



**God the Mother:
The Creatress & Giver of Life
By: Lawrence Durdin-Robertson**

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Printed by Redmond Print, Kildavin, Bunclody, Co. Wexford, Eire.

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God The Mother
The Creatress and Giver of Life

by

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Cesara Publications



Clonegal Castle, Enniscorthy, Eire.

Printed by Newark Printers, Clogrennan, Carlow, Eire.

Anno Deae Cesara, Hiberniae Dominae, MMMMCCCXXXII.

Dedication:

**This book is dedicated to
my wife, Pamela**

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PART I.

THE MATERNAL SOURCE

In his *History of Women* published about two hundred years ago, Dr. William Alexander makes this statement: "Whenever female deities have obtained a place in the religion of a people, it is a sign that women are of some consequence; for we find in those modern nations where the women are held in the most despicable light that even their deities are all of the masculine gender." (cit. *Rel. of Gdss*, 5).

This assessment recognized the basic difference between matriarchal and patriarchal religions. Both are inextricably tied to the social attitude to women. But whereas the former develops where the role of women is understood & appreciated, the latter where it is devalued. The one is fundamentally affirmative, the other negative.

Matriarchal religion is based on personal experience, the experience resulting from the impacts which the female makes on our lives. These impacts are classified by Jung under three headings. Writing on the maternal archetype he describes "the three essential aspects of the mother, her cherishing and nourishing goodness, her orgiastic emotionality and her Stygian depths." (*Four Archetypes*, 16). Those who will allow themselves to accept these as divine revelations have the basis of a natural theology.

Patriarchal religion has no such basis. While the impact of the male may be stronger than that of the female in such secular fields as politics, economics and technology, his positive religious impact is weaker. In proof of this one has only to take the three female attributes listed by Jung to see that the male's religious role is entirely subordinate to that of the female.

Patriarchal religions, therefore, having no basis of their own, have adopted the expedient of arrogating to themselves those powers which are the property of the female. Even a cursory reading of the scriptures, creeds and dogmas of such religions will demonstrate the extent to which they have gone. Claims are made, for instance, by the male godhead both to create and to give life, neither of which he can do.

The practical effects of this artificial basis of patriarchal religions are seen throughout history. While the male based religions have often played a valuable role in initiating and in maintaining advances in certain fields of social ethics, these have often been vitiated by an invidious discrimination against women. In fact, like other authoritarian regimes based on usurped powers, whose main preoccupation is the removal of the true claimant, male monotheistic religions are characterized by a consistent policy of suppressing the female, at least in her peculiarly religious aspect. For instance, the draconian taboos connected with menstruation, the repressive measures directed particularly against women's sexual freedom and the reluctance to admit women to religious offices, all these are indications that male monotheism, consciously or subconsciously, is aware of its insecure foundation.

But there is always a limit to the extent to which the artificial can impose upon the natural. In the religious survey of Dr. Alexander of two hundred years ago, maternally based religions seem to have been superseded. Female deities appear only as a nostalgic memory from the past. Where they were still worshipped were in areas remote from western Civilization; and there, too, they seemed no more than a vanishing anachronism. Patriarchal religion, usually in the form of male monotheism, appeared dominant. And even though many people were already ceasing to believe in it, it was generally regarded as the only acceptable religion for the world.

A different picture is presented in a religious survey recently published. Margot Adler, in her book *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshippers and other Pagans in America Today*, writes: "In the last ten years, alongside the often noted resurgence of 'occult' and 'magical' groups, a diverse and decentralized religious movement has sprung up (p. 3.). It is significant that this movement is not confined to some remote region left behind by western civilization, but to a country which is in the forefront.

While at first sight it may not seem that this resurgence is in a particularly matriarchal direction, yet a closer examination shows that in fact it is so. Most of the religions described in that survey are polytheistic; and in nearly all polytheistic religions there is a numerical equality of gods and goddesses. But in view of the fact that the goddess is, from a religious point of view, more potent than the god, these religions have a resultant matriarchal emphasis. This can be seen in the syncretic polytheism of later Roman Empire. In the course of time it was Isis who emerged as the

supreme deity of the Pantheon. As Dr. Witt writes of her: "She could assume the eagle of Zeus, the lyre of Apollo and tongs of Hephaestus, the wand of Hermes, the thyrsus of Bacchus and the club of Heracles. (see Vandebek, 139).. She came as the champion of polytheism. Yet even more strongly she asserted she was herself the one True and Living God." (*Isis in Graeco-Roman World*, 129). Similarly Larson describes the flowering of the worship of Isis: "In short, without Isis there would have been .. no mystery and no hope of an after-life. She became the universal and infinite benefactress of humanity, the eternal protective mother, the queen of earth and heaven." (*Rel. of Occident*, 9). And when to this is added "Isis can embrace Venus/Aphrodite as she did Hathor in Egypt. Regarded as lo she could be said to make 'many women what she was to Jupiter:' (Ovid. *Ars Amator*, I. 78)" (Witt, 85), we see in her the full expression of the three female attributes described by Jung.

The same ultimate supremacy of the Goddess in polytheism is seen in Eastern religions. Professor Norman Brown writes as follows of the Indian goddess Devi (Parvati): "The final word in Parvati's history was reached when she was identified by followers with the all-powerful feminine principle considered to be the fundamental and dominant element in the universe. Devi's supreme position among the gods as the first principle of the universe is forcefully affirmed in the Shakta texts .. She is mind and the five material elements .. She is also the supreme and unseconded intelligence and pure Bliss .. She embodies the whole power of creative love, from which everything springs .. To her devotee she is all grace and motherly concern". (*Kramer, Myth. Ancient World*, 312-3).

Polytheism, though emphasizing the goddesses, does not suppress the gods. While the former are sources of creation and originators of life, the latter are given an important role as ministers of the goddesses. Thus, in the later Graeco-Roman polytheism, while the goddesses hold control over the attributes of the gods, the gods assist them in the administration of their gifts. Jupiter is still required to assist Juno in government, Apollo to assist the Muses in the arts, Vulcan to assist Minerva in technology, and so on. The positive role played by the god in the male monotheistic religions continues undiminished. Each god, called on to use the special gifts entrusted to him, has his honoured place in the Pantheon. As Margot Adler writes: "There is a place for the god, but the female as Creatrix is primary." (p. 120).

The current search for matriarchal theologies is proceeding along several lines. Some people are looking for them in the religion of their own upbringing; while retaining the familiar names, iconography, buildings and even certain forms of worship, the theology is feminized. Others, more radical, change to an entirely different religion, either already being practised or in the process of formation. Others prefer to select or to synthesize from the matriarchal elements of all religions.

The theologies presented in this book are, as far as possible, representative of all these types. For convenience, each is listed according to the country of its origin, even though it may later have incorporated elements from outside, or, in its own turn, itself have become established in another country.

The nationalities are listed in the following order, arranged more or less according to the location and to the chronological period in which the religion flourished: General Prehistoric, Chaldean, Syrian, Hebrew, Egyptian, Hittite, Anatolian, Cretan, Graeco-Roman, Hebrew-Greek (including Gnosticism and early Christianity), Persian (including Parseeism), Indian, South-East Asian (including Buddhism), Chinese, Japanese, Celtic, Norse, Slavonic, American, Oceanian, Medieval Western, Later Jewish (including Kabbalism), Later Jewish Derivatives (including later Christian), Renaissance Western, Modern Western.

Prehistoric.

The prehistoric eras, while providing little in the way of written theologies, present ample iconographic evidence that the people of those times had a basic theology. Judging from the numerous artifacts which still survive, two fundamental theological premises may be inferred. The first is the belief that female beings are the source of magical and religious powers. The second is the belief that these powers originate exclusively in the female sex.

The first of these beliefs appears as an intuition accompanying the first beginnings of human consciousness. As James Layer writes: "Ever since the first dawn of thought gleamed upon the dark landscape of instinct, man has regarded woman with a mixture of attraction and awe. Woman as the gate of life: Woman as the object of desire: ... The body of woman has always been heavy with magic, mysterious as life itself." (*Homage to Venus*, 2).

The first outward formulation of such a belief, the first theology in fact, would probably have been the female idol. Certainly, the people of those remote times seem to have been aware of the religious potency of such symbolic images, how by means of these they could receive from the object of their worship, whether it be a woman individually known to them or a more publicly acclaimed goddess, those powers which she generated. They must have been aware that the idol could be used as an extension of her physical body, so that by coming into contact with it, by touching it, by looking at it or even by making a mental picture of it, they would actually be making contact with her. A channel of communication would be made whereby the vital powers emanating from her body could pass into that of her worshipper.

The assumption that these figures have some sort of religious significance is made by writers in such diverse fields as archaeology, social and religious history, psychology and art.

Erich Neumann, describing himself as "a psychologist of culture" writes in his well known book, *The Great Mother*, "With the stone age sculptures of The Great Mother as a goddess, the Archetypal Feminine suddenly bursts upon the world of men in overwhelming wholeness and perfection. Aside from the cave paintings, these figures of the Great goddess are the earliest cult works and works of art known to us. This is true regardless whether we take them to be twenty thousand or only twelve thousand years old." (p. 96.)

The church historian, William Albright, suggests that these figures show the recognition of the magical powers of women. He describes how, "in deposits of clear Aurignacian age are statuettes of nude women. All are alike in stressing only the breasts, abdomen and hypogastric regions. . . The breasts are invariably heavy and pendulous and the abdomen protrudes. . . all of which remind us of Halafian and later analogies.. and make it evident that these figures have been used as amulets". (p. 132)

While some of these figures present women as the general source of religious power, others by emphasising some particular female attribute concentrate on a more definite theological concept. Many of these earlier figures, as Neumann points out, show woman in the form of a vessel, the all containing Deity. He describes how "These figures of The Great Mother Goddess are primordial types of this feminine elementary character. In all of them the symbolism of the rounded vessel predominates. The belly and breasts, the later often gigantic, are like the central region of this feminine vessel, the "sole reality". In these figures the fertility of the feminine has found an expression both prehuman and superhuman. The head is sightless, inclined toward the middle of the body; the arms are only suggested and they too stress the middle of the body. The gigantic thighs and loins taper off into thin legs; the feet have broken off, but there is no doubt that they were frail and by no means conceived as supports of the giant body vessel. In the magnificent Lespugue figure, whose breasts, belly, thighs and triangular genital zone form a single cluster, this symbolic fulness of the elementary character is still more evident than in the naturalistic and therefore less symbolic Venus of Willendorf." (p. 96.)

The same theological concept suggested by these figures is seen by Doreen Valiente. "Woman was the vessel of fertility, the vessel of life."

"The first known artistic works of humanity are little figurines representing nude or pregnant women . . . Beside them the pyramids are things of yesterday. They are not portraits. They represent rather the abstract principle of fertility, of life itself; A goddess of fertility; man's most primordial object of worship." (*ABC of Witchcraft*, 7)

The woman vessel idols also suggest another theological view, that of woman as a source of nourishment. Within her vessel she would generate vital powers which she could then emit through certain parts of her body. Vessels of this type, according to Neumann, are characterised by being open rather than closed, and take the form of bowl, goblet, chalice or grail. "the fact that these symbols are open in character and form ... accents the motif of giving, donating." (p. 47)

While the particular forms which these gifts take may vary widely, they are sexual in their origin; and for this reason female idols are characterised by a particular emphasis on the sexual zones. A very common feature of primitive images, therefore, is their steatopygia, the disproportionate breadth and fulness of their thighs and buttocks. This is often coupled with pronounced breasts. This emphasis is not accidental: it is a deliberately employed technique to give further efficacy to the idol by drawing attention to the particularly potent zones. Thus Neumann explains: "It

would be a mistake to derive this steatopygia from any racial characteristics. (Levy. p. 58.) This quality of the Great Primordial Mother is exceedingly widespread and is found in regions where there can be no question of a particular African or Hottentot type." (p. 97) Among the illustrations he gives of this type of figure are examples from Crete, Rumania, Austria, France, Malta, Thrace, Cyprus, Persia, Mesopotamia and Peru.

But this steatopygia is itself only ancillary to the chief outlet of numinal power, the vulva. Neumann continues, "Side by side with these representations in which the posterior is emphasised, stand other nude figures of goddesses in which the genital triangle is particularly stressed." Their distribution can be traced from predynastic Egypt through Syria, Mesopotamia, Iran and Asia Minor to Troy, the Aegean islands, Cyprus and Crete and southern Europe.

This group overlaps with another in which the genital triangle is again prominent but which is further characterised by a "holding of the breasts"; that is to say, the character of fertility and sexuality is accented.

"As early seals show, the nude Great Mother with emphasized genital zone was also known in India as the goddess of sexuality and fertility." (Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, vol. 1. pl. A8.) (p. 103).

Emphasis on the vulva is particularly pronounced in the "Baubo" figures of Priene. Here the upper part of the torso is entirely omitted, the head being placed immediately above the genital triangle. These figures clearly demonstrate that the vulva was to be regarded as the theological focus.

From a study of their ancient imagery, it is evident that the people of those times regarded the female being as central to their theology. Neumann, writing on the body of the great goddess states: "her display of her breasts, belly or entire naked body is a form of divine epiphany". (p. 128).

But the truth of this need not rest only on the evidence of scholars. It may be experienced directly by any one, subject to the required preconditions. Firstly, one needs to approach the female idol, or a representation of it, in the role of a worshipper, without any reservations. Next, one must be willing to receive, again without reservations, the flow of forces which emanate from the body of the female being which the idol represents.

The second basic theological principle, the belief that these vital forces originate exclusively in the female sex, can also be inferred from these prehistoric artifacts. Neumann writes: "Of the Stone Age sculptures known to us there are fifty five female figures and only five male figures. The male figures, of youths, are atypical and poorly executed (Bohmers *Die Aurignac Gruppe*), hence it is certain that they had no significance for the cult. This fits in with the secondary character of the male godhead, who appeared only later in the history of religions, and derives his divine rank from his mother, the Goddess". (p. 95). Geoffrey Ashe presents the same findings. He writes in *The Virgin*: "Early stone age art gives us no proven images of male deity. But it does give us female ones - figurines with gross breasts and bellies, exaggerated tokens of motherhood. The primitive sculptures leave no message and the precise meaning of their work is open to challenge. But as the theme undergoes its long drawn transition, it flowers without dispute into the imagery of a goddess centered religion". (p. 10)

There are also ways by which iconography can suggest a supremacy of the female. In mixed groups of female and male figures the former can be specially emphasized.

One of the most important religious differences between the female and the male is the fact that the female is the giver while the male is the recipient. Thus, in perhaps the earliest type of mixed female and male groupings, the mother and son, the difference is pointedly shown in the woman giving her breast to her son who is drawing from her the vital nourishment. The female is enlarged to a size far beyond that of the male. This magnification is often seen in the mother and son groupings, while the mother is shown in massive proportions - contrasting with her diminutive infant. Neumann gives the following examples: "The archetypal situation of the mother-child relationship is most apparent in representations of primitive peoples. The Peruvian jar of the mother with child strikes one as one of the most outstanding representations of this archetype. The steatopygia is unmistakable and again the woman is represented as a vessel, but also is carrying a vessel and holding her breasts. Somewhere at the side of this mountainlike mass hangs a human creature whose characterization lies somewhere between infant, old man and ape. But this gigantic woman, on whom the little one "de-pends" in the literal sense of the word, stares straight ahead of her, "magnificent".

"In our first African example the child is again tiny and dependent, here also the vessel stands beside the woman as companion symbol, but the expression of the woman is entirely different. It is the triumph of wild motherhood, whose proud, overpowering pleasure with all self- satisfaction is not unrelated to the child". (p. 129).

By another technique the woman is placed in such an attitude as to be the natural focus of attention. Neumann thus describes a bronze group of the second millennium: "The nude Hittite goddess, facing forward, standing on a lion and suckling her child has the numinous powers of ceremonial self display" (p. 128); and he goes on to explain that "in this frontal position the goddess whole naked womanhood is permeated by the numinous which emanates from her as a fascination.." (p. 138).

Some groups combine several of these methods of emphasizing the female. In an Egyptian vase painting of the fourth millennium (p. 115) the women, presented full face with upraised arms, are twice the height of the men, who are shown in profile.

Another later example of the way in which the female is made the focus of attention, comes from Crete. A painting from the stone sarcophagus at Hagia Triada is described by Dr. Charles Seitman, as follows; "This depicts a complete and distinctive act of worship and presents the celebrants not as priests but as priestesses. The men who occur in this interesting painting are there as acolytes and musicians but do not officiate". (*Women in Antiquity*, 43). The women, as is typical in Cretan art, are shown with bared breasts.

This type of imagery, showing the religious supremacy of the female, is widespread.

In his survey of the prehistoric near Eastern civilization, J. Mellaart writes: "Between 9000 and 7000 B.C.. art makes its appearance in the Near East in the form of statuettes of the supreme Deity, the Great goddess." (*Earliest Civils. Near East*, 18); and he goes on to say that historically the cult of the Great Goddess "is the basis of our civilization" (loc. cit. 77).

This is also found in Europe. The author of an article in *The Book of Rhianna*, writes : "In a similar survey of ancient European Civilisations between 7000 and 3500 B.C. Professor Mania Gimbutas explains how recent archaeology has given us a clear picture of the period, unearthing some thirty thousand sculptures of clay, marble, copper and gold from some three thousand sites. Clearly a vast area and a great period of time are involved (much longer than this whole known "historical" period) yet certain general statements can be made covering this entire civilisation. Prof. Gimbutas shows that the creator of the world was regarded as a goddess (like Tiamat, often symbolised as a bird), that the great goddess was "the central figure in a pantheon of Gods" and that "the pantheon reflects a society dominated by the mother".

We may go back further, say to the Gravettian-Aurignacian culture sites of which have been found in Spain. France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Russia and nearly as far afield as Anatolia and the Near East. Some of these sites date back well over 25,000 years, and in these virtually all statues divine or human, are female, In the period after 9,000 B.C.. the pattern tended to follow that stated by Mellaart in connexion with ancient Hacilar (c. 5,800 B.C.): "The statuettes portray the Goddess and the male appears only in a subsidiary role". But in the older Gravettian-Aurignacian cultures, the male scarcely appears at all. What we have is a vast predominance of stylised female images, known as "Venus Figures". (p. 4).

Within the Celtic lands the same kind of pattern emerges. John Corcoran writes "Celtic Goddesses often enjoy a wider distribution than the male Gods and appeared to date from an earlier period" (*New Larousse Myth*, 224).

Further eastwards, Ananda Coomaraswamy refers to "a common cultural inheritance from Mesopotamia to Egypt, from the Ganges to the Mediterranean"; this is based upon "the worship of the Great Mother" (*University course in Indian art*, p. 34).

The same pattern is found in Mexico. Writing on prehistoric ceramic objects found at Tlatilco dating to about 1,500 before this era, Laurette Séjourné states that: "There is an extraordinary number of figurines. Representations of men - almost always oddities - dwarfs, hunchbacks, magicians - form a small percentage of the whole. The female figurines are surprising in their quantity as well as in their seductive quality". (*Burning Water*, 52).

This world-wide predominance of the female clearly suggests a belief that she was the possessor of religious attributes peculiar to her.

The advent of writing brought with it a significant change to religion.

Words, unlike images, can readily convey prohibitions. And since patriarchal religions depend heavily on prohibitions to maintain their position, words tended to displace idols as a medium for religious expression. Thus, while it would be difficult to devise an image conveying the idea of the jealousy or exclusiveness of a god, it can easily be done by means of a few sentences. Words have, moreover, the advantage of being transportable. And as many primitive tribes were nomadic, they would tend to adopt verbal religious formularies, easily memorized, rather than the more cumbersome idols.

Nevertheless, especially among the settled peoples, the old matriarchal imagery continued. In fact, all through history, including the present, there are to be found two separate strands of theology, the more patriarchal one based on words, the more matriarchal based on imagery, the former affecting chiefly the conscious mind, the latter chiefly the subconscious. These two strands appear very obviously in the time of Constantine. The official written theology defined by decrees, creeds and scriptures was essentially a form of male monotheism. But simultaneously there was also an official iconography which was largely polytheistic and matriarchal. In the year 324, the emperor, rebuilding Byzantium to form his new imperial capital, Constantinople, "built two temples where he placed statues; in the one it was Rhea, mother of the gods. . in the other temple he set up a Tyche (Fortuna) of Rome". (Zosimus, *Hist. Nov. I. xxxi,2,3*). Similarly with the coinage, as Dr. Witt writes ; "The adoption of Christianity as a religion of the state is not reflected in Constantine's coinage. Whereas coin-types with unequivocal Christian subjects await discovery those with Isis (and sometimes Anubis) in traditional postures number nearly twenty (See Burckhardt, 425. Alföldi, 60 - 2). What is really surprising, however, is the persistence of Isis as a numismatic figure till late in the fourth century.." (pp. 240 - 1).

In nearly every country these two expressions of theological beliefs, the written and the iconographic, are to be found side by side, one sometimes entirely unrelated to the other. It is, therefore, necessary, if one is to make a true assessment of a particular country's theology, to take into account both these modes of expression.

The introduction of writing, while at first favourable to the patriarchal religions, is ultimately to the benefit of the matriarchal. The written or spoken word can easily and quickly convey a very much more detailed idea than can be done through iconography. The ramifications of theology can be shown to extend into every field of study, however specialized. Cosmogogenesis can be described in detail as the work of such creator goddesses as Tiamat and Vari; history can be seen as governed by the Fates and their counterparts, the arts and professions as under the inspiration and direction of such goddesses as the Muses and Athena, philosophy as under Sophia, ethics and justice under such goddesses as Mayet, Themis, Dike and Nemesis, the Other World as under the rule of Allat or Persephone. Even the most specialized activity was seen by the Romans as under the care of some particular goddess. They saw, for example, Juno Moneta as presiding over the Mint and money, Minerva as Tutelary goddess of the guild of flute players, Pomona as watching over fruit-trees, Robigo as controlling mildew, Fornax as in charge of furnaces and ovens, Vesta of baking and Potina of children's potions. There is, in fact, no aspect of life over which the goddess cannot be shown to preside.

Thus, by means of language, theology can be shown as a subject of universal relevance.

The particular division of theology described in this book is Cosmogogenesis. Here the goddess appears in her aspect of Genetrix and Demiurge. Starting as the source, she then, by reproducing herself in various ways, by fission, by giving birth and by emanation, subsequently forms the cosmos.

Chaldean.

The Babylonian Creation Narrative, *The Enuma*, begins with the words: "When above the heavens had not been formed, when the earth below had no name, Tiamat brought forth them both". (trans. Muss - Arnolt, cit. *Book of Rhianne*, 4).

