

Patriarchal Mythologies: A Feminist Jungian Perspective¹

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We have, in a sense, secularized our religion. Having voided the sacred from nature, we have turned to new gods: technology, production of goods, greater physical wellbeing. Consequently our environment is poisoned; resources become exhausted; ecological cycles are disrupted; demonic powers of the machine threaten us. ...

Let us look more closely at the religious background of our exile on this planet. The Decalogue's first three commandments present a deity separate from man. This god fashioned man for an exclusive covenant with Himself. No graven images are to be made of this patriarchal, king-like leader. He exclusively is to be worshipped. The sacred is severely limited to the abstract spirit. Experiencing the sacred in groves, animals, or objects of imagination is declared evil. Symbolic imagination is banished. (Whitmont 1987:99-101).

In the dire consequences arising from the well-documented abuse of Earth, nature, and our bodies, we begin to see that they will no longer tolerate the tyranny of our control. They will no longer submit to the slavery to which we try to subject them. The Goddess is the life force in matter. She has laws that now have to be learned and obeyed. Her indwelling presence is the sacred energy, energy on which our egos have no legitimate claim. Confronted with this reality - a reality that is a confrontation with our own threatened survival - we realize that like Earth, nature, our bodies, we too are the vessels of an energy far greater than anything that tries to contain it. We realise that we, like the rest of nature, are participating members in the vast community of life, whose sacredness we must embrace if we are to survive (Woodman and Dickson 1996:3).

¹ This document is Chapter 7 of Margaret's PhD thesis "*The voices we speak and the silences we keep: toward an epistemology of immanence*" in which Margaret explored conjunctions between Environmental Studies and Jungian psychology.

Introduction

In modernist western cultures in which abstract 'rational' reason is privileged whilst other ways of knowing are oppressed and life qualities within nature are denied, culturally dominant positions are gendered masculine whilst inferiorised alternatives are gendered feminine. In a network view of the interconnected patterns in which cultural meanings and power relations rest, this gendering must be recognised as existing within the foundation constitution of western cultural meanings, values and perspectives which are of central concern to environmentalists.

In the following discussion I do not unpick and separate-out complex relationships between sex, gender, cultural values, meanings, epistemologies and ontologies. Rather, I use images from western cultural myths of origin to express how this complexity is inextricably integrated in whole patterns of meaning and being. In this approach I combine critical, abstract analysis with a mythological, imagistic epistemological alternative. Firstly, I locate study of mythology within perspectives provided by depth psychology and environmental feminism. I then present a brief history of western myths of creation, and demonstrate how these mythic images have a continuing presence within contemporary secular cultures. Finally, I initiate an exploration of the alternatives which are contained within a notion of sacred feminine, whose presence is spoken, and then repressed, within western mythologies.

A depth psychological reading of mythology

Archetypal dimension of myth

Within depth psychology, mythologies are understood to be stories about the outer world which express archetypal images and energies within psyche. Psychological-cultural understandings of the powerful influence of mythologies are thus based upon understandings about archetypal patterning of psyche which have been described in previous chapters. From this perspective, mythologies are seen to hold a middle ground and mediating position within dynamic interchanges between inner and outer, psychological and cultural worlds. In this image of mutual, reciprocal influence, cultural forms are

'introjected' to form inner psychic images, whilst the contents of unconscious and conscious psyche are projected in the creations of cultures.

The presence of collective mythic images in the dreams of individual people suggests that mythologies address people through unconscious psyche as well as through influences in conscious cultural expression. In modern western cultures a living participation in mythological-cultural worlds is viewed to be a characteristic of 'primitive' cultures. However mythologies continue to have a psychological significance even within a culture in which recognition of their importance and living cultural presence has been lost (cf Kerenyi 1949/85:1). As Jung (in Jung and Kerenyi 1949/85:75) insists: "Archetypes were and still are, living psychic forces that demand to be taken seriously". Archetypes mediate past and present, and eternal and historical time or, in the words of modern sciences, reversible and irreversible time. Whilst mythologies tell of events occurring in historical times, they also open into mythological time: a mythology returns to primordial time, whilst it unfolds in narrative form across time (Kerenyi 1949/85:7). Therefore, Kerenyi argues, in the midst of speaking a myth, a teller may 'find his way back' into primordial time. In this sense, myths can provide openings to archetypal energies and hold a power which is beyond analytic representation.² In the following discussion I mainly utilise a cultural-analytic perspective, as I search for mythological presence in the meanings and forms of western social-cultural institutions.

Mythology in culture

Whilst mythic stories are understood in depth psychology to come out of relatively timeless and trans cultural dimensions, myths give very culturally idiosyncratic and specific body to the abundant possibilities that are contained in this collective stratum. Myths then, are not culturally-neutral, psychologically-given stories. Rather, mythic stories and images act very persuasively within culture by directing perception and meaning in culturally specific forms; acting ideologically to privilege certain people over others; and directing actions toward the rest of nature in particular ways (cf Campbell 1964; Cheney 1991; Doyle

² "A personal-collective descent story" by Margaret (also on the Sophia website www.sophia.org.au) takes up this psychological, living experience of mythic images.

1990; Ruether 1992:15). Myths are both "a reflection on the cosmos" and "a justification of the particular society from which they proceed" (Vieyre 1965:56).

Mythological influence is particularly clear in cultural myths of origin or creation stories, which are the focus of the following discussion. Such stories about the gods at the same time tell of the origins of particular social-cultural worlds. As Kerenyi (1949/85:7) puts it, "The gods are so 'original' that a new world is always born with a new god - a new epoch or a new aspect of the world". This should not be seen however as a causal explanation, or an 'objective' description of social-political and/or mythological history. Whilst a mythology may be traced to a certain cultural-historical period, as an archetypal image it also may live in the present with a fresh and original, spontaneous energy which is only partially derived from its antecedent cultural life. As Campbell (1964:516) warns: "(for the) uninstructed mind, myths tend to become history and there ensues a type of attachment...(which) binds so-called believers into contending groups and ... deprives them of the substance of the message ...". Rather, Campbell suggests, mythic imageries should be read as poetry, art and experience. As I stress, this requires that specific, epistemological qualities of imaginal forms of knowing be recognised: the power of images is contained within their ability to provide a living, contextual picture, rather than an abstract chain of separated assertions.

Gendering in mythology

Restrictive choices between either essentialist or constructivist interpretations of gender differences in feminist theories can be radically reordered, when the deep mythological patterning of gender in social-cultural worlds is recognised. From a depth psychological perspective, psyche contains neither a fixed, gendered nature nor a 'blank sheet' to be inscribed by culture in the socialisation of a single lifetime. Rather, the depth psyche is understood to contain very influential, culturally-specific gendered stereotypes and conceptions which include at least 4,000 years of collective western cultural history.³ As Tacey describes it:

³ Here, *experience* of gendered distinctions as 'essential nature' are recognised. This feminine does seem deeper than can be explained by even the most critical exposes of subtle and not-so-subtle socialisation processes. However, it is also so culturally specific - all cultures do not honour an abstract logic and associate its prowess with masculinity. Perhaps it is the intuitive faculty of a shaman that bestows power and prestige in another culture. An edited collection of anthropological studies by McCormack and Strathern (1980) demonstrates the complex and culturally specific nature of gendered conceptions of humans and nature.

Social stereotypes do not emerge out of thin air; they represent an amalgam of nature and nurture, culture and psyche, time and eternity. The way in which masculinity is socially reproduced is of course a product of ideology, but this ideology has archetypal foundations that are ignored at our peril (Tacey 1997:194).⁴

In this view, archetypal theory is not used to rationalise conservative theories of immutable gender difference, but to provide an understanding of the cultural depth of gender oppression which is not contained in the radicalism of social-constructivist theories (Tacey 1997). Obviously, a conception such as the creative life quality in material nature is not essentially gendered (cf McNeely 1991:36). However, as the following discussion illustrates, in the depths of our cultural history this conception is gendered feminine, whether we intellectually understand it to be that way or not.

