

THE ROLE AND MEANING OF THE MELUSINE MYTH IN MODERN

NARRATIVE: A JUNGIAN PERSPECTIVE

by

LAURA NANNETTE MOSLEY

(Under the Direction of Jonathan F. Krell)

ABSTRACT

The myth of Mélusine first appeared in literary form in France in 1393. Its author, Jean d'Arras, drew from long-standing oral tradition in the writing of his romance, which was, by the standards of the Middle Ages, a best-seller. Mélusine's ongoing popularity into the 20th and 21st centuries, not only in France, but internationally as well, is evidenced by André Breton's *Arcane 17* (1944), Manuel Mujica Lainez's *El unicornio* (1965), Esther Tusquets's *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978), and Marie de la Montluel's (Chantal Chawaf's) *Mélusine des détritius* (2002), the four novels I undertake to explore in this dissertation. From a Jungian perspective, the ongoing appeal of Mélusine may be explained by the rich archetypal images and mythological motifs contained within her story, but to fully understand why these authors from such vastly different socio-cultural and historical backgrounds were so inspired by her, it is necessary to consider that each of these authors wrote at a time of personal and societal crisis. Jung teaches that it is at such times that the individual awakens to the need to probe the unconscious, and that it is then that the archetype most needed by the psyche will appear. Following Jungian scholar James Hillman, who identifies the alchemical

Mercurius as the archetype of healing due to his capacity to unite opposites, I identify Mélusine with this archetype. I argue that the four narratives addressed here are projections enabling a “working through” of psychological and/or societal problems, and Mélusine emerges in each to act as spiritual guide and archetypal healer. I will show that in all of these narratives, her ultimate function is to bring healing – to characters, authors, and societies. In these narratives, the authors tap into and give voice to the unconscious. By offering the reader a representation of the individuation process this requires, they, like Mélusine, are offering guidance toward a healing of harmful schisms that have cut the individual and society off from the unconscious, the feminine, the body, nature, and the Other.

INDEX WORDS: Mélusine, Myth, *Le Roman de Mélusine où L’histoire de Lusignan*, Jean d’Arras, *Mélusine ou Le Roman de Parthenay*, Coudrette, André Breton , *Arcane 17*, Manuel Mujica Lainez , *El unicornio*, Esther Tusquets , *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, Marie de la Montluel, Chantal Chawaf, *Mélusine des détrit*us, Carl Jung, Archetypal analysis, Individuation, Alchemy, Mercurius, Luna, Modern Narrative, Projection, Crisis, Healing

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF MÉLUSINE AS
MERCURIAL HEALER

*Le Roman de Mélusine ou L'Histoire de Lusignan*¹ was completed by Jean d'Arras for his patron, the Duke of Berry in 1393. Shortly thereafter, in 1405, there appeared a second version, closely resembling it in content, but composed in verse by Coudrette for Jean Larchevêque, lord of Parthenay.² By the standards of the Middle Ages, the works soon became best-sellers; they were among “les plus célèbres et les plus traduits en langues étrangères de cette flamboyante fin du moyen Age” (Vincensini, Introduction 8). As Harf-Lancner indicates, the large number of extant manuscripts gives testament to their initial popularity – ten for Jean d'Arras, twenty for Coudrette (Introduction 19). The story was rapidly disseminated throughout France, Spain, Germany, England, and Eastern Europe, with its first printing produced in Germany in 1474 – a prose translation of Coudrette's version by Thuring von Ringoltingen (Arras/Morris, Introduction 3). Four years later the Jean d'Arras version was printed in France and, due to high demand, multiple editions appeared in the centuries to come.³ In

¹ In this essay, I will use Matthew W. Morris's bilingual (middle French-English) edition (2007) of Jean d'Arras's romance. He works from Arsenal MS 3353, “long considered one of the oldest and best of all manuscripts containing Jean d'Arras's work” (48).

² Citations used will be drawn from the bilingual (middle French-English) edition (2002) of Coudrette's *Mélusine où Le Roman de Parthenay*, also by Morris. The base manuscript he uses is BnF fr. 19167.

³ According to Harf Lancner twenty two editions of the Jean d'Arras version were published between 1478 and 1597. She adds that two novels based upon the epic romance appeared in the mid 1500's (the *Roman de Mélusine* and the *Roman de Geoffroy à la grand dent*) and their popularity continued into the 19th century where they appear in the 1869 collection *Romans de Chevalerie ou Nouvelle Bibliothèque Bleue* (Introduction 36).

Spain, translations of Jean d'Arras version were published in 1498 and 1526.⁴ Since her earliest appearance, Mélusine has continued to fascinate and captivate writers. She has resurfaced in numerous literary works, from Rabelais to Zola, and her ongoing popularity into the 20th and 21st centuries, not only in France, but internationally as well, is evidenced by André Breton's *Arcane 17* (1944), Manuel Mujica Lainez' *El unicornio* (1965), Esther Tusquet's *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978), and Chantal Chawaf's *Mélusine des détritrus* (2002),⁵ the narratives to be examined here. Interestingly, these writers come from vastly different socio-cultural and historical backgrounds, yet all of them have applied the myth of Mélusine in their narrative works. How does one explain the "staying power," the continuing appeal and relevance, of the Mélusine myth? Why is it that each of these writers evokes this mythical figure and what precisely is her role in their narratives? These are the central questions I propose to answer in this essay.

In preparation for this, however, it is useful to go back to Mélusine's beginnings. Both Jean d'Arras and Coudrette, as was customary at a time when artful re-telling was prized above originality, preface their work with the revelation of their sources, which include much earlier writings in Latin; in fact, Jean d'Arras directly cites Gervais de Tilbury, recounting a tale from his *Ottia imperialia* (written between 1209 and 1214) which provides the central frame for the story of Mélusine (Arras/Morris 55-57). As Harf- Lancner has shown, multiple tales of fairy-human encounters appear in 12th and

⁴ Modern editions of the Spanish versions have been published in recent years by Ivy Corfis (Madison: Hispanic Seminar of Medieval Studies, 1986) and Carlos Alvar (Madrid: Siruela 1988).

⁵ This novel was written under the pen name Marie de la Montluel, which was Chawaf's maiden name. In this essay I have chosen to refer to her by her present name, Chantal Chawaf, as it is the name by which she is best known and has signed all of her other works. I will briefly explore this choice of name in my forthcoming analysis in chapter 6.

13th century texts,⁶ and almost a century prior to the Jean d'Arras version, in a text by Pierre de Bressuire,⁷ we already have evidence of an as yet un-named fairy who has much in common with Mélusine, said to be connected to the House of Lusignan. The literary myth of Mélusine is an etiological one that traces the origins of this illustrious family to the fairy (more precisely half-fairy), first named (in extant texts, at least) in Jean d'Arras. Yet the literary versions arose not only from written sources, but also from a long-standing oral tradition. In addition to “true chronicles,” Jean d'Arras relies upon “what we’ve heard people of other times relate, and [...] various eyewitness accounts of things seen in the region of Poitou and elsewhere” (53). Coudrette draws upon stories “recalled from long ago” (55) and what “is said everywhere” concerning Lusignan (57). It was, in fact, an awareness of the fairy’s importance in Poitevin lore that instigated the Duke of Berry to commission the writing of the epic romance, through which he intended to link his mother’s lineage to the fairy, and thus substantiate his claim to the fortress of Lusignan.⁸ During the particularly unstable period surrounding the Hundred Years War, nobles went to great lengths to protect their claims to territories, including such creative means of convincing their subjects of a divine right to rule. They realized that “aux yeux

⁶ For an in-depth look at Mélusine’s many medieval relatives, see Harf-Lancner’s *Les Fées au Moyen Age* (1984) and *Le Monde des fées dans l’occident médiéval* (2003).

⁷ In his *Reductorium Morale*, Bressuire recounts that it is said that the fortress of Lusignan was founded by a knight and a fairy from whom the kings of Jerusalem and Cyprus, the counts of la Marche and of Parthenay were descended. He also tells that when the fairy’s husband spied her naked, she transformed into a serpent, and even today appears in the castle when it is to change hands (qtd. in Harf-Lancner, *Le Monde des Fées* 58).

⁸ According to Morris, Coudrette’s version, too, was written to protect the territorial rights of the Sires of Parthenay (“Origines” 17-18). Although modern minds may not appreciate the utility of claims to fairy descendency, one must recall that this was a time in which the “merveilleux” was accepted as a very real part of life, and superstitions held a powerful sway. Jean d'Arras fully expects his tale to be believed, since he was convinced, as were many of his day, that “the more developed [one’s] knowledge and natural intelligence, the more he will be disposed to admitting the possibility of such things” (Arras/Morris 717).

du peuple, un tel droit ne pouvait être établi que si l'incarnation anthropomorphe de la souveraineté territoriale reconnaissait le suzerain et s'unissait à lui" – in the case of Poitou, Mélusine was just such an incarnation (Morris, "Origines" 19). This traditional motif of "union of the rightful ruler of the land with the tutelary spirit of the territory" and multiple others appearing in Jean d'Arras' *Mélusine*, have been shown by Morris to spring from Celtic mythology, from which the Poitevin lore likely developed (Introduction 12-13). It is clear, then, that Mélusine served as a valuable political tool and that her myth, albeit with significant variations, long pre-existed the romance.

By drawing upon both oral lore and written tradition, Jean d'Arras elaborated a complex character, who interestingly shares multiple aspects with other mythical figures far removed from the Celtic tradition. Harf-Lancner, in her structural and comparative analysis of "contes mélusiniens,"⁹ demonstrates that there are many variations on Mélusine's story, all of which involve the romantic union of a supernatural being with a mortal and which share a similar schema: the pair meet and marry, but this union is contingent upon the respect of a pact; the couple is happy and prosperous as long as the human keeps his/her word; the pact is eventually broken, and the supernatural being leaves, taking with him/her their happiness and prosperity (*Les Fées au Moyen Age* 83-84). She further demonstrates that these stories surface in a variety of cultures, some dating back to ancient times. She compares, for instance, the stories of Urvashi, a heavenly nymph of the ancient Hindu Vedas (circa 1500-1000 B.C.); of Toyotamahime, daughter of the sea-god as recorded in the Japanese Shintoist *Ko Ji Ki* (composed in 712); of

⁹ A bit of a misnomer, underscoring the fame of Mélusine herself, as it refers even to stories of similar theme and structure written long *before* the fairy's own legend came to be. The term was coined by Georges Dumézil in *Le Problème des Centaures*, Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1929.

Psyche and Eros told in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* (2nd century AD); as well as those of the “époux animaux” of many African tales (86-117). It would appear, then, that as we examine the “why” of Mélusine’s ongoing appeal, we might also need to consider the closely related question of why she has, at least in some form or other, “always been around”?

As Philippe Walter writes, we can recognize in Mélusine a “créature mythique universelle,” but one who takes on “des visages et des noms particuliers selon les pays et selon les cultures” (11). This medievalist observes that memory and oral tradition have an important role in the maintenance of the myth and its movement from culture to culture; however, he adds that the impossibility of contact between, for instance, the Japanese and Europeans prior to the 16th century, leads us to consider the possibility that the stories of Toyotamahime and Mélusine are a result of “une invention spontanée et séparée du même schéma mythique à partir du même potentiel de symbolisation inhérent à toute l’espèce humaine” (23). The existence of this innate transpersonal capacity for symbolization was postulated by Carl G. Jung in his theories regarding the archetypes and the collective unconscious. Early a student of Freud, he participated in what Walter aptly refers to as “une rehabilitation de l’image et de la pensée mythique” (8). In Freud’s work, dream images once ignored as simply meaningless aberrations came to be taken seriously—he revealed that these images springing from the unconscious mind held keys to a deeper understanding of the human psyche. According to Jung, this vital breakthrough was slow in coming due to the powerful sway held by materialism and empiricism (*Archetypes* 3). These not only interfered with the recognition of the value of examining “irrational” dreams, but also resulted in views of myths and fairy tales as little

more than entertaining fictions. Joseph Campbell lauds both Freud and Jung for having “demonstrated irrefutably that the logic, the heroes, and the deeds of myth survive into modern times” (4) – ultimately they express realities, although couched in a symbolic language, the language of the unconscious which, as Jung teaches, is their original source.

Freud’s primary focus was the Oedipus myth, from which he derived his well-known theory of the Oedipal complex.¹⁰ Jung, however, devoted much systematic study to a multitude of myths, along with fairy tales, folktales, religion, rites, and alchemy, pursuing another understanding of shared patterns and images which he identified across a wide variety of time periods and cultures. Like Walter, he recognized that “tradition and transmission by migration certainly play a part” in these shared aspects, but there were far too many cases which could not be accounted for in this way (*Archetypes* 155). Additionally, when, in his role as psychologist, he examined dreams (considered to reveal the inner workings and content of the unconscious mind of the individual) he found that, in addition to images and motifs traceable to the individual’s personal experiences and repressed or forgotten contents of the unconscious, there were others of an impersonal nature, which “cannot be explained as something individually acquired” (155). These findings led him to elaborate his theory of what he called the “collective unconscious.”¹¹

¹⁰ The Oedipal complex is a triangular relationship which Freud postulated as a natural part of childhood development, in which a male child’s early incestuous desire for his mother initially pits him against his father, a state which must be overcome by internalizing the values of the father, with whom he eventually identifies, and then overcomes the complex. (For further discussion of this and Freud’s other theoretical contributions to psychoanalysis, see William Kelley’s *Psychology of the Unconscious* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1991, 71-85.)

¹¹ In her discussion of Jung’s work, Frances Gray points out the “unfashionable” aspect of such a theory at a time when “universalisms” and “innateness” are considered suspect; yet she points out that “Jung’s claims give a serious account of the unconscious collective aspect of what it means to be human” (21).

According to Jung, the human unconscious is composed of two elements; a personal unconscious and a collective one, which is made up of certain psychic structures, patterns and tendencies shared by all human beings, in the same way that we all share the same physical cerebral structure and the same instincts. These “formal” elements of the psyche are called *archetypes*. There has been much confusion regarding the archetypes, as Jung himself noted.¹² It has been assumed, for instance, that the archetypes are themselves images, yet in fact, Jung considers the archetypes as being “empty [...] nothing but a *facultas praeformandi*, a possibility of representation which is given a priori,” (*Aspects of the Feminine* 107), or a “transpersonal capacity for symbolization” as Walter succinctly termed it. Interestingly, Lévi- Strauss criticized Jung for assigning meaning to the archetypes (208), yet any meaning would emerge only once the archetypes became manifest within the individual psyche as archetypal images, a point at which, as we will see, the personal melds with the collective. And Jung’s preceding definition of the archetypes, as simply an empty, pre-existing capacity for representation within the unconscious is remarkably similar to Lévi-Strauss’s own description of the unconscious, which, for him, “ceases to be the ultimate haven of individual peculiarities – the repository of a unique history which makes each of us an irreplaceable human being. It is reducible to a function, the symbolic function, which no doubt is carried out according to the same laws among all men, and actually corresponds to the aggregate of these laws” (203). Lévi- Strauss would place “individual peculiarities” elsewhere, into the *preconscious*, which he carefully distinguishes from the unconscious, and which he defines as the “reservoir of recollections and images amassed in the course of a lifetime,

¹² He addresses concerns about these misunderstandings in his preface to *Psyche and Symbol*, p. xvi.

[and which] is merely an aspect of memory” (203). This dual notion of what lies in the psyche’s recesses, would appear, then, to be rather similar to Jung’s own conception of the unconscious itself, when he distinguishes between the collective (wherein reside the structuring archetypes) and the personal unconscious, containing the unique repressed or forgotten contents accumulated over the individual’s lifetime.

According to Jung, archetypal structures, the organizing components of the unconscious mind, will “produce over and over again, irrespective of tradition, [certain] figures which will appear in the history of all epochs and all peoples, and will endow them with the same significance and numinosity that have been theirs since the beginning” (*Mysterium* 390). Each of us, when in a state in which the conscious mind loosens its restrictive hold, will find that archetypal images emerge; these he considers to be the language of the unconscious, which wants to make itself known and which ultimately cannot be silenced.¹³ He considers these archetypal images to be influenced by *both* the collective and the individual layers of the unconscious, which serves to explain the spontaneous emergence of seemingly anomalous primordial images, yet accounts for variations influenced by individual experience and socio-cultural factors. Thus, although the actual archetypal images manifested in any given individual’s dreams will vary considerably from those of another individual, they will tend to share certain aspects, due to the influence of the collective unconscious, such that the emergent archetypes can be identified. Jung holds that there is not a limitless number of archetypes, as the spectrum of possible experiences of the human psyche is itself limited (*Aspects of the Masculine*

¹³ Jung taught that repressed unconscious contents inevitably make their presence known, as will soon be discussed. In this respect he clearly agreed with Freud, who postulated “the return of the repressed,” a process whereby repressed elements surface in dreams and behaviors, ranging from the proverbial “Freudian slips” (“parapraxes”) to more disruptive, even debilitating symptoms (Felluga).

14).¹⁴ It should also be borne in mind that a single image can encompass more than a single archetype, even apparently contradictory ones.¹⁵ Some of these include, for instance, the “Self” (that is the *whole* self – both conscious and unconscious together), the “Puer Aeternus” (what we might call an “inner child”), “the shadow” (representing those aspects within us which we would rather forget or repress), the Mother archetype (actually often involving two distinct archetypes, that of the Great Mother,¹⁶ a comforting avatar of unconditional love, or the Terrible Mother,¹⁷ who threatens to overcome and devour), the Father archetype (found by Jung to commonly manifest itself as a single but ambiguous figure, simultaneously inspiring attraction and fear), and a contra-sexual archetype which Jung referred to as the *anima* in a male’s psyche, and the *animus* in that of the female. It should be mentioned here that the emergence of the *anima* or *animus* as a contra-sexual image is due to its encompassing those aspects of the self which are seen as “other,” that which is not “me” or my conscious self (ego). However,

¹⁴ Again we find a parallel with Lévi-Strauss, who stressed the limited number of structures available to language, myth, and the psychological complexes. He observes “there are many languages, but very few structural laws which are valid for all” and states that just as myths can be reduced “to a small number of simple types if we abstract,” so are the complexes – “those individual myths” – reducible “to a few simple types which mold the fluid multiplicity of cases (204).

¹⁵ As we will see, Mélusine is herself a prime example of just such an archetypal image.

¹⁶ Jungian scholar Ginette Paris stresses the importance of distinguishing between literal designations and archetypal language. As an example, she discusses the Great Mother archetype, and points out that the notions of compassion and mothering are synonymous and can be offered to us by anyone regardless of their sex, age or relationship to us. “An archetypal role is distinct from the social or biological function; what counts is the experience of the archetype” (16). She also warns that terms, such as “the feminine principle” (sometimes used by Jung) have led to confusion and to the unfortunate, even destructive assumption that only females can possess maternal qualities. She explains that “compassion is a human quality and ‘Mother’ symbolizes it” since if mothers were not to some degree motherly toward helpless human infants, humanity would simply not exist (17).

¹⁷ The threatening aspect of the Terrible Mother archetype aligns her with Freud’s Phallic Mother, with her imposing phallus imagined by the child. (Although a source of fear, Freud suggested that belief in the mother’s phallus also served as a protection from castration anxiety.) A discussion of Jung’s conception of the Terrible Mother will be taken up within the forthcoming discussion of his theory of individuation.

Jung associates traits traditionally regarded as feminine (especially *Eros*, which he defines as relatedness)¹⁸ with the *anima* and those traditionally regarded as masculine (especially *logos*, which he defines as discrimination and detachment) with the *animus*; such associations have led to charges of essentialism.¹⁹ John Beebe stresses that Jung's later elucidations of *logos* and *Eros* as *Sol* and *Luna*, were more nuanced; for example, although *Luna*'s light (wisdom) blurs edges and reveals connections, she also has a cold, unrelated aspect, that "gives her reflective depth," while *Sol*, whose light sharply delineates and separates, also has a "penetrating warmth" (xv). Jung actually preferred the use of such images to discuss his concepts, as they allow for more fluidity in interpretation (*Aspects of the Masculine* 86); however, obviously the associations *anima*/moon/*Eros* and *animus*/sun/*logos* reflect a very traditional line of thought, namely patriarchal society which he, a Western European male, embodied. Yet, as the *anima* resides *within* the psyche of the male individual and the *animus* *within* that of the female, in Jung's conception each of us, regardless of sex, has access to all traits, whether they are generally considered masculine or feminine.²⁰ The constellation of a contra-sexual set

¹⁸ Jung differs from Freud in his use of this term in that he disassociates it from sexual libido; although it may come into play in sex, in Jung's terminology it refers primarily to a sense of emotional or psychological connectedness to the Other.

¹⁹ Catherine Keller says that Jung's concepts of the *animus* and *anima* are "notoriously ridden with sexism" and that here "we encounter the social stereotype masquerading as the eternal archetype" (109). Susan Rowland observes that Jung's use of the word "feminine" "frequently collapses bodily sex into psychic gender," which "places Jung as an essentialist on gender" (39). Rowland cautions, however, that he cannot be categorically considered an essentialist, given the androgyny he ascribes to the unconscious (45). Keller, too, gives some credit to Jung for his recognition that those traits traditionally reserved for the opposite sex need to be accessed by both (110).

²⁰ As Casado observes, Jung "regarded men and women to be innately androgynous, partaking of traits belonging to both genders in accordance with each individual's unique relationship between his/her conscious on the one hand, and his/her contra sexual archetype on the other" (43). And Jung insisted frequently that one should always bear in mind the infinite variety within individuals, which he insisted had to be "borne in mind whenever there is talk of a theory serving as a guide to self-knowledge [...] for the

of traits around one's contra-sexual archetype is largely due to societal pressure upon the male or female to conform to expected behaviors for each sex, which leads to repression or a lack of development of those traits not deemed acceptable, and to their being hidden away within the corresponding archetype in the unconscious. Although such pressure was likely felt more strongly by individuals of Jung's day, even now such pressure is brought to bear. Cixous observes that males are the more deeply affected,²¹ for whereas women are now frequently encouraged to take on traditionally masculine roles and behaviors, males who do not repress the feminine²² still tend to receive strong criticism.

If not acknowledged as part of the Self, the *anima* or *animus* is often projected upon individuals of the opposite sex, which can have destructive consequences upon the individual, (who fails to acknowledge aspects of the Self) and upon relationships with those upon whom contents are projected. Jung found that the shadow, as the "shadow-side" of the ego itself, is generally projected upon an individual of the same sex. But ultimately *any* repressed archetypal contents risk emerging through projection. Jung reminds us that we forget all too easily that our "idea of a person consists, in the first

object of this knowledge is an individual – a relative exception and an irregular phenomenon" (*Undiscovered* 6).

²¹ "Pour des raisons historicoculturelles, c'est la femme qui s'y ouvre [à la bisexualité]: d'une certaine façon 'la femme est bisexuelle.' L'homme, ce n'est un secret pour personne – [est] dressé à viser la glorieuse monosexualité phallique"(46). If we bear in mind that in patriarchal societies, greater value is placed upon masculine traits, this state of affairs is unsurprising. In such societies there occurs a collective rejection/repression of feminine traits.

²² The feminine as used by Jung should not be confused with the strictly biological notion of "female." Rather, for Jung it refers to such traits as nurturance, intuitiveness and relatedness (Jung's *Eros*, or a sense of connectedness to the Other)— traits which, as mentioned above, are frequently deemed by society as belonging to the domain of the female, but actually can, in Jung's view, be found in individuals of either sex. Throughout this essay, my use of the term "feminine" conforms to Jung's notion. Jung differs in this regard from the uses of "feminine" in which traits attributed to women are strictly socially constructed rather than present (to any degree) prior to the individual's socialization: as Simone de Beauvoir states, "On ne naît pas femme; on le devient." (*Le Deuxième sexe II: L'Expérience vécue*. Paris: Gallimard, 1949, 13).

place, of the possibly very incomplete picture [we] have received of the real person, and, in the second place, of the subjective modifications [we] have imposed upon this picture,” many of which have sprung forth from our own unconscious (*Aspects of the Feminine* 175). Jung frequently stresses the autonomous aspect of the archetypes. He teaches that attempts to repress or ignore them will eventually result in their surfacing “against our wills” and that they can ultimately “overwhelm the ego and force it under their control” (*Psyche and Symbol* 328). This occurs not solely through projection; unconscious contents can emerge unexpectedly in our own behaviors, further complicating our exterior lives when they manifest as splinter personalities or as “phobias, compulsions, and so forth [...] in a word, neurotic symptoms”(331). Obviously, then, there is good reason for paying attention to the archetypal images surfacing in our dreams.

However, it is not solely in dreams that the archetypes are manifested; in myths, too, we encounter archetypal images. Jung explains that in dreams, they are “more individual, less understandable, and more naïve than in myths,” since myths bear a “specific stamp and have been handed down through long periods of time” (*Archetypes* 5). Campbell effectively sums up the dream-myth relationship thus: “dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream; both myth and dream are symbolic in the same general way of the dynamics of the psyche. But in dreams the forms are quirked by the peculiar troubles of the dreamer, whereas in myth the problems and solutions shown are directly valid for all mankind” (19). In Jung’s view, the dream-state in which archetypal images appear is comparable to the “primitive state of consciousness” in which myths were originally formed, so one can suppose that “mythological archetypes

[...] made their appearance in much the same manner as the manifestations of archetypal structures among individuals today” (*Archetypes* 156).

Bettina Knapp has analyzed the myth of Mélusine applying a Jungian approach and has identified multiple archetypal motifs that emerge within her story. Some of these are *the hunt* or quest to know the Self, *the forest*, symbol of the unconscious, and *the fountain*, representing the source of life and of “ever-renewing waters” that cleanse and heal, as well as the emergence of contents hidden within the earth (*i.e.* within the depths of the unconscious) into the air (*i.e.* into consciousness) (41).²³ She has also identified multiple archetypal aspects assembled in this single mythical character, including the *anima* figure, the Great Mother, builder of cities / builder of souls, the Gnostic Sophia or Wisdom, spiritual guide, shadow figure, and succubus. Jung’s theories appear to suggest, then, that we may attribute the deep, enduring resonance of the myth of Mélusine through so many centuries to the rich archetypal images and mythological motifs contained therein. Certainly, this aids us in understanding Mélusine’s appeal to those who hear or read her story. Yet, the writers addressed in this essay have gone a step beyond, actually bringing her forth within their narrative works in some way. How then do we explain the repeated appearance of Mélusine in the written word?

To explore these questions, let us first turn to Jung’s conception of myth. His definition of myth, from which I work in this essay, is “symbolic expressions of the inner unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man’s consciousness by

²³ In his book, *La Fée à la fontaine et à l’arbre : un archétype du conte merveilleux et du récit courtois*, Pierre Gallais examines in-depth the archetypal motif of the fountain, stating that of all the tales he examines, it is in Mélusine’s that the theme of the fairy at the fountain “brille de son plus vif éclat: nulle part il n’est plus manifeste,” but adds that she inherits this theme from oral tales which “courageaient [...] depuis des millénaires” (51)

way of projection” (*Archetypes* 6). Ultimately, it is the psyche speaking to us: “We do not invent myths; we experience them... they don’t represent, but rather *were* the psychic life of primitives” (Samuels, Shorter and Plaut 95). Jung considers myth “the primordial language natural to these psychic processes [which are] best and most succinctly reproduced by figurative language” (*Psychology and Alchemy* 25). It is through myth, then, that psychic processes are revealed and made more fully accessible and comprehensible by giving voice to the archetypes.²⁴ But what exactly are these psychic processes to which Jung refers?

The “inner unconscious drama of the psyche” projected in myth hinges on the relationship between the unconscious and ego consciousness. Jung theorized that the conscious self (ego) emerges from the unconscious.²⁵ He postulates that in the first half of life, we face the task of separating from the unconscious in order to develop our own distinct conscious personality. This task is itself a challenge, as there is a need to break free from the comforting security and illusory sense of wholeness experienced within the undifferentiated state and overcome the fear involved in leaving this “paradise” in order to establish the independent ego. The desire to remain unconscious and infantile must be overcome as the individual develops a sense of self-direction, and is symbolized in hero myths in which victory must be had over the “Mother” in the form of some demonic representative (a dragon for instance) (*Aspects of the Masculine* 21). Here we have the

²⁴ Jung’s interest in giving voice to inner “demons” was not especially well-received by theologians or psychologists; one group considered this a sacrilegious act setting the individual in opposition to the one true voice (God’s), and the other considered it a dangerous move toward psychosis (Hillman 55).

²⁵ This designation of the unconscious as the point of origin for all conscious contents, as well as its dual composition (both personal and collective) mark a divergence with Freud. Jung came to disagree with Freud’s estimation of the unconscious as essentially a “gathering place of forgotten and repressed contents” (*Archetypes* 3).

explanation for the dual Mother archetypes: the Great Mother and the Terrible Mother are related to the ambivalent reaction of the conscious before the unconscious – felt as safe paradisiacal haven or as a dangerous force to be overcome in order to prevent the dissolution of ego within it.

In his discussion of a child patient suffering from an infantile neurosis, marked by a strong identification with his mother and fear of his father, rather than focus upon the role of physical sexual desire as is done in Freud's Oedipal complex, Jung connects the child's experience to the psyche itself, stating that this is representative of "the original human situation" the "clinging of primitive conscious to the unconscious, and the compensating impulse which strives to tear consciousness away from the embrace of darkness" (*Aspects of the Masculine* 67). Jung's recognition of libido as psychic energy as opposed to sexual energy was, in fact, a primary reason for his break with Freud.²⁶ By drawing attention to the child's need to move from the realm of the unconscious, where archetypes are the organizing principle, into consciousness, wherein *logos* organizes thought,²⁷ Jung's theory closely parallels that of Lacan (also inspired by Freud's Oedipal complex) regarding the developing child's emergence from the Imaginary into the Symbolic order. The child must make a difficult move away from a comforting symbiotic state with the mother, in which he or she is closest to a purely material existence, a state governed by instinctual urges or drives, toward the realm of language. The separation from the mother begins at the Mirror Stage, wherein the child conceives of him or herself

²⁶ For further discussion of their multiple differences of opinion, see Kelley's *Psychology of the Unconscious*, 62-67.

²⁷ Hillman stresses the close relationship between *logos* and consciousness; in fact he defines *logos* as "the insighting power of the mind to compose a cosmos and give meaning to it," adding that it is in actuality "an old word for [...] consciousness" (40).

as a whole, rather than a fragmented being, yet in this period, called the Imaginary by Lacan, the child is still not separated from the mother. Toril Moi explains: “when looking at itself in the mirror – or at itself on its mother’s arm, or simply at another child [it] only perceives another being with whom it merges and identifies [...] the ‘self’ is always alienated in the Other” (*Sexual/Textual Politics* 98). The separation process only becomes complete with the imposition of the Law of the Father, “logos,” here meaning “the Word” or language itself. Through language, limits are set, rules are imposed, and the close affinity with the mother comes to a close, considered a necessary prelude to active participation in the larger society as a distinct human being. Although a linguistically driven theory, this process aligns with that of Jung, for without emergence into consciousness (wherein language is the organizing principle), without the development of a distinct ego, the individual cannot become a full human being. It is also of interest to compare Jung’s Father archetype, with Lacan’s Law of the Father. As mentioned earlier, the Father archetype usually emerges as a single image, inspiring less clear cut responses than those seen in the dual Mother archetypes. Paris explains that although the Archetypal Child within us “draws a sense of power and protection” from the Father archetype, it is terrified to learn that it “imposes [...] rules and regulations, has strict codes of rewards and punishments, and holds on to principles of order;” it is against this that the Archetypal Child tends to rebel (17-18). But this archetype can be seen as “an attempt of the unconscious itself to rescue consciousness from the danger of regression” (*Aspects of the Masculine* 67), and therefore plays a role of vital necessity.²⁸

²⁸ Again we should recall Paris’s admonition that this is an archetype, and we must distinguish between literal designations and archetypal language. The Father archetype emerging as an imposer of conditions does not negate the capacity for women to take on such roles. This archetype, by setting conditions,

The initial separation from the unconscious and subsequent ego formation is only one aspect of the psychic drama. According to Jung there are two stages of life; it is the first that involves the initial breaking away from the unconscious. Once this is achieved, there develops a neglect of the unconscious during the years in which the individual is busily carving a niche for him or herself in the world. This neglect leads to ego-inflation, the dangerous assumption that the ego is one and the same as the Self. The individual becomes over confident that the personal myths he or she lives by are true; Jung observes that we become entrenched in beliefs, ideals and principles of behavior that have served us until this point, yet “we overlook the fact that the social goal is attained only at the cost of a diminution of personality” (29). In mid-life, however, we often find these foundations shaken, as many of the tasks of youth have been accomplished; our sense of purpose and identity may seem thrown into question, potentially provoking what has been called so commonly a “mid-life crisis.” The individual may recognize a need for self-examination and re-orientation, but sometimes makes an attempt to cling stubbornly to past schemas and suppositions, which can have harmful repercussions within the psyche. As Jung observes, “we cannot live the afternoon of life according to the programme of life’s morning; for what was great in the morning will be little at evening, and what in the morning was true will at evening have become a lie” (*Aspects of the Masculine* 33). Jung teaches that it is in moments of crisis that we awaken to the need to probe the unconscious. It is then that those neglected aspects of the Self hidden within the

manifests as the opposing factor to the Great Mother archetype (explained by Paris in fn13 as being representative of unconditional love). Additionally, we should bear in mind that *both* of these archetypes are situated within the unconscious of either sex.

unconscious begin to emerge most strongly, demanding our attention.²⁹ Too long cut-off from the unconscious, it is now time for the ego consciousness to return to it, for what Jungian scholar Jon Dourley calls a “re-rooting in the Mother” (72). Yet due to repercussions of the initial phase described above, a delving into the unconscious tends to provoke a panic reaction; it implies great risk. Jung explains that for consciousness to return to the unconscious it “puts itself in a perilous position because it is apparently extinguishing itself” (*Psychology and Alchemy* 333). However, only by probing the depths of the unconscious can the individual become aware of hidden or repressed contents and progress toward wholeness. This coming together of the conscious and unconscious is referred to by Jung as individuation. It involves an ongoing and difficult process, through which we must recognize and come to terms with negative aspects of the self hidden in the unconscious, and access and draw upon positive ones. Although the ultimate goal of individuation is psychic wholeness, this can never be fully realized. “The unconscious [...] can never be ‘done with’ once and for all. It is, in fact, one of the most important tasks of psychic hygiene to pay continual attention to the symptomatology of unconscious contents and processes, for [...] the conscious mind is always in danger of becoming one-sided” (*Aspects of the Feminine* 177). Thus, rather than ever aim for a stagnant fixity of being, Jung’s process situates the individual “in a stream of eternal

²⁹ This pressure brought to bear upon consciousness by the disruptive, yet necessary, contents of the unconscious can be seen to parallel an aspect of Julia Kristeva’s re-working of Lacanian theory (already discussed in relation to those of Jung above). She posits that the pre-Oedipal semiotic (linked to Lacan’s Imaginary) continues to apply a disruptive, destabilizing pressure upon discourse, even after the individual moves into the Symbolic. Just as ego consciousness never fully escapes the influence of the unconscious, discourse never fully escapes those primary pulsions caught up within the semiotic “chora” which, Kristeva explains, “precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm”(94). She holds that *all* discourse “simultaneously depends upon and refuses it” (94), but its effect is most evident in poetic language (113).

becoming” (de Lazlo xxix). If fear of the return to the unconscious, the Mother, can be overcome, engaging in the process of individuation enables healing and psychic growth. As Dourley explains: “intercourse with the goddess becomes the deepest meaning of incest whose purpose is the renewal of life” (Dourley 178).³⁰ But how does one overcome the fear this process evokes? And how can one come to actually hear the archetypes?

The answer to both questions lies in outward projection of psychic content, the very type of projection which, as we have seen, occurs in myth. Such outward projections enable the recognition of and exploration of the psychic drama just described in a way that seems less threatening to the conscious mind. Jung, during his own personal crisis (provoked by his break with Freud, who had been his close personal friend and mentor for many years), originated a technique for doing this which he called “active imagination,” defined as “a sequence of fantasies produced by deliberate concentration” (*Archetypes* 49). This involves a release of the imagination, giving it free reign as was so much more readily done in childhood, thereby enabling the unconscious to make known its contents to the conscious mind. Jung combined fantasizing with outward productive activities such as drawing, painting, and writing. When applying the latter, Jung actually wrote down conversations with the archetypal images who appeared to him, quite literally giving them voice, as he sought to gain a deeper knowledge of himself. One might ask whether these fantasized conversations were actually revealing unconscious contents or if they were overly dictated and controlled by the conscious itself. Jungian scholar James Hillman has drawn a correlation between this technique and that of the

³⁰ Here again we can recognize the significant divergence between Freud and Jung regarding conceptions of the libido and interpretation of the Oedipus complex. Dourley explains that for Jung it is actually this *psychic* incest which constitutes “the taboo the hero must break to enjoy the numinosity of identity with the mother and rebirth from her” (180).

writer of fiction. He suggests that there occurs in both a certain relativization of the author who becomes surprised by the autonomy of the characters; it becomes unclear who is making up whom, or who is writing whom – one “wavers between losing control and putting words in their mouths,” and eventually it seems that “only the characters know what is going on” (59). Jung stressed that the exercise of active imagination had to continue “until the cramp in the conscious mind is released, or, in other words, until one can just let things happen” (*Psyche and Symbol* 314), and at that point the contents of the unconscious are revealed. According to Hillman, “what we learn from Jung is that [...] literary imagination goes on in the midst of ourselves. Poetic, dramatic fictions are what actually people our psychic life. Our life in soul (the unconscious) is a life in imagination” (56). According to Hillman, the importance of Jung’s contribution is in his creation of a whole new way of “knowing thyself.” Whereas in Freud’s teaching, introspection was an in-depth examination of one’s entire past life, with Jung it becomes an “archetypal knowing,” which requires us to meet a “host of psychic figures” which go beyond our personal identity, and we meet them “both as images in the imagination and as [...] archetypal patterns” (62-63). Hillman explains that ultimately therapy “revivifies imagination,” and in fact “the entire therapeutic business is [a] sort of imaginative exercise. It picks up the oral tradition of telling stories; therapy re-stories life” (47). As Paris puts it “When the old script offers no more surprises, no more room to move, one needs a new identity” (xv). In her book, she reveals her own personal engagement with archetypal images, as she creates a new script, in narrative form. She is fully aware of her application of a literary approach in her own psychoanalytical process, and stresses that

“the exploration of our psyche’s depths definitely belongs to the humanities and the arts” (xv).

It is through creative fantasy activity that the inner workings of the unconscious can be revealed to the conscious mind. Outward projections involving the written word are helpful in the process, for not only does the conscious mind, organized by *logos*, better understand such expression, but also this placement of inner processes “out there,” beyond the individual, permits a distancing which enables the individual to approach them with less fear. It would appear then, that like ancient myth, modern narratives, too, can serve as tools which assist in understanding psychic processes and in the process of individuation. Thus they can bring about healing, deeper self-knowledge, and greater psychic wholeness, all of which Jung considered to result from the individuation process (*Archetypes* 289). I propose that this very process is at work in each of the four narratives analyzed in this essay. They are, like myths, projections, which are enabling a “working through” of psychological and/or societal problems.

Two of the authors whose works will be examined here are women, so before going further, I must first address Gray’s attack upon Jung’s model of individuation, which she considers to have no value to women. She bases this upon her belief that Jung replicates Plato’s view of the feminine soul as irrational and disordered. In her assumption that Jung’s paradigm simply involves the bringing under control of the unconscious by the dominant conscious, she states: “Jung’s notion of individuation amounts to a rejection of the feminine in pursuit of [the] ideal of reason” (35). When speaking in general terms of conscious and unconscious, Jung, as we have seen, indeed applies to that “great unknown,” the unconscious, a feminine aspect, referring to it as the

“mother” of the conscious self from which it is “born,” and in his writings he also frequently speaks of its chaotic aspect. Taken at face value, he might be said to replicate age-old fears of females and of the feminine; however, when Jung refers to the unconscious in such terms, he is expressing not his own attitude, but rather the fear and perplexity of the conscious mind before that which it does not understand. His actual views of the unconscious are quite positive, and to assume his perception of the unconscious as irrational and disordered would appear to negate such statements as: “we are practically compelled to believe that the unconscious cannot be an entirely chaotic, accumulation of instincts and images” (*Archetypes* 281), and “unconscious influences [...] are often truer and wiser than our conscious thinking” (282). He taught that not just in the process of individuation, but at moments when one has a difficult decision to make, the unconscious should be consulted, and warns that “if you act against the tendencies of the unconscious you will be counteracted by [it] [...] you should be absolutely at one with yourself” (*Earth has a Soul* 218). As we have seen, Jung’s efforts to hear the unconscious and tap into its wisdom do not appear to involve efforts to control it, but rather an openness to receive whatever the unconscious might reveal; the individual frees the unconscious, letting it say what it has to say. This does, however, involve the complicating factor that “as soon as the insurgent ‘substance’ speaks, it is necessarily caught in the kind of discourse allowed” (Moi, Introduction 10), an observation Moi makes in reference to the paradoxical problem Kristeva noticed to be encountered by notions of an *écriture féminine*. As elaborated by Cixous, *écriture féminine*³¹ involves, to

³¹ One should bear in mind here that this is a style of writing she considered available to both men and women.

return to Dourley's term for individuation, a "re-rooting in the mother." It is the expression of, "in short, the Voice of the Mother, that omnipotent figure that dominates the fantasies of the pre-Oedipal baby [...] the voice is the mother and the mother's body" (Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics* 112). It involves a liberation from the constraints of the Symbolic. Refusal of the unconscious (an attitude considered so destructive by Jung) is here linked with refusal of the body (calling to mind again Kristeva's *chora*), and refusal of the feminine. Cixous exhorts women: "Ecris-toi: il faut que ton corps se fasse entendre. Alors jailliront les immenses ressources de l'inconscient" (43). She adds "il faut tuer la fausse femme qui empêche la vivante de respirer. Inscrire le souffle de la femme entière" (43). Cixous appears to be calling for precisely what Jung calls for – a delving into the unconscious as part of a move toward wholeness. Yet in Kristeva, we find a cautionary stance that might also be seen to apply to Jung. She stressed the need for intelligibility, the necessary role of the Symbolic, suggesting that to denegate the Symbolic is to "remove the 'feminine' from the order of language" (Moi, Introduction 11). When the insurgent unconscious emerges, rather than attempting to subjugate it by capturing it within the written word and bringing it under conscious control, Jung ultimately appears to be seeking to reveal the unconscious in a way the conscious better understands, while the conscious mind maintains an openness to its wisdom. He continually warns of the destructiveness (and actually, the impossibility) of subjugating the unconscious in the sense of repression, and the opposite – complete dominance of the unconscious over consciousness – would lead to psychosis and the inability to fully function in society. He is ultimately seeking an equilibrium between the unconscious and consciousness. He has clearly expressed that each component of the psyche relies upon

the other: “it is as much a vital necessity for the unconscious to be joined to the conscious as it is for the latter not to lose contact with the unconscious” (*Aspects of the Masculine* 20). Rather than perceiving individuation as the triumph of consciousness over the unconscious, I agree with Sabatini that Jung sees our ideal unconscious-conscious relationship as involving “not domination by either side, but equal cooperation” (195), and the harmonious valuing of both. For this reason, both men and women can benefit from engaging in the individuation process.

In light of Jung’s views regarding mid-life as the time in which the individual finally begins to become concerned with the contents of the unconscious, it is illuminating to consider that all of the authors were in middle age when they wrote the works in question – all were in their forties or fifties at the time they were writing.³² Additionally, crisis plays a significant role in some way in all of the novels, not only within the narratives themselves, but also regarding aspects of the authors’ lives and/or societies at the time of their writing. André Breton wrote in exile during World War II; Mujica Lainez’s protagonist attempts to overcome an incestuous attraction, while the author struggles with the complications of leading a double life in a society which limits free expression of his desires; Esther Tusquets’s Elia copes with personal crises quite similar to those of the author at the time, and both do so amidst a time of dramatic societal upheaval in post-Francoist Spain; Chantal Chawaf’s *Mélusine* struggles for each breath of polluted air, and the author expresses concern both for the ecological crisis and for oppression of the feminine voice (Krell “*Mélusine*” 8-10). It is interesting to recall

³² Casado has recognized that Tusquet’s age of 42 at the time of her writing *El Mismo Mar*, her first novel, is “germane to the appropriateness of a Jungian analytical approach to her novelistic production” (14).

that Jean d'Arras himself wrote of Mélusine at a time of crisis – the Hundred Years War – while his patron struggled to protect territorial claims. Crisis emerges at the narrative level, as well; Mélusine first appears to an emotionally devastated Raymondin who, shortly before their meeting, had accidentally killed his beloved uncle.

In the four modern works, the frequent appearance of archetypal motifs and imagery, as well as stylistic aspects present in each (although in varying ways and to varying degrees), appear consistent with Jung's description of the technique of active imagination as used in psychoanalysis. André Breton, for example, refuses traditional narrative form, eliminating plot and characters. He simply gives free reign to the flow of ideas and images which emerge juxtaposed in unusual ways and defy clear organization as he fluctuates between past and present, narrative and poetry. This style is characteristic of this surrealist writer, so heavily influenced by Freud and his examination of dreams, and so deeply interested in exploring the workings of the unconscious mind. In the case of Esther Tusquets, too, we find a free-flowing narrative, which goes beyond even Breton's in applying the "stream-of-consciousness" technique, with page-length sentences that challenge the reader's comprehension. Akiko Tsuchiya has recognized in the novel an example of Cixous's *écriture féminine* and states that Tusquets "seeks to generate a discourse of feminine desire that undermines phallogocentric logic by striving for deconstructive play and open-ended textuality" (186). Stacey Casado has effectively revealed the role of psychoanalysis at work within this New Novel,³³ whose minimal

³³ Casado has established that *El mismo mar* bears traits consistent with the French *nouveau roman*. She reveals that Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Pour un nouveau roman* appeared in Spanish translation in 1965, two years after its French publication, but adds that it was not so "new" to Spain. Although Juan Benet introduced the New Novel there in 1967, it was in fact a "re-introduction of dehumanized art as theorized

plot, completely conveyed to us from within the mind of the protagonist, begins with a symbolic return to the “womb,” and involves the discovery of repressed aspects of the self. She has noted that this plot

is but a vehicle upon which [Tusquets] mounts her own idiosyncratic periphrastic style, one that reproduces with remarkable exactitude the dialectics of elaboration (thesis and antithesis) and integration (synthesis) that characterizes the dynamic processes of individuation and literary creation alike.(113)

In Chantal Chawaf’s *Mélusine des détritius*, too, one notes a free-flowing, poetic style. Her descriptions involve a corporeal, visceral aspect that speaks strongly to the reader’s senses, a style of writing within which the body is inscribed and which recalls the theories of both Kristeva and Cixous, and implies a link to the pre-Oedipal and the unconscious. This is clearly informed by Chawaf’s own preoccupation with the disjunction she finds between body and word which, as Jonathan Krell has revealed, is central to the novel, a crisis which will be further discussed below. Chawaf differs from Breton and Tusquets, in that she utilizes clearly structured dialogue, although one cannot always be sure to whom a given voice belongs. We also encounter a more clearly defined plot, organized around the archetypal motif of the quest (i.e. pursuit of self-knowledge) and some degree of organization with four titled *parties*, although within these, empty spaces are used to designate a change of subject or a break in time (such empty spaces, particularly rare in Tusquets’s novel, supply the sole means of organization in her and

by José Ortega y Gasset in *La deshumanización del arte* (1925) and *Ideas sobre la novela* (1925) and subsequently practiced by a dozen or so of his followers between 1926-1934” (28).

Breton's narratives). Mujica-Lainez's novel is the most traditional of the four works, and is the only one in which we find a very precise ordering of chapters. The organization of the narrative is very clear; we are always certain who speaks, where one character's thoughts end and another's begins, and what is happening at any given time. However, Mujica Lainez's style is baroque, with lengthy, convoluted sentences, within a novel which, like Chawaf's, is organized around the archetypal quest motif. The narrative itself is, like the sentences which form it, lengthy and convoluted, as multiple subplots and stories converge and diverge along the hero's route. Additionally, Mujica-Lainez incorporates a wide variety of magical and mythical creatures; if less free with his structure, he is perhaps the most free with his imagination, as he constantly brings together realistic characters, creatures and events with imaginary ones. Thus, we find in each of the novels elements which involve a certain "letting go" or freedom of expression, in form and/or content, which is necessary in creative fantasy if the unconscious is to make itself heard.

Jung teaches that when, in the process of analysis (the work of individuation), mythological motifs appear, they must be envisioned as "symbols dynamically activating and enabling the discovery of new possibilities" (*Man and His Symbols* 96). Additionally he states that "when [...] a distressing situation arises, the corresponding archetype will be constellated in the unconscious," and it will seek to make itself perceptible; "its passing over into consciousness is felt as an illumination, a revelation, or a 'saving idea'" (*Aspects of the Masculine* 14). Thus, the appearance of a particular archetypal image at any given time is not a haphazard occurrence, but rather this is the archetype needed at a given moment, the one which can "save" or heal. Following Jung, then, the appearance of

archetypal images and motifs in these narratives merits our attention, and the primary archetypal image shared by all four works is Mélusine, which is apparently the archetype that is most needed at the time. Why might that be the case?

In *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Jung reveals that the work of alchemists was itself an outward projection of the individuation process. Their work to unite opposites – active sulfur and passive salt – required mercury as a mediating element to bring about the harmonious union and achieve the production of gold: “the incorruptible One,” or the state of perfection of earthly matter (*Mysterium* 459). Jung recognized in this formula the symbolic union of opposites– conscious and unconscious – in a transcendental wholeness, a goal as elusive for the individual as it was for the alchemists. In their writings, they couched their obscure formulas in symbolic language, and frequently applied the symbol of Mercurius. This mythical mediator and guide of souls to and from the underworld presents a feminine softness, carries a caduceus with entwined snakes, and has winged feet, exemplifying “the full power of transcendence, whereby the lower transcendence from under-world snake consciousness, passing through the medium of earthly reality, finally attains transcendence to superhuman or transpersonal reality in its winged flight” (*Man and His Symbols* 156). His resemblance to Mélusine – half woman, half snake, and capable of flight– is certainly striking. In alchemical texts Mélusine is indeed associated with the androgynous figure of Mercurius, who symbolizes the initial chaos of the *prima materia*, as well as mediator in the alchemical process, and the *lapis philosophorum*, the end result, or the harmonious union of opposites.³⁴ Hillman explains

³⁴ Interestingly, although Jung relates that alchemists applied Mercurius (with his greater male aspect) to all three steps in the alchemical process – as the initial undifferentiated chaos, as mediator in the process of differentiation and the move toward harmonious union, and as the final perfected whole– the Mélusine-

the importance of the hermaphroditic image as related to the individuation process. If psychic healing requires the harmonious joining of consciousness with the unconscious, then the “hero with his sword of decision” is not an effective healing image; instead the psyche looks to the hermaphrodite, for “psychic hermaphroditism holds juxtapositions without feeling them as oppositions”(102). Mercurius and Mélusine break with binarisms; “nature is transformed by imaginative deformation, *physis* by *poeisis*” (102). These are thus *the* archetypal figures of healing, as they are “preposterous, unrealizable, nonliteral [images] from which singleness of meaning is organically banned [...], impossible in life and necessary in imagination” (102-03). Only by the guidance of such an image can the imagination and thus the psyche be freed to accomplish the healing process of individuation. Hillman explains the powerful and vital role of the archetypal image once it is fully realized through creative fantasy activity; once it is “fully imagined as a being other than myself, it becomes a *psychopompos*, a guide,” the pandemonium of images in the imagination congeals and becomes comprehensible through “this specific image which has come to me pregnant with significance and intention, a necessary angel as it appears here and now and which teaches the hand to represent it, the ear to hear, and the heart how to respond” (62). Mélusine is just such a *psychopompos* in the narratives I address here. In each of them it is important to notice that, just as there are variations in the manifestations of archetypes in dreams and myths, the representation of Mélusine varies considerably from one text to the next. In each, certain archetypal aspects of Mélusine are emphasized, downplayed, or eliminated altogether. This appears to be

type images appear to be more commonly associated with the beginning point – chaos, and with the soul of matter which must be “redeemed” (not surprising, if one recalls that alchemists were male).

linked not only to the author's individual goals in applying the myth to a unique narrative work, but also to the author's own gender and societal context, both of which must be taken into account. In spite of such variations, however, I argue that in each of the works, the role of Mélusine is central to the resolution of the crises they evoke: she takes on the role of *anima* figure, mediator or spiritual guide to aid in this task, on multiple levels. In the same way that Mélusine aids Raymondin and heals his "cognitive dismemberment" (Knapp 41), I propose that in all these works her role is ultimately to bring healing – to characters, authors, and societies.

Before undertaking detailed analyses of each individual novel and revealing how Mélusine is interpreted and applied within each (to be accomplished in subsequent chapters), I will first lay the necessary groundwork, in chapter 2, by examining various interpretations of Mélusine which pre-existed the four novels. This will involve a look at not only critical, but also certain literary representations that have emerged over time and among which I will need to situate those of her found within the four novels studied. I will show that perceptions and interpretations of Mélusine frequently involve or reflect particular conceptions of gender and that among the disparate notions regarding her "true" nature and meaning, as well as the multiple and varied means of depicting her, there runs a common thread – these are all ultimately tied in some way to issues involving gender relations and power – issues that will soon be revealed (in chapters 3-6) to play an important role in the application and treatment of Mélusine in the four narratives I examine.

Devoting a chapter to each author, I study the works chronologically, which should help the reader follow more effectively as historical events, circumstances and

societal changes are discussed. I will apply a similar structure to each of these four chapters. In each one, I will foreground my analysis with information regarding the societal context of each author, establishing aspects of the author's experience and concerns at the time of the writing of the work, as well as his/her societal context and own gendered role within that context. Such considerations are especially pertinent to an exploration of why Mélusine is represented the way she is and to establishing what precisely her purpose is within each specific narrative. Next I will turn to the work itself, exploring the role of Mélusine at the narrative level and examining the narrative as projection – one that enables the exploration of individual and collective crises and efforts toward resolution of these, as part of a process of both individual and collective individuation. It is important to note that Jungian theory not only applies to the individual, but to society as a whole. Just as Jung taught that the male individual must seek to access those qualities hidden in the *anima*, so does patriarchal society need to recognize and validate the feminine. He stressed the necessity of *Eros*, or interrelatedness, and the recognition of the collective shadow as being vital to preventing war and destruction (*Undiscovered Self* 57)³⁵. In the following paragraphs I briefly summarize a few of the observations I will develop as I explore the individual and societal crises which emerge in each individual novel.

³⁵ The ongoing relevance of Jung's theories can be seen in Dinnerstein's call to save our modern world from disaster. She insists that men must learn nurturance, and women must apply the "wisdoms and skills with which our female history has equipped us," adding "we may yet mobilize Eros [...] and turn the deathly tide" (195-96).

In chapter 3, I will examine *Arcane 17* (1944), André Breton's surrealist "anti-novel"³⁶ written while in exile during World War II. Throughout the narrative there looms the shadow of that war; Breton reflects upon its contributing factors, consequences, and solutions. He offers a message of hope to his suffering society, that times of darkness cannot endure, and that they ultimately serve a purpose, for only through death may rebirth and renewal take place. This message is brought forth in a cyclic story of death and rebirth in which Mélusine plays a central role, and in which he stresses the importance of psychic growth and healing through the individuation process and calls for a return of the feminine (linked to mother-love or relatedness, akin to Jung's *Eros*), which has been too-long rejected (represented symbolically by Mélusine, cast out of the world). This is the missing element that is needed to end war. We can recognize in Breton's writing a desire to access the feminine within, his own *anima*, as a means of developing his art and healing society. However, when he speaks of women themselves, we encounter a problematic attitude, in which, in an essentialist stance, he equates the feminine with woman, and expresses shock that women, endowed with feminine traits, were unable to stop the war. Expressing frustration at women's incapacity to make effective use of the feminine, Breton complicates what could have otherwise been seen as a positive desire to access and value his own feminine traits, when he calls upon artists like himself to "appropriate" the feminine (i.e. to take over what he considers a female's domain because of her ineffectiveness). Such an attitude devalues woman, as does the tendency of the Surrealists to place women "on a pedestal as a symbol of beauty and

³⁶ As mentioned above, Breton's narrative lacks the traditional elements of the novel, hence its frequent appellation under this term. The surrealists rejected traditional novelistic form, as it had long been applied in an effort to represent reality – an aim contrary to their own goals, involving efforts to attain a "sur-réalité," which they deemed superior.

perfection impossible to live up to” (Krell, “Between” 384). Following Jung, such deification results from an effort to cope with disturbing emotions – overwhelming desire and a sense of powerlessness – felt before the real woman (and the *anima* within): her objectification in a projection assembling all the most desirable feminine attributes creates in her an object worthy of worship and devotion, while there is a simultaneous devaluation, even demonization, of the real woman (*Aspects of the Feminine* 19-20). Mélusine is herself such an idealized projection – of Breton’s own *anima*. Tellingly, his Mélusine is a weak “child-woman” in need of union with the male Breton for her cry to be finally heard.

In chapter 4, I will examine *El unicornio* (1963), in which I propose that Mujica Lainez is voicing frustration with a modern society out of touch with spirituality and magic, inhibiting the manifestation of contents of the individual’s unconscious deemed “unacceptable” by that society, thus preventing the individual’s quest for inner peace and wholeness. While writing the novel, the author himself was leading a double life, outwardly an upper class family man, yet privately involved with a homosexual lover, a struggle which informs this text. His protagonist Airol must battle with an incestuous attraction, symbolic of the inner conflict involved in bringing together consciousness and repressed unconscious contents. I propose that the process whereby Airol and Azelaís are brought together in harmony in a celestial union represents this inner process through which Mujica Lainez has already passed, while Mélusine’s quest to manifest herself in the world throughout the novel is a projection of Mujica Lainez’ struggle to move to the next even more difficult step in individuation – bringing out into the open those aspects of the self which the individual has discovered.

In chapter 5, I will explore *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978) by Esther Tusquets. Tusquets writes shortly after the death of Franco, a time of reassessment and recovery after a long dictatorship from which she and her whole nation bear the scars. As Casado reminds us, she, like her protagonist, is facing a mid-life crisis and a failing marriage (15). It is fitting that Mélusine's child-woman counterpart Ondine is initially evoked in the novel. Here we encounter a woman's struggle for validation and empowerment as she attempts to emerge from a sense of victimization and alienation she has experienced for much of her life. Her experience can be seen as representative of that of many Spanish women of the time, long oppressed under the Francoist regime. I suggest that Clara, Elia's Ondine-like lover, transforms into the more powerful, nurturing Mélusine, assuming the role of spiritual guide. Casado explains that their relationship is "designed to heal the emotional scars of childhood on a personal level, while at the same time redressing the disequilibrium of the phallogentric, patriarchal universe from which the feminine principle has been ostracized" (99). It is Clara who enables Elia's stunted psychic development to begin anew. Thus, I contend that the myth of Mélusine is being used as a tool toward individuation. This implies a subversive stance, since reading myth, as Soliño has pointed out, was deemed inappropriate for little girls in Francoist Spain. She explains that girls during Tusquets (and Elia's) childhood were "protected" from myths – boys' terrain – and were only to read "pink" fairy tales, with happy endings, to maintain an "institutionally mandated cheerfulness" (51) and to encourage them to "live in a constant state of servile domestic fervor and to enjoy this fate" (49). Tusquets, then, is rejecting this state of affairs which served to prevent effective psychological growth, and now reclaims myth for women's benefit.

In chapter 6, I will analyze *Mélusine des détritrus* (2002) by Chantal Chawaf (Marie de la Montluel), in which the author repeatedly evokes Earth's victimization, growing sterility and looming death, events linked metaphorically to the physical state of her character, Mélusine, as she struggles with severe asthmatic crises. Mélusine's role is that of mediator – she speaks for Earth, providing us with a powerful warning of the impending doom and the urgency of halting the destruction before it is too late. By giving this role to a female character, Chawaf appears to agree with ecofeminists like Ynestra King, who recognize that the connection between women and nature places women in a “bridge-like position between nature and culture” (22). It is clear that Chawaf sees as a root of the ecological problem an absence of a sense of connection or interrelatedness; the breakdown of links to the past, to nature, and between humans recurs throughout the novel. Mélusine cries out against society's rejection of emotion and of women in preference for a sterile conformity. So in the struggle for ecological change, we hear echoes of the struggle for women's validation, and a questioning of the success of both. Chawaf views the dangerous absence of a sense of relatedness as directly resulting from patriarchal society's repression of women and devaluation of *Eros* – a problem brought up not only by Jung, but also by ecofeminists. Krell has examined the novel in light of Chawaf's earlier book, *Le Corps et le verbe: La Langue en sens inverse*, which reveals the presence of yet another disconnect – that of body and voice. He explains that Chawaf finds Biblical tradition at the root of this breakdown; by making the word flesh, flesh itself was cast aside, valueless (“*Mélusine*” 7). He suggests that for Chawaf, women are ultimately the hope for overcoming the divide and saving nature. Mélusine's lover, Jean, can be seen as representative of both man and humankind. Mélusine represents the *anima*

both rejected and desired by man, and also is Earth and thus mother of all humankind, whom we seek to dominate, yet with whom we must connect. Jean takes on a traditional archetypal heroic quest – his goal being to save Mélusine, and thus, by extension, the Earth. Applying a Jungian interpretation, his quest may be viewed as part of the process of individuation, in his effort to save the inner *anima*, which is necessary on both the personal and collective level.

In the final chapter, I will work across texts, calling special attention to divergences and commonalities which will have emerged from the exploration of the four novels. For instance, in the patriarchal aspect of the societies forming the background of all these works, one can recognize the neglect of the unconscious, the collective shadow, and the feminine, a dangerous, but all too common societal stance, as Jung observed. The same ambivalence toward woman and nature at play in the earliest literary version of Mélusine returns in more modern treatments and interpretations. Society's rejection and subjugation of woman, nature, and the body, its devaluation of feminine traits, especially nurturance and relatedness, and its neglect of the disruptive unconscious are problems, even today, and mark a destructive course, but at least they are all being roundly challenged. In these works, even if their endings throw doubt upon eventual success, we at least hear the emergence of the voice of the unconscious, the feminine, nature, the body, even woman herself, in the cry of Mélusine, refusing to be silenced, as she flies headlong into the obstacles before her.

CHAPTER 2

WHO IS MÉLUSINE?: AN EXPLORATION OF VIEWS REGARDING HER NATURE, ROLE, AND IMAGE

Enchanting beauty and flying serpent, nurturing mother and herald of death, fairy seer and advisor of knights, builder of castles and kingdoms, the multi-faceted Mélusine clearly invites exploration and analysis, yet efforts to categorically pin down her nature and identity are inevitably frustrated. Lecouteux has accurately dubbed her “la créature ambigüe par excellence” (11), and she appropriately makes her first literary appearance within a text every bit as elusive and enigmatic as she, one considered by Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox to be “a perfect example of what Roland Barthes would call [...] a writerly text, one whose obstinate resistance to interpretation compels us to engage the full range of our scholarly resources and interpretive faculties in the attempt to capture its essence, to master its mysteries” (3). The complexities and ambiguities to be found in this mythical creature and her story pose a welcome challenge to critics, but it comes as no surprise that the results of their analyses are sometimes contradictory. Both they and authors of narrative works present quite divergent views regarding who, or what, precisely Mélusine *is*, and/or represents. As I stated in Chapter 1, the four writers explored in this essay each depict and apply Mélusine within their works in quite different ways. The present chapter provides a look at various ways in which Mélusine has been perceived and interpreted over time within critical and literary works. This will provide a context within which to situate the interpretations of Mélusine that we find elaborated in the four modern narratives to be addressed. Throughout this discussion, it

will become evident that due to her diverse characteristics (some of which have been commonly associated with the feminine, others with the masculine), both critical analyses and narrative metamorphoses of the Mélusine myth tend to involve or reflect particular conceptions of gender. And whether Mélusine herself is perceived as goddess, demon, or agent of God, whether as threat, aid or victim, as child-woman, Great Mother, or androgyne we can identify a common thread in these interpretations, in that they are all ultimately tied in some way to issues involving gender relations and power, issues which will be shown in forthcoming chapters to be of significance within each of the four modern narratives, as well.

Miriam White-Le Goff has observed that neither Jean d'Arras nor Coudrette themselves seem to be entirely sure of what Mélusine's nature is; in their manuscripts they establish "*par petites touches tout ce que la belle étrangère n'est pas, en continuant de taire énigmatiquement sa nature réelle*" (36). She suggests that there are two explanations for the elusivity of Mélusine's identity as presented by the authors – one is that Jean d'Arras and Coudrette approach her as a real individual, whom they were unfortunately unable to meet.³⁷ They are thus incapacitated, unable to know her fully, or to pass on to the reader any more than they can ascertain from their sources. The second is the problematic identity of fairies in general during the Middle Ages, which has been addressed by a number of Mélusine's critics. As Sara Sturm –Maddox points out, medieval responses to the "*merveilleux*" are typically ambiguous, and Mélusine "*admirably embodies*" this reaction. (138). Fairies in particular inspired ambivalent

³⁷ As we saw in chapter 1, both authors firmly and frequently attest to the veracity of the story they recount.

responses, descending as they do from pagan mythology and lore, yet emerging at a time when the Catholic Church was growing in power.

In *Les Fées au Moyen Age*, Laurence Harf-Lancner traces the development of fairies in the European imaginary, and explains that they arose from a blending of certain beings which have their origin in Greco-Roman mythology. One of these is the *Tria Fata* or Three Fates, from whom fairies gain their name and prophetic abilities. She explains that the cult of the three Fates persisted in roman Gaul and became associated with Celtic tutelary mother goddesses, which commonly appeared in triads. Pierre Gallais, in his own examination of the origins of fairies, stresses that the *Fata* linked nicely with these “Matrones” who were considered protectors of communities, families, or even individuals, and who provided wealth and healing and watched over newborns (13). Another influence is the nymph – and it is from her that fairies inherited their erotic aspect.³⁸ Harf-Lancner indicates that from these two figures there gradually emerged in folklore the “fata” or “maîtresse du destin des hommes [...] liée au culte de la fertilité et de l’abondance” and who visited homes by night to collect the offerings of those who sought her favor (76), and ladies of the forest, “divinités sylvestres ou aquatiques,” who engaged in romantic relations with lucky humans (38). As early as the year 1000, texts written by Christian clerics were criticizing beliefs in these beings, of pagan, thus, in their view, demonic origin.³⁹ But as Lecouteux points out, “malgré les anathèmes de l’Eglise, le Moyen Age a recherché la faveur des fées et leur amour ” (11).

³⁸ Harf-Lancner credits Alfred Maury with first recognizing this dual heritage in his book *Les Fées du Moyen Age*, Paris, 1843.

³⁹ Harf-Lancner provides us the text of the *Decretum* of Burchard, Bishop of Worms, which dates to the year 1000, and which is “un admirable catalogue de survivances des cultes païens dans le monde occidental

In the 12th century, the fairy emerged as a distinct supernatural creature as a result of the work of authors writing for the pleasure of the aristocracy at a time in which the marvelous already present in folktales made its way into literature and the “*matière de Bretagne*” came into vogue (*Les Fées* 25). These vernacular texts more fully elaborated and delineated the traits of fairies, and they present fairies in quite favorable terms; in fact, they are commonly shown as emblematic of courtly, chivalric ideals. Harf-Lancner suggests that it is precisely because of their distance from the clerical world that fairy themes, which came to be “*ancrés dans le système de representations de l’aristocratie chevaleresque,*” were used to express secular values, set in opposition to dominant Christian ones (*Le Monde des fées* 22). Certainly the desire of members of the aristocracy to claim fairy ancestors, which, as we have seen is a primary factor in the composition of Jean d’Arras’s and Coudrette’s works, ran counter to the teachings of the Church. But, as Harf-Lancner points out, “*les lignages ambitieux qui se donnent une fée pour ancêtre sont beaucoup plus sensibles à la gloire d’une affiliation surnaturelle qu’au caractère inquiétant d’un merveilleux païen*” (*Les Fées* 172). She adds that the fairy supernatural was drawn upon as a means of lending a “*caractère héroïque et sacré*” to chivalric society (218). Mélusine appears to be a case in point. And, in reference to a middle and lesser aristocracy eager to expand its influence, and whom they see represented by Raymondin, LeGoff and Le Roy Ladurie state: “*Voilà l’instrument de leur ambition: la fée; Mélusine apporte à la classe chevaleresque terres, châteaux, villes, lignage*” (601). It appears

du premier âge féodal;” it is here that we find not only references to the Parques (or fata), but also the earliest known references to the “*femmes de la forêt,*” which clearly indicates their existence in the folklore of the period (23-24). Burchard writes of them in order to criticize and chastise those who engage in pagan “*demonic*” practices by making offerings to or even believing in such creatures.

evident that the fairy in general, and Mélusine in particular, serve as tools at both the societal and narrative levels.

According to Harf-Lancner, there were two types of fairies which emerged in the 12th century vernacular texts, linked to the two folkloric types already identified above, and both of which present images “variées et parfois contradictoires de la féminité” (*Le Monde des fées* 22). These are the “fairy godmother” and “fairy lover” type fairies.⁴⁰ Fairy godmothers oversee the destiny of individuals from birth, and are closely linked to both fertility and death, while fairy lovers provide love, wealth, and offspring to their human consort. In spite of divergences in their role and powers, fecundity and abundance are linked to fairies of both categories (*Le Monde des fées* 22). Harf-Lancner further indicates that blending of the two types was common in literary works of the Middle Ages (*Les Fées* 42). White-Le Goff agrees and explains that, generally speaking, fairy lovers exhibit maternal traits in their care of the man they love, and when they take him into their fairy realm, this place is presented as a paradisiacal womb (169-70).⁴¹ She considers Mélusine to exemplify the combination of fairy lover and fairy godmother, as she fulfills all of her beloved’s needs, desires and aspirations (73). Death, too, is often evoked in relation to fairies; whether Avalon, where Mélusine resides prior to her marriage, or in underground dwellings, Harf Lancner reminds us, “le monde des fées est aussi le monde des morts” (73), and entrance into it implies death to this world. In fairies’

⁴⁰ Harf-Lancner has further subdivided fées amantes into two types, the “mélusiniennes” et the “morganiennes,” the difference being that the Mélusine type joins her lover to live in the human realm (albeit conditionally – requiring the maintenance of a pact), whereas the Morgane type takes her lover away with her to her own fairy realm. This division provides the organizing principle of her book *Les Fées au Moyen Age*, as its subtitle *Morgane et Mélusine, la naissance des fées*, makes clear.

⁴¹ In Jungian terms, this would represent a return to the unconscious – the “mother” of the conscious mind, both desired and feared, hence a simultaneous link with death also revealed by Harf-Lancner.

association with fertility, abundance, motherhood and death, they exhibit traits of the Mother Goddess, who, according to Gimbutas, is always linked simultaneously with “(1) birth-giving, life promotion, and regeneration, and (2) life-giving and life-taking, or death” (29) and thus incorporates the archetypes of both Great and Terrible mother to whom we were introduced in chapter 1. Jean Markale states that Mélusine is “au fond la Mère Primordiale” (18). Certainly her associations with fertility, abundance and the maternal are evident in the great prosperity and multiple offspring she engenders, along with her devotion to her children and all her descendents. Yet a “terrible” aspect can be seen in her command to end the life of one of her sons who poses a threat, and in her eternal task as herald of death.

