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THE FEMALE VOICE IN  
LÓPEZ DE ÚBEDA'S *LA PÍCARA JUSTINA* AND  
GOETHE'S *WILHELM MEISTER*

by  
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Thesis  
Submitted for the Degree of  
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in the  
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## ABSTRACT

The thesis has grown out of a perceived similarity between two novels from quite different cultural periods and national literary contexts: López de Úbeda's Spanish picaresque novel, *La Pícaro Justina* of 1605 and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* of 1795-1829. Both novels deal with the problem of female self-presentation, and use similar stylistic (poetic) resources to give expression to the female voice. The Introduction argues for the appropriateness of adopting a double strategy — both analytic and historical — in order to provide both internal and external evidence to make the point that the authors studied are participating in a shared cultural tradition. Chapter I introduces an account of the Kabbalah's presentation of the divine Speaking Woman (the Shekhinah), analysed in terms derived from contemporary feminist discussion. Chapter II then traces Goethe's life-long interest in the Divine Feminine, as illustrated in his *Faust*, various poems, and his Autobiography. In Chapter III Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* is analysed with regard to his presentation of key female figures and to his lending them a mode of aesthetic language that empowers them to express their true identity. The purpose of Chapter IV is to show that the protagonist Justina's development in López de Úbeda's novel is represented in part by the series of Great Mother figures she encounters and in part by her identification with the Shekhinah model. Then, in Chapter V, the ways in which Justina is made to exploit the Spanish language, like her resourceful use of her female persona, are examined to bring out the similarity of her rhetoric to that employed by Goethe (and advocated by Luce Irigaray). In the Conclusion, some suggestions are offered as to possibly fruitful lines of investigation which this inquiry may open up.

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This thesis is dedicated to my Mother, Catherine McDermott.

ABBREVIATIONS AND OTHER CONVENTIONS USED

- G.A.            *Gedenkausgabe: Goethes Werke, Briefe, und Gespräche*, ed. by E. Beutler (Zürich: Artemis, 1948-59)
- H.A.            *Goethes Werke in 14 Bänden: Hamburger Ausgabe*, ed. by Erich Trunz (Hamburg: Wegner, 1949)
- MLR            *The Modern Languages Review*
- MM             *Diccionario de Uso del Español*, ed. by María Moliner (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1970)
- M.u.R          *Goethes Maximen und Reflexionen, Schriften der Goethe Gesellschaft*, 21, 1907
- NSEOD        *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by Lesley Brown (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)

The edition of *La Pícarra Justina* used for this study is that of Antonio Rey Hazas, 2 vols (Madrid: Editorial Nacional, 1977).

The external arrangement of *La Pícarra Justina* resembles a medieval *summa*; it is divided into Books, Chapters, and Numbers. I have used this arrangement for reference when discussing longer portions of the text. The translations into English from the Spanish novel are my own.

Unless otherwise indicated, English translations from Goethe's works are cited from *Goethe: Collected Works in 12 Volumes*, ed. by Victor Lange, Eric Blackall, Cyrus Hamlin (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); in particular, Vol. 1: *Selected Poems*; Vol. 2: *Faust I and II*; Vols. 4 and 5: *From My Life*; Vols. 9 and 10: *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years*. I have indicated my own emendations in square brackets.



## INTRODUCTION

The point of departure for this thesis is a striking and, I argue, mutually illuminating, similarity between two works that appear rather disparate at first sight: Francisco López de Úbeda's Spanish picaresque novel *Libro de entretenimiento de la pícaro Justina* of 1605 and the German *Bildungsroman* par excellence, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* of 1795-1829.<sup>1</sup> There is, in my view, not simply a thematic coincidence in that both novels deal with the problem of female self-presentation; there is also a remarkable similarity in the stylistic devices that each author deploys in order to give expression to the discourse of women. Preliminary analysis of the texts confirmed, to my mind, that in both texts the female voice is characterized by a thickening of the linguistic texture that approaches the density of poetry.

The internal evidence seemed to me compelling; but I could find in the secondary literature little confirmation of any direct link between López de Úbeda and Goethe that might offer an external, historical, explanation of this close similarity of both topic and treatment. Although Goethe's interest in Spanish literature is well-documented,<sup>2</sup> there is only oblique evidence that he may have been familiar with *La Pícaro Justina*, via Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* (who seems to have drawn on the Spanish novel, though probably indirectly through the German translation (1626) of an earlier Italian translation!).<sup>3</sup> Although, as Eric Blackall has emphasized, there is in general only very sparse direct evidence of Goethe's having read central narrative

<sup>1</sup>The term 'picaresque' does not seem to be susceptible of any strict, narrow definition. See John P. Kent and J.L. Gaunt, 'Picaresque Fiction: A Bibliographic Essay', *College Literature*, 6 (1979), 245-70 (p.245): 'The term is stretched to cover any form of prose fiction which sends its hero on a journey or has him engaged in the service of many masters; the hero or anti-hero might range from an out-and-out desperado to a well brought up young man, or woman, who is forced by circumstances to spend some time with the lower classes'. The connection of the picaresque with the *Bildungsroman* has often been noted, and in a recent study the two genres have been subsumed under the comprehensive genre of the 'novel of formation'. See María de los Angeles Rodríguez Fontela, *La novela de autoformación. Una aproximación teórica e histórica al 'Bildungsroman' desde la narrativa española* (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1996).

<sup>2</sup>See Marie M. Weinrich, 'Goethe's Interest in Spanish Literature'. (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Washington, 1937); J.J. Bertrand, 'El Mayor Amigo de España: W. Goethe', *Revista de Ideas Estéticas*, 8 (1950), 169-96. Cf. Goethe's conversation with Eckermann on Lope de Vega (20 April 1825).

<sup>3</sup>See Ulrich Stadler, 'Parodistisches in der *Justina Dietzin Picara*: Über die Entstehungsbedingungen und zur Wirkungsgeschichte von Úbedas Schelmenroman in Deutschland', *Arcadia*, 7 (1972), 158-170.

texts of the European tradition which internal evidence indicates he must have read,<sup>4</sup> such comprehensive silence on Goethe's part can, of course, be merely suggestive at best in respect of any particular possible influence. As S.S. Prawer has convincingly argued, the justification of comparative scholarship lies precisely in its revelation of 'the particularity of works in one language through comparison and contrast with works in another.'<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, even though 'comparative studies make their distinctive contribution of crossing linguistic barriers',<sup>6</sup> there is always implicitly, if not explicitly, a shared cultural background assumed to exist in which the texts compared in some measure participate: 'the question of tradition must ... sooner or later be faced.'<sup>7</sup>

At almost every point ... comparative literary studies lead over into, or presuppose, studies in cultural history and the history of ideas.<sup>8</sup>

Guided by contemporary discussion of the cultural representation of the woman and by feminist stylistics (in particular by the speculative-cum-theological variety associated with Luce Irigaray's work), I began to suspect that both writers, for all the evident differences of period and temper of mind, were drawing on a common tradition — very possibly one to which contemporary feminism, too, is indebted. For what Prawer identifies as reliable signals of a shared tradition ('verbal reminiscences and mythological references — a tissue of allusions')<sup>9</sup> began to emerge, not only in the German and in the Spanish text, but also in the twentieth-century feminist writers I drew on. There seemed to be a specific source, some shared stable nexus in the long tradition of the Apollonian/Male-Dionysian/Female opposition, on which Camille Paglia has recently insisted, in which 'the [female] Gorgon eye of appetite' has given

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<sup>4</sup>Eric A. Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), pp.143-148.

<sup>5</sup>S.S. Prawer, *Comparative Literature Studies: An Introduction* (London: Duckworth, 1973), p.ix. Cf. Robert Clements, *Comparative Literature As Academic Discipline: A Statement of Principles, Praxis, Standards* (New York: Modern Languages Association of America, 1978), pp.11-15.

<sup>6</sup>Prawer, *Comparative Literature*, p.2.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p.57 and pp.53-55.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p.141.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p.57.

way to the male gaze, 'the detached Apollonian eye of contemplation'.<sup>10</sup> What this shared focus within the rather amorphous Great Goddess heritage might be was brought home to me by J.E. Cirlot's identification of the kabbalistic Shekhinah with the Jungian anima 'of which all such souls as the young woman, the stranger, the beloved, are mirrors'.<sup>11</sup> Cirlot's identification of Shekhinah-as-anima with the Gnostic Sophia and with 'the principle of the eternal feminine'<sup>12</sup> opened up the possibility that López de Úbeda and Goethe (and possibly Luce Irigaray and other contemporary feminists) are, wittingly or unwittingly, drawing on the Kabbalah both for its elaborated account of the (divine) feminine and for its doctrine and practice of the Speaking (divine) woman.

My procedure has clearly had to be both analytical and historical in bringing out, on the one hand, the internal evidence, and offering, on the other, some degree of confirmation from external evidence. In tackling this problem my indebtedness to others for concepts and historical orientations — as well as for information — has been great (and, I hope, fully documented in the course of my argument). For the narratological approach I have taken I am especially indebted (in particular for the concept of narrative 'voice') to Genette's *Narrative Discourse* and, more generally, to Stanzel's *Theorie des Erzählens*.<sup>13</sup> I have taken from general literary theory and criticism only what I felt I could apply illuminatingly to the texts under consideration. Pragmatism has also guided my appropriation of concepts derived from contemporary feminist theory. I have, therefore, not felt the need to take sides in the complex internal debates within feminist theory. I have, for example, been happy to adopt, and adapt, what seem to me useful analytical concepts from both Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, regardless of the controversy between them (or their followers) in respect of the fictionality or essence of femininity. Likewise I have not felt the need to discuss

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<sup>10</sup>Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p.64. See, too, pp. 50, 84 (on the goddess' androgyny), and 89 (Dionysus' androgyny), 91 and 93: 'Dionysus is the all-embracing totality of the mother-cult'.

<sup>11</sup>J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. by Jack Sage (London: Routledge & Kogan Paul, 1967), p.293.

<sup>12</sup>Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, pp. 76 and 300.

<sup>13</sup>Cf., too, Edward H. Friedman, *The Antiheroine's Voice: Narrative Discourse and Transformations of the Picaresque* (Columbia, Miss.: University of Missouri Press, 1987).

Irigaray's modification of Jacques Lacan's theory of desire in language, by which she seeks to demonstrate that female sexuality is constituted by a total otherness to male sexuality, rather than by a lack in relation to it.<sup>14</sup> Of all the feminist theorists I have learned from, Luce Irigaray has been especially useful to this study because of her overriding interest in a specifically female mode of language, and because of her speculative interest in the possibility of a feminine mystical theology. (In turn, in reading Irigaray I have been guided by Margaret Whitford's lucid expositions of her thought.)<sup>15</sup> In particular, Irigaray's privileging of what she regards as the lost sense of touch, like her emphasis on 'the poetics of the body', has enabled me to see a conceptual (and perhaps historical?) connection with the interrelated theories on the importance of touch and on poetry as 'the body of language' which Herder instilled into Goethe as early as 1772, and which inform my analysis of both the Spanish and the German text.<sup>16</sup> But perhaps my greatest debt is to Gershom Scholem's work on the Kabbalah which I have endeavoured to follow closely in my account of the nature and function of the Shekhinah as the divine feminine voice in *The Zohar*.

I have tried, then, to situate close readings of both novels within a double perspective: 1) of the crystallization of the ancient Great Goddess mythology in the Kabbalah; and 2) of modern theorizing — as a tentative, heuristic, approach which, I argue, helps illuminate important aspects of both *La Pícaro Justina* and *Wilhelm Meister*, while opening up further, possibly fruitful, areas for investigation. The arrangement of chapters in this thesis and the use of cross-references are attempts to

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<sup>14</sup>See *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, ed. by Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (London: Macmillan Education, 1989), p.14. I have drawn on Freudian and Jungian, as well as non-psychoanalytical, common-sensical, models of femininity where this seemed appropriate. Cf. Margaret Littler, 'Diverging Trends in Feminine Aesthetics: Anne Duden and Brigitte Kronauer', in *Contemporary German Writers, Their Aesthetics and Their Language*, ed. by Arthur Williams, Stuart Parker and Julian Preece (Berne: Peter Lang, 1996, pp.161-180 [p.161]): 'One problem with the dominance of psychoanalytical discourse in feminist criticism ... is the risk of a prescriptive narrowing of the definition of what constitutes feminine writing, and the summary exclusion from an alternative feminist canon of those women writers who fail to adopt the Lacanian model of identity acquisition'.

<sup>15</sup>For example, with regard to the vexed question of distinguishing between 'feminine' and 'female' (and 'masculine' and 'male') — a variant of the 'nature-nurture' debate — I have followed Whitford's precept, and have chosen according to context: 'The question of nature or culture is an interpretative one, and accordingly the interpretation has been left to the reader'. *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. by Margaret Whitford (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p.17.

<sup>16</sup>See Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, 'Goethe to Herder, July 1772: Some Problems of Pedagogic Presentation', *German Life and Letters*, NS 15 (1961), 110-22.

handle this double, analytic-cum-historical, approach in a way that helps the reader to maintain a steady focus on what is an as yet under-researched set of cultural relationships. As a result, certain aspects of both novels, and of the theoretical and historical frameworks in which they are considered, are looked at in detail more than once, and from different angles. In both novels, in my view at least, the feminine is represented in two main ways: by being embodied in female figures, and in being articulated in the language used by (predominantly) female speakers. For that reason I have organised my analysis of the novels around these two modes of articulation.

The purpose of Chapter I is to introduce the reader to the Kabbalah's reformulation of those aspects of the Great Goddess tradition, on which, as I argue, both López de Úbeda and Goethe are drawing in their portrayal of both female figures and of the female voice. Drawing on Scholem's work on Jewish mysticism, I attempt to provide what I think is an enlightening historical background to the texts I compare, in terms taken from Luce Irigaray's work (and from commentary on her work). In order to illuminate the Shekhinah as an expression not merely of a feminine aspect of God, but of the female divine as co-equal with the male God, I have drawn on Irigaray's theory of a distinctly female subjectivity (without which, in her view, women will continue to be absorbed as lesser males into the dominant, phallo-centric order)<sup>17</sup>; similarly I adduce Irigaray's advocacy of a woman's need to wander freely — an aspect of her recommended 'tactical mimicry'<sup>18</sup> — to bring out Shekhinah's alienated, mobile, and marginal location mid-way between the human and the divine spheres; just as the rich ambiguity of Shekhinah's language seems to anticipate Irigaray's recommended linguistic strategy of 'elusiveness' and 'mucosity'.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the essential idea of the Divine Feminine, as it is invoked in the Kabbalah, is clearly delineated, I argue, by reference to Irigaray's complex linkage of the feminine principle with the notions of God, the elemental world, and the sense of touch;<sup>20</sup> just

<sup>17</sup>Luce Irigaray, 'A Chance for Life: Limits to the concept of the neuter and the universal in science and other disciplines', in *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp.183-206 (pp.194-97).

<sup>18</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Parler n'est jamais neutre* (Paris: Minuit,1985), p.266.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.270 and 302.

<sup>20</sup>Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp.59-60.

as the sensuous, and sexual, language, attributed to Shekhinah, is (as Irigaray herself points out) very close indeed to what she terms *parler-femme*, a skillful manipulation of the medium of the only available (male) rhetoric in order to create a female style.<sup>21</sup> On the basis of this analysis (supported by Jungian accounts of the psycho-sexual significance of the Great Goddess tradition) I argue that the Shekhinah emerges as an archetype of the divine-human relationship, as the core of a tradition which finds its secular counterpart in such works as *La Pícaro Justina* and *Wilhelm Meister*. In López de Úbeda's novel the Shekhinah prototype is embodied as the main character, Justina, while other female figures incorporate various characteristic attributes of the goddess. In *Wilhelm Meister*, similarly, the numerous female-figures share overlapping qualities of the Shekhinah, though only one female character (Makarie, the Wise Woman of the novel) comes close to expressing her numinous quality. In both novels, the expressive exploitation of the sensuous aspects of language characterizes the speech of women characters in general.

In Chapter II I trace Goethe's life-long preoccupation with the Divine Feminine in both its alchemical and kabbalistic forms. His famous presentation of 'the Eternal Feminine' at the end of his *Faust* is at least consonant, I argue, with the Kabbalah's insistence on the distinct identity of a female God, as is his presentation earlier in the play of other female divine figures, such as The Mothers, Galatea, and Helen of Troy. While there seems to be no evidence to suggest that Goethe himself was a kabbalistic mystic, it is clear that he drew on this tradition freely, in poetry and prose alike, to give expression to his understanding — derived from Herder and shared with Schiller — of the form and function of aesthetic discourse and aesthetic imagination. Analysis of some key passages of his Autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, I argue, makes clear that the tactile, fluid simultaneity of the aesthetic discourse he employs in presenting his feminine understanding of religious sentiment justifies identifying it with the kind of *l'écriture féminine* the Kabbalah exemplifies.

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<sup>21</sup>Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp.105-123 (p.115).

In Chapter III I seek to show that Goethe's sympathetic interest in the form (and import) of femininity is given powerful articulation in *Wilhelm Meister*, where he lends an authentic female voice to both his women-figures and to his Narrator. Because of the highly ironic and riddle-like structure of the novel, the reader is encouraged to concentrate closely on the detail of the novel's linguistic texture;<sup>22</sup> in particular, the reader learns to be sceptical of Wilhelm's view of the female-figures in the novel. Sexual tension is pervasive; and Goethe presents the constraints under which male-female relations are conducted in a patriarchal culture with considerable realism, as he does the recurrent complaints on the part of the women characters about the unjust way they are excluded from cultural development (*Bildung*; H.A.7, p.452). I argue that Goethe, with evident irony, makes perfectly plain the paternalistic attitudes of the male characters, which often degenerate into blatant misogyny (e.g. H.A.7, pp.452-53). That Wilhelm shares this ambivalence towards women (indeed towards his own sexual identity, the instability of which is indicated in the transsexual desires he harbours, and expresses, with regard to women) is also made clear. The fundamental discrepancy between the imaginary feminine entertained by the men on the one hand and, on the other, the reality of female experience is a rich source of irony in the novel. The women-figures are shown to be significantly different from the men's (particularly Wilhelm's) image of them, a discrepancy that underlies the tendency of the male-figures to ignore the female voice. Yet, Goethe shows in a series of compelling speaking-women, that the female voice engages the Other's unconscious, and moves him, eventually, to insight. Goethe does this, I argue, by giving his female figures' spoken/written language the kind of 'embodied meaning' that characterizes the discourse of the Shekhinah and Irigaray's *parler-femme*. Within the fiction this mode of aesthetic language is assimilated to the Narrator's; and, outside the fiction, attributable to the author himself.

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<sup>22</sup>This narrative strategy — 'of encouraging the reader to discover the true meaning of the novel' — is adopted, too, in *La Pícarra Justina*. See Bruno M. Damiani, *Francisco López de Úbeda* (Boston: Twayne, 1977), p.111; and Harriet Goldberg, 'Women Riddlers in Hispanic Folklore and Literature', *Hispanic Review*, 59 (1991), 57-75.

In Chapter IV I examine the series of Great Mother-figures that punctuate Justina's progress in the novel: La Sotadra, Sancha Gomez, La Vieja Morisca ('the Old Moorish Woman'), 'the Mothers', and Justina's own mother. Reminiscent though these figures are of the stereotypical mother-figure commonly found in Spanish Golden Age texts,<sup>23</sup> they evince in their respective relationships with Justina a capacity for growth and development which mirrors her own. Like her, they show a potential for maturation, and are reborn, to differing degrees, into a distinctly female Self. Justina, I argue, finds her true, female identity by re-constructing — very much in the way Irigaray exhorts women to do — her divine genealogy in respect of the Mother (ultimately in respect of the Great Mother as Divine Feminine). This — for a woman vital — relationship is symbolized above all by the pervasive metaphor of water, itself expressing that fluidity that marks true female discourse. Playing her proper part in a fundamentally aesthetic world, in which 'all things are at play' (*La Pícaro Justina*, 537-8), Justina engages in an Irigarayan 'amorous exchange' with men and women alike. In her marriage to Lozano, the discursive inexpressibility of true love functions as a symbol of that more radical ineffability of the relation between human and divine — a mystical feeling that is given aesthetic expression in a poem which identifies Justina unmistakably with the Divine Feminine or Shekhinah (523-24).

In Chapter V an examination of the strategies Justina adopts to assert her female identity reveals, I argue, the ways in which she uses the Spanish language to create a style (very similar to the aesthetic discourse of *Wilhelm Meister*) in which she expresses her authentic female self. I try to show, as in the case of *Wilhelm Meister*, that in *La Pícaro Justina* the female voice (of Justina) is articulated by means of a rhetoric that is very close to that adumbrated in Luce Irigaray's theory of *parler-femme*, and that both are very close to the Shekhinah's kabbalistic style of

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<sup>23</sup>Cf., for example, María Antonia Garcés' study of the monstrous sinful-sexual witch as the abject mother who is devoured by the male protagonist in Cervantes' *Coloquio de los Perros* ('Berganza and the Abject: The Desecration of the Mother', in *Quixotic Desire: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Cervantes*, ed. by R.A. El Saffar and D. de Armas Wilson [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp.292-314]).



enunciation. The book she has written, the product of her process of self-discovery, embodies — in its very texture — Justina's female voice, in rich symbolic material derived, I suggest, from the Kabbalah. I argue that her attempt to intervene in male discourse, and express herself, is nowhere more powerfully evoked than in Justina's description of her taking up her pen to write her life-history, in the General Introduction (87-131). At this point, intensity of feeling ruptures any semblance of logical, semantic coherence. Her characteristic narratorial stance on the margins is initiated here in-between rage mixed with frustration (at the [masculine] hair stuck in her [female] quill) and pleasurable amusement (at the challenging constraints she feels confident of overcoming). Her ultimate aim, I argue, is to uncover the feminine as positive, through the veil — or 'stain' (615) — of aesthetic presentation; she gives birth to her true Self through practising her own style of writing. The relatedness and connectedness characteristic of her narrative style, apparently 'light and airy', is in reality a powerfully effective use of language (304-5) — a voice that is also an agent of rebirth for those who listen to it (518). The motif of the balance that sustains wholeness — perhaps the main theme of her narrative, as of the Kabbalah — is manifested in the playfulness with which Justina handles to expressive effect the physicality ('the body') of her linguistic medium.

As a result of this comparative argumentation I have felt justified in concluding that there are compelling grounds for regarding López de Úbeda's *La Pícaro Justina* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* as eminent examples of a consistent concern to give expression to female experience that not only stretches as far back as our culture reaches but also informs our contemporary feminist debate.<sup>24</sup> This conclusion, if accepted, seems to have several, possibly important, repercussions in three main areas: 1) it suggests that radical feminist texts can indeed, as Julia Kristeva

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<sup>24</sup>Emphasis on this expressive aspect of *La Pícaro Justina* is, of course, compatible with Marcel Bataillon's reading of it as a roman-à-clef, satirizing the royal entourage in 1602; and with A.A. Parker's view that López de Úbeda projects a burlesque parody on the first part of Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599). See Marcel Bataillon, 'La picaresca. A propósito de *La Pícaro Justina*', in his *Pícaros y picaresca* (Madrid: Taurus, 1968), pp. 175-199; A.A. Parker, *Literature and the Delinquent* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967). As has been pointed out, 'the book's satire is certainly not its only interesting aspect'. Francis Trice, 'A Literary Study of *La Pícaro Justina*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Syracuse University, 1971), p.189.

has maintained, be written by male authors;<sup>25</sup> 2) that what has been called *l'écriture féminine* is indistinguishable from what 'the aesthetic tradition' holds poetry to be;<sup>26</sup> and 3) that comparative studies can be fruitful in stimulating the kind of detailed cultural-historical investigations which my argument requires in order to be more fully corroborated.

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<sup>25</sup>Cf. Anne J. Cruz, 'Studying Gender in the Spanish Golden Age', in *Cultural and Historical Grounding for Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. by Hernan Vidal (Minneapolis: Institute for the Study of Ideologies, 1989), pp. 193-222 (p.215).

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis: Themes of Gender in Psychoanalytic Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 213-14. For clear accounts of Kristeva's theory of poetry, see Paul Julian Smith, 'Writing Women in Golden Age Spain: Saint Teresa and María de Zayas', *MLN*, 102 (1987), 220-240 (p.225); and Catherine Davies, 'The Return to Mother Cathedral. A Stranger in No Man's Land: Rosalía de Castro Through Julia Kristeva', *Neophilologus*, 79 (1995), 63-81 (p. 64).

CHAPTER I: The Divine Feminine as the Female Voice of God and the Speaking Woman

Man becomes aware of a fundamental duality, of a vast gulf which can be crossed by nothing but the *voice*; the voice of God, directing and law-giving in His revelation, and the voice of man in prayer.<sup>1</sup>

We women, sexed according to our gender, lack a God to share, a word to share and to become. Defined as the often dark, even occult mother-substance of the word of men, we are in need of our *subject*, our *substantive*, our *word*, our *predicates*: our elementary sentence, our basic rhythm, our morphological identity, our generic incarnation, our genealogy.<sup>2</sup>

The Great Mother

Interest, in particular amongst feminists, in what Luce Irigaray has called 'the mother-earth culture'<sup>3</sup>, and what Robert Graves, in his pioneering study, called 'the Aegean Mother-Son religious tradition',<sup>4</sup> has been intense in the last fifteen years or so. The tradition, often discontinuous and piecemeal, of the pre-patriarchal Great Goddess of European Palaeolithic and Neolithic times has recently been invoked mainly to throw into relief the alleged devaluation of femininity that is characteristic of patriarchal, Western culture. The tradition has been traced, often by (Jungian) psychologists, from Asia Minor — 'the home of the Great Mother'<sup>5</sup> — in approximately 5000 B.C. Here the Magna Mater supplanted all other gods (with the exception of her son-consort), spreading to the whole Aegean-Mediterranean area,

<sup>1</sup>G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1954) pp. 7-8. (What follows is in large measure based on Scholem's work, supplemented by that of Matt and other more recent commentators on the Kabbalah and its reception. All quotations from the Kabbalah are cited from Scholem's works, unless otherwise indicated.)

<sup>2</sup>Luce Irigaray, 'Divine Women', in *Sexes and Genealogies*, 55-72, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 68. Cf. Patricia Reis, *Through the Goddess: A Woman's Way of Healing* (New York: Continuum, 1991), p. 15: 'By reconstructing [the Greek Goddesses] we can locate the deeper, "more permanent" strata and the more "natural expressions of the female mode of being"; Christine Dowling, *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1987), who points out (p.20) that the cult of the Goddess appears in mythology with the substitution of the feminine deities by the masculine; Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 8-10.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Graves, *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), p. 61.

<sup>5</sup>Edith Weigert-Vowinkel, 'The Cult and Mythology of the Magna Mater from the Standpoint of Psychoanalysis', *Psychiatry*, 1 (1938), 347-78 (p. 349). Cf. Patricia Reis, *Through the Goddess*, p. 17, for what she calls 'feminist archetypal psychology'. As an example of this cultural/ psychological interest, see Clarissa Pinkola Estés, *Women Who Run with the Wolves* (London: Methuen, 1994).

taking on different names (Cotyto, Cybele, Rhea, Gaia, Demeter) but hardly changing her fundamental nature.<sup>6</sup> Such distinctions as did obtain were completely obscured in the Roman tendency to syncretism, in which the semitic Mother of the Gods (Atergatis, Ishtar, Astarte, Isis, and Aphrodite) are all condensed and conflated.<sup>7</sup> The Great Goddess is protectress of cities (though she may, in the throcs of love, destroy these cities); she tames and charms lions and snakes (though she may unleash their ferocity on others). She is the goddess of procreation and birth, *and* of death and destruction. She is both 'White' and 'Black' goddess.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Mother of All Things, she is both man and woman, able to beget phallic beings who in turn mate with her.<sup>9</sup> 'Masculinised' by Homer's time, according to Graves, in many of her attributes, the mother goddess becomes divided into two figures, the good (e.g., Aphrodite) and the bad (e.g., Persephone) goddess-figure. But the shadowy memory remains of a morally indifferent mother-deity, representative of life and death and fecundity; and characterized by an extraverted, uninhibited sexuality.<sup>10</sup> The Isis, apostrophized in Apuleius's *Golden Ass* — 'the most comprehensive and inspired account of the Goddess in all ancient literature'<sup>11</sup> — seems to become conflated in European folklore and mythology with the Hebrew wife and companion of God, Sophia, who takes on a central position in Gnosticism and occultism; representing the Bride ('Wisdom') in her syzygy with the Bridegroom ('Logos') in that *coniunctio* of Hermes and Aphrodite ('hermaphrodite') that becomes the ultimate aim of hermeticism and alchemy alike. By whatever name this goddess goes, she represents in the esoteric tradition of Europe the *anima mundi* — the Great Soul of the World,

<sup>6</sup>See Graves, *The White Goddess*, p. 62; Weigert-Vowinkel, 'Magna Mater', p. 349.

<sup>7</sup>See Weigert-Vowinkel, 'Magna Mater', pp. 349-50.

<sup>8</sup>See Robert Graves, *Mammon and the Black Goddess* (London: Cassell, 1965), p. 162: 'The Black Goddess has experienced good and evil, love and hate, truth and falsehood...!'

<sup>9</sup>Albrecht Bachofen, *Mutterrecht und Urreligion* (Leipzig: Kroner, 1927), pp. xix and 280.

<sup>10</sup>Weigert-Vowinkel, 'Magna Mater', pp. 360-61.

<sup>11</sup>Graves, *The White Goddess*, p. 70. Apuleius' *Golden Ass* (alluded to in *La Pícaro Justina*) has been cited as a principal source-text for the Spanish picaresque novel. See Joseph V. Ricapito, 'The *Golden Ass* of Apuleius and the Spanish Picaresque Novel', *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 40 (1978-79), 1-9. Cf. Aída Beaupied, *Narciso hermético: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz y José Lezama Lima* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), p. 83, where the feminine manifestation of the divinity seems to be inspired by *The Golden Ass*.

the Eternal Feminine — the animating principle of creation of which Plato had spoken in his *Timaeus*.

### The Kabbalah

The most cogent articulation of the Great Goddess down the centuries appeared in the kabbalistic mystical tradition. The "Kabbalah" is an esoteric tradition in which the mystical strands in Judaism came together, and whose development, fed by subterranean currents probably emanating from the Orient, has been adulterated since its early beginnings. Classical Kabbalah came to full fruition in Spain in the 13th century, culminating in the appearance there, towards the end of the century, of what was to become its central text, a kind of kabbalistic bible, the pseudo-epigraphic *Zohar*, literally 'Book of Splendour', usually attributed to Rabbi Moses de Leon. Though first printed in Italy in the 16th century,<sup>12</sup> the earliest form appeared in first-century A.D. Palestine, and is known as *Merkava*, the 'chariot' or divine throne, mentioned in *Ezekiel*, I, whose mystical contemplation enables the initiate to rise towards the Godhead. Between the 3rd and 6th century A.D. the *Sefer yetzira* ('Book of Creation'), the earliest known speculative text of Jewish mysticism, was set down. Jewish mysticism was transmitted by word of mouth, and it was not until the 12th century A.D. that a second written text of the Kabbalah (meaning literally 'tradition' or 'reception') appeared: a largely symbolic commentary on the Old Testament, *Sefer ha-bahir* ('Book of Brightness'). In 13th-century Spain — the cradle of the European Kabbalah — an anonymous *Sefer ha-temuna* ('Book of the Image') appeared, continuing the doctrine of the ten 'emanations' (*sefirot*, or 'numbers') of the *Sefer yetzira*, the extensive mystical symbolism of the *Sefer ha-bahir*, and advancing the notion of cosmic cycles — or aeons — each of which had a different *Torah*.<sup>13</sup> In marking 'a relapse into, or ... revival of, the mythical consciousness', in which all

<sup>12</sup>The first two printed editions of the *Zohar* appeared between 1558 and 1560 in the Italian cities of Mantua and Cremona'. José C. Nieto, *El Renacimiento y la Otra España: Visión Cultural Socioespiritual* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997), p.598.

<sup>13</sup>For a useful history of the Kabbalah in the pre-Zohatic period (i.e. before 1300), see Joseph Leon Blau, *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance* (New York: Kennikat Press, 1965), pp. 7-10.

metaphors, figures of speech and, above all, symbols were inherited from Gnosticism,<sup>14</sup> the kabbalistic tradition and in particular, *The Zohar*,<sup>15</sup> granted to the Shekhinah, the female element of God, the central position that Sophia occupied in Gnostic speculation. Moreover, the sometimes fantastic and frequently indelicate anthropomorphisms employed in the *Zohar* to express the Shekhinah's relations with God as with Man are reminiscent of the Great Goddess' sexual prowess — an explicitness that persuades, as late as 1926, the English translator of Knorr von Rosenroth's influential Latin translation of the *Zohar*, the *Kabbala Denudata* (I, Sulzbach, 1677-78; II, Frankfurt, 1684), to leave certain passages in Latin.<sup>16</sup>

Even before the keen interest taken in the *Zohar* in the Christian world of the Renaissance — by such influential figures as Pico della Mirandola and Reuchlin — its influence in Christian Spain was being felt.<sup>17</sup> Long before the *Zohar* appeared in print, 'one of the major Spanish contributions to Renaissance intellectual history' (namely the Spanish Christian Kabbalah) was exerting a widespread influence across southern Renaissance Europe.<sup>18</sup> In Latin translations and polemic pamphlets it caught the interest of such thinkers as Paracelsus, Agrippa, Luther, and Newton. Between 1480 and 1650 not many Christian thinkers and writers were left untouched by the influence of what one writer on its reception has called a 'fad' of the Renaissance.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, according to Harold Bloom, after 1492 the doctrines of the *Zohar* had become

<sup>14</sup>Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp. 28 and 35.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Alice Raphael, *Goethe and the Philosophers' Stone: Symbolical Patterns in 'The Parable' and the Second Part of Faust'* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 31: 'The book *Zohar* ... concerns the relations of God to his consort — the Matrona, who at the same time, meant Divine Wisdom'.

<sup>16</sup>*The Kabbalah Unveiled*, trans. by S.L. MacGregor Mathers (London: Kegan Paul, 1926), p.231. For a still useful account of the *Zohar*'s history and reception, see the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. by James Hastings (Edinburgh: Clark, 1908-1926), XII (1921), pp.858-62. For an account of some of the most influential translations of, and commentaries on, the *Zohar*, see Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, 3 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1989), I, pp. 101-5; pp. 13-30, for a detailed account of 'the Publication and Influence of the *Zohar*'; and pp. 33-38 for the Renaissance reception of the *Zohar*.

<sup>17</sup>See G.G. Scholem, 'Considérations sur l'histoire des débuts de la Kabbale chrétienne', in *Kabbalistes Chrétiens* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1979), pp. 17-48 (pp. 31 and 36); Catherine Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala: the works of Luis de León, Santa Teresa de Jesús and San Juan de la Cruz* (Columbia, Miss.: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 28-43.

<sup>18</sup>See Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala*, p.vii; see, too, D.C. Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), pp. 198-201 and 209-10.

<sup>19</sup>Blau, *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance*, pp. vii and 13.

common property.<sup>20</sup> The interest of the Christian interpreters was primarily to corroborate Christological doctrine:

The primary intention of the Christian interpretations of cabala, as first shown in the earliest of the Christian interpreters, was to seek for new means of confirming the truths of the Christian religion....<sup>21</sup>

But other aspects also had their appeal, and made their way into writings of Renaissance figures only twenty-five years after the introduction of the *Zohar* into Europe. Indeed, one of the earliest references to the Kabbalah in a history of philosophy calls attention to 'the similarity between the Kabbalah and the late Greek mystery cults'.<sup>22</sup>

The earliest critical discussions of the Kabbalah seem to have taken place in Provençal literature; though Castile, as early as the last two decades of the thirteenth century, is a meeting-point for those interested in the Kabbalah, and a fertile breeding-ground for the elaborate flourishing of its symbolism.<sup>23</sup> But it is undoubtedly the publication of Pico della Mirandola's *Conclusiones Philosophicae Cabalisticæ et Theologicae* of 1486 (in which he saw the Kabbalah as the best way of bridging the gap between Christianity and ancient Greek philosophy) that marks the true beginning of the widespread interest in the Renaissance for kabbalistic thought.<sup>24</sup> Kabbalistic ideas became part of the Platonic-Pythagorean-Hermetic Renaissance synthesis, which itself was widely disseminated in Latin, Italian, Spanish, German, French, and English.<sup>25</sup> Johann Reuchlin, in his *De Verbo Mirifico* of 1494 took up Pico's idea that

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<sup>20</sup>Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p.35.

<sup>21</sup>Blau, *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance*, p. 20; '... knowledge [of the cabala] has been found in every type of scholar, everywhere in Europe. From Italy to Scandinavia knowledge of cabala spread' (p. 112).

<sup>22</sup>Blau, *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance*, pp. 101 and 102.

<sup>23</sup>See Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 9ff; 210-213; 212, 213; and 250 ff. According to José C. Nieto, *El Renacimiento y la Otra España*, the influence of Kabbalah in Golden-Age Spain is under-rehearsed (p.575).

<sup>24</sup>Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, pp. 257-63.

<sup>25</sup>The resultant theosophy was of interest to 'English Platonists and scientists such as Newton, and German idealistic thinkers, such as Schelling'. Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, p. 264.

all religions, each in its own way, express the same divine, cosmic truth<sup>26</sup> — an idea that was to play a central role in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. The cross-fertilization during the early Christian era which had apparently given rise to the eclectic cosmological speculations and formulations of the Kabbalah, along with its systematic compression, seems to have recommended the *Zohar* in particular to Renaissance thinkers, keen to codify the complex symbology of the general Hermetic tradition to which they were grateful heirs. And in this melting-pot of Christian, pagan, and esoteric traditions, the Kabbalah provided a lingua franca of seductively exact macrocosmic correspondence as well as a mythological framework.

#### The Female Voice in the Kabbalah

The Kabbalah also provided the most fully articulated version available of the Eternal Feminine, offering to writers a rich, and accessible, store of imagery and ideas with which to articulate the female voice. The Kabbalah's conception of the key archetype of the Shekhinah represents a radical departure from the old Rabbinical conception of it, which can be summed up as follows: in Talmudic literature and non-Kabbalistic Rabbinical Judaism the Shekhinah is simply God Himself in his omnipresence in the world, equivalent to his 'face' in the Bible, with no distinction made between the two. In the Kabbalah, however, the idea of the feminine potencies in God achieve their most succinct expression in this quasi-independent aspect of God.<sup>27</sup> She is Binah, the third sefirah, or upper mother, or Shekhinah who, as demiurgic potency, gives birth to the seven lower sefirot.<sup>28</sup> Of these seven potencies, the first six (4 to 9) form one of the most powerful mythical symbols of the *Zohar*, which identifies the God of the sefirot with Adam Kadmon, the 'primordial

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<sup>26</sup>Cf. Charles Zika, 'Reuchlin's *De Verbo Mirifico* and the Magic Debate of the Late Fifteenth Century', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 39 (1976), 104-38.

<sup>27</sup>See Helder Macedo, *Do Significado Oculto da Menina e Moça* (Lisbon: Moraes, 1977), p.60, where he emphasizes that the fundamental and specific characteristic of Hispanic Kabbalism is its feminism.

<sup>28</sup>G.G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, trans. by Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken, 1965), p.105.



androgynous human'.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly each of the six is identified with a part of the primordial man's body, culminating in the phallic 'foundation' of the ninth sefirah Yesod, who in turn is identified with the Righteous One (Zaddik) as 'the God who maintains the powers of generation within their legitimate bounds' (*Symbolism*, pp.103-5).

In keeping with the mythical quality of these conceptions 'exemplified by the distinction between the masculine and feminine, begetting and receiving potencies in God', the Shekhinah, as tenth sefirah, is no longer a particular part of man, but 'as complement to the universally human and masculine principle' (*Symbolism*, p.104-5), she is the feminine Mother, Wife and Daughter. The controversial nature and historical significance of a fully elaborated symbolic representation of a feminine aspect of the divine is described by Scholem as follows:

This discovery of a feminine element in God, which the kabbalists tried to justify by gnostic exegesis, is of course one of the most significant steps they took. Often regarded with the utmost misgiving by strictly Rabbinical, non-Kabbalistic Jews, often distorted into inoffensiveness by embarrassed Kabbalistic apologists, this mythical conception of the feminine principle of the Shekhinah as a providential guide of Creation achieved enormous popularity among the masses of the Jewish people, so showing that here the Kabbalists had uncovered one of the primordial religious impulses still latent in Judaism (*Symbolism*, p.105).<sup>30</sup>

Shekhinah herself is associated with ambivalence (in that she is susceptible of being dominated by the powers of Evil as much as by those of divine Mercy); with the Soul; and with the idea of Exile (understood as the separation or cleavage of the masculine and feminine in the Godhead, said to have been brought about through Adam's sin, which was to have regarded the tenth sefirah, the Shekhinah, as separate from the rest,

<sup>29</sup>See B. McGinn, 'The Language of Love in Christian and Jewish Mysticism', in *Mysticism and Language*, ed. by Steven T. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp.202-235 (p. 218).

<sup>30</sup>The kabbalists fuelled the old controversy relating to the Shekhinah by '[giving] shape to all that was nonconformist when speaking about God'. (G.G. Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah*, trans. by Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), p.159. Henceforth referred to, in text and footnotes, as *Mystical Shape*.)

instead of as part of the whole). Adam did not respect her wholeness, including her divine aspect, but reduced her to the purely earthly and physical aspects of her nature, as symbolized by the separating of the Tree of Knowledge from the Tree of Life (of Life from Death) and by the image of 'pressing the juices and power of judgment from the sacred fruit of the Shekhinah' which has been plucked from the tree (*Symbolism*, p.108). Agrippa's feminism in his *De nobilitate* (1529) — 'which sees in woman an immediate manifestation of the divine'<sup>31</sup> — is, by contrast, an early example of the formative influence of the Shekhinah on Western writers' attempts to give expression to the female divine identity, one in which traces of the ancient Great Goddess are unmistakably present.<sup>32</sup>

The defining characteristics of the Kabbalah, emphasised by its scholars and critics, are the uniquely feminine aspect of God as immanent; the emphasis on sexuality and eros; the attention given to the concept of evil; and the centrality of language. All of these themes are intimately linked with one archetype in particular, and in an overriding manner, and that is with the complex, evocative, and ambivalent figure of the Shekhinah. Indeed it has been argued that Shekhinah constitutes the central mystery at the heart of Kabbalistic teaching. Gershom Scholem, for example, in his study of the key concepts of kabbalistic doctrine, has dedicated an entire chapter to the Shekhinah as the feminine aspect of the deity, tracing her long history as a God-bearing image,<sup>33</sup> and drawing attention to the use of her name in talmudic literature of the first century B.C. to enable the Gnostic distinction to be drawn between 'the hidden essence of God and his revealed image'.<sup>34</sup> Historically this link between the

<sup>31</sup>Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to Woman Christ* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), p. 227.

<sup>32</sup>Scholem compares Shekhinah with the Shakti of the latent God of Indian religion which is 'entirely active energy, in which what is concealed within God is externalized'. *Mystical Shape*, p.174.

<sup>33</sup>See G.G. Scholem, 'Shekhinah: The Feminine Element in the Divinity', in *Mystical Shape*, pp. 140-96. Scholem deals here with two aspects of the Shekhinah in particular: her pronounced female nature, and her relationship with the Godhead.

<sup>34</sup>Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, pp. 151-52. Various descriptions of this presence include "radiance", "wings", "countenance", "feet", or just simply presence. The term itself means literally 'His visible or hidden presence in a given place, his immediacy', but is also used to describe 'the awareness of His presence' (p. 147).

Shekhinah and the 'revealed image' of God had been attacked by philosophers and theologians determined to defend the unity and ontotheological status of God. However:

...the more philosophers and theologians strove to articulate a strict unity in God devoid of all symbolic content the greater became the danger of a counterattack in favour of the *living* God, who like all living forces, speaks in symbols (*Symbolism*, p.89).

If kabbalistic doctrine essentially encapsulates the return of the immanent God, revitalized in its highly symbolic presentation in the *Zohar's* sefirotic system, as a response to a widespread and deep-seated need to have a sense of God as present in creation, then Shekhinah is the symbol, *par excellence*, of this impulse. The Shekhinah articulates the fundamental concern with giving expression to, and thereby revitalizing, the *relationship* between the divine and the human realms. The Kabbalah articulates a deity that is envisaged from a human point of view, a projection, that is, of the innately-human desire to have a relationship with God, and to aspire to be God-like. In the Kabbalah we are no longer dealing with a wholly remote and abstract God — although this traditional view of God as wholly 'other' forms part of the global picture that emerges — but one who is conceived of as also interacting with, and being reflected in, all aspects of human life. Indeed it is a God who in His process of self-revelation (as the Shekhinah) is envisaged as equally needy of human love as human beings are of God's love. The whole multi-layered form of the kabbalistic God of emanation in the sefirotic structure is a finely-wrought articulation of this complex and delicately balanced relationship between God and the human individual, a relationship between two ultimately incommensurate but creatively interacting entities. And the task of maintaining the delicate balance and ensuring continuity between two essentially incommensurate realms is the multivalent Shekhinah's, gateway to 'true knowledge of God'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, p. 156. In the *Zohar*, the Kabbalah tradition's crowning achievement of its quest to elaborate a mystical interpretation of the sacred Torah, the author's impulse to flesh out

The kabbalists' aim was, in part, a pragmatic one, namely to bring God into ordinary people's lives by helping to develop a more acute awareness of God's presence in day-to-day existence. For the kabbalists, the real object of (mystical) contemplation was the wonder and the mysteries of this world, and of human beings in particular, as products of God's creative power made in the divine image. The peculiarly theosophical aspect of the Kabbalah emphasises a deity that, in the process of self-emanation, emerges as progressively more anthropomorphic, more of a mixture of human and divine as it approaches the lower (earthly and female) realm. It is small wonder, then, that the sefirah at the lower end of the sefirotic hierarchy, the Shekhinah, is also the most fully developed in terms of its (human) attributes and

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the concept of God and invest it with dynamic power and dramatic immediacy led him to elaborate an extraordinarily imaginative, complex, and sophisticated symbolic framework which described the process of emanation of the living God emerging from the hidden and unknowable God. This is the doctrine of the Ten Sefirot, of the various stages of divine revelation, the most distinguishing feature of the classical Spanish Kabbalah. The sefirotic system emerges from the *En Sof* (literally 'without end') to form ten distinct emanations or stages: 1. *Keter* (crown), 2. *Hokmah* (Wisdom or father[right]), 3. *Binah* (Intelligence, Womb or Divine Mother[left]) that receives Hokmah's seed in order to give birth to the other seven Sefirot. These three form the head of the divine body. Binah gives birth to 4. *Hesed/Gedullah* (love/mercy/greatness[right]), and 5. *Din/Gevurah* (power/judgment[left]) — the right and left arms of God respectively, the balance between which must be maintained if harmony is to reign. 6. *Tifereth* or *Rahamin* (Beauty/compassion/glory/male principle, sun, king, etc.) symbolizes this harmony and the trunk of the body, 7. *Netsah* (victory/endurance[right]), and 8. *Hod* (majesty/endurance[left])prophecy) — the right and left legs respectively, or — in the pronounced sexual symbolism of the Zohar —the right and left male testicles, from which the seed flows. 9. *Yesod* (foundation of all active forces in God), and representing the phallus or the *axis mundi* of the universe. In the *Zohar*, the symbols of the Source of Life/Tree of Life are applied to this 9th sefirah, otherwise known as *Tsaddik*, the Righteous One. Through Yesod, Binah produces the final Sefirah, her daughter, 10. *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence), also called *Malkhut* (kingdom of God, the female principle, mystical archetype of Israel, bride queen, soul, moon, etc.). Shekhinah is the pool, or vessel into which life flows, and from which it then disperses to all the lower beings according to their natures and needs. Moreover, there is a central pivot linking Kether, Tifereth, Yesod, and finally Shekhinah. This is flanked with three pairs of sefirot on either side, three on the right which are male principles, and three on the left which are female principles. What the sophisticated complexity of the sefirotic structure symbolizes is the emergence, or process of revelation, of the self-contained inaccessible God from its secret and hidden place, or roots, in the *En Sof* (literally, infinite, unknowable) as it reaches or branches out of itself to become knowable in human terms. The visual representation of this dynamic and dramatic process is a perfectly symmetrical tree-like structure with hierarchically arranged branches and a central middle column, or trunk. According to the theory of the sefirotic tree which attempts to interpret and elaborate the visual image, each attribute of God, each *sefirah* (literally, number) or stage in the process of divine emanation or creation corresponds to a particular aspect or attribute of God expressed, inevitably, in human terms — for example Love, Compassion, Judgment. The defining characteristic of the sefirotic tree is the relationship among the individual parts, and that of the parts to the whole, symbolic of the correspondences between the constituent parts of God's creation and the relationship of the created world to the Godhead. In other words, what we are essentially dealing with here is an imaginative and highly symbolic representation of God's immanence, or presence in the world, which is modelled on, indeed mirrors, a vision of the dynamic inner workings of the deity itself. Despite the complexity of the web of interconnecting, mutually stimulating, and at times contradictory aspects of the sefirotic tree, its unity as a self-affirming harmonious whole remains constant.

functions. For it represents the most fully developed image of the divinity in human (and erotic) terms. In its position on the threshold between the upper and the lower world, or, to put it another way, as the (only) one who belongs to both worlds, She herself, to all (human) intents and purposes, is the God-bearing image.

What the sefirotic system — culminating in the Shekhinah as the quintessence of the fully-developed divine image — articulates, therefore, is a projection, understood in psycho-logical terms, of a deep-seated human need to have a sense of God as real, and therefore, necessarily with human attributes (including good and evil). This is not to say that God is being reduced to the merely human level. On the contrary, the sefirotic tree encapsulates the wholeness, or integrity, of God as *both* divine *and* human. His status as wholly 'other' and unknowable persists in the concept of the *En'Sof*. In fact, it is only in the Shekhinah — situated on the periphery of the sefirotic, or divine, realm — that the overlap between the human and divine comes into play. The highly complex, ambivalent, and mysterious nature of the emanation process — made visible in the image of the sefirotic tree — maintains the distance, integrity, and the sense of incommensurability between both realms. Nevertheless, the link and sense of continuity between the two spheres, and the interaction (albeit on the outer margins which is the Shekhinah's position) and the reciprocity between the two, as articulated by the kabbalists, corresponds to a human need for this vital relationship with God. It is a relationship which is, of necessity, fraught with tension, for its articulation necessitates a delicate balancing act between giving vital human expression to this link with the divine and avoiding the danger of reducing it to the merely human.

Scholarly research (in particular Scholem's work) bears testimony to the fact that the kabbalistic conception of the Shekhinah became the recipient of a deep reservoir of religious feeling which had lain suppressed and dormant until projected on to this traditional symbol, particularly in the Renaissance, when the tendency to divest the concept of God of its mythical (female) qualities had gone too far in the

direction of a rigidly masculine and abstract deity.<sup>36</sup> That latent need has clearly been for a sense of God as Mother, as compassionate, nourishing, and life-giving. The sheer wealth of images and symbols attached to the Shekhinah which are of a distinctly female nature and sexual identity attests to this fact. In particular, her high-profile appearance in the *Zohar* brings with it an explosion of female attributes, including all of those contained in the canon of Jewish sacred literature as well as new and vibrant images of her as a decidedly human and sexually-differentiated woman; moreover, she, as symbol, has absorbed like a sponge all that has been projected on to her. Accordingly, she is simultaneously the mother, bride, daughter, sister, the bride of the 'Song of Songs', compared in the Book *Bahir*, to a 'field', or 'chest'; and to vessels into which the upper Sefirot flow, as well as to the 'heart' of the Godhead itself. She is referred to as 'pearls' and 'jewels', 'hidden treasures' and 'beautiful things', manifest in the form of 'garments' and 'paths', alternately related to the King as sister, daughter, mother.

#### Shekhinah as Divine Feminine

However, the full significance and controversial nature of the Shekhinah's position in the kabbalistic emanation process is, perhaps, not fully explored or articulated by scholars of the Kabbalah. She is, after all, not merely 'a feminine element in God', as Scholem suggests; she becomes clearly *the* image of the immanent God, a view of God as feminine in the world, as mother of creation. The attraction of such a notion of God as nurturing, loving mother may correspond to basic human instincts. But a view of God as feminine is severely at odds with theological tradition, both Judaic and Christian. Whereas scholars of the Kabbalah, in particular Scholem, have carefully analysed and documented the sacrifice of the mythical imagery of religious life at the altar of monotheism which preceded and, indeed, brought about the return of the Shekhinah symbol in its full glory, what they perhaps fail to give due

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<sup>36</sup>See G. Mallory Masters, 'Renaissance Kabbalah', in his *Modern Esoteric Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 132-153 (pp.138 and 145), who points out that this tradition — carried in Spain by folk-wisdom diffused, in particular, by the *conversos*, Jews converted to Christianity — reached the highest circles of Spanish life, including the Court.

and explicit recognition to is the importance of the feminine in this historico-cultural process. As Patricia Reis has emphasised, modern scholarship of the Kabbalah has paid scant attention to the central importance in this historical process to the loss, indeed suppression, of the female element of God and its subsequent and dramatic re-emergence in the Kabbalah — all the more potent as a result of its previously enforced repression. And this, despite the fact that it is uniquely in the Kabbalah that we find the most cogent articulation of God as female creatrix. It appears that the elaboration of the Shekhinah in the Kabbalah represents the last and most fully developed image of the original Great Goddess in her full glory as creatrix, with complete power over life, death, and rebirth: a wholly self-seeding and self-conceiving goddess:

When our earliest ancestors imaged the divinity as female, they understood that she contained the whole cycle of creation. They included the divine powers of phallic self-seeding and death within one symbolic system. The whole miraculous cycle of sexuality, birth, death, and rebirth was assimilated into the images of the Great Goddess.<sup>37</sup>

It is to scholars of other disciplines, and in particular scholars working in the interdisciplinary fields of theology, depth psychology, and feminism, that we must turn for a more thoroughgoing analysis of the history of the divine or archetypal feminine in our culture from a psycho-cultural perspective. What emerges is a more complete picture of the Great Goddess in our cultural history, a panoramic view in which to contextualize and illuminate the Shekhinah in the Kabbalah as an expression

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<sup>37</sup>Patricia Reis, *Through the Goddess: A Woman's Way of Healing* (New York: Continuum, 1991), pp. 34-59 (p. 40). Reis, drawing on Mircea Eliade, describes the phallic configuration of the Great Goddess of the Palaeolithic and Neolithic eras as 'profound images of a religious nature which demonstrates an ancient concept of female wholeness' (p. 45). She describes the significance of the image of an *inner phallus* for women as 'a sustaining, supportive inner core' which on the figurines is situated in the upper part of the body — the torso, neck, and head, denoting the possibility for self-fertilizing, self-renewal, and regeneration (p. 45). In Jung and Erich Neumann these positive images become aspects of the monstrous, terrible mother (p. 46). She further comments that a woman's longing for a phallus to provide pregnancy and childbirth may also be an acting out, a wrongly-interpreted literalization, of the desire to give birth to the self, give birth to a creative form' (p. 48). Cf. Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* (London: Oxford University Press, 1989), III, p.1355: '... any image in which male and female do not figure is not a proper image of the supernal'.

not merely of a feminine aspect of God, but of the female divine as co-equal with the masculine aspect of the Godhead in intradivine relations, and in herself a holistic symbol of God in the world. Studies of the Great Goddess archetype evidence a scholarly search which has been compared variously by their authors with Ariadne's thread leading through and out of the labyrinth<sup>38</sup>, with a descent to and return from the Goddess<sup>39</sup>, following the spiral path of Psyche, or the 'embodied soul', and with an archaeological dig uncovering layers of hidden and fragmented pieces, or *archae*, of the Goddess from prehistoric and ancient cultures.<sup>40</sup> What they have in common is their painstaking search and discovery of the archetypal feminine or Goddess as having been robbed of her divine status and repressed in culture, her re-emergence in fragmented and more or less distorted forms, and a plea for the re-establishment, full re-integration and restoration of the goddess to her archetypal status. A return of the goddess to her original powers is viewed as imperative for the psychic health, not only of women, and of men, but of our culture as a whole.<sup>41</sup>

Patricia Reis explores the psychology, indeed pathology, of a one-sided (patriarchal) imaginary which has split the image of the Goddess figure<sup>42</sup> into Nurturing or Devouring Mother (White and Black Goddess), and has created a (patriarchal) myth of matriarchy which, she argues, is perpetuated in the work of male writers such as Bachofen, Frazer, Neumann, and Wilber (Reis, pp. 88-9). This same tendency is evident in the work of object-relations-theorist and feminist Diane Jonte-

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<sup>38</sup>Joan Chamberlain Engelsman, *The Feminine Dimension of the Divine* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979). Engelsman locates the last great era of the archetypal feminine as a Goddess in the Hellenistic world from the time of Alexander the Great until the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire (p. 42).

<sup>39</sup>Sylvia Brinton Perera, *Descent to the Goddess: A Way of Initiation for Women* (Toronto: Inner City Books), 1981.

<sup>40</sup>Reis, *Through the Goddess*, p.34. The author's search for the archetypal feminine takes her to the pre-patriarchal Great Goddess of European Palaeolithic and Neolithic times and traces her fragmentation and disempowerment by the patriarchal Bronze Age cultures. She pays particular attention to the powerful and autonomous 'self-seeding, self-generating image of wholeness of the Phallic Goddess'. Like Engelsman, Reis traces the gradual splitting off of the Great Goddess' primal sexual energy and association with death, which is then assigned to the negative and demonized Goddesses (p. 31).

<sup>41</sup>Cf. Edward C. Whitmont, *Return of the Goddess* (London: Arkana, 1987).

<sup>42</sup>Reis, *Through the Goddess*, pp. 60-86. Reis traces the splitting of the image of the Great Goddess figure in history to the advent of the patriarchal social, political, and religious domination of the goddess-worshipping cultures of the Late Neolithic era, and gives a detailed analysis of this (psychological) process.



Pace who draws on Melanie Klein's theories of splitting and object-relations to uncover a pathological (undeveloped) cultural imaginary that projects the feminine archetype as fragmented and polarized, and which needs to mature into a healthier (more developed) mechanism able to tolerate ambivalence and embrace integration, thereby healing the 'maternal matrix of the religious experience and the image of God'.<sup>43</sup> Reis suggests three possibilities for healing the maternal matrix: firstly, a recognition of the 'infirmity' (p. 109) or pathology of the existing state of the archetype; secondly, a release from the disabling patriarchal myth of the dragon-slaying — read mother-slaying — heroic male:

The whole thrust of heroic consciousness is to move out of the deadly embrace of the mother, the earth, matter, and unconsciousness, toward the father, spirit, light, and solar consciousness (Reis p. 110).

And finally, as advocated elsewhere by feminist theorists like Irigaray, Kristeva, and Cixous, Reis suggests a revaluation of the maternal-feminine by writing the female body into language:

Only when we, as women, begin to give voice to the full emotional repertoire of our lived experiences of sexuality, pregnancy, birthing, and mothering will the patriarchal myth of matriarchy and its split mother imago be replaced with images of unity and multiplicity, which will speak a new language (Reis p. 110).

The cultural benefit derived from redeeming — paying the debt to, in Irigaray's terms — the integrity of the maternal feminine, for her role in bearing the burden of blame, for 'containing the pathology' (Reis p. 109), is a healthier and more creative psyche.

Now the Shekhinah, or archetypal feminine, as symbol of the divine-human relationship is itself a symbol of this innate human tendency towards wholeness of

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<sup>43</sup>Diane Jonte-Pace, 'Object Relations Theory, Mothering, and Religion: Toward a Feminist Psychology of Religion', *Horizons*, 14 (1987), 310-327. For a fuller analysis of the 'myth of matriarchy' theme, see Reis, *Through the Goddess*, pp. 86-110.

personality as outlined in Jung's account of the successful individuation process — the successful integration of ego and self. What the kabbalistic doctrine of the Sefirot depicts can be read as this very process. Jung's analysis of the nature and function of the archetype is useful for our understanding of the centrality of the Shekhinah as the (female) presence of God in the Kabbalah.<sup>44</sup> Joan Chamberlain Engelsman charts the history of the divine, or archetypal, feminine in Christianity from the Great Mother goddesses of the Hellenistic world, Demeter and Isis; via Sophia of Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity; to its emergence in the patristic doctrines of Mary and in Christology, grounding her study in Jung's concept of the archetypes and in Freud's theory of repression.<sup>45</sup> Jung's psychology is based on his distinction between the conscious and the unconscious realms, the latter consisting of material not readily acknowledged by the conscious mind, the domain of the ego, which mediates between the two worlds. His theory that the unconscious is both personal and collective is crucial to an understanding of the archetypal function as belonging to the impersonal, universal, or inherited layer of the collective psyche, where primordial images, or archetypes, lie dormant. Dynamic, autonomous, and living symbols of an eternal and compelling nature, archetypes are not ideas as such, but the potential vehicles of universal themes and motifs which consistently reappear as projections of the human psyche. Jung clearly often sees them as a means or medium for apprehending the divine realm, in much the same way as Shekhinah mediates between the human and divine realms: "They give human beings a "premonition of the divine" at the same time that they protect persons from an unmediated encounter with the Holy'.<sup>46</sup> He attributes to them 'divine' characteristics such as numinosity, givenness, symbolic

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<sup>44</sup>I am indebted to Engel<sup>5</sup>man's summary of Jung's theory of the archetypal, which she describes as a 'major contribution to theological speculation in this century' and 'of particular importance in discovering the feminine dimension of the divine' in *The Feminine Dimension*, pp. 13-18 (p. 13).

<sup>45</sup>Engelsman, *The Feminine Dimension*, p. 15: 'Jung believes that the archetypes are thrown up from the collective unconscious as things are brought up from the depths of the sea and thrown upon the beach. As such, [they are] "an urgent question of psychic hygiene", and even without proof of their existence "we would have to invent them forthwith in order to keep our highest and most important values from disappearing into the unconscious".'

<sup>46</sup>C.G. Jung, *Collected Works*, ed. by Sir Herbert Read, et al; trans. by R.F.C. Hull (London: Princeton University Press, 1953-83), IX, 1:8. Cited in Engelsman, p. 16. Cf. Paul Bishop, *The Dionysian Self: C.G. Jung's Reception of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), pp. 342-56: 'The Concept of the Self as a Replacement for God'.

nature, and ambivalence (Engelsman, p. 17). An archetype or living symbol articulates wholeness, the combination of positive and negative attributes; a paradox that the conscious mind or 'discriminating intellect' finds difficult to apprehend. Consequently:

Consciousness splinters the unity of the archetype by seeing its various aspects as separate and unrelated entities. For instance, the great mother archetype becomes the basis for both the good and the bad goddess (Engelsman, p. 17).

As a result, the archetypes combine both inadequate conscious understanding and unconscious import, rational and irrational material, exerting a powerful fascination on the conscious mind which strives to interpret and apprehend them.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the conscious-unconscious split results in a positive-negative distinction, so that the combination of grief and rage characteristic of Demeter is separated in later Christian images of the *Mater Dolorosa*, with the result that the Virgin Mary, for example, becomes simply a grieving mother while her rage is suppressed and projected onto witch-like figures (Engelsman, p. 56). The original great goddesses combined both emotions, and reigned over birth and death, creation and destruction, positive and negative, in keeping with their image as Earth Mother or Mother Nature. As anima-figure, the Great Goddess articulates a transformative mode presiding over bodily and material transformations linked to her female bodily transformations during menstruation, pregnancy, and lactation. The transformation of material things from one state to another, such as wheat into bread, grapes into wine, and flax into clothes are examples of Her mysterious powers possessed only by women (Engelsman, p. 21). In her positive mode she is Sophia (closely associated with both Shekhinah and the Anima Mundi)<sup>48</sup>, Goddess of Wisdom, the Eternal Feminine which leads men to God; and in her negative aspects, she is the young witch or temptress who leads men

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<sup>47</sup>Engelsman, *The Feminine Dimension*, pp. 16-17. As a conscious personified image of the unconscious archetypal, they are 'the conscious part of an unconscious iceberg' (p. 16).

<sup>48</sup>Cf. Barbara Neuman, *From Virile Woman to Woman Christ* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), p. 231.

astray (Engelsman, p. 22). The two basic symbols connected with the Great Mother archetype are based on the biological functions of a woman: the Mother or Mater is symbolized as a vessel which is her body, and represents for both men and women 'the first and most basic experience of the feminine' (Engelsman, p. 25). The most important symbol for the anima-figure is the moon because of the association of the lunar cycles with her own menstrual cycle involving the transformation, or blood, mysteries<sup>49</sup>

Mirroring Scholem's analysis of the Shekhinah image as coming into its own in the *Zohar* in a cultural climate of acute symbolic impoverishment, Jung links the emergence of the archetypes from the individual unconscious to the 'alarming poverty of symbols'<sup>50</sup> in the wake of the iconoclasm of the Reformation and the loss of church authority. The history of the Great Mother-Sophia-Shekhinah archetype has been one of expression, repression, and return of the repressed. Engelsman analyzes Jung's three feminine archetypes — the mother, the maid, and the anima — as one 'super-archetype', the Great Mother, and identifies mother and maid as the archetypal mother-daughter relationship embodied in the Demeter-Kore myth,<sup>51</sup> as a highly significant distinction for women, and one that has tended to be blurred by male psychoanalysts like Jung and Erich Neumann (Engelsman, p. 19). Its resurgence is seen as a response to an instinctive urge to give expression to what has been erased from the cultural memory<sup>52</sup> — namely the feminine as necessary complement to the masculine pole. The ambivalence which accompanies this process is expressed in the following statement in relation to this phenomenon in Judaism:

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<sup>49</sup>Engelsman, *The Feminine Dimension*, p. 25: 'the transformative mysteries of the *anima* are blood mysteries and involve not only menses, the onset of bleeding, but pregnancy as cessation of bleeding, and the creation of a child from the unexpelled blood, and lactation, during which time the woman supposedly makes milk from the unexpelled blood'.

<sup>50</sup>C.G. Jung, *Collected Works*, ed. by Sir Herbert Read, IX, 1:12-13. Cited in Engelsman, p. 17.

<sup>51</sup>The Demeter-Kore (Persephone) myth formed the basis for the Eleusian mysteries in the Hellenic period and tells of the abduction and separation of Kore from her mother who after many adventures is reunited with her (Engelsman, p. 20).

<sup>52</sup>Engelsman, *The Feminine Dimension*, pp. 32-33. Drawing on Freud's theory of repression, the author describes how (unwittingly but instinctively) repressed or erased memories — which can be of a culture as well as of an individual — inevitably seek to return to consciousness 'in disguised and distorted forms which are totally cut off from conscious control' and correspond to instinctual needs which cannot, indeed, refuse to be ignored. This echoes Scholem's description above of the return of the feminine in the Kabbalah as that of a 'primordial religious impulse' latent in Judaism.

The evidence of the Aggadah [Legend] indicates how incessantly she who was repressed returned, not only in the worst fears of the rabbis but also in their deepest yearnings.<sup>53</sup>

The notion of a return to wholeness and health as the beneficial goal of the healing that comes with the fully integrated feminine archetype underlies, then, both the theological and the psychological analyses:

... the missing feminine can create "a serious psychological problem" for modern man because it stresses the divisive nature of patriarchal religion and represents no divine feminine symbols to complete, complement, and inspire human wholeness (Engelsman, p. 40).

The Goddess or Great Mother is shown to have been systematically robbed of her powers which have in turn been surreptitiously and almost seamlessly subsumed under the sign of the masculine god-potencies, in much the same way as, in Irigaray's theory of language, the feminine in language and cultural discourse has been subsumed under the masculine.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the word 'goddess' itself has suffered the devaluation of its original meaning, as it now suggests one of many, inferior to the one God of our culture. The Kabbalah's emphasis on difference, and in particular on sexual difference, can be seen as a response to this dilution and diminution of the powers of the Great Goddess. And the emphasis on the female body and on female sexuality as the basis of the Goddess' power, as an attempt to return to the archetypal value of Woman as a medium of the divine:

For many women the notion of matriarchy ... has to do with the woman's journey; a cyclic return to the female body; and/or nostalgic longing, or future projection, for the matriarchy as a Golden Age; and a source for needed images of female power (Reis, p. 90).

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<sup>53</sup>Richard L. Rubenstein, *The Religious Imagination: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Jewish Theology* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), pp. 97-98. Cited in Engelsman, p. 39.

<sup>54</sup>See, in particular, Luce Irigaray, 'The Female Gender', in *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

Joan Chamberlain Engelsman's following description of the potential cultural implications of the due recognition and full elaboration of a feminine divine, equal in status to the masculine, could, I suggest, be taken as a return to the description of the mirroring of the divine-human realms so central to the Kabbalah's theory of the sefirot:

... an image of God with both masculine and feminine dimensions would dramatize the *intrasexual* harmony of the divine which human beings could emulate in their own *interpersonal* relationships (Engelsman, p. 156).

The notion of a (human) relationship with God is distilled in the concept of the Shekhinah, in the individual's sense of connectedness with God as Mother of creation, as the maternal soul or womb of the world. The Shekhinah as archetype of the divine-human relationship (which in turn mirrors the potential for inner syzygy<sup>55</sup> or sacred union within the human psyche) is central to a tradition that permeates our cultural history — handed down to us via the reception of the Kabbalah (one which has found

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<sup>55</sup> Nathan Schwartz-Salant, 'Anima and Animus in Jung's Alchemical Mirror', in *Gender and Soul in Psychotherapy*, ed. by N. Schwartz-Salant and M. Stein (Wilmette, Ill.: Chiron Publications, 1992), pp. 1-24 (pp. 10-12). The syzygy is an archetypal image of relations, called the *coniunctio* by the alchemists, which articulated at-oneness and completion as an internal or external state. The divine syzygy is found in the myth of Cupid and Psyche whose blissful union is lost when Psyche attempts to become conscious of her beloved Cupid; she seeks the union again through her terrible ordeals, ending with the ascent of the pair to Olympus. Another example is the ecstatic embrace of Shiva and Shakti (p. 10). The syzygy was once the centre of mysteries of union in the ancient world, probably between Dionysus and Persephone in Eleusis, and, significantly for this study, 'went underground with the demise of the religion of the Great Goddess ... and kept up a shadowy life in magic, and the occult, and in alchemy' (p.11). 'The divine syzygy may thus have gained a permanent place in even a patriarchally structured unconscious, but not yet on earth' (p.10). Schwartz-Salant outlines current debate on the syzygy as an implied relationship between anima and animus, whereby anima as soul and animus as spirit-ego function in tandem. He refers to Jung's theory of the syzygy as his 'major contribution to the central issue of difference' (p. 6), and describes Irigaray's discussion of 'double desire' (p.7) as an eloquent articulation of the dynamics of the syzygy, whereby in the desiring and being desired, the positive and negative poles create, according to Irigaray, 'a chiasmus or double loop in which each can move out towards the other and back to itself, a changing space or interval caused by the 'sense of attraction' underlying desire. (Luce Irigaray, 'Sexual Difference', in *French Feminist Thought*, ed. by Toril Moi [London: Blackwell, 1987, pp.120-21]). 'The field of syzygy, while relativizing the meaning of difference between the sexes, especially as its sense of space is embraced, also retains difference, largely through the mysterious workings of desire' (Schwartz-Salant, p.7). But the liminality of the syzygy is different for women (p. 6). The space of the syzygy is elsewhere referred to as a third area in the relation, an ambiguous ritual space of transformation where male can become female (p. 9). Jung, in the syzygy, found a link between the parts (anima and animus) and the whole. ('Concerning the archetypes, with special reference to the anima concept', in *Collected Works*, 9i:54-72 [par.115]); cited by Schwartz-Salant, p. 13.

its secular counterpart in literary works of which Francisco López de Úbeda's *La Picara Justina* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* are, I argue, eminent examples). Moreover, the doctrine of the kabbalistic, distinctly female, voice of the immanent God in the Shekhinah finds its contemporary secular counterpart in the theoretical works of such feminist writers, philosophers and psycho-analysts as Luce Irigaray, in particular in her 'theory' of *parler-femme*. For Irigaray, patriarchy or what she calls the 'between-men culture', is a historical construct, and as such, susceptible to change.<sup>56</sup> A change fully to incorporate a distinctly female subjectivity is desirable, in her view, indeed absolutely necessary, for without it women will continue to be absorbed as lesser males into the dominant (phallo-logocentric) order, and therefore be excluded as equally-valid subjects and co-makers of culture. The sociological consequences of what Irigaray calls our current sexually-indifferent (but really male) symbolic and social order are mapped out and analysed in her work. In Jungian terms, we are in danger of losing touch with our anima. Because the parallels between the Kabbalah's presentation of the Divine Feminine and later representations of the feminine (particularly in López de Úbeda and Goethe) are so close, it is necessary — following Scholem and others— to undertake a detailed analysis of the many-sided complexity of the Shekhinah figure.

#### Shekhinah as Ambivalent Anima

David Tresan's analysis of the anima figure in Jungian psychology<sup>57</sup> is particularly relevant to my argument, for he links it expressly to the Shekhinah of the Kabbalah which he cites as one of Jung's sources, in particular the *Zohar*.<sup>58</sup> However, according to Tresan, Jung ignores the fact that the Shekhinah concept can be a

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<sup>56</sup>Defined by Irigaray as a society that 'respects only the genealogy of the sons and the fathers, and the competition among brothers' (*Sexes and Genealogies*, p.188).

<sup>57</sup>David I Tresan, 'The Anima of the Analyst—Its Development' in *Gender and Soul in Psychotherapy*, pp. 73-110. He describes the anima as 'an elegant, subtle, and heuristic psychological apperception', p.74.

<sup>58</sup>Referred to at length in Jung's *Mysterium Coniunctionis 1955-1956*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 14. Cited in Tresan, p. 75.

personal and psychological idea 'akin in many ways to his notion of the anima and in other ways actually more sophisticated and beautiful' (Tresan, p. 76):

... as the ineffable enters the realm of human perception, the Shekhinah is the first manifestation, the first emanation, of God's energy, his will, and as such, she is the symbol of the reality and essence of all things, their 'ontos' (Tresan, p. 76).

He describes the psychological implications of an upper and lower Shekhinah: 'like the anima, the Shekhinah relates us to the world within and the world without, the world above and the world below, and links them all.' (Tresan p. 77). Consequently the anima, like the Shekhinah, or 'indwelling', becomes a religious and psychological imperative involving 'a continuing dialectic between ego-consciousness and the unconscious qua anima' (p. 77). Jung appears to draw on the Shekhinah archetype when he describes the anima as a 'middle path of psychic autonomy'<sup>59</sup>:

The anima is more present as a psychological and psychic fact than is the Self. It seems to be the role of anima to function as the immanence of the Self like [sic] the Shekhinah is the immanence of God (Tresan, p. 78).

Tresan differentiates between the immature and mature ego-anima configuration, whereby the immature ego-consciousness, that is unconsciousness of self as Eros, identifies with the anima *qua* mother, a situation which at a later stage in the individuation process becomes a more balanced liaison (Tresan, p. 79) in which a mature, self-conscious Psyche becomes the incarnate self or soul, agent of growth and symbol of wholeness. (Tresan, p. 86)

If the Shekhinah articulates our relationship with God, then it is the voice of that part of our being which we share with God, our essential self or soul, or Psyche. This relationship is one of reciprocity.<sup>60</sup> The voice of the soul bridges the gap that

<sup>59</sup>C.G. Jung, *Dream Analysis: Notes of the Seminar given in 1928-1930*, ed. by William McGuire (London: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 222. Cited in Tresan, p. 77.

<sup>60</sup>Man becomes aware of a fundamental duality, of a vast gulf which can be crossed by nothing but the voice; the voice of God, directing and law-giving in His revelation, and the voice of man in



exists between our existential self in the world and our essential self or soul. The tendency of the two poles is towards each other, each reflecting and enhancing the living reality of the other. And this relationship, this female voice of the soul (Shekhinah), is apprehended intuitively, that is, without recourse to the rational or intellectual faculty. It expresses the mysterious, secret (and sacred) nature of the Godhead itself, and how we relate to it. It is hidden and secret firstly because of its sacred nature and of the danger of, and taboo against, distorting, diminishing, and thereby violating it by attempting to articulate it in inadequate (human) terms. And secondly, because of the historically tendentious (patriarchal) socio-cultural restrictions placed on it. The negative aspect of Shekhinah as dark (Goddess) and destructive is primarily linked with her role as medium or channel of the supernal potencies, for, as the final sefiroth in the sefirotic tree, the Shekhinah receives the emanations of the sefiroth of both love and judgment. She can be the medium of either of these, depending on which dominates. She can, like the Jungian anima, be a loving mother, or a chastising mother.<sup>61</sup> But in the characteristic Zoharic fashion of elaborating particular aspects of received doctrine in its own idiosyncratic way, the rather passive and restrained role that the Shekhinah plays in channeling destructive forces from the sefirotic system is more fully developed than in earlier kabbalistic texts. Her role hitherto had not only been passive, but relatively harmless in that it was contained within the overall sefirotic framework, and thus within the Godhead itself. But the *Zohar* in many passages now presented the Shekhinah as being associated with the dark and ominous Other Side, which, as the name suggests, no longer belongs to the divine realm, but is the sphere of Evil itself, outside and independent of the Godhead. In this way, the Other — the dark and destructive aspect of her nature — is given new and dramatic prominence, for she, alone of all the sefiroth, is linked with, and runs the risk of contamination by, the demonic Other Side. But the divisions between good and evil, or between Right Side (positive) and

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prayer' (G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1954), pp. 7-8.

<sup>61</sup>G.G. Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, p.189.

Left Side (negative) in sefirotic terminology, are not always clearly defined in the *Zohar*<sup>62</sup>, and perhaps deliberately so, for the suggestion that evil may be located in the realm of the Godhead, is a bold one. And yet the original source of the power of severe and punishing judgment is the sefirah of Din situated on the (female) left side of the sefirotic tree. (This confusion, or conflation, stems particularly from the use of the term Left Side, which could refer to the demonic Other Side, outside and inimical to the Godhead, or could be simply the Left Side of the sefirotic tree itself.) The following description (by Scholem) sums up this aspect of the Shekhinah's dangerously ambivalent role:

When these forces of the Left Side become stronger, primarily due to human erring and sinning, the Shekhinah becomes the executrix of the powers of judgment which have entered her. But at times the *Zohar* goes even further: the Shekhinah actually comes under the sway of the Other Side, which penetrates and becomes entrenched within her [...] This may be caused by the weakness or helplessness of the Shekhinah, because it [she] is lacking the impetus created by man's good deeds; [or] by the preponderance within her of those forces that, because of their stern and punitive nature ... have an affinity with the Other Side. Overwhelmed by these dark forces, the Shekhinah herself becomes dark and destructive, with disastrous consequences for Israel and for the entire world (*Mystical Shape*, p. 189).

The images and symbols employed to express Shekhinah's ambivalent nature are myriad. She emits sweet fragrances like a rose and her face is radiant when there is an abundance of righteousness in the world. Conversely, when wickedness takes over, the rose, captive of the Other Side, is surrounded by thorns, she tastes bitter, and her face becomes dark. (Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, p. 190). Similarly, as a counterpart to the Tree of Life, symbol of the male sefirot of Yesod or Tif'ereth, the Shekhinah's ambivalent nature is symbolised in the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,

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<sup>62</sup>G.G. Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, p. 189. Cf. Georg M.D. Langer, *Die Erotik der Kabbala* (Munich: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1989), p. 33, where he points out that in the Kabbalah evil is the 'yeast' to the 'wine' of goodness.

otherwise known as the Tree of Death, so called because the forces of evil which bring death attach themselves to it. Her full identification with the Other Side in these negative moments of her powers is underlined by the *Zohar's* use of this term for both the Shekhinah herself and the Other Side (*Mystical Shape*, p. 190). The prolific lunar symbolism in the *Zohar* underlines, too, her association with the Black Goddess, as does the chthonian element, linking her with the Great Mother in ancient mythology, appropriate to the Shekhinah as a symbol of the 'esoteric interior of the "earth"' (*Mystical Shape*, p. 190).

A further development in the *Zohar's* elaboration of the Shekhinah archetype links her with the antagonist of Divine Wisdom from the Book of Proverbs — i.e. of *herself* as Sophia, the whorish 'strange woman' whose 'feet go down to death; [and whose] steps take hold on the netherworld' (Prov. 5.5)' — (*Mystical Shape* p. 191), who is elsewhere in the Proverbs described 'as the "riotous woman Folly"' (Prov.9:13ff.), who seduces men to ritual prostitution and fornication' (*Mystical Shape*, p. 191). Thus:

when a way of thinking that sees itself as strictly Jewish draws upon symbols from deep strata, it does not even recoil from such obviously paradoxical changes as attributing characteristics of Lilith to the Shekhinah (*Mystical Shape*, p.191).

Thus we have in the *Zohar* (I.148a) a detailed description of the demonic figure of the whorish woman as an antagonistic, negative counterpart to the noble and 'capable' Shekhinah (*Mystical Shape*, p. 191). Scholem cites two *Zohar* passages (I, 223a-b and III, 60b) which, when compared, show how far the author's 'mythical imagination' will go to unite these two figures: the first describes the archetype in her role as harsh judgment, at the same time as being the mother of Metatron the highest potency in the angelic world, who "emerged from between her legs" (*Mystical Shape*, p. 191). The second describes the Shekhinah as actually giving birth to two demonic females: Lilith and Naamah. She is described as 'wisdom of Solomon', the moon, and 'the

cattle upon a thousand hills (Ps.50:10). Her cosmic power and ubiquitous presence is clear in the following passage:

A thousand mountains loom before her, and all are like a puff of wind to her. A thousand mighty streams rush past her, and she swallows them in one swallow. Her nails reach out to a thousand and seventy sides; her hands grasp on to twenty-five thousand sides; nothing eludes her rule on this side or the other. How many thousands of potencies of judgment are grasped in her hair...(Zohar, I, 223b).

The positive images of abundance and rich fecundity of the upper Shekhinah give way (in ways that, as we shall see, anticipate Justina's rhetoric) to opposing negative images of poverty and deficiency in relation to her lower counterpart. Similarly the active or positive force of the upper give way to the markedly passive or negative nature of the lower. Some of the most common negative designations are night, moon, earth, dryness, the sabbatical (fallow) year, gate, and (closed) door. In addition, she is described in terms of a vessel or receptacle wherein forces gather and combine to give her a particular, distinct, or visible form; these include, among others, a garden in which all plantings grow, a pool fed by springs, a sea into which the rivers flow, a shrine and treasure-house in which the treasures of life and the secrets of the Torah are kept, and the countenance of the Community of Israel which is illuminated by the joining together of the sefirotic candles and lights (*Mystical Shape*, p. 176). Significantly, she is not the potencies themselves, but the means by which these powers are transmitted, whether audibly, visually, or tangibly; the site or 'field in which the force spreads' (*Mystical Shape*, p. 176-77). Another element linking the Shekhinah with whatever is imaged (*demuth*) was the idea that 'the form imparted to each and every individual thing by the Shekhinah, is already prefigured in the Shekhinah' (*Mystical Shape*, p. 178), an idea that evokes the image of her as womb. Accordingly, she is 'the differentiating seal, coin, or vessel' which 'corrects' or receives form, hence her phases of corrective severity. The *Zohar* decisively shifts the site of the process of individuation and differentiation from upper to lower

Shekhinah who then becomes the "form that embraces all forms", in whose garments all of God's creatures are prefigured (*Mystical Shape*, p. 179).

### Shekhinah as the Amorphous Feminine

Irigaray proposes the strategy of 'nomadic, legally non-owned, women'<sup>63</sup> as a means of avoiding being hemmed-in and de-vitalised by a (male) legality that views woman as valid, or legal, only if she functions as property, as a disposable and therefore inert and interchangeable asset among men in a 'between-men' culture. As an antidote to such attempts by the dominant culture to stunt her growth, to restrict her 'becoming', Irigaray advocates for woman active engagement with life as a free agent, exposing herself, alone and independent, to the vicissitudes and arbitrary nature of lived experience. Such experience brings — as it does to Justina and Mignon — painfully acquired but indispensable self-knowledge and self-awareness through experience of the other. Armed with a growing sense of self as a free spirit, and determining her own path and her own destiny, woman is able to challenge the traditional cliché (male) view of her. Irigaray's emphasis on a woman's need to wander freely and thus avoid being pinned down by the male subject's will to mastery over his environment, in particular over Woman, could be seen as a tactical mimicry<sup>64</sup> of the traditionally male vagus prerogative, of 'sowing one's own wild oats' — a tactic which was already employed by the 16/17th-century literary figure of the female picaresque wanderer.<sup>65</sup> Women, she argues, must free themselves from the cultural imperative to remain static and unthinkingly bound by the legal institutions set up by a male culture in order to hold mastery over them. The Shekhinah's position, like

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<sup>63</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Parler n'est jamais neutre*, p. 266.

<sup>64</sup>Luce Irigaray, 'The power of discourse and the subordination of the feminine' in *The Irigaray Reader*, pp. 118-32 (p. 124): 'One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination to an affirmation, and thus begin to thwart it'.

<sup>65</sup>See Ingrid Ladendorf, *Zwischen Tradition und Revolution: Die Frauengestalten in 'Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahren' und ihr Verhältnis zu deutschen Originalromanen des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990), pp.27-29 ('Pikara-Figuren'). I offer an analysis of the (fundamentally similar) strategies adopted by the female figures to gain some degree of autonomy in a male-dominated culture in respect of *Wilhelm Meister* in Chapter IV and in respect of *La Pécara Justina* in Chapter V. (In the case of *Wilhelm Meister*, as I point out in Chapter IV, the male Narrator expresses his desire for the skills of a female Narrator [H.A. 8, p.208].)

Irigaray's female would-be subject of discourse, is likewise on the margins, defined by her ambivalent mid-way location between the divine and human realms. From her unique standpoint, she adopts a different — distinctly female — viewpoint. Her role as the female voice of God is always already scandalous in its defiance of the moral imperative of a peculiarly male onto-theological sensibility. Her marginal status gives her freedom from the restrictions of a particular socio-cultural imaginary, that seeks to impose on her a partial and wholly inadequate identity. Her position is illegal, invalid, in that she is a real stumbling-block to an orthodox notion of a God that is wholly transcendent, abstract, devoid of vital content and lacking tangible reality. Her function is to make sensuous the idea of God. Similarly, the rich ambiguity of both Shekhinah's position and her language seems to prefigure the notion of speaking 'elusiveness' and 'mucosity', an Irigarayan linguistic strategy that allows women to articulate their negative position in culture as being untheorized and unthought and, hence, virtually absent from, at the very least exiled on the margins of, discourse.<sup>66</sup> Mucosity articulates that which lacks form and structure and is therefore in some sense amorphous, slippery, invisible and left out of account — at least by and in a dominant imaginary that gives prevalence to structure and form at the expense of substance and tactile sensuousness. But elusive mucosity simultaneously, and paradoxically, expresses a positive moment: a kind of tactical mimicry that aims to capitalize on the formless, quasi invisible, and elusive quality of mucosity as a means of circumventing a hostile system that seeks to entrap, immobilize, and render lifeless that which it encompasses, uses, without paying it due recognition — the feminine.<sup>67</sup> Like Irigaray's other strategies involving tactical mimicry, the repressed negative is brought to consciousness, exposed and reclaimed and transformed, for her *parler-femme* aims to affirm the feminine by means of tactical mimicry of the negative, an approach that could be described as very close indeed to the self-manifestation of the

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<sup>66</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Parler n'est jamais neutre*, pp. 270, 302.

