame my inquiry, and acknowledge that this work will progress us towards provisional, rather than definitive, answers.

**Spiritual Experience**

I argue for the term ‘spiritual’ rather than ‘religious’, when investigating feminine spiritual experience, because the former allows for experience outside an established religious framework, while the latter relies upon it. I argue first for a spiritual experience that occurs to those with a developed interiority. Second, that this experience occurs in very different cultures. Third, that spiritual experience is not necessarily of a transcendent object, but that it directs us towards a horizon, which is in excess of the limited concerns of the personality. Fourth, that spiritual experience includes the body, and thus is not transcendent of the

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203 Monotheisms are inherently intolerant of other gods, and I have no desire to create another ‘monotheistic’ approach, in regard to feminine spirituality.

204 Barbara Newman cautions us that “experience of the divine is such that no historical reconstruction can be more than partial and provisional” (Newman, 1995, p. 17), therefore it is imperative that we do not imagine that the experiences of the medieval mystics, for instance, are contiguous with our own.
body. Fifth, that spiritual experience is different for men and women. I contend that this difference has been masked because women have been included, and subsumed, in masculine religious systems. This has led to certain experiences - more likely to be had by women - to being viewed pejoratively, such as that of women mystics. I will refer back to these points as I develop this chapter.

If we imagine that the notion of spiritual experience is not an empty idea, but rather an experience that all kinds of people have, what might this be? Is it an experience of an external, absolute other? Luce Irigaray observes that we attribute to some eternal “Other - God, Ideal, Idea – what we discover about ourselves” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 127). So do we, as Luce Irigaray suggests, experience ourselves, perhaps on a different ‘horizon’, in spiritual experience? Seen from this perspective, spiritual experience is a matter of inner experience, mediated as it might be by symbolic or archetypal factors, and attributed as it might then be to the external Other, to God. It is also therefore, a matter of interiority. I agree with Anne Ulanov’s view, when she claims that we “receive our authority on the basis of actual experience” (Ulanov, 1981, p. 133), and in so doing I privilege experience over theory, and personal experience over collective views. I also privilege experience over logos, as does George Bataille when he says “words have something of quicksand about them. Only experience is the rope that is thrown to us”.

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205 As Janice Soskice asks, “why should disengagement from the society of the emotional and sensual world be our path to spiritual excellence?” (Soskice, 2004, p. 215). Rather, “let us suppose that our affections and even our animal responses, properly attended to, are not distractions but guides to what we are and to the love of God” (ibid., p. 206).

206 In a similar vein, C. G. Jung argued that “all the old ideas of God, indeed thought itself, and particularly numinous thought, have their origins in experience” (C. G. Jung, 1977, Volume 11, § 469, emphasis mine). This infers that that new ideas of ‘God’ are also based upon experience.

207 In addition to theory or doctrine arising from experience, we could also say that theory assists us in integrating experience, that is, that theory works both ways. Iris Marion Young says explicitly that theory, to be valid, “must help people understand and describe their experience” (I. M. Young, 2005, p. 15).

Let me spell out what I mean by ‘women’s spiritual experience’, because retrieving spiritual authority for and by individual women is important. Irigaray places this same emphasis: “Becoming divine is ... a passage that everyone must realize by oneself, alone. Nobody can accomplish this process in my place, for me” (Irigaray, 2004b, p. 165). For her, “divinity is what we need to become free, autonomous, sovereign” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 62). But what kind of divinity? Which paradigm, which archetype of spirituality? Perhaps becoming divine is related to becoming “one’s ownmost possibilities”, following Heidegger. Thomas Merton posited the existence of “some point at which I can meet God in a real and experimental contact with his [sic] infinite actuality” (Merton, 1972, p. 37). I would also add ‘finite actuality’, in agreement with the sensible aspect of Luce Irigaray’s sensible/transcendental. It is this personal experience for which I argue, in relation to women’s spirituality.209

**What do I Mean by Mysticism and Numinous?**

Before we go any further, we need to explore more fully what is meant by ‘mysticism’ and ‘numinous’, and upon this foundation I will lay my particular use of these terms.

**Mysticism**

Bernard McGinn defines the response of an individual to immediate divine presence as the proper use of the term mysticism (McGinn, 1987, p. 7).210 Yet what might this immediate divine presence be? The sixth century writer, Dionysus, applied the word *mystical* in his *Theologia Mystica*. He describes Moses as climbing the mountain and entering into darkness. According to William Johnson, “this Dionysian darkness is what we would now call an altered state of consciousness. It is the state of a mind emptied of discursive and conceptual

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209 According to Pamela Sue Anderson, “the fascinating specificity of mystical feelings depend upon the sexually specific relation of male and female to the mother” (P. S. Anderson, 1998, p. 108). Whether this “fascinating specificity” can actually be drawn on male/female lines exclusively, or is as much informed by individual psychology, or relations between any specific mother/child dyad, is another question.

210 Other theorists are less certain about the definition of mysticism: “The various attempts at defining mysticism clearly suggest that there is simply no identifiable subject to study” (Ching, 1983, p. 94).
thinking and remaining silent and empty” (W. Johnston, 1993, p. 228). Johnston does not frame the mystical in terms of divine presence, but rather a silent state, which is cultivated through breathing and meditation, as advocated by Irigaray and as practiced in yoga and other mind/body disciplines. We can deduce from this that the mystical mind can be cultivated and developed, and that it involves an “altered state of consciousness”. This idea sounds very esoteric, so I prefer the notion of a change in perspective. The essential distinguishing feature of the mystic is that (s)he lives and thinks non-dualistically, and thinking non-dualistically is what actually constitutes mysticism (Rohr, 2009). This non-dualist thinking results in an entirely different experience of being. (Conversely, the experience of the numinous results in non-dual thinking.) We could say then, that mysticism is the capacity to live and think from the perspective of non-duality. So, when Jean Byrne argues for non-dual oneness she is using those terms to argue for what I understand to be the perspective or attitude of the mystic (Byrne, 2008). How, then, might non-dual thinking and a radical change in perspective be related to the numinous and embodied transcendence?

The Numinous
When Rudolph Otto, German philosopher and historian of religion, wrote of the numinosum, (from numen, spirit) he was attempting to understand the ultimate non-rational dimensions of religious experience, which “entrances the soul” (Otto, 2004, pp. 12,26,42). The mysterium tremendum is one of the forms which the numinous takes, and is the non-rational encounter that is “beyond conception or understanding, extraordinary and unfamiliar” (ibid., p. 13) which causes astonishment, awe, and sometimes fear. In Otto’s view the numinous was ‘wholly

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211 The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy defines mysticism as: “A (purportedly) super sense-perceptual or sub sense-perceptual experience granting acquaintance of realities or states of affairs that are of a kind not accessible by way of sense perception, somatosensory modalities, or standard introspection” (Gellman, 2011).

212 Could someone who thinks non-dualistically not be a mystic? This question is beyond the scope of my present inquiry.

213 Otto used the Latin mysterium tremendens et fascinans to cover all or some of the following: awe or dread in the face of the numinous; overpowering presence of majesty; intense unbearable energy; the sense of a wholly other; a fascination with or attraction to the numen followed by rapture in contact with it.
other’ and experienced by affect rather than intellect; he said “the nature of the numinous can only be suggested by means of the special way in which it is reflected in the mind in terms of feeling” (ibid., p. 12). However, it is not only the ‘wholly other’ that evokes astonishment and even fear, and which could then to be said to be numinous.

Pamela Sue Anderson argues that “feelings of fascination and horror are produced by awareness of one’s differentiation from the other and one’s finitude; this fascination recalls the experience of undifferentiated being as the earliest sense of the infinite” (P. S. Anderson, 1998, p. 107). Julia Kristeva also speaks of “the fascination and horror that a different being produces in us” (Kristeva, 1995, pp. 29-30). Otto’s notion of the mysterium tremendens et fascinans covered the fascination and horror experienced in relation to the ‘wholly other’. Could it be, then, that enduring the experience of radical otherness engenders a tolerance of that otherness? Thus is it possible that the experience of the numinous enables a toleration of otherness (of the human other, of the Self as other), or perhaps the converse – does the radical toleration of human otherness opens one to numinous experience? I conjecture further that a radical understanding of one’s self – one’s differentiation, as argued by Anderson - gained through, for instance, spiritual contemplation, yoga or meditation practices, and personal application of depth-psychology including dream analysis, enables one to withstand the radical awareness of the otherness of (any) ‘other’, where the ‘fascination’ and ‘horror’ are, or become, endurable and transformed.

The particular aspect of mysticism that I am investigating here from a feminist point of view is the numinous. Notwithstanding the difficulty of discussing the numinous, primarily because it resists both logos and rationality, it is essential to my argument. Lucy Huskinson cautions that “an intellectual pursuit of [the

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214 A fundamental question is whether numinosity is a quality of interiority or whether it is something external to one’s-self. Or is it something that we discover about ourselves, and then presume the source to be outside ourselves? Or is it something of ourselves, which we then project onto an external object or person outside ourselves? When we say ‘interior’, do we mean
numinous] will push it further away from ego-comprehension” (Huskinson, 2006, p. 200). An intellectual pursuit of the numinous is exactly what I am undertaking here, however, and I argue that it is possible to make clear what is understandable by ego, and what is understandable by soul or Self. Huskinson further suggests that “the numinous is an affective, living experience that overflows the boundaries of the ego” and although “it cannot be understood on an objective level, it can be known subjectively, in a personal relationship pregnant with meaning” (ibid., my emphasis). She adds a point that is most integral to my argument: “One’s relationship with the numen can be communicated effectively to another person, who is also in a living relationship with it” (ibid., my emphasis). If we attempt to communicate the numinous - or the mystical - to someone embedded in rationality, or using the language of rationality, it will be incomprehensible to that other. However, I believe that one’s living relationship with numen, can, as Huskinson suggests, be communicated, because it represents a perspective, or, as Johnston said, above, an “altered state of consciousness,” that is, a move away from ego-orientation, towards non-duality. In this way, while experiences of the numinous might resist description, they are not ineffable, as often claimed, for instance by Otto. Rather, they resist rational comprehension. This situation arises when we are too eager to take ‘logically deviant’ (Gellman, 2011) language at its most literal. For the researcher William Alston, mystics have much to say about their experiences and about God (Alston, 1991), though they refer to the difficulty of speaking in literal terms, and prefer metaphor, analogy, and symbols. Alston contends that this difficulty of speaking in literal terms is common in diverse fields - science, philosophy, and religion.

A productive example of cross-disciplinary benefit is a critique of the thinking of feminist philosophy of religion by the psychology of enlightenment, where the

inside the specific psychic confines of an individual, or do we mean interior as a quality of life that requires a particular attitude of mind - interiorly-oriented – in order to perceive? For my purposes here, I argue that ‘interiority’ is a way of perceiving, and as such neither interior nor exterior to that person, but both.
ineffable and numinosity are examined. One of the earliest female thinkers to investigate mysticism, Evelyn Underhill, for example, emphasizes the mystic way as an arduous psychological process that entails a complete remaking of character (Underhill, 1955, p. 57). Various researchers have focussed on the difference between delusional states and the ‘enlightened’ ones of ‘true’ mysticism. P. S. Anderson argues that “without a balance of equality and reciprocity between male and female subjects to ensure the justice of interpersonal relations, theism can easily reinforce the problem of a self-annihilating mysticism within patriarchal societies” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 62). Rather than promoting self-annihilation, which is undoubtedly present in mysticism within patriarchal societies and is well documented by many researchers, what I am proposing in this chapter is one of self-transformation.

Nor is my argument theistic, because I am arguing for an encounter with the numinous as a spiritual, rather than religious experience, which is not predicated upon, or framed within, theism or the belief in ‘God.’ It is not based on belief, but experience.

Returning to the necessity for intersubjectivity for the ‘true’ mystic, St Teresa of Avila taught that there is a kind of pride and human self-conceit in wanting by deliberate effort and technique to attain to an experience of the divine essence while bypassing the person of one’s fellow human being (the Man-God, in her words) as though he were an obstacle. She claimed that one of the first dangers of mystical experience is flight from ordinary life and withdrawal into one’s own world. Yet it seems to me that the mystical process requires an extreme introversion, while the result of experience of the numinous is a return to extraversion, a return to the world. The transformed states of being are shown or demonstrated and given form through all kinds of work. We could even say that

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215 For instance Kenneth Wapnick (Wapnick, 1972) and David Lukoff (Lukoff, 1985).
the major wellsprings of creative work lie in the experience of the *numinous*, regardless of the field in which they occur.

Before continuing my discussion of the *numinous*, I pause to consider the notion of the *ineffable*, because it has been such a central element in discussions within philosophy of religion, including contemporary debate,\(^\text{217}\) as shown by P. S. Anderson’s assertion: “Serious attempts to communicate the *ineffable* in new ways have become part of the productive project of feminist philosophy today” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 86). *Ineffability* is considered to be an essential part of *apophatic* mysticism, whereas in *kataphatic* mysticism what is experienced is indeed expressible.\(^\text{218}\) According to Fr. Thomas Keating, Christian mysticism has strongly endorsed God’s being *unknowable* (Gellman, 2011) and therefore is presumed to be *ineffable*. For some philosophers, *ineffable* seems to constitute a derogatory term signifying obfuscation, refusal, denial or absence (perhaps of rationality). Grace Jantzen, for example, critiques *ineffability* as an intentional removal of rational scrutiny, placing mystical experiences, perhaps correctly, into the realm of feelings (Jantzen, 1995, p. 344). This would concur with Feuerbach’s idea that “religious *feeling* is the organ of the divine” (Feuerbach, 1844, p. 29, my emphasis), which I will visit again shortly.

Is the *ineffable* a trustworthy source of knowledge? I contend that it is indeed valid and the gender, and therefore the specific material bodies of the experiencer do influence their approach to and experience of both the infinite and the ineffable. In this I concur with the project of P. S. Anderson “to expose the unacknowledged role of gender in timely matters such as ineffable knowledge and mystical practice” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 79). Undoubtedly, new knowledge and new concepts can be gained from examining these experiences,

\(^{217}\) According to William James, (James, 2008, pp. 380-381) “ineffability” or indescribability is an essential mark of the mystical. It is not always clear, however, whether it is the experience or its alleged object, or both, that are to be ineffable (Gellman, 2011).

\(^{218}\) *Apophatic* from the Greek, “apophasis,” meaning negation or “saying away”, and *kataphatic* from “kataphasis,” meaning affirmation or “saying with” (Gellman, 2011).
especially from the perspective of feminist philosophy of religion. P.S. Anderson conducts a lively debate on this subject, with many nuances, which I do not presume to engage in here (ibid., pp. 75-79).

However, one debate I would like to enter is the question P. S. Anderson poses. Referring to the binary thinking of western philosophy where the masculine is equated with the limited, and the feminine with the unlimited, she asks: “are men always associated with one side of this binary? Gender theorists might have expected an affirmative answer. Their assumption would, then, be that men are linked to the limited and the effable, while women are associated with the unlimited and the ineffable” (ibid., p. 76). Thus, a linking of “ineffability and (female mysticism) raises all sorts of significant ontological, metaphysical and epistemological issues” (ibid., p. 79). If we take ‘finite’ and ‘infinite’ to be two sides of a duality, my argument here dismantles this duality by positioning ‘true’ mysticism as embracing and embodying both poles, the ‘finite’ or bodily aspect, and the ‘infinite’ or transcendent aspect, which is evident in my term embodied transcendence, and Luce Irigaray’s sensible/transcendental does likewise. Another approach to the question of duality is to argue for the masculine and feminine spiritualities as two different archetypes, rather than two poles of a duality. When I argue for mysticism as a feminine divine, I am not implying that the gender of the experiencer is female, as will become evident as I proceed.

Before I leave this section on the ineffable, I suggest that there has been a major confusion between the ineffable and the confrontation with the numinous itself. If we read “the numinous” or “contact with the numinous” i.e. the cause, in the place of ineffability i.e. the effect, I believe we can shed some new understanding on this subject. However, it is far beyond the scope of this present work to take this discussion any further, and I now return to my consideration of the numinous.

Let us look at Jung’s understanding of the numinous. He took up Otto’s notion of the numinous, and used it in his own way. In his opinion it was not essentially
religious, but claimed that the *numinosum* is “a dynamic agency or effect not caused by an arbitrary act of will... that causes a peculiar alteration of consciousness” (C. G. Jung, 1977, Volume 11, § 6). Huskinson is critical of what she terms Jung’s misappropriation of the *numinous*, believing he “is too quick to incorporate Otto’s term into his own theory” (Huskinson, 2006, p. 202), primarily because Jung did not differentiate sufficiently between the *numinous* and the ‘holy’, or exhibit an understanding that the latter incorporates the unification of both the rational and non-rational, in a way which would have been very useful to Jung’s own idea of individuation.

Notwithstanding this criticism, Jung’s approach to the *numinous* is useful because, rather than privilege an androcentric *transcendence* where the bodily is evaded or transcended, he claims that the *numinous* constitutes a “creative undoing of the rule of the Sky-Father over texts in the widest sense of cultural signifying” (Rowland, 2006, pp. 104, my emphasis). Implicit in the “creative undoing of the rule of the Sky-Father”, is the removal of *logocentrism*. Thus, Jung sees the Word as a “pathologizing deity because religious literalism and historicism have severed the Word from the abyss which precedes it and so reduced it to an empty rationalism” (Dourley, 2006, p. 175). Inasmuch as the Logos/Word is the “central figure of the Christian faith”, it has alienated the “individual and society from the numinosity of their roots” (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 10, §265).219 One may conclude that the removing of the rule of the Sky-Father paves the way, certainly for women, for an immanent feminine divine where the ‘numinosity of our roots’ is prior to culture, prior to social construction, and prior to logos.

The feminine divine as mysticism, as direct access to the *numinous*, constitutes, then, a return to their roots for society in general and women in particular. The radical removal of the “pathology of logocentrism” in current religion and society

219 As corollary to the logos-myth, “transcendent mind is a ‘masculine’ creative principal working on inert ‘feminine’ matter” (Rowland, 2006, p. 101). By undoing the *logos*, we also free feminine/matter.
would entail the rewriting of the Gospels, or thinking about them differently, however. “In the beginning” could no longer be the Word. “In the beginning would be the silence of the nothing from which the Word and the world proceed and in whom they continue to dwell”, as John Dourley argues (Dourley, 2006, p. 177). Thus the beginning, here posed by Dourley as ‘silence’, could be experienced as *numinous*, rather than *logos*. This silence enables the return to the pre-logos *numinous* and a feminine divine. In chapter six I spell out how Luce Irigaray advocates ‘silence’ for feminine becoming.

Feminist thinkers such as Daly (Daly, 1973) and Goldenberg (N. Goldenberg, 1979) point out the dichotomy between the holy and the creaturely that underpins Otto’s androcentric analysis; that is, that androcentric analysis privileges the *transcendent* at the expense of the *sensible*. Feminist theologians stress the *immanent* nature of *numinous* experience, and emphasize women’s experience of the holy *in their fleshly embodiment*. There is much scope for the further study of gender in spiritual experience and mysticism.

My last words in this section are to argue that feminine experience of the *numinous* is indeed through the flesh; Cedrus Monte proposes flesh itself as *numen* (Monte, 2005). She argues that matter can be a source of the *numinous* experience. This recalls Brown’s notion of two streams of mysticism, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. The Apollonian in his terms is sublimated and flees from the body, and the Dionysian is that “which stays with life, which is the body, and seeks to transform and perfect it” (Brown, 1959, p. 310). Brown argued for, “in tradition Christian terms, *the resurrection of the body*” (ibid., p. 307, emphasis mine). Monte’s view is that for anyone “who has spent so much time in the Absolute, perhaps embodiment and reconnecting with instinct and feeling *is* the resurrection” (Monte, , emphasis mine). This represents a return to, or the achievement of, the *sensible/ transcendental*. An example of this is seen in

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For Otto likewise, silence is *numinous*, and the response to the *numinous* is silence. Jerome Gellman acknowledges the gender difference in mystical experiences, for instance (Gellman, 2011).
Ramakrishna, a man, whose cultivation through *bramachrya* or breathing practice resulted in an experience “in which it seemed that all the pores of the skin were like female sex organs and intercourse were taking place over the whole body” (cited by Sovatsky, 1987, p. 41). Let me explain how this is an example of the *sensible/transcendental*. For the moment let us put aside the question of sexuate difference, and instead concentrate on the *numen* of the flesh. It is clear that Ramakrishna’s experience of the *numen* is bodily, in the present time, and not transferred to a transcendent object. Could it be that the cultivation of the breath specifically, and the body in general, leads to experiencing the *numen of the flesh*? The notion of the *numen of the flesh* is very different to that of Otto or Jung, for whom the *numinous* comprised the ‘Wholly Other’, which took one outside oneself. The *numen* of one’s own flesh, or in one’s own flesh, combines the notions of bodily *jouissance* and transcendence as evident in my term for women’s spirituality, ‘embodied transcendence’. I will return to *jouissance* later in this chapter. Is it possible that ‘embodied transcendence’, especially if we keep in mind the notion of *numinosity* in relation to one’s incarnation, evades interpretation or mediation in or from the Symbolic? Is there a relationship between embodied transcendence and unmediated experience?

**Transformation of Divinity**

I now consider the idea that divinity is shaped by *human*, thus *sexuate*, experience. As such, this opens the way to a divine in feminine terms. Jung and his contemporaries, Edward Edinger and Erich Neumann, proposed that divinity itself is shaped by human experience, just as much as the divine shapes human experience. Edinger argued that “the ego and the Self make overtures to each other, the end result of which is the transformation of God through a double process of the humanizing of the Self and the deifying of the ego”

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222 In patriarchal religious forms, “that which women shall represent has been designated not by she herself but by man” (Hampson, 2009, p. 179).
223 This is not to say that the ‘divine’ is a projection - it could equally be an introjection.
Likewise, Luce Irigaray asks if “God undergoes his [sic] own process of development” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 70)? I argue that we can allow that previous god-images, including that of a phallogocentric Judeo/Christian tradition, can be transformed by our own (feminine) 'dialogue' with the divine, and our own experience of the ego. This can be done, according to Jung, by confronting the 'untransformed' or 'evil' aspect of God (in Jung’s terms, the devil) in our own psyche and events around us. According to Jung, God’s development or individuation process requires assimilation of unconscious (shadow) aspects, which, importantly for my argument, includes the feminine alongside the finite, and evil. If God needs to integrate the feminine, as Jung asserts, and our development influences God’s, then the labours employed by philosophers, eco-feminists, and all those working for the liberation of the feminine, are influencing God in this integration. Jung argues that this conscious transformation modifies both ‘God’ and self by humanizing divinity and spiritualizing the ego (C. G. Jung, 1977, Volume 11, §553-758). In this process, the assumed human/divine divide is dissolved. I argue that this dissolution of the human/ divine divide, the annulment, is the site of mystical experience, which was also expressed by Neumann, who claims that in “the two poles of the

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224 I use Self in the Jungian sense, as the suprordinate aspect of the psyche, which is most often that which is projected onto ‘God’ or external transcendent objects. It might equally be called the "God within us" (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 7, §399). The ego is the functioning personality.

225 Jung discusses the question of ‘evil’ extensively throughout "Answer to Job", so an ultimate definition is not possible, however a working definition in this context is that evil signifies that something previously good has turned into something harmful, particularly by becoming unconscious (C. G. Jung, 1977, pp. 355-475). This is true of ‘the feminine’.

226 Jung’s “Answer to Job” (C. G. Jung, 1977, pp. 355-475), is one of Jung’s most controversial works, and his most extensive commentary on a biblical text. In my Introduction, I proposed a “critique of masculine epistemologies, and the underlying unconscious assumptions”. Jung’s text is essentially psychoanalysis of the Old Testament Jahveh. Jung aligns the psyche of God with that of his subjects, and of particular importance to my argument here, he indicts God for his lack of the feminine, and charges both God and humankind to address this imbalance by assimilating the feminine. Jung describes the feminine that needs integrating, “Sophia”, as having a “pneumatic nature” and “as the cosmogenic Pneuma she pervades heaven and earth and all created beings” (C. G. Jung, 1977, §611, 613). I have already made the connection between the feminine, and pneuma, and cultivating the breath as a specific act of becoming, in the earlier section, “Cultivating the Breath” in chapter two. In a joint paper with Zeena Elton (Elton & Gersch, 2012), I take up Jung’s proposal that the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin in 1950 was a necessary development because, in Jung’s words, “the feminine, like the masculine, demands an equally personal representation” (C. G. Jung, 1977, Vol. 11, § 753), both in the human and divine realms.
encounter which we designate as mystical, the ego as well as the non-ego, are transformed in a process by which the dividing line between them is annulled from both sides” (Neumann, 1969, p. 382). Thus the transformational space - for ‘God’ and ego – is the encounter with the numinous, or better the numinosum itself. This gives me grounds to argue that the confluence of body/ego and spirit/non-ego, is possible, and they come together in an intersection and pivot around each other.

Another way in which the concept of God can be transformed is through the removal of parental imagos. In other words, if our notion of divinity is based upon ideals of father and mother, we remain governed by father and mother archetypes. Of this notion of Gods as parental imagos, Luce Irigaray has this to say: “We set them up in some way as idealized parental authorities, we take them as unattainable models for our evolution, we submit ourselves to their decisions, real or presumed” (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 355). For women particularly, it is necessary to remove themselves from the father imago, from a paternal God, so at the very least they can become a mother’s daughter. In this way a woman is oriented to a feminine, rather than, masculine divine, and feminine subjectivity, rather than subjectivity founded on masculine terms.