Both fairies and the Mother Goddess are closely associated with nature; White-Le Goff observes that “la puissance féerique est ancrée dans la nature” (43-44), and Walter explains that Mother Earth is incarnated in territorial goddesses, which were later designated by the Middle Ages as fairies (13). As we have seen in chapter 1, Mélusine’s relationship to the land as a Poitevin territorial goddess was at play in the very composition of Jean d’Arras’ romance.⁴² She also has a particular connection to water – not only does her transformation take place in it, but her first meeting with Raymondin occurs beside a spring. Gallais has addressed the close affinity of goddesses with water which stems from the fact that water is necessary for all life, it is “la matière primordiale” which makes fertile and nourishes; thus it is “un résumé de Nature : féminine, maternelle, bénéfique, salutaire” (9). Walter explains that springs were believed to contain the sacred

⁴² As explained by Morris in “Origines;” see p. 3 of the present essay.

soul of the mother goddess or later the fairy (29),⁴³ and White-Le Goff stresses the spring as place of mediation – marking the intersection of two worlds, the supernatural and the human – since the water flows from one world into another (44),⁴⁴ an appropriate place of dwelling for fairies, since they are beings “mi-chemin entre le surnaturel et l’humain” (Markale 19). So her dwelling beside a spring affords us further evidence of Mélusine’s goddess aspect. It is also of note that she appears there with two other women, likely her sisters, in a triad, as is typical of goddesses in the Celtic tradition, as mentioned above.

Mélusine’s critics generally agree with Le Goff and Le Roy Ladurie that Mélusine can be recognized as “l’avatar médiéval d’une déesse mère, comme une fée de la fécondité” (“Mélusine maternelle” 604), a view that Markale considers “incontestable” (13). Gallais finds that Mélusine’s story evokes nostalgia for a goddess in the process of being replaced as “l’imaginaire de la femme, sous pression du christianisme, subit de profondes mutations” and observes that Jean d’Arras’s romance “ne fait que prolonger les intuitions du mythe de la déesse-mère” (31).

The mutations in conceptions of woman to which Gallais here refers involve changing attitudes toward both Mary and Eve within the Catholic Church. Gallais reminds us that the 12th century emergence of fairies coincides with that of the cult of Mary. He adds that this is unsurprising at a time in which Christianity, although growing in popularity, encountered resistance to its excessive “masculinity”: “c’est certainement sous la poussée du peuple que les ‘grand clercs’ ont dû [...] réintroduire l’élément

⁴³ Walter adds that Christianity re-appropriated these sacred places, associating them with Mary, which explains the multitude of pilgrimages made to springs in her honor even today (29-30).

⁴⁴ And let us not forget Knapp’s Jungian view of Mélusine’s spring as bringing into contact two worlds – those of the conscious and unconscious mind – as discussed in chapter 1.

féminin et maternel, magnifié mais toujours mineur” (15).⁴⁵ In this way they could redirect veneration of the Mother Goddess and her avatars toward the ideal, albeit not fully divine, Mary, yet some of this veneration continued to be projected onto fairies (15). Gallais explains that in the popular imaginary, in spite of clerics’ designation of them as demons, fairies retained traits associated with angels, over whom they were generally preferred; a fairy was perceived as a “doublet moins éthéré” who seemed closer to themselves, less “lofty” or condescending (14). Representations of fairies resembled Mary images with their ethereal beauty and elegant attire, and even if, as Gallais concedes, the more earthy fairies appeared immodest, even monstrous, in comparison, they continued to serve as an “alternative populaire à la Vierge” (15). They shared this problematic comparison with the “perfect” Mary with their human female counterparts, who also appeared hopelessly flawed in comparison.

It is enlightening to consider that the image of Mary as elaborated by the Church during the Middle Ages differs from the Mother Goddess not only in her limited power, but also in the absence of any sense of threat proceeding from her. Mary comforts; she does *not* inspire fear in the heart of men. And, as we learn from Jung, the Mary image, as developed by male powers within the Church, involves the objectification and projection of woman and the interior *anima* onto an image of feminine “perfection” in an effort to rationalize and reduce the unpleasant sense of vulnerability and fear they inspire in

⁴⁵ He adds that the development of “courtoisie,” was another result of this “réaction de l’*anima* occidentale,” and explains that within this tradition, troubadours sang of ladies with qualities closely linked to the fairy and applied to them a similar constellation of images “qui associe[nt] la belle jeune femme aux éléments naturels les plus bénéfiques, renforçant mutuellement leur symbolisme” (15).

man.⁴⁶ The unfortunate result is a demonization of the real woman. Jung points out that this process is at play in the increase in witch hunts which occurred in conjunction with growing Mariolatry in the later Middle Ages (*Aspects of the Feminine* 19-20). His observations agree with those presented by Le Goff in his discussion of attitudes toward women during the Middle Ages. Le Goff cites fellow historian Georges Duby, who characterizes this period as “mâle, résolument,” yet finds in their writings that, although men were convinced of their superiority over women, “ils ont peur d’elles, et, pour se rassurer, les méprisent” (qtd. in *Une histoire du corps* 58). This fear before woman arises from a sense of powerlessness before the unknown or at least the not fully comprehensible. Harf- Lancner observes that fairies, too, disturb due to the inability of humans to fully comprehend *them*: “les fées [...] renvoient à une réalité qui suscite l’incompréhension, donc l’inquiétude” (*Le Monde des fées* 13). It is unsurprising, then, that ambiguous fairies predominantly appear as female creatures and ultimately “incarnent, dans l’imagination des hommes du Moyen Age, bien des fantasmes liés à la féminité” (Harf-Lancner, *Le Monde des fées* 19). Miriam White-Le Goff asserts that fairies incarnate more specifically “tout le potentiel effrayant de la sexualité féminine” for it, like the world of fairies, presents “un autre monde inquiétant” (184).⁴⁷ Harf-Lancner observes that the two types of fairy lovers – those like Morgane, who seduces and steals her lover away to dwell forever in her realm, and those like Mélusine, who instead live as “normal” women within the lover’s own world, represent “en un couple

⁴⁶ This is the same process at work in the Surrealist’s idealization of women as mentioned in chapter 1, and as will be further discussed in chapter 3 regarding Breton’s *Arcane 17*.

⁴⁷ White le Goff also reminds that “l’homme et la femme sont l’un pour l’autre, dans une certaine mesure, un autre monde” (83). She suggests that the differences and distance between Mélusine and Raymondin evoke this struggle faced by all couples (83).

antithétique le régime diurne et le régime nocturne des images de la féminité, la femme aux deux visages dont bercent les rêves” (*Le Monde des fées* 240). But certainly, as Metka Zupančič points out, in Mélusine herself we find the confrontation of these dual images, for as supernatural, beneficent power, yet possible incarnation of evil, as “she who is feared,” yet “she who is needed,” Mélusine assembles characteristics that “nourrissent l’imaginaire depuis des siècles, sinon des millénaires, au sujet de la femme en général, et qui marquent en quelque sorte un grand nombre de stéréotypes contre lesquels s’est révolté le féminisme contemporain” (227).

Although the elevation of Mary during the Middle Ages might appear to signal a somewhat positive attitude toward woman in her role as nurturing mother, following Gallais, we can recognize in her “improved” status and in the development of fairies themselves what are essentially remnants of the dying cult of the Mother Goddess, whose position and power have been subsumed under the authority of God the Father. Walter indicates that the transgression of the pact between fairies and mortals, so central to melusinian tales, replays the transition from feminine to masculine power and authority:

Pouvoir masculin et pouvoir féminin s’y affrontent radicalement autour de la question d’une loi. Le mythe mélusinien raconte [...] la défaite d’un matriarcat original et le passage des sociétés au stade patriarcal. L’interdit permettait à la femme d’avoir autorité sur son époux [...] ; dès qu’[il] transgresse l’interdit, le pouvoir des hommes reprend le dessus et élimine le pouvoir féminin. (221)

Marina Brownlee appears to agree, finding in Mélusine an example of “the earth-mother who is eventually displaced by the sky-father who appears in more advanced

societies” (229). She applies here Northrop Frye’s observation that maternal myths are believed to precede the sky-father myths, for the former, arising as they do from an earth-centered view of creation as sexual and involving the cyclic emergence of new life and subsequent death, were “more appropriate for an agricultural society ”and the latter, espousing an artificial creation by a distant, non-maternal higher intelligence, were more so “for the patriarchal, tool-bearing society that came later” (112, qtd. in M. Brownlee 229). Frye adds that “the artificial myth won out in our tradition, and the lower world became demonized, the usual fate of mythological losers” (112).

In melusinian tales, such demonization accompanies the earth-mother’s fall from power, as seen in Mélusine’s serpentine appearance as she flies away. In the Church, not only fairies, but also Eve underwent satanization. Jean Markale has discussed Mélusine in relation to both Eve and Mary, referring to her as “une Vierge Marie d’avant la récupération” (19),⁴⁸ for if Mélusine, in her beauty and piety, shares certain aspects with Mary (whom Markale considers a “bonne fée” devoid of any dark side or sexual aspect), she continues to share in the earthy “imperfections” of Eve. Even though she swears, upon first meeting Raymondin, that she is “part of God’s scheme” and believes “everything that a good catholic should believe” (Arras/Morris 97), Mélusine cannot escape the persistent perception of the existence of a “face noire de la féerie, luxurieuse et diabolique” (Harf-Lancner, *Le Monde des fées* 91). This conception stems from the Church’s interpretation of fairies, undoubtedly influenced by those fears experienced by men before woman, discussed above. Nor could women escape being affected by the

⁴⁸ According to Le Goff, Markale’s assessment of Mélusine here echoes that of the people of the Middle Ages who also saw in her “une sorte d’Eve qui n’aurait pas été rachetée” (*Héros et merveilles* 148).

dark side they were perceived to have, represented in the figure of Eve, whose image became particularly tarnished with the re-interpretation of original sin undertaken in the Middle Ages. Le Goff explains that theologians began to equate the consumption of the apple with copulation (*Une histoire du corps* 54). When original sin was made a sexual sin, Eve's crime was interpreted not as one of seeking greater knowledge, but rather as the seduction of Adam to seek fleshly pleasure – she became a lustful temptress. This teaching was central to the Middle Ages becoming “l'époque du grand renoncement du corps” (37).⁴⁹ The flesh-spirit divide placed Eve, (along with the goddess/fairy, and by extension all women) on the side of flesh and nature,⁵⁰ conceived of as negative, even evil, for they distract from the spiritual. However, Adam (and men) were placed on the side of spirit, which was associated with godliness, knowledge, reason, and culture, and was deemed superior.⁵¹

Anita Guerreau-Jalabert finds this opposition at work in pre-melusinian and melusinian texts. She observes that in the Latin clerical texts, the authors take the orthodox Christian position that makes the flesh “intrinsèquement lié au démoniaque (120),” and notes that in them, husband and wife are separated by a secret that involves the flesh. She explains: “Femme et chair constituent les deux faces d'une même réalité, qui est aussi celle du diabolique et du péché originel” (Guerreau-Jalabert 121). Markale

⁴⁹ Although, as we will see, this break from the body had certain negative results, particularly for women, Le Goff observes that this rejection goes hand in hand with the development of civilization and corresponds to man's efforts to distance himself from his own animality (*Une histoire du corps* 22).

⁵⁰ Today's ecofeminists like Ynestra King observe that the woman-nature link continues, with negative ramifications for both. She recognizes that this link is influenced by males' innate recognition that they are “born of women and are dependent upon nonhuman nature for existence,” a frightening situation which has led to their objectification by men and efforts to appropriate and dominate them both (22).

⁵¹ For many critics, a key aspect of Mélusine is her refusal to respect this divide, a point to which we will soon return.

agrees. He considers the taboo Raymondin must not violate – that of not truly seeing Mélusine’s body – to be in essence a prohibition to maintain hidden “la réalité sexuelle de la femme” (238). Guerreau-Jalabert adds that in such tales, the desire for the fairy/woman’s flesh is also linked to *all* earthly (and negative, since opposed to spiritual) desires, including the riches and worldly power she offers — so highly valued by the aristocracy against which these texts set themselves (120-21) .

Certainly, as LeGoff and Le Roy Ladurie have observed, there was no ambiguity in the early Latin texts, the *exempla* which present us an as-yet-un-named Mélusine: “Pour tous elle est un démon succube, une fée assimilée aux anges déchus ” (“Mélusine maternelle” 598). And in fact Harf-Lancner points out that *all* fairies were considered by the clergy, following St. Augustine, to be demonic succubes “qui incitent les hommes à succomber au péché de chair” (*Le Monde des fées* 175). Guerreau -Jalabert observes that Gervais de Tilbury’s tale, which (as we have seen in chapter 1, provides the framework for Jean d’Arras’s narrative) is a “réflexion sur le péché originel” which additionally evokes St. Augustine’s teachings regarding the evils of metamorphosis which he considered “œuvre des femmes et des démons” (119). However, in vernacular lays and romances, the flesh is rehabilitated and courtly love plays a central theme: “l’amour charnel perd alors son caractère diabolique; il est valorisé pour lui-même et présenté comme une sorte de moteur du progrès spirituel” (112), since the knight aims to perfect himself to merit his lady’s love.⁵² Guerreau- Jalabert considers the ambiguous

⁵² The valorization of the flesh by the feudal aristocracy is unsurprising as its power is based in great part upon lineage, thus sexual reproduction. It was forced to wrestle with the Church (linked to the “superior” spirit and ascetism) for authority over the people, thus the overall societal structure was affected by the flesh-spirit divide, as Guerreau-Jalabert emphasizes in her article.

representation of fairies in lays and romances to be intentional – one might also say inevitable – since they pull together so many oppositions, presented as Christian beings, yet unorthodox, supernatural ones, “pourvues de pouvoirs ‘magiques’ à connotation diabolique, tout en étant de parfaites aristocrates” and who use their beauty, riches and powers to aid, even regulate, courtly society (114). She reminds us that Jean d’Arras’s text is a hybrid, drawing from both Latin and vernacular tradition.⁵³ Although Mélusine fits neatly into the 12th century vernacular description of fairies as beautiful, noble, even Christian ladies who uphold courtly ideals,⁵⁴ this 14th century text presents a unique case in that Mélusine is not without sin; she is marked by her crime against her father and her resultant transformation into a half-serpent, an outward representation of Mélusine’s “dark” side. Harf-Lancner reminds that although her half-serpent form links her to ancient chthonic cults for whom the serpent carried positive connotations (they were associated with fertility and immortality, for instance), we must bear in mind that in the Christian imaginary, the serpent was “l’avatar du démon” (198). However, Guerreau-Jalabert insists that Mélusine “n’est pas un diable,” and she considers this refusal of Jean d’Arras to demonize Mélusine to be in keeping with the typical refusal in romances to link chivalrous heroes to a diabolical origin (130). The critic also holds that Mélusine’s place of origin, Avalon, although a supernatural world, is “clairement pas diabolique” (129), and thus discounts this as marking Mélusine in a negative way.

⁵³ Kevin Brownlee observes that hybridity is a constant in literary works of the 14th and 15th centuries, and sees Mélusine herself “as a figure for the overtly and problematically hybrid poetics of the late Middle Ages” (77).

⁵⁴ Guerreau-Jalabert is quick to admit that not all fairies of the vernacular tradition are good, yet their “evil” is more to be found in their failure to conform to chivalric codes and virtues, not religious ones, so they are not deemed “diabolical.” They are also exceptions to the rule and do not alter the generally positive view of fairies presented within such texts (115).

And yet, Mélusine's mother Présine daily shows her daughters the distant Scotland and complains of the "great misery" into which they have all been cast as a result of their father's betrayal (Arras/Morris 69). Further, when cursing Mélusine, Présine warns her that if her own future husband should betray her by viewing her transformed body, "tu retourneras ou tourment de devant, sans fin, tant que le Hault Juge tendra son siege" ("you will return to your previous torment without respite until that day that the Great Arbiter sits in judgment") (70-71). One is thus forced to wonder with Sara Sturm-Maddox, if the "misery" to which Mélusine's mother warns her she will return if betrayed by Raymondin is synonymous with the fairy state; does "misery" equate with having "a nature whose status is unambiguously malefic within the sphere of divine justice? [...] [I]s 'being a fairy' itself [...] some kind of curse?" ("Configuring alterity" 133).⁵⁵ She suggests that the answer is yes, following Harf-Lancner who proposes that Raymondin's betrayal "la met au pouvoir du demon; c'est affirmer l'emprise du diable sur le merveilleux féerique" (*Les Fées* 174-75, qtd in Sturm Maddox, "Configuring Alterity" 138), and of course, the fairy realm includes Avalon, from which Mélusine so desperately wants to escape.

In exploring Mélusine's nature, we must consider a factor distancing her from other fairies – she is not fully fairy, but rather half-human from birth, and the crux of her story is found in her desire to become fully human and rid herself of her supernatural quality, which seems to mark her so strongly (she particularly seeks to become mortal). Mélusine's fairy half almost completely overshadows her human one, a problem which

⁵⁵ Sturm-Maddox here echoes the musing of Le Goff and Le Roy Ladurie: "Le christianisme offre-t-il à Mélusine une chance de salut ou la damne-t-il inévitablement?" (594), a question to which they did not hazard a response.

has been explored by Douglas Kelly. He observes that while Mélusine and her sisters are more heavily marked by their mother's fairy nature, Mélusine's sons, although often demonstrating an unusual prowess as knights, do not exhibit her magical abilities and are considered fully human and mortal. Kelly explains that this seeming discrepancy or double standard arises from medieval beliefs regarding "blood" and "seed." While a father's seed produces daughters,⁵⁶ they cannot, as male sons do, transmit that seed, so the influence of the mother's (in this case fairy) blood is dominant, although they retain a degree of the father's humanity which over time will gain in strength, and eventually dominate their nature, a process Kelly calls the "patrilinear effect" (42). And in fact, Présine, as she metes out their punishments which will interrupt it, reveals to Mélusine that this process had already been underway within them: "la vertu du germe de ton pere, toy et les autres, eust attrait a sa nature humaine, et eussies esté briefment hors des meurs nimphes et faees sans y retourner" ("your mortal descent from your father's side, without doubt, drew you and your sisters towards his human nature. You would have been subject to supernatural law – that of nymphs and fairies – for only a short time, never to return to it") (Arras/Morris 70-71). Melusine's sons, on the other hand, even if they bear the physical mother marks which inscribe their descendency from her (for example the patch of mole fur on Fromont's face or Geoffroy's tusk-like tooth), they belong from the very beginning to humanity, for they transmit their father's human lineage (42). This situation seems to demonstrate an underlying belief that the power of the male is greater, for Mélusine's sons are not at risk of their mother's fairy nature ever becoming the

⁵⁶ LeGoff notes that the assumption that the male's seed is alone responsible for fecundation is due to the flawed science of the Middle Ages, which ignored the existence of ovulation. This belief also contributed to the prevalent notion that only men, and not women, were *truly* created in the image of God. (*Une histoire du corps* 58)

dominant in their make-up. And when on the occasion of Mélusine's birth and of Raymondin's betrayal "the patrilinear effect, through which they might acquire humanity, is interrupted [. . .], the fault is with the husband – with Hélinas and with Raymondin, because each breaks his vow" (41).⁵⁷ This clearly aligns with Walter's observation regarding the vow as indicative of the imposition of feminine power, and its transgression as the fall of the female *from* power. Yet we might also observe that Mélusine's need for a male in order to attain full humanity (which translates to "full spirituality," since the goal of "full humanity" is to die a Christian death and attain eternal life in paradise) reflects commonly held conceptions of females put forth by the Church at the time. According to LeGoff, women were considered weak, both spiritually and physically, and it was only with the help of a male to oversee and train her that this flawed being might manage to lead a godly life (*Une Histoire du corps* 57). Could Raymondin's failure in this respect explain God's anger as expressed by Mélusine?: "Je ne puis plus demourer avec vous, car il ne plait pas a Dieu, pour le meffait que vous avez fait" ("I can no longer remain with thee, for such is not the will of God; 'tis because of thy transgression") (602-03). As Sturm-Maddox points out, this "explanation" only leaves us with more questions – who is actually being punished here? Mélusine or Raymondin? And on whose authority? – Présine's (the one who issued Mélusine's curse to begin with), or that of God himself? It is also of vital importance to consider this: if the fairy realm is under the sign of the demonic, how can Mélusine know the mind of God? Is she good or evil? Sturm-Maddox agrees with Harf-Lancner regarding the problematic serpent's tail, which

⁵⁷ Although Présine lays the blame for the interruption of the paternal effect upon Mélusine and her sisters, had their father not betrayed their mother, they would not have harmed him in any way, thus I agree with Kelly that ultimately the blame lies with their father.

inscribes a *further* hybridity; by that tail “she comes to embody [...] the fairy other and the monstrous other [...], [and] monsters were frequently portrayed as an incarnation of evil” (131).

Even so, Sturm Maddox considers it difficult to sustain the argument that Jean d’Arras considers Mélusine to be by nature evil in light of her own immediate assurance of Raymondin of her Christian beliefs, her later pious works, and her repeated exhortations given to her sons to always uphold the laws of God and the Church.⁵⁸ Sturm-Maddox reminds us that only once in the entire narrative is Mélusine accused of being evil – and by her own husband Raymondin in an instance “immediately qualified by the narrator as a result of his own fury” (131). Most, although not all, critics agree with Sturm-Maddox that Mélusine is by nature good and/or godly. Although calling attention to Mélusine’s crime as distancing her from the earlier benevolent and perfect courtly fairies, Guerreau-Jalabert stresses the intent involved in Mélusine’s crime – she punished her father believing she was acting in her mother’s best interest, and thus it is not an evil act. Lecouteux agrees: “Le but de l’auteur est clair : la fée [Mélusine] n’est pas un être diabolique ; elle est victime d’une malédiction ” (19). LeGoff and Le Roy Ladurie find her to be distanced from her precursors in the *exempla* by the fact that, serpent though she may be, she is presented as a touching victim (598). Markale observes: “il n’y a,

⁵⁸Marina Brownlee points out that the most important such exhortation occurs at the vital midpoint of the romance, when Mélusine advises her sons Antoine and Renaud at length before their departure, stressing the values she deems most worthy to live by, which are those dictated by the teachings of the Church. M. Brownlee observes that it is here evident that Mélusine “affirms the omnipotence of God [...] implicitly but clearly presenting her world [and abilities] as totally subservient to His”(234-35). M. Brownlee stresses that since midpoints traditionally serve to illuminate both reader and hero, we are here “meant to understand the greater importance of Mélusine’s Christian – rather than supernatural – identity” (235).

apparemment, rien de sulfureux autour du personnage de Mélusine. Le diable, pourtant si familier de ce siècle, n'y pointe jamais le bout de son oreille monstrueuse" (15).

Perhaps her staunchest defender is Laurence de Looze who finds that Mélusine repeats the "Christian New Covenant or New Law: a law of love, written in the flesh of the heart and not of stone," recalling the Biblical admonition that "the letter kills, whereas the Spirit vivifies" (130). He finds that Mélusine recalls teachings of St. Augustine, well-known by writers of the time, that under the New Covenant, one's intentions are always weighed. Thus by protecting Raymondin from reprisal after he accidentally kills his uncle, and by charitably taking no action when Raymondin initially breaks his vow, she is acting in accordance with the New Covenant; essentially, then "the half-serpent Mélusine becomes the sign of the New Law" (133). Yet his anger upon learning of Geoffroy's burning of the monks and his brother within Mallezais causes him to lose control, and he accuses her of being an Old Testament demon. At that moment, he condemns her forever to that very status, while actually revealing *himself* to be following Old Testament Law – equating her serpent's body with evil, regardless of her positive attributes and intentions or her charitable and noble works. De Looze also points out that this return to Old Testament Law is instigated by a fratricide, reminiscent of the Old Testament Cain and Abel, and that Mélusine's footprint left etched in the window from which she leaps "leaves behind a text that alludes to Raymondin's return to a law written in stone" (133). He explains that because Raymondin refuses to recognize Mélusine as a "sign of God," he loses Mélusine eternally, just as any man who refuses God's teachings will lose Him. Even as Mélusine leaves, she forgives Raymondin and asks for God to forgive him as

well; words which make of her, as Sturm-Maddox puts it “an exemplar of Christian charity” (“Configuring Alterity” 134).

And yet, there is no escaping the shadow hanging over such conceptions of Mélusine as saintly agent of God. As Harf-Lancner points out, although it is clear Jean d’Arras wishes to remove from Mélusine “tout élément diabolique, [il] n’y réussit que partiellement” (177), how can one overlook the bizarre deformities of her sons which evoke “leur origine monstrueuse” (177)? And what of that serpentine tail, since, as Françoise Clier-Colombani reminds us, the serpent has been “la métaphore du Mal depuis l’épisode de Génèse”? (183). Her final flight, too is problematic, for although angels flew, demons were also considered creatures of air. Walters adds that both Mélusine’s transformation and her flight evoke behaviors associated in the Middle Ages with witches. Even Raymondin’s peeking upon her through a hole in a wooden door repeats a practice believed useful for recognizing witches in disguised form – their true form was revealed if one bored a hole in a piece of wood and looked through it (Walter 170).

Some critics have rejected Mélusine’s assurances of her Christian beliefs, accusing her of deception and proposing that we should instead believe Raymondin’s words when he finally accuses Mélusine of being demonic, a stance which, it must be noted, also discounts the trustworthiness of Jean d’Arras’s narrator, for just prior to his furious outburst and betrayal, Mélusine speaks to him of Geoffroy’s crime, and the narrator states: “si scet bien qu’elle lui dit voir de quanqu’elle lui avoit dit, et que c’est le meilleur selon raison. Mais il fu si treseperciez et outrez de yre que raison naturelle s’en estoit fuye de lui” (“he knew in his heart that she was speaking the truth, that her words

were filled with wisdom, but he was so enraged that all reason had left him” (596-97).⁵⁹ These words equating rage with an absence of reason would appear to align nicely with Elisabeth Pinto-Mathieu’s reminder that writers of the time were familiar with the teaching of Gregory the Great that “la colère est la mère de l’injure” (199). Certainly this, too, would incline one to doubt the veracity of the contents of Raymondin’s outburst. However, if Coudrette’s version is consulted, the Devil is indeed evoked in relation to Mélusine, and by Mélusine herself, just before she leaves forever: “Encore mes t’ay ge soufferte/ De ce qu’en mon baign tu me veys,/ Pour ce qu’a nulle ne le deys./ L’ennemy ne le savoit pas,/ mais si tost que revelé l’as/ L’a sceü si te mescherroyt,/ Si mon corps o toy demourroyt.” (“I had endured before your/ having spied me in my bath,/ Because you told of it to no one./ The devil did not know it, then./ But as you revealed it,/ he knew it, and it would bode ill for you / If I were to remain with you” (314-15).

Gabrielle M. Spiegel insists that Raymondin’s betrayal and cursing of Mélusine as a “très fausse serpente” expresses a “logic born of despair” (112), and Stephen G. Nichols agrees: “Raymondin’s anger leads to insight: he immediately links Geoffroy’s fratricide to Mélusine’s demonic origin” (145). Both critics propose that, until this point, Mélusine, as demon, has continually distracted Raymondin (and most others) from seeing clearly. Spiegel points out a problematic lack of reaction to disturbing occurrences, for instance, their sons’ birth with bizarre mother marks “which might logically have aroused suspicions of diabolical forces at work,” and Horrible’s killing of two nurses while still

⁵⁹ K. Brownlee has pointed out the inconsistency (even irony) in Raymondin’s words issued in the midst of his own furious outburst – in claiming Geoffroy’s murder of Fromont to be a result of demonic influence, his own words imply that he has more in common with his own son than Mélusine herself (87). In Morris’ translation we find this essentially self-accusatory statement: “Fromont [is] [...] a victim of demonic conjuring, for all those rendered mad by anger are in the power of the princes of Hell” (Jean d’Arras 599).

an infant seem to go unnoticed by everyone until Mélusine herself orders his death (102). Nichols stresses that Mélusine's repetitive production of progeny and fortresses, as well as her "authoritative managing of Raymondin's life, has been "a blind, an illusion to distract him from turning his gaze on her and her progeny" (147). However, Jean-Jacques Vincensini, quite to the contrary, asserts that Raymondin *is* aware of his wife's supernatural abilities, since we are told upon their first meeting that he is "stunned" by her extraordinary powers, her inexplicable knowledge of his name and of all that has happened to him; this critic posits that due to his powerful desire for her, Raymondin actively chooses to ignore signs of her supernatural origins: Raymondin "se satisfait de la méconnaissance et de l'ambiguïté" ("Samedi" 85). But, whether chosen or imposed, Raymondin does, in any case, accuse his wife of being demonic; he now acknowledges Geoffroy as "the agent of some more powerful force [and] does not hesitate to locate that agency in his wife, and in the demonic powers she incarnates," calling her a phantasm, which Nichols identifies as a technical term from demonology (Nichols 146). He proposes that at this moment, Raymondin finally realizes that "the phantasm's true pathology lies not in the illusory image itself but in the pernicious delusion that phantasms of any sort can provide a key to resolving personal, social, or political problems" (147). Mélusine imposes "otherworld dimensions of seeing, seeing not what is really here but [...] what desire wishes the world were like, for that's what phantasm means" (149). Nichols also points out that by linking his denunciation of her to their sons Geoffroy and Horrible in a "demonic trinity," Raymondin recalls her status as triplet as well as the "unnatural morbidity of this family given to parricide, fratricide, and infanticide" (149). Spiegel considers Mélusine's status as triplet to be still another

indicator of her demonic aspect, since during the Middle Ages “twins were seen as fundamentally monstrous in nature” and twinning was seen as “confounding the categories animal/human” (104).⁶⁰ In opposition to the many critics who have viewed Mélusine as embodying a mixture of the human and the supernatural, Spiegel sees her primarily as a blend of the human and the bestial, and reads the joining of Raymondin with Mélusine not as a positive (albeit transgressive) coming together of human and supernatural being, but rather as “the more debased union of man and subhuman being, who approximates animality both in her status as twin and in her embodied punitive form” (108).⁶¹ She adds that “the detritus of the animal kingdom [is] strewn upon” the bodies of her sons as evidence of their monstrous origins, and this indicates their impure state which makes them all “dangerous for the whole society” for they link humanity to animality or nature, a link opposed by society and especially the Church (109), which is in keeping with the flesh/nature-spirit/culture divide we have already explored. Her sons’ bestial link to nature comes from their mother, of course, for as Le Goff explains, in the Middle Ages, “la femme est réputée pour ses pulsions animales très obscures, le plus souvent rejetées du côté du mal” (*Une Histoire du corps* 51).

Spiegel, Nichols, and Vincensini detect in Mélusine a disruptive, even dangerous, blending of categories and crossing of boundaries. Vincensini finds here an explanation for the pact. Although Vincensini asserts that Raymondin is well aware of his wife’s

⁶⁰ Spiegel suggests that the reason for Présine’s banning of Elinas from witnessing the birthing of her offspring is due to the very gestation of triplets as constituting monstrosity (106).

⁶¹ Le Goff and le Roy Ladurie have called attention to this problematic aspect of their union, suggesting that at the time it was written, it would seem that it should indeed be read as “debased” within a Christian society, for although among pagans “l’union d’un mortel avec un animal surnaturel est glorieuse, le christianisme [...] a fait de l’homme l’image incarnée exclusive de Dieu” (594), so such pairings would be viewed as evil.

supernatural aspect, the pact, as well as the unusual agreement of Raymondin's sovereign the Count of Poitiers not to insist upon knowing her origins when they are wed, make the blending of human and in-human possible: as long as silence is maintained, she can function "as-if" she were an ordinary human.⁶² Spiegel takes a similar stance. Although she concedes that "no form of human life" completely conforms to socially constructed categories (113) and that social categories are always permeable and thus arbitrary in nature (118), she adds that their transgression, once made public in Raymondin's public revelation of Mélusine's hybridity, cannot be tolerated (113). Spiegel perceives in the flight of Mélusine, in fully animal (dragon) form,⁶³ the sacrifice of the purely evil Horrible, and Mélusine's final words disavowing her fairy nature and attempting to identify her sons as categorically human, as all part of a "necessary [...] 'cleaning up of categories' that reassembles both the latent and overt structures on which all societies are constructed" (114).

This "clean-up," it must be remembered, implies an end to the androgynous social functioning of Mélusine. Once a builder of castles and political and military advisor, who, as Spiegel points out, even gives her name to an agnatic lineage, "which, since the 12th century at least has been the principal and exclusive domain of males" (107), Mélusine will henceforth be reduced to her maternal function, returning to nurse her two smallest sons. This reestablishment of boundaries appears to signal the end of the

⁶² White- Le Goff agrees that Raymondin chooses to "ignore" her origins. In her view, "ce renoncement à la compréhension totale semble un préalable à l'amour et une marque de respect pour l'altérité [...] de la bien aimée "(35).

⁶³ K. Brownlee, however, notes that the winged serpent's cry as it flies away (and whenever it returns) is a human one, and in this sense Mélusine never fully escapes hybridity (94).

transgressive power of the “demon” – who, it would seem, is synonymous with the powerful female, so often perceived as threat even into the modern era.

Bettina Knapp observes that throughout history, powerful women have been perceived as a danger: “female powers, as builders, thinkers, and procreators of worlds, have frequently been associated with snakes, vipers, and dragons,” a result of “the age-old deprecation of the female sex” (51). Denyse Delcourt agrees. She reminds us that the association of women with vipers is rampant in the literature of the Middle Ages, due to those commonly held misogynistic notions discussed above, in which woman is made synonymous with fleshly desires and nature. She considers that such associations stemmed from the belief that behind the outward charms of women there lurks a dangerous “nature primitive de serpentes” (91), and that it was necessary to repress “les pouvoirs menaçants attribués au corps de la femme” (92). Delcourt’s analysis of Mélusine, centered around her body – specifically her enormous tail, demonstrates that medieval conceptions are unfortunately not so far removed from more modern ones. She initially takes up a “cousin” of Mélusine’s, another powerful serpent woman, the gorgon Medusa. She discusses Freud’s analysis of her, in which he links the gorgon’s severed, serpent-covered head to the female genitals; these multiple phallic substitutions act as a compensating image for the far greater horror a boy would experience viewing her “castration” (Delcourt 96).⁶⁴ As Delcourt shows us, Freud, like his medieval counterparts, structures the feminine subject “à partir d’une expérience uniquement masculine” (96); which she believes explains his and Jean d’Arras’s insistence on the importance of man’s

⁶⁴ For Freud’s explanation of this theory, see “Medusa’s Head” (1922) in *Collected Papers*, vol. 5. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1952, 105-106.

view of her body (96). But, when Raymondin sees Mélusine's tail, the horror that might be expected (as per Freud's interpretation) is directed at himself, whom he calls a snake, referring to Mélusine only as a unicorn.⁶⁵ Delcourt associates this added phallic symbol (the horn) with the compensatory multiplication of snakes seen in the case of Medusa.⁶⁶ Delcourt proposes that here the view of woman serves as a mirror reflecting "les fantasmes les plus secrets" of the *voyeur* himself (97). Thus, seeing the enormous phallic tail of his wife provokes Raymondin to recognize his own shortcomings, sexual and otherwise. Knapp would seem to agree, suggesting that Raymondin himself has displayed a snake-like aspect by never facing up to his having killed, albeit accidentally, his uncle: "he snakily slithered away from any and all responsibility" (48), and adds that he behaved similarly by placing the blame for his own transgression of his vow to Mélusine upon "fortune" and his brother (53). Delcourt suggests his anguish may also be due to the pleasure displayed by Mélusine as she splashes her enormous tail in the bath, sending water to the ceiling in a moment of feminine plenitude in which Raymondin has become unnecessary.⁶⁷ Paul Valin has suggested another interpretation that also disquietingly excludes Raymondin – the critic finds here a reenactment of the "scène primitive et originaire," in which the "child" Raymondin views his parents (the androgynous

⁶⁵ "Je suis le faulx crueux aspis et vous estes la licorne precieuse" (I am the cruel vile asp and you are the unicorn") (Arras/Morris 568-69).

⁶⁶ Paul Valin agrees with this interpretation of Raymondin's peering upon Mélusine as a representation of the forbidden view of the phallic mother and her "castration feminine" (237). Yet he considers the phallic multiplication, the horrible "en plus" faced by the spying male, to be represented not by the unicorn reference, but rather by Mélusine's excessive number of monstrous sons with their bizarre "extra" parts (this Freudian interpretation appears to be in keeping with Freud's polemical theory that childbearing is the means by which women compensate their lack of a phallus – making the child synonymous with it.) (238).

⁶⁷ Markale refers unequivocally to this scene as one which represents masturbation (21).

Mélusine embodying both father and mother) engaged in the exclusionary sexual act (238). Clier-Colombani, too, has considered Raymondin's exclusion from this scene, from the perspective of Mélusine as androgynous goddess – she considers her bath to be that of the lunar goddess regenerating herself in contact with her serpent double, “génie issu de la terre-mère aux vertus de la fécondité, de prospérité et d’immortalité, symbole, selon Mircea Eliade, de la vie sans cesse renaissante” (*La fée Mélusine* 56). White-Le Goff observes that Mélusine's androgyny is an indicator of her status as supernatural deity – since in ancient times “les Etres suprêmes créaient en eux-mêmes et par eux-mêmes” (n 16, 58). This suggests that Mélusine's capacity to generate life and prosperity is not dependent upon Raymondin.⁶⁸ According to Clier-Colombani, he is no more than a means of escaping her fairy destiny, and is otherwise unnecessary to her: “Raymondin [...] n’est jamais le meneur du jeu et ne fait qu’exécuter aveuglement ses vœux, tel le respectueux dévot d’une grande déesse,” (“La Nymphé” 57). Certainly it is Mélusine who spares Raymondin punishment for his (accidental) murder of his uncle, who instigates and directs both his own and later their sons' exploits which will expand the family's power and domain, and who alone undertakes the building of the strongholds that will protect their lands. Clier-Colombani compares her to the Ovidian Salmacis, into whose body is “absorbed” Hermaphrodite, resulting in the emergence of an androgynous creature of a decidedly feminine visage; like Salmacis, “Mélusine a intégré Raimondin à son personnage. Il fait partie d’elle-même, de sa puissance, et la perte de Mélusine le laissera faible et démunie” (57). Here, Mélusine's duality is apparent yet again: she does

⁶⁸ This appears to support Walter's theory that as water-loving “serpent” she is not “snake” but rather “eel” – believed at the time to reproduce by spontaneous generation, as “un poisson qui, pour l’Antiquité et le Moyen Age, ignore toute différence sexuelle” (63).

much for Raymondin as Mother goddess, yet is equally “séductrice, redoutable et dominatrice” (57).

White Le Goff offers an opposing viewpoint. She finds that Raymondin moves toward self-improvement and full adulthood as a result of knowing Mélusine, demonstrating prowess in order to show himself worthy of her. She proposes that because of Mélusine he seeks to “comprendre qui il est profondément, d’actualiser toutes ses capacités, de devenir meilleur” (87). Rather than a relationship in which one individual dominates the other partner, she considers the relationship between Raymondin and Mélusine to be egalitarian: “Mélusine et Raymondin expriment une tendresse toute humaine et une image de couple uni et confident. Chacun consulte l’autre pour les décisions qui touchent à leurs fils” (74). Yet as evidence she only gives examples of Raymondin consulting Mélusine, and not the other way around, and admits that Mélusine is “plus sage que son époux” (73).

Knapp’s Jungian interpretation agrees with that of Clier-Colombani in that she stresses the authoritarianism of Mélusine and Raymondin’s weakness. She recognizes that over time Mélusine comes to evoke the demonic succubus, “a force to which young men – so myths and fairy tales tell us – become enslaved” (41), which appears to recall Nichol’s interpretation of Mélusine as demon, yet Knapp blames Raymondin, and not demonic deceit, for his “enslavement” or subordinate role. In her discussion of Mélusine’s traits, she establishes that some critics “erroneously identify Mélusine’s wisdom, energy, and authoritarianism as exclusively masculine characteristics” (44), explaining that gender conceptions have not been altogether static over time and that Gnostic Sophia/Wisdom is an example of “usurpation by the male of formerly female

characteristics” (44). She describes the process whereby Sophia was “downgraded” and incorporated into Mary, who was then deleted from the Godhead, with Sophia then becoming assimilated to the “superior” male. She finds in Mélusine a representation of Sophia/Wisdom as well as of the Great Mother. She also stresses her capacity to heal as *psychopompos* or spiritual guide, mediating between the conscious and unconscious realms, and her archetypal role as *anima* figure. In all these roles, Mélusine offers a great deal to Raymondin, and her counsel and directives are imbued with wisdom, yet Knapp observes that Raymondin comes to rely excessively upon her guidance:

As an authority figure and a paragon of wisdom, Mélusine was self-contained, reasoned, measured, and loving. [...] A mother figure par excellence, Raimondin obeyed her every wish/command, behaving like a child, forever gratified by a mother’s incredible gifts. As a passive recipient, never did he attempt to amplify, question or absorb her intellectual or psychological riches with the goal of furthering his own development. (47-48)

Knapp explains that whereas the pragmatic Mélusine strove to compensate her closeted, shadowy aspects with actions to benefit others, Raymondin simply relied upon Mélusine to maintain his own outward reputation while keeping his shadowy side hidden.⁶⁹ This worked initially, but ultimately “her dominance served to both devalue

⁶⁹ Knapp finds that both characters represent psychic one-sidedness, neither fully acknowledging shadow aspects within themselves, which creates an imbalance preventing individuation and often provoking the outward manifestation of an extreme personality – “the shadow or the sublime side of the individual” comes to the fore (48).

his sense of self-worth and to diminish his already severely-marred thinking function” (48).

Knapp and Delcourt agree that Raymondin’s building sense of his own shortcomings is involved in his final public betrayal of his wife. Knapp suggests he was attempting “to extricate himself from Mélusine/snake, which he looked upon as the feminine principle,” or like St. George, he sought to “annihilate the serpent/dragon – that formidable personification of *woman* – that had taken hold of his life” (56). Markale would appear to agree that Raymondin is rejecting his *anima*. He recalls Jung’s theories regarding our psychological androgyny, for he considers that what Raymondin saw upon peering into Mélusine’s bath chamber was “lui-même, comme dans un miroir, mais inversé” (250). Markale proposes that upon seeing the masculine and feminine joined, he realizes that, he, too, is both masculine and feminine, thus monstrous and dual. Markale considers the notion of androgyny as the dominant in Mélusine’s myth, and has called her “Notre Dame de l’Unité Retrouvée” (268); he considers her a potent reminder of the many dualities inherent in human nature, such as human and animal, good and evil (254).⁷⁰ Recalling the idealized moment when androgynous Yahweh created Lilith and Adam in his image, Markale explains that since the differentiation of the sexes, civilization has become caught in the “piège du dualisme” (259), to the degree that we are horrified by the vision of this “androgynat pur” (256).⁷¹ Raymondin’s response, then, is

⁷⁰ Jonathan Krell takes this a step further, stressing that Mélusine can be said to represent not just the duality, but the *plurality* inherent in human nature (“Between” 376).

⁷¹ It bears considering here that the term “androgynat pur” evokes a level of androgyny that would appear to erase gender difference. Cixous has cautioned against the classical conception of bisexuality (Plato’s androgyne) where a “half and half” being results in a neuter – neither male nor female, and in which separation of the two is perceived as a *loss* (46). Cixous opposes to this notion a “bisexualité en transes qui

ultimately to reject the feminine within himself, for it is “insupportable dans le cadre d’une société qui privilégie le rôle du mâle. Cela explique le rejet de Mélusine [...] dans les ténèbres” (250).

According to Knapp, never having delved into his own unconscious, entering into full contact with his own shadow-side and *anima*, Raymondin projects his own inadequacies upon his wife, and acts according to the medieval line of thought already discussed: “Having regressed to his preconscious forest-level, Raimondin slithered into a world of extremes, where woman was either saintly like the Virgin Mary, or evil like Eve/Serpent. No middle course was possible” (56). Delcourt, too, believes that Raymondin’s self-denigration and humiliation experienced when first spying upon and betraying his serpent-wife is eventually projected upon Mélusine in his outburst – now *she* becomes the snake (Delcourt 99). This certainly provides us an illustrative case of Francis Gray’s observation that women are “the ‘junkyard’ of men’s projections,” recipients of the “undesirable, unvalorised characteristics of men that they do not want to acknowledge in themselves” (100).

Historically, the misogynistic tradition brought out here, based in fear of women’s power, has lead to the victimization of women, and even to women themselves being implicated in the maintenance of female oppression. Markale indicates that myths like that of Mélusine about “une femme maudite” have been used as psychological weapons to prevent women from recognizing that it is not “à la petite fille qu’il manque quelque chose, mais au petit garçon” (258). Like Markale, Hélène Cixous challenges

n’annule pas les différences ”(46), which would permit a recognition of aspects of both sexes within an individual to varying degrees, yet which celebrates separation and gender difference.

Freud's conception of woman as "lack," and criticizes patriarchal society's having situated woman between "deux mythes horrifants: entre la Méduse et l'abîme" (47). Such constructions of women, created by men, have too often been believed by women, resulting in their silence, shame and the concealment of their own bodies and power – even their accusation of *themselves* as "monstrueuse(s)" (40). She holds that pregnancy was made taboo for at that moment a woman's power seemed greatest, and it was feared she might actually (and inconveniently for males) see *herself* in that light (52). As Knapp observes, this particular taboo plays a role in the Mélusine myth, for Présine imposes the condition upon Elinas that he must never see her during her confinement; his transgression of that taboo was punished by his daughters. Mélusine's "crime" was to seal her father in a cave, which, as Markale explains, is a symbolic castration and patricide (37). Valin agrees with this interpretation, and has gone so far as to call *Le roman de Mélusine* "le roman familial de la castration" (235)⁷² Mélusine's act placed her beyond the boundaries of society's expected behavior for woman. And, as Delcourt points out, Mélusine's *own mother* metes out her punishment, given for having transgressed "les lois 'naturelles' à son sexe," for being "trop 'hardie' [...] [et] virile" (101). She now must wear "le phallus de son père, [...] matérialisation de son acte" (Markale 39).

⁷² Although not fully in keeping with the text, Valin has interestingly identified in Raymondin an Oedipal figure for having killed his own (adoptive) father and then going on to wed his "Mère Lusine" (237). Mélusine is never identified as his mother, but rather the mother of the Lusignan lineage they establish together. However, as we have seen he is quite reliant upon her, as a son upon his mother. And as White Le Goff points out, Mélusine did reveal to Raymondin that his own father was once aided greatly by a fairy, whose identity she refuses to discuss, which provokes us to wonder if that fairy might not have been the ageless Mélusine herself (31).

Due to Mélusine's age (15) and the role of confinement, Delcourt points to this punishment passed from mother to daughter as connected to conceptions of the female body as shameful, reflecting medieval males' fears of menstruating women, whose bodies they considered "tabou" and "venimeux" (102-103).⁷³ Knapp explains that the female's monthly cycle contributed to the woman-nature link discussed earlier, since her body seemed to be governed by the moon (33). Another consequence was the association of women's moods and behaviors with it; the full moon was at times "associated with the woman's shadowy, secret, arcane, chthonian side, and the witch's sabbat, with its nocturnal revels, orgies, and practices in celebration of devil worship" (52).⁷⁴ Knapp suggests, as have many, that Mélusine's transformations on Saturday evoke the witch's sabbat, as well as the Jewish Sabbath (a positive time of communion with God in Jewish tradition, but which would be linked to heresy within Catholic circles) yet Vincensini, in his in-depth exploration of the significance of Saturday to her story, prefers to recognize the ambiguous Mélusine's link to Saturn, "le dieu des contraires," and even more divergently, to the Son of God himself, since Holy Saturday is the day of the "mystérieuse fusion des contraires que vit le Christ" ("Samedi" 97), marking his passage from human death to supernatural afterlife. Vincensini shows that in mythology, and in Biblical and folkloric traditions, Saturday is the day of the junction of opposites; it is "le jour de l'équivoque et de la médiation" (100).

⁷³ Knapp links Mélusine's bath to the *mikveh*, an ancient Hebraic monthly cleansing ritual for women, and points out that Mélusine's relatives Lilith and Eve are not just blamed for the Fall, but also for menstruation (50).

⁷⁴ Le Goff has discussed the close association of witches with nature, which today we can recognize as a positive. He stresses their important contribution toward the redemption of nature and the body and to the rediscovery of medicine (16-17).

Vincensini's exploration of Mélusine brings out the importance of her role as mediator. Certainly, as suggested by her appearance at a spring, her dual origins, and physical form on Saturdays, as human-animal, human-supernatural, and feminine-phallic, Mélusine appears to be uniquely positioned to mediate between worlds; between nature and civilized society, between the natural and the supernatural, and between the masculine and the feminine. As Knapp has indicated, she also mediates between the conscious and the unconscious, as was also brought out in chapter 1 in our discussion of her link to the mediator Mercurius, who is himself associated with Christ by the alchemists, since Christ functions as mediator between heaven and earth, the natural and the supernatural.

Vincensini stresses Mélusine's success as mediator; for as long as the pact, and thus her "as-if" human status, is maintained, she is quite successful functioning "across worlds." For example, as we have seen, Mélusine as territorial goddess is closely tied to the land/nature. Yet once she marries Raymondin, she distances herself from nature, establishing herself within society/culture, as an active force in its construction.⁷⁵ When Mélusine enters the realm of culture, claimed by men in the Middle Ages, she behaves in ways that transgress society's expectations of women, particularly by her building of castles, cathedrals, and cities, which, as Knapp observes, "points to her uniqueness, as builders were usually men" (45). But Knapp also reminds us that she uses this talent for the benefit of her lineage, acting in keeping with her Great Mother aspect, as well (45).

⁷⁵ This move from nature to culture brings to mind the position of feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir, who sought to break free of the woman-nature connection, seen as an obstacle to entry into the masculine realm of culture. However, later feminists like Cixous consider dissociation and rejection of the female body (thus, of nature) as deeply detrimental. As we will see, though, White Le Goff contends that Mélusine's break with nature is never a complete one, that she never truly cuts herself off from nature.

Le Goff and Le Roy Ladurie were the first to identify Mélusine as “maternelle et défricheuse” pointing to her motherly and civilizing roles, due to her felling of trees, claiming and clearing lands for the building of her castles, and granting prosperity to her people, which enabled the spread of civilization. They have called her “la fée de l’essor médiéval” (560).

Knapp points out that she was “in all senses of the word a head of state”(46), yet, as Delcourt reminds us, her power is conditional on “la non-divulgateion de sa difformité physique” (Delcourt 106). Her entry into “culture” is contingent upon concealment and denial of her physical reality, which society cannot tolerate. She can only fully unite her diverse roles in secret on Saturday; as Vincensini reminds us, this is the day she assumes her serpentine form, yet it is also the day she pays her workers, an important part of her cultural role. White-Le Goff agrees, and considers this the day she is most whole: “ce jour semble avoir une fonction unificatrice par rapport à la nature multiple de Mélusine” (52).

Kevin Brownlee points out that even when her multiple nature is revealed and she is forced to leave the society she helped to build, Mélusine maintains an authoritative stance, as shown by her final instructions; even then “she speaks as a political mother, attempting to protect her heirs” (92). And White-Le Goff stresses that here we are also reminded that in spite of her role as clearer of land and builder of kingdoms, “Mélusine n’oublie [...] jamais son lien avec la nature et avec ce lieu singulier, puisque, quand elle

quitte le monde des hommes, elle annonce qu'on ne pourra la reconnaître dans les airs [...] mais [...] sur la terre ferme, du moins à la fontaine" (44).⁷⁶

Vincensini states that precisely because of Mélusine's success in bridging worlds as mediator, because of her "competences étrangement efficaces, Mélusine est une véritable menace pour l'ordre social, il faut donc qu'elle soit sacrifiée" ("Samedi" 101). He suggests that even had Raymondin not betrayed her, she would have eventually faced a tragic fate for "la merveille est trop proche à toutes les satisfactions, championne d'une non humanité socialement excessivement efficace;" thus society cannot let her remain (101). She threatens to destabilize all those binaries society holds as sacred, so, although she is in essence a "héros de la médiation," she is doomed from the outset (101). Applying the theories of René Girard, Vincensini shows that Mélusine functions as societal scapegoat. He explains that she fits neatly into Girard's criteria of the expiatory victim, for she is a visitor, and, as not fully human, is not a true member of her community. She also carries a double connotation, embodying both good and evil. He considers the texts of Jean d'Arras and Coudrette to be works "de synthèse, de médiation," which attempt to confront, even overcome, certain obstacles present so long in human society: "la différence des sexes, la différence des espèces, la différence des mondes," yet the incompatibility of polar opposites is not overcome, and Mélusine is sacrificed in order to re-establish "la démarcation logique des classes ontologiques et sexuelles" (102).

⁷⁶ She refers here to Coudrette's version (p. 321). In Jean d'Arras no reference to the land or her fountain is made as she prepares to leave.

White-Le Goff observes that in modern times the androgynous power held by Mélusine has led certain feminists to exalt her, seeing in her androgyny the capacity to function without dependence on a man (58). According to Lecouteux, several German critics have found in her a “modèle d’existence féminine” (201), a notion recently taken up by Audrey Fella. She does not proclaim Mélusine as an androgynous ideal that negates sexual difference or renders the male unnecessary, but rather considers Mélusine an ideal guide in what she considers a necessary return to the valorization of sexual difference in a modern society in which such difference is being subsumed under a certain uniformity: “la femme a quelque chose à reconquérir. Elle doit retrouver la fierté et la dignité de son sexe” (23). In this sense, perhaps she, like Metka Zupančič, sees Mélusine as challenging societal norms which repress the feminine. Zupančič observes that “Mélusine est loin de la femme esclave soumise au patriarcat, alors qu’on affirme souvent que ce dernier était fortement ancré dans les sociétés à l’époque” (226). In her view, the lesson Mélusine teaches is that woman “ne veut et ne peut se conformer entièrement à l’homme” (22), and suggests that Mélusine imposes her desires by claiming her right to a pact, and metes out punishment upon the transgressor by flying away. Yet, we must also recognize that Mélusine is never free of patriarchal power. As Walter has shown, the violation of the pact signals her own fall from power. And Raymondin is evidently not the only one who suffers; by flying away, she is herself punished. She loses all that she had built, all that she desired, and is thus herself a societal victim.

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Now that we have reviewed what critics have had to say in their interpretations of the early literary myth, let us turn to Mélusine's representation (essentially another *type* of interpretation) over time. Certainly it has already become clear that both pagan superstitions and Biblical beliefs came into play in the development of the Mélusine myth and in its various interpretations. And from within both of these traditions there emerged powerful images that have long colored the European imaginary, and which are inevitably brought to bear in representations of Mélusine herself. As we found in chapter 1, the development of such images has a still deeper origin (which to a great extent explains their powerful, enduring hold upon us), the collective unconscious.

As Nichols has observed, "who says Mélusine says image; visual image, certainly, but also verbal image in its myriad permutations" (138). The influence of her image upon those interpreting her is a strong one, as Nichols himself demonstrates. He has stated that "the visual image of Mélusine, the quintessential medieval fatal attraction, is, *of course*, that of the siren, mermaid in the more anodyne form, except that Mélusine, like the dragon with which she is also associated, *has* wings as well as a *piscine* tail" (139, my emphasis). As the following discussion will show, "of course" is quite an overstatement, considering the myriad visual and verbal images of Mélusine that have been generated over time, and which, like the image Nichols here describes, depart considerably from Jean d'Arras's textual description of her, which presents her as half-serpent on Saturday, full serpent upon her departure, and makes no reference to wings or a piscine aspect. Yet, as is evident in Nichols's own interpretation of Mélusine as demonic phantasm, it is frequently upon images that pre-existed Mélusine's description by Jean d'Arras, or that were generated by artists responding to his text, that judgements

of Mélusine are based, hence the attention they will be given here prior to an examination of literary representations.

Due to the influence of certain images in the collective unconscious and the popular imaginary, even if Mélusine does not appear to pose a direct danger to those around her, even if her magic appears to be that of “la femme, féconde, maternelle et rassurante” (White-Le Goff 59), even if she is presented above all in positive terms by Jean d’Arras, “les hommes du Moyen Age étaient sensibles à son origine diabolique” (Le Goff, *Héros et merveilles* 148). Certainly Françoise Clier-Colombani has shown that the earliest “critics” of Mélusine’s texts, whom she quite accurately identifies as the illustrators of the manuscripts themselves (“Mélusine: Images d’une fée” 34), initially interpreted Mélusine in a more ambivalent way than did Jean d’Arras and Coudrette, more strongly influenced by the collective imaginary than by the actual texts. For instance in the oldest manuscript, Ars 3353, even before her transformation, Mélusine is frequently pictured with a small dragon near her skirts, which is never mentioned in Jean d’Arras. Clier-Colombani suggests that this not only foreshadows her fate, which is to become a flying serpent herself, it also evokes “une légère menace” from early on (*La Fée Mélusine* 41). Clier-Colombani has found that in the oldest manuscripts, the earliest illustrations, usually few in number, most frequently depict the bath transformation and Mélusine’s flight, and in these Mélusine tends to be pictured in rather savage monstrous images, which are evidently influenced by popular culture. She establishes that the artists were well acquainted with numerous snake women and female monsters of Antiquity that shared certain traits with Mélusine: “Chimère, Sphinge, Scylla semblent avoir chacune transmis ses caractéristiques propres à la figure – pourtant nettement edulcorée par

rapport à ces monstres atroces” (94). The dragon woman Scylla and her mother Echidna (Greek for “viper”), with her enormous tail and production of monstrous children, appear to be most closely reminiscent of Mélusine (94-95). Other related monsters with which they were familiar are the Medusa, the Lamia (a beauty transformed into a serpent-bodied, child-eating monster by the jealous Hera), and *vouivres*⁷⁷ (cave dwelling, man-eating serpents who guard treasures) all of whom share the ability to stun or petrify by their evil gaze. This links them to sirens, known for their seductive power (98). First considered half bird, half human, these creatures became fish-women in Mesopotamia and were considered “divinités de la mort, maîtresses des eaux et de la fécondité” (93), all traits that can be associated with Mélusine. 12th century notions of the mermaid retained associations with sins of the flesh, and sexual seduction; Clier-Colombani stresses the influence of images of Venus on their renderings (104). Both frequently were represented holding a comb and mirror (114). Jean d’Arras’s text describes Mélusine holding a comb in her bath, yet artists frequently added the mirror reminiscent of Venus and mermaids, associated with their seductive vanity, and at times, in spite of his textual description of her as half-serpent, the artists chose to represent her with a fish’s tail, thus transforming her into a mermaid.⁷⁸ Clier-Colombani states that Mélusine “cumule dans son personnage de fée serpente les dangers des sirènes et les vertus de la fée” (105). However, certain positive connotations of mermaids also influence representations of Melusine; they were considered to have great nourishing powers. The very first appearance of Mélusine with a piscine tail occurs in one of Coudrette’s earliest

⁷⁷ Marcel Aymé resurrected Mélusine’s relative the *vouivre* of Franc-Comtois legend in his 1943 novel *La vouivre*.

⁷⁸ It is evidently this visual imagery upon which Nichols bases his description of the fairy.

manuscripts – here Mélusine nurses one of her two youngest children to whom she has returned after her flight from Lusignan (71). Clier-Colombani explains that this mermaid image is due to the ongoing influence of legends in which mermaids nursed future heroes, their milk affording them extraordinary abilities. Not incidentally, one of the two sons Mélusine nursed was Thierry, from whom the Parthenay line descended. Certainly by this slight departure from the text, the artist was contributing to a favorable image of the Parthenays (and perhaps flattering his patron) (72).

Biblical imagery too played an important role in renderings of Mélusine at the time; of particular interest is the bath scene. Clier-Colombani explains that “lieu de purification, le bain apparaît comme lieu de luxure au Moyen Age” (165). Particularly influential was the story of Bathsheba, and Clier-Colombani finds that the images depicting this Biblical bath scene appear to affect the artists’ drawings of Mélusine’s, as well (159-60). Although King David was at fault for spying upon her, and causing her husband’s death out of his own selfish desire, in typical misogynist thinking, the Church placed much blame on Bathsheba, perceived, like mermaids, as a temptress (159).

Although described as a serpent by Jean d’Arras, who made no mention whatsoever of wings, in the early illustrations of her flight, Mélusine is often depicted with them, but these are not angel wings – rather they are bat-like, evoking the demonic; in some images she is a full dragon, also not surprising since serpents and dragons “ont le même statut au Moyen Age” (82). Both were considered diabolical. And one must not forget the possible influence of certain images of the devil himself, which provoke conceptions of Mélusine as “la démonsse, doublet du diable, qui est lui-même figuré comme un serpent à visage féminin dans certaines représentations de la tentation d’Eve

au paradis” (Bouloumié 9). Such images are likely influenced by the intrusion of cabbalistic legend into the Christian imaginary with the figure of Lilith. According to certain cabbalistic texts, Lilith was in fact the first created woman. This creature is believed to have developed from earlier Mesopotamian legends of Lilû and Lilitû - he an incub, she a succube – the two a “dédoublément d’un personnage primitif qui, lui, était androgyne” (Markale 234). In some versions she is the mother, in others the wife of Adam, but was created from the *prima materia* like Adam, and like him (at least until the removal of his rib to create Eve) considered androgynous (240-42). Markale explains that Lilith refused to submit to Adam and dared speak the name of God; for these reasons she either chose to leave or was cast out of Paradise and became the consort of Lucifer, engendering demons (237-47). And Lilith, perhaps in revenge against her replacement, became the serpent responsible for original sin, and was also believed to devour children, especially those resulting from illicit unions (241, 244). Markale calls attention to Mélusine’s and Lilith’s shared androgyny and serpentine tail. According to White- Le Goff, “Mélusine s’apparente à Lilith ou à Eve par sa proximité avec le serpent et en ce qu’elle est une tentation pour l’homme” (57). Clier-Colombani has called attention to the similarities between representations of Lilith and of Melusine, observing that in Lilith “se profilent donc dès l’origine les traits les plus maléfiques des êtres surnaturels dont nous avons pu faire les éventuels prototypes antiques du personnage de Mélusine” (*La Fée Mélusine* 202). She suggests that Lilith prefigures “certaines versions régionales d’une Mélusine devenue ou redevenue une divinité dangereuse,” similar to the *vouivres* guarding their treasures and emerging to devour unwary humans ” (203).

Although most of the creatures described above influenced Mélusine's earliest representations in a negative fashion, over time there was a "humanisation progressive du personnage [...] , le symbolique diabolique se réduisant peu à peu à la seule notion de "double," être hybride à queue de serpent" (Clier-Colombani, "Mélusine: Images d'une fée" 29). In later texts, in which illustrations were more numerous, Clier-Colombani notes that the sequences of images form an enlightening autonomous discourse that reveals to us how the story was received and perceived at the time (34). She notes a tendency toward greater sentimentality in the treatment of Mélusine and calls attention to the increase in pictures of her as loving mother returning to nurse her children, adding that since Jean d'Arras dedicates far fewer lines to Mélusine's return to her children, it is primarily in the texts of Coudrette that we see these images (*La Fée Mélusine* 69-70). However, across texts there is a marked evolution in which Mélusine's humanity triumphs over Melusine as monster: "il y a affaiblissement petit à petit de l'évocation du surnaturel et du monstrueux [...] une constante progression visant à gommer l'expression du merveilleux surnaturel et effrayant au profit d'un sentiment accru de l'humanité et du pathétique" (68). There is also a greater emphasis placed upon her civilizing role; she becomes more evidently "l'héroïne civilisatrice, mère d'une puissante famille" ("Mélusine: Images d'une fée" 32).⁷⁹

As we now examine the ways in which Mélusine is represented in written texts over time, it will become evident that a similar progression from diabolical monster to a more domesticated figure also occurs. Yet we cannot view this process as permanent, but

⁷⁹ Kelly has called attention to a similar progression in Mélusine herself. Since her last two sons show no monstrous mother marks, he concludes that she progressively becomes more human (44).

rather as one always in flux – for even after her humanization by certain authors (which, incidentally, tends to entail a reduction, not an emphasis upon her power), others sometimes followed with representations that re-demonized her.

One of the most influential demonizations of Mélusine, even into the 19th century as we will soon see, was undertaken by Paracelsus in the 16th century. Sabine Wienker-Piepho states that Paracelsus's treatise on elementary spirits *Liber de nymphis, sylphis, pygmäeis et salamandris et de cetera spiritibus* was “entirely dependent upon the clichés of gender dichotomy of the time” (96),⁸⁰ two important motifs being that female water spirits (for whom he coined the term undines) seek to get a human soul by marriage to a man, and they have the capacity of giving birth to many descendants (96). Wienker-Piepho points out that Paracelsus doesn't entirely “demonize” these creatures, since their hopes “to gain a Christian soul by a mortal husband are noble and reasonable” (100). Yet in writing of Mélusine, he explains her serpentine tail as the result of a pact with the devil: for Paracelsus, “Mélusine était une nymphe possédée par l'esprit du Malin. Elle connaissait bien la sorcellerie et participait à ses rites. Il s'ensuivit une superstition voulant qu'elle fût serpent tous les samedis. C'était le prix payé à Bélzebuth pour qu'il l'aidât à trouver une épouse” (Markale 16). Markale warns that we shouldn't take at face value Paracelsus' interpretation of Mélusine, (as did many of his readers, it would seem) but rather should bear in mind the aims of this alchemist, who actually appears to have been describing an alchemical code for the “marriage” of Sulphur and Mercury (16). Jung

⁸⁰ Wienker-Piepho reveals that this treatise was preceded by tracts by John Trithemus and Agrippa von Nettesheim, who both located all elementary spirits in the feminine domain. Trithemus held them to be “absolutely diabolic, above all for the simple reason that they were female (!) And they were female because they ‘seek for a soft gentle life’” (95). Nettesheim considered these feminine creatures to be hedonistic and ruled by their emotions (97).

too has analyzed Paracelsus's alchemical writings regarding Mélusine, which he views as a projection of the individuation process. Paracelsus was far from the only alchemist to utilize Lilith or Mélusine images in his work. In the case of Paracelsus, he associates her with a substance he called the Aquaster (thus transforming her into a water nymph) and holds that she was descended from the whale that swallowed Jonah, which, Jung explains, makes her birthplace "the womb of the mysteries, obviously what we would call today the unconscious" ("Paracelsus" 143).⁸¹ Jung adds that "for anyone familiar with the subliminal processes of psychic transformation, Melusina is clearly an *anima* figure. She appears as a variant of the mercurial serpent, which was sometimes represented in the form of a snake-woman by way of expressing the monstrous, double nature of Mercurius" (144).⁸² He adds that her longing for a soul and for redemption,⁸³ (which for Paracelsus likely was a means of underscoring the "desire" of matter to be redeemed and perfected in the alchemical work) represents the desire of the contents of the unconscious to be recognized by the conscious mind.

Like Paracelsus, Rabelais presented Mélusine as diabolical, albeit in a more comical fashion. In his *Pantagruel*, when Epistemon is brought back to life by Panurge, he recounts his trip to hell, where he saw Mélusine, now reduced to a "souillarde de

⁸¹ Perhaps Paracelsus and Jung are not straying so far from the original text, if we recall the medieval geographical imaginary, as does White-Le Goff. She observes that by sealing her father in a cave, Mélusine demonstrates her link to the chthonic subterranean fairy realm (43), which might also be associated with the "womb of the mysteries" or the unconscious.

⁸² Interestingly, it appears that Jung had at least some knowledge of the original tale of Mélusine, for he also provides a brief synopsis of the French legend, yet ends with "she was forced to disappear again into the watery realm" (143). As we know, Jean d'Arras has her fly, not swim, away from Raymondin.

⁸³ We should bear in mind that her lack of a soul is an invention of Paracelsus. In the earliest literary versions, she seeks to become mortal, but nowhere is her lack (or desire) of a soul indicated in Jean d'Arras.

cuysine, ”or “kitchen slut ” (231). He again brings her up in a defense of sausages in his *Quart livre*, chapter 38. Here we are informed of many influential “sausage-halfed ” beings, including the giants of Antiquity, the serpent who tempted Eve, and, of course, our Mélusine. We learn that many witnesses from the Poitou region swear that she had a “corps féminin jusques aux boursavitz, et que le reste en bas estoit andouille serpentine, ou bien serpent andouillique” (173). According to M. Brownlee, this description of her as half “sausage” “crystallizes her phallic association” (229).

For Le Goff and Le Roy Ladurie, the value of the Rabelaisian passages is the evidence they provide of the ongoing influence of Mélusine in oral folklore. The critics have examined written accounts of such folklore post-dating her first literary appearances, and have found a persistent tendency to view Mélusine as diabolical, in spite of her ongoing positive perception as mother of powerful lineages and as the origin of many historical structures.⁸⁴ In one tale, she and her son Geoffroi are viewed as demons and he is made an enemy of Saint Louis –from whom she saves him by lifting him into the air upon her broomstick, still, at least, attesting to a motherly role (609). Le Goff, Le Roy Ladurie and Clier-Colombani have shown that she was also eventually “transformed” into a dangerous *vouivre*. Clier-Colombani reports the post-melusinian legend of the evil “Mélusine de Maulnes:” it was believed that after her flight from Lusignan, she settled in the Burgundian region, becoming a guardian of the well of a

⁸⁴ Interestingly, by the 17th century in Poitou and Dauphiné, she had developed an additional positive characteristic, now associated with overseeing and predicting the quality of harvests (Le Goff and le Roy Ladurie 613).

castle, harming passersby and stealing away children to devour them (*La Fée Mélusine* 97-98).⁸⁵

Certainly this horrible creature would not appeal to writers of fairy tales, at least in the heroine role, but, as Isabelle Trivisani-Moreau observes, it is somewhat surprising that the Mélusine of Jean d'Arras did not receive much attention during the 17th century, even in the latter period during which fairy tales were in vogue (67). At least one author did take up her story at the time, although he is among the lesser-known writers of his day. Paul-François Nodot wrote *L'Histoire de Mélusine*, which appeared in 1698. Trivisani-Moreau finds that it closely follows Jean d'Arras. She considers Nodot, with his taste for the supernatural, to be “un peu plus insistant pour évoquer les connaissances supérieures de Mélusine,” for instance the fairy recounts to Raymondin in full his own past conversation with his brother, and the reader is more frequently reminded of her omniscience (69). The critic also notices a certain contamination by the popular *nouvelles* of the period, with greater attention paid to what were earlier minor romantic developments (among Mélusine's sons), and an increase in the number and splendor of various festivities (74-75). She observes that it is primarily not the fairy tale, but the “nouvelle historique et galante qui vient donner forme à son récit et ramener les créatures venues du merveilleux aux traits plus raisonnables du romanesque” (78). An example of this “domestication” of the marvel in Nodot's works (which, as we have seen, also occurred over time in Mélusine's depiction by early artists) is seen in his description of Mélusine, fainting just after Raymondin's betrayal: she is simply overcome by “vapors.”

⁸⁵ A behavior reminiscent of Lilith, as Clier-Colombani has observed.

Trivisani-Moreau remarks that here the powerful Mélusine is reduced to “l’image un peu dolente de la dame des salons de l’époque de Nodot” (77).

Although the popularity of fairy tales continued on into the 18th century, Raymonde Robert indicates that writers increasingly found inspiration for their tales in their own imaginations, and interest in existing folktales and legends began to wane, indeed virtually disappearing by mid-century (94). This trend likely explains the lack of attention Mélusine received at this time. She survived in popular regional beliefs, however, despite the disdain of intellectuals like M. Mazet, writing at the turn of the next century (1804), who criticized superstitious locals for believing in the reality of the fairy and for perpetuating her memory with so many “contes ridicules” (qtd. in Le Goff and Le Roy Ladurie 608-09). In the 19th century, however, coinciding with renewed interest in the literature of the Middle Ages, in which the Romantics found inspiration, Mélusine rose again to popularity in literature.

