In the footsteps of the heroine

The journey to Integral Feminism

Figure 1: ‘Queen of the Night’, © Trustees of the British Museum

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Sarah Nicholson
To the women,
known and unknown,
who have forged the way,
and those still to come.
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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

_____________________________(Signature)
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Abstract

‘Who am I?’ is the central question of the hero’s journey. This thesis takes the hero’s journey as motif and metaphor for the exploration of subjectivity, and explores the manner in which woman’s journey as hero has been marginalised. For woman, the question ‘Who am I’ has been obscured by the more pressing question, ‘Who is woman?’ This thesis sets out to find and follow woman as hero and in so doing, to explore woman’s evolving socio-cultural and psychological relationship with what it is to be human.

To begin this journey, I turn to feminist theory as a principle space for the examination of the question of Woman. I trace feminism’s development of, and increasingly complex engagement with, the definition of Woman as subject. Arriving at the juncture of contemporary feminist discourse I introduce the unique tools and sophisticated philosophy of Wilber’s Integral theory in order to examine the possibilities that an Integral feminism may offer for the (re)construction of the female subject.

Reciprocally, feminist theory is brought to bear upon Integral theory. Following the proposition that the emergence of post-conventional feminist subjectivity represents an evolutionary unfolding of consciousness, this thesis follows and investigates the stages of consciousness as posed in Wilber’s evolutionary spiritual philosophy. As Wilber utilises perspectives from multiple disciplines to construct his theory, I utilise interdisciplinary feminist evidence to interrogate his theory of consciousness and to thus trace woman as hero through these stages.

Finally, I return to examine the manner in which classic models of the hero have posed the separative (male) self as the omega point of human development. I contextualise the limits of this model by introducing the more expansive horizons of contemporary Adult Developmental theory. By applying this expanded spectrum of development with a specific eye to gender I illustrate the heroine’s journey to the embodiment of the Unitive horizon of the divine. Further I demonstrate the necessity of establishing a genealogy of the female divine as complement to this path, from which a figure of the female divine horizon (after Irigaray), who is both guide and goal for the heroine on her journey may emerge.

Defined in her own name, plotted as a subject in the evolutionary stages of consciousness, and with a gender specific pathway of development towards the divine horizon, this thesis looks towards rendering a neo-perennial mythology of the journey of woman as hero that places her in the context of the dawning Integral stage.
Introduction

Furthermore, we have not even to risk the adventure alone; for the heroes of all time have gone before us; the labyrinth is thoroughly known; we have only to follow the thread of the hero path. And where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god; where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves; where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of our own existence; where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world. (Campbell 1949, 25)

Laurel Richardson writes that no matter how much we try to suppress it, our self is present in our writing and our research; in the conversation between self and research “topic and self are twin constructs” (Richardson 1997b, 523). This is indeed true of this thesis, which has its genesis in my own journey.

In the midst of a period of internal and external exploration, fuelled by the desire to understand the significant disparity between my socio-cultural context and my inner calling - which insisted that life was deeper, wider and wilder than social norms and material goals suggested - I found the work of Joseph Campbell. This meeting was deeply affective. His exploration of the hero beautifully articulated the core purpose of human life as attunement to the path of awakening, and this spoke to me directly.

For over a decade I have explored meditation practices and immanent forms of contemplation. These modes of inquiry have introduced me to new forms of knowledge while they have also continued to cultivate questions within me. The more deeply I ventured into the territories of mythology, religion and spirituality, the more I realised the deeply androcentric nature of these worlds. Their lineages dutifully recalled long list of patriarchs, and their primary emergent heroic figures, such as Buddha or Christ, were male. Women on the other hand, were rare, unnamed or unknown.

With this as a starting point, this thesis set out to find and follow the heroine and in doing so to explore woman’s evolving relationship with what it is to be human. Writing itself Richardson
asserts, is “a method of discovery and analysis”, it is itself “a way of ‘knowing’” (Richardson 1997b, 516). Thus without rejecting a rational voice or process, this thesis, in a nomadic style, after Braidotti, and responding to Irigaray and Kristeva’s poetic theories of language, acknowledges “ebb and flow, multiple beginnings, and multiple paths” (Harmon 1996, 1) in writing and structure. In following the evolving course of my questions the pathways of this thesis are at times cyclic or circular.

This thesis begins with one of the very oldest myths, the deeply profound Sumerian story of Inanna. I first encountered Inanna’s story as an undergraduate. Years later when I returned to it, informed by my own spiritual experiences, that I was able to understand her journey as a classic hero’s tale. For two years her story was the topic of this thesis, but the need to establish an Integral feminist philosophical and methodological position that could adequately contextualise her story in terms of stages of consciousness, the evolution of gender dynamics, and changing representations of the female divine, became increasingly clear to me. Thus this thesis is focused on the greater schema. Yet, no matter how much I put Inanna’s story aside it continued to return to the text. It is an important recurring motif in this thesis, and a story that continues to call me to the path.

Through the story of Inanna, Chapter One introduces Joseph Campbell’s theory of the hero as spiritual subject. Campbell writes that the hero may be equally man or woman yet symbolically at the central point of his narration of the journey woman as hero disappears. The ‘human’ hero is unmasked as man alone.

The hero’s journey is taken as motif and metaphor for the question ‘Who am I?’, and the heroine as the motif for the exploration of woman’s subjectivity. I examine woman as a socio-cultural, psychological and spiritual subject, and particularly examine the manner in which the marginalisation of woman as subject has meant that the question of woman sits in front of the question, ‘What is it to be human?’. Thus, this thesis examines how this question might be resolved as it follows the journey of woman through her various guises. Chapters Two and Three turn to feminism and explore the ever-increasing complexity with which this discourse has examined woman, maintaining particular reference to feminist discourses on spirituality and religion.

Starting from the premise that the emergence of post-conventional feminist subjectivity is an evolutionary development of human consciousness, Chapters Four, Five and Six take Integral theory as a methodological position from which to trace woman as subject, and the emergence of feminism, through the developments of human consciousness. Interjecting into Wilber’s
evolutionary map of the development of consciousness from a feminist perspective, I question the manner in which man is constructed as the central figure of history and through applying feminist evidence in an interdisciplinary manner, I construct and follow woman as a central figure from the initial Archaic through to the emergent Integral stage.

Finally, Chapter Seven enjoins feminist philosophy with Adult Developmental theory. I depose the classic (Mythic-Agrarian) hero as the exemplar of human development by framing development in an expanded transpersonal spectrum. With gender-specific focus I map a path of development for woman to the Unitive divine horizon, where the answer to the dual question ‘who am I?’ and ‘what is woman?’ may be resolved.

Throughout this thesis the Integral methodology and philosophy I use is consciously expanded by feminist thought. I have employed the work of male theorists such as Campbell and Wilber in the knowledge and avowal of the patriarchal heritage from which their work arises. I hope to have met this heritage in a clear-sighted way by attempting to filter the chaff of androcentric thinking from the wheat of their unique ideas. In doing so I have neither hesitated to part company from them where necessary, nor have I failed to utilise their key thoughts or contributions to scholarship.

As a key Integral theorist Wilber's work has been particularly placed in dialogue with a wide and rich array of feminist thinkers throughout this thesis. These include Catherine Keller, Carol Christ, Mary Daly, Elizabeth Grosz, Rosi Braidotti, Luce Irigaray, Carol Lee Flinders, Grace Jantzen and Julia Kristeva, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Anne Klein and Elizabeth Debold. With an eye to the horizon that is cognisant of development and evolution, the process of bringing Integral and (a bricolage of) feminist theories into dialogue, to operate methodologically upon one another, is designed to enable the emergence of Integral feminism. The three primary pathways of inquiry that this thesis has followed - defining woman, placing her as a central subject in the evolutionary stages of consciousness, and plotting a gender specific pathway of development towards the Unitive horizon - seeks to create a neoperennial mythology of the journey of woman as hero, one that draws on and contributes to the promise of Integral feminist consciousness in the dawning of the Integral stage.
Hearing the Call: 

The heroine’s journey

From the Great Above she opened her ear to the Great Below.
From the Great Above the goddess opened her ear to the Great Below.
From the Great Above Inanna opened her ear to the Great Below.

Trans. from the Sumerian, (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 52)

The journey begins with a call: a cry ... a whisper ... a question ... a moan ... This is the summons to awaken from our slumber. This is a call that requires a response, a brave stepping out, a leap of faith. For on the other side of this threshold is a door. A door that opens wide onto vast, alive plains, that are, to us, unknown.

Around four thousand years ago temple scribes in Sumer, using the wedged-shaped symbols of cuneiform, created the earliest traces of writing. They began to record their people's sacred texts onto clay tablets. One of their stories was of the death and resurrection of a beautiful goddess, the much revered and powerful Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth, who explored the deepest mysteries of embodiment in human form. This narrative is one of the earliest written Mythic tales.

Despite inhabiting a land described as “arid, wind-swept, and unproductive” (Kramer 1963, 3), around 5000 BCE the Sumerian people laid the foundations for cultural and agricultural innovations that transformed a fundamentally inhospitable environment into a land of abundance. Over time this land came to be referred to as the Fertile Crescent. Nestled between and around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, this ‘cradle of civilisation’ roughly constitutes what is today the war-torn land of Iraq.
The Sumerian story of Inanna’s descent begins with a call, out of range to the reader, heard only by the goddess. The story thus begins, “She opened her ear to the Great Below”. It’s an odd phrase. What does it mean to open one’s ear? I believe it is the process of inquiry; opening both to the question of what is heard, to hearing, and to the nature of the subject of hearing herself. One of the classic koans in Zen Buddhism echoes just this, in asking ‘Who is hearing?’ In this context we might ask, ‘Who is calling and who, called?’

For Inanna, her willing answer to the call becomes a deep and arduous journey of relinquishment. The goddess abandons her temples, her powers, all the aspects of her identity and life, to travel into the dark face of the unknown. Passing down through seven gates she enters into Kur, the Great Below.

Here the transformation undertaken is painfully direct. Confronting her sister Ereshkigal, Queen of Kur she is killed and becomes “a piece of rotting meat … hung from a hook on the wall” (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 60). Her journey continues: Ninshubur, the high priestess of Inanna, calls upon the god Enki, Inanna’s father, to rescue her. Deeply concerned for her wellbeing, he forms two tiny creatures from the dirt under his nails. These creatures are able to enter Kur undetected. Once there they gain Ereshkigal’s favour and sprinkle “the food” and “the water of life on the corpse”. Thus “Inanna arose” and was able to begin her ascent to the upper world (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 67).

JOSEPH CAMPBELL AND THE HERO’S JOURNEY

In his seminal work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) Joseph Campbell interpreted the mythological journey as a symbolic map. He proposed that deeply embedded in this journey, both outward and inward in nature, was an inquiry into humanity and divinity. For Campbell, the hero’s journey, as well illustrated by the story of Inanna’s descent, was a symbolic injunction to spiritual experience. At its most sublime, this adventure produced the core realisation of the most profound human questions: ‘Who am I?’, ‘What is it to be human?’, ‘From whence am I born?’, ‘What happens when I die?’ These realisations, he insisted, were of central importance to human life.

Campbell drew his picture of the monomythic cycle of the hero from wide-ranging sources which traversed the distance from Grimm’s fairy tales to the Upanishads. His material comes from the wealth of Greek, Roman, Persian, Melanesian, Korean, Celtic and Egyptian myths, from the Bible, from Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu texts, from the Quran, from shamanic Siberian tales, from

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1 This term is variously translated from the Sumerian; it remains unfixed.
2 The myths of Inanna, and particularly the narrative of her descent, is further discussed in Chapter Five.
James Joyce and Shakespeare. He deliberately loosened the boundaries between religious text, sacred recollection, mythology, literature and folklore, as he posed the hero’s journey as hermeneutic; in both psychoanalytic and spiritual terms, a journey of self.

Upon surveying the global dimensions of the mythological tradition, Campbell suggested the existence of two orders of mythology. The first, the Village way emphasised a heritage of orthodoxy and cultural norms. It was the way of the multitude who, choosing “the less adventurous way of the comparatively unconscious civic and tribal routines” (Campbell 1949, 23), walked village pathways ruled by obedience, fear, faith and desire (Campbell 1962, 22). By way of contrast, the hero’s journey was the ideal of a life lived in pursuit of realising one’s inborn potential. Campbell’s second order of mythology, the forest adventure, could not be embarked upon without breaking free from the boundaries of social dogma, authority and tradition. The forest path emphasised the embodiment of the highest creative possibilities of life and was, Campbell wrote, the hero’s journey.

The call is the prompt for the hero to rise from the dream-state of village life into active experiential awareness and inquiry. Having passed the threshold of departure, the hero is both beset by tests and ordeals, and assisted by an array of helpers and supernatural forces. Venturing into the heart of the unknown, the hero is swallowed, lost for a time (out of time) in transit in the bardo-like depths of this other land. Here, he or she undergoes a process of intense initiation. Transformed by experience, the hero returns to the community with ‘gift-bearing hands’. This gift is the sharing of knowledge gained; creative potential released “into the body of the world”, the means of regenerating society as a whole (Campbell 1949, 37-8, 40).

**MYSTICISM AND MYTHIC SYMBOL**

While Campbell has been criticised for “oversimplification and ahistoricism” (Keller 1986, 54), “freeze-dried reductionism” and “logocentric oneness” (Doty 2000, 146) in his reading of mythology, his proposal of the heroic monomyth does not disregard other meanings embedded in mythology. In fact he consistently indicates that mythology contains multiple levels of meaning which may include specific local, cultural and historical references. He acknowledges that myths may refer to historical personages or events, and that they are coded with cultural lore, but his central concern is with the *philosophia perennis* of myth; the mystical reading which is of “neither past nor future but transcendent of time and eternal” (Campbell 1972, 264). Forming a comparison with Bastian’s ‘elementary ideas’ and Jung’s ‘archetypes’ he suggests that the metaphorical heart of mythology is one (Campbell 1986, 19). Read properly, he writes, these “symbolic texts open into the heart of the human condition”; they refer “to the inward potentials of our species” (Campbell 1972, 264). On this topic Campbell quotes Trappist monk Thomas
Merton, who writes that the true symbol “does not merely point to something else. It contains in itself a structure which awakens our consciousness to a new awareness of the inner meaning of life and of reality itself” (Merton in Campbell 1972, 265).

Campbell suggests that the key question: “Can the ego put itself to death?” is symbolically rendered through initiation at the centre of the journey (Campbell 1949, 109). The mystical experience closes the gap between our self as subject and the object of the world as other. It dissolves ego boundaries and finds union with the Divine. Such experience, by its very nature, must strain beyond the limits of language. Thus as a representation of mystical, transpersonal experience, the hero’s journey must be “both continuous and discontinuous with language: continuous in that it must be communicated through language, and discontinuous in that it handles material that lies in some way out of the reach of language” (Lauter 1984, 2). As Hatab describes it, the powerful experiences of mysticism “at this outer edge of language, beyond the conceptual mind” exist in a state of sublime tension with the necessity of expression (Hatab 1990, 24 in Doty 2000, 76). Unable to be fully expressed through the discourse of the rational, its transmission requires symbolic elaboration through artful means, such as symbol and poetic affect, to bridge the gap. The symbolic language of myth is used to point beyond itself, using metaphoric affect to say and unsay, with the aim of bringing the audience into a direct relationship with, and realisation of, the transmitted experience.

THE HERO’S JOURNEY AS PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY

The hero’s journey, which appears across cultures and times, is understood as a symbolic expression of an experiential relationship with that which is variously called: the divine, the Higher Self, God, the Goddess, Allah, Jehovah, Brahman, the Supreme Being, One, Spirit, or the Absolute. In essence, Campbell distinguishes between the exoteric and the esoteric by reading the multiplicitous manifestations of the journey of the hero (in myth and religion) as the ‘many faces’ of the one perennial philosophy, its dictum contained in an oft-quoted passage from the Vedas, “Truth is one, the sages speak of it by many names” (Campbell 1949, viii).

Advocates of the theory of perennial philosophy suggest that “the core teachings of every major spiritual philosophy are identical, even though the traditions are separated geographically, culturally, and by vast periods of time” (Thackara 1984, 1). Drawing on the work of sixteenth century theologian Steuch, the seventeenth century German mathematician and philosopher

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3 For consistency I use the term the Absolute in my discussion to refer to the ground of being, but defer to the chosen term of any author in discussion of their work. I concur with Smith’s definition of the Absolute as the “Infinite” that “both includes and transcends everything else, which everything is (in categorical contrast) finite and relative” (Smith 1987, 562).
Leibniz was the first to elaborate a philosophy of perennialism. The perennial philosophy was, he suggested, to be found through a philosophical process of analysing ancient and modern religious philosophies such that “one would draw the gold from the dross, the diamond from its mine, the light from the shadows; and this would be in effect a kind of perennial philosophy” (Leibniz in Loemker 2003, 459).

The term perennial philosophy “stands for the notion of a philosophy of philosophies, an enduring set of ... insights which is repeated in all variations of thought” (Loemker 2003, 459). This idea of a common experiential and mystical core within the spiritual tradition was further championed by Aldous Huxley, who in 1946 explained it thus:

More than twenty-five centuries have passed since that which has been called the Perennial Philosophy was first committed to writing; and in the course of those centuries it has found expression, now partial, now complete, now in this form, now in that, again and again .... (It) has made use of the terminology and traditions of every one of the higher religions. But under all this confusion of tongues and myths, of local histories and particularist doctrines, there remains a Highest Common Factor. (Huxley in Walsh and Vaughan 1993, 213).

With its roots in renaissance perennialism, the twentieth century philosophical movement The Traditionalist School, founded by Guenon and including such notables as A.K. Coomaraswamy and Schuon, derived its name from the primordial tradition from which they asserted that all religion arose (Shah-Kazemi 2007, 41). Their exposition of perennial philosophy (also known as Sanatana Dharma), continues today in the work of a number of scholars, notably the renowned Islamic scholar Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Kazlev 2004: Sedgwick 2003). The Traditionalist School asserts that the world finds itself today in what Hinduism terms the age of Kali Yuga. Kali Yuga’s state of chaos and decline exists in direct opposition to our original state, Satya Yuga. In this a long-past Golden Age humankind existed in perfectly harmonised consubstantiation with their primordial nature (Shah-Kazemi 2007, 44).

Contemporary American philosopher Ken Wilber, following twentieth century Indian philosopher Aurobindo, fundamentally disagrees. A proponent of evolution, he argues that the egregious flaws of the contemporary world do not represent a devolutionary slide from a previous Golden Age. Far from being anti-spiritual, Wilber presents the contours of modern day humanistic-scientific-rational-secular society as a necessary, intermediate form of evolution (Wilber 1998, 66 & 78). Evolution, for Wilber, is countenanced through a set of tenets4 that assert evolution to be “as

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4 Discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.
active in humans as it is in the rest of the Kosmos" (Wilber 1998, 73). He presents modernity's great global movements of liberation - from slaves to workers to women - as part of the evidence for humankind's ongoing spiritual evolution. His position is a rebuttal of what he identifies as modernity's refusal to “recognise the full spectrum of consciousness” and, at the same time, of romantic traditionalism’s refusal to “recognise any substantial advances made by modernity itself” (Wilber 1998, 58).

Wilber presents perennial philosophy as the essence distilled from the deep structural similarities of religious belief. He presents the central tenets thus: Spirit or the Absolute exists and is found within all things. Yet most people live in a state of separative duality, unconscious of their intimate union with Spirit. In this state of duality, awareness - dominated by the self-contraction of the individual ego - does not recognise its true identity with the All, or non-duality of being, that is Spirit. But, Wilber's tenets of perennial philosophy continue, there is a pathway out of duality: one must die to the limits of the small self in order to awaken to the supreme identity of self as Spirit. This experience is one of satori, enlightenment, rebirth or resurrection (Wilber 1991, 81-5).

Like Campbell, Wilber is an advocate of 'neoperennial philosophy': the perennial presented in terms appropriate to the age and thus responsive to a contemporary understanding of the world. Wilber’s formation of an Integral philosophy that syncretically enfolds humankind’s various epistemologies is in some ways an extension of Campbell’s theory of ‘living mythology’. Campbell asked, and answered, the question of what ‘living myth’ might look like in contemporary terms. He says, “It is - and will forever be, as long as our human race exists – the old, everlasting, perennial mythology, in its ‘subjective sense,’ poetically renewed in terms neither of a remembered past nor of a projected future, but of now: addressed ... to the waking of individuals in the knowledge of themselves” (Campbell 1972, 275). Living mythology, as Campbell described it would supply positive models for human behaviour, giving meaning and value to contemporary

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5 Wilber defines the Kosmos as the totality of the physiosphere, biosphere, noosphere and divine domains (Wilber 1998, 64).

6 Wilber describes this as the state of sin from a Christian perspective: “Sin ... is the self-contraction, the separate-self sense” (Wilber 1991, 85). Keller reports that the philosopher Kierkegaard defined sin “as despair”, “summoned by the failure to be who we are ... he goes on to distinguish between specifically ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ forms of despair. If the masculine sin is ‘potentiated defiance’ – a refusal to accept the ultimate terms of selfhood – the feminine analogue is ‘potentiated weakness’”. She goes on “Kierkegaard perceptively links woman’s weakened sense of self to her self-loss in service to others, a form of despair and self-abnegation”(Keller 1986, 12). I discuss these issues further, with particular reference to Mary Daly’s definition of sin, in Chapters Six and Seven.

7 Wilber’s Integral philosophy is addressed extensively in the coming chapters.
life; it would offer an image of the universe in accord with the scientific knowledge of the time and, globally grounded. It would awake a sense of affective awe in relation to the mystery dimension of the universe, without being aligned to any one religion.

THE HERO AS ‘EVERYMAN’

In accord with Campbell’s definition of the true function of mythology\(^8\) as guiding us towards the spiritual potentials of human life (Campbell, 1972, 31), the vast canons of mythology, metaphysical philosophy and religion can be seen to exist in an intimate relationship of inquiry to a central theological question: ‘Who am I?’ Yet a careful examination of the central human agent of these disciplines finds that the subject, protagonist, and central individual of each articulation of perennial philosophy is most consistently ‘man’. For example, let us listen to the words of Huxley’s doctrine: “It is possible for a man … to identify himself with the spirit and therefore with the divine Ground … man’s life on earth has only one end and purpose: to identify himself with his eternal Self and so to come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground” (Huxley in Walsh and Vaughan 1993, 213). Here, I am sure Huxley uses ‘man’ imagining this ‘him’ to be a universal every-person, and yet the further we lift his veil, the more strangely clear it becomes that this ‘everyman’ is no woman.

We might begin, in examining the figure of woman in perennial philosophy, by looking again to the journey of the hero. In early modern books on the hero, heroism is assigned almost exclusively to men (Segal 2004; see also Carlyle 1908; Rank 1909; Raglan 1936). Carlyle, for example, begins his book on the hero with “as I take it, Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world is at bottom the History of the Great Men” (Carlyle in Segal 2004, 1). Even when theorists deigned to extend the potential prerogative of heroism to woman, their nod would more often than not subsume woman as subtext, a bracketed subspecies of the category Man.

While Campbell suggests that “the whole sense of the ubiquitous myth of the hero’s passage is that it shall serve as a general pattern for men and women” (Campbell 1949, 121), in analysing his observations it is starkly obvious that at the journey’s “zenith” or “central point” the hero is distinctly male (Campbell 1949, 109). It is Woman\(^9\) who serves as the “crisis at the nadir” of the male hero’s journey (Campbell 1949, 109). Campbell writes that in mythic symbology Woman represents “the totality of what can be known for the hero” (Campbell 1949, 116). Further, the meeting and mystical marriage of the hero with the queen goddess of the world at the central

\(^{8}\) I take Campbell’s statement here to be qualified as specifically referring to the journey narrative in myth.

\(^{9}\) I use ‘Woman’ (capitalised) in this thesis to refer to woman as a symbol or concept/definition.
point of the journey “represents the hero's total mastery of life; for the woman is life, the hero its knower and master” (Campbell 1949, 120).

Analysing Campbell’s hero, feminist theorists Pearson and Pope note that while Campbell initially declares that the hero can be of either gender he “then proceeds to discuss the heroic pattern as male and to define the female characters as goddesses, temptresses, and earth mothers” (Pearson and Pope, 1981, 4). The depth of the confused gender dynamics of Campbell’s heroic outline is deeper than Pearson and Pope’s statement might suggest. Campbell’s use of gender-inclusive language is conscious and deliberate, and as Segal points out, in illustrating the journey he “enlists myths of female heroes as often as those of male ones” (Segal 2004, 14). But, at the heart of initiation, woman as hero is lost.\(^\text{10}\) (Segal 2004, 14).

At this point in the journey, the hero meets the goddess (as Woman), and comes to “know” and unite with “the feminine” through making love with her: “She is the paragon of all paragons of beauty, the reply to all desire, the bliss-bestowing goal of every hero’s earthly and unearthly quest” (Campbell 1949, 110-11). In the goddess “who is incarnate in every woman” (Campbell 1949, 116), Campbell also recognises the figure of the hero’s mother. The maternal goddess is loving and caring: she is the “incarnation of the promise of perfection; ... the comforting, the nourishing, the ‘good’ mother – young and beautiful – who was known to us, and even tasted, in the remotest past” (Campbell 1949, 111). But the Mother, can also be ‘bad’; in that guise she threatens to subsume the hero within her undifferentiated mass.

Campbell continues to examine the hero’s initiation in The Hero with a Thousand Faces under the title “Woman as the Temptress”. Where Woman has been “the guide to the sublime acme of sensuous adventure” (Campbell 1949, 116), now she is the manifestation of evil in the embodiment of desire. Campbell quotes Flugel in respect to the existence of “a very general association on the one hand between the notion of mind, spirit or soul and the idea of the father or of masculinity; and on the other hand between the notion of the body or of matter ... and the idea of the mother or of the feminine principle” (Flugel in Campbell 1949, 113). This “very general association” between body/matter/ woman/mother/the feminine principle, is explored in a heavily

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\(^{10}\) To his credit Campbell discusses Inanna’s journey, descent and meeting with Ereshkigal (Campbell 1949, 105-8), along with the stories of a number of other heroines in the course of The Hero with a Thousand Faces, but in discussing the journey of the hero in a general and symbolic sense he speaks from the vantage point of man as hero.
Christianised account\textsuperscript{11} of the stories of Saints Bernard, Peter and Anthony and their battles with Woman as the symbol of the “Queen of sin”: “practising his austerities ... [he] was troubled by voluptuous hallucinations perpetrated by female devils attracted to his magnetic solitude. Apparitions of this order, with loins of irresistible attraction and breasts bursting to be touched, are known to all the hermit-resorts of history” (Campbell 1949, 125). Here Woman is the siren song of immanent flesh that calls the saint-hero away from his transcendence of desire and the world-flesh: “there is experienced a moment of revulsion ... woman in particular as the great symbol of life, become intolerable to the pure, the pure, pure soul” (Campbell 1949, 122).

“The hero is the one who comes to know. As he progresses in the slow initiation which is life, the form of the goddess undergoes for him a series of transfigurations” (Campbell 1949, 116). From goddess to mother, to carnal temptress and onwards, it is the symbol Woman who undergoes metamorphosis for the male hero. She is the hero’s mother, the lost connection to his primal beginnings; she is the ground of being. She is “lure” and “guide” (Campbell 1949, 116). She is the beguiling divine that is the core agitation and goal of his journey: that which is to be explored and merged with. She waits for the arrival of the hero, who receives her as “the mastered of the world” (Campbell 1949, 120). She is also the revolting snare of the undifferentiated, the primal source, which is to be negotiated, destroyed, and/or transcended. She is desire, she is flesh, she is the earth. She serves as the ultimate illustration of the contours of duality. Where man is self/agent, she is his undifferentiated all/other.

As Campbell proceeds to discuss woman in terms of the “picture language of mythology” (Campbell 1949, 116), it is starkly clear that the hero is meeting Woman: a symbol for the male journeyer. But what, finally, does Campbell have to say of the heroine who comes to initiation? And when the adventurer, in this context, is not a youth but a maid, she is the one who, by her qualities, her beauty, or her yearning, is fit to become the consort of an immortal. Then the heavenly husband descends to her and conducts her to his bed - whether she will or not. And if she has shunned him, the scales fall from her eyes; if she had sought him, her desire finds its peace(Campbell 1949, 118)

While there is a similar meeting and union with the God, the difference is keenly felt in the lack of discussion of Man in godly form as a symbol for the female hero. The hero as woman is also confronted, “whether she will or not” (Campbell 1949, 119 italics mine), with the potential of

\textsuperscript{11} This Christian emphasis is strange for Campbell, whose writing is repeatedly marked by dismissal of elements of Christian faith. Yet he could just as easily have drawn similar quotes on the temptations of female flesh from Buddhist and other religious texts.
sexual agency being used against her. It is she who will be acted upon, she who will be the subject of male heroic action.\textsuperscript{12}

Faithful both to some of the limits of the mythic record and in accord with the gender traditionalism of his time, Campbell does not adequately deal with woman as hero. In an interview on this topic he suggests that the hero’s journey appears differently for the two sexes as “the male body lacks that recall to nature, to the female nature, that there is automatically in the female body” (Campbell 2004, 147). Campbell also suggested differently gendered roles on the mythic plane: woman as receptive dreamer, man as active warrior.

David Miller, scholar of mythology, writes that mythology has been charged with creating “repressive and oppressive” archetypes which stereotype “races, religions, and genders” and metaphysically sanction the status quo (Miller 1996, 62). Campbell is clear on this. He delineates between the local and ethnic specifics of mythologies and their broader spiritual dimensions: “mythology is a control system, on the one hand framing its community ... and, on the other hand ... conducting individuals through the ineluctable psychophysiological stages of transformation of a human lifetime ... in unbroken accord simultaneously with ... the rapture of participation in a manner of being beyond time” (Campbell, 1986, 20). He outlines four primary functions of mythology\textsuperscript{13}: the sociological that integrates the individual with the social order, the psychological which fosters the process of individuation, the metaphysical which elicits and supports “a sense of awe before the recognition of the numinous” (Campbell 1964, 519), and finally, the cosmological which creates an image of life and the universe in accord with the knowledge of the time\textsuperscript{14}, (Campbell 1964, 519-21). For Campbell’s purposes the metaphysical and psychological functions form the core of the hero’s journey.

In his reading of gender, Campbell falls foul of the traditional gender norms of both modern and mythic time. I assert that, in part, gender symbolism in mythology poses an issue similar to that of “ideas in local ‘ethnic’ inflections” (Campbell 1986, 21). As part of the mythological system of

\textsuperscript{12} Reading myth’s psychosexual manifestation of woman meeting with the God (Father) might thus involve examining the pattern of violence towards women, sexual or otherwise, that many feminist theorists have traced throughout the corpus of mythology and patriarchal religion.

\textsuperscript{13} Campbell’s functions of mythology are similar to, and yet contrast with, Levi-Strauss’ designation of mythological levels or codes. Levi-Strauss proposes the following orders: “the geographical, the acoustic, the astronomical, the culinary or alimentary, the technoeconomic, the sociological, the cosmological, and the sociopolitical” (Doty 2000, 117).

\textsuperscript{14} Examples such as the debate between fundamentalist Christianity and the scientific arena over the facts of evolution, demonstrate, for example, Christianity’s failure to keep the cosmological aspect of their mythology system up to date.
framing, ordering and control (Campbell 1986, 20-1), the ideas shaping gender images in mythology are limited by recourse to the time and location of their conjuring.

Is woman a hero of myth and life, for Campbell? He answers with a definitive ‘Yes’. But if we look at the symbolism the answer is, ‘Not really’. At the crux of the journey, Woman, ‘recalled to nature’, becomes symbolic flesh: sex, desire, generative motherhood. As flesh, Woman loses her agency and it is the male who retains it as well as the ability to act as hero. Woman disappears and is replaced by symbol because she is not fully allowed her subjectivity. Thus it becomes starkly clear why mythological figures of Woman are marked as non-heroic. Woman has been positioned as the purely phylogenetic source material (ripe, passive flesh) that has silently enabled the ‘dazzling exploits’ of the ontogenic male.

In Campbell’s dissection of mythology, woman as hero is lost to the greater symbolic Woman. This is not unusual. ‘The feminine’, we find as our investigation unfolds, is inscribed in religion, philosophy and mythology under a range of related, almost completely fused, guises all of which are directed through the male gaze. As this thesis progresses I squarely face the messy entanglement of the symbology of Woman (from the subject position of woman).

**Feminist Critique of the Hero**

Tension in the gendered symbolic is certainly not unique to Campbell’s work. At a root level even the term ‘heroine’ is problematic. ‘Other’ to the hero, it can oddly connote a certain weakness and vulnerability as much as it expresses strength. The “perfect pink-and-white passivity” (Yolen in Ragan 1998, xvii) of fairytale heroines – sleeping, victims, “hopelessly alluring in her helplessness” (Keller 1986, 70), awaiting rescue or return - have seen to this. Almost always defined by her sexual difference, almost always in contrast or relation to the active hero, she ‘represents’ something for him: it is she who waits (Penelope), she who is to be rescued (Andromeda), she who receives (Mary), she who is abducted (Persephone).

So, what is it that defines the hero as a male? Historically the predominant heroic stories of an era can in many ways be seen to present a cultural model of ideal human development (Doty 2000, 17). The history of the way the heroic has been defined reflects the history of the definition of selfhood: “active or passive, conquering or receptive” (Doty 2000, 64). In accord with the western tradition, the hero is “he who acts” (Cavarero 1997, 2): where action is “the clearest

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15 To his credit, Campbell’s door was always purposefully left open to change, he was insistent upon the necessity of creating new ‘living’ mythological models.

16 This is particularly and primarily so in the western canon of mythology and religious representation.
illumination of the individual”, “heroism is the ‘revelation, the dazzling exploit of the act’... while the hero who does not act is nothing” (Caravero 1997, 2).

Confronting the problem of identifying with either the hero or heroine\(^\text{17}\) of myth, Cavarero writes, it is “inevitable that a woman will eventually insist on asking: to what extent do Prometheus or Odysseus offer me sensible images of my embodied existence as a woman? Or, to limit myself to the figures of my own sex, to what extent do Penelope’s and Circe’s experiences match my own?” (Cavarero 1995, 3). Woman, she writes “lacks a mythic figure that can represent her as a female subjectivity capable of taking shape within her own symbolic order” (Cavarero 1995, 3).

Mythology is the foundational axis from which both religious and philosophic thought emerges. Campbell suggests that myth might be defined, “from the point of view of any orthodoxy ... as ‘other people’s religion’” and so too, he writes the strictures of theistic religious facticity might be defined as “misunderstood mythology” (Campbell 1986, 55). With Campbell, I argue that one of the functions of mythology has been as carrier of the earliest expressions of spiritual thought. This is, for example, illustrated by the Sumerian mythic motifs which are carried through into the books of the Old and New Testament.\(^\text{18}\)

Classicist Cavarero in her exploration of Plato, traces links between the symbolic base which frames gender in both Greek myth and its early philosophy (Cavarero, 1995). Historically, the roots of Greek philosophy are embedded in mythology, with works such as *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* being “simultaneously philosophical, psychological, poetic, theological, and narrational” (Grosz 1990, 147). Grosz suggests that myth and philosophy continue to share closer borders than philosophy might like to imagine. She quotes Michelle Le Doueff on this subject, who writes that “philosophical discourse ... posits itself as philosophical – by distancing itself from the myth, the fable, the poetic, and all that is image-making” (Le Doueff in Grosz 1990, 163). Yet it is only able to do so by turning a blind eye to its own abundant use of image and metaphor. Setting itself the task of defining the ‘nature’ of human beings, philosophy is, Elizabeth Grosz writes, directly implicated in how the subjectivity of “men and women, or masculine and feminine, are defined” (Grosz 1990, 148). Posing the same manner of questions and contextualised as part of the same western canon, philosophy, theology and mythology are jointly implicated by their production of the same poor symbolic gender outcomes for women. In these proximate arenas images of women (as other), the image of the female divine, and the image of woman as hero are closely and intimately entwined. As can be seen in Campbell’s use of symbolism, one drifts into another. I

\(^{17}\) During this thesis I use the term ‘hero’ to refer to the male hero, ‘heroine’ or ‘woman as hero’ to refer to the female hero, and ‘hero/ine’ to refer to refer to the hero both women and man.

\(^{18}\) The Old Testament being a foundational text of the Judeo-Christian tradition.
examine and clarify these drifts by delineating the Absolute (as ungendered Spirit which inhabits all, and is greater than the sum of all), from the divine horizon of woman (a transpersonal archetype of development\textsuperscript{19}), and from woman as hero. In doing so I address the question posed by Sylvia Perera in her Jungian exploration of Inanna: “where shall we look for symbols to suggest the full mystery and potency of the feminine and to provide images as models for personal life?” (Perera 1981, 12). While on the divine horizon there are distinct archetypes of the Self, such as Buddha and Christ, for men; for women the mirror of the divine is not so clear.

Just as the hero’s journey in mythology can be understood to represent the central tenets of perennial philosophy (as outlined by Wilber), it can also be argued that the core pattern of heroism as “repeated in the various disciplines that deal with human experience – anthropology, history, philosophy, psychology, literature” (Pearson and Pope 1981, 3), might constitute a path of transpersonal development.\textsuperscript{20} The symbolic representation of a female hero journeying towards the transpersonal mirror of divine Woman is less than adequately represented or analysed\textsuperscript{21}.

Where the hero’s journey is characterised by the questions ‘Who am I?’, ‘What is it to be human?’, the first question for woman as hero, due to her marginalisation, must be ‘Who is woman?’. Thus the first step in this investigation is the examination of this question, I turn to feminist theory in the following chapter in order to begin.

\textsuperscript{19} Addressed in Chapter Two.
\textsuperscript{20} I address the male and female specifics of transpersonal development in Chapter Seven.
\textsuperscript{21} Yet as illustrated by Inanna’s journey, examples do exist. As the symbolic axis for the trajectory of both philosophy and religion, mythology is a particularly important site of origin, and thus excavation, from which to address female subjectivity and female spiritual genealogy.
\textsuperscript{22} I address the male and female specifics of transpersonal development in Chapter Seven.
Crossing The Threshold:

Confronting the question of Woman

Long afterward, Oedipus, old and blinded, walked the roads. He smelled a familiar smell. It was the Sphinx. Oedipus said, “I want to ask one question Why didn’t I recognize my mother?” “You gave the wrong answer,” said the Sphinx. “But that was what made everything possible,” said Oedipus. “No,” she said. “When I asked, What walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening, you answered, Man. You didn’t say anything about woman.” “When you say Man,” said Oedipus, “you include women too. Everyone knows that.” She said, “That’s what you think.”

‘Myth’, Rukeyser ¹

Muriel Rukeyser’s poem ‘Myth’ illuminates a matter of central feminist concern with simple eloquence. Placing the recognition of woman at the centre of the riddle of the Sphinx, Oedipus’ inability to recognise her as a subject becomes the key to his undoing. In choosing the story of Oedipus, Rukeyser draws our gaze towards Greek mythology, famous as a foundational text of western thought, and infamous for its misogyny. She also shrewdly directs our gaze towards Freud. This founding father of psychoanalysis made Oedipus a key western cultural reference² by using the myth to illustrate his theory of

¹ Rukeyser in Rukeyser & Levi 1994, 252
² “The story of Oedipus Rex as told by Sophocles was first employed by Freud, but later augmented
sexual and psychological development. Freud’s theory is a prime example of the manner in which woman has been drawn as different and lacking against man as the normative human individual.

**FEMINIST APPROACHES TO THE QUESTION OF WOMAN**

Over the last four decades feminist scholars have described and responded to this symbolic crisis in which woman has “not herself develop[ed] the symbols by which she is described” (Millet in Larrington 1992, 425). Feminist theorists such as Luce Irigaray have shown that in the discursive order man has stood in for woman as the central and default category of human experience and woman has not been written as a subject (Irigaray 1991). It has been claimed that the phallocentric conditions of the symbolic system are incapable of representing woman as anything but the negative shadow of man. As Rosi Braidotti notes “the paradox of being defined by others is that women end up being defined as others” (Braidotti 1994, 235).

The figure of the hero is particularly potent in this regard. Representing the process of inquiry into, and embodiment of, what it is to be human it is a key ontological symbol that forms a knot with representations of the divine. The question ‘Who am I?’ is, as Campbell has presented it, the central focus of the hero’s journey. Yet when woman as hero asks the question, ‘Who am I?’ another question arises. Denied socio-cultural subjectivity the question of what it is to be a woman stands directly in front of the question ‘Who am I’ for the female journeyer.  

With the heroine as a motif for woman’s journey to come to, and embody, her subjectivity, I have turned to feminist theory as a principle space for the examination of the question of Woman. The name Woman has paradoxically been both the symbol feminists gather about as well as the place of deepest critical unrest (Braidotti 1994, 9-10, 14). To best understand feminism’s diverse philosophic and strategic responses to the problematic of Woman, these discourses must be framed within the broader developmental trajectory of feminist theory. Thus in this chapter I begin with the first wave and broadly follow the evolution of feminist thought, how it has framed, explored and complexified the question of Woman, through the waves of feminism.

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3 In both mythological and contemporary contexts.
At its zenith (and all along) the journey to uncover Woman has a spiritual context. The journey of the heroine in mythology is also, importantly, a metaphor for the female relationship with the divine: in the world and in herself. Thus, this investigation of feminism in the following chapters periodically returns to and emphasises the religious, mythological and spiritual aspects of feminism’s relationship with subjectivity, and explores the representation of woman in relation to, and as, the divine.

**THE FIRST WAVE OF FEMINISM**

In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft published *Vindication of the Rights of Women* in England, laying out the core concerns of first wave feminism. Her powerful response to the conditions of her day contested the conceptualisation of the sexual difference of mind, and envisioned woman as an autonomous political subject. She argued that women, given appropriate educational opportunities had the potential to be the mental equals of men: “Let woman share the rights and she will emulate the virtues of man; for she must grow more perfect when emancipated, or justify the authority that chains such a weak being to her duty” (Wollstonecraft 1792, VI). Women must be emancipated, educated and given equal social status and political rights, so that they might fulfil their potential to make great contributions to society (Stanlick 1997, 179-83).

In the 1800s, on the other side of the globe, paraphrasing the American Declaration of Independence, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal ... The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward women, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her” (Stanton and Mott in Lerner 1971, 83). These women, who had worked with the anti-slavery movement and in Christian women’s organisations for reform and welfare, formed the first wave of Anglo-American feminism. With firm roots in a liberal ethic of autonomy and emancipation, they demanded equal rights under the law for women. Their early petitions for laws granting women property rights and the right to divorce created a segue into the women’s suffrage movement. Beginning with New Zealand in 1893, first wave feminism bore the fruit of voting rights for women which became established across the majority of the globe by the end of the Second World War.