Another version of this reads:

- "1. When above were not raised the heavens;
 2. and below on the earth a plant had not grown up
 3. The abyss had not broken its boundaries.
 4. The chaos Tiamat was the producing mother of the whole of them."
- (*The Akkadian Genesis*, ed. George Smith)

Tiamat's position in the Babylonian cosmogony has been variously assessed. Of the 19th century writers George Smith describes her as "the living principle of the sea and of chaos" (*Chaldean Account of Genesis*, 91). Helena Blavatsky states that "Tiamat the embodiment of the spirit of chaos" of the Deep, or Abyss, is the female principle, the womb" (*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. III, 112). Among other writers Dr. Theophilus Pinches refers to "Mummu Tiawath (the sea) she who brought forth everything." (*Rel. of Babylonia and Assyria*, 31). While of more recent writers, Neumann sees her as not only holding a dominant role, but as the source of everything. "Tiamat is the actual principle of origination" (*Great Mother*, 213).

In the Greek account of the Babylonian Creation narrative, recorded by the priest Berossus, the same goddess similarly dominates, but under other names. As he describes it, "The person who presides over them (i.e. the primeval zoomorphic beings) was a woman named Omoroca; which in the Chaldean language is Thalath; in the Greek tongue Thalassa, the sea; but which might equally be interpreted the Moon (Selene)". (*Cory, Frag.* 25). The Greek word *Thalassa*, according to Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, is a feminine noun meaning "the sea, sea water, salt water, a well of salt water".

In another Greek account of the Babylonian cosmogony the sea appears as the sole origin: "It is said that from the beginning all things were water, called the sea (Thalath?)." (Megasthenes, cit. Temple, 264). This primacy of Tiamat in the Creation is supported by a tablet found at Nineveh and preserved in the British Museum. The text, giving a list of the holy places of Babylonia, begins with the word Tiawthu, "the sea". (Pinches, 22).

Other fragmentary Chaldean Creation traditions similarly point back to a female origin. According to Professor Kramer, "In a tablet which gives a list of Sumerian gods, the goddess Nammu, written with the ideogram for sea" is described as "the mother who gave birth to heaven and earth" ". (cit. Merlin Stone. *Paradise Papers*, 236). In an ancient Sumerian prayer are the words: "Hear O ye regions, the praise of Queen Nana, Magnify the Creatress, exalt the dignified, Exalt the glorious One draw nigh unto the Mighty Lady". (id.) In the Gilgamesh tablets the primeval goddess Aruru appears. According to Graves' summary: "there the "Bright Mother of the Hollow" is credited with having formed everything - "Aruru" is only one of this goddess's many titles - and the principal theme is a revolt against her matriarchal order". (*Greek Myths*, I. 35). The goddess Zerpanitu or Sarpanitu, according to the meaning of her name, is "seed creatress"; and among her other titles is "the lady of the abyss" and "the voice of the abyss" (Me-abzu) (Pinches, 62). And according to Sayce, "the primeval mother who had begotten heaven and earth" was Zi-kum or Zi-kura, "the life of 'heaven' and 'earth'." (*Rel. Egy. and Bab.* 278).

The chronological priority of the Chaldean goddesses is indicated by the title of Ishtar, "eldest of heaven and earth". (G. Smith, *Bab. Myth.* cit. S.D II 250). The Akkadians wrote of "the female and the male" (Massey, *Tracts*, 27); and the late Greek writer Damascius followed the same order in listing the goddesses before the gods (Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, cit, G.M. 214).

The position of the goddess as Source in this area is summarised by professor Henri Frankfort: "In Mesopotamia, the goddess is supreme, because the source of all life is seen as female. Hence the god too descends from her.. Even in the condition of chaos, the female Tiamat is the leader and Apsu merely her counterpart". (*Kingship of the Gods*, cit. *Para. Papers.* 43).

Chaldean iconography of historic times confirms this view. Writing on Bronze Age Mesopotamian art, Seitman refers to "this surprising abundance of naked terracotta female figurines found in their shrines". (p.28)

And as the primitive iconography shows the focus of attention, from a religious point of view, to be the vulva, so in these early written traditions, the Source or Beginning is indicated either explicitly or in symbol as the womb or the vulva. This is seen symbolically in Tiamat as the Abyss or Great Deep. The same symbolism is seen in the primordial goddess Bau and her parallel in Phoenicia, Baau or Baev. As Massey writes: "This Bab (or Beb) which modifies into Bau, is the opening of the abyss or cavern, void or pit-hole .. This Bab became the Bahv or void in which the Hebrew dogma of creation was based. It is also the Babylonian and Byblian Bab called the Gate, but which is more comprehensively the opening, the *outrance*, uterus or abode of life." (*The Natural Genesis, Vol. I.* 462). It is significant that Bau had her festival at the opening of the year. "In the old days of Gudea of Lagas the year commenced with the festival of the goddess Bau". (Sayce, 473).

Syrian, Hebrew, etc.

The Chaldean tradition of a female origin can still be detected in the Hebrew Bible. Genesis opens with the words, translated in the usual English versions as: "In the beginning .." In Hebrew this is "B'Rashith". Rashith is a feminine noun with a wide range of meanings. Feyerabend in his *Hebrew-English Dictionary* gives: "beginning, commencement, origin, former state, the first, the best firstling". An alternative literal translation, as given in *The Secret Doctrine* reads: "Out of the ever-existing Essence (divine) (or out of the womb -also head - there of)". (V. 204).

This matriarchal interpretation of the first verse of Genesis is found in the later Gnostic tradition (See below); There she is connected with Wisdom, Sophia. According to Irenaeus the Gnostics "insisted that Moses began with the Ogdoad of the Seven Powers and their mother." (Massey, *The Hebrew and Other Creations*, 19, cit. S.D. V. 199). These would correspond to Rashith and the Elohim (translated 'God', of Genesis I. i). In the Samaritan Pentateuch Genesis is called *Akamouth*, the personified female Wisdom (S.D. V. 74). And the later rabbis, according to Eliphaz Levi, gave the name Bereshith to the first division of the Kabala. (*Trans. Magic*, 103).

The word Rashith is rendered in the Greek translation of the Bible as "Arche", also a female noun whose meanings, according to Liddell and Scoff's Lexicon includes "a beginning, origin, foundation, a first principle, element". The New Testament Cosmogony of *John* I. i. is a summary of that of the Old Testament. According to Mme. Blavatsky, "the 'Beginning' of St. John - is the *Rasit-* of the *Book of Genesis*". (IU. II. 37).

On these two words, Rashith (or Rasit) and Arche, Parkhurst writes in his dictionary: "Arche in this application answers to the Hebrew word Rasit or Wisdom . . a word which has the meaning of the female generative power, the Arg or Arca". (cit. S.D. IV, 28). The writer is referring here to the ark as a boat; but the other ark or chest, the Ark of the Covenant has exactly the same significance, as Mme. Blavatsky points out: " [The Jews] had the Ark made *still* more *realistic* in its construction by the two Cherubs set up on the coffer or Ark of the Covenant, facing each other with their wings spread out in such a manner as to form a perfect Yoni (as now seen in India)", (id.). This Ark was the physical focus of Jewish religion during the period in which the Old Testament and some of the New was compiled. It seems likely that this great archetypal symbol, coupled with the numerous Astarte and other goddess images prevalent in this area, should be reflected, at least subconsciously in Jewish and Christian literature. In fact, the beginning of the *Gospel according to St. John* is seen by some scholars as a veiled reference to the birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary. It may be no coincidence that one of the titles of the Virgin is Ark of the Covenant" (*Litany of Our Lady of Loretto*).

Another matriarchal tradition of Chaldaeia is reflected in *Genesis*. 1.2. "And the earth was without form and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep." The Biblical scholar Professor S. H. Hooke states that: "It is accepted by the majority of scholars that in the Hebrew word *tehom* used to denote the abyss of waters in Gen. 1 : 2. there is a reference to the chaos-dragon Tiamat" (Mid. *E. Myth.* 106). For other Biblical passages reminiscent of Tiamat, see Part II.

The Syrian goddess Atargatis seems to have been accorded titles appropriate to her as a creative source. Apuleius quotes a form of oath running; "May the almighty and all-creative Queen of Heaven" (*Metam*, XII).

The iconography of Syria and the neighbouring regions including Elam and Cyprus similarly suggest a belief in the feminine source. Neumann, describing female images with the genital zone exposed, writes; "In the case of a nude

goddess we find on Syrian cylindrical seals, who is the successor to the nude goddess of the Euphrates culture (Porada and Buchanan. *Near East. Seals*, Vol. I.). the exposure of the genital zone has an unquestionable sacral significance. While on two of these cylinders the goddess lifts the ends of her robe, displaying her nakedness, on the third she thrusts her garment back to expose herself. . These cylinder seals reveal archetypal symbols that we shall encounter again and again". (pp. 140-1)

Similarly in Israel and later in Judah, much of the old matriarchal imagery of the Canaanites was retained by the invading race. As Merlin Stone writes: "Although the official religion of northern Israel was that of Yahweh - the god of Israel we know from both biblical verses and Archaeological discoveries that the cult of Ba'al and Astarte strongly influenced the local population in the form of popular beliefs". (*Para. Papers*, 179). Frequently throughout the Old Testament mention is made of the worship of Ashtoreth and Asherah, the latter often in the form of a tree, or pole set up on a "high place". On these symbols Neumann writes: "The numinous-feminine of the tree speaks to us in the manticism .. of the Old Testament. We know of the veneration in which the tree cult was held among the Semites - the tree cult of the heights; the worship of the cult pole of Asherah, the goddess of heaven." (p. 259). These holy Asherah poles, sometimes draped, may well be the prototype of the beribboned maypole round which the children of today celebrate the festival of the May Queen. (See Esther Harding, *Woman's Mysteries*, 45).

Egyptian.

The feminine Source is seen in many of the more general and also local Egyptian traditions. Mme. Blavatsky writes: "the Egyptian Cosmogony .. in its opening sentences, shows Athtor (orthography of the *Archaic Dictionary*), or Mother Night, representing illimitable darkness, as the primeval element which covered the infinite abyss" (S.D. II. 60).

Similarly Nut the sky-goddess, is described by Budge as representing "the great watery abyss out of which all things came". (*Gods, II*, 102). He sees her as the equivalent of the Chaldean Mammu-Tiamat and the Tauthe of Damascius. (*Gods, I*. 289). She is the personification of the sky: "Hail, Nut in whose head appear the two eyes (i.e. sea and moon)". (*Text of Pepi I*, line 100ff. cit. Budge, *Gods II*. 111). A detailed description of how the heavenly bodies are born from the womb of Nut is given in an Egyptian text dated at 1,300 before this era. It is thus given by Professor Rudolf Anthes: "She shall give birth to them and they shall live, and they shall come forth in the place at her hinder part in the East every day. (This translation is based on that of Adriaan de Buck in H. Frankfort, *The Cenotaph*, p. 82 ff)". (*Myth Ancient World*, 65).

The cosmological position of Nut is shown very strikingly in iconography. On tombs of between 1350- 1100 she is represented as a gigantic standing cow, whose body is the sky. Beneath her are diminutive human figures. Anthes thus describes one of these pictures: "we see a standing cow. Her belly is decorated with a line of stars.. Four different Egyptian concepts are attested here: a cow, an ocean, the woman Nut and a roof". (loc. cit. 20). Sometimes Nut appears as a cosmic naked woman arched over the disc of the earth. This kind of iconography continued into the Roman period, when, again as a naked woman, she supports the sky with her arms above her head. Describing the "Star Chamber" of the Temple of Hathor at Denderah, Robert Eisler writes: "The naked woman on the left side standing on her toes and outstretched hands is the goddess Nut supposed to form the arch of heaven". (*Royal Art of Astrol* 267)

The goddess Nut as physiological source of all is shown in a relief of the Roman period (see *G.M.* Pt. 36). The naked goddess is shown in profile in her usual overarching position. From her breasts flows a stream of milk; and from her vulva there issues a fluid, represented by wavy lines.

Another goddess, taking both cow and human form is Hathor, one of the oldest known deities of Egypt. Budge writes of her: "In the theological system of the priests of Heliopolis she became as Brugsch says (*Religions*, p. 312), "the mother of the light", the birth of which was the first act of creation .. She was, in fact, the great mother of the world, and the old cosmic: Hathor was perpetually conceiving, and creating, and bringing forth, and rearing, and maintaining all things. both great and small .. and heaven, earth, and the underworld were under her rule, and she was the mother of every god and every goddess". (*Gods*. 1.429- 31). As a cosmic being, like Nut, she is the sky whose eyes are the sun and moon (p. 436).

Another early form of Hathor is mentioned by Merlin Stone, who writes: "Other texts of Egypt tell of the goddess as Hathor in this role of creator of existence, explaining that She took the form of a serpent at that time". (*Para. Papers*, p. 52).

Neith of Sais is a goddess whose character seems originally to have been similar to that of Nut. Budge describes how: "at an earlier period she was certainly a personification of a form of the great, inert, primeval watery mass .. and it is possible, as Brugsch has suggested, that the name Net may be akin in meaning to Nut". (*Gods*, I, 451). Massey sees her as the self-existing Source. "The title of the goddess as "Tesat-Neith" signifies self-existing; she who came from herself. The genetrix is celebrated as the "only One" in the Ritual, "Glory to thee! Thou art mightier than the gods! The forms of the living souls which are in their places give glory to the terrors of thee, their mother; thou art their origin!" (*Rit.*, ch. xixv., Sup. Birch)." (*Nat. Gen. I.* 456). And Geoffrey Ashe, in *The Virgin* assesses her position in a similar way: "Neith is one of the few goddesses whose myths, in their surviving form, take us back in plain terms to the primordial cosmic Motherhood .. A priest told the Persian king Cambyses that it was Net, the mighty mother, who had given birth to Ra, that she was the first to have given birth to anything and that she had done so when nothing else had been born". (p. 60). And Plutarch records the famous words applied to her: "In Sais the statue of Athena, whom they believe to be Isis, bore the inscription: I am all that has been, and is, and shall be, and my robe no mortal as yet uncovered". (*Mor.* 354C).

The goddess Mut of Thebes, like Neith, produced herself. According to Budge she is among those goddesses "of whom it is declared that she was "never born" i.e. that she was self-produced". (*Gods* I 32) "[Her] name means "Mother" and in all her attributes we see that she was regarded as the great "world mother", who conceived and brought forth whatever exists". (id. p. 30).

Nekhebet, the vulture goddess of the south, is thus described by Budge: "As a Nature power Nekhebet was a form of the primeval abyss which brought forth the light (Brugsch, *Religion*, p. 324) .. who hath existed from the beginning, and is the creatrix of the world". (*Gods*. I. 440). Merlin Stone sees her as a prototype of some other early goddesses: "From about 3000 B.C. onwards the goddess, known as Nut, Net or Nit, probably derived from Nekhebt, was said to have existed when nothing else had yet been created. She then created all that had come into being". (*Para. Papers*. 52).

Another primeval goddess, assuming both a cow and human form, is Mehurt, the Methyer of Plutarch. Budge states of her that "Meh-urt was originally a female personification of the watery matter which formed the substance of the world, and her name, which means "mighty fulness" indicates that she was the abundant and unfailing source of the matter of every kind .. she was, in fact, a form of the primeval female creative principle .. in one of the representations of the goddess figured by Signor Lanzone (*Dizionario*. p1. 131 ff.) she is depicted in the form of a pregnant woman with full, protruding breasts, emblem of fertility, but she usually appears as a great cow of the sky (see p. 368) .. she is also said to have "existed from the beginning". (*Gods*. I. 432-4). She is described physiologically in her cosmic aspect in the Papyrus of Ani: "I beheld Ra who was born yesterday from the buttocks of the goddess Meh-urt". (*Book of the Dead*, 99).

The ancient hippopotamus goddess, Ta-urt, is seen also as a first cause by Massey: "The sole catholic and universal first producer was feminine. She was Mother Nature, La Source, the Goddess of Beginings (Taurt)" .. (*Nat. Gen. I.* 457). A similar goddess of the primordial water is the frog-shaped Heqet. According to Neumann: "In Hermopolis she is the primordial mother of all existence, which she generates and protects". (*G.M.* 217).

The Egyptians were among those peoples who believed that the Cosmos sprang from an egg. Summarizing the Hermopolitan creation traditions. Veronica Ions writes: "In the first, the world was said to have originated in a cosmic egg .. which was laid by a celestial goose, which first broke the silence of the world, and was known as the Great Cackler. The Egg, laid on the primeval mound, contained the bird of light, Ra. . Other sources say that the egg contained air .. The remains of the egg were shown to pilgrims at Hermopolis. The second version is similar to the first, except that in this case the egg was laid by an ibis." (*Egy. Myth*, 35). Mme. Blavatsky comments on this tradition as follows: "Ra is shown like Brahma gestating in the Egg of the Universe. 'The Deceased is resplendent in the Egg of the Land of Mysteries' (*Book of Dead*, liv. 3).. It is 'the Egg of the great clucking Hen, the Egg of Seb, who issued

from it like a hawk' (op. cit. lxxvii, 1)" (S.D. II. 75). For the Egg as a widespread cosmogonic symbol, see under Finnish.

In the Heliopolitan tradition it was the sky-goddess Nut who produced the first Egg from which sprang the Bennu bird or Phoenix (Brugsch. *Rel.* p. 577 cit. Budge *Gods II.* p. 96). "Similarly, the favour of Nut gave the deceased to rise in a renewed body, even as Ra rose from the Egg.." (*Gods.* 11.110).

The Egg is used in Egyptian hieroglyphics as a feminine determinative. Budge, in his *List of Commonest Determinatives: Parts of Birds*, shows the egg represented as an upright oval, tilted to the left, as "goddess, queen, female", (*The Mummy*, 198). Similarly, Mme. Blavatsky sees the Mundane egg both as "Infinite Space", and as "the Womb". (S.D. II. 69); and "the non-eternal primordial germ, which later becomes in symbolism the Mundane Egg contains in itself, when it emerges from the said symbol, "the promise and potency" of all the Universe". (S.D. II. 133).

The early cosmogonic traditions of Egypt symbolize the same physiological basis as that of other countries. As Massey writes: "The Mythical Abyss was the womb, the Bab, Kep, Ken, Khem, or Tep of all beginning. Tep (Eg.) means first. With the feminine or dual terminal this is the tepht, the abyss of source. This name of the primordial place of birth is likewise that of the primal conditions of beginning, becoming, and being .. Teb. (Eg.), the Mother of Source, was a personification of the womb.." (I. 464-5).

In the later period of Egyptian history, particularly during the Graeco Roman era, it was Isis who was increasingly accorded the dominant position. And she "of the ten thousand names" was soon seen to hold the same role as that traditionally allowed to the primeval goddesses. A Theban tradition of the 14th century before this era, records a cosmogony starting with Isis: "In the beginning there was Isis. Oldest of the Old. She was the goddess from whom all Becoming Arose" (cit. Merlin Stone, *Para. Papers*, Intro.). In the *Oxyrhynchus Litany* she is "the First Name" (cit. Witt, 268). While the poet Isidorus, living in the Fayum in the 1st century before this era, sees her as the original creatrix. In his first *Hymn to Isis* he thus addresses her: "Because of you heaven and the whole earth have their being". (V. 9). In her commentary Vera van der Lip summarizes these verses: "Isis is the creator of the physical universe". (p. 25). And in general she writes: "The early aretalogies emphasize Isis' power, omnipotent and creative .. [She is] the eastern creator who first established the cosmos and made man". (p. 9).

Graeco-Roman.

In Graeco-Roman literature several cosmogonies are recorded. Hesiod starts with Chaos: "These things declare unto me from the beginning, ye Muses who dwell in the house of Olympus and tell me which of them came first to be. Verily at the first Chaos came to be". (*Theogony.* 113). According to Dunbar and Barker's lexicon, Chaos, a neuter noun, has the meaning of "an immense void or gulf, an abyss, a chasm, a rude shapeless mass; the materials from which the world was made; darkness". Commenting on the meaning of Chaos, Herbert Rose writes: "This word, which seems literally to mean 'gaping void', apparently does not signify mere empty space; even at that time the Greeks were unlikely to conceive of anything as coming into being out of nothing. Nor does Hesiod say that Chaos had existed from all eternity, for he used the word *geneto*, 'came into being', a term with which philosophers in later ages made great play. It is his starting point rather than an absolute beginning". (*Greek Myth.* 19).

Ovid, in his cosmogony, suggests an origin anterior to Chaos: "In the beginning, the Sea, the Earth and the Heaven which covers all, was but one Face of Nature thro' the whole Extent of the Universe, which they called Chaos; a rude and undigested Mass .." (*Metam.* I. 5). Here Chaos is only a primeval aspect of an already existing Nature. The feminine noun, *Natura*, is sometimes used to describe a personified female being, as when Cicero writes: "Next I have to show that all things are under the sway of nature, and are carried on by her in the most excellent manner"; and he goes on to describe her as "the sustaining governing principle of the world". (*Nat. Deorum*, I. 83).

Hyginus, in his short cosmogony, carries us back to a period before the starting point of Hesiod. Chaos itself has a parent, the female Caligo: "From Caligo was born chaos, *Ex. Caligine Chaos*". (*Fabulae*, Praef. 1.). White, in his dictionary, defines Caligo as: [perhaps akin to Celso (to hide, conceal)]. A thick atmosphere, a mist, vapour, fog .. Darkness, obscurity". In Greek the equivalent of Caligo is Achlys, "Mist or Darkness", also personified as a female being in Hesiod (Sc. 264).

The fragmentary Pelasgian cosmogony begins with the primal creatress and demiurge, Eurynome. According to Robert Graves' reconstruction it opens thus: "In the beginning, Eurynome, the Goddess of all things, rose naked from Chaos". (*Greek Myths*. I. 27)

The Orphic theology starts with the Mundane Egg from which emerged the god Phanes. According to Grote, "This egg figures, as might be explained, in the cosmogony set forth by the Airds, Aristophanes. Av. 695. Nyx gives birth to an egg, out of which steps the golden Eros". (*Hist. of Greece*, I. 16). As Mme. Blavatsky writes: "Among the Greeks the Orphic egg is described by Aristophanes, and was part of the Dionysiac and other mysteries, during which the Mundane Egg was consecrated and its significance explained: Porphyry also showed it to be a representation of the world: 'The Egg expresses (represents) the world'." (*S.D. II*. 75). The Orphic theogony is thus summarized by Larson: "At the beginning there was only Night (Nyx); and from this, as in the Egyptian cosmogony, sprang the primeval egg, which contained Eros-Phanes, which was simply another name for Dionysus. When the Egg burst, it separated into two elements, which became Heaven (Uranus) and Earth (Ge)". (*Rel. Occ*. 77).

The goddess Gaea or Ge has retained titles and attributes which would suggest that she at one time was regarded as the creative source. She is "the eldest of them all" (*Hymn. Homer*. xxx. 1). As Christine Downing states: "But there is in Greek mythology a 'great' mother in the background - Gaea, .. Gaea is the mother of the beginning, the mother of infancy. She is the mother who is there before time .. In Freud's terms Gaea is the mother of primal fantasy". (*Lady-Unique*. V. 24).