In these discussions, distinctions need to be drawn between forms of patriarchal social organisation and patriarchal mythologies. These two forms of patriarchy are certainly interrelated, but the relationships are by no means straightforward. A mythological focus does not necessarily directly reflect or draw attention to particular social expressions of power of men over women within culture. Rather, it brings to the fore unequal power-distribution of some values, forms of consciousness and knowledge over others which exist across a culture, and are inscribed upon and experienced by both men and women (although gendered differentially) within that culture. It is not simply an 'essential feminine' which is devalued under patriarchy. Rather, all which is devalued is placed in association with cultural conceptions of 'the feminine'. It is a confusion and simplification of this process therefore, to conflate all the qualities of the inferiorised other as being of an essential feminine, but it is equally dangerous to overlook the existence of the implicit cultural gendering which is present in particular cultural ways of doing and being. It is with these understandings that I speak of 'the feminine' and 'the masculine', to refer to complex categories which are constituted within culture. Thus it is understood that men and women are all "the

⁴ Tacey uses depth psychology to mediate a dispute between mythopoeic and social-constructionist theories of masculinity. A similar dispute is reflected in theoretical divisions within environmental feminisms.

children of patriarchy" (Woodman 1993:40) and each suffer patriarchal oppression differently but equally, as do different classes and cultures of people (Tacey 1997:xiv, 13). Such discussion and analysis of implicit cultural gendering of characteristics which clearly are not related to biological sex distinctions is fraught with difficulties and ambiguities. However, from a depth psychological perspective, gendered distinctions cannot easily be reasoned or wished away as though they do not exist:

We continue to dream [and mythologise] in the archaic and concrete language of ancient symbols, and we cannot rail against the psyche for using sexist or stereotypical language. The point is that masculinity and femininity have to be constantly raised from the literal to the metaphorical level, where they can be dealt with in philosophical and psychological ways (Tacey 1997:35).

By recognising the depth and the inner dynamics by which outer patriarchal power relations are sustained, the depth of the oppression is revealed in more striking detail (Woodman 1993b:9). At the same time, alternative possibilities which are contained within western cultures are also revealed.

Environmental feminism: Associations between women and nature

This reading of gender and mythology directly addresses and re-orientates central theoretical issues within environmental feminism. In feminist, mythological readings of contemporary environmental situations, an historical period in which conceptions of divinity and the sacred were represented in feminine earth deities or goddesses is recalled. Ecofeminists argue that a loss of this awareness of a sacred nature is a powerful factor which enables human brutality to non-human nature; and suggest that a regaining of sacred relationships with earth which are modeled on feminine images is likely to assist development of deeper wisdom and very different values and actions (cf Diamond and Orenstein (eds) 1990; Plant (ed) 1989).

These mythopoeic feminist positions are often seen to be in conflict with other forms of feminist analysis, which seek to be located and recognised within the

broad intellectual traditions of western cultures.⁵ It is feared that the status of ecological feminism as reasoned theory and emancipatory praxis is jeopardised by the irrationality and essentialism which are said to arise when associations between woman and nature are positively embraced (cf Warren (ed) 1994). By its admission of the association of the feminine with an inferiorised nature, and its employment of epistemological and expressive alternatives, ecofeminism is accused by some of being not only ineffective but also regressive in terms of feminist politics (Prentice 1988:9). Biehl (1991) has influentially argued that the 'irrationalities' of ecofeminists are so problematic that ecofeminisms should be altogether abandoned. She particularly finds problem with the "unifying modes of subjectivity such as mysticism, metaphor, and myth" which, she argues, "unify phenomena at the expense of differentiations" (Biehl 1991:87). Beuge (1994:49) suggests that ecofeminism can be rescued from the worst of Biehl's criticism, but that it should "abandon goddess worship and other mythopoeic structures".

It is also argued that the re-valuing of nature and the feminine, which occurs through an invoking of images of nature-goddesses, merely reverses the *values* of western dualisms, whilst problematic hyper-separations of humans from nature, mind from body, masculine from feminine and so on, are retained. As Plumwood eloquently warns:

In feminist and liberation theory, the misty forbidding passes of the Mountains of Dualism have swallowed many an unwary traveler in their mazes and chasms. In these mountains, a well-trodden path leads through a steep defile to the Cavern of Reversal, where travelers fall into an upside-down world which strangely resembles the one they seek to escape. Trapped Romantics wander here ... as do various tribes of Arcadians, Earth Mothers, Noble Savages and Working-Class Heroes whose identities are defined by reversing the valuations of the dominant culture (Plumwood 1993:3).

However, from a depth psychological perspective, I argue that the alternatives which are being sought in Plumwood's 'upside-down' places go significantly beyond dualistic reversal, in their search for deeper alternative possibilities. In

⁵ The mythopoeic positions to which I refer to in this discussion are categorised variously as ecofeminism, radical feminism or cultural feminism.

drawing associations between women and 'earth mothers' and goddess images of divinity within nature, radical feminists are gesturing to a conceptual form that is much more than reproductive and biological. It is in these marginalised areas of ecofeminism that the most radical reappraisals of epistemological and value hierarchies in western intellectual thought are made within environmental feminism. In addition, mythopoeic embrace of goddess mythologies and 'feminist spiritualities' provides a space in which deep *critiques* of disembodied reason also support active exploration and expression of other modes of knowing. As Ruether (1975:194) asserts, ecofeminist analyses attempt to move beyond the options provided by "emancipation through identification with a misogynist male rationality or re identification with a concept of 'nature' and 'femininity' which ever returns them to powerless inarticulate subjugation".

Furthermore I suggest that, when environmental feminists try to exclude discussion of women's imaginative and mythopoeic experiences from their ranks, they are explicitly employing the same oppressive logic that is so effectively criticised by feminists in other contexts of oppression. As I outline in the following discussion, popular cultural understandings of 'myth' as meaning 'untrue' ("it's just a myth") can be understood to be *part of* a western mythology and ideology which states that our culture is founded upon rational, rather than religious and mythological foundations. This is a defining feature of the cultural logic by which western cultures sustain their 'master status' in relation to other cultures. It is therefore not a position which feminists should use against other feminists who seek to liberate these silenced possibilities.

In addition, mythopoeic and synthesising modes of subjectivity and expression utilise an imagistic epistemology which provides extremely valuable contributions which cannot be gained by the reasoned analysis and deconstruction of existing social-political institutions alone. These synthesising and analysing possibilities should not be seen as contradictory, however. Mythological understandings provide a vantage point for critical analyses of oppression, and Jungian-informed feminism provides a psychological basis from which radical feminist positions can be read as critical theory and invaluable emancipatory movement. Feminists can thus acknowledge their very reasonable fears of losing hard won ground, without defensively closing the doors on any theorising which recognises cultural associations between the feminine and non-rational things such as mythology,

poetics, earth and body (cf Casselare 1994 for a socialist feminist support of this position).

Western creation myths: From sacred nature to sky god

In the following discussion, I use images from western cultural mythological-religious histories to provide understanding of the ecologically destructive nature of contemporary cultures. These richly textured images contained within western cultural myths of origin illustrate ways in which cultural conceptions of non-human and human nature, intelligence, knowledge and creativity all form together in a nexus of interrelated concepts. Particular conceptions of these qualities underlie all efforts to address our environmental situation, and yet these are very rarely made explicit. I focus on conceptions of the form and location of the 'sacred', as creative source and origin of life in western creation stories. I describe how representations of processes of creation have conceptually shifted from images of an ongoing creative present to images of a single and completed act of creation which occurred in the past; and how a reversal in the gender of the perceived source of creative activity closely accompanies these dramatic conceptual changes. This description is followed by explorations of the presence of these conceptual patterns within social institutional and psychological structures of contemporary western cultures. From this depth psychological, analytic perspective, I argue that ecofeminism provides much more than a "seductively simple and appealing counter argument" to "complex social theory", as Prentice (1988:9) suggests. As Tacey (1997:10) says: "Unless a depth dimension is taken into account, political and social science will remain frustrated and frustrating, a testimony only to the machinations of the hubristic intellect".

