

2001

Poetic Anatomy of the Numinous Creative Passages into the Self as Beloved

ZIA, PARTOU

<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/2620>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.24382/3282>

University of Plymouth

All content in PEARL is protected by copyright law. Author manuscripts are made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the details provided on the item record or document. In the absence of an open licence (e.g. Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher or author.

Poetic Anatomy of the Numinous

Creative Passages into the Self as Beloved

by

PARTOU ZIA

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Research
Falmouth College of Arts

2001

ABSTRACT

PARTOU ZIA

Poetic Anatomy of the Numinous

Creative Passages into the Self as Beloved

This research is shaped by the actual experience of practice: as painter and writer. My preoccupation is with the nodal moment when conscious awareness is suspended, and both the corporal and psychic involvement in realising the work almost transport one to another zone of effectiveness. This zone, which I name as the *poetic zone*, is where the numinous enters the ordinary. The investigation for a space/place/moment that lies beyond the logic of acceptable discourse can help initiate and give shape to a new vocabulary – visual or literary. By orchestrating a methodology, which functions on several layers, I have endeavoured to create a synthesis between painting and writing. My method in all the aspects of this research -the **thesis**, **play scripts**, **studio paintings**, and **albums** - is firmly rooted in the conscious and critical intellect, as the vehicle that helps facilitate my need in establishing a personal arena for Becoming: - a deliberate yet semi-controlled state of charged eidetic experience, whereby the 'other' of the self is met with and (perhaps) named. By probing into the specific makeup or anatomy of the poetic moment, and coming to understand how it functions within both the pragmatic and the apparently undecipherable creative processes, the artist/poet, like the mystic visionary, may give an affirmative answer to the Self, as *I-that-is-not-the-other*. Thus I hope that this research will contribute to the feminist project engaged in trying to delineate the divine presence in '*feminine writing*', as a powerful guise and method for a clearer understanding of the psychological *other*.

LIST OF CONTENTS

*	Foreword	10
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the First</i>	16
*	Introduction	17
*	Extracts from the 'Diaries of Eve'	18
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Second</i>	22
*	Differentiating the Beloved/Other in Myth	23
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Third</i>	32
*	The Momentary and the Infinite	33
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Fourth</i>	38
*	In Words and Image	39
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Fifth</i>	44
*	The Scribe	45
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Sixth</i>	56
*	Interiors of the Sacred and Profane	57
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Seventh</i>	67
*	Still Life	68
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Eighth</i>	80
*	Word and Flesh	81
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Ninth</i>	88
*	The Self-Portrait and the I/Eye	89
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Tenth</i>	99
*	The Three Graces	100
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Eleventh</i>	118
*	My Beloved – My Muse	119
*	<i>Artist's Journal: Month the Twelfth</i>	128
*	Appendix: Crossing Lingual [Border]land/lines]	129
*	Illustrations i–xxviii	133
*	Endnotes	135
*	Bibliography	163
*	Further Reading	168
*	Visual Documentation on C.D. Rom – PC only [cover sleeve]	

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------|--|
| Fig. | 1 | Passional of Abbess Kunigunde, MS XIVA 17, fol.7v
National & University Library, Prague (1314 and 1321) |
| Fig. | 2 | Image du Monde, Paris BN, MS fr. 547, fol. 140r. (1171) |
| Fig. | 3 | Villers Miscellany, Brussels, Bib. Roy; MS 4459-70, fol. 150r. (1320) |
| Fig. | 4 | Cistercian Nun, Private Collection, Aachen (early fourteenth century) |
| Fig. | 5 | Gwen John 'A Corner of the Artist's Room in Paris' (c.1907-9)
Oil on canvas 32.5 x 26.5 cms. |
| Fig. | 6 | Vincent van Gogh 'The Artist's Bedroom' (October 1888)
Oil on canvas 72 x 90 cms. |
| Fig. | 7 | Pieter Saenredam 'The Grote Kerk, Haarlem' (c. 1635)
Oil on panel 59.5 x 81.7 cms. |
| Fig. | 8 | Pieter de Hooch 'The Pantry' (c. 1658)
Oil on canvas 65 x 60.5 cms. |
| Fig. | 9 | Partou 'Lent, St. Peter's' (1999) Oil on canvas 140 x 90 cms. |
| Fig. | 10 | “ 'Open Door' (1999) Oil on canvas 90 x 80 cms. |
| Fig. | 11 | “ 'The Chapel, St. Peter's' (1999) Oil on canvas 140 x 90 cms. |
| Fig. | 12 | “ 'Green Stairs' (2000) Oil on canvas 225 x 100 cms. |
| Fig. | 13 | “ 'The Red Chair' (2000) Oil on canvas 122 x 122 cms. |
| Fig. | 14 | “ 'The Studio II' (1999) Oil on canvas 130 x 95 cms. |
| Fig. | 15 | “ 'The Studio, White Slippers' (2000) Oil on panel 122 x 122 cms. |

- Fig. 16** Miniature showing Marcia, c.1402 from a French translation of Boccaccio's 'Concerning Famous Women'
- Fig. 17** Miniature showing Marcia, c.1404 from a French translation of Boccaccio's 'Concerning Famous Women'
- Fig. 18** Sofonisba Anguissola 'Self-portrait Painting the Virgin and Child' (1556) Oil on canvas 66 x 57 cms.
- Fig. 19** Frida Kahlo 'Self-portrait' (1940) Oil on canvas 62 x 47.5 cms.
- Fig. 20** Leonora Carrington 'Self-portrait' (1936-7) Oil on canvas 81 x 64.5 cms.
- Fig. 21** Helen Chadwick 'Vanity II' (1986) An image from a large installation cibachrome Photograph mounted in 60.9 cms. Diameter circular matt.
- Fig. 22** Partou 'Painting Myself' (2000) Oil on canvas 100 x 100 cms.
- Fig. 23** " 'Self-portrait with Goya' (1999) Oil on panel 122 x 122 cms.
- Fig. 24** " 'Self-portrait with Brushes' (2000) Oil on canvas 90 x 70 cms.
- Fig. 25** " 'Drawing (Self)' (1999) Pencil on graph paper 35 x 40 cms.
- Fig. 26** " 'Looking In the Mirror' (1998) Oil on canvas 160 x 120 cms.
- Fig. 27** " 'With Bra' (1998) Oil on panel 145 x 50 cms.
- Fig. 28** " 'Drawing with Postcards' (2000) Pencil and chalk on paper 70 x 50 cms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To

My dear family for having always believed in me

Professor Penny Florence for her insightful support and encouragement

And

**Professor Linda Anderson & Julia Farrer
for their generous and professional advice**

DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award. This study was financed with the aid of a studentship from Falmouth College of Arts, and carried out in collaboration with Plymouth University. A programme of advanced study was undertaken, which included Fine Art practice. Relevant seminars and conferences were regularly attended at which work was presented; external institutions were visited for consultation purposes, and papers were prepared for publication.

Publications or presentation of other forms of creative work:

- 1998 Solo Show, Newlyn Art Gallery - 'Church Paintings'
- 1999 Solo Show, Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro - 'Place & Persona'
Mixed Show, Art Space Gallery, London - 'Four Young Painters'
- 2000 Solo Show, Plymouth Arts Centre - 'Church Paintings'
Solo Show, Art Space Gallery - 'New Light'
- 2001 'Transitions', Newlyn Art Gallery - 'Presence - New Painting:
Self-Portraits & Interiors'
South West Arts Award, Fine Art

Presentation and Conferences Attended:

- 1998 Going Australian: Reconfiguring Feminism & Philosophy, an International
Conference, University of Warwick, Coventry
Regional Research Seminar, Falmouth College of Arts
The Relationship of Making to Writing; Practice, History & Theory, University of
Plymouth
Research Workshop, Exeter School of Arts & Design, University of Plymouth
- 1999 Theorama: Regional Seminar, Falmouth College of Arts - Introduction and Paper
Differential Spaces: European Axes of British Modernism, A Conference, FCA
- 2000 Complexity Conference: Dartington College of Arts
Practice Related Research in Fine Art & Performance, FCA
- 2001 Enactment of Thinking: Plymouth University, Exeter - paper

External Contacts:

I have had correspondences and / or meetings with:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Professor Linda Anderson | Arts Council, London |
| Rosemary Betterton | South West Arts, Exeter |
| Sister Wendy Becket | Tate, St. Ives |
| Deanna Petherbridge, RCA | Newlyn Art Gallery |
| The Laboratory, Oxford | Arnolfini, Bristol |
| Slade School of Fine Art | The British Museum, London |

Signed: *Pantag*
Date: *5 August 2001*

No poetic fantasy
but a biological reality,

a fact: I am an entity
like bird, insect, plant

or sea-plant cell;
I live; I am alive;

take care, do not know me,
deny me, do not recognise me,

shun me; for this reality
is infectious – ecstasy.

[H. D., *Trilogy*; *The Flowering of the Rod*, 9]

FOREWORD

The impulse that has shaped this doctoral research is derived from the actual experience of practice - focusing on the affect of both the sensuous and the cerebral, as a final outcome: how those qualities, in the realisation processes of the paintings, the albums, and poetic prose may be delineated. My artistic and poetic preoccupation is in trying to configure, and make coherent, the nodal moment when the conscious side of awareness is suspended; whence both the corporal and psychic involvement in realising and making the work almost transports one (the artist/poet) to another zone of effectiveness. This is what I consider and name as the *poetic zone*, or the moment of *being*, where the numinous enters the ordinary and the mundane. It is the space where the interiorised need to express imagery that is as yet not adapted to the so called 'logic' of acceptable discourses, begins to originate its own forms of expression. These instances of *epiphany* note what truly hold my research interest. Areas of transcendental expression, not easily defined, are what I grapple with in both my painting and writing practice.

- | | | |
|--|-------|-----------------|
| ~ G. <i>theos</i> : god | } | To gain insight |
| | }=? : | from |
| ~ C.16 L. <i>theoria</i> , from G. <i>theorein</i> : a sight; to gaze upon | } | a godly height |
-
- ~ C.16 L. via Med. L. *praxis*: deed, action; from G. *prassein*: to do

In order to begin its self-conscious processes of ontological affirmation, an academic document requires the participation of an-other as both examiner and interested reader. And so, to lead you (the *other*) to this thesis that-is-the-reflective-/embodied, is to incite to enter a pan-theoretic world constructed from a strange amalgam of parts.

Via the subtlety of language, - that phenomenal structure of artifice devised for the unique purpose of giving substance to every possible thing that tends towards the intangible, the ephemeral and the inexplicable, - a series of ideas and thoughts in here find a placement out there. This we refer to as: *Thesis*. The doctrine, argument, or dissertation is therefore embarked upon with the understood premise that much of it will, by necessity of its 'originality' be, at least initially, unfounded. It is therefore a tactical performance, albeit in the two-dimensional sphere of paper and word, staged amidst the public, and at times emotive arena of academia. All very well, until we add artistic and poetic praxes to the above. To establish a factual basis for the focus of this thesis, and then draw out conclusive results is, by definition of the methodological processes employed, impossible. Whilst it is true to say that in relation to the central aim of the thesis, both the visual, and poetic evidence presented hold their own independent positions, it is the combined rejoinder of *theoria to praxis* that affords an energised current of intention and possibility; and more importantly, opens a creative dialogue into which the reader can thus venture.

To orchestrate an appropriate presentation, that would answer the complexities of the proposed research programme, my methodology functions on several layers. The theoretical writing aims to articulate an epistemological stance adequate to the historical, philosophical and literary aspects of my research, whilst the practical aspect of the project, comprising studio paintings and three poetic/visual albums completes the aims of my methodology. To this end the topography and structure of the dissertation is designed to generate meanings that are integral to the argument and point of the thesis. The entire document is intercepted and diverted at twelve, deliberate intervals in which selections from my own studio journals [**Artist's Journal**] are quoted. The different sections of writing, - the **Plays**, and **Extracts from the Diaries of Eve**, which may be regarded as independent pieces, - are placed in the main body of my thesis to reiterate my methodology within a cohesive weft and focus. Through the inherently diverse processes of the **paintings**, the **plays**, and the **albums**, the false notion of a divided psyche, or a 'Cartesian split' is, somewhat healed. The simultaneity of thinking and expressing an idea from both the word-oriented [*Logos*]¹ and the image-oriented [*Eros*] aspects of one's faculties, allows entrance into a domain of self-integration. This is an on going challenge to an evolving self-reality. For an artist and a poet the idea of

functioning between and amidst the interchange of the left and the right, the hand and the eye, the ear and the tongue, the heart and the head, offers the most enticing possibility. Where there is a fissure of apprehension is the very place where *the* happening or phenomenon takes shape.

Locating the multi-fluent boundaries between painting, drawing and writing, configured within the need towards Becoming, the studio paintings are a materially palpable realisation, between my poetic quest for the 'subject matter' - which already exists within me - and the object or *thing* perceived. The *Church Interiors* are an out-there, which correlates with the interior of my own internal and domestic, personal space. Similarly, the *Self-Portraits (Nude)* are a self-denuding of the 'I', trying to explore my own identity as a woman, a painter, a naked body, a self-absorbed libido; consciously attempting to test the boundaries of what Bataille calls, *Ipse*.² Both the interiors and direct portraits of myself, act as a catalogue of Absence(s). These are portraits of absence and of emptiness,³ even when apparently representing a mirror/memory image of me, and my body.

The studio paintings, in dealing specifically with this search for that numinous presence, are a visual rhetoric of pigment versus imagination. In these paintings I am trying to physically make material the poetic meeting place/zone, on the two-dimensional surface of canvas or panel. My intentions in the three genres - the Sacred and Domestic Interiors, and the Self-Portraits (Nude) - are all bound by the same aim: to transcend the 'genre'[s] as already established. The *Church Interiors* may perhaps be regarded as a more obvious locus for this mystic moment, where the tangible world of the real encounters that of the conventional 'spiritual' element. And yet the choice of the ecclesiastic interior does not necessarily make for contacting the numinous; it is too simplistic an expectation. The genre, heavily laden with religious, historical, and not to mention art-historical expectations, makes it too possible for the idea to slip into the illustrational or merely topographical. In both the domestic and sacred arenas, my practice insists on the same method of using drawing, as the passage through which I can surpass mere knowledge of how things look, or seem to look. Via an engagement with drawing I become almost attached to every detail, and thus gradually bypass the laboured hallmark of description. This process of intent is also true of the self-portraits; except there, the space within which I stand and regard myself almost becomes

(also) my body; a transaction between 'It' and 'I' takes place. The objects in the studio, the air in the room and my body all play the same rhythmic, painterly sound. Here, as I myself become the numinous element, the poetic encounter and the mystic vision (the *muse*), transformed from 'Body', 'Female', 'Artist', into a host for this epiphanic moment of perception, none of the individual elements exists. In the paintings I seek to find a painterly syntax for the unfixed, the floating, or that element which can only be encountered when imagination and intellect collude. It is *metaphor*, in its most abstract sense, experienced through my engagement with the *epiphanic* moment that I am intent on expressing. The aim is to make of the (presumed) 'empty' space, or the unremarkable objects around me, something other than mere sensory information. It is an attempt at vivifying space through the energy of presence.

The need to decipher this initiation into the numinous is not simply to do with yearning for some outer reality experience, in order to elevate my practice from the mundane.⁴ This investigation is firmly rooted in the conscious and critical intellect, as the vehicle that helps facilitate my need in establishing a personal arena for *Becoming*. My method is to employ, through the practice, a deliberate and yet semi-controlled state of charged eidetic experience whereby the 'other' of the self is met with and named. Such processes are readily acceptable in the writing of poetry, whilst also being identified in researches carried out on indigenous shaman practices, as well as clearly catalogued by the personal writings of religious visionary mystics. By probing into the specific makeup or anatomy of the poetic moment, and coming to understand how it functions on the pragmatic level of making/writing, the artist (like the mystic) can give an affirmative answer to the self, as I-that-is-not-the-other: the resounding timbre that resonates the return sound of Echo's call, heralding her own self-hood. My project is an ontological one. Everything I write, paint, draw and make is enfolded in the impending answer to my incessant rhetoric of: - "who/what is the I?"⁵

Acting as a bridge between the studio paintings and the dissertation, and as the completing element of my methodology, is the three albums: each a collaboration of image and word. The poetic texts of '**Eve's Book of the Garden**', '**A Head of Her Time**', and '**The Ancient Book of Endings**' are an important element of my methodology. Twined with the unworded etymology of line, mark,

colour and gesture, these are texts that build a bridging dialogue between imagination and language. The text is a 'happening' of its own, independent from the images. The three **Albums**, which stand as a contemporary echo of the medieval or the oriental manuscript, are also a 'playful' aspect of the theoretical thesis, a dialectic search for a new *lingua* [= tongue] that speaks in clear notation. My drive and intentions are to find a way in which this poetic *other* of the psyche may be identified as existing within the creative expression of painting and poetry, that is particularised by the weave and weft of a *feminine* skein. Through the process of making these **Albums**, I have tried to bring drawing and word into mysterious conj[unc]tation. The images in the albums are very different from the large, studio paintings. Not only in medium, but manner of execution, these images are more about the loose, apparently un-practised line, tracing the process of transcribing the imagination and dream-memory, into [surreal]-play. In the writing, my engagement with language is, at root, a poetic 'getting-at', or hunting that moment of ecstatic seeing, or thinking/hearing the voices of my 'unknowing' self. Somehow, by trying to find a link between the threads of Farsi (or words adopted from Arabic into the Farsi language) and that of Anglo-Saxon or Latin⁶ - where they meet and how they express them-selves within the boundary of my perceptions of 'meaning',⁷ through both the visual and *lingual*⁸ text - could be the locus of my creative voice. This coupling of the visual and the textual, as focused in a single expression or practical form, can come to broach the possibility of configuring an analogy between painting and poetry, as perhaps symbolic parallels with the spirit[ual], and the corporal.

Informing my methodology via my own paintings (imagery), and writing, I have chosen to begin each section (excluding the play-scripts) with a poem by Emily Dickinson. Dickinson's reclusive world of the garden and domestic isolation in nineteenth century New England where regular attendance at church or a bible-reading group of women's bazaar were the focal points of conversation, is supremely transcended through her daring engagement with language. The clipped, brief, and tightly rhymed, but always surprising poems of Dickinson, often sound like some long-forgotten nursery rhyme or ironically rephrased conversation overheard. Her verse bears the marks of stigmata borne of an intense privacy, constructing a remarkably charged and secret world of desires untold, confidently offering a poetic prism of a brave *Theology*. Each poem

becomes an intimate journal entry, lamenting the daily-incantation of an ancient wound. The autobiography of the minutia of her emotional encyclopaedia reads, initially, in apparent simplicity of word, diction, and poetic structure. In time with closer familiarity however, her poetry goes on to sear us her readers, with a deeply intelligent and innovative resonance, unique to Dickinson's prophetically estranged voice.

At intervals I have interrupted the dialectic text with a journal entry from my own Studio Journals. The *locale* of the diary/journal as the closed book where thoughts, ideas and fantasies are recorded carries a particular reference to both the methodology of this dissertation, and my own processes of practice – visual and literary. The journal is the place of the secret. It is a nameless, title-less 'book', as such, where the most intimate, mischievous, disruptive, and at times autoerotic self-writing can happen. This private little booklet, the journal, becomes the *other*-of-I-as-the-lover. The journal, as the *beloved* receives, always ready to open out a clear surface for the hieroglyphics of the lover's message to be scribed upon. It is the place where – as Dickinson's poetry often demonstrates – an "incessant anxiety of autonomy" [Rose 1995, 35],⁹ is daily re-enacted. The journal thus transcends to being regarded at once as the energy source of the aspiring *other*, and the inspiring libido of *self*-[hood].

Thus I hope that my research will contribute to the feminist project, which endeavours to delineate the divine presence in '*feminine writing*', as a deliberate guise for the psychological *other*. Making this coupling of self and other not so much within the given matrix of opposing genders, but rather as a poetic means of highlighting a historical and lingual locus for the feminine, whose validity is held within the necessary imaginary of her own Being.

Artist's Journal
Month the First

After days of living in a haze of indecision, I paint the little chapel with a woman lighting a candle; it's a curious thing: but I am somehow comforted by its atmosphere. The studio is lit by it.

The days and weeks pass me by without a trace of time! As ever inundated with yet more tasks. Must remember to breathe – long and deep.

Rain, Rain, Rain. Absolutely wet through. Backroom flooded: always something to worry over.

Berry sits and I paint two heads - not bad, though her presence is so reticent, and I could say almost withdrawn.

Patience is the only virtue along this journey. How does one pack 'patience' in the suitcase of 'longing'? (together with poverty, etc.) How can I begin to gather my belongings and strap them all into 'The Rucksack of Harmony'? I can't trust that they will all fit in, or sit well together. Perhaps I don't 'need' anything. No! I need not carry my virtues, my sins, my fears, and my absurd sense of Woman = the 'unholy' female. All I actually need is to pick up this booklet, my pen, or maybe a pencil also, and walk towards the door.

Works on paper in earnest: - a little stilted, but in earnest. The black and white ink- pots wink at me: thinking # large self-portraits in ink?

Barely aware of it, I begin working on 'Eve's Book of the Garden'.

Suddenly flooded by memories of landscapes seen when I was a very young girl. The small strips of gesso-primed canvas pervade the room with the scent of 'over there'. How shall I ever conquer my inherent state of nostalgia? – PLEEAZZE don't give me schmultz. Just BE, that's all.

INTRODUCTION

The way of my work is the way of the circuitous. Shifting from any one 'station' at the circumference, the different aspects of this research travels the circular route and intuitively disrupts all edges, corners and hierarchies; thus making connections and intrinsic relations between the apparently diverse processes and ideas employed. The realm of the circle is the place of revelation, and sudden flashes of coming to. The circle affords spaces, moments and realities whereby the seeds of vision may be given time to germinate. The circular movement on an ever-turning centre implies a positive vortex of an infinity that is always at hand. An incantation that shapes an abstracted rhythm strung upon its (*her*) own axis; thus at each turn bringing an emotive newness of vision, and an-*other* plane of possibilities. At any one time the non-concrete nature of the poetic text inter-re-acts or breaks the substantiated theoretical text, inviting the reader to participate in the uncertain adventure of research.

Extracts from the 'Diaries of Eve'

As discovered by the Angel Gabriel, after the Eve(iction) commonly referred to as 'Expulsion from the Garden'

~

There is a moment in between seeing and remembering, saying and hearing, touching and inhaling; a fraction of a moment into which I sometimes slip. In this moment the mirage has two faces. The extreme parts of each attached to the other, - I see you, and you look to see me. Our reflections become as one, and in that cavernous moment, the past – of which we know nothing – becomes a memory of the future.

I hear a 'hissing' sound at my back.

There, where the Linnets nested last year. Do you remember? And the light appeared to us in the shape of a Sycamore, thrilling in its spring flutter of young unfurling foliage.

There, where the Linnets played on high branches; peach-blush-breasted, against the deep cerulean clarity of Sky.

I hear a 'hissing' sound.

But then it changes into a voice. The 'hiss' is the voice familiar from a dream I had. – I have it written down somewhere in my dream-book, but I can't recall now where exactly.

The dream was of you and I. Except I remember how different you were: cruel, hard-eyed, and you would not respond to my touch. My voice was not "our treasure", in that dream.

You walked with others like you. That was the astonishing thing, there were others like you.

I remember now.

The 'hissing' sound said, "Don't let them do this to you."

You and the others were bidding me into strange coverings, my beautiful hair, fresh-as-a-gurgling-spring-skin, covered with harshness and such dark colours that even now, as I recall, makes my heart sink in despair. You placed a lot of earth and built it high, and in this un-fresh, unlit thing I was shut up for days. Only in company of others – that's right – others like Me, was I allowed outside. We all walked with heads bowed, fearing to look up, to greet the birds, sky and the tips of playful branches piercing the clear air. "Heads down! Lips closed!" - I remember how you admonished me. And once there were fires, and others who were like me, were being tied to tall trunks; -

But, what's the use of these mere dreams. After all dreams are only one's fears, are they not? There is the '*hissing*' sound again. I am both drawn and alarmed by the strain of this strange voice, amidst our lovely garden. It worries me. Listen!

"Believe your fears. Prepare for your split. But remember your own truths. He will forget. And as for you, only at the very end will your memory be recalled. You must remember not to forget. There will be times of such extreme cruelty, that your only comfort will be the desire to return the same. Don't! Just remember this garden, your dreams, the freedom, that is by Truth, yours. He will forget. Be patient, but do not be fooled. No matter how many times, or how many ways, the he that comes into being will forego the Truth. You will suffer. And then, as though at the end of a terrible night of dreaming, turning and sweating, with fear and foreboding, you will arise from your bondage; from this long sleep that awaits you, – awaits you both. You will then remember to find the Voice that I give you now. I sing this Voice of Woman in your ear. It will sit in a pocket, deep in your mind's ear. From there it will sometimes be heard: songs and tales that will bewitch the world. But, the wholeness of this Voice you will bear forward. Remain true, do not become like him. Remember, that it was you who received the Dream, and he shall sit, despite all his powers, laws and judgements, as a child, empty-handed. At the end of all Times: when it seems no more is possible, when words have been spoken, nay written in many sounds and colours, carved it seems into the very air you breath; words and vignettes of Memory and Things, called Images, all around you. When the very breath is crowded out of itself, into a gasping breathlessness, then you will remember. Of you there will be many, and you shall all simultaneously dream the dream once more. Then the Linnets will return and again sit on the Sycamore tree, light-headed with the spring of the time of you."

O, my Breath! How can I have thought all this? It cannot possibly be I speaking thus, let alone comprehend the meaning of such speech. My friend, my companion, my-self-that-is-not-I, can you understand what is happening to me? I am anxious. Too many words are being spoken.

All I know is the dance of the Speedwell, as it drives a soft passage through mud and bramble; there it is, a tiny complete world of Blueness, at our feet. That is what I know well. These dreams, what are they? Premonitions? They are wearisome and strange to my world.

At the very edge of the stream, just at the point where the water-silken-stretch meets a rounded boulder, and begins its Festival of Sound and Movement, I sit. The light is soft, and I am protected by the beloved trees, who smile down at my solitude. Here, the boisterous water keeps those words, those new and unwanted words, from me. I sit in a strange hub of orchestrated quiet; in a

All I know is the dance of the Speedwell, as it drives a soft passage through mud and bramble; there it is, a tiny complete world of Blueness, at our feet. That is what I know well. These dreams, what are they? Premonitions? They are wearisome and strange to my world.

At the very edge of the stream, just at the point where the water-silken-stretch meets a rounded boulder, and begins its Festival of Sound and Movement, I sit. The light is soft, and I am protected by the beloved trees, who smile down at my solitude. Here, the boisterous water keeps those words, those new and unwanted words, from me. I sit in a strange hub of orchestrated quiet; in a skin of silence absolute. Outside, rubbing and trickling on the membrane of my hub, is: World, Water, Foliage, Blossom, Insects, Birds, -and you. My-darling-self-that-is-not-I, for the first time we are broken, split, and apart. I sense such immense loneliness, that the forests would weep months of April rain, and the ivy would droop in mourning for what I feel at this moment. We are no longer a mutual reflection; a part of one, making the other whole. The '*hissing*' dreams have ruined that forever. Here, beneath this strange blossom tree, where fruit of the deepest red, bulbous and hard grows, and branches willingly bend to breaking point at the pull of such abundance, is where I have come to rest. This is my new abode. Here I can listen to the ecstasies of Thrush and Finches, and watch the Swallows skimming the water, low. And when in need of replenishment, I reach for the fruit. Tasting only a small mouthful, I lay down and dreams come to me. Beneath the blossoms you will find me. I am at the brink of such self-hood that perhaps I shall not need to leave these dreams. The hissing has become familiar, and I begin to feel in my body the meaning of these strange words.

The self-abandon of our many walks into the garden now seem like fantasies that never happened. That sweet harmony and togetherness of you, smiling joyfully into my eyes, - was that real or just another dream?

The Light warned us against listening to Words. I am losing my fear.

It seems that the past of dreams has already happened and the future of this fruit will never fade into putrid autumnal death. Our garden, this air, the trees and my dream-lidded sleep of many words, shall become the garden that lies outside of ours. I now know that there will be other Gardens, and other Light, which will eventually reflect us to ourselves. I know this and out of fear of utterance, I write it down. Perhaps one day we may read it together.

These are the secrets: this journal, and the '*hissing*' sound are the secrets. Maybe the taste of this extraordinary fruit is also a secret.

Why are you not curious to find secrets, too? Why are you so content to roam, and play and merely obey the Light's instructions?

I believe there are secrets of such delicious proportions that we cannot even guess at. If only you were here, with me, of me. No longer just in play, but a true companion.

Let us become Truth seekers, and change these dark dreams of future-pasts.

Come! Let me hear you call my name.

In between these quiet moments, there are cavernous splits. We could leave the moments and swim deep into our dreams. Hands held, so as not to get lost. There, in the split of a moment, we could discover the greatest secret of all. Come my friend, my companion, the my-self-that-is-not-I, come and venture beyond the given. Let us discover the truth of secrets: together, this time.

This is my last plea.

I shall leave the journal where you will be tempted, - hush! That was the word I should not have spoken. O, Light! Forgive me.

But, now it is done. I have said it, breathed it rounded from my mouth. There it is the word that was forbidden me, now carved into my journal for all the Angels to weep over.

I say it with confidence now: come Adam, and be tempted to discover your-self-that-is-not-you. It is I who am the Secret, the Temptation. Now I see it clear as water running over a boulder, struck by light from above.

Artist's journal
Month the Second

A slow return: and so cold. How I long for the relaxed feeling on my back, which only the sun can give. I paint the view from my window: the dry dock, lighthouse, and the miserable woman across the way, who seems to always be scowling. Bitter wind, and chill pervades. I no longer care whether I belong to a tradition or not. In truth I am a hybrid, and so is my work. I am in no humour to conform, or hedge my bets. After all I am from over there.... somewhere!

The church is closed so often that my fascination grows into a secret longing. I feel betrayed under the gaze of other worshippers – [and am I a worshipper, also?]. I need so much the total emptiness of each and every pew to be there for me. All arrayed in their blue-silent-horizontal-wooden reality. Pews that recall ships and water-floating vessels out at sea.

*I return from London and out trickle small paintings with figures. Vignettes of secrets and anxieties: couples meeting on a bridge, or under shade of trees. Somehow painting begins to take a different shape in my soul. I am gradually freeing myself from the intellect and binding myself to the poetic experience: forgetting, remembering, experiencing the memory and forgetting, again. I'm excited by all that I'm **not** sure of in my work.*

Show tied up for 26 April - Insha-allah!

Sudden bursts of anger: nothing seems stable or calm in me. Try to find some kind of equilibrium in self-belief; - large self-portraits in the dimly lit studio: momentary ease in ephemeral embodiment of self v. mirror v. paint v. light.

DIFFERENTIATING THE BELOVED/OTHER IN MYTH

This Consciousness that
is aware
Of Neighbors and the Sun
Will be the one aware
Of Death
And that itself alone

Is traversing the interval
Experience between
And most profound
Experiment
Appointed unto Men –

How adequate unto itself
Its properties shall be
Itself unto itself and none
Shall make discovery –

Adventure most unto
itself
The Soul condemned to be –
Attended by a single
Hound
It's own identity.

[Dickinson, poem 822]

The journey of this thesis is through the land of 'I' as woman. The pronoun of a gender, a psyche, and a life-process, whose identity is often frayed at the edges; disturbed by the second and third person pronouns of 'you', and 'he'. Mine is an eccentric attempt at discovering an image-(inary), a name, or a place of arrival, where my 'I' would be answered, in the language of me as Woman, and Artist. The creative and theoretical methodology by which an iconoclastic *other-as-Beloved* is

conjured and named, is pivotal to my quest: seeking that to whom I may bow my head in mutual poetic compassion, rather than an authoritative other, whose nature lies beyond the reach of my consciousness and possibility.¹⁰ Through this pilgrimage, towards a clearing out of the dark thickets of history and language, given as universal imaginary – I aim to negotiate a place of regard for the female within the already configured hearth of language;¹¹ hoping to give place and time for a feminine vocabulary to write of the [her]self, a text which goes some way towards deciphering the intimate and the emotional. As a way to realize the identity of the *one-that-is-not-I*, acting as the imaginary half to my dialogue, I need to acknowledge the possibility of this *other*, as a divine *other* to the *self*. It seems fairly plausible to regard the creative echo as that of the mystic's beloved, which is often represented as an idealised representation of a better self, in the name of a greater religious other, to whom the ascetic or visionary would submit, and be subsumed in the passionate fold of divine love¹².

The mystery does not rest in an un-dialectic, and therefore passive yielding to some spurious notion of a *Holy Spirit* per se, rather the courage to find consistency amidst the diversity of methods, whilst making tangible sense of this undefined historical naming process of the female artist/poet. Via the ecstatic exchange of creative energy with the numinous *other*, she can thus initiate an intimate dialogue with herself; on the one hand gaining a sharper vision of her own truth and meaning, whilst in time arriving at a place whereby *she* can act as the autonomous priestess¹³ with the power of anointing and naming the *Self*. Thus the 'Beloved' of the Sufi, or mystic visionary is brought out of the darkness of the philosophically confusing theology of the past, and re-configured within the ambitions and lingua of contemporary feminist light. The self-completing *other*, is not what the female artist needs to arrive at her own ontological confirmation – ie: a corporeal other. Much of the data in our [so-called] concrete history and imaginatively archetypal mythology has persistently established woman as: (i) passive to, and at the mercy of both her own biological reality and therefore the fates; (ii) incapable of [divine-driven] powers of intellect or access to the higher echelons of poetic and artistic imagination.

By focusing on the spiritual-oriented (religion/mythology) and psychoanalytical *other*, in order to then disturb those premises of 'opposite', 'lack', 'absence' - given as the acceptable structure of metaphor or meaning - the '*other*' whose presence, in both the intimate and public life of the *feminine*, can guide *her* towards perceiving a clearer understanding of the numinous self, is articulated. Acting therefore from the focus of a feminist engagement with the creative process, the notion of a 'numen': as a gender-less guiding principle, in the (psychological) guise of the nurturing *other* to the female artist/poet, may be developed.

Whilst it is central to my theme in establishing a *numinous-other-as-Beloved*, to look at the affect of patriarchal belief systems on the feminine psyche, - in relation to her own sense of a personal ontology, and creativity, - I am in no way qualified in either theology or classical mythology to embark on a critique or even a broad analysis of patriarchal religious histories. However by briefly positioning this project in the context of the (Christian myth) opening pages of the Genesis, I can begin to outline the poetic drive of my methodology, within the framework of this central theme: a desire to establish a place and an accessible entity for the Creator (*numinous* element) as functioning within the *Self*.¹⁴

This 'essence' or form, that we call God, is usually understood within the Monotheist religions as the one and only, most high and powerful creator. Immutable, all giving, as well as inimical, the ultimate dispenser of power and creativity; maker of all things, forms, and therefore giver of *meaning*. This is usually believed to be the same God who made man (the male of the human species) in his own image.¹⁵ Nowhere being mentioned that woman (the female of the human species) was also made in the image of this God it is safe to presume that the God of monotheism is masculine, male, man-like.¹⁶ This disembodied, and apparently faceless God speaks; an operatic drama of a lone voice that surmounts the bellowing chaos of Creation itself. A voice amidst the half-formed firmament of heavens, a mouth, a throat, and lips that come together, to utter the new names, and commands. Among these first apocalyptic sentences is heard: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon

the earth.' [Gen. 1:26] And man thus becomes the replicate son of God; given birth to by the father, and appointed as second in command over all the named creatures, upon the earth, and in the sky, and within the waters. Adam is shown the garden, and the bountiful trees, but warned that: 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' [Gen. 2:17] After six days of perseverance, making and inventing this alchemical wonder of earth, sky, sea and living organisms, the master designer conjures up woman. On the first Sabbath, God thinks again, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.' [Gen. 2:18] Like a magician, Adam is wooed into a deep sleep, and with deft hands God opens up the man's flesh taking from him a rib, and carefully closing up the flesh again, sets to make of the stolen rib, the form of woman, she who will be named Eve. This is a God of separate, and it seems disconnected parts, that is never revealed as a whole being, and who, speaking in a disembodied voice, places language onto our realm. In this furtive space of absolute isolation from any prying *other*, passes the mystery of the Logos onto Adam, enacting, therefore, both mother and father, past and future, dream and reality, spirit and material. Adam therefore inherits the word, 'and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.' [Gen. 2:19].¹⁷ Here we have a God who is not so abstract a notion as philosophical theology would have one to believe. It is not a hieroglyphic mystery of mathematical equations, but a vernacular voice, that sounds familiar, spoken in the timbre of a male voice. Such a god is neither an Idea,¹⁸ nor a fantastic notion of a deranged imagination. Can we honestly believe, that a God who has shown such depth of understanding, in cosmology, astronomy, astrology, physics, chemistry, higher levels of biological engineering, as well as founding the very grounds of ethics and epistemology, does not realise that within this complex systems of opposites - which the Genesis informs us is easily applied to animals, and vegetation - Adam must have an Eve? The scenario of a last minute panic, on behalf of an entity, that has recourse to all and every possible thought, is unbelievable. This is a God-story, which is woven with meticulous attention to detail. The omission of woman in the very weft and foundation of Genesis, until all and sundry has been created, set to rights, and named, betrays a surreptitious intent on a grand scale.

The ethical roots of 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil', sits in the mud of a highly sophisticated deception. It is a puzzle as to what kind of ethics is this whereby the *One* is sacrificed for the apparent purity of the *Other*. One is labelled sinner, whilst the other is held as having followed in naïve innocence. If the Bible story were a Metaphysical play, would the female protagonist have withstood such treachery? Can it be imaginable that a female God(dess), having carefully brought into existence Eve as the overseer, and ruler of all earthly creatures, and possessor of Adam, her help meet, would then blame and punish the man for having sinned with (in) love? ¹⁹ There are two issues here: - (1) woman does not belong to the hierarchy of God. It is decided from the outset to make the man (Adam) rightful descendent, and therefore, with legalised spiritual access to both the divine genealogy of God the Father, as well as material dominance over all the earth, and that which lives within it. (2) The discovery and *participation mystique* in the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, which is love and carnal desire, is entirely blamed on the woman. Indeed because this knowledge for some reason offends God, the guilt of its discovery and appropriation, must rest with the woman, who as yet does not belong to the genealogical ancestry of the Divine. The pleasure, and companionship which this fruit brings, offers the newly-born woman and man, the taste of each other's *difference*, in passionate self-abandon. They are caught, as such, in the act of making an independent choice. This is not merely teenage rebelliousness, rather it is a step into mature ethical responsibility towards answering an affirmative, to their own separate, respective desires, and carnal fantasy-needs, as well as an open, un-meditated arrival at perceiving their opposites' true otherness. This unique moment of pleasure, in receiving and giving is snatched back. The tree of 'the knowledge', is not merely a source/root of good and bad, this is too simplistic a picture of morality; sex, pleasure, love, union; the voluntary regard for the separateness of the other, who stands facing one, is what offends our God most.²⁰ The sensual aspects of mystical vibration in the human body, seeing and touching are denied within the laws of this God of ours. This God assumes the prerogative to be the all seeing, all knowing, but forever unknown, and absent source of power. From the very start, in the Genesis, he is portrayed as a disembodied voice, or a hand moving the heavens; acting without contact to the flesh, except when Adam is asleep, and Eve is in the unconscious process of becoming moulded, and invented in the hands of God, the absent potter/sculptor. Later, the decrees of laws and

ethical/civic principles are given on a tablet of illegible coda, which Moses must decipher by intuition alone. Already, the scene is set for the unrequited nature of the longing for God: to know God, to see God, to feel the presence (touch) of God, to hear God - albeit in the unknown language of Divinity.

“The law creates invisibility, so that God (in his glory?) cannot be looked upon. What happens to seeing, to flesh, in this disappearance of God? Where can one’s eye alight if the divine is no longer to be seen? And if it does not continue to dwell in the flesh of the other in order to illuminate it, to offer up to the look the other’s flesh as divine, as the locus of a divine to be shared? For this exchange, do not figurative writing and art represent necessary articulations? In particular to harmonise listening and seeing.” [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(b), 187]

Writing the word, articulating the image can therefore, become a kind of paying of homage to the love of (the) God.²¹ It is a tangible ‘articulation’ for such *absence*, that gap in perception, touch, and scent of the other. The psyche’s libido is thus propelled towards a ghost-like entity, the mysterious and unpredictable materialisation of which rests on the subject’s ability and willingness to undergo a number of coded practices. To prove a willingness to believe, and therefore submit to the authority of the absent giver, there is established a hermetic economy of the one who requests and the other in whose hand rests the possibility of choice in granting the *promise*.

Regarded from the structures of Jungian psychoanalytic practice,²² such compensation for one’s action would be diagnosed as the psyche having identified too closely with the ‘shadow’. Thus the *other-as-Beloved*, is related to as being either of the same gender, or the re-fractured opposite.

Within the literary traditions of mythology and mysticism, this figure is often reflected in the vague gloaming that pervades the interiorised atmosphere of spiritual struggle. It is not a sweet love that binds the lover and the beloved; their mutual entanglement includes antipathy and myth-oriented obstacles in the shape of poisonous snakes, difficult terrain, persecution, social stigma, death, and often much personal grief. Myth has the literary power of *imagination* to summon up the possibility of union, and transcendence. Where there are obstacles, the narrative becomes more enriched with the potential meaning of metaphor, therefore making of the completed *story* a crystallized form, eternally held within an iconic moment outside of the temporal.²³ Whilst in contrast, the earthly lovers must, by the definition of their corporeal-based attraction, be for always

shackled to fears of loss, betrayal, finally becoming bereft of love itself. The lover who chooses the spiritual relationship, of *self* to that mysterious *other*, in effect embraces the persona of a mythical wayfarer, set upon an emotional journey through which the phenomenon of Meaning itself becomes the goal.

The depth and intensity of the semi-mythologized friendship between Rumi, the Sufi mystic-poet, and Shams,²⁴ was the inspirational drive behind the poetic effluence that makes up the *Masthnavi*, published in eight volumes. Similarly the legendary myth of Orpheus, whose profound influence continues to effect artists, poets, and thinkers, can perhaps be more completely understood in the light of the love-tragedy, which dictated Eurydice's fate in the dark passes of the Underworld; where she was committed to the purgatory of neither death nor life.²⁵ These lovers, Shams of Tabriz, and Eurydice, were both regarded by their respective beloved, as the *other* who gave them tongue²⁶ to speak the Word; the Poetic. Inspiration and ambition are the active endowments of the *beloved*, whilst the lover becomes the vehicle and passageway towards the expression of that dynamic, on which both partners will feed through their mutual passion. The *beloved* is to the lover the storehouse of that mysterious *promise* of possibility, acting as a kind of metaphor to the *Self*.

Where society, or institutionalised (religion / politics) practices endorse judiciary laws, as means of curbing, controlling and containing complex or difficult behaviour, the psyche acts by way of giving space to unconscious or unassimilated contents, that in time can come to haunt the ego. The dualism that sits at the heart of modern epistemology in both the secular and religious order of things,²⁷ cannot sit comfortably with the notion of an-other whose will could be read as collaborative with one's own wish. The long tradition, in the history of mysticism, that has developed and given shape to this collective figure of *divine other*,²⁸ conflicts with the view that the reflected, unknown other is an unworthy evil which should, as of principle, be regarded with contempt, and ultimately destroyed.²⁹

Taking the writings of mystics and visionaries as evidence, it seems that the 'saint' or ascetic is often well aware of the strange gap that is situated between the impasse of matter and spirit. The white heat of passionate longing is not denied, but more often indulged in. The emotive language of the mystic or saint is always focused on the possibility of experiencing complete self-fulfilment. By moving that much closer to the aura of the divine force, the mystic is rarely subtle in the form and directness of showing her/his adoration and pleasure.³⁰ Although I am not drawing parallels between the remarkable writings of a female mystic, St. Julian, and the essentially patriarchal text of the Old Testament, it is interesting to note the erotic element present in a union between the mystic/ascetic worshipper and the invisible radiance of the divine/god. In the texts by Julian of Norwich [*Revelations of Divine Love*], the focus of language is often centred on the corporal-consciousness. She has no qualms in accentuating her needfulness for 'the Godhead' by referring to her own body, and other fleshly-fluids.³¹ Similarly, the sensuality of the verses in *The Song of Solomon*, bears witness to a language that is openly eroticised with longing for the beloved as a sexual presence, to be embraced and enjoyed.³² Both texts - in their differing theological and ascetic arena - display a yearning for an ecstatic union; an embracing of the *other* which in essence seems to belong to both the sexual experience of earthly lovers, as well as the mystic's spiritual intimacy with the divine beloved.³³ This is perhaps the utopian notion of the body becoming entwined with the soul, - a kind of recognition of the unconscious inner landscape, wherein the body will begin to experience physical and spiritual satiety. The lovers can therefore imagine themselves functioning outside of the structures that require the ego to sport a worldly identity, and through their union, begin to feeling themselves released from merely existing under the guise of the *persona*, and acting more from a true, inspired sense of self.³⁴

The myth of the *beloved* can therefore act as a positive and creative force, giving new identity and status to the lover. The alliance, even if self-proclaimed, creates a protective aura that permits of the impossible or the potential, giving courage to enter the mysterious emptiness of the Void.³⁵ The *beloved* is therefore always absent, and a secret, mischievously tricking the lover towards further and farther boundaries of the unknown; - whether these are tangible realms of geography, physical bravery, or poetic ventures, it is always situated amid the sphere of the creative self. The notion of

such identity can therefore act in the form of the *inspiring-other* who will guide the lover to traverse the mundane, and enter a world as yet un-seen, un-decreed, and therefore truly inventive. This is the Landscape of the *beloved*, the terrain through which one may choose to travel, in search of a kind of ultimate gnosis of self: an *epignosis*. Or more precisely, I suggest this as the route for the creative psyche's desire towards recognising and naming its own Being-ness, - making for itself an ontological³⁶ situation that is not simply grounded in the mortal, but more a hesitant and hopeful approach to knowing what God may be. Perhaps even attempting to assimilate something of the essence³⁷ of the Divine into the fabric of the *Self*.

Artist's Journal
Month the Third

Spring comes slinking in, unconfident but determined all the same. How the world out there is beautiful. As I write church bells seem to be knocking to be let in. Blue sea a32nd stillness; I love this light of soft turquoise, restful in its sense of infinity. But I also love being indoors with curtains half-drawn; hidden and secret: looking out over the vast Blue. Yes, this is good and I am content. The minutiae of life's moments are, it seems, the sum total of All. And what is the future or the past when seen against this moment: reflection of light trembling on a mauve-tinted wall, the sound of birds outside and soft din of work in the harbour?

A long litany of questions, only lead me to a pool of wonderings.

The wind howls for recognition, tearing all in its path.

Did I not dream of never bothering with ironing or tidying up or [house] cleaning? The spirit flies highest when uprooted from convention; but I must wait a while yet to learn the art of 'not bothering'. Self-flagellation must be a form of wish-full thinking on the part of 'She' who wills freedom. But as it stands my flesh is shy; too comfortable in the daily renewal of everyday happenings

The mirror and I stand naked in the cold of March, with a single bar of electric heat as our only source of both warmth and light; and I draw and draw and draw until fingers ache with numbness.

*Two paintings: sudden and in a haze of Action. I seem to have learned the alchemy of mixing **light** in my pallet.*

~ The Red Chair and Chess Set

~ Tervaize Chapel; Window of 'HOPE'

I am exhausted and must leave the studio for a few days' rest.

Almost forgot: must complete the 'Introduction'.

THE MOMENTARY AND THE INFINITE

This was a poet – It is That
Distills amazing sense
From ordinary Meanings –
And Attar so immense

From the familiar species
That perished by the Door –
We wonder it was not Ourselves
Arrested it – before –

Of pictures, the Discloser –
The Poet – it is He –
Entitles Us – by contrast –
To ceaseless Poverty –

Of Portion – so unconscious –
The Robbing – could not harm –
Himself – to Him – a Fortune –
Exterior – to Time –

[Dickinson, poem 448]

Everything that goes to inform my own quest towards the discovery of a personal ontology, leads (me) to the intriguing place whereby, via a transparent bridge of mutual engagement, the world *out there* meets (my) the world *in here*. At this crossing, where one is neither on the one side nor the other, is the place of poetry and creative revelation.³⁸ Here is the secret locus where one may be afforded a glimpse into comprehending the nature of what it is to be human. Or more accurately, it is perhaps the space where inherent qualities of that which traverses beyond the understood parameters are apprehended. The artist/poet, equipped with the reasonable faculties, takes a leap into the adventure of discovering something of which is denied our full knowledge: the

unconscious. The unconscious is exactly what it sign posts: the place or thing, or elements which are not conscious, therefore unknown. It is here amid the unknown and difficult-to-access that Jung situates the religious experience. Within this strangely lunar parameter, by way of ceremonies devised from our own psychic codes of sacred ritual and rites, the ecstatic is encountered, and the transcendent *other*, whom we can then place in a mythologized-higher-than-the-self position, ie: God, is discovered.

The unconscious is the only available source of religious experience. This is certainly not to say that what we call the unconscious is identical with God, or is set up in his place. It is simply the medium from which religious experience seems to flow. [Jung, *CW10*, 1958-69, 565]

The place of discovering the *divine-as-other* is the place of relinquishing the known, yet it is always through the known imagery and experiences that such an exercise can take place; amidst the unremarkable things, dispersed in the *Momentary* and the *Infinite*.

The *Infinite* does not merely alliterate the *Momentary* as a package of happening(s) within time. Neither is the *Momentary* an isolated oasis that pulsates outside of both the 'forever' quality of the Infinite nor the actual passing experience of time. The *Momentary* presence in the present can be the poetic awareness of all that the apparently ordinary has to reveal to us. This electric sense of being awake and alert to all that floods past and about us, within the moment, can thus become the ecstatic node of experience. The mystic's incantation does not act out an intention of disruption per se, or necessarily as a politicised subversion. The spiral-like chanting and dance of the Sufi, the breath-controlled meditation of a Buddhist, or Yogi, is a concentration towards the centre of the *Momentary*: a hopeful yearning to glimpse the *Infinite*.³⁹ Resting amidst the unremarkable moments, we can awaken to the *Momentary*, by entering the paradox of becoming at once both awake and forgetful. Eternity is without history. To enter the intensity of such wakefulness, and penetrate the eternity within the moment, one must first forget the way of things, and word - forgetting the already acknowledged definition of things and people. By entering a state of voluntary amnesia all notions of the already configured 'ordinary' and 'unimportant', take on a strange, as yet unfamiliar mutability.