On the name Hera, Shuttle and Redgrove write as follows: "A reasonable derivation from Hesiod and Homer of the name 'Hera' is 'womb', and this interpretation is backed by the fact that she is called *panton genethla* 'origin of all things', which is the womb. The great goddess's name in most cultures in derivation means 'womb' or 'vulva'; the Goddess in Genetrix .. So Hera's womb is literally *panton genethla*. Kerenyi .. is our chief source for information on the Hera cults". (*The Wise Wound*, 179).

The Greeks also had an important visual symbol representing their origin; this was the omphalos or "navel-stone" at Delphi, regarded as the centre of the world. The early poet Pindar speaks of "the central stone of tree-clad Mother-earth" (*Pythian IV*. 131). This is later described by Pausanias: "What is called the Navel (Omphalos) by the Delphians is made of white marble and is said by the Delphians to be the centre of all the earth". (X. xvi, 2). It is significant that the feminine noun Delphi, *Hai Delphoi*, is etymologically similar to *delphys*, the womb. On the symbolism of such stones Neumann writes: "The navel as the centre of the world is archetypal. Characteristically, many shrines are looked upon as navels of the world, as, for example, the Temple (Patai, *Man and Temple*. pp. 85, 132) at Jerusalem, the sanctuary of Delphi, and so forth. The Earth in a sense is the womb of a reality seen as feminine, the navel and centre from which the universe is nourished. The childlike conception of umbilical birth originates in the archetypal symbolism of the navel's identity with the womb as the feminine centre of life. Cf. the shining white Parthian goddess .. who has not only gleaming eyes but also a radiant navel". (p. 281). Similarly, as Shuttle and Redgrove write: "The Heraion, the temple of Hera, the cunt-place, was for centuries in ancient Greece 'the sanctuary of the whole country ..' says Carl Kerenyi". (p. 179). For the etymology of Hera see above.

In general, the Graeco-Roman cosmogonies can be seen as symbolizing female sexual organs and acts. The Chaos, which figures so largely in these traditions, is seen by Mme. Blavatsky as having a physiological connotation. She speaks of "the human womb, the microscopic copy and reflection of the *Heavenly Matrix*, the female Space or primeval Chaos" (*S.D. III*. 94); and similarly, "The 'Virgin Egg' is the macroscopic symbol of the microscopic prototype, the 'Virgin Mother' - Chaos or the Primeval Deep." (I. 134).

In the Roman cosmogony of Hyginus the primordial female Caligo, the Mist, Fog or Vapour, is reminiscent of the creative sexual emission of Sophia. This is said, in the *Gnostic Gospel of Truth*, "to have condensed like a fog", after her orgasm which started all creation. (See below: Gnostics).

Hebrew-Greek, etc, (including Early Christian and Gnostic).

In the later Hebrew and Gnostic writings, which include Hebrew, Greek, Egyptian, Persian and other traditions, the female source is given recognition. Wisdom, the Hebrew Chokmah, the Greek Sophia, is seen either as standing at the beginning of history, or as the creatrix of everything. Dr. Elaine Pagels, discussing certain Biblical passages, as in *The Proverbs*, asks whether wisdom could have been considered as the female power in which creation was conceived. (*The Gnostic Gospels*, 54). In the later *Wisdom of Solomon* these words are imputed to the king: "I was in ignorance before that, she (i.e. wisdom) is the beginning of it all". (vii, 12), and "I was taught by her whose skill made all things, wisdom". (vii, 22).

An undated Hermetic writing, probably pre-Alexandrian, *The Secret Sermon* (Corp. Herm. xiv) summarized by Flinders Petrie, states: "Wisdom (Sophia) is the matrix .." (*Personal Rel. Egy.* 98). And according to Clement of Alexandria the Gnostics taught that Wisdom was "the first universal creator". (*Excerpta*, 47.1 cit. *Gn. Gosp.* 54). This is in keeping with the identification of Rasit or Sophia as the creatrix of Genesis, ii, described above.

Among other female figures seen as holding the primal position is the *Bythos* of the Ophites. According to a record of the Copts and Druses of Mount Lebanon, Bythos or Depth is regarded as feminine. (See *Isis Unveiled*, II. 169). The Gnostic-Ophite cosmogony begins, according to Mme. Blavatsky, with "Unity enclosed within the Depth, Bythos, feminine — principle — the boundless circle, within which lie all ideal forms". (Op. cit. 159). This would correspond to the Abyss or Deep of other cosmogonies. Valentinus, in his theology, sees *Sige*, Silence, as the womb or "Mother of the All". (Irenaeus. *Adv. Haer.* 1. ii. i. cit. *Gn. Gosp.* 50): while another Gnostic writing, *The Great Announcement*, explaining the origin of the universe, starts with the power of Silence. (Hippolytus, *Ref. cit. Gn. Gosp.* 50).

The Source of the universe was seen as the Womb by the Sethian Gnostics. They explain that "heaven and earth have a shape similar to the womb ... and if ... anyone wants to investigate this, let him carefully examine the pregnant womb of any living creature, and he will discover an image of the heavens and the earth". (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 5.19. cit. *On. Gosp.* 53). A view similar to this is seen in a passage attributed to Simon Magus: "Grant Paradise to be the womb.. Moses.. using allegory had declared Paradise to be the womb .. and Eden to be the placenta". (loc. cit. 6.14). He goes into further biological details, as Mme. Blavatsky summarizes: "for the terrestrial Paradise is the womb, says Simon (*Philosophumena*, vi 14), Eden the region surrounding it. The river which went out of Eden to water the garden is the Umbilical Cord: this cord is divided into four Heads, the streams that flowed out of it, the four canals which serve to carry nutrition to the Foetus, i.e. the two arteries and the two veins which are the channels for the blood and convey the breathing air, the unborn child, according to Simon, being entirely enveloped by the Amnion, fed through the Umbilical Cord and given vital air through the Aorta". (*S.D.* V. 449). Commenting on Simon's teaching, Mme. Blavatsky writes: "Thus Science corroborates the wisdom and knowledge of ancient Occultism, for in the days of Simon Magus (i.e. first century of this era) no man, unless an Initiate, knew anything about the circulation of the blood or about Physiology". (loc. cit.).

Certain other female figures of the Gnostics are described in forms implying an historical or causal primacy. *Charis*, Grace, is thus invoked by Marcus: "May she who is before all things, the incomprehensible and indescribable Grace, fill you within and increase in you her own knowledge". (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1. 32. 2. cit. *Gn. Gosp.* 50). In her more personal form she gives her blood in the Eucharist or Mass. (loc. cit.).

Among the writings recently discovered at Nag Hammadi is *The Secret Book*. Here the divine Mother is described in these forms: "[She is] ... the image of the invisible, virginal, perfect spirit ... She became the Mother of everything, for She existed before them all.." (*Apocryphon of John*, 4. 34. 5. 7. cit. *Gn. Gosp.* 52). Dr. Pagels states that "the author of *The Secret Book* has in mind the Hebrew form of spirit, ruah, a feminine word". (p. 52).

A more complex cosmogony is described by Dr. Pagels (p. 55). "Another newly discovered text from Nag Hamrradi, *Trimorphic Protennoia* (literally, the "Triple-formed Primal Thought"), celebrates the feminine powers of Thought, Intelligence, and Foresight". The text opens as a divine figure speaks:

"[I] am [Protennoia the] Thought that [dwells] in [the light] [she who exists] before the All ... I move in every creature I am the invisible One within the All." (35. 1 - 2).

She continues: "I am perception and knowledge, uttering a voice by means of Thought. [I] am the real voice. I cry out in everyone, and they know that a seed dwells within". (36, 12-16).

The second section, spoken by a second divine figure, includes the words: "I am the Voice .. [It is] I [who] speak within every creature ..." (42. 4-26).

Later the voice explains: .. "[I copulate] with myself. . I am the Womb [that gives shape] to the All.. I am Mer[jiroth]ea, the glory of the Mother". (45. 2-10).

The origin of the universe is alluded to in another Nag Hammadi writing, as Dr. Pagels describes: "Another text, mysteriously entitled, *Thunder, Perfect Mind*, offers an extraordinary prayer spoken in the voice of a feminine divine power:

"For I am the first and the last.
I am the honoured one and the scorned one.
I am the whore and the holy one.
I am the wife and the virgin....
I am the barren one, and many are her sons....
I am the silence that is incomprehensible....
I am the utterance of my name". (12.16-14.15 cit. *Gn. Gosp.* xvii).

The self-copulation of Wisdom, is a theme developed in detail, particularly in the Valentinian teachings (See Part H below).

The primordial feminine voice reappears in certain Gnostic and related writings, as the Logos or Word. In *The Shepherd of Hermas* "She is an old woman because she was first, and the world was made by her". (Cit. Massey, *Tracts*. I. 15).

In Gnostic iconography Sophia is shown as a woman. Budge gives the following description of a Gnostic amulet: "A naked woman is standing below a crown which is held over her head by two winged angels.. From an Egyptian point of view the naked woman is Hathor, but to the Gnostics Sophia and to the Ophites, Achamoth". (*The Mummy*, 370).

Another type of Gnostic iconography suggesting a matriarchal source is recorded by Neumann: He describes how "according to Grunwedel, Manichaeic monuments in Turkestan .. show the cosmic woman, a beautiful, richly ornamented girl with her body open in such a way as to disclose the stylized entrails, representing the disk of the world". (*Great Mother*, 235).

Indian.

In the Indian Pantheon, the primeval mother of the gods is Aditi. In a passage in the *Rig Veda*, believed to be the most ancient of the Hindu scriptures, is to be found what appears to be a short cosmogony. Not-being and Being are in the highest heaven, in the birthplace of Daksha, in the lap of Akiti." (Mandala i, *sukta* 166). This goddess is described thus by Max Muller: "Now Aditi means infinitude, from dita, bound, and a, not, that is, not bound, not limited, absolute, infinite. Aditi, itself is now and then involved in the Veda, as the Beyond, as what is beyond the earth and sky, and the sun and the dawn - a most surprising conception in that early period of religious thought .. Aditi, too, the Infinite, still shows a few traces of her being originally connected with the boundless Dawn". (*The Vedas*, p. 116). In theological terms she might be described as the transcendental "Absolute"; or, as the ancient Vedic writers put it: "Aditi is THAT". (*Rig Veda*, cit. *S.D.* 1.72).

Aditi, being as the original Cosmic Mother who gave birth on her own, thus closely resembles the Egyptian sky-goddess Nut. As Mme. Blavatsky writes: "In the *Rig Veda*, Aditi the Boundless or infinite Space .. is the equivalent of "Mother-Space", co-eval with Darkness". She is very properly called the "Mother of the Gods", DEVA-MATRI; as it is from her cosmic matrix that all heavenly bodies of our system were born - Sun and Planets". (*S.D. I.* 161). And like Nut she is also connected with the primordial waters: "the water" is another name of the "Great Deep", the primordial waters of Space or Chaos and also means Mother, - Ambâ, meaning Aditi and Akasha, the Celestial Virgin, Mother of the invisible Universe". (*S.D. II.* 179).

Another ancient Vedic goddess is Vach, the "Creative Tone" (S.D. Gloss). In the Vedas she herself speaks: "Originating all beings, I pass like the breeze. I am above this heaven, beyond this earth; and what is the Great One that am I". (cit. *Asiatic Researches*, viii. "102-3 cit. IU. II, 269). She appears to be closely akin to Aditi, "Again, as goddess of Speech and Sound, and as permutation of Aditi, she is Chaos, in one sense". (S.D. II. 152); and in her more physiological form she is "the melodious cow who milks forth sustenance and water" —(S.D. V. 291). She corresponds to the Female Logos or Word of some Gnostic and related traditions. (S.D. loc. cit.).

A reminder that the Original Creative Tone is feminine is given etymologically. "Vak is Vox", states Max Muller, (*Vedas*, p. 108); and from this word comes the modern "Voix" or "Voice".

Another Indian goddess of origin is seen in the star Denebola in the constellation Leo. Allen in his *Star Names* records: "Hewitt writes of it as, in India, the 'Star of the Goddess Bahu, the Creating Mother' ". (p. 259).

In the Dravidian and other native pantheons of India the goddess Devi holds the place of primacy. As well as belonging to the Hindu pantheon she incorporates many of the attributes of the aboriginal goddesses. Thus Professor Norman Brown writes of her: "Devi's supreme position among the gods as the first principle of the universe is forcefully affirmed in Shakta texts .. The Gunas, or Strands of the material universe .. are hers .." (*M.A.W.* 313).

But the shakti worshipper realizes also that this primacy of the goddess is not confined just to the beginning of history; it is present through eternity. "If Devi were to close her eyes for but an instant all the cosmos would disappear including the gods. Her motherly concern keeps her from doing so and preserves the universe with all its helpless and dependent creatures". (Op. cit. 312).

The Mundane Egg also appears in an Indian cosmogonic tradition, as recorded in the *Ayeen Akbery*. This book, compiled at the order of the Emperor Akbar by his vizier Abul Fazi, gives a survey of all the beliefs and customs in the Mogul Empire in the 16th Century. One of the cosmogonies listed mentions a woman named Teeree, who produced an egg, which on division, formed the celestial and terrestrial beings. (See the *Ayeen Akbery*, II. 326). See also Part II. Another cosmogony in that book describes in detail a process of creation originating from the goddess Mahalakshmi. See Part II.

Other indications that the Indians recognised the female as the first cause appear in some epithets applied to certain goddesses. One of them is *Jagad-yoni*. This word, meaning literally "The World's Yoni or Vulva", "The World's Womb" is translated by MacDonell in his Sanskrit Dictionary as "source of the world". Fitzedward Hall sees it as "Material Cause of the World" (cit. S.D. I. 118). This epithet is applied to *Prakriti*, Nature, (Macdonell, *Dict.*) personified as "Mother of the gods of men". A similar term *Jagad-matri*, "mother of the world" is a title of both Devi Durga and Lakshmi. (*Skr. Dict.*) *Sarva-yoni*, "Source of all" similarly appears as a title. (op. cit.).

Indian iconography in general presents a theology different from that recorded in literature. This difference is well described by Sir James Fergusson in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*: "It is most important always to bear in mind that the Sanskrit-speaking Aryan was a stranger in India .. all, indeed, which is written — belongs to them; but all that is built — all, indeed, which is artistic — belongs to other races, who were either aboriginal or immigrated into India at earlier or subsequent periods, and from other sources than those which supplied the Aryan stock". (cit. *Gdss. Ind. 2*).

Thus to anyone living outside the country, Indian theology would appear differently from what it would be to a native of India. To outsiders, receiving most of their information either from literature or by word of mouth from a guru, the written theologies would tend to hold a disproportionately significant place; and thus a study of Indian iconography is of particular importance.

In a description of a primitive Indian statue of the Maurya period, about two thousand years old, Mme. Deneck writes: "This terracotta statuette probably depicts the Mother Goddess, the symbol of fertility, protectress of all beings and creator of life, whose cult seems to have been common to ancient religions of India, Iran and the Near East. Similar statuettes have been found in the sites of the Indus civilization. The representation of the figure is very stylised: the clothes are indicated only by a few incised strokes and the hair is built up into a kind of turban decorated with three rosettes". (cit. *Gdss. Ind. 2*).

Other types of symbolic figures are described by Veronica Ions. "An agricultural people, the Dravidians worshipped gods connected in one way or another with fertility .. the cult of the mother-goddesses [is] most plainly depicted on seals which show plants growing from the womb of the female deity, or which show a naked goddess.. "(*Ind. Myth.* 13).

Sometimes the goddess is shown graphically as the Cosmic Mother. Neumann reproduces a picture entitled: "Bhavani-Trimurti-Mother. Hindu xix Century or earlier, from Muller". (p. 235. fig. 51). This drawing shows a woman with three breasts. Below the waist the body opens to reveal a symbolic scene which includes the sea, the sun and moon and a cloudy sky". This may be an illustration of the theological belief referred to by Brown: "the triple universe [is] conceived as a woman with the sun and moon as her breasts". (*M.A.W.* 313).

In his illustrated book *Yoga Art* Mookerjee shows many symbolic representations of the Yoni. Among those depicted are: "Yoni, symbolized by the triangle .. Rajasthan. c. 17th century, Gouache on paper", and "the Yoni (female organ) signifies Karana or Ultimate Cause. As the transcendent influences of Prakriti (female energy) initiates the process of creation, the yoni represents the womb of the animate, and the primal root of objectivization .. Uttar Pradesh c. 17th century. Gouache on paper". The painter shows a downward pointing heart-shaped figure similar to the heart of playing cards.

The general cosmogonic belief of India is summarized by Vicki Noble: "The Indian understanding of universal law is based on the Great Mother, just as were the ancient cultures of Egypt or Sumer. Her creativity is the cause and effect of all existence. She is both Being (unchanging consciousness or "Cit") and Activity (incessant Creation of shifting forms or "Maya") .. When the Mother is seen in all things, She is at length realised as She who is beyond them all". (*Motherpeace*, 144).

Tibetan.

The *Stanzas of Dzyan*, parts of which are reputed to be of great antiquity, start with the beginning of a period of cosmic manifestation, or *Manvantara*, following a period of cosmic rest or *Pralaya*. The following are the opening verses, with the commentaries, as cited in *The Secret Doctrine*: "The Eternal Mother [space] wrapped in her ever invisible robes (cosmic prenebular matter) had slumbered for seven Eternities, Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of Duration". (Stanza i. cit. *S.D.* I. 101). The Commentaries on this passage read: "The 'Parent' Space, is the eternal, ever-present Cause of all - the incomprehensible DEITY, whose 'invisible Robes' are the Mystic Root of all Matter and of the Universe .. Spirit is the first differentiation from THAT, the Causeless Cause of both Spirit and Matter.. By the 'Seven Eternities' aeons or periods are meant". (loc. cit. 109).

The Eternal Mother has a similarity to the Hindu Aditi, and to the Tibetan "Mother of the Space of Heaven" of the *Book of the Dead: 1st Day* (p. 105).

The national goddess of Tibet, Dolma, or Tara, holds a central position in cosmogony. Neumann summarizes her position thus: "She is not only the power of the godhead as the whirling wheel of life in its birth- bringing and death-bringing totality, she is also the force of the centre."

"Thus Brahma prays to the Great Mother: 'Thou art the pristine spirit, the nature of which is bliss, thou art the ultimate nature and the clear light of heaven .. and thou art the one that muffles the universe, for all time in thine own very darkness'. (Zimmer, *The King and the Corpse*, 264)". (*G.M.* 334).

The *Stanzas of Dzyan* record also a tradition of the Mundane Egg. This "Virgin Egg" lies in the waters of the "Mother-Deep". (Stanza 3. 3. cit. *S.D.* I. 93). In her comments on this concept Mme. Blavatsky writes: "The 'Virgin-Egg' is the microcosmic symbol of the macrocosmic prototype, the 'Virgin Mother' - Chaos or the Primeval Deep". (*S.D.* I. 134).

Chinese.

The origin of the Universe is suggested in a passage cited by Max Muller from Lao-tse (cap. 25).

"There is an infinite Being, which existed before heaven and earth.

How calm it is how free!

It lives alone, it changes not.

It moves everywhere, but it never suffers.
We may look upon it as the Mother of the Universe.
I know not its name.
In order to give it a title I call it Tao (the way).
When I try to give it a name, I call it Great .." (*Intro. Sc. Rel.* 250).

A more modern translation of this passage by Karma Jinba Tharchin, runs:

"There is a thing confusedly formed,
Born before heaven and earth.
Silent and Void
It stands alone and does not change,
Goes round and does not weary.
It is capable of being the Mother of the world.
I do not know its name,
So I style it "the way",
I give it the makeshift name of "The Great" ".
(*The Tao-te-King*, cit. *Gdss. Ind.* 356).

Commenting on this, Tharchin writes: "By living in harmony with the flux of the universe and holding fast to the eternal principles behind it, one is "holding fast to the mother", following the way, not attempting to interfere with processes beyond one's control". (*Ms. cit. Gdss. Ind.* 356).

A similar maternal source, "The Mysterious Female", known also as the "Valley Spirit" is also mentioned in the *Tao-te-King*, and is thought to be an echo of some ancient Creation narrative. The translation is:

"The spirit of the valley never dies,
This is called the mysterious female.
Is called the root of heaven and earth
Dimly visible, it seems as if it were there,
Yet use will never drain it".

In a commentary Tharchin states that, "just as living creatures are born from the womb of the mother, so is the universe born of the womb of "the mysterious female" ". (cit. *Gdss. Ind.* 272).

In his *Maps of Consciousness* Metzner writes as follows: "The Orient.. has been .. seeking the power of the mother principle: the "valley spirit" of the Taoists, the Shakti power of the Hindus .. to the extreme of the Kali-worshippers of Bengal".

Celtic.

In the Irish tradition, like the Egyptian, Persian, Hindu, and Norse, prominence is given to the primeval cow. This animal is generally seen as a cosmogonic symbol. As Mme. Blavatsky writes: "The cow is the symbol of prolific generation and of intellectual nature .. The cow was held, in short, as the impersonation of the first Mother of all beings, both of mortals and the gods, of physical and spiritual generation of things". (*I.U.* I. 146). And similarly Neumann states that "the cow.. is an authentic symbol of world-creating motherhood (*Kees, Gotterglaube*, 76)" (p. 218).

The enchanted Cow of Irish mythology, the Glas Gaibhlen or Glas Gavien is seen by Borlase as resembling the primeval cow, Audhumbla, of Norse mythology. He states that: "If as Mullenhoff suggests, the name Audhumbla was connected with Humal and Humbli, and derived from the same source, we have the curious fact before us that the Scandinavian cow was a sky-goddess, like the Glas Gavlen, the sky-coloured cow of the Irish, who performed her round of the island once in every four and twenty hours". (*Dolmens*, vol.111. 898). Both these cows resemble the Egyptian sky-goddess Nut.

Norse.

A cosmogonic tradition is recorded in the *Prose Edda*. This is given in the form of a dialogue.

"Gangleri said: 'What was the origin of all things? How did they begin? What existed before?'

High One answered: 'As it says in the Sibyl's Vision:

In the beginning not anything existed,

there was no land nor sea nor cooling waves;

Earth was unknown and heaven above.

Only Ginnungagap was - there was no grass'."

(*Prose Edda*, p. 32).

In her commentary Dr. Jean Young defines Ginnungagap as "Open Void" or "Primal Void" (pp. 32 index). Dr. Brewer has: "Ginnung Gap. The abyss between Niflheim (the region of fog and Muspelheim, the region of heat). It existed before either land or sea, heaven or earth." (*Scandinavian mythology*). (*Dict. of Phrase and Fable*, 520).

On the symbolism of the Norse primal abyss, Mme. Blavatsky writes: "In the Scandinavian Cosmogony, placed by Prof. Max Muller, in point of time as "far anterior to the Vedas", in the poem of Woluspa (the song of the Prophetess), the Mundane Egg is again discovered in the Phantom - Germ of the Universe, which is represented as lying in the *Ginnungagap*, the cup of illusion, Maya, the boundless and void Abyss. In this World's Matrix, formerly a region of night .." (*S.D. II*. 83). The same maternal symbolism is suggested by Dr. Hilda Davidson, in her *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, where she speaks of Ginnungagap as being "pregnant with the potential power of creation". (p. 197).