Relationships were drawn between women’s political rights and access to education, social roles, property rights, conditions of marriage, work and public sphere participation. The primary goal of this liberal feminism was the full acknowledgement of woman’s shared humanity. Women’s bodies, while acknowledged as offering a particular and unique
experience of embodiment, were fundamentally considered to constrain woman’s access to the public sphere and thus to social equality. In unwitting agreement with patriarchal thought, first wave feminism believed that while woman possessed a sexually neutral mind her oppression was, in part, “a consequence of their containment within an inadequate i.e., a female or potentially maternal body” (Grosz 1994, 16).

**THE SECOND WAVE**

Second wave feminism was characterised by its praxis of social activism. This breaking wave produced a plethora of subsets of feminist thought including: radical, Marxist/Socialist, cultural, ecofeminist, constructionist and (french) psychoanalytic. Second wave feminism firmly established key objectives of political reform such as ‘women’s control over women’s bodies’. Their wide-ranging examination of historical, literary, and social frameworks identified hierarchies of value across all these domains that were clearly male dominated and controlled. To counter this they began an ongoing search for women’s cultural presence and expression in history. In consciously developing space for the transformative ‘consciousness raising’ sharing of women’s experience and voice, second wave feminists asserted ‘the personal as political’.

Focusing their analysis on the differentiation between the public and private spheres and the techno-economic base of production, Marxist/ Socialist feminists explored the manner in which patriarchal relations and the capitalist economic system intertwined. They propounded a “theory that analytically separates class and patriarchal forms of oppression and analyses their interpenetration as a major mechanism that sustains both” (Chafetz 2006, 9). Marx and Engels had identified two interlocking spheres of work: production and reproduction. With the development of industrial capitalism these two spheres were separated into public and private arenas, and through complex historical processes women became largely relegated to the domestic. Socialist feminists argued that the key to women’s emancipation was to be found in “the demise of capitalism”

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4 In fairness, it must be noted that in the particular context in which first wave feminism emerged the maternal body did pose potential constraints to a woman’s ability to participate in public sphere activity (according to the manner in which women’s role in the family and public sphere was constructed). As Whitford notes, in retrospect, “contraception and the legalisation of abortion have enabled women to control their reproduction to a certain extent, it is now possible to see the identity of women as women as separate from their identity as mothers, and to raise the question of women’s identity outside of their role as ‘reproducer of children, as nurse, as reproducer of labour-power’” (Whitford 1991, 26).

5 While I engage the categories of first, second and third wave feminism for this discussion, the broad nature of these categories inevitably means that these categories fail to provide a perfect fit for a number of the theorists that I discuss.

6 The class system has meant that women of ‘lower’ classes have often been required to work in both the domestic (private) and extra-domestic (public), though their public sphere activities have generally been limited to the sphere ‘women’s work’ (that is, they performed domestic work for others).
(Chafetz 2006, 9) and the socialisation of the reproductive sphere, which would allow women to enter and fully participate in the productive (Nielsen 2002, 4).

Eco and cultural feminists responded to the joint devaluation, repression and exploitation of women and nature with the belief that women’s essential biological differences should be celebrated, viewed in many ways as superior, and reclaimed through positive identification. The reclamation and celebration of the connection of woman’s body and her relation to the earth “in a woman/body/earth hating society” is, they assert, an act of profound revolution (Caputi 1992, 434). They argue that women are less valued because they are more closely connected to the processes of the natural world through menstruation, childbirth and rearing: “by virtue of biological connections between women’s menstrual cycles and the phases of the moon, pheromones which create menstrual synchrony among us, and our physical connections to the next generation via umbilical cords and lactation, women are more ‘in tune’ with ourselves as part of, rather than distinct from, ‘nature’” (Ginzberg in Bianchi 1999, 51). By virtue of this connection women, they argued are inherently more peaceful, more ecologically sensitive and more spiritually connected to the earth as can be evidenced in “the everyday subsistence production of most of the world’s women” (Mies & Shiva 1993, 19). Women’s liberation, they assert, can only occur in conjunction with the re-establishment of an immanent spiritual engagement with the planet, and in conjunction with ecological liberation (Mies & Shiva 1993, 16).

Another subset of the second wave, radical feminists, share a fundamental set of beliefs with ecofeminists. Espousing women’s inherent superiority, and identified firmly with their biological nature, radical feminists are vociferous in their opposition to patriarchal social constructions of femininity: traditional norms that include ‘compulsory’ heterosexuality and the institution of motherhood within the nuclear family unit. They assert that the hierarchies of patriarchy need to be dismantled through institutional reforms and a cultural revolution of gender roles as men assert dominance and physically oppress women through these social constructions. Radical feminists advocate the elimination of all “concepts of hierarchy” (Rowland and Klein 1990, 276). A characteristic fundamental to radical feminism is its separatist ideology, which calls for the establishment of women-only spaces in all arenas (Intemann 2001).

**SEX VERSUS GENDER**

A split in second wave feminist thought saw the broad development of two schools of thought. Constructionist feminist thought problematised discourse arising from cultural and ecofeminism that advocated a positive reclamation of the connection (negatively
posed in androcentric philosophies) between woman, body and earth. The
constructionists posed this discourse as ‘essentialism’, in that it posed an essential
connection (pre-existing culture or gender) between women’s biology, nature and her
gender characteristics. On the other hand, constructionists emphasised the divide
between sex and gender.

The theorem of gender as the cultural overlay of sex is famously espoused in de
Beauvoir’s statement in *The Second Sex* that, “One is not born a woman, but rather
becomes one” (de Beauvoir 1972). Constructionist thought stresses that the female body
(alone) does not make a woman, “gender difference” they argue “dwells in language, there
is nothing ‘natural’ about gender itself” (Elam 1997, 1). They emphasise the imposition of
socially constructed representation in producing gender identification and argue that
biological factors are reworked through the construction and maintenance of
intersubjective cultural patterns. Cultural, radical and ecofeminists were considered to
cling to an essentialist view of woman’s nature through the “glorification of the feminine
in biological terms” (Joy, O’Grady & Foxon 2002, 86). This, constructionists argue,
continues to root woman within the negative category of traditional binary divisions,
which associated woman with nature and the body, and man with mind and culture.7

Constructionist thought argued that gender traits could be transformed through
socialisation, such as the social reorganisation of child rearing. Nancy Chodorow’s
*Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), for example, combines object relations theory with
Freudian ideas in an examination of existing parenting relations. She suggested that deep
structural differences were built into the psyche during early socialization.8 She stressed
the importance and the intensity of the child-mother bond during the pre-Oedipal9 period
in the “socio-psychical transmission of ‘gender roles’” (Rowley and Grosz 1990, 190).
Chodorow’s research argued “that gender differences “in structures of consciousness are
the outcome of the child’s development of self in gendered social arrangements” (Sprague
and Kobrynowicz in Chafetz 2006, 30).

According to Freudian theory to develop as a male in the current order, a child must
differentiate himself from his fusion with the original female self of the mother and in the

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7 DiLeonardo reports Sherry Ortner’s astute proposal from her analysis of Levi-Strauss’
“dichotomization of human thought into ‘raw’ and cooked’ categories”, that “worldwide, females
were thought to be natural... whereas males were cultural” (di Leonardo 1991, 13).
8 The developmental processes of girls and boys is more fully addressed in Chapter Seven.
9 In the pre-Oedipal phase (as Freud’s theory is recast by Lacan) the child is in a state of
undifferentiated union with mother/world. This bond must be broken for the child to form a sense of
separate self and to enter the Symbolic Order.
process “reject, derogate, and negate all things feminine” (Neilsen 2001, 10). Boys learn that they are other than women, while girls reproduce the identity of the mother. As a consequence boys and girls develop different relational capacities that are fundamental to the construct of gender: “girls grow into women whose primary concern is with interpersonal connection and nurturance, while boys mature into men who focus on individuation, deny affect, and strive to prove themselves through social achievement” (Chafetz 2006, 19). The solution to what Chodorow poses as an inherently structural problem is, she suggests, the restructure of gender stratification, particularly in regard to the division of labour around parenting, such that both parents are “equally responsible for child rearing from birth on” (Neilsen 2002, 10).

PSYCHOANALYTIC AND POSTSTRUCTURAL FEMINISM
The call for a new discourse around maternity was also articulated by the feminists who formed the group 'Psychanalyse et Politique' in the wake of the revolutionary events in Paris, 1968. This group of psychoanalytic feminist theorists utilised psychosexual analysis in examining and articulating the questions of female and feminine difference (Joy, O’Grady & Poxon 2002, 5).

The work of poststructuralist theorists such as Barthes, Derrida and Foucault were fundamental to the development of the feminist theory that emerged from this group of French feminists. Poststructuralism is characterised by the breaking apart of systems of representation, the rejection of singular interpretative meanings and grand narratives. Deconstructing dualisms and binary structures, their focus was on the text’s struggle for meaning: expressed in slippages, repetitions, absences, marginalities, the multiple, the ambiguous and the contradictory (Humm 1995, 111). Working from this base, these poststructuralist feminist theorists (such as Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva), examined the failure and inconsistency of language, particularly the way in which women’s difference was represented through hierarchies of binary opposition. They sought to deconstruct the phallocentric discursive centre occupied by Man and to bring man and woman into an equal reciprocity as two autonomous subjects existing in a non-reversible, reciprocal relationship of difference (Whitford 1991, 25).

The primary focus of psychoanalytic feminism has been the analysis of the subjectivity of woman as it is constructed through language. Kristeva, for example, utilised Lacan’s theories on gender development, the symbolic system and the unconscious. She extended upon Lacan’s idea that identity and subjectivity are acquired in the mirror phase of development as the child breaks from its fused identity with the mother and enters into the symbolic order via language (see: Grosz 1990, 31-2). For Lacan, the symbolic system
is governed by ‘the Law of the Father’, with the phallus as its dominant signifier. It is with language acquisition in this phase (which privileges the masculine), that the child ‘gains’ sexual difference (Humm 1995, 73).

Under this system, the phallocentric nature of discourse defines man as the primary subject in symbolic discourse and woman as ‘not man’, defined as his castrated Other (Grosz 1990, 143). Jantzen summarises Lacan’s position thus, “to speak is to enter into th[e] masculine realm to engage in speech at all, is to ‘inscribe oneself’ in the masculine ... it follows in Lacan’s system that ... in order to speak, women must use men’s language” (Jantzen 1998, 42).

Kristeva asserts that in patriarchal cultures where woman has been reduced to reproductive function, the mother as maternal body must be rejected and made abject in order for the child to become a male subject: “The infant is impelled by two contradictory impulses, one which strives for a merger with the mother, which sustains its dependence on her; and the other which strives for independence and its own autonomous place in the world” (Rowley and Grosz 1990, 191). The male infant’s contradictory impulses are writ large in the symbolic order’s relation to the symbol Woman. As illustrated in Campbell’s description of the hero’s union with the goddess, the symbol of Woman (conflated with the mother) paradoxically represents both man’s desire for (re)-union and oneness, and his abject fear of fusion.

Within this system there are two choices for the female child: identification with the mother ensures her exclusion from the patriarchal order or identification with the father which reinforces and colludes with the systemic abjection and denial of female identity (Oliver 1999, 1). The female subject is left, Kristeva concludes, in a paradoxical state: “women must not refuse to enter the symbolic order, but neither should they adopt the masculine model of femininity” (Oliver 1999, 1).

Kristeva brings the body back into discourse by looking at the passage between sign systems. Initially an infant has no separate subjectivity, or sense of self, from the mother. She refers to this state as the ‘chora’: a moment of all encompassing connection, which includes natural desires and drives that exist before language, representation or

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10 As described in Chapter One.
11 The state of female hysteria that Freud famously described has been similarly described in feminist analysis as woman’s “simultaneous acceptance and refusal of femininity” within patriarchal discourse” (Mitchell 1984, 289-90). The hysteric “both refuses and is totally trapped within femininity”; where femininity here is the conventional construct of the female gender (Mitchell 1984, 290). This is also covered in Chapter Six.
subjectivity. The chora, she proposes, is “the foundation of any signifying process … [yet] continues to exist in language” (Humm 1995, 53-54). She terms the gestures and repetitive rhythmical sounds contained within the chora and associated with the maternal body (“the law before the law”), the ‘semiotic’. The semiotic is repressed in the movement into the symbolic order of language, yet it remains as the “subterranean element of meaning within signification that does not signify” (Oliver 1997, 1). The semiotic and the symbolic (the syntactic and grammatical element of signification) operate relationally in “dialectic oscillation” within signification (Oliver 1997, 2). In uncovering the chora, Kristeva exposes the hidden subterranean of the feminine that proves both necessary for, and is suppressed by, the masculine symbolic.

Although the phallocentric foundations of some feminist psychoanalytic work, such as Kristeva’s, have been critiqued, Juliet Mitchell suggests that work based on theories such as Freud or Lacan’s is not unviable. Freud’s Oedipal theory, for example, can be read not as a static, prescriptive and universal analysis of gender development (as he presents it) but as a detailed observation of psychosexual relations within one specific historical and cultural (patriarchal) period. Mitchell, while acknowledging that Freud was caught in the “concepts and terminology of his time” (Rowley and Grosz 1990, 189), explains that in her reading psychoanalysis is “not a recommendation for a patriarchal society, but an analysis of one” (Mitchell in Rowley and Grosz 1990, 189). As Whitford notes, the strength of Freud’s work is “that he brought to light the state of affairs regarding relations between the sexes” and his weakness lies in the fact that he “is enmeshed in a power structure and an ideology of the patriarchal type” (Whitford 1991, 75).

Another key French feminist, Luce Irigaray based her ground breaking work in This Sex Which is Not One (1985) on the fact that the theories of subjectivity developed by Freud and Lacan were intrinsically bound to their theories of male sexuality. Under ‘the Law of the Father’ the rational and linear construct of language is ruled by the singularity of the phallus as key signifier. She proposed the creation of a symbolic language system based on the touch of female sexuality. Woman, she says, “has sex organs more or less everywhere” (Irigaray, 1985, 28). Confronting the phallic economy of ‘the Same and the One’, Irigaray proposed a non-symmetrical sexual difference between women and man that resisted the closure of one and other, through the metaphor of woman’s two vaginal lips; lips that are always touching, not one, not two, not none. Accordingly she offers that a feminine symbolic which privileges multiplicity, plurality and connection, “ebb and flow, multiple beginnings, and multiple paths … doubling back”, may more adequately represent women’s subjectivity (Harmon 1996, 1). Through “a positive model or series of
representations of femininity by which the female body may be positively marked” feminist theory might “establish the conditions necessary for the production of new kinds of discourse, new forms of knowledge and new modes of practice” that enables woman’s subjectivity (Gross 1986, 142).

While desiring her representability, Irigaray suggests that the subjectivity of woman is truly unrepresentable in the masculine symbolic. Kristeva concurs, “on a deeper level ... a woman cannot ‘be’ ... In ‘woman’ I see something that cannot be represented, something that is not said, something above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies” (Kristeva in Kramarae & Treichler 1985, 493). Along with Kristeva and Cixous, Irigaray argued that it is only “with new and multiple psychosocial, linguistic constructs [that] we might release the repressed Other, or femininity, into culture” (Humm 1995, 51), and only through this release might the representative of woman as subject be made possible.

In their work both Irigaray and Kristeva express a deep interest in the relationship between woman, subjectivity and the discourse of religion. Religion for these theorists “is premised upon the Name of the Father” (Jantzen 1998, 42). In the western symbolic, with its deep roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition “God is the ultimate Name/Law/Father” (Jantzen 1998, 42). He is both “ultimate signified” and “the guarantor of all signifiers”(Jantzen 1998, 50).

**WOMAN, MYTHOLOGY AND THE RELIGIOUS SYMBOLIC**

While religion has been a consistent concern of feminist theorists, with suffragist Cady Stanton and her revising committee publishing The Women’s Bible which boldly denounced the Bible’s portrayal of women as early as 1896, it was during the second wave that religion as discourse came to be wholly rejected by a large sections of the feminist population. It is understandable in confronting the fact that “not one of the religions of the world has been totally affirming of women’s personhood” (Frankenberry 2005, 2), that the majority of feminist academic thought renounced the male God of monotheism who represented “the supreme instance of the ‘phallocentrism’ of Western metaphysics ... the centre and source of all truth”; as reflected and consolidated in male-only religious hierarchies (Joy et al 2002, 9). While, as Carol Wayne White notes, it is now a “very dated (and myopic) view of religion” that sees it as essentially composed of “belief in the existence of God”, she acknowledges that “it is not too surprising that the term religion” fell “into bad repute in the public and academic spheres” during this period (Wayne White 2002, 149).
In a world shaped by the ontology of religion, male symbols for and stories of the Divine have formed “the linchpin of the western symbolic” (Jantzen 1998, 12), and have served to render male power in western society as both legitimate and “unquestionable” (Wehr 1987, 23). The institution of religion has formed a “primary space” for the articulation, reinforcement and consolidation of gender hierarchy (Frankenberry 2005, 2) with Biblical stories used to demonstrate women’s sinful, weak, inferior and secondary nature (Shinn 1986, 110).

In a position opposing that held by many second wave feminists, who “dismissed religion not only as irretrievably male centred and sexist, but also of no importance in the feminist agenda” (Stuckey 1998, 15), there exists a general consensus among feminist theologians that while “Western religious traditions have devalued and even betrayed women”, spirituality is valid and meaningful (Stuckey 1998, 15). Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow wrote in their early reader on feminist spirituality that the deep permeation of sexist religious imagery into the western psyche “does not invalidate human need for ritual, symbol, and myth” (Christ & Plaskow 1979, 1).

Being a party to both cultural and institutional functions, mythic-religious texts have often elucidated sexist messages at odds with their central message of human emancipation. As Zabunyan notes, the figure of woman in traditional religious texts “is considered not only as an inferior but also as a dangerous, even evil being who must be subjugated to man’s authority, excluded from religious structures and institutions and banned from using the language of theology. Yet her ontological equality is also proclaimed ... St Paul declares that after Christ, ‘there is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female (Galatians 3, 28)’” (Zabunyan 2003, 77).

In identifying the canonical history of religion as demonstrably a victor’s history in which women and the face of the female divine have been dismissed, vilified, marginalised and erased, feminist scholars of religion set out to restore and honour women’s place and participation in religious history. Many feminist scholars looked back to pre-Biblical symbolic systems in order to find and revivify the figure of the female divine so “strongly anathematised in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic scriptures” (Dashu 2005, 209). They sought to restore mythology to the trajectory of religious history and to re-invigorate the images of the goddesses that dwelt there.
Maureen Murdock’s work *The Heroine’s Journey* is a prime example of some of the central and recurrent themes that characterise second wave feminist explorations of women in religion. Hers is a personal and psychological examination of woman’s strained relationship with conventional western gender roles and her search for a full sense of self in female identity. She discusses the disaffection for and disavowal of women, nature, the body and the female divine in the cultural West and in response looks towards reclaiming pre-Biblical goddesses in order to rebuild the female divine as a spiritual symbol for contemporary women (Murdock 1990).

With aims similar to Murdock’s, feminist theorists have championed sub-textual readings of religion and the creation of alternative Mythic meanings. Exploring erasure and hints of the unsaid, excavating to find what has been forgotten or ignored, poets and writers such as Spretnak, Rukeyser, Rich, Attwood, Sexton and Levertov have given voice to the figures of women in myth where previously there was silence. Myths have been rewritten, retold, and reimagined in ways that subversively sought to reveal their “particular relevance to women’s lives” (Downing 1996, 32). This appropriation “to altered ends” has been termed “revisionist mythmaking” (Ostriker 1986, 317): an “act of looking back, or seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction” (Rich 1979, 35).

These feminist theorists have understood the distinction between myth and religion as, in many ways, an arbitrary one. Religion most often stands for institutionally organised and sanctioned belief and practice. ‘Myth’ has been marked as the false beliefs of ‘others’ against the ‘one God, one church, one truth’ of monotheistic belief (‘our true story’). This distinction serves to render myth as ‘primitive’ and thus devoid of spiritual depth and import), as opposed to ‘religion’ proper, or the intellectual logos and rational rigour of philosophical thought. In many ways beyond institutional or chronological distinctions, the separation of mythology and religion is simply a false dichotomy based on cultural standpoint. Theologians have defined religion inclusively as “the expression of humanity’s ultimate concern – the articulation of longings for a center of meaning and value, for connection with the power of being”, a definition which can certainly be extended to cover mythical texts (Christ and Plaskow 1979, 2).

I argue, extending upon Campbell’s work as discussed in Chapter One, that the heroine in mythology is a metaphor for the female relationship with the divine: in the world and in herself. In the spiritual history of the west the history of woman as spiritual hero has been for the most part lost or erased by a masculine symbolic in both which the Absolute and
the divine hero in flesh have been depicted as male. Thus the following examination of
feminist theology and thealogy sets out to examine the way that these theories and
theorists have dealt with woman in relation to, and as, the divine.

FEMINIST THEOLOGY

Second wave feminist work on religion has tended towards either documenting “how a
given religious tradition has historically excluded and degraded women in religious life”,
or to retrieving a lost, hidden or forgotten tradition that is “respectful of women” (Patel
1994, 69). Due to its predominantly western context it is unsurprising that many of the
most significant theorists\(^\text{1}\) in the field of feminist religious theory have set their
foundations in and operate out of, or with intimate (if oppositional) reference to,
Christianity. Examining the work of feminist theology - which generally refers to feminist
analysis of one of the major monotheisms (Stuckey 1998, 15) - commentators have
isolated four separate categories of feminist theological approach\(^\text{1}\): revisionist,
renovationist, revolutionary and rejectionist.

Revisionism refers to theorists who argue that a “correct ... interpretation” of a tradition’s
sacred text will reveal its “liberating message”(Stuckey 1998, 71). Feminist revisionists
have taken on the task of re-interpreting traditional monotheistic texts with the intention
of uncovering their “revelatory message for women”(Stuckey 1998, 79). At first glance,
this approach appears reminiscent of perennial philosophy, yet the fundamental
difference lies in the manner in which revisionists, sometimes also referred to as
‘apologists’, remain insistently within the confines of their tradition. While they advocate
textual reinterpretation, they deny the need for deeper changes.

Renovationists argue that reinterpretation is simply not enough. They focus on peeling
back the cultural and institutional dressings of tradition. In terms of Christianity this has
meant insisting on the “alteration of language and symbols of deity”, as well as focusing on
the ordination of women (Stuckey 1998, 71). Where the renovationist push is primarily
an editorial one, the revolutionary rewrites. Advocating “pushing a tradition to its limits”
while remaining inside it, the revolutionary’s answer to the dilemma of sexist tradition is
transformation: “reviving” old practices, “importing” from other religions, and “inventing”
new figures, language and practices (Stuckey 1998, 151).

\(^{1}\) Including Daly, Christ, Jantzen, Irigaray, Keller and Radford Ruether.
\(^{1}\) These categories were initially proposed by Carol Christ, revised and expanded by Joanna
Stuckey.
Rejectionists then, are described as those who have left the framework of institutional religion to “set about creating new spiritual traditions” (Stuckey 1998, 17). While the revisionist is apologetically wedded to the core metaphysical function and blinkered to all else, and the renovationist and the revolutionary struggle with the sociological dimensions of religious institution, the rejectionist begins to journey beyond the limits of the frame.

Two of the key figures in feminist religious scholarship, Mary Daly and Carol Christ, demonstrate movement through these categories as stages in the evolving course of their work, which I will now explore.

**MARY DALY: REWEAVING THE JOURNEY**

Mary Daly began her scholarly exploration in the discourse of classical Catholic theology. Her experience as a woman within the confines of this tradition provoked her to launch a fervent, feminist post-Christian attack on sexism in the Church and society at large in her books *The Church and The Second Sex* (1968) and *Beyond God the Father* (1973) (Stuckey 1998, 77). She wrote that “if God in ‘his’ heaven is a father ruling his people, then it is the ‘nature’ of things and according to divine plan … that society be male dominated. Within this context, a mystification of roles takes place: The husband dominating his wife represents God ‘himself’” (Daly in Christ 1979, 275). While her work recognised the women’s movement as ontological, her early impulses were to revolutionise the Church. While recognising that He needed to be rethought and re-worded in this early phase Daly still felt the need to ‘save’ God, as the ground of being and core spiritual essence (Daly 1992, 222; also Campbell 2000, 175). Her response was ‘God the Verb’. In the process of “leaving the patriarchal space-time of God the Father” women might participate in God the Verb a “form-destroying, form-creating, transforming power that makes all things new” (Daly in Stuckey 1998, 77).

Daly’s early work was significantly responsive to the progressive theology of Paul Tillich. Tillich posed ‘Being-itself’ (a metaphor for God) as a response to the “universal ‘human’ existential dilemma” of non-being (Scheider 2000, 59). For Tillich, ‘New Being’ appeared in the figure of Jesus Christ as the reality and possibility of “reconciliation and reunion, of creativity, meaning and hope” (Schneider 2000, 59-60). Daly recapitulated ‘Being-itself’ to the specifics of woman’s confrontation with the dilemma of patriarchy: ‘Women’s Be-

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14 Accepting that these categories map the contours of feminist theology as a discourse, I find Stuckey’s rejectionist category limited by its sense of entrenched, fixated opposition to a central religious institution. I believe that the term evolutionist might more aptly capture the spirit of unfettered forward-looking spiritual creativity.
ing’, ‘New Be-ing’ and ultimately ‘Metabeing’ were infused with “an evolutionary understanding of the nature of the immanent and the transcendent” (Schneider 2000, 68). ‘Women’s Be-ing’ was manifest in the “unfolding of woman-consciousness”. This consciousness was created through the confrontation with, and journey beyond, patriarchal space, and as such Daly recognised the feminist journey itself as “an intimation of the endless unfolding of God” (Daly in Campbell 2000, 175).

In Beyond God the Father Daly identified women’s marginalisation from the power of symbols and naming as the root of their oppression. Women, she boldly declared have “had the power of naming stolen from us” (Daly 1973, 8). Gyn/Ecology marked Daly’s philosophic movement into radical feminist separatism. Performing a classic rejectionist inversion, Daly completely rejected men and all male imagery for God, “reversing its reversals” (Daly 1993, 326) and heralded female-only imagery as life affirming for women (Stuckey 1998, 77). She set out to reclaim the power of naming by re-“spinning” language (Daly 1992, 322).

Mary Daly’s work has been one of the most significant demonstrations of the ethic of feminist mythopoesis. Mythopoesis (the artistic reimagining or revision of mythology) has been one of the most significant strategic responses to the constraints of the male symbolic. One frequently used mythopoetic strategy has been to deconstruct a myth in which woman has been excluded and to reconstruct it in a way that gives voice to a female figure from the corpus who was previously “silent, objectified or inaudible”(Purkiss 1992, 445: see also, Ostriker 1986, 316). Daly’s mythopoetic strategy has been to consciously deconstruct the barriers between philosophy, theology and the mythic, and to redefine symbolic spiritual language with woman positioned as the primary subject (Daly 1992, 323-4).

With “phallocentric reality” maintained by the western religious construct Daly proposed that a reversal of the religious symbolic contained the potential to create an upheaval that would shift the very base of Western thought (Caputi in Larrington 1992, 425), causing “the world to ‘split open’” (Caputi 2001, 20). Through the “restoration and reinvention” of language, women might “once more name and own their elemental, magical powers”(Raphael 1996, 60).

Daly’s practice of symbolic transformation was purposefully designed to “open up levels of reality otherwise closed”, to “unlock dimensions and elements of our souls” (Caputi in Larrington 1992, 428). In this she utilises what Campbell described as the “energy-
evoking and “directing” principle of symbolic affect (Campbell 1972, 219). Symbolic affect is defined as coming into being and existing independently of language, speaking directly to the feeling system and manifesting itself “with a viscerally felt integrity” that is “not addressed first to the brain” “(Cates 1995, 1). Campbell writes that an affective symbol “hits one where it counts …[and] immediately elicits a response … There is some kind of throb of resonance within … like the answer of a musical string to another equally tuned … when the vital symbols of any given social group evoke in all its members responses of this kind, a sort of magical accord unites them as one spiritual organism” (Campbell 1972, 89). This is Daly’s desire, to affectively unite women and evoke transformative change: “not only [in] the self, but also [in] the world” (Caputi in Larrington 1992, 428).

It is not an easy task. Daly names herself a Pirate on a mission to reclaim “the Treasure Trove of symbols and myths that have been stolen and reversed by the theological thieves” (Daly 1992, 325). The negotiation of this complex maze of symbol and imagery is itself “the journey of women becoming” (Daly in Morris 1998, 27).

The Journey has been described as a “central axis” of Daly’s philosophy (Campbell 2000, 174). In ‘Women’s Be-Dazzling Journey’ the call is for women to awaken from their stuckness in patriarchal space. It is the patriarchal threshold of gender roles and rules that she must cross and her journey is an ongoing process of questioning this conventional cultural space in which she finds herself (Campbell 2000, 166). This enquiry and her bold response enables her ‘Be/Leaving’, her increasing realisation and her ‘Be-becoming’; all of which deepens her ability to participate in “ever Unfolding Be-ing” (Daly 1992, 3).

**CAROL CHRIST: THEALOGY**

Carol Christ, another of feminist theory’s most prominent scholars of religion, expresses a sense of woman’s spiritual quest that resonates with that of Daly. For Christ woman’s quest for wholeness is both social and spiritual and begins with the realisation of the “emptiness of life as a woman, configured by patriarchal relations” (Christ 1995, 13). The journey involves “probing to the bedrock of woman’s experience of self and world” (Christ 1995, 11-12) and through awakening to the immanent powers of being woman becomes able to ground herself “in a new sense of self and a new orientation in the world” (Christ 1995, 13).

Like Daly, Christ began her scholarly journey in classical theology and a combatant engagement with Christianity remains a resonant and ever present background to her
work. Christ writes that while “all around her the voices of patriarchy” spoke disparagingly about women (Christ 1995, x), almost no women’s voices spoke to “name the gap between men’s stories about women and women’s own perceptions of self and world” (Christ 1995, 7). “Without stories”, she writes, woman “cannot understand herself ... she is alienated from those deeper experiences of self and world that have been called spiritual or religious” (Christ 1995, 1). Confronting this, Christ began the struggle to find a vocabulary for women’s experience of self and spirit outside of the bounds of the western Christian tradition.

Christ also shares with Daly the opinion that the re-construction of symbolism, language and history specific to women is of prime importance. But, for Christ the primary symbol of this new feminist canon is The Goddess. An advocate of feminist Goddess worship, Christ has, over a period of twenty years, produced a systemic thealogy,\footnote{Thea being the Greek for goddess, logos meaning study (Stuckey 1998, 144).} literally meaning study of the Goddess (Stuckey 1998, 144).

In theology, the Goddess is the supreme creatrix and ground of all being. As the female divine, she is “a personification who can be invoked in prayer and ritual” and the “symbol of life, death, and rebirth energy” (Christ 1979, 278). She is the Many in the One; multiply manifest as a diverse array of goddesses across the pan-global mythic-religious spectrum. As a practitioner of Goddess devotion explains: “You can say it’s the Great Goddess and that’s the one Goddess but she’s also all of the many goddesses and that’s true. And she is everywhere, she’s immanent in everything ... So I worship the great goddess and I’m polytheistic and pantheistic and monotheistic too” (Eller in Long 1996, 2).

A long, almost limitless period of prehistoric Goddess worship is set as counterweight against the “psychological weight of thousands of years of cross-cultural male dominance” (Eller 1991, 282). Challenging the canonical religious representation of women’s spiritual history, Goddess feminists have crafted their own version of spiritual history (herstory) which maps a lineage of Goddess worship from prehistory to present. Merlin Stone writes, “female religion, far from naturally fading away, was the victim of centuries of continual persecution and suppression” (Stone in Eller 1991, 285). Utilising the archaeomythological scholarship of Marija Gimbutas\footnote{Gimbutas’ work is discussed in Chapter Five.}, theology finds support for a prehistory in which the “disregarded but fundamental truth of human nature”, needed to restore “the degenerate consciousness of a corrupt civilisation” can be found (Purkiss 1992, 442).
GODDESS SPIRITUALITY AND THE GREAT MOTHER

The Goddess is first of all earth, the dark, nurturing mother who brings forth all life. She is the power of fertility and generation; the womb, and also the receptive tomb, the power of death. All proceeds from Her; all returns to Her. As earth, She is also plant life; trees, the herbs and grains that sustain life. She is the body, and the body is sacred.

(Starhawk in Muten 1994, 8)

Much early theological philosophy invokes radical and ecofeminist principles. These include the reclamation and celebration of the female body, particularly its relationship to the immanent power of nature, and a separatist ideology that advocates for the creation of women’s only space. In an early influential essay Christ suggests that, at base, the symbol of the Goddess is an “acknowledgement of the legitimacy of female power as a beneficent and independent power” (Christ 1979, 277).

According to Cynthia Eller’s study Living In The Lap of The Goddess, the radical separatist ideology of the Goddess movement can be traced back to Dianic Wicca. Emphasising “female power” expressed through “the positive valuation of will”, adherents of Dianic Wicca “do ritual only with women and ... worship female, not male deities” (Stuckey 1998, 145: see also Christ & Plaskow 1979, 114). As Christ and Plaskow note in an early text “feminists may be divided into those who favor full equality between the sexes and those who favor temporary or permanent ascendancy of women and the female principle” (Christ & Plaskow 1979, 13). Many adherents of Goddess worship fall into the later category, espousing the belief that “the overarching divine principle is more appropriately symbolized in female terms, as Goddess, while the male principle or God must remain secondary, the son and lover, but not the equal of his mother” (Christ & Plaskow 1979, 14). As representatives of this theological quandary, Christ and Plaskow rightly pose the questions: “Will the Goddess be the sole religious symbol in a new gender specific monotheism? Or will Goddess and God both be included in the new spiritual vision?” (Christ & Plaskow 1979, 13).

Thealogy, Melissa Raphael writes, is “grounded in female physiology” as a response to the desacralisation of women’s body in classical theology (Raphael 1996, 68). The Goddess, revered as Great Mother, “is inseparable” from motherhood and the act of human motherhood is seen to mirror the “cosmic generativity” of the Goddess (Raphael 1996, 17).

Asphodel Long makes a distinction between European and American Wicca in this respect; with European Wicca being distinct from its radical US feminist cousin, in offering male and female god/dess images of “equal and complementary polarity” (Long 1996, 2). This gender separatism is not representative of all Goddess communities, for example Starhawk’s Goddess community ‘Reclaiming’ welcomes men, and also reveres male figures of the divine.
Raphael reports that in feminist Goddess spirituality “where the divinised earth is held to gestate and feed all life-forms in an essentially female manner, the human female body images or ‘is’ the Goddess in its own biological and cultural processes” (Raphael 1996, 52). She argues that in so doing, the female body\(^\text{18}\) is resacralised as a microcosmic representation “of the generative purposes of the divine” (Raphael 1996, 70).

Here the Goddess, reflective of, and in, women is the creator of all things: “The life-giving powers of the Goddess in her creative aspect are not limited to physical birth. The Goddess is also seen as the creator of all the arts of civilization, including healing, writing, and the giving of just law” (Christ 1979, 281). She is in nature and all natural processes and bodies, although, at times with the exception of men.

The problem with thealogy’s reclamation of the female divine, resacralisation of the earth and the female body, is its strategic duality and the consequent marginalisation and evisceration of the male divine, and the male (body) as divine, as I will discuss.

**THE GOD PROBLEM**

... the liberation of women is finally contingent on overcoming those dualisms that have for centuries molded Western consciousness...

(Christ 1979, 22)

Locked in a tense battle with the looming figure of the western Christian symbolic, the Goddess has been invoked as a replacement to (the problem of) God. She is “the reverse of the God we have had in the Semitic monotheistic traditions” (Coleman 2005, 228). The strategy of the Goddess movement has been, to paraphrase Coleman, the symbolic destabilisation or rupture of traditional Western metaphysics through radically transforming “the hegemonic signifying system”. It has been, “in short, a deconstruction of ‘God’” (Coleman 2005, 229). The result of this is the Goddess, reassigned to His now vacant position as “transcendental signified” (Coleman 2005, 232).

While employing a strategic dualism in her early work, Christ outlines the problem: “Because dualistic habits of thinking are so deeply ingrained, it is tempting simply to turn them upside down: to affirm nature, body, sexuality, the non-rational, and the female and to deny or devalue spirit, mind, rationality, and the male. While it can be radicalising to think this way for a period of time, dualistic habits of thought are not thereby transcended” (Christ 1997, 100).

\(^{18}\)Theologist Coleman writes that the Goddess “encompasses all, female and male, just as all things comes from a mother”. Such parthenogenesis is not reflective of human creation for whom, I would pointedly note, reproduction requires the input of mother and father (Coleman 2005, 235).
According to philosopher Michelle Le Doeuff the patriarchal symbolic can in large part be defined by its dualistic practices (Morris 1988, 43). Dualism might be understood as the creation and radical expulsion of a subordinated Other on whom there is a denied dependency (Campbell 1996, 175). As O’Grady explains it, the Other comes to be “shunned, marginalized, punished or … cast out … in order to protect the homogeneity upon which [the one] is established. Yet, this expelled ‘other’ is by the same token, ‘the hidden face’ of any identity” (O’Grady 2002, 50).

Radical feminist philosophy has been particularly guilty of a strategic dualism which responds to the patriarchal symbolic by establishing and expelling the male and masculine as Other. As Meaghan Morris aptly notes in her analysis of Daly: “What remains discreetly un-reversed” in this mode of feminist thought and practice “is the structural necessity FOR a symbol of the Other” (Morris 1988, 43). While remaining within a system of binary opposition “their only possible movement is into inversion” (Mulvey 1989, 162).

As long as the practice of creating and projecting an Other continues, dualism continues unabated. Whether employed consciously or unconsciously, duality denies our intimacy and interconnectedness with the Other. It can certainly be argued that the early feminist reversal of the dualist framework was a strategically necessary act of differentiation and thus appropriate in the context of feminist thought at the time, but these rigid dualistic boundaries ultimately hinder change by remaining caught within their own “conceptual frame of reference, unable to advance” (Mulvey 1989, 162). I believe Mulvey looks right into the heart of the issue in stating that the “problem of dealing with difference without constituting an opposition may just be what feminism is all about” (Mulvey 1989, 161). Braidotti writes that in our recognition of the “asymmetrical position between the sexes”, “reversibility is not an option, either conceptually or politically”.19 It is clear that “the point is to overcome the dialectics of domination, not to turn the previous slaves into new masters” (Braidotti in Butler 1994, 8).

In continuing through and beyond the process of deconstructing God (and without suggesting a return to Good Old God), it remains necessary to acknowledge the sacredness of male bodies, the mind, agency and the masculine divine, alongside the feminine divine, the female body, communion, feelings and earth. In assigning a single gender to the Absolute theologists are replicating a theological error. To ascribe a solely female gender

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19 Also see Irigaray (in Whitford, 1991) on the irreversability of male and female ‘difference’. 
to the “anchor of ‘reality’” (Coleman 2005, 232) is as fruitless, meaningless and dualistic, as it is to ascribe a male one. While Coleman asserts that “God as It would still be God [veiled He]” (Coleman 2005, 235), I argue that the ground of being is immanently present in, and reflective of, both sexes (as it is present all things), and yet Absolutely transcends sex and gender. The challenge of constructing an appropriate symbolic for the Absolute and its immanent embrace and transcendence of both sexes remains.

This said, it is clear that women require a figure of the divine in female form. This figure would not a re-gendered Absolute, but a figure who represents the journey of the heroine, her process of individuation and finally her immanently incarnated revelation of divinity. This figure I propose would be the female archetype of the Self.20

**JUNGIAN ARCHETYPES**

Jung derived the term archetype from that used by “Plato, Pliny, Cicero [and] St Augustine” (Gerringer 2006, 4) and used it to refer to images that arose as “autochthonous, individual products of unconscious origin” from the collectively inherited structures of the psyche (Jung in Gerringer 2006, 4). Jung posed archetypes as aspects of the collective unconscious, correlates of “basic mythic structures … like the trickster, the shadow, the Wise Old Man, the ego, the persona, the Great Mother” (Wilber 1998, 148). He termed the psychological process of working with, and integrating, these archetypes: individuation.

Wilber interprets these archetypal forms as distillations of “some of the very basic, everyday, existential encounters of the human condition – life, death, birth, mother, father, shadow, ego, and so on” (Wilber 1998, 149). He contextualises Jung’s work by suggesting that archetypes are directly related to the “pre-formal stages of the mind’s development, particularly pre-operational and concrete operational21 thought … [stages that] all modern men and women pass through” (Wilber 1998, 147). Thus he asserts that, in terms of psychological development, archetypes represent our ancestral inheritance of behavioural patterns (Wilber 1998, 147). He writes: “it is altogether necessary to contact and befriend” these pre-operative and conventional archetypes, and also “necessary to differentiate and individuate from them” (Wilber 1998, 247).

Stuckey notes that feminist spirituality has had an ongoing relationship with Jungian psychoanalysis due to Jung’s interest in the figure of the goddess as archetype (Stuckey

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20 I purposefully use the term ‘archetype of Self’ to differentiate this figure of realised immanent divinity from the more generalised sense of Jungian archetype.

21 Wilber is referring here to Piaget’s stages of psychological development (discussed in Chapter Four).
Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen proposed, for example, seven Greek goddesses as archetypal figures for women. She writes that these archetypal figures were “less powerful ... and more specialised” than the earlier figure of the Great Goddess from who they were derived (Bolen 1994, 249). Where Jungian archetypal readings of female mythic characters, such as Bolen’s, have argued for the psychological relevance of these figures to women today (see also: Murdock 1990, Shinn 1986, Perera 1981), other feminist scholars have countered Bolen (and Jung’s) claim that “archetypes exist outside time” (Bolen 1984, 22), arguing that to see historical gender archetypes as “sacrosanct [and] immutable” is to play into the hands of patriarchal gender structures (Powers 1991, 155. See also Pratt 1982). Particular issue has been taken with one of Jung’s fundamental archetypal images, the ‘feminine’ anima. While the anima has been presented as an image of the feminine “common to all people”, it has been exposed, in actuality, as the “image of the female in the individual male unconscious” (Simmer-Brown 2001, 13).

Feminist Jungian Demaris Wehr suggests that any utilisation of Jung’s powerful understanding of the symbols of the psyche must be balanced against its potential to legitimate androcentric images of ‘the feminine’ in the guise of a universal given (Wehr 1987, 13, 22-3). Wehr insightfully advocates for archetypal images to be stripped of their false power as timeless universals, and re-contextualised as images that arise as part of an “ongoing conversation” in human society (Wehr 1987, 14). Further, she advocates for the investigation of gender specific pathways to individuation22 (Wehr 1987, 100).