I consider that monotheism - the father God - is a very limited lens through which both masculine and feminine spirituality might be viewed, or through which we might view our spirituality. Mike King reminds us that our Western religious monotheism is a specific archetype of spiritual life, which is by no means universal. Furthermore, we need to be careful that women’s spiritual experience is not framed as a translation of male transcendence. King says “for a proper understanding of the spiritual life and the nature of, and possibilities for, women’s spirituality, we need a broader language of the spiritual than monotheism can provide” (King, 2009, p. 153).²²⁷ In this context, King questions the sexuate

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²²⁷ Women “have different sensibilities, employ different paradigms. Indeed, one could well read women’s involvement in past religion as a straining at the leash to be allowed to conceive of
delineation of spirituality. For him, “the transcendent modality of the spirit requires that gender as ‘a modification of the mind’ is suspended altogether in ecstatic absorption (or enstatic as Georg Feuerstein prefers it). Why should women (or men, for that matter) be deprived of any of these modalities of the spirit?” (King, 2009, p. 169). While King is arguing for a context in which to understand women’s spirituality as different from men, he is also saying that certain spiritual states go beyond the sex/gender differences. Luce Irigaray prefers the terms enstasis or standing within, a term of internality, rather than ecstasies or standing without, a term of externality, as I noted earlier. In focussing on mysticism as feminine divine, I am, in effect, not choosing the archetype of Patriarchal Monotheism, but I am directed instead by the mystical/shamanic. My position is therefore not merely in opposition or counterpoint to the masculine/patriarchal/monotheistic, that is, not merely positing, say a Goddess, but proposing a different spiritual archetype for women through mysticism. This is important because I can speak on sexuate lines, but also allow for diversity, which may include men, and here I can agree with King. Diversity celebrates plurality, for which I argued in my Introduction. Put another way, diversity incorporates the simultaneous activity of more than one archetype.

How, then, does the development of God, the transformation of divinity, relate to the spiritual experience of women and a feminine divine? Before I proceed, I need to make a distinction between the transforming of God and divinity, and transformation of human concepts of God and divinity. While I will be emphasizing the latter, in terms of a feminine face of God as a human concept,

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things otherwise: consider Julian of Norwich’s metaphors. We must surely employ the paradigms of wholeness, not those that imply opposition or separation” (Hampson, 2009, p. 185).

228 Enstasis is borrowed from the Greek, and means ‘standing into’, in contrast with ecstasy, which means to stand outside of (Friesen, 2011).

229 Ideas of the divine, the “concrete imagery and form of the religion are not incidental, but rather intrinsic to what ‘God’ has been for us” (Hampson, 2009, p. 173). Conversely we can argue that for God to be different for women - that is a divine suited to a woman subject - imagery and form must be transformed. It is not so much that redemption is required, but that our concepts of the divine to be redeemed. Daphne Hampson argues that a feminine sense or presence of ‘God’ would be open, amorphous, and ‘translucent’, rather than the fixed boundaries and borders of a masculine divine which has prevailed in masculine thought (Hampson, 2009, p. 175).
underneath this is the idea that ‘God’ actually changes as human beings change. Irigaray relies on the Feuerbachian argument that “progressive development of religion is identical with the progressive development of human culture” (Feuerbach, 1844, p. 20). Irigaray extends this argument to women having divine ideals as a necessary prelude to women becoming subjects and subverting the singular logic of patriarchy. Thus the relevance of her claim that a woman’s “not becoming God is a loss for herself and for the community. Perhaps for God” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 71). For Feuerbach “religious feeling is the organ of the divine” (Feuerbach, 1844, p. 29) and is more to do with personal experience than with the abstractions of philosophy. Feuerbach opposed any ideas that estranged the human from the divine, or predicated a human/divine schism, and Luce Irigaray has developed her notion of a female divine on this premise. Irigaray also built on Feuerbach in her insistence that women need a divine of their own. For her to “posit a gender, a God is necessary” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 61). And “if she is to become woman, if she is to accomplish her female subjectivity, woman needs a god who is a figure for the perfection of her subjectivity” (ibid., p. 64). What kind of God, then, could do this?

**What Kind of God is ‘She’?**

What kind of a divine ideal would not be estranged from the woman subject? Which would not depend on parental imagos? Which would be personally experienced? Which would allow for development, fluidity and change? I propose a feminine divine (and a divine feminine) which can be found in the experience that is mysticism itself.

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230 The Old Testament can be seen as the interactions between an erratic deity and his people, as Joan Dallett examines (Dallett, 1998), as does Edward Edinger (Edinger, 1996). Again, this is not to say that the ‘divine’ or ‘God’ is a projection of human ideas.

231 Jung develops a similar idea to Feuerbach’s. Rudolf Otto, whose ideas on the *numinous* I develop shortly, likewise develops this idea.

232 Frances Gray argued for Feuerbachian (and Platonic) projection theory in the development of Irigaray’s notions of the feminine divine. Feuerbach’s emphasis that God is a mirror of man is extended to God as necessarily a mirror of women, as articulated by Irigaray (Gray, 2008). I am not, however, relying on projection theory in my proposal of a feminine divine.
In order to determine this ideal, we need to bring into focus some traditional characteristics of (masculine) divinity. In Irigaray’s view, following Feuerbach, man is dependent on identification with the masculine divine “in order (for man not) to be mirrored in his absence (of self)” (Luce Irigaray, 1985, p. 314). I argue that women do not need a mirror (of, or from, the divine) so much as the ability to be present as a self, as intimated by Irigaray. Specifically, I argue that a woman does not need a reflection of/from a feminine divine in order to attain subjectivity, but conversely, she does need to be present as a self. According to Penelope Deutscher, the masculine “divine is an ideal of self-coincidence and self-sufficiency of which the masculine inevitably falls short” (Deutscher, 1994, p. 94).

In my view, the projecting, constructing, or resurrecting (particularly in the concrete form of Goddesses) of a female divine runs the same risk; a divine-ideal mirror-in-the-feminine could provide a static reflection of which the woman falls short, forcing her into abjection and dereliction not markedly different from her previous situation. A matriarchal monotheism is still a monotheism, which precludes ‘other Gods’ or other spiritual modalities. Therefore, it does not follow that, because the man’s God provides redemption in order to reinstate a masculine divine ideal, this approach should be repeated in the feminine. So, I am not arguing for the achieving of feminine subjectivity through being reflected by a female divine image. But I am nonetheless arguing for a feminine divine. In what other ways might this be done?

Could a feminine divine be discovered in an “easy pluralism” (King, 2009, p. 169), where multiple modalities of the spirit are available to both men and women? King proposes five different modalities of the spirit, five different archetypal forms, namely Goddess polytheism, Warrior Polytheism, (Abrahamic) Monotheism, Unitive/Transcendent and Shamanic/Animism, which he claims are all “present in our psyches today” (King, 2009, p. 155). This approach has

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233 The polytheism of goddess spirituality would “merely transpose a male monotheism into a female monotheism, a single ‘God’ into a single ‘Goddess’” (King, 2009, p. 159).
several advantages, one of them being that it removes us from a God/Goddess trope.

Irigaray approaches the idea of a feminine divine by arguing for a ‘God’ for women and a ‘woman God’, but she does not intend this God to be the *personification* of divinity. Rather, the feminine divine will not be a “fixed objective, not a One postulated to be immutable but rather a cohesion and a horizon that assure, for us, the passage between past and future” (Irigaray & Green, 2008, p. 146). She will be fluid and mutable, changeable, a ‘passage’; this is a logical corollary to the changeless god of the masculine ideal; such a divine is more aligned with the notion of (feminine) becoming. Thus, I concur with Irigaray that a fluid concept of feminine divinity will be reflected in a fluid concept of women’s becoming (divine). The idea of a feminine divine as being a ‘passage’ suggests a conduit, an experience, a process, an exchange, a pathway, something which exists between, but not a fixed object.

As I see it, the divine for women is an *experience*, a living process, rather than an image. Luce Irigaray holds that the “goal that is most important is to go on *becoming*, infinitely” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 61), and that a feminine divine must also incorporate a “field of infinite, open-ended feminine identities in which a woman could situate herself” (Deutscher, 1994, pp. 100-101). ‘Infinite’ here is clearly not referring to the transcendent, but that which is not fixed, or foreclosed and is thus open-ended. Penelope Deutscher stresses that the most important difference “between the traditional masculine God and the Irigarayan divine is that women would not be severed from their ideal” (ibid., p. 101). What does Irigaray mean by *becoming, infinitely*? In what way would *infinitely becoming* be related to feminine mystical experience?

For Luce Irigaray, it is fundamental that, “if we are to escape slavery, [in the symbolic] it is not enough to destroy the master [patriarchal structures]. Only the divine offers us that freedom - enjoins it upon us. Only a God constitutes a
rallying point for us that can let us free - nothing else” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 68). What kind of God can actually provide this rallying point? What kind of new order can be thought, “in which both women and men remember their respective divine and sexual ancestries in myths, representing the difference in their sexual desires” (P. S. Anderson, 1998, p. 148)? What might women find, outside the masculine symbolic, and, indeed, is it possible?

As I have already argued, the acknowledgement of sexuate difference is far-reaching, affecting “women's self-appraisal and self-naming”. Elizabeth Johnson argues that this in turn “creates a new situation of language about divine mystery” which “takes female reality in all its concreteness as a legitimate finite starting point for speaking about the mystery of God” (E. Johnson, 1992, p. 75). I propose that a feminine divine is a necessary component of the feminine imaginary, which prefigures a feminine, rather than masculine symbolic. I argue that, as Johnson puts it, an encounter with divine mystery “brings persons to birth as persons” (ibid.). Thus having a divine ideal is necessary for giving birth to ourselves as women, but I argue further, that an encounter with divine mystery is required. Echoing my earlier point regarding reciprocity between divine and human, Johnson also claims that this is a “real encounter with divine power and glory” and that this is a “reciprocal relation” (ibid., p. 75). In chapter one, I linked feminine connectedness with genealogy as a means of developing feminine subjectivity and the lived bodily experience of women. Here I reiterate that women’s development and psychology, their ways of knowing, loving and living bodily are all inflected by an intrinsic connectedness, demonstrating their specific sexuate difference. Thus spirituality in the feminine, which draws on a young girl’s identification with and differentiation from her mother, is “structured not in dualistic opposition to the other but in intrinsic relationships with the other” (ibid., p. 68), even when this other is divine.
Let me develop further the idea of a continuum between experience of self and experience of the divine.\textsuperscript{234} When we (re) name and affirm ourselves, we are (re) naming and affirming the divine. When we have new experiences of ourselves as women, we simultaneously experience the divine possibility in new ways. I propose that apprehension of the \textit{numinous} enables both a renewed experience of self, as well as of the divine. Johnson puts it this way: “the silent, nonverbal encounter with infinite mystery constitutes the enabling condition of any experience of self at all” (ibid., p. 65), affirming Luce Irigaray’s proposal of divinity preceding subjectivity.

As I mentioned earlier, feminine \textit{embodied transcendence} is intertwined with relationality, which, in Johnson’s words again, “ensures that feminist ethics presses ultimately toward the flourishing of all people, children as well as men, and the earth and all its creatures” (E. Johnson, 1992, p. 69), thus extending relationality to a global dimension. The flourishing of all is approached through the \textit{perspective} that the mystical provides. Contrary to claims that mysticism is narcissistic, I argue that the perspective from which the mystic sees the world reflects an ethical attitude toward the ‘whole human family’.\textsuperscript{235} To borrow a phrase from William Johnson, “every step of the way, the mystics are close not only to God but to the whole human family” (W. Johnston, 1993, p. 257). It follows that the \textit{numen of the flesh}, that is mystical experience in one’s own body/ flesh, leads to or is synonymous with an appreciation of the divinity of \textit{all} flesh. I take up the \textit{numen of the flesh} again shortly.

\textbf{Is Unmediated Experience Possible?}

By \textit{unmediated} I mean unmediated by the culture, not constructed by the culture. In chapter one, I discussed various aspects of experience, including the notion of

\textsuperscript{234} Karl Rahner’s ontological theology claims a seamless connection between “the unity of the experience of God and the experience of one’s self, on the one hand, and in the unity of the experience of the self and encounter with the neighbour, on the other hand”. Rahner \url{http://ttj.sagepub.com/content/62/3/352.full.pdf}. Accessed August 6th 2013.

\textsuperscript{235} Grace Jantzen sees this as the specific form of mysticism known as “\textit{Bhakti} devotional mysticism”, which is “bound up with social relations and the pursuit of justice in a common life” (Jantzen, 1994).
experience qua experience, and asked whether it is possible to have experience that is not mediated in some way by the symbolic. Here I argue that unmediated experience as not only possible, but necessary in accessing the feminine divine as or in mysticism. Thandeka proposes that “the experience of a lived moment of creation is not mediated” (Thandeka, 1997, pp. 95, my emphasis). I argue that, if a “lived moment” is not mediated (by culture and the symbolic), it is indeed creation or becoming in action. It is possible that (in that moment, or from that perspective) I am not ‘interpreted’; I am not enclosed within the folds of the symbolic. Jung, in talking about ‘God’ speaking through us, as direct, rather than borrowed experience, speaks of “our only too understandable fear of the primary experience” (Letters to Oskar Schmitz C. G. Jung, 1975, p. 82). Yet this primary experience is a release of “all that is wild and free in the human soul” (Sanford, 1995, p. 111). I argue that “all that is wild and free”, that is primary experience, is that which is outside the symbolic, and is therefore a fearful and awesome experience, and poses some risks (to the ego). As Luce Irigaray says, “the prophets feel that, if something divine can still come to us, it will do so when we abandon all calculation. All language (langue) and all meaning already produced. In risk. Only risk, of which no one knows where it will lead” (Whitford, 1991b, p. 281). Therefore the divine that “can still come” will be outside “all meaning already produced”, that is, outside the Symbolic. Thus the unsymbolized divine is the mystical, and it is accessible through unmediated experience. The question then arises as to how the mystical, and the numinous, might be communicable, if it is unmediated (by language, cultural conventions, religious symbols, the symbolic). I will now explain how and why the mystical is unmediated. Various metaphors have been used to attempt to carry the import of the experience, or to convey the perspective thus gained.

For many mystics, direct and primary experience was framed in terms of ‘union’, or unitive experience. What, exactly, did the mystics consider ‘union’ to be?

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236 I am not implying a union between two, but a state of consciousness characterized by non-dual thinking, of a union within, so to speak.
Using the terms of the extant Christianity, their union was with God or Christ. The elevation of love was their aim; "a love so attentive that it is divine" (Irigaray, 1993b, pp. 18-19). The Irigarayan idea that "love is in and by itself essentially feminine by nature" (ibid., p. 70) finds fulfilment in the Minne of the Beguines, and their belief "in the feminine principle as divine" (ibid.). Is their experience of union an unmediated experience, or is ‘union’ an interpretation or mediation in itself? In order to answer this question, we turn to the notion of nuptial bliss found in the writings of the Beguines. Hadewijch for instance, claimed that after a life spent immersed in minne/love, the soul can demand union with God (Hadewijch, 1980, letters 12, 22). However, when trying to describe the incommunicable experiences of her mystical union, Hadewijch attributes her own inability to communicate to the inadequacies of the language. In my view, her experience was of the semiotic, and thus did not yield readily to language, as I have discussed in chapter three. For Hadewijch, the capacity for love, which she sees as a female power, is inextricably tied to her capax dei, her capacity for God, something that potentially makes the female capacity for love, in Hadewijch’s view, the most powerful thing possible. That the images used by the Beguines is similar, if not the same as the extant Troubadour’s images of courtly love, lends weight to nuptial images being a conventional interpretation conveniently at hand (Hadewijch, 1980).

I submit that the nuptial bliss of the women mystics, and the particular union implicit therein, must be read through the mediating filter of the religious and social conditions of the time; that is, it is both mediated and interpreted. Yet I claim that the unsymbolized divine is the mystical, and it is accessible through unmediated experience. Let’s approach this through Michael Murphy’s idea that the "‘mediated’ aspect of all experience seems an inescapable feature of any epistemological enquiry, including the inquiry into mysticism, which has to be properly acknowledged” (Murphy, 1993, p. 166). The problem is that a wordless,

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237 Irigaray is referring to the love between beloved lovers, the human couple, and for her this represents one aspect of the divine.
objectless experience of bliss, an encounter with the *numinous*, is inevitably framed in language and images already available in the masculine symbolic.\(^{238}\) Thus, even objectless experiences would still be framed within the masculine symbolic, and further, and perhaps more importantly, an inquiry into mysticism itself, including its language and interpretation, constitutes an inquiry into the workings of the Symbolic, and even a deconstruction of it (Cupitt, 1998). Is an acknowledgment of the conceptual and interpretative framework (we all use) the best we can do? Berman comments, “because of our biology, ecstatic experience is ecstatic experience; what system of symbols it gets translated into is a matter of context” (Berman, 1988, p. 169). I necessarily press further towards the primary experience, rather than the language/symbolic aspect. Irigaray asks us to question “the image and all that hides behind it” to investigate “the transmutational or transfigurational states that may be represented therein” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 56)? It is exactly this transmutational or transfigurational state that I am investigating, and which I see behind interpretations, including that of ‘union’.

Bridal or nuptial union is only one interpretation of what the Beguines considered to be union. A unity within one’s-self is described by Hadewijch of Brabant, (1220-1260) for example, who spoke of having two selves, akin to a human nature and a divine nature, which “become one in the bridal union, which is a union of equals, of lovers both full-grown in their eternity” (Newman, 1995, p. 147).\(^{239}\) Hadewijch can be seen as incorporating both the sensible - the human - and transcendental - the divine nature - in her love, in which no aspect of herself is seen as inferior - or superior. This ideal envisions a time which Luce Irigaray proposes, “of women’s law, in the present or yet to come, [when] the human and divine will not be separate” (Irigaray, 1994, pp. 10-11). Here the ego is in proper

\(^{238}\) One of the reasons Luce Irigaray privileges the mystic’s body is because speech is limited in the face of the *numinous*.

\(^{239}\) William Johnston believed that love between persons was the way to the divine. He said love “between persons differentiates. It is this person to person love that is the road to enlightenment” (W. Johnston, 1993, p. 71). Thus, for Johnston, differentiation was more important than union, or at least prior to it.
relation with the Self/divine; the ego is still ego, and the Self is still Self, but the relation between them is seamless. As I see it, this is a living of the implications of Luce Irigaray’s sensible/ transcendental, the human and divine relations in seamless contiguity.

As Jung also conceived of the unconscious as the absolute Other, the notion of unmediated experience, and ‘union’ could also be interpreted as a relation between the conscious ego-self and unconscious possibility. In each of these interpretations of the notion of mystical union, the emphasis is on relation. This relation provides a perspective from which our view of self, the divine and the other is inexorably changed. Thus, seen in this way, the feminine divine as mysticism provides a perspective, a relation, not an object, but rather something one can speak from, rather than about. This is reiterated in Huskinson’s remark that “the value of the numinous is determined by the impression made by the numinous object on consciousness, and not by the numinous object itself, or by the subject’s disposition to it” (Huskinson, 2006, p. 204). Otto confirms that encounters with the numinous result in a “strange and mighty propulsion towards an ideal good known only in religion and is in its nature fundamentally non-rational, which the mind knows of in yearning and presentiment” (Otto, 2004, p. 36). It follows that an encounter with the numinous is not teleological, but positional. That is, the numinous encounter creates a radical re-orientation of the individual to a perspective from which ethical relations emanate.

From what I have been arguing, it seems that we can construe the feminine (mystical) divine as a perspective, rather than a theory. Inasmuch as this perspective colours every moment of life, it allows each moment to be an epiphany, a birth, a becoming, filled with new life. Viewed in this way, mysticism leads to gnosis or direct knowledge, which is not mediated by culture, is not a

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240 This is seen as the coniunctio in individuation.
It follows that if women are seeking a feminine divine not mediated by the masculine paternal, then direct encounters with the numinous are both necessary and inevitable. I now approach feminine mystical experiences, including experience of the *numinous*, through the alternative ideas of Kristeva and de Beauvoir, to discover if and how a woman's life and body provide ground for *numinous* encounters.

**Kristeva, the Feminine Divine and the Semiotic**

The work of Kristeva deserves more consideration than I am able to provide here. The particular aspects relevant to my argument in this chapter are her discussions of the maternal and the *semiotic*. Let me explicate how this relates to my discussion of a feminine divine, and *numinosity*. Speaking of that which is of concern to women, in her terms “the sacred” - Julia Kristeva says this:

> Not religion or its opposite, atheistic negation, but *the experience* that beliefs both shelter and exploit, at the crossroads of sexuality and thought, body and meaning, which *women* feel intensely but without being preoccupied by it and about which there remains much for them – for us – to say. Does a specifically *feminine sacred* exist? (Julia Kristeva in the Preface, Clément & Kristeva, 2001, pp. 148, my emphasis).

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241 June Singer confirms that gnosis in our present time still corresponds with our own, rather than acquired, knowledge. She says: “Gnosis, as first enunciated two millennia ago by heretical sects who refused to be bound by institutionalized ‘truths’, was understood by Jung as a spirit of inquiry that is independent of dogma and that requires confirmation through personal experience and reflection.” (Singer, 1990, p. 48). Roberts Avens, who has written extensively on mysticism and gnosis, including *The New Gnosis*, asks: “But what is gnosis? John Keats refers to an ability to work with imagination without the necessity of seeking out fact and reason as *Negative Capability*, that is, when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason” (Avens, 1984, p. 2).

242 It is through their embodiment, through the experiences of menstruation and childbirth, that women “find themselves equipped with insight into a central element of religion” (Ulanov, 1981, p. 25), through their own bodies. Birthing, for instance, can be “an ecstatic initiation” (Gaskin, 2002, p. xiii), a numinous event. Janet Soskice argues for an interface between, rather than polarization of, feminine body and mind: “Nothing convicts one more graphically of the implausibility of a sharp distinction between our rational and deliberate capacities, on the one hand, and the bodily appetites and responses on the other, than the experiences of pregnancies and attending to an infant” (Soskice, 2004, pp. 206-207).
Here, Kristeva is placing *an experience* - the sacred - at a crossroads of nonduality, an inclusive category, which contains the body and sexuality and thought and meaning. And does, indeed, a “specifically feminine sacred exist?”

This returns us to the debate as to whether a feminine divine, however construed, is accessible to both men and women. I began this chapter by claiming that the spirituality of men and women is different, and have argued for a differentiated feminine divine. A central theme in Kristeva’s work is that of the maternal, and with it the *semiotic*. She says, “let us call the ’maternal’ the most ambivalent principle that …is the most intense revelation of God, which occurs in mysticism, is given only to a person who assumes himself as ‘maternal’” (Kristeva & Moi, 1986, pp. 161-162). For Kristeva a mystical divine is accessible through ‘the maternal’. However, she is adamant that “both men and women can experience, and so seek to give expression to, the maternal” (P. S. Anderson, 1998, p. 157). If we accept that “the most intense revelation of God”, which occurs in mysticism according to Kristeva, is accessible through “the maternal”, and if both men and women can “experience, and seek to give expression to, the maternal”, then it follows that mysticism as feminine divine *is* accessible to both men and women. Reinforcing this opinion, Barbara Newman points out that Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), with “her frequent cross-sexual imagery and inversion, instinctively avoided the peril of associating the feminine exclusively with women” (Newman, 1987, p. 270). While this might seem to confuse the issue - that the experience of divinity in the feminine is *not* exclusive to women - it avoids dichotomies along gender lines. This is borne out by Kristeva’s assertion that access to the *semiotic* is not drawn on gender-lines. I will draw these issues together in my Conclusion; suffice to say for the moment, that sexuate difference is a necessary distinction, which enables women (and men) to escape the singular subjectivity of the masculine, but that does not, in my view, mean that certain experiences are not available to both sexes. A way of approaching this debate is to say that multiple archetypes are functioning at the same time: one archetype could be that of sexuate difference, another the specifics of a
shamanic/mystical spirituality rather than a patriarchal monotheism. Therefore, a similar experience could be available to both women and men and yet it will have some different qualities and effects due to sexuate difference.

I return my discussion to contemporary critique of medieval mystic women to progress my argument for mysticism as feminine divine.

**Beauvoir, Irigaray and Mystic Women**

Both Irigaray and Beauvoir question if, or how, female medieval mystic women were able to subvert the dualistic patriarchal structure in which they lived. I begin with Beauvoir who sees the woman mystic in problematic terms. She associates mystic love and fervour with delusion; “either the woman establishes a relation with an unreal: her double or God; or she creates an unreal relation with a real being” (de Beauvoir, 2009, p. 734). In each case, Beauvoir is presuming that an object, an elevated or unreal object, is the focus of the woman lover’s experience - whether mystic or not. This reflects Hegel’s notion, that desire is intentional, and thus “that it is always desire of or for a given object” (P. S. Anderson, 1998, p. 88). However, is it possible to love -- or desire -- without an object?

Earlier, I argued that mysticism is essentially an experience *without an object*, but is it possible? Simone Weil argued, “we have to go down to the root of our desire in order to tear the energy from its object. That is where the desires are true in so far as they are energy. But there is an unspeakable wrench in the soul at the separation of a desire from its object” (Weil, 1995, p. 20). Weil is saying that the desire itself is the important thing - not the *object* of desire. As I have argued, mystical experiences of *numinosity* do not require an object. Beauvoir, however, will have nothing of this. Speaking of the characteristics of the woman in love, she says she “is *not* first the prey of a desire without an object that then fixes itself on an individual” (de Beauvoir, 2009, pp. 729, my emphasis). Beauvoir does not therefore allow for the possibility of love, or desire, without an object. I maintain that if we attach our desire to an object, or project it towards an object
(person) we attribute it to the object as desirable, rather than claim desire as our own experience. This is also Luce Irigaray’s point when she advocates that our desire and fulfilment not be ever-deferred to a transcendent object.\textsuperscript{243} This point is important because Irigaray develops the notion of a feminine divine as horizon, not object. I am further associating experiences of the numinous with objectless desire, and infer that Irigaray’s perspective is mystical on this point, that is, her notion of horizon rather than object. But Beauvoir has more to say, so let us return to her.