At a later stage of this creation narrative there is introduced the primordial cow, Audhumbla. According to the *Prose Edda* "four rivers of milk ran from her teats". (p. 34). In a comment on this passage Mme. Blavatsky writes: "the cow Audhumla (the "mother", Astral Light or Cosmic Soul), from whose udder flowed four streams of milk - the four cardinal points; the four heads of the four rivers of Eden, - which "four" allegorically are symbolized by the Cube in all its various and mystical meanings". (*S.D. II*. 83). For the symbolism of the cosmic cow, see above: Celtic.

Finnish.

The Finnish creation tradition differs widely from the Norse. As Dr. Hilda Davidson writes: "There seems to be no trace in Scandinavian sources of the other widespread form of the creation legend deriving the world from a primeval egg, whose upper shell forms the heavens and lower shell the earth. This myth is found in Egyptian, Greek Orphic, and Mithraic traditions, and it has been preserved in Finland .. It appears that the traditional ideas about the creation which have inspired *Voluspa* and other Eddic poems are distinct from those which reached Finland". (p. 200).

The Egg as a cosmogonic symbol is considered in detail in *The Secret Doctrine* in the chapter, *The Mundane Egg*. Mme. Blavatsky writes: "Whence the universal symbol? The Egg was incorporated as a sacred sign in the Cosmogony of every people on the earth and was revered both on account of its form and of its inner mystery .. The Secret Teaching explains the reason for this reverence by the symbolism of the prehistoric races. In the beginning, the "First Cause" had no name. Later it was pictured in the fancy of the thinkers as an ever invisible mysterious Bird that dropped an egg into Chaos, which Egg became the Universe .. A second reason for this egg having been chosen as the symbolic representation of the universe, and of our earth, was its form. It was a circle and a Sphere; and the ovi-form shape of our globe must have been known from the beginning of symbology, since it was so universally adopted. The first manifestation of the Kosmos in the form of an egg was the most widely diffused belief of antiquity". (II. 74).

The beginning of the Finnish epic, *The Kalevala* is thus summarized by Kirby: "Runo I, The Prelude. The Virgin of the Air descends into the sea .. A teal builds its nest on her knee and lays eggs. The eggs fall from the nest and break, but the fragments form the earth, sky, sun, moon and clouds .. In the following passages we have the combined Finnish version of the widespread cosmogonical myths of the Divine Spirit brooding over the waters of chaos; and the Mundane Egg". (*Kalevala* 1. and 319).

American.

The Mexicans, according to Neumann, had a stellar cosmogony similar to that of ancient Egypt: "This matriarchal symbolism of the heavens survived in Egypt for thousands of years after the patriarchal solar theory had become the official world view. We find a corresponding situation in Mexico. Long after the patriarchate had become dominant in every sphere, we still encounter the matriarchal conception according to which the heavens and worlds revolve around the hole, that is to say, the Great Mother, out of which life is drilled". (p. 225).

In North America the inhabitants of the Mesas see their origin geographically. As described by Cottie Burland, they regard the Earth as a living being with an inner womb, "the place of Generation", and an outer womb, "the place beneath the Navel". The various creatures, having been generated in the inner womb, proceed to the "Vagina of Earth" and from there to the "Womb of Birth", where they are born into the outer world. (See *N. Amer. Myth.* 138).

The Colombian Indians preserve their traditions of a cosmic creative source in *The Song of the Kagada Indians*: "The Mother of Songs .. bore us in the beginning". (cit. Neumann, *G.M.* 85). See Part II.

Australian and Oceanian.

The Manganian cosmogony of Polynesia starts with the goddess Vari; "Vari is the very beginning in the Abyss, the Polynesian *Sige* (i.e. Silence) who dwells in the Mute land at the bottom of Avaiki, where she is the originator of all things .. In a dramatic song of creation .. the singers claim descent from her, the mother, alone: "We have no father whatsoever; Vari alone made us", and "Vari the originator of all things." (Massey, *Nat. Gen.* I. 469)."

In Australia the aborigines of Victoria, according to the same author, have a stellar cosmogony: "We still find they have the Great Mother of the Beginning not only in her earlier phase, as the bringer forth in Space, but also in Time as the Bear or Goddess of the Bears and the Waters. The Bushmen also identify the star Sirius as the Great Mother or Grandmother of Canopus .. In its feminine type it represents the Great Mother of Beginnings in the Southern Heaven .. Thus we find the same mythos in Egypt or Victoria". (op. cit. I. 474).

African.

Among the titles of the "universal first producer", enumerated by Massey are, "The First Mother, The Grandmother (Inner African) .. She is yet extant in the African's and Hindu's 'Mama'." (*Gen.* I. 458), and the author goes on to give an illustration of how this matriarchal belief showed itself in a practical way in the following incident: "When a piece of crewel work bearing the motto "God is my King" was presented to Cetawayo in London he at first declined to receive it with the remark, "There is no one over me but the Queen, my Mother".. (*Daily News.* Sept. 2, 1882)". (cit. *Nat. Gen.* I. 458).

In Nigeria the African goddess Ngame "has in her hand a scepter which has the globe of the world on the top; this symbolizes her dominion over the kingdom of nature. She is the mother of all nature, the womb of life". (Okoruwa, *The Avatar*, 36).

Later Jewish (including Kabalistic).

The female Rasit, the Head-Source, Wisdom, of *Genesis* I, i, appears again in later Jewish literature. A passage in the Zohar describing the Kabalistic Trinity reads: "The first head is the Concealed Wisdom (*Sapientia Abscondita*)". (Idra Suta: *Sohar* iii. p. 288 cit. *I.U.* II. 222). For the connexion between the Hebrew primordial Wisdom and the Kabalistic source, Ain Soph, see Part II.

Jewish Derivatives (including Later Christianity).

Later Christianity, with the growing emphasis on the Virgin Mary, applied to her many of the titles and attributes of the goddesses of the older religions, particularly Isis. Dr. Witt writes: "Like her great forerunner the Blessed Virgin Mary has been known as she whose praises are innumerable (*myria*) as "Nurse" and "Nature", as "the goddess of all goddesses", and as "the great first principle (*elementum*) in which the "elements" (*elementa*) are all specifically contained". All these epicleses can be found in the Marian aretology published at Cologne in 1710 by Hippolytus Marraccius. His alphabetically arranged aretology gives the Praises of Mary (*innumera laudum encomla*) in eighteen books. Maria Myrionymus shares other names with Isis, e.g. Augusta, Aurora, Gubernatrix, and Primigenia

(Primogenita). She can also be called Exorcista, Jupiter and Mars. Later patology has been well culled by this enthusiast." (pp. 273, 324). For the connexion between Mary and Wisdom see Part II.

Western Renaissance.

The Classical revival brought with it a renewed interest in Classical theology. Goethe, in his second part of *Faust*, introduces a Classical background, but adds to it some medieval traditions and also some theological opinions of his own. This is particularly apparent in his references to *The Mothers* and these passages suggest an actual cosmogony.

"Mephistopheles:

Unwillingly, I reveal a loftier mystery.—
In solitude are throned the Goddesses,
No Space around them, Place and Time still less;
Only to speak of them embarrasses.
They are THE MOTHERS!..

Faust:

The Mothers! Mothers! - a strange word is said." (Act i. v. 329).

In his commentary on this scene Bayard Taylor records what Goethe himself had said in relation to this passage. He quotes from Eckermann, writing in 1830: "Today, as a supplement to the dinner, Goethe gave me a great enjoyment, by reading to me the scene when Faust goes to the Mothers. The new, unsuspecting character of the subject, together with the tone and manner in which Goethe recited the scene, took hold of me with wonderful power, so that I found myself at once in the condition of Faust, who feels a shudder creep over him when Mephistopheles makes the communication.

"I had heard and clearly comprehended the description, but so much of it remained enigmatical to me that I felt myself forced to beg Goethe to enlighten me a little. He, however, according to his usual habit, assumed a mysterious air, looking at me with wide-open eyes and repeating the words:-

"The Mothers! Mothers! It sounds so singular!"

"I can only betray so much", he then said, "that in reading Plutarch, I found that in Grecian antiquity the Mothers are spoken of as Goddesses. This is all which I have borrowed, however, the remainder is my own invention .." Plutarch's mention of the Mothers, however, is not to be found in his *Moralia*, but in the *Life of Marcellus*..

"Hartung has discovered another passage in Plutarch (*De Defect. Qrac.*, 22) wherein the Mothers are not mentioned, it is true, but which Goethe evidently bore in mind and applied to this scene: "There are a hundred and eighty three worlds, which are arranged in the form of a triangle. Each side has sixty worlds in a line, the other three occupying the corners. In this order they touch each other softly, and ever revolve, as in a dance. The space within the triangle is to be considered as a common fold for all, and is called the Field of Truth. Within it lie, moveless, the causes, shapes and primitive images of all things that have ever existed and which ever shalt exist. They are surrounded by Eternity, from which Time flows forth as an effluence upon the worlds.

"..The Mothers, therefore, (admitting the significance of the name, which suggested their use to Goethe) must of necessity symbolise the original action of those elemental forces in Man, out of which grew the aesthetic development of the race in whatever form..

"Eckermann, after taking home Goethe's manuscript and duly pondering over it, evolved out of his inmost consciousness the discovery that the Mothers are the "creating and sustaining principle, from which everything proceeds that has life and form on the surface of the Earth". Kostlin .. says they are the sustaining and conservative principle, adding: "They are Goddesses, who preside over the eternal metamorphoses of things, of all that already exists" .. Weisse states that they are "the formless realm of the inner world of spirit - the invisible depth of mind ..". From this view it is but a step to the *Matrices* of Paracelsus which, in fact, we find particularly accepted by Deycks, who sees in the Mothers, as in the *matrices*, "the elemental or original material of all forms". Riemer's view is

substantially the same - "they are the elements from which spring all that is corporeal as well as all that is intellectual".

Bayard Taylor summarized by saying that "The realm of the original conception of things is therefore outside of Space and Time, and the Mothers .. typify the unknown and unfathomable origin of all forms, and chiefly, here, of those eternal Ideals of Beauty which became more real to the Poet and Artist .. The realm where the Mothers dwell is visible to the secret vision of the Poet and the Artist". (*Faust*, pp. 541-6).

Modern Western.

The Romantic Revival of last century brought with it a renewed interest in the old "grass-roots" historical, mythological and religious traditions. This, coupled with the study of comparative religion led to the reformulation of the old national theologies in modern religious and philosophical terms.

With the publication of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* towards the end of last century Eastern religion was presented in Western terminology. In the summary of Eastern cosmogonies Mme. Blavatsky writes: "Space is called the Mother before its cosmic activity". (*S.D. I*, 83). Among the later writers Neumann, a social psychologist, comes to the same conclusion: "After all that has been said, it is not hard to see that space is one of the most important projections of the Feminine as a totality; if there were no other indications of this, it would follow from her character of containing vessel and cosmic egg". (*Great Mother*. 226).

Dion Fortune, writing at about the same time as Neumann, and herself a psychologist and occultist, states: "In the beginning was space, darkness and stillness, older than time and forgotten by the gods. Movement arose in space: that was the beginning.

"This sea of infinite space was the source of all being; life arose therein as a tide in the boundless sea. All shall return thereto when the night of the gods draws in. This is the Great Sea, Marah, the Bitter One; the Great Mother". (*Aspects of Occultism*, 34).

Among contemporary writers Merlin Stone presents again the old maternal cosmogony: "In the beginning, people prayed to the Creatress of Life, the Mistress of Heaven. At the very dawn of religion, God was a woman. Do you remember?" (*Paradise Papers*, 17). Similarly Starhawk writes: "CREATION. Alone, awesome, complete within Herself, the Goddess; She whose name cannot be spoken, floated in the abyss of darkness, before the beginning of all things". (*Spiral Dance*, 17). For the development of this see Part II.

The cosmogony of Morgan McFarland begins: "In the infinite moment before all time began, the Goddess arose from Chaos and gave birth to Herself ... before anything else had been born ... not even Herself. But when she had separated the Skies from the Waters and had danced upon them, the Goddess in her ecstasy created everything that is .." (cit. Margot Adler, 218). Ms. Adler quotes from a letter which she received from Penny Novack, stating her belief. An excerpt from this reads: "The Earth Mother is the primal seed - source of the universe". (op. cit. 35).

The "return to nature" trend is seen in the traditional charge adopted by Wiccan and other groups:

"Hear the words of the Star Goddess, the dust of whose feet are the hosts of heaven, whose body encircles the universe:

"I who am the beauty of the green earth and the white moon and the stars and the mysteries of the waters .. For I am the soul of Nature that gives life to the universe. From Me all things proceed and unto Me they must return.. For behold, I have been with you from the beginning, and I am that which is attained at the end of desire". (cit. Starhawk, *Spiral Dance*, 76).

Some of the modern cosmogonies take as their source a particular Goddess. For instance, Margot Adler, in her survey of modern religious movements, writes: "According to the Feraferian theology, the centre of the universe, of all universes, perhaps, is the Arretos Koura, an ancient Greek phrase for the ineffable bride, the Nameless Maiden. The Arretos Koura spins a cosmic dance from which all things come into existence". (p. 237). and Frederick Adams, of that group, writes: "The Mother is the Source and Centre". (op. cit. 238).

Among what she calls "Pagan Reconstructions", Ms. Adler gives the following creed of the Aphrodisian religion, which begins: "I believe in Aphrodite, the flower-faced sweetly-smelling, laughter-loving goddess of Love and Beauty; the self-existing, eternal and only Supreme Deity; Creator and Mother of the cosmos; the Universal Cause; the Universal Mind; the source of all life and all positive creative forces of nature; the Fountain-Head of all happiness and joy ..." (Seabrook, *Witchcraft*, 342)." (p.431).

The Greek Goddess Rhea appears in the following modern ritual. "*Oracle of the goddess Rhea through her priestess* .. There is no distance in me, no separation : am I not the Void of Space? All moves with perfect accord within by blackness: and in my manifestation is the Light.

"Devotee: Hail to the Divine Lady .. All creatures adore thee, thou self-created Being, who gave birth to nature". (Olivia Robertson, *Dea*, 30).

The Kabalistic Binah, who appeared originally as a female personification of Understanding in *The Proverbs*, is seen by modern writers as a form of the primeval Deep. Dion Fortune gives the following invocation:

"O thou that was before the earth was formed - Rhea, Binah, Ge.
O timeless, soundless, boundless, bitter sea".
(*Sea Priestess*, 218).

While Dolores Ascroft-Nowicki, of the "Servants of the Light" attributes to Binah words reminiscent of the Egyptian goddess Neith: "I am that which was, is, and shall be, I am your faith, your cool waters in the desert, I am your beginning and your end .. I am Binah". (*The Shining Paths*, 139).

A Marian cosmogony is presented by Martha Courtot: "Who is this Goddess, obscured by a male clergy, emerging as Mary in Christian theology? What is this female power figure which insists on maintaining Herself in the under belly of our belief? Helen Diner had written, 'In the beginning there was woman'. (Monique Wittig, *Les Guilleres*, p. 3). That is, as life-givers, nourishers of the species, women in pre-history are the species". (*Lady-Unique*, I. 67).

The Indian cosmogony is reflected in that given by Monica Sjoon and Barbara Mor, in a passage entitled *Female Cosmogony: The Creation of the Universe*: "The Universe existed in the shape of Darkness, unknowable, wholly immersed in deep sleep. Then the Divine self appeared with irresistible creative power, dispelling Darkness. She who is subtle, indiscernible and eternal, who contains all created beings, wakes then this world stirs". (*Great Cosmic Mother of All*, 13). A close resemblance is noticeable between this and the Tibetan *Stanzas of Dzyan*.

Chinese philosophy is reflected in another passage by the same authors. *The World Egg*. "The ancient Great Mother of All Living gave birth parthenogenically, without a male, to Herself and the entire cosmos. She was the World Egg, containing the two halves, the Yin/Yang of continuity and change, expansion and contraction of the Universe." (op. cit. 15).

Cosmogony is also seen in physiological terms. According to Vicki Noble: "The original Mother, she who created all the universe, was always a body of water ... the original amniotic fluid that once bathed all the surface of the earth" (p. 87). And in a modern ritual for the consecration of the Grail, the officiant, holding the grails, intones:

"I am the mystic Grail, Virgin of Light and Mother of Ecstasy..
Mother am I of the Logoi and Mother of Life Undying
Myrrha am I, and Marah am I, and Mem the Great Ocean.
Within me mingle Time and Eternity
I am the Mother of All being, and I am the Womb of Rebirth".

At a later stage the celebrant again intones:

"O thou Womb, thou Womb! - thou Ocean whence cometh Life".
(Denning and Phillips, *Mag. Phil.* V. 304).

The womb as the source of creation is suggested by these words of Martin Buber, written in 1919: "In the womb of the Mother was the undivided world that precedes form. At birth we forget, but never forget completely. The memory of that undivided primordial world lingers on as a 'secret image of desire' and this is the real meaning of the 'wish to

return to the womb'. It is not at all a sign of unhealthy pathology but represents a natural longing to establish the cosmic connection". (*I and Thou*, cit. Sjo and Mar, 13).

This physiological basis of cosmogony is vividly demonstrated through iconography. The writer and artist Monica Sjo graphically shows the vulva as the source of creation. Many of her drawings illuminate the theme, such as: "The Goddess with upraised arms and parted legs gives birth to the universe". (p. 29).

But cosmogenesis is not limited to a particular time, once for all, in the remote past; it is a continuing process. "All Mother Goddesses spin and weave Everything that is comes of them. They weave the world tapestry and of genesis and demise, "threads appearing and disappearing rhythmically ". (Helen Diner, *Mothers and Amazons*, cit. Mary Daly. 1)." In fact, every female being, by virtue of her divine creative and life-giving powers can become a new source of creation. New creations can come into being when women, acting either singly or together, generate and release the spark of life. As Mary Daly writes: "Sparking means building fires of gynergetic communication and confidence. As a result, each sparking Hag not only begins to live in a lighted and warm room of her own; she prepares a place for a loom of her own. In this space she can begin to weave the tapestries of her own creation. With her increasing fire and force, she can begin to Spin. As she and her sisters Spin together, we create the Network of our time/space". (*Gyn/Ecology*, 320).

PART II.

THE GENERATION OF THE GREAT MOTHER

The original Female Source has her place in the beginning, before the process of Creation ever begins.

In the first stage of Cosmogogenesis this Source, according to most matriarchal cosmologies, proliferates herself into many other female entities. Each of these, in her own particular way, undertakes some specialized creative activity.

Various methods by which the Source reproduces herself are described.

By one method, the Mother is seen as simply dividing herself into two or more parts. This process is found in some of the ancient cosmogonies. According to Massey, "The earliest Myth-makers .. observed phenomena and represented objective manifestations. Their beginning was simply the Oneness that opened in giving birth and in bifurcating; hence the type of the female first, the one Great Mother of all". (*Nat. Gen.* I. 465). The resultant parts sometimes become two similar female beings, known as the Mother and Daughter, or the two Sisters, as in ancient Egypt. A threefold division results in a triad or trinity of female beings, as in the Hindu and Celtic traditions. Sometimes the resultant parts of this division are unlike or complimentary, as in the Babylonian Creation Narrative, where the original Goddess becomes divided to form Heaven and Earth.

Another way in which the Original Mother reproduces herself is by the process of parturition or giving birth. Here she separates off a minute amount of her own substance and forms it, within her womb, into an independent embryo. Reproduction by birth is assumed to take place in most of the theologies as, for instance, in that of Hesiod.

Another method of reproduction, adopted by the original greatness is described in detail in Gnostic literature. Here the Mother emanates from out of herself certain vital essences or elemental substances. These are at first of an ethereal nature but subsequently consolidate into denser matter, from which a new entity is formed. The relationship between this new being to its parent, is that of a child to its mother. But whereas the development of the child produced by birth takes place partly within the womb and partly outside, that of the child produced by emanation is wholly extra-uterine, as described in the formation of Sophia Achamoth.

But while there are various ways in which the female reproduces herself, these have all one thing in common; each originates in the female genitalia. While this is not always explicitly stated in the cosmogonies, it is nearly always implied by the symbolic language used. Cosmogogenesis is, in fact, a product of female sexuality.

It was thought a sexual act, as the Gnostics saw, that the whole process of Creation first began. According to the Valentinian doctrine, a certain female Cosmic Being or Aeon, Sophia, had the desire to stimulate herself sexually on her own. In the ensuing orgasm the vital etheric substances which she emitted into space consolidated and developed into a separate female entity, Sophia Achamoth. The daughter, adopting her mother's method, proliferated her vital substances throughout space, and thereby caused the creation of the denser matter of the cosmos. At the same time she created male cosmic beings, the Archons, male Elohim or gods to help her in organizing this primordial substance.

The male orgasm, by contrast, being incapable of transmitting life, cannot create. Having only limited resources, the innate gift of the "power of the Mother", on which to draw, it can produce nothing more than soulless elemental entities; these can only be animated and humanized by the life-giving Spirit of the Mother.

Many traditions refer to the repeated attempts of man to create on his own, and to the consequences of these abortive efforts.

In the Babylonian tradition, Kramer records of the primeval god Enki: "After Ninmah had created these six types of man, Enki decides to do some creating on his own. The manner in which he goes about it is not clear, but whatsoever it is that he does, the resulting creature is a failure; it is weak and feeble in body and spirit, Enki is now anxious that Ninmah help this forlorn creature; he then addresses her .. Ninmah tries to be good to the creature but to no avail. She talks to him but he fails to answer. She gives him bread to eat, but he does not reach out for it. He can neither sit nor stand, nor bend the knees. Following a long but as yet unintelligible conversation between Enki and Ninmah, the latter utters a curse against Enki, because of the sick, lifeless creature he produced, a curse which Enki seems to accept as his due". (*M.A.W.* 104).

Greek and Roman tradition mentions "the creatures of Prometheus". The early accounts state that they were simply artifacts of a skilled craftsman; but the later version by Horace suggest they were produced organically. (Odes, I. 16). But, however made, they had no life of their own; it was the goddess who animated them. In a representation of the scene, described by Montfaucon: "This Image, besides, is very singular: *Minerva* there appears, because, according to *Lucian*, it was she that animated the Work of *Prometheus*." (Davidson, *Ovid. Metam.* p.10).