Françoise Ferlan has explored the literary metamorphosis that took Mélusine from powerful female serpent or dragon, to fragile “femme-enfant” as the 19th century Ondine. No longer a builder or mother, she becomes in Friedrich de La Motte Fouqué’s *Undine* (1811), “la femme qui ne sait que pleurer ses peines et supplier” (318). Christine Planté has also discussed the weak, dependent role of Ondine. She indicates that La Motte Fouqué borrowed from Paracelsus the belief that water spirits differ from humans in their lack of an eternal soul, which becomes central to the plot (“Ondine” 89). She stresses that it is Ondine’s father who seeks for her a soul, and thus sets up her eventual encounter with Huldebrand who will, by marrying her, be the one who grants her the soul her father desires for her. Ondine continually follows the dictates of a male character ;

quite differently from the active, authoritative Mélusine, “dépourvue de volonté propre, Ondine, dans les eaux, comme sur terre, est soumise au vouloir des hommes” (89). Initially a spirited, rebellious character, who prefers frolicking outdoors to helping in the kitchen, moments after her marriage, and the subsequent entry of a human soul into her body, she becomes eager to assist her mother, engaging dutifully in domestic “feminine” tasks, now a “vraie petite maîtresse de maison” (La Motte Fouqué 61). And from that point on, she submits fully to her husband. According to Ferlan, Mélusine’s transformation into a weak, tearful, submissive figure coincided with the 19th century vision of the perfect woman: “la femme-ange” for whom “le mariage seul sanctionne l’accès à l’identité” and assures her integration “dans l’ordre patriarcal” (318-19). It is only by love for a male that Ondine leaves the water and becomes “fully human,” which Planté reads as individuation, in that she leaves “l’indistinction de l’élément original (l’eau) par l’amour” (89).⁸⁶ And although Mélusine actively sought human status, she, too, was reliant upon marriage to achieve it. Planté reminds us that it is men who originated such myths, to ensure that women believed that their access to “la pleine humanité” relied upon *their* mediation (97). The alternative troubles them, due to the inherent threat “d’une exclusion et d’une vengeance” (99).

Planté has also examined a novel written by 19th century writer Marceline Desbordes- Valmore in which a young woman named Ondine is a main character. Primarily known for her poetry, Desbordes-Valmore published *L’Atelier d’un peintre*, her

⁸⁶ Ferlan observes that in Giraudoux’s 20th century re-writing of La Motte Fouqué’s tale as a play, Ondine’s strong link to nature makes her a superior being; the human soul is shown as petty in contrast to the “‘âme du monde’ dont procède Ondine” (319). It is her inability to “lower” herself to integrate into inferior patriarchal society that causes her rejection by Hans and her ultimate return to her watery home. But if in Giraudoux there appears finally to be a complaint for the rejection of the feminine and of nature, Ondine remains reliant upon a man in order to achieve full humanity.

most popular narrative work, in 1833. In this novel we encounter an Ondine closely resembling that of La Motte Fouqué; the character is clearly influenced by and named for his character. In fact the young girl's uncle routinely teases her for her name, and comments at one point that "avec un nom comme celui-là, on doit être placide, insoucieuse, et d'une humeur à peine murmurante" (287), a description that fits her early on in the novel, until a love, unrequited until too late, breaks her heart and leads to her and her beloved's deaths (the plot, too, closely resembling that of *Ondine*). A quiet, reserved, sensitive girl prone to tears, Desbordes-Valmore's Ondine finds pleasure in simple things, such as tending to her household duties, pleasing her loved-ones (which often implies a willing self-sacrifice), and spending time in nature. Certainly this description reflects that of her namesake, but it also is in keeping with Desbordes-Valmore's intent to write "l'histoire de ceux qui n'en ont pas" (Planté, "*L'Atelier*" 47). In her preface she comments that "la vie humble, pauvre, et obscure du logis a son drame de même qu'une vie agitée et féconde d'événements" (*L'Atelier* 8).

If Desbordes-Valmore's Ondine at first appears simply a reproduction of that of La Motte Fouqué, this is not the case. Surely influenced by her own gender and experience, this woman writer evidently rejects his reductive treatment of Ondine and makes of her a more complex being. Planté points out that the Ondine of Desbordes-Valmore has artistic ambition and dreams of finding glory through her painting. She explains that Desbordes-Valmore not only reveals a woman's aspirations to artistic success, she also reveals "les difficultés pour elle d'assumer une telle ambition" (49). She adds that in this work Desbordes-Valmore expresses concern not only for the marginalization of women, but of artists in general; both groups are "exclus des sphères des événements et de la

decision” (48). Ondine and the other artists around her are dreamers, “rêveurs éveillés décalés dans le monde contemporain, et attentifs à autre chose” (47), and yet Planté notes that these humble, excluded individuals are shown to exert an unexpected resistance to political power. Although the character Ondine does not herself directly participate in this revolt, Planté finds in the novel evidence that for Desbordes-Valmore “il appartient en effet avant tout aux artistes d’incarner la résistance, d’affirmer des valeurs étrangères au pouvoir et à l’argent” (48). Although Desbordes-Valmore herself is clearly participating in revolt by inscribing this subversive message in her work, perhaps Ondine’s non-participation is a comment upon the effect of prevalent societal attitudes toward women at the time, that both limited their ability to act and inculcated in young women the passivity of La Motte Fouqué’s Ondine.⁸⁷

If the 19th century saw the literary domestication of Mélusine in the form of Ondine, it also saw her demonization in Zola. In his interpretation, “the good fairy, Christianized by Jean d’Arras and Coudrette, gives way to the demon” (Krell, “Between” 379). Gisèle Seginger observes that Zola borrows from Paracelsus : “c’est cette Mélusine que Zola choisit, c’est-à-dire la femme fatale que l’imaginaire peut associer à d’autres femmes mythiques, à la sexualité violente et au pouvoir dégradant, comme la Lilith judaïque” (117). She proposes that this is part of Zola’s effort to set up a binary battle of good versus evil, setting the demonic woman against the Christian, the Count Muffat (116). In the novel *Nana* (1880), he transforms her into a prostitute and an untalented yet sexually alluring actress who rises to fame (notoriety) and wealth as she “devours” the

⁸⁷ Interestingly, in the 20th century novels addressed in this essay and in which Mélusine emerges (often in a form resembling Ondine), revolt is a common theme, as well; the authors frequently call upon a refusal of the passivity of Ondine and a return of Mélusine’s lost power, as we will soon see.

fortune and souls of moneyed and titled men, bringing them to ruin. Krell agrees with Seginger, commenting that “Zola the naturalist emphasizes the destructive nature of feminine erotic power, which makes Mélusine the mythic descendent of the demonic Lilith” (“Between” 376). Seginger considers Nana a “Mélusine renversée, qui, loin de fonder une lignée, met fin aux lignées” (119). However, Krell reminds us that Mélusine, even if against her own will, was also responsible for the ruin of her own noble family, whose wealth and power was doomed with her flight from the fortress (379). Krell explains that Zola also draws upon a negative association with Mélusine’s frequent erecting of structures : “the double meaning of the word ‘erection’ caused the constructive force of the fairy to become associated with a powerful and potentially destructive erotic energy;” thus, in his descriptions of Nana, Zola stresses her animality and sexual energy (379). Seginger finds that it is via Nana’s animalistic and diabolical sexuality that she transforms Paris into “une nouvelle ville maudite” (118). Mélusine again becomes the seductive Venus or siren of early medieval imagery, “who would lead a Christian down the path of evil” (Krell “Between” 380). Not incidentally, her opening stage role in the novel is as Venus, her final one as Mélusine; in both she is presented as goddess, and the audience feels the captivating power of her physical beauty.

Thus in these two 19th century works, *Undine* and *Nana*, we find dual images of Mélusine, one recalling images of the saintly, submissive Mary and the other, the seductive Eve. Mélusine’s androgynous image, evoked already in *Nana*, not in her physical image perhaps, but in her penchant for acting as dominatrix and in her lesbian encounters, comes to the fore in the work of Josephin Péladan, a lesser known author, but

one who is representative of his time in certain ways, and who renews attitudes going back to Plato regarding androgyny, attitudes that assigned woman a negative status.

Writing in the “decadent” period at the end of the 19th century, Péladan’s interpretation of the Mélusine myth perfectly illustrates the ambiguity of 19th century attitudes toward the fairy. According to Krell, Péladan, who, like many of the “decadents” was fascinated with androgyny, discovered Mélusine in his readings of Paracelsus. Krell initially examines two of his works appearing in 1891 that treat androgynous figures – volume 8 of his *Ethopée de La Décadence latine* addresses the “éphèbe,” a young effeminate male character regarded by the author as an ideal – while volume 9 treats the “gynandre” or masculine female, who represents for Péladan “la déchéance absolue du sexe féminin” – she is the “usurpatrice: le féminin singeant le viril” (Krell “Une Mélusine décadente” 99). Krell reveals the misogyny evident in Péladan’s association of the androgynous male with an image of wholeness and perfection, for whom sex is unnecessary, thus, an androgyny that negates difference and renders woman unnecessary. In Péladan’s book, his androgynous male, Samas, ultimately succumbs to carnal desire with a woman, portrayed as marking the death of his androgyny and his fall from perfection into a sordid abyss – the novel ends upon the words “Femina Super Bestiam. [La femme est à classer au-dessus des bêtes]” (qtd. and translated in Krell 99). Krell indicates that the fascination with androgyny among decadent writers reflected male-female relations at the time, and it is clear that the attitude here expressed in Péladan would support the observation of Frédéric Monneyron that “the fascination with androgynous forms is a quest for the feminine, which ends in the most virulent exclusion of woman” (qtd. in Krell, “Between” 389). As we learned from Ferlan, the submissive

“angelic” woman was considered the ideal during the 19th century. This attitude is borne out in Péladan’s conception of the gynander. She is, Krell explains, “toute femme qui n’accepte pas un rôle passif auprès de l’homme: c’est la femme fatale, l’intellectuelle, ou la lesbienne” (99). Thus, she is the woman who has achieved precisely what Péladan desires for the ideal man – no need or desire for a person of the opposite sex – and she is portrayed in an entirely negative way, requiring, as we will see, redemption by a man. This double standard evident in Péladan’s misogynistic stance brings us once again to fear: the male may indeed desire an androgyny for himself, which would free him from the perceived hold woman has upon him, yet he feels threatened by a female who achieves a similar independence, rendering him unnecessary to *her*. In *La Gynandre*, the hero of the novel, Tammuz, sets out to “cure” Parisian lesbians and restore “binary law” (100). Péladan here reflects his society’s assumption that binarisms are natural, when ultimately they are themselves myths – none of us is fully masculine or feminine.

In 1895 Péladan wrote *Mélusine*, another novel expressing his interest in the androgyne and the gynander. The melusinian character is an intelligent young woman, Mary, who lost her feet in an accident as a child – she has renounced the notion of marriage and is presented as “un formidable adversaire de l’homme,” (Krell 100), a gynander, in other words. She is, however, transformed into a “femme-fée” once she meets a young poet, who conforms to Péladan’s ideal, according to Krell, in that he is both chaste and androgynous (101). Krell explains that in the peculiar lexicon of Péladan a “femme-fée” is essentially no more than a “courtisane sacrée qui doit servir le ‘Mage’ ou ‘l’Artiste’” (101). Thus Mary, who begins writing letters to her poet, Lixus, under the name Mélusine, will give her all (and steal all she can from her unsuspecting father) to

ensure his comfort and success. She also comes to desire marriage. Krell explains that here we find an important shared aspect with Mélusine. Mary, due to her handicap, does not feel complete and, like Mélusine, who seeks to become fully human by marrying Raymondin, Mary seeks to achieve wholeness through her devotion to her young poet (103). He adds that “le plus grand devoir de Mary – comme d’ailleurs de Mélusine – est peu ésotérique, peu spirituel: c’est le devoir bien naturel et bien conventionnel de faire un fils pour son mari” (104). Here again emerges that male-created myth brought out by Planté that only through a man’s mediation may a woman achieve full personhood. Additionally it is evident that Péladan achieves here what is likely seen by misogynists like himself as a most desirable goal, the full domestication of a once “dangerous” gynandre.

Throughout this examination of the varied ways in which Mélusine has been depicted both in criticism and in artistic and literary representations over time, we have seen the fairy take on a myriad of physical forms and roles. Views regarding her nature have run the gamut, from purely demonic to angelic messenger of God, but her ambiguity tends to be a dominant factor in her make-up, which, in itself, has much to do with the wide range of interpretations we have encountered. It has become evident that how Mélusine is perceived has much to do with gender conceptions as they have developed (or not developed?) over time. As we turn now to 20th century writers, we will find that such issues still come into play, thus the present chapter has provided us a helpful backdrop within which to situate the upcoming analyses. Additionally, and of equal importance, it has served to provide us with a fuller understanding of the earliest literary versions and

subsequent representations of Mélusine, which may well have influenced the 20th century authors now to be addressed.

CHAPTER 3

MÉLUSINE AS *LUNA*, HEALING “STAR” OF *ARCANE 17*

Facing Crisis, Finding Mélusine

In the years leading up to the writing of *Arcane 17* in 1944, not only André Breton’s homeland, France, but the entire world faced a period of extreme crisis – that of World War II. Breton himself was directly affected by that war, in many ways – first as soldier, then as political target, and finally as refugee. Breton served the French military as a “médecin-auxiliaire” from September 1939 until the Armistice, and once demobilized finally settled in Marseille with his family, recognizing they would not likely be safe in Vichy-controlled Paris. Breton had always been politically outspoken, as had the surrealists in general; his biographer Henri Béhar explains that although attuned to the dream-state and to the inner workings of the psyche, Breton remained equally alert to the on goings of the outer world, and was “constamment tendu vers l’action collective [...] ; [il] se hâte de rassembler le plus largement possible, au-delà du groupe qu’il anime, pour faire pièce au fascisme, pour témoigner contre toutes les iniquités” (*André Breton: Le grand indésirable* 11). And as Clifford Browder points out, the Vichy government espoused as ideals the concepts of Family, Church, and State – concepts which “the Surrealists had been assailing for two decades” (39). Unsurprisingly, the surrealists found themselves targeted by the Vichy regime. Not only were Breton’s works censored,⁸⁸ but

⁸⁸ Both *Anthologie de l’humour noir* and *Fata Morgana* were denied publication by Vichy censors.

his home was searched, items were confiscated, and he was detained and interrogated for hours during a visit of the maréchal Pétain to Marseille. This experience was a deciding factor for Breton – shortly thereafter he went into exile, settling in New York City in 1941 with his wife Jacqueline Lamba and their daughter, Aube. Prior to his journey to America, he had expressed ambivalence regarding exile, feeling torn between the desire to leave and doubts about life abroad; in a letter cited by Béhar he states: “l’Amérique ne s’impose, du reste, que d’une manière toute négative: je n’aime pas l’exil et je doute des exilés” (Béhar, *André Breton: Le grand* 335). Whether a case of foresight or self-fulfilling prophecy, exile did not agree with Breton. He soon found himself handicapped by his inability to communicate in English, to a degree self-imposed.⁸⁹ Whereas in France the surrealist movement had managed to maintain a certain cohesion, united around its “pape” Breton, despite frequent dissensions and the resultant goings and comings of its various proponents, in the U.S. the language barrier, combined with ongoing discord, hampered Breton’s efforts to unite surrealists as effectively as he had in the past. Breton also faced frustration due to his limited income and possibilities for publication; in March 1942 he took a post as announcer for “La Voix d’Amérique,” upon which he was financially dependent, a situation which he considered humbling and altogether disagreeable (346). And if exile itself posed challenges, his life became all the more bleak that fall when his wife left him for David Hare, an American artist. Charles Duit, a student who visited Breton at the time, reveals that the 45 year old Breton appeared much older and seemed “las, amer, seul, terriblement seul, supportant la solitude avec une

⁸⁹ According to Béhar, in spite of some knowledge of English, Breton felt ill-equipped to effectively express himself, and rather than risk errors, preferred to rely upon interpreters to communicate. His wife Jacqueline Lamba spoke English well, and he relied upon her in this capacity prior to their separation (*André Breton: Le grand* 346-47, 351).

patience de bête, silencieux” (qtd. in Béhar, *André Breton: Le grand* 354). Most devastating for Breton was the loss of his daughter, who went to live with his wife and her lover. We find Breton’s expression of the overwhelming despair he felt in the pages of *Arcane 17*: “Une grande partie de la terre ne présentait plus qu’un spectacle en ruines [...] . Cette enfant, toute l’injustice, toute la rigueur du monde l’avaient séparée de moi, m’avait privé de ses beaux réveils qui étaient ma joie, m’avaient fait perdre avec elle le contact merveilleux de chaque jour, se préparaient à l’éloigner de moi encore davantage” (70).

Yet, as devastating as the blow was, Breton had long believed that the darkest moments of life hold within them the germ of renewed joy: “Pour lui, le mal doit nécessairement être tourné au bien” (Béhar, *André Breton: Le grand* 354). Béhar indicates that Breton frequently mentions the “terrible law of compensations” in his unpublished correspondence, a notion he likely encountered in a philosophy course early in his life, and which was subscribed to by the philosopher P.-H. Azaïs. According to this “law,” “les biens et les maux sont accordés aux hommes en quantités rigoureusement égales et ils se compensent mutuellement” (Michel Baude 58). Thus, Breton did not give up on life, did not cease to write, and in the darkness of his own despair, he sought the light of hope and happiness, convinced that at such a dark time “l’individu ne peut que retrouver la joie de vivre et le bonheur” (Béhar, *André Breton: Le grand* 356). Béhar points out that two of his works written the following year attest to this belief; the first, by its very title, “Lumière noire,”⁹⁰ and the other, *Les Etats généraux*, by the emergence

⁹⁰ This theme of a “Lumière noire” closely parallels that of *Arcane 17*, as we will see. Breton’s own recognition of this appears to be made evident by his decision to include it along with the three “Ajours” which were appended to the 1947 edition of *Arcane 17*.

of a feminine image Esclarmonde, the “Light of the world,” which, whether referring to the heroine of Huon de Bordeaux’s “chanson de geste” or to the sister of the Count of Foix, heroine of the Cathar cause during the 12th and early 13th centuries,⁹¹ has been aptly recognized by Béhar as a prefiguration of Mélusine in her illuminating role in *Arcane 17* (355). By the time of these writings, Allied successes were already increasing optimism on the world stage. And by January 1944 hope was renewed in Breton’s personal life, as well, by an unexpected, yet fortuitous encounter with a young Chilean woman, fluent in multiple languages – Elisa Bindoff Enet – who would become and remain his wife for the remainder of his life. Elisa had also known despair, having tragically lost her own daughter to drowning the prior year, and had sought to end her deep suffering through suicide. In the fall of 1944, Breton took leave from his ongoing post as radio announcer in New York to vacation on the coast of Québec in Gaspésie with Elisa. While there, between August 20 and October 20, a time that coincides with the liberation of Paris, Breton composed *Arcane 17*. Although the war raged on, the darkest hour for France was coming to a close, as it had for Breton and Elisa. Now was a time for healing, a time for Mélusine.

In *Arcane 17*, although we learn of Breton’s personal crises, his scope goes much further. Béhar explains that Breton relates his experience to the world crisis in an effort to convey hope, particularly to Elisa whom he seeks to keep committed to life, but, ultimately, to all his readers, “touchés par la guerre et son cortège de douleurs” (“La Mélusine surréaliste” 149). The aforementioned “law of compensations,” indicative of a

⁹¹ Although Béhar appears convinced that the former Esclarmonde is the one to which Breton refers, I am inclined to believe he refers to the Cathar heroine, in light of Breton’s interest in Gnosticism which would suggest familiarity with this historical figure – who brought hope (light) to many during the darkest hours for the Cathar faith.

belief that all problems and pain are inevitably transitory, is what made it possible for Breton to maintain what Anna Balakian refers to as a “grim but gallant optimism” following the war (*Surréalisme* 238), contrasting sharply with the prevailing postwar stoicism he would eventually encounter upon his return to France (236). In *Arcane 17* he shares this “law” by which he retains hope : “Toute tempête, au premier beau jour revenue, trouve moyen de s’engloutir, de se nier dans une perle [...] tout tend, *doit tendre* en fin de compte à se réorienter sur les déductions de la vie” (24). His faith in this concept assured that even in “the depths of political upheaval, of humiliating defeat for his country, and self-willed exile for himself, Breton was able to celebrate the triumph of resurrection” (Balakian 238).⁹²

In *Arcane 17*, Breton stresses the need for healing and rebuilding, the need for resurrection and renewal in the aftermath of a period of devastation, and his hope, even his certainty, that these are possible. As he insists in the early pages of the narrative: “en dépit de certaines apparences, tout n’est pas encore sacrifié au Moloch militaire” (21). In opposition to this god of war, and in opposition to the “maléfiques devises de Vichy, à la démission populaire que ce régime entraîna,” Breton brings to bear the powerful collective force of myth, choosing to invoke the medieval myth of Mélusine (Béhar, “La Mélusine surréaliste” 149). As Béhar states, “sur le pays dévasté Mélusine revient pousser son cri en mère bâtitresse et consolatrice. Intuitivement, en sûr poète, il sait que la légende possède un contenu latent susceptible de rassembler le peuple, de le rendre actif par-delà ses divisions antérieures, où qu’il soit et où qu’il en soit après ses longues

⁹² Balakian also notes that Breton took on his message of hope and resurrection during the Fall, not the Spring of the year, a time in which we are so readily reminded of death (235).

années d'Occupation" (149). It is unsurprising that Mélusine, who, in her physicality alone is such a clear image of the overcoming of oppositions, should be used by Breton in this way. In light of our identification in chapter 1 of Mélusine as representing, like Mercurius, the archetype of healing, the bringing together of people formerly divided is a task well-suited to her, as is the healing of the psychological suffering and schisms the dividing sword of Moloch has produced within them. Throughout the narrative, Breton evokes again and again a corollary to the "law of compensations," one which is a guiding principle of both alchemy and Jungian psychology: not only can no period of darkness and destruction go on indefinitely, but such times ultimately serve a purpose – for it is only from a prerequisite death that rebirth may take place. As the butterfly who appears during his meditations in *Arcane 17* reveals,

les plus hautes pensées, les plus grands sentiments peuvent connaître un déclin collectif et aussi le cœur de l'être humain peut se briser et les livres peuvent vieillir et tout doit, extérieurement, mourir, mais une puissance qui n'est en rien surnaturelle fait de cette mort même la condition du renouveau. (82)

Breton holds fast to the notion that the war presages a rebirth, and although, as it will soon become clear, Mélusine had fermented for quite some time in his imagination, it is significant that only at this time of war does she surge forth in all her fullness to guide this re-birth as she guided Raymondin after his own tragic loss. Evidently, for Breton she is *the* archetype most needed, and he seems to have realized that this creature in whom the opposites are so clearly united could serve as a powerful symbol of the goal of greater psychic and interpersonal unity and of new life.

Interestingly, surrealism, like Mélusine herself, involves healing, a bringing together; as Beaujour reminds us, its ultimate goal is “la reconciliation des antinomies” (233). An understanding of this literary movement,⁹³ which was led by Breton, the author of its manifestos,⁹⁴ is vital to any analysis of his writings, and will be of particular importance to our analysis of Mélusine’s role in *Arcane 17*. Reacting against the failure of reason, so clearly evident in “rational” society’s inability to end the absurdity of war, the surrealists sought to break free of the abusive hold of logic, and thereby progress toward a superior reality by tapping into the contents of the “illogical” unconscious mind. Breton decries society’s having reduced “l’imagination à l’esclavage” due to its over-valuing of reason (*Manifestes* 14-15). To the contrary, Breton and his fellow surrealists chose to give free play to their imaginations, paying attention to the images and words emerging from within the dream-state and letting their thoughts flow forth freely in what he called “l’écriture automatique,” which calls to mind Jung’s active imagination technique designed to access unconscious contents. Breton defines surrealism as “automatisme psychique pur par lequel on se propose d’exprimer [...] le fonctionnement réel de la pensée, en l’absence de tout contrôle exercé par la raison, en dehors de toute préoccupation esthétique ou morale” (36). Breton explains that a vital goal is “la résolution future de ces deux états, en apparence si contradictoires, que sont le rêve et la réalité, en une sorte de réalité absolue, de *surréalité*” (24). In his second

⁹³ Béhar notes that although the surrealists strove to avoid any sort of institutionalization, surrealism has certainly come to be considered a literary institution itself “avec sa doctrine, ses textes fondateurs, ses directives, ses instances de légitimation, ses valeurs symboliques” (*André Breton : Le grand* 9).

⁹⁴ Breton’s importance to the movement cannot be overstated, as Béhar puts it ; Breton “est indissociable du mouvement surréaliste auquel il a insufflé vie” (“André Breton, l’histoire et le sens du mythe” 12).

manifesto, Breton sounds particularly Jungian in his description of the surrealist exploration of the unconscious so central to their creative activity; he explains that the surrealists seek “la récupération totale de notre force psychique par un moyen qui n’est autre que la descente vertigineuse en nous, l’illumination systématique des lieux cachés” (496). Beaujour explains that by joining conscious and unconscious, dream and reality, Breton “instaure la vie rêvée, la vie vécue comme en rêve, et le rêve inséré dans la vie. Il nous convie à pénétrer dans le mythe” (221) which, as we learned in chapter 1, begins with dreams. Walter reminds that the surrealist revolution rehabilitated myth and mythical images in the poetic domain in much the same way that Freud and Jung had done in the theoretical (8). Breton’s interest in myth arose at least in part from his studies of Freud, who, like Jung, considered myths to be projections of inner psychic contents. Breton first encountered the theoretical writings of Freud while working in a mental ward for soldiers during WWI, and Breton frequently credits Freud’s influence upon the movement. Yet, as Yvonne Duplessis points out, it is actually Jung who most clearly shares in the surrealists’ belief that conscious and unconscious are not truly opposed, that “au contraire ils se complètent l’un l’autre et forment à eux deux un ensemble: l’individualité” (107). Like him, the surrealists sought through their psychic explorations a greater psychic unity. In fact, Yvonne Duplessis notes that Breton complained of writers who used the automatic writing technique solely for the purpose of creating an unusual final written product; she cites Breton who insists that this attitude deprives one of “tout le bénéfice que nous pourrions trouver à ces sortes d’opérations” (qtd. in Duplessis 106). It is evident that for Breton greater self-knowledge is inherent to the process. Béhar stresses that Breton always wrote “pour se révéler à soi-même et, par ce

biais, rencontrer certaines personnalités n'ayant jamais démérité à ses yeux, qui l'aideront à se trouver ” (*André Breton : Le grand* 32). Certainly this recalls the goal of Jung's psychic explorations, designed to activate the archetypes within and to discover hidden aspects of the self, thereby moving toward a greater sense of wholeness as part of the process of individuation. Beyond this individual goal, there are artistic and societal considerations, as well. Their psychic explorations infused their work with a creativity and vitality which was nothing short of revolutionary, and through this new art, they sought to influence the world – “ses adeptes doivent avoir pour seule préoccupation de lui découvrir de nouvelles perspectives” (Duplessis 107). Once the contents of their own psyche are brought to light, the surrealists reveal new ways of seeing to others, ways they consider far superior to those which can be gleaned from reason and consciousness alone. Thus, the initial self-illumination leads to a role as illuminating guide, reproducing Mélusine's role in relation to Raymondin and in *Arcane 17*.

It must be borne in mind that, like Jung, Breton recognized the danger inherent in the individuation process, which is the disintegration of the personality. Duplessis observes that Breton knew very well that “le danger de l'analyse de soi est de s'y perdre” (106). In his first manifesto, Breton cautions that “on revit, dans l'ombre, une terreur précieuse. [...] On traverse, avec un tressaillement, ce que les occultistes appellent des *paysages dangereux*. [...] L'homme est soluble dans sa pensée!” (*Manifestes* 52-53). Béhar recounts in Breton's biography multiple occasions in which Breton took upon himself a protective role, pulling back his surrealist friends from the brink of insanity, and in spite of his great interest in hypnotism involved in the séances in which they engaged experimentally, he was never able to give himself fully over to the altered state

as did others, instead always maintaining a degree of lucidity. Béhar recounts a conversation Breton had with Trotsky who was concerned about the loss of consciousness within the unconscious; Breton responded that he guarded against this, applying an “effort permanent d’élucidation et de compréhension des phénomènes irrationnels” (*André Breton : Le grand* 313). Certainly Breton was wise to guard against losing himself completely within the unconscious. However, some of Breton’s writings indicate a concerted effort to dominate the unconscious, which is expressed in terms of a battle – and this certainly deviates from Jung’s efforts and goals. Jung sought a harmonious balance between conscious and unconscious, as discussed in chapter 1. At first glance this appears to be the goal of the surrealists as well, but Breton speaks in terms not of balance, but of mastery: “ Si les profondeurs de notre esprit recèlent d’étranges forces capables d’augmenter celles de la surface, ou de *lutter* victorieusement contre elles, il y a tout intérêt à les capter, à les capter d’abord, pour les *soumettre* ensuite, s’il y a lieu, au contrôle de notre raison ” (*Manifestes* 20, my emphasis). He later adds, “ l’essentiel n’est-il pas que nous soyons nos maîtres, et les maîtres des femmes, de l’amour aussi? ” (28). It would appear here that the subjugation of the personal unconscious is problematically linked to the subjugation of woman. Our explorations of Jungian theory in chapter one and of conceptions of Mélusine in chapter two have prepared us to comprehend fully this link made by Breton. The unconscious as the ambivalent (nurturing/devouring) “mother” from which the conscious mind is born, has consistently been associated by men with the female over time, and is related to men’s historically ambivalent attitudes toward woman, that other “dark continent” as Freud called her.

This brings us to the surrealist view of women, which, although somewhat more positive than that of prior literary movements, continues to foment certain ideas and attitudes regarding women that contribute to their oppression. Ariane Guieu recognizes the surrealist tendency to subscribe to a great extent “au partage traditionnel de l’irrationalité féminine et de la rationalité masculine” (90); here again we encounter the destructive woman (flesh) – man (spirit) opposition explored in chapter 2. However, in the case of the surrealists, woman’s perceived connection to nature, the irrational, and the unconscious is deemed a positive force. Balakian explains that such connections place woman in the role of “‘voyante’ and as such [she] is a medium, not for the purpose of perpetrating any mystification, but as a guide toward clarification of confusions” (*Surrealism* 236). It is only through union with her that man reconciles flesh and spirit (hence the recuperation of the value of physical love by the surrealists, which was long rejected as sinful by the Church). Through this union he reconnects with nature and the cosmos, but equally with himself, for she is his spiritual guide through the labyrinth of the unconscious mind. This is, in fact, consistent with Jungian teachings that hold that individuation cannot occur in isolation, and, further, that in order to activate the contra sexual archetype, contact with an individual of the opposite sex is necessary (*Aspects of the Feminine* 179). Certainly, projections of the *anima* upon the women in a man’s life are common and can have damaging consequences, but if these can be overcome and recognized as such, a relationship with the opposite sex can indeed contribute to greater psychic wholeness. Further, Jung holds that a man is most likely to be drawn to the woman who most closely corresponds to his own *anima* (*Aspects of the Feminine* 78). It is for this reason that in *Arcane 17*, when speaking of his first encounter with Elisa (and

with whom he directly associates Mélusine), Breton speaks not of meeting, but of recognizing her; meeting someone who closely corresponds to a part of the self, even if that part has not yet been fully accessed and brought to consciousness, *feels* like finding one's other half. As we learned in chapter 1, Jung believed that men frequently repress *Eros* (relatedness), but in contact with a woman in whom it is not repressed, his own *Eros* can come to the surface. This creates a sense of connectedness, not just to her, but to others in general, and even to nature itself.

Eros was a particular preoccupation of Breton and his fellow surrealists. Although, following Freud, they used *Eros* in terms of the relationship between a man and woman, and particularly lauded physical love, if we consider their quest for unity both within and without, it is evident that *Eros* as Jung conceived of it is equally at work in surrealist writings. The physical and emotional union of man and woman is seen as of primary importance, for it is inherently representative of, even brings about, the reconciliation of opposites in the "supreme point," identified by the alchemists as the *lapis philosophorum* and by Jung as psychic wholeness or the self. Breton defined it as that point where "la vie et la mort, le réel et l'imaginaire, le passé et le futur, le communicable et l'incommunicable, le haut et le bas cessent d'être perçus contradictoirement" (*Manifestes* 72-73). Balakian recognizes that for Breton "love is a deepening sense of self in the material as well as the spiritual sense of the word, since the distinction is a verbal one rather than a real one to the surrealists"(236). She contends that, even if his belief in the law of compensations is important to understanding his optimism, "the primary reason that Breton could find hope in disaster is that he was able to call on the forces of love." (235).

The surrealists in love, then, exalt woman not only as the poet's inspiration, his muse, but also as his mediator and guide, who reveals hidden secrets of the inner and outer worlds, which they may in turn share through their art. However, if woman is generally perceived as a guide, she is a somewhat ambivalent one. According to Guieu, the surrealists describe woman as always a "fairy-like" creature who carries "la clé du monde" yet she is ascribed to one of two categories: the "femme sorcière" (a seductress or "femme-fatale" who can lead man to catastrophe) or the "femme-enfant" (vulnerable and always benevolent) (88). The second was their ideal woman, to whom they ascribe all the most positive (in their view) traits, but let us recall that Jung teaches that "one idealizes only if there is a secret fear to be exorcised" (136). Such idealization may indeed aid in resolving fear before woman, making of her an object worthy of the powerful emotions she produces in man, but this tends to result in the denigration of the real woman who cannot hope to live up to those expectations. As we will soon explore in greater depth, the two works by Breton in which Mélusine emerges bring forth these very images: as Grieu aptly remarks, if in *Nadja* we meet a vulnerable young "voyante", she is actually, due to her insanity, best recognized as the "femme-sorcière" (88). In the later *Arcane 17*, however, Mélusine is directly identified by Breton as a "femme-enfant." This progression clearly aligns with Legrand's identification of a

persistance dans la rêverie de Breton d'un type de "femme fatale" qu'il a maintes fois signalé lui-même comme l'ayant électivement conditionné : celui des héroïnes de Gustave Moreau, menacées menaçantes comme Hérodiade, ou " simplement" séduisantes, mais de par tous les prestiges d'un gouffre, comme la Fée aux Griffons. Je dirai que tout se passe

comme si la “femme-chimère” [...] avait précédé dans la pensée
 “subliminale” de Breton, l’avènement de la *femme-enfant*. [...] On dirait
 qu’entre le premier et le deuxième cri, [...] Mélusine, hier sirène
 maléfique, est devenue sylphide bienfaisante. (161-62)

As we found in the debates surrounding her nature brought up in chapter 2, the Mélusine of Jean d’Arras and Coudrette is an ambiguous creature, to say the least. But now as “sylphide bienfaisante,” or “femme-enfant” in Breton’s terminology, she more readily calls to mind the Ondine of La Motte Fouqué, certainly a creature more readily “maîtrisable” in accordance with Breton’s aims to master himself, his unconscious, and woman/love, and we should bear in mind that in between the unruly Nadja of his narrative of the same name, and *Arcane 17*, Breton indeed wrote a work in which not Mélusine, but her relative Ondine appears: *L’Amour fou*. Béhar has observed that Mélusine “hante les œuvres du premier des surréalistes, depuis *Nadja* jusqu’à *Arcane 17* (“La Mélusine surréaliste” 147). Hervé Menou has effectively shown that even prior to *Nadja*, Melusine’s traits permeate Breton’s poetic works – Menou identifies a “femme-serpent-nature” link arising in multiple works, including *Poisson soluble* and *Les Vases communicants*, as well as a frequent association between “la rencontre amoureuse réelle et des créatures aquatiques” (163). As we have seen in chapter 2, the associations of woman with snakes, nature, and water have been quite common across centuries and cultures (which we can attribute at least in part to the collective unconscious), yet the naming of Mélusine in two works clearly indicates that Breton had knowledge of the myth. Due to the surrealists’ interest in myth, it is certainly possible that Breton read the medieval works in which she appears, but in *Arcane 17*, we learn that Breton had already

expected to hear her cry during World War I, which, as Béhar reminds us, was well before Breton undertook his surrealist explorations. Thus, Béhar suspects that it is via Breton's grandfather that he first came to hear of Mélusine, since it is known that in his childhood Breton enjoyed listening to the avid storyteller who shared with him many old folktales and legends ("La Mélusine surréaliste" 148). Legrand agrees, considering Breton's incorporation of Mélusine in *Arcane 17* to be one of many cases in which Breton's Celtic heritage was "revendiquée et glorifiée" in his works (154). However, we know he had encountered Mélusine in the works of other writers, and in alchemical works, and as we learned in chapter 1, Mélusine played an important role in the alchemical process, which, according to Jung, is an outward projection of the inner quest for psychic wholeness, or individuation. Pascaline Mourier-Casile has examined the influence of prior texts within *Arcane 17*, particularly those involving Lilith or Mélusine, and finds that Breton operates a reversal, converting the "Mélusine fin de siècle" (who so clearly recalls her evil counterpart Lilith within those texts⁹⁵) into a "Mélusine lumineuse" (33).⁹⁶

However, the first Mélusine named as such in Breton's work is not at all luminous, though may certainly be considered illuminating. In *Nadja*, Breton tells of his

⁹⁵ Although Mourier-Casile makes mention of Péladan, whose work was addressed in chapter 2 above, she primarily examines two other late 19th century works: Alfred Jarry's *L'Amour absolu* and Rémy de Gourmont's *Lilith*. In both there appear lustful, immoral snake-women.

⁹⁶ This reversal is evidently a component of the wider-scale reversal which occurred from the mid-19th to the 20th centuries, of which Krell reminds us. He cites Gilbert Durand who, in his myth analysis undertaken in *Figures mythiques et visages de l'oeuvre: de la mythocritique à la mythanalyse* (Paris:Dunod 1979) finds that the Dionysian tendencies of the decadent writers (who frequently explored androgyny in terms of sexual excess), gradually give way to Hermeticism (as in the hermetic surrealist works). Krell observes that "the hermetic partakes of the androgynous, and is thus closely related to the enigmatic Mélusine" ("Between" 391). In the twentieth century androgyny is used to explore "the problematic of otherness" and the quest for unity (Durand 309-10 qtd. in Krell 391), thus Mélusine and Mercurius/Hermes take on a far more positive role during this period.

encounters with a woman on the brink of insanity who directly associates herself with Mélusine. Breton depicts Nadja as weak, lost, and needy; she frequently speaks of his power over her, as when she says: “Si vous vouliez, pour vous je ne serais rien, ou qu’une trace” (137), yet she is unpredictable and her unusual behaviors gradually wear thin. Breton appreciates her fairy-like aspect, she is “libre de tout lien terrestre” (104). Her ability to see people and her surroundings in new and unexpected ways draws him to her; as Paule Plouvier observes, through Nadja, Breton discovers a certain complicity between the inner and the outer which fascinates him and renews his passion for life (137). Through her he also progresses in his art, appropriating the abilities of his “initiatrice” to himself before finally ending what had gradually become a bothersome relationship. As Krell observes, here we have “woman as marginal victim, subjugated by men (that is Breton)” (“Between” 382). Krell cites stronger words from Katharine Conley, who considers Nadja “the most powerful as well as the most negative representative of Woman in Surrealism” (qtd. in “Between” 382). Yet, this negative image may in a sense apply to Breton himself; Plouvier identifies in Nadja Breton’s own double, “celle en qui il regarde fasciné et inquiet, car la possible folie de Nadja ne risquait-elle pas de devenir la sienne propre?” (137). The inspiration of this fear, combined with Nadja’s utter unpredictability and her progressive slipping toward insanity would certainly seem to explain Breton’s break with her. And recalling that desire for mastery already discussed, we might add that in Nadja he had certainly found a woman, who, in spite of her apparent vulnerability, was far from “maîtrisable.” Plouvier explains that the vital difference between Breton and this unusual mediator, guide, and double, is that Nadja will remain lost, imprisoned within the “fureur des symboles” she has revealed to him (138), while

Breton guards against losing himself completely or going so far that he cannot simply revel in their discovery, always holding instead to an appreciation of what he called “le naturel,” within which “il y a plaisir et jouissance du monde; la vie y est moins interrogée qu’agie”(138).

When the name Mélusine surfaces in *Nadja*, it does so ostensibly due to Nadja’s interest in her, yet, as Henri Béhar reminds us, we should take care not to assume too quickly that it was Nadja who supplied the name; Breton mediates between her and the reader, and it is he who brings the name into play, so it may actually be the result of “une projection de Breton” (“La Mélusine des surréalistes” 147.) As we learned in chapter 2, a multitude of mythological creatures have close ties to Melusine, though they bear different names, and the images drawn by Nadja which are shown in the novel reveal to us little more than the back view of a creature with long hair, and a fish’s tail (consistent with Melusinian imagery, yet more evocative of the mermaid). Breton writes : “Elle compose un moment avec beaucoup d’art, jusqu’à en donner l’illusion très singulière, le personnage de Mélusine” (*Nadja* 125). Directly following these words, he cites Nadja, who evokes neither mermaid nor Mélusine, but still another relative of these two creatures – Medusa: “Qui a tué la Gorgone? Dis-moi, dis” (125). Breton also tells us she had her hairdresser carefully arrange her hair in the form of a star, turning up two points to frame her face as ram’s horns, in order better to resemble Mélusine (155). However, as Béhar points out, this hairstyle does not correspond to traditional Melusinian imagery, thus he suggests this was purely a fancy dreamt up by Breton (“La Mélusine” 148). Whether Nadja actually wore her hair in this way or even knew of Mélusine, we cannot be sure, but Suzanne Lamy has uncovered a likely influence upon this hairstyle, which

appears to evoke the Egyptian goddess Isis, often represented with ram's horns. Lamy has identified a passage in a book entitled *L'histoire de la magie* which was published in 1892, by a "modern" alchemist, Eliphas Levi, whose works Breton is known to have read. In the book, Levi, provides his own version of the origin of the fairy Melusine, evidently blending her myth with that of Isis. He identifies her earliest name as Hertha or Wertha, referring to her as "la jeune Isis gauloise, [...] reine de l'initiation [qui] présidait à la science universelle des choses" (qtd. in Lamy 95). Due to this role, he says she was typically depicted with one foot upon land and one upon the sea, that foot within a boat or the conch associated with Isis, and he adds she was depicted as either half woman-half fish or half woman with two serpent legs "pour signifier la mutation et la mobilité continuelle des choses, et l'alliance analogique des contraires dans la manifestation de toutes les forces occultes de la nature." It is in this form that she took on the name of Mélusine, "c'est à dire la sirène révélatrice des harmonies" (qtd. in Lamy 95). This passage not only aids our understanding of the fanciful hairstyle of Nadja/Mélusine, it will also contribute to our understanding of Mélusine as she appears within *Arcane 17*, where she is closely linked to Isis.

Before examining Mélusine's second appearance in Breton's work (in *Arcane 17*), it is helpful to consider briefly the role of Mélusine's relative Ondine as she appears in *L'Amour fou*, as well. Although one might expect the child-like innocent water spirit encountered in La Motte Fouqué's tale, this character is not shown to be particularly child-like, and in fact appears to inspire a degree of uncertainty, even fear in Breton. As he walks beside her through Paris at night, his fears emerge :

Toutes sortes de défenses se peignent autour de moi, des rires clairs fusent
des années passées pour finir en sanglots, sous les grands battements
d'ailes d'une nuit peu sûre de printemps. Peu sûre : c'est bien, en effet,
toute l'insécurité qui est en moi dès que, cette nuit-là, je me reprends à lire
dans l'avenir ce qui pourrait, ce qui devrait être si le cœur *disposait*. (715)

As they walk, his knowledge (gleaned from personal experience) that loves fade and end exacerbates a worry provoked by a sense of the loss of their connection which he had felt earlier when speaking with her face to face: "J'en suis réduit à m'arrêter de temps à autre pour immobiliser devant moi le visage que je ne puis supporter plus longtemps de voir s'offrir de profil" (716). In the following chapter, however, those fears have dissipated and the two become one in love, their "journey" to this point representing, according to Richard Danier, the alchemical work, which is itself "avant tout une oeuvre d'amour" (110). As described in our above discussion of the surrealist view of love, here love and physical union grant Breton access to a greater unity with the surrounding nature, and within the psyche. It is interesting to note the silence of Ondine throughout the process. Whereas Nadja spoke, Ondine is simply an accompanying presence; additionally, little is revealed about her, and the name of Jacqueline Lamba (whom she represents) is concealed. Danier explains that "Breton n'a pas voulu la figer dans sa réalité historique, mais il garde sa généralité, son éternité ; elle peut de cette manière représenter plus facilement le Guide, la femme, la fée, la vierge ... Ce que le personnage perd en précision, il gagne en puissance évocatrice" (76). She is "toutes les femmes qu'il a cherchées et, par là, la femme unique " (76). Here again, the role of Ondine is that of guide, although in this case, rather than actively teaching, it is above all by their union

that Breton moves forward in his quest for unity and self-knowledge already begun in *Nadja*, which had been inaugurated with the opening line of that book “Qui suis-je?” This time, “l’acteur principal de la démarche, le ‘sujet,’ reste [...] le poète seul; Ondine n’est pas là que pour le seconder dans sa quête” (Danier 77).

The clear evocation of psychic journey coupled with the evident guiding and illuminating role of the feminine figures (so typical of surrealist works) has, not surprisingly, led to the recognition of *Nadja* and *Ondine* as *anima* figures. As we know, the *Mélusine* of literary myth has been identified as *anima* figure and spiritual guide. Many critics have recognized that in *Arcane 17*, she takes on these roles as well. Eidelginger examines *Mélusine*’s myth as one of several different ones evoked in the work,⁹⁷ all having in common the theme of reconciliation and the creation of wholeness (we could certainly apply here the term “healing”), thus the myth repeats the very role Eidelginger sees myth to play in general within *Arcane 17* – that of a bringing together of disparate parts and apparent oppositions into a unified whole. Like Michel Beaujour, he recognizes the vital role of Elisa, whom Breton directly associates with multiple mythical feminine figures, and particularly *Mélusine*, in this quest for unity. Beaujour reminds that from the very first line of the narrative, we find that it is Elisa who provides the “mais c’est” – the interpretation of the dream of the old gypsy as Bonaventure Island – it is she who reveals hidden relationships, and deciphers the obscure language of all that surrounds them, who illuminates the darkness. From the very beginning, then, “Tout est déjà placé sous le signe de la sorcière, de la voyante, de la fée qui illumine le rocher, et de

⁹⁷ He identifies four primary myths – Plato’s androgyne, *Mélusine*, the 17th Arcanum of tarot, and the myth of Isis and Osiris.

Mélusine la terrestre” (Beaujour 223). Both Eidelgenger and Beaujour occasionally borrow from Jungian terminology, yet with minimal or no explanation of those terms, and unfortunate errors occur, especially with regard to the terms *anima* and *animus*.⁹⁸

Richard Danier’s analysis pays closest attention to the psychological aspect of the narrative in his analysis which also encompasses *Nadja* and *L’Amour Fou*, as he considers them an alchemical trilogy.⁹⁹ He is well aware of the correlation of the alchemical work with the individuation process,¹⁰⁰ yet also makes similar errors, which could provoke some confusion, thus it appears necessary to address this prior to undertaking my own analysis.

Danier explains Breton’s goal and the *anima*’s contributing role in this way : “le but est de connaître son moi, d’atteindre le soi pour reconstituer la personnalité disloquée. L’équilibre *animus/anima* retrouvé permet d’atteindre l’homme parfait” (39).

Unfortunately these statements are replete with errors more of terminology perhaps than

⁹⁸ In a discussion of the two streams united by the “Verseuse” in *Arcane 17*, Beaujour says the second stream “offre à *animus* le réconfort d’*anima*”(235). Eidelgenger speaks of these same streams and similarly comments that their “deux discours du feu et de l’eau, tout en étant clairement différenciés, sont complémentaires, comme le sont, dans la psychologie de Jung, l’*animus* et l’*anima*” (214). This indicates a certain misunderstanding of Jungian terminology, which I will address in an examination of Danier’s similar application of the terms.

⁹⁹ Lamy has also identified a link across the three works : *Nadja* a été l’initiatrice; c’est elle qui a entraîné Breton dans une voie à contre-courant de son éducation, de sa culture, de son époque et ouvert en lui une brèche par laquelle l’amour dans sa toute puissance s’est implanté ultérieurement au plus creux de son être. [...] *L’amour fou* a livré le poème du hasard objectif et de l’amour qui prend tout le pouvoir. *Arcane 17* pose un jalon, le dernier d’une telle importance sur le plan de la création littéraire, dans cette recherche de la Toison d’or entreprise vingt ans auparavant” (Lamy 31).

¹⁰⁰ Other writers have analyzed to varying degrees the alchemical component of *Arcane 17*, treating the closely related psychological component, but to a limited degree, due to their specific aims. Jean Schoenfeld focuses upon elaborating the meaning and significance of specific alchemical imagery, relating it to the image-making process. Suzanne Lamy did an extensive and far-ranging analysis to aid comprehension of this hermetic text replete with intertextual references, among these were, of course, alchemical ones. Mourier-Casile’s focus is a reduced number of specific and not so clearly evident intertextual references, including alchemical ones, but specifically those which come into play in Breton’s treatment of mythical women appearing in the text.

of notion, but due to the importance of clarity upon this vital point, let us recall briefly the individuation process as it was explained in chapter 1. We must establish first that an equilibrium between *animus* and *anima* is not at issue here. The *animus* resides in the unconscious of women, thus certainly not in Breton. Rather what is sought is a bringing together in harmony of his ego consciousness with unconscious contents (the *anima*). Certainly this brings about greater knowledge – Danier expresses this by referring to the goal of knowing “le moi,” the ego, which he rightly distinguishes from the “soi” Jung’s “Self” which refers to the totality of the psyche. However to “attain” the Self is neither an entirely accurate way of expressing the progress toward that greater wholeness which is the goal of individuation, nor is it a real possibility. We can attain greater knowledge of the Self by increasing knowledge of what is hidden within the unconscious mind, but we can never expect to “attain the Self,” which would imply a complete psychic unity. Nor can the eternally elusive equilibrium of the two psychic components (ego consciousness/unconscious) “permet l’accès à l’homme parfait.” As we learned in chapter 1, Jung held that just as the ultimate objective of the alchemical work (the *lapis philosophorum*/ alchemical gold/ elixir of life) was never truly achieved, no individual can ever achieve the full realization of the unified, perfected self. (In addition, the assumption of having achieved perfection always results in an overblown ego, and the psychic disequilibrium and negative consequences upon relationships that this brings about). The ongoing effort to bring to light hidden knowledge, that is, the constant striving toward unity, is what is needed, according to Jung’s theories.

In spite of these unfortunate errors of terminology, Danier has effectively shown that the alchemical process is at work across *Nadja*, *Ondine*, and *Arcane 17*, and,

moreover, has identified a progression, corresponding to the alchemical process, which, he posits, culminates in *Arcane 17* with the ultimate achievement of the sought for unity. Danier concludes, then, that Breton actually becomes a master of the alchemical art and produces the sought for “*or du temps*.” According to Danier, he has accomplished, within the textual space at least, the impossible – the *lapis* has come forth, and Breton has achieved full psychic unity, which for Breton implies “mastery” of the unconscious, the *anima*, and, one could potentially say of woman and love, for certainly the doubts and uncertainties he experienced in relation to the feminine figures in the other two works are gone in *Arcane 17*. No fear is evoked in relation to Elisa or to the multiple mythical women evoked, all of whom are presented under the sign of the benevolent “femme-enfant.”¹⁰¹ Like Eidelginger and Beaujour, Danier identifies Mélusine/Elisa as guiding *anima*, yet now she, who once guided Breton, serves primarily to guide the world to achieve the unity he has achieved. Danier finds that Breton now speaks to us, no longer as “adept” but as “sage,” sharing his knowledge from a fixed position as observer. This role and positioning of Breton within the text is quite accurate. Yet, the unfolding images of the waking dream he shares with us could in themselves be considered part of a psychic journey. Must we, then, assume that this inner journey is a reproduction of a process he considers to have been brought to completion?

Suzanne Lamy notices that at the close of the series of alchemical and mythical images appearing in the narrative “tout est encore en gestation. A achever, à accomplir” (114). She refers here in particular to the apparent incoherence of the final myth evoked,

¹⁰¹ We should perhaps bear in mind that in Elisa, Breton has found a woman who needs him, whom he has in a sense returned to life, thus the dynamics of the relationship itself are not particularly conducive to a sense of fear.

that of Isis and Osiris, which emerges well after the appearance of Mélusine. She reveals that Breton draws upon a version of the story written by Plutarch (108), yet observes there are many gaps in Breton's retelling, even that, "la succession d'événements n'est pas suffisamment ordonnée et élaborée pour constituer une histoire" (114). I propose there *is* a story here, albeit a circular and somewhat convoluted one, and it is a story we can follow if we apply a Jungian analysis of mythical and alchemical references. This "story" begins not at the point at which the goddess Isis is first evoked, but much earlier in the narrative, with a crucial pair: the Rocher Percé (or Pierced Rock), appearing at the close of the first section of the two-part text, and Mélusine, who opens the second part, and who is, most assuredly, "l'assise et la colonne vertébrale du développement de la deuxième partie" (Plouvier 176). An initial analysis of these two (literally and thematically) central images will reveal their shared alchemical symbolism. Further, the story that unfolds around them will be shown to stress the necessary, inescapable, and continual alternation of times of darkness with times of light, thus of the process of death and regeneration that Breton evidently recognizes as being an integral part not only of life itself,¹⁰² but also of the alchemical work and individuation. I argue that it is for this reason that this story – although quite coherent within its frame of reference to alchemy (and thus individuation) – carries, like those cycles it represents, a certain aspect of "inachevé." This story also appears to reveal that even if Breton, the "sage," may well have discovered the *path* toward unity and achieved a greater sense of wholeness since encountering Elisa and his *anima* within, he recognizes (as does Jung) the inescapable

¹⁰² As we have seen, Béhar considers this the principal lesson to be gained from the narrative, so consistent with Breton's "law of compensations."

truth that full realization of the “supreme point” at which all opposites are reconciled is eternally elusive. Breton conveys that despite this elusiveness, it is vital that an effort to achieve it continually be made, which will always require the refusal of complacency and blind acceptance of dogma, thus revolt. However, throughout this analysis, time and time again, we will find evidence of his complicating desire for mastery – which continuously problematizes not only Breton’s stated desire for the reconciliation of opposites, but also the credibility of his desire expressed in relation to Mélusine that society’s dominant “système masculin” be overturned and replaced by a feminine one.

I agree with Danier (and so many others) that within *Arcane 17*, Mélusine takes on the role of *anima* and guide, yet she is far more than this. Although Breton provides a myriad of feminine images and key non-human ones, Mélusine, as she is presented by Breton, emerges as the only one in which, in a single body, a single being, are assembled so many oppositions that we may consider her a physical representation of the “supreme point.”¹⁰³ This point refers not only to that ultimate elusive goal of alchemy and individuation of all oppositions joined in harmony, but also to the point from which all that exists originally sprung forth. Thus it is both *prima materia* (the undifferentiated unconscious) and the *lapis* (the whole and ever-elusive self). The Rocher Percé (Pierced Rock), which equally brings together a myriad of oppositions, can be recognized as a prefiguration of Mélusine. And just as the appearance of the Rocher Percé sparks a chain of powerful images representing an alchemical and psychological drama, it is from

¹⁰³ Henri Béhar, whose *Cahiers du centre de recherche sur le surréalisme* took for its title “Mélusine,” remarks that this choice of title was influenced by Mélusine’s status as an “être double, appartenant simultanément à deux univers (sinon trois puisqu’elle vole), Mélusine est une synthèse des contraires [...] [et] une allégorie du ‘point sublime’ ” (“Mélusine des surréalistes” 157).

Mélusine that a series of myths emerge and merge to reveal and take up that drama once again in new ways. For this reason, we can recognize an alchemical arch or “bridge” uniting the two halves of *Arcane 17*. Both images thus represent in all respects the alchemical Mercurius – who represents the original unity, the reconciling agent (i.e. archetypal healer and spiritual guide), and the final perfected unity. Both, then, as representatives of the paradisiacal origin and the ultimate goal, are powerful symbols of light and healing. We must bear in mind, however, that Mercurius is considered “duplex” by the alchemists – he contains both an active and passive principle – and the alchemists (males like Breton) identify the active under the sign of *Sol* (the sun) and the passive under the sign of *Luna* (the moon). Jung explains, however, that ultimately “*Sol* and *Luna* are merely aspects of the same substance that is simultaneously the cause and the product of both, namely Mercurius Duplex of whom the philosophers say that he contains everything that is sought by the wise” (*Aspects of the Feminine* 99). The Rocher Percé presents us with the more masculine version of the Mercurius Duplex, thus its guiding light comes from “*Sol*,” while Mélusine’s light is that of “*Luna*,” and in this respect they also represent consciousness and unconscious, by whose union are brought healing and renewal and the creation of a new, third source of light which reconciles the light of the Sun and the Moon – the light of the Morning Star.

The Hidden Complexities of the Initial Cosmic Pair:
Analysis of the Rocher Percé and Mélusine

Schoenfeld quite rightly observes that “The Rock of Percé¹⁰⁴ dominates the entire first part of *Arcane 17*. It generates Breton’s associative imagery and when framed by the window recalls the mandala in both form and function” (496). She accurately recognizes the mandala, using Jung’s terminology, as “an aid to contemplation” and an “inner image,” which is gradually built up through (active) imagination, at such times when the psychic equilibrium is disturbed”¹⁰⁵ (*Psychology and Alchemy* 95-96, qtd. in Schoenfeld 496). *Arcane 17* applies traits typical of Jung’s technique of active imagination, by which the unconscious is freed, bringing forth inner images which are its means of making its contents known. *Arcane 17* is among Breton’s experimental narrative works, written in keeping with the surrealist rejection of the traditional novel, “ces livres ridicules” (Breton, *Manifestes* 16) which attempt to reproduce reality, denying the sheer unpredictability of existence and neglecting the “illogical.” I have chosen to apply the term “narrative,” although the actual genre of *Arcane 17* is, like Mélusine herself, difficult to pin down categorically, for it blends prose poetry, autobiographical narrative, and essay. The free flow of ideas and of constantly metamorphosing images is broken only by occasional blank spaces and a single skipped page which marks the division into two halves. Lamy, who accurately identifies Elisa with the mediating alchemical mercury, points out that the division of the narrative into two halves and the two writing

¹⁰⁴ The translation of the name of the rock formation here used is not entirely accurate; Rocher Percé, is best translated as “Pierced Rock.”

¹⁰⁵ Schoenfeld appropriately adds that a time of war is certainly a time of psychic disequilibrium (496). Let us also recall here Jung’s belief that such times are most propitious to the emergence of unconscious contents.

styles Breton applies (both poetic and didactic) evoke the duality of this substance (132-133); they equally evoke the duality of the mercurial Mélusine with whom Elisa is closely associated in the narrative. Another structural evocation of Mélusine may be found in the style of writing, for it undulates much like the serpent-woman Mélusine (Mourier-Casile 16). This style of writing certainly recalls the flow one might expect in active imagination, but also the very emergence of the Rocher Percé as the primary image of the first half recalls the technique, for Jung tells us the individual begins by focusing upon an initial “dream image, or on a spontaneous visual impression, and observes the changes taking place within it” (*Aspects of the Feminine* 151), which is precisely what occurs as the Rocher Percé image unfolds and expands in complex “associative imagery” as Schoenfeld calls it. Let us bear in mind here that the image with which this sequence begins, the Rocher Percé, is quite real. The enormous rock formation just off the coast of Gaspésie was seen by Breton during his trip with Elisa. Due to its actual existence, his application of this particular image as his “inner” guide to contemplation implies in itself the reconciliation of the inner and outer worlds, one aspect of the unity sought by Breton. In active imagination, Jung taught that as the images develop, ultimately the archetypal image most needed will emerge – which is here the archetypal healer, as we have determined. The multiple components and emerging contents of the Rocher Percé first converge into an initial representation of this archetype as Mercurius/*Sol*, but then, in the singular and more feminine image of Mélusine, Mercurius appears once again as *Luna*.

Although the Rocher Percé is evidently the initial guiding image, such an image does not necessarily have to be a mandala, although they are indeed used in such processes. When Schoenfeld refers to the Rocher Percé as a mandala, she does not

mention the traditional circular form these take, which evokes the self (conscious and unconsciousness joined, thus wholeness). The Rocher Percé is not circular in shape. Rather it is a large squared off boulder which emerges from the sea – which, we must add, is a point of significance in itself, as the sea is, of course, a symbol of the mother/unconscious from which consciousness is born, so just as this guiding image is emerging from the mother/ unconscious, it here emerges, quite literally, from the mother/ sea. Schoenfeld describes the Rocher Percé as “mandala” only in relation to the window through which Breton views it,¹⁰⁶ simultaneously assigning to it both shapes involved in mandalas (the circle and the square), yet the mandala involves a circle *within* a square. Jung explains that the phenomenology of the *lapis* or the archetype of the Self “is exemplified in mandala symbolism, which portrays the Self in a concentric structure, often in the form of a squaring of the circle” (*Mysterium* 544). The mandala also symbolizes “by its central point, the ultimate unity of all archetypes as well as the multiplicity of the phenomenal world, and it is therefore the empirical equivalent of the metaphysical concept of the *unus mundus*” (463) (here again is our “supreme point”).¹⁰⁷ Schoenfeld has effectively addressed this latter concept in relation to the Rocher Percé. She observes that the rock “literally teems with distant realities that have been conjoined. The primary conjunction is that of organic with inorganic [...] , of life with non-life [which] dissolves easily into the reconciliation of two opposites of alchemy: life and

¹⁰⁶ She states that “the window frame does not only circumscribe the object for contemplation, but it also suggests the quaternary structure that delineates the mandala” (496). The term “circumscribe” here at least *suggests* the circularity of the mandala.

¹⁰⁷ Jung explains that the circle “apart from the point itself, is the simplest symbol of wholeness and therefore the simplest God-image” (*Alchemical Studies* 337), which, in Jungian terms, corresponds with the Self.

death [...] . The rock becomes a concrete manifestation of the supreme point precisely because of the reconciliations it effects” (497). This is perhaps sufficient to identify the Rocher Percé as supreme point, yet she also identifies the rock as mandala, and within these are situated the supreme point, so where is the circle within the square? Actually there are many, evidently overlooked in Schoenfeld’s analysis, and all of these circles are of vital importance as Breton prepares us for the arrival of Mélusine.

In his description of the Rocher Percé, which he considers a “modèle de justesse naturelle” (*Arcane 17* 34) Breton notes that this large squared-off rock formation “se présente en deux parties,” which he describes quite “harmoniously,” we might say, as having on one side a portion resembling the profile of Bach, on the other, an organ above which a sort of sea vessel is perched, and below which is the opening – the pierced point of the Rocher Percé, which creates an arch (34-35), symbolic of the union of opposites (and of its narrative function as bridge once it is linked to Mélusine who opens the text’s second half). We learn that through this pierced portion of the rock, Breton enjoys watching the sun rise (51). The sun is, of course, circular, which evokes the Self, yet also represents the light of consciousness, thus the ego. An additional circular image which Breton imagines within the rock is that of the rose window of Notre Dame. Contemplating the lengthy existence of this rock formation he finds it “émouvant” that it encompasses “une telle succession d’existences humaines” – this evocation of the unity of time and history in this rock which has and will continue to witness the rise and fall of civilizations is followed by the thought of gunshots in Paris which he imagines “retentissent en ce moment jusqu’à l’intérieur de Notre-Dame, dont la grande rosace se retourne” (49). Directing his attention back to the rock, he adds: “Et voici que cette

grande rosace vire et gire dans le rocher” (49). The revolving of the rose window evokes the powerful changes and reversals happening within both the outer and inner worlds. Soon after, he shares with us a tale about “la petite fille à l’harfang,” who, he imagines, lives imprisoned within the rock, held there by a witch who gives her the task of watching over a snowy owl while her captor concocts a poisonous brew. Here we encounter the two surrealist images of woman – witch and “femme-enfant,” both of whom dwell within the darkness of the rock, i.e. Mother Earth, representing the unconscious as a whole, which harbors within it the *anima* archetype, and indeed appears frequently as an ambivalent image; here Breton separates the *anima* into the two extremes. Bearing in mind that “femme-enfant” is the term he applies to Mélusine, we can recognize in this little girl an initial representative of Mélusine as *anima* figure within the unconscious. This little girl also paves the way for Mélusine, as representative of unity (supreme point), in that “Mélusine ne peut apparaître, elle, la transparente, qu’une fois l’opacité dissipée” (Mourier-Casile 111).

The snowy owl teaches the little girl the secret of the creation of light, or, more precisely, to create “un oeil étincelant et fixe, pareil au sien” (*Arcane 17* 50). The eye is itself an orb, thus we encounter here another circular image; it is also the proverbial “window to the soul.” It is important to notice that the lights to be created will mimic the eye of the owl – notably spoken of in the singular, thereby evoking the “third eye” or the inner eye which sees inner truths hidden to the conscious mind. The little girl’s vision becomes keen, as well, and she becomes adept at creating other eyes, to illuminate the depths of the unconscious and end the darkness there, the inner blindness. Interestingly, the technique applied to create that light is to touch an empty scallop shell, “élément

féminin par excellence” (Lamy 206), with a damp straw from a broomstick. Lamy indicates that this evokes the sexual act, symbolic of the union of opposites which creates true illumination, and further, that the owl and the girl themselves “reconstituent, par le couple qu’ils forment, l’équivalent du couple alchimique, soit l’union des principes opposés parvenus à l’union” (206). Here we have the *anima* archetype and the archetype of the Wise Old Man “who personifies *meaning*” – both of whom are archetypal images which can come into play in progress toward psychological insights (Jung, *Mysterium* 233). Interestingly, though, rather than associate wisdom with the *anima* (not unheard of, as we learned from Knapp in chapter 2 above, and certainly Mélusine herself was quite wise in the literary myth, and has been associated by Knapp with Sophia) here, although the *anima* as little girl/ “femme-enfant” brings light and ends the opacity within the rock, the origin of her knowledge and keen sight lies with a masculine figure.

In *Arcane 17*, a chief concern for Breton as he muses upon what is wrong with modern society is man’s blindness – he finds that man is unable to clearly see truths about the world around him and about himself: “la grande ennemie de l’homme est l’opacité. Cette opacité est en dehors de lui et elle est surtout en lui, où l’entretiennent les opinions conventionnelles et toutes sortes de défenses suspectes ” (36). To the contrary, he lauds the “femme-enfant” for her “état de transparence absolue – l’autre prisme de vision” to which she has a special access (64). As has been noticed by a number of critics (including Danier and Plouvier, for instance), since the surrealists placed a high value upon children’s ability to “see” better than adults (due to their as yet unrestricted imaginations), applying the term “enfant” to woman is not without a certain positive connotation, yet we must recognize, as does Mourier-Casile, that one cannot escape the

fact that the term is, at the very least, “quelque peu paternaliste” (91). The work of the snowy owl appears to confirm this paternalism – for the little girl needs his aid and guidance to bring forth the light she was capable of producing, and this implies a contradiction – one must wonder if the *anima* (and the woman who activates her) is really the surrealist’s guide after all? We should notice that frequently in the more didactic passages Breton positions himself as woman’s guide, aiming to save *her* from her own ignorance of her “true” feminine nature, which she has lost sight of or denied due to its devaluing by masculine society. He warns that “il faut que la femme se retrouve,” (56) so that, through her, man and society may access those feminine qualities which have been repressed and rejected. In Breton’s view, it appears, woman is essentially as blind as man, and has herself repressed the feminine. He has projected his idealized notion of femininity (his *anima* stripped of its dark side) upon woman and found her lacking. Here we run into the dangers of projection – for within his very call for freedom and greater power for women, by basing the need for this upon a supposed notion of what women are and should be, he ends up imposing limits himself. Sonia Assa observes that “Breton entourait de sollicitude, de flatteries et de condescendance les nombreuses femmes à qui il avait accordé le privilège douteux d’être des femmes-enfants,” and, although Breton may express frustration with the inner blindness of man which he believes must be ended, he is himself “aveugle ... d’une cécité qui couvrait toutes les femmes réelles” (36).

In psychological terms, certainly the activity of man’s conscious mind or ego, specifically its effort to delve into the unconscious, is required in order to access the *anima* “imprisoned” within the “rock,” yet it is necessary to recall that Jung insists that the *anima* is, like woman herself, far *from* helpless – if the conscious mind ignores and

represses her, she will emerge against the ego's will. An additional aspect of the snowy owl/little girl juxtaposition to bear in mind is the presence of the *logos/Eros* opposition. Although the owl is teacher, associated with *logos*, the feminine being is the one who unites scallop shell and straw, indicative of her capacity for *Eros* (relatedness). As we will see, this dynamic is maintained and reproduced throughout the narrative, and can be seen to represent the dynamic of woman/surrealist, for although she leads the poet to inner illumination by activating his *anima* and bringing him in contact with a lost part of himself, the poet is teacher, for it is he, through his writing, who will share new ways of seeing the world.

Within the rock, the little girl creates a multitude of "eyes," each bearing light, and eventually "les lumières s'apprêtent à communiquer" (50). It is "enlightening" to take into account briefly the meaning of the multiple eyes within the rock. These are clearly evocative of the "scintillae" described in alchemical texts, considered to exist within the earth in great number and commonly called "fishes eyes" for they were considered "always open, like the eye of God" (*Mysterium* 51). As we saw above, this is exactly how the eyes are described by Breton - "étincelant[s] et fixe[s]" (50). The presence of these eyes in the alchemical work was believed to indicate that "the *lapis* is in the process of evolution; ultimately it grows from these ubiquitous eyes" (*Mysterium* 51). Once joined they refer to the *lapis*, and also to the one eye of God, which is the sun (52). In psychological terms, Jung reveals that these multiple eyes correspond to unconscious complexes and splinter personalities, which give off their own individual "light," which mimics the light of consciousness (53), represented in the eye of the owl. It is vital to bring together these multiple lights, that is, to recognize the existence of the splinter

personalities within the unconscious in order to move toward a greater sense of wholeness.

The communication among the multiple lights within Breton's rock ultimately achieves this aim, for once the lights are connected, the broom (the male component, since it is the source of the straw) transforms into an egret that "fait la roue" (certainly the term itself, "wheel," is evocative of the circle) this action refers more precisely to the fanning of the bird's feathers, which Breton says span "sur toute l'étendue du rocher" (51), thus all is united. He also adds that the egret's body inserts itself "tout naturellement [...] dans la découpure de la brèche," which links the egret to the sun, for this is the precise point where Breton so enjoys viewing the sun (51). Lamy finds that the egret's insertion into the breach recalls the sexual image of the insertion of the straw into the scallop shell, thus union of masculine and feminine, and it is at this point that Breton describes the rock as an "arch" implying reconciliation (Lamy 207). We should notice as well that just as Mélusine cannot make her appearance until the unconscious is illuminated, nor can this egret. Here, although his body is shown as synonymous with the sun, and therefore represents consciousness, his wing span encompasses all – thus the Rocher Percé made one by the egret's wings clearly symbolizes the supreme point, the Self, now enlightened and whole.

