

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL**

**A Comparative Analysis of Male Sexuality in Modern Mexican Literature**

**(With special references to the works of Rosario Castellanos,  
Marcela Del-Río, Octavio Paz, and Jaime Sabines)**

**being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
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**by**

**Victoria Carpenter, BSc (Orlando)**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Mexican Male Character: Literary and Philosophical Interpretations

### **The representation of male sexuality**

This thesis presents a comparative analysis of the representation of male sexuality in modern Mexican literature, with the focus on the works of two men and two women writers of the same literary era, whose writings reflect various aspects of the Mexican male character. Octavio Paz (1914-1998) and Jaime Sabines (1926-1999) are seen in Mexico as two of the leading poets, although Paz's works are better known to the Western reader. Paz's contribution to Mexican and world literature is undisputed; his poetry and prose are translated into many languages and analysed by a number of literary critics all over the world. Surrealist, Hinduist, Aztec and other influences make Paz's works a unique combination of perceptions of reality; his interest in Mexican national character expressed alongside examination of multiple realities (seen, for example, in the poem 'Piedra de sol' (1957), the collections *Libertad bajo palabra* (1949), *Ladera este* (1968), etc.) enhances the universal nature of his poetry. Ramón Xirau describes Paz's works as a reflection of multiple cultures and expressions - 'No le falta el ímpetu de la épica, ni el fervor de la lírica. No le falta tampoco comprensión profunda de este mundo subjetivo que principalmente los surrealistas han desarrollado en este siglo' (Xirau 1976, 21).

In addition to poetry, Octavio Paz wrote essays on philosophy and literary criticism. His best known contributions to Mexican narrative are his essays *El mono gramático* (1974), *El ogro filantrópico* (1979), *La llama doble: amor y erotismo* (1993), and *El*



*laberinto de la soledad* (1950), seen by many as a literary piece rather than a philosophical study. This work examines the nature of the Mexican male, the origin of his character(s), and his role in the makeup of contemporary Mexican society<sup>1</sup>.

Jaime Sabines' role in world literature is not as explicit as that of Paz partly because Sabines has been considered an inherently 'Mexican' poet. His works are rarely translated because their seemingly simple language carries additional meaning lost in translation into languages whose structure is different from Spanish; in addition, the cultural specificity of his language (particularly idiomatic and marginal expressions) creates a unique atmosphere, which is hard to express in a different linguistic environment. 'La sencillez de Sabines' has been recognised as the trademark of his works, in particular the collection *Yuria* (1967), inspired by a town in his native region of Chiapas. Other collections - *La señal* (1951), *Tarumba* (1956), *Maltiempo* (1972) - are equally popular because of their successful breaking down of the barriers of 'decency' in poetry. Monsiváis sees Sabines' simple language as a sign of emotional spontaneity which is also an aesthetic and political challenge; 'él exhibe los afectos desde su raíz familiar o su clima prostibulario, convierte la intimidad en proeza diaria, y conjunta, con genio, la ternura, la blasfemia, el amor familiar que es la egolatría legítima, la celebración de las putas, el elogio rencoroso de la soledad, el sentimiento amoroso como la fuente original de las imágenes' (Monsiváis 1991, 35).

The destruction of traditional literary barriers is particularly evident in the works of Mexican women writers. It has been said that 'women have not been allowed to play a very visible part in the development of Latin American culture, although men have used them as the inspiration and even the measure of their own imagination and creativity' (G. Martin

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<sup>1</sup> The summary of *El laberinto de la soledad* is presented later in the Introduction.



1989, 21). The woman's role as keeper of stability in the family has not allowed independence or creativity because that would jeopardise the traditional family structure. It was only in the 1950's that Mexican feminist movement began to take shape, and with it emerged feminine text, which 'achieved expression through its vision of the disharmony of identity' (Hart 1993, 45).