This presentation involves a shift in voice, as many conceptions which have previously been expressed in analytic terms are re-mapped and re-presented through the telling of myth. Although I tell these stories as history, there are obviously many different histories, mythic stories and interpretive translations, and I envisage this very much as one contemporary story about historical presence in modern-postmodern cultures (cf Ruether 1975:xii).

Early matriarchal mythologies

In ancient Near Eastern (for example, Egyptian and Sumerian) cultures, creation stories begin with an account of a primal mother, or matrix, who is conceived as the origin of all the cosmos and the gods. Heaven and earth, water, air and vegetation emerge from her body, followed by the anthropomorphic gods and goddesses. For example, in Sumerian stories, it was Nammu, an oceanic sea-mother, who gave birth to the gods (Vieyra 1965:57-9). These stories represent processes of creation in images of *gestation*, which reflect images of creation in nature: in seeds, eggs and wombs, life emerges mysteriously out of the darkness (Ruether 1992). They present an image of immanent creativity, in which creative process is understood as residing throughout the material world: that is, "the divine as filling all of life" (Griffin 1990:87). This feminine sacred source was understood to have an on-going existence that provided generative power within the world, as a 'fountain of life', 'world navel', 'matrix' of life, or 'goddess' (Campbell 1968).

Within these myths, dualities of masculine and feminine emerge from the primary matrix, and are reproduced in various gendered categories and deities such as sky (masculine) and earth (feminine). However, they are not hierarchically ordered (Ruether 1975:12). Overall, these creation stories reflect a cross-culturally common mythological theme: that differentiated or separated aspects of the world have emerged from an undifferentiated matrix, unformed matter, chaos, or *prima materia*, which is either conceptualised as being pre-gender or, very frequently, is gendered feminine (eg Duff 1994:130).

Associated with this cosmological understanding, political power was held by a male God-King in a patriarchal society. Within this patriarchy, according to Ruether (1975:13), men saw themselves as "children of the nature mother, ... exercising power through worshipping her". This form of relationship between secular and sacred power was symbolised in Egypt by the king's throne, which took the form of the lap of the Goddess Isis. The Earth is associated with the feminine, social order and fertility in this matriarchal myth. However, in its conjunction with secular patriarchal power, Ruether (1975:13) considers this pre-Christian social/mythic situation as being "the first stage of a male co-option of the female into a system of power exercised by males."

Transitions from matriarchal to patriarchal myths

A radical departure from these matriarchal mythologies can be found in a succession of myths in which battles between the anthropomorphic gods and the primal mother are recounted, and the eventual demise and disappearance of a primal feminine matrix is recorded. These collisions of masculine and feminine deities, and the triumph of the masculine deity, contain a clear expression of movements from matriarchal to patriarchal mythologies. These accounts form the earliest written records of western mythic stories⁶ (Campbell 1988; Ruether 1975, 1992).⁷

An example of a mythic story from later in this period is provided in the *Enuma Elish*, the founding myth of the Babylonian culture which defeated and overtook Sumerian culture (1,600 - 2,000BC). The story begins with descriptions of the ancient mother, the oceanic water goddess Tiamat, who gives birth to the gods through a commingling with the god of fresh waters, Apsu (Furlong 1992:5). It continues with the story of the defeat of Tiamat by the younger, masculine god Marduk, who is the founding, anthropomorphic deity of Babylon. In a period of political conquest and revolt, Tiamat is negatively represented as the forces of 'chaos' that threaten order and stability. The mythic story tells how Marduk kills Tiamat and treads upon her lifeless carcass. He splits her body in half and fashions the heavens and earth from its dead matter (Furlong 1992:7-8; Ruether 1992:15-19).⁸ As Joseph Campbell describes it:

... the story begins with a great council of the male gods up in the sky, each god a star, and they have heard that the Grandma is coming, old Tiamat, the Abyss, the inexhaustible Source. She arrives in the form of a great fish or dragon ... when Tiamat opens her mouth, the young god Marduk of Babylon sends winds into her throat and belly that blow her to pieces, and he then dismembers her and fashions the earth and heavens out of the parts of her body (Campbell 1988:170).

⁶ Joseph Campbell (1988) judges this to be a 'critical moment in history', which he describes in terms of invasions of northern herding peoples into the agricultural south.

⁷ Margaret looks in more depth at one mythic story - that of the Sumerian goddess Inanna - which dates from early in this period (3,000 - 4,000 BC) in "Inanna's descent: A Sumerian myth" also on the Sophia website www.sophia.org.au

⁸ Marduk also fashions humans from the blood of her male consort, in order that they can serve the gods, and the human priests who are closest to the gods. Thus human hierarchy is also justified (Ruether 1992).

In this image, earth and sky are still imagined as being formed from the body of the primal matrix (gendered feminine). However, the creative formative processes are attributed to a masculine, sky deity, who works upon the matter of Tiamat's dead body. The myth thus records the prior presence of the primal mother, as well as her defeat, the destruction of her being, and the re-ordering of its matter according to patriarchal design.

The erasure of the primal mother: Greek and Judeo-Christian myths

In the Christian myth of origin, these previous understandings are encompassed within an over-arching explanation of creation, in which an *immaterial* principle is perceived to be an *a priori* creative power. A masculine god is located in space beyond the masculine realm of previous sky gods, and is presented as existing prior to, and creating, the earth. In the original Hebrew creation myth, God makes the world from inert matter, and so the story of the killing of a living goddess, or living matter, is erased. She no longer has power or a name: "the Mother has been reduced to formless but also malleable 'stuff' that responds instantly to the Creator's command" (Ruether 1992:19). In later Christian doctrine, God is said to have created *ex nihilo* - out of nothing. Here, even the presence of a primary matter is removed (Griffiths 1994).

In this creation story, humans and the earth and sky are made during a single time of creation, by a god who existed before everything, who is pure spirit (has no body), who is male and who is all powerful and all-knowing. In contrast to previous conceptions of immanent divinity, this new sky god represents a unitary *transcendent* principle. God is transcendent over (is able to stand above) his creation, rather than being subject to it. He transcends both earth and sky in terms of time and space (as spirit, he exists outside matter). Nature is relegated to the lower side of a new dualism between spirit and matter, as 'mater' (the mother) is transformed into inanimate 'matter'. As Johnson summarises, in classical Christian doctrine:

... God ... is depicted as the epitome of the masculine half of the dualistic equation. The all holy Other is uncontaminated by Matter, utterly transcendent over the world, and unaffected by it. The way in which patriarchal authority commands the obedience of women and other creatures on earth serves as a prime analogy of God's relation to the world (Johnson 1993:17).

The *one* god is elevated, whilst pagan, earth and sky-based goddesses and gods are outcast. Eve is born from Adam, and Adam is created by the male god (Ruether 1975:14).

In intersections of these conceptions with those of Platonic idealism and its misogynist dualisms of spirit and body, value and power *hierarchies* within divisions between earth and sky, masculine and feminine, humans and nature, and so on is completed (Griffiths 1994; Plumwood 1993). In Greek society the hierarchy of spirit and body served to justify master-slave relations and the disenfranchisement of women, and this inferiorisation of the social status of women was introduced to Egypt, where previously women held equal legal status with men (Seton-Williams 1992:23). Biologically, women were considered as the passive receptacle for the incubation of the male seed, which is seen as the source of generative potency (Cantarella 1987:52-61).