Beauvoir says of a specific mystic, St Teresa, that she “seeks to unite with God and experience this union in her body” (ibid., p. 730), which suggests a union of the sensible and the divine, the sensible/transcendental. However, earlier in the same chapter on “The Mystic”, Beauvoir conflates ‘human’ and ‘divine’ love, because she argues that they both move towards an absolute. This is how she puts it: “Human love and divine love melt into one another not because the latter is a sublimation of the former but because the former is also a movement towards a transcendent, towards the absolute” (ibid., p. 726). Beauvoir is saying that all love is transcendent, and moves towards an absolute, distanced from the fleshly experience. Irigaray, however, differentiates transcendence by saying there is vertical transcendence (with ‘the divine’) and horizontal transcendence (with the human other). Both ‘transcend’ the ego. Nonetheless, for Irigaray, both of these unions are experienced in the flesh, they are never transcendent of the flesh. ‘In the flesh’ brings us to the consideration that what is experienced by the body subverts or evades phallogocentrism. In order to discover who might evade or subvert the symbolic, let us examine the hysteric, who has been the subject of much analysis, for instance by Beauvoir, Irigaray, Kristeva, Freud, Lacan, Cixous and Clement.

\textsuperscript{243} This is borne out in her argument of “I love to you”, rather than “I love you” (Irigaray, 1996).
Beauvoir argues that the mystic is hysteric and that “both adversaries and admirers of mystics think that giving a sexual content to St. Teresa’s ecstasies is to reduce her to the rank of hysteric” (ibid., p. 729). She laments the lack of freedom available to the hysteric. However, from a psychoanalytic perspective, what the hysteric expresses through her body, albeit in an incomplete form, is the freedom of being unclassified, unclassifiable and unsymbolized. That is, she is outside the masculine/Symbolic. Thus, I aver, she is claiming an inestimable freedom, from which much can be developed in terms of a subject position, and specific female perspective, including a divine not already framed in phallogocentrism.

A way in which the body speaks, as I have just mentioned, is through hysteria; that is, the body expresses that which culture forecloses. Here the body has come to substitute for the psyche, to stand in for it and to display that which cannot be said. The hysteric in a Freudian/Lacanian context is intrinsically problematized and pathologized; “she” is “the problem” (“Femininity”, Freud, 1953-1974, p. 116), because she has not submitted to the implicit order. However, I argue for a loosening of the context of hysteria in order to interpret her outside, rather than from within, phallogocentrism. To return to the medieval mystics, Carolyn Walker Bynum gives examples of “religious women who spoke of striking music from their flesh through extravagant asceticisms” (Bynum, 1995, p. 15). I propose that their experience, in modern terms, is hysteria; namely that their spirituality was bodily in the extreme, and not dependent upon sublimation or transcendence. Arguably, the climate of medieval mysticism gave women a legitimate expression of desire through the body. Thus, they were not marginalized or pathologized.

But what about a contemporary woman? Is the ‘hysteric’ - the she that is all women - unconsciously expressing desires which are not attainable within the

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244 Both mystics and hysters describe similar, if not the same, psychological experience of dissociation from their egocentric experiences of the world, that is, the world constructed according to masculine principles.
Is the hysteric, then, avertir the “normativizing injunctions” cautioned by Judith Butler, but at the same time not avertir the simultaneous attributions of “psychosis, abjection, psychic unlivability” (Butler, 1993, pp. 14-15)? While I am not advocating hysteria as such, because it is an unconscious formation, I argue that the same position, when achieved consciously, is mysticism. If the hysteric is demonstrating a love that culture/symbolic will not allow, or has no opening for - it has been foreclosed - then mysticism is that which creates the opening and undoes the foreclosure. If we allow the possibility that the ‘mysteric’ does know God in her body, the material and spiritual are inextricably interwoven, and she is experiencing embodied transcendence. Clearly, however, the God she “knows” is not the patriarchal God of logos.

Continuing the theme of embodied transcendence, Luce Irigaray claims that her concept of the female divine is not mystical and I infer that this is because she associates ‘mystical’ with an ecstasis, which takes one out of the body, into dissociating transcendence, to a "solitary exile where an essential proximity with the god presses near" (Luce Irigaray, 1999, p. 112), and indeed this does

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245 Cixous, Clément and Irigaray all discuss the hysteric and what her body might be expressing. Anorexia, including the ‘holy anorexia’ of certain mystics, including Catherine of Sienna, can be considered a manifestation of hysteria, although the term describing it was changed from “anorexia hysterica” to “anorexia nervosa” in 1873 by Gull, because anorexia was diagnosed in men as well as women.

246 I am not arguing here for a deliberate taking on of the hysteric’s position of bodily enactmment, but by conscious cultivation of a perspective other than the phallogocentric. The hysteric’s position is one of reaction to, but what I am suggestion is an action on one’s own behalf.

247 ‘Mysteric’ is Irigaray’s own term which conflates ‘hysteric’ and ‘mystic’ (Luce Irigaray, 1985). For Irigaray, the mysteric is the figure of the hysterical female mystic who manages to occupy a place in patriarchy, which is not subsumed within it. However, Irigaray also claims that the mysteric’s ecstatic passion is still tied to masculine reason, by being in excess of it. This somewhat accords with Grace Jantzen’s view, but not with mine. My view is that libido is naturally a threat to credo, and it is inevitable that patriarchy would see this as an excess (of representation), which I argue that it indeed is, and needs to be, and will remain so.

248 “Alison Martin says: “Irigaray … is less concerned with stating what the divine is (or should be) than with setting out the structural possibility or necessity of the divine; she is more concerned to elaborate the ontological possibility of the divine as an existential-hermeneutic condition, than to list its features as if it were a being, ontically conceived. That said, as this divine is not mystical, she does on occasion offer ways of interpreting, appropriating and creating it, at least for the female divine!” (Martin, 2003, p. 133) Martin claims that Luce Irigaray’s divine is not mystical.
represent the patriarchal/androcentric emphasis on transcendence.\footnote{According to Luce Irigaray: “Transcendence, then, is no longer ecstasy, leaving oneself behind … Neither simple nature nor common spirit beyond nature, this transcendence lies in the difference of body and culture that exists between us and nourishes our energy, its movement, its generation, and its creation” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 18).} It is dissociating from the body, and from the other. However, what I am arguing here is an \textit{enstasis} (Whitford, 1991b, p. 17), which is a manifestation of the \textit{sensible/transcendental}. For Irigaray, emphasis on the experiential or lived body better evades phallogocentrism, and a feminine divine must likewise evade phallogocentrism.

Before I move to the next section, let me reiterate that the crux of my argument is that a feminine divine and the apprehension of that divine are contiguous, and this contiguity is mysticism. This proposition of a feminine divine is intimately tied to the \textit{sensible/transcendental} of Luce Irigaray, and her idea of a divine horizon or passage. Notwithstanding Irigaray’s claim that her feminine divine is \textit{not} mystical, Amy Hollywood summarizes that for Luce Irigaray, “the mystical is both dependent on the existence of a female deity and the site on which she can be apprehended” (Hollywood, 2002, p. 188). A divine object is not posited here, but a paradoxical apprehension. This paradoxical position allows for an apparent contradiction to coexist. I can therefore conjecture that such apprehension coalesces as a spiritual attitude, which informs and transforms one’s person, one’s relationship with others, and one’s way of living on this earth. As such I argue that mysticism (and, by implication the feminine divine) is not a perspective exclusive to women.\footnote{Although I fully subscribe to Luce Irigaray’s call for a separate spirituality and subjectivity for women, to claim that such a position is \textit{absolute} in its exclusivity is, in my view a form of fundamentalism, or stereotype, and I develop this thought in the Conclusion. Briefly, having established that sexuate difference is essential, the experiences within these two - at least two, says Irigaray – could well demonstrate much variation.} This goes some way to answering the question I posed earlier, regarding the possibility that divinity-in-the-feminine might also be available to men, but is more ‘natural’ to women. I realize that any mention of ‘natural’ in relation to women runs the risk of attracting critique along essentialist lines. So, what do I mean by ‘natural’ in this context?
**What is ‘Natural’ to Women?**

Fundamental to what is ‘natural’ to women is the establishment of *sexuate difference* when all women are extricated from the logic that has subsumed them. So, when I argue that an attitude is more ‘natural’ to women, I remove a woman’s spirituality from what Irigaray calls “the logic of the essence of man” and replace this with imagining a god which is a “place or path whereby the self could be coalesced in space and time: unity of instinct, heart, and knowledge, unity of nature and spirit” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 67, my emphasis). In this way women are removed from a masculine logic and consequently have the possibility of discovering what is ‘natural’ to them when assuming their autonomy. This emphasis on the self, which consists in “faith in the possibility of our own autonomy” (ibid., p. 68), is, I contend, a first step in feminine spirituality. This faith is explicitly not dependent either on god as object, or the masculine logic of spirituality. Autonomy, which is our salvation according to Irigaray, results in more than redemption. It allows for “a love that would not just redeem but glorify us in full self-awareness: thought directed at the self and for the self that is free to love but not obliged” (ibid., p. 68). Thus feminine spiritual autonomy results in a move outwards, through love, (not obligation) toward the other, because “love of neighbour is an ethical consequence of becoming divine” (ibid.). However, it begins by being oriented to and in the self as self-affection. Love of neighbour as ethical consequence moves us into the community. As Irigaray says, “It is essential that we be God for ourselves so that we can be divine for the other” (ibid., p. 71), as I have already suggested earlier in this chapter.

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251 Irigaray is speaking of a quality of heart, namely love, that is not sentimentalized, but rather is a “quality of soul”, as described by Roberts Avens thus: “I am not referring here to “common religious piety, (in which) the heart has become a sentimentalized and prettified version of the ego, but rather a quality of soul” (Avens, 1984, p. 194).

252 Irigaray is basing her comments on Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (Feuerbach, 1844).

253 Irigaray is referring to Levinas and his emphasis on the “unfulfillable obligation” toward the other. In this way, obligation takes the form of an estrangement of the self. This is totally opposite to the intention of Irigaray, which I am discussing here.

254 St Augustine said something similar: “love God and do what you will”, (in Latin it is *Ama Deum et fac quod vis*), namely that we cannot but behave ethically when our centre is in “the divine”. Of course St Augustine and Irigaray had radically different notions of what this divine might be.
My second point is that spirituality not directed toward objects, but founded on a mandala of sorts, is ‘natural’ to a woman’s psychological development. Recall Luce Irigaray’s understanding of the difference in development between girls and boys. When she observes the different ways in which a little girl and a little boy manage separation from their mother, she notes that for the boy this is done when he plays with an object and pulls it towards him.\textsuperscript{255} He displaces “a substitute object from one place to another” (ibid., p. 99). This focus on objects, especially as replacement for the lost mother, is, I argue, the foundation of a masculine spirituality based on objects. “The little girl, however, “manages to organize a kind of symbolic space. She dances… this dance is also a way for the girl to create a territory of her own in relation to the mother” (ibid., p. 98). She creates an “energetic circular movement …There is no object here, in the strict meaning of the word, no other that has had to be introjected or incorporated” (ibid.).\textsuperscript{256} One may conclude that the spiritual movement of a woman follows a similar circular movement, beginning with herself, as this movement is ‘natural’ to her. Her focus is not on an objectified god/ idol, but on the space created. Thus the way girls “describe a space around themselves” (ibid., p. 99) relates to a mystical space, rather than a substitute object. “The girl-subject does not have objects as the boy does. …Women do not try to master the other but to give birth to themselves” (ibid.). Following on from this difference, it is ‘natural’ that the feminine divine is not found in an object, but rather as an experience, a space.

As a third point, I argue that a spirituality natural to women is evident in Luce Irigaray’s notion of the enigma of women as residing in “her lips and all they keep unmanifested” (ibid., p. 102). Irigaray deploys a woman’s morphology, her two lips, to differentiate her from a man psychologically and spiritually, as well as in her physiology. It is ‘natural’ (and necessary, for Irigaray) for her to find within the closed lips the solitude and silence she associates with virginity. I utilize these

\textsuperscript{255} Luce Irigaray is commenting on the observations by Freud of his grandson - the fort-da game, and comparing and contrasting this with her observation of little girls.

\textsuperscript{256} I take these differences in relating to objects and space between boys and girls as being intrinsic; I do not investigate the possibility that these differences are social and cultural, due to space constraints.
concepts further in chapter six. It is outside my argument to discuss Irigaray’s discourse on the lips, but the aspect of the enigma that I am interested in here is the “unmanifested”, that which is not seen clearly, has not yet become, is not objectified. The mystical as related to female morphology, as unmanifested, could be seen as intrinsic or natural to women, because of its unmanifestability - an extension of the enigma of the lips, as it were.\(^{257}\) For this reason the feminine divine can never be in opposition, competition or even equi-valence with the masculine divine. It is of an entirely different nature, seen through a different perspective which, I have argued, comes more ‘naturally’ to women, because it is related to women’s bodies and movement.

Earlier I argued that women’s desire and \textit{jouissance} are intrinsic to divinity in the feminine, specifically as mysticism. I now develop this idea more fully.

\textbf{Jouissance, Desire and the Feminine Divine}

\textit{Jouissance} is important to my discussion for two primary reasons; the first is that it is experienced in, or even because of, the body, the second is that it is specifically feminine. The French feminist writer Hélène Cixous uses the term \textit{jouissance} to differentiate women from men - and masculine \textit{jouissance} from feminine \textit{jouissance} – and to describe a form of women's pleasure, or sexual rapture that combines mental, physical and spiritual aspects of female experience, in a metaphysical fulfillment of desire, bordering on mystical communion (Cixous & Clément, 1986). Cixous maintains that \textit{jouissance} is the source of a woman's creative power, and the suppression of \textit{jouissance} prevents women from finding their own fully empowered voice.\(^{258}\) \textit{Jouissance} is what women have but know nothing about, according to Lacan; it is the embodied

\(^{257}\) “There is the belief that the mystical truth is always there, but that ordinary experience stands in the way and must be put aside just as one removes a veil to reveal a treasure which existed all along” (J. E. Smith, 1983, p. 253). I believe women are taught to wear that veil, and that it consists in the masculine symbolic.

\(^{258}\) Cixous argues that only women could produce feminine writing, because it must come from their bodies, but she also argues that men could occupy a structural position from which they could produce feminine writing. Thus she espouses sexuate difference, but also a kind of bisexuality, or sexual fluidity, where both men and women can occupy a masculine or feminine 'structural position’. This is close to my own view.
sense of that which cannot be spoken. Lacan refers to the ecstasy of St Teresa, and says unequivocally that this is an expression of ‘coming’, or orgasm, of sexual bliss. To him sexuality and mystical ecstasy are related; that is, mysticism is the site of a jouissance that goes beyond the phallus, in other words beyond representation (Lacan, 1982, p. 47). While Lacan goes on to chide women for going beyond or outside language in jouissance, I applaud jouissance as that which women have which is uncontaminated by symbolic/phallic processes. Beauvoir also recognized the conflation of the mystical and the erotic, as I have already mentioned, although she does not recognise jouissance as evading the symbolic.

In order to build a post-patriarchal feminine philosophy of religion, I argue that we need to introduce female desire/jouissance, which is eclipsed or foreclosed in patriarchal religions. The desire of the medieval mystics was clearly evident, although Carolyn Walker Bynum cautions that desire as expressed by them is “both like and unlike” our modern notions (Bynum, 1995, p. 26). Nevertheless, I draw on Bynum’s claim that their “devotional writing, as in medieval love poetry, body and desire are connected” (ibid.). In the mystical transports demonstrated by these women, “all their senses are in play” (ibid.), in other words their experience is with and through their bodies, it is ‘sensible’ and expresses desire.

Consequently, the spirituality of the medieval mystics is not ‘disembodied’. Desire is an ever-present part of their bodily experience. As Bynum comments, in the “poetry and visions of mystical women, heaven was ever-expanding desire”

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259 Irigaray summarizes this, when she says, “woman has sex organs more or less everywhere. She finds pleasure almost anywhere” (Luce Irigaray, 1985, p. 28). In this view, woman is not the stable lens through which man reflects himself, but the unstable, multifaceted prism through which she manifests herself, through her body and through jouissance.

260 For As discussed by Carolyn Walker Bynum, in medieval theology, the lived fleshly body was important because of the spiritual importance of the flesh, namely that the flesh would be present at the resurrection; “in my flesh will I see God.” The doctrine that the same body we possess on earth will rise at the end of time and be united to our soul was part of the Christian creeds from the early third century on (Bynum, 1995, p. 20).
Rather than the notion of a static beatitude which, once attained, remains unchanged, for these women, even in heaven, their desire would “never be stilled” (ibid). Mechthilde of Magdeburg is recorded as wanting to remain in her body forever so that she could continue in her desire for God, thus expressing a very embodied experience of spirituality, a jouissance, a sensible/transcendental, or embodied transcendence.

At the beginning of this chapter I posited a necessity for women’s spirituality to be removed from the masculine/Symbolic. This necessity is met in women’s mysticism when embodiment and transcendence are embraced simultaneously. I have demonstrated that female evaluation is not the “irritable reaching after facts and reason” associated with androcentric evaluation. Rather, women mystics’ autonomy and subjectivity is conferred through the authority of their own experience, not by religion; mysticism and the numinous are not religious in the first instance, because they consist of direct rather than mediated or interpreted experience. Neither does Lacan’s notion of jouissance need a religious setting, but bypasses it entirely. Therefore, Lacan can say that the jouissance of the female mystic is an experience of the Real, rather than the interpreted world of the Symbolic. Inevitably, mysticism, direct knowledge and unmediated experience are threatening to the notion that the symbolic and phallogocentricity are the only source of knowledge. If feminine mysticism is the return of the

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261 Carolyn Walker Bynum Walker says: Mystical women such as Hadewijch, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Angela of Foligno, and Marguerite of Oingt spoke of selves (body and soul together) yearning in heaven with a desire that was piqued and delighted into ever greater frenzy by encounter with their lover, God. Angela described Jesus as “love and inestimable satiety, which, although it satiated, generated at the same time insatiable hunger, so that all her [that is, Angela’s own] members were unstrung.” My point is not merely that writing about desire becomes more complex and fervent in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, although this is true. It is that such desire is not only for bodies; it is lodged in bodies (Bynum, 1995, p. 26).

262 For Lacan, the Real is that which is ultimately authentic, an unchangeable truth. It is opposed to the imaginary and beyond the symbolic; that is, it precedes or exceeds, language. It consists in a pre-Oedipal realm, which can never be symbolized. As Bruce Fink articulates, “Women can step beyond the boundaries of language and the pittance of pleasure allowed by it because [they join with] the Real” (Fink, 2010). Fink goes on to say that “a woman is related to the Real”, because “the feminine jouissance raises the ordinary object to … a Real satisfaction”.

263 Nancy Frankenberry asks the important questions: “What has the status of knowledge? What gets valorized as worth knowing? What are the criteria evoked? Who has the authority to establish meaning? Who is presumed the subject of belief? . . . What do we learn by examining
repressed (feminine desire), and *jouissance* is not excluded from epistemology, it follows that mysticism constitutes a language or expression that either subverts, or exists alongside, the masculine-Symbolic.

**Mysticism Saves us From (Patriarchal) Religion**

I have argued that patriarchal belief-systems can be undermined or subverted by the perspective of the mystic.\(^{264}\) For feminists, this subversion of patriarchal religion is useful. As mysticism is a direct response or access to the *numinous*, necessarily this is a means by which women can avoid the constructs of meaning of the masculine symbolic in order to discover a feminine divine. From the perspective of patriarchal religious forms as *magisterium*, (established church teaching) mystical piety is therefore often, although not invariably, seen as subversive.\(^{265}\) Since the body and the words of mystics reflect a direct personal relation to the divine, their experience cannot be mediated by ecclesiastical structures. As noted by McGinn, this subversive position is variously seen as something to applaud or condemn, (McGinn, 2004, p. 200) and is two-fold, namely as a protest against dogmatic theology, and as a female critique of male-dominated religion. My argument for mysticism as feminine divine contains these elements and more, namely the site and experience of feminine divinity itself.

Don Cupitt argues that *mysticism is what saves us from religion* (Cupitt, 1998). I rephrase this and say “mysticism as feminine divine removes us from the sphere of influence presumed by patriarchal religion”. Cupitt argues that mystical writing was - and presumably continues to be - the forerunner of deconstruction and

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the relations between power, on the one hand, and what happens as evidence, foundations, modes of discourse, and forms of apprehension and transmission, on the other hand?”(Frankenberry, 1998, p. 192). I am focussing on apprehension of what is worth knowing, especially in chapter four.

\(^{264}\) On the other hand, mystical transcendent realities have, within monotheisms, been marginalized, and mystics persecuted, because, in King’s terms, their language calls for “a language of personal transcendence foreign to monotheism” (King, 2009, p. 165).

\(^{265}\) As Grace Jantzen says: “The power of the church would be severely threatened if it should be acknowledged that access to divine authority was possible outside its confines” (Jantzen, 1994, p. 187).
radical theology (Cupitt, 1998, p. 93). He says: “the mystic has to be a 
deconstructor, because religious orthodoxies were all constructed with the aim of 
making final religious happiness (or salvation, of the Vision of God) impossible in 
this life” (ibid., p. 4). In his own deconstruction of religion and mysticism, he 
describes religious alienation as ‘normal’ within the masculine religious construct, 
and mysticism, which he frames as feminine, as bridging that alienation (ibid., pp. 
88-89). He says, “mystical writing may be seen as attempting to deconstruct at 
least some of the great distinctions established by dogmatic theology, and 
especially the ideas of God, the human self and the quantitative difference 
between them” (ibid., p. 83). He argues for a mysticism which is minus 
metaphysics, that is fluid, mortal and changeable (ibid., pp. 8-9). This point 
warrants emphasis: If we equate established religion with patriarchal logos- 
dependent forms, that is, the masculine symbolic, then mysticism is what ‘saves’ 
us from this; mysticism introduces a subversive element. That mysticism is seen 
as a feminine critique, allows for mysticism as a feminine spiritual position that is 
outside the masculine/Symbolic. As Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray noted, the 
medieval mystics were able to discover a degree of autonomy, even within a 
system that suppressed them; namely, they had authority in ecclesiastical as well 
as secular life, their opinion was tolerated and even sought and respected.266 This 
is an important point for women, and for a development of the feminine divine, in 
all periods of history.

Notwithstanding that mystics have often been viewed as subversive, many of the 
key mystics of history have maintained a life within religious institutions. This too 
is important: in the idea of mysticism as subversive of patriarchal/ Symbolic, 
there is an inherent danger of creating an unbridgeable duality, with male divinity 
and established religion on one side, (credo) and female mystical experience on 
the other (libido). I argue that it is more likely that conflict arises within 
individuals, male or female, between libido and credo, which may or may not be

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266 There was enormous variation in the lives of medieval mystics, and generalizations are 
therefore impossible. However, I refer here to women such as St Teresa of Ávila and Hildegard 
of Bingen.
easier for women to resolve than men. For example, Barbara Newman argues that “Sister Catherine” sometimes acclaimed as ‘Meister Eckhart’s daughter’, puts forward a feminine, or non-logos way of being, in contrast with Eckhart himself, because of “its exaltation of the beguine’s all-absorbing love (libido) at the expense of her confessor’s churchly prudence” (Newman, 1995, p. 172, interpolation mine), or adherence to credo. Mystical experience, as a direct apprehension of the divine, is inherently personal and characterized by a change in perspective, not related to one’s position in society. Historically, prevailing authorities have closed ranks against women mystics.\textsuperscript{267} As McGinn emphasizes, such conflicts “do not hinge essentially on the personality or doctrines of the mystic” (McGinn, 2004, p. 202). They are external, imposed by the context. If mysticism was expressed within a religious tradition, using the language and symbols already available and understood by consensus, then it was accepted as religious renewal. If it was democratized, secularized, or feminized, the magisterium was alerted to heresy (ibid., p. 209). I believe that this is still the situation today; that by proposing - and experiencing – mysticism as feminine divine, we inevitably run counter to that which is already established.

\textbf{Conclusion}

In this chapter I have demonstrated that mystical experience is non-discursive, or pre-discursive and as such is not logos-valued and not easily, or initially, expressed or symbolized in language. For this reason, Luce Irigaray reads the body, rather than the text of the female mystic. (Or the female mystic’s body as text.)\textsuperscript{268} Therefore I have placed my emphasis on the body. Like Irigaray, I favour the body, touch and feminine desire because it escapes “the dangers of

\textsuperscript{267} One means of closing ranks is through scape-goating the experiencer. As Luce Irigaray says, most new discoveries are achieved by sacrificing something. “Only rarely”, she says, “does some initiative serve to inaugurate a new rhythm, a new mode of social living, a covenant that needs no scapegoat” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 76). The one bringing in the new message, the new vision, the new theory, could be the mystic. In contradistinction to Hegel and Heidegger, Irigaray aims at a new structure without scapegoat, without sacrifice, without war or revolution. She speaks of this kind of functioning reflecting a masculine model described by Freud: tension, discharge, return to homoeostasis, etc. In other words, it is not an inevitable style for women.

\textsuperscript{268} Amy Hollywood comments that Luce Irigaray “highlights the bodies of women mystics, going to the point of suggesting that their eloquence is less a feature of language than of the inscription of their bodies” (Hollywood, 2002, p. 196).
language and the emphasis on the visual and representation which serve to reinscribe the (woman) mystic within a male economy”, as Hollywood says of Luce Irigaray (Hollywood, 1994, p. 169).