The Gnostics give more detailed accounts of these abortive attempts by the male to create on his own. The first male beings, the seven sons of Sophia Achamoth, were the seven Archons or male Elohim, of whom the first-born was Ildabaoth or Samael, known as, "the blind god", "the Archbegetter" or "the Demiurge". (*Gn. Rel.* 304). "In the *Apocryphon of John*, Sophia's distress arises over the creative doings of the demiurge, her son". (*Gn. Rel.* 301). "[Ildabaoth] became haughty and said: 'I am God, and there is no other beside me .. His thoughts were blind. He bethought himself to create sons to himself' .. Zoe, daughter of Pistis Sophia, has Ildabaoth bound and cast into Tartarus at the bottom of the Deep, by a fiery angel emanating from her". (*Hypostasis of Archons*, 143: 5-13, cit. *Gn. Rel.* 303). King, in his *Gnostics*, says: "but he failed utterly in his work .. proving a vast, soulless monster, crawling upon the earth". (cit. *S.D.* III, 246). Another account states: "Ilda-Baoth .. ambitious and proud .. set himself to create a world of his own. Aided by his sons, the six planetary genii, he fabricated man, but this one proved a failure. It was a monster; soulless, ignorant. and crawling on all fours on the ground like a material beast. Ilda Baoth was forced to implore the help of his spiritual Mother [Sophia Achamoth]. She communicated to him a ray of her divine light, and so animated man and endowed him with a soul". (*I.U.* II, 184). According to the Ophites, the Archangels' attempts to create man resulted in a creature "prone and crawling on the earth as a worm. But the heavenly mother, Prunnikos .. infused into man a celestial spark - the spirit. Immediately man rose upon his feet, soared in mind beyond the limits of the seven spheres .." (*I.U.* II, 187).

The Valentinians, just as in the *Divine Pyramander*, state that the desire to create arose from seeing a reflection in the water. Seeing an image, in the shape of 'a man'. This inspired Ildabaoth with a creative ambition to which all the seven archons consented. 'They saw in the water the appearance of the image and said to each other, "Let us make a man after the image and appearance of God" ' .. The imitation, illicit and blundering .. is a widespread Gnostic idea .. The tale continues: 'Out of themselves (note by Jonas: "Out of their substance, which is 'soul' not matter") and all their powers they created and formed a formation. And each one created from [his] power and *soul* .. But a long the creature remained immobile and the powers could not make it rise."

Now, the presumption and the bungling of the archons' work played into the hands of the Mother "...with the result that she sent 'life'. (fem.) who hid herself within him .. 'It is she who works at the creature, exerts herself on him .. and shows him his [way of] ascent'. Adam shone from the light within him". (*Gn. Rel.* 202-4).

Indian tradition, also, compares the parts played by the sexes. Colonel Wilford writes: "Many Pundits insist that the Yanavas were so named from their obstinate assertion of a superior influence in the *female* over the *linga* or *male nature*, in producing a perfect offspring .. There is a legend in the *Servarasa* of which the figurative meaning is more obvious. When Sati .. in the character of Parvati, was reunited in marriage to Mahadeva (Shiva). This divine pair had once a dispute on the comparative influences of the sexes in producing animate beings, and each resolved .. to create apart a new race of men. The race produced by Mahadeva was very numerous and devoted themselves exclusively to the worship of the *male deity*, but their intellects were dull, their bodies feeble, their limbs distorted, and their complexions of many different hues. Parvati, had at the same time, created a multitude of human beings, who adored the *female power* only, and were well shaped, with sweet aspects and fine complexions. A furious conflict ensued between the two races, and the *Lingajas* were defeated .. But Mahadeva, enraged against the *Yonijas*, would have destroyed them .. if Parvati had not interposed and spared them. She 'made use of the same artifice the old woman, called Baabo, did to put Ceres in good humour, and showed him the prototype of the *Lotos*. Mahadeva smiled and relented; but on condition that they should instantly leave the country' .. and from the *Yoni*, which they adored as the sole cause of their existence, they were named Yanavas". (cit. O'Brien, *Round Towers of Ireland*, 260).

According to Graves, an African "Father-god, Odomankoma .. claimed to have made the universe single-handedly .. Ngame is now said to have vitalized Odomankoma's lifeless creation". (*Greek Myths*, I, 23).

In Medieval and later times, the male orgasm, produced apart from the female, was seen to give rise to soulless psychic entities known variously as homunculi, mannikins, humanoid elementaries and artificial elementals.

This accumulation of male psychic debris was seen as a pollution to the dense etheric cosmos; and by smothering life, it obstructed the normal development of nature. Something of this is hinted at by Goethe, in *Faust*. Here the unnaturally produced Homunculus is irresistibly drawn - in fact is the guide to the onlookers as well - to the only remedy for its abnormal condition, - absorption in the female; only here could it be vivified and become part of the stream of human evolution. As Goethe put it: "*Homunculus* .. Who to the Mothers found his way, Has nothing more to undergo." (Part II, Act II, Scene 3).

Though the male incursion into the creative process has consequences of its own, the basic pattern of reproduction remains the same. As cosmogenesis proceeds each new generation of Deities is allotted its own particular functions in the developing cosmos.

The female Elohim, the Goddesses, each further extend the bounds of their creative activity into their own specialized areas, the same process continuing with their progeny. But each succeeding goddess, however far removed she may be genealogically from the Original Source, has the full potential of the first Great Mother. Thus, for instance, Eve, the distant descendant of Sophia, still possesses "the great creative power from which all things originate." (Valentinus, cit. *Gn. Gosp.* p. 54) And in the Egyptian Pantheon, Isis, genealogically the grand-daughter of Tefnut, can at the same time, as Dr. Witt describes: "Manifest as the One Supreme Deity", without in any way derogating from the earlier goddesses. And the same principle may be applied to every subsequent female being. Each takes on a specialized creative role, but each has the full potential of the original Deity, the Great Mother; each, like Eve is "the mother of all living". Matriarchal religion, is therefore, as has been stated, essentially polytheistic.

The male Elohim, the Archons or gods, are likewise given the task of organizing and developing those new specialized fields of creation produced by the goddesses. Similarly, all subsequent male beings have a corresponding part to play in the development of the cosmos.

Chaldean.

In the Babylonian Creative narrative, the *Enuma Elish*, the primordial goddess Tiamat becomes divided into two parts, the Heaven and the Earth. Similarly the account given by Berosus states that from the body of Omoroca or Thalath "of one half [was] formed the earth and of the other half the heavens". (Cory. *Anc. Fragms.* 25). The resulting universe is seen as a kind of an enclosed space bounded by the upper and the lower hemispheres of the all-encompassing goddess, with the zenith "High in the belly" of Tiamat, the nadir, "the Ditch of Hell". Subsequently the lower part of the goddess provides "earth, rivers, springs and wells", and the upper, the constellations of the zodiac. The upper vault is as permanent as the lower. As Neumann describes it: "The female sky is the fixed and enduring element; the luminaries - sun, moon and stars - that rise and fall within the black-and-white cosmic egg of the Great Goddess are transient and perishable". (p. 224).

A similar division is seen in the Goddess Ishtar. Massey describes how: "In an Akkadian hymn to Ishtar, the Lady of Heaven, the Queen of Heaven, the opener of the locks of high heaven, is celebrated as the Begetter. "Heaven she benefits, earth she enlightens, my Begetter". (*Rec. of Past*, Vol. v. 158). Ishtar has the dual form of the Great Mother who fills the one character above the horizon and the other below". (Nat. Gen. I. 511). This cosmic aspect of Ishtar may be seen in the name of the zodiac, the "girdle of Ishtar". (Esther Harding, *Woman's Myst.* 163).

The goddess Nammu also manifests in a cosmic way. Vicki Noble speaks of: "the Sumerian Nammu who created the whole cosmos ('She whose waters are all the universe')." (p. 87).

The formation of the vegetable realm, according to an ancient prayer, is the work of Ishtar. "O Mother of the gods .. who makes the green herb to spring up, who created all things, who guides the whole of creation, O Mother Ishtar .. A prayer will I utter" (King, 213). Another vegetation goddess is Ninhursag, "Creatrix of Vegetation" (*Gdss. Chald.* 15).

Hebrew.

The Babylonian view of cosmic development is seen by some scholars to be reflected in the Bible. Referring to the splitting of Tiamat's body, Hooke writes: "This corresponds to the Priestly account of the creation of the firmament, which is depicted as a solid vault stretched out above the Earth." (cf. *Job* 38: 4-11).

"There is also a resemblance to the Babylonian order of Creation in the Priestly account of the successive acts of Creation on the six days. Hence, in spite of the complete transformation of the Babylonian material effected by the Priestly writer, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the original form of the Creation story upon which he is depending is ultimately of Babylonian origin .." (*Mid. E. Myth*, 119). In the passage in the Book of *Job*, referred to above, the words: "Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb". (v. 38. 8) are also reminiscent of the matriarchal cosmogonic tradition.

Egyptian.

The division and sub-division of the Female Source is seen in Egyptian traditions. Certain of the primeval goddesses, as described above, Part I, are shown as "proceeding from themselves".

The suggestion that Neith reproduces herself into several persons is given in the *Book of that which is the Underworld*. Describing the illustrations in the 11th Hour, Budge writes: "Next we have figures of the four forms of the goddess Neith .. they are called Neith the fecundator, in allusion to the belief that this goddess begat herself, Neith of the red crown (i.e. The North), Neith of the white crown (i.e. The South), and Neith the child". (*Gods*. I. 252).

Another method of differentiation is seen in the case of the goddess Tefnut, mother of Nut. Massey describes this in detail: "One name of the most ancient genetrix who divided into two sisters was Tef (Eg.), identical with the Abyss of the beginning. She was continued as Tefn or Tefnut under the lioness-type, and from her name and nature it is now proposed to derive the *Dawn*. The word is common for opening and to dawn is to open out.. But the name of Dawn or *Tefn* includes more than the dawn in heaven. The dawn with which primitive mythologists were first concerned was the dawn of womanhood, and the day of procreation. This was the dawn that broke in blood. We speak of the rose of dawn, but they drew their simile from blood; and blood first manifested through a breaking open, as it did in the human dawn. In Egyptian, Tef means to shed, evacuate, spit, menstruate, drip, and drop, with the flower-sign of bleeding .. The mother opened in the first of two phases in the red dawn that broke in blood. The first mother divides and assumes the forms of the two sisters, as she did in sociology". (I. 531). The dawn as a female physiological process is sometimes also associated with Nut. As Veronica Ions describes it: "The rosy colour of the sky at dawn was supposed to be the blood which Nut shed in giving birth to the sun". (p. 53).

Nut herself manifests also in a divided form, similar to that of the Babylonian Tiamat. As Neumann writes: "Nut is water above and below, vault above and below". (p. 222), Each part, resulting from the division, still remains a goddess. "To Nut as the upper vault corresponds Naunet as the lower vault, the counterheaven lying "under" the disc of the earth, the two together forming the Great Round of the feminine vessel. But Naunet, the counterheaven is identical to Nut". (loc. cit). The cosmic sovereignty of Nut is described in the *Pyramid Texts*. Pepi II in the *Hymn to Nut*:

"O perfect Daughter, mighty One of thy Mother..

The whole earth is under thee, thou hast taken possession of it.

Thou hast encompassed the earth, everything is in thy two hands".

(cit. Elissa Sharpley, *Anth. Egy. Poems*, 29. trans. Budge).

Egyptian geography is shown by Kenneth Grant to be linked physiologically with Nut. "The most ancient form of "physical geography" was founded on the female form; the woman below, being the earth; the woman aloft (i.e. the celestial Nut) being heaven; and whether as the woman below, with feet pointing towards the Great Bear constellation - the Goddess of the Seven Stars - or as the Great Bear itself, Inner Africa was the womb of the world, Egypt the vulva or outlet to the north, the Nile itself forming the vulva of the woman "below". (*Mag. Rev.* 16).

The division of the primordial Egyptian Goddess into two hemispheres is enlarged upon by Massey: "Hor Apollo points out that the Egyptians thought it absurd to designate Heaven in the masculine, *ton ouranon*. but represented

it the feminine, *ten ouranon*, inasmuch as the generation of the Sun, Moon, and the rest of the planets is perfected in it, which is the peculiar property of the female.(B. I. ii). The Heaven, whether Upper or Lower, was the bringer-forth, therefore feminine .. The Two Heavens, or Heaven and Earth, were represented by the Two Divine Sisters as Neith and Seti (or Nephthys), or Isis and Nupe, who were the two forms of the first One, the Mother and Sister in the earliest sociology". (N.G. 1.467).

The division of the goddess into two different and complimentary parts has been shown above in the case of Neith, who differentiates into Neith of the Northern Crown and Neith of the Southern Crown. In the same way, among the daughters of Nut are "Isis, a spirit of dawn, and Nephthys, a spirit of twilight". (Budge *B.D.* xcvi).

A quarternary division of the goddess is mentioned by Neumann: Only now are we in a position to understand the significance of the Goddess Hathor's identification with the four cardinal points and four quarters of the world characterized by the goddesses Nekhbet, Uadjet, Bast and Neith (Budge, *Gods, I.* 451). Since, as Jung has repeatedly shown, the quarternary is the archetypal symbol of wholeness, this quarternary of Hathor (Kees, p. 220) is the symbol of the Archetypal Feminine as the world-governing totality in all its aspects. (*Great Mother*, 221). This female quarternary is shown iconographically in Tutankhamun's tomb. Mme. Desroches-Noblecourt describes how at each corner of the Canopic Shrine stood the image of a winged goddess, "Isis at the north-west: Nephthys at the south-west: Neith at the north and Serket at the south-east". (*Tutankhamun*, 243). A celestial quarternary is also depicted in the Dendera Zodiac. As Eisler describes it: "Note the four goddesses holding the planisphere and supposed to turn it round with their hands. They are the goddesses of the four columns of the sky". (*Royal Art of Astrol.* 266).

The production of certain geographical features are seen as a result of the emanations of Isis. The Greek writer Pausanias records how: "At this time the Nile begins to rise and it is a saying among many of the natives that what makes the river rise and water their fields is the tears of Isis". (X. xxxii, 18). "Sometimes Isis is seen as the bed of the river Nile, the river itself representing the parturient waters of the goddess". (*Gdss. Chald.* 290).

The creation of vegetation is often attributed to Isis. As Frazer writes: "Amongst the epithets by which Isis is designated in the inscriptions are "Creatress of green things", "Green Goddess, whose green colour is like unto the greenness of the earth", "Lady of Bread", "Lady of Beer", Lady of Abundance". According to Brugsch she is "not only the creatress of the fresh verdure of vegetation which covers the earth, but is actually the green corn-field itself, which is personified as a goddess." This is confirmed by her epithet Sochit or Sochet, meaning "a corn-field".. The Greeks conceived of Isis as a corn-goddess, for they identified her with Demeter. In a Greek epigram she is described as "she who has given birth to the fruits of the earth" and "the mother of the ears of corn"; and in a hymn composed in her honour she speaks of herself as "queen of the wheat-field", and is described as "charged with the care of the fruitful furrows wheat-rich path". Accordingly, Greek or Roman artists often represented her with ears of corn on her head or in her hand". (*Golden Bough*, abdg. 382).

In the Classical period of Egyptian history, when Isis assumed the dominant: position in the Pantheon, she is seen as "Thiouis", the One; and cosmogenesis was in general attributed to her. Isidorus in his first hymn to her praises her in these terms:

"O wealth-giver, Queen of the Gods; Hermouthis, Lady,
Omnipotent Agathe Tyche, greatly renowned Isis,
Because of You heaven and the whole earth have their being,
And the gusts of the wind and the sun with its sweet light.
By your power the channels of the Nile are filled, every one." (p. 21),

In her introduction Vera Vanderlip writes: "The early aretalogies emphasise Isis' power, omnipotent and creative". Isidorus, in his second Hymn addresses her as:

"Creator of both earth and the starry heaven,
and of all rivers, and many swift streams .." (p. 36).

In a résumé of Isis' position in this period, Dr. Witt states: "The most important aspect, however, is the omnipotence of Isis on a cosmic scale. She has separated earth and heaven. She has revealed the paths of the stars .. All things bow to her.. She is indeed Almighty". (p. 106).

Isis is seen as cosmic nature by Apuleius; in his address to her he uses the words: "You set the orb of heaven spinning around the poles, you give light to the sun, you govern the universe .. At your voice the stars move, the seasons recur, the spirits of earth rejoice, the elements obey. At your nod the winds blow, clouds drop wholesome rain upon the earth, seeds quicken, buds swell" (*Metam.* xix).

Another Egyptian-Greek goddess of origin is Sopdet, the star Sothis or Sirius whose heliacal rising began the Sothic year. Porphyry writes: "And for them, the ascendancy of Sothis, which makes a beginning of genesis to the Cosmos, is the New Year". (*Cave of Nymphs*, p. 25)

Graeco-Roman.

In the Roman Theogony of Hyginus Night, *Nox* and *Day*, *Dies*, appear as two sisters, being the first two children of the personified female Mist, *Caligo*. (*Fab. Praef.* I. 1); while in Hesiod (*Theogony*, 124) Night, *Nyx* is the mother of Day, *Hémeré*.

A multiple division is recorded by Massey: "A form of four-fold motherhood is also intimated when Plutarch tells us that the properties of a quadrangle appertain to the goddesses Rhea, Venus, Keres, and Vesta as Eudoxus relates". (*Nat. Gen.* I. 547). The Loeb translation of this passage reads: "The dominion of .. the quadrilateral [belongs] to Rhea, Aphrodite, Demeter, Hestia and Hera". (*Mor.* 363a). Here we have Rhea, "Mother of the Deities", with her three daughters, together with Aphrodite.

Another four-fold grouping appears in later Greek thought in the Seasons, The *Horae*. Hanfmann in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* writes of them: "When Hellenic religion develops to a more unified and intellectual state, the Seasons, whether three or four, are also called *Horae*; Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter all bring their proper blessings and are depicted in art with appropriate attributes". And according to Felix Buffière, "the four maidservants of Circe bring naturally to mind the four seasons (Eustatheus, 1661, lff) and the 350 cows of the sun the days of the lunar year (Cf. *Myths of Homer*, 224)". (Heraclitus, p. 77).

Cosmic reproduction by the process of parthenogenetic birth is shown by Hesiod in the case of Earth, *Gaea*, who "brought forth of herself the sky, the mountains and the sea". (see *Theog.* 126-132).

In the Pelasgic tradition, as reconstructed by Graves, the primeval Eurynome uses a variety of methods in producing the universe. "In the beginning Eurynome, the Goddess of All Things, rose naked from Chaos, but found nothing substantial for her feet to rest upon, and therefore divided the sea from the sky". Subsequently she laid the Universal Egg, which hatched and split in two. "Out tumbled all things that exist, her children; sun, moon, planets, stars, the earth with its mountains and rivers, its trees, herbs, and living creatures". (*Greek Myths*, I. 27)

Cosmogogenesis effected through the emanations of the Female Producer is seen in the case of Hera, who produced the Galaxy or Milky Way from herself. As Lempriere describes it in his *Classical Dictionary*: "When Jupiter placed Hercules to the breast of Juno, some of her milk fell down upon earth, and changed the colour of lilies from purple to beautiful white. Some of the milk dropped into that part of the heavens, which from its whiteness, still retains the name of the milky way, *Lactea via*". The Greek astronomical writer Aratus refers to "what men call the milky way, *Gala*". (*Phaenomena* 476). And Plato thought that "the fire which we call the sun" was lighted at a ray of the first mother". (See *Timaens*, cit. I U. 1.258).

In some traditions the Creator or Demiurge is described in terms of a female Artificer. According to Heraclitus, the world was created by Athena as a kind of artifact: "Athena, the earth, is she not in fact the great demiurge of the universe, the craftswoman goddess?". (*Alleg. Homer*, 25-6).

The Emperor Julian, a neoplatonist, saw the creatrix of the earth as Selene. the Moon. In his letter to the Christians of Alexandria he writes: "And do you not perceive what great blessings the city derives from her even Selene who is the creator of the whole universe". (47 C). He describes how she works in co-operation with Athene: "Athene distributes and is a channel for stainless and pure life throughout the seven spheres from the highest vault of the

heavens as far as Selene, the moon: for Selene is the last of the heavenly spheres which Athene fills with wisdom." (149. D.).

Hebrew-Greek etc. (including Gnostic and early Christian).

The Gnostic writers explain in great detail the method adopted by the female in cosmogenesis. It is essentially a method of emanation, first started by the sexual desire of Sophia, or her equivalent.

The doctrine of Valentinus is centered on this female Aeon. She, through performing a sexual act on her own, brought into being the whole cosmos. Jonas, summarising Hippolytus, describes this event: "The Sophia leaped farthest forward and fell into a passion apart from the embrace of her consort". (Gnostic Religion, 183). In the commentary Jonas states that she wanted to "generate out of herself without spouse .. She, Sophia, which is called Pistis, wished to accomplish a Work by herself, without her consort". (Gnos. Rel. 302). While the text of the Discourse of the *Origin of the World* (Codex. II. 5) has: "an image flowed out from Pistis, who was called Sophia. She wished it to become a work" ... (p. 303).

In the *Trimorphic Protennia*, the Triple-formed Primal Thought, quoted by Dr. Elaine Pagels, which celebrates the feminine powers of Thought, Intelligence and Foresight, a passage reads: "[I copulate] with myself.. I am the womb [that gives shape] to the All.. I am Me [iroth] ea.. the glory of the mother". (N.H.L. 457. cit. Elaine Pagels, *Gnos. Gosp.* 55).

The *Apocalypse of Adam* describes another feminine power, or Sophia under another name: " the nine Muses, one separated away. She came to a high mountain and spent time seated there. so that she desired herself alone .. She fulfilled her desire, and became pregnant from her desire .."(N.H.L. cit. p.54).

While starting within her own body this orgasm is the beginning of a chain of consequences which manifest externally.

An account is given in the teaching of Simon Magus. Jonas says that he describes "the personalized figure of Epinoia (or alternatively Ennoia), who .. is the subject of further divine history, which has been set in motion by the first act of reflection. This history is one of creation or a series of creations". (p. 106). In the *Divine Pymander* of Hermes Trismegistus in place of Sophia is the Boulé. As Jonas summarizes it, the female Will "Organizes herself "according to her elements" .. Also, besides the elements which were the subject of the question, a *psychical* "progeny" of the Boulé is mentioned, which supposedly is among her contributions to the future creation. Both traits give her a noticeable kinship with the Sophia figure of the Syrian gnosis. In other words, we would have in the Boulé a version of that problematical divine personage .. which we first met in the Ennoia of Simon Magus. The equation of the Boulé with the Sophia (via Isis) was first proposed by Reitzenstein" (*Poimandres*, 45) (*Gnos. Rel.* 171).

The Valentinians, as Dr. Pagels states, taught that Wisdom "Desiring to conceive by herself, apart from her masculine counterpart, she succeeded and became "the Great Creative Power from whom all things originate", often called Eve, "the Mother of all living" ". (p. 54).

A parallel passage in the *Hypostasis of the Archons* (codex II. 2), having described Sophia's intended work, goes on: "And her work became a celestial image". (Gnos. Ret. 303). The *Discourse on the Origin of the World* gives a similar picture: "An image flowed out from Pistis who called Sophia .. and forthwith her will came forth and appeared as a celestial image". (*Gnos. Rel.* 303).