<sup>67</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Ethique de la différence sexuelle* (Paris: Minuit, 1984), p. 107. Translated by Margaret Whitford: 'this mucous, in its touching, in its properties, would hinder the transcendence of a God foreign to the flesh, of a God of immutable and stable truth' (*Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.163.

Dark Shekhinah. By (means of) articulating her deprived state within the cultural economy, Woman implicitly, and paradoxically, expresses her potential self as equally valuable. Her mission is to bring to light the hidden, or unconscious, that is (for Irigaray), the feminine. In doing so, she gives birth to her hidden (dark) self as the suppressed unconscious of our culture and gives prominence to what is the necessary other pole of the male principle. Similarly, Shekhinah's designations have been described as 'myronymous'.<sup>68</sup> She defies and eludes any attempt to reduce her to any one particular attribute. She is overdetermined in her portrayal. Indeed one of her key characteristics — apart from her essentially female gender — is her own formlessness. In her passive mode, she adopts the form of whatever she contains. She is the vessel that gathers and gives shape to that which flows into her from above. Her protean nature, her refusal to conform to any one fixed idea imposed on her from without gives her the status of the invisible or of the only partially visible. She is, thereby, elusive of a gaze that does not recognize her with a sophisticated and enabling eye.

Shekhinah as the God-bearing image articulates the maternal potencies in God. As such, the most important organizing principle in the articulation of the emanated God — the concept of sexual difference — emphasises the female principle, recipient of the male principle of potency, as that which receives, cherishes, and (in her womb) gives shape to an otherwise male God's divine potency. One could say that complexity-in-wholeness is the essence of the Shekhinah, and is what her language at its best attempts to grasp. This complexity-in-wholeness is linked in the Kabbalah with the feminine principle of God, that is, in particular with Binah-Shekhinah as mother of creation:

In Binah we find the womb of all Creation, a womb that maintains harmony in differentiation, the reconciliation of contradiction, the unity of conflicts that are about to erupt. [It is] here that we find the roots of severity in the powers of judgment.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup>A.F. Waite, *The Holy Kabbalah* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1929), p.34.

<sup>69</sup>Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, p. 62.

Derrida uses the term 'différance' rather than 'distinction', to express the overlapping and dynamic quality of thought that is not measurable and quantifiable by means of cut-and-dried concepts, but is, rather, a network of dynamic interrelations, a fluid process, the workings of which are not always expressible in discursive language or apprehendable to the intellect.<sup>70</sup> Irigaray uses the placenta as a metaphor to articulate much the same idea, that what we (necessarily) distinguish between in discursive thought is not in fact (in life, that is) really cut and dried, but that there is always and already interaction — continuous negotiation, rather than fusion — and indistinct boundaries between whatever is conceptually distinguished.<sup>71</sup> Irigaray defines and distinguishes between these two different modes of perceiving the world — the one cut-and-dried, intellectual, and exclusive, the other fluid, overlapping, intuitive and reciprocal — in gendered terms of male and female respectively, in her theoretical writings.<sup>72</sup> Thinking (and speaking and writing) is, for Irigaray, the historico-cultural prerogative of the male individual, and the privileging of this one human faculty has been effected at the expense of others, in particular the culturally female-gendered faculty of intuition with its implicit link with modes of apprehending other than via rational thought, namely by means of bodily sensation or feelings. The male individual's will to master his environment and impose his own view of the world has, according to Irigaray and others, resulted in an impoverishment of our cultural life. For to privilege the rational mind over the body in such a radical and far-reaching manner (the establishment over time of an almost exclusively-male cultural discourse) has been to neglect shamefully, disregard, and belittle the 'other' value of lived, that is bodily, experience and the real knowledge — born of an intuitive body-mind — that such experience brings. It is clear, then, that in Irigaray's work as in the Kabbalah,

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<sup>70</sup>Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 427-28.

<sup>71</sup>Luce Irigaray, 'On the Maternal Order', in *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, trans. by Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 37-44. Cf., too, Patricia Reis, *Through the Goddess: A Woman's Way of Healing* (New York: Continuum, 1991) on the 'shift from the paradigm of opposites to the paradigm of difference' (p. 29).

<sup>72</sup>See, e.g., Irigaray, 'On the Maternal Order', in *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, pp. 42-43.



Woman embodies that other pole of discourse, those 'other' values, which have been traditionally neglected and deprived of cultural space, and therefore (cultural) value. Shekhinah/Sophia embodies Wisdom as opposed to (male) Logos.

A founding principle of both the Kabbalah, therefore, and of Luce Irigaray's analysis of our (patriarchal) culture, is the concept of difference, in particular and fundamentally, the difference between the sexes and its overcoming in wholeness. In the Kabbalah, male and female are the two fundamental categories into which the immanent and self-revealing God, and hence the human being as reflection of that God, can be divided — and yet reconciled. The basic difference, the fundamental division, in the kabbalistic concept of the sefirotic tree is its left and right sides representing female and male principles respectively. The whole tendency of its inner dynamics is towards a harmonious balance between left and right, between female and male. Clearly, it is a profoundly significant and crucial distinction without which the sefirotic concept of the deity collapses through lack of a meaningful structure. Irigaray, too, makes the concept of difference, of two absolutely distinct sexual identities, central to her theories and analyses of (Western) culture. According to her, the lack of recognition of, and respect for, difference-in-wholeness, for *both* male *and* female; the failure to give equal value to the feminine (or female) as is given to the masculine (or male) principle represents a fundamental, if not *the* fundamental flaw in our cultural life. The extent to which, in her view, this results in an impoverishment of our cultural, political, ethical, and spiritual life is well documented in her work. What is of especial interest here is that she, in terms very like the kabbalists' attempts to conceptualize and give prominence to what is neglected, belittled, and suppressed, namely the feminine (or female) principle as the necessary other and different, but equally valid, pole of discourse and life.

#### Shekhinah as Tangible, Transcendent Mediator: Her Self-Embodiment in Language

Just as the Upper Shekhinah is on the threshold between the upper (configuration of) three and the lower (configuration of) seven sefirot, as Lower

Shekhinah she is similarly positioned on the margin between two distinct realms, here the divine and the earthly. Consequently, one of the most prevailing symbols of her is the traditional mystic image of the woman as *doorway*, or *entrance* (images much used in *La Pícara Justina*),<sup>73</sup> thereby indicating her status as means of access to the other realm, whether it be the divine or the earthly, for she functions in both directions. We are told that all God's bounty and plenitude gathers and is collected in her, and the abundance of symbols relating to (the age-old female symbol of) vessels, particularly collecting vessels and containers, are expressive of this key attribute of the Shekhinah as form-giving womb or mother. The overriding image is of the (in-herself amorphous) Shekhinah as passively receiving, gathering, and containing the paths which converge in her; but most important, she is the (passive) medium through which it is possible for us sensuous beings to reach the king himself. She is of both worlds, characteristically positioned on the border 'between transcendence and immanence' identified as 'lower wisdom' and 'supernal earth' (*Mystical Shape*, pp.164 and 167), alternatively the hidden queen and the visible, tangible daughter of the king, the principle or essence of this world in which her law — the secret Oral Law of the mystical substance of tradition — rules. She possesses exclusively feminine attributes, and must be 'adorned and presented with gifts in order to have something of her own' (*Mystical Shape*, p.164). Her role as palpable mediator is clearly emphasised in the Zoharic passage alluding to the ineffable nature of the En'Sof who cannot be directly articulated, for 'everything is hinted at in the Shekhinah, who is dressed in the garments on which are drawn all created things, and it is called by all their names'<sup>74</sup> She of all the sefirah, because of her key location on the margin between both realms, is most expressly endowed with both human, sensuous, and divine attributes. She is what links us to God. Our affinity with transcendent God is only conceivable and graspable with the help of the Shekhinah. The image of her as two-faced expresses

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<sup>73</sup>J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 85; this configuration is re-enacted by Justina in relation to Sancha in *La Pícara Justina* in a scene of female bonding in which the doors to Sancha's secret treasures are opened to Justina (pp.557-58). Cf., too, the play on the female symbol of the water-jar — pervasive symbol of the tenth sefirah — in the scene at the 'Regla' fountain (p.397).

<sup>74</sup>*Tikkunei Zohar*, §22, f. 65a. Cited in Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, p. 180.

the way we identify with her (or she with us) in terms of her human attributes, the face which she has turned towards us. She is the archetypal go-between.

In terms that are distinctly evocative of kabbalistic rhetoric, Luce Irigaray expressly links the feminine principle with our (human) relationship to God, the elemental world, and 'our lost sense of touch'.<sup>75</sup> This double relationship, fruit of the sensuous-emotional aspects of our psychological life — traces of which survive, according to Irigaray, in the dark and mysterious aspects of myths and folk tales, and are expressed in poetry — is, in her view, otherwise left out of everyday (male) language and discourse that 'forgets the [particular] matter it names and by means of which it speaks' ('Divine Women', p.58). The status here of the feminine-divine-elemental, the Great Goddess by another name, is as a forgotten and neglected sensuous medium through which the fundamental relationship with the mother and with nature-God can be expressed. Both men and women suffer from this fundamental deprivation, but woman is more acutely disabled in her growth process, in her 'becoming' as Irigaray calls it, for she lacks a sense of herself as more than finite flesh, more than bodily self. In other words, she lacks a sense of herself as simultaneously transcendental, as divine: 'in order to become, it is essential to have a gender or an essence (consequently a sexuate essence) as *horizon*. Otherwise becoming remains partial and subject to the subject' ('Divine Women', p.61). Irigaray presents her case for the necessity of recognizing the female divine alongside the male divine by reference to man's having achieved *his* status as divine by means of a uniquely abstract male-gendered God: 'God has been created out of man's gender' ('Divine Women', p.61):

Divinity is what we need to become free, autonomous, sovereign. No human subjectivity, no human society has ever been established without the help of the divine ('Divine Women' p.62). ... As long as woman lacks a divine made in her image she cannot establish her

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<sup>75</sup>Luce Irigaray, 'Divine Women', in *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp.59-60.

subjectivity or achieve a goal of her own. She lacks an ideal that would be her goal or path in becoming ('Divine Women' p.63-4). ... 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. ... Women lack a female god who can open up the perspective in which *their* flesh can be transfigured. ... The only diabolical thing about women is their lack of a God and the fact that, deprived of God, they are forced to comply with models that do not match them, that exile, double, mask them, cut them off from themselves and from one another. ... Woman scatters and becomes an agent of destruction and annihilation because she has no other of her own that she can become ('Divine Women', p.64).

Irigaray argues that the failure to reconnect with these elemental and fundamental relationships has resulted in 'partial incarnations and monstrously composite women, or indeed men' ('Divine Women', p.58). She is suggesting that an overreliance on other senses — in particular sight — has inevitably resulted in a monstrously distorting, because one-sided and only partial, projection of this life-giving relationship. Like Herder, Goethe's teacher in this regard, she privileges the lost sense of touch as being the sense that underlies and mediates between the other four senses:

This is the sense that travels with us from the time of our material conception to the height of our celestial grace, lightness, or glory. We have to return to touch if we are to comprehend where touch became frozen in its passage from the most elemental to the most sophisticated part of its evolution. This will mean that we need to stay both firm and mobile in our catheches [incarnation], always faithful, that is, to the dimension of touch ('Divine Women', p.59).<sup>76</sup>

The sense of touch, therefore, is fundamental to the incarnation or descent of the word of God made flesh in Irigaray, and this mediating sense is inherently linked, as in the

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<sup>76</sup>See, too, Luce Irigaray, 'When our lips speak together', trans. by Carolyn Burke, *Signs*, 6 (1980), 69-79; and *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 1985, pp. 25-26: 'Woman takes pleasure more from touching than seeing'. Cf. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, 'The Blind Man and the Poet: An Early Stage in Goethe's Quest for Form', in *German Studies Presented to W.H. Bruford* (London: Germanic Institute, 1962), pp. 29-57.

Kabbalah, to the notion of God as the maternal-feminine, for 'everything is given to us by means of touch, a mediation that is continually forgotten' ('Divine Women', p.59).<sup>77</sup> Already in early Gnostic writing, the Shekhinah is the *embodied* voice of God directed at God himself, and not just at human beings (*Mystical Shape*, p.152). Binah, we are told, speaks as part of the process of creation, and in speaking gives birth to God's creative, active energy, which in turn, through a direct line (a female genealogy in Irigaray's terms) passes down to and enters in the receptive Lower Shekhinah:

This force ... gathered and concentrated carries it down in the form of the living divine 'word' that permeates and vivifies all of the worlds that are outside the Godhead (*Mystical Shape*, p.181).

Now, the mystical value attributed to language and the faculty of speech in general is one of the most distinguishing features of the Kabbalah<sup>78</sup>:

The process which the Kabbalists described as the emanation of divine energy and divine light was also characterized as the unfolding of the divine *language*. ... The secret world of the godhead is a world of language, a world of divine names that unfold in accordance with a law of their own (*Symbolism*, pp. 35-36).

For the Kabbalists:

Letters and names are not only conventional means of communication. They are far more. Each one of them represents a concentration of energy and expresses a wealth of meaning which cannot be translated, or not fully at least, into human language (*Symbolism*, p. 36).

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<sup>77</sup>See Karen Guberman, 'The Language of Love in Spanish Kabbalah: An Examination of the *Iggeret ha-Kodesh*' in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, ed. by D.R. Blumenthal (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), pp.53-105 (pp.65-6), for the Kabbalists' championing of the sense of touch in the face of Maimonides' Aristotelian contempt for it.

<sup>78</sup>See, for example, Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 17. For a discussion of the language of the *Zohar* itself — mostly Aramaic or a mixture of Hebrew and Aramaic — see Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* (London: Oxford University Press, 1989), I, pp.64ff.

This expresses a mystical view of language linked to the doctrine of the fourfold meaning of Scripture, and the notion that language in general, and paradigmatically the Hebrew language as the sacred language *par excellence*, has hidden layers of meaning of which the literal is the most superficial and the mystical, or anagogic, the most sublime and secret. The view of language as mystical, as having hidden depths or layers goes hand in hand with the view of Jewish mystics in general that the Torah is 'a living organism animated by a secret life which streams and pulsates below the crust of its literal meaning' (*Major Trends*, p.14) – a symbol, in fact, of God's (i.e. Shekhinah's) creative, sensuous fecundity. The mystical notion that the Torah is made up of the names of God and is itself the one great Name of God was introduced by the Spanish kabbalists and is central to the *Zohar*: '...in the Torah God has expressed His transcendent Being, or at least that part or aspect of His Being which can be revealed to Creation and through Creation' (*Symbolism*., pp. 39-40). In other words, Torah is both the instrument of creation and is itself (a symbol of) God's Being in creation. Or, to put it in yet another way, when we speak of God and his transcendent Self on the one hand, and his instrument or vehicle of self-manifestation (that is language or the Shekhinah) on the other, we are in fact, according to the kabbalists, essentially talking about the same thing. For knowledge of God, or a sense of being-in-touch with the living God, can (for most individuals) only ever be mediated. And that sensuous medium (i.e. Shekhinah) is language, in its most infinite, or mystical, sense, for the secret or sacred knowledge of God requires a layer of language or meaning which expresses, and is a vehicle for, its quintessentially divine nature.

The female voice of God, or Shekhinah was closely linked with the rebirth of the mythical substratum of the ancient Aggadah texts which endowed the dry concepts with a fluid and vibrant authenticity.<sup>79</sup> Scholem describes the mythical

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<sup>79</sup>Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp.30-32: 'The whole of Aggadah can ... be regarded as a popular mythology of the Jewish universe, a mythical heritage which the Kabbalists inherited and continued' (p.31). 'The Aggadah (Legend), together with the Halakhah (Law), the prayers, and the philosophy of Judaism are the most important spiritual forces to have conditioned and shaped the intellectual life of Jewry during the past two thousand years' (p. 19).

realm as a 'reliable and authentic source of vocabulary' for the kabbalists in their ambivalent relationship to the dominant ideological discourse:

... they often enough found themselves helplessly entangled in a net of contradictions between the rigid and undialectical concepts that they, as men of their time, had to use, and the images and symbols that lived within them, that they had brought to life but could not adequately express in the terminology imposed upon them by their adversaries (*Mystical Shape*, 159).

This description of the relationship between on the one hand kabbalistic and, on the other, an orthodox discourse, redolent of a rigidly masculine, onto-theological, conception of the divinity, parallels the way in which Luce Irigaray's female subject of discourse places herself within patriarchal discourse, from which she seeks to find a new *langage* in which to express herself. It articulates precisely the same problematic position (of women) in relation to a 'rigid and undialectical' masculine cultural imaginary and its discourse. In Irigaray, the female voice articulates an essentially female symbolic, a linguistic medium, or *langage* — a female discourse potentially — in and through which not only can women express their essential selves, their essentially female desires from within a dominant male symbolic and discourse, but in which this essentially masculine discourse of the cultural imaginary finds its 'other' pole, its female counterpart. Language as *power* in this sense is central to the mystical tradition:

Most mystical streams are keenly sensitive to the energizing ontic possibilities that (certain) language, employed with spiritual integrity and in normatively efficacious manner, is said to possess.<sup>80</sup>

Katz (p.21) refers to the 'locomotive power' of words to transport the spiritual self from the world below into the world above. Language, and in particular the language of mystical tradition, is both source and medium of the divine:

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<sup>80</sup>Steven T.Katz, 'Mystical Speech and Mystical Meaning', in his *Mysticism and Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 3-41 (p.20).

The Tetragrammaton is the Absolute's *self*-identification, possessing powers, by virtue of this ontic ground, this metaphysical source and connectedness, that other linguistic ascriptions lack. [...] So, the creation accounts wherein 'God speaks' are taken with extreme, if original, literalness (Katz, p.16).

Language has the innate power to raise to self-awareness a feeling of continuity with God, a divine-earthly connectedness which is indirectly apprehended through the mediacy of words. It is this mediacy in language that is the female voice of the Shekhinah.

Our unquestioned ability to know the Sefirot entails that we can, in some sense, know the *Eyn Sof*. At a far lower level, therefore, we can learn about the Eyn Sof (through the mediation of the Sefirot) by way of the things in our world; by knowing and naming these, we know and name the *Eyn Sof*, obliquely but authentically (Katz, pp. 30-31).

Shekhinah is not only God's presence in the world but the culmination of his process of 'self-manifestation' (*Mystical Shape*, pp.162-63). As archetype of the divine-human relationship, she gives tongue to the innate human tendency towards growth and ongoing refinement as an inner process akin to and mirroring the dynamics of the Kabbalah's self-revealing God of emanation. Moreover, such refinement is a process of becoming, of becoming closer to God, or more godlike, or in psycho-analytical terms, becoming one's true Self. Paradoxically, real engagement (being-in-touch) with the external world (or 'lower realm' kabbalistically speaking), is a necessary condition of such inner growth, and increasing self-awareness: a sense of our essential selves or souls as co-eternal with God, accompanies the process. This sense of one's self as growing and becoming corresponds to Jung's idea of the individuation process, and it is achieved by way of experience of life and engagement with the world.

In her analysis of Western Culture as one which has been founded on the suppression of the feminine principle, Ruth El Saffar has pointed out that Jung's



account of the individuation process as involving the crucial encounter with the *anima* (for a man) and with the *animus* (for a woman), while adequately dealing with the male individual's route to self-discovery, when simply reversed, does not, in fact, correspond to a woman's actual experience.<sup>81</sup> There is, according to her, a fundamental assymetry between the two genders, if not between the two sexes. To claim, as Jung does, that woman encounters the male *animus* and becomes whole and integrated is to confuse sexual with archetypal gender. For the woman, unlike the man, does not initiate the individuation process from the position of a healthy, strong ego-identity in culture — a position that Jung insists is a *sine qua non* of successful integration. On the contrary, she starts already from a position of disadvantage, having herself no real ego-identity. Her journey to female subjectivity, therefore, must be charted along a different route; and this route, like that of her male counterpart, involves a return to the feminine *anima* or eternal feminine. Her crucial encounter is with her own divine maternal-feminine from which she has been cut off in attempting to adapt to the culture's view of her sex as pure matter, devoid of spiritual life, divested of divine status, and of linguistic embodiment. Whatever the psychological value of El Saffar's analysis may be, her account reveals part, at least, of the meaning of the Shekhinah-archetype. For Shekhinah is both the divine maternal-feminine or soul given voice in the Kabbalah, the repressed *anima* archetype of Jung's individuation process, and the (as yet unrecognized) divine woman of Irigaray's theory of sexual difference. In this double articulation, she is hidden in the distinctly female voices that express Goethe's own (veiled) analysis of our (male) culture's pathway to wholeness, an analysis of which illuminates the way in which she is identifiable with the mysterious, authentically female voice of the first-person narrator of *La Pícará Justina*.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Ruth A. El Saffar, *Rapture Encaged: The Suppression of the Feminine in Western Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 13-18.

<sup>82</sup>In Chapter IV, I offer an analysis of the aesthetic exploitation of language by the female figures in *Wilhelm Meister*. In Chapter VI, I offer an analysis of the similar way in which the female voice embodies itself in the detail of the language it uses in *La Pícará Justina*.

The internal dynamics of the sefirotic system, already present in the older *Book Bahir*, are highly elaborated in the *Zohar*. Accordingly, the Shekhinah can move from her lowly position on the very lowest borders of the supernal realm upwards to become absorbed into the highest level. As archetypal go-between she articulates the importance of unceasing movement in the dynamic process of interpenetration of the divine and human spheres. Intrinsicly linked to her role as divine intermediary, therefore, is the notion of dynamic movement, for her role is to move constantly between the two realms ever connecting and revitalising both:

Within the Godhead, there takes place a secret movement upward no less than downward, and it is the Shekhinah in particular that is the instrument of that motion (*Mystical Shape*, pp.168-70).

Her unique characteristics and status are as the female channel, as (female) passive receptacle of the (male) active drives which permeate her and which she absorbs like a sponge. The Shekhinah is the key to establishing and maintaining both a crucial harmony in the mutually sustaining relationship between the divine and the human, as well as the dynamic interrelationships within the godhead itself, for:

...the nine upper Sefiroth only operate in Creation through the intermediacy of the last Sefirah [and] these potencies manifest themselves exclusively in this medium (*Mystical Shape*, p. 171).

The theme of free movement articulates the notion of a real, living God and, more important, a real, and hence dynamic, relationship between God and creation. It suggests a living organism capable of growth and development, as opposed to an abstract notion of a God who is static, wholly self-contained, and hence devoid of vital content. The emphasis on movement in relation to the Shekhinah's function points to the existence of two essentially, and ontologically, distinct realms of being — human and divine — and the need for interaction and interflow between the two. It is Shekhinah's role to mediate, to go between the two realms, ever maintaining a

harmonious balance between both. Freedom of movement is also indicative of the dynamic relationship between and among the parts that go to make up the whole organism, as well as between these parts and the whole. The kabbalistic system or, in Irigaray's terms, the 'economy' (in the sense of the relationship of the parts to the whole), is modelled on a view of divine emanation as a living organism, whether a human body or tree, made up of various interconnecting and vital parts, limbs, or organs, which, when functioning harmoniously, maintain a healthy and balanced whole.<sup>83</sup> The relationship between the ideal God of whom nothing can be said and the emanated God of the Kabbalah that speaks in and through the voice of Shekhinah is mirrored in the differentiation between, on the one hand, the ideal or primordial (Written) Torah as the very name of God, the tetragrammaton YHWH (*Symbolism*, p.41), and the Torah as an explanation of this written text, a living organism or woven fabric made from God's name<sup>84</sup>, in other words the Oral Torah. Unlike the Written Torah, which as God's vehicle of self-expression is and must remain ultimately meaningless to human understanding, the notion of the Oral Torah involves the multifarious human interpretations and the 'bringing forth of meaning' that this (inter)action involves. We can say that the written Torah is the text of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, and the oral Torah is 'the sum total of everything that has been said by scholars or sages in explanation of this written corpus' whose task it is to carry out the 'necessary role of completing the written Torah and making it more concrete'. Both (like all oppositions in the Kabbalah) are really one: each incomplete and inconceivable without the other (*Symbolism*, pp.47-48). But within the (apparent) duality of a knowable and unknowable God, the Oral Torah — the Shekhinah or immanent God — is really what concerns us:

*There is only an oral Torah ... the written Torah is a purely mystical concept. [What Moses] gave to the world as the written Torah has*

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<sup>83</sup>Cf. Irigaray on the importance of having freedom of (bodily) movement: 'we have to construct a space for ourselves in the air for the rest of our time on earth — air in which we can breathe, and sing freely, in which we can perform and move at will' ('Divine Women', p. 66).

<sup>84</sup>This view of a leading 13th century Spanish Kabbalist, Joseph Gikatila, contemporaneous with the *Zohar*, is discussed in Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, p.42.

acquired its present form by passing through the medium of the oral Torah. [...] there is no written Torah, free from the oral element, that can be known or conceived of by creatures who are not prophets (*Symbolism*, p. 50).

So the bringing forth of meaning from the written corpus — which is the Oral Torah — enacts the process of the self-revealing God of which Shekhinah is the quintessential symbol and manifestation. Indeed, it becomes clear that Shekhinah *is* the Oral Torah, the 'sum total of everything that has been said by scholars or sages in explanation of the Written Torah', the mouth that articulates and interprets the written corpus thereby making it more concrete (*Symbolism*, p.47). In other words, she herself is to all intents and purposes the Torah, given that the written corpus is a purely mystical concept. Both Shekhinah and Oral Torah are mystical symbols of our relationship with God. Whereas the written Torah is identified with the giving, compassionate sphere of Tifereth, the oral Torah is a symbol of the receptive sphere of Shekhinah, as well as the power of divine judgment in Malkuth.<sup>85</sup> And it is only in the union of both sefirot, and the unity of both Torahs 'in their active association' that God's completeness is manifest (*Symbolism*, p.48-49).

The emphasis in the Kabbalah on the essential divine coupling of Written and Oral Torah, of Tifereth and Shekhinah, is one of its most pervasive and most elaborately developed aspects. It is clear, however, that in this imagined marriage of the two, and indeed throughout the whole sefirot scheme, the masculine principle, identified principally with Tifereth, is regarded as a given, as an absolute or universal value, linked with God the Father, infinite, unspeakable, and *untouchable*. On the other hand, it is correspondingly far less elaborated, and devoid of human characteristics compared to its female counterpart. The feminine principle, in contrast, has been endowed with the fullest and most potent projections of the human imagination; images born of the human desire to find, and to create, meaning in the world. Shekhinah is God-in-the-world, Mother Nature, The Great Goddess, the Oral

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<sup>85</sup>Meaning 'the Kingdom', God's dominion or power in the world — another name for the Lower Shekhinah.

Torah. She is the tangible embodiment of our desire to know God, of our essential self or soul. She is, too, the embodiment of female desire as the counterpart of male desire necessary for the divine syzygy, or union, which involves the maintenance of individuality-in-union.

Irigaray claims to uncover the reality of the non-existence in our cultural tradition(s) of such a truly female divine.<sup>86</sup> While the female has been given a divine function as the virginal womb or mother-queen of the male God who engenders the male son-god, she has no lineage of her own, no female 'genealogy' in Irigaray's terminology. Her status is as a maternal medium or channel which enables a specifically male-god to pass between the upper and the lower realms, while her own divine-human potential — her genealogy, the mother-daughter line — remains obscure and undeveloped, her symbolic-power consequently diluted and anaemic. Both Irigaray and Jung argue that we need a God in and through which to realise our full potential as human beings, our true selves as human-divine, capable of growth — implicitly in the direction of God. The renewed contact or reconnection with our essential selves or souls brings with it a sense of wholeness or one-ness with God, and a concomitant love of self which Jung says is essential to the formation of a healthy personality. If this God has been man-made in man's own image, as Irigaray argues, then this poses a problem for both men and women. The resolution of the problem for men — the (theoretical) route back to reconnect the male ego-identity with the feminine soul or *anima* — has been clearly identified by Jung in his mapping out of the individuation process mentioned already. The difficulty for women is more acute and complex precisely because they lack a 'transcendental which leaves them free to embrace the maternal while giving them back their childhood [as daughters] at the same time' (*Ethics*, p.69). They lack a subjective identity, an 'I' as means of loving the self. Their 'I', their position in culture, is not as female divine-subject, equal but different from the male divine-subject, but as abject object, restricted to and imprisoned within the purely material-maternal realm, as Irigaray has contended in

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<sup>86</sup>Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, (London: The Athlone Press), pp. 68-9.

her theoretical works. The devastating result for women of this lack of a 'bridge' to the transcendental is that they are prevented from coming to a love of self.<sup>87</sup> Irigaray analyses this concept of self-love as the creation of a double relationship within the self involving a 'kind of play between active and passive' which is related to *eros* and *agape* (*Ethics*, p.60). Male love of self, insofar as it is successfully achieved, occurs as a result of this double and reciprocal relationship between active and passive, or between interior and exterior; a love of self mediated externally by the body, specifically the male sex organ, the phallus. For a woman, achieving self-love is not only inhibited by a lack of subjective identity in culture, and by her subservience to man's self-love, but also by her inability to externalize her interiority, to express and circumscribe her desire via her bodily self. She cannot 'watch herself desiring' as a man can (*Ethics*, p.63). As a result:

[she lacks] the power to clothe herself ... in something that would speak her jouissance, her sexuate body, and would offer her the clothing and protection *outside* of that home which she is *inside*. Tradition places her within the home, sheltered in the home. But that home ... places her in internal exile (*Ethics* p.65).

In other words, she has no means of sublimating her desire. The description Irigaray gives of a potential female transcendental bears a striking resemblance to the Binah-Shekhinah/mother-daughter genealogy of the Kabbalah. The representation and recognition in culture of this fundamental relationship is vital, according to Irigaray, if women are to accede to cultural autonomy, and if men and male culture, in turn, are to benefit from her necessary creativity. Both Irigaray and El Saffar argue that this relationship has been relegated to taboo-status in our present (patriarchal) economy, and that it must be urgently brought to light and given its due status: 'Wholeness [both personal and collective] ... comes out of a return to the psychological conditions of

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<sup>87</sup>Luce Irigaray, 'Love of Self' in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, (London: The Athlone Press), pp. 59-71. Irigaray identifies three requirements for a female love of self: 'detachment from what is, from the situation in which woman has traditionally been placed; love for the child that she once was, that she still is, and a shared enveloping of the child by the mother and of the mother by the child; [and] an openness, *in addition* to that mutual love, which allows access to difference' (p. 69).

infant dependency, and a correlative re-membling of the mother fragmented by culture' (El Saffar, *Rapture Encaged*, p.99). The tradition of the Kabbalah suggests that a female genealogy has, in fact, a long and vibrant history.

### Shekhinah as Embodied Language

The concrete (symbolic) forms of the symbolic coupling of Tifreth (Logos) and Shekhinah (Wisdom or Sophia) are the scroll (written Torah) and the collections of Talmudic traditions (oral Torah), as well as the body symbolism, according to which the former is the heart and the latter the mouth. Similarly, the treasury and the lamp of oral Torah are related to the Shekhinah (*Symbolism*, p. 48). In the imagery of the fiery organism that burned before God in black fire on white fire, the written Torah is the white fire — like paper on which the form of the letters is not yet explicit, and the oral Torah is the black fire 'like ink on the parchment' which forms the consonants and vowels (*Symbolism*, p. 48). The identification of the Oral Torah with the Shekhinah is clear from the description in which the written Torah, no longer formless and concealed in the white light, is given shape by the black light which 'determines and limits', in other words expresses, the attribute of divine severity and judgment (*Symbolism*, p. 50). The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil symbolizes the Oral Torah as 'the modalities of the Torah's application in the earthly world' (*Symbolism*, p. 68), in contradistinction to the written Torah as an absolute:

It is the tradition [i.e. Oral Torah] which first makes the Torah accessible to the human understanding ... the Written Torah alone, without the tradition, which is the Oral Torah, would be open to all sorts of heretical misinterpretations (*Symbolism*, p.68).

Scholem links this principle of the Torah as a living organism with the theory of the infinite meanings of the Torah. First, it was the Spanish kabbalists, and particularly the author of the *Zohar* (Moses de León), who gave a mystical interpretation to the originally Islamic concepts of the inward (philosophical) and outward (literal) meaning of the sacred texts, so that in the *Zohar*, the Torah is said to be 'at once

hidden and manifest, esoteric and exoteric' (*Symbolism*, p. 51). Moreover, with the principle of mirroring and correspondence at the heart of kabbalistic speculation, this duality was extended to embrace the whole of existence and every constituent part of it. The strong resemblance between the Zoharic doctrine of the Torah with its different levels of meaning and the older Christian Medieval theory of the fourfold meaning of the Bible historically links both branches back to their roots in Philo of Alexandria, and the notion of an inward and outward meaning. But the kabbalists' mystical view of the inner level meant that, while orthodox Jewish philosophers saw the inner meaning in terms of philosophical allegory, kabbalistic exegesis was strictly symbolic:

What Kabbalists looked for in the Bible was not primarily philosophical ideas, but a symbolic description of the hidden process of divine life, as it unfolds in the manifestations and emanations of the sefiroth (*Symbolism*, p. 52).

As a result, the inward or esoteric itself acquired two different levels: the allegorical or philosophical, and the symbolic or mystical. There was already talk of three levels of interpretation: 'literal, Aggadic, and philosophico-allegorical', and the Kabbalists added a fourth, that of the theosophical mystery of the hidden process of divine life — in the *Zohar* referred to as 'understanding according to "the mystery of faith"' — so that the theory of the fourfold meaning found its most significant development in the *Zohar* (*Symbolism*, pp. 53-54). The most pervasive symbol of the four levels is the 'nut' with its outer shell or 'husk' and 'two finer inward coverings which protected the kernel', whereby each word of the Torah has four levels: outward fact, midrash, haggadah (tropic or allegorical), and mystery (*sod*), each level being progressively more penetrating. The author of the *Zohar* uses this metaphor in multifarious ways to describe variously the meaning of the Torah, of the *merkabah*, as well as the demonic



realms which surround it, while the mystics themselves are described as those who have 'penetrated to the kernel' (*Symbolism*, p. 54).<sup>88</sup>

This doctrine of the fourfold meaning of the Torah is most elaborately and sensuously explained in the erotic language of medieval chivalry in the following *locus classicus* from the *Zohar* (*Symbolism*, p. 54):

Verily the Torah lets out a word and emerges a little from her sheath, and then hides herself again. But she does this only for those who know and obey her. For the Torah resembles a beautiful and stately damsel, who is hidden in a secluded chamber of her palace and who has a secret lover, unknown to all others. For love of her he keeps passing the gate of her house, looking this way and that in search of her. She knows that her lover haunts the gate of her house. What does she do? She opens the door of her hidden chamber ever so little, and for a moment reveals her face to her lover, but hides it again forthwith. Were anyone with her lover, he would see nothing and perceive nothing. He alone sees it and he is drawn to her with his heart and soul and his whole being, and he knows that for love of him she disclosed herself to him for one moment, aflame with love for him. So it is with the word of the Torah, which reveals herself only to those who love her. The Torah knows that the mystic [*hakim libba*, literally 'the wise of heart'] haunts the gate of her house. What does she do? From within her hidden palace she discloses her face and beckons to him and returns forthwith to her palace and hides. Those who are there see nothing and know nothing, only he alone, and he is drawn to her with his heart and soul and his whole being. Thus the Torah reveals herself and hides, and goes out in love to her lover and arouses love in him. Come and see: this is the way of the Torah. At first, when she wishes to reveal herself to a man, she gives him a momentary sign. If he understands, well and good; if not, she sends to him and calls him a simpleton. To the messenger she sends to him the Torah says: tell the simpleton to come here that I may speak to him. As it is written [Prov.9:47]: 'Whoso is simple let him turn in hither, she saith to him that wanteth understanding.' When he comes to her, she begins from

<sup>88</sup>This kabbalistic imagery of the 'nut and 'husk' is used by St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa. See Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala*, p.160.

behind a curtain to speak words in keeping with his understanding, until very slowly insight comes to him, and this is called *derushah*.... Then through a light veil she speaks allegorical words and that is what is meant by *haggadah*. Only then, when he has become familiar with her, does she reveal herself to him face to face and speak to him of all her hidden secrets and all her hidden ways, which have been in her heart from the beginning. Such a man is then termed perfect, a 'master', that is to say, a 'bridegroom of the Torah' in the strictest sense, the master of the house, to whom she discloses all her secrets, concealing nothing. She says to him: do you see now how many mysteries were contained in that sign I gave you on the first day, and what its true meaning is? Then he understands that to those words indeed nothing may be added and nothing taken away. And then for the first time he understands the true meaning of the words of the Torah, as they stand there, those words to which not a syllable or a letter may be added and from which none may be taken away. And therefore men should take care to pursue the Torah [that is, study it with great precision], in order to become her lovers as has been related [Zohar, II, 99a-b S56].

It is important to remember that the literal or simple meaning is preserved in the mystical interpretation or transfiguration. It remains, but has been made transparent by the mystical light shining through it. In another passage of the *Zohar* (III, 202a), in which the levels of meaning are depicted as parts of the organism of the Torah, which is the Tree of Life (*Symbolism*, p. 56), a further — fifth — level is added to 'combining and separating the letters...composing whole motifs of separate groups, combining several of them with one another and enjoying their combinations in every direction'.<sup>89</sup> Probably the best known technique of textual manipulation derived from Kabbalism, namely *gematria*, or the interpretation through the numerical value of the Hebrew letters, had, until this point never been considered an independent level of meaning.<sup>90</sup> Further development of these ideas by Moses de León came in the form

<sup>89</sup>G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends*, p.134, where he discusses Abraham Abulafia's kabbalistic manuals, including 'The Words of Beauty' and 'The Book of Combination'.

<sup>90</sup>The stylised patterning of letter-play into the 3 forms of *gematria* (numerical operations), *temurah* (anagrams), and *notorikon* (acrostics), which 'are popularly supposed to represent the heart and core of Kabbalism ... as a matter of historical fact ... played a very minor part' (Scholem, *Major Trends*, p.100). Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism*, p.46, refers to these

of a lost work written shortly after completion of the main part of the *Zohar* whose title, *Pardes*, meaning literally 'paradise', is based on a pun, whereby the four consonants of PaRDeS refer to the (names of the) four levels of meaning: literal, allegorical, Talmudic/Aggadic, and mystical. The term itself, 'highly suggestive' and 'rich in shades of meaning', is seen as a cipher for the four levels and, together with the symbol of the nut, has been the object of long and intense speculation (*Symbolism*, p.57). The anonymous author — thought to be a student of Moses de León — of the *Tikkune Zohar*, which is not the main part, gives further twists and names to the descriptions of the levels, including the fourth which is described as the 'Euphrates, the innermost kernel, the marrow whence flows the seed of life ... in other words, [it] discovers and develops ever new mysteries' (*Symbolism*, p.58). In another work by Moses de León, presumed author of the main part of the *Zohar*, the latter connects the idea of the four ways of the *pardes* with the principle of the Torah as the name of God, all of which contain and refer in a mystical sense to eternal life (*Symbolism*, p.59).<sup>91</sup>

Shekhinah's role is to mediate between the transcendent and the immanent realms, between the divine and the earthly. It is clear that this mediation takes place through and in language.<sup>92</sup> She speaks the God-bearing *logos*; she is the *logos*-bearing voice of the immanent God. She bridges the gap and gives us access, through her, to the divine realm, and this bridge is a sensuous, linguistic one. The Shekhinah's distinctly female voice is the medium through which God — in his transcendency

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techniques as 'a kind of parody' of kabbalistic poetic sensitivity to language. Nonetheless, their popularity after the fourteenth century attests to kabbalistic influence on expressive playfulness with the sound and look of language, as does their pervasive use in *La Pícaro Justina* (e.g. the anagram of 'Tamar', referring, *inter alia*, to the hermaphroditic symbol of the palm tree, pp.292-93; and the *notorikon* on p.551). Cf. José C. Nieto, *El Renacimiento y la Otra España*, pp.577-78.

<sup>91</sup>The existence of a historical connection between the kabbalistic doctrine of the *pardes* and the very similar medieval Christian theory of the four levels of meaning: history, allegory, tropology (moral homiletics), and anagogy (eschatological interpretation of Scripture) seems likely, according to Scholem, in view of the simultaneous appearance of such ideas in the works of three kabbalistic authors all living in Christian Spain. Scholem notes that Pico della Mirandola, the first Christian humanist to concern himself in depth with the Kabbalah, drew attention to this parallel. (Scholem, *Symbolism*, pp. 61-62). For an illuminating discussion of the theory of the four levels of meaning, centred on Dante's *Convivio*, see Umberto Eco, 'Overinterpreting Texts', in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. by Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp.45-66 (pp.52-53).

<sup>92</sup>In Cabala the divine act of creation ... is itself a linguistic activity'. Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala*, p.87.

conceived of as male — may be apprehended here and now, and therefore necessarily in human terms. Moreover, since we are a reflection of the divine realm, Shekhinah mediates in-and-through language between two aspects of our being, between who we are and who we (ideally) desire to become; or, put another way, between our selves as products of a particular socio-cultural milieu, and our 'other' selves as spiritual beings, co-eternal with God.

The tendency in kabbalistic doctrine for an idea to take on a multiplicity of forms or formulations, for example in the case of the fourfold meaning of the Torah, is evident, too, in another traditional concept that was given prominence in the *Zohar*, namely the notion that every word, in fact every letter, has seventy faces. The number seventy is related to the traditional number of the nations that inhabit the earth, each speaking a separate language. Accordingly, the commandments which issued from God's mouth did so in all seventy languages. In true kabbalistic style, the 'aspects' or 'faces' become 'languages' which in the *Zohar*, in turn, become the 'lights' which shine in every word. The validity of the names derives (to some extent) from *gematria*, whereby the numerical values of the alphabetical letters are computed. In this way, the (finite) numbers themselves are symbols of the irreducible infinity of meanings that the concrete numbers gesture towards. The paradoxical and irrational correspondences that the use of *gematria* produces — for example the Hebrew word for 'light' is thus equivalent to 'mystery' — are appropriate in the context of the search for knowledge of God; a context in which (male) 'reason' or 'logic', in the strict sense, have little place, and where (female) paradox and incongruence are at the heart of the matter. But the irrational identification between two terms, here light and mystery, only seems irrational at first sight, or, kabbalistically-speaking, on a literal level. Further study or 'contemplation' of the terms reveals a deeper correspondence which is brought to light by the kabbalist. Thus, for example, the mysteries at the heart of the *Zohar* are said to be 'shrouded in the literal meaning', or darkness, which are then brought to light by the discovery of the mystical level (*Symbolism*, p.63). Most

interesting of all for the purposes of this study is the identity which is unambiguously drawn between the Shekhinah and 'the Torah in its total manifestations, embracing all its meanings and levels of meaning'.<sup>93</sup> She is 'the paradise of the Torah' and she is represented in the nut motif: 'The shekhinah in exile is called *pardes* — because it is clothed as it were in the four levels of meaning, but itself is the innermost kernel' (*Symbolism*, p.58). Bearing in mind that the whole is more than the sum of its constituent parts, the Shekhinah, is the four levels of meaning in which she is said to be veiled, or clothed. But she is more: she is, in addition, the inner kernel. In other words, she, as a totality, constitutes a fifth substance which we might justifiably call the 'quintessence'.<sup>94</sup> This quintessence, so conceived, has an affinity with the so-called fifth level of *gematria*, mentioned above, and significantly to Reuchlin's influential doctrine of the 'wonder-working word' ([IHSUH] [Pentagrammaton]). The great Christian Hebraist Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522),<sup>95</sup> the most important follower of Pico and reputedly one of the founders of German humanism, was the first non-Jew to publish on the Kabbalah. The subject of his first work *De Verbo Mirifico*<sup>96</sup> (*On the Wonder-working Name*, 1494) was to draw explicitly the implication of the quintessence and to argue that in the third of the three periods (the period of grace and redemption) into which human history can be divided, God revealed Himself through five letters, namely the Tetragrammaton YHVH with the addition of the letter 'S' (*shin*) signifying the Logos, and spelling Jesus, the once unspeakable but now pronounceable name YHSVH.<sup>97</sup> Reuchlin's Socratic disputant in *De Verbo* elaborates at length on the powerful symbolism of the additional letter S to form the 'one sacred

<sup>93</sup>By the author of the *Tikkune Zohar* [Zohar, I, 26b]. (cited in Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, p.58).

<sup>94</sup>In classical and medieval philosophy, a fifth substance in addition to the four elements, thought to compose the celestial bodies and to be latent in all things', *NSOED*, p. 2452. Significantly, Justina identifies herself with the quintessence (indeed 'tenthessence') when giving an account of how she got her name: 'Pero llamáronme Justina porque yo había de mantener la justa de la picardía, y Díez, porque soy la décima esencia de todos ellos, cuanto y más la quinta.' (173) ('But they called me Justina because I had to umpire the picaresque joust, and Ten, because I am the tenth essence of all of them [i.e. her forefathers], let alone the fifth.')

<sup>95</sup>See C. Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala*, pp. 15-18, for a useful summary of Reuchlin's contribution.

<sup>96</sup>Cf. Charles Zika, 'Reuchlin's *De Verbo Mirifico* and the Magic Debate of the Late Fifteenth Century', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 39 (1976), 104-138.

<sup>97</sup>Cf. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, (Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971), X, pp.490-654, 644.

name IHSUH [in which] is located the power and strength of all'.<sup>98</sup> Accordingly, it is not only the instrument of [com]union between man and God, but is the means by which man performs and produces wondrous and superhuman works in the world, in other words 'human sharing in divine power' (Zika, p.11). Moreover, Love is the bond by which man is joined to God, and the process of linkings is compared to the procession of numbers [or Sefirot]:

In the same way as number begins with infinite unity, creates finite number both in evenness and unevenness, and gradually penetrates the whole numerical kingdom, so the architect of the universe passes from his infinitude to individual things and men *through the medium of the word* (Zika, p.111; my emphasis).

'That in which nature chiefly practises magic, is the voice of God' (Zika, p.124). Pico's detractors refuted his claim that words have power because they are formed by God's voice — on the grounds that God had no instrument. To know this Tetragrammaton was to know not only the characters and the word, but also its pronunciation whose occult virtue, hidden in the name, is analogous to the occult virtues within things (Zika, p.127). So, 'Man, by making use of the divine Tetragrammaton, is only imitating God's own pronunciation, a power endowed by God and made available to man through language' (Zika, pp. 127-28), with the result that:

...In this way, therefore, he has been placed in the more fortunate place of mediation, so that he loves those things which are below him, and is loved by those above (Zika, p.130).

Following Pico, Reuchlin passes in to the area of 'mystical philology' in the style of Kabbalistic speculation:

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<sup>98</sup>Charles Zika, 'Reuchlin's *De Verbo Mirifico* and the Magic Debate of the Late Fifteenth Century', p. 106.

When the Word descended into flesh, then the letters passed into voice. As we know from the Old Testament, he continues, God is formless spirit (breath), and so it is appropriate that he be expressed by four vowels. But with the incarnation of that spirit a consonant (sin or shin = s) is added, forming the Pentagrammaton IHSUH and making these vowels pronounceable. This *shin* is a many-faceted symbol. It represents the fire which God would bring on earth (the letter 's' when pronounced, i.e. 'es', means 'fire' in Hebrew); it symbolizes the pronunciation of human speech (the consonants 'sn' in Hebrew can be read 'teeth', the means of articulation according to Jerome); it expresses the seventh age of the world in which Jesus becomes head of the Church, and the mediator between God and man (shin is within the seventh group of three letters of the Hebrew alphabet – res, sin, tau – which when translated, read: *shin* designates the head); finally, by means of a more complicated exegesis, the *shin* represents the oil (semen) of the divine lamp, which brings the lamp out of darkness by joining it to fire – a mystical explanation of the revelation of the divinity through the Incarnation (Zika, pp. 131-32).<sup>99</sup>

Reminiscent of this imitation of God's (i.e. Shekhinah's) pronunciation of the Word, is Irigaray's advocacy of the rhetorical strategy of tactical mimesis or mimicry which is aimed at producing difference. According to this device, the would-be female subject of discourse deliberately, that is consciously, adopts — particularly in her choice of language — the role assigned to her in culture, that of man-made woman. The very act of deliberately assuming this function already reduces the risk of her being unwittingly defined by and reduced to this quasi pseudo-identity, for in raising her condition-in-culture to a conscious level she exposes it and simultaneously disarms it as a means of repressing her. Since the essence of any ideological system, according to Irigaray, is that it needs to remain hidden in order to be effective (its power resides in its ability to appear to constitute an absolute, a universal truth, and therefore seeming to be unchangeable), to expose a particular ideological bias or tendency is

<sup>99</sup>According to Zika (p.132-33; fn.92), Reuchlin does not discuss the Hebrew spelling of the name of Jesus in any detail in the *De Verbo*. But as part of a genealogy of Mary to be found in his later work *De Rudimentis Hebraicis* (Pforzheim 1506, fol.31) — meant to serve as an exercise in the syllabic pronunciation of Hebrew names — Reuchlin spells it and transliterates this as *Ihesuh*. He refers to this name as the Pentagrammaton of which he wrote in an earlier work.

inevitably to destabilize it and weaken its power to dominate and repress. Such is the intentioned effectiveness of tactical mimicry. In exposing her pseudo-identity in culture by means of tactical mimicry, the would-be female subject of discourse simultaneously creates a space for an other (new) identity, this time defined by her.

This ironic deployment of established symbolism and language is very close to the style of the *Zohar*, which starts from the master discourse (Written Torah) and gives it a kabbalistic twist (Oral Torah). 'In its attitude toward allegory the *Zohar* preserved all the aristocratic esotericism of the rationalist philosophers' (*Symbolism*, p.60). In the *Midrash ha-Ne'elem*, for example, the author, in the spirit of the philosophers, justifies the crude figurative mode of expression employed by the rabbis in interpreting a well-known Aggadah (Legend), claiming that 'the popular faith should not be destroyed, but should on the contrary be reinforced' (*Zohar*, 1,135b-136a). However, as Scholem indicates in a footnote, the ironical stance of the speaker is expressed in the term used for popular faith (*mehemanuta dekola*), which elsewhere in the *Zohar* is employed in a mystical sense to mean not 'what all believe,' but 'the world-permeating power of faith, the system of the sefirot' (*Symbolism*, pp. 60-1). So it seems that, for the kabbalists, it was important to break down the elitest nature of mystical experience, and express the idea that, for the kabbalists, the mystical experience is open to all; for it is nothing other than a sense or knowledge of the living God, as symbolized, for example, in the traditional biblical stories which formed the backbone of popular faith. One way of doing this for the kabbalists was to appropriate, or imitate, authoritative discourse and, through their ironic use of language, make these associations and identities — here, popular faith with the mystery of the immanent God (with Shekhinah) as expressed in the sefirotic system — palpable.

The position of Shekhinah in-between the earthly and the divine parallels that of woman in culture, in Irigaray's account. An essentially, and therefore authentically, female voice will inevitably express a uniquely female perspective which will speak her condition in culture while simultaneously transcending (merely socio-cultural)



parameters. Its authenticity, the ring of truth that such a voice evinces, derives from that very condition of being 'in-between'; in between, that is, what we could call man-made woman and self-made woman; in-between the culturally-gendered feminine and the authentically female. Her position or condition derives from having two identities: one stamped on her by her cultural inheritance, the other a new self-made ego-identity which is of her own making. She finds herself caught between the two, for it is vis-à-vis her cultural position that she must (re)define herself. It is the cultural matrix in which she finds herself that she must challenge, and in doing so redefine herself ('inscribe' herself) and her identity more effectively and authoritatively in the cultural imaginary and its modes of exchange. It is from these cultural shackles, from the self-restricting confines of her cultural identity — or, rather, cultural lack of identity — that she must free herself. Clearly, her creation of her own identity as woman, her speaking-as-woman in the fullest sense of being more than what the cultural environment restricts her to, if it is to have the ring of authority, of something approaching truth, must be made from the real position in which she finds herself — namely from within the comparatively narrow confines of her actual position in a patriarchal culture. This is her starting-point, this is the beginning of her story, of a process of growing self-awareness in her, of becoming, and coming to know herself. Her goal is to articulate Irigaray's 'other of the other' as distinct from the 'other of the same'; an essentially-female identity that is the other pole of an authentically male principle, as opposed to an inauthentic, 'unreal' female image that is merely a reflection and projection of the male subject's reductive gaze, and a function of his inability to see the other — woman — as equally valuable in her own right and not simply an extension of his own subjective consciousness.<sup>100</sup> The articulation of a distinctly-female voice not only enables the location of the culturally-determined feminine and, therefore, by implication, the culturally-determined masculine, it also gives tongue to the material feminine: a 'real' woman's voice, irreducible and authentic

<sup>100</sup>Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.171; 'Questions to Emmanuel Levinas' in *The Irigaray Reader*, pp.178-189. See, too, 'The Other: Woman' in *I love to you: Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History*, trans. by Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp.59-68.

because biologically female-gendered. (This would be what Irigaray calls the female, as opposed to the culturally-determined 'feminine'.) Just as Shekhinah is the embodiment, specifically the embodied voice, of the immanent God, Irigaray's 'other woman' inscribes herself (like Justina and several of Goethe's female characters in *Wilhelm Meister*),<sup>101</sup> inserts herself into existing (male) discourse. The rhetorical emphasis on material Woman's need to embed herself in patriarchal discourse if her voice is to be heard, is conveyed by Irigaray's use of the verb 'inscribe' to explain the act of material woman's self-entry into discourse. It suggests both the written linguistic medium used, with all the authority and durability that this implies, as well as the need to infiltrate *into* an already existing (apparently universal) discursive economy, involving all the skill and tact that such an act necessitates if it is to be successfully executed. It also implies the need to penetrate to the heart or centre of that discourse, as opposed to merely taking up a marginal position. Thus the fluid nature of the female voice penetrates the male discursive economy and infuses the ailing organism with its healing properties. The appropriation here by the female voice of an act which is culturally gendered male, that of 'entry into' or 'penetration', could itself be seen as a tactical assumption by material woman of an activity which otherwise does not belong in her cultural domain. Her tactics clearly involve deliberately imitating mastery, but this is done indirectly, subversively from within, thereby astutely overcoming the defensive structure built to resist any overt attempt to dismantle it.

The Shekhinah, as 'all-embracing symbol of the animation of the concealed divine life' (*Mystical Shape*, p.180), is identified with the mystical theory (and practice) of language which is at the heart of Kabbalistic doctrine — with, as Harold

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<sup>101</sup>Examples of women's meaning being embodied in language rather than simply designated by it are discussed in respect of *Wilhelm Meister* in Chapter IV and in respect of *La Pícara Justina* in Chapter VI. Perhaps the most striking example in *Wilhelm Meister* is Mignon's strangely effective use of imperfect German which, in its undecidability, nonetheless conveys the impression of immense import (e.g. H.A. 7, p.110) — a 'deformation' of normal usage that is also striking in *La Pícara Justina*, where the playfulness characteristic of *conceptismo* style is used to serious expressive purpose (e.g., p.605).

Bloom puts it, 'a theory of rhetoric', a 'theory of writing' that denies 'the absolute distinction between writing and inspired speech':<sup>102</sup>

The divine 'word', in its development and individuation from innermost thought to verbal articulation is, for the Kabbalist, the medium by which the divine energy operates. Indeed, the world of divine potencies is symbolically expressed, above all, in the world of language (*Mystical Shape*, p.181).

It is said that the world was created by means of ten 'words' or *logoi* and the doctrine of the ten Sefirot made these ten words into 'semi-independent, creative primal words in which all active energy was concentrated' and which together formed the one divine word, or name of God, that is 'present in all that is real, and resides within all things as a perpetual or renewing force' (*Mystical Shape*, pp.180-81). Interpreting the first verse of the Torah where divine speech is mentioned for the first time, Genesis 1:3, the *Zohar* uses the mother symbolism of the upper (active) Shekhinah:

Hitherto, everything hung in the air, in the secret of *Ein-Sof*. But as soon as the energy permeated the Upper palace [the womb of the upper mother *Binah*], which has the secret name *Elohim*, speech is mentioned: 'and Elohim spoke' — for the term 'speaking' is not previously employed. Even though the first word of the Torah, *Bereshith* ('in the beginning') is a *logos*, it does not say there 'and He spoke'. 'He spoke' indicates the level where He asked and wished to know. 'He spoke' — a separate potency; this separation was done covertly, through the mystery of *Ein-Sof* within the mystery of divine thought [of the beginning of Creation]. 'And God spoke' — now that 'Palace' [i.e., the upper *Shekhinah*] gave birth, impregnated by the holy seed, and it gave birth in secret, that it not be heard at all. Once it was born, a voice [the Daughter's voice] is heard that is audible on the outside (*Zohar*, I, 16b). (cited in *Mystical Shape*, p.181).

In other words, *Binah*, the upper *Shekhinah*, speaks as part of the process of emanation or Creation, and [in] that act of speaking gives birth to God's creative

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<sup>102</sup>Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism*, pp.18 and 52.

energy, which, in turn, through a direct (female) line, passes down to the receptive vessel which is the lower Shekhinah, in whom 'this force ... is gathered and concentrated [and who] carries it down in the form of the living divine "word" that permeates and vivifies all of the worlds that are outside of the Godhead' (*Mystical Shape*, p.181). To underline the significance of this crucial link between the *sound* of language and the force of creation,<sup>103</sup> the Shekhinah is further identified by thirteenth-century Kabbalists with the *memra*, the paraphrase used in the Targumim (the Aramaic Bible translations) to refer to God's word. No mere linguistic device, but a matter of theological significance in its own right, Scholem (quoting Abelson) emphasises that the *memra*, like the *Shekhinah* is 'a world-permeating force, a reality in the world of matter or mind, the immanent aspect of God, holding all things under its omnipresent sway' (*Mystical Shape*, p.182). In the Kabbalah we are told that language, as heard and seen, is the medium of the self-revealing God (i.e., Shekhinah) of emanation, a revelation in and through language that mirrors our human process of self-discovery. The manipulation of language, therefore, constitutes Shekhinah's self-manifesting style, the expression of a uniquely and irreducibly female *langage* in Irigaray's terms. Her aim is to counter, in and by her use of language, a cultural (i.e., male, orthodox) view of her that is reductive, that literally does not do her justice. She aims to overcome male ideology that seeks to define her merely as abstract goddess, to belittle and reduce her to her 'real' (i.e. actual, but only partial) socio-cultural identification with the inferior sex, and object of the male subject's imaginary, rather than her truly 'real' (i.e. noble-divine) identity-as-woman in the widest sense of encompassing her full female divine-human potential.

#### Stylistic Strategies of the Female Voice

The main strategy recommended to enable Irigaray's self-made woman (and the Shekhinah's female voice) to inscribe herself in male discourse is twofold: to

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<sup>103</sup>C. Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala*, p.131: 'sound is a vital force of Creation [in the Kabbalah]'; indeed hearing or seeing kabbalistic language is considered 'good for the soul even if one did not understand it' (p.169).

intervene, and to re-code, patriarchal mythology, thereby exposing its hidden bias, its subconscious rationale, its actual suppression of the female. Irigaray identifies the use of double syntax as an example of a helpful linguistic tactic or stylistic device to articulate the way in which subject and object are not locked in a static syntax, but rather are interchangeable. Such a device expresses the need to free 'normal' use of language from its static, inherently male-biased, mode of syntax where subject and object appear locked in a fixed relationship that apparently constitutes a universal truth. The free interplay between subject and object that Irigaray proposes envisages a possible equity in terms of the value ascribed to each.<sup>104</sup> Linked to this stylistic device of indicating the two-way dialogue between male and female, between speaker and reader, is Irigaray's concept of amorous exchange as a model for a relationship between equal partners in a loving and creative, as well as procreative, reciprocity. Kabbalistically-speaking, the double syntax of Irigaray's theory corresponds to a similar emphasis on the absolute value of the reciprocal relationship, intrinsic to mystical language, between two different, and ultimately incommensurate poles, which, nevertheless, engage in a relationship of mutual respect and creative cooperation ('syzygy'), namely that between the divine and the human sphere, or, in mirroring mode, the relationship between male and female, or between existential and essential self. In this relationship of creative free-play, the equal value of both poles or principles is continually being re-emphasised anew. This attempt to mobilize static distinctions, and make a space for creative 'exchange' between two otherwise separate and distinct entities, extends — in both Irigaray's theory and the Kabbalistic system — to all aspects of cultural life. The female voice in this way inscribes herself as an (epistemological) subject in her own right, equal to and challenging the male voice of patriarchal discourse from within that discourse. The Shekhinah's status within the kabbalistic conception of the deity is that of the phenomenal voice of the living non-

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<sup>104</sup>An example of what Irigaray seems to have in mind would be the syntactic ambiguity of the famous line from Goethe's sonnet, 'Natur und Kunst' in which either *Freiheit* ('freedom') or *Gesetz* ('law') may be construed as subject or object: 'und das Gesetz nur kann uns Freiheit geben' ('And only Law can give us Freedom').

phenomenal God, and hence an all-knowing subject of the predicate who speaks and reveals herself.

Scholars have drawn attention to the dominant role of the language of sexual love in kabbalistic literature, by means of which the sexual act itself becomes a key to, or symbol of, the mysterious intradivine relations.<sup>105</sup> This is particularly true in the *Zohar*, which is characterised by its marked emphasis on sexual imagery. The Zoharic system of the sefirot envisages the Tree of Life itself as the phallus, represented by Yesod<sup>106</sup> (or Tsaddik, 'The Righteous One'), whose relationship with Shekhinah is described in images of a sexual union, whereby the procreative male power, or river of life, flows — via the sexually nuanced *shefa*, influx or inflow — into the female Shekhinah, and harmony prevails. When this harmony is disturbed, 'the attribute of Tsaddik (Phallus) is gathered into itself and withdraws high above; then all the channels and streams drawing down cease, and the attribute of Adonai (Shekhinah) remains as a dry and empty earth and lack in everything' (*Mystical Shape*, p.112). In respect of the *Zohar's* elaborate portrayal and concentration on the lower realms of the sefirotic tree, Scholem notes that the symbols of the Source of Life and Tree of Life respectively — normally corresponding to the (upper) Binah and Tifereth — are in the *Zohar* linked to the lower sefirot of Malkuth and Yesod (*Mystical Shape*, p.103). The preservation of Creation, a process distinct from its genesis, and brought about by the *shefa*, or inflow from above that animates the otherwise passive creatures, flows into all created beings from the ninth and tenth Sefiroth, and pre-eminently from their union (*Mystical Shape*, p.109). The *Zohar* in this way emphasises 'the dialectical relationship of mutuality and magical rapport' between the active Godhead and all created things:

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<sup>105</sup>See Karen Guberman, 'The Language of Love in Spanish Kabbalah: An Examination of the *Iggeret ha-Kodesh*', in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, pp. 53-105. In her study of the kabbalistic marriage manual, Guberman provides a detailed analysis of the organizing principle of resemblance in the relationship between human and divine language and behaviour.

<sup>106</sup>According to Scholem, 'the metaphor of the phallus as a mediator in the center of the human body originates in *Sefer ha-Yetsirah* (I,3;II,1)' (*Mystical Shape*, p.97).

But the quintessential symbol of this rapport is the union of 'saddik [Yesod] and Shekhinah, based upon the arousal of procreativity in sexual union between male and female (*Mystical Shape*, p.111).

The notion of a coming together of male and female in the celestial realm through the absorption of (female) Shekhinah back into the upper (male) realm is, however, only hinted at in the earlier works, and never approaches the 'extravagant sexual symbolism' which is the hallmark of the *Zohar* (*Mystical Shape*, p.170). She is, as ever, the 'celestial Donna', 'Woman of Light', the eternal feminine 'in whose mystery are rooted all the females in the earthly world';<sup>107</sup> but her most important role and function is as the freely negotiating female partner in the divine marriage, where the union of male and female symbolizes the unity of divine potencies and the fulfilment of cosmic harmony. Within the structure of the sefirotic framework, the male is conceived of either as Tifereth (sixth and central sefirah) or Yesod (ninth sefirah into which all the higher Sefiroth flow, constituting the phallus of the supernal man), and the female as Malkhut (tenth and final sefirah). The union between Tifereth and Malkhut is described in more abstract terms as the marriage of king and queen, while that of Yesod and Malkhut is clearly defined as the 'supernal archetype of earthly sexual union, and is uninhibitedly depicted in such terms' (*Mystical Shape*, p 183).

In his comparative study of the way in which Christian and Jewish-kabbalistic mysticisms have dealt with the tension between sacred and profane love,<sup>108</sup> Bernard McGinn addresses the widespread notion that the impassioned outpourings of Christian mystics in articulating their experience of God are nothing other than sublimated expressions of sexual desire. He draws directly on Georges Bataille's study of eroticism and mysticism<sup>109</sup> and commends Bataille for distancing himself from those psychologists who give a purely sexual reading to mystical experience

<sup>107</sup>*Zohar* I, 228b; cf. also II, 101a and III, 24a. Cited in *Mystical Shape*, p.182.

<sup>108</sup>Bernard McGinn, 'The Language of Love in Christian and Jewish Mysticism', in *Mysticism and Language*, ed. by Steven T. Katz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 202-235.

<sup>109</sup>Georges Bataille, *Death and Sensuality: A Study of Eroticism and the Taboo* (Salem, Mass., 1984). Bataille is described by McGinn as unusual among twentieth-century thinkers in the serious attention he gives to the relation between eroticism and mysticism (McGinn, p.202).

(McGinn, p.223). The mystical approach to the language of eros held that the 'most sublime function of human eros and the language that represents it is to serve as a privileged symbol, a way of revealing this hidden higher reality' (McGinn, pp. 210-11):

The language of love ... [is] a tool in the delicate game of creating strategies for allowing us to speak of what lies outside the normal canons of speech (McGinn, p. 226).

In Zoharic Kabbalah the human lover retains his male character while the Divine Beloved, the Shekhinah, is female. According to McGinn, this contrasts starkly with Christian mysticism which has generally resisted attempts to describe the inner divine workings in clear, explicit sexual terms and imagery, although the Holy Spirit has been spoken of as a 'Kiss' or referred to as female by some medieval and early Christians (McGinn, p.222):

Christian mystics usually spoke of God as masculine and the soul as feminine. But there are texts where the reverse is the case. Just as recent study has shown that the traditional Christian language of God as Father has often been complemented by speaking of God or Christ as Mother, there are also examples in the history of Christian mysticism where the Divine Lover is conceived of as feminine.<sup>110</sup>

According to Irving Singer, in criticism of Freud, in *The Nature of Love*, the mystic uses erotic symbols knowing full well that they are erotic in the human sense, but on the basis of a religious commitment that 'everything physical represents something non-physical, transcendent, spiritual' (McGinn, p.224). For Freud it was enough to show how various symbols consciously or unconsciously symbolize sexual

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<sup>110</sup>McGinn, 'The Language of Love', p.222. 'The sapiential books of the Old Testament viewed *Sophia* (*Hokhmah*) as a female emanation from God whom Solomon pursues and weds (Wis. 8:22).' Following his lead, Augustine of Hippo — referred to by McGinn as 'the pillar of orthodoxy' — spoke of Christ as Divine Wisdom (*Sapientia*, a female figure) in a decidedly erotic way in some texts (McGinn, p.222, fn:99).



intercourse; the mystic, as Singer recognizes, asks 'But what does sexual intercourse symbolize?'<sup>111</sup>

A.E. Waite locates the mystery at the heart of the Zoharic Classical Spanish Kabbalah in the realm of the sexual, and he associates this mystery with the archetype of the Shekhinah:<sup>112</sup>

There is a very true sense ... in which it may be said that out of this Mystery all Kabbalism seems to issue and, moreover, goes back therein. ... Like the First Matter of the Great Work in Alchemy, Shekhinah is almost myronymous in respect of her designations, but almost without exception, the ascriptions are feminine' (pp.341-42). She is sister in relation to the world of man at large, she is the architect of worlds, the Eden above, whence the river of life flows forth that waters the Garden below, Divine Womanhood. She is the tutelary guide of humanity (pp.342-44).

This accords with Scholem's comment that the true mystery of the act of procreation as holy, if properly enacted, is explained by the *Zohar* in terms of the sacred marriage in the divine realm (*Mystical Shape*, p.184). Consequently, the improper or unholy sexual act<sup>113</sup> not only abandons the realm of sanctity and enters the realm of the profane, but goes beyond this into the realm of evil and the demonic forces (*Mystical Shape*, p.184). The crucial importance of this central symbol of the sacred marriage is summed up as follows:

The entire dynamics of the Zoharic notion of God is based upon this doctrine, in which the oneness and unity of the divine life are realized

<sup>111</sup> Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love, I: Plato to Luther* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp.182-83. In her *Notebooks*, Simone Weil argues: 'To reproach mystics with loving God by means of the faculty of sexual love is as though one were to reproach a painter with making pictures by means of colours composed of material substances. We haven't anything else with which to love.' (Cited in McGinn, 'The Language of Love', pp. 224-25.)

<sup>112</sup> A.E. Waite, *The Holy Kabbalah* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1929). Book VIII 'The Higher Secret Doctrine' is divided into I. The Mystery of Shekinah and II. The Mystery of Sex, pp.341-408. Cf. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, 'Some Psychological Aspects of the Kabbalah' in *God, The Self and Nothingness: Reflections Eastern and Western*, ed. by R.E. Carter (New York: Paragon House, 1990), pp. 19-36 (p.27): 'To my knowledge Kabbalah is the first system in Western religions to develop a mystical metaphysics of the sexual act'.

<sup>113</sup> Scholem distinguishes between the 'service' of love before God, and the improper 'cult' of love before God, in *Mystical Shape*, p. 298.

in the sacred marriage; under no circumstances can these dynamics be separated from this doctrine. (*Mystical Shape*, p.185)

The sheer number of passages dedicated to this theme and the abundance of erotic imagery and nuance which characterises them is worth noting. It was, it seems, the author of the *Zohar* who 'read the entire text of the Song of Songs as a nuptial hymn of the Godhead itself': 'In the *Zohar* (III, 214b) the stages of union are described as stages of sexual coupling, in a highly naturalistic interpretation of the Song of Songs 2:6' (*Mystical Shape*, p.184), and other biblical verses are described using only thinly veiled sexual symbolism. Indeed, the *Zohar* itself begins with an erotic symbol which pervades the entire work, and that is the pollination of the rose, a symbol for the Shekhinah. The background to the holy coupling symbolism is that, although supernal king and queen are unaffected by human actions it is, since the expulsion from Paradise, 'no longer God's business alone, but is a human concern as well' (*Mystical Shape*, pp.184-85), and therefore the mystical union becomes the object of certain rituals. Moreover, the central image of the 'Exile of the Shekhinah' who accompanies man, appears in parts of the *Zohar* to question whether it was God who expelled Man, or Man who expelled God/Shekhinah, cutting her off from 'constant union with the upper forces' (*Mystical Shape*, p.185), which, channeled through her, flow into the earthly sphere. The central image, then, of the state of the world is one of lack or deficiency which is intimately linked with a lack of harmony between upper and lower spheres as a result of the Shekhinah's rupture from the supernal forces.

Shekhinah's style — her mode of thought embodied in language — is, then, necessarily based on her own sexuate woman's body. Eros is the origin of her bodily style, and erotic love the 'enabling symbol to express union with God' (McGinn, p.227).<sup>114</sup> Like Irigaray's self-made woman, the Shekhinah's articulation of the

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<sup>114</sup>And, as such, a variant on what was to become a poetic convention in the Spanish Golden Age, 'the metaphor of writing as love-making'. See D. Gareth Walters, 'Language, Code and Conceit in *El Vergonzoso en Palacio*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 30 (1994), 239-55 (p.248).

(divine) feminine is fundamentally an exploitation of her body.<sup>115</sup> The apparently negative aspect of the Shekhinah, most emphatic perhaps in her moments of severity, is also mirrored in Irigaray's assertive self-made woman. Irigaray's woman-as-subject must resist the current culture's attempts to silence her by refusing to keep quiet, by ensuring that her voice is distinctly heard, and that it occupies a permanent cultural space; a space that remains open for her, a space-time in which to enact her legal entitlement to speak her real identity in culture. By deliberately assuming the misogynistic male cliché versions of her, designed to muffle her voice — for example the constant accusation that she is as talkative as a parrot — the female subject of discourse positively signifies this characteristic by enacting what Irigaray calls a 'disruptive excess' challenging male logic in the form of the imitatory, repetitive, articulation of woman's position and condition in discourse as a lack, deficiency, or void.<sup>116</sup> The self-made woman adopts a contestatory position challenging the oedipal position which assumes rule. And this challenge is enunciative; in other words it is a vocal utterance. As the voice of Shekhinah, she occupies the site of dynamic enunciation and intercourse. The language of the Kabbalah, of the *Zohar* in particular, like the style recommended by Irigaray, is thus characterized by its explicitly, to many offensive, sexual symbolism, in particular in relation to its most developed attribute, the female Shekhinah, and her relations with her male counterpart in the mystical marriage. Shekhinah's female genealogy, her ongoing relationship with her female line, with her mother, the Upper Shekhinah or Binah, is crucial to the maintenance of her vibrant, healthy, and (pro-) creative role. She must remain in-touch literally; she must preserve her integrity; that is, her contiguity to the mother; she must remain true to her female line. Irigaray's notion of a need for women to have their own genealogy posits the idea of a female genealogy which is created in and through language. Irigaray is not advocating the invention of a new language but

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<sup>115</sup>Irigaray herself points to the Kabbalah as furnishing an example of this symbolism of the body: 'Hebrew culture, or at least the Kabbalah, shows the lips in the form of a double inverted yod, a double inverted tongue' ('The Female Gender', in *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp.105-123 [p. 115]).

<sup>116</sup>Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 78.

rather a skilful manipulation of the only available (male) rhetoric in order to create a new (female) style.<sup>117</sup> In Irigaray's terms, this *parler-femme* would be a 'house of language', a Shekhinah-space, however limited, for a female identity to express itself. In other words, a distinctly female 'I' or ego is envisaged — however tentatively, and however inadequately — as articulating an authentic, distinctly female imaginary, and pointing towards a potentially female semiotic system that is very close indeed to the kabbalistic system of signification. For Shekhinah's voice speaks her position in the scheme of things. She speaks her own *langage*, her own style. It articulates her complex, ambivalent position and condition in our culture, and hence in our cultural imaginary. Above all, she articulates her relationship with the masculine principle in the Godhead — her father, her brother, and her beloved, and that with her mother and sisters. She is on the border, between transcendence and immanence, between the earthly realm and the divine, belonging to both and not wholly visible in either. Lacking any readily available means of articulating her essential, divine self, her empirical self is characterised by marginalization, deprivation, and alienation both from the culture in which she finds herself, and from her self. And it is from this problematic standpoint that she struggles to express herself. As mediator between the upper and the lower realm, between the outer and the inner selves, however, she also underpins and guarantees the maintenance of harmony and dynamic (pro-) creativity by means of a voice that 'is, simply, already poetry'.<sup>118</sup>

As we shall see in Chapter VI, Justina likewise expresses a non-male logic, one of association and condensation that emphasises the meaning that inheres in correspondences. And it is precisely in this regard that comparison with *Wilhelm Meister* is illuminating in respect of *La Pícara Justina*. As I shall argue in Chapter IV, Goethe lends an authentically female voice to both his women characters and his (would-be feminine) Narrator by exploiting those poetic aspects of language that, as

<sup>117</sup>Which, in turn, is very close to the precepts of poetic style that Herder inculcated into Goethe: see Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, 'Goethe to Herder, July 1722: Some Problems of Pedagogic Presentation', *German Life and Letters*, NS 15 (1961), 110-22.

<sup>118</sup>Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism*, p.52.

he had learned from Herder, constitute the 'body of language', and give expression to the felt life that is otherwise inexpressible. That Goethe may well have been predisposed to Herder's aesthetic theorising by his profound preoccupation with the long tradition — both Hermetic and alchemical — of the Divine Feminine, in which López de Úbeda clearly also participated, is the topic to which we must next turn. For what emerges from a comparison of the style of the two novels is that rhetorical and aesthetic devices are employed by both López de Úbeda and Goethe that are strikingly consonant with the language recommended by the Kabbalah and modern feminist theorists alike.

## CHAPTER II: Goethe and the Divine Feminine

'Indem der weibliche Gott unsere Anbetung heischt, entzündet das gottgleiche Weib unsre Liebe' (Schiller, *Ästhetische Briefe*, XV, 9)<sup>1</sup>

In her essay on 'Divine Women', Luce Irigaray quotes Feuerbach in order to corroborate her thesis that in Western culture, love, including God's love, is feminized:

The mother of God is the key-stone of theology, of the Father-son-spirit relationship. Without the mother of God, there can be no God. And Feuerbach adds that Protestants, who have done away with the Mother of God ... should logically have renounced God purely and simply: 'Where faith in the Mother of God sinks, there also sinks faith in the Son of God, and God as the Father. The Father is a truth only where the Mother is a truth. Love is in and by itself essentially feminine in nature. The belief in the love of God is the belief in the feminine principle as divine. Love apart from living nature is an anomaly, a phantom. Behold in love the holy necessity and depth of Nature' (*The Essence of Christianity*, p. 72).<sup>2</sup>

Whatever may be the theological validity of this view, it is (as we shall see) consonant with Goethe's own attitude to Christianity, and entirely consistent with the import of the famous final lines of his *Faust*:

Alles Vergängliche  
Ist nur ein Gleichnis;  
Das Unzulängliche,  
Hier wird's Ereignis;  
Das Unbeschreibliche,  
Hier ist's getan;

<sup>1</sup>'While the woman-god demands our veneration, the god-like woman kindles our love'. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughy, *Friedrich Schiller: On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>Luce Irigaray, 'Divine Women', in *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 55-72 (pp. 69-70).

Das Ewig-Weibliche  
Zieht uns hinan (Ll. 12104-12111; H.A. 3, p. 364).

All that is transitory  
is only a symbol;  
what seems unachievable  
here is seen done;  
what's indescribable  
here becomes fact;  
Woman, eternally, shows us the way (*Faust I & II*, p. 304).

Stuart Atkins' translation, above, deviates from the standard translation of the last two lines of the play ('The Eternal-Feminine draws us on'); but, if it obscures 'the feminine principle as divine', it does at least make emphatically clear the centrality of the woman-figure in the text. However mistaken in detail,<sup>3</sup> Jung's thesis that Goethe's *Faust* articulates the feminine — the Anima — in a series of key women-figures is surely fundamentally correct. The ecstatic hymn to the Mother of God by the Doctor Marianus in this final scene of the play (who occupies 'the highest and nearest cell' of all 'the holy anchorets' praising heaven) makes quite explicit that divine love is here 'essentially feminine':

Hier ist die Aussicht frei,  
Der Geist erhoben.  
Dort ziehen Fraun vorbei,  
Schwebend nach oben (Ll. 11989-92; H.A.4, p. 360).

The view here is vast,  
the spirit exalted.  
There I see women  
floating past upwards ... (*Faust I & II*, p. 302).

And the Queen of heaven is here the co-equal of any god (l. 12011: 'Göttern ebenbürtig') and 'the mistress of the world':

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<sup>3</sup>See Harold Jantz, 'Goethe, Faust, Alchemy, and Jung', *The German Quarterly*, 35 (1962), 129-141, for a critical reading of Jung's interpretation of *Faust*.

Höchste Herrscherin der Welt!  
 Lasse mich im blauen,  
 Ausgespannten Himmelszelt  
 Dein Geheimnis schauen.  
 Billige, was des Mannes Brust  
 Ernst und zart bewegt  
 Und mit heiliger Liebeslust  
 Dir entgegenträget (Ll. 11997-12004; H.A. 3, p. 361).

Sovereign mistress of the world,  
 let me, in the azure  
 of the heaven's canopy,  
 contemplate your secrets!  
 Sanction that which stirs man's heart  
 to earnest tenderness  
 and bears it aloft to you  
 in love's sacred rapture (*Faust I & II*, p. 302).

A man's love for a woman — his 'earnest tenderness' — is offered to the Mater Gloriosa, in the expectation that it will be blessed and ennobled. And in a formulaic series of epithets that might well have been taken straight from the *Zohar's* attempts to describe Shekhinah ('Virgin, Mother, Queen, Goddess'),<sup>4</sup> the Divine Feminine is apostrophized as co-redeemer:

Blicket auf zum Retterblick,  
 Alle reuig Zarten,  
 Euch zu seligem Geschick  
 Dankend umzuarten.  
 Werde jeder beßre Sinn  
 Dir zum Dienst erbötig;  
 Jungfrau, Mutter, Königin,  
 Göttin, bleibe gnädig! (Ll. 12096-12102; H.A. 3, p. 364)

<sup>4</sup>Cf. J. Louvier, *Goethe als Kabbalist* (Dresden: Henkler, o.J.) — though the many kabbalistic allusions in the text hardly warrant his thesis that *Faust* is itself a 'cryptic book' (*Geheimbuch*; pp. 1-4).



Look up to salvation's eyes,  
 tender penitents,  
 so that you may gratefully  
 be reborn for heaven!—  
 May all noble spirits be eager for thy service;  
 Virgin, Mother, Queen, and Goddess,  
 keep us in your grace! (*Faust I & II*, p. 305.)

Feuerbach's central point — that 'belief in the love of God is the belief in the feminine principle as divine' — is embodied in this last scene of *Faust* by a feminine God, to whom the proper response is tender love ('itself essentially feminine in nature').

As Jung indicated, the motif of the divine feminine runs through the length of the Second Part of *Faust*. It has been pointed out that 'the Mothers', to whom Faust journeys in search of Helen, may well be kabbalistic in origin.<sup>5</sup> Responding to the Emperor's demand that he be presented with 'the paradigms of Man and Woman' (ll. 6185-86), Faust descends to the very matrix of Being, to the *natura naturans*, the self-creating basis of all creation:

Die einen sitzen, andre stehn und gehn,  
 Wie's eben kommt, Gestaltung, Umgestaltung,  
 Des ewigen Sinnes ewige Un'erhaltung.  
 Umschwebt von Bildern aller Kreatur ... (ll. 6286-6289; H.A. 3, p. 193).

Some will be seated, some will stand or walk —  
 there is no rule — for all is form and transformation,  
 Eternal Mind's eternal entertainment.  
 About them hover images of all that's been created ... (*Faust I & II*, p. 161).

Like the three mothers (the 'Furies') of *La Pícarra Justina*, the Mothers in *Faust* represent that fundamental self-generational quality of the divine feminine that is

<sup>5</sup>See J. Louvier, *Goethe als Kabbalist*, pp. vi and 9; and Ronald Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist: A Study of Alchemical Symbolism in Goethe's Literary and Scientific Works* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1952), p. 202: 'In the principal work of the Cabbalist tradition — the *Zohar* — the primal trinity, the first three emanations of God, are referred to as the Mothers.'

central to the whole Great Goddess tradition. Moreover, the ambiguity of the German word 'Sinn' — unavoidably lost in the translation 'Eternal Mind' — is developed throughout the 'Classical Walpurgisnacht', whose central theme is the growing embodiment of 'mind' and 'sense'. This theme reaches its climax in the appearance of Galatea at the height of a Dionysian water-festival in her honour — whom the character Thales hails as the quintessence of the life-giving symbol of water:<sup>6</sup>

Alles ist aus dem Wasser entsprungen!!  
 Alles wird durch das Wasser erhalten!  
 Ozean, gönn uns dein ewiges Walten.  
 ... Du bist's, der das frischeste Leben erhält  
 (Ll. 8435-37, 8443; H.A. 3, p. 255).

All things have their beginning in water!!  
 Water sustains all things that exist  
 may you, Oceanus, rule us forever!  
 ... You're the support of all living freshness  
 (*Faust I & II*, p. 214).

Galatea is greeted, like the Mater Gloriosa, with a hymn of love in which she is addressed as the equal of Aphrodite; and in the climactic conjunction of Fire and Water, identified with Eros, 'the creator all':

So leuchtet's und schwanket und hellet hinan:  
 Die Körper, sie glühen auf nächtlicher Bahn,  
 Und ringsum ist alles vom Feuer umronnen;  
 So herrsche denn Eros, der alles begonnen!  
 (Ll. 8476-79; H.A. 3, p. 256)

Lights wave and hover, the brightness comes nearer,  
 what moves in the darkness is pure incandescence,  
 and all is enveloped in eddies of fire.

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<sup>6</sup>Cf. Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), where water is the central motif, as a symbol of femininity (especially, p.165 in respect of Dionysos).

Let Eros now rule, the creator of all! (*Faust I & II*, p. 215)

Both body and soul evince in these presentations of the divine feminine a free movement that is distinctly reminiscent of the sefirotic system through which Shekhinah moves. For progress and development — becoming — are intrinsic to the proper response to the feminine divine in *Faust*. Like Galatea, Helen emerges from the sea in Goethe's *Faust* (l. 8450); and, like the mater Gloriosa, she is the object of (male) worship. And the beauty traditionally associated with the Goddess, and so eminently represented by Helen, is portrayed by Goethe as both positive (e.g., ll. 8500, 8507, 8521-3, 8527-9, 8602-3, 8636-7) and negative (e.g., 8530-3, 8765-70, 8821, 8960-1, 9061-2). The age-old associations with the *femme fatale* are powerfully expressed by Mephistopheles in an attack on Helen's chorus that is aimed at her — *qua* goddess — as well:

Wer seid ihr denn, daß ihr des Königes Hochpalast  
 Mänadisch wild, Betrunken gleich, umtoben dürft?  
 Wer seid ihr denn, daß ihr des Hauses Schaffnerin  
 Entgegenheulet, wie dem Mond der Hunde Schar?  
 Wähnt ihr, verborgen sei mir, welch Geschlecht ihr seid,  
 Du kriegerzeugte, schlachterzogne junge Brut?  
 Mannlustige du, so wie verführt verführende,  
 Entnervend beide, Kriegers auch und Bürgers Kraft!  
 Zu Hauf euch sehend, scheint mir ein Zikadenschwarm  
 Herabzustürzen, deckend grüne Feldersaat.  
 Verzehrerinnen fremden Fleißes! Naschende  
 Vernichterinnen aufgekeimten Wohlstands ihr!  
 Erobert', marktverkauft', vertauschte Ware du!  
 (Ll. 8771-8783; H.A. 3, p. 264)

And who are you, that you, like frenzied maenads, dare  
 surround with drunken uproar here the king's great house?  
 Who are you, who assail the palace-stewardess  
 with howling, like a pack of dogs that bay the moon?  
 Do you presume I do not know your lineage,

you war-begotten, battle-nurtured, callow things,  
 man-hungry, too, as much seducing as seduced,  
 who sap the strength of citizen and warrior both!  
 To see you in such numbers is as if I saw  
 locust swarms plunge and cover green, fresh-planted fields.  
 Devourers of the toil of others, who destroy  
 the buds of the prosperity on which you feed!  
 Wares gained in war, sold second-hand in market places!  
 (*Faust I & II*, p. 222)

The contempt voiced here by this (male) devil is the age-old view of the feminine as the Black Goddess: hysterical, noisy, sexually insatiable, vampyric, and destructive — fit only as an object of financial exchange.<sup>7</sup> Indeed it is the most disgusting and ugliest female form — the Phorkides — that Mephistopheles assumes in the 'Classical Walpurgisnacht', in which he inveigles his way into Helen's court. And two other women-figures give expression to the traditional negative image of the feminine: Erichtho, the witch of antiquity; and Sorge, 'Anxiety'. Erichtho introduces herself at the beginning of the 'Classical Walpurgisnacht' as the Dark One portrayed, as she points out, by generations of hostile (male) poets in a defamatory way:

Zum Schauderfeste dieser Nacht, wie öfter schon,  
 Tret' ich einher, Erichtho, ich, die düstere;  
 Nicht so abscheulich, wie die leidigen Dichter mich  
 Im Übermaß verlästern ... Endigen sie doch nie  
 In Lob und Tadel ... (Ll. 7005-9; H.A. 3, p. 215).