Bolen’s process of using Greek goddesses as archetypes presents a powerful way of dealing with the inheritance of western cultural gender roles and feminine behavioural patterns ingrained in the collective unconscious. The integration of these mythological figures unleashes the energy trapped in these representations of conventional gender roles. This process of identifying how gender identity is positioned in the conventional sphere is vital to women’s emergence into authentic selfhood. Yet, while the recognition of cultural role identity and the development of the psyche are deeply and inextricably linked to matters of Spirit, the archetypal figures that Bolen puts forward are not archetypes of the Self.

The path of individuation begins with the preoperative “chthonic Self” (Harris 2001, 1), it requires the integration of a range of conventional, inherited archetypes, and at the end of the sequence concludes with the archetype of meaning (wise self), and finally with the archetype of the Self (“the unified psyche”) (Whitlark 2005-6, 1). While archetypal

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22 This is explored in Chapter Seven.
images such as the Greek goddesses point in the direction of, and are an essential part of
the passage towards, transpersonal union, they are not themselves representations of the
full potential of the Self. The integration of archetypal images, which arise with respect to
(and are translated by) specific structures in the human psyche at each stage of
development, are part of the journey of human developmental (psychological) growth.
The culmination of the transformative process of individuation (self realisation) is
represented by the Archetype of the Self. With the body-mind fully and consciously
integrated the healthy ego is surrendered, transcended, and transparently included in
union with the Absolute (Harris 2001, 5).

THE ARCHETYPE OF THE SELF FOR WOMAN

... female sacrality ... transforms not merely the procedures and apparatuses by which we
live, but what we can be...

(Raphael 1996, 72)

The archetype of the Self relates directly to the contemporary journey of woman’s
becoming as posed by Christ and Daly. For Daly, woman’s social and spiritual journey
towards wholeness engenders her ability to participate ever more fully in “the real
source”, the “deep background” that is ‘Be-ing’ (Daly in Frankenberry 2005, 4.2.1). Thus
after Daly (and Tillich24), the female archetype of the Self would be the symbol of
‘Woman’s New Being’: a figuration of the revealed potential of woman’s self.

For theologian Christ the intelligent awareness of Goddess/god25 manifests the “power of
loving persuasion that calls beings into transformative response” (Ruether 1992, 291).
While Christ leaves the question of persuasion somewhat open she writes that “becoming
aware”, is part of the “process of transformation” (Christ 2005, 295). It is through the
cultivation of increasing awareness (of self, of world) that we might come to more fully
embody the qualities of the divine in ourselves.

The archetype of the Self is an omega point of development; actual, imagined or intuited,
that represents the full potential of divine/ human embodiment in the form of woman.26 In

23 Each of the stages of development are common to human kind, yet each stage is experienced
differently due to factors that include the developmental stage, the interior subjectivity and
historio-cultural context of the individual. For a full discussion of developmental stages, refer to
Chapter Seven
24 Tillich proposed Christ as the “symbol for the archetype of the Self” (Harris 2001, 3). Christ,
Tillich says, invites us to participate in New Being, to reveal this potential for divinity, self reunion,
healing and self revelation in ourselves (Tillich 1965, 3-4).
25 Christ’s most recent work begins to reintegrate the male and masculine with the divine as her use
of the term Goddess/god reveals.
26 While embodying specific qualities the figure of a transpersonal archetype for woman would need
to be broad enough to encompass difference, acknowledging the fact that in each woman the path to
the form of the heroine the archetype of the Self would represent both the journey of woman, and the culmination of her journey: at the point of realisation at which she immanently reveals the transcendence of divinity in her female form. The establishment of such an archetypal figure is both a historical task that requires us to excavate mythic and religious history for spiritual heroines of the past, and a contemporary one. It is a task that requires us to examine and map the contours of the biological, psychological, historical and socio-cultural specifics that woman has and does negotiate on her pathway to individuation.

**TOWARDS THE THIRD WAVE AND BEYOND**

we are inventing a new form of language radiating a female power which cannot be conveyed in any other way at this time  
(Wilding\(^\text{27}\) in Zabunyan 2003, 16)

Accepting that aspects of the early work of the theorists discussed in this chapter were written in the “polemical spirit that belongs properly to the early confrontational moments of a movement” (Mulvey 1989, 161), there is much in this foundational work that continues to be of vital importance to the developmental trajectory of feminist theory. I find the passionate, transformative impulse in the work of these first and second wave theorists of great import.

As demonstrated in this chapter, the diverse streams and discourses of first and second wave feminism have variously explored biological, cultural, psychological, linguistic and social perspectives in the quest to answer to question ‘ who is woman?’ and their desire to resymbolise woman has also led some on a deeper spiritual quest to find the face of the female divine. The move into (and beyond) the third wave opens feminism to the possibility of moving beyond the limits of the binary. The tensions of dualism begin to be righted and the emergence of Integral philosophy lends promise for future developments of feminist thought, as will be explored in the following chapter.

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\(^\text{27}\) Feminist artist Faith Wilding, in the preface of a visual art exhibition catalogue.
Who Is Woman?

The Third Wave and Beyond

TIME AND THE EVOLUTION OF FEMINIST THOUGHT

Thus far this thesis has examined elements of first and second wave thought in order to explore the increasing complexity with which feminism has unfolded, as an evolving discourse, in defining and examining woman as subject.

As presented in the previous chapter, the first Wave “sought to stake out” a “place in the linear time of planning and history”, by rectifying “woman’s relationship to ... sociopolitical life” (Kristeva in Moi 1986, 350). The second wave built upon, and expanded beyond, this foundation by exploring the manner in which woman’s identity related to, and was contextualised by, the psyche, both personal and cultural. In doing so the linear socio-temporal focus of feminist discourse was disrupted by an emerging relationship with, what Kristeva terms, ‘monumental’ space-time (Kristeva in Oliver & Kristeva 1997, 352).

Monumental time is the deep time that “extends the human story into a non-human realm” (Griffiths 2000, 1). It “conjures up ancient evolutionary history” and “awesome geological eras” and is “radically destabilising of conventional, felt timescales” as it reveals “long-term cycles”, that upset “linearity and progressivism” (Griffiths 2000, 1). Monumental time beckons us to return to humanity’s “archaic (mythic) memory” (Kristeva in Moi 1986, 355).

With the “teleological time of historical agency colonized by men” (Braidotti 1994, 9), the re-orientation to this “spatio-temporal sensibility” that exists beyond the “traditional artifice of the space-time grid” (Keller 1986, 241), counterposed feminism’s forward
facing movement with the necessity of return: to archetypal mythology and immanent ecological relations with the planet. In the context of this expanded sense of temporality a more complex (post)-metaphysical relationship to the question of identity began to develop. Through the process of dismantling “the fundamental” yet “untenable” separation upon which contemporary western identity has been based, it began to become clear that the dichotomies of man and woman, self and other, must collapse (Kristeva in Moi 1986, 367).

It is to this analysis and the question of how to “reassemble” the female subject “after the certainties” of identity have “collapsed”, that this investigation now turns (Braidotti 1994, 99). By exploring the discourses of third wave feminism and the promise of Corporeal, Process and non-dual philosophies this chapter moves towards examining the possibilities that Integral feminism offers for the (re)construction of the female subject.

**THE DISCOURSES OF THE THIRD WAVE**

Towards the end of the twenty first century, with the arrival of queer, postmodern and postcolonial theories, the discourses that characterise third wave feminism came into being. The third wave declaimed second wave attempts to define Woman as exclusionary; inherently blind to the differences constituted by the experience of race, class, and sexuality. Responding to the work of postcolonial scholarship, third wave feminism denounced second wave feminism’s predominantly ‘white middle class’ focus as hegemonic (Gillis & Munford 2003). The focus of the third wave developed a transnational focus, as it sought to recognise the manifold and at times, divergent needs, priorities and identity positions that were apparent when woman was examined in a global context.

Postmodernists Fraser and Nicholson summarise the third wave position as the replacement of “unitary notions of ‘woman’ and ‘feminine gender identity’ with plural and complexly constructed conceptions of social identity, treating gender as one relevant strand among others, attending also to class, race, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation” (Fraser & Nicholson 1993, 429). The embrace of discrete cultural rights as advocated by multicultural discourse ran counter to the central “ethical claims of feminism” and created significant tensions (Pollitt 1999, 1). Postmodern feminism’s resistance to universalism or summary, its “doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre … has a universal and general claim as the ‘right’ or privileged form of authoritative knowledge” (Richardson 1997a, 517) combined with the third wave’s insistence on identity politics through the embrace of plural ideologies and differences, fractured the central cohesive
feminist telos of social and cultural rights that the first and second waves had sought to construct.

One of the major theoretical moments of the third wave has been the re-analysis of the sexed body. Third wave feminism asserted that the second wave had posed the female body as a biologically determined, fixed and ahistorical form. A pre-cultural base for a social, cultural and historical mind that determined the meaning for biology, the body in second wave thought was simply “a biological object whose representation and functioning is political” (Grosz 1994, 16).

The question of the sexed body was taken up in third wave analysis with striking force. It became a key means for deconstructing the construction and performance of “polymorphous and groundless difference: not a difference between men and women, but a continual and unstable difference”1 (Colebrook 2002, 1). Scholarship on intersexuality, particularly arising from the acknowledgement of disorders of sexual differentiation where sexual morphology is neither categorically female nor male, demonstrated the nature of the complex continuum of intricate, interconnected differences that runs between the biological positions male and female (and thus women and men) (ISNA 1993). The historically shifting and culturally contingent nature of sex and gender determination was further revealed. They emphasised that sex, or the body, was not an ahistorical biological given, but a lived and culturally constructed form.

Judith Butler, a radical postmodern constructivist argued that identity does not pre-exist signification. Language — as a constructive and performative form — “always already mediates our knowledge of the body, of reality in general” (Butler in Vasterling 1999, 20). Thus, in terms of the relationship between woman and female, the underlying semantic definition of these terms contains connotations which effect “a certain delimitation of what is taken as extra-linguistic reality” (Vasterling 1999, 20). The constitution of sex, constructivists argue, is “retrospectively produced through our understanding of gender” (Elam 1997, 4). Our understanding of biology is enculturated, with gender giving “rise to a belief in a prediscursive, natural sex” (Elam 1997, 5). Butler’s work argues, in effect, against any ontological truth, reality or given, for sex or gender. According to her theory there are simply maintained norms that stabilise through performance “over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface” (Butler in Lloyd 2007, 72-73).

1 While categorised in this discussion as a second wave feminist, Irigaray’s emphasis on the body as a site of difference, flux and fluidity has some marked similarities with (and no doubt, influence upon) third wave theories on the body.
Under the microscope of postmodernism, woman was virtually without form. Stressing the contextual nature of identity, some postmodern feminists emphasised anti-essentialism, “to the point of questioning the existence of any core self at all” (Neilsen 2001, 7). The interior space of subjectivity was “flattened into a social construction or marker in language, the unoccupied occupant of the subject position” (Fuchs 1996). ‘Being’ itself was posed as a complex, nihilistic, theoretical fiction (Wayne White 2002, viii). Woman, as subject, was left afloat (or not) on a sea of language (Keller & Daniell 2002, 147).

**SUBJECTIVITIES OF INTER-RELATION: CORPOREAL FEMINISM**

...the torsion of the one into the other, the passage, vector, or uncontrollable drift of the inside into the outside and the outside into the inside (Grosz 1994, XII)

As a counterpoint to some of the more extreme forms of postmodern feminism, Corporeal, Process and Nomadic feminist philosophies reject the classical view of the human subject as pure mind, “independent of, and hence ultimately separable from, the body’s flesh, the terrestrial environment” (Keller & Daniell 2002, 147). They propose a female subject that offers more promise for this investigation of the journey of woman’s subjectivity. This subject is both destabilised and in intimate inter-relation with exterior elements of the world. Importantly this relation is acknowledged as occurring both through embodiment and interiority.

Taking the postmodern constructionist position that the body cannot be adequately understood through a dominant discourse that posits it as ‘natural,’ pre-cultural, inert, and unchanging, Corporeal feminist philosophers, such as Elizabeth Grosz and Moira Gatens argue that there is no static biological, sexed body over which cultural gender attributes are laid. Corporeal feminism breaks down the dichotomy of body and mind, sex and gender, it rejects the privilege of mind and language over the corporeal, and it re-locates the mind and the emergence of meaning in the body (Colebrook 2000, 182). The body is thus not split between its material reality, as some pure thing in and of itself, and its various historical and cultural representations, as arbitrary cultural overlay. Sexed embodiment is a continual process of becoming. Grosz suggests that the body is “neither brute nor passive but is interwoven with and constitutive of systems of meaning, signification and representation ... The body cannot be understood as a neutral screen, a biological tabula rasa onto which masculine or feminine could be indifferently projected” (Grosz 1994, 18). The entire corpus of the body is thus recognised as a centre “of

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1 This rejection of the classical view of the human subject is shared by many contemporary feminist theorists.
perspective, insight, reflection, desire, agency” that is animately in conversation with the world and other bodies (Grosz 1994, XI). “The body” Grosz proposes “marks that peculiar site of transformation whereby the human becomes human, the body becomes sexed, and the subject emerges as its own ... The body is the very passage from being to becoming” (Colebrook 2000, 84).

Grosz tackles the deeper ontological question of ‘What is woman?’ by using Spinoza’s philosophy of non-oppositional difference to rethink embodied subjectivity. Spinoza closes the gap between subject and object by reconciling body and mind as two attributes of one inseparable substance.3 Psychical interiority and corporeal exteriority are identified as interdependent and non-dichotomous. In an ongoing movement, body becomes mind, mind becomes body. Thus body and mind are identified as not being “two distinct substances or two kinds of attributes of a single substance but somewhere in between” (Grosz 1994, XII). Grosz illustrates this with the figure of the mobius strip, an inverted three-dimensional figure eight.

The mobius strip visually illustrates the movement and interconnectivity of two surfaces which cannot be collapsed into one and are yet not two (Grosz 1994, 189), thus demonstrating “the inflection of mind into body and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting or inversion, one side becomes another” (Grosz 1994, xii). Grosz’s model of the body is non-essentialist. It is a contextual continually becoming body, “neither ground (immediate given) nor limit (radical beyond)” (Colebrook 2000, 80), that, being without a “true nature,” cannot be definitively known (Grosz 1994, 12). The entirety of the corporeal subject, incorporating as it does the flows of conscious and

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3 This counters Descartes foundational claim for two irreducibly different and incompatible substances.
unconscious mind and living matter can neither be “fully apprehended” nor “represented”, it exceeds representation (Braidotti 1994, 8-9).

**PROCESS PHILOSOPHY AND THE NOMADIC FEMINIST SUBJECT**

Philosopher Catherine Keller activates Process philosophy for the task of re-examining masculine and feminine identity and subjectivity with outcomes similar to that of Corporeal feminism. Process philosophy, “comprehends people and things as intercontextual events or processes, continuously created by and in turn furthering the creation of their cultural, ecological, and spatiotemporal contexts” (Keller & Daniell 2002, 160). Process explicitly counters the sense that the “human realm is not profoundly affected by, nor has any great effect upon, the more than-human world” (Keller & Daniell 2002, 160).

Process philosophy is an “organic, relational, dynamic and embodied” ontology that is at one with “scientific cosmology and evolutionary theory” (Frankenberry 2005, 4.1). Together, the fundamental tenets of the “primordial interrelatedness” of “all organisms”, creativity and emergence are summarised in Whitehead’s dictum that “the many become one and are increased by one” (Whitehead in Frankenberry 2005, 4:1).5

The subject is understood as an ongoing enactment of emergence that is born of, and contributes to, the multiple becomings of others (Keller & Daniell 2002, 162). The subject is a particular relational pattern which becomes incarnate “over and again ... thereby creating the intensity of definiteness” (Daniell 2002, 162). Although connected through interbeing, diversity and difference occur between subjects due to their partial or limited nature and the characteristics of “endurance and reiteration which allow specific types of subjects to arise”(Keller & Daniell 2002, 160). In this way, by applying the principles of Process6 to the quandary of definition, woman can be identified as specific intensity of form that arises as a reiterated relational pattern. This form both endures and changes and is located as a part of a larger whole, the ongoing-becoming matrix of being (Daniell 2002, 149).

Feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti advocates a Process figuration of subjectivity that adequately demonstrates the principles of “interdependence of change and repetition,

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5 This is further articulated in Wilber’s holonic theory, as expounded in the next chapter.
6 The most recent incarnation of theologian Carol Christ’s work engages Process philosophy in responding to the questions and criticisms raised against theology. In this most recent evolution of her thinking she demonstrates a significant shift in both emphasis and timbre; both women and men are described as embodied subjects, interconnected with nature and part of the divine body. This is further demonstrated by Christ’s use of the new term Goddess/god.
movement and rest, evolution and endurance” (Daniell 2002, 148). Noting that “subjectivity is not a given, unchanging thing, but a dynamic, continuous happening” (Daniell 2002, 151), Braidotti seeks to rethink woman as subject “without dualistic oppositions, linking instead body and mind in a new set of intensive and often intransitive transitions” (Braidotti 1994, 31).

Her ‘Nomadic Feminist Subject’ is a hybrid being of transnational orientation that infuses the conception of female subjectivity with motion. No form of identity is taken as permanent; nomadic identity is contingent as “the nomad is only passing through” (Braidotti 1994, 33), yet the nomadic subject is “not altogether devoid of unity” her cohesion is “engendered by repetitions, cyclical moves, rhythmical displacement” (Braidotti 1994, 22).

Her project seeks recognition of a specific pattern of definiteness, womankind, while also recognising the diversity of that category. The “distinctiveness” of woman’s sexual difference “is partially reliant upon the reiteration of definite, and hence limited, patterns” (Daniell 2002, 152). A challenge to “the modernist idea of an essential or ‘core’ self”, the nomadic feminist subject is “situated, multifaceted, and alterable” (Daniell 2002, 150). Braidotti calls for an ongoing accountability for female difference that dodges the pitfalls of relativism. She posits the subjectivity of Woman as needing to be plotted according to what she calls, “regulative variables”: “social and semiotic ‘axes of identity,’” which include “race, class, age, and sexual preference” (Daniell 2002, 150).

THIRD WAVE RELIGION: BUDDHISM’S NON-DUAL PHILOSOPHY

Corporeal feminism’s body-mind, and Process philosophy’s inter-relativity and the nomadic feminist subject push subjectivity beyond the bounds of dualism. As the drift of body and mind extends out into culture, intermingles with language and history, drifts back through social institutions, to arrive, fall and return again in nature: where in this drift is there one thing that exists without reference to all others? Where in this drift can we find woman: discrete, separate and alone?

The non-dual philosophical principles of co-dependent arising, no self, form and emptiness, as found in eastern and particularly Buddhist thought, deepen, further elaborate and extend the principles of destabilisation of form and identity in third wave feminism. Further, and of particular importance to this investigation of woman as heroine, they locate this destabilised subject as a spiritual one.
Feminist Buddhist scholar Rita Gross has noted that in western feminist scholarship ‘religion’ in the first and second waves has implicitly been understood to mean Christianity, an understanding which led to a failure of feminist religious scholarship “to engage with the diversity of religious positions” (Clack 2004, 1). Rectifying this oversight, third wave religious scholarship has been party to the burgeoning field of intercultural research, including the study of eastern philosophies such as Buddhism (see Campbell 1996; Klein 1995; Simmer-Brown 2001; Shaw 2000; Byrne 2000).

In charting pathways which look to “inter and intra-cultural exchanges” between eastern and western religious philosophies and practices, with the aim of developing our understanding of “human spiritual consciousness, beyond the boundaries of religious demarcations” (Joy in Joy et al 2003, 64-5), it is very important to note, as Morny Joy does in her examination of Irigaray, that intercultural philosophical and religious materials must be subjected “to the same type of critical analysis that [are] applied to the Christian and Western myth” (Joy in Joy et al 2003, 61).

The concerns and responses of feminist Buddhist scholarship are remarkably similar to those found in Christian feminist theology’s streams of reform, renovation, revolution and rejection (or evolution). Some feminist Buddhist scholars have mapped the dimensions of Buddhism’s patriarchal history and practice, and its systemic symbolic and actual marginalisation of women (Campbell 1996), while others have unearthed hidden gynocentric lineages and practices within the tradition (Shaw 2000), or compiled genealogical histories of key female teachers (Allione 1984). Gross’ work represents the effort to revalorise Buddhism by repairing and bringing it into line with values that are both fundamentally “its own” (and also feminist) yet are not demonstrated in its historical practice (Gross 1993, 5).

As Simmer-Brown notes, the case of Buddhism might be summarised as “a general pattern of institutional patriarchy accompanied by a contrasting doctrinal promise of the inherent spiritual capabilities of women” (Simmer-Brown 2001, 21). Feminist scholars have found the depiction of women in the Buddhist literature complex and contradictory: on one hand women were represented as being trapped in bodies of lesser worth, as seductive objects, obstacles on the path of men’s spiritual journey, and on the other hand their spiritual potential was extolled (Byrne 2000, 14; Simmer-Brown 2001, 21). While

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7 As described in Chapter Two.
8 According to the Mahayana principle of tathagatagarbha, all things possess buddha-nature or the potential for enlightenment.
the central principles and philosophy of Buddhism lent themselves to an obvious conclusion vis-à-vis the equality of women, within the institution of Buddhism this was not so.

Chavis, writing on the relationship between women and Buddhist practice, calls attention to the first Bodhisattva vow in Mahayana Buddhism: “All my twisted karma, from beginningless greed, hate and delusion, I now fully avow” (Chavis 1996, 118). She notes that avowal means ‘to acknowledge’. Thus this first vow of Buddhist practice is to fully acknowledge our “twisted karma”. In the context of the “twisted karma” of the Buddhist heritage, she continues, this means: “to acknowledge the patriarchal history of the transmission of the Dharma” (Chavis 1996, 123).

I employ Buddhist philosophy in a non-doctrinal way with clear-sighted acknowledgment of this heritage. While the religious structures of Buddhism have been encoded with the same male privilege as that found in Christianity, I believe it is possible to move towards resolving the “epistemological split between subject and object” (Joy et al 2002, 59) that has plagued the western symbolic, through orienting our understanding of subjectivity with respect to the sort of trans-ontological non-dualism that is found in Buddhist philosophy.

I support Buddhist feminist Anne Klein’s pivotal thesis that an expanded understanding of subjectivity is required to unlock the feminist impasse. She writes, “To go beyond this bifurcation requires that we recognise forms of subjectivity which are viscerally connected to the body and for which ‘knowledge’ in the sense of information is not the sole criterion” (Klein 1995, 4). She advocates expanding the feminist conception of subjectivity to include trans-conceptual knowledge, such as the mindful subjectivity, experienced through contemplation, that relates body-mind to an open unlanguaged state, a dimension of knowing which “is not primarily linguistic or conceptual, and yet ... is capable of being cultivated” (Klein 1994, 117).

Klein, like Grosz, sees the relatedness of physical and mental processes as, “not two halves of a whole, but two avenues of access” into the complex of subjectivity (Klein 1994, 120). She describes the state, or activity, of mindfulness as viscerally connecting with a subjective space that “need not entirely be localized inside the body, because to go deep enough ‘inside’ is also sometimes to touch a point that connects with a vast neither-external-nor-internal-world” (Klein 1994, 122). This contemplative mindfulness, she writes, is “a unifying dynamic” (Klein 1995, 7). Cultivating a sense of continuity with a
unified consciousness in which all beings participate to varying degrees, lends “coherence even as it reveals the endless flux of self and world” (Klein 1995, 7).

**NON-DUAL PHILOSOPHY: TRANSOntOLOGY**

Nowhere can I find what is male, nowhere can I find what is female. These are simply forms no more separate from one another than a wave from water.

*(Tara’s Vow in Galland 1998, 50)*

In eastern philosophy ‘non-duality’ refers to the understanding that the form of the manifest world is directly sustained by the formless, creative, ground of being. The radical, unqualifiable openness of the formless is confined to nothing and embraces everything. As Absolute, it completely transcends and includes all (Wilber 1995, 302). In knowing the embrace of the formless, the bounds of duality are dissolved: all things are interpenetrated and in flux, subject and object are radically open, interconnected and empty of independent being. Form and emptiness co-exist: “The Formless and the entire world of manifest Form – pure emptiness and the whole Kosmos – are seen to be not-two (or nondual)” (Wilber 1995, 308).

Non-dualism provides a way to tackle the west’s underlying ontological problems by posing non-oppositional difference. The idea of ‘not two’\(^9\) posits a dynamic interplay and balance between different manifestations of one related phenomenon, as an interconnected spectrum or continuum of difference.

In the Buddhist view the subject is impermanent, empty in that it only arises co-dependently with all the myriad other subject/objects of the world, and does not exist “independent of causes and conditions” (Klein 1995, 12). The tenet of not-self (*anatta*)\(^10\) recognises that none of the factors that constitute the self are permanent. There is no stable core self, no One to be Other than. The idea of a separate, fixed, mutually exclusive self is destroyed. Interconnectivity sees subjects and objects as interpenetrated by all things and empty of independent existence. Directly correcting the problem of the separative self (as posed by Keller 1986), non-dual philosophy breaks down the boundaries of self and other by postulating that no subject or object exists by itself as separate and independently contained. As Vater explains, the principle of *sunyata* (emptiness) directs us towards the understanding that, “things, apprehended in their appearing, one by one, are deceptive” (Vater 2004, 191).

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\(^9\) This philosophy of ‘not two’ can also be directly related back to Irigaray’s discourse on female sexuality and her proposition of a symbolic system based on woman’s two lips- the mouth and the labia of the vulva; lips that are always touching, not one, not two, not none (as discussed in Chapter Two).

\(^10\) In Mahayana Buddhism.
According to Buddhist doctrine, the true nature of being is beyond gender, it is “interdependent, unconditioned and non-gendered” (Byrne 2004, 6). Tibetan Buddhist lore illustrates this in the story of Princess Yeshe Dawa. Yeshe Dawa means Moon of Wisdom, with the full moon in Buddhism symbolising the Absolute realisation of truth (Galland 1998, 50).

In the west Yeshe Dawa is more commonly known as Tara. In this tale the princess, after much consistent and determined spiritual practice, ‘awoke’. Her enlightenment drew the attention of monks. They came to advise her that while previous good karma had allowed her to manifest in human form: “if you pray that your deeds accord with the teachings, then indeed on that account you will change your form to that of a man, as is befitting” (Templeman 1981, 1).

Tara’s reply is astute, “In this life there is no such distinction as ‘male’ and ‘female’, neither of ‘self identity’, a ‘person’ nor any perception, and therefore attachment to ideas of ‘male’ and ‘female’ is quite worthless. The weak minded are always deluded by this” (Templeman 1981). Her reply refers to the Buddhist understanding that the self is without “inherent reality ... All phenomena arise as dreams within the vast and luminous space of emptiness” (Simmer-Brown 2001, 16).

In accord with her state Yeshe Dawa vowed to defer her own release from the karmic round by taking the form of a female bodhisattva: “There are many who wish to gain enlightenment in a man’s form, and there are but few who wish to work for the welfare of all living beings in a female form. Therefore may I, in a female body, work for the welfare of beings right until Samsara has been emptied” (Galland 1998, 50).

Tara’s story is a wonderful example of holding both relative and Absolute positions on woman. Acknowledged as without separate solidity of being on an Absolute level, and yet recognised as an historically less honoured human incarnation on the relative, woman is accordingly championed.

Through non-dualism, woman is recognised as constantly becoming body-mind, a specific form arising moment to moment within a matrix of interbeing, interwoven with other sexes, genders, the symbolics of culture, history, earth, social systems and so on.
DEFINITION: THE NAME OF WOMAN

Try to go back through the names they’ve given you.
I’ll wait for you, I’m waiting for myself.
Come back.

(Irigaray 1985, 205-6)

All things by their nature exceed the category of their linguistic representation. Like a koan\(^1\), the slips and gap of symbolic definition move us, not just into a field of meaning, but beyond conceptual meaning into a space where separate identity breaks down.

In the feminist struggle to define woman, the notion of definition itself is problematic. The classic Aristotelian understanding of definition entails metaphysical, not purely linguistic, commitments and is thus fundamentally linked to notions of essence. Understood as a discursive linguistic practice that relates linguistic subject to socio-cultural context, the necessity for definition to capture the essential or universal nature of the object/subject is removed (Barker 1997, 9). Thus the definition of Woman, after Barker,

need not hold that the commonalities exceed the differences among women, nor again that their difference from others exceed their commonalities with others. In short, we will not be bound to assume that the term captures its reality exhaustively and exclusively... Simply by defining “women,” we do not thereby commit ourselves to the existence of formal or timeless characteristics of ... her self-identity ... [and] we are not committed to the essential or universal nature of the commonalities it implies. (Barker 1997, 13-4)

Accepting that “‘women’ is indeed an unstable category”, and that at the same time “to be named as a woman” is “the precondition for some kinds of solidarity” (Riley in Elam 1997, 4), the task for feminist theory is to establish a socio-political definition for womankind in which she is understood, after Process philosophy, as a particular iteration of form plotted within an interconnected matrix of arising. Utilising Buddhist terminology that separates the categories of relative (or conventional) and Absolute (or ultimate) truths, Byrne proposes that Buddhist ideas of selfhood could be used to allow us to “see women as a category” which also “disrupt[s] the idea of continuous and fixed subjects” (Byrne 2004, 7). She asserts that this separation “can assist feminists to speak of ‘woman’ as a category within representative politics, without acquiescing to an idea that the category ‘woman’ is fixed ...[as] the category ‘woman’ is being used in a conventional and relative sense”

\(^1\) Goodchild writes that the Buddhist koan is a form of teaching that manifests an “unsayable figure of speech” as a paradox or “insoluble problems” (Goodchild 1993, 16). This form is used to “reflexively delimit the domain of the operation of language, and it is a realisation of this limitation which allows the break-through to an alternative mode of experience to occur” (Goodchild 1993, 3).
In this manner the political identity Woman would be a “conscious and wilful position” as opposed to an essential or philosophical one (Braidotti 1994, 9).

**INTEGRAL THEORY: NEW TOOLS**

... the central question in feminist theory has become: how to reassemble a vision of female subjectivity after the certainties of gender dualism have collapsed? ... how do we reconcile the radical historical specificity of women with the insistence of constructing the new figuration of humanity? (Braidotti 1994, 99)

To this point I have taken the heroine as motif for the questions “Who am I? What is Woman?” and addressed these questions through the journey of feminist theory. At this juncture, as Braidotti notes, new tools are required in order to address the problematics of identity that have emerged with third wave feminism, while also attending to the task of mapping and defining woman as subject.

Ken Wilber’s Integral theory (Wilber 1995) proffers sophisticated philosophical and structural tools that I believe may be adequate to this complex task. Integral theory is both a philosophy and a methodology: on the one hand it provides structural tools for mapping complex subjects and on the other it frames this conceptual knowledge in the greater context of non-dual spiritual philosophy.

Integral theory incorporates the same principals of contingency, interconnectivity and corporeality that are found in the work of Braidotti, Grosz, Klein and Keller (theorists whose scholarship is of deep import to this thesis). It offers a way of framing a linguistically discursive definition of woman, plotted on multiple axes (as proposed by Braidotti), while also situating her among the deeper complexities of “interrelational context from which our identities emerge” (Daniell 2002, 152).

Methodologically Integral theory asserts that in order to furnish a holistic vision of the subject, it is necessary to begin with four perspectives, which Wilber terms: interior individual, exterior individual, interior collective and exterior collective (Wilber 1995 121-6). Greater depth is then added by plotting lines, levels, types, and points of transition. Together these axes produce a multi-perspectival, three dimensional map of subjectivity.
Integral theory specifically recognises the “inherent, mutually arising, inextricably bound influences” of biology, psychology, spirituality, culture and the systemic, physical world (Pearson 2004). Instead of collapsing under the weight of relativism\(^{18}\) it elaborates on standpoint theory’s postulate “that each subject is specific, located in a particular time and place. Thus ... knowing is not relative ... it is partial” (Sprague and Kobrynowicz in Chafetz 2006, 27). The specific partiality of individual discourses is addressed by plotting the ‘orienting generalisation’ of each perspective on the Integral map (Wilber 1998, 190). In this sense Integral theory is a meta-theory or grand unifying theory (as opposed to a grand unified theory) (Saiter 2005, 2).

This methodology provides a way of locating, mapping, and thus more comprehensively analysing the complex intersections between perspectives (as posed by the Integral map). It extends upon standpoint theory’s partiality by seeking to coherently integrate these located, partial, truths into “a realistic, workable, fluid, and dynamic ‘meta-vision’” (Saiter 2005, 2). Fundamental to Integral theory is the recognition of the importance of a skilful assemblage of multiple perspectives under the precepts of “nonexclusion (acceptance of truth claims that pass the validity tests ... in their respective fields); enfoldment (some sets of practices are more inclusive, holistic, comprehensive than others); and enactment (various types of inquiry will disclose different phenomena...)” (Esbjorn-Hargens & Wilber 2006, 529). In this sense Integral theory asserts that incorporating and analysing

\(^{18}\) Wilber asserts that postmodern relativism executes a “performative contradiction”, in that the claim that all truth is embedded and contextual and that there thus can be “no universal truth” is itself a meta-truth that stakes the very universal position that it decries (Wilber in Jewell-Rich 2001, 46).
multiple perspectives (or theories), under these injunctions, will yield a more holistic, informed, and encompassing, understanding of the subject.

This mapping is underpinned by a spiritually engaged, post-metaphysical non-dualism that is explicitly and emphatically inclusive of trans-cognitive ways of knowing. Wilber’s philosophy employs Process and non-dual body-mind principles to explore the question of identity. This also means that while Integral methodology is a structuralist one it embraces, even insists upon, the ultimate dissolution of its constructed boundaries.

In Integral philosophy all knowledge claims are inherently contingent and subject to revision as they meet the emerging force of new knowledge forms. Acknowledging that our understanding of subjectivity cannot but deepen and evolve within the changing context of history, the Integral approach acknowledges the contextual nature of its position. Without the expectation of arriving at an ultimate or absolute conclusion it moves towards furnishing increasingly more adequate answers by continuing to gather new evidence and continually rethinking its conclusions in the light of new material brought to bear on the subject.

**TOWARDS AN INTEGRAL FEMINISM**

Although when seen individually the different feminist perspectives can appear at odds, even contradictory, by utilising the structural coherence proffered by Integral theory each of feminism’s divergent yet sophisticated insights can be affirmed as valid yet partial perspectives\(^\text{13}\) (Wilber 1998, 591). Thus contextualised, varying feminist perspectives can be utilised in a fluid manner to allow the sort of “idiosyncratic and hybrid”, “feminist ‘dirty-minded’ thinking” that Braidotti\(^\text{14}\) champions (Braidotti in Butler 1994, 19).

“Without falling into either a new essentialism or a new relativism” the Integral framework can pragmatically address the constructivist impasse by facilitating a contextually discursive definition of Woman (Braidotti in Butler 1994, 8). As Wilber notes the postmodern realisation that “all perspectives interrelate, or that no perspective is final (aperspectivism), does not mean that there are no relative merits among them” (Wilber 1995, 188). For the purposes of feminist praxis Woman can be intentionally

\(^{13}\) “Integral feminism” is proposed by Wilber in *Eye of Spirit* (1998). He writes “this approach ... gives us a chance to bring together a dozen different schools of feminism, which, ironically, have heretofore resisted being linked, integrated and connected”(Wilber 1998, 591).

\(^{14}\) Braidotti is not an Integral theorist, but I find both that many of her theoretical positions are in concordance with those advocated by Integral theory, and that Integral theory offers methodological tools that directly address her theoretical proposals.
constructed as a socio-political position and the key telos of first and second wave feminism affirmed.

Plotting Woman on the Integral quadrant map allows for the acknowledgement and ongoing analysis of her conventional construction (as particularly demonstrated in second wave feminist theory): culturally as a gender, through biology as female, psychologically as ‘feminine’ and socially located in relation to constructed systemic relationships. This can be then further accented by the addition of the coordinates of “race and class and other historical, socio-economic, and political realities” (Klein 1995, 10).

As noted, Integral theory is spiritually grounded and acknowledges trans-conceptual ways of knowing. This facilitates the deeper exploration of the core question of self. A feminist approach via Integral theory would thus affirm our subjective relations to the unquantifiable open formlessness from which the sexed, gendered, and bounded self arises and into which it dissolves. Consciously holding both relative (political, discursive) and Absolute (trans-ontological) positions on subjectivity, the Integral theoretical position is psychologically and spiritually dynamic to demonstrate what Braidotti refers to as the “different layers, registers, and levels of the self” (Braidotti 1995, 9). Further, due to its post-traditional context Integral theory can be used as a framework to utilise non-dual philosophies such as those emerging from feminist theologies of Buddhism, yet without in any way being bound to the singular religious framework or patriarchal lineages that constitute Buddhism.

While operating with an overarching structural unity, in accord with the symbolic order’s need for “definite positions and propositions ... unified texts, discourses, knowledges and practices” (Gross in Gross & Pateman 1986, 128), Integral theory’s non-dual position also insists upon the instability and emptiness of the symbolic. The non-dual framework explicitly reframes and continually refocuses the symbolic lens, such that it must embrace that which is outside of, exceeds, yet underpins, its own existence. This continually undermines the symbolic “pretension to the production of truth and of a meaning that [is] exclusively univocal” (Irigaray in Jantzen 1998, 11). The dualist machinery of the symbolic is jammed through this conscious uniting of symbolic and the semiotic.15

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15 Purkiss points out that in this crucial aspect of Irigaray’s and Kristeva’s psychoanalytic theory is “that the return of what has been repressed or silenced has the power to undo the stable constructions of identity and culture built on its repression ... The return of the feminine has the power to shake male culture by undoing its central logic” (Purkiss 1992, 448).
WOMAN – THROUGH THE QUADRANTS

We would change them, we could replace them with synonyms, which would become as closed, as immobile and petrifying, as the words ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine,’ and they would lay down the law for us. And so? There is nothing to be done, except to shake them all the time, like apple trees.

(Cixous in Jensen 1991, 150)

Turning now to the specifics of the quadrants I will briefly address the manner in which Integral theory might be used to define Woman. The upper right quadrant is the zone of objectivity where scientific perspectives and biological definitions observe physicality and materiality as ‘It’. Here woman is defined as biologically female through the physiological standards of: chromosomes, hormone levels, anatomical structure and internal sexual anatomy. For women, female-specific biological action includes menstruation, pregnancy and lactation (Wilber 1998, 59-2).

The upper left quadrant is the sphere of ‘I’: interiority, psychology, the conceptual and the trans-conceptual. Here consciousness, experienced in the forms of memory, emotions and thought, conceives itself phenomenologically as gendered self-identity. The specifics of women’s interior developmental pathways, for example, through moral development (Gilligan 1988) and epistemological orientation (Belenky et al 1986) are observed in this quadrant.

The lower left quadrant holds the ‘We’ perspective of the cultural sphere. It is in this cultural realm that the definition of gender roles resides and it is here that, through socialisation, sex is reworked into gender. This quadrant houses the symbolic orders of values, language, philosophy, history and worldviews that have been a predominant site of Second wave analysis.

In the collective-exterior perspective of the lower right quadrant (‘Its’) Woman is structurally defined, and her definition solidified in relationship to social institutions and infrastructure, such as government, law, access to education and politics. As this quadrant is concerned with the material, techno-economic base of society, analysis in this area focuses on the divisions of public versus private, or productive versus reproductive (as found for example in first wave and the materialist Marxist-feminist analyses).

The definition of Woman viewed from any single quadrant is limited. This is

16 And as Butler notes, vice versa.
demonstrated through challenges to the stability of the borders of definition, as particularly discussed in postmodern feminist work such as Butler's illustration of the instability of the attribution of sexual 'normality'. The constructed, historically charged and changing nature of biological attribution is forged and dependent upon its interaction with the lower quadrants. Each quadrant holds partial truths about the constitution of Woman. Each of these partial truths are acted upon, and interwoven with, the partial truths of the other quadrants.

Thus, while an Integrally informed definition maps the way in which woman is characterised through cultural gender role, biological norms, ‘feminine’ psychology, and systemic social relations, it acknowledges its instability (and the instability of all identity claims). Without a core or monolithic identity Woman is defined as occurring when the contexts of culture, language, biology and psychology unite and emerge in a specific (reiterated) form, contextualised within a broader web of social relations.

The Integral feminist approach frames the definition of Woman within a broader context of theory that acknowledges the flux and slide of slippage through which woman (man, and all things) are constituted through inter-being and co-dependent arising. Akin to Tara who in the ultimate sense sees the emptiness of sex and gender, yet immanently chooses to incarnate as a woman, so too the Integral definition of Woman incorporates both the discursive relative truth of gendered being and the Absolute truth of her emptiness (undefinable, unfixed, unseparated, beyond language). This understanding, I believe, brings us towards the articulation of the female subject in all her “de-essentialized, complex, and multi-layered” fullness (Braidotti 1994, 9).

A relative discursive definition would thus not seek to fully capture the subjectivity of woman, only to map her identity as necessary for categorisation in representational politics. The identity position ‘Woman’ would not be static or essentialist in that it imagined itself as speaking to the specificity or entirety of experience of women at all times and places. It would be marked by its specific historicality and located context. Neither would ‘woman’ be imagined as her sole marker of identity, as Irigaray declaims: “one female + one female + one female” will not add up to a definition of woman; any definition of Woman would be exceeded in the individual and unique presence of each and every woman (Irigaray 1987, 112).

17 Following the philosophies of Process, Corporeality and non-dualism.
Further texture would be added to the Integral model of Woman through the addition of specific lines exploring sexuality, race, class, age, dis/ability and historio-cultural context. Dimension would be added through examining the gender specifics of stages of development (psychological, epistemological, values, moral, etc).

Table 2: Woman through the lens of Integral Theory

This process provides a conventional plot of the position of Woman, while also demonstrating the contingent nature of these definitions and the manner in which analysis, of necessity, changes the form of definition. This allows the formation of a socio-political discursive definition of Woman that affirms the continuing work of transformative feminist praxis. With trans-national orientation an Integrally informed feminism would insist that the capacities of women (physical, psychological, cultural and social) are recognised and their right to develop them to the fullness of their potential is guaranteed. This includes the right to be considered as a full subject, symbolically, ontologically and practically (in the public sphere); to be educated, to choose whether and when to marry, to have sexual relations, to become mothers, and so on.

This application of the Integral framework to feminist theory is in many ways a proposal for an ongoing collaborative investigation. It acknowledges the deeply important work of the feminist thinkers that I have covered and it seeks to plot this work, in order to illuminate both its partiality and its interconnections and expand upon these vital foundations. An Integral feminism draws on and includes many voices and perspectives, in order to compile ever more sophisticated, holistic and comprehensive answers to the

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18 Each of these is a complex area of scholarship that I do not attend to in this thesis.
19 Discussed in Chapter Seven.
question of Woman, yet never holding fast to the codification.

