The Femininity of the Sacred

The sacred, the holy, the numinous: already I have characterized it as ‘the vexingly gendered conjunction of immanence and transcendence,’ yet such a description lacks specificity, cries out for explanation. In response then … It seems to me that the numinous, expressed more fully as the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, both embodies and posits the terrifying convergence of immanence and transcendence, or, the coming together of *feminine* extremes. And now to explain. The mythic femininity of immanence, its tremendously excessive materiality, physicality and corporeality, is blatant.¹ In all its blatancy, however, I think the femininity of immanence has served to obscure or cover up the equally excessive femininity of transcendence. A thought-experiment: what if the standard association of transcendence with a disembodied mind, reason, intellect, rationality (and by extension masculinity) simply makes no sense at all? What if even a brief consideration of the theo-philosophical conceptualizations of transcendence were to reveal, simply, ‘otherness’ abstracted, ‘otherness’ hurled out of this world, ‘otherness’ projected into an impossible untouchable unreachable realm – an ‘otherness’, in other words, that like a toothache just refuses to go entirely away. An otherness that remains an incessant, thrumming presence, a presence somehow always threatening to sameness.

Transcendence. That mysterious, wholly unknowable otherness of the kind so commonly allotted to the Stranger, the Foreigner, the Dark, the Woman. Transcendence. That otherness the boundaries of which constantly must be reinscribed, reiterated, renamed, restated, re-insisted-upon, re-distanced-from-oneself, if, that is, one is not already an ‘Other’. What if transcendence is always already thoroughly, frighteningly, unspeakably feminine? The ‘dark continent’ of theology and philosophy, as it were.

A quick perusal of a handy christian theological dictionary leads to an arm chair epiphany. To paraphrase – the ontological conception of
transcendence: wholly otherness. Its linguistic conception: unnameable. Its moral conception: holy. Its epistemological conception: incomprehensible, unknowable.\(^2\) Actually, the beautifully brief ontological conception comes straight from Rudolph Otto. In the dictionary John McIntyre defines transcendence as, \emph{ontologically}, ‘the otherness of an existence which makes it discontinuous from our own.’ Which of course begs the question, Who is the ‘we’ for whom that ‘other’ existence is discontinuous? Or, just who is the ‘we’ who has decided that the ‘Other’ is radically separate, distinct, different, not of the same kind, utterly unknowable? There’s something fishy going on, and it seems to have been going on for centuries, unchecked. It gives off the faintest scent of a petrified myth, to me.

Myth petrified: almost as rigid as a dead metaphor, but not quite. Poor petrified transcendence, almost unrecognizable as myth. Yet transcendence as a petrified (I want to write ‘patri-fied’) myth is not quite dead, and not quite a fiction either, but is instead a solid fabrication. In the case(ing) of transcendence, a fabulous fabrication indeed, the work most certainly of \emph{homo faber}, of he who imposes his vision and violence onto the material at hand in order to make of it, ironically, something else, something other.\(^3\) In the myth of transcendence, the ‘material’ at hand is the frustrating excess that remains even after the possession. The hint, the suspicion of a something that remains ungrasped, that slips away. That elusive yet persistent echo of a subject rendered speechless, yet somehow speaking nonetheless. A subject that becomes bearable only when tamed, contained by myth. Transcendence: truly a mythical creation, product of the epic work of conceptual bracketing, the setting-apart and exclusion of the theoretically unruly, the upsetting, the excessive, the other-than.

If Roland Barthes is correct in his assessment that ‘myth hides nothing: its function is to distort, not to make disappear,’ then transcendence serves as a mythical concept \emph{par excellence}.\(^4\) Transcendence: on the one hand it is the oft-used conceptual translation of \emph{mysterium}, a translation that seems to be far more preferable to theologians and philosophers
than any more obvious allusion to mystery-in-our-midst. On the other hand, it is the practically perfect way to name as an absence that which in fact is present, a shining example of the old mythical sleight of hand trick: simultaneous affirmation and mis-direction. How many times and in how many different ways have I read of transcendence as that which is beyond reach, transcendence as always on the other side, away over there, untouchable, not of this realm – for, after all, one must die to know it – so ‘we’ say, and say, and keep on saying. And yet such boring repetition brings a blessing. ‘This repetition of the concept through different forms is precious to the mythologist, it allows him [and sometimes even her] to decipher the myth: it is the insistence of a kind of behaviour which reveals its intention.’