The term "egret" is commonly applied to members of several species of herons, usually white, with large plumes in the mating season ("Egret"). In Egyptian mythology, the heron is considered the "bearer of light" and is associated with the phoenix and with rebirth; he is also a "ba" or soul form of Osiris and of the sun god Ra with whom Osiris

was sometimes conflated over time,¹⁰⁸ clearly suggesting the egret-sun link established here by Breton. Osiris, killed and cut into multiple pieces by his brother Set, was reassembled and revived by Isis, a myth that appears later in the text. We should also bear in mind that the egret (or heron) closely resembles the ibis, and thus evokes the ibis-headed Egyptian god Thoth – the Egyptian counterpart of Mercurius/Hermes, and this is consistent with our identification of the Rocher Percé united by the egret as representative of the active half of the Mercurius Duplex, *Sol*. As we know, Mélusine and Isis are closely related in Breton's writings, due to the apparent influence of Eliphas Levi, thus Isis, Osiris's sister-wife, can be found to correspond to Mélusine as *Luna*. In a discussion of the alchemical importance of Isis and Osiris, Danier cites the alchemist Michael Maier who explains that “le soleil est Osiris [. . .], la lune, de son côté est Isis, et ce sont les parties du composé qui avant l'opération est appelé pierre et du nom de tout métal [Mercurius as *prima materia*] ” (132). Together, the two unite the four elements – Osiris, fire and air; Isis, water and earth (Danier 132). Significantly all four elements may be found in the image of the Rocher Percé (earth – the rock, water – the sea from which it emerges, air – the egret, and fire – the sun);¹⁰⁹ this conjunction of the four elements occurs in the image Breton creates of Mélusine, as well, as our analysis of her physical representation will soon reveal. She, too, is a symbol of totality and is herself the supreme point, yet presented under the sign of a feminine dominant.

¹⁰⁸ According to Geraldine Pinch, these gods shared association with the heron (or more precisely the mythical *benu* bird, prototype of the phoenix, modeled upon the heron) is an “expression of the ‘secret knowledge’ that these two gods were one” (117).

¹⁰⁹ It should be noticed that this quaternary aspect repeats that of the window which Schoenfeld recognizes as framing the mandala.

The switch to a feminine representative of the supreme point at the opening of the second half of the narrative could be said to correspond to Breton's call for an overturning of the current dominant masculine order, evoked after the "malédiction" [that of the separation of the masculine and the feminine, and of male and female] is lifted by the work of the little girl and the owl (52). An angel raises a huge stone, then casts it into the sea heralding the end of the old masculine system, and a second stone, identical to the first, its counterpoint, is raised and becomes one with the Rocher Percé; this rock Breton identifies with love, the union of man and woman, which he holds can only come to full fruition in a world which validates the feminine. It is the little girl of the Rocher Percé (albeit with the aid of the owl, of course), the representative of Mélusine as benevolent *anima* figure and "femme-enfant," who defeats the snake, "le boa" dwelling within the rock. This snake represents the shadow side of the conscious sun,¹¹⁰ and it creates opacity and division. It also is associated with Lucifer as deceiver (Mourier-Casile 53). The little girl, by illuminating the rock, creates a "transmutation éblouissante" which ends the opacity produced by the snake; the rock becomes "transparente" (51), and the deceiver is thus "vaincu" (53). This creature "se lovait dans les meandres de la roche pesante et [...] lorsque la pensée filait d'ici vers d'autres régions, venait sifflait quand ce n'était ouvrir sa gueule triangulaire dans l'échancrure" (53). This association of the snake with the triangle, symbol of the active/phallic/masculine, also represents a world order which limits free thought, preventing the exploration of "autres régions" including the

¹¹⁰Jung explains that *Sol* always has a shadow according to the alchemists - a mist that is capable not only of obscuring the sun, but of befouling it (*Mysterium* 97).

unconscious and the effort to access truths that contradict strongly held dogmas, which themselves include the devaluation of *Eros* and the feminine.

Breton blames the dominant masculine order for the divisiveness and blindness he recognizes in modern society, and which have contributed to war. Interestingly, Jung, too, writing just after World War I, spoke of the absence of *Eros* in modern patriarchal society, blaming “soul-destroying unrelatedness” as the cause of “the barbarities of war;” he expressed the hope that women, with their more-developed sense of *Eros*, could bring healing to what “*logos* has sundered” (*Aspects of the Feminine* 74-75). Now, as World War II comes to a close, Breton calls for a return of the feminine (which he associates with mother-love and relatedness, akin to Jung’s *Eros*) which has been too-long rejected like Mélusine herself, whose return signals this reversal. He conceives of this missing element as what is needed to end war in the world “je ne vois qu’elle [Mélusine] qui puisse rédimer cette époque sauvage” (60). Given his disassociation of woman and the feminine, although he refers to Mélusine as a representative of woman, we should recognize that she is, rather, “cette femme perdue même dans la femme,” the feminine aspect that he believes both sexes need (Plouvier 179). Breton, like Jung, initially appears to suggest that woman must lead the way, expressing a hope for “*le salut terrestre par la femme*, de la vocation transcendante de la femme, vocation qui s’est trouvée systématiquement obscurcie, contrariée ou dévoyée jusqu’à nous” (47). We should notice, though, that although both Jung and Breton speak of a need for women’s involvement, proposing in somewhat idealistic terms that she, who has been so long denied power, can simply step up and undo the damage brought on by the suppression of the *anima* and *Eros* (relatedness) by patriarchal society (which has, of course, gone hand

in hand with women's own oppression), what they actually call for is for men (and women) to access *Eros* within, allowing an orientation in society which will unite and heal rather than divide and destroy. Further, Breton expresses a hope that from the "confusion idéologique sans précédent" that will prevail at the war's end, there will come forth radical new conceptions, promoting "le langage du coeur et des sens," and he particularly expects this language to hold flesh and soul as indissociable and equally sacred (47).

If, as has already been suggested, there are certain inconsistencies evident within the text related to an actual overturning of the masculine system, this recognition of the body or flesh as valuable marks a certain improvement in the status of woman, associated with flesh in a negative sense for so long.¹¹¹ Breton insists upon the need for liberty to bring about such change in the outer world, and to enable man to explore the inner world of dreams and the psyche: "les aspirations de l'homme à la liberté doivent être maintenues en pouvoir de se récréer sans cesse; c'est pourquoi elle doit être conçue non comme état mais comme force vive entraînant une progression continue" (105). Thus not only do we need *Eros*, but in order to achieve the reconciliation of opposites, we need revolt, and, as we will see, both of these are associated with Mélusine. This is fully consistent with Jungian teachings, for Jung frequently insists upon the dangers of the suppression of personal freedom and the blind subscription to dogma, worn-out "truths" which create blindness and prevent the recognition of the societal and the individual shadow; "we can recognize our prejudices and illusions only when [...] we are prepared

¹¹¹ As discussed in chapter 2, the reinterpretation of original sin which occurred during the Middle Ages was particularly damaging for women due to the ensuing renunciation and demonization of the flesh with which she was associated.

to doubt the absolute rightness of our assumptions” (*Undiscovered* 56). Jung insists that it is through questioning assumptions, tradition, and authority (in Breton’s terminology “revolt”) that one can recognize one’s (and one’s society’s) imperfections, which is prerequisite to human relationship, for “the perfect have no need of others,” a condition which sets the stage for divisiveness; he adds, sounding very much like Breton, that “where love stops, power begins, and violence, and terror” (57).

Mélusine’s cries clearly suggest her link to revolt. Breton speaks of two cries – she emitted the first when she was banished from the world, which can be associated with the denigration of woman, the feminine, and the unconscious. Her second cry marks her joyful return. Lamy observes that Breton “exploite le courage et l’audace qui appartiennent en propre à la Mélusine légendaire qui, en dépit du risque, a aimé un mortel et l’a épousé ”(97). A further aspect of her cry to consider involves her role as mother. Although Mélusine as represented by Breton does not directly recall her mother aspect, she is clearly linked with Elisa. As Brunel observes, both of these mothers suffered despair : Elisa upon her daughter’s drowning, Mélusine upon irrevocably losing her whole family through her forced flight (332). In *Arcane 17*, Breton admires the “dark fire” in Elisa’s eyes when she recalls the injustice of the loss of her child and observes in this counterpart of Mélusine a smiliar sense of rebellion (98).

In the narrative, Breton appears to call upon women to revolt against the repression of the feminine so that they may help men to reconnect with it. Certainly this disconnect “a coûté le Bonheur au couple Mélusine – Raimondin” (Lamy 97). It is important to recognize that Raymondin is nowhere in Breton’s description and discussion of Mélusine, except as the implied cause of her first cry of despair, provoked by his

betrayal; in this capacity, though, he could be said to represent the general stance of patriarchal society discussed above (perhaps *he* is the “boa” lurking in the rock). In *Arcane 17*, Mélusine, with her “queue merveilleuse” (55) is first described as woman above, snake below, as in traditional iconography. The female and the phallic snake evoke the union of male and female, but since the snake half is quite literally “below”, it appears to be indicative of that switch from a masculine to a feminine order Breton desires, thus the vanquished “boa” is now subordinate to Mélusine – or is he?

Lamy observes that Breton’s call for societal change through the discovery of the feminine aspect of man is charged with subversion since “la phallocratie règne [dans la société],” but she observes that it also reigns to a degree “à son insu, en certains recoins du psychisme de [Breton]” (228) – he, too, is still influenced by “le boa” and has not fully escaped his shadow. This becomes clear when we learn that he does not actually expect women themselves to revolt against the masculine system. He complains that he has always been “stupéfait” that in the midst of war woman has not made her voice heard, that she did not think to “tirer tout le parti possible” of her gift to “parler à l’homme dans l’amour” and to “appeler à elle toute la confiance de l’enfant” (57): “Quel prestige, quel avenir n’eût pas eu le grand cri de refus et d’alarme de la femme” (57). Here Breton laments the failure of woman, who has been “incapable d’empêcher la guerre, incapable [...] de suffisamment aimer” (Assa 31). Due to this “failure,” rather than give woman voice as acting subject, Breton intends to appropriate the “eternal feminine” in order to lead the revolt and bring forth a “feminine” system himself. He calls upon artists to

faire prédominer au maximum tout ce qui ressortit au système féminin du monde par opposition au système masculin, de faire fonder exclusivement sur les facultés de la femme, d'exalter, mieux même, de s'appropriier jusqu'à le faire jalousement sien tout ce qui la distingue de l'homme sous le rapport des modes d'appréciation et de volition. (58)

Krell observes that his wording here “hints that Breton may not be ready for man to yield his dominance” (“Between” 384). Assa agrees, and adds that when Breton asks rhetorically “Qui rendra la sceptre sensible à la femme enfant” (*Arcane 17* 64) one should replace “rendra” with “s'appropriera,” since once “Celui-là” has appropriated her image and power to himself, “il sera prêt à accomplir ce qu'en fin de compte les femmes ne peuvent pas accomplir: œuvre de création, ou œuvre de paix” (Assa 31). In light of this, when Breton speaks of that “bloc de lumière” created by the merging of male and female into one, we must wonder if what he ultimately seeks is an idealized androgynous state which erases difference and makes woman herself unnecessary, or as Assa puts it, a “nostalgie d'un être masculin, homme femelle, qui n'aurait pas besoin de femme... l'étant” (32). Certainly, following Jung, seeking out the *anima* within himself is an important aspect of individuation, but appropriating the feminine because women are “incapable” of creating or bringing change about themselves amounts to a denial of his own (and the collective) shadow—his own guilt as dominant male within a patriarchal society that devalues women and which in fact has prevented their attaining power – a state of affairs to which Breton's own stance actually contributes.

Although Mélusine bears a feminine visage, she is an androgynous image, suggesting the union of masculine and feminine. But the unity Breton seeks involves not just this, but the joining of a multitude of opposites, and if we consider further aspects of Mélusine's description, it becomes clear that she was prefigured by the Rocher Percé. From an initial single undulating tail, Breton transforms Mélusine's body throughout the text – the description of her legs establishes her link to land, water, and air for they are simultaneously snakes, fish, and birds (61). By evoking her legs as two snakes (61), Breton recalls Levi's description of Hertha, the Mélusine/Isis. Breton adds further links to water, and thus to Mélusine's association with the Mother archetype (in positive, nurturing terms, it should be noticed) in his description of her arms as "l'âme des ruisseaux qui chantent et parfument" (61). An additional link with air is her wings, which are, in Breton's description, not those of a bat or dragon, but rather of a swallow – who, due to its appearance in spring, is, like the egret (*ba* of Osiris) appearing in the Rocher Percé, associated with rebirth. This is the bird associated with Isis (healer of the dismembered, and eventually re-born Osiris) in Plutarch's version of their myth, thus it creates another clear link between the goddess and Mélusine. A further correspondence between the Rocher Percé and Mélusine is its composition in two parts, which evokes her physical duality. And just as the rock's long existence unites the ages, Mélusine's myth traverses and bridges epochs, with its origins in the dawn of human time, and its continuing presence in the modern imaginary. The rock formation itself is an inanimate object – and the inanimate is not typically associated with Mélusine, yet if we consider the rock as representative of "Earth," whose initial inner darkness represents the unconscious, its link to Mélusine as Great Mother archetype and Mother goddess

becomes clear. And in his description of her, Breton creates a clear association with another inanimate object – a hill – for, just as in the case of the Rocher Percé, the series of images created in relation to Mélusine begin with a real image seen in nature. Breton describes ski trails upon a slope with which Mélusine is joined, for the meandering trails become “sa queue merveilleuse, dramatique se perdant entre les sapins” (55). Mélusine is also associated with the light and the sun – her torso is “éblouissante” (55) and “Mélusine se dore de tous les reflets du soleil” (60). Her light is, significantly, from the sun’s reflection; thus, we can recognize here that she is *Luna* of the Mercurius Duplex, for the moon’s light is a reflected one. We find the evocation of fire, too, in her description after the second cry: “son torse s’élance en feu d’artifice de sa taille cambrée, moulée sur deux ailes d’hirondelle, ses seins sont des hermines prises dans leur propre cri, aveuglantes à force de s’éclairer du charbon de leur bouche hurlante” (61). Since the “charbon ardent” mentioned here, can “éclairer au point d’aveugler, mais aussi cautériser et guérir” (Lamy 189), it clearly corresponds to Mélusine’s roles as spiritual guide and archetypal healer. Breton also juxtaposes in this description the image of swallows and ermines, both alchemical symbols associated with mercury, the uniting “eau-feu,” both are white and black, indicating a joining of opposites, both darkness and light (Mourier-Casile 94,101). Since the snowy owl found within the Rocher Percé was also both white and black, he is thus evoked here once again in Mélusine’s body, which equally represents the little girl in that she is the “femme-enfant” (*Arcane 17* 62).

Like the pairing of the little girl with the snowy owl, like the joining of straw and scallop shell, Mélusine’s body alone represents the reconciliation of opposites, and evokes Plato’s androgyne by uniting male and female (or more precisely “male and

anima” through that union) which must be joined, according to Breton, as a prerequisite to the societal change he envisions, which he believes can only be brought about by *Eros* in both the Freudian and Jungian senses of the term.¹¹² The light of Mélusine recalls the hand of Elisa that “réfracte son rayon” in his own (24) and the “bloc de lumière” created when one finds one’s other half.¹¹³ By uniting animate and inanimate, the four elements, nature and humanity, and by her image within which all these are reconciled, she is clearly an evocation of the supreme point, as was the Rocher Percé, and is another image of the Self. Lamy recognizes in Mélusine Breton himself, observing that he, “comme elle sait décrypter la nature” (218). Certainly, from a Jungian perspective this is highly accurate, since her female aspect suggests his *anima*, indeed a part of him. Thus her full unifying image may be viewed as an image of Breton’s Self, now with his *anima* brought to the fore.

And yet, in spite of Breton’s evident effort to create in her a symbol of all opposites, one remains lacking: darkness. Breton has hidden “l’aspect maléfique de Mélusine, femme de l’eau noire, femme-poisson, pour ne garder que le visage lumineux de la femme-enfant” (Mourier-Casile 103). In Mélusine, he eliminates the witch found in the Rocher Percé. He rejects the duality of the *anima* and of woman; he does not desire a blending of light and darkness within either, for this is what inhibits understanding and

¹¹² Let us recall Freud’s association of the term with the physical act of love, and Jung’s with a deep sense of relatedness to the other.

¹¹³ Interestingly, Lamy observes that due to Mélusine’s appearance following the actions of the little girl, we can say that she was born from a scallop shell, just as was born the goddess of love (206).

thus mastery.¹¹⁴ Through his writing, then, it appears that Breton makes an effort to tame both. Although he evidently aims to give Mélusine the same multiple traits as the Rocher Percé and make her, like it, a symbol of the uniting of opposites, removing this dual aspect and placing Mélusine under the sign of the moon, as opposed to the sun that marks the Rocher Percé, indicates that Mercurius remains fissured – *Sol* and *Luna* are not fully joined – the elusive resolution of all opposites has not yet come to pass. And the ongoing effort toward full union continues throughout the evolving images now to appear, forming an unending and never fully-resolved story of individuation.

Mélusine in her full uniting imagery soon dissolves: “de la tête aux pieds Mélusine est redevenue femme” (*Arcane 17* 64). Here we are reminded that this is actually what he desires of women, for them to be “just” women, feminine beings resembling his vision of his own (tamed) *anima*. He rejects war heroines, whom he considers to be acting against their own nature, and complains that what is needed is “une femme simplement femme” to reunite the warring sides (57).¹¹⁵ He believes that woman, due to man’s and society’s diminution of her value, has become too like man himself. Assa observes that Breton first creates Mélusine as a male-female being, “puis s’en épouvante. Le désir ambivalent de Breton compose les traits de la chimère [...] , puis s’empresse de lui ‘vider’ les yeux pour n’en faire ‘rien tant qu’une femme’” (34). But Mélusine, once reduced to her idealized feminine form eludes Breton: she slips away, and

¹¹⁴ Mourier-Casile reminds us of the human tendency to conceive of all that surrounds us in terms of oppositions, which creates a “grillage du monde et de l’imaginaire, qui les rend intelligibles – maîtrisables – et, du même coup, y établit de rassurants garde-fous” (208).

¹¹⁵ This image of woman, defined here by Breton in terms of a limited and limiting projection of man, is a clear reminder of the damage male psychology has inflicted on woman through the ages.

fear returns. Perhaps the text is revealing that his *anima*, as he would like it to be, is not so easily subjugated as it would seem...

An Unending Story of Cyclic Death and Rebirth

No sooner does Mélusine take on the form of woman, than the “window” through which Breton watches all these metamorphosing images falls dark, and this darkness is “totale, on dirait que celle de notre temps” (65). He worries that “Mélusine à peine retrouvée ne s’y soit fondue tout entière” (65); a confusing, frightening array of barely recognizable images appear, which converge upon the scene of a mother struggling to protect her frightened children during an air raid. Darkness and death have now replaced the luminous image of Mélusine. But by closing his eyes and concentrating his thoughts upon the “real night” “la nuit magique [...] , la nuit des enchantements” (67) (thus by keeping his thoughts aimed toward the *potential* for light held within that darkness and by closing his physical eyes in order to open the inner eye and discover inner illumination during dark times) he is gradually able to see new images in the window: seven flowers appear, which gradually turn into seven stars, each bearing its own light. Above the five smaller stars appear two larger ones that, Breton tells us, “figurent le soleil et la lune” (67). Thus, Mélusine/Isis and the Rocher Percé/egret/Osiris, are still present. Mélusine has not been lost after all: she retains her presence as *Luna* (the unconscious), who is joined with *Sol* (consciousness) to assemble the light of all the stars into a single greater light, that of the Morning Star which gradually appears in all its shining glory – and it bears noting that this greater light that is the result of their union is also a “bridge”

between night and day. Here is Mercurius/Mélusine as the philosopher's stone, the ultimate whole – the Self. This recalls the merging of the multiple lights (splinter personalities) into one greater light in the Rocher Percé, brought about by the little girl and the snowy owl. Breton identifies this light as “Lucifer porte-lumière” (68), which agrees with Jung who says that “just as evening gives birth to morning, so from the darkness arises a new light, the *stella matutina*, which is at once the evening and morning star – Lucifer, the light bringer” (*Alchemical Studies* 247). Mourier-Casile calls to our attention the “renversement de signe” which has occurred in the narrative, since it was Lucifer who was the great deceiver and who battled against light in the Rocher Percé (159). Actually, it is less a reversal of image or sign than it is a reversal of perception. Jung explains that Lucifer the light bringer is synonymous with Mercurius as the light of the self (both, of course, male images applied by the male alchemists to represent the desired unity¹¹⁶): “Mercurius calls to mind that double figure which seems to stand behind both Christ and the Devil – that enigmatic Lucifer whose attributes are shared by both” (*Alchemical Studies* 223). He reminds us that Christ refers to himself in the revelation as “the bright and morning star” (223). In Jung's view, we should recognize that Christ and the devil are actually “two different images of the self” which is always dual (246). The devil is a diabolization of Lucifer, who can be both light bringer and deceiver (248). The freeing of consciousness from unconscious, which is initially necessary and desirable, is, itself “a Luciferian deed” (*Symbols of Transformation* 434). What is important is how the conscious mind approaches the light Lucifer brings, this

¹¹⁶ As we have noticed, Breton's evident attempt to represent that unity in Mélusine could not be maintained, his own fears slipped in, dissolving her multifaceted image into one he could master.

alone determines if it will have a positive or negative effect. The inner illumination brought about by the joining of conscious and unconscious contents can bring healing, rebirth and psychological growth, yet if the conscious becomes over confident and perceives that this powerful light represents an ultimate illumination, that a perfected state has been achieved, the conscious will be lead straight back into disequilibrium and it will take another “fall” like that of the angel Lucifer (too sure of his own power and knowledge) for the process of individuation to begin anew. “For those who are unmindful of this light, the psychopomp turns into [...] a diabolical seducer. Lucifer, who could have brought light, becomes the father of lies” and on the collective scale, Jung adds that the voice of this deceiver “in our time, supported by press and radio, revels in orgies of propaganda and leads untold millions to ruin” (*Alchemical Studies* 250). This echoes Breton’s own concerns regarding the damage of fascist propaganda during the war.

At the moment of the union of *Sol* and *Luna*, the action of the Morning Star is presented by Breton in a positive sense: it is through the action of the light bringer that “le paysage s’illumine, la vie redevient clair” (68) and Mélusine appears once again, now as the “Verseuse,” a beautiful woman who kneels, naked, beside a stagnant pond, pouring water from two urns. Her link with Mélusine is clear: Breton states that she “est Mélusine, est Eve, est toute la femme” (68). The stars which first appeared, and the “Verseuse” herself, as well as the subsequent images that gradually appear form the 17th Arcanum of the Tarot, the card of transformation, “l’étoile [...] , symbole de la lumière et de la totalité sur les vingt-et-un qui constituent le chemin initiatique” (Menou 164). The two urns, as Breton describes them are of different colors – one silver (associated by alchemists with the Moon) and one gold (associated with the sun), thus, here, once again,

are *Sol* and *Luna*. The “Verseuse,” by pouring together the water from the two urns functions as the mediating mercurial substance, the *anima* archetype, who can bring together the conscious and unconscious portions of the psyche (*Sol* and *Luna*). The revitalization of the stagnant water of the pond by her unifying efforts brings out Breton’s theme of revolt against stagnation (Lamy 103), and, thus, the effort that must be made against that one-sidedness the conscious so readily falls into. Once again, Breton presents us with death (stagnation) and the process of rebirth. The stagnant water is a representation of the ego, once again mired in its own one-sidedness and in need of renewal. As the Verseuse pours the two waters together, they speak: *Sol* (as Father Archetype, representing spirit and the discriminating light of consciousness) says he does the work of fire (“je brûle et je réveille”); while *Luna* (as Mother archetype and nurturing force) does the work of water (“j’enchante et multiplie”) bringing fertility (fecund ideas) to the barren earth (Breton 80). But as these two opposing forces come together, a fierce battle ensues symbolizing the difficulty involved in bringing them together. Danier explains that this represents the “solve et coagula” of the alchemists – the separation of the components from the *prima materia*, which then must be brought back together in harmonious union with the aid of Mercurius (134), here represented by Mélusine/Verseuse. This uniting of opposing elements is always difficult, just as is the psychological equivalent, and thus is always represented as a battle in alchemical writings.

Once the two rivers flow together peacefully, the union of opposing forces is consummated in the alchemical “coït” symbolized by the rose and the butterfly. Jung identifies both as symbols of the Self (*Aspects of the Feminine* 148), yet the rose is also

particularly important as an emblem of the alchemical work, and it is, significantly, the place “where the *filius philosophorum* is born” (Ronnberg and Martin 162). A feminine “vessel” image, it is here joined with the more masculine (penetrating) symbol of the butterfly, thus, here again we have represented Mercurius Duplex as *Luna* and *Sol*. Breton, in fact, alludes to Mercurius here by calling the rose “la collerette de l’ibis” (81), which represents Thoth, and confirms that here we have Mercurius in feminine form, signaling Mélusine. The rose speaks and reveals that “l’aptitude de la régénération est sans limites” and that winter is only transitory, and is, in fact, needed in order to “ramasser de leurs pointes les mille abeilles de l’énergie qui à la longue s’endormiraient dans la grenade trop capiteuse du soleil” (81). Here, taking up again the theme evoked by the stagnant pond, Breton suggests the danger of a one-sided consciousness, a deceptive “sun” which can indeed have a “heady” effect upon the individual, lulling him or her into complacency, and resulting in the repression of needed contents into a “sleep” within the unconscious. Here we also have confirmation of Breton’s agreement with Jung that it takes crisis (“winter/death”) for one to begin to look within and to finally hear the stirrings of the unconscious mind: without crisis, we would continue blindly (and destructively) about our business. Tellingly, the preceding tarot card, the 16th Arcanum, is one of destruction: a tower, representing the overblown edifice set up by ego consciousness, steeped in dogma and too staid in its own one-sided “perfection,” is destroyed by a bolt of lightning, which strikes a large hole into the top of the tower, and men are seen falling from it to the ground.¹¹⁷ This destruction is, of course, prerequisite to

¹¹⁷ For a more detailed Jungian analysis of the 16th Arcanum (and indeed of all the Arcana of the Tarot), see Sallie Nichols’s *Jung and Tarot: An Archetypal Journey*. York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc. 1984.

the 17th Arcanum, wherein for the first time woman (the *anima*) appears to reunite ego and unconscious, creating rebirth and harmony.

Breton compares the action of the butterfly upon the rose as “une hache de lumière plantée dans la fleur” (82). Lamy remarks that the use of the aggressive term “hache” connoting male dominance can be seen to contradict Breton’s call for overturning the masculine system; “[il] ne parvient pas à se départir d’une certaine phalocratie dont il est, bien sûr, inconscient” (227). As we will see, far more male aggressivity is soon evoked. However, at this point in our evolving (and as is becoming clear, *circular* and *cyclic*) “story,” it is helpful to consider that *Sol* and *Luna* are also frequently referred to in alchemy as “Rex and Regina,” by whose “deadly embrace” the king (consciousness) will be born anew in his son, “the regius filius [who] is a rejuvenated form of the Father-King” (*Psychology and Alchemy* 330). The embrace represents the *coniunctio* of conscious and unconscious, which implies the death of the ego in preparation for rebirth. It should be borne in mind that Rex and Regina are also frequently called the “brother-sister pair.” Like the battle evoked upon the joining of the two streams, placing this union under the “socially repugnant” sign of incest stresses in a powerful way the tremendous difficulty involved in the process¹¹⁸ (415). The “birth” following the conjunction of *Sol*/Butterfly and *Rose*/*Luna* is marked by the appearance of a hawk – the avatar of Horus, son of Isis and Osiris – as sibling gods, they represent both

¹¹⁸ Following Jung, Ronnberg and Martin helpfully summarize: “Alchemy’s entire opus had to do with the separation and synthesis of opposites, culminating in the “chymical marriage” of *Sol* and *Luna* – it’s psychological equivalent is the production of an internal sense of unity; alchemy boldly incorporated the ancient motif of the royal brother-sister incestuous *hierosgamos*, or sacred marriage, as a means of conveying the magnetism between two things, like conscious and unconscious, that are different and yet essentially the same substance” (414).

Rex and Regina and brother-sister pair, and repeat, as we have already established, the pairing of Mélusine/Isis and the egret (*ba* of Osiris) of the Rocher Percé. According to Lamy, in *Arcane 17*, “dans l’aspiration de l’unité, tout peut être rapproché de tout” which leads to a fusion of mythological traditions (216).

When we recall that the couples evoked are all *Sol* and *Luna*, it is particularly significant that Horus is a very literal combination of the two, for it was said that his eyes were the Moon and the Sun (Tressider 242). We should also note the frightening images which preceded his arrival. The acacia tree of the card grows suddenly very large and appears to advance upon Breton, sparking fear – “il va me renverser!” – but, he quickly reassures himself, stating that “je fais un rêve” (88). Since the tree is “predominantly a mother-symbol” (*Symbols of Transformation* 233) it represents here the unconscious mother to which the “dead” must return for rebirth, and thus evokes the fear of psychic disintegration, that danger of which Breton was so aware. Interestingly, although all threat and duality are removed from the more human feminine images, Breton permits here a single intrusion of that fear before the feminine/unconscious, one which hints that although he may continually attempt to bring it under his control, he, on some level, recognizes this can never be fully achieved.

Also just prior to the hawk’s arrival, a pyramid emerges from water, and upon it there appears the image of a green sun, supported by four scorpions. Osiris was often represented with green skin, due to his association with renewal, thus the “greening” of the world. Yet it is a color which has a dual connotation, for it may evoke death (slime and decay), a meaning which may well be at work, since the four scorpions carrying this sun are also dual. The Egyptian scorpion goddess Selket guards the coffins of the dead,

and is a representative of death, yet also carries a positive connotation, for scorpions aided Isis in the search for the parts of Osiris (Ronnberg and Martin 218), which reminds us again of the necessity of death of the old ego to prepare for rebirth. Further, alchemists celebrated “‘scorpion time,’ the moment when base metals turned into gold” (218). The number of scorpions (four) can be seen to anticipate the coming renewal (wholeness) of Osiris in his son Horus,¹¹⁹ brought about by the “deadly” embrace of *Luna*. When the hawk appears, he is lit from within by a lamp – once again light heralds the end of darkness and new vision. The reconciliation of opposites has taken place and all opposites merge within his eye: “c’est tout l’étang renversé dans l’oeil de l’oiseau” (88). This reference to a single eye is often used in myth and alchemy to refer to “a unity of vision in which the dualism of ‘inner and outer’ has become resolved” (Ronnberg and Martin 352). In fact, the Eye of Horus is an amulet representing the restored “healthy and whole” eye, and was thus worn by Egyptians to ward off death and disintegration (353). But this new inner vision is too much for the bird’s initial form to hold, so he begins to tear at his own heart with his beak, destroying his body in yet another death and rebirth; from within his damaged body, he emerges whole and shining with an inner light, which evokes the Morning Star: “dans ce Coeur d’ombre s’ouvre à ce moment un jeune Coeur de lumière encore tout dependant du premier et qui réclame de lui sa subsistence” (89). This represents the death of the ego and its rebirth to greater wholeness which was

¹¹⁹ According to Jung, “Osiris is frequently confused in tradition with Horus. The latter’s name is Horpi-chrud, which is composed of chrud (child) and Hor (from hri, up, above, on top”). The name thus signifies ‘the up-and-coming child,’ the rising sun, as opposed to Osiris, who is the setting sun, ‘the sun in the western land.’ So Osiris and Horpi-chrud are one being, both husband and son of the same mother” (*Symbols of Transformation* 240).

brought about by the clearer vision into the unconscious mind that could only come to pass by means of the frightening return to the Mother.

The gaze of the bird, just prior to its transformation, had focused upon the sight of a long coffer “hermétiquement clos sur une dépouille chérie” (89); we soon learn the body of Osiris is within this. After Horus’s (the bird’s) transformation, the coffin slides into the sea, and another process of death and renewal begins. The coffin is carried to land where a tree grows up around it, sealing it within its trunk. Jung explains that the coffin, as container, represents the womb of the unconscious, as do the sea and the tree (*Symbols of Transformation* 242). The tree is the same acacia which had frightened Breton earlier; now it completely engulfs the coffin, but Breton describes the arrival of several men armed with hatchets, who chop down the tree. It is then fashioned into a pillar by a sculptor. Here again we encounter the hatchet reference, used earlier with regard to the action of the butterfly upon the rose, and considered by Lamy to suggest that Breton continues to desire masculine dominance: Breton “ne parvient pas à se départir d’une certaine phallocratie dont il est, bien sûr, inconscient. Aussi, en toute innocence, exploite-t-il les symboles mâles les plus agressifs “ (227). In a societal frame of reference, we can recognize an enactment of men trying to control and subjugate woman, but on a psychological level, this is the tendency of consciousness to try to bring the unconscious under control. As we have seen in Chapter 2 above, the two are closely interconnected, due to those associations long drawn between woman and the unconscious within patriarchal society. An even stronger aggressivity is displayed here than in the prior actions of the butterfly, and the tree is not simply being damaged, but also shaped into a particular form. Certainly this brings to mind patriarchal society’s

aggression toward women in the form of attempts to force them into a preconceived, idealized mold of what a woman *should* be. In the psychological sense, this aggression marks a strong opposition to Jungian teachings, for the unconscious is being cut down to size and made to fit a desired image. As we have seen, although this type of dominance is contrary to Jung's notion of psychic equilibrium and unity, Breton himself tends to view the unconscious as needing to be subjugated. And if we consider the form into which the tree is made – a pillar, an artistic creation which serves as a support – perhaps it is the basis of surrealism? It could well be that this is what Breton seeks to suggest, since certainly the surrealists strove to access unconscious contents, to master them, and to create of unconscious contents a work of art.

With the completion of the pillar there arrives a woman who has “une vive ressemblance avec celle qui, agenouillée, tenait les urnes” (91) but Breton describes her body as now being swathed by a star-covered veil, held by a “lune à la jonction des cuisses” (91). She, too, is evidently an *anima* figure and spiritual guide, the stars and moon evoking the enlightenment she will bring. Her resemblance to the “Verseuse” underscores the middle position of the 17th Arcanum, which assures the link between “les chants à l’adresse de Mélusine et les passages inspirés par Isis” (Lamy 103), but all are clearly joined by their connection to the moon, and their shared identity as the alchemical Mercurius/*Luna*. Multiple hints reveal this is Isis, but Breton consistently avoids naming her. The silencing of the name appears to contribute to the ongoing merging of identities: Mélusine, the “Verseuse” and Isis are all one and the same. We should also notice that “Isis” wears a “diadème de serpents” and her arrival “coincide avec la disparition d’une

hirondelle qui s'était signalée par son insistance à décrire autour du pilier" (91), which clearly recalls the description of Mélusine as part snake and part swallow.

The coffin of Osiris was revealed by chopping away at the tree (the unconscious) around it; its having been sealed and embedded within the tree suggests the difficulty of accessing the treasures within the unconscious mind (and, in alchemy, the difficulty of accessing the hidden treasure – the *prima materia*, the substance to be transformed, which was sealed within the alchemical *vas hermeticum*), but once the tree is cut apart, the coffin is removed and opened, revealing the 14 pieces of the body of Osiris. However, there is a missing piece – the phallus, which was consumed by the fish. As Plouvier points out, "le dieu dans sa perfection première ne sera pas refait" (189). This appears to suggest the impossibility of true wholeness, of a complete unity.

Isis undertakes the recomposition of Osiris's body, and does this within an "atelier" formed in the shape of a star. Here the Morning Star returns, and Breton gives us a detailed description of this key image. It is formed by two overlaid stars. One of these is the six-pointed seal of Solomon, in which an upright and an inverted triangle are joined, the first representing the active/phallic (*Sol*), the second, the passive/feminine (*Luna*). The second star with which the seal of Solomon is interlocked is composed of two superimposed squares, representing the sought-for wholeness and equilibrium. The result is a fourteen point star (8 points from the two overlaid squares, 6 points from the overlaid triangles). Lamy accurately identifies this star as a symbol of attained perfection (106), but we must stress that this is but a symbol: perfection is still elusive, for Osiris is not fully whole. The goddess places one piece of Osiris's body within each point, and rather than re-assembling them to form a single being, she creates 14 identical gods from

each piece; thus she not only heals, but multiplies. The importance of artistic creation is expressed here, for it is by “l’artifice sublime d’Isis [que] naissent quatorze dieux rigoureusement semblables” (Plouvier 189). The 14 gods are sent out in 14 different directions, which appears to correspond to the spreading of Breton’s message through his own text, and each is accompanied by Isis. If wholeness is elusive, it appears that *anima* and art will pave the way toward it, which brings us to the importance of the Word.

But who speaks? Although Mélusine represents the desired healing of schisms and the goal of unity in her “monstrous” form, and the “Verseuse” and Isis unite and heal through their mediating work, all are silent, except, of course, Mélusine, who can only cry. It appears that Breton’s conception of the alchemical *Sol* and *Luna* corresponds to the *logos/Eros* opposition, a correspondence spoken of by Jung, as well: “*logos* and *Eros* are intellectually formulated intuitive equivalents of the archetypal images of *Sol* and *Luna*” (*Mysterium* 86). Mourier-Casile accurately observes that although Mélusine’s cry has the power to dissipate the shadows and herald the arrival of light, “il n’en reste pas moins que le droit de prononcer le Phé hiéroglyphique,¹²⁰ [...] que l’usage même de la parole articulée et de cette forme privilégiée de la parole qu’est l’écriture demeure l’apanage de l’homme” (39). It is Breton, man and poet, who must interpret “cette incohérence bouleversante de la femme,” he who will transform “le cri d’impuissance de la femme en œuvre de poésie” (Assa 34). In this sense we may clearly consider Breton’s text to be synonymous with Mélusine’s cry, as Lamy has suggested (218); that cry has now been translated into a narrative that may be read and understood.

¹²⁰ Breton introduces this Hebrew letter within a didactic portion of the narrative, explaining that it means “au sens plus haut la parole même” (108) and that it is key to the resolution of contradictions.

Given Mélusine's androgyny, if, as Breton tells us, she is Elisa, she is also Breton. Significantly Elisa, too, is silent, existing only "par et dans le monologue de Breton qui, même lorsqu'il s'adresse à elle, ne vise qu'un Toi qui est projection de lui-même" (Assa 35). It is not woman, but rather the emergence of the *anima* within man that is vital here. Woman (Elisa) plays a role – union with her aided Breton to access his own *anima*, which remained repressed until meeting her, but she is also a part of him in that she receives the projection of his *anima* – a part of his psyche.¹²¹ Since it is his own *anima* that is emerging and revealing new knowledge of himself, one might say that the surrealist conception of woman as guide is not entirely accurate, for ultimately it is Breton himself (his own *anima*) who is "guiding" the process of individuation. And since only the male half of the androgynous beacon of light and hope into which he and Elisa fuse may wield *logos*, it is his words that now guide others.

The unifying fourteen point star from which *Sol* and *Luna* set forth as Breton's alchemical story comes to an (open) end, is, like Mélusine, an androgynous image, but, as we have seen, Breton directly associates it with the masculine figure, Lucifer the light bringer; clearly, although his *anima* has brought him light, it is he, Breton who now becomes light bringer.¹²² If Breton claims that only Mélusine, "la femme enfant," "peut rédimier cette époque sauvage" (*Arcane 17* 60), Breton himself actually retains the task of enlightening the world. Through *Phé* (the poetic word), Breton will spread his message of hope found within the cyclic story embedded in his waking vision that began with the

¹²¹ Lamy also considers Elisa to be a "part" of Breton; she describes her as a "miroir médiateur dans lequel il se lit et se découvre" (218).

¹²² Lamy similarly recognizes that "derrière l'étoile se profile avec de plus en plus de netteté un Breton messianique" (105).

Rocher Percé and Mélusine, assuring us that the unending cycle of death and rebirth is not cause for despair, for from each moment of darkness will come a greater light. His writing, the work of the artist, is what will bring change and unity, by bringing forth a “feminine” system – still led by men, it appears, but men who no longer repress their own *anima* – a system that values *Eros* (physical and spiritual love, but also relatedness). Ultimately, Breton himself, now imbued with the full power of inner vision gleaned from his healing archetype, steps into Mélusine’s archetypal roles; it is he who acts as spiritual guide and healer for the world.

CHAPTER 4

THE STRUGGLES OF A HINDERED HEALER: MÉLUSINE AND THE SEARCH FOR WHOLENESS IN MANUEL MUJICA LAINEZ'S *EL UNICORNIO*

Mélusine's Timely Appearance in the Work of Mujica Lainez

Manuel Mujica Lainez first shared his initial ideas for *El Unicornio* with Ricardo González Benegas¹²³ in 1960 while on the isle of Rhodes during a seven-month trip to Europe and the Near East. At the time he was in the process of writing the novel *Bomarzo*, which would be published in 1962. *Bomarzo*, the most successful novel of Mujica Lainez's career, is set in Renaissance Italy, making it the first in a series of novels that breaks with his prior tendency to situate his fictional works within a more recent Argentinian past. *El Unicornio* (1965), in which the action unfolds in France during the Middle Ages, along with *El Laberinto* (1972), set in late sixteenth-century Spain, complete this European "trilogy." Sorkunde Frances Vidal explains that these three novels constitute an homage to the European peoples who have most strongly influenced the formation of the Argentinean: the Italians, the French, and the Spanish (73). Mujica Lainez's family, counted among the traditional Buenos Aires elite long known for its admiration and emulation of Europeans, had instilled in him from an early age a sincere appreciation and abiding love for Europe. As was expected in aristocratic families of the time, and despite his family's dwindling fortunes, Mujica Lainez lived and

¹²³ Mujica Lainez shares this information with us in the frontispiece of *El Unicornio*, wherein he also dedicates the novel to González Benegas, his assistant with whom he shared an intimate relationship.

was educated in France for nearly three years,¹²⁴ becoming fluent in French; in fact his first novelistic effort was undertaken while there and in that language.¹²⁵ Mujica Lainez would return many times to France in the course of his life, but always recalled fondly this first stay in Paris and the family's three-month holiday in the chalet "Bel Abri" in Yerres, with its church's 11th century bell tower, and the "castillito" belonging to his friend Jacques (Villordo 58-60). Perhaps these early experiences of the "New World" adolescent among centuries-old edifices contributed to his life-long interest in history and influenced his much later writing of *El unicornio*.¹²⁶ And although it is clear that Mujica Lainez consulted François Eygun's *Ce qu'on peut savoir de Mélusine et de son iconographie* (1951)¹²⁷ while researching the novel (Abate, *El tríptico* 117), it is likely he had encountered the myth of Mélusine before reading the book, perhaps even during this or another visit to France. However, it is only in mid-December of 1962 that we have the first clear record of his knowledge of the fairy. He had undertaken the extensive research and note-taking that would inform his writing of *El unicornio* a full thirteen months before. In the second of six large notebooks he would eventually fill, the one subtitled "Notas sobre la Edad Media," he finally mentions Mélusine and expresses an idea to

¹²⁴ According to his biographer Oscar Hermes Villordo, the family resided in Europe between 1923 and 1926 (41). Mujica Lainez and his younger brother attended school in France during the first two years, then traveled to England for an 8-month stay under the charge of an English preceptor.

¹²⁵ Already demonstrating a penchant for historical fiction, in his first "novel" the fourteen-year-old Mujica Lainez imagines the escape and fate of Louis XVII; the book was presented to his father as a birthday gift and this preserved document attests to a superior knowledge and skillful use of the French language (Villordo 55-56). Mujica Lainez reports that it was during this time in France that he decided that writing would be his life's vocation (Roffé 110).

¹²⁶ His "Melusina" "writes" the contents of the novel while cloistered within the bell tower of an 11th century church.

¹²⁷ The book includes a summary version of Mélusine's story which is, barring a few omissions, true to the Jean d'Arras version of events.

include her in the novel. Two weeks later, he decided that she should, in fact, narrate the story:

Hoy, último día del año de 1962, he tenido una idea curiosa y que me parece fundamental para ‘El unicornio.’ Como *Bomarzo*, este libro será escrito en primera persona. Y será escrito por un hada. Por el hada Melusina, antecesora de los Lusignan, o sea de Aiol y cuidadora vigilante de su estirpe.¹²⁸

By placing Mélusine, an immortal creature, in the role of narrator, Mujica Lainez seems to have chosen to re-utilize a technique that had served him well in the recently published *Bomarzo*. In it a similarly immortal narrative voice speaks to us from the present as it recounts events from long ago, which enables the incorporation of a modern perspective as these events unfold and the narrator reflects upon them.¹²⁹ In the case of *Bomarzo*, this is made possible through an interesting conflation of author and narrator – we learn that the protagonist, Pier Francesco Orsini, the Duke of Bomarzo (who was a real historical individual) has been reincarnated in Mujica Lainez, who now tells his (“their”) story to us, imparting a sort of physical as well as a literary immortality to Orsini.¹³⁰ However, in the text of *El unicornio* such a direct effort to conflate author and

¹²⁸ From Notebook 2, subtitled “Notas sobre la Edad Media,” qtd. by Abate in *El tríptico esquivo*, p. 110.

¹²⁹ George O. Schanzer lauds the efficacy of this technique in *Bomarzo* for it “enables the reader to view the pageant of the Duke’s life with a modern detachment and the psychological and critical knowledge of our time” (81).

¹³⁰ Interestingly, Mujica Lainez, revealing a certain mysticism, often suggested that the conflation of the two individuals went beyond the merely literary. Villordo cites Mujica Lainez’s words regarding his reaction upon entering the unusual preserved gardens of Bomarzo, which would inspire the novel: “Tuve la desazonante impresión de que regresaba a casa, después de años y años, acaso siglos (214).” Villordo adds that after completing the novel, Mujica Lainez commented that “El duque de Bomarzo y yo hemos quedado mezclados. Ya no sé cuál es cuál” (214).

narrator is not undertaken, and logic would appear to preclude us from identifying Mujica Lainez with a mythical immortal fairy.¹³¹ In a letter written as he neared completion of the novel, he even admits his concern to friend and fellow writer Victoria Ocampo that readers of the novel will experience difficulty identifying with the narrator: “Con decir que todo [el libro], todas sus 400 páginas estarán narradas por un hada, por Melusina, por la ‘fée Mélusine’, sobra para medir la desazón de los lectores” (“Cartas a Victoria Ocampo” 68). He admits *El unicornio* eludes the “contrato tácito de recrearlo al lector” and that the reader, too focused upon the superficial trappings of the novel, will likely be distracted and disoriented by them. He adds that the novel will be “harto más complejo y difícil de captar que su predecesor,” but he staunchly defends himself against the “infelices” who may reject it, insisting that, “**si saben ver** se encontrarán y me encontrarán en las páginas que su tedio o su cólera voltean” (68, Mujica Lainez’s emphasis). Given Mujica Lainez’s recognition that Mélusine as narrator could alienate readers, along with his admonition to look beyond the surface to comprehend *El unicornio* (which he suggests conceals revelations about both him and ourselves), we must begin to suspect that the idea of Mélusine as narrator is not “fundamental” to the novel solely as a handy narrative device. I agree with George O. Schanzer that she indeed provides an effective means of offering “a period eye witness and a modern perspective,” and further allows Mujica Lainez to “incorporate the whole world of fantasy and to project reality from an ‘unreal’ viewpoint” (86). And in this regard we may notice that Mujica Lainez calls into play the mediating role we discussed above in chapter 2; in *El*

¹³¹ However, they are not so far removed one from the other as it might initially seem, as our forthcoming analysis will show.

unicornio Mélusine mediates for us between past and present as well as between worlds – those of fantasy and of reality. But the significance of this authorial decision goes much deeper, as will become clearer as we undertake an examination of Mujica Lainez’s situation, experience, and concerns while preparing and writing the novel. Here, as in all of the novels addressed in this essay, we will find that Mélusine comes forth as multiple crises converge.

Generally speaking, the years spanning Mujica Lainez’s initial conception of *El unicornio*, his meticulous preparatory research for the novel (1961-1963) and its rather rapid composition (April 16, 1964-April 9, 1965), constituted a high point for the author professionally speaking. Already a member of the prestigious Academia Argentina de Bellas Artes since 1959, in 1963 Mujica Lainez won Argentina’s coveted Primer Premio Nacional de Literatura for *Bomarzo*.¹³² Also that year the novel garnered him the prestigious Kennedy Award, and France named him “Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.” However, prior to *Bomarzo*, Mujica Lainez’s two short story collections and his four novels (commonly referred to as the “Saga of Buenos Aires”) had been situated in Argentina, thus his switch to a European setting shocked and disappointed some members of his readership. At a time of strong nationalism,¹³³ some took issue with this

¹³² Soon afterward, the novel was transformed into a Cantata with music by Alberto Ginastera; it premiered in Washington D.C. in 1964 and in Argentina the following year, with much success. It would later become an opera which would be prohibited from opening in Argentina due to the Onganía regime’s concerns about its immorality. This move ironically, but unsurprisingly, spurred even further interest in the novel, in fact increasing its success.

¹³³ An anti-imperialist sentiment and desire to counteract growing American hegemony in those years lead many writers to focus upon the uniquely Argentinian, as well as to engage in literary experimentation. The latter was equally rejected by Mujica Lainez, who maintained a traditional style of writing, strongly influenced by 19th century novelists. George O Schanzer and Blas Matamoro have called attention to another earlier generation’s influence upon his work – that of the Modernists of the early 20th century.

change of course for ideological reasons. The “cólera” mentioned in Mujica Lainez’s above quote, the anger that he predicts *El unicornio* to inspire in some readers, is thus one which he had already seen come forth from certain quarters after the publication of *Bomarzo*, despite its largely positive reception by critics both in Argentina and abroad.¹³⁴ A particularly unpleasant scene occurred in the fall of 1964 while he attended the V Congreso de Escritores of the Sociedad Argentina de Escritores as an honored guest; during a session he was harshly attacked by young leftist writers for having written *Bomarzo*, set it in Italy instead of Argentina.¹³⁵ Against these and other attacks, Mujica Lainez steadfastly defended his choices of subject and setting for *Bomarzo*, and the works to follow, always insisting that writers must be free to express themselves as they see fit, “creando sin más socorro que su pluma sincera la atmósfera espiritual que conceptúa necesaria” (“Letters to Victoria Ocampo,” 67-68). Thus, although enjoying a successful period, Mujica Lainez was also struggling against pressure to conform, to limit himself to a set category. His feelings on this topic were later expressed to Marta Lynch, another friend and fellow writer; she, too, suggested a return to more contemporary settings and concerns, but in a letter to her he insists that in his earlier works he had met his quota of novels addressing “la angustia contemporánea, aunque haya vestido disfraces distintos al

Although Modernists were better known for poetry than narrative, both critics find many of their tendencies in Mujica Lainez’s work. (See Schanzer 145 and Matamoros 30.)

¹³⁴ Their anger and his own frustration are clearly revealed in the aforementioned letter to Victoria Ocampo when Mujica Lainez speaks in the voice of these negative critics: “¡pero dos, dos sucesivas novelas gordas que osan quebrar con la consigna folklórico social! ...eso es imperdonable. Manucho nos tira a la cara con el Renacimiento y ahora nos tira con la Edad Media : ¿qué se habrá creído ? Hay que escribir sobre Buenos Aires”(68).

¹³⁵ He expresses his frustration with this attitude in a letter to Alberto Girri in which he comments that “los comunistas [...] son paradójicos: por un lado pregonan una universalidad acaparadora y por el otro exigen la práctica de un folklore pueblerino” (qtd. in Villordo 249).

explicarla,” (qtd. in Villordo 235), and that he had earned the right to write what he desired. He held firmly that “la creación literaria no consiste en el cómodo instalarse dentro de un molde y sus límites, una vez que éstos han recibido la aprobación de determinado grupo” (Villordo 235). This refusal to fit prescribed molds recalls Mélusine who, as was discussed at length in chapter 2, so strongly defies clear categorization. As we will soon see, Mujica Lainez defied other norms and categories as well, but we may recognize here an initial crisis and a factor contributing to the special appeal Mélusine held for him.

The earlier works to which Mujica Lainez refers above, those which he felt had earned him a chance to explore other topics, had clearly been written in response to difficult times in Argentina. Although he grew up in the promising 1920s, the economic blow of the 1929 market collapse and the subsequent 1930 coup marked the beginning of the “*Década Infame*,”¹³⁶ a time known for rampant governmental corruption and instability, electoral fraud, and economic stagnation. A further complication for society at the time was a crisis of Argentinian identity stemming from the massive influx of immigrants that had occurred in the earliest years of the 20th century. Those in power during the “*Década Infame*” were members of the aristocratic oligarchy from which Mujica Lainez’s own parents hailed, descendants of the early landed Spaniards, with their ideological roots in empiricism, rationalism, and agnosticism, a class whose days of glory were past and that was now in decline (Castellanos 15). The abuses and inefficacy of the governments of the 1930s would eventually give way to the rise of populist dictator Juan

¹³⁶ Actually this “decade” spanned a period of more than ten years: from 1930 until 1943.

Domingo Perón.¹³⁷ Schanzer explains that while many intellectuals of the time responded to these years of crisis with rebellion or introspection, Mujica Lainez turned to his nation's past, and particularly to an exploration of the rise and decadence of his own class (17), criticizing it from within, sometimes harshly. Yet his criticism is tinged with humor and a certain indulgence reflecting his compassion for the weakness and imperfections inherent in the human condition and his love for a class of which he is both “juez y parte” (Fleming 376).

Perón's regime endured until 1955 when he was overthrown by a military coup, and in its aftermath Argentina entered yet another unstable period; multiple generals and presidents would come and go in the years immediately following and in the first half of the 1960s while Mujica Lainez researched, planned and wrote *El Unicornio*. He had welcomed the end of Perón's regime, which had begun with democratic elections, but became increasingly repressive and totalitarian during what proved to be a dark time for Mujica Lainez and his fellow intellectuals.¹³⁸ The end of the dictatorship brought about rapid improvements for them. General Lombardi formally recognized the Sociedad Argentina de Escritores, and Mujica Lainez was assigned to a governmental post as “Director General de Relaciones Culturales” in the ministry of Exterior Relations

¹³⁷ A 1943 coup marked the end of the “Década Infame.” Perón was elected to power in 1945.

¹³⁸ The Sociedad Argentina de Escritores, of which Mujica Lainez and his friend Jorge Luis Borges were active members, was suppressed under the regime, and many writers went into exile. Mujica Lainez's own brother was among those obliged to leave. A correspondent for American newspapers, he found himself persecuted after writing unflattering articles about the regime, and left for the United States. Mujica Lainez was himself removed by the Peronist government as an official of the Museum of Decorative Art where he had held a position for many years.

(Villordo 205).¹³⁹ Despite the numerous changes of government that followed, the leaders of this period did not tend to interfere with artists and intellectuals as Perón had, certainly a positive situation for Mujica Lainez, but it was hardly a peaceful time in his country. Societal polarization and worker unrest were increasing. Hard-liner General Aramburu, who succeeded the more conciliatory Lonardi soon after the coup, harshly persecuted Peron's supporters, fomenting an even deeper rift between Peronists and anti-Peronists. Additionally, his economic policies alienated workers, causing Peronism to become "the dominant political and trade union allegiance of the Argentinian working class" (Burdick 87-88). Arturo Frondizi, more sympathetic to Perón, served briefly after Aramburu, but in 1962 (as Mujica Lainez completed *Bomarzo* and began taking notes for *El unicornio*) the military deposed him, largely due to his connections with Perón (Burdick 105). Arturo Illia later became President following elections in which the military prohibited Peronist participation. The ongoing repressive measures taken against the Peronists set the stage for later reprisals such as the street demonstrations of October 1963 (Robben 98) and the 'Plan de lucha,' a series of limited strikes and factory occupations that began in May 1964 and lasted through 1965 (Burdick 119-20). Given such developments, 1964, the year in which Mujica Lainez began to write *El unicornio*, was certainly not "un año tranquilizador para el país" (Villordo 232). Illia's government was receiving criticism for its inefficacy and slowness and there were increasing rumors of a possible return of Perón, a situation likely worrisome for Mujica Lainez (232).¹⁴⁰ Also between 1963 and

¹³⁹ He resigned in 1960 while in Italy researching *Bomarzo*. (We should recall this was also the year he began to formulate his ideas for *El unicornio*.)

¹⁴⁰ Although such rumors did not come to fruition until 1973, Illia would be overthrown the year following the publication of *El unicornio*. During the dictatorship that followed, Mujica Lainez found his work the

1964 a small group of poorly-organized leftist revolutionaries inspired by the Cuban Revolution, and aided by Che Guevara, attempted an insurgency in the province of Salta. Mujica Lainez found himself affected by this, for a young friend and former assistant participated and was imprisoned. Despite his own conservative political orientation, Mujica Lainez did not condemn the youth; according to Villordo, Mujica Lainez always demonstrated solidarity with his friends in times of need, and despite their differing political views, he showed his support by regularly sending letters of encouragement while the young poet was in prison (226). Villordo adds that in a defiant gesture, he wrote these letters using the official letterhead of the Sociedad Argentina de Letras (226).

Since this period was certainly one of crisis, Mujica Lainez, again writing to Ocampo, anticipated he would be accused of escapism or evasion upon *El unicornio*'s publication, an accusation he vehemently denied in advance, saying this would be yet another of his critics' "argumentos imbéciles" ("Letters to Victoria Ocampo" 68) . Mujica Lainez had indeed turned to writing for escape during Perón's dictatorship,¹⁴¹ and when Perón later returned to power in 1973, Mujica Lainez would advise his friend the writer Marta Lynch: "Métete en tus libros, Marta. Son nuestro gran socorro, nuestro gran privilegio. Escribe para ti y no para los demás, (o por los demás)" (Villordo 235). The

object of censure as the opera version of *Bomarzo*, for which he wrote the libretto, was prohibited from its scheduled 1967 opening. Although the opera opened in New York and other venues abroad, it would not be performed in Argentina until 1972.

¹⁴¹ He immersed himself in the sonnets of Shakespeare during these years, producing a highly regarded translation of many of them; Schanzer calls our attention to a sonnet Mujica Lainez later wrote, "To Shakespeare," which clearly reveals he sought and found solace in this pursuit. Mujica Lainez writes that he turned to Shakespeare "cuando más me afligia la amargura / De mi país burlado y humillado / y el no reconocerlo transformado" (qtd. in Schanzer 20).

comment certainly seems to reveal a notion that writing is better used as a refuge than as a platform.

And yet, if we look beyond the novel's deceptive external medieval trappings (about which Ocampo was warned) we can recognize that Mujica Lainez is justified in his refusal to consider *El unicornio* to be a work of "evasion." The novel is not so disengaged from his own times as it might initially seem. For instance, Leonor Fleming has pointed out that in *El Unicornio*, Mujica Lainez in fact returns to his prior and already much-explored theme of the rise and decadence of the aristocracy; here it is simply transposed to another setting (374). Mélusine and her descendents are his central characters; thus he evokes the very real rise and fall of the great House of Lusignan.¹⁴² The story Mélusine shares in *El unicornio* is set in the 12th century, a time in which the glory of her line is fading. Her descendancy is represented to us in the poor and aging errant knight, Ozil, and his young bastard son Aiol. The power of her legitimate, titled heirs is ebbing as well, as we see in the victory of Saladin over Guy of Lusignan, which marked the return of Jerusalem to Muslim control. By addressing the decline of an aristocratic family of the Middle Ages, Mujica Lainez reminds us of the universality of such processes that have affected so many societies through the ages.

A further contemporary issue taken up by Mujica Lainez has been identified by Sorkunde Frances Vidal – the problem of war.¹⁴³ This critic points out that in *El*

¹⁴² We should recall here that the family's founding was credited to Mélusine, and the breaking of her pact by Raymondin was considered the fateful cause of its downfall.

¹⁴³ Frances Vidal considers Mujica Lainez's entire European trilogy to be united by this shared theme: "El tema que trasuda el ciclo europeo es el de *la guerra*. Es el tema acuciante, es el tema que engendraría desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial, y no encontraba una expresión apropiada" (198).

unicornio we see the tragedy of war, the loss of cherished lives, for a glorified cause that masks an underlying desire for power, which is itself shown as a corrupting force in the novel. In this way Mujica Lainez condemns the barbarity and senselessness of war, which can have no real justification, regardless of the lofty or elegant terms in which it is couched (152-54). Mujica Lainez had seen first hand the devastation of Europe following World War II while traveling as a journalist reporting for *La Nación*.¹⁴⁴ Frances Vidal surmises that a response to the war had long been fermenting in Mujica Lainez's mind, but the subject had been too painful to take up before (58). His sadness and frustration felt before the tragedy of that war likely influenced him, but we should also recall that an ideological war was brewing in Argentina as he wrote, one which had sadly already begun to cost lives of young idealistic men like his friend imprisoned in Salta, and reminiscent of *El unicornio*'s youthful protagonist Airol. By addressing war within the context of a distant European past, Mujica Lainez may sidestep directly criticizing his own government and society, but he exposes war as an enduring and universal problem that has marred human existence from the very beginning. And significantly, as he does so, he, like André Breton before him, calls forth Mélusine, the archetypal healer to point the way toward unity and peace. Further, as in *Arcane 17*, the warring between different factions or nations becomes, in fact, secondary to a very closely-related universal conflict – the war within. External warfare begins only in the last half of *El unicornio*, while the struggle between opposing aspects of the Self is evident from beginning to end, and in multiple characters, but most notably in the painful inner battle of the protagonist Airol.

¹⁴⁴ Mujica Lainez contributed to the journal for 37 years, from 1932 until his 1969 retirement.

This character significantly undertakes a quest, a physical journey that, as we will see, is actually representative of the quest for psychic wholeness. We know that Mujica Lainez had read and drawn from Jung's *Psychology and Alchemy*;¹⁴⁵ thus, we must assume that he was aware of Jung's belief that the root of war can be found in the psyche.¹⁴⁶ By making war a subsidiary theme to that of the search for psychic wholeness, Mujica Lainez reveals that he recognizes, as did Jung and Breton, that the individuation process is vital to the achievement of peace, both within and without. He also appears to have recognized the powerful and complex roles that Mélusine can play in this process, and was likely guided to this realization by his reading of Jung.¹⁴⁷

A further concern likely contributed to his evident interest in the resolution of the inner war: the widespread inattention to and neglect of the inner life, creating within the collective a divided state between the inner and the outer world. María del Carmen Tacconi de Gómez has called attention to his concern for a "crisis de valores" existing in modern society that has "privilegiado los instrumentales sobre los intrínsecos; importan más 'el confort,' el poder, la adquisición de bienes materiales, que el crecimiento

¹⁴⁵ Abate, *El Tríptico* 143.

¹⁴⁶ In *Psychology and Alchemy*, Jung asserts that when that "four-year war of monumental frightfulness on the stage of Europe" took place, "nobody realized that European man was possessed by something that robbed him of all free will" (481). Jung states that World War II was a result of the rampant problem of an inflated consciousness, "hypnotized by itself and [that] therefore cannot be argued with" (480). He explains that this inflated state leads to unconscious possession, and "inevitably dooms [consciousness] to calamities that must strike it dead" (481).

¹⁴⁷ *Psychology and Alchemy* contains images and references to Mélusine, and in it Jung calls attention to her link to the unconscious and the *anima*. This link was more extensively explored by Jung in "Paracelsus as a Spiritual Phenomenon," and given Mujica Lainez's interest in Paracelsus (which he had researched extensively in his writing of *Bomarzo*) as well as Jung's frequent references to his own study of Paracelsus, I am inclined to agree with Abate that it is likely Mujica Lainez read Jung's "Paracelsus" as well (143).

interior” (98). She finds that he calls attention to this problem in multiple works, and *El unicornio* is no exception.

There are two further crises faced by Mujica Lainez in the 1960’s that are highly significant in light of the attention he gives in the novel to the search for inner peace and harmony and to the process of individuation that is so vital to their attainment. These are his advancing age and the increasing tension between his own outer and inner life (closely tied to growing tensions between Mujica Lainez and his own society).

As is the case with all of the writers addressed in this essay, Mujica Lainez was facing middle age in the years *Mélusine* emerged in his writing. Born in 1910, he was formulating and writing *El unicornio* between the ages of 50 and 55 years. As we know, Jung identifies mid-life as a propitious time for the emergence of repressed contents of the unconscious; for it is at this juncture that we begin to undergo changes that often call into question our role, beliefs and assumptions about ourselves. As he prepared to write *El unicornio*, Mujica Lainez not only faced natural, expected aging, but also underwent a period of extreme physical suffering, which forced him to confront his own physical weakness, limitations, and mortality. In 1963, he was struck with hepatitis, and found himself bedridden for three months. Despite his illness and the imposed physical inactivity of a long convalescence, he kept mentally active that year, continuing to take copious notes and filling four of the six notebooks that would inform the novel.¹⁴⁸ Then, in 1964, after his writing was underway, illness returned during his trip to attend the

¹⁴⁸ From his sick bed he even managed to write a translation of Molière’s *Les femmes savantes*, which would be performed the following year by the Comedia Nacional (Villordo 228).

Congreso de Escritores.¹⁴⁹ His doctors believed the illness to be related to the earlier bout with hepatitis. Its most serious symptom was a crippling stiffness and pain in his fingers that interfered with his writing of the novel. He was forced to cease writing for a month and a half after finishing chapter five, and when he returned to the novel, toward the end he had to pause and immerse his aching hands in hot water every hour in order to bear the pain (Villordo 250-51). The trauma this illness provoked and the impact it had upon him is expressed in the letter to Victoria Ocampo, written just before he completed the novel:

Por primera vez, después de meses de titubeos, angustia, dolor y mal humor (y desconcierto también, porque toda esta situación escapa a mis relaciones habituales con la vida) [...] comienzo a entrever algo así como el anuncio [...] de la salud. [...] He descubierto, en el curso de esta enfermedad absurda, algo que no sospechaba, y es que la vejez es la enfermedad. [...] Por eso me he creído, con espanto, con desilusión, con impotente furia, llegado a la vejez a los cincuenta y cuatro años. [...] Me han quitado – en parte – el dolor, y ese alivio me llena de alegría. Ya estaba resignándome a convivir con él, como con un sádico compañero ... Esa extraña misteriosa familiaridad del dolor [...] ¡qué singular es y cómo nos permite mirar hacia nosotros mismos desde otra perspectiva, como si de repente miráramos hacia un insólito santo o demonio que llevamos dentro! (66)

¹⁴⁹ Incidentally, this is the same conference at which he found himself the object of attacks by young leftist writers.

Clearly his illness drastically altered his view of himself, and it is very clear this period was a time of deep personal crisis and of self-examination; it is no wonder he gives such attention to the quest for psychic wholeness in the novel or that he was so drawn to Mélusine, an *anima* figure representative of his own unconscious, and who shares in the power of Mercurius to unite and heal. Interestingly, despite the excruciating pain he underwent as he wrote it, he credits the novel with his healing: “El mundo mágico que inventaba me rodeó con la diversión, la inquietud de sus personajes, y me brindó la droga bienhechora que el médico me negaba” (67).¹⁵⁰

El unicornio appears to have served not only as a distraction from his physical suffering, but also as a means of coming to terms with his advancing age and mortality. Although serious illness had not touched Mujica Lainez prior to 1963, Tacconi de Gómez indicates that a preoccupation with death was already evident in the preceding *Bomarzo*.¹⁵¹ She has analyzed the presence of the theme of immortality in both it and in *El unicornio*. She finds that in response to his disturbing recognition of the destruction wrought by the passage of time and of the finite nature of life, in *Bomarzo* Mujica Lainez explores various ways of attaining immortality (93). The Duke of Bomarzo attempts to achieve this by any means – including, for instance, the plastic arts, writing, gaining glory

¹⁵⁰ Another factor which may have contributed to his improvement was the visit of 24 year old Carlos Bruchman, as he lay in bed convalescing. The young painter would not only become one of his great loves, but also the model for *El unicornio*'s protagonist, Airol (Villordo 233). Mujica Lainez described him as “un ser puro, raro en esta época” and admitted to a sincere interest in him from their first meeting: “me fascina asomarme al laberinto de esa alma” (227-28).

¹⁵¹ We should bear in mind Mujica Lainez was already nearing 50 when he began this first novel of his European trilogy. His treatment of the theme of aging and death would continue across many works written between this time and his death in 1984. Interestingly, in a 1979 interview with Cristina Pacheco, he intimated that his frequent writing of historical works, his preoccupation with the past, is, at least in part, a manifestation of his fear of death, for a backward vision avoids envisioning the future, which is finite; by taking such a perspective, he said, “así no pienso en la muerte. La muerte a todos nos preocupa, ¿a usted no?” (151).

in battle, and, finally and most significantly, alchemy. This last one holds the greatest appeal for him, for only it promises physical immortality (88). Yet Tacconi de Gómez explains that he runs into problems precisely because he understands the elixir of life in the literal sense. In a comment very much in keeping with Jungian thought, Tacconi de Gómez indicates that the true goal of the alchemical work is to access the “chispa divina” within (89). We should recall here that Jung would correlate this notion of a “divine spark” with the Self, which is the ultimate goal of individuation, the process he considers to be represented in the alchemical work. Tacconi de Gómez rightly observes that in *El unicornio*, we find a progression, in that physical immortality is no longer desired; Mélusine considers it, in fact, a curse.¹⁵² We might find in this progression an externalized reflection of Mujica Lainez’s inner psychological growth and deepening understanding of the individuation process over time. Tacconi de Gómez recognizes, as do I, that in *El unicornio* the primary focus is a search for inner peace and wholeness. However, she correlates this goal with the overcoming of inappropriate urges (122) and finds that Aiol is involved in a heroic quest to overcome his “libido incestuosa,” his goal being spiritual perfection (149), and thus the immortality that comes from the redemption of sin.¹⁵³ Her understanding of the novel contrasts with my own view that the peace sought is one that can only be brought about by the sense of wholeness that results from the process of individuation – *not* by an idealized “perfeccionamiento espiritual” (89) involving the expiation of sin. Tacconi de Gómez’s view stems from a too-literal

¹⁵² Mujica Lainez did not invent this idea – we should recall that already in Jean d’Arras, Mélusine’s primary goal when entering into her pact with Raymondin was to escape the cruel fate of immortality.

¹⁵³ She assumes precisely the same cause and goal for Azelaís’s self-sacrificial aid to the Leper King. Here, too, Tacconi de Gómez neglects to account for Mujica Lainez’s use of alchemical symbolism in the novel.

interpretation of symbolic alchemical content in the novel, which has, however, been noticed by Sandro Abate. Working from Jung's *Psychology and Alchemy* and his article on Paracelsus, Abate accurately recognizes Mélusine as a representative of the *anima*/unconscious, but a somewhat limited analysis of both her and the novel have led him to a conclusion quite similar to that of Tacconi de Gómez. For although he has suggested that a search for a sense of wholeness is involved, he finds Mélusine, as the unconscious, and Aiol, as a representative of the conscious mind, to be set in opposition due to her amoral aspect, and to Aiol's involvement in a literal and spiritual quest to overcome sin ("Psicología y simbolismo" 32).¹⁵⁴

To assume that in *El unicornio* Mujica Lainez sets forth the overcoming of sin (and particularly a sin involving sexual desires) as a goal, is to negate vitally important aspects of Mujica Lainez's own experience, for he was himself a victim of strict societal dogma that held that homosexuality was at best a deviant behavior to be repressed, at worst, an evil.¹⁵⁵ Nor does it take into account Jung's concerns regarding "sin" that are addressed in *Psychology and Alchemy*. In this work to which Mujica Lainez referred, Jung takes issue with clear-cut black and white definitions of right and wrong, good and

¹⁵⁴ Here we have the assumption that the unconscious (conceived of as amoral/feminine), is in conflict with the conscious (conceived of as superior/masculine) and must be overcome and subdued by it, which is not in keeping with Jungian thought. It appears that Abate interprets Jung erroneously as did Gray (see my discussion of this point in chapter 1). Although Jung taught that a bringing together of conscious and unconscious is a difficult process, this is due to the need for consciousness to overcome the fear of engulfment by the unconscious. He does not consider the unconscious to be amoral or evil. He has stressed the wisdom it contains and finds the goal of individuation to be harmonious union, not domination by either side.