Acknowledging that language fails us, nonetheless we can move towards Woman, circling her, holding her lightly with skilful means as she continues to slip from reach into a realm beyond definition. Woman and Not Woman — interconnectively melting into the fruitful dark of emptiness, constantly co-arising under new conditions — are not one, and yet, not two.

**EVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS**

The women’s liberation movement had an effect ... far beyond those relatively few heroic women who were directly involved. Why? Because they were working to change consciousness itself. Women, compelled to change themselves and the world, decided to evolve consciously for the sake of freedom and equality. And something was liberated that transformed almost every aspect of social life.

(Debold 2005b, 35)

Having in this chapter introduced and demonstrated the significant possibilities that Wilber’s Integral theory presents when placed in dialogue with feminist theory, I will now bring feminist theory to bear upon the evolutionary spiritual philosophy of Wilber’s work. In utilising Integral theory, it is not my intention (to paraphrase Jantzen) to pretend that there are no problems with Wilber’s theory. Indeed there are points at which I distinctly part company with him. Yet, as Jantzen concludes in discussing her use of Irigaray’s scholarship, “these difficulties can be viewed as opportunities” (Jantzen 1998, 18). It is my intention in the following chapters, utilising the philosophy and methodology of Integral feminism, to follow woman’s journey through the broad waves of human development, as Wilber presents them, to her arrival in feminist consciousness. Along the way I examine how Wilber positions woman, and I make feminist incursions into this history where necessary.

Integral theory marks the unfurling of feminist consciousness as a key development in the trajectory of human-spiritual evolution. This is a view that some feminist theorists have also shared, as exemplified in the quote from Elizabeth Debold. Christ also writes that woman’s journey is “about a revolution in consciousness, a paradigm shift” (Christ 1997, 88), and Daly is insistent that “we are called upon to be attentive to what the new experience of the becoming of women is revealing to us and to foster the evolution of consciousness” (Daly in Christ & Plaskow 1979, 56).

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20 Wilber describes his work as “an analysis of the types of gender roles available to men and women at each of the five or six major stages of techno-economic development in the formation of the human species” (Wilber 1998, 594).
As Campbell elucidates it, the act of leaving behind the roles and rules of the village is an essential aspect of the hero’s journey. The heroine, as feminist subject, has awoken to her relationship with the conventional, patriarchal socio-cultural system. Moving past these obstacles on her path, she has entered the domain of the forest to explore identity and being on her own terms. She acts as a pathway for others, charting unknown territory and sending the flow of new knowledge back into the world; with her gift giving hands affecting the evolution of consciousness itself. In fully exploring the depths and limits of her self, she has pushed the edge of being, further unfurling the increasingly “wakeful presence” of consciousness in the world (Feuerstein 1997, 3).
The Road of Trials:

Evolutionary pathways

One Being and Consciousness is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the process by which it liberates itself; consciousness appears in what seems to be inconscient, and once having appeared is self-impelled to grow higher and higher and at the same time to enlarge and develop toward a greater and greater perfection. Life is the first step of this release of consciousness; mind is the second. But the evolution does not finish with mind; it awaits release into something greater, a consciousness which is spiritual and supramental.

(Aurobindo 1993, 3)

Following the proposition that the emergence of (post-conventional) feminist consciousness represents an evolutionary development, the next three chapters follow and investigate the unfolding stages of consciousness as posed in the evolutionary philosophy of Ken Wilber. As Wilber’s theory utilises perspectives from multiple disciplines to construct his evolutionary philosophy, I utilise an Integral feminist methodology in joining feminist evidence from transdisciplinary sources in conversation with his developmental history.

For evolutionary spiritual philosophers such as Wilber, Gebser and Aurobindo the developments of human history form part of a greater course: an ongoing realisation of the divine in the world. In contrast to philosophical apocalypts¹ who chart a steady decline from some long-past Golden Age, these theorists suggest that the great movements of modernity, feminism among them, demonstrably show an increasing and ongoing unfolding of the form of Spirit in the world (Wilber 1998, 76). Through the human manifestation of increasing levels of individual and collective “self-actualization”, the consciousness of the divine is progressively unveiled in the world (Wilber 1995, 487)².

¹ As discussed in Chapter One.
² Wilber asserts that this evolutionary spiritual philosophy is only able to be fully conceived through Integral ‘vision-logic’, a mode that includes rational and transrational ways of knowing. Vision-
THE LIMITS OF EVOLUTIONARY THEORY

Twentieth-century anthropology notoriously discredited the “ethnocentrism, teleology, methods, data, and conclusions” of early theories of evolutionary history (Huber 2006, 67; see also Ruether 1992, 146). Postcolonial theories particularly deconstructed nineteenth-century meta-narrative approaches, such as those of Hegel and Schelling, that posed western patriarchal Christian culture as the triumphant endpoint of human development (see Matsumoto & Juang 2004, 171-2).

Wilber, while drawing heavily on an assembled cultural history that is predominantly western, has been careful to note that his theory balances “universal deep structures” with “culturally variant surface structures” (Wilber 1995, 342). With respect to his evolutionary meta-narrative he specifically asserts that while there are deep structures that “show cross-cultural and largely invariant features at a deep level of abstraction”, “the surface structures ...are quite different from culture to culture” (Wilber 1995, 276). Thus accepting the rightful claims that each culture holds to being read as unique, Wilber’s evolutionary philosophy plots the dimensions of a global trajectory of historical development that extends from our earliest hominid ancestors. Significantly the meta-narrative and structuralist aspects of Wilber’s evolutionary vision are underpinned (and destabilised) by the tenets of Integral theory that include non-dual philosophy.

Wilber’s developmental theory of consciousness has been dismissed by critics who read it as a value hierarchy in which tribal peoples are considered to be ‘lesser than’ modern peoples (see Wright 1998, Di Zerega 1996). Wilber goes to great lengths in his work to abstain from the use of value hierarchies when applying developmental concepts, and makes it repeatedly apparent that his developmental narrative refers to greater spheres of complexity in the span of circumstances to which a stage is responding. Wilber also differentiates between states such as mystical or phenomenological experiences Logic integrates many perspectives and modes of knowing. Thus a broad philosophical vision that incorporates the sciences and the humanities, religious studies and systems thinking, rationality and phenomenology, and so on becomes possible. This development is in turn demonstrative of the evolution of consciousness.

3 Gidley notes that male gender bias and eurocentrism are at times apparent in Wilber’s work (Gidley 2007, 39). While following Wilber’s stages of development (and in closely following the theoretical trajectories of American/European feminism), my own assertions and conclusions are framed and limited by a specifically western evidence base. Operating within these limits is neither without merit nor without problems. In this working within these limits I follow Ruether, who argues in the introduction to her treatise Gaia and God (1992) that in drawing a line of discussion that follows the western tradition she is “accountable” to her tradition and culture; one that has in many ways acted to shape “and continues to shape (particularly in its secularised, scientific form) the rest of the world”, in both positive and negative ways (Ruether 1992, 10).

4 As addressed in Chapter Three.
(available at all stages) and *stages* (which are more structural in nature). Early tribal cultures are seen as equally valuable to later cultures, while at the same time Wilber proposes that they demonstrate less complexity in terms of social organisation (due, for example, to lower population size and/or smaller span of social input and reference, than nation state and global network forms of social organisation) and cognitive structures (as opposed to their wealth of state experiences).

While Wilber's theory of evolutionary stages can be read as universalist, the logic of my framing follows Nussbaum who, while noting that “feminist philosophy has frequently been sceptical of universal normative approaches”, goes on to argue that “a particular type of universalism, framed in terms of general human powers and their development” may, in some contexts, offer “the best framework” for discussion (Nussbaum 2000, 7). In the context of this exploration of feminist consciousness, I believe Wilber's framework to be the most appropriate.

**WILBER'S EVOLUTIONARY THEORY**

Wilber maps the process of evolution through three interlocking spheres: matter (physiosphere), life (biosphere), and mind (noosphere). Utilising and expanding upon systems theory, he proposes that the evolution of these three domains is united by common “general laws or dynamic patterns” (Wilber 1995, 8). *En masse*, the material world is observed as an open self-organising system that emerges with ever increasing complexity through a process of “differentiation/integration, increasing structural organization and increasing complexity” (Wilber 1995, 13). This is demonstrated by the developmental trajectory of single celled organisms emerging from matter, then animals, hominids and humans. Through the principles of this process, matter prepared “the conditions for the emergence of the biosphere from which, the noosphere - the culmination of evolution thus far – was then able to emerge” (Wilber 1995, 488). While both matter and body are constitutive and expressive of the divine, with the emergence of mind a new stage of consciousness was born: “where Nature was objective Spirit, Mind is

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5 This is a simplified summary of Wilber's extensive argument on this topic in *Sex, Ecology Spirituality* (1995). Etymologically evolution has both biological - “a process by which species develop from earlier forms”) and more general meanings - “the presentation of events in due succession” (Moore 2002, 451). While I engage with Wilber's thesis primarily on a philosophical rather than a scientific level, it is a thesis that refers to various disciplines, including biology for its development. Wilber's theory of evolution is, for example, founded in twenty tenets that are derived from “dynamic systems theory” and “the basic conclusions of modern evolutionary sciences” which he suggests are operative “in all three domains of evolution – the physiosphere, the biosphere, and the noosphere” (Wilber 1995, 32). The accuracy of Wilber's reading of contemporary evolutionary science has been repeatedly critiqued (see Lane 1996; Visser 2007).

6 Wilber draws particularly on the systems theory of Ervin Lazlo (Wilber 1995, 7).

7 Wilber uses the term ‘noosphere’ to refer to consciousness.
subjective Spirit” (Schelling in Wilber 1995, 488).

Extending theories of the ‘web of life’ or the Great Chain, Wilber proposes that, central to the perennial philosophy found in the “esoteric or inner core of the wisdom religions” is the understanding that being is composed of separate but contiguous levels of consciousness (Wilber 1998, 52); ranging “from the lowest and most dense and least conscious to the highest and most subtle and most conscious” (Wilber 1998, 49). At one end of the chain we find “‘matter’ or the sentient and the non conscious, and at the other end … ‘spirit’ or ‘Godhead’ or the ‘superconscious’” (Wilber 1998, 49).

Spirit, in Wilber’s philosophy, is “both Source and Summit” (Wilber 1995, 486). Immanent and transcendent, it is both the highest goal on the ladder of evolution, and also the ground and substance from “which the entire ladder and all of its rungs are made” (Wilber 1998, 51-2). A “self-organizing and self-transcending” drive impels the oneness of Spirit to manifest itself through “successive unfoldings” in and as, the many (Wilber 1995, 486).

Humankind, both as individual and species, figures as the hero of the evolutionary narrative. The journey being the movement towards the horizon of divine realisation; through the manifestation of increasing levels of self-reflexive consciousness, self-transparency and immanent-transcendence.

**HOLONIC THEORY**

Foundational to Wilber’s theory of evolution is the concept of holons. Through holonic theory he demonstrates the systemic development of increasingly complex holarchies of being (Wilber 1995, 6, 480).

A holon is defined as a unit of being that is whole unto itself and exists independently at one stage, and it is “part of a larger whole at the next stage” (Wilber 1995, 17). This larger whole (or emergent holon) is constituted of a number of smaller holistic components and possesses “properties and qualities that cannot be strictly and totally deduced” from its

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8 Thealogy is not included in the grouping of “fully developed World Traditions (such as Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, even aspects of Taoism)” (Wilber in Walsh and Vaughan 1993, 263) from which Wilber derives perennial philosophy. It would certainly be a poor fit with this group given that thealogy is a critique of the Judeo-Christian system and has a deep philosophical opposition to hierarchy. Yet it should be noted that Wilber’s theory is in agreement with thealogy’s assertion that wisdom traditions have emphasised transcendence to the detriment and disavowal of their connection to women, body and earth; and he asserts the necessity for the reaffirmation, inclusion and acknowledgement of this disavowed immanence.

parts, and in itself cannot be “reduced without remainder to the parts which constitute it” (Wilber 1995, 46). When holons are combined such that “a principle not found in isolated parts alone” emerges, a higher stage holon has emerged (Wilber 1995, 18). The emergent holon “transcends but includes its predecessor(s) ... in a movement to increasingly complex organisational entities” (Wilber 1995, 49). In holonic theory an order of increasingly complex holons or holarchy, unfolds sequentially. Holarchy (or hierarchy\textsuperscript{10}) as Wilber presents it is “simply an order of increasing holons, representing an increase in wholeness and integrative capacity” (Wilber 1998, 50).

In terms of the evolutionary trajectory of holonic theory, each successive level of emergence is considered to produce greater depth – more levels of incorporated holons, greater complexity and a higher degree of consciousness (Wilber 1995, 56 & 63). The more fundamental a holon, the lower it sits on the holarchic ladder. It will have little depth, but great span (that is, it is incorporated within the being of many emergent holons). Matter for example, as the root of all physical life, is considered a foundational holon. As a root holon it sets the foundations, guarantees the existence, and allows for the emergent possibilities of all higher, more complex, holons (Wilber 1995, 100). It is absolutely significant, and yet in the hierarchy of being sits at the very bottom rung.

Wilber is careful to point out that ‘further evolved’, while denoting more complex, does not connote ‘better’. Matter’s position on the lowest rung of the holarchical ladder is not, for example, a statement of lesser value. As with Maslow’s hierarchical order of needs, the bottom rungs are indispensable. In would make no sense to suggest that a human was of more worth than an element fundamental to its very being. Yet according to this schema, humans – as more complex, emergent holons - are higher on the holarchical scale of evolution as a result of having more incorporated holons; including and transcending incorporated limits of the lower level holons.

\textsuperscript{10} Wilber makes a sound argument for the interchangeability of the terms holarchy and hierarchy, in the sense of both referring to a sequence of holons. I use the two terms interchangeably with the understanding that ‘hierarchy’ is used in this context under the terms of Wilber’s definition.
Each emergent stage of development is both more complex and more differentiated. Each stage will also eventually encounter boundaries or limitations, which will trigger the necessary impetus for new creative development. According to Wilber, healthy emergence negates the limits but includes the functions of its predecessors. Each emergent holon builds upon earlier stages, in a process where “nothing is lost, all principles are preserved” (Wilber 1995, 487 & 491). Thus with each ascent comes “a new synthesis” that “brings a new and higher union or integration” (Wilber 1995, 487 & 481).

Wilber asserts that the principles of holonic theory can be observed across the full range of human development: biological, social, cultural and psychological. Just as “each person starts development as biospheric ... and must differentiate, to the noosphere” (Wilber 1995, 163) so too can such differential development be observed on a broader human scale. He asserts equivalence in development between individual and species. Just as the individual human can be observed in gradual change from an initial indissociate state of infancy, through increasing levels of self/other consciousness, Wilber asserts that movement through these “same basic structures of consciousness” can be observed in the process of human evolution (Wilber 1995, 149).

**DEVELOPMENTAL ERAS OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

Wilber frames his understanding of human evolution through a set of tenets that “explain both advance and regression”; “The ups and downs of an evolutionary thrust” that he asserts, continues to be “as active in humans as it is in the rest of the Kosmos” (Wilber 1996, xi). As with holonic theory, the precepts of human development state that growth is hierarchical. The basic structures of each lower stage are “taken up and preserved” in the

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12 Other possibilities such as developmental regression, or pathological hierarchies are discussed in Chapters Five and Six respectively.
newly emergent level, while the limits of perspective at the lower stage are “negated and replaced” (Wilber 1995, 245). Each new level presents “a new and higher sense of self existing in a new and wider world of others, with new drives, new cognitions, new moral stances, and so forth” (Wilber 1995, 278). The process of transformation from level to level is driven by the need to deal with the limits and challenges of the current stage. Creative new responses of “a higher level of complexity and consciousness create fresh ‘cognitive potential’” (Wilber 2005, 110-111) which, given sufficient critical mass, will take the form of a new mode of being in the world (Wilber 1995, 197).

**FROM ORIGIN TO INTEGRAL: THE WORK OF GEBSER**

Wilber’s work draws extensively on twentieth century German philosopher Jean Gebser. Gebser understands the evolutionary process as one of latency and transparency: latency being “the demonstrable presence of the future” and transparency, the conscious manifestation of the divine (Mahood 1996, 1-2). According to his philosophy, all things arise from an atemporal, aspatial and ever-present source, which he termed Origin.

Origin and consciousness are unveiled to and through one another. Human consciousness having arisen from Origin has passed through successive, mutative phases over the course of history, demonstrating increasing transparency and decreasing latency. Thus, Gebser asserts that with the development of “transrational modes of consciousness” humankind is brought closer to Origin. These higher modes, in which self becomes increasingly transparent to the divine, represent the self-actualisation of Origin (Feuerstein 1987, 37).

Gebser outlines five stages of human development - Archaic, Magical, Mythical, Mental, and Integral - which each represent “fundamentally different ways of experiencing reality” (Mahood 1996, 1). While suggesting that these eras might “be arranged chronologically”, to represent developmental stages of human history, he voiced a steady reluctance to concretely locate them in time and emphasised that all the stages remained “co-present in the human psyche” and as such were “constitutive of the total consciousness of modern humanity” (Feuerstein 1987, 6). While “distinctly delineated from one another” these eras were also considered to be deeply interconnected and co-present such that “all previous stages” were “found in subsequent ones” (Mahood 1996, 1). It was his fervent belief that the developmental process was an evolutionary one activated by a “spiritual or originary presence” that “exerts, by its very presence, a continuous ‘pressure’ on space-time” (Feuerstein 1987, 8-9); a pressure that insists on the creative unfolding of consciousness.
Feuerstein writes that, for Gebser, “the mutative unfolding of consciousness appears to represent both ‘progress’ insofar as there is an accrual of new capacities or modes of responsiveness and ‘progression away’ from the simplicity of Origin, the whole” (Feuerstein 1987, 3). Beginning in a state of complete indissociation, each stage represents a progressive development of awareness as humankind moves towards the culmination of reintegrated conscious connection with Origin.

The first era, the Archaic, was described as “the least complex or the least dimensionated”. Considered to “historically precede[] and psychically underlie[] all others”, Gebser equated the Archaic era, with a state of deep sleep (Feuerstein 1987, 6). For Gebser, the humans of this first stage were absolutely and unconsciously immersed in the natural world, and largely devoid of perspectivity (Mahood 1996, 2-3). The emergence of a ‘rudimentary’ sense of self marked the arrival of the Magical. Yet the Magical self was still so deeply enmeshed in its surrounding ecology that it was also marked by a minimal sense of individuation (Mahood 1996, 3). It was only in the third Mythical phase that, according to Gebser’s theory, the nascent beginnings of cultural and social life might be found. The next transition, the Mental stage, brings us closer to the modern era. Characterised as rational and analytic, in this stage abstraction and philosophising come to the fore with “the full development of the ego ... [and] individual separation from nature” (Mahood 1996, 6).

Gebser was insistent that his theory did not endorse “any implications of progress toward the mental-rational as the neutral culmination of the history of consciousness” (Feuerstein 1987, 8). According to Gebser, humanity now found itself moving beyond the Mental, “on the threshold of a new structure of consciousness”: the Integral (Mahood 1996, 7-8). Actualising this Integral consciousness was the task now confronting humankind (Feuerstein 1987, 37). Once established, this structure of consciousness would enable humankind “to overcome the dualism of the mental structure and actually participate in the transparency of self and life” (Mahood 1996, 7-8). It is this structure that Wilber takes as the centrepiece of his scholarship.

**WILBER’S INTEGRAL THEORY OF DEVELOPMENT**

Drawing on, and deeply influenced by a diverse, interdisciplinary, range of theorists - across both eastern and western traditions - Wilber’s Integral model maps the progressive maturity of human consciousness across quadrants, levels and lines of
development.\textsuperscript{13} The four quadrants delineate between the exterior – individual biological perspective (atoms, molecules, cells, organisms), the techno-economic zone of the exterior-social (family groups, tribes, villages, nation state, world), the interior-individual psyche (prehension, sensation, impulse, image, symbol, concept) and interior-social culture (worldviews)(Wilber 1995, 120). Wilber then draws multiple roughly parallel and corresponding lines of development in: cultural worldviews\textsuperscript{14}, values\textsuperscript{15}, cognition\textsuperscript{16}, morality\textsuperscript{17} and self identity.\textsuperscript{18}

Elaborating on Gebser’s stages of consciousness with the critical social theory of philosopher Jurgen Habermas, and with particular reference to Piaget, Wilber charts the emergence of homo sapiens and ‘human nature’ from its beginnings in prehistoric times. He proposes that the stages of evolutionary development are demonstrated through historical expressions of “space-time, law, morality, cognitive style, self identity and modes of technology” (Wilber 1995, 119).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HISTORICAL AGES:</th>
<th>WILBER/GEBSER’S STAGES OF CONSCIOUSNESS:</th>
<th>PIAGET’S LEVELS OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT\textsuperscript{19}:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre- Palaeolithic</td>
<td>Archaic</td>
<td>Sensorimotor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palaeolithic</td>
<td>Magical</td>
<td>Pre-operational</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neolithic – Iron Age</td>
<td>Mythic</td>
<td>Concrete operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern - Postmodern</td>
<td>Mental – Rational</td>
<td>Formal Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-postmodern</td>
<td>Integral</td>
<td>[Post formal operations]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 3: Wilber’s evolutionary stages of consciousness

\textsuperscript{13} Developmental theory is addressed in Chapter Seven.

\textsuperscript{14} For worldviews Wilber draws on the work of Gebser and Habermas.

\textsuperscript{15} For values Wilber draws on the work of Grave, Beck and Cowan.

\textsuperscript{16} For cognition Wilber draws on the work of Piaget and Aurobindo.

\textsuperscript{17} For moral development Wilber draws on the work of Kohlberg, Gilligan and Keagan.

\textsuperscript{18} For self-identity Wilber draws on the work of Loevinger and Cook-Greuter. I return to address moral development and self-identity in Chapter Six.

\textsuperscript{19} Dawson & Medler, 2004.
Accepting the concept of this evolutionary narrative arc, which has unfolded from “insentient matter to living bodies to conceptual mind” (Wilber 1998, 113), it is my intention to finely examine the contours of this history, as Wilber tells it, with a specific eye to how woman does, and might, figure within this map of evolutionary development.

THE ARCHAIC STAGE
For Wilber the first stage is termed Archaic. It roughly covers the period from the first appearance of the australopithecines (ancestor of the *homo* genus), “up to and including the first hominids” (Wilber 1995, 119). Wilber asserts that the consciousness of this period is represented by the sensorimotor stage in which the self is undifferentiated from the world. It is pre-egoic in the sense that “the entire material world is absorbed in the self-sense” (Wilber 1995, 228-230).

THE MAGICAL STAGE
The nomadic foraging tribes of the Paleolithic era (circa 30,000 – 9000BCE) are “literally” the “roots”, “foundations” and “structure upon which all subsequent human evolution would be built” (Wilber 1995, 170). Wilber considers identity in this stage to have been relatively undifferentiated from body and biosphere; a state that he describes as pre-rational unity (Wilber 1995, 206). The literal, causal understanding of the relationship between symbol and action in this stage - “learn the right rituals and prayers ... [and] the gods and goddesses intervene and alter the world for me” – earns this stage the moniker, Magical (Wilber 1995, 219).

In discussing the development of consciousness as it relates to cognition, Wilber particularly draws on the work of developmental theorist Piaget. Piaget studied the development of cognition in childhood. He proposed that development occurred in distinct, observable stages with an “invariant” order, and he considered these stages to be “universal” (Matsumoto & Juang 2004, 168). It has been posited that “no theory has had greater impact on developmental theory” than Piaget’s (Lourenco & Machado 1996, 143). To that end his theory has been widely critiqued, analysed and tested.

Critics charge Piagetan theory with underestimating “the competence of children”, characterising development “negatively” and neglecting the “social factors in development” (Lourenco & Machado 1996, 144, 148 & 150). Lourenco’s overview of this

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20 It is important to note that the discussion of the tribal Magical stage is not a discussion of tribal peoples of the world today but is a hypothetical discussion of tribal peoples of some 30 000 years ago.
criticism notes that while the manifold studies that have re-examined the competence of children have demonstrated “a remarkably rich, complex, and hitherto unsuspected set of cognitive competencies”, they have not demonstrated competence in “the logiomathematical and operational” areas that Piaget was examining (Lourenco & Machado 1996, 144). Piaget’s question was not whether children’s thinking “was logical or not … but what kind of logic children manifest” (Lourenco & Machado 1996, 148). Further, Piaget (like Wilber) does not describe development as a process of moving “from absence to presence but as a process of progressive transformation, differentiation, and integration”; “there is no absolute beginning in development”, it “never ends, and nothing in it begins ex-aquo” (Lourenco & Machado 1996, 148). Finally, while on the one hand the Piagetan subject has been pervasively critiqued as being without “social class, sex, nationality, [or] culture”(Lourenco & Machado 1996, 150), studies such as those of Shayer, Demetriou & Perez (1988) have “convincingly demonstrated” the content and fixed nature of Piaget’s stages in cross-cultural settings (Matsumoto & Juang 2004, 169).

For Piaget the pre-operational stage of development, developed out of the infantile sensorimotor stage in which the world is understood solely through “sensory perceptions and motor behaviours” (Matsumoto & Juang 2004, 167). The pre-operational stage demonstrated the beginnings of representational thought. Wilber writes that in the pre-operative thinking (which he asserts is characteristic of the Magical stage): “mental images and symbols are often confused or even identified with the physical events they represent, and consequently mental intentions are believed to be able to ‘magically’ alter the world … physical objects are ‘alive,’ possessing not just prehension but explicitly personal intentions (animism)” (Wilber 1995, 165).

**HABERMAS: SOCIAL LABOR AND THE FATHER**

Wilber takes from Habermas the “familialization of the male” and “social labor” as key markers of the movement from the pre-hominid Archaic structure to the hominid Magical stage. For Habermas the distinct emergence of these two phenomena was of prime importance in “delimiting the mode of life of the hominids from that of the primate” (Habermas in Wilber 1995, 155).

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21 Matsumoto & Juang report that “studies have found surprising cultural variations in the ages at which children in different societies typically reach the third and fourth Piagetan stages” (Matsumoto & Juang 2004, 169).

22 DiZerega argues, in his critique of Wilber’s developmental theory of consciousness, that Wilber’s assertions are purely speculative as “there is no evidence that the early hunter-gatherers didn’t possess formal rational consciousness” (DiZerega 1996, 19).

23 Hominid refers to members of the family Hominidae, related to homo sapiens.
Habermas’ schema, an extension of the historical materialism of Marx and Engels, is based on the idea that “the mode of production manifests the mode of life or humanity” (Welty 1989, 4). Marx and Engels utilised the research of Lewis Henry Morgan, who is described as the first American anthropologist. Morgan linked kin terminology systems derived from his research to the idea of evolutionary social stages. Marx and Engels then linked “these kin terminology/social-level stages to particular modes of production” (di Leonardo 1991, 11). But, where Marx and Engel claimed “that socially organized labor allows us to distinguish human and animal life”, Habermas asserted that social labor alone was insufficient to distinguish between humans and other primates (Fleming 1998, 2). He found that there was evidence of the rules of instrumental, strategic and communicative action in both human and other primate societies. Thus he proposed that the peculiar emergence of the human species was marked by the supplement of “the economy of the hunt” with “a familial [male-headed] social structure” which linked with what he considered to be two original, naturally occurring, subsystems – the male sphere of labor and the female symbolic-social sphere (Habermas in Fleming 1998, 3).

Habermas’ work expounds the now well-worn, ‘man the hunter’ theory: the “first mode of production” was established by the formation of a band of male hunters who demonstrated cooperation, the use of tools as a means of production, and distribution of goods. Together these elements constituted the first economic form (Habermas in Wilber 1995, 154-5). After Habermas, Wilber’s historical narrative rests heavily on the delineation of two roles, both male, father and worker: “The novel emergence of the human family ... occurred only as the male was also assigned the role of father, for it was only in this way that the two value spheres of the male and the female could be linked” (Habermas in Wilber, 156. Italics mine). Wilber goes on to argue that from the role of the father “a family system based on marriage and regulated descent”(Wilber 1995, 156) could be established, which connected the, presumably biologically based, pre-existent, separate and unrelated, areas of labour (male) and domus (female and child). Only the new status of the father could link these realms and integrate the “functions of social labor with functions of nurture of the young, and moreover ... coordinate[d] functions of male hunting with those of female gathering” (Wilber 1995, 156). Wilber’s story of prehistory thus begins with a gender system in place from the outset separating the social laborer (male) from the domestic nurturer (female).

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24 Wilber thus asserts that the structural distinction between the gendered domains of public work and private domus is a biological one.

25 I use the American spelling ‘labor’ in order to be consistent with the theorists whose work I discuss on this topic.
Maternity pertains to the physical side of man, the only thing he shares with the animals: the paternal-spiritual principle belongs to him alone.

(Bachofen 1967, 109)

Triumphant paternity partakes of the heavenly light

(Roller 1999, 10)

Interestingly, Engels’ model posited human origins in an egalitarian matriarchal period which was disrupted and superceded by the emergence of property ownership and “institutionalised social stratification” (di Leonardo 1991, 11; Conkey & Gero 1997, 420). For Engels there was a direct relationship between the development of “father-right”, and its attendant patriarchal family form, private property and the accumulation of wealth “in the hands of a few”, and “unequal productive relations” (Sydie 1987, 173).

The divergent points of view, as represented by Habermas and Engels, illustrate the ongoing tussle over the dynamics of gender in the beginnings of human history. Habermas’ emphasis on the emergence and integration of the father has echoes of Bachofen’s influential nineteenth-century thesis Das Mutterrecht [The Mother Right], which trumpeted the evolutionary triumph of patriarchy (Father-right) over the rampant chaos of the maternal (Mother-right). Utilising the “testimony” of ancient Greek and Roman mythology, which he saw as a hypothesising the “relevant symbolic images” of each stage, Bachofen proposed “that matriarchy preceded patriarchy” (Campbell in Bachofen 1967, xlvi). He termed the earliest stage - characterised by unrestricted and unbridled sexual relations in which men had “sexual access to all women” - Hetareic (Ruether 2005, 257). In the next stage, the still primordial Mother Right, women forced men into “monogamous unions, which were dominated by women as mothers and in which descent was traced through the mother. Bachofen saw the agricultural age as classically female, represented in mythology in the figure of the Greek Goddess Demeter (Ruether 2005, 255).

The third stage, Father-right, could only come about through an overthrow of Mother-right’s oppressive, female-focused, social structure which “lacked a capacity for true order and discipline” (Ruether 2005, 256). Worship of an earthbound chthonic mother goddess was thus superceded by the evolutionary triumph of “transcendent rationality and the idea of eternal life located in the heavenly realm” (Ruether 2005, 256). This was

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Bachofen is used by theologists to support their Goddess thesis, Christ writes that he “uncovered important data but his theories are flawed” (Christ 1997, 59).
revealed in the development of a “more advanced male-focused religion” (Goodison and Morris 1998, 7). Most interestingly, Bachofen identified the first symbol of this new masculine stage as “the figure of the solar ... hero, born without earthly father from the virgin-mother Dawn” (Campbell in Bachofen 1967, xlvii). While Bachofen’s thesis was “a matter of consensus” for late nineteenth-century scholars, who concurred with its “sense of the female as a primitive, ‘natural’, sexual, maternal being utterly divorced from their ‘rational’ world” (Goodison and Morris 1998, 13), in the contemporary context Bachofen’s work is generally regarded as theoretically poor.

**PRE-MODERN GENDER: WILBER’S SUPPOSITIONS**

Because of her ‘lower’ position in evolution and her reproductive function for the human race, woman lies, so to speak, like an immovable prehistoric boulder ... Manifesting a not yet differentiated unity, woman seems ... to remain close to the primeval grounds of being. (Lichtblau in McPhillips 1995, 149)

To summarise, Wilber’s suppositions (par Habermas) amount to the following: during the Magical stage women’s activities do not constitute social labor, which is marked by cooperation, use of tools and distribution of goods. Underlying this is the assumption that natural, pre-social gender divided spheres (that is, based on biological sex) exist and, it is only through the development of the role of father that humankind has been able to bridge the gap between them to become ‘human’. Each of these suppositions deserves close consideration.  

Gender relations have long been a central concern of evolutionary prehistoric reconstruction, as has been evidenced in the work of Bachofen, Engels, et al. Common to the thought of nineteenth and twentieth century social theorists such as Spencer, Durkheim, Tonnies, Simmel and Weber, was the assumption that public sphere production was a male (and male only) affair since the beginning of time (see: Chafetz 2006, McPhillips 1995, Sydie 1987). Women were, after all, not only “innately different ... in their intellectual, emotional and moral capacity” and thus naturally inclined towards domestic activity, but were actually incapable of tasks “beyond the care of husband and children” (Chafetz 2006, 4). The categorisation of ‘social labor’ or ‘cooperative production’, was absolutely delineated from those productive activities considered to be the domain of women such as child rearing, food gathering and preparation, and related tool making.

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27 This sentiment was echoed in the evolutionary theory of Schelling, who hailed Christianity as the revelation, heir and evolutionary successor of mythological thinking.

28 See Peggy Wright’s initial analysis and critique of Wilber’s work in this area (1998, 228-9).

29 In this quote Chafetz is discussing the thought of nineteenth century sociologist Herbert Spencer.
Assumptions about what constituted ‘work’ were deeply entwined in nineteenth and early twentieth century conceptions of gender. In her comprehensive survey of feminist studies in prehistory Ruether picks up this issue, addressing “depictions of Palaeolithic man” which reproduce “the presumed sexual division of labor within the Western industrial middle class, with its split between ‘home’ and ‘work’ with men as providers and women confined to domestic work and child raising” (Ruether 2005, 15). She decries this as a false dichotomy formed through the projection of current ideology onto the past. Ruether writes that “human prehistory from hominids through the Palaeolithic and Neolithic worlds did not consist of men providers and protectors sheltering and feeding dependent women whose main job was cooking and caring for children … Most human families, even in modern times, have depended on the productive work of both adult women and men, as well as that of their children” (Ruether 2005, 38).

Recognising these projections, the canonical stories of prehistoric gender relations and evolutionary history must be considered in a fresh light. Addressing the specifics of the depiction of gender in prehistory, feminist archaeologists have demonstrated the manner in which contemporary gender norms and values have been uncritically projected on to the past (Nixon 1994, 1) and have further presented evidence that disrupts the idea of gender as a static category unchanged by time. Archaeologist Margaret Conkey writes that there is concern, not only with “the consistent unquestioned linkages of certain activities of the past with each gender”, but with the “very existence of a bipolar, two-gendered world in past societies” (Conkey 2003, 874). Indeed, Conkey writes, questions around the capacity of very early societies to have a concept of gender and gendered behaviour boundaries remain contested: “If one accepts the idea that gender is dependent upon symbolic communication systems, it is immediately problematic to assume that … early hominids had ‘gender’” (Conkey & Gero 1997, 418). Archaeologists Adovasio and Soffer concur, “the social roles by which these ancient creatures played out their lives”, they write, are “shrouded in shadows and scholarly chimera” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 85). Noting that the “chief method” of determining gender roles has been to examine “contemporary tribal societies and

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30 Archaeologist Hudecek-Cuffe writes “Although the domestic/public dichotomy and the assumption that women were confined by reproductive “domestic” chores while men controlled the public domains is entirely inappropriate and distorting for many societies, ethnographic evidence tends to suggest that in many societies, men and women had and do have different domains of social life, spheres of activities and responsibilities, and patterns of mobility, though not necessarily corresponding to this artificial domestic/public division.” (Hudecek-Cuffe 1996, 77).

31 Mapped from the perspective of the Integral quadrants Archaeology as a discipline predominantly provides an external ‘it’ analysis of objects or ‘they’ analysis of society.

32 As highlighted in the previous chapter postmodern feminist theory delineates gender (as a cultural concept) from biological sex, and repudiates the idea that gender is natural (that is, biological) or pre-cultural.
extrapolate backwards”, they question what accurate methodology can be used to “fathom the gender woman (as opposed to the sex female) and, more accurately, the genders women are identified with in the deep past” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 85). Further on this point, Conkey notes that anthropological study of foraging societies has appropriately complicated the question of gender through demonstrating the existence of third and fourth gender categories beyond the binaries of man and woman (Conkey 2001, 283).

**MAN THE HUNTER**

Up until the 1960s, ‘old-school’ anthropological reconstructions of prehistoric hominids all began with hunting (Dahlberg 1981, 1). Scant interest was shown in the evolutionary place of women other than their role in reproduction (Zihlman 1981, 75). This work reified the “belief that present-day inequality of the sexes had its roots in an ancient lifestyle and in inherent biological differences between the sexes” (Zihlman 1981, 76).

The ‘Man the Hunter’ thesis “posited analogies between male-dominant African savanna baboons and the evolution of male-dominant societies” (di Leonardo 1991, 7). It proposed that male hunting “initiated man’s separation from the apes. Males provided the meat, presumed to be the main item in early hominid diet, by inventing stone tools and weapons for hunting. Thus males played the major economic role, were protectors of females and young, and controlled the mating process”(Zihlman 1981, 75). As “the major economic and technological pursuit”, the emergence of male hunting was credited as being the point of germination of human society and culture: “producing the essential ‘human’ traits – intelligence, manual skill, toolmaking, tool using, sociability” (Zihlman 1981, 82).

Other than its studied disinterest in exploring the contributions of women in history, the main problem with the Man the Hunter thesis lay in the evidence, or the lack thereof. Archaeological records construct images of the past that are understandably biased in favour of the preserved fossil evidence of bones, tools and remains of dwellings and structures. Perishable, fibre artefacts, of primary importance to our earliest ancestors, are lost to the fossil record. Of late, a surge in recognition of the key importance of gathered plants and ‘lost’ organic tools have intervened in established reconstructions of prehistory (di Leonardo 1991, 7; see also Zihlman 1981, 87; Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 24).

Recent scholarship has suggested that these artefacts dramatically reshape the landscape of our past. This research, particularly from feminist quarters, has sought to move beyond
the boundaries of examining only preserved evidence, in order to form more complex reconstructions of prehistory. These hypotheses have moved towards the integration of evidence from a full range of sources including, the “growing body of data on living apes and gathering-hunting peoples, the hominid fossil record, genetic relationships of living species, as well as concepts in evolutionary biology” (Zihlman 1981, 85).

While “no human group on earth represents ‘living history’” in that “every human population has experienced many thousand years in which to alter its language, its religious ideologies, its social arrangements” (di Leonardo 1991, 28), anthropological studies of contemporary foraging groups have provided important insights into the lost evidence of perishable prehistoric material. From an examination of the “similarities and differences” of primates and contemporary foragers, placed against other bodies of evidence such as archaeology, socio-biology and sociological meta-analysis, we can deduce some important features which our ancestors may have “exhibited five or six million years ago” (Dahlberg 1981, 4-5).

**FORAGING: WOMAN THE GATHERER**

Sociologist Joan Huber surveyed over 25 years worth of anthropological research on pre-modern subsistence. Using Lenski as her starting point, she analysed the way in which gender stratification was affected by the interrelationship of population maintenance, war and technology use, in each of the early subsistence modes (Huber 2006, 76). Explaining that Lenski classified societies “by the major tool used in food production” in order to demonstrate “how the interrelations of population, organization, ecology, and technology affect social stratification” (Huber 2006, 66-7), she writes that while his “schema went far toward explaining the emergence of caste, class, feudalism, and slavery” it said “little about gender stratification” (Huber 2006, 67).

A ‘minimal’ description of foraging, “a term used synonymously with hunting and gathering”, has been suggested as: “subsistence based on hunting of wild animals, gathering of wild plant foods, and fishing, with no domestication of plants, and no domesticated animals except the dog” (Lee and Daly, in Panter-Brick et al 2001, 2). Huber’s evidence, gathered from a mix of anthropologists and archaeologists, suggests

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33 This statement is also relevant to Wright’s critique. She takes Wilber to task for equating “tribal cultures” with “a particular childlike developmental stage of egocentrism, magical thinking, and biospheric fusion” (Wright 1998, 222). In the context of this discussion the assertion of pre-operative consciousness of tribal cultures refers to those of thirty thousand years ago, not contemporary tribal cultures.

34 Lenski is also a key anthropological source for Wilber’s work. His anthropological analysis provides a view from the social (external) quadrant.
that forager groups exist/ed\(^{35}\) in small “mobile, and nonterritorial” groups and “use several methods to obtain most of their food: gathering wild plants and small animals such as mice or clams; hunting large animals such as deer, caribou, whales or seal; and fishing” (Huber 2006, 69). Their nomadic lifestyle and limited possession of goods leads to a more “egalitarian emphasis on sharing resources” (Huber 2006, 69).

Disputing the thesis of ‘Man the Hunter’ as the central and only significant player on the Paleolithic historical stage, Huber presents ‘woman the gatherer’: her labor, likewise mobile, provides a highly significant, regular, shared food source for the tribe. Studies by female anthropologists have shown that, not only was female gathering “of plants, nuts and berries” a significant and “equal source of food” to the animal protein derived from hunting, but for some foraging groups, gathered foods “provided the predominant food source” (Ruether 2005, 17-8). Anthropologist Lee notes, in examining the contemporary lifestyle of the foraging !Kung people, that “vegetable foods and small animals” make up a substantial portion of their subsistence base; yet evidence of this fact would be largely lost from the archaeological record” (Lee in Zihlman 1981, 93).

Gathering has been shown “to be more reliable in terms of the quality and quantity of food collected than is hunting, which is unpredictable and often dangerous” (Nixon 1994, 6), and, more importantly was often “the main source of calories for the whole group” (Dahlberg 1981, 2). Some estimates,\(^{36}\) such as that derived from ethnographic study of the San people of the Kalahari, place the gathering process as provider of “between 75 percent and seasonally, 100 percent” of the tribe’s total food source (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 78; see also Christ 1997, 52-3).\(^{37}\) Indeed, as Zihlman points out, the majority of foraging peoples have “subsisted primarily on resources other than meat – mainly wild plants and fish” (Zihlman 1981, 91). As a nomadic activity occurring outside the domus, with substantial day-to-day import for the tribe, gathering would have been as significant a cooperative productive activity as hunting, if not more so. Also, like hunting, gathering was economic in the sense of involving toolmaking and the distribution of goods.

Archaeologist Hudecek-Cuffe in righting the exaggerated importance of Paleoindian big game hunting, emphasises the importance of gathering. She notes that “the collecting of plant resources would have required, first of all, the ability to identify numerous varieties

\(^{35}\) Huber notes that contemporary foraging groups “occupy land no one else wants (yet): African and South American rain forest, Arctic tundra, and Australian desert” (Huber 2006, 69).

\(^{36}\) Including an estimate cited by Wilber (1995, 158).