In the myth of transcendence, it would seem that the behaviour and intention are one and the same. ‘Go away,’ transcendence has been told, ‘you are not like me – and yet, don’t go too far away.’ This is what is said to and of transcendence when it is mythed most rigidly by those who claim they are in no way other.

‘And yet’. Staying with Barthes, ‘In actual fact, the knowledge contained in a mythical concept is confused, made of yielding, shapeless associations. One must firmly stress this open character of the concept; it is not at all an abstract, purified essence; it is a formless, unstable, nebulous condensation, whose unity and coherence are above all due to its function. In this sense, we can say that the fundamental character of the mythical concept is to be appropriated …’

Transcendence, a mythical concept designed thus far to separate and hold apart the Other, to contain confusion, to package the nebulous, to provide a sturdy cell encasing the unstable – away, but not too far away. Herein lies the danger. Closer at hand than usually acknowledged, the knowledge contained within the mythical casing of transcendence waits to be appropriated, to be borrowed. Such a borrowing has indeed begun.

For of course there are other ways of understanding, of telling, of mything transcendence. I write ‘of course’, which should probably be read as meaning that these other ways are of course not obvious, that they are as a matter of course ignored, avoided, unmentioned. I also
write ‘other ways’, which probably should be read as meaning ‘the ways of the Others,’ or ‘the Others’ ways.’ Expressed perhaps as the wholly other of transcendence told from within transcendence by the Others – transcendence mything transcendence. What happens when this happens? Transcendence suddenly comes closer. Still somehow strangely fluid, ungraspable, but somehow even more persistent, now persistent in all its urgent presence. Present in all its potential, all its possibility, transcendence flowing through all immanence precisely as potentiality, possibility, as that stirring insistence toward the otherwise – transcendence as the condition of all movement. The unexpected, unpredictable, the inescapable condition Hannah Arendt referred to as ‘natality’. The capacity to begin again, to act anew, to realize the previously unimagined, undreamt, unthought. The feather-touch of transcendence: the capacity to imagine something else, something different. The pressing weight of transcendence: the urgent, relentless demand to realize something other than that which is. When thought this other way, without transcendence there could be only pure, absolute immutability.

From the perspective of the Others, it is not the mystery of transcendence that is unbearable, not the excessive strangeness of the Other, not even the inability to put the unknown into words, but rather, I strongly suspect, the fear that What Is might, tragically, remain exactly as it is forever. The horror of the thought that nothing will ever change, or, that being will cease becoming.

As mentioned earlier, certain sneaky Others already have set to work remything the borrowed concept of transcendence. Catherine Keller put it this way: ‘There is always the world, coming in: its immanence. We make something of it, flowing out: our transcendence. Remembering in its work of immanence, of taking in and reconnecting, breaks into imagining, in its work of transcendence, of envisioning the possible.’ And from Elaine Graham: ‘An alternative understanding of transcendence as it informs the building and inhabiting of worlds would characterize it not as disembodied or other-worldly, but as something oppositional, visionary, undetermined ….’ According to Pamela Dickey
Young, ‘Creativity depends on the ability to transcend the given, in thought and in action. The fact that we can think feminist thoughts and put them into action is a mark of our transcendence.’\textsuperscript{9} And my favourite, bringing us obscurely, obscenely closer to the slippery subject at hand, from Marcella Althaus-Reid:

If, as we have already suggested, obscenity is the aboutness of Indecent Theology then this theology participates in and is participated in by that sense of transcendental viscosity which is determined to stick in any reference to out-of-body defined transcendental revelation … \textit{Any sense of transcendence is marked with this gelatinous, viscous condition, this fluidity which seems to taint and wet transcendental conceptions which want to deny the body.}\textsuperscript{10} (Italics added)

What’s it all about? In one sense, it is entirely about ‘a remaking of immanence and transcendence, notably through this \textit{threshold} which has never been examined as such: the female sex. The threshold that gives access to the \textit{mucous} […] – a threshold that is always \textit{half-open}.\textsuperscript{11} Transcendence: slipping, sliding, spreading all over the body, all over every body. Fluid, slick, running into every crack and crevice, impossible to wipe entirely away. Transcendence as a theo-philosophical lubricant, enabling subjects to slide up next to, into, one another. In other words… \textit{No transcendence, no movement}. No to-ing or fro-ing, no approaching or going. No transcendence, no bodies reaching to meet other bodies, slipping sliding rubbing nuzzling tasting sniffing grabbing holding pressing urging opening entering wanting struggling panting sweating crashing pushing pulling biting licking stroking crying coming. And no, it is not always easy. The outcome is always uncertain. With transcendence comes confusion, the possibility of pain as well as pleasure. But in the absence of transcendence, simply immanence, unmoving presence.