In these conceptions, elevation of a concept of Spirit as being pure and perfect, is achieved along with a denigration of body, as being impure and imperfect: "The desires of the flesh are against the spirit and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh" (the Gospel according to Paul). Mortal humans are born in original sin, whilst God provides the model of perfection: "May I know Thee O Lord, that I may love Thee. May I know myself that I may despise myself" (Christian prayer quoted by M. Fox, 1983). In these hierarchical hyper-separations of images of spirit from those of matter, realms of the gods and the sacred are divided from human daily life. These conceptions are part of the 'original sin' and 'Fall' doctrines in Christianity, which Fox (1983) persuasively argues is deeply implicated in contemporary situations of environmental destruction. As Campbell (1988:24) describes it: in Biblical thinking, "we live in exile". Campbell argues that this cultural conception of original sin and the

association of the feminine with it, stands out amongst the wealth of world mythologies he has researched, as a single and isolated mytheme:

In the Biblical tradition we have inherited, life is corrupt, and every natural impulse is sinful unless it has been circumcised or baptized. The serpent was the one who brought sin in to the world. And the woman was the one who handed the apple to man. This identification of the woman with sin, of the serpent with sin, and thus of life with sin, is the twist that has been given to the whole story in the Biblical myth and the doctrine of the Fall (Campbell 1988:47).

Understood psychologically, this 'fall' from participation within a sacred world is identified with the development of ego identity, which is experienced as a separation of individual consciousness from unconscious psyche.⁹ Whitmont describes how Christian monotheism relates to development of this form of self awareness, which is increasingly focused in consciousness, in the western psyche:

The earlier magical and mythological world views had allowed for the experience of a plurality of forces, powers, and personalities. This was expunged by the centralized, monotheistic world view. Theologically the myth appears in the concept of the one God, psychologically in the concept of a unified self, and I personality. This I personality deified the conscious aspects of experience while denying the multiplicity of pre-ego-conscious aspects and complexes from which it had emerged. This development sets the pattern for the ego's dictatorial use of will to enforce the fiction of being the supreme ruler of the total psyche (Whitmont 1987:80).

⁹ In much Jungian work the development of ego-consciousness is considered as a positive and necessary movement, in an evolutionary theory of human consciousness which conceptualises western consciousness as being 'advanced' in relation to 'primitive' consciousness (cf for example, Campbell 1964; Whitmont 1987; and Woodman and Dickson 1996:16-22). This is an ethnocentric interpretative position which maintains a naturalistic fallacy that matriarchal consciousness is 'natural' whilst the masculine consciousness is a product of culture. I read and use these scholarly works for their descriptions of changes in human consciousness, psychologies and mythologies, whilst I treat their evolutionary interpretations with extreme caution. The concept of 'evolution' itself is patriarchal, in that it speaks of a movement towards increasing perfection, whilst a less value-laden notion of 'change' can be very differently conceptualised within an image of a continuously creative present.

In summary, transformation to a deeply patriarchal mythic system is completed in the intersections of Hebrew and Greek cultures. Dualities of feminine earth and masculine sky become hierarchical and spiritual man is considered superior to embodied woman, in a powerful alliance of patriarchal social and mythological power (Griffiths 1994). Whilst, by their nature, men are perceived to be more closely related to spiritual dimensions, women are also considered capable of spiritual experience. However, this ability is typified by the model provided by the Virgin Mary, which involves a repression of their material, sensual self and therefore does not correct foundation misogynist conceptions (Ruether 1975). Whereas embodied earth and a material matrix had been considered the primary ground out of which life grows, their presence becomes secondary to a concept of disembodied spirit.

Secularisation of the sky god - the rational human and mechanistic nature

Within Enlightenment Europe, mythological removal of an enlivened, creative material nature is concretised in mechanistic images of nature. At the same time, the attendant image of a disembodied sky god is re-presented within secular images of rational human mind, through which humans are understood to be able to control a malleable nature.

In the influential philosophy of Descartes, Platonic dualisms of spirit and body are transformed by translating the concept of spirit into that of human mind and consciousness (Plumwood 1993:112). Through this possession of mind, men begin to feel themselves to be "the masters, rather than the children, of organic nature" (Ruether, 1973:11). The human man believes himself to be in principle capable of understanding the laws of nature: that is, of encompassing them within his rationality. From this understanding he believes himself to be capable of encompassing and controlling nature. As Birch (1990:114) expresses it, the human "begins as a tenant or lodger in the world, and ends up as its landlord". It is important to note the *necessary* relationship between this elevation of consciousness and the desacrification of wider nature. The human individual can make himself and create his freedom only in proportion as he desacrifices himself with the whole (Whitmont 1987:98).

Thus, when Enlightenment conceptions are viewed from a mythological-analytical perspective, deep interconnections are seen to exist between the,

apparently contrasting, secular-rationalist emphases of Enlightenment thought and the religious-spiritual focus of Christian thought. As Prigogine and Stengers suggest:

...Western thought has always oscillated between the world as automaton and a theology in which God governs the universe. This is what Needham calls the 'characteristic European schizophrenia'. In fact, these visions are connected. An automaton needs an external god (Prigogine and Stengers 1984:66-7).

Western sciences of control which are enabled by human ownership of mind are intrinsically related to the conceptual image of an original and completed act of creation which is presented in the Judeo-Christian myth of origin. An image of a transcendent god who exists *prior to and outside of his creation*, which was completed within a single series of actions in a fixed past, provides an excellent explanatory principle for the mechanistic assumptions upon which reductionist sciences depend, and indeed was self-consciously present in the work of scientists such as Newton, Bacon and Descartes (Griffin 1984:10-21; von Franz 1992). Conceptual removal of creative activity from a living present into a separated, past age enables the vision of a machine-like nature which is constituted of inert matter and subject to immutable laws. Von Franz places the completion of this desacrilisation - the abandonment of the hypothesis of 'nature being animated' - as arising with Descartes, in the foundations of his philosophy:

Descartes actually proved his mechanical causal outlook with a statement that 'God will keep forever to his own rules which he once set.' In other words, God can no longer be creative. It is interesting that this idea is still behind the determinism of the natural sciences - you all know of the famous, desperate cry of Albert Einstein...'God does not play dice!' Now which God does not play dice?...it is only one god-image which does not allow God to change; there are, in other civilizations, god-images which do allow God to change or to be creative (von Franz 1992:155).

In these secular versions of patriarchal mythologies, images of creative process in the world mirror human, 'man-made' creative works, rather than the gestative, reproductive processes of nature, and birth from human women. When it is

viewed as a machine, nature is conceived as a human-made artefact which is transformed by reductionist understandings and modification of its various parts. On the other hand, any mythologies which provide pictures of an *ongoing creative present* challenge this basis of the mechanistic premise. Optimistic visions of human mastery which is to be achieved through prediction of the future, via extrapolation from the past, are insupportable when a creative, living and unpredictable present intercedes in this linear flow of causality. In addition, gestative processes represent a form of creative change which occurs within a darkness which is simply not amenable to the visual command and control of conscious planning and design.

Carolyn Merchant (1980) describes transformations from an 'organic' to a 'mechanistic' world view from an historical, socialist-feminist perspective. She argues that this change constituted an 'ecological revolution' which provided fundamental support for capitalist industrialisation, its accelerated exploitation of nature and the associated transitions from peasant to urban life. In addition, mythological-ideological gendering of mind as a masculine attribute ensured that gender differences were maintained during a period of historical-cultural transformation in which traditional gender boundaries and categories were challenged by the complex divisions of labour available within industrial societies. Divisions of public and private domains were constituted within previously established gendered dualisms and built into the social structure of industrial cultures, to provide an important new vehicle for women's oppression (Ruether 1973; Stratford 1995).