\(^{37}\) Dahlberg reports estimates of food provided by gathering ranging from 44-65 percent of total foodstuffs (Dahlberg 1981, 14).
of plants, an enormous knowledge of the plants themselves and of the abundance and preferred location of each species ... knowledge concerning the life cycles of various species... and last, but not least the tools for extracting or collecting the plants” (Hudecek-Cuffe 1996, 82). Rethinking the assumptions around prehistoric tool making in which “men have been assumed to be the major, if not the only, makers and users of stone artefacts” the fact that “women make and use many of their own tools (including flaked and ground stone tools) in most recent hunter-gatherer societies” suggests that this was most probably “the case in the past as well” (Torrence 2001, 91). Scholars have suggested that, as the “extensive sharing of food other than meat requires containers to accumulate and transport the food”, women may have invented carrying devices (Dahlberg 1981, 8). This development may have occurred in cohort with the development of a carrying tool for infants.

The women of foraging tribes are renowned for harvesting fibres to transform into baskets, carrying bags, nets and fishing scoops. It is certain that they would have fashioned digging sticks, rudimentary cutting and food preparation tools, not to mention clothing “of various kinds such as shawls, shirts, sashes and shirts” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 181). The revolutionary development of string, for example, made available the technology of “snares and fishlines, tethers and leashes, carrying nets, handles and packages, not to mention a way of binding objects together to form more complex tools”(Barber in Miller 2007, 3). Yet, these perishable tools “being made generally of flexibles such as bark, grass, folded leaves, and animal skins” would “leave no trace in the archaeological record” (Dahlberg 1981, 8). The physical deterioration and thus loss of this evidence from the prehistoric record, mixed with androcentric concern, has meant these cultural innovations have been given little weight in the collective narrative of human development.

**EVOLUTIONARY CONTINUITY: SOCIOBIOLOGY AND SHARING**

Evolutionary success is reproductive success (Zihlman 1981, 75)

In terms of feminist theory, socio-biological analysis has been lambasted for its reification of “two unambiguously dichotomous sexes” with universal biological sex characteristics which are considered to determine “the cultural behaviours adopted by sex group and account for why males and females are ‘assigned’ gender” (Conkey & Gero 1997, 417). Without neglecting these valid concerns, Huber argues that it is “a mistake to fail to notice the role of biology” in prehistory. Women, she asserts, have been crucial to human reproductive and thus evolutionary success, as they have been “central to population
maintenance in a way that men cannot be, and population maintenance is crucial to species survival” (Huber 2006, 67).

Adrienne Zihlman, a physical anthropologist, has produced a significant body of scholarship focused on the analysis of comparative functional anatomy, sex and gender in primate and human origins and evolution. Concerned primarily with the “three or four million years” that Wilber terms the Archaic, Zihlman’s thesis traces the contours of “evolutionary continuity”, she counters the attribution of hunting as “the major economic and technological pursuit” of evolutionary prehistory (Zihlman, 1981, 85 & 105) with the proposition that gathering laid the technological and social base from which the technologies of hunting developed later in human evolutionary history (Zihlman 1981, 93).

Her thesis proposes a developmental continuum through which behavioural technologies and tools are modified, adapted and refined over time. Gathering, which involved “tools for collecting a quantity of food that can be carried elsewhere for consumption and sharing”, was a departure from “the ape’s way of plucking and eating food ‘on the spot’” and could also “be applied to protein sources in ‘small packages’ such as insects, other small invertebrates, reptiles, small animals, and shellfish” (Zihlman 1981, 94-5). She writes that “behaviors attributed to hunting can as easily be explained by gathering: long-distance walking, use of tools, sharing resources, large home range, home base, low population density, detailed knowledge of the environment, and cognitive mapping” (Zihlman 1981, 108). 38

According to her thesis, hunting tools would have been adapted from those developed and used for gathering: “wooden spears and, later, hafted tools, fishing nets, and the like may have developed from digging sticks or ‘bags’ for collecting and carrying, in the same way that digging sticks may have emerged from an ape’s termiting stick. Tools invented for food preparation, such as those used to pound and pulverize tough plant foods or to cut up large fruits and vegetables ... may have been the basis for inventing stone tools for cutting up animals or pounding meat prior to eating” (Zihlman 1981, 109).

Zihlman extends her argument for the development of hunting from the technologies of gathering and presents sharing (rather than hunting) as the key meme of early human adaptations.

38 Hudeck-Cuffe adds that gatherers “do not ignore animal resources. Often they will procure animals, in addition to obtaining information relating to the location of animal tracks and excretions, the density of game, the direction of game movements, and the location of water and feeding areas” (Hudecek-Cuffe 1996, 78).
evolution. She argues that it was the social base of sharing that allowed for the emergence of hunting; if “individuals engaged in ... pursuing unpredictable game ... did not succeed in the capture they would be assured of shared food” (Zihlman 1981, 109). Thus she asserts that the hunting of “moderate-to-large-sized animals” emerged later in human evolution utilising the more stable base provided by the technologies of gathering (Zihlman 1981, 110).

In their significant archaeological survey of the role of women in prehistory *The Invisible Sex*, Adovasio, Soffer & Page describe women as “the chief engine in the unprecedentedly high level of human sociability” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 3). Concurring with Zihlman’s thesis they suggest that the perception of “permanent and interdependent” families emerged through the development of “routine and reliable sharing” practiced between “children, males, females and old people” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 160). These groups would have expanded over time “into larger groups such as clans, based on descent from ancestors” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 162). They argue that the advent of sharing and through this the historic development of interdependent families was “probably more important than any new tools or technologies” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 160). Thus, on closer inspection, it becomes clear that the importance of the ‘role of the father’ in prehistory is better elucidated as the important emergence of the interdependent family which may have been prominently shaped by the characteristic of female sociability.

**SEXUAL DIMORPHISM**

Addressing sociobiology’s attempt “to explain the evolution of social systems, from insects to humans” Zihlman turns to focus on “the concepts of parental investment and mate choice, pillars on which socio-biology is founded” (Zihlman 1981, 82-3). Sociobiology’s ‘just so’ narratives are notorious for reductionism and “actively if unconsciously projecting and reinforcing particular “paternalistic, patriarchal, racist and class commitments” (Grosz 2005, 13). This is particularly true for the Man the Hunter thesis which, as noted earlier, assigned characteristics to our earliest human societies that were derived from the sexually aggressive and male dominant hierarchical structures observed among baboons. Sexually dimorphic differentials in size and weight have been used as biological explanations for sexual segregation in labor and male dominance of women in society. Zihlman, analysing sexually dimorphic disparities in “body size and weight, canine tooth size, or pelvic proportions” notes that the occurrence of similar sexually dimorphic proportions across primate species “do not all correlate with the same behaviours” (Zihlman 1981, 99).
Even acknowledging disparities of strength and size between human sexes, and the probability of occasions of violence and physical acts of domination in early hominid societies, Chafetz asserts that male violence against women is an indicator “but not a fundamental causal” or a significant “maintenance mechanism” of inequity between the sexes (Chafetz 1990, 87). In her analysis of systems of gender stratification she writes, “no one argues that other forms of social inequality are based on size or strength differences. Even slave systems, not to mention social class, status, and caste systems, are not said to be maintained because superordinates are bigger and stronger than subordinates” (Chafetz 1990, 87).

Zihlman counters the traditional sociobiological position which equates larger male body size with the power of mate selection, with her thesis on the relationship between sexual selection and sharing (Zihlman 1981, 97). Examining the role of parental investment and mate choice in female hominids, she writes that “because of the burden of long-dependent offspring” (Zihlman 1981, 91) maternal investment is high among human females. Considering the reproductive success of the human species, her thesis asserts that it is most likely that “females were choosing precisely those males who were friendly, nurturing, tool-using, and willing to share food. Chosen males then contributed to the gene pool by investing in their kin ... and were integrated into the food-sharing and social network” (Zihlman 1981, 96). The ‘pair bond’ situation, may have developed out of this (Zihlman 1981, 96).

**THE COLLECTIVE HUNT**

Zilhman concludes that arguments for “the supposed specialization of sex roles” in prehistory, with “females as nurturers and males as economic providers – ignores the potential flexibility of behavior of both sexes” (Zilhman 1981, 97). Dahlberg illustrates this flexibility. Her research notes that, while in foraging groups “technological tasks relating to subsistence” are often divided by sex, “many jobs are masculine in one society and feminine in another” (Dahlberg 1981, 13). Further she points out that “emphasis on the importance of gathering may actually obscure the importance and variety of women’s activities” (Dahlberg 1981, 12). “Both sexes”, she asserts, “must have been able to care for the young, protect themselves from predators, make and use tools, and freely move about the environment in order to exploit available resources widely distributed through space and time” (Zilhman 1981, 97).

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30 While Chafetz is specifically discussing gender stratification in societies that are operating in later development structures I believe that her observance of the place of violence in systems of gender inequity still bears relevance in this context.
To complicate matters further, anthropologists have suggested not only that men would have certainly participated in gathering activities but that the predominant mode of hunt in prehistoric times was most likely the capture of small animals such as “rabbits, foxes and other small mammals” with large woven nets and cordage snares (Miller 2007, 20; see also Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 184). Consistent with contemporary ethnographic evidence, such as that derived from studies of the Mbuti and Ituri Forest people, this small animal hunt was “a communal affair involving women, children, and elderly people as well as adult males. It engages essentially everyone in the group as beaters, clubbers, or net holders and makes the acquisition of high-energy and high-protein food (meat) much less dangerous and more dependable” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 184; see also Dahlberg 1981, 11; Hudecek-Cuffe 1996, 82). Zihlman’s research concludes that significantly delineated gendered (or sexual) divisions of labor are unlikely in the early stages of human evolution. Gendered divisions of labor, she writes, “probably evolved late in human evolution” and were “never ... absolute” (Zihlman 1981, 104).

Zihlman’s evidence destabilises the strictly divided gender spheres that Habermas and Wilber’s present as clear, empirical facts. Further, this research demonstrates the constructed nature of conceptions of gender in prehistory. With gender being neither ‘natural’ nor pre-social, any delineation of gendered spheres within prehistoric societies, with pre-operative cognition, would have to have been tenuous and most definitely pliable.

**THE SEDENTARY WOMAN**

The male society of the hunting band became independent of the plant gathering females and the young, both of whom remained behind during the hunting expeditions. (Habermas in Wilber 1995, 156: Italic mine).

Another key supposition in Habermas' explanation of the development of human society and culture is that women were sedentary and domestically based; while men roamed and worked on the hunt. Huber's study reports:

“available quantitative data show that women were away from camp as long as men and walk the same distances, carrying infants and heavier burdens ... Recent data even suggests that our hominid ancestors had no home bases ... making untenable a house-bound vision of early women” (Huber 2006, 68).

Some anthropologists believe that our hominid ancestors were probably loosely territorial in much the same way as the contemporary foragers of the Kalahari. While moving often as a band, they would operate: “within a relatively restricted region, usually twenty-five
to thirty kilometres in all directions” (Wenke 1999, 136; see also Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 77).

Addressing the issues of work and mothering, Dahlberg reports that “there is considerable evidence … that many women put their work first and adjust child care to work needs … Contemporary foragers provide little evidence of maternal constraints in activity” (Dahlberg 1981, 21). Zihlman is also firm on this point, hominid mothers she writes, would have been moving actively around the environment, getting food and carrying infants while doing so. To postulate that early human females were sedentary denies their primate heritage as well as evolutionary continuity, and implies that their behavior has no counterpart among all female monkeys and apes and women in gathering societies today. In fact, there are no such sedentary females in gathering and hunting societies (Zihlman 1981, 89).

Wilber asserts, after Habermas, that “male and female value spheres had already been differentiated into social labor (hunting) and nurturance of the young” in the Magical stage of prehistory, with “the role of the mother” insufficient “to link the two value spheres, because the mother could not, or at any rate did not, participate in the social labor of the hunt” (Wilber 1995, 155-6). While the male may have joined with mother and child creating family relations, he was certainly not joining his labor to her non-labor as Wilber suggests.

Given that upon reassessment of the evidence, the task of gathering demonstrates all of the criteria of ‘social labor’, the assignation of hunting and not gathering to this category appears questionable, problematic and androcentric. As is clear, the collected evidence points strongly toward the likelihood that Palaeolithic woman was a collaborative producer; she created tools, roamed and worked, actively producing, processing goods and distributing these significant resources among a network of kin. She was also, almost certainly, a member of the collective hunt of small game.

**THE FATHER AND THE QUESTION OF ‘WORK’**

This leaves us with the role and figure of the father. Nancy Fraser, a scholar of Habermas, takes up the issue and ideological ramifications of his analytical separation of ‘women’s work’ from the sphere of labor in modern society⁴⁰. She writes that, in analysing capitalist

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⁴⁰Fraser's analysis is both social and cultural. In her analysis of Habermas' work on social systems, she is activating a cultural perspective that concentrates on the nature of his symbolic
society, Habermas divides “the activities and practices ... of paid work” which he marks as “material reproduction activities” or “social labor”, from the “childrearing activities and practices performed without pay by women in the domestic sphere” which he describes “as symbolic reproduction” or socialisation (Fraser 1993, 100). While she acknowledges an “empirical social reality” to Habermas’ observations, she argues that they direct attention away from a significant fact: “that the household, like the paid workforce, is a site of labor, albeit ... unremunerated and often unrecognised” (Fraser 1993, 107). She asserts that, in observing these distinctions, Habermas fails to acknowledge and analyse the highly gendered nature of the divide that serves to institutionalise and foster gendered identity. The functional tasks of social labor and (women’s) unpaid domestic labor both have aspects of “symbolic and material reproduction” (Fraser 1993, 100). The worker is just as implicated in the activity of socio-cultural symbolic replication as the (maternal) childrearer. Both activities produce “not just objects” but also “symbolically-mediated social meanings” (Fraser 1993, 101).

Laden with symbolism and deeply related to the “conceptual dissonance” that separates ‘woman’ from ‘worker’ the (masculine) role of worker is itself implicated in the ongoing wheel of symbolic reproduction (Fraser 1993, 113-4). Thus Fraser argues, these divisions are not so much natural as potentially, and I would add, potently, ideological. The fact that “the private (official) economy and the private family in male-dominated, capitalist societies” are linked by the masculine role of the worker, forges a link which serves to concretise and continually reinforce the “masculine gender identity” of these roles (Fraser 1993, 113-4).

Critically Habermas’ analysis fails to acknowledge that ideology is at the heart of, and driving these distinctions; gender identity is fundamental to building, and maintaining the walls of the worker/domestic divide. When the worker and citizen are symbolically and socially designated as male only, woman is oppositionally cast across the divide as ‘other than’. While Fraser notes that the distinctions Habermas discusses are patently modern (in the sense of emerging in cohort with classical capitalism), it is clear, as Habermas’ depiction of prehistory illustrates, that they continue to deeply affect our understanding and conceptualisations of the past. The historical division between domus and ex-domicile production, and the associated distinction between social labor and non-labor, and the sites of symbolic reproduction are rife with historio-cultural associations about male and female identity and capability.
The categorisation of ‘labor’ as male in early social theory is consistent with the given premise that women, inferior by ‘nature’, had a lesser impact on and participation in history. This idea certainly has been reinforced by ignoring, or dismissing, the role of women in pre-history almost entirely. The assignment of the most significant evolutionary roles (father/worker) in pre-history to men is only consistent with an androcentric perspective in which men are both the primary (and universal) subjects of history, and in which history is narrated from their perspective. This assignation is not consistent with a measured evaluation of the diverse array of evidence at hand today.

FEMINIST ARCHAEOLOGY: RE-CAPITULATING THE EVIDENCE

While the attempt to illustrate evolutionary development must of necessity utilise broad meta-narrative brush strokes, Wilber’s presentation of prehistoric evidence is littered with ‘just so’ knots of assumed knowledge with regard to gender. This homogeny is at odds with his Integral multi-perspectival methodology.

The “flawed, coarse-grained” nature of the pre-modern record means that theorisations about the prehistoric origins of culture and our earliest gender relationships remain, in many ways, deeply speculative (Panter-Brick et al 2001, 8). In re-tracing the roots of human development, it is important to acknowledge the incomplete nature of evidence in the pre-modern record. As Wenke notes “people look at the same bones and stones and see, alternatively, conclusive evidence of hunting, conclusive evidence of scavenging, and no conclusive evidence at all” (Wenke 1999, 143). The inconsistencies, gaps and complex problems in interpretation that prehistoric evidence presents, requires the acknowledgement of complicated, perhaps even contradictory, possible meanings. Neither ignoring nor dismissing ambiguity, the process of building theoretical conclusions from pre-modern evidence requires continuous shifting and sifting to deal with the contradictions that naturally occur.

Feminist work in archaeology has posed itself as ‘strategically ambivalent’ in that it “recognises both the ambiguity of the archaeological record and the existence of sociopolitical factors and contingencies” (Conkey 2003, 875-6). Yet, Conkey asserts that while there may be a number of alternative interpretations, it is not the case that one can say anything” (Conkey 2003, 876). By “respecting empirical constraints” feminist archaeology rejects a collapse into relativism. It demands the use of complex methodologies and fosters views “from ‘many wheres’” with multi-perspectival intent (Conkey 2003, 876). “Open to continuous revision, in theory, evidence, and interpretation”, it is steadfast in not ignoring “complexity and heterogeneity”, while it
pursues “continuous critical assessment of ... key categories of analysis and key presuppositions” (Conkey 2003, 876). I find this a particularly insightful theoretical position that is deeply in keeping with the philosophical and methodological position of Integral feminism, as outlined in Chapter Three, and with my intent in the presentation of evidence in this chapter.

Having assembled multiple perspectives, it appears possible to assert that the beginning of the Magical period may have seen a form of extended kin network emerge, linking mother, father and child with other kin. These tribes were based predominantly in the technologies of gathering and small game hunting and the sociability of sharing. Gathering, done by men and women was an economic activity involving the production and use of tools, communication and the distribution of goods. Gathering also appears to have been a base from which the later technology of large game hunting may have emerged.

Accepting Wilber’s assertion that the Archaic and Magical stages exhibit sensorimotor and pre-operational cognition respectively, these periods would demonstrate little in the way of gender roles. It is difficult to assert exactly what the sexual breakdown of behaviour with respect to biological tendencies and impulses would look like in these stages as there are no existent human tribes operating in this mode of consciousness and primate species show variable behaviours. Sexual dimorphism and the limits and tendencies of biology may account for delineations of work around times of greater female parental investment, and the introduction of intensive large game hunting in some societies may have also lead to greater sexual differentiation in productive tasks. Yet while there appears to be some division and distinction of task between the sexes the evidence does not point to gendered spheres of a universal or inflexible, structural nature. In fact quite the opposite; recent reconstructive work suggests that the work roles for men and women in prehistoric times would probably been interdependent, overlapping, complementary and flexible in nature (Hudecek-Cuffe 1996, 93).

In general, as Wilber asserts, evidence from the Magical period does not suggest “a massive differentiation of status” between men and women (Wilber 1995, 157). Contra to

41 Anthropologists Tooby and DeVore have proposed that if hunting of large animals (as opposed to the hunt of small game which does not appear limited to either sex) changed from being occasional, as it is for example with the Kalahari people, to being intensive, a possible consequence could have been the “extreme sexual division of labor found among humans” (Tooby & DeVore in Wenke 1999, 142).

42 Hudecek-Cuffe notes that this does “not necessarily imply that there were no... individuals who had specialized and more highly developed knowledge and skills” (Hudecek-Cuffe 1996, 78).
Wilber and Habermas' assertions, the evidence gathered in this chapter from anthropological, archaeological and socio-biological sources points to the significant contribution of women’s work and innovation in the Magical stage of human evolution. General anthropological consensus suggests that foraging societies demonstrate the lowest levels of structural inequity between the sexes, for reasons including significant levels of female participation in subsistence production (the capacity to both generate and distribute resources), minimal public/private separation, and the relative rareness of war.\textsuperscript{43}

If we accept that the Magical stage was operating with pre-operational cognition this indicates a period prior to the emergence of conceptions of gender rules, roles and structures. The capacity to turn biological markers into conceptualisations of gender is only available with the move to concrete operational thinking. This development is one of the many significant, rich and varied progressions that are charted in the events of the next, Mythic stage.

\textsuperscript{43} Tribal dispute over territory is in this instance distinguished from institutions of warfare as developed in the Mythic-Agrarian stage, is discussed in Chapter Five.
As this thesis follows Wilber’s theory of the evolutionary stages of human development, it also intervenes in this philosophical theory in order to chart and bring much needed attention to the contributions of women. Alongside this narrative another journey is mapped, one which charts the metamorphosis of the figure of the female divine. Thus this chapter demonstrates the complexities of the changing face of the female divine in responsive relationship to the development of consciousness, as well as adding important

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cultural and spiritual perspectives to the analysis of evolutionary history thus far presented.

The positioning of women across the stages of evolution, and changes to the symbol of the female divine, in many ways mirror one another. Both have been affected by the same permutations of history and both are emblematic of the changing stages of human consciousness. Just as the figure of Woman, encountering obstacles and enabling breakthroughs of development on the pathways of human history is an exemplar of the heroine’s journey, so too the figure of the female divine can be seen to represent the divine heroine in her embodiment of the highest human values. Thus this chapter analyses and explores the art and symbol of the female divine in the Magic and Mythic period.

THE QUESTION OF VENUS

Art is the key medium in which the shift from Magic to Mythic consciousness is demonstrated. In comparison with the more complete mythological records of the late Mythic period (and beyond), the pre-textual art of the Magical and early Mythic stages presents significant challenges for ‘reading’ and analysis. Despite the inherent complexities in deciphering meanings for prehistoric art, this mode of evidence presents vitally important clues for the task of deciphering the evolutionary course of depictions of the divine.

The figure of the ‘Venus’ of Willendorf (Figure 4) has been dated at circa 24,000 BCE. Carved from oolitic limestone, this famous image has become an “icon of prehistoric art” (Witcombe 2005, 1) and as such is a focal point for a number of central debates. Her “deliberately emphasized” genitals, her “large breasts”, “the roundness of her stomach” (3) and the “traces of red ochre pigment” (Witcombe 2005, 5) have lead to ongoing questions over just what she represents.

Venuses of this sort have been found across “a broad geographical area ranging from France to Siberia” suggesting some shared understanding of the nature of these figures (Witcombe 2005, 4); also significant is that, in contrast to these female figures, “there are only one or two examples of clearly male figurines” and many that are “androgenous, without visible sex” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 188). While the question of whether the Venus represents, as different scholars have suggested: a fertility amulet, a depiction of the Goddess, the representation of a woman of significant status (Witcombe 2005, 3 & 5), or a demonstration of female weaving designs (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 188),
may not be definitively answered, what is clear is that each of these interpretations has serious impacts upon our understanding of the Magical era.

**SYMBOLISM OF THE MAGICAL STAGE**

Deep in the caves of Chauvet, France, are some of the most well preserved and extensive displays of Magical stage art. Dated up to 31,000 years old this cave art features extensive, naturalistic depictions of animals ranging from horses to hyenas (Lamarque 2005, 21). The forms have provoked researchers to wax lyrical about their “spectacular character” and “aesthetics” (Clottes in Heyd & Clegg 2005, xx1), the “fidelity of naturalistic representation”, and the “sheer power, economy of means and vitality of [the] depictions” (Lamarque 2005, 22). Art historians have argued that these paintings were purposefully produced to create visual effects as they demonstrate a skilful mastery of artistic technique (Clottes in Heyd & Clegg 2005, xxii).

Apart from figurative work, Magical art displays abundant, globally distributed, non-figurative motifs: from finger marks, single dots and lines to “cups, rings and spirals ... geometric shapes and incised grids” and “complex ... extensive panels of apparently unstructured linear marks” (Bahn 1998, 223-5). There are virtually no depictions of humans in the early Palaeolithic cave art, they appear later, as “among the engravings of La Marche, France, dating to about 14,280 years ago” (Bahn 1998, 183-4). Some are naturalistic but “many are highly stylised – with unrealistic proportions such as the abbreviated head, arms and legs of most Ice Age figurines, or exaggerated anatomical details” (Bahn 1998, 183-4). Notably, depictions of violence are enormously rare (Bahn 1998, 196).

The meaning and function of early art - “mystical or symbolic or practical” - has been the subject of “long standing debate” (Lamarque 2005, 21). As illustrated by the following quote from Germain Bazin, Conservateur En Chef Au Musee Du Louvre, early readings of Magical art assumed it to be an expression of sympathetic magic:

> if the animal figures painted in the French and Spanish caves are perfect works of naturalism ... it is because primitive man (sic)... was convinced that he was genuinely creating. For him the image was not mere imitation .... He intended ... to ensure the fertility of his prey, to entice it into his traps, or to acquire its strength for his own purposes. The primitive artist was a magician whose drawing had all the virtue of a magic spell (Bazin 1958, 11).

Despite the limits of ethnography, in that “no matter how superficially simple a recently
living or still living group of hunters and gatherers may appear to be, they are nonetheless fully modern human beings “in terms of anatomy, intelligence capabilities and communications skills” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 82), this study remains an important resource for the ‘reading’ of Magical art. Contemporary ethnographic research has demonstrated contradictory possibilities. On the one hand, for example, study of Australian Indigenous art has concluded that there is “virtually no evidence” that Australian prehistoric rock art was “produced to influence the hunt magically” (Bahn 1998, 234). Data from Siberian ethnography, on the other hand, has proposed that figures in Siberian prehistoric art might be read as “ongones”; the mediating spirits of dead shamans who take the “forms of animals or humans” to assist with hunting and healing (Bahn 1998, 237).

Discussing early European rock art (from circa 15,000 to 30,000 BCE), archaeologist Margaret Conkey suggests that these paintings display a complexity of image making and meaning that reflect “rich symbolic and cultural worlds” (Conkey 2001, 269). This, she asserts, is in accord with studies of contemporary foraging art. Using the example of art produced by Northwest Coast Indian tribes she writes that study of the great variety of material objects that these people produce - “spoons, fish-hooks, bowls, shaman’s charms, masks, tattooing, face-painting, blankets, basketry hats, painted buckskin garments, huge canoes, house posts, tall totem poles” - is integral to a full understanding of their life (Conkey 2001, 282). Their art “is so rooted in and constitutive of social and symbolic life that it is not possible to comprehend one without explicit reference to the other” (Conkey 2001, 282). It reflects “overall social organization” and “core cultural myths”, and expresses “as much about ... social relations and gender” as it reflects “aesthetics” (Conkey 2001, 281).

Conkey’s reading is in many ways, akin to Joseph Campbell’s theory of the functions of mythology. Campbell suggests that diverse purposes of expression: numinous, psychological, cosmological and social are often bound together in a mythic expression. These references may be contained either in a single work or a collection of inter-textual works. Doty explains that in these polysemic texts “several meanings” may “simultaneously overlap[ ] one another” (Doty 2000, 145).

From his survey of archaeological research Bahn suggests that “a complex interweaving of the real and the non-real” is displayed in prehistoric art (Bahn 1998, 221). Elements of the “mundane, literal, whimsical, religious and secular, mystical and metaphorical” are

\[ As discussed in Chapter 1. \]
often incorporated into a single work; “even a single motif may have pluralistic meanings. Or it may not” (Bahn 1998, 221). He concludes that there are an “open-ended array of imaginative and subjective possibilities ‘riddled with contradictions’, rather than any unified or coherent” answers to the question of meaning in prehistoric art (Bahn 1998, 250). Lamarque goes even further, and asserts that the meaning of these works remains “a complete mystery; they are uninterpretable, and the role they played in the cultural or social life of the peoples who made them is unknown, as are the attitudes, aspirations, values and beliefs of those who viewed them” (Lamarque 2005, 22).

While exact meanings for the figurative and non-figurative works of Magical art - and associated symbolic art such as “musical instruments, necklaces, pendants... [and] grave goods” (Adovasio, Soffer & Page 2007, 163) - remain unattainable, it is clear that each of the constituent parts of Magical (and early Mythic art) can be read as attempts to express, explain or contain the world. This speaks in many ways to Wilber’s schema of consciousness. For Wilber the Magical stage is framed by the limits of pre-operational cognition. This level of consciousness provides a functional structure for the interpretation of art. Pre-operational cognition is egocentric in the sense that it is a “representational” form of thinking, close to and significantly undifferentiated from, the body (Wilber 1995, 166). Wilber writes that with pre-operational consciousness, “images and symbols do not merely represent objects; they are thought to be concretely part of the things they represent” (Wilber 1995, 216). Piaget explains this in terms of magical causality. Through the link made by participation, subject and object become fused in a magical relationship: “the subject regards his (sic) gestures, his thoughts, or the objects he handles, as charged with efficacy ... Thus ... a certain gesture will protect one from certain danger; a certain white pebble will bring about the growth of water lilies” (Piaget in Wilber 1995, 216-7). Read in this way the images and symbols expressed in this stage can be understood as literal expressions, or expressions of magical causality (perhaps in ritual context), but not metaphors (which requires formal operational cognitive). The literal, historical, proto-cultural, psychological and spiritual dimensions of Magical symbolic expression are so deeply intertwined that their different constitutive parts are virtually impossible to unravel.

From the cave paintings and sculptures of the Magical era, to the stories of gods and goddesses in the Mythic world, the examination of art and story is essential to our understanding of these stages, yet they do not yield simple or singular meanings. Later in this chapter I examine Marija Gimbutas’ attempt to reconstruct the meta-language of the Goddess in Neolithic symbolism as an example of this dilemma. With the emergence of
writing in the Mythic age, mythology became an increasingly important form of evidence through which changing modes of consciousness are revealed.

**THE MYTHIC STAGE**

Encountering the limits of the Magical stage creatively, new forms of social organisation and production emerged when the limits of the Magical stage were creatively encountered. The wild flowering innovations of the Mythic era heralded the birth of a new stage of consciousness (Wilber 1995, 168-9). Around 8000 BCE the Neolithic period began with garden and domus creating settled horticultural villages across Asia Minor. Food was produced through the cultivation of plants in garden sized plots that were tilled by digging sticks or hand held hoes (Huber 2006, 70). The skills of pottery and weaving were enhanced, animals were domesticated and utilised for food production. In all these mediums, women of this period are believed to have been “the primary creators of the technology that turned the raw into the cooked, plant and animal matter into clothes and containers” (Ruether 2005, 18).

Wilber points to the major events of late Mythic organisation - codified mythological texts, kingship and the city-state - as the key markers of the Mythic period. His diachronic account of evolutionary stages in *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* skirts over an important historical period of development that falls between the tribe based Magical stage and late Mythic imperialism. This stage, the early Mythic period, was characterised by settled horticultural villages with a form of peer-based local council.

As the early and late Mythic periods are significantly different in terms of the markers of food production, social organisation, mythic symbolism and particularly, gender stratification, it is important to examine the Mythic stage in two parts; Mythic and Mythic-Agrarian. The Mythic stage is particularly important to feminist scholars of religion, many of whom consider it a crucial turning point: “when a critical shift took place” which had a deep impact on “human relations and in human relations to the earth” (Ruether 1992, 8).

**STAGES OF CONSCIOUSNESS: FROM MAGIC TO MYTHIC**

Wilber proposes that the differentiation of mind from body-nature, or the development of what he terms the noosphere, occurs in the Mythic stage and later culminates in the

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3 Wilber gestures to the importance of the Neolithic Mythic period but skirts over any detailed discussion of this period in *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*. I particularly follow Wilber’s discussion in *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* as it represents Wilber’s most detailed outline of evolutionary philosophy.
development of formal operational thinking in the (next) Mental-Rational stage. He describes the development of concrete operational cognition and conventional morality as the key markers of Mythic stage consciousness. Conventional morality is derived from Kohlberg’s work on the stages of moral development. Kohlberg proposed three stages: Preconventional, Conventional and Postconventional. Conventional morality was reached once the Preconventional tendencies to comply “with rules to avoid pain and gain rewards” were superceded by “conformity to rules that are defined by others’ approval or society’s rules” (Matsumo and Juang 2004, 173).

In the pre-operational thinking of the Magical stage identity was “natural or body-based” on a personal level, and “collective identity was likewise kinship or blood-bound” (Wilber 1995, 171). According to Wilber, tribal systems of the Magical age had limited capacities for dealing with those outside the kin/blood lineage of the tribe or managing the wider context of large groups of people (Wilber 1995, 168-9). In the early Mythic stage, while the primary locus of personal identity remained close to the body and nature, a shift began. The sense of identity expanded outwards enabling more social, role-based identities.

Early concrete operational cognition is characterised by the loosening of the limits of embodied identity orientation and the emergence of noospheric identity (Wilber 1995, 223). This is represented by the nascent capacity to take the perspective of an ‘other’ enabling social roles and sociocentric identities (including gender roles). As Wilber describes it, “the self transcendent drive within biology pushed forth something beyond biology ... symbols and tools that both created and depended upon new levels of social holons ” (Wilber 1995, 100). Thus the Mythic stage saw the development of “mythic-membership”, which united social members ethnocentrically around the belief and practice of a mythological system, and made the development of larger social entities possible (Wilber 1995, 226).

**GIMBUTAS AND THE GREAT GODDESS**

In the beginning, people prayed to the Creatress of Life, the Mistress of Heaven. At the very dawn of religion, God was a woman. Do you remember?

(Stone in Muten 1994, 58)

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4 Matsumo and Juang note that “findings from a number of cross-cultural studies suggest that many aspects of Kohlberg’s theory of morality are universal.” They cite studies by Snarey (1985), Ma (1988), Ma and Cheung (1996) and Hau and Lew (1989)(Matsumo and Juang 2004, 174). The parameters and characteristics of Kohlberg’s stages have been comprehensively critiqued for their androcentric biases in the work of Carol Gilligan. I examine her work in Chapter Seven.
The Mythic Neolithic period and its symbolism has been of particular interest to feminist practitioners and theorists of spirituality. The archaeomythological evidence presented in Marija Gimbutas’ Goddess hypothesis has been used as primary evidence by a wide range of prominent feminist theorists. Her work presents the thesis that this period reveals pre-patriarchal forms of representations of the female divine and was witness to events that led to the fall from matricentric to patriarchal social structures.

Renowned for her Central and Eastern European archaeological expertise (Eller in Dashu 2005, 192), Gimbutas worked for over thirty years on “extensive studies of the Indo-European Bronze Age”, herself directing “five major excavations in southeast Europe” (Vest 2005, 242). Her focus became the analysis of depictions of the early Mythic period in Old Europe. She developed the hypothesis that a widespread agrarian culture had flourished throughout Neolithic Europe between 6500 and 3500 years BCE, venerating a singular Great Goddess (Gimbutas 1989, xix). From her survey, Gimbutas asserted that Neolithic art displayed the sacred principle of “all life in Nature” through “thousands of images in female form” (Marler 2003, 2). The “striking absence of images of warfare and male domination” led Gimbutas to declare the Mythic culture of Neolithic Europe as primarily peaceful, matrilineal and kinship based (Gimbutas 1989, xx).

Gimbutas’ hypothesis asserts that the established peaceful, matrilineal, agricultural and primarily sedentary culture of Mythic Old Europe was aggressively invaded by nomadic herders who arrived with domesticated horses and lethal weapons, and brought with them the myths of conquering warrior hero gods. This invasion heralded the dawn of the patriarchal era and a new stage of consciousness sometime between 4300 and 2800 BCE (Gimbutas 1989, xx). In the ensuing Bronze Age period, after the “superimposition of the Indo-European and finally the Christian myths” (Gimbutas 1989, xvii), the roots of sexism, hierarchy and dualism took root in society (Marler 2003, 2).

From her interpretation of the “systemic associations” of around two thousand artefacts, Gimbutas presented a “pictorial script” for the symbols of Old Europe (Gimbutas 1989, xiii-v). She deciphered the “grammar and syntax” of Mythic symbol as a “kind of meta-
language” which, she asserted, represented a “cohesive and persistent ideological system” (Gimbutas 1989, xv, xvi). Her translation of the symbolic output of Old Europe arose from her understanding that their prehistoric consciousness “experienced the world as a wondrous whole, multiple in its many facets” (Vest 2005, 244). For Gimbutas, the Goddess, whose “major aspects” were “the birth-giver ... the fertility-giver ... the life or nourishment-giver and protectress ... and the death-wielder as a stiff nude” (Gimbutas 1989, xix), was a symbol for the dynamic interplay of life energy cycling and transforming between the two extremes of life and death, dissolving from one form and regenerating as another (Gimbutas 1989, 321).

Gimbutas’ use of an expanded interdisciplinary methodology can be framed as a purposeful response to the androcentric bias of archaeological reconstructions of prehistory. With the rational - objective voice behind the “authoritative and monolithic readings of women” in history uncloaked as a thin veil for the face of male subjectivity (Bach 1990, 1:1), the feminist methodological response has been one of conscious employment of subjectivity, phenomenology, and creative imagination. Gimbutas’ approach to the interpretation of prehistoric artefacts combined readings from “archaeology, mythology, ethnology, folklore, historical linguistics, comparative religion, and information from historical documents” (Marler 2003, 2).

According to her thesis later mythological motifs display continuous, if distorted, representations of the same symbols found in prehistoric materials. Informed by the premise of the survival of “archaic cultural patterns” (Marler 2003, 2), she asserted that the goddesses of later periods were fragmented dilutions of a singular Neolithic figure. Having established her thesis on the Goddess, Gimbutas inductively read evidence backwards and forwards across time (reading the “substratum” of the Goddess in later mythic motifs) and proceeded to incorporate the symbols of the period under one sign: ‘the language of the Goddess’.

CRITIQUE OF THE GODDESS HYPOTHESIS

Despite the undoubtedly positive connotations of ‘female power’ that resonate from Gimbutas’ Goddess scholarship, it has been repeatedly and comprehensively criticised by archaeologists, including feminist archaeologists, for a lack of factual rigour (Uck 1968; Fleming 1969, Meskell 1995; Conkey & Tringham 1995, 1998: as cited in Meskell 1995;

9 Wilber would disagree with the implicit assertion in her work, and particularly thealogy’s analysis of it, that the mode of consciousness in this stage is trans-rational, as his theory asserts that consciousness in this stage is pre-rational and thus its sense of unity with the ground is pre-egoic differentiation.
Whitehouse 2000). Feminist archaeologist Meskell writes that while scholarship examining the past from “an engendered perspective is ... long overdue”, “re-weaving a fictional past with claims of scientific proofs ... is simply irresponsible” (Meskell 1995, 74).

Critics have refuted the meanings assigned by Gimbutas to symbolic artefacts and have charged her with presenting her symbolic interpretations with “little or no explanation or authentication” (Long 1996, 1), “as though her readings were self-evident” (Whitehouse 2000, 328). In reviewing symbolic assignment in Gimbutas, Meskell writes that: “every figure that is not phallic - and some that clearly are – are taken as symbols of the Goddess. This includes parallel lines, lozenges, zigzags, spirals, double axes, butterflies, pigs and pillars. Why this miscellany are self-evidently emblems of a female, much less a deity, is never explained ... indeed even the male may be symbolically female”(Meskell 1995, 79).

Ruether draws the conclusion that her “overall interpretative framework” lacks “credibility” (Ruether 2005, 23 & 37).

Gimbutas’ hypothesis that a single ‘Great Goddess’ of multiple aspects is the source of the various manifestations of later goddesses of history is also highly contentious. Larrington suggests that this approach “blurs important differences, generalizing, often inaccurately, about the goddesses of different cultures, in order to assimilate them to a single supreme figure” (Larrington 1992, x). Gimbutas’ Goddess hypothesis (and applications of) fail to acknowledge that while the female face (and perhaps principle) of the divine, can be manifest in various guises, this does not release the individual appearance of goddesses, with varying functions, meanings and relationships from the rightful claims of their cultural and historic specificity11 (Meskell 1995).

While not absolutely explicit, it is clear that, in keeping with feminist methodology, Gimbutas’ archaeo-mythology is a liberally intuitive and creatively interpretive method. She moves her subject matter out of the realm of archaeology and into the realm of mythopoesis and in doing so blurs boundaries and distinctions, utilising but going beyond the scope of the material evidence. Yet despite these methodological problems, there is much rich material in Gimbutas’ extensive research that should not go unutilised (I return to it shortly).

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10 The two triangles composing the double axe are explained as a sign of the female pubic triangle and the female trinity.

11 The same charge that has been made of Campbell’s Monomythic hero.
REMEMBERING AND INVENTING THE GODDESS

There was a time when you were not a slave, remember that. You walked alone, full of laughter, you bathed bare-bellied. You say you have lost all recollection of it ... you say there are no words to describe it, you say it does not exist. But remember. Make an effort to remember. Or, failing that, invent.

(Wittig in Christ 1979, 277)

Gimbutas’ work suggests that the consciousness of the Mythic Neolithic period was significantly different to that which emerged in the Mythic-Agrarian Bronze Age; much in line with the levels of consciousness theory proposed by Wilber and Gebser. Theologian Christ writes the following recapitulation of Gimbutas’ hypothesis, “the breakdown of tribal culture ... led to the disruption of the holistic perspective that characterized early human societies. Woman and man, nature and culture, body and spirit, Goddess and God, once bound together in a total vision of world renewal, became split off from each other and ordered hierarchically” (Christ & Plaskow 1979, 21). Her reading of Gimbutas’ work is characteristic of theologia analysis, in which the Goddess and her narrative are emblematic of the “legitimacy and goodness of female power, the female body, and female will” (Christ 1997, 22). The Mythic Goddess period is equated with a society that revered woman and in which women held and (equally) exercised social, cultural and ontological power.

Ethos and mythos, the Goddess hypothesis has been used as religious narrative by those men and women, Ruether writes, “who are engaged in a search for a more life-sustaining deity and spirituality” (Ruether 2005, 21). Gimbutas’ work as used by theology, both establishes a historically grounded trajectory for a female spiritual symbolic, and offers an alternative social model. The Goddess hypothesis is used to carve a space of return outside the continuum of the patriarchal symbolic; directly linking the theological vision for the future with an ideal pre-patriarchal past (Meskell 1995, 78).

One of the strategic cores of theology’s employment of Goddess myth is its conscious articulation of a “mythic space to ‘go back to’”, a space that is seen to pre-exist the contemporary space of “master-slave/ patriarchal/colonial definition and occupation”, a space that is “variously imaginative, ideal, historical, emergent, and/or psychical”(Caputi 2001, 3). In this sense the “lost feminist alternative” of Goddess prehistory “is not so much a literal historical era of the past as it is a symbol of faith in the possibility of a better self and society ... [a] capacity for good social relations that can be resurrected from beneath the patterns of alienation. Its validity, like that of the myth of the Garden of

11 The reference to God and Goddess is at odds with the insistence that only the Goddess only was worshipped in the Mythic period, and later Gods were (at least initially) only secondary figures (sons or lovers).
Eden on which it is built, is theological rather than historical” (Ruether 2005, 307).