The duality of Mexican female character became the source of inspiration for many women writers, who also addressed the multiplicity of the character of the Mexican male by analysing his sexual behaviour. Among them is Rosario Castellanos (1925-1974)<sup>2</sup>, author of many influential feminist essays ('Otra vez Sor Juana' (1963), 'Costumbres mexicanas' (1964), 'Y las madres, ¿qué opinan?' (1965), etc.), a widely popular *indigenista* novel *Balún Canán* (1957), and poetry collections, among which the most famous are *Poesía no eres tú* (1972) and *Bella dama sin piedad* (1984). Her best known and most analysed works are the play *El eterno femenino* (1974) and a collection *Album de familia* (1971), containing short stories which have become classics of Mexican feminist literature - 'Lección de cocina', 'Domingo', and 'Cabecita blanca'. Castellanos' influence on modern Mexican literature is undisputed<sup>3</sup>, and literary merit of her works is acknowledged worldwide - 'Among the prose writers of her generation, Rosario Castellanos has produced the best constructed and the most ideologically sound work' (Carballo 1965, qtd. in Foster 1975, 243). The short stories and poems by Castellanos will be used in this study of male sexuality because they provide an insight in the male character from a viewpoint of a woman; a feminist nature of her works adds a new perspective on the relationship between the male and the woman and the constraints imposed on it by patriarchal society.

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<sup>2</sup> Jaime Sabines and Rosario Castellanos were friends in the 1960s; after her death in 1974, Sabines wrote a tribute 'Recado a Rosario Castellanos', in which he mourned the loss of a talented poet and a good friend. The bitter irony of the poem is reflected in the combination of references to public viewings of Castellanos' body in death and public disregard of her emotional isolation in life.

<sup>3</sup> See Section 1.1, Chapter 1, for Rosario Castellanos' literary and ideological influence on Mexican feminism.



Another woman writer chosen for this study is Marcela Del-Río (1932). Called 'una Ray Bradbury mexicana', Del-Río is better known in Mexico and the Spanish-speaking areas of the United States than in Europe, although her novel *Proceso a Faubritten* (1976) is translated into French, Czech, and Bulgarian, and in 1975 she was awarded a prestigious Smetana medal - 'máxima condecoración que por méritos culturales otorga el gobierno de Checolovaquia' (Soriano y Bueno 1975, 17). Among Del-Río's works are plays *El camino al concierto* (1984), *Año nuevo, vida nueva* (1989); poetry collections *Temps en paroles* (1983), *Homenaje a Remedios Varo* (1992), which was awarded the 1991-1992 'Letras de oro' Spanish Literary Prize, and most notably, novels *Proceso a Faubritten*, *La cripta del espejo* (1988), etc.

The works of Marcela Del-Río have been chosen for this analysis because they address the emotional aspect of a heterosexual relationship and the interconnection between emotions and acquisition of knowledge. Her works also focus on the multiplicity of realities which is determined by one's subjective view of the world based on his/her past experiences and plans for the future (Bambi 1976, 3B). This aspect of Del-Río's literature arises not only from her interest in surrealism and science fiction (this allows us to draw parallels between her works and Octavio Paz's poetry) but also by a combination of indigenous, mestizo, and European influences on her writings.

Before we begin our analysis, it is important to determine which theories we will employ. The works of the writers selected for this study have been analysed before, and various methodologies have been employed to examine the male and female characters. Until recently, Latin American literature has usually been seen as 'the other' in relationship to European and North American literatures; therefore, most of its critiques were based on European or North American literary, psychological, and sociological theories. Some critics attempt to reverse this trend, still relying on European and North American theories. In objection to this practice, I support Nelly Richard's view that 'even when [the critics']



current hypothesis is that of de-centering, those who formulate it continue to be surrounded by the reputation, academic or institutional, that allows them to situate themselves in “the center” of the debate at its densest point of articulation’ (Richard 1995, 222). While I recognise the validity of the application of Western theories of discourse to the analysis of Western literature, I find it restrictive when applied to the analysis of Mexican literature because it does not allow for a study of the works of Mexican writers as literature in its own right, rather than as ‘the other’ dependent on the ‘civilised’ literatures of the Old World.