Psychologically, these efforts to control women and external nature are paralleled within the individual human. Conceptions of an autonomous 'self' are considered (ideally) capable of transcending and controlling the non-rational, emotional, bodily aspect of human being. Like the transcendent god, the human self is considered capable of transcendence because it is conceptually located outside of unconscious psyche, body and matter. As in the earlier transitional mythologies, this form of ego psychology involves issues of fear and power. As von Franz (1992:154) describes, in depth psychological understandings "wanting to know everything completely and exactly is a power drive, coupled with a wish to protect oneself against the unexpected and irrational". In this conflict, unconscious dimensions of psyche suffer a fate identical with feminine earth

deities and conceptions of a primal matrix. With the assumption that creative power is derived from the light of consciousness, rather than emerging from the darkness of unconsciousness, the presence of a primary unconscious ground is erased.

Relationships between mythology and these cultural developments are not causally direct. Mechanistic images of nature are certainly potentially present in patriarchal creation myths which contain stories of the erasure of creative matter. However, it is also clear that this is the development of only one particular imaginal possibility, which arose in conjunction with particular social circumstances and cultural developments. Other more feminist and environmentally respectful alternatives are also potentially present in Judeo-Christian images: eg in the figure of Wisdom or Sophia (Griffiths 1994; Johnson 1993), in sacramental and communion traditions (Ruether 1992) and possibly in stewardship traditions (Passmore 1980). This complexity is thus not amenable to reductionist, causal *explanations* which present social situations as following causally from mythological foundations. However, mythological analyses are very important in refuting arguments which attempt to *oppose* secular, rational approaches to so-called mythopoeic and non-rational, spiritual intuitions. Rather, mechanistic sciences and western individualism are located as products *within* creative, mythologising processes of human meaning-forming activity, rather than being given a privileged, separated position which is supported by virtue of ownership of transcendent reason.

Patriarchal spirit in contemporary cultures

From an archetypal perspective, these mythological images which I have presented as 'mythological history' can be seen to be actively present in the patterns of contemporary life. Depth psychology suggests that archetypal contents, which express the unknowable powers within which we live, do not simply dissipate when they are not brought to consciousness, but continue to act unconsciously. As Whitmont describes it:

... gods banished from the high altar have a tendency to creep in through seamy back streets. ... For while modern man is free to ignore mythologies and theologies, his ignorance will not prevent

his continuing to feed upon decayed myths and degraded images (Whitmont 1987:102).

For example, through god-images, humans express their intuitive recognitions of greater divine or archetypal powers to which they are subject, and cultural imagining of a transcendent western human consciousness is akin to a 'degraded image' of such spiritual yearning. Similarly, the addictive energy which is invested in material things and expressed in eating disorders in consumer cultures can be viewed as a negative face of sacred mother-matter, creeping in through the back door (Woodman 1980). Bulldozing and remodelling of earth into a human-dominated 'landscape', and the managing of 'sustainable development', provides an ongoing expression of Marduk's battle to dismember Tiamat - the raw material of life - and reform it according to his desires.

Similarly, in important ways contemporary modernist sciences, democratic politics, technological capitalism and associated institutions, which clearly share in the Enlightenment conceptions outlined, take the values, form and energy from the Christian and pre-Christian mythologies within which they developed. From this perspective it becomes evident that a religious or archetypal energy lends power to these apparently secular social-cultural institutions of western cultures. For example, I am much more able to understand the vehemence and energy contained within economic rationalism and growth ideologies when I see it as arising out of possession by archetypal and non-rational energies, than I can by recourse to arguments founded on the supposedly-rational 'reason' of self interest. This recognition that archetypal, non-rational energies contribute significant strength and numinosity to beliefs in western Reason is particularly relevant to the epistemological foci of this research, because it provides a way of understanding powerful cultural meanings which underlie this apparently neutral, natural form of human knowing.

Mythological images of a triumphant or transcendent 'sky god' provide a way to see how a cluster of values within contemporary cultures are relationally interconnected: abstract reason and universalist perspectives; intellectual control and perfectionist law-order; and the idealism of unlimited growth (malleability of the earth) are given precedence over embodied particularity, unpredictable creativity and compassionate acceptance of the way things are. Different

environmental positions can be assessed for their critical and/or culturally reproductive content, by assessing how they reflect this mythological imagining. If proposed environmental solutions continue to constellate around central images which have been intimately involved in the cultural development of contemporary environmental exploitation, then there is good argument to be doubtful of their efficacy, particularly when the mythological pattern of these positions remains unconscious.

In the following discussion I briefly review issues of science, environmentalism, postmodernism and psychology which have been raised throughout this thesis, from this mythological-analytical perspective. I use short text excerpts to provide glimpses of the presence of sky-god images within theoretical perspectives which inform critical environmental analyses, as well as those of which environmentalism is critical. This is a form of cultural analysis which emerges through depth psychology's recognition of the presence of archetypal patterns and energies within all aspects of the cultural world. It is a brief, truncated account, which focuses on the negative tendencies contained within sky god thinking. Western cultural forms have of course also produced obvious and dramatic benefits, but these are so well represented within collective values and commentary that I believe they hardly need reiteration.

Modernist, classical sciences

Within contemporary western cultures, creation stories are provided almost entirely by science. In scientific accounts of cosmogenesis, concepts such as 'the singularity point' and the 'big bang' express properties which in other cosmologies are attributed to the gods: a singularity point represents a point of the union of opposites (the non-differentiation of a primary matrix) and 'the big bang' expresses the moment of bursting of this mythological unity into duality (Campbell 1988:49). One ambition of these cosmogenic hypotheses is to assimilate all sacred and unknowable dimensions of the universe into the mastery of its theory. Human intellectual understanding thus becomes the container in which all of creation can be held. Atkins (1995) beautifully spells out the necessity for science to deny the existence of anything prior to 'the creation', if it is to achieve this self appointed role.

The scientific account of cosmogenesis cannot stop when it has accounted for the universe springing from a seed the size of a Sun, nor when it has arrived at a seed the size of a pea. ... Science will be forced to admit defeat if it has to stop at a seed of any size. That is the severity of the criterion science sets for itself. If we are to be honest, then we have to accept that science will be able to claim complete success only if it achieves what many think completely impossible: accounting for the emergence of everything from absolutely nothing....

How different this is from the soft flabbiness of a non scientific argument, which typically lacks any external criterion of success except popular acclaim or the resignation of unthinking acceptance (Atkins 1995:131).

Atkins quite rightly recognises that the presence of even one seed must be disallowed from this new, scientific mythology, lest it recall the presence of a matriarchal matrix and its gestational metaphors of creative power, existing prior to the patriarchal creative act, *ex nihilo*. To me (an unbeliever), this statement of heroic high intention sounds remarkably tongue-in-cheek. However, Atkins is apparently serious.

Modernist environmental sciences

Potential omniscience of human knowledge also lies at the foundation of scientific myths of human technological mastery over nature; and provides foundation for the environmental sciences upon which much mainstream sustainable development and management approaches are based. Here it is assumed that humans will continue to create nature according to their needs, but must learn to do it better, by increasing knowledge and applying more perfect and rational input. As an example of such attitudes, I quote an extended passage from the opening paragraphs of a text (Simmons 1996) used in the teaching of *Environmental Studies 1*, University of Adelaide, 1997. The author begins by representing the source of scientific knowledge through an 'imaginary' presentation of a technological 'god's eye' view of the evolution of the earth:

Imagine that in a space-ship we can rove among the stars and find points where our remote sensing technology can pick up the light reflected from the earth about two million years ago and then zoom in, capturing images of the earth's surface every century of so until the very recent past. These images could be

made into maps of the cover of the land surfaces and the condition of shallow waters (Simmons 1996:1).