How often to this night's dread celebration  
 have I thus come, Erichtho I, all somberness,  
 yet not so frightful — they exaggerate and set  
 no limits to their praise or blame — as hateful poets  
 slanderously say! (*Faust I & II*, p. 180)

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. Luce Irigaray, 'The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine', in *The Irigaray Reader*, ed by Margaret Whitford, pp.118-132 (p131).

Similarly, Sorge embodies the Anxiety into which the 'tender love' owed to his other is transmuted when man refuses to hear the voice of the feminine:

Würde mich kein Ohr vernehmen,  
 Müßt es doch im Herzen dröhnen;  
 In verwandelter Gestalt  
 Üb' ich grimmige Gewalt.  
 Auf den Pfaden, auf der Welle,  
 Ewig ängstlicher Geselle,  
 Stets gefunden, nie gesucht,  
 So geschmeichelt wie verflucht (Ll. 11424-431; H.A. 3, p. 344).

Even though no ear may hear me,  
 in your heart my voice is loud;  
 I appear in many [transformations] and I wield a vengeful power:  
 the companion-cause of fear  
 whether you're on land or sea;  
 always met with, never sought,  
 always cursed, but never banished (*Faust I & II*, p. 288).

Faust's insistence that he will not heed the voice (l. 11468) causes the blindness in which he ends his life on earth.

It is, of course, beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse in any further detail or extent the vast range of female-figures that function in Goethe's *Faust* to articulate diverse aspects of the feminine. But it is important to establish that the theme of the divine feminine is central to what is generally recognized to be his greatest work. It is also important, because it places Goethe's articulation of the theme of the female voice in *Wilhelm Meister* in a helpfully illuminating context, one in which it becomes clear that both 'the woman-god' and 'the god-like woman', evoked by Schiller as the epitome of aesthetic experience, is a central pre-occupation throughout Goethe's life and work. Consideration of this general context will offer a perspective which shows how a late eighteenth, early nineteenth-century German writer like Goethe came to

participate in much the same cultural tradition as was available to a late sixteenth, early seventeenth-century Spanish writer like López de Úbeda.

There can be no doubt that Goethe's lifelong interest in magical and kabbalistic literature was not just a major part of his reading, but informed his thinking and feeling too — as is evident from its precipitate in almost all his works, major and minor (including his *History of the Theory of Colour*).<sup>8</sup> It is well known (he records it in Part II, Book 8 of his Autobiography) that he was influenced in his intellectual theology — like many of his contemporaries in Germany — by the English Deists (Herbert of Cherbury, John Locke, John Tolland, Anthony Collins, and Matthew Tindal). Recorded, too, in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, is Goethe's indebtedness to the English and Spanish mystical-chemical tradition. Besides, amongst others, the Italian Renaissance influence of Pico della Mirandola's and Marsilio Ficino's neo-Platonism,<sup>9</sup> we find, too, traces of the Spanish and English mystics' emphasis on (feminine) love rather than on the (masculine) intellectual orientation which Goethe could find in his own German tradition, particularly in Meister Eckhart.

Between 1768 and 1770 it is estimated that Goethe, initially under the influence of the woman Pietist, Fräulein von Klettenberg, read little else but alchemical and hermetic texts.<sup>10</sup> Although he found the content of Georg von Welling's *Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum et Theosophicum* (1735) obscure and incomprehensible, he was attracted above all by the suggestiveness of the language; while in Joseph Kirchweger's *Aurea Catena Homeri* (1723) he found the basic doctrines of the Hermetic tradition: universal polarity; the equivalence of microcosm and macrocosm; the Philosopher's Stone as the key-symbol of Centre, Soul, and God;

<sup>8</sup>See, particularly, the sections 'Lust am Geheimnis' ('Delight in Mystery'), 'Paracelsus', and 'Alchymisten' (H.A. 14, pp. 67-68; 77-80); see, too, Schiller's discussion of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century 'Kabbalistic and astrological works' in his letter to Goethe of 7 April 1797 (where a Latin translation of the Portuguese-Jewish doctor-cum-philosopher Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore* [1587] is of especial interest). As Dieter Borchmeyer (*Weimarer Klassik: Portrait einer Epoche* [Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1994], p.44) points out, Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia* (1531) was an item in Goethe's personal library in Weimar.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. H.A. 9, p. 718.

<sup>10</sup>See Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist*, pp. 4ff.

and the Way to the Centre, whether by alchemical procedure or speculative reflection, equivalent to the Mystic Way. In Gottfried Arnold's voluminous *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie – Unbiased History of Church and Heresy* (2 volumes, 1700-15), housed in his father's library in Frankfurt, he found two aspects of erotic wisdom which were particularly congenial to his own way of thinking: on the one hand, it was clear that mystical eroticism had a long history, at least co-terminous with the Western cultural tradition; on the other, it was saturated with a sexual rhetoric oriented to the devotion of the Divine Woman (as Arnold had made quite explicit in the title of another of his publications, *Das Geheimniss der göttlichen Sophia oder Weisheit – The Mystery of Divine Sophia or Wisdom* – of 1700).<sup>11</sup> Scholars have seen the Silesian mystic Jakob Boehme's patterning of alchemical symbols as a major influence on Goethe; but Boehme is mentioned only once in his work.<sup>12</sup> The personification of Wisdom as a heavenly virgin (Aurora) who, like the Stone, is represented as a hermaphrodite in her reconciliation of opposites, Goethe could just as easily have taken direct from the writings of the Christian kabbalists (like Reuchlin or Oetinger) or, more likely, indirectly from his secondary sources. Similarly, Boehme's symbolization of the final attainment of wisdom as the loving embrace of Bridegroom and Bride — a commonplace of mystical writing since the Song of Songs — was available to Goethe in Arnold, whose sympathetic passages on the Spanish 'heretics' Saint Teresa, Saint John of the Cross, and Saint Ignatius Loyola, Goethe found particularly congenial because of their emphasis on an in-dwelling God.<sup>13</sup> And, as Goethe tells us in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, such notions in any case were mother's milk to him, raised as he was under the influence of the German Pietist movement, itself inspired by Boehme, an influence dramatically reinforced by his Pietistic mother's friend Fräulein von Klettenberg's enthusiastic endorsement of the strongly occultist sect of Pictism founded by Zinzendorf. Moreover, long before he

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 31 for explicit sexual descriptions of the entry to the Kingdom of God which 'Goethe is almost certain to have read'.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 49. C. Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala*, p.170, finds in the writings of St. John of the Cross an identification of the Bride of the Canticles with the Shekhinah.

read, at Herder's insistence, Shaftesbury's neo-Platonic writings, Goethe had at the age of fifteen read Plotinus himself, and had gone on absorbing Neo-Platonism, along with the tenets of alchemy and the Kabbalah during the period 1768-70 (when he had even conducted alchemical experiments). Although, as he tells us in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, he hid this 'mystical-cabbalistic chemistry and all that pertained to it' from Herder (H.A.9, p.414), he continued to read in hermeticism, 'in order to develop it more consistently' than the confused form in which he — and the late 18th-century fashion for quasi-mysticism — received it. To this end he read the 'Rational Psychology' of Swedenborg throughout the early 1770s, and in 1786 he read *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz*, by the supposed founder of Rosicrucianism. The fruit of all this study and reflection is not so much the obviously hermetic material that informs Goethe's overtly mystical poetic fragment of 1786, 'Die Geheimnisse' ('The Mysteries'), or even the alchemical allegory *Das Märchen* (*The Fairy Tale*) of 1795. While it is incontrovertible that, say, the Mothers evoked in Act I of *Faust Part II* are very close in conception to those representing primal matter in the alchemist's 'Bible', the *Zohar*<sup>14</sup> (just as the Homunculus of Act II is evidently the Child, in the psycho-alchemical sense analysed by C.G. Jung), mere source-hunting begs the question of what Goethe was doing with this material in the various, and very varied, contexts in which he deployed it.

What certainly seems to be the case is that there is no scholarly warrant whatsoever for attributing an individual syncretistic mystical system to Goethe himself on the basis of his poetic use of kabbalistic and Hermetic materials, as became the fashion in the 1920s in such sensational books as Max Seiling's *Goethe als Okkultist* (Berlin, c. 1920) and J. Louvier's *Goethe als Kabbalist* (Dresden, n.d.). As Joseph Strelka pointed out in 1980,<sup>15</sup> the tradition Goethe inherited (in both the texts that he read and the Orders of Freemasons and Illuminati that he, like so many of his contemporaries, joined on socio-political rather than mystical grounds) was itself eclectic and syncretistic. Christian mysticism (via Boehme, Arnold, and the Pictist

<sup>14</sup>See Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist*, p.202.

<sup>15</sup>Joseph Strelka, *Esoterik bei Goethe* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1980), p.7.



circles); the alchemical (via Paracelsus, von Welling, van Helmont); and Neo-Platonism — all blended in the German eighteenth-century cultural context to yield a heady mix, of which the most significant element, certainly for Goethe, seems to have been that the feminine principle was restored to a position of equality with the masculine principle — or Nature with Spirit — and woman was again coeval with man.<sup>16</sup> Rather than attribute Goethe's high evaluation of the feminine to his teenage reading of Plotinus' *Enneads*, in which Sophia is 'the mistress of all creativity',<sup>17</sup> it is surely more plausible to regard it as the upshot of that long history of kabbalistic-hermetic thought that fascinated Goethe in Arnold's history of heresy and in his own eclectic reading of the esoteric tradition. After all, the quasi-independence of Shekhinah from her 'husband' Tiferet, and from the system of the sefirot or 'spheres', had for the kabbalists themselves potentially heretical implications for the doctrine of divine unity. The majestic presence or manifestation of God that has descended to dwell among men, the Shekhinah, the source of human inspiration, is in the Talmud merely the presence of God himself. By contrast, in the kabbalistic *Book Bahir*, God so loves the now distinct, if related, divine feminine being Shekhinah that He calls her alternately 'my Sister', 'my Daughter', 'my Mother'.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, she as mediator between Human and Divine, moves up and down the hierarchy of spheres apparently at will, and is often in danger of severing her connection with God and going over to the side of evil. Given the centrality of the *Zohar* to the alchemists and Christian Kabbalists on whom Goethe drew, we might be tempted to see this as *the* direct source for Goethe. But it might just as well have been an indirect influence, say via the Cambridge Platonist Henry More, that was decisive. For More had insisted on the existence of a central principle of all gnostic 'divine sagacity', an intuitive instinct in human beings — 'more noble and inward than reason itself' — which he saw at work

<sup>16</sup>Alice Raphael, *Goethe and the Philosopher's Stone*, pp. 31-32. Raphael attributes this 'to the persistence of Christian Kabbalists during the Renaissance' (p. 31).

<sup>17</sup>Joseph Strelka, *Esoterik bei Goethe*, p.11.

<sup>18</sup>G.G. Scholem, 'Die Symbolik der Schechina und des Weiblichen—Der Edelstein', in his *Das Buch Bahir* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970), pp.143-59 (pp. 146 and 149 especially); see, too, his 'Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Kabbalistischen Konzeption der Schechina', *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 21 (1952), pp.15-107.

both within (as 'innate ideas') and without (as an *anima mundi* or 'Spirit of Nature').<sup>19</sup> It would be entirely consistent with the sophisticated temper of both Goethe's own mind and that of his age to have regarded such traditional material, whatever the precise source used, as commonplaces in need of significant resuscitation rather than as ideas original to any particular author or movement.<sup>20</sup> What would almost certainly have attracted Goethe to the specifically kabbalistic strain in the hermetic fusion that he inherited, is the Zoharic emphasis on the pantheistic nature of the divine. The theosophical aspect of Kabbalah, which Gershom Scholem has identified as one of its defining characteristics (above all in the *Zohar*), is at least consistent with the 'panentheism' — which embraces both the immanence and the transcendence of God — which Goethe held to throughout his life:

Theosophy postulates a kind of divine emanation whereby God, abandoning his self-contained repose, awakens to mysterious life; further it maintains that the mysteries of creation reflect the pulsation of this divine life.<sup>21</sup>

The Kabbalah's concern (in contrast to rabbinic Judaism's with the unknowable Jehovah) with the central paradox of a God that is both self-revealing and self-concealing — a God that is, on the one hand, infinite, distant, and unknowable to (mere) human intellect, and yet simultaneously finite, present, and apprehensible in the here-and-now: in other words, a God that is both transcendent and immanent — is Goethe's concern in this first stanza of a late, poetic formulation (1815) of his panentheism:

Was wär ein Gott, der nur von außen stieße,  
Im Kreis das All am Finger laufen ließe!

<sup>19</sup>See Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Bookshop, 1946-[75]), Book II, V, Chapter 3, pp. 52-66.

<sup>20</sup>See Harold Jantz, 'Goethe, Faust, Alchemy, and Jung', *German Quarterly*, 35 (1962), pp. 129-141 (especially his insistence in this context on Goethe's knowledge of the classics, p. 131).

<sup>21</sup>G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), pp. 206 and 490. See, too, "...und alles ist Kabbala": *Gershom Scholem im Gespräch mit Jörg Drews* (Munich: Edition Text und Kritik, 1980), p.6.

Ihm ziemt's, die Welt im Innern zu bewegen,  
 Natur in Sich, Sich in Natur zu hegen,  
 So daß, was in Ihm lebt und webt und ist,  
 Nie seine Kraft, nie Seinen Geist vermißt (H.A. 1, p.357).

What sort of God would it be, who only prodded from without,  
 Let the world turn on his finger!  
 It is his proper nature to move the world within  
 Nature in Himself, Himself in Nature cherished,  
 So that what lives and has its being in him,  
 Never lacks his power nor his spirit.

It is this theological orientation that first drew Goethe to Spinoza; it can hardly have failed to attract him in the kabbalistic tradition.<sup>22</sup>

What Goethe had in mind by 'developing more consistently' his hermetic heritage (H.A.9, p.414) becomes manifest in a poem written in 1784 'Zueignung' ('Dedication'), first intended as a prologue to 'Die Geheimnisse' ('The Mysteries'), itself an articulation of mystical doctrine. Working in a tradition stretching back at least as far as Apuleius' invocation of the Goddess Isis, and with textual reference to Dante's deeply moving encounter with Beatrice in *Purgatory* (XXX, 32) — 'una donna m'apparve' — Goethe's speaker encounters his mother-image as mountain-goddess:

Bald machte mich, die Augen aufzuschlagen,  
 Ein innerer Trieb des Herzens wieder kühn,  
 Ich konnt es nur mit schnellen Blicken wagen,  
 Denn alles schien zu brennen und zu glühn.  
 Da schwebte mit den Wolken hergetragen,  
 Ein göttlich Weib vor meinen Augen hin,  
 Kein schöner Bild sah ich in meinem Leben,  
 Sie sah mich an und blieb verweilend schwebend (H.A.1, p.150).

A moment, then, I felt compelled to look

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<sup>22</sup>See David Bell, *Spinoza in Germany from 1670 to the Age of Goethe* (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1984), p. 112.

By some strange impulse of the heart's emotion,  
 But more than rapid glances scarcely took,  
 For all was burning like a molten ocean.  
 Then in the glory--cloud that seemed to bear her  
 A godlike woman drifted through the air;  
 I never did behold a vision fairer,  
 And now she gazed upon me, floating there (*Selected Poems*, p.91).

She asks if he (who 'even as a little boy' craved for her) does not recognise her; and with the promptness that reflects the fundamental function of maternal mirroring in identity-construction, the recognition is immediate and mutual.<sup>23</sup> She offers him a veil, age-old symbol associated with the myth of Ishtar's descent into the underworld in search of her lover:

...— So sagte sie, ich hör sie ewig sprechen —  
 Empfange hier, was ich dir lang bestimmt:  
 Dem glücklichen kann es an nichts gebrechen,  
 Der dies Geschenk mit stiller Seele nimmt:  
 Aus Morgenduft gewebt und Sonnenklarheit  
 Der Dichtung Schleier aus der Hand der Wahrheit (II.A.1, p.152).

She said—her voice I never shall forget—  
 'Accept the gift that long for you was treasured:  
 Happy the man, and strong, for he is shriven,  
 Who takes the gift with soul serene and true:  
 By truth the veil of poetry is given,  
 Woven of sunlight and the morning dew (*Selected Poems*, p.95).

It has been said, quite rightly, that the Veil is 'the archetypal image of Goethe's use of metaphor'.<sup>24</sup> Goethe's use of this age-old theological image in the context of aesthetics has been called 'the symbol of symbols'.<sup>25</sup> For what Goethe meant by the

<sup>23</sup>See Heinz Kohut, *The Restoration of Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1977), pp. 10 and 264.

<sup>24</sup>Wilhelm Emrich, *Die Symbolik von Faust II: Sinn und Vorformen* (Königstein: Athenaeum, 1981), p. 51; see too, Emil Staiger, *Goethe*, 3 vols (Zurich: Atlantis, 1970), I, p. 484.

<sup>25</sup>William Larrett, 'Der Dichtung Schleier: From Theology with Love to Aesthetics', in *Tradition and Creation*, ed. by C.P. Magill, et al (Leeds: Maney, 1978), pp. 89-100 (p.99). Interestingly, Gershom Scholem proposed the Goethean definition of symbolism as an adequate one for Kabbalistic

'veil of poetry' is the network of sensuous, 'sound-look', relations, drawn as it were across the discursive surface of the text, some meaningless and obscuring, others meaningful and heightening, what is revealed. In other words, what Goethe could not accept literally as revelation of mystical intuition, he understands symbolically, in the sense of an aesthetic conjunction of the artist's medium (here, language) with the felt inner life of the psyche<sup>26</sup>. The upshot of this particular 'chymical marriage' is *Gestalt*, the living form of art — which gives tongue to what is otherwise left inarticulate: the voice of the Goddess ('her voice I never shall forget'). Entirely consistently with the oral mystic tradition of the Kabbalah, handed down from generation to generation, and, more precisely, with Shekhinah as the 'oral Torah', Goethe identifies the otherwise inexpressible import with the burden of (the) Woman's speech, which he then, characteristically, restricts to the aesthetic (poetry), as distinct from the mystical, sphere. What has been called by feminist criticism the subordinative syntactical 'mastery' inherent in discursive language has been transformed in aesthetic discourse into co-operating in the expression of the otherwise repressed female voice. In Luce Irigaray's terms, poetry is '*parler femme*'; it is *écriture féminine*.<sup>27</sup>

Goethe's identification of the Feminine with the Imagination in its aesthetic modality is made quite explicit in 'Meine Göttin' ('My Goddess') a poem of just six years earlier:

Laßt uns alle  
Den Vater preisen,  
Den alten, hohen,  
Der solch eine schöne,  
Unverwelkliche Gattin  
Dem sterblichen Menschen

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symbols...'. Mosche Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 218. Cf. *M.u.R.* 188, 314, 749, 750.

<sup>26</sup>See R.H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature: A Study in Aesthetic Transmutation* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1983), pp. 157-163.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis: Theories of Gender in Psychoanalytic Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p.19: 'Woman is the hysteric for imagery, whereas "man" is the master'. See, too, Paul Julian Smith, 'Writing Women in Golden Age Spain: Saint Teresa and Marfa de Zayas', *MLN*, 102 (1987), 220-240, especially p.225 for an analysis of Julia Kristeva's account of poetry as a co-ordination of 'thetic' discourse (discursive language) with the fluid 'chora' of pre-symbolic expression.

Gesellen mögen! (H.A. I, p. 145)

Let us all  
 Praise the Father,  
 The ancient, exalted,  
 Who deigned to join  
 Mere mortal men  
 To so beautiful,  
 Unaging a consort (*Selected Poems*, p. 77).

Nor did Goethe hesitate on other occasions to identify inner psychic life with the feminine, as in the opening line of a *Spruch* (rhymed maxim) from the collection *Gott, Gemüt und Welt* of 1810-1812, in which the inner life is identified quite blatantly with the maternal womb:

Aus tiefem Gemüt, aus der Mutter Schoß  
 Will manches dem Tage entgegen;  
 Doch soll das Kleine je werden groß,  
 So muß es sich rühren und regen (H.A. I, p. 304).

From the depths of the soul, from the mother's womb  
 A great deal wills to come to light,  
 But if the little is ever to become big,  
 It must stir itself and move.

The conflation of the *psychological* significance of the search for the Self with the *religious* significance of the mystic, that has attracted so much criticism to Jung's analysis of the hermetic tradition, is entirely lacking in Goethe.<sup>28</sup> In perhaps his ostensibly most mystical of poems, 'Selige Sehnsucht' ('Blessed Longing' of 1814), taken from the 'Buch Suleika' of his *West-östlicher Divan*, there is not a trace of Platonic idealizing in the frank physicality of the sexual vocabulary used to evoke the *unio mystica* of the Butterfly (*Psyche*) with the flame:

<sup>28</sup>See Jantz, 'Goethe, Faust, Alchemy, and Jung', p. 133 for an analysis of Jung's blindness to the aesthetic structure of Goethe's *Faust*; and Paul Bishop, *The Dionysian Self: C.G. Jung's Reception of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), pp.342-56.

Nicht mehr bleibest du umfassen  
 In der Finsternis Beschattung,  
 Und dich reißet neu Verlangen  
 Auf zu höherer Begattung (H.A. 2, p. 19).

Gloom-embraced will lie no more,  
 By the flickering shades obscured,  
 But are seized by a new desire,  
 To a higher union lured (*Selected Poems*, p. 207).

Both *Beschattung* ('obscuring', but also 'covering' of one animal by another in copulation) and *Begattung* ('begetting', rather than 'union') are almost coarsely sensual; yet they capture perfectly in this context the essential earth-bound, immanent-aesthetic, rather than transcendent-mystical, tone of Goethe's spiritual eros.

It would, however, be a mistake to overlook the intimations of mystical sublimity in Goethe's identification of aesthetic experience with the erotic expression of the Feminine within. Aesthetic experience, 'subject for Goethe like everything else to the law of polarity, evokes its opposite, ineffability'.<sup>29</sup> The limited order perceived in aesthetic contemplation of Art or Nature admittedly gives us no warrant to assume that the vast infinite of which it seems to be a part is equally so ordered. Beyond the presence of Beauty there lies only its absence, an Otherness awesome in its sublimity. Moreover, the richer the aesthetic experience, the greater, *per contrarem*, the attendant, mystical, intimation of sublimity. And the appropriate response, for Goethe, to such ineffability is silence. Such mysticism, which points via the merely aesthetic *coniunctio* to a beyond, is the sort Goethe approved of.<sup>30</sup> Rather than reminding one of Meister Eckhart's strenuous intellectualization of the Godhead, as

<sup>29</sup>See R.H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Conception of Knowledge and Science* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 90.

<sup>30</sup>See his letter to Zelter, 25 August 1805; and Andrew Jaszi, *Entzweiung und Vereinigung: Goethes symbolische Weltanschauung* (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1973), p. 44. For Goethe, then, the wholeness symbolized by sexual union is, as in Lacan, 'merely' imaginary. See Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis*, p.84.

Ernst Beutler suggests,<sup>31</sup> Goethe's position is reminiscent of Hildegard von Bingen's teaching, that a living woman may become the mediatrix who leads a man's soul towards illumination through the experience of earthly love.<sup>32</sup> Or, perhaps, he is even closer to the English mystics' gentle insistence on 'oning' with God through the pressure of love, rather than through reflection.<sup>33</sup> For Goethe, in any case, aesthetic experience is a necessary prerequisite to mystical awareness because only in aesthetic perception are symbols created, the inherent drastic limitations of which precipitate an intuition of the void — which is the point of Mignon's insistence on (beautiful) appearance as a preliminary to her longed-for departure from earthly existence:

So laßt mich scheinen, bis ich weyrde,  
Zieht mir das weiße Kleid nicht aus!  
Ich eile von der schönen Erde  
Hinab in jenes feste Haus (H.A., 7, p.515).

So, let me seem till I become:  
Take not this garment white from me!  
I hasten from the joys of earth  
Down to that house so fast so firm (*Wilhelm Meisters Apprenticeship*,  
p. 316).

By articulating her inner life (in song), Mignon creates a pattern of harmonious order which allows her to entertain the (essentially religious) hope that the universe as a whole will be similarly patterned.

It may be an exaggeration to claim, as Ronald Gray does, that Goethe's classical solidarity 'was a direct result of his early studies in alchemy' (*Goethe the Alchemist*, p. 182). But it contains a kernel of truth. For it seems clear that Goethe's hermetic

<sup>31</sup>In his edition of *Der West-östliche Divan*, mit Hans-Heinrich Schaefer (Leipzig: Reclam, 1943), pp. 332-33.

<sup>32</sup>For a magisterial overview of still-useful literature on the German mystics, see Joseph Bernhart, 'Literatur zur Mystik', *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift*, 2 (1924), 302-329.

<sup>33</sup>Or again, to Saint Teresa of Avila who feminizes God 'from (whose) Divine breast ... flow streams of milk'. Cf. Erich Trunz, *Studien zu Goethes Altersdenken* (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1971), p. 235: 'die menschliche Liebe als Gleichnis des Göttlichen'.



studies served to reinforce him in his life-long conviction that the office of poet consisted in giving form and solidity to the inner, 'feminine', life of both writer and reader. From his teacher, Herder, he learned, in the years 1770-72, the theory of how this was to be done: by the exploitation of the bodiliness of language in conjunction with its discursive meanings. When, much later in life, he reflected on how Mother Nature was to be described in language, these same principles are drawn upon. In Nature, he reflected in the preface to his *Morphologie* of 1817, 'nowhere do we find anything stable, at rest, or detached; rather, we find that everything is in constant flux'; and later still, in an essay of 1823 entitled *Probleme*, he noted that the simultaneity of oppositional forces at work in Nature cannot be expressed in discursive language.<sup>34</sup> And he suggested an artificial/artistic mode of discourse be introduced, matching the ebb-and-flow and subtle interconnectedness of Nature's workings. Such aesthetic language exploits both meaning and the look and shape of words, phrases, sentences, even paragraphs — sometimes in co-ordination, sometimes in reciprocal subordination, depending on whether expression or communication is paramount. An example of this style is the opening of the poem 'Vermächtnis' placed in the 1829 edition of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* which offers a recapitulation of his own method of gathering knowledge.

Das Sein ist ewig: denn Gesetze  
 Bewahren die lebendgen Schätze,  
 Aus welchen sich das All geschmückt (H.A. I, p. 369).

Being is deathless: living wealth,  
 With which the All adorns itself,  
 By laws abides and is maintained (*Selected Poems*, p. 267).

It is the rhyme of *Schätze* ('treasures') with *Gesetze* ('laws') and the (Trigaray-like) ambiguity of the syntax that connects them (where both 'laws' and 'treasures' can be either subject or object) that defeats even the most talented translator. Goethe, as so

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<sup>34</sup>See R.H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Conception of Knowledge and Science*, pp. 2 and 67.

often, manages, by means of aesthetic discourse, to say two things at once: that universal laws preserve living particulars, and that living particulars preserve universal laws.<sup>35</sup> How close the thought and style here is to that recommended in the Kabbalah is clear from the following passage:

And it is written 'your speaking is comely' (Song of Songs 4:3) - for the voice governs speech, and there is no voice without speech, and this voice is sent forth from a profound place in the realms above, and it is sent from its presence in order to govern speech, for there is no voice without speech, and no speech without voice, and that is the universal that needs the particular and the particular that needs the universal.<sup>36</sup>

When the conceptual ('the universal', 'voice') is co-ordinated with the sensuous, physical properties of the language ('the particular', 'speech'), the repressed feminine (the Shekhinah) is released.<sup>37</sup>

Equally, in the language of modern French feminist criticism, we may speak of this style as *l'écriture féminine* or *parler femme* — marked as it is by fluidity and dislocation, elasticity and spontaneity, going beyond syntactical correctness, in just the way Herder advocated poetry be written. The liquid, primordial feminine matrix in which the Goddess has her being — 'the unformed, the amorphous and the virtual, all of which are associated with the realm of the Earth Mother goddess'<sup>38</sup> — is precisely what is reflected in Luce Irigaray's call for a specifically feminine style: 'its privileging of the tactile, the simultaneous, the fluid, the proximate — a disruptive excess'.<sup>39</sup> What (in psychoanalytic language) is otherwise repressed is the female's,

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<sup>35</sup>I am grateful to Professor Roger Stephenson for pointing out the relevance for my argument of this poem, analyzed in his *Goethe's Wisdom Literature*, pp. 198-203.

<sup>36</sup>Isaiah 'Ishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, p. 325.

<sup>37</sup>'Feminine' is used here in Julia Kristeva's generally accepted sense as a position of marginality available to both males and females. Cf. *Feminist Readings/Feminists Reading*, ed. by Sara Mills, Lynne Pearce, et al (New York: Harvester, 1989), p. 241.

<sup>38</sup>Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959), p. 48.

<sup>39</sup>See *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.78.

(and the male's) desire to represent her/his own relation to the Mother.<sup>40</sup> Goethe, like many another male writer, is out to produce non-logocentric texts, expressive of the inner life — of the 'Mother's womb'.<sup>41</sup>

Women owe mysticism a great deal, as the courage they gained from their sense of God-experience brought them out of the silence the Church prescribed for them, and made it possible for them to make their voices heard at last.<sup>42</sup>

And so, too, do men, at least male poets. Certainly, when Goethe ended his *Faust* with the famous line, 'Das Ewig-Weibliche/Zieht uns hinan', he had far more in mind than any commonplace notion of Woman-as-subordinate-Musc-to-Man. Rather he was evoking the long pagan-Christian tradition of a gentle, tender, nurturing Goddess.<sup>43</sup>

Goethe's preoccupation with the theme of femininity is almost everywhere in evidence in his work as a whole. In his early play, *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), the entrancing Adelheid so fascinated him that she threatened to dominate the drama in its first version of 1771, where she is a larger-than-life embodiment, beyond good and evil, of the anima-figure as the apparent chaos of life itself. In *Iphigenie* (1787) the central character famously articulates the misery of woman's lot:<sup>44</sup>

Ein unnütz Leben ist ein früher Tod;  
Dies Frauenschicksal ist vor allem meins (LI. 115-16; *H.A.* 5, p.10).

What earthly death is worse than useless life?  
And I chiefly bear this, [woman's] fate (*Verse Plays and Epic*, p.4).

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<sup>40</sup>See Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis*, p. 160.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. Introduction to Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, p. 12.

<sup>42</sup>Monica Furlong, *TLS*, 22/3/96, p. 10, in a review of Grace M. Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>43</sup>Cf. Barbara Newman, 'The Pilgrimage of Christ-Sophia', *Vox-Benedictina*, 9 (1992), 8-37.

<sup>44</sup>See Irmgard W. Hobson, 'Goethe's *Iphigenie*: A Lacanian Reading', *Goethe Yearbook*, 2 (1984), 51-67.

The late novel, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (*The Elective Affinities*) can be profitably read as the tragedy of a woman caught in the stultifying gaze of a solipsistic man.<sup>45</sup> And many other works of Goethe bear testimony to his deep and abiding interest in the significance of the position of woman in culture. A short epigram, written in 1791 after having read Georg Forster's translation of Kalindasa's drama *Shakuntala*, neatly sums up the all-embracing significance the female figure could have for Goethe:

Will ich die Blumen des frühen, die Früchte des späteren Jahres,  
Will ich, was reizt und entzückt, will ich, was sättigt und nährt,  
Will ich den Himmel, die Erde mit *einem* Namen begreifen,  
Nenn' ich, Sakuntala, dich, und so ist alles gesagt (H.A. 1, p. 206).

If I want the flowers of the first half, the fruits of the second  
half of the year,  
If I want something charming and delightful, something  
satisfying and nourishing,  
If I want to comprehend heaven and earth in *one* name,  
I name you, Shakuntala, and then everything is said.<sup>46</sup>

In terms reminiscent of Petrarchan adoration of the Beloved, love of woman represents here a reconciliation of polarities that culminate in a marriage of the spiritual and the sensuous ('heaven and earth').

Nowhere perhaps in his whole work is this Goethean synthesis of the physical and the spiritual made more explicit than in his Autobiography, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. It has often been noted that the religious motif, first introduced at the end of Book One, is continued throughout the work in one form or another, and that special emphasis is thereby laid upon it.<sup>47</sup> Certainly it is within the context of his discussion of his own religious experience and of the theology he constructed for

<sup>45</sup>See Patricia D. Zecevic, 'The Beloved as Male Projection: A Comparative Study of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* and *Dom Casimiro*', *German Life and Letters*, NS 47 (1994), 469-76.

<sup>46</sup>Cf. Humphrey Trevelyan, *Goethe and the Greeks* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1942), p. 182: 'With his eyes he saw the very human body of his little German flower-girl [Christiane]; his spirit saw and worshipped the great Goddess, Kupris-Aphrodite'.

<sup>47</sup>See H.A. 9, p.650.

himself that Goethe's condensation of the Eternal Feminine (what he called his 'mystical-cabbalistic chemistry and its implications'; H.A.9, p.414) with Christianity is most clearly in evidence. In the following passage (taken from Part II, Bk. 8), for example, the debate between conventional church-goers and the then newly-fashionable deists is couched in terms that suggest that the dispute between the two camps was marked by sexual difference:

Die Verschiedenheit der Charaktere und Denkweisen zeigt sich hier in unendlichen Abstufungen, besonders da noch ein Hauptunterschied mit einwirkte, indem die Frage entstand, wieviel Anteil die Vernunft, wieviel die Empfindung an solchen Überzeugungen haben könne und dürfe. Die lebhaftesten und geistreichsten Männer erwiesen sich in diesem Falle als Schmetterlinge, welche ganz eingedenk ihres Raupenstandes die Puppenhülle wegwerfen, in der sie zu ihrer organischen Vollkommenheit gediehen sind. Andere, treuer und bescheidner gesinnt, konnte man den Blumen vergleichen, die, ob sie sich gleich zur schönsten Blüte entfalten, sich doch von der Wurzel, von dem Mutterstamme nicht losreißen, ja vielmehr durch diesen Familienzusammenhang die gewünschte Frucht erst zur Reife bringen (H.A. 9, p. 334).

Differences in character and ways of thinking were evident here in infinite gradations, but the underlying chief difference was over the question about how much part reason and how much part feelings, could and should play in such convictions. In this situation, the liveliest and most quick-witted men showed themselves to be like butterflies, who, quite forgetting they were ever caterpillars, discard the cocoon, in which they have developed to organic completeness. Others, of more loyal and modest disposition, could be compared to flowers, which do not detach themselves from the root or [mother-] stem, while unfolding into the most beautiful blossom; indeed, and to the contrary, it is only through this connection that they bring the desired fruit to ripeness (*Poetry and Truth*, p.250).

There can be little doubt, surely, which side of this theological debate has the narrator's sympathy: the deists, though 'lively' and 'quick-witted', are insect-like, and

flighty, forgetting their own heritage; the traditionalists, by contrast, are 'loyal' and 'modest', and resemble flowers that blossom and give forth fruit;<sup>48</sup> moreover, earlier (H.A. 9, p.289; *Poetry and Truth*, p. 218) the religion of the heart had already been highly valued as the true, inner religion. Of particular interest here is that the contrast between the two schools of thought is also articulated in male-female terms. The 'men' (*Männer*) are emphatically identified with the party of Reason, while Feelings are represented by 'others' (*andere*), who — while they could grammatically also be male — are strongly associated with the conventionally feminine symbols of 'flowers', 'beautiful blossom', 'fruit', and (reminiscent of the Zoharic sefirot-system) with the 'mother-stem'. A strong sense of woman as *l'autre* is created; and the true, heartfelt religious sensibility, it is insinuated, is designated feminine in nature.

This same emphatic preference for the felt, sensuous attachment to spiritual values is, if anything, even clearer in an earlier passage in the Autobiography (Part II, Bk 7) where the sacraments, in particular the Eucharist, are discussed. Making much the same point as Feuerbach in the quotation cited from Irigaray at the opening of this chapter (namely, that 'Protestants have too few sacraments'), Goethe goes on to praise the physicality of the Eucharist:

Die Sakramente sind das Höchste der Religion, das sinnliche Symbol einer außerordentlichen Gunst und Gnade. In dem Abendmahle sollen die irdischen Lippen ein göttliches Wesen verkörpert empfangen und unter der Form irdischer Nahrung einer himmlischen teilhaftig werden. Dieser Sinn ist in allen christlichen Kirchen ebenderselbe ... (II.A. 9, p. 289).

The sacraments are the most sublime part of religion, the physical symbol of extraordinary divine grace and favor. In the Eucharist our earthly lips are said to receive the incarnation of a divine essence, and under the form of an earthly food to partake of a heavenly one. It has this same [sense] in all the Christian churches ... (*Poetry and Truth*, p. 218).

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<sup>48</sup>Aída Beaupied, *Narciso hermético: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz y José Lezama Lima* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), p. 18, identifies the kabbalistic symbol of the flower (as Shekhinah) as central to these two poets.

It is important to translate *Sinn* as 'sense' here, despite its awkwardness in English; because the double signification of the term in both languages signals Goethe's attempt here to achieve a combination of both 'mind' or 'spirit' ('meaning') and the sensuous and physical (in very much the spirit of the language of the *Zohar*).<sup>49</sup> Apparently, Goethe is as insistent as Irigaray in putting 'the Flesh before the Word' (to quote her much-repeated anti-Lacanian slogan): since in the Eucharist the Word is made Flesh, Goethe emphasizes — by using that same metonymy of the *lips* that Irigaray also employs to evoke sentience and the body<sup>50</sup> — the human encounter with an embodied divinity. The earthy, erotic overtones of (kissing with) the lips are redolent of that 'sexual intimacy within the life of God' which in the *Zohar* 'is the paradigmatic expression of divine wholeness.'<sup>51</sup> As if to underline the symbolic significance represented by the sensuous engagement of the lips, Goethe reports a little later on that, appalled by the perfunctoriness with which his heartfelt confession as a young man was about to be received, he could not bring himself to say what he truly felt:

... auf einmal [erlosch] alles Licht meines Geistes und Herzens, die wohl memorierte Beichtrede wollte mir *nicht über die Lippen*, ich schlug in der Verlegenheit das Buch auf, das ich in Händen hatte, und las daraus die erste beste Formel, die so allgemein war, daß ein jeder

<sup>49</sup>See Matti Megged, 'The Kabbalah as Poetry', in *Hermeticism and Poetics: Proceedings of the Xth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, 3 vols; vol.2: *Comparative Poetics*, ed. by A. Balakian and J. Wilhelm, et al (New York: Garland, 1985), pp. 558-564 (p. 560): '[the poet of the *Zohar* aspires] to embrace the abstract and the concrete ... the sensual and the transcendental'. Such play on homonymy (and synonymy) is typical of the style Irigaray herself employs (e.g., in *Speculum*) in an attempt to achieve *parler femme*. For an analysis of Goethe's deployment of aesthetic discourse in his Autobiography, see Jane Plenderleith, 'The Testament of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*: An Enquiry into Goethe's Mode of Secularization' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 1991).

<sup>50</sup>See Luce Irigaray, 'The Limits of the 'Transference'', in *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. by Margaret Whitford (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 110-11. Cf., too, her speculation that 'lips' is etymologically cognate with that pre-eminently feminine symbol, the labyrinth ('Gesture in Psychoanalysis', in Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 89-104 (p. 101).

<sup>51</sup>Lawrence Fine, 'Purifying the Body in the Name of the Soul: The Problem of the Body in Sixteenth-Century Kabbalah', in *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*, ed. by H. Eilberg-Schwartz (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 117-142.

sie ganz ruhig hätte aussprechen können (H.A. 9, p. 293; my emphasis).

... suddenly all the light in my mind and heart was extinguished. The well-memorized speech would *not cross my lips*, and in embarrassment I opened the book I held in my hands and read from it the first formula I came upon, which was so general that anyone could have spoken it quite calmly (*Poetry and Truth*, p. 221; my emphasis).

Whether the emphasis here on contact through the lips marks an identity with the mother, in the way Irigaray characteristically argues, is unclear. But what is clear is that the encounter with divinity is envisaged as sensuous and erotic, marking out the divine not simply as Other, but as sexed Other — which, in the case of the male communicant, identifies the divine as feminine.

Much later, in Part III, Book 14, Goethe sets up a dramatic confrontation between a woman (Fräulein von Klettenberg) and a man (J.C. Lavater) in which an explicit, if not blatant, sexual difference in approaching the divinity is registered:

Ob ich nun gleich dies nicht geradezu behauptete, so konnte ich doch im gegenwärtigen Fall bemerken, daß Männer und Frauen einen verschiedenen Heiland bedürfen. Fräulein von Klettenberg verhielt sich zu dem ihrigen wie zu einem Geliebten, dem man sich unbedingt hingibt, alle Freude und Hoffnung auf seine Person legt, und ihm ohne Zweifel und Bedenken das Schicksal des Lebens anvertraut; Lavater hingegen behandelte den seinigen als einen Freund, dem man neidlos und liebevoll nacheifert, seine Verdienste anerkennt, sie hochpreist, und eben deswegen ihm ähnlich, ja gleich zu werden bemüht ist (H.A. 10, p. 22).

Although I did not actually put this in words, still I could detect in the present case that men and women require a different Savior. Miss von Klettenberg's attitude to hers was as to a lover to whom one yields oneself unconditionally, looking to him for all the joy and hope, and without any doubt or hesitancy entrusting to him one's destiny in life. Lavater, on the other hand, treated his like a friend whom one emulates lovingly and without envy, whose merits one acknowledges and lauds



to the skies, and for this very reason makes every effort to resemble and equal (*Poetry and Truth*, p. 450).

Yet again the warmer, more intimate, relationship is on the side of the woman; by comparison with the erotic analogy underlying the woman's relation to her Saviour, the man's friendship with his seems worthy but dull. This impression is then fully confirmed by the final part of the passage:

Welch ein Unterschied zwischen beiderlei Richtung! wodurch im allgemeinen die geistigen Bedürfnisse der zwei Geschlechter ausgesprochen werden. Daraus mag es auch zu erklären sein, daß zärtere Männer sich an die Mutter Gottes gewendet, ihr, als einem Ausbund weiblicher Schönheit und Tugend ... Leben und Talente gewidmet, und allenfalls nebenher mit dem göttlichen Knaben gespielt haben (H.A. 10, p.22).

What a difference between these two approaches! And it expresses in general the spiritual needs of the two sexes. It may also explain why more sensitive men have turned to the Mother of God, why they have ... devoted their life and talents to her as the paragon of feminine beauty and virtue, and have dallied with the divine Child only incidentally (*Poetry and Truth*, p. 450).

What at first sight may appear to be a third option, an addition to the two approaches outlined above, is in reality no such thing. Like the sensitive/tender souls aspiring to the Mater Gloriosa in *Faust II* (ll. 12012 and 12097), the 'zärtere Männer' ('sensitive men') are clearly superior in a crucial respect to those who form a friendship with their God: their emotional constitution is more exalted. Devotion to the Mother of God is clearly a better approach, according to Goethe; certainly preferable to demeaning divinity by striving to be His or Her equal. Moreover, the ironic rhetorical strategy adopted implies yet another possible position, not spelled out: 'more sensitive women' might want also to approach a feminine divine (in precisely the sense in

which Luce Irigaray has argued for it), thus resisting male appropriation of the identity of the divine.

That Goethe as narrator of his own autobiography identifies with those men who worship a Mother God is clear from the passages cited above. That he sustained this approach to the divine feminine through his work as a whole has also been indicated. And that this attitude also characterized his habitual modes of thought and feeling is corroborated by a report of his secretary, Riemer, who noted on the 24th November 1808: 'Merkwürdige Reflexion Goethes über sich selbst: Daß er das *Ideelle* unter einer *weiblichen* Form oder unter der Form des Weibes konzipiert' ('Noteworthy reflexion made by Goethe about himself: that he conceives of the *Idea* in feminine form or in the form of a woman'). Perhaps in no other text of Goethe's is his interest in the form (and import) of femininity more intense than in his novel, *Wilhelm Meister*.

CHAPTER III: The Female Voice in *Wilhelm Meister*

After the initial enthusiasm for *The Apprenticeship* expressed by Goethe's Romantic contemporaries, in particular by Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis,<sup>1</sup> verdicts on *Wilhelm Meister* have been overwhelmingly negative in the critical literature. It was not until the 1970s that the work began to be revalued, a resurgence of interest that was noted in a 1977 review of the *Festschriften* of three leading Germanists, each of which contained a large number of studies of the novel:

*Wilhelm Meister* — that most incalculable of Goethe's incalculable productions — somewhat surprisingly draws the most interpreters of all.<sup>2</sup>

The Second Part in particular, *The Journeyman Years* — which over the last twenty years has attracted so much admiring critical attention — has, since its publication in 1829, been the major stumbling-block to an appreciation of the work as a whole. George Henry Lewes' damning judgement of 1855 is typical of the responses, German and non-German, that the novel has elicited until comparatively recently: 'it is unintelligible, it is tiresome, it is fragmentary, it is dull, and it is often ill-written.'<sup>3</sup> Nearly a century later, J.M. Robertson's view sustains the negative note, adding two motifs taken from contemporary German criticism<sup>4</sup> according to which the novel (in particular, *The Journeyman Years*) is 'a receptacle into which Goethe threw the most varied collection of "odds and ends" of his work and thought'; and which, far from being 'a novel of a readable kind, became a storehouse of Goethe's apothegmatic wisdom';<sup>5</sup> both critiques of its formal structure which have been only generally

<sup>1</sup> See Martin Swales, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp.24-37, for an account of what he calls 'the second phase of the reception' of the novel, the first being 'the interchange of letters involving Goethe, Schiller, Humboldt, and Christian Gottfried Körner' (p.24).

<sup>2</sup> David H. Miles, 'Review of *Festschriften* for Wilhelm Enrich, Oskar Seidlin, and Erich Heller', *Germanic Review*, 102 (1977), 64-65.

<sup>3</sup> G.H. Lewes, *Life of Goethe* (London: Nutt, 1855), p.412.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Max Wundt, *Goethes Wilhelm Meister und die Entwicklung des modernen Lebensideals*. (Berlin: Göschen, 1913).

<sup>5</sup> J.M. Robertson, *The Life and Works of Goethe* (London: Athlone, 1932), pp.271-72.

contested since the 1970's. Friedrich Gundolf considered it far more 'a book of wisdom' than a work of literature;<sup>6</sup> and Barker Fairley saw the novel, particularly the Second Part, as 'the chief vehicle of Goethe's thoughts on society and the state'.<sup>7</sup> This ingrained attitude to the novel led to its almost total neglect, and to its being dismissed as a careless product of both Goethe's dotage and the indulgent reading-practices of the public for whom he wrote. As Benedetto Croce maintained:

...particularly in Goethe's time, there was in the mental attitude of German readers something which probably encouraged the author to yield to his syncretistic tendency and to indulge his weakness.<sup>8</sup>

In a (highly influential, though heavily criticized) study of the novel, published in 1953, Karl Schlechta began with what has become in the secondary literature a generally characteristic admission of the peculiar difficulty of undertaking a reading of the work: '*Wilhelm Meister*, both the *Apprenticeship* and the *Journeyman Years*, offers any exegesis unusual problems'.<sup>9</sup> As late as 1969 this negative assessment of Goethe's alleged lack of formal control in the novel was the dominant tone of the criticism. As Victor Lange, summing up the consensus view at the time, succinctly states: '*Wilhelm Meister* remains a puzzling testimony to Goethe's conception of narrative strategy'.<sup>10</sup>

In the wake of burgeoning interest in that international world of discourse known as 'literary theory', however, the apparent oddity of Goethe's mode of organization in *Wilhelm Meister* has, once again, brought his novel renewed critical attention. Drawing on such works as Wayne C. Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction*, F.K. Stanzel's studies of narrative technique, and Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse*,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Friedrich Gundolf, *Goethe* (Berlin: Göschen, 1917), p.714: 'ein Weisheitsbuch'.

<sup>7</sup>Barker Fairley, *A Study of Goethe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p.253.

<sup>8</sup>Benedetto Croce, *Goethe* (London: Methuen, 1923), p.173.

<sup>9</sup>Karl Schlechta, *Goethes Wilhelm Meister* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1953), p.11.

<sup>10</sup>Victor Lange, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte von Goethes Wanderjahre', *German Life and Letters*, 23 (1969), 47-54 (p.54). Cf. Manfred Karnick, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre, oder die Kunst des Mittelbaren* (Munich: Fink, 1968), p.7.

<sup>11</sup>Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968); F.K. Stanzel, *Typische Formen des Romans* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964); *Theorie des Erzählens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976); Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An*

critics have seen a narratological strategy at work in both the *Apprenticeship* and the *Journeyman Years*, one which lays to rest the accusations of 'negligence' on Goethe's part. By the same token, a consensus has begun to form in respect of the status of the novel's content thus rhetorically organized. Since the 1970s, two strands of criticism are discernable in relation to what in 1976 was called — uncontroversially — 'the most important novel in German literature'<sup>12</sup>. On the one hand, Goethe's novels generally — and *Wilhelm Meister* in particular — have been analysed and held to be anticipatory of many of the insights of twentieth-century social science:

As a novelist Goethe belongs amongst the first to have seen the world with the eyes of the sociologist, the economist, the psychologist, even the psycho-analyst. He is the precursor, indeed in many respects a discoverer of these sciences and of their basic principles....<sup>13</sup>

This rather startling claim marks the climax of a school of criticism on the novel which seeks to locate the work's importance in its (undeniable) sociological orientation.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, stimulating work has also been undertaken on the esoteric and mythological content of the novel:

Once opened, the book of the past has proven so profitable for the world of Goethe's novels, that the Old Testament, Christian, and classical traditions cannot be dismissed.<sup>15</sup>

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*Essay in Method*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980); Cf. R.H. Stephenson and P.D. Zecevic, "Das Was Bedenke..." On the Content, Structure, and Form of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*', in *London German Studies* V, ed. by Martin Swales (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1993), pp.79-94 (pp.79-80).

<sup>12</sup>Eric A. Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976), p.100.

<sup>13</sup>Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane: Aufbruch in die Moderne* (Paderborn, München: Schöningh, 1996), p.11: 'Als Autor seiner Romane gehört Goethe mit unter die Ersten, die die Welt mit den Augen des Soziologen, des Ökonomen, des Psychologen und sogar des Psychoanalytikers gesehen haben. Er ist ein Wegbereiter, ja, in vielem ein Entdecker dieser Wissenschaften und ihrer Grundlagen...'

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Wilhelm Voßkamp, 'Utopie und Utopiekritik in Goethes Romanen Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre und Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre', in *Utopieforschung: Interdisziplinäre Studien zur neuzeitlichen Utopie III*, ed. by Wilhelm Voßkamp (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1982), pp. 227-49.

<sup>15</sup>Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.11: 'Einmal aufgeblättert, hat sich das Buch der Vergangenheit auch für Goethes Romanwelt also so ergiebig erwiesen, daß die alttestamentarischen, christlichen und antiken Traditionslinien nicht von der Hand zu weisen sind.'

Though it pays scant attention to the feminine voice in the novel, Hannelore Schlaffer's 1980 study of mythical material in *Wilhelm Meister* has stimulated work that complements the sociological orientation of much recent criticism.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, drawing on Joseph Strelka's pioneering study of Goethe's life-long interest in esotericism, Schlaffer's study has helped to establish the view that, whatever else he was aiming at in *Wilhelm Meister*, there can be little doubt that one of Goethe's intentions was to re-formulate ancient Hermetic-mythological lore in psychological terms.<sup>17</sup>

Adopting the framework provided by Volker Neuhaus's pioneering analysis of the novel's narrative structure,<sup>18</sup> critics now see in both the *Apprenticeship* and the *Journeyman Years* a structuring principle at work that strengthens the case made for the esoteric content of the novel. Their perception in the novel of a narrative strategy called 'internal mirroring' — a variant of Goethe's principle of 'wiederholte Spiegelung' ('repeated reflexion')<sup>19</sup> — has brought a degree of order into what earlier commentators often perceived as a chaotic jumble.<sup>20</sup> Goethe's adoption of such an oblique, indirect method of presentation would seem to encourage the reader to adopt, in turn, that same open attitude of mind that Wilhelm is encouraged to cultivate throughout his adventures. Juxtaposition in varying contexts and modes encourages the reader to compare and contrast 'repeatedly reflected' elements until a common import emerges, distilled from particular passages.<sup>21</sup> The whole novel is presented as if all its constituent parts had been sorted and assembled by a cautious narrator;<sup>22</sup> the

<sup>16</sup>Hannelore Schlaffer, *Wilhelm Meister. Das Ende der Kunst und die Wiederkehr des Mythos* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980); Cf. Hans-Rudolf Vaget, 'Goethe the Novelist: On the Coherence of his Fiction', in *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, ed. by W.J. Lillyman (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), pp. 1-20 (p.6).

<sup>17</sup>See Joseph Strelka, *Esoterik bei Goethe* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1980), p.84. See Hannelore Schlaffer, *Wilhelm Meister*, p.5: 'In den versteckten mythologischen Bildern siegt endlich doch die Poesie über die Prosa.' ('In the hidden mythological images poetry finally triumphs over prose'.)

<sup>18</sup>Volker Neuhaus, 'Die Archivfiktion in Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre', *Euphorion*, 62 (1968), 13-27.

<sup>19</sup>See L.A. Willoughby, 'Literary Relations in the Light of Goethe's Principle of "wiederholte Spiegelungen"', *Comparative Literature*, 1 (1949), 309-22; reprinted in Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, *Goethe, Poet and Thinker* (London: Edward Arnold, 1972), pp. 153-166.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Lillyman, *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, pp.7ff.

<sup>21</sup>See Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.24, where it is argued that Goethe's novels 'provoke a conceptual response'.

<sup>22</sup>Neuhaus, 'Die Archivfiktion', p.26.

apparently unintegrated 'stowaways'<sup>23</sup> (the intercalated *Novellen*, aphorisms, and poems) indicate that the novel is precisely what Goethe called it: an *Aggregat*, an 'assemblage'. Such 'jumps in the narrative point of view'<sup>24</sup> encourage the reader to concentrate on each (apparently isolated) part in turn:

Goethe seems to be concerned with letting each part be a whole-in-itself, with reference to the overall whole. That is precisely what the 'repeated reflexions' achieve....<sup>25</sup>

One clear implication of such a strategy is that the reader feels compelled to pay close attention to the verbal texture of those parallel passages that are caught up in this interaction of 'repeated reflexions'; for the logic of the mutual 'relativization'<sup>26</sup> of different elements is that such 'repeated reflexion' fosters concentrated focus.

The particular constellation of, and the relationship between, often distant parts of the novel which is brought about — 'without the narrator's even calling attention to it' — by this structuring principle of 'repeated reflexion', produces a rich textual irony.<sup>27</sup> This well-established view of *Wilhelm Meister* as pervasively ironic has been helpfully summed up by Eric Blackall:

It is an ironic book about irony, with a plot that portrays a hero desperately trying to make a plot of his own life, past, present and future, only to find out that all his attempts at self-realisation and self-

<sup>23</sup>The term is taken from George C. Buck, 'The Pattern of the Stowaway in Goethe's Works', *PMLA*, 71 (1956), 451-64 (p.458).

<sup>24</sup>Laura Martin, 'Who's the Fool Now? A Study of Goethe's Novella "Die pilgernde Törin" from His Novel *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*', *The German Quarterly*, 66 (1993), 431-450 (p.449). Martin notes 'that the novel before 19th-century "realism" contained many elements which the modern post-realism novel recaptured, but did not really invent' (p.449). Repetition, for example, 'the central technique in certain avant-garde novels', and central to Genette's narratology (*Narrative Discourse*, Foreword, p.11) has been identified (in terms of 'wiederholte Spiegelung') as crucial to Goethe's narrative structure in *Wilhelm Meister*.

<sup>25</sup>Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.58: 'Goethe scheint es darum zu gehen, in bezug auf das Ganze auch jeden Teil ein Ganzes sein zu lassen. Gerade das leisten die "wiederholten Spiegelungen"...'.

<sup>26</sup>Lillyman, *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, p.8.

<sup>27</sup>See Vaget, 'Goethe the Novelist', in *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, ed. by W.J. Lillyman, p.9. Vaget is here drawing on Ehrhard Bahr, *Die Ironie im Spätwerk Goethes: ... "Diese sehr ernsten Scherze" ... Studien zum West-östlichen Divan, zu den Wanderjahren und zu Faust II* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1972), which in turn acknowledges its debt to Thomas Mann's highly influential Goethe interpretations.

expression are fruitless, and that what really matters is what comes to one by chance — or by fate?<sup>28</sup>

The root-source of this thorough-going irony is identified by critics in 'the double-faced profile' of the novel: in the discrepancy between the realistic world of contingency on the one hand ('chance', as Blackall calls it) and the mythological world ('fate') evoked by both characters and narrator on the other.<sup>29</sup> This discerned tension between the exoteric and the esoteric has in turn given rise to the two main schools of criticism on the work. And it is a commonplace of *Bildungsroman* criticism in general, and of *Wilhelm Meister* scholarship in particular, that the genre in this respect as in many others owes much to the tradition of the picaresque novel.<sup>30</sup> Wilhelm — like Justina, desirous of seeing the world and developing himself — drifts from place to place and from one social grouping to another; *Wilhelm Meister* shares the same episodic structure of the picaresque novel and of the rambling romances of chivalry; and, as in *La Pícaro Justina*, the hero's point of view is that of an outsider. More specifically relevant here is that the two works share a similarly ironic viewpoint, arising from the same structural contrast (between realism and mythology), one which is articulated in very similar stylistic terms, certainly in respect of the expression given to the female/feminine voice. In his 1823 review of a collection of Spanish romances<sup>31</sup> it was precisely the 'higher, benevolent irony' that Goethe singled out for particular praise, favourably comparing it with what he admired in Goldsmith's and Sterne's novels — a humour that 'liberated the soul'.<sup>32</sup> And, as Eric Blackall notes, there is some evidence to suggest that the picaresque novel played a significant role in shaping Goethe's own practice as a novelist.<sup>33</sup> However that may be, what is clear is that in both *La Pícaro Justina* and *Wilhelm Meister* the perplexing

<sup>28</sup>Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel*, p.136.

<sup>29</sup>See Heinz Schlaffer, *Der Bürger als Held: Sozialgeschichtliche Auflösungen literarischer Widersprüche* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976).

<sup>30</sup>Cf. Swales, *The German Bildungsroman*, p.34: 'The *Bildungsroman* ... is written for the sake of the journey, and not for the sake of the happy ending toward which that journey points'.

<sup>31</sup>GA, XIV, p.508.

<sup>32</sup>GA, VIII, p.513.

<sup>33</sup>Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel*, pp.142-44.



discrepancy between the 'real' world of contingency and error, and the mythological world produces an interruptive narrative framework,<sup>34</sup> which in turn furnishes opportunity for an indirect, non-linear, allusive style that acts as a provocation to the reader to find coherences in the textual detail that are, apparently, lacking in the narration.

That *Wilhelm Meister* is 'an experiment in the art of reading',<sup>35</sup> and one in which Goethe seems to be 'deliberately playing with reader expectations',<sup>36</sup> is generally accepted in the secondary literature. The response Goethe is eliciting from the reader seems to be the same as that which he himself brought to bear on Homer:

Someone says: 'Why do you bother with Homer? You don't understand him after all.' To that I answer: I don't understand the sun, moon, and stars either; but they pass over my head and I recognize myself in them by contemplating them and their wonderful regular course, always thinking at the same time that maybe something will become of me.<sup>37</sup>

In a novel in which there is such an assertive display of diverse forms, the reader is forced to construe the whole, to make sense of it. It was this aspect of the work that struck Schiller so strongly on reading *The Apprenticeship*. He wrote to Goethe:

The result of such a whole must always be the independent free, though not arbitrary, production of the reader.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.39, argues that this structuring polarity holds true for all Goethe's novels: 'Seit dem *Werther* erzählt Goethe in seinen Romanfiguren zwei Geschichten: eine historische und eine musterhafte.' (Since *Werther*, Goethe narrates two stories in terms of the characters of his novels, one historical, the other exemplary.)

<sup>35</sup>Vaget, 'Goethe the Novelist', in Lillyman, *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, p.4.

<sup>36</sup>Swales, *The German Bildungsroman*, p.65.

<sup>37</sup>M.u.R., 1037: Jemand sagte: 'Was bemüht ihr euch an den Homer? Ihr versteht ihn doch nicht.' Darauf antwort' ich: Versteh ich doch auch Sonne, Mond und Sterne nicht, aber sie gehen über meinem Haupt hin und ich erkenne mich in ihnen, indem ich sie sehe und ihren regelmäßigen wunderbaren Gang betrachte, und denke dabei, ob auch wohl etwas aus mir werden könnte.

<sup>38</sup>'Das Resultat eines solchen Ganzen muß immer die eigene, freie, nur nicht willkürliche Produktion des Lesers sein.' Schiller to Goethe, 9.7.1796.

Such a stimulus to the reader's free use of his/her imagination is also what appealed strongly to the Schlegel brothers, who found in *Wilhelm Meister* those qualities of Romantic 'wit' that they extolled in Spanish literature, in particular Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.<sup>39</sup> Like *La Pícaro Justina*, *Wilhelm Meister* is a work which sets out quite deliberately to puzzle, to challenge the reader to 'unravel the riddle', as Northrop Frye puts it:

Riddle was originally the cognate object of read, and the riddle seems intimately involved with the whole process of reducing language to visible form.<sup>40</sup>

As we shall see, nowhere is this hermeneutic provocation more intense, in either novel, than in the presentation of the theme of femininity.<sup>41</sup>

The 'immense variety of sexual attitudes' displayed in *Wilhelm Meister* has often been noted.<sup>42</sup> It ranges in the *Apprenticeship* from the incestuous relationship between Augusta, the itinerant Harp-Player, and his half-sister, Sperata, that has produced the apparently hermaphroditic Mignon, through the flirtatious promiscuity of Philine and the Casanova-like exploits of Lothario, to the markedly cool and restrained relationship between Wilhelm and Natalie; from the idyllic marriage of a certain Mary and Joseph, that opens the *Journeyman Years*, to the sublimated marriage-of-minds represented by the relationship between the Astronomer and the

<sup>39</sup>See Ernst Behler, 'Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre and the Poetic Unity of the Novel in Early German Romanticism', in Lillyman, *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, pp.110-127 (pp.117-18).

<sup>40</sup>Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p.280. Cf. Blossin, *Goethes Romane*, p.286: 'Aus allem, was sich erst Schritt für Schritt klären soll, macht der Roman mit Vorliebe ein Geheimnis.' ('The novel prefers to make a mystery of everything that is to reveal itself only step by step.'). p.296: the inner and outer form of the novel has 'die Gestalt eines Rätsels' ('the form of a riddle').

<sup>41</sup>Cf. Umberto Eco's comments on 'the fruitfulness' (p.140) of what he calls 'overinterpretation' — 'an excessive propensity to treat as significant elements which might be simply fortuitous' (p.121) — when warranted by the kind of 'Hermetic semiosis' (p.50) that was the model of reading in the Renaissance and the Baroque, and in traditions stemming from those periods. 'Overinterpreting Texts' and 'Reply' in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 45-66 and 139-51 respectively. I am grateful to Professor Gareth Walters for drawing my attention to Eco's arguments here.

<sup>42</sup>See Elizabeth M. Wilkinson, 'Sexual Attitudes in Goethe's Life and Works', in her *Goethe Revisited: A Collection of Essays* (London: Calder, 1984), pp.171-184 (p.173). Cf. Vaget, 'Goethe the Novelist', in Lillyman, *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, p.4, on the freedom with which Goethe handles the erotic.

Wise Old Woman, Makarie, whose personality dominates the end of the novel. This emphatic presentation of the possibility of diversity in erotic relationships is, by common consent, at its most intense in the series of *Novellen* that are interpolated into the narrative of the novel.

Each story is about an unusual love situation, cutting across standard patterns of relations between the sexes: feeling at cross-purposes with the habitual course of things. In 'Die Pilgernde Törrin' ('The Deranged Pilgrim') both father and son are in love with the same woman. In 'Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren' ('The Man of Fifty Years') the father is initially in love with his niece (Hilarie), while his son is in love with an older woman of his father's age. Later in the *Novelle* the father's affections are engaged and reciprocated by the older woman; the son loses his heart to the niece, who returns his love; and there is a return to a difficult and problematical 'normality'. In 'Wer ist der Verräter?' ('Who is the Traitor?') a young suitor falls in love with the sister of the girl his father has chosen for him, thus running counter to the wishes and plans of his father. In the more tragic 'Nicht zu weit' ('Not Too Far') both partners in an unhappy marriage have significant extra-marital involvements. Most bizarre of all the stories is that of 'Die neue Melusine' ('The New Melusine') in which a man falls in love with a fairy-princess who has taken on human form in order to find a husband.<sup>43</sup>

The problematic dynamics of the relationship between feeling and form are presented vividly in these stories. Sometimes feeling triumphs over an imposed form as in 'Who is the Traitor?', in which the son opts for his own choice of bride. Sometimes feelings are restored, even revitalized, by a conscious return to conventionality, somewhat blithely transgressed, as in 'The Man of Fifty Years': it is at Lake Maggiore — the birthplace of Mignon — that Hilarie learns to express her feelings to some extent, by subjecting herself to the rigorous conventions of representational drawing:

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<sup>43</sup>Cf. Luce Irigaray's discussion of the Melusine-motif, 'Divine Women', in *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp.59-60.

Auch nicht ohne sittliche Nachwirkung war eine solche ästhetische Ausbildung geblieben: denn einen magischen Eindruck auf ein reines Gemüt bewirkt das Gewährwerden der innigsten Dankbarkeit gegen irgend jemand, dem wir entscheidende Belehrung schuldig sind. Diesmal war es das erste frohe Gefühl, das in Hilariens Seele nach geraumer Zeit hervortrat. Die herrliche Welt erst tagelang vor sich zu sehen und nun die auf einmal verliehene vollkommene Darstellungsgabe zu empfinden! Welche Wonne, in Zügen und Farben dem Unausprechlichen näher zu treten! Sie fühlte sich mit einer neuen Jugend überrascht und konnte sich eine besondere Anneigung zu jenem, dem sie dies Glück schuldig geworden, nicht versagen (H.A.8, p.238).

This aesthetic education was not without moral consequences; for the recognition of heartfelt gratitude toward someone who has taught us a significant lesson makes a magical impression on the pure heart. This was the first joyous feeling to emerge in Hilarie's soul in some time. To see the glorious world spread out before her for days on end, and now suddenly to experience a fuller power to represent it! What bliss, to approach the inexpressible through lines and colors! She felt swept up by new youth, and could not but harbor a special fondness for the person to whom she owed this happiness (*Journeyman Years*, p.263).

In 'The Deranged Pilgrim', on the other hand, the wilful imposition of 'good form' by the Lady Pilgrim appears to smother her feeling:<sup>44</sup> for example, she persistently shuns contact with men by hiding behind ponderous platitudes (H.A., 8, pp. 59 and 63);<sup>45</sup> and the feelings both the son and the father have for her are held at bay by her reiteration of the rules of good conduct. By contrast, it is the inability on the part of the man in 'The New Melusine' to play the part of the chivalrous knight the fairy-princess seeks that ruins the relationship. Had he been bound by a code of honour and been as good as his word, the fairy-princess might have attained human stature and

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<sup>44</sup>For a subtle and discerning defence of the Lady Pilgrim's (admittedly extremely guarded) 'presentation of self', see Laura Martin, 'Who's the Fool Now? A Study of Goethe's Novella "Die pilgernde Törrin" from His Novel *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*', *The German Quarterly*, 66 (1993), 431-449', especially pp.442-45.

<sup>45</sup>Cf. Gonthier-Louis Fink, 'Die Auseinandersetzung mit der Tradition in Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahren', *Recherches Germaniques*, 5 (1975), 89-142 (pp.100-101).

status. As it is, she must return to the fairy-kingdom. The man at first volunteers to go with her, but, dismayed at the physical diminution in his size that this entails, he breaks faith with his fairy-wife in order to regain his normal, human height.

These stories present, then, the often painful adjustments that need to be made if feeling is to find expression in the relationship between the sexes. They show the deadening effect of conventionality when applied with the tactlessness of 'The Deranged Pilgrim'; while in the case of Hilarie in 'The Man of Fifty Years', we see how attention to conventions can serve to re-kindle the most delicate of feelings; feelings that might otherwise lie dormant. Rather than articulating the warmth of the naive life Wilhelm has lost,<sup>46</sup> these *Novellen* deal with a more complex theme; one which lies at the very centre of the novel: the reflexion — in the women's struggle with their conventional role(s) — of the generally human necessity of maintaining a flexible reciprocity between feeling and formula, inclination and precept, freedom and regulation; in a word, between the Dionysian and the Apollonian.<sup>47</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate in greater detail the complexity and diversity of Goethe's presentation of the theme of femininity in these interpolated stories. It will be sufficient to my comparative procedure to limit discussion to the main narrative, in accordance with what has been identified as 'the central trope' or governing rhetorical strategy of the novel, namely 'metonymy'. It has been convincingly argued<sup>48</sup> that the interpolations in *Wilhelm Meister* (the so-called 'stowaways': the *Novellen*, the aphorisms, and the poems) have the synecdochic function of one-standing-for-all. In other words, each re-presents a different elaboration and refinement of themes already at work in the main body of the text.<sup>49</sup> For the purposes of exposition, therefore, it seems appropriate, in relation to the

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<sup>46</sup>Schlechte, *Goethes Wilhelm Meister*, p.107.

<sup>47</sup>Cf. Stephenson and Zecevic, "'Das Was Bedenke...'", pp.88-89. See Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis: Themes of Gender in Psychoanalytic Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p.165: 'Dionysos, that slightly recalcitrant son of Zeus, sings, dances, draws every thing, every man, every woman into the orgy of a return to a primitive mother-nature'.

<sup>48</sup>Ehrhard Bahr, 'Revolutionary Realism in Goethe's *Wanderjahre*', *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, ed. by W.J. Lillyman, pp.161-175.

<sup>49</sup>Ehrhard Bahr, 'Revolutionary Realism', pp.163-65.

central theme of femininity and its expression, to focus primarily on the main plot and its major characters.

In order to present in the proper perspective the various attempts to articulate the feminine — by both women and men — in the novel, it is necessary to characterize first the ironic, indeed on occasion comic, way in which the Narrator (whose empathy with the female characters has been noted)<sup>50</sup> presents the male, in particular Wilhelm's, view of women and femininity. In its essence the problem which this narratorial irony points to is summed up aphoristically — 'metonymically' — in both of the collections of sayings contained in the Second Part of the novel. Near the beginning of the collections entitled 'Betrachtungen im Sinne der Wanderer' ('Reflections in the Spirit of the Wanderers'), the tension in the (unequal) pairing of male and female, masculine and feminine, as categories of thought is obliquely indicated in a subtle exploitation of the body of the German language which is as characteristic of Goethe<sup>51</sup> as it is in the case of the Spanish of López de Úbeda's *La Pícara Justina*:

Die vernünftige Welt ist als ein großes unsterbliches Individuum zu betrachten, das unaufhaltsam das Notwendige bewirkt und dadurch sich sogar über das Zufällige zum Herrn macht (M.u.R., 444).

The rational world should be regarded as a great, immortal individual, who ineluctably brings about that which must be, and thereby gains mastery even over chance (*Journeyman Years*, p.294).

The (quite untranslatable) *pointe* of this aphorism is expressed by means of the shift in the German from a (grammatically feminine) world to an action on its/her part ('zum Herrn macht': 'gains mastery') which implies, in the original language, a transformation from feminine to masculine. This need for the feminine to switch to the masculine in order to gain significance and recognition is expressed in the second

<sup>50</sup>See Laura Martin, 'Who's the Fool Now?', pp.432 and 448.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. R.H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature: A Study in Aesthetic Transmutation* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1983).

aphorism-collection ('Aus Makariens Archiv': 'From Makarie's Archive') in quite explicit male-female terms, in which the irony highlighting the inherent inequality of the relation between the sexes is unmistakable:

Für die vorzüglichste Frau wird diejenige gehalten, welche ihren Kindern den Vater, wenn er abgeht, zu ersetzen im Stande wäre (M.u.R., 729).

The superior woman would be she who could take the father's place with the children when he is gone (*Journeyman Years*, p.430).

This sexual tension runs through the whole length of *Wilhelm Meister*, informing its import at every level and taking on a different colouring in and between the characters of the novel. As a recent commentator has accurately noted: 'Das Ringen zwischen Männlich und Weiblich findet auch in jedem selbst statt. In jedem entscheidet sich dieser Konflikt aufs Neue.' ('The struggle between masculine and feminine takes place in every [main character]. In each the conflict is decided in a new way;' Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.172).

Aggression on the part of women towards men is not uncommon in the novel: Mignon bites Wilhelm in the hand; Philine flourishes her letter-opener on occasion; Hersilie wishes to take revenge on Lenardo for his having neglected his family. But, while it is difficult to find a rational motivation for most of these examples, Aurelie's wounding Wilhelm (in the hand) with her dagger is grounded in a carefully constructed context of causation. After the untimely death of her mother, Aurelie tells Wilhelm, she was brought up by an aunt whose loose-living and promiscuity made a deep impression on her, especially in respect of men:

Was mußten wir Kinder mit dem reinen und deutlichen Blick der Unschuld uns für Begriffe von dem männlichen Geschlechte machen? Wie dumpf, dreist, ungeschickt war jeder, den sie herbeireizte; wie satt, übermütig, leer und abgeschmackt dagegen, sobald er seiner Wünsche Befriedigung erfunden hatte. So hab' ich diese Frau

jahrelang unter dem Gebote der schlechtesten Menschen erniedrigt gesehen; was für Begegnungen mußte sie erdulden, und mit welcher Stirne wußte sie sich in ihr Schicksal zu finden, ja mit welcher Art diese schändlichen Fesseln zu tragen!

So lernte ich Ihr Geschlecht kennen, mein Freund, und wie rein haßte ich's, da ich zu bemerken schien, daß selbst leidliche Männer im Verhältnis gegen das unsrige jedem guten Gefühl zu entsagen schienen, zu dem sie die Natur sonst noch mochte fähig gemacht haben (H.A.7, pp.252-53).

What sort of view of the male sex could we innocent children form for ourselves from this? How obtuse, insistent, brazen and clumsy were all those whom she attracted to herself; how satiated, arrogant, empty-headed and ridiculous they became once they had satisfied their desires. I watched this woman degraded by base company for years on end. What encounters she had to put up with, what spirit she showed in accepting her fate, what shameful enslavements she had to learn to live with!

That was my introduction to the male sex, my friend; and how utterly I despised them when quite decent men seemed, in their relations with our sex, to abandon every good feeling that nature otherwise might have made them capable of (*Apprenticeship*, p.150).

Significantly, Aurelie's disgust is aroused not only by the casual, post-coital indifference of her aunt's many lovers, but also by her aunt, for whom she has scant sympathy; and this in turn breeds in her a contempt for her own sex: 'Leider muß ich auch bei solchen Gelegenheiten viel traurige Erfahrungen über mein eigen Geschlecht machen' (H.A.7, p.253) ('Unfortunately I also on these occasions formed some negative opinions of my own sex' *Apprenticeship*, p.150). Later she makes quite explicit the compensatory idealization of her own sex which informs the high standards by which she condemns those who transgress what she considers proper conduct. 'A woman who respects herself', one who is 'cold, proud, superior' is her ideal — an ideal which men, in her view, are incapable of appreciating:



Sie versank in sich, und nach einer kurzen Pause rief sie heftig aus: 'Ihr seid gewohnt, daß sich euch alles an den Hals wirft. Nein, ihr könnt es nicht fühlen, kein Mann ist imstande, den Wert eines Weibes zu fühlen, das sich zu ehren weiß! Bei allen heiligen Engeln, bei allen Bildern der Seligkeit, die sich ein reines, gutmütiges Herz erschafft, es ist nichts Himmlischeres als ein weibliches Wesen, das sich dem geliebten Manne hingibt! Wir sind kalt, stolz, hoch, klar, klug, wenn wir verdienen, Weiber zu heißen, und alle diese Vorzüge legen wir euch zu Füßen, sobald wir lieben, sobald wir hoffen, Gegenliebe zu erwerben (H.A.7, p.279).

She collapsed into herself, and then after a short pause, violently cried out: 'You are accustomed to everything coming your way without any effort. You cannot understand. No man can possibly appreciate a woman who respects herself. By all the holy angels, by all the sacred images of bliss that a pure and generous heart may create for itself, I swear there is nothing more divine than a woman who gives herself to a man she loves! When we are worthy of the name of woman, we are cold, proud, superior, clever, far-sighted; — but all these qualities we lay at your feet when we love, in the hope of gaining love in return' (*Apprenticeship*, p.166).

It is the abject self-abasement of the woman, according to Aurelie, that expresses her divinity; she sacrifices her superiority to the man she loves in an act of self-deification. In a word, her quite understandable ambivalence towards both her own sex and men is resolved in what she herself calls her 'theatrical display of passion' (H.A., 7, p.279; *Apprenticeship*, p.167).

At first sight Aurelie's violent hysteria might seem to justify, to some extent at least, the misogyny that is expressed by several male characters in the novel. But attention to the text reveals that Aurelie's state of mind is causally bound up with the patriarchal paternalism of her erstwhile lover, the significantly-named Lothario, the man who has rejected her.<sup>52</sup> In a set-piece debate (reported to Wilhelm by Lothario's bride-to-be, Therese), centred on 'all the usual things about the education of women',

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis*, p.18: 'the hysteric produces a knowledge of the unconscious'.

Goethe presents with ruthless realism the constricting, repressive constraints under which male-female relations are conceived and conducted in a patriarchal culture — that is, the apparently fixed and rigid oppositional pairs of male/female, active/passive, physical/spiritual, subordination/idealization. The women's complaints are familiar enough:

Das Gespräch machte sich ganz natürlich; einige Damen aus der Nachbarschaft hatten uns besucht und über die Bildung der Frauen die gewöhnlichen Gespräche geführt. Man sei ungerecht gegen unser Geschlecht, hieß es, die Männer wollten alle höhere Kultur für sich behalten, man wolle uns zu keinen Wissenschaften zulassen, man verlange, daß wir nur Tändelpuppen und Haushälterinnen sein sollten (H.A.7, p.452).

The topic came up quite naturally. Several ladies from the surrounding area were visiting us and were saying all the usual things about the education of women. Our sex was treated unfairly, they were saying: Men want to restrict all higher culture to themselves, we are not allowed to study, we are only to be playthings or housekeepers (*Apprenticeship*, p.277).

It is a topic that is certainly familiar to the reader of *Wilhelm Meister* at least, for it crops up with insistent frequency in the course of the novel. It is, for example, the basis of Hersilie's complaint against both Wilhelm and his son, Felix throughout the *Journeyman Years* (e.g., H.A.8, p.66); and it is a principal reason for the withdrawn, secretive life of Natalie's aunt in the *Apprenticeship*. Her exchange of books, and opinions on them, with her new friend, Narcissus, had, she tells the reader of her 'Confessions', 'to be kept even quieter than an illicit love affair':

Er brachte und sendete mir manch angenehmes Buch, doch das mußte geheimer als ein verbotenes Liebesverständnis gehalten werden. Man hatte die gelehrten Weiber lächerlich gemacht, und man wollte auch die unterrichteten nicht leiden, wahrscheinlich weil man für unhöflich hielt, so viel unwissende Männer beschämen zu lassen. Selbst mein

Vater, dem diese neue Gelegenheit, meinen Geist auszubilden, sehr erwünscht war, verlangte ausdrücklich, daß dieses literarische Kommerz ein Geheimnis bleiben sollte (H.A.7, p.366).

He brought or sent me many agreeable and useful books, but this had to be kept even quieter than an illicit love affair. Learned women had been ridiculed, and even educated women were unwillingly tolerated, probably because it was considered impolite to put so many ignorant men to shame. Even my father, though he welcomed this new opportunity for me to improve my mind, insisted that this literary exchange should remain a secret (*Apprenticeship*, p.222).

The high esteem in which scholarly women were held in the Renaissance (especially in France, Italy, and Spain, where a handful of women held university chairs, in the medical faculty of Salerno, for instance) — a development 'entirely due to the persistence of the Christian kabbalists during the Renaissance'<sup>53</sup> — is reflected in Goethe's novel as the precarious, somewhat socially embarrassing, phenomenon it has continued to be until recent times. The prescribed, and circumscribed, social role assigned to women is, for instance, reflected in the fact that it is the ladies' task to charm, flatter, cajole, and intrigue, to persuade the Count to accept changes to the theatrical performance he has charged Wilhelm with producing (H.A.7, p.167); and it is similarly indicative of women's subordination that, although they have both 'a seat and a vote' (H.A.7, p.296) in the make-shift policy of the travelling troupe of actors, their views are actually overlooked.

Lothario's response to the ladies' complaints is worth quoting in full since it not only explains where Aurelie may well have derived her self-tormenting idealized image of the perfect woman. In its explicitness it also makes perfectly plain a paternalistic patriarchal attitude that is endemic amongst the male characters of the novel:

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<sup>53</sup>See Alice Raphael, *Goethe and the Philosopher's Stone*, pp.31-32.

Lothario sprach wenig zu all diesem; als aber die Gesellschaft kleiner ward, sagte er auch hierüber offen seine Meinung. 'Es ist sonderbar', rief er aus, 'daß man es dem Manne verargt, der eine Frau an die höchste Stelle setzen will, die sie einzunehmen fähig ist; und welche ist höher als das Regiment des Hauses? Wenn der Mann sich mit äußern Verhältnissen quält, wenn er die Besitztümer herbeischaffen und beschützen muß, wenn er sogar an der Staatsverwaltung Anteil nimmt, überall von Umständen abhängt und, ich möchte sagen, nichts regiert, indem er zu regieren glaubt, immer nur politisch sein muß, wo er gern vernünftig wäre, versteckt, wo er offen, falsch, wo er redlich zu sein wünschte; wenn er um des Zieles willen, das er nie erreicht, das schönste Ziel, die Harmonie mit sich selbst, in jedem Augenblicke aufgeben muß: indessen herrscht eine vernünftige Hausfrau im Innern wirklich und macht einer ganzen Familie jede Tätigkeit, jede Zufriedenheit möglich. Was ist das höchste Glück des Menschen, als daß wir das ausführen, was wir als recht und gut einsehen? daß wir wirklich Herren über die Mittel zu unsern Zwecken sind? Und wo sollen, wo können unsere nächsten Zwecke liegen, als innerhalb des Hauses? Alle immer wiederkehrenden unentbehrlichen Bedürfnisse, wo erwarten wir, wo fordern wir sie, als da, wo wir aufstehn und uns niederlegen, wo Küche und Keller und jede Art von Vorrat für uns und die Unsrigen immer bereit sein soll? Welche regelmäßige Tätigkeit wird erfordert, um diese immer wiederkehrende Ordnung in einer unverrückten, lebendigen Folge durchzuführen! Wie wenig Männern ist es gegeben, gleichsam als ein Gestirn regelmäßig wiederzukehren und dem Tage so wie der Nacht vorzustehn, sich ihre häuslichen Werkzeuge zu bilden, zu pflanzen und zu ernten, zu verwahren und auszuspähen und den Kreis immer mit Ruhe, Liebe und Zweckmäßigkeit zu durchwandeln! Hat ein Weib einmal diese innere Herrschaft ergriffen, so macht sie den Mann, den sie liebt, erst allein dadurch zum Herrn; ihre Aufmerksamkeit erwirbt alle Kenntnisse, und ihre Tätigkeit weiß sie alle zu benutzen. So ist sie von niemand abhängig und verschafft ihrem Manne die wahre Unabhängigkeit, die häusliche, die innere; das, was er besitzt, sieht er gesichert, das, was er erwirbt, gut benutzt, und so kann er sein Gemüt nach großen Gegenständen wenden und, wenn das Glück gut ist, das dem Staate sein, was seiner Gattin zu Hause so wohl ansteht' (H.A.7, pp.452-53).

Lothario said little to all this, but when the company had diminished in size, he did speak his mind openly. 'It is strange', he said, 'that a man is thought ill of for wishing to please a woman in the highest position she is capable of occupying; and what is that but governing a household? Whereas the man labours away at external matters, acquiring possessions and protecting them, even maybe participating in the government of a state, he is always dependent on circumstances, and, I may say, controls nothing that he thinks he is controlling. He always has to be politic when he wants to be reasonable, covert when he wants to be open, deceitful when he wants to be honest, and for the sake of some goal that he never attains, he must every moment abandon the highest of all goals: harmony within himself. But the sensible housewife really governs, rules over all that is in the home and makes possible every kind of satisfying activity for the whole family. What is the greatest joy of mankind but pursuing what we perceive to be good and right, really mastering the means to our ends? And where should these ends be if not inside the home? Where should we encounter the constantly recurring, indispensable, needs, except where we get up in the morning and lay ourselves to rest at night, where kitchen and wine cellar and storerooms are always there for us and our families? And what a round of regular activity is required to maintain this constantly recurring order of things in undisturbed, never failing sequence! How few men are able to reappear like a star, regularly presiding over the day as well as the night, making household implements, sowing and reaping, preserving and expending, and treading the circle with calm, love and efficiency! Once a woman has assumed this internal governance, she makes thereby the man she loves into the sole master. Her attentiveness acquires all skills, and her activity uses them all. She is dependent on nobody and assures for her husband true independence — domestic independence, inner independence. What he owns, he now sees secured; what he acquires, he sees well used, and then he can turn his mind to bigger things, and if fortune favors him, be to the state what his wife is so admirably at home (*Apprenticeship*, p.277).

There is no mistaking the irony with which the Narrator allows Lothario to give full vent to his condescending 'pedestalling' of the (in fact) subordinated woman. Though her position is said to be the 'highest', in actuality it has to do with the humble chores

of a housewife; the neat, seemingly co-equal, antitheses (e.g., inner-outer) are, of course, loaded in terms of value in favour of the man: his destiny, after all, is to turn his mind 'to bigger things' (leaving the trivial sphere to his wife). The woman, it is indicated in the author's exploitation of the bodiliness of his medium (as in the aphorism quoted above), has to transform herself in running a household: she has to take on the masculine characteristics of '*Herrschaft*' ('governance'). Moreover, the ambivalence expressing itself in the hidden hierarchy at work here, which the idealization is meant to disguise, is made quite clear in this self-regarding variant of the old adage that '*behind* every great man stands a dutiful little woman': there is clear resentment in Lothario's extended lament over the character-distorting pressures a man faces in the external world (against which the little woman is sheltered).

Just as Lothario's encomium to the woman as man's helpmate makes the hysterical ambivalence of Aurelie's psychological martyrdom more understandable, so, too, does it provide the reader with an enlightening possible aetiology for the explicit outburst of misogyny on the part of several men in the novel. For example, the old man's concern for Mariane, Wilhelm's first love who has disappeared from the scene, quickly turns into suspicion of her motives, and is just as quickly subsumed under a general condemnation of the 'dissemblance and wantonness' of women in general:

O, die Verstellung und der Leichtsinns der Weiber ist so recht  
zusammengepaart, um ihnen ein bequemes Leben und einem ehrlichen  
Kerl manche verdrießliche Stunde zu schaffen! (H.A.7, p.114).

Dissemblance and wantonness combine in women to provide them  
with a comfortable life and honest fellows like me with hours of  
sorrow! (*Apprenticeship*, p.64)

It is this same *topos*, of the association of falseness with the feminine, that gives to the discussion of the ostensibly purely aesthetic topic of 'illusion' the palpable gender-tension between Laertes, Wilhelm, and the wife of the leader of the theatrical troupe:

'Fürtrefflich!' sagte Wilhelm, 'denn in einer Gesellschaft, in der man sich nicht verstellt, in welcher jedes nur seinem Sinne folgt, kann Anmut und Zufriedenheit nicht lange wohnen, und wo man sich immer verstellt, dahin kommen sie gar nicht. Es ist also nicht übel getan, wir geben uns die Verstellung gleich von Anfang zu und sind nachher unter der Maske so aufrichtig, als wir wollen.'