¹⁵⁵ Illustrative of the attitude of his day, the publishing house Emecé refused to publish *Misterioso Buenos Aires*, for the publisher was "shocked" by the sexual "deviance" to be encountered in the collection of stories, and a long-time friend of Mujica Lainez's parents had a mass prayed for the salvation of his soul (Villordo 166).

evil, in a stance that surely resonated with Mujica Lainez. Jung insists that “there is absolutely no truth that does not spell salvation to one person and damnation to the other” (30), and he insists that doctors like himself, when aiding a patient striving toward inner wholeness, must avoid a “facile moral superiority” and must instead consider “not whether a thing is for or against the Church but whether it is for or against life and health. On paper the moral code looks clear and neat enough; but the same document written on the ‘living tables of the human heart’ is often a sorry tatter” (30-31). Unfortunately, society does not tend to take such a view, but instead harshly judges deviations from the norm, particularly if these are perceived as morally reprehensible, which can have devastating consequences for the individual’s psyche.¹⁵⁶

Leonor Fleming observes that a constant across all of Mujica Lainez’s works is an exploration of the individual’s struggle to accept himself. She indicates that his varied characters regularly face “la dificultad de ser ellos mismos y se buscan reiteradamente en otros a través de vidas transpuestas” (374). The inability to accept oneself is frequently attributable to an inability to reconcile one’s internal understanding of who one is with what society believes or expects the individual to be. Self-acceptance is surely difficult when an important aspect of one’s being is condemned as wrong or sinful, an experience only too well-known to Mujica Lainez.

Perhaps such struggles with self-acceptance in his early years explain why not until rather late in his life is there an indication of his romantic involvement with an

¹⁵⁶ Jung complains that “the rigorous exercises and proselytizing of the Catholics, and a certain type of Protestant education that is always sniffing out sin, have brought about psychic damage that leads not into the kingdom of Heaven, but to the consulting room of the doctor” (20).

individual of his own sex.¹⁵⁷ He met Guillermo Whitelow in the late 1940's (when Mujica Lainez was already approaching middle age), and by 1954 their correspondence reveals a deep and passionate love. Mujica Lainez had been married since 1936 to Ana Alvear and had fathered three children. Despite his love affair with Whitelow, and others to come, he would remain married throughout his lifetime, a choice that was surely influenced by the need to conceal his homosexuality. However, Adriana González Mateos has examined Mujica Lainez's public persona, which attests to a desire to reveal it. An elegant dresser, he modeled his look upon that of 19th century dandies and the homosexual writers Oscar Wilde and Marcel Proust. He came to be known for his decorative vests and his monocle, as well as his large, flashy rings. His effeminate mannerisms tended toward the stereotypical. According to González Mateos, Mujica Lainez constructed this persona in response to societal constraints – it was an acceptable public image that served to “cover [his] sexuality, both concealing and revealing it” (157).¹⁵⁸ For example his rings were symbolic of his homosexuality, but this was only known to those sharing in his secret – for others it could be taken as “a mere fondness for beautiful and refined objects” (201-02). This same kind of “subterfuge” was applied in his writing. Even early in his career, homosexuality was subtly alluded to within his stories and novels, but not addressed directly. González Mateos's analysis of a variety of

¹⁵⁷ According to Villordo, although it is certainly likely Mujica Lainez engaged in homosexual activity at some point earlier in his life, there is no clear evidence of this. He adds that if there were other such relationships, they were clearly not of the depth and intensity he experienced with Whitelow (62).

¹⁵⁸ González Mateos notes that we should bear in mind that Mujica Lainez's status and position within the aristocracy enabled him to project such a persona. He had a greater degree of protection than other homosexuals of the time, for whom mannered behavior and dress would have actually been a danger (202). Through this persona he was able to “challenge traditional norms of gender classification” and to undertake a “reinvention of what was possible from the despised position of the effeminate,” creating a “non-virile voice which could be heard in the public realm” (283).

his works demonstrates that in many of them “the homosexual content is hidden, available only to the reader able to decipher its clues” (197).¹⁵⁹ According to Leopoldo Brizuela, over the course of Mujica Lainez’s career, there is a growing tension evident between his explicit purpose to write “art for art’s sake” and his desire for exhibition, which he knew could have very negative consequences (81). Mujica Lainez was growing frustrated by his ongoing practice of concealment, and the mounting tension was, by the 1960’s, provoking him to become more daring. Brizuela calls attention to the revolutionary aspect of his European trilogy in that it brings forth homosexual characters in pre-modern settings.¹⁶⁰ By 1967, not long after his publication of *El unicornio*, the daring of his persona and literary work began to receive negative attention from the Onganía regime with the *Bomarzo* scandal;¹⁶¹ it is evident that by then he had carried his ambiguity, and its exhibition, “al límite de lo tolerable, y que ya no podrá camuflar el elitismo, el refinamiento, la ironía propias de su concepción de lo *gay* bajo el elitismo y el conservadurismo de la clase dominante, [...] ese enemigo poderoso que empezó a atacarlo” (82). A further cause for tension for Mujica Lainez in the 60’s is the ideological shift taking place among homosexual writers. Brizuela indicates that by that

¹⁵⁹ Leopoldo Brizuela, too, discusses Mujica Lainez’s application of rhetorical devices, “códigos secretos” which could only be fully understood by fellow, informed members of the gay subculture (80).

¹⁶⁰ González Mateos considers that by placing homosexuals in these contexts, Mujica Lainez is responding to the ongoing interest of Hispanic writers in the construction of a national identity and the exploration of their national roots. She finds that he is turning to an exploration of the homosexual identity, seeking to create a history for a group of individuals typically lacking filiative ties (234). Rather than national ties, he “stress[es] the importance of affiliation to this transnational group of exiles” (235).

¹⁶¹ It was also in 1967 that he wrote a story entitled “La larga caballera negra” which Brizuela considers to demonstrate “una osadía única en el marco de la dictadura” in that Mujica Lainez suggests his own homosexuality by inserting a protagonist clearly modeled upon himself (75), whose dark-haired lover is described applying careful avoidance of gendered terms. This lover was, in fact, modeled upon Carlos Bruchman, who had also served as the inspiration for Aiol.

time, Mujica Lainez was becoming emblematic of an earlier, traditional, conservative gay subculture that had reached “el límite de sus posibilidades,” and was beginning to give way to the 60s generation – with its emblematic “larga cabellera,”¹⁶² and more radical, leftist orientation.¹⁶³ Thus, not only was he coping with physical aging; he was also beginning to experience a disconnect with the upcoming generation of writers, and perhaps sensed that his own image, style, and views were becoming outmoded. Not only his body, but also his ideas, were aging.

As we have seen, a multitude of conflicts were affecting Mujica Lainez in the early 60's. Faced with progressing age, a crippling illness, and the harsh realization of the brevity of life, he was increasingly preoccupied with the need not only to achieve an inner peace and wholeness, but also a growing desire to break free from societal pressures to conform and make known hidden aspects of himself – to end his societal posing and concealment of his homosexuality and thus to heal the schism between the personal and the external. He found himself living in the midst of a society intolerant of deviation from the norm, in which those who did not think or act in accordance with it (or with the government which undertook to establish and “safe-guard” it) found themselves the object of repression. His society denied the individual the freedom so conducive to the exploration of the unconscious and so necessary to the outward manifestation of newly discovered contents of the unconscious once these are accessed. His is a society

¹⁶² Brizuela finds this conflict to be evoked in “La larga cabellera negra.”

¹⁶³ According to Brizuela this generation of writers came to view Mujica Lainez as “un figurón inoperante cuya ambivalencia política servía de acquiescencia al poder dictatorial” (84). But González Mateos explains that his refusal to engage in criticism of Argentina's political regimes through his writing was a result of his being loathe to trouble his relationship with regimes tolerant of his “secreto a voces,” and that had allowed him “to attain a place in the public sphere and to create the conditions to realize his intellectual work” (230).

that has much in common with that of André Breton – one that has become overly rational and dogmatic, is blind to the “irrational” unconscious, and is unprepared to permit full realization of the Self.¹⁶⁴ Jung would consider this indicative of an overblown consciousness, bound to fall prey to dangerous projections and the subsequent persecution of any who contradict its perceived “rightness.” Jung teaches that if undertaking the individuation process is itself difficult, the far more difficult step is the integration of newly discovered aspects of the Self into one’s outer life. The conditions necessary for Mujica Lainez to be free to reveal his homosexuality simply did not exist, hence the growing tension and unresolved inner battle he faced, despite his having already come to terms with this aspect of himself. I consider *El unicornio* to be informed by all of these crises and concerns, and propose that Mujica Lainez calls upon Mélusine in much the same way as Breton – as *anima*, archetypal healer and spiritual guide toward unity, wholeness, and peace. Mujica Lainez’s primary focus is the necessity of healing the internal war waged between opposing aspects of the psyche, and he positions Mélusine as both narrator and participant in a story aiming to redress the divisions existing between consciousness and the unconscious (both collectively and within the individual) and between the individual who has taken up the individuation process and a society unprepared to permit the full revelation and realization of the new individual that results.

¹⁶⁴ I agree here with Abate’s observation that the novel can be seen to be situated in one of the “más singulares controversias de nuestro tiempo” regarding the paradoxical “agotamiento de la razón y la urgencia de los nuevos misticismos [...] de las vindicaciones irracionales” (“*El unicornio*” 228). This was precisely the concern of surrealists like André Breton, who sought to access the unconscious, the “irrational,” which they perceived as superior to the conscious rational mind. In light of Mujica Lainez’s knowledge of French, and travels to Paris in the years that Surrealism was at its height, it seems likely he read and could have been influenced to some degree by Breton and the surrealists.

The Multiple Roles and Quests of Mélusine

Although *El unicornio* is clearly organized around the central quest of the young Aiol, an examination of the representation and varied roles of our guiding narrator Mélusine will uncover the presence of three interrelated quests within the novel. These include 1) the quest of the unconscious to gain recognition and validation in a society in need of collective individuation, 2) the quest of the individual to unite consciousness and the unconscious in the individuation process, and 3) the quest of discovered contents of the unconscious to become manifest in the outer world. I propose that the process of individuation has already been taken up by Mujica Lainez himself, and through Mélusine's narration of Aiol's story he presents the process to us, applying alchemical symbolism, in order to point the way for others, much as did André Breton in *Arcane 17*. However, Mujica Lainez not only reveals the need for both individual and collective individuation, he also questions whether or not the next step is possible – can one ever hope to reveal hidden contents that transgress societal expectations?

As the novel begins, we encounter Mélusine in solitude within the Church tower of Lusignan. She speaks to us from the present and reminds us that the castle of Lusignan has long since been destroyed. This has eliminated the one task that was left her after her tragic flight away from Lusignan – her duty to cry out and circle the castle's tower with the passing of each descendant. Her existence has become a lonely and monotonous one. She passes her days engaged in interminable hours of reading and study, poring over her books as she peers through the antique glasses that had belonged to her beloved Raymondin. This image brings to mind Mujica Lainez himself, poring over his own

extensive readings and research with his own out-moded eyewear of preference – his signature monocle. And both he and Mélusine share in the frustrations of the aging process, despite her immortality. Although she retains an ageless beauty,¹⁶⁵ she is losing not just her eyesight, but also her magical powers. She can no longer make herself visible to humans and finds herself reduced to relying upon other magical creatures for aid.¹⁶⁶ She also complains that humans no longer recall her story. She criticizes the current disbelief in fairies, and insists that, contrary to our modern assumptions, fairies swarm everywhere, and one would have to be “ciego para no verlas” (11).¹⁶⁷ Mélusine recalls a medieval past in which people still believed in and called upon fairies, as well as angels, for help, and these supernatural creatures passed by each other frequently as they bustled about their work (12-13). Now not only are humans blind to them, they are deaf to them as well – her own cries are no longer heard, and she speaks of the plight of certain fairies “densas de voluntad científica” who used to whisper to laboring scientists as they worked (12). The inspiration and “ideas pasmosas” they provided are outmoded, no longer heeded or desired, like the fairies themselves.¹⁶⁸ These fairies have become “sumergidas por el alud de cifras, de las fórmulas y de las máquinas electrónicas, y miran

¹⁶⁵ She explains this is a beauty that now lacks the blush of youthful vigor. Now only by magic may she fully recover it as it was at her peak, but her magic is so weak that she may not retain it for more than a few moments at a time (65).

¹⁶⁶ Although as we turn to her role in Aiol’s quest, we will find that she seeks to serve as guide and healer, these roles are limited by her lack of powers, and can rarely be accomplished without the intervention of others, including, for instance, the fairies Morgan and Oberon.

¹⁶⁷ We might notice the correlation of fairies with unconscious contents of the psyche that may be denied or ignored, but which are, nevertheless, always “swarming” about, silently going about their business and subtly affecting us despite (or we might say because of) our ignorance of their existence.

¹⁶⁸ Perhaps this, too, echoes Mujica Lainez’s own experience, in light of his rather traditional style and ideas which were beginning to be seen by some as outmoded.

multiplicarse en torno las expresiones que no entienden y que convulsionan a un mundo que se les desliza entre las manos aéreas y que no les pertenece ya” (12). Mélusine describes the modern day as belonging to an industrialized and rational world in which there is no longer any place for the illogical or the irrational, and thus none for magic, the imagination, spirituality or the unconscious. She complains of the present century in which “los escolares deben aprender tantas cosas difíciles e inútiles que no les queda ya tiempo para las fundamentales” (13).¹⁶⁹ As we know, Jung held that such one-sidedness is detrimental to individual and collective health. Mélusine chides us for choosing this course that impoverishes the spirit : “hay distintos modos de ser un pobre de espíritu; [...] – tal vez el más tonto – consiste en negarse a probar la sal y la pimienta ocultas que sazonan [la Tierra] de magia” (11).

Jung identifies Mélusine as a representative of the unconscious mind and as an *anima* figure representing the contra-sexual aspect of the male psyche. Given the similarities between Mujica Lainez and the fairy, as well as his study of Jung, his preoccupations at the time and consequent interest in self-exploration and the pursuit of inner wholeness, we may recognize that Mélusine serves here as an outward projection of Mujica Lainez’s own *anima*, to whom he gives voice in this flowing narrative, with its baroque style reminiscent of active imagination.¹⁷⁰ Bearing in mind the practice of concealment and subterfuge that he had long applied to his life and literary work, it

¹⁶⁹ Mujica Lainez clearly speaks here to that crisis identified by Tacconi de Gómez as one of his prime concerns – modern society’s inattention to those things that matter most.

¹⁷⁰ Although this novel applies more formal organizational aspects than the other novels addressed in this dissertation, with its chapter divisions and clear headings that even briefly summarize the content of each chapter, it should be noted that their use is not typical of Mujica Lainez’s writing. Such chapter headings were a late addition to his previous *Bomarzo*, applied only at the suggestion of his editor. (See Abate, *El trípico* 8). These served as an aid to readers of the lengthy novel, and also evoked writing conventions of an earlier time. Evidently Mujica Lainez chose to apply these once again in *El unicornio*.

becomes particularly significant that her voice comes forth to criticize society from within a tower in which she has long been hidden away. He positions her precisely where his society prefers to relegate the “chaotic, irrational” unconscious (not to mention homosexuality that “must” be kept repressed within it), but, in keeping with Jung’s teachings, confined or not, she cannot be silenced. We should note that Mujica Lainez emphasizes her unruly, disturbing, chaotic aspect that makes her so difficult to bring into consciousness, much less into the world beyond. He does so by giving this very beautiful, wise, knowledgeable, and well-spoken creature a tail with a mind of its own; recalling her baths, she complains that her tail “me atormentaba, me inspiraba agradables pensamientos réprobos, me sacudía con bruscos coletazos”(25); her wings, too, escape her control: “azotaban el aire con sus membranas de murciélago” (25). Her wings take on an even darker connotation when she later refers to them as “alas de vampiro” (29). Despite the frightening image this evokes, Mujica Lainez presents Mélusine as an appealing character in many respects, and does not categorically characterize her as evil. Instead, by insisting upon her duality, he reminds us first that the unconscious contains both positive and negative aspects of the Self, which complicates its very necessary exploration. Further, through the vampire image, he reminds us why we so rarely seek to delve into the unconscious and why society tends to oppose its exploration: the unconscious is felt to pose a danger to the conscious mind, for it threatens to devour (drain the “life-blood”) of the *ego*, presenting the risk of psychic disintegration. This problem is addressed by Jung in *Psychology and Alchemy*, where he observes that “the unconscious induces a panic fear in civilized people, not least on account of the menacing analogy with insanity” (52). He adds that as rational individuals we may not reject the

notion of analyzing the unconscious as a passive object, but “to let the unconscious go its own way and to experience it as a reality is something that exceeds the courage and capacity” of most, and although necessary to individuation, he adds that it is indeed “not without its dangers” (52).

This very human fear was, of course, already experienced in the Middle Ages, and Mélusine reveals that her final contact with the world occurred during those years: “sola en el campanario de Lusignan, no hablo con nadie desde el siglo XII” (32). Although, as Mélusine reminds us, medieval individuals still believed in fairies and magic, as the power of the Church increased so did notions that these pagan elements were on the Devil’s side.¹⁷¹ In *Psychology and Alchemy* Jung calls attention to the ambiguity of conceptions of fairies, lamias, and sirens, as well as Mélusine herself; all of these he identifies as feminine figures representative of the *anima*/unconscious, who thus simultaneously fascinate and threaten (52-53).

In *El unicornio*, before she undertakes the story of Aiol’s journey, Mélusine first briefly shares with us her own. Here Mujica Lainez includes a significant departure from the earlier versions of her betrayal, the act so clearly symbolic of the rejection of the ambiguous and threatening unconscious. In Jean d’Arras and Coudrette, following his betrayal of her, Raymondin begs for Mélusine to forgive him and desperately wants her to stay; she cannot, due to his having broken the pact. However, in *El unicornio*, the violation of the pact is only secondary, which makes her rejection all the more definitive.

¹⁷¹ See chapter 2 for further discussion of the relationship between evolving notions of fairies and the rise of the Church. Certainly Mélusine’s quickness to establish she is on God’s side upon meeting Raymondin (in both Jean d’Arras and Coudrette’s versions) stems from the writers’ recognition of this already conflictive view of fairies.

Melusine tells us that she might actually have been able to forgive Raymondin's transgression and return to him, but that what prohibits her return is actually her "cola de serpiente" (30). Now that he has seen her ambiguous and frightening form, nothing can ever be the same. Raymondin is repulsed by her and is unable to bring himself to touch her; she says that they took leave of each other, blowing kisses "a distancia prudencial" (31). Mujica Lainez eliminates the tragic farewell scene of Jean d'Arras and Coudrette, thus no one mourns the loss of the beautiful lady of Lusignan. It appears that her needed and valued attributes count for nothing. She is simply seen flying from a window as a monstrosity, and all are horrified. Melusine describes the reactions of the multitude at length, adding that even "los caballos rompían sus frenos con delirantes relinchos [...] las palomas, aterrorizadas por mi presencia de mortífero dragón, escapaban en círculos trémulos" (29). All now perceive the unconscious as a frightening creature from which no good can come. Her subsequent confinement in the tower can be said, then, to represent the repression of the unconscious, not just by the individual, but by society as a whole.

In the story that follows, Mélusine reveals to us that a few hundred years later, in the 12th century, she attempted one last time to return to the world beyond her tower. In this story we learn that she finds herself drawn one night to the revelry of a group of travelling players. When she flies to investigate, invisible to them all, she spies among the performers the adolescent Aiol, who bears a striking resemblance to Raymondin; in fact, he appears to be his very reincarnation. When the aging errant knight Ozil of the House of Lusignan unexpectedly encounters this group and proves to be the father Aiol has never known, Mélusine realizes that the boy is a descendent of hers and

Raymondin's. Although this explains the startling resemblance, it complicates matters, for she finds the stirrings of love awaken within her. In the first of several comments that appear designed to throw into question sexual mores, she attempts to excuse her desire for Aiol, stating that her long existence through so many centuries has inspired in her "un distinto ordenamiento de las ideas morales, adaptadas a la originalidad de mis circunstancias" (43). She senses he needs her, but admits she is at least equally inspired by her own need for him when she decides to leave her solitary confinement and join Aiol and Ozil in their adventures.

Diana García-Simon comments that the characters of *El unicornio* "no dejarán de desplazarse de un lugar a otro intentando la reconstrucción de la armonía arrebatada" (32). We may clearly apply this to Mélusine, who from the moment she joins Aiol, undertakes her own quest for a lost paradise, which may be interpreted in a number of ways. If we bear in mind Mujica Lainez's preoccupation with aging, reflected in the frustrations of the aging immortal fairy, we might first recognize this as a quest for lost youth. Here she meets a boy identical to her beloved Raymondin; she is unable to help but feel drawn to him and to feel her spirits lift as the invigorating spark and renewal that love inspires begin to grow within her.¹⁷² Yet we should also bear in mind the alchemical symbolism evident in the novel, which leads to other interpretations. Sandro Abate's analysis finds Mélusine to be associated with the moon (thus, Mercurius as Luna) and to be a complementary character in relation to Aiol, whom he has shown to be associated

¹⁷² It seems likely a similar sense of renewal accompanied an ill and aging Mujica Lainez's first encounter with Carlos Bruchman, upon whom Aiol is modeled. If we consider Mélusine's voice to be that of Mujica Lainez's own *anima*, a part of himself, here we reveal a certain case of literary subterfuge as well. That a female character is drawn to the boy is certainly not scandalous (barring, of course, the incest complication) but the *anima* is simply the feminine unconscious of a male. Thus, in this sense, Mujica Lainez is himself expressing desire for a young man.

with the sun (thus, Mercurius as *Sol*), representative of the conscious mind. Yet, except to point out the expected difficulty of joining the two, as per Jung and alchemical texts, little more is revealed by his analysis. A more in-depth exploration proves enlightening. First, we should consider the incestuous relationship between them. Mélusine is his ancestress – a distant grandmother, thus in this respect we may identify her as symbolically representing the Mother/unconscious from which was born the conscious mind. As discussed in chapter 1, Jung interprets the mother-son incest as representative of the psychic need for the difficult return to the mother in the process of individuation. However, throughout *El unicornio*, Aiol remains virtually oblivious to Mélusine's presence. This is not to say that he remains untouched by the individuation process over the course of the novel – in fact this is central to his quest. However, as we will see in our analysis of it, another character, his half-sister Azelaís, comes into play in Aiol's individuation. She is simultaneously Aiol's counterpart and a "double" of Mélusine. This complicating factor requires us to examine Mélusine from a different perspective, one that reveals another quest that overlaps Aiol's. Aiol participates in both quests; his role, however, differs in each. Mélusine is indeed a representative of the unconscious, and clearly seeks union with Aiol, yet she is engaged in her own quest, one in which he represents not the individual ego pursuing individuation (as he does in relation to Azelaís) but rather a collective society that rejected her long ago (in the person of Raymondin, Aiol's double), and that is even now completely blind to her, just as Raymondin himself was when she secretly returned to visit him after her departure.¹⁷³ We

¹⁷³ This is another alteration applied by Mujica Lainez to Mélusine's myth. In *El unicornio* Mélusine tells us that not only did she return to tend her children after leaving Lusignan, she also visited Raymondin when he was in bed at night, but due to his severe nearsightedness without his beryl glasses, he never saw her.

may recognize in the ageless Mélusine the equally ageless collective unconscious seeking to be recognized and given validation within a society that has repressed it and has thus lost its psychic equilibrium. This interpretation is readily supported by the fact that the only way in which she ever manages to be heard or seen in her own form by Aiol is in his dreams and waking visions, which is where, according to Jung, the archetypes of the collective unconscious manifest themselves. Their autonomy, so often ignored by us, is equally demonstrated here, for she gains the ability not only to enter, but also to sway and control Aiol's thoughts. When unexpected thoughts and ideas emerge unbidden in his own mind, he fails to recognize there is someone (or something, i.e. autonomous unconscious contents) seeking expression and acknowledgement, and that recognized as such or not, these have the power to influence him. Mélusine, luckily for Aiol, acts as a positive force from within his psyche, and we may recognize in her behavior toward him the work of the archetypal healer and guide. Although continually hindered in this role by her weakened powers and his ignorance of her presence, she is able nevertheless to aid him in many ways. Through her ability to read and influence his mind, she is able to guide his thoughts toward more positive ones when he begins to fall into sadness and despair, for instance when he dwells upon the tragic death of Seramunde (179). Mélusine is also able to witness the warring within his mind that results from his struggle to cope with the often unwanted lascivious attentions of a series of men and women, and to suppress his own sexual inclinations toward males and his powerful love and desire for his half-sister. When the "tremenda y brumosa batalla en torno a la idea del amor" (184) becomes too much to bear, she comes to his aid, calming him with her loving, albeit incorporeal presence, which he somehow senses. She also aids in more dramatic ways,

with the assistance of supernatural “connections.” For instance, the fairy Morgan provides her a potion that she uses to heal both Aiol’s and Ozil’s injuries (115), and on several occasions she sounds the magical horn of Oberon to save Aiol from death. The final time she sounds it, she magically provides him with the object of his quest, thereby aiding him, she tells us, “a morir (a revivir) con serena grandeza” (383). Significantly, only once his quest comes to an end in death, his wholeness finally achieved, does he finally see and acknowledge her. He ascends, she tells us, “en el aire propicio a las criaturas superiores, [...] [y] antes me sonrió” (386). Thus, the completion of Aiol’s quest, requiring the death of the individual’s one-sided consciousness, is what is required (and, certainly, must occur among a multitude of individuals) in order for the unconscious to become acknowledged by the collective, and in order for Mélusine’s quest to be fulfilled.

Now let us turn to a closer examination of Aiol’s quest. As mentioned above, Aiol continually struggles with his desire for his half-sister. A number of critics have been distracted by their “sinful” behavior, and by the explicit preoccupation of multiple characters with the battle between good and evil. Examined from a literal point of view, Aiol and Azelaís’s incest indeed appears to instigate both characters to undertake efforts to expiate their sin. And the terrible guilt they feel, as well as the deep love for each other, cause this literal interpretation to bring up the thorny issue of where one draws the line between right and wrong in relation to sexual and emotional desires, which will prove to be of central concern when we take up the third quest found in the novel: the “coming out” of accessed and needed unconscious contents. But their incest and Aiol’s quest are best understood if we consider them from a symbolic perspective. In this way,

we may recognize in these two characters a representation of the alchemical brother-sister pair. As we saw in our analysis of Isis and Osiris in chapter 3 above, the “brother-sister pair” represent the encounter between the unconscious and consciousness, initially in a tremendous conflict that carries with it certain moral complications, and is thus “appropriately expressed in the morally obnoxious form of incest” (*Psychology and Alchemy* 415). Aiol, as symbolic of the conscious mind, experiences most powerfully fear and repulsion before the notion of the sin of incest; thus it is unsurprising that it is Azelaís,¹⁷⁴ representative of the unconscious and thus less bound by societal concerns, who instigates their union. The way in which they are presented to us leaves little doubt that Mujica Lainez drew upon his knowledge of alchemy and Jungian teachings when creating these characters.¹⁷⁵ First we should notice their physical images. Their similarities are stressed in that both are adolescents and share a very similar build and facial features. Both are, significantly, androgynous. By blending both masculine and feminine traits in each of them, Mujica Lainez presents a less clear-cut image of conscious as masculine and unconscious as feminine than we sometimes encounter in alchemical representations of the brother-sister pair. By insisting upon their androgyny, Mujica Lainez symbolically (and quite accurately) expresses that both consciousness and

¹⁷⁴ I must disagree with Tacconi de Gómez, who considers Azelaís to be an evil monster tempting the heroic Aiol away from the pursuit of spiritual perfection with her “erótica agresividad” (151).

¹⁷⁵ He also clearly knew, understood, and applied key elements of Mélusine’s story. This is clear in his choice of name for Azelaís, which evokes the conflictual relationship of two other siblings, sons of Mélusine. Azelaís appears to come from “Mallezaís,” the name of the abbey in which Mélusine’s son the monk Fromont was killed by his brother the knight Geoffroi in a fit of rage. This creates a link between Azelaís (as the unconscious) and Aiol (consciousness) and these brothers. The monk of Mallezaís may be linked to a preoccupation with the inner world, and thus the unconscious, while the knight Geoffroi with his outward, worldly preoccupations, represents the ego/consciousness. The somewhat more friendly rivalry between the hermit Brandan and the knight Ozil regarding what the ideal training for young Aiol should entail equally evokes these two characters with their contrasting values and views.

the unconscious are dual, always a mixture of darkness and light – thus this is not a conflict between good and evil and we cannot simply categorize consciousness (Aiol) as a positive force and the unconscious (Azelaís) as a negative one. Their duality can be seen to serve as a means of highlighting the presence of both masculine and feminine traits within the human psyche, and, back on a more literal plane, presents for us the difficulties faced by those who exhibit their androgyny externally (we particularly notice this in the case of Aiol, whose existence is continually complicated by his androgyny, as he struggles with his ambiguous desires and the sexual attraction he inspires in individuals of both sexes.)

Despite their shared traits, the characters are also presented as opposites: Aiol is dark-haired and dark-complected, while Azelaís is very blonde and pale-skinned. Mélusine describes them as simultaneously “muy semejantes y muy opuestos” (153), reflecting that they are distinct elements of a singular psyche, two components of the larger Self. Another crucial consideration is their eyes. Aiol has one blue eye and one golden eye. They serve as a constant physical reminder of his duality (Ozil calls direct attention to this, when he describes Aiol as having one eye for the Devil, one eye for God, “un ojo para el Bien y un ojo para el Mal” (50).¹⁷⁶ But if we explore these colors in reference to alchemy, much more is revealed. Certainly we may recall that the gold is associated with the philosopher’s stone, the final goal of the work, the *lapis* or in Jungian terms, the Self. As we will see, a sense of wholeness, the unity the elusive Self represents, is the goal of Aiol’s quest. However gold is also a color frequently associated

¹⁷⁶ Here we have one of the many references to the inner conflict conceived of as good vs. evil, which this analysis will contradict and ultimately reveal to be part of Mujica Lainez’s practice of subterfuge.

by the alchemists with the sun, and thus consciousness. Blue, on the other hand, is associated with the sky and upward, transcendental vision, the moon, and the soul. Jung points out that the color is also the traditional color of the robes of the Virgin Mary, thus its associations are with the feminine and the unconscious (*Psychology and Alchemy* 214). In Aiol's very eyes, then, we find represented both *Sol* and *Luna*. Azelaís's eyes, on the other hand, are green. Significantly, green is a color that in itself carries dual connotations – the green of slime and decay, or the green of Spring and renewal. We might also consider that green is a color associated with snakes; this, coupled with her physical androgyny, blonde beauty, and masculine behaviors and dress, reveal her as a more youthful double of Mélusine herself. It is Azelaís, so different yet so like Aiol, and not Mélusine, who serves as Aiol's counterpart in his quest. It is she who represents the *anima* with which he struggles to be united.

Like Mélusine, Azelaís demonstrates the archetypal traits of healer and spiritual guide. When Aiol is distraught after the death of his father Ozil, she comes to his aid, providing physical comfort,¹⁷⁷ and helping him overcome his disorientation by knighting him in his father's name; it is also she who orients Aiol's quest from early on, suggesting the search for the Holy Lance. Further, after Azelaís's long disappearance, she reappears in Jerusalem where we learn she has been tending the wounds of the Leper King. In alchemy the leprous or ailing king is symbolic of a one-sided consciousness in need of the healing that only union with the unconscious can provide (*Psychology and Alchemy*

¹⁷⁷ Their physical union brings at least a momentary healing, even if a sense of guilt drives them apart afterward.

412).¹⁷⁸ Thus we should pay close attention to the similarities between him and Aiol and Azelaís. He shares the same physical build and androgyny, and is also an adolescent as are they. Yet his eyes are black, the color of death and of the alchemists' "nigredo," the death and destruction required in order to attain the goal of renewal and wholeness. We may recognize in this character a projection of Aiol's ailing consciousness, now dying.

The character Aiol himself soon dies as well. In order to understand fully the meaning of his death, we must first consider the Holy Lance he pursues. Again, a superficial and literal understanding of the novel could easily lead us to believe his ultimate goal is redemption. Aiol indeed says he seeks to gain forgiveness for his sin of incest, and the Lance is a relic associated with Christ, considered a perfect being, thus the lance, too, could be considered a symbol of perfection. But Aiol has been brought up by his step-father Pons, who strictly adheres to Biblical law, so Aiol rationally sets forth an objective for his quest in accordance with what he has been taught by a Church and society guided by strict notions of right and wrong, good and evil. And yet what he truly seeks and most desperately needs is not perfection, but wholeness. In *Psychology and Alchemy* Jung stresses that the alchemists wisely recognized that "there is no light without shadow and no psychic wholeness without imperfection. To round itself out, life calls *not for perfection but for completeness*" (159, my emphasis). Further, Jung calls attention to the androgynous and mediating aspect of Christ who is directly equated by the alchemists with *Mercurius* (438). The Holy Lance, then, symbolizes unity or wholeness, and not only through its evident association with Christ, the unifying mediator

¹⁷⁸ In light of this, and of the Leper King's wisdom and kind countenance, I must disagree with Frances Vidal's comment that the Leper King is a "clara formulaci3n simb3lica del poder que pudre al hombre" (153).

and healer of the schism between humanity and God, but also through its use. As a piercing, penetrating object, it evokes the conscious ego and its associations with the masculine and the divisiveness of *logos*, and yet it also spilled Christ's healing, unifying blood, hence an association with the unifying relatedness or *Eros* associated with the feminine and the unconscious. Further, this act was accomplished upon Christ's body on the cross, an image representing the intersection of all opposites. Christ himself, whose body is situated at the point of intersection, can thus be recognized as the supreme point, which also corresponds, like Mercurius, to the Self. We should bear in mind that upon Aiol's shoulder he bears an unusual birthmark, which, as we are frequently reminded in the novel, is considered the symbol of princes – the white sign of the cross. This image of the unity he seeks emblazoned upon his body foreshadows his success, for it marks him as holding the potential to achieve the unity and wholeness symbolized by the Prince of Peace. However, those who undertake such a quest are bound, as was he, to experience much pain and suffering. What Aiol seeks is that point of unity, "the treasure difficult to attain" (*Psychology and Alchemy* 340), the harmonious union of all of the opposites battling within him. And when he finds the lance, after a journey fraught with trials and physical and emotional struggles and pain, his wholeness is achieved. This moment marks not a tragic end, but a triumph, as we will see in considering the alchemical symbolism involved.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ I must strongly disagree with Abate who comments that "la obsesión de la Santa Lanza como un medio de acercarse a Dios lo ha conducido a la muerte. Final irónico" (*El Tríptico* 130). Quite to the contrary, the alchemical content indicates new life and an achieved wholeness and equilibrium, which have brought Aiol into contact with the Self, i.e. God within.

Aiol jumps to his death, arms outstretched like Christ upon the cross. He lands upon the lance, which pierces his side. Mélusine describes in detail the glorious moment as Azelaís and the Leper King arrive for his soul in a cart pulled by four white oxen, sacrificial animals of the Old Covenant, thus associated with Christ of the New Covenant based upon not the dividing Law, but unifying love. Aiol, whole and reborn represents Christ himself, as well as Mercurius and thus the Self. The number of the oxen is four, representative of the achieved wholeness and equilibrium. Azelaís and the Leper King are fully healed, rejuvenated and whole, as well. The two are reunited with Aiol who joins them in the cart. He carries the horn of the unicorn that he had inherited upon the death of his father Ozil. As our narrator Mélusine reminded us from the outset, the unicorn is a dual creature, associated with both masculine and feminine, active and passive, good and evil, and is considered an allegory of Christ and a representative of the alchemical Mercurius (*El unicornio* 34).¹⁸⁰ It is equally representative of Aiol. The horn had been broken in battle, but, like Aiol, is now whole, and its colors are those of the alchemical work, now complete. The black at its base is the *nigredo*, or death, the white in the middle of the horn (also seen in the color of the oxen) represents the *albedo*, the moon phase or whitening indicative of union (as the union of all colors). The red at the tip is the final stage, now achieved, a result of a heating of the alchemical substances to the highest intensity, the point at which “King and Queen [...] celebrate their “chymical wedding” (*Psychology and Alchemy* 231-232). Aiol, as Mercurius, holding all opposites in

¹⁸⁰ Interestingly, in her discussion of the multitude of meanings assigned the unicorn, she directly mentions numerous authors who have analyzed his symbolism; among these she names Jung. Abate has indicated that Mujica Lainez drew heavily upon the chapter in *Psychology and Alchemy* “The Paradigm of the Unicorn” while researching the novel.

harmonious balance in his single form, is united with the couple Azelaís and the Leper King. Thus the three become four in a wholeness of one, in the *mysterium coniunctionis*. The goal has been achieved.

Jung stresses that neither the alchemists nor we can ever hope to truly attain the ultimate goal.¹⁸¹ Mujica Lainez depicts a symbolic process that can only be fully achieved in the mystical realm of heaven or in the literary space. We can, however, all undertake the process, and our alchemical interpretation of the text reveals that as our narrator Mélusine shares Aiol's story with us, she is guiding us, indicating the necessary path toward wholeness.

Although we have found by now that Aiol achieves his individuation, and Mélusine (as the collective unconscious) has gained at least a glimmer of recognition by him (although, she, too, only accomplishes this in the celestial and narrative spaces), there remains another quest to consider. As we know, by the time he wrote the novel, Mujica Lainez had, at least in his personal, private life, come to terms with his own homosexuality and was no longer attempting to repress this aspect of himself (that many of his day would consider as a "dark" shadow aspect) down into the confines of his unconscious mind. And yet he was still leading a dual existence, only revealing it in code to the informed few. This very practice of subterfuge can be recognized in *El unicornio*. Homosexuality is presented in the novel under the sign of evil and sin. The characters with such desires are either supernatural and unholy anyway (Oberon), murderous and

¹⁸¹ We must stress here that, as mentioned multiple times in this essay, Jung considers wholeness to be something we must continually strive for in life, for it is never finally "achieved." In Aiol's case, however, given that Aiol ascends into heaven as he finds unity, cutting short the continuation of the process by denying further earthly experience which could send the conscious into another imbalanced state, we may consider that in this symbolic character, at least, the goal is achieved.

insane (Aymé), or ridden with guilt and striving to repress it because they “know” it is “bad” (Aiol). Indeed, libidinous desire of any kind is shown in a negative light. These judgments seem to be in line with societal opinion and make the otherwise “shocking” sexual behaviors he places into the novel more palatable to the morally conservative reader. And when Mélusine’s transgressive voice occasionally calls into question moral assumptions regarding sexuality, it is not so disturbing since, after all, she is just a supernatural and unholy fairy. Or is she? We should recall that Mujica Lainez commented that only those who “saben ver” will find (or we might say hear) him in the novel. Further, he suspected it would be difficult for readers to identify with this supernatural being, and they were unlikely to identify him with a fairy as readily as they identified him with the Duke of Bomarzo. But as readers aware of the psychological and alchemical symbolism, we can recognize in her a representation of his own *anima*, which makes her a part of him, meaning her voice is essentially his own. He does not directly encourage us to identify him with the fairy, and when she speaks, his “hedging” and subterfuge are clear. Before she ever broaches prickly subjects, she typically prefaces her comment with a reminder that she is a fairy, not governed by the same rules as humans, so one is less surprised when she comments, for example, that based upon her different “escala de valores” she tends to believe that Aiol and Azelaís’s incest is not so bad: “para mí [...] el amor sea cual fuere, basta para borrar la culpa” (176).

In addition to voicing transgressive opinions through her, Mujica Lainez uses Mélusine to explore the problem he now faces – whether it is possible to end the concealment and subterfuge and bring those aspects of himself that the individuation process revealed to him out into the open. To understand how he does this, we must now

consider the quest of Mélusine in another way – as a quest of discovered unconscious content to make itself fully and physically manifest in the outside world. As she undertakes this quest, we must recall once again that she does so within a 12th century setting in which the Church was already increasing in power and fairies were increasingly viewed as evil.¹⁸² Then, as in Mujica Lainez’s own century, powerful dogmas held sway, and individuals faced societal pressure to conform.¹⁸³ Pons, a mason, represents that society whose behavior calls attention to an all-too-frequent result of the strict laws of the Church, one that Mujica Lainez subtly criticizes. Pons demonstrates an unthinking (and unfeeling) adherence to clear-cut notions of good and bad; he is rigidly conservative and strictly observes the rules, yet is overly judgmental: “dividía a los humanos en dos clases únicas y adversarias : pecadores y no pecadores”(77). In a warped and quite un-Christian logic, he decides it is best to send Berta’s children away with Ozil in order to be rid of these “importunes testigos” of her earlier life as a prostitute, since they hinder her redemption (80). This mason, hard at work on a church built to the glory of God, reveals a problem already developing in the Middle Ages and all too common in the present: that of increasing attention to the external edifices and outward trappings of religion (its required practices and laws). This is highly detrimental according to Jung, for it distracts from the importance of the inner experience of it.¹⁸⁴ It is into a society characterized by

¹⁸² Evidence of this is given when Airol and Mercator realize they have been magically transported to safety. They agree it must have been the work of fairies, and Airol promptly protects himself by making the sign of the cross, angering Mélusine for this reveals that he equates fairies “con lo demoníaco” (376).

¹⁸³ Schanzer observes that a constant in Mujica Lainez’s historical fiction is his tendency to reveal that despite certain rather superficial variations, “humanity is always and everywhere basically the same” (230).

¹⁸⁴ “In an outward form of religion where all the emphasis is placed on the outward figure (hence where we are dealing with a more or less complete projection), the archetype [including for instance, the God-archetype, which Jung considers to correspond to the archetype of the Self] is identical with externalized

this tendency that Mélusine must try to emerge as a real presence, that she must, so to speak, “come out.”

As we saw in our exploration of the first reading of her quest, she tries very hard to come forth in her own form, but this is impossible. At one point, however, she attains a human body, although with a shape markedly different from her own. Due to a cruel trick played upon her by her mother Presine, the body is that of a male. This stroke of irony creates a very complicated (and, at times humorous) situation, but is another means of subterfuge. If we conceive of Mélusine as *anima*, she represents the unconscious contents of a male individual so that in actuality her appearance in a male body is highly appropriate. Considered literally, however, we have here a female who is (quite appropriately by societal standards) physically and emotionally attracted to a male individual, and she is trapped within a male body. This permits Mujica Lainez to explore the complications and sufferings that mark the homosexual experience in a more “acceptable manner;” the love she feels for Aiol isn’t *exactly* “wrong”, since “Melusín” is not *really* a man. Mélusine’s situation is further complicated when she begins to draw the attention of women. She comments “me ha correspondido el raro privilegio, quizás único, de conocer sucesivamente las emociones que suscitan una doncella hermosa y un doncel hermoso” (285). I find, with Fleming, that this statement (placed in the mouth of his “unconscious”) very clearly expresses the experience of Mujica Lainez.¹⁸⁵ Further, the

ideas, but remains unconscious as a psychic factor” (*Psychology and Alchemy* 11). For this reason a “Christian who believes in all the sacred figures [can remain] undeveloped and unchanged in his inmost soul [...] his deciding motives, his ruling interests and impulses, do not spring from the sphere of Christianity but from the unconscious and undeveloped psyche” (11).

¹⁸⁵ Fleming adds that this “raro privilegio” is at the very heart of the process of inner exploration in which Mujica Lainez regularly engages. She finds that we encounter repeatedly in his novels “la introspección, el

frustration and bitter inner struggle brought about by the fact that both are now male, and her knowledge that she cannot reveal her love to him, despite their growing friendship and constant proximity, clearly brings forth the sufferings of the homosexual who, due to the same concerns regarding shocking or angering the object of his affections (who is often heterosexual or, if not, is himself repressed due to societal influences) must suffer in silence.¹⁸⁶ Mélusine shares her pain with the fairy Oberon, himself suffering from a similar problem, as he loves a man who does not return his affection. Once again Mujica Lainez (“appropriately”) places a transgressive comment in the mouth of a supernatural creature ungoverned by the rules of humans. But this statement is key to our understanding of the novel and expresses a deep truth that demands recognition in Mujica Lainez’s society. Oberon tries to comfort Mélusine, saying “todo amor verdadero es puro. Tu amor y el mío lo son y eso basta para redimirlos y exaltarlos, pese a cualquier torpe crítica e hipócrita convención. Tendrás que resignarte, Melusina [...] a esperar.” “A esperar qué?” She asks. He says, with tears in his eyes, that he doesn’t know, but that she must carry on and “arder como una lámpara sola y [...] esperar” (269). For what must she wait? Evidently for “la convención” to change, as it can only do, oh so very slowly, over time. But Mélusine eventually feels that she can wait no more. As she and Aioli prepare for a battle in which she knows they are likely to lose their lives, she finally reveals her love to him. He is stunned, and she sees a terrible panic rising in his face just

asombro por su propia persona, una psiquis y cuerpo con la singularidad de lo extraño, de lo fuera de norma, que supone perturbación y desasosiego, pero también raro privilegio para el incisivo aficionado a la originalidad” (374).

¹⁸⁶ This struggle is poignantly expressed during one of Mélusine’s moments of inner reflection: “segregados por inaccesibles muros, en el encierro de nuestros cuerpos y nuestras respectivas almas, continuábamos el uno al lado del otro como dos incomunicados forasteros que hablasen idiomas distintos” (348).

before they plunge into the tumult. Mélusine is killed in battle, her physical body lost to her, and along with it all hope for union with Aiol. Mélusine's quest, and Mujica Lainez's "experiment," end on a note of failure. The content of his unconscious *anima* returns to her tower, resigned to her lonely fate, hidden away from view.

In her final quest Mélusine is, unfortunately, unsuccessful. She proves unable to fully reveal herself and thus bridge and heal the schism between the individual and society that is caused by societal rigidity and blind acceptance of dogma and convention. The individual must continue to hide aspects of the Self which are not in accordance with these or risk persecution. But Oberon suggests that someday, perhaps, these will change enough to permit the individual to be fully him or herself. Perhaps to a degree, Mélusine's quest contributes to this, for her suffering and her words call into question long-accepted assumptions about right and wrong and provoke us to ponder them. They reveal to us the damage we do to those we label as sinful, even criminal, not because their behavior brings harm to another, but simply because they are different. Recalling Jung, we must be careful not to judge too quickly, but should instead carefully weigh a behavior or a way of being and consider not whether or not it follows the rules, but whether or not it is "for life and health" (30-31). A collective move away from the harmful divisions and limitations imposed by strict observation of clear-cut dogma can only begin at the individual level. Society must be composed of individuals who think for themselves, who look not unquestioningly outward for guidance, but who have learned to look to the wisdom within. This requires the process of individuation. The necessity and the path toward this individuation are shown to us through Aiol's journey. And here Mélusine, like her double Azelaís, is more successful as healer and guide. By directing

him toward the Santa Lanza, a symbol of wholeness, she enables him to advance toward, even achieve, his individuation. And here we come full circle, back to the first journey – that of Mélusine as the unconscious seeking recognition by the collective. Aiol's individual journey merges with hers, as he, now a symbol of the society that rejected her long ago, finally acknowledges her. Certainly a single individual cannot, as is possible in this novel through this symbolic juxtaposition, alter the thinking of a whole society. But if enough individuals undertake the individuation process, change can come. And this is the ultimate and powerful message of Mélusine.

CHAPTER 5

THE LITTLE MERMAID GROWS UP: THE RECLAIMING OF MÉLUSINE FOR HEALING AND WHOLENESS IN *EL MISMO MAR DE TODOS LOS VERANOS*

The Spanish Transition and the Emergence of the Repressed

Esther Tusquets wrote *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* in 1978, a time of transition for her native Spain, which had only recently emerged from the constraining rule of Francisco Franco. A general of the Fascist *Falange* during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Franco had led a coalition of right-wing Nationalist rebels to victory against the standing democratically-elected government, the Second Republic. The conservative and protectionist dictatorship that he established in the aftermath of the war endured until his death in 1975. Tusquets, born August 30, 1936, just months after the war began, was fortunate, in a practical sense, perhaps, to have been born into a family on the “winning” side. Although she grew up safe from the persecution faced by those who lost, her society limited the freedom of all, and as a woman, she shared in the injustices faced during those years by the female sex. It was during the transition, a time of change and upheaval, yet also of hope and new freedoms, that Tusquets began to write in earnest for the first time.¹⁸⁷ At the personal level, Tusquets was facing middle age, a time propitious for psychic exploration. As Stacey Casado reminds us, Tusquets was undergoing the “natural

¹⁸⁷ Tusquets had attempted writing in her youth, but had become frustrated with the outcome and put writing aside for other pursuits for many years, most notably becoming an editor in her family’s publishing house, Editorial Lumen (Dolgin 398-99). Tusquets inherited the publishing house from her father in the 1960s, and continued there as director until her retirement in 2000.

process of reorganization” that tends to occur in those years (14). In light of our examination of Jungian theory in chapter 1, we can readily recognize with Casado that the age at which Tusquets began to write is “germane to the appropriateness of a Jungian analytical approach to her novelistic production” (14). Casado also indicates that 42 year old Tusquets ended her long term relationship with the father of her children in the same year she published *El mismo mar* (15), thus the novel was emerging at a time of multiple crises at both the societal and personal levels. It is at such times that the archetypal healer tends to appear, offering guidance to those willing to take on the necessary yet difficult challenge of engaging in the individuation process.

The crises faced by Tusquets and her society leave their mark within the pages of *El mismo mar*. In the novel, Tusquets situates her protagonist within her own context, as she does in subsequent works, having indicated a personal preference for writing from her own experience, rather than inventing new cultural or historical settings for her characters.¹⁸⁸ Given the somewhat limited knowledge of the Francoist era and the Spanish transition outside of Spain, yet the vital importance of such knowledge if we are to fully understand the novel, it appears appropriate to begin here with a closer examination of the conditions existing in the country at those times. As we will see, Francoist policies set up conditions which cut the individual off not only from the other, but also from the Self, while the transition created conditions far more conducive to the exploration of the unconscious, and thus to individuation. During the transition years, the

¹⁸⁸ Asked to what extent her fiction is a projection of her cultural ambiance, Tusquets replies “almost completely... I almost always write about my ambiance because I am not able to imagine what other environments are like and to think, for example, of an historical novel that requires prior research” (Rodríguez, “Talking with Tusquets” 186).

resolution of oppositions and the healing implied by the individuation process were vitally needed, on both the collective and the personal level. Within the context of Tusquet's novel, we will encounter this process, led by none other than our healing archetype, Mélusine.

The early years of the Francoist dictatorship, the years of Tusquet's childhood, were dark ones, particularly for the vanquished. At the end of the Spanish Civil War, Franco adamantly refused any gestures of reconciliation with the Republicans. Instead, he chose to bolster his power by violently quashing all opposition, thus the tragedy begun by the bloody war continued far into the post-war period.¹⁸⁹ In spite of some loosening of restrictions and freeing of prisoners in the later years of the regime,¹⁹⁰ throughout his lifetime, Franco's government remained "hostile to the disruptive pluralism and freedom of opinion associated with a liberal society" (Tusell 13). According to Morcillo, Franco's application of a clear-cut black and white mentality in his categorization of all individuals as either pro-Francoist (equated with good, tradition, godliness, and social order) or anti-Francoist (associated with evil, change, atheism, and chaos) was all part of a policy that served him well throughout his career, first as general, then as dictator – that of "divide

¹⁸⁹ Key in this effort was the 1939 "Law of Political Responsibilities," designed to punish all who had in any way (even by "omission") opposed his own "National movement." Its victims were given no procedural guarantees and tribunals heard 12-15 cases per hour, passing judgement on large groups simultaneously, regardless of the widely varying crimes of which individuals had been accused (Tusell 23). Known executions in the post-war period number 35,000, but some experts suggest the number could well have been closer to 50,000 (22-23).

¹⁹⁰ According to Tusell, this increased tolerance resulted from the ultimately inescapable influence of the outside world. Although a communist leader was executed as late as 1963, by the 70s when left-wing leaders were arrested, they received short sentences and were not tortured (19). Booming tourism, Spanish emigrant workers, and the advent of modernization and consumerism within the country (beginning in the 1950s) all eventually contributed to changing attitudes, and Franco's regime found it necessary to make some concessions to these.

and rule” (Morcillo 31). His conflation of religion and politics was particularly effective in this effort; he rallied conservatives by calling for a return to traditional Catholic values which had been eroded under the atheistic “Reds”¹⁹¹ who had instituted such progressive measures as secularizing schools, legalizing divorce, recognizing civil marriage and according women the right to vote. All such “subversive” measures were done away with,¹⁹² and Franco promptly instituted a National-Catholic ideology which “lent cohesion to [the] regime and legitimated its existence” (78). Certainly, by claiming his own victory and rule as divinely ordained, Franco could more readily justify his persecution of dissidence. Unsurprisingly, he instituted strict censorship to prevent the dissemination of ideas contrary to his own, and, in order to promote adherence to the National-Catholic values and to ensure unity, conformity, and an unquestioning loyalty, Franco made strategic use of the educational system whose essential aim was to produce pro-Francoists and inhibit the development of any future opposition. “Through the promotion of a single language, a single history, and a single religion, the Francoist educational system inculcated, on a grand scale, a sense of individual duty to the National-Catholic agenda” (78). And since the duty of boys and girls was different, they were schooled separately.

For Franco’s regime, “gender constituted the very essence of selfhood; gender differences provided stability and social order to the nation and clarity of purpose to the

¹⁹¹ Franco applied the term indiscriminately to all those who had been on the side of the Republicans, regardless of their actual political orientation, which varied considerably.

¹⁹² Of course, one should bear in mind here that under the dictatorship the right to vote counted for little, even for men who were allowed to exercise that “right.” Even within the Cortes which Franco created, ostensibly as a parliamentary body, members knew their role was to support the regime and that ultimately “no one was to contradict Franco” (Tusell 16).

individual” (Morcillo 78). The family was expected to function as “a microcosm of the Francoist regime”; ultimate authority belonged to the father, and women were to be self-abnegating and subservient (75). At all educational levels the instruction girls and women received was designed to encourage a life of submission and domesticity. Thus, if society as a whole suffered under an imposed collective mindlessness during the Francoist years, it was women who bore the brunt of Franco’s policies. “In tune with the mentality of a society that had decided to take a step back in time, women were seen solely as destined for procreation” (Tusell 30); their primary purpose was to repopulate the devastated nation after the war and to instill National-Catholic values in their children. According to Morcillo, in addition to the limitations for women created by the educational system itself, during the dictatorship “all the laws, statistics and definitions of normalcy and deviance guaranteed and perpetuated the masculine power of the state” (79).

Tusell observes that the separation of the sexes in schools “fueled a kind of mystique about masculinity and about the sinfulness of contact between the two sexes” (201). In the mold of the Virgin Mary, women were expected to be essentially asexual beings: either virgins or idealized mothers, sacrificing themselves for the good of family and country. The Sección Feminina of the Falange was charged with training women for the role they were assigned. Its ultimate goal was to bring back an idealized home life in which “men were men and women were women” (Costa 17). Although a college education was never denied to women, in order to attend college¹⁹³ women were required

¹⁹³ ... and, we might add, in order to hold a passport, a driver’s, fishing, or hunting license, or to join any association involving cultural or leisure activities...

to serve six months in the Women's Section for six hours a day, first receiving political, religious and home economics training, then serving in hospitals, nurseries or shelters.

Working women were encouraged to leave their jobs upon marrying, and could not work if their husband had sufficient income. Prior to reforms made to the Civil Code in the 1950s,¹⁹⁴ women's legal status was that of a minor, but even afterward, they continued to be subject to their husband's authority and could not work without his permission (Morcillo 69). In spite of a growing need for women in the workforce and their increasing enrollment in universities, the Sección Feminina did not waver in its essential aims, always encouraging women entering universities and the world of work to choose from appropriately "feminine" professions (nursing and teaching, for instance), and insisting that career was to be secondary to family. The leader of the Sección Feminina, Pilar Primo de Rivera, continually stressed the importance of connecting women, even those with careers, to their "proper realm":

And for women that realm is their family. That is why, besides offering our members the mystique that elevates them, we have to attach them, with our teachings, to the daily routine, the child, the home, the garden. Our goal is that women find there all their purpose in life and find in men all their comfort. (qtd. in Morcillo 101)

In Franco's final years, there was growing discontent among a citizenry whose values were changing with the times, yet who continued to be governed by a regime that seemed to be out of step, still clinging to old standards and beliefs. There was a growing

¹⁹⁴ These reforms extended to women at least some rights regarding joint possessions and a degree of protection in the case of desertion or "divorce" (actually this involved annulment, obtained only through a very difficult and drawn-out procedure presided over by the Church) (Morcillo 69).

desire for change and reconciliation and many were beginning to question the validity of assigned gender roles. Franco's 1975 death marked a decisive moment, one that would herald change and progress. When Franco's successor, King Juan Carlos II, chose to renounce the authoritarian regime he had inherited and return power to the Spanish people, he and the leaders of the transition undertook a delicate and difficult task. The war, which had physically and emotionally scarred so many in both camps, the nearly four decades of political oppression of dissidents, and the resentments and distrust that surfaced on both sides of the political divide as changes were undertaken, all complicated the transition to a democratically elected government.¹⁹⁵ What was sought was a bridging of ideological divisions and the creation of a new sense of national unity, one no longer based upon a forced conformity, but rather upon a shared vision of a free Spain. Reconciliation and the healing of old wounds required the liberation of the dissenting voices that had been repressed and silenced for so long. In 1975, women were finally legally freed from the long-imposed obligation to obey their husbands (Tusell 321). The first democratic elections were held in 1977, and women, as well as members of leftist political organizations, were allowed to run for office and to participate fully in the electoral process.

The transition created new possibilities for the forging of new identities, both collective and individual, ones that took into account aspects that had been ignored and repressed under Franco's rule. By reducing freedom, by training/forcing individuals to support unquestioningly the National-Catholic doctrine and to accept assigned societal

¹⁹⁵ That this transition was so successful and was achieved without bloodshed is a testament to the profound desire of the Spanish people to avoid a repeat of the horrors of the Civil War and for opposing sides to work together peacefully.

and gender roles, and by fragmenting society, Franco had set up conditions ideal to the maintenance of his power but which simultaneously assured the demise of the individual. Jung stresses that dictator states are uninterested in promoting self-knowledge and mutual understanding for “in so far as society is itself composed of de-individualized human beings, it is completely at the mercy of ruthless individualists” (*Undiscovered* 31). When under pressure to conform to an image of “self” imposed from without, the individual is unlikely to seek to know, much less to acknowledge, contents of the unconscious mind that do not correspond to that image. The individual is effectively taught to fear precisely what the State itself fears most: the “dark chaos of subjectivisms” (59). Unable or unwilling to question the authority of the state, National-Catholic tradition, and their underlying assumptions held out as truths, the individual in Francoist society was essentially cut off from the unconscious and the experience of the Self, which creates a vicious circle, for, as Jungian scholar John Dourley reminds us, unless one is securely “anchored” within the Self,¹⁹⁶ one is not effectively equipped to protect oneself from religious and political possession (176). Fortunately, not all had fallen victim to the collective blindness Franco had fomented, as is evidenced by the course taken during the transition, a course leading toward healing and growth and away from divisiveness and stagnation. For collective progress, Spain required new freedom, one that involved, to borrow Dourley’s term, a re-rooting in the Great Mother, that is, in the collective and personal unconscious, wherein are overcome all oppositions. Only by returning to her and connecting with the shadow therein can projections and blame-shifting be brought to an

¹⁹⁶ Let us recall here that Jung applies the term Self in reference to the whole self, which encompasses both conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche.

end, a prerequisite to reconciliation, both of components of the individual psyche and of societal factions. Certainly this is a situation ripe for the appearance of Mélusine, as representative of the unconscious, the Great Mother, and the healing archetype.

Tusquets appears to have been sensitive to the need for societal reconciliation as her nation emerged from nearly forty years of oppression. Although Tusquets has described her father's family as being staunchly Francoist, her mother's family was less so. Her parents themselves were somewhat unorthodox (and perhaps gave Tusquets an early example of a certain bridging of opposites) in that they were rightist atheists (*Confesiones* 18). Given that she was raised within a wealthy, rightist family of the Catalan bourgeoisie, one might expect her to have been sheltered from knowledge of the far less-privileged existence of those who had lost the war, yet Tusquets indicates she was aware of their hardships from an early age. In an interview with Rodríguez, Tusquets explains that the children of families like her own spent much time in the care of servants, and it was from overheard conversations among them that, "the children of my generation and social class began to realize the existence of two sides," a situation that could "create a crisis in you [...] you would have doubts about what was happening" ("Talking" 178). Proving the efficacy of Franco's educational policies, Tusquets reports that as a university student, she was taught that leftist action was opposed to the family, and she describes her shock when she finally learned later on that it was the Nationalists and not the Republicans who had rebelled against an established system (179). As she matured, Tusquets came to identify with the left, and she underscores the irony of the fact that her family's publishing house, which was founded in 1936 by her father's eldest brother (who had ties to Franco) with the goal of protecting Spain's conservative

Christian values against dangerous “free-thinkers,” would become under her direction in the 60’s and 70’s “una de las editoriales formalmente comprometidas en la lucha contra el franquismo” (*Confesiones* 18).

Tusquets clearly recognized that individuals, especially women like herself, so long oppressed under the Francoist regime, needed to break free of restrictive norms and binarisms and re-define themselves. In interviews she has criticized the limitations placed upon women¹⁹⁷ and the role Francoist society foisted upon female members of the Catalan bourgeoisie. She describes the empty existence that women like her mother were expected to lead as one that she herself could never have tolerated, one in which they did not “do anything in life but play cards, go to the beauty salon, and things like that [...] [M]ost intelligent women would become neurotic, because it is a life of total emptiness, total boredom” (Rodríguez, “Talking” 186). Her frustration regarding the untapped potential she knew her mother had possessed is evident: “lo sabe cualquiera que haya leído unas pocas páginas de mis novelas, [mi madre] era la mujer más capacitada y más desperdiciada que imaginarse pueda” (*Confesiones* 16).

When Tusquets expresses here that her reader can “know” her mother by reading “even a few pages” of her novels, she suggests that they contain an autobiographical element which goes beyond simple societal context. Barbara Ichiishi indicates that Tusquets actually modeled the mother of the protagonist of *El mismo mar* upon her real-

¹⁹⁷ Tusquets has consistently distanced herself from “militant” feminists and does not consider herself to belong to any feminist group, yet states that “if you are a woman and are conscious of the basic injustice of the feminine condition, then what you write, of course, reflects that” (Rodríguez, “Talking” 175). Her recognition of ongoing inequalities is evident in a 1987 interview with Dolgin in which she expresses that woman’s situation is “absolutamente injusta. Y no hay otra manera de verlo en forma objetiva: estamos en mayor desventaja que todos los hombres” (406).

life mother, and their difficult relationship is reproduced in the novel (18). Tusquets shares with her protagonist, Elia, not only an identical societal position (both are daughters of the rightist Catalan bourgeoisie) and a difficult mother-daughter relationship, but a number of other aspects to which Casado has called attention. She points out that, for instance, both grew up with an absentee father, unwittingly reproduce their troubled mother-daughter relationship with their own child(ren), experience both the disillusionment of a failed or failing marriage and a longing for mutual love, and engage in sexual experimentation (23-24). Yet Casado warns of the danger of assuming too quickly that the novel is, in the traditional sense, an autobiography, for the particulars simply do not bear this out.¹⁹⁸ In interviews, Tusquets has frequently distanced herself from Elia by stressing that she has never experienced the particular personal crisis of her protagonist, that is, having been left by her husband for a younger woman.¹⁹⁹ However, she explains that much of herself *is* inscribed in her work, but rather than being encompassed within a single character, she is parceled out across all of them.²⁰⁰ Additionally, Tusquets has revealed to Dolgin that her reader can learn more about her from her style than from what actually happens in the book: “lo que soy se ve más por el modo en qué están escritas las novelas que por lo que pasa” (401). Tusquets tells us that she writes “de una forma bastante espontánea, con pocos propósitos previos,” and adds

¹⁹⁸ The characters and events are virtually never “‘true’ to Tusquet’s life in the sense of being empirically verifiable” (Casado 50). One among many examples Casado proffers is that the protagonist is 50, and if she is ostensibly Tusquets, it “defies all laws of logic” that she would make her character so much older than she actually was at the time (24-25).

¹⁹⁹ See, for instance, Rodríguez (“Conversación”) and Dolgin.

²⁰⁰ She complains that readers so often think “que yo me tengo que identificar con una mujer mayor, cuando a lo mejor me estoy identificando con uno de los hombres o con Clara” (Rodríguez “Entrevista” 617, also qtd. in Casado 27).

that little planning went into the appearance of multiple myths and fairy tales in her writing; she stresses that they were “muy presentes en mí,” and thus tended to emerge spontaneously, as well (Rodríguez “Conversación” 109); evidently these aspects of her writing are consistent with creative fantasy techniques designed to tap into the personal and collective unconscious, which results in the emergence of mythical and archetypal images.

It was Tusquet’s comment regarding the importance of her style that oriented Casado’s Jungian exploration of Tusquet’s first four novels. I agree with Casado that they should be conceived of as an outer projection of an inner psychic process of self-discovery, that Tusquets is “portraying the psychodynamics of her inner life via the creative process” (49). Casado has effectively shown that together the novels form a tetralogy whose collective theme is psychological transformation (12), and whose “cumulative and integrative structure [...] reveals a unified pattern of meaningful psychic activity leading to the attainment of the Self” (26), which she finds represented by the squared circle or mandala evoked by the circular relationship among the four distinct novels in their reproduction of the dynamics of the individuation process.²⁰¹ As we know, the Francoist regime had produced societal and psychological stagnation; engagement in the individuation process and access to the Self had been inhibited. Thus, it is particularly significant that Tusquets began this process in her writing during the transition years, when individuals could begin to break free of imposed identities and

²⁰¹ Clayton Frances Houchens’s analysis of Tusquet’s first three novels also identifies the process of individuation as playing a central unifying role. Her focus is limited, however, to an exploration of the protagonist’s uniquely feminine quest within each novel and the gradual progress made toward an “autonomous solitude” achieved in the third novel (5-6).

discover the dormant Self, and when society needed to free and acknowledge those long-silenced elements concealed within it. Casado agrees with Barbara Ichiishi²⁰² in her assessment that Tusquets's novels represent attempts to "work through" the fundamental psychic issues of her [Tusquets's] life story, to achieve a kind of catharsis in the act of artistic creation" which she attempts to do by "taking control of the events in her life in her writing, through the beauty and perfection of artistic form, and by gradually moving toward a more mature, forward-looking view of life in the characters and stories she creates" (19, also qtd. in Casado p. 50). Casado explains that by approaching Tusquets's work from this perspective, we may best understand the presence of autobiographical traces within her novels in this way:

Just as the Creator permeates the Universe, Esther Tuquets pervades her literary microcosm; she is imbedded in its constitutional make-up. As a demiurge, she has created a novelistic cosmos in the image of the dynamic structure of her own psyche, a universe in which she is dispersed throughout so that a part of her resides in every fictional character – the young , as well as the old, the male as well as the female, the heterosexual as well as the bisexual – in every anecdote, incident, fantasy, hope, and disillusionment that is narrated and in every passion that is experienced, feared, or desired. (50)

I agree with Casado that the characters in *El mismo mar* (and in the three subsequent novels) are "symbolic personified projections of the undifferentiated, contrasting parts of *a* personal and *the* collective unconscious" (27). For this reason it is

²⁰² Ichiishi has explored the first three of Tusquets novels as examples of *female bildungsromans*.

unsurprising that the novels are replete with those mythical and archetypal images which have surfaced in the human being's psyche from earliest times.²⁰³ Given our recognition of Mélusine as healing archetype, one can readily expect to discover her presence in such a text, as well. Yet, despite the multitude of analyses focusing upon the many references to and evocations of myths and fairy tales within *El mismo mar*, the presence of Mélusine has gone unnoticed. Aside from the fact that she is much less well-known than, for instance, Theseus and Ariadne, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, or Peter Pan, the most logical reason for this oversight is the absence of her name within the text. However, it is always an error to discount Mélusine's presence based upon the absence of her name, for we find her each time we encounter "la dame des fontaines, la fée bâtisseuse, la femme au bain, la femme-serpent, la femme-oiseau" – in these traits, Robert Baudry insists, we locate the central core of her myth which withstands any attempt at modification and which enables us to identify her despite any masks that may conceal her (217). Two of her "masks" directly named within the novel are Ondine and the Little Mermaid.²⁰⁴ As we noted in chapter 2, both have close ties to the much earlier myth of Mélusine. Interestingly, although a number of critics have addressed the

²⁰³ Their presence in the novel brings to mind our discussion of the appeal and resonance of the original myth of Mélusine; here again, we find a factor which likely contributed to the tremendous success of *El mismo mar*. Although Tusquets attributes its popularity to the timing of its appearance (Dolgin 398), I agree with Casado that its continuing resonance with readers confirms that Tusquets has "tapped into the female objective psyche," thus the novel "stir[s] within each and every one of us, irrespective of age or national origin, the timeless, universal female experience" (40).

²⁰⁴ Although, as discussed in chapter 2, Ondine's literary origins are to be found in La Motte Fouqué's 19th century tale *Undine*, clear references are made within *El mismo mar* to Jean Giraudoux's 1939 play *Ondine*, as will soon be shown. Although Giraudoux presents his heroine as a superior being due to her ties with nature (Françoise Ferlan 19), his heroine is, like the original Ondine, a victim, weak and self-sacrificing, doomed to a tragic fate. As for the mermaid evoked in *El mismo mar*, she is clearly the tragic heroine of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The Little Mermaid*.

importance of the story of the Little Mermaid within the novel, references to Ondine are rare,²⁰⁵ perhaps because her story is also less well-known. These fairy tale characters are significantly applied in the novel in reference to several females, but most notably to the protagonist, Elia, and her young student and eventual lover, Clara. Yet, as I uncover the presence of Mélusine within the text, we will witness the emergence of the initially dormant Great Mother and healing archetype within these very characters, which forces us to reassess them as being far more than the tragic, self-abnegating victims that were Ondine and the Little Mermaid.

I have chosen to confine this analysis to the first novel, *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, the novel that opens the tetralogy (or we might say that “closes it,” in light of the circularity of the process as identified by Casado), for it is here that the archetypal healer first, most fully, and most powerfully appears. However, it is important to point out that Mélusine never completely disappears from any of the novels. Her continued underlying presence is suggested by ongoing references to multiple symbols of transformation (for instance water/the sea, mercury, reptiles) which clearly recall both her and the process she set in motion in the first novel,²⁰⁶ but also by a white cat named

²⁰⁵ Roberta Johnson is an exception, and makes at least one reference to Ondine; she refers to Clara as an “undine” in search of a soul (75).

²⁰⁶ As an example, let us consider a passage from the pages of the “final” novel of the tetralogy, *Para no volver* (1985). The protagonist, here named Elena, admires the sea, and the narrator’s description of it evokes not only Mélusine, but also the title of the first novel, the one in which the healing archetype first and most fully appeared: “delante del mar espeso y lustroso, lustroso como un reptil enorme, una entera camada de reptiles, que enroscan y desenroscan sus anillos, un metal como fundido o líquido, una consistencia bien distinta a la del mar en que se baña Elena *todos los veranos* [...] le parece hermoso, un mar mercurial debajo de una luna que asciende grandota, como una farola [...]”(157, my emphasis). Notice the reference to Elena’s bathing in the water within which the serpents emerge, recalling Mélusine’s bath, as well as the circularity evoked by the rings the reptiles create recalling the *ouroboros*, a circular symbol of totality, and the presence of the moon beneath which the mythical Mélusine appeared to Raymondin, and which recalls *Luna* of the Mercurius Duplex.