Despite the imaginary nature of this knowledge, Simmons then goes on to use it to describe the earth's surface during the Pleistocene, Holocene and the advent of *Homo Sapiens*, in a soothingly factual, scientific, balanced and knowledgeable tone. He continues:

This book is about the history of such changes, and its basis is the gathering of empirical facts about the changes of the sort that our space derived images would provide, were they not imaginary. But a unique feature of *Homo Sapiens* is that observed facts also have a meaning so we must provide a framework in which this information can escape from its status as mere isolated words or numbers and become a pattern. This pattern may be a clue to the kind of underlying regularities in nature and human activity that we call theory; equally it may lead to a set of tools for discussing the future, the more so since we may to a large extent choose the type of future we want (Simmons 1996:1-2).

The disinterest of the observer-scientist (sky god) is superbly expressed here in the passive language with which theory is described as an event which arises in the patterns of nature. However, in a further smooth leap of context, it is precisely through this knowledge of nature's patterns that it is assumed that humans can 'to a large extent', control and create the future according to their will and wishes. Simmons' neutral scientific account thus also records the advent of humans, as creator of nature as their artefact.¹⁰

The spiralling intensity with which management is being 'rationalised' and 'perfected' within Australian political cultures and much environmentalism can thus be viewed as a deepening excess and a one-sided development of the mythic patterns through which western patriarchal consciousness and its related social-cultural institutions are formed. The optimism of superficial management approaches relies upon this idealisation of human rationality through which, with better education, we will know the 'right' things to do, and do them. Individual

¹⁰ Simmons (1996:43) later presents the dualism between humans and nature in equally neutral terms: "In this book we shall accept dualism as a convenient vehicle. ... it is assumed that the hominid characteristics of self consciousness ... mark us off from our nearest animal relations."

humans are expected to fill the gaps and shore up deep-structural, social and political problems by increasing their knowledge, performance and efficiency. Such perfectionist demands express an idealism which can never be attained, but which must always be striven toward: they represent the judgements of a god who is forever out of reach, and separated from the mortal imperfections of everyday life. From a mythological perspective, it is arguable that the imbalances which are expressed in contemporary environmental situations are not likely to be redressed by intensification of this pattern, in which scientific knowledge and management skills are to be increasingly perfected. From this viewpoint, scientific knowledges have a place as one tool *within* the activities of human cultural life, but they are not able to encompass human cultural life from outside it.

New sciences

Research in 'new sciences' is often presented as providing a radical paradigm shift from these assumptions of classical sciences (Capra 1983; Roszak 1993). Returning to the discussions in the previous chapter, it is evident that myths of a transcendent god and a single act of creation are being challenged in theories which study and theorise about processes of an ongoingly creative nature. Campbell (1988:169) suggests that Sheldrake's (1985) work recalls a primal feminine presence within material nature: "There's a young scientist today who's using the terms 'morphogenetic field,' the field that produces forms. That's who the goddess is, the field that produces forms".

Alongside these new sciences of immanence, however, strong tendencies to retain and extend Enlightenment conceptions of transcendent mind are evident. For example, in cosmological theories of retroactive causation, consciousness is conceived as the creative, formative principle of the universe. As Reaney describes it:

We who are, as far as we know scientifically and empirically, the only conscious beings in the cosmos are the carriers of a torch which ... had the capacity in theory at least, to summon the entire cosmos into reality through what's called 'retroactive causation' (Reaney 1993:92).

In quantum physicists' accounts of the intrusion of the experimenter's mind into experimental results, the *collapse* of clear distinctions between mind and matter means that radical exclusion between these dualised conceptual categories is dismantled. However, in some of the myths being written by modern sciences this result is given interpretations in which the hierarchies of mind and matter are retained. Reductive materialism in classical sciences is inverted, as mind is explicitly re-interpreted to be *the* central creative principle. Roszak (1993:99) quotes physicist, James Jeans, in support of this conception: "Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that *we ought to hail it rather as the creator and governor of the realm of matter*". Zukav (1980:136) similarly suggests that: "The cogs in the Machine have become the Creators of the Universe". Zukav outlines a dubious line of logic, through which such conclusions might be reached:

Since particle-like behaviour and wave-like behaviour are the only properties that we ascribe to light, and since these properties now are recognised to belong (if complementarity is correct) not to light itself, but to our interaction with light, then it appears that light has no properties independent of us! To say that something has no properties is the same as saying that something does not exist. The next step in this logic is inescapable. Without us, light does not exist (Zukav 1980:118).¹¹

Here, rather than perceiving the collapse of distinctions between observer and observed as providing an apparently insurmountable barrier to objective and definitive human knowledge, the influence of the observer on the quantum object is taken as possible evidence of even greater human powers - that human conscious mind is effecting matter.

These intuitions of some form of mind or intelligence spreading through all the cosmos are part of a scientific search for a transcendent unitary ground behind the multiplicity of everyday life, and can be recognised and respected as a

¹¹ Elsewhere Zukav describes the measurement problem in terms of the intrusion of the measuring machine (a multi-molecular scale object trying to measure sub atomic particles of qualitatively different scale), rather than in terms of the human mind itself, except as it is the maker of the machine. Machines, of course, always measure things in accord with the theory which informed the construction of the machine (Bohm and Peat 1987:65-66; Davies 1989:167).

religious quest. Clearly, these philosopher-scientists are reaching toward an intuition of transcendent spiritual reality, which is also expressed in images of divinity as a sky god. Ken Wilber (1982:3) specifically embraces this tendency: "... ever since the 'quantum revolution' of fifty years ago, various physicists have been finding intriguing parallels between their results and certain mystical-transcendental religions". From a feminist, ecological perspective, the problematic issue lies not in this quest for spiritual insight, but in the presence of hierarchical conceptions which involve concomitant denial of immanent divinity within material life. In particular, problems arise when a secular ideology of human mastery is co-joined with speculations of a shared original oneness of the cosmos, which is conceived in anthropomorphic images of disembodied mind. Judged in terms of the archetypal images of creation within western cultural traditions, such conceptions hold a familiar failure to recognise and respect a primary reality in the material world and everyday human existence.

Certainly, these expansive notions do not seem to have served to bring humility to scientific quests for transcendent knowledge, as fundamentally mysterious and unknowable dimensions of reality are encountered. Rather, Wilber perceives encounters between science and mystics as providing a scientifically-founded legitimation of hitherto-unfounded religious intuitions:

And, Bohm and Pibram reasoned, the quintessential religious experience, the experience of mystical oneness and 'supreme identity,' might very well be a *genuine* and *legitimate* experience of this implicate and universal ground (as discovered by these modern scientists) (Wilber 1982:3, original emphasis).

Deep ecology and ecopsychology

These all-embracing cosmological visions are frequently called upon in support of more radical holistic, environmental approaches in deep ecology and ecopsychology. For example, as Roszak develops his influential notion of an ecological self through a scientific-cosmological perspective, he asks:

But how does inert stuff become transformed into a hierarchical arrangement of systems so complex that our science still struggles to find a model that will match its subtlety? *How does mindless matter become the mind* that struggles with the task of understanding matter? (Roszak 1993:176 emphasis added).