Yet Ruether charges the Goddess movement with failing to distinguish between myth and history (Ruether 1992, 8). As noted, the ambiguity between ‘objective’ history and a ‘remembered and invented’ one is to some degree, purposeful and strategic. Gimbutas’ hypothesis, as a mythic-historical narrative, fits perfectly with thealogy’s mythopoetic stratagems: to destabilise the existing masculine symbolic and disrupt the androcentrism that has eviscerated women’s contributions to and presence in history, and to then create a re-languaged and re-mythified genealogy of female symbolic and spiritual history. As such it has been repeatedly and fervently defended.

The core problem with Gimbutas’ work, and particularly its theological readings and defence resides in the fact that Gimbutas’ deeply symbolic hypothesis lends itself, as a form of evidence, to thealogy’s own mythic tale of sacred origins. Thealogy’s strategic aim of acquiring a swathe of pre-patriarchal territory forces a conclusive reading of ambiguous evidence.

**RE-READING THE MYTHIC EVIDENCE**

Life in the simple agricultural villages of the Mythic period appears to have been “relatively peaceful” and demonstrates far less by way of organised hierarchy, central authority, class inequity and warfare\(^\text{13}\), as “compared to the later imperialistic, clearly patriarchal empires” (Bach 1990, 5:1). Studies of contemporary horticultural societies show an equal distribution of productive work between men and women. Both women and men “plant, weed, harvest, and transport crops” after new areas of land have been cleared and prepared for cultivation, mostly by men (Huber 2006, 71). This is likely to have been the case in the Neolithic period also.

In accord with contemporary evidence, women in early horticultural societies would have worked with and around nursing infants: “lactating women can carry babies and return with loads of food as women gatherers do” (Huber 2006, 71). While moving towards the socially conventional ‘roles and rules’ of concrete operations and conventional morality, the early Mythic\(^\text{14}\) period would not yet have the reified differentiations of gender roles and status divisions that are demonstrated in later stages.

\(^{13}\) Hallo writes that “the prepottery Neolithic was a generally pacific time in human relations” (footnote); “as indicated by the absence of fortifications” (Hallo & Van Dijk 1968, 17).

\(^{14}\) It needs to be noted that these descriptions of the Mythic stage refer to the general tendency of the stage, which overwhelmingly appears to be in accord with what Sanday terms an “inner orientation” (see footnote 17). It is no doubt true that other specific examples of societies with a predominant “outer orientation” would also be found in the Mythic stage.
Like Gimbutas, archaeologist Mellaart hypothesised from his excavation of the Neolithic urban settlement Catal Huyuk that these people inhabited a “mode of community in which women and men lived more interdependently, with more sharing of power than we know of in later societies” (Barstow 1978, 9). This was deduced from its “beehive” like structure, with “no streets, no large plaza, no palace”, which suggested a lack of centralised authority (Barstow 1978, 11). What the town of Catal Huyuk did have was many shrines. These included frescoes with “lively, natural, lifelike figures” illustrating, “animals … bull horns” and figures of women “running or dancing and whirling … hair streaming behind her”, “big bellied with pregnancy” or “legs spread wide, giving birth”, also “women and men dressed in leopard skins … chasing and dancing around deer and bulls” (Barstow 1978, 12-13). These images, Mellaart suggests, display continuity and provide the earliest known link back to cave art (Mellaart in Barstow 1978, 8).

Catal Huyuk appeared to be a settlement with plentiful agricultural resources: “Crops of barley, peas, wheat, almonds, apples and pistachios … wine from hackberry … milk and meat from domesticated sheep, cows and goats” (Barstow 1978, 12). Assessing this evidence Barstow suggests that the images of the female divine in the Catal Hayak shrines may reflect the status of women in this community and the fact that they “exercised certain kinds of power … because its chief source of wealth was agriculture and women were in charge of its development” (Barstow 1978, 15).

For Wilber, on the level of ontological symbolism, “where women work the fields with a hoe, God is a Woman; where men work the fields with a plow, God is a Man” (Wilber 1995, 159). While this may be true in part, a range of factors – from consciousness, to environmental context, cultural values, aesthetics and gender roles, affect ontological symbolism. In a complicated gesture, religious symbology both sets and follows the ontological terrain in which socio-cultural rules are grounded.

Extrapolating from the case studies of Catal Huyuk and Old Europe, the Mythic period appears to exhibit what anthropologist Sanday calls an ‘inner orientation’. She argued, from her extensive research on the status of women in foraging communities, that societies develop “an overarching cultural orientation” that relates to, and is at base rooted in environmental conditions and survival (Sanday 1981, 6). Her research points to a strong “congruence between the gender of a people’s creator gods, their orientation to
the creative forces of nature, and the secular expression of male and female power” (Sanday 1981, 6).

An ‘inner orientation’ arose within communities inhabiting “relatively benign environments” and resulted in the sacralisation of nature and an emphasis on “the female creative principle” (Chafetz 2006, 11). The ‘outer orientation’ arose “in more physically harsh and/or warlike environments, where nature is defined as dangerous” (Chafetz 2006, 11). According to her hypothesis, when environmental conditions and the capacity to meet individual and group needs are easily met the capacity for creative co-existence between the sexes is more likely to prevail. Her analysis attributes the appearance of high levels of male dominance in a society to a cluster of factors that importantly include environmental stresses in which “resources diminish” and group survival or identity is endangered (Sanday 1981, 210).

Consistent with the discussion at the beginning of this chapter, if Gimbutas’ evidence on Neolithic symbolism is re-examined alongside that of Mellaart, it seems clear that the people in this early part of the Mythic stage used symbols and images to construct mythic narrative that reflected their immanent and embedded consciousness; a consciousness that experienced mind, body and world as part of a singular whole. Reflecting the fact that personal and collective identity was still very close to, and not totally differentiated from, body and earth, these people demonstrated through symbol and images of female and male divine, humans and animals, an immanent pantheistic sense of awe of, and intimacy with, the world of nature and the human body (and this was particularly reflected in the plentiful depictions of women’s pregnant bodies and childbirth).

From a twenty first century vantage, what has been lost, as well as what has been gained, in the movement away from preliterate people’s undifferentiated intimacy with nature is clear. In birthing an increasingly complex world of symbol - through song, dance, tool making and creative materiality - a long path of development began. Each forward movement into the realms of the cognitive and the symbolic was a movement further away from the embedded, immanent connection with the natural world.

15 Her conclusions in regard to the congruence between the gender of creator gods and secular power are problematic if her argument is moved from its specific context (hunter-gatherer societies) and examined more generally (for example, in the context of Hindu societies).

16 In more hostile environments ‘outer orientation’ leads to gender inequity as “the sexes tend to separate from each other” conceptually as well as physically (Sanday 1981, 7). Sanday concludes that male oppression of women in hunter-gather societies was not an “automatic nor an immediate response to stress”, but was determined by the nature of their ‘orientation’ (Sanday 1981, 9).
Yet as Wilber points out, the Magic/Mythic stage of consciousness was a “pre-differentiated” union, a fusion in which part is confused for the whole (Wilber 1998, 111). By contrast, higher levels of consciousness (which Wilber posits are presently becoming available to humankind) offer the possibility of a “trans-differentiated integration”, in which the individuated self, recognises self, other and nature as separate yet interconnected parts of a sacred whole (Wilber 1998, 111).

**EPOCHAL MUTATION: FROM MYTHIC TO MYTHIC AGRARIAN**

Some 3-4000 years after the appearance of the first forms of horticulture, the invention of metallurgy brought both a more advanced hoe-based mode of food production, and other, deeper, repercussions. The coming of the sword, the city-state, private property and kingship, marked the move from the Mythic to the Mythic-Agrarian stage and effected tectonic shifts in gender dynamics.

With a radical and distinct change in tone, the mythology of the Mythic-Agrarian period reflected the increasing differentiation that human consciousness was making from its intimacy with the earth and the body, and turned away from earth-based stories towards stories of war and conquest. Charting the course of mythological narrative Campbell marks an “epochal mutation” occurring in the land of Sumer during this period (Campbell in Bachofen 1967, xliv).

Nestled between and around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers Sumer roughly occupied the land which, in contemporary terms, is known as Iraq. Credited with the development of the arts of “civilisation”, things as diverse as the “food producing arts of agriculture and stock breeding … mathematics … astronomically calculated calendar, [and] monumental architecture”, the developments incubated in Sumer heralded a “new style of human living” that spread “westward and eastward to the Atlantic and Pacific” (Campbell in Bachofen 1967, xliv).

Early Neolithic horticultural villages, overrun by ongoing waves of migration, invasion and conquest, and fuelled by the urban revolution of the Bronze Age, developed over time into the first city-states, characterised by “monumental building and fortifications” (Hallo & Van Dijk 1968, 30). These cities produced significant political and social shifts through which “tribal and kinship loyalties were replaced by political loyalties based on common dependence on a military machine headed by a king” (Hallo & Simpson 1998, 31). Further socio-cultural change was signalled by the establishment of class structures and first instances of wealth accumulation by a select few.
The development of cuneiform, a writing system of wedge-shaped symbols pressed into clay, in the second quarter of the third millennium BCE, is credited with marking the historical movement from pre to protohistory (Hallo & Van Dijk 1968, 25; see also Kramer 1963, 4). Along with the invention of “temple worship, and ... the kingly art of government” the development of writing led to an explosion of codified mythologies (Campbell 1964, 6).

Figure 5: ‘Warka vase’

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF MYTH: THE TALES OF INANNA

The Sumerian mythologies of the goddess Inanna straddle the divide between the early Mythic and Mythic-Agrarian stages. Inanna is a particularly important case study. Encapsulated in the very first written mythic narratives she is both a unique representation of the heroine and of the divine in female form. In this guise she represents the archetype of the Self as envisaged through the Mythic stage. The significant changes that occur in the manner of her representation as the Mythic stage transitions to Mythic-Agrarian demonstrate the shifts in consciousness that occur during this period.

The Mythic Inanna embodied the values of adventure, curiosity, knowledge, sensuality and deeper self-knowledge through mysticism. As a spiritual hero she is both agentic and communal, transcendent and yet deeply immanent. As a goddess Inanna fully represents the burgeoning consciousness of the Mythic age. Fundamentally different to the mother

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Goddess espoused by Gimbutas\textsuperscript{18}, Inanna is a goddess of exploration and knowledge. In her early mythologies the natural world is known through observation and cultivation.\textsuperscript{19} Humanly incarnated, she joyfully examines her body, walks in orchards, and talks with farmer and shepherd. She is courted, and the tales of her lovemaking with the semi-divine shepherd Dumuzi are replete with metaphors for sexual pleasure and fecundity. The story of Inanna’s river journey is characteristic of the style of these early texts. Accounts of her adventures are framed by, and interwoven with, a sense of rapturous appreciation for physical embodiment and the earth’s abundant bounty. The adventure is introduced by Inanna’s presence in the sheepfold, where leaning “against the apple tree ... her vulva was wondrous to behold” (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 12). She travels on the Boat of Heaven to the palace of her father Enki, the God of Wisdom, where she gains the memes\textsuperscript{20} of civilisation from him, using her charm, wit and wisdom. After winning a magical battle against a monster (sent by Enki to retrieve the memes) during her return voyage, she bestows these gifts of culture upon the people of her city.

The memes cover everything from the art of song, to the craft of the builder and the scribe, from kindling and the putting out of fire, to counselling and the making of judgements, the arts of lovemaking, and descent and return from the underworld (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 16–7). Importantly, through her adventures Inanna creates possible new ways of being, thinking and acting: at the end of the river journey she unloads more memes “than Enki had given [her]” (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 26. Trans. from the Sumerian).

\textsuperscript{18} In contrast to the Goddess hypothesis, while Inanna’s representation demonstrates a fecund sexuality, she is not a mother figure and is not represented as pregnant or in childbirth.\textsuperscript{19} Hallo writes that the fertile crescent of Sumer “required massive, sophisticated human effort to yield the abundance for which they later became famous” (Hallo & Van Dijk 1968, 11).\textsuperscript{20} The meaning of “me” – the symbols that Inanna gained from Enki, and which she wears on her clothing - remains untranslated (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983). Reflecting on the “me” in the context of this and other Sumerian narratives, the “me” symbols appear to be memes, which Richard Dawkins defined in \textit{The Selfish Gene} (1976) as units of cultural transmission; ideas that can be transferred from one individual to another and further adapted for use.
INANNA: THE GREAT DEATH

She walked alone
along the plain,
almost out of nowhere
on the very edge of things,
the door appeared.
a large dark mound
emerging from the very body of the earth.

She walked alone
but prepared,
purposeful, brazen,
wrapped in the warmth of every confidence,
wrapped in the magical jewelled strands of her conquests,
alive.

She beat on the solid black of the monolith,
called out boldly across the way:
"Open the door gatekeeper.
I alone would enter."

And the door opened.
Neti, the gatekeeper of the Great Below appeared.
And he saw her.
The goddess.
A golden fire burning across the threshold.
Who is this?
   It is the unlucky, the old, the ill, the crazed, the snatched, the
   misbegotten who arrive at my door,
   without choice, without joy.
   I control the passage for those for whom there is no passage.
   Who is this that does not understand the ways of the Great Below?

He returned her challenge:
"Who are you?"

She announced:
"I am Inanna,
Queen of Heaven and Earth, on my way to the East."

With a curiosity,
almost tender,
he asked:
"If you are truly Inanna, Queen of Heaven, on your way to the East.
Why has your heart led you on the road from which no traveller
returns?"\(^{21}\)

The story of Inanna’s descent to Kur, her death and resurrection, is the first written
account of the hero’s journey and it testifies to her status as a mystical figure (Campbell
1964, 7). No clearer symbolic representation of the tenets of perennial philosophy could

\(^{21}\) This poem is an interpretation of Inanna’s descent story based on the translation of ‘The Descent of Inanna’ from the Sumerian, by Wolkstein & Kramer (1983).
be imagined, or expected to emerge, from the stage of consciousness and the nascent language tools available to the Mythic age.

This journey, undertaken by the beautiful spirited Queen of Heaven and Earth, the gateway and conduit between humans and the gods, Inanna is a deliberate and purposeful one. The narrative begins with her thoughtful preparation. She gathers “together the seven sacred” memes and dresses herself in this symbolic regalia: “the small lapis bead”, “the royal robe”, “the breastplate”, “the lapis measuring rod and line” (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 53). She leaves detailed instructions with Ninshubur, “her faithful servant”, her “warrior” on what to do in case of her non-return: “Set up a lament for me by the ruins. Beat the drum for me. Circle the houses of the gods” (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 53).

The descent to Kur requires Inanna to pass through seven gates. Ereshkigal instructs Neti, the gatekeeper to “Bolt the seven gates”, “one by one, open each gate a crack. Let Inanna enter. As she enters, remove her royal garments” (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 57). Piece by piece, every symbol of her power, accomplishment and identity are removed. Finally she arrives, “naked and bowed low” she enters the throne room of Kur (Wolkstien & Kramer 1983, 60). Then, “Ereshkigal rose and fastened on her the eye of death. She struck her. Inanna was turned into a corpse, a piece of rotting meat, and was hung from a hook on the wall” (Wolkstien and Kramer 1983, 60).

After “three days and three nights”, following Inanna’s instructions Ninshubur seeks out Enki (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 61). The God of Wisdom is troubled by Inanna’s predicament and from dirt under his fingernails creates two tiny, abject creatures, the kurgurra and the galatur. Enki gave “the food of life to the kurgurra and the water of life to the galatur” and he sent them down into Kur; “like flies they slipped through the cracks of the gates” (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 64).

Inanna’s death has brought Ereshkigal to labour with new birth. Enki’s creatures lament with Ereshkigal as she moans “with the cries of a women about to give birth” and in acknowledgement she offers to bless them or give them a gift (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 64-66). They request Inanna’s corpse. After sprinkling it with the food and water of life,

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22 As seen on the Uruk vase, one of Inanna’s symbols was the two poles of the threshold. Among the many facets of her representation, this suggestion of her as a liminal figure, a gateway or passage between the human and divine worlds, is most interesting.

23 The Sumerian term kur literally means ‘mountain’ or ‘foreign land’ and came to be translated by archaeologists as Underworld or Great Below (Kramer 1961, 76).
"Inanna arose" (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 67).

Inanna’s immanent-transcendent journey is a visceral description of the mystical experience of great death, or Satori as it is known in Buddhism. Wilber writes the following description of this union: “forced to drop all identity with your present body and ego. You are forced to find that in you which actually goes beyond you – namely, the pure, empty, formless, timeless Witness or primordial Self. To the extent that you can actually rest as the timeless Witness (‘I am not this, not that’), then you have died to the separate self … You have, in fact, found the great Unborn.” (Wilber 1998, 173). He quotes Plotinus who writes that this mystical union required that you “strip thyself of everything” (Plotinus in Wilber 1995, 334). This is so in Inanna’s willing descent towards death. She drops every aspect of her identity, gate by gate. She relinquishes the entirety of her separate self to rest in union with the Absolute. This apophatic narrative stood metaphorically for this death of the separate self.

Parallels of style can be drawn between this text and those by western mystics in the apophatic tradition and the tradition of Zen koan; language is used paradoxically, poetically, to directly transmit mystical experience, pointing and directing the mind beyond itself. Framed, as this myth was, by the practice of temple ritual, and couched in affect-driven, poetic, repetitive language, the description of Inanna’s journey to Kur can be read as a sacred text; the first instalment in the great perennial trajectory of mystical teachings.

THE MYTHIC-IMPERIAL STAGE

Pre-dating military leadership, the earliest kings of Sumer were high priests (Hallo & Van Dijk 1968, 40). One of the markers of the transition to the Mythic-Agrarian age of empire and expansive military conquest was the appearance of military rulers who claimed a divine right derived from selection, and often parentage by, the gods and goddesses (Wilber 1995, 171 & 176).

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24 The myth continues. Her return from Kur is conditional, she must send someone else down in her place. She chooses Dumuzi, her (ungrieving) consort, as her substitute. He flees, appeals to the gods who assist him to metamorphosise. He is eventually captured but his sister Geshtinanna agrees to share his time in Kur, spending half the year each (Wolkstien & Kramer1983, 68-89).

25 While in this instance I give priority to a mystical reading of Inanna’s descent story this is not to suggest that the story is not also coloured with historical, socio-cultural and psychological layers of meaning.

26 As noted, Wilber equates the Mythic period with concrete operational cognition. As he makes clear this stage of cognition does not have the rational ability to hold mythology metaphorically (Wilber 1995, 236-241). Acknowledging this, I am not suggesting that the mythologies of Inanna were generally understood as metaphors for mystical union, but I am proposing that the intention of this text, at the highest level, was to express and affectively provoke transpersonal experience.
Around 2300 BCE the Akkadian king Sargon invaded and conquered Sumer. Calling himself Inanna’s beloved, he attributed his right to sovereignty in part to his claim to be born and beloved of Sumer’s chief goddess. As the conduit of knowledge between the gods, goddesses, and humankind, Inanna was particularly renowned for bringing Sumer “the art of kingship” after the “great flood” as chronicled in Sumerian myth (Hallo & Van Dijk 1968, 34). Through an act of ritualistic union the King, (playing the role of her consort Dumuzi), united with Inanna (in the form of her high priestess), and was thus divinely endowed with the right to rule.

Sargon entrenched the reach of his power “in a great ring around Sumer and Akkad” not just through conquest and alliance, but also through the vehicle of the imperial family (Hallo & Van Dijk 1968, 53). Hallo notes that the introduction of a “dynastic system of royal succession” brought to an end the earlier system of “elective kingship” while it established an “alliance of royal and religious interests” (Hallo & Van Dijk 1968, 46). Installing his daughter Enheduanna as high priestess of Inanna’s temple, Sargon claimed further ontological and spiritual power for the throne. Enheduanna extended her father’s work of conquest into the theological realm, syncretising Inanna with the Akkadian goddess Ishtar and producing a hybrid goddess who better reflected the values and consciousness of the Mythic-imperial system (Hallo 1968, 7-9).

From Enheduanna’s time onwards the resplendent Neolithic tone of Inanna’s myths was readapted in accord with its cultural and social surround (Campbell 1964, 17). As Sumer’s discrete “political existence came to an end and its people vanished as a discrete ethnic group, or ... were assimilated”, Babylon rose (Ochshorn 1983, 19). Following this trajectory, Inanna’s transmutation culminated in her form as the dominating Babylonian goddess of war Ishtar, referred to biblically as the Great Whore.\[27\]

**THE HERO AND THE WARRIOR**

... the myth of the warrior-hero has dominated Western imagining of what it is to be a ‘man,’ that is, a full human being. (Keller 1986, 8)

Catherine Keller presents an erudite analysis of the figure of the hero and heroine from the perspective of masculine and feminine models of selfhood in *A Broken Web* (1986). Examining Bronze and Iron Age texts she notes that where the hero ventures, the heroine

\[27\] It is interesting to note that in cultures where multiple manifestations of the goddess are worshipped (such as India), the chaotic and destructive form of the goddess is balanced and measured by her compassionate, nurturing form.
waits. She deftly maps the mythic symbolism of gendered selfhood against the turn of historical events. When Keller equates the hero of myth with the separative nature-denying masculine consciousness of the warrior-hero, it is specifically the Mythic-Agrarian stage to which she refers. The classic war heroes of this period - Gilgamesh, Marduk, Odysseus - each epitomise “transcendence without immanence” (Keller 1986, 26).

Keller asserts that it is with the coming “of the Indo-European invaders in Europe and the Semitic conquerors in the Near East” that warrior heroes “extirpate the matricentric images of a nonheroic and pre-patriarchal culture ... [and] transmutes the images of female power into the monster, the enemy and the amazon” (Keller 1986, 26). She uses the example of the creation story from the Babylonian epic Enuma Elish in which Tiamat the primordial creatrix is slain and dismembered by her son, the supreme Babylonian god and warrior hero Marduk. He carves earth and sky from the unformed potentiality of her body, thus forming the world. Keller asserts that this mythological act is a deeply symbolic one in which “the primordial enemy” is posed as being a “woman ... and the cosmos [is] established by her destruction” (Keller 1986, 77).

The changing relationship between Gilgamesh and Inanna-Ishtar also illustrates the symbolic shift that takes place in the move from the Mythic to the Mythic-Agrarian. In Sumerian days Inanna and Gilgamesh’s relationship was one of ease and reciprocity. In the creation tale, The Huluppu Tree28, Inanna rescues a tree from the floodwaters of creation and plants it in her garden. As it grows it is invaded by a nesting snake that “could not be charmed”, a bird, and a dark maid (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, 6). Inanna cries out to Gilgamesh, a semi-divine human warrior, for help. He cuts down the tree and creates a throne and the symbolic bed of kingship for her. In return she crafts for him symbols of power and play.

In the later Babylonian (Mythic Agrarian) narrative Epic of Gilgamesh he rejects Ishtar’s sovereignty by refusing to undertake the rite of marriage with the goddess, taunting and deriding her. Instead he enters into heroic union with a male, Enkidu (Frymer-Kensky 1992, 78). These stories illustrate the progressive disavowal of the revered figure of the female divine that occurred along with the rise of the separative consciousness of the Mythic-Agrarian stage.

In contrast to Inanna’s willing mystical descent, the Babylonian story of Gilgamesh’s

28 As found in Wolkstein & Kramer (1983).
physical search for immortality is starkly marked by the newly emergent values of materialism. At the end of his quest, with all of the symbols of immortality lost, it is the city walls of “Uruk, the strong-walled city ... the work of Gilgamesh, the king” that are posed as the exemplar of Gilgamesh’s immortality (Sandars 1960, 117).

Missing from Keller’s analysis, and important in the context of this history of evolutionary consciousness, are the stage-specific markings of the hero. The figure of the hero is as much represented in the sensual Mythic form of Inanna - the journeyer, explorer and holder of knowledge - as it is in Keller’s classic Mythic Agrarian war heroes. Appearing on the fine edged cusp between pre and protohistory Inanna cuts a particularly important figure. For the first time, with the aid of the development of writing tools, the figure of the hero, embodying the highest human values, was recorded in texts. Appearing before the self was crafted as normatively male, Inanna is the first example of the heroic figure of the divine in female human form.29

MYTHIC-AGRARIAN: THE IRON AGE

The Mythic-imperialist age reached its pinnacle with the smelting of iron, a common metal, around 1000 BCE. Iron permitted “a great proliferation of weaponry” (Huber 2006, 74): the iron plough and the weapons of war came hand-in-hand across the Middle East, affecting most of Asia, Europe, and North Africa. With the coming of the iron plough, men assumed the mantle of primary producers. Social stratification assumed a new form, the pyramid, as “common to feudalism” (Huber 2006, 71). Huber writes that while “the plow had a devastating effect on the lives of ordinary people ... [it] depressed women’s status more than men’s” (Huber 2006, 71). The introduction of the plough disrupted the generally equal gender participation in food production of the previous stages: “the plow required the management of heavy draft animals in larger fields further from home” (Huber 2006, 74-5). In these societies with oxen and plough it was principally men who worked the fields, reflecting, in part, recourse to the size and strength principles of sexual dimorphism.

Wilber notes that there is a strong theoretical consensus that this shift saw “sexual polarization and male domination of the public sphere” move towards “their historical peak” (Wilber 1995, 158). Ruether, along with the predominance of feminist commentators, concurs with Wilber, she reports: “ethnographic studies show that plow agriculture generally displaces women from their earlier role in hand hoed gardening. Men then control both sources of food supply, grains and animals ... plow agriculture

29 Inanna is a figuration of pre-patriarchal female subjectivity (prior to norms of binary opposition).
Iron Age specialisation caused a schism between public and private domains. With food production continuing as a core survival concern, the social value of women remained quite directly linked to her participation in primary production. While women continued to produce and innovate in the home, they were increasingly marginalised from participation in the public sphere. The development of separate male and female gender roles and social and cultural spheres were linked to this division.

Woman’s status as a secondary producer, transforming the raw into the cooked in terms of food and material goods, rapidly translated into second class social status. The Iron Age also signalled the arrival of new and significantly different relationships to land ownership. With the advent of plough technology, land became “the chief form of [male] wealth” (Huber 2006, 75). Conventional gendered relationships emerged with late conventional operational thinking and conventional morality; divisions which were further reinforced by the creation of legal codes such as the Babylonian code of Hammurabi. Governing “male-female relations” this first written legal text reified gender divisions by legally defining “women as strictly subordinate to the males of their own family and to those of their husband’s family” (Ruether 1992, 165).

While the tribal and village conditions of the Magic and early Mythic stages lent themselves to smaller living groups with little in the way of a “political structure beyond the local group” (Dahlberg 1981, 18), the city-state structure was one of male politico-military elites. From the time of Bronze Age metallurgy onward, war became “a profitable way to acquire food produced by someone else” (Huber 2006, 70-1); and not just food, but land, status, goods and workers. The advent of ongoing, institutionally-based warfare had a significant influence on women’s plummeting social status of women. Warfare-focused political structures made women structurally, and conclusively, absent from the public decision-making processes that determined the structure of their social and cultural lives (Huber 2006, 77). With male domination of key forms of food production technology, war as a prevalent activity, and the institution of private property, society became stratified in such a way that women were increasingly denied access to resources, decision-making and the cultural public sphere.

The newly emergent values of this stage were of material and mind. Ontological symbolism for the divine reflected and reinforced the rules under which gendered
behaviour were inscribed. Theis chapter has illustrated the manner in which the symbolic landscape was dramatically reshaped in the movement from the Mythic to Mythic-Agrarian stage. On the verge of her eclipse the figure of the goddess-hero became war-like and ‘dangerously’ sexual as the ascendency of male figures for the divine culminated in the rise of male Gods. Over this time women were increasingly marginalised from their extensive and “unrestricted participation” and “positions of leadership” within the structures of Mythic Sumerian religion (Ochshorn 1983, 19). The rise of separative consciousness, with its distinct differentiation from body and earth, and by association from woman, continued to follow this developmental trajectory into the next stage, Mental-Rational.

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30 In this way symbols of the divine operated across quadrants –culturally as codes, socially as rules and individually as bearers of psychological and spiritual affect.
The Rise of the Rational

**Exceptional**  
**even deviant**  
you draw your long skirts  
across the nineteenth century  
...  
The law says you can possess nothing  
In a world  
where property is everything  
You belong first to your father  
Then to him who  
chooses you  
...  
forbidden to vote  
forbidden to speak  
...  
Your mind burns  
not like the harbor beacon  
but like a fire  
of fiercer origin  
...  
‘Heroines’, Rich

**THE MENTAL-RATIONAL STAGE**

Around 500 BCE, following the fall of the Roman Empire, the Mental-Rational stage commences. With its fruition in the early Modern state of sixteenth century Europe, this stage is hailed as a new age of democracy (Wilber 1995, 194). The achievements of this epoch have been undeniably wide ranging and many - from advances in education, philosophy, science, mathematics, medicine and architecture, to technology, the arts and social systems - too many, in fact, to chronicle here in any satisfactory way. Thus, I take feminist historian Gerda Lerner’s pertinent commentary on history to heart.

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1 Rich 1981, 33
Lerner reflects that with interpretation being “a constantly shifting process” there are “no certainties” in the historical past (Lerner 1997, 213). She suggests, however, that from understanding “how past generations thought and acted, how they responded to the demands of their time and how they solved their problems” a central lesson of history is illuminated: “that human actions have consequences and that certain choices, once made, cannot be undone. They foreclose the possibility of making other choices and thus they determine future events” (Lerner 1997, 199). Thus in examining this stage I focus most closely on the manner in which the choices of history, made in the context of this particular stage, have acted to create avenues for, or close down, woman’s potential to fully inhabit her subjectivity in the world.

**FORMAL OPERATIONAL COGNITION**

Wilber directly links the emergence of the Mental Rational stage to the capacities of formal operational cognition. With formal operations, Wilber writes, “you can operate upon or reflect upon your own thought processes” and “to some degree transcend them; you can take perspectives different to your own, you can entertain hypothetical possibilities” (Wilber 1995, 173). Formal operations also allow the development of abstract forms of thinking including systematic, hypothetical, scientific and logical processes (Matsumoto & Juang 2004, 168).

The values developed in the Mental-Rational epoch reflect the development of the formal operations technique of “cognitive disembedding” (Wade 1996, 138). Cognitive disembedding separates “the knower from the known, positing an objective reality and a hypothetically objective, independent observer, as exemplified in “the conventional Western scientific paradigm” (Wade 1996, 138-9).

With a worldview characterised by “empiricism” and “the Newtonian model of reality” (Wade 1996, 135), the values of this stage can be summarised positively as “strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery, competence, independence, and freedom” (Wade 1996, 137). Viewed less positively the rise of Mental-Rational ideals gave rise to the values of separatism and individualism – which spawned a rampantly destructive materialism, reductive monism, unfeeling rationalism, exclusive hierarchies, and the impulse to achievement unfettered by concern for ‘others’. This stage’s focus on the transcendent,

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2 Piaget’s term as outlined in Chapter Four.
3 Derived from the characteristics of Maslow’s Self-Esteem category.
analytical mind and human-made matter devalued associations with the body, earth and feeling. Thus the repression, denial and marginalisation of woman, body and earth directly followed the Mental-Rational ascendance of man, mind and God.

FROM MONOTHEISM TO GLOBALISM

Early in this stage the monotheism of Christianity and Islam spread pervasively; each religion championing a single male God and his divine incarnation in the flesh of man. The Muslim conquests of Europe, and later The Crusades, saw the rise of these monotheistic political, socio-cultural and military forces battle one another for expansion (Crawford 1997, 2).

The mid-point of this stage saw the colonial expansion of Europe, which had grown large urban populations, with its forceful global land grabs and powerful dissemination of cultural memes. Most recently the Mental Rational period has seen the rise of movements that have set about reintegrating and rebalancing the disassociative relations described above. In the response to the inter-national wars in the latter part of this stage global organisations such as the United Nations emerged. They sought to set the globe’s modern nation-states in a world-centric context with the aim of together settling “crises peacefully, preventing wars and codifying rules of warfare” (United Nations 2004, 3). As Wilber points out, the early part of Mental-Rational stage signalled the development of conventional morality in which identity was governed by identification with cultural rules and roles. The arrival of these equality and liberation movements late in the Mental-Rational stage, beginning with slavery and workers, followed by women, sexuality, indigenous cultural rights, disability, saw the beginnings, along with great cultural and social change, of post-conventional identities. Along with burgeoning global-national networks, post-conventional identities began to situate themselves in the context of wider world-centric perspectives (Wilber 2006, 54-5).

FEMINISM: EMERGENCE VS. OPPRESSION

Wilber argues that “around the sixteenth and seventeenth century” a major event in human evolution occurred, the noosphere (mind) fully separated and differentiated itself from its enmeshment in the biosphere (mind) (Wilber 1995, 160). With this differentiation the noosphere was for the first time able to reflect upon itself as an entity (subject).

4 Kohlberg’s term (as used by Wilber).
Utilising Janet Chafetz’ analysis he asserts that from the Archaic stage onwards, the sexes had been polarised into value spheres reflecting biological constraints such as “restriction due to pregnancy and nursing” (Chafetz in Wilber 1995, 383). Women also tended towards doing “the bulk of the care taking of young children ... [and thus] on the basis of expedience, the nurturance role is extended ... these factors keep women in the proximity of the domicile ... [and] it becomes more efficient to extend their domestic role to encompass other household tasks” (Chafetz in Wilber 1995, 383). The point is, Wilber asserts, sexual polarisation does not reflect male oppression of women, but reflects biological universals. Further he asserts that “women and men co-create[d]... intersubjective patterns” that governed the formation of gender divided spheres of value and activity (Wilber in Rothberg and Kelly 1998, 347).

In setting out to chart the evolutionary development of what he terms ‘male and female value spheres’, Wilber rests a large proportion of the weight of his analysis in the techno-economic (social) sphere. He argues that worldviews have been anchored, framed and limited by the dimensions of the social and thus “play a decisive role in helping to select which factors will in fact be honored in any given society” (Wilber in Rothberg & Kelly 1998, 347).^5

Wilber, after Habermas, attributes industrialisation as a key factor in “liberating human labor (and the female) from the determinants of the biosphere” (Wilber 1995, footnote 32, 577).^6 Wilber argues that until the differentiation of the noosphere and biosphere, biological determinism drove gendered polarisation (Wilber 1995, 160). He argues that it was only with the emergence of rational capacities, that biologically-based identity constraints were able to be “subordinated” (Wilber 1995, 385). For the first time “the roles of men and women were no longer necessarily or automatically determined (or largely influenced) by biological factors” (Wilber 1995, 160). Specifically, “the exclusive identity ‘woman/nature’ was no longer needed, or appropriate, or even relevant (as an exclusive identity) ... And it was right for the female to assume cultural agency in the newly differentiated world, a right that wasn't prevented before it was simply meaningless before (on a collective scale)”(Wilber 1995, 181).

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^5 He points out that each stage of development offers and attends to gender roles and status differently (in a broad sense and then also with cultural variants).

^6 Following Wilber’s argument about biology the most significant technological revolution liberating women from the condensed body/nature role identity of “mother” was contraception, rather than industrialisation.
He argues that it was only at this point in history that human development reached a collective centre of gravity that allowed for “the widespread emergence of the women’s movement”, such that the possibilities of being “free and equal” moral and political subjects (initially extended only to male subjects), were also extended to women (Wilber 1995, 183). Wilber argues that these events marked, not “the undoing of a nasty state of affairs that easily could have been different, but rather ... the emergence of an altogether new state of affairs that was in significant ways unprecedented” (Wilber 1995, 162).

In this analysis Wilber has overlooked a number of key elements of the social sphere (such as systemic structures and laws), which have been fundamental to the process of creating structured gendered value spheres. As discussed in earlier chapters, gendered polarisation is not as fundamentally based in biology as Wilber presents it. While not disregarding the biological realities and restrictions of pregnancy, birth and early childcare, it is important to note that these activities are related to only one section of the female life cycle. Taking hunting and gathering societies once again, (as an example of Magical stage societies), current research indicates that the predominant pattern is for tribal women to work outside the domus while also tending to infants.

The action of creating ‘value’ separated spheres of male work versus female home-care (that occurred in the Mythic-Agrarian and Mental-Rational stages), fundamentally relates to cultural definitions of gender and the constitution of work and workers, and as such is deeply ideological. As previously discussed, socio-cultural changes in the Mythic-Agrarian period such as the rise of a warrior class, male leadership, and the development of separative gender ideology, were reified in law thus creating a system that significantly limited women’s freedoms.

**GENDER STRATIFICATION: COERCION AND VOLUNTARISM**

As mentioned earlier, Wilber draws on Janet Chafetz’s sociological theory in *Sex and Advantage* (1984) as evidence for his theory of the co-creative nature of male and female roles in prehistory. Peggy Wright responds to Wilber particularly on this point. She writes that while “Wilber asserts that men and women have co-created their social structures at every stage of human development ... Chafetz ... states that there comes a point when women as a group are no longer equal co-creators of their conditions” (Wright 1998, 229).
Chafetz’ later work on “the maintenance and reproduction of gender systems”, in Gender Equity: An Integrated Theory of Stability and Change, ventures beyond the limits of Wilber’s co-creative gender theory (Chafetz 1990, 14). She distinguishes two separate, yet deeply interrelated, forces of gender inequity which she terms ‘coercive’ and ‘voluntaristic’ and in doing so discusses the manner in which worldviews set limits for socio-cultural participation.

Chafetz presents coercive theories as focused on “men’s ability to maintain their advantages over women by dint of superior power resources: economic, political, ideological” and voluntaristic theories as the examination of “how women come to make choices that inadvertently contribute to their own disadvantage and devaluation” (Chafetz 1990, 19). She notes that coercive forces tend to operate on a macro-level, through social structures and economic systems, where voluntaristic forces are micro-level “and stress the processes by which males and females internalise gender-normative ways of being and behaving” (Chafetz 1990, 19).

From her research she asserts the following propositions: in gender-stratified societies male advantage in macro-level division of labor sees a higher distribution of men in “the composition of social elites”, thus social definitions follow that value more highly “attributes associated with maleness” (Chafetz 1990, 60). These values legitimate “a gender-based system of unequal opportunities and rewards” in which resources, power and opportunities to work (outside the home) accrue to men, and the work done by women (in the home) is devalued (Chafetz 1990, 60).

Voluntaristic processes are set in motion as a result of these macro-structural forces of disadvantage. Chafetz observes that according to Exchange Theory “the partner who has less access to valued resources balances the exchange by offering deference to, or compliance with, the requests of the provider of resources” (Chafetz 1990, 23). In terms of “agrarian, pastoral and industrial societies” in which women are marginalised from the ownership of essential resources, Chafetz writes that women are required to provide services “to their husbands ... other family members ... the physical household and the objects it contains” (Chafetz 1990, 47) in exchange for access to the primary resources men control, but, unlike economic debts, the time of discharge of this social debt is never clear (Chafetz 1990, 23). Chafetz presents this micro-structural process as an example of the manner in which women inadvertently “come to want to do that which they would be
constrained to do anyway” (Chafetz 1990, 24) and thus contribute to the process of their own “disadvantage and devaluation” (Chafetz 1990, 19).

Habermas marked woman as the bearer of symbolic reproduction, highlighting the key mode through which woman has enacted the voluntaristic process of gender stratification. In a conventional society such as Chafetz refers to above, typical of the western Mental-Rational epoch, woman has overseen the micro-level construction of male and female gendered subjects through their role as the primary care giver to children (Fraser 1993, 117). In this role women have had significant influence over the generational transmission of gendered behaviour to the children in her care, as particularly explored in Chodorow’s work on the ‘reproduction of mothering’. Wilber’s co-creative argument has validity when examined in this context but, as noted, his theory fails to address the broader context in which voluntaristic processes are framed by coercive ones.

A REBUTTAL TO CO-CREATIVE THEORY

To recapitulate, Wilber’s key claims amount to the following: women have not been oppressed as much as captive to the limits of human development, biology and the ‘expediency’ through which her nurturance of infants was extended to the general domus. Overall, he concludes that woman has been an equal party to co-creating the intersubjective patterns that determined her constrained life conditions.

As noted, Wilber’s argument is in part reflective of his evolutionary theory of developmental capacity. According to the developmental model, there are limits to the behaviours and interpersonal capacities available at each stage. Wilber insists that these limits require acknowledgement. He writes that “forms of oppression and subjugation ... have to be judged, not against today’s structures of consciousness, but against what could have been otherwise at a given previous structure” (Wilber 1995, 163). While there is certainly merit to this argument, it needs to be contextualised within a broader picture. In Wilber’s analysis of co-creativity, he stresses the voluntaristic nature of women’s participation in the construction of a gender system while minimising the coercive. Chafetz’ analysis clearly demonstrates that the coercive nature of macro-structural forces placed significant constraints on women that left them with few options other than to participate in the voluntaristic processes that reinforced their disadvantage.

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7 As discussed in Chapter Three.
In response to Wilber’s assertion that the movement of women into the public sphere could not have occurred earlier “under any given circumstances” (Wilber 1998, 163), let us ponder the circumstances of the period under discussion. Historically the social reification of cultural views on gender had serious ramifications for women, by determining who is a social subject and in what manner. Chafetz highlights the fact that “when gender norms gain the status of law, they take on a far more powerful role in reinforcing the gender system status quo than when they remain informal. They become part of the coercive forces that maintain the gender system” (Chafetz 1990, 69).

As noted in the previous chapter, laws introduced in the Mythic-Agrarian period distinguished a male public sphere from a female private sphere in terms of citizenship and cultural participation. These conditions were maintained until the early twentieth century. Thus examined from social, cultural and psychological perspectives, it is clear that for extensive periods of the Mythic-Agrarian and Mental-Rational stages women were without access to citizenship or public office, were excluded from social and religious authority, marginalised from full participation in public culture, and access to education, the work place and the arts. Rendered through law an occupant of the private domain only, women were actively incapacitated from determining their own conditions of being in the world. In this period where woman was marginalised, actively discouraged and often outlawed from exploring and culturally expressing essential aspects of her being, when she was not a public subject, how could she at this point equally ‘co-create’ her conditions of being in the world?

**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

Martha Nussbaum proposes a theory by which to measure “capacity development”, based on a “quality of life assessment” pioneered by economist Amartya Sen (Nussbaum 2000, 70). In this, a universal threshold level of capability is drawn beneath which “it is held that truly human functioning is not available” (Nussbaum 2000, 6: Italics mine). In this analysis human capacity can be taken as the ability to (co)create the conditions of one’s being the world.