We are not particularly good at imagining pure immanence, I would suggest. In fact, strictly speaking, we can’t. There is no such thing. Which does not mean that we shouldn’t try to imagine it. Especially
when attempting to remyth transcendence, we need to have a better understanding of that with which transcendence is mutually interdependent, of that through which transcendence is inseparably suffused. Let’s try to begin with space, or rather, no space. Immanence knows only Here. No elsewhere, just here. Here as All, Here as Only. Immanence knows no distance, no ‘there’, no up or down or to the side, just Here. By itself immanence cannot conceive of spatiality. As for time, immanence is without tense. No past, no future, no present even, for ‘present’ is meaningful (for linear thinkers) only in relation to past and future, or, for cyclical thinkers, only in relation to other continually repeated times, times that come and go and come again. Immanence knows no linearity, no repetition, no movement or passage of time in any way at all. Now, knows immanence, and only Now. For immanence there is no other time.

I am drawn to immanence, to its utter stillness, its weightless presence. I imagine that I am closest to immanence when I am fast asleep – not when I am dreaming, no, I mean that dreamless, timeless stage of sleep in which I fully am, and in which I am fully unaware. In which there is only Here without Elsewhere, Now without Otherwhen. In which there is no ‘I’ even, rather, in which ‘I’ is without meaning, in which all is neither a nothing nor a something. Immanence. NowHere and only NowHere.

Is it simply a coincidence that, when not capitalized, the English word closest to pure immanence is nowhere? And how easy it is to slip from thinking of nowhere to thinking of nothing. Or, if you happen to be an Other, to thinking of NowHere and NoThing. Creation from nothing, insist the hoary old farts. Maybe not. In the beginning, if you need a beginning, the love affair to begin all love affairs. The NowHere of immanence fully open, offering nothing but an open welcome to the NoThing of transcendence.

The NoThing of transcendence. For transcendence is NoThing: no thing that can be touched or seen or heard or tasted or smelled, no. Yet when poured over immanence, when the NoThing of transcendence comes upon the NowHere of immanence, there is a quivering a trembling a
stirring a quaking a rushing a flooding a Coming to Life of all that is and so it begins. The no-thing-ness that is the uncertain possibility, the unknown potentiality, the pure might-be of transcendence being realized only in and through the here and now of immanence. The mystery, the Other of transcendence finds its only meaning, its only dwelling place in immanence. Here and now, the NoThing of transcendence moves like a lover against her beloved, slipping, sliding over every surface, stirring movement everywhere. Lovers exchanging gifts, immanence gives to transcendence actuality; transcendence gives to immanence the chance to shift and move and change about, to realize a multitude of differences. As they meet, each imbuing, infusing, permeating throughout the Other, space receives dimension and time receives tense. Immanence and transcendence, mutually coinherent. Joined together as they are, now as it was in the beginning, What Is is always already unavoidably mutable. Always moving, even if imperceptibly: always changing, always becoming anew. Thus might the conjunction of immanence and transcendence be faithfully remythed by an Other. And here is yet another way, perhaps even more faithful to the viscous, slippery myth.

Immanence: patient, open, accepting, always awaiting her lover, always receptive to more and more and more and more how horrifying really she is insatiable, inescapable. Transcendence: flowing, flighty, fickle, unpredictable, present for an instant gone again. She cannot be pinned down, she slips away yet everywhere she leaves her trace behind she is insatiable, demanding more and more and more and more how horrifying. How like a masculine fantasy of Woman, both of them. Together they are so undependable, so uncontrollable, so voracious, so alluring, so terrifying. And how indecent, how immodest, how queer it is to imagine them both as rampantly feminine. But this is indeed how they have been encased in myth for centuries, both implicitly and quite explicitly.