Muslina, who plays no active role, yet is a quiet, unifying constant across the novels, despite the many variations (such as the protagonist's ages, experiences, predicaments, and sometimes even names) in each. Certainly the name Muslina is strikingly similar to that of Melusina, the Spanish equivalent for Mélusine's name, but its meaning is deeply significant. The term Muslina, muslin in English, comes from an Arabic word, which is also the name of the city in Iraq where the fabric was first produced: Mosul (Harper). We should here recall that in chapter 2 we noted that according to Paracelsus, Mélusine was born from the belly of Jonah's whale – which Jung translates as the womb of the mysteries or the unconscious mind. The original birthplace of Jonah himself was Ninevah, which, perhaps not so coincidentally, lay across the Tigris from Mosul, whose name means, significantly, "the joined." The term made reference to a bridge between the two cities, which gradually fused. In modern times the ruins of ancient Nineveh are encompassed within modern Mosul. Thus, both Muslina and "Melusina" have ties to Mosul, but even more important to bear in mind is that Mélusine is herself the physical embodiment of Mosul's (and hence Muslina's) name; she *is* "the joined." For this reason, we may recognize the cat as her avatar, subtly placed within each novel to remind of the ongoing goal of unity around which the entire tetralogy is organized.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ This theory is strongly supported by the multiple comparisons in *El mismo mar* of Clara, whom I will show to correspond to Mélusine, with cats. One passage in particular equates her with the cat Muslina "Clara trepa a mi cama con la ligereza y la blandura de un feline y distiende su cuerpo junto al mío con una rara habilidad – que yo recuerdo sólo en una de mis gatas [...] una gata que se llamaba Muslina – una rara habilidad [...] para pegarse a mi cuerpo y mantener el máximo posible de superficie de nuestras pieles en contacto" (198).

Discovering a Dormant Mélusine – Lost Shadow, Great Mother,
and Archetypal Healer

The presence of myths and fairy tales within *El mismo mar* has been examined by many and from various perspectives. For example, Akiko Tsuchiya has analyzed the flowing style of “free association” in the novel, with its “complex fabric of words and (inter)texts” [*i.e.* the continual re-writing of myths], as an aspect of the evolution of a feminine writing (194,191).²⁰⁸ Rosalia Cornejo-Parriejo explores the juxtaposition of high culture (myths) and low culture (fairy tales) as representing a postmodern subversiveness. Kathleen Glenn focuses upon the presence of the mythical intertexts within the work not as a subversive re-writing, but rather as evidence of a confusion between fiction and reality. For Mirella Servodidio, the intertextual bonds serve as a substitute for the broken bonds between the protagonist and her mother, and trap Elia in a self-destructive need to interpret her life through fairy tale and myth.²⁰⁹ Dorothy Odattey-Wellington has similarly explored the incapacity of Elia to free herself from “norms rooted in the convention of the tales of enchantment” which produce an unhappy ending despite her “yearning for subjectivity” (121). In *Spanish Women Writers and the Fairy Tale Tradition*, María Elena Soliño examines unhappy endings from another perspective. She finds that Tusquets’s re-writings and re-appropriations of fairy tales reveal the harsh

²⁰⁸ Geraldine Cleary Nichols has explored the presence of “écriture féminine” in the text, as well, but focuses upon its limitations, for it is ultimately trapped within a linear text. She considers the multiple myths and fairy tales to be applied in an effort to convey that “one is what one reads, since one can only experience that which has already been experienced, *i.e.* written about” (375), and to show that the word is pre-eminent in the structuring of reality.

²⁰⁹ Robert C. Manteiga draws a similar conclusion, but in harsher terms. He finds that Elia’s return to her past and interpretation of her life through myth signal “una incontrolable necesidad de expresión propia que llegará hasta alcanzar tonalidades sadomasoquistas” (24).

reality and disillusionment she (and other women raised upon fairy tales) have experienced; in Elia's re-readings "all happy endings have been proscribed so that they more clearly reflect her disillusionment with the traditional marriage plots these offer in her closures" (224).

Key to Soliño's analysis is the differing educations received by boys and girls during the Francoist era. Soliño reveals that efforts to inculcate "appropriate" gender roles went much further than the confines of the classroom – even the books children read for pleasure were divided along gender lines; she points out that the assignment of particular types of texts dependent upon a child's sex was "the ultimate method for socializing each gender separately and unequally" in order to meet "gender specific goals" (49). Tales for children were published in two forms – a "blue" version and a "pink" version, out of concern that "a girl become confused and mistakenly identify with a male hero" (52).²¹⁰ Myths, with their tragic endings, were considered appropriate for boys, while fairy tales with their typically "happy-ever-after" endings were considered best for girls, for they would maintain an "institutionally mandated cheerfulness to convince the suffering population that nothing was wrong" (51). The ideal woman was perfectly symbolized by such characters as Cinderella and Snow White, singing while they took care of household chores, given that "females were expected to live in a constant state of domestic fervor, and to enjoy this fate" (49). Soliño points out that little girls facing these expectations and guided only by such fairy tales were placed at a

²¹⁰ Interestingly, Stephen Hart observes that mythical subtexts found in post-Spanish Civil War novels tended to be split along gender lines. Consistent with the pink v/s blue stories, Hart comments that men's fiction tended to refer to Greek myths, while women's more commonly referred to fairy tales. "Fairy tales – especially the Cinderella story – are a recurrent motif in female development novels written by women in post-civil-war Spain" (97).

disadvantage in terms of potential psychic development. She considers Tusquets to belong to a group of female writers of the post-Francoist period who, in reaction to this negative and limiting situation, chose to reject traditional fairy tales or re-write them. And by choosing the tragic mythical end, Tusquet's reclaims myth for women's use, all the while revealing "the suppression of the feminine in the Western mythic tradition" and exposing myth in its complicity "as a master plot that contributes to continued political oppression" (Soliño 225).

In keeping with Soliño's observations, Roberta Johnson observes that within *El mismo mar* there is a gradual shift away from the happy endings of fairy tales toward the mythical tragic end. She and Soliño evidently concur that myths are more beneficial to the development of a mature outlook on life, for fairy tales "remain in the realm of escape fantasy outside the realities of life as we live it, [while] myths, although they also eschew realistic constructs of time, place, and logic, are meant to engage an adult listener in life's insoluble vicissitudes and tragedies" (Johnson 73). We may indeed recognize the reclaiming of myth as a positive step toward psychological growth. Yet Johnson highlights a negative aspect of the shift in the intertextual references in the novel from fairy tales toward myths. She identifies Elia's young lover Clara as a "fairy tale element not in harmony with the harsh realities of contemporaneous life for Spanish women" (74) and finds that whereas Clara is "a princess who can take the narrator [Elia] back to the world of childhood, [...] [Elia's] mother is a mythic goddess who forces her back to the straitjacket of an unhappy marriage" (74). In the narrative Elia's mother is referred to as a

cold and distant Greek goddess, embodying the “Terrible Mother”²¹¹ and representative of, as Ichiishi aptly puts it, “an Apollonian world of rational order and control” (74), reflecting the patriarchal society with which she is implicated, and which seems to triumph in the end. However, this triumph is not so clear-cut as it may initially seem.²¹² Another, more positive fairy tale to myth shift occurs in the novel – within the character of Clara herself. This “princess,” in fact, is gradually revealed to be a goddess as well – the mythical Mother Goddess or Great Mother in the form of Mélusine. Although many elements of the novel prepare Mélusine’s arrival and traces of her are present in multiple characters, we will fully encounter her in Clara, whose role is that of Elia’s spiritual guide. She first appears under the guise of the passive, fragile, lovelorn child-woman that is the Little Mermaid/Ondine, but eventually gains in power, emerging as wise nurturer, healer and builder of souls, Mélusine.²¹³ As Great Mother, archetypal healer and representative of the Self, Clara leads the way toward the final elusive goal of wholeness sought by Elia, Tusquets, and Spanish society. Clara also represents a textual bridging of opposites, since in her singular androgynous form are merged both fairy tale and mythical being, thus “pink” stories and “blue” stories come together in an integrated whole. The

²¹¹ Surprisingly, Manteiga proposes that Elia’s mother represents “la Madre Universal” although his description of this “mother” is devoid of any reference to mothering or nurturing; he instead stresses her “espíritu de mando y de lucha” (25) – perhaps he had in mind the more negative side, the archetype of the “Terrible Mother” as well.

²¹² My more positive views regarding the novel’s ending are shared by fellow Jungian critics Casado and Houchens, a point which we will later explore in greater depth.

²¹³ We should note that despite the fact that this is a shift from fairy tale to myth, the two fairy tales as well as the myth to which I refer here end sadly, which is why rather than exploring the sad versus happy end, as have Soliño and Johnson, my analysis turns instead to the traits and behavior of these three characters. We should consider that while the fairy tales *The Little Mermaid* and *Ondine* did not have the cheerful ending typical of “pink tales,” they were equally “useful” for inculcating the expected behavior of women – that is, for them to be self-abnegating and self-sacrificing creatures solely preoccupied with the happiness of their “man.”

first person narrator and protagonist, Elia, is, like Tusquets herself, engaging in the creation of narrative as part of a the developmental process of individuation, and Clara represents a projection of Elia's own unconscious. For this reason we will find that Elia, too, undergoes the transformation from Little Mermaid/Ondine to Mélusine. And although the outcome differs for the two, in both we can recognize evidence of significant psychological growth. Thus, Mélusine's appearance and role in the novel mark the recuperation of myth, long denied girls by their "pink stories" of the Francoist era, as a tool toward individuation.

The novel opens with Elia's return to her childhood home where she takes refuge following one more in what has become a series of infidelities committed against her by her philandering husband, Julio. It is while there that she begins to relive her childhood and youth, both marked by feelings of rejection and inferiority largely due to the absence of maternal love and acceptance in her life. She expresses an affinity with the house, for both were victims of the futile yet continual efforts of her "perfect" mother, "la más bella y la más inteligente entre todas las mujeres del reino," to re-make them: "nos atacó durante años con su furia renovadora y terrible, con su racionalismo olímpico, con su esteticismo cuadriculado y perfecto" (24). The thin, awkward, androgynous, dark child, so different from her blonde, blue-eyed mother, was a source of frustration for this woman in whom "la maternidad [...] no cabe entre las posibilidades de su esencia magnífica" (10). According to Ichiishi, "when the early preoedipal bond between mother and daughter goes awry, it may cripple the daughter emotionally for life, blocking her progress to psychic maturity and health" (41). Elia's mother's treatment of her has undoubtedly contributed to the psychologically damaged and stagnated state in which

Elia now finds herself. María del Carmen Caña Jiménez effectively calls our attention to the parallels of Elia's situation and that of Francoist society; she finds that "la represión y la coerción que [la madre de Elia] ejerce sobre su hija [...] es comparable a la represión que ejerce el poder dictatorial sobre el pueblo español" (81). The efforts of this "diosa de la luz" to overcome the "desorden, la angustia, lo ambiguo y mutilado" which both the shadowy house and the dark girl inject into her universe and which "se creía o al menos se quería perfecta" (*El mismo mar* 26), evokes the battle not only of the patriarchal dictatorial state, but also of consciousness itself, to deny the shadow and to repress the troublesome, rebellious unconscious and impose conformity.

It is in reference to her difficult childhood under the authority of her ever-disapproving mother that Elia first refers to herself as the Little Mermaid; she tells us "la sirenita aprendiz de mujer convivía amigable y asustada con la hija del rey del marjal" (25). Elia stresses here her difference, her sense of not belonging. She feels out of place, even fearful on land; Elia's natural element is water, suggesting the sea of the Great Mother and thus the unconscious and the feminine. All that this element represents has been devalued and rejected by the society in which she and her mother live. Her mother has adapted effectively, indeed too effectively. She has herself rejected the feminine within, hence her inability to demonstrate motherly affection or to connect with her daughter who is so incapable of conforming to the expectations of their rational, orderly world. Elia knew as a child that if she were to ever gain the love and acceptance she so desperately needed from her mother, she would have to become one of her mother's kind; and this, she sadly knew, was impossible, just as it was for the Little Mermaid herself.

In Jungian terms, the Little Mermaid “represents the feminine principle within the human mind, the realm of the unconscious, of body feeling, instinct and intuition” (Ichiishi 37). Her desire to become fully human evokes young Elia’s own desire to “fit in,” but it may also be read in a broader sense as the effort of that feminine principle to gain acceptance into a world that has ostracized it, as Elia’s has done. This societal stance sets up conditions that inhibit engagement in the individuation process, and victimizes those who, like Elia and the Little Mermaid, are unable to conform. In her attempt to become a part of such a world, the Little Mermaid leaves behind her watery home, sacrifices her voice, and exchanges her tail for human legs, yet despite all of this, the prince weds not the Little Mermaid, but instead a “normal” woman who more readily fits into her expected role in his society, just as Elia’s mother has always been able to do so effectively. But the real tragedy of the Little Mermaid is that she views herself as abnormal and gives up her tail and her voice in a futile effort to fit a prescribed mold.²¹⁴ We can read the giving up of her tail as the repression of aspects of herself that did not conform to the norms and expectations of patriarchal society, and her willingness to give up her voice as a passive acceptance of its dictates. As we will see, Elia, too, has given up aspects of herself, including her own voice.

²¹⁴ I disagree in this respect with Rodríguez who suggests that the problem of the mermaid lies not in a society that refuses to accept her difference, but in her own inferiority and abnormality. Rodríguez considers her “la mujer inferior, incompleta que sufre el tormento del deseo que la lleva a su autodestrucción, ya que su cuerpo anormal no puede satisfacer la pasión que despierta (132), and finds that Elia eventually forces an internal polarization in order to achieve “su individuación, sobreponiéndose sobre el mito del andrógono” (135). However, the individuation process undertaken here by the middle-aged Elia specifically implies, according to Jung, the *disruption* of the polarized state of being and the bringing together in harmony of seemingly oppositional aspects of the psyche, symbolized by androgynous archetypal images – such images are not to be “overcome” but rather offer guidance in the process.

During her childhood, Elia's means of protecting herself from her mother's demands and her lonely existence was to escape into the world of imagination and fairy tales. But later, as a young woman, she fell in love with Jorge, and placed her hopes to escape her oppressive and lonely existence in him. Houchens explains that "thinking that she could escape the loneliness of youth by grafting her life onto Jorge's, the young Elia celebrated her false salvation by killing or repressing the Minotaur, symbol of her solitude and lonely thoughts, but also of her imagination (84). Yet Jorge's betrayal – his suicide, committed with no warning and no explanation – devastated her; left with neither her "prince" nor her former refuge of imagination, she found herself psychologically defenseless. From that moment, she ceased all psychological growth, cutting herself off from the inner world, passively submitting herself to the dictates of others, most notably by giving herself in marriage to a man chosen by her mother, and who has, himself, subjected her to multiple betrayals. Her own voice, like that of the Little Mermaid, has fallen silent. Yet in this first-person narrative told from Elia's point of view, as she shares with us her story and her suffering, we hear her voice emerging; finally she is beginning to speak.²¹⁵

The damage done to Elia by her mother carried over to affect her relationship with her own child, Guiomar. She has never been able to feel at all maternal toward her

²¹⁵ Smith-Sherwood finds that Elia's reclaiming of her own voice corresponds to the efforts of Tusquets and other Spanish women writers of the period. She points out that Tusquets was a foremost figure in what has been called a post-war "Boom" in women's writing, indicative of the emergence of feminism within Spain and the destabilization of gender roles during the transition, affording women a voice in Spanish society. She remarks that despite some earlier loosening of censorship and some improvements in opportunities for women over the course of the dictatorship, it is evident that "liberation came to Spanish women writers with the Generalísimo's death" (2).

daughter, who closely resembles Elia's mother.²¹⁶ She now is convinced that neither of the women understand or love her: "me pregunto que diablos pinto yo en esta genealogía de vírgenes prudentes, un eslabón torcido en una cadena irreprochable, mientras ellas se entienden perfectamente por encima de mí, la diosa y la doctora intercambiando opiniones sobre la niña difícil" (22). Elia, as we encounter her in the first pages of the novel, is alone and alienated from her family and society, and facing crisis. At 50, she confronts not only the natural aging of her body and menopause, but the pain of her husband's abandonment of her for another, younger, woman. These crises have thrown into question the roles she passively accepted and which have, until now, been her only source of identity; Elia "feels lost, abandoned, scattered, useless, unable to find a center of gravity within herself from which to derive an inner strength and peace as she confronts the difficulties inherent in leaving one stage of life and entering another that is frightfully unknown" (Casado 91).

Elia describes her entry into her childhood home as a descent: "me submergo en otra atmósfera contradictoriamente más pura, menos luz, menos ruidos, menos sol" (Tusquets 7), which evokes a return to the womb-like unconscious, so important to the process of individuation. When Elia speaks in terms of "submerging" herself, she evokes the nearby sea, a symbol of the unconscious which, "like the feminine archetype of the Great Mother who is both the giver and taker of life, [...] symbolizes the birth/death dualism since it is the origin of life and the place to which all life returns to die" (Casado 93). Mélusine is herself a representative of the Great Mother, associated with life and

²¹⁶ Tsuchiya aptly remarks that Guiomar is "a stereotypical product of patriarchal rationality, divested of any 'feminine' desire for communion or interchange with the other" (197).

death and with water, particularly that of the bath in which she submerged herself each Saturday and where she underwent transformation. Elia's initial entry into the darkened house and her own "submersion" in it not only prepares the way for Mélusine's arrival, but also heralds Elia's own forthcoming transformation.²¹⁷

Among the shadows, within the building's vestibule, Elia encounters the statue of Mercury. This alchemical, androgynous symbol, albeit under a male dominant, represents *Sol* of the Mercurius Duplex, while Mélusine is representative of his more feminine-visaged counterpart (*Luna*). The presence of Mercurius, spiritual guide and representative of the goal of individuation – the Self – further prepares us for Mélusine's appearance. Mercury here "symbolizes all that the character [Elia] is not in her conscious life, but has the capacity of being if the path toward individuation remains unobstructed" (Casado 96). His pose, with outstretched hand, appears to invite Elia to follow his guidance, and is evocative of the moment in which Mélusine reaches out to take the arm of Raymondin, also facing crisis, awakening him from his dazed and forlorn state following his uncle's death, and leading him toward his own individuation. Yet Mercury is but an immobile statue; although he points toward and invites Elia to begin the individuation process, this is not sufficient. We should recall that Elia compares her own mother to a statue; she is cold and marble-like, and seems to have established long ago "un pacto entre estatuas o entre dioses, en cualquier caso no entre seres humanos" (15). Having long been denied

²¹⁷ Houchens, following the observations of Annis Pratt regarding female quest novels, calls attention to the special importance of such a plunge for women like Elia. She explains that "the basic structure and theme of the quest [...] is the same for Pratt as it is for Jung: a departure from the workaday world of reality to explore the inner self in the hope of finding an identity more satisfying than the hollow one acted out in society" (31), and this is a process needed in individuals of both genders. But in light of the particular struggle of women oppressed under patriarchy (and in Elia's case a patriarchal dictatorship), a move to an inner place far removed from that oppression is especially important. Houchens cites Pratt, who finds that the female quest begins with a coming to consciousness of oppression and a subsequent "plunge away from patriarchal experience" (qtd. in Houchens 29), and this is what Elia enacts here.

the warmth of a flesh and blood mother, Clara will need more than a statue to guide her and help her heal the wounds this created within her. And in fact Jung teaches that individuation is not possible in isolation; it is always “settings of an interpersonal nature which lend themselves to the work of individuation” (Samuels, Shorter, and Plaut 79). Further, Mercurius, despite his androgynous aspect, is male, and Elia has known only neglect and betrayal in her relationships with men. Her father was frequently absent, her husband has repeatedly cheated on her, Jorge’s betrayal has caused deep psychological scars. Given this, and Elia’s position in a society in which woman’s identity is assigned via her relationships with men (she is wife, mother, daughter, never truly an individual), it appears particularly significant that Elia’s guide toward individuation will not be the masculine-visaged Mercury, but rather Mélusine, embodied within a young woman, Clara. Despite their shared gender, “their relationship exemplifies Jung’s theory of psychic integration as the attraction of opposites [...] ; the division, however, is not based on male-female difference, but rather on differences in age and experience” (Houchens 64). Due to these differences, ultimately each is able to contribute in some way to the other’s psychological growth, as we will soon see.

Just following her description of Mercurius, Elia reaches in the shadows to touch the genitals of the statue and finds them exposed; they are no longer covered by the bronze leaf which had, in the past, been placed over them out of concern for modesty, a reflection of the societal prudishness and repression of the Francoist era. According to Caña-Jiménez, the exposed genitals evoke a time prior to the Fall and the bronze leaf alludes to all that society imposes contrary to “los instintos primarios del individuo” and especially to the naturalization of sexual repression (82). From a Jungian perspective, the

Fall corresponds to the emergence of the conscious ego, *i.e.* psychic differentiation, which immediately sets in motion the move toward the repression of certain contents; this must later be overcome by a return to the unconscious, symbolized by the removal of the concealing bronze leaf. This removal is enacted by Elia's mother, whom Elia sees in her mind's eye, young and beautiful, surrounded by admiring young men, laughing as she playfully removes the leaf and hides it, repeatedly inserting it into various nooks and crannies "en un resquicio que dejan las molduras del pedestal, en la maceta de la fuscía moribunda y pálida, en el hondo repliegue del sofá [...] en el oscuro pozo sin fondo del hueco del ascensor [...] o en el mismísimo buzón de las tres señoritas," the disapproving old spinsters who live on another floor (10). Elia's mother took a special pleasure in shocking the sexually repressed women with these antics. The insertions of the leaf clearly replicate the sexual act and recall the actions of Mélusine's representative, the Little Girl of the Rocher Percé in *Arcane 17*.²¹⁸ Here, however, is no "child-woman" passively following the instructions of a masculine figure. It is upon Elia's mother's own initiative that she undertakes this behavior in which she performs the active role of "insertion," provocatively crossing the established boundaries for her sex so strictly observed in the Francoist era. Here, as in the scene in Breton, we find an evocation of the much-needed union of opposites. Yet her actions do not create light or illumination. It is only a game, and will go no further, for Elia's mother is adept at playing the larger game she must play. The beautiful woman holds aloft the leaf as a "flamante gallardete de libertad," yet Elia comments "qué libertad puede haber sido sino ésta, y aun para unos

²¹⁸ The striking similarity of Elia's mother's use of the leaf and the Little Girl's use of the straw cause one to wonder if Tusquets had read and recalled this scene from *Arcane 17* (addressed here in Chapter 2) or if this is, in fact, simply a case of the resurgence of archetypal imagery from the collective unconscious.

pocos, para la asamblea de los dioses vencedores, en los años cuarenta” (13). She realizes it is a pitiful and ineffectual gesture toward the freedom so desperately needed by society as a whole, but especially by women like Elia’s mother. If Elia’s oppressive mother appears initially to correspond to the oppressive Francoist regime, she is also a woman, subject to the dictates of the patriarchy and of Elia’s father. It is he who ultimately represents the Francoist State. Elia describes him, quietly watching her mother’s antics from the shadows, ensuring her mother never strays too far from the expected norms.²¹⁹ Despite her mother’s evident complicity with the patriarchy, we notice here an indication that she, too, desires to break free of the bonds that restrain her, and we catch a glimpse not only of a flesh and blood woman, but also of the androgynous, transgressive, and uniting Mélusine. This glimpse reveals that Elia is not so far removed from her mother as it may seem when she posits them as opposites.²²⁰ Her binary thinking (so opposed to individuation and so pervasive in patriarchal society) and her frequent descriptions of her mother as forbidding goddess, or “Terrible Mother,” reveal that Elia is, at least to an extent, projecting negative aspects of her own shadow upon her mother. We know that she has been unable to feel motherly toward her own child, and must therefore suspect that she too has been a less than adequate mother; this suspicion seems to be confirmed by her initial encounters with Clara which are clearly marked by impersonality, awkwardness, even coldness. Elia is denying contents of her own shadow, which Jung

²¹⁹ Ordoñez observes that “the mother as goddess exists as a function of the patriarch,” she reminds us that throughout the text we learn that Elia’s mother, “goddess or harpy – is whatever she may be because [Elia’s father] has assigned her a particular role, and he is able to change that role at will” (39-41). Cleary-Nichols agrees, calling attention to his power as “wielder of the word and final author” of their family dramas (378).

²²⁰ Nancy Beth Vosberg points out that Elia’s “bipolar” world is gradually revealed to be complex and multifaceted. She finds that although Elia presents herself as passive victim of the Apollonian order, she is also “cómplice en su sistema de poder y de castigo, verdugo en vez de víctima” (44).

explains “contains values that are needed by consciousness, but that exist in a form that makes them difficult to integrate into one’s life” (*Man and His Symbols* 170). The statue of Mercury evokes not only the Self, but also the *animus* within Elia’s unconscious with which she has a problematic relationship (Casado 96). Casado explains that due to her neglect of the unconscious, Elia has not only lost access to the positive aspects the *animus* could provide her (such as initiative, courage, objectivity, and wisdom²²¹), she has become *animus*-possessed; she is entirely out of touch with the feminine, and is now “trapped between shattered idealism and a negative *animus*, which conditions her outlook on everything. Consequently, she is bitter, sarcastic, judgmental, highly critical of herself and others, skeptical, cynical, and unable to share intimacy with anyone” (125).

The three spinsters so often provoked by Elia’s mother were similarly cut off from the unconscious and the shadow within. After years of living a “corseted” life, their lost connection with their own female physicality and feminine desire is reflected in their breasts “oprimidos sin piedad en corsés de acero [...] que los hicieron a la larga fundirse y desaparecer” (*El mismo mar* 11). Despite the absence of any hint of voluptuousness and their outward prim behavior and constant vituperations against her mother, Elia spied the shadow within them, which she presents to us under the flying serpent aspect of Mélusine, even evoking her despairing, piercing cries as she was banished from this world. Elia says they have

pupilas rojizas y pequeñas de dragón, la doncellez y el monstruo fundidos estrechamente, y una vagina cerrada [...] que a fuerza de ignorada es

²²¹ For further discussion of traits Jung found frequently associated with the *animus*, see *Man and his Symbols*, 194.

como si no existiera y que grita tan fuerte desde esta casi no existencia que su aullido angustioso puede dequiciar el universo: vírgenes adustas que esperan vanamente un San Jorge tardón [...] capaz de hundir su espada en los tres pozos y liberarlas de su encantamiento, pero quizá San Jorge no ha decubierto que la princesa y el monstruo son una misma cosa, que son una misma cosa las doncellas y sus dragones. (12)

Here is revealed not only the repressed shadow, but also the frustration, simmering anger and desire, and unspoken protest of these women forced to live under the yoke of Francoist Catholic Nationalism. We also glimpse their denied duality and desperate need to access the shadow within the unconscious in order to draw from the strengths of Mélusine, who although shown here as dragon-woman – a fear-inspiring monstrosity – if released from her imprisonment within the psyche, can take on her archetypal healing role.

When Elia enters her childhood room, she peers out a window where she sees that “los árboles estallan ya en un verde lujuriente. Ondulantes senos de matrona bajo mis ventanas” (18). Here we find the forest with which Mélusine is associated, having first appeared there to Raymondin, and this forest is described with a fertile, feminine maternal aspect – the forest, like the sea, represents “the habitat of the Great mother” and “the nonregulated and hidden womb-like unconscious” (Knapp 26-27). It is within this house and later the house of Elia’s beloved grandmother, that Elia makes contact with the healing archetype. Elia describes these homes as “dos casas vegetales y acuáticas, susurrantes y oscuras” and within them begins to find “esta parte ignorada de mí misma,

que yo creí ya muerta y que iba entretanto multiplicándose en las más hondas simas de las prohibidas profundidades” (87).

The darkness, the forest, and evocation of water certainly recall the scene in which Raymondin, too, encountered the healing archetype. Yet, recalling that Mélusine is closely linked to “the ever-flowing source of inner knowledge, [...] the ever-renewing waters from the fountain, emerging from the depths of the earth (the unconscious), rising into the air (consciousness)” (Knapp 41), we might wonder about the absence of a fountain. I propose that the narrative style, which Tsuchiya describes as “overflow of the textual body,” Elia’s words which come forth in unlimited “free association instead of rational thought” (Tsuchiya 194), with her sentences continuing for pages at time, themselves represent the fountain as it is through this flowing narrative, this fountain of words, that Elia will come into contact with her innermost feelings and will bring to the surface what lies buried at the bottom of her unconscious.²²²

Elia’s relationship with Clara begins shortly after her return to her childhood home. From the first moment that she sees her, Elia “immediately recognizes in the adolescent almost a mirror image of [...] herself during her adolescent years: frail, sensitive, impassioned, deperately in need of love” (Ichiishi 52). During their visit to the ice cream shop so enjoyed by Elia as a child, she describes Clara as a fellow mermaid, “tiernísima sirena de senos adolescentes y hermosa cola casi piernas” (66). Clara here takes on the projection of Elia’s shadow which, according to Jung, appears in the dream

²²² Casado observes that this narrative “reproduces with remarkable exactitude the dialectics of elaboration (thesis and antithesis) and integration (synthesis) that characterize the dynamic processes of individuation and literary creation alike” (113).

state in the form of a figure of the dreamer's own sex (*Aspects of the Feminine* 167).²²³

That Clara represents a part of Elia is underscored by the visual imagery in the ice cream parlor. Elia sits in front of a large mirror upon which the menu and an image of a mermaid are painted, and "she mixes her own reflection of the mermaid on the glass with the youthful Clara so that the three become one archetypal image" (Houchens 56). Clara clearly represents aspects of Elia's own unconscious that she "must rediscover and incorporate into her own psyche" (Houchens 63).

Elia expresses a strong desire for union with Clara; she finds that she wants to touch "la suavidad fría de [su] cola casi piernas – tan cerca y tan lejos del mar" (67). And yet we note a hint of fear. Elia begins to imagine her mother's and her daughter's scandalized reaction if she were to engage in a sexual relationship with this young girl, and is simultaneously concerned and tempted to defy them, since it is, as she silently tells Clara within her own mind, "más vergonzoso amarte que decapitarte, es más terrible acariciar un segundo tu cola que cortarte la cabeza" (68). This reaction is consistent with the conscious mind's reaction to encounters with repressed psychic content; Jung often stresses the difficulty and fear involved in undertaking the process of individuation, for it inevitably involves the necessity to question, even defy, societal expectations. Thus, it often seems easiest to take the path of least resistance (although, ultimately, this is the more dangerous and damaging choice), hence the tendency to continue to falsely equate the conscious ego with the Self and thus to ignore and repress all that lies hidden in the unconscious in order to, as Elia puts it "decapitate" it. Elia decides to follow through, but

²²³ Casado points out that the presentation of the first moments of submersion within the house "form a generic coherence with the later presentation of Clara as a mermaid or siren 'belonging to' the narrator-protagonist" (107).

only for “un minuto fortuito, en un gesto furtivo” (68). She decides to engage in a diverting game of seduction, determined to maintain a certain distance and calculated control over her encounters with this seemingly fragile mermaid. Elia fails to perceive that beneath that delicate façade there lies the full power of the unconscious, the Great Mother, Mélusine. Thus, Elia is clearly unaware of the impossibility of ever fully controlling the unconscious.

In a perverse move, Elia takes Clara to a party in which they are both surrounded by members of Elia’s society who, like Elia herself, are adept at concealing their true selves beneath their outward personas. Elia describes the party as a “farsa” in which, even in the absence of costumes, they all seem to be participants in a shallow masquerade (98-99). While there, the hostess encounters Elia alone upstairs and attempts to seduce her, evoking once again Mélusine as the repressed shadow; Elia says: “tengo la lengua de la mujer-pájaro, de la mujer-serpiente, enroscándose a la mía,” and once again she experiences fear. She thinks that she must warn this woman of the danger of this behavior, of letting her repressed desires become known, and especially of being caught by her husband: “nunca debe adivinar su dueño y señor [...] que hay algo en su magnífico juguete que no funciona como es debido, [...] porque mi pobre mujer-serpiente, mi desválida mujer-pájaro [...] sería devuelto de inmediato” (104-05). Despite this concern, the next day she accompanies this woman and another on a day trip at sea, bringing along Clara, as well. The two women contrast sharply with the shy and innocent Clara, so fervent in her feelings for Elia. The lesbian escapades of these other women are no more than “games of false witches desperate for release from social pressures [...] ; the union of the women is compensatory, not heroic, decadent, not

regenerative, desperate, not transformative” (Ordóñez 42). Elia observes these women and sees in them, as she has in Clara, sea creatures, with their “piernas soberbias y no humanas recubiertas también a trechos por brillantes chispitas de espuma” (107-08).

They are bird-women, too, yet she describes them as penned birds “que pelean con rabio pero sin brillo” (109). Elia tries to ignore these representatives of the negative aspect of the shadow, and separates herself from them mentally: “me dejo arrastrar amodorrada y lenta, perezosa como un lagarto” (108), “merecida por el agua de plomo o de mercurio, tan plata y tan oscuro” (109). Here we have evocations of the reptilian, alchemical, and mercurial aspects of Mélusine, which presage Elia’s coming transformation. Her description of Clara, too, evokes the transformation undergone in alchemy and in individuation, for she describes her as a bird-woman who is now an ugly duckling, but destined to become a beautiful white swan. The swan is an alchemical symbol equated with the Self, as is Mélusine. Casado explains:

not only does the swan give the appearance of being androgynous [with its long neck and rounded body], but likewise suggests the co-existence of consciousness with its shadow insofar as its white plumage conceals black flesh. Furthermore, the belief that the swan sings only when about to die underscores the binary nature of the individuation process. (117)

The night after this outing, Clara becomes violently ill after drinking excessively. Witnessing her suffering, the mother within Elia begins to awaken. As she finally makes contact with the feminine within herself, we witness the transformation of the passive, weak and sterile mermaid into the more complex and powerful being that is Mélusine, who encompasses the Great Mother and healing archetypes. Elia helps and cares for

Clara tenderly, and expresses wonder that her body somehow knows what to do despite her inexperience with this kind of mothering. She describes “el cuerpo pálido, sudoso, flaco de Clara estrechamente abrazado, atrapado, seguro entre mis brazos – que han empezado a mecerlo, que han empezado a acunarlo” (117). Having suffered so long from her unhealthy relationships with both her mother and her daughter, with Clara, Elia finally relives the mother-daughter experience, creating a more positive one.²²⁴

In one of their most intimate moments, in which Clara is awakened to sexual pleasure, Elia once again describes Clara with rich imagery linking her to various permutations of Mélusine. She tells us that this

sirena loca, la ondina más torpe del estanque [...] ha emergido de las aguas, misteriosa y ambigua como cualquier anfibio, temblorosa como una ondina asustada que no habrá de encontrar jamás a un príncipe, que no adquirirá nunca un alma de mujer – para que demonios puede quererla – [...] y recorro depacio la cabellera larga, cabello de sirena, que llega casi hasta el inicio de la cola. (135)

Here we find references to Clara as a nervous and clumsy ondine, a misfit, who, like the Little Mermaid, is not truly made for life on land. Here, too, Elia makes mention of the ondine’s quest for a woman’s soul, which was central to the tale by La Motte Fouqué, and she rejects this notion, thereby equally rejecting patriarchal society’s attempts to make woman’s identity contingent upon a man, as her own has consistently been. In chapter 2 above, we learned that in the 19th century the transformation of

²²⁴ I agree with Casado that Elia’s relationship with Clara is “designed to heal the emotional scars of childhood on a personal level, while at the same time redressing the disequilibrium of the phallogocentric, patriarchal universe from which the feminine principle has been ostracized” (99).

Mélusine into Ondine marked her “evolution” (more accurately “devolution”) into a being that perfectly fit patriarchal society’s conception of the “good wife”: self-sacrificing, fragile and submissive, “ni bâtisseuse, ni figure maternelle” (Françoise Ferlan 318). In Elia and later in Clara, we find a reversal of this process for both become active, healing, maternal figures, yet, as we will soon see, it is Clara who most fully incarnates Mélusine, for she is also a builder.

The binary aspect of the individuation process is suggested by the death of Elia’s grandmother, which comes to herald Elia’s rebirth. It is Elia’s sorrow and pain at the loss of this fellow dark-haired mermaid, who had also suffered the torment of submission to a brutish husband, that provokes Elia’s realization that she needs Clara: “por primera vez, soy yo la que recurro a Clara – se invierten finalmente los papeles –, y la llamo con dedos temblorosos, [...] y le pido que venga, ahora mismo, [...] [la] necesito” (144). As the novel progresses, we can recognize a complex, evolving, and circular relationship whereby, as Ichiishi explains, “each will give birth to the other, while each becomes at once mother and daughter to herself” (53). Here, Elia feels herself coming undone – the cold, calculating woman, “esta mujer distante y superior” that she has been, or attempted to be, is “reducida ahora a una bestezuela angustiada” (145); her old “costume” is about to be shed. As she comes into full contact with the hurting inner child within her unconscious, it is now she who most needs the Great Mother and healing archetype. As she prepares for Clara’s arrival, Elia, reminiscent of Mélusine herself, ritually bathes in perfumed water, to wash away the “olor a muerte” and of “animal asustado” that seems to cling to her (144-45).

When Clara arrives at Elia's grandmother's house by the sea, the two enter Elia's childhood room and leaf through storybooks, their gaze falling upon an image of Wendy sewing Peter Pan's shadow back; Elia finds there is something "repugnantemente posesiva y maternal" in Wendy's behavior, yet adds there are "vagas conotaciones inquietantes esto de que alguien haya perdido su sombra" (152). Again we encounter Elia's mixed feelings regarding this process; her desire to explore the depths of her unconscious and re-connect with her shadow is tinged with the dread of the engulfing mother.

However, in contact with Clara, this fear gradually dissipates and finally, "since the radiant days in which she knew Jorge, Clara is the first to penetrate the outer shell to touch the frail, vulnerable being beneath" (Ichiishi 54). Elia admits that now "se han caído todas las barreras y se han bajado todas las defensas, y estoy aquí, inerme en mi ternura" (157). She gives herself fully to Clara, the two fusing into one, and we may recognize that "the physical union of the middle-aged woman and the naïve adolescent who is a part of herself, symbolizes the fluid reciprocity that is achieved between consciousness and unconsciousness within the female psyche" (Casado 107). As these two components of the Self are brought together, Elia describes her gradual dissolution: "me voy deshaciendo, disolviendo, desangrando en palabras, tan dulcemente muerta" (158). This language "no aprendido" (157) which both she and Clara begin to speak, emerges "hecho ya voz de las entrañas y la mente la escucha ajena y sorprendida" (158). This new voice is born of the body and the unconscious; it is that language that "binds mother and child during the blissful phase of symbiosis or imaginary fusion between self and other" (Ichiishi 57). Here we encounter the language of Kristeva's Pre-

Oedipal *chora* and the pre-Symbolic “Voice” explored by Cixous (Tsuchiya 190). Elia directly associates this language with the mother-child bond that was broken between herself and her daughter Guiomar. She muses that she believes she somehow intuited these words in moments when her baby daughter was sleeping and she couldn’t see the child’s blue eyes so like her mother’s, but sadly those words “no llegaron a brotar nunca” (158). Elia’s sense of alienation vanishes as she merges with Clara in the pre-Oedipal space. There they discover an “otherworld of sexual pleasure and maternal tenderness” where they are able to “forget the society that offers them only restrictive, secondary roles” (Houchens 74).

As Elia casts off her inhibitions and relinquishes her efforts to control, finally revealing to Clara her vulnerability, her weakness, and her need for healing, the young woman transforms into a new being before Elia’s eyes. The silent, passive mermaid has, like Elia, found her voice, and becomes “risueña y expansiva” (181): “se ha lanzado a hablar, roto su mutismo obstinado de niña hostil.” (185). This “little girl” (Little Mermaid, Ondine) begins not only to speak, as did the always “expansive” Mélusine, she also begins to build. As discussed in chapter 2, Mélusine as builder took on an active role which has traditionally been associated with the masculine. Yet she built her castles not only to ensure the safety and future of her growing family, but also to contain “the protecting and nurturing aspects of the archetypal Mother within them” (Knapp 45). Clara, like Mélusine, desires to create a safe haven, a place in which will be protected the “soul” now being created through the process of individuation. This safe place she builds is described as a castle: “la voluntad de Clara está convirtiendo paso a paso la vieja mansión de la abuela en el castillo inexpugnable de la Bella del Bosque encantado [...]”

convierte la casa junto al mar en el palacio del monstruo [donde] triunfan los amores de la Bella y la Bestia (y ahora sé que las dos somos la Bella y las dos somos igualmente la Bestia) (183). Elia's recognition of the duality of their roles reveals that within this protective fortress the women are completely freed from the confines of the imposed binarisms of the society outside and are free to explore all aspects of themselves. Elia also describes this protective space built by Clara as a cocoon, evoking the transformation that is occurring now that Elia is undertaking the individuation process, and she wonders if this "capullo que ella me construye y yo le dejo construir es lo bastante resistente"(200).

Within this protective space, Elia experiences true happiness for the first time in many years,²²⁵ but realizes there is a last painful story she must share, one she has shared with no one – that of her abandonment when Jorge took his own life. When Elia undertakes this story, we clearly see in Clara Mélusine's aspects of Great Mother and archetypal healer. Elia exposes to Clara the hurting child within herself, "tembloroso, miserable, y enfermo – este yo más profundo, y por más profundo, más herido" (188); this hidden part of her has long overwhelmed her psyche.²²⁶ As Clara listens, she is gentle and attentive; she comforts Elia, collecting her tears and then softly speaking for Elia, wisely guessing the ending when Elia can no longer continue for herself "habla [...] con tantísima ternura, como si se estuviera dirigiendo, como si se estuviera cuidando de

²²⁵ She echoes Breton when she comments that from the abyss of pain can come joy, yet she is far more reserved than he: "en pleno abismo se producen a veces, muy, muy pocas veces, entre oceanos de desdicha, unos breves, muy muy breves, instantes de felicidad, como este momento en que me he refugiado en Clara" (189).

²²⁶ Houchens observes that by telling this story to Clara, Elia is finally able to distance herself from her own grief and see it finally as a part of her psyche, and "not as her entire being" (76).

un enfermo terriblemente grave, un enfermo que fuera todo él una herida, y con su voz que se hace bálsamo Clara concluye, para que yo no tenga que seguir – porque le duele o porque me duele demasiado” (197).

The happiness and healing that Elia finds with Clara were vital to her individuation, but Elia hints from early on that she knows they cannot remain forever submerged in this protective world. Over time, Clara’s growing devotion and this closed Pre-Oedipal space begin to become claustrophobic. She admits that Clara is “tan absolutamente mía que siento una angustia extraña” (162), and she begins to notice the “asfixia del capullo de seda” (186) that Clara builds around them. Elia also worries that Clara is building more than this, that she is “construyendo una futura imposible para las dos” (184), for Clara starts making concrete plans to arrange for them to live together. Elia fears that Clara loves her too much, she sees in her eyes “la mirada terrible del amor total” (171), and compares them to the eyes of the Little Mermaid willing to walk on broken glass and to those of the Ondine of Jean Giraudoux’s play in a passage in which she directly cites lines spoken to Hans²²⁷ by Ondine. Elia says she murmurs “‘desde que te amo, mi soledad comienza a dos pasos de ti,’” and knows that later “gritara inutilment obstinada ‘te he engañado con Bertrán,’ porque todas las criaturas del lago saben ya [...] que es él quien te ha traicionado a ti, perdiéndose, pobre Hans hermoso y tonto, al perderte” (164).²²⁸ In the play, try as she may, Ondine is unable to conform to the norms of the society in which she must live when she marries Hans. This is a prime factor in

²²⁷ The direct mention of the name of Ondine’s lover as “Hans,” as opposed to La Motte Fouqué’s “Huldebrand,” is a clear indication that Giraudoux’s play is being referred to here.

²²⁸ The first phrase first appears in Act I, scene 9 : “Depuis que je t’aime, ma solitude commence à deux pas de toi” (Giraudoux 49); the second is from Act III, scene 1 “je t’ai trompé avec Bertram!” (99).

Hans's betrayal of her with another woman, but to protect him from certain death, Ondine lies, saying she was the one who betrayed him with another man, Bertram. Her lie is eventually revealed, and Hans must lose his life, and she her memory, returning to her watery home; thus Hans betrays them both. Elia applies this tale to her father's abandonment of Sofía, her own caretaker, whom he loved, but made no move to defend or protect when their love was discovered by Elia's mother, whom Elia casts as the other woman, Bertha. Elia again refers to the play, commenting that the worst for Ondine is not to lose Hans, but to see him lose himself, and for someone who did not even merit it "una ruin asesina de pájaros" (170).²²⁹ Yet this is what she fears she must do, and finally does, when she returns to her husband Julio; she becomes Hans the betrayer by leaving Clara for the "asesina de pájaros" who is now Julio. This appears an apt role for him, for although earlier on she had considered the possibility that "a las aves de [su propia] raza les pueden volver a nacer alas," she equates her return to Julio with the end of her possibility to fly.

Elia here casts Clara in the role of the victim, Ondine, but a central theme of the novel has been the struggle to break free of imposed roles, and this is precisely what Clara does. Clara has little in common with the tragic Ondine.²³⁰ She has grown and evolved, and her loss of Elia does not reproduce the catastrophic results of Hans's betrayal of Ondine. From a Jungian perspective, "individuation demands that [Clara] accept the relinquishment of the maternal nurturance and security the 'Earth Mother' has

²²⁹ This is also a reference to the play. Ondine knows that the woman for whom he betrays her, Bertha, cruelly killed a pet bird as part of a plot to gain his affections.

²³⁰ In this respect I disagree with Houchens who finds that "like Peter [Pan], Clara's role in the novel is that of the child, the archetypal mermaid who elects to remain in the mythic world of Never-Never Land, dreaming of love and revolution rather than undergo the disillusionments involved in growing up" (94).

provided her for nearly a month, and assume her rightful role in society as a mature, independent young adult” (Casado 104). The support and nurturance given to her by Elia has aided her in gaining strength and wisdom, so that she is now far more closely aligned with the rich and multi-faceted Mélusine. In response to Elia’s betrayal, Clara neither dissolves into sea foam as did the Little Mermaid, nor loses her memories, returning to a life in water as did Ondine. Like Mélusine, despite the pain she surely feels, once she realizes she must leave, Clara takes charge of the situation.²³¹ She calls to ask that Elia be with her as she prepares for her trip, and her voice is, Elia notices “segura y firme, sin temblores” for the very first time. As Elia watches her pack she is amazed to see how decidedly she does this; Clara’s clumsiness has disappeared, and her gestures are “sorprendentemente seguros, firmes y precisos” (227). Elia knows Clara is returning home to her family, but not forever, “no vuelve a ellos, escapa sencillamente de mí, intacta o casi intacta su capacidad de andar sobre las aguas [...] de que le nazcan alas” (226). In spite of the suffering it eventually caused her, “Clara’s experience of love has endowed her with the strength and courage to learn to ‘fly’” (Ichiishi 62).

Although Clara’s flight at the end evokes the final flight of Mélusine, there is an important divergence here from the original Mélusine myth. Clara is not flying away from the world, (and is certainly not flying *to* “Neverland”) but rather is flying toward her own future, having faced the disillusion of lost love and emerged an independent young woman.

²³¹ We should recall here the calm and wisdom with which Mélusine handled her affairs, giving firm directives in the moments just prior to her departure.

According to Houchens, Clara refers to Elia when she whispers to her at the close of the novel “Y Wendy creció” (Tusquets 229). Although it is clear that Clara understands that Elia has grown up and so cannot remain in the “mythic past of mermaids and princes, a past in which she can no longer believe” (Houchens 95), given that both women have undergone the transformation from mermaids/ondines to Mélusines, Clara’s reference to Wendy should be recognized as referring to both of them, as well. If we recall the image of Wendy sewing the shadow back on Peter Pan, which was a precursor to Clara’s assistance with Elia’s recuperation of her shadow, it becomes clear that she, too, is Wendy. Like Wendy, she returned Elia her shadow, all the while growing up from delicate, helpless mermaid, to strong, maternal, decisive Mélusine. Like Mélusine in response to Raymondin’s betrayal, Clara does not recriminate Elia, but reveals her love and wisdom by simply letting Elia know she understands. Elia tells us that this is the purpose of those final words; they are a “prueba inequívoca de que hasta el final me ha comprendido” (229).

And what of Elia? Many critics have found her betrayal of Clara to mark a thoroughly tragic end, representing an act of self-destruction.²³² However, in her case, as in that of Clara, a Jungian perspective requires a closer look and a more nuanced interpretation, one that takes into account “the deeper emotions at work in the protagonists’s mind, specifically the relief she feels at being free of Clara” (Houchens 44). When Elia leaves Clara and returns to Julio, she is released from the sense of claustrophobia which was beginning to taint their relationship. This is representative of

²³² Ichiishi, for instance, finds here a “playing out of the Freudian repetition compulsion,’ she must go through life continually reenacting her own abandonment. The return to [Julio] is “a self-destructive act which has as its aim to punish herself for being what she is, for having been born” (60).

the desire and need of the conscious mind to break free of the unconscious, which is a necessary step in the circular and ongoing process of individuation. Casado explains that “like the difficult labor that often precedes childbirth, psychological growth (rebirth) requires a period of intense suffering” (104); thus, from a psychological standpoint, union with Clara had to end, and Elia experiences this as a painful surgery, a loss of a part of herself (Tusquets 213). Here we witness “the sacrifice of the young maiden by the ‘Earth Mother,’ [which] symbolizes the abandonment of childhood innocence, and acceptance of the need to move forward into the next phase of life” (Casado 104). Although this loss of innocence and illusion has been seen as a negative by some,²³³ it is ultimately liberating in that it “undermines one of western civilization’s most oppressive myths: the fulfillment of woman through romantic love” (Houchens 4). And had Clara and Elia run away together, their story would have resembled those limiting “pink stories” that Tusquets so clearly calls into question in this narrative, for they would have reproduced “the very happy-ending of fairy tales so criticized as out of step with reality” (Houchens 94).

Elia comments that had they remained together, she and Clara would have been “perdidas en un mismo sueño” (203). She knows she cannot sleep forever, lulled by the gentle waves of the Pre-Oedipal sea. Elia must return to land to face the everyday reality and responsibilities awaiting her outside their “cocoon.” Casado explains that “freed from the grips of immature yearning, the middle-aged woman is prepared for passage from the first half of life into the second” (104). Clara, too, needed to be set free, for had they

²³³ Ichiishi’s description of this process, for instance, does not take into account the positive birth of the new person we later become: “The maturing process of growing up inevitably involves a process of inner spiritual decay and death, the gradual fading of the cherished person we once were” (62).

remained together, the young woman would have risked her own psychological stagnation, overly sheltered and potentially engulfed by the newly emergent Great Mother in Elia.

Jung teaches that once an individual connects with contents of the unconscious, the most difficult step is to bring these contents out into the open. When one begins to act differently in relation to others, changing the “face” presented to them, this alteration of the familiar persona to which they were accustomed disturbs those who knew the individual before the process was undertaken, and this often creates conflict, potentially disrupting all aspects of life. Although we can recognize that through her experience with her archetypal guide, Elia has gained healing and has awakened long dormant aspects of herself, it is this next, most daunting step that she must now undertake. And unfortunately, when she returns to Julio, we find her slipping into her familiar passive, submissive role. She wonders briefly if she should try to end the “media vida” she has led until now with him (212), but then forgoes the disturbance this would create, making plans to return to her old persona; she comments that her mother, “Julio, y Guiomar se reunirán felices y cómplices a mis espaldas para respirar con alivio” (228). And in this sense, I recognize with Lirot that Elia appears to give up to the “presiones sociales y familiares que la rodean” (664). Those pressures and the very human tendency to slip back into old, familiar, and ingrained patterns of behavior (however harmful those may be) are what prevent Elia from allowing her newly discovered, truer, and more whole self to emerge. She, like Mélusine, finds that in order to live comfortably in society, one must often hide certain aspects of the Self. It appears that although Elia has experienced psychic growth, once she makes the necessary return to consciousness and the outer

world, she is not yet ready to make her discoveries about herself known; clearly, this has been “but a first stage of her quest” (Houchens 96). Thus Elia intends to seal the Mélusine she has discovered within herself back into her secret chamber, just as Mélusine hid her own serpentine tail.

According to Johnson, by making Elia’s renewal “fleeting,” Tusquets’s “message for several generations of Spanish women who grew up between 1940 and 1970 is that the only escape from the psychological damage done them is brief at best” (76).²³⁴ This dark view is not in keeping with the novel’s evident theme of transformation and the very clear evidence of the healing and progress toward wholeness experienced within Elia under the guidance and protection of Clara (Mélusine). Despite Elia’s apparent unwillingness to continue forward in her individuation process, the present analysis suggests two interrelated messages that are vitally different from the one ascertained by Johnson. First, Tusquets exposes the dire consequences of repression and psychological stagnation and the need for victims of these to engage in the healing process of individuation. And as we have seen, this message is highly relevant to both her own experience and to that of her society during the transition years. Women especially were freed from oppressive laws that had limited their freedom to engage in this process of self-discovery. By bringing forth in her novel the myth of Mélusine, an active and powerful feminine image that breaks down destructive binarisms, heals schisms and represents the harmonious union of opposites and the Self, Tusquets makes use of myth as a tool toward individuation –a tool denied women in the Francoist years. It is Mélusine

²³⁴ She adds that if Clara has “any hope for a better life,” it is only because she has her origins in Columbia and has, thus, “been unmarked by the dictatorship” (73).

who guides Elia's healing and who points the way toward wholeness and psychic unity. But Tusquets's second message appears to be a warning. By permitting her protagonist to slide back into old roles, she alerts us to the difficulty of this process; it seems clear that Tusquets was cognizant of the fact that close to forty years under a regime that strove continually to inculcate unquestioning acceptance of expected roles and to quell the human urge toward self-exploration and individuation, cannot but have a powerful and enduring impact. Elia is a woman living during the transition – she no longer has to obey her husband or remain in her loveless marriage, and yet there she remains. Although the transition offers possibilities for renewal, growth and unity, self-exploration requires not just a looking within, it also requires willingness to undertake real external change despite the disruptions this creates. We find in Elia's experience a reminder that to achieve full healing and unity, the individual and society as a whole will have to fight against the pull of ingrained habits and inertia. The effect of these will, logically, pose the greatest difficulty for women who faced the harshest limitations under Francoist rule. Despite improvements in the written law, society itself is slow to change, and societal and familial pressure is indeed a powerful force. Rather than sending the message that women's "only escape from psychological damage is brief at best," I believe that Tusquets's message is that psychological healing is possible, but that it requires a great and ongoing effort and the determination to break with old standards and norms in order to carve out a new life for the new being that will emerge, in order to make room, both within the psyche and without, for Mélusine.

CHAPTER 6

THE WARNING CRY OF *MÉLUSINE DES DÉTRITUS* BY CHANTAL CHAWAF

Chawaf's Writing as Response to Crisis

Chantal Chawaf's very entry into the world was marred by death and destruction. In 1943 her family fell victim to an Allied bombardment during the Occupation. The car in which her mother, aunt and father were travelling was hit in the bombing; her father was killed instantly, and her mother lived only a few short hours after Chawaf was delivered by cesarean. Her aunt, too, perished a short time later. The couple who adopted Chawaf kept the fact of her adoption as well as the tragic circumstances of her birth from her until she was in her mid- twenties, and this revelation had a profound impact upon both her and her writing.²³⁵ Chawaf has described her discovery of her real parents as marking for her a "deuxième naissance" ("Chantal Chawaf" 104). According to Monique Saigal, Chawaf's sudden uprooting from believed blood ties with her adoptive family and her realization that she had grown to adulthood "dans le monde du faux, du mensonge et du caché," explain an almost obsessive preoccupation with origins and the search for truth that emerges in her works (*L'écriture* 71). Her traumatic "birth from death" is replayed again and again in her novels, forming a sort of leitmotif carried across the majority of them (Bosshard, *Chantal Chawaf* 51). Thus, like Mujica Lainez, with his

²³⁵ Chawaf reveals that she also learned that the relatives of her birth family had never been notified that she was born alive. She had been assumed dead along with her mother from the beginning, thus the adoption itself was not conducted legally, which was for her yet another disturbing revelation ("Chantal Chawaf" 108).

ongoing examination of his “raro privilegio,”²³⁶ and Esther Tusquets, with her recurring exploration of an unhealthy mother-daughter relationship, we find in Chawaf’s writing evidence of a “working-through”²³⁷ of the painful repercussions of a very real and deeply felt personal experience.²³⁸

Chawaf had begun to write long before her discovery of her origins, at the early age of six, but she observes that from adolescence until her early twenties, her writing was neither “bon ni authentique, ce n’était pas de moi” (“Chantal Chawaf” 106). She attributes this to her upbringing in a bourgeois family full of “prejugés sociaux, [un] milieu refoulant les affects” (103), and especially to the damage done her by her mother’s fear of the body and preoccupation with her daughter’s “purity” during her early adolescence (105-06). Ironically, her need to escape her adoptive mother led her to Syria (107), where she faced a more severe repression than she had known before.²³⁹ In a 1978 interview with Evelyne Accad, she reveals the difficult conditions of her existence there; she found herself veiled and enclosed, and admits that she gradually began to participate in her own oppression, to enclose *herself*, “à me mutiler, moi-même”: “je ne voulais plus sortir, je ne voulais plus parler. Je ne pouvais pas parler. Ce qu’on m’aurait laissé dire

²³⁶ “de conocer sucesivamente las emociones que suscitan una doncella hermosa y un doncel hermoso” (*El unicornio* 285.)

²³⁷ The multiple revelations she faced in her twenties threw much into question regarding her life and identity; Saigal aptly describes her work on the whole as “une recherche constante et une herméneutique de son identité” (*L’écriture* 71).

²³⁸ Although her novels frequently incorporate events and experiences through which she herself has lived, as in the case of Tusquets, her novels are not autobiographical in the traditional sense. Chawaf has, in fact, commented upon the unfortunate result of her adoptive mother’s assumption that her first novel was an autobiography, and she stresses that she does not reproduce her own life in a linear fashion, but rather that her work is “complètement nourri” by her own life experiences (“Chantal Chawaf” 106).

²³⁹ Chawaf married a Syrian, whom she accompanied to his native country. Chawaf remained there for seven years; her first novel *Retable-la rêverie*, was published the year following her return.

n'avait tellement rien à voir avec une parole, avec ce dont mon corps avait besoin de dire tellement c'était oppressant" (155). Her sense of alienation led to both mental and physical suffering.²⁴⁰ And yet there, during her first pregnancy, an experience that afforded her a new sense of connection with her own birth mother, she finally undertook her first novel and began to rediscover her "véritable écriture" (Chawaf, "Chantal Chawaf" 106).

Chawaf credits not only the jarring truth of her birth and origins, but also the frightening experience of the Six Day War that erupted in Syria²⁴¹ as she held her newborn son in her arms, as being the primary factors contributing to a process of self-discovery²⁴² enabled by and revealed through a new kind of writing, one in which she finally began to "écrire à partir de moi, de mon corps, pour retrouver le corps dans le langage" (106). This writing allowed her to reclaim "tout ce que [ma mère adoptive] avait détruit en moi" and also served as a means of finding her birth mother. Through her writing, she explains, "je la recherche en moi" (106).

Although birth necessarily implies an eventual experience of death, in that all life ultimately comes to an end, Marianne Bosshard observes that in the case of Chawaf "il y a eu un raccourci infernal entre le don de la vie et la mort" and it is this trauma that

²⁴⁰ She has reported that she was continually ill and the sun of the region sapped her strength and energy (Accad 155).

²⁴¹ This brief 1966 war involved primarily Egypt, Syria and Jordan in alliance against Israel. Syria's part in the war began with its invasion of Israel in reaction to false information that Israeli troops were massing along its borders. Israel's counter attack drove the Syrians from the Golan heights. This action, coming on the heels of other key successes against Egypt and Jordan, brought the war to a rapid conclusion ("The Six Day War").

²⁴² Once again we are reminded of Jung's observation that it is in times of crisis that one begins to recognize the need to explore the unconscious.

explains another important tendency in Chawaf's literary and theoretical texts - the strong emphasis she places upon the notion of a language "accroché à la pulsion de la vie" (*Chantal Chawaf* 22).²⁴³ Although denied the opportunity to know her mother in life, through her writing, Chawaf could give life to her (22). Chawaf explains:

Mon seul moyen de récréer cette vie, c'était le langage, les mots [...] . Je me suis engagée et tout s'est mis à revivre, et cela ne finit pas, ma recherche s'élargit tellement que je sens qu'elle n'est plus la mienne propre, mais celle des autres, avec les autres. Ce n'est plus une vie mais la vie que je cherche dans les mots. Comment s'arrêter ? Il s'agit maintenant d'aller plus loin, le plus loin possible, bien au-delà de la mère et de ce qu'elle ouvre dans le langage, l'inconscient, la conscience. ("Chantal Chawaf" 108, also qtd. in Bosshard, *Chantal Chawaf* 23)

What is this "plus loin possible" to which she aims? Another passage, one included in the 2004 theoretical text *L'Erotique des mots*, which she wrote with Régine Deforges, a passage she had planned to include, but never placed within her "roman autobiographique" *Le Manteau noir* (1998),²⁴⁴ seems to reveal what Chawaf (and her protagonist in the novel) seek and encounter in this "beyond":

Elle avait supplié l'écriture : "Donne-moi la vie. Car la mère n'avait pas eu le temps de donner la vie à sa fille [...] . L'écriture entendait et répondait [...] , elle avait vu apparaître enfin la vraie vie, l'écrite, la

²⁴³ Bosshard reports that in a 1995 conversation, Chawaf expressed that for her "le sacré n'est ni l'esprit ni l'âme, mais la vie elle-même" (*Chantal Chawaf* 119).

²⁴⁴ Significantly, Chawaf included this passage in *L'Erotique* as a response to her friend Deforges's question "Why do you write?"

phrase à sa source [...] . Elle était arrivée [...] là où il 'n'y a plus de mots, où cette vie patiemment, désespérément ranimée pendant des années par les mots inventifs, par l'imaginaire revient à n'être plus que ce qu'elle est : un point invisible, impensable, inimaginable, inaccessible, le point zéro, ce que les mots ne peuvent plus nommer, tellement le sens est si loin [...] , ce point où, plus on écrit, moins on reçoit la consolation, le simulacre qu'on cherchait, car on se retrouve à des profondeurs où la mère racine, la langue racine, la langue maternelle, vous enrachine si terriblement en elle qu'on n'existe plus que dans l'inexistence de cette vie disparue qui n'est que vide à vif, plus rien d'autre, alors on ose. On ne sépare plus le corps de l'écriture. Et le mythe se réinvente. Inlassablement, comme il le fait depuis l'aube du Temps, il s'acharne à détruire la destruction. (172-73)

What began as a personal search for the lost life of a mother within the individual's own unconscious mind, which was undertaken through a writing that seeks to fuse mind and matter, language and the body, leads to a place beyond words, to the pre-Oedipal or pre-natal bond, wherein the individual merges not simply with the lost mother, but with the Great Mother within the realm of the collective unconscious, that place where myth is encountered in its primeval form as archetypal images, the dwelling place of Mélusine. Here then is a healing moment of fusion, not simply with lost or shattered parts of the Self, but also of the individual psyche with humankind, and with life itself, spanning back through the ages.

Jung would agree with Chawaf that such an experience of myth can “détruire la destruction,” and not only the destruction wrought by the violence done to her mother’s body and to her own psyche. The sense of relatedness (or *Eros*, in Jung’s terminology) achieved in this moment of fusion is what Jung believed was urgently needed in order to heal an unbalanced modern society too heavily dominated by the divisiveness of *logos* or “discrimination.” Chawaf, too, considers this sense of connectedness, of love, or as she puts it here, “tendresse” to be vitally important in order to counteract war, violence, and destruction:

Dans la société où je vis, j’en sens infiniment le manque. [...] Cette tendresse c’est finalement aussi une nécessité. Si elle ne vient pas assez vite, [si] elle n’est pas suffisamment protégée, ou si elle n’affleure pas, que reste-t-il pour empêcher la destruction de la parole, non pas celle du corps et de la vie mais celle des intérêts, du pouvoir et de la névrose qui est une coupure d’avec la vie ? (Accad 152)

Chawaf finds that the dominant masculine discourse has long been cut off from the body and from instinct, from urges and desires that have been rejected and pushed into the recesses of the unconscious, a situation she recognizes as highly destructive. Jung, too, voices concern that our modern civilization has strayed too far from the roots of our natural, primeval inner being: “Civilized man [...] is in danger of losing all contact with the world of instinct – a danger that is still further increased by his living an urban existence in what seems to be a purely man-made environment. This loss of instinct is largely responsible for the pathological condition of contemporary culture” (*Earth Has a Soul* 15). Interestingly, Chawaf, like he, expresses concern about the harm

wrought by urban life. In Bosshard's in-depth study of Chawaf's works, she reveals that throughout them we encounter clear evidence that Chawaf is against "toute violence faite à la vie," which includes many dangerous technological or scientific developments so commonly welcomed in the name of "progress,"²⁴⁵ and the writer consistently presents cities as "des lieux étouffants, hostiles à la vie" (*Chantal Chawaf* 18). In the oppressive urban space, the already difficult quest to connect with the body and with the archaic, natural being within, becomes an even greater struggle. But cities do harm not simply to the human psyche, they also harm nature, another primary concern of Chawaf's, which, as we will soon see, comes to the fore in *Mélusine des détrit*us. Both Chawaf and Jung hold that our neglect of our inner nature (our body and our instincts) is directly related to the damage we do to the natural world to which we actually belong – we have cut ourselves off from both, and this problem ultimately stems from the fear the body provokes in the rational mind. Chawaf observes that we distance ourselves from the body to avoid feeling overly attached and dependent upon life, "trop dépendants d'un déroulement sur lequel nous n'avons que peu de pouvoir, que peu de certitudes [...] ; on se croit prudent et mesuré en s'éloignant de la rumeur vitale, en la rendant inintelligible pour ne pas en être troublé" (*Le Corps et le verbe* 9). Jung agrees and observes that

the thing people are most afraid of is not so much the soul, which to them is practically non-existent, but the body. That is what they don't want to see, the animal or the evil spirit that is waiting to say something to them when they are alone. That is exceedingly disagreeable [...] the body is

²⁴⁵ Chawaf is concerned about the dangerous by-products of technological advancements, such as the pollution they create. One invention that particularly preoccupies her is the nuclear generator. The problem of pollution and the risks of nuclear power arise in *Mélusine des détrit*us, a point to which we will return in our later analysis.

the darkness, and very dangerous things could be called up. [They think] it is better to play the piano in order not to hear what the body has to say.

(Earth Has a Soul 169)

Both Jung and Chawaf recognize that all those repressed urges, all those unruly and “irrational” aspects of ourselves that we seek to silence and deny, ultimately and inevitably come forth unbidden in a myriad of destructive ways, causing neurosis, violence, even war. They also agree that the refusal to connect with the contents of one’s own unconscious not only splinters and harms the individual psyche, it also inhibits our sense of connection with the other – be that another individual, nature, society, or humankind. Chawaf complains that when woman, the unconscious, the body, and the feminine are repressed, “c’est l’amour qu’on nous empêche de vivre tout simplement” (Accad 157). She explains that a connecting, healing love (here again is Jung’s *Eros*) is needed not just between individuals; we must also experience this with “les arbres, avec l’architecture, les pierres, les formes, avec le monde” (157). When referring to the mother, she adds, we should understand that she conceives of this in the broader sense as “un rapport d’amour au monde, à la société” (157).

Although Chawaf expresses the belief that men, too, are capable of connecting with the body and producing life, like Jung, she asserts that women more readily experience a sense of relatedness, while a sense of separation is “un problème certainement beaucoup plus aigu chez l’homme que chez la femme. [...] Cette violence et ces guerres [...] sont peut-être la conséquence justement d’un problème spécifique à l’homme qui a de la difficulté à prendre contact avec la vie, avec son corps, avec le corps de l’autre, avec sa féminité et à assumer sa rupture avec la mère ” (153). Chawaf points

out that this break with the mother, made to establish his masculinity and to avoid appearing effeminate, is “encoded in his culture, into all his cultural and symbolic work, into all his thought and his behavior” (Jardine and Menke 19).²⁴⁶ She holds that since girls do not have to separate in the same way, they remain more closely connected to the feminine; “the body, pregnancy, the world of the flesh, of affects, the entire world of generation, of the prenatal, the preverbal, the pregenital, origins – even if she never becomes a mother, a woman is better informed about this than any man ever will be” (19). She adds that the experience of childbirth and the nursing of a child enable women to experience a “connection to life as it is being made in a way that men don’t” (19). She holds that “dans toute femme, tant qu’elle est vivante, la vie parle et la vie continuera de parler, contre la mort, contre la menace, contre même l’arme braquée devant vous. Parce que, justement, nous exprimons la vie” (Accad 158).²⁴⁷ For this reason, she holds that women are better equipped to do the uniting work of joining body and voice, and women “can initiate man into what frightens him, into this feminine that he has completely separated from his own identity and society, a society in which we all live” (Jardine and Menke 20). In this respect she echoes not only Jung, but also ecofeminists like Dorothy Dinnerstein who finds that women, more commonly raised to esteem relatedness and nurturance, are best-equipped to lead the way toward environmental change (194-196), and Ynestra King who insists that the connection between women and nature places

²⁴⁶ Chawaf’s words imply that men are innately different from women, which suggests she is an essentialist.

²⁴⁷ Here again we encounter an essentialist position, given that Chawaf considers “toute femme” to be endowed with certain traits inaccessible to men.

women in a “bridge-like position between nature and culture” (22).²⁴⁸ Rather than severing this connection by joining “male culture,” ecofeminists seek to create a new kind of culture opposed to the present one, which they see as “based on the devaluation of life-giving and the celebration of life-taking” (23). This goal is clearly aligned with those of Chawaf.

Woman, like Mélusine, can play a key role as mediator and guide man toward healing through the process Jung refers to as individuation, and described by Chawaf as “un travail d’approche de quelque chose qui me reste inconnu et qui doit être libéré pour pouvoir vraiment être accepté et reçu dans une société qui l’a toujours ignoré” (152). By delving within and bringing forth all that is hidden there, Chawaf seeks to counteract the harmful divisiveness fomented by an unbalanced society dominated by a masculine discourse that has repressed woman, the feminine, nature, the body, and the unconscious. Bearing in mind that the repression of all of these is intricately involved in the story of Mélusine herself, and indeed in the rejection of all fairies over time²⁴⁹ and that Mélusine, the archetypal healer, is a symbol of the bridging or healing of oppositions, of the overcoming of divisions, it is no wonder that this mythical creature eventually surfaces in her work. She is clearly representative of the kind of healing Chawaf seeks, requiring of us all “un travail de libération, à un niveau plus interne et plus profond pour que ressortent la vie et le corps, au lieu que ressortent le besoin de détruire” (153).

²⁴⁸ Although Jung and these ecofeminists share in Chawaf’s belief that women tend to be best-equipped to act as mediators, they suggest that societal influences play a part in the development of the traits that capacitate them for such a role. This suggests that those traits are *not* necessarily innate and may be accessed by men, as well.

²⁴⁹ See chapter 2 of this essay.