As has been stated earlier, Mexican literature is deeply rooted in the political turmoil of the society. Sara Sefchovich states that Mexican literature finds inspiration in ‘la historia y en el pueblo y abandonando todo lo extranjero y europeo “para entendernos con el indio, con el chinaco” como escribió Cuellar’ (Sefchovich 1991, 48). Although this statement may seem rather radical, it reflects the attitude towards Mexican literature as a self-sustaining entity, not an appendage of Western literary traditions, virtually indistinguishable from the literary ‘self’ that bore it. The constant controversy produces the perpetual state of emotional flux, leading writers to reflect it in literature, which becomes an indicator of the state of society, just as the Mexican feminist movement reflects the conflicts among and within different ethnic and economic groups. ‘A great deal of material is circulating whose assumption of feminism or whose analysis and interpretative criteria, reduce themselves to a mere instrumental application of already canonised theories from French and Anglo-Saxon criticism to a specific work, without revealing the cultural norms that motivated the scholar to select the chosen text or examining the possible contribution of this exercise to the feminine cause’ (Hernán Vidal, qtd. in Castillo 1992, 2).

The problem faced by a critic analysing Mexican literature lies in the difference between a purely theoretical approach (such as one finds in some French feminist and deconstructionist theories) and the ‘action-based’ literature originating in the society constantly affected by social, economic and political clashes, both internal and international.



European and North American feminist theories, though successfully applied to Western literature, are still rather rigid due to being based on other theories (Lacan's psychoanalysis, Saussure's linguistic sign theory, etc.). Therefore it would be advisable either to follow the example of Debra Castillo, who decided to use traditional Western theories sparingly, or to eschew a canonised theory that can undermine the validity of the study by disregarding the uniqueness of literature produced in the turmoil of the societal conflicts has not taken place in Western Europe since late 1960's.

Deborah Shaw warns against 'the dangers of formulating a neat, prescriptive theory to apply to all writers of the same sex in an entire continent' (Shaw 1997, 163). It is especially true when applied to the analyses of Mexican women writers' work because the difference in the class structure of Mexican society (much more striking than in Europe) creates obstacles for an all-encompassing feminist theory. Feminist movements in Mexico and Latin America are affected by class conflicts to the extent that there is a lack of connection between different classes due to the uneven distribution of wealth. Western feminist theories presume that all women's common enemy is the male-dominated society that does not acknowledge the existence of female discourse. However, Latin American feminists are also concerned with more 'down-to-earth' problems of wealth distribution, participation in the work force, health and welfare problems, protection from political recriminations, etc. In other words, the Latin American feminist movement cannot, as of yet, afford the luxury of a purely theoretical approach offered by the Western theorists. Such an approach would be suitable only for a fraction of the movement represented by upper-class women ('las intelectuales'). The remaining majority would have to subscribe to this abstract theory (thus forsaking the solution of more immediate problems) or to separate themselves into another movement concerned primarily with everyday matters. Such a division would be against the principles of Mexican feminist movements which attempt to meet the needs of women of all strata of Mexican society.

The theoretical base chosen for this research is compiled from various studies carried out by Latin American philosophers and literary critics. In the process of analysing literary works of Rosario Castellanos, Marcela Del-Río, Octavio Paz, and Jaime Sabines, I will study the works of Latin American theorists, thus establishing a culturally accurate basis for my research<sup>4</sup>. The difference between male and female writers' approach to male sexuality will be determined by analysing their works rather than by merely stating the difference in their gender.