I have argued that a mystical element is at the centre of feminine becoming, and without it women become robotic, functioning by means of already-established ideals (idols) which are not their own, and therefore intrinsically misrepresent them. Is it possible then, that if one does not become a mystic, one “will not exist at all?” It follows that mysticism enables women to exist as spiritual *individuals*, rather than through a collective ideal of God. The problem with the collective idea (of ‘God’ or ‘Goddess’) is that it is a projection of the divine, rather than a realization of the divine (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 353). Here I have linked personal mystical experience with a “descending theology” (ibid., p. 354) which is not associated with an ever-transcendent other, but rather “descends into the body of the experiencer. I have argued that mystical experience allows for a free-flowing release of energy, within one’s self and between beings, an open “exchange with the other, in search of a future even more spiritual than that in which each one believes” (ibid., p. 356). For a woman, freeing herself from a masculine spiritual ideal enables a respect for herself as well as respect for the different other.

I argued that *jouissance* is a manifestation of *libido* as developed by Jung, and therefore includes more than sexual energy, and is rather “life energy”. When the medieval mystics experienced the pleasure of God’s presence this was a libidinal experience, a *jouissance*. Thus Bynum speaks of the feminine medieval

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269 “The future Christian will be a mystic or he or she will not exist at all, if by mysticism we mean...a genuine experience of God emerging from the very heart of our existence” (Karl Rahner, in Lehmann & Raffelt, 1986).

270 In this way, we can say, with Meister Eckhart: “So therefore let us pray to God that we may be free from ‘God.” (Eckhart, 1981, p. 200). Or Goddess. In any case, God/ess is a projection, not a realization.

271 An aspect of the role and experience of female mysticism, which I would like to explore on another occasion, is the notion that mysticism and hysteria occupy “a cusp” in Western culture where the feminine imaginary is displayed. From both an analytical psychology and philosophical point of view, I believe that each is expressing an existence outside of the masculine/symbolic, in a form that refuses symbolization.
mystic’s desire for the divine as the desire that would “never be stilled” (Bynum, 1995, p. 25). One may conclude that she is speaking of an extended sense of *jouissance*, of *libido*. The making of *credo* in the masculine/ Symbolic is in part an attempt to distance from *libido*, hence Luce Irigaray’s question, “why and how long ago did God withdraw from carnal love?” (Irigaray, 1993a, p. 16) Carnal love, one of the expressions of *libido*, is something that *credo* cannot contain. Thus, in developing the notion of a feminine divine, I have argued that it is mysticism that saves us from religion, or, more particularly, it is *libido* that saves us from *credo*. So the place, horizon and experience of the feminine divine, which is proposed by Luce Irigaray, is achieved in mysticism, where the *numinous*, the threshold of that which is yet to be symbolized, is accessed.

In the next two chapters, I focus on the fairy tale of “The Handless Maiden”. I revisit themes of the previous chapters, and explore their application to this myth. For instance, in chapter three, I proposed that poetic and allegorical language can convey more than the text, and “The Handless Maiden” illustrates this point.\(^{272}\) In applying philosophy, analytical psychology and theological analysis to myth, I reunite the *logos/ mythos* split of phallogocentrism, and apply this reunion to feminine subjectivity (Cavarero, 2000). This is not an exhaustive analysis of “The Handless Maiden”; I will pass over motifs that are not directly related to my previous discussion. I will begin chapter five with the first part of the narrative itself.

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\(^{272}\) Luce Irigaray is cautious about the benefit of narrative – she contends that no narrative is enough to “produce a change of discourse. If anything narratives risk repressing sexual and affective freedom by moralising - unless, that is, they can manage to create a new style, unless they go beyond the utterance into the creation of new Forms” (Irigaray, 1993a, p. 177) However, Terry Threadgold is less doubtful. She says “narrative is a way of telling different stories or of telling stories differently” (Threadgold, 1997, p. 82). I argue that both this narrative and the discussion I provide, tell this story differently.
Chapter Five: The Handless Maiden - Femininity Derogated

The Tale: Part One

A miller, who has fallen into poverty, meets an old man - who turns out to be the devil - in the forest. The old man promises to solve the miller’s financial problems if he gives him what stands behind the mill, which is his daughter, who is both beautiful and pious, not the apple-tree as he assumed. In three years the devil returns to collect his bargain, and tries to take the daughter, but he cannot come near her because of her weeping. Furious, he then demands that the miller cuts off his daughter’s hands. Initially the miller refuses, but the devil says he will then take the miller instead. So the daughter says, “dear father, do with me what you will, for I am your child”, and he cuts off both her hands. However, the devil gives up his intention to take her, because of her continued weeping. The girl’s father wants to continue to provide for her, but she refuses. She has her arms bound behind her back and then sets out on a journey. Tired and hungry she finds herself in the pear-orchard of a King, and there, observed by the King, she sustains herself by eating pears. He takes her into his palace, “loves her with all his heart”, has silver hands made for her and then makes her his wife.

Not long after, the King goes to war, during which time messages which are sent between him and his mother, who is caring for his wife and child, are intercepted and changed by the devil, with the result that, fearing for her life, the woman, this time with the baby on her back, flees the castle, again piteously weeping.273

Introduction

In this chapter I interpolate my arguments from previous chapters into an analysis of this fairy tale, namely that subjectivity can be achieved outside of patriarchal structure, embodied transcendence as constitutive of women’s spirituality, and sexuate difference for men and women. First, however, I introduce the importance of myth as a source of knowledge. I then interrogate the myth itself, and apply and develop my discussion. I pass over many motifs, because they are not directly related to the subjects I have developed in previous chapters.

273(Grimm, 1884). There are many translations and interpolations of this tale, and this synopsis contains the most important motifs in the tale. Grimm’s own version is available on http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/authors/grimms/31girlwithouthands.html. Accessed August 6th, 2013.
Myth and Fairy Tale

“The most we can do is to dream the myth onwards and give it a modern dress. And whatever explanation or interpretation does to it, we do to our own souls as well, with corresponding results for our own psychic well-being” (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 9, part i, §271). My task here is to give the tale a modern dress of contemporary philosophy.

I have already argued for an interface between the disciplines, especially philosophy, psychoanalysis, analytical psychology and feminist theology, and this fairy tale enables such an interface. Pamela Sue Anderson advocates “building upon psycholinguistic readings of myth in their relation to philosophical texts” (P. S. Anderson, 1998, p. 153). According to Anderson, the thus transfigured “mythical meaning can aim to disrupt the male configurations of rationality and patriarchy which have excluded women and sexual difference from philosophy of religion. Disruptive refigurations will offer new images from old myths of women in nature” (ibid.).

Taking up Anderson’s point, I argue that this disruption has been part of my project thus far, and is further advanced in this chapter as I propose a new position for all women, through the figure of the young maiden. Myth and fairy tale are not generally privileged in the academy, but Anderson promotes their inclusion by arguing that “some philosophers might imagine that myth and myth-making were left behind with the emergence of ancient Greek philosophy and its rational discourse; but arguably, myth has always accompanied philosophy in constituting the identities of men, women and the divine” (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 3). Likewise, in Luce Irigaray’s view, myths are the poetry of history, and we need to discover some good positive myths, which include a spiritual level that will reveal women’s entrenchment in patriarchal restraints.

This myth/fairy tale does exactly that. Mythical meaning can supply for women a horizon, a culture of difference.

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274 Some myths “remind us of the way other cultures [have created] a culture of difference” (Ingram, 2000, pp. 53-54). This myth/fairy tale clearly instates sexuate difference.

275 Luce Irigaray, seminar at Nottingham University, 2010.
I argue that our embroidering of a personal myth upon the collective story is a version of genealogy - the way we live the myth changes it. As such this myth reveals our past, present and future selves, (Huskinson, 2008, p. 5) that is, it provides women with a continuum upon which they can situate or identify themselves. Women have taken up fairy tales to speak their condition for them, so to speak. In 2008, Marina Warner, researcher into fairy tales (Warner, 1996), writes in the cover notes of the movie, “La belle and la bête” (Cocteau, 1946), “Aristocratic French women (such as) Mme D’Aulnoy, Mme de Murat, and Villeneuve created a vogue for fairy tale in their salons in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in Paris. They were reinventing the form as a vehicle to attack conventions of their day, especially those concerning their condition as women”. I am using the Handless Maiden for a similar purpose. When fairy tales were part of an oral tradition, subtle changes and inflections in each telling revealed changes in the culture over time, as well as the individual psychology of the narrator. As this tale has been written - and therefore static – for 200 years, it runs the risk of being a dead story. My reading and analysis here bring it to life for contemporary women, by using concepts that inform modern inquiry. On the other hand, fairy tales often suffer the fate of being ‘modernized’, sanitized, or revised so that they suit collective values, and are therefore more socially acceptable; in their unexpurgated version they are considered too graphic or violent, especially as stories for children. Such changes inevitably demonstrate thinking that is rational rather than imaginal. I reproduce here a reasonably unexpurgated version.

Lucy Huskinson outlines one of the qualities of myth as the “dual function of describing our understanding of the world, and revealing how we might change that understanding” (Huskinson, 2008, p. 1). “Myth …is a narrative that shapes and affects us, it is the order in which we make sense of ourselves and it reveals to us, through this ordering, how we might develop into something different” (Huskinson, 2008, p. 2).

While the first edition of the Grimm tales proclaimed, “no particular has been either added through our own poetic recreation, or improved and altered,” the second edition of 1819 admitted “we have given many tales as one insofar as they complemented each other and no inconsistencies had to be excised”. From the Grimm brother’s own annotations http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/authors/grimms/31girlwithouthands.html, accessed August 6th, 2013.
I employ myth as part of my project to re-imagine the irrational.\textsuperscript{278} In this way fantasy, literature, and myths/ fairy tales use “language to conjure visions of other worlds without asserting their empirical reality” (Rowland, 2002, p. 151). Subjectivity imagined outside the claims of authority and truth of the patriarchal symbolic is an aid to the feminine imaginary.\textsuperscript{279} I argued in chapter four for a feminine divine as a horizon towards which one extends. Myth proposes another horizon of meaning. As Hans-Georg Gadamer says, “the gift of myth is the gift of a horizon stretching out just as far as the inhabitants of that myth require meaning to extend. A dwelling place” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 217). He adds, “a horizon is not a rigid frontier, but something that moves with one and invites one to advance further.” I do indeed use this fairy tale to invite the reader towards a horizon, and to extend beyond previous limits.

Myth and legend are essentially archetypal, that is, they are filled with archetypes. Archetypes represent potentials and possibilities within the culture as well as within the individual personality. No archetype has precedence over the others, and can exist simultaneously – they represent polyphonic possibility. The archetype of the Self, however, incorporates all other archetypes in the Jungian view. The Self appears in dreams, myths, and fairytales in the figure of the "supra-ordinate personality," such as a king, queen, etc (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 6, §790). Thus the feminine archetypes, such as the Virgin Mary, the maiden and the virgin, which we will meet in this chapter and the next, are not subordinate to any masculine archetypes. However, the King, representing the totality of the psyche, incorporates all other archetypes. This is not a gendered assumption, as the Queen can equally represent the Self. Another way of putting this is to say that the supra-ordinate archetypes represent that which is not the ego - a spiritual dimension - while the other archetypes represent ways in which

\textsuperscript{278} Susan Rowland comments “feminist fantasy literature is the attempt to imagine women and the feminine beyond the social constraints of both existing societies and the dominant genre of literary realism” (Rowland, 2002, p. 151). My use of this fairy tale is toward the same end.

\textsuperscript{279} To read both fiction and fairy tale is to “submerge and reimagine subjectivity through narratives not claiming the authority of truth” (Rowland, 2002, p. 151). Rather, fairy tales and myths show us how to live a fully human life, according to Jung. And what is truth? I argue that fairy tales and myths offer a different way of approaching truth.
the ego/personality might develop.

Myths, like the archetypes they employ, change over time, and in this way are historical. They also take us towards a new horizon of meaning, which transgress the limits of the constructed horizon. Joseph Campbell called myths a 'cultural dream', and I argue that this dream both informs the culture, and the culture informs the dream/myth. Roland Barthes believes that “myth has in fact a double function: it points out and it notifies, it makes us understand something and it imposes it on us” (Barthes, 1984, p. 117). So the myth/dream both informs and reflects the culture. As such, myth reflects the cultural imaginary, in a different, although equally potent form, to scientific discourse. The Jungian idea of amplification is to link individual psychic events to mythology, fairy tales or religious narratives and this is my intention - to amplify, and link the personal with the mythological.

This fairy tale clearly stresses the need for, and process of, descending theology, embodied transcendence, or the sensible/transcendental, by navigating a path for both men and women towards their own sexuate spiritualization of desire and subjectivity, to a point where they can properly speak to each other, and for the woman, to speak at all.

**The Fairy Tale of “The Handless Maiden”**

Philosophy has not, in general, taken into consideration the unconscious, either personal or collective. Fairy tales provide access to aspects that are unconscious, which can either aid or thwart. Marie Louise von Franz, the Swiss Jungian Analyst who is an expert on the interpretation of Fairy tales points out

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280 Luce Irigaray, in seminar at Nottingham University 2010.
281 This is a similar question to whether dogma creates or constricts belief, or whether experience creates dogma and belief; the latter is what Jung suggests. If we take the unconscious into account, both experience and dogma are informed by elements outside culture and belief.
282 Luce Irigaray says, “without descending theology, there is no possible incarnation of the divine within us and between us. No divinization of the body, breathing, love, speech” (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 2, emphasis mine).
that the fairy tale brings to light *unconscious* processes.\(^\text{283}\) Von Franz says: “Fairy tales are the purest and simplest expression of collective unconscious psychic process. Therefore their value for the investigation of the unconscious exceeds that of all other material” (von Franz, 1996, p. 1).

Clarissa Pinkola Estes (Estes, 1992) gives a detailed and lengthy analysis of “The Handless Maiden”, and I pause to include her reasons for using myth/fairytale:

> In this [story-telling] tradition a story is 'holy,' and it is used as medicine. The story is not told to lift you up, to make you feel better, or to entertain you, although all those things can be true. The story is meant to take the spirit into a descent to find something that is lost or missing and to bring it back to consciousness again.\(^\text{284}\)

In this chapter we do indeed descend into the unconscious, and bring back what is missing - the subjectivity and spirituality of women - and find a place for it. I do not draw further upon Estes’ work here, however, as I choose to focus my analysis on contemporary philosophical issues especially as raised by Luce Irigaray, which focuses on instating women’s subjectivity and spirituality. Ultimately, the story maps the way to sexuate difference, by imagining women (and men) outside current cultural and psychological constraints. “The Handless Maiden” has a message for women’s emergence, coded in a way that evades conflict with our Christian foundations.

In fairy tales, something is being righted; as von Franz says, “this ‘rightness’ could perhaps be better defined as being in complete accordance with the wholeness of the situation” (von Franz, 1980, p. 20). The wholeness of the situation implies that no element is advantaged, disadvantaged, or favoured over the others, and thus is truly ethical. In a fairy tale, the path to ethical relations will not be a conventional one, convention being the problem. Fairy tales also

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\(^{283}\) As Dubosc says of mythological forms: “The emergence of consciousness in its relationship with life, death and sexuality are represented in most cultures as a funding mythological event” (Dubosc, 2000, p. 44). We see consciousness emerging, specifically about sexuate difference, in this fairy tale.

compensate, that is, if there is too much ‘lightness’ in the conscious attitude in the family or the culture, the fairy tales will be very dark (Davies, 2006). In “The Handless Maiden” the compensation or correction addresses the secondary place accorded to the feminine and women in patriarchal cultures; this is where the darkness lies. Fairy tales often involve trickery, which will create some radical change, which in the end is beneficial to all. In this particular fairy tale, I relate ‘the wholeness of the situation’ to Luce Irigaray’s insistence that feminine as well as masculine subjectivity be equally represented, that is, sexuate difference. So, although this fairy tale is about the predicament of women, it is also applicable to men.

Some commentators, such as Midori Snyder (Snyder, 1995), take the story to be one of a girl surviving incest at the hands of her father, and some versions of the tale are explicit on this detail. This is a very valid way of reading the story, but I take the ‘abuse’ as being universal to women, and about a lack of sexuate identity in patriarchy rather than physical sexual abuse. When we take a sexual, rather than sexuate, emphasis, we miss the deepest most fundamental abuse of the feminine. As a depth psychologist I observe that the psychological sciences in general run the risk of focussing on sexual abuse as the ultimate betrayal of women, and thus foreclose the possibility of further examining women’s experience. Donald Winnicott said that rape is a “mere bagatelle as compared to the violation of the self’s core, in the alteration of the self’s central elements” (Winnicott, 1965, p. 187). Luce Irigaray’s emphasis on sexuate identity goes to the heart of protecting ‘the self’s core’ of women, their ‘central elements’. This is not to say that physical rape is not a violation of the self’s core,”

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285 Women’s subjectivity is also important in relations between women, including mothers and daughters.
286 “Fortunately, myths are not locked into univocal meaning or timeless configurations. Neither strictly patriarchal nor strictly matriarchal meanings have to dominate” (P. S. Anderson, 1998, p. 148).
287 Other scholarly references are: “The Psychoanalytic Study of the Grimm’s’ Tales with Special Reference to The Maiden without Hands” (Dundes, 1987); Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion (Zipes, 1983); The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World (Zipes, 2002).
288 If Winnicott were a woman I have no doubt that he would have framed his claim differently!
however, as Susan Brison (Brison, 2002) makes clear in her personal narrative of recovery from rape, and philosophical exploration of trauma. Indeed, Brison’s examination can be applied to physical trauma other than rape, as perpetrated by men/patriarchy against women, and psychological violence/intrusion as well. I argue that “The Handless Maiden” maps a story of gender or sexuate abuse universal to women.

This tale is about belief, which is embodied. That is, one’s body is as engaged in one’s belief as one’s mind. So the maiden’s body enacts her belief, and the beliefs of the culture/patriarchy are enacted upon her. Enacted belief is instilled through childhood, and consists in the deferred (unconscious) thoughts of a social system, that which we take on unknowingly, and later experience the consequences. In chapter six, I will show that it is through the young woman’s (interior) work that these deferred thoughts, the unconscious maiming, are challenged. She re-members her body. As I have already argued, women must transform their imaginary, and following this, their belief, especially about themselves as women.

At this point, I need to make a distinction between fate and destiny regarding the maiden’s situation: A person who is fated is interred in an internal world, which endlessly repeats the same scenarios, and has little capacity to imagine a different future (Bollas, 1989, p. 41). “I have no choice”, we say when we are in the grips of fate. We are subject to fate when we are enclosed in a complex – any complex – because we are held in the grip of that complex, rather than

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289 Bourdieu suggests, “practical belief is not a ‘state of mind’, still less a kind of arbitrary adherence to a set of instituted dogmas and doctrines (‘beliefs’) but rather a state of the body”. Further, that “belief is a state of the body not of the mind” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 68, my emphasis).

290 Hysteria speaks in “the mode of a paralysed gestural faculty, of an impossible and also forbidden speech” (Irigaray & Whitford, 1991, p. 138). We could imagine the maiden’s absent hands as a hysterical symptom, and as such it is the task of the myth to reveal her handlessness as a symptom of repressed femininity within the patriarchy. I read “The Handless Maiden” as a new form of feminine expression, which arises out of an imposed condition. In a similar way, Kristeva achieves a double writing in “Stabat Mater”, because she inserts the personal into the collective belief. Even when we imagine the handlessness to be a hysterical formation, it still ultimately leads to autonomy and freedom.
acting freely. The sense of fate is a feeling of despair over the impossibility of influencing the course of one's life, as is demonstrated by the maiden. In the first scene we are introduced to fate, through the motif of the mill, which represents the equalizing effect of fate, and is reflected in the saying “it's all grist for the mill”. The sense and meaning of destiny, however, is evident when the person feels she is moving in a progression that gives a sense of steering her own course, of exercising subjectivity. We can apply this to the tale by saying that the maiden/every woman can move from being in the grips of fate to taking charge of her own life.

**Female Subjectivity and the Patriarchy**

Women’s subjectivity is the foundation of the work of Luce Irigaray. The fundamental questions are: Can a woman be a subject or citizen without adapting to masculine norms? Can a woman be a full feminine subject, with full agency (to do and be) and independence, without sacrificing herself as woman? At the core of the story is the maiden’s lack of subjectivity; she is treated as an object. The (inevitable) lack of subjectivity for all women - to some degree or other - in patriarchal culture, is a feature of Luce Irigaray’s critique of the masculine paternal, because it recognizes only the masculine subject. Objectification can be roughly defined as seeing and/or treating a person, usually a woman, as an object. Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 257) has identified seven features of objectification, (1-7) and Rae Langton (Langton, 1993, pp. 228-229) has added three more (the last 3): let me now demonstrate how each of these features apply to the young woman/all women in the process of moving from the “other of the same” in phallogocentric culture, to autonomy and subjectivity.

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291 A very useful idea of C. G. Jung is that of complexes. There are many complexes, mother, father, puer, inferiority, superiority, etc. Briefly, a complex is a set of ideas, assumptions, beliefs and behaviours which are largely, if not entirely unconscious. We might have a vague idea that there are certain subjects which, when confronted, drive us into a frenzied state (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 8, §96). As Jung notes, in actuality, we don’t have complexes; they have us (ibid., volume 8, §200). A complex is a painful subject area in the psyche which, when activated, acts autonomously, arbitrarily, and usually contrary to the wishes of our conscious selves.
1. **Instrumentality** is the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectifier’s purposes; the maiden is used for both the devil’s and her father’s purposes. It is not until later in the story that she refuses to be a tool for others, and acts upon her own desire; for instance when she refuses the ‘care’ her father might give her and leaves his house. If we read the tale as one of *sexual* abuse, she is the tool of her father in a specifically sexual way.

2. **Denial of autonomy** and denial of self-determination are features of the young woman’s life. She does not really have a say in her dismemberment, and even when the king marries her, we are told how he “loves this girl with all his heart”, but we are not told of *her* independent feelings. As a means of discovering autonomy and subjectivity, Luce Irigaray asks women to discover “a relation of intimacy with ourselves” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 6). This is elaborated in her concepts of self-affection, and virginity, which I discuss fully in chapter six.

3. **Inertness** is the treatment of a person as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity. In her father’s house, the young woman is speechless, totally inert and unable to exercise independent choice - she defers to her father as a ‘dutiful daughter’, as if this is the only course open to her, even when this means that her hands will be cut off. How often do women in contemporary culture feel inert and helpless in the face of the masculine/symbolic?

When the young woman says to her father, “I am your child”, she confirms that she is her father’s daughter, (not her mother’s daughter), the daughter of the patriarchy (masculine/symbolic), and it is his psychology she relates to and complies with. She is less inert when she leaves her father’s house. She is leaving the attitude of pleasing ‘father’ or unthinkingly complying with patriarchal dictates. She is separating out, an application of Jung’s alchemical *separatio*,

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292 Irigaray sets out the “conditions for the ‘amorous exchange’ in which women would be the desiring subject too” (Irigaray & Whitford, 1991, p. 159). As Robert Johnson says, “to gain affection from another person without providing one’s own part of the relationship is a devil’s bargain” (R. Johnson, 1993, p. 62). Feeling values cannot be traded - they are not commodities. *Both* partners *must* be desiring subjects for an ‘amorous exchange’.
which insists that there is a separation before a coniunctio, or marriage. This theme is emphasized by Luce Irigaray because in order to choose “we have to know something about what could be an identity of our own” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 91).

4. **Fungibility** is the treatment of a person as interchangeable with other objects; the maiden is indeed interchangeable with a tree! She is also required to fit a role - that of ‘dutiful daughter’⁹³ – where any daughter would do, so to speak, demonstrating fungibility. Roger Scruton poignantly argues against the fungibility or exchangeability of both human beings and the environment. “We deal with the world by pricing it. Things that are valued only for their use can then be compared with, exchanged against, and sold for other things of the same kind. They can be consumed, depleted and thrown away, by the person who nevertheless acknowledges the only value that they have, which is the cost of a replacement. That is what we now do to each other and to the earth. Yet the earth is irreplaceable, just as we are” (Scruton, 2012, p. 127). Scruton continues by arguing for a sense of the sacred, to put a brake on that instrumental attitude.

5. **Violability** is the treatment of a person as lacking in boundary-integrity. The handless maiden is open to violation, most particularly when her hands are cut off. Do women find it difficult to set boundaries around the amount of energy and time which they expend in the service of others? Irigaray has countered this by advocating ‘virginity’ and ‘self-affection’, which I discuss in the next chapter.

6. **Ownership** is the treatment of a person (and the environment) as something that is owned by another, and a commodity that can be bought or sold. I will spend some time on this theme, as it is so important to the tale, and has far-reaching implications in regard to subjectivity.

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⁹³ The first volume of Simone de Beauvoir’s autobiography is entitled, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, (de Beauvoir, 1963b) perhaps ironically.
The first scene introduces us to the miller, who represents “the commercial outlook of collectivity which has exhausted itself”, according to von Franz, (von Franz, 1993, p. 88) or the commodification of life, via culture as we know it, the patriarchal/Symbolic. This results in exhaustion of spiritual values and with it the feminine. Yet, in this story the renewal is posited as coming through the feminine. The young maiden is an object of exchange between her father and the devil for business reasons, based on opportunity and expediency rather than ethics. How often is a betrayal of ethics excused because it is ‘just the way business is done’? We all find ourselves in a culture that is spiritually impoverished - ironically, because it lacks ‘the feminine’ - and where nature is depleted. The whole family - the entire culture, the environment - suffers from this impoverishment. The emphasis here is that the patriarchy is no healthier for men than women.