'Ja', sagte Laertes, 'deswegen geht sich's so angenehm mit Weibern um, die sich niemals in ihrer natürlichen Gestalt sehen lassen.'

'Das macht', versetzte Madame Mefina, 'daß sie nicht so eitel sind wie die Männer, welche sich einbilden, sie seien schon immer liebenswürdig genug, wie sie die Natur hervorgebracht hat.' (H.A.7, p.118)

'Excellent idea!' said Wilhelm. 'If people don't dissemble at all but simply act according to their own impulses, harmony and contentment will not be theirs for long; and never, if they dissemble all the time. It will not be a bad idea if we assume a personality at the beginning and then show as much as we wish of the real self hidden beneath the mask.'

'Yes', said Laertes. 'That's why women are so agreeable, for at first they never show their true colors.'

'That's because they are not as vain as men,' said Madame Melina. 'Men always think they are quite attractive enough as nature made them.' (*Apprenticeship*. p.66)

The impossibly high ideal of the man-made woman, which Aurelie has only partially internalized, is also at work in these men, casting the real, all-too-human women they encounter in an unfavourable light.

That Wilhelm himself shares this male ambivalence towards women is made abundantly clear throughout and from the outset: the first three Chapters of Book II of the *Apprenticeship* are largely given over to his often savage condemnation of Mariane, whom he — wrongly — supposes to have been unfaithful to him.<sup>54</sup> In

<sup>54</sup>Cf. Kathryn R. Edmunds, "Ich bin gebildet genug ... um zu lieben und zu trauern": Wilhelm Meister's *Apprenticeship* in Mourning', *The Germanic Review*, 71 (1996), 83-100. Edmunds, drawing on psycho-analytic theory, argues that Wilhelm's whole career can be seen as a mourning-process for his lost first-love.

Wilhelm's case, however, this ambivalence is also shown to be at work within his own psyche, in respect of his own femininity. On the surface Wilhelm projects that contempt for the commonplace and that scorn for money and commerce (so deplored by his father and his childhood friend, Werner) that Stendhal called 'l'espagnolisme': a strong attraction for forcefulness in a man, for passionate ebullience, typical, thought Stendhal, of Spanish culture.<sup>55</sup> And yet, in stark contrast to the dry premise of male-female relations that Simone de Beauvoir cites from Sir James George Frazer ('Les hommes font les dieux; les femmes les adorent'),<sup>56</sup> Wilhelm's tendency is to worship the women he feels so ambivalent about. In Jungian terms, his 'individuation' — his becoming himself — is externalized into his relations with a series of women: 'der Frauendienst meinte Seelendienst' ('service of the lady meant service of the soul/psyche').<sup>57</sup> In mastering his relations with women, he slowly and painfully learns to master himself, at least to some extent.<sup>58</sup>

Wilhelm's relationship to his mother is insisted on in the course of the *Apprenticeship*, most notably through his retrieval of his favourite painting from his grandfather's collection, after it has been sold by his father. He is fascinated and drawn by the depiction of 'a sick prince consumed by passion for his father's bride' (H.A.7, p.70), despite its distinct lack of aesthetic quality. The idealization required to overcome the strong Oedipal attachment that Wilhelm's love of the painting clearly reveals is transferred, in the course of the first Book, to his first love Mariane. On completely misconstruing the evidence of his own eyes when seeing Mariane with a rival in what he thinks are compromising circumstances, Wilhelm switches from idealization to demonization — and of women in general:

<sup>55</sup>Cf. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 17, p.670.

<sup>56</sup>Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxième Sexe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), p.128. ('Men make the gods; women adore them'.)

<sup>57</sup>C.G. Jung, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Lilly June-Merker, et al (Olten: Walter Verlag), VI: *Psychologische Typen* (1921), pp.424-25.

<sup>58</sup>The significance of Wilhelm's wanderings may well include his desire to prove himself a man. Cf. Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis*, p.19.: "'Woman" is the hysteric for Irigaray, whereas "man" is the master.'



Seitdem ihn jene grausame Entdeckung von der Seite Marianens gerissen hatte, war er dem Gelübde treu geblieben, sich vor der zusammenschlagenden Falle einer weiblichen Umarmung zu hüten, das treulose Geschlecht zu meiden, seine Schmerzen, seine Neigung, seine süßen Wünsche in seinem Busen zu verschließen (H.A.7, p.124).

Since that cruel discovery which had torn him away from Mariane, Wilhelm had remained true to his vow to avoid the traps of all female embraces, to shun the fickle sex and keep his sorrow as well as his yearning and desire locked up in his breast (*Apprenticeship*, p.69).

And as in the case of Lothario, this mistrustful aggressivity towards women in general, and Mariane in particular, finds an outlet in condescending, self-centred, sentimentality:

Wilhelm hatte auf seinem Wege nach der Stadt die edlen weiblichen Geschöpfe, die er kannte und von denen er gehört hatte, im Sinne; ihre sonderbaren Schicksale, die wenig Erfreuliches enthielten, waren ihm schmerzlich gegenwärtig. 'Ach!' rief er aus, 'arme Mariane! was werde ich noch von dir erfahren müssen?' (H.A.7, p.471).

On his way to the town Wilhelm thought about all the fine women he knew or had heard about, their strange lives, so deprived of happiness, painfully present to his mind. 'Oh, poor Mariane!', he cried, 'what more do I have to learn about you?' (*Apprenticeship*, p.288).

It is a wariness on his part that has as much to do with his insecurity about his own sexuality as with his imagined unhappy experiences with the women he has known.

Philine's remark to Wilhelm, 'that men are always in contradiction with themselves' ('daß Männer immer im Widerspruch mit sich selbst sind'; II.A.7, p.316) has a profound resonance in respect of Wilhelm's sexuality. As Ronald Gray (one of the first commentators on the novel to make the point) has emphasised, Wilhelm shows a marked and consistent predilection for women who, it seems to him at least, have distinctly masculine traits:

... all the women for whom Wilhelm feels a strong affection share in this quality of dual sex. His imagination, first guided into a definite path by the story of Clorinda (*Apprenticeship*, Bk.1, Ch.7), seeks the fulfillment of its dreams first in Mariane, then in the Countess, and Therese, and finally beyond all doubt in Natalie herself.<sup>59</sup>

In their first embrace, we are told that it is the 'red uniform' of the army officer role Mariane has been playing on stage that Wilhelm embraces so passionately. Similarly, his attraction to Therese (to whom he proposes and from whom he soon withdraws his proposal before becoming engaged to Natalie) explicitly owes a great deal to her male appearance:

Wilhelm hatte einen unruhigen Nachmittag nicht ganz ohne Langeweile zugebracht, also sich gegen Abend seine Tür öffnete und ein junger artiger Jägerbursche mit einem Grusse hereintrat. 'Wollen wir nun spazierengehen?' sagte der junge Mensch und in dem Augenblicke erkannte Wilhelm Theresen an ihren schönen Augen (H.A.7, p.446).

Wilhelm had been spending a restless afternoon, and was somewhat bored, when toward evening, his door was opened and in came a comely young huntsman who saluted and said: 'Well, shall we go for a walk?' Wilhelm instantly recognized Therese by her lovely eyes (*Apprenticeship*, p.273).

And Wilhelm clearly enjoys, too, the transvestism of his wearing, on occasion (e.g. H.A.7, pp.93-94), women's clothes. But Wilhelm's indeterminate sexual orientation is at its clearest perhaps in the powerful fascination which the hermaphroditic 'enigma', Mignon, exercises over him, sending him into a trance-like state:

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<sup>59</sup>Ronald Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist*, pp.230-31. Cf. Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), pp.249-252 for a stimulating, if inaccurate, account of Wilhelm Meister as 'dominated by masculine women' (p.249).

Wilhelm konnte sie nicht genug ansehen. Seine Augen und sein Herz wurden unwiderstehlich von dem geheimnisvollen Zustande dieses Wesens angezogen. Er schätzte sie zwölf bis dreizehn Jahre; ihr Körper war gut gebaut, nur daß ihre Glieder einen stärkern Wuchs versprachen oder einen zurückgehaltenen ankündigten. Ihre Bildung war nicht regelmäßig, aber auffallend; ihre Stirne geheimnisvoll, ihre Nase außerordentlich schön, und der Mund, ob er schon für ihr Alter zu sehr geschlossen schien, und sie manchmal mit den Lippen nach einer Seite zuckte, noch immer treuherzig und reizend genug. Ihre bräunliche Gesichtsfarbe konnte man durch die Schminke kaum erkennen. Diese Gestalt prägte sich Wilhelmen sehr tief ein; er sah sie noch immer an, schwieg und vergaß der Gegenwärtigen über seinen Betrachtungen. Philine weckte ihn aus seinem Halbtraume, indem sie dem Kinde etwas übriggebliebenes Zuckerwerk reichte und ihm ein Zeichen gab, sich zu entfernen (H.A.7, pp.98-99).

Wilhelm could not take his eyes off her; her whole appearance and the mystery that surrounded her completely absorbed his mind and feelings. He thought she was probably twelve or thirteen years old. She was well-built, but her limbs suggested further development to come, which possibly had been arrested. Her features were not regular, but striking: her forehead seemed to veil some secret, her nose was unusually beautiful, her mouth, though too tight-lipped for her age and inclined to twitch at times on one side, had a certain winsome charm about it. The grease paint almost obscured her dark complexion. Wilhelm was so absorbed in contemplating her, that he lapsed into silence and became completely oblivious of the others. But Philine roused him out of his daze by offering the child some of the candy she had left over, and then gave the child a sign that s/he should leave, which s/he did (*Apprenticeship*, p.54).

Wilhelm's utter absorption in the physical details of the child, brought emphatically to the reader's attention by means of the *blason*-like style that the Narrator adopts, has a strikingly erotic quality, which culminates in the daze — or 'half-dream' — into which Wilhelm falls. Wilhelm's absorption is reminiscent of the individual's fixation with his or her own Narcissistic mirror-reflexion which, according to Lacan, is reproduced

in the (illusory nature) of the sexual relation: 'Sexuality, according to Lacan, is an attempt to regain an imaginary unity or "oneness" through the sexual relation of the two sexes.'<sup>60</sup> However that may be, it seems compellingly clear that what holds Wilhelm fixed on this occasion is the symmetrical mirroring (in the hermaphroditic Mignon) of his own inner confusion.

It has recently been argued that Wilhelm's pronounced tendency to confuse one beloved woman with another is the source of much of the comedy in the novel: it is only later that he learns that he has spent the night with Philine after his performance as Hamlet; he fears that it may have been Mignon. Similarly, he confuses — or conflates — the Countess with the Amazon (her sister, Natalie); and, to begin with, Natalie with Therese.<sup>61</sup> But the repeated instances of this tendency to condense quite diverse figures, as if in dream, and the detail in which they are narrated, suggests that this tendency has more than merely comic intent:

Mariane erschien ihm im weißen Morgenkleide und flehte um sein Andenken. Philine's Liebenswürdigkeit, ihre schönen Haare und ihr einschmeichelndes Betragen waren durch ihre neueste Gegenwart wieder wirksam geworden; doch alles trat wie hinter den Flor der Entfernung zurück, wenn er sich die edle, blühende Gräfin dachte, deren Arm er in wenig Minuten an seinem Halse fühlen sollte, deren unschuldige Liebkosungen er zu erwidern aufgefordert war (H.A. 7, p.190).

Mariane in her white negligé was there [in his imagination], begging him to remember her. Philine's amiability, her lovely hair and her ingratiating behaviour had worked on him once again when he saw her just now. But all this receded into the distance when he thought of the noble, radiant countess, whose arm he should feel on his neck in a few moments and whose innocent caresses he was called upon to return (*Apprenticeship*, p.111).

<sup>60</sup>Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis*, p.84; though narcissism, it is argued, is necessary to feminism as a whole (p.102).

<sup>61</sup>Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, pp.124 and 130. Wilhelm even conflates Natalie with her aunt, 'die schöne Seele', whom he has never met (H.A. 7, p.517).

Like Goethe's Mephistopheles — the ultimate cynical seducer — it might appear that Wilhelm, too, 'always thinks of women in the plural'.<sup>62</sup> But in Wilhelm's case his delay in reducing the Many to the One, and committing himself, derive more from incapacity than a devilish urge to philander. Towards the end of the *Apprenticeship*, that is to say just before he is betrothed to Natalie, Wilhelm is in a state of anxiety, one clearly linked to his inability to settle on a stable love-object:

Die Unruhe hielt ihn noch eine Zeitlang wach, und er beschäftigte sich, das Bild der Amazone mit dem Bilde seiner neuen gegenwärtigen Freundin zu vergleichen. Sie wollten noch nicht miteinander zusammenfließen; jenes hatte er sich gleichsam geschaffen, und dieses schien fast ihn umschaffen zu wollen (H.A.7, p.516).

His uncertainty kept him awake for a time, which he spent comparing the image of the Amazon with his new friend. The two would not coalesce: the former had been fashioned, as it were, by him, the latter seemed almost to be fashioning him (*Apprenticeship*, p.316).

The 'Amazon' is the image Wilhelm formed of Natalie when she came to his aid after he was wounded in a bandit-attack; the fact that he cannot reconcile the (past) image with his (present) real woman suggests a deep inner instability over which he has no control.<sup>63</sup>

So much is clear from a dream that Wilhelm has, and which is recounted by the Narrator, Chapter 1 of Book VII of the *Apprenticeship*:

Er fand sich in einem Garten, den er als Knabe öfters besucht hatte, und sah mit Vergnügen die bekannten Allecn, Hecken und Blumenbeete wieder; Mariane begegnete ihm, er sprach liebevoll mit ihr und ohne Erinnerung irgendeines vergangenen Mißverhältnisses. Gleich darauf trat sein Vater zu ihnen, im Hauskleide; und mit vertraulicher Miene, die ihm selten war, hieß er den Sohn zwei Stühle

<sup>62</sup>*Faust II*, 1.10175.

<sup>63</sup>Cf. Edith Weigert-Vowinkel, 'The Cult and Mythology of the Magna Mater from the standpoint of Psychoanalysis', *Psychiatry*, 1 (1938), 347-78 (p.365): '[the Amazon is] a myth born of the fantasy of male Greeks'.

aus dem Gartenhause holen, nahm Marianen bei der Hand und führte sie nach einer Laube (H.A.7, p.425).

He found himself in a garden where he had often been as a child, and joyfully recognized the familiar hedgerows, walks, and flowerbeds. Mariane came up to him, he spoke tenderly to her, without any reference to the past disturbance of their relationship. Then his father appeared, in his housecoat, and, with more than customary friendliness, asked his son to bring up two garden chairs, took Mariane's hand and led her to an arbor (*Apprenticeship*, p.260).

Given that, a little later in the dream, no matter how fast Wilhelm pursues his father and Mariane, they 'scemed to be running away from him', eventually 'soaring through the trees in flight', it seems reasonable to interpret the dream as expressing Wilhelm's (Oedipal) anxiety with regard to his (charmingly friendly) father, who, as in the case of the mother, proves to be the victorious rival, blocking Wilhelm's way to the female beloved.<sup>64</sup> The fact that Wilhelm awakes 'with mixed feelings', after the Amazon (not, note, Natalie herself) in the dream had held him back from pursuing Mariane, suggests, moreover, that his image of the ideal woman has a repressive function.

In a major study of Goethe's novels, published in 1996, the interpretation of Wilhelm's relationship to Natalie (his betrothed) which has gained general acceptance amongst critics is persuasively rehearsed: '*Die Lehrjahre* bringen Wilhelm ... jeden erwünschten Erfolg. Die erschte Schöne erhält er zur Frau.' ('The *Apprenticeship* brings Wilhelm every happiness he has desired. The beautiful woman he has long yearned for he wins for his wife.')<sup>65</sup> Because of the vivid depiction of Wilhelm's falling in love-at-first-sight with the Amazon — a variant of the *topos* of 'Una donna me apparve' — we are, it is argued, to accept that 'Natalie ist die Frau, die ihm vorbestimmt ist und als Rettungengel seinen Weg gekreuzt hat' ('Natalie is the wife

<sup>64</sup>For this reason — and because Wilhelm's betrothal to Natalie is by no means the unambiguous resolution it is often taken to be — I cannot agree with Louise Coté, 'Wilhelm's Dream', *Carleton Germanic Papers*, 9 (1981), 1-16, in her conclusion that the dream 'symbolizes the reconciliation of the anima to the male personality' (p.15).

<sup>65</sup>Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.156.

who is intended for him, the one who crossed his path as an angel of salvation').<sup>66</sup> But this overlooks the fact that, as we have seen, the image of the Amazon and Natalie are not stably unified in Wilhelm's mind. It also leaves out of account two other telling facts of the text: 1) that, though Wilhelm and Natalie agree to marry, no ceremony takes place; 2) the *Journeyman Years* represent a parting of at least ten years, in which their relationship is sustained by correspondence only. And when the pointed contrast between the erotically playful Philine and the ideal, asexual Natalie — made towards the end of the First Part — is taken into account, a different conclusion seems to be required. When Friedrich, who has recently married Philine (who is pregnant by Wilhelm) reminds Wilhelm that he (Wilhelm) truly loved her, Wilhelm responds by violently repressing any mention of her name:

'Reden Sie nichts mehr von diesem Geschöpfe!' versetzte Wilhelm. 'Ich leugne nicht, daß ich den Eindruck ihrer angenehmen Gegenwart lange nicht loswerden konnte, aber das war auch alles.'

'Pfui! schämt Euch', rief Friedrich, 'wer wird eine Geliebte verleugnen? und Ihr habt sie so komplett geliebt, als man es nur wünschen konnte. Es verging kein Tag, daß Ihr dem Mädchen nicht etwas schenktet, und wenn der Deutsche schenkt, liebt er gewiß (H.A.7, p.557).

'Don't talk to me about that creature!' Wilhelm replied. 'I will not deny that for a long time I could not get rid of the impression her agreeableness made on me — but that was all there was to it.'

'Shame on you!' said Friedrich. 'Who can ever disavow that he loved someone? And you loved her as completely as one could possibly wish. Not a day passed without your giving her some present or other — and when a German gives presents, then he is certainly in love' (*Apprenticeship*, p.341).

The point would seem to be that Wilhelm's search for wholeness and integrity is — like Justina's — of a different order from that which could be resolved by a merely personal, sexual relation. Though the sexual is a necessary constituent of his heart-

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp.259-60.

felt need for integration, it is not in itself sufficient. Wilhelm's *Bildung* requires something closer to what C.G. Jung identified in Dante's adoration of Beatrice:

Dante is the spiritual knight of his lady; for her he undergoes adventures of the upper and lower world. And in this heroic work her image is enhanced to that of the transcendent, mystical figure of the Mother of God, a figure that has abstracted itself from the object and has thereby become the personification of a purely psychological fact, namely of those unconscious contents, whose personification I call the soul.<sup>67</sup>

The need for some such imaginative construct of the *anima*, of the feminine within, that goes beyond the female without, while including and embracing, has been evident in the novel from the outset (and, as we shall see, reaches its climactic expression at the end of the *Journeyman Years*). The resolution — the *coniunctio* — that the Shekhinah promises<sup>68</sup> is precisely what Wilhelm yearns for at the outset of his *Apprenticeship*, having already lost Mariane:

Und noch jetzt, da das Gericht über mich ergangen ist, jetzt, da ich die verloren habe, die anstatt einer Gottheit mich zu meinen Wünschen hinüberführen sollte, was bleibt mir übrig, als mich den bittersten Schmerzen zu überlassen? (H.A.7, p.85)

And now that judgement has been passed on me and I have lost her who, instead of a divinity, was to lead me towards the fulfilment of all my desires, what is left for me but resignation to pain and bitterness? (*Apprenticeship*, p.46)

<sup>67</sup>C.G. Jung, *Psychologische Typen* (1921), *Gesammelte Werke*, VI, p.425: 'Dante ist der geistige Ritter seiner Dame; für sie besteht er die Abenteuer der unteren und oberen Welt. Und in dieser Heldenarbeit erhöht sich ihm ihr Bild bis zu jener jenseitigen, mystischen Figur der Gottesmutter, einer Figur, die sich vom Objekt gelöst hat und daher zur Personifikation eines rein psychologischen Tatbestandes wird, nämlich derjenigen unbewussten Inhalte, deren Personifikation ich als Seele bezeichne.' ('Dante is his Lady's spiritual knight, for her he endures the adventures of the lower and the upper world. And in the course of this heroic endeavour, her image raises itself in his eyes to that of the transcendental, mystical figure of the Mother of God, a figure that has abstracted itself from the object, and has thereby become the personification of a purely psychological state, namely of those unconscious contents whose personification I designate as Psyche/Soul.')

<sup>68</sup>See Gershom Scholem, *Das Buch Bahir* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970), p.157: 'Das Weibliche ist das schöne Gefäß für die Kraft des Männlichen' ('The female/feminine is the beautiful container for the power of the male/masculine').



This fundamental discrepancy between the male imaginary feminine and the reality of female experience is the rich source of irony in *Wilhelm Meister* that helps identify the source of the authentic female voice in the novel.

Much of the irony of *Wilhelm Meister* derives from the fact that the women-figures portrayed in it — in both the First and Second Part — are shown to be significantly different from the men's, particularly Wilhelm's, image of them. The only detailed analysis (of the *Apprenticeship*) of Goethe's portrayal of women in the novel, helpful though it is in its descriptive thoroughness, neglects this aspect of the work, presenting the women in the novel largely as idealized bearers of various aspects of Goethe's ethical and pedagogic concerns.<sup>69</sup> The discrepancy between the women in the novel as cultural constructs of the men on the one hand and as living beings in themselves on the other — for some time a central theme of 'Images of Women' criticism in (particularly Anglo-American) feminist research<sup>70</sup> — merits, however, some attention, since it throws into relief the fact that the female voice and what it has to say is ignored by Wilhelm during most of his educative journey. Unlike the women who — as Hersilie tartly remarks (H.A.8, p.66) — 'haben Zeit zu beobachten, und da finden wir meist, was wir nicht suchten' ('have time to observe and find mostly what we were not looking for'), Wilhelm reflects rather than observes, and is forever (illusorily) 'finding' just what he is looking for.<sup>71</sup> Wilhelm's distinct tendency to project his own ideal of the feminine on to the women he encounters seems to render him deaf to what they have to say, a factor which serves, in turn, to

<sup>69</sup>Ingrid Ladendorff, *Zwischen Tradition und Revolution. Die Frauengestalten in Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahren und ihr Verhältnis zu deutschen Originalromanen des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990). See particularly pp. 123-32 (on Therese) and pp.133-37 (on Nathalie).

<sup>70</sup>See Toril Moi, *Textual/Sexual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London: Methuen, 1985), p.8; Annette Kolodny, 'Dancing through the Minefield: Some observations on the theory, practice and politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism', in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, ed. by Elaine Showalter (London: Virago, 1986), pp. 144-167 (p.162).

<sup>71</sup>It is this that underlies the pervasive theme of error in *Wilhelm Meister*, and which makes it a precursor of the nineteenth-century novel of disillusionment, according to Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, pp.96-98.

highlight the dilemma the women in this novel are shown to face.<sup>72</sup> Comparison with *La Pícaro Justina* reveals that, as in the picaresque tradition in general, the ironic parody of the idealized and idealizing lover is also a significant aspect of *Wilhelm Meister*. Self-assertive and autonomous female figures abound in both the *Apprenticeship* and the *Journeyman Years*;<sup>73</sup> but I shall limit my discussion to a representative sample of the main female characters, in order to bring out the discrepancy between Wilhelm's image and the reality on to which he projects it.

No character, male or female, has attracted as much idealizing comment, from within the novel and from critics alike, as Natalie. It is undoubtedly the case that 'the Amazon is Wilhelm's ideal woman';<sup>74</sup> and it may well be that the Amazon represents 'the anima, the powerful woman and the happy union of male and female characteristics'.<sup>75</sup> But there is nothing in the novel to suggest that this imaginary projection on Wilhelm's part has much, if any connexion, with the character on to whom the projection is made.<sup>76</sup> Little wonder that some critics, following Karl Schlechta, have reacted against this trend, finding only a mere schema in such a bloodless creature.<sup>77</sup> Both readings, in my view, overlook important facts of the text. Her brother, Lothario, is of the opinion that Natalie is 'unattainable' (H.A.7, p.608); but, as in the case of Wilhelm's assumption that, in following the prescriptions of the Society of the Tower, he is following Natalie's injunction, there is no evidence in the text to support this view of her.<sup>78</sup> What is made clear is that Wilhelm's love-at-first-sight is a wholly subjective event — one that is conceived in extreme Either-Or terms

<sup>72</sup>This idealization by Wilhelm has been assimilated into much of the criticism of the novel. See Hans Eichner, 'Greatness, Saintliness, Usefulness: Character Configurations in Goethe's Oeuvre', in *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, ed. by Lillyman, pp.38-54.

<sup>73</sup>In this *Bildungsroman* at least, autonomy and self-definition are not considered in any way 'unfeminine', *pace* Siobhan McIlvanney, 'Feminist *Bildung* in the Novels of Claire Etcherelli', *MLR*, 92 (1997), 60-69.

<sup>74</sup>Kathryn R. Edmunds, "'Ich bin gebildet genug...'", p.90.

<sup>75</sup>Louise Coté, 'Wilhelm's Dream', p.11.

<sup>76</sup>For examples of the critics' acceptance of Wilhelm's conflation of image and reality, see Gonthier-Louis Fink, 'Die Auseinandersetzung mit der Tradition', p.115; and Hans Eichner, 'Greatness, Saintliness, Usefulness', *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, ed. by W.J. Lillyman, p.48.

<sup>77</sup>See Karl Schlechta, *Goethes Wilhelm Meister*, pp. 140 and 246. Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, notes that Natalie lacks 'eine unverwechselbare Persönlichkeit' ('an unmistakable personality') (p.135); yet he sees this as positive, in that she makes the perfect supplement to Wilhelm.

<sup>78</sup>See Arthur Henkel, *Entsagung: Eine Studie zu Goethes Altersroman* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1954), p.30, for an influential example of the critical acceptance of Wilhelm's unwarranted assumptions.

of Wilhelm's (over-)drawing a comparison between the idealized Amazon and Philine:

Philine war indessen aufgestanden, um der gnädigen Dame die Hand zu küssen. Als sie nebeneinander standen, glaubte unser Freund nie einen solchen Abstand gesehen zu haben. Philine war ihm noch nie in einem so ungünstigen Lichte erschienen. Sie sollte, wie es ihm vorkam, sich jener edlen Natur nicht nahen, noch weniger sie berühren (H.A.7, p.228).

Philine rose to kiss the lady's hand. As the two of them stood side by side, Wilhelm thought he had never seen such a difference. Philine had never appeared to him in so unfavourable a light. She should not even approach such a noble creature — so it seemed to him — let alone touch her (*Apprenticeship*, pp.134-35).

The way the Narrator emphatically directs the reader's attention to Wilhelm's subjective judgment ('Wilhelm thought', 'appeared to him', 'so it seemed to him') makes the narratorial irony quite clear. No less ironic is the Narrator's reporting of Wilhelm's image of Natalie as an 'angel' (H.A.7, pp.228 and 230), since it is preceded by the observation that Wilhelm had lost a lot of blood from the wound sustained in the bandit-attack. In general, what little we do learn about Natalie is curiously at odds with both Wilhelm's idealization of her as the psychologically synthesizing, androgynous Amazon and with the views that the men who know her express.

She herself is well aware that, with the exception of the Abbé — 'the only one who seemed to understand me' — she is the butt of the men's ridicule: 'I know I was often laughed at' (H.A.7, p.527; cf. p.539, where she tells Wilhelm that her great-uncle made fun of her). And to Wilhelm's rather patronizing question (the condescension clear in his use of the diminutive) Natalie could hardly be less direct — or, in polite society, more aggressive:

'Haben Sie denn', fragte Wilhelm, 'bei der Erziehung Ihrer kleinen weiblichen Welt auch die Grundsätze jener sonderbaren Männer

angenommen? lassen Sie denn auch jede Natur sich selbst ausbilden? lassen Sie denn auch die Ihrigen suchen und irren, Mißgriffe tun, sich glücklich an Ziele finden oder unglücklich in die Irre verlieren?'

'Nein!' sagte Natalie, 'diese Art, mit Menschen zu handeln, würde ganz gegen meine Gesinnungen sein. Wer nicht im Augenblicke hilft, scheint mir nie zu helfen, wer nicht im Augenblicke Rat gibt, nie zu raten' (H.A.7, p.527).

'Did you, in the instruction of your [little] women charges, carry out the principles of these extraordinary men?' asked Wilhelm. 'Do you allow each human being to develop by itself? Do you let them search and lose their way, make mistakes, and either happily reach their goal or lose themselves miserably in the process?' 'No, I do not!' said Natalie. 'To treat people thus would be quite contrary to my convictions. If someone does not provide help when it is needed, he will, to my mind, never be of any help; if he does not come up with advice immediately, he will never provide any' (*Apprenticeship*, p.323).

She hardly sounds like an 'angel' in this exchange, or indeed like some 'unattainable' figure in her emphasis on plain, practical help. And, in her insistence on principles in education, she runs counter to the sexual cliché that equates woman with nature:

'Ebenso nötig scheint es mir, gewisse Gesetze auszusprechen und den Kindern einzuschärfen, die dem Leben einen gewissen Halt geben. Ja, ich möchte beinahe behaupten, es sei besser, nach Regeln zu irren, als zu irren, wenn uns die Willkür unserer Natur hin und her treibt, und wie ich die Menschen sehe, scheint mir in ihrer Natur immer eine Lücke zu bleiben, die nur durch ein entschieden, ausgesprochenes Gesetz ausgefüllt werden kann' (II.A.7, p.527).

'It seems to me of the utmost importance to enunciate certain principles and inculcate them into children — principles that will give their lives some stability. I would almost be inclined to say that it is better to err because of principles than to do so from arbitrariness of nature, and my observation of human beings tells me that there is always some gap in

their natures which can only be filled by a principle expressly communicated to them' (*Apprenticeship*, p.323).<sup>79</sup>

To Wilhelm's rather sheepish supplementary question — 'Your procedure, then, is radically different from that followed by our friend?' — Natalie defiantly retorts 'Yes, it is!' adding (as a hint to Wilhelm) 'but you should respect their tolerance in letting me go my own way' (H.A.7, p.527). The reader is left wondering whether the absence of any marriage-ceremony, and the long separation of Wilhelm and Natalie in the *Journeyman Years*, may not have more to do with Natalie's distancing herself from Wilhelm than his from her. Certainly, we learn enough about her to know that she is quite different from the image that Wilhelm, and other men in the novel, have formed of her.

It is made quite clear where Natalie has derived her critical attitude to the (exclusively male) society of the Tower. Her aunt, at the end of her 'Bekenntnisse' ('Confessions') expresses her concern that, for all their apparent toleration, the members of the Tower are exclusivist and intolerant:

...was ich nicht an diesen Erziehern billigen kann, ist, daß sie alles von den Kindern zu entfernen suchen, was sie zu dem Umgange mit sich selbst und mit dem unsichtbaren, einzigen treuen Freunde führen könne. Ja, es verdrießt mich oft von dem Oheim, daß er mich deshalb für die Kinder für gefährlich hält. Im Praktischen ist doch kein Mensch tolerant! Denn wer auch versichert, daß er jedem seine Art und Wesen ganz lassen wolle, sucht doch immer diejenigen von der Tätigkeit auszuschließen, die nicht so denken wie er (H.A.7, pp. 419-20).

<sup>79</sup>The sophistication of Natalie's concept of 'law' is brought home in a later passage, when she upbraids her brother, Friedrich (and, by implication, Wilhelm and the Society of the Tower) in asseverating the (Stoic) tenet that principles are founded in character:

'Ich habe immer gesehen', versetzte Natalie, 'daß unsere Grundsätze nur ein Supplement zu unseren Existenzen sind. Wir hängen unseren Fehlern gar zu gern das Gewand eines gültigen Gesetzes um' (H.A.7, p. 565).

'I have always thought', said Natalie, 'that our principles are merely supplements to our existence. We are all too ready to give our faults the semblance of valid principles' (*Apprenticeship*, p.346).

...one thing I cannot condone about these educators, that they deprive children of anything that might lead to their communing with themselves and with their Invisible, and only true Friend [Jesus Christ]. And I am often irritated with my uncle that for this reason he thinks I would be [dangerous] to the children. Nobody is really tolerant in practice, for however much someone may assure us that he is leaving a person to his own desires and inclinations, in effect he does all he can to exclude them from activities not acceptable to himself (*Apprenticeship*, p.255).

Both of these women at the margin of the male-dominated society portrayed in the novel express views that run counter to the tenets largely shared by the men. Moreover, they disagree with one another; Natalie's insistence on principle and law is quite different from the aunt's — the 'Beautiful Soul's' — position (in respect of her pious vocation):

Ich erinnere mich kaum eines Gebotes; nichts erscheint mir in Gestalt eines Gesetzes; es ist ein Trieb, der mich leitet und mich immer recht führt: ich folge mit Freiheit meinen Gesinnungen, und weiß so wenig von Einschränkung als von Reue (H.A.7, p.420).

I cannot recall having followed any commandment that loomed before me as a law imposed from without: I was always led and guided by impulse freely following my own persuasions, and experiencing neither restriction nor regrets (*Apprenticeship*, p.256).

There is an overwhelming consensus in the secondary literature on *Wilhelm Meister* that the *Schöne Seele* ('Beautiful Soul') is presented in a negative light. Her world, writes Blackall, 'is an ordered world — but ordered only because it omits what is disruptive of its calm'.<sup>80</sup> It is recognized that she does achieve 'independence from a male-dominated world';<sup>81</sup> but it is at the cost 'of everything physical, everything

<sup>80</sup>Eric Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel*, p.129. Cf. his comment (p.130): 'This ... is not the operation of "creative forces", because it does not create order out of variety, but reduces variety to unity by rejecting what is not consonant with that unity'.

<sup>81</sup>Ingrid Ladendorff, *Zwischen Tradition und Revolution*, p.199.

"female": a symptom, not of self-discovery, but of alienation'.<sup>82</sup> It is certainly true that, in traditional Christian mystical fashion, following awareness of her sinfulness (H.A.7, p.392), she turns to Jesus as to 'an absent lover' ('einem abwesenden Geliebten'; p.394). And, it is also true — again in consonance with the tradition of mystical writing — that her soul (at one point) seems to operate without reference to her body: 'Es war, als wenn meine Seele ohne Gesellschaft des Körpers dächte' (H.A.7, p.415; 'It was as if my soul were thinking without the body'). To dismiss her experience as 'die Geschichte einer Verdrängung' ('the history of a repression')<sup>83</sup> is, however, not only reductionist in the extreme; it also overlooks the possibility, emphasized by Irigaray, that such mystical discourse, whatever religious significance it may or may not have, is also an expressive outlet for women on the periphery of the kind of patriarchal culture portrayed in this novel.<sup>84</sup> For all the limitations of the Beautiful Soul's existence (hardly less constrained, after all, than that of some of the male characters in the novel, such as Joseph in Book 1 of the *Apprenticeship*), it is one of considerable independence and purposiveness:

Meine Gesinnungen waren niemanden ein Geheimnis, und man möchte sie ehren oder auch nur schonen, so erlangte ich doch meinen Zweck und blieb ohne Anfechtung (H.A.7, p.383).

My sentiments were [not] a secret to anybody, and whether they were respected or just tolerated, I attained my goal and was not assailed for this (*Apprenticeship*, p.233).

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<sup>82</sup>Susanne Zantop, 'Eigenes Selbst und fremde Formen: Goethes *Bekenntnisse einer Schönen Seele*', *Goethe Yearbook*, 3 (1986), 73-92: 'Die Befreiung' von allem Körperlichen, "Weiblichen" ist ... nicht Symptom für Ich-Findung, sondern für Entfremdung ...' (p.87).

<sup>83</sup>Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.199.

<sup>84</sup>Luce Irigaray, 'Sexual Difference', in *French Feminist Thought: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), pp. 118-30 (especially p. 128).

The implication is clear, that those about her — in particular, the men — are barely tolerant of a way of life that they find incomprehensible (even 'dangerous'). Nonetheless, she 'attains her goal', and leads a life she finds satisfying.<sup>85</sup>

Undoubtedly the most tragic victim of the male gaze (in particular, of Wilhelm's well-meaning, but uncomprehending, perception) is Mignon. The brutality of Jarno's dismissal of her (and of the Harpist, Augusta) wounds Wilhelm; but, for all his affection for the 'gutes kleines Geschöpf' (H.A.7, p.194; 'good little creature'), it never occurs to him to contest Jarno's debasing description of her:

'Ich versichere Sie, es ist mir bisher unbegreiflich gewesen, wie Sie sich mit solchem Volke haben gemein machen können. Ich hab' es oft mit Ekel und Verdruß gesehen, wie Sie, um nur einigermaßen leben zu können, Ihr Herz an einen herumziehenden Bänkelsänger und ein albernes, zwitterhaftes Geschöpf hängen mußten (H.A.7, p.193).

I assure you that I have found it totally incomprehensible that you should have joined forces with such people as these. I have been distressed, indeed disgusted, that, in order to have some experience of life, you should have given your heart to an itinerant ballad singer and a silly androgynous creature' (*Apprenticeship*, p.113).

Despite the general perception of Mignon as an androgynous child<sup>86</sup> — and despite her own protestations to the contrary ('Ich bin ein Knabe: ich will kein Mädchen sein!' H.A.7, p.207; 'I am a boy: I don't want to be a girl!') — the Narrator makes clear her desperate, deep-seated, and doomed, urge to express her female identity. The product (we learn late in the *Apprenticeship*, after her death; H.A.7, pp.583ff.) of an

<sup>85</sup>Goethe's remark to Schiller (18/3/1795) — often quoted to support dismissive interpretations of the Beautiful Soul — is by no means unequivocally negative: '... und da das Ganze auf den edelsten Täuschungen und auf der zartesten Verwechslung des Subjektiven und Objektiven beruht ...'. (... and since the whole rests on the most noble illusions and on the most delicate confusion of subjective and objective'). All of the operative terms — *Täuschung* ('illusion'), *Verwechslung* ('confusion'), especially in combination with *edel* ('noble') and *zart* ('delicate') — had positive connotations in eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse. Cf. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, ed. and trans. with an Introduction, Commentary and Glossary of Terms by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp.327-29.

<sup>86</sup>Her alleged hermaphroditism leads Kathryn R. Edmunds, "Ich bin gebildet genug ...", p.87, to claim that 'she is the most significant character of the work'; and Louise Coté, 'Wilhelm's Dream', p.8, aligns her with Jung's 'bisexual primordial being'.



incestuous marriage, Mignon rarely manages to express herself, except in song or in violent-physical exertions, as in the excitement of the dance (H.A.7, p.116); her thought-processes seem numbed and blunted and her speech is broken.<sup>87</sup> Trapped, as she is, below the threshold of culture, a great deal of her experience has to remain unnamed for her. In a state of such profound cultural deprivation, the outer world seems to her unknowable and mysterious; life seems fated, its basic patterns unrelieved by any sense of an alternative way of living. Such a life is, by its very nature, fearful.

Like the abandoned child Anna Freud describes in *War and Children*, who 'substituted for the spoken word gestures' and moved 'his hands and lips with an absolutely tragic expression on his face',<sup>88</sup> Mignon gives every sign of having been severely abused (H.A.7, p.103), though she has sworn never to tell anyone her story, even those bits that she recalls (H.A.7, p.522); and the reader is hardly enlightened about it by the later revelations about her incestuous parents.<sup>89</sup> What is clear is that she wishes to be independent. Her offer to serve Wilhelm, who has bought her from the leader of the travelling dancing-troupe (to stop Mignon receiving a beating) is her way of paying off the hundred ducats laid out for her (H.A.7, p.106); in the same spirit, she offers to pay the musician who tries to accompany her with a fandango (H.A.7, p.116). Equally clear is her sexual desire for Wilhelm. What has been rightly called 'the orgasm she has in Wilhelm's arms',<sup>90</sup> leaves Wilhelm bemused and perplexed:

<sup>87</sup>Cf. Max Kommerell, *Essays, Notizen, Poetische Fragmente* (Jena: Walter Verlag, 1969), p.163: 'Wilhelm könnte heiraten, Kinder zeugen, sterben; Felix könnte ein Wilhelm sein; und immer noch wäre Mignon ein halbwüchsiger Knabe...' ('Wilhelm could marry, have children, die; Felix could be a Wilhelm; and Mignon would still be a stunted lad'.)

<sup>88</sup>Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham, *War and Children* (New York: International Universities Press, 1943), pp. 99-100. Cf. Ursula Mahlendorf, 'The Mystery of Mignon: Object Relations, Abandonment, Child Abuse and Narrative Structure', *Goethe Yearbook*, 7 (1994), 23-39 for an elaboration of this view.

<sup>89</sup>Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.184: 'Nicht das Widernatürliche an und für sich steht am Anfang einer Kette verhängnisvoller Umstände, sondern was für widernatürlich gehalten wird'. ('It is not the unnatural in and for itself that lies at the beginning of a chain of fateful circumstances; it is rather what is considered unnatural'.)

<sup>90</sup>Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p. 168.

... bald mit einer neuen Heftigkeit wurden alle ihre Glieder wieder lebendig, und sie warf sich ihm, wie ein Ressor, das zuschlägt, um den Hals, indem in ihrem Innersten wie ein gewaltiger Riß geschah, und in dem Augenblicke floß ein Strom von Tränen aus ihren geschlossenen Augen in seinen Busen. Er hielt sie fest. Sie weinte, und keine Zunge spricht die Gewalt dieser Tränen aus. Ihre langen Haare waren aufgegangen und hingen von der Weinenden nieder, und ihr ganzes Wesen schien in einen Bach von Tränen unaufhaltsam dahinzuschmelzen. Ihre starren Glieder wurden gelinde, es ergoß sich ihr Innerstes, und in der Verirrung des Augenblickes fürchtete Wilhelm, sie werde in seinen Armen zerschmelzen, und er nichts von ihr übrigbehalten (H.A.7, p.143).

All her limbs became alive again, and with renewed strength she threw herself around his neck, like a lock that springs shut, while a deep cleft opened up inside her and a flood of tears poured from her closed eyes on his breast. He held her close. She wept tears such as no tongue can describe. Her long hair hung loosely around her as she wept, and her whole being seemed to be dissolving into a steady flood of tears. Her rigid limbs unfroze, her whole inner self poured itself out, and in the confusion of the moment Wilhelm feared that she might melt away in his arms so that nothing of her would remain (*Apprenticeship*, p.82).

Understandably, Wilhelm deflects Mignon's erotic passion by designating her as '[his] child' — a paternal relationship that she is glad to accept. But it does not contain her desire for Wilhelm, the elemental, Dionysian nature of which the Narrator brings home by describing her as a maenad, full of frenzied excitement during the party to celebrate the troupe's first-night performance of Hamlet:

...nun sprang sie auf und raste, die Schellentrommel in der Hand, um den Tisch herum. Ihre Haare flogen, und in dem sie den Kopf zurück und alle ihre Glieder gleichsam in die Luft warf, schien sie einer Mänade ähnlich, deren wilde und beinah unmögliche Stellungen uns auf alten Monumenten noch oft in Erstaunen setzen (H.A.7, p.326).

... she now began hysterically to rush around the table, tambourine in hand, hair flying, head thrown back and her body flung into the air like one of those maenads whose wild and well-nigh impossible postures still [amaze] us on ancient monuments (*Apprenticeship*, p.198).

She takes her leave by biting Wilhelm in the arm; and it is only because she is forestalled by Philine that she does not climb into Wilhelm's bed that night (H.A.7, pp.523-24).

There can, then, be little doubt of Mignon's urge to give expression to her femaleness. Her failure to give her relationship with Wilhelm the form and import she desires seems to take away her will to live: her eagerness to wear women's clothes thereafter (H.A.7, p.515) seems to have more to do with the connotations of the angel's costume Natalie has her wear in the Christmas pageant than with any achievement on her part of stable sexual identity. Her longing for the next life, which is a prelude to her death, is evidently motivated now by a longing to transcend sexual differentiation altogether:

Und jene himmlische Gestalten,  
Sie fragen nicht nach Mann und Weib (H.A.7, p.516).

For all those glorious forms,  
They do not ask [after] man or [woman] (*Apprenticeship*, p.316).

Tellingly, it is only in song that she finds her voice, while in life she remains ineffably enigmatic.

Significantly, the woman Wilhelm finds the most difficult to relate to is Philine, about whom the critics are agreed in seeing her 'as all-woman' with 'an elemental energy'.<sup>91</sup> But there is nothing in the text to justify either the critics' or Wilhelm's negative evaluation of her, of which Stefan Blessin's recent formulation is typical:

<sup>91</sup>Louise Coté, 'Wilhelm's Dream' p.10; Cf. Kathryn R. Edmunds, "Ich bin gebildet genug", p.88.

She is the true Eve, and needs for her dramatic scenes no stage. She is always at play; and, of course, it is Wilhelm in particular with whom she plays. She makes him fall completely in love with her.<sup>92</sup>

Sensuous, playful, and charmingly flirtatious she is; but she hardly merits the negative identification with Adam's seductress. Wilhelm's inability to tolerate sexuality in his beloved — as evidenced in his disparagement of Philine by contrast with his idealized Amazon (H.A.7, p.228) — seems to have blinded critics to the wholly positive portrayal Goethe gives of this warm and generous personality (H.A.7, p.96). For all her explicit sensuality (e.g., her apparently lewd song, the lyrics of which the Narrator ironically censors for fear the reader might find it 'indecent'; H.A.7, p.130), and for all her flirtatiousness (e.g., in her reception of her new acquaintance, Wilhelm, in her negligé; H.A.7, p.93), there is not a hint that she deserves the 'no-better-than-she-ought-to-be' obloquy she playfully evokes in introducing herself to the Countess as an 'actress':

'Wer ist Sie?' fragte die Gräfin im Hereintreten.

'Eine Schauspielerin, Ihre Exzellenz zu dienen', war die Antwort, indem der Schalk mit einem gar frommen Gesichte und demütigen Gebärden sich neigte und der Dame den Rock küßte (H.A.7, p.148).

'Who is that?' asked the countess as she went into the inn. 'An actress, and at your Grace's service', the roguish girl replied, putting on a sober face, curtseying modestly, and kissing the lady's skirt (*Apprenticeship*, p.85).

Indeed, Philine demonstrates sterling moral qualities, for all her insistence on her own personal freedom (H.A.7, p.101). Above all, she is no hypocrite (and makes no

<sup>92</sup>Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p. 103-4: 'Sie ist die wahre Eva und braucht für ihre Auftritte keine Bühne. Sie spielt immer, und natürlich ist es Wilhelm, dem sie besonders mitspielt. Sie macht ihn regelrecht in sich verliebt ...'. The designation of Philine as Eve is Laertes' (H.A.7, p.91). Ingrid Ladendorf, *Zwischen Tradition und Revolution*, pp.89-105, offers a largely positive description of Philine, against the critical consensus, on the grounds that she is 'urweiblich' ('elementally female'; p.89), though amoral.

pretence, for instance, to be interested in Nature; her interest — with which Wilhelm awkwardly and portentously concurs — is in human beings; H.A.7, p.101). No-one is taken in by her (Justina-like) playful *faux naïf* manner, her 'scheinheilige, unschuldige Miene' (H.A.7, p.151; 'hypocritical expression of innocence on her face'); rather people 'delight' in her company. Unlike Mignon, who longs to be allowed to project an acceptable persona which will protect her inner life ('So let me seem till I become'; H.A.7, p.515), Philine has the gift of presenting herself — as she truly is. On first seeing her, even from a distance, Wilhelm can tell that her face is lit up by happiness ('Er konnte ungeachtet der Entfernung bemerken, daß eine angenehme Heiterkeit ihr Gesicht belebte'; H.A.7, pp.90-91) — an innate gaiety to which others are drawn.

In one of those general reflections, the broad implications of which are left to the reader to draw, the Narrator defends the kind of stylish self-presentation we learn to associate with Philine (picking up the words, 'Art', 'Zierlichkeit' and 'Anmut' so often used in connection with her):

Denn da es der Charakter unserer Landsleute ist, das Gute ohne viel Prunk zu tun und zu leisten, so denken sie selten daran, daß es auch eine Art gebe, das Rechte mit Zierlichkeit und Anmut zu tun, und verfallen vielmehr, von einem Geist des Widerspruchs getrieben, leicht in den Fehler, durch ein mürrisches Wesen ihre liebste Tugend im Kontraste darzustellen (H.A.7, p.111).

Since it seems to be a part of our national character to do good without ostentation, we seldom reflect on the fact that it is also possible to do what is right with some degree of graciousness and style, and as a result we tend all too easily to be cross-grained in order to emphasize by contrast the sweetness of our virtues (*Apprenticeship*, p.62).

In other words, it is possible to project 'sincere semblance' ('aufrichtiger Schein'), as Schiller calls it: an aesthetic culture which honestly reflects the feelings within, in precisely the way Philine characteristically behaves. In the final book of the

*Journeyman Years* it is, after all, Philine who demonstrates 'intelligence and taste' in her refashioning of the local girls' traditional wedding-dresses:

[Philine] schneidet immer zu, wobei sie aber, mit Geist und Geschmack verfahren, ohne dem Charakter einer solchen Tracht etwas zu benehmen, das eigentlich stockende Barbarische derselben mit einer Anmut zu vermitteln weiß, so gelind, daß die Bekleideten sich und andern besser gefallen und die Bangigkeit überwinden, man möge von dem Herkömmlichen doch abgewichen sein (H.A.8, p.440).

[Philine] cuts away. Proceeding with cleverness and taste, she manages not to detract from the character of the local costume, yet contrives unobtrusively to blend its clumsy barbarity with such gracefulness that the girls looked better to themselves and to others and at the same time overcame their anxiety about diverging from tradition (*Journeyman Years*, p.403).

It is, therefore — given her characteristic combination of intelligence and aesthetic sensibility — hardly surprising that, of all those characters who engage in assembling inherited thought with the aim of enlivening their own thinking,<sup>93</sup> it is Philine who hits on a reading practice that is truly stimulating. Having collected various books as representative of the Western cultural tradition, she and her new husband, Friedrich, read extracts from them to each other, as Friedrich reports to Wilhelm:

Endlich hatte Philine den herrlichen Einfall, die sämtlichen Bücher auf einem großen Tisch aufzuschlagen, wir setzten uns gegeneinander und lasen gegeneinander, und immer nur stellenweise, aus einem Buch wie aus dem andern. Da war nun eine echte Lust .... Schon finden wir nichts Neues mehr unter der Sonne, ja allem bietet uns unsere Wissenschaft einen Beleg an (H.A.7, p.558).

Then Philine hit on the splendid idea of piling all the books on to the table and opening them up. We sat across from each other and read to

<sup>93</sup>Cf. R.H. Stephenson and P.D. Zecevic, "'Das Was Bedenke...'" On the Content, Structure, and Form of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, in *London German Studies* V, ed. by Martin Swales (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1993), pp.79-94.

each other, always bits and pieces, from one book and then from another. This was the greatest fun! .... We soon found there was nothing new under the sun that our [scholarship] could not account for (*Apprenticeship*, p.342).

Sophia, or Shekhinah, might well be a more accurate sobriquet for Philine, then, than the quite inadequate one of Eve with which she is saddled (by Lactes; H.A.7, 91) on her first appearance in the novel.

Perhaps none of Wilhelm's relationships with women is more revealing of his inability to match ideal and reality, and to judge women correctly, than that which he has with Therese. His decision to marry her is, he is convinced, perhaps the only authentic one he has ever made:

Der Entschluß, Theresen meine Hand anzubieten, ist vielleicht der erste, der ganz rein aus mir selbst kommt. Mit Überlegung machte ich meinen Plan, meine Vernunft war völlig damit einig, und durch die Zusage des trefflichen Mädchens wurden alle meine Hoffnungen erfüllt (H.A.7, p.534).

My decision to offer Therese my hand in marriage was perhaps the first that came to me entirely from within myself. I made my decision after careful consideration, my mind was completely made up, and my fondest hopes were fulfilled by her acceptance (*Apprenticeship*, p.327)

It is, however, a decision that he comes to regret, almost immediately. At first sight Therese makes a powerful appeal to his own unresolved sexuality. Her tendency to dress and act in a manly fashion reveals, she tells Wilhelm, her 'true colours'; in trying to get Lothario's attention, she puts on men's clothes:

... zum erstenmal in meinem Leben fiel mir's ein, zu scheinen, oder, daß ich mir nicht unrecht tue, in den Augen des trefflichen Mannes für das zu gelten, was ich war. Ich zog meine Mannskleider an, nahm die Flinte auf den Rücken und ging mit unserm Jäger hinaus, um die Gesellschaft an der Grenze zu erwarten (H.A.7, pp.454-55).

... for the first time in my life I decided to appear in my true colours, or perhaps I had better say, as I wanted to appear in Lothario's eyes. I put on men's clothes, slung my gun over my back, and went out accompanied by our huntsman, to await the others at the edge of the estate (*Apprenticeship*, p.278).

Therese's apparent self-assertion has also lured critics into much the same misjudgment as Wilhelm. Recently she has been characterized — typically for the secondary literature — as follows:

Therese is the modern, emancipated woman, self-assertive in her work and striving for self-realization; a woman who has broken with the traditional woman's role and who no longer wants to be the charming girl. She is that out of the deepest conviction.<sup>94</sup>

The key phrase in Therese's report of her transvestism — of her attempt to pass herself off as a man — is, after all, 'as I wanted to appear in *Lothario's eyes*'. Assertive she has certainly been; but she has asserted herself against her step-mother, and in favour of her father (H.A.7, 559ff.). Therese's strategy is not to 'emancipate' herself; it is to get as close as possible to her man.<sup>95</sup> She prefaces her report of Lothario's speech on the ideal patriarchal marriage with the telling words, 'unaussprechlich war meine Zufriedenheit, als ich ihn eines Abends über die Frauen reden hörte' (H.A.7, p.452; 'one evening I had the inexpressible satisfaction of hearing him talk about women'). She concludes it by identifying herself wholly with the man-made wife Lothario has been extolling:

<sup>94</sup>Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.132: 'Therese ist die moderne, emanzipierte, sich in ihrer Arbeit behauptende und auch nach Selbstverwirklichung strebende Frau, die mit der traditionellen Frauenrolle gebrochen hat und nicht mehr nur das reizende Mädchen sein will. Sie ist das aus innerster Überzeugung'.

<sup>95</sup>See H.A.7, pp.446 and 454, for Therese's attempt to be her father's son. See Ingrid Ladendorff, *Zwischen Tradition und Revolution*, pp.123-130, for a (to my mind, mistaken) reading of Therese as an independent woman.



Er machte darauf eine Beschreibung, wie er sich eine Frau wünsche. Ich ward rot; denn er beschrieb mich, wie ich leibte und lebte. Ich genoß im stillen meinen Triumph, um so mehr, da ich aus allen Umständen sah, daß er mich persönlich nicht gemeint hatte, daß er mich eigentlich nicht kannte. Ich erinnere mich keiner angenehmeren Empfindung in meinem ganzen Leben, als daß ein Mann, den ich so sehr schätzte, nicht meiner Person, sondern meiner innersten Natur den Vorzug gab. Welche Belohnung fühlte ich! Welche Aufmunterung war mir geworden! (H.A.7, p.453).

He followed this up with a description of the wife he desired. I blushed, for what he described was myself, just as I was. I secretly revelled in my triumph, and all the more so because everything indicated that it was not me he was referring to, for he did not really know me. I cannot remember a more pleasing experience in my whole life than to see a man I respected giving preference to my character over my appearance. I felt rewarded and encouraged (*Apprenticeship*, p. 277-78).

Nothing could be further from the image Wilhelm has, briefly, formed of her than the reality of Therese's overwhelming desire — to be the object of a man's desire (H.A.7, p.456).

The world that Wilhelm Meister enters in the *Journeyman Years* is significantly different from that of the *Apprenticeship*. What distinguishes the characters of the Second Part from those of the First is the clear recognition on their part of what has been described as the inevitable artistry inherent in our normal behaviour.<sup>96</sup> Hersilie, speaking of her extended family (whose members constitute largely the society in which Wilhelm moves in the *Journeyman Years*), tells Wilhelm of 'the cast of characters':

... es ist das ewig in Romanen und Schauspielen wiederholte: ein wunderlicher Oheim, eine sanfte und eine muntere Nichte, eine kluge Tante, Hausgenossen nach bekannter Art; und käme nun gar der Vetter

<sup>96</sup>See Martin Price, 'The Other Self: Thoughts about Characters in the Novel', in his *Essays in Honour of John Butt* (London: Methuen, 1968).

wieder, so lernte er einen phantastischen Reisenden kennen, der vielleicht einen noch sonderbarern Gesellen mitbrächte, und so wäre das leidige Stück erfunden und in Wirklichkeit gesetzt (H.A.8, pp. 67-68).

It is the one eternally repeated in novels and plays: an eccentric uncle, one gentle and one merry niece, a wise aunt, household companions of the usual stripe; and if the nephew were to return now, he would meet a whimsical traveller, who might perhaps bring an even stranger companion with him, and so the whole dreary play would be complete and translated into reality (*Journeyman Years*, p.140).<sup>97</sup>

This sophisticated, ironic, self-reflexive, quality — often called 'symbolic'<sup>98</sup>, following Goethe's own recorded remarks on the novel (and more recently dubbed 'metonymic')<sup>99</sup> — is nowhere more evident than in the female figure Wilhelm encounters in Book I, Chapter 6 of the *Journeyman Years*: Makarie. For she clearly represents the Wise-Mother figure, the female mana-personality, who in a mysterious, Shekhinah-like way links the microcosm of human experience with the macrocosm. Earlier critics have found this figure well-nigh incomprehensible. The following comment is typical of this reaction:

It is the most astounding characteristic of this novel, which is so full of the practical shaping of the world, that Goethe has it conclude in a myth of a spiritually perfected life of the highest morality, that is integrated into the stellar system.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>97</sup>Cf. Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis*, p.51: '...women are so often like actors in a play they didn't write and don't direct'.

<sup>98</sup>See Goethe in conversation with von Müller, 8/6/1821: 'Alles ist ja nur symbolisch zu nehmen, und überall steckt noch etwas andere dahinter'. ('Everything is to be taken purely symbolically; and everywhere there is always something else behind things'.) (Cf., too, his conversations with von Müller, 22/10/1821 and with Eckermann, 25/12/1825.) Cf. Andrew Jaszi, *Entzweiung und Vereinigung: Goethes symbolische Weltanschauung* (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1973), p.44.

<sup>99</sup>See Ehrhard Bahr, 'Revolutionary Realism in Goethe's *Wanderjahre*', in *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, ed. by W.J. Lillyman, pp.161-75.

<sup>100</sup>Arthur Henkel, *Entsagung*, p.149: 'Es ist der erstaunlichste Zug dieses Romans, der so erfüllt ist der praktischen Weltgestaltung, daß Goethe ihn in einem Mythos eines geistig vollkommenen, in der Sternenwelt einbezogenen Lebens höchster Sittlichkeit münden läßt'. Cf. Albert Fuchs, *Goethe-Studien* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), p.99.

Later critics, drawing on the Hermetic tradition, have seen Makarie as a revitalization of the Platonic creation-myth of the *Timaeus*.<sup>101</sup> What is of significance here is that Makarie is the single most important female encounter that Wilhelm has in the *Journeyman Years*, one that has a profound effect on his development.

Makarie's function at the end of the novel indicates her special, soul-curing status:

The wise-woman of the *Wanderjahre*, Makarie, by holding up a *sittlich-magischer Spiegel* ['an ethical-magical mirror'], a mirror of inward harmony, to such as are confused and disoriented, is able to restore them to new life.<sup>102</sup>

If the Beautiful Soul represents that traditional stage of mysticism (often called 'Illumination') in which 'God[dess] becomes [Wo]man' (the ego's union with the soul), then Makarie seems to represent that equally traditional higher stage ('Ecstasy'), in which '[Wo]man becomes God[dess]' (the soul's union with the Godhead). We are told that the relations of the solar-system are fundamentally innate in Makarie; and, moreover, that she is spiritually moving within it, making her way ever further to the periphery (H.A.8, pp.449 ff.). Such 'cosmic consciousness' is clearly (traditionally) mystical in nature;<sup>103</sup> and equally clearly reminiscent of the mysterious movement of the Shekhinah within the system of the sefirot. As Paul Julian Smith, drawing on Toril Moi's studies of feminine mysticism, has pointed out in a different context, such an extreme, peripheral position is one of the traditional places for the female voice in our cultural tradition:

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<sup>101</sup>Hannelore Schlaffer, *Wilhelm Meister: Das Ende der Kunst*, p.192. Rather than hunting for a source, it might be more profitable to follow Arnd Böhm ("der heilige Borromäus": *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, VIII, 10', *Germanic Notes*, 19 [1988], 33-34), and see Goethe's use of the Goddess-material as one more instance of a late eighteenth-century tendency to mold mythical traditions into paradigmatic figures.

<sup>102</sup>L.A. Willoughby, 'Literary Relations in the Light of Goethe's Principle of "Wiederholte Spiegelungen"', in *Goethe: Poet and Thinker*, pp. 164-5.

<sup>103</sup>Cf. Ronald Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist*, p.249, where he discusses 'the purely mystical attitude of Makarie'.

The mystic, ... in her very extremity, is taken as exemplary of woman's position. She takes up her place in or on the margin, and thus permits both the transgression of boundaries and the cohabitation of incompatible elements ....<sup>104</sup>

Makarie's very name is redolent of the 'blessedness' which springs from the mystic's direct intuition of God; and her nieces, Hersilie and Juliette, have no hesitation in describing Makarie as a disseminator of divine wisdom:

In krankem Verfall des Körpers, in blühender Gesundheit des Geistes, war sie geschildert, als wenn der Stimme einer unsichtbar geworden Ursibylle rein göttliche Worte über die menschlichen Dinge ganz einfach ausspräche (H.A.8, p.65).

She was described as withered by illness in body, blooming with health in spirit, as if the voice of an ancient sibyl, now become invisible, spoke pure, divine words of the greatest simplicity about human affairs (*Journeyman Years*, p.138).

And it is a preoccupation with communication that has a quite down-to-earth practical application in Makarie's sphere of influence, one that makes a deep impression on Wilhelm. When he first meets her, she talks to him 'as to a confidential friend' (H.A.8, p.116); and she encourages him to listen and to talk, since in this private sphere 'nothing need be proven or produce an outward effect'; the only point is mutual enlightenment:

...da wir unter uns sind, nichts festsetzen, nichts nach außen wirken, sondern nur uns aufklären wollen, so kann das Gespräch immer vorwärts gehen (H.A.8, p.116).

...since we are among ourselves and are not attempting to establish anything definitive or affect the outside world, but only to clarify

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<sup>104</sup>Paul Julian Smith, *Representing the Other: 'Race', Text, and Gender in Spanish and Spanish American Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.98.

things for ourselves, the discussion can proceed (*Journeyman Years*, p.176).

The complementary pole to this on-going conversation is intermittent withdrawal and silence (II.A.8, p.223).

There is no evidence whatsoever that Wilhelm is sexually attracted to Makarie. Her very entrance is calculated, rather, to instill a reverently maintained distance:

... ein grüner Vorhang zog sich auf, und eine ältliche, wunderwürdige Dame ward auf einem Lehnstuhl von zwei jungen, hübschen Mädchen herein geschoben ... (H.A.8, p.115).

... a green curtain rose, and an elderly, hallowed figure in an armchair was pushed in by two pretty young girls ... (*Journeyman Years*, p.175).

The benefit for Wilhelm is that, in contrast to all his other relationships with female figures, he feels no resistance and no need for the projection of a self-defensive, idealizing image of the Other. He is able to listen attentively (H.A.8, p.118) — and read the documents, including the aphorisms in her Archive, presumably written out, in part at least, by Makarie herself. The upshot of the impression that Makarie makes on him, in combination with the shattering experience of viewing the night-sky from atop an observatory (H.A.8, p.119), is a dream, which he recounts as follows:

Ich lag sanft, aber tief eingeschlafen, da fand ich mich in den gestrigen Saal versetzt, aber allein. Der grüne Vorhang ging auf, Makariens Sessel bewegte sich hervor, von selbst wie ein belebtes Wesen; er glänzte golden, ihre Kleider schienen priesterlich, ihr Anblick leuchtete sanft; ich war im Begriff, mich niederzuwerfen. Wolken entwickelten sich um ihre Füße, steigend hoben sie flügelartig die heilige Gestalt empor, an der Stelle ihres herrlichen Angesichtes sah ich zuletzt, zwischen sich teilendem Gewölk, einen Stern blinken, der immer aufwärts getragen wurde und durch das eröffnete

Deckengewölb sich mit dem ganzen Sternhimmel vereinigte, der sich immer zu verbreiten und alles zu umschließen schien (H.A.8, p.122).

I was lying in a gentle but deep sleep, and found myself in yesterday's hall, but alone. The green curtain rose, Makarie's chair moved forward by itself, as if it were an animate being. It shone like gold, her clothing seemed priestly, a soft light radiated from her. I was about to prostrate myself. Then clouds billowed out around her feet, and rising, bore the sacred figure upward, as if they were wings. Finally, I saw amidst the parting clouds, in place of her glorious countenance, a star twinkling, which was steadily carried aloft, and through the opened vault of the ceiling joined the entire starry sky, which seemed to keep spreading and encompassing everything (*Journeyman Years*, p. 179).

As if in response to his anguished question, 'What am I in the face of the universe?' — following the humiliation his ego suffers on contemplating the night-sky — this imaginary apotheosis of Makarie seems, for the first time in Wilhelm's development, to mark the growth within him of an awareness of an integrative centre, both within and without, that goes beyond the personal, and which is symbolized by the star, the traditional symbol of the 'spirit',<sup>105</sup> and by the gold of the alchemist tradition.<sup>106</sup>

What all of the female figures discussed have in common is, then, an apparently paradoxical insistence 'on their irreducibility to the feminine role', while 'deliberately assuming it', the only strategy, according to Irigaray, open to women in a patriarchal culture.<sup>107</sup> In that sense, they share a similar significance; to use the term the Elder employs in the Pedagogic Province to cover shared cultural meanings, they are 'symphronistic' (H.A.8, p.159) — in Irigarayan mimicry. And this strategy is shown to be successful in promoting communication between the sexes, as, for example, in the case of the Joseph whom Wilhelm meets at the beginning of his *Journeyman Years*, who reports:

<sup>105</sup> See J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 309.

<sup>106</sup> See Ronald Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist*, p.26: 'the aim of the alchemists might be described as the knowledge of the centre'.

<sup>107</sup> See Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis*, p.166.

Das Geheimnis, womit mich Elisabeth jederzeit empfing, die bündigen Antworten auf meine rätselhaften Fragen, *die ich selbst nicht verstand*, erregten mir sonderbare Ehrfurcht für sie, und ihr Haus, das höchst reinlich war, schien mir eine Art von kleinem Heiligtum vorzustellen (H.A.8, p.21; my emphasis).

The secretiveness with which Elisabeth always received me, the laconic answers to my [enigmatic] questions, *which I myself did not wholly comprehend*, filled me with a curious awe of her, and her house, which was spotlessly clean, seemed to me a small sanctuary of sorts (*Journeyman Years*, p.107; my emphasis).

The woman's talk, even at an unconscious level, seems to engage her male interlocutor in a communicative interchange, like the Kabbalah's transmission of the great secret,<sup>108</sup> which engages him in a (new) way that he himself is only vaguely aware of. But it is one which, as the novel indicates over and over again, affects the way the men think and behave in fundamental ways — as, for example, in Lenardo's confrontation with the daughter of a leaseholder (Susannah) whom he is instructed — by his uncle, in accordance with the rules of his estate — to evict (H.A.9, p.74):

Sie antwortete mir darauf mit so viel Klarheit und zugleich mit so viel kindlicher Schonung und Liebe, daß sie mich ganz für sich einnahm.... Ihre Gründe ruhten auf Individualität und Neigung, die meinigen auf Pflicht und Verstand, und ich leugne nicht, daß sie mir am Ende selbst zu hart vorkamen.... Ihr gefaßtes Wesen verließ sie nicht ganz; aber sie sprach lebhaft, mit Bewegung, und indem ich immer noch Kälte und Gelassenheit heuchelte, kehrte sich ihr ganzes Gemüt nach außen. Ich wünschte die Szene zu endigen; aber auf einmal lag sie zu meinen Füßen, hatte meine Hand gefaßt, geküßt, und sah so gut, so liebenswürdig flehend zu mir herauf, daß ich mir in dem Augenblick *meiner selbst nicht bewußt war* (H.A.8, p.131; my emphasis).

<sup>108</sup>Cf. Aída Beaupied, *Narciso hermético*, pp.3 and 18, where — drawing on Harold Bloom's *Kabbalah and Criticism* — poetry is identified with the kabbalistic practice of communicating the (divine and unspeakable) mystery.

She replied with so much clarity, and at the same time with so much [childlike] forbearance and love, that she completely won me over.... Her reasons were based on exceptional circumstances and affection; mine were based on duty and reason, and I cannot deny that in the end they seemed too rigid even to me.... Her composure did not entirely desert her, but she spoke animatedly, with emotion, and while I continued to feign coldness and detachment, she gave vent to all her feelings. I wanted to put an end to the scene, but suddenly she was at my feet, had taken my hand, kissed it, and looked up at me so sweetly and imploringly that for the moment *I did not know myself* (*Journeyman Years*, p.186; my emphasis).

This confrontation between 'reason' and 'emotion', between 'rigid' principle on the one hand and the evaluation of 'circumstantial' particularity, on the other — in which the male relents in the face of the disruptive excess and fluidity of the female's discourse, for reasons of which he is only obscurely conscious — is characteristic of the relationship between the sexes portrayed in the novel. Rather than accept Wilhelm's (and other male characters') use of the model of economic exchange in respect of man's relations with woman,<sup>109</sup> it would seem more accurate to think in terms of that 'polite exchange' (as Irigaray has it) between the sexes as a cultural activity which promises to reinvigorate both participants.<sup>110</sup>

The ability of the female voice to engage the unconscious of its listeners, and to move them (eventually to insight) is emphasized throughout the novel, as is the need for the woman's point of view to be articulated over against the man's — as Hiersilie insists in Book I, Chapter 6 of the *Journeyman Years*:

Wir Frauen sind in einem besonderen Zustande. Die Maximen der Männer hören wir immerfort wiederholen, ja wir müssen sie in goldnen Buchstaben über unsern Häupten sehn, und doch wüßten wir

<sup>109</sup>Contrast Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.149, who holds that Goethe is endorsing this economic attitude to love and marriage.

<sup>110</sup>See Luce Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, pp. 17-19 and 64. Cf. Patricia Zecevic, 'Woman as Means and End in Camões' *Os Lusíadas*', in *Actas do Congresso Internacional 'O Rosto Feminino Da Expansão Portuguesa'* (Lisbon: Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres, 1994), pp.319-328 (p.328).



Mädchen im stillen das Umgekehrte zu sagen, das auch gölte ... (H.A.8, p.66).

We women find ourselves in a peculiar situation. We are forever hearing men's maxims repeated, indeed, we must see them inscribed above our heads in golden letters, and yet in secret we girls might very well say the opposite, and it would be valid too ... (*Journeyman Years*, p.139).

To make her point she takes her uncle's motto 'Vom Nützlichen durchs Wahre zum Schönen' ('From the Useful by Way of the True to the Beautiful') and turns it on its head:

Die Schöne findet Verehrer, auch Freier, und endlich wohl gar einen Mann; dann gelangt sie zum Wahren, das nicht immer höchst erfreulich sein mag, und wenn sie klug ist, widmet sie sich dem Nützlichen, sorgt für Haus und Kinder und verharret dabei (H.A.8, p.66).

The Beauty finds admirers, also suitors, and finally even a husband; then she attains to the True, which may not always be entirely pleasing, and if she is sensible, she dedicates herself to the Useful, tends her house and children, and contents herself with that (*Journeyman Years*, p.139).

And, as we shall see, this special power of the female voice to disturb, and to stimulate new insights, is manifested in the organization of the language used by women, whether spoken or written. Marie Cardinal's tenet, that words are a valuable means of a woman's self-determination,<sup>111</sup> is corroborated by the way in which in *Wilhelm Meister* what women have to say takes on 'embodied meaning' rather than simply 'designative meaning'.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>111</sup> See Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis*, pp. 52-67.

<sup>112</sup> The distinction is taken from James Guetti, *Word-Music: The Aesthetic Aspect of Narrative Fiction* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1980), p.172.

Makarie, 'the most taciturn of women' ('die schweigsamste aller Frauen'; H.A.8, p.223), when she does talk, speaks in the measured tones, and the heightened aesthetic discourse of the aphorisms in her Archive.<sup>113</sup> While it is left open to whom the writing of the aphorisms in her Archive is to be ascribed, the presumption must be that one or all of the women who use and take care of it (Makarie herself, Hersilie, Juliette, or Angela) write them out. Whoever the particular author may be, the aphorisms seem to be the precipitate of woman's writing. And just as these aphorisms evince a highly stylized linguistic organization — 'an unrepeatable concordance of sense, rhythm, and sound'<sup>114</sup> — so, too, Makarie's talk is marked by an unusual formal intensity. In her opening conversation with Wilhelm she picks up her cue from the terms used by the Astronomer (in discussing the *misuse* of in-themselves useful *means*), and then plays with them in a curiously fractured chiasmus:

Ich geb' es zu', versetzte Makarie, 'denn man kommt in doppelte Verlegenheit. Spricht man von Mißbrauch, so scheint man die Würde des Mittels selbst anzutasten, denn es liegt ja immer noch in dem Mißbrauch verborgen; spricht man von Mittel, so kann man kaum zugeben, daß seine Gründlichkeit und Würde irgendeinen Mißbrauch zulasse' (H.A.8, p.116).

'I agree', Makarie answered, 'because you face a dilemma. If you talk about misuse, then you seem to impugn the dignity of the means themselves, since the means are always still implicit in their misuse; if you talk about means, then you scarcely concede the possibility that their thoroughness and dignity might allow any misuse (*Journeyman Years*, pp. 175-76).

In ways that are reminiscent of what Irigaray argues are characteristic of a specifically feminine discourse — asymmetry, in particular<sup>115</sup> — Makarie's language at once

<sup>113</sup>See R.H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature: A Study in Aesthetic Transmutation* (Bern: Lang, 1983), pp.157-163, for an aesthetic analysis of Goethe's aphoristic style.

<sup>114</sup>See Michael Hamburger, 'A Perilous Multiplicity', in *Goethe Revisited*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson, pp. 11-30 (p.19).

<sup>115</sup>Cf. Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis*, pp.162-165.

associates in German 'means' (*Mittel*) and 'misuse' (*Mißbrauch*), by the play on their near-identical first syllable, thrown into relief by the chiasmus, *Mißbrauch, Mittel, Mittel, Mißbrauch*, which is disrupted by an 'extra' appearance of *Mißbrauch* in the middle of the four terms. It is as if the dilemma — the tangled inextricability of the two concepts — were being enacted in the particular use of language. Just as in the case of the Archive aphorism quoted above (M.u.R., 729), in which alliteration links *Frau* ('woman'/'wife') with *Vater* ('father'), cutting across gender-lines and articulating the very cross-over of male and female roles which is the topic of the discourse; so here the meaning is embodied in the language rather than simply designated by it. This same expressive oddness of formulation is also at work in the following exchange of Makarie's:

'Von Natur besitzen wir keinen Fehler, der nicht zur Tugend, keine Tugend, die nicht zum Fehler werden könnte. Diese letzten sind gerade die bedenklichsten. Zu dieser Betrachtung hat mir vorzüglich der wunderbare Neffe Anlaß gegeben...' (H.A.8, p.127).

'By nature we possess no faults that could not become virtues, no virtues that might not become faults. The latter are the most disturbing. I am led to this consideration by my remarkable nephew...' (*Journeyman Years*, p.183).

For once, the rhetorical figure governing the opening sentence — the chiasmus: *Fehler* ('fault'), *Tugend* ('virtue'), *Tugend* ('virtue'), *Fehler* ('fault') — is flawlessly symmetrical. But there is a disruptive, a-grammatical, feature of the German that has been smoothed over in the English translation. '*Diese letzten*' ('the latter') can, grammatically speaking, only refer to *both* 'fault and 'virtue', since the German terms are singular and the phrase '*die letzten*' is plural. Yet again, as in the examples given above, Makarie's discourse is marked by a tendency to treat what, on the level of logic are Either-Ors, as inextricable Both-Ands.

We find these 'non-linear, fluid, and contradictory'<sup>116</sup> features embedded in the language of almost all the women in *Wilhelm Meister*<sup>117</sup> — The Beautiful Soul, for example, in writing that 'my convictions were a mystery to no-one' builds in an anaphoric link that condenses 'convictions' and 'mystery' in a way that runs counter to the surface sense: 'Meine Gesinnungen waren niemand ein Geheimnis' (H.A.7, p.383). And in the final paragraph of her 'Confessions' the same technique is used to suggest that 'commandment' and 'law' are essentially (mere) 'formalities':

Ich erinnere mich kaum eines Gebotes; nichts erscheint mir in Gestalt eines Gesetzes; es ist ein Trieb, der mich leitet und mich immer recht führt; ich folge mit Freiheit meinen Gesinnungen... (H.A.7, p.420).

I cannot recall having followed any commandment that loomed before me as a law imposed from without: I was always led and guided by impulse, freely following my own [conviction]... (*Apprenticeship*, p.256).

Moreover, alliteration likewise links *Trieb* ('impulse'), *leitet* ('led') and *führt* ('guided'), and *führt, folge* ('following') and *Freiheit* ('freedom'), in an a-logical cluster of meaning that binds together 'being led (by impulse)' and 'freedom'. But if it is hardly surprising that an (albeit lesser) mystic disposition like that of the Beautiful Soul should share Makarie's linguistic practice,<sup>118</sup> it is perhaps remarkable that in a letter to Wilhelm, Hersilie (described by a recent critic as 'flighty')<sup>119</sup> should also employ similarly embodying effects in her writing. She is ostensibly writing about the (mysterious) little chest that has been recovered; but she is also talking about the unresolved triangular relationship between herself, Wilhelm and his son, Felix:<sup>120</sup>

<sup>116</sup>See Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.79: '[women's writing] resists and explodes every firmly established form, figure, idea or concept'.

<sup>117</sup>Although it is hazardous to argue from silence, the most striking exception would seem to be Natalie, in the unadorned directness of her discourse.

<sup>118</sup>Cf. Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.194, where he argues that Goethe has put into the mouth of the Beautiful Soul the tenets of Pietism.

<sup>119</sup>Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.275; the German terms is *sprunghaft*.

<sup>120</sup>Cf. Arthur Henkel, *Entsagung*, p.81. See, too, Eric Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel*, p.257.

...genug, es war mir so wunderbar, so seltsam, so konfus, wie es mir immer geht, wenn ich aus meiner gleichmütigen Heiterkeit herausgenötigt werde. ...wenn Sie eine Art von Herz und Gemüt haben, so denken Sie, wie mir zu Mute ist, wie viele Leidenschaften sich in mir herunkämpfen, wie ich Sie herwünsche, auch wohl Felix dazu, daß es ein Ende werde, wenigstens daß eine Deutung vorgehe, was damit gemeint sei, mit diesem wunderbaren Finden, Wiederfinden, Trennen und Vereinigen; und so sollte ich auch nicht aus aller Verlegenheit gerettet werden, so wünsche ich wenigstens sehnlichst, daß diese sich aufkläre, sich endige, wenn mir auch, wie ich fürchte, etwas Schlimmeres begegnen sollte (H.A.8, pp.377-78).<sup>121</sup>

... in short, I felt so strange, so odd, so flustered, as I always do when startled out of my calm good humor. ...if you have a spark of sensitivity or sympathy, you will imagine what I am feeling, how many passions are warring inside me, how I wish you here, and probably Felix as well, so that this may end, or that at least some interpretation be provided for all this mysterious finding, refinding, separation and reuniting; and even if I should not be rescued from all this confusion, I still wish fervently that all this may be clarified, be ended, even if, as I fear, something worse should befall me (*Journeyman Years*, p.359).

The confusing situation in which Hersilie finds herself, caught as she is between churning passion and longing for a final enlightenment and clarification, finds a precipitate in the language itself. The apparent parallelism of *Finden, Wiederfinden, Trennen, Vereinigen* ('finding, refinding, separation and re-uniting') is indeed only apparent: the term 'losing' is missing from the first half of the implied parallel, thus disrupting it, and leaving it, logically, asymmetrical; but the shared endings (homeoteleuton) and the 'f'-sound alliteration gather all the terms into a felt grouping. Once again, a Both-And structure is embodied in the style; and a feeling of anxiety, that 'finding (again)' will bring 'unity' and 'parting', is given expression.

<sup>121</sup>This word *Verlegenheit* ('embarrassment') occurs regularly in Goethe in connection with the articulation of the feminine. Cf. *Faust II*, 1.6215: 'Von ihnen [den Müttern] sprechen ist Verlegenheit'.

Probably the most striking case of a woman employing language in a non-linear, apparently illogical, and disruptive way is that of Mignon. Far from being a source of mere involuntary comedy,<sup>122</sup> Mignon's mangled German is curiously expressive:

Manche Tage war sie ganz stumm, zuzeiten antwortete sie mehr auf verschiedene Fragen, immer sonderbar, doch so, daß man nicht unterscheiden konnte, ob es Witz oder Unkenntnis der Sprache war, indem sie ein gebrochenes, mit Französisch und Italienisch durchflochtenes Deutsch sprach (H.A.7, p.110).

Some days [Mignon] would be completely silent; on others she would answer certain questions, but always strangely, so that it was difficult to decide whether it was a joke or her German mixed with French and Italian was intentional or simply the result of an imperfect knowledge of German (*Apprenticeship*, p.61).

The undecidability of Mignon's use of language has the advantage, for her, that her unique style of German protects her from being fully understood, and thus renders her difficult to manipulate. Moreover, her German, however broken, is accompanied by an impressive tone ('einer sonderbar feierlichen Art', H.A.7, p.8; 'a peculiarly solemn air'), reinforced by a peculiarly affecting body-language: her egg-dance, for all its clockwork, mechanical nature, is nonetheless powerfully expressive of her character (H.A.7, pp.115-16). It is, then, hardly surprising that such a communicative nature should try so hard to master writing (H.A.7, p.135). Despite her failure at acquiring this particular technique, it is no exaggeration to point out that Mignon is shown to be, along with the Harpist, the most articulate of all the characters in the novel. She is, after all, the author — within the fiction of the novel — of some of Goethe's most admired poems ('Kennst du das Land', H.A.7, p.145; 'So laßt mich scheinen, bis ich werde', H.A.7, p.515). It is pointed out by the Narrator that the power of the first song

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<sup>122</sup>Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane*, p.167.

disappears completely, once Mignon's interpretation is lost in its being set down on paper:

Melodie und Ausdruck gefielen unserm Freunde besonders, ob er gleich die Worte nicht alle verstehen konnte. Er ließ sich die Strophen wiederholen und erklären, schrieb sie auf und übersetzte sie ins Deutsche. Aber die Originalität der Wendungen konnte er nur von ferne nachahmen. Die kindliche Unschuld des Ausdrucks verschwand, indem die gebrochene Sprache übereinstimmend und das Unzusammenhängende verbunden ward. Auch konnte der Reiz der Melodie mit nichts verglichen werden (H.A.7, pp.145-46).

The melody and the expression pleased Wilhelm greatly, though he could not make out all the words. So he asked her to repeat it, and explain it; then he wrote it down and translated it into German. He found, however, that he could not even approximate the originality of the [turns of phrase], and the childlike innocence of the [expression] was lost when the broken language was smoothed over and the disconnectedness removed. The charm of the melody was also quite unique (*Apprenticeship*, p.83).

It is, then, precisely the brokenness, non-linear connectedness of Mignon's expression that moves her listeners — and gives expression to her own psyche. Much later in the novel, this point is made with some emphasis by the Narrator:

Sie sprach noch immer sehr gebrochen deutsch, und nur wenn sie den Mund zum Singen aufthat, wenn sie die Zither rührte, schien sie sich des einzigen Organs zu bedienen, wodurch sie ihr Innerstes aufschließen und mitteilen konnte (H.A.7, p.262).

She still spoke a broken German; and only when she opened her mouth to sing, or played the zither, did she reveal the one organ she had to express her innermost self (*Apprenticeship*, p.156).

Mignon's ability to express herself aesthetically, but not discursively, is made manifest in her manner of articulating general principles, in much the same way as the infinitely more sophisticated Makarie. For example, in response to Wilhelm's decision that she get a formal education, she answers 'Ich bin gebildet genug, um zu lieben und zu trauern' (H.A.7, p.488; 'I am educated enough to love and to sorrow'). Parallelism and near-rhyme on the endings of the two infinitives coalesce 'love' and 'sorrow' in her (powerfully effective) German in a way that is quite untranslatable. Similarly, her formulation of the 'Reason-Emotion' antithesis is charged and heightened: 'Die Vernunft ist grausam ... das Herz is besser' (H.A.7, p.489; 'Reason is cruel ... the heart is better'). The sibillant-alliteration, in combination with the assonance-repetition, link in German 'heart' with 'better' in a dense knot of quasi-identity between the terms. The result of this particular exchange is consistent with a repeated pattern in the novel: Wilhelm relents (H.A.7, p.489). Shortly before her death, the Narrator again draws attention to the expressive power of her singing, in almost identical terms to those commenting on the performance of 'Kennst du das Land'. To the questions put by the other children, Mignon gives 'significant' (*bedeutend*) answers:

Und so antwortete sie bedeutend auf jede unschuldige, leichte Frage. Als die Neugierde der kleinen Gesellschaft befriedigt war und der Eindruck dieser Erscheinung stumpf zu werden anfang, wollte man sie wieder auskleiden. Sie verwehrt es, nahm ihre Zither, setzte sich hier auf diesen hohen Schreibtisch hinauf und sang ein Lied mit unglaublicher Anmut (H.A.7, p.515).

She continued to give [significant] answers to their questions. When their curiosity was satisfied and the first impressions of her appearance began to fade, they wanted to undress her. But she would not allow this. She took up her zither, climbed up on this high desk, and sang with unbelievable grace and appeal (*Apprenticeship*, p.316).



Mignon puts great store by appearance; indeed, the opening line of her song ('So let me seem till I become') makes this as clear as her keenness to keep on the (female) clothes she has grown to love. The rhyme of *Weib* ('woman') on *Leib* ('body') in the third stanza of her song fully articulates the theme of 'embodied meaning' which the female speakers and writers in the novel also exemplify:

Und jene himmlischen Gestalten,  
 Sie fragen nicht nach Mann und Weib,  
 Und keine Kleider, keine Falten  
 Umgeben den verklärten Leib (H.A.7, p.516).

For all those glorious heavenly forms,  
 They do not ask [after] man or [woman],  
 No garments long or draperies fine  
 Surround the body now transformed (*Apprenticeship*, p.316).