### **Analyses of the Mexican identity**

The main aim of this thesis is to examine Mexican male sexuality; therefore, it is important to establish a sound theoretical platform, which will allow for a more culturally specific analysis than those based on more traditional (non-Mexican) approaches. Firstly, we will examine the existing studies of the Mexican character, keeping in mind the literary focus of our thesis.

Much of Mexican literature finds its inspiration in revolutions, revolts, societal clashes, which metaphorically stem from the inherent conflict of the national character, reflected in a symbolic clash between its two opposing sides: the Spanish conquistador-attacker and the native Indian victim. As a result, the existing Western literary canons are questioned and shaken by Mexican writers, who seek their unique way of expression - 'Desde los iturbidistas a los juaristas hay una sola constante: la ruptura con la colonia

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<sup>4</sup> The works of North American psychologist Abraham Maslow will also be used in this thesis because they are based on a multitude of cross-cultural studies of human nature, attempting to deduce a pattern of human behaviour which is not culturally specific.



española en todos los ámbitos, incluyendo por supuesto a la literatura que transforma los gastados modelos formales de los siglos anteriores. “Los plebeyos tomaron por asalto el mundo de las letras como protagonistas y como actores” afirma José Emilio Pacheco sobre esta época’ (Sefchovich 1991, 47). Since it may be said that the conflicting nature of Mexican character gave rise to much of Mexican literature, then the study of ‘lo mexicano’ becomes one of the major focuses of the works of Mexican authors. According to José Revueltas, literature and culture of the Third World reflect the phenomenon of alienation from the patronising influence of the Western society; the effort of separating Latin American identity is aimed at asserting ‘lo latinoamericano’ as an identity in its own right (Revueltas 1971, 303-7). He sees literature and culture as the main means of communicating the development of Latin American national identity to the world - ‘la cultura es el desarrollo del pensamiento teórico, ciencia, filosofía, de los valores estéticos. Entonces, como una parte de estos valores se expresa a través de la palabra, ... la magnitud de comunicación de un idioma significa, ante todo, la magnitud de difusión de ese pensamiento, del pensamiento de [la cultura latinoamericana] determinada’ (id., 311).

Since we have established that Mexican literature is closely linked with Mexican history, we will focus our attention on the era of 1950-1985 (to which the writers selected for this study belong) because of a number of significant events that took place in Mexico at that time. Two of the most important dates of this period are 1952, the year Mexican feminist movements became stronger as women received the right to vote, and 1968, the year of one of the worst incidents of oppression of human rights during a massacre of a student demonstration on October 2 at La Plaza de Tres Culturas in México, D.F. Overall, this was the time of formation of a new national conscience, which caused the writers of this era to re-focus their attention on the question of Mexican identity (individual and national).

The issue of the Mexican character has been raised before by several Latin American scholars, including Samuel Ramos and Octavio Paz. Samuel Ramos’ *El perfil del hombre y*



*La cultura en México* is arguably the most important study of the Mexican national character insofar as it attempted to define the Mexican personality as culturally original. The uniqueness of this work lies in the fact that it did not rely solely on the works of European (particularly Spanish) philosophers, like Ortega y Gasset, instead inferring the psychological definition of 'lo mexicano' from 'una descripción anecdótica de la vida mexicana' (Ramos 1986, 52).

The essay focuses on the origins of the Mexican character, its psychological components and overt expression. Ramos states that the prevailing quality of 'el hombre mexicano' is his emotional weakness due to the fact that he feels inferior to the rest of the world<sup>5</sup>. As a result of the Mexican male's 'inferiority complex', he becomes distrustful and suspicious - 'está siempre temeroso de todo, y vive alerta, presto a la defensiva. Recela de cualquier gesto, de cualquier movimiento, de cualquier palabra. Todo lo interpreta como una ofensa. En esto el mexicano llega a extremos increíbles' (id., 60). Not being able to trust anyone, the Mexican male becomes unnecessarily violent towards the world, trying to establish his superiority over the weaker and therefore to rid himself of the feeling of inferiority. According to Ramos' psychoanalysis of this process, the Mexican male subconsciously imitates his 'role model' - a European counterpart (metaphorically personified by Hernán Cortés), attempting to compensate for the cultural shortcomings of his origin. While taking into account the 'criollismo', or the influence of the native Indian culture on the Mexican character, Ramos does not regard the figure of La Malinche<sup>6</sup> as an important factor in the formation of Mexican masculinity; neither does he consider the native Indian population capable of contributing to the development of the nation because of their