In the Valentinian tradition the subsequent effect of "the objectification of her own passion", (*Gnos. Gosp.* 183), is described in detail. "But her intention once conceived and having become effective together with the passion caused by it, is separated from her .. As the natural impulse of the Aeon, this detached complex of mental states is now a hypostasised spiritual substance". (*Gnos. Rel.* 183).

This substance, the externalisation of her masturbation, is now a vital source of creation, and it is called by the Valentinians "female fruit". (*Gnos. Rel.* 184). The further development is described, "Now the Intention or Desire of the Sophia, hypostasized in its separation from her, is a new personal being: the lower Sophia or Achamoth (from the Hebrew, chokmah, i.e. wisdom, the same as "Sophia")". (*Gnos. Ref.* 186).

The names of the mother and daughter are variously given in the different Gnostic systems. Sophia the mother is sometimes simply called "Sophia"; by the Barbeliotes, "Barbelo" (probably virgin) and Ennoia": and by the Ophites "the Holy Spirit". Sophia the daughter is variously called "Sophia-Achamoth", "Achamoth", Sophia the Younger, and the "Lower Sophia"; and by the Barbeliotes she is known as "the Holy Spirit". Other names applied to her are simply "Sophia", the Left", "Prunikos", the Prurient or Lustful, perhaps in reference to her mode of origin or to her subsequent character.

Jonas refers to the hypostasizing role which the affects of Sophia assume in the Valentinian speculation; also the two-step development (first chaos then demiurge) adumbrates the differentiation into a higher and lower Sophia .. This is fully present in the *Gospel of Philip* (108. 10-15), "Another is Ekhamoth, and another is Ekhamoth, Ekhamoth is Sophia simply, but Ekhamoth is .. called "the little Sophia" . The *Gospel of Philip* is by all accounts a Valentinian composition". (*Gnos. Gosp.* 302). The later neoplatonic writer Proclus refers perhaps to this two-fold aspect: Of the Vivific Goddesses they call the one older but the other younger" (Proclus, in *Timaeus*, b. iii). These two forms of Sophia are perhaps referred to in the *Epistle of James* (iii, 15, 17), in the New Testament.

Sophia Akhamoth, now a separate entity, starts like her mother to release sexual energy: "she repeats on her own level the scale of emotions which her mother in the Pleroma underwent". (*Gnos. Ret.* 187). From now on both mother and daughter start to generate the universe, the former producing the more rarefied, the latter the denser substance. the two realms being separated by a kind of "curtain".

The work of the elder Sophia is described in the *Origin of the World*: "Since everybody, the gods of the world and men, contend that nothing existed before the Chaos, I will prove that they are all mistaken, for they never knew the origin of Chaos or its root .. the Chaos originated from a Shadow and was called "Darkness"; and the Shadow in turn originated from a work that exists since the beginning" (comment by Jonas): "This primordial work was undertaken by Pistis Sophia. (145 : 24-146, 7)", (*Gnos. Rel.* 298).

The *Hypostasis of the Archons* states of the *Pistis*: "And her work became a celestial image, so that a curtain exists between the upper ones and the aeons that are below. And a shadow formed below the curtain, and that shadow turned into matter". (142 : 4-26 cit. *Gnos. Rel.* 302-3). In the *Origin*: "The Deep (Chaos) therefore stems from the Pistis as when a woman gives birth, all her redundancy (afterbirth) is wont to fall off, thus did Matter come forth from the Shadow". (146, 11. 147 : 20) (*Gnos. Rel.* 304). In another text, it is said of Sophia's work: "It elaborated its own Matter in the Void". (*Gospel of Truth.* 17 : 9-16 cit. *Gnos. Ret.* 183).

The *Origin* continues: "After these happenings, Pistis came and revealed herself over the Matter of Chaos, which had been cast (there).. a boundless darkness and a bottomless water.. So she turned to it and breathed into its face.. in the deep beneath the heavens [Of Chaos]. (147: 23 - 148, I)". (*Gnos. ReL* 304). According to Plotinus, of the 3rd century, the Gnostics held that Sophia "turned downwards .. but in another sense did not descend herself and somehow did not really turn downward, but only illumined the Darkness, and from this, an "image" (eidolon) originated in Matter". (Enn. II, 9-10. cit. *Gnos. Rel.* 163). This descent of Sophia in Plotinus' teaching "is the necessary and positive self-expression of the efficacy of the first source". (p. 164).

The part played by the lower Sophia in the generation of the Universe is concerned with the denser matter. Her orgasms are similar to those of her mother. "The only difference". according to Jonas, "being that these passions pass over into the form of definitive states of being, and as such they can become the substance of the world. This substance, then, psychical as well as material, is nothing else than a (more descended) form of the Spirit, solidified from acts into habitual conditions and from inner process to outer fact". (*Gnos. Rel.* 187). Or, to state it a different way, Sophia's emotions became externalized and solidified into independent substances. The particular area in which the lower Sophia works is summarized by Jonas; "The actual transition to matter occurs only in the stage represented by the lower Sophia". (*Gnos. Rel.* 18:3).

In the Ophite system : Sophia .. is also the female spirit, or the Hindu female Nan (Narayana), moving on the face of the waters — chaos, or future matter. She vivifies it from afar, but not touching the abyss of darkness .. Thus, Sophia is obliged to employ on the task her emanation Sophia-Akhamoth, the latter being of a mixed nature, half spirit and half material.

Delegated by her purely spiritual parent, the elder Sophia, to create the world of *visible forms*, she descended into chaos.. Still ambitious to create a world of matter of her own, she busied herself hovering to and fro about the dark abyss, and imparted life and motion to the inert elements". (*I.U.* II, 174-5).

The actual connexion between each emotion and each resulting substance is considered in detail by the Gnostics.

Irenaeus states that: "Every one of them expounds differently .. from which emotions the elements of being took their origin". (4, 3, cit. *Gnos. Rel.* 187). Jonas, summarizing these views, states that there are five emotions in all. The first four are "passions", in the narrower sense; they are sources of the traditional four elements of matter, Earth, Water, Air and Fire. An additional emotion is her laughter, "whose physical correlate is the luminous substance of the universe. (e.g. that of the sun and the stars, which is conceived as different from fire)" (p. 188). In summary, according to the Valentinian text, "this combination (of affections) became also the substance of Matter, of which the world consists" . (p. 187).

This generation of the elements is described in another way in the *Paraphrase of Shem* where Nature "turned her dark vagina and cast from her the power of fire, which was in her from the beginning". (27, 2- 6. cit. *Gnos. Gosp.* 66).

The generation of the universe is a continuous process. The effects of Sophia's original creative act are continually being repeated each time a female orgasm takes place; and new life and new substances are brought into existence akin to the first sexual force released by Sophia. These become externalized, condensing into refined psychical and etheric substances which are palpable only to some senses. But in time, as in the case of the lower Sophia, this etheric substance further condenses until it becomes the solid material matter of the earthly plane.

And just as this generative process was originally initiated by the solitary act of Sophia, the complex work of cosmogenesis is achieved by the working together of the two Sophias. So in the continuing process of the generation of the universe the more complex self-stimulated orgasms of the female are supplemented by lesbian intercourse.

In general the first division of the female according to the Gnostics is in two, the mother and daughter, the upper and lower Sophia. It is from this duad that springs the basic elements of the universe.

But there is also a triadic division. The *Trimorphic Protennoia*, alluded to above, means literally the Triple-Formed Primal Thought. This triad is very similar to the eighteenth century Most Holy Trinosophia, the Most Holy Three-fold Wisdom of the Comte de Saint-Germain. This title, according to Manly Hall, may be connected with the Masonic lodge, Les Trinosophistes founded by Jean Ragon. Mme. Blavatsky writes: "It is on the occult properties of the three equal lines or sides of the Triangle that Ragon based his studies and founded the famous Masonic Society of the Trinosophists". (cit. *Trinosophia*, xxxv.).

Another Gnostic female trinity is described by Dr. Pagels: "In addition to the eternal mystical Silence and the Holy Spirit, certain Gnostics suggest a third characterization of the Divine Mother: as Wisdom (Sophia)". (*Gnos. Gosp.* 53).

A tetradic division is also seen in Massey's words, "The Gnostics were men who had continued the most ancient, and as was considered the most mystical types from the beginning; and here we find the Tetrad in the feminine form as it was represented by the genetrix Typhon or Apt in her figure of the four chief elementaries which were combined in her image and which became the types of the spirits of the four quarters. Marcus insisted that the infinitely exalted Tetrad had descended on him from its invisible place, to be made visible through him, in the form of a woman, and expounded to him its nature, and the origin of all things. (Irenaeus, Book I, 14, 1) (*N.G.* 1.547)". Budge records another version of this vision: "In the revelations of Marcus it is said that the supreme Quaternion came down from heaven in the form of a naked woman, and that she was revealed to Marcus as TRUTH". (King, *Gnos.* p. 39 cit. *The Mummy*, 330). The picture of the naked woman is shown on a Gnostic gem which from an Egyptian point of view is Hathor, but to the Gnostics is Sophia and to the Ophites, Achamoth. A more detailed account of Marcus' vision is recorded by Mme. Blavatsky. "The *Tetrad* shows to Marcus the *TRUTH* in the shape of a naked woman, and letters every limb of that figure, calling her head *Alpha Omega*, her neck *Beta Psi*, shoulders and hands *Gamma Chi*, etc.." (*S.D.* II. 67). In Dr. Pagels account the presence said to Marcus: "I wish to show you Truth herself: for I have brought

her down from above, so that you may see her without a veil, and understand her beauty". (cit. Irenaeus, A H, I, 143. cit. *Gnos. Gosp.* 20).

A twelve-fold division of the female is alluded to in a Manichaean psalm where the Twelve Virgins represent the twelve signs of the zodiac. (see Jonas, *Gnos. Rel.* 225).

Persian.

Both the Earth, Spenta Armaiti, and the Waters, the Ahuranis are seen in the *Zend Avesta* as the producers of Life. *Yasna xxxviii, To The Earth and The Sacred Waters*, begins: "And now we worship this earth which bears us, together with thy wives, O Ahura Mazda (Note by Darmesteter: "The waters are wives, as in the earth; below they are mothers") .. O waters, ye who are productive, and ye maternal ones, ye with heat that suckle the needy (before birth) .. ye mothers of our life".

A cosmological tradition in the *Vendidad* records how Yima, the First Man, finding his domain in need of expansion: "stepped forward speaking thus: "O Spenta Armaiti, Kindly open asunder and stretch thyself afar, to bear flocks and herds and men" .. six hundred winters passed away and the earth was replenished with flocks and herds, with men and dogs and birds and with red blazing fires". (Fargard II. 10. 11).

The waters also take the form of the goddess Ardvi Sura Anahita, the heavenly Spring from which all waters on the earth flow down: "Offer unto .. Ardvi Sura Anahita, the wide-expanding, and health-giving .. the life-increasing and holy, the fold-increasing and holy, the wealth-increasing and holy, the country-increasing and holy". (*Aban Yast.* X. 1).

The Holy Cow in Persia, as in India, is a cosmogonic figure. Darmesteter writes: "Gos, the cow "is a personification of the animal kingdom which she maintains and protects. She is also called Drvaspa and Gosurun .. considered a female angel". (II. p. 110). According to Haug: "The name *Gosh* "cow" which was given her in after times, refers to *Gēush urvá* the universal soul by which all living beings of the good creation are animated .. In heaven she represents the Milky-way". (*Essays on Parsees.* 202).

Indian.

In the Hindu tradition the primeval goddess Aditi differentiates by a twofold division. Massey writes: "The Hindu Aditi is the Great Mother of the gods who becomes Twain .. She becomes Diti in her second character, and is identical in both with the one original genetrix who opens and divides in all the ancient mythologies. Roth understands Aditi to mean the boundlessness of heaven as opposed to the limitation of earth. Diti in Sanskrit denotes cuffing, splitting and dividing .. Aditi produced Diti by a sort of self-splitting which may be compared with entozoa, mollusoids and annelids". (*N.G.* I. 468).

The physiological production of the daughter from the body of the mother is described in the *Puranas*, as Mme. Blavatsky writes: "Pramlocha is the Hindu Lilith of the Aryan Adam; and Marisha the daughter, born of the perspiration from her pores, is the "Sweat-born" (*S.D.* III. 182). "According to the text "The nymph went from tree to tree, and, as with the dusky shoots that crowned their summits, she dried her limbs .. the child she had conceived .. came forth from the pores of her skin in drops of perspiration. The trees received the living dews; and the winds collected them in one mass .. and gradually it increased in size till the exhalation that had rested on the tree tops became the lovely girl Marisha" (*Vishnu Purana*, Wilson, Vol. II, p. 5). The twofold aspect is seen also, as in Graeco-Roman cosmogonies, with a division of the earth goddess Prithivi, into night and day. According to Max Muller: "Day and Night, Dawn and Twilight, are conceived as sisters and spoken of as Ahani, the two days, one bright, the other dark". In the Hymn to Ushas (the Dawn), "the one departeth and the other cometh. Unlike in hue, the two march together". (*Vedic Hymns*, 123, Mand. I, cit. *Vedas*, p. 61). Massey, commenting on the passage, writes: "Here the two females preserve the type of the feminine double-first". (*N.G.* I. 514).

A triple division of the primordial goddess is also emphasised in Indian Religion. Veronica Ions, describing the Hindu female Tritmurti or Trinity, writes: "They are said to have been originally one goddess (i.e. Mahadevi) .. She divided herself into three forms, which represented Past, Present and Future. These are the white goddess, Sarasvati; the red goddess, Lakshmi; and the black goddess, Parvati (Kali)". (*Ind. Myth.* 94).

A sixfold division of the motherhood is mentioned by Massey: "The type [of geometric figure] was further extended to the hexagonal figure of the genetrix who as Durga, (in India), is called the six-sided; a sort of Shasta-Yoni of space". (N.G. I. 547).

Among the more multiple divisions is the hundredfold. "Shatarupa. of the hundred forms" is a term applied to Vach. Mme Blavatsky writes: "The Esoteric Theogony begins with the One Manifested .. the Number of the Numbers and Numbered — the latter proceeding from the Voice, the feminine Vach, Shatarupa, "of the hundred forms", or Nature. It is from the number 10, or Creative Nature, the Mother .. that the whole Universe proceeds." (S.D. I. 157).

The production of the Universe from the Original Female is described in detail in the *Ayeen Akbery, the Institutes of the Emperor Akbar*. In the chapter, *The three different Opinions of the Hindoos concerning the Creation*, the second of them describes how Deity manifested "under the form of a woman, who is called Mahaletchmeen (i.e. Mahalakshmi). From the essence of Mahaletchmeen proceeded three attributes, the first called Sut (i.e. Sattva), the second called Ruj (i.e. Rajas), and the third Tum (i.e. Tamas). And when Mahaletchmeen willed that the world should "be created, she united herself with Tum, and produced another form, called Mahakalee and who is also called Mahamya (Maharnaya?). And by joining herself with Sut, another form appeared, called Sirsootee (Sarasvati?). After this Brahma issued from Mahaletchmeen.." (II. 326). The three attributes, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the three gunas, the strands or qualities of matter.

The formation of the universe from the Great Mother is shown iconographically. Neumann writes: "According to Grunwede (source not stated) .. "Jaina works in India show the cosmic woman, a beautiful, richly ornamented girl with her body open in such a way as to disclose stylized entrails, representing the disk of the world". (G.M. p. 235). The same author shows a Hindu drawing, of the 19th century or earlier, of "Bhavani — Trimurti — Mother". See Part I. Evans Wentz speaks of: "The all-embracing Womb, whence comes into being the manifested Universe." (cit. *Gdss. India*, 185).

Some divisions of the universe are seen as bodily products of the Cosmic Female. In the *Ayeen Akbery*, there is a description of the seven divisions of the terrestrial globe; these include "Shakdeep" .. beyond this deep (Dvipa, Island) is a sea of milk .. "Shalmuldeep" .. the sea which lies next beyond it is of milk curds .. "Kustdeep" .. the sea that lies next beyond it of ghee (clarified butter)" (II. 340).

Bashara Archarya, who considers these as sidereal regions, speaks of "the sea of milk and the sea of curds" as meaning the Milky Way and other nebulae. (cit. S.D. III. 320). Neumann also sees this Milk Ocean as formed by the celestial Great Mother. "In India (on higher plane) the immortality is "whipped" from the female milk sea, of which it is said: "water is the milk of the world body, and the cosmic space is a sea of Milk". (Zimmer, *Maya*, p. 101)". (G.M. 225).

Among the sub-divisions of the cosmic female in India are the rivers, which, in general, are female. The Ganges, the Goddess Ganga, is seen both as a woman, Mother Ganga, wife of all the celestial gods, and also as a river. This dual aspect is shown by Yeats Brown, who writes: "From her was born the Hindu race .. The Ganges is never without her worshippers. She greets them at dawn, attends them through the day, hears their vespers when she is crowned with stars, Serene, aloof, apparently eternal". (Bengal Lancer, cit. *Gdss. India*, 74). And in the *Mahabharata*: "And the broad and ruddy Ganga, sweeping in her royal pride", (cit. id. 72). Similarly the Jumna (the goddess Yami), the Godavari and the Nerbudda (Narmada) are also female personifications.

Tibetan.

The *Stanzas of Dzyan*, describes the beginning of a new cosmic cycle; "The Mother swells, expanding from within without, like the bud of a lotus". (Stanza 3.1. cit. S.D. 1.92). In the commentary, Mme. Blavatsky writes on this expansion of the Mother: "called everywhere the "Waters of Space", "Universal Matrix" .. means a development of limitless subjectivity into as limitless objectivity". (S.D. I. 131). "It expanded "like the Bud of the Lotus"; for the Lotus plant exists not only as a miniature embryo in its seed (a physical characteristic), but its prototype is present in an ideal form in the Astral Light from "Dawn" to "Night" of the manvantaric period". (S.D. I. 132).

A threefold division is seen by Massey: "The triangle is sometimes portrayed on the ancient coins of Tibet, painted blue, with the lotus flower in the centre. This shows the genitrix was source of all, the Emaner from the water of life, which was her own blood". (*N.G.* I, 539).

This release of sexual energy is only the first stage in a continuing process at work, as Neumann states: "Among the legends of the Padmasambhava we find the following passage, translated by Grünwedel: "Women are the unremitting stream of Samsara, their flesh is a copper witches' "caldron". (*G.M.* 236).

Chinese.

The Mother, as well as being the Origin (see Part I), is also the Creatress of the subdivisions of Nature. Kwan-Yin produced rice, according to a tradition recorded by Toichi Matsuchi, in *Asian Folklore Studies*, xxiii. (1964). Eberhard's summary is as follows: "One day the goddess Kwan Yin saw how difficult men's lives were and how they were always hungry. Her compassionate heart was touched, and she decided to help them. One evening she secretly slipped down to the fields and pressed her breast with one hand until milk flowed into the ears of rice. She squeezed until there was no milk left, but all the ears were not filled; so she pressed once more with all her might, and a mixture of blood and milk came out. Now her task was finished, and she returned home content".

"From that time the ears were filled, and man had rice to eat. The white grains are those that are made from her milk, and the ruddy ones are those that were formed from the mixture of milk and blood". (*Folktales of China*, 9).

Japanese.

In the Japanese traditions, descriptions are given of a physiological cosmogenesis. In the *Nihongi*, the primal deity, Izanami no Mikoto, gives birth to the island. In one writing it is said: "The island of Ono-Goro being considered the placenta, then was born the island Ahaji, next the island of Oho-Yamato no Toyo-Akitsu". (I. 10). Dale Saunders summarizes these generative acts. "Izanami continued producing a variety of deities; the sea, the waves, the mountains, and so on". (*M.A.W.* 419).

Izanami also gives birth to personal beings from the products of her body. The *Nihongi* records: "Next her urine became changed into a Goddess, who was called "Mitsu-ha-no-me". Next her excrement was changed into a Goddess, who was called "Hani-yama-hima" ". (I, 13). Commenting on the parallel passage in the *Kojiki*, Philippi writes: "The deities who came into existence in Izanami's faeces were deities of clay and earth, and Mitu-pa-no-me-no-kami, who came into existence in her urine, was a deity connected with water or water-greens". (*Kojiki*, p. 57). The literal meaning of the name Midzu-ha-no-me is, according to Philippi, "Water-greens, Woman Deity?" and of Pani-yasu-hime, (*Kojiki* version) derived from "Pani - clay, Yasu - ease, comfort", but sometimes interpreted as Neyasu — "to make sticky, to knead, etc." "Pani-Yasu Princess", (*Kojiki, Glossary*).

The further differentiation of Nature also results from emanations from the goddess, by a biological process. Certain forms of vegetation and animals, particularly those used for food, are produced by Ogetsu hime, the Food Goddess. In the *Kojiki*, "Opo-ge-tu-pime took various viands out of her nose, her mouth and her rectum". (18. 2). The *Nihongi*, where the goddess is named Uke-mochi, reads: "Thereupon Uke-mochi no-Kami turned her back to the land, and forthwith from her mouth came boiled rice: she faced the sea, and again there came from her mouth things broad of fin and narrow of fin. She faced the mountains and again from her mouth came things rough of hair and things soft of hair". (I. 26). Dale Saunders, commenting on a further *Kojiki* passage, describes the origin of other products from out of the food-goddess: "From her head, the ox and the horse; from her forehead, millet; from her eye-brows, silk worms; in her eyes, panic grass; in her belly, rice; in her genitals, wheat and beans". (Footnote: The parts of the body and the articles produced from kinds of words play, but in Korean .. see Anesaki, p, 379) (*Kojiki*, p. 70). Head - Silkworm; eyes - rice seeds; ears - millet; nose - small beans; rectum - large beans; genitals - barley. "These commodities are taken up by the messenger and shown to the sun goddess. Thereupon Amaterasu makes seeds of the grain and appoints a divinity to sow them for the future sustenance of mankind". (*M.A.W.* 424). The *Nihongi* reads: "Ame-kuna-bitō carried all these things and delivered them to Ame-terasu no Kami, who was rejoiced, and said: "These are the things which the race of visible men will eat and live". (I. 27)

The acceptance of the fact that food originates with the female is seen in a ritual celebrated by the Emperor Jimmu: "At this time he commanded .. saying: "We are now in person about to celebrate a public festival .. the water shall be

called Idzu-no-Midzu-ha-no-me or sacred-water, — female, the food shall be Idzu-uka-no-me or sacred-food, — female". (*Nihongi*, III, 19). The officiant appointed was called idzu-hime, "Dread or Sacred Princess".

A further connexion between the things produced and the parts of the body producing them is pointed out: "The association between barley and wheat and the genitals would suggest a recognition of their symbolic relationship. The grains of both these cereals having a longitudinal division resembling the vulva .. the red bean (genitals, *Nihon Shoki*, Asaki ed.) is suggestive of the clitoris". (*Idols, China, Japan*. 42).