What at first sight appears to be inarticulateness is, in fact, the most profound articulation of felt life. In much the same way (though lacking the tragic depths of Mignon's articulated feeling) even a woman as apparently light and carefree as Philine uses language to give expression — and not only in song and dance (H.A.7, p.96) — to a complexity of (contradictory) feeling that is, consciously at least, inaccessible to her male interlocutor. In response, for instance, to Wilhelm's pompous and condescending remark that, if she were to sing something rather more respectable than her favourite song (*Leibgesang* in German: literally: 'body-song' — a linguistic ambiguity lost on him, though not on her), she might meet with more approval, Philine replies with a verbal wit reminiscent of the Baroque topos of 'icy fire': "'Ja", sagte Philine, "es müßte eine recht angenehme Empfindung sein, sich am Eise zu wärmen"' (H.A.7, p.131; "'Yes", said Philine. "It must be quite pleasant to warm oneself on ice"'). The association of 'pleasant feeling' ('angenehme Empfindung') with 'warming oneself on ice' ('am Eise zu wärmen') is a felt-cluster in German, held

together, quite a-logically but nevertheless effectively, by an alliterative play on 'm' and 'n'-sounds.

Just as Hilarie learns to express her own feelings by weaning herself gradually from her painting instructor in order to paint in her own style (H.A.8, p.238), so the speaking and writing women discussed above express themselves in a style that 'privileges the tactile, the simultaneous, the fluid, the proximate'.<sup>123</sup> What Kenneth Burke called 'the muscular tensions of good prose'<sup>124</sup> — the sound-look approximations that can be exploited for meaning through being brought into contact with one another— are what these women use to articulate themselves, to *parler femme*.

At a particularly delicate stage in the development of the intricate plot of the interpolated *Novelle*, 'Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren' ('The Man of Fifty Years'), the Narrator makes the following, telling, remark:

Nun aber wünschten wir wohl den nächsten Zeitverlauf von einer zarten Frauenhand umständlich geschildert zu sehen, da wir nach eigener Art und Weise uns nur mit dem Allgemeinsten befassen dürfen. Hier muß denn nun von dem Einfluß der Dichtkunst abermals die Rede sein (H.A.8, p.208).

But now we would dearly wish to have the next period described in all particulars by some delicate feminine hand, since we ourselves are restricted by our own manner and style to the most general aspects. For at this point the influence of poetry must once again be spoken of (*Journeyman Years*, p.241).

This association of the Narrator with the female and the poetic is, in fact, sustained throughout the novel by virtue of the fact that the kind of embodied meaning traceable

<sup>123</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, p.78.

<sup>124</sup>Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p.133.

in the discourse of the female figures is *also* characteristic of the narrative voice.<sup>125</sup> For example, in Wilhelm's Certificate of Apprenticeship beginning (H.A.7, p.456; *Apprenticeship*, p.303) with the saying usually attributed to Hippocrates: 'Die Kunst ist lang, das Leben kurz' ('Art is long, life short') — an authorial presence is felt in the very opening lines: in a cluster of sound-look features linking what is conceptually opposed: *schwierig* ('difficult') by homeoteleuton to *flüchtig* ('fleeting'), *Denken* ('thinking') to *Leben* ('living'); alliteration links *Kunst* ('art') with *kurz* ('short'), and *Gelegenheit* ('opportunity') with *Gedanken* ('thought'); above all, the key-terms of the antithesis *handeln* ('action') and *denken* ('thinking') are interwoven by means of an aural and visual chiasmus:<sup>126</sup>

Die Kunst ist lang, das Leben kurz, das Urteil schwierig, die  
Gelegenheit flüchtig. Handel ist leicht, Denken schwer; nach dem  
Gedanken handeln unbequem (H.A.7, p.496).

Art is long, life is short, judgment difficult, opportunities fleeting.  
Action is easy, thinking is hard; acting [according to] thinking,  
uncomfortable (*Apprenticeship*, p.303).

Within the fiction such features belong to whatever character employs them, in writing or speaking — including the Narrator; outside the fiction, they clearly belong to the author.<sup>127</sup> Put another way, the embodied female voice in the novel is assimilated to the author's voice; and is, to that extent, authoritatively endorsed. Moreover, this voice is the poetic voice — a point made with great emphasis by the concluding poem of the novel, 'Im ernsten Beinhaus war's' ('In solemn vault of burial'). The last stanza of the poem both states and articulates the fundamental

<sup>125</sup>Cf. James Guetti, *Word-Music*, p.27: '... in the aural processes of ... fiction, the presence of the author is felt'.

<sup>126</sup>See R.H. Stephenson and P.D. Zecevic, "'Das Was Bedenke' ...", pp.92-94.

<sup>127</sup>Cf. Michael Beddow, *The Fiction of Humanity: Studies in the Bildungsroman from Wieland to Thomas Mann* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). I take it that this authorial presence is what Beddow has in mind when he speaks of 'an additional narrative plane' in the novel (p.5).

interaction between what our culture marks as 'masculine' (the fixed and Apollonian) and what it marks as 'feminine' (the fluid and Dionysian):

Was kann der Mensch im Leben mehr gewinnen,  
 Als daß sich Gott-Natur ihm offenbare?  
 Wie sie das Feste läßt zu Geist verrinnen,  
 Wie sie das Geisterzeugte fest bewahre.<sup>128</sup>

To what more noble end our life we use  
 Than knowing God-and-Nature, which are one?  
 Firm matter melts which She as Mind renews,  
 And She makes firm what fertile mind has done (*Collected Poems*,  
 p.259).

The reciprocity between Material (*das Feste*) and Mind (*Geist*) is articulated by the (slightly asymmetrical) chiasmus (*Feste* and *fest* do not quite reproduce each other). And the rhyme of *bewahre* ('presence') on *offenbare* ('reveal') links the two poles of one of the novel's central themes, that of the interplay between Tradition and Discovery. The poetic voice we hear at the very end of the novel is, then, the one we hear throughout, in the aphorisms, in the Narrator's style, and in the embodiments of the female voice.<sup>129</sup>

This congruence of the aesthetic with the feminine is also reflected on the thematic level of the novel. The appropriate attitude that Wilhelm slowly learns to cultivate in the face of the zealous preservation of inherited culture by the various groups he comes into contact with — i.e., an active, independent mind of one's own

<sup>128</sup>Both this poem and 'Vermächtnis' (included by Goethe in the 1829 version of the novel) are not included in the Hamburger edition of *Wilhelm Meister*; they are included in H.A. I (edition of Goethe's poems) pp.366 and 369. The poems are not included either in the Princeton translation of *The Journeyman Years*; but translations can be found in vol.I (*Selected Poems*) of *The Collected Works*, pp.257-8 and 267-9.

<sup>129</sup>See Hans Reiss, "Das "Poetische" in "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahren", *Goethe Jahrbuch*, 101 (1984), 112-28. Cf. Eric Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel*, p.137 on the German Romantics' praise of *Wilhelm Meister* as 'poetic': 'The author-narrator ... became the essential objectifying force structuring and destructuring material into a poetic statement...'. Cf., too, Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. by A. Jardine, T.A. Gora and L.S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p.138: '[in poetry is expressed the] 'repressed instinctual, maternal element, what is untenable in the symbolic, nominal, paternal function'. I cannot therefore agree with Ursula Mahlendorf, 'The Mystery of Mignon', p.34, that the price of the modern society envisaged in the novel is 'the almost total eradication of female sexuality'.

— is, it turns out, particularly characteristic of the women-figures in the novel. Indeed, it is often precisely those characters, like Philine — who appear to Wilhelm to be the least serious — who hit on a mode of aggregating received tradition that yields wisdom (H.A.7, p.558). Nachodine, for example, notes the aesthetic-cum-alchemical effect of a church-service, in which age-old *topoi* suddenly come alive:

'Es waren' sagte sie 'bekannte Sprüche, Reime, Aussprüche und Wendungen, die ich hundertmal gehört und als an hohlen Klängen mich geärgert hatte: diesmal flossen sie aber so herzlich zusammengeschmolzen, ruhig glühend, von Schlacken rein, wie wir das erweichte Metall in der Ruine hinfließen sehen' (H.A.8, p.429).

'They were', she said, 'familiar sayings, verses, expressions, and phrases which I had heard hundreds of times, and had scorned as empty sounds. This time, however, they flowed forth so wonderfully melted together, gently glowing, free of dross, as when we see molten metal running from the crucible' (*Journeyman Years*, p.395).

The living wisdom Wilhelm had valued so highly in the Poet (H.A.7, p.83) — and sadly missed in his own poetasting — he learns to discover in the female voice, in whatever form it gains expression.<sup>130</sup> Wilhelm's early, naïve idealization and quasi-identification of woman with the deity — 'da ich die [Mariane] verloren habe, die anstatt einer Gottheit mich zu meinen Wünschen hinüberfahren sollte' (H.A.7, p.85; 'since I have lost her who in the stead of a goddess was to lead me to my wishes') — gives way to a respect for the female and the feminine as equivalent to the aesthetic. Woman-as-aesthetic is the burden of the song Philine sings to him in the *Apprenticeship*:<sup>131</sup>

<sup>130</sup>It is this quality of poetic wisdom in *Wilhelm Meister* that led Friedrich Schlegel to say of the modern novel: 'Die Romane sind die sokratischen Dialoge unserer Zeit. In diese liberale Form hat sich die Lebensweisheit vor der Schulweisheit geflüchtet' ('Novels are the Socratic dialogues of our time. Wisdom of life has fled from the wisdom of the schools into this literal form'). *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. by E. Behler (Munich: Schöningh, 1967), p.26.

<sup>131</sup>Cf. Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p.212 (XXVII, 7) for a discussion of the link between aesthetic culture and wooing of the woman. (I am grateful to Professor Roger Stephenson for bringing this passage to my attention.)

Wie das Weib dem Mann gegeben  
 Als die schönste Hälfte war,  
 Ist die Nacht das halbe Leben,  
 Und die schönste Hälfte zwar (H.A.7, p.317).

Just as man is given wife to  
 Be his [most beautiful] half – agreed –  
 So is night the half of life, too,  
 And the [most beautiful] half indeed (*Apprenticeship*, p.191).

And Wilhelm's internalization of the value of aesthetic experience is made clear in his enthusiastic training as an anatomist (as part of his education as a surgeon). Wilhelm comes to the realization that aesthetic imagination can bridge the gap between knowledge and action: 'Das, was jetzto Kunst ist, muß Handwerk werden' (H.A.8, p.332; 'What now is Art must become Craft'); just as his master in anatomy deploys his own skills as a sculptor, so Wilhelm draws on his stage experience, to develop the new craft of making artificial models of parts of the human body.

Like the Kabbalah, the wisdom Wilhelm assimilates is handed down in the playfully manipulated body of language; and it is symbolized, as in the writings of the Kabbalists, by Woman — by 'a beautiful and good eros', the motivating force of traditional mysticism.<sup>132</sup> The newly fashionable, but age-old, association of femininity and mysticism is, however, exploited by Goethe not to reveal the Divine or express the ineffable.<sup>133</sup> What is embodied in the aesthetic-feminine 'veil of poetry' ('der Dichtung Schleier') is human felt-thought.<sup>134</sup> Silence about what may — or may not — lie beyond this, for Goethe, highest level of human articulation is part of that *Entsagung* ('Renunciation', literally 'un-saying') that is announced in the sub-title of the *Journeyman Years* as the major theme of the work.<sup>135</sup> In giving the veil — the

<sup>132</sup>Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. by T.A. Carlson (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), p.74.

<sup>133</sup>Cf. Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis*, p.165.

<sup>134</sup>See William Larrett, 'Der Dichtung Schleier: From Theology with Love to Aesthetics', in *Tradition and Creation*, ed. by C.P. Magill, et al (Leeds: Maney, 1978), pp.89-100; and R.H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature*, pp. 157-163.

<sup>135</sup>Cf. Victor Lange, 'The Metaphor of Silence', in *Goethe Revisited*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson, pp.138-52 (pp.143-44).

ancient symbol of mystical revelation — an emphatically aesthetic meaning,<sup>136</sup> Goethe is neither upholding nor denying the validity of the mystical tradition. Indeed he is continuing the central tradition of the *Zohar*.<sup>137</sup> For he is insisting that if the transcendental is to be glimpsed at all, it must be via the highest level of immanent, human, self-expression: the aesthetic-feminine deployment of language

In the next Chapter, an examination of the main female figures, and the strategies they adopt to assert their female identity, in *La Pícarra Justina* will enable us to analyse, in Chapter V, the way in which the Spanish language thickens into poetry in the mouth of Justina, creating a style that is very similar to the aesthetic discourse of *Wilhelm Meister* and to the linguistic theory and practice of the Kabbalah.

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<sup>136</sup>See Joseph Strelka, *Esoterik bei Goethe*, p.24.

<sup>137</sup>Cf. C. Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala*, p.182: 'for ... Cabala the veil is the mystical symbol of the barrier separating man from God' — namely, creation, 'itself a linguistic phenomenon' (p.87).

CHAPTER IV: The Female Figures in *La Pícaro Justina*

El gusto me lleva ('Desire carries me along')  
(Motto on the Frontispiece of the first edition of *La pícaro Justina*)

Critics have, until recently, tended to accord to the author's voice in *La Pícaro Justina* a narrative authority that sets Justina's narration in an ironic, undermining light. Francis Trice asserted in 1971 that the author, albeit with irony, 'sets out to show us how inferior women are'.<sup>1</sup> The consensus view, that 'his voice alone — never hers — has any truth value',<sup>2</sup> receives perhaps its most trenchant formulation in Anne J. Cruz's 1989 article, 'Studying Gender in the Spanish Golden Age', which speaks in general terms of the reprehensible 'absolutism and misogyny' of much sixteenth-century writing.<sup>3</sup> But the hyperbolic nature of many of the misogynist remarks in the novel has led critics to diverge from the established view. Edward H. Friedman's 1985 study of the novel's narrative structure leads him to accord to Justina as narrator a great deal more authority than had hitherto been conceded to her in the secondary literature: 'while the author has the last word in each section, Justina has the major voice', in a 'give-and-take of literary authority'.<sup>4</sup> Implicit in the argument that follows is that Justina-as-Narrator has — partly because of the powerful female lineage evoked by her rhetoric and partly because of the evident intelligence of her reflexion and behaviour<sup>5</sup> — at least as much claim to authority as the fictive male

<sup>1</sup>Francis Trice, 'A Literary Study of *La Pícaro Justina*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Syracuse University, 1971), p.117.

<sup>2</sup>Marcia L. Welles, 'The pícaro: Towards Female Autonomy, or the Vanity of Virtue', *Romance Quarterly*, 33 (1986), 63-70 (p.65).

<sup>3</sup>Anne J. Cruz, 'Studying Gender in the Spanish Golden Age', in *Cultural and Historical Grounding for Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. by Hernán Vidal (Minneapolis: Institute for the Study of Ideologies, 1989), pp.193-222 (p.207).

<sup>4</sup>Edward H. Friedman, 'Man's Space, Woman's Place: Discourse and Design in *La Pícaro Justina*', in *La CHISPA 85: Selected Proceedings of the Vth Louisiana Conference of Hispanic Languages and Literatures*, ed. by G. Paolini (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1985), pp.115-23 (pp.118 and 115).

<sup>5</sup>It has been argued that, since the pícaro, modelled on the *Celestina*, is portrayed either explicitly or ironically as a prostitute, such a depiction makes her a far more significant personage than the pícaro, because the prostitute historically holds an important place in society'. Anne J. Cruz, 'Sexual Enclosure, Textual Escape: The Pícaro as Prostitute in the Spanish Female Picaresque Novel', in *Seeking the Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Writing: Essays in Feminist Contextual Criticism*, ed. by Sheila Fisher and Janet E. Halley (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), pp.135-159 (p.137) — a point that sits uneasily with Cruz's acceptance of the view of López de



author. For in this novel (as in Quevedo's *Buscón*, where the reliability of both the protagonist-narrator, Pablos, and that of Quevedo as narrator-figure are dubious),<sup>6</sup> the author-in-the-work, though he frames the narrative, is no less a part of the novel's fictional fabric; and as such not simply identifiable with the empirical author, López de Úbeda. Rather than any firm subordination of her tale to his perspective, what in fact is at work in the novel is an oscillating dialectic between two valid (and equally limited) viewpoints: that of the author-in-the-work and that of the protagonist-as-narrator (perspectives which, on occasion, coincide and mutually reinforce one another),<sup>7</sup> reflecting in turn the Renaissance debate on women, the 'Querrelle des Femmes'.

The significance of Mother-figures in several major Spanish Golden-Age texts (for example in Quevedo's *El Buscón* and Cervantes' *Coloquio de los Perros*) has been noted.<sup>8</sup> And Justina herself, in referring to her fictitious archetypal Mother, Celestina, alludes to this literary context by identifying the Old Moorish Witch, who becomes her own grandmother in the text, as Celestina's great grandmother (652). The series of Great Mother-figures or 'visions' (e.g. 553, 621) that punctuate the text and symbolize Justina's process of inheriting her maternal genealogy by way of an unbroken chain is by far the most important structuring principle at work in Justina's life-story. These key relationships involve her in coming face to face (and to terms)

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Úbeda as 'condemning women' (p.149). For how much more prestige attends Justina who, though perceived as a whore, is in fact chaste.

<sup>6</sup>See Paul Julian Smith, *Quevedo: El Buscón* (London: Grant and Cutler, 1991), pp.48-49: 'Quevedo the author makes it difficult indeed for us to make up our minds'. (Moreover, unlike Quevedo's Pablos [pp.63-64], Justina clearly has the intelligence to produce herself the profusion of linguistic dexterity in which she delights.)

<sup>7</sup>See the 'Summary Prologue to Both Tomes of Justina' (81-84). Cf. Nina Cox Davis, *Autobiography as 'Burla' in the Guzmán de Alfarache* (London: Associated University Presses, 1991). The 'discursive oscillation' (p.17) in *Guzmán* 'seems to establish ... an implied dialogue' (p.25).

<sup>8</sup>See, for example, C.B. Morris, *The Unity and Structure of Quevedo's Buscón: Desgracias Encadenadas* (Hull: University of Hull Publications, 1965), for an analysis of the (male) picaresque relationship with the mother-figure; María Antonia Garcés' study of the monstrous sinful-sexual witch as the abject mother who is devoured by the male protagonist in Cervantes' *Coloquio de los Perros* ('Berganza and the Abject: The Desecration of the Mother', in *Quixotic Desire: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Cervantes*, ed. by R.A. El Saffar and D. de Armas Wilson [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp.292-314]); M. Gossy, *The Untold Story: Women and Theory in Golden Age Texts* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), pp.111-116; the misogynist treatment of the female-figure in Quevedo's *Sueños* ('Mundo por de Dentro'); and the Celestina-figure in Lope de Vega's *El Caballero de Olmedo*.

with a series of negative anima-figures which represent those projected onto women by the (male) cultural imaginary, internalized more or less unwittingly by Justina and by women in general, and, in turn projected into her *langage* in the psychological process that she enacts. Each encounter with the female figures (La Sotadera, Sancha Gomez, La Vieja Morisca, the 'Mothers', and her own Mother) is characterised by a certain self-sustaining organic completeness, symbolic of the coming together of the mother-daughter relationship. And each contributes to the growth and development of the central female figure of the novel, Justina herself.

La Sotadera<sup>9</sup> (406) who appears —as guide— at the head of a procession of female dancers at the religious festivities in León in the course of Justina's pilgrimage to that city is a colourful, witty, and visually extravagant example of the negative anima-figure. Describing her, in terms that call Goethe's Phorkyas to mind, as 'the oldest and most evil thing that I saw in all my life' (406), Justina comically adds that 'bastaba enjugar dos veces los ojos con la cara de aquella maldita vieja cada mañana, que yo fío hiciera esto más efecto que tres onzas de ruibarbo preparado (406-7). ('it would be enough to rinse one's eyes out twice every morning with the face of that accursed old woman: surely a more effective laxative than three ounces of stewed rhubarb'). She describes the old woman's skin as 'pellejo de pandero ahumado' ('smoked tambourine skin'), her features like the 'cara pintada en pico de jarro' ('the face painted on the beak of a jug'), neck like a dragon, blacker than dried beef, and 'hands like tenderized pieces of meat which had been cured for three months' (407). La Sotadera bears the characteristically grotesque marks of the repressed (and hence self-repressing) feminine archetype common to all of the She-Devil figures in the text, which links them with one another and in turn with Justina, as representative bearer of the (psychological) effects on real women of a repressed and negative female archetype. Justina praises the priests for having at least done one thing right, namely to have ordered the Sotadera's face to be covered 'con una manera de zaranda forrada

<sup>9</sup>The footnote at this point in the Hazas edition describes la Sotadera as 'a very old woman, covered with moorish headdress and a wheel in her head like a gypsy, [...] who was learned in the Spanish language, and who had the wisdom to console and raise the spirits of the sad and disconsolate young virgins who were sent as tribute to the Moorish kings' (406).

en no sé qué argamandees' (407) ('with a kind of sieve covered with some kind of rags'); in other words a kind of (hiding yet revealing) veil, for as Justina tells us, although her face was covered, the veil occasionally lifted and the very sight of the 'accursed basilisk' prompts her to run away in fear of being confronted by her own 'great guilt' (407). The apparent shame that the ritual act of covering her face suggests is internalized by the woman as indicative of a real cause of shame located in her. The grotesque description of La Sotadera, and the reference to Justina's 'great shame or guilt', suggest the exaggerating tendency of the ego which fears and therefore distorts through inflation that which it fails to comprehend. Significantly, as if to counterbalance and overcome such negativity, Justina begins the next Number ('De la vergonzosa engañadora') by invoking her mother as divine redeemer by means of a traditional Spanish poem in the female first-person voice, appealing to her mother to save her by lending her some eyes with which to defend herself against the 'evil onlooker' (masculine) who looks at her with 'amor traidor' (409) ('treacherous love'). Although directly this refers to her male opponent whom she plans on repaying by cheating him of his gold *agnus dei* at the inn in this Number, indirectly she enacts a return to her mother (both real and archetypal) as positive anima-figure to provide a mirror in which to see herself as empowered and an equal match for her battle with her male counterpart. For immediately following this invocation, she sees herself as 'libre desta medio Celestina' (410) ('free of this half Celestina'), that is the Sotadera, and free to meet her opponent on more equal terms.

Other 'visions' in Justina's narrative of the 'tan mala, tan negra y abominable' (621) ('so evil, so black and abominable') face of the repressed feminine in culture include her description of the Asturian women in their traditional black veils, for she articulates their presence precisely as lack. 'They look, with their black faces covered with one veil at the front and another at the back, like 'ánimas no incorporadas ni humanadas' (621) ('souls neither incorporated nor humanized'). Black, the 'colour' of the Unconscious,<sup>10</sup> is the distinguishing colour of the repressed feminine in her

<sup>10</sup>Cf. J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p.57: 'Black...seems to represent the initial, germinal stage of all processes, as it does in alchemy'.

narrative, and, indeed, she refers to her female *langage* as 'esta negra habla española (500) ('this black Spanish speech'). Commenting that these 'visions' of an 'evil face' are not in tune with her own 'gusto' (621) ('desire'/'pleasure'), Justina aligns the repression of the feminine with the repression of enjoyment, pleasure, and sexual love calling them heretical anti-Christ, hypothesising that these black faces of the Asturian women must have the function (because of the geographical position of Asturias at the borders of the kingdom) of defending the limits of the faith by warding off the anti-Christ, Lady Heresy, and her pleasure-seeking knights from entering such a land where the prevailing pathology is defined as a lack of pleasure and joy, symbolized in these black female faces. The image of the culturally demonized feminine is filtered through Justina's mitigating female eyes and pen, and in giving it prominence in this way, she locates the pathology ('peste' (622) 'plague', in her words) not in women, but in a culture whose fear of women and of the body they eroticize gives rise to a pathological projection.

Certainly, by far the most elaborated examples of Justina's imaginative embodiment of the repressed maternal-feminine figure in her narrative are the two Great-Mother figures or 'mesoneras' (landladies, or female keepers of the inn-cum-world) — Sancha Gomez and The Old Moorish Witch — and the (collective) 'Mothers'<sup>11</sup>. All three of these female figures, or configurations, are characterised by their lameness: a sign of their lack of balance and health. This lack is expressly linked to a lack of fulfilment of their desires, in other words a lack of pleasure, an inability to express, and thereby satisfy, their own psycho-sexual needs; a deficiency which results in their stunted development and growth as well-rounded (fully human) individuals. Sancha's 'enfermedad' (551) ('illness') consists in an imbalance between inner and outer, so that her defensive obesity appears as an external manifestation of her being distanced from, and out of touch with, herself and her own feelings. Her overlarge body is proportionate to her sense of her inner self as small and in need of

<sup>11</sup>A comparative study of López de Úbeda's use of this mythological material with Goethe's use of 'die Mütter' ('the Mothers') in *Faust II* (ll. 6212ff.) might well reveal a shared tradition for the two writers, probably also kabbalistic in part. (Cf. H.A., 3, p.543, where Plutarch is cited as a possible source for Goethe.)

protection, and paradoxically out of reach. The Mothers (condensed in the novel with the three Furies) are depicted as an undifferentiated amorphous group, who, we are told, are 'enemigas del género humano' (642) ('enemies of human kind'), implicitly of the male gender as bearers of the universal. Their task as exclusively 'spinners of wool' — a symbol in the novel of the mother-function — cut off from men other than as the mere providers of the raw material, articulates the fact that their (full) female identity has been reduced to the (mere) mother-function — excluding a woman's need for development and individuation.<sup>12</sup> In the case of the Old Moorish Witch, which marks the culmination of Justina's coming to terms with her female tradition, the notion of repressed female bodily pleasure is comically expressed in a (pathological) obsession with seeing hanged men and bringing their teeth home to boil in a pot amidst her own incantations. This distortion of her female psycho-sexuality is tragically articulated through her twisting her neck (indirectly the neck of her womb, or cervix; the use of 'descervigar' allows her to exploit the language to inscribe femaleness into her discourse) to watch the procession of hanged-men until they disappeared from view: 'si había un ahorcado, se descervigaba por mirarlo, y hasta perderle de vista, le hacía ventana, que era pura para dama de ahorcados.' (654) ('if there was a hanged man, from her window she would twist her neck to look at him until she lost sight of him, for she was a pure lady of hanged men'). The life-giving urges of the maternal-feminine, unexpressed and unsatisfied, become twisted into a desire for the death of her male adversaries, so that when she sees hanged-men it gives her so much pleasure that she stops limping for three days: 'El día que los había [ahorcados] era el día de sus placeres, y, con ser coja, todos aquellos tres días siguientes no cojeaba' (654) ('the day there were some [hanged men] was the day of

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp.79-81 (p.79): 'women suffer from an inability to individuate themselves, from "confusion of identity between them" and from lack of respect for or, more often, lack of perception of, the other woman as different' (*Ethique de la différence sexuelle*, p.66). According to Whitford, Irigaray sees this as 'a symptom or result of women's position in the symbolic order' (p.80), which 'does not distinguish between the mother and the woman ... [and in which] the mother is never positioned as a subject.' (p.46). Cf., too, Luce Irigaray, *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. by Margaret Whitford (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp.51-2: 'Mothers, and the woman within them, have been trapped in the role of she who satisfies need but has no access to desire. [...] But if mothers could be women, there would be a whole mode of a relationship of desiring speech between daughter and mother, son and mother [which would] completely rework the language (*langue*) that is now spoken'.

her pleasures, and although lame, she did not limp for three days afterwards'). In all three cases, Justina acts as the benevolent healing medium: in the case of Sancha, she facilitates her getting back in touch with her sense of herself as lovable; she acts as a bridging and healing agent between the Mothers and the male providers of the raw material; and as a loving granddaughter-heiress for the Old Witch she likewise re-establishes continuity. All three strategies have in common the aim of fostering wholeness, balance, and harmony between male and female, between inner life and outer expression, and between the physical and the psycho-spiritual.

In the figure of Sancha Gomez, widow of two husbands (551), the novel's central symbol of balanced-wholeness is highlighted by means of its opposite. Her extreme (literally 'pure') obesity is the reason why she *appears* to Justina to be 'algo coja' ('somewhat lame'). However, Justina's emphatic statement that she is not lame, but only walks in that way because she is obese, draws attention to the fact that Sancha's problem is not physically pathological, and certainly not incurable, but that it is related to a lack of balance between inner and outer, and, as the quotation suggests, one that is due to an excess of 'carne en el peso' ('flesh in the weight'), that is (implicitly) too much flesh for her (spiritual) frame:

Parecióme algo coja, y no lo era, sino que las gordas siempre cojean un poco, porque como traen tanta carne en el peso, nunca pueden andar tan en el fiel ... y esta era gorda en tanto extremo, que de cuando en cuando la sacaban el unto para que no se ahogase de puro gorda. (551-2)

She appeared to me to be somewhat lame, and she was not; it's just that fat women always limp a little, for as they carry so much flesh in their weight, they can never walk quite perfectly balanced ... and this fat woman was so extremely fat that from time to time they drew fat from her so that she would not drown in sheer fat.

The central metaphor of more-or-less, so prevalent in the novel, finds yet another significant means of expression. Linking wholeness with bodily health or lack of it,

as well as its underlying (or inner) psychological causes, Justina's narrative suggests that Sancha's excess of formless fat is due to a lack of a sufficiently supportive (bone) structure; in other words, a lack of a robust ego-identity in culture, as an enabling framework through which to mediate, and alleviate, her imprisoned self. Her obesity acts as a defence mechanism, an external over-compensation for her sense of her inner self as small, vulnerable, and in need of protection; a mechanism, however, which distances her from her inner self (her heart and feelings) which is literally drowning in fat.

Sancha's 'cure' is a healing poultice, which, like the suction cups applied to her body, aims to make the blood (indirectly the heart and its feelings), flow freely throughout her whole body and bring about a healing (whole-making) process of reconnecting her with her lost sense of self through a sense of her own bodily pleasure. And Justina, this time with the help and mediation of her male companion, Bertol Araujo, together diagnose her illness, and prescribe and carry out a healing cure to restore balance to Sancha's health, a treatment which is indicated by the Number's title 'La Bizma de Sancha Gomez' ('the poultice of Sancha Gomez') — a healing, pleasurable cure which is summed up in Sancha's grateful words: 'nunca hombre tanto bien me hizo, ni médico me curó tan diestramente' (589) ('never did a man do me so much good, nor a doctor cure me with such dextrous handling').

But, prior to the healing process, Justina gives voice to and brings to light the negative aspects of this shadowy Lileth image of the repressed feminine, over which Sancha as female Bacchus (551), guardian of the underworld-unconscious, stands guard. The vivid depiction of this monstrous travesty of a woman, this 'mala visión' (553) ('evil vision') — the sheer ugliness of whose face speaks volumes about her status as the abject feminine in culture — is graphically presented to us in the significant details and adornments of her physical description. The rings on her fingers turn out to be big warts; her roman nose looks like the black giant; her lips are like the mouth of a well --- thick and scarred as if by the mark of the ropes; and her eyes are said to be 'chicos de yema y grandes de clara' (553) ('small of yo and large

of whites'). Her facial ugliness, referred to as 'la sodomía del rostro' (553) ('the sodomy of her face') evokes the Sotadera of the festival, with whom Justina compares her by referring to her as the 'Tarasca' or 'Gomia' (556), regional variations of popular cultural representations of the monster-dragon myth. Her 'endiablada cara' (553) ('bedevilled face') — covered when outdoors, but uncovered at home — is so repugnant that even Justina's (Shekhinah's) 'presence' at the inn is not enough to attract young men. In other words, overshadowing the alluring countenance of the divine Shekhinah-Justina as access to the divine, Sancha-Lileth succeeds in repelling with her abhorrent appearance. Her 'adornments',<sup>13</sup> too, speak eloquently of her abject and imprisoned state — echoed, in turn, by Justina's referring to her as 'la triste' and 'la cuitada' ('the sad, and 'the poor' woman) — especially in the references to her heavy, defensive headgear, not to mention her heavy iron-clad shoes which symbolize her lack of mobility and freedom to express herself: 'No traía chapines, sino unos zapatos sin corcho, viejos, herrados de ramplón, con unas duras suelas que en piedras hacen señal' (553) ('She did not wear 'chapines' [women's lightweight cork shoes] but shoes without cork, old, iron-clad, and with hard soles that leave an imprint on stones'). Sancha's other significant accessories lead the reader gradually to discovering the secret of her illness, for she wears a thick rope, more like a stick, for it is so hard, knotty and thick, and at the ends of the rope she carries a sack 'like an ostrich egg' (553) and a bunch of heavy iron keys. The repeated references to iron in this description suggests her heavy-heartedness *and* her lack of a sustaining ego-structure to carry the weight of her boneless flesh: '¡Miren si esta carga era para doblegar una mujer que parecía que constaba de sólo carne momia, o que era carne sin hueso, como carne de membrillo!' (553) ('Look how such a load was enough to bend double a woman who seemed to be made of only dessicated flesh, or who was boneless flesh, like quince flesh'). Sancha is a powerful illustration of Irigaray's unstructured, untheorized feminine in culture, locked in itself, unable to speak of itself

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<sup>13</sup>The reference in the margin to her 'atavío' ('attire') suggests the ancestral (atavistic) nature of her dress. Because of the almost ubiquitous ambiguity of the language used in *La Pícara Justina*, I have when translating into English tended to sacrifice elegance to the pursuit of meaning (s).



in discursive language.<sup>14</sup> The history of Sancha's names is symbolic of her problematic relationship with herself, for Justina has discovered that her original name — Juana Redonda ('Joanne Round') — became on one occasion when she was drunk and unable to pronounce it correctly the tongue-twisting 'Cobana Restosna'. This name stuck to her, as did the sense of shame attached to her inability to identify herself, until she changed it (repressed it) to Sancha Gómez. Sancha suffers from a lack of a sense of herself as more than mere flesh-matter. She has lost touch with her inner self (her identity), and the key on the rope round her neck is a symbol of the way in which she keeps her inner self, her treasure — her honey and butter — under lock and key.

The further identification here of Sancha with the Upper Shekhinah-Binah (the third sefirah who gives birth to all the other levels in the emanation process) is hinted at in Justina's odd reference to Sancha descending six steps to meet her, Justina (as Lower Shekhinah, the tenth and last sefirah); and in their addressing each other as mother and daughter respectively (554). The rhetorical emphasis on 'recado' ('message'), alluding ostensibly to the food provisions for the animals, serves to underline the Shekhinah's mediating role. Both Justina and a certain Perantón-Araujo<sup>15</sup> indulge in the kind of coded, criminal-slang, exchanges, referred to by them as 'el jiroglífico' (554) ('emblematic *langage*') and 'la nueva jacarandina' (555) ('the new criminal slang'), familiar to readers of Golden Age texts such as Cervantes' *Riconete y Cortadillo* and Quevedo's *El Buscón* — in order to confuse and alarm the 'ventosa encarnada' ('suction-cup incarnate' or 'flesh-coloured suction-cup') as she calls the overweight landlady. In fact, it is precisely Justina's verbal dexterity, and ability to interact and treat with people — communicative skills she has been taught by her mother, the 'flor de mesoneras' (556) ('flower of innkeepers') — that Justina puts into effect in order to get round the ultra-defensive Sancha, a strategy that she encodes in weaponry-terms of:

<sup>14</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Parler n'est jamais neutre*, p. 302. See, too, Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*, pp. 38-43.

<sup>15</sup>The fluid interchangeability of specific names to refer to the various male counterparts (whether opponents or assistants) suggests their archetypal nature.

poniendo en razón la ballesta de la atención, el arco de palabras dobles,  
el virote de la lisonja y el jostrado de mi perseverante ingenio. (555)

adjusting the crossbow of attention, the bow of double-words, the  
arrow of flattery and the lance of my perseverant wit.

Not only does Justina put in place a verbal 'assault' befitting 'el talle de la mujer y el ingenio de ramplón' ('the stature of the woman and her unsophisticated wit'); she also adopts the demeanour of the modest, shy, loving and playful girl, sitting at the feet (an allusion to the Lower Shekhinah's position) of Sancha; whom she calls her beautiful mother. (555) Significantly, unlike Justina's long and detailed family tree, Sancha's is reduced to 'sus abuelos [que] se llamaban Goznes'(556) ('her grandparents called Hinges'); a reference to the hinges of the chest containing her 'treasure'. The name Goznes ('Hinges'), we are told, has come down in a corrupted form to Gómez. Justina claims that Sancha's whole purpose was to convince Justina of her hatred of the new name, so that the shameful old name (the nickname they had given, which was her mispronunciation of her own name) did not come to Justina's notice. The allusion to her lineage underlines her hidden (repressed) female genealogy, whereby the link with the Jewish Shekhinah is hinted at, in that her old name cannot be pronounced, and in her new name, Sancha, meaning 'sow', whose (alienated) room, we are told, is a pigsty (567).

The upshot of Justina's praising and flattering Sancha is that she reveals to Justina all her secrets: her youth, her lineage, as well as 'los trances de sus amores' (557) ('the trials of her love relationships'). Sancha tells her all: 'me dijo de pe a pa toda su leyenda' (556) ('she told me the "a" to "z" of her legend') and 'no hubo cosa que me abscondiese.' (556) ('there was not a thing that she hid from me'). In short she reveals to Justina her heart and soul. (557). The emphasis on the bonding and sharing, and the identification between 'mother' and 'daughter' is seen to be of mutual benefit, for Sancha's expression of her innermost feelings to Justina (whose ears and tongue are hers, that is, Justina listens to Sancha and is, in turn, her voice), the act of sharing

her suffering, brings Sancha relief and comfort from her unhappiness: 'Teníame ya por tan suya, que quiso repartir conmigo de sus males y descansar de sus penas' (557) ('She considered me so much her (implicitly) daughter, that she wanted to share with me her misfortunes and (so) rest from her sufferings'). And Sancha's openness, Justina tells us, 'me abrió camino para mis deseos' (557) ('opened a way for my own desires'). And the doors that open for Justina are the doors to Sancha's secret treasures, namely the 'bacon, eggs, and honey' (558), or 'bacon, honey, and butter' (557) that she has hidden, ostensibly from naughty student guests.

It is precisely the mother-and-daughter 'conversations' that result in Sancha's so trusting Justina, that she allows her to light her with a candle while she takes her secret treasures from the cellar up to the pantry 'con la veneración y atención que si fuera cuerpo santo' (558) ('with the veneration and attention as if it was a holy body'), where she puts them under lock and key and hangs the key like a jewel on a greasy rope round her neck with such esteem and respect 'que si fuera llave del arca del tesoro de Venecia' (558) ('as if it were the key to the ark of the treasure of Venice'). The symbolic significance of such fruits of nature as being God-given is reinforced by Justina's comment that on this occasion 'God's bounty' (the popular name for egg pancakes with honey) was tangible, ('one could 'divine' with one's finger that God's mercy was certain') (558). The fever that results from Sancha's excessive coming and going from cellar to pantry in order to 'complete' her task and 'compose' the 'jewels' of her house and leave it in order, leaves her physically out of sorts, and she has to go to bed. The references to Sancha's chronic diarrhea as being so unstoppable that it would have been easier for her to 'parir' ('give birth') than 'parar' ('stop') (560), together with the allusion to the greasy rope with the key round her neck as a 'cordelejo untado' (560) ('aointed cord') — indirectly, umbilical cord — suggest an underlying order of a symbolic birth, which is echoed in the later description of the death of the Old Moorish Woman. Despite thinking she is dying, 'la diablesa de la Sancha' (561) ('the she-devil Sancha') will not relinquish the keys to her treasure. Not knowing whether to laugh in admiration of Sancha's obstinacy or to rage at being

thwarted in her own aims (560), Justina 'returns to herself', her comically heroic determination to triumph in combination with her imaginative *parler-femme* strategies overcoming her frustration at Sancha's obstinacy:

que no hay castillo roquero ni alcázar pertrechado que deje de rendir su entono y descervigar su presunción, si se ve sitiado de una perseverante estratagema o imaginación constante determinada a morir o vencer. (561)

for there is not a rocky castle nor fortress on a rock that can fail to surrender its tone and overcome its pride if it sees itself under siege from a perseverant strategy and constant imagination determined to die or vanquish.

The underlying sexual connotations of the Number 'De la enfermedad de Sancha la gorda' ('Of the illness of Sancha the fat woman') — already hinted at in Justina's suggestion that she helped Sancha come and go with a candle that was so much work that, through the sheer (effort of) stuffing her (ostensibly putting a wick in the candle), her fingers were sore (559) — become more pronounced in the following Number 'De la bizma pegajosa' ('Of the sticky poultice'). For it becomes increasingly obvious that Justina's 'cure' of Sancha is effected through the latter's sexual arousal and satisfaction carried out by Bertol 'the doctor who graduated in her school', who follows her instructions word for word. For the medical team (Justina and Bertol) turn her round and round on the bed causing Sancha to 'make them (that is, Justina and Bertol) see visions' (568) — indirectly, the spectacle of her naked body — until her fever (indirectly her sexual arousal) increases, 'y con él, las quejas y deseos que la curásemos' (568) ('together with the moans and desires that we cure her'). Justina prescribes a vocal prescription, and Bertol repeats what she says, so that Shckhinah-Justina's female voice is the emphatic, distinct voice of the healing divine word: 'Me entré adentro a intimar a Sancha más distintamente lo que con un confuso sonido había oído al doctor Bertol' (568) ('I entered inside to intimate to Sancha more distinctly what she with a confused sound had heard from doctor Bertol'). Justina's

'cure' or 'poultice' requires ingredients, namely butter, not very fresh eggwhites and breadcrumbs, in order to concoct a slightly warm mixture for 'una bisma estomaticona' (569) ('stomachal poultice'), with which, she instructs Bertol, '[con ello] fregarás las sobretripas, que por otro nombre se llama barriga o espalda delantera' (569) ('[with it] you will rub on her abdomen, which by another name is called belly or front back'). Sancha, fearful, then relieved, that she does not have to spend money on her 'cure' relinquishes to Justina the key to her culinary delights, claiming that she herself has the ingredients that can bring about her own cure:

¡Oh, bendito sea Dios!, que no he menester enviar fuera por cosa ninguna de las que ha recetado el señor doctor, que todo eso tengo yo de mi puerta adentro. Y vos, hija, no perderéis de mí la paga. Tomá, hija, esta llave. (570)

Oh, blessed be God!, that I do not need to send outside for anything the gentleman doctor has prescribed, for I have all that within my own doors. And you, daughter, will not lose the payment from me. Here, daughter, take the key.

In other words Sancha herself has the cure to her own illness, being out of touch with herself, a connectedness which she recovers, through the mediation of Justina-Bertol, with her own newly eroticised body.<sup>16</sup> Once in touch with herself Sancha 'da de sí'<sup>17</sup> (literally 'gives of herself'). It is Justina's way with words and with people, in particular her praise and flattery of Sancha that allows Sancha's sense of herself to expand and to give of herself generously. In fact, the Number begins with a poem addressed to all-powerful praise (or flattery), especially 'en-castled' in women, as the 'sponge of others' qualities' (587): 'lo que quieres puedes y puedes lo que quieres' (587) ('what you want you can, and you can what you want'). The reciprocal and beneficial quality of praise is evident in her praise of Sancha, for it is suggested that

<sup>16</sup>For an elaboration of the discourse of the body in the novel, see Nina Cox Davis, 'Breaking the Barriers: The Birth of López de Úbeda's *Pícaro Justina*', in *The Picaresque: Tradition and Displacement*, ed. by Giancarlo Maiorino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp.137-58.

<sup>17</sup>A pervasive leitmotif in the novel in relation to, for example, language and words, which when read attentively in context, yield layers of meaning.

Justina benefits directly from, and absorbs like a sponge, Sancha's increased self-awareness and self-love, and consequent generosity in her giving of herself. Indeed, she wants to make Justina her heiress, but Justina has no desire for such a pigsty of an inheritance and turns her down.

There are several references in this number to the dark sister-goddess (paralleled in the *Zohar* by the Lower Shekhinah/tenth sefirah in alienation). For example, in the figure of Bertol's (to him) terrifying wife known as 'muerte supitaña' (583) ('sudden death'), whom he fears ('como al fuego') ('like [implicitly hell's] fire'). An example of 'Sudden Death's' aggressive mode of addressing her hapless husband is provided by Justina to illustrate his justifiable fear:

— No me hinchas las narices, que por esta señal que Dios aquí me puso (y era un lunar) y por aquella luz que salió por boca del ángel, y por el pan, que es cara de Dios, que esa tu cara te sarje. (565)

— Don't annoy me, for I swear by this mark that God gave me (and it was a mole) and by the light that came from the angel's mouth, and by the bread that is God's face, that I'll lance that face of yours [as if it were a boil].

Bertol's wife's appearance and language, like Sancha's, bear the tell-tale marks of the repressed goddess — the black mole ('lunar' in Spanish which links it further with the Shekhinah's 'moon' symbol) on her face; the reference to typical Shekhinah symbols: 'mouth', the 'face of God' and the 'bread'; while her 'healing' functions are comically distorted by her angry avowal to lance her husband's boil (his face) for not having carried out her instructions. Araujo is terrified at the thought of facing his wife having broken one of the sucking glasses she sent him to buy, along with silk bandages for 'bleeding' some of the village women. The punning play on 'bleeding' as both curing and extracting money serves to emphasise the mutually-beneficial quality of Justina's strategies. However, while admitting some remorse for having tricked Sancha, Justina, 'metida a teóloga' (574) ('intervening as a female theologian'),

justifies her actions to the male 'sub-theologian' who condemns her fraud as the greatest sin in the world, arguing that there is no more excusable sin than that which proceeds from the necessity to eat and sustain oneself. Drawing on the wise men's image of 'la excusa' ('excuse') as a thin woman stealing a spit of roast meat, she makes a veiled private reference, by way of justification, to her own mother's attempt to steal the spit of roast meat — a sin for which she paid dearly — and reveals publicly women's voracious hunger (her mother's) and defensive meanness (Sancha's) as symptoms of their lack of a means of self-fulfilment and self-love, and the difficulties inherent in living with such deprivation. Her differentiating, mitigating female voice — as Shekhinah the rose among thorns<sup>18</sup> — pleads with the sub-theologian, as sower of seeds (indirectly disseminator of knowledge), not to pave (sow) her way to heaven with thorns:

Hermanito, ya que es sembrador no me siembre de espinas el camino del cielo; distinga entre el ser gulosa y pecar contra el Espíritu Santo ... no nos quiera decir que todos los pecados son de una marca. (575)

Little brother, since you are sower of seeds, do not sow my way to heaven with thorns; distinguish between being greedy and sinning against the Holy Spirit ... surely you do not mean that all sins are of one type.

To underline the sexual nature of the 'cure' that Sancha receives, Justina comments that Bertol later wanted to carry out another cure in the house, but not, this time, of his hostess Sancha. Justina's response is, however, typical of her wordly-wise repartee: 'le sentí el humor y adiviné de qué pie cojeaba el muy licenciado' (579) ('I sensed his mood and guessed what leg he was limping on, the licentious devil'). As he approaches her in the dark — Justina-Shekhinah's sphere — she cleverly conjures up a whole host of violent sleeping male relatives around her bed, in order to frighten

<sup>18</sup>G.G. Scholem, *The Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, p.190: Shekhinah's symbol, the rose, reflects her ambivalent nature, so that when there is an abundance of righteousness in the world, she emits sweet fragrances like a rose and her face is radiant. Conversely, when wickedness takes over, the rose, captive of the Other Side, is surrounded by thorns; she tastes bitter, and her face becomes dark.

him off, and then goes and beds down beside Sancha, under the pretext of checking on her state of health:

mas la verdad era que me pareció a mí que junto a ella no podía correr peligro mujer ninguna, que así como a la oropéndola ninguna vez la conoce el macho en el nido porque le tiene sucísimo, así junto a tan sucio nido no me parecía a mí que corría peligro mi honestidad. (581-2)

But the truth was that it seemed to me that beside her, no woman could be in danger, for just as no male ever recognizes the golden oriole in her nest because it is so dirty, so beside such a dirty nest, it seemed to me that my honesty was not at risk.

Justina's imaginative verbal inventions aimed at dealing with the unwelcome advances of the stupid, but nevertheless frightening, Bertol come about as a result of her intense experience of life, and in particular her ever more robust self-identity, which she describes in terms of a continual returning to reconnect, often through her encounters with women-figures, with her female genealogy (the implication of her comparing herself, here, to Antaeus, the giant whose strength grew every time it touched his mother the Earth): '¿No sabe que yo en un mesón estoy como Aantheón sobre su madre la tierra, que nadie le podía hacer mal ni de veras ni de burlas, y él a todos sí?' (584) ('Dont you know that I am like Antaeus who, when in touch with his mother the earth, cannot be harmed by anyone either in truth or in jest, but who can harm them all?')

But Sancha gives Bertol the credit (her 'benediction'; 588) for bringing about her cure: 'nunca hombre tanto bien me hizo' (589) ('never did a man do me such good') and claims that his qualities show through in his being a man of 'few words' (589). Such a comment is like a red rag to a bull to Justina whose soothing, and healing *words* were precisely what brought about Sancha's cure. She urges the reader/listener to hear her argument, and judge for himself if she is right. Enraged that his lack, that is his inability to speak, can be interpreted as such a virtue — for



Sancha calls him honourable, discreet, intelligent, bountiful, and blessed — she provides a similar example, this time of a woman whose intelligence is praised precisely because she does not laugh, joke, or say witty, funny, or crude jokes:

Pues, ¡vieja maldita!, ¿hay cosa más fácil que dejar de hacer lo imposible? Pues ¿por qué alabas en aquella lo que le es forzoso? ... ¿Qué gracias quieres que diga quien por naturaleza salió en desgracia con las tres hermanas que son las madres de las gracias? ¿Qué burlas quieres que haga quien no sabe qué son veras ni qué son burlas? (590)

Listen, wretched old woman, is there anything easier than failing to do the impossible? So why do you praise in her what is inevitable? ... What witticisms (graces) do you want a person to say who came out in disgrace with the three sisters who are the mothers of the graces? What deceptions do you want someone to play who does not know what truths are and what lies are?

Justina's identity as the female voice of the healing-word of God in the world is clear: 'dime, vieja de Berceguey, si todo el mundo fuera mudo, ¿quien te relatara la bizma que te sanó?' (592) ('tell me old woman of Beelzebub, if all the world were dumb, who would relate to you the poultice that cured you?'). Her mercurial nature means that 'me vuelvo pícara a lo divino y que me paso de la taberna a la iglesia' (591) ('I become picara in the divine style and I pass from the tavern to the church'). The mirroring effect implicit in the mother-daughter seeing and recognizing each other, as in the case, for example, of the Old Moorish Witch, does not occur between Sancha and Justina, for Sancha ultimately fails to recognize Justina's voice as the source of her cure and gives Bertol her blessing instead, or, in Justina's parlance: 'Esta Sancha, como era una jumenta, cuadróle aquel asno mudo.' (592) ('Since Sancha herself was an ass, that donkey [that is, Bertol] suited her down to the ground').

Because Sancha wishes to bestow on Bertol her blessings and gifts for having cured her, Justina asks — in the form of a prayer, indirectly to the divine female —

that she, as woman, should be the rightful recipient of her donations, precisely because of her deprived status in relation to the man's:

¡Para mi primo se hizo la tierra de promisión, que manaba lecha y miel, y para mí no darán agua las piedras! Pues a fe que, si no fuera yo nacida, que v.m. fuera muerta. (594)

For my male cousin the promised land, flowing with milk and honey, was created, and for me the stones will not give water! But by faith, if I were not born you would be dead.

Justina's healing speech goes on to transform Sancha's (apparent) meanness from latent into actual endless generosity, through her attention to the underlying, psychological, reasons for avarice, emphasising the importance of expressing feelings (desire) as a means to psychological health or wholeness. For, she argues, unlike the liberal person who *thinks* about giving, and therefore also *thinks* about retaining, and as a result gives in moderation, the mean person gives endlessly, for he gives with the desire to put an end once and for all to all donations:

el liberal, como siempre piensa en el dar, siempre piensa en el retener y así salen de sus manos las franquezas con freno y falsas riendas; pero el avariento da sin freno, porque da con deseo de poner fin de una vez a los dones todos. (595)

the liberal man, as he is always thinking about giving, is always [also] thinking about retaining, and so dispenses sincerities in moderation and with false curbs; but the avaricious man gives in an unbridled way, for he gives with the desire to put an end, once and for all, to all donations.

Justina's rhetoric here makes clear the link between giving generously and expressing oneself sincerely and with some form of restraint, so that excessive generosity is shown to be the other, hidden, side of avarice, and Sancha's extreme openness and demonstrativeness the other side of her former intractability and unyielding defensiveness, both characterized by a lack of moderation. And the cured Sancha

turns out to be as immoderately generous both with her money and her feelings as she was mean with them prior to her cure. The transformation that has taken place because of Justina's healing words is comically summed up in the farewell scene at the end of the Sancha episode — at the end of the Number entitled 'De la despedida de Sancha' (587) ('Of the goodbye to Sancha') — for it becomes increasingly evident to the reader that the mother-figures that people Justina's narrative are significant precisely because of her self-identification with these (at least partial) mirror-images of her own inner self. There can be little doubt that Justina recognizes in Sancha her own defense-mechanisms and her resistance to expressing her feelings. It is precisely her felt affinity with these Great Mother figures that enables her to apply the healing cure in this case, and release not only Sancha's pent-up inner life, but simultaneously her own inner self. Unlike Sancha's transformation from one extreme to the other, Justina as ever emphasises her own becoming-herself as a process — always slowly ('de espacio') — characterised by restraint and moderation, and a marked resistance to the kind of gushing show of affection that Sancha indulges in:

Sólo te digo que harto bien pagué su liberalidad, pues sufrí que me abrazase o, por mejor decir, me cinchase, y yo la medio abracé [...] También sufrí derramarse sobre mi albanega ciertos lagrimones de oveja vieja, y me retocase con sus claras, olor y estopas, que tuve bien que hacer en sacudir de mí tascos y pegotes. (596)

I tell you that I paid dearly for her generosity, for I endured her hugging me, rather, encompassing me, and I half-hugged her [...] I also suffered her weeping on my veil certain big tears of an old ewe, and her touching me again and again with her egg-whites, smell, and burlap, so that I had great trouble shaking off me her sticky, messy, remnants.

Justina's language here to describe her leave-taking of Sancha acts as a rhetorical veil which reveals rather than hides Justina's barely suppressed emotion beneath the surface gruffness of her tone. Her reference to Sancha's 'big tears of an old ewe' and

her attempts to 'shake off' the bits of dirt and smells that Sancha has left on her veil ('albanega') when she gave her a bear-hug, express the unacknowledged feelings and affection that Sancha, this 'mesonera de la pestilencia' (596) ('landlady of the pestilence'), has aroused in her. In alluding to Sancha as the 'cuba de Sahagún' (596) ('the vat of Sahagún') Justina links her with her own mother, and by association with the Goddess Demeter. While Sancha encompasses ('cinchar') her with the full girth of her hug, Justina only half-hugs ('la medio abracé') Sancha, a detail which — apart from the obvious allusion to Sancha's enormous size, and to Justina-Shekhinah as 'half' or 'medium' — suggests Justina's being not yet ready to accept and 'fully embrace' such 'medir tan sin medida' (596) ('immeasurable measure') that is the maternal-feminine in her self (as she will be later in her confrontation with the Old Moorish Witch). What is made absolutely unambiguous, however, is that, while Justina is unable to *express* fully and directly to Sancha her love and affection for the 'old ewe', she expresses it in her use of language, in particular her emphatic statement that she 'paid dearly' ('harto bien pagué') for Sancha's generosity, and that she 'suffered' ('sufrí') Sancha's excessive hugs and tears when they said goodbye to each other.

The Mothers are 'tres famosas viejas hilanderas, que según eran enemigas del género humano, parecían las tres parcas que hilan las vidas' (642) ('three famous old spinners who, as they were enemies of humankind, were like the three Furies who spin lives'). The Mothers as archetypal creators of life take up their crucial role in the process of Justina's coming into her inheritance. Having already turned down the 'route' offered by her solicitor to shorten the deliberately lengthy proceedings in the lawsuit undertaken to win back her inheritance from her brothers (Book Three 'Of the litigant picara') — that is, through sexual favours (639-40) — and having decided not to sell her jewels in order to finance her claim, Justina looks for 'otra vía' ('another way'). As ever, Justina is uncompromising about her own personal integrity. Her jewels are clearly a symbol of her self-esteem, for she tells the reader that they were legitimately won (641) ('ganadas en buenas lides') and that 'aunque hubiese dinero para pagar *su* valor, pero no *mi* estima' (641) ('even if there were money enough to

pay for *their* value, *her* esteem was priceless [my emphasis]). Moreover, she makes it clear that money is not the real issue here, but self-love born of desire, implicitly for wholeness, a link which is expressly made in the symbol of her self-love, her jewels: 'porque no eran mis joyas invendibles ni avinculadas a mi mayorazgo, pero estábanlo a mi gusto' (641) ('for my jewels were not unsellable nor were they entailed to my estate, but they were inseparable from my desire'). And it is precisely her achievement in getting back in touch with her own sense of her self as powerful that enables her to raise her spirits and find her own way, that is, not through compromising either her body or her self-esteem. Aligning herself with the all-powerful goddess figure who alchemically changes the sand to gold dust, she gives herself the praise that was so effective earlier in enhancing Sancha's self-esteem:

Ea, Justina, ... ¿No eres la que arenillas de campo vuelves arenas de oro? ... Pues confía que ahora saldrás de aqueste aprieto, pues eres la misma que antes y tu ingenio el mismísimo. (641)

Hey, Justina, are you not the woman who turned country dust to gold dust? ... then trust that now you will get out of this fix, for you are the same as before and your wit the very self same.

Her uncompromising route is to make money, so that the clerks and scribes involved in her suit 'a mi son danzasen' (640) ('would dance to my tune'). Because of this material need, this 'interés villano' (645) ('base interest'), as she calls it, Justina is stripped of her noble attire, her jewels and her adornments, and forced to dress in the simple neutral-grey dress of the spinners 'como representante desnudo' (642) ('like a naked representative') and 'pícara pobre' ('poor pícara'), in the company of 'una abominable vieja' (645) ('an abominable old woman') and some greasy wool carders. By a constant coming and going between the old spinner she lodges with and the male carders, and between the other two old spinners and the carders, Justina talks, and works, her way into their confidence, until eventually the carders give her wool to spin 'sin llevar padrinos ni intercesores, ni más fiadores que mi persona y mi cara'

(645) ('without needing godfathers nor interceders, nor guarantors apart from my own person and face'); and until the old spinners trust her and allow her to act on their behalf, in their name (645), as a go-between. In other words, Justina cleverly brings about a situation in which she becomes the agent who negotiates both on their and on her own behalf.

To achieve this, she persuades the old spinners — referred to as witches (646) — that their constant bringing and taking wool to the carder is disabling them, making them ever more immobile. Each of the three old spinners suffers in her own particular way from a disability of the leg — 'tullida' ('crippled'), 'gotosa' ('suffering from gout'), and 'coja' ('lame') (645) respectively — but in keeping with their lack of individual identity as an amorphous group, Justina, addressing them as 'Madres' ('Mothers') tells them (and the reader) that the 'congoja' ('anguish') caused by their anxiety to return to their job is the underlying (common and psychological) cause of their illness. The healthy dynamic mobility of the Shekhinah-figure becomes, in the image of the old spinners, the pathological paralysis of her dark sister-goddesses. Their existence as a kind of living-death is expressed in Justina's compassion for them: 'es lástima, madres, trocar la vida por lana de ovejas' (645) ('it is a pity, mothers, to exchange life for sheeps' wool'). Justina speaks openly and honestly to the Mothers about her own self-interest in her role as maternal go-between ('colectora y agente de mis viejas' (647) ('as collector — a key symbol of Shekhinah — and agent of my old women')); but it is one which turns out to be beneficial to the Mothers too, for Justina's helping and appealing presence attracts more and better wool for spinning (644). Mutual benefit is her aim, as she explains to them:

A vosotras os está bien y a mí no mal. La paga que de vosotras quiero, sea vuestro gusto, y si le ponéis en el mío, digo que no quiero de cada una de vosotras más que un cuarto por ir y venir cargada, que son tres cuatros entre todas. (645-46)

It is good for you and not bad for me. The payment I want from you, let it be your pleasure (or desire), and if you accord with my desire, I

tell you that I do not want from each of you more than a quarter for coming and going laden (with wool), which is three-quarters among all of you.

With this statement Justina expresses her desire for mutually-beneficial wholeness, for implicit in her calculations is that she herself will make up the fourth, completing quarter in this 'contrato de mancomún' (646) ('joint contract') in the form of her emotional investment in this quartet, for she confesses that 'para decir verdad, lo que más me mueve es la lástima que os tengo' (646) ('to tell the truth, what moves me most of all is the [human] compassion I have for you'). Justina thus transforms the one-sided (either-or) self-interest of her male solicitor's 'negocios' ('negotiations'), which profits at her expense without (as yet) any benefit to her, into a different (female, both-and) expression of self-interest that brings benefit for both the 3 women and her.

To put into action her overall balancing strategy of making 'more' to compensate for their (both her own and the Mothers') 'less', or lack, Justina brings about numerous instances (intentional and unintentional) of achieving more wool from the male carders than they intend to give (647-48). Moreover, she finds a way of increasing the weight of the wool by leaving it in a humid place 'que la lana coge cuantos licores se le juntan, y por eso fue jeroglífico de la niñez y del mal acompañado' (648) ('for wool absorbs all the liquids that adhere to it, and that is why it was an emblem of childhood and having bad company'). The life-creating powers of the spinning goddess-figure is reinforced with this reference to wool as a symbol of new life. In the spirit of Irigaray's emphasis on revaluing the devalued, the worthless, the residue — as symbols of the excluded and devalued feminine<sup>19</sup> — Justina gives prominence to and revalues the 'motas' or 'tamos' (648) ('leftover specks of wool mixed with dust') by using them — in a gesture reminiscent of her father who mixed the grain with chaff, except that his action was to everyone's detriment — to increase

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<sup>19</sup>Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp.30 and 114.

the weight and therefore the benefit to the spinning 'goddesses'.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, she is the figure of the 'Goddess', for — in the kabbalistic tradition which gives her a thousand names without her being captured by any one of them — her name gives the title to the Chapter 'De la Marquesa de la Motas' (637-650) ('Of the Marchioness of the Specks'), in recognition of her gift for benefitting from the bits of fluff which she bought from a hungry and sad young weaver's maid who equally benefitted from the transaction (648).

Justina makes a name for herself as a deft and accomplished spinner, sought after by carders who, anxious to have an assignment quickly and efficiently despatched, take the wool to Justina's home. Unable to manipulate the weighing of the wool because the carder brings it to her home already weighed 'muy a lo justo' (649) ('too precisely'), Justina finds a way to readjust the situation so that it is balanced in her favour. She does this by strategically alluding to the situation of women in the home, ostensibly to their vulnerability to male advances — in Justina's case, the reader is alive to the fact that as a seasoned campaigner by this stage of her life-history, her vulnerability is wholly feigned — but indirectly to their (and her) restricted mobility and lack of space at home to manoeuvre and manipulate a system which is inherently (publicly) weighted against them, so that 'no había lugar de hacer mangas de lana' (649) ('there was no room to make profits with the wool'). By insisting that her wool be weighed in the presence of witnesses, that is publicly, for 'acaecen muchas desgracias por recibir las mujeres lana en secreto, y debajo de los pies le salen a una mujer embarazos.' (649) ('many misfortunes happen to women who receive wool in secret, and embarrassments/pregnancies fall at their feet'), Justina acts to disclose, by taking it into the public sphere, the underlying male bias that secretly and privately (i.e., at home) disadvantages women. The sexual subtext of the spinning metaphor as articulating the creative impulses of the goddess who receives the fecundating wool-semen of the male god (the carders) is exploited in her

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<sup>20</sup>Indeed, Justina's revaluation here of the old spinners' 'motas' and 'tamos' constitutes a clear backward reference to the 'sticky, messy, remnants' associated in Justina's mind with Sancha's hugs and tears (p.596), reinforcing the link between the culturally devalued and the inner (feminine) life.



articulation of the real consequences for women of their receiving 'wool' secretly, namely childbirth and with it (implicitly) society's shaming condemnation of the child born out of wedlock.

The upshot of Justina's spinning a yarn and of her wheeling and dealing 'negocios' ('negotiations') is that she makes the necessary money with which to carry on the business of her lawsuit. The key attribute of the goddess here — the notion of dynamic movement as essential to her creative life-giving powers — is comically reinforced by her in the final lines of the chapter. Having bought a donkey, she rents it out — significantly to a *water-carrier*, with the condition that he uses it to transport 'dueñas honradas' ('honourable ladies'), 'doncellas amovibles' ('immobile young women'), 'viudas de oropel' ('lazy, dirty, widows') and a certain type of lethargic, inactive women who, like turnips in a pot where the water has boiled away, need to be shaken about in the pot so that they do not burn and stick to the bottom (649-50).

Justina's early formative relationship with her own mother, characterised by mutual love, trust, and benefit, informs her later relationships with significant mother-figures in the novel, as we have seen in the case of Sancha, and in that of the Mothers. But it is most notably in the relationship with the Vieja Morisca that she comes into her own, for she comes face to face with the embodiment for her of the Eternal Feminine as an Old Moorish Witch.<sup>21</sup> In the Chapter entitled *La Heredera Inserta* involving the death of the Old Moorish Witch, Justina, in attempting to articulate what she *is*, says what she is *not*:

No soy yo moza de los ojos cebolleros, como otras que traen la canal en la manga y las lágrimas en el seno, y en queriendo llover, ponen la canal y arrojan de golpe lágrimas más gordas que estiércol de pato.  
(669)

<sup>21</sup>Cf. María Antonia Garcés, 'Berganza and the Abject: The Desecration of the Mother', in *Quixotic Desire: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Cervantes*, ed. by Ruth Anthony El Saffar and Diana de Armas Wilson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp.292-314, where Berganza's pursuit of the witch in Cervantes' *El coloquio de los perros* is described as a (horrific) 'voyage to the womb' (p.298). Cf., too, Garcés, 'Zoraida's Veil: "the Other Scene" of the Captive's Tale', *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, 23 (1989), 65-98: 'In the Cervantine universe, sensual women are often depicted as Moors' (p.75).

I am not a girl of the onion eyes, like others who carry the channel up their sleeve and the tears in their breast, and when they want to rain, attach the canal and suddenly shed tears bigger than duck-droppings.

She clearly rejects the role of man-made woman; and yet she uses precisely that traditional topos of 'feminine wiles' to make the policeman see her as the sole and rightful heir to the witch's inheritance. This 'indirect' strategy is a potent mixture of tears and emotional rhetoric as she addresses the dead Witch for the benefit of the policeman's ears:

¡Ay mi señora abuela! ¡Ay abuela mía! ... ¿Y qué haré yo sin vos?  
... ¡Mucho debo a Dios, que ya que a esta pobre la llevó Dios todos sus hijos y nietos, quedó sola esta triste nieta suya para cubrir sus ojos!  
(666)

Oh, my lady grandmother, oh my grandmother ... What shall I do without you? I owe so much to God, for since God took this poor woman's sons and grandchildren, only this sad granddaughter of hers remains to cover her eyes.

Here we do not have an either-or of the male imaginary, but rather a both-and; in other words, a memorable example of what Luce Irigaray calls *mimesis*, or mimicry.<sup>22</sup> For it is made clear to the reader that the paradoxical stance here is not *just* for tactical, practical, reasons but rather is expressive of a much deeper felt ambivalence in Justina. She clearly loves this she-devil, and this in response to the witch's (maternal) love for her: 'Estábamos como madre y hija, y ... me quería bien la diablo de la vieja' 658) ('We were like mother and daughter, and ... she loved me dearly, the old She-Devil'). Moreover, this mutual love is also mutually beneficial, as is made

<sup>22</sup>Luce Irigaray, *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. by Margaret Whitford (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp.124-25 (p.124): 'One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus begin to thwart it. [...] To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it.' See, too, the reference to Irigaray's distinction between mimesis as parroting and mimesis as parody in Whitford, *Philosophy in the Feminine*, p.205, Note 32.

clear from the pronounced emphasis on 'hacer bien' ('doing good') and 'querer bien' ('loving well') in both directions when describing their relationship with each other; for example: 'si la hice bien, fue por la natural obligación que tiene cada cual a querer bien a quien le hace bien' (658) ('if I did her good, it was because of the natural obligation that each human being has to love well the one who does him/her good'). Indeed, one might with considerable justice translate the ubiquitous 'inserta'/'insertada' ('inserted') with 'inscribed', for in a specifically Irigarayan way, Justina sees herself as being the heiress in a deeper sense than the merely legal: the, in some profound sense, true heiress of this Wise Old Woman.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the suggestion that she is, indeed, the 'heredera forzosa' ('heiress apparent', literally, 'inevitable') of the Old Witch crystallizes in the text in the use of 'forcejar' ('to struggle'), 'forcejaban' ('they struggled'), 'forzado' ('forced') and 'necesitada' ('necessitated') (668), all to describe the tears that Justina sheds in spite of her efforts not to cry. Adapting Irigaray, one could say that Justina, nomadic and homeless up to this point, finds her home in the genealogical symbolic order that Irigaray claims is a condition of woman's access to subjectivity.<sup>24</sup> One could also describe it as Justina's finding and claiming her rightful place in the Great Goddess' mysterious order of creation:

De la misma suerte y sin que se entienda,  
 Justina, hecha nieta de la muerta vieja,  
 Se pega a la sangre, pecunia y hacienda.  
 Y sin tener gana, a gritos se queja;  
 En mañás y hacienda hereda a la muerta,  
 Por eso se llama la heredera inserta. (661)

In the same and mysterious way,

<sup>23</sup>The notion of things being 'inserted' or hidden inside, so that their true nature is not visible to the naked, or untutored, eye is a pervasive leitmotif in the novel.

<sup>24</sup>The importance of genealogy in the Spanish picaresque novel has been highlighted, in respect of the inescapability of Pablos's in Quevedo's *Buscón*, by C.B. Morris, *The Unity and Structure of Quevedo's Buscón*, p.21. The theme of lineage is presented in a burlesque manner for the first time in *La Pícaro Justina*. (José Luís Alonso Hernández, *Léxico del Marginalismo del Siglo de Oro* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1977); cited in Victoriano Romero López, 'Degradación Caricaturesca en el Estebanillo González: Dos Ejemplos', *Anali Sezione Romanza*, 31 (1989), 233-44 (p.244). The significance of female genealogy to a Renaissance woman has been stressed in respect of Isabel de la Cruz by Ruth A. El Saffar, *Rapture Encaged*, p.99.

Justina, now granddaughter of the old dead woman,  
 Cleaves to the blood, money and estate.  
 And without wanting to, she cries out in protest;  
 In skills and estate, she falls heir to the dead,  
 That is why she is called the inserted heiress.

These are the final six lines of an extended simile in which awesome, imperceptible, and mysterious, natural processes - such as the lamb cleaving to its mother's breast - are likened to Justina's coming into her inheritance. Given the sense of a significant and natural event which these comparisons invite, and the fact that we are told that this act of nature is accompanied by involuntary cries of complaint, it is clear that the rhetoric implies an underlying order of a symbolic (and inherently traumatic) birth. The reference to the Old Witch's retiring to sleep despite the storm 'porque ella no temía nada destos *embarazos*' (662: my emphasis) ('because she had no fear whatsoever of such *hindrances* '— or pregnancies, in its secondary meaning) supports this view. In the description of events immediately prior to the the Old Witch's death there is a rhetorical emphasis on limited movement involving transitional stages and thresholds — both internal: '[no pude] acabar con mi fiel corazón que dejase de dar aldabadas a la puerta de mi imaginación, el cual, por instantes, las daba a las puertas de mi alma' (662) ('[I could not] stop my trusty heart from knocking at the door of my imagination, which for moments knocked on the doors of my soul'); and external: 'Levantéme y vestíme, y fui al aposento de la vieja por salir de la inquietud que me atormentaba' (662) ('I got up and dressed myself, and went to the Old Woman's room in order to escape the anxiety that tormented me'). In fact, death itself is expressed as a necessary (natural) — if mysterious and imperceptible — transition from one state to another. Justina enters the Old Woman's room as the latter is taking her last breath, and in the next sentence she sees her dead. No sooner is she dead than Justina, until this moment tormented by fear and anxiety, undergoes an immediate and significant transformation, characterized by a loss of fear and references to new beginnings, a process which results in her seeing the house with an *owner's* eyes: 'comencé a

ensanchar el corazón y mirar la casa con ojos señoriles, y tras esto, comencé a hacer libro nuevo y trazar una buena vida tras una mala muerte (663) ('I began to expand my heart and look at the house with an owner's eyes, and after that, I began to make a new book, and design a good life after a bad death'). It would surely not be claiming too much to see here precisely the definition of the feminine as dynamic process of which Irigaray makes so much,<sup>25</sup> issuing in the creation of a new discourse, a (kabbalistic) 'house of language', the making of a new book and a new understanding in Justina's terms — a new life which wholly compensates for the old.

Justina's reaction to the arrival of the officer of the law, whose task it is to take care of the business of the Old Witch's legacy 'en el ínterin que parecía el heredero, según los derechos disponen' (665) ('until the lawful heir appeared'), is to exploit Irigaray's 'enforced silence' and say nothing,<sup>26</sup> thereby disregarding patriarchal law, and nonchalantly taking possession of the Old Woman's property:

Entró el alguacil, pero yo no me turbé, y de propósito no le quise decir cosa alguna del ser yo nieta de la difunta, sino al descuido y como cosa asentada, entablé mi hecho (665).

The policeman entered, but I did not worry myself, and I deliberately did not wish to say anything about my being granddaughter of the deceased, but instead, nonchalantly proceeded as if it were already an established fact.

The fact that Justina proceeds as if her identity as granddaughter of the deceased is 'cosa asentada' ('a *fait accompli*'), elicits the desired response in the policeman, who equally 'como cosa asentada' ('as if it were a *fait accompli*') treats her 'como única nieta y heredera' (666) ('as if she were the sole heir and granddaughter'), and not only puts no obstacles in her way, but publicly declares 'esta pobre doncella es la heredera' (666) ('this poor girl is the heiress'). In other words, she so takes command of the situation that she makes patriarchal law declare her the sole heiress, so that both in

<sup>25</sup>See Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*, p.135.

<sup>26</sup>Luce Irigaray, 'Questions' in Margaret Whitford, *The Irigaray Reader*, pp.133-139 (p.138).

name and in practice she inherits what is hers. As she proudly told us in Chapter 2 of Book 1 in relation to her talkative ('gift-of-the-gab') lineage, the difference between her ancestors and herself is that whereas they spoke when asked to speak, she, by her restraint, 'a los oficios mudos hago parleros' (179) ('she makes dumb offices speak'). And what enables her to occupy this position is her 'tretas y eficacia en el hablar' (667) ('her resourcefulness and ingenuity in speaking'), or, in Irigaray's terms, her skill in *parler-femme*, a talent which not only allows her to speak her own identity, but brings forth the underlying truth of that identity through the mouths of those who seek to repress it.

In the confessional tone that she so often adopts in addressing the reader directly, Justina asserts her right to the two hundred ducats of the old Woman's legacy by reference to the abuse she suffered at the hands of her father, indicating that the logic at work here, as in the case<sup>of</sup> Sancha, is that of compensation:

De verdad te digo que sólo por haber vencido el torrente del alegría y forzado el alma a llorar en ocasión tan sin ocasión, merecí los doscientos ducados, porque te doy mi palabra que desde el día que mi padre me imprimió el jarro en las costillas ... mis ojos no se habían desayunado de llorar. (669)

In truth I tell you that just for having suppressed the torrent of happiness and forced my soul to cry on such an inauspicious occasion, I deserved the two hundred ducats, for I give you my word that since the day that my father left the mark of the jug on my back ... my eyes have not known what it is to weep.

What Luce Irigaray calls the 'debt to the mother' is at least paid to the daughter.<sup>27</sup> In a gesture of empowerment, therefore, Justina pronounces in her own favour: 'me hice poseedora inquilina, como dicen los escribanos' (668) ('I made myself owner-

<sup>27</sup>Luce Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, p.43: 'instead of acknowledging every human being's debt to the mother, he would rather forget and speak of and with a language that has the maternal body's gift of generosity, abundance, and plenitude, but to which nothing is owed. The materiality of the relationship to this maternal body having disappeared, language remains an inexhaustible "womb" for the use that's made of her.'

occupier, as the scribes put it'). In other words, male language is thereby 'forced' to recognize her as an epistemological subject, here as a person in the legal sense. Her empowerment is indeed an achievement of sexual politics, of political sexuality. But it also has more far-reaching benefits for the culture as a whole, in the form of peace and harmony, a Shekhinah-leitmotif which runs through the text in relation to the female figures. Justina's compensatory payment of the debt to the mother consists in proclaiming herself heir not only to the estate of the Old Witch but to her house of language, an action which brings 'well earned and better deserved' (668) peace, not only for the Old Witch who dies peacefully in the sense of having passed on her divine female power to Justina, but indirectly for Spain (used metonymically for the culture as a whole) and ultimately harmonizes life and death:

parecióme que si ella muriera con su lengua, mandara aquella hacienda a algún mal morisco, lo cual fuera como quien lleva armas a infieles, y, por tanto, me pareció a mí que era mejor ahorrar destos inconvenientes a España y meter en ella paz bien pagada y mejor merecida. (667-8)

It seemed to me that if she died with her language, she might send that inheritance to some little moorish man, which would be tantamount to taking weapons to infidels, and so it seemed to me that it was better to save Spain from such inconveniences, and in so doing create in her the peace she had well paid for and better deserved.

The key notion of balance and harmony so crucial to the Shekhinah's role in the sefirotic system abounds in the text at every level, not least in relation to the mother-daughter relationship between Justina and the Old She-Devil here. For Justina is clearly moved — her hyperbolic language betrays her depth of feeling, despite her efforts to suppress it! — by the fact that the Old Woman does her so much good 'tan sin contrapeso' (668) ('without counterweight'), without, that is, demanding anything in return. But as she herself goes on to confess (in her characteristic style of *correctio*, stating one thing then doubling back on herself to deny it and change her mind), she does in fact provide the 'counterweight' to that love in the form of her own

involuntary, grudgingly acknowledged if generously spent, and painful, tears before, during, and after the funeral of the Old Witch. Justina's choice of inappropriately pedantic phraseology — for example, 'I felt necessitated to shed' instead of 'I cried' — as well as her references to her irritation, which suggests she is being forced against her will to cry — all serve to highlight the authenticity of the feelings she finds almost too painful to express. Her choice of words and expression have distinct echoes of her emotional farewell to Sancha Gomez, except that this time the tears are her own:

me vi necesitada de echar algunos lagrimonatos mal maduros que me daban gran fastidio, porque llorar una persona sin gana, cree que sólo se puede hacer en dos casos: el primero, que sea mujer, y el segundo, cuando ve el interés al ojo. (668)

I saw myself necessitated to shed some well-matured big old tears that really annoyed me, because for a person to cry involuntarily, believe me, it can only be done in two cases: the first, it has to be a woman, and secondly only when she sees something in her own interest.

The ambiguity expressed in Justina's words in relation to her tears is psychologically plausible. For, in fact, she clearly did not know whether to laugh or cry: laugh, that is, at her good fortune (the use of the noun 'interés' suggests something of value to her both in monetary terms and in terms of the love passed on to her) or cry at the loss of the subject and object of such 'interés' ('interest'). Ever the Shckhinah-voice of balance and harmony, Justina alludes to the 'counterweight' to all the benefits her grandmother had passed on to her, namely the tears she felt obliged to shed in her honour, despite the difficulty of displaying sorrow in the midst of the happiness she felt at her new state. We are reminded of the decorous 'sorbitos' ('little sips', that is, sobs) and 'lagrimitas' ('little tears') she managed to squeeze out on the occasion of her own mother's funeral:

Lloré la muerte de mamá algo, no mucho, porque si ella tenía tapón en el gaznate, yo le tenía en los ojos y no podían salir las lágrimas. (231)



I cried for the death of mummy somewhat, not much, for if she had a stopper on her throat, I had one on my eyes and the tears could not come out.

As if to emphasise the significance of her copious tears at this point in her narrative, she reminds us that her life thus far has been dry-eyed apart from the 'dos sorbitos' ('two sips') she cried and the 'pucheritos' ('little pouts') she made when she was abducted by Pero Grullo, and even when her brothers marked her face with 'la verdadera señal de sus cinco dedos' (669) ('the true sign of their five fingers') she did not shed a tear. Indeed, her economy in shedding her own tears is something she inherited from her own mother: 'ella me dejó enseñada desde el mortuorio de mi padre a hacer entierros enjutos y de poca costa' (231-2) ('she left me trained, since the funeral of my father, to make funerals which cost little [implicitly] in terms of both money and emotions spent').

It would seem that her own mother's unexpressed emotions, her failure to reconcile her inner with her outer life, is the cause of her less than peaceful death, for, unlike the Old Moorish Witch's death in 'sana paz' (662) — in peaceful harmony with the natural world — her mother's demise is traumatic in the extreme. So much so, that it is suggested (rather irreverently) by Justina that her mother does not rest in peace, but rather has to have her two arms forced into one sleeve of her shroud to stop her from wandering off to other graves in (erotic?) search of 'sausages'. (232).

The full significance of Justina's tears and cries on this occasion become clear, for the treatment given to Justina's mixed and deeply felt emotions on the death of the Old Witch echo the versified version (the extended simile) of her coming into her inheritance, especially in the sense that, once again, the underlying order of her depiction is that of a symbolic birth. The descriptions of her feelings at the loss of the Old Witch speak not just of this particular loss, but of a wealth of emotions 'matured' in the course of her painful and intense experience of life, an accumulation of feelings that, by dint of the metaphors she uses, are expressed in terms of a pregnancy. The appropriateness of the pregnancy metaphor, sustained throughout the text, consists in

the notion that Justina's inner sense of herself grows and matures. Reminiscent of the mixed feelings she experiences at the outset of her narrative, where positive and negative emotions (then of anger and pleasure, here of sadness and joy) appear to struggle with one another to be expressed, she draws on the myth of Silva's two daughters who struggle with each other in their mother's belly to see who comes out first (668). The flow of attendant feelings is experienced by Justina as a powerful physical-cum-spiritual transformation, one that suggests that she is, indeed, in the process of being her own midwife, as was her declared intention at the outset of her narrative. She experiences the sound of her *own* cries as if from the point of view of an out-of-body experience, expressed both in terms of (earthy) giving-birth — her cries are loud and hearty, and significantly, 'desentonados' ('out of tune'), unlike the orchestrated little gulps at her mother's funeral — and in terms of being so loud and high-pitched that she felt they would rise upwards to the starry sky and turn into heavenly bodies (669). The distance implied in such acute self-awareness suggests the disjunction between inner and outer self, a sense of her (inner-unconscious-bodily) self as such a powerful, mysterious, natural force that it appears to her conscious mind as wholly 'other', and therefore in a sense godlike, akin to the mysteries of childbirth. However, the disjunction is a division, a tension that is resolved in the birthing of the Child, in the expression of her inner self via her painful experience of life. Justina's tears and cries are the result of the labour pains of her own birth into her female symbolic genealogy. The tears for the death of the mother(s) become — in the very process of crying — the cries of her own birth as daughter of the Great Mother, as she is born into, and by means of, her own female inheritance, her own female house of language, her finding tongue to express the Eternal Feminine:

Daba gritos, y eran tan recios, como si estuviera de parto, y tan altos, que no sé cómo no me subieron al cielo estrellado y me convirtieron en estrellas higadas y pluviales. (669)

I was crying out, and my cries were so hearty, it was as if I were giving birth, and so high-pitched that I don't know how they did not lift me up to the starry heavens and convert me into pluvial and courageous stars.

The ironic distance implied in her description of her own uncontrolled cries and tears as hearing her own 'simplezas de niña inocente y tierna' (669) ('simplicities of innocent and tender girl-child') is psychologically and spiritually convincing, for (like the myth of Silva's two daughters alluded to above) it suggests her inner struggle: the tension between the by now mature, experienced, and dry-eyed, 'above-it-all' realistic old ego succumbing to the (from an egotistic perspective silly and childish) weeping for her new-born (and crying) self in touch with her transcendent female identity. She has come full circle from the moment she symbolically retreated to her mother's belly (136) at the outset of her story in Chapter One, 'De la escribana figada' ('Of the snooped-upon female scribe'), having been inhibited in her attempt to take 'la pluma en la mano para sacar mis partos a luz' (145) ('to take the pen in my hand to give birth to my offspring'), that is give birth to herself via a more authentic, more real (maternal-feminine) route (156), up to this moment when she finally sees herself (symbolically) reborn in and by means of her own female narrative. The conclusion to this key episode and completion of the process — 'Con estas ceremonias y lloros, eché el sello ... y aseguré mi herencia' (670) ('with these ceremonies and cries, I sealed ... and assured my inheritance') is that Justina feels fully recompensed by her 'grandmother' for the tears that she has shed, whether 'voluntary, hired, inserted', for 'no ha habido lloradora más bien pagada que Justina.' (670) ('there has never been a woman crier more well paid than Justina'). In return, she feels that she has honoured her debt to her 'grandmother', so that the picture of harmonious balance that emerges bears testimony to the recognition and validity of this mother-daughter line. In Irigaray's terms, each pays the debt to the other; in terms of the hermetic tradition of

the Divine Feminine, the soul (the Anima) has become one with the Soul of the World (Anima Mundi).<sup>28</sup>

Whereas Justina up until this point in her career (her meeting the Old Moorish Witch) had reigned supreme — 'dando a la excelencia de mi ingenio título de grandioso' (652) ('giving the excellence of my wit the title of grandiose') — over all those she encountered who, in turn, duly recognized her superiority, in this Old She-Devil she finally meets her match. In an extended simile she recounts her encounter with the Witch in terms of a profoundly transformative (quasi-mystical) experience. Justina compares herself to one of those proud, grave, and fast-flowing rivers whose swollen arms cover the tender plants on either side of their banks as they pass with a majestic and authoritative tone, but which, in the presence of the emperor Neptune, fall silent and are hidden, without so much as a hint of authority, as if they had been converted into earthly lime and particles of dry dust (652):

así yo ... ahora que entré a competir con el mar de una morisca vieja, hechicera, experta, bisabuela de Celestina, me verás rendir mi entono y humillar mi no domada cerviz, sin más ruido ni semejanza de quien fui que si nunca fuera. (652)

So I ... now that I came to compete with the ocean of an old moorish woman, a witch, a wise woman, and the great-grandmother of Celestina, you will see me surrender my lofty conceit and humble my indomitable self-esteem, with no more sound or similarity of who I was than if I had never been.

In the presence of the awesome Goddess that the Old Witch embodies, Justina knows her (inferior) place. Recognizing the Witch's superiority, and with it her own human limitations, Justina surrenders to the ineffable and transformative experience of her

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<sup>28</sup>Cf. Justina's allusion to the wise and wicked Old Woman as symbol of the world: 'porque los engaños y embustes del mundo no pueden tener mejor imagen y dibujo que una vieja hechicera' (658-59) ('because the deceptions and wiles of the world have no better representation and depiction than an Old Witch'). Compare, too, the final words of the novel written by the fictional author, who refers to Justina as 'esta estatua de libertad que aquí he pintado, y en ella, los vicios que hoy día corren por el mundo' (741) ('this statue of liberty that I have painted here, and in her, the vices that abound in the world').

encounter with the Anima as Goddess. The natural-divine hierarchy falls into place in this crucial encounter, for Justina takes up her position, her old self silent and invisible, as she is reborn in the Goddess.