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<sup>5</sup> Since this quality also pertains to the childlike aspect of the Mexican male sexuality, it will be examined in more detail in Section 3.1.2 of Chapter 3, where the focus will be made on the 'child' status of the Mexican nation.

<sup>6</sup> The image of La Malinche and its metaphoric role in the creation of the Mexican male character is examined in Section 1.1 of Chapter 1.



psychological inability to use technology (id., 106). Instead, he sees the combination of the European and the Indian cultures as the driving force in the creation of 'lo mexicano' (id., 109). His analysis is based mainly upon the idea of a cultural *interaction*, which suggests that in order to overcome its inferiority complex, the Mexican nation should follow a European route of development (Schmidt 1978, 160-1).

Although we recognise the problems appearing in Ramos' work - the dilemma of writing a philosophical work without a sound theoretical basis (id., 157-61), the claim of national specificity appearing alongside a frequently Eurocentric view of Mexico - it is impossible to deny that his study of the Mexican male has influenced many studies of the Mexican national character. The same philosophers who saw the deficiencies in Ramos' study later relied on his work when devising their theories. Rubén Salazar Mallén, for example, saw the Mexican' inferiority complex being complemented by the 'complex of grandeur' - 'As Octavio Paz would do much later, Salazar explained that the national character was to be viewed in its dual function of contending extremities' (id., 156). Further analyses of the Mexican character reflect many aspects of Ramos' theory, while taking into account its shortcomings. Among these works is Octavio Paz's famous *El laberinto de la soledad* (1950).

Octavio Paz adopted Ramos' idea of the Mexican's inferiority complex; however, his study focuses on the *conflict* between the cultures of the conquerors (Spaniards) and the conquered (the Aztecs), thus implying that a violent nature of the conflict produces the inner emotional turmoil within the Mexican male character. The symbiosis of the two nations is especially evident 'in the formation of male-female relations... In the way a Mexican man enjoys dominating a woman, wants service from her, and expects to impose his will and body on her and then dispose of her, he repeats the pattern Cortés established with La Malinche' (Cypress 1991, 8). A nation born in the violence of conquest is carrying within itself a conflict of the two warring sides; 'to be made up of two things because of a rape, in a



symbolic context where the rapist is from the allegedly superior race, the victim from the inferior race, and where the child knows this, sympathises with but despises his mother, hates yet fears and even admires his father, and has to live in a society which perpetuates the same values, distinctions and hierarchies, is a painful experience indeed' (G. Martin 1989, 15). Such an inner struggle has contributed to the emotional make-up of the Mexican male<sup>7</sup>.

In *El laberinto de la soledad*, Octavio Paz analyses the Mexican male character as a result of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, suggesting that a Mexican male sees himself as a target for ridicule and humiliation by the world because he subconsciously recognises his emotional inferiority as a result of the inability to choose between the two opposite attitudes within - the conqueror and the victim<sup>8</sup>. To survive this moral predicament, a Mexican male isolates himself from the potential attackers - 'Estamos solos... Hemos caído; y esta caída, este sabernos caídos, nos vuelve culpables... [de] un delito sin nombre: el haber nacido' (Paz 1959, 73). As a result of the feeling of guilt, he develops a dual personality - on the outside, a loud, obnoxious 'chingador', or an attacker and bully of the weaklings (including women who are not members of the male's household); on the inside, an emotionally insecure child, who prefers to conceal his feelings for fear of being hurt.