Emmanuel Levinas was more explicit than most, as others have noted already. Here, in a single glowing passage from *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas combines the mystery and the essential, transcendent, untouchable otherness of the virgin(!) with feminine anonymity of a
deeply immanent ‘exorbitant ultramateriality’,\textsuperscript{14} with sex of a very peculiar sort.

The Beloved, at once graspable but intact in her nudity, beyond object and face and thus beyond the existent, abides in virginity. The feminine essentially violable and inviolable, the ‘Eternal Feminine’, is the virgin or an incessant recommencement of virginity, the untouchable in the very contact of voluptuosity, future in the present … The virgin remains ungraspable, dying without murder … The caress aims at neither a person nor a thing. It loses itself in a being that dissipates as though into an impersonal dream without will and even without resistance, a passivity, an already animal or infantile anonymity, already entirely at death.\textsuperscript{15}

The fact that the masculine author/lover/existent seems thoroughly confused in this passage, expressing himself without form, lacking any incarnation of his own, present only as a most intangible bewilderment, a bewilderment that quickly slides into a frustration with untouchable, virginal transcendence, which quickly leaps into a desperately grasping, murderous desire (for the virgin? for the whore?) that ends, unsatisfied, in dissipation, that ends utterly lost in an impersonal passivity, spread throughout an undifferentiated mass of Being, finally unknown, unknowable, lost in what is apparently for him a deathly immanence (back in the maternal womb/tomb?)…this fact should not be lost upon us. It is most certainly one of the consequences of mything both immanence and transcendence as feminine, and then denying their conjoined presence within and between every existent. A consequence of the attempt simultaneously to possess and to distance the Other(s) from one’s strictly, rigidly masculine self – the Others: both the massive, material, nameless Other of the NowHere of immanence and the ungraspable, untouchable, slippery NoThing other of transcendence. It is a consequence, perhaps, of an excessive awareness, and equally excessive fear, of the sacred. The sacred, which Levinas intuited correctly as being tremblingpoundingpresent between two lovers. So close, he came so close, but then he shied away, he fled before his terror.
And maybe, to be fair, by that time he had been confronted with too much terror already in his life. Still, he had the chance to choose anew, and he chose not to look her in the face, chose not to recognize that she, that feminineotherloverbeloved, had a face different from his own. He chose not to recognize that she had any face at all. I wonder. Hear the words of Irigaray: ‘The mystery of relations between lovers is more terrible but infinitely less deadly than the destruction of submitting to sameness.’

In the end, turning away from mystery, away from the terribly voluptuous Other, Levinas sought salvation for the father through the son. In a kind of repetition of the same … Oh but such a huge slick trace remains in his texts, an excessive, overwhelming trace (it really should be termed a ‘heavy coating’, or some other, more flood-full word) of the Other. The *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, tremblingpoundingpresent, mythed in all its feminine guises.

Which is to say, like certain Others, I too wish to acknowledge openly the strange assumptions present in these myths of immanence and transcendence. Their cloying omnipresence, slick and sticky and intangible, all together all at once. I wish to tease away at the myths, to slide between them, to find some way to dive into and through such uniquely gendered, queerly sexual, truly excessive images of the Other, to dis-cover how it is that together immanence and transcendence fuse into a mightily feminine sacred…. My method is a little mad, and quite deliberately. We are dealing with myth, after all, with ‘that-without-which’ we would be utterly adrift in this world, horizonless, but within which we are both more and less tightly bound than we like to imagine. There is no sane way into or out of the matter … Further, I know of no way to keep from slipping constantly between myth and reality, for each is drenched with the viscous mucus of the Other. From a slightly different perspective,

[W]e constantly drift between the object [of myth] and its demystification, powerless to render its wholeness. For if we penetrate the object, we liberate it but we destroy it; and if we acknowledge its full weight, we respect it, but we restore it to a state which is still mystified. It would seem that we are
condemned for some time yet always to speak excessively about reality.\textsuperscript{17}