In answer, Roszak (1993: 176-181) outlines a "New Deism" which, following the advances in new sciences, replaces the Judeo Christian God with a concept of "Mind At Large". Here, whilst the transcendent Christian god is indeed being replaced, it is arguable that some of the deepest mythological themes associated with it are being further reiterated, in a completion of Enlightenment deification of Mind. Whilst it is clear that Roszak is calling forth a much larger conception of mind than that of a narrowly defined human consciousness, this consciousness is clearly conceptually anthropomorphic. This tendency is evident in previous quotations and in a close perusal of Roszak's (1993) work (for instance, in his use of 'the strong anthropic principle'). Such masculinist emphases upon transcendent experiences, in which human interconnection is understood to be achieved through expanded consciousness, have been critically addressed by many ecofeminists (cf Chapter 2).¹²

Postmodernism

Within postmodernist theorising, these modernist tendencies to inflate the power of human consciousness and unitary human knowledges are brought to ground. Indeed what better expression of this completion can be given than Nietzsche's "God is dead"? However, when judged in terms of western cultural mythemes, postmodern approaches contain a different version of sky god thinking. This is particularly evident in postmodern denials of embodied life as a source of creative activity. Whilst a transcendent consciousness is negated, it is replaced by a view in which the social and cultural order is argued to be creative source of identity, subjectivity and illusions of objectivity. Whilst new sciences risk idealising concepts of mind and consciousness, postmodernism completes

¹² Hamilton (1997) provides a collection of such stories. Whilst the importance of such experiences of transcendent identification with nature is not to be denied, the reiteration of such stories forms a pattern which directs reflection and experiences within nature in narrow channels. Alternative forms of recognition of a living divinity immanent within nature do not have so much voice, although they are present, and being developed as feminist literature gains strength (eg Griffin 1984; Williams 1992).

modernist secularisation projects: all mystery and divinity is removed in a strangely disembodied cultural world which rests upon a vision of lifeless materiality.

Western psychologies

Mythological images of various relationships between sky god(s) and feminine earth deities also find expression in the models of human psyche in modern western psychologies. Modern western psychologies reflect conceptions in which images of a transcendent sky god are secularised in conceptions of transcendent human mind, self and consciousness in Enlightenment thought. In contrast, in the depth psychologies of Jung and Freud, 'discovery of the unconscious' represents a return of the presence of the primal mother-matrix. However, these psychologies should not be seen as a revival of past, mythological histories. Rather, they are twentieth century psychologies which specifically address splits between conscious and unconscious aspects of psyche in the experiences of contemporary western humans, which are a psychic reflection of the cultural presence of patriarchal mythologies. These psychological theories also reflect recognition of the living presence of archetypal patterning, which is not simply dismembered or banished as different mythic patterns gain cultural ascendancy.

In Freudian models of psyche, images of conflict between conscious and unconscious psychic factors reproduce images from transitional myths which describe active and ongoing battles between the ordering 'civilising' masculine gods and Tiamat, the primary unconscious ground of being. The presence of unconscious psyche is recognised, but hierarchical values attributed to consciousness are retained.

Jungian psychology reflects earlier mythic images which present positive and creative aspects of the primal goddess, as the primary matrix out of which diverse forms of life emerge. This psychological model gives value to the unconscious psyche as a creative and powerful aspect of the human, and affords it primacy as the ground out of which consciousness springs. Sanford (1988:352) points to contrasts between Jung's reported experiences of a "vast but dim" consciousness, and Christian spiritual experiences of acutely "heightened" awareness, and argues that Jungian psychology provides "a natural

basis" for a "theology of immanence". As I have outlined, Jungian analytic methods rely upon belief in a continuously-creative emergence of forms out of darkness. It is at this level of meta-theory that I argue that, amongst contemporary psychologies, Jungian psychology is most amenable to, and can provide most support for, radical feminist reappraisals of western patriarchal forms.¹³

In a circular and reinforcing silencing, a silencing of women's voices and earth speech has been accompanied by silencing of the voices of unconscious psyche. In order to be able to hear and validate suppressed voices arising, we have simultaneously to justify the importance and relevance of mythology, poesis and embodied knowings. It is from within these words that the presence of a creative unconscious can be recognised, against an ongoing process of patriarchal-cultural erasure of such conceptions.

Re-membering and re-cognising the sacred feminine in the earth and embodied humans

In the above discussion, powerful mythological themes within Christianity and science are encompassed within a longer mythological history. This new story tells that our ancestors once viewed the earth (gendered feminine) as the source of creativity and life. However, over time this sense of the sacred - a sense of greater power - was taken from earth deities and placed within a sky god or gods (gendered masculine). In turn, the human mind was elevated in the secular world, and the source of active creative intelligence was equated with human consciousness (gendered masculine). The destructive social, psychological and ecological consequences of one-sided development of disembodied consciousness are becoming apparent. The result is an intellectual domination of the earth and human experience, which will not be solved until conceptions of a unity between humans and living, creative nature are incorporated into contemporary world views.

¹³ Jung's work contains the obvious cultural gender biases of a man born in the late nineteenth century. For example, his theory of anima and animus retained many stereotypic gender conceptions, whilst at the same time it also pointed toward a courageous theory of psychological androgyny (cf Singer 1989; Tacey 1997:26-29). These are relatively superficial theoretical difficulties, which do not conflict with the deeper radical revaluing of so many qualities which are associated with the repressed feminine in western culture which Jungian psychology offers.

This is not a "recovery narrative" - a story of a return to Paradise. Rather, the entire linear view which is an aspect of western patriarchal mythologies is disrupted by this new context (Merchant 1996:54). Re-inclusion of the feminine matrix, which was erased in the patriarchal story, entails recognition of processes of a complex ordering out of chaos which forever exist in a continuously creative present. This presence of the chaos-matrix within the larger story undermines the patriarchal history of an heroic journey of unending progress, which is presented in shorter stories in which the primal mother presence is only contained as a 'slain dragon'. This feminine sacred presence also expresses the possibility of new life: life which continues to exist in the world despite patriarchal stories which tell that sky gods and men have the ability and the right to make the world according to their designs.

In the shadow of western patriarchy

This creative possibility lies within the shadow of western cultures. From a depth psychological perspective, psychological and cultural shadow exists in creative and dynamic relationship with consciousness, and contains all that is repressed and rejected by consciousness. Negative shadow aspects of the light and vision of disembodied consciousness include a demanding perfectionism, loss of embodied ways of being and knowing, and addictive materialism. However, the shadow also contains many positive qualities (Johnson 1991:7-8). Beyond human value judgements of good and bad, presence of shadow indicates the being-ness of life, which is itself regardless of human desires for it to be otherwise. Also within the western cultural shadow are qualities of a sacred, creative life within matter, which are far from actually being dead and dismembered. To the contrary, in depth psychological understandings, repression of shadow contents is likely to encourage a constellation of psychic energy around the archetype in the unconscious, through which its expression in the world is activated. Many Jungians analysts describe such a process of re-emergence of repressed feminine energies, images and patterns in recent decades (Whitmont 1987; Woodman and Dickson 1996). As Tacey (1997:194-5) describes it: "There is a radical feminism at work on the inside of the Western psyche, and this has been constellated as a compensatory response to the patriarchal excesses of consciousness".

Imagining a world which contains the primal mother and sacred feminine is a radical, whole image transition. Creative intelligence within matter is not a concept of something spiritual, which started its life in the cosmos somewhere and has flown in for a temporary stay. It has no meaning outside of residence within earth, and it is not 'consciousness' as this is understood in western cultures. The primal feminine has been in shadow and has also come to represent a quality of 'darkness' culturally speaking. Like the reworking of wilderness concepts in environmentalism, our perceptions of the dark unconsciousness require transformation, from emptiness or perhaps demonic possession to denote instead the mysteries of life which are unseeable by a conscious, discriminating intellect. Archetypal presence comes in many guises, and there are myriad different ways to recognise and explore conceptions of the earth and human people as being alive; having divinity immanent within them; and being creator, creature; and living, gestating process.

Recognitions of creative presence in nature, body and psyche in contemporary thought

Many faces of these conceptions have been explored in previous chapters, where alternatives to dualised conceptions of mind and nature have been sought. They are found across feminist theorising in concerns to include embodied, contextual and particularist knowledges. In extending these understandings to include the context of unconscious psyche, I have proposed that relating with the voices of unconscious psyche is one form of environmental action which is part of creating relationship with wider nature. Conceptions of and relationships with a creative nature are also captured within a more open-minded science (for example Bohm and Peat 1987; Davies 1987; Lovelock 1979; Maturana and Francisco 1988; Sheldrake 1991; Waldrop 1992). For ecofeminists and others, the answer lies in learning from the earth spiritualities of various indigenous understandings; in re-imagining ancient goddess-centred societies; or creating new 'neo-pagan' approaches which recognise sacred life within nature (Eisler 1988,1990; Starhawk 1989; cf. Luhmann 1993 for an analysis of these approaches).¹⁴

¹⁴ Within these approaches, a singular terminology of 'the goddess' is sometimes used. In my view, this does not do justice to the personalised, embodied and polytheistic forms of most earth based spiritualities, which seek relationship with immanent sacred presence. In some cases this singular term is employed purposefully in order to indicate some overarching, unitary presence:

Within transpersonal and depth psychologies, creative, imaginative and transformative potentials within the unconscious dimensions of the human psyche are recognised; and the interconnections between humans and their history and non-human nature are explored (W. Fox 1990; von Franz 1992; Jung 1960, 1972, 1980; Perera 1981; Roszak, Gomes and Kanner (eds) 1996; Woodman, 1993). Some analysts also record and work with the specific images of divine feminine goddesses which are appearing in the dreams of many contemporary men and women, and in broader social-cultural movements (Perera 1981; Whitmont 1987; Woodman and Dickson 1996). Recognition of an ensouled world is central in *anima mundi* perspectives in archetypal psychology (for example, Bishop 1990, 1994; Hillman 1982; 1988). From this perspective, as Giegerich (1987) argues, recognition of the 'reality' and true animation of the land can occur only in association with a recognition of our unconscious dimensions of psyche and the associated loss of belief in the sovereign ego. Just as ego growth demands negation of the sacred in nature, recognition of a sacred nature demands negation of the sacred ego.

Jungian feminism

Jungian-informed feminists present a diverse range of discussion about archetypal feminine figures and energies, and the form and intensity of patriarchal oppression (Bolen 1994; Estes 1992; Murdoch 1990; O'Kane 1994; Perera 1981, 1986; Woodman 1985, 1993a; Woodman and Dickson 1996). Some discussion centres on the difficulties involved in accepting the necessary limits of human ego consciousness and control, as well as the unexpected inspirations which are found in opening to the unknown. As Perera (1981:30) notes, this attitudinal work need not be in antagonistic opposition to discriminating, patriarchal consciousness. What is being asked is reasonable respect, rather than defeated capitulation: "The forces and modalities of the Great Round do not wish to rule, or even to resist, hierarchical, progress-oriented, Logos modes. They do require reverence and respect, however". The repressed feminine shadow does not need to be 'integrated', so much as to be allowed to exist in paradoxical relationship, which is allowed by a multivalent

eg a "unifying light within nature" (Woodman and Dickson 1996:18). This Christian and post Christian flavour does not represent the radical cultural reappraisal which I imagine. However, such differentiated discussion is beyond the scope of this research.

consciousness and acceptance of the complexity in the ways things are (O'Kane 1994:29-32). Whilst this is a humbling view, there is also a relief and optimism in realising that we do not actually make the world as our artefact and we don't kill off anything we don't want to know about.

This more humble acceptance may not sound very significant, but for me it involves a deep experience of arrival at a place which is outside of and beyond perfectionist demands. Here, a feminine sacred ground is experienced as compassionate, and as offering a peace of acceptance and belonging which is in striking contrast to a demanding patriarchal power which remains forever out of reach of intimate relationship (cf Griffiths 1994). In this space, mortal particularities and limitations of knowledge are seen to reflect the rich diversity and complexity of a living world, rather than a failure of perfection.

Pre-planned and goal-oriented behaviours lose some of their meaning, whilst the transformative feminine presents a very different image of creativity. In the following picture, I imagine this energy like a life-giving, red-blooded warmth pushing up through, and cracking the controlled, icy order which comes from the excesses of disembodied mind. The rose is an image of the unexpected renewals which offer themselves to us from time to time. Whilst we cannot predict or force their times and shapes, we can learn to recognise and nurture the times when they occur, and find words and perceptions to describe them so that they are better brought into the collective consciousness.



Painting: Rose in ice castle

Summary

Cultural ideals of perfection, abstract reason and universalist perspectives are constituted within a deep and pervasive gendering of meaning and value. In this paper I have employed an archetypal and depth psychological analysis of central lineaments within western mythologies, to assist in revealing this complex nexus of gender and power. This conjunction of feminism and depth psychology also enables exploration of the ways in which structures and actions of oppressive power in the social world are supported, reproduced and indeed enabled by analogous divisions and oppressive oppositions within inner psyche. Personal socialisation experiences are channelled and given psychological meaning by mythological-cultural archetypal patterns, in the mutually reinforcing dynamics of psyche and culture.

Three broad mythic patterns in the development of western patriarchal mythologies were outlined. Firstly, there are myths which portray all anthropomorphic gods and life on earth as emerging from a primary, feminine, creative source or matrix. Secondly, are myths which recount battles in which

the anthropomorphic, secondary gods triumph over this primal feminine presence. Images portray a dismemberment of the primary mother or 'mater', and a re-constituting of her as raw 'matter' out of which male gods fashion earth and heavens. Representations of processes of creation shift from that of *incubation* (mysterious change within darkness) to that of *artefact* (creation initiated by conscious design). Finally, the presence of even primary material is denied, and a male, transcendent male god is said have created life from nothing - *ex nihilo*.

A secularised form of these conceptions is evident within contemporary western cultural conceptions of a transcendent human mind, which stands in a relationally similar position to that of the transcendent God of Christian mythologies. The patterned presence of these power-laden conceptions is also clearly evident in classical, environmental and new sciences; deep ecology and ecopsychology; postmodernism; and western psychologies. In psychological terms these mythic stories express the development of specifically western cultural forms of ego psychology, in which the denial of a powerful creative unconscious psyche is akin to the denial of a creative source immanent within matter.

This brief perusal of western mythological history thus shows that lineages of dominant thought in contemporary global cultures are built firmly upon mythologies which attribute creative power and control to disembodied and transcendent qualities of spirit and mind. This elevation involves a thoroughgoing repression of embodied ways of being and knowing, which would challenge the very basis of this power. Such an analysis provides an excellent vantage point for further critical review of western cultural relations of power and privilege.

In addition to critical deconstruction, a further departure point is found in the search for that which has been repressed and silenced, as patriarchal figures of creative power and political authority have gained ascendancy. Silenced possibilities are concealed in conceptions of incubation, in which life emerges from invisible creative sources within material nature, in a process which is qualitatively different than that in which humans create artefacts through conscious design and planning. In starting to look at our present situation

differently, I have argued therefore that we must develop epistemologies of immanence, in which inner ear is tuned to different voices; and different voices are given space to speak. As we allow other modes of perception we will be better able to 'see' into these mysteries, whilst we will also understand that we can never 'know' their unfathomable dimensions. This attitude involves a surrendering of some of the promises and experiences of control which are provided by sky god mythemes, and practising (alongside them) an active submission to an unpredictable fate. It is in these hidden, repressed possibilities that other sources of hope and life-giving power might be found.

In my developing relationship with the unconscious psyche I have very unexpectedly encountered feminine sacred presence and my story (A personal-collective descent story¹⁵) continues the task of remythologising patriarchal stories, by including them within more expansive historical and imaginative frames. It is one small activity in the ongoing work which is needed to restore life to the banished creative feminine.

¹⁵ Margaret's story can be found on the Sophia website at www.sophia.org.au

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