In the 1970's, many women writers of Chawaf's generation were actively involved in the work of liberation through writing. Significantly, Chawaf's first novel, *Retable-La rêverie*, was published in 1974, shortly before the appearance of Cixous's article "Le Rire de la méduse."²⁵⁰ Both writers were participants in a movement seeking to bring about change by inventing a kind of writing that would free women from "une parole faite en dehors d'elles, voire contre elles" (Klein-Lataud 93), the limiting, dead, "phallic" language, of the "maîtres [...] qui ont mis, qui continuent à mettre la planète à feu et à sang" (94). However, Saigal identifies an important difference between Cixous and Chawaf. Although both engaged in a "writing from the body" involving a tapping into the unconscious and a drawing forth of repressed aspects, urges and desires, Cixous's focus is primarily upon feminine sexuality - writing as "jouissance" (*L'écriture* 68),²⁵¹ while Chawaf places greater stress upon the maternal: "Ecrire pour Chawaf c'est faire fonction de mère, c'est donner à autrui, se rapprocher de l'Autre, c'est donc une manifestation d'amour. C'est aussi un moyen d'abolir les divisions, les limites, tout ce qui sépare" (65). Chawaf's aim in fusing body and language is to create an "androgynous" language "qui n'aurait division grammaticale ni sexuelle et qui servirait de véhicule à la compréhension humaine, la création et à l'amour, un langage qui nous

²⁵⁰ As we have discussed above, in chapter 1, Cixous's *écriture féminine* involves an accessing of the unconscious and thus can be seen to align closely with the individuation process described by Jung, as does Chawaf's writing.

²⁵¹ Kathryn Robson observes that Chawaf also differs from Cixous and other writers of her generation in the relationship she draws between her birth experience and her effort to "write 'preverbally'": "Chawaf claims that it is her mother's death upon her birth that gives her a privileged access to the pre-verbal and the bodily, to that which resists articulation" since this was, indeed, all that was left to her of her mother (111). Chawaf reminds us that the prenatal life experience of the fetus is now recognized as a reality by scientists, and that the love she has for her mother is somehow connected to "une mémoire diffuse de la prénaissance [...] . Le peu que j'ai connu de ma mère morte a sûrement fait que quelque chose s'est cristallisé" ("Chantal Chawaf" 104).

mènerait vers un monde plus harmonieux” (66). Mélusine is herself not only a powerful maternal image as the Great Mother, but also a mercurial androgynous image, holding the opposites in harmonious balance. Thus, here again, we find aspects of the fairy that clearly correspond to Chawaf’s interests and aims.

Metka Zupančič has observed that few writers of Chawaf’s and Cixous’s generation have considered Mélusine in their work. In her article “Mélusine travestie dans quelques textes contemporains de femmes” (1998), she expresses her surprise at this, in light not only of those writers’s strong interest in myth, but also of Mélusine’s rich symbolism and her actions and traits that make of her, in a sense, a “pré-féministe” (227). Despite the fact that Mélusine is rarely directly named, Zupančič seeks out and indeed finds traces of Mélusine in the work of Cixous, Jeanne Hyvrard, and Chawaf. She recognizes the presence of ambiguous water-women or sirens and other feminine representatives of the disturbing, hidden aspects of woman and of man in their writing, but finds that only in Chawaf do we encounter the name of Mélusine. Zupančič’s article pre-dates the novel to be analyzed here, in which Mélusine finally emerges as a primary character, but she helpfully calls our attention to the first direct mention of the fairy in Chawaf’s work, in the 1984 *La Vallée incarnate*. Zupančič indicates that this novel, which examines the relationship between the characters Edma and Evrard, “baigne dans une atmosphère féerique” (232), and that the young Edma, a character who embodies “l’invitation, pour l’homme, à retrouver le divin” is described as belonging to another world (232), thus here she takes on a mediating and initiatory role. However the name Mélusine surfaces only once in reference to Edma : we learn that Evrard finds himself

drawn to “cette folle peut-être enceinte d’un enfant taré,”²⁵² yet that he feels “mal à l’aise devant Edma, devant cette féerie d’un esprit de l’eau, devant cette habitante du flot verdâtre, devant cette fille d’une mère et d’un père aquatiques, devant cette amphibie, cette Mélusine, cette femme aux vêtements toujours mouillés, il a parfois presque peur d’elle” (*La Vallée incarnate* 75, also qtd. in Zupančič 233). In the work of the other writers she examines, Zupančič notes that Mélusine’s relatives Medusa (in Cixous) and the *vouivre* (in Hyvrard) are the mythological beings of preference. She suggests that the lack of references to Mélusine may result from a memory still “trop vif, dans la conscience collective, d’une Mélusine surréaliste, femme fatale, femme serpente, femme vampire, femme secrète, mais aussi femme rendue objet, femme poupée, à la merci d’un autre type de ‘dédain’ témoigné à son sujet” (229). A consideration of parallels between the writing and goals of Chawaf and Breton may explain why Chawaf was not to be put off by that surrealist interpretation, and would eventually reclaim Mélusine, transforming her and applying her as a “porte-parole” in her own call for change.

Chawaf’s focus upon the need for “tendresse,” love, the maternal, and the union of masculine and feminine, and her opposition to the excessive rationality and divisiveness she finds in society all clearly recall the concerns André Breton expressed in reaction to World War II in *Arcane 17*. And despite the fact that she wrote far later than he, her writing, like his, was very much marked by that particular war, since it deprived her of her mother, an event that proved central to her personal, artistic and theoretical development. Significantly, both Breton and Chawaf seek through writing to give voice

²⁵² Zupančič quite accurately identifies this as an indirect reference to Mélusine, whose offspring were indeed all “tarés.”

to that which is hidden and repressed within the psyche, and both believe that this is required, not just at the personal, but also at the collective level, in order to end societal divisions and violence. And in light of these shared interests and aims, we can readily see why in both their work, the unifying image of the mercurial healer Mélusine is called upon.²⁵³ However, there are points of difference that we should not overlook, and which, as we will see in our analysis of *Mélusine des détrit*, enter into Chawaf's unique interpretation of the fairy.

Although both Breton and Chawaf consider women to have stronger ties to nature, the feminine, and the unconscious, and hold that woman can initiate man, enabling him to better connect with these himself, their observations and reactions toward women who are *themselves* cut off from these ties differ considerably. Despite her recognition that women, too, sometimes engage in the suppression of the feminine,²⁵⁴ Chawaf does not express the surprise Breton evinces in response to such behavior, nor does she wonder with him why women engage in it or why they have been unsuccessful in using their feminine "power" to end war – she unequivocally blames men for all of this. It is they who have so long been in control and who have dictated the norms of society, wielding the word as a destructive and divisive force, thus, in her view, woman is "victime de l'homme qui ne lui a pas permis d'être femme et qui ne lui donne pas accès à

²⁵³ In his analysis of *Mélusine des détrit*, Jonathan Krell also calls attention to Breton and Chawaf's shared application of Mélusine and their shared turn to art, to writing, in order to "rédimer cette époque sauvage" (Breton 69, also qtd. in Krell 9), an era, Krell explains, "caractérisée pour Breton spécifiquement par les atrocités nazies, et pour Chawaf par 'la barbarie' (*Le Corps et le verbe* 71) infligée sur les êtres humains et sur la planète par ceux qui détiennent le pouvoir" ("*Mélusine des détrit*" 9).

²⁵⁴ Whereas Breton criticizes women's engagement in war, Chawaf particularly expresses concern that mothers so often raise their sons to "se passer d'elles," thereby accomplishing "un travail de destruction sur le vivant, sur le féminin de l'homme" (Accad 154). She asks us "quel homme sera-t-il ce fils qui a été, pour la mère réduit à un sexe au lieu d'être éduqué à être attentive à la vie, à s'oublier pour l'autre" (154).

sa féminité ou à son corps” (Accad 154). She also would be loathe to agree with Breton’s call to “appropriate” the feminine. Although she indeed expresses that men should connect with the feminine within, she holds that this will inevitably differ from the feminine as it exists within woman, since our bodies and experience differ. She suggests that men must find and learn to express their own femininity, but must also “be able to distinguish it from our femininity as women” (Jardine and Menke 23). Like Cixous, she stresses the importance of difference, and the danger posed by its erasure,²⁵⁵ which makes women unnecessary and actually contributes to their rejection or repression²⁵⁶:

[Men] have their body, we have ours; they have their affectivity, we have our affectivity. [...] If we encounter one another it is because we are different. It’s from the starting point of that difference that men and women can love one another. Otherwise, it starts to become perverse, centering everything around the self, around oneself. There is no longer another. Men who want to coopt everything continue, in fact, to reject the other. They have always rejected it, they are still doing so. (Jardine and Menke 23)²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Cixous opposed classical notions of the androgyne that result in a neuter being; she held that although each individual could partake of aspects of both sexes, separation and gender difference should be celebrated. (See n 71, chapter 2, and *Le Rire de la Méduse* 46). Cixous suggests, like Chawaf, that there are certain inescapable, thus innate, differences between men and women, which hints that she, too, is an essentialist.

²⁵⁶ This process is precisely what we encounter at work in *Arcane 17*. We should recall that although Breton credits Elisa with leading him to a recognition of the feminine within, her voice, as well as that of all the mythical women appearing in the text, is silenced in *Arcane 17*. Mélusine cries out, but she, too, is deprived of words. As we learned in chapter 3, Breton/man is consistently the wielder of the word, never yielding it to woman.

²⁵⁷ Chawaf complains in harsh terms of men who attempt “to steal and appropriate [her writing] for themselves”: “these men try to reproduce my writing, and that’s a little stupid, because it is necessarily less

Despite these diverging views, the preoccupations and goals of both writers are, as we have seen, quite similar. And aspects of their writing technique are similar as well. Saigal's analysis draws similarities between Chawaf and the Surrealists. Chawaf's style is, like theirs, highly poetic. Saigal describes Chawaf's distinctive, long, circular sentences that, like those of Tusquets, have frequently been compared to Cixous's *écriture féminine*, as evoking a figurative and literal turning about within the sphere of the womb "dans un flot qui coule comme une interminable cours d'eau ou hémorragie sans respect pour la logique" (62). This flow, she says, "creuse l'inconscient comme les textes surréalistes" in a writing in which, like theirs, "les barrières de la logique et de la grammaire sont exclues" (62.) Here once again we find a writing reminiscent of Jung's active imagination, designed to give voice to the unconscious, and within which archetypal images such as Mélusine herself are likely to emerge. Chawaf's description of her writing process is very much in keeping with this technique, and with Breton's automatic writing. She tells us that when she writes, "avant, rien n'est prévu, organisé, ou calculé; ça s'organise après et je pourrais dire presque tout seul. [...] Ce n'est pas moi qui écris, c'est la recherche qui écrit. Ce n'est pas un acte d'écrire que je vis, c'est vraiment l'acte de chercher. Chercher toujours à éclairer les zones sombres de la nuit et du silence où justement on n'a pas parlé et où on n'a pas encore porté les mots" (Accad 152).

authentic. Instead of expressing themselves, instead of understanding that what they have to do is come up with an equivalent, these young male writers in fact lose their own expression, the liberation and symbolization of their own femininity and of everything they continue not to know about themselves, and they end up still being in competition with us" (Jardine and Menke 26). Chawaf holds that a masculine femininity will inevitably produce a writing that differs from her own. In this respect we find a divergence from Cixous who held that both men and women could engage in *écriture féminine*.

Given her goal of “enlightening” the dark zones within, it is clear why Chawaf does not seek to remain in the pre-Oedipal moment of fusion, “le point zéro,” whose attainment we saw described above in the passage taken from *L’Erotique*. Saigal explains that Chawaf ultimately seeks a second type of fusion, one that proceeds from the first; “il faudra retourner au langage de l’avant naissance, celui des pulsions que Kristeva appelle modalité sémiotique, retrouver ce qui est caché et même interdit et le dépasser pour le faire entrer dans l’univers du Symbolique” (*L’écriture* 68). Through this process, the Symbolic gives way to the “‘Haut Symbolique’; c’est à dire l’entrée du féminin dans le langage” (69). Indeed in *Le Corps et le verbe*, Chawaf stresses that she does not seek to replace one language with another, but rather to merge “la langue préhistorique, oubliée, et la langue historique, apprise” (102).²⁵⁸ It is the product of this fusion that is needed to stop the damage of the language of men who “s’entre-tuent dans un langage guerrier de frontières, de races, de religions, d’ethnies, d’intérêts économiques ou d’idéologie” (*Le Corps et le verbe* 68).

Since her early theoretical work of the 1970’s, Chawaf has never wavered in her belief in the vital necessity of this kind of writing, as is clear in *Le Corps et le verbe*, published in 1992, and also in *L’Erotique des mots* (2004). In *Le Corps et le verbe*, Chawaf examines the damage wrought by the Catholic Church due to that dissociation of spirit and flesh fomented in the Middle Ages and that we found in chapter 2 to be at root in the rejection of fairies, including Mélusine, so closely aligned with nature, the flesh and the feminine. Chawaf quite accurately points out that in Genesis, not the body, but

²⁵⁸ It is evident that Chawaf recognized, as did Jung and Kristeva, that if the voice of the pre-Oedipal, of the unconscious, is cut off from the Symbolic, its valuable messages may not be fully comprehended by the conscious mind. For our discussion of this issue, see chapter 1, above.

knowledge *of* it was deemed sinful. When Adam and Eve realized they were naked, God knew they had undertaken, to borrow Jung's terminology, the "Luciferian deed" – they had become enlightened, conscious. Chawaf observes, like Jung, that, paradoxically, "c'est la conscience qui est maudite mais qui fait de nous des hommes et des femmes" (16). Bosshard points out the significant reinterpretation of Eve's role in this process that Chawaf undertakes – Eve's offering of the apple to Adam is presented as a liberating act that makes of Eve the "'initiatrice' à la connaissance et à l'intelligence de l'homme" ("Le mytheme" 149). Certainly as instigator of the claiming of consciousness, Eve becomes not just mother of humanity in the narrow sense of her physical birth-giving, but also in the claiming of knowledge vital to its development. Chawaf finds, however, that in Saint John's account of the beginning, once "the Word was made flesh," woman and the flesh lost all value : "on ne trouve plus la femme, on trouve seulement le verbe ... Le verbe qui précède le corps" (*Le Corps et le verbe* 19). With woman's removal from the word, she became relegated to a body "d'avant la conscience" (18) and, what's more, "le Christianisme fit du corps un péché et de la femme celle par qui le péché arrive"(16). Man, however, was linked with Spirit and the Word, now deified "au prix de la perte de son origine biologique humaine" (19). The result was "un langage désincarné qui exilera du verbe le corps, la femme, la mère organique, [...] l'homme lui-même" (20); the word is in essence cut off from the biological, feeling world and instead of translating human pain, it creates it (21). Chawaf insists that now women *and* men "sont les uns autant que les autres victimes de leur privation de langue vivante" (7), and she calls upon a reversal of the destructive course set in motion so long ago, hence her subtitle: "La langue en sens inverse":

ce n'est plus au verbe de se faire chair mais à la chair de se faire verbe pour que la vie, la chair, parle enfin [...] pour que le vivant repoussé dans les profondeurs non verbales et régressées gagne ce respect qui lui a toujours manqué et dont le manque a autorisé et encouragé les guerres, les génocides, l'homicide, l'injustice, la misogynie, la pollution, au nom d'un chef, au nom d'une cause, au nom d'un idéal, au nom du progrès, au nom d'un verbe non plus Dieu mais dictateur. (*Le Corps et le verbe* 21)

Although this call for change and an end to the ongoing crises she enumerates above indicates for us that Chawaf's preoccupations and goals have remained constant for decades, over time there are indications of an increasing sense of urgency and frustration. When asked in an interview about her views regarding writing at the close of the 20th century, Chawaf expresses concern that so little has as yet been done to verbalize the preverbal, something that she insists must be done if we are ever to "increase our consciousness as well as our knowledge of women, the feminine, life, and men" (Jardine and Menke 17). She also stresses that although some progress was made in the 70's, it has now slowed and "part of this work hasn't been done at all. There's a gigantic repression [operating] that is *becoming more acute*, that almost amounts to an interdiction of speech, especially in the realm of affects and the body" (18, my emphasis). She finds that although bestsellers are being published by women, "there is no new rewriting, no real writing of the body or the affects in the feminine merchandise literature;" she finds there is "a degradation of feminine expression and feminine speech in the novel [that inhibits] authentic literature, that is to say, living expression, which goes beyond the feminine problem, the problem of women, and touches upon the problems of art,

creation, and the freedom to create” (18). She blames publishers and the media for the lack of this kind of writing in circulation, despite the presence of writers who are indeed engaged in this pursuit, one “in danger of being curbed,” and she adds that “this wasn’t the case in the early seventies,” (18). Rather than improving, conditions are, in fact, worsening in her view.

Turning to her narratives, Bosshard indicates that without sacrificing any of their poetic power or her ongoing exploration of writing from the body, Chawaf’s more recent novels, since *La Rédemption* (1989), demonstrate a clearer “ancrage du contenu narratif dans le réel,” that is, the reader can more readily recognize the location of characters and can more easily follow their trajectory in space (*Chantal Chawaf* 46-47). Further she finds that her protagonists are textually well-developed and “se profilent davantage sur fond d’un vécu social clairement formulé” (47). *Mélusine des détritrus* (2002) is itself an example of a novel in which, while fully maintaining her aims and poetic style, Chawaf clearly situates her characters in their societal context and enables the reader to follow their movements. The plot in this novel is well-defined, and is, at least initially, organized around the quest motif. The novel itself is subdivided into four titled parts, as well.

These organizational aspects of the novel facilitate the reader’s comprehension.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹We might recall that both Tusquets’s and Mujica Lainez’s novels analysed above (in chapters 4 and 5) also employed the archetypal motif of the quest, representative of the pursuit of self-knowledge in which all three writers are engaged. Tusquets’s quest, however, is focused upon the inner world, and her writing, like that of Breton, is considerably less-structured and thus somewhat more difficult for the reader to follow than those of Chawaf and Mujica Lainez. Mujica Lainez and Chawaf set their characters upon an outer journey as a projection of the inner one, thus permitting us to plot their progress in space. Mujica Lainez’s protagonist’s trajectory toward the final goal is the more linear of the two; Chawaf’s involves a series of failed journeys, ultimately dissolving into a futile “errance.” These two novels also share in a surface organization that helps orient the reader. Rather than the few labeled parts of Chawaf’s novel, we find multiple chapters in Mujica Lainez, whose work is by far the more traditional. In Chawaf, despite these organizational aspects, much is still left to the reader to decipher (for instance one is not immediately sure who is speaking in particular “parts” or indeed in much of the dialogue).

Perhaps the evolution described by Bosshard, and that appears to be reflected in *Mélusine des détritrus*, goes hand in hand with Chawaf's growing concern that her message has not been heard or heeded; it may be indicative of a desire to make her message more fully accessible. Karin Schwertner has made a further significant observation : although Chawaf has long presented feminine characters at the limit of their endurance, struggling against the societal expectation for woman to remain always "passive et taciturne" despite their suffering, the three novels she published just following *Mélusine des détritrus* "indiquent le plus ouvertement, et le plus explicitement" the dual problems of resistance and suffering (71).²⁶⁰ Shwertner finds that in these novels, only when the protagonists reach the absolute limit of their endurance are they finally heard: "la communication et le rapport à autrui ne sont possibles qu'à partir de l'épuisement des forces" a point that coincides with "le cri quasi-primal qui signale ce que Chawaf théorise en termes d'un retour à l'origine" (74), a cry that marks their exhaustion and regression to the "combat primitive entre les pulsions de vie et de mort" represented in the newborn's primal cry (74). Interestingly, no reference is made in this article to *Mélusine des détritrus*, however just such a cry is uttered by Mélusine, and this cry is of prime importance in the text, as Jonathan Krell has shown. A key difference between this novel and those analyzed by Schwertner is that in the latter, the characters "réussissent à mieux se faire entendre et à faire mieux comprendre le monde " (74). Mélusine's cry in *Mélusine des détritrus*, written a few years prior to these, is gut-wrenching and never-ending, and we are left in doubt regarding any success Mélusine has at making herself heard. Perhaps we

²⁶⁰ The novels in question include *L'Ombre* (2004), *Sable noir* (2005), and *Infra-monde* (2005).

can recognize in this novel an expression of a moment at which Chawaf, then in her late fifties, had reached the limits of her own endurance. Facing mid-life and realizing that despite her constant efforts, all too little had been accomplished and all too much remained to be done, perhaps Mélusine's cry is her own cry of frustration and anger; indeed, as Zupančič has observed, *Mélusine des détrit* presents a particularly virulent accusal of "une société qui est perçue par Chawaf comme au bord du precipice écologique et moral" ("Nouvelle écriture" 51). Whereas *Mélusine des détrit* marks a moment of dire crisis, Shwertner's analysis suggests that in the novels that followed, at least some glimmer of hope was beginning to emerge once again.

In order to understand fully the context in which Chawaf was writing *Mélusine des détrit*, *L'Erotique des mots* is invaluable. Although this theoretical text was not published until two years after the novel, there are indications that the two books were written nearly simultaneously. For example, Chawaf refers to a visit she paid to Régine Deforges in order to work together upon the theoretical text in January of 2000 (13) and certain events described in the book appear not only to have preceded the writing of *Mélusine des détrit*, but, in fact, to have inspired its very writing, a point to which we will return in the following section of this chapter. However, even had the novel preceded *L'Erotique*, the latter's relevance to an understanding of the novel could not be understated, given that Chawaf considers *L'Erotique* "une sorte de livre pratique qui est un peu le livre prolongement de nos romans" (*L'Erotique* 11).

In *L'Erotique des mots*, Chawaf returns to her complaint against publishers, only here, once again, we find increasing anger; her attack is far more forceful:

On chante la merde et le foutre, pour faire des clones ! Bientôt, si les industriels du livre peuvent faire des mots pilules, ils feront des mots pilules ! [...] La littérature doit combattre – mais le peut-elle ? – l’envahisseur, l’ennemi de la langue, des mots qui est l’argent [...] . La créativité est menacée partout, [...] celle qui conquiert sa propre espace, celle qui crée la liberté de la conscience et cultive chez l’homme et chez la femme leur dignité. (156)

Like Mujica Lainez she refuses to be forced into a prescribed mold as a writer, insisting upon the necessity of being true to her own vision. She does not reject more popular styles of writing, but stresses that there is a danger involved in catering to the masses, who are themselves controlled by the media and publishing houses who either completely reject or at best print few copies of original or experimental works, which are in essence “vaincus d’avance,” for they are judged too “difficiles” for the public, or because they “sortent trop des normes, des conventions” (131). She finds that conformity is, in fact, a problem in all walks of modern life. Although she admits that conformity is no longer so readily forced upon us from above in society, there remains the pressure to conform to the expectations of the multitude, which she considers to have “plus de pouvoir que jamais” (148) and to pose a barrier to the free expression of originality. Chawaf herself refuses to conform and calls upon other writers to revolt,²⁶¹ allying themselves against the “dictature commerciale” (131). She stresses the danger of silencing any group of writers, an action that has ramifications for all of society: “L’enjeu est grave: la liberté d’expression est remise en question, la liberté d’apprendre à devenir

²⁶¹ Here we hear a rallying cry that recalls that of Breton in *Arcane 17*.

humain, d'apprendre à rester humain" (134). She draws a link between the silencing of authors, and the ongoing silencing of the body, and the dangerous schism between body and word that contributes to the destruction of our world : "Dans notre monde pollué, pollueur et injuste, nous sommes progressivement dépouillés des mots vitaux que notre société agressive et décadente tend à nous arracher du corps" (135). She again calls upon writers to refuse this, stressing that there is no time to lose: "il nous faut, dans le vacarme assourdissant que fait la destruction de la nature et de l'humain, nous remettre à l'écoute de la musique de la vie, rendre aux mots la voix, réveiller le cœur, redonner à la signification son sens, l'être humain, son titre de grand responsable du monde créé et incréé ; [...] il y a *urgence*" (135, my emphasis). She stresses that the decisions made in the next 50 years will determine how much longer the human race will endure on our planet : "nous sommes devant la perdition ou le salut" (149).

In addition to these foremost concerns regarding the destruction of our world and the closely related schism between flesh and word, Chawaf raises the issue of globalization and its effect on language. She recalls that her own education as a young girl included the early study of Latin and Greek and a focus upon an understanding of the roots of her own language. In contrast:

Aujourd'hui on prépare très tôt l'enfant à parler, à écrire dans la langue des jeux-vidéo, la langue d'Internet, la langue des écrans d'ordinateur [,]
[...] la langue mondialiste, une langue anglaise en abrégé, une langue qui, un jour, si l'évolution-régression continue, ne sera plus qu'un alignement d'abréviations, d'initiales, de chiffres, un minimum de formes et de sens qui se passera de traduction. [...] On veut inculquer un langage universel,

oui, mais grâce à la perte de la langue! On atomise, on fractionne. (129-30)

Chawaf holds that a writing from the body that returns “à la source, souterraine, inconsciente” can protect us, can enable us to “parler humain, et non pas humanoïde, comme ces robots qui naîtront bientôt ” (136-37). As this universal language develops, she adds that the French language is simultaneously giving way to multiple regional dialects, which she views as equally problematic and divisive:

on régionalise...on divise... on limite...on enferme, on sépare...Au lieu d’approfondir, de développer la communication et l’union entre les hommes et les femmes, on tend vers une réduction du langage, où les gens se comprennent de plus en plus mal et reculent, tiraillés entre un global approximatif et des particularismes étrangers les uns aux autres. (130)

However, she regrets the loss of past languages, which is itself a degeneration. Chawaf stresses our need for a sense of connection with the past, not just with the archaic being within us, but also with past cultures and civilizations that were more closely connected with nature and the body. A significant problem she identifies is the fact that “le souci dominant des modernes est de transformer, le souci des anciens, traqués par les épidémies, la mort omniprésente, était de conserver” (138). Although modern medicine can now prolong life and overcome sterility, she asks that we consider the cost: “les nouvelles techniques de reproduction, la nouvelle médecine des gènes, en intervenant sur la gestation, combinent, morcellent, émiettent les fonctions de vie. L’organisme, soumis à une science autoritaire, est réorganisé, divisé ” (138). Sterility may indeed be overcome, but the scientists

châtrent la fécondité, en participant à nous dépersonnaliser, à nous déshumaniser, à nous industrialiser [...] ; on réussit le clonage des cellules végétales et animales, on fabrique des animaux, on fabrique des humains [...] . L'homme de science croit en un homme nouveau dont il sera l'auteur [...] . Plus de Dieux, plus de femmes, plus de nature... Seul la volonté technique... La sélection et l'élimination des gènes humains se donnent quelles limites? Et qui fixera les limites? (139-140)

Chawaf insists that it is the responsibility of writers, of literature to take up “la cause de la vie” to make heard words of “compassion ou de désir de vivre ou de se faire vivre” (141) to counteract the dominant language of “le pouvoir technico-scientifique” (141). She firmly believes that literature must play a “rôle salvateur” and as we will soon see, *Mélusine des détrit*us was clearly written with this aim in mind.

The Value of Fairies and of Mélusine

Mélusine is not the first of Chawaf's works in which Mélusine is named, as Zupančič was said to have observed above.²⁶² And Saigal indicates that fairies, albeit not bearing Mélusine's name, have occupied an important place in several of Chawaf's works;²⁶³ she adds that the world of fairies can, in fact, be said to form a “toile de fond”

²⁶² The reader will recall she cited a single naming of the fairy in reference to a character in the 1984 *La Vallée incarnate*. Interestingly, in the much earlier novel *Cercoeur* (1975) the name appeared, but not as a fairy. Here it can be found embedded in a long list of foods, and inserted in the lower case, not referring here to the fairy herself, but rather to a pastry bearing her name (Paris: Mercure de France, 150).

²⁶³ She here refers to *Cercoeur* (1975), *Blé de sémence* (1976), *Elwina, le roman fée* (1985), and *Fées de toujours* (1987).

in all of her texts (*L'écriture* 81). Saigal explains that “le merveilleux est un autre moyen pour Chawaf de récupérer comme une bonne mère ce qui a été abandonné ou perdu et d'évoquer une France rurale enchantée ” (81). Her interest in the world of fairies goes hand in hand with her interest in our archaic being and the past cultures from which we evolved (or Chawaf would say “devolved”), ones in which words and flesh were still connected. This link is made clear in a passage from *Fées de toujours* (1988), significantly one in which the name Mélusine once again arises. The narrator's little girl says she would like to draw a fairy “en queue d'anguille” – her mother identifies this creature: “Mélusine? Tu sais comment on l'appelait en patois, dans le Midi? La faye de Sassenageo... Et pour ensorceler, soumettre au pouvoir des fées, on disait : Faya” (20). She continues sharing multiple old words, magical words belonging to the “vocabulaire alphabétique proche de la terre” in “un vrai dictionnaire des petits chemins du français où on se promène dans la matière de la vie” (21); fairies recall that time for us, and that language. Fairies are closely tied not only to a lost past, but also to nature. Fairies and their fantastical relatives were believed to inhabit water, trees, knolls, caves and grottoes. Yet rationalism did away with them, exiled us from “les noms millénaires de Morgane, de Viviane, Titania, Mélusine” (*Fées de toujours* 72). In *Fées de toujours*, as the narrator introduces her daughter to the archaic world of fairies and the power and beauty of “les mots fées,” she describes the process of devaluation that fairies underwent from their earliest beginnings as semi-divine creatures of Celtic lore who “montraient aux hommes, souvent en songe, les chemins de la connaissance” (106) to their “francisation” by 17th century writers of fairy tales, who, she points out, were primarily women. Indeed she considers women to have long been involved in ensuring the survival of the old lore with

their storytelling across generations. Although fairy tales were enjoyed at first as an “art mineur,” they were eventually deemed suitable only for children: “comme si les adultes, au cours de l’histoire et de son évolution, devaient s’éloigner de l’imaginaire comme d’une régression et perdre l’imagination, seule capable de comprendre, de sentir le merveilleux” (22). Fairies were tucked away into the unconscious, relegated to the imaginary, and completely outcast from a modern, rational world that maintains they do not exist. Chawaf complains that their loss is our own: “Qui aujourd’hui, est encore libre d’imaginer et de suivre le chemin millénaire où les fées guidaient le surnaturel, l’irrationnel, l’esprit du rêve qui continuent de veiller en nous et peut-être sur nous?” (41-42). Jung echoes her in his concern for the important question that “nobody ever asks”:

What happens to those figures and phantoms, those gods, demons, magicians, those messengers from heaven and monsters of the abyss, when we see there is no mercurial serpent in the caverns of the earth, that there are no dryads in the forests and no undines in the water, and that the mysteries of faith have shrunk to articles in a creed? Even when we have corrected an illusion, it by no means follows that the psychic agency which produced illusions, and *actually needs them* has been abolished. (*Earth Has a Soul* 130, my emphasis)

Chawaf’s interest in the world of fairies clearly stems from her shared recognition with Jung that we need this mythical world, that we must reconnect with it. Jung warns that our rational “correction” regarding the existence of the creatures of myth only creates a dangerous “new illusion, which consists in the belief that what [...] myth says is not true, when, in fact [...] it describes, in figurative form, psychic facts whose existence

can never be dispelled by mere explanation” (*Earth Has a Soul* 131). Our denial of the existence of fairies and demons and removal of those outward projections only to push them further down into the unconscious is what leads to possession – we no longer fear “things that go bump in the night, but, instead, are seized with terror of people who, possessed by demons, perpetrate the frightful deed of darkness” (131). Chawaf recognizes that both the good and bad within must be acknowledged, but while maintaining in her representation of fairies that sense of ambiguity that has marked them (and our conceptions of them) for centuries, she places fairies in a strongly positive light. Chawaf regrets that today “[les] contes [de fées] ne sont plus que ‘les ruines du château-grotte des langues originelles’” (Bosshard, “De l’eu-topie champêtre” 80), for they are invaluable to our understanding of the inner world.²⁶⁴ Fairies serve an important initiatory function, as guides toward a recuperation of that world, the world of the imaginary. This is vitally needed in Chawaf’s view. And Bosshard observes that “c’est par le détour de l’imaginaire que Chawaf approche, – paradoxalement – au plus près de la réalité,” (80), that is, the reality of the body and of the unconscious. “Les mots-fées” to which fairies grant us access also have a protective role, since they counteract the harmful effects of the modern city “où l’on est coupé de ses racines naturelles et mythiques” (Saigal 82).

Clearly fairies hold a special appeal for Chawaf, but why does Mélusine in particular come forth so clearly, finally taking on a central role in *Mélusine des détrit*? Certainly, as we have seen above, this half-fairy’s ties to nature, the feminine, the body, and the unconscious, her image and actions that challenge convention and clear-cut

²⁶⁴ Despite the fact that fairy tales have indeed come to be considered “children’s fare,” today’s popular fantasy fiction and video games attest to an ongoing interest in the world of fairies, as they are replete with magical and supernatural elements. One must wonder, then, whether it is entirely accurate to describe fairy tales as having been reduced to “ruins.”

categorization and that equally signify the harmonious fusion of oppositions, as well as her archetypal roles as Great Mother, mediator, spiritual guide and healer, are all highly germane to her resurgence in Chawaf's work. But given the appearance of her name in several of them, this is not purely the effect of the collective unconscious – like Mujica Lainez and Breton, Chawaf was evidently well aware of this specific myth. What might have sparked her special interest in this fairy? How did she learn of her? A number of clues are afforded us by passages in *L'Erotique des mots*. In the jointly written work, a passage by Deforges indicates that she is herself from Montmorillon, in Poitou, “Mélusine country.” She tells us that she grew up on myth and legend and that “la fée Mélusine, la mère Lusine, était ma cousine [...] . Quand disparaissait un poussin j’entendais: ‘C’est la mère Lusine qui l’a enlevé’” (122-23). In light of this, and the fact that she and Chawaf have been friends for so long (according to Chawaf they first met over 25 years ago [168]), it seems likely that Deforges could well have shared tales of this mythical creature with Chawaf.

Significantly, in *L'Erotique* Chawaf describes for us a visit she made to Montmorillon, which has become, thanks in large part to Deforges, “La Cité du Livre.” While there during a book signing, Chawaf reveals that she sought out opportunities to speak to the people of the area, not in an interest to promote her work, but rather in an effort to know them and their interests, their concerns. The worries of the people of Montmorillon are similar to her own, and all, as we will see, come to the fore in *Mélusine des détrit*us:

Les gens qui me parlent accusent la pollution, ou la mondialisation culturelle qui tend à étouffer progressivement [leurs voix], je perçois dans

ces voix individuelles isolées une colère, des tensions...j’entends les descendants de ruraux dire qu’ils se sentent évincés par la culture dominante anglo-saxonne, et surtout technologique, j’entends les héritiers du vieux patrimoine se plaindre qu’on restaure certes d’un côté, mais on dégrade de l’autre irréversiblement, irrémédiablement, dans la modernisation et l’uniformisation. La société paysanne exclue de la société des banques, des laboratoires, du tourisme, des promoteurs, s’exprime encore. (183)

When speaking with the elderly residents, representatives of what she calls “une France éteinte,” individuals who so warmly opened their homes and hearts to her, Chawaf found herself appreciating their rich patois, with its origins in a vanishing past, a time when ties to the earth were more deeply felt. She regrets that as these individuals pass from life, with them will disappear a “vieux savoir. Ce vieux langage, cette vieille sensibilité n’auront plus lieux d’être” (184). Chawaf reveals that while in Montmorillon she made a vow - that she would write about the people of Montmorillon, would channel them, their voices, into her writing : “je me fais une promesse: je les interpréterai comme un musician joue une composition musicale” (184). She intends to take on a mediating role, bringing their voice and concerns to others, since “l’artiste, ce n’est qu’un intermédiaire entre l’expression et l’inexprimé, c’est le médium” (186). She addresses Deforges in this passage, telling her that the “salon du livre” of Montmorillon is for her “le plus cher, le plus porteur de joie et de vérité” but that it also awakens within her serious worries, “questions qui empêchent l’esprit à s’endormir. La centrale nucléaire de Civaux n’est pas loin” (186). Our analysis will reveal that *Mélusine des détrit* evidently

arose as a result of Chawaf's promise. Montmorillon clearly served as the inspiration for the fictitious Mulac, a city facing the effects of pollution and a dubious progress, situated in the shadow of a nuclear facility. This is the home of her Mélusine. And who best to speak for the worried residents of Montmorillon than this representative of their vanishing past, an archetypal healer whose cry of anger and revolt resounds in a powerful call to stop the destruction before it is too late.

*Mélusine des détrit*us and a Quest for Healing

*Mélusine des détrit*us has received little attention from critics. This is likely largely due to its having been written under a pseudonym. Chawaf authored the work under her maiden name, Marie de la Montluel, perhaps as a means of expressing her own roots in the French soil and in her nation's mythic past, roots she shares with Mélusine. In her review of the novel, Saigal accurately identifies Chawaf's Mélusine as a "symbole de la France d'autrefois, de la vie humaine simple et pure," (190) thus, of that vanishing past Chawaf saw represented by the aging residents of Montmorillon. Saigal points out that in the novel Chawaf strongly criticizes the modern-day society that has arisen to replace it, one "où l'humanité engouffrée dans les machines et la pollution se déshumanise mais pourtant s'efforce de survivre" (190). It is within this setting that we encounter the young Mélusine, "amie de la nature et des animaux" (190) whose asthmatic lungs are ravaged by the smog of Mulac. Saigal adds that in her suffering, this character is equally a symbol of "l'âme du monde meurtri qui souffre de la perte de vie corporelle et spirituelle" (191).

Jonathan Krell's ecocritique also stresses the close symbiosis that exists between Mélusine and a suffering Earth in the novel. However, he astutely reveals the transformation that the Mélusine of Jean d'Arras undergoes in Chawaf's narrative. Although the medieval Mélusine indeed had close ties to nature, and ultimately would return to it, she distanced herself from nature upon her marriage with Raymondin "pour apporter la culture et l'architecture dans cette région couverte de forêts" ("*Mélusine des détrit* ou les cris de la terre" 1). This she did by clearing forests and building castles and churches, actively contributing to the growth of cities, which as we have seen above, Chawaf frequently places in a negative light. Krell explains that the earlier Mélusine can be said to represent "une vision optimiste selon laquelle l'humanité, grâce à son travail et sa créativité, ne cessera de progresser et de se perfectionner" (2). Yet Chawaf's view of western civilization is quite the opposite; she finds that since the time of Mélusine, there has been a "régression dystopique plutôt qu'un 'progrès'" (2). Chawaf's Melusine tells us that the burial mound of a Gallic chief was razed to build housing projects, stones were taken from the ruins of a local castle to build garages and the Roman cloister has become a parking lot (Chawaf, *Mélusine des détrit* 9). In Mulac, Krell observes, "le progrès tue le passé et n'offre rien en contrepartie aux habitants [...] les fruits de la modernisation seront réservés pour la classe des dirigeants" (Krell, "*Mélusine des détrit* ou les cris" 3). Here, too, we find evoked another complaint of Montmorillon's "société paysanne exclue de la société des banques, des laboratoires, du tourisme, des promoteurs" (*L'Erotique* 183). We learn that in Mulac "on a la conviction, les uns et les autres, d'être des humains finis, condamnés à être remplacés par une humanité améliorée, on se sent arriérés avec nos nerfs, nos veines, nos artères, nos capillaires de vieilles lignées

sanguines. On se dit que l'avenir n'a plus rien à faire avec nous" (*Mélusine des détritits* 9, also qtd. in Krell 3). Here we find a society in which the body is no longer valued and no longer heard, one in which progress must be made, and money must be generated, regardless of the damage it may cause to human life. Although too many human beings deny this state of affairs, Krell observes that they and nature "ne font qu'un et souffre également de la crise écologique qui sert de toile de fond au roman" (4). He adds that the anguished asthmatic cries uttered by Mélusine express this close relationship.

Krell's analysis also takes into account Chawaf's theories as put forth in *Le Corps et le verbe*, thus he accurately points out that Mélusine is not simply the "porte-parole courageuse pour les amis de l'environnement," her cries do not simply voice the protest of nature, they also are the protest of woman (8). He finds that the novel expresses not just a concern for the ecological crisis, but also for the oppression of the feminine voice (8-9). He reminds us that if Chawaf holds that all human beings are victims of the divide between body and flesh undertaken in Biblical tradition, woman has suffered the consequences of the split to a greater degree given her marginalization since the deletion of the feminine from the godhead. This deletion also handicapped man, for, as we have seen above, Chawaf considers woman to serve a mediatory and initiatory function – woman is best equipped to lead toward the healing of the existing schism. Krell quite rightly observes that for Chawaf, women are ultimately the hope for overcoming the divide and saving nature; he explains that "un renouveau de la parole féminine est essentiel pour qu'on retrouve une attitude plus saine à l'égard d'une terre ravagée par la

pollution, par les maladies et par la guerre” (“*Mélusine*” 9).²⁶⁵ I agree with Krell that our mediator and archetypal healer Mélusine, due to her dual yet uniting image, serves both to represent and to heal the multiple disconnects in the novel – “corps/esprit, corps/langage, animal/humain, homme/femme” (8). Indeed “c’est précisément le cri de Mélusine qui s’efforce de ‘cicatriser la blessure de la separation’” (9).²⁶⁶ In a world headed toward destruction, her cry marks “la recherche d’une voix féminine et maternelle” (10), one that can bridge and heal harmful divisions.

One aspect of the novel that remains unexplored is the presence of archetypal and alchemical imagery. Much of this imagery points to the existence of a dangerously one-sided psyche, dominated by consciousness; the protagonists Jean and Mélusine act as symbolic representations of an effort to remedy this situation. Jean’s quest to save Mélusine is more than the very necessary attempt of humanity to reconnect with and save the natural world; it also enacts the conscious mind’s effort to “save” the unconscious. The acknowledgement of repressed contents of the unconscious is what enables us to experience a deep sense of relatedness with other human beings, with nature, and with the world, to experience that love or *Eros* that both Jung and Chawaf realize is so desperately needed. Only if this is achieved on the collective level can we expect society to finally and fully return the proper and ultimately inestimable value to the archaic being within us, to the body, nature, the feminine, and indeed to life itself in *every* shape and form. However, if this does not occur, and if it is not followed by a rapid and concerted effort to protect all of these, we are doomed to remain on the present destructive course toward

²⁶⁵ Here, once again, Chawaf’s thought clearly aligns with the theories of the ecofeminists.

²⁶⁶ Krell here cites a phrase of Chawaf’s in reference to the healing that she believes must take place (from *Le Corps et le verbe* 13).

our own annihilation. Chawaf's novel presents an allegorical representation of the process of individuation that must be undergone by individuals on a large scale in order to save our world and ourselves. As Jean engages in this process, we find evoked the concerns of Chawaf and of those worried citizens of Montmorillon who feel so helpless faced with the current dominant, divisive and destructive "system." In this important work, Chawaf, like Mélusine, acts as the reader's spiritual guide, showing us the path toward healing and the process in which we must all engage if we are to halt the destruction before it is too late.

Mélusine's Mulac, situated on a river in Poitou, is "un triste bourg en train de perdre son passé glorieux; il n'est presque plus qu'un carrefour d'autoroutes" (Krell, "*Mélusine des détrit* ou les cris" 2). As such, a multitude of trucks, many of them carrying dangerous chemicals, pass through continually, just beside the home in which Mélusine lives with her aunt. Although a crossroads suggests a coming together, there is no contact made and no unity. When a trucker is asked if he worries about the people whose lungs he fills with diesel fumes, he suggests this is no concern of his, and it's not his fault the road is so close to homes; "on fait notre boulot, c'est tout!" (36). He adds a litany of his own complaints, convinced *he* is the one who should be pitied. In further evidence of the disconnect between human beings, we learn that the man with whom he speaks, Jean, is not even listening to this. All he has on his mind is Mélusine, whom he has just met and whose asthmatic cries are disturbing his thoughts – thus, from the outset of the conversation, he was only using the trucker for his own purposes, as a distraction. This reminds us of that all-too-common tendency Jung warned about above, the desire to distract ourselves however we can when the inner voice begins to speak. Given that it is

Mélusine's voice that invades his thoughts, we may recognize here an initial indication that hers is the voice of the unconscious.

Mélusine's fragile lungs are damaged by the perpetual smog; she can barely breathe. She feels alienated in this polluted world in which she must struggle to live and longs to overcome the disconnect between individuals that so deeply affects her. We should note that she lives alone with an aunt; her status as an orphan serves to underscore her isolation and alienation. She watches continually from a window hoping somehow to connect with passersby; the cries her body emits fall on deaf ears. Drivers continually pass by, their eyes fixed firmly on the road, oblivious to her suffering. There is not so much as a glimpse of recognition: "Jamais! Les uns pour les autres, nous sommes des ombres" (11). She realizes that no help will be forthcoming, and there is no escape from the tainted air, even when she closes the windows in a futile attempt to block its entry into her home. The demands of her body force her to inhale ; after all, she asks "comment changer de poumons, se débarrasser des alvéoles qui absorbent la pollution [?]" (14).

Mélusine tells us that in Mulac, "au lieu de respirer, on larmoie, on absorbe la suie, on a la gorge enfumée. Quand le soleil se lève [...] c'est dans une odeur d'ammoniaque. On n'a aucune prise sur cette chimie" (11). Here we are reminded that science, which appeared initially to grant us control over our environment, has now escaped us, producing byproducts from which we are increasingly unable to protect ourselves. However, the words "*cette chimie*" appear to suggest there is another type over which we may have some control. Could this be a nod to alchemy? Let us recall here that alchemy was conceived of by Jung as an outward projection of the inner process of individuation, the very process I propose is presented in this novel. As we will soon see,

Jean and Mélusine are presented in a way that suggests they correspond to the alchemical *Sol* and *Luna*; for this reason I propose that Chawaf is indeed suggesting here that it is *this* kind of “chimie,” the one that aims for inner wholeness, and over which we have greater control, to which we can and must give our attention. Since the alchemical process/individuation enables us to reconnect with the body and nature and rediscover their intrinsic value and to simultaneously recognize our own shadow and the dark side of our scientific pursuits, it is a necessary precursor to their reassessment, and to a needed reorientation toward a “chimie” that will safeguard and protect our world.

Compounding the problem of polluted air, or likely stemming from it, the weather in Mulac is one of extremes. In the first part of the narrative, Mélusine describes the conditions of her existence that are imposed upon her by the pollution and stifling heat. She makes frequent reference to the unbearable sun that “me mord, claqué contre moi, me pousse, irritant d’effluves d’herbes brûlées et de fumées de cheminées” (15). Its power, unmediated by moisture or natural clouds free of contamination, forces her retreat into her home. Mélusine feels suffocated in the hot and polluted air: “dans ce soleil de fin du monde on n’a plus de réflexes, plus de volonté, on est sans défense” (16). This powerful sun is symbolic of an imbalance in the psyche and in society at large, in which consciousness, the alchemical “*Sol*” of the Mercurius Duplex, holds full sway. In Mulac, and indeed in modern society on the whole, *Sol* reigns supreme, powerful, harsh and destructive. It is unmediated by unconscious elements (represented by Mélusine, sealed inside her home) that are repressed, contained and closeted in the recesses of the psyche, a situation that goes unnoticed and unquestioned due, at least in part, to the constant noise

of the city, which offers a “built-in,” continual distraction from the inner voice. As Mélusine points out, in Mulac “on ne se concentre sur rien, que sur le bruit” (12).

Like the Mélusine of Mujica Lainez, Chawaf’s has been forced into confinement, where, as we have seen, patriarchal society prefers to relegate the body, nature, the “chaotic, irrational” unconscious, and woman, who is perceived as being closely linked to all of these. Significantly, Mélusine’s aunt has accepted the silent, passive role assigned to her. Although she, too, is concerned by the pollution, she believes there is nothing she can do. She spends her days enclosed in the house, always embroidering or knitting stoically, contenting herself with those activities sanctioned as feminine since time immemorial.

Certainly the original Mélusine did not accept that role so readily, instead taking on more active, “masculine” pursuits, and engaging in building cities. As shown by Krell above, Chawaf distances her own character from this aspect in particular, yet she retains her heart-rending cry. Unlike her aunt, the “riveraine stoïque” (11), “Mélusine résiste” (32). She cries out in revolt against the present system that devalues the feminine and the body, and thus is destroying nature. This cry of revolt recalls that of Breton’s Mélusine, but in Chawaf, Mélusine is not deprived of words – at least not yet. In the throes of asthmatic attacks, she shrieks her fury from the window. Although she cannot leap from it herself and fly away from the pollution as the original Mélusine might have, from it “elle lance sa plainte au vent, [...] elle crie [...] contre la terre en perdition” (32). When Jean first hears her cries, he describes the agony he hears in her voice : “La fée pousse un hurlement qui n’en finit plus. [...] On dirait les cris d’une femme qu’on viole, qu’on torture à coups de couteau, les cris de sa jeunesse interdite, les cris de sa vie

dont les pulsations déréglées, affolées, s'essoufflent dans l'indifférence d'une ville morte" (32). This violent imagery of rape and torture is a powerful reminder of the violence done to the psyche, to the body, and to woman when the feminine and the unconscious are devalued and rejected by society. Clearly, to reject or ignore them is to negate life itself; such a society is "morte."

Mélusine tries desperately to call Mulac back to life, and she does so with far more than guttural shrieks; the words she emits strongly accuse and condemn the indifference around her: "Bande d'abrutis! Ce n'est plus de l'air que vous respirez, c'est du dioxyde d'azote, du dioxyde de soufre! Vous n'avez plus de bronches, vous ne sentez plus rien ! Vous êtes des zombis!" (45). Mélusine's mention of sulphur calls to mind alchemical teachings and is a further reminder of the psychic/alchemical imbalance that exists due largely to indifference to the demands of the inner world. Alchemists considered sulfur the masculine element that needed joining with the feminine phosphorous or salt, through the mediation of the androgynous mercury. Thus, not only does the unbearable sun suggest the unmediated dominance of *Sol*, but the very contents of the air Mélusine must breathe bear his mark, inhibiting her from performing her mediating, healing role.

Like the original Mélusine, that ageless archetypal resident of the collective unconscious, Chawaf's character, too, is ageless : "j'habite, au centre de la France, cette petite ville, depuis combien de siècles?" (17). She adds that she is, like Mélusine herself, a "descendante des sources, des rivières, des fontaines "(17). Water represents the Great Mother from which springs all life, both physical (Mother Earth) and psychic (the mother/unconscious), and to which it ultimately returns. Mélusine belongs to it and

serves as a projection of it; however, she has been stripped of the powerful Great Mother imagery that was so clearly associated with the original Mélusine. The neglect and abuse of the unconscious brought about by this imbalanced society has weakened her. As in Tusquets, the Mélusine of Chawaf evokes Mélusine's relative Ondine. Krell has pointed out these two characters' shared symbiotic ties to nature (6). Further, Mélusine is a victim like Ondine, her frail and tormented body giving testament to the damage that has been caused her, and both characters lack the fertility commonly associated with the original Mélusine and with the mother goddesses from which she hails. Chawaf's Mélusine is a shape-shifter, but is far from voluptuous. She has "la sveltesse d'une adolescente dont la silhouette ondulante peut se modifier, prendre tout d'un coup la forme fuselée d'une carpe ou d'un brochet, réfléchir la brume du crépuscule comme le frémissement d'un poisson"(34). In *Mélusine des détritius*, nature, like Mélusine, is presented as weakening and infertile— not only does Mélusine/the unconscious flee the harsh, imposing sun, so does life itself: "Pas une vache, pas un mouton, pas un chien sous ces nuées de sécheresses [...] . Le sol, les meules fument, surchauffées, électriques. Des incendies spontanés éclatent dans les champs. Le vent est plus chaud que des flammes" (16).

The only respite afforded Mélusine is the occasional "jour sans lumière" (17), dark days in which *Sol's* counterpart *Luna* may finally emerge. The drastic contrasts between days of sun and light and days of rain and darkness form a further symbolic evocation of an imbalanced psychic state. If on darkened days Mélusine and nature regain strength, we should also notice that this occurs only in the *absence* of light, thus there is still no sign of balance, no mediation, and no unity. Indeed Mélusine tells us that "rien ne s'interpose entre l'air irradié de braises et les tempêtes instantanées" (16).

On one such day she passes by a “paysanne” with three male parrots in a cage. Mélusine tells us, “Je leur trouve l’air éteint, il leur faudrait une femelle” (25). These three males are representative of the masculine Biblical trinity from which the feminine has been erased and of the resulting unhealthy and unbalanced individual and collective psyche. The application of parrots in this brief, yet deeply symbolic passage is key, for it evokes Chawaf’s concern for the degeneration of the resulting language from which the feminine has been circumscribed along with the unconscious, nature and the body. Trained parrots no longer speak their natural language. They have been trained to use an artificial one imposed upon them, one that does not have its source within themselves, it is not from their own body. The female parrot needed is one who knows the original language and who can guide the three back to the unconscious and to that language of the body. Mélusine appears to know that if the feminine is returned to the equation, the phallic trinity will give way to the balance and equilibrium, the wholeness represented by the number four.

Mélusine’s emergence on dark, stormy days is due not just to the lifting of the searing heat of *Sol*, but also to the healing effect water has upon her, and we find this not only in the action of the rain. Although she expresses to us her loneliness and sense of alienation in this world, she reveals that she is never truly alone, for she has the river, the Arnon. In its water she transforms, as does her medieval namesake : “(Dans) *les couches d’eau maternelle* de la rivière, j’oublie mes rancœurs, mon mal de vivre, ma peur. [...] Je retourne à ma phase aquatique, je ne suis plus déprimée, je me sens batricien, fée, têtard, salamandre, grenouille, je change de morphologie” (18, my emphasis). This water, described under the sign of the feminine maternal, is what is needed to counteract the

burning sun. *Sol* and *Luna* are in need of unity; at present conscious and unconscious exist separately, with no middle ground. *Luna*'s need for *Sol* is suggested by Mélusine's reaction toward and desire for "l'homme" - when Jean arrives at the river and sees her shivering, he wraps his arms about her to warm her and she reveals that "je ne m'étais jamais autant sentie faire partie de la rivière que dans ces bras énergiques, virils, où je frissonne" (19). Although it appears at first that Mélusine needs the maternal, feminine water, she no less needs union with the masculine. Certainly both are necessary for wholeness, harmony and balance.

The name of the river in which the two join in this embrace is crucial – although there is indeed an Arnon in France, it is not in the Poitou-Charentes region where Chawaf situates Mulac. And although Montmorillon, the city that appears to have inspired the creation of Mulac, also has a river, its name is the Gartempe. Chawaf's choice of name for the river was likely influenced by the Biblical Arnon, since this river in Jordan has long served as an important boundary line. It separated the Moabites from the Amorites and divided Moab from the tribes of Reuben and Gad (Arnon). Mélusine the mediator of masculine and feminine, human and animal, divine and earthly is, then, in her "element" in the Arnon – a boundary line, but equally, a point of union where opposites come together. We might also recall that the city through which the Arnon flows in the novel is itself a crossroads, or meeting place. The Biblical Arnon was significantly positioned on the Israelites's route to the promised land, yet it flows to the Dead Sea – thus it has associations with both hope and death, and inscribes the ambiguity that characterizes Mélusine herself. And although she finds here some healing and hope, as we will soon see, we are left in the end to wonder whether Mélusine can manage to alter the course

upon which Mulac and the world seem to be set, the one that, like the Arnon, is sweeping us all toward death.

Jean, like his medieval counterpart Raymondin, first meets Mélusine at a time of personal crisis, although his is by far the less tragic – this modern day knight errant,²⁶⁷ whose voice we hear in the second part of the text, has had a car wreck. He describes for us his trip just prior to the crash, revealing that he had been driving in the rain: “Je roulais à l’aveuglette” (31). Mélusine is suffocated by the sun, yet he is blinded by the rain; here we find opposites in need of each other in order to overcome the unbalanced psychic state. In their embrace by the Arnon, Jean, as *Sol*, brought Mélusine (*Luna*) his warmth and vitality, but here it becomes clear that he needs Luna’s vision that penetrates the darkness of the unconscious. Not only is Jean “blind,” he is also engaged in battle, existing “contre” and not with nature; he drives “contre le ciel, contre la grêle, contre le vent” (31). Significantly, near the close of the first part, a masculine tendency toward battle is commented upon by Mélusine during a visit to the castle near Mulac. Upon seeing swords of the armor museum, which provoke nausea within her, she imagines a bloody battle and envisions the “sang [qui] coagule sur les lames;” she sees in a glimpse “des armées de pères, de frères, de cousins lointains, les terribles lignages de mâles plastronnés, ceinturés, [...] casqués de mailles de fer” (24). Chawaf suggests that the imbalance we face today in our masculine dominant society has long been a problem, and that the divisiveness and violence continues on into the present, but its target has now shifted – no longer do Europeans battle each other for territory; war is now waged upon

²⁶⁷ In the opening lines of the second part, he tells us that he loves to be on the road: “Au Moyen Age, j’aurais été un chevalier errant; aujourd’hui je ne suis qu’un automobiliste” (31).

nature itself. Jean's initial blindness and opposition to nature are a clear reflection of the prevalent attitude of modern society.

Shortly after Jean meets Mélusine, she introduces him to her garden: "L'homme est revenue [...] . Je lui ai fait les honneurs du jardin" (13). We should note that her frequent references to Jean as simply "l'homme" underscore Jean's symbolic role as representative of the masculine *Sol* (consciousness), and man himself, as well as the masculine - dominated society. In the garden, Mélusine, in the role of spiritual guide, introduces him to the space that she belongs to and protects. He describes it as a "forêt vierge" (13). This garden, evocative of the Garden of Eden, the original, primeval paradise of the Mother /unconscious prior to differentiation, is one to which Jean has lost all connection, all access. Yet he must return to it if he is to rediscover those aspects of himself that lie dormant and repressed within his own unconscious. Mélusine, as his intermediary, begins here his initiation, guiding his first steps toward wholeness. When Jean enters this space, his footing is unsure amidst the vines of the unkempt garden; Mélusine observes that he is not "habitué" to the unruly nature surrounding him (14). Certainly it has long been the very unruliness of nature, the body, and the unconscious that has caused man to distance himself from them and instead to strive to control and/or repress them. Due perhaps to her knowledge of this, Mélusine asks us "comment aurait-il pu comprendre qu'on pût s'attacher comme moi à la force capiteuse, vanillée, de la moelle riche qui nous dégorgeait dans la bouche, sucrée come des fraises de bois, qu'on aspirait, soudain à l'écart de la route, et qui, pour un instant, grisait la langue, la peau?" (14). She knows he has been cut off from the pleasure and healing that is gained through the connections she manages to retain, despite the fact that the very existence of the

garden (as of nature and life itself) is threatened. This natural space is, like Mélusine herself, suffering. The flowers are faded and wilting, the vegetation is dry and brittle, life is barely holding on.

However, Jean realizes that this encounter with Mélusine is, in fact, a “rencontre avec la vie” (34). He reveals to us that she has awakened in him a single, powerful desire : to “porter à sa place le fardeau de souffrance” (34). Jean takes on a traditional archetypal heroic quest – his goal being to save Mélusine. This quest is representative of the process of individuation, for Mélusine, the representative of the unconscious, may here be recognized as a projection of Jean’s *anima*; the *anima* within himself has been repressed, but now he strives to bring it forth. As he engages in this pursuit, we will find signs of psychic growth and the development within him of the needed *Eros*; indeed from early on he recognizes that “Mélusine m’apprend à aimer” (48). However, his relationship with her is not an easy one and his feelings toward her are not without ambivalence. Early on he undertakes a problematic idealization of her, one that he fails to notice actually undermines his efforts to aid her and interferes with his progress toward union and wholeness. Mélusine indicates that “l’homme” places her upon a pedestal; when he enters her room where she lies suffering, she outstretches her cold hands toward him, seeking his warmth, but in a rush of self-denigrating emotion, one that unfortunately denies her the very warmth she desired and needed and that he could so easily have given her, he kisses the hem of her garment. She tells us his “sourire ne semble pas s’adresser à moi, mais à une apparition” (28). When he calls her his fairy, she rejects this, saying “je ne suis personne, non, pas même une femme” (28), and indeed his behavior toward her

negates her very existence.²⁶⁸ Thus, initially at least, he only wants to see the beauty that lies in the recesses of the unconscious and remains blind to the existence of darkness. Yet gradually, after many times of witnessing her cries of agony and fury, she falls from that pedestal as he comes to admit that Mélusine's cry at times "portait sur les nerfs" (48). After a particularly disturbing scene, he overhears passersby mocking her, calling her crazy and a drug addict, and finds out they have called the "police secours" to end her cries (which is supremely ironic, since it is Mélusine who needs saving, and the system the police represent will do nothing to save the passersby from the far more serious threat they so ignorantly face). He complains that "Mélusine leur mettait en garde sans succès" and he alone recognizes their foolishness in refusing to truly hear or heed her (46). He knows she is a "bouc émissaire," that she "souffrait à leur place, comme si elle écoutait à leur place l'instinct de conservation qu'ils refoulaient" (46-47). Yet he, too, is bothered by her cries, and rushes to get her into his car. His actions are ostensibly to save her, but his own discomfiture comes into play as well. He tries to silence her: "Tais-toi!" accelerating excessively despite her protests against the frightening speed; he even lies that he must go faster because the police are following, when in fact he does this only to vent his frustration (47). He here encloses and entraps her, placing her at his mercy – thus he is himself guilty of seeking to control and stifle her. Only once they are far from any sign of civilization does he finally tell her "Crie, Mélusine! Crie à perdre haleine!" (48). Jean's behavior is a clear reminder of a problem also treated in Mujica Lainez and in Tusquets – that once the unconscious is encountered, it is difficult to bring freely the

²⁶⁸ This problematic attitude was one of which surrealists like Breton were guilty, as well. See chapter 3 above for further discussion of this issue, as well as Jung's warning of its danger and negative consequences for women.

contents of the unconscious out into the open – it disrupts our lives and disturbs the society surrounding us. Here, too, is evoked the similar conflict between Giraudoux's Hans and Ondine: Hans was bothered by his unusual, non-conformist wife, and in their case, this problem even led to his rejection of her and to his own death. Given the state of the world around them, physical death could indeed be the consequence if Jean (consciousness, man, mankind) continues to stifle and conceal Mélusine.

It is evident that Mélusine's revolt and non-conformity express Chawaf's own revolt and refusal to conform. As we learned above, she worries about the dangers posed by the silencing of innovative writers, by attempts to alter genes and selectively clone humans, and by the growing uniformity brought on by globalization. Further, the citizens of Montmorillon who evidently inspired this novel feel their voices are being silenced in the face of a "culture dominante anglo-saxonne et technologique" (*L'Erotique* 32). The dangerous power of the multitude is a prime preoccupation not only of Chawaf, but also of Jung, who stresses that individuation requires revolt against conformity. Only by undertaking individuation and thus developing that sense of wholeness or we might say "sense of self" that grounds us when faced with the societal pressures, can we hold to our own convictions and stand strong in the face of mass-mindedness (or more precisely, mass-mindlessness). Mélusine rails against society's rejection of the inner world she represents; too many would rather ignore it, for it disrupts and disturbs the status quo, just as do the "bothersome" individuals like Mélusine who seek to remind of its existence and to give it voice. This is why they want Mélusine to go away. She knows this, and tells Jean they want her dead – when asked who wants this, she defines them clearly, they are "ceux qui veulent qu'on ne pleure plus, qu'on ne rie plus, qu'on n'exige rien, qu'on soit

conformes” (42-43). They are those who are oblivious to the needs of the body and the psyche and all too blind to their own unconscious, whether by choice or a tragic ignorance. All too often, such individuals are also in positions of power and have money to spare, but are too intent upon gaining more, even at their own expense, thus Mélusine accuses society of “selling out.” “Pauvre tas de viscères!” she cries, “le monde n’est pas à vous mais à l’argent” (42).

Out of his concern awakened by Mélusine, Jean makes a single attempt in the novel to address the system directly, engaging in a conversation with one of these individuals in authority, Mulac’s mayor. But Jean finds himself helpless to argue with this “imperturbable” man who is shocked at his questions “Qu’est-ce qu’il a, notre air? C’est l’air de la campagne! C’est du bon air!” (44). These surprising words are followed by boasts of Mulac’s plans to adapt to the demands of their strategic, central location, to modernize further, to build more rest areas and parking lots to accommodate the needs of the multitude of truckers passing through Mulac. This individual evokes the proverbial case of the “blind leading the blind.” He represents the ignorant majority that voted him into office and that rejects Mélusine as “crazy” and would, as she suspects, rather she simply disappear and let “progress” continue unhindered, at least until Earth itself puts an end to all of us. And if they can’t make her disappear, they will try to alter those like her; Mélusine suggests: “On veut nous perfectionner, on veut des robots [...] qu’on n’exige rien, qu’on soit conformes! Les autres, les comme moi, qu’on ne les voie plus! Qu’elles fassent place nette les filles! Que la vie ne sorte plus de nos ventres, de nos cris, de nos larmes, qu’on ne crée plus, qu’on n’enfante pas des enfants qui nous ressemblent!” (42-

43).²⁶⁹ These words remind us of the link between women and the inner world; evidently Mélusine considers women to be, like her, more in tune with it, thus they, like her, become targets since the potential mediators and protectors of life “must be silenced” if the present destructive course is to continue unperturbed. Certainly the ecofeminists, Jung, and Chawaf would all agree that efforts to dominate and control nature have been closely tied to similar behaviors toward women. Such attacks upon them interfere with their ability to bring forth the needed *Eros* and to create the necessary bridge between mankind and nature.

Although Jean cannot reason with the mayor, he at least has his “steed” – the car in which this knight can attempt to save his lady by taking her away to a safer place, one where she can breathe freely; he seeks to protect her by leading her upon “une course folle contre le désespoir” (50). When they are together on these weekend excursions, he experiences a growing sense of completeness and renewal: “Elle est à côté de moi, elle est dans mon coeur. Je revis” (52). But despite brief respites in more tolerable air, true escape from the pollution is impossible and her struggle to breathe freely goes on.

Her suffering becomes more acute after a harrowing experience. Suffering a severe attack, Mélusine seeks help at a hospital; assumed insane, she is refused assistance, and is finally bound and injected with a tranquilizer that nearly provokes her death. No one bothered to inquire about drug allergies, no one considered the consequences of their actions. This violent act upon Mélusine, a representative of the endangered inner and outer worlds, clearly reveals to us the negligence and

²⁶⁹ This passage recalls Chawaf’s own words cited earlier from *L’Erotique*, where she expresses her concern about humanity becoming “robots” if we do not stop present trends. It is also a clear allusion to genetic alteration and cloning.

destructiveness of our society, bent upon quieting the disruptive unconscious (so often done by means of sedation as occurred in Mélusine's case) and equally bent upon injecting pollutants and nuclear wastes from plants like the one so near Mulac into Earth, regardless of the potentially tragic consequences.²⁷⁰

Jean experiences a new sense of urgency, finally aware not only of Mélusine's need to be saved, but also of how little time is left to help her; he rushes to her aid: "On me la tue. [...] Si je ne vais pas assez vite, si je n'arrive pas à temps, la violence aura raison d'elle" (55). Chawaf thus reminds us that if we do not begin to heed the demands of the unconscious and of Earth itself and reconnect with them soon, the violence we commit against both will win out and provoke the ultimate destruction.

Frightened, Jean redoubles his efforts to help Mélusine, to drive her to a place where she can breathe free and happy, but the neglect and damage she has endured have left a deep mark, and his fears grow as he notices death in her eyes (56). In the burning heat of Mulac, in the continuing unbalanced state that oppresses her, Mélusine's voice begins to fade; no longer a strident cry, it becomes but a "série de notes tristes, de soupirs à peine plus audibles que le grésillement d'élytres de grillon" (58). Escape proves impossible – the heat and pollution envelope them in "des masses de déchets contre lesquelles ni le corps ni les kilomètres n'étaient une barrière" (59). The goal of saving Mélusine, both in the literal sense (by saving her physically) and in the figurative sense (by achieving union with his *anima*), elude Jean. As hope fades, Jean's quest becomes more of an aimless wandering. In a last-ditch effort, Jean plans a two-week trip outside of

²⁷⁰ This problem is directly addressed later in the novel when Jean describes the means by which nuclear facilities rid themselves of dangerous wastes, burying them within the ground: "tout ce qui a pu être contaminé par les radionucléides finira dans les profondeurs de la terre, en espérant que la terre accepte..." (198).

France, far to the north, “à l’air pur, aux terres vides, à la mer”(62). He intends to try just once more to achieve the goal. Although initially Mélusine acted as guide, introducing him to the existence of the dormant unconscious and leading him to her fragile, wilting garden, thereby awakening him to the need and the possibility of the union of conscious and unconsciousness, now Jean takes on an active role. He seeks out that paradise he now longs for so desperately, the womb, the point of fusion:

On irait au début de la vie, là où rien ne pourrait plus abîmer mon amphibienne Mélusine au corps d’anguille, où rien ne pourrait empêcher sa progression vers l’eau des commencements, l’eau des naissances et des renaissances infinies; [...] on plisserait et replierait les lèvres pour sucer, pour têter à satiété le sein de la terre maternelle [...] . On retournerait à l’enfance. (63-64)

However, the hoped-for blissful union with Mélusine is ever-elusive; like an eel, he observes, “[elle] me glisse entre les doigts” (91). Tensions grow between the two over time. Their difficult relationship represents the conflict that inevitably comes into play in the encounter between consciousness and the unconscious. As both lose hope, continually pursued by smog wherever they travel, he speeds dangerously “en compétition dans l’obscur tournoi,” heedless of how upset she becomes by this (65); she grows ever more petulant, demanding, dissatisfied, and he is increasingly irritated and frustrated. He tries continually to please her, but feels helpless to do so, and a battle brews between them: “Son exigence et mon abnégation se battaient, dans un duel ambigu entre le ciel et la terre, le rêve et la réalité; l’amour ne jouait plus son rôle, éclipsé par des énergies occultes, par un chagrin qui ravivait la lutte chaque jour” (79).

When the two enter a cathedral together, he sees a painted statue of the Virgin Mary that closely resembles Mélusine; his unsatiated desire burns within him as he kneels, he tells us, in impious prayer, overcome with a longing that draws him “soudain irrésistiblement entre ces cuisses de femme, sous la lourde robe de metal et de perles; je rêve de m’y blottir comme un enfant” (69). He prays to and seeks the Great Mother, but her womb is forbidden, access is denied to him by her virginal metal robes. This is the chaste version of the mother Eve, the “Church-approved” remnant of the Mother Goddess, herself deprived of the corporeal, of the experience of the flesh, of communion with man. This imagery reveals that union with Mélusine, the unconscious, is inevitably difficult, and, further, that it is discouraged by society. Despite this, Jean perseveres.