To speak excessively, mythically, about reality. About that which is most real? About the being of the sacred, the holy, the numinous, the \textit{mysterium tremendum et fascinans}? The perichoretic conjunction of transcendent wholly otherness plus immanent overwhelming presence plus tremblingpounding desperate attraction. Can you tell me how to separate the feminine from the sacred? How to convey the meaning of the sacred in terms stripped of all feminine associations? Can you tell me how to rid the sacred of the Other, the abyss, the source, the dark, the hidden, the mysterious, the dangerous, the powerful, the engulfing, the bloody, the fecund, the desirable, the uncontrollable? No? Perhaps then you can tell me how to separate entirely the feminine from Woman? Or simply how to remove, without leaving any trace behind, the female from the feminine? Myself, I cannot imagine how to do it. What I can imagine, easily, is the myth of the sacred, of that tumbling burning union of immanence and transcendence, devoid of any masculinity, of any masculine associations. And this possibility is, take a step back and consider it ‘objectively’, unbelievably bizarre.

Barthes suggests that ‘myth deprives the object of which it speaks of all History. In it, history evaporates.’\textsuperscript{18} In other words, myth makes that of which it speaks seem natural, inevitable, outside of history, beyond the possibility of chance or change. Problematic, to be sure. But myths are themselves historical; they certainly change over time. What I find strange and troubling about the historically slowly-changing western cultural myth of the sacred is not the way it naturalizes and/or ontologizes its subject matter (how could it not, when myth tries to speak what is most ultimately real?), but its ongoing evaporation of the masculine, the mythic disappearance of Man, the deepening absence of the male. I cannot stress this point enough. Historically, myth is made to speak what is most ultimately real, most deeply meaningful to its inhabitants. Myth names the inhabitants of the world. Myth tells how and why those various inhabitants of the world matter. In short, Myth matters Being. It has become perfectly natural to imagine the sacred as entirely
feminine, to figure the sacred as exclusively female – as virgin, whore and mother. Where in the world did the stag, the bull, the potent male brotherloverconsort go? Why have they been erased, forgotten? Were they too blatantly animal, fleshly, corporeal, immanent? Too uncontrollable, unpredictable? Were the sacred transubstantiations they embodied too powerful, too dark, too mysterious, too ‘Other’? Were they figures far too orgiastic? Too insistently sensual, poundingly sexual, explicitly erotic?

There is such a profound imbalance at the moment. Dear boys, do you realize what you have done through your myths, both your epic pronouncements concerning the femininity of myth, and your feminine mything of the sacred? You have mythed a world in which that which is most ultimately real is the feminine, simultaneously immanent and transcendent. In which the only figures that matter are female. A mythic world in which you, embodied males, are ultimately absent. Do you realize that it really cannot matter to you anymore if you destroy this world now, for you no longer tell yourselves as part of it, as present, here and now. You have already annihilated yourselves. Unless and until you return to dwell in myth, I fear for all our lives.

…

I have two burly-bear brothers, sturdily incarnate creatures, both of them. Rather like mobile tree-trunks, exceptionally good to hug and lean upon. Thinking of them, I wonder how it was ever possible for anyone to believe for an instant that women are somehow much more immanent than men. Thinking of them, I comprehend so fully why the ancients spoke of mud, shaped and formed and inspirited with life. My brothers could so easily have been scooped from this earth, or hewn from that oak. They can be squishy soft and quite rock-like: comfortingly solid, occasionally thick-headed. Sometimes, perhaps because I know them well or perhaps because we share a certain past, I am able to discern how and what they are thinking. Other times they completely mystify me, their otherness (and mine as well) untouchably present between us. I think of my brothers, of my father (crusty old curmudgeon with the hidden, tender heart), of male friends and loves – I see them wandering
sometimes, all dazed and stumbling as they try to live a life in which
they are not mythed. And I want to yell at the idiots who disappeared
them out of this world, who erased them from the sacred, who wrote
away their immanence, denied their transcendent otherness. Yes, myth
is a dangerous place in which to dwell. And yes, the sacred too (but
how in this place and time to separate entirely the sacred from myth ‘in
general’?) is filled with danger. But what to do? Outside of myth, outside
of those ultimately most real stories we tell about ourselves, we cease
to matter in any way at all, cease, oddly, to be made of matter. Lose our
bodies, our flesh, our feelings, our passions, our capacity to imagine
otherwise, to act anew. Our existence fades away, evaporates.