We might be tempted to excuse the miller’s mistake - that which is promised stands behind the mill, and is thus posited as unconscious, not in the forefront of the miller’s/patriarchy’s mind. However, a tree symbolically represents that which is in both heaven and earth, and depends on each equally for its existence, thus introducing an image of Luce Irigaray’s sensible/ transcendental, an embodied spirituality. In various parts of Europe it was traditional to plant an apple tree on the birth of a child, and the good care of it was related to the good growth of the child. 294 (In Switzerland a pear tree was planted for a girl.) The miller, who was willing to trade the tree, has thus neglected either his spiritual values, or the good care of his feminine/ daughter, or both. Von Franz aligns psychological values with the value we put upon nature, (the miller presumes that his bargain involves the tree) and the loss of one equates to a loss of the other (ibid., p. 87). Luce Irigaray also says of the distress of the ecology and the distress of women that it is not a question of which comes first, it is a simultaneous situation. Nature itself is commodified in contemporary culture, which profits from its appropriation and

294 Other meanings can be attributed to the apple. For instance, apples are the sacred fruit of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Apples are said to be the fruit that Eve ate in the Garden of Eden.
exploitation. The ecofeminist Carolyn Merchant discusses the *commodification of nature*, and links this with the commodification of women (Merchant, 2010, p. 21 and throughout), as does Irigaray. So the betrayal of nature in the form of the apple-tree is already a betrayal of the feminine, and of women. Thus, if nature continues to be commodified and exploited, women will continue to suffer a similar betrayal. An apple tree specifically (as well as a pear tree, as we see later) represents feminine spirituality. The archetype of the number three (the devil will return in three years) represents the move away from duality, by introducing a third. This demonstrates a move from simplistic either/or dichotomies to something inclusive and complex. The trope of (male) subject, and (female) object is about to be radically overturned in the narrative, to be replaced by relations *between* subjects.

Of the commodity exchange, Irigaray says that “the important thing is that they (the commodities) be preoccupied with their respective values, that their remarks confirm their exchangers plans for them” (Luce Irigaray, 1985, p. 179). The young woman certainly confirms her father’s ownership of her; “I am your child”, she says. According to Irigaray, “*commodities thus share in the cult of the father, and never stop striving to resemble, to copy, the one who is his representative.* It is from that resemblance, from that imitation of what resembles paternal authority, that commodities draw their value - for men” (Luce Irigaray, 1985, pp. 178, emphasis in the original). The young woman has no value except that which is conferred upon her as object/commodity. Only when she/all women and nature are valued in their own right, and resist any ownership by another or the culture, will the devil’s bargain be contravened.

Morny Joy argues further that this commodification includes a spiritual aspect, associated with women’s role as scapegoat and sacrificial object. She says: “Women thus represent a medium in transactions that sustain an economy of bartered objects – sacred or otherwise. Since they have not had a say in these negotiations, women are neither in control of their bodies nor their destiny” (Joy,
2009, p. 101). Even anthropologists such as Levi-Strauss, did not question why the exchange of women was ‘necessary’, reflecting a patriarchal world-view where the sacrifice of women is taken for granted (Levi-Strauss, 1969, p. 481). We can also apply the notion of the scapegoat in another way. According to a Jungian intrapsychic interpretation of both fairy tales and dreams, all characters are taken to be aspects of one’s own psyche, both conscious and unconscious. So to understand the situation where the daughter’s hands are cut off, we need to be aware that unless we consciously incorporate all aspects of our psyche, they become split off and are projected upon someone or something else, that is, they are scapegoated. This splitting occurs on both a collective/cultural and individual/personal level.

I ask, with Penelope Deutscher, when women will not be a means of exchange between men? The daughter is not seen for herself, but as property. That the father/patriarchy has possession of the daughter is not questioned. It is notable that the devil threatened to take the miller instead of the daughter, but this is a sacrifice that the miller was not willing to make. It is the young feminine that he/patriarchal culture, is willing to sacrifice. The commodification of women has been taken up by Luce Irigaray, who argues that “the law that orders our society is the exclusive valorization of men’s needs/desires, of exchanges among men” (Luce Irigaray, 1985, p. 171). And further, that “the circulation of women among men is what establishes the operations of society, at least of patriarchal society” (ibid., p. 184). This is clearly the case in our fairy tale.

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295 As has been done to women by men who project their split-off or dissociated carnality and materiality upon women, according to Beauvoir (de Beauvoir, 1989). This situation is overcome by Luce Irigaray's sensible/transcendental, where men are required to recognize their own carnality and women their own transcendence, hence my term embodied transcendence.

296 The notion of the scapegoat has two different aspects. Briefly, the scapegoat is the one who carries the sins of the people in the Old Testament Azazel, and the New Testament Christ, and is thus the saviour. The scapegoat is also the one who carries the ‘inferior function’, (the unwanted an despised aspects) in Jungian terms, for a family, organization, or culture, and it could be argued that the two aspects are ultimately the same thing. Women have been scapegoated by phallogocentric culture, in being required to carry the ‘inferior’ pole of the dichotomous spirit/matter, transcendence/immanence trope. Irigaray is concerned with the cultural sacrifice of women as the scapegoat (1993a, p. 75; 1993b). However, I argue that the feminine scapegoat, as presented in the form of “The Handless Maiden”, creates balance not by sacrifice and disappearance, but by restoration and return.
The maiden says to her father, “I am your child”, that is she is her father’s daughter, (not her mother’s daughter), the daughter of the patriarchy (masculine/symbolic), and it is his psychology she relates to and complies with. By adapting to the patriarchy she has become its daughter; she has internalized the patriarchy. We could say that therefore she is the victim of the patriarchy, but the tale gives does not end here.

A person gains subjectivity when they have a face. When persons are denied a face, they are denied subjectivity, and are then able to be treated as objects of and for exchange. As Roger Scruton points out, this is “the deep explanation of the burqa: it is a way of underlining the exclusion of women from the public sphere. They can appear there as bundles of clothing, but never as a face” (Scruton, 2012, p. 105). When we see the face of a person, we are called into ethical relations. Much of the philosophy of Levinas is dependent upon “the face”. He says, “the face speaks .... The first word of the face is the ‘Thou shalt not kill’. It is an order. There is a commandment in the appearance of the face, as if a master spoke to me” (Lévinas, 1969, pp. 87-89). To recognize the face of nature means that we recognize our responsibility towards it as another subject, and it carries the same injunction. To have a face, to be seen as a subject, the earth needs to be seen as an animate being. Scruton also expresses this view, when he says “the environmental problem arises because we have treated the earth as an object and an instrument, in something like the way that we have treated the human being as an object and an instrument. And surely it is not unrealistic to connect the two developments” (Scruton, 2012, p. 127). When we behold the face of nature we see a subject, just as we do when we behold the face of a human being, and are called into ethical relations between subjects.

7. Denial of subjectivity is the treatment of a person as something whose

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297 It is beyond the reach of my discussion to elaborate the action of complexes, in this case the father complex. Briefly, the patriarchy operates as a father complex, for both men and women.
experiences and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account. The maiden is not consulted as to how she feels, or what independent plans she might have. The daughter is subject to the desires of her father (the masculine symbolic), and she, as a dutiful daughter, is blinded to her own welfare and her own spirituality as a result. A definition of 'spiritual values' is useful here; for Irigaray spiritual values are "qualities and resources of our energy, our creative capacities, our capacity of meeting and exchanging with other(s), while remaining ourselves, our real tolerance towards difference(s), the nature of our desires" (Luce Irigaray, 2008c, p. 105). She comments, pertinent to the daughter's situation:

Patriarchy has imposed silence upon the daughter. It has dissociated her body from her speech, and her pleasure from her language. It has dragged her down into the world of male drives, a world where she has become invisible and blind to herself, her mother, other women, and even men, who perhaps want her that way. Patriarchy has thus destroyed the most precious site of love and its fertility (Irigaray, 1994, p. 112).

In our tale the patriarchy does indeed want the daughter that way. The daughter lives a masculine femininity, (a femininity based on masculine/patriarchal ideal) which alienates her from her body. We can extrapolate that women of our own culture are ‘dutiful daughters’, even if unintentionally/unconsciously. The daughter has no awareness of her own desires, and therefore her own subjectivity. Versions of this tale exist in countries as diverse as Japan, Africa, Russia and Central Europe, thus reflecting a universal predicament of women that is not culture-specific and certainly not Western-specific.

8. Reduction to body: A differentiation is needed here between the treatment of a person as identified with their body (or body parts) as an object, and an experience of one’s own body as subject. A woman is often reduced to the body, where she is subjected to her own or other’s gaze and seen as an object/body for sexual gratification. Modern industries such as the fashion and so-called beauty and sex industries commodify a woman's body, and make their exchanges upon its value to them. More subtly, however, dieting and exercising can reduce a woman's attitude to herself as body. To counter this, Luce Irigaray promotes self-
affection, that mode in which she might best regard herself, and at the same time creates a limit in respect to the gaze of the other. Irigaray is advocating an experience of one’s own body, in contradistinction to be identified as body.

Scruton argues that the effect of pornography, “amounts to a marginalization, indeed a kind of desecration, of the human face. And this desecration of the face is also a cancelling out of the subject. Sex, in the pornographic culture, is not a relation between subjects but a relation between objects” (Scruton, 2012, p. 107). Not only does pornography deal in objectification, but when the face disappears, “the human being disintegrates into an assemblage of body parts” (ibid., p. 111). When we engage in sexual activity, in prostitution or elsewhere, where the other is faceless, or when any face will do, we reduce ourselves to an object also. This is reflected in Robert Johnson’s argument that “the demand for sexual experience outside the frame-work of relatedness, whether by a man or a woman, carries a terrible cost paid by everything feminine” (R. Johnson, 1993, p. 63).

9. Reduction to Appearance is the treatment of a person primarily in terms of how they look, or how they appear to the senses. Our young woman is described as ‘beautiful’, thus conforming to some masculine/Symbolic ideal of feminine appearance.

10. Silencing is the treatment of a person as if they are silent, lacking the capacity to speak; the maiden is mute - does not speak until the end of the narrative (Papadaki, 2011). She/every woman has a long way to go before she achieves subjectivity, yet in the course of the narrative, she moves from being silenced, to intentionally being silent or keeping her own counsel. I develop the theme of silence in chapter six.

I will now take up other motifs from the tale, in order to amplify themes I have developed in previous chapters, and I begin with the devil’s bargain.
The Devil’s Bargain

What is the devil’s bargain? This motif can be approached in many useful ways. Firstly, rather than face up to the exhaustion of that which funds his life, his ‘poverty’, the miller/patriarchy tries to find an easy way out; one is readily at hand in the form of ‘the devil’, who can be interpreted in several ways. ‘He’ can represent an aspect of the unconscious, the trickster archetype, Mercurius, who will bring the underlying truth to the surface, often through sly dealings and malicious pranks. Mercurius brings to light the pathology of a situation in ways that are abhorred by the rational consciousness. If we see the devil in this light, ‘he’ hastens the tale towards an ultimately better direction, that is, towards a woman’s subjectivity and individuation. I note many parallels between Luce Irigaray’s articulation of women’s subjectivity and Jung’s opus of individuation. However, there are differences too, as Frances Gray (Gray, 2008) and others (El Saffar, 1994) point out, specifically that women’s individuation is predicated upon their subjectivity and subjectivity is not assured in the patriarchal situation, which intrinsically undermines individuation for women.

I am arguing that the internalizing of patriarchal values endangers women. As Irigaray says, women, “without realizing it, or willing it, …constitute the most terrible instrument of their own oppression: they destroy anything that emerges from their undifferentiated condition and thus become agents of their own annihilation, their reduction to a sameness that is not their own” (Irigaray, 1994, p. 129). The ‘devil’ can also represent split off parts of the psyche, or, in Jungian terms a shadow aspect, which we no longer imagine we are responsible for, and then claim that, an outside agency caused our actions. If we take up the incest theme, the devil represents the father’s disavowed sexual approach to his daughter. Gray says: “For Luce Irigaray, whose work I interpret as offering a process through which women can become individuated, individuation is not simply a matter of conforming to the demands of some pre-set pattern exhibited in a neutral symbolic. Rather it means a radical reinterpretation and appraisal of that symbolic, its structure and content. … Thus individuation for women involves producing a feminine symbolic ontologically distinct from the masculine symbolic” (Gray, 2008, p. 2). This distinct difference I enunciate in this chapter. El Saffar says: “I have been led to call into question the process of individuation described by Jung, at least as that process is applied to women” (El Saffar, 1994, p. 5), and “I came more and more to suspect that no theory yet exists that can incorporate the full expression of female autonomy” (El Saffar, 1994, p. x). However, by applying Jungian analysis and the theories of Luce Irigaray to this tale, I argue that we do indeed "incorporate the full expression of female autonomy".
p. 88). Contemporary Jungians approach this as “animus obsession”, and I provide here a brief summary of contributions to this approach, because it supports Luce Irigaray’s idea of women being the instrument of their own oppression. Robert Johnson likewise identifies the “tyranny that the masculine side [animus] of a woman exerts over her often helpless femininity” (R. Johnson, 1993, p. 57). Von Franz considers that the girl is faced with obsessive activity, based on patriarchal ideals. She gives the example of a talented young woman who took up various things quite obsessively, including playing the piano (von Franz, 1993, p. 93). The young woman realized that she had no capacity to do anything moderately, with her own needs in mind. So she gave everything up, and for a time did nothing. Sometimes doing nothing is a lot better than doing something, at least until a woman can find her own desire, rather than mimic patriarchal standards. The problem with obsessive ideas is that they replace the freedom to choose. The maiden dare not touch these values lest they destroy her. Irene Claremont de Castillejo claims that the voice of the negative animus is male aggression against women, which women have internalized. Marion Woodman develops the idea that a woman can be driven by an impossible perfectionism which she focuses on her body. Then distortions arise, based upon a masculine ideal, which the woman applies to herself via the animus, or to phrase it differently, via the male gaze. In Luce Irigaray’s terms, the maiden sheds her complicity in the patriarchy by refusing her status as commodity (de Castillejo, 1997; Luce Irigaray, 1985; Rowland, 2002; Woodman, 1982).

Robert Johnson, who also analysed “The Handless Maiden”, proposes another view of the devil’s bargain; “to gain a bargain at the expense of some inner value is extremely dangerous. To buy material comforts at the cost of feeling values is the devil’s bargain” (Johnson, 1993, p. 62). How might the devil’s bargain manifest itself in the day-to-day life of contemporary women? We have already seen that being driven by compulsive activity attached to achieving cultural/patriarchal standards can be the devil’s bargain. Robert Johnson is even more specific:
One faces the devils' bargain frequently when planning the structure of one's day. How much can one crowd into the day? How much can I get with minimum payment? How many times in the day does the feeling (the daughter’s hands) take second place to practicality? How many days go by without music or the gym or a sunset walk? How many vacations are half-spoiled because the energy has been spent in a dozen devil's bargains before one even gets there? (R. Johnson, 1993, pp. 63-64).

Luce Irigaray counters these compromises with her proposal of self-affection, which we will meet fully in the next chapter. I now consider the meaning of the motifs of ‘beauty’ and ‘piety’? Do these contribute to the young woman's subjectivity?

**The Beautiful, Pious Daughter**

The maiden is known and recognized for her piety, suggesting that it conforms to a patriarchal ideal of spirituality, which helps her, but only to a limited extent. As we have seen, Von Franz describes the girl's avoiding the devil as a way of avoiding a repetition of her father's values and to do this she sacrifices participation in her own life. While this evasion might seem to be a negative withdrawal at first, she later converts her solitude to a means of becoming, which is not contaminated by her father's (the patriarchy's) values (von Franz, 1993, p. 89). The motif of the beautiful young woman is so universal in fairy tales as to hardly require noting. But what is meant by this notion of beauty? My provisional answer is that it represents an ideal for women’s becoming, a ‘beautiful’ ideal. However, the most salient interpretation of beauty in this context is that it represents a **collective** rather than **differentiated** ideal. The specific subjectivity of the maiden - and with it her truly individual beauty - are yet to evolve.

Her value as commodity is presumably increased because she is both ‘beautiful’ and ‘pious’. Her ‘piety’ can be assumed to include her virginity - she is described as a ‘maiden’. However, this maidenhood or virginity would inevitably be based upon her intact hymen, where she would be a means of exchange among men.
This is not the virginity of psychological and spiritual dimensions, of being entire in one’s self, advocated by Irigaray, where one ‘becomes’ virgin.

A woman invariably attempts to find a spiritual home within a religious tradition that alienates her, because it is not differentiated as feminine, (Reilly, 1995) and does not incorporate sexuate difference. Jung’s insistence that unless men and women have separate spiritual paths they become devil to each other is applicable here. If the piety which the girl demonstrates serves to impede her ability to become, it is not truly spiritual by Luce Irigaray’s definition; she is neither truly remaining with herself and her own desires, nor with her meeting and exchange with others. Luce Irigaray says of her own Christian beliefs that she “was wounded by them, then distanced myself from them. I have come back to them, but to question and no longer to submit to them blindly. To me this task seemed a necessary one, but also for all women and men seeking their liberation” (Irigaray, 2004b, pp. 150-151). The maiden’s piety is unquestioning, however, and does not yet represent autonomy; she is not questioning, she is submitting. In spite of all the compromises it exacts, the position of women in the patriarchy provides a kind of comfort, perhaps infantile in its dependency, but nevertheless a (pseudo) identity, as Simone de Beauvoir has outlined for us (de Beauvoir, 1989).

Is her piety and concomitant avoidance of the devil ‘a good thing’ or ‘a bad thing’? Robert Johnson repeatedly asks the question, ‘is this a good thing or a bad thing’ in order to determine if events are evolving towards individuation or ego-orientation in his interpretation of myths, fairy tales and Shakespearean tragedies. This is a fruitful way of handling this part of the story, especially if we take the view that the story is one of creating truly ethical relations. If the girl’s avoidance of the devil means that she is not repeating her father’s values, and is moving towards her own it is a good thing, even if it means, for a time, that she simultaneously sacrifices participation in her own life. It seems like a good thing, when the girl creates a space where the ‘devil’ of patriarchy will not be able to
intrude upon her, when she draws a circle around herself. Luce Irigaray observes, as I discussed earlier, how a little girl will describe a circle around herself, or spin in a dance, in order to create a measure of self-affection, comfort and good feelings that cannot be assailed. This protects her from abandonment, attack, depression and loss of self (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 98). Jung, who compares them to Tibetan mandalas, gives graphic examples of the shape of these territories. Of the mandala, Jung says, “it is an archetypal image whose occurrence is attested throughout the ages. … This circular image represents the wholeness of the psychic ground or, to put it in mythic terms, the divinity incarnate in man” (C. G. Jung, 1963, pp. 334-335). In drawing the circle, the girl is indicating an orientation towards the “wholeness of the psychic ground”, or indeed the wholeness of the situation, to which I have already referred. This would seem then, to be ‘a good thing’.

From a psychological perspective, if the drawing of the circle to keep the devil at bay is actually a defence, that is it defers or deflects change and transformation, is this a good thing or a bad thing? Could it be that transformation, if it comes too early, (when we are too young developmentally, or when the situation is not yet able to support it) is a bad thing? Could we therefore say that while the achieving of autonomy and subjectivity is a good thing for women, it is a process that will weave its way through the internal and external environment that is unique and different for each woman, and will evolve as psychological dependencies are revealed and removed? With this in mind, let us interrogate the motif of the severed hands.

**Her Hands are Severed**

The image of the cutting off of hands is indeed bizarre. However, in my experience as an analytic psychotherapist listening to the dreams of many women, it is a recurrent theme: sometimes the cutting off of the hands is done by another, sometimes by oneself, sometimes the whole hand is cut off, sometimes

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301 We could see the severed hands as a castration motif, in which case I would propose this as ‘a good thing’, in that she has been deprived of the phallus, as quilting signifier.
only one digit, sometimes the dreamer finds herself inexplicably without hands.\textsuperscript{302} The motif also appears in popular culture: In the movie \textit{The Piano}, (1993) the woman’s finger is cut off, and replaced with a silver one.\textsuperscript{303} The woman is also mute. It is notable that the motif of not having hands applies only to women in fairy tales, never to men.

The whole tale can be thought of as taking what was unconscious and externalized, and making it conscious and internalized as specific psychological awareness. How often does the achieving of subjectivity for a man depend on the disavowing of it for a woman? As demonstrated in this narrative, we may be shocked when we see the workings of the patriarchal system, but the momentum of it is nevertheless hard to resist. It is taken for granted that it is a woman, and her ability to be and do, which will be sacrificed, in order for the patriarchy to continue as it always has. However, rather than follow in her father’s footsteps - the attitude that lead to his ‘impoverishment’ - the story provides the maiden with a form of escape; having no hands keeps her out of (patriarchal) trouble.\textsuperscript{304} If the trouble is a masculine subjectivity in which she has no real part, then this gives her the potential of finding her own (von Franz, 1993, p. 89). Thus the work of the ‘devil’ is also that which enables a radical retrieval of her own becoming, although she fears it.

One way in which we can read this fairy tale is as a mapping of women’s psychological development. In this reading, we can see the trusting young girl as malleable and open to maiming influences, through which she gains autonomy and maturity. In my view, this reading has some advantages, namely that it does not pathologize or blame, but rather acts as a commentary and guide. James

\textsuperscript{302} Freud was delighted when the symbols that appear in fairy tales also appeared in the dreams of his patients. \textit{Dreams in Folklore, 1911, Freud and Oppenheim, joint paper.}

\textsuperscript{303} This fairy tale has evoked much creative response, in art and literature, including poems by Margaret Atwood and Martha Landman (Landman, 1012). Attwood’s poem, “The Girl Without Hands” (Attwood, 1995) speaks to a young woman isolated in the “ruins” of her office-worker landscape.

\textsuperscript{304} Grimm, in their notes on this fairy tale, comment that some versions say that her tongue was cut out as well.
Hillman proposes that being without hands, not having a grip on one’s own life demonstrates a naive child, a *puer*, in the midst of collective life. Thus this tale can be seen as outlining the *development* of all women. However, the task of the maiden is *not to adapt* to Symbolic life, but to bring her own unique freshness to it, and for this she needs her inviolable subject hood. The maiden displays the broken hands of the child, out of touch. She has yet to discover a place in the world for herself, to reach out for life herself, to move forward from her own libidinal impulses. Could it be that suicidal wrist-slashing or the particular self-harm of cutting one’s own flesh, often in the area of the wrists and arms, is an attempt to cut off the maiming influences of *animus/patriarchy*, so that one is not it’s unwitting tool? (Hillman, 2005, pp. 218-222) Hillman has further thoughts on the handlessness, which the maiden suffers. Why is it that both the father and the mother escaped the devil’s intentions and therefore do not suffer the fate of having their hands severed? They, presumably, know how to ‘handle’ such a thing as evil. But the *puella* has fragile hands, an unformed psychology, and she must learn this for herself (Hillman, 2005). A decisive developmental moment occurs when she leaves her father’s house.

**Leaving Her Father’s House**

The girl rejects ‘care’ in her father’s home, because it would be holding her in a regressive psychology. We can presume that she knows that the care he promises would not foster her subjectivity. Women face many precarious moments, when any care at all might seem preferable to a lone journey, so this act of leaving her father’s/the patriarchy’s house is a powerful autonomous gesture.

That which is unvalued - or devalued - feeling-quality, the virgin self, that which is no use to commerce - is unconsciously projected upon the daughter, by both the miller and his wife, and she becomes the scape-goat (Johnson, 1993, p. 65).

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305 The Mother Complex is that regressive part of our psychology that wants to return to an earlier level of adaptation and be cared for by a mother (or any system that purports to take care of us) who gives all and requires no effort in return.
When the daughter leaves her father’s house,\textsuperscript{306} she is leaving the attitude of pleasing ‘father’ or unthinkingly complying with the patriarchal dictates. By leaving the house of the patriarchy, she refuses its strictures, although she is simultaneously homeless.\textsuperscript{307} For Irigaray, a feminine identity is based on freedom from definition through relationship with men and instead is based on inwardness, introversion, solitude and silence. The maiden, without hands, is unable to do usual feminine activities, and is forced to introvert. Are modern women capable of introverting, of “gathering and collecting” (Luce Irigaray, 2008c, p. 94) themselves, of cultivating an inner life? Introversion means to go inwards for our identity, rather than accept a false identity that is conferred. Women create this for themselves, and in so doing transform their fate into destiny.

When the daughter walks all day and stops at nightfall, she enters into a \textit{liminal} space, night. In chapter three, I argued that nightfall heralds \textit{al samar}, speaking in the soft and indirect light of the feminine. Night requires a different vision from the bright sunlight of the day, of rationality. \textit{Al-samar} is the language of lovers, the speaking of the heart and feeling, which rely on \textit{eros} rather than \textit{logos} for communication. This soft light opens the way to a different kind of communication. According to Luce Irigaray, the caress that enables us to truly meet the other functions in the ‘night’. This ‘night’ evokes the mystic’s path, which I discussed in chapter four, that thrives in ‘darkness’, away from bright rational light.\textsuperscript{308}

Guided by an angel, the maiden finds sustenance from pears in a very well tended garden. This garden can therefore be seen as a place where the feminine (the pear-tree) is valued, unlike the father’s carelessness about both the tree and his daughter. The motif of the pear is especially curious: the pear has long been a symbol of the Virgin Mary and is a very feminine form (R. Johnson, 1993, p. 306). Marion Woodman devotes an entire volume to this question (M. Woodman, 1993).\textsuperscript{307} We can also attribute this necessity to leaving a Father Complex, which suppresses every impulse a woman might feel on her own behalf.\textsuperscript{306} Luce Irigaray, in seminar Nottingham University, 2010.
Her nourishment comes from the pears in the orchard and, via the Virgin Mary; this is a double intimation of the ‘virginal’ process that she is about to enter. The maiden eats the pears with her mouth, and the ‘two lips’ of Luce Irigaray come to mind here, as representing feminine becoming.

In this garden, the maiden has been observed in her handless distress by a man of noble birth, who out of compassion has a pair of silver hands made for her, and marries her. This could be a commentary on marriage where the partners are not psychologically equal, or when the bride is valuable because she is empty of her own self, that is, in a situation based exclusively on masculine subjectivity. Now let us see how the motif of silver hands might be associated with subjectivity.