At one point he offers Mélusine an engagement ring. However, significantly, Mélusine declines. Although stemming from a sincere desire to unite with her, the ring would symbolically restrict her, imposing limits, and marking her as being possessed by him. Her refusal undoes the inevitable incapacity of the conscious mind ever to truly dominate or control the unconscious. The goal of individuation is a harmonious union based upon equilibrium, not dominance. The belief that one controls the unconscious is a dangerous illusion, and just when it seems that it has been successfully contained, the threat it poses is at its greatest. Equally, the Earth, which reflects the inner world, also retains the ability to revolt and harm when least expected. It may seem to accept complacently the damage done to it, but even as it weakens, its power is far greater than our own, and the risk of its retribution steadily increases. Mélusine, as representative of both the unconscious and Earth, clearly illustrates this, for although she grows weaker, although “[p]eu à peu, Mélusine a perdu la force de crier” (75), her power over Jean

grows and her ability to inflict harm remains strong. She causes him pain with her complaints and indifference and with an increasing habit of vanishing, striking a fear in Jean that he experiences as a visceral attack: “Elle me traque, elle me dépèce avec ses dents pointues d’anguille, elle expérimente sur le cœur humain jusqu’où elle peut faire souffrir l’homme. Aie pitié!” (95). Mélusine has herself endured much suffering and neglect, and her anger eventually transforms her into the imposing, formidable, unforgiving Terrible Mother. Jean thus faces the inevitable fear experienced by the conscious mind when confronted with the full power of the unconscious: “Au plus fort de notre aventure d’air et de lumière, son visage se défigurait, un masque barbare le recouvrait; je me sentais tout à coup loin d’elle, terrorisé. [...] Ma salive s’épaississait, remplissait ma bouche d’une angoisse pâteuse” (77). She has become an “idole effrayante” (77). At times he wonders if he can bear to go on, since “[c]e voyage ne rime à rien qu’à attiser l’insatisfaction d’une fée implacable envers les piètres humains, les sordides humains, que Mélusine évalue avec intransigeance, qu’elle rejette en bloc” (79). He realizes that he is included in this group she rejects, so different from herself, and he bemoans the impossibility of ever truly understanding or becoming one with her: “Elle était irrationnelle. [...] Je n’étais pour elle qu’un humain et elle détestait tous les humains. [...] Elle n’irait jamais dans le sens du pardon”(200-01). He feels the unconscious seeks retribution, will not forgive the neglect it has received. His perception of her behavior as “irrational” is due to his inability to understand her, and this stance very clearly illustrates the typical reaction of consciousness to the unconscious, and again evokes the underlying reason behind society’s ongoing rejection of it.

During their trip to the north, there is a moment in which it appears that the union he seeks might be realized; finally the two come together in physical union. However, this is not presented as a healing, transformative act. Jean, beside himself with pent-up desire, presses Mélusine's body to his own as they lie together in a hotel room. Mélusine does not resist, yet neither does she encourage him. Her only reaction is an enigmatic smile after the act is complete, reminding once again that the unconscious itself is eternally an enigma. But most importantly, their intercourse passes under the sign of sterility – Jean withdraws just before his sperm is discharged. On a symbolic plane, Jean, the representative of the conscious mind, pulls back just as he reaches the threshold of their union. His actions inhibit the potentially fertile coitus of *Sol* and *Luna*; no life or growth results. This symbolically suggests that *Sol* is not yet prepared to give himself over to the full experience of the process of individuation. Even after this moment of physical union, there remains an invisible, impermeable barrier between Jean and Mélusine.

As their travels continue, all of Jean's efforts seem doomed to failure. Mélusine keeps more and more to the car, and barely notices when he tries to call her attention to the beauty in the scenery they pass. She simply asks again and again: "Quand est-ce qu'on rentre?" (73). She complains that she is tiring of the long trips, is suffering trapped within the car: "J'en ai assez de rouler, j'ai des fourmis dans les jambes à force d'être mal assise dans cette voiture trop petite" (82), and within the car she faces the same suffocating heat she had undergone in Mulac. After each fruitless pause in their trip, "on se réengouffrait dans la fournaise de la voiture sans climatisation" (74). When they finally reach the sea, Jean is left to sit alone upon the dunes, for despite her complaints of

discomfort in the car, Mélusine has gradually begun to stay inside it, even at stops. She has also taken up knitting; instead of joining him by the sea, “Mélusine a préféré tricoter dans la voiture en laissant les quatre vitres ouvertes” (80). Jean has unwittingly implicated himself in her oppression, and, wearying of her long battle to be heard, she takes on the image of her stoic, passive aunt. She is gradually withdrawing from the world, now isolating herself and relegating herself to the place society would rather she be²⁷¹ – the unconscious, the feminine and nature are still agonizing, yet now conveniently hidden from view.

Soon after their return, Mélusine’s occasional “vanishing acts” finally culminate in a definitive disappearance; one that Jean realizes may mark the end of all hope. For weeks he struggles to find her, with no success. Then he finally learns from a local that Mélusine and her aunt have left Mulac in order to escape the pollution. They gave him no warning of their plans and neither he nor anyone in Mulac knows where they are. Upon learning this, Jean experiences a deep, tormenting pain that corresponds to the necessary dire suffering and death of the ego that must be undergone in order for psychic renewal to occur. And significantly, his description of this pain reveals at last a full and clear understanding of all that Mélusine herself has suffered. Her actions have provoked in him an agony that paradoxically fuses him with her in a way that none of his feeble, self-directed efforts have been able to achieve. He feels precisely what she feels during her attacks, essentially becomes her:

²⁷¹ This behavior reminds of Chawaf’s personal experience described for us earlier in this essay when she spoke of her engagement in her own oppression while living in Syria.

Le démon abdominal, bronchique, macère, muqueux. J’essaie de desserrer le rétrécissement qui m’étrangle, les sécrétions du système nerveux déréglé, les hormones, les molécules d’angoisse, je suffoque, au bout du mouvement reptilien de la maladie qui chemine dans mon ventre; je n’ai plus pour respirer que la peur tenue en dissolution dans mon sang, c’est tout ce qui me reste d’oxygène...Mélusine s’est enfuie. (137)

Jean recognizes that her disappearance is just one of many that will happen as the abused Earth worsens, since, like her, many more of “les espèces sauvages, les êtres naturels allaient disparaître” (148). However, her disappearance was actually a necessity for Jean, for it symbolically marks the withdrawal of projections; now his gaze turns from Mélusine, the outward projection of his own unconscious, to all that lies within. His guide is no longer needed; the unity he seeks is not “out there” somewhere, not to be found in another. This is a key lesson; all too often individuals tend to look to another – be it another person, things, money, drugs, alcohol – to fill the inner void. We have an indication that Jean was doing precisely this, for he admitted earlier on that for him Mélusine “était une fée; non, pire: ma drogue” (77). Now, however, Jean’s psychic growth becomes evident as he begins to reconnect with submerged parts of himself. He here addresses Mélusine, now physically absent, yet within him: “je me sens rejoindre cette partie de moi-même que j’ai perdue avec toi, je me sens gonfler, devenir gélatineux au contact du courant de douceur” (139). He now fully experiences the “tendresse” so needed, according to Chawaf. He also describes for us a transformation whereby he becomes moist, feminine, and experiences an inner illumination:

Je passe intérieurement de l'état sec à l'état humide sous la force de la puissance féminine qui ne me différencie plus de la lumière que je crois reconnaître, comme si je retournais dans son ventre, comme si on pouvait même dans la mémoire désespérée renaître à cette vie abîmée, empêchée dont on est orphelin. Mélusine, ma mère, ma sœur, ma fille, ma femme, la femme de l'homme. Je parle tout seul, je prends les intonations de la fée.

(139)

Clearly Mélusine is to Jean the Mother-unconscious from which his own consciousness was born, Sister-Bride, his own feminine *anima* that complements his masculine consciousness, the two united forming the Self, and daughter, evocative of the new aspect of himself to which their union has given birth. Although he speaks alone, he has taken on her "intonations," thus now he begins to speak with her voice. Significantly, Mélusine narrates the first part of this narrative; in it she reveals to us the suffering of the neglected and abused unconscious. But as the second part opens, the narration shifts to Jean's point of view; it is he who speaks to us to the end, revealing the difficult psychic journey he undergoes as he attempts to "save" the unconscious. Certainly Mélusine plays a vital role throughout this process, but given the centrality of Jean's inner journey toward individuation, as well as the relationship between the two characters identified here, it is evident that from a Jungian perspective, Jean is the actual protagonist in this narrative.

Jean remains in Mulac to feel close to Mélusine and to be there waiting if ever she returns. Although he continues to long for her, like her he now finds pleasure in nature, reveling as she had among the plants: "je m'étends sur le gazon, je me mouille, je me

délecte, [...] je ris tout seul, [...] je suis ivre de vie” (179). Further, like Mélusine herself early on, he seeks to bond with others, to be heard and noticed by them. He feels a connection with everyone he encounters, but echoes Mélusine’s frustration with the alienation between individuals: “je m’identifiais à tout le monde, je ne voulais plus être personne, personne de distinct, [...] je me rapprochais de mon prochain, mais le prochain ne s’apercevait de rien, le prochain restait égoïste, inconnu, on n’était tous que des étrangers, Mélusine nous avait tous quittés, on était tous orphelins” (149). In need of some form of connection, he resorts to spending time in bars and restaurants, always seating himself as close to other tables as possible, listening to others’ conversations; he considers himself “un damné à l’écoute des damnés” (150). In the novel’s third part, aptly titled “Paysages de paroles,” we hear through Jean’s ears snippets of those conversations; a series of mingling disembodied voices reveal the damage that has been done by that very separation from the body the passages evoke. “Ecoutez Mulac” Jean admonishes us, “écoutez la communication en décrépitude, oyez le vieux parler, [...] les dialectes humains en souffrance, nos questions sans réponses, nos brédouillements, nos capitulations, les courages las, [...] les campagnes vidées, les villes en mutation, [...] les innombrables victimes” (150-151). He shares with us the voices of those so in need of the healing unity that Mélusine could offer. Jean regrets their lost ability to connect with this fairy, regrets the repression of the imaginary in modern man, thus echoing the complaints of Mujica Lainez’s Mélusine: “Plus de fees, plus de Dieu, plus d’amour, plus de vie, plus de vérité [...] ; j’entendais à travers la mélancolie les humains livrés à eux-mêmes, dégénérer, perdre pied...” (157).

Finally he receives a letter from Mélusine. Taking her self-inflicted isolation to a shocking extreme, she has rented a fishing cottage within walking distance of a nuclear power plant.²⁷² Her own circular journey has led back to the beginning; she is sealed away indoors once again, but now refuses to go outdoors at all. When Jean tries to convince her to walk with him, she tells him, “Tu ne peux pas marcher avec une morte” (187). And indeed the light is gone from her eyes, she is changed, weak and listless. She has chosen to accept silence and death, now she herself breaks connections with others, with the past. She chooses to be rid of a painting of her great-great grandmother: “ce portrait m’encombre [...] je ne veux rien avoir” (223).

When she has an asthmatic attack, in a moment of admitted cowardice Jean flees, only to find that now there is no escape for him – the sound within him, he realizes, “c’était quand même elle, elle en moi, elle qui ne savait plus que hurler avec des cris d’animaux. [...] Je ne pouvais plus m’éloigner de ces hurlements, ils étaient mes pulsations, ma chair, mon corps, ma vérité” (193). Mélusine’s cries, now emitted not only from her strangling throat but also from within himself, have changed. They no longer sound human, contain no words: “Mélusine ne se donnait plus la peine à articuler, elle parlait à petits cris étouffés” (204). Her cries have been reduced to a “dialecte de miaulements, de gémissements, ces sons de petite bête sauvage” and he finds them “prémonitoires” (204). He wonders “que resterait-il de la langue dans un siècle? Un

²⁷² Krell indicates that 80 percent of the electricity generated in France is the product of nuclear power. He observes that by situating nuclear reactors near both places in which Mélusine lives, Chawaf “exprime l’ubiquité de l’énergie nucléaire” (“*Mélusine des détrit* ou les cris” 5).

abrégé? Une seule langue? Plus rien?” (204).²⁷³ Krell observes that for Jean, Mélusine’s preverbal, incomprehensible cries “annonce la fin de l’humanité telle qu’elle est” (10). We may further recognize these weakened cries as marking the death-throes of a long-neglected unconscious that will die along with us if we are unable to save it and thereby save ourselves.

Although Jean considers himself “prêt à tous les combats pour défendre sa nature” (189), he is still unsure how to save Mélusine. He imagines buying land for her, but where? In his mind’s eye he builds a safe haven for her; like the original Mélusine he seeks to build a fortress, but not of stone, his will be entirely of nature, “du lichen, des branchages, du duvet d’oiseau” (193). But this can only happen in the imaginary. Facing a sense of hopelessness, he loses himself in her within the enclosed cottage, engaging in a “descente dans les grandes profondeurs du ventre de la terre, [...] enfermé avec Mélusine, je me noyais en elle” (223). Eventually he convinces her to take to the road with him again, with no destination, theirs will be a trip to nowhere, and as the title of the last part of the novel suggests, it will also be “La route sans retour” (177). The novel ends not with a period, but with an ellipsis.

This disturbing open ending leaves us wondering if there is any hope at all. But let us reconsider the final actions of Jean in light of the process of individuation. Although the return to the unconscious is a necessity, Jung cautions that we cannot remain in the womb of the archetypal mother. We must return to the surface, to life, and face the challenges of bringing our newly gained knowledge about ourselves into the outer world.

²⁷³ Chawaf’s concern for the degeneration of language, its potential reduction to a language “en abrégé” as it loses out to a globalized, technological one (*L’Erotique* 129) clearly informs this passage.

Earlier in this essay we learned that Chawaf, too, insists that we must go beyond the initial fusion with the body if we are to make the prenatal voice heard – we must continue forward by engaging in the second fusion, that of the prenatal voice with the Symbolic. This is similar to what Jung also sought in written products of active imagination designed to translate the voice of the unconscious into understandable words. Jean has gone wrong for he is still seeking to evade the difficult return to the surface, he is not engaging in the second fusion. Although it may at first seem that by leaving the house in the end, Jean and Mélusine are returning to the surface, this is not the case. Jean was “drowning” with Mélusine enclosed within her cottage; in the end he continues to drown with her. The two are mobile, indeed, but they are fleeing the reality of the world, still enclosed together within the car.

As we have seen, Jean has made progress, has connected with the unconscious, has finally discovered *Eros* and the feminine within. But what has he done with this new insight? Although he complained that the people whose company he desired were oblivious to him, we have no indication of his having ever uttered a word. He knows from all those overheard conversations that there are others suffering like himself, but he does not communicate with them, he simply contents himself to listen. He is the only individual who now fully understands Mélusine’s message, the only person who knows the words behind her cries. In fact, we might also recall that even when her cries *did* express words, no one but Jean listened because she, representative of the unconscious, and consistent with the usual reaction to it, was believed insane. Jean alone listened and followed her guidance. He has undertaken the individuation process. Now he, the conscious mind, is fully equipped to translate the message of the unconscious by

undertaking the second fusion. The need for him to do this is suggested by a key passage near the end of the novel. During one of her crises, Jean had gone in search of help for Mélusine, but to no avail. He describes her reaction when he returns to the cottage:

Quand elle m'a vu, elle a renversé la tête en arrière dans la lumière et ouvert grand la bouche comme pour se préparer à lancer un cri plus puissant, elle a présenté le fond de sa gorge au soleil pour sentir le jour entre ses lèvres et ses dents, descendre à l'intérieur d'elle chercher sa voix profonde, pour que le jour la hisse, qu'il en extériorise le son rentré, qu'il le pousse hors de la chair qui le tenait captif ; et tout ce qu'elle ne savait pas dire, ce qu'elle ne savait pas savoir, tout ce qu'elle tenait bloqué dans la trachée s'est relâché d'un coup, a remonté à la surface du corps, a franchi le barrage de la poitrine, du sternum [...] ; c'était une Mélusine hallucinée, allégorique, visionnaire, prophétique que j'entendais sourdre du cri instinctif où je reconnaissais, dans ce déversement de pulsions et de réflexes, l'opposition à notre progrès trop risqué, à notre violence sans morale. (210-11)

This passage is a reenactment of the individuation process from Mélusine's point of view, and it suggests to us how it must now continue. Here the unconscious opens wide, fully revealing herself to *Sol*, offering him entry. We see him enter her depths, but she does not swallow him, does not hold him within herself. She wisely seems to know he must not remain there, for she remains open to allow his return to the world outside; the unconscious clearly *desires* that return for she desires to be given voice. After an initial fusion, he returns to the surface, and a powerful cry results – one that breaks

through barriers and whose message is recognized. This is the step Jean fails to take in the end, the task of bringing forth Mélusine's message and making it heard in an effort to stop the damage to her and to Earth. Or does he? Throughout this very novel he continually speaks to us, the reader, revealing to us the process he undergoes, even if it is a process he never seems to fully understand. In the novel we also witness Mélusine's suffering and anger and we hear her cries along with Jean, fully translated for us. But our understanding of all of this, of Jean and Mélusine's message, is actually made possible through the mediatory work of Chawaf, an individual who *has* fully claimed the second fusion, and who, despite the moments of doubts she surely faces, as do we all, has not thrown up her hands in despair. As this novel proves, she has not given up and removed herself from engagement with a damaging society in a damaged world like Mélusine, nor does she choose flight from it like Jean. Instead she speaks out for them, for Jean (*Sol*), a concerned consciousness and an increasingly fearful mankind, and Mélusine (*Luna*), the neglected unconscious, the feminine, the body, and nature itself. She also speaks for the worried people of Montmorillon, and indeed for all those who, like her, recognize that the violence and destruction must stop. Channeling all these voices into her writing, this novel brings forth their powerful cries of protest. But Chawaf does not stop short with their warning. She also offers guidance, pointing the way toward the healing process that is so desperately needed, and in which she has already engaged. Let us hope, for all our sakes, that her message will be heard and heeded.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

When Mélusine appeared to Raymondin, his world had come undone. The misplaced blow of his spear had severed not just the belly of his uncle, but his own familial and societal bonds. All that he had believed himself to be was thrown into question, and as he wandered aimlessly through the forest, not only had his sense of self vanished, but with it any sense of connection to his surroundings and indeed to his very own body. Jean d'Arras tells us he still had eyes, but could not see, had ears, but could not hear (61); when he passed near Mélusine by her fountain, he was oblivious to her presence; nature, the body, and the Other may as well not have existed – he was cut off from all of them, and from life itself. This is the moment at which Mélusine was most needed and at which she appeared to him, making herself known, just as Jung tells us the unconscious so often does – by forcibly demanding attention. She took hold of his arm and firmly spoke out. As Bettina Knapp has shown, Mélusine acted as his *anima* and spiritual guide, mediating between consciousness and the unconscious, and thereby effectively returning to Raymondin his lost sight and hearing. As half fairy, (and sometimes flying half-serpent) Mélusine embodies the point of union between the earthly and the supernatural, the real and the imaginary, and humanity and the natural world. In all her ambiguity as a mercurial image “from which singleness of meaning is organically banned” (Hillman 102), Mélusine represents the archetypal healer. As such she made possible the healing of Raymondin’s shattered psyche, enabling him to overcome all the

schisms he faced, both within and without. Yet, in the end, he rejected her and all that she represented: the healing archetype, *anima* and spiritual guide, the feminine, the shadow, the unruly flesh and nature itself, and the equally untamable Great Mother (the unconscious), all closely inter-related and all associated with woman for centuries. Unfortunately, woman, too, has often been rejected part and parcel with these elements, and has thus partaken of Mélusine's fate under the dubious auspices of patriarchal society.

In chapter 2 we learned that Mélusine's story can be interpreted as a reflection of the move from a matriarchal to a patriarchal orientation, a "last hurrah" of the mother goddesses,²⁷⁴ from whom fairies (Mélusine included) developed, and who were gradually subsumed under the authority of God the Father.²⁷⁵ On a societal level, she evokes the shift from feminine to masculine power and authority that went hand in hand with the fall of the mother goddess (reproduced in the flight of Mélusine).²⁷⁶ Raymondin's was a society largely dominated by men and by a one-sided consciousness, overly confident of its own power and determined to ignore or repress all that might threaten to disturb or disrupt the illusion of control. Accordingly male Christian theologians of the time began to insist upon the evils of the flesh and of all those troublesome, disturbing "unknowns" associated with it, including nature, the unconscious and woman herself. They taught that the nature and the flesh must be overcome to preserve the sanctity of the "superior" spirit,

²⁷⁴ Here I follow Pierre Gallais. See chapter 2 above.

²⁷⁵ We might perceive the culmination of this process as that erasure of the feminine from the Godhead, so criticized by Knapp and Chawaf (see chapters 2 and 6).

²⁷⁶ Philippe Walter and Marina Brownlee have both identified this process at work in Mélusine's myth. See chapter 2 for a full discussion.

equated with godliness, knowledge, reason, and culture, all associated with the equally “superior” male. This flesh-spirit divide has long influenced gender relations, resulting in stereotypes that place harmful limitations upon individuals of both sexes – limitations that Mélusine defies and refuses with her androgynous physicality and her transgressive roles encompassing those of nurturing mother, military advisor, and builder of cities. Despite all that she accomplished in these roles, or perhaps because of it, Raymondin ultimately lashed out against Mélusine, calling her a “vile serpent,” echoing his society’s limiting and condemnatory attitude toward woman, considered an inferior being. However, in so doing, he only masked and re-directed his own self-doubts and a certain fear felt before woman,²⁷⁷ the feminine, and the unconscious, all clearly assembled in Mélusine’s form.

As we also discussed in chapter 2, Woman is capable of inspiring overwhelming emotion and desire in man, and her perceived close ties to nature²⁷⁸ uncomfortably remind him of his own dependence upon it, of his own body and mortality, as well as of woman’s power – after all he is dependent upon woman for his very birth. She thus inevitably retains that disturbing trait of the Mother Goddess, power over life and death, as does Mélusine herself. The Mother Goddess corresponds in the psyche to the archetypal Great Mother and Terrible Mother, and, as we learned from Jung in Chapter 1 above, these are representative of the unconscious that wields identical powers to those of

²⁷⁷ Denyse Delcourt’s analysis provides a revealing analysis of the fear at play in this outburst, and according to Le Goff this fear influenced more than just Raymondin; it was evident in men of the Middle Ages in general. See chapter 2 above.

²⁷⁸ This is largely due to her inescapable menstrual and gestation cycles, as we learned from Bettina Knapp in chapter 2.

the Mother Goddess in relation to the conscious mind: the unconscious gives it birth, inspires in it both desire and dread, and is an unpleasant reminder of the power of inner nature, of the archaic being within and to which “civilized” consciousness is so inextricably tied despite its striving to overcome and repress it. A perception of this link between woman and the unconscious clearly influenced the alchemists’ choice of melusinian images to represent the original chaos (the unconscious) and to prefer the male-visaged Mercurius as representation of the perfected goal (the Self), despite the similarly disconcerting ambiguity they both share.

Also in chapter 1, we learned that according to Jung the demonization and rejection of the unconscious (and all associated with it) stems from the inner psychic drama,²⁷⁹ since once that initial and necessary separation from the unconscious occurs, despite a lingering desire or nostalgia for the previous undifferentiated or pre-Oedipal/paradisiacal state, a return to it is sensed as a danger, and with reason, given the threat of psychic disintegration. Men have long tended to project this fear onto woman herself, in light of those links just discussed, hence the theological re-interpretation of Eve’s sin as a sexual one rather than one involving a claiming of knowledge.²⁸⁰ By casting Eve, the flesh and the unconscious (that disturbing seat of natural sexual desires) as evils, man was “safeguarded,” from a dangerous return to the Mother unconscious, represented by both Eve and by Mélusine. The exaltation of Mary was similarly

²⁷⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this psychic drama, see chapter 1.

²⁸⁰ The latter interpretation is the one both Jung and Chawaf would assign this act. Both she and Jung have stressed the ambiguity of the claiming of the “apple,” given that it is as an act of defiance or revolt, thus a “sin,” but an absolute necessity to the development of consciousness. See chapter 3 for Jung’s views regarding this “Luciferian” deed. Chawaf finds that Eve’s claiming of the apple (or knowledge), placed her in a mediatory role. For her views on this topic, see chapter 6, above.

“beneficial” to men and detrimental to women, enabling a rationalization of man’s overwhelming feelings felt before woman, but setting an impossible standard to which women were expected to measure up.

Although on the surface men have fared better than women under the above conceptions, individuals of both sexes have suffered dire consequences from the divisive, destructive, and delusional thinking they involve. Encouraged to ignore and neglect the demands of the body and the archaic being within, to repress inner drives and desires, and to protect the conscious mind from disturbing intrusions of a dangerous unconscious, individuals of both sexes have become cut off from all of these, which are significantly assembled in the image of Mélusine. Society’s intolerance of them can thus be recognized as the underlying reason for her long concealment of her serpentine half, as well as her ultimate flight away from our world.

And yet Raymondin needed Mélusine. We all do. According to Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious, the modern psyche is not so far removed from that of Raymondin’s contemporaries, nor indeed from that of archaic man, as one might think. All of us undergo the same psychic processes, and all of us experience periods of dangerous psychic disequilibrium requiring a return to the Great Mother and the aid of the archetypal healer. Our shared psychic structures thus account for the long endurance of the myth of Mélusine, its emergence under various guises in such disparate cultures through the ages, the ongoing resonance she has with readers of her myth, and the frequent return to and reinterpretation of that myth by so many writers from the Renaissance to the present, including the four whose modern narratives have been explored in this essay.

In every human being the return to the mother/unconscious is a prerequisite to psychological growth and progress toward unity in the process of individuation. Each individual must engage in this process in order to overcome that psychic disequilibrium that results from ignorance or repression of aspects of the Self, as well as the harmful consequences of this disequilibrium for ourselves and those around us: neuroses, splinter personalities, psychological possession, and the projection of aspects of the Self onto others, with the subsequent blame-shifting, misunderstandings, and recriminations that so often result. An unbalanced, divided state within the individual psyche contributes to divisions between the individual and the Other, fomenting resentments, even hatred and violence.

Unfortunately these same problems emerge collectively, as well. When society is controlled by a system either blind to or actively engaged in the repression of its own shadow (done by discouraging individuation and/or silencing the disruptive voices of those engaged in it and who thus refuse an unquestioning conformity and acceptance of dogma), society as a whole experiences psychic disequilibrium, possession, and dangerous projections. The tragic consequences can include the intolerance and persecution of particular groups viewed as “different,”²⁸¹ war within or between nations, and environmental damage or destruction - the very problems that come to the fore in the narratives here addressed. Unfortunately these problems stemming from a one-sided psyche have long plagued patriarchal society and continue to be a problem in modern times. Even today there are efforts to silence the feminine, the body, the unconscious,

²⁸¹ This type of persecution can culminate in such tragedies as the Holocaust, which Jung blames upon just such a state existing in the collective in Nazi Germany, and genocide, which Chawaf similarly attributes to a collectively unbalanced psyche.

nature, and even woman herself. The need to end such repression and for engagement in the individuation process at the individual as well as the collective level is clearly recognized, not just by Jung, but by each writer whose work we have examined in this essay. Breton, Mujica Lainez, Tusquets and Chawaf all find in their societies a rampant neglect of the needs of the psyche and a consequent dangerous absence of relatedness, or *Eros* in Jungian terms. Each of them calls upon the healing of divisions existing both within the psyche and in the world outside – be they divisions between individuals, between societal factions, or between mankind and the natural world. And all of them call upon an end to the harm done to the individual psyche and to the Other, as a result of those divisions.

The narratives of these authors certainly impress upon us the universality of the experience of psychic disequilibrium and the need for wholeness and unity, for they hail from three different countries on two continents and belong to differing generations, the publication of their narratives spanning several decades from the 1940's to the early years of the present century. As they wrote, each one, like Raymondin, faced crisis, as did his or her society. Jung teaches that this is the time in which a dormant unconscious most powerfully demands attention, and in their narratives, as in the case of Raymondin, this is precisely when it surges forth in the form of Mélusine, a vital player in all their works. As I have shown, these narratives all bear traits evocative of Jung's active imagination technique and each functions as an outward projection of inner processes; specifically these authors are engaged in and present to us a quest for increased self-knowledge and wholeness through individuation. In each novel the rich, multifaceted Mélusine emerges

as archetypal healer, that necessary “healing angel”²⁸² who can best guide this process. Mélusine thus comes forth to offer healing not only to the protagonists at the narrative level, but also to the writers and their societies, and indeed to all readers of these works. Not only does each narrative inscribe the authors’ recognition of and concern regarding the problematic societal rejection of a vitally necessary unity, they also, in a guiding role evocative of Mélusine herself, “cry out” to us through their narratives in powerful warning of the urgent need for individuation, and, even more importantly, they provide us within these narratives what is essentially a blueprint for engagement in that process. In this respect, all of them may be seen to engage in a revolt against harmful societal conditions and to be taking action to bring about change.

However, despite all that the narratives have in common, in each of them we encounter unique variations on shared themes. Mélusine’s defiance of singleness of interpretation not only enables us to identify her as the archetype of healing, it also frees these authors to interpret this rich and compelling character in different ways that reflect their individual experiences, contexts, and concerns. The authors’ gender is a primary factor influencing such variations, which is expected in light of those gender issues discussed above and involved in the very development of fairies, as well as in Mélusine’s own myth.

To conclude this essay, we will review some of the key aspects of Mélusine’s role and representation across the four narratives. By juxtaposing these more directly here, certain significant similarities, divergences and patterns will become evident. It is hoped

²⁸² I borrow here from Hillman’s apt description of the healing archetype (62). See a full discussion of this archetype in chapter 1.

that this final analysis will deepen our understanding of the underlying reasons for certain artistic choices and for the subtle variations in the authors' messages and in how these are conveyed, despite their shared over-arching aim to bring about healing and unity.

Two of the four authors are theorists as well as writers, and their theories clearly come into play in their narratives involving Mélusine, thus it is important to preface our review and comparison of those narratives by briefly recalling certain aspects of Breton's and Chawaf's theoretical orientations, clearly influenced by their respective genders. In their theoretical writings, just as in their narratives, there emerges a similar concern about the divisiveness and destruction existing in society. Breton and Chawaf criticize society for being excessively rational, consciousness-driven, and masculine in orientation, which has inhibited individuals from connecting with the unconscious. Both call for a return to the feminine and insist upon the need for *Eros* in a divided world. They, like Jung, hold that women retain a stronger sense of relatedness due to the very links to nature and the body mentioned above. Although these have led to her denigration, both Chawaf and Breton view those links in a positive light. Chawaf calls upon a need for a writing from the body to give voice to the unconscious and improve these connections. Breton's automatic writing suggests a similar process. And in a theoretically-oriented passage from *Arcane 17*, he directly calls for a language that would unite flesh and soul, holding each sacred (47), which sounds strikingly similar to what Chawaf seeks. The theorists agree that due to her special connections with the body and the unconscious, woman is best-equipped to overcome the divide between flesh and spirit, the unconscious and consciousness, and can thus play an important role in bringing about the needed inner and outer healing. However, Breton and Chawaf disagree significantly regarding the form

that guiding role should take. The surrealist Breton conceives of woman's role as that of muse or inspiration, and through contact with her, she who is more "in tune" with the feminine, nature and the unconscious can enable man to gain fuller access to these himself, and thus develop the needed sense of relatedness. Breton calls for the masculine societal system to be overturned and replaced with a feminine one, which appears at the surface to suggest a goal to empower women, but this conflicts with the desire for dominance over women (and the unconscious) expressed in his *Manifestes*. As we learned in chapter 3, the didactic passages of *Arcane 17* reveal that the change he seeks does not imply that women will be in charge, but rather men in touch with the inner feminine; he also suggests he intends to lead women back to the feminine *they* have lost (*Arcane 17* 56). Thus when Breton and Chawaf both call upon writers to revolt against the existing societal system and bring about the necessary change and return to unity, Breton is calling upon men to lead this process, "appropriating" the feminine, while Chawaf is calling upon women to do so. She considers women's closer connections to the body and the unconscious to uniquely equip her to do far more than passively inspire men to seek a similar connection – they are the ones best able to engage in the writing from the body and must, therefore, actively lead the way in giving voice to the unconscious. She considers man's "appropriation" of the feminine not only improper, but ultimately impossible, since they can only hope to access what will inevitably be a "masculine-feminine." In her view women alone will act as mediator; they need not rely upon man to guide them in any way in the process of recuperating the voice of the unconscious, and indeed they must take a stand against any effort on his part to dominate her. Due to personal experience, she understands the danger woman faces of becoming implicated in

her own oppression, but insists it is man's oppression of her that has prevented that voice, and her own, from being heard. As we examine once again the narratives in which Mélusine appears, we must bear in mind these divergences of opinion. We will also attempt to discern where Mujica Lainez and Tusquets fit along the spectrum between the two.

As we return to *Arcane 17*, let us first consider Mélusine's representation within the work. True to the description of Jean d'Arras, Breton presents Mélusine to us as woman above, snake below. Although this initial description already suggests the desired union of opposites, Breton goes further by refusing Mélusine a stable or fixed image, thereby underscoring her ambiguity and capacity to unite. Since her tail emerges from meandering ski slopes, she is shown to link not just human and animal, but also the animate and the inanimate. Her continually morphing body creates associations with earth, water, air, and fire. In this way he stresses Mélusine's ties to nature, and also presents her as a representative of the intersection or union of all elements, which makes her a human-visaged counterpart of the Rocher Percé in which all opposites are also held in harmony. Both, then, represent the supreme point, that point of union representing the unconscious from which the self proceeds, and the ultimate goal of alchemy and individuation – the whole Self, wherein the conscious and unconscious contents are brought together in harmonious union. Given his identification of Mélusine as the alchemical goal, we appear to encounter here some progress since the days of the alchemists, and yet a closer look reveals one missing element – darkness.²⁸³ Breton erases from her any hint of threat in her imagery, replacing the bat wings often seen in her

²⁸³ Pascaline Mourier-Casile first called attention to this problem (103); see also chapter 3 above.

iconography with those of the gentle swallow. He also reduces Mélusine's power, placing her under the sign of the *femme enfant*, which distances her from the Mother Goddess. Further, she is no longer the articulate counselor that was the Mélusine of Jean d'Arras. She is limited to her cry. All of these aspects evident in her representation suggest that a desire to dominate woman and the unconscious ultimately problematizes his attempt to present her as a symbol of unity.

We have discovered that Mélusine is present in *Arcane 17* not only within this initial description of her, but also as a protagonist within a cyclic story of death and rebirth embedded in the narrative. Through this story Breton presents to us the needed individuation process in an effort to convey its necessity and to guide us toward engagement in it. As seen above, this is a primary message shared by all four narratives discussed here. But through this story he equally aims to return hope to those undergoing the traumatic experience of WWII, and to Elisa who has faced the loss of her daughter. This explains his insistence upon the cyclic nature of the process. In the other narratives, we see but a single cycle represented: the conscious returns to the unconscious, accesses elements hidden therein, and is reborn. Yet in Breton's story this happens again and again (this is, incidentally, precisely what actually occurs according to Jung – individuation *is* an ongoing and never-ending process). The repetition of these cycles in which each moment of crisis or death is followed by growth and renewal is designed to impress upon the reader that dark times cannot last and that they actually serve a purpose, for they awaken us to the need of individuation from which arises psychic healing, renewal, and growth.

Throughout this story Mélusine undergoes further metamorphoses, emerging in a myriad of feminine guises, all equally representative of *Luna* of the Mercurius Duplex. These ultimately culminate in her appearance as an un-named Isis who heals the dismembered Osiris, and together they set out into the world in the fourteen directions indicated by the rays of the Morning Star. Osiris is *Sol* of the Mercurius Duplex and has, like Mélusine, transformed into multiple images, beginning with that of the egret of the Rocher Percé, each of them representing her masculine counterpart, the consciousness with which she, the unconscious, merges in the individuation process to form the Self (the Morning Star). Despite Mélusine's clear role as archetypal healer, *anima*, and guide in the process (as seen particularly in her incarnations as the uniting mediators of consciousness and unconscious, the "Verseuse," and the healing Isis), she goes about this work in silence. Ultimately it is Breton himself, as the conscious half of the Morning Star into which Isis and Osiris fuse, who wields the Word and thus takes on the active role of guide and who will share Mélusine's message of unity and healing with the world.

Considered from a symbolic standpoint, this is neither surprising nor inappropriate. Mélusine represents the unconscious, and as we learned from Jung, its language is composed of images that surface in dream states. Through active imagination, the conscious mind, whose domain is that of words, seeks to bring forth the wisdom of the unconscious (gained from the initial encounter of consciousness with the unconscious) in a way that is better understood by the conscious mind. Chawaf would describe this as that second fusion in which the recently accessed language of the unconscious fuses with conscious language (the Symbolic) to produce something new. For Breton, that something is surrealist writing; for Chawaf, it is a writing from the body.

The problematic aspect of Breton's presentation of Mélusine lies in the association he makes between his *anima* (Mélusine) and woman herself. It seems he cannot escape the problem of projection; he expects women to exhibit his idealized notion of the feminine and criticizes those who do not in certain didactic passages within the narrative (as when he condemns war heroines, for example). He evidently prefers to cast not just Mélusine, but also woman herself into the role of *femme enfant*, convinced that what is needed in the world is for women to be "simplement femme" (*Arcane* 17 57). Just by "being," this way, she can subtly (and silently) guide man toward his own femininity. Such a woman poses no threat to his own authority and ensures his utility – she *needs* him to take the active role and speak for her. His own guiding role is the more powerful one, which enables him to "master" woman right along with the unconscious with which he associates her. Breton is evidently still haunted by the flesh-spirit divide and by those same phantasms that have negatively impacted man's relationship with woman for so many centuries.

How does Mujica Lainez's treatment of Mélusine compare? His initial description of her body is true to that of Jean d'Arras, as well, but unlike Breton, he does not make her a shape-shifter; her body is constantly presented in the same way, at least until quite far along in her adventures with Aiol, when her mother's magical spell grants her a new body, that of a young man. Until then, she bears a snake's tail; her wings, as in much of the traditional iconography, are those of a bat. Unlike Breton, Mujica Lainez retains this more fearful image, occasionally even referring to her wings as "vampire wings." He underscores the frightening aspect of the unconscious, evoking the engulfing Terrible Mother who could suck the conscious's "life blood" in psychic disintegration, as well as

the shadow that we would like to hide safely away from view (as Breton did when he, clearly affected by these threats, removed all traces of these archetypes from his own Mélusine). Although Mujica Lainez does not remove her dark side, he does place her in a bell-tower, relegated to where society would rather she stay: out of sight and “out of mind.” Significantly, this Mélusine is unable to exert full control over her wings and her serpentine half; her tail undulates and her wings move as though they had a mind of their own. By these means this author underscores the unruliness of the unconscious that prompts us to attempt to dominate and control it, and equally reminds us of how difficult it is to do so. Jung teaches, in fact, that this is impossible. By presenting Mélusine’s dark aspects (represented in her wings and tail) as uncontrollable, Mujica Lainez appears to inscribe his own experience of the impossibility of fully repressing his homosexual desires, deemed as dark aspects by his society, in spite of the tremendous pressure that society placed upon him to do so. The most he could do was conceal them from the view, just as he conceals Mélusine in her tower.

Another significant contrast between Breton’s and Mujica Lainez’s Mélusines is that the latter is not limited to a cry; far from it, in fact. Like the Mélusine of Jean d’Arras, this Mélusine is quite articulate and expresses considerable wisdom, although that wisdom falls outside the bounds of the conventional and only we, the reader, may hear her – all other characters, except the supernatural ones, are deaf to her. It appears that Mujica Lainez recognizes with Jung that the unconscious holds great wisdom, but one that tends to escape our comprehension and that we too often fail to hear or heed. Although Mélusine serves as *anima* or archetypal feminine counterpart to the masculine consciousness of both Breton and Mujica Lainez, the latter more directly gives her voice.

This seems to hint that Mujica Lainez is less concerned about the domination of the feminine and the unconscious (and of woman herself) than is Breton. This could well be the case given the strong roles women played in his life; he was particularly close to his mother and three aunts, all of whom lived with him in later life until death parted them. It appears that his relegation of Mélusine to a bell tower, mentioned above, is due primarily to his fear of the trouble her revelation would provoke if brought out into the open.²⁸⁴

Whereas a primary preoccupation of Breton is his need to access and simultaneously control the feminine, Mujica Lainez is more concerned with a need to *conceal* his own existing feminine traits in a society that rejects any hint of femininity in those of the male sex. His narrative affords him an opportunity to let that hidden part of himself speak out through Mélusine, his own *anima*. The subterfuge he employs is clear. By placing his message in the mouth of Mélusine, a female and a supernatural creature, he is able to express thoughts, beliefs, and sentiments that would be shocking coming from a male or indeed from any fully-human character. He can openly express his homosexual desire for Airol, a character inspired by his own lover Carlos Bruchman, by placing the female Mélusine in a man's body (since "her" desires for a male seem less shocking), and her supernatural aspect enables the reader to "forgive" the transgressive views "she" expresses concerning the redemption of any kind of sexual relationship as long as it stems from love.

A similarity in their depictions of Mélusine may be identified in her lack of power. Breton's is a weak *femme enfant* in need of his help, and Mujica Lainez's is

²⁸⁴ It is interesting to note that Breton not only gives us evidence of a desire to dominate woman (suggesting his fear of her), but he was also known for his homophobia. He would have been one of those members of society in need of the message of greater tolerance toward difference (particularly in sexual orientation) that is found in *El unicornio*.

weakened as a result of aging, which reflects his own concerns as he faced aging and physical deterioration. She is losing her eyesight and her powers, and is all but forgotten by the human world. Certainly Breton's placing of Mélusine under the sign of weakness is at least partially related to those issues of dominance discussed above, but they are also likely influenced by his shared recognition with Mujica Lainez that the power of the unconscious is fading, and indeed it no longer seems to have a place in this modern world. Both clearly consider this a travesty. They are aware that our ignorance and active repression of the unconscious have weakened its influence, but Mujica Lainez goes further, reminding us that this is ultimately only an illusion. In addition to her unruly body parts that suggest she is not ultimately to be controlled, Mélusine tells us about the ongoing work of fairies despite our blindness to their existence; they continue to subtly affect humans and the world around them, the odd happenings they provoke always somehow given rational explanations. Certainly Chawaf and Jung would agree with Mujica Lainez that supposing the inexistence of these magical creatures is problematic in that it amounts to a denial of very real elements of the psyche once projected into the world around us, and now dangerously denied and buried within. Mujica Lainez, following Jung, reminds us that the unconscious still goes about its business, ignored or not, and can certainly "speak up" in its own way whether we like it or not – it is ultimately not such a helpless *femme enfant* as Breton would like to believe, since if we insist upon ignoring or repressing it, it will eventually come forth against our will and without our even noticing it (which can be a very dangerous state of affairs.) This capacity is revealed in the narrative through Mélusine as well, for despite her waning

powers and invisibility to a world now blind to her, she manages to continue to influence Aiol even if only through his thoughts and dreams.

Mujica Lainez clearly recognizes, like Breton, that only by engaging in the individuation process and thus encountering the unconscious and the shadow within can the inner blindness that has made Mélusine invisible to us be brought to an end. His narrative, like *Arcane 17*, offers us guidance, and thus like Breton, Mujica Lainez steps as author into Mélusine's guiding role. As regards *her* role within the narrative, in chapter 4 we found that Mélusine not only serves as Mujica Lainez's own *anima* figure and as narrator in this work, she also participates in three interrelated quests undertaken within the novel. One of these, the most clearly identifiable quest and the one around which the narrative is structured, is that of Aiol who undertakes the process of individuation. In this quest it is not our narrator Mélusine, but her younger counterpart Azelaís, Aiol's half-sister, who represents Aiol's unconscious with which he must unite, and the two are representative of the alchemical brother-sister pair, their relationship having been placed under the sign of incest in illustration of the extreme difficulty involved in the process toward unity. The second quest is that of the unconscious to gain recognition by the collective consciousness that is so in need of individuation. Here the collective unconscious is represented in the ageless Mélusine as she appears in Aiol's dreams and struggles to gain his recognition, ultimately shown to be possible only once he achieves individuation, since just as he and Azelaís come together in harmony, he finally sees Mélusine. In both of these quests Mélusine and her youthful double Azelaís serve both as archetypal healers and spiritual guides, thus repeating the roles of Mélusine in the cyclic story presented in *Arcane 17*.

Mujica Lainez's country was not at war like that of Breton, but deep societal rifts had already begun to provoke violent confrontations. Both are evidently concerned about the conflict that stems from failure to engage in the individuation process. Both writers are also concerned about pressures to conform. Breton calls for revolt, signaled by the cry of Mélusine, due not only to his realization that it takes revolt against complacent acceptance of established norms for individuals to open their eyes to the need for individuation, but also due to the necessity of revolt against the existing masculine system in order to bring about change. Breton appears confident that such revolt and change can happen. However, Mujica Lainez is less confident, since his own examination of a need for revolt is made not from a broad ideological standpoint, but rather in very human terms that address the harsh realities of the power of societal dogma. This is shown in the third quest Mujica Lainez presents – that of unconscious contents seeking to be made manifest in the outer world. This he explores from the point of view of Mélusine now locked within a man's physical frame. She must struggle to decide whether to hide her love for Aiol, now forbidden for it is a homosexual love, or to reveal it. We witness a painful inner battle as she wrestles with the desire to revolt against established norms and free her true feelings, versus the need to conceal them and thus protect Aiol and herself from the potentially devastating repercussions of such a revelation. Ultimately this quest fails, and Mélusine returns to her tower to spend the rest of her days sealed away from the outside world. Mujica Lainez suggests that until society undergoes a collective individuation that will end its divisiveness and intolerance, the free revelation of unconscious contents that digress from the established norms will not be possible; individuals will continue to be forced to choose between condemnation and persecution

or a silent suffering as they struggle to keep disruptive and “inappropriate” contents hidden from view.

In Tusquet’s narrative, we encounter a similar struggle to overcome societal pressures, but here it is explored from a uniquely feminine perspective. Tusquets recognizes, as do all of the authors whose work we analyze here, that individuation is needed at the collective level, as can be seen in the critiques of Spanish society under the dictatorship that are embedded within her narrative. Tusquets was well aware of the damage wrought by her intolerant, oppressive society upon men and women, and the limitations placed upon women were the most severe. Spanish women were afforded new hope for personal growth during the transition. This moment fraught with possibility appears to inform Tusquets’s representation of Mélusine. Significantly, Tusquets is the sole writer addressed in this essay who presents gradual signs of positive change and growth in her Mélusine over the course of the narrative, which suggests that Tusquets faced the coming changes for Spanish women with a certain optimism. In contrast to those constantly shifting images of Breton’s Mélusine, which only serve to highlight her ambiguity, the changes Tusquets’s Mélusine undergoes involve her progress from a weak Ondine or Little Mermaid (representative of the weakened condition of woman under Francoist society and recalling the weakened Mélusines of Breton and Mujica Lainez), to the powerful Mother Goddess of the original literary myth. We witness this shift in two characters who incarnate her – the protagonist Elia, and her young counterpart Clara. Although Clara clearly acts as Elia’s spiritual guide, ultimately both characters gain in strength through the process of individuation in which they engage together. Tusquets’s application of the myth of Mélusine marks a recuperation of myth as a tool for female

individuation, one denied girls under the dictatorship. She reclaims myth by gradually merging the limiting “pink stories” of little girls, with their “appropriately” passive female characters (Ondine, the Little Mermaid), with “blue stories” or myths, considered boys’ domain, by means of the weak fairy tale characters’ metamorphosis into the mythical Mélusine, a creature who significantly refuses the destructive binarisms that have governed Tusquets’s society. As in all the novels addressed here, in *El mismo mar*, Mélusine takes on the roles of archetypal healer and spiritual guide. Once she fully emerges in all her strength and wisdom in Clara, this ambiguous being who defies categorization and holds oppositions in harmonious union also offers the reader an image of the individualized Self. In Breton we saw an attempt to position Mélusine as goal in his narrative, but that image became fissured due to his reluctance to empower her. Quite the opposite occurs in Tusquets, since her primary concern in the narrative is the urgent need for *women* to take up this process during the transition, a time in which they are finally free to end the psychological stagnation so long imposed upon them. She offers an image of the goal in a powerful feminine form, one likely to resonate with women readers. Mercurius is the more logical representative of the goal for Breton and the male alchemists; thus, although Elia initially encounters a statue of Mercurius himself as she begins her first steps toward individuation, this incarnation of the goal under a masculine dominant is gradually replaced by the female-visaged, flesh and blood Mélusine that emerges fully in Clara, and at least for a time also comes forth in Elia, as they move forward in the individuation process.

In *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, Tusquets does not merge the four elements in Mélusine as does Breton, she instead focuses upon her ties to a single element – water.

Elia and her double, Clara, are clearly presented as creatures of water, directly referred to as ondines or mermaids. Elia's descriptions of Clara frequently suggest the presence of a fish's tail, and not that of a serpent. Such descriptions have contributed to the failure of critics to recognize the presence of Mélusine, for they assumed these initial images were static and were unaware that although Jean d'Arras described her as a serpent, Mélusine, too, has ties to water, through her fountain and the bath in which she transforms. Also, as we learned in chapter 2, she is frequently depicted in iconography as having a fish's tail, her images thus closely resembling those of mermaids. We learn in the novel that both Clara and Elia feel most "at home" in water, and feel awkward and out of place on "dry land." Water is presented as a feminine space, the frequent evocations of the sea reminding us that it is also the space of the Great Mother. The dry land is representative of the patriarchal society from which the feminine and the unconscious (the Great Mother herself) have been expelled. It is significantly within watery settings that the characters undergo their most significant moments of healing and transformation.²⁸⁵ Thus Tusquets expresses the need for a healing return "home" to the mother unconscious from which Spanish women have been cut off, and perhaps equally suggests her own personal need for such a healing return in order to heal the scars of her own difficult mother-daughter relationship (which we see played out in the experience of her character Elia.) Certainly Elia's initial steps into the watery womb of the Great Mother (the dark shadowy foyer of the house where she lived as a little girl) are presented not as a frightening experience, but as a home-coming. Breton appears to be strongly influenced by a fear of the

²⁸⁵ Such backdrops include, for example, the watery description of the dark depths of Elia's childhood home, the boating trip upon "mercurial" water, and Elia's grandmother's house by the sea.

unconscious (suggested by his efforts to maintain dominance over Mélusine), and Mujica Lainez, too, despite his evident lesser fear of woman and the unconscious, does evoke the threat the unconscious mind can pose to the conscious mind when he places it under a vampire-like image. Although women are certainly not immune to psychic disintegration (and indeed Elia does *eventually* demonstrate fear of the unconscious, a point to which we will return) we find here an interesting point of contrast that suggests a difference between men and women, at least in their initial approach to the unconscious. Tusquets would seem to agree with Chawaf that women, not required to break so fully from the mother in life,²⁸⁶ experience the relationship to the unconscious in a different way, finding the return to it less difficult, despite all that society has done to separate them, right along with men, from the feminine, the body, and the unconscious. This is certainly a contributing factor to that perceived special ability of women to act in a mediatory role, guiding men toward those lost connections, a notion put forth by Chawaf, Breton, and Jung. Given that Mujica Lainez and Tusquets place Mélusine in the role of guide in their narratives, it appears that they, too, ascribe to this assumption. It also seems to explain the absence of fear in Elia's freely-taken, self-directed initial steps toward union with the unconscious. Interestingly, Tusquets, like Mujica Lainez, does not attempt to remove the frightening, dark aspect of Mélusine (the unconscious), as does Breton. For example, Elia describes her neighbors' repressed unconscious with a truly fearsome melusinian image – a female dragon with burning red eyes – and Elia's response is tellingly not marked by

²⁸⁶ As we learned in chapter 6, Chawaf attributes men's more decisive break from the mother to their need to avoid the appearance of femininity in a society that does not tend to tolerate the blending of gender roles, especially in males. Certainly this posed a significant problem for Mujica Lainez. More strongly connected to the feminine than other men, he suffered societal condemnation when exhibiting feminine traits generally tolerated in "the weaker sex."

fear, but rather by an understanding of their plight as victims of a patriarchal society forcing repression upon them. She knows that this imposed repression is what has provoked its transformation into something so threatening. This suggests, in keeping with Jungian teachings, that although the individuation process itself poses certain risks, the far greater danger is that posed by the unexamined unconscious and the unacknowledged elements it contains.

Given that individuation cannot occur in isolation (Jung teaches that it in fact *requires* interaction with the Other), after her initial steps, Elia is in need of guidance if she is to make further progress. When she encounters Clara, so similar to herself, and indeed serving in the narrative as a projection of Elia's own shadow, Elia finally experiences fear. She is tempted to flee, but then takes another tactic, laying plans to engage with her, but to maintain dominance. Here we notice a fear of which the conscious mind inevitably partakes, be it that of a woman or of a man. *Both* become fearful when any disturbing repressed elements of the unconscious are encountered, since these will inevitably disrupt our beliefs about ourselves and potentially our lives, as well. Elia's response, her desire to seek dominance over Clara (Mélusine), is particularly interesting for it repeats the reaction of the male writer Breton before her. It thus suggests that at whatever moment the unconscious begins to be felt as a threat, the reaction to seek to dominate it marks a human tendency that crosses barriers of gender. And ultimately Elia learns she cannot control Clara. Thus Tusquets clearly recognizes with Mujica

Lainez and Jung himself, that we are ultimately helpless to ever fully control the unconscious.²⁸⁷

As mentioned above, Clara (Mélusine) acts as Elia's guide within the narrative, thus Tusquets, like all the authors examined here, positions woman in the mediatory role, suggesting that she, too, believes woman is best equipped to serve in this capacity. Mélusine appears as guide in Breton and Mujica Lainez's narratives in the form of their contra-sexual archetype, the *anima*. In Chawaf's *Mélusine des detritus*, Mélusine equally steps into the role of guide as the projected *anima* of the male protagonist, Jean. In Tusquets's narrative alone the protagonist in need of individuation is a woman. Although Elia *does* encounter an image of her *animus* in the statue of Mercurius who seems to beckon her to undertake the process of psychic healing, it is not he who guides her individuation. This is likely not solely due to a perception of a special mediatory capacity of women, but also to the suffering and oppression that Elia (like so many Spanish women of the time) has faced in relation to men and a rigid patriarchal society, who have provoked her lost connection to elements of herself now buried in the unconscious. She evidently shares Chawaf's concerns about women's victimization in this respect.

The elements of herself to which Elia specifically needs to connect include the suffering Ondine/Little Mermaid (her Inner Child) and the lost Great Mother within (Mélusine), both eventually revealed to be contained within Clara, that projection of Elia's shadow. As Clara transforms from the passive Ondine into the active builder and archetypal healer, comforting Elia and creating a protective fortress around her within

²⁸⁷ This has much to do with why Jung stresses that the goal for the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious should be one based upon equilibrium and not dominance, as we learned in chapter 1 above.

which her own transformation into Mélusine can take place, Clara also goes from voiceless Little Mermaid to an articulate Mélusine. Tusquets thus evokes here the Mélusine of Jean d'Arras prior to her flight from the human world, and repeats a key aspect of Mujica Lainez's presentation of her. Elia, like Clara, discovers a new voice in the pre-Oedipal space they access together, that of the body and the unconscious, that voice of Mélusine, the Great Mother, that has lain dormant within her. This is also that very voice so actively sought by writers of *écriture féminine* and by Chantal Chawaf who seeks to fuse it with the Symbolic in her own writing. This voice eludes Elia's attempts to fully express it, but she nevertheless is able to convey to the reader her experience of it through the written word in a narrative that clearly evokes *écriture féminine*. Neither Elia nor Clara are limited to an incomprehensible cry as in Breton.

However, in the end Elia chooses to silence her newfound voice despite the life-changing experience she has undergone with Clara. Tusquets thus offers us an ending with mixed results, for although Clara emerges as a strong, mature young woman, ready to face whatever challenges life may present, Elia appears ultimately to choose the path of least resistance and hide the newly discovered aspects of herself. Although she wisely recognizes that neither she nor Clara can remain forever lost within the pre-Oedipal space and breaks with her, which appears to signal her own preparedness to return and face the challenges of the outer world, when confronted with the difficulties that revealing her new self would evoke, she cuts short the progress she has made. Here we find a parallel with Mujica Lainez, for both inscribe a circular process leading back to the original repression; in both, Mélusine is sent back to her tower, relegated once again to the confines of the unconscious. Through the successes of Aiol and Clara, both writers

suggest a certain hopefulness that progress toward individuation can be made, but both realize that the collective is not yet ready to accept the next step, the outward revelation of inner changes brought about by the process. Neither Elia's nor Mujica Lainez's inner Mélusine is permitted to make herself manifest in the outer world. Although the younger generation represented by Clara may hope to fly like Mélusine, not away from life as in the original myth, but rather *toward* a new and hopeful future, Tusquets seems to recognize that mature women like Elia will find it difficult to overcome the passivity forced upon them by years of oppression. It will be particularly difficult for them to rebel against familial and societal pressures to conform to their old roles. She, along with Breton, Mujica Lainez and Chawaf, recognizes the necessity of revolt if individuals are to make real progress toward wholeness and bring about change. With Mujica Lainez she suggests that until changes are made at the societal level, until there is greater tolerance of the nonconformity that results from individuation, those individuals unwilling to risk the rejection and persecution of their society will continue to subject themselves to the damaging repression of vital elements of themselves. They will be essentially forced to keep Mélusine in hiding.

In *Mélusine des détrit*, this need for revolt is made very clear, and we hear in the piercing cries of Chawaf's Mélusine an expression of the revolt of the unconscious, the body, nature, and the feminine. She represents all of these elements with which society so urgently needs to connect, but that it continues to attempt to ignore and repress. Although her cries are powerful, they surge forth from a frail and ailing body. Thus, here, once again, we encounter a weakened Mélusine, a reminder of the damage that society's neglect of her, and all she represents, has already caused. Chawaf shares the

same concern expressed in all the narratives we examine here regarding the divisiveness and destruction this situation produces, both within the individual and in society. The chief concern she addresses in her novel, however, is the destructive effect this has upon our environment, thus her Mélusine is shown to have a particularly close affinity with nature. Although the tendency in society is to imagine nature under the guise of a powerful, fruitful Mother Nature, which would evoke the Great Mother aspect of Mélusine, Chawaf's fragile character has more in common with Breton's femme-enfant and the passive Ondine encountered early on in *El mismo mar*. She displays none of Mélusine's Great Mother aspect nor do we ever perceive any glimmer of its emergence as we did in Tusquets's Clara and Elia; Chawaf's Mélusine is both childless and motherless and is presented under the sign of sterility, thus evoking both nature's abandonment by mankind and its own growing sterility stemming from the damage we are inflicting upon it. The only change we perceive over time in this Mélusine is a negative one; rather than gaining strength, she becomes steadily weaker over the course of the narrative. Whereas Tusquets inscribes in her Mélusines' growth a degree of optimism stemming from drastic societal changes that were underway in her society as she wrote, offering real and substantial increases in freedom that would afford women new opportunities for individuation, Chawaf writes at a time when there is no hint that the desperately needed change is coming. She sees only a steady increase in pollution, a growing number of nuclear power plants, and a deepening rift between humanity and the natural world upon which we seem to have forgotten we rely, a problem she sees as largely due to a rampant refusal to acknowledge our own bodies and the archaic being within, now buried deep

within the unconscious mind. Thus Chawaf has far less reason for optimism.²⁸⁸

Nevertheless, her Mélusine, presented as weak and steadily weakening, continually cries out in protest and warning against this dangerous situation.

Like the Mélusine of Mujica Lainez, Chawaf's Mélusine is articulate and fully capable of expressing her complaints, which are in fact quite similar to those of that Mélusine as well. Both deplore the fact that the modern, industrialized, rational world in which they live has no room in it for them or their kind. There is no room for the 'illogical,' unruly and disturbing elements they represent. Both speak these complaints, significantly, from a confinement that has been forced upon them. Mujica Lainez's Mélusine was unable to make herself known centuries before in a society already blind and intolerant, the one that prevented her from revealing herself to Aiol. The confinement of Chawaf's Mélusine is directly due to the pollution that makes it impossible for her asthmatic lungs to breathe outdoors, but this ultimately stems from a similar societal blindness and rejection of all that she represents. At least initially, this young Mélusine, unlike the Mélusine of Mujica Lainez, and equally unlike her stoicly knitting aunt, refuses to complacently accept the condition to which she has been relegated, hence her strident cries of protest directed to all who pass by her home. We might notice that these starkly contrasting images of the youthful Mélusine and her elderly aunt engaged in her own oppression are, at least initially, reminiscent of Tusquets's Clara and Elia: the younger woman ready to actively claim a place for herself in the world, the older woman

²⁸⁸ Chawaf finished writing her novel in October 2001, just one month after 9/11. This, too, could have contributed to the hopelessness at its end. She comments upon this tragedy in *L'Erotique des mots*: "Le 11-Septembre, c'est un bon en avant dans la déshumanisation de la terre, dans l'étrangeté du mental non-maîtrisé, dans l'obscurantisme de l'inconscient privé du secours d'un langage de compassion et de fraternité. C'est la barbarie" (194).

unprepared to engage in the revolt this requires. The verbalized and physically-inscribed pain of Chawaf's young Mélusine and the silent suffering of her aunt reveal that Chawaf, like Tusquets, recognizes the plight of women in a society that rejects the feminine, the unconscious, the body, and nature, in that they, too, are so often oppressed along with these. This likely contributes to their shared expression of their female characters' need for water in their novels. Both closely link their Mélusines to that element. Similarly to Clara and Elia, so awkward on "dry land," Chawaf's Mélusine only feels fully at home by her river (thus here, too, we see her ties to Ondine) and she can only emerge from her confinement indoors on rainy days or at night when the sun is gone (which aligns her with *Luna*, the unconscious). Chawaf does not refer to the patriarchal society from which the feminine (i.e. water) has been exiled in terms of "dry land" as does Tusquets, but rather in terms of an unbearable heat – the oppressive sun (*Sol*) unmediated by rain, beats down upon Mélusine, in combination with the polluted air, and her breath is completely stifled. In this description of the conditions in Mulac, Chawaf clearly establishes the psychic disequilibrium that has come from the stifling of the feminine and the female herself, whom Chawaf considers the ideal and necessary mediator who can return balance and heal society.

Chawaf, like the other three writers analyzed here, inscribes the needed individuation process within her narrative. She does this through Jean's quest to save Mélusine, which serves as an allegorical representation of this process in which Jean (*Sol*) represents the conscious mind, man, and the masculine dominant collective (even mankind itself) and Mélusine (*Luna*) represents his *anima*, the unconscious, the feminine,

nature and the body with which we ultimately see him gain connection, under the guidance of his *anima*, archetypal healer, and spiritual guide, Mélusine.

Unlike Tusquets, Chawaf, although equally concerned about women's oppression, represents the individuation process of a male character. But by raising it to the level of allegory, we should recognize that this approach in no way excludes women from engagement in the process. Simply put, Jean represents the conscious mind in need of individuation, which implies his coming together with the unconscious, Mélusine. This process, as shown in the defense of Jung found in chapter 1, is one in which a feminine consciousness can equally engage. But by applying to this process the same gendered imagery used by the male alchemists, Chawaf effectively represents the individuation of a collective marked by a masculine dominant. The male character, Jean, serves as its logical representative. Further, by positioning Jean and Mélusine in these roles, Chawaf effectively represents the flesh-spirit divide and the unfortunate divisive dynamics between conscious and unconscious, men and women, society and individual that resulted from it, and that she knows must be altered. Her placement of the female character in the mediatory role is also in keeping with Chawaf's belief (shared, as we have seen, by the other three writers) that women are best equipped for this task, and can enable men to reconnect with all they have lost.

As Jean engages in the process, we see his initial idealization of Mélusine, reminiscent of that surrealist tendency to place women upon a pedestal, which is what Breton seems to do with his *femme-enfant*; Jean even attempts to dominate her at times, trying to silence and confine her himself, for, as Elia also experienced upon her meeting of Clara, when one begins to encounter repressed elements of the unconscious, one is

often bothered by them and would rather not bring them out into the open. Eventually her hold upon him grows stronger, and he experiences at times a nearly crippling fear before her, as she lashes out against him in an evocation of the Terrible Mother, still weak, but fully able to inflict harm upon Jean, the conscious mind. Given the threat presented by this Mélusine, we find that only in Breton is her threatening aspect removed. Like Tusquets and Mujica Lainez, Chawaf here reminds us that even though she may appear to be weak, the unconscious continues to wield power over us, no matter how effective our repression of it may seem, and despite our efforts to control it.

Although her Mélusine gradually deteriorates, in Chawaf we encounter a positive evolution in a single character – Jean himself. He suffers and struggles in this process, fully consistent with Jungian teachings; nevertheless, we see him transform, fully gaining a sense of relatedness, of love, not just for Mélusine, but also for nature and for his fellow human beings. Breton, Chawaf, and Jung all insist upon the vital necessity of this sense of relatedness that comes from first bringing together the opposing elements within the psyche in the individuation process, and certainly we see the emergence of *Eros* in Tusquets, as Elia and Clara's relationship deepens, and in Mujica Lainez, when Azelaís, and Aiol are joined with his rejuvenated consciousness (the healed Leper king) all fused in joyful union. Although Breton's cyclic story of Mélusine (Isis, *Luna*) and Osiris (*Sol*) does not directly offer the experience of an individual's developing feelings for the Other over time, the symbolism he employs represents relatedness to us as his characters continually merge into other beings, sometimes human, sometimes animals or insects, even plants, and their sexual union (for instance as rose and butterfly) express their coming together in love.

Although Jean makes progress in the individuation process, in the end he makes the mistake of seeking to remain in the pre-Oedipal symbiotic state. He “drowns” with Mélusine, first sealed away in her cottage by the sea, then in his car, as they embark on their ride to nowhere. In both cases they are seeking to escape and hide from the world outside. Tusquets’s Elia wisely broke with Clara, knowing that it would ultimately be psychologically damaging to remain hidden away forever in their feminine pre-Oedipal space. It would deny further growth. And although Elia unfortunately later retreats, taking no action to effect change in her life, we see Clara emerge from that space to embark upon a journey like Mélusine and Jean, but a hopeful one toward the future. In Mujica Lainez, we are not able to see whether this second step, the return to the outer world, occurs in the individuation process of Aiol, for his union with the unconscious takes place in the celestial space; he has clearly been reborn, but has passed from life and thus no further opportunity for this next phase of individuation is offered. However, we do see the second step (specifically the effort to bring into the open the newly-gained self-knowledge) represented in Mujica Lainez’s narrative in the struggle of Mélusine to fully reveal herself. She sadly fails, thus, like Tusquets, Mujica Lainez offers us a mixed ending, with disappointment and hope intertwined. Breton only gestures toward the second step in the process, that return to the world, for at the close of his narrative Mélusine (*Luna*) and Osiris (*Sol*) embark upon a journey out into the world, clearly to spread the message of the hope and healing that comes from individuation. Breton here equally gestures toward active engagement with the world, an effort to bring change, and thus the necessary revolt. Consistent with his knowledge that Paris had been liberated, and thus the war was ending, and his evident overall aim to bring hope and healing to

those who have suffered through the war, his is the “happiest” ending. When compared with Chawaf’s, we find a particularly interesting parallel and a key divergence, for both narratives are open-ended and present *Luna* (as Mélusine) and *Sol* (as Osiris and Jean respectively) setting out on a journey. But in Chawaf, there is no destination and no hope. Neither Jean nor Mélusine have any plans to strive to bring change in the outer world; they have given up. She no longer cries out with words, instead now participating in her own oppression, enclosing herself and knitting stoically like her aunt. Thus we see her switching from her earlier resemblance to Tusquet’s Clara and slipping, sadly, into Elia’s role, resigned to her fate. She is following the tragic circular trajectory of Mujica Lainez’s Mélusine who strove, at least for a time to come out into the world, but ultimately returned to her tower in defeat. Like her, Chawaf’s Mélusine had once embarked on a more hopeful journey with Jean, seeking a place where she could breathe freely; she, too, failed. Now they intend to simply flee together for however long there is left for them to survive.

It is clear that Chawaf’s ending offers less hope than any other narratives we have examined, and, as mentioned above, she has far less reason to be optimistic than Breton, given the scarcity of indications that change is on the horizon. The ultimate message of his cyclic story of death and rebirth is that dark times cannot endure, so we should not lose hope for the future and should instead view those dark times as affording us opportunities for growth. Tusquet’s mixed ending suggests new hope for women to individuate, but the harsh reality of how difficult it will be to translate that into real life changes, given ingrained individual tendencies to shy from revolt and society’s ongoing tendency to reject those who do refuse to conform. Mujica Lainez offers a successful

story of individuation, but, disconcertingly, one that occurs in the celestial space. Given this, and his Mélusine's failure to become manifest in the world, he clearly conveys that although individuation is possible and urgently needed, far too few here below, in real-world society, have undergone the process for us to be able to put an end to the intolerance of nonconformity. Chawaf's even darker view is certainly understandable, given the primary concern of her narrative – the destruction of the world around us. To follow Breton's hopeful suggestion of viewing the darkness as transitory is simply not possible, since the encroaching darkness of a dying world cannot be viewed as in that way. Either we will stop the darkness or it will consume us all – if there *is* any rebirth after that death, humanity will not be here to witness it.

However, through her ending Chawaf is not just warning of the impending doom, she is also warning of the danger of our giving up. The ultimate mistake made by Jean (the conscious mind) in his allegorical journey is his failure to engage not just in the second step of emergence from the pre-Oedipal, but also his failure to channel that voice he encountered while there (which clearly suggests the value of Chawaf's writing from the body). The world around him refused to hear or heed Mélusine (the unconscious) because her behavior and wisdom escaped the understanding of a blind society cut off from the inner world, and it labeled her insane. Jean not only needed to return to life and take action for his own and Mélusine's benefit, but also for all those blind individuals surrounding them. They needed him to reveal to them that voice he alone understood. By refusing to engage in this way, Jean's flight to nowhere with Mélusine becomes an acceptance of the destruction – the destruction that Chawaf adamantly refuses to accept, as is made clear by her having written this very narrative. Similarly, when Tusquets and

Mujica Lainez express through their ambiguous endings a concern regarding ongoing societal limitations and divisions that force their characters to give up, they themselves are clearly *not* doing so – they are speaking out against the harmful state of their societies. And Breton is clearly prepared to do battle against a masculine system that has created such dangerous rifts in the psyche and in the world.

Breton, Mujica Lainez, Tusquets, and Chawaf are all engaged in the kind of revolt that must happen at the individual level if we are to even initially undertake the vitally needed process of individuation, but, even more importantly, if we are to face the further and greater challenge of bringing the often disruptive results of the changes we undergo through that process and the often disturbing but necessary knowledge that we gain from it out into the world. And for change to come at the collective level, for society to finally recognize its shadow, to finally see how its suppression of the unconscious, the body, nature and the feminine is harming individuals, society itself, and the natural world of which it seems to have forgotten it is actually a part, this revolt will be required of not just a handful of individuals, but on a massive scale. This is why Breton and Chawaf did not limit themselves to experimentation with their new kinds of writing for their own personal benefit, despite the fact that automatic writing and writing from the body both emerged from a deeply personal experience that activated their own individuation by enabling them to access and hear the unconscious. They realized the tremendous value of such a process, and the need for others to make those connections to bring about a collective individuation that could unify all of us and end the destruction. That is why both called upon all writers and artists to engage in such a process and to make it known. They, along with Tusquets, with her writing so similar to *écriture féminine*, and Mujica

Lainez, with his baroque style, all engaged in a kind of writing that, like Jung's active imagination, brought forth archetypal images, the language of the unconscious. In the narratives of these four writers we have seen that language coalesce into the powerful image of Mélusine, the archetypal healer. They all know that her healing work must be done within the individual and the collective psyche if change is to come. And this knowledge they have chosen to share with all of us. By offering to us these narratives that are essentially projections of the psychic journey in which they themselves have engaged, they all step into the guiding, mediatory role of Mélusine herself. By offering us not just warnings, but clear representations of the process in which we all must engage, they point the way toward the healing process of individuation. Evidently the closures of most of these narratives disturb and throw into question the possibility of success – the possibility that the unconscious, the feminine, nature, and the body, even woman herself, can gain full validation and reclaim their rightful place in the world, thereby restoring the lost equilibrium. However, in all of them we can clearly identify a glimmer of hope, even if only in the absolute refusal of Mélusine to be silenced. For through each of these narratives, themselves clear representations of her powerful cries, we can hear her eternal voice calling us to action, urging us to engage in the work that must be done to bring forth the unity so urgently needed by each of us and by our suffering world.

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