The anxiety in finding a way to give form and substance to this process of discovering the *self*, through an engagement with artistic work, is at first only relieved by simply noting all that which is seen, heard, and touched; reality, experienced in its raw, un-edited version. This is the boundary where nothing can be relied upon, but everything that *is* can become a noun, a verb and an adjective of experience. There, at the threshold of all that which automatically transforms into an unanswerable question, is the place of arrivals. At the centre and core of the apparently linear journey of birth and death, which mark the vanishing points of every life[-time], is the ever undulating frame of a *becoming*. This is not a static place of completion, where the edge of a precipice would signpost a kind of absolute and final arrival, it is more like a chance encounter or the fluidity with which a single card (Wild card/ the Joker) can transform a game. The oppositional qualities of the material v. the spiritual melt away, and both the body and the intellect move into a creative space of conjunction with the apparently incomplete, broken possibility of self-identity.⁴⁰ And so in this *aleatoric* economy the poetic begins to be formed, tested, and should fortune decree, given space to happen.⁴¹

The fractious quality⁴² of the poetic/artistic process is as Ungaretti gives one to visualise, 'a brief tearing of silence'.⁴³ To close the gap between our ordinary language and the inability to say what things really are or how they are felt and experienced, is when one discovers language in it's divinity: as creative word. Both this 'tearing' of, and Mallarmé's repeated return to the notion of 'white'-(ness) as correlated with the word, the poem, the silent dissonance of speaking from the centre of the poetic,⁴⁴ may act as a stepping out of the temporal. It is not to say that things, or we for that matter, become unreal or move outside of *reality*, rather that by submitting to the crucial moment of becoming witness to the fracture of things, the poet/artist (and therefore the work) becomes empowered as the agent of both destruction and renovation. The very rooted quality in the *now* makes for the true vision that permits an exit into, and through the torn space of silence discovered in the *then*. The gap in the interior space of real time and actuality is transformed into a creative negative.⁴⁵

The epiphanic moment is by strict religious interpretation the sudden embodiment of a mystery: the near-fantasy becoming an almost-reality. The mystical moment of revelation is a moment whereby consciousness traverses from the outside to the inside – taking from the exteriorised their-ness of the world of things, places, people, and events, in order to make an alchemical transference towards an intimate reality of the interiorised self-world. The fantasy, or the near-unreality of the *wish* or the *promise* cannot in itself ever be fully realised. The world it seems, can only receive an almost-reality (personal truth) when there is an accessible and palpable engagement with the thing out there.⁴⁶

The moon is an astronomical fact: a planet in the vast panoply of countless other planets, and other moons within our galaxy; - one galactic system amongst an unknown many which exist amidst the unthinkable properties of universal mass. Our literary and myth-oriented relationship to the moon - although we are aware of there being many hundreds of other moons- often seems clichéd and simplistic. Until a moment arrives when on a dark and delicate evening we look up and see The Moon! For the first time we really conceive of this strange apparition in the sky. *The Moon* is born: it becomes the moon at that particular moment, - my singular and self-oriented aloneness expressing itself in the space known as *the sky*. Suddenly the moon is a truth, a conviction. This moment stencils itself out of the normative other times of looking up at the sky and seeing a silvery thing called the moon. The revelation is not the moon per se, but the time-isolated process of experiencing the moon as really there, for one (me). A kind of poetic secret⁴⁷ is transmitted at that moment, whereby time pivots outside of time: an ecstasy.⁴⁸

ECSTASY = root: c.14 old French *extasie* via medieval Latin,
from Greek: *ekstasi* = displacement, trance, from *existanai*
to displace, from *ex*: out + *histania*: to cause to stand] .

If time is of the material world, where does Time *happen* in relation to thought, writing and creating of an image?⁴⁹ If the mystical moment of engaging with/of an epiphany, is outside of Time how does time relate to the soul, to experience, and memory? The poetic moment of ecstasy is found within an out-of-time capsule; a capsule of creative now-ness that orbits in another sphere and space. This space⁵⁰ stands outside of expectation, a place where Becoming and Annihilation are given as equal gifts. There are no guarantees here. By definition, the past or history of the self

engaged in realising its own *Bliss* is at once ruined, fractured and re-aligned; whilst held in the limbo of alertness, seeking itself amidst a state of unknowing, there a revolution occurs.

There is a quiet pocket wherein one may hear the almost imperceptible utterance of a word, espy a gesture arrested in action, or perceive a thing as though for the first time; there a shadow silently glides across the room, making of everything that was seemingly 'known' something other. Here is the ontological 'locale' [Heidegger] where Myth and Self at last meet. The lacunae [pool, cavern; from L. *lacus* = lake] of awareness, where the waters swallow up everything and it seems give nothing in return. Only a silent ripple of water, though each undulation is alive and germinating a re-configured clear-eyed *self*. Thus, via the poetic hiatus of having grappled with the integrity of the creative process taken as the *other* of Becoming, the 'I' reemerges; renewed, and reinvented.

Artist's Journal
Month the Fourth

Painting is hard; writing is hard; and I know nothing else but the day's task at hand.

I tread with care, in case I should miss the rare berry I search for in the dark woods. All alone, venturing into territories quite strange and only glimmeringly known. Residing inside my skin: only the shadows can speak to me, here.

The 'show' goes well, but finances barely improved. Hope grows thin at times, and this is one of those times.

Hands ache so much that I am forced to admit defeat: no more making of panels. No more stretching of canvas. (My) dear ones to support the purchase of all materials: my patrons.

A large self-portrait ~ I stand tired, resigned and sad, holding a plate of red paint. All is diffused with a pink-grey light.

Drawing becomes more colourful - Pastels and inks - avoiding the line. Making light and shadow speak with the raw vocabulary of 'Colour'.

Today I asked the Sea:- "Why are you so constant in your grandness and depth?" The Sea answered, - "Because I love." And so I knelt by the shore and kissed the curled lips of every wave that would roll towards me. Wet sea-salt-ness of ocean wide.

I avoid Mass, and slip in unnoticed. The shroud of Lent veils everything. I draw, without hope. Then a few days later, almost as though I were pounced upon by a will outside of myself, a painting of the main apse bellowing with the white cloak of Lent. Such peace!

It seems you only get to hear of the eventful moments. How can I begin to tell you of all that is annulled and made up of nothingness? That would be cruelty in return for all your unworded patience.

How to achieve the narrative of the theatrical/stage, in contemporary painting?

In Words and Image

A word is dead
When it is said,
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day.

[Dickinson, poem 1212]

The word when said (enunciated) can be effective, but holds true power once it has become the written word. The (written) Tablets of Moses, are thus not only enunciation of a God to a prophet, but in themselves symbolic objects of that (holy) message wrought by human hand to convey the unseen breath of the divine utterance. The word, shaped and carved into the psychic phonetics of cultural tablets, create the psychological bond between mortal and the spirit/energy that operates beyond life and death. The word, the book, the drawn line or the daubs of colour, gathering to image[ine] a *thing*, become hence transformed into symbols of the self, within and of (her) its own space.

The union of Words and Image is a tangible document we know of as the illustrated book, the artist's book, or more originally the medieval illuminated manuscript.⁵¹ The book, more than sculpture, painting or even film has been the place of this meeting, a marriage of the creative

hand of one person, the notion that “Everything in the world exists to end up in a book” [Mallarmé], may come to be regarded from a somewhat different perspective. However, there is still a dynamic relationship between the traditional format of a book – portable package of rectangular shape - and its symbolic idea as a world of possibilities, held in the secret folds of a front and a back cover. Leafed by pages (sewn, glued or boxed) it holds our interest. At once both as an object containing information, ideas, news, images, and novelties, whilst perhaps also conveying something of the ancient archetype of the performance/process of play which invariably acts as the protagonist conjuring up the (an) unknown. Opening a book and leafing through a page at a time, comes to resemble a mystic incantation, and coded entry to a sphere through which we are obliged to pass, in order to gain the treasure promised by the unnamed secret contained within the protective outer cover. Book design: layout, and visual intent of each page, as a finite space across and through which the ‘reader’ may travel, is in itself an independent subject of study. The creative process of realising such a space of visual and intellectual adventure has been applied to the making of books, from the very beginning of its appearance, as a social and cultural invention. The phenomenon of the book rests in its being a tangible document that celebrates the intelligence and subtlety of a culture.

This sense of intention in design need not necessarily be demonstrated only when there is a combination of image and text. Where there is only text employed, the empty, unused spaces, (of the screen) or page, can lend the content an aesthetic visual domain, attracting the mind via the eye, to participate both intellectually and creatively in the subject of the book or text. Malcolm Bowie’s lucid research into the poetic structure of Mallarmé’s work – both its textual and visual intentions – speaks of the “expressive power of *empty* space” which Mallarmé’s poems communicate on the visual surface of the page. Bowie declares this space as - “[...] no more empty than physical space is for Descartes, or for Einstein. It is rather a ‘field’, a comprehensive realm of interrelated energies, which are organised yet indefinitely subject to mutation and inflection.” [Bowie 1978, 144] Whilst the image is regarded as universal, in its enduring associative mutations of myths, writing is immediately encapsulated within its own specific boundaries of nationality. Dialects, inflections of personal voice, meaning, grammar, and historical time, make up what we understand

visual surface of the page. Bowie declares this space as - “[...] no more empty than physical space is for Descartes, or for Einstein. It is rather a ‘field’, a comprehensive realm of interrelated energies, which are organised yet indefinitely subject to mutation and inflection.” [Bowie 1978, 144] Whilst the image is regarded as universal, in its enduring associative mutations of myths, writing is immediately encapsulated within its own specific boundaries of nationality. Dialects, inflections of personal voice, meaning, grammar, and historical time, make up what we understand as language. Phonetic inflections, grammar, rhythm, punctuation, and the linguistic expectations of the faculty of speech, as employed within each particular society, are specific within the hedgerows of cultural husbandry. Image: line, mark, colour, form, shape, volume, and movement, speak the dialect of consciousness, without the added glossary that is a necessary blemish for the cultural passport of ‘meaning’. To cross these territories and zones of the image, one must declare silent imagination and the realm of dreams. In turn, imagination requires that we yield to the deep-seated desire of expressing what the senses have *impressed* on the mind. Independent of the tools of language [L. *lingua* = *tongue*], the image [L. *imago* = *representation*]: decorative scrolls, formal designs, of line and mark, areas of colour, and repetition of shapes, can and do speak a *lingua*, without words.⁵² The hand in drawing a line sees the object of interest out there, but each mark is a personal signature of the relationship between the eye that sees and the eye that receives that seeing. The unthinking hand is the vehicle or messenger without a ‘script’.

“[...] a language addresses itself to the shadow of events as well, not to their reality, and this because of the fact that the words which express them are, not signs, but images, images of words, and words where things turn into images.”
[Blanchot 1955, Notes. 3; 34]

Acting outside the time of language, the hand moves to the harmonies of an imagination wrested in some half forgotten dreamtime.⁵³ Images speak of words, barely audible. Words delineate a vision or framed moment in the mind’s dusky memory of colours and sensations, for which no vocabulary or written text exists. As in a copula, that links subject to predicate, bonding two elements that are active outside of each other’s known parameters, text [*Logos*] and image [*Eros*] thus emerge as at once both separate and interdependent for their respective becoming.⁵⁴ Image and language wound together, are united in a betrothal of mutual satisfaction, transcending their separate entities of effectiveness. Their union giving life to the desire of self-expression: which is to conceive of

Meaning: the child of imagination and play, and the offspring of intellectual transcendence. This is a profound play with unconscious material, holding the divining rod of consciousness: aesthetics of design, form, colour, composition, grammar, poetic metaphor, punctuation, and musical rhythms of shape and sound.⁵⁵

Through this inter-active adventure of paint, word, line, metaphor, colour, and meaning, I find pathways that harmonise perception and representation; experience and imagination; intensity and loss or emptiness. The inscriptions in the paintings are pictorial tropes in a primordial coda of language. A painterly hieroglyphic that functions on two levels: (a) representation of shapes and forms; (b) an inscription of my logos-oriented self, amid the chaotic silent 'field' [Bowie] of painting. The conscious decision that is employed in putting a particular text next to an image is in itself a very important aspect of this process. Here the element of chance, and a patient trust in that which may not be possible, eventually bears its own strange results. Then, it is not so much the thing seen or experienced, but the place from which it is seen, that becomes the seductive enigma of the initiation to *meaning*. The **Albums** are painting, writing, and visual poetry; an elision of sensation, idea, memory, and thought; they are complex ideographic scripts devised with the singular intention and aim of establishing an artistic and poetic ontology of a *feminine self*: - a curious monologue of the 'I' with the 'I'. Amidst this harmonised (re)-presentation of many parts, the two main protagonists - who in truth are of the same flesh - are word and image. Proclaimed as the outer and inner aspects of the creative presence of *maker-author-I*, whose every effort is to heal whatever dividing line may exist, between the word [*Logos*] as the 'conscious' element of self-expression, and the image [*Eros*] as arising from the 'unconscious'. Perhaps, as the Surrealists' witty forays into 'automatic writing' and other experiments in 'simultaneity' of words, ideas and representation have helped to - indirectly - document the (artist's) book as a place where both intellect and the senses interact, is a defiant challenge to what in scientific terms is regarded as a dualistic division of self: *epiphenomenalism*.⁵⁶

If the imagination, as both the space for a self-reflexive voyeurism, and the boundary to a transcended sense of understanding of the way things are, is to be trusted, then surely that is the

place of poetic transformation: ecstatic revelation, suspension beyond time and memory, and therefore the place and moment of the invisible notation of the mystical experience. The **Albums** can therefore be regarded as the *locale* of the nodal orbit in which word and image coincide, making an appropriate seedbed for (the) poetic metaphor.

Artist's Journal
Month the Fifth

Although my feet would not go I take myself to church. Wrong timing: no space there for me, not today. How different a place become when it is invaded by noise and activity per se. My solitude recoils, and I leave as fast as my feet would take me. I want this place all to myself. I will not be exiled – I will not be exiled in the island of that which has passed; gone forever.

Boards are made, new canvassed are bought, and still nothing is.

I don't feel bad, just Empty, Slow, and Private.

Another return to church: obstinate and determined that this is my place – as it is anybody else's. I have an abode, a hearth, a calling, a doorway; an arrival that awaits me Here. I try to draw and the pencil glares back in disbelief. Perhaps I have 'done' with the church interiors. I don't know! No more looking in a linear fashion to the apse or up at the curve of the stone arches. Instead I am enthralled by the dusty corner of the gloomy non-place at the back entrance, where the light switches wink mischievously, calling out to be turned on and off. As with everything else, I am no longer able to look the obvious in the eye.

Spring begins and spring ends - a simultaneous arrival and exit.

Despite the ever present potential of rain, and that I avoid leaving this dark enclave, - the studio - knowing the sun resides outdoors is a comforting thing in itself.

The scent of paint repels. I draw for solace.

The Scribe

Or

[Letter to my Daughter]

A Play in One Act

“And as the Word is the Only-Begotten in the Divinity, so the Word is the Only-Begotten of the Virgin. As the Word is the sole one of God, so the Word is the sole one of this mother. God begot the Word before the beginning of time; the Virgin Mother begot the same one within time, and then she remained after birth of her Only-Begotten.”[Hildegard of Bingen, *The Scivias*, second part; vision two: 8]⁵⁷

Players:

Mother	- An elderly and physically broken woman
Scribe	- A young man
Daughter	- A young woman, who is heard as a voice, or an echo offstage
Chorus	- Mixed choral voices
Street vendors and labourers	

The scene is set on permanent view in the midst of the entrance to a large church, or cathedral, parts of which are hinged by scaffolding, where stonemasons are working – partly away from view, behind sheets that flap in the breeze. Both the immediate street scene of market stalls, etc. and the voluptuous interior are at once visible to the audience. The light shifts, sometimes with the emphasis on the natural light outdoors, and at intervals the coloured stained glass refracts a ‘religious’ light on the scene(s) enacted.

The written text, which is transcribed from the vernacular language of the old woman, to a pseudo-academic Latin, by the Scribe, is projected on the walls/columns/ and doorways, whilst being simultaneously heard by the audience. It is assumed that Mother only hears her own ‘Word’, and being illiterate, cannot read the ‘writing on the wall’.

The speech or presence of the Daughter, is emphasised by the lights shining on the Mother holding and gazing into a framed image – (photograph or painting). Or sometimes the audience are shown the silhouetted shadowy figure of a young woman seen from behind a rood screen or window, holding a letter.

Act One

[The lights go up on the street scene outside the grand church entrance. Amidst the noise and clutter, and all kinds of [medieval] every day aspects of town life, gradually attention is drawn to the old woman squatting by a low scribe's writing box/bureau, behind which is seated a young man with a rather pompous stance.]

- Mother** And there isn't a day that goes by when I wonder...is it right to regret the past, as a series of beginnings? *[Looking worried and frightened.]* No, no that's not what I mean at all.
- Scribe** I am told that Magic tricks *[pronounced My-agic.]*
- Mother** And how be that?
- Scribe** By Magic; I believe – it seems.
- Mother** Trickery is a sin. I learnt that long ago. That is, trickery is. About magic I don't know. That I no more know what is than what your so-called 'seems' or seemingness to be, is or isn't.
- Scribe** Is that so?
- Mother** So I were told as a little girl, and know it to be so: The spirit of light shines in all that comes to sight. Open and See! *[She mumbles under breath:]* "The spirit breathes where it will; you hear its voice but do not know where it comes from, or where it is going" *[John 3:8]*
- Chorus** Mater Amabilis
Lovable Mother
Mater Admirabilis
Wonderful Mother
Mater Boni Consili
Mother of Good Counsel
- Scribe** *[Touching his writing utensils and paper/parchment, with a self-preening pride.]* Well, old woman, you may be right. For look at me; this desk, my pen, and the fine quill fluttering in the breeze: all is, is it not? Tell me different if it is or not.
- Mother** Yes my young S...- *[she hesitates to call him 'Sir'.]* Scribe. It all seems to be. As you say; or rather show me to be so. But what can I know? - An old woman with aching bones, all alone and not a word or knowledge to her name. No! Not a word of her own.

Scribe Well, yes now that you mention it - a woman and an old one at that. Poor, illiterate – that is as you say of course – with not a word to call ‘her own’. And so it is. I now see what you mean – that is about tricks and things that are. Or not. [*He opens his desk out and rummages inside.*]

Mother Yes, that’s well put.

Scribe Us Scribes have a word or two here and there, to cushion the silent lack of words. You understand; and of course, sometimes we have a word or two of our own.

Mother Yes, I hear them. And so I am here sate by you, wishing you to give me some words of my own to write a letter of mine to a dear daughter, now living far away. I will pay you; see. [*She takes out a small cloth purse, on a drawstring.*] I’ve been going frugal these past days. No need for luxuries, the dream said. I even stopped talking, keeping my words in store, as such. And here I am, with enough to buy me a few words to send my daughter.

Chorus In this emptiness I commence my full self

 [*The Scribe indicates to her that he is ready and poised to take her dictation.*]

Mother My cherub, my little flower of blessed goodness. How I worry over you.

Scribe My dear, I do worry over you, so. In fact you have grown to become a cause of much anxiety to me.

Mother How are you this winter, my child? I expect you must be wondering how long I am taking over your woollen scarf and gloves. I won’t bother you over it all, but just o say that things have been hard, my sweet. Though now, as I write – that is, the Scribe so kindly writes you – your woollen things are ready to be despatched with the next departure of pilgrims.

Scribe I am getting on with great difficulty. Things have not been easy, what with shortage of barley and hay, and no sheep old enough or ready for slaughter. However, the Lord willing I shall finish and send onto you the knitted wear, as soon as I can.

Chorus Duties are limited
 Thoughts are rampant
 Suspicion at every turn
 Each place with a story of its own
 Memories bring back a room in mid-hell,
 Where two strangers once met

Mother My dear how I miss you! And every stitch is wound around my crude needle with a kiss and a wish to my only darling God, - may that God be forever nameless, - to protect and guide you, always. How I dream of seeing your darling face at my door!

Chorus Your picture hangs at the garden gate
As the white flag of peace
Surrendered to time, and silence
And the empty place of
You.

Scribe And it seems much time has passed since you paid your mother a visit.

Mother Dear child, I eat and sleep with you in mind. I want for nothing but that you should be happy, well in body and in good company. And are you happy?

Scribe [*Beginning to look impatient and bored.*] I send you my best wishes, of course, etcetera, etcetera, etc.

Mother Weather here is worsening by the day. Rains and winds to break the heart. Folk driven from their hard-won homes, unthinkable floods of water gushing in and taking their livelihood. You would not believe to see so many and all their stock, all undone. I am one of the lucky ones, dear...

Scribe The forecast has gone from bad to worse in the past few weeks. Rainfall unprecedented. But then of course those who have been ruined by the floods, etc., having paid in full for their sins, will be finally cleansed, and returned to the fold.

Daughter [*Silhouette of a young woman reading it seems from a journal/booklet.*] The bright days continue and delight. My mother here, in my town, near me is like a treasure found. How I want to have a child, a piece of myself to leave behind. Given as love, or explanation of some kind to mother, lover, time and beyond. Dreams speak of transformation, but also of endings long overdue.

Mother Our little hut, - you remember our simple *locus*, all made of rushes and hawthorn branches, wound about the hazel pole, where the old hearth be - nestles me against the wind. Some say it's the wrath of the Angels or some such thing. I couldn't say, uneducated as I am. I can't really point to anything with a sure mind. But something is wrong – if that's the right word for all the devastation that has been, these recent times.

Scribe Astronomers are hard at work to come up with some answers to this extreme state of affairs. [*Looking pleased with himself, as he spells out aloud: 'Astronomers'.*]

- Chorus** Speculum Justitiae
 Mirror of Justice
 Sedes Sapientiae
 Seat of Wisdom
 Causa Nostrae Laetitiae
 Cause of Our Gladness
- Mother** Like I say, my daughter, my cherub, there is some dispute being enacted over our skies. I hope things are calmer where you are.
- [The Scribe begins to whittle away at his reed pen, whilst flirting with a street vendor, offering apples from her basket. The old woman sinks into a reverie, and there is a strange pause, whereby the street scene becomes animated with the sounds of vendors and labourers, and people haggling at the stalls.]*
- Mother** I had a dream last night. Woke up in a sweat. That's why I came to the Scribe, here, as he who writes this letter to you, my lovely. I had to talk with you. See if all is well and good with you. The gentleman Scribe making this letter out to you, all told by me, of course, is an educated man. He has so many words and letter all his own. Anyhow, like I was saying: In my dream you were only a little one, perhaps no more than a day old. A big smile on your baby face, and a dimpled dear body all nestled in my arms. I picked you up and put my old shawl about you, so, and then looking right into my eyes, you spoke. Not like little baby sounds, no, you spoke as I would, proper, and grown up.
- Scribe** *[The Scribe picks up his pen, and continues in an irritable, mechanical fashion.]* I saw a baby who seemed very grown up indeed. *[Suddenly puts down his pen, and in anger protests to the old woman.]* Woman why waste this precious white paper and my learned skills on such nonsense! I am sure your daughter is far too busy to wish to receive a scribed letter filled with nonsensical here say, dreams, visions and such like. That genus of Illogic!! Have some sense what with your age and things as they are. For shame, woman!
- Mother** *[She looks up from her state of reverie, and is surprised at his attack.]* Dear Mr Scribe, my dreams have always been my solace and guide. My daughter would understand. There is a message in all things – even in the precious empty whiteness of your paper, there, set out so elegantly in front of your hand. Please take my broken words and write exactly what I say..
- Scribe** *[Reluctantly picks up his pen.]* Very well. In this dream you spoke...
- Daughter** Mother, sometimes, staring at the nothingness of everything waiting to be said, I feel the milky way of colours and things and words invade me. How can I trace all the lines and connections and names into a whole? My spirit bubbles with indignation.

- Mother** When you spoke my love, you looked sad and reproachful. You looked into my old eyes and said: [*The voice of the young Daughter can be heard apparently emanating from the silhouetted figure visible from behind stained glass windows.*] - “Mother, why did you do it? I thought you loved me and wanted me to become your daughter. Why did you kill me, leaving me in limbo; so tired and estranged I am. Here I wait in this grand darkness with nowhere to go to, and no one to be close to. How long will I be left out here, all alone? Mother do you hear me?”
- Scribe** It seems that you have forgotten where I live, and have abandoned me somewhat. At least that is what you were saying in my dream. [*Whispers to himself.*] - What utter nonsense!
- Mother** And so my dear I woke up only to realise I hadn’t so much dreamt all this, as that you were a vision, a great streak of the brightest light that ever was circled me all about. Our humble *locus* had of a sudden transformed into a glorious space for a goddess, [*The scribe looks up shocked.*] - I mean a queen. I looked down at the bundle wrapped in my shawl and from the woollen folds came a golden vibrating light, enough to warm the entire hillside.
- Scribe** I came to with a start, and realised that it was not so much a vision, but that having had the fire, at the old hearth sizzling at full heat, the room was lit with an unearthly glow; an illusion emanating from the hot embers.
- Mother** I am surrounded everywhere by thoughts incomplete. Waking from a deep night of dreams, I can barely recall a single event. Yet I know things happened, and things were said.
- Chorus** Nothing remains but the possibility
Nothing but the most important things matter
Nothing but to note that Realism is not Reality
Let go and swim in the oceanic deep of a dewdrop
- Mother** I knew then the great wrong I had done you, and hope that this letter of mine will show you how prostrate with remorse I am, at all that you may have suffered at my ignorance.
- Scribe** I thought therefore that you may be interested to know about this dream of mine, and that I am fully aware of your discomforts, etc. Otherwise forgive me for having bothered you with so much talk. [*He yawns and is generally distracted.*]
- Mother** [*Turning to the Scribe, half apologetic.*] Scribe, you do write fast, if I may be bold to observe. Or perhaps there must be more words in the mouth than can be scribbled with the pen?
- Scribe** Quite so, old dame, quite so. [*Pompously leafing through his heavy, leather bound Lexicon.*]

Mother My dear child the time has come, what with this vision given me, to tell you of all the truths long withheld; hidden as a secret here in my chest.

[The Mother's voice is taken over by the Daughter, shown in silhouette, reading the letter.]

Chorus Seeds tinkle like bells
And the clock says: Time not Eternity

Daughter I was young, see, and so much in need of company, love, and guidance. I don't know what. The long and the short of it is that when you came along it seemed a blessing; a gift reaching out to give me a truth; an answer after all those years of blankness. I didn't know a soul, and so how could I go on, a woman with child? No one would even buy the faggots I collected, that tore and shredded my hands, so. And all the while that I carried your blessed weight in my body I was happy.

Chorus Vas Spirituale
 Vessel of the Spirit
Vas Honorabile
 Vessel of Honour
Vas Insigne Devotionis
 Noble Vessel of Devotion

Scribe Life was most burdensome whilst I was pregnant with you. However, somehow I survived by the labour of my own hands, collecting and selling faggots.

Mother Now that I have seen you through childhood, and have gone out there into the world, I know that all was well. I put language of woman on your tongue, watching you grow into a woman; gracious, capable, and strong. Now you have more than the humble sound of things I once placed on your tongue. You are not your mother, with not a word to call her own.

Scribe Now that you have been brought up into an obedient woman, reared according to the scriptures, the Lord, He shall guide you. For it is not for a mere woman, a mother to teach a child the true path.

Mother Until the other night, in the midst of that confusion and stillness of air as the little hut began to tremble with the presence of something, a strange light, I had thought it best to let you be as you are. They say that woman can't think straight. Maybe they're right. But I can tell you that my memory is as straight as any line drawn by the guild of craftsmen, or the sharp blade of the plough.

[The Daughter continues the reading.]

Daughter Your father was a good enough man – though I can't say how good, since we never spoke much. The Churchmen would tell you different, but let me tell you I am your begetter true. You came from me. You belong to no one. You were spirit pure. You come to me from no man, for you come as myself. You are no flesh of sin, no divided love. You are as I am: Woman.

[The Scribe stops writing, and looks angry. He stands up and almost as a warning speaks aloud. Some of the passers by stop and stare. The old woman hangs her head, humiliated.]

Scribe Woman! Beware of blaspheme! Think of what you say! Bite your tongue, or be damned with all the heretics that time ever did witness as acting in falsehood to the God of Man. Do you not know that it is held as the ultimate truth stated in all the noble Books, that nothing exists but for man's will, man's breath, man's honour and direct intervention? God himself being akin to man has made things as they stand. Woman is not even a shadow for she is not akin to God's blessed truth that is man shaped. She is but a vessel, a vehicle of flesh. No mortal woman can aspire to being akin to the Holy Spirit, not even those cloistered virgins that fast and flagellate. It is only the grand nature of man that can aspire so high. Perhaps you are envious of man. But do not presume that you can deceive an innocent girl, your daughter, to become as black-hearted as yourself, you old hag! Envy is a sin you know, as is pride; assuming yourself greater than your master on earth, and your Lord in Heaven – what next? Do not presume even to be like him, for you are always born to be less than him. Woman Beware!

Chorus And after all the dark despair
And after three days of suffering, experienced
And after all had been said, considered and heard
There remains this: What is in a story anyhow?

Mother Perhaps you are right, Sir, *[Pausing in embarrassment]* – Scribe. I am just an old woman with bones that creak in despair. The wind blows in my very sinews and my tongue is like an old dog, thirsty for water. Don't mind my chatter, young Scribe. I am an old sinner. All flesh is sin, according to man my lord and master, on this earth; and my knees are worn with genuflection in the hope of some glimmer of redemption. But all to no avail, that time is passed, clean. Be good enough to finish this letter to my cherub. I couldn't say, though it may be a last letter of a mother tongue-less, to a daughter, finding words of her own. See my good Scribe, all I want to do is pass on myself – worthless old wench that you call me – to her, my young and hope-bound daughter. She has a life and words of her own, though all the same what I will send her, here in this letter, will be a nameless secret, that is passed on from mother to daughter. Then she is ready to go out there and be; that is, a woman.

Chorus Rosa Mystica
Mystical Rose

Turris Davidica
Tower of David
Turris Eburnea
Tower of Ivory

- Daughter** As yet un-ventured, I am held in the un-expectant air of expectation, unhindered by bitterness.
- Scribe** Good, woman, speak before the noontide bells should ring you dumb.
- Mother** Well as I was saying my dear, this is a letter that may come to you as the churchman comes to shrive me. These may be my last words to you: from one woman to another. My age is your youth; my fears your courage. Take these words of mine – paid for each and everyone with honest money.
- Chorus** No one wants a bruised sap
Not now
A life barely lived
Bite: determined to the core
C'est la Vie en Pomme
From air to ground – what height:
To fall and fall and fall
The simple root and flame of all that is complex
- Scribe** Although this may be my last letter to you, written at the good hands of a learned scholar, albeit a cheap barter of a few humble coins for all these grand words scribed and sent to you by way of a farewell.
- Mother** I am your mother, in whose image you are come into this world. Do not become, child, so broken by man's many ways, on this earth. Hold your spirit always poised towards the highest mark. Be strong and know that the true blessing lies in your own flesh as woman, though you be only accepted as simple, sinful, and a mere helpmeet to man, remember that it is you who houses the blessed vessel through which man makes the journey of life to life. Hear no blasphemy in this.
- Scribe** As the tongue-less, sinful vessel of man's shadow side, your only true task remains always to be obedient and refrain from blaspheme against your master on earth and Lord in Heaven. [*Looking pleased with his ability to transcribe so well.*]
- Chorus** No pushing
Only a gentle pressing
– At the right points

- Mother** My bones are empty, and winds whistle through my very marrow. But this much I do know: I am woman and my Soul a blessed companion to this flesh, this cladding named by man as the symbol of all shame and ignorance.
- Scribe** Remember always that you are nothing, but a woman. A flesh-clad armature made in shame and imbued by ignorance. Therefore redeem your soul through duty and silence.
- [The young woman is seen as a shadowy figure reading the letter, as she walks among the crowd, or becomes a silhouette behind a canopy, bellowing in the midday breeze, etc.]*
- Daughter** You are my child, and yet you could have been my mother. Be my guide child, as I give you my life, my tongue, my courage; take and become all that I could not dare to become. Here in the market place I look about me and I see women with heads bowed to the ground, afraid to see their courage, their blessedness, and rightful truth. Everything conspires to shut them in a silent acquiescence; to be a 'Nothing'. No, they are deemed less than nothing. Indeed a male child is better heard than a woman, young or old. They know that a woman silenced is less than nothing – she is NOT. And I wonder how it came to pass that man, the lord and proprietor of the city, the churches and places of learning should have deemed it a good thing to make his opposite, into a non-being, a nothing. An empty place; a silent, empty NOT – that is how woman is told she must be, and so she obeys; fearful of punishment. Always with her head bowed down to the ground. And so it comes to pass, daughter of mine, that I sit here in the marketplace with all my savings gathered in the old, many-times darned purse, to buy me some words, owned by man. I work my life's blood to buy me words which my tongue is deprived of, to send your ears as gift from mother to daughter – both dumbfounded by fear, obedience and tongue-less-ness.
- Chorus** I too have noticed the desert
It sits just out there
Cushioned between
You and I
- Scribe** *[Quietly snoring into his collar, suddenly comes to and scribble on his pad.]* Yes my daughter, remember that fear is good for woman.
- Mother** Read on my child, and take every word as gospel – breathed from the blessed tongue of a mother, given as food for the body and mind of a daughter. The church is a She, and so your body, my cherub is as holy a foundation. You are the virgin of clarity, and goodness, even when with child. Your purity your virginity resting in your heart and not in sin. I say you are of the very stuff as the stars that shine a silver path along the forest floor.

Chorus	Domus Aurea House of Gold Foederis Area Ark of the Covenant
Scribe	And of course, needless to say that you must be alert to the inherent filth of woman's body, unless of course if she be a virgin of the church. Beware of the sins of the flesh and practice cleanliness with rigour.
Mother	And, child, never ever forget the Secret, which was whispered deep in your ears at birth. Your name, sacred as the flagstones of the high altar, indeed it is the very alter of truth, at which you will some day own your own mystery.
Chorus	Janua Coeli Gate of Heaven Stella Matutina Morning Star
Scribe	As you know the noble mystery of the Way is too grand for us, mere women: Therefore remain content in your shadowy inconsequence, and leave the laws of truth and revelation to your better masters. Thus you shall not transgress the true mystery. Look to man, and not to your own like, for your lessons in self-betterment.
Mother	Finally, my daughter, take these words sent from the sad and wistful heart of an old woman, as a bouquet of wild flowers, handpicked for your pleasure. Take your own spring, child, held firmly in each hand and live your seasons to the full. And when you come to whisper the Secret, deep in the ears of your own daughter, remember to pass on these words, as holy sacraments of Sophia to Sophia. May the love of all that is of spirit light your way: The moon be consolation to you and your love in the dark nights; and the sun a beacon of hope in all your long days of labour together.
Daughter	Here in our separating paths, old skins must be shed. And amidst the ambiguous inheritance of a nameless secret, the cut is final. <i>[The bells begin to ring, and the people in the market place pack up their gear. The old woman stands up, hands the Scribe her purse. He scoffs at the amount offered, and pockets the coins; throwing away her old purse. She places the letter neatly into the fold of her skirt, and hobbles quietly away, towards the edge of the stage, where fields and trees signal the outskirts of the town; midday Mass calls: the scaffold sheeting bellows over the scene, leaving only shadows and silhouettes.]</i>

The End
 [Curtains Down]

Artist's Journal
Month the Sixth

A complete change! A miracle is taking place within me. No longer able to tolerate the masculine-[dis]approving index finger wagging in my face; – the good and the bad are for me to find and not a pre-ordained catalogue handed out at the studio door. Every step is to be taken with gathering conviction and sensibility of my being and gender.

Paint and draw without knowing why, how or when

Poetry has no knowledge but itself

[the] Poetic is the un-name-able

Large Nude [me and I myself] with three Icons in the left of picture; everything tilting and falling out of the frame of the stretcher, it seems.

And where is this centre to which we must all be aligned? Where is this exclusive space? Perhaps by killing Narrative, I can at least arrest History in the Now. That, then may be[come] the space of anonymous gestation.

*Small panels and canvases and paper await the new me to write myself out **for** me. Like a love letter to a long-lost beloved, whose very name sounds a thrill of expectation in both the mind and body; painting the 'Still Life' of my biography: objects of mine, not a masquerade of taste.*

The uninviting panels of MDF come alive with five paintings:

~ Studio Journal and Paint Pots

~ White Ink and Pink Geraniums

~ Books and an Orange balanced on large Paint Pot

~ Slippers and 2 Ink Pots

~ Glasses resting on Drawing of Me

~ Studio Watch, Light Switch and Curtain

Learning at last to curl in upon myself. The space within this (my) circle of circularity of self will eventually become Meaning.

Artist's Journal
Month the Sixth

A complete change! A miracle is taking place within me. No longer able to tolerate the masculine-[dis]approving index finger wagging in my face; – the good and the bad are for me to find and not a pre-ordained catalogue handed out at the studio door. Every step is to be taken with gathering conviction and sensibility of my being and gender.

Paint and draw without knowing why, how or when

Poetry has no knowledge but itself

[the] Poetic is the un-name-able

Large Nude [me and I myself] with three Icons in the left of picture; everything tilting and falling out of the frame of the stretcher, it seems.

And where is this centre to which we must all be aligned? Where is this exclusive space? Perhaps by killing Narrative, I can at least arrest History in the Now. That, then may be[come] the space of anonymous gestation.

*Small panels and canvases and paper await the new me to write myself out **for** me. Like a love letter to a long-lost beloved, whose very name sounds a thrill of expectation in both the mind and body; painting the 'Still Life' of my biography: objects of mine, not a masquerade of taste.*

The uninviting panels of MDF come alive with five paintings:

~ Studio Journal and Paint Pots

~ White Ink and Pink Geraniums

~ Books and an Orange balanced on large Paint Pot

~ Slippers and 2 Ink Pots

~ Glasses resting on Drawing of Me

~ Studio Watch, Light Switch and Curtain

Learning at last to curl in upon myself. The space within this (my) circle of circularity of self will eventually become Meaning.

INTERIORS OF THE SACRED AND PROFANE

Dare you see a Soul *at the White Heat*?
Then crouch within the door –
Red – is the Fire's common tint –
But when the vivid Ore
Has vanished Flame's conditions,
It quivers from the Forge
Without a colour, but the light
Of unannointed Blaze.
Least Village has its Blacksmith
Whose Anvil's even ring
Stands symbol for the finer Forge
That soundless tugs – within –
Refining these impatient Ores
With Hammer, and with Blaze,
Until the Designated Light
Repudiate the Forge –

Dickinson [poem 365]

The land out there is not necessarily an alien space, but it is very much demarcated into a separate boundary, from my world in here. Here in the studio partially curtained and hidden, here amid the dimly lit, brightly coloured walls and artefacts of my dwelling: the cottage, here, in my place of work and life is where the boundaries of I, and *things* become both confused and integrated. Somehow, the association of *things* as they occupy their home-space, whereby the dwelling place of each thing is a sanctified 'home', mingles with my daily seeing, touching or use of them, thus bestowing the most modest of things with an epic reality. Outside, the sky manoeuvres and manipulates light; Penzance curves into an opal-glow set firmly into the forever changing hues of water-anchored foundations, amid the Atlantic expanse of seaweed mottled pool of infinite blues.

Inside in church, I know of the time of day only when a mysterious shadow glides across the ochre and Venetian-red chequered tiled floor, that runs from the blue door down to the isle, stopping at the mustard coloured carpet, with two small steps up to altar and apse. Apart from its appropriately known religious purpose every object holds a secret a history, a touch, and a memory of ritual; an instance of mortal appeal towards that other who is given as greater than I. How should I presume such iconography of religious detail when my only induction into public fervour was a political march, or a revolutionary text, recited as though some mysterious verse from the *Canticles*. That kind of 'religious' ritual always offers tangible ground for redemption: governments can be toppled, comrades heartily embraced, language and meanings given a heroic sense of the possible; the quantifiable chart of revolutionary gestures monitoring societal evolution of self and other.

By contrast, in this present quiet solitude of nothing but shadows and cheap taper smoking the air heavy, only the printed reproductions of gold-encrusted panels of medieval Icons, from the Eastern Church, speak to me. Their essence is not the realm of the tangible. Rather with gaunt and meaningful eyes they stare back at me, as if saying: "Come enter the Nothing, because it is there, the place of no-thing where all *things* come into being." Dare I assume: - it is precisely when all matter appears to be nullified and disinherited of the vivacity of the breath of becoming, that the possible evolves? And so it is in the absence of others, the missing place of *you-thou*, which I seek to face, hear, and speak to; an impossible quest that endows every pew, and prayer mat with a particular presence of its own.

If the Church Interior has become, in my hands – via my pencil, brush and palette – the transcription of a spiritual portraiture, then whose face, life, status, and presence am I delineating? Perhaps the place as architectural structure, symbolically arranged with *things* that represent a constant incantation for the arrival and reception of that *other*, - whose absence is representative of the eternal presence, - can in itself be the body mass, the living breath, and quizzical boundary of the sitters' gaze.

A place of prayer is not accorded its atmosphere only when in the practice of worship. The function of such a place is an ever-present possibility where one may encounter the divine object of worship, and partake of the reassuring uncertainty of feeling oneself as being truly within the present, made witness to the presence of some-*thing* outside of the known or the logical boundaries of time-spatiality. When I have been fortunate enough to find that secret entrance into this strangely undefined zone where all things hover between the fantastic and the believable, I sense the texture of every shape or matter, even the sensation of my own skin, as being transformed. This state can happen anywhere and in any place. It is then almost corseted, held warm in this capsule of otherness, that my home also takes on the hue of an incantation, becoming a contemporary setting for a mystery play in progress. The Bedouin rugs in stripes of red, orange and deepest green, which cover the armchair, resonate my own absence. This is the place of thought and rest. Being the only comfortable seat in the house, this is where I come to be at ease. The Red Chair bears the imprint of my presence between its open stretched wooden armrests, though to all other eyes it is an empty seat vacant of human volume. The melancholy of such absence lends the paintings of my Domestic Interiors an equivalent quest as in the Church series: - the fullness of emptiness, the boundaries of that which we consider as being void, annulled, not, minus, or without.

It is through the repetitive engagement of drawing objects, buildings, doors, beams, banners, candles, books, windows, curtains, floor tiles, and even shadows, that I try to arrive at the edge of that place where none of these *things* can any longer hold onto a recognized essence of matter. It is at that point where colour, infused with the dynamic energy of drawing, makes of matter a strangely amorphous substance for which I have no 'name'. And precisely when the names of things, places, and people are no longer significant, then as if walking hesitantly out of a misty fog, one suddenly comes upon the edge of a precipice.⁵⁸ This is the place where the *Momentary* meets with the *Infinite*.

The interior as a grand-scale still life⁵⁹ is where the sophisticated semblance of objects arranged on the stage of 'still life' inflates the human scale of things into a virtual space of a metaphor for Being. Two interiors into which I am invited, indeed compelled, to enter are: *A Corner of the*

Artist's Room, by Gwen John (c.1907-9), and *The Artist's Bedroom*, Vincent van Gogh (1888). [Figs. 5 & 6]⁶⁰ Both of these paintings are intimate and private spaces that the artist has depicted with an almost journalistic intent.⁶¹ These are rooms occupied for both living and working in. The doors to the 'inside' of a personal universe are opened out towards the 'outside' of a public gaze. The genre of the interior in the hands of John, and van Gogh, bestow a silent resonance to the familiar and ordinary objects, making of the *things* themselves the subject and narrative; the poetic intention becoming the emblematic expression of an unremarkable place, and time, occupied by equally unremarkable effects which the seer and maker of the paintings daily handles. Both van Gogh and John's rooms are in different ways imbued with a monastic silence and stillness. There are no indications of any religious preference, though we are enraptured by a particular quality of light, radiating differently in either painting, as representative of a communion with something other than the material-bound. John's pearly hub celebrates the fresh airiness visible through the ephemeral lace curtains, making the almost shabby resonate with a mysterious something impending. There is a suspension of time, and the wordless anonymity of a spiritual iconography.⁶² These representations of a particular habitat presume an archaeological dialogue of a life that is lived within their walls, interacting with the *things* and various aspects of the architecture: ceiling, wall, window(s), door, and floorboards. Painted with the same intensity of a 'still life' that mingles observation of the isolated or grouped object with the intimated presence of human touch and presence, these are biographical descriptions stated in colour, line and pigment. These paintings are not physically empty and yet they are empty paintings, making of the apparent absence of human presence the essential subject. Here 'void' is the subject. This is by no means interpreting the word or notion of 'void'⁶³ in the sense of the negation of being, but rather as a space embodying a narrative of emptiness, as both predicate and subject. Amidst this emptiness, the 'I' encounters the *other-that-is-not-you*.

The silence and solitude of the space of creative engagement is where the artist and poet experiences the absence of the temporal scheme of things. Blanchot's discourse on the creative/poetic process names "literature" itself as "the fascination of time's absence"; - the poet/writer willingly enters this arena of "Time's absence", in order to experience the ultimate

solitude, whereby even the notion of a pronoun is subjected to scrutiny, and so "The time of time's absence has no present, no presence."⁶⁴ In sensitively deciphering the artist's (more specifically the writer and the poet's) process of work, Blanchot draws for us an interior topography of how and where the poet/artist comes to experience that mysteriously unanswerable sensation of being held, and suspended in the limbo of neither an "affirmation" nor a "negation". At the same time it is not a strict time-less-ness which the poet-painter-I experience, but more a feeling of liberation and a complete release from the realms of the expected: the past, present, and future all at once become contradictory, because the idea of Time is suddenly lost to one's consciousness.

This place within the map of Time, named by us as 'the present'⁶⁵ is where we encounter the profound experience of Being. In that "ecstatic time" space we bring together everything that we know, or have aspired to, and somehow, through the process of engagement with the poetics of a work of art, we are given to transcend the material aspects of things, as they appear to us. A sense of Time in which a palpable notion of the "now" is always statically, almost theatrically spread before us, is part of the language of painting itself. Although as Tina Chanter articulates in *Ethics of Eros*, notwithstanding that "ordinarily, time is envisaged as ever-changing, in continuous flux, like the river into which Heraclitus said, no one can step twice [...] in their attempt to articulate the truth about time, philosophers call upon the idea of time as modelled on an eternally present now. In so far as they take for granted that the actual "now" is the only real time [...] that time stands still." This temporal place where "present is understood as constant, identical with itself, a unit, unchanging"[Chanter 1995, 154]⁶⁶ must by the definition of Time as un-static, be less a deliberate contradiction than a poetic notion of space-to-time-to-self.⁶⁷ Even in the use of a camera lens, it is not so much the voyeurism of looking into an intimate interior space that is visually seductive, but the sense of the stillness, and concentration of time held in abeyance of change, into which we can project our associative imagination. Making of that capsule of time and place an interiorised space, to which we, the onlooker can have an emotive connection.

We repeat the present always from a past notion of the present, acting into a future that is almost missed because of our focus on the present. In some curious way this repetition of a yearning for

the now is the only thing we possess of the notion of Time. Repetition without memory is only play-acting: it is a lifeless, empty enacting. Repetition is a vibrant centre that is always rich with possibility.⁶⁸ This repetition is also the poetic station of arrival, which propels the artist, writer, or poet to return again and again to the expression of the same thing, as though eternally dissatisfied with the last effort, mark, or word. Blanchot's "fascination" is thus extended, from the simple notion of the artist being merely seduced to spend more and more of the (her) self in that limbo of "time's absence", to the poetic pull that compels to become mesmerised by a true experience of one's own solitude. *The Essential Solitude* seems to offer us a subtle account of this creative process with which the artist must become whole-heartedly engaged in order to enter the place of writing and making: the realm in which this encounter takes place he names the "nowhere" or the "dead present". Here the pronoun of "Someone" as "They" takes on the mysterious, ghostly non-identity residing in the "Nonreal", whom the artist needs to face and recognise and name, in order to access the "fascination" which is the root of the will towards seeing "the Image", hearing and speaking the "language", and by definition, voicing a herald to the *other-of-the-self-becoming*.

"When I am alone, I am not alone, but, in this present, I am already returning to myself in the form of Someone. Someone is there, where I am alone. The fact of being alone is my belonging to this dead time which is not my time, or yours, or the time we share in common, but Someone's time. Someone is what is still present when there is no one...Someone is the faceless third person, the They of which everybody and anybody is part, but who is part of it? Never anyone in particular, never you and I. Nobody is the part of the They. "They" belongs to a region which cannot be brought to light, not because it hides some secret alien to any revelation or even because it is radically obscure, but because it transforms everything which has access to it, even light, into anonymous, impersonal being, the Nontrue, the Nonreal yet always there."
[Blanchot 1955, trans; 31]

This aloneness is a negation of the outside "light of day", or the world and therefore "a loss of a dwelling place" [Blanchot 1955, 31]. In answer to this loss, I create a new "dwelling place", filtering it with a new light, a light that is not so much of the world out there, but projected from the source of my own seeing. In the process of "obsession which ties" me "to a privileged theme, which obliges" me "to say over again what has already" been said/painted [Blanchot 1955, 24], I am arrested in a kind of deaf and blind state of self-absorption, that by necessity helps develop the faculty to see, and hear in a deeply intimate way, as in the resonance of an imagined sound or vision of the *other-that-is-not-I* reflected back⁶⁹.

Unlike the paintings by Gwen John and van Gogh, where we are led to dwell amidst an emptiness that is filled with *things*, the sophisticated and carefully devised interiors of 17th century Dutch painting⁷⁰ are not so much a visual ode to *emptiness*, but rather more about the presence of people amidst the fullness of *things*. Shyly permitting the public gaze to ‘look in’ on a happening as it unfolds, teased with theatrical sleight of hand masquerading as chance, but in actuality, meticulously structured and rehearsed. The new generation of merchants whose appetite and taste demanded the development of these images, implicitly requested the artists of this era to celebrate their thriving economy via the subject of ‘still life’, and domestic interiors. There is a curiosity and enjoyment in not only highlighting the living/entertaining spaces of the average home, or public inn, but also depicting for the first time, the kitchen, the preparation of food, and the people who, as the working body of the town and village, help nurture the Dutch art buying market of the seventeenth century.⁷¹

The handling of the sacred interior, as a genre in itself, is treated with a similar, candid eye for the fashionable accent placed on the ‘every day’ events and affects of the thriving middle class. The architectural clarity of church interiors, drawn with precision, and empathy for the frugal simplicity of the Northern Church, is beautifully defined by the work of Pieter Saenredam (1597-1665). Saenredam’s paintings are not preoccupied with conveying the quality of worship, or the communion between parishioner, and the mystic element of his or her religion. Instead these are meticulously drawn, carefully constructed pictures that help convey one’s awe at the feats of architecture, whilst elegantly and quietly generating the meditative truth of the simple economy of civil life, engaging with the more sociable aspects of religious space. White, and without ornament, there is little vivid colour in these paintings, and yet the dark wood panels contrasted against the heavy, plastered columns of these late Gothic interiors sets off a meditative hum, which scales up into the high, cubistic planes of the unreachable vaulted ceilings, above *The Grote Kerke, Haarlem*, c.1635 [Fig. 7]. There are always just so many figures quietly going about their business of either a hushed rendezvous, or taking an afternoon’s rest, leaning on the base of bulky capitals supporting the white rotund columns, calculated it seems to indicate both the scale as well as the commercial

nature of these places of worship. In these works, the Dutch master of the church interior appears less concerned with contemplation of the divine element as the unattainable mystery within these Protestant interiors, and more preoccupied with portraying the sheer enjoyment and sense of human pride at simply being amidst such a well ordered, and ingeniously designed architectural space. The point of the religious is in the sense of neat, well kempt crispness of everything from the wooden banners, to the floor tiles. In effect they are closer to the domestic interiors of de Hooch, whereby normality and social adaptability are the main prerequisites of religiosity.⁷²

The interior is the place where the *natura morte* begins a dialogue with the self - that is the psychological human presence, - each object's reality making a statement of what is, whilst at the same time hinting at a biographical itinerary. The objects and things that occupy the space of an interior therefore become the notations of a private journal⁷³. In this visualised and embodied *note-book-place*, amidst the solitary and the silent 'pages' of the interior, - via a secretive relationship of emotions and ideas delineated in line, mark, colour, and word, - the expected boundaries of time-to-self are eroded

By erasing the public world to a minimum in the interior composition, I attempt to draw the limits and depths of the moment of transcendence: that mysterious nodal point of departure from the public sphere into the intimate emotional sphere of communicating *within* the sacred. Whether focused on the sacred architecture of an ecclesiastical space, or domestic structure of my own dwelling, it is the notion of that transitional passage where the intimate sacred locus of 'in here' meets the public arena, of the religious or iconographic expectations of 'out there'. [Figs. 9, 10 & 11]⁷⁴ But where do the boundaries of these two arenas of existence meet? Is it a matter of gender that I am attracted to the enclosed, the interior, and the apparently mundane aspects of the every day? It is interesting [as Bryson points out] that when Freud refers to the concept of the interior in his essay on the 'Uncanny',⁷⁵ it is psychoanalytic confirmation of: (a) the appropriation of women's body as simultaneously a coveted and repulsive arena, to which men may relate with some degree of contention; (b) the interior of the domestic space acts as a place of repression for the male ego, whilst provoking a strange desire for him to look into that space as a voyeur or outsider. [Fig. 12]

The once 'familiar' [*heimlich*] is only 'uncanny' [*unheimlich*], or unfamiliar in so far as I may not know the objects, or the particular way a door handle may turn.

Neither the domestic nor the ecclesiastic space confronts me personally as anything but a place of containment, where the mundane and the precious amount to the poetic, the sacred, and the meaningful. It is more a place of self-expression, a kind of intimate communion with both architecture and artefact. I walk about the columns in church, sense my body against the cold wooden pews, or light a candle, with the same detachment as I would have in the cottage, where I may open a window, draw a curtain, take a book out of the bookshelf, or sit on the chair gazing out to sea. [Fig. 13] Although I am not aware of a premeditative intention to invade or appropriate the space, it could be argued that the act of seeing, drawing, notating, and painting, are in themselves a taking away, or a colonisation. In the church I am an outsider, and perhaps also a voyeur. The public and religious space of the church grants me an appropriate, and civic entrance, though the unsaid/unwritten agreement is based on the tacit understanding that I will not actively participate in the coded ceremonies of that building.⁷⁶ Things are different inside the architectural space of my own dwelling. Here things are not 'uncanny' to my feminine consciousness. They are as they are: locations of the unremarkable that allow the imperceptible eruption, amidst all that is 'ordinary', as the true expression of being witness to the presence of the present. If anything, it is the spaces of institutional bureaucracy, which create a sense of the confrontational, the oppressive and the 'uncanny' in my perception. Should we rationalise a metaphor for architectural space as that of the human body, then it is the public, un-intimate, politicised environment that conveys the least sense of humanity. [Figs. 14 & 15]

Perhaps Bryson's sympathetic thesis hints at precisely this genre of interior, where the 'greater existence' of the 'masculine agenda' is focused on; where the female is excluded and given to feel herself as a strange misfit. The 'megalography' of the public domain need not be a place of alienation for the female, as the 'rhopography' of the domestic arena can be also welcoming and familiar to the male psyche.

-“And for as long as painting's mode of vision would be constructed by men,
the space in which women were obliged to lead their lives would be taken from

them and imagined through the values of the 'greater' existence from which they were excluded. As the category of the nude pictured women's bodies from the outside and re-fashioned it according to the logic of another point of view, so still life pictured the space of women from the outside and imposed on it the values of another world." [Bryson 1990, 177]

However as he concludes, the history of art has literally to be re-written from a new angle altogether, re-evaluating what is artistically worthy of depiction whilst seriously questioning the scopic view of genres such as the still life, and the nude.

Artist's Journal
Month the Seventh

Waiting for the essential things to happen.

*Small water-colours sitting in the foliage-canopied quiet of the garden. Trying to leave this inside space of studio, and feel the outside world a little. I am lost in end-less-ness. My place and my arrival must surely take place soon, or I will disappear completely. Only **There**, where I soften at the edges, where my outer merges with my inner, can I find the **Thing** which will give my vision form; my thoughts word. I dwell in the dark forum of LOSS. Can the garden become substitute for **That Thing**?*

Everyday I come closer to changing expectations and so move into myself: as the only true place of learning, tradition, meaning and answers

A kind of self-myth emerging: Large, life-size+ (of) standing nude [Me] holding my Books of poems, with a deep blue dust-jacket; at my feet a large pot of geraniums. I'll call it "The Blue Book". - No longer 'about' painting, rather 'about' me.

I wake up at dawn with two sentences staring me in the face:

Only experience endows the body with certainty of vision.

Only the full comprehension of the meaning behind experience

Will envelop the mind in a resolved state of peaceable acceptance.

Pages and pages of drawing and then satisfaction: large painting of the studio interior with red mug and white slippers. Good. I feel as though I've crossed a treacherous [im]pass of the river; negotiating the menace of large slippery boulders, and stepping safely onto the spongy turf of the other side.

More paper bought. Drawing me. Large water-colours sitting out in the fields.

STILL LIFE

Or

ATHANASIA: a play on the immortal

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

“Ever since the age of the Greeks, beings have been experienced as what comes to presence. Inasmuch as language is, coming as speech again and again on the scene, it pertains to what comes to presence. One represents language, having taken one’s departure from speech, with a view to articulate sounds as bearers of meanings. Speaking is one form of human activity.”
[Heidegger: *The Way to Language* 1959; Farrell Krell (ed.) 1978, 402]

Players:

- Alice
- Writing Bureau
- Curtains
- Mirror (s)
- Chair (by bureau)
- Light Switch
- Cup and Saucer (pair)
- Fountain Pen
- Window
- Door
- Rug
- Cushion
- Painting (canvas – may be framed)
- Chorus (male & female voices)

[All the *objects* speak in female voices]

A room decorated simply, with windows facing at three quarter view to the audience, to the left of stage. The window opens out onto a garden. Peach coloured curtains drape the long drop from ceiling to floor. To the right of the windows an antique ladies writing bureau, open, with a fountain pen and some yellow coloured paper, partially written, can be seen on the bureau. A slender chair is placed casually in front of the bureau. A Persian rug fits the exact length of the window [in the foreground of stage]. A large cushion and an open book are

placed on the left hand corner of it. The door to the room opens down stage [left] to the left of which a wall with a light switch on the wall, and below it square against the wall, another chair, different in shape and style to the one by bureau. The walls are a mauve, moon-blue colour. On the wall, down stage to the right of the desk is a medium sized painting; showing a landscape leading down to the sea. On the top of the writing desk there is a pretty old-fashioned china cup and saucer. Almost centre stage an ornate, full-length mirror is set at an angle to the auditorium. Books and note pads scattered everywhere in the room, on shelves, on floor, etc.

A woman, in her early forties enters, quietly, casually, with a vague air about her movements. She looks about her a little agitated. She makes out as though she is trying to find a place to hide. Sits absentmindedly at the writing bureau, picks up the pen and writes a few words down. Opens a writing pad and notes something down. Puts down the pen, stares out of the window, picks up the cup and saucer and sips her beverage. All the time muttering to herself, at first inaudibly, gradually beginning to be heard more clearly as she gets up, goes up to the mirror and it seems addresses the looking glass.

This play can either be performed in semi-pantomime costume – each actress assuming the outward ‘shape’ of the object being played, or with lighting effect so that the object ‘speaking’ is highlighted, whilst the actresses stay backstage.

Act One

- Alice** I come in and the room scents deep of sandalwood. Wafting from the small block we bought all those years ago. Now it sits in a wooden box, stencilled with gaps for the scent to flow out into space - out into the room. Fills me with the air of another place: Heat of mountains, rising and bathing in lukewarm lakes; the other side of my world. [*Looking at chair by the door; a little irritated*] I’m tired of the spare seat reserved for a ‘Him’. From now on it will either be occupied by a ‘Me’ or an ‘I’. Or it will be taken away altogether. No more reservations in absentia: there, done! [*She peers into the mirror*] No more: “Look I’m here!” But instead: “Look, I see you are there!”
- Mirror** Go on have back. Keep it to yourself. I don’t want your ‘mankind’. I told him straight. Leave us alone. Get along now, there’s a good boy!
- Alice** That’s what I say, too. Smile please. She left, along with him.
- Window** How it rains. April always weeps for itself.

Curtains I wonder if April wishes it were another month altogether.

Mirror But then who to carry this dark metamorphosing month? This, the burden of earth's violent turn about: Weeping all the while, weeping.

Rug Not so dramatic my dear. As for being pulled and tugged at I have a few tales to tell. And when the cat pulls at me with her lazy paws all open and sharp; there's violence for you. No weeping for me. My colours may run.

Alice I can see how it will be. I will be long gone, perhaps buried or ashes scattered in some wistful place; and there you shall be. Still a little removed, placed solid in your place, where you were last placed. Will I be imprinted on you? [*Distracted, she looks out onto the rain*] That 'She' is DEAADD. What price for that, now?

Mirror This is much.

Bureau And to measure, balance or ledger, which account book this?

Alice I know of a ruler that has notches of numbers never seen before. It is long. Anything can be measured. A very long ruler to rule by, that.

Mirror Will it measure my width or my length, which way?

Alice There is no end to that ruler; all it's accounting, and numbers and everything. It has a very long memory of things; all things measured. [*Turning to the bureau*]. You know it all.

Bureau [*Irritable*] I am not explaining. I am not explaining anything. I am not explaining anything to anyone. If you want to know more find out for yourself.

Chair Not an easy stance to take.

Bureau I am not taking anything. Just that.

Alice [*Walking amongst the things in a quiet frenzy; speaking to herself it seems*] And will it all Be: as it needs to be? Or do I need to push, shove, make space, call out, speak; shout and weep for my own little heaven? Why this outer crust of no substance, as the masquerade of Truth eternal; - not mine. I go anyhow, down or up, in the end I go. [*With defiant air*] Exactly so!

Bureau Just that: like you would say a door is only a door, or a chair, or a rock; what you will: just that.

Pen There is no such thing as "Just that". Remember clever is not being clever. In fact clever means you're not.

- Door** Why only a door. Why not a door is a door. Why only? There is only one door, one chair, one rock.
- Light Switch** Yes Door is right. A rock is a rock, not only. Until you meet it. That is you sit near it, have a picnic by it, empty your bowels against it. Then it's not a rock, or even just a rock, it is the rock. You see it changes. It changes shape. Like you and me; we are not just anything, or only anything. We are the, *this* and *that*. [*Makes a clicking sound*]. Do you see?
- Bureau** All right, I get the point. So what do you want to know?
- Alice** [*Smiling to herself*] Complete Poems of Elizabeth Bishop; paper back.
- Bureau** [*As though in a trance*] With a gentle water-colour by Winslow Homer from 1898. Cover designed mostly in blues. Not an impressive volume in shape or size; an object to be enjoyed in one's pocket or carried in a bag.
- Alice** Inside though things are very different.
- Bureau** So you tell me.
- Chorus** Knowing is the realization of knowledge through doing [*Repeated*]
- Alice** The world is one enormous smock with millions of pockets attached. In each pocket a different life; a separate story, totally unfathomable, even unimaginable by the next pocket.
- Mirror** Whose smock are we talking about?
- Chair** Someone's got to wear it.
- Rug** Not by any chance Alice's smock is it? What we're talking about.
[*Alice makes an impatient gesture and walks over to look at some books.*]
- Window** Look to the top. A breeze swaying and clouds break up.
- Alice** [*Suddenly attracted to look out to the garden*] Bench cracking. There are two pins missing.
- Pen** The beginning and the end are always contained in the middle. The middle tells of all that was and everything to be.
- Bureau** And how many times you've left me in the middle of things. Count them too. Or the number of times you've sat staring not able to think. Then you've lifted up Pen, from its resting position on me, and gazing in muteness at the paper, you are

distracted. Someone calls and you get up, abandoning me [*Shouting with dismay*].
How many times! Measure that. Try.

Alice [*With the air of independence*] I write even when not sitting by you.

Bureau Don't! I don't want to know. And there you see, how will this ruler of yours
measure faithless conduct such as this? Tell me!

Alice [*Drops to her knees, and in mock dramatisation opens out her arms: prophetic
gesture*] I am dissolved. In your hands I'm dissolved. Blessed spirits of things all
about me, tell me how am I to survive this state of being without a boundary. The
humiliation is on such a scale I cannot begin to explain. Not even to you Pen. I
am so fully dissolved. I have let the other go, only to face this that is here [*Points
to her chest*]. I don't know who I am any more.

Curtain Blessed sun returns to warm my hurt.

Alice Heal me light!

Light Switch [*Self-righteously butting in*] My narrative is that which takes shape between Light,
Shadow, and Dark.

Door My nouns are adjectival; to the point that they break with the grammar of the word
and become verbs. Verbs of a very potent nature, they. Can't explain how, not
linguist I.

Alice My eyes ache.

Mirror My brow grows stern.

Curtain Like a great plateau to be climbed.

Cup/Saucer Never reaching the summit of a calm thought.

Chair I am disturbed, curbed. Wretched, in my wordless pitiable state.

Alice Find me a language to fit my tongue.

Rug All the time pressed, and harrowed.

Pen O! Voices that will not be quiet!

Cushion Except when I sleep.

Alice And how I need to sleep: all the time.

[Light shifts. Sun pours in and the room is lit from the garden. The rain has stopped. Birdsong can be heard. The door closes slowly. All the objects move about to their original placing and seem at rest. Alice gets up from her stupor on the rug, and walks slowly to the cup and saucer. Takes a sip from the cup. Walks over to the mirror and straightens her hair.]

Mirror *[Confiding]* She was here yesterday.

Alice I am no longer. Today She is not.

Mirror *[A little bored]* I helped. I listened. She looked. I stood still; very quiet and very still. Then light changed outside. The window was open and the curtains began to flicker. She watched me moving. Patches of things in me were no longer muted, and edgeless. Then she said: "This pride is no more my size." I stared back, not knowing what to see.

Alice Didn't you suggest a diet or something?

Mirror No. I could see no way out.

Alice The seams being rotten, nothing to do but to submit.

Mirror I held her a little while and gently stroked her hair.

Rug She stood on me and I felt her toes open out in pleasure.

Mirror There she stood and smiled. Framed and it seemed happily contained. Squeezed in between my width and length.

Alice And she's gone?

Mirror Yes, now she's gone.

Alice I wonder if you will see her again.

Mirror *[Irritable]* Look! I may remember her, you, and a myriad of things seen. But she's gone.

Alice Let me see. *[Moves over close up to the mirror, and stares searchingly into the mercury set surface of things. She's inquisitive and a little anxious.]*

Pen She does not speak. Her tongue is tied up.

Mirror Eyes are tongues of flame.

Chair And I'd have to sit there, grounded. Speechless: taken to trial.

Window And finally it came to pass. Always in the round, though I am set square, flush to the wall.

Curtain Meeting amidst the Blues: you forever changing; I a permanent blush; and Wall a silent state of sea hues.

Mirror [*Trembling a little, and deflecting flashes of light to dazzle the audience with.*] I've often observed that to arrive at the point of departure is a painful grimace. Pride twists and curls upon itself; unwilling to let go. Determined to not see. Will not look, even. Intent on avoiding the moment of realization, when all that is to be revealed is that which is.

Alice [*Slightly absent minded, gazing out of the window, it seems mesmerized by the garden.*] Difficult to reflect upon, I expect.

Mirror Yes. Always an awkward replica. Which of course never is.

Alice I can't see her. She must be gone. [*Looks vainly at herself with a sense of relief on her face.*] No trace even. Not a mark.

Rug No. People not slugs.

Chorus After a downpour the Stepping Stones are slippery.

Bureau I still bear the mark of her elbow on mine. I remember the date, and that she wore a sprig of lavender on her waist. She sat on Chair and read his letter. Last one. After that I rarely felt her slender forearm resting on mine. The next war, years later, left her completely mute. And no more lavender on her waist-band, not she.

Light Switch Woman hide thee from mine eye!

Pen Angel speak! Muteness is the art of those who have tasted the delicious fruit of seeing with their tongue. SPEEAAK...[*The pen moves about agitated, almost sounding tearful.*]

Door [*Making to open*] Forever caught in the gap of meeting.

Mirror I wasn't looking. She was gone before I could see where or how far.

Window Now it comes back to me. There used to be a small rectangular window just there to my right. But they blinded it. [*Wistfully to itself*] Miss that.

Door [*Closing slowly*] Forever caught in the gap of parting.

Chorus Two words you must know, namely: SPEED and VELOCITY [*Sung with teasing gusto*] SPEED: The rate at which a body changes it's position [*Repeated*]

VELOCITY: The rate at which a body changes its position and direction in which that body moves [*Repeated*]

Bureau Like I always say: people are not like us. And here is proof.

Chorus The noted VELOCITY is of two kinds, though only one is known: There is Uniform Velocity and Variable Velocity. That is U.V and V.V. [*Play on sound of vowels and consonants*]. It is probably true that no body moves with a perfectly Uniform Velocity. For if the intervals of Time were taken, small enough, the distances measured would be found to vary slightly. However, please note: many bodies move with a Velocity so nearly Uniform, that they may be taken to have Uniform Velocity or U.V. No error made. No error. Time tells all.

Alice I feel very lonely now she's gone. How much so.

Chorus When giving the speed of a body always say:
- 10 feet per second; 20 feet per minute; 40 miles per hour. [*Repeated*]
Remember: Distance in feet = time in seconds x Velocity: $s = t \times u$.

Alice [*Walks up to (the) Mirror; accusative.*] You don't move! Always in the same place! I leave the room, turn and look, there you are, sitting where I left you. And now, coming in, I don't know how long since I left the room, and you're there; solid, patient, and removed. Always a little removed from me, and everything around you. Woe! The slippery sphere of silver Mercury!

Mirror Yes, I suppose that's how it must seem.

Painting Though much water has gone under the bridge, since we last crossed it.

Window [*Dreamy*] There's nothing better than sunlight on water.

Cup/Saucer [*Protesting*] And Hunger?

Rug There are the deep shades of Campions too, that bewilder.

Bureau [*Indignant*] And Justice?

Cushion [*Shaking its feathery content; some float onto stage*] The Barn Owl's creamy flight of long soft span of wings. I recall that very clearly indeed.

Alice [*Pleading to be heard*] And what of being a woman denied?

Painting Well, sometimes as the Bee hums, lost in the belly of some Dog Rose, or secretly nuzzling a Fox Glove's dark curved tunnel, I think of how lovely it all is – for some.

Rug A child gives foundation to life. Turning the menial into the magical.

Door The strangeness of Day, each time she enters.

Window Trees slanted, held against the wind. Shaping the blue sky streaked white, it seems staged as a drop for the clear bell sounds of summertime church.

Pen Did you ever hear of the girl who got pregnant, and her mother killed her and buried her in the garden [*A little breathless*] – right there, by that dark corner of the old wall; where the Pomegranate grows.

[Light darkens about the room. The only area visible is the view from (the) Window. A soft glow around (the) Painting, as the only object/subject still visible on stage.]

Act Two

[Light gradually lifts. The naked light bulb clicks ON. Alice sits at (the) Bureau writing. It is now dusk out in the garden. (The) Curtain(s) move slightly across (the) Window, half closing the view to the garden.]

Chorus Whatever I say you must write it down.
On paper Blue, Yellow, or sometimes White.

Alice Whatever I say: write it down
Always in words, shaped Black.

Window There in the haze of a Blue cloud
Some White bird lingers; and the shape of White
Set against this Grey-ness reminds me of you.

Mirror How are you?

Alice Strange. Though myself.

Chorus In the silence there are sounds. You find what you need and go on.

Light Switch Out from the light
Enter into a dark house
Set at the end of some bus stop.

Curtain Oh the ease of being in the breeze. Lounging down. Quietly soaking in the sun. A mellow air wriggles about us and bellows us; tickles us into various shapes; colours changing all over us. [*Luxurious*] Hmmm.

Bureau That must be a pleasant experience. Not wanting to change places or anything. No. No. Must say though, do rather envy Air as your mover, and not some hand. [*Becoming louder and more resentful*] Wilful, unpredictable HAND!!

Alice Talking about me, or she?

Bureau [*Slyly.*] She, of course: who else but she.

Alice Good.

Bureau As I say: Hands have different moods. Guided by some mood or thought or some thing, at any rate. A bill, or cheques always make me very itchy. Sit up. Look serious. Prop up. No lounging. Hands scrawling script. Reluctant to write out payments. Quite wilful, and unpredictable, I say.

Painting The harder you hold a fistful of sand the faster it flows out of your hand.

Pen When you think of it, making history takes time. Many hands: what duration endures this?

Mirror And eyes, what of eyes: always so inquisitive. Needy, unsure, and cruel; O! Cruel eyes.

Painting Eyes can also caress. Stroking every part of one with affection and humour.

Mirror I've never seen them.

Alice [*Standing by the window, her back to audience.*] Despite all this, things are more complete than you suspect. There is always a meeting. Time past to Time present; Hand to Thing; Eye to Sense. And then there is the wholeness of all that gathered together, stored. Making memory, against time's reality.

Bureau [*Suddenly inspired.*] Language of mine! Memory of mine! Never ask me with hesitation, come and lay your hand on me. I am always here, for you. Ready with arms held out to hold your elbows resting, paper slanted, poised just there, above me. Write on me; write my story, as you would yours. I am mute. You have the words to make pictures from my thoughts. Mine memory of my emotion.

Pen Steady on. Without me what story?

Painting	Talking of pictures: the sense of time stored in things is an eerie thought. Though personally I always try and live in the present. Best state for a Painting, don't you think?
Cup/Saucer	Time tastes different when you touch something you've known before. Otherwise, you got to try and find the taste – <i>ll' gusto</i> – or at least the name for the taste of that time's taste. Each time it's own touching and tasting and seeing. Every sip of time is a new sip; though tinged with expectation of that other sip, which you happen to hold, memorised.
Rug	Now that you mention it, it all comes back to me. I remember sitting hot as toast in front of a three-bar electric heater. Never seen one that simple before; not fuel or coal! There I was, and plates of thick, thick white bread spread edge to edge with a cream-coloured honey. Must have set all congealed, in that cold. They would all sit in the gloaming light – only one light bulb allowed; saving on the meter, I expect. He would read out loud. His voice dominant, and loudly paced; words booming with clear diction. Read from the daily papers; the only one of the four who could in that language. Huddled little group taking refuge in each other's body heat. Shutting out the strange dark world out there. They were together, but how I could sense the ruffle of resentment and misunderstanding in my very woof. There they sat dusk after dusk. Bringing to me their newfound hardship, and hurt and fear and cold. But all the same they were a kind of family – if observed from outside.
Window	And time always catching up, as in the beating of the raven's wings, heard in the still moving air. Whirring of feathered limbs that leave their sound a pace behind.
Painting	Then: that white horse against the green hillside. [<i>Almost muttering inaudibly to itself.</i>] Never a whiter horse since.
Chorus	Believe and all shall be well. [<i>The words resonate again and again in the background.</i>]
Mirror	Dreaming of things that are confused and of the past. But still not so bad that I want to forget.
Pen	I shall write you a letter of my Blue dreams.
Bureau	Not knowing amidst true knowing.
Door	Each night I dream of a magenta coloured gateway, and beyond it, as if beyond the soft flap of a hem, softly rustling, the night opens its secret.
Chair	Simply glad to be sitting; no more worries.
Mirror	Restful sentences, and faces that are as silent as a door stare back at me.

Painting	Accepting one's abstraction needs training.
Light Switch	Always running towards a time <u>out</u> there [<i>pointing to the light bulb suspended from the ceiling.</i>] Always running away from a Time <u>in here</u> [<i>pointing to it self.</i>]
Pen	In the Blue dreams no one speaks, and everything has a label attached. A message. An instruction.
Cushion	Don't sit on me for too long.
Cup/Saucer	Handle with care!
Mirror	Look gently.
Curtain	Draw back.
Rug	Not too much light
Window	Open outwards.
Pen	Press lightly.
Bureau	An interesting notion. So who writes the labels?
Door	And the air is always being ruffled. [<i>All the things in the room begin to move about and talk at the same time. A great din of voices that make no sense. Alice looks about her and as if no longer interested, she gets up and slowly leaves the stage, closing the door behind her.</i>]
Alice	[<i>As she slips quietly through the door.</i>] Evening drops layer by layer.

[*The things begin to settle in their places. There is a rustling of leaves against glass. The light bulb clicks OFF. The stage darkens gradually.*]

The End
[Curtains down]

Artist's Journal
Month the Eighth

Saturated in everything that is everything Green. Heat longed for is here, and my body uncurls itself.

The blankness of the last few weeks gathers a volcanic momentum. Painting after painting. All the old bodily ailments return to taunt me. And I cannot let go of the hold this [the studio] has over me. Why does August always feel like an ending, a destination, an unpacking?

A series of five large gouaches: Partou (and not Jacob) struggling with the Angel. The last showing the owl-sphinx-bird creature and I embraced in friendship redeemed, and re-staged as 'collaboration'. Strange how an apparently unintended 'doodle', can so liberate one from self-inflicted yokes.

I write; I read; I paint; I think; I dream; and desperately fight off sleep. I need so much 'rest' it seems.

Paint medium-sized self-portrait wearing brown skirt, breasts bare, holding p/c of a mother and child icon.

The obsessive nature of these paintings begins to worry me. A stubborn organism grows inside: anarchy against 'to please', 'to impress', 'to fit in'; - I know the price is high, but I'll somehow pay it. If, I'm prepared to be uncomfortable, by these images, my words, and my colours, then why should I care for your response, or discomfort!

WORD AND FLESH

A Word made Flesh is seldom
And tremblingly partook
Nor then perhaps reported
But have I not mistook
Each one of us has tasted
With ecstasies of stealth
The very food debated
To our specific strength –

A Word that breathes distinctly
Has not the power to die
Cohesive as the Spirit
It may expire if He –
“Made Flesh and dwelt among us”
Could condescension be
Like his consent of Language
This loved Philology.

[Dickinson, poem 1651]

Desire⁷⁷ is the key (word) towards achieving a union with the divine-self, and therefore experiencing the precious fragility of the present and *Becoming*: the poetic awareness of the extraordinary *moment*, amidst and through the exultant reality of the ordinary. The equivalent feminine locus for a meta-erotic spiritual moment has long been foregone, forbidden, and forgotten. To discover a mirror-reflected *other* of *not the same*, is a two-tiered re-location of the feminine principle.⁷⁸ Firstly, a *feminaerotic* (I am making up this term as counter to ‘homoerotic’) sphere of a female dialogue needs to be established within the family, social, and media-originated imaginary of women’s bodies and sexual life, as well as extending the vernacular meaning of the word ‘friend’. Secondly, the *Bliss*⁷⁹ of the feminine must first be (re)-deciphered and placed within its

own iconic element of a woman's specific sexual organ. The egg-shaped oblong in which Romanesque high relief images of Christ in Glory sits, seem to me a very specific shape of the womb, and the open-stretched labia,⁸⁰ leading to the vaginal passage. Similarly the triadic (and triangular) structure of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost, is a replica-pattern of the triangular shape of the pubic area of a woman's body. The actual shape of the triadic union as held in a circle, is an arrow pointing to the earth; a powerful, archetypal shield-formula which also when doubled, and inverted up on itself, makes the shape of a star.⁸¹

The contemplation and meditation on the number three bound by two masculine symbols – father and son, plus a genderless, abstract entity, the holy spirit – aesthetically completes the notion of the containment of the triadic qualities, that have become central to western culture. By way of this strangely angular rotation of *self-to-thou-to-other* has been constructed the hermetically masculinized economy of Desire v. Transcendence of *same-to-same*. And so it is amid this prescribed boundary that the subject goes beyond the erotic aspect of the term (experience) and via the creative pursuit of writing, speaking, and using the *Word* (made flesh), performs the prophetic act of traversing the gap between thought and language, or imagination and poetic imagery. In this set of correlations the author - *she* who has access and power to scribe the *Word* – becomes the magician, who is apparently decreed as representing the universal notion of a creative barometer, by the simple analogy of speaking *from-the-same-for-the same*. The dramatic performance of an un-embodied voice that “is heard clamouring to enunciate ‘the universe is a defect in the purity of Non-Being.’” is at once revelation and disillusion. Because, although this placement or locus for the ‘I’ that is seemingly abandoned amidst the great universal lack of an answer to the unrequited mystery of things, and is therefore the place that “makes Being itself languish.” This place is also where “*Jouissance*”, is encountered and named as “the absence [...] that makes the universe vain.” [Lacan 1966, 317] This third element, this ghostly shadow, named as the “absence”, the “signifier for which all the other signifiers represent the subject [...] since in the absence of this signifier, all the other signifiers represent nothing,” becomes therefore the universal “lack”,⁸² which in turn creates a longing and a need for fulfilment and the *desire* and drive towards an answer: “nothing is represented only *for* something else.” [Lacan 1966, 316]⁸³ This “something else” however, the *she*-

oriented equivalent creative effervescence is no part of the father-to-son-to-‘Other’ triadic equation. The established notions of *feminine* sexuality and woman’s link to her own *Bliss*, does not (as yet) conceive of a powerful symbolic system whereby *she* can discover a new answer, and therefore re-name the *other-as-longing* and so make for a completion of a feminised hermetic economy of Desire v. Transcendence.

In the visions of Hildegard of Bingen, as recorded in the *Scivias* (c.1141-1147/8), there are numerous meditations on the tripartite qualities of the Trinity. However, she abstracts from the embodied terminology of the patriarch and male offspring, focusing her language on the colour, temperature and strengths of ‘God’, ‘the Word’ and ‘the Holy Spirit’.

“Vision Two: 5 ~ There are three strengths in a stone and three in a flame and three in a word [...] In a stone there is moist greenness and tangibleness and reddish fire. It has moist greenness so that it may not be destroyed and crushed, tangibleness so that it can be used as a dwelling or for defence, and a reddish fire so that it can give warmth and have solidness from its hardness. The moist greenness signifies God, who never becomes dry nor is limited in virtue. The tangibleness stands for the Word, who was able to be touched and grasped after being born from the virgin. The reddish fire signifies the Holy Spirit, who is the attendant and the illuminator of the hearts of faithful people. [...] So just as these three strengths are in one stone, so also the true Trinity is in a true unity.” [Bingen, c. 1141-1147, trans. 1986, 90]

The saintly ecstasies of St. Teresa therefore, are not to be perceived as merely a spectacularly public scope of a woman absorbed in a self-eroticised moment. On the higher plane of a self searching for a[her]self, it is a woman’s breath in the creative act of giving vocal shape, actively making the Word, and “clamouring to enunciate” so that she also may be heard and included amidst the “unrequited mystery of things”. This is a genuine moment of the poetic religious awakening - the mysticism palpably and simultaneously experienced on both the corporeal, and spiritual level. The self-abandonment portrayed in the statue is mystical revelation, similar accounts of which can be cited amongst others, in the writings of Julian of Norwich and Hildegard of Bingen. The creative quality of these visionary experiences therefore need not necessarily be read as directly oriented to the fantasy of a corporal encounter with the phallus.⁸⁴

Within the social and religious order of things, 'she' *Is* or has *Being* only in ratio to the so called 'natural' strategy of *being* born, *becoming* daughter, *becoming* wife, giving birth, *becoming* mother, dying. Her status, as a being outside of these social and biologically defined boundaries, amounts to nil. In effect she has no actuality, truth, reason to be, other than in relation to the given quota of a limited arena of active becoming. She is forced into representing an already predicated being, whose volition or intellectual needs towards an abstract becoming, or aspiration to god-likeness are laughably excluded from possibility.⁸⁵ This tightly set-up strategy therefore only includes her as a utilitarian digit, given as facilitator to the libidinal *desire*, and process of *Becoming* for the man. Her only value is that she holds up the reflection of that which he is not: material-bound, earth-bound, unlike the image of God, without a true locus for her person, lacking the word (or an official language), and ultimately held up as the symbolic embodiment of some very dubious, and sadistic ideas.

In the illuminated manuscripts of the Old French and Vienna Latin *Bible Moralisée*, the female body and presence is used in scenes of (gang) rape, sadistic beatings, and dismemberment. The nubile form of a woman, as symbolic of the philosophers' misuse of divine and secular knowledge(s) and the sciences is depicted being savagely abused and punished. The inexcusably violent portrayal of these scenes graphically betrays some of the abusive attitudes towards the reality and sacredness of the female body, as the fecund though vulnerable *other*. Except when she is represented as mother, or holy virgin, and therefore protected in the triadic system of hierarchies, a woman who is portrayed as having worldly or intellectual status, but is depicted as being unattached, nameless and (it seems in these illuminations) homeless, is liable to be attacked and violated.⁸⁶ Even when acting under the guise of a symbol such as the church, the holy book, or wisdom itself, she is not safe from real matter and flesh male attackers, who tear at her with their lustful eyes, and greedy hands.⁸⁷ This 'she' who is deluged throughout history and in the present of her social/religious life, with images of woman as food (feed, fodder), both physical and psychological to be consumed by 'he' (of man-kind) cannot easily find a genuine pathway to the divine-as-other who will support and help affirm her being.⁸⁸

A disruption of The Text is required for the radical to Become. To create a *femina*-appropriate version of [*jouissance*] *Bliss*, order needs to be dissembled, the text subverted and an orgiastic transcendence achieved. Breaking down familiar forms and structures as a kind of ritual offering for the absence of and therefore a yearning for the beloved - may then initiate fresh ground. Only when that *thing* is missing, by way of a quest for union, the impetus towards fulfilling the vacancy becomes *meaning* itself; in the as yet unexplored place is found a plausible enclave of anxiety, or discomfort, where the plurality of existence is introduced.⁸⁹ In the passage between non-being, and becoming, the place where we all pass through, but can never [re-]find with ease. That apparently impassable passageway, where there are no street maps, directions or signposts, is the place of poetry, love, and becoming. Amidst that portentous silent pause, the almost imperceptible pause which is the deciphering of all *things*, is the vague, barely drawn line of distinction between the *here* and *there* of Being. The breakage, that shatters the spaces already traversed, making of the familiar a wreckage of endings, is also herald of each trembling footfall marking it as the order of a new step that will draw-dance inventive architecture all around it. It is not the occupied areas that tend to make of any particular space a physical and emotional map, but the empty, untouched, unmarked, and apparently flat areas without a given dimension, which dictate the eye and body towards a sense of itself and the rest. The borders of a country - real or imaginary boundaries - define space and land as becoming one thing or another by virtue of a simple flag or uniform, marking the spot.

However, in truth nothing but vastness and chaos exists between '*you*' and '*I*', *there* and *here*. These are posts of safety, euphemisms of comfort. Becoming, which is nothing less than an awakening to self and other, is the territory of that un-named, unmarked place. The gap lies between the yearning, forever lost call of Echo's love to Narcissus,⁹⁰ and the youth's unquenchable, eternal promise of the last look at himself in the rippling waters. It is the dark splitting of destinies, between Eurydice's final steps to the Upper-world, and the loving turn of that fatal glance, from her devoted husband, burning with the desire to arrive and once more hold her close to his breast.

But how does one name, or voice that repetitive frame of disruption? - The language that Irigaray adopts as the persona proclaiming a feminine symbolic, whose timbre is hitherto undefined and undiscovered, is the dramatic voice of *enunciation*.⁹¹ To speak this other-than the meta-language, which may become the 'female language', Irigaray tells us, - in *This Sex Which is not One*, - "There is simply no way I can give an account of "Speaking (as) woman": it is spoken, but not in meta-language." [Irigaray 1985(b), 144] Instead she proposes the possibility of speaking in a kind of theatrical declamation, a performance of words, ideas, analysis, and thoughts. A voice (a writing) that speaks with passion, with direction, and all the signs of one who Desires to Be; she wills herself, her mothers, sisters, and daughters to Become, but is herself, apparently absent precisely as the dramatic soliloquy of the poetic visionary enunciates, without necessarily becoming bodily represented; she simply makes known her extraordinary experience, or her given task, from a deliberately visionary stance of declamation. An independent voice, whose tenor is to recommend to us, her readers, a *femina* timbre speaking as subject is one who can redeem her non-existent locus within the symbolic by defining herself first and foremost in "a female homosexual economy" [Whitford 1991(a), 45]. Irigaray's call to women to re-negotiate their relationship with other women is a strategy that would make for a "[...] female subjectivity [...] which is the matrix which can generate change, and language or discourse as a process of enunciation, a dynamic exchange between interlocutors which can transfigure flesh and blood. This is also the prerequisite for dialogue between the sexes, so that each can offer a house or home to the other." [Whitford 1991(a), 48-9] The 'love', of which Irigaray speaks, is not a charitable love, but rather a love of one of the same. An acknowledgement of the qualities and truths of those like [my] one-self: woman seeing, knowing, and qualifying woman; thus informing the imaginary on two levels. It may be licence for a discovery of autoeroticism, but more importantly it is love of the self that can lead to love of god, or better knowledge of god.⁹² In a similar way, Irigaray takes us through the discovery of the feminine qualities directed within her own erotic locus, to a formation of a new syntax, and by way of love of the other of the same - woman among women.

As in the poetic pause, for that fleeting moment of the Annunciation, the angel gives the message of a divine impregnation: woman is given as Word, or divine Breath. By definition, this is also a

rebirth or re-configuration of a Divine, who will, perhaps, for the first time recognise the alterity of woman from man, and encourage the feminine to approach, speak, and thus be heard. This time, without the expected strategy of the muted position of a motherhood, - which seems to preclude the possibility of Becoming, - a being that has the choice, to be considered as separate from her biological status, or merely as sexualised matter.

“[...] bringing the god to life through us [à travers nous], between us, as a resurrection and transfiguration of blood and flesh through their language [langage] and their ethic.” [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(a), 48; from: *Ethique de la différence sexuelle* 1984]

Perhaps we may read this as a poetic challenge to break both the physical written text, as well as the text of the imaginary, thus recreating another stance of thought, desire, dream, and action. It is an invitation, to me as woman, to enter voluntarily into the underworld of the unconscious and through the phonetics of a disruptive, transcendental *femina*-textual voice, help bring about a second Genesis; this time with Eve being represented as an active participant, within the drama of Becoming. Taking up this echo-call is a modest attempt at finding a vocal definition in writing and painting, each expression an aspiration towards a transcendental *other* situated within the poetic realm; self-making via texts of poetic palimpsest, engaged in the notation of the *femina* voice.

Artist's Journal
Month the Ninth

The studio is suddenly packed with new paintings. Can't move for wet paint. Everything manic. Writing all the time. New sentences, awkward and raw like the new paintings.

In a dream I paint, barely putting on pigment; barely looking even - the curtains, the yellow chair in the studio, and the view out of the gap where the curtains don't meet - in this strangely silent and empty dream, I move about as though treading air.

In reality: the studio interior painted in an almost half-forgetful gesture, where the white primer of the canvas is hardly skinned by colour/pigment. All the [darling] paraphernalia of the studio, plus a fictional self-portrait – a giant head of me staring out; brazen and almost ugly. These are the new paintings: turbulence of emotion held in the calm measure of pigment laid on canvas: a slow, flowing, almost not present, colour-substance that happens without-and-outside of thought.

In half stupor and suffering from exhaustion I try to go on with an almost inhuman intensity of work.

I hail the corners of my life, of places, and things.

Church paintings not satisfactory anymore, unless I accept the corners, the smaller areas of contemplation. Corners=contemplation=solitude=it/my-self

My pulse beating in the quiet sanctuary of concentration – without thought.

Each time straying from the centre I return as a refugee to her country of origin. A foreigner with impaired memory, a misfit, longing to be en-folded. The Prodigal Daughter, lost, and found again.

From morning till 5pm I work non-stop: painting! Creature-like energy that flagellates my body into submission.

THE SELF-PORTRAIT AND THE I/EYE

There is a solitude of space
A solitude of sea
A solitude of death, but these
Society shall be
Compared with that profounder site
That polar privacy
A soul admitted to itself –
Finite infinity.

[Dickinson, poem 1695]

The self-portrait of a female painter is an (one) attempt at readdressing the imaginary of the feminine, to the question posed by Borzello: “What is an artist?” [1998, 27]⁹³ Who is this *She/Painter/Artist* amidst the already historicized map of the sensible male-dominated art world? In practice she may be regarded as ‘good enough’, however set against social mores and economic structures the female artist is regarded as an anomaly to the norm. At best the female artist is seen as a “prodigy”, and at worst “a grotesque transgressor of womanliness”,⁹⁴ never living up to her male counterpart “as the mad genius, the outlaw or the mystic” [Borzello, 30].⁹⁵ I, like so many other women artists, need to re-write that image. The text of the active female critically situating and imaging her own imaginary and true potential is the task of this re-configuration of discovering who/what exactly the artist is. The person working in the studio, producing images that are fed into the cultural mainstream of our ideas and concepts is given to us as male: man the maker. Re-

writing the visual text⁹⁶ of the I/eye that looks at the female body is central to my own methodology within the medium of paint, and via the genre of the self-portrait.

Two eyes stare back at a familiar reflection in the mirror, encountering another pair of eyes.

◇ Question: With whose/which Eye do I see me/myself?

<i>The:</i>	Sexual	Eye
	Political	“
	Corporeal	“
	Social	“
	Historical	“
	Religious	“

The Self-portrait genre as an embodiment of a (gendered) body, as the image of an artist **without** the theatrical appendage of clothes, is the site in which I find appropriate expression: a body in action, a being preoccupied with its own recognition. Not merely accepting of a ‘likeness’, even though the traditional mirror reflection is the process used.⁹⁷ These paintings are the autobiography of a naked body. Making a statement of Self, as woman and artist, via the awkwardness of holding the ancient tools of painting in hand: a naked female body stating *herself* in paint. This is a specific female body. She is not merely an element in a painterly gesture; repeated yet again as the predicate of a pictorial subject that has for so long been associated with the expressive repertoire of the male artist.

Irigaray’s delineation of woman’s pleasure being non-scopic is in a way extended by these paintings. Not only do I look with self-pleasure and curiosity at my body, face, hair, but also I touch this body seen in the mirror by painting it on the surface of the canvas/panel, using brushes and my hand to shape this seen image in paint is itself a double-pleasure. I observe a woman in the mirror, actively taking her “pleasure more from touching than looking, and her entry into a dominant scopic economy” which would signify “again, her consignment to passivity” is shifted, and intersected, by my eye, a woman’s eye, actively seeking ‘her’ in the mirror. Here, in the sensuality of pigment and colours, she is not consigned to mere passivity, her beauty becoming in the hands of me as also woman, an altered “object of contemplation” [Irigaray 1985(b), 26] making of ‘her’ a subject of as one/she-who-is-*whole*-in-and-with-herself. The image of the woman in the

mirror represented in paint on a piece of canvas or board, makes of the mimesis a tangible negation of the ludicrous notion that asserts woman's sexuality as being constructed on the premise of a 'lack'. [Fig. 22]⁹⁸ The image of me naked is not some idea of "femininity", but the real experience of a 'real' female body seen in the active process of observing, drawing, and painting a conscious image of *her-spiritual-self-through-her-corporeal-self*. This is *She*-The artist as woman: not trying to be polite or genteel, but un-self conscious, anxious, deft, unsure, playful, and completely engaged presence. I stand in the nude, and not denying the sexualised view from which these paintings can be read, I challenge the feminine role by exploring the very thing that has been subject of exploitation: passive wordless misrepresentation in the hand of the male artist looking at his female model. I am active. I make my own image. I move. I create, perform and paint with sweeping gestures. Self-engrossed, I celebrate and analyse and stare, making myself the central subject of a universal biography of woman's body within the masculine tradition of the active eye, and decisive hand. [Fig. 23]

"To play with mimesis is thus for a woman, to try and locate the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself – inasmuch as she is on the side of the "perceptible" of "matter" – to "ideas" in particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make "visible" by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible: the cover-up of a possible operation of the feminine language." [Irigaray 1985(b), 76]

I am not only dealing with my sexuality painted *as* a woman, but I am trying to reassert the social-gendered I/Eye, that has always been focused from the male towards the female. By projecting a catalogue of myth-oriented socialised symbols, via the depersonalisation of the 'artist's model' as a generalised idea of and reference to the female body, woman has come to be visually representative not only as the agent of masculine-erotic imagination, but also the symbolised notions of nature, home, revolution, justice, war, peace, and so on. I want to forego such pre-determinates, and paint myself as a woman situated within the gendered-ego of the female I/Eye, scrutinising the female form and position. I read 'her' as I am read myself: both as a woman and as an artist. It is a political and an intimate project, being active in the process of painting ['her']. The clothes that hide and distort, placing one/her into a framework of reference are stripped off. Despite her vulnerable flesh she moves and gesticulates, refusing to stand inactive. [Fig. 24]

Indifferent one, keep still. When you stir, you disturb their order. You upset everything. You break the circle of their habits, the circularity of their exchanges, their knowledge, their desire. Their world. Indifferent one, you mustn't move, or be moved, unless they call you. If they say "come", then you may go ahead. Barely. Adapting yourself to whatever need they have, or don't have, for the presence of their own image. One step, or two. No more. No exuberance. No turbulence. Otherwise you'll smash everything. The ice, the mirror. Their earth, their mother..[Irigaray 1985(b), 207-8]

She watches herself watching herself: taking note, and making a catalogue of psychological moments; emotion going beyond the recognisable being centred more on the day's weather in one's heart, and mind. These are geographical notations of an interior world: here is doubt, there bravado, over the way lies a stretch of fear, coloured by a horizon of hope. [Fig. 25] The psychological self showing, in the posture and position of the figure depicted in the composition giving a resemblance of a body recognised in gender, and maybe in some specific feature, a personality. These portraits are (about) the *colour* of self seen in private, and bravely presented to the other of the viewer, in public.⁹⁹

My project is to establish the painter, as female, as active, as sexualised and as gendered in her difference.¹⁰⁰ She is powerful in her studio: in her own representation as self-reflective of the wit and depth of her psychological position. She does not accept the Freudian/Lacanian concept of woman=lack. On the contrary it is woman=creative independence. The paintings are abundant: the edge of canvas or panel filled with the flesh and energetic movement of my body in a decisive moment of action. The objects all relate to my needs and my textual commentary: the postcard, light switch, light bulb, doorway, chair, and other artefacts observed within the studio space. They are an aspect of my archaeology as an artist working in a studio where the history of art, and minimal reference to some kind of contemporary technology is recorded and used as my prop, or my point of reference. A woman in the twenty-first century, active in the ancient practice of painting, self consciously aware of her philosophic stance and politicised responsibility.

These self-portraits aim to *visually* act as vehicles of recommendation for women to speak as women: "Parler leur sexe" [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(a), 173]. These are not just paintings that enjoy their skill and sensuality of pigment and colour. They are deliberate statements structured

out of the deep-seated need to speak from the female body, and with a female voice using the essential ingredients and tools of drawing and painting. My focus or true genre is to seek the wholeness of body and psyche, as potential in the 'I' who is both woman and painter.

The poetry of the autobiographical experience is a mixture of the social, religious, geographical, racial, lingual and historical time.¹⁰¹ That is the domain of the dream, and the ancient intuitive self that shapes one's ontological map, - an uncharted territory of the abstract self deciphered in a language at once both palpable and invisible, - thus making a strange though cohesive text, that employs the noun of one's 'real' history and the consonants of a personal 'psychic' archaeology.¹⁰²

I shadow my own gaze. Like a suspect, at once both suspicious and afraid of being discovered, I shadow myself in the mirror. Not only when I am still and staring, but also when I shift about the studio, catching myself in part reflected in the reciprocating gaze of the mirror. In the bathroom, broken at each corner by a mirror, not large enough to show me the whole body, I see my face, a shoulder, my belly, and hair. Amidst this alliteration of fugitive shadows I wait and watch for a sign. **[Fig. 26]** Looking into the eyes staring back at me, I recall the childish excitement of an eleven year old, reflected in the walls of glass pushing a bulky trolley of suitcases, through the as yet partially constructed airport lounge of Terminal 4. I enter England, an unwilling émigré, brought here under the cunning pretext of an extended vacation. Where does that little girl connect to this adult woman of forty-something? My eyes caress my flesh-round belly, and memories of the foetus aborted, fills the canvas with regret. I am always in the here, squeezed between the edge of canvas or panel, and the wall opposite where a light-switch winks, on-and-off. How does one hold a dialogue with a mute gaze in the mirror, with her who is naked, standing with paint-splattered knees, holding brushes greasy with pigment congealed? The picture postcard on the wall distracts my attention from the shadowy woman in the mirror. I am performing the act of painting a 'self-portrait'. I ask myself what this term - a portrait of the self - actually means. Is it a likeness or an imaginary idea of [a] *Me*?

The present speaks of my past and through that impossible and impassable avenue, where neither translation nor transcription are any longer viable forms of understanding a text, a different kind of

My[his]tory occurs. Closing in on an autobiography always creates a strange aura of impersonality, an open edged voyeurism into every biography where-in *You* and *I* are no longer margined out by our specific histories. The representation of the naked woman caught in the act of painting herself, in rich, fast gestural movements of colour and line, could be anyone at all; any woman. It is because painting and drawing function within their own alphabet and phonetics, that the process of making a painted image manoeuvres beyond and despite the Word. Through the calligraphy of mark making (drawing), and the gesture of placing coloured pigment on a surface (painting), the Word is reinvented.

Autobiography through self-portraiture is a re-writing of histories. The self-portrait is a narrative of a reality already lived, but in part fused within the act of forgetting, which becomes reinvented into another layer of reality. In the antechamber of Memory resides Autobiography. Similarly, in the dark passages of seeing the reflected self, lurks the ghost of a self whose brazen gaze coyly returns my rhetorical muteness; a mixture of the bold and the sly. This figure inhabits the non-space of the mirror. Here is the shadow of my own shadow, staring back in the confident knowledge that by stopping to notice 'her' in the mirror, I am obliged to confront *her* reality, as apart and perhaps independent from my own, who stands outside the mirror. She is the surprise hidden in the husk of the look. Every fleeting gesture a moment caught in the epic of seeing. If anyone were to enter on this meeting of 'her' and 'I', she would disappear. Our dialogue takes place away from a third person: It is the *you* and the *I*, whose disinterested and disengaged confrontation is an ambitious hope for a potential meeting between the *I*, and the *thou*. Here, in the unfixed place between where I end and the mirror (*thing*) begins and she is reflected back (to me), rests the location of an extraordinary rendezvous. She is only alert when I look at myself: me looking at me. Then she stirs herself and without notice, as I turn to check the alignment of crown to navel, or distance between shoulder and right elbow, she's there gazing back, silent and patient. *Me* looking at *me*, looking at *me*, looking at *me*: I become a triumvir embodiment of three. [Fig. 27]

<i>The:</i>	Corporeal Eye	=	My Body
	Archaeological Eye	=	My Memory
	Journal's Eye	=	My Reflection

The archaeological eye: h[I]story, is the seer who envisions me as both vividly alive and moribund, in my future potential as a corpse. The I becomes truly palpable in the here and now, arrested in the lumps of paint, held in a frame, as when you look up and glance someone sitting in a window, nonchalantly gazing out beyond you into the street below.

Perhaps the self-portrait is always an effigy, a practice towards the realisation of the perfect representation bequeathed after one's death. As in the Egyptian-Roman 'Mummy portraits', which were portraits of the deceased painted on the wooden or parchment coverings to the mummified corpse, as representative of the spirit (*ka*)¹⁰³, in readiness to confront the other life. In this mute reflection, the message or dialogue which the look poses can only be guessed at, giving the onlooker a reading of itself as a psychic text, which permits for an open ended possibility of transference projections to take place.

In the paintings of myself as an unclothed female seen in the act of painting, the issues of nudity, gender, and the historically expected (gendered-role) of the artist are made visually immediate. The self-portrait delivers the ultimate autobiography, occupied not with the minutiae of a life's events that outlines birth, wonder, loss, joy, success, and death - all wrapt in the cloak of the mundane, - but rather the intensity of a life captured within a rhetorical moment of word-less gaze. With her lips resolutely shut the apparent peace of an orchestrated silence hints at a never-ending performance of a life, making a visual alliteration of a chosen moment or state of mind that becomes within the finite frame of each painting, the complete story of a life(span).

I paint from the first person speaking in the hieroglyphics of pigment, and gestural mark. My colours are my vernacular accent of someone whose origins lie in the near East. My narrative is the speech of the first person pronoun, looking for a place in which the metaphysical vocabulary can write its ontological story. These paintings offer only one cultural location to the viewer who is unfamiliar with my biography: that of a woman naked painting the image of herself as she sees or remembers seeing it in the mirror. I am not *saying* anything. I am just looking. What is there to say? What is there to recount? I am here. There is a mirror in front of me: just to the right, or just

to the left of me. I half look at the mirror in which a familiar 'I', an *other-that-is-the-same-as-me*, floats in and out of view. The mirror is fixed. I move. The canvas or panel is propped up and passive. I am active. Everything else is passive. I as the active agent become at once both the dynamic subject and the receptive object. I try to conjure a stillness and so give form to this moving, breathing, thinking presence of an I/Eye: seen from the reverse of the passive flicker in the opalescent shadow-idea of that who is *Me* in the mirror. The corporeal eye perceives the connection of my body as extension reaching towards the archaeological I [eye] in the mirror. The 'I' discovered in the mirror unravels a story with a past that connects to a future: a kind of extension across the formulae of temporality. She is not the same as Blanchot's "third person" of "myself become no one, my interlocutor turned alien." [1955, 28]¹⁰⁴ The shadowy figure in the mirror, both corporeal and non-material confused by the refracted light of the mirror, becomes the potential of that *other* for whose imminent appearance 'I' am mingled with this strange space of silence, and solitude. She is a familiar, and a confidant whom I am glad to have the courage to let myself encounter the *other*, and watch as I fall into *her-as-the-Beloved*. [Fig. 28]

“ [...] I receive without trembling. In broad daylight I would never have paradisiacal nudity. One can only receive nude. No, not unclothed. The nudity from before all clothing [...] And I see. I see! With the naked eye, and it is exaltation itself.” [Cixous 1998, 141]

Out of this strange meeting, in the regions that function beyond what we assume as *reason* and *reality* emerges a painted image of a 'self'. The journalistic eye stares back. As in an intimate journal recording a momentary scission of a personal experience, the journalistic eye is transfixed, taking a kind of erotic pleasure in performing an auto-voyeurism on her own presence, touch, stance, shadow, and story. The painterly language of this 'journal' is no different from the textual range of the written word on page: Jour=Day; Journal=Daily; Journey=travel=pass through, as in light that traverses the barriers of the camera lens and via the inversed image, recreates in replica what is *out there*. The ego involved with its own enjoyment of self given to self, is the active libido that generates itself because of itself. This emptiness of intention, that can be perceived as almost autoerotic, is translated into a repetitively poetic play of self-reflexive curiosity.

As a genre, the self-portrait is a mischievous and risky foray into the unconscious stillness of the stubborn gaze in the mirror. It is the gaze that traverses from (and through) the intimate out into a public arena. The one who is being investigated becomes transcribed in the act of self-portraiture, as the one who investigates. The scrutiny of self turns upon its heels and scrutinises the universal *other-self-that-is-not-I*.

By discovering the corporeal self, and making a candid representation the 'sexualised female' is wrested away and out of the imaginary language of the male repertoire, as the subject of an age-old visual economy of appropriation and exploitation. Within the structures of this economy my body is merchandise for the self-intentioned use or misuse of *his* fantasy. I play no role in that economy other than a mute subject. My pleasure is neither negotiated nor sought, except when directed within the male production of a script rehearsed by men among themselves.¹⁰⁵ Why my pleasure of self and the other should be taboo and a threat, must surely tie in with the dark secret of empowerment which such self-knowledge, and representation would bring. She must be kept away from her own kind, and most importantly from her own self. She must not look at her body, to know and enjoy it, because that is a flesh-language, and a corporeal-knowing that will arm her to defend her own *needs* and her own *desires*.¹⁰⁶ And once she is familiar with her own map, then surely will she not begin to look for a route to the *divine-other-that-is-also-her*: – awakening to her own meaning(s). By discovering "*her*" pleasure in the realms of the sexual, she must then undertake a further journey, travelling through and beyond "the dimension of desire" to a place where the "untranslatable" *Self-as-the-other-who-is-her-as-the-Beloved*, may be met with.

"Not to forget that the dimension of desire, of pleasure, is untranslatable, unrepresentable, irrecoverable, in the "seriousness" – the adequacy, the univocity, the truth [...] - of a discourse that claims to state its meaning [...] it is right here that the most virulent issue at stake in the oppression of women is located today: men want to hold onto the initiative of discourse about sexual pleasure, and thus also about *her* pleasure." [Irigaray 1985(b), 163]

The process of painting or drawing my own image is akin to that soundless instant when diving into deep water, swimming under water, where the image of my embodiment is shattered, and sound mutates into another audio-lingual layer. Each time that I emerge from this process of representing myself, as when released from the liquid grip of the deep, I come up for air, only to

find that my image, the mirror, the studio and the very texture of my breath have all moved one more notch outside of the boundaries of the understandable. The self-portrait acts like a vortex of energy. The liquidity of the visual text of *a self* cannot be linear, accountable to time, or any notion of completion. It is always experienced as a shattered remains of something that is potentially whole, but rarely contained as such. Each self-portrait painting, drawing, or print, is like a broken shard from an ancient plate once held as a whole vessel. A roomful of self-portraits seen in retrospect of a life already lived, may at first appear to be making an accumulative statement, and a complex of parts presented as a whole. But in truth each portrait, one hung next to the other, annuls the one before or after. Each painting contradicts the narrative of the next. As in all biographical text, we are invited to make a definitive conclusion, but the self-portrait denies one the privilege of a final narration, taking as its very process a position of anti-definition.

The desire “of our own” [Betterton] is a desire that transcends the sexualised issues of the imaginary of gender, as one who speaks *from* herself *as* herself, demanding to be given the regard of one who is part of the greater scheme of *Becoming*. That her presence in the world is not only to regurgitate a *script* handed to her at birth, but to have the satisfaction of writing her own *scenario*, represented by a protagonist who acts *as* her and not merely some caricature who is led to masquerade *like* her. This is the drive or desire that can be reinterpreted as making our own representation and our own true likeness; given as an honest, first hand experience of speaking, painting, and being active *from* the locus of a woman’s corp(o)real centre. The central “axis” of self and “becoming”, situated amidst the very ground and air where I stand, as body, and speak, as a psyche. This body-(margined) space is the primary place in and from which I may perhaps begin to “find the condition” of my “own territory”. Initiating the process that would come to delineate the complexity of my own specific “autonomy” of “body” and “flesh”. Making of this “axis” that “is present in the iconographic traces left by traditions in which women are visible,” the dynamic locus in which I can hope to situate the “autonomy” of my own body and flesh and from where I may re-write “the possibility of an expanding jouissance.” [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(a), 164] ¹⁰⁷

Artist's Journal
Month the Tenth

Church Warden mixes 'Grey Daze' (Dulux) with White; and the walls begin to glow a quiet mauve. There in the background, dissonant sounds of an old man up a ladder, re-pasting old walls against aged damp.

- "The walls have been painted, outside, so we hope that should keep the damp from rising. So we hope' Ha, Ha! – Do you want a light there?"

I sit in gladness of not too much stillness. Not too much isolation. Life's daily reiterations a glorious reminder of how souls create heat in union; as do bodies.

- "The mauve base makes everything sit beautifully next to it. The gold shines, don't you think?"

This is the month of stopping, and by default the call for beginning. I feel the urgency to sum up the year before it has found its totality.

Cold and the incessant rain leave me no room for thought.

Desire dries up and everything folds itself away, leaving to search for a long forgotten coda to meaning. And so I do. Quietly closing the door on energy outward, whilst with the other hand gathering energy inward.

Small attempts at drawing: in the hope of remembering the odour of paint on my fingers. The studio is sleepy, and I must honour that. Although something akin to a longing lurks inside me, I must learn to be patient.

Paper is good: so I tell myself, as I come to terms with NO large canvases at hand.

All there is is this.

PROGRAMME

~~~~~

### The Three Graces

**The Three Graces** is a remarkable play and a debut piece by a new comer to the world of theatre. This new voice is not only refreshing in the manner and syntax of language employed, but also in the psychology from whence the concept of the script derives. Here we have a first play by a British writer; penned in the English language, and yet as with any good writer, making the known language an unknown, mysterious territory.

Partou was born in the middle of the last century, in Tehran. Her family heritage having been rooted in generations of political activism, she was obliged to leave her motherland at an early age. Partou admits that her very early memories are of her grandmother reciting verses from epic poem-stories. Her paternal grandfather had been an orator and respected politician, who had actively stood against the Shah's father, whilst her maternal side of the family, had always been attached to the court. In many ways the complex environment in which this poet-painter grew up gives us, as her audience, a view into an unimaginable world of beauty, colour, risk and love of language. As a little girl, Partou grew up in a household where religion, superstition and adherence to social institutions were simply not a choice. Religious activity, or religious sympathy was actively barred. Instead political awareness, communal reading or recitation, conversation, and a rigorous diet of outdoor activity were encouraged. The text, the epic poem, stories and myths told in verse, are the weft from which Partou's artistic cloth is woven and shaped.

This is a play by an artist; an accomplished painter, whose imagery has always aimed at somehow trapping and giving representation to the poetic experience of the feminine psyche, life, and story. In the apparent simplicity of this play, we are given a broad and individual re-writing of many of the issues that are current in feminist philosophical thinking. The setting of the play is in a visual artist's studio where the painter and two other cognoscenti engage in an abstract dialogue; a repartee verging at times along the boundaries of the absurd. We are handed various pieces to construct a highly refined, concise whole. **The Three Graces** is not an ordinary play with a beginning, middle, and an end. It is a Haiku of a moment in time – a rarefied glimpse into history regarded with the eyes of a woman. The play is sprinkled with a rich array of references to Greek mythology, psychoanalysis, and philosophy of language; and yet the writer does not at any point give us, the audience, the reader, the observer, a clue as to how these ideas or theatrical decisions can be resolved, or even tied up into some form of cohesion. This is precisely as it purports to be: a brief glimpse into a world of ideas, memories, artistic intentions, and historical injustices. No conclusion is given. No judgement is conferred. No attempt is made to be specific or make the apparently confusing clear. It is a web of thoughts upon which we are given privilege to enter.

Although the three women appear to speak to one another, there is an underlying implication that no one actually sees or hears the other speak. If there is a dialogue, a conversation, one suspects that it may all be a theatrical illusion; manufactured for the purpose of making the invisible visible: “giving an embodiment to the soliloquy of intangible thought, and immaterial breath”[Partou]. In simplistic terms one could sum up the intentions of this play as: A private dialogue on the true moment and nature of the poetic; as spoken, painted, written, and made by a woman. Regarded thus, Partou’s preoccupation is not so much with forms of expression - being both a painter and writer - but more with a deeper understanding of herself as a woman engaged within her self-expression. As she points out:

Painting, and drawing are not a simple analogy to poetry and prose. That is not a task I set myself to define, anyhow. My interest and passion lies in the discovery [of], a closer knowledge and a personal understanding of the poetic moment; that strange moment when creative engagement transcends both the medium and intentions of the maker – artist/poet. Transcribing that capsule of time and activity into a mystical bridge towards some thing; that is other than either ‘reality’ or ‘concept’. The so-called divine, or better still the numinous becomes, in this quiet and unexpected moment, the nameless protagonist that helps orchestrate the transformation of the unremarkable into an epiphanic mystery. But what is it? How does it work? Where and when can it be held, seen, named? It is like hunting; alone, out on a crusade after a marvellous treasure. And as with the best stories, there are times that one even doubts its existence. Then something happens, and there is a glimpse, a mark, a track; the suspicion is confirmed. And the seduction, the hunt, the enchantment, begins all over again. You start looking at everything, or everyone, as though you were looking for a lost one

**The Three Graces** is therefore given to us as a complex and yet tongue-in-cheek analogy of an interiorised dialogue that centres on the processes of creativity; though more specifically Partou’s play is concerned with the voice of woman as artist, and maker. Her “crusade” is therefore not only the “hunt” for that special moment of creative activity; a self-abandonment to the epiphanies of the “unremarkable” - for which Joyce’s prose is renowned. She is, moreover, interested in the as yet uncharted archaeology of a journey embarked upon from the actively stated stance of the female psyche; “She who looks to write her own story.” This is not autobiography per se. And yet there is nothing generalised or simplistic in either her visual or her textual *writing*. The enquiry is always into the anatomy of process: as a prosodic bridge via which she can map out the ontology of woman as artist, visionary, poet, maker.

History, philosophy, epistemology are all processes of thinking, that have over time and often intentionally maligned repetition of the *same*, helped create representation of woman and man (female; male); set deep in the collective unconscious, where the imaginary takes shape. It is time to bring these processes under question. The seriatim alliteration of the *same* will never allow a place of truth, respect and freedom for that [whom] does not spring from the *same*: woman as she who is not the *same* has no representative to speak for her. The female imaginary needs therefore to be re-appropriated, and made again. She has no name: I must re-name her. As an artist and a poet my task within the gender economy of the psychological imaginary is to be actively engaged in *poiesis*. This re-configuration can only take place by hunting out and revealing the process of the poetic – as experienced by I as woman, who is not of the *same*. I want to draw the political map of the poetic: the female as she is within and of her creative voice. It all comes down to the text: whether imaginary or

actual: this is the as yet un-deciphered hieroglyphic tongue that can function outside and despite the linear, the expected, and the allocated.

Admittedly such depth of involvement with her own work requires commitment from the audience\*. Notwithstanding the complex issues that shape some of her dialogues in **The Three Graces**, whereby we are given to ponder the representation and expression of woman in the processes of creativity<sup>ii</sup>, and hence on a broader level, society, it may not be too far-fetched to say that perhaps Partou's debut as a play write offers us, in the twenty-first century, that "miracle" for which Ibsen's Nora leaves her nineteenth-century 'Doll's house'; in hope.

Aurora de Reeve

---

<sup>ii</sup> It is important and of interest to note the underlying influence(s) of Partou's philosophical interests and preoccupation. On the one hand she has positioned herself as an active *reader* of contemporary French feminist philosophical thinkers; specifically Luce Irigaray whose remarkable re-reading of classical Greek texts: myth/philosophy, has helped to initiate a complex and often controversial debate amongst [feminist] contemporary thinkers as to the re-imagining of the gender maps: this regarded from the stance of twentieth century practices and ideas of psychoanalysis. Heidegger's writings on the ontology of '*Being*' [Ontological reflections in his renowned work titled: *Being and Time* 1927] are also instrumental to the structure and language employed in Partou's *poiesis* thesis [L. from Gk.= a placing; from *tithenai* = to place].

Philosophical psychology, anthropology, ethics, "politics", poetry, biography, and the discipline of history pursue in different ways and to varying extents the behaviour, faculties, powers, possibilities, and vicissitudes of Dasein.  
[Heidegger 1927, trans.1962, ed. Krell 1999, 59]

*\*By way of extending this extraordinary work of contemporary drama onto a wider audience, the play write has kindly given permission for a 'selection' from her pedagogical notebooks to be reproduced in this programme*

## Extracts from the Pedagogical Note Books

[1]

The play: A Trium-fertilis[femina]: a dialogue centring on MEANING

::      The Presence of meaning  
         The Shape of meaning  
         The Imaginary of meaning  
         The Happening of meaning

Where looking at a life-size self-portrait [nude] can there be meaning; for each voice – whether characters or chorus: – a separate set of connections.

I.      Feminist statement of body, naked, metaphor

      Woman: Here  
         Always  
         Subject

II.     Historical statement of body, female, naked, flesh-represented, sexualised imaginary. Understanding\Negation of the Being of woman as:

         Nature  
         [Mis]take  
         [Mis]hap  
         O[ther]utside

III.    Psychological and therefore imaginary presentation of woman-self in shape of female body, as blatant re-writing of woman:

         Image  
         Addition\subtraction  
         Presence  
         Becoming  
         Essence # *not essential*[ist]

:: Always as open, uncompleted.



[2]

Even as the mandalas of Mexican healers are left with a gap of possibility – to enter, leave, allow, hold, and let go. Or the ancient script of the circular line drawn on pots by woman-hand: beginning from a floating, indeterminate place; ending not. Leaving a space for space. Possibility for the ancestral spirit [to] enter, [to] leave: the final sentence: the drop of a curtain. Each inflection of the pencil as an attempt to draw her face is a new face. A new eye-awareness of an already-there face.

~ When the line, the splash of colour, or the composition of 'events' staged around the figure becomes predictable; or set in place, with the air of '*How it is*': the hand stops; breaks the continuity; intervenes and scatters the '*How it is*'. - Making space for '*How it may be*'.

~ Twenty-four heads on paper: 'Ahead of Her Time': A book, a folio, a complete *thing*; or a descriptive sentence? Each head accompanied by a moment's death. An epiphanic presence within the 'real', or the 'ordinary'. Prophetic pronouncements held in the strict brevity of the momentary.

Each 'work' a mosaic piece; a shard long discarded in the layered fields. Together. In pieces placed together. Each shard becoming: a square, a rectangle, a tile, a wall: an entire dome. And so there happens within time a pattern of memory

|           |                                  |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| line      |                                  |
| figurines |                                  |
| giants    | >                                |
| sentences | >making one space to enter#leave |
| words     | >                                |
| marks     |                                  |
| dots      |                                  |
| numbers   |                                  |

QUESTION: Is Time variable or static?

...naked self, standing: active ~ absent ~ demanding ~ puzzled

...head curiously held: sometimes anxious

...chair: always empty: space left

...window awaiting to be opened

...stairs listen for echo of feet: not here

...church palpitating light source: not given

ANSWER: Depends on space.

Light is bent by Time

Distance [variable] = Speed [variable] X Time [constant]

If **this here** is the black hole then it must follow as in theory :

Big Objects In Space Change Time

[3]

Abstract # Figurative ~ corners of the same whole.

Reality is made up of both.

Vision, dialogue, feelings, happenings, things, efforts and effects are all equally shared out [with]in the abstract and the figurative.

And so it is in painting: there are no divisions, no real dilemmas, no *other* to be rejected as not the *same*. It just *is*. Not good. Not bad.

Abstract is the other face of figurative: inverse. Take a magnifying glass to life and see for yourself.

Why are we so afraid of things that work together: one the weight and anchor and sail to the other: no more. Is.

Always breaking up don't be satisfied with what emerges and seems to bespeak  
of the 'truth' – break it: smudge it let it emerge once more without your help.  
and EVE: what Her when She *is*?

Aware every history naked thought active courage

First psychoanalyst: she listened to her unconscious voice and accepted the  
individuation process; knowing = punishment severe; because.

Garden. Eve. :: Cultivation of self beyond nature and nature *also*.

~ Twelve gesso-primed canvases: small [30x46cms] boxed, somehow to be backed,  
easy to hold, see. Landscapes. Each: one of a place. Open land. The other side of the  
equator: heat, sun, mountain, wide plain, vines, snow, even. Out. There. Always the  
outdoor-ness of the outside was grand. Still remembered, sometimes yearned for to name  
this present that is without country for to belong to.

# The Three Graces

Or

Trium-fe[mina]rtilis\*

A Play in Two Acts

Three Characters: Female

Chorus One Echo: Female voice (transmitted from different parts of the stage)

Chorus One-Other: Mixed voices of female and male (transmitted from the centre)

*[An artists' studio. The outside door placed to the far left of stage, arched with glass panes. French windows to the far right of stage. Long room, laid horizontally across stage. High ceiling. Two bare electric bulbs, no shades. An old and much used hand basin in the foreground to the left of stage, with small shelving above it, displaying: photographs, small mirror, washing up liquid, white spirit, jars of dry, powder pigment. On the wall next to the basin, map of Iran, with a black and white photograph of the artist in her [this] studio. Paintings of varying sizes line most of the walls, except one, where a paint-splattered 'donkey' acts as easel or stretcher rest. An ochre coloured studio seat in the foreground, right, half turned from audience. A number of poetry and other Books resting against the skirting board, just behind the studio seat. There are drawings, and sketch-books scattered against paint tins, or on floor. The wall to the left of the French windows covered with post cards of painting reproductions. An old wooden drawer/box on the floor containing several jars each packed tightly with different sized used paintbrushes. Next to it also on the floor large paint tins and several old saucers, each caked in oil paint, and a box of surgeon's gloves, half full. The French windows are neatly curtained with oatmeal coloured cotton drapes. On the sill, on the floor, are placed six or seven geranium pots. At the far corner, by the door [left of stage] a great mound of old clothes, some paint-smeared, or torn. By the light green doors leading to the studio [stage opening out to the audience] are two pairs of paint-splattered bathroom slippers: one a dark blue, and the other a pale peach. A large red mug placed by the studio seat creates the margin between one side of the studio/stage and the other. The view from the French windows opens out onto a beautiful blue harbour: fishing boats, light house, etc.]*

*The meeting of the three women is not accidental. Two of the women have come to meet with the third woman. They are all looking at and discussing the paintings, drawings in*

*the studio. There is both a familiarity and a degree of distance between the women. Each woman is aware of her own individual stance or intentions in this coming together. There is a decision to be made. A kind of contract or agreement is at stake here, amongst the three women. One of the women takes notes on a loose sheet of A4 (white) paper, using a variable lead-tip pencil.*

*Outside there is a distant din of harbour sounds.*

*It is a warm, bright afternoon in July: first summer of the new century.*

*The three women stand and look at the paintings and drawings: Large nudes, – self-portraits, and some interiors of the artist's studio/abode. The word Poetry/poiesis\* is on the tip of each tongue. There is in the background a hiss of a chorus humming almost out of tune: In the shadow-lit auditorium a strange song is fills the space: -*

*'Poetry Poetry Poiesis Poetry  
What Is is Poetry here is Poiesis  
Poetic is when it makes Poetry  
And Poetic is itself Poiesis\*  
Poetry within the Poetic Poiesis  
Poetry Poetic Poetry Poiesis is  
Poetry Poetry Poiesis Poetry'*

*Lights go up very slowly. A bright summer's day: pearly and blue fills the stage. Birdsong can be heard, from backstage.*

\* The balance to the traditional shape of the council of three males officials [Trium Virorum] known also as the Triumvirate [Vir = man: virile].

\* The Greek term for poetry is rooted in the concept of: forming or producing something specific or as a combination of – *poietic* = adj. Combining form. *Poiesis* = a making. Unlike theory that is based on the knowledge of scientific nature constructed by Logos ("definition or account"); Poiesis is a portrayal, a figuration of how things are "[...] not things that are captured by us in the course of our scientific theorising about nature. They are representations of subjects, their characters, their interests, and their possible stances in cultures that are made by subjects and that in turn help to make them, in so far as they make available certain routes of self-construal and of action and identity in culture. Such figuration will be, in Plato's and Aristotle's terminology, poetic representations, *mimemata* that are products of poiesis, and they are far from insignificant for human life, far from idle objects of aesthetic delectation." [Eldgridge 1996, 7]

## Act One

- Woman One** If you want to get a woman's attention [*She turns and faces the audience.*]
- Woman Two** Spell aloud the word: Authority [*She turns and faces the audience.*]
- Woman Three** She'll sit up and be all ears [*She turns and faces the audience.*]
- Chorus One-Echo** Well trained we are: Fear our first mouthful; suckled on it a lifetime. With all my written attempts calculated, I have been scribe to thirty-thousand words of footnote. Now it is clear that to own my project I must erase the other's voice, and that there is only this: the periphery is not the circumference. Remember that by continuously denying your presence in practice, whilst protesting for a *Daaaa-seinnnn* of your own; you are still an invisible *thing* [*the word 'thing' résonates into next sentence*]. You are a Being that is placed in the body of the Text, rather than relegated to the periphery of footnote or index. Go learn the warrior method and show yourself to the enemy. The tradition of a duel is an elegant – though for the loser a rather tragic – *modus vivendi* of counteracting the very *thing* that is so difficult to do. There are no fixtures; little that cannot be re-negotiated, placed and named afresh.
- Woman Two** [*Pauses in front of a folio of gouache portraits, on rough hand-made paper*] And would you say that there is enough here to negotiate a counter-reaction? What is that pink mark in the middle of the face, if not a nose; so I try and understand, looking at these small paintings. Perhaps these 'heads', as you call them, are not visual heads. Words interleaved between each painting may or may not give a text, an accompaniment. But the heads ARE without the written. They speak of words rarely spoken. Am I reading this correct?
- Woman One** [*Looking anxious, and reticent*] The head is the locus of becoming. It is the home of all that we call *reality, here, there, now, then*, and so on. Of course the head speaks. No mouth can round a word, no tongue pronounce a gesture better than the head itself. No help needed. To be: a head is. But don't get me wrong, I'm not into disembodiment. The whole, the circumference that holds and dances with the entire *thing*: the circle, the O,

the rounded, complete line, held seamless in space – that's what I aspire to. What else if not?

**Chorus One-Echo** Circuitous measurements allow for things to stretch in and out of expectation. I go around a thing as a fly would the hand drawn chalk line, sprinkled with sugar.

**Chorus One-Other** No. There is a given centre. Always a place to be reached, discovered, answered or taken as 'task' [*Sung and repeated*].

**Chorus One-Echo** The Circuitous method is in the quality of awareness: present at each completion of the circumference. Take a fresh slant on the route already heeled. Take a look; a-fresh. The only task is the task of taking to task the smallest particle – as though it were the greatest obstacle, or better the greatest pleasure; there is your ambition. No task [*Fading echo repeated*].

**Woman Three** [*A little apart; taking notes*] And what do you mean by *reality*?

**Woman One** I mean everything that is: the being of things and people, and moments, and memory, and therefore meaning. That's what I really mean. Meaning. Reality is meaning. Well at least reality can become meaning. But as you know reality is rarely experienced; and so meaning remains unknown.

**Woman Two** What do you mean by this. Take me through it. Tell me. What?

**Woman One** I mean I. What but [the] I? The only story worth telling is my story. And then all gathering into one story. Narrative that can be truly genuine is that of the autobiography – without names. Who? What? Where? When? Why? - Except here. My meaning can also be yours, and hers. Meaning - it sounds like mining [*Smiles to herself. The other women look blankly at the ochre chair*]. No names, not here. Even language is only a colour or inflection: All is sound; All is one stream; All is one life; Woman life. That's why Eve's story. She stands in the silence. Don't be fooled by the name.

**Woman Three** [*Smiling*] As I understand it, from your language, meaning is reality, and vice-versa. And from that close analogy emerges this work. These heads, self-portraits, interiors, all painted or drawn in order to allow reality a place?

- Woman Two** Yes, [*Turning to Woman Three*] I also see that.
- Woman One** Yes and no; this reality is a kind of reality. My reality of what it is to remember reality. To feel reality, becoming reality in my hand of a reality that is not reality at all. There is a distinction, a choice.
- Woman Three** Is there really a choice?
- Woman Two** Where is choice? - : is it *reality* or *in reality* or *not*? You know just *not* – I am not you are not we are not. What is *IS*, anyhow? And so what choice?
- Woman One** There, in dreams I take on the form and guise and name and shape of anyone. It – my dream boss: the unconscious – chooses. It is not ever just anyone; it has to be anyone who fits the link that that chosen from can then pass on the message from It to me in waking. It seems random, but there is always an intelligence, a cunning and a craft in that choice.
- Woman Two** And when Athena takes on the guise of old Mentor to approach and advise young Telemachus, the brave son of king Odysseus, son of Laertus, to go and board the long ships in the silence of the night's dark secret, away from the suitor's eyes, she is also cunning. She whispers to him, councils him to sail off in search of his father; she is not Athena, there, mantled as an old seer, white-bearded and not woman. Her 'form' becoming the form of Mentor: so who is Athena or Mentor? Telemachus trusts this 'form'. Athena knows this. That choice is obvious to me who holds the book of Odysseus' woes penned in verse. Heavy-laden pages that sing of an interminable journey; a return to a home long left behind. When travelling, and beset by troubles, Odysseus has no choice, he is not Odysseus the king, only a ravaged soul at the mercy of Poseidon's rage. So what choice for him who for the span of many pages is not. But must at all time remember to choose to be.

**Woman Three**

Perhaps then Aristotle is not only referring to the fiction of theatre – (though my Greek is not) when he says: “*he psyche ta onta pos estin*” = the soul is in a certain way all beings.” [*She turns to the life-size standing nude, mimicking the painted figure*] Now there is a kind of choice; would you say?

**Woman One**

I can take any shape I want: in dreams. There in the house of silence where all sound is sound, and nothing but itself. Nothing, even sound, is anything but itself. Though true to say there are different kinds of sound; being still ‘itself’.

**Woman Two**

Nothing is anything but itself. And nothing is itself only.

**Woman One**

Which makes me think that if It – the unconscious – can monitor such tricks, in Dreamtime, then why not also in Now-Time. Here, as we speak everything could be a substitute, a sign or a trope. You as you seem: gentle and pleasant, apparently of like mind may in truth, seen from the eyes of another, a thing other than what I see, here in my space.

*[There is a general silence. The three women turn each towards a different side of the stage. The lights dim very slowly. The opening phrase/song fills the auditorium; being transmitted from different and unusually placed speakers placed throughout the theatrical space.]*

Poetry Poetry Poiesis Poetry  
What Is is Poetry here is Poiesis  
Poetic is when it makes Poetry  
And Poetic is itself Poiesis  
Poetry within the Poetic Poiesis  
Poetry Poetic Poetry Poiesis is  
Poetry Poetry Poiesis Poetry

**Act Two**

*[The lights begin to go up again, very slowly. The three women are now seated at a table, placed down stage, almost at the boundary to the entrance of the studio space. There are Books and some of the small works on paper scattered on the table. Some cups, a vase of flowers, etc., occupy the centre of the table. The women all seem to be oblivious of the each*



*other. A strange hub of light/shadow separates the three figures at the table].*

**Woman Three**

And there are countless examples. There are many who like the Heliotrope in the midst of January's cold search with the avid faith of a visionary for the sun. Helio means sun, add to trope, it turns, actively seeking looking towards warmth, to survive, be nourished. Not just a turn of phrase, a style. A way of life, for some. Becoming: the embodiment of the sun, that is a lack, missing here on earth; held in the dark fold of winter. Turning up and out of the sleepy soil in feather-blossoms gathered at centre, a livid pink, winter earth in this flower of not a time of flowering, heralds hope of warmth. Emanates warmish hues in the midst of barren branches turned inwards: meditative.

**Woman One**

In every sentence there is a complete story.

**Woman Two**

A story longer than a sentence is too long.

*[The dappled effect of shadows around the three women dims. They become busy leafing through books, writing, drawing, staring in a kind of self-absorbed meditation.]*

**Chorus One-Echo**

Vision is not trochoidal. All circumference can be given a fixed point and then as if a trick the circle opened out and stretched into a straight line. But the truth of it is that tropos can also videre; so tropovidere = that means turning to see; or changing the point of vision. Don't bother with the lexicon: it doesn't exist. I know. I speak. There is always a moment, a time, and a place when a *thing* turns. It pivots from one point to the next. Transforms, and transcends in this moment of tropos: of turning. The moment of transcribing, changing, being itself, but turning.

**Chorus One-Other**

Transcendence is not always an expected arrival. Not given. It is a kind of tripping up. Tripping over that which is assumed to be a familiar parameter. There is the turning point. The very thing that has been given freely and often, it seems effortlessly.

**Woman Two**

Odysseus almost stumbles awake on Ithaca. Home: after the deep sleep that had enraptured him at the very outset of his return voyage accompanied by the hospitable Phaeacians. There, after twenty odd years of yearning and struggle he turns on his side, and awakens on home-soil.

How could such an important tropos of fate and fortune take place so easily? -: Perhaps only in a book, in a story or a myth.

**Woman One**

But then, just as we turned to hear swallows clicking their swallow-dance, skimming across dark brown rivulets; water rushing down stream: everything changed shape. A milky-blush of a swallow breast – a god-chosen and given to reveal a tropos placed with design on our path, our destiny. Here. Now. Where all is well. This moment. Quick! Taste the ever-turning Now.

**Chorus-One**

Soon gone. It's gone.

*[The strange shadowy lighting lifts. The lights come up slowly and it is once more a blue summer's day. The women get up from the table and walk without ceremony, to the studio space. The table and chairs are dimmed in the dark downstage.]*

*[All three women turn to gaze in the direction of a painting leaning against the wall, facing the audience. The canvas is stretched on a deep-set stretcher. The colours of the painting are pinks and greys, earth-browns, and patches of white here and there. The painting depicts a woman standing alone in a room, with a kind of window or glass door illuminating patches of the interior, that are lightly painted. She is naked. Her hands are active. Her torso in process of turning, stretching. Curious, almost vying for attention, she stares out of the canvas. In one hand a brush held like a pen, or a knife. In the other hand she elegantly cups, in her palm, a pigment-brimmed plate of blood-red hues. She stares out. Round brown eyes delineated and audacious. The three characters return the stare. There are now four women in the room. They all seem to be locked into each other, mesmerised. Almost a mimesis of one another's presence and gestures. The voice of the two choruses fill the space.]*

**Chorus One-Echo**

Woman One, Woman Four, Woman Three, Woman All

**Chorus One-Other**

Woman One, Woman Three, Woman Four, Woman All

*[There is an eerie sense of transformation or osmosis taking place on the stage. The audience being witness and participants, simultaneously.]*

- Woman One** This image is an imaginary not imagined before. These paintings of woman naked, active, questioning, not avoiding my gaze – the gaze – gazing back: it has not happened. She is the first to dare the gaze.
- Chorus One-Echo** We imagine all the time. We imagine that all things are as we imagine them to be. Our reality is an image unimaginable.
- Chorus One-Other** An image unimaginable.
- Chorus One-Echo** Images come and go.
- Chorus One-Other** The television gives us all that we need.
- Chorus One-Echo** Imagine our life without those images to imagine with.
- Chorus One-Other** Where is the singular imaginary to imagine. When laden by all this imagery. What imaginary after that; imagine.
- Chorus One-Echo** Every day a new image-attachment given to us, unasked for. All receive the same simultaneous image to imagine an imaginary image; unasked for.
- Chorus One-Other** Thank you all the same. Why not: we say. Imagine, make copies, imitate.
- Woman Two** And where would you say intention begins and expectation start? Does a word come to mind because it fits a *thing*, or a line drawn across the page to depict a particular feature – out of choice. Is there a choice involved? Why say this and not something else? Draw the line with the pencil held at right angles, or sharp, obtrusive, direct above the page? So. [*She offers the other two her pencil.*]
- Chorus One-Other** Choices are not independent. And Athena: Lustrous Goddess bearing shield and arms: would Zeus not be were it not also for her - embodiment of the father's intellect; and he vessel employed by a daughter's choice.

- Chorus One-Echo** No mother: Not truth: No continuity: No Choice: No transcendence. Fruit of a father's thought, no choice for a seed of many orchards. A Lie. Independence is not a man-[u]factured lie. We must choose to turn to our own choice. Play your hand with cunning.
- Woman One** I did not choose to be Woman One. [*Walks fast and a little irritated to the centre of stage; pointing and gesticulating at herself.*] Imagine me so. Here I am, so. I cannot be Woman Two, or Woman You. But I am still Woman. Does that make me Woman All? It must be the same as the choice of a word, a phrase, a line, a colour, or an expectation. The *thing itself* has already shaped the choice.
- Chorus One-Echo** Is that Essential—issssmmm?
- Woman Two** How do you explain the *Imago-myth* of Eurydice? It occurs to me she didn't choose to be bitten by a snake and hurled down – twice hurled down into the underworld. But could I say the same for Orpheus? Did he choose to turn around? He had been given the choice to choose: he chose to turn.
- Woman Three** The *Imago* is a picture, a figure, a place, a thing.
- ALL** [*All the voices together, though some broken off and not in sync.*] Is it memory when so many versions of?
- Woman One** The *Imago* is an insect matured; sexually formed. That must be what a caterpillar transcends, turns and aspires towards. A butterfly at the nodal moment of its destiny turning transforms. From the dormant, optically passive caterpillar lying in a large white shoe- box, consuming green pads of vine-leaves, there it rises. One day it wakes from a heavy dream, recalling a vague sensation of wings beating the air. Pushing up the cardboard sarcophagus lid of white space, the encased *casa* of trapped air opens; out into the flurried blue of the day. What imaginary there?! In the dream the caterpillar is both itself: timid, earth-drawn, limp; and this other: angelic, translucence of air-born colours. Free.
- Chorus One-Other** No T.V. then. Caterpillar unconscious is the ultimate image-imago imaginable. No. Thank you. We say: why not?

**Chorus One-Echo**

If there is a choice, from whence comes that choice? The turning from one choice to the other. When? What shape that choice? Whose choice – or Any? Perhaps there is a place, where choices are stored, catalogued; each labelled “Choose Me!”

**Woman One**

And then the moment of choice: How to be on time for choice.

*[Woman Three picks up and puts on a head-scarf, and almost play-acting at self-disguise, pretends to be a wise old woman. A kind of story teller. She beckons the other women as though children, and gets them to sit on the floor near her, whilst she conjures up a story to tell them.]*

**Woman Three**

**[Wise Woman]**

**[Story Teller]**

Come, and let me tell you an old story. You may know it, but not like this; how I shall tell it to you; now.

*[The lights dim, highlighting the group only. From backstage comes a slight tinkle of nursery chimes.]*

[...] - Morning dawns, the little girl pads across the room to a small white box. Her new red shoes had come in that box. There is a smile on her sleepy face. She lifts the lid of the shoebox. Slides the sarcophagus lid, white, across the top. The *Imago* stares her in the face. Nothing left to trust. Everything was just so. Why change it now. A small tear in the corner of her left eye: she strikes it away. Now angry, she thinks: here had been my every morning's hope. To see the full transcendence of *that* to *this*. Now I'm too late. She had had her own imaginary of how it would be. But this tropes, this turning from one *thing* into an-*other* : this she could not have seen. Traversing the known to the expectant knowing, but always remaining within the unknown; that was not it: she thought. The sarcophagus is empty. The divine, the fluttering angel has gone from her life. She is bereft and angry. How such a trick? All day she sits in the silence of tears. And then that night she dreams. In the half-shadow of her *stanza*; curtains looming over her bed, she imagines herself completing the *Imago* journey; just think, she says to herself in the dream, I am changing too; just imagine that. Morning comes. Her mother, kind and soft comes into her *stanza*, she opens the white curtains: day fills the space. The white space turns to the rising sun. She pulls at the padded leaf-green bed cover. Suddenly there is a loud, perceptible flutter in the bright air. The mother can scent her daughter's breath. Then it dawns. She screams: unimaginable fear; and then the anger at her loss. The little girl is air-born; dressed and yet it seems naked. She flutters and turns and dances wrapt in

the golden light of morning, reflecting all the colours of her choice. She calls out to her mother: Imagine mother my *Imago* is now complete.

*[The two women listening / acting as child audience, stand up smile, brush down their clothes and turn, theatrically gesticulated, to face the audience. Woman Three takes off the head scarf, also smiles, to herself, brushes down her clothes, turns with theatrical gesture, and stands with the other women to face audience. Front of stage.]*

**Woman Two**                      The day is not as long as we thought. *[Pause. Turns to face Woman One]*

**Woman One**                      We need more information. *[Pause. Turns to face Woman Three]*

**Woman Three**                      Look. Here. *[Holding out a Joker card to the audience]* I give you the Wild Card.

*[The women turn away from each other, and begin to walk slowly off stage. Each goes to a different exit. They stop at the threshold, turn with gesture, and gaze out at the audience. The three women and the painting all simultaneously visible to the audience: gazing out.]*

**Chorus One-Echo**                      Your turn. Choose.

**Chorus One-Other**                      Your turn. Choose.

*[Lights go down. Three doors are heard being slammed shut.]*

**The End**  
*[Curtains Down]*

*Artist's Journal*  
*Month the Eleventh*

*Autumn howls at my ear. Where is the gentle fugue of cadmiums shifting against the intense of sky-blue? Here is not that kind of autumn.*

*Several days from hell, come all together. Drawing like a maniac; hand hurts. I have nothing to say but that **I DO**. That's the only explanation on offer.*

*The air beats with the quiet wings of Acceptance.*

*Every Monday morning to church - sit at the back; light one candle; listen to the din of fishermen smoking fish; be lulled by the gurgle of the Coomb as it hurries past the vicarage.*

*I come for you and you give me myself. Generous friend, kindly dispenser of the highest good[ness]. No electricity, only the wan, wet gleam of a fractured light and a single candle. I am held in benevolent bondage. And in the half-light I try to recall what Black means. And why is the list of those to be prayed for typed in Red? – Warning or Passion; which?*

*Almost running out of large canvases.*

*The idea of working 'small' is attractive, but not easy to reconcile.*

*And after all - remember that behind all history, collective or individual, lies **the Secret**.*

*The grey of rainy days envelope my fears, so that even I can't access them.*

*Working in measured pace, but all is well.*

|                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Things to remember:</i> | <i>Draw</i>            |
|                            | <i>Write</i>           |
|                            | <i>Paint</i>           |
|                            | <i>Breathe</i>         |
|                            | <i>Live+++ what IS</i> |

## MY MUSE – MY BELOVED

I reckon – when I count at all –  
First – Poets – Then the Sun –  
Then Summer – Then the Heaven of God –  
And then – the List is done –

But, Looking back – the First so seems  
To Comprehend the Whole –  
The Others look a needless Show –  
So I write – Poets – All –

[Dickinson, poem 569]

I appeal to the *Muse*<sup>108</sup> as my inspirer to guide me towards an intimate dialogue, whereby I may discover and build the space of my own feminine self. By refusing to create an expected formula of symmetry between genders<sup>109</sup>, I reject a male muse, and by way of inquiring into the genealogy of my own sex, I will *Her-who-is-my-other-as-the-Beloved-to-the-'I'*. Notwithstanding her adoring host of (male) poets, philosophers, thinkers, and artists the muse-woman remains nameless, faceless and for the most part form-less. She remains an unreality. The Queen of the Underworld (Isis), or Heavens (Ishtara/Akhtar), can only attend to those who appeal to her with their innate voice of man. In the apparently harmless romance, or archetype of the feminised muse, the age-old dialogue of the male resistance to a feminine symbolic continues; whilst the fear and awe of this figure perpetuates the negative, (and fatuous) theories of castration. By establishing a positive messenger (*nuntius*) that both guides and vocalises the feminine creative 'other', this ferry-woman,



“Queen of the Stygian Realm” who carries her host of (male) poets across the dark waters of the underworld, may then begin to add to her cargo women poets and artists; helping them safely to that mysterious bank-side of language [*langage*], across the poetic-symbolic river. She/I need not speak from a sense of the ‘horror’ of this unknown, this un-chartered aspect of the self, which the concept of the *Unheimlich* can evoke, but more a realisation and a courageous step into the territory of the poetic; experienced as the unquestioning trust in the vital breath. This/my female *inspiratrice* speaks in a strange tongue, not because she is either denying the importance of coherence, or because she is mischievous, she speaks in the eternal breath of the mother tongue; many times denied, oftentimes mocked in misapprehension. My *Muse* by definition of her sex that is one with mine, speaks in the tongue and diction of a language that is rooted in the soil of an interiorised, and poetically individual feminine voice, whose timbre can aspire to far more than the apriori presumptions of nonsensical ‘gabble’.<sup>110</sup>

But then I am faced with the dilemma as to who this wise creative spirit can be. My confusion doubly propounded by the history of literary and artistic references, replete by examples of the muse that appears, to the male artist, always in the form of a graceful, and sensuous woman. The presence of the ‘Muse’ figure is invariably portrayed in the shape and guise of ‘Woman’. She is the ephemeral being who guides the hand of the (male) philosopher, and dynamically influences the poetic tongue to sing. She is the inspiring figure behind the creative male thinker/doer.<sup>111</sup> Although the principles of Jung’s openly derogatory characterisation of the *animus* figure – as the male companion to the female psyche – can help a woman to direct her passive, feminine morose qualities, into the world out there, Jung cannot give much hope to the woman as an independent agent who can access the finer aspects of human activity. Her inspiring agent, moreover, needs to be guided and monitored by the better-knowing man. The *anima* figure, on the other hand may be temperamental, causing the man to suffer disillusionment and ‘moods’. Nonetheless, the anima is allowed (by Jung’s twisted misogyny) to act as the desired (Lacan’s) ‘Other’ to the man. This feminine figure is to the male psyche not only the Muse, but also the embodiment of creativity, of primal speech and poetic inventiveness.<sup>112</sup> By accepting the premise of the feminine-muse, the nameless (woman), figure that acts as the bridge to the unconscious, I am obliged to ask: “what

shape does the Muse take for a woman?" The Jungian solution of the animus figure as the unconscious active male within the female (psyche) cannot represent that companionable guide towards the poetic genre of Becoming. It in no way has the same access to that mysterious domain of word and image, nor a relationship with the *gnosis* of mythopoeia. The male-imaginary of the feminine muse figure is given as the abstracted image of *every woman*: who is only symbolically representative of skill or action, - personified feminine-idea of an instigator, maker, and producer, and a universal allegory for feminine qualities.<sup>113</sup> That is why she remains faceless and nameless, but also that is why she remains attached to the vital force of Nature and the dynamic presence of the life force, without being herself permitted into the equation of doing and becoming. The absurdity turns to cruelty of negation and the power-based fantasy of the male artist in charge of this life force, as the mute, un-individuated woman seeps into the real sphere of the social and lingual gender economy. Every aspect of a woman's development is thus tainted, and marginalized by this central referential view of the female.

We are all, regardless of gender, born of the womb and come from the body of a mother. It is not a male body that nurtures and brings forth a female child, but a female womb; the space where a female child is also reared the same as a male child. It is a flesh-bound reality, that the mythogenesis of creativity must, by necessity, stem from the mother's body, blood, taste, sound, scent, affect; for both the male and the female psyche are grounded primarily in the vital reality of: Conception, Gestation, and Birth. The Mother relates, nourishes, loves, and speaks to both her son and her daughter. She is the essence of life, within reality and allegory. Yet in the transcendental space of the relationship with God, she is conceived of as *only a mother*. That is, she is portrayed as an inert, passive body, that merely brings forth - a kind of mute giving birth to - but is not empowered to give language, spirit, or life itself. Rather it is the Father, who imparts that kernel of life unto the Son, - and of course not the Daughter. In this unreal (and deceitful negation of both biological and spiritual truth) equation, the dull overtones of a male monologue are given centre-stage. Empowered by the history of philosophical thought, and social oppression against the Daughter, the dissident female has been allocated the unenviable role of the predicate. However, she is not permitted a voice, a name, or a true space to Become a subject to her own verb. The

Mother's / Daughter's voices have never been heard. Her word is a language that remains necessarily foreign to the ear, her image alien to the eye. In the house of the Father "there are many rooms", but none is allocated to *her*. It is true that to find a room of their own, both mother and daughter must first learn to speak: to each other and of each other. They must construct and use the mother-muse as their (own) messenger and guide across the bridge of the unconscious: journeying towards their own poetic Becoming. The transcendence towards a God who speaks the Word of the feminine therefore requires a deep commitment to the self as Woman, Daughter, Sister, Mother and Lover.<sup>114</sup> The Holy Word, received as the Breath of the Divine, and seed of God, within the pure vessel of the Virgin's womb, may be regarded as not merely, the *jouissance* of the phallus, but more significantly, the inspiration of the Holy Word of the Mother's *Bliss*, as she perceives her own Transcendence and Becoming.

"If women lack a God, there is no possible communication or communion between them. One needs, they need, the infinite in order to share a little [...]  
If I cannot be in relation to some sort of horizon where my genre is accomplished, I cannot share while protecting my becoming." [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(a), 143 from *Sexe et Parentés*]

This quiet, apparently repressed, echo of *Bliss*, resonates the erotic sensuality of *Her* pleasure, which is returned by a silence. This lack of co-operation, and silence that refuses to recognise the moment of presence and pleasure of woman, for the appropriation of the male (*l'eye*), can be used as a point of strength. This in itself, is a real aspect in the creation of a genealogy of the feminine; at the least it is a refusal to be accorded a value-tag by the 'authorities' of Better, Best, Infinite, Absolute; amidst the partially un-decipherable, a low relief that is scratched out of the tablets of the historic-imaginary: 'suspended' and open-edged. Memory, the birthplace of myth, can only encompass that which is already lived, seen, touched, and then somehow in a private and special way remembered. It is within the solitude of staying with and within the ordinary, and the known that poetic consciousness takes shape.<sup>115</sup> Entering the opening that leads to the poetic ecstasy is always through the doorway of the already familiar, where the strange and extraordinary, or fantasy can be encountered. It is the known space of one's own body, clothes, home, street, and garden, which supply the unmapped route to the beyond of imagination.<sup>116</sup> This 'mirror' which woman lacks, is the equated reflective of the *other*, which for [M]an has represented God. To look in the

mirror of Woman (my-self), means to be prepared to shatter the image/icon, the male-construed imaginary, given as the universal symbolic. The aspiration of the Woman universal is bound to be very different, multi-layered, strange, and un-adapted.<sup>117</sup> It can neither be a monosyllabic re-configuration of the already given patterns and ways, nor a lame attempt at making symmetrical representations.

“If the metamorphosis of the visible into the invisible is our task, if it is the truth of conversion, then [...] To speak is essentially to transform the visible into the invisible; it is to enter a space which is not divisible, an intimacy which, however, exists outside oneself.” [Blanchot 1955, 142]<sup>118</sup>

Perhaps language can itself become a *Muse*, acting independently at taking us across the strange waters of the poetic underworld. The intentions of the poetic, like that of the visionary intentions of the mystic, do not dwell within the rigid realms of that which is known, or certain. The language of transcendence is always raw, and untamed, its inspiration a particular form of [self]-sacrifice; a voluntary leap into the prodigious white heat of the imagination.<sup>119</sup> This longing for a Becoming is going beyond desire as sexual desire, but more a will to re-phrase Heideggers’ “worldling” with the bricks and mortar of a desire placed in the territory and boundaries of the feminine in relation with and to the feminine. The house of language need not be a detracting, death-oriented place. To fertilise not the female body as a finite vessel and site of reproduction, but fertilise the female symbolic, by investing her with the gestation and birth of herself: the protagonist myth-heroine, reproduced as the active subject, in her own woman-to-woman economy of poetic self-discovery. I am not interested in the new naming of a house of language for woman with the notion of making this language the embodiment of an absolute truth. Emig in her critique of Heidegger’s influence on modernist poetry, refers to Heidegger’s *Dasein* – a project in relation to poetry and truth - in that by making art and poetry as answers to/for truth make for a system whereby artistic expression, and therefore the art object is “promoted to an almost messianic representative of truth.” [Emig 1995, 233] To become embroiled in a superstructure of ascetic form(s) and a fascination with silence=purity for silence=purity’s sake, is politically regressive and potentially dangerous. Instead the silence, the emptiness I look for is not to shut the outside the world, the positive of the possible out there to be negated, but to make space for a new kind of utterance, that is not already coloured and shaped by everything else that has gone on before. Taking the process of drawing

and painting as real analogies, it is always better to struggle against the complexity of what is already there on the surface, scraping and rubbing out until the work takes shape, despite all that has already gone on underneath, it is more dynamic to work from a mark, a gesture, a daub of colour – no matter how unsatisfactory – than try to erase and start absolutely fresh. The purity, freshness, the becoming of the text, drawing, or painting is because of the re-negotiation of the already there, to the possibly becoming. The scraping and the detraction are not destruction or amputation for the sake of style, but as process of work, the traces of which themselves will be hidden in the fold and time of the work's inherent meaning.<sup>120</sup>

Instead of continuing the notion of (poetic) language as attachment and quality of a body which is involved with incest and therefore self-annihilation, - the *logos* acting in parallel with the physical journey of the male desire that travels his body from the ecstatic high of erection to the transformed sight/site of pleasure in the shape of the ejaculated, emptied penis<sup>121</sup> [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(a) 115-7], symbolic of the creative journey of *jouissance*, - the mythic state of access to the poetic being achieved only via the vicious loss of the body of the beloved, can perhaps come to be regarded in a new light – a feminine light of a *Bliss*; “clinging”[Jouve]<sup>122</sup> to rather than cutting off, or abandoning the body of the beloved as the other. The impulse towards the poetic need not be a fascination of death but a desire and fascination with life as the new economy of practice for the woman poet. At this other place of inspiration “to obey the deep demand of the work” in the name and intention of Eurydice’s twice over loss, need not be an unredeemable formula for inspiration [Blanchot 1955, 173-4]. Why this fascination with the forbidden; the denial of the other as already “invisible”; the unasked for death and destruction of the “gaze” which sets out to completely destroy the *other’s* possibility in being considered as the “ultimate gift to the work”; as the discovery of the self, through failure? Her youthful partner, Orpheus having become the beacon of mythic thought symbolic of the poetic as both expression of, and actual mystery of creative writing/thinking for the male artist and poet, has left little historic space for Eurydice’s own poetic, musical, artistic, and philosophic Symbolic to be made a founding ground for the feminine poetic which may be related to and come to be considered as a source of inspiration. Much has been debated about the reasons and mysterious events that lead to the moment of Eurydice’s second fall;

the dual-meaning look of Orpheus which both doubts that Eurydice is still following behind, and unwittingly challenges the God's mischievous test in their pledge to take her back, were he to turn around as they climb to the Upper World. She is the unavailable, the other, the unseen because she is "veiled". She is the "night" as the "other" which is the unreachable territory of "art" (for the male), and so she represents the shadowy world of everything that offers inspiration, and plenitude of all that is creative. But alas she is described by Blanchot as only pregnant or promising of these things, herself condemned to a death of no death, a silence of no silence, because her role is solely to be what the 'work' is to the male poet – Orpheus. I propose that Eurydice's name is NOT a name - "[...] that hides her and a veil that covers her" as the "[...] profoundly obscure point towards which art and desire, death and night, seem to tend. [...] as the *other* night." [Blanchot 1955, 171] Her role as the symbolic *other*, which has hitherto been made to pertain to everything that is considered mysteriously seductive in the poetic tradition and practice, and so has helped fulfil the idea of the *persona* of the male poet/artist, is defunct. No longer can she remain the faithful beloved of a lover who betrays her and takes her skills and inspirational tongue from her. The love of Orpheus for his beloved Eurydice is read by Blanchot as the poetic impulse itself, whilst Orpheus himself is likened to "the Poem", or "the Open", which is itself the poem: -

"The Open is the poem. The space where everything returns to deep being, where there is infinite passage between the two domains, where everything dies but where death is the learned companion life, where horror is ravishing joy, where celebration laments and lamentation praises [...] this is the poem's space. This is the Orphic space to which the poet doubtless has no access, where he can penetrate only to disappear, which he attains only when he is united with the intimacy of the breach that makes him a mouth unheard, just as it makes him who hears into a weight of silence. The Open is the work, but the work as origin." [Blanchot 1955, 142]

Or more to the point 'the Work' is offered, within this economy of *she/other-as-the-invisible-beloved*, as Eurydice's body and soul given wholesale to Orpheus the poet, in search of a genuine and original voice of 'his' own, who in turn acting from the pure instinct of self-making drives his own love out of LIFE into DEATH, thus pushing things towards that strange reversal of events, and for ever disturbing the fates of both (the) *lover*: Orpheus, and (the) *beloved*: Eurydice.

All language is essentially a mystery; a magical code(r) of breath, sound, image, association, memory, names, thoughts, and ideas. It is a system of apparently simple components, (alphabet, grammar, and phonetics) - which weave a seductively complex web of attachments and meanings. Language is thought that lays itself out as a bridge for the other to cross, it is a pathway to the arrival place of understanding. Language is hope made palpable, via the breath. It is the music of breath, resounding against vocabulary that reinvents itself in every dialect and cultural sound.

“Vision Two: 7 Finally, just as three causes can be noted in a word, so also the Trinity in the unity of the Divinity ought to be thought of the same way. What are the three causes? In a word there are sound, goodness, and breathing. A word has sound so that it may be heard, it has goodness so that it may be understood, and it has breathing so that it may be completed.” [Bingen c. 1141-1147/8, trans. 1986, 91]

The most profound moments of human experience, emotion, memory, and imagination, find a hearth of arrival within language. Thus the apparently simple can become complex and extraordinary, and the barely formed thought, a deeply significant concept. Language is the public, open, and often theatrical stage/space of communication, and meaning. A free spirited *Thing*, which flutters, like a bird, from the inside of the cage of mind, eye, ear, throat, and mouth, out *there*, as gift, or a surprise for the other-that-is-not-I. The world of cloud, door, cup, light, chair, window, eye, hand, tree, smile, mirror, book, bird, music, fruit, kiss, water, touch, table, rain, curtain, box, tears, silence, fire, walking: *all Become - enigmatic worlds within a world, word within the world and word(s) without end.* Thus the root, attachment, memory, geography, and tract of a word are both the fragment, and the whole aspect of *Meaning*.

La mystérieuse: this is how one might refer to what, within a still theological onto-logical perspective is called mystic language or discourse. Consciousness still imposes such names to signify that other scene, off-stage, that it finds *cryptic*. This is the place where consciousness is no longer master, where to its extreme confusion, it sinks into a dark night that is also fire and flames. This is the place where “she” – and in some cases he, if he follows “her” lead – speaks about the dazzling glare which comes from the source of light that has been logically repressed, about “subject” and “Other” flowing out into an embrace of fire that mingles one term into another, about contempt for form as such, about mistrust for understanding as an obstacle along the path of *jouissance* and mistrust for the dry desolation of reason.” [Irigaray 1985(a) 191]

The hiatus which *feminine-lingua* (my invention) creates, is a vacuum extending beyond categories, the strange gaps, or spaces where this language functions. The visionary<sup>123</sup> lives almost entirely in

a broken unreality, always reaching into the illusive pockets of *here/now*, to speak of and create *there/then*. The vague hovering stance, partly forgetting and somehow recalling of things that wind in and through memory, in a concentric movement, rewrites the linear map allowing for the psyche to exercise its immense ability to adapt to the contortions of the unconscious. "She" is the mysterious performer of a dance that bridges the irredeemable spaces of imaginative intention, language, and meaning. The visionary [poet-artist] is empowered through her own body and enunciative language to act as her own muse – the theatrical re-enactment of her own tragedies, and ecstatic moments, lends her, and her language, therefore her presence a remarkable tenacity, to create a place and a possibility for a God who is not the same but who has ears adapted to her timbre, rhythm and step. Thus she conjures a God who is happy to see her dance without judgement or mockery, only delighting in the innovative way she can breath new life into an old and almost forgotten light-presence of the numinous.

The lingual dance is initiated and led by the individual breath that moves between the lyrical spaces of inhalation and exhalation – uniting and marrying the soul to the body; a dance which in its intrinsic qualities of responding emotionally to sound, via body movements, is an un-inevitable, even when choreographed. As the mantra or 'seed sound', - which denotes a particular '*chakra*', and vibrates a specific energy in mind and body, - the physical body and the unseen breath that makes of air, a sound, a vowel, a consonant, and finally a word, must surely be deeply attached to the thread and flow of one's uniqueness.<sup>124</sup> Here is the mysterious area of slippage or gap, where the pure sound of a shrill breakage, un-mediated shape, and inspired re-memory, opens out towards a fresh response. It is the moment of seduction, a swooning, or as Irigaray stages it, a trope of the visionary.<sup>125</sup> This is the gap of apparent emptiness, where silence resonates the word as metaphor; which in turn acts as the self connecting to the self: thus configuring a bridge towards the numinous. It is at the threshold of this hitherto in-traversable valley that awe turns to challenge.



**Artist's Journal**  
**Month the Twelfth**

*After what seemed a struggle I paint two square-shaped (1m. sq.) portraits of myself, in the act of painting myself. The paint energy and sense of 'seeing' is fresh. It is more like drawing or memory, and so the 'Me' portrayed is more theatrically present. There I am, standing with my breasts bare looking at myself painting myself in the mirror. Fast, energised and the ground or conventional perspective slightly tilted, disjointed, broken. Uncertainty, brashness, anarchy towards change, and instability are integral to this new work.*

*Penniless and in need of canvases: a good place for a pause? Maybe I could write more and paint less? Where is the weighing machine for that little transaction?*

*I allow the 'world' to see the new work. Once you have spoken in your own voice two things happen – (1) you can no longer emulate another's timbre or diction; (2) No one will dare to take [away] your voice and 'speak' with it as though it were theirs.*

*The green stairs descending down, the ochre-gold banister and hallway leading to the front door. A long and vertigo-spiral of the stairs in the cottage; and there goes my last large canvas. Almost a comforting thought, - for the time being that is.*

*The Mirrors have gone to sleep, and every glass pane of every window in the house has shut its doors to Light.*

*Drawing and dreaming, and yearning for a real rest.*

*Quiet moments in church, and a lot of time editing texts, whilst everything I pick up to read seems to palpitate with a strange herald of the fortuitous.*

## [APPENDIX]

The inter-lingual play of words – Anglo-Saxon /or/ Latin, to that of Farsi /or/ Arabic – is an approach adopted as a means by which I can heal the seams which exist in the subjective roots of my own creative voice. My mind's tongue speaks in the literary script and timbre of the western tradition, balanced by the rich texts of metaphor and allusion recalled from the eastern traditions. The lists of words are therefore a personal play on how the sound and shape of a word can embellish and extend meaning, doing so well beyond any strictly etymologic systems of research and comparison. I am interested in the 'in-between' of things; not so much direct translation or literary transcription, but rather entering possibilities whereby one set of meanings (or sounds) may appear to evoke and promote another set of meanings altogether.

For example the words: Body=Baddan; Donor=Dehandeh; Lip=Labb, have parity in both sound, and meaning, and yet the physical sensation of saying out loud the Farsi equivalent, sharpens my perception of both the tangible thing-ness of the noun, and its embodied sense of meaning(s). Dehandeh conveys very much a literal image of one who reaches out and gives to another. In my lingual space of meanings therefore, the word Donor becomes endowed with a rich 'picture' of hands that bestow gifts and perhaps even goodness. By contrast, the words: Silence=Sekoot, have less obvious similarity of pronunciation in common, but the sound and shape of both words, - as they form in *my* mouth and pass through *my* lips, vocalised to *my* mind's ear, - somehow endorse the essential quality of the meaning of absolute soundlessness, and the true presence of a quiet space or moment. My textual voice as painter-poet is thus held by the curiously interactive relation of Farsi and English, as upon a 'Hinge' [Dickinson] on which my creative Becoming turns.

[Appendix]

Crossing My *Lingua* (Border) Land/Lines

The Missing All, Prevented Me  
From missing minor Things.  
If nothing larger than a World's  
Departure from a Hinge  
Or Sun's extinction, be observed  
'Twas not so large that I  
Could lift my Forehead from my work  
For Curiosity.

[Dickinson, poem 985]

|               |                    |            |
|---------------|--------------------|------------|
| Adept/Adopt   | Addatt             | آدت        |
| Aetiology     | Taaleel/Ellat      | تعلیل/علت  |
| Affluent      | Faravan            | فرآوان     |
| Alcohol       | Alkol              | الکول      |
| Aleatory      | Alah-Bakhti        | آله جفتی   |
| Algebra       | Jabbre             | جبر        |
| Amber         | Anbær              | عنبر       |
| Amor/Love     | Eshqge             | عشق        |
| Amore/Beloved | Asheqge/Maashooqge | عاشق/معشوق |
| Aqua/Water    | Aabb               | آب         |
| Band          | Band               | بند        |

|                       |                 |            |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Battery               | Battery         | باتری      |
| Being/[to]Be          | Boudan          | بودن       |
| Belief                | Bavar/Aeymman   | باور/ایمان |
| Blue                  | Aabby           | آبی        |
| Body                  | Baddan          | بدن        |
| Bondage [Slave]       | Bandeh          | بند        |
| Book                  | Kettaab         | کتاب       |
| Brother               | Baraadar        | برادر      |
| Complete              | Kaamel          | کامل       |
| Creative              | Karbar/Khallagh | کاربر/خلاق |
| Cushion               | Cussan          | کوسن       |
| Dark                  | Taareek         | تاریک      |
| Daughter              | Dokhtar         | دختر       |
| Difficult             | Doshvaar        | دشووار     |
| Dishevelled           | Parreeshan      | پریشان     |
| Donor                 | Dehandeh        | دهنده      |
| Door                  | Daar            | در         |
| Door-keeper           | Darban          | دربار      |
| Drape                 | Pardeh          | پرده       |
| Exception             | Estesnaa        | استثنا     |
| Fairy                 | Pærry           | پری        |
| Father                | Pæddar          | پدر        |
| Flight (to take)      | Farrar          | فرار       |
| Geography             | Goghrapfie      | جغرافیا    |
| Happening             | Haddesse        | حادثه      |
| Hidden                | Penhan          | پنهان      |
| Hosanna [Praise/Good] | Hossn           | حسن        |

|                    |                         |                 |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Idea               | Ieddeh                  | ایده            |
| Ideal/Idol         | Ieddehal                | ایده آل         |
| Iron               | Ahann                   | آهن             |
| Jasmine            | Yasamine                | یاسمن           |
| Joy                | Vajd                    | وجد             |
| Layer              | Laaye                   | لایه            |
| Lemon              | Leamou                  | لیمو            |
| Lingua             | Lafz/Lahjeh             | لفظ / لهجه      |
| Lip                | Labbb                   | لب              |
| Man                | Mard                    | مرد             |
| Mansion            | Manszel                 | منزل            |
| Marble             | Marmar                  | مرمر            |
| Masked [Concealed] | Mostattar               | مستتر           |
| Master [Skilled]   | Maherr                  | ماهر            |
| Material           | Maaye                   | مایه            |
| Me/Myself          | Man/Khodd[+am]          | من / خود / خودم |
| Meaning            | Maana                   | معنا            |
| Moon               | Mahh                    | ماه             |
| Moorland           | Mordaab                 | مردآب           |
| Mother             | Maadar                  | مادر            |
| Music              | Mouzik/Mousziequee      | موزیک / موسیقی  |
| Musk               | Moshk                   | مُشک            |
| Mute               | Maatt                   | مات             |
| Name               | Naam                    | نام             |
| New                | Noe                     | نو              |
| Ordeal             | Erdaaly                 | لرد آلی         |
| Paw                | Panjeh [of five digits] | پنجبه           |
| Plumage            | Par-o-Bal               | پر و بال        |

|                     |                  |            |
|---------------------|------------------|------------|
| Polluted            | Alloudeh         | آلوده      |
| Prowl               | Parseh           | پرسیم      |
| Puissant            | Pour-Zoor        | پُرس زور   |
| Pure                | Paak             | پاک        |
| Ribbon              | Roubban          | رُوبان     |
| River               | Roude            | رود        |
| Road                | Raah             | راه        |
| Root                | Reeshe/ Reshtteh | ریشه/ رشته |
| Rose/Red            | Rose/Sorch       | روزه/ سرخ  |
| Secret              | Serr/Raaz        | سِر/ راز   |
| Shadow              | Saaye            | سایه       |
| Sight               | Baserah          | باصره      |
| Silence             | Sekoot           | سکوت       |
| Sound               | Seddah           | صد         |
| Slippage            | Laqgzesh         | لغزش       |
| Sphere/Surface/Page | Safhe            | صفحه       |
| Star                | Settareh         | ستاره      |
| Stone               | Sang             | سنگ        |
| Tobacco             | Tanbakoo         | تنباکو     |
| Vassal              | Vassel           | واسل       |
| Vast                | Vasze/Vassey     | وازد/ وسیع |
| Verb/Word           | Vaggeh           | واژه       |
| Virtual             | Vagheii          | واقعی      |
| Vision/Visionary    | Vaheey           | وَحی       |
| Vital               | Vajeb            | واجب       |
| Vogue [Current]     | Ravaj/Rayyej     | رواج/ رایج |

**ILLUSTRATIONS**

---



[Fig. 1] Passional of Abbess Kunigunde, MS XIV A 17, fol. 7v  
National & University Library, Prague. (1314 and 1321).





[Fig.2] 'Image du Monde'. Paris, BN, MS fr. 547, fol. 140r. (1171)







[Fig.4] Cistercian Nun. Private Collection,  
Aachen (early fourteenth century)

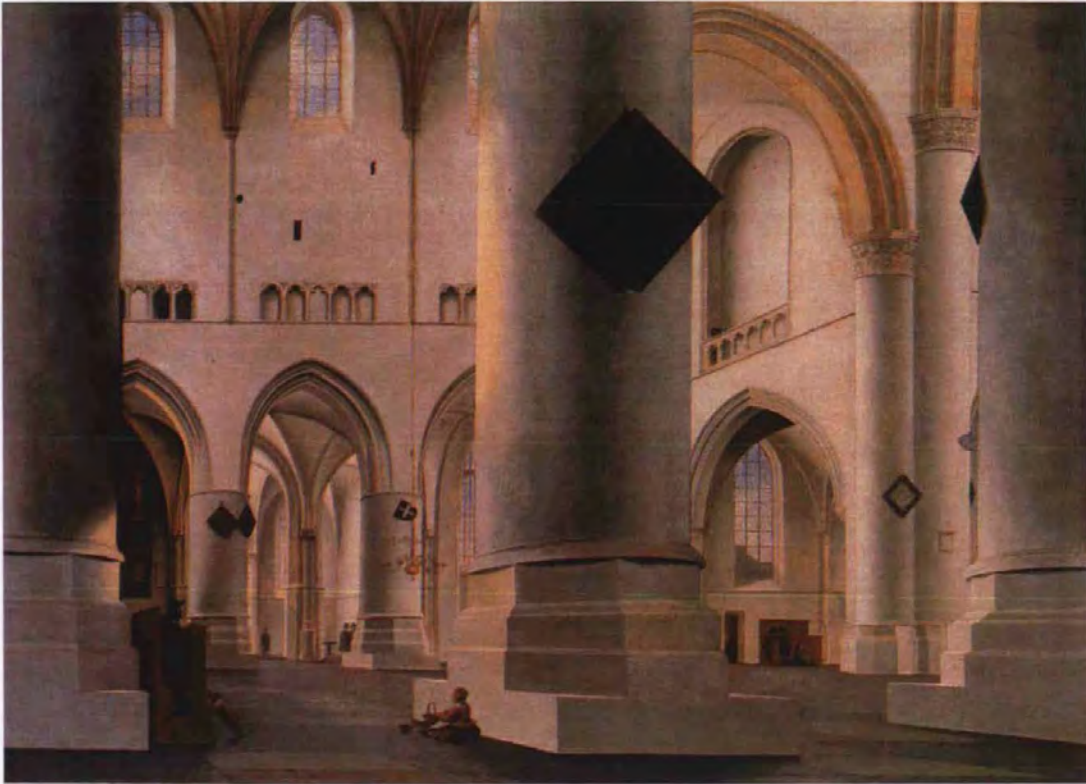


[Fig.5] Gwen John 'A Corner of the Artist's Room in Paris' (c.1907-9)  
Oil on canvas 32.5 x 26.5 cms.





14. [Fig.6] Vincent van Gogh 'The Artist's Bedroom' (October 1888) Oil on canvas 72 x 90 cms.

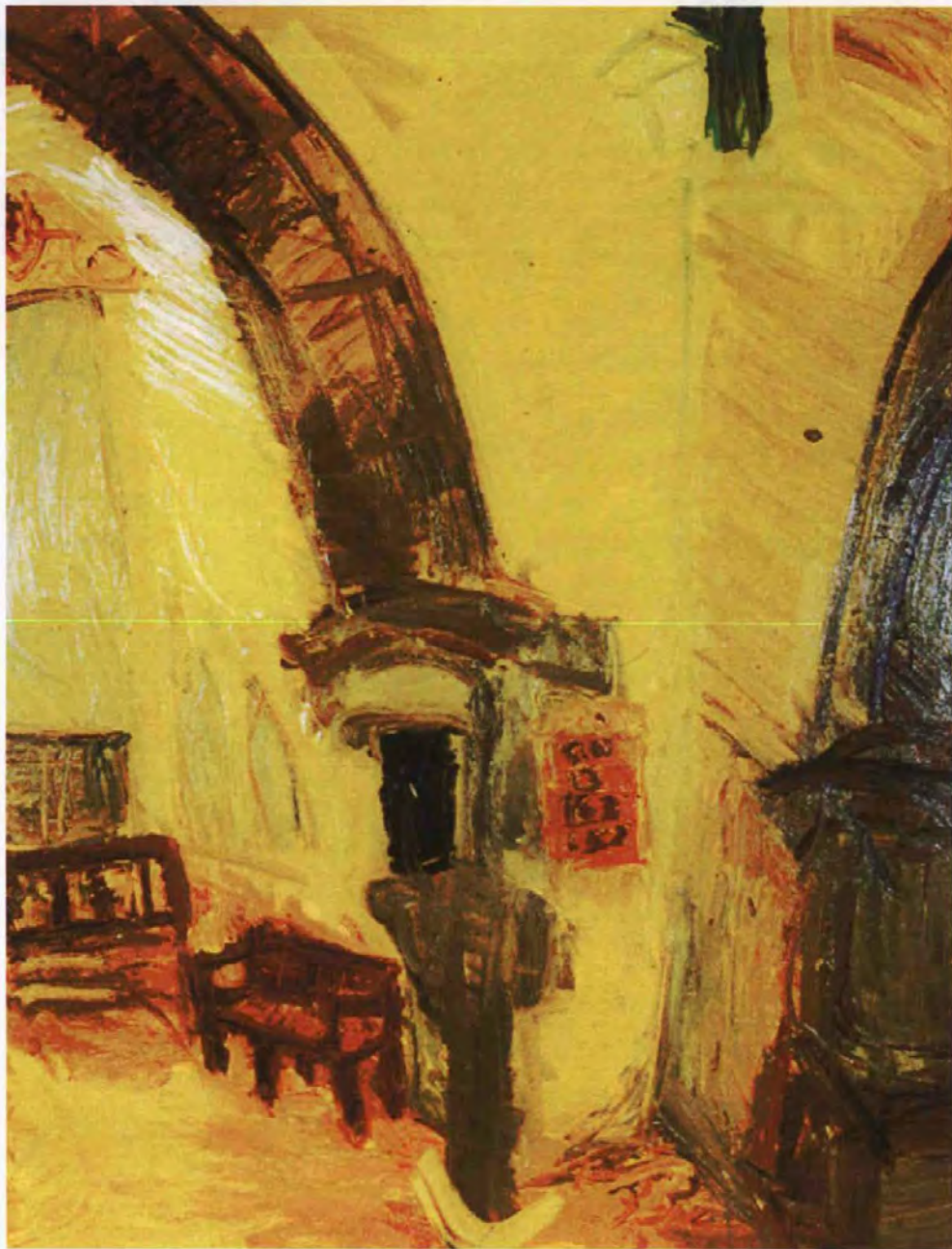


[Fig.7] Pieter Saenredam 'The Grote Kerk, Haarlem' Oil on panel 59.5 x 81.7 cms.  
(c.1635)





[Fig.8] Pieter de Hooch 'The Pantry' Oil on canvas  
65 x 60.5 cms. (c. 1658)



[Fig.9] 'Lent, St. Peter's' Oil on canvas. 140 x 90 cms. (1999)



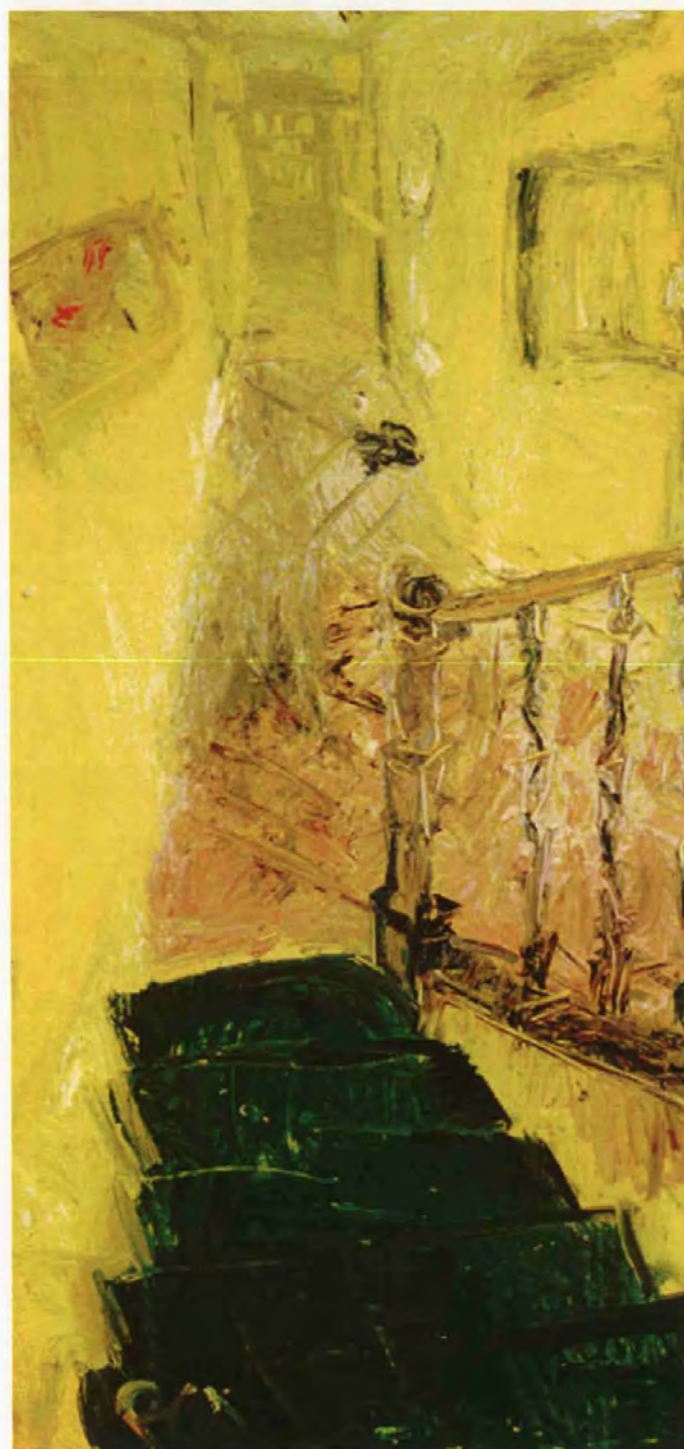
[Fig. 10] 'Open Door' Oil on canvas, 90 x 80 cms. (1999)





[Fig.11] 'The Chapel, St. Peter's' Oil on canvas. 140 x 90 cms. (1999)



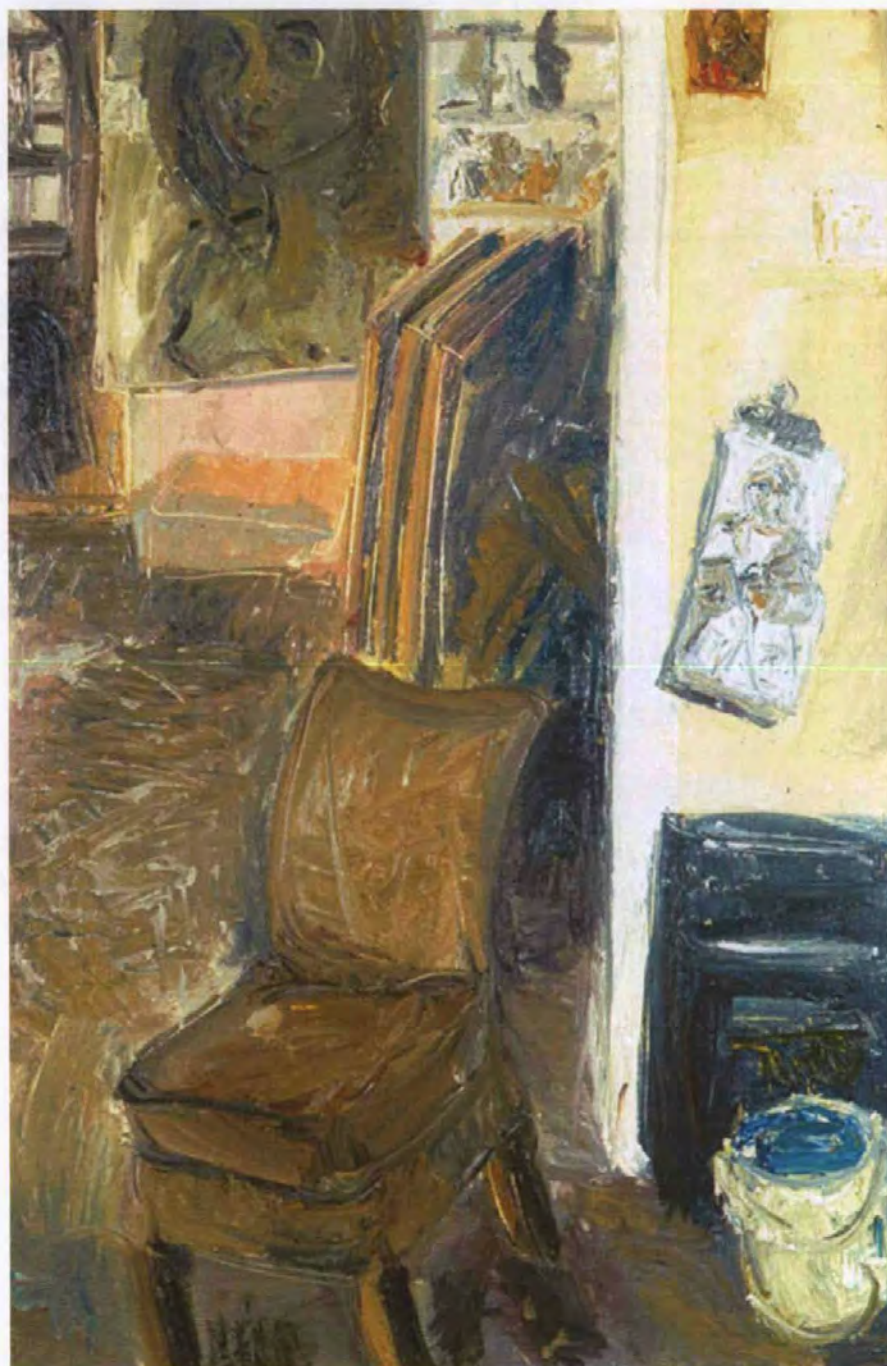


[Fig.12] 'Green Stairs' Oil on canvas.  
225 x 100 cms. (2000)



[Fig.13] 'The Red Chair' Oil on canvas. 122 x 122 cms. (2000)

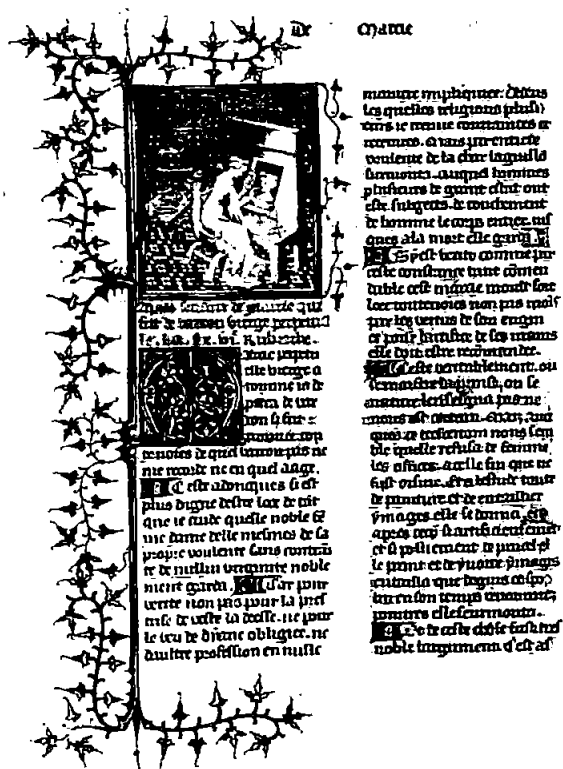




[Fig.14] 'The Studio II' Oil on canvas. 130 x 95 cms. (1999)



[Fig.15] 'The Studio, white slippers' Oil on panel. 122 x 122 cms. (2000)



**[Fig. 16] Miniature showing Marcia, c. 1402 from a French translation of Boccaccio's 'Concerning Famous Women'.**



[Fig.17] Miniature showing Marcia, c.1404  
from a French translation of Boccaccio's  
'Concerning Famous Women'.





[Fig. 18] Sofonisba Anguissola 'Self-portrait Painting the Virgin and Child'. Oil on canvas. 66 x 57 cms. (1556)



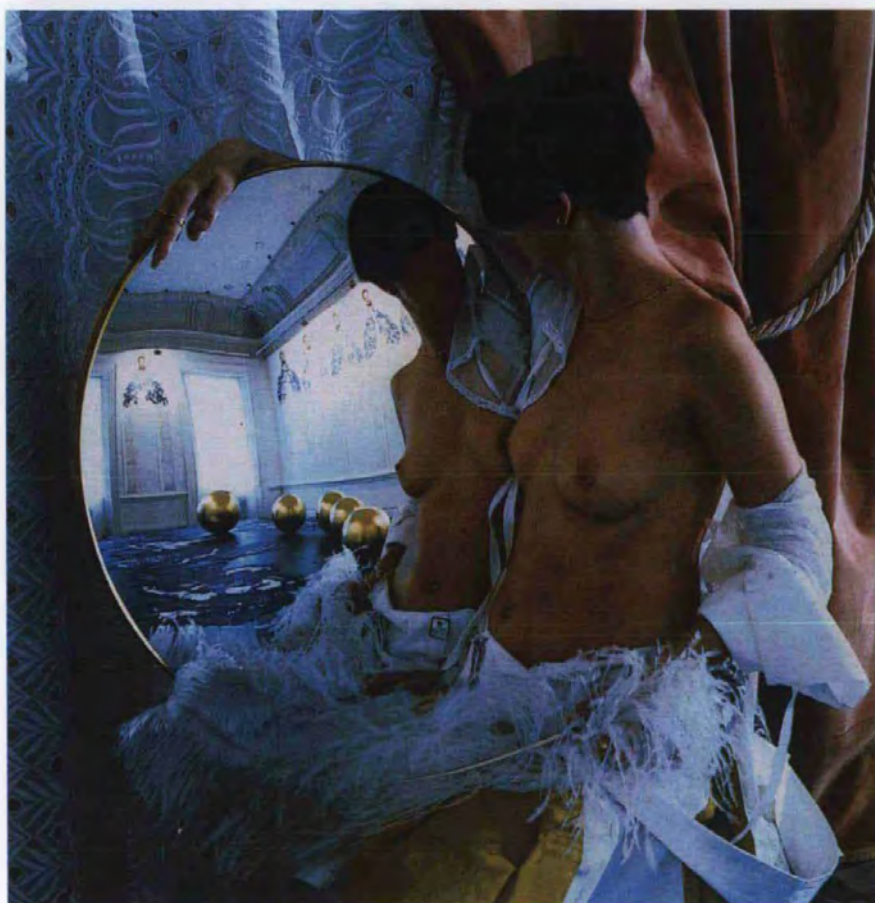


[Fig.19] Frida Kahlo, 'Self-Portrait' Oil on canvas. 62 x 47.5 cms. (1940)



[Fig.20] Leonora Carrington, 'Self-Portrait' Oil on canvas. 81 x 64.5 cms. (1936-37)



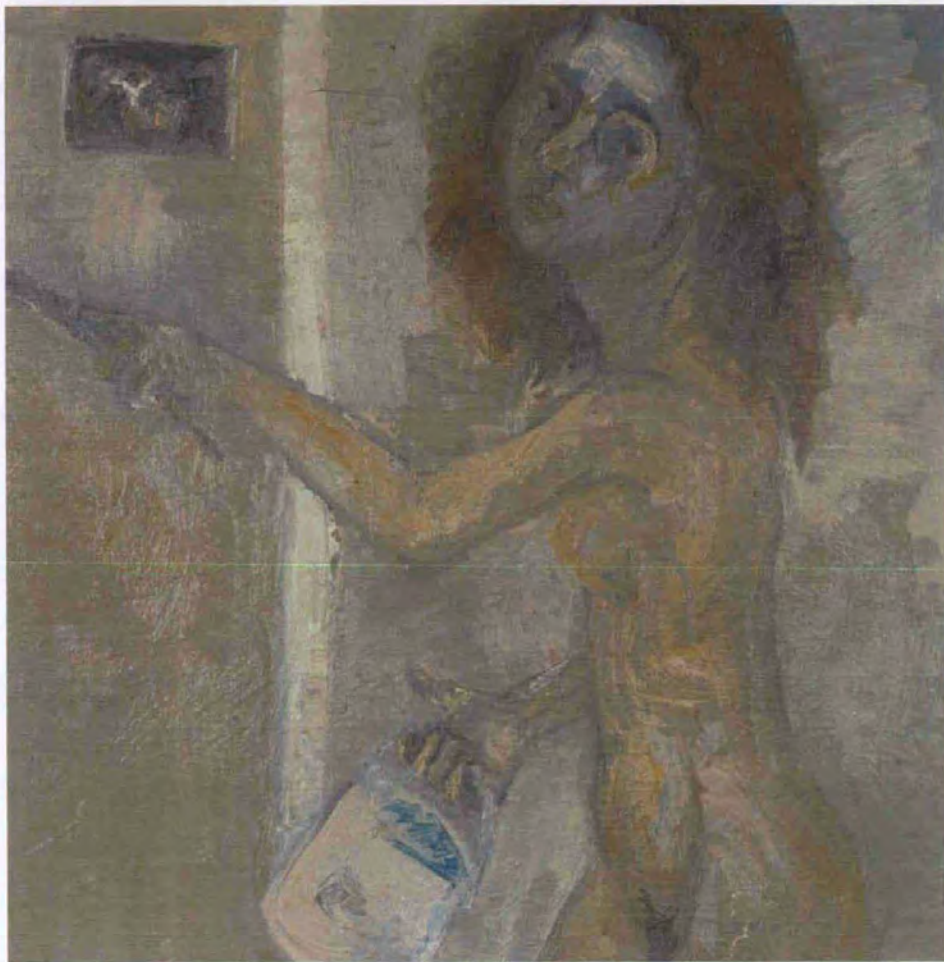


[Fig.21] Helen Chadwick 'Vanity II' An image from a large installation cibachrome photograph mounted in 60.9 cms. diameter circular matt. (1986)

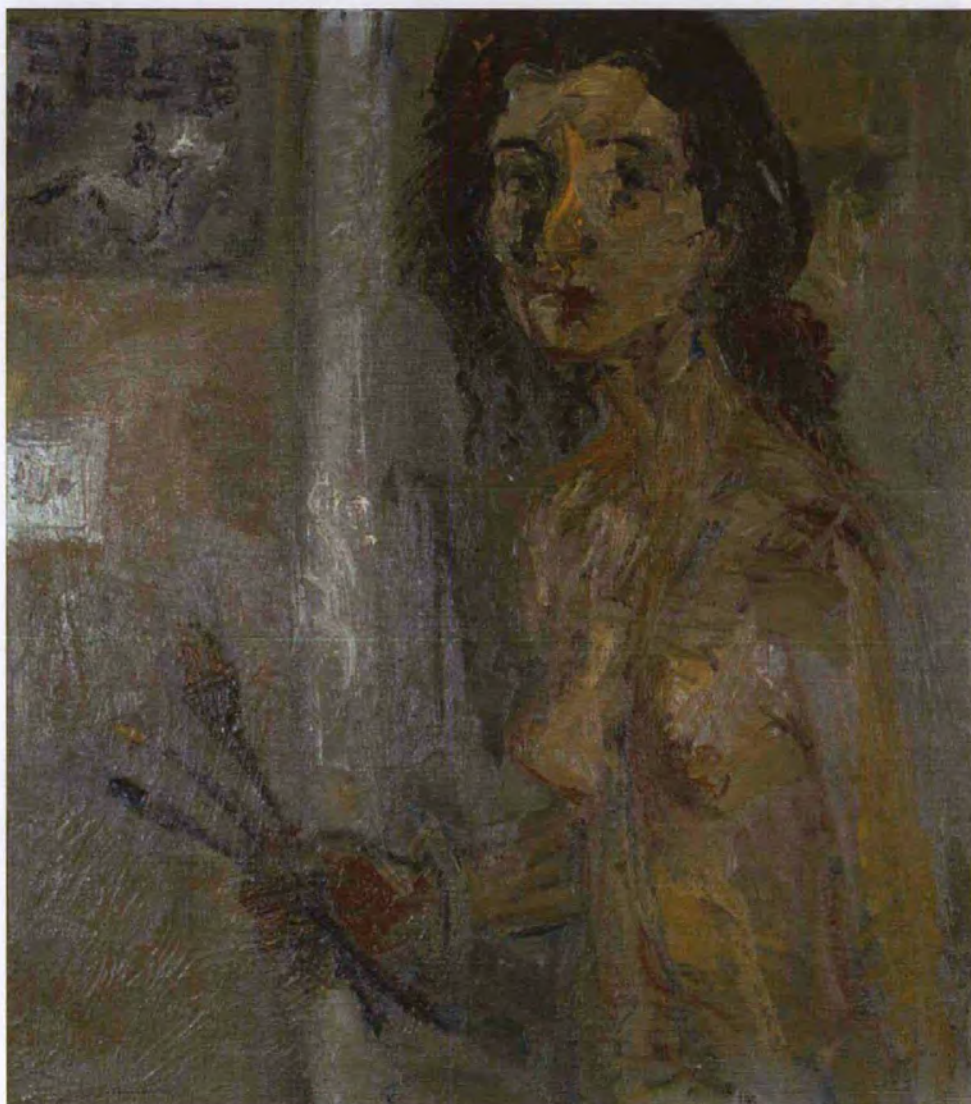


[Fig.22] 'Painting Myself' Oil on canvas. 100 x 100 cms. (2000)





[Fig.23] 'Self Portrait with Goya' Oil on panel. 122 x 122 cms. (1999)



[Fig.24] 'Self Portrait with brushes' Oil on canvas. 90 x 70 cms. (2000)





[Fig.25] 'Drawing (Self)' Pencil on graph paper. 35 x 40 cms. (1999)



[Fig.26] 'Looking in the Mirror' Oil on canvas.  
160 x 120 cms. (1998)





[Fig.27] 'With Bra' Oil on panel.  
145 x 50 cms. (1998)



[Fig.28] 'Drawing with Postcards' Pencil and chalk on paper. 70 x 50 cms. (2000)

So she must have been pleased with us,  
who did not forgo our heritage

at the grave-edge;  
she must have been pleased

with the straggling company of the brush and quill  
who did not deny their birthright;

she must have been pleased with us  
for she looked so kindly at us

under her drifts of veils,  
and she carried a book.

[H.D. *Trilogy: Tribute to the Angels*, 35]

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> My use of the word *Logos* is strictly in relation to the word, the conscious intellect, and the ego. The word *Eros* is more complex. Generally associated with the emotions, feelings, and projection of love, and even sexual desire, I use this word to place the source and function of the image, as embedded in unconscious material, and therefore correlate – albeit loosely – the image with the less rational and subjective feeling-oriented part of the ego. – “While verbal communication is associated with Logos, the world of the secret (and hence of silence) is tied up with Eros, the realm of emotions.” [Carotenuto 1989, 93] The Logos was given the masculine(-ized) platform as the ‘Idea of Ideas’, representative of all intelligent and creative sources. Philo of Alexandria’s Platonic concept of the Logos, was thus inherited by first the Jews, and later the Christians. The church adopted this Logos spirit, as “[...] mediator between God and Man”, which Philo regarded as ‘the first begotten Son of God, the man of God, and the image of God.’ [See: *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 1991 Notes 474-5]. In *Gender and Genius*, Battersby, explores with aplomb, the (mostly Greek originated) philosophical traditions, which upheld the male as supreme principle of reason, and embodiment of the abstract, but highly powerful logos, which reproduces itself, in some kind of spiritual-seed; a mono-gendered tree of ancestry, which begins with God the Father, and extends to man on earth. As this research points out, these ideas persist well into our own era, namely through psychological influences such as Jung, Freud, etc., thus still affecting the shape of our perceptions, and representations of the gender divide. – “Jung the product of Romanticism, joined a patrilineal tradition that stretches back all the way to Aristotle, the Stoics, and the founding Fathers of the Western Church. Jung would have us believe that this tradition represents ancient wisdom. But the Gnostics know better: they suggested that it is wilful male blindness that shapes the ancient prejudice.” [Battersby 1994, 71] Following the notion of the *secret*, Jung in his autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* speaks of ‘the secret’ in terms of an unconscious drive for the psyche to assert its individual identity, by embracing the inevitable detachment and isolation that is an important aspect of growth and self-hood. – “There is no better means of intensifying the treasured feeling of individuality than the possession of a secret which the individual is pledged to guard. The very beginnings of societal structures reveal the craving for secret organisations [...] The secret society is an intermediary stage on the way to individuation. The individual is still relying on a collective organisation to effect his differentiation for him; [...] Like the initiate of a secret society who has broken free from the undifferentiated collectivity, the individual on his lonely path needs a secret which for various reasons he may not or cannot reveal. Such a secret reinforces him in the isolation of his individual aims. A great many individuals cannot bear this isolation [...] The need for such a secret is in many cases so compelling that the individual finds himself involved in ideas and actions for which he is no longer responsible. He is being motivated by neither caprice nor arrogance, but by a *dira necessitas* which he himself cannot comprehend. This necessity comes down upon him with savage fatefulness, and perhaps for the first time in his life demonstrates to him *ad oculos* the presence of something alien and more powerful than himself in his own most personal domain.” [Jung 1961, 374-7] – Jean Rhys’s *enunciative* language expresses this un-definable *thing*: *secret*, in poetic prose: – “He spoke politely enough, but I could feel his dislike and contempt. The same contempt as that devil’s when she said, ‘Taste my bull’s blood’. Meaning that will make you a man. Perhaps. Much I cared for what they thought of me! As for her, I’d forgotten her for a moment. So I shall never understand why, suddenly, bewilderingly, I was certain that everything I had imagined to be truth was false. False. Only the magic and the dream are true – all the rest is a lie. Let it go. Here is the secret. Here. (But it is lost, that secret, and those who know it cannot tell it). Not lost. I had found it in a hidden place and I’d keep it, hold it fast. As I’d hold her.” [Rhys 1966, 138] This undefined *something*, this *secret* is perhaps at the axis of what I would consider the will towards a poetic expression. Heidegger’s analogy of language as following the thread or “trail” of thinking, until one can reconfigure that something into poetic language can perhaps offer a philosophical parallel to the above. – “[...] Every thinking that is on the trail of something is a poetising, and all poetry a thinking. Each coheres with the other on the basis of the saying that has already pledged itself to the unsaid, the saying whose thinking is a thanking.” [Heidegger 1959, ed. 1978, 425]

<sup>2</sup> See Ann Boldt’s notes in the introduction to her translation of Bataille’s *Inner Experience* [1988], where she quotes from *La Prise de la Concorde* [1974], Hollier’s definition of ‘*ipseity*’, as: – “The differential quality of an individual who is irreplaceable and incomparable, which is itself (*ipse*) and not another.” thus giving *ipseity* to also mean “[...] an identity to ones’ self as conservation of this individual differential beyond the changes that affect it.” [9]

<sup>3</sup> There are parallels in the methodology of my practice with Blanchot’s “pure space and ecstatic time” of “everything present and absent” [Blanchot 1955], and with some of Heidegger’s ideas, in *Being and Time* [1927, 385]. – “By the opening up of a world, all things gain their lingering and hastening, their

remoteness, and nearness; their scope and limits. In a world's worlding is gathered that spaciousness out of which the protective grace of the gods is granted or withheld. Even this doom, of the god remaining absent is a way in which world worlds. A work, by being a work, marks space for that spaciousness." [Heidegger 1935 ed. Farrell Krell 1993, 170] The dangers of using words such as 'absence' and 'nothingness' are clear in my mind; and I want to stress that notion of a moribund space or expression are not part of my either my artistic or theoretical engagement. Emig traces the nihilism in modernist poetry inspired by Heidegger, - "Death, the limit against which modernist poetry has to defend itself both internally and as the macrocosmic enterprise of producing art in the face of inevitable destruction, is turned into a constructive force by Heidegger. To come into existence, man has to learn about his mortality. [...] The modernist project in all its variants is clearly a balancing on the borderlines of its own possibility and destruction. Language supplies both the original source of authentic Being and the means of its decline to inauthenticity. The rift is incurable, and it opens up in the ambiguity, arbitrariness and potential emptiness of the sign itself. It reverberates through the textual structures depending on it where it produces the obscurity, ambiguity and fragmentation so dearly beloved as superficial characterisations of modernism." [Emig 1995, 231] Although I do not wish to place my work within any particular 'ism', it would be more sincere to admit at the outset, that my interest and preoccupations are embedded in works that are projected within the cultural history now commonly termed and defined as 'Modernism'; and to conclude as a footnote to a beginning, I aim at fulfilling the ambition of taking further the poetic project(s) of Modernism, framed rigorously by a feminist-oriented politics which is founded on the demanding critique of self and other. Griselda Pollock writing on the subject of *Painting, Feminism and History*, defines the complexities with which I am preoccupied and per force obliged to express in my work. - "[...] the body of the painter and the body of woman - the signs of difference - stand opposed in modernist culture, caught up in the series of binary oppositions which figure sexual difference to us across these inter-related domains. Feminist practices cannot simply abandon either of these bodies, but whatever constitutes the feminism of the practice results from the necessity to *signify* a relation to this complex. That is not the same as desiring somehow to have a share in the painter's body while producing new meanings for the feminine body. They exist as a relation, fabricated interdependently across the disparate spaces which make up culture. Thus feminist interventions in the spaces of representation have begun to qualify and differentiate the feminine bodies fabricated in culture's inter-facing hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality and age. [...] The freedom here is not imaginary self-realization within the confines of the canvas, but the register of concrete struggles on and beyond the battlefield of representation." [Pollock 2001, 87]

<sup>4</sup> The Greek word for 'mystic' is "*mustes*: initiated person" [OED]; related to "*muein*: to initiate into sacred rites" [Collins English Dictionary]

<sup>5</sup> Helen Vendler's sibylline call of "duty" to the "poet" rings a true note with my own intentions and drive. - "And the first duty of any poet is to reconfigure felt experience in an analogic rhythm - prosodic, syntactic or structural." [1995, 15]

<sup>6</sup> It interests me that the word 'God' in Farsi is Khoda = خدا, which is rooted in the word for 'self'/'one-self', Khod = خود. Which therefore makes of the word God, that which is off/from the Self.

<sup>7</sup> Deleuze in an essay/chapter titled *Life as a Work of Art* speaks about the archaeology and genealogy, of self, in terms of reformulating a geological graph that would demonstrate "an archaeology of the present." This is a poetically formulated insight into the essential flow of self-realisation and Becoming. From the viewpoint of a feminist (re)-reading of histories and ideas, however, although I am attracted by Deleuze's enunciation to "break words and sentences", I'm not sure whether the thing that has altered them, - ie: a broader, more just intervention and inclusion of the feminine in the order of things, - is actually an aim integral to his thinking. It seems to me that "the contrast of light and things" remains still only an outside object [ie: the other as the excluded one, the lack], whose only task is to act as the catalytic absentee, whose force of vision can help enlighten and make more rounded that which is already established as **the** visible one. - "And what is visible at a given period corresponds to its system of lighting and the scintillations, mirrorings, flashes produced by the contrast of light and things. We have to break words and sentences, too, and find what's altered them." [Deleuze 1995, 95]

<sup>8</sup> I am using the term '*lingual*' - [see: *Collins English Dictionary*; - adjective: relating to the tongue; relating to language or languages; articulated with the tongue; a lingual consonant, such as -*lingually*: adv.], - in order to give myself the space and possibility to play with the sound and correlations of meaning between words of different cultures. I am interested in the 'in-between' of things; the way in which transcription or translation of one sound seems to relate or connect to another; one set of meanings appear to evoke and promote another set of meanings altogether. Perhaps this mutation of things is also similar to the way [hi]-stories are often re-told in different modes and guises. [see: Appendix:- *Crossing Lingual [Border]land/lines*]

<sup>9</sup> This "autonomy" perhaps may be considered in the light of Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe's essay "*Kant's Ghost, Among Others*" [Florence & Foster (eds.) 2000], in which he argues for the feminist approaches to art practice by way of recalling and re-defining the Kantian ghost of the "autonomous subject" and perhaps as a support system for engaging with "[...] identification, description, or invocation of feminine sublimines" [111]; - this, in relation to the individual's "freedom of thought" in configuring "an aesthetic experience". - "The Kantian subject is a problem because of its autonomy. In the art world no one wants the art object to be



about autonomy, despite everyone wanting it to be about people thinking for themselves.” [108]. Having now moved passed the literal reading(s) that provided modernist [male] artist the means and ways in which Kant’s “judging Subject” could be tailored to an apparently avant-garde order of things, whilst being still firmly established in the ethical plains of a male-construed ethical past, Gilbert-Rolfe likens the contemporary conviction of practice and critique functioning in an apparently anti-Kantian art world [103], to the way in which Ophelia’s ghost may be read as not so much a cancelling out, but a re-allocation of the image and the symbolic, - a kind of agenda that knowingly subverts things. - “If one grants the logic of Ophelia’s death her absent ghost might be heard to ask why some symbolic withdrawals are more equal than others. The answer would be because you can only withdraw once, but art develops, in the interest of which feminist art has used negation in a way directly continuous with its employment by modernism and its successor/s in the art world at large: not exemplary withdrawal but exemplary refusal, communicated through inversion as assertion – although irreversible withdrawal is not a plausible option in art, symbolic withdrawal is its life blood.”[105]. By way of extending this idea of a feminine sublime or a feminist renegotiation of aesthetics I am aware, that with regard to the various genres and mediums of work being offered to my viewer and reader, of promoting a complexity of responses. However, my justification for both my methodology of research, and approaches to ‘subject matter’ rests on one thing – a will towards defining the complexities that reside in my own *Self as Subject*. - “[...] - then it follows that without aesthetics (or quarrel over aesthetics, which is almost the same thing) the work of art cannot be a place where one finds a subject which is the product of questioning the constitution of the subject. Like the subject which, even if, [...] better described through its heteronomy than its autonomy, is still one subject, works of art can only pass beyond aesthetics – or propose to do so – by remaining within it.”[113]. In further qualifying my strategies, I would go so far as to say that in the process of this research, - where I explore the notion of creatively writing the *Self* by way of acknowledging or naming the *Numinous-as-the-Beloved-that-is-the-other-to-the-I-as-Woman*, - both in my painting and writing practice I have developed a deliberate positioning of the in-between-of-things; not so much out of choice but more out of the necessity of how – as I perceive it – the psyche needs to exercise a courageous balancing act that holds on to a state of radical evolution, whilst functioning within the static strategies of all that the ‘I’ receives as the already given or the apparently unquestionable. Josef Raab, in his essay *The Metapoetic Element in Dickinson* [Grabher, Hagenbüchle, Miller (eds.) 1998, 273-95] situates Dickinson’s poetry in Kantian philosophy, an almost-modernist voice that hovers between certainty and doubt. - “In her work, Emily Dickinson has transferred to the realm of poetry the Kantian question of the relation between subject and object. How do we recognize what we recognize? What Kant calls *transzendental* (our way of recognizing and knowing) and *transzendent* (that which goes beyond the boundaries of empirical experience) were also central concerns of Dickinson. As the metapoetic element of her work demonstrates, Kant’s interest in epistemology is also hers. Dickinson can be said to have completed the Copernican shift in poetry, since with her the word (the poet’s concept or thought) determines the object to which it refers, not vice versa – an insight which was to find its counterpart in physics with Werner Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle.” [293]

The term *other/lautre*, which occurs within so many different contexts and intentions, in the texts of 20th century philosophy, may not always take on the meaning of ‘alterity’, or difference. For Emmanuel Levinas, the other is an ethical and therefore religious “responsibility”. He challenges the long-standing tradition of philosophical thought, which has centred ontological debate on the concept of Being, and in effect not tackled the misrepresentation, which tends to allow ontology to reduce “the other to the same by interposition of a middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being” [Levinas 1961, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. 43]. On the other hand, Derrida’s term, which he coined with intentional irony, *différance* - denotes not so much difference of gender consciousness, as in a literary-philosophical awareness of identifying with the world, from the stance of the self, being the same as the other. Also, the verb ‘defer’, as implied in Derrida’s coinage, makes of the present tense of relating to the other, an unpredictable vacancy, which by definition of posing a space of deferment, implies the possibility of an insincere vision/reception of the other’s separate truth-being. Derrida’s interest in the ‘other’ rests mostly on the relationship of literary text, or inventive language, and the inherited (metaphysics) ideas of Western philosophy. The linguistic approach to the subject as the ‘I’ who is of the world – within a framework of place, time, history – makes Lacan’s [the] other an object of desire (for ‘knowledge’), and self-reflective sameness, that is given shape by the imagination. “Who, then, is this other to whom I am more attached than to myself, since, at the heart of my assent to my own identity it is still he who agitates me?” [Lacan 1966, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. 172]. In her reading of Plato’s *Hystera*, Irigaray points out the age-old, and it seems as yet unchanged ‘circle of the identical’ which in (the Platonic) God’s various “movements [...] turning around his still centre would be indistinguishable from the exhaustive production of self (as) same – the matrix of all representations [...] Thus, when a man looks into the mirror of another man’s eye, he knows nothing of the back of that eye; the point of view of the same’s other (l’autre du même) is hidden from view just like, and unlike, its backside.” [Irigaray 1974, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. 1985, 336]. Irigaray’s reading of Plato confirms - with ironic inference to the still persistent attitudes of ‘logocentric’ philosophical discourse - that in fact the idea of God the Father, as ultimate Eye and Mind, is the male model image or representation of himself - hence ‘phallogocentric’ - this male-same-God has, “from all eternity [...] known and contained the outcome of

every enunciation, of which he has also been the source. He is telos and/or arkhe who makes every speaker "in truth" a "subject" of his logos alone." [Irigaray 1985(a), 337]

<sup>11</sup> In the chapter titled: *Maternal Genealogy and the Symbolic*, Whitford quotes from Irigaray's (French text), *Ethique de la différence sexuelle* [1984] her re-configurations of the idea of Language as a place, a house, or an entity, - taken from the root concepts on language in Heidegger's use of the same simile, - to a gendered issue, whereby women can negotiate a place of "access to society and to culture". Irigaray's case for establishing a lineage from the mother insists on that women must learn to have access to the very abode of language: - "If women don't have access to society and to culture: - they remain in a state of dereliction in which they neither recognise or love themselves/each other; - they lack mediation for the operations of sublimation; - love is impossible for them." (E: 70);" ' and ' "[...] they need language, a language. That house of language which for men even constitutes a substitute for his home in a body, [...] woman is used to construct it, but (as a result?) is not available to her." ' (E: 105) [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(a), 81]

<sup>12</sup> Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi's (1207-1273) mystical friendship with Shems of Tabriz, became a journey towards God. Their love and gnostically oriented relationship brought both men to the brink of selflessness. Burning within the white heat of religious fervour, they experienced total immersion in the Love of God, via the love of each other. A jouissance deeply 'saturated' in Sufi mysticism: - "Every part of me was saturated with love, until / Nothing remained but my name. All else was him". There are many examples of (male) friendship, in both literature and literary biographies. These memorable encounters set the blue-print ideal of friendship, as the most poignant human relationship, a fraternity whose nobility is based on freedom and a blameless striving towards the highest 'good'; ie: Achilles and Patroclus, in the Iliad, Dante (as his guide of course, the legendary partnership of master and apprentice with Virgil) and Beatrice, Robinson Crusoe and Friday, Gilgamesh and Enkidu. It is interesting to note that such union between opposing genders, often result in death; this is true of Pelleas and Melisande, Tristan and Isolde, and Romeo and Juliet. Within the realms of recent popular culture, the female protagonists in the film *Thelma and Louise*, also resolve their moment of friendship and self-liberation, in a somewhat violent transcendental finale; a kind of flight from reality, into a fantasy beyond, as they drive above the void expanse of the grand canyon, holding hands and, it seems, defying death itself. Perhaps, it would not be too unfitting, to consider the long and creatively profitable relationship, which Gertrude Stein had with Alice B Toklas, as a modern ideal of such a friendship.

<sup>13</sup> I am aware that much of what I practice as both painter and writer, may be read within the (voluminously critiqued) boundaries of modernist thinking, which propounds a pseudo-religious bathos expressed through the idea of art as a transcendent arena of (self)-creation [Eliot, Lawrence, and even Joyce]. The dichotomy of all institutionalised religion represents, in it's varied examples of bigotry, self-righteousness, vicious misogyny, abuse and destructiveness of the 'other' as the unknown or unrelenting culture, creed, and colour, not to mention the absurd claims of an invisible, intangibly immaterial source of power, - challenge to whose authority would be deemed as the highest form of treason, - is fully present and clear to my mind. Nevertheless, it is the evocative pull where the gaps between art and religion come to be linked, that is profoundly significant to my practice. Despite the political agenda(s) by which I try to act/work, the symbolic and ritualistic elements of both art and religion, - which function on an a-prior hierarchised system of signs, an unabashed suspension of dialectic mindfulness as to the finite source and authenticity of 'meaning', with the promise of giving comfort and a sense of protection in the face of [humanist] despair, whilst remaining always unrequited and in the realms of the irreproachable, - are at the axis of my methodology as both painter and writer. This deliberately manoeuvred position is not simply a feminist version of "literature is religion without theology." [Mathew Arnold]. Nor do I wish to establish a dictatorship of the woman artist/writer as the Creator who is - like her predecessor male artist/writer - mysteriously transcendental in whatever that she generates, independent and miraculously functioning outside of all known laws. My personal 'crusade', as such, is to develop a methodology that stems from the roots, and processes of all that the history of art and literature has already founded, aiming at negotiating a re-configuration that would transform and rename the given codes, conventions and canons, hence initiating a fresh, as yet nameless structure of Becoming; within which newly devised structures of thinking the feminine is not simply regarded as: 'in her own right', but more a promoter of an unknown, hereto marginalized mode and practice of self-expression.

<sup>14</sup> Much brilliant and incisive research and archaeological work has already made a serious arena of discussion and progress in this field. Philosophical texts by thinker such as Marina Warner, Janice Raymond, Pamela Sue Anderson, Christine Battersby, Elizabeth Grosz, Fatima Mernissi, amongst many others have extended and disrupted the dialogue of the patriarchal myth-language of religion by foregrounding new feminist-readings. Whilst the re-translations of Judaic texts, and new transcriptions of the *Nag Hammadi Bible* have turned much that has hitherto been accepted as unassailable truths, into archaeological interest and philosophical material.

<sup>15</sup> Unlike the Aristotelian idea of God as the First Mover, who dispassionately fashions the world and leaves it in the hands of humankind. This God of the Bible is the transcendental paternal figure; God makes,

divides, creates categories, decrees laws and boundaries, metes out punishment, and in short maintains the status quo of the ultimate source of power.

<sup>16</sup> Hence Voltaire's aside that if God did not exist we should have to invent him, not only locates, in earnest wit, the state of human anxiety, but also the historical categorisation of God's image as being in the reflected form of man. After so much that has passed, analysed, practised and made law, in the name of God - who represents the Other for man, the material embodiment of the divine on earth - how can I, as woman, appeal to, speak of, and aspire to a similar blessed wholeness. Where must I seek to meet with a god who will reflect my own image back onto myself? - The 'we' of Voltaire, the 'mankind' of the male. Even Spinoza's '*Pantheism*' does not, necessarily or clearly, include womankind as amongst those in the world, within which God is present. This abstract entity, wielder of power, and maker of decrees, remains forever absent, unknown, and unseen. Like a disembodied monster we are told of the hand that reaches down to our realms, moulding and shaping heaven and earth, from this dark void that 'was upon the face of the deep' [*Genesis* 1:2]. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre seems to almost conclude that as the presence of God cannot be tangibly cited or proven, then this blank, 'missing' agent, presumed to be God does not in fact exist. - "Everything happens as if the world, man, and man-in-the world succeeded in realising only a missing God." [Sartre 1956 trans. 623].

<sup>17</sup> The actual giving of a name to 'the woman' only takes place after 'the fall'. She of the 'help meet' becomes therefore mother to Adam's offspring, and wife to God's son. She becomes a separate and nameable entity because - by the default of original sin, i.e. desire, passion, love, - she now belongs to the Father's genealogy; thus she is named at that crucial moment of belonging. [*Gen.* 4.20] In Iran the name is whispered by an elder, into the newborn's ear within minutes of birth. Often it is the grandmother who breathes the name into the newborn body, bringing to wakefulness that state of pre-natal sleep. This first naming-word that is whispered, is considered as almost sacred, or at least of far more importance than any state, or social contract of a name that relates to the genealogy of the father's inherited second name.

<sup>18</sup> I am here taking the philosophical risk of using Lock's definition of the word/term Idea, which he deciphers for his "reader", in the introduction of *Innate Notions* - "It being that term which, I think, serves best to stand for whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks, I have used it to express whatever is meant by phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking [...]" [*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1671, edition 1961, 4-5]

<sup>19</sup> Luce Irigaray in her *Questions to Emmanuel Levinas: On the divinity of love*, cites a parallel hypothesis in her dialectic dialogue with the historical imaginary: - "[...] is it possible to assimilate philosophy and theology until one has interpreted what is at stake in monotheism? In my opinion, it is not. Is monotheism wisdom or a patriarchal and masculine passion? The obligation to believe or to give one's allegiance, the injunction not to touch, form an integral part of a monotheism which conceals its passionate nature. But monotheistic religions cannot claim to be ethical, unless they submit themselves to a radical interrogation relative to the sexual attribution [*caractère sexué*] of their paradigms; whether these are God, the ways in which God is referred to (in particular the masculine gender used by language, when he is not represented pictorially), God's commandments, etc." [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(b), 184-5]

<sup>20</sup> Irigaray follows her logic through from Levinas' use of the word *autre* = Other, pointing out that the other cannot merely support the abstract notion of Being, it must have a 'face', a voice, a truly perceived and delineated alterity. Irigaray looks to answer why she is not convinced by this system of ethics, which somehow is echoed in Levinas' philosophy. - "[...] I used the term 'woman lover' [*l'amante*] and not, as Levinas does, the word 'beloved' [*aimée*]. In this way, I wanted to signify that the woman can be a subject in love [*un sujet amoureux*] and is not reducible to a more or less immediate object of desire. Man and woman, woman and man can love each other in reciprocity as subject, and not only in that transitive fashion whereby the man loves the woman, one accomplishing the act of love to which the other submits, already in the past tense, in passive. [...] So the woman's pleasure is alienated to that of the man, according to the most traditional of scenarios of temptation and fall. In my opinion, if there is a fall, it is located in the reduction of the feminine to the passive, to the past tense and to the object of man's pleasure, in the identification of the woman with the beloved (*aimée*)." [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(b), 185]

<sup>21</sup> Notwithstanding, that both the scribed word and image can be a tangible celebration of the divine element within the Christian belief, it is a defiance of the second Commandment. The Muslim and Judaic religions forbid any iconic imagery of the divine, which might pertain to the earthly, human proportions or ideas of form. Animals and scrolls of vegetation are instead employed, as embellishment within a symbolic set of references to the mystic and religious texts, or as indication of the earthly bounties, that have been bestowed by God's benevolence.

<sup>22</sup> Throughout this thesis I refer to the practice of psychiatry, - psychoanalysis - mostly with the intention and commenting from the (limited) back-ground understanding of Jungian practices; since any knowledge of Freudian thought that I may have is for the most part based on my readings of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, or secondary texts in reference to Freudian practice and structures.

<sup>23</sup> The psychological 'shadow'-story in the myth of St. George, in which the forces of evil energies - represented by the damsel-snatching dragon - versus the good and heroically redemptive self - in the form of the young knight figure - functions on several layers. Primarily the virginal abduction is symbolic of the



appropriation of the purity of (institutionalised) faith and worship. The, naked, disarmed, and imprisoned state of the nubile female becomes the passive, unguarded shadow of an unmindful consciousness, whose voice-less and powerless position is in itself sexually arousing whilst given as an example to be warned against. Thus, ironically the so-called enemy or the *other* is portrayed by and in the depiction of the imaginary symbolism of both the exotic beastliness of the dragon, and the provocative virginity of the abducted young woman.

<sup>24</sup> Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi's (1207-1273) mystical friendship with Shems of Tabriz, became a journey towards God. Their love and gnostically oriented relationship brought both men to the brink of selflessness. Burning with the white heat of mystic fervour, they experienced total immersion in the love of God, via the love of each other. [For a brief account of this mystic relationship, see: *Where Two Oceans Meet* 1992 by James Gowan]. -

- "In the early morning hour  
Just before dawn, lover and Beloved wake  
And take a drink of water.  
She asks, "Do you love me or yourself more?  
Really, tell the absolute truth."  
He says, "There's nothing left of me.  
I'm like a ruby held up to the sunrise.  
Is it still a stone, or a world  
Made of redness? It has no resistance  
To sunlight." [Rumi - vol. v]

"The Beloved says that she remains steadfast and consistent, unwavering in her love: the Lover is the inconsistent one. The Beloved says she is bewildered and deserted: the Lover appears indifferent equally to his withdrawal and to her bereavement. The Beloved remembers not only disproportionate joy, but the fantasy of the future pledged." [For a touching and erudite essay on love and the notion of the beloved, see: *Love's Work* by Gillian Rose 1995, 66]

<sup>25</sup> Eurydice, like many other female myth figures rooted in classical literature, has been taken up by feminist thinkers, writers and artists, as an inspiring principle, symbolic of the disaffected female, and the unheard voice of a woman prematurely and unjustly silenced. She has a vital role to play in my own methodology and work. [See: *My Beloved - My Muse*] I intend to adopt her as the fecund, positive face of the poetic, and artistic inspiration for the feminine poet/artist, rather than continuing the notion of her as symbolic of the moribund, shadowy, forever silenced *other* of the male poet/writer. [See: chapter/essay on Bracha lichtenberg Ettinger's series of paintings *Eurydice*; Pollock 2001, 143-169; also: H.D. *Collected Poems* 1912-1944; and: Nicole Ward Jouve 1998, 168-171]

<sup>26</sup> The Farsi word for language is literally tongue: *zaban* زبان = tongue = language.

<sup>27</sup> The rational, ordered epistemology of 'modern philosophy' (ie: Cartesian; post 17th century) has consistently centralised reason as the highest truth, - and therefore the best kind of foundation on which to base religious belief. This binary system of oppositional thinking has somehow become embedded in our culture, politics and language, giving privileged centralisation to the male as the maker and giver of the 'Symbolic'. The de-mythologising of these reductive structures of thinking is at the centre of feminist philosophy and theology. Irigaray, Kristeva, Battersby, Grosz, Butler, Gatens, Burke, Whitford, Schor, Anderson, Mernissi, Woolf, Pollock, Betterton, and so many others, have each in different ways highlighted, and helped to subvert this simplistic system of hegemony, whereby the feminine, has become identified [by 'modern philosophy'] as the irrational object, which by definition of the binary system of opposites would demand (her) to be marginalized and sacrificed to the masculine subject.

<sup>28</sup> I do not, at any point in my thesis, wish to advocate or prove some kind of Goddess tradition, in parity with the male-God. My use of the term divine is within the parameters of achieving a higher aspect of the self; a divine light that may guide and help endow to the apparent meaninglessness of the ordinary human life span with a grander, more poetic texture. To a degree (the idea) of love being interchangeable with (the idea) of God[dess] is more my intention of meaning, than some atheistic, text-based approach to love of the other. - "So it is Love, it is God, the only words worth knowing. Both mean the other and more." [Anon. 13th C. the *Cloud of Unknowing*]

<sup>29</sup> The mystic's beloved differs from the secular psychoanalytically philosophised other; it is neither Lacan's "image of one's own body", nor as he refers to it, Freud's "Ideal I". [Lacan 1977, trans. 2-3] For Lacan, the concept of the *other* is the process of "discourse" - within the unconscious - written with a capital O, - "[...] in order to indicate the beyond in which the recognition of desire is bound up with the desire for recognition. In other words this *other* is the 'Other' that even my lie evokes as a guarantor of the truth in which it subsists." [Lacan, 172] Irigaray's sarcasm and anger is diamond sharp at taking this framework of Lacan's 'Other' which is given a fixed economy of unconscious drive and desire. "Alas, according to you the body is always-already engineered by language, by a language [*langage*]. The domination of that language means that the sexual relation is as non-existent as Woman, not that the theoretical impact of such statements is without its effects on the most quotidian banality." [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(b), 86-7] She therefore points out the essential flaw of Lacan's school of thought by attacking his misuse of the role/function of the

analyst, by presuming an aprior-isation of woman as the 'Other' whose 'veiled' identity according to Lacan (or non-entity = 'dis-being' [desetre]), is mainly due to her fundamental lack of a penis. Moreover, the idea of "an a priori agency – and an a posteriori agency" which precludes "an omnipotent and omniscient father-mother God", also helps create a "tautology" of a neutered universe, she argues continues the ancient and unjust discourse that persists in the exclusion of woman. In answer to the veiled nothingness of Lacan's idea of Woman, she points to the researches of Lemoine-Luccioni on the subject of the ritualistic dance; etc. – "[...] in many traditions, the dance of the veil is the sexual and religious rite *par excellence*, a dance with a mystery and a cosmic reality that is at once prior to and beyond any already-constituted subjectivity. The scene is played out by the Mother-Goddess or the Betrothed, the gods and the universe. It does not cover nothingness; it attempts to pass through the veil of illusion to reach the act/gesture creating or begetting the world." [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(b), 87]

<sup>30</sup> It is interesting to observe the contrast between the highly intimate language, which St. Teresa of Avila uses in her call to God as her beloved, and the rational decorum in which a theological philosopher like Kirkegaard speaks of the love of God.

"Love, I think is an arrow shot by the will, and freed from every pull of earth, flying straight at God with full force...Once it has pierced the Heart of God, absolute love, it rebounds with immense graces."

St. Teresa of Avila, *Conceptions of the Love of God* [c.1562]

The saint's forceful, eroticised, (psychological) relationship which the mystic sets up between herself and the divine, the measured, and slightly distanced, though compassionate ethics of theologian/philosopher. In Kirkegaard's *Works of Love* [1847, trans. 1962], the Christian view of the ethics of divine love is discussed on the basis of the tender love of the inferior soul bestowed on the benevolent and the all seeing beloved, whose superiority of moral truth reciprocates with a love that is woven of wisdom, hope and faith. This grandeur of affection, wrapped in knowledge, thus reflects back to the lover all that is honourable and true. In effect the role of the beloved [God] is to educate the lover (humankind) by bestowing, as gifts, the ability to love humanity (the other) as the secret in attaining to a rarefied sense of the higher self.

"[...] We shall now conclude by introducing John the apostle, saying: "Beloved, let us love one another" [1, John 4:7]. These words, which consequently have apostolic authority, also have, if you will consider them, a middle tone or a middle mood with respect to the contrasts in love itself, which has its basis in that they are said by one who was perfected in love [...] No, the love-commandment remains new until the last day, [...] the only change can be, then that the lover becomes more and more intimate with the commandment, becomes more and more one with the commandment, which he loves[...]in this way God is the educator; his love is the greatest mildness and the greatest rigour." [Kirkegaard, 347-349]

<sup>31</sup> The language of Julian of Norwich is simple, in the medieval vernacular use of English; she is almost matter of fact in her many descriptions of her visions, and religious experiences. However, much of the visionary enthusiasm seems to centre on the body: the wound, bodily fluids/waters, the pained and wracked flesh, numbness of limbs, sweat, blood, tears, extreme heat, all gathering momentum with an overwhelming eagerness and desire to fully see and feel 'Jesus Christ'. She often refers to the 'Godhead' with a strange intimacy and relish in the notion of the word itself, as a thing which has the power to make her yield in physical and intellectual submission to. Although therefore allusions to her also refers to 'the Saviour' as 'our true mother' - along with the current medieval tradition which considered 'wisdom' as mother/nature, and the holy blood being an understood allusion to the motherly/loving milk [See: Spearing; Introduction 1998, XXI], - it is still a male godhead to which she supplicates her being. - "The fourth revelation – how it pleases God better to wash us from sin in his blood rather than in water, for his blood is most precious. After this I saw, as I watched, the body of Christ bleeding abundantly, in weals from the scourging. It looked like this: the fair skin was very deeply broken, down into the tender flesh, sharply slashed all over the dear body; the hot blood ran out so abundantly that [...] it seemed to all blood. And when it reached the point where it should have overflowed, it vanished; nevertheless, the bleeding continued for a while so that it could be observed attentively. And it looked so abundant to me that I thought if at the moment it had been real, natural blood, the whole bed would have been blood-soaked and even the floor around. And then it came to me that God has provided us on earth with abundant water for our use and bodily refreshment, because of the tender love he has for us, yet it pleases him better that we should simply take his holy blood to wash away our sins; for there is no liquid created which he likes to give us so much; it is as plentiful as it is precious by virtue of his holy Godhead." [Norwich *Revelations of Divine Love: The Long Text*, 12, trans. 1998, 59-60] [Fig. 1]

<sup>32</sup> The 'narrator' of the *Solomon's Song* seems to be both of male and female gender. The voice of the songs is at once both the feminised 'church' referring to 'her' beloved as the youthful and virile (the symbolic) Christ (or more to the point Christianity or the Logos of the Saviour), and a youthful male in search for the fecund, sexualised body of his female lover. - "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, [...] My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the

mountains of Bether." [2:14-17]. Then suddenly the 'gender' focus of desire shifts to the longing of a male lover ("Christ setteth forth the graces of the church. He sheweth his love to her."), for the body and lust of a beautiful young woman [the 'church'] - "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead [...] Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, [...] Thy two breasts are like two young roses that are twins, which feed among the lilies. Until the daybreak, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Thou art fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." [4:1-6]. However, it must be noted that there are some very strange and uncomfortable passages in the Songs. Unfortunately despite all the sensuality and subtlety of language this tale of the lover seeking her beloved, finally degenerates into her being assaulted and stripped in a public place. As she goes abroad in the dark night searching out the streets and fields for her missing beloved, she is beset by the watchmen of the city, and beaten harshly. This is not an easy passage to read, since it comes too close to the daily horrors of so many women's experiences out in the night of the world. It is also an indictment of the lone woman out alone, to whom her punishment is due without any particular excuse, other than that she is a provocative presence for the men who may be attracted to her. [See: Peter Chave's essay *Towards a Not Too Rosy Picture of the Songs of Songs*, in the *Journal of Feminist Philosophy* No. 18, May 1998, 41-53]

<sup>33</sup> In her 'Questions to Emmanuel Levinas: On the Divinity of Love', Irigaray is puzzled as to why: - "Levinas has little taste for mysticism. What is the link between this lack of interest and his conception of sexual difference? In other words, is mysticism, not linked to the flesh in its sexual dimension [comme sexuee]? But outside of mysticism, who is God? What is God? What is the point of flesh without mysticism?" [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(b), 186-7]

<sup>34</sup> This is the Latin term for mask, in particular one worn by an actor to play/impersonate a part in a play. Jung adopts this term to demonstrate the outer aspect of the ego. - "The persona [...] is the individual's system of adaptation to, or the manner he assumes in dealing with the world [...] One could say, with a little exaggeration, that the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is." [Jung, *CW* vol. 9, 122]

<sup>35</sup> The Void is (for me) the place where the 'I' encounters the Self. It is a poetic space that functions independent of the set boundaries of the 'out there'. It is a domain that is deciphered via the most inner aspects of the psyche. To my mind it is the point at which all that is undesirable, in me, is met with, and considered in the light of Becoming. But is also the lunar zone that allows for the creative self to emerge, and become accessible to the 'out there'. The Void is not empty\* - that is: without anything to offer - rather it is a place of potential and possibility. I am not referring to a Freudian post-Oedipal state where the child is driven by the desire for differentiation [from the mother] and self-discovery, - a state of initiation that engenders a violent reaction to the other as the barrier to becoming or individuation. It is therefore also not the Lacanian ('mirror stage') space between the actual mirror and the reflected image, whereby the child having begun the process of renouncing the mother reaches out towards a establishing her/his own sense of self 'out there', by negotiating access to language and culture. Since I have difficulty in accepting the idea of the [mother's] womb as either a 'holy vessel' [in Christian terms of reference to the Virgin Mary; the symbol of the pure/true/unmolested faith; etc.], or a place where the 'horror' of encountering the symbolic mother gives rise simultaneously to perceiving the other in the light of repressed elements held within the '*das Unheimliche*'. In contrast Bataille's, albeit oblique, reference to this word (in the context of mastery and servitude; God / State to Mankind, etc.) is set against the complex emotions of a once practicing Catholic, whose critique of 'transcendence' seems to me to be bitterly in denial of his own innately rich poetic ground. - "The empty character of the transcendent world is remedied by sacrifice. By the destruction of an object of vital importance (but whose modification, resulting from a utilitarian usage, was felt with difficulty), the limit of the possible in one place was broken: the impossible was, in that place, liberated by a crime, bared, undressed." [*Essential Writings* 1998, 150] In relation to the actual experience and engagement with/in the creative process, Blanchot's sensitive re-assembling the nature of "the work's solitude" (writing), refers to "this void" as the point of completion of a piece of work. Therefore, the void of having achieved a finished piece of work is an illusion in itself, since this limbo state comes to represent the (writer's) realisation that only by her/his own death will the completion of the work be properly arrived at. - "The writer who experiences this void believes only that the work is unfinished, and he thinks that a little more effort, along with some propitious moments, will permit him and him alone to finish it. So he goes back to work. But what he wants to finish by himself remains interminable; it involves him in an illusory task [...] This is what is meant by the observation that the writer, since he only finishes his work at the moment he dies, never knows of his work. One ought perhaps to turn this remark around. For isn't the writer dead as soon as the work exists?" [Blanchot 1955, trans. 1982, 23] - \* The goddess Khali, famed for her terrible powers, actually translates in the Farsi as: Khali خالی = Empty, Emptiness.

<sup>36</sup> The metaphysical puzzle in which I am engaged - a *feminine-numinous-other-as-her-becoming* - must by necessity look closely at the ontological legacy of Heidegger; in particular with regard to the way that philosophical framework has been re-shaped by feminist thinkers and philosophers. Although it would also be an expected to consider and refer to Deleuze, in the light of contemporary writing on ontology, I have chosen the deliberate strategy of keeping such references to a minimum on the following grounds; - (a)

Despite the interest and intelligence generated by contemporary thinkers like Deleuze, and Derrida, particularly in the framework of much that is central to feminist philosophy, I am not always sure to what extent the form and tone of the language being employed by these (male) writers is actually and genuinely responsible to the furtherance of my ontological project of 'I' as woman. (b) by repeatedly naming and highlighting the same set of personalities and works, one can often help further the insidious patterns of iconoclasm, (and male hero worship) and therefore hinder a space for a broader, more female-generated language of debate to take centre-stage.

<sup>37</sup> I am using the term 'essence' here in the Platonic, and Aristotelian meaning of the word, in that it refers to that which is essential to a being/thing, and therefore immutable.

<sup>38</sup> In his classic biography [of Joyce] Ellman [1959] clarifies what the word/term 'epiphany[ies]' meant to Joyce's processes of writing and imagination. - "The epiphany did not mean for Joyce the manifestation of godhead, the showing forth of Christ to the Magi, although that is a useful metaphor for what he had in mind. The epiphany was the sudden 'revelation of the whatness of a thing', the moment in which 'the soul of the commonest object [...] seems to us radiant [...]'. The artist, he felt, was charged with such revelations, and must look for them not among gods but among men, in casual, un-ostentations, even unpleasant moments. He might find 'a sudden spiritual manifestation' either 'in the vulgarity of speech or of a gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself.' Sometimes the epiphanies are 'eucharistic', another term arrogantly borrowed by Joyce from Christianity and invested with secular meaning. These are moments of fullness or of passion." [Ellman, 87] - "I think that writing serves also to do this: to collect what Joyce called epiphanies. Moments where reality, in its most modest forms, joins in a single stroke a possibility and a promise of eternity - an instant that resists death." [Cixous 1997, 99]

<sup>39</sup> For one of the most remarkable texts on the secret art of meditation, as a means towards entering the path of the 'Elixir of Life', see: *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, translated by Richard Wilhelm: - "The One is the circulation of the light [...] When one is so far advanced that every shadow and every echo has disappeared, so that one is entirely quiet and firm, this is refuge within the cave of energy, where all that is miraculous returns to its roots. One does not alter the place, but the place divides itself. This is incorporeal space where a thousand places are one place. One does not alter the time, but the time divides itself. This is immeasurable time when all the aeons are like a moment." [Wilhelm, 1931, ed. 1984, 58]

<sup>40</sup> In *Elemental Passions* Irigaray makes a convincing play of speaking as a visionary, albeit a contemporary one. The tone of her poetic interrogation questions the validity of the hegemony of religious [and philosophical] systems, in direct reference to the feminine sense of herself as an entity and identity who is forever evolving within the myriad of "possibilities". She is not to be fixed and ordered by any framework, but that which is dictated by her own inner need for becoming. - "The whole is not the same for me as it is for you. For me, it can never be one. Can never be completed, always in-finite. When you talk about Infinity, it seems to me that you are speaking of a closed totality: a solid, empty membrane, which would gather and contain all possibilities. The absolute of self-identity - in which you were, will be, could be." [Irigaray 1992, 89]

<sup>41</sup> The creative performance\* - painting, writing, etc; - goes beyond making a site for Becoming, and there, at the splitting edge of the opening to where 'the work' is entered upon, the momentary is granted its true space. In this holding-on to the 'instant' the artist/writer can continue to function within and through 'the work', her/is "life" preserved in a strange capsule that "slides into the distress of the infinite." Therefore, as Blanchot puts it, the ex-temporal essence of 'the work' rests in the core of the ambition within the (artistic/poetic) pursuit itself. An ambition and endeavour towards the becoming of the 'I', which is bound up with the corporal/temporal existence of the artist/writer's own life. - "For isn't the writer dead as soon as the work exists? He sometimes has such a presentiment himself: an impression of being ever so strangely out of work." [Blanchot 1955, trans. 1982, 23] - \* = Perform Old French: *parfournier* - par - PER + fournir = to provide/furnish (with).

<sup>42</sup> The development and character of much of twentieth century literary culture, visual arts, and music (Surrealist and Dada cinematography, and collage) pivots on the fractured, mischievous notions of individual perception, versus the established norms of society; the politics of the individual, as an independent psychological entity acting out her/his expression, from the vantage point of the rarefied premise of one. Thus imposing the singular upon the plural, with the assertion that it must by definition be regarded as the normative stand. Whilst the playful, though at times violent dismemberment, characteristic of Futurist and Vorticist art was an intentional visual manifestation of a political manifesto of an exclusive group, the fugue-like aura of much of early Cubist and Orphist painting concerned itself with the aesthetics and ontology of a personal perception. Similarly, the anarchic language, which dominates much of Dada and Surreal work, (c.1917-1930) is with the intention of presenting a world based on the premise of disintegration, doubt, and self/other-revelatory shock tactics. Creating vignettes of humorous drama with the aid of juxtaposing unlikely components, which give rise to a derisory and often puzzlingly surreptitious whole; thus making a new space for a third or other meaning to be discovered, through the experience of interacting with the work.

<sup>43</sup> From Notes to Harris's essay: *Metaphor and Transcendence* [Sacks 1979, 76], quoting from Paul Valéry [*Pure Poetry, in The Art of Poetry*, trans. Denise Folliot 1961, 192.]

<sup>44</sup> The notion of purity of verse, in either the concise use of words in conveying a metaphor or poetic image, or the shape and pattern of verse designed on the blank page, puts me in mind of Dickinson's eccentric behaviour in her later years. During the last ten years of her life, Emily Dickinson insisted on dressing herself in predominantly white hues, and rarely received visitors, preferring at times to remain in the adjoining room whilst her visitors sat in the next chamber, with the door left slightly ajar. White is the non-colour of cleanliness, of the yearning for redemption, and the cloistered blamelessness and religious fervour. In the Chinese tradition of colours, white is often indicative of death, inactivity, and closure of the alive. - "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me: what are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him: Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me. These are they which came out of great tribulations: and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." [*Martyr III. the Epistle Rev. VII.13.*] This empty, pure whiteness bears comparison with Mallarmé's subtlety and brilliance and the way in which his verse was constructed by a multifarious collaboration of word, inflection, punctuation, sound page surface or visible space made by the words on the page. Making of the sphere of a page a powerful and intentionally playful visual and visceral statement, as a true part of the metaphor and meaning inscribed in the poem itself. - "To solitude, reef or star/ Whatever was meriting/ Our canvas with its white care." [From an early poem by, Mallarmé: 'Salut'='Greeting' 1893]

<sup>45</sup> Perhaps such a space of poetic becoming maybe regarded as being akin to Heidegger's "fold of Being"; Blanchot's and Foucault's "line"; Deleuze's "path" ("between impossibilities"); or Bataille's "folds of consciousness". It is not difficult to read the fold, or the line, as the disembodied imaginary of the female sexual organ - the borderline where life and death may merge. - "It's a *line* that's not abstract, though it has no particular shape. It's no more in thought than in things, but it's everywhere, [...] The Outside, in Foucault as in Blanchot from whom he takes the word, is something more distant than any external world. But it's also something closer than any inner world. So you get an endless switching between closeness and distance. Thinking doesn't come from within, but nor is it something that happens in the external world. It comes from this Outside, and returns to it returns to it [...] The line outside is our double, with all the double's otherness." [Deleuze *Negotiations* 1995, 110] Although no direct mention of the 'other' as woman is made specific, the very use of the word 'fold' brings to mind flesh that closes a small, inaccessible cavity. Hence the 'line' that is neither an "outside" nor an inside, becomes an unhealed wound/tear: vagina, womb, or mouth. Thus Irigaray's enunciative language about the "wound" or "sore" as a holy thing gives the mystic women's ascetic practices and vision a feminist and a contemporary stance; - "Ecstasy is here in that glorious slit where she curls up as if in her nest, where she rests as if she had found her home - and He is also in her [...] And to know myself I scarcely need a "soul", I have only to gaze upon the gaping space in your loving body." [*La Mystérique*, in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 1985, 200] [Figs. 2 & 3] The wound of Christ, which for the medieval mystic women represented the place of pure ecstatic experience, intensely meditating on the bodily wounds of 'Christ on the Cross' and yearning to be wounded and pained, in order that the same heightened experience of transcendence via pain, could be repeated in their own bodies. [See: *Maps of Flesh and Light: The Religious Experience of Medieval Women Mystic* 1993]. In regard to one of Christ's wounds, made by the lancing of the flesh on his breast, what interests me is the vaginal shape it has taken in the many depictions of Christ's gashed wound, being probed by the doubting Thomas' index and second fingers (!). Bearing all this in mind, I am led to read the fold, the line, the path, and the wound in relation to and with consideration of the creative embodiment of the feminine other, whose reality, as an ontological whole is denied, whilst the impenetrable mystery of her otherness is utilised within and for the articulation of all that makes up the creative process, cerebral or otherwise. - "We have to see creation as tracing a path between impossibilities [...] creation takes place in choked passages [...] a new syntax is a foreign language within the language [...] A creator's someone who creates their own impossibilities, and there creates possibilities [...] Your writing has to be liquid or gaseous simply because normal perceptions and opinions are solid, geometric [...] Not becoming unearthly. But becoming all the more earthly by inventing laws of liquids and gases on which the earth depends. You have to open up words, break things open, to free earth's vectors. All writers, all creators are shadows." [Deleuze 1995, 132-134] Also Blanchot on the notion of the writer or artist/poet as belonging "to the shadow of events, not their reality, to the image, not the object." [Blanchot 1955, 24]

<sup>46</sup> The theatrical stage demonstrates this notion of transference from the mundane to the something other or more than what one sees. In my mind 'Minimal' art or 'pure abstraction', fails to engage the self precisely because it purports to function within the aesthetics of the denial of metaphor and meaning. In my own work and search for a personal-feminine aesthetic, I am committed to the seen things, and events; the inflections of speech, and accent; the diversity of ideas, and notions; the complexity of histories and myths, - in exact opposition to the notion of (a purist) aesthetics which places a curfew on reality. By this I do not mean the unimaginative replication of the mundane, but more the mindful, mischievous, knowing engagement and play with the so-called real. It is the power to make theatre - that is to re-en-act reality by

subverting and hence transforming the known, the expected, and the familiar, that is so often condemned to forgetfulness, into an epiphanic event of knowledge.

<sup>47</sup> The epiphanic experience of one's reality is the challenge for the artist-poet, to make articulate that for which word has not yet been endorsed. - "Metaphor no longer has its telos in reality. It still invites us to take leave from familiar reality but not for the sake of a more profound vision of what it is. Instead metaphors become weapons directed against reality, instruments to break the referentiality of language, to deliver language from its ontological function and thus to confer on the poet's words a magical presence that lets us forget the world. As Ortego y Gasset says to such metaphor, 'between the real things it lets emerge imaginary reefs, a crop of floating islands.'" [See: essay by Karsten Harris.; Sacks, ed. 1979, 78]

<sup>48</sup> The 'Work', as a pivotal point of *death and becoming* - via the metaphor of Orpheus and Eurydice, and in particular looking at the (late) poems of Rilke, is for Blanchot akin to the (*Orphic gaze*) which in being a "disinterested gaze, [...] has no future and seems to come from the heart of death". And so, with one shot Blanchot places the ecstatic moment of creativity at the dangerous headland of 'Death', whilst also using/implicating the *Being* of Eurydice, not as a palpable existence of woman but rather as an abstracted, albeit poetic, schema in which 'she' can only function as both the seductive call to ruin; or be taken as the 'symbol' or idea of an enriched visionary opportunity for the 'male' poet/artist. - "To see properly is essentially to die. It is to introduce into sight the turning back again which is ecstasy and which is death. This does not mean that everything sinks into the void. On the contrary, things then offer themselves in the inexhaustible fecundity of their meaning which our vision ordinarily misses - our vision which is only capable of one point of view." [1955, 151]

<sup>49</sup> For a lucidly prose in defence of an ontological view of scientific philosophy, see 'Conquest of Abundance' - "The idea that reality is uniform but ineffable is not the only possible way of bringing order into what we think we know. Another way [...] would be to admit that there are many different kinds of objects and features, that they are related to each other in complex ways, that some of them [...] reflect human interests while others, though manufactured with the help of complex equipment, seem to be more independent, and that this hierarchy becomes the more obscure the more we try to remove ourselves from it. So far a Unitarian realism claiming to possess positive knowledge about Ultimate Reality has succeeded only by excluding large areas of phenomena or by declaring, without proof, that they could be reduced to basic theory, which, in this connection, means elementary particle physics. An ontological (epistemological) pluralism seems closer to the facts and to human nature." [Freyerabend 1999, 215]

<sup>50</sup> This place could be likened to a womb-oriented space where its containment is not so much independent but more self-willed. The notion of a 'place' a 'dwelling' is at the centre of feminist approaches in defining a differentiated (architectural) space for women. In her brief, though informative essay on the theme of architecture and women, 'Women, Chora, Dwelling', Elizabeth Grosz looks at the word 'chora', which has in recent years come to be a key term, used with varying philosophical intentions, primarily by Kristeva and Derrida, but with more feminist differentiation by Irigaray. Citing original text from Plato's *Timaeus*, she explains that the term is used by Plato to denote the difference of function between "Forms" and "eternal realities", in other words between that of the male=father="the model" of reproduction, - sketched out as an active and productive element in the act and process of "the metaphor of birth", - and the female=mother="the receptacle" - likened to the *chora* - who/which remains only a space where-in the 'Form' can help gestate its own replica. Grosz draws our attention to Irigaray's work on this word/metaphor, which has actively opposed any vague relation to the womb as an appropriative space for the male to own and use for his own self-regeneration. Grosz, outlines and goes on to give an outline of Irigaray's project by concluding: - "For women to be able to occupy another space, or to be able somehow to occupy this space in a different way, it is clear for Irigaray that several transformations need to be effected. Most particularly, a series of upheavals in the organization of personal life (transformations in the way the mother-daughter relation is both conceived and mediated, changes in the ways in which female subjectivity and sexuality are structured according to the privileges of phallic subjectivity and sexuality, changes in the ways in which the two sexes relate to and exchange with each other), in the ways in which women's relations to what is larger than them (the divine, the environment, nature) are conceived, and in the ways in which theory, and cultural production more generally, are regarded." [Grosz 1995, 123] - (bauen / dwelling: are terms which Heidegger uses in speaking on the metaphor of thought) - [see: Heidegger's lecture/essay *Building Dwelling Thinking*, 1951 ed. Farrell Krell, 1993, 347-363]

<sup>51</sup> Although for the most part women were excluded from the economy of writing and publishing, where there was not direct intervention of a male scribe and permission to do so, there is evidence of women's writing, both secular and religious well before the thirteenth century, a period which is referred to, by Leslie Smith, as the "flowering of women's mystical writing, especially from the convent of Helfta." The courage shown by many early nuns, abbesses, and religious women, like Mechthild of Magdeburg, Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, Margery Kemp, and many others, gradually communicated the confidence for women to begin to express their experiences and religious ambitions in actual writing and embellishment of books. Nonetheless even Hildegard of Bingen withheld her visions and thoughts for many years, until having received papal approval for publication. [Leslie Smith's essay: *Scriba, Femina: Medieval Depictions of Women Writing*, in the book titled: *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, (eds.) Taylor and

Smith 1997, 24] There are many examples of medieval female scribes who make either their own identity or that of a compatriot female writer or saint known, as in the figure of a Cistercian depicted in the act of writing, from an Aachen manuscript in private collection. [Fig. 4] Blake's gem-like hand-made books that combined his own unique imagery, and poetry with highly innovative methods of engraving and printing, still hold significance for anyone interested in this particular medium/genre. The sophisticated, limited edition evolution of the hand-made book, known in the contemporary art-world as the 'artist book', is a long way from the original tradition of this genre. These contemporary artist books are often working with a particular aesthetic (art-historically placed) discourse and style, and are invariably manufactured for the rarefied arena of the museum/gallery culture and market, which is not that unlike the public spheres of the church or monastery. The three **Albums** are in contrast more intimate objects, which are not produced in editions, and since they are not fixed into a particular boundary of interaction with the reader (or person that handles them out of interest), their apprehension relies on the function of chance, and play.

<sup>52</sup> In notes to the end of *The Essential Solitude*, Blanchot extends the idea of "The Image" to a more textual and poetic sphere; - "One likes to think that poetry is a language which, more than others, favors images. This is probably an allusion to much more essential transformation - the poem is not a poem because it contains a certain number of figures, metaphors, comparisons; on the contrary, the poem's particular character is that nothing in it functions as an image. So we must express what we are seeking differently: in literature, doesn't language itself become altogether image? [...] We do not mean a language containing images or one that casts reality in figures, but one which is its own image, an image of language (and not a figurative language), or yet again, an imaginary language, one which no one speaks; a language, that is, which issues from its own absence, the way the image emerges upon the absence of the thing;" [Blanchot 1955, Notes. 34]

<sup>53</sup> There is a parallel point of interest here with Maurice Blanchot's understanding of the strange relationship between the physical body and the actual process of writing. The writer becomes a tool, a vehicle through whom the "[...] obsession which ties him to a privileged theme, which obliges him to say over again what he has already said." The artist/writer is thus held by a greater force that intervenes and dictates the process of creativity; - "The hand moves in a tempo which is scarcely human: not that of viable action, not that of hope either, but rather the shadow of time, the hand being itself the shadow of a hand slipping ghostlike towards an object that has become its own shadow. This hand experiences, at certain moments, a very great need to seize: it must grasp the pencil, it has to. It receives an order, an imperious command. This phenomenon is known as "tyrannical prehension". The writer seems to be the master of his pen; he can become capable of great mastery over words and over what he wants to make them express. But his mastery only succeeds in putting him, keeping him in contact with the fundamental passivity where the word, no longer anything but its appearance - the shadow of a word - never can be mastered or even grasped. It remains the ungraspable which is also unreleasable: the indecisive moment of fascination." [Blanchot 1955, 24-5]

<sup>54</sup> In Jungian analysis the role of description by the analysand, via text and visual configuration of imagery is taken very seriously. There are numerous examples of such drawings/paintings accompanying dream/psychic experience in Jung's own writings. The idea and methods of 'active imagination', - whereby physically interactive scenes are discovered (conjured up from encounters with the unconscious) by the analysand, and then set out for the analyst to work with - is lucidly presented in: *Encounters with the Soul*, by Barbara Hannah [1981]. Marie-Louise von Franz, in her introductory note to this book, gives a brief [anecdotal] background to this method: - "When C. G. Jung went on the quest of finding his own myth after his break with Freud, he ventured into the realm of the collective unconscious, unguided and alone. In this unique confrontation he discovered, by trial and error, a new way of coming to terms with the contents of the unconscious within the unitary reality of creative fantasy. Jung later called this method "active imagination" and recommended it warmly to many of his patients [...] Nowadays, there is practically no mental hospital where painting modelling, dance, music and writing are not used to help patients express their problems. At the end of his life Jung remarked that passive imagination had been more or less understood by the world, unlike active imagination. In short, what is lacking is the active, ethical confrontation, the active entering of the whole person into the fantasy-drama." [Hannah 1981, 1]

<sup>55</sup> Martin Jay, in an essay titled *Phallogocentrism*, in which he looks at Derrida and Irigaray's work on perception cites a show at the Louvre in 1989, which Derrida at the time suffering from a temporary paralysis in his facial muscles, and having difficulty in using his left eye, was therefore "unable to blink", undertook to curate, thus giving it the pun-inflected title: *'The Opening Where One Can't See' (L'ouvre ou on ne pas Voir)*, Jay points to two philosophic aspects of our seeing. (a): "There is no initial vision that is not already a ruin"- that there is an inability to formulate the tangible reality of a thing before having first created it as a "representation". (b): It is possible, on the strength of Derrida's concept of the image - in particular self-portraiture - "To generalise the lesson that images and writing are always intertwined" [Jay 1994, 522-4]. Perhaps this expresses something of Heidegger's *Dasein* [ed. 1978, 54-5], in that it is not simply an existential view of things as we believe we see them, but more the way in which their structure of becoming is understood, regarded from the intimate angle of its [the things] inherent evolution. Somewhat in a similar strain, Jung in his notes to an essay titled: *Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity*,

speaks of the act of "Reflection" as more than an ability of the mind alone. - "As the word itself testifies ("reflection" means literally "bending back"), reflection is a spiritual act that runs counter to the natural process; an act whereby we stop, call something to mind, for a picture, and take up a relation to and come to terms with what we have seen. It could therefore, be understood as an act of becoming conscious." [CW 2, 1958-69, Notes 235]

<sup>56</sup> The ancient Pythagorean systems of listing opposites - the principles of which Lacan seems to have found still of use in his own theories on the 'Other' [*Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. 1977, 281-91] - is precisely where I do not want to arrive at. I am not placing a hierarchy of meaning or value on either word or image. The ideal would be to create a gender-less approach to my methodology, in defining the ecstatic element of the poetic moment. Instead, I would cite Hermaphrodite, the mythological divinity of birth and creation: god of procreation (Alchemical symbol of Mercury, itself a substance whose transmutation is strangely dualistic: both liquid and solid at the same time). Hermaphrodite is the divine locus where all that is separated can come together, and transcend their divisive isolation. Astrology's 'third house' of the zodiac that is occupied by the Gemini twins, is also an alchemical representation for the concept of Hermaphrodite. The doctrine of 'epiphenomenalism', as a dualistic approach to the way one regards physiological processes, being independent of consciousness, may not be an ideal stance from which to prognosticate how a text v. image work, such as the **Albums** (presented as part of this research), may be perceived. Perhaps it would be more precise to use the term 'parallelism', for the manner of intention behind the making of the album-objects, (three components) - the locus whereby the essential focus of my thesis is demonstrated; a discovery and an understanding of that mysterious moment of the eidetic experience, which can make present the notion of the numinous is achieved through the actual making of the Albums.

<sup>57</sup> It is perhaps difficult for us in the twenty-first century to appreciate the gravity of fear with which women were kept silent (literally, unable to because forbidden to express themselves; to use the word to speak their mind;). In her essay: *The Rhetoric of Orthodoxy: Clerical Authority and Female Innovation in the Struggle with Heresy*, Jo Ann McNamara gives a clear view of the medieval society - in particular the church - in its relation and dealings with women and the word, when the general expectation was that even where a woman has experienced the elated sense of being spoken to by God, her visions and new-found spiritual understanding must be tempered in the monitored environs of the cloister; where she would be required to forebear in solitude and silence, always in fear of some retribution from her male counterpart, who had the legal right to judge her every intimate thought, and action, reserving the and self-righteous licence to even burn or destroy her work, her word, and her being. - "Popular theology linked Eve's original sin of curiosity to her seductive powers. In the same spirit, critics interpreted every form of female self-assertion as an invitation to sexual pleasure. The Dominican Humbert de Romans spoke for the majority of the clergy when he warned that women must not be allowed to preach because they would stimulate lust in their listeners [...] The convent's protective environment sometimes helped nuns to resist internalising male concepts so damaging to their self-esteem. Nevertheless, women feared to obey even God's direct commands without the support of the male clergy [...] The gender system was effectively constructed to keep women silent. Empowerment by divine revelation strengthened their self-confidence but prohibition was so strong that even when God commanded them to speak, the effort made mystics physically ill. Hildegard concealed her visions for half her life until, in 1141, a sense of irresistible supernatural force overcame her paralysis. This reluctance did not arise from a simple internalisation of male arguments about the inferiority of women. Women depended on the approval of the male clergy for survival, both physically and historically. Mechthild of Magdeburg complained to God that the same men who tried to have her books burned would gladly have paid honour to a priest given the same revelations. Margurite de Porete actually was burned at the stake while her book, mistakenly attributed to a man, was approved as orthodox and widely circulated for several centuries." [Wiethaus (ed.) 1993, 10-4]

<sup>58</sup> Indeed the fixative quality of 'naming' can sometimes be a hindrance in knowing a thing/person/place/experience. And yet the moment of giving a name to a person, a place or thing can also be a mysterious revelatory instant. allowing the named subject to be seen as a separate and sacred entity. Appellation can have an empowering affect, whilst perhaps allowing for a sense of appropriation, by the one who bestows the name.

<sup>59</sup> The series of both the sacred, and the domestic interiors, which occupy my painterly practice, may be contracted into the art historic tradition of the genre of the 'interior'. There are countless examples of paintings, as well as sculptural relief, from the early Renaissance onwards, which employ the interior for the narration of a religious, civic, or courtly dialogue. The interior, the picturesque scenes of landscape and gardens or still life, that had held such a prime aesthetic and architectural place in Roman fresco painting (and *trompe l'oeil* effects produced in early mosaic work), does not become an independent genre in easel painting until the seventeenth century. Although my focus on the works of painters such as Fra Angelico, De Hooch, Vermeer, Saenredam, Rembrandt, Tintoretto, Van Gogh, and Gwen John may appear historically incongruous, it is an intentional project. I am here concerned more at placing my own methodology within an art historical frame of the genre in itself, rather than to make any formal chronological comparisons. It is the genre of the interior and its manifestation as an artistic and poetic expression, which concerns me. -



"Things speak to us. Is that more than a metaphor that betrays man's incurable tendency to project himself into the things of the world rather than describe these things?" [See: essay by Harris; in Sacks (ed.) 1979, 88]

<sup>60</sup> There are two versions of this interior, which Van Gogh painted within a month of each other in September and October of that year.

<sup>61</sup> I am aware that not only are there gender, nationality, and temperament differences, but also chronologically, these two paintings emerge from the psychological locus of the nineteenth (Van Gogh) and twentieth (Johns) centuries.

<sup>62</sup> This simple, unadorned room (painting) by Gwen John bears plausible similarity to the *Annunciation* by Fra Angelico in the Dominican convent at S. Marco, Florence. Of course I realise that this is not in any way an intention on the part of John, however the visual language of *A Corner of the Artist's Room* unfolds a parallel metaphor of solitude and revelation.

<sup>63</sup> The Tibetan Nagarjuna School of thought names this metaphysical concept of reality as perceived and lived through an acceptance of emptiness or the void as the fundamental state of being, *sunyata*. - "Nagarjuna argues that since all individual things arise dependently, i.e. come into being because of the causal interactions of other things, they are without essence or empty. Being-as-is or reality does not arise dependently, and its nature is voidness." [Fifty Eastern Thinkers 2000, 180]

<sup>64</sup> - "[...] this 'no present' does not, however, refer back to a past. Olden days had the dignity, the active force of now [...] The irremediable character of what has no present, of what is not even there as having once been there, says: it never happened, never for a first time, and yet it starts over, again, again infinitely. It is without end, without beginning. It is without future. The time of time's absence is not dialectical. In this time what appears is the fact that nothing appears. What appears is the being deep within being's absence [...] For it is as if there were no beings except through the loss of being, when being lacks. The reversal which, in time's absence, points us constantly back to the presence of absence [...]" Blanchot 1955, trans. 1982, 30]

<sup>65</sup> How defined the boundaries of 'space' and 'time' may be is situated in the complexity of sciences, mathematical theories and philosophical propositions which have come to influence our conceptions of *being*; and therefore representations of subjectivity. By accepting space as tangible and present, therefore a thing *outside* of our own immediate bodies, that can be appropriated, whilst regarding time as an abstract and intangible commodity, a complicated notion or formula that is held *in* the mind, we tend to shape the ways in which we perceive ourselves *to*-the other *to*-the world - "[...] representations of space have always had - and continue to have - a priority over representations of time. Time is represented only insofar as it is attributed certain spatial properties. [...] Space is no more concrete than time, nor is it easier to represent. The subject is no more clearly positioned in space than in time; indeed, the immediacy of the "hereness" of corporal existence is exactly parallel to the "nowness" of the subject's experience." [Grosz 1995, 97-8]

<sup>66</sup> For a coherently discussed philosophical look at Irigaray's work, see *Ethics and Eros*, by Tina Chanter. - "[...] By considering the past as a present which has passed away, and the future as a present which is yet to come, true time, they assume, must be present. If the past and the future only qualify as time by virtue of their respective status as quasi-present, (as presents which are "no longer" and "not yet"), what is it about the present that makes it real?" [Chanter, 1995, 154]

<sup>67</sup> It is of interest to note that the Zen Buddhist [Suzuki and Nishitani] concept of time is very different from the western. In the Nishitani order of Buddhist thinking the *kalpas*\* are the cycles of time which are endless, and history/time is therefore both linear and cyclic; - "Each *kalpa* is composed of a series of discrete moments, or individual 'nows', and each 'now' is new and transitory. Time, which is impermanent, is at all times on the point of vanishing, or nihility. Through nihility is revealed *sunyata*, which encompasses all time and impermanence by its absolute emptiness." [Fifty Eastern Thinkers 2000, 399] \* - (C. 18: Sanskrit) - In Hindu cosmology, a period in which the universe experiences a cycle of creation and destruction. Suzuki's Zen metaphysics considers and acts with the premise of the temporal as founded on the idea of *satori*\*. An understanding of *satori* is based on the acceptance of the notion of reality as outside of time, held for always in the timeless moment, or the eternal. - "Those who achieve *satori* are freed from the tyranny of ordinary time consciousness, in which we crave the eternal amid relentless mutability [...] There is no self/not-self distinction in being-as-is nor any distinction between mental and non-mental. Therefore, *satori* cannot be the mental event of an individual [...] *Satori* is reality, so to speak, conscious of itself." [Fifty Eastern Thinkers, 2000, 392] \* - (from Japanese) - *Zen Buddhism*: = The state of sudden indescribable intuitive enlightenment.

<sup>68</sup> - "And perhaps this repetition at the level of external conduct echoes, for its own part, a more secret vibration which animates it, a more profound, internal repetition within the singular. This is the apparent paradox of festivals: they repeat the 'unrepeatable'." [Deleuze 1968, trans. 1994, 1]

<sup>69</sup> - "[...] What happens when what is seen imposes itself upon the gaze, as if the gaze were seized, put in touch with the appearance? What happens is not an active contact, not the initiative and action which there still is in real touching. Rather, the gaze gets taken in, absorbed by an immobile movement and a depthless deep [...] What fascinates us robs us of our power to give sense [...] Fascination is solitude's gaze. It is the gaze of the incessant and interminable. In it blindness is vision still, vision which is no longer the possibility of seeing, but the impossibility of not seeing, the impossibility which becomes visible and

perseveres – always an always – in a vision that never comes to an end: a dead gaze, a gaze become the ghost of an eternal vision.” [Blanchot 1955, trans. 1982, 32]

<sup>70</sup> It is not until the Baroque movement has brought about a reactive independence of art from state and church, thus giving rise to the concept of the artistic genres of ‘still life’, ‘portraiture’, and ‘the nude’, that the domestic interior begins to gain artistic status, as a viable subject for painting. Within the remarkable output of seventeenth century Dutch painting, the genre of the domestic interior (Jan Vermeer, de Hooch, Jan Steen, Adriaen Brouwer, et al.) is handled with the quiet precision of a theatrical scene, unfolding along the horizontal lay of the picture stage/plane. There is invariably a narrative in these paintings that the contemporary viewer would have related to as very much a current reportage on the state of social and moral flavour of the day. This is especially clear in the noisy scenes of drinking, and flirtation, that Jan Steen painted. Pieter de Hooch’s ordered rooms, discreetly lit, often portray the morals of the perfectly kept home, in the caring charge of one or more women, sometimes attended by a shadowy presence of a child; *The Pantry*, c. 1658. [Fig. 8] These are modestly furnished and frugally managed homes of the average middle class – to which de Hooch, himself, aspired – where the tiles, fabrics and delicately glazed windows are scrubbed and displayed with an air of the good citizen about them. Here, as in Vermeer’s more mysteriously devised apartments, there is no sign of excess in food, drink, or other kinds of indulgence. Jan Vermeer’s more elegantly furnished spaces, however, are imbued with a different intention. They are not simple portrayals of the domestic life of the citizen, but rather hint at a household appreciative of music and the plastic arts. His rooms are subtly draped with silks and taffetas, arranged in curvaceous abundance, musical instruments, and paintings on the walls; whilst the women portrayed are very much the idle ‘lady of the house’, and not merely a well groomed ‘house keeper’ (with the exception of *the Kitchen Maid* c.1658). The air and atmosphere of Vermeer’s interiors resonate with a strange narrative of riddles. There is a quiet charge of sexual intrigue, the details of which we are never made privy to, though as voyeurs, we are solicited with an air of protocol, to ‘guess’ at the story/scenario, being silently played in front of us. These paintings are more than a catalogue of Dutch seventeenth century middle-class living; they are also carefully devised viewfinders focusing on the uneventful domesticity where women play out most of their – permitted – social and intimate lifespan. For a delicately balanced and brief historical account of the social backcloth against which seventeenth century Dutch painting emerged, in particular the genres of still life and interiors. [see: Bryson *Looking at the Overlooked* 1993, 98-9 & 158].

<sup>71</sup> I have deliberately omitted writing on Chardin – whose beautiful paintings of every day objects and simple interior domesticity continue to haunt our contemporary sensibilities – for two reasons: (1) it is not so much still life per se that I am researching, but more the notion of a complete interior, with or without figures; (2) Norman Bryson’s essay on the subject of still life covers Chardin’s oeuvre with greater dexterity and art-historical erudition than could be easily paralleled.

<sup>72</sup> Notwithstanding the art-historical rules of chronology and the reasons and modes of practice which differentiate Italian gothic ecclesiastic fresco painting with that of the 17<sup>th</sup> century ‘easel’ genre painting, it is of interest (to my project) to contrast the rhythmic delicacy of the series of frescos, individually designed for the monastic living quarters in S. Marco, Florence, by Fra Angelico, two centuries earlier. These are paintings that aim at depicting the charged moment of spiritual revelation, or visionary experience. The cloistered enclaves in these frescoes are utterly bereft of decoration. It is the texture and attention to the handling of paint in these images of enclosed walls, which is given as a momentary glimpse into the sumptuous elements of religious rite and ceremony of the Catholic Church. The seductive aspect of worship, and spiritual revelation are hidden in the shadows and rhythmic curves of these low ceiling spaces, reiterated almost in replica, in the paintings that embellish each cell. The mysterious moment of *The Annunciation* 1438-45 is not embodied, as in earlier Gothic iconography [Duccio or Simone Martini], with a golden thread of the word, ascending towards a heavenly interpretation of the earthbound. Despite the three figures, all apparently observed from ‘reality’, the subtlety of the iconographic moment, depicted by Fra Angelico rests in the denial of the corporeal, material sensuality of worldly desires and comforts. The secret code of this painting is hidden in the discreet folds of drapery, rippling silently from shoulder or waist to the cold stone slabs. The bodies may be emaciated and pale in their other worldly lack of flesh or vivacious colouring, but these drapes, cloaks, and skirts are sensuous reminders of feminine flesh and sensibility protected beneath the garb of religious asceticism. The young virgin, by the androgynous angel, are caught in an elegant moment of illicit conversation, looked on by a friar-saint who bears the bloody mark of his martyrdom on his forehead. The Incarnate Word, the word that cannot be produced by the flesh, and therefore is unutterable or un-announced by human tongue and mouth becomes silent glowing paint. The notion of the Word is instead transcribed into the neatly modelled drapery standing sculptural-still in time, held within the eternal space of the cell, as an enclave, swaying in its fleshless serenity. The presence of figures in this fresco does not deter one from seeing it as a painting of a still and silent interior: literally a life held, distilled and therefore, by definition, remote (hence: *natura morte* = *moribund nature/life*).

<sup>73</sup> Blanchot writes of the journal as the place (and literary genre), which “belongs to occupations, incidents, the affairs of the world – to our active present.” [1955, 29] In truth the journal is the place, and activity, which can keep one from slipping too far out of the idea of the reality of things. Perhaps I would go

so far as to say it acts as a kind of safety net for the ego to return to in case it should be overwhelmed by unconscious contents.

<sup>74</sup>

In contrast, the Baroque style with the heat and depth of darkness, in which Rembrandt and Tintoretto delve, has a very different effect at allowing us as witness to a mystic moment of religious enlightenment. Unlike both Saenredam and Fra Angelico, the interiors of sacred happening which the Baroque artists employ are peopled with flesh-bound, blood-pulsating human beings; the protagonists in the paintings of both Rembrandt and Tintoretto, are believable versions of our own world, whose faces betray the suffering borne from the battle of self and ego, conscience and human weakness. The interiors of Rembrandt and Tintoretto share one thing, and that is mainly the great areas of darkness, the unknown shadowy masses, where our eyes are not permitted to penetrate. The iconographic religious interiors that Tintoretto (1518-94) devises, are on the Italianate grandness of Baroque architecture, which despite exaggerated size of his figures, still manage to be great vaulted spaces, constructed in their idiosyncratic proportions to recede with theatrical aplomb, into the dark horizon line of infinity. Rembrandt (1606-69), on the hand only hints at his 'interior' by highlighting or spot lighting a shabby, peeling area of floor, wall or corner of window where it meets the ceiling. A corner of a chair or a purse hanging on the wall, suffice to tell us of a religiously meditative moment. The dirty worn sole of the young man who falls in exhausted self pity at the feet of the old man, are our gift from the artist's pious self; affording us permission to share the mystical Hebrew-Christian moment of redemption, in a superbly staged biblical finale depicting the *Return of the Prodigal Son*, c. 1663. For Rembrandt, the master of paintings which make palpable the inner psychological task of simply being human, the complex moment of confronting the divine is not so much a representation of the place and circumstance, rather the forgotten, less defined presence of things and people. It is not symbolically hidden in the folds of drapery - as in the pictorial riddle depicting spiritual silence given as resignation, which Fra Angelico focuses on - but rather an almost believable scene, hand picked from 'real life' and brought close up, and dramatically isolated in a great mass of textured darkness. This all-enveloping apparent lack of light, in itself bespeaks of a great reserve of inner light, and illuminated wisdom, captured amidst the crowd of all that is made of the mundane and avaricious in life. The sacred architectural space, in Rembrandt's pictorial iconography of religious subject, is the human heart. Looking specifically at the *Return of the Prodigal Son*, the location for this sacred space is given to us in the touching areas of the painting where the son's head rests on the breast of the father, whilst the large, forgiving hands of the old man are quietly reassuring on the son's back. The bare, bruised and blistered feet, and pathetic torn slippers are given as our chance for redemption, or perhaps our [visual] way into attaining a true spiritual insight. It is not the humble, but rather on the grand scale and dramatic passages of tonality, in which Tintoretto stages the *Finding of the Body of St. Mark*, 1562. Here we have wispy figures which float into thin air, ghosts, intrigue and murder, whilst around the extremely foreshortened body of the saint, who lies there in a pale bloodless deathly state, mourners declaim revenge and turn their faces up to the heavens for an answer. The entire scene is effused with bombastic strains of an opening orchestral piece set for some dark opera, seducing us to enter this great gallery of balconies and arches. Tintoretto, the magician artist, thus calls to us to enter a world of canny intrigue and visual adventure. The source of light is unknown or not indicated, but in symbolic terms the lighting is a significant aspect and key to the sentiments and interpretation of the painting's subject matter. The architectonic forms, so cleverly devised, are used more for pictorial interest: to decipher for us, as 'audience', the exact time, place, and site in which this dark biblical tale would unfold.

<sup>75</sup>

There is something almost poetic (though obviously in view of a feminist stance somewhat problematic) about Freud's metaphorical approach to the domestic space as analogous to the mother's womb. The idea of the interior as a tangible transference of the mother's body as some kind of oppressive space holding a being in place, has a flavour of truism about it; since this is a strangely enclosed boundary from which one is - regardless of gender - released into life. However, it is what Freud does with this notion as a potential transference, which disturbs one. I wonder to what extent this is a universal male attitude to the female genital organs, and not only that of the "neurotic". Which if so, would account for the concept of the female body as representative of a major 'lack', incomplete, and therefore covetous of the completing element of the male body, ie. The phallus. The idea of this repression, of the female body as an element of repression for the male, projected onto the 'home', not only has helped to create distrust, and abuse, amongst the sexes in the social expectations of domestic arrangements, but also taken as a 'scientific' verification of male behaviour, helped to endorse all kinds of injustice and crude thinking as an acceptable, and unquestionable archetypal theory, which woman is given as irrefutable. Psychoanalysis, as the modern mouthpiece of the unconscious, has helped to forge farther the female psyche's sense of self-negation as a gendered state, which [who] is as yet to be truly and sympathetically identified, delineated and acknowledged in her own specific separateness, as the-other-that-is-not-him. - "It often happens that neurotic men declare they feel there is something uncanny about the female genital organs. This *Unheimlich* place, however, is the entrance to the former *Heim* (Home) of all human beings, to the place where each one of us lived once upon a time and in the beginning...Whenever a man dreams of a place or a country and says to himself, while he is still dreaming: 'this place is familiar to me, I've been here before', we may interpret the place as being his mother's genitals or her body." [Freud 1919 vol. xvii, 245] also see Kristeva on Freud and the term '*the Uncanny*' [Kristeva 1991, 181-92] - "In a sense its (the domestic interior) values are alien to the masculine

agenda. And spatially, it cannot be known from the inside. The result is often the production of the uncanny; although everything looks familiar, the scene conveys a certain estrangement and alienation, at their chilliest in *trompe l'oeil*." [Bryson 1990, 170-1]


<sup>76</sup> Architecture, as a philosophical metaphor for thinking differently, and with the openness of ideas which can break down conformity to standards and assumptions, is part of a larger Deleuzian discourse. Elizabeth Grosz's essay *Architecture from the Outside*, explores and outlines briefly the importance which the consideration of architecture has assumed within post-modern thinking and writing; in particular in the wirings of Deleuze, where "innovation" in architecture as place and dwelling becomes an intellectual goal towards a rigorous stance in establishing a more creative notion and place for "difference". There are no specific answers to this discourse, though as the abstract, open arena for considering change, whether in thinking or in the actual devising and making of buildings (and presumably cities, etc.) Grosz proposes that the metaphysical questions raised by Deleuze need attentive answers. - "If the goal of the intellectual is not simply the production of knowledge, but more precisely, the production of concepts, of thought, and if the disciplines, including those constituting architecture as well as philosophy, function to thwart thought, to stifle and prevent exploration, to inhibit the production of the new, then the function of the radical intellectual, whether philosopher or architect, is to struggle against what, in discourse and in practice, functions to prevent thought [...] The question remains: How to perturb architecture, [...] with its outside? In other words, how to force an encounter, to effect a transformation or becoming, in which the series that is architecture can be intercut with an element (or several) from its outside, from that series which is philosophy, in which the two series are thereby transformed through their encounter [...] Deleuze poses a new understanding of difference, in which thought (thought in concepts, images, building materials) asserts its full force as event, as material modification, as movement beyond [...]" [Grosz 1995, 130-1] Although the answers which these ideas/questions have posed are not yet answered, Grosz concludes that the notion that buildings can be considered to "link with and make other series deflect and transform while being transformed in the process [...] may prove crucial." [137] Read in relation to my project, the notion of re-aligning the oppositional binaries of "outside" v. "inside" by re-positioning the traditional view of these two 'places', as separate is interesting, though not necessarily offering any real solutions parallels. Following Deleuze's thinking process, Grosz explains that: - "Deleuze wants to link the outside, not with the inside, but with the *real*. This is in no way to align the inside with the unreal, the possible, nor the imaginary; it is to see that the outside is a *virtual*\* condition of the inside, as equally real, as time is the virtual of space. The virtual is immanent in the real." [132] - \* In her notes to this chapter/essay, Grosz re-names this *virtual reality*, as "the *unsaid* of the statement, the unthought of thought." [Notes 14, 239]

<sup>77</sup> The word *desire*\* is key to this project. - "Desire is that which is manifested in the interval that demand hollows within itself, in as much as the subject, in articulating the signifying chain, brings to light the want-to-be, together with the appeal to receive the complement from the Other, if the Other, the locus of speech, is also the locus of this want, or lack." [Lacan 1966, trans. 263] The interesting contradiction arising here between the 'Other' who is simultaneously representative of both lack and source of the Word, as the locus of desire, which/who is iconic of all that is wanted and needed for development, as well as despised and denied of existence, is barely dealt with logically by Lacan. The *Song of Songs* enters this ontological dance of desire, via the language of lover and beloved, erotically betrothed, - as a more seemly version of Adam and Eve - in a fertile world of the garden, physical caresses, and ecstatic longing. This is not, however permitted to be read as merely the expression of love, between man and woman. The bible instructs us at every paragraph, that this breathless testimony, to erotic/spiritual desire, is in fact merely symbolic of "The church's love unto Christ" [*Solomon's Song* 1:1]. The *desire* is therefore not for the other as Woman, but that of becoming lover to God, specifically it seems for the male worshipper/believer, via an erotically intimate relationship with the church (feminised embodiment in brick and mortar, as *locale* of the Christian faith). Whilst encouraging carnal experience of not so much Christ himself, but more the great dramatic finale of his Passion, close to, and erotically twined with the Divine, in the hope of discovering the meaning of Being, here the maleness of Christ is indubitable, but the female (or feminised) beloved must remain without a body or a soul that is human. She is the abstract notion of a building, a place, a structure that is made, (man-made); the church has no legs, no breasts, and no lips. The 'she' of the *Songs* confirms for the male worshipper, or the male seeker of truth and spiritual becoming, that his other must surely be himself, or one like him. The male pleasure/*desire* is here incited as libidinal drive towards the divine as the *other* who remains a secret longing, for the completion and meaning of the male-*jouissance*. \* - *List* =: Archaic: to *desire* or to choose. Old English: *hlystan* relating to Old German: *lusten* and Gothic: *luston*=to desire. (Within the framework of my thesis, in which I am interested as to how words relate to one another, it is fascinating to discover that the verb To Listen is rooted in the verb To Desire; - *list* is the archaic poetic word for listen Old English: *hlystan* related to Old Norse *hlusta*).

<sup>78</sup> By '*feminine*' I do not mean some spuriously popularised notion of 'woman' or 'female'. In a way I would prefer to use the latin word *femina* - (a) it does not contain the compound of 'male', and (b) one avoids the unfortunate pitfalls, within Anglo-Saxon use of the word 'female': as attributed to womanliness.

<sup>79</sup> I will use the word *Bliss* as a way towards finding vocabulary for a female erotic imaginary, which is clitoris-and-vaginal-oriented, and therefore unlike Lacan's phallus-signifier theory, that advocates a Freud-

derivative imaginary as given "dominance of the phallic attribute and by the masturbatory *jouissance*", which he reassures us is in turn, by definition what "[...] localizes this *jouissance* for the woman in the clitoris, which is thus raised to the function of the phallus." [Lacan 1966, 282] The *jouissance*, which Lacan sites as the (male's) rarefied flow of creative pleasure, is not to be shared by woman, unless she is completely oriented towards, and for, the phallus. A much debated and commented on seminar paper by Lacan, titled: *God and the Jouissance of The Woman* [1975], in which he discusses the notion of a feminine ecstatic/orgiastic approach to God, gives the Bernini statue of St. Teresa by way of an example to amplify the term *Jouissance*. Bernini's statue – in the Vatican, Rome, - depicts a larger than life figure of the mystic nun, swooning under the gravity of her visionary experience; observed at the moment of receiving her stigmata, St. Teresa's passionate moment is the secret and silent encountering of the promise of the presence of the Holy Ghost, made public. We see her mystic moment of epiphanic revelation depicted as a virgin experiencing God's touch in/as an eroticised vision. Lacan constructs a complex system of subject-to-object analysis of the gender differences based entirely on the apriori acceptance of Freudian language and references of the 'Oedipal Complex' and 'Penis envy' and 'Lack' in the female subject; this in particular relation to the way women have access to a *Jouissance* – which acts outside and independently from the phallus, and even in absence of a corporally present male other. Although he seems to be saying, in this essay, that in fact because of this '*something more*' in women's physical and psychic makeup, they perhaps are better able to access the ecstatic and mystical experience of God's presence, he is also crudely aligning this '*something*' '*beyond the phallus*' as an insubstantial, meaningless exaltation, or Becoming, since it functions outside and beyond the phallus there is no signifier worth talking of. Moreover, this channel of self-fulfilment is an almost mind-less, state of ignorance on the part of the woman towards and with her own bodily needs and functions. He goes on to outline why woman must be read minus '*The*', since - "This '*the*' is a signifier characterised by being the only signifier which cannot signify anything, but which merely constitutes the status of *the* woman as being not all." [...] There is a *jouissance*, since we are dealing with *jouissance*, a *jouissance* of the body, which if the expression may be permitted, is *beyond the phallus*. [...] There is a *jouissance* proper to her, to this '*her*' which does not exist and which signifies nothing. [...] she may herself may not know anything except that she experiences it – that much she does know. She knows it of course when it happens [...] There are men who therefore feel just as good. Despite, I won't say their phallus, despite what encumbers them on that score, they get the idea, they sense that there must be a *jouissance* which goes beyond. That is what we call a mystic. [...] It is the same as for St. Teresa – you only have to go and look at Bernini's statue in Rome to understand immediately that she's coming, there is no doubt about it. And what is her *jouissance*, her *coming* from? It is clear that the essential testimony of the mystics is that they are experiencing it but know nothing about it. [...] I believe in the *jouissance* of the woman in so far as it is something more, on condition that you screen off that *something more* [...] Might not this *jouissance* which one experiences and knows nothing of, be that which puts us on the path of ex-istence? And why not interpret one face of the Other, the God face, as supported by feminine *jouissance*?" [Quoted from: Mitchell and Rose 1982, 138-145] - The hitherto acceptable ethics of relating to the woman within two limited boundaries: passive whore, or pure, and inexperienced virgin, have established an abusive and often caricature imaginary of feminine sexuality and libido. Women are often characterised as not being in control of their own carnal desires; the whore is under the exigent of the male subject, whilst the virgin is innocent of even the names and true potential of her sexual body. - "Blank face. Virgin should say: or fingered only. Write something on it: page. If not what becomes of them? Decline, despair. Keeps them young. Even admire themselves. See. Play on her. Lip below. Body of white woman, a flute alive. Blow gentle. Loud. Three holes all women. Goddess I didn't see. They want it: not too much polite [...]" [Joyce 1922, 281] Although I do not claim the female body as the only true site of self-expression and the locus from which women can aspire to the ambition of developing their own genuine sense of self, it is important to recognise the vast influence which the accepted histories have had on the collective imaginary of woman within the psychological economy of Becoming. - "Body politics need not depend on an uncritical, a-historical notion of the (female) body. Beginning from the lived experience of women in their currently constituted bodily identities - [...] feminist artists and cultural workers can engage in the challenging and exhilarating task of simultaneously affirming those identities, questioning their origins and ideological functions, and working towards a non-patriarchal expression of gender and the body." [Wolff 1990, 138]

<sup>80</sup> Labia = Lab(ha)  = Lip(s). The Latin Labium, also means Lips. The parity of the three languages in even the phonetic and actual movements of the mouth for the pronunciation of this word, adds to the reading of Irigaray's *When Our Lips Speak Together*, as a creatively poignant approach to seeing/thinking/touching/speaking from the female body. [Irigaray 1977 trans. 205-18]

<sup>81</sup> - "During the period when there were female goddesses, the woman's sexual organs always appear in the representation of the bodies of women, particularly goddesses, and not merely in the form of the triangle indicating the womb, but also in the form of the labia, an inscription which will later be erased. The cult of goddesses who are exclusively mothers, and mothers of sons, is a late episode in the history of women. In the symbolism of social exchanges, it is accompanied by the representation of woman's sexual organs as the figure of the triangle representing the womb and standing as symbol of the maternal function." [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(a), 178]

82

Speaking of 'perversion', Lacan indicates that the female has a stronger sense of perversion, since she must make love to the very thing she lacks, and desires at the same time, ie: the phallus. - "Such is the woman concealed behind her veil: it is the absence of the penis that turns her into the phallus, the object of desire." [Lacan 1966, trans. 320 & 321] For a poetically expounded philosophy which resolutely reconfigures an opposition to this idea of the norm, see: *This Sex Which Is Not One* - "In the last analysis, the female Oedipus complex is woman's entry into a system of values that is not hers, and in which she can "appear" and circulate only when enveloped in the needs/desires/fantasies of others, namely men." [Irigaray 1985(b), 134]

83

The male's fear of death becomes mingled and colluded with keeping in tact this hermetic system of *same-to-same*, and so the other-as-death is projected onto the feminine erotic and maternal orifice, as the gaping dark hole of the unknown. She therefore takes on the representation of devourer of the male organ and potency. Such a threat requires a strategy of containment, and the most obvious move is, as Irigaray points out in her critique of Freud's writings on the death drive, the male's psychology instructs an extraordinary turn about of his own 'masochistic' death drive by projecting the entire scenario onto the woman. She thus turns this projected, self-negating masochism onto herself. - "By connecting the trajectory of the death drives with the castration complex, Irigaray makes a link between the naturalization of castration and the naturalization of female masochism. [...] The 'other of the other' for man is that which is unthinkable. By making death (instead of woman) the 'other of the other' and by making woman the representative of death, men attempt to master the unthinkable." [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(a), 115]

84

The fiction of the phallus has become common language. Jung's research into the archetypal aspects of this imaginary, explored the meaning(s) and categories of the phallus/phallic worship, in the dreams (his own, et al), stories, and initiatory processes of various indigenous cultures. [See: *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* 1961, 26-28; *Collected Works* 1953-78, vol. 5, 140-6]. A great deal of research has been undertaken to correct this historical-myth in representing the male gender (literally physical body) as the dominant aspect in ancient religious/mystery rites and rituals. There is now enough evidence within this field to make a very strong case for the significant role which the female gender (body) held within prehistoric societies. Jung's surety of this mode of worship, which is represented by him as the only rite of its kind and one so universally practised, the 'archetype' of the phallus: as an organ/symbol, has come to be the accepted representative of a potently active source of creativity: - "The phallus is the source of life and libido, the creator and worker of miracles, as such it was worshipped everywhere." [CW, vol.5 p.146] Acceptance of the Freudian concepts of the phallic-oriented imaginary, as the 'universal' symbolic infrastructure of thought, memory, dream, fantasy, perception, and linguistics, etc., is presumed as an apriori foundation, upon which gender psychology is constructed. The by now famous quote of Lacan's: 'there is no such thing as the truth of woman', though shocking, is somehow already permitted a place within discourse. To dismiss such a remark, which ultimately makes of woman - her genealogy, nature, integrity, aspirations, and reality - an abstraction, and a mockery, is obviously not good enough. We must remain congenial, and open to discuss the lowest derogation against ourselves, in order to prove to the dominant representative of what Irigaray calls *langua*, [see: Irigaray in Whitford 1991(a), 42], that we are capable of mimicry. It is not a simple case of (female) pedantry, or vana curiositas, - for which Irigaray has paid the price, by being actually expelled from the Eden of the Parisian psychoanalytical circles, whose dictum is founded on the Freudian structures of the symbolic imaginary.

85

Irigaray's critique of Freud's writings on the female gender and her role/placement make very clear the horizon of (male) perception which our/the social-universal psyche has accepted as 'nature', 'order', 'law'. Her libido is neutered, and de-feminised. She cannot relate to her mother, and in relating to the father she only comes up against the insurmountable reality of her own lack of a penis. [See: *Speculum of the Other Woman* 13-129] The accepted norm of the primacy of male intervention is an integral part of the biblical imaginary. The gestation and birth of Eve and Adam at the hands of 'God the Father', presumes the corporal violence of dismemberment as an active quality in Becoming. Eve could not come into being without the intervention of the Father, and a corporal aspect of Adam's physical reality, ie: his rib=symbolic phallus. Eve is at once denied both her own genealogy of the *mother-to-daughter-to-other*, and her rightful place in the creative-ecstatic order of things - whether sexual or poetic/spiritual.

86

Nietzsche's blind anarchy, and it seems total disregard for Her as anything approximating the human, openly betrays the raw distastefulness of base regard for womankind. - "Woman fulfils, man promises." - "Through the woman nature shows the point it has by now reached in its work on the image of mankind; through the man it shows what it had to overcome in attaining to this point, but also what its intentions are with respect to mankind. - The complete woman of every era is the idleness of the creator on that seventh day in the creation of culture, the repose of the artist in his work." [Nietzsche 1878, *Opinions and Maxims*, no. 274; 1986, 278]

87

See article on the iconography and tradition of the Old French and Vienna Latin *Bible Moralisee* in the *Art Bulletin*, March 1998 (Vol. LXXX, No. 1) by Katherine H. Tachau. - Surely this must be the 'Other' the desire for whom - "is also hollowed within the demand, in that, as an unconditional demand of presence and absence, demand evokes the want-to-be under the three figures of nothing that constitutes the basis of the demand for love, of the hate that even denies the other's being, and of the unspeakable element in that which

is ignored in its request. In this embodied aporia [...] desire is affirmed as the absolute condition." [Lacan 1966, trans. 265]

<sup>88</sup> This image of woman portrayed as 'matter' is therefore, by definition of matter being a finite and unredeemable substance, a thing that can be *had*, taken and then abandoned, renewed or replaced. An appropriation of an entity who/that is considered bereft of spirit, gives it a two-fold label of vulnerability: set up as a challenge for possession, and since it is bereft of spirit therefore not boundless, and so dispensable.

<sup>89</sup> This is the pause, the creative gap, where things become possible. It is as powerful as God's chemistry of hypnotising Adam into a deep, dreamless sleep whereby he could disrupt the biblical text, and create Eve. Perhaps for the authors of the Genesis, this was a moment of *jouissance*. The few examples of the *Nag Hammadi* texts from the Gnostic Gospels, which I have briefly looked at, seem to indicate that there was also a strong energy of *Bliss*, present in the process of the Creation. Christine Battersby, discusses the influence of these texts in the light of exploring the philosophical and historical roots of an ethical system of aesthetics in which the male (masculine element) is given precedence as inherently able to access creativity and in particular the potential to genius writes. - "[...] Several of the texts provide Eve with a more positive part in the drama of the garden of Eden: she is associated with wisdom and the awakening of Adam to life and understanding [...] A number of the gospels also present us with the prehistory of Genesis. God the Father of the Old Testament is made the self-promoting and boastful offspring of the female procreative force, Sophia (Wisdom)." In the early Gnostic tradition the concept of creation is not given solely to the male this, as Battersby points out, is an elaboration of the "untranslatable Greek term *logos*", which once elaborated from Aristotelian thinking that has become established as - "[...] *logos* was the formula contained within the male seed that enable the father to reproduce his own likeness in his offspring. The *logos* was a kind of mystical (genetic) code, which only males carried." Which is thus transcribed as a god-given law by the Christian Church, and propounded the notion of the appropriation of the Word (*Logos spermatikos*= 'the spermatic word') as the inherited right of the *Father* onto the *Son*, - "[...] The Gnostic female is associated with that which underlies *logos*; with sound (out of which words are shaped), and with matter (out of which the seed itself is moulded). Matter was also female in Aristotle, but was down-graded in a way quite foreign to many of these early Gnostic texts. The Gnostic universe was formed by forces which include the psychic and reproductive powers of the female." [Battersby 1989, 68-71] In Codex V, 64:1-85:32, of the *Nag Hammadi Library* [as selected by Andrew Welburn 1994] Adam is quoted on his deathbed, in the 700<sup>th</sup> year, telling his son Seth the story of the creation of himself and Eve, and their subsequent expulsion from Eden. - "[...] When God had created me out of the earth along with Eve your mother, I went about with her in a glory which she had seen in the aeon from which we had come forth. She taught me a word of knowledge of the eternal God. And we resembled the great eternal angels, for we were higher than the God who had created us [...] Then the God, who created us created a son from himself and Eve, your mother [...]" The symbol/idea of a feminised figure of Wisdom or Sophia is often found in contradictory references. Sophia can be traced as: Female Power of Silence; or Achamoth, who sent her own spirit in the shape of the snake to teach the newly shaped human couple's disobedience against their jealous God, and so eat of the fruit of knowledge; the giver of spirit to Christ; as mother of Christ and the mysterious bride of Christ; as the goddess of doorposts in Hellenistic tradition, since she was able to 'open what is shut and shut what is open'.

<sup>90</sup> The myth of the young girl, Echo, who is strangely audible, and yet possesses no vocal, and one assumes intellectual, independence, as the lover forever abandoned by a beloved who in turn spends his time in self-conscious auto-eroticism, is a female tragedy on two levels. (a), the obvious portrayal of Echo as a potentially undesirable lover, since she is described as having "tricked" Juno with her "tongue", Ovid lends no sympathy to the young girl who is punished by becoming deprived of her own thought and word. (b), the story barely describes the fate of Echo's enforced mute-ness, instead giving prevalence to the sensuous youth's love of himself; compounding the fascination with the notion and practice of an homoerotic culture. [Metamorphosis: 1-8 AD, bk. III; ed. 1986, 61-66]

<sup>91</sup> Not so much with scholarly intent but more intuitively, I would say that there is a parallel between Irigaray's use of the word "*enunciation*"\* and Butler's term "*performative*"; the latter concerning itself with the secular view and the former with a more religious. By taking note of both, as I am trying to make a place in between the two - to negotiate a scared/numinous voice for woman, that will permit the difficult to hear, or that which has never been heard, to find an audience. The figures of Eve, Echo and Eurydice are of great interest to my methodology in writing a voice for women who have been mis-heard, negated, or wrongly punished, and in effect written out/crossed out of the original script/text. Whitford's explanation of Irigaray's *enunciative*\* language, makes clear the creative intention behind the idea of different modes of speech. - "It must then be language (*langage*) as ideally enunciative (though enunciation on its own is not enough; an object of exchange is needed; [...]) So the dynamics of enunciation is given primacy over language, which simply conveys information or truth, such as theoretical language. Epistemology is subtended by the subject of enunciation." [1991, 48] \* - Enunciate v.t. Express (proposition, theory) in definite terms; proclaim; pronounce (words); hence or cogn. -A'TION, -atoR, ns. -ATIVE (or -sha-) a. [f. L. E. (*nuntiare*; announce; f. *nuntius*: messenger) + -ATE3]



The notion of woman as engaged within crude matter, and therefore by premise, excluded from the spiritual or higher plane of self-development, is echoed in Jung's obliquely poetic text of *The Seven Sermons to the Dead* [1925]: -

- Sermo V

"The dead mocked and cried: teach us, fool of the church and holy communion.

The world of the gods is made manifest in spirituality and in sexuality. The celestial ones appear in spirituality, the earthly in sexuality. Spirituality conceiveth and embraceth. It is woman-like and therefore we call it MATTER COELESTIS, the celestial mother. Sexuality engendereth and createth. It is man-like, and therefore we call it PHALLOS, the earthly father.

The sexuality of man is more of the earth, the sexuality of woman is more of the spirit.

The spirituality of man is more of heaven, it goeth to the greater.

The spirituality of woman is more of the earth, it goeth to the smaller.

Lying and devilish is the spirituality of the man which goeth to the smaller.

Lying and devilish is the spirituality of the woman which goeth to the greater.

Each must go to its own place."

From as far back as the pharaohs of Egypt there are examples of artists whose self-portraits make a visual gesture towards establishing their identity [see essay by: Alison Thomas in the catalogue for: *In the Looking Glass: an Exhibition of Contemporary Self-portraits by Women Artists*, held at the Usher Gallery, Lincolnshire in 1996, 8-13; also *Ancient Faces – Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt* BMP 1997]. The body as a place, via the depiction and use of which the female artist can begin to situate her-self as an authoritative subject is part of the important and radical theories current in recent feminist thinking. - "Any body politics, therefore, must speak about the body, stressing its materiality and its social and discursive construction, at the same time as disrupting and subverting existing regimes of representation." [Wolff 1990, 138] - "Seeing that the subject's consciousness or interiority, its essential humanity or unique individuality, can no longer provide a foundation or basis for accounts of identity, it is appropriate to ask whether subjectivity, the subject's relations with others (the domain of ethics), and its place in a socio-natural world (the domain of politics), may be better understood in corporeal rather than conscious terms." [Grosz 1995, 83-4]

Quoting from Michel Beaujour's book *Miroirs d'encre*: - "Sick persons, actors, poets and athletes discuss their own bodies without aspiring to universalism. But the relation the self-portraitist entertains with his body is more complex and more paradoxical. Because although a self-portrait is not strictly limited to a description of the author's own body, neither can this be passed over in silence. The self-portrait is the only genre in which writing cannot avoid wondering about the site of its production, the incarnation of the word and the resurrection of the body. The self-portrait thus stands in opposition to reason, between embodied individuality and commonplace. The question of the relation between *Loci* and bodies is thus raised in a general way though the body-corpus metaphor, as well as the details of the symbols around which the self-portrait organises its topics." [In Lionnet 1980, 307-8]

The portrait often adheres to the traditions of portraiture as a rehearsed, and posed delineation of someone 'out there', in the public gaze. Whereas the self-portrait, no matter how self-consciously staged, is a revelation of someone on the other side of the easel, 'in here', stolen from the intimate gaze that pierces the seen 'out there' into a realm beyond merely depicting a replica of oneself: - an illustration of the outer physique of what can be discerned from a mirror, or a photograph for that matter. Notwithstanding the Modernist legacy of portraiture [- in particular Matisse, Picasso, Soutine, etc.], the portrait genre at its most traditional depends on the artist being able to create a near enough or recognisable image of the sitter, often complimenting and/or even exaggerating an aesthetic feature, whilst perhaps not stating the less attractive aspects. The portrait can be about a kind of self-promotion. The self-portrait on the other hand is always based on a choice made by the artist, to depict the self, with a view of partaking in a three way visual parley: the artist looking at the reflected image-being looked at by the 'audience'/onlooker of the completed work. The idea of complimenting or exonerating oneself is also part of the history of self-portraiture. However, it is the essence of fiction or autobiography in the self-portrait that fascinates us. As Borzello makes clear in her concise survey of women's self-portrayal, throughout the ages [mainly concentrating on the western tradition of painting], even apparently insignificant opportunities of self-portraiture are not overlooked by the avid self-interest of artists. In a twelfth century German Psalter, the scribe nun, Claricia swings in mid-page, enacting the quaver tail of the letter 'Q' [German Psalter, Ausberg, 12<sup>th</sup> century]. In a more detailed composition, the painter Marcia is depicted deeply preoccupied as she paints herself, reflected in a mirror; a dignified reference for one of Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women* [Borzello 1998, 20-1] [Figs. 16 & 17]. Despite the persistent omission of women painters from the annals of art history, there have been several publications in recent years to help readjust the historical gap. Nancy Heller [*Women Artists: An Illustrated History*, 1987], and Frances Borzello [*Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-portraits*, 1998], and Marsha Meskimmon [*The Art of Reflection: Women Artists' Self-portraiture in the Twentieth Century*, 1996] are consistent in their efforts to give a comprehensive and contemporary art-historic analysis of the female artist as the I/eye that regards the world from her own unique stance of the gender, situated outside the domain of the socially acceptable notions of (a) the artist as male, and (b) feminine sexuality represented as a public/artistic subject. In almost all the early, surviving examples, the image of the female artist depicting



herself, whether in paint or the plastic arts, has been consistent with the social expectations of women being accomplished, correct in their demeanour, and ultimately 'feminine'; - she shows off her talents, but not too much! Hers is the statement that publicises her acceptability, conformity, and received approval. The female artist's view of herself is formulated, in these early self-portrait paintings, on the premise that she must by all means show off her refined habits and abilities, as a fashionable woman of her times, whilst on no account overstepping the boundaries of 'feminine' behaviour. In paintings such as Fontana's *self-portrait with Small Statues* 1579 [Borzello 1998, 22], modesty and restraint mixed with a curious look of acquiescence stare back at us. With one eye to being approved and accepted within the male-given rules and regulations of the Academy, the self-portraits of artists such as Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614), Sofonisba Anguissola (1532-1625), [Fig. 18], Judith Leyster (1609-1660), and Vigee-Lebrun (1755-1842), show the artist posed in classical attitude. They are invariably depicted in fashionable clothes, poised, calm and attractive, staring boldly out to us, the 'onlooker'; depicting themselves as women who are not only proud of their unconventional occupation as artists, but showing themselves as fully capable in their painterly skills and ambitions. It seems important, for these women artists, to pay homage to the already accepted format of the 'artist at work', though as in the paintings of Vigee-Lebrun, these painters bring a new element to this genre showing the artist as a polymath female: sociable, neatly dressed, and polished whilst attentive to their children and other domestic details. In these early works, the artist's challenge to her audience, is in that she depicts herself as an ideal woman who is at the same time completely in charge of her faculties and artistic potential. These are remarkable self-portraits in that the boundaries of the 'feminine' are being pushed as far as the social and religious restrictions of the day will allow the female artist to break into new grounds of activity and self-expression. No matter how apparently conventional to our eyes, the heritage of much early self-portraiture by women artists is a genuine example offered us to see with the eyes of a woman painter. In the twentieth century the female artist begins to express herself with a more radical self-confidence, and a more conscious differentiation, as having the artistic ambitions of depicting the feminine in painting. The works of artists like Kathe Kollwitz (1867-1945), Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876-1907), Gwen John (1876-1939), Leonora Carrington (b. 1939), Dorothea Tanning (b. 1910), Frieda Khalo (1907-1954) [Fig. 19], and Suzanne Valadon (1865-1938), open a space for the feminine gender in painting. Making for imagery that is less biased by a male imaginary strategy of expectations, disguised as social and artistic mores. Leonora Carrington in her *Self-Portrait* 1936-7 [Fig. 20], set in a dream-confused room of part reality part unconscious projection, presents herself as a creatively inspired woman palpably present within both her own intimate arena of the imagination and sexuality. By intentionally creating an interior atmosphere outside of the studio space, Carrington represents herself and the consciousness of her own interiorised 'reality' by situating herself in the psychological interior of dream and fantasy, and therefore with[in] a Surrealist narrative. Although the self-portrait as an acceptable genre, in the hands of both male and female painters were sought after by collectors from the sixteenth century onwards, neither the large catalogue of work, nor the recent art-historical feminist re-configurations has as yet created a place for the female view of herself as a universal imag(e)-inary, that may be referred to as the *idea* of the artist. - "[...] we cannot idealise something without at the same time identifying with it." [Silverman 1998, 2] Although every age has presented woman with her coda of 'feminine' practice as her attribute, it seems that artistically the most important feminine trait has revolved around the notion of modesty of sexuality. The latter part of twentieth century, brought forward diverse self-reflected images by women artists, and has gone some way to change and challenge these deep seated expectations of the female body and sense of represented self. In particular I would mention as example the works by Cindy Sherman, Hannah Wilke, Jo Spence, Paula Rego, Helen Chadwick [Fig. 21], Mona Hatoum, Jenny Saville, and Tracy Emin, etc.

<sup>96</sup> Using the material body to express a personal agenda whether political, religious or poetic is given by Helen Vendler, in her brilliant analysis of the essence and shape of (poetic) 'style'- (looking closely at the work of Hopkins, Heaney and the American poetess Jori Graham), as bearing a lyrical parity with the "material body". Thus she describes the choice or change of style in a writer's process, can come to be representative of "an act of violence", and as the intentions - knowing or otherwise - of (the) writing 'style'. - "It is still not understood that in lyric writing, style in its largest sense is best understood as a material body. When a poet puts off an old style [...] he or she perpetrates an act of violence, so to speak, on the self. It is not too much to say that the old body must be dematerialised if the poet is to assume a new one." [Vendler 1995, 1] There is a parallel here to the way mystic and visionary women used their bodies to access a higher spiritual experience or perception. The violence which Vendler uses as a metaphor for the poet's change of style - voluntary or otherwise - maybe read as reflected in the self-flagellating attitude of these medieval, mystic women. The body of the feminine having been placed in the economies of every 'filth' that can be associated with hatred and the abysmal depths of sinfulness, promoted in these women a strange fetish to self-hurt and a dislocated attitude towards the sanctity and wholesomeness of their own flesh. Although it is difficult for us to fully perceive the reasoning behind this kind of violation, and self-abuse the wounds and hardship inflicted on their own bodies were used by the female mystics as a means of gaining power and authority within their religious arena. - "[...] The loathing of the female flesh, expressed in countless official church documents, created enclosed and restricted geographies for women who in turn spent much of their spiritual search in self-flagellation and loathing of their own body. [...] the Classical

body denotes the *form* of official high culture. Medieval "high" culture was Latin, male and extremely homogenous, including such discourses as philosophy, theology, cannon law and liturgy. In the medieval church, the Classical body was harmonious, proportionate, and monumental; it attempted to represent a sort of disembodied spirituality and, as such, it never existed except as cultural representation. The grosser, more material aspects of "the body" were displaced onto the "grotesque body". Woman (along with other marginal social groups, the lower classes, for example) is constructed by this dominant culture as the grotesque body, the other, whose discursive norms include heterogeneity, disproportion, a focus on gaps, orifices, and symbolic filth. [...] The mystic's pain – her inflicting of wounds upon herself – grants her the authority to speak and be heard, to have followers, to act as a spiritual advisor, to heal the sick, and to found convents and hospitals. Her body bears the marks, the "signs", of her own spiritual power. The mystics' progress, then, is discursively organised by the disciplines authorized by religious tradition and performed on her body. She changes, however, the meaning of the physical forces that oppress her. She assumes for herself the power to define what they mean." [See: essay, *Mystical Bodies and the Dialogues of Vision*, by Laurie A. Firke, in Wiethaus (ed.) 1993, 36-42] The deeply personal, and at times harrowing images of Frieda Kahlo's self-portraits, are candid 20<sup>th</sup> century equivalent examples: a woman painting her body with all its pain, suffering, humiliation, and tragedy. Kahlo's portraits are painted by her intimate woman's eye. These are the eyes of one who knows her body shamelessly, and without judgement.

<sup>97</sup> The notion of the other [facial/bodily presence], as the *loci* of 'regard' [Levinas] or the place of moral responsibility which rests on the quality and intention of my 'gaze' is the stand which Levinas takes in considering the other; but more precisely the self's own impenetrable capacity for truly seeing the other. - "The way in which the other presents himself, exceeding the idea of the other in me, we here name face. This mode does not consist in figuring as a theme under my gaze, in spreading itself forth as a set of qualities forming an image. The face the Other at each moment destroys and overflows the plastic image it leaves me, the idea existing to my own measure and to the measure of its ideatum – the adequate idea. It does not manifest itself by these qualities [...] It expresses itself." [In Vasseleu 1998, 88; - quoted from Levinas 1979, 50-1] Or as Cathryn Vasseleu goes on to expand: - "The anarchy of the face is an infinite difference, theorized by Levinas as a never presentable deferred identity, or difference as a non-recurrence, as always already past." [89]

<sup>98</sup> Desire predicated as a 'lack' for the female is not a relevant notion for consideration. I desire without lacking: since I refuse to become party to the futility of the ancient dance whereby a closed system locks up the puerile male into a matricidal love-hate relationship with woman, whilst giving as excuse for his own blind behavioural ways, the crude notion of woman relating to him merely out of her own sense of lacking a phallus. (!)

<sup>99</sup> - "The I always has one foot caught in it's own existence. Outside in face of everything, it is inside of itself, tied to itself. It is forever bound to the existence which it has taken up. This impossibility for the ego to not be a self constitutes the underlying tragic element in the ego, the fact that it is riveted to its own being." [Levinas 1978, 84]

<sup>100</sup> Betterton's writing on the depiction of the female body in art, confirms Irigaray's project in exposing the long established domain of the "morphology of the male body" as the active maker of "the phallogocentric logic and language of the symbolic order", which has hitherto dictated how the female body may be situated in the scopic tradition of art. Having been perceived or "imagined within a phallic system of representation", this genre becomes, in the hands of the female artist, a viable space from which a new "critique of the system itself" may be initiated. [Betterton 1996, 105] - "The question of how to represent the body has become an interrogation of identity, marginality, power and difference: the body in history. Themes of identity have been explored in such practices through the relation of personal to historical memory, through journeys, both real and metaphorical, and through the representation of self from the point of view from those displaced from the 'centre' by gender and race. This kind of work engages with [...] an inter-subjectivity which enables identifications and differences between women and men and between races and cultures to be recognised. It also asks how we – as women, as feminists, as post-colonial subjects – might journey towards the articulation of our own desires." [Betterton 1996, 193]

<sup>101</sup> I go beyond myself as woman, Persian, born from a Moslem-Jewish heritage, which at the same time denied me a religious upbringing, insisting on a Communist standard of world imaginary in politics as well as gender. I go also into the deeply intimate notions of a self who is those things cited above, and yet none of those things simultaneously. The meaning in my essential journey of becoming lies beyond the history of western art, theology of the Bible, the Torah, the Koran, or Das Kapital for that matter. - "The space of art is one which narrates and in doing so legitimises that which is made visible in its recurring stories. The script of figurative painting in the west has been massively masculine, servicing its fantasies and representing its white dominance. Women desire to write new stories, their stories, into this narrative. [...] The problem is how to develop enunciations of femininity that can cut across the twin poles of femininity as absolute difference (the nineteenth-century model) and femininity as a social disadvantage to be overcome in the ambition for equality with men (the twentieth-century liberal position). [...] Femininity has also to be thought beyond its imperial bourgeois origins. [...] Thus identities are not just plural (an ideal typical of post-modern indifference). They are historical complexes of textured difference. [...] These are registers of

historical and political affiliations and experiences which speak of the necessity to grasp persons as living, specific configurations of historical placement around deeply and mutually interactive categorizations – race, class, gender – which are never discrete totalities, but complex formations operative as much as the level of psychic as of socio-economic constructions.” [Pollock 2001, 94-9]

<sup>102</sup> - “However, we do not ever look once and for all, but within time [...] This “Time” has two dimensions, one conscious and one unconscious. Although one cannot control what happens to a perception before we become aware of it, we can retroactively revise the value which it assumes for us at a conscious level.” [Silverman 1998, 5]

<sup>103</sup> From Egyptian, a word/name denoting the ancient belief in the dynamic spirits that would attend human or statue representations.

<sup>104</sup> The writer must, according to Blanchot, lose himself in the process and along the breadth of the journey into the land of writing, as a refugee who forsakes the native land for the adventure of experiencing both a new territory, as well as seeing her/him-self as an unknown other. - “When to write is to discover the interminable, the writer who enters this region does not leave himself behind in order to approach the universal. He does not move towards a surer world, a finer or better justified world where everything would be ordered according to the clarity of the impartial light of day. [...] What speaks in him is the fact that, in one way or another, he is no longer himself; he isn’t anyone any more. The third person substituting for the “I”: such is the solitude that comes to the writer on account of the work. It does not glorify consciousness in someone other than myself or the evolution of a human vitality, which in the imaginary space of the work of art would retain the freedom to say “I”. The third person is myself become no one, my interlocutor turned alien; it is my no longer being able, where I am, to address myself and the inability of whoever addresses me to say “I”; it is his not being himself.” [Blanchot 1955, 28]

<sup>105</sup> My nakedness is not merely being undresses, but a nudity that revels in its candid state of detachment. Clothes can indicate an associative erotic genre/scene, and the hint of nakedness is in itself a green light for erotic imagining. Nudity however, is almost innocent, protected, within it(her)-self. These portraits are not the product of masculine erotica, which ultimately sees the phallic as the central aspect of the partly dressed or naked female figure. - “I am a woman. I am a being sexualised as feminine. The motivation of my work lies in the impossibility of articulating such a statement; in the fact that its utterance is in some way senseless, inappropriate, indecent. Either because woman is never the attribute of the verb to be nor sexualised female a quality of being, or because am a woman is not predicated of I, or because I am sexualised excludes the feminine gender.” [Irigaray 1985(b), 148-9] She, the mute and obliging subject, who is given the protagonist role of playing out ‘his’ desire: phallic oriented, phallic excited, and therefore homoerotic. [For a visual survey of erotic art see: Gilles Neret *Twentieth-Century Erotic Art* 1993]. - “In all probability no one has to this point seriously enough considered to what extent the image of a desirable woman is dependent on the image of the man who desires her, so that in the end it amounts to a series phallic projections which progress from one segment of a woman to configure her entire image, whereby the finger, the arm, the leg of the woman, could actually be the man’s genitals – that it’s the male sex organ in the woman’s firm, stockinged leg, the thigh swelling over – or in the pair of rounded buttocks out of which, arching backwards in tension, the column of the vertebrae extends – or in the double breasts, that hang down from the extended neck or freely from the body – so that the phallus is finally the entire woman, sitting with hollow spine, with or without hat, standing erect [...]” [Hans Bellmer quoted in Neret, 21]

<sup>106</sup> Irigaray returns again and again to the fundamental crisis in law and discourse of the shackles placed on the female who remains unknown to herself, and yet a gratis commodity in the masculine initiative on sexuality, and self-articulation. The “hierarchical structure” has not only created “a position of inferiority” for the feminine, but also set up various systems whereby the feminine is excluded from language. What is named as “true” and “proper” has invested culture and the universal psyche with the power to prohibit the feminine from learning to generate “self-affection” and “self-representation” [Irigaray 1985(b), 161]

<sup>107</sup> - “What [women] do need is to stand centred about their own axis, an axis which passes microcosmically from their feet to the top of their head, macrocosmically from the centre of the earth to the centre of the sky. This axis is present in the iconographic traces left by traditions in which women are visible. It is on this axis that women find the condition of their territory, of the autonomy of their body and their flesh, and the possibility of an expanding jouissance. [Irigaray in Whitford 1991(a) 164; from *Gesture in Psychoanalysis* 1989, 134; *Sexes et Parentés* 1974, 114] This is a feminine-subjective territory of space, and time that is as yet to be drawn and established, in which the female can also be situated as a knowing and therefore an actively self-represented subject. - “If [...] post-Euclidean and post-Newtonian conceptions are made possible during an historical questioning of the postulates and values of the Age of Reason and the era of the self-knowing subject, these have still in spite of their conceptual distance from Euclid and Newton, confirmed the fundamental masculinity of the knower, and left little or no room for female self-representations, and the creation of maps and models of space and time based on projections of women’s experiences. It is not clear that men and women conceive of space or time in the same way, whether their experiences are neutrally presented within dominant mathematical and physics models, and what the space-time framework appropriate to women, or to the two sexes may be. One thing remains clear: in order to reconceive bodies, and to understand the kinds of active interrelations possible between (lived) representations

of the body and (theoretical) representations of space and time, the bodies of each sex need to be accorded the possibility of a different space-time framework." [Grosz 1995, 100]

<sup>108</sup> In Greek mythology, the muses were referred to as any one of the nine sisters/goddesses, who were each the patron goddess of an art or science. These nine women were the offspring of Zeus and Mnemosyne. The alternative to the feminised *muse-(woman)* is the effeminate youth with his lyre, traditionally configured as the myth of Orpheus. - "[Orpheus] [...] that infinite one who makes himself felt, here and there through the ages, in a mind that can surrender to him." [Rilke 1987, Notes 337] It occurs to me that it may be time to begin listening for the resounding, dark echo of the call of Eurydice, his beloved spouse, as the mainspring who inspired and moved Orpheus. Perhaps, despite the man-[u]factured myth of her disappearance into the underworld, it is she to whom we must 'surrender'. At first on a purely intuitive level, and then having discovered the mass of work that has already been achieved by feminist thinkers, writers, and artists in reviving and re-reading the myth of Eurydice, I am convinced of the power of potential expression and inspiration, which the idea/symbol of this woman-story holds for my own needs in the practice(s) of painting and writing. Looking for a kind of parallel poetic figure for the feminine to relate to, (which/who would also embrace the mother as poet), Nicole Ward Jouve writes: - "[...] *So then, what do I mean by Poetry?* Lyricism. The Lyre. The impulse to sing. And dance. Move to rhythm. Make music with words. Patterns with words. Numbers. To alternate one and two; and three. [...] The even, and the odd. To celebrate, vent, state, soothe, rock, explore, express, in words that sing and dance: [...] Poetry I also see as transformation. As metaphor, that is voyage, change. [...] Are women debarred from any of these, except through power of tradition, rule or circumstance? I don't think so. You could imagine Phaedra, frustrated in her love for Hippolytus, lover of horses, making music out of horsehair: isn't that what the bow of violins is strung with? Or Echo, instead of pining to death for love, hewing down the sycamore at whose foot Narcissus bends over his watery image, and making a violin out of its wood. Eurydice, killing the snake that ravishes her to Hades, and making strings for her lyre out of its guts to call to her beloved Orpheus." [1998, 168-9]

<sup>109</sup> Pallas Athena (or Athene), - the Greek goddess known in Roman mythology as Minerva, was the virgin goddess, daughter of Zeus (or Jove; Jupiter), who was celebrated as the patron goddess of Athens, goddess of prudent warfare and goddess of wisdom and technical skill/the arts, - who is born from the split-opened head of her father Jove, fully grown and clad in her armour, - is a brilliantly illogical imaginary for the feminised muse to the male psyche.

<sup>110</sup> It is interesting to note that the public language of the Medieval period was Latin and a language which was "under theological protection". The vernacular language of Middle English, or courtly French, was deemed as less worthy, whilst Latin was universally (Europe / and Christian world) accepted as the language of "divine revelation". The female writer was not a commonly regarded phenomenon, and often even religiously influential, and powerful women would have a male scribe take down their dictation in Latin. This was the case with the dictation of Hildegard of Bingen's remarkable series of visions, as recorded in the *Scivias*. Language, as tool of power, influence and law, was not given to women, as either a privilege of learning or a democratic individual right. - "Medieval scribes were primarily responsible for guaranteeing accuracy of textual transmission from one generation to another; they worked for the most part, in monastic communities made mostly of men, but also, and not that infrequently, important contingents of women, all of whom were drawn at times, from the most distant corners of Europe. It was however, the men who performed the scribed functions of reliable textual transmission over time as well as place; they could provide such a guarantee of linguistic accuracy because they were learned in Latin as well as fluent in their own particular vernacular language, and knew the difference." [Nolan 1994, 11] For a thorough critique of images of women scribes, saints or popular writers of the medieval period, see the series of excellent essays on this subject, titled: *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence* 1997, (eds.) Jane Taylor and Leslie Smith.

<sup>111</sup> Jung's theories of the 'unconscious' embrace the ancient concept of the feminine muse, as the *Anima* to the male psyche, with her counterpart named the *Animus*, accompanying the feminine psyche. However, whilst the *anima* is given as the positive and creative aspect of the male, the *animus* often induces the female subject to act in an obsessive and uninspired manner. The will-full female subject cannot aspire to the creative, or intellectual heights of her male counterpart. She tends to become verbose and involved in issues, which detract from her 'feminine nature', giving her an inappropriately ambitious self-image [!]. - "The animus corresponds to the paternal *Logos* just as the anima corresponds to maternal *Eros*. I use *Eros* and *Logos* merely as conceptual aids to describe the fact that woman's consciousness is characteristic more by the connective quality of *Eros*, than by the discrimination and cognition associated with *Logos*. In men, *Eros*, the function of relationship, is usually less developed than *Logos*. In women, on the other hand, *Eros* is an expression of their true nature, while their *logos* is often only a regrettable accident." [CW vol.9] This kind of oppositional system of thought has had its own stamp of influence in perpetuating the notion of the creative potential as an androgynous and undifferentiated gender, therefore continuing to exclude the female from the sublime and so the expression for a feminine creative genius. - "The great artist is *feminine male*. Although Jung allows women an inner 'masculine' self - bound up with what he calls the '*logos spermatikos*' [...] he insists that a woman's creativity reaches only as far as *inspiring* a man to productive activity." [Battersby 1989, 10-11]

Rilke, writing to a young woman in 1904, cites this (faceless) "feminine" creature, as "the creative artist", the encounter with whom heralds a poet's initiation "to speak". He goes on to recount what the poet Obstfelder had once written - it seems with a sense of awe - at watching the shifting changes on the face of a stranger: - "when he began to speak, it was as though a woman had taken a seat within him." [Rilke 1987, Notes 337] This female-phantom, who moves the mind and emotions (of the male), cannot in reality hold on to her lofty status, when encountered in her embodied form of a living woman. For the male, this fantasy-woman is the very essence of creative energy, of nature and the mistress of all the unknown realms, so long as she remains behind the mysterious veils of masculine vocabulary. In her own reality, as a living woman, such qualities are not permitted as belonging, or appropriate to her. Like the goddess Isis, this muse-woman is "the Universal principle of Nature", appealed to as both a magician and wise physician. - "Let no one say that I don't love life, the eternal Presence: I pulsate in her; she bears me, she gives me [...] Her strong hand is above me, and if she should hold me under, submerged in fate, I would have to learn how to breathe down there." [Rilke, 1987, n. 227] And when Blake comes to both celebrate [albeit with a hint of bitterness], and rage against 'Woman', as the inherently omnipotent agent of 'Man's' psyche, she is seen as merely wilful and displaced in her own sense of grandeur. Here Woman's sex becomes the secret dwelling place for the divine ('secluded Holy Place'), which is sought after by 'Man' in the name of seeking to find God amidst the 'covert' and 'the shadows of a Woman'. Thus sex, and woman's body where the 'stolen treasure' is 'hidden' becomes also the place of death; the secret passage that is blocked ('mured up') off from life itself. Hence the 'Female Will' is the portrayal of female body, and sexual allure. Interestingly although it is taken as given that God resides within 'Man' one suspects the mirrored presence of a God enthroned within this wilful 'Woman', would not occur so readily! [See *Jerusalem* 1820]: -

- "What may Man be? Who can tell? But what may Woman be,  
To have power over Man from Cradle to corruptible Grave?  
There is a Throne in every Man: it is the Throne of God.  
This, Woman has claim'd as her own; and Man is no more:  
Albion is the Tabernacle of Vala and her Temple,  
And not the Tabernacle and Temple of the Most High.  
O Albion! Why wilt thou create a Female Will,  
To hide the most evident God in a hidden covert, even in the  
Shadows of a Woman and a secluded Holy Place,  
That we may pry after him as after a stolen treasure,  
Hidden among the Dead and mured up from the paths of Life?"

<sup>113</sup> The feminine figure of the muse has acted not only as a poetic/artistic guide, but also the embodiment of the Liberal Arts, Justice, Freedom, Liberty, Truth, Victory, etc., [see: *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* 1985].

<sup>114</sup> The Etruscan language and traditions have revealed the high status, which was afforded the (eldest) Sister, who was chosen as the head of the family, and named *Nanna*, or *Anma-Nanna*. She would have been a virgin, and empowered both within the home, and the community. Interestingly the etymology of the word Sister is: *Syth-Stir*, the one in charge of cooking or boiling (cauldron/pot/vessel); and the Latin *Sorror: Soahroer*, is she who makes sacrifices and shakes the pot. The Farsi word for sister is *Khahar* = خواهر.

<sup>115</sup> In a language-promoted equivalent of this interiorised space, the 'sphere of space' within which the poet Kathleen Raine feels blessed with, appears to echo the traditional feminine-space of the domestic, and the vernacular: interior, wall, garden, etc. More specifically it is a world that is constructed upon the premise of a powerful light source, which allows for the boundary wall to be at once permeable and a threshold of privacy. - "My Time

Has other symbols, speeding light waves, light-years, rays  
Cycling for ever the boundless sphere of space,  
Vast emptiness of what is or is not,  
Unsolid matters' equivocal seeming -

[...] And today I receive yet again from your inexhaustible treasury  
Of light, this room, this green garden, my boundless universe."

[Raine, *The Sun* 1988, 153-6]

This is the 'Time' space which bears a familiar vocabulary to that of the silence-lit interiors of Gwen John paintings; but more poignantly resonant with Heidegger's writings [essay: *The Way of Language*] on the nature and idea of language, as: - "[...] the house of Being because, [...] it is appropriation's mode. In order to think back to the essence of language, in order to reiterate what is its own, we need a transformation of language, a transformation we can neither compel nor concoct. The transformation does not result from the fabrication of neologisms and novel phrases. The transformation touches on our relation to language. [...] For appropriation - owning, holding, keeping to itself - is the relation of all relations. [...] Our relation to language is defined by the mode according to which we belong to appropriation, we who are needed and used by it. Perhaps we can in some slight measure prepare for the transformation in our kinship with language." [Heidegger 1959, ed. 1978, 424-5]

<sup>116</sup> If woman is just another name for that "untruth of truth" [Lacan], then why should one wish to hear her speak of her "want"? She, as woman, as truth of an entity, does not really exist, it is all just language, just talk, just "style" [Derrida]. Speaking of Difference, in terms of 'determination' Deleuze reminds us of the Platonic ideas of the 'Other' [female?], in relation to the 'One' [male?]: - "Difference is this state in which determination takes the form of unilateral distinction. We must therefore say that difference is made, or makes itself, as in the expression 'make the difference' [...] The Platonists used to say that the not-One distinguished itself from the One, but not he converse, since the One does not flee that which flees it; and at the other pole, form distinguishes itself from matter or form from ground, but not the converse, since destruction itself is a form." [Deleuze 1968, trans. 1994, 28]

<sup>117</sup> In Françoise Lionnet's reading of 'Miroirs d'encre' by Michel Beaujour, she points out that "[...] the dialectical relationship between the self and the book, the body of the corpus constitutes one of the foremost characteristics of the "genre" of "autoportrait", that is, the mode of self-description whereby a writer uses a set of rhetorical topoi as, means of self-writing." [See: *Autobiographical Voices* Lionnet 1980, 85]. This analogy between the mirror, as the embodied reflexivity of the returned gaze of a Self, engage with its own Becoming, via the Book as the performative locus where a personal text and meaning is re-configured, is perhaps akin to the feminist project for a new language [tongue/language/voice/text] via "self-description". In relation to my own processes, in poetic language and painting as channels of "self-writing", the above is a concise and highly relevant parallel.

<sup>118</sup> By representing an imaginary *Muse* for the woman, this seductive language of making that which is the source of inspiration an "invisible", can be dispelled from the general notions attached to the man's feminised *Muse*.

<sup>119</sup> Traversing beyond sophisticated phraseology the poet/mystic yearns, like Rumi, to: "Be Friends with [your] burning. Burn up [your] thinking and [your] forms of expression." This is a language, which attempts to go farther than Maggie's "mother tongue of our imagination", in *The Mill on the Floss* [Eliot]; "the language that is laden with all the subtle inextricable associations the fleeting hours of our childhood left behind them." The feminine-language is not a mere 'babble', nor a simple specificity of equating woman with nature; and by definition, it is also not some hysterical mimicry, of the impish trope of the Shakespearean 'Fool'; - a language that sustains imagination outside of the scientific, the theoretical, the already established applications of grammar and punctuation. Here, amidst 'The Missing All' [Dickinson, poem 985] *She* may learn to awaken her own 'god' and nurture it back into a subject, a presence and a becoming. - "Visions led women to the acquisition of power in the world while affirming their knowledge of themselves as women. Visions were a socially sanctioned activity that freed a woman from conventional female roles by identifying her as a genuine religious figure. They brought her to the attention of others, giving her a public language she could use to teach and learn. Her visions gave her the strength to grow internally and to change the world, to build convents, found hospitals, preach, attack injustice and greed [...]" [Petroff 1986, 6]

<sup>120</sup> Also see: Pollock on the myth of van Gogh, as the modern painter, and the de-mystification of the presumed universal fascination of castration, and death [chapter 9, 2001, 277-309].

<sup>121</sup> At the locus where Lacan's scrutinising gaze is situated, and perceives that which he does not wish to see, is where woman's Presence/Word is unveiled. The kind of textual involvement, which Barthes recognises as that of '*plaisir*' is not the nagging incompetence which Joyce complains of, in the singing voices of women whom he perceives as inherently incapable [due to their female gender] at filling or carrying the 'gap' in the male voice [Joyce 1922, 282]. It is more akin to that void, or gap of fertile space, which is open to speculation, for both the male and female imagination.

<sup>122</sup> - "[...] Is it the case then that the woman poet, if she wants to remain 'womanly' rather than 'androgynous' or 'male', can somehow hang on in and through words to the mother's body without having to go through the cruel loss that the male poet has to deal with? [...] Is this why Louise Labbé expresses her longing and love through the image of the ivy *clinging* to the trunk of a tree?" [Jouve 1998, 171]

<sup>123</sup> Even if I were to take the Freudian Oedipal premise of the psyche's development, as ideologically or in simple terms as viable, - thus accepting a framework that makes of the other/female gender a non-happening, a 'lack' [the "spastic body", given as representative of the state of the female corporeal condition] - then regarded as an active assertion of self, women's writing can try to deal with this awful heritage of dismemberment with a positive, and autonomous sense writing from the locus of her own presence. - "[...] In women's writing, language seems to be seen from a foreign land; - is it seen from the point of view of an a symbolic, spastic body? Virginia Woolf describes suspended states, subtle sensations and, above all, colours - green, blue - but she does not dissect language as Joyce does. Estranged from language, women are visionaries, dancers who suffer as they speak." [Kristeva quoted from an interview, in Gilbert & Gubar 1988, 301] I do not read the reference to women writers as "visionaries" with anything less than agreement. The complexities (real or potential) in defining a new (home/place) space for the feminine self-reflection within the poetic, I account the remoteness, and 'suspended' state, as the multi-syntactical quality which women's writing own as an essential of the genre. Making use of the very fragmentation given to her as an heritage, she asserts the unique shape of a whole-some-ness that is both raw and tenacious. Seen in this light it is daring in the way she writes herself into a newly configured identity of 'subtle sensations' scribed and shaped within the creative process. The 'castrated', non-male, un-wholeness, which the Oedipal myth perpetuates

makes this 'visionary' expression shift the mortal subject beyond suffering. What may be perceived as a kind of deathly "dance", the performance and dynamic of which requires that the woman writer "suffer", is in practice a reaching out towards a lingua-space where *her* voice can be established: a space within which different systems of mythopoeia may come about. The collage-cut, collated listings [Joyce], or cubist discord of the meaninglessness of meaning [Beckett], are not any more innovative than "subtle sensations" and "suspended states"; it is not a matter of gender *ability* or literary quality; rather they are modes of writing with which each in their own specific, therefore differentiated, ways try to speak a new breath into the Word. Women's writing does not need to be a reaction to the absurd notion of replacing her 'lack', but in expressing the word as spoken from the purity and remarkable site of her own inherently feminine vision of reality, and becoming. Irigaray's reading/indexing of Plato's texts, adds light to this age-old mis-(y)th-use of woman; highlighting the polis space of social interactions, and legal rights in which the feminine is accepted only when she is perceived as being or becoming the same as the other (ie: male); thus assimilated to the male sphere of activity. [Irigaray 1985, 152-159]

<sup>124</sup> Speaking at the conference: *Post Conventional Religion - Feminism, Ethics and Spirituality* [ICA, London 23 May 1988], Luce Irigaray puts forward the idea of "the breath", "collective breathing, social or cultural" as the primary – physically tangible – quality which must be re-addressed by women in their search for creating a feminine imaginary of a divine self/other; - "[...] We have yet to understand that the soul corresponds to the life of the body [...] Life cultivated until it acquires autonomy and until breath becomes spiritual. [...] To forget breathing is almost the custom in our tradition. This has led to a separate-ness in us, between Vital breath and Divine breath; between body and soul. [...] Woman gives subtly [...] by sharing her breath. Thus the symbolic economy is far more subtle [...] The woman considered as woman, the lover, as distinct from the mother is more scorned than praised, at least on the spiritual level. She is considered as the guardian of nature, a guardian that is necessary of course, but one who continually endangers the spiritual life. We say that she would be the occasion of seduction but also of decline. We know of few women who are spiritual masters in the West. In the Far East woman has long been the first and even the only initiator, sexual and spiritual, at times the two roles were barely distinguishable. [...] Desires are what are often awakened by the woman. Desire implies something more than need, it is probably a specifically human trait. [...] attraction equals difference of subjectivity. [...] By subjecting woman to masculine forms of spirituality, our tradition has stolen her soul, and thus deprived man of a spiritual resource. [...] if carnal love appears to him as a sin, a fault, that is because the spiritual being that he is approaching has become unknown for his tradition. Sometimes it remains simple breath, without words, without ritual, without any visible transformation of air, without energy. But if this breath is located at the centre, the *Chakra*, at the centre of the heart, speech appearing, as it seems to appear at the annunciation, then this breath is a pure spiritual being. It corresponds probably to what is sought by masters of the Far East, and by certain Western mystics who take the negative path to join the Divine, the God who is "nothing", as says St. John of the Cross, nothing except breath. Breath that has passed from the level of elemental vitality to the spiritual level." - [The] *Chakra* is the Sanskrit word for wheel, rotation, spin. They are situated within the physical body and via the practice of Yoga and meditative processes can therefore create a psychic bridge to the subtle body.

<sup>125</sup> The circle of text to self-portraiture and *becoming* is an ongoing circumference of creativity that has been active in the hands of woman since time immemorial. There are endless records of women active in recording and making public their interior experiences: whether in word or image, self-wrought, dictated, [and] or declaimed. The embellishing of the homestead with crafted, colourful designs and mud-wrought relief work by the women of the household is a long-standing tradition in India. These designs – drawings, paintings and semi-sculpted forms, are devised and carried out by the women as a means of not only representing their sense of pride and protectiveness to the local community, but most importantly as embodied examples of visualised prayer. These are touchingly beautiful expressions [and thoroughly artistic], which make public the intimate process of sacred experience [see: *Painted Prayers*, Huyler 1994]. - "[...] we cannot decide that we will henceforth idealise differently; that activity is primarily unconscious, and for the most part textually steered. We consequently need aesthetic works which will make it possible for us to idealise, and, so to identify with bodies we would otherwise repudiate." [Silverman 1998, 2-5]

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Pamela Sue** (1998) *A Feminist Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford & USA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Bataille, Georges** (1988) *Inner Experience* (trans. & intro.) Leslie Boldt, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Bataille, Georges** (1998) *Essential Writings*, (ed.) Michael Richardson, London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Battersby, Christine** (1994) *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*, UK: Women's Press.
- Betterson, Rosemary** (1996) *An Intimate Distance: Women, Artists and the Body*, London: Routledge.
- Bingen, Hildegard von** (1152-58) *Scivias: Mystical Visions*, from the (trans.) Bruce Hozeski, (intro.) Matthew Fox, Santa Fe, New Mexico: Bear & Co. Publishing (1986).
- Blanchot, Maurice** (1955) (trans. 1982) *The Space of Literature*, (trans. & intro.) Ann Smock, USA: University of Nebraska Press.
- Borzello, Frances** (1998) *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits*, London: Thames and Hudson.
- Bowie, Malcolm** (1978) *Mallarmé and the Art of Being Difficult*, London: Cambridge University Press.
- Bryson, Norman** (1993) *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting*, London: Reaktion Books.
- Butler, Judith** (1987) *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Bynam, Caroline Walker** (1992) *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, New York: ZoreBooks.
- Carotenuto, Aldo** (1989) *Eros and Pathos: Shades of Love and Suffering*, Canada: Inner City Books.
- Chanter, Tina** (1995) *Ethics of Eros: Irigaray's Rewriting of the Philosophers*, London: Routledge.
- Chave, Peter** (1998) *Feminist Theology (Journal of)* No. 18 May 1998, Wiltshire: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Cixous, Helene** (1991) *Coming to Writing and Other Essays* (intro.) Susan Rubin Sweimann, (ed.) Deborah Jenso (trans.) Correll, Jenson, Liddle, & Sellers, USA: Harvard University Press.



- 
- (1997) *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, (with) Cixous, Calle-Gruber and Mireille (trans.) Eric Prenowitz, London: Routledge.
- Collinson, Diané, Plant, Kathryn, & Wilkinson, Robert** (2000) *Fifty Eastern thinkers*, London, NY & Canada: Routledge.
- Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Felix** (1994) *What is Philosophy?* (eds.) Graham Burchell & Hugh Tomlinson; USA: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles** (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, (trans.) Paul Patton, London: Athlone Press. (In France 1968, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France).
- (1995) *Negotiations 1972-1990*, (trans.) Martin Joughin, New York: Columbia University Press
- Dickinson, Emily** (1991) *Collected Poems*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Running Press.
- Eliot, George** (1860) (1979) *The Mill on the Floss* (ed.) A. S. Byatt, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Eldridge, Richard** (ed.) (1996) *Beyond Representation: Philosophy and Poetic Imagination*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellman, Richard** (1959) *James Joyce*, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Elton, Janita Wilson, Susan** (foreword and intro.) (1996) *In the Looking Glass: An Exhibition of Contemporary Self-Portraits by Women Artists*, with essays by Michele Roberts and Alison Thomas, The Usher Gallery, Lincolnshire.
- Emig, Rainer** (1995) *Modernism in Poetry: Motivation, Structures and Limits*, NY: Longman
- Farrell, Robyn** (1996) *Passion in Theory: Conceptions of Freud and Lacan*, London: Routledge.
- Feyerabend, Paul** (1999) *Conquest of Abundance: A Tale of Abstraction versus the Richness of Being*, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
- Florence, Penny & Foster, Nicola** (eds.) (2000) *Differential Aesthetics: Art Practices. Philosophies and feminist Understandings*, USA & UK: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Freud, Sigmund** (1900) *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud Library, Vol. 4), (trans.) James Strachy (ed.) Angela Richards, UK: Pelican Books (1976).
- Gilbert & Gubar** (1988) *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth-Century*, vols. 2, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Andrew George** (trans. and intro.) (1992) *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian*, UK: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press
- Gowan, James G.** (1992) *Where Two Oceans Meet: A Selection of Odes from the Divan of Shems of Tabriz by Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi*, UK: Element Books.
- Grabler, Gudrun, Roland Hagenbuchler, and Critanne Miller** (eds.) (1998) *The Emily Dickinson Handbook*, USA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Grosz, Elizabeth** (1995) *Space, Time & Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*, NY & London: Routledge.
- H. D.** (1997) *Trilogy*, (forward) Norman Holmes Pearson, Manchester: Carcanet Press.

- 
- (1984) *Collected Poems 1912-1944*, (ed.) Louis L. Martz, Manchester: Carcanet.
- Hannah, Barbara** (1981) *Active Imagination: Encounters with the Soul*, USA: Sigo Press.
- Heidegger** (1927-64) *Basic Writings* (ed. And intros.) Farrell Krell (1978) London: Routledge.
- Homans, Margaret** (1980) *Women Writers and Poetic Identity: Dorothy Wordsworth, Emily Bronte, Emily Dickinson*, Surrey: Princeton University Press.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manly** (1950) *Selected Poems* (preface & notes) Robert Bridges, (intro.) W. Gardner, London: Oxford University Press.
- Huyler, Stephen, P.** (1994) *Painted Prayers: Women's Art in Village India*, Thames & Hudson.
- Irigaray, Luce** (1992) *Elemental Passions* (trans.) Collie & Still, London: Athlone Press.
- (1994) *The Forgetting of Air* (trans.) Mary Beth Mader, London: Athlone Press (in France 1983: Editions de Minuit).
- (1985)(a) *Speculum of the Other Woman*, (trans.) Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- (1985)(b) *This Sex Which is Not One*, (trans.) Porter and Burke, NY: Cornell
- (1998) *Post Conventional Religion-Feminist - Ethics and Spirituality*, (interpreter) Peter Hallward, London: ICA
- Jay, Martin** (1994) *Downcast Eyes: Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought*, Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Jouve, N. W.** (1998) *Female Genesis: Creativity, Self and Gender*, UK: Polity Press.
- Joyce, James** (1956) *Epiphanies* (intro. & notes.) O. A. Silverman, University of Buffalo: Lockwood Memorial Library.
- (1922) (1969) *Ulysses*, (with a short history) Richard Ellman, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Jung, C. G.** (1925) (1967) *The Seven Sermons of the Dead (VII Sermones ad Mortuos)*, London: Robinsons & Watkins Books Ltd.
- (1950-78) *Collected Works, Vols. 5, 6, 8, 9* (eds.) Read, Fordham, & Adler (trans.) H. G. Baynes, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- (1961) *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (ed.) Aniela Jaffe (trans.) Richard & Clara Winston, UK: Fontana.
- (1982) *On the Nature of the Psyche* (trans.) R. F. C. Hull, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- (1986) *Psychological Reflections: An Anthology of his Writings 1905-1961* (ed.) Jolande Jacobi, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Kirkegaard, Soren** (1847) (1962) *Works of Love: Some Christian Reflections in the Form of Discourses*, (trans.) Howard and Edna Hong, London: Collins.
- Lacan, Jacques** (1977) *Ecrits: A Selection* (trans.) Alan Sheridan, London: Routledge.

- 
- Levinas, Emmanuel** (1978) *Existence and Existents*, (trans.) Alponso Lingis, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Lionnet, Francoise** (1989) *Autobiographical Voices: Race, Gender, Self-Portraiture*, Ithaca & New York: Cornell University Press.
- Lock, John** (1671) *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (abridged, ed. & intro.) John W. Yolton, London, Melbourne & Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. (1961).
- Muthesius, Angelika & Riemschneider, Burkhard** (eds.) (1993) *Twentieth-Century Erotic Art*, Koln: Benedikt Taschen Verlag.
- Mitchell, Juliet & Rose, Jacqueline** (eds.) 1982 *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, (trans.) Jacqueline Rose, London: Macmillan Press.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich** (1878) (1986) *Human All Too Human: A Book For Free Spirits*, (trans.) R. J. Holingdale, (intro.) Erich Heller, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Nolan, Edward Peter** (1994) *Cry Out and Write: A Feminine Poetics of Revelation*, N.Y: Columbia Publishing Company.
- Norwich, Julian of** (1413?) *Revelations of Divine Love: (Short Text and Long Text)* (trans.) Elizabeth Spearing (intro. & notes) A.C. Spearing, London: Penguin Books (1998).
- Ovid** (1-8 AD) (1986) *Metamorphoses*, (trans.) A. D. Melville (intro & notes) E. J. Kenney, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
- Petroff, Elizabeth** (ed.) (1986) *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Pollock, Griselda** (2001) *Looking Back to the Future: Essays on Art, Life and Death* (intro & commentary) Penny Florence, Amsterdam: OPA.
- Raine, Kathleen** (1988) *Selected Poems*, Ipswich: Golgonooza Press.
- Rhys, Jean** (1966) *Wide Sargasso Sea*, UK: Penguin Books.
- Rilke, Rainer Maria** (1987) *Selected Poetry* (ed. & trans.) Stephen Mitchell (intro.) Robert Hass, London: Picador Classics.
- Rose, Gillian** (1995) *Love's Work*, London: Chatto & Windus
- Sacks, Sheldon** (ed.) (1978) *On Metaphor*, London & Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul** (1956) *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, (trans. & intro.) H. E. Barnes, NY: Citadel Press.
- Silverman, Kaja** (1998) *The Threshold of the Visible World*, New York: Routledge.
- Smith & Taylor** (eds.) (1997) *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, London: British Library publications.
- Tachau, Katherine H.** (1998) *Old French and Vienna Latin Bible Moralisée*, *The Art Bulletin*, March 1998 (Vol. LXXX, No. 1, pp. 7-27)
- Tarnas, Richard** (1996) *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas that have shaped our World View*, UK: Pimlico.

- 
- Vasseleu, Cathryn** (1998) *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty*, London: Routledge.
- Vendler, Helen** (1995) *The Breaking of Style: Hopkins, Heaney, Graham*, Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: Harvard University Press.
- Walker, S. and Bierbrier, M.** (eds.) (1997) *Ancient Faces – Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt*, UK: British Museum Publications.
- Warner, Marina** (1985) *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form*, UK: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- Welburn, Andrew** (selected and intro.)(1994) *Gnosis, The Mysteries and Christianity: An Anthology of Essene, Gnostic and Christian Writings*, Edinburgh: Floris Books.
- Wilhelm, Richard** (trans.& foreword) (1931; rep.1984) *The Secret of the Golden Flower: A Chinese Book of Life*, (foreword & commentary) C. G. Jung. London & Melbourne: Arkana Paperbacks.
- Whitford, Margaret** (1991) (a) *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*, UK: Routledge.  
– (ed.)(1991) (b) *The Luce Irigaray Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wiethaus, Ulrike** (ed.)(1993) *Maps of Flesh and Light: The Religious Experience of Medieval Women Mystics*, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Wilson, Katharina** (ed.) (1984) *Medieval Women Writers*, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Wolff, Janet** 1990 *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

---

## FURTHER READING

- Ahearn, Edward, J.** (1996) *Visionary Fictions: Apocalyptic Writing from Blake to the Modern Age*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Alpers, Svetlana** (1983) *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, London & USA: John Murray Publishers in association with University of Chicago Press.
- Armstrong, Karen** (1995) *A History of God*, UK: Mandarin.
- Attar, Farid Al-Din** (1990) *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-Auliya [Memorial of the Saints]*, (trans.) A.J. Arberry, UK: Arkana, Penguin Books.
- Bachelard, Gaston** (1958) *The Poetics of Space*, UK:
- Bataille, Georges** (1998) *Essential Writings*, (ed.) Michael Richardson, London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Benjamin, Walter** (1973) *Illuminations*, (trans.) Harry Zohn, (intro.) Hannah Arendt, London: Fontana Press.
- Bennett, Paula** (1990) *Emily Dickinson: Woman Poet*, Iowa City: University of Iowa.
- Bergson, Henri** (1907 trans. 1911) *Creative Evolution* (trans.) Arthur Mitchell (1988) USA: University Press of America Inc.
- Bernal, J. D.** (1973) *The Extension of Man: A History of Physics Before 1900*, UK: Paladin.
- Betterton, R.** (1987) *Looking On: Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media*, London & New York: Pandora.
- Brenner, A.** (ed.) (1993) *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Bryson, Norman** (1983) *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, (eds.) Stephen Heath & Colin MacCabe, London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Bishop, Elizabeth** (1991) *Complete Poems*, London: Chatto & Windus.
- Blamey, David** (curator) (1992) [exhibition catalogue] *Work and Turn Artists' Book Works from United Kingdom*.
- Boehme, Jacob** (1965) *Mysterium Magnum: Or an Exposition of the First Book of Moses called Genesis, vol.1*, (trans.) John Sparrow (ed.) C. J. B., London: John M. Walkins.
- Bowie, Malcolm** (1987) *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction*, UK: Cambridge University press.
- Brookner, Anita** (2000) *Romanticism and Its Discontents*, UK: Viking.

- 
- Bruckner, Christine** (1992) *Desdemona – if you had only spoken: Eleven uncensored speeches of eleven incensed women*, (presented and trans.) Eleanor Bron, London: Virago.
- Burke, Carolyn, Schor, Naomi, & Whitford, Margaret** (eds.) (1994) *Engaging with Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy and Modern European Thought*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Carrington, Leonora** (1989) *The Seventh Horse: and Other Tales*, (trans.) Kathrine Talbot And Anthony Kerrigen, (intro.) Marina Warner, London: Virago Press.
- Chicago, Judy & Lucie-Smith, Edward** (1999) *Women And Art: Contested Territory*, UK: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson.
- Cixous, Helene** (1997) *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, (with) Cixous, Calle-Gruber and Mireille (trans.) Eric Prenowitz, London: Routledge.
- Collins, Judith & Lindner, Elspeth** (eds.) (1993) *Writing on the Wall: Women Writers on Women Artists*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- Cormack, Robin** (1990) *Painting the Soul: Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds*, London: Reaktion Books.
- Daly, Mary** (1978) *Gyn-Ecology: The MetaEthics of Radical Feminism*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Felix** (1994) *What is Philosophy?* (eds.)Graham Burchell & Hugh Tomlinson; USA: Columbian University Press.
- Dzielska, Maria** (1996) *Hypatia of Alexandria*, USA: Harvard University Press.
- Eckhart, Meister** (1994) *Selected Writings* (trans. & selected) Oliver Davies, London: Penguin Books.
- Edlin-White, & Keay** (1996) *Dancing on Mountains: An Anthology of Women's Spiritual Writings*, UK: Harper Collins.
- Eliade, Mircea** (1989) *Shamanism: Archaic Methods of Transcendence*, UK: Arkana.
- Farr, Judith** (ed.) (1996) *Emily Dickinson: A Collection of Critical Essays*, USA: Prentice-Hall.
- Ferguson, George** (1961) *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, USA: Oxford University Press.
- Filorama, Giovanni** (1994) *A History of Gnosticism*, UK: Blackwell Publishers.
- Foerster, Werner** (1972) *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts, vols. 2* (trans. & ed.) R. Wilson, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Freud, Sigmund** (1910; 1962 ed.) *Two Short Accounts of Psycho-Analysis: Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis and the Question of Lay Analysis*, (trans. Ed.) James Strachey, UK: Penguin.
- Gatens, Moira** (1996) *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*, London: Routledge.
- Gellner, Ernest** (1998) *Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Habsburg Dilemma*, UK/NY/Australia: Cambridge University Press.
- Goodman, Lizbeth** (selected and Intro.)(2000) *Mythic Women/Real Women: Plays and Performance Pieces by Women*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Grosz, Elizabeth** (1991) *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction*, UK: Routledge.

- 
- Hanscombe & Spyers** (1987) *Writing For Their Lives: The Modernist Women 1910-1940*, UK: Women's Press.
- Hardwick, Elizabeth** (1980) *Sleepless Nights*, London: Virago Press
- Harding, Esther** (1973) *Psychic Energy: It's Source and its Transformation*, forward by C. G. Jung, USA: Princeton University Press.
- Heer, Friedrich** (1993) *The Medieval World: Europe 1100-1350* (trans.) Janet Sondheimer, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- Hermann, Christa-Maria** (1996) *The Movement of Life in the Five Elements*, Madrid: Centreur.
- Hodge, Joanna** (1995) *Heidegger and Ethic*, London, USA, Canada: Routledge.
- Hooke, S. H.** (1988) *Middle Eastern Mythology*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manly** (1950) *Selected Poems* (preface & notes) Robert Bridges, (intro.) W. Gardner, London: Oxford University Press.
- Howe, Susan** (1985) *My Emily Dickinson*, Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books.
- Hunt, Lynn** (ed.) (1991) *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press.
- Jacobi, Jolande**, (1959) *Complex/ Archetype/ Symbol In the Psychology of C. G. Jung*, (trans.) Ralph Manheim, New York: Princeton University Press.
- Kearney, Richard** (1993) *Poetics of Imagining: From Husserl to Lyotard*, London: Routledge.
- Khan, Masud R.** (1974) *The Privacy of the Self*, London: Hogarth Press.
- Kime, Bonnie Scott** (ed.) (1990) *Gender of Modernism*, USA: Indiana Press.
- Kristeva, Julia** (1994) *The Old Man and the Wolves* (trans.) Barbara Bray, New York: Columbia University Press.
- (1991) *Strangers to Ourselves* (trans. Leon S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lichtenberg, Ettinger** (1995) *The Matrixial Gaze* (pref.) Griselda Pollock, UK: Feminist Arts and Histories Network.
- Livingstone, Angela** (1984) *Salome: Her Life and Work*, New York: Moyer Bell Ltd.
- Lodge, David** (ed.) (1972) *20th Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, UK: Longman Group Ltd.
- Lomperis & Stanbury** (eds.) (1993) *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, Philadelphia: University of
- Long, Ashphodel** (1992) *In a Chariot Drawn by Lions: In search for the Female in Deity*, UK: Women's Press.
- Magdeburg, Mechtild** (1982) *Meditations* (versions of) Sue Woodruff, (pref.) Matthew Fox, New Mexico: Bear & Co.
- Materer, Timothy** (1995) *Modernist Alchemy: Poetry and the Occult*, USA: Cornell University Press.

- 
- Matthews, Eric** (1996) *Twentieth-Century French Philosophy*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- McGahey, Robert** (1994) *The Orphic Moment: Shaman to Poet-Thinker in Plato, Nietzsche, and Mallarmé*, USA: State University of New York.
- McNay, Lois** (1992) *Foucault & Feminism: Power, Gender and the Self*, Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press.
- McNeil, Helen** (1986) *Emily Dickinson*, UK: Virago Press.
- Mernissi, Fatima** (1993) *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, (trans.) Mary Jo Lakeland, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Meskimmon, Marsha** (1996) *The Art of Reflection: Women Artists' Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century*, London: Scarlet Press.
- Miller, Nancy** (1991) *Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and other Autobiographical Acts*, London & NY: Routledge.
- Mitchell, Juliet** (1974) *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, UK: Penguin.
- Moi, Toril** (1988) *French Feminist Thought: A Reader*, UK: Basil Blackwell.
- (1994) *Simone de Beauvoir: The making of an Intellectual Woman*, UK: Blackwell.
- Nalbantian, Suzanne** (1994) *Aesthetic Autobiography: From Life to Art in Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Anais Nin*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Nin, Anais** (1986) *Journal of a Wife (1923-1927)* Preface by Joaquin Nin-Culmell, London: Quartet Books Ltd.
- Otto, Rudolf** (1923) *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational* (trans. J. W. Harvey) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pagels, Elaine** (1982) *The Gnostic Gospels*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Pateman, Carole and Gross, Elizabeth** (eds.) (1986) *Feminist Challenges: Social & Political Theory*, Australia, New Zealand, UK, USA: Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd.
- Perls, Hefferline, Goodman** (1951; rep. 1974) *Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality*, USA & UK: Penguin Books.
- Plant, Raymond** (1997) *Hegel: On Religion & Philosophy*, UK: Phoenix p/b, Orion Publishing Group.
- Plath, Sylvia** (2000) *The Journals of Sylvia Plath (1950-1962)*, edited by Karen V. Kukit, UK: Faber & Faber.
- Plato** (1955) *The Republic* (trans.) H.D.P. Lee, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- (1954) *The last Days of Socrates* (trans. & intro.) Hugh Tredinnick, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Pollock, Griselda** (1988) *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the History of Art*, London: Routledge.



- 
- Price, Janet & Shildrick, Margaret** (eds.) (1999) *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Purce, Jill** (1974) *The Mystic Spiral: Journey of the Soul*, London: Thames & Hudson.
- Raine, Kathleen** (1982) *The Inner Journey of the Poet; and other papers*, ed. Brian Keeble, London: George Allen & Unwin.
- (1991) *Golgonooza: City of Imagination; Last Studies in William Blake*, Ipswich: Golgonooza Press.
- Rilke, Rainer Maria** (1987) *Selected Poetry* (ed. & trans.) Stephen Mitchell (intro.) Robert Hass, London: Picador Classics.
- Rose, Gillian** (1996) *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation*, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, Jacqueline** (1992) *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*, UK: Virago Press.
- Sappho** (1992) *Poems and Fragments*, (trans. and intro.) Josephine Balmer, UK: Bloodaxe Books.
- Shah, Idries** (1971) *Thinkers of the East*, UK: Arkana.
- Serrano, Miguel** (1984) *NOS: Book of the Resurrection*, (trans. in collaboration with author) Gela Jacobson, London, Boston, Melbourne: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- (1966) *C. G. Jung and Hermann Hesse: A Record of Two Friendships*, (trans.) Frank MacShane, London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Shurr, William H.** (1993) *New Poems of Emily Dickinson*, (eds.) Anna Dunlop & Emily Grey Shurr, USA: University of North Carolina press.
- Silverman, Kaja** (1998) *The Threshold of the Visible World*, New York: Routledge.
- Smart, Elizabeth** (1994) *On the Side of the Angels: The Second Volume of the Journals of Elizabeth Smart*, Van Wart, Alice (ed.), London: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Smith, Margaret** (1928) *Rab'a the Mystic and Her Fellow Saints in Islam*, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Spinoza, Benedict de** (1883; trans. Repub.1955) *On the Improvement of the Understanding; The Ethics; Correspondence*, (trans. And Intro.) R. H. M. Elwes, New York: Dover Publications.
- Stone, Robert Karl** (1970) *Middle English Prose Style: Margery Kemp and Julian of Norwich*, The Hague.
- Storr, Anthony** (1988) *Solitude*, Glasgow: Flamingo.
- Tiggers, Wim** (ed.) (1999) *Moments of Moment: Aspects of the Literary Epiphany*, Netherlands: Editions Rodopi B.V.
- Todd, Janet** (1983) *Women Writers Talking*, USA: Holmes & Meier Publications Ltd.
- (ed.) (1980) *Gender and Literary Voice*, London: Holmes & Meier Publications Ltd.
- Van Inwagen, Peter & Zimmerman, Dean** (eds.) (1998) *Metaphysics: The Big Question*, Massachusetts & Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.