An enlightening example of a recognizably completed stage in the ongoing process of Justina's making of her own identity as a representative female figure herself occurs on her first triumphant return home to her village following her defeat of her abductors where she basks in the admiration and respect of the leaders of her village who look at her 'with other eyes' (334). Justina has, after all, learned, from her own experience, that individual triumphs — and specifically the pride one takes in them — form part of a larger, ongoing, process which has its own dynamic, making 'spirits invincible and disposing them to undertake new exploits' (353). Here, too, as in the later episode, and generally increasingly so in the novel, the rhetorical emphasis on expansion and growth<sup>29</sup> in relation to her self makes the process of her growing sense of selfhood and, more important, her increasing awareness of this inner process absolutely clear (and reminiscent of the *Bildung* ['personal growth'] that Wilhelm Meister undertakes):

Así yo, como de la pasada y referida empresa salí tan lozana cuan triunfante, no sólo me ensanché, pero en mi mesma opinión crecí: crecieron mis humos, mis desdenes, mis pensamientos, y aun pongo en duda si creció mi alma, según vi en mí universal mudanza. Ya yo era dama. (354)

So it was that, having emerged from this last adventure as lusty and proud as I was triumphant, not only did I expand in myself, but in my own opinion I grew; my airs-and-graces, my disdains, my thoughts grew, and I even think my soul grew, for I saw in myself universal change. I was now a lady.

<sup>29</sup>Note the prevalence of such verbs as 'ensanchar' ('to expand', 'extend', 'open up'), 'medrar' ('to grow organically', 'to prosper'); 'crecer' ('to grow', 'increase'); 'madurar' ('to mature').

Justina has now taken on the identity of the Lady, which, since Petrarch at least, has been the privileged muse of the man, and she sums up this transformation in that she now is, and sees herself, as a 'dama' ('lady') with nuance, sophistication, 'encapada y ensombreada' (355) ('cloaked and shaded'; 'chiaroscuro'). But the phrase suggests, too, the self-esteem that wearing a hat brings! She determines to leave behind her 'estado', that is her culturally inferior status as 'aldeana' and 'montañesa' ('villager-highlander') and become a 'persona' and 'ciudadana' ('citizen'), that is, a person, a full citizen, in her own right. (355) She implies that this is part of her route to a well-rounded education, for since she is already mistress of 'lo criminal' ('the criminal'), she needs to go to the city — León — to acquire something of 'lo civil' (356) ('the civil'), in the same way that she has to complement her book-learning with real lived experience.

In agreement with Irigaray's strategy of revealing the underlying sexual bias of our culture's mythology — 'one of the principal expressions of what orders society at any given time'<sup>30</sup> — by inserting an alternative reading, thereby inscribing the material feminine and preventing, however temporarily, the dominant discourse from occupying that space, Justina adopts similar tactics. In comic explanation of why all women have inherited the desire to wander far afield, and asserting her right to express her own authoritative view on this matter 'pues es caso propio de mi escuela' (246) ('it's a case that belongs to my school') — i.e., because she is a woman — Justina presents various male points of view, hypothesising on women's tendency to be 'andariegas' ('to roam') by means of which she indirectly addresses the most fundamental male myth — that of Eve's origins as one of Adam's ribs — and subjects it to her characteristically comic and debunking *parler-femme*. The significance of this variety of male views hypothesising on how the first woman became a wanderer is that they have a fundamental male cultural bias which saddles women with sole responsibility for both humanity's lack of wholeness and for healing that lack.

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<sup>30</sup>Luce Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, p.24.

Accordingly, suggests Justina in comic reconstruction of the story underlying the myth, Eve is accused by the first man of stealing his missing rib, and, on counting her own and seeing that she has no superfluous rib herself, sets off in search of her husband's lost rib, looking for a man with a surplus rib, so that — given the impossibility of this quest — women 'nacen inclinadas a andar en busca de la costilla y viendo si hallan hombres con alguna costilla de sobra' (247) ('women are born inclined to wander in search of the rib and seeing whether they find men with an extra rib'). As the reader's awareness becomes ever more attuned to the underlying sexual subtext that coheres in the novel, it is tempting to see in this description a veiled reference to another (twentieth-century) male myth, namely the Freudian notion of 'penis envy' in women, one that appears to be echoed in Justina's mother's post-mortem craving for 'sausages' and her tendency to wander off in search of sausages in other graves (232). The fact that we are told that these stories, and the women in them, are imaginary products of a sleeping or dreaming man, points to the out-of-touch quality of the male imaginary, whose unmitigated fantasies metamorphose into cultural norms about what constitutes women's 'nature': a male-biased ideology which has real (negative) implications for women's (and humanity's) material well-being. Once again, Justina draws on cultural variants of the female voice of wisdom — this time on the wise Theodora of Arabian folklore — in order to uncover the male bias inherent in mythology, a distortion which Theodora — providing both 'reason' and 'cause' as to why women love to and are inclined to walk and dance — reduces to 'un principio y razón' (249) ('one principle and reason'): namely, the tendency of the male-dominated culture to confuse or conflate the merely 'cultural' with the 'natural'. Addressing herself to illustrious 'madamas' ('ladies') and 'daifas' ('concubines') in the fictional Court of the Ladies on Parnassus, she — taking exactly the opposite tack to Shakespeare's tamed shrew, Kate<sup>31</sup> — urges them to suppose that:

aunque sea cosa tan natural como obligatoria que el hombre sea señor  
natural de su mujer, pero que el hombre tenga rendida a la mujer,

<sup>31</sup>Cf. *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act V, Sc. 2, ll. 137ff.

aunque la pese, eso no es natural, sino contra su humana naturaleza, porque es captividad, pena, maldición y castigo. Y como sea natural el aborrecimiento desta servidumbre forzosa y contraria a la naturaleza, no hay cosa que más huyamos ni que más nos pene que el estar atenuadas contra nuestra voluntad a la de nuestros maridos, y generalmente a la obediencia de cualquier hombre. (249)

It is a thing as natural as it is obligatory that the man is natural lord and husband of his woman-wife. But if the man has the woman in a state of subservience, despite it paining her, that is not natural, but on the contrary against her human nature, for it is captivity, suffering, curse, and punishment. And as it is natural the abhorrence of such enforced servitude contrary to nature, there is nothing that we women more flee from or that makes us suffer more than to be forced against our own will to comply with that of our husbands, and generally to have to obey any man.

In this way, Theodora's female voice of reason locates the cultural space where culture is at odds with the natural (that is, Shekhinah's divine) law precisely in patriarchy's view of women, and these two laws—cultural and natural — are viewed in gendered terms of male and female respectively. Her female voice brings to light and thereby remedies the distortion of, and deviation from, the natural order (God's order) for woman as God-bearing logos — Shekhinah/Sophia — and restores the universal harmony and balance which is the mark of divine wholeness. Her (female) desire for freedom of movement — expressed in her excessive urge to dance and roam — is seen as a natural response to a cultural imperative which seeks to bind and imprison her.

The emphasis in the novel on the female/natural need for constant movement and activity as integral to the process of becoming oneself (a motif it shares with *Wilhelm Meister*), in imitation of the constant flux of Nature, crystallizes in the text with her use of the word 'fuste' meaning 'shaft' (the part of the column between the base and the capital; also, the part of the hair between the root and the point, like the trunk of the tree) to articulate the complexity of this natural process. For example,



Justina — carried by her winged soul and airborne senses as a result of her adventures and conceits — returns to rest in her beloved home-port Mansilla. It is precisely the constant polaristic movement (from Leon to Mansilla, from change to desire for peace, from one extreme to another, as she puts it) that brings about and consolidates who she is, for:

[como] todas las cosas están armadas en el fuste de la mudanza, es claro que, por no salir de quien son, jamás toman ningún puesto, si no es para que sirva de paso y tránsito. (601)

[as] all things are formed in the shaft of change, it is clear that, in order not to deviate from what they are, things never take up a fixed position, unless it serves as a means of transition.

The text is peppered with architectural metaphors which link Justina's growing sense of self as taking shape or form as a formidable female figure. The widespread use in the text of various forms of the verb 'asomar' (defined in Moliner as 'aparecer el principio o una pequeña parte de una cosa quedando oculto el resto' (278) ('the appearance of the beginning or a small part of something, while the rest remains hidden') is a subtle allusion to the almost imperceptible process of her becoming-herself and her growing sense of self-awareness, a process which is linked in the text — via various metaphors relating to plant shoots — with organic growth. It is a metaphorical web that evokes the Shekhinah in her central guise as veil, symbol of the simultaneously self-concealing and self-revealing immanence of God.

Justina's urges are aligned to what is evoked as a divine-natural tendency to free the human soul-spirit (the Anima) from the cultural male bias that seeks to reduce and debase it. The linguistic emphasis on the female voice as a means of restoring lost harmony is clear in her rhetorical emphasis on balancing (i.e., cancelling out) two 'evils' in relation to women — being housebound and feeling sad at seeing themselves oppressed — with two 'goods' — namely, [the ability] to wander freely and to please ourselves: so that dancing 'encierra dos bienes contra dos males' (250) ('encompasses

two goods against two evils'), described by her as two wings with which to flee from our sorrows and two capes with which to cover our lacks (250). In this way, dancing embodies two goods acting as a balancing counterweight to the two evils. Speaking on behalf of all women, she places herself in this female tradition, or genealogy, and sees herself, and her life, as truly enhancing — literally, increasing the (implicitly cultural) value thereof (250) — the healing power of female, embodied pleasure and freedom. Whereas (male) poets have invented discord between the two, that is, freedom to develop and pleasure (perhaps an allusion to the Horatian distinction between *prodesse et delectare*),<sup>32</sup> Justina's person is symbol enough to show how both can exist in harmony:

podrás creer que yo sola bastara a ponerlos en paz, dándoles en mí campo franco para dibujar en mí sus blasones, trophéos, victorias y ganancias.(250)

you will be able to believe that I alone would be enough to put them at peace, giving them in me, the authority to draw their heraldic shields, trophies, victories and benefits.

The notion of ever-increasing value mirrors the ongoing process of becoming ever closer to the divine.

A rather bizarre variation on Irigaray's notion of 'amorous exchange'<sup>33</sup> — which marks an important stage in Justina's growth — is expressed in the novel by the exchange of letters between Justina and Marcos Méndez Pavón, alias the 'fullero' ('trickster'), after she robs and outwits him in the Number 'De la vergonzosa engañadora' (409-428) ('Of the disgraceful (female) deceiver'). In the Number 'De las dos cartas graciosas' (441-457) ('Of the two funny letters') the exchange takes the form of a mock trial of Justina by Pavón followed by her defence-cum-counterattack: a verbal duel between the two, enacted as his-and-her letters, each defending the

<sup>32</sup>I am grateful to Professor Gareth Walters for bringing the possible relevance of this topos to my attention.

<sup>33</sup>Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*, pp. 165-68.

superior skill they employed in their earlier head-on clashes. Each speaks of having outsmarted the other. Pavón's case against Justina is expressed in terms of a 9-month/9-year sitting in judgment on her, during which all the forces of justice (male law) 'give birth' to his condemnation of her as having meted out punishment to him which far exceeded the crime of insulting and embarrassing her with 'una palabrita' (442) ('one little word'). He deems his 'trick' to be superior, as one little word of his made her 'give birth' to a hundred of her own — her whole intricate, and complex revenge-plot involving the gold pieces. He also claims that his was 'pure trick' untainted by 'veras' ('truths'), whereas her trick was wrapped in 'un muy verdadero y averiguado latrocinio' (443) ('a very true and definite swindle'), stamped with 'the marks of her donkey nails and hooves' (442). She stands accused by him of openly and shamelessly priding herself on her 'burla' ('trick'), instead of decently covering it up by feigning loving affection. Pavón's overall aim is to undermine her achievement, deflate her ego; so he patronizingly calls her a silly woman, and insists she need not have gone to such lengths, since he was, in any case, intending to give her the gold *agnus dei*, and more cheaply at that. The rhetorical emphasis here on hands — he threatens to cut her nails, and put gloves on her hands should she dare to try this trick again — underlines his legitimized power (as a man) to curtail her liberty and freedom to act.<sup>34</sup> He continues by angrily accusing *her* of impregnating *him* in order to establish and carry on her female (cheating-landlady) genealogy, which is that of the Furies, and Dragon monsters. He ends by threatening to name her 'marca de más marca' (447) ('superior whore', but also 'superior quality'), should she try to denounce him.

Justina's letter in response to the 'squint-eyed' Pavón's letter is triumphant and devastating in its analysis of her victory over him. One trick of hers is worth a thousand of his, she claims, for it 'touched' him a thousand ways, and in the three faculties of the soul: Will — his thwarted desire left him 'sniffing at the post'; Understanding — she fooled him into thinking he embarrassed her when she did not

<sup>34</sup>Cf. J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p.137: 'the hand signifies manifestation, action....'

even esteem one hair of his venereal head; and Memory — for he is destined to remember her as long as her name and life last. She claims her trick was skilful, inventive, original, substantial, and well-composed, an architectural creation for which *he* foots the bill. Justina makes clear that it is her own female ego that was exercised and thereby enhanced in this instance. She casts herself as the stallion (that is, chameleon-like, taking on the male ego-identity), refuting Pavón's claim that his trick gave birth to hers, and insisting that rather she made use of him as a 'potra paridera' (449) ('foaling mare'). She thereby makes explicit her fecundating, (pro)creative ability in bringing to life her own female identity by means of his male discourse; and also makes it clear that it comes to light precisely in the exchange between the two. Amused by his repudiation of her trick because — unlike his 'pure deceit', that is, without a hint of a truths — hers is mixed with truths, and therefore impure and imperfect, Justina's disabusing female voice (indirectly) locates the notion of 'pure' truth exclusively in the divine realm and not of this world at all, where truth is of necessity impure yet, paradoxically, more perfect:

¿pues ahora sabéis que todas las cosas vivientes, cuanto más perfectas, son más mixtas? Hermanito, mi burla era viva y vivirá, y porque fuese más perfecta, la hice mixta. (450-1)

Don't you know now that all living things, the more perfect they are, the more mixed? Little brother, my deceit was alive and will live, and I made it mixed, so that it would be more perfect.

She deliberately creates mixed 'burlas', a mixture of truth and fiction, of good and bad; even he, she comically jibes, is not pure stupidity:

No hay mentira sin mezcla de verdad, ni mal sin mezcla de bien, ni aun bobo — como vos bien sabéis — sin mezcla de discreto, y aun vos, con ser tan tonto comenzastes a querer soñar de poder tener algo de discreto. (450)

There is no lie without an (ad) mixture of truth, nor evil without a mixture of good, nor even fool — as you well know — without something of the prudent person; and even you, in being so stupid, have begun to want to dream of having some sense.

Justina speaks here with the disabusing both-and voice of the Shekhinah who articulates this-worldliness as a *perfect mixture* of divine and human, of good and evil. Justina's cure consists in administering not simple, uncompounded ingredients but 'pildoritas' ('little pills'), that is compounds of ingredients, for she declares herself to be 'boticaria de entre christianos' ('female pharmacist among Christians') the healing (health- and wholeness-bringing) voice of Shekhinah. Indeed, it is the duped Pavón himself who sums up her 'divine' swindle, claiming woefully — alluding to the gold *agnus dei* she uses to fool him — 'sólo me pesó que para un hecho tan humano tomase un medio tan divino]Herejota!' (444) ('it only pained me that you took such a divine means for such a human act'). She speaks, of course indirectly, as the complex and divine-human Shekhinah, who is not in the least cowed by his threat to disempower her by cutting her nails and curtailing her freedom. Rather, as the quotations suggest, she is well equipped to fight her own battle without anyone's help:

que moza soy yo que no sólo sé trocar mi plata por su oro, pero sé asentar el guante y, tras él, las uñas, y tras todo, armar mamona, sin ser necesario traer de acarreo quien suelte la ballestilla. (450)

I am a girl that not only knows how to exchange my silver for your gold, but I know how to put on the glove and, after that, the nails, and after all that, arm the crossbow without the need for anyone to fire the shot.

Moreover, Justina has no desire, as he fears, to make public her victory over Pavón — in her words, to sell secrets which are usually 'paid for publicly'. She is content to enjoy the private memory of her joke at his expense: 'confieso que mil veces me parlo el chiste entre pecho y espalda, y a su costa traigo forradas en risa todas las tres

potencias del alma' (453) ('I confess that a thousand times I repeat the joke to myself between breast and back, and at his expense I have the three faculties of my soul lined with laughter'). Justina has taken Pavón's words out of his mouth and used them to discredit and humiliate him, for his own words in Justina's hands and pen, and mediated by her, reveal their own (and his) twisted logic and his wounded male ego. Her powerful weapon is her skill at *parler-femme*, her ability to target and expose his punctured male pride expressed in and through his own words. Her reward is the public manifestation of her own female persona.

The rhetorical leitmotif in the novel of not only being or doing, but 'seeing' oneself (e.g. p. 250, when Justina distinguishes between women both being oppressed and seeing themselves oppressed, in order to bring home to the reader the increased suffering that self-awareness brings) is typical of the way in which Justina-Shekhinah's voice articulates the need for cultural (human) discourse to mirror faithfully, that is mediate, natural (divine) discourse in such a way that *both* the divine-material-natural *and* the human-cultural, the unconscious and the conscious, the soul-self and the ego-in-the-persona, engage in (loving) creative intercourse. In other words, to *be* really free presupposes a conscious awareness of ourselves as being free — a positive self-image as an autonomous figure. The rhetoric of the novel in this respect implies that simply, or purely, 'being' belongs exclusively to the natural-divine realm, in the same way as the whole concept of perfection or purity is, paradoxically from a human perspective, a distortion (imperfection) of a one-sided male imaginary that fails to come to terms with the less-than-perfect maternal-material world.<sup>35</sup> To be wholly human necessitates being free *and* seeing oneself as free, in Irigaray's terms, an epistemological subject with the ability to talk about

<sup>35</sup>This distinction between 'organic completeness' on the one hand and 'abstract perfection' on the other is drawn by Goethe, in respect of a work of art, in one of the aphorisms in the collection 'Betrachtungen im Sinne der Wanderer' in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*:

'Eine solche Arbeit braucht nicht im höchstem Grade ausgeführt und vollendet zu sein; wenn sie gut gesehen, gedacht und fertig ist, so ist sie für den Liebhaber oft reizender als ein größeres ausgeführtes Werk' [MuR, 455].

(Such a piece of work does not have to be executed to the highest degree and perfected; if it is well observed, well thought-out and rounded-off, then it is often more charming for the *amateur* than a larger, more fully executed work.)

Cf. Marlis Mehra, 'The Aesthetics of Imperfection in Goethe's Last Novel', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 12, 1983, 205-11.

oneself in language.<sup>36</sup> This requires that our essential freedom (our 'Self' or 'Soul') be mirrored in and confirmed by the surrounding cultural world — in language. To lack the means of expressing one's subjective identity in the culture's discourse is to be deprived of one's autonomy, and, therefore, of one's humanity. As a result 'nunca gozamos las mujeres lo que vestimos, hasta que vemos que nos ven.' (259) ('we women never enjoy what we wear until we see that they [men] see us'). In other words, women have no mirror, no language, of their own in which to see themselves faithfully projected, only the male mirror-language which casts back at them an inauthentic image which is at odds with the felt image they experience:

We look at ourselves in the mirror to please someone, rarely to interrogate the state of our body or our spirit, rarely for ourselves and in search of our own becoming. The mirror almost always serves to reduce us to a pure exteriority. ... The mirror signifies the constitution of a fabricated (female) other that I shall put forward as an instrument of seduction in my place. ... I have yet to unveil, unmask, or veil myself *for me* — to veil myself so as to achieve self-contemplation. ... The mirror should support, not undermine my incarnation. All too often it sends back superficial, flat images.<sup>37</sup>

An extraordinarily subtle formulation of this ambivalent relationship on the part of women to the mirror of male discourse comes at the wake following Justina's father's funeral. She and her sisters are anxious to look at themselves dressed in mourning, to see how it suits them, but 'no osábamos descubrirnos ni salir a mirarnos en él' (226) ('we did not dare uncover ourselves [that is, remove the mourning veil] or leave the room to look in the mirror'). Making full use of their talents for invention — 'como todas éramos chimeristas' (226) ('we all had fertile imaginations') — each finds a ploy to take a look at herself in the mirror. One sister (the silliest) wants to place it at her father's mouth to see if he covers it with his breath, implicitly to make sure he is dead; the other sister (smarter than the first) wants to ensure that the nail on the mirror —

<sup>36</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Ethique de la différence sexuelle*, p.130.

<sup>37</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 65.

indirectly of his coffin — is not loose; Justina barely suppresses a giggle and, protesting that a mirror on a day of mourning is unseemly, wants to put it away in the coffer. And finally, the mother, asserting her ultimate authority, asks to see if it is broken, and with this excuse 'se miró a su sabor' (226) ('she looked at herself in her own pleasurable way') and gives it to Justina with instructions: 'Toma, Justina, guárdale, que ya de poco servirá en esta casa' (226) ('Take it, Justina, and put it away, for it has no place in this house'). In Irigaray's terms, the women, each in her own individual way and with varying degrees of subtlety and indirection, symbolically banishes male authority from their *house*, while taking over that symbol of man-made woman projected — the mirror — and transforming it to their own taste: 'De modo que, cada cual por su camino, dio un golpe al espejo, según los méritos de su discreción, y consiguió su gusto' (226) ('So that, each in her own way and according to her individual discretion, derived pleasure from taking a [parting] shot at the mirror [the word 'golpe' ('blow') conveys their barely suppressed aggression]'). Later in the novel, Justina removes the (same) patriarchal mirror from Sancha's ark 'para que no viese su maldita cara y se ahorcase como arpía' (594) ('so that she would not see her godforsaken face and hang herself as a harpy'). But there was no need, for Justina sees her 'tocar en los cristales de una herrada de agua, y no se desesperó ni se ahogó' (594-5) ('touch in the crystals of a barrel of water, and she did not despair nor drown herself'). In other words, she is in touch with the mirroring waters of her female genealogy, ultimately traceable to the Goddess of a Thousand names who reveals her to herself.

Justina fosters her own growth and development as a full — in Irigaray's terms, divine<sup>38</sup> — person who can engage on equally valid, if different, terms with the (already) divine man. Justina's need and desire for self-embodiment as a female figure in the world explains the abundant (overt and hidden) sexual imagery in the

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<sup>38</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp.61-64: 'To posit a gender, a God is necessary: guaranteeing the infinite' (p.61). 'The (male) ideal other has been imposed upon women by men. Man is supposedly woman's more perfect other, her model, her essence. The most human and the most divine goal woman can conceive is to become *man*. 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' (p.64).



text (a feature central to the portrayal of the kabbalistic Shekhinah in the *Zohar*, for she is none other than Eros, or Psyche, the quintessential symbol of the embodied soul, and of divine wholeness).<sup>39</sup> As the motto which adorns the frontispiece of the novel tells us 'El gusto me lleva' ('desire carries me forward'); desire, or Eros, is the transformative impulse which brings Justina to greater self-knowledge through her consciousness of her own embodied soul, or ensouled body.

Justina exposes the hidden nexus between language and the body by focussing on the (hidden) link between misogynist clichés of woman's openness (or inability to keep a secret) and her 'openness' in terms of her sexual availability to men, drawing attention — in a typically kabbalistic style so characteristic of the novel as a whole, and so fundamental to its key themes — to the centrality of Eros as the mediating link between the body and the soul, or between (bodily) language and (divine) language. In tune with Irigaray's suggested strategies, she illustrates her gesture of re-coding male (misogynist) myths via a direct appeal to the divine-feminine, this time under the name and form of the goddess Volupia, and to Angerona, the woman who stood at the door of the temple of the goddess of sensual pleasure with her finger on her mouth.<sup>40</sup> She provides her own interpretation of this myth:

¿Qué era aquello, sino que si la mujer huele que hay entrada para algún gusto o deleite — significado por la diosa Volupia — es más cerrada que trozo de nogal rollizo. (396)

This obviously means that if a woman smells that there is an entry for some pleasure or delight — symbolized by the goddess Volupia — she is more closed than a piece of robust walnut.

<sup>39</sup>See D.C. Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, p.220: 'According to Kabbalah, Adam's sin was a misapprehension of the unity of God' (220); 'the nature of Adam's sin—one of the most tightly guarded secrets of the *Zohar*—was that he partook of Shekhinah alone, thus splitting her off, and divorcing her from the higher sefirot and her husband, 'Tif'eret' (215), thereby denying her her full psycho-spiritual (human-divine) identity: 'The inner purpose of human sexuality is to regain wholeness and manifest the oneness of God' (217). In Jungian, psychoanalytical terms, 'Adam's sin corresponds to the splitting off of consciousness from the (anima) unconscious.' (215); Matt draws here on Jung's *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, Collected Works*, VIII, p.157.

<sup>40</sup>Note 'ang' forms the root of the Latin verb 'angere' meaning 'to narrow', MM181. The idea of a narrow opening providing access to the divine goddess reinforces a pervasive theme in the text. Cf. the narrow (as well as low, old, and filthy) door of the convent church, which Justina refers to as the 'door of virtues' (532).

She challenges the reader to believe her when she claims for women the ability to keep their lips closed, literally glued, when it is in their own interest: 'gusto o provecho' (395) ('pleasure or profit'), whether sexual pleasure or material benefit, so that if the latter is in question (or if it is a question of the latter) 'con las tenazas de Nicodemus no le abrirán los labios' (396) ('not even Nicodemus' forceps will open their lips'). Here, too, we have one of the many examples of the way in which the ubiquitous presence of a strong erotic undercurrent in the novel rises to the surface of the text with a more pressing, local urgency. Here, as in other key points, references to (female) parts of the body are more sensually fluid, necessarily veiled and ambiguous. In particular — as is here the case — patriarchy's view of women's lips and mouths as being perpetually open (and implicitly both threatening and enticingly accessible) inevitably implicate their lower, more explicitly sexual, bodily counterparts (the labia and vagina), so that patriarchal misogyny reveals itself as rooted in psycho-sexual anxiety involving libidinous desire for, mixed with fear of, the maternal-female libido.

The suggestion of female auto- and homoeroticism evoked here by the subtle interplay between the two mutually supportive women figures (one human, one divine): Angerona and the goddess Voluptia, is reinforced in the scene at the Fountain — itself a key symbol, like the Well, of the Shekhinah — which is characterised by its link with female earthiness-cum-divinity. For it is implied that the women use the fountain to bathe themselves during their menstrual cycle, an activity that is reflected in its name, Regla ('Menstruation'), while Justina's reference to the fountain as 'tan sacro lugar' (397) ('such a sacred place') consecrates it as a divine symbol. The whole scene evokes an exclusively female realm, situated albeit at the end of the patio where 'los señores de la iglesia' (397) ('the clergymen, or lords, of the church') walk, but nevertheless mysteriously self-contained, timeless, and unmistakably female — even in its external references to the girls' mistresses cagerly awaiting their return from the fountain, where the girls gather, chatter, look, and listen like 'gorriones en sarmentera'

(397) ('sparrows on the vine shoots') playfully emptying and filling the large earthenware jugs (yet another pervasive symbol of the tenth sefirah). Justina herself is enchanted and seduced by the beauty and playful sensuality of the 'mozas de cántaro'<sup>41</sup> ('water girls') and by that of one girl in particular who gives Justina to drink from her pitcher:

aunque gruesa y no nada fresca, por donde mojava pasaba, y aficionéme más a su cántaro que a otro por ser el más enjuagado o enaguado. (397-8)

although thick and not very fresh, where it was wet it passed, and I became more fond of her jug than any other, as it was the most rinsed, proudly displayed, and feminine.

The underlying suggestion is that water is the female realm of the impure ('gruesa' ['thick'] suggests the water is mixed with earth) fluid, mitigating, feminine that relieves the otherwise extreme climate of León — the very opposite of the temperate nature of the pastoral *locus amoenus* — with its 'calor de Extremadura' ('the dry heat of the Extremadura region of Spain') in summer and its extreme cold in winter: 'comienza en fresco y acaba en yelo, y su calor acaba en fuego; pueblo extremado' (397) ('begins in cool and ends in ice, and its heat ends in fire; extreme region'). The erotically-charged scene (with its evocation of the goblet of the Song of Songs) is further enhanced by Justina's imagined empathy with the girl's mistress who, she speculates, must be waiting for her 'con el frío de la calentura' (397) ('with the cold of the fever'), suggestive indirectly, of sexual arousal. Indeed, the reciprocity of erotic interplay evoked by the alleviating-mitigating, healing water is made more explicit in her reference to the girl's relieving her mistress's cold fever 'con ropa que le sobraba a ella' (397) ('with clothes that were surplus to her!'), further heightened in turn by the subtle evocation of an amorous triangle, as Justina enjoys the idea that the girl kept her mistress waiting on her (Justina's) account.

<sup>41</sup>MM 466 'sirvienta que tenía, entre otras, la obligación de llevar el agua a la casa ('a female servant whose task, among others, was to take water to the home').

Prior to taking her readers on a grand tour of the city as seen from her perspective, Justina expresses her desire to see freely, that is from a distance and free from 'picos' (394) ('pecks' or 'beaks'). What precisely Justina means by this becomes clear in the course of her guided tour of Leon. She wants the freedom to express her essential (female) self, her 'voluntad' ('will', 'desire') free of reference to the other that is masculine, and she expresses this in monetary 'more or less' terms, employed elsewhere in the novel to express her balanced female perspective:

quise ver libremente, sin costas, sin echar sisa en voluntad ajena ni pagar alcabala de la propia, y para esto era propio ver de lejos y guardarme de picos. (394)

I wanted to see freely, without costs, and without exacting tribute on another's desire or paying tax on my own. And so it was right for me to see from a distance and protect myself from others' tongues.

The status of León cathedral as a symbol of the female Shekhinah figure (recalling the jugs at the fountain) is made clear to the reader when Justina tells us that not only does it look like a glass cup or basin of a fountain as other churches do, 'sino que es una taza de vidrio que se puede beber por ella' (398: my emphasis) ('but it *is* a glass cup') by means of which one can drink through her.<sup>42</sup> The sheer profusion of female symbols makes Justina's intention almost self-evident. In encountering the Cathedral she has her climatic encounter with the Eternal Feminine itself. She focusses on the door of the church which is 'notablemente envejecida' (398) ('noticeably aged') compared to the rest of the cathedral, and this is understandable, she comments in a conversational tone, because, after all, 'las viejas gastan más de boca que de ninguna

<sup>42</sup>The various descriptions of León Cathedral as a (female) symbol of divine immanence (Shekhinah/Malkuth): the 'palace of the Virgin Mary', 'Kingdom of God on Earth', 'The Celestial City on Earth' unite in the central figure of the Virgen Blanca (White Virgin) adorning the main door of the Cathedral, named La Pulchra (The Beautiful Woman). Jesus Fernandez del Hoyo, *Comprender la Catedral: Aproximación Estética a la Catedral de León* (León: Ediciones Leonesas, n.d.). Cf. Catherine Davies, 'The Return to the Mother Cathedral, A Stranger in No Man's Land: Rosalía de Castro Through Julia Kristeva', *Neophilologus*, 79 (1995), 63-81: 'The Cathedral is a dark, womb-like inner space...' (p.66); 'The poem describes a journey to a sacred place, then, on two levels: to the Cathedral, certainly, but also back to the Mother and into the self' (p.70).

otra parte, en especial cuando están afeitadas' (398) ('old women wear out the mouth more than any other part of the body, especially if they are made up'). The mouth-door of the cathedral, she tells us, is old and worn, out of sheer annoyance at seeing so many 'caperuzas' (the pointed hoods of the ostentatiously pious) and so few 'devotos' (faithful'). The symbols here of the mouth and the door seem to be a clear reference to the tenth sefirah, the Shekhinah. Justina next focusses the reader's attention on the cloister of the church, and manipulates her words so that there is no doubt in the reader's mind that she is highlighting the distinctly female associations of the name(s). She does this by pretending that she is not sure of the right word 'hay una claustra o calostra, no sé cómo se llama' (404) ('there is a cloister [or womb] or a colostrum [that is, the mother's first milk after parturition], I'm not sure what the name is') and, also, by choosing the feminine gender of the words over their more usual masculine form, a strategy she has employed elsewhere in the text to harmonize the (outer) form with (inner) meaning, or to give prominence to the feminine in her discourse.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>See, for example, pp. 236, 244, 272, 275, 331, 385, 595. Cf. Damiani, *Francisco López de Úbeda*, p.119. It has been noted (e.g., Luce Irigaray, 'Linguistic Sexes and Genders', in *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, pp. 68-74) that the grammatical gender of nouns reflect values applied generally to gender roles in a given culture at a given time — for example 'moon' is feminine in Spanish and masculine in German, and 'sun' is masculine in Spanish and feminine in German. Justina, like Irigaray, seems to be drawing to the readers' attention that the gender imperatives imposed by a culture on men and women are reflected, albeit inconsistently, in the language, and that just as gender-related modes of behaviour can be freed from such limitations, so, too, can the language in which they find form. With this in mind, the way in which Justina makes much of the interaction and relationships between and among, for example, her various writing tools — the black (feminine) ink-stain on the (masculine) white paper which was made by the (feminine) ink from the (masculine) inkpot as a result of the (masculine) hair on the end of her (feminine) pen — seems to relativise any superficial (arbitrary) polarity, and reinforce their underlying (necessary) relatedness. In keeping with Irigaray's concern with giving prominence to the issue of difference between sexed subjectivities, Justina, makes much of distinguishing between Mr. Inkpot and Mrs. Quill while showing their interconnectedness. The famous poem by Heine about the love of a (masculine) fir-tree for a (feminine) palm-tree exploits grammatical gender to articulate the male-female relationship in very much the way that is characteristic of Justina's style (and, as we have seen, of Goethe's):

Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam  
Im Norden auf kahler Höh.  
Ihn schläfert; mit weißer Decke  
Umhüllen ihn Eis und Schnee.

Er träumt von einer Palme,  
Die, fern im Morgenland,  
Einsam und schweigend trauert  
Auf brennender Felsenwand.

(A fir-tree stands alone in the north on a bare height. He is sleepy; ice and snow envelop him with a white blanket. He dreams of a palm-tree who, far away in the east, grieves alone and silent on a burning wall of rock.)

Paradoxically, although the Spanish word for 'cloister' can be either masculine or feminine, in its secondary meaning of 'maternal womb' or 'matrix', it takes the masculine gender only. The incomplete church itself is referred to as a symbol of everlasting love of God, the ambiguity of the phrase suggesting, as in English, both God's love and human love of God: 'la iglesia que ha años que está comenzada a hacer por amor de Dios, y porque no se acabe tan buen amor, no se acaba la obra' (404-5) ('the church that has been begun to be built for years through love of God [or God's love] and because such good love never ends, the work never ends'). Justina interprets the half-paved patio of the cloister as articulating the transformative power of the Goddess as medium or half, symbolic of the promise of divine wholeness and love as inevitably compensating for the partial destructiveness of natural process: 'porque aquella piedra la desmoronaba el agua y a pocos años se volviera de piedra en arena' (404) ('for the water crumbled the stone and in a few years the stone became sand'). The fecund array of female properties linking her descriptions of the sights and monuments of León culminates in a return to earthly reality — to the Wise Old Woman (la Sotadera).

Irigaray identifies male clichés about women's psychology (envy of men and of each other, the tendency to talk too much, etc.) as inevitable symptoms of the conditions in which women's status as residue, waste is given. Such clichéd misogynistic versions of their psychology would, in fact, indicate 'drives without any possible representatives or representations'.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Justina deconstructs and transforms male clichés such as envy in women, exposing it as a symptom of woman's condition in culture, rather than an inherently female trait, for female envy is revealed as desire born of an acute sense of lack in patriarchal culture. Male bias, for example — their tendency to think in either-or terms — is exposed in her recounting the tale/myth of Blandina who, seeing the male parrot's splendid plumage and colours

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Heine, ed. and trans. with introduction by Peter Branscombe (Hammondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967, p.29).

<sup>44</sup>Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp.189.

asks Apollo or Jupiter (or whoever the weekly God happens to be!) to transform her into a parrot. As a consequence, Blandina — a name which, in its connotations of softness echoes the sickly-sweet, man-made woman — is, consequently, neither a woman nor a parrot-man, but becomes a 'mujer apapagayada o papagayo amujerado' (359) ('either 'parroted woman *or* womaned parrot'), who ends up speaking as a parrot during the day and as a woman at night'. Justina exposes the pathologising effect of the patriarchal imaginary on a woman's sense of self, and therefore on *both* the figure she cuts in the world *and* her female voice, for unable to be a woman *and* have her own voice — that is, project an ego-identity in culture, as the image of the colourful parrot suggests — she is reduced to being a woman-parrot, a nagging, chattering, in other words ineffectual, mindlessly mimicking, bird in a cage. As a result, realising she is trapped, Blandina pleads with the all-powerful Jupiter to undo what he has done, so that she can choose to have skirts and be free rather than sport the colourful borrowed plumage with its attendant imprisonment. Justina re-inscribes this particular male cliché by inserting herself as a new model of femaleness, by asserting that she, unlike Blandina, does not need Jupiter's, nor any other 'drunk's' intervention for that matter, in order to satisfy her own desires. She absolutely rejects the either-or imperative and asserts that she has: '*juntamente galas y colores de papagayo y libertad de andar y hablar como mujer*' (360: my emphasis) ('*both* adornments *and* colours of the parrot *and* liberty to roam *and* to speak as a woman'). She asserts her right to the self-satisfaction of all her desires as the only route to her assumption of *both* identity in discourse *and* in the public sphere; and to be able to 'paint her own face', as she puts it, and make herself a real-royal-divine parrot (360). The making of her own identity, of a speaking female figure, is linked to the notion of a female house of language,<sup>45</sup> or in Justina's terms a girlfriend's shop (360) where she can buy the colours (white and red) with which to make herself up. She reveals female envy to be a symptom of a woman's cultural lack of a means of true self-expression, and this

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<sup>45</sup>Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*, p.135: Whitford indicates that when Irigaray talks about woman's identity, she is alluding to 'the discursive articulation of an ontological category ... the construction of a "house of language".'

revelation becomes the very antidote to such self-destructive tendencies. Similarly indulging — earlier in the novel — in debunking male myths, Justina, having been abducted by the band of students, and aware that 'yo no era la primera robada ni forzada del mundo' (291) ('that I was not the first abducted and forced woman in the world'), invokes the myth of the damsel-in-distress figure of the chivalric romance whose brothers come to her rescue, and in a gesture of re-coding confirms that her aggressors well knew that as far as her relatives were concerned 'mi rapto y deshonor había de ser vengado con las lanzas de copos y espadas de barro' (291) ('my abduction and dishonour was to be avenged with cloth lances and clay swords'). Her clear-eyed cynicism in respect of male, indeed 'macho', ideology, is made abundantly clear.

The male imaginary is structured, in Irigaray's view, by the single standard, the phallus, according to which everything and everyone (especially women) have to 'measure up'. To counteract the one-sidedness of this outlook, she claims that women and men are, in fact, ontologically incommensurable; they cannot, except by reduction of one sex to the other, be measured — as greater or lesser approximations of the One<sup>46</sup>. In her theorizing of gender, therefore, and in an attempt to posit a different (female) mode of apprehending the world, she problematizes the issue of measure with a compensatory concern for quality and difference, gender-marked as female, by way of an alternative mode of valuation. This alternative — female — mode of valuation emphasising quality and the appreciation of qualitative difference is most effectively and comically drawn to our attention in the description of Justina's father who dies by being struck on the head by a half-measure at the hands of a customer, just when he was in the act of giving him short measure of grain by making up the measurement with chaff and straw ('granzones'). In a comic re-statement of the commonplace 'how you live, so shall you die', Justina comments 'en el medio celestín pecó y allí penó' (221) ('in the half-measure he sinned, and there he suffered his punishment'). The sexual connotations of the description of this whole episode, in particular the suggestion that Justina as his 'hija obediente' (221) ('obedient daughter') is potentially

<sup>46</sup>Luce Irigaray, *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. by Margaret Whitford (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p.96. See, too, Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*, pp. 209-10, Note 6.



open to exploitation by her father for both his (and his customers') sexual satisfaction, leave the reader in no doubt about the links being made between the phallus and the fixation on measurement:

Mi padre, en lo que siempre ponía mucho cuidado, era en esto de echar polvoraduce de granzones al medir la cebada, según y como nos lo notificó el día de la erección mesonil. Un día me mandó cargar la mano algo más de lo acostumbrado. (220-1)

One thing in which my father took a great deal of care was in throwing a sweet sauce of chaff (the verb 'echar un polvo' is slang for 'to have an an orgasm') when measuring the barley, exactly as he had notified us women of the house on the day of the inn's erection. One day he ordered me to load my hand rather more than usual.

And just in case the connection is missed by the less attentive reader, we are told that her father's shroud was a source of embarrassment to Justina and the object of general laughter at his funeral: 'por ir rota a ciertas partes y vésele el cuerpo a tarazones' (222) ('as it was torn in certain places and one could see his body in parts') and some men thought that she and her mother had buried him 'con el rasero en la mano' (221) ('with the thick cylindrical stick, used for levelling measures in his hand'). Not only is his obsession with measured quantity seen to be pathological — her father dies 'sin gastar un comino en su *enfermedad*' (221 my emphasis) ('without spending a penny on his *illness*') — it is an 'illness' which is not unique to her father; on the contrary, we are told that there is a surplus of both the 'medio celemín' (221) ('half-measure') and the 'rasero' (222) ('cylindrical stick') in the inn; a fact that is reflected in the men's veiled suggestion that the women were eager to bury, that is, rid themselves of at least one of them, and implicitly to reduce the surplus. Their father's murderer's threat to denounce the mother as the murderer of her husband if she does not acquiesce in the cover-up, corroborates this interpretation.

Indeed her father's rigid fixation on (implicitly phallic) measurement is so pathological that it is presented as flirting with the goddess of Death; with Thanatos as

complementary aspect to the flow of life of the divine-feminine, or Eros. Justina accuses her father's male cronies of being idiots and fools (222) for thinking that such a 'rasero negro y carcomido' (222) ('black and worm-eaten rasero/phallus') was as such a 'bastón de capitán' (222) ('a captain's mast'). The symbol of Justina's father's authority — the phallus — is transformed by the (female) figure of Death and, reduced to its essential material state, thereby losing its authority and power over her/them. The idea of death as loss of patriarchal potency is re-stated by Justina as being a loss of very little, and one amply compensated for by her, her sisters, and her mother. The father's death provokes little pity and pain (224) and his death/loss as *little*, becomes the mother-figure's life-affirming *more*:

ya era muerto, lo perdido no era mucho, lo que él había de hacer en casa nosotras lo sabíamos de coro, y aún mi madre vivía de sobra. (225)

now he was dead, what was lost was not much, what he had to do at home we women knew it by heart, and even my mother lived more than ever.

The link with the Goddess as 'medio' or half-way route to redeeming wholeness is clear in the epitaph on the tomb of her father 'príncipe de los mesoneros' (227) ('prince of innkeepers') which suggests that her father has been finished, and completed, by the half-measure. And Death claims her just privilege and jurisdiction precisely in the middle of his 'summo gusto' (227), at the height of his pleasure. Death is portrayed as the divine bringer of justice and wholeness, the divine-female figure that he neglected and sinned against, for: 'Que a quien por medio pecó, Le acabe un medio, es muy justo' (227) ('For it is very just that he who sinned by half is finished/completed by half'). Her father is accused of having challenged Death — in the form of the whorish woman with whom he is unfaithful to his wife — who gets the better of him (literally takes the measure of him).

The importance of what Irigaray calls the 'lost sense of touch' (a loss implicit in the patriarchal obsession with abstract measurement) that must be rediscovered and revalued in order to mediate the fundamental relationship with the Mother and with Nature, reaches its fullest expression in the novel on the occasion of Justina's bridal preparations for her wedding to Lozano in the final chapter of the novel entitled 'De la Boda del Mesón' (729) ('Of the Wedding at the Inn'). There are no fewer than ten references to 'tocar' ('to touch, or arrange a woman's hair or headdress') in the second short paragraph of this chapter to describe the way in which Justina's (female) neighbours quarrel among themselves, each insisting on 'touching/arranging' her in her own way, until her godmother (her 'madrina') enters and insists that they have no right to touch her (adorn her head) in her absence. The scene suggests not only Justina's own temporary lack of self-determination and of a tangible form of self-expression at this stage in her development, but, in general, women's lack of real power as individuals in culture, reduced to indulging in miniature power-struggles and squabbling over trivia: their repressed creative urges reduced to vying even for such culturally-constrained, if tangible means of self-expression. Justina, being prepared for the archetypal role of Bride, is depicted as an apparently silent martyr as she is subjected to having her hair 'tocada ... al gusto de muchos' (731) ('touched/arranged ... according to many people's pleasure/taste'). The right to be a 'persona', a person in the legal sense, equated here with the very notion of speaking — if only in protest at being poked in the temple by a hairpin, at being 'pinned in' — is denied Justina the Bride: 'había de callar, porque diz que las novias no han de abrir la boca ... como si la novia no fuese persona el día que se casa' (731) ('I had to keep silent, because they say brides must not open their mouth ... as if the bride were not a person the day she marries'). The patriarchal matriarch embodied by the authoritarian 'madrina' ('godmother') who enters to undo *their* work and establish *her* authority, depicts the culturally legitimized form of female power. For she proceeds to arrange and hem Justina in with the pins that she has brought from her own house. In other words, she pins Justina in, makes a 'martyr' of her, and thereafter silences all her attempts at self-

expression, to the extreme point of forbidding her to open her mouth even when she has been jabbed in the temple with one of her pins (731). Justina's reference to herself in this 'touching/adorning the bride' ceremony first as being 'as touched as Pandora' suggests her disempowerment, her (temporary) loss of divine status; and secondly as being touched as if she were a 'portapaz' (a silver object touched by the faithful in the church to acquire peace) suggests her status as an object or talisman; and both also evoke her status as objective source of others' pleasure and (spiritual) benefit. What liberates Justina from martyrdom at the hands of her godmother whom she refers to as 'diablo' ('devil'), is the appearance of another female figure, the wife of the 'corregidor' ('magistrate', literally, 'corrector'), whose intervention, unlike the godmother's, is in harmony with God's wishes ('quiso Dios') and (divine) justice, as her name—Justez de Guevara—and her role (as wife of the 'corrector') suggest. The upshot of the mediating power of the divine-feminine-as-Justice is that Justina is freed to 'tocarme a mi gusto, que era muy justo' (731) ('to touch/adorn myself as I please, which was very just'), and her female neighbours, in solidarity with her and in (justifiable) revenge for the godmother's attempt to disempower them, incorporate Justina into their midst and in so doing liberate Justina from her hands. The effects of this cultural act, this expression of female solidarity, is that the patriarchal godmother is excluded from the newly-created female discourse-economy and thereby disempowered, for, although she continues to pay lip service ('for the sake of peace') to the godmother's warnings, Justina literally 'does as she pleases' (732).<sup>47</sup>

Women, Irigaray argues, are essentially free in this sense; they are nomadic, non-owned legally; their 'living house' should move with them; they need to escape from the properties in which they have been legally confined by the paternal genealogy.<sup>48</sup> One of Justina's most endearing features is her sheer zest for life, her

<sup>47</sup>The godmother's status as diabolical or denatured Woman is underlined by the fact that she is so wide and fat that she cannot pass through the doors (731). She remains outside, without access to divine female discourse, her female voice ineffectual, unable to bridge the gap. Cf. Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 64: 'The only diabolical thing about women is their lack of a God and the fact that, deprived of God, they are forced to comply with models that do not match them, that exile, double, mask them, cut them off from themselves and from one another'.

<sup>48</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Parler n'est jamais neutre*, p. 266.

insatiable desire to do as she pleases, to experience life for and as herself, a desire, as she makes clear, which becomes all the more pronounced in proportion to the restrictions and oppression she suffers. It becomes clear that Justina is out to experiment and test the validity of the cultural values which have been passed on to her and which she, initially at least, has absorbed like a sponge. We know that she is precocious, and bright; that she has read the books that were left at her parents' inn by the 'humanist' who was passing through; that she has heard and assessed her parents' lessons and advice; and that she listens and learns from the people who stay at the inn. In fact, Justina's mind is a formidable instrument which seems to be permanently in top form, analysing, questioning, assessing, drawing on multiple points of view from the full breadth of her cultural panorama, and anticipating myriad possible responses in a penetratingly differentiating attempt to exhaust, as it were, its entire wealth of material. Indeed, it has been pointed out that *La Pícaro Justina* seems, as a result, more like a doctoral treatise than a novel.<sup>49</sup>

But she herself makes clear in the course of her (hi)story that the knowledge she acquires during her time as 'mesonera' ('woman of the inn') in her parents' inn through reading, listening, and observing — impressive as it undoubtedly is as evidenced by her depth of cultural awareness<sup>50</sup> — is, nevertheless, limited, as she herself acknowledges, by her own lack of autonomy; she speaks of her life then as 'mesonera con tutores' ('a woman with tutors') living as she was in someone else's shadow, her parents', her mother's (and implicitly in the shadow of patriarchy). It is implied, too, that the whole question of knowledge as truth or falsity is not a cut-and-dried matter, but a process, a question of degrees of truth, which must be individually experienced. So, for example, she visits León because she is curious to see 'cuántos grados de verdad me trataban los leoneses que posaban en mi mesón' (357) ('how many degrees of truth the leonese men who were staying at my inn had treated me to'). It is clear that, for Justina, it is real lived experience that contributes to her own

<sup>49</sup>E.g., see Angel Valbuena y Prat, *La Novela Picaresca Española* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1968), p.56.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. Bruno M. Damiani, *Francisco López de Úbeda* (Boston: Twayne, 1977), p.133 for 'Justina's literary sophistication'.

sense of what is true or false, her own individual (female bodily) experience of the truth (or reality) of her life, her own ability to evaluate. Such freedom to experience for herself is implicitly the means of her valid, that is distinctly female, entry into discourse. She needs to experience-for-herself and not live vicariously and allow some man '[que] haga salivas por mi cuenta' (358) ('to make saliva on my account'). This sentence also suggests that neither does she want to be the mere object of male (sexual) desire, in that they salivate because of her. Justina learns through her own experience to question, and thereby expose and relativize, apparently universal, god-given, laws, truths or myths, and to insert her own truth-reality, her book, her own point of view, as the other (female) half of the whole picture.

Justina makes it unambiguously clear to the reader that her entry into León — and indirectly into discourse and to a sense of herself as divine and whole, in other words, with a robust ego-identity — is via the maternal-feminine. This is made unambiguously plain when she alludes to the city itself in terms of a symbolic goddess-figure, as the head of her mother Mansilla: a clear allusion to a Great Mother figure — the Goddess Bast who, according to mythology, had the head of a lion and the body of a woman, and is sometimes depicted as a cat. The route she takes is indirect, and full of female symbolism; in Irigarayan terms, expressive of the morphological marks of the female body: curvaceous, luxuriant, and with overlapping boundaries.<sup>51</sup> Some of the most striking examples of indirection involving threshold-margin imagery comes in Justina's descriptions of her entry into the city itself, and of her highly personal and detailed tour of the city and its monuments. She adds to the symbolic representation of the feminine by referring to the two famous rivers surrounding León as

una corona de claros y cristalinos ríos, adornados de varios y frondosos árboles pregoneros de una victoriosa e ilustrísima cabeza.  
(530)

<sup>51</sup>It has been argued similarly that the landscape in *Wilhelm Meister* is likewise symbolic. See Jeremy Adler "Die Sonne Stand noch hoch ..." Zur Landschaft und Bildung in "Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre", in *Johann Wolfgang Goethe*, ed. by H.L. Arnold (Munich: Text und Kritik), pp.222-39.

a crown of clear and crystaline rivers, adorned with various and leafy trees proclaiming a victorious and most illustrious head.

It is a crown, moreover, which is of no less value than other crowns, she claims. And to make clear the symbolic significance of the long, winding, indirect, and amenable route that she takes to enter the city, she tells us that 'Por la ribera de uno destes ríos, alta, llana y apacible fui caminando para entrar en la ciudad' (530) ('I went walking along the banks of one of these rivers, which was high, flat and peaceful, in order to enter the city'). On the outskirts of Leon and preparing to enter the city, Justina, instead of returning to the inn beside Saint Ann's gate, goes along a street that the Leonese call 'Renueva' ('Renewal') that takes Justina into the city; a name which, with its connotations of revival, new beginnings, and new shoots, in the context clearly suggests the process of acquiring a new (female) identity along a different (female) route. The verb 'renueva' is also used in Spanish to connote the idea of remembering or opening up old wounds, and is clearly linked with the suffering that re-membering entails. In typical Justinian style, she speculates that they must have given the street this name because of their intention to renew the houses in the street, but that since there was no 'bolsa' (518) ('purse or bag') the name was given 'for when they would renew the houses': 'Ya no le falta todo, que tras el nombre le vendrá el hecho, si Dios quiere' (518) ('It does not lack everything, for after the name will come the fact, god-willing'). She indicates here the transformative power of language, and its innate (God-like) power to bring about that which it signifies. Although the houses in the street were still old, its name held the promise of renewal. She describes the street as long and narrow, but despite this:

cupimos por ella yo y mi borrico, que no fue poco, según iba ancho de ver que entraba en ciudad y en poder de quien le sabía bien tañer. (518)

my little donkey and I managed to get through it, which was no small thing, as it (the donkey) was proud to find itself entering the city in the power of someone one who knew how to handle it.

The importance of Renueva ('Renewal') Street is that it takes Justina, the competent rider, and the reader from the 'arrabales', or outskirts of her own myth to the centre. She addresses the reader-friend at the end of the second part of Book Two, suggesting that (indirectly alluding to her being always two steps ahead of her male reader) he might be tired of listening to the outskirts of her story, and urging him to wait here and to let her know when he is 'de aután' (518) that is, up-to-date: 'que me verás ciudadana y en el mesón, que es mi centro, y quizá te dará más gusto' (518) ('for you will see me citizen and in the inn that is my centre, and perhaps it will give you more pleasure').

This portrayal of the maternal-feminine as image of the life-giving divine is all the more striking for its being juxtaposed with a depiction of the male imaginary's relationship with the divine. Justina alludes to the Monastery of the Knights of Saint James with its unfinished cloister and (unfinished) steep staircase. She speculates that the illustrious knights had clearly no time to finish the cloister (a feminine symbol in its secondary meaning of womb) of their monastery nor the adjoining steep steps which she refers to as Jacob's ladder (528) because they were too busy surrounding and 'cloistering' enemy cities and kingdoms — an aggressive activity which caused them not to feel concerned about the ascension of stairs that are difficult to climb, being themselves:

gente que escala fuertes con tal valor, que si en las nubes hubiera  
muros de enemigos, por ellos rompieran y en el más alto alcázar  
pusieran su real bandera adornada con la espada que da a España  
renombre famoso y blasón insigne. (530)<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Cf. Irigaray's analysis of the patriarchal order as being based on the worlds of the beyond and, hence, lacking appreciation of the real world, so that it 'draws up its often bankrupt blueprints on the basis of hypothetical worlds. (Luce Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, p. 27).



people who scale forts with such valor that, if there were enemy walls in the clouds, they would break through them and put their royal flag — adorned with the sword that gives Spain its great renown and most notable coat of arms — in the highest palace.

The implication of this creation by Justina of a new (female) symbol for the (one-sided) patriarchal imaginary — the half-finished cloisters and stairs — is that patriarchy's neglect of, and refusal to acknowledge, the divine status of the maternal feminine that watches over the earthly, material world has, as a direct consequence, that they (the men) lose touch with reality, seeing enemies on all sides (even in the sky!) and going to extreme (pathological) lengths to satisfy their male drive to conquer and subdue; a mindset which is exemplified in imperial Spain's historical relationship with the Other.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, it is suggested that even the walls<sup>54</sup> of the divine palace in heaven are a legitimate target for their absurd and destructive expansionist urges. This aggressive image of the knights of Saint James breaking down<sup>55</sup> the walls of the 'enemy' defence stands in marked contrast to Justina's gentle, indirect, and subtle penetration of the city walls of León: she is the balmy breeze (the 'céfiro', 'sefirot') that penetrates and touches all things, as the introductory poem to this very Number describes her (523-4). With the appropriate self-irony that is wholly lacking in the absurd, quixotic crusades of the knights of Santiago, Justina enacts a comic version of the crusading knights, entering the city 'caballera en mi borrica' (525) ('a female knight mounted on my little donkey'), her female voice articulating life and pleasure, rather than death and destruction.

Justina's *entereza*, the integrity that she so tenaciously holds on to and fights for, is, as the word suggests, not her virginity in the unduly restricted, partial, male view (Trigaray's 'sexual in the strict sense': in other words, an exchange value between

<sup>53</sup>For a thorough analysis of patriarchy's relationship with the feminine, particularly in the context of imperial Spain's persecution of the Other, see Ruth A. El Saffar, *Rapture Encaged: The Suppression of the Feminine in Western Culture*, pp.57-79.

<sup>54</sup>J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, pp. 362-63 (p.363): the wall is 'a mother-symbol' (as in the *Song of Songs*).

<sup>55</sup>The verb 'romper' ('to break, destroy') is frequently used in the novel in relation to male activity.

men) but rather her 'fidelity to her identity and female genealogy'.<sup>56</sup> Water is perhaps the most pervasive symbol in the novel of female identity as expressing such fidelity to a female genealogy. While it is subtly woven into the whole texture of Justina's narrative, the metaphor of water-as-female-genealogy is most keenly elaborated in key moments of Justina's journey of self-discovery. Significantly, following her self-initiation into the mysteries of her own sexuality and her own body in the chapter entitled 'Del afeite mal empleado' ('Of the badly applied make-up'), Justina's face (in its blushes) betrays her secrets to the older, more experienced, woman.<sup>57</sup> Exposed, and 'corrida' ('embarrassed') as a result, Justina washes her face and neck in a jug of water which 'iba mansamente murmurando de mi sencillez y de mis enemigas por entre unos amenos y deleitosos sauces' (364-5) ('went tamely murmuring my simplicity and my female enemies in amongst some delicious and delightful willows'). The emphasis is on the mysterious sensuousness and sensuality of the water (female) to whom she entrusts 'the secrets that so affected (literally, touched) her honour' (365). The water, she tells us, symbolizes fidelity, fidelity that is to a female genealogy, for the reciprocity between Justina and the water is emphasised 'Prometiómelo, y creíla' (365) ('she promised it to me, and I believed her'). The suggestion here is that both the water and Justina are exchanging secret mysteries. Justina entrusts her secrets to the water and the water in turn to her. The water neither keeps secrets nor discloses them, apparently — a mystery which not even Erastus understood, but which she, Justina, says is easy to understand, for:

el agua no tiene sujeto sólido para conservar la memoria de los secretos, pero eslo para que nadie los conozca en ella, porque a nada da asiento ni firmeza ... no conserva el agua los escritos, mas hace los secretos infinitos. (365)

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<sup>56</sup> Luce Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, p.19.

<sup>57</sup>To whom Justina gives various names, including 'la nueva Celestina' (364) ('the new Celestina') with which fictional mother-figure she shares a homocrotic desire for the younger, less experienced woman.

the water does not have a solid subject to conserve the memory of the secrets, but is it so that noone knows them in her, for it gives neither seat nor firmness to anything ... water does not conserve writings, but makes the secrets infinite.

Female genealogy, the connectedness of the mother-daughter line and of the Divine Mother-Daughter relationship, is made explicitly clear in that the water communicates with her, laughs with her and Justina suspects that she — the water — was to be noble and true to her, for 'el agua fue símbolo de la fidelidad' (365) ('water was a symbol of fidelity'): 'por la que guarda en tornar al mar, de do nació, a pagar el tributo que debe' (365) ('because of its fidelity in returning to the sea from whence it was born, to pay the tribute that it owes'). So in touch are they with one another, that, at Justina's request, the water bestows her favour on Justina by stopping for a brief moment so that:

[yo] remirase en ella y en sus cristales mi rostro y mis mejillas, renovadas como alas de águila anciana, la cual, para renovar las plumas, pico y alas, las moja en agua viva, después de tenerlas cálidas con el fervoroso sol y concitado movimiento (365).

In her and in her crystals [I] could look again at my face and checks, renewed like the wings of an ancient eagle which, in order to restore her feathers, beak and wings, wets them in living water, after having warmed them in the impassioned sun and with the exhilaration of movement.

Justina renews herself in the waters of her female genealogy. It is not until she wets her cares (she dissolves them by soaking them in the water) that her tongue is freed and she begins to talk liberally: 'parlaba más que una picaza' (366). In this way, the renewed contact with water stimulates the flow of Justina's discourse/language and she is able to hold her own with the other women. The implications of this scene are that Justina now cuts a dashing figure among her female fellow-pilgrims, who no

longer speak nor laugh but eat with their eyes the darts on her skirt and the fringes of her veil, their eyes being teeth and their envy stomach (366).

Justina, like Goethe's Philine, lives in the waters of life, in a fundamentally aesthetic world in which all 'things' in their own individual way are playful at heart:

En su manera, todas cuantas cosas hay en el mundo son retozonas y tienen sus ratos de entretenimiento: la tierra, cuando se desmorona, retoza de holgada; el agua se ríe, los peces saltan, las sirenas cantan, los perros y leones crecen retozando, y la mona, que es más parecida al hombre, es retozona; el perro, que es más su amigo, es juguetón; el elefante, que se llega más que todos al hombre, los primeros días de luna retoza con las flores y dice requiebros a la luna. (537-8)

In their own way, all the things of the world are at play and have their times of entertainment: the earth, when it crumbles, frolics with delight; the water laughs, the fish jump, the sirens sing, the dogs and lions grow up in play, and the (female) monkey, the most similar to man, enjoys herself; the dog, more his friend, is playful; the elephant, closer than any of them to man, gambols with the flowers on the first days of the moon and pays her amorous compliments.

The passage implies that life (and the world as its symbol) by its very nature, though finite and corruptible, is a self-sustaining whole. The appropriate (and natural) response to it, is to enjoy it, at a playful distance — a distance that, in turn, gestures towards the infinite, if only for finite periods of time. Further, this holistic view of its essential playfulness links nature, via the animal world, to man (or rather men) and men, in turn, to the feminine and woman — of which the moon is the age-old symbol — in a gesture of amorous exchange. The value of such delightful, playful pleasure she sums up ('and completes') as follows, citing the prudent and discerning female voice of doña Oliva,<sup>58</sup> who 'libra en el gusto salud, refrigerio y vida' (538) ('who places her health, relief, and life in pleasure').

<sup>58</sup>Footnote 21, p.538, notes that the Golden Age text known as *Doña Oliva*, the true title of which is *Nueva filosofía de la naturaleza del hombre* (Madrid, 1587), was written by Miguel Sabuco and attributed to his daughter Olivia Sabuco de Nantes. The work postulates that health is rooted in joy and pleasure.

The words of Doña Oliva constitute a valuable addition to Justina's procession of female figures and voices of wisdom and discretion. In drawing on female symbols and figures, Justina is articulating the mediating voice of the Goddess, and it is precisely by means of her own fun-loving and irreverent style, that she throws into relief the patriarchal imagination which in its rigid and censorious stance vehemently condemns Justina as 'hereja' ('woman heretic') and fails to recognize in her (and, implicitly, in woman) a faithful image of God in the world, and intermediary between man and God. Able to speak freely (now that the priest conducting a guided tour of the monastery cannot overhear her) she makes further clear, if characteristically veiled, reference to the failure of the patriarchal imagination to recognize the eternal feminine as the medium, or way, to knowing God, and (implicitly) its failure to give due recognition to the woman in culture: 'estos hombres del tiempo viejo, si dan en ignorantes, piensan que no hay medio entre herejía y Ave María' (538) ('these men of the old times, if they are determined to be ignorant, think that there is no middle-way between heresy and Ave María'). This whole Number ('De la mirona figante' ['Of the (female) spying looker']) is replete with female symbols and images which speak both of the deprived status of the feminine and women in culture, and its unacknowledged link with the divine feminine, with the Shekhinah. Justina describes what lies just outside the city walls adjacent to her entrance, on the outskirts, prior to entering the city-gate, called Saint Ann, after Mary's mother. These include the bridge itself, the gate to the city, the poor quarter of Saint Ann adjacent to the gate; the hermitage of Saint Lazarus, compared by her to the temple of Ceres; the Goddess Angerona, patron saint of the dumb who speak; the joyful goddess Volupia; the Door of the Virtues; and the inn itself which is 'pegante con la misma puerta de Santa Ana' (387) ('right beside Saint Ann's gate itself'). She comments on Saint Ann's as the prostitutes' quarter, and this site, together with her reference to the nearby 'Rollo' ('hanging column') indirectly implicate men (and patriarchal abuse of women) in women's social destitution and marginalisation — suggested by her punning inference that men get rid of their wives by telling them to go to the devil ('ir al Rollo'). She speculates that the Leonese put

both 'culpa y pena' (386) ('guilt and punishment') — namely, the 'houses of pleasure' and the hanging column — in one place. That is to say, they rid themselves of both, by placing them at the door of the feminine, in spite of the fact that there is, as she so succinctly puts it, no 'pequé' ('I sinned') without 'pené' (386) ('I suffered'); but also 'no sin without phallus'. And to make the link with the Goddess explicit, Justina tells us that the third reason she has for staying at Saint Ann's inn is that nearby there was 'El Prado de Los Judíos' ('the Field of the Jews'), in reality a Garden, so that both the 'field' and the 'garden' evoke the Shekhinah via two of her central symbols. And the main reason for staying there, she explains, is that right beside the door of the inn there is the fountain that she compares to the Fountain of the Muses which has its source in Mount Helicon (388), the fountain she claims is known as 'La Regla' (The 'Rule' or 'Period').

In keeping with the discriminating style of her female voice, Justina's love for and marriage to Lozano (682) comes at the end of a process of testing individual suitors (in verbal exchange) until she finds one in whom she can 'believe'; an idea that in respect of other suitors takes the form of a refrain: 'No creo en el amor si ese es amor.' ('I don't believe in love if that is love'). Two kinds of suitors sum up the unsuitable suitors she interviews, Maximino de Umenos ('Maximum of Less') and the 'Pretensor Disciplinante' ('Flagellant Suitor') both of whom share a lack of wholeness and balance; one pretends he is 'more' and thereby reveals that he is 'less', and the other pretends he is less, while secretly thinking he is more. Justina indicates that the road to her heart leads to an understanding of her soul (her Anima). In other words, true love is the voice of the soul, and the language of Eros (including body language) is its medium, a language that she wishes the reader(s) to read and understand:

Pero quiero que me lean el alma y en ella un consejo digno de saber de todos ... y, en resolución, quiero enseñar la vereda por donde camina el corazón de una mujer, que quizá me echará bendiciones alguno de los muchos que andan este camino. (722)

But I want you/them to read my soul and in her a counsel worthy of knowing by all ... and, in resolution, I want to show the path along which the heart of a woman walks, for perhaps one or other of the many who walk this way will give me benedictions.

Justina tells the reader that few women surrender to the power of the passion of love or affection, for in women the passions of love are not only calm but slow and mitigated:

Es su amor fruta que no nace en ellas, y si nace, no madura, si no es con humanas diligencias de regalos, importunidades y servicios. Es como fruta, que a veces madura en paja, otras en pez y otras en arena, y si hubiera fruta que madurara en la bolsa, era la comparación nacida.  
(722)

Their love is fruit that is not born in them, and if it is born, it does not mature, unless as a result of human care and attention with gifts, persistent entreaties, and services. It is like fruit that sometimes matures in straw, sometimes in pitch and sometimes in sand, and if there was a fruit that matured in the bag the comparison would be perfect.

A woman, claims Justina, loves for three reasons. First, interest, the principle thing; for they have extremes of desires that diminish the imagination (723). Justina opens up the Spanish word for women, or ladies 'damas' so that it forms two words 'da más' meaning 'give more' (imperative) or '[she] gives more'. In other words, women have much to give, and yearn to be given much in return (723). Secondly, power; for they love to see a man subject to them, to see themselves with (god-like) sceptre over their lives and over their souls (724). And thirdly, persistent entreaties --- for we women are born to please and there is nothing more contrary to our nature than to leave someone discontented, or unsatisfied (725).

Significantly, despite Justina's propensity to talk a lot, when it comes to talking about how she fell for Lozano, her 'curador y defensor' (719) ('healer and

defender'), she is uncharacteristically short of words. Explaining to the reader how she fell for him (how he 'armed her' as she puts it): 'me miró y miréle y levantóse una miradera de todos los diablos' (719) ('he looked at me and I looked at him and our looking took on renewed intensity'). She explains that they were friends prior to falling in love, and they spoke together with plenty of 'noise and harmony', 'mas luego que le quise bien, nunca tuve palabras.' (719) ('as soon as I loved him well, I never had words'). Their harmonious looking at each other contrasts with her brothers' divisive gazes, so out of tune with her own inner feelings. Justina embraces Lozano's gaze ('me miró') ('he looked at me') (719) and harmoniously joins them both together in the one word: 'miréle' ('I-looked-at-him') (719). The rhetorical emphasis on the eyes and hands throughout the novel — on the reciprocity of sight and touch — becomes explicit here in relation to Cupid-Eros, the god of love, who 'condena a los parleros a que les saquen la lengua por los ojos y el corazón por las manos' (719) ('condemns talkers to stick out their tongue through their eyes and their heart through their hands'). This is the reason, Justina playfully imagines, that Cupid has two arrows, one for going through the heart and the other for going through the tongue. She speculates that true, inexpressible, love, as it does not express its abundant treasures in words, must, when it entered her soul, have emptied her soul of the air with which words are made, and put in its place (erotic) fire for burning hearts: 'Era fuego y queméme' (720) ('it was fire and I burnt myself'):

Díjome Lozano su cuidado, con tan pocas palabras y tan cortas, que daban bien a entender que más se hicieron para pensadas que para dichas ... Y si pocas razones manifestaron su cuidado, menores fueron las que sacaron mi consentimiento. (720)

Lozano told me his tender love with such few and short words that they seemed to have been made more for being thought than for being said ... and if few reasons manifested his love, fewer were those that drew my consent.



The discursive inexpressibility of true love — the amorous exchange — between humans clearly functions as a metonym for the ineffability of the love between Justina and the Goddess that binds the human and the divine by means of female genealogy.

The close parallel of Justina with the all-powerful, gentle, but penetrating voice of the goddess-figure — the balmy 'céfiro' ('zephyr-breeze-veil';<sup>59</sup> *ruh*: holy spirit) which corresponds to the sefirah Shekhinah's poetic veil, already alluded to in the abduction scene with Perro Grullo (304)<sup>60</sup> — is given full expression in the Number entitled 'De la mirona figante' ('Of the looker spy') (523-539) — in a poem constructed in the strict form of a series of rhetorical parallelisms (reflected in the repeated rhyme scheme between the first two and the second two stanzas). Each of the attributes of the balmy 'céfiro' ('breeze') — *ruh*, The Holy Spirit — is extended in the second half of the poem to Justina.

Esdrújulos sueltos con falda de rima

('Loose proparoxytones [i.e. lines stressed on antepenultimate syllable] with skirt of rhyme')

- 1 *Suele en el verano el blando céfiro*
- 2 *Hacer entre las yerbas varios círculos,*
- 3 *Entrase penetrando hasto lo íntimo,*
- 4 *Queriéndolas haber con los antípodas;*
- 5 *No pudiendo bajar, sube al empíreo,*
- 6 *No pudiendo subir torna a lo ínfimo;*
- 7 *Anda, vuelve y revuelve, y desde el ártico*
- 8 *Da vuelta general hasta el antártico.*
  
- 9 *El necio, cuando oye tal estrépito,*
- 10 *Teme como si fuera ruido bélico,*
- 11 *El sabio dice que es cosa utilísima,*

<sup>59</sup>NSOED, p.3759: [zephyr]: The west wind, especially as personified, or regarded as a god; a soft gentle breeze; a very light, soft, and fine fabric.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. Aída Beaupied, *Narciso Hermético*, p.45: 'La asociación viento/aliento es muy antigua: la conexión bíblica entre el viento y el aliento divino es de todos conocida, y es que tanto en árabe como en hebreo la palabra *ruh* significa al mismo tiempo 'aliento' y 'espíritu'. ('The association breeze/breath is very ancient: the biblical connection between wind and divine breath-spirit is well-known, and both in Arabic and Hebrew the word *ruh* means both 'breath' and 'spirit'.')

- 12 *Pues los terrestres, aéreos y acuátiles,*  
 13 *En él tienen contra el mal antídoto,*  
 14 *Gusto, regalo, esfuerzos, ánimo;*  
 15 *Sólo el enfermo dice ser mortífero*  
 16 *El dulce viento, a los sanos salutífero.*
- 17 *Así, Justina, hecha<sup>61</sup> un blando céfiro,*  
 18 *Con pies, ojos y lengua hace mil círculos,*  
 19 *Apodos da, que penetra hasta lo íntimo,*  
 20 *Sus ojos son zahorís de los antípodas:*  
 21 *Lo que encarece, súbelo al empíreo,*  
 22 *Lo que vitupera, abátelo a lo ínfimo,*  
 23 *Anda, vuelve, revuelve, y desde el ártico*  
 24 *No deja cosa intacta hasta el antártico.*
- 25 *Oyóla un necio y hizo tal estrépito,*  
 26 *Cual si resonar oyera rumor bélico,*  
 27 *Mas ella prueba ser cosa utilísima,*  
 28 *Trayendo a cuento (¿qué piensas?) los acuátiles,*  
 29 *Y concluye que las gracias son antídoto*  
 30 *Contra el daño, y en las penas ponen ánimo,*  
 31 *Que sólo un necio siente ser mortífero*  
 32 *Aquello que llama el cuerdo salutífero (523-24).*

- 1 In the summer the balmy breeze tends to  
 2 Make various circles among the grasses,  
 3 Enters penetrating into the innermost,  
 4 Wanting to discipline the antipodes;  
 5 When unable to descend, it goes up to the heavens,  
 6 When unable to ascend it returns to the lowest;  
 7 It goes, returns and returns again, and from the Arctic  
 8 Does a general turn to the Antarctic.
- 9 The fool, when he hears such a commotion,  
 10 Fears it as if it were the noise of war,

<sup>61</sup>MM:23: [hecha] 'se aplica a las cosas que ya han alcanzado su madurez o su desarrollo completo, o el punto debido.' ('applied to things that have reached their maturity, their full development, or desired point.')

11 The wise man says that it is a very profitable thing  
 12 For the creatures of earth, air, and water:  
 13 An antidote to evil in the form of  
 14 Pleasure, sensuous delight, endeavours, spirit;  
 15 Only the sick man says that the sweet breeze is deadly,  
 16 To healthy people it is health-giving.

17 Likewise, Justina, having become a gentle balmy breeze,  
 18 With feet, eyes and tongue makes a thousand circles,  
 19 She gives names, that penetrate to the innermost,  
 20 Her eyes are dowers of the Antipodes  
 21 What she enhances she raises to heaven,  
 22 What she vilifies she pulls down to the lowest,  
 23 She goes, returns and returns again, and from the Arctic  
 24 To the Antarctic leaves nothing untouched.

25 A fool heard her and made such a din,  
 26 As if he had heard resound a warlike tumult,  
 27 But she proves to be a most profitable thing,  
 28 Mentioning (guess what?) the creatures of the water,  
 29 And concludes that graceful witticisms are an antidote  
 30 To harm, and in the midst of suffering raise the spirit,  
 31 For only a fool considers death-dealing what is called  
 32 Wholesome life-giving health.

In the first two stanzas of the poem we have an eloquent rehearsal of the Shekhinah's essential attributes and functions, which in stanzas 3 and 4 are associated with Justina, indeed identified with her. The animating Spirit of the World is characterized by constant movement (ll. 2 and 7), mediating between the upper and the lower realms (ll. 5 and 6) and between the poles of earthly existence (ll. 7 and 8). The animating Spirit shares all of her attributes with Justina: for example, they both penetrate into the innermost (ll. 3 and 19); they are both antidotes to evil (ll. 12 and 29), and they both bring delight and health (ll. 14 and 16, 17 and 32). So close indeed is the parallel between the two figures, that Justina takes on qualities that are not explicitly ascribed to the animating Spirit, but which are implicitly divine. It is she, Justina, who is said

to have the divine power of naming things (l. 19) — a power that underlines her identification with Adam. And it is she who is able to divine that eminently female sphere, the waters (l. 20). The female voice is here the voice of divine Wisdom (l. 11) and compassion (ll. 15 to 16, 30 to 32); and both the disembodied Spirit and its earthly embodiment in Justina move in a fluid, circular, dynamic mode that embraces extremes.

Justina's relationship with the procession of major and minor female figures in the novel embodies her own growth and development, expressed in terms of her ever more clearly articulated, reciprocal mother-daughter relation with both the immanent and the transcendent aspects of her experience as a woman. Recourse to the aesthetic, poetic, mode of language to express the inner 'divine' life of feminine experience is by no means an isolated phenomenon in *La Pícara Justina*. In the next Chapter I shall endeavor to show that, as in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, aesthetic discourse is employed throughout the Spanish novel to give expression to the female voice.

CHAPTER V: An Analysis of the Style and Presentation of the Female Voice of the Shekhinah in *La Pícara Justina*

Soy otra diosa Sophía, reina de la elocuencia  
(I am another Goddess Sophía, queen of eloquence; *La Pícara Justina*, 124)

One of the most striking passages in which the eponymous heroine of *La pícara Justina* gives tongue to the frustration she experiences, at critical moments in her story, at her inability to articulate her self — to speak her 'identity as a woman'<sup>1</sup> — comes in Chapter 4, Book 4 on the occasion of the bans of her marriage to Lozano: '¡Mirábanse unos a otros, y luego todos me miraban a mí!' (727) ('They looked at each other, and then they all looked at me!'). Unable to tolerate her brothers' hostile stares, she secures her grip on the coffer containing her hard-won inheritance, and composing herself, affirms: '¡Yo soy! ¿No me conocéis? ¿Qué me miráis?' (728) ('I am! Don't you know me? Why do you look at me?'). Caught in her brothers' intolerable male gaze, Justina's hysteria can be seen as a response to the disjunction between, on the one hand what she appears to be in men's eyes (an appearance which, as a functioning person in her social world, she must necessarily adopt) and, on the other the reality of her self - as she senses and tries to articulate it, by means of a rhetoric that is an uncannily accurate precursor of that adumbrated by Luce Irigaray's 'theory' of *parler-femme*.<sup>2</sup> And both Justina's authentic female voice and Irigaray's *parler-femme* are very close to (perhaps modelled on) the voice of the kabbalistic Shekhinah, the specifically female aspect of the Godhead conceived of as God's presence or immanence in the world, the female voice of God and the messenger of God's word.<sup>3</sup> For we find that Justina's statement is one of self-affirmation which in its all-

<sup>1</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p.196.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Patricia Elliott, *From Mastery to Analysis: Theories of Gender in Psychoanalytic Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p.18: 'the hysteric produces a knowledge of the unconscious'.

<sup>3</sup>D.C. Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, p.230: 'Shekhinah expresses divine language'. Cf., too, p. 22: 'Though ultimately God is infinite and indescribable, the sefirot are real "from our perspective"' (Zohar 2:176a;3:141b; see Scholem, *Major Trends*, p.402, n.66.922). Cf., too, Matt, p.34: 'The sefirot generate the ultimate confusion of identities: human and divine. Such sublime confusion [including those of gender] catalyzes the process of enlightenment.'

important beginning "I am" places her words firmly in the tradition of the aretalogies of the great goddesses<sup>4</sup> But Justina is not just any Goddess. She is, in fact, the epitome of this long tradition, the quintessence or, as she claims for herself, the 'tenthessence'<sup>1</sup>(173) in a telling allusion to her true identity as Shekhinah, the tenth sefirah of the kabbalistic emanation process. The coffer which Justina so determinedly holds on to with the help of her new husband — the ark of her inheritance as she calls it — is, like the *Kästchen* ('little chest') in *Wilhelm Meister*,<sup>5</sup> symbolic of Pandora's box, the chest which, according to mythology, contains all the God-given powers of which she had been robbed, which she has reappropriated, and now firmly retains in her grasp.<sup>6</sup>

Justina's words ('I am! Don't you know me? What are you looking at me for?') not only reveal her real (royal-divine) identity; they also simultaneously betray her real (human) frustration and disbelief at her brothers' failure to recognize her true self, and pay due respect to her autonomy, her integrity, and her status: 'comencé a cobrar bríos de hidalga, mas no por eso mis hermanos me tenían más respeto' (728) ('I began to acquire a noblewoman's spirit, but that did not mean that my brothers showed me more respect'). The rhetorical emphasis in this episode on 'looking at' (and implicitly seeing and/or not seeing) is clearly linked to a notion of respect (or recognition of the object as an other, different, and equally-valid subject) — the essence of Irigaray's idea of 'difference'<sup>7</sup> — for her brothers, retaining their position of authority as subjects of the verb, reaffirm their male solidarity by looking at (*and* seeing!) one another; a solidarity, or 'seeing-one-another' which is underscored in the verbal form 'mirábanse'

<sup>4</sup>NSEOD: p.111: 'A narrative of the miracles performed by a god or semi-divine hero'; see Engelsman, *The Feminine Dimension*, pp.76-77 (p.76): The power of Sophia, the archetypal goddess of Wisdom in ancient Judaism is expressed in the various aretalogies (hymns of praise) or "I am" statements she makes about herself and in those spoken by others on her behalf. See, too, references to the aretalogies of the Hellenistic goddesses, Isis and Demeter (pp.64-66).

<sup>5</sup>See Volker Dürr, 'Geheimnis und Aufklärung: Zur pädagogischen Funktion des Kästchens in Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahren', *Monatshefte*, 74 (1982), 11-19 (p.12).

<sup>6</sup>The name Pandora means 'all-powerful' or 'all the powers, gifts'. Indeed Justina identifies in the text with Pandora, precisely because of their shared poverty, because both she and the goddess have been stripped of their powers (pp.101-02).

<sup>7</sup>Luce Irigaray, 'Section III: Ethics and Subjectivity: towards the future', in Margaret Whitford, *The Irigaray Reader*, pp. 155-218, in particular 'Sexual difference', pp. 165-177. See, too, Luce Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*.

('they looked at each other'), common enough in Golden-Age Spanish usage. But their male solidarity sees itself in opposition to her. For they then turn, all-men-together ('todos') to look at her, an action which, in its linguistic formulation ('todos me miraban a mí') speaks not of solidarity with the object of the looking, that is Justina, but of a divisive and fragmenting gaze, really a not-seeing,<sup>8</sup> which, experienced as it is from Justina's standpoint, is a powerful expression of the root-cause of her isolation and exclusion, indeed alienation, from the dominant (male) group, and hence in the public sphere at least, from her inner self.<sup>9</sup> Her sense of herself as thus split between subjective and objective identities is underlined in the two distinct (one objective, the other disjunctive) pronouns for 'me' which are, significantly, separated by the male subjects' (that is patriarchy's) divisive and reductive gaze. And it is in courageous response to their concerted attempt to suppress her hard-won (ego)identity, her integrity as a subject in her own right — her goddess-status one might justifiably say — that Justina, grown in stature and self-awareness by this point in her narrative (hi)story (on the threshold of her union with Lozano), is emboldened to utter those all-important and all-powerful (divine) words 'I am'.<sup>10</sup>

However, Justina's aretalogy is truncated for she does not, even at this stage in her journey, go beyond the 'I am' to identify herself with the usual epithets that the Goddess claims for herself. Significantly, this comes in the 'Summary Prologue to Both Tomes of Justina' (81-84) which is essentially a 'hymn of praise' to Justina by the fictional author. He lists some of her qualities and refers to her 'tomes' as the cream and quintessence of all the 'good things' (82) of its literary predecessors, and then goes on to cite from Justina's own 'suma' (meaning both summary and quintessence) of her

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<sup>8</sup>Whitford: 'Irigaray argues ... that all of western discourse and culture displays the structure of specularization, in which the male projects his own ego on to the world, which then becomes a mirror which enables him to see his own reflection wherever he looks' (p. 34). As a critique of Lacan's flat mirror of male discourse, she suggests for women, 'a different sort of mirror (literal or symbolic) ... a speculum, for example'. (Irigaray, *Speculum De L'Autre Femme* [Paris: Minuit, 1974] p.109 note). Cited in Whitford, p. 65.

<sup>9</sup>Witness Justina's earlier references to her unsuitable suitors '-novios' ('grooms') as 'no vios' (did-not-see's'); in other words those who did not truly see and (implicitly) respect her (455).

<sup>10</sup>In Zohar, Shekhinah is called "I". She is the immediate presence of God' (D.C. Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, p.275).

tomes, written by her to Guzmán before their wedding, in which, beginning with "Yo, mi señor don Pícaro, soy" ('I, my señor don Pícaro, am'), she provides a list of personal epithets linked to her multifarious adventures in the text. I suggest that Justina here, typically for her style, puts the mark of her own embodied subjectivity on the generic model of the aretalogy, not only by providing the list of very personal epithets she legitimately claims for herself as a result of her own multifarious adventures, but also by literally including the male 'other' in her statement of self-affirmation in an oddness of expression similar to that employed by Goethe's Makarie or Mignon — a gesture on Justina's part that, rather than being a general public declaration on this occasion to an unreceptive and, therefore, unworthy brotherhood, remains a very private affair between her and her significant other. Moreover, in keeping with her self-determined holistic (inclusive) style of 'telling all' — a style she claims in an eloquent tree-metaphor (170) will uncover the roots and branches of her self-definition — she opens up the linguistic space between the 'I' and the 'am', and holding the male beloved in her womb-like, liminal interiority, inscribes her Self, in indirect (Irigarayan) fashion, as archetypal woman, drawing on the divine feminine as her legitimate female inheritance. To make her 'real' (royal-divine as well as empirically real) identity as the all-powerful goddess absolutely clear, she tells us, or rather tells Guzmán, at the end of her list of attributes:

'(yo soy] la novia de mi señor don Pícaro Guzmán de Alfarache, a quien ofrezco cabrahigar su picardía para que dure los años de mi deseo.' (84)

'I am the bride of my señor don Pícaro Guzmán de Alfarache, to whom I offer to 'cabrahigar'<sup>11</sup> his 'picardía',<sup>12</sup> so that it lasts the years of my desire.'

<sup>11</sup>'Market-gardening term used to describe the method of hanging male (inedible) figs in female (edible) fig trees believing that the female figs will be better fecundated and will give sweeter fruit.' (*La Pícaro Justina*, Glossary, p. 756).

<sup>12</sup>'picardía', on the model of Arcadia, suggests all that pertains to the imaginary realm or kingdom of the pícaro.



The key word here the verb, 'cabrahigar' suggests that Justina strategically appropriates for herself the active (male) seeding role and offers her self as bride to Guzmán to fecundate his 'picardía'. In other words, she casts herself as the all-powerful and creative Phallic Goddess who, like the sefirotic system, contains within herself all the secrets of creation.

In the course of her painful trajectory through life, which gives rise to her book as the metonymic symbol, and the means, of her process of self-discovery and achievement of autonomy, in that it is the vehicle of her own uniquely female voice, Justina draws attention to her royal — that is, divine — descent by repeated reference in respect of herself to the great goddess figures of the historico-cultural landscape. This she does both directly in the case of Sophia, the Jewish personification of Wisdom, and Pandora, the once all-powerful goddess, as well as indirectly, and by frequent allusion ubiquitously, through her identification with the Great Earth Mother, Demeter of Greek mythology, in her many guises. But it is the Shekhinah of the Kabbalah — that great female archetype of the Judeo-Christian mystical tradition — who provides Justina with the rich (symbolic) material with which she can articulate her essential self, her female identity, in the fullest and most authentic sense.