By another form of emanation the sun-goddess gave birth to three daughters. The *Nihongi* describes how: "from the true-mist of her breath Deities were born. The first was named Ta-gori-bime, the next Tagi-tsu bime, and the next Ichiki-shima-bime, three daughters in all". (I. 31).

Celtic.

In the Celtic tradition there is a threefold characteristic division of the goddess. Dr. Anne Ross writes: "Trios of goddesses are well-known in insular mythology .. any one of the single goddesses invoked or portrayed in Roman Britain could appear in threefold form. For example, Coventina, the patron goddess of the sacred well at Carrawburgh, Northumberland, figures on a relief as a trio of nymphs. (p. 207). The Irish eponymous goddesses, Banba, Fodhla and Eire, each successively represent the country. Similarly, the three Machas and the three Brigids appear either singly or as a triad."

As Cosmic Producer, the Sun, "Grian", figures in a kind of cosmogony in a Scottish Gaelic traditional folk prayer: "Greetings to you, Sun of the seasons .. You are the happy Mother of the stars". (Jackson, *Celt. Myth*. 91). Another prayer carries the cosmogony further: "To the Moon Mother of the stars, gem of the night, Foster-child of the sun, gem of the night". (p. 92).

As in India, the rivers are generally female beings. On the Continental Celts, Dr. Ross writes: "The Celtic mother-goddesses .. have a widespread association with water. This is due, no doubt, to their own obvious connection with fertility which, in the popular mind, could be likened to the life-giving powers of water.. So we find, for example, the powerful Marne taking its name from that of the Gaulish Matrona, "Divine Mother". No doubt there was at one time a cult in circulation associating the Mother with the river, which became the physical personification of the goddess. Another example drawn from many, is that of the river Seine, sacred to the goddess of the source, *Sequana*". (p. 20). Many rivers in Britain are seen to have the same maternal origins. The Severn (Sabrina), the Dee (Deva), the Clyde (Clota cf. Gaulish Clutoida), the Brent of Middlesex (Brigantia). Similarly the Irish Shannon (from Sinann) and the Boyne (Boand).

Other geographical features are "The paps of Anu". In *Cormack's Glossary* they are called "The Two Paps of Ana .. The Mother of the Gods of Ireland". Keating has "From Danan, the mother of these brothers, the two hills at Luachair Dheagda, in Desmond, were called the "Da Chide Danan"." (*Gen. Hist. of Ireland*, 91).

Creation by emanation is suggested in the Sheela-na-gigs, "From whose open legs and spread vulva all the world's goods flow". (Shuffle and Redgrove, 271). Some streams and rivers owe their origin to the same source. On Queen Maeve, Dr. Ross writes: "Her influence on topography is shown by the following incident in the *Tain Bo Cuailnge*.. At a critical moment, before the final encounter, the queen requires to make water .. the water she passes forms three great dykes, "so that a mill could find room in each dyke". In Kinsella's translation: "It dug three channels each big enough to take a household; the place is called Fual Medba (Medb's Urine) ever since". (p. 250).

Norse.

In the cosmogony of the *Edda*, the primordial division of the Universe into an upper and lower region is seen in the person of Hel. The name Hel or Helheim is the name for the underworld, a place of mist and darkness. As Neumann writes: "The cave, one of the examples of feminine vessel symbolism, is hell or Hel, the Germanic Goddess of the underworld. She is also the gaping abyss that untiringly swallows up mortal men". (p. 171). She has also a connexion with heaven. As the same author writes: "The correlation of the starry firmament with the Feminine determines the whole early view of the world, whether we speak of a Milky Way or whether this portion of the

heavens is assigned to Hel (Kees. P. 170), the northern ruler of the night, and is called the "Path of Hel" or "of Hilda", (Ninck, *Wodan und germanischer Schicksalsglaube*, p. 177 ff.)" (p. 224).

The main divisions of time, past, present and future, are seen in the Norns. As Brewer describes in his Dictionary: "Nornir or Norns. The three fates of Scandinavian mythology .. called Urda, Verdandi and Skuld (Past, Present and Future)". Literally translated, according to Hilda Davidson they are: "Fate (Urdr), Being (Verdandi), Necessity (Skuld)". (p. 26). Ninck, writing on the Germanic fate states: "This fate may appear as a maternal old woman presiding over the past and future". (cit. *G.M.* 304).

As in the Celtic tradition the *Edda* records Topographical changes through the emission of the Giantess Gjalp. "Then Thor looked up a rocky ravine and saw Geirrod's daughter Gjalp, standing there astride the river, and it was she who was causing it to swell". (p. 107). Similarly "four rivers of milk flowed from Audhumla's udder". (Larousse, 362). And of Sif's hair, "It has been suggested that this was the sign of an ancient fertility goddess, her abundant, shining hair typifying the golden corn". (Hilda Davidson, 84).

Finnish.

The Kalevala gives a detailed picture of the development of the Universe. The bard, after a preamble, describes how the primeval Virgin of Air (Ilmatar), descended into the sea. "After this the maid descending, Sank upon the tossing Billow, On the open Ocean's surface, On the wide expanse of water .." (l. 23).

Then a teal alights, looking for a place to nest. At the invitation of the virgin, the Water-Mother, She makes her nest between the other's knees.

"Then the mother of the waters, Water Mother, maid aerial, From the waves her knees uplifted. Raised her shoulders from the billows, That the teal her nest might 'stablish, And might find a peaceful dwelling. Then the teal, the bird so beautiful.. Gently on the knee alighting And her nest she there established, And she laid her eggs all golden Six gold eggs she laid within it, And a seventh she laid of iron.

"O'er her eggs the teal set brooding, And the knee grew warm beneath her .. Then the mother of the waters, Water Mother, maid aerial Felt it hot, and felt it hotter, And she felt her skin was heated. . Then she jerked her knee with quickness, and her limbs convulsive shaking, Rolled the eggs into the water, Down amid the waves of ocean. .And to splinters they were broken, And to fragments they were shattered.

"But a wondrous change came o'er them, And the fragments all grew lovely, From the cracked egg's lower fragment, Now the solid earth was fashioned. From the cracked egg's upper fragment, Rose the lofty arch of heaven, From the yolk, the upper portion, Now became the suns bright lustre; From the white, the upper portion, Rose the moon that shines so brightly; whatso in the egg was blackish, In the air as cloudlets floated. .

"When the ninth year had passed over, And the summer tenth was passing, From the sea her head was lifted, And her forehead she uplifted. And she then began Creation, And she brought the world to order.. On the open ocean's surface, On the far extending waters.

"Wheresoever her hand she pointed, There she formed the jutting headlands; Wheresoever her feet she rested, There she formed the caves for fishes; When she dived beneath the waters, There she formed the depths of ocean; Where towards the land she turned her, There the level shores extended. Where her feet to land extended, Spots were formed for salmon-netting; Where her head the land touched lightly, There the curving bays extended. Further from the land she floated, And abode in open water. And created rocks in ocean, And the reefs that eyes behold..

"Now the isles were formed already, In the sea the rocks were planted; Pillars of the sky established, Lands and continents created; Rocks engraved as though with figures, And the hills were cleft with fissures. Still unborn was Vainamoinen; Still unborn the bard immortal."

In his commentary Kirby writes: "[Here] we have the combined Finnish version of the widespread cosmogonical myths of the Divine Spirit brooding over the waters of Chaos; and the Mundane Egg". (l. p. 319).

Other allusions to the formation of the world from products of the female body are shown in the person of Syojatar, who is called the "Mother of the Serpents". The formation of a serpent is described: "Syojatar she spat in water, In the waves she left her spittle". (Runo xxvi. 695). From this was formed a black serpent. "Whence was then its heart created? Out of Syojatar's own heartstrings. . Whence was then its mouth constructed? Syojatar's own mouth supplied it." Her spittle forms also toads and water snakes (xvi. 731).

Metals also are formed from cloud maidens: In Runo IX: *The Origin of Iron*.

"Down on earth their milk ran over, From their breasts o'erflowing fulness. Milk on land, and milk on marshes, Milk upon the peaceful waters.

"Black milk from the first was flowing, From the eldest of the maidens. White milk issued from another, From the second of the maidens. Red milk by the third was yielded. By the youngest of the maidens.

"Where the black milk had been dropping, There was found the softest Iron, Where the white milk had been flowing, There the hardest steel was fashioned, Where the red milk had been trickling, There was undeveloped Iron. (49 - 66)."

Siberian.

Cosmogogenesis is summarized by Lot-Falck as follows: "The source of all life is the Great Mother. She possesses the strength and substance of nature, (*musun, djol, lab, kut*), and there is a tiny bit of this in each creature, animal, plant and even in certain objects. According to their own activities, different races worship the goddess as a presider over game, over growing grass, food and cattle, the plants useful to man and cereals. She also presides over births and looks after health. In each of these roles she has in course of time acquired a special personality, which ultimately achieved independence. Thus separate deities parted from the central trunk, represented by the mother. In the mythology of the Yakuts, she split into three goddesses; of earth, cattle and children". (Larousse, p. 435).

"Similarly, the great earth-goddess resolves into local spirits. Every small Tungus group, widely scattered as they are, builds up its own microcosm, with its world-tree, its mythical river, its village for the dead, its earth-mistress, whose jurisdiction is restricted to clan territory". (op. cit. 436).

American.

The Pueblo Indians record a cosmogony in which the creatress is the Earth Mother. Cottie Burland records how: "Earth Mother held a bowl of water and described how the mountains should be made to divide land from land, and stand around the rim of the world. She spat into the water and stirred it with her fingers making foam arise. She drew milk from her breasts to give it life. So she indicated the coming of life, and showed how children should be nourished. She breathed upon the foam, and mists and rainbows arose as clouds floating over the sea". (p. 137). The Indians of the South-East have a tradition which "attributes the origin of maize to the creative magic of an old woman who must have been some kind of earth-mother .. [Her grandson] decided one day to peep in through the door when she was preparing food. He saw her remove her dress and straddle a corn sieve. As she scratched one of her thighs, a stream of maize descended. As she scratched the other thigh a stream of beans descended". (p. 125). An Algonkian creation myth, also quoted by Cottie Burland, records: "The body of this mother earth formed the pleasant plains, the food plants, the animals, and the human race". (p. 62). Similarly, in the Eskimo mythology: "Fish were not just animals which swam in the sea but animated creatures provided by the Old Woman who lives under the sea". (p. 18).

A cosmogony is included in the *Song Of The Kagaba Indians of Colombia*: "The Mother of Songs, the mother of our whole seed bore us in the beginning. She is the mother of all races of men and the mother of all tribes. She is the mother of the thunder, the mother of the rivers, the mother of the trees and of all kinds of things. She is the mother of the grain and the mother of all things. She is the mother of the animals, the only one, the mother of the Milky Way.. She gave us the limestone coca dish. She is the mother of the rain, the only one we have, She alone is the Mother of all things, she alone. And the mother has left a memory in all ten .. Thus the priests, the fathers, and the older brothers have reported". (cit. G.M. 85).

The Mexican female Earth Monster in certain ways resembles the Chaldean Tiamat. Irene Nicholson describes how, having become divided in two: "Her lower part rose to form the heavens, and her upper half descended to become the Earth. "As above, so below. As in Heaven so on Earth".. Her hair became long grass and the trees and flowers; Her skin the lawns and the flowers with which they are studded like jewels. Her eyes became little caverns, wells and fountains; her mouth, great caves for man's shelter; and her nose, hills and valleys". (*Mex. Myth*, 26).

Another Mexican goddess who subsequently divided herself is Coatlicue, "one of the five moon goddesses; or, she may have been a single goddess represented as a five-fold symbol, the quincunx, signifying Earth with her four directions and her centre". (p. 85). Her function was "to solidify spirit into the tangible planet on which we live" (id.). The cosmic process is shown iconographically in her great statue in the National Museum of Mexico.

Goddesses also produce by emanation. From the river goddess Chalchiuhtlicue: "From her body springs a prickly pear tree laden with fruit which symbolises the human heart". (Laurette Séjournée, *Burning Water*, 107). Neumann refers to the primordial Mexican earth goddess as "The Great Genetrix and renewer of vegetation through the sexual act", (*G.M.* 182),

Oceanian.

In Polynesia, the division of the great mother is described by Massey: "The Manganians relate that the genetrix ..took the dual form of the two women, as Vari below and Papa above". (*N.G.* 5. 480). He compares these two aspects with Aditi and Diti of the Hindus: "These two forms of the mother appear in the Manganian mythology as Vari and Papa. Vari is the very beginning in the Abyss (See Part I).. She is the blood mother who creates her children from pieces of her own flesh, these therefore are equivalent to the embryos of Aditi. Vari is the first form of the Great Mother and Papa, answering to Diti, is the second. It is Papa who produces the first human being in a perfect human shape, as the Mother of Breath or Soul called Foundation" (Gill, pp. 1-7). In the dramatic song of Creation Vari, the first of the two, is celebrated as the source of all, and the singers claim descent from her, the Mother alone, "We have no Father whatever; Vari alone made us" and Vari, the Originator of all things, sheltered Papa under her wing", (l. 469).

In a further development Roslyn Poignant describes how Vari-ma-te-takere "The "Beginning-and-the-Bottom" plucked six children from her side". (*Oc. Myth.* 31). She sees Vari, as "a self-existent being. Vari also means mud, and in the sense of an original chaos of mud from which life grew, this Mangaian belief rather resembles that of the original state of chaos postulated in the myths of the other islands" (p. 31). In the Hawaiian Kumulipo chant Vari is replaced by Hina: "Coral insects were born, the eel was born, The sea-urchin was born, the sea-egg was born, The black stone was born, the volcanic stone was born, Hence she was called Hina-from-whose-womb-came-various-forms" (p. 45).

Oceanian cosmology is shown iconographically by Robyn Kahukiwa in *Waahine Woman* in *Maori Myth: I Te Po, The Myth*. "Te po was in the period of time that preceeded the birth of Papatuanuka, the earth mother. It was the place of creation and personifies the night, the darkness, the unknown. *The Painting*. The Kow shapes symbolise growth, creation and the labours of Te Po, the foetus is Papatuanuka. The woman shape is Te Po (a the Earth lay in the Womb of Darkness (b) Te Po and Papatuanuka (c) the Labour of Te Po (p. 1)."

A demiurgical creative process is also described by Roslyn Poignant: "On the island Truk it was Anulap's busy wife, Ligoububfanu, who not only made men, plants and animals, but islands as well". (p. 73). "And in Western Arnhem Land the Mother Who Made Us All, called by some tribes Waramurungundju and others Imberombera .. made the landscape and from her body produced many children, animals and plants which she distributed". (p. 127).

In the Celebes a cosmogonic tradition records that the Moon was delivered of the Earth: " She was big with several other worlds which she will successively bring forth". (Raynal, *Hist. E. and W. Indies*, I. 168).

An Australian aboriginal commenting on the Wawilak sisters, is reported by Shuttle and Redgrove, as saying: "We have been stealing what belongs to them [women] all that belongs to the Wawilak, the baby, the blood, the yelling, their dancing, all that concerns the women. In the beginning we had nothing .. we took these things from the women". (p. 66).

African.

The African goddess Ngame has the aspect of Cosmic Creatrix. According to Graves: "Ngame is said to have brought forth the heavenly bodies by her own efforts and then to have vitalized men and animals by shooting magical arrows from her moonlike bow into their inert bodies". (*Greek Myths*, I, 21). And Archpriest Okoruwa writes of her: "Also associated with Her are the two water jugs with the outflow of water which symbolizes the water of life — "Let the firmament (abyss) divide the waters from the waters, the waters above the firmament and those below the firmament" (*Genesis*). Also Ngame is shown with one foot in water and one on dry land, bridging the abyss". (*The Avatar*, 36).

In a tradition from Dahomey, the "primordial mother, Nana Buluka created the world". (Parrinder, *Afr. Myth*, 21). The Kikwun see a division from a woman called Moombi, "the Moulder or Creator; she bore nine daughters". (p.111).

Later Jewish (Kabalistic).

The two Sophias of the Gnostics may be seen in the Kabala. Here they appear as Ain Soph and Sephira. The word *Ain* or *Ayin*, when written, is usually translated "nothing"; but when spoken — and the medieval occult teachings were generally passed on orally — Ain could have the meaning of "Eye". And it is significant that one of the more occult names of Ain Soph is "the Closed Eye, the Unknown Darkness". (*I.U.* II, 265). This has an obvious symbolism linking it with Sophia. "The eye is .. the emblem of the female as reproducer" (Massey, *N.C.* 1, 551). "The Eye .. is also a symbol of the Yoni, the source of images". (Grant, *Mag. Rev.* 4). Hence Ain Soph, "The Closed Eye", is the "closed eye" or vulva of Sophia, before her sexual act which brought the cosmos into being. While Ain Soph Aur (Light), corresponds to the open "eye" or vulva of Sophia, while her creative orgasm is taking place.

Similarly the first manifestation of Ain Soph, Sephira, corresponds to the daughter of Sophia, Sophia Akhamoth. In the Kabala, Sephira, emanating from the "Unbounded wisdom", is personified as feminine, (corresponding to the Gnostic Sophia, the Female Holy Ghost and Hindu Sarasvati), (see *S.D.* II, 67 and 69). She is often connected with the Shekinah, "for she [Shekinah] is the "divine Glory" the "veil". . . which dwelt in the tabernacle, manifesting herself like a visible cloud". (*I.U.* II, 224).

The close correlation between these feminine emanations is shown by Mme. Blavatsky: The female *Aura* or *Anima Mundi*, "the holy *Pneuma*".. is the *Sephira* of the Kabalists and the Sophia of the refined Gnostics". (*I.U.* I, 160). "Light — the first mentioned in Genesis, is termed by the Kabalists *Sephira*, or the Divine *Intelligence*, the Mother of all the Sepiroth". (*I.U.* I, 258). And "The Kabalists, as well as the Hindu *Dikshita*, know the power of the Shekhina or Vāch, and call it "the secret wisdom". (*I.U.* II, 269).

The terms which the Kabalists apply to Sephira and Shekinah, "the veil", "the visible cloud", the "Divine Glory", "Primordial Light" and "consuming fire", are similar to the Gnostic descriptions of the sexual emission of Sophia: it "formed a curtain", (*Origin of the World*, cit. *Gnos. Gosp.* 303), "it condensed like a fog". (*Gosp. of Truth*, cit. p. 300). "It illumined the darkness", (Plotinus, *Enn.* II, 9 and 10), and formed "the luminous substance of the world". (Jonas on Valentinian Teaching). And she "cast forth from her the power of fire". (*Gosp. of Truth*, cit. *Gn. Gosp.* 66).

Similarly, the functions of Sephira parallel those of Akhamoth: "Sephira creates Primeval Waters, or in other words, Chaos takes shape. It is the first stage towards the solidification of Spirit which, through various modifications, will produce Earth". (*S.D.* II, 69). While — " Deep (Chaos) thus stems from Pistis" (*The Origin*, cit. *On. Rel.*, 301); Sophia's action "elaborated its own matter in the void". (*Gn. Rel.* 183).

The Babylonian Tiamat reappears in the Kabala under the form of Binah, "the Understanding" of *The Proverbs*, "The feminine Sephira, *Binah*, is termed by the Kabalists, the Great Sea, therefore Binah .. is simply the Chaldean Tiamat, the Female Power, the Thalath of Berosus, who presided over the Chaos". (Myers, *Qabbalah*, 336-6). (*S.D.* II, 109).

Later Jewish Derivatives (including Christian).

In Christianity the Virgin Mary repeats in herself the creative processes of the goddesses of the older cosmogonies. Peter Chrysologus, Archbishop of Ravenna writes: "Mary is called Mother. And when is Mary not a mother? "the gathering together of the waters that we call seas (Maria)" (*Genesis*, I, 10). Was it not she who conceived in her

single womb the people going out of Egypt, that it might come forth a heavenly progeny reborn to a new creation, according to the words of the apostle: "Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea .." That Mary might always lead the way in man's salvation, in her own right, She went with a canticle before that same people, whom the generating waters had brought forth to light". (cit. Ashe, *The Virgin*, 147). She shows herself like the early Egyptian Goddess Neith of Sais, who proceeded from herself, "Mary revived the theology of Neith, the primordial Virgin Mother". (Ashe, 170). This was recognised by the Collyridians of the fourth century, who saw Mary as virgin born". (King. *Gnos.* 81-2), and in the 1854 Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, on which the Roman Catholic writer, the Marquis de Mir "We Catholics understand how it is that the famous inscription of Sais should have stated that "none ever lifted my veil" [Peplum], considering that this sentence, literally translated, is the summary of what is sung in the Church on the day of the Immaculate Conception." (cit S. D. II 108)

Like Isis, Mary is also "Mistress of the world". Dr. Witt records that "In the church of St. John the Divine on Los Angeles the writer in 1965 examined the stele (upside down) behind the iconostasis and saw for himself that in this building, where the priest had just invoked the Panagia as "Mistress of the World", Isis still stood hidden but obstinately alive, uttering her own praises to prying eyes". (p. 275). Shuttle and Redgrove record: "Briffault tells us that the Virgin Mary, identified with the Moon, was asserted to have created the world. Said St. Alfonse "At the command of Mary all obey, even God". (p.175).

The Hebrew-Greek Sophia is seen to manifest in the person of the Virgin Mary. As Ashe writes: "Far back, I have suggested, Mary's priestesses deified her as an avatar of wisdom .. Under a compulsion that we never discussed, the two Marian dogmas drew Wisdom into the liturgy of their feast-days. *Proverbs*, 8: 22ff became the lesson for the Immaculate Conception. Parts of *Ecclesiasticus* 24 were read at the Assumption. Thus, almost casually, Mary was conceded the Jewish demigoddess attributes". (p. 214). The fourteenth century Isidore Glabas, says of the Virgin: "All things came into being because of her". (p. 215). While the modern Russian writer Sirgius Bulgakov states that in Mary, "is realized the idea of Divine Wisdom in the created Word, so Isidore Glabas re-wrote *John*, I, 14, as "We have beheld her glory.." drawing the comment of the Catholic scholar Jugie: "Isidore's eyes are so unswervingly fixed on the Mother that he seems to forget the Son". b (p. 214-215). The well-known title, "Seat of Wisdom", of the *Litany of Loretto*, is another reminder of this connexion with Wisdom.

Mary has also some parallels to the Shekinah of later Judaism. Waite states: "A litany of Shekinah might, I think, be constructed out of the ZOHAR and would not be less decorative or less pregnant with meaning than the Litany of Loretto, though .. she who was *MATRONA* in the heights and *MATRONA* also in manifestation was no object of ceremonial devotion, like Mary the Mother, among any sect in Jewry". (Waite, *Rosi.* 91). Lévi quotes from the *Correspondence with Baron Spédalieri*: "Mary is the human personification of Divine Wisdom or the Holy Shekinah". (p. 151). Bat'ya Podos in *Hebrew Goddesses*, writes: "The Shekinah is the 'act of dwelling'.. Her radiance ... is so great that the Angels must cover their faces .. (Patai) .. Her aspect survived and transformed itself in the Middle Ages to the Matronit of the Kabbalah, which is the heart of Jewish mysticism". (*Lady-Unique*, 3, 33). These qualities are reflected in Mary; as act of dwelling, she is the tabernacle; as the "Glory and the Radiance of the Shekinah", she is the woman, clothed with sun", and as Isidore Glagas presents the gospel: "we have beheld her glory". Iconographically she is to be thus represented in the Immaculate Conception "the sun is to be expressed as a flood of light around her". (Mrs. Jameson, *Leg. of Madonna*, 45).