You will tell me, but you don’t have to tell me, I am aware of it already,
that my brothers have the Father and the Son – that this obviously
masculine myth is theirs for the inhabiting, that I must be mad indeed
to imagine otherwise. But I tell you, I have watched my father and my
brothers (fathers both of them), and they know they are not Gods. They
know they are not The Father, not all-powerful not all-knowing not
all-good. I have watched them, and I know they would simply never
demand or offer the death of their children, the death of any child. I
have seen them shake and cry over deaths they could not prevent, no
miraculous healing power do they possess. They know so well that they
are neither The Father nor The Son. They know they are not Gods.
Present in this world, they cope imperfectly with whatever comes their
way. And this is the most real difference between them and The Father
and The Son.

The myth of The Father and The Son is a myth centred around perfect
absence.\textsuperscript{19} Perfect absence, not imperfect presence. The maleness, the
masculinity of The Father and The Son is precisely a maleness, a
Absence, not terror. Absence, not attraction. Absence absence absence
absence absence. It is a myth of dis-incarnation. A myth located well
beyond the horizons of this world. A myth located in, truly, a nowhere,
a ‘place’ neither in any way immanent nor in any way transcendent.
No messy physicality, no voluptuous carnality, no mysterious, terrible
or terrifying otherness there. No potentiality, no possibility of any otherwise. Really, it’s quite hard to imagine the attraction, the attraction of such a sterile, barren place. No wonder there are rumours of God’s death. I imagine that if I were God I would have started those rumours myself, just to get the hell out of such an awful heaven.

... 

Actually, it is quite hard simply, not so simply, to imagine anything at all. It is impossible to prepare oneself even for the possibility of imagining, of imagining something otherwise. It is difficult to open oneself to the torrent of transcendence – to its swirling spinning intensity – or to its sporadic, nerve-wracking drip, drip, drip. It is quite hard to risk being knocked off one’s feet, swept along in directions undreamt. To wait for it in the open, outside the ark, to wait unseeing, as though in a cloud of dust, patient, accepting, welcoming. Never knowing when or where it might appear. To risk drowning in what could be a flood, to risk becoming mired in the muck – or catching fire, blazing into ashes. What is required is a certain trust in immanence. An unwavering faith in the muck, the mud, the ashes, the dust. A not so simple acceptance, perhaps, of the simple myth of dust and ashes. From which we all of us are made and to which we shall all return, even those who deny both their muddy immanence and their fiery transcendence – the tremblingpoundingpresent conjunction of both the NoWhere and the NoThing, the _mysterium tremendum et fascinans_.

... 

Throughout western modernity and postmodernity the sacred has been told by masculine mythers as overwhelmingly feminine – figuratively through the virgin, whore and mother, and conceptually through immanence and transcendence. How bizarre, considering that myth tells what matters most. Yet, could it be that the myth of the sacred is even now trying to tell us something else, something more?

**Endnotes**

1. I am indebted to Roland Barthes’ insight concerning the character of myth. According to Barthes, ‘myth has in fact a double function: it points out and it notifies, it makes us understand something and it imposes it on us.’ Barthes, ‘Myth Today,’ p. 117, italics added.

3 See Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 139. ‘This element of violation and violence is present in all fabrication, and *homo faber*, the creator of the human artifice, has always been a destroyer of nature.’


5 Ibid., p. 120.

6 Ibid., p. 119.


12 Perhaps now you will understand when I confess that this entire meditation upon transcendence as feminine was sparked by an otherwise inexplicable snippet of a sentence from Naomi Goldenberg, ‘the transcendent, the immaterial, and the metaphysical is actually the embodied, the physical, and the female.’ Naomi R. Goldenberg, *Returning Words to Flesh: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Resurrection of the Body* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), p. 207.


15 Ibid., pp. 258-259.


17 Barthes, ‘Myth Today,’ p. 159, italics in original.

18 Ibid., p. 151.

19 Catherine Keller reminds us that ‘we need not read [Karl] Barth – or most mainline theology from the fathers on – as the mouthpiece of a merely absent Father, totalitarian Ruler, or distant infinity.’ While whole-heartedly agreeing that multiple interpretations of such theology are both possible and necessary, I would argue that we do need to read the ‘absent Father’ in addition to whatever else we read, that we do need to ponder long and hard the relationship of such an absent divine masculinity to the masculinity/s of those creatures known, here on earth, as ‘males’. Keller, *Face of the Deep*, p. 90.