Octavio Paz also describes Mexican males as private, emotionally isolated people. To a Mexican, opening up equals betraying his personality and pride. 'Para nosotros...

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<sup>7</sup> Section 3.1.2 of Chapter 3 contains a detailed examination of emotional insecurity being a sign of a childlike aspect of male sexuality, as reflected in the works of the four Mexican writers in this study.

<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Salvador Reyes Nevares 'viewed the Spanish Conquest of Mexico as an act of rape in which the conquistador played the role of active-masculine attacker, and the Indian that of passive-feminine victim' (Goldwert 1983, 29). The juxtaposition of the masculine power and feminine submission formed the basis for the emotional conflict within the Mexican psyche. According to Reyes Nevares, 'machismo is essentially the flight of the mestizo from underlying feelings of weakness' (id., 35).



abrirse es una debilidad o una traición. El mexicano puede doblarse, humillarse, “agacharse”, pero no “rajarse”, esto es, permitir que el mundo exterior penetre en su intimidad’ (id., 26-7). Those males who let outsiders into the realm of their emotional privacy are considered weak, ‘de dudosa fidelidad’, and are despised by those who maintain their stoic exterior, suffering with dignity. Emotional pain has become an intrinsic part of everyday existence; stoicism, therefore, became an integral trait of the Mexican male character. True to their ancestors’ memory, Mexicans measure their worth in the ability to ‘sufrir con dignidad las derrotas... Y si no todos somos estóicos e impasibles - como Juárez y Cuauhtémoc - al menos procuramos ser resignados, pacientes y sufridos’ (id., 28).

But the Mexican male is not simply a victim defending himself. To assert his strength he takes on the role of ‘el Gran Chingador’, who himself attacks and harasses weaker characters. Paz describes the term ‘el Gran Chingador’ as the phrase that ‘resume la agresividad, impasibilidad, invulnerabilidad [sic], uso descarnado de la violencia, y demás atributos del “macho”: poder’ (id., 73). The power assigned to and sought after by the male is based upon physical abilities rather than social status or intellect. As an attacker, the male enjoys and resents satisfaction from inflicting emotional or physical pain because he finds his strength in seeing others’ weakness, not suffering. In other words, he re-asserts himself in his ability to victimise someone the way the world humiliates him. The Mexican male is not interested in the end result (pain), but in the process of demonstrating his strength and, therefore, superiority. These two diametrical positions, of a victim and an attacker, comprise Mexican male character: ‘para el mexicano la vida es una posibilidad de chingar o de ser chingado. Es decir, de humiliar, castigar y ofender. O a la inversa’ (id., 71).

According to Paz, the Mexican male’s emotional insecurity causes him to be cautious when involved in a love relationship; in this case, emotional closeness is replaced by the desire to conquer because of the male’s subconscious fear of having to open up to his partner. ‘El amor es una tentativa de penetrar en otro ser, pero sólo puede realizarse a



condición de que la entrega sea mutua... Nosotros concebimos el amor como conquista y como lucha. No se trata tanto de penetrar la realidad, a través de un cuerpo, como de violarla' (id., 37). It is easier for the Mexican male to flaunt his physical and sexual strength than to admit his emotional weakness.

Discussing the nature of love, Paz states that 'el amor es amor no *a* este mundo sino *de* este mundo; está atado a la tierra por la fuerza de gravedad del cuerpo, que es placer y muerte' (Paz 1971, 207). In fact, the inseparable pair - love and death - appear throughout the analysis of love and sexuality. It is true that everyone entering a love relationship will have to face death, either directly or metaphorically, of his/her loved one. Whether it will be physical death or a death of the relationship (break-up, separation or divorce), one will experience pain that accompanies the loss. In other words, one cannot experience sexual pleasure without subjecting oneself to the pain of loss or the pain of gain, to that matter. To Paz, 'la muerte es inseparable del placer, Thanatos es la sombra de Eros. La sexualidad es la respuesta a la muerte ...' (Paz 1994, 161). The martyr attitude towards love, that considers pleasure inseparable from suffering, is another attribute of Mexican male sexuality.