Ain Soph of the Kabbalah also has parallels to Mary. Ain Soph is surrounded by the Shekinah, described sometimes as the solar effulgence, just as in ecclesiastical tradition Mary is clothed with the sun. As Ain Soph is the: "Concealed Source", so Mary is *Porta Clausa*, "the Closed Gate" (Mrs. Jameson, p. xlv); and as the manifest source. she is the "House of Gold" (*Litany of Loretto*) paralleling Hyranyia, "the Womb of Gold". (*Lit. of Our Lady Nan.* cit. LU. I 209). Within the womb is the great cosmic force known to the occultists of the East as *Soorejnari*, the Solar Female", (*Ayeen Akbery* II. 475) and to those of the West as the *delphys* (the Uterus") power (*Urania* vi), and called the "Sun behind the Sun", the "Celestial Spiritual Sun" and the "Inner Sun".

Medieval — Western.

In medieval times there were two distinct theologies. There was that of the established Church, and also, quite independently, that of literature, and particularly of poetry. The latter saw the basic controlling Power of the universe

as feminine, and usually personalized as Nature, Mother Nature or Dame Nature. Boethius, the early sixth century writer, translated by Chaucer, writes: "It lyketh me to shewe, by subtil song how that Nature, mighty, enclineth and flitteth the governments of things, and by whiche lawes she, purveyable, kepeth the grete world; and how she, bindinge, restreyneth alle thinges by a bonde that may nat ben unbounde". (Bk. III. met. II lff.). Sometimes, as with Chrétien de Troyes, in *Erec et Enide*, she appears as a creatress: "Nature herself had marvelled more than five hundred times how upon this one occasion she had succeeded in creating such a perfect thing .. The complexion of her forehead and face was clearer and more delicate than the lily". (p. 6). And Chaucer similarly describes: "For certes, Nature had swich lest, To make that fair, that trewly she, Was her chief patron (pattern) of beautee, And chief ensample of all her werke". (*Book of the Duchesse*, 908).

More specific feminine theologies are shown in the survival of the Classical religion. Etruscan folk traditions have been collected by Charles Leland in *Aradia, Gospel of the Witches*. He records a kind of cosmogony: "Diana made the stars and the rain: in her were all things: out of herself, the first darkness, she revealed herself, into darkness and light she was divided. And having made the heavens, the stars and the rain, Diana became Queen of the Witches". (*Aradia*, 20).

Other cosmologies were presented by the Occult Orders Margaret Bennell and Elizabeth Wyatt, commenting on a passage in Christian Rosenkreuz', the *Chymical Wedding*, writes: "In earlier times seven living Goddesses stood before the soul; later they were presented to the student as pictures, and finally dried out into abstractions. Even up to the seventh century the pupils could learn to become aware of a mighty living Being, the Goddess Natura (described as the Ancient Mother in our story), who appeared before them all in her full radiance, and taught them the secrets of Nature .. The pupils did not learn of abstract laws of Nature, but of the creative power of the Goddess Natura. She it was who lead them to a knowledge of minerals, plants, animals, the elements as filled with divine power and substance". (*Chy. Wedding*, 42).

Some of these figures are considered in more detail. "Alchimia — We are invited to consider her being more closely. She is the imaginative representation of spiritual knowledge. Andreae wants to show how true Alchemy is concerned with the transformation of spiritual substance into physical and how a true understanding of physical substance leads to the supersensible .. "And now there enters a very stately figure who reveals herself as Theologia. This duchess is more other-worldly than Alchimia. One must not think of her in terms of the rather dry picture called up by the word "theology" today, but rather see her as the early reflection of Sophia, divine Wisdom. Her way is the way of faith, Alchimia's the way to knowledge. She looks towards Heaven; Alchimia seeks to penetrate the secrets of earth". (op. cit. 47).

On the inscription on the medallion "Art is the Priestess of Nature. . Nature is the daughter of time", the commentators write: "Evolution gradually comes forth from the womb of time". (op. cit. 59).

Creation by emanation is seen in a vintage song recorded by Leland. Here wine is shown as a eucharistic production of Diana; "I drink, yet it is not wine I drink, I drink the blood of Diana". (*Aradia*, 46).

The Renaissance.

Throughout the Renaissance period in English literature, the two theologies, the ecclesiastical and the literary, continue to be presented simultaneously but yet independently. Spenser describes Nature in terms of a cosmic creatress, like Sophia: "Through knowledge we behold the worlds creation, How in its cradle first he [man] fostred was; And judge of Natures cunning operation. How things she formed of a formless mas." (*Tears of the Muses, Urania*). She is concerned with every detail: "The lilly, Lady of the flowering field. The flowre-deluce, her lovely Paramoure ... Yet neither spinnes nor cards, ne cares nor fretts. But to her mother nature all her care she letts". (*Fairie Queene*. I VI. xvi).

In the 18th century, the poet James Thompson, regards nature as a primordial creatress: "Say then, where lurk the vast eternal springs, That, like creating Nature, lie concealed from mortal eye .." (*The Seasons; Autumn*. p. 136); And as a source of anthropogenesis, "But Man, whom Nature formed of milder clay, With every kind emotion in his heart, And taught alone to weep, while from her lap, She pours ten thousand delicacies, herbt Abd fruits as numerous as the drops of rain". (id. *Spring*, p. 16). He sees the process of creation as a continuing one: "At other

times he pried through Nature's store, Whate'er she in the ethereal round contains, Whate'er she hides beneath her verdant floor, The vegetable and the mineral reigns". (*Castle of the Indolence*, canto xi).

William Cowper sees Nature particularly as the great Artist: "Lovely indeed the mimic works of art; But natures works are lovelier .. But imitative strokes can do no more Than please the eye — sweet Nature's every sense. The air salubrious of her lofty hills, The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales, And music of her word — no works of man, May rival these; these all bespeak a power Peculiar, and exclusively her own". (*The Task*, Bk. I. p. 10) and "Nature, exerting an answering power, Forms, open, and gives scent to, every flower: Spreads the fresh verdure of the fields .." (*Table Talk*, p. 30).

Nature's role in cosmogenesis is shown by Campbell: "Eternal Nature, When thy giant hand Had heard the floods, and fixed the trembling land. When life sprang startling; at thy plastic call. Endless her form .." (*Pleasures of Hope*, p. 46). And Akenside writes similarly: "O faithful Nature, dictate of the laws Which govern and support this mighty frame of universal being". (*Pleasures of Imagination*, Bk. II. p. 54); and more physiologically: "Through the breath of Nature has infused, Her genial power to draw with pregnant veins, Nutritious moisture from the earth, In fruit and seed prolific .." (Bk. I, p. 34).

Shelley, in *Queen Mab*, sees the Spirit of Nature, the Mother of the World, as the great controlling cosmic power: "Here, in this interminable wilderness of worlds, at whose immensity Even soaring fancy staggers. Here is thy fitting temple". And earth is seen as the nourishing Mother of all. "The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck, To myriads, who still grow beneath her care".

These personifications occasionally take a more definite form. In his *Poems*, published in 1838, Samuel Rogers has: "An inscription for a Temple Dedicated to the Graces at Woburn-Abbey: Approach with reverence. There are those Within, whose dwelling place is Heaven. . From them flow all the decencies of Life"..". (p. 214).

Modern Western.

The Medieval and Renaissance view of Nature as a kind of female Demiurge is still followed particularly by those reviving the local "Grass roots" religions.

Erde, Mother Earth, was seen by Richard Wagner as the Primeval Mother. Bernard Shaw summarizes his views in *The Perfect Wagnerite*, "When Erda the First Mother of Life, rises from .. the heart of the earth", and he speaks of "The Fertility of The Great Mother .. the life that came from her has ever evolved to greater organization". (p. 23). P. G. Woodhouse occasionally holds the view that Nature is the Creatress of humanity, in certain unusual cases.

Hargrave Jennings writes: "Woman, in fact, is the maker of nature; as we know nature". (cit. *Gd. Ind.* 209). And in the traditional *Charge*, now used in many modern ceremonies: "For I am the soul of nature that gives life to the universe. From Me all things proceed and unto Me they must return". (cit. *Sp. Dance.* 77).

Many modern writers see cosmogenesis and its development in terms of the traditional theologies. Dion Fortune presents it partly in Hebrew, partly in Greek terms. Writing on the development of the Great Goddess—as space, water and earth—she describes how, "She is more old than time; she is the matrix of matter, the root-substance of all existence, undifferentiated, pure. She is also Binah, the Supernal Mother.. Likewise she is called Ge, for she is the most ancient earth, the first-formed from the formless .. Herein do we bathe in sleep, sinking back into the primordial depths, returning to things forgotten before time was, and the soul is renewed, touching the Great Mother. Whoso cannot return to the Great Mother hath no roots in life, but withereth as the grass". (*Sea Priestess* 228). The Egyptian and Chaldean cosmogonic ideas appear in a modern rite: "Mother of the Gods, the Great Deep, the Celestial Deep, Nuit .. as thou holdeth all time and space in the darkness, bring our souls into their true fruition of eternity". (*Dea*, 37), and "Celestial Anat .. Who caused light to be separated from darkness" (*Urania* p. 2).

A ritual of the Dianic coven, conducted by its High Priestess, Morgan McFarland, uses a synthesis of many different traditions. The Goddess is seen developing the Elements: "Her Movements made the wind, and the Element Air was born and did breathe".

"A candle is lit in the East. Morgan speaks:

"And the Goddess named Herself: Arianrhod-Cardea-Astarte. And sparks were struck from her dancing feet so that She shone forth as the Sun, and the stars were caught in Her hair, and comets raced about Her, and the Element Fire was born".

"A candle is lit in the South.

"And the Goddess named herself: Sunna-Vesta-Pele. About her feet swirled the waters in tidal wave and river and streaming tide, and the Element water did flow".

"A candle is lit in the West.

"And She named Herself: Binah-Mari Morgaine-Lakshmi. And She sought to rest Her feet from their dance, and She brought Forth the Earth so that the shores were Her footstool, the fertile lands Her Womb, the mountains Her full breasts, and Her streaming hair the growing things".

"A candle is lit in the North.

"And the Goddess named Herself: Cerridwen-Demeter-the Corn Mother. She saw that which was and is and will be, born of Her sacred dance and cosmic delight and infinite joy".

Morgan speaks for the last time.

"We are Virgins, Mothers, Old Ones — All. We offer our creating energy". (Margot Adler, 2 18-9).

An emphasis on the Eastern theology is found in some writers of the Liberal Catholic Church. Pascaline Mallet, in a lecture entitled *In The Service of The Divine Motherhood* printed in *The Liberal Catholic Magazine*, June 1964, states: "In the teachings of the ancient wisdom we find that before all creation there was Akasha, living divine Space, the Eternal Mother, as she is called in the first stanza of the Book of Dzyan. She is the deep background, the *fons et origo* of all manifestations; she was born before the sun and the stars, as is expressed in the Book of Solomon..

"If, when we gaze up into the heavens on a starry night, we open ourselves to the wonders of nature, we may sense the majesty and grandeur of Aditi, Infinite Space; in the Eternal Mother all universes come into being and suns and stars are her children .. The Queen Rectress of our Earth scheme provides the divine substance and essence, The divine form of Wisdom and the conditions for evolving life. "Her protective shield" says Prof. Van der Stok, "surrounds the world, keeping the substance pure, untouchable and unapproachable..

"We may think of Our Lady as being in the East, with Air as her Element; Isis in the South, with the Element of water, Kwan-yin in the West having the Element of fire. Then in the North is the Queen Ruler of the Aether connected with the Element of Earth; and in the Centre is the Divine Maiden Guardian of the Most Sacred Sanctuary.

..for every woman is, in a mysterious way and perhaps unknowingly, a representation of Divine Motherhood, whether she be married or single..

"I would once more quote from Dr. Arundale: How wonderful is the Motherhood of God, the Mother Principle of Life .. The Light which is in this Mother Principle flashes forth, many-hued, encircling the world, radiating upon all things.. How glorious is the role of woman temple, priestess, altar, chalice in one .. May every man bow in reverence before her temples, May every woman cause Her Light to shine upon the world. So shall the Mother-Light heal the wounds of the world and make it new" (*Ubique Mag*, 4-7).

The same use of Eastern Religion occurs in rituals of Olivia Robertson.

"Wise Goddess Sarasvati .. From Your river of Creation come the lotus flowers of suns and plants, You play the vina with the rhythm of Universe". (*Urania*, 55).

"Nor aught nor naught existed; yon bright sky Was not, nor heavens broad woof outstretched above; What created all? what sheltered? what concealed? .. There was no light of night nor light of day, Aditi breathed breathless in herself". (*Urania*, 57).

So with the Tarot: Arland Ussher sees Key xxi, *The World* "The nude maiden — a Kali dancing down the world — is Eternity.. The Eckhartian "Abyss of Godhead" .. She is the alchemist "Quintessence" .. she, the bride, is Cosmos.. she is the attained *Sophia* .. Her sign in the heavens is the Sun (feminine in the Irish and German)". (*Keys of Tarot*, 53-4).

Other modes of Creation are emphasized by certain writers. Mary Beth Edelsen describes a method evocative of the Gnostics: "Great Mother thinks things into being". (*Lady-Unique*, I. 56). While Starhawk sees the differentiation of the original Female in a manner reminiscent of the Valentinian Gnostics: "Alone, awesome, complete within Herself, the Goddess, She whose name cannot be spoken, floated in the abyss of the outer darkness, before the beginning of all things. And as She looked into the curved mirror of black space, She saw by her own light Her radiant reflection, and fell in love with it. She drew it forth by the power that was in Her and made love to Herself, and called Her "Miria, the wonderful".

"Their ecstasy burst forth in the single song of all that is, was, or ever shall be, and with the song came motion, waves that poured outward and became all the spheres and circles of the worlds. The Goddess became filled with love, swollen with love, and She gave birth to a rain of bright spirits that filled the worlds and became all beings". (*Spiral Dance*, 17).

"The Goddess falls in love with Herself, drawing forth Her own emanation, which takes a life of its own.. Desire is the primal energy and that energy is erotic.. Divine Ecstasy becomes the fountain of creation, and creation is an orgasmic process". (p. 25) .. "The song is carried forth on waves that become spheres. The waves are the waves of the orgasm, light waves, ocean waves, pulsating electrons, waves of sound .. The Goddess swells with love and gives birth to a rain of bright spirits .. The rain is the fruitifying menstrual blood that nourishes life, as well as the bursting waters that herald birth, the ecstatic giving forth of life". (*Spiral Dance*, pp. 17-26).

This creative process is commented on by Vicki Noble: "It is sexual-creative power that makes the Goddess so disturbing to the modern world". (*Motherpeace*, 3).

The more recent feminine theologies tend to see all women as participating in the nature and work of the ancient Goddesses. This insight was indeed not new. Thomas Carlyle wrote: "In his secluded way of life and with his glowing Fantasy, the more fiery that it burnt under cover, as in a reverberating furnace, his feeling towards the Queens of this Earth was, and indeed is, altogether unspeakable. A visible Divinity dwelt in them; to our young Friend all women were holy, were heavenly". (*Sartor Resartus*, 128).

Dion Fortune writes even more explicitly: "All those Goddesses are one Goddess, and we call her Isis, the All-Woman, in whose nature all things are found .. Therefore should he worship the Great Goddess, for without Her he hath no life, and every woman is Her priestess. In the face of every woman let him look to the face of the Goddess, watching Her phases through the flow and return of the tides to which his soul answereth, awaiting Her call, as he needs must, aching in his barrenness". (*Asp. Occ*, 38). "No essential distinction is seen between her and an historical Goddess. What may be said of the one may be said of the other, She answereth with Her changing phases, to the needs of his secret life, and he, fulfilled of Her, is made glorious in his strength". (p.39).

In a ritual quoted by Denning and Phillips the officiant intones: "I am the sapphire bowl, dark and immense, that holds. . In ancient wards the glorious horde of stars.. I, dark and hidden Mother.. In my gift is the viewless strength beyond destiny. I am Night, and Dread, and the Void".. (V. 303).

This idea of the Great Goddess being identified with all women is often expressed by describing women as her priestesses or in some other official role. This is seen in Yeats: "Woman herself was still in our eyes ... romantic and mysterious, still the priestess of her shrine". (cit. Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelite Imag*. 196). And in a modern ritual:

"As the golden dawn lights the sky, the Sekhmet Enchantress who is in all women awakens from a trance of thousands of years.. The Lioness Stirs". (Olivia Robertson, *Urania*, vii). And much the same is suggested in the *Oracle of the Goddess Grainne through her priestess*:

"My golden hair is wheat and oats, My robe the ever-changing sky, The lady-bird my finger bears, My eye shines forth in lake and sea.

"From the depths of earth my inner sun Glows through the heart of all existences Atoms and stars: creatures that grow and move, Know me as Mother and Consciousness.

"My breath inspired every breath: The healing rays are mine. Look upwards, round about and down. For I am everywhere". (*Dea*, 24).

Kay Turner, for example, sees herself interfusing with a Mexican goddess: "Our task is personification, each of us facing a mode for interfusing the person & the image of the Goddess. For me, it has been in the act of biography inviting Ix Chel's life to interweave with my own. A new fabric woven between us. I welcome the world to wear it". (Kay Turner *Lady-Unique I*, 51)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

b. before this era.

G.M. *The Great Mother*, by Erich Neumann.

I.U. *Isis Unveiled*, by Helena Blavatsky.

O.C.D. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

S.D. *The Secret Doctrine*, by Helena Blavatsky.

U.P. University Press.

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Aset Shemsu — The Retinue of Aset

Foundation Centre: Clonegal Castle, Enniscorthy, Eire.

Growing numbers of people are rediscovering their love for the Goddess. At first, this love may seem to be no more than an inner feeling. But soon it develops; it becomes a longing to help the Goddess actively in the manifestation of Her divine plan. Thus, one hears such enquiries as, "How can I get initiated into the Mysteries of the Goddess? How can I experience a closer communion with her? Where are her nearest temples and devotees? How can I join the priesthood of the Goddess?", and many other such questions.

The Fellowship of Isis has been founded to answer these needs. Membership provides means of promoting a closer communion between the Goddess and each member, both singly, and as part of a larger group.

The Fellowship is organized on a democratic basis. All members have equal privileges within it.

The Fellowship respects the freedom of conscience of each member. There are no vows required or commitments to secrecy. All Fellowship activities are optional; and members are free to resign or rejoin at their own choice.

The Fellowship reverences all manifestations of Life. The Rites exclude any form of sacrifice, whether actual or symbolic.

The Fellowship accepts religious toleration, and is not exclusivist. Members are free to maintain other religious allegiances.

The Fellowship believes in the promotion of Love, Beauty and Abundance. No encouragement is given asceticism.

The Fellowship seeks to develop knowledge and wisdom.

The Fellowship also aims at informing the public about the religion of the Goddess; presenting the views of Her followers on current social affairs; working for a fair representation of the Religion of the Goddess at local and national levels, communicating with members of the Press and other media, and with our political representatives and others.

The magazine of the Fellowship, "Isian News", is published quarterly. This includes news of members, Fellowship and other events of interest to members, list of new members, centres, temples, shrines and centres associated with the Goddess, and of members' publications, artistic works, crafts, etc. The magazine also includes articles on subjects of general interest to members, such as formation of a temple and the hallowing of temples, shrines and ritual objects. The Fellowship of Isis Directories give the Festival Calendar and full lists of Centres, priestesses and priests, members, etc.

Membership of the Fellowship of Isis is open to all, of every religion, tradition and race. Children are welcome as members, subject to the consent of parents or guardians. There is no fee or subscription. Those wishing for admission are asked to apply to Foundation Centre. After enrolment in a list of members, which is kept in the Temple of Isis at Clonegal Castle, a certificate will be sent to the new member. Unless instructions are given to the contrary, the names and addresses of members are printed in "Isian News" and the Directories.

FROM THE BACK COVER:

This book presents a theology. It is based on the fact that the Goddesses alone possess the power to create form and to transmit life; the Gods, while having neither of these powers, are allotted the function of helping the Goddesses organise these forms and of assisting them in administering their vital gifts.

The first part of the book, *The Maternal Source*, shows the Female as the Original First Cause of the cosmos. Examples of the recognition of this are drawn from many religious traditions, including the prehistoric, the Western, the Eastern and the modern.

The second part, *The Generation of the Great Mother*, describes the various ways by which the Female reproduces herself to form the Cosmos, by fission, by parturition or giving birth and by sexual emission. Examples of these methods are shown in the different religious traditions. There is an index and bibliography.

The author, born in 1920, was educated in Ireland. After serving in the Irish Army and the Admiralty Research Laboratory, Teddington, Middlesex, he studied at Wells Theological College, Somerset (1946-8). Ordained in the Anglican Church in 1948, he was rector of Aghold, Co. Wicklow (1951-2) and of East Bilney, Norfolk (1952-7).

Religious conviction led the author to start writing in 1970, to receive the priesthood of Isis in 1972, and to help found the Fellowship of Isis, with his wife and sister in 1976. In 1981 he made over, by Deed of Gift, the Temple of Isis on the ground floor of the early 17th century Clonegal Castle, to the Fellowship, to be held by trustees.

The author has officially revived his ancient Gaelic family title, Baron Ruadh or Robertson of Strathloch, through registration by the Chief Herald of Ireland. He is cousin of Robert Graves, author of *The White Goddess*. He has three daughters and one son.

The Fellowship of Isis was founded at Clonegal Castle on the vernal equinox, 1976, by Lawrence Durdin-Robertson, his wife Pamela, and his sister, Olivia Robertson.

The Fellowship is dedicated to spreading the Religion of the Goddesses throughout the world. It believes in the ideals of Love, Truth, Beauty and Abundance, and the reverence for all forms of life, animal, plant and mineral. It rejects the principle of sacrifice in any form, whether actual or symbolic.

In October 1984 the number of members was 4,955 in 53 countries, with 154 sister centres. There are 38 priestesses and 37 priests. The membership includes Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, Hindus, Buddhists, Shintoists, Kabalists, numbers of Wiccan groups, those still holding to the indigenous religions of Africa and America, and those now restoring the ancient religions of Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome and the Celtic and Norse lands.

This quick development of the Fellowship, together with the parallel growth of other matriarchal religious organisations, may be seen as part of the Renaissance of the Goddess taking place all over the world in both secular and religious life.

ISBN O 906007 20 0

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