**Silver Hands**

Could it be that women do not even know when they are being patronized and deprived of their own growth? Could it be that “women are trapped in their silver-handed way of life and never know that this is the cause of their weeping”? (R. Johnson, 1993, p. 91). Naturally enough, at various points in the story when she is suffering loss, the maiden falls into weeping, depression and despair, severed as she is from her own spirituality and intuition. For example, the maiden’s weeping protects her against the ‘devil’, at least for a time. Once a woman is able to have her own feelings, and, by implication, desires, she is protected from acquiescing to the desires of others or the obsessions of her own animus/internalized patriarchy. This weeping is something that women know all about; depression is so common among women, and in our culture particularly. What is noteworthy is that this depression is a necessary response to a very real deprivation, and, if our fairy tale is to be trusted, is a part of a

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309 I am implying here that this is a specific kind of weeping, not weeping *per se*.
310 That women are more prone to depression than men is the subject of much research and speculation, for instance (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1999).
woman’s suffering of, and separation from, patriarchal values. On a spiritual level, this is the suffering woman, who “saves the world”.  

A woman cannot expect the collective culture, the patriarchy, and the symbolic order, to confer upon her an inner status. As Toyoda says, “It is important to remember that the male can never give a woman the feminine spirituality that she has lost. It is a woman’s task to recover it” (Toyoda, 2006, p. 24). She must, indeed, stand against patriarchal norms, and anything which stands in the way of her own thinking, writing, and divine ideals. And when she is able to recover her spirituality, she is able to discover her subjectivity. Whatever a woman might find for herself within the Symbolic - the silver handedness - will only be a facsimile, a fake, even although a clever one, but it will not convey flesh and blood humanness and specific femaleness. Women are taught, often subliminally, “the manners, customs and gracefulness of acquired femininity... which makes such a good substitute for flesh-and-blood femininity (this) artificial function is often more prized than the natural one” (R. Johnson, 1993, p. 86). When a woman stands on a par with men in the business world because she has developed her intellect, it is often at the expense of her feminine feeling-self; she has silver ‘man’ made hands. The maiden now has silver hands, but they cannot be warmly connected to her humanness - they are cold. As Robert Johnson says, “the first effect that one sees from a silver-handed atmosphere is that it is terribly isolating” (R. Johnson, 1993, p. 87). Women who are skilled in various professions speak of feeling isolated, when men in the same profession feel part of a convivial club. In this situation women, consciously or unconsciously, are ‘silver-haired’ and subsumed in patriarchal values. Indeed, they have become part of the club. When the handless maiden is asked if she is a spirit or a human, Luce Irigaray would answer for her that she is both, in reference to the sensible/transcendental. That she herself replies that she is an abandoned human reflects the position of women not being subjects in patriarchal culture.

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311 “I think that women have suffered, as much as Christ, to save the world” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 103).
The theme of silver hands deserves further attention. James Hillman (Hillman, 2012) discusses silver from the point of view of “soul-er”, moon-based non-rational consciousness, rather than “solar” or sun-based, rational consciousness. He approaches this through the language of alchemy, when ‘the’ feminine, soul, moon, silver and whiteness are conjoined. It is here that growth takes place. Hillman describes the moon’s body as air, and air itself as the nourishing principle. In a metaphorical (non-literal) operation in the psyche, which he calls “mining silver”, the lead of depression releases a silver bird. In this way, depression is the price of silver, that is, depression is the mine from which silver is extracted, and silver enables reflection. However, air, the nourishing principle, tarnishes or “blackens” silver, so the silver requires rubbing, worrying and attention to still remain reflective, or for one to continue to reflect. Hillman relates the blackness to silence and stillness, when imagination flourishes, where intuition grows, where sparkles of bright insight are nourished. Historically, both the mining and value of silver decrease the more material the culture. Metaphorically, then, in a grossly material culture, it requires more silver (silence, contemplation, reflection) to exert an influence on our personal psyche and the culture. Following Hillman, the more absent ‘the’ feminine, the more resistant the culture to the methods of mining or retrieval of ‘silver’.

Let me spell out the significance of these views in relation to the Handless Maiden narrative. The masculine/ Symbolic provides hands made of silver for the young queen. While in a rational way, these are cold and useless, and an apparently poor compensation for the loss of her flesh and blood hands, if we listen to the non-rational thread of meaning, then silver is related to her soul and by extension, the soul of culture. Her depression is the mine from which the silver, her ability to reflect, arises, and in turn that silver is darkened by silence and solitude. It requires some work, some attention, to return the silver to being able to reflect and shine. The relationship between air and its effect of blackening silver, or engendering solitude and silence, is a curious one. Although a reflective
process, it is not passive. The handless maiden/a woman, is required to actively work in an interior way, as Luce Irigaray reminds us when she emphasizes “the responsibility to work at each instant for our own evolution, transformation, transfiguration or transubstantiation” (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 3). This work I relate to polishing the silver so that we/it remain(s) reflective. At the beginning of the narrative we are shown the materiality of the culture by the miller who is willing to make a devil’s bargain for material gain. We can rely on Hillman’s assertion that this situation will take a lot of blackening (solitude/silence) and polishing (reflection) of silver for both the restoration of inner values in the culture, and in instating of ‘the’ feminine. Hillman does not make a distinction between ‘the’ feminine and women, in fact he does not mention women at all in this context. For my purposes here, I have elided them, because the images of Hillman’s discussion of sliver and the images in “The Handless Maiden” are so strikingly similar. I do not, however, intend that elision throughout this work.

I will now discuss the motif of handlessness and silver hands with specific reference to speech and dialogue. In chapter three I stressed the importance of language in articulating the situation of women, and in achieving erotic logos. In chapter four I introduced the necessity of a feminine divine through which an open-ended dialogue is possible, where the last word is never spoken. This might seem far from the theme of silver hands, but bear with me. I begin by referring to Mikhail Bakhtin’s assessment of the importance of dialogue. Bakhtin noted:

…authentic human life is the open-ended dialogue. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 293).

I introduce this question of dialogue here because the handless maiden is not involved in dialogue, but is a witness to the monologue of the patriarchy. If “to live
means to participate in dialogue”, she is not alive at all. This dialogue must include one’s whole person, eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, and one’s whole body. Note that for Bakhtin, the hands are involved. So, we can say that the young woman’s capacity for dialogue, for reciprocity, is intentionally cut off by the patriarchy. Then her natural capacities - her own hands - are replaced by silver hands, made by and for the patriarchy. This image shows how serious the situation is, and the seriousness is emphasized by Bakhtin’s final contention, that one’s whole-body “discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium”. It is clear that if women are deprived of dialogue, a dialogue which involves their whole being - their sexuate difference - they cannot enter into the full fabric of human life, and in the world symposium. A symposium that therefore operates by monologue rather than dialogue is thus not a symposium at all. In this reading of the tale, the silver hands are a great deprivation, for women, dialogue and the full fabric of human life. True discourse can only take place between independent subjects, between those who have achieved subjectivity, whether male or female. I argue that true independence – and interdependence - can only be achieved when logos is tempered by eros, in dialogue. Otherwise the discourse is not true discourse, but mono-logos. This goes back to an insistence on sexuate difference; “the philosophical implications of insisting on the irreducibility of sexuate difference are enormous” (Leeuwen, 2010, p. 124).

As I have discussed throughout this thesis, Luce Irigaray intervenes in ontology, when she insists upon the inclusion of women in order to retrieve sexuate difference.312 She takes issue with Heidegger, who conflates the unity of identity with the subsumption of parts within sameness: (Irigaray, 2004c, p. 69) he claims that “two are not needed” (Heidegger, 2002, pp. 22-23). Heidegger allows for no co-belonging together of two that are irreducibly different, that is, no sexuate difference. For Irigaray, then, Heidegger refuses to consider “that there does not

312 To answer the charge that she is not really a philosopher, she herself insists, that “the philosophical dimension of [her] writing is not sufficiently taken into account” (Irigaray, 2000, p. 10)
exist a world proper to all subjects,” (Irigaray, 2004c, p. 8) but rather only the male subject, Heidegger’s insistence that Dasein is “neither of the two sexes” (Heidegger, 1984, p. 36) notwithstanding. Following Heidegger’s insistence on the univocity of Dasein, he construes thinking/discursivity as mono-logical or homo-logos. Thus, speech between two is “already bound in a same that nullifies their differences and reduces their exchange to a tautology, an already programmed scenography, a monologue in two voices” (Irigaray, 2004c, p. 47) So, “dialogue is then limited to a complicity in the same saying, the same world, and not considered a novel production of speech determined by the context of an exchange of difference” (ibid., p. 35). Thus far in our fairy tale, the monologue excludes the maiden/woman’s voice; she has no voice of her own. But how is this implicated in her handlessness?

I continue to connect two themes from our story, that of handlessness/carnality and voicelessness/discourse. To do this, I move to Derrida’s essay, “Geschlecht II: Heidegger’s hand“ (Derrida, 1988),313 where, in his reading of Heidegger, he claims that ‘we’ are a monstrous sign - a sign that “shows or signifies nothing, the pas de sens, no-sense, and announces the loss of the tongue” (Derrida, 1988, p. 167). 314

To Heidegger, thinking and the hand are related thus:

Perhaps thinking, too, is just something like building a cabinet. At any rate, it is a craft, a ‘handicraft.’ ‘Craft’ literally means the strength and skill in our hands. The hand is a peculiar thing. In the common view,

313 Geschecht can be translated variously as sex, gender, race, organ, generation, house, family, and lineage, that is, a collective.
314 To understand the implications here, we need to go to the Latin, monstrare, from which arises “monstrate”, which itself has two meanings. Firstly, to show something true without yielding any knowledge of the cause, and secondly, “the ability to turn into an inhuman creature”, that is a monster. http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=monstrate. Accessed August 6th, 2013. The aspect of “monster” even appears in our story, in that the devil changes the letters between the queen mother and her son, to read that his wife has given birth to “a monster”. According to Heidegger, it is the hand that shows the we of humanity to be the we of monstration: “the hand is a monstrasity, the proper of man as the being of monstration. This distinguishes him from every other Geschlecht, above all from the ape” (Derrida, 1988, p. 169). Going back to the fairy tale, we can conclude that “we” in an undifferentiated collective, becomes a “monster”, and our individual sexuate ‘handedness’ is an obligation towards subjectivity.
the hand is part of our bodily organism. But the hand’s essence can never be determined, or explained, by its being an organ which can grasp. Apes, too, have organs that can grasp, but they do not have hands (Heidegger 1968, p. 16).

Heidegger is saying the hand is more than an organ, an object. Derrida confirms this idea when he links thinking the we of Geschlecht as handedness with thought itself as “handiwork, a work of the hand” (Derrida, 1988, p. 171). To describe thinking as handiwork is to implicate thinking in carnality, but as more than a biological determinant (Leeuwen, 2010, p. 122). Likewise, for Merleau-Ponty, “a handless or sexless man (sic) is as inconceivable as one without the power of thought” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968a, p. 197).

Thus thinking is bound to the “situation of the body,” while simultaneously the body is not reducible to a conglomeration of organs. Derrida suggests that the concept of thinking as ‘handed “will permit us to glimpse a dimension of Geschlecht as sex or sexual difference apropos what is said or not said about the hand. Thinking is not cerebral or disincarnate; the relation to the essence of being is a certain manner of Dasein as Leib” (Derrida, 1988, p. 171). Rather, thinking is a kind of handiwork, inextricably bound to the body, and therefore sexuate.

Let me specify the implications of the notion of the handedness of thinking in our tale. The maiden’s hands are cut off, and thus her thinking. The thinking is left ‘in the hands of’ the univocal being, man. No dialogue is possible. Thinking, though, for women, (and for men) is dependent upon sexuate difference, upon handedness, which in turn enables dialogue between two sexuate others, rather than monologue. If we follow Irigaray, then women have no position in phallogocentric discourse, they have no meaning; that is, to say “woman” is to say “nothing”, because women are denied subjectivity in the symbolic. This is clearly demonstrated by the young women’s handless state; she is denied the

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315 The exact meaning Derrida has in mind is uncertain: in addition to a literal “Being and body”, Leib is translatable as ‘life’ and ‘heart’. It is also related to ‘hand’ in various expressions, such as ‘first hand experience’, am eigenen Leib erfahren.
craft of thinking, and excluded from discourse and therefore subjectivity. Irigaray’s *parler femme* provides for women a subject-position, because it is through language that subjectivity is achieved in the symbolic. This *parler femme* counters the situation in phallogocentrism where, as soon as a woman speaks, she fails to speak as a woman (Luce Irigaray, 1985, p. 265). Our young woman cannot afford to speak *until* she can speak as a woman. This is why achieving subjectivity and autonomy are so important, because she can, then, truly speak for herself, as a woman. Bahktin, and his insistence upon discourse provide an additional emphasis. That is, she does not just speak, she speaks *with*. Her sexuate position as women enables the *between*, relatedness.

Having established the philosophical import of ‘handedness’, we can return to the tale. After she marries, the devil appears again, in a more devious guise. It is in relation with the other in a committed relationship that the underpinnings of patriarchal culture, specifically the lack of sexuate difference and concomitant lack of subjectivity for women, are laid bare. She will still, and even more particularly, need to become herself (von Franz, 1993, p. 94). Through the garbled messages it is easier to see the workings of patriarchy, and the subsuming of the young girl within it. Although she is ‘cared for’, she is still without voice and freedom; the devil brings out the precarious nature of her situation. Of the motif of the king, von Franz says:

> If we interpret the king on a subjective level, not as the husband but as an inner figure in the heroine, he would represent a collective dominating positive spirit. The woman would then adopt all the prevailing ideas concerning religion, and duty and behaviour, and would live in accordance with collective standards (ibid., p. 95).

This constitutes an adaptation to the status quo, the patriarchy, without reference to what she herself might need or prefer. However, each trauma *shocks her soul awake*. Women can easily miss out on the first half of life, as Jung says, but the meaning of it can be saved, and enable them to heal their hands and stretch out for what they want and love (C. G. Jung, 1977, volume 9 part i, §185).
Most versions of the tale specify that the young woman has not said a word since she left her father’s house, so the symbolism of the tongue emphasizes that she still has no language of her own, and, literally, cannot speak for herself. The girl realizes that the situation is contaminated, and once again she needs to take the situation into her own hands, although literally she has none. We can apply the handedness of thinking here, in emphasizing her need for a sexuate differentiation in thought, for her to be able to think for herself.

A Second Departure

Up until now, the maiden’s self-worth (and her fate) has been dependent on the opinions and actions of others. This is demonstrated by the exchange of letters between the young queen’s husband and her mother-in-law, which are intercepted by ‘the devil’ who changes their meaning. Does the mother-in-law’s action save her life or plunge her into a further alienation? Is the mother-in-law alert to the treacherous nature of the patriarchy, or is she complicit with it? Le Doeuff reminds us that a feminist is “someone who knows that something is still not right in the relations between a woman and someone else, in other words men, other women, the supposedly impersonal agents of institutions, and anyone else: some hitch …which you must learn to identify in everyday situations and conversations” (Le Dœuff, 1989, p. 28). In this case it is in a relationship with another woman, her mother-in-law, that something is not right and the hitch is discovered. The figure of ‘the devil’ can be seen as carrying the disavowed motives of the mother-in-law. That is, she projects her own complicity with the patriarchy upon someone else, (her daughter-in-law) in much the same way as we saw the father doing. It is an individual responsibility of the handless maiden/all women to discover when something is not right.

Dependence on outer opinion, whether affirmative or derogatory, is a dangerously fickle place to rest one’s fate and life. The young woman’s life truly rests in other’s hands - she has none of her own - via their words, via their opinions. Marguerite la Caze comments on Descartes’ notion of _generosité_, and says that this “protects us from dependence on what others think of us …
because what we think worth pursuing depends only on ourselves” (La Caze, 2002, p. 12). As Toyoda says, “a handless maiden is unable to evaluate the results herself. Moreover, she has no words of her own” (Toyoda & 2006, p. 26). She is in the situation that I have already discussed in chapter three, that of needing to discover a language through which to articulate herself. This last point is especially important – the handless maiden has no language through which she can express and incarnate herself. She can only be a ventriloquist of the patriarchal voice. She remains speechless till she truly has a voice in/with which to speak. Being without hands she cannot write, or, if silver hands allow writing, they would symbolically at least, be only able to write what is mechanical, technological, predictable, non-original, non-creative ‘man-made-ness’, dictated. This motif of hands represents how, unconsciously, against her own intent, a woman’s project is contaminated by the patriarchal order, and through language or logos specifically.

That which has been spoken thus far has not actually included her - she has not yet given utterance. Luce Irigaray laments that “nothing is able to be seen through language any longer” (Irigaray, 1999, p. 131) because that which is invisible to the symbolic order, that which is worth uttering, is that which remains but that it “remains silent” (ibid. p. 137). Yet, paradoxically, it is through (a different kind of) silence that that which is worth uttering is found, as we shall soon see.

**Conclusion:**
In this chapter I have argued for the inclusion of the analysis of fairy tale in feminist philosophy, giving it the modern dress advocated by Jung. I have shown how women are invisible and voiceless in patriarchal culture, via the first part of the fairy tale of The Handless Maiden. The tale specifies many ways in which the subjectivity of women is foreclosed, and I have demonstrated how the ten categories of objectification proposed by Nussbaum and Langton can be applied to the maiden/contemporary women.
In the next and final chapter, the young woman’s journey continues, and we shall see how, through being sequestered in a cottage in the forest, and via the motif of her hands growing back, she demonstrates the retrieving of women’s subjectivity and spirituality. I begin the chapter with the second part of the tale.
Chapter Six: The Handed Maiden - Femininity Transformed

The Tale: Part Two

In the forest she prays. An angel appears and leads her to a little cottage, over the door of which is a shield inscribed with the words: “Here may everyone live freely.” A young virgin comes out to meet the queen and the child, and she sees to their every need. Seven years pass.

One day, as the young queen bends over a stream to drink, the child falls from her back into the water. Because she has no hands she is in despair, but when she plunges her arms in the water and reaches for her child, her hands regenerate and the child is saved.

Meanwhile, back at the castle, the King returns from war and is very upset to find his wife and child missing. He vows to find them, and spends 7 years doing so. Finally he comes upon the cottage in the forest. A white angel invites the king inside. The angel calls the queen and her son and they look upon the king as he is resting. She says, “I am your wife, and this is your child”. The king sees the young woman’s hands and doesn’t believe her. When the angel brings the silver hands that the king had made for the queen, he finally believes that he has found his long-lost wife and child and is overcome with joy.

The three of them return to the home of the king’s elderly mother, and the king and his wife are married once again.

Introduction

In this chapter I continue to analyse the fairy-tale of the Handless Maiden: the tale has taken her from the outside world, from which she has now been banished twice - firstly from the home of her father/patriarchal culture, and second from her husband’s home where her own desires were not considered - to an interior world, where the project of attaining subjectivity is quickened. My primary interlocutor is Luce Irigaray, and the notions of virginity, self-affection, solitude and silence are highlighted in this chapter.

I have chosen to begin this chapter with the young queen’s sojourn in the forest, because, in the mysteries of its depths, this is where we witness a radical change. As I intimated in chapter five, our fairy tale guides us as to what attitude to take.
Retreat into the Forest

After she receives the garbled messages, and is sent away from the castle, the young queen enters a liminal space – the forest. Von Franz speaks of her retreat and the gathering together of herself and her interior life, as follows:

To retire to the forest would be to accept loneliness consciously, and not to try to make relationships with good will, for that is not the real thing … The virgin soil would be that part of the psyche where there was no impact of collective human activities, and to retire to that would be to retire not only from all animus opinions and views of life, but from any kind of impulse to do what life seems to demand of one. The forest would be the place of unconventional inner life (von Franz, 1993, p. 97).

So it is here in the forest that things begin “to turn and grow again; it is a healing regression” (von Franz, 1993, p. 97). Both Luce Irigaray and von Franz see the importance of nature in the healing of women as it represents - and actually is - that which is uncontaminated by any ideas of any culture. It is virgin in itself. As von Franz says:

Frequently women say that the only way in which they can enjoy life a little and not feel so bad over their difficulties is by taking long walks in the woods, or by sitting in the sun. This is a genuine tendency, for it seems as though only nature in its virgin beauty and essence has the power to heal (ibid., p. 98).

Likewise, Luce Irigaray says that frequenting nature “revirginilizes the body and the mind, and gives new perspectives on what has been thought and what is still to think” (Irigaray, 2004a, p. 29). This frequenting nature is not so much “wandering in nature”, but rather “communion with it” to find “paths other than those of rationality” (ibid., p. 38). She insists that nature remain an “autonomous living being”, that we leave it to be, to “give it back its place in the economy of the real and in the workings of consciousness” (ibid., p. 45). Irigaray’s intention is to preserve a becoming, which “does not divide itself from nature. Form does not claim to dominate matter; it serves its blossoming, its growth. … The body becomes spirit and the spirit body, or, rather, they both become flesh, and each by the other” (ibid., p. 30). For Irigaray, respect for nature, by both men and
women, is one aspect of achieving a divine horizon and sexuate difference, as well as *embodied transcendence*.

In the early work of Irigaray, to which I have already referred, she argues that women have been commodified as a mainstay of patriarchy. However, she also asks what modification would the social order "undergo if women left behind their conditions as commodities – subject to being produced, consumed, valorized, circulated, and so on, by men alone – and took part in elaborating and carrying out exchanges?" She answers her own question by saying: “Not by reproducing, by copying, the ‘phallogocratic’ models that have the force of law today, but by socializing in a different way the relation to nature, matter, the body, language, and desire” (Luce Irigaray, 1985, p. 191). It is remarkable that a fairy tale should so clearly map the same process, whereby the woman finds a new relation to nature, desire, language and her body.\(^{316}\) To find this relation, the maiden stays alone, that is she cultivates interiority. Rather than being guardians of outer temples with associated wealth and power, I argue that women are the guardians of the temple within - at least their own temple within - that is, their interiority. This interiority most certainly does not need to be mediated by patriarchal authority. Luce Irigaray reminds us that in a young girl’s development she “manages to organize a kind of symbolic space” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 98). Her task is not to master another (as the boy does) but rather to give birth to herself (ibid., p. 99). It is in giving birth to herself that she refuses commodification.

Her first act in the *liminal* space of the forest is to pray.

**She Prays**

Why does she pray? What is the language of prayer? Is going into the forest already an act of prayer? Is it *logos*? *Poiesis*? Does it have words at all? Is it what one *does or says*, or what one *is*? Or *becomes*? Jung suggested that wise

\(^{316}\) In terms which I used in chapter three, that of the phallus being considered the dominant signifier in phallocentrism, we see that by giving birth to herself the young woman displaces the universal signifier, and establishes a position for herself in and through language.
prayer consists in determining the correct attitude to take. Is she contemplating her own attitude? Or is prayer primarily doxicological, that is, in praise of the divine? Luce Irigaray argues for “‘praise’ as a way of praying in the feminine” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 99). For Jung, prayer is the motion of the ego towards the Self, that is, towards the imaginal divine core, from the ego/personality. For Luce Irigaray, this is an orientation towards possibility, the possibility of divinity, and therefore subjectivity.

Some versions of the story have the young queen praying to the Virgin Mary,317 which serves to intensify the importance of the virginal nature of this part of the journey, and the importance of the archetype of the Virgin Mary for women. It is not the ‘natural’ or nature mother to whom she turns for help, but the spiritualized mother, the one who is already virgin;318 in other words she has been ‘immaculately’ conceived without the lack implied by the masculine symbolic. It is an attractive idea that a woman might discover her feminine spirituality from the matrilineal line, from the mothers, from a female genealogy. However, Irigaray cautions that mere naturality “cannot work towards feminine liberation” (ibid., p. 90). Sharon Moloney also argues this point, when she says that the natural processes of menstruation and birth “do not automatically confer reintegration and maturity. To become transformative, they require the conscious sacrifice of a previous psychological state and sense of identity” (Moloney, 2009, p. 9). The previous identity, which the handless maiden must sacrifice, is alignment with patriarchal values within which she was dismembered.319

317 “I would prefer that Mary’s spiritual virginity could evolve according to her becoming divine” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 98). Irigaray is advocating a spiritual ideal for women, rather than an intact hymen.
318 See joint paper, Elton and Gersch, on the importance of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary for both the subjectivity and divinity of women (Elton & Gersch, 2012).
319 “The ‘accomplished interiority’, which Irigaray elsewhere suggests should be the goal of spiritual life, may well be achieved by a systematic exploration of other archetypal forms” (King, 2009, p. 169). Her spirituality does not follow that of patriarchy, or of it’s opposite or complement, matriarchy, but something different, an archetype of interiority.
In interpreting fairy tales, the absence of certain figures is as important as the presence of others. In the context of this tale, where the mother is largely absent, I argue that this is because the mother herself is not virginal. Luce Irigaray posits that the virginity of Mary “requires that she escapes a maternal incest” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 89). This maternal incest is an over-identification with the mother, which precludes autonomy for the daughter. Kristeva also sees some difficulty with mother-daughter identification. In her work with patients, she saw “the actual difficulties of oedipal identity, that is, of achieving a healthy separation from the mother, for the girl-child, for women” (A.-M. Smith, 1998, p. 85). Or, put in reverse, an over-identification or merging of the mother with the child mitigates against the child’s autonomy. The way Irigaray overcomes this dilemma is to configure the mother herself as immaculately conceived, as in the Catholic doctrine regarding Mary. In the case of the Virgin Mary, her own mother, Anne, is ‘virginal’ and autonomous, that is not enclosed in patriarchal meaning. Irigaray advises that women place a Leonardo da Vinci painting of the Virgin Mary with her mother Anne in their homes; her intention is to rely on a feminine genealogy uncontaminated by the patriarchal order. Irigaray claims, “it is impossible to ask a woman to be holy, absolved of blame, as long as she is unable to recognize the potential holiness of her own mother” (Irigaray, 1994, p. 77).