The subject of love and death deserves further attention, since, as will be seen later, fear of death characterises two aspects of male sexuality - primal (animal) and childlike. One can see the connection between this view of love and the analysis of Mexican character in the duality of human existence - pleasure is inseparable from pain. In the essay 'El más allá erótico', Paz describes love as suffering that stems from the desire to possess something that is out of reach. Once possession is achieved, there is a risk of losing the object of love through separation or death. Mexican males, who already bear the mark of victims, face a difficult decision whether to enter a relationship knowing the risks, or to opt for loneliness.



On the other hand, they see life as a risk (Paz 1971, 217) and sexual intercourse as a way of 'proving oneself' by metaphorically risking their life<sup>9</sup>.

Paz summarises 'la mexicanidad' as 'búsqueda, ... voluntad por trascender ese estado de exilio' (Paz 1959, 79-80). Some critics see this conflict 'en forma ambivalente con una realidad interna y una cara al exterior' (Cid de Sirgado 1969, 60); however, it is equally feasible to suggest that the conflict of Mexican personality is within its psyche. The two sides of Mexican character - an attacker and a victim - are equally strong and thus create an inner turmoil that attempts to control itself by putting up an outward guard in form of stoicism, aggression, and martyrdom. Thus, it may be said that the Mexican's solemn exterior represents the defensive mechanism designed to protect the struggle within from potential ridicule of the world.

It should be noted, however, that Paz's analysis of the Mexican male character is not a psychological profile or a sociological study. Matthew Gutmann suggests that 'Paz [should] be taken not literally but literarily [because] part of the reason for [the elegance of *El laberinto de la soledad*] may be that Paz was creating qualities of *mexicanidad* as much as he was reflecting on them' (Gutmann 1996, 229). Therefore, Paz's view of the Mexican male character should be considered metaphorical and applied accordingly.

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<sup>9</sup> The male's fear of death is closely linked to sexual arousal; Section 2.1 of Chapter 2 examines this link in more detail, while examining the primal aspect of Mexican male sexuality.

In order fully to comprehend the Mexican male character, we should also examine the character of the woman, since our analysis will focus on male sexuality, which is revealed during the male's sexual interaction with the woman. The best-known view of the Mexican female character is the metaphoric representation of the woman as La Malinche, or 'La Chingada', who, according to Paz, 'encarna lo abierto, lo chingado, frente a nuestros indios, estóicos, impasibles y cerrados' (Paz 1959, 78). Women outside the male's family are usually seen by him as passive victims, inferior creatures unable to voice their wishes or defend themselves. The inferiority of Mexican women lies in their willful openness and desire to surrender to emotions. 'Su inferioridad es constitucional y r dica en su sexo, en su "rajada", herida que jam s cicatriza' (id., 26-27). Roberto Usigli, on the other hand, interprets women's position of victims as a defence mechanism or even a means of a covert attack on the males. 'La mujer sabe que la m s eficaz forma de atacar es fingirse atacada' (Usigli 1978, 708). Mexican males' mistrust of women, fueled by suspicion of falsehood of their apparent weakness, demonstrates a subconscious fear of women's emotional power<sup>10</sup>. The covert strength of the woman's character (usually referred to as 'marianismo') is the reverse of the male's overt brashness ('machismo') - women are overtly weak, yet covertly strong-willed, determined and spiritually empowered. Men, on the contrary, display physical strength and stoicism, while their inner personality is emotionally vulnerable and insecure (Stevens 1973, 100). Thus, it may be said that the traits composing the male and female characters complement each other.