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^6 These constrained opportunities deserve to be acknowledged as they are not just historical remnants but the lived actuality of many women’s lives.
Nussbaum outlines key areas in which central capabilities need to be met in order to fulfill human functioning. These areas include the realms of bodily health (including reproductive choice), bodily integrity (“having one’s bodily boundaries treated as sovereign”), senses, imagination and thought (“informed and cultivated by an adequate education ... being able to search for the ultimate meaning of life in one’s own way”), emotions, practical reason, affiliation, relations with other species and nature, play, and political and material control over one’s own environment (Nussbaum 2000, 78-80). Nussbaum suggests women are often not extended “essential support” in these key areas as they are frequently considered to be “mere instruments of the ends of others” (Nussbaum 2000, 2). The result of this is that women are often lacking in the central capacities needed “for leading lives that are fully human” (Nussbaum 2000, 4).

Nussbaum’s summary of the contemporary situation of women in the world is worth reading in full, as it is extremely doubtful that the situation in which women find themselves today is poorer than that of the earlier periods of history under discussion:

Women in much of the world lack support for fundamental functions of a human life. They are less well nourished than men, less healthy ... They are much less likely than men to be literate, and still less likely to have pre-professional or technical education. Similar obstacles often impede their effective participation in political life. In many nations women are not full equals under the law: they do not have the same property rights as men, the same rights to make a contract, the same rights of association, mobility, and religious liberty. (Nussbaum 2000, 1)

She concludes that the operation of “unequal social and political circumstances” has, and continues to, severely undermine women’s capacity to develop to the full potential of her human capacity (Nussbaum 2000, 1).

Nussbaum’s thesis outlines the essential relationship between cognitive, social, physical and cultural conditions in developing the full capacity of human potential. This is reinforced by the 2006 United Nations report of the Millennium Development Goals which attributes women’s disadvantage to a mix of cultural-ideological and social-institutional

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9 Nussbaum’s categories traverse both interior and exterior perspectives—covering the biological, psychological, cultural and social conditions of human being.

10 The details of these capacities deserve greater elaboration and discussion, but are beyond the scope of this thesis.
factors, demonstrative of the double-barrelled nature of the prohibitions to full socio-cultural membership women have historically faced (United Nations 2006, 8).

In summary, as I have demonstrated, from the Mythic-Agrarian stage onwards women were denied full human membership in both the social and cultural spheres which placed them in a position of serious disadvantage. Impaired by social structure from developing to her full capacity, woman was absolutely precluded from equally co-creating the conditions of her participation in the world in the way that Wilber proposes.

**WOMEN AND THE CULTURAL SYMBOLIC**

In her 1928 treatise *A Room of One’s Own*, Virginia Woolf observed both the social barriers that excluded women from access to education and the cultural and psychological barriers that inhibited their capacity to create. Pondering the example of an imaginary sister to Shakespeare, the “wonderfully gifted” Judith, she concludes that “it would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare” (Woolf 1928, 54). Stymied of opportunity, “any woman born with a great gift … would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village” (Woolf 1928, 57). Misogyny was a key psychological burden: “The indifference of the world which … men of genius found so hard to bear was in her case not indifference but hostility”. “Surely” she concludes, “it is time that the effect of discouragement … should be measured” (Woolf 1928, 61).

By focusing heavily on the techno-economic paradigm Wilber’s analysis also suffers from a lack of discussion of the manner in which the symbolic and psychodynamic forces of the cultural paradigm work to regulate and maintain gender roles and social membership. From early in the Mythic-Agrarian period and onwards women were

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11 Women are, of course, not the only group that are denied social membership and marginalised in such a way that their ability to develop to the fullness of their capacity is inhibited.
12 Until the changes wrought by the women’s liberation movement came into effect.
13 Throughout the early Mental-Rational period, as Wilber presents it, the potential for practical reason was generally available, yet women were broadly excluded from public rights.
14 In *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* Wilber repeatedly proposes that he will present a more expansive and detailed discussion of his theory of gendered paradigms and development in a Third Volume of his work. This work was not published at the time of writing this thesis.
15 Nussbaum’s work illustrates these forces when she distinguishes between ‘internal capabilities’ and ‘external conditions’. Internal capabilities being the interior “developed states of the person” that are required to “exercise of the requisite functions” associated with external conditions (Nussbaum 2000, 84).
consistently symbolically positioned\textsuperscript{16} as lesser, inferior humans, an adjunct to men and not an end unto themselves. Aristotle's (384 BC – 322 BC) thesis on women is a prime example. “Females” he writes, “are weaker and colder in nature, and it is necessary to regard the female status as a deformity, though a natural one” (Aristotle in Keller 1986, 49). He considered women to be defective and “misbegotten”, lacking “in full mental, volitional and physical powers” (Ruether 1990, 8). Her exclusion from all social institutions was thus to be a natural reflection of her inferior human status (Grosz in Gunew 1992, 155). Aristotle's philosophy has been central to the western canon. His theory on women was subsequently taken up by many scholars including Thomas Aquinas who continued “to argue that women [we]re inherently inferior and non-normative” (Ruether 1990, 8).

The growing dominance of mental faculties in this stage meant that ideology became of prime importance. With the emergence of Cartesian dualism men, mind and culture were split from the derogated ‘others’ of women, body and nature. Descartes’ doctrine advocated the “radical separateness of mind and body” (Lloyd 1984, 41). Mental reason for Descartes was “a highly abstract mode of thought, separable, in principle, from the emotional complexities and practical demands of ordinary life” (Lloyd 1984, 49). With “women ... assigned responsibility for that realm of the sensuous which the Cartesian Man of Reason must transcend” (Lloyd 1984, 50), the “existing distinctions between male and female roles” were further exacerbated (Lloyd 1984, 49-50).

These negative ideologies, articulated and disseminated through the canons of literature, philosophy, religion, and so forth, have acted as an internal psychological, voluntaristic force of gender inequality. As Jungian analyst Wehr notes, “symbols have both psychological and political effects because they create the inner conditions ... that lead people to feel comfortable with or to accept social and political arrangements.” They “have the power to shape styles of life, values, [and] self images” (Wehr 1987, 32). She asserts that “women’s sense of themselves as in some way, uniquely deficient or inadequate ... is the result of internalising patriarchal society’s definition of them” (Wehr 1987, 18). This internalisation has paralysed “women from within, causing them to collude in their own destruction or, at a lesser degree of intensity, to accept their own lack of development” (Wehr 1987, 20). She observes that where “maleness is normative and represents the

\textsuperscript{16} Continuing the western trajectory of history that I have been following over the last two chapters, I refer here specifically to representation in the western canon of literature and philosophy, including early Greek and Hebrew thought.
fully human, women who choose to be a fully human adult are in a double bind with regard to their ‘femininity’. Their ‘femininity’, while not fully adult, guarantees their acceptance in this society "(Wehr 1987, 15)\(^\text{16}\).

This is culturally demonstrated in what Jungian analyst Marion Woodman terms the ‘split feminine’. In a culture where the male dominates and the feminine is repressed “everything becomes dichotomous” (McPhillips 2008, 4). Women are split between embodying the figure of “the perfect Madonna” or “the whore, the bad mother”; there is no middle ground (McPhillips 2008, 4). Through an “inter-generational and circular” process women are bound by the “cultural prompting and socialisation” of patriarchal relations to these painfully limited roles\(^\text{18}\) (McPhillips 2008, 4).

The discourse of the hysteric demonstrates some of the serious psychological outcomes of this phenomenon. Psychoanalyst Juliet Mitchell has analysed the strictures of female identity and femininity in the early Mental-Rational period through the work of Freud. She identified Dora, Freud’s classic case of female hysteria, as bound by a central dilemma, the question: ‘what is a woman’? (Mitchell 1996, 477). Dora’s hysteria represented the paradox of her rejection of the (classically Victorian) feminine identity woman available to her - as passive, dependent and helpless - and her powerlessness to move beyond the confines of this socially governed identity. In this way, as noted in Purkiss’ commentary, “female hysteria both accepts and refuses the organization of female sexuality under patriarchy, allowing women simultaneously to act out and refuse femininity” (Purkiss 1992, 454).

Irigaray unearths the figure of the female hysteric in the Greek myths of Clytemnestra and Electra; these are women “rising up … against the patriarchal power in the process of being established” (Irigaray in Whitford 1991, 37). The hysteric confronts the “masquerade” (Irigaray in Whitford 1991, 77) required to inhabit a gender who is denied desire or voice. Yet “even in her paralysis,” the hysteric speaks in gestures, she “exhibits … a movement of revolt and refusal, a desire for/of the living mother who would be more than a reproductive body in the pay of the polis, a living, loving woman” (Irigaray in Whitford 1991, 26).

FROM MYTHOS TO RELIGION

\(^{15}\)This is explored in Kristeva and Irigaray’s treatment of Lacan, as discussed in Chapter Three.  
\(^{18}\)The issues specific to female development are further explored in Chapter Seven.
The Mental Rational stage saw the rise of what Wilber terms the “rational religions” and the imperical spread of monotheism (Wilber 1995, 179). Wilber proposes that where the Mythic understanding of mythology had been literal, fundamental, absolutist and ethnocentric, reflecting the stage’s average concrete operational capacity, the Mental Rational period had new capacities: the ability to use rationality to hold and reflect upon the mythic symbol metaphorically. Thus, he writes: for the first time, “the first great religions took their stand, not in a mythological pantheon of gods and goddesses out there that had to be appeased through magic or mythic ritual, but rather took as their starting point: ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is within’”(Wilber 1995, 179). These assertions require some consideration.

While Wilber notes “the all-important separation of church and state” as a significant act in this epoch, both before and after this separation many of the most restrictive depictions of gender were established in, and supported by, the authority of the male God of the West (Wilber 1995, 178). Since God was a man and his word was law, androcentrism was considered divinely ordained. As Wehr writes, “Masculine symbols of and language for the Divine legitimated male power and authority in society”19, both setting the foundations for and reinforcing secular male socio-cultural dominion (Wehr 1987, 24). Wilber acknowledges this as an emergent phenomenon of the stage: “The fully developed World Traditions (such as Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, even aspects of Taoism) all arose in a climate of discourse that devalued the body, nature and women” (Wilber in Walsh & Vaughn 1993, 263). With recourse to (purportedly) irreproachable sacred revelation, religion governed “customs and laws” such as “kinship structures ... commerce between the sexes, marriage arrangements and matri- or patrilineality” (Wehr 1987, 23). Monotheism drew a particularly disparaging picture of woman as a sinful, foolish and potentially sexually dangerous, second-class citizen, who required the control of man20.

As the major religions of the Mental-Rational period marginalised, and substantially

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19 While as Wilber notes, the latter part of the Mental-Rational period saw a historic separation of church and state, religious worldviews remained closely intertwined with socio-cultural authority.

20 In this discussion I am looking at religion from multiple perspectives – culturally, socially, psychologically and spiritually. From its space as a cultural institution religion becomes operationalised as a social force. In both of these guises it has the potential to effect the individual psychologically as well as being a potential locus for spiritual practice, experience and development.
erased earlier autonomous images of the female divine, it is important to acknowledge the
genealogical spiritual trajectory that runs through from the Mythic stage. While the
spiritual directive to ‘look within’ is not explicitly articulated in mythology, I disagree
with Wilber’s implicit assertion that the ‘great’ religions were the first to refer to it.
Without discounting the interwoven layers of socio-cultural, historical and psychological
context in Mythic texts nor their very real limits of expression, there is a demonstrable
articulation of the tenets of perennial philosophy in Mythic sacred literature as detailed in
the previous chapter. Inanna’s journey of death and resurrection provides a particularly
exquisite example of this.

Mythic stage religious expressions are limited, firstly, by the nascence of written
language in this period. The lack of recourse to clarity of language, concept, or expression,
places an unmitigated limit on the ability to adequately explicate the complexities of
experience of a transpersonal nature in the mode of commentary available in the Mental-
Rational era. In the absence of complex language skills, mythology displays profound
methods of creating spiritual affect. It activates the elasticity of poetry and repetitive,
circular rhythms in order to develop affect in a manner that is demonstrably similar to
the styles of prayer, chant and sacred song found across religious traditions.

Secondly, there are the pre-rational developmental limits of cognition and consciousness
of which Wilber writes. Where, on one hand, Wilber asserts that “there is precious little
that is transpersonally inspired” about mythology (Wilber 1995, 173), he also readily
admits that most Mental-Rational religious practice is predominantly translative rather
than transformational (that is, trans-personally oriented) in function. Religion he writes,
only serves “the function of radical transformation and liberation”, in a “very, very small
minority” (Wilber 1998, 141). Most commonly, he writes, religion has served the socio-
cultural purpose of providing legitimacy for established “beliefs … paradigms …
worldviews” (Wilber 1998, 142).

“Myths and rituals”, Doty writes, “may ‘mean’ different things at different developmental
levels within a society, [and] at different points within personal chronology” (Doty 2000,
144-5). We can see what Doty describes as a ‘polyfunctionality’ of available meaning and
experience – across the range of psychological, sociological, cosmological and mystical
functions21 - in both religious and mythological practice and text. Yet the translative or

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21 See the description of Joseph Campbell’s four functions of mythology in Chapter One.
sociological function is identified (by Wilber) as a predominant function and primary participant experience of both.

Wilber acknowledges that, “in each epoch, the most advanced mode ... a very small number of individuals” penetrated “not only into the higher modes of ordinary cognition ... but also into genuinely transcendent, transpersonal, mystical realms of awareness” (Wilber 1995, 173). These states, as Wilber notes elsewhere, are available at “virtually any stage or level of development” (Wilber 2000, 2). While states of spiritual experience have been broadly available, extraordinary transpersonal insight has presumably been limited to an extremely small proportion of the population in each of the stages (much as it is today). Thus if, as Campbell asserts, mythology was the work of poets, priest/ess’ and seers, the journey texts demonstrate the fruits of the transpersonal experience of an exceptional few.

The trajectory between the mythology and religion is illustrated by instances of direct, shared referencing of motifs (first found in mythology), such as the world tree, the serpent, the flood, the Edenic garden and most potently, the death and resurrection three days later of the god/dess. Assessed together, Mythic and Mental-Rational religious texts demonstrate a gradual development and refinement of expression and concept, yet the central spiritual dilemma of the gap between the experience of the divine and its ability to be adequately expressed must be noted.

Across traditions the symbolic representation of the sacred has been considered as “both continuous and discontinuous with language: continuous in that it must be communicated in language, and discontinuous in that it ‘handles material that lies in some way out of the reach of natural language’” (Lauter 1984, 2). Thus, while the advances of the Mental-Rational stage allowed for a more direct articulation of spiritual revelation, commentary and instruction they also failed to capture the divine.

This discontent is articulated from within the “rational religions” (Wilber 1995, 179). The Christian saint, Teresa of Avila, a mystic of the Middle Ages warns: “In truth, our intelligence, as clear sighted as it may be, cannot understand [the soul], just as it could not represent God” (Teresa of Avila in Clement & Kristeva 2001, 34). Angela of Foligno describes the divine as “a thing that has no name” which decries “Do not approach, human

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22 Particularly in this instance between Sumerian mythology and Christianity.
word” (Avila in Clement & Kristeva 2001, 34 & 37). In response to this lack these mystics poetically “submerge us in metaphors, images ... they paint and embroider in the very substance of words” (Clement & Kristeva 2001, 35).

Techniques such as the language of apophasis were created to bridge a gap between the “comprehension” and “representation” of the divine that could not be other than “forever imperfect” (Clement & Kristeva 2001, 35). Apophasis is the way of “unsaying”: “having once named the ‘transcendent’ (even if simply as ‘the transcendent’), the mystic must then erase that naming – but that act of erasure constitutes in itself a new naming, which must be erased in its turn” (Priest 2003, 10). The apophatic mode, just like mythological affect, is “a systematic attempt to disestablish ordinary thought”, in order to “tease the mind out of ordinary patterns of thought” (Mortley in Priest 2003, 11).

It is clear that the ongoing development of the capacities of language and cognition gradually lifted the veil obscuring perennial philosophy, stage by stage. These developments allowed the many facets of sacred experience to be revealed with ever clearer and more direct enunciation. Yet at the same time, the ineffable divine has remained ineffable. In this context it is clear that certain mythological texts are of direct genealogical relevance, to our records of transpersonal expression generally, and of the female divine particularly.

THE SEPARATIVE SELF

... [with] the eighteenth-century shift in Western thought towards rationalism (referred to, without irony, as The Enlightenment) ... the older, indigenous, cosmological casts of mind ... have been demoted, paralysed and ‘progressively’ abandoned, and we have paid for this dearly.

(Murphy 2004, 63)

The pathologies of the Mental Rational have been widely and exhaustively chronicled (see Tacey 1995; Eliot 1996; O’Connor 2000; Mies & Shiva 1993; Ruether 1992; McPhillips 2003). Theorists have observed a comprehensive conceptual division developing between the human subject and nature during the Intellectual Enlightenment. While this separation made the development of a highly cerebral western consciousness possible, these theorists suggest that it led to the development of a grotesquely inflated human subject, and was made at the expense of the natural world and ultimately of human society. The Mental-Rational orientation towards ascent and transcendence was divorced from relation to the descendent, immanent world and led to dissociation, pathology,
alienation and repression which spurned the global threats from “military violence” and “economic exploitation” to “ecological collapse” (Ruether 1992, 308).

The “self enclosed subject”, built on Descartes’ separation of mind from flesh and environment (Keller 1986, 8), considered “itself the center of creation” (Braidotti 1995, 27). It emerged as an “imperial consciousness” that denied the immanent claims of the Other (Braidotti 1995, 27). Keller’s thesis, that “separation and sexism have functioned together as the most fundamental self-shaping assumptions of our culture” (Keller 1986, 2), is not an uncommon view among feminist and ecological thinkers. Indeed, some writers go so far as to blame the western ideal of the separate self, “independent of, and hence ultimately separable from, the body’s flesh, the terrestrial environment, and the viscous emotions of relationships” for helping “to foster some of the most severe problems plaguing the modern era, including racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, heterosexism, the unmitigated wasting of the natural environment” (Daniell 2002, 147-8).

Modernity engaged with pre-modern religion on “less than cordial” terms (Lyon 2000, 2). Margaret Wertham proposes that the shift from a sense of self framed by religion and myth to one contextualised by the workings of scientific laws, mathematics, matter, space and time23 represented an enormous shift “in the psychic bedrock of the Western subconscious” (Wertham 1997, 5).

As McPhillips explains, modernisation has been the bedfellow of secularisation: “driven by the new logic of science” rationality “held that the world and its origins could be explained by physical forces, and that there was no such thing as God or a superior divine force” (McPhillips 2003, 74). Speaking from the perspective of cultural psychology, mythological scholar O’Connor posits that the affiliation of self with the scientific has had profound implications. While “science which is a fine expression of logos, deals with the observable, transitory worlds … myth is concerned with profound and eternal realities that make science itself possible” (O’Connor 2000, 114).

O’Connor dismisses the prevailing Mental-Rational worldview as a one-dimensional materialist obsession (O’Connor 2001, 2). This disembodied worldview, he writes, clings

23 It is noted that this shift occurred with the fall of many of the traditional mythological systems (particularly including the decay of the institutions of monotheism in the later parts of the Mental-Rational epoch).
to the rational, the tangible, and the factual. It amplifies the cognitive, dismisses the affective and spurns any relationship with the psychic totality of the natural world or deep mystical realities of the universe (O’Connor 2000, 114). In this mode the world is stripped bare, divorced of its enchantment (McPhillips 2003). Concordantly, theorists such as eco-philosopher Tacey have concluded that in this mode, contemporary culture is estranged, pervasively alienated and disconnected from both world and self. He writes, “we feel isolated, lonely, rootless, disconnected. Nature is at best a dead background to our human endeavours” (Tacey 1995, 150).

**PATHOLOGICAL DOMINANCE**

The inner core of patriarchal culture is estrangement, the estrangement of mind from body, men from women, thought from feeling, humans from the earth. (Ruether 1992, 284)

Wilber’s theory readily acknowledges the pathologies of the Mental-Rational stage and its dissociated relationship with woman, body and nature. He writes,

... if it is true that, a few hundred years ago, we finally succeeded in clearly differentiating these two great domains [the biosphere and the noosphere], it is equally true that we have not yet found a way to integrate them. On the contrary: the necessary differentiation ... has now clearly moved into the beginning stages of dissociation. (Wilber 1995, 183)

It is clear that the same “worldwide collective psychoneurosis” of Mental-Rational ... denial, alienation, [and] dissociation” to which Wilber attributes responsibility for the present ecological crisis has acted, through conflation, to suppress women’s full humanity (Wilber 1995, 382).

The concept of pathology is fundamental to the holarchical processes of Wilber’s Integral theory. “After Eisler”, he distinguishes between “pathological hierarchies” and “positive, or as Eisler calls them, ‘realization hierarchies’” (Wright 1998, 213). It is through the inclusion of the concept of pathological hierarchy that Wilber is able to argue for an ongoing evolutionary trajectory of human development despite historical and behavioural evidence that might be mounted to the contrary (war, genocide, environmental destruction, oppression of liberty etc). The manifestation of pathologies, “diseases and repressions”, should not damn the concept of evolutionary development itself, Wilber says (Wilber 1995, 104). He writes that “the fact that evolution always produces greater transcendence and greater differentiation means that a factor of possible pathology is
built into every evolutionary step” (Wilber 1995, 103). In the dialectic of progress increasing complexity throws up new problems. According to the holonic theory of development emergent growth requires differentiation. Differentiation that moves beyond the limits of the present context, is an essential step in development, yet it also holds the possibility of dissociation: differentiation gone too far (Wilber 1995, 103). Where healthy development includes and honours lower levels while transcending their limits, in the case of dissociation a pathology occurs in which the emergent holon “no longer recognises” its relationship with the parts that constitute it (Wilber 1995, 22-23). It exerts a “repressive, oppressive, arrogant role of dominance over [these] other holons” (Wilber 1995, 22-23).

As Wilber explains it, all people experience the translative drives and coexistent tensions of agency (separation) and communion (permeability). Humans exist as “agency-in-communion” (Wilber 1995, 64). Imbalances of either of these translative drives can lead to pathology. Where pathological agency leads to “alienation and repression”, pathological communion leads to “fusion and dissociation” (Wilber in Wright 1998, 216).

The normative subject of the Mental-Rational shares characteristics with what Wilber describes as the pathologies “of male agency”: “‘power over,’ or brutal dominance and rigid autonomy” (Wilber 1998, 589). The cohort of this, pathological feminine communion, “fears autonomy and disappears into relationship, often destroying her own identity in the process” (Wilber 1998, 589). Wright’s commentary on Wilber’s theory insightfully identifies “pathological communion and pathological agency” as “best recognised as … mutually supportive … ‘co-dependent’” processes (Wright 1998, 216). That is, the establishment of the pathological agentic self as a normative (masculine) subject, is intimately interwoven with, requires, and reinforces, the pathological communal self - in its extreme form, the “icy grip of the merged and undifferentiated” (Whitford 1991, 77) - as a normative feminine subject position.

In the historical asymmetry of power between the sexes, co-dependent pathology has clearly been at play. In order to heal the many pathologies of the Mental-Rational stage, many of the theorists discussed in the last two sections have advocated a return to humanity’s earlier body/earth orientation (which was less oppressive of women). Wright for example, emphasises the importance of “the reintegration of the knowledge”, “reflections, qualities, and images” “from other and/or less structurally complex (i.e. matrifocal and tribal/indigenous) cultures” (Wright 1998, 225). She suggests that while
we should not “uncritically accept the past” we must “remain open to what the past has to offer” (Wright 1998, 225). However, she asserts that, “from Wilber’s perspective, such actions often are interpreted as being unwisely regressive” (Wright 1998, 219). While some statements from Wilber may be read as divergent from this position, Integral theory broadly, and the discourse of transpersonal psychology specifically, have demonstrated the need for a “reintegrating return” in the face of dissociation and pathology, in order to assimilate these lost parts of the “deep psyche” (Washburn 1998, 71). Only when these deeper structures are included is healthy development possible. Wilber asserts that what is required of us now is not a rejection of Mental-Rationalism for earlier values but a move beyond the limits of the Mental stage; a move that incorporates earlier values but holds them in a new, broader and deeper context.

**THE RISE OF FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS**

As women begin to name the world for themselves, they will upset the order that had been taken for granted throughout history. They will call themselves and the world into new being. (Christ and Plaskow 1976, 7)

Transformation has been at the heart of the feminist journey, with feminists at the forefront of carving post-conventional gendered identity through their examination, and increasingly complex analysis, of gender roles, cultural identities, and social structures. Wilber writes that as ego identity emerged in the Mental-Rational epoch “individuals were no longer identified by the simple and unreflexive roles that they played in society, as was the case with ethnocentric and mythic-membership societies” (Wilber 1995, 179). The development of formal operational cognition created “third-person perspectives” which, as Wilber notes, allowed “not only scientific precision but also impartial, postconventional, worldcentric judgements of fairness and care” (Wilber 2000, 26). Post-conventional identity moved beyond the conventional mould in which one is “defined by others approval or society’s rules” by crafting their own “beliefs and values”

(Christ and Plaskow 1976, 7)

The rise of feminist consciousness led beyond the norms of conventional gendered identity: “it posed unsettling questions about selfhood. It challenged men and women to shape their own identities without resort to stereotypes” (Kramer in Debold 2005, 35). It particularly posed “existential challenges to women who were accustomed to knowing themselves through the web of familial relations” (Kramer in Debold 2005, 35). Feminism

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According to Kohlberg’s theory post-conventional morality “involves moral reasoning on the basis of individual principles and conscience” (Matsumoto & Juang 2004, 173).
lead women through a process of awakening to conventional gender roles and differentiating from them, and it required men to do the same. In this way feminism has nurtured new ways of thinking and acting, and forged new modes of being, in and among women, and in the world.

Elizabeth Debold specifically places woman, as feminist heroine, in the unfurling trajectory of evolutionary history. She traces a history of events through the Mental-Rational period in which women made a conscious choice to defy conventions and follow a deeper calling. Events which had, she writes, “an effect ... far beyond” themselves (Debold 2007, 46). She cites the female leaders in early Christianity such as Perpetua and Thecla who “defied ... authority” and “challenged hierarchy” to champion revolutionary new ways of relating, mystics of the twelfth century and the founders of American feminism as exemplars of this (Debold 2007, 46-47).

Carol Lee Flinders concurs. In her work on medieval female mystics she writes that these luminaries had to brave “the stigmas attached to women who made their own decisions” (Flinders 1998, 132). They forged paths that required a “willingness ... to break with cultural norms” (Flinders 1993, 41). This was a period in which “men determined who they declared a mystic” which placed women “at great risk” of being charged with heresy “when speaking and writing of their experiences” (Pagel 1999, 120; see also Nuth 2005, 276)

Following the call of her interior life, the young woman “bound for sainthood” “almost invariably” broke with the mould of the ‘good woman’. In direct violation of the tenets of femininity that required “docility, obedience to parent and spouse”, she left “the parental home and refused to marry” (Flinders 1993, 34). Acting against the dictum of female passivity, she not only spoke and wrote but became “a spiritual focal point ... however reluctantly, for her devoted followers” (Flinders 1993, 41).

Flinders reports that in the Middle Ages the opportunity to be enclosed in female communities, “unencumbered by husband or children” allowed for the emergence of a number of notable female mystics who turned their back on the self “as patriarchy conceived it” (Flinders 1998, 124-5). Flinders’ collection of biographies of the lives of western female mystics includes the stories of St Clare of Assisi, the visionary anchoress Julian of Norwich and Saint Theresa of Avila. These stories detail the struggle imposed by
gendered limits, and the force unleashed by women who have uncompromisingly followed the path of their inner calling.

The young St Clare of Assisi (1195-1253), for example, joined the renunciate St Francis against the opposition of her wealthy family who were determined for her to wed. She founded the Poor Ladies convent and was their much revered abbess. She became the “first woman in the West to write a rule for monastics” when she rewrote the rules composed for her order by Pope Innocent IV with those derived from her own experience (Flinders 1993, 34).

Fourteenth century anchoress Julian of Norwich was “the first woman to write a book in English” (Flinders 1993, 78). This, A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich, was composed of her account of a series of intense visions and commentary derived from the “inward instruction” that she had received about them over a period of twenty years (Flinders 1993, 78). During this period of vision, writing and reflection Julian was in complete retreat from the world, enclosed in a single room adjoining a church in Norwich that she vowed never to leave (Flinders 1993, 80-1). The Showings are a theologically important text that demonstrate with “force” and “beauty” Julian’s uniquely feminine interpretation of the divine, as derived from her “direct unmediated encounter with God” (Flinders 1993, 83). Attributing “specifically to Christ, the love of a mother for her child” (Flinders 1993, 94), she writes, “as truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our Mother” (Julian of Norwich in Flinders 1993, 94).

Debold asserts that the same internal fire that fuelled these mystics was present in the early founders of the women’s liberation movement. Foundational American feminist Lucretia Mott’s “revelation of womanhood” in her speeches was described by observers as being “so born of conviction, so radiant with inward light’ that it ignited social transformation by evoking a new consciousness” (Debold 2006, 7). Certain women, Debold asserts, have been so “compelled to change themselves and the world”, that they “decided to evolve consciously for the sake of freedom and equality” (Debold 2007, 35). In the consciousness raising circles of early second wave feminism, for example, women worked “to change consciousness itself” (Debold 2007, 35). As a result of this tending to consciousness, “something was liberated that transformed almost every aspect of social life” (Debold 2006b, 35).
As a movement, feminism itself has operated as a developmental process; individually, collectively, culturally and socially, it has moved through stages of differentiation and integration and unfolded with increasing complexity, as detailed extensively in Chapters Two and Three. Riane Eisler summarises the actions of feminist consciousness as a threefold process. On a collective level, she writes, there has been a “coming together of women ... to ask new questions about the nature of reality.” Individually this inquiry has afforded women a “new way of looking at ourselves and at the world”, and it has lead to the development of new cultural awareness that “the subordination of women and of ‘feminine’ values ... lies at the core of an aberrated ... social system” (Eisler 1990, 32).

In terms of human evolution the point of the hero/ine’s journey has been the creation of ever deeper understandings of what is it to be human (and divine). This depth has been formed through action. The heroine has left the comfortable limits of the conventional village life behind and forged post-conventional paths through the wilds of the forest. Each stage has explored and unravelled deeper levels of understanding of humanity (each with their limits) through the development of new socio-cultural contexts and more complex human capacities. Having mapped the expansions and limits of each epochal stage, we have been brought full circle to the events of feminism, and this trajectory leads us to the present: the nascent beginnings and promise of the emerging Integral stage.

Catherine Keller writes that in squarely and truthfully addressing our history, the question “at once private and public, of the self, of who we are to become” becomes ever more pressing (Keller 1986, 16). It is to this central question in the context of the Integral age that I would now like to turn.

**INTEGRAL ANSWERS**

In terms of evolution Colegrave posed that where “the Masculine and the patriarchal revolution enabled the individual ‘I’ to emerge into consciousness” the rise of feminist consciousness has enabled the individual ‘I’ “to begin to return and connect with its greater being ... to recognize its relationship to the larger community of earthly and cosmic life” (Colegrave 1990, 23). The coming together of these two modes, the separate and the soluble, feminine and masculine, is at the very heart of the emergent Integral stage.

Wilber asserts that in this age of globally contextualised, rapidly changing high technology and information, humankind finds itself at the dawning edge of a new stage. It
is here he suggests that the answer to humankind’s pressing socio-cultural and ecological problems may lie. This breaking wave of possibility presents the promise of new capacities - higher modes of thinking, acting and being - and accordingly, new worldviews.

As foreshadowed by my discussion in Chapter Three, the Integral stage moves beyond the limits of the Mental-Rational stage by including rationality but transcending its limits. It reincorporates the disassociated, conventionally ‘feminine’, modes and ways of being such as body awareness and phenomenology. It balances both poles of dualism: rationality and relationality, transcendence and immanence, agency and communion, justice and care, man and woman, and dissolves their dualistic opposition. Integral vision-logic emerges with more perspectives and more complex capacities.

Wilber is an advocate for the “integrative”, healing, possibilities of the “vision-logic” capacities made available in the Integral stage (Wilber 1995, 187). In vision-logic “all perspectives interrelate … [but] no perspective is final.” Yet, this “does not mean that there are no relative merits among them” (Wilber 1995, 187). This mode “can hold in mind contradictions, [and] unify opposites, it is dialectical and non-linear, and it weaves together what otherwise appear to be incompatible notions … negated in their partiality but preserved in their positive contributions” (Wilber 1995, 185).

This consciousness, expanded beyond rational limitations, explicitly draws on trans-rational ways of knowing. Feuerstein writes that the integral-aperspectival structure “for the first time in human history, permits the conscious integration of all previous (but co-present) structures, and through this act of integration the human personality becomes, as it were transparent to itself” (Feuerstein in Wilber 1995, 189). The Integral self authentically brings together aspects of being that were previously divorced now re-woven in a higher, broader context, and it is able to act discerningly from the vantage point of these multiple perspectives.

Wright’s analysis suggests that this integration “does not necessarily reflect a move to a new developmental level of vision-logic” but instead “is a healthy expression of the rational level” with “both feminine and masculine value spheres” integrated (Wright 1998, 221). She writes that this “potential for reintegration should be inherent within the holon or stage in which the dissociation first developed, as well as within each holonic stage that emerges thereafter” (Wright 1998, 221). In either view we are yet to demonstrably witness a collective shift from separative or soluble selves to selves.
balanced and extended by the healthy integration of agency and communion. The Integral stage thus represents the proposition of intersubjective relations, contextualised within the “fluid, permeable, mobile (post) modern social experience” (Lyon 2000, 14), emerging from integrated selves that exist in conscious relationship with the “instreaming universe” (Fonda 1995, 10), and the healthy incorporation and transcendence of all the stages of development that have come before.

TOWARDS THE HORIZON

Chapters Four to Six have followed the bird’s eye view of Wilber’s meta-narrative in order to examine and to introduce an Integral feminist perspective to his evolutionary schema. This chapter charted the events of history in the Mental-Rational stage in parallel with an examination of the developments (and limits) of consciousness, with specific focus on the place of women, the female divine and the important emergence of feminist consciousness. Having arrived at the present Integral stage, the next chapter turns from a collective to an individual view of development in order to examine the developmental journey of woman, in the guise of heroine, as she travels towards the Unitive horizon of divine embodiment.
Divine Horizons:

The heroine’s path to the Unitive

Classic models of the hero have posed the separative (male) self as the omega point of human development. Although derived from Mythic-Agrarian mythology, the primacy of this ideal has remained culturally pervasive. Yet this model has proved to be neither reflective of, nor appropriately healthy for women (or men).

By exploring the more expansive understanding of human development posed by research on Adult Development centred in the Integral theory, the limits of this heroic model can be appropriately contextualised. This chapter illustrates the heroine’s journey to the Unitive horizon of the divine through applying this expanded spectrum of interior development with a specific eye to gender\(^1\); and further argues for the necessity of a genealogy of the female divine to complement this path, a figure who is both guide and goal for the heroine on her journey.

SELF-ABNEGATION: WOMEN’S ESTRANGEMENT FROM THE DIVINE

The hero/ine’s journey can be understood in terms of perennial philosophy as the journey from estrangement\(^2\), or separation, to conscious (re)union with the divine. Keller writes that Kierkegaard defined this estrangement, or sin, as a “despair summoned by the failure to be who we are” (Keller 1986, 12). He went on to “distinguish between specifically ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ forms of despair. If the masculine sin is ‘potentiated defiance’ – a refusal to accept the ultimate terms of selfhood – the feminine analogue is ‘potentiated weakness’.” He linked “woman’s weakened sense of self to her self-loss in service to

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\(^1\) This chapter addresses the manner in which the Individual–interior develops in cohort with conditions in the Collective-interior quadrant (culture).

\(^2\) With the Absolute in all things, this estrangement is understood as a lack of conscious awareness of this divinity.
others, a form of despair and self-abnegation ... [by which] ‘she has lost herself’” (Keller 1986, 12).

The notion of the centre of woman’s estrangement from the divine, as her “underdevelopment or negation of the self” also appears in the work of Valerie Saiving (Saiving 1960, 109). Although “the structure of female experience” on which she rested her analysis “has been challenged” in the decades since she wrote her treatise on the human condition, her observation of the problem of woman’s fractured selfhood remains relevant to any attempt to chart women’s spiritual and developmental journey (Fulkerson 1991, 660).

Mary Daly presents sin in the inverse. She writes, “the word ‘sin’ is derived from the Indo-European root ‘es-,’ meaning ‘to be’” (Daly 1996, 76). She asserts that for women “trapped in patriarchy” ‘being’ “in the fullest sense is ‘to sin’” (Daly 1996, 76). For woman to ‘be’ she must confront, question and dismantle the norms and boundaries of gender that have called on her to negate herself. This necessary ‘sin’ enables her ‘Be-coming’ and thus her manifestation of Woman’s Be-ing as “an intimation of the endless unfolding of God” (Daly in Campbell 2000, 175).

While disparate, the conceptualisations of both Saiving and Daly suggest the heroine’s journey as a developmental path that requires coming to terms with the manner in which woman “has lost herself” (Keller 1986, 12). This chapter explores the path of the reconciliation that enables her to immanently reveal the full radiance of her potential in union with the transcendence of the divine.

**WOMEN’S DIVINE HORIZONS**

Irigaray insists that women must flourish. We must, she says, “refuse to allow parts of ourselves to shrivel and die that have the potential for growth and fulfilment” (Irigaray 1987, 69). She argues that “all bodies (men’s and women’s)” hold in themselves the potential for the immanent and transcendent incarnation of the divine, and she finds in this an obligation placed upon us to reveal this divinity (Jantzen 1998, 16).

Drawing from the theological thought of nineteenth century German philosopher Feuerbach, Irigaray takes the premise that “God is the mirror of man” (Irigaray 1987,

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3 “Unfortunately” Keller continues, in presenting this analysis Kierkegaard could not “distinguish between the effects of patriarchal culture and woman’s nature” (Keller 1986, 12).
4 Despite the Christian context of her discussion, Grace Jantzen notes that Irigaray’s spiritual context is not limited to this, for her God is simply “a name to describe the
67). Feuerbach argued that “at its best religion is a mirror for humanity, onto which ideal human characteristics are projected and which we then strive to reflect” (Jantzen 1998, 13). But, Irigaray argues, Christian imagery of the divine has functioned to ground and facilitate only male becoming by reflecting the ideal human characteristics of man “back to himself” (Armour 2003, 29). Where God has helped man to define his gender and achieve his subjectivity, woman has been left without a means of divine reference. The figuration of a female ideal - a divine horizon of becoming, “an ideal of wholeness”, is required for women to realise their divinity, to become “free, autonomous, sovereign” (Jantzen 1998, 12-14).

“This God,” she asks, “are we capable of imagining it as a woman?” (Irigaray 1987, 63). A female genealogy of women who have undertaken this journey, and have revealed the horizon of the divine in themselves, is essential to woman’s journey of becoming. Emphasising the necessity of spirituality to women’s subjectivity, Irigaray proposes that the process of creating “cultural filiations”, which link “women with their spiritual mothers” is crucial to “the construction of female identity” (Roy 2003, 19).

The symbol of the divine horizon of woman would act as a sustaining goal, one that leads, inspires, “marks or establishes” the path to the goal of becoming, mirroring the possibilities of women’s subjectivity back to her (Irigaray 1987, 72). Allione writes in the introduction to her compilation of sacred biographies of significant Tibetan Buddhist women, “in order for women to find viable paths to liberation, we need the inspiration of other women who have succeeded in remaining true to their own energies … and have, with their integrity, reached complete liberation” (Allione 1984, 20). Sacred biographies are concerned “with providing information which will be helpful and inspirational for someone following … the ‘path’” (Allione 1984, 20). In such a way, the figure on the horizon portrays the completion of the heroine’s journey. She is a heroine who, having reached the end of her journey, shows the path by which she has come. She beckons and encourages the heroine to continue. Neither this figure, nor the path is, as Irigaray puts it, “a fixed objective, not a One postulated to be immutable but rather a cohesion and a horizon that assures us the passage between” (Irigaray in Jantzen 1998, 272).

Contemplating the values of the divine horizon, Jantzen writes that they must “embody our best and deepest aspirations, so that we are drawn forward to realize them. In one possibilities of awareness, and transcendence” (Jantzen 1998, 12).

5 As men have in the form of Buddha or Jesus. As discussed in Chapter Two I differentiate here between the act of re-ascribing God (as Absolute) in the female gender as theology proposes (the Goddess) and establishing a figure of the divine in human form (as archetype of the Self).
sense, therefore, they must already be human characteristics, at least in some measure ... yet they are also ideals never fully achieved, always beckoning us to ‘become what we are’” (Jantzen 1998, 92). In order to more closely examine the possibilities of this horizon, and as a mode of mapping the pathway to this goal, I have turned to one of the pillars of Integral theory, the field of Adult Developmental theory.

This structural research provides flesh for the bones of Irigaray’s philosophy. I look at the specifics of women’s development both in terms of the characteristics and obstacles specific to her path, without suggesting that these specifics are essential to her, or apply to all women at all times. Utilising research that contextualises adult development in an expanded, transpersonal spectrum I propose a pathway for women’s development towards the embodiment of the divine horizon that begins with pre-egoic fusion with the Absolute, moves through egoic separation, and re-emerges in trans-egoic (re)union with the Absolute6 (Washburn 1998, 10).

**ADULT DEVELOPMENT THEORY**

Adult Developmental theory is described as a map of “the unfolding of human potential towards deeper understanding, wisdom and effectiveness in the world” that reflects the actualities of human being and becoming (Cook-Greuter 2004, 7). The model of transformative change in human (ego) development arose from structuralist research conducted by theorists such as Maslow, Graves, Loevinger, Kohlberg, Piaget and Torbert. Beginning with Piaget’s work in the 1950s on the process through which children developed into young adults, the 1960s saw Loevinger, Kohlberg and Graves expand the focus of developmental studies to examine the development of the “mature wisdom and powerful action of ... adults” (Cook-Greuter 2004, 4).

Developmental theory presents each stage of development as “more comprehensive, more differentiated and more effective in dealing with the complexities of life than its predecessors” (Cook-Greuter 2004, 4). Contemporary developmental theories, extending the established research of the theorists mentioned above, generally work with a broadly shared set of assumptions. These include the belief that developmental growth occurs in

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6 Washburn problematises the “structural-hierarchical” model of Adult development, and particularly the strong differential between pre- and trans-egoic states as found in Wilber’s work. He counters this with a “dynamic-dialectical paradigm” (Washburn 1988, 9), that suggests that there are “nonegoic potentials” that have “both pre and trans developmental expressions”. These “nonegoic potentials” he suggests, express themselves early in life in “pre ways” and then express themselves later in life – that is, after the ego is mature and has been reconnected with nonegoic potentials – in trans ways” (Washburn 1998, 68). Further Washburn particularly asserts the necessity for the ego to undergo a “regressive return” before a “higher synthesis” is enabled (Washburn 1988, 10)
logical, expanding stages and that the transition to a later stage depends upon the achievement of certain competencies in the previous stage. Later stages include and transcend earlier ones, as something more complex is added to the existing developmental stage. Healthy development includes and honours the characteristics of the earlier stages; yet, is no longer limited to them. Each higher stage brings an increased capacity for complex thinking, feeling, being and doing: these elements function as interrelated components termed ‘action-logics’. As development unfolds, autonomy, tolerance for difference and ambiguity, as well as flexibility, reflection, and skill in interacting with the social environment increases. Later stages offer more differentiated as well as more integrated capacities for optimal functioning in the world (Cook-Greuter 2004, 7). While “each stage has its own stage-specific achievements and triumphs over earlier stages”, it is important to note they also each hold “specific limitations and vulnerabilities” (Cook-Greuter 2005, 10), including the possibility of the manifestation of unhealthy, shadow or pathological aspects.