I argue that the mother is not present in any significant way in the tale, because she has not been ‘immaculately conceived’; she has not ‘become divine’ and cannot help her daughter attain her own virginity. Thus she is unable to intervene effectively, when we might imagine that this would be the role of the mother. She/ every woman is directed towards an internal, spiritualized attitude: she prays. The theme of a spiritualized attitude is reinforced by the appearance of an angel.

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320 It is risky for a woman to identify with her mother, because the mother is (almost inevitably) the object of the very male imaginary - or anima projection -, which she is trying to avoid.
321 Irigaray discusses virginity in many different places, including the following: Thinking the Difference for a Peaceful Revolution (Irigaray, 1994, p. 60) Je, tu, nous: Towards a Cultural Difference (Irigaray, 2007b, pp. 86, 117) Between East and West (Irigaray, 2003, pp. 68, 93)
322 “It is possible to understand the virginal pregnancy of Mary and the role of God the Father in its conception as a stage in the attempt to overcome a relationship with the mother that is too close and experienced only as natural” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 102).
An Angel Appears

Thus, while immersion in nature is liberating for women, the spiritual horizon – indicated by the presence of the angel – is equally important. There are many possible ways of understanding what angels might represent, as they feature in Christian, Jewish and Islamic religious writings where they predominantly act as messengers between God and human beings, mediators between these traditionally paired opposites. However, I invoke a particular meaning here: Luce Irigaray allows angels to evoke a coming together in the trembling between their wings and asks, can she “make or remake a body from it?” (Luce Irigaray, 1991a, p. 176) This is an especially poignant question for the handless maiden, who indeed needs to ‘remake a body’. Irigaray indicates that the angel is beyond all binaries, beyond all duality; paired angels are “neither like nor other, they guard and await the mystery of a divine presence that has yet to be made flesh” (Luce Irigaray, 1986, p. 45). She continues to theorize the mediating role of the angel as enabling “the possibility of presence and of sharing in something divine that cannot be seen but can be felt, underlying all incarnation” (ibid.). This is the embodied transcendence that I have proposed.

Von Franz specifies that “only a religious experience can help the woman out of her difficulty” (von Franz, 1993, p. 98). Jung was persuaded that no one was able to individuate without what he called a spiritual attitude. This idea accords with Luce Irigaray’s project of women’s subjectivity/spirituality. It gives weight too, to Irigaray’s ground of the sensible/ transcendental, or spiritual corporeality: it is this interval between the sensible and the transcendental which, she says, can be mediated by ‘angels’ which are an evocation of potential. Tilghman complains of “the term’s slipperiness and refusal of closure,” (Tilghman, 2008, p. 48) which I take to be exactly what Irigaray intended. Thus ‘angels’ offer continuous potential, and operate against a foreclosure. The symbolic order acts as the foreclosure, angels open it up. Thus angels can be seen as that which mediate
restoration of the continuum of divinity and flesh, in the body.\textsuperscript{323}

Our young woman has left her father’s house, (the patriarchy, the law of the father) has left her mother-in-law’s house, (the unvirginated feminine) and is still looking for her own dwelling-place. I refer here to my challenge to Heidegger, as to whether language offers a house of being to women as assuredly as it does to men. I argue that, as guardians of language we create our own dwelling. Irigaray stresses “that the inscription of viable dwellings for both the female divine and the embodied female can only be realized by modifying the deep structure of language” (Tilghman, 2008, p. 42). So one of women’s tasks is to renovate the structure of language. The work of Irigaray’s angels intersect here; Tilghman suggests that their “gestures herald the embodiment of a multiplicity of ideas and figures that will never be contained by ordinary language or orthodox representation” (Tilghman, 2008, p. 47). Thus ‘ordinary language’, or the language of the masculine/paternal, will not serve as an adequate dwelling for being, but rather women need to develop “a discursive system which will reclaim for women a ‘dwelling’ within their bodies while it acknowledges their potential as transcendent beings” (ibid. p. 41), thus maintaining the \textit{sensible/ transcendental}, and the confluence of immanence and transcendence, so that the female body imbues transcendence with carnality. A woman, in the realization of sexuate difference, finds access to language, and to a feminine divine. Thus we can postulate that, by restoring the continuum of divinity and flesh in \textit{embodied transcendence} the handless maiden will find a language-home for herself. The arrival of a virgin white as snow further announces the divinization of the flesh.

\textbf{The Virgin White as Snow}

How does the maiden/every woman, discover her specific feminine identity in a patriarchal culture? Christine Downing laments that there “are few explicit rituals

\textsuperscript{323} An alternative reading of the presence of the angel would be to question whether the angel represents an interpolation of Christian values and attitudes, as does P.S Anderson in her analysis of Virginia Woolf’s \textit{Angel in the House} (P. S. Anderson, 2012). This would serve to reinforce patriarchal views of female piety. Because the angel does not represent a moral authority in the tale, I have chosen to see this figure as an entirely positive potential for women.
of female initiation among us” (Downing, 1992, p. 22), which would facilitate this. I argue that in our tale the virgin and the angel take the role of initiators. The young woman’s own body also takes this role - her lost hands, and finally regrown ones, demonstrate embodied truth, which cannot deceive her, or be taken away from her (again!). If we imagine a woman’s own body as initiator, women need to pay close attention to their actual experience, rather than what they imagine or expect it to be, especially as formulated by patriarchal standards. Marion Woodman, in her notion of ‘addiction to perfection’ (Marion Woodman, 1982) discusses addiction to (phallogocentric) ideals, which she observes is common among women; the way to overcome this addiction is to stay close to one’s own desires and one’s body. However, as Luce Irigaray argues, the feminine "body is not educated to develop its sensible perceptions with a spiritual aim in mind, but to detach itself from the sensible dimension” (Luce Irigaray, 2010, p. 15). Therefore the maiden is courageously going against her received education, towards her senses, toward her body. Staying close to the body through the senses enables women to avoid phallogocentrism, by remaining with their flesh, rather than deserting their bodies through logos. Otherwise we succumb to “automatism” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 145). It is this ‘automatism’ that the young woman in our story is about to overcome, that is, she is finding a way to regrow with flesh her silver ‘man-made’ hands. She is ‘coming to her senses’ and these senses are conditions for her spiritual as well as her physical autonomy. The maiden is moving from automatism to autonomy.

The arrival of ‘the virgin white as snow’, who ‘takes care of her every need’, tells us that the young queen needs to be educated, informed and protected by a virginal attitude. It is during this period of ‘virginity’ that her hands grow back. She gains her own subjectivity, grown from within, not conferred from without and through it she ‘re-members’ her lost capacities. The young virgin’s arrival

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324 This can also be seen as learning to discriminate between what is authentic for one’s self, and what is culturally predicated. Irigaray puts it this way: “In the ways in which men and women act, it is possible to distinguish what belongs to an identity and what is induced through social stereotypes” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 91).
facilitates the “gathering and collecting” (Luce Irigaray, 2008c, p. 94) of the maiden, which requires solitude and silence.\textsuperscript{325} It is especially interesting that there is still no mother figure around; the virgin and the angel sustain her.\textsuperscript{326} I argue that this is an important point for contemporary women; that is, while still within a patriarchal system, women can and must find their own virginal way by educating and sequestering themselves. While this process might have external evidence, it is primarily one of internalization, where a woman gathers herself towards her becoming. If we associate the ‘virgin white as snow’ with ‘purity’, specifically meaning untouched sexually, as the Christian tradition has done, we are subscribing to an androcentric view of both sexuality and purity. Indeed, my reading of the ‘virgin white as snow’ is that she is ‘pure’ (although this is not mentioned in the tale) specifically because she is not subsumed within androcentric culture and ideals, and is symbolically separated by living in the cottage in the forest. Her ‘purity’ relies on not being part of androcentric views of sexuality, rather than being judged by them. So, virginity is part of a specifically feminine ethic, rather than being judged by a specifically masculine ethic. Luce Irigaray proposes that women develop “an ethics that is ours” (Irigaray, 1993a, p. 129, my emphasis), and I pose virginity as part of this ethic.

Luce Irigaray poses a trio of ideas, namely the breath, solitude/silence and virginity/self-affection, as constituting the path to women’s becoming. I considered the cultivation of the breath in chapter two,\textsuperscript{327} and present the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{325} “I suggest remaining quiet, only keeping silent, as a way of gathering or collecting oneself. … I more insist on the necessity of turning back before all representations and words to find or find again one’s own self” (Irigaray, 2008a, pp. 94-95).
\item \textsuperscript{326} In some versions there is an angel and a virgin, in others a virgin who is an angel.
\item \textsuperscript{327} Pamela Sue Anderson is critical of Luce Irigaray’s emphasis on the breath as a means towards self-affection, autonomy and the sensible/transcendental. She says that Irigaray’s account of breathing, "excludes all questions of social and historical relations making up the real oppression of a woman’s situation. …How many women would agree that a woman’s bodily subordination to men and to a masculine divine can be completely sorted out by learning to breathe differently?" (P. S. Anderson, 2009, p. 41). My perspective is that social constructions and conventions must be challenged in order to maintain and create freedom, by both men and women, as a constant vigilance. Anderson too easily dismisses, however, the importance of a woman centring her locus of action in herself, rather than attributing it to an outside agency. In the defining and achieving of sexuate difference, a woman’s position is in relation to herself, initially, rather than to another. Anderson determines self-affection as ‘narcissistic’, which runs the risk of
\end{itemize}
remaining ideas here. We can imagine each of these occurring during the young queen’s 7-year residence in the cottage. I suspend the narrative while we consider.

**Virginity**

Arguably, Luce Irigaray’s most far-reaching contribution to feminist theology and philosophy is her ethics of sexuate difference. One of the most significant means of achieving this is through her discussion of virginity and self-affection.\(^\text{328}\) She provides a modern voice for, and development of the theme of virginity,\(^\text{329}\) which was proposed by Esther Harding in the 1930s.\(^\text{330}\) Harding made a clear distinction between the psychology of ‘married women’, to whom libidinal life flows from the other, and the ‘virgin’. She describes “married women” as oriented to men, living their lives around their relationship, whether they are married or not. A virgin, on the other hand, is a woman who, whether in relationship or not, retains her own sovereignty. It is a psychological and spiritual state, not a matter of sexuality, which concurs with the view of Luce Irigaray.\(^\text{331}\) Harding analysed various goddesses of antiquity in an attempt to discover the archetypal basis for a virginal feminine.\(^\text{332}\)

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\(^{328}\) Russell Lockhart interrogates the word for virginity in Greek texts, *parthenion*; para meaning “alongside of” and thenion meaning abundance. In this sense, virginity has the literal meaning of “to be near abundance” (Lockhart, 1983, p. 156).

\(^{329}\) Others, such as Marion Woodman (Woodman & Dickson, 1997), have taken the virgin archetype and developed it somewhat differently. For Woodman, the virgin is a transformative energy for women, which creates the mid-ground between spirit and matter, and is that which holds these two together (Woodman & Dickson, 1997, pp. 185, 189). In this way virginity and the breath are related; or, for Woodman, virginity achieves the same transformation as that of the sacred breath.

\(^{330}\) Although Irigaray’s work on virginity can be viewed as a development of ideas that are found in Harding’s work, there is no evidence that Irigaray has read Harding, or was directly influenced by her. Given that Harding took a Jungian, (rather than psychoanalytic) and archetypal view, an actual connection is unlikely.

\(^{331}\) A woman who is actually married might have a ‘virginal’ attitude, and likewise a woman who is single can be ‘married’ to the patriarchy. It is important that this discussion of virginity is not confused with sexuality.

\(^{332}\) The figure of mythological figure, Echo, is pertinent here: “Echo’s love for her own fullness angers Pan, and her music excites envy even in him who plays so well. … he does not see that it is possible for something virginal to be complete in itself - to love itself” (Lockhart, 1983, p. 157).
The chief characteristic of the goddess … is that she is a virgin… She remains virgin, even while being goddess of love. She is essentially one-in-herself. …. She bears her divinity in her own right...The woman who is virgin, one-in-herself, does what she does – not because of a desire to please, not to be liked, not to be approved, even by herself; but because what she does is true (M. E. Harding, 1990, p. 125).

Similarly, Luce Irigaray claims that “if a woman does not keep her virginity, she loses her identity” (Irigaray, 2002, p. 68). Irigaray goes so far as to call this present age, potentially at least, “the era of virginity…as a dimension of preservation of spiritual identity and becoming” (Irigaray, 2004b, p. 163). Although elsewhere she claims that virginity should be a legal right, (Deutscher, 2002, p. 50; Irigaray, 2004b, p. 206) she also emphasizes virginity as a metaphor of integrity, as a mental or even spiritual state. Luce Irigaray ascribes to women a state of 'becoming virgin'. She writes:

There is no doubt we are born virgins. But we also have to become virgins, to relieve our bodies and souls from cultural and familial fetters. For me, becoming virgin (devenir vierges) is synonymous with women’s conquest of the spiritual (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 117).

It is clear that neither Luce Irigaray nor Harding are extolling the value of an intact hymen, (being born a virgin) but rather an intact psyche (becoming virgin). Luce Irigaray’s virginité psychique is something that a woman cultivates and conserves, an inviolability of identity. What I am arguing for here is a very specific cultivation of the feminine body/mind, one that enables “mastering oneself without sacrifice, amputation [!] or self-annulment” (Irigaray, 2001, p. 72).

In light of this idea, we might consider the remarks of German poet Rainer Maria Rilke in the early 1900s (Rilke, Kappus, & Mitchell, 1987, pp. 76-78). He calls for a new paradigm of relationship between women and men, not predicated upon commodification, not dependent upon that which “flows from man to woman” and

Thus we see that the masculine/patriarchal, even one as ‘feminine’ as the figure Pan, is likely to find the notion of virginity infuriating, because it does not serve phallogocentric purposes.

“When I speak of a spiritual virginity, I allude to the capacity of gathering, keeping and transforming an energy of one’s own” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 105).
that, in a future time, women "will only in passing be imitators of male behaviour and misbehaviour". Rilke finds any imitation a "ridiculous disguise" and a "deforming influence". He feels it is necessary for women to strip "off the conventions of mere femaleness" and the position that "will no longer mean the mere opposite of the male" and be "something in itself, something that makes one think not of any complement and limit." This sense of a woman being something in herself is in keeping with the virgin status proposed by Harding and Luce Irigaray. Rilke certainly recognizes the separate subjectivity of women, not as imitation of male behaviour, but something in itself, ‘without complement’. It is clear that, expressed from a masculine point of view, he realizes that he as a man cannot have free and ethical relations with a woman, unless she is free herself; this is a full realization, by both men and women, of Luce Irigaray’s ethics of sexuate difference.

I argue that the love relationship that would result from this transformation of women would no longer be dependent upon the libidinal flow from man to woman, but that which exists between them, as Irigaray has articulated in her ‘amorous exchange’ in which women would be the desiring subject too” (Irigaray & Whitford, 1991, p. 159). If we are in any doubt, Rilke emphasizes the solitude, the separate identity of each partner which allows for “the love that consists in this: that two solitudes protect and border and greet each other.” Luce Irigaray’s comments also evoke encircled solitude: “It is not something which we must exchange, but perhaps a dwelling, a place to remain, a circle to inhabit, a limit in which to rest” (Irigaray, 2001, p. 116).

What I am arguing for is a contemporary concept of virginity that goes beyond the literal, but which likewise effects an escape from the Symbolic. Not only this, but the perpetual virginity of the Virgin Mary affirms, as Tina Beattie claims, “‘woman’s eternal liberation from the power of the phallus’, for the virgin has not
been violated, despoiled” (Tina Beattie, 2001, p. 134). The Phallus of Lacan, as the chief signifier in the Symbolic, is deposed in this account, and in the same gesture, virginity is achievable. Virginity is thus essential for all women, and is not predicated upon relations with men.

What might be some of the difficulties in achieving virginity? Luce Irigaray is concerned that women and girls are inclined to be relational, (Irigaray, 2004b) and therefore ‘give themselves away’ too easily, psychologically and otherwise. Kristeva relates this to the ‘fusional bliss’ which is ‘characteristic of the mother-daughter’ relationship, which must therefore be overcome (A.-M. Smith, 1998, p. 84). She, like Irigaray, advocates “women’s solitude and its vital importance...to preserve the singularity of each woman and to prevent it being swallowed up by the common cause” (ibid., p. 86). Both Kristeva and Irigaray are saying that it is easier to slip into a collective fantasy of any kind, than to think and feel for one’s self. This is the virgin psyche - the thinking and feeling through for oneself, without inclusion (in family, culture, groups of other women) or exclusion (from family, culture, groups of other women), and therefore not being beholden to others for that thinking and feeling. Closely associated with virginity are Irigaray’s ideas on self-affection.

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334 Tina Beattie has been criticized for developing a model of feminine spiritual embodiment based on implicit Mariology, leaving Protestants to analytic disembodied ideas. Yet I believe that, as Jung says, the imagery which Catholicism has embraced gives ample scope for the imagination to play with these traditional concepts in new ways; ways that do not simply reinforce the patriarchal patterns which we are consciously working to dismantle. For example, Jung provocatively argues that “the logical consistency of the papal declaration [of the Assumption of Mary] cannot be surpassed, and it leaves Protestantism with the odium of being nothing but a man’s religion which allows no metaphysical representation of women... The feminine, like the masculine, demands an equally personal representation” (C. G. Jung, 1977, Vol. 11, § 753). Julia Kristeva has a similar view when she says that the Virgin Mary “is one of the most powerful imaginary constructs known in the history of civilizations” (Kristeva, 1987, p. 237). We can, I believe, read old texts, dogmas and doctrines in a new way, as I have done here and elsewhere. In no way am I supporting an exclusively heterosexual view of spirituality, however, as P. S. Anderson claims that Beattie has done (P. S. Anderson, 2012, p. 184).

335 For Irigaray also, the fusional nature of mother-daughter relations can stand in the way of virginity. She says: “To keep her breathing free, Mary needs her mother to have also reached autonomy and the internalization of her breathing. Otherwise, Mary ought to separate violently from her mother and could then attain virginity with difficulty” (Irigaray, 2008a, pp. 89-90).
Self-affection

Luce Irigaray describes the interiority of women as the return to themselves and staying with themselves, “despite a culture in the masculine, the attraction for man, the traces of pregnancy, the strength of maternal love” (Irigaray, 2004b, p. 161). In other words, self-affection/virginity is her most important task, overriding that of culture, biology and desire.

It is clear that self-affection is an ethical self-relation for women. Irigaray asks us to discover “a relation of intimacy with ourselves… an ability to remain within oneself, as in a home before any other sort of dwelling. Self-affection alludes to a state of gathering with oneself and of meditative quietness” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 6). In gathering herself, a woman stores, rather than squanders, her energy. Irigaray says it is “not always a matter of gaining something more but one of being capable of something less. Feeling more free vis-à-vis your fears, fantasies about others, freeing yourself from useless knowledge, possessions, and obligations” (Irigaray, 2007b, p. 117). She admits that self-affection “is still to be discovered or rediscovered and cultivated by each of us” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 6). So a woman needs to guard against losing herself in her tendency to be relational, in the “attraction for the other, not letting oneself be ruled by the other... It is to give oneself a feminine mind or soul, an internal dwelling which is not only physical but also spiritual: linked to breath, to speech, to the mind” (Irigaray, 2004b, p. 161). Therefore, before sexual relations can exist, each sexuate identity is to take care of their own self-affection. It is not only in relations with men that a woman risks ‘letting oneself be ruled by the other’, as it can occur in any relations.

336 “It is genius to store energy”, says Robert Johnson, rather than be exhausted all the time. The physical, psychic, and spiritual energy of modern people is “mortgaged into the next decade” (R. Johnson, 1993, p. 93).

337 Robert Johnson says that “easier, faster, more is the great seduction for the modern mind” (R. Johnson, 1993, p. 58). Thus Irigaray’s advocacy for self-affection goes against this seduction of contemporary culture, of the situation of the miller.
I propose that self-affection is the relation a woman must have with herself. As such it is the prelude to relationship with others, and cannot be circumvented by focusing on, or substituting, the other. As Irigaray comments, men stay with themselves too much, in contradistinction to women, who leave themselves too much (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 92). That is, a man needs to be taught not to prioritize himself, while a woman needs to learn to do exactly that. This is the beginning of a true ethics between two. Other (male) philosophers, Levinas for instance, focus their philosophy of ethics on being-for-the-other before being-for-oneself. Foucault, too, defined his ethics as the “kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself” (quoted in Cooper & Blair, 2002, p. 513), but, by inference, usually have with the other instead. This reflects the psychology of the masculine subject, based on a sense of hierarchy, superiority, and entitlement and with it a heightened sense of obligation. What I am arguing here, however, is an ethics between, which is predicated upon equal subjectivity, not an ethics toward. The Levinasian stance is that the face-to-face with the other is “based upon an unfulfillable obligation” (Hand, 1989, p. 190). Thus Levinas is representing a man’s education in ethics, which is towards the other, and Irigaray is representing a woman’s education in ethics, which is towards herself. A sexuate difference in both thinking and ethics is revealed. He places the other “right at the beginning”, and takes “upon oneself the destiny of the other” (Hand, 1989, p. 206). My position is quite to the contrary: in advocating self-affection and ethics towards oneself as being primary, one cannot take responsibility for the other, only ones-self. A woman must know how to return to herself, to her self-affection (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 5). This then leads to an ethical relation with others.

**Solitude and Silence**

Irigaray tells us it is in this silence that we enable, and bear witness to, the advent of the other, while simultaneously maintaining self-affection. She says

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338 In this regard Foucault is more like Irigaray in his approach than Levinas.
that if we are not capable of solitude we are incapable of loving. This is something to be cultivated, because it is not given from the beginning (Irigaray, 2010b).

Silence also implies a distancing from the contamination of the Symbolic Order, and being open to renewal from what Lacan would describe as the Real. That which is invisible to the symbolic order, that which is worth uttering, is that which "remains silent" (Irigaray, 1999, p. 137). The paradox is that it is through silence that that which is worth uttering is discovered. The Virgin Mary’s presence is received in silence. Irigaray says that “attaching too great an importance to the word renders us unable to appreciate the value of Mary’s gestures, including her silence” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 98). I point out that in many cultures, women’s mysteries have involved a time of solitude and silence, a setting apart. The young queen of our story is separated from patriarchal culture in the isolation of the cottage.

For Luce Irigaray, silence “is the speaking of the threshold” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 5). Language would seem to point beyond itself, beyond what can be said. T.S. Eliot writes: “Words, after speech, reach into the silence” (Eliot, 1944, p. 17). At various stages in the maiden’s journey, she enters into solitude and silence. It is silence that “allows an exchange of words between two different subjects. It is thanks to silence”, says Luce Irigaray, “that the other as other can be maintained."

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339 “But it is true that in order to provide a home in herself for the different other, she has to have at her disposal a sort of language, be it only silence, which allows her to coexist with the different” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 98).
340 The Quakers, in their form of worship, come together in silence. As such, they do not rely on logos.
341 The Virgin Mary is sometimes known as “Our Lady of Silence", and “a spoken silence” is attributed to her. It is that “silence which enables us to listen to the small, still voice”, rather than the clamour of external, ego concerns. The forms this silence takes are many, see for instance http://www.squidoo.com/thesilenceofmary, accessed August 6th, 2013, but are primarily based on the Annunciation where Mary “kept these things, and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:15-19). Otto says that the numinous is most often encountered and manifests itself in silence, which he terms ‘sacramental’(Otto, 2004, p. 217), thus emphasizing the spiritual nature of silence.
342 This point coheres with the views of Jung, for whom “the demand for individuation ... means farewell to personal conformity with the collective, and stepping over into solitude” (C. G. Jung, 1977, Volume 18, §1097)
Relations between two different subjectivities cannot be set up starting from a shared common meaning, but rather from a silence, which one agrees to respect in order to let the other be" (Luce Irigaray, 2008a, p. 5). In this way, taking care of another means letting the other be, and to become. Of this becoming, “that is still to be elaborated - for the one, for the other and for their relations”, Luce Irigaray says that it is an “always virginal space safeguarded through the attention that each one accords to the other in their transcendent alterity” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 61). She continues to elaborate how each being is modified by the other, and that our ability to be “is not received once and for all but evolves according to our relation with the other, an other who both limits and increases our ability to be” (ibid., p. 75). This approach epitomizes ethics in the feminine; nothing is prescribed or proscribed, but a silence, a threshold. She stresses that “if this silence does not remain present and active, the whole of discourse loses its most important function: communicating and not merely transmitting information” (ibid., p. 5). It is likely that Irigaray’s experience as a psychoanalyst has shown her the effectiveness of remaining silent, so that both the other, and the depths of one’s self, can be revealed.

_Her Hands Grow Back_
Let us now return to the narrative, and the remarkable motif of the young queen’s hands growing back. I remind the reader of Heidegger’s notion of the handedness of thinking, and Derrida and van Leeuwen’s emphasis on the sexuate nature of _Being_. The achievement of sexuate difference has allowed her to think as a _woman_. She has become a thinking and desiring being. She is capable of _dialogue_. It is no coincidence that the king, representing the sexuate other with whom she is now capable of engaging in discourse, now re-enters the tale.

_The king’s Search_
Both the young queen and the King have undergone seven years of development; neither avoid this task, both require transformation, although the seven years are spent very differently. The transformation is rooted in the
seeking of one’s own self, for both man and woman. For men the external gathering is needed in order to leave his mother - or a mother complex. Robert Johnson reminds us that if a wounded woman can keep faith in the feminine curative power to be found in solitude, she will, as if by a miracle, find her way to feminine healing (R. Johnson, 1993, pp. 83-84). I contest Jung’s idea of the contra-sexual anima in a man’s psyche and his reliance on women as a muse on which his own creativity could be projected. This story indicates that in order to discover her own spiritual nature, it is not through being muse to man but neither is it due to incorporating what Jung termed the animus, which he posited as the inner capacity for spirituality in a woman. In so saying, the notion of animus I discussed in chapter one is reduced to being of limited value for women. Rather, in our story, her 7 years sojourn in the cottage in the forest with the virgin white as snow, are achieved with the only masculine presence being that of her son. This suggests that rather than depending on culture to provide a model for her animus development, she must, quite literally, give birth to it herself. The boy baby is an unthreatening form of masculinity, not a version of patriarchal culture, which has previously betrayed her. The boy, too, in these 7 years, is able to develop freely; the inscription over the cottage is, “here all dwell freely.” We associate this story with liberation from the father complex. The father complex is synonymous with the patriarchal/ Symbolic and this story therefore directs women to an uncontaminated subjectivity and spirituality. The process of (re) discovering female subjectivity continues through the motif of the veil.