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<sup>10</sup> There are several sociological studies that support this statement. For example, JoAnn Martin, who conducted research on women's political power in Buena Vista, Mexico, reports that '[men] say that women do not let anybody get away with anything, and although they laugh at the stories of women's strength, their laughter reflects more shock than mockery. [...] Men and women alike clearly recognized women's power, but men feared that women would use it to compromise male authority and to dominate the community' (J. Martin 1990, 479). There are also beliefs that women use their femininity as magic to influence men; therefore, men, though physically stronger than women, may not be able to withstand the attack of spiritual forces, since retaliations cannot be made against them with physical aggression.



### **The aim of the thesis**

This study proposes to examine the representation of male sexuality in modern Mexican literature with a particular focus on the works of Rosario Castellanos, Marcela Del-Río, Octavio Paz, and Jaime Sabines. It aims to determine whether there is a pattern in the depiction of the male's sexual behaviour, and to analyse the similarities and differences in the men and women writers' approaches to the representation of various aspects of male sexuality. It is important to emphasise once again that this is a literary investigation, i.e., it does not propose to carry out a sociological or psychological analysis of the Mexican male character. This analysis will examine the structure of sexuality in the male characters of the works of four Mexican writers; although the theoretical basis selected for this purpose includes psychological theories (Maslow) and philosophical studies of the Mexican male character (Paz, Ramos), these will be used to support the findings of literary analysis of the works.

The analysis of male sexuality will begin with the chapter focused on the image of the woman because, as will be seen through the thesis, the revelation of the aspects of male sexuality depends on the character of the woman-partner and the role she plays in various stages of sexual intercourse. In the case of the women writers in this study, the character of the male is created by the woman narrator and, therefore, it is often perceived by the reader through the woman's actions, thoughts and feelings expressed in her dialogue with the male, etc.

After the interdependence of the male and female characters has been established, we will examine the main aspects of male sexuality (primal, childlike, and omniscient-godlike). Chapter 2 will contain analysis of the primal aspect of male sexuality as revealed in the works of Rosario Castellanos, Marcela Del-Río, Octavio Paz, and Jaime Sabines. The study of the male's animal-like sexual behaviour will focus on the two interlinked components of its expression: the representation of the male as a non-cognitive being, and fear of death

revealed at the moment of sexual satisfaction. In Chapter 3, we will examine other fears experienced by the male during sexual intercourse - the fear of being alone and the fear of the unknown - which characterise the childlike side of his sexuality. This chapter will also explore the ways in which the male reacts to his fears, paying particular attention to his first efforts to learn about himself and the world. The study of the male's search for knowledge will continue in Chapter 4, which will focus on the male's attempt to create his own reality as a result of attaining omniscience through sexual experiences.

As a result of the analysis of the three major components of male sexuality, a connection will be revealed between the process of formation of male sexuality and development of the male's cognitive abilities. It will also be possible to determine whether, in the case of the four Mexican writers in this study, the authors' gender affects their representation of male sexuality.



# CHAPTER 1

## The Role of the Woman In the Formation of Male Sexuality

### 1.1 Theoretical background

It is important to establish at the onset that this study concentrates on the representation of heterosexual male sexuality. There is evidence (direct or implicit) that the males' partners are women. In *Proceso a Faubritten* the characters of Faubritten's partners are Cristina, María Corona, Hélène. In the stories by Rosario Castellanos the main characters are women and their partners are men - in 'Domingo' the names of the main characters (Edith and Carlos) are obvious clues of their gender<sup>11</sup>, while in 'Lección de cocina' the gender of the main characters can be deduced from the text - 'Soy yo... Tu esposa, claro' (Castellanos 1983, 166), 'Y cuando venga mi marido' (id., 169). The gender of the male's partner in the poems of Jaime Sabines is inferred from clues in family relations - 'Tú eres mi madre y yo soy tu hijo' (Sabines 1997b, 193) - or gender endings (gender designation) of adjectives or nouns - 'Tú vienes toda