The complexity and sophistication of the Shekhinah holds the key to our understanding of how the flesh-and-blood 'pobre y pícara' ('poor and pícara') Justina is able to identify with the great goddess. The portrayal of the Shekhinah of the *Zohar*, mirroring the status of the goddess (the feminine) in inherited cultural imagery, provides a model for Justina's own (inner) process of self-discovery and route to self-identity, an identity as a whole person.<sup>13</sup> And the most obvious stylistic marker of the way in which the heroine authenticates her self-identification with the (apparently incommensurate) goddess is her strategic deployment of the adjective 'real', meaning both royal-divine and actually real, making the human-divine link explicit in linguistic terms. It is but one of countless subtle examples of the way in which Justina's skill in speaking-writing, her gift for *parler-femme*, articulates her identity, is indeed her

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<sup>13</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p.72.

identity-bearing *language*. Irigaray's *parler-femme* refers, after all, to the possibility of female subjectivity being expressed in language, in contrast to (male) discursive, theoretical or meta-language: 'there is simply no way I can give you an account of speaking (as) woman; it is spoken, but not in meta-language'.<sup>14</sup> *Parler-femme* is thus likened to the dynamic immediacy of the 'enunciation' in the psycho-analytic process, where not only the unconscious but gender, too, can be articulated. But it is not only a psycholinguistic description: it also articulates women's real, empirical, dilemma in a patriarchal culture, the fact that their position as object is already given; and that the real challenge for her is to enter language as a subject in her own right, as an epistemological subject, in Irigaray's terms, a subjective economy: 'Her economy is based on subject-subject relations, not subject-object',<sup>15</sup> an intersubjective economy that derives from her genealogical relationship with the mother.

There is perhaps no more poignantly eloquent account of this process, of a woman's delicate and painfully ambivalent attempt to intervene in male discourse, and of the intolerable tension and anguish that accompanies it, than Justina's descriptions of her tentative first attempt to take up her pen and write the history of her life, the story, that is, of her emerging sense of selfhood. The exorbitant linguistic playfulness and symbolism in this introductory chapter in reference to her lack of hair is eloquent in its articulation of deeply felt ambivalent emotions, excruciatingly difficult to express (and typical of the novel's stylistic difficulty often identified by critics).<sup>16</sup> The 'hairlessness' she alludes to symbolizes her deprived condition in culture, her vulnerability, her lack of protective covering — in short, her lack of a robust (female)

<sup>14</sup>Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, p.144.

<sup>15</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p.196.

<sup>16</sup>Besides the scholastic outer organization of the work, critics have also consistently emphasized the novel's participation in a Golden Age hermetic style: 'nebulous figurative language which often makes understanding difficult, through complicated metaphors and ambiguous allusions'. See Aída Beaupied, *Narciso hermético*, p.3; and Joseph R. Jones, "Hieroglyphics" in *La Pícaro Justina*, in *Estudios Literarios de Hispanistas Norteamericanos*, ed. by Josep Sola-Solé et al (Barcelona: Hispanic, 1974), pp.415-429: 'besides obscure allusions to contemporary events which make the satire hard to penetrate, the rhetorical virtuosity of López de Úbeda's style daunts even the stubbornest admirer of Golden Age Prose' (415). The consensus view is that *La Pícaro Justina* is 'one of the most difficult works of Spanish literature'. Bruno Damiani, *Francisco López de Úbeda*, p.22.

ego-identity with which to mediate her self-expression and interact effectively, on equally-valid terms with the male, in the world of her culture.<sup>17</sup> Justina succeeds to a large extent, against the odds, in her aim of achieving a sense of her own female identity in culture. However, her hairlessness at the beginning of her narration,<sup>18</sup> and the lack of respect for and acceptance of her new-found identity by the male fraternity (at the end of her narration) suggests that, in Irigaray's terms, a mature and robust ego-identity is simply male in the novel's male-biased culture. Indeed, while Justina's tendency to (male) baldness may appear to undermine her truly female identity and evoke the cultural imperative to adopt a more male identity in order to have access to the systems of power, it also implies that she is bold enough to accept the biological consequence of human ageing, regardless of the affront that it constitutes to the male image of femininity. The whole of Justina's General Introduction (entitled 'La Melindrosa Escribana' (87-131) ('The "Precious" Writing-Woman') — hair-splitting in its analytical thrust — of which this episode marks the (melodramatic) beginning, is based on the age-old symbolism of hair, and it establishes her narratorial stance, her position — both inner (psychological) and outer (cultural) — in the world, and the implications of this fact. The inner tension caused by conflicting feelings of sheer terror at the prospect of exposing herself, on the one hand, and her desire to express herself on the other, reaches breaking point when the seemingly harmless occurrence of a hair getting stuck in her quill as she is about to put pen to paper brings forth an avalanche of what can only be described as primordial feeling, issuing from a profound inner source, deep in the psyche. The language at some points has an (intentional?) lack of surface coherence that is of quite the same order as the apparently 'hysterical' discourse of the female characters in *Wilhelm Meister*. In effect, the intensity of feeling expressed is so overwhelming that it ruptures — like

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<sup>17</sup>Hair on the head, traditionally a symbol of power, 'symbolizes spiritual forces', that is male, rational, strength. J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, pp.134-35.

<sup>18</sup>This baldness clearly parallels the biological cycle of birth and death; see page 96: 'Sin pelo salí del vientre de mi madre y sin pelo tornaré a él' ('I came out of my mother's belly without hair, and without hair I shall return to it').

Philine's and Hersilie's rhetoric — the surface (that is, the logical/semantic) clarity, resulting in an explosion of metaphors and hyperbolic alliterative language:

Sólo un pelo de mi pluma ha hablado que soy pobre, pícara, tundida de cejas y de vergüenza, y que de puro pobre he de dar en comer tierra, para tener mejor merecido que la tierra me coma a mí, que si me rasco la cabeza no me come el pelo, y según mi pluma lleva la corriente atrevida y disoluta, a poca más licencia, la tomará para ponerme de lodo, porque quien me ha dado seis nombres de P, conviene a saber: pícara, pobre, poca vergüenza, pelona y pelada, ¿qué he de esperar, sino que como la pluma tiene la P dentro de su casa y el alquiler pagado, me ponga algún otro nombre de P que me eche a puertas? Mas antes que nos pope, quiero soplarle, aunque me llamen soplona. (103-4)

A mere hair of my quill has spoken out that I am poor, pícara, stripped of eyebrows and of shame, and that because I am pure poor, I have to take to living on nothing [literally, to eating earth], so that I can better deserve to die [literally, to be eaten by the earth]; for if I scratch my head no hair will not bother me [literally, will not eat me], and since my pen is holding forth in a bold, and dissolute manner, with a little more licence it will take the liberty of discrediting me [literally, covering me in mud], because whoever has given me six names of P, and it is important to know them: pícara, poor, very-little shame, bald [socially inferior/lacking], and bald [deprived/ oppressed], what can I expect but that, since the pen has the P inside its house, and has paid the rent [in other words, it is free to speak], it will exclude me with another name beginning with P. But before it belittles or patronizes us, I wish to blow it away/whisper its secrets, even if they call me telltale.

Justina's emotional response here seems incommensurate with the apparent insignificance of this (accidental) occurrence and speaks of a wealth of latent emotion, just below the surface, which has been straining to be unleashed.<sup>19</sup> The hair stuck in

<sup>19</sup>The mere contingency underlines the notion that this seemingly (at least to the readers' mind) trivial occurrence acts as a trigger to release other, less easily definable, more deeply-hidden feelings coming from another, more existential source or cause. In other words, Justina typically creates her own symbol, or network of symbols, in that she endows the everyday-outer with a deeper (higher,

the tip of the pen — like the proverbial straw — serves, one feels, to upset her by now unsustainable equilibrium resulting in literally unspeakable rage mixed with pain. The frequent (29) occurrences of the 'p'-sound creates an alliterative pattern that reaches its climax in the self-defining phrase, 'pícara, pobre, poca vergüenza, pelona y pelada'. Besides suggesting a whispering tone of confidentiality, semantic items are linked by this figure in a wholly a-logical way, suggesting an identity of some sort between the pícara and poverty, and belittlement and baldness (with its connotations of low social status and gender blurring). In the words, both the physical and the moral predicament of the feminine pícaro are intimately associated with socio-economic factors in an a-causal, one might say, 'poetic', nexus — and all of this is linked, by the same alliteration, to writing (the pen). The hair serves, as it were, as the object onto which she projects that which she can no longer suppress — indescribably intense and inarticulate feeling. The act of writing the introduction to her life-story, which requires discipline in itself, thus threatens to be completely overwhelmed by sheer intensity of the emotion that it arouses.

The tension of the ambivalent feelings of fear mixed with pleasure that she experiences at the prospect of expressing her anger is summed up in a declaration which amounts to her narratorial stance. It articulates her in-between status; in between, that is, giving tongue to her (repressed) condition in culture (by savouring the restrictions she feels on her desire to laugh) on the one hand, and, on the other, giving free rein to her instinctive (natural) anger, liberated from its enforced (cultural) suppression :

No sé si dé rienda al enojo o si saboree el freno a la gana de reírme,  
viendo que se ha empatado la corriente de mi historia, y que todo  
pende en el pelo de una pluma de pato. (88)

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inner) significance, and thereby expresses her own reality, a reality which would otherwise remain inside, hidden, unknown - both to herself and to the reader(s).

I don't know if I should give free rein to the rage or savour the bit on the desire to laugh, seeing that the current of my (hi)story has been suspended, and everything hangs on the hair of a duck's feather.

The verb ('empatar', 'to equalize') that Justina employs here suggests her acute awareness of the process whereby her narrative flow has been suspended by two equally-powerful opposing forces (here, anger and pleasure) that meet and interrupt her discourse. The difficulty in unravelling the knot of interrelated symbols which go to make up her emblematic narratorial stance — the hair that crosses the nib and blots her writing comes, after all, from the feather-quill itself; and her use of 'empatar' is a pun on the origins of the quill-pen ('the duck', 'el pato') — expresses and underlines the way in which all form part of the same complex web of motivations which it is her difficult task to disentangle and analyse.<sup>20</sup> What is conceptually a choice between one or the other (the expression of anger or of pleasure) becomes in effect, in the bodiliness of the language, a kind of simultaneity in that she *is* able to express in words both the torrent of rage and the simultaneous pleasure at expressing it, for as one thing (rage) is expressed, it simultaneously liberates (leaves space for) feelings of pleasure which accompany the release; in short, an expression of her complex psychophysical state.<sup>21</sup>

And yet there *is* discipline, there is control, in this seemingly chaotic torrent of emotion, for we witness her virtuoso use of language aimed relentlessly at amplifying the implications of this one symbol: a hair. One might say that these lines illustrate Justina's particular style, her consummate skill at extracting the good from the bad, while interrelating them and transforming the negative into positive — a style which is mirrored in and by the emblematic symbol she creates, the hair stuck to the pen. For here, as elsewhere in countless examples throughout the text, Justina manages to

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<sup>20</sup>MM, 1083; significantly, 'empatar' also means 'to suspend the course of the process of proof of nobility', a process in which Justina herself is engaged, in the Renaissance sense of 'nobility of spirit-soul'.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. the psychological authenticity expressed here with the parallel episode of Justina's ambivalent feelings on the death of the Old Witch. Both episodes bear witness to the intensity and complexity of human emotions at a psychological level, and to her intention to express the wholeness and complexity of human experience.

derive pleasure from her painful and difficult situation,<sup>22</sup> a *jouissance* that she herself creates in and through her ability to express, to some considerable extent, her Self in words, to *embody* herself linguistically. And she does this precisely by means of a profound self-awareness of her own existential predicament. In other words, Justina's creativity, her skill at *parler-femme*—of which the hair stuck in the pen is emblematic—gives tongue to and derives from the reality of her embodied condition in culture heightened by her intelligent awareness of that fact.

Her dialogue with the pen<sup>23</sup> is fraught, then, with tension and ambivalence, as she tries to examine what are clearly her own conscious and half-conscious motivations: 'Mas ya querréis decirme, pluma mía, que el pelo de vuestros puntos está llamando a la puerta y al cerrojo de las amargas memorias de mi pelona francesa' (91) ('so you want to tell me, quill of mine, that the hair of your tips is calling at the door and lock of the bitter memories of my French "baldness" [insinuating siphilis]). And what better symbol of frustration in expression, after all, for the hair on the pen is a hair from the feather quill itself, and the black ink stains on the paper caused by the hair-on-the-pen — providing a messy, blurring accompaniment to the well-delineated narrative — may be seen as but shadowy projections of her as yet barely intimated, but nevertheless emerging, sense of self. And evidence of her nascent self-awareness lies in her invention of this new emblem or cipher for herself, as well as in her explicit acknowledgement of the value and appropriateness of this identifying 'mark' of her own life-history, 'in a nutshell':

De manera que mi pluma, aprovechándose de sola la travesía de un pelo, ha cifrado mi vida y persona mejor y más a lo breve que el que escribió la *Ilíada* de Homero y la encerró debajo de una cáscara de una nuez. (103)

<sup>22</sup>Witness, elsewhere, Justina's myriad allusions to melancholy as the heresy of the picaresque life, e.g. p.281.

<sup>23</sup>The phallic significance of the pen, like the conventional 'metaphor of writing as love-making', is exploited in this passage to heighten and express the passion of Justina's struggle to express herself. See D. Gareth Walters, 'Language, Code and Conceit in *El Vergonzoso En Palacio*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 30 (1994), 239-255 (pp.248; 252-53).

In this way, my pen, benefitting solely from the crossing of a hair, has ciphered my life and person better and more succinctly than he who wrote Homer's Iliad and enclosed it in a nutshell.

In a display of Irigarayan female 'disruptive excess', Justina makes much of the stains on her own fingers and skirt caused by the hair in the pen, for they are, she re-emphasises, symbols — 'pronóstico y figura' (114) ('prognostication and figure') — of what will happen (her book) or has already happened (her life) with respect to her book-life and the stygma they (the 'murmuradores', ['critics/tell-tales']) will attach not only to the substance of her book but also to the 'modo del decir y en el ornato' (114) ('the style and adornments') of that substance.

The shadowy, and foreshadowing, accompaniment to her narrative, the black ink stains on her writing, is none other than the dark (shadow) image of the goddess — expressive of both the (cultural) repressed feminine and her own (individual) repressed female self — which Justina is attempting to re-member, raise to consciousness, make visible, and thereby redeem. The reference to her bitter memories as being behind not only a door, but a door with a lock on it (a motif which is common to the 'stories' of the significant female figures in the text), emphasises the difficulty inherent in this psycho-spiritual process. Her aim (both personal-individual and human-cultural), throughout her narrative, is to raise to conscious awareness her own repressed female identity as a psycho-spiritual process while simultaneously providing a model, a means or route (through the feminine) whereby the reader (male and female) and (indirectly) the culture, can achieve the wholeness which they implicitly lack. The benefits or 'fruits' of the success of this enterprise, for the individual as well as for the culture as a whole (justice, equality, peace, as well as loving, joyful, and fruitful engendering), are implicit and at times explicit in her narrative.

Justina's ultimate aim, therefore, is to uncover the feminine as positive (visible) presence to counterbalance its cultural status as negative or lack. But as she must of necessity express this using (male) language and discourse wherein the



feminine already exists as absence or lack, her route to the positive feminine is, in turn, *through* the negative feminine. And as the negative feminine is exposed as a product or projection of the male cultural imagination, her route to the negative feminine is, in turn, *through* the male imaginary as expressed in its own cultural tool: discursive language. Her double-edged sword-pen, therefore, is out to articulate the hidden (positive) presence of the feminine that the articulation of her virtual absence speaks of. It becomes, in Justina's hand, one (simultaneous) gesture of rewriting the feminine into (male) language and discourse thereby restoring both the integrity of the feminine and that of cultural discourse so that it becomes an expression of the wholeness (male-and-female) of human kind. In its turn, a more inclusive cultural discourse provides the enabling and ennobling vehicle for individual self-becoming. The pervasive traditional motif of the veil in Justina's narrative (e.g., pp. 226, 366, 407, 596, 621) provides, as in Goethe's writing, a coherent expression of her indirect style as evocative of this mysterious hidden (divine) feminine which is occasionally glimpsed behind her darkly veiled (cultural) presence in the text.

Justina is at pains throughout her narrative to stress her down-to-earth (bodily) *this-worldliness*, claiming to be the 'fundadora de la picardía' (168) ('founder of the realm of the picaresque'), that is Malkuth (or Foundation), Shekhinah by another name. She claims to have been born 'de las tejas abajo, como tordo' (168) ('born of this world, like the thrush') and, unlike Romulus and Remus who according to mythology are born via the side of their virgin mother, Justina is born via the 'camino real' (168) ('main/royal/real road'), that is both the ordinary way (via her mother's belly) and the divine way (in descent from the goddess). Her (and Malkuth's) birth is compared to a gallstone that passes into the bile ducts causing the mother real pain and suffering. Her characteristic evocation of the mother's actual physical pain is aimed at recoding male mythology (whether product of 'Roman poet or Greek philosopher') — responsible for creating male gods by *means* of 'sombras' ('shadows'), 'intractas vírgenes' ('untouched virgins'), and 'vírgenes incorruptas' ('incorrupt virgins')

(169) and denying, and devaluing, the female pole of divinity, and the mother's real-royal role, 'com si el parir fuera rebueldo o estornudo' (169) ('as if to give birth were [merely] to burp or sneeze'). Typical of her tendency to disabuse and disillusion, she gives prominence to the earthly, the bodily, the female, to compensate for the masculine cultural imagination's denial of the female (and her body) in its mythologising of the woman as object of male desire. Her guise as Malkuth/Shekhinah highlights her real-royal provenance — her 'prosapia' (170) or aristocratic lineage — for she is descendent of Binah, founder of the world, who is simultaneously the primordial human being, Adam. The cryptic identity of 'Adam' with 'Dama' (her own self-identification: p.354) indicates her adopted genealogy as primordial (wo)man.<sup>24</sup> Her disabusing, oblique style exposes what she discerns as mere lip-service paid to the maternal-feminine in patriarchal culture by (male) poets who 'honour' the dove—indirectly women—as grandmothers of Aeneas and mothers or daughters of Venus, when in reality their (subordinate) goddess-status guarantees them no (real) respect from 'the breadcrumbs that coat them and the spit that roasts them' (169). In short, the cultural idealization of the woman is exposed by Justina as merely empty rhetoric — 'heretical and stupid' male myths (169) — which not only afford women no real respect in patriarchal culture, but which mask the actual dangers (for women) inherent in their subordinated (invisible) status in culture. Her authorial intention is to redeem the maternal-feminine, and thereby real women, by remembering the forgotten mother and her body — her real-royal female genealogy— and (re)inscribing her creative fecundity as divine in origin, with a view to correcting the heresy and stupidity of male bias:

Ea, Justina, ya que no quieren veros nacer monda y redonda, sino que vais con raíces y todo, para que adonde quiera que os planten deis

<sup>24</sup>See Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, p.217: 'The original androgynous nature of Adam is a theme that informs the Zohar's psychology and theosophy. [...] It is an essential component of the mystery of faith that the sefirotic realm is androgynous. Because of Adam's sin our original androgynous nature has been lost. The inner purpose of human sexuality is to regain wholeness and manifest the oneness of God.'

fruto, decid vuestra prosapia; vean que sois pícara de ocho costados.  
(170)

So there, Justina, since they don't want to see you being born plain and round, but with roots and all, so that wherever they plant you, you give fruit, speak your (aristocratic) lineage; let them see that you are an all-round 'pícara' [literally on all eight sides.]<sup>25</sup>

Here Justina suggests that female fecundity is a necessary and material fact of culture, and that, given this fact, woman must speak and therefore inscribe her (divine-human) identity into discourse, and not permit it to remain unconscious, unspoken, and therefore unrecognized. Once again, like Irigaray's, her concern is to disabuse with a double strategy: to expose the falseness, or partiality of patriarchal myths that pose as whole, or universal, truths, and thereby uncover the underlying real truths which have been thus obscured. By systematically negating and disassociating herself from false male myths designed more to 'engualdrapar las verdades' (170) ('put horse-blanket on truths'), Justina, in affirming in her characteristic indirect style, that 'la ilustrísima picardía no va por esa derrota' (170) ('the most illustrious picardia is not taking this path'), articulates her intentions to take another (implicitly female) route designed to express and give value to that which is essentially lacking for a whole, and therefore truer, picture to emerge: to give voice to the Shekhinah or (maternal-material) divine-female genealogy as expression of the human condition as she envisages it, or 'picardía' as she calls it. In this spirit, she declares: 'no enmantaré cosa que a nuestra picardía pertenezca' ('I shall not put a blanket on any thing that belongs to our "picardía"').

Justina's voice, expressing her self-identity, forges the link between the hitherto split goddess-figure, between, that is, the culturally demonized feminine (Eve by another name) and the idealized feminine (the divine Sophia), for she is both Marquesa de las Motas ('Marchioness of the Stains'; p.637), and 'otra diosa Sophia'

<sup>25</sup>Significantly, the number 8 is the symbol of regeneration. Cf. J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 'Numbers', pp. 230-257 (pp.233-34).

('another Goddess Sophia') queen of eloquence and wisdom who turned herself into a serpent, not to deceive the sleeping Adam, as male mythology would have it (124), but to 'enseñar sabiduría a los dormidos que no saben en qué mundo viven' (124) ('to teach wisdom to the sleeping (masculine plural, implicitly including Adam) who do not know in what world they live'). She later praises her own (and in general women's) quick-witted *parler-femme* 'devised in the air according to the sudden sciences' (581), in contrast to men's 'slow tricks' with pen and ink, putting this as an argument for believing in women as Sophias. She declares her intention,<sup>26</sup> her desire, to be the disabusing voice of Sophia:

Quiero despertar amodorridos ignorantes, amonestar y enseñar (a) los simples para que sepan huir de lo mismo que al parecer persuado.  
(125)

I wish to awaken ignorant drowsy sleepers (masculine) and admonish and teach the simpletons (masculine) so that they know how to flee from the very thing I appear to persuade them of.

And as if to ensure that there is no mistaking the symbolism of her style, she typically sums it up for the readers' clarification: 'Así que lo primero, la culebrilla os significa la desengañadora elocuencia mía' (125-6) ('So, first of all, the little snake [watermark on the writing paper] signifies to you my disabusing eloquence'). Thus, Justina in her self-portrayal brings together the two aspects (negative and positive, 'black' and 'white') of the one self-same Great Goddess by whatever name (Sophia, Pandora — or Shekhinah), awakening her listeners to a conscious awareness of an evil which, left unconscious, might well hold them in thrall.

Consonant with Irigaray's, and the Kabbalah's, insistence on the equilibrium of the male-female polarity as the defining principle of a healthy and creative cultural-cum-spiritual economy, Justina focusses on (gender-sexual) difference as the key to unravelling the mysteries of her problematic female self-identity. And perhaps the

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<sup>26</sup>The marginal note in the text indicates that it is also the fictive author's intention (p.125).

most remarkable and frequent way in which she privileges 'difference' in the novel is her rigorous insistence that when she is referring to both male and female, she expresses this in the detail of her language in a seemingly pedantic way, quite unlike her otherwise playful, airy style, and most important, quite foreign to the normal way in which the feminine is often invisible, subsumed under the sign of the masculine (at least) in the Spanish language.<sup>27</sup> This linguistic strategy, clearly aimed at opening up and exposing (male) gender-bias by enabling the female writer to expose the not-so-hidden masculine posing as the universal (both male and female), also means that when Justina uses a masculine or feminine form of the word, then there is none of the usual ambiguity, and she is able to express herself in a more differentiating, more sophisticated voice. But more important, the feminine is made visible and given a presence and a voice, linguistically at least. She provides a prime example of the way in which, left to itself, (male) discursive language is often unable to express a distinction which is fundamental to life.

The ambivalence of gender-sexual identities, typical of much of the rhetoric of the novel, is one of the motifs eloquently addressed in the crucial opening passage of her General Introduction entitled 'La Melindrosa Escribana' ('The "Precious" Writing-Woman'). Each of the three sections, or Numbers, is dedicated to a key symbol of her writing style: the hair (stuck to the pen); the stain (made by the ink, as a result), and the snake-watermark (universal symbol of Eve) of her writing paper (87-134) — which, taken together, sum up her narratorial (and cultural-existential) stance:

Un pelo tiene esta mi negra pluma. ¡Ay, pluma mía, pluma mía! ¡Cuán mala sois para amiga, pues mientras más os trato, más a pique estáis de prender en un pelo y borrarlo todo! (87)

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<sup>27</sup>Cf. José Miguel Oltra, 'Una aproximación a *La Pícaro Justina*', *Insula: Revista de Letras y Ciencias Humanas*, 43 (1988), 13-14, who identifies 'the inversion of genders' as the guiding principle of López de Úbeda's work (p.13).

This black pen of mine has a hair. Oh, pen of mine, pen of mine! What a bad friend you are, for the more I handle you the more you are on the point of picking up a hair and erasing all of it.

One does not need to adopt a vulgar Freudian approach in order to see in the opening address to her pen an allusion to the phallo-logocentric — a topos of Golden Age poetry. But the fact that the pen (feminine in gender) in its attempts at writing is blurred, smeared, erased (unintentionally) by the hair (masculine!) is also a symbolic enactment of the way in which the speaking-woman, or rather the writing-woman's efforts at enunciation via male rhetoric, to borrow Irigaray's term, is frustrated by being entangled, enmeshed in male-dominated discourse. And yet it is the blurring stain of the hair-and-pen that constitutes the mark of her peculiar, complex style, for it effaces while at the same time drawing attention to itself in its smudged form, so that the black ink stain acts as a kind of veil which partially covers or makes less distinct one pole (the masculine well-delineated discursive mode) while simultaneously exposing and thereby giving prominence to the feminine-poetic 'other' pole of discourse that Justina makes so convincingly her own.<sup>28</sup>

Justina's narrative style with its rhetorical emphasis on the body and its rhythmic functions, is distinctly, unmistakably female, and she goes beyond mere surface tinkering with the genders of the words — important though this undoubtedly is as a way of writing herself into the very fabric of (male) language. She is out to 'inscribe' herself (and the maternal-feminine) into discourse in much more assertive, indeed aggressive, terms. So enraged is she, for example, by her male alter-ego's (Perfícaro's) attempts to undermine her as she embarks on her narrative voyage, that she declares her intention to put her sharp quill through his eyes and with her (female) pen, and write a letter in his 'píamáter'<sup>29</sup> using his own brains for ink (157). This

<sup>28</sup>This obscurity of style, consistently noted in the criticism of *La Pícarra Justina*, is a variant of the 'Baroque' cultivation of the rhetorical figure of *obscuritas*, 'characterized by hermeticism and preciosity' that 'reached such dimensions in the seventeenth century that it became the mark of distinction among the writers of the time'. Bruno M Damiani, *Francisco López de Úbeda*, p.97.

<sup>29</sup>NSOED p.766: [Pia mater, med.L=tender mother] 'mother', indicating a relationship between parts'.

powerful image articulates her (Irigarayan) style of using the male (represented here by his brains) as the material substance (ink) to articulate her own female self, using her own female pen to write the letter in his 'pia mater', a key strategy in her articulation of the feminine.<sup>30</sup> The use of 'pia mater' makes clear, too, the link with the Mother as universal organic principle of containing-complexity-in-wholeness, while creating, in Irigarayan terms, a powerful female symbol of the speaking-writing woman. It can also be seen as a symbolic (revenge) reversal of the way in which male (logocentric) language in fact depends on the mother tongue as unacknowledged and unending source of organic sustenance.<sup>31</sup> (Compare, too, Justina's declared intention at the beginning of her narrative to extract (female) blood-ink from Mr. Inkpot's 'pure horn' with the jabs of her (female) quill [113]).

The spy-cum-snifferdog Perlicaro — a grotesque caricature resembling a projected male alter- or super-ego figure — looms up threateningly from behind and peers over her shoulder to scrutinize and undermine her embryonic scribbings just as she is on the point of putting pen to paper. His attempts to belittle and stigmatize her (by asking her to count the years since her conception and thereby reveal her age) are exposed as a male strategy to undermine her and thereby interfere in her attempts to be the 'historiadora' ('female historian') of her own life (156), to express, that is, her own identity as a speaking-woman, and not just the man-made woman of culture, whose value (to men) depends (inversely) on the sum total of her years. She herself has already provided (in her Introduction) a typically Justinesque answer to this attempt to reduce her to her chronological age, namely by comparing the 'manchas' ('stains/spots') of her picaresque life to those of a variety of big cats (leopard, tiger) which 'con cada mancha añaden un cero a su valor' (91) ('which with each mark add a zero to their value'). Her statement here about the inherent value of lived experience is echoed in the final stages of her written narrative in relation to her search for a 'suitable' husband, for she compares it to buying a melon; he must, like the melon, be

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<sup>30</sup>Cf., for example, the number entitled 'His and Her Letters', when she uses his words, and accusations, point by point, for her written counterattack, making him eat his *own* words.

<sup>31</sup>See Irigaray, *je, tu, nous*, p.43.

heavy, fragrant, and most of all 'escrito' (682) (literally, 'written'). In other words, he must, like Justina, carry the scars or distinguishing marks which are the visible signs of his experience of life and of the maturity ('neither all seed, nor all flesh', but a harmonious mixture of both) that it brings.

Justina makes explicit that she rejects the universal cultural model of entry into discourse — i.e. self-contextualization in a patriarchal culture — because it is an erroneous male model that involves the rejection-suppression of the Mother; the very principle that she wishes to empower and bring to prominence. Her symbolic entry into discourse has, as she never tires of emphasising, a different (female) route via the mother:

Haga cuenta que no soy nacida y que en el vientre de mi madre me estoy todavía, que acá sabremos nacer y ser nacidas sin que nos madure ni partee el muy comadrero. (156)

Take heed that I am not [yet] born and that I am still in the belly of my mother, for here we [women] will know how to come into the world [usual, active, form of 'to be born'] and be born [invented passive form with the feminine past participle, making the 'we'-subject of 'knowing' feminine] without any odious (male) midwife maturing us and assisting our birth.

The appearance of her male super-ego (the shadowy Perlícaro) symbolizes the difficulty of her task, trapped as she is in male discourse. She empowers herself by re-membering her mother, by returning — symbolically — to her mother's womb, and giving birth to her self through her own style of writing which bears the morphological marks of the maternal-female body. Her angry outburst in response to his drawing attention to her 48 years, is that she is not yet born (implicitly as an autonomous woman in her own right), but that she will know how to give birth to her self without his intervention. She will, in fact, be her own midwife. Her terms of reference here, as ever, bear witness to her loyalty to her maternal-feminine lineage, the means and agent of her becoming her self, while at the same time counter-



challenging misogynistic clichés that seek to belittle and restrict women because of their age. So that age in the female mode becomes no longer (mere) chronological-linear time, but a different (female) perspective linked to the maternal-feminine principle; in tune, that is, with the natural recurrence of life-cycles of which she herself is a symbol (if only by genealogical link with her mother) and which form a network of motifs in the text, linked to the seasonal changes and the periodicity of the menstrual cycle — in other words, the female mysteries.

So Justina, in keeping with her intention to inscribe the maternal-feminine by her attention to 'difference' articulates the whole entangled web of her emerging sense-of-her-self-in-culture — her nascent self-identity — with reference to the (gendered) tools of her self-expression. For it is the attention to discerning difference that (paradoxically) draws attention to the relatedness and subtle interconnectedness so characteristic of her narrative style in general, and already evident with respect to her writing tools. For each is differentiated in itself, but all are inextricably linked with one another, and in particular the complex male-female multi-polarity is articulated, for the hair (masculine) is the hair of her quill (feminine), the serpent-watermark is the 'culebrilla' (feminine) of the paper (masculine), the stain (feminine) is on her finger (masculine), and the ink (feminine) is of the inkpot (masculine). The status of these newly-created images becomes clear, for she tells the reader that she is speaking in the hieroglyphic (or symbolic) law (109). In other words, what these images elaborate is a meaning which is intrinsic to her experience of life and to her condition in culture, and therefore, lies within the mind, or psyche-soul, as a symbol.<sup>32</sup> So she tells us that the stain on her finger inevitably 'reaches her soul' (psyche), reminding her of the indelible mark on her reputation (107); a clear allusion to the first woman, Eve, and the biblical source of the denigration of the feminine in culture:

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<sup>32</sup>See Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, p.37, where he emphasises the psychological aspects of the *Zohar*. He refers to Shekhinah as 'opening' or 'gate' to the divine: 'Once inside the sefirot are no longer an abstract theological system; they become a map of consciousness'.

Que, en fin, para el vestido hay jabón, pero no para la mengua en la fama, contra quien esta mancha arma la mamona, estando en la ley jirólfica, y quiere que mi misma pluma dispare contra mí la ballestilla.  
(109)

For, after all, for the dress there is soap, but not for the lack in the reputation against which this stain is aimed, being in the hieroglyphic law, and it wants my very own pen to aim the arrow at me.

Justina tries in vain to erase the ink stain from her fingers with saliva, but only succeeds in staining her white dress and tongue (108). The stain becomes the distinguishing mark of her writing, a stain that is both symbolic of the denigration of the feminine, and of Justina's own acceptance of her self as flawed, though not, she makes clear, in the sense of 'humildad superba' (109) ('proud humility'), that is, false humility. But she suggests that she calls herself 'pícaro' in order to give tongue to her (flawed) human condition and its relationship to the wholeness and perfection that is God, a relationship of which she as woman in culture is the vehicle, the mouthpiece, giving voice — from her privileged site of relative freedom, on the margins of society — to the insight afforded by her intense experience of life as a woman, and the wisdom and (self-) knowledge that this brings.

The motif of 'residue', of 'lack' indicates the feminine, according to Irigaray, in the sense that it represents that which is outside discourse. It is women's task to symbolize, and thereby make a place for, the value of that which has been excluded. Their condition is characterised by a 'familiar and alienating' multiplicity,<sup>33</sup> linked to the image of 'mucosity' as a marker of the 'unthought and therefore untheorized'<sup>34</sup> feminine: 'this mucous, in its *touching*, in its properties, would hinder the

<sup>33</sup>Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*, p.83. Whitford gives an account of Irigaray's concern that, in relation to women, multiplicity can be very damaging because of their lack of an individual sexual identity. For women, therefore, it is essential to theorize the mother-daughter relationship (pp.81-84). The negative potential for women of 'multiplicity' as the 'dissemination of identity' (p.144), is to be distinguished in Irigaray's work by means of the notion of the female imaginary as plural, non-identical, multiple, as opposed to the 'single standard' of the male imaginary (p. 81, and in general the section "The mother-daughter relationship", pp.77-84).

<sup>34</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Parler n'est jamais neutre*, p. 302.

transcendence of a God foreign to the flesh, of a God of immutable and stable truth<sup>35</sup>. Pathology, for Irigaray, is located, therefore, not in woman, but in discourse itself. Significantly, one of the most potent images in *La Pícarra Justina* of woman's position within the socio-cultural imaginary which combines both Irigaray's ideas of *multiplicity* and of *mucosity* is the city of clean and beautiful squares and streets (the maculine), whose suburbs are 'una sentina de mil viscosidades' (95) ('a sewer of a million viscosities'). Similarly, the description of Sancha Gomez as the potent image of the feminine in culture without means to express herself in a more structured way, remains a 'gran escopidora' ('great spitter') who 'si comenzaba a arrancar, arrancaba los sesos desleídos en forma de gargajos' (553) ('when she started to gather mucus, voided her unread brains in the form of phlegms').

The Shekhinah of the Kabbalah not only incorporates the essential wholeness of the original Goddess, but is portrayed in her full complexity as a symbol of cosmic interconnectedness in terms of which she alone is the entity to which all things relate, the centre or womb to which all living things return. Analogously, Justina's symbolic 'return to her mother's womb' marks the beginning of the process of her becoming herself. She retraces her own family tree, returning to her maternal origins — and thereby reconnecting with this necessary touchstone for her successful becoming — in much the same way as Shekhinah might express her own genealogy from her position as the last sefirot on the tree of emanation. Justina's grandparents 'machunos y hembrunos'—note, sexually-differentiated male *and* female — are of primary importance, she tells us, if a distortion of the 'order of such an important generation' (173) is to be avoided, that is, if the real (divine-human, female-male) order is to be respected. And her 'padres' — her biological (linguistically sexually-undifferentiated) parents (literally 'fathers') — are further down, or later, in the process-tree. Once again, her subtly differentiating female-*langage* — her *parler-femme* — exposes a historico-cultural sleight-of-hand which results in the envelopment of the feminine by

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<sup>35</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Ethique de la différence sexuelle*, p.107. (cited in Whitford, p.163). See Whitford *Philosophy in the Feminine*, p.163, for a fuller account of the motif of 'mucosity' in Irigaray's work generally.

and within the all-embracing masculine (of which 'padres' provides an eminent example) which, in turn, falsely poses as an ahistorical, that is universal, truth. The covering-up of the feminine lineage is, then, embedded in the very inappropriateness of the language used.<sup>36</sup> Language, more precisely the Goethean veil of poetry which simultaneously hides and reveals, is the vehicle of these truths, and Justina, with her usual deftness at expressing her alchemical credentials in 'verdades apuradas' (187) ('distilled truths') sums up her whole lineage as the 'crucible of speech' (173), the essential expression (Sophia), that is, of Logos, of God's word — the defining function of the Shekhinah. And to ensure that the Justina-Shekhinah identification is not missed by the reader ('whether Christian or Moor'), the novel (and in particular the number dealing with her mother) is shot through with Shekhinah symbols such as the 'reverendísima cuba' ('most-reverent vat for collecting wine or cereal'), which is also described as a 'beautiful whale' (172), the moon, the bridge(s), the saddlebags (maintaining balance), the date-palm (173) and the reference to the name of her mother's home town, Cea, and its association with the goddess Ceres, Demeter by another name. Her own (and Shekhinah's) role as mediator, is encapsulated, too, in her name, Justina, for she who has to 'mantener la justa de la picardía' ('umpire the joust—the just balance—of the picaresque life').<sup>37</sup> It also alludes to Justina's role as go-between, mediating between the divine-human realms and between male and female polarities in order to maintain a just, and therefore harmonious, balance, as well as to her right to stage a just battle of the sexes where individual (verbal) skill and dexterity are displayed by two equally-armed or empowered adversaries, male and female; an activity which punctuates Justina's narrative as she comes to terms with and triumphs over a series of male adversaries. But it is her surname, Diez ('Ten') and her statement, 'porque soy la décima esencia de todos ellos, cuanto y más la quinta' (173) ('because I am the tenth essence, never mind the fifth [quintessence]

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<sup>36</sup>Note the pervasive use of the verb 'traer consigo' in the text, meaning 'carries with it', suggesting continuity, commensurability, and containing wholeness.

<sup>37</sup>The frequent references to 'duelos' in the novel suggest both 'duel' and 'pain' in its secondary meaning.

of all of them [her ancestors]), that confirm her self-identification with the tenth sefirah, Shekhinah.

Embedded in Justina's narrative strategy, as I have argued, is the urge to give voice to the repressed feminine, a desire which mirrors the notion that increased self-awareness and self-knowledge is a process of becoming more god-like. For we discover that the paradox at the heart of Justina's attempt to speak her (whole human) identity — one which is central to the notion of human redemption as *felix culpa* — is that an awareness of herself as sinful is the means whereby she attains an awareness of herself as goddess-like. If, then, a sense of oneself as a sinful mortal is the *sine qua non* of becoming more god-like, then Justina, as (a) woman, is uniquely well-placed for such a psycho-spiritual transformation. For it becomes ever more evident in the course of her narrative, that she wishes to draw attention to the fact that it is Woman, and the maternal-feminine, that have borne the (psycho-spiritual) burden of being the cultural representatives of the theological concept of evil. Woman has been relegated to the position of the unconscious of the cultural imaginary, where she embodies first and foremost the notion of evil as the unacceptable face of God. This accounts, for example, for the emphasis in the novel on (particularly) women's shamefulness and shamelessness, for Justina's projected life (hi)story bears testimony to the fact that it is women who carry the whole burden of collective cultural shame or 'original sin'; so much so, that she makes much, rhetorically, of the impossibility of being further shamed (96), since to feel shame necessarily implies its opposite: a sense of honour or self-esteem. The implication is that women have exhausted their capacity to feel shame (a sense of oneself as sinful), for they have lost touch with their sense of their own godliness. Their fate, their fall from grace, has paralleled that of Eve and the other goddesses. In her allusion to Eve, Pandora, and the serpent, in the opening pages of her narrative, Justina is setting the scene for her archeological dig, in order to uncover, to bring to light, and to give due recognition to, the maternal-feminine voice, along with the historico-cultural tools of her demonization.

The aim of her explorations, in bringing the demonized feminine to light, is to initiate her own process of becoming-herself. She does this by giving voice to her personal experience, as woman, of her diminished status in culture (internalized as diminished self-esteem). She thereby creates a route out of her diminished state, a means of transcending it by confronting her own dark sister-image, raising it to consciousness and replacing it with the positive image of the goddess. In this process, the concept of evil is exposed as being precisely that: a concept created by the human imaginary, and in patriarchy's case, a symptom, or imaginative projection, created by the imbalance between the sexes, of the cultural subordination of the feminine to the masculine, in harmony with Irigaray's theory of difference, and with the negative portrayal of Lileth-Shekhinah in the Kabbalah. Moreover, in taking up her position in relation to the ultimate context of go(o)d and evil, she is the voice of the tenth sefirah, Shekhinah in her guise as Lileth. Indeed Justina refers to herself as Eve—the serpent of 'desengaño' ('disillusionment') — who articulates the 'memory of death' as an antidote to the sin of pride, or presuming oneself to be immortal (124). As archetypal woman, she eloquently articulates the need to re-member death — the merely mortal body — as part of the wholeness which is the cycle of life and death: a natural-divine process of dying and becoming, of being born again, a new and enhanced self as an ongoing process of becoming ever more one's true self and at one with God. The consequences of patriarchy's failure to come to terms with its own inherent (human) sinfulness (which is then banished to the unconscious and projected onto the feminine that Eve represents) is illustrated by Justina's example of Herodes as one who presumed godlike status and brought down upon himself divine wrath in the form of rains falling on his rich attire (110). Here Justina strategically takes the hitherto exclusively-female symbol of human sinfulness — the stain-sin which is the mark of Eve in the (male) cultural imaginary — and projects it onto the man for his failure to recognize (and take responsibility for) his own sinfulness. Moreover, she — indirectly, through her use of 'castigo' as both noun and verb ('punishment' and 'I punish') — claims to be the (divine) author of this just

punishment, in keeping with the Shekhinah's other face as Din or Dina<sup>38</sup>, otherwise known as 'stern judgment':

Justo castigo, no lo niego. Justa pena contra quien, por verse vestido de oro, se olvida que es de polvo y lodo, como si el oro y cuantos ricos metales hay no trajesen consigo la memoria de la muerte y corrupción, en razón de que las arenas exhaladas, corrompidas y acabadas, en virtud de su corrupción, se convierten en *saphyros*.<sup>39</sup> (110)

Just punishment (or justly I punish), I do not deny it. Just punishment for one who, seeing himself dressed in gold, forgets that he is made of dust and mud/excrement, as if gold and all the rich metals there are, did not carry with them the memory of death and corruption, by virtue of which the exhaled sands, corrupted and finished, by virtue of this corruption, are transformed into sapphires/sefirot.

This vision of the wholeness (human-divine; earthly-spiritual) of living things articulates it as a process of dying and becoming, as one-and-the-same cyclical natural process of ongoing refinement and becoming ever more whole and godlike; while the oddness of the invented 'saphyros' (in italics in the text) suggests a precious gem (*zafiros* or sapphires) as well as being a veiled reference to the sefirot, in its sound-look characteristics. This echoes Irigaray's insistence that the female individual (and the male!) embodies her (his) own potential for growth and spiritual fulfilment, an inner potential that Justina wishes to *express* and thereby enact in the world. And the authority Justina draws on in claiming her (divine) right to pursue self-fulfillment and embodiment as goddess beside the male gods of culture derives, ultimately, from the archetypal model of the Great Goddess.

<sup>38</sup>Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, p.225: the aramaic for 'strict judgment' or 'rigor' is Dina (in Hebrew: Din), the holy left or divine source of evil. Justina associates herself punningly and indirectly with the Dina of the Old Testament, by insisting that she, Justina, by contrast with Dina, is 'unworthy' ('indigna'), despite the fact that the chapter title 'El Robo de Justina' alludes to 'El Robo de Digna' (see Rey Hazas, p.293).

<sup>39</sup>Both the Rey Hazas and the Damiani editions have replaced 'saphyos' with 'saphyros'. The Rey Hazas edition comments in a footnote that it must be a mistake, as there are no precious stones with this name, therefore it must be 'zafiros', i.e. sapphires. In my view, its very oddness is consistent with its being read as yet another allusion to the sefirot, which are often referred to in the *Zohar* as 'lights' or 'gems'.

When Justina is abducted from the fair by the gang of rogues-cum-students led by the brutish Pero Grullo, it is precisely her verbal skills which save her from his unwelcome advances. Justina alludes to the gang as if they were a perversion of true hierarchy; as 'demonios' ('devils'), they are as anxious to obey their gangleader ('Belcebub' (315) ['Beelzebub']) as they are disinclined to obey their true and legitimate superiors (indirectly Justina as Shekhinah). This whole episode entitled 'Del robo de Justina' ('The Abduction of Justina') can justifiably be interpreted in kabbalistic terms of Shekhinah's capture by the 'Other Side' (the Side of Evil, or the Husks).<sup>40</sup> Left alone with the leader of the gang, her words speak of her sadness, her isolation and her alienation: 'Dejáronme con él y sin mí, tan sola cuan mal acompañada, tan triste cuan disimulada (315) ('They left me with him and without me, as alone as I was in bad company, as sad as I was concealed'), and are in tune with the *Zohar's* description of Shekhinah's experiences when she is separated from God and is no longer his presence (i.e. her face is concealed). Justina's success at thwarting the gangleader's attempts to rape her is due, she acknowledges, to the advice of her mother Celestina (316) and to her apparently ineffectual ('light and airy') but in reality powerful use of language: 'el gustosillo y blando céfiro de mis regaladas y airosas palabras [que] borncaban su cabeza de porra de llaves y su cuello de tarasca' (304) ('The delightful, gentle zephyr-breeze of my graceful, elegant words bent and adjusted his truncheon-like, iron-clad head and his dragon's neck'). The use of 'céfiro' to describe her style as the gentle breeze-veil which is by far the superior adversary of his crude, grunting style makes the link with the Shekhinah-sefirah yet clearer, so that Shekhinah herself, through her divine words, overcomes her captors and frees herself from their evil grip.

Again, Justina, who describes the tricked rogues as 'castigados por mi mano y aun por la de Dios' (328) ('punished by my hand and even by God's hand') sees herself as the instrument (literally 'hand') of God's avenging angel, as Shekhinah, that is, in

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<sup>40</sup>Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, pp.189-191.



her guise as stern judgement; activated by her capture by the Other Side. It is implied by the band of rogues addressing and making fun of their tricked and deposed leader — following his public whipping and humiliation at Justina's hands on her triumphant return (astride her cart-cum-chariot) to her village — that the effect of Justina's action, of her punishing hand, is to give him (or rather whip him into) new life, to be, in effect his midwife. His former disciples make him eat his own idealized, romantic words (about his soul being reborn like the phoenix in Justina's hands) while he undergoes the stark and physically painful reality of her punishing whip, so that Justina's down-to-earth and disabusing female voice is put in their mouths:

Camarada, ¿cómo era quello de hoy renazco como ave fénix de las cenizas que ha hecho Justina con el inmortal rigor con que me ha quemado las tres potencias del ánima? Más cierto fuera decir: Yo naceré con dolor del vientre de una carreta, cabeza abajo y pies arriba, y hoy seré aborto de carreta, y me pondrá Justina como nuevo de puro frisado con su azotina. (331)

Hey comrade, what was all that about 'I shall rise again like the phoenix from the ashes Justina has created with the divine rigor with which she has burnt the three potencies of my soul'? It's more like 'I will be born today with considerable pain from the belly of a cart, head first and feet up — a mis-carriage — and Justina will make a new man of me with her sheer whippings.<sup>41</sup>

A further example of the rejuvenating effects of the goddess as stern judgement — following the honey (excrement) basket scene — is Justina's use of the verb 'despachar' (to 'dispatch', or less commonly, 'give birth') when referring to her role as

<sup>41</sup>Compare with other instances in the novel where punishing female mother-cum-landlady figures— either Justina herself or other 'mesoneras' (516)—whip their male victims in a kind of initiation, mortification-purification, or birthing, rite. In the pot of 'honey/excrement-basket' incident, for example, the excrement-covered boy is whipped through the streets by the 'empedernidísima mesonera' ('inveterate landlady') until he 'embocó por la puerta de la ciudad' (516) ('came out of [literally through the mouth/orifice of] the gate of the city'), a process of 'passing through water' — literally and symbolically it is suggested — that results in his being well-received in the inn, earning a 'real y medio' ('a royal and a half') with which he pays his debt (of the basket) to the goddess-landlady. His public mortification ('penitencia') is likened to that of the Inquisition 'and so it was, except that the inquisition was *not holy*' (517) (my emphasis: a further kabbalistic allusion — in the shape of the punishing female Shekhinah of stern judgement — to the divine-female as being allied to the forces of Evil [the Other Side]).

teller of tales, as having to '*despachar* otros mejores cuentos.' ('dispatch other better tales'), and to the student as having been '*despachado*' (518: my emphasis) 'dispatched' by the punishing *mesonera*. The female voice is once again the agent of rebirth, the messenger/midwife of new life. The difficulty of this process is made clear both in relation to the 'fullero' ('cheat') who undergoes a painful if purifying punishment at the hands of the landlady of the inn because of the unpaid bill (516-17), and indirectly to Justina herself. Guessing at (the verb '*adivinando*' ['guessing'/'predicting'], employed ubiquitously in the text by Justina in relation to herself, punningly underlines her divine identity, and stresses her divinatory powers) the commotion taking place in the inn adjacent to Saint Ann's Gate,<sup>42</sup> where the landlady is 'dispatching' the 'fullero', Justina does not want to return through the gate (a traditional symbol of the feminine), because, she claims, it is extremely stupid (literally a 'superjackassthing') not to flee from the place that once meant damage and danger.

The motif of wholeness, therefore, and the balance or equilibrium that it sustains, is undoubtedly one of the main themes, if not the central theme, of Justina's narrative. The myriad ways in which she expresses wholeness, or completeness, as the distinguishing mark of the divine feminine, and its opposite, the implicit lack of wholeness that the repression of the feminine brings with it, gives consistency and cogency to her narrative. Indeed Justina's exploits, her '*burlas*', '*engaños*', '*embustes*' (all synonyms for tricks, deceptions, wiles, etc.), are merely different names to describe the only means at her disposal to find a voice within a (legal) cultural discourse that, left to itself, silences her. Her '*burlas*' are the basis of her whole narrative style which can be described as a sustained strategy to articulate (and therefore achieve in language) balance, peace, and harmony as the concomitant of (divine) wholeness; as a corrective measure to restore the divine-feminine to her rightful place alongside the divine-masculine. Unlike the male imaginary that covers up its real — that is, maternal — origins and deifies the male line in a gesture of overcompensation, Justina is at pains to reveal her (whole) royal-divine descent, both

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<sup>42</sup>The reference to Mary's mother, Saint Ann, serves to further emphasise the mother-daughter line.

paternal and maternal, and this means that she indirectly gives prominence to what is otherwise hidden, the feminine. Throwing into relief this central theme of a whole and harmonious 'both-and' are the countless examples of Justina demonstrating the simplistic and reductive nature of what Goethe's Werther famously deplored as inadequate responses to the realities of human living,<sup>43</sup> and what Irigaray has called phallogocentric 'either-or' stabilities. For example, when writing of her beloved Lozano she declares her intention, not only to say the 'gracias y partes de mi novio' (721) ('the charms and parts of my beloved'), but also his 'tachas' ('faults'). Her use of 'partes' ('parts') here to describe his talents and attributes implies that she wishes to present him as a whole (as in the Scottish expression, 'man o' pairts') and therefore, real, person, for 'aunque más digan de un hombre que es como un oro, nunca es oro acrisolado' (721) ('although more often they may say of a man that he is like gold, it is never pure gold'). Justina, like Irigaray, equates lack or flaw with the feminine, that which is excluded from male discourse, but which is necessary for a whole (and wholesome), true-to-life, image, embracing both light and dark, both beauty and ugliness.

Justina constantly reiterates that it is with the dark, the ugly, the poor, valueless and disinherited that she (as woman) particularly identifies. She declares, in relation to her style of writing, that she is no weaver of fine silk (615) but: 'soy relatera ensarta piojos, y si tomo pluma en la mano, es para hacer borrones (615)' ('I am a relater of linking fleas, and if I take the quill in the hand, it is to make stains'). She takes as her symbols those of the Shekhinah: the culturally-devalued moon, the thorns on the plants, the summer, season of ripening, and the earthly and venomous animals (the snakes), which, she insists, all have their rightful place in the (whole) divine scheme. Her aim is to give prominence to, and shed light on, the darkened face of the feminine. She tells the reader that, although ugly, her story is equally valuable (sellable, as she puts it) as one explicitly about beauty, precisely because it is 'con arte'

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<sup>43</sup>H.A., 6, p.43.

(90) ('with art'), in other words, skillfully drawn.<sup>44</sup> She claims that her particular style is 'necessarily' the product of her essential self as (human and divine) pícaro: 'siendo pícaro, es forzoso pintarme con manchas y mechas ... venta y monte, a uso de la mandilandinga' (91) ('being 'pícaro' it is necessary to paint myself with [both] stains and highlights...inn and mountain, in the picaresque style'). Therefore, in keeping with her holistic 'picaresque' style, her concern with painting the whole picture, she intends to root her identity and therefore legitimize it, in the dual aspects of the Goddess's status in the cultural imaginary: both her positive and her negative characteristics, both her human and her divine aspects, and both her feminine and her masculine attributes, as two sides of the same coin. So, for example, after introducing her mother to her 'brother reader', she anticipates (literally 'intuits') his casting her in the 'molde' (mould or matrix) of the diabolic feminine created by the male imaginary,<sup>45</sup> here invoked in the image of the Bermuda island feared by mariners because of the dangers involved in navigating it:

Yo, hermano lector, ya adivino<sup>46</sup> que en oyendo quién fue mi madre, te has de santiguar de mí como de la Bermuda. (207)

I, brother reader, already guess (predict) that on hearing who my mother was, you will have to bless yourself against me, as you do against the Bermuda (island).

Justina presents her female genealogy as validation and justification for her life, for she is a chip off the old block: 'tal fue la hija como la madre' (207: marginal note) ('like mother like daughter'). Her mother is the fecund mould or 'womb' that shaped her and bore her: 'soy fruta de aquel árbol y terrón de aquella vena' (207) ('I am fruit of that tree, and crystallization of that vein'). A conscious awareness of the debt to the

<sup>44</sup>This echoes the characteristic 'apology' of Golden Age writers' Prologues to the Reader. (I am grateful to Professor Gareth Walters for bringing to my attention the relevance here of this contemporary context.)

<sup>45</sup>See, too, references to 'another (mechanical, i.e. man-made) Celestina' (207-8).

<sup>46</sup>The widespread use of this verb in the text (meaning 'to guess') serves to underline punningly in Spanish the human-divine nature of her narrative.

maternal-feminine is essential to the process of maturation/individuation, for it implies the differentiating between self and mother which is a prerequisite for a successful entry into discourse for woman, and avoids the 'blurring' of the mother-daughter relationship that Irigaray warns against,<sup>47</sup> and which Justina herself alludes to in referring to her life in the inn as a time when she was merely a 'mesonera con tutores' ('landlady with tutors'), dancing to her mother's tune (235); a time, therefore, when she had no real autonomy, no life of her own (and certainly no voice of her own). But she pays the debt to her mother by acknowledging the qualities and skills that she inherits from her, and the wise advice and cunning tricks that she learns from her. Justina's acknowledgement of her indebtedness to her mother sows the seeds of her growth in self-awareness and becoming-herself in culture and discourse, a process that mirrors the kabbalistic emanation process. Her story is presented as a journey through life, a (holy) pilgrimage, with both joyful triumphs and painful setbacks, but it is one which inevitably sprouts small off-shoots: the subtly externalized representation of her inner growth. Consider again, for example, her reference to 'el retoño' (459) ('new growth') which appears 9 years after her encounter with Pavón — a number which is significant in relation to the organic growth-period of the child in the mother's womb. For the verbal duel that takes place in the Chapter entitled 'De las dos cartas graciosas' (441-457) ('Of the two amusing letters') between Justina and the trickster revolves around each claiming to have 'given birth to' the better trick at the other's expense, summed up in Justina's statement in her letter in response to his: 'Preciáisos de que vuestra burla parió la mía: Ahí veréis vos que me sirvo yo de vos como de potra paridera' (449) ('So you think your trick gave birth to mine. You will see that I use you like a foaling mare'). It is precisely this opportunity that Pavón gives her (with his threatening and accusatory letter) to respond and express — in the form of a letter — the powerful and (for him) devastating words (nine years later) that brings her to the conscious realization (via the written account) of her own growth in

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<sup>47</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Ethique de la différence sexuelle*, p. 66. See, too, Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 62.

self-confidence and self-esteem which she couches in (characteristic) terms of a process of giving birth to herself.

In recounting her precious maternal inheritance, Justina tells the reader(s) that her mother singles her out among her sisters as her heiress because of her intelligence and wit. Her mother, herself alluded to by Justina as 'flor de mesoneras' (556) ('flower of landladies'), tells Justina that she is the culmination of her lineage, and, in a clear allusion to her precocious intelligence: 'Justinica, tú serás flor de tu linaje, que cuando a mí me deslumbras, a más de cuatro encandilarás' (213) ('Justinica, you will be the flower of your lineage, for if you dazzle me, you will inspire more than four'). Justina highlights her own uniqueness and superiority in relation to her two sisters, for even compared to their considerable intelligence, she was an 'águila caudal' ('golden eagle'), and whereas they could never see through her strategies, she was able to spot theirs a mile off (193). Wisdom is the powerful (divine) legacy she inherits from her mother who is like the eagle who passes it on to her eaglets by having their humid and innocent eyes dried by the sun:<sup>48</sup>

... para que vean la caza de lejos y se abalancen a ella, por ser esta propiedad única del águila, la cual, desde lo altísimo de las nubes, ve al cordero en la tierra y los peces en el agua de los profundos ríos, y bajando con la furia de un rayo, divide con las alas el agua y saca los peces del abismo. (213)

... so they can see the prey from afar and swoop upon it, as this is a unique property of the eagle, which, from high up in the clouds, sees the lamb on the land/earth and the fish in the water of the deep rivers, and, descending with the fury of a ray, divides the water with its wings and takes out the fish from the abyss.

Wisdom is described in terms of seeing the whole from afar—a god-like position that is compared to the eagle's view, and which allows it to descend from the heights and focus on its prey. Like the allusion to the dangerous Bermuda island, (Mother) Nature

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<sup>48</sup>This is the source of the dry-humid leitmotif in the novel. For Justina's dry-eyed wisdom and penetrating insight is a result of a life lived in acknowledgement of her mother's inheritance.

is viewed here as having (apparently) negative aspects, which because they are contained within Her wholeness — a wholeness that is related to the divine-feminine — are transformed into positive qualities.

The relationship that binds Justina's mother to her daughters is one of love; a love that is expressed, in a variant of the Petrarchan topos, through her mother's eyes—significantly 'las dos niñas de sus ojos' (208) ('the two pupils [or girls] of her eyes'); and eyes are 'como niñas, en fin, parleras' (112) ('like girls, of course, talkative') — which are used to send her daughters meaningful and astute messages with tactical advice aimed at teaching them how to navigate the 'mar de dificultades' (213) ('sea of difficulties') in which they, as women in patriarchal culture, find themselves. Unlike her father's monologues which speak of self-interest — the rule of the father upheld at the real cost to the mother-daughter — Justina's mother's advice amounts to a series of *parler-femme* strategies, which enables the daughters to negotiate the material-commercial world that is the inn, significantly 'sin haber enajenado ni perdido nada' (212) ('without having alienated or lost anything'); without, that is, having alienated or lost anything of their real (divine) identity. The mother's strategy highlights the cost to their female identity that the father's one-sided advice exacts, and which her strategies aim at compensating for. This is done, Justina assures us, at the very real risk of incurring the physical wrath of the father. The mother's influential and fundamental role in Justina's early development is crucial to her later success in realizing her identity; and Justina, herself, acknowledges this debt to her mother when, in León, she pities the young 'boquirrubias' ('naive girls'), she calls 'mocitas de munición' (389) ('resident prostitutes') in the inn because of their lack of a 'buena madre que yo tuve' (389) ('good mother that I had'), their lack of the wise teaching that her mother had given her, in short '¡Cuitaditas, no tenían maestra!' (390) ('Poor little things, they had no master/mistress'). As a consequence they lacked the style (literally, salt) and know-how that comes from experience and a good teacher, so that the sinful intentions of these 'parvolitas' (390) ('little fools') as she affectionately calls them, were utterly transparent. Their naivety is due to the fact that their

innocent eyes have not been opened to the (sexual) motivations of the male clients, and that they do not understand that 'comer sin plato' ('to eat without a plate') refers to them as the 'food' which the clients intend to consume. The tone of Justina's description of the young women is that of the older and more experienced (Celestinesque) woman who looks on the 'beatillas' ('bless them, little innocents!') with maternal compassion and more than a hint of gentle, stylish, sophisticated amusement at their naivety.

But the healthy mother-daughter relationship based on reciprocal love has its darker side, for — inimical to the reigning ideology — it cannot be openly acknowledged. So female solidarity—the acknowledgement of the debt to, fidelity to, and respect for the mother-daughter genealogy between women—requires mutual trust, for while it brings with it mutual benefit, it also brings with it shared punishment and suffering if discovered, a real threat of danger which is expressed through the pervasive leitmotif of the bread and pastry as alluding (indirectly) to violence and real physical threat.

La verdad es que [mi madre] me quería mucho, y debíamelo que le presté mucha masa en que empanar secretos tan graves, que el menor que mi padre husmeara la despenara.... (208)

The truth is that [my mother] loved me deeply, and she owed it to me, for I lent her a lot of dough in which to hide secrets so grave, that had my father even suspected, he would have broken her legs.

The idea of the violently-censored and silenced female voice excluded from culture, and, therefore, wholly lacking visibility or value in cultural terms is given prominence in the text, beginning with Justina's account of her early childhood. In keeping with her style, Justina extracts goodness, and benefit from what is unnatural (evil). So, for example, the repression of the female voice (here her mother's) gives way to her mother's consummate skill in expressing herself and communicating with her daughters with her eyes. (208). Later, her mother is silenced and prevented from



exposing the truth about the murder of her husband at the hands of the 'caballero' ('gentleman') he was cheating. The latter takes over the husband's place within the family and threatens to accuse the mother of 'throwing her husband to the dogs' if she speaks the truth (224). The interchangeability here of the male guardian-protector figure suggests women's lack of a legal voice, a position which makes them vulnerable as pawns and scapegoats in a violent and competitive male culture. Once again, a justice-bringing, a compensatory female voice articulates intense inner growth as a direct result of reduced external channels of communication, for it is precisely Justina's and her mother-sisters' lack of (outer) cultural space to express themselves that strengthens the association in the text of inward retention and maturation (e.g., 'madurar los tragantones pasados' (234) ('to mature their past swallowings'). Paradoxically, the more contained and suppressed the female voice is, the more eloquently and expressively it is voiced by other (indirect) symbolic means, as we see in Justina's reference to the way her mother's eyes spoke volumes, even in death:

la miraba a los ojos y me parecía que me hablaba con ellos tanto y tan a menudo, que el encaje dellos parecía jaula de papagayo. (232)

I looked at her eyes and it seemed to me that she spoke to me with them so much and in such detail that their socket seemed like a parrot's cage.

Justina's inherited finely-tuned skill at reading and interpreting the language of even her mother's already lifeless, but nevertheless for her still meaningfully pregnant, body is transposed to her relationship with the male reader whose lips she reads and interprets as demanding of her that she tell him the (hi)story of her time at the inn 'in particular detail' (235). The body-language between mother and daughter is transformed here, following her mother's death, into the erotic exchange between Justina and her male reader-voyeur who offers her money to reveal the 'particulars' of her (implicitly bodily) story-self. Justina seductively chides his stupidity at imagining

that her life in the inn 'con tutores' (235) ('with tutors') — could be described as her own life at all, dancing as she was 'al son que me hacía mi madre' ('to her mother's tune') (235), and living as she was '(in her mother's shadow)' (235). Deliberately and effectively mimicking the role of the tantalizingly seductive woman-in-culture who when offered money feels obliged to reveal something of herself, Justina playfully exposes the mediating role of money in patriarchy's male-female relationships, one which contrasts starkly with the centrality of love in the mother-daughter relationship:

¿Dinero das? Pues si tanto me importunas, habré de pintar algo, aunque no sea sino el dedo del gigante, que por ahí sacarás quién fue Calleja. (235)

Money you offer? Well, if you importune me to that extent, I will have to paint something, even if it is none other than the finger of the giant, for in that way you will gather who Calleja was [presumably a folk-mythological female figure].

The links between money and desire-love in respect of relationships, in particular the male-female relationship, makes it clear, that money has usurped the place of love in mediating human sexual relationships — an imbalance that Justina's female voice aims to correct. She does this by exercising her rights to a fair share of money and power firstly via the inheritance she legally wins back for herself, and then by differentiating between the love relationship and the cultural form that it takes in marriage, the former having little to do with money, and the latter everything, in that, in Justina's case, it provides the means whereby she gains legal protection for herself and her inheritance from the man she marries. Justina, in her down-to-earth style, corrects this imbalance, by combining in her relationship with Lozano, both a loving relationship and practical, legal, protection for her money, the symbol of her autonomy as an individual in her own right. By marrying him, she ensures that their

'interests' are mutual, and mutually beneficial. The either-or question of money usurping the place of love in relationships becomes a balanced, harmonious both-and in Justina's inclusive style.

The inn in which Justina and her sisters are raised is clearly a symbol of the Shekhinah-Malkuth's realm, the natural-cultural world, for certain epithets that she attaches to it — 'purgatory of purses, university of the world, riverbank of many rivers' — express its in-between, its transitional status, midway between birth and death, while other descriptions — 'sponge of virtues, enchanted cave, sweet grape-harvest' — suggest Shekhinah's female role as landlady and container-womb of the nurturing divine goodness of mother earth: mouth, (new) vessel, collector of divine goodness, and holder of (divine) transformative powers. Indeed, the highest praise she reserves for the inn is in comparing it to (Mother) earth, 'madre de los vivos' ('mother of the living'), and to the water as 'espejo en quien nos remiramos todos' (191-92) ('mirror in which we all look at ourselves again'); while she later refers to the inn as her (implicitly spiritual) centre telling her reader to be patient: 'que me verás ciudadana y en el mesón, que es mi centro' (518) ('for you will see me, a citizen, and in the inn, that is my centre'). But on a more down-to-earth note, Justina tells us that the inn's cultural world was not fully ('de todo punto': literally, 'from all points') established until she and her two sisters were 'good girls ready and eager to serve' (193) ('buenas mozas y recias para servir'):

un mesón muele los lomos a una mujer, si no hay quien la ayude a llevar la carga (193).

an inn grinds the back of a woman if there is no-one [implicitly no woman] to help her bear the burden.

The inference is clear. The foundation/establishment 'en perfección' ('in perfection') of the patriarchal culture of her father's inn depends for its 'completion' on the suppression and exploitation of the feminine, and of women, who physically form the

(hidden) foundation, the solid body-ground upon which such (visible) 'perfection' is erected. The notion of measured completeness, as opposed to organic wholeness, is achieved at the cost of the maternal-feminine. The rhetorical emphasis on all-round perfection and erection suggests the installation of patriarchal values and discourse dependent for their own stability and completion (and validity) on the firm foundation which is the woman, whose full humanity is (in the process) negated by the denatured, dehumanising role as beast-of-burden, assigned to her and imposed on her from above. Justina's dry-eyed, but clearly painful, account of the inception of patriarchal values, with its emphasis on installation/foundation, erection, perfection, and completion, reveals the morphological marks of the male (patriarchal) unconscious imagination: a violent rigidity and lack of creativity summed up in the word 'perfección' ('perfection') that is in sharp rhetorical contrast to the idea of female fecundity expressed by Justina and encapsulated in her notion of 'entereza' or wholeness.

While Justina, her mother, and her sisters are subjected to the physical abuse and restrictions of patriarchal power, physically bearing the burden of serving the patriarchal microcosm of the inn-cum-home in their roles as mothers, nurturers, and sexual providers, 'mis hermanos todos se fueron a romper por el mundo, y asentáronse en la soldadesca'<sup>49</sup> (193) ('my brothers all went off to see the world and settled in the military life'). Thanks to the women, literally on the backs of the women, as the donkey-image suggests, the patriarchal sons have the freedom to explore the wider world, and to continue to erect their empires elsewhere (193). The choice of verbs here, 'romper' ('to break') is a ubiquitous verb in the text used almost exclusively in relation to men's actions or attitudes, and suggests the destructive tendencies inherent in their one-sided activities. Justina assures us that her father's 'house-rules' — announced by way of a manifesto at the inauguration of the inn, dedicated to 'los huéspedes' ('male guests'), and imprinted indelibly on her memory — are aimed

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<sup>49</sup>MM, p.1194: 'Un conjunto de soldados, particularmente de los que cometen desmanes' ('A group of soldiers, particularly of those who commit outrageous abuses of power').

exclusively at his female offspring, and are unambiguously a source of unspoken and unexpressed pain:

mientras el pulmón me sirviere de abanillo, no se me olvidará la plática que nos hizo nuestro padre a sus hijas el día que puso el mesón en perfección. (194)

while my lung serves me as a little fan, I will never forget the speech that our father made to his daughters the day he brought the inn to completion.

The inn's price-list and certificate about the barley are printed and posted high on the wall of the inn, and no coffer, bench, or footstool (194) is permitted to be beside the wall to provide a means of reaching them. These precautions have a traditional, comic, relatively innocuous purpose — namely that customers are unable to verify that the prices they are being charged are the official ones. But there is another, hidden motivation in relation to these house-rules. For it is clear — in as much as the father's 'speech' is addressed exclusively to the daughters, and in as much as the pieces of furniture, that are banned from being beside the wall, are traditional symbols of the female<sup>50</sup> — that her father's injunctions are to remain untouched and unassailable by the patriarchal wife and daughters: 'Hijas: la carta del mesón y la cédula de la postura pública de la cebada esté siempre alta y firme' (194) ('Daughters: the inn's price list and certificate in respect of the barley are to be placed high up and permanent'). The voice of the Father is simply to be obeyed.

One of Justina's most remarkable stylistic features is her expression of the sheer pleasure she takes in expressing herself, and this pleasure is conveyed to the reader in two fundamental ways: first, through her constantly alluding to her body as playing a vital role in her self-expression, and secondly by the playful way with which she handles the physicality of her linguistic medium, appearing to set words free from

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<sup>50</sup>See J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p.52.

their rigid semantic import by exploiting their sound-look properties to the full. Many of the expressions she uses to refer to her words (such as 'aires bola')<sup>51</sup> suggest the playfulness, airy lightness, seductiveness, and extreme subtlety, so characteristic of López de Úbeda's contemporaries, to whom such playfulness is second nature.<sup>52</sup> But Justina's playfulness can also convey deeply felt emotion and profound truths; all expressive of her woman's touch. She is, of course, equally skilled at re-producing its opposite — the heavy, clumsy, ugly, and repellant, style of the unsuitable suitors, for example, whose belching overtures she finds so 'inappropriate'. When speaking to her unsophisticated apprentice Bertol, she cannot speak to him with her usual witty 'coded' ('en cifra') style because, she says, she may as well be speaking in Arabic, so she has to say it 'pan por pan' (567) ('to spell it out') before he understands. In keeping with the female imaginary's reflection of the 'morphological marks of the female body'<sup>53</sup>—a style that is characterized by fluid, non-linear, disruptive processes being set in motion—Justina's pen, the symbol of her empowerment and the instrument of her style, her *parler-femme*—like her readers-interlocutors—takes on a multiplicity of different identities, an expression of her dynamic sense of empowerment and delight in her chameleon-like fluid self-identity: 'porque para de lejos, me servía de lanza; para de cerca, de trompa de elefante; para en pie, de azote, y para asentado, de sceptro' (329) ('from afar [the pen] served me as a lance; from near, an elephant's trunk; on foot, a whip; and seated, a sceptre') — a series of identities which she claims give her pleasure by confusing them [her vanquished abductors] (329). For pleasure, the fulfilment of desire, is the mark of the (feminine) imaginary; and Justina 'jugaba de rebenque floridamente' (329) ('flourished her pen-cum-whip with rhetorical virtuosity'), rejoicing in her chameleon-like qualities, her floriferous style, her skill,

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<sup>51</sup>Rey Hazas comments on this playfully cryptic phrase, p.747, namely that it evokes the speaker's pleasure. (Cf. Irigaray, *The Irigaray Reader*, pp.179-81; 185-86.)

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Bruno M. Damiani, *Francisco López de Úbeda*, p.96: 'Úbeda epitomizes...artistic currents of the time', i.e. *culteranismo* and *conceptismo*, and 'that ingenious stylistic preciousness that is the hallmark of Baroque writings' (p.93). Damiani's list of examples of conceits, puns, invented words and expressions, and other rhetorical devices used in the novel (pp.96-110) closely follows Francis Trice, 'A Literary Study of *La Pícaro Justina*', pp. 128-82, where a much fuller inventory is provided.

<sup>53</sup>Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp.179-80.

particularly in writing, at *parler-femme* — a challenge indeed to the instrumental, reductive, male gaze, unable to grasp the dynamic quality of female specificity.

One of the most striking techniques Justina uses to speak her female bodily self is her constant reference to (parts of) her body as mediating her thought-feelings. She mimics patriarchy's view of women as brainless, by requesting special permission to be a little 'cuerda' ('sane/wise'), to speak 'con seso' (236) ('with a mind'):

para enjuagarme los dientes con una consideración que me brinca en el colodrillo por salir a danzar en la boca a ringla con los dieciocho. (236)

in order to rinse my teeth with a consideration that is playing at the back of my neck , and is about to come out and dance in my mouth in line with the eighteen (teeth).

Her female voice expresses pleasure, and the sound of her pleasure is recreated for the reader and for herself via allusions to her laughter playing in her body and making warbling/vibrating sounds in her teeth (245), a sound that she, in turn, savours so that her pleasure is doubled, as it were, by her heightened awareness of it. This doubling up, this re-creation of pleasure, which amounts to a self-pleasuring, or *jouissance* in Irigaray's (and Barthes') terms, is a common, indeed key, feature of Justina's narrative style; the sublimating powers of the imagination, which recreates and heightens the experience of the original pleasure. One instance of this is when Justina, having subdued and punished her abductors, whips them and then turns her ear to 'perceive with pleasure' the sound of the whipping (328). And Justina identifies this capacity of hers to enjoy herself reflectively as having been inherited via her female genealogy, a life-enhancing bond that has the capacity endlessly to renew her pleasure. Thus, alluding to her two key 'gems of inclinations' (236) — her pleasure in dancing and her desire for freedom (245) — she claims to have inherited them from the One [woman] who gave birth to her once and 'a thousand times returned her to her belly 'to renew the tangles that she sculpted in me at the beginning' (236):

ahora me confirmo en que todas las cosas tornan al principio de do salieron. La tierra se va al centro, que es su principio; el agua al mar, que es su madre; la mariposa torna a morir en la pavesa, de quien fue hecha; el sol torna cada veinte y cuatro horas al punto donde nació y fue criado; los viejos se tornan a la edad que dio principio a su ser; la espiga madura y abundante de granos se tuerce e inclina por tornar a la tierra de do salió, y el ave fénix vuelve a morir en las cenizas que dieron principio a su vida. Y el hombre ... ¿Dónde vas a parar, Justina? (237)

now I confirm myself in that all the things return to the beginning from whence they came. The earth goes to the centre, which is its beginning/principle; the water to the sea which is its mother; the moth returns to die in the burning soot of which it was made; the sun returns (turns) every twenty-four hours to the point where it was born and was raised; the old people return to the age that gave beginning to their being; the wheat (feminine) matures and abundant with grains (masculine) bends itself and inclines to return to the earth from whence it came, and the phoenix returns to die in the ashes which gave beginning/principle to its life. And the man...Where are you going to end, Justina?

Justina affirms the validity of her self-becoming by aligning it with Mother Earth, the archetypal maternal-feminine as the origin of life and death, the necessary touchstone of her ongoing, recursive process of self-renewal and growth. In fact, Justina finds so many fecund paradigms of this principle in the natural world that she has to put an end to her natural (equally fecund) gift of the gab, and to the ever-increasing elaboration of rhetorical parallelisms, and she stops herself in mid-flow.

Justina is not only adept at winning verbal battles, she literally uses her body in her battles with her male opponents. One example of the way she uses her face, for example, occurs in an encounter with Pavón in the Number 'Del desenojo astuto' ('Of the astute appeasement') when she turns the table on him by mimicking the Gorgon-Medusa-like vision of the demonized feminine. Confident of frightening her opponent who has struck a blow at her with his two fingers hidden in his fist, she



reminds herself (and the reader) that 'no era yo la primer mesonera<sup>54</sup> que triunfó de hominicos' (605) ('I was not the first landlady who triumphed over insignificant little men'). Justina gestures like a wild cat thereby stopping her opponent in his tracks and, in a typically playful use of the body of language, the 'enojo' ('anger') is 'deformed' into 'desenojo' ('dis-anger' or appeasement).<sup>55</sup> She recreates her own body-language in the bodily detail of the language, as she describes the way in which she retracts her bodily parts (here, her eyes and arms) , as if they were a formidable and very effective weapon:

Retraje el brazo, eché a mis espantadores ojos las cortinas de mis párpados y plegué el pendón de mis extendidas cejas. (605)

I retracted the arm, closed the curtains of my lids on my frightening eyes and folded the banner of my extended eyebrows.

The striking alliterative play on 'párpados', 'plegué' and 'pendón' associates (in the same non-logical way as Goethe identifies 'being led' with 'freedom' in the writing of the 'Beautiful Soul'), the human body ('párpados') with the instrumentality of heroic action ('pendón'). The result of their encounter and her strategy is success, for she loses her fear and he his anger (605).

Justina re-traces the (life-renewing) connections with the maternal-feminine via her own relationship with her mother in order to build a solid foundation of positive maternal-female attributes (love, wisdom, relatedness, wholeness) — of which she herself can give guarantees of validity and authenticity, for they are founded on real experience — to use as a positive self-image with which to confront her negative dark shadow-sister: Death. And perhaps the most horrific depiction in

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<sup>54</sup>A ubiquitous epithet in the text, used to express her female genealogy.

<sup>55</sup>The pervasive exploitation of the physical morphology of language in the novel — so reminiscent of the 'chaotic activity' of Zoharic style (Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, p.298) — is paralleled in other Spanish Golden Age texts. Cf. R.M. Price, *Quevedo: Los Sueños* (Grant & Cutler: London, 1983), pp.62-63, for Quevedo's wordplay 'at the level of the sound of words'; and Paul Julian Smith, 'Writing Women in Golden Age Spain: Saint Teresa and María de Zayas', *MLN*, 102 (1987), 220-40: 'At a smaller linguistic level [Teresa's] unrealizable urge towards the dissolution of contraries can be seen in the use of chiasmus at the moments of greatest tension' (pp.231-32).

the text of the violent, death-dealing, and dehumanizing suppression of the maternal-feminine in patriarchal culture is the grotesque description of her mother's (symbolic) death. The black humour employed in the treatment of the spectacle of Justina's mother challenging the other woman (Death) for having cuckolded her by killing her husband, and then having her own mouth and throat closed by Death becomes increasingly more violent, grotesque, and macabre as the incident unfolds. Its climax in the image of her mother's final (four) hours must surely be one of the most horrific and profoundly disturbing portrayals in Spanish literature of human pain inflicted and human suffering endured. It is undoubtedly the most sinister depiction of the dark mother-figures which populate the novel. It symbolizes the distorting and denaturing effect of the patriarchal imaginary which transforms the notion of Death as part of the wholeness of Creation (and beyond good and evil) to a violent, distressing image of human suffering.

This scene is depicted in Justina's serenely comic voice as a powerful imaginary re-enactment of the violent transition from a matriarchal to a patriarchal discourse, seen from both a male and a female (psychological) perspective. The scene begins with Justina's mother setting about some half-cooked sausages, pork loins, and veal legs roasting on the fire. Her pose 'astride her spit' is reminiscent of Justina's aggressive launching of her story-attack, pen in hand. The sausages, and other pieces of meat, are personified and weep and wail in terror like souls in torment, protesting their immaturity (only half-roasted) and vulnerability (nakedness) and consequent lack of benefit to anyone. Her mother (enacting matriarchal law) orders them to obey 'what has been decreed', at which point the sausages, melting out of sheer terror, appeal to their master who, being king and at no one's beck and call, does not appear. The mother, at the sight of their rebellion, launches her attack, unhorses them and incarcerates most of them in the prison of her stomach (229). At this point, the butcher enters to defend his own; the mother swallows them in such quantities and so quickly that she blocks up her passageways to the extent that she cannot speak nor breath. The butcher asks her to give an account (literally, a reason) of herself but at

the 'other' door (implicitly anus), for the first was blocked with sausages. The subsequent grotesque descriptions — which depict the mother variously stuffed with sausages and with one protruding from her mouth 'like a serpent' with its tongue hanging out: like a 'new-born mouth with uncut umbilical cord'; like a 'snake at the mouth of a warren' (230); (to the butcher) 'like an ambush and den of thieves', and finally, like a 'sausage sepulchre' — depict typical (culturally legitimized) projections of the monster images created by male fear of the all-devouring Terrible Mother.<sup>56</sup> The butcher and his servants, angry at being 'cheated of their sausages' and 'robbed of their (phallic?) authority' conduct a concerted attack with a range of phallic weapons and instruments inserted at both ends of her body which results in her death at the end of an agonizing four-hour period (231). A less surrealistic (and less graphic) version of patriarchy's seizure of power from women is portrayed when Justina's brothers return from Italy and 'shamefully and shamelessly' 'nos tomaron a mí y a mis hermanas los cetros del imperio' (234) ('took from me and my sisters the sceptres of the empire') as well as the keys and money, she adds in her typical fashion of combining and linking both the (rather grandiosely) symbolic and the real, or, one could say, of updating and revitalizing the traditional commonplaces by inserting her own newly-created symbols in kabbalistic style.

Later in her (hi)story, Justina suffers the consequences of her courageous departure from the traditional role(s) assigned to women in a patriarchal culture, not only at the hands of men, but also of other (man-made) women, who — still hopelessly enmeshed in the psycho-social entrapment in which they find themselves and fearful of male censorship — are subject to envy and ambivalence, and misdirect culturally legitimated anger and aggression towards the self-made and speaking woman. It is implied that the envy, and lack of solidarity, that Justina (unwittingly) incites in her female cousins is a result of her expressed disdain for their complicity in patriarchy's suppression of the feminine: 'mis primillas tenían por gran primor el

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<sup>56</sup>Mother-symbols are characterized by an interesting ambivalence: the mother sometimes appears as the image of nature, and vice-versa; but the Terrible Mother is a figure signifying death.' J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p.218.

servir a mis primos de estropajo, y así las trataban ellos como a estropajos' (270) ('my little [female] cousins felt it was a great honour to serve my [male] cousins as doormats [literally, 'scrubbers'], and so they were treated like doormats'). An example of her audacious appropriation of traditionally male language and behaviour comes round the camp fire at her first pilgrimage having had her imagination fired by Bacchus. Justina clearly takes the lead, sets the tone, and takes control of the conversation by posing riddles for the assembled cousins. References to her 'orgullosa pujanza' (272) ('proud vigour'), her giving 'vado al virotismo' ('show of machismo'), not to mention the risqué nature of her jokes and riddles, evince her inappropriate use of (culturally) exclusively male language and customs, a kind of macho-posturing that she later quite deliberately mimics on her victorious return to her village after she defeats her abductors, referring to it as 'inciense macho' (334) ('male incense') — the tendency, that is, for men hyperbolically to embellish and enhance their reputations, a trick she herself strategically adopts to compensate for her own, potentially 'scorched', reputation. In other words, she learns consciously to manipulate (male) rhetoric in a timely and effective manner, for her own (female) benefit.

Justina, herself, is given a timely reminder of her own mortality in this Number 'Del convite alegre y triste' (269-83) ('Of the happy and sad invitation') in the form of an ego-deflating attack on her by her (male and female) cousins. Her vulnerability to such attacks derives from the defect of her quality of self-assertion: her egotistic blindness to their position and point of view; a weakness that leaves her open to humiliation. Delighting in shocking and baffling her assembled cousins with her risqué riddles and crude jokes, and basking in their (apparently) admiring laughter, she fails to notice their underlying animosity at her show-casing her superior verbal wit at their expense, and their envy of her 'buen entendimiento' ('good understanding'). Her blindness and insensitivity to their real feelings and thoughts (anger and envy) prove to be her weakness, for in attempting to belittle them by displaying her superior (and indirectly their inferior) wit, her joke at their expense

backfires, and allows two of her cousins (one male and one female) to entrap and humiliate her, using, significantly, her own strategies and material: 'Corríne de verme cogida en mi trampa y empanada en mi masa.' (275) ('I was embarrassed to see myself caught in my trap and battered in my dough'). The albeit momentary effect on Justina of her cousin knowing the answer to her riddle, and of her subsequent ritual humiliation by all her relatives, male and female, is that she is left, for once, speechless (275 and 277) and thus disarmed, and cruelly reminded of her mortality. The elegaic leitmotif in this Number: 'No hay placer que dure, Ni humana voluntad que no se mude' (282) ('there is no pleasure that lasts, nor human will that does not change') becomes in the mouth of her male cousin: 'Acuérdate, Justina, que eres conejo, y en conejo te has de volver' (278) ('Remember, Justina, that you are rabbit, and that you will (re)turn to rabbit'), emphasising her merely animal mortality. Her cousin's swift and crushing jibe that she and all women are 'monas' ('monkeys/drunks') contains all the negative connotations of the witless, clowning-mimicking monkey that dances to everyone's tune and for everyone's amusement. With this insulting remark he succeeds in 'paying her out' and silencing her 'como si tuviera los dientes zurcidos' (278) ('as if her teeth were darned').

But true to her innate survival instinct and chameleon-like ability to adapt to the needs of the moment, Justina dons a different — grave — mask and takes her revenge by mimicking her male cousin's earlier strategy when he invoked her father's memory in an attempt to repress her spontaneous display of pleasure and enjoyment at the fair. Characteristically 'sacando fuerzas de flaqueza' ('drawing strength from weakness') she accuses him of lack of respect for her *mother's* memory, of thinking that just because they had said a mass for her soul, they had the right to laugh as if they would blow the roof off their low house (279). Once again, it is Justina's appeal to her female genealogy, in response to her cousins' envy and aggression, that allows her to come to terms with a necessary stage in her growth process: an awareness of her own mortality (her own version of *momento mori*). Her invocation of the eternal, death-defying, feminine allows her to re-arm herself verbally, and launch a verbal

counterattack. At serious risk of entering the 'melancholy sect', which she describes as the 'heresy of the picaresque life' (281), Justina goes off to dance at the fair making an obscene, defiant gesture — used to ward off evil spirits — at both time and change ('dando dos higas al tiempo y otras tantas a la mudanza' (281) (*giving two fingers to Time and another [two] to Transience*)) aware that 'No hay placer que dure, Ni humana voluntad que no se mude' (282) ('there is no pleasure that lasts, nor human will that does not change'). She sums up this particular episode by making a general statement about the seemingly arbitrary way in which life's fortunes can change and cause a setback, and she uses the pervasive weaving leitmotif to illustrate this:

Un buen decididor o decidora es de casta de lanzadera, la cual aunque muchas veces y mucho tiempo ande aguda y sutilmente sobre los hilos de la tela, pero si por desdicha encuentra en uno solo, aquél la ase y detiene. Así yo, aunque había gran rato dicho con agudeza, topé en este hilo y perdí el hilo. (277)

A good speaker (masculine) or speaker (feminine) is like a shuttle, which, despite having run over the threads of the cloth shrewdly and subtly many times and over a long period, by misfortune, chances upon one (thread) only, and that one catches it and stops it. So it was for me, for although I had spoken for a long time with wit and intelligence, I hit on this particular thread, and I lost the thread.