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7 Wilber describes development that does not honour the aspects of the lower levels as pathological. A pathological hierarchy occurs when “a particular holon assumes a repressive, oppressive, arrogant role of dominance over other holons (whether in individual or social development)” (Wilber 1996, 23).
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<td>• Ego-Aware • Construct-Aware • Autonomous • Authentic</td>
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<td>• Preoperational • Self Protective • Impulsive • Symbiotic • Ego • Naïve • Reactive • Pre/Perinatal</td>
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Table 4: Tiers and Stage of Development – as proposed by Piaget, Cook-Greuter and Wade.

CRITIQUE OF DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY
Developmental hierarchies have come under intense critical fire from theorists outside the boundaries of this structuralist discourse. In proposing a ‘normal’ pathway, Developmental theory has been critiqued for ignoring the partiality of its culturally situated perspective\(^8\) (Burman 1997, 136). The field of Developmental psychology has, for example, been accused of supporting “a thoroughly conservative social agenda” through “an evaluative rendition of what is normal” that “introduces a moral ‘ought’ into an account of ‘what is’”(Burman 1997, 136).

\(^8\) I have examined some aspects of this critique as addressed to the work of Piaget, in Chapter Four.
Acknowledging this criticism, this reading of developmental theory recognises the partiality of the predominantly western-situated research discussed and particularly addresses the feminist critique of issues of ‘normality’ in development. The following discussion specifically situates Developmental theory in the context of Integral philosophy. Further, it proposes the stages under discussion to be observations of pathways of development that have arisen due to the particular convergence of historical, biological, psychological, social and cultural factors. As such, the descriptions of these stages should not be taken to be exhaustive, essential, or unchanging.

The Integral approach to development broadens the spectrum of development, extending it beyond the limits of ego-centred identity and into the spiritual domain, with an eye to the Unitive horizon “in preparation for ... the ultimate transformation into the always-already present state” (Wilber 1997, 28). With the aim of following the heroine’s journey of development to the divine horizon, I particularly follow - along with addressing the specifics of gender in development - the developmental research of theorists Susanne Cook-Greuter and Jenny Wade (both Integral theorists of development) whose research focuses on the higher stages of mature adult development.

**THE FIRST STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT**

All persons begin their lives at the first tier of development, termed *Preconventional*. This stage encompasses the developments typically observed in the progress of a child from birth to around age 12 (Cook-Greuter 2005, 10). Preconventional development in this early period is focused on the movement away from “the undifferentiated symbiotic embeddedness of the newborn ... merged with their initial care giver” and towards the development of a separate self (Cook-Greuter 2005, 6).

The next level of development is tellingly named *Conventional* as this tier is strongly governed by socio-cultural norms. In the lower stages of the Conventional tier, personal identity is largely derived from strong affiliations with “family, tribe, group, nation” (Cook-Greuter 2005, 17). While this identity relationship with a larger grouping offers a sense of protection and belonging, it generally requires unquestioning acceptance of, and adherence to, the operational “rules and myths and dogmas” of the particular socio-cultural masse (Wilber 1995, 226). Loevinger’s findings report, “belonging to a group and being identified with it” as key “benchmarks” of “conformist orientation” (Loevinger and

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9 As discussed in Chapter Three.
10 Freud and Lacan’s theories of development in the Preconventional tier, and gender critique of this work by Kristeva and Irigaray are discussed in Chapter Three.
Wessler in Wade 1996, 119). Conventional identity conforms “to the dictates of authority” with “niceness and helpfulness” directed internally while “prejudice and fear” are projected at outsiders (Loevinger and Wessler in Wade 1996, 119). “Normalization” of behaviour (gendered and otherwise) is wrought through the disciplining practices of family and peers (Debold 2001, 171).

Cook-Greuter deftly distinguishes between lateral and vertical modes of development. She reports that the most common mode of development is lateral (translation) which occurs with the acquisition of expanded knowledge. Vertical development (transformation) occurs much less frequently: “It refers to how we learn to see the world through new eyes, how we change our interpretations of experience and how we transform our views of reality”(Cook-Greuter 2004, 5). Such transformation may occur in response to the catharsis of an environmental force that requires adaptivity, through the cultivation of self-awareness and “psychological-mindedness” in the recognition of “one’s internal states” and their inter-relation to others (Hauser 1993, 25). The cultivation of these practices drives vertical development and thus the acquisition of more complex action-logics.

WOMEN IN THE CONVENTIONAL

The dynamics that surround the development of socio-cultural gender roles have been of paramount interest to feminist thinkers. Elizabeth Debold from the Harvard Girls Project reflects a common feminist stance on women and conventional development; she notes, after Foucault, that “development … can be considered as the process by which we become drenched in, and shaped by, culture-bound assumptions of power/knowledge” (Debold 2001, 170-1). She suggests that, in terms of development, “masculinity and femininity are, in some ways, systems of meaning-making that … cohere as a self” (Debold in Alev 1996, 22).

Feminist psychological research responded to the perception that within developmental theory women had been “defined as less than, not as good as, deviant from, a male norm” (Debold in Alev 1996, 15) with the assertion that psychology had ‘mismeasured women’. This theory refuted “mainstream psychology’s statement that women are inferior by arguing that psychology as presently conducted is poor science” (Wilkinson 1997, 254). Another central theme has been the theory of ‘internalised oppression’, which argues that “women are socialised in ways which encourage the development of personal characteristics detrimental to our happiness and achievement” (Wilkinson 1997, 257).
In this vein, the late 1980s saw the emergence of a number of influential feminist studies that rocked the solid landscape of developmental studies. The first was the groundbreaking Harvard Girls Project led by Carol Gilligan, written up as *In a different voice* (1982). Gilligan, a renowned psychologist, argued that women demonstrated a path of moral development specific to their gender. She illuminated the manner in which “various models of ‘human’ moral psychological development” were premised on a single “paradigmatic perspective” which was “closely associated with masculine psychology” (Heyes 1997, 146). Her analysis “stressed that girls’ voices had not been listened to”, “the political salience” of her project thus “lay in creating a space for girls to be heard” (Heyes 1997, 149).

Gilligan’s study sought to redress the predominant view of the individual as separate and of relationships as “hierarchical or contractual” arrangements, tied in with the values of justice and autonomy as presented in Kohlberg’s map of the development of moral reasoning. Gilligan challenged the androcentric premise of Kohlberg’s study and proposed that the relationship between justice and morality was mostly predominant in male moral thinking (Gilligan 1988, 8).

She found that the values of care and connection, salient in women’s thinking, implied a view of self and other as interdependent and of relationships as networks created and sustained by attention and response (Gilligan 1988, 8). She suggested that the gender differences observed in moral reasoning and orientation are tied to different understandings of the self-in-relationship. In women’s narrative of self, the process of joining another’s story to our own constitutes an understanding of the self-in-relationship which highlights the “relational context of identity formation” (Gilligan 1988, 7). In women the “self is known in the experience of connection … interaction, the responsiveness of human engagement” (Gilligan 1988, 7). From this observation she asserted that where the ‘basic masculine’ sense of self is separate, the ‘basic feminine’ sense of self is connected to the world. With this understanding she re-examined the moral domain, broadening the spectrum of moral development to include activities of compassion, care and interdependent attachment that empower all the participants in relationship (Gilligan 1988, 5).

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11Where Piaget’s developmental work was focused on the development of cognitive structure, Kohlberg & Gilligan’s work was focused on the development of cognitive content (Debold 2005, personal communication).

12Where Keller uses the term soluble to refer to the feminine mode of connected self-identity, Wright uses permeable and Gilligan uses communal (as does Wilber).
Delineating three stages of development: Selfish, Conventional Ethical and Universal Care, she reported the tendency for different preferences between men and women which Wilber summarises thus, “men tend to progress ... based more on judgement of rights and justice, whereas women tend to negotiate these hierarchical stages based on judgements of care and responsibility” (Wilber 1998, 588). Each unfolding stage of moral development is “higher and more valuable” because it extends the circle of care (feminine tendency) or justice (masculine tendency) to more people\textsuperscript{13} (Wilber 1998, 588).

Exploring the traditionally defined relationship of gender to knowledge: the masculine being the sphere of abstract, impersonal ‘thinking’ and the feminine being, the ‘emotional’ dimensions of the personal and interpersonal (Belenky et al 1986, 7), the authors of Women’s Ways of Knowing asserted that masculine attributes had to that point dominated studies of psychological development. Due to this, they suggested, “we have learned a great deal about the development of autonomy and independence, abstract critical thought and the unfolding of a morality of rights and justice in both men and women. We have learned less about the development of interdependence, intimacy, nurturance and contextual thought” (Belenky et al 1986, 6). Their study set out to illuminate women’s experience of meaning making and knowledge in order to redress this balance.

Debold observes that the Women’s Ways of Knowing project “pointed to the relationship between cultural authority and the struggles women must endure in order to authorize themselves and their knowledge” (Debold 2001, 167). It is worth bringing attention to the fact that the researchers in Women’s Ways of Knowing question “universal developmental pathways” citing the variance presented by women of widely different “ages, life circumstances, and backgrounds” (Belenkey et al 1986, 15). While their research is not presented in a developmentalist format and they are hesitant to mark out any “stage-like qualities” of development, Wade notes that “considerable unprompted evidence concerning the order of emergence [is] volunteered by their respondents” (Wade 1996, 132). Their epistemological categories move from the almost subjectless Silence, and culminate in Constructed Knowing. This state is described as an expanded, integrated, and empathetic state of knowing; a connected and passionate knowledge characterised through the “opening of mind and the heart to embrace the world” (Belenky et al 1986, 141). They describe the women of this stage as self-aware, with the desire to work in the world in a way “that contributes to the empowerment and improvement in the quality of

\textsuperscript{13} In terms of the discussion of higher stages of development it is worth noting that Gilligan also perceived the possibility that there was “a hierarchical moral stage beyond the formal operational level” (Gilligan in Wilber 1998, 588).
life of others” (Belenky et al 1986, 152). These particular values and the distinctly transpersonal qualities of *Constructed Knowing* are echoed and expanded upon in the description of Cook-Greuter’s higher stages, as examined below.

These two studies, despite exploring different fields – Gilligan, moral (cognitive) content and Belenky et al, epistemological style – both emerged with results demonstrating the relational emphasis in women’s developmental pathway. This “self-in-relation” model, based on empathy and emotional connection with others, challenged the supposition of (masculine) “separation-individuation” as the only model for healthy self-development (Jordan et al 1991, 36 & 58-9).

**CRITIQUE OF GENDERED THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT**

Both Gilligan and Belenky et al have been lauded for recognising the specifics of a ‘feminine’ mode of development, and critiqued for reinforcing the attachment of these characteristics to women’s nature.

The ‘maximizing bias’ in the work of these theorists has been criticised; that is, their analysis focuses on finding differences between the sexes rather than commonalities. Their work has been taken to task for its recourse to “biological essentialism” in the suggestion that women are “naturally inclined” towards particular ways of meaning-making (Crawford 1989, 141). Some feminist critics have argued that relational theories such as those presented feed “back into traditional ideas about women” and femininity, that further reinforce “the social structures which impose on us the jobs of caring for small children and elderly relatives” (Wilkinson 1997, 259).

Critics have specifically charged Gilligan with false generalisations from “perspectives such as class, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity” (Fraser & Nicholson 1993, 427). Fraser and Nicholson asserted that, “disclaimers notwithstanding, she described women’s moral development in terms of a different voice; without specifying which women, under which specific historical circumstances have spoken with the voice in question” (Fraser & Nicholson 1993, 427). Further, Skoe et al note that research in the wake of Gilligan’s initial study “provided mixed support for Gilligan’s original claim of gender differences in moral orientation.” “Overall”, they conclude, subsequent research has demonstrated that “the two moral orientations, justice and care, are not gender specific, but gender related” (Skoe et al 1996, 280).

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14 Theory developed at the Stone Centre for Developmental Services and Studies, Wellesley College (Jordan et al 1991).
But, as Heyes notes, “at no point does Gilligan explicitly or implicitly argue that they are biological features of either men or women.” Rather, Gillian argues that “these different voices are learned” (Heyes 1997, 147). Gilligan has responded to critiques of her work in a considered manner. In subsequent research, Gilligan paid explicit attention to the variables of class and race by employing an extended “revised method” (Heyes 1997, 156). From this Gilligan and her co-researchers were able to draw the conclusion that girls “will experience the same kind of relational impasse at adolescence, but ... it may well be worse for girls of color and working-class girls than for their white or privileged counterparts” (Heyes 1997, 152-3).

Weighing up this criticism, gender research such as that presented by Gilligan and Belenky et al should not be understood to illustrate gendered differences that are biologically essential to women, nor differences that characterise the experience of all women at all times. This said, the gender differences illustrated by this research remain important when observing the path of women’s development as it illustrates some the relational modes of being they may develop in the face of the specific crises and hurdles of women’s development.

**GIRLS’ DEVELOPMENT AND ADOLESCENCE**

... the question arises – why have so many women so long supported this self-negation? Have we not worked as the main accomplices in our own oppression?

(Keller 1986, 15)

Confrontation with the ‘split feminine’ self of conventional womanhood may well be the nadir on the path of women’s development, but a precursor to the depth of this crisis arises as girls enter adolescence and face the identity they are being socialised to inhabit, as Elizabeth Debold reports. Debold, also from the Harvard Girl’s Project, examined the “psychological dynamics of power, knowledge, and desire” as girls developed into women (Debold et al 1993, xxiii). Both Debold and Gilligan identified fundamental differences in the course of development followed by girls and boys and from this asserted that major developmental catharsis occurs at disparate junctions for each gender.

Adolescence is identified as a period of “crisis” in the lives of girls that is equivalent to the Oedipal complex in early childhood for boys” (Debold 2001, 180). Nancy Chodorow’s work on childhood development (1978) suggested that the formation of differently gendered

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15 This later work was presented as *Between Voice and Silence* (McLean et al, 1997).
selves (separate or connected) could be traced back to different childhood experiences with the mother (as traditional primary care giver). Where the boy’s experience of an early childhood17 trauma of separation from the mother led to “what the culture understands as masculine personality” (Debold 2001, 188), the girl’s bond with the mother was allowed to continue18, she is taught to be like her mother, leading consequently to her developing a “more permeable ego” (Wright 1998, 211).

The experience of ‘coming of age’ at adolescence has been described as a disassociative process for girls. In the face of a growing apprehension of their relationship to “cultural power relations” - a “frightening ‘power/knowledge’ about being embodied as young women” - their natural voice and expression is often silenced (Debold 2001, 187). Research showed that girls’ response to their encounter with, and ensuing understanding of, the dominance of social male power “often results in a withdrawal from their bodies’ power and sexuality as a means of securing protection” (Debold 2001, 188). This withdrawal is part of the process of internalising, or incorporating the construct of the “good woman”: “where goodness equals both self abnegation and safety” (Debold in Alev 1996, 16 & 19). Debold concludes, “this protective withdrawal is what the culture understands and rewards as feminine personality” (Debold 2001, 188).

THE DEVELOPMENTAL JOURNEY OF THE HERO/INE

In Chapter One I noted the internal disparity in Campbell’s work between his assertion that the hero can be either male or female, and the loss of the heroine’s agency at a crucial juncture in the journey. While the aim of the hero/ine, according to Campbell’s analysis, is the attainment of the Authentic self, his observation and analysis of heroic symbolism reflected in large measure the conditioned view of male and female subjects that arises in the Conventional sphere. The hero of the Conventional realm is positioned as an individuated achiever with the heroine his passive, nurturing helpmate: the hero is separate, the heroine soluble. This is reaffirmed in Pearson and Pope’s examination of the character of the female hero in literature. They assert socio-historical reasons for the lack of profile of woman as hero: “With the rise of individualism, democracy, and secularism, men were expected to develop their individual identities. Women, on the other hand, continued to be taught a collective myth: They should be selfless helpmates to husband and children” (Pearson and Pope 1981, 6).

17 Preconventional.
18 Bussey and Bandura note that “empirical findings” are not supportive of the aspects of Chodorow’s theory that suggest that “the attachment bond is any stronger between mothers and daughters than mothers and sons” (Bussey & Bandura 1999, 680).
Women’s developmental journey has also been captured in the journey of the heroine in literature. Annis Pratt writes that in literature the figure of the heroine often begins as a socially devalued woman who, in transforming to a powerful being, is likely to encounter punishment for succeeding in her quest (Pratt 1982, 160 - 5). She continues, “the greater the personal development of a hero, the more true she is to herself and the more eccentric her relationship to the patriarchy. A quality of consciousness that is essentially antisocial characterises the most admirable heroes” (Pratt 1982, 169). This eccentric relationship is a product of tension inherent in development beyond the limits of Conventional boundaries and is exactly the problematic of the hero as posed by Campbell. For Campbell the hero’s navigation of the path to the realisation of his or her inborn potential is in necessary conflict with inherited orthodoxies, norms and beliefs (Campbell 1970, 147).

I argue that, for woman as heroine, a central problematic on the path has been her self-abnegation. To overcome this, the heroine must confront the Conventional image of the ‘nice girl’ and ‘good wife’ and swap Saiving’s sin of abnegation for Daly’s sin of being. It is in claiming the right to her post-Conventional, post-patriarchal eccentricity that she leaves the village and enters the forest to claim her true self.

The limits of Conventionality have had a significant effect on women’s development. Woman’s self-abnegation has meant that often parts of her self have to be split off or dissociated in order to fit the cultural model of ‘good womanhood’. Norman writes that in psychiatry or psychoanalysis, one of the major aims of therapy is “the integration of splintered or otherwise disturbed personalities ... it is often said that a patient’s ‘ego’ must be built up, so that he [sic] may properly function” (Norman 1969, 191 fn.). In the case of woman’s self-abnegation, lost parts of her self must be found, reclaimed and reintegrated. For it is only once the self is not longer abnegated, once there is healthy function of the ego, that access to the higher stages of development – which require a (healthy) dis-identification from the ego – are made possible (Wilber 2005, 84).

A DEVELOPMENTAL JUNCTION: ACHIEVER OR AFFILIATE

A common experience of catharsis is reported at the Conventional developmental juncture: there is the realisation that “the rules ‘don’t work’” and with this, the “faith in established authority” is shattered (Wade 1996, 148). The rules that govern the boundaries of the Conventional mode are damaged beyond repair and must be abandoned.

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19 Feminist theorists of Buddhism have cautioned that teachings of “not-self and emptiness”, which are synonymous with some of the characteristics of the highest developmental stages, hold a danger for women in that they can be “understood to mean self-sacrifice” and thus “reinforce gender conditioning” (Byrne 2000, 23).
Wade suggests from her analysis of developmental theory that while the developmental journey is “invariant up to the Conformist stage”\textsuperscript{20} at this point a developmental fork appears\textsuperscript{21} (Wade 1996, 158). The next stage is manifest as one of two equal but different modes, reflecting a separative ‘masculine’ or soluble ‘feminine’ mode, which she terms: \textit{Achiever} and \textit{Affiliate}.

Both the Achiever and the Affiliate have “metaphorically put[] one foot outside the system” (Wade 1996, 136). The Achiever does so by invoking the norm of masculine separatism through concern with “independent achievement via the manipulation of an externally perceived world of objects” (Wade 1996, 132). By contrast, the Affiliate stage - constructed from “data derived from females” - reflects a “socially connected orientation related to sustaining an interpersonal world of relationships” (Wade 1996, 132). Wade equates the Affiliate stage with Belenky et al’s Subjective knower who, having rejected “rationalism”, “logic and abstraction” as the “mistrusted ... methods of the masculine oppressors”\textsuperscript{22} turns to the internal locus of “intuitive, subjective experience” and “seeks nondominant peer connections and the affirmation of others’ subjective experience” (Wade 1996, 148 -150).

\textbf{DIFFERENTIATION AND THE SEPARATIVE SELF}

The separative heroic self has long been fetishised as the end point of human development with conventional psychology often concluding development at “Piaget’s Formal Operations in a Newtonian world” (Wade 1996, 17). Moving beyond the blinkers of the Conventional tier the subjective horizons of hero and heroine become considerably more vast.

Cook-Greuter’s research asserts that the greatest differences in the appearance of developmental characteristics between men and women occur in the first two tiers of development as people unconsciously reflect “the norms and notions shared in the cultural milieu” (Cook-Greuter 2005, personal communication). In terms of recontextualising the separative self, she reports that the first two tiers of development (Preconventional and Conventional) are primarily focused on differentiation. The Conventional tier culminates in Loevinger’s modal \textit{Conscientious}, whose description

\textsuperscript{20} This assertion does not take into account Debold’s research, which proposes significant developmental crises of differentiation for infant boys and adolescent girls.

\textsuperscript{21} The \textit{Conscientious} stage follows \textit{Conformist} at this point in Loevinger and Cook-Greuter’s schema.

\textsuperscript{22} “Authority figures for these women were typically male, creating suspicion of men and male systems” (Wade 1996, 148).
sounds strikingly like the heroic Separative self. Characterised by “rationality, progressivism, positivism and reductionism” through the hallmarks of independence, self-authorship and “increased self-differentiation” (Cook-Greuter 2005, 25), the achievement of the Conscientious stage is rewarded and supported by “society and institutions” (Cook-Greuter 2005, 17). *Conscientious* is, as Cook-Greuter describes it, “widely considered the adult stage in much of Western culture” (Cook-Greuter 2005, 17). This perception fails to recognise the partiality of the differentiated heroic mode of being and further fails to recognise a number of additional stages of potential personal growth.

**THE POST-CONVENTIONAL TIER**

When extending our model of human development beyond the first two tiers with the assistance of Cook-Greuter and Wade et al, the Conventional masculine ideal of the separative masculine self is surpassed and out-grown as development moves into the post-conventional realm. Cook-Greuter notes that while the Conventional stage is completely adequate for mature adult life and, according to her research, encompasses around eighty percent of the adult population, the Post-conventional heralds the arrival of more mature, more powerful and additionally complex action-logics. Growth into the higher levels of development demonstrates “an overall shift from differentiation to integration” (Cook-Greuter 2005, 6) and requires the reintegration of the communal modalities marked as feminine. The later stages “are associated with greater nurturance, trust, interpersonal sensitivity, valuing of individuality, psychological mindedness, responsibility and inner control” (Hauser 1993, 27).

An important aspect of the focus on the specifics of women’s subjectivity, is suggested by Cook-Greuter who maintains that as development progresses into the Post-conventional socialised gender differences are increasingly transcended “as individuals consciously expand their own mental models, question unexamined beliefs, and increasingly embrace whatever was seen as ‘other’ at earlier stages” (Cook-Greuter 2005, personal communication). Specifically in terms of women, this means becoming conscious of, examining and moving beyond the set boundaries of gender roles such as the ‘dutiful daughter’ and the ‘good wife’. Once woman has stripped herself of the Conventional accoutrement of feminine identity, once she has divested herself of the “needs/desires/fantasies of others, namely men” that “envelope” her, “subjectivity can be ‘thought’ differently” (Priest 2003, 20-2). It is from this space that she can begin to truly open herself to the divine. Priest writes that it is only from this space that her ‘I’ can be

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Findings derived from Cook-Greuter’s research in the USA. On this topic see also Wade: “Researchers have observed that, comparatively, very few adults even in industrialized societies function consistently above the Conformist level” (Wade 1996, 132).
“set aflame, flooded, emptied of meaning”, opened wide “in rapture of the soul” (Priest 2003, 20–1).

And indeed, reports of the Post-conventional tier are marked by this inward, spiritual turn in which one’s identity is “no longer accepted” without question (Cook-Greuter 2005, 30). There is a movement towards what Cook-Greuter describes as a search for “unique gifts or [for] pursuing ... burning questions” (Cook-Greuter 2005, 30); a description that immediately reminded me of Joseph Campbell’s oft quoted injunction, to “follow your bliss” (Campbell & Moyers 1988, 149). As Wade describes it, the Authentic consciousness of this stage “resolves both the Achievement and Affiliation dilemmas, using a synergistic blend of both solutions that is greater than the sum of its parts ... the Authentic resolution is fulfilling one’s own personal mission and supporting the personal growth of others along the way” (Wade 1996, 158)

**INTEGRATED VS CONSTRUCT AWARE**

Susanne Cook-Greuter’s research on mature ego development was catalysed by the emphasis on permanence and stability that Loevinger placed on the categorisation of the identities of “self-actualised persons” in her highest Integrated stage (Cook-Greuter 1999, vi). Cook-Greuter perceived this characterisation as an ill fit “for people who develop a dynamic, fluid self-experience and who question the very assumption of the permanent self and object world” (Cook-Greuter 1999, 3). In response her research, drawn from a sample of 4400 SCT’s²⁴, composed two new stages: Construct Aware and Unitive to replace Loevinger’s Integrated (Cook-Greuter 1999, vi). These identities bridged “Western conceptions of psychological growth as increasing individuation and self-integration with Eastern notions of the permanent self as a transitional phenomenon that may be recognised as a guiding fiction and transcended” (Cook-Greuter 1999, vii).

Thus recapitulated, Cook-Greuter’s highest stage of Post-conventional development Construct Aware, introduces an explicit relatedness between action-logics and transpersonal capacities. People at this stage, reflecting their development of a complex world view, are reportedly aware of the constructed nature of the symbolic and of the interconnected and impermanent nature of being in the world (Cook-Greuter 2005, 6). The qualities of this stage include deepened self-awareness, through the observance of mental states, and the “conscious experience of non-ordinary states of consciousness” including increased access and “the capacity to draw from and appreciate insights from” “intuition, bodily states, feelings, dreams, archetypal and other transpersonal material”

²⁴ The Washington University Sentence Completion Test (SCT)
THE POST-POSTCONVENTIONAL TIER

Moving into the final Post-postconventional tier, the culminative Unitive stage of development, drawn from information gathered from both “the ancient wisdom literature” and contemporary research (Cook-Greuter 2005, 42-3), is described by Cook-Greuter as a “cross-paradigmatic and transrational ... way of knowing” which supersedes and integrates “all previous knowledge and epistemologies” (Cook-Greuter 2005, 36).

Wade notes that Cook-Greuter’s research “represents the only data for this level grounded in comprehensive conventional model” but she critiques Cook-Greuter’s description of the Unitive stage as being “somewhat clouded”, combining “suggestions of transition with assumptions of an end state” (Wade 1996, 179). Cook-Greuter herself suggests that there is “evidence of many more stages beyond the ... postconventional tier” and that the Unitive stage is a catchall level that “confounds several distinct higher levels of consciousness” (Cook-Greuter 2005, 42-3). Importantly, both theorists note that these higher stages are not static end points, but dynamic reference points that continue to develop along with human becoming. As Wade has drawn on reports from diverse spiritual traditions in order to unpack and expand upon Cook-Greuter’s description, I follow her delineation of the two stages that she suggests compose the Post-postconventional tier, the Transcendent and the Unitive.

THE TRANSCENDENT STAGE

The primary motivation of the Transcendent stage is “the psychic death of the ego” (Wade 1996, 187). This dis-identification with the ego, as noted in Chapter One25, has been central to the hero’s journey, and its realisation, at this stage, finally becomes possible (Campbell 1949, 109). Having realised that “self-transcendence is ... unobtainable by intellectual study or emotional longing, though these must be present” this stage is primarily characterised as a spiritual quest. Mystical practices such as prayer, meditation, and ritual trance are fundamental to this stage. These practices, employed with rigor, produce states of consciousness, which are increasingly subtle and expand beyond common spatio-temporal limits (Wade 1996, 18 & 177).

25 Campbell suggests the key question of the hero’s journey as: “Can the ego put itself to death?” (Campbell 1949, 109).
The “residual positive effects” of these mystical states practices, such as an increased “sense of freedom, of expansion, of communication with other Selves” and the kosmos at large (Assagioli in Wade 1996, 186), become the “primary traits” of this stage (Wade 1996, 186). While the ego in this stage is reportedly, “fully open … and unselfconsciously at one with experience”, it is “nonetheless still in command of egoic faculties and operations” (Wade 1996, 187). This is in contrast with the next, Unitive stage. The Transcendent self is still separated from the full oneness of divine union. It is the dissolution of this duality that brings us to the Unitive stage.

THE UNITIVE STAGE

The Unitive stage is described as “the most complex known state of consciousness … characterised by the permanent cessation of the motives for becoming … It is the nirvana of Buddhism, the samadhi of yoga, the satori of Zen, the fana of Sufism, the shema of the Kabbalah, and the Kingdom of Heaven of Christianity” (Wade 1996, 203). Characterised by the extinguishment of the fires of ego, “desire, attachment, and self-interest” (Wade 1996, 203), at this stage ego is transparent and self is no other than the divine. Unitive individuals are described as having the ability to “shift effortlessly” between multiple perspectives and “states of awareness” (Cook-Greuter 2005, 43). Operating with an expanded frame of time, embedded in nature and the interconnectedness of being, unified in body-mind, the Unitive individual experiences reality as an “undifferentiated phenomenological continuum” (Cooke-Greuter 2005, 44). From this perspective their life’s work, characterised by the values of universal justice and care, is understood simultaneously as an “expression of their unique selves” and part of the unfolding of human consciousness (Cook-Greuter 2005, 45). With the population that attains Unitive consciousness historically few, those who do “are thought of as divine beings (e.g., Gautama, Jesus) saints (e.g., St Francis, Kabir, Julian of Norwich), sages (e.g., Lao Tzu, Al-Gahzzali, Judah Loew, Meister Eckhart), and spiritual guides (e.g., Ramana Maharshi, Brother Lawrence, Patanjali)” (Wade 1996, 204).

Development to this stage has required a full processual embrace of agency and communion, differentiation and integration, immanence and transcendence. Having fully integrated what at other stages manifest as ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’ traits, exemplars at this stage exist beyond the limits of gender, yet in full acknowledgement of them, as earlier demonstrated in the story of Tara. Tara, who saw no Absolute distinction between male and female, “in this life there is no such distinction … The weak minded are always deluded by this” (Templeman 1981), nonetheless chose to “work for the welfare of all living beings in a female form … until Samsara has been emptied” (Galland 1998, 50).
While, as noted earlier, the arrival at the highest Unitive development stage is made possible by a path of “arduous psychological and spiritual preparation” (Wade 1996, 204), the practice pathway for women may be quite different to that laid out for men. In her beautiful examination of the intersection of spiritual practice and feminism, Carol Flinders examines some of the key meditative injunctions: Be silent, “Put yourself last … Unseat the ego”, “Resist and rechannel your desires. Disidentify yourself with your body and senses,” “Enclose yourself. Turn inward” (Flinders 1998, 83). She notes that these instructions “cancel the basic freedoms” and “sound remarkably like the mandates young girls have always received as they approach womanhood.” They are at direct odds, she concludes, with the messages of feminism (Flinders 1998, 83-4). She proposes that the principle concerns of spiritual practice for women, an essential aspect both of women’s development and wellbeing and an important focal point for feminism must, at the present time, be quite different (Flinders 1998, 324). Her conclusions are absolutely in keeping with the work of gender development theorists such as Gilligan, Debold, Belenky et al and the Stone Centre. Women’s practice must acknowledge gender specific hurdles on the path. It must include “finding voice, strengthening the sense of self, supportive enclosure with other women and girls … identification of desires … recognition of a historical lineage of strong women, establishment of a female community, and validation of one’s own capacity to choose” (Flinders 1998, 285).

This is further reinforced in Irigaray’s philosophy. Her most recent works speak of the necessity of spiritual practice for women’s development. She focuses on the immanent practices of awareness found in yoga and tantra, through which the body is transformed into a “spiritual vessel” (Joy in Joy et al 2003, 57): awareness of breath, inhabiting the body, and being in communion with all creation. She insists that women’s practice must be of the ‘sensible transcendental’ (Immanence (as opposed to transcendence) has been devalued in theology and philosophy. Breaking down this sense of opposition and enfolding each with their reliance upon one another, Irigaray has conceptualised the ‘sensible transcendental’ to repair the torn symbolic by which woman, as immanent nature, is separated from man as transcendent mind. She points out that “immanence is a necessary condition of transcendence, since no one can achieve intelligence or
opposition to the flesh but as the projected horizon for our (embodied) becoming” (Jantzen 1998, 271-2).

In this light the sensible transcendent can be read as a specific proposal for women’s developmental practice, a practice that would encompass “a range of movements and nutritional practices, attentiveness to breath in respiration, respect for the rhythms of the day, and night, for the seasons and years as the calendar of the flesh” and “the training of the senses for accurate, rewarding and concentrated perception” (Irigaray 1996, 24). A practice pathway specific to the context in which women find themselves, and one which leans towards the Unitive horizon: “an objective-subjective place or path whereby the self could be coalesced in space and time: unity of instinct, heart, and knowledge, unity of nature and spirit, condition for the abode and for saintliness” (Irigaray 1987, 67).

‘HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL, TERRESTRIAL AND HEAVENLY’

I argue that in the current western context there is a specific path for women towards the Unitive. In accord with the Integral feminist perspective that I have outlined, the effects of biology, psychology, culture and systemic regulation form an interactive matrix that produces gendered subjectivity. In the contemporary socio-temporal space this means that differences in the developmental pathways of women and men towards the Unitive stage are apparent, and notably include: a crisis of development in adolescence, the tendency towards relationality in development, the need to reclaim the self abnegated to fit the model of ‘good girl/wife’ and the negotiation of the Affiliate stage. This illustration of the journey has sought, as Wright proposed, to examine the particular reasons for the development, and subsequent effects, of “women’s more permeable ego-boundaries” and the particular “qualities and values that flow” from the action-logics of a ‘feminine’ self “on their patterns of personal and spiritual development” (Wright 1998, 210-11 & 216). Yet it must remain clear that the traits designated as ‘female’, or ‘feminine’ tendencies, are not static, essential or exclusive to women. They arise co-dependently from within a matrix of being in the world, and relate specifically to socio-temporal conditions. In drawing the specificities of a women’s developmental pathway it is important to note that any such map would never be complete or unchanging, and that the noted differences will not necessarily always be the same (between women, or in contrast to men). It must be

creativity without the requisite physical complexity” (Jantzen 1998, 271). That is, quite simply, transcendence, requires, occurs in, and with, immanence.

29 As articulated in Chapter Three.
held in clear awareness that the relationship between ‘the feminine’ and woman is intimate and actual but also historical and contingent.

**‘TO BE INCARNATED? ARCHI-ANCIENT AND FOREVER FUTURE’**

So, what would the horizon of becoming, the female face of Unitive development, the archetype of the Self, both wholly beyond gender, and wholly present and realised as the divine in female form, look like? Can we look back to women in mythology, folklore and history, to find her?

Irigaray implores us, as women, not to forget “that we already have a history, that certain women, despite all the cultural obstacles, have made their mark upon history and all too often have been forgotten by us” (Irigaray 1987, 19). To construct a divine horizon that recognises and supports the path of female subjectivity it is necessary to recognise and continue to reclaim the unsung, forgotten and repressed genealogy of female spirituality - the figures, stories, insights and practice of women from mythology, folklore, and religion - while looking to the future to imagine ever fuller possible manifestations of human female divinity.

The journey stories of Christian mystics such as St Clare of Assisi and Julian of Norwich, Tibetan stories such as Lady Yeshe Tsogyal, Nangsa Obum, the Hindu mystic Mirabai, or the eighth-century Islamic poet and saint Rabl’a, or goddesses such as Inanna and Tara, are all fertile territory from which to draw threads. These stories explore the peculiar pathways that women have taken to overcome the hurdles of gendered expectation, find release from them and manifest the divine in themselves. In these stories a female figure moves towards the horizon of her own immanent and transcendent divinity with a preparedness and willingness to venture beyond her ego boundaries, to squarely meet unexpected obstacles and constraints, to move from seeking, to self mastery, integration and divine union.

The divine horizon, or archetype of the Self, is a guide who assists women to understand the hazards and potentials of their developmental journey to the Unitive stage. This figure, who is the expression of the highest stage of development and practice as a woman, beckons us “to ‘become what we are’” (Jantzen 1998, 92). An omega point that comes into being in the meeting of present and past, she beckons woman into the future.

Held in the philosophical framework of Integral feminism, and set within the context of

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30 Quote: Irigaray 1987, 72.
the evolution of consciousness, this process of drawing together exemplary spiritual examples of women, past and present, with contemporary research on gender and adult development has sought to make possible a neo-perennial understanding of the heroine's journey as demonstrated in this chapter. Just as the divine horizon for women emerges from the genealogical process of bringing together the many faces and paths of female divinity, with clothes cut in the Integral stage, so too the heroine's journey emerges from an exploration of the dimensions of women's history to inscribe a contemporary symbolic, sacred and developmental pathway for the heroine of the present.
Conclusion:

Returning from the journey with gift giving hands –
the discourse of Integral Feminism

This thesis began with the figure of the heroine, and took her as a metaphor for the female relationship with the divine, in the world and in herself. With her journey as a motif for the question of women’s subjectivity, “Who is woman?”, this thesis has argued that, at the present juncture, a discourse of Integral Feminism is required in order to “reassemble” the female subject “after the certainties” of identity have “collapsed” (Braidotti 1994, 99).

In the past women’s subjectivity was mapped in the interwoven socio-cultural, psychological, cosmological and spiritual dimensions of a myth. This map is no longer adequate. Each of these threads have been rightfully pulled apart and closely examined by contemporary scholarship, and they must be carefully rewoven in order to draw a map in a manner and method appropriate to our present context.

Thus this thesis has traversed domains such as mythology, philosophy, religion, archaeology, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and gender theory in order to journey towards the depths of the question “Who is woman?”. The answer to this question requires both a discursive position on the definition of Woman and a greater philosophy of interconnection and non-dualism, and it requires sophisticated interdisciplinary tools in order to achieve this. To this end I brought the multi-perspectival methods and non-dual philosophies of Integral theory into conversation with feminist theory. This meeting has been a challenging one. I believe, despite any measure of discomfort between the two, that each theory enriches and expands the other, and suggests the growth of a new theoretical paradigm, Integral Feminism.

The Integral Feminist discourse I have presented in this thesis utilises the tools, methodology and philosophy of Integral theory but expands them to include, and substantially modifies them through, the inclusion of feminist theories. Integral feminism
contributes to, and transforms, the discourse of women as subject by using the lines, levels and quadrants of Integral Theory as a tool to map woman. It acknowledges the necessity of re-integrating the repressed ‘feminine’ of body, earth and feeling, and the importance of placing woman as subject in intimate, immanent relationship to ecology and deep time, while at the same time the ‘feminine’ is understood as intimate with, yet not essential to, woman.

As a discourse Integral Feminism remains committed to key (first and second wave) feminist goals, while it also acknowledges difference and diversity among women. It confronts the destabilisation of form, as particularly presented in third wave feminism, by extending the promise of Corporeal, feminist Process and Nomadic philosophies of interconnectivity.

Along with many of the theorists discussed in this thesis, I believe that spirituality is essential to the feminist task, and that true subjectivity is formed through connection to an inner life, to our embodiment (in body and with nature), and to our connection to the Absolute. The spiritual nature of the heroine’s journey, and the divine horizon of her path, has been of paramount importance to this thesis. This discourse avoids the postmodern trap of emptiness by grounding woman as subject in the fullness of spiritual subjectivity.

Further, in forming a discourse of Integral Feminism I have emphasised women’s contribution to the evolution of human consciousness, both as a subject of history, and in the emergence of feminist consciousness. From the perspective of the west, limits in development in the stages of evolution have produced social, cultural and psychological effects that have inhibited women’s ability to develop to her full potential. Feminism has challenged the socio-cultural limits of conventional gender roles and in doing so has been a catalyst for the development of new, post-conventional identities. This movement has changed the consciousness of the planet and is now helping to open the door to an Integral stage of consciousness.

Just as the emergence of feminist consciousness required and inspired women to leave patriarchal spaces and roles behind, we find ourselves again at the cusp of a new stage of consciousness, one that integrates and heals the pathologies of the past and promises new horizons; one that is replete with new values, identities, relationships and ways of being. This new consciousness calls us to embody and extend to others the highest values available to us, the values of universal care and justice for all humanity and for the ecosystem; values that are still collectively emerging as part of the nascent Integral stage.
Still poetic, today’s map of the heroine’s journey incorporates all our ways of knowing: cognitive, emotional, spiritual and immanent. The mythic material in which we originally found the heroine is included, but is transformed by its contextualisation in the broader framework of Integral feminism. With an articulated developmental pathway to the divine horizon, this discourse insists on the importance of a genealogy of divine women and of the archetype of the Self for women that is a naturally emergent outcome of this lineage. The neo-perennial map to the heroine’s journey created through this process thus includes a genealogy of the past while it beckons woman into the future.

**NEXT STEPS: SACRED MARRIAGE**

In the context of creating an Integral historiography of evolutionary development (as was Wilber’s goal in *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*) a fully fleshed out female perspective on woman is an absolute and fundamental requirement, and that is what this thesis set out to do. I fully concur with Wilber in believing that human history is the richer for multi-perspectival analysis; a history that joins male and female perspectives can only be richer, and specifically more Integral, in doing so. I assert that without including an informed feminist perspective on woman and ‘the feminine’, Integral theory by its own standards is not Integral. Concurrently, I retain belief in the possibility that these two disparate, at times seemingly incompatible and competing perspectives, male and female, might be brought in union in an Integral mode that understands both the particularity and the partiality of each.

The final task of the heroine is sacred marriage. It is only as woman genuinely gains her subjectivity that a true intersubjective meeting with man becomes possible. Conscious intersubjective relations require both men and women to come to the realisation of self, each coming to understand interrelation, difference and unity in and through each other, each acknowledging the karmic threads of the past, avowing our suffering, and opening to the gifts we have to bestow on one another. In turn, this intersubjectivity is what makes possible, and characterises, the Integral stage. This stage requires, represents and embodies the fundamental healing of the pathologies and rends of the dualities of the past and present. It seeks to gather new evidence and perspectives in an ongoing way, to integrate these perspectives, to readjust and to continue evolving ever deeper and wider forms of knowledge, again and again. In an Integral spirit this thesis is offered as a contribution to this open-ended, ongoing, conversation, with the aim of fully exploring and genuinely honouring the journey of woman as heroine.
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