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343 “We have to make our way, letting men make their own, and finding crossroads and places where we could share with respect for one another” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 103).
344 “In our culture, gathering refers to constructing a world of one’s own rather than gathering oneself. It is thus yet not a question of internalization. This construction of an external gathering is needed by man to leave the maternal world” (Irigaray, 2008a, p. 95).
345 El Saffar is concerned that the concepts of both animus and anima tie a woman to patriarchal notions: “Does individuation mean adaptation to one or several of the images of the feminine offered up in the cultures of patriarchy...Seldom do we suspect the images, or question the ways in which they reflect the ancillary roles women play in relation to the dominant male culture” (El Saffar, 1994, p. 5).
The Angel Invites the King

Luce Irigaray comments, “I have yet to unveil, unmask, or veil myself for me - to veil myself so as to achieve self-contemplation, for example, to let my gaze travel over myself so as to limit my exposure to the other and repossess my own gestures and garments thus nestling back into my own vision and contemplation of myself” (Irigaray, 1993b, p. 65). She is defining her own self-affection, that mode in which she might best regard herself, and at the same time create a limit in respect to the gaze of the other. Yet in the tale, it is the husband who is veiled, so the young queen is protected from a penetrating gaze from her husband/androcentric culture, which might disrupt her newfound subjectivity. This veiling allows her to be in the presence of her husband without the penetration of his gaze. (von Franz, 1993, p. 102) This indicates that her subjectivity needs a gentle approach or she could be frightened into a regressive reaction. That is, she must not be drawn out of her own subjectivity. He/androcentric culture must be covered lest his rationality be too bright.346 Irigaray also cautions that, “on attaining subjectivity, women must not fall into narcissism, as she believes men have done (Irigaray, 1996, p. 118). The motif of the king being veiled suggests that his own narcissism is subdued, or humbled, in order to be present for the queen.

To further ponder the motif of the veil, some things need to be half-veiled or seen in a subdued light; samar and erotic logos are the forms of communication, rather than rationality. This represents a version of ‘the feminine’ and of the nature of women as a way of living which does not engage patriarchal constructs. As Luce Irigaray puts it:

346 Lockhart says this of rationality: “The literal blocks the flow of psyche as cool and moist air. Breathing becomes laboured and the air hot ... If here the literal impulse tries to constrain or restrain the psyche’s natural tendency towards the imaginal, then it behaves wrongly” (Lockhart, 1983, p. 172). I see a relation between the king’s need to veil himself and the protecting of female subjectivity from the bright light of rationality - her own, or other’s. Lockhart also makes the connection between rationality, air, and the ability to breathe freely, which I have discussed in chapter two.
The gesture that we direct toward the other cannot be inspired by a mere moral obligation. Such an attitude does not allow comprehensive and reciprocal exchange between two different subjects. In order for this sort of meeting to happen, each one must rest oneself and stay within oneself...opening one’s own world, opening one’s own self requires the ability to return home. … It is our human identity that we have to return (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 5).

In our tale, this comprehensive reciprocal exchange between two is now possible. Luce Irigaray’s notion of cultivation includes being able to see another person as a subject different to one’s self, not appropriating the other to one’s own perception, not possessing the other in any way. Through cultivating a manner of seeing, through the eyes of the soul, we are able approach the core of the other (Irigaray, 2010b). This is the situation that the king and queen have now engendered, thanks to their separate journeys.

I note that it is the angel who invites the king to enter. As we have seen, the angel, for Luce Irigaray, represents the terms that negotiate sexuate difference, as we have seen. What is most remarkable in most versions of the narrative is that this is the first time the woman speaks. Luce Irigaray reminds us that the “one cannot speak the truth of the other, and that obliges the one and the other to speak and to listen so as to take account of being in its wholeness” (Irigaray, 2004a, p. 47). The woman has had to find her own voice – no one, including the king, can speak for her. "Putting myself in search of my word, my words, seems to be the first fidelity to a theology of Incarnation...Women have to discover their word(s), be faithful to it and, interweaving it with their bodies, make it a living and spiritual flesh” (Irigaray, 2004b, p. 151). Her language is bodily, and spiritual, it articulates the sensible/transcendental.

She has not been able to speak as woman to this point, because she has not occupied a subject position, and therefore could not be heard.347 Hence, when

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347 Ranciere is instructive on this point: “the plebs do not speak. [We can substitute ‘women’ for plebs] They do not speak because they are beings without a name, deprived of logos - meaning, of symbolic enrolment” (Ranciere, 1999, p. 23). Ranciere goes on to discuss using the master’s
Luce Irigaray proposes *parler femme*, she is speaking of both a psychological and linguist position that she claims *is in the future.*[^348] *Parler femme*, the dwelling in language, which the handless maiden has found for herself, is not Heidegger’s house of being. She is not speaking *like* a woman, but *as* a woman. According to Irigaray:

> If we don’t invent a language, if we don’t find our body’s language, it will have too few gestures to accompany our story. We shall tire of the same ones, and leave our desires unexpressed, unrealized. Asleep again, we shall fall back upon the words of men (Luce Irigaray, 1985, p. 214).

Not only does the young queen speak, but another motif speaks for her too, and that is the name of her child, ‘Sorrowful’, or “rich in sorrows”. In the child’s name we understand the affect, the sorrow, which his mother has not expressed - a common theme in analytic practice is that the repressed or unexpressed passions of the parents are lived out by the child. If not a literal child, then that which we (are unable to) create in our daily lives. However, “rich in sorrows” carries more than grief and sadness; it conveys fullness, depth and the wealth of the life of the soul. This sense of richness is carried over to the richness of the sexuate difference of the couple.

**The Second Marriage**

The young queen has been discovered in her sexuate difference - likewise the king, which they have achieved through their respective, very different, labours. The young woman has been relieved of her value as commodity. This sexuate difference initiates what Luce Irigaray terms “the establishment of another era of civilization, or of culture, in which the exchange of objects, and most particularly of women, would no longer form the basis for the constitution of a cultural order” (Irigaray, 1996, p. 45). Irigaray requires that the partners in the couple establish sexuate difference, which means “that men and women do not belong to the same subjectivity, that subjectivity itself is neither neutral nor universal” (Irigaray, tools to dismantle the master’s house. Women’s language dismantles the non-position that they have occupied.

[^348]: However, it could be argued that because she can write it, it does indeed exist, as the feminine imaginary at least - we begin with the imaginal.
2004b, p. xii). She stresses that male and female “have to discover a new way of differing as human by entering into communication as two different subjectivities.” I claim that, because of this discovery, they now go forward to a very different future, because they now enjoy “the mystery of a divine presence that has yet to be made flesh” (Luce Irigaray, 1986, p. 45). Their second marriage is a contrast to when the king married her out of pity and to provide for her. Her feminine jouissance is something she has for herself, “as opposed to the feminine object as the object of exchange of masculine subjectivity” (Schroeder, 1998, p. 288). Rather, they are now ‘realizing a horizontal couple’, as advocated by Irigaray. The “new envelopes of identity” which Luce Irigaray (Luce Irigaray, 1993a, p. 82) proposes are reflected in both the young queen and the returning king. They are able to yield to each other, without appropriation, through an interval that sets limits. This interval allows for the distance - and difference - which paradoxically allows for relatedness. This situation is described by Irigaray thus:

Interdependency between subjectivities is no longer reduced to questions of possessing of exchanging or sharing objects, cash, or an already existing meaning. It is, rather, regulated by the constitution of subjectivity. The subject does not vest its own value in any form of property whatsoever. No longer is it objecthood, having or the cost of having that governs the becoming of a subject of subjects and the relation among them. They are engaged in a relationship from which they emerge altered, the objective being the accomplishment of the subjectivity while remaining faithful to their nature (Irigaray, 1996, p. 120).

While Irigaray is talking of the sexuate subjectivities, having achieved this between two, male and female, it also can then be applied to all relations. We can imagine the young queen entering into all relationships on this basis, including with her mother-in-law.

**Conclusion**

I have shown that we can trace contemporary psychological, philosophical, social and feminist issues in a fairy tale, which has been a part of cultural myth in diverse cultures for hundreds of years. Through interpreting this narrative, I have shown the need for, and development of, both the male and female subject. As a
final gesture, I demonstrate how the three phases of Luce Irigaray’s work are revealed by this story. She says:

1. “I had to start with criticizing a tradition that does not recognize the existence of two different subjects and does not care enough about ethics in their relations” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 3). The handless maiden demonstrates her lack of subjectivity in the first part of the tale when a devil’s bargain is made and her hands are cut off.

2. “Then, I had to propose means for a woman to constitute herself as an autonomous subjectivity, a subjectivity appropriate to her natural belonging” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 3). Through many twists and turns, including 7 years living in the forest, the handless maiden achieves or reaches her ‘natural belonging’, through solitude and silence, and through this process achieves subjectivity.

3. “It is in the third phase of my work that I approach the positive definition of gestures that can favour ethical relations between man and woman, this relation representing the most basic and universal place where ethics must be exercised in order that it could become effective in all human relations in difference” (Irigaray, 2010a, p. 3). I emphasize that sexuate difference must be founded prior to coniunctio, indeed to enable the coniunctio. This approach to ethical gestures toward the other is demonstrated in the final scene, where the king and queen marry for the second time, having established sexuate difference and thus the basis of ethical relations.
Conclusion

From the outset, I proposed to extract thought from dependence on the masculine symbolic and to simultaneously work to expose the necessity for a new feminine identity not embedded in it. Have I been able to situate my view outside the masculine/symbolic? Part of the problem is that women have framed their enquiry and their theories as the antithesis of androcentric ones. The wording of my original aim reveals this problem. As I discussed in chapter one, this is attempting to solve a problem at the same level as the problem itself. That is, we are trying to solve the problem of duality by framing it in terms of that duality. I depart from feminist theorists such as Mary Daly, who propose the perspective of the single (female) subject.\textsuperscript{349} While this is a necessary starting-point, it is incomplete because it constitutes a reversal of androcentrism, which operates on the basis of one circumscribed (male) subject - Mary Daly is merely replacing this with a single, circumscribed (female) subject. Much of my project has been to articulate female and feminine subjectivity, but I have also emphasised the ethics between two, as does Irigaray. This fulfils my intention to not replace androcentric ideals with equivalent feminine notions, which would merely be another side of the existing dualism. I have taken up Luce Irigaray’s proposal for two separate subjectivities as sexuate difference, which effectively eliminates this duality-schism between the masculine/symbolic and women who are excluded from it. My arguments articulate a feminine that stands alone.

I have pointed out that if we think in styles that are inherited from the patriarchy, which are patriarchal, we see only what these styles are constructed to see - the masculine/ symbolic. This vision privileges the patriarchal/ symbolic. What I have achieved here is to create a perspective by and for ‘the feminine’. Lacan proposes the ‘not-duped-er’, who sees that the Emperor/ symbolic does not wear

\textsuperscript{349} In an interview in 1999 Mary Daly said, "I don't think about men. I really don't care about them. I'm concerned with women's capacities... I really am totally uninterested in men's capacities" (Quoted in Rodkey, 2009, p. 302).
clothes, and this represents the feminine position, which sees from another viewpoint (Lacan, 1992, p. 231). In order to achieve this position, I have used a perspective that is tethered to the body, to women’s lived feminine bodies because it better evades phallocentrism, according to Irigaray. I referred to Simone Weil, who also recognized that thought alone is an illusion, that transformative intellectual work is incomplete if the body has not participated in the change. (Weil, 1956, pp. 23-24) I considered that belief itself becomes embodied; to accept a theory is to live it, through one’s body, in embodiment. A theory is not something that can remain transcendent, or be a disembodied mental exercise. So I am therefore cautious about claiming that the flesh evades the phallocentric. I have argued that it would be necessary for a woman to cultivate her own belief and her ideals, so that which she embodies is truly ‘feminine’, rather than deploying the dualistic terms of phallocentrism, even if by denial or evasion. I have demonstrated that the seeds of cultivation can be seen in Beauvoir, where woman “is not a fixed reality but a becoming” (de Beauvoir, 1989, p. 66). And likewise for Luce Irigaray, she becomes a woman: “I am born a woman, but I must still become this woman that I am by nature” (Irigaray 1992, 168). She more pointedly directs women to cultivation, to “the transformation of ourselves into a work of art” (Irigaray, 2010a, pp. 15, my emphasis). The point that I have argued is that women must be engaged in a conscious project of their own becoming, lest what they live is merely a ventriloquising of given, andocentric, (or even feminist) forms. In this way I have questioned – and perhaps sidestepped - the dogma of feminism, and promoted ‘the feminine’ and women in a way that is not dictated to by ‘feminism’. I have done so, not to be contentious, but to represent more than the rights of women in what remains an androcentric culture.

I argued that a ‘feminine’ perspective could be viewed as an inner-orientation, rather than the external orientation of patriarchal concerns. I have demonstrated that female spirituality does differ from male spirituality, and my specific contribution is the notion of mysticism as feminine divine. I explicited the
implication of this difference in chapter four through my discussion of the numinous, and proposed a fundamental difference between feminine and masculine mysticism. While the numinous can be seen as the foundation of experience in both, in the masculine the divine numinosity is posited - and presumably experienced - as absolute other, as a spiritual agent arising outside of the individual. Kristeva, for instance, comments on the affects of encounter with the other. Irigaray and Beauvoir critique the ecstasis implied in mysticism, which takes a women away from her subjectivity. Yet Weil worked towards discovering god in her body. Thus, in my view, the feminine experience of the numinous is indeed through her flesh, and I have argued for flesh itself as the numen. I proposed that the cultivation of the breath specifically, and the body in general, leads to experiencing the numen of the flesh, to embodied transcendence.

My interrogation of the debate between social construction and essentialism convinced me that its usefulness is limited. Rather I deferred to Luce Irigaray who summarizes the situation: “We are not only culturally determined, we remain natural, and nature is the basis from which we can continue to create culture” (Irigaray, 1991b, p. 113). This also recalls Beauvoir’s brilliant assessment, that “it is not nature that defines woman; it is she who defines herself by taking on nature in her affectivity” (de Beauvoir, 1989, p. 69). I thus discovered a middle position between nature and culture, and the notion of cultivation was one way in which I achieved this middle position.

A further reason I have taken up cultivation is because it can be approached through spiritual views both East and West and the Jungian depth-psychology view of individuation. Both Jung and Irigaray (Irigaray, 2003) had ‘an Eastern turn’, and were influenced by Eastern philosophy, religion and mythology. Arguably, Jung’s idea of individuation and Irigaray’s of cultivation were fertilized by this ‘Eastern turn’. In my view, Jung’s depth-psychology can be compared with the sensible/ transcendental, because it is, as Yuasa says, “positioned between
the mental and biological world” (Yuasa, 1987, p. 238), that is, it is aligned with
the natural material world, as well as the mind. Jung’s project of cultivation, via
individuation, intentionally incorporates a spiritual attitude as well as attention to
the elements. According to Yuasa the cultivated or authentic self, “advances
through one’s inner experience toward nature” (Yuasa, 1987, p. 240). Thus, a
cultivated or authentic self would have a transformed relation to the natural world,
when exploitation and commodification would be impossible to contemplate.

How, then, should a woman begin her cultivation? I agreed with Irigaray that
cultivation “should be the first gesture in a spiritual journey. Without this
cultivation, our spirituality remains paralysed and idolatrous inevitably” (Irigaray,
2007a, p. 359). I further argued that the cultivation of sensible perceptions assists
“reaching autonomy, for spiritual becoming and better relations with the other(s)”
(Irigaray, 2010a, pp. 15-16), as does Irigaray. This concept of cultivation does not
remain theoretical, because it escapes from the confines of philosophy and
creates a bridge to psychology and the social sciences, and at times, verges on a
pedagogical approach. While I see Irigaray’s teaching as primarily beneficial to
women’s autonomy and subjectivity, it nevertheless has didactic and prescriptive
tendencies about which I am cautious. For example, her presumption that a
heterosexual couple best demonstrates sexuate difference, and her view that
women can, or maybe even should lead men via the breath.

I expanded upon cultivation in several chapters. In chapter two, I utilized Luce
Irigaray’s vision of a love to be cultivated between two, based, I believe, upon her
own experience of the sensible/transcendental, which she has gained through
her practice of yoga and meditation. In my view, she demonstrates how to move
from every-day awareness to cultivated awareness, and it is from this latter
perspective that she writes and teaches. Thus, as Jean Byrne comments, it is
most useful to think about difference “not before the realization of oneness, but
after the experience or realization of oneness” (Byrne, 2008, p. 235), when the
relations between two are transformed. I have shown that after mystical or
coniunctio experiences, ethics become a vital practice, and instances of oppression, denial, exploitation and cruelty are keenly perceived. From this perspective, no form of appropriation, projection or exploitation is tolerable, whether that be on the basis of personal psychology, gender, race, education, religion, economic status or anything where one side is favoured over the other; my exposition on the tale of the Handless Maiden in chapters five and six, explicates the necessity for truly ethical relations. I have argued, therefore, that much of what has been observed as ‘the feminine’ and the traditional roles, and experience, of women, whether from an essentialist perspective, socially constructed, and the sex/ gender debate, arises from a pre-cultivation, or an uncultivated state, or the inauthentic self. Thus cultivation, in the sense I am using it here, culminates in the individuated self, which is an orientation of the ego to the Self. In Irigaray’s terms, this is ‘becoming divine.’

I have demonstrated that it is the cultivation of a spiritualized attitude that enables reciprocal exchange, enabling ethical relations with the sexuate other, the same-sex other, all others. As Irigaray stresses, “the responsibility to work at each instant for our own evolution, transformation, transfiguration or transubstantiation” (Irigaray, 2007a, p. 3), is required for any ethical relations. This is a major shift from ego-orientation, when the other serves our needs, to a solicitude for the other which amounts to “suspending all projections or plan about them” (Irigaray, 2008b, p. 79). It is clear that the first position is that of a subject towards an object, the second a relation between subjects, female subjectivity being a necessary achievement for women themselves, and relations between.

I have applied the notion of cultivation in chapter two where I argued for the cultivation of the breath as a mindfulness or yogic practice, but also as a tool towards carnal transcendence, the sensible/ transcendent. This encompasses the breath literally (pneuma), but also the movement of the spirit (Pneumatikos) as it infuses the body. Cultivation, in Irigaray’s view, is evidenced in gestures and
what she calls ‘presence’. By this I do not imply a learned femininity, equivalent to having silver hands, but something which arises naturally from a perspective grounded in feminine divinity, which I have ascribed to body-affirming, (Dionysian) mysticism, and embodied transcendence. Cultivation can be summarized as an attitude to life, which involves mindfulness.

Throughout this work I have visited the question of whether men can have experiences of a feminine divine through body-based mysticism, or indeed other ‘feminine’ experiences. This question is fundamental to Luce Irigaray specifying sexuate difference as predleting different spirituality for men and women. Before I venture further, my position is that nothing that follows weakens my argument for a feminine divine, accessible by and as mysticism, or for sexuate difference between men and women. I cannot, however, limit my argument to absolutes of any kind. My defence is several: firstly, in the Introduction I argued for the idea of a human continuum, “at least in part” and for the possibility that men might access ‘feminine’ experiences, and vice versa, because humanity is a continuum separate from, or more primary than, sexuality. (Irigaray would disagree). I must, indeed, allow for this possibility. Secondly, I argued for diversity, which acknowledges the differences between men and women, as well as the differences within the sexes. There is a great deal of latitude in this “within”. Furthermore, I uphold that there are limits to the application of sexuate difference when approaching spirituality. I have proposed that “each individual tends to gravitate toward the spiritual life that suits them. More than this, each individual has a spiritual impulse and temperament that aligns itself within these categories and has a right to adhere to them without interference” (King, 2009, pp. 165-166), as King argues. It is important that we do not deny such polyvalence, such a variety of archetypes. This leads to my third point, that while

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350 At Nottingham University in 2010 she commented, for instance, that she had not observed any women students on campus who demonstrated ‘presence’.

351 “Mindfulness is a pre-symbolic function. You can play with word symbols all day long and you will never pin it down completely. We can never fully express what it is. However, we can say what it does.” (Accessed on August 6th, 2013, Bhante Gunaratana, Voices of Insight http://www.shambhala.com/html/learn/features/buddhism/basics/mindfulness.cfm)
a feminine/ feminist “we” is a fantasy, so is a masculine “we”. That is, I cannot speak collectively for either women or men, and what a singular woman or man might be capable of as part of their individual becoming could well go against a sexuate identity, or sexuate ‘sameness’. This introduces my fourth point, namely that I set out to discover “a voice beyond dualisms” and a blurring of the lines drawn on sexuate difference precludes the developing of another duality, a categorization that becomes absolute. This continuum does nothing to diminish the necessity for sexuate difference itself. My fifth point is that Irigaray argued for “at least two, male and female”, in the diversity of nature (Irigaray, 1996, pp. 37, my emphasis).

There is room in the “at least two” for those men, for instance, who experience certain things attributed to the feminine sexuate identity, and conversely for women to experience in a way attributed to the masculine sexuate identity; I argued for polyphonic variation. The “at least two” is open to conjecture, articulation and development. In serving multiple influences, something that is a reflection of the polyvalence of the human being, Irigaray’s notion of sexuate difference can only take us so far. Further, as I intimated in the Introduction, I uphold that diversity and a continuum of human expression are also important in framing women’s - and men’s - experience. My final point is that Irigaray’s development of sexuate difference is a relatively young philosophic idea. In its maturity, it may well look different, due to explorations and amplifications, such as I have made here. For instance, in chapter six I have emphasized the necessity for women to develop self-affection in order to establish subjectivity. How might women well grounded in self-affection think about sexuate difference?

A specific and unique contribution that I have made in this work is the development of the notion of erotic logos, which I have advanced to install the sensible/ transcendental in language, where eros and logos fecundate each other. The notion of erotic logos enables me to bypass, and work parallel with, ‘scientific’ styles, with their reliance on rationality. These scientific styles have de-
mythologized the irrational, while I re-introduce and re-mythologize the irrational through the use of narrative, poetics and myths to recharge language and imagination. Through *erotic logos* I have proposed an *eros*-based renewal of feminine language, which was used by Sheherazade to save her own life. As Dubosc summarizes, “Sheherazade spells out the thousand possible conjugations of the conflict between power and desire allowing the king access to repentance, forgiveness and justice. From their complex intercourse the one thousandth and first night is born when the implicit order of narration finds its fulfillment in the acknowledgement of Sheherazade as Queen and saviour of the kingdom” (Dubosc, 2003). It is through language, through the specific form of *eros/ logos*, that she transforms the monologue of the king/patriarchy into a dialogue between subjects. My point is that this *erotic logos* is woven through a phallogocentric system, indicating that the feminine can and will prevail, not only for herself, but also for the ‘between two’, as does Sheherazade, who also mediates the salvation of the kingdom/patriarchal culture. The Handless Maiden likewise achieves this. Thus my work builds upon and advances Luce Irigaray’s project of sexuate difference, because there are two separate systems, one arising out of the female body and mode of living in the world, the other from the male. I have argued that once Sheherazade and the Handless Maiden achieve their sexuate identity, two parallel systems operate, through which men and women can then truly come together.

A final word on difference, the couple and the in-between. Difference cannot be abandoned in the search for parity; neither is parity a reason to neglect difference. In my view, Luce Irigaray has privileged sexual difference along heterosexual lines, and in so doing is in danger of creating the very kind of prejudice she seeks to avoid. A divine which is only, or preferably, available to the heterosexual couple risks being as exclusive of difference as a patriarchal, androcentric male God. I believe we must therefore be alert to the dangers of

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foreclosure at every turn, and in order to achieve this, we must restrain our conclusions as provisional, not definitive. Furthermore, I believe that a truly feminine divine is inclusive of all difference. Thus, Luce Irigaray, in my opinion, is in danger of falling back into the same style of androcentric certainty that she claims to eschew. I have referred to mysticism as the feminine divine by discussing Mediaeval women mystics for the reason that religious, psychoanalytic, and feminist philosophical discussion is available in plenty on this subject. When in that space, which I claim is the feminine divine, no form of hierarchical thought is available, and both difference and the connectedness of all things are present in a continuum. From this perspective, no form of appropriation, projection or exploitation is tolerable, whether that be on the basis of personal psychology, gender, race, education, religion, economic status or anything else which seeks to classify and implicitly create dualisms where one side is favoured over the other. Thus, I claim that an acute social conscience arises as a consequence of the kind mystical experience that I am discussing. Perhaps the claims by some that the mediaeval mystic women were not active in righting the oppressions that surrounded them and the world in which they lived are based, not on an intrinsically solipsistic passivity, but as Grace Jantzen claims, on the way in which gender inequality was enforced by the magisterium. No matter what era we live in, the vested interests of those with power will be opposed to the all-inclusive view, which, in my opinion, the feminine divine represents. This is a daunting reality, and I personally would abandon the task, if it were not for the concomitant realization that through the intrinsic interconnectedness of all things, radical change is a constant possibility, and each small choice that I, or any other makes, does make a difference - in either direction.

Thus, it must be clear that my work towards this doctorate is far more than the great privilege of standing on the shoulders of many others who have undertaken the hard labour of scholarship, and who have thus made a difference, but it is the
vehicle which carries my passion and desire to understand and give voice to The Feminine, through Body, Language and Spirituality.
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