She compares her life to the dynamic to-ing and fro-ing of the weaving shuttle, a constant interactive movement that is crucial to the creation of the whole tapestry-cloth and to her growth-narrative. Caught in a thread, she is stopped in her tracks and forced to contemplate (albeit only momentarily, for melancholy is anathema to the pícara) the other of her pleasure-seeking enjoyment of life: Death as the silent (ineffable) other of her delight in *parler-femme*. This analogy, of speaking and weaving, reveals Justina's sophisticated awareness of the etymological basis of the concept of 'text'; as a result she is adept at drawing threads of sound and look over the surface of her writing, in the process creating a dense 'texture' of apparently playfully

arbitrary relations which yet are expressive of what would otherwise remain repressed: namely the 'both...and' structure of the felt life in which, for example, apparent (either-or) logical opposites like 'anger' ('*enojo*') and 'appeasement' ('*desenojo*') are, in a polyptoton, made to sound and look quasi-identical in a way that is faithful to the (feminine) ambivalence of human feeling (605)<sup>57</sup>

Justina is at her happiest when dealing with the concerns of this life, rather than speculating on transcendental matters. For example, she delights in exposing the gender-bias inherent in patriarchy's idea of Justice, by showing it to be an ideal to which mere lip-service is paid, especially in respect of women. For she experiences, first-hand, that her own relatives, whom she refers to as 'villanos' ('small-minded'; 'villagers-villains'), have no desire to extend the obligations implied in the concept of justice to include her, for, as she puts it, quoting a commonplace: 'Justicia, y no por mi casa' (271) ('Justice, and not in my house.'). She exposes the double-standards that disadvantage her, an imbalance which she, in exposing it, begins to redress. Similarly, when her relatives confiscate her inheritance before the courts she claims, using the rhetorical figure of *distinctio* to emphasize the injustice of the law in application: 'Para mí fue la justicia justicia, para mis hermanas misericordia (631) ('for me justice was justice, for my sisters [it was] mercy'). When the magistrate Justes de Guevara not only declares her 'desheredada' (631) ('disinherited') but orders her to pay the costs of the scribes, she reiterates the thought, this time employing a vivid metaphorical antithesis that 'Para mí tenía vara de hierro y para mis contrarios de manteca' (631) ('for me [Justice] had a rod of iron, for my opponents, it was made of butter'). The reality that confronts her is that she finds herself 'La Hermana Perseguida' ('the Persecuted Sister') which gives the title to one of the Numbers; persecuted, that is, by her brothers (with the help of her man-made sisters). She finds that her newly-won sense of herself as a person in her own right is fragile and fleeting,

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<sup>57</sup>Drawing on Julia Kristeva, *La Révolution du Langage Poétique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1974), Catherine Davies ('The Return to Mother Cathedral', p.66) has employed the concept of poetry as 'music in letters', which accurately denotes the kabbalistic play on the sound and look of language (crystallized in stylised anagrammatic and acrostic techniques used in mystical speculation; Scholem, *Major Trends*, p.100) that we have found at work in Goethe and López de Ubeda (and which is recommended by Irigaray).

when they attack her with every means they have: mouth, teeth and hands. They condemn her outright as a 'pieza suelta' ('loose piece'), in other words an immoral woman. Justina tries, at first, to reason with them in an effort to persuade them that her freedom is not just to her advantage, but also to theirs, for she could make a good marriage and honour her lineage and their inn as 'casa de los Dieces o de los Justinos' (626) ('House of the Diez's or the Justinos'). She then tries to cajole them by joking that there is no nun in her lineage and that she does not want to be the first, imprisoned between two walls (627). Having tried in vain to heal the rift, she loses her temper, for they begin to watch her every move, speak ill of her, and physically beat her, and all because she has the effrontery to ask for her patrimony ('hacienda'):

¡Ah, interés, interés! Más puedes que la naturaleza, pues ella me dio hermanos y tú me los volvistes culebrones. (628)

Oh interest, interest, you are more powerful than nature, for she gave me brothers and you transformed them into big snakes.

In one of the most startling exploitations in the novel of the bodiliness of the Spanish language, to express the way in which her brothers repress her, take away her pleasures, and summon the whole of the 'hermandad' ('brotherhood') and their weapons against a woman if she makes one small move to assert herself, Justina literally opens up the word brother ('hermano') and then inserts her own interpretation of the word: 'her[ir con la ]mano' ('to injure with the hand'), based on her own experience of brothers:

no hay peores ni más crudos verdugos para una mujer que hermanos. ... Un mal hermano es enemigo como la carne, que no la podemos echar de nosotras. Quien dijo hermano, dijo herir con la mano. (628)

there are no worse nor more crude executioners for a woman than brothers. ... A bad brother is enemy like the flesh that we women cannot cast from us. Whoever said brother, said to wound with the hand.



In her differentiating — 'precious' ('melindrosa') — female voice she makes it clear that it is not all brothers (indirectly, not all men) but only those 'que tienen tan corrompido el amor como el nombre' (628) ('whose love is as corrupt as their name'). With this statement she pinpoints stylistically the distorting, pathologising influence of a one-side patriarchal psychology that corrupts the inherently positive meaning enshrined in the name — 'hermano' meaning 'loving affinity', 'correspondence' and 'harmony' — and endows it with negative and destructive significance. Whereas her brothers are guilty of greed and envy, her sisters are envious at seeing her 'dama y orgullosa de condición' (628) ('a lady and proud of her condition'). She reads their envy (both brothers' and sisters') as symptomatic of their own pathology, that is, as lack, for 'todo menesteroso tiene envidia de aquello que no tiene' (629) ('every needy person is envious of that which he does not have'). They envy her 'good understanding'; and her sisters — lacking a language of their own with which to relate to her as an equal — resort to patriarchal vocabulary in calling her 'barpy', and in accusing her of spending more than her fair share of their parents' inheritance (628).

As if to compensate for her many failures and frustrations in communicating her true self to others, Justina engages in an ongoing dialogue with her inner self, which is characterized by her propensity to displacement (the unconscious transfer of an emotion from its original object to something else). The most striking example of this is, perhaps, her relationship with her donkey which accompanies her throughout her pilgrimage to Leon and back to Mansilla, and onto which she projects her growing sense of her inner life, so that Justina's growth in self esteem is presented to the reader as the donkey's increasing pride in its noble status (518). In her need and desire to express her (inner) life, she also personifies and holds dialogues with inanimate objects, for example with Mrs. Pen, Mr. Hair, Madame Inkpot, Señor don Paper. She even animates the snake watermark on her writing paper — seeing it transformed before her eyes into a dragon, a deadly monster that she imagines is about to jump off the page and bite her, before quickly chiding herself for not realizing that it is not

alive, and is only a 'culebrilla' ('a little snake') and, indeed, a watermark. But in that minimal space between imagining a dragon and then seeing that it is merely a little snake, Justina inscribes the products of her female 'fervorosa imaginación' ('fervent imagination') by alluding to four dragon and monster-slaying saintly heroes of the cultural landscape, and two saintly heroines, Saint Catherine and Saint Marina, who were not slayers but 'abogadas contra las bestias fieras!' (120) ('patron saint - protectors against wild animals'). Once again, she contrasts the death-dealing extremes of the male imaginary which heroically seeks (fantastic) monsters to defeat at every turn, with the mitigating feminine, which, as advocate and life-preserver, protects against wild animals. The thrust of Justina's female voice, like that of her pen/sword, is to intercede and to mitigate the extremes of good and evil, the extremes of mother nature in her negative and positive aspects and the extremes of one-sided patriarchal mythology. In this spirit she begins to transform her (irrational) fear of the imagined dragon into the realization that it is only a little snake on paper:

Mas, ¿de qué temo?, qué me acobarda? ... ¿Es posible que la culebra sólo anuncia males y sólo es tablilla de malas mensajerías? No lo creo. No hay animal cuyas propiedades, en todo y por todo, sean tan malignas que, a vueltas de algunas nocivas, no tenga otras útiles y provechosas. (123)

But what am I afraid of?, what is intimidating me? Is it possible that the snake only announces evils and is the herald only of bad tidings? I don't believe so. There is no animal whose overall characteristics are so evil that they do not have, alongside some harmful properties, other useful and beneficial ones.

The process of redeeming the vilified snake as symbol of the demonized feminine (and thereby turning her negative self-image into a more positive one) is set in motion by the faculty of memory, her ability to recall, raise to consciousness, and re-member what has been suppressed and repressed, thereby healing the pathological effects of such repression: a gripping, paralysing fear. Significantly, while she is able to list

example after example of creatures with both negative and positive properties, she has particular difficulty in remembering a single positive trait of the 'culebrilla' ('little-snake', as she calls it affectionately), despite remembering her own act of revision:

Milagro es que no se me acuerde a mí lo bueno que significa la culebrilla, que no hay hoja en los jiroblíficos, ni en cuantos autores romancistas hay, que yo no tenga cancelada, rayada y notada. (124)

It's a miracle that I do not remember the positive meaning of the little snake, for there is not a page on the emblem books, nor in romance writers, that I have not deleted, crossed out, and annotated.

But it is made clear that Justina's act of writing — even this (negative) statement that she does not remember the good things about the snake — becomes the catalyst that opens the gates of her memory and allows her to remember — '¡Ya, ya!, ya se me acuerdan mil primores acerca del símbolo y buen anuncio de la culebrilla' (124) ('Yes, yes!, now the memories are coming back of the thousand exquisite details related to the symbol and good omen of the little snake') — the positive symbolism of the snake, in particular its significance as the symbol of Sophia, goddess of wisdom, and of her female eloquence (124). In a typical gesture of simultaneity, Justina 'surrenders her fear of the snake with the recovered memory of what she has to write about it' (124). Her speaking-writing female voice becomes the agent of her self-healing. For the original act of repression (or relegation to the unconscious) of the negative self-image that patriarchal culture foisted on her via the (phallic) serpent had clearly resulted in what Irigaray, drawing on Freudian psychoanalysis, refers to as the 'return of the repressed' — to her being gripped by an irrational fear of this now shadow-image of herself as evil, that appears like a bad omen overshadowing her writing enterprise. Her re-remembering the repressed memory and incorporating it into her consciousness functions as an antidote to this negative anima figure (i.e. her self-assertion misinterpreted as less-than-feminine, and inappropriately masculine), and her very writing about it, expressing it in concrete, embodied form becomes her healing,

whole-making, cure. This pattern of raising to consciousness through writing in order to dispel irrational fears is repeated throughout the text, so that the initial fear turns out to be a psycho-cultural symptom of the unconscious repression of unacceptable thoughts and feelings.<sup>58</sup>

Among the harmful effects on women of the internalization of a negative anima figure which are highlighted in the text is a form of lack of self-esteem and tendency to self-destruction. Justina's employs two of Shekhinah's most pervasive symbols — the face, and the earth (or ploughed field) — to speak of the wealth of painful experience to which her body (her face) bears the deep scars of testimony. She claims that the wrinkles on her face are not wrinkles at all, but the furrows which her loose hair had ploughed in the 'soft, virgin earth' of her face (106). Unable to fathom the guilt and pride that must be hers to have deserved such 'disproportionate suffering' (111), she has, she claims, in an act of self-mutilation, vented her anger on the offending hairs, 'reaped' one August, for being the cause of her vices. In a clear reference to her writing as the voice of her soul that, 'being porous, flees from my face and goes to the tongue' (106), she clearly sees her speaking-writing as an act of compensation for her lost beauty and youth, and for the suffering that she has undergone. She reflects with melancholy on her former status as the all-powerful goddess — a time when her transformative aesthetic powers (symbolized in her woman's ability to paint her face and make herself beautiful) were at her fingertips: 'en fin, tiempo en el cual estaba en mi mano ser blanca o negra, morena o rubia, alegre o triste, hermosa o fea, diosa o sin días' (107) ('a time, that is, when it was in my power [literally, hand] to be white or black, dark or blond, happy or sad, beautiful or ugly, or goddess or "without days" [eternally young or old]' — a paradoxical sentiment that is given typically cryptic expression in the playful transposition of letters in the phrase, 'diosa o sin días'.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>This same process is acted out by Goethe's speaking/writing women in *Wilhelm Meister*, for whom Hilarie may serve as paradigmatic (H.A. 8, p.238).

<sup>59</sup>Cf. Bruno M. Damiani, *Francisco López de Úbeda*, p.98, who cites this as an example of playful punning, without, however, analysing the figure's expressive quality.

Womanly lack of self-love is further exemplified in the episode following her abduction, when she tells us that, although she hated students (her abductors), she was hurt that they did not address or look at her; and the more she lacked their acknowledgement, the more she desired it (370), and the more vulnerable she became. Speaking, as is her wont, for all women, she compares them in a powerful series of vivid similes to the mosquito who is attracted to the strongest wine in which it is most likely to drown more quickly; to the octopus tail, the more tender the more it is beaten; and to the butterflies, who 'leaving the peacefulness of sun and moon, with all propriety die by means of the burning light of the candle where together we find disillusionment and punishment' (370). Women, she claims, are a symbol of Imprudence, having inherited from Eve the tendency to keep company with snakes, and who are all like Atalia who, faced with the choice of all the gods, turned them all down and chose Vulcan, who had killed her parents; Atalia who is depicted by the Ancients as a very beautiful young woman with her foot on a young man, 'y dando la mano a un horrendo salvaje que, con un nudoso bastón, amagaba un golpe a sus hermosos ojos' (372) ('giving her hand to a horrendous savage who was bludgeoning her beautiful eyes with a blow of his knotty club'). Justina reflects on possible reasons to explain why women are so undiscerning in their choice of a man, citing one (Greek male's) explanation that no matter how bad a man is, there is always a woman who is worse, and consequently, no man should ever be despised by a woman (372), and asks herself '¿qué es la causa que tan mal sabemos tantear méritos, graduar personas, diferenciar calidades?' (372) ('why are we so bad at assessing merits, graduating persons, differentiating qualities?'), to which she answers 'ello va en la comadre' (372) ('it lies in the co-mother'). In other words, Justina, in line with Irigaray, identifies women's self-destructive tendencies and lack of self-esteem with their inferior cultural status as a gender without a God, and consequent lack of individual self-identities; unable to develop and grow as female individuals without a means of mediating their essential female selves in language.

Running through all her tactics of self-assertion, both practical and stylistic, is, then, Justina's gift for mimicry of male modes of self-expression. She wins the grudging respect of the gangleader, Pero Grullo, for instance, who abducts her, precisely by mimicking his own 'mandilandinga' ('criminal slang') *langage*. As a result of this initial move on her part, he removes her gag (hoping to be flattered) and thereby allows her to make fuller use of her linguistic dexterity to play for time and delay the imminent threat to her 'entereza' (301) ('virginity-integrity'). Indeed, the more imminent the danger, the more her language sparkles in its physico-semantic word-play: 'como me quiso tocar en lo vivo, avivé y, rechinando como centella, le respondí' (302) ('as he wanted to touch me in the live-flesh, I vivified and, with dazzling brilliance I responded'), until she finally succeeds in making him suspend the 'proceedings' and listen to her wise (and wise-sounding) counsel. Justina needs to summon the full arsenal of her various 'chazas' and 'trazas' ('strategies') for the difficult situation in which she finds herself. She herself describes her overall strategy as mimicry, designed to turn the tables on her adversaries and turn the hunter into the prey. In the process the language-weapon she adopts — their language — is transformed by her from their 'cart-chariot' into her 'warren', from their showy, thrusting, vehicle of prowess, that is, to a hidden, complex (female) lair designed to entrap them:

Usaba de todas estas trazas por vestirme del color de la caza, lo cual fue parte para que el mismo carro que ellos ordenaron para su triunfo, me sirviese a mí de vivar donde cazarlos. (307)

I used all these tricks in order to dress myself in the colour of the prey, so that the very cart/chariot that they ordered for their triumph would serve me as a warren in which to hunt them down.

Her adversary's ugly, gross, and stupid mindset is, as usual, no match for the mercurial sophistication of her enchanting *parler-femme*, 'his thick iron-clad head and his dragon's neck' is easily manipulated by the delicious and gentle breeze-veil of her

delightful and airy words' (304). Her skill in one-to-one discursive combat — a talent which is encapsulated in her name as the jousting Justina — and in dealing effectively with her abductor, is due to her ability to size him up, anticipate his moves, and quick-wittedly adapt to the dictates of the moment, diverting his thoughts ('blood') and acting, above all rhetorically, the required part convincingly — an overall strategy which is described by her as giving him (linguistic) 'flowers' instead of the 'fruit' he expected (315).<sup>60</sup>

And although Justina's strategy throughout is to arm herself with a positive, and therefore powerful, self-image, with which to counteract the reductive, and disarming male gaze, this is not always the 'face' that she shows to her adversaries. During her pilgrimage in León, for example, Justina with the aim of taking revenge on the rogue who had insulted her, adopts the strategy of conscious mimicry: 'Entré baja, encovadera, maganta y devotica, que parecía ovejita de Dios. (413) ('I entered low, occult, haggard and pious [the suffix *-ica* suggests feigned devotion], so that I looked like a little lamb of God') The rhetorical emphasis here on 'entering' (placed at the start of the Spanish sentence) draws attention to her speaking (knowing) her own identity in a hidden, invisible way (that is, for her self) since she is mimicking from the outside her cultural identity as submissive, inferior, naive, man-made woman, wholly unaware of the ways of the man's world. Justina emphasises her artistry in strategically camouflaging her real intentions and identity, and draws attention to the fact that knowing is the *sine qua non* of successfully appearing not to know: 'Entré en el mesón y, como supe donde estaba, entré como que no sabía dél' (413) ('I entered the inn and, as I knew where [he] was, I entered as if I did not know of him'). She illustrates her (and, in general, women's) consummate skill in hiding their true nature with a negative cultural reference according to which Dissimulation is painted as a

<sup>60</sup>The fruit-flower polarity (embracing physical body—embodied mind) is elsewhere alluded to in the text, for example, in relation to female homoerotic experience, when Bárbara Sánchez, on seeing Justina so flushed and 'lucid' following her 'self-pleasuring' scene, is said by Justina to have 'more envy of the fruit of my pomegranates than desire for the success of my flowers' (363). Justina is 'vencida' ('defeated') and consequently 'convencida' ('convinced') by the sexually mature older woman, the New Celestina to whom she concedes, as it were, seniority as the more experienced (and therefore wiser) woman, and from whom she learns not to reveal her secrets (her embarrassment) on her face (364).

modest maiden who has a dragon beneath her dress peeping out through pocket of her skirts (413). Once again, her own self-portrayal gives the lie, and acts as a just counterbalance, to overcoming the negative cultural image of the feminine. Her deliberate donning of the negative image of the feminine undermines it as a weapon to disarm her, while she simultaneously appropriates it for herself as a hidden weapon (the dragon beneath her skirts) to achieve her own (female) ends. With the result that, in the end, she is able to reinscribe (via her actions) the negative image and transform it into a positive image, and see 'con cuánta razón' ('with what reason') it was painted. Justina authenticates and draws attention, indirectly, to the divine nature of her 'mission' to go to the inn at five o'clock to meet the rogue who had insulted her, one that differs, she claims, from the intention of the male God/trickster: 'Dios sabe la intención con que él me envió a llamar, y aún yo la sé. La mía era muy *diferente*' (410: my emphasis) ('God knows the intention with which he sent me to call, and I too know it. Mine was very *different*'). The rhetorical emphasis in the transaction with the rogue at the inn is on accounts and balancing, on more and less, and Justina ultimately wins by seeing through and appropriating his tricks and strategies and using them more effectively against him, thus becoming his feminine equivalent, but superior: 'jugadera más fullera' (409) (a 'more skilful trickster'), by employing her skill in *pabler-femme*. The sexual undertones of her ostensibly financial dealings with her male counterpart underline her strategy of playing upon the man's, and the culture's, ulterior, hidden, but nevertheless real, interests based on the commerce in (that is, suppression of) the female-as-body; and she manipulates this hidden underlying fact to her own advantage. Indeed, she is forever drawing attention to the fact that the body (in particular the female body) is the hidden ground supporting discourse in general.

Justina undermines the misogynist defamatory views of the 'maldicientes' ('[male] slanderers'); in particular here the notion that women are blabbermouths, incapable of keeping anything to themselves, in that they articulate pure unmediated emotion. The rhetorical device she uses to express her own female view of these (for



women) damaging clichés gives the Number its title 'del penseque' ('Of the excuse'). With this device, Justina suggests that misogyny is an 'excuse'; in other words, a (false) pretext in place of a (true-underlying) failing on the part of the 'maldiciente' — a false generalisation posing as a particular truth. Furthermore, Justina transforms 'penseque' ('excuse') into a verbal phrase 'pensé que' ('I thought that') by opening up a space—Irigarayan-style—for her own female voice thereby assuming the 'I' of discourse ('I thought') to express her own (truthful) rebuttal of this cliché, based on her own particular experience, while at the same time hiding behind her mimicry of the naive pose of the man-made woman. The poem at the beginning of this Number neatly sums up her position:

Hácese bobilla  
 La del penseque,  
 Y no mira cosa  
 Que no penetre. (393)

She pretends to be silly, the 'I-thought-that' woman, and in fact she never looks at a thing without seeing through it

Moreover, she provides the other (balancing) pole to 'pensé que era verdad' ('I thought that it was true'), with her 'mas de veras que' ('but the truth is that'), expressive of her own authentically female point of view, here in relation to male clichés about women's inability to keep secrets:

Yo pensé que era verdad lo que maldicientes dicen, que las mujeres tenemos correo ordinario y posta que marcha del corazón a la lengua y de la lengua a todo el mundo, mas de veras que yo no despegué mis labios para decir a persona alguna con qué fin inquiría del estudiantón, y crean que nos agravian si piensan que no sabemos ser cerrajeras de bocas las mujeres. (395)

I thought it was true what the slanderers say, that we women have regular mail that goes from the heart to the tongue and from the tongue to the whole world, but the truth is I did not unstick my lips to tell

anyone my intentions when I inquired of the student-rogue, and believe me, you (masculine plural) wrong us if you think that we women do not know how to be mouth-locks.

In re-coding this particular male myth about the female voice, Justina implicitly speaks as the divine-feminine — the Shekhinah — against whom these men blaspheme. For her female voice speaks clearly of the Goddess in her guise as messenger (postwoman) who mediates the inner life (heart) and gives voice (tongue) to it for the benefit of the whole world. And Justina's intervention here in re-appropriating, re-inscribing, and ultimately re-valuing the female voice as expressive of the inner (divine) life — and not the mindless and mechanical outpouring of pure, unmediated feelings, as the misogynistic point-of-view would have it — brings about a differentiating and skillfully strategic restatement of the cliché, so that it speaks more justly of, and honours, what has been unjustifiably dishonoured and defamed, namely the divine feminine. Justina's words form the (erotic-mystical) veil through which the reader sees the sights and monuments of León in a different—that is, female—light. The reader is taken on a guided tour of the city of León as seen through her eyes while she awaits the arrival of the rogue at the inn. The overall strategy she adopts in this tour is very effective. The pouting, naive, man-made-woman expresses with her 'penseque' an apparent confession of her own stupidity and naiveté in her repeated 'I thought that', when, in reality, she is indirectly inserting her own penetrating interpretation, her theory, of why the Leonese monuments and churches have the particular form that they have. Very familiar as the reader has become with the narrator's Irigarayan attention to the articulation of difference, and in particular with the fundamental distinction between male and female, s/he is unlikely to overlook those occasions when Justina specifically refers to one or other. So Justina tells us, with reference to the Iglesia Major, or Cathedral, that the transparency of the stained-glass windows is such that when she is inside, it is as if she were still outside. She states that '*piensa un hombre que está fuera y está dentro*' (398) ('a man thinks he is outside and he is [in fact] inside'). Here she articulates the either-or of

male discourse that divides and maintains division, but then mistakes the one for the other. But she also expresses the both-and of the female imaginary in this formulation (which is closer to reality), so that it can also mean 'a man thinks he is *both* outside *and* inside'. Although she gives tongue to the male point of view, she also gives expression to a kind of androgynous ambiguity in her formulation. Later in her pilgrimage, Justina provides a further highly significant example of this both-and of the female imaginary when she compares herself to the gardener:

...que de cuantas yerbas toco, sólo echo mano de la mala, pero aunque pícara, sepan que conozco lo bueno, y sé que aunque esta iglesia, mirada con ojos médicos, cuales son los míos, parece que está al revés, pero para quien mira a las derechas, al derecho está, sino que siempre fue verdadero el refrán de aldea: 'Cual el cangilón, tal el olor'. (529)

...which of all the herbs I touch, I only take hold of the bad weed, but although pícara, you [readers] should know that I know the good, and I know that, although this church, looked at with a doctor's eyes, that is, [penetrating] like mine, seems to be inside-out; it is, for whomever looks to the right side, right, for the popular refrain was always true: 'As the pipe, so the smell'.

Essentially, she is alluding here to the duality of her own divine-human status, for, although she is a 'pícara' and 'mala hierba' ('a rogue' and 'a weed') — that is, human and sinful — this does not mean that she is unaware of the other pole of her dual nature, that is, her divinity. So Justina's eyes and tongue mediate and express her other (divine) nature precisely by means of her female body which also expresses her pícara-human nature.

Justina urges the reader to make the link (implicit throughout in what she calls her 'picaresque' style) between wholeness (the co-implication, for example, of such apparent opposites as negative-positive; male-female; divine-human; lies-truths; body-soul) and love (and, implicitly, truth), whereby even the negative things she says

about the object of her love (here the city of León, but implicitly, too, by association, her beloved Lozano) are a mere camouflage ('disimulo') for her underlying (true) love for the city, and for her man. This love has its roots in her maternal genealogy, in the mother-daughter love relationship, which in turn is linked to the royal-divine, a love which wholly compensates for any negative banter, and which is part-and-parcel of her becoming and being a woman.

An instructive example of Justina's emphasis on loving wholeness as a dynamic mediating between extremes — specifically between the extremes of good and bad — comes in the Number entitled 'Of the snooped-on looker' (523-539) when she is on the threshold of entering the city of León, which she says she loves precisely because it is 'la cabeza de mi madre Mansilla' (530-1) ('the head of her mother Mansilla'), thus excusing herself, literally forgiving herself, for having spoken badly of the city in the first instance, explaining that it was mere 'disimulo' ('pretence'):

el que quiere bien una cosa siempre anda por extremos, cuando diciendo mucho bien, cuando mucho mal. Pero siguiendo el picaral estilo que profeso, acudiré a lo uno y a lo otro. (531)

He who loves a thing well always goes to extremes, when saying very good things and when saying very bad things. But following the picaresque style that I profess, I will attend to the one and the other.

Justina—like the Shekhinah—is constantly moving between the polar extremes in order to sustain a balanced view. As she goes on to explain later, the reader is drawn into her narrative and it is enjoined on her/him to extract the meaning, the 'goodness'. The 'pensé que' technique indicates Justina's style of eliciting from herself a variety of possible interpretations, only to discard them once they are expressed, and to replace them with her intended interpretation. It creates a style that involves a kind of toing-and-froing of possible interpretations and positive-negative statements, that is, a constant adjusting to the counter-claims of each pole:

Yo pensé que había mucho que ver en las fiestas, mas confieso que no había; aunque miento, yo me asuelvo, que sí había, y es bien decirlo porque no nos maten los legoneses, que tienen nombre de azadón de los que llaman legones, y (a) azadonadas me harán decir la oración de los leoneses y de León. (394)

I thought that there was much to see in the festivals, but I confess that there was not; although I lie, I absolve myself, for there was, and it is good to say it, so that the men of León do not kill us, for they have the name of picks [pun on pick and leonese] and with pick-blows they will make sure I sing the praises of the leonese and of León.

When Justina ironically repeats the age-old defamation of Eve — 'Woman was the first to falsify the good and nature' (563) — she is alluding to her office as writer-poet, in revaluing semblance as positive; for she gives expression, by means of the aesthetic manipulation of her medium, to the inner, feminine, life — the voice of the soul, as she puts it — which she 'simulates' or 'falsifies', in other words recreates 'artificially', in her poetic style. *Poetae mentiuntur*. She has already told us in her Introduction (90) that she paints 'with art'. And artifice — an allusion to her rich arsenal of linguistic strategies, her 'jokes', 'tricks', 'deceptions', etc., as well as to her distinct writing-style, for she is, after all, the '*melindrosa* escribana', the 'affected, precious' (i.e., not natural) female scribe — is paradoxically what she must avail herself of, in order to achieve what can only ever be an approximation of 'truth' and 'nature'. The lies and tricks of her *parler-femme* are justified, moreover, in that they are valid self-expressive tools within a cultural discourse that is weighted against her. Whether it is 'lo de veras' ('to do with truths') or 'lo de burlas' ('to do with deception') she assures the reader that it is all truth: 'es verdad todo esto y otro tanto que callo' (530) ('all this, and more that I keep to myself, is truth'). She tells the reader, addressing him affectionately as 'letorcillo' ('little reader'), that woman is the first inventor of strategies and 'fictions', for it is women's legacy to be 'fingidoras, disimuladas, recetistas, bizmadoras, saludadoras, y todo sobre falso, y más que yo me callo' (564) ('pretenders, deceivers, prescribers of cures, appliers of poultices, health-

bringers and all based on [above all] falseness, and more that I keep to myself'). In other words, her female voice, by means of poetic artifice, forges the healing, redeeming link between the (inner) divine and the (outer) human.

Justina's emphasis in these Numbers concerned with the 'sticky poultice' of Sancha Gomez is on blurring the distinctions between truths (most often plural in the text) and lies. Her strategy is to relativize these rigid categories which, as we know from the exchange of 'his and her' letters, are never 'purely' one or the other, and indeed, are most effectively a mixture of both. So, for example, Justina's praise of Sancha are 'lisonjas' ('flattery'), (apparent) lies and strategies invented by Justina purely to coax from Sancha the treasures of her pantry for her own (selfish) interest. But in fact, Justina's loving and compassionate words of praise for the 'big fat mean sow' have the effect of hitting home in the sense of appealing directly to Sancha's (well-hidden and well-guarded) inner life, her repressed self-love, so that in return Sancha not only gives from her pantry, but more important, she 'gives of herself' in the form of loving affection, a generosity that is symbolized in her surrendering the key to her treasure-trove to Justina. The result is that Justina's familiar stock in trade, her *parler-femme*, her 'lies', 'tricks', 'jokes', and the myriad ways she refers to her 'strategies', paradoxically express her own inner 'feminine' life, and draw out the same (absorb it like a sponge, as she puts it) from those she aims it at (directly or indirectly); whether mother-figure or male adversary, they all fall 'victim' to her wiles and are healed, made whole, by her female voice which articulates the offspring of her fervent female fantasies (282). The power of praise (or flattery) is emphasised appropriately in her introductory poem to the Number entitled 'Saying goodbye to Sancha':

¡Oh, omnipotentísima lisonja,  
 Cuánto vales, cuánto puedes, cuánto enseñas,  
 Y más si te encastillas en mujeres!  
 Allí del bien ajeno eres esponja,  
 De allí vences durezas, rompes peñas,  
 Lo que quieres puedes y puedes lo que quieres. (587)

Oh omnipotent praise,  
 How much you are worth, how much you can do, and teach,  
 And more if you 'encastle' yourself in women!  
 There you are the sponge of others' qualities,  
 From there you conquer hardships, break rocks,  
 What you want you can do, and you can do what you want.

To make her benevolent, healing, indeed loving, intentions clear vis-à-vis the readers, she urges them to take what is good as the truth(s), and to consider the rest 'donaire' ('witticism'), for to do otherwise 'sería sacar de las flores veneno y de la triaca que hago contra sus melancolías tósigo para el corazón' (531) ('would be to take poison from the flowers, and venom for the heart from the antidote for your melancholics that I am making'). The emphasis here on the divine-feminine as healer and creator of whole truths, that is cosmic harmony is clear from the language used. Justina firmly places the onus on the reader to extract the honey (goodness) from her witty, fun-loving style, a paradoxical style which has all the authority of being used — according to the fictive author's *Prólogo al Lector* ('Prologue to the Reader') — by other writers whose 'lengua materna' (75) ('maternal language') was Latin (namely Terence and Martial), as well as by the 'Autor natural' (i.e., God Himself):

que de la nieve helada y despegadiza saca lana cálida y continuada, y de la niebla húmeda saca ceniza seca, y del duro y desabrido cristal saca menudos y blandos bocados de pan suave'. (75-76)

who from the frozen and fragmented snow extracts warm and continuous wool, and from the humid fog extracts dry ash, and from the hard and brittle crystal extracts tiny and soft morsels of sweet bread.

In other words, it would be contrary to Justina's intentions, and to (Mother) Nature's, indeed to Divine Providence, if the reader were not to read, in true kabbalistic fashion,

against the mere literal meaning of this divine language, in order to grasp the essential goodness of her words.

This preoccupation with the deep, inner, subjective-symbolic meaning of things, rather than with the mere literal, is evident, too, in Chapter One of 'The Pícara Pilgrim' entitled 'Of the pleasurable looker'. Justina, in line with the Greek philosophers she lists, states that there is no pleasure without sight and that, with sight, all pleasures are tributes of the soul (or tributaries of the monarch, in its secondary meaning) (524). Justina's inquisitive spirit is expressed in her determination in León to 'ver cosas curiosas y con curiosidad' (524) ('see curious things with curiosity') by which not only does she emphasise that interesting things must be seen with the interest they (implicitly) merit, but she establishes an intrinsic connection, and an at-oneness between the sensuous (seeing) subject and the 'things' seen. Such reciprocity is for her 'manjar del alma' (524) ('sweet food of the soul'), and for this reason she tells the readers that she wants to tell them:

no tanto lo que vi en León, quanto el modo con que lo vi, porque he dado en que me lean el alma, que, en fin, me he metido a escritora, y con menos que esto no cumplo con mi oficio. (525)

not so much what I saw in León as the way in which I saw it, for I am determined that you read my soul, for, after all, I have dedicated myself to being a (female) writer, and with less than this I do not fulfill my office.

Justina emphasises here that she intends to express herself in her own style, which she defines as expressive of her own (female) point of view, her female bodily self, or soul (Anima), which is what she writes into her descriptions of León — a description which is of particular significance as it expresses her (bodily) pleasure in her relationship to her female genealogy, her house of language in Irigarayan terms: a meaning that she is determined will be understood, for this is her purpose, and her office. 'Le style, c'est la *femme* même'.



She describes the pleasure she derives from looking 'attentively' at some of the sights and monuments of Leon, in particular two monasteries, the King's Garden (in fact a slaughterhouse, despite its royal name), and the House of Guzmanes (the family home of her future, parodied fictitious husband, Guzmán de Alfarache). Together with her fellow (female) pilgrims, she wittily speculates on why these buildings have the form and design they have. The women's laughter and irreverent approach to the hallowed artefacts of the monastery, for example, is met with angry sermons and chastisement by the monk who is giving them a guided tour. Female pleasure is angrily suppressed and chastized.

Justina makes frequent reference to the nature of her 'picaresque' style as being 'de espacio' (e.g., 412, 525, 642); an opening up of the word 'despacio' ('slow') to suggest also 'of space'. Her style is one that takes its time and sees in the round.<sup>61</sup> Her repeated plea to the reader to wait for her, suggests she does not want the reader to jump, at first glance, to any rash judgments about her and the intentions or meanings of her words:

Y noten que cuando les parezca que mormuro, me aguarden, no me maldigan luego. Espérenme, que cuando no piensen, volveré con la lechuga. (525)

And note that when it seems to you that I criticize, wait for me, don't condemn me right away. Wait for me, for when you least expect it, I shall return with the lettuce [a reference to the interpolated story in Book II, Part II, cap.I, no.3., p.379].

Rather she urges them to savour what she writes that they might appreciate that she returns 'más honra que la que debo' (525) ('more honour than I owe'). Justina, once again, articulates the notion of precarious balancing, which in her case involves her in

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<sup>61</sup>Cf. Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*, p.5: The phrase 'time of understanding' is used by Whitford to describe Irigaray's style which needs the reader, and requires of the reader that he/she take time for the process of making the connections, and thus be a vital part in 'thinking the unthought' and effecting the change in the symbolic order which is her aim.

giving a little more, as she returns more honour than she owes, more, that is, than has been given to her. Later, in the Chapter dedicated to Sancha Gomez, she underlines her style as cat-like, ever waiting to pounce; a style that she claims has an advantage over other women who usually make sudden moves:

yo soy mujer que trazo a lo gatuno; quiero decir que me estaré un día aguardando lance, como cuando al ojeo de un ratón está un gato tan atento y de reposo, que le podrán capar sin sentir, según está atento a la caza. (558)

I am a woman who schemes in a catlike fashion; I mean that I will wait a day before making a move, just as a cat with its eye on a mouse is so attentive that they could castrate it without it being aware, so intent is it on the prey.

One illustration in particular sums up the dilemma that Justina faces in her role as woman-as-writer, and her need to write herself subtly and indirectly into discourse. In the interpolated tale of the Catholic monarchs, Isabel, who, as a woman, is unable to speak directly to the king to tell him that he is making a mistake, wonders aloud what the marshmallow plants on the side of the road would say if *they* were the only ones who could speak; a rhetorical question to which she herself provides the punning answer: 'en esta ocasión [no supieran...decirnos] otra cosa, sino mal vas' (89) ('on this occasion [they would not know how...to tell us] anything, except "you are going wrong"'). The term for marshmallows ('malvas') has been literally opened up to yield 'mal vas' ('you are going wrong'). Unable to assume directly the 'I' of discourse in her own right, Isabel, like Justina on occasion, is forced to speak indirectly *sub rosa* and in *parler-femme*. The prosapopeia-figure by means of which the plants repeat their own name (with all its connotations of the soft sickly-sweet feminine of man-made woman that cannot speak directly about herself in language) mimics exactly the position of woman-as-speaker within male discourse. By disrupting the very morphology of the Spanish word, Justina-as-writer creates the space in which a woman's intended meaning can find expression.

Justina's rhetorical style is one that changes rapidly in tone from serious to comical, solemn to flippant, from straightforward narration of plot to an ultra self-conscious narrative style. It is one which — like Goethe's in *Wilhelm Meister* — involves the reader in the very construction of the meaning of her text, a kind of 'amorous exchange' that Justina, as narrator, also sustains with her (explicitly male) reader: 'Acaba ya, hermano lector. Vete conmigo, que buena es mi compañía' (356) ('Stop now, brother reader. Come with me for my company is good'). The (often paradoxical) synthesis of polar opposites that characterizes Justina's style is the direct result of her coming to terms with her female identity via her relationships with both her male and her female interlocutors. In her concern for expressing difference is rooted Justina's desire for a competent adversary with whom she can engage on equal terms in the challenging, creative, dialogic battle of the sexes.<sup>62</sup> She compares, for example, the idea of exercising her talent for witty comments on idiots with 'playing a cornet where there is no echo' ('como quien prueba cornet donde no hay eco') (584). A paradigmatic illustration of Justina's need of a worthy dialogic partner is her adroit handling of the hypocritical 'bellaco' ('rogue-troublemaker') Martín Pavón, who is posing as a pious hermit in the inn, (unjustly) wanting respect for virtues he does not have, instead of (justly) expecting disdain for the virtues he lacks as a weakling. She prays to God to be matched with a rogue 'de pan por pan', that is, one who is her equal, and who does not pretend to be anything other than a rogue, rather than posing as one of the 'sirenos enmascarados' (429) ('false sirens') she is so disdainful of. Poor transparent Pavón ('Peacock') is, as an opponent, simply not worthy of Justina: 'tiene figura de ángel, voz de diablo y pasos de ladrón: puro y parado Martín Pavón' (432) ('he has the figure of an angel, the voice of a devil, and the steps of a thief: pure and paralysed Martín Pavón'). Justina, of course, sees through him. Although he has a peacock's golden breast, his abominable feet with their black and ugly steps (432)

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<sup>62</sup>Cf. Irigaray, 'Sexual Difference' in Luce Irigaray, *The Irigaray Reader*, pp. 165-77. This dialogue is reflected in the novel's dialectical interplay of the two authoritative voices, of the protagonist-narrator and the fictive author.

expose his true nature. Despite all the 'eyes' on his feathered body, he fails really to see her as she sees (through) him: 'Conocíle y no me conoció' (433) ('I knew him and he did not know me'). One of the most telling indications of Pavón's hypocrisy is his addressing Justina as 'hija mía' (434) ('my daughter') to which she — in mimicking mode — replies 'Padre mío' ('my father'), as if his motives in giving her good counsel were anything other than to take (sexual) advantage of the (apparently) destitute and virginal girl she poses as. Pavón's ignorance lies in the fact that he, in keeping with the (male) cultural imaginary, insists on separating the divine and the human realms, the celestial and the earthly — or as the Spanish expresses it 'las tejas arriba' ('above the tiles') or 'las tejas abajo' ('below the tiles')<sup>63</sup> — a false dichotomy which Justina not only finds tedious and mind-numbingly boring: 'cuando oí aquello de las tejas abajo, sospiré un sospirazo' (434) ('when I heard him mention the higher realm, I heaved a long sigh') but which incites her indignation, for it implies a false hierarchy. In his condescending sermonizing, which has the the intention and effect of inhibiting, silencing and forcing her to listen, he seeks to bend her to his will. But Justina is, as ever, at least one step ahead. She cleverly manipulates him, playing on his real (but hidden) motives, in confessing that she is so destitute that she is 'está a pique de hacer un mal recado y afrentar a mi linaje' (435) ('about to run a bad errand and affront my lineage').

In relation to the advice he gives her, she, as stylistically sensitive as ever, draws a distinction between what he says and the way that he says it, making it clear that it is the latter, his 'modillo' ('sneaky little style'), that negates, literally castrates, the 'substance of his doctrine':

Decía sin duda buenas cosas, pero con un modillo que destruía la substancia de la doctrina, que bien parecía obra de diferentes dueños, pues la sustancia olía a Dios y el modillo a Bercebú. (435)

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<sup>63</sup>MM, p.1276: 'En lo que es cosa de los hombres o en lo que pertenece a Dios' ('pertaining to the human or God's realm respectively').

He was undoubtedly saying good things, but with a certain sneaky style that destroyed the substance of the doctrine, that appeared to be the work of different masters, for the substance smelled of God and the sneaky little style of the Devil.

What renders his speech ineffectual is the discrepancy between substance and style. Justina indicates to the reader exactly how to construe sanctimonious monologues of Pavón, which she declares to be as difficult to understand as they are easy to be suspicious of (435). The method of reading-understanding that Justina advocates is expressed in the verb 'colegir' meaning 'to deduce or gather together things that are spread out', and which, etymologically, means to 'co-read'. The meaning of this verb — which is to be found ubiquitously in the text (especially in relation to her direct appeals to the reader to deduce from what she tells him) — is made explicit in relation to Pavón's speech, from which she deduces, or interprets, the message, that that if she wants to be good, then she will die of hunger for love of God, and if she wants to be bad, then 'él me aplicaba para la cámara, y que menos escándalo era que entre Dios y él y mí quedase el secreto' (435) ('he would allocate me to the bedroom, and there would be less scandal as the secret would remain between God and him and me'). Her disabusing female voice having exposed his (and indirectly the culture's) hidden motivations, Justina is free to conclude her strategic manoeuvring at his expense, by relieving him of some money after (indirectly) threatening to take her 'wares' (i.e., her body) to a more profitable, 'legal', and less sinful source (that is, the magistrate from whom Pavón is on the run). In short, it is her very act of raising to (her own and the reader's) consciousness the hidden (sexual) subtext of his and the (culture's) rhetoric that allows her to manipulate strategically Pavón's own (disguised) motivation that frees Justina from his power. The link between the status of the feminine and that of the bodily-sexual as both suppressed and undervalued aspects of culture is clear. The reference in her words, here, to a more legitimate, just, less sinful, and more beneficial

recipient of her body (the magistrate), makes the aims of her strategem clear too; to arrive at Justice.<sup>64</sup>

Justina's narratorial stance, in-between the familiar binary opposites of an Either-Or culture, strives to achieve that poised balanced that is the essence of justice. And it is in her playful, yet serious, weaving of often punning links through the texture of her language that enables her style of writing — like her style of living — to negotiate at every turn a dense relatedness and connectedness in the very body of her Spanish that gives palpable shape and force to this hard-won, dynamic equilibrium.

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<sup>64</sup>Cf. Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, pp. 241-299, for a list of Zoharic symbols related to the Shekhinah, including Justice.

## CONCLUSION

What I hope has emerged from this study is that Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and López de Úbeda's *La Pícaro Justina* demonstrate, in their presentation of the female figure and the female voice, a remarkable similarity of approach, both in the presentation of character and in the stylistic means that they adopt to give expression to femininity. I do not, however, wish to imply that my focus on the theme of female identity in any way exhausts either text. Rather this reading is offered in the same spirit in which Barbara Hardy presents her interpretation of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*:

When we isolate a theme, we invariably appear to exaggerate its prominence, but I hope I am isolating something which is an important and neglected part of the novel.<sup>1</sup>

My intention throughout is not to offer an exhaustive and fully-detailed analysis of each text; but to give an adequate indication of the extent and depth of each author's interest in portraying the female and in embodying her voice in what has been called the 'density' of the text: 'the marvellous and profound powers of human language'.<sup>2</sup> In order to offer a (tentative) historical explanation of this perceived similarity in two novels from different cultural periods and different national literatures, I have extended my fundamentally comparative method to include two other, to my mind highly relevant, contexts: on the one hand, the Kabbalah tradition of representing the Great Goddess in the Shekhinah as the voice of God; and, on the other, contemporary feminist theory on the theme of a specifically woman-centred language. I argue that once the salient features of the woman-figure, and her mode of self-expression, are analysed in comparable detail in these four contexts, a striking similarity in all four is

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Hardy, *The Appropriate Form: An Essay on the Novel* (London: Athlone Press, 1984), p.110.

<sup>2</sup> John Holloway, *Narrative and Structure: Exploratory Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.109; see, too, pp.53-73 for a discussion of what he calls 'density-elements' in prose-fiction.

revealed, one that strongly suggests participation by López de Úbeda and Goethe (and possibly Luce Irigaray) in a shared tradition given its definitive stamp in the *Zohar*.

Now at the close of this enquiry it seems appropriate to indicate what seem to me interesting implications which arise if my arguments prove to be acceptable. These seem to be of three broad kinds. First, it seems clear that the sexual identity of authors — certainly that of the two male authors studied here — has no bearing whatsoever on their ability to articulate the female voice.<sup>3</sup> To that extent, the following statement is emphatically corroborated by this study:

...it is the inscription of feminist subject positions in texts, which can be penned by men as well as women, that determines their potential radicalness, and not the author's biological sex.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of López de Úbeda, one important implication of my analysis would seem to be that his extremely dense and difficult text would profit by the kind of detailed textual exploration that would be facilitated by means of a word-concordance.<sup>5</sup> Though my main emphasis in this study has been on the Spanish text (to which comparison with Goethe's novel has been largely subordinated), I hope to have contributed, too, to the debate on *Wilhelm Meister* in particular, and in general perhaps to discussion of Goethe's equally dense and difficult 'Late Style' (*Altersstil*).<sup>6</sup>

A second area where further consideration of the findings of this study may prove fruitful is the history of poetics and aesthetics. Paul Julian Smith's conclusion

<sup>3</sup>In the case of López de Úbeda, the evidence presented would seem to indicate that his work implies a radical revision of what is still a widespread assumption in the secondary literature, namely that there is a distinct tendency to antifeminism in the Spanish picaresque: María del Pilar Oñate, *El Feminismo en la Literatura Española* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1938), p.133. (Cited in Damiani, *Francisco López de Úbeda*, p.151.

<sup>4</sup>Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, p.12. Cf. their statement (p.24): '...it was not unknown during the eighteenth century for men to masquerade as female authors in the attempt to obtain some of the higher status (and greater chances of publication) which went with being a woman writer'.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Cf. José Miguel Oltra, 'Una Aproximación a *La Pícaro Justina*', *Insula Revista de Letras y Ciencias Humanas*, 43 (1988), 13-14, who points out that the linguistic aspect of *Justina* has been somewhat neglected (p.14).

<sup>6</sup>See T.J. Reed, *Goethe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p.92; and Dieter Borchmeyer, *Weimarer Klassik: Portrait einer Epoche* (Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1994), pp. 507-16.



to his study of 'Writing Women', that 'a feminist reading cannot claim syntactic disruption as an essential characteristic of women's writing'<sup>7</sup> is, I think, corroborated by the present study. What the disruptive play with discursive language seems to characterize, rather, is the expression of the 'feminine' in the broad sense of the inner felt life of human beings that a patriarchal culture contrasts with 'masculine' extraversion. In other words, the female voice may be equated with the poetic voice. Certainly, a modern commentator on the Kabbalah has suggested, the *Zohar* seems to be an important link in the tradition of viewing poetry as a discourse different in kind from any other:

...if we turn to the poetical parts of the *Zohar*, or the poetical aspects of its language, we'll discover there the eminent affinities between the mystic of the thirteenth century, and the contemporary poet or reader.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed the kabbalistic tendency to appreciate language in both its semantic and its physical modalities is entirely consonant with one modern view of poetic language — what Elisabeth Sewell in her work on Mallarmé and Rimbaud identified as the coordination of given meaning with 'sound-look';<sup>9</sup> a conception that has been given authoritative support in Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature*:

For the poet, the word is not primarily a 'sign', a transparent counter, but a 'symbol', valuable for itself as well as in its capacity of representative; it may even be an 'object' or 'thing', dear for its sound or look.<sup>10</sup>

This commonplace of contemporary literary aesthetics (as familiar to the Spanish Golden Age as to Goethe's contemporaries) might well have received its definitive

<sup>7</sup>'Writing Women in Golden Age Spain: Saint Teresa and María de Zayas', *MLN*, 102 (1987), 220-40 (p.240).

<sup>8</sup>Matti Megged, 'The Kabbalah as Poetry', pp.558-64 (p.563).

<sup>9</sup>Elisabeth Sewell, *The Structure of Poetry* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951).

<sup>10</sup>René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), p.88.

Renaissance formulation in the lively debates that accompanied the diffusion of the Kabbalah — and its emphasis on female discourse — throughout Europe.

The third specific area where the implications of the foregoing inquiry are perhaps of the most pressing relevance is that of the reconstruction of the (continuous or discontinuous?) tradition of kabbalistic ideas in general since the Renaissance. In addition to underlining the inherent fruitfulness of comparative studies in promoting an intercultural 'cross-fertilisation' of ideas and approaches which helps to illuminate the texts compared, the present study may also serve to support S.S. Prawer's contention that 'comparative literary studies lead over into, or presuppose, studies in cultural history and the history of ideas'.<sup>11</sup> If only because of the 'tremendous intellectual impact' that Kabbalism is said to have had in Spain,<sup>12</sup> the external evidence alone suggesting its major influence on López de Úbeda is, I think, strong enough — and more so in combination with the internal evidence — to warrant further research in this specific area. Moreover, there also seems to be the exciting possibility that a thorough investigation of the historical filiation of kabbalistic ideas (along the lines perhaps of the kind of inquiry adumbrated in Chapter III) might well cast a clarifying light on the provenance of some of the central notions, not only of contemporary poetics, but also in such areas as linguistics, psychology, and, not least, modern feminism in general.

The case for 'the centrality of the *Bildungsroman* to contemporary feminist writing' has recently — in my view, quite rightly — been advanced.<sup>13</sup> In the light of the foregoing study — and of Goethe's tendency to place his *Wilhelm Meister* in the picaresque tradition (for instance, in conversation with Kanzler Friedrich von Müller, 29.v.1814) — it might be more accurate, and more illuminating, to insist on the equal

<sup>11</sup>S.S. Prawer, *Comparative Literature Studies: An Introduction* (London: Duckworth, 1973), p.141.

<sup>12</sup>José C. Nieto, *El Renacimiento y la Otra España: Visión Cultural Socioespiritual* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997), p.577. Not irrelevant in this connection (in view of the transmission of Kabbalah by Christian converts from Judaism [C. Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala*, pp.vii-viii]) is the probability of López de Úbeda's *converso* status (and Justina's Jewish background; Bruno M. Damiani, *Francisco López de Úbeda*, p.79). Cf. Henry Ettnghausen, 'Quevedo's *Converso Pícaro*', *MLN*, 102 (1987), 241-54.

<sup>13</sup>Siobhan McIlvanney, 'Feminist Bildung in the Novels of Claire Etcherelli', *MLR*, 92, 1997, 60-69 (p.69). Cf. Susan Fraiman, *Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers and the Novel of Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp.1-31.

relevance to feminist thought (and its historical antecedents) of the *picara* tradition as exemplified in Francisco López de Úbeda's *La Pícarra Justina*.

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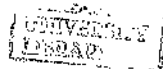
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ADDENDUM:

ARNOLD, G. UNPARTEYISCHE KIRCHEN UND KETZERHISTORIE,  
2 VOLS. , FRANKFURT a/M, 1700-15.



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'DAS WAS BEDENKE ...'  
ON THE CONTENT, STRUCTURE, AND FORM  
OF GOETHE'S *WILHELM MEISTER*<sup>1</sup>

'Stoff ohne Form ist freilich nur ein halber Besitz ...  
Form ohne Stoff hingegen ist gar nicht der Schatte  
eines Besitzes ...'

Schiller

In the present state of euphoric enthusiasm on all sides for formal analyses of the novel it needs to be said that *Wilhelm Meister*, like any other novel, is an 'ado about something', as Henry James has it;<sup>2</sup> and that unless we are in a position to judge correctly the status of this something, we shall not be able to see what is being done with it. For structure — by definition — consists in relations between entities; we can scarcely grasp it if we do not know what is related to what. And this means, as Gombrich has insisted in a different context, knowing the significance of those forms the artist has built into his work.<sup>3</sup> Certainly, one benefit of recent formalistic trends is that it can no longer be maintained of *Wilhelm Meister* that 'all studies begin with an apology for the novel's form'.<sup>4</sup> For in the thirty years or so since this at-the-time seemingly uncontroversial remark was made, a consensus has formed in

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1 This paper was delivered at the Institute of Germanic Studies on 21 February 1991.

2 Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) (Harmondsworth, 1983), p. xi.

3 E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, (London, 1972), p. 36. Cf. A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of an Idea*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), p. 3, on the need to be familiar with content.

4 J. M. Arndt, 'The Harmony Society and Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre', *Comparative Literature*, 10 (1958), 193-202 (p. 193).

the wake of such work as Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago and London, 1968) and Stanzel's *Erzählkunst*<sup>5</sup> as to its highly-wrought nature. Drawing on general studies of Goethe's modes of thought,<sup>6</sup> and adopting the framework provided by Volker Neuhaus's pioneering analysis of the novel's narrator-figure(s),<sup>7</sup> critics now see in both the *Lehrjahre* and the *Wanderjahre* a 'structural principle' at work, one which lays to rest the accusations of 'negligence' on Goethe's part, accusations made since the novel's first appearance (and repeated as recently as 1969 in Manfred Karnick's full-length study).<sup>8</sup> 'Internal mirroring' — a variant of Goethe's principle of 'wiederholte Spiegelung' — is the narrative strategy, the perception of which has brought a degree of order into what to many an honest commentator seemed a chaotic jumble.<sup>9</sup> But zeal for this (after all, hardly new)<sup>10</sup> 'key' to the novel's formal organization has tended to blind commentators to what seems to us a rather obvious objection to its supposed explanatory power, namely: why should Goethe have adopted such an oblique method of presentation? Hans Vaget's recent suggestion, that, given Goethe's relationship to the nobility, his analysis of the problem of dilettantism could not be expressed directly — even if it were plausible in respect of these particular topics — can hardly explain as a general strategy why material of the wealth and breadth of that contained in *Wilhelm Meister*

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- 5 F. K. Stanzel, *Typische Formen des Romans*, (Göttingen, 1964); *Theorie des Erzählens*, (Göttingen, 1979).
  - 6 See L. A. Willoughby, 'Literary Relations in the Light of Goethe's Principle of "wiederholte Spiegelungen"', *Comparative Literature*, 1 (1949), 309-322; reprinted in *Goethe, Poet and Thinker*, 2nd edn, (London, 1972), pp. 153-166.
  - 7 Volker Neuhaus, 'Die Archivfiktion in Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre', *Euphorion*, 62 (1968), 13-27.
  - 8 *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre oder die Kunst des Mittelbaren*, (Munich, 1969).
  - 9 See William I. Lillyman, ed., *Goethe's Narrative Fiction (The Irvine Goethe Symposium)*, (Berlin and New York, 1983).
  - 10 Consider Eric A. Blackall's 'contrapuntal' model of the novel's structure, in: *Goethe and the Novel*, (Ithaca and London, 1976), pp. 235 ff.), itself the development of an earlier argument (see Eugen Wolff, 'Die ursprüngliche Gestalt von Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahren', *Goethes Jahrbuch*, 34 (1913), 169; and Hans Reiss, *Goethes Romane*, (Berne and Munich, 1963), p. 225 and *Goethe's Novels*, (London, Melbourne, Toronto, 1969), p. 233.)



'Das Was bedenke ...'

should be given the self-reflexive rhetorical form it evidently has.<sup>11</sup>

The problem, so it appears to us, lies not in any error of formal perception (for repeated mirroring is manifestly at work), but rather with the unexamined assumption — which is at least as old as G. H. Lewes's condemnation of the novel of over one hundred and fifty years ago<sup>12</sup> — that what Goethe is articulating are his own views, to which on occasion material taken from other sources has been assimilated. Our argument here is that this assumption (which so clearly underpins both a now standard work like Arthur Henkel's *Entsagung* and Wilhelm Voßkamp's recent work on utopian thinking)<sup>13</sup> is very far from being self-evidently true; and that, once the status of the material Goethe deploys begins to come into focus, the rhetorical virtuosity of its presentation begins to make much more sense than it has hitherto. The age-old rhetorical rule applies here as elsewhere: the function of rhetoric can be evaluated only if the *res* being treated is taken into account. Our aim in what follows, then, is to make a case for a thorough-going re-orientation, away from viewing the novel as a vehicle of Goethe's own thinking and towards a consideration of it as a re-presentation of traditional, indeed commonplace, material.

It has often been maintained, perhaps most trenchantly by Barker Fairley, that the importance of *Wilhelm Meister* lies in its being 'the chief vehicle of Goethe's thoughts on society and the state'.<sup>14</sup> But just a small sample of three political propositions taken at random from the novel make this assertion appear, at the very least, dubious. Consider, first, Lenardo's advocacy of political quietism in his exhortation to his fellow emigrants: 'alle Regierungsformen gleichfalls gelten zu lassen und ... innerhalb einer jeden uns, auf wie lange es auch sei, nach ihrem Willen und Wunsch zu bemühen' (Hamburger Ausgabe 8, 391). If we hear an identifiable source here surely it is Epicurus rather than Goethe. Similarly, the two following statements,

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11 Lillyman, [note 9], p. 11.

12 *Life of Goethe*, (London, 1855), p. 525.

13 *Eine Studie zu Goethes Altersroman*, (Tübingen, 1954); 'Utopie und Utopiekritik in Goethes Romanen *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* und *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*', in Wilhelm Voßkamp, ed., *Utopieforschung: Interdisziplinäre Studien zur neuzeitlichen Utopie*, III, (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 227-49.

14 *A Study of Goethe*, (Oxford, 1947), p. 253.

taken from 'Aus Makariens Archiv', are familiar enough and in no way distinctively Goethean.

Wir brauchen in unserer Sprache ein Wort, das, wie Kindheit sich zu Kind verhält, so das Verhältnis Volkheit zum Volke ausdrückt. Der Erzieher muß die Kindheit hören, nicht das Kind. Jene spricht immer dasselbe aus, ist vernünftig, beständig, rein und wahr. Und in diesem Sinne soll und kann das Gesetz der allgemein ausgesprochene Wille der Volkheit sein, ein Wille, den die Menge niemals ausspricht, den aber der Verständige vernimmt und den der Vernünftige zu befriedigen weiß, und der Gute gern befriedigt.

Welches Recht wir zum Regiment haben, danach fragen wir nicht — wir regieren. Ob das Volk ein Recht habe, uns abzusetzen, darum bekümmern wir uns nicht — wir hüten uns nur daß es nicht in Versuchung komme, es zu tun. (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 470).

In the case of the first, it is likely to be Rousseau that comes to mind as a possible 'source', though the distinction drawn between the diverse desires and aspirations expressed by the people and the underlying 'general will' to which the statesman is to listen, is a thought associated, too, with Plato and later embodied in Roman Law.<sup>15</sup> And it is Machiavelli's view that the founding of a state need not have any legality, a thought which received its clearest and most systematic treatment at the hands of Hobbes, who argued that there was no claim to legitimacy without power.<sup>16</sup> Our point is this: neither proposition is in any way original to Goethe. Indeed, all three are, and certainly were in Goethe's day, commonplaces of political discourse. Moreover, on the face of it none of them can be easily assimilated to Goethe's own, dynamic, political outlook<sup>17</sup> — which may explain the straightforward puzzlement of one commentator who approached the novel with expectations nourished by the widespread view of it as a vehicle of Goethe's ideas on society: '[it] seems to be a denial of everything Goethe

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15 George Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, (London, 1963), p. 172.

16 Sabine, pp. 347 and 470-71.

17 See R. H. Stephenson, 'The Coherence of Goethe's Political Outlook' in *Tradition and Creation*, ed. C. P. Magill, Brian A. Rowley and Christopher J. Smith, (Leeds, 1978), pp. 77-88.

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himself had stood for ...'.<sup>18</sup> But, in order to meet the possible objection that these examples are in some way exceptional, let us consider probably the most famous piece of political discourse in the work: Wilhelm's discussion of Having and Being.<sup>19</sup> As Lionel Trilling has convincingly argued, there was a 'pretty clear consensus' from the sixteenth century onwards that 'the great enemy of being was having'.<sup>20</sup> It would surely be as perverse, and as historically naive, to attribute this commonplace to Goethe as it would be to trace, say, Erich Fromm's *To have or to be?* (London, 1978) to Goethe as source. Both are clearly drawing on a common resource, a perspective that is obscured if we embrace the notion that the material in *Wilhelm Meister* is Goethe's own political testament.

This same impression, of Goethe's deploying traditional material in the novel rather than using it as a receptacle for his own thought, is sustained by a consideration of quite different, and diverse, content. For example, while the Platonic derivation of the Three's insistence on the crucial religious value of *Ehrfurcht* (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 155-6) may go without saying, the no-less-traditional nature of Jarno's almost total contempt for communication, an idea generally attributed to the rhetorician Gorgias,<sup>21</sup> has, we think, been overlooked:

Ich habe mich durchaus überzeugt, das Liebste, und das sind doch unsere Überzeugungen, muß jeder im tiefsten Ernst bei sich selbst bewahren, jeder weiß nur für sich, was er weiß und das muß er geheimhalten; wie er ausspricht, sogleich ist der Widerspruch rege ... (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 262-63).

Likewise the Leader's aesthetic tenet, that genius and rules are compatible, was, after all, a commonplace of eighteenth-century aesthetics, familiar if only through the *Discourses* of Sir Joshua Reynolds:<sup>22</sup>

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18 Arndt, [note 4], *loc. cit.*

19 See Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, 'Having and Being, or Bourgeois versus Nobility: Notes for a Chapter on Social and Cultural History or for a Commentary on *Wilhelm Meister*', *GLL*, n.s. 22, (1969), 101-05.

20 *Sincerity and Authenticity*, (London, 1972), p. 122.

21 G. S. Brett, *A History of Psychology* (1912). Edited and abridged by R. S. Peters, (London, 1953), pp. 59-60.

22 K. E. Gilbert and H. Kühn, *A History of Aesthetics*, (New York, 1939), p. 263.

'[Das Genie] bequemt sich zum Respekt, sogar vor dem was man konventionell nennen könnte: denn was ist dieses anders, als daß die vorzüglichsten Menschen übereinkamen, das Notwendige, das Unerläßliche für das Beste zu halten; und gereicht es nicht überall zum Glück?' (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 250).

And the same holds for the discussion between the astronomer and Jarno on scientific method. The following doctrine of academic freedom, for example, had been an axiom since at least the time of Galileo:

... in den Wissenschaften ist die absoluteste Freiheit nötig: denn da wirkt man nicht für heut und morgen, sondern für undenklich vorschreitende Zeitenreihen. (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 443).

Moreover, lest it be thought that the examples so far cited may be objected to as mere eclectic pieces assimilated to an original core of Goethean thought, consider the pervasive theme of education, of *Bildung*, on which so much *Meister* scholarship has centred, as a re-presentation of traditional, indeed commonplace, material. If the kind of epigenetic model of human development, set up by Erik H. Erikson in his now famous *Identity — Youth and Crisis* (London, 1968),<sup>23</sup> is applied to Wilhelm's career, a schema emerges which may be outlined as follows: i) Wilhelm's rejection of his family-ties; ii) the childish solipsism of his love for Mariane; iii) his enthusiasm for the theatrical peer-group and especially for Hamlet, 'the morbid young intellectual';<sup>24</sup> iv) his subsequent disillusionment and disgust with this period of his life; and v) his identity-crisis proper: his entrance into the responsible, adult world of the Tower. The relevance of this fact in the present context is twofold. In the first place, this notion of the 'ages of man' was, of course, as much a commonplace for the Age of Goethe as it is for our own, and to that extent this aspect of Wilhelm's *Bildung* is in itself unoriginal. In the second place, the discrepancy between how Wilhelm himself conceives of his own development on the one hand — 'mich selbst, ganz wie ich da bin, auszubilden, das war dunkel von Jugend auf mein

23 An equally plausible case can of course be made for seeing Wilhelm's development in the *Wanderjahre* as an instance of what C. G. Jung called 'individuation'.

24 Erikson, p. 237.

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Wunsch und meine Absicht' (Hamburger Ausgabe, VII, 290) — and the terms in which the narrator records it on the other, is not only a source of amusing irony. It also precisely mirrors the preformation-versus-epigenesis controversy that marked the height of its modern (i.e. post-Renaissance) phase in the debate between von Haller and Caspar Friedrich Wolff in the 1750s.<sup>25</sup> Wilhelm (unwittingly) embraces preformation, 'all the complexity of the finished form being supposed to be present initially' and needing only to unfold;<sup>26</sup> while the narrator records the gradual production and organisation of parts in (epigenetic) interaction with the world of chance and circumstance.

But perhaps a case for the unoriginal nature of the novel's material can be made more tellingly by turning to the ethical thought contained in it, which critics have tended to attribute to Goethe himself, with even less hesitation than in the case of the political and educational content. Wilhelm's early realisation in the *Lehrjahre* of the central importance of Man hardly needs to be glossed with, say, Pope's 'the proper study of Mankind is Man'. It is perhaps otiose, too, to point out that Jarno's 'Sich auf ein Handwerk zu beschränken ist das beste' (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 37) is a central tenet of the post-Socratic schools, already attributed to Heraclitus.<sup>27</sup> Certainly, the phrase, 'von jeher anerkannt', makes sufficiently clear the traditional nature of Jarno's most-quoted sentence (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 263): 'Denken und Tun, Tun und Denken, das ist die Summe aller Weisheit, von jeher anerkannt, von jeher geübt, nicht eingesehen von einem jeden.' And yet so powerful is the presumption that the ideas in *Wilhelm Meister* are Goethe's own that a scholar of Henkel's distinction offers a full-length study of *Entsagung* as in some sense 'Goethean', despite an awareness on his part of Goethe as 'ein Anwalt des "alten Wahren", der Überlieferung' (p. 24) which peeps through Henkel's text — to undermine his central thesis that Goethe is offering an original doctrine of Renunciation — in such phrases as 'erinnert an Plato, Augustin oder Pascal' (p. 111) and 'Gemeingut jedes höheren religiösen Selbstverständnisses' (p. 131); and then culminates in an appendix

25 See Joseph Needham, *History of Embryology*, (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 220-1.

26 Needham, p. 183.

27 See Henry Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, (London, 1888), pp. 14-15.

in which the Stoic tradition is given particular attention (pp. 165-8).

The question that arises in the light of this suggestive evidence is, to our mind, this: why should Goethe use the narrative strategy of 'internal mirroring' to re-present what to his sophisticated contemporary audience, saturated in so many ways with the great thoughts of the past,<sup>28</sup> would be utter commonplaces? An examination with this question in mind of the novel's (hitherto neglected) theme of what A.N. Whitehead called 'assemblage' will provide both a clue to a satisfactory answer to this question, as well as what we hope will be persuasive corroboration that the novel is indeed designed to bring such inherited and familiar thought to the reader's refreshed attention. According to Whitehead, 'philosophy', in the broad sense of critical reflexion, begins with the gathering together of common notions:

Philosophy can exclude nothing. Thus it should never start from systematization. Its primary stage can be termed 'assemblage'... [assemblage of] some ultimate notions, as they occur naturally in daily life.<sup>29</sup>

'Assemblage' in this sense is an insistent theme that is sustained throughout the length of *Wilhelm Meister*, through both the *Lehrjahre* and the *Wanderjahre*.

The structuring of one's ordinary, daily life about some received idea or collection of ideas is the strikingly recurrent feature of those various communities with which Wilhelm comes into contact in the course of his wanderings. When, for example, Lenardo tells Wilhelm about the Pedagogic Province for the first time, he characterizes it as essentially a collection of ideas, thoughts, proposals, and precepts given concrete expression: 'es schien mir als sei, unter dem Bilde der Wirklichkeit, eine Reihe von Ideen, Gedanken, Vorschlägen und Vorsätzen gemeint ...' (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 141) — an impression that is confirmed for Wilhelm on his arrival in the

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28 See R. H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature: A Study in Aesthetic Transformation*, (Berne, Frankfurt am Main, New York, 1983), pp. 83-89.

29 *Modes of Thought*, (Cambridge, 1938), p. 2. For a fuller treatment of this theme, though from a quite different angle, see R. H. Stephenson, 'The Place of Revolution in Goethe's Thinking: The Case of *Wilhelm Meister*', *Strathclyde Modern Language Studies*, Special Issue, 1991, pp. 4-22.

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Province. The collections of paintings he is shown set forth actions and events *symphonically*, as his guide has it: the different images are grouped according to the similarity of ideas they express, 'not having so much a like time as a like significance' (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 159). This habit of assembling wise and venerable truths is practised in various ways, whether it be a physical collection of significant objects or a cataloguing of received ideas.<sup>30</sup> And the proper way of achieving new understanding by the thoughtful assemblage of time-honoured thoughts is indicated in the novel by repeated references to the edifying nature of a religious service. In the *Wanderjahre*, for instance, Nachodine reports the effect of a church-service held by her father:

Es waren, sagte sie, bekannte Sprüche, Reime, Aussprüche und Wendungen die ich hundertmal gehört und als an hohlen Klängen mich geärgert hatte: diesmal flossen sie aber so herzlich zusammengeschmolzen, ruhig glühend, von Schlacken rein, wie wir das erweichte Metall in der Rinne hinfließen sehen (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 429.cf. vol. VII, 138).

The 'something quite different' (Hamburger Ausgabe, VII, 542) that is felt and thought, the fruit of assemblage, is clearly the independent production of the mind entertaining the collected thoughts: a new pattern perceived in the old.<sup>31</sup> For just as the *Sammler* (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 144) marks the transition from the old to the new, from the past to the present, in his mixed collection of old and new equipment, so throughout the novel 'assemblage' is held up as the way to re-invest inherited thought with new, living significance — as Neoterpe puts it in *Paläophron und Neoterpe*: 'Gern will ich sammeln, daß ich einst auch geben kann.' (Hamburger Ausgabe, V, 307).

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30 It was Schiller who first perceived the function of the grandfather's collection in the *Lehrjahre*: 'einen köstlichen Gebrauch haben Sie von des Großvaters Sammlung zu machen gewußt; sie ist ordentlich eine auswirkende Person und rückt selbst an das Lebendige' (to Goethe, 28 June 1796).

31 Wilhelm's understanding of the creative potential of assembling traditional thought is clear from the advice he gives Nachodine: 'Die religiösen Ausdrücke waren uns trivial geworden, der Kern, den sie enthalten sollen, war uns entfallen. Da ließ [Wilhelm] uns die Gefahr unseres Zustandes bemerken, wie bedenklich die Entfernung vom Überlieferten sein müsse' (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 423).

The whole novel is presented as if all its constituent elements had been sorted and assembled by a cautious narrator;<sup>32</sup> indeed those blatantly unintegrated, and to successive generations of commentators troublesome, 'stowaways'<sup>33</sup> — the *Novellen*, maxims, and poems — indicate very clearly that the novel itself is precisely what Goethe on occasion called it: an *Aggregat*, an 'assemblage' — though not of his own ideas, but of key-notions, in every area of thought, of our common intellectual inheritance. They, too, are assembled; and in such a way, like the images in the Pedagogic Province, that the reader is invited to adopt that same, open attitude of mind that Wilhelm is encouraged to cultivate: juxtaposition in varying contexts and modes encourages us to compare and contrast until the pure conceptual form — the idea — emerges, distilled from particular associations, 'von Schlacken rein'. Far from being peripheral<sup>34</sup> or representing, as Karl Schlechta would have it,<sup>35</sup> the warmth of the innocent life Wilhelm has 'lost', the apparently interpolated *Novellen* deal with the theme which lies at the centre of the novel: namely, the complex problem inherent in any use of convention. The necessity of maintaining a flexible reciprocity between feeling and formula, inclination and precept, freedom and regulation, is portrayed with a starker intensity than is possible in the epic expanse of the novel. Similarly, the significance of the two maxim-collections, 'Betrachtungen im Sinne der Wanderer' and 'Aus Makariens Archiv' lies not so much in their content (whose connection with various sayings and doings of the novel proper has long since been established)<sup>36</sup> as in their structure — the assemblage of commonplaces, abstracted from context, which they graphically present to the reader. The increasing generality inherent in this transposed (re-) statement reaches its climax in the poems placed in the work, particularly in the two strategically placed at the end of the two maxim-collections, 'Im ernsten

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32 Neuhaus, [note 7], especially p. 26.

33 The term is George C. Buck's. See his (very influential) article, 'The Pattern of the Stowaway in Goethe's Works', *PMLA* 71 (1956), 451-464 (p. 458).

34 See Neuhaus, p. 14, for criticism of the model of a 'wreath' of *Novellen* with which Emil Staiger and Erich Trunz operate.

35 Karl Schlechta, *Goethes Wilhelm Meister* (Frankfurt am Main, 1953), p. 107.

36 See Wilhelm Flitner, 'Aus Makariens Archiv. Ein Beispiel Goethescher Spruchkomposition', *Goethe-Kalender*, 1943, pp. 116-74 (p. 123).



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Beinhaus' and 'Vermächtnis'. The former articulates the ambivalent, poignant, feelings attendant on bringing inherited forms to life by 'pious plundering' of the past ('fromm entwendend'); while the latter traces what might be called the 'Seven Stages of Insight', at each stage of which an age-old verity concerning the life of the mind is enunciated.<sup>37</sup>

The function of the narrative strategy of 'internal mirroring' would then be plain if our account of the commonplace status of the material assembled in the novel were to be accepted and confirmed. It would be an example of what Northrop Frye has characterized as 'a dissociative rhetoric aimed at breaking down habitual responses'.<sup>38</sup> The 'wrappage of traditions, hearsays, mere words', which, as Carlyle puts it, is 'hardened round us, encasing wholly every notion we form'<sup>39</sup> is broken down, and the tried and familiar is seen in a fresh perspective and in a new light. If the commonplace status of his material were established, the structure of the novel would no longer appear to be a coy hide-and-seek on Goethe's part,<sup>40</sup> but rather a way of engaging the reader in the same process of assemblage and assimilation of the all-too-familiar that Wilhelm is taken up with. And the appropriate response would, we think, be clear too: to furnish the one element that cannot be handed down by tradition,<sup>41</sup> an active mind — that 'aggregate of interacting components' as it has been so aptly called.<sup>42</sup>

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37 For a rhetorical and aesthetic analysis of 'Vermächtnis' see *Goethe's Wisdom Literature*, pp. 62-67 and 196-204.

38 *Anatomy of Criticism*, (Princeton, 1957), p. 329. Cf. William H. A. Larrett's comment, in: "'Weder Kern noch Schale". The "Novel" Epistemology of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*', *PEGS*, 56 (1985-6), 38-55 [p. 42] that 'the work ... allows for both unity and diversity and for the constant reappraisal of form, context and content'.

39 *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, (1841) Everyman edition, (London, 1926), p. 245.

40 An erroneous impression that is only compounded by the apparently obligatory citing by *Wilhelm Meister* critics of the obscure passage from his letter to Iken (27 September 1827) about his predilection for 'durcheinander gegentübergestellte und sich gleichsam ineinandergestellte Gebilde'.

41 See *Maximen und Reflexionen*, ed. M. Hecker, (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), no. 1175.

42 By Geoffrey Bateson, *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unit*, (Glasgow, 1980), pp. 99 and 102.

Much more evidence, of course, needs to be adduced. In particular, the material Goethe is deploying needs to be more closely characterized in respect of its historical, sociological significance. Our own view, based on the novel's typically modern appeal to the reader's autonomous Reason as the final valid authority — and on the specific, delimited nature of the social setting of the plot as a later phase of an era that in its emphasis on immanence ('Gedenke zu leben!') marks itself off from the Middle Ages — is that it is firmly set in the post-Renaissance world: 'a unitary complex of interacting assumptions, of thought, habits and styles ... connected ... with the practical arrangements of a society ...', which Lionel Trilling sees as the essentially modern concept of culture.<sup>43</sup> If this should prove to be the case — and the evidence points in that direction — then the significance of the novel would consist in its attempt to give comprehensive expression to the temper of this our modern culture and society.<sup>44</sup> Wilhelm Voßkamp is, therefore, right to

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43 Trilling, see Bateson, p. 125.

44 For example, the line 'Mein Acker ist die Zeit', taken from the introductory poem to the *Wanderjahre*, is a translation of the inscription, 'Tempus ager meus', which the Renaissance mathematician-physician Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576) had over the door of his library and which typifies Renaissance attitudes to time. (See *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, vol. IV, p. 49 for this information and Johnson's own version.) Even material ultimately traceable to ancient sources is of precisely the kind the Renaissance rejoiced in rediscovering. We are using the concept of 'Renaissance' here in the Michelet-Burckhardt sense of 'the discovery of the world and of man' — 'the prototype of the modern world', in which new social patterns emerged, linked to a scientific outlook, social improvement and economic development, in which individualism was discovered. Despite the many concessions that have been made to critics, it is generally agreed that Burckhardt's essential thesis — namely, that a peculiar configuration of developments definitive of modern society unfolded in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries — still commands support (See Denys Hay, 'Idea of Renaissance', in: *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, vol. 4 (1976), pp. 121-29). A vivid evocation of the Renaissance in this sense, as the birth of modernity, is Naphta's brilliant criticism of its spirit — what he calls '[das] Manchestertum' — in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*, where Copernican astronomy is seen as the starting-point of a secularized rationalistic view of the state, tempered by bourgeois-humanistic notions of liberalism, individualism, human rights and democracy; and all this motivated by money, by capitalism's profit-motif, which, in turn, encourages technological development (Stockholmer Ausgabe, 1948, pp. 560-573.).

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say, 'Goethe reflektiert realgeschichtliche Tendenzen'; but wrong, in our view, to add, as a defining relative clause, 'die nach 1789 etwa in Sachsen und Preussen sichtbar sind' — simply because the perspective is far too narrow and parochial. Similarly, the motif of inheritance in the novel, highlighted by R.D. Miller and subtly elaborated by Michael Minden is, we would suggest, not just part of 'the history of the [post-eighteenth-century] bourgeoisie ... which is our history too', as Minden has it (a view to which both Dieter Borchmeyer and Stefan Blessin subscribe). The socio-economic institution of inheritance is part of the whole, inherited structure of our modern Western society, in which capitalistic modes of investment make for an ever-intensified return on the principle, mirrored in the 'circularity of inheritance', which Minden notes in the novel.<sup>45</sup> The precarious synthesis of aristocratic values (the *Turm der Gesellschaft*) with (Werner's) commercialism is likewise not Goethe's (pace all those who follow Lukács): it is rather a reflection of a compromise that saw its first light in the Renaissance, when the term 'nobility' became untethered from birth<sup>46</sup> — a compromise that continues of course into our own day.

Goethe is out, not to explain as did Max Weber, the process of rationalization and secularisation that distinguishes post-Renaissance society. Instead he holds up to our contemplation the essential constituents of our socio-cultural inheritance: the characteristic ways in which human potential for growth is channelled and shaped (i.e. conditioned) by modern secular society's insistence on productive performance and 'efficiency'. Whereas in *Faust* (Part Two, Acts II and III), the geological debate between the Neptunists and Vulcanists remains just that, a debate, albeit in a diachronic

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45 See Voßkamp, [note 13], p. 233; P. D. Miller, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre: An Interpretation*, (London, 1969), pp. 34-88; Michael Minden, 'The Place of Inheritance in the Bildungsroman', *DVjs*, 57 (1983), 33-63 (esp. p. 52); Dieter Borchmeyer, *Höfische Gesellschaft und französische Revolution bei Goethe: Adliges und bürgerliches Wertesystem im Urteil der Weimarer Klassik*, (Königstein / Ts., 1977); Stefan Blessin, *Die Romane Goethes*, (Königstein / Ts., 1979).

46 Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance*, 2nd edn, (Cambridge, 1987), p. 190.

dimension,<sup>47</sup> in *Wilhelm Meister* the same cultural material is given a quite different, and for the novel utterly characteristic, inflexion: Jarno declares that such views are meaningless unless pragmatically tested (Hamburger Ausgabe, VIII, 263). In general, the novel presents the adaptations and re-adaptations of inherited modes of thought (and behaviour) to the increasingly intense 'Forderung des Tages' of modern society, a challenge which presupposes the kind of flexibility of thought that Weber sees as characteristic of modern Western man: a constant dis-solution and re-solution of elements in order to make sense of ('rationalize') our experience of accelerated change and instability.

The underlying justification for our constructing such a general theory of the text on — as yet — inadequate evidence is, ultimately, that *Wilhelm Meister* is a work of art, vouchsafing insight at a deeper level than discursive understanding. 'Der Roman', declares Goethe, 'fühlt uns vor'.<sup>48</sup> What we only dimly grasp as a conceptual relation can yet be felt, through art, as a unity. Even if, as a scholarly community, we do not yet know what we need to know in order to make full discursive sense of *Wilhelm Meister*, its aesthetic texture — its 'form' as distinct from its (rhetorical) 'structure' — serves us as a guide. In other words, the formal links made by the veil of poetry function both as the source of our intuition and as the test of assumptions made on the basis of that intuition.

In *Wilhelm's* indenture, the great Renaissance theme of the 'art of life' is taken up. A series of very familiar propositions is assembled, beginning with perhaps the best-known:

Die Kunst ist lang, das Leben kurz, das Urteil schwierig, die Gelegenheit flüchtig. Handeln ist leicht, Denken schwer; nach dem Gedanken handeln unbequem. Aller Anfang ist heiter, die Schwelle ist der Platz der Erwartung. Der Knabe staunt, der Eindruck bestimmt ihn, er lernt spielend, der Ernst überrascht ihn. Die Nachahmung ist uns angeboren, das Nachzuahmende wird nicht leicht erkannt. Selten wird das Treffliche gefunden, seltner geschätzt. Die Höhe reizt uns, nicht die Stufen; den Gipfel im Auge wandeln wir gerne auf der Ebene. Nur ein Teil der

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47 See Elizabeth M. Wilkinson, 'Goethes *Faust*: Tragedy in the Diachronic Mode', *PEGS*, n.s. 42 (1972), 116-74.

48 'Der deutsche Gil Blas', Jubiläums-Ausgabe, vol. 37, p. 204, 30.

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Kunst kann gelehrt werden, der Künstler braucht sie ganz. Wer sie halb kennt, ist immer irre und redet viel; wer sie ganz besitzt, mag nur tun und redet selten oder spät. Jene haben keine Geheimnisse und keine Kraft, ihre Lehre ist, wie gebackenes Brot, schmackhaft und sättigend für einen Tag; aber Mehl kann man nicht säen, und die Saatfrüchte sollen nicht vermahlen werden. Die Worte sind gut, sie sind aber nicht das Beste. Das Beste wird nicht deutlich durch Worte. Der Geist, aus dem wir handeln, ist das Höchste. Die Handlung wird nur vom Geiste begriffen und wieder dargestellt. Niemand weiß, was er tut, wenn er recht handelt; aber des Unrechten sind wir uns immer bewußt. Wer bloß mit Zeichen wirkt, ist ein Pedant, ein Heuchler oder ein Pfücher. Es sind ihrer viel, und es wird ihnen wohl zusammen. Ihr Geschwätz hält den Schüler zurück, und ihre beharrliche Mittelmäßigkeit ängstigt die Besten. Des echten Künstlers Lehre schließt den Sinn auf; denn wo die Worte fehlen, spricht die Tat. Der echte Schüler lernt aus dem Bekannten das Unbekannte entwickeln und nähert sich dem Meister. (Hamburger Ausgabe, VII, 496-7).

The conceptual antitheses in these opening lines, taken of course from Hippocrates, ascribe all the prestige of what is difficult to the 'artificial' pole of 'art' — to conscious judgment and thought — while the 'natural' pole of life — action and opportunity — is said to be ephemeral and easy. But after we are told that only a part of art can be taught (the other being innate by implication), and that it needs to be possessed as a whole, the valuation switches. Now the artificial pole — words — is valued less highly than action ('Das Beste wird nicht deutlich durch Worte', etc.). What is taught and learned — *das Bekannte* — only achieves its true significance in helping to articulate appropriate action — *das Unbekannte*. This apparently paradoxical double valuation of life and art, of nature and culture — of the naive and the sentimental, of the Dionysian and the Apollonian — might well be said to be the central problem of modern culture. What is of particular interest here is how, through the aesthetic deployment of language, what is otherwise the difficult result of a precarious process of reasoning, is presented in a palpable form. In the very opening lines a cluster of sound-look touches links what is conceptually opposed: *schwierig* by homeoteleuton to *flüchtig*, *Denken* to *Leben*; alliteration links *Kunst* with *kurz*, and *Gelegenheit* with *Gedanken*; above all, the key-terms of the antithesis *handeln* and *denken* are interwoven by means of a visual and aural chiasmus. And in this way a central aspect of

the temper of our modern culture — and, as we have tried to show, the central burden of Goethe's novel — is presented not discursively elaborated, but *in nuce* to our feeling; namely, that (inherited) Thought and (spontaneous) Action are fundamentally and inextricably one.

What Jürgen Habermas has dubbed 'reconstruction'<sup>49</sup> — taking parts of inherited tradition and putting them back together again in a new form, appropriate to present requirements — is what both the characters and the reader of *Wilhelm Meister* enact. And in so doing we are enabled to reflect critically on the modes of thought and the forms of life — indeed on what Raymond Williams has called 'the structures of feeling' — that constitute the socio-cultural world of which we, too, are both the products and the producers.

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49 *Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns* (1981), edition Suhrkamp, n.F. Bde 502-3, (Frankfurt am Main, 1988) vol. 1, pp. 263, 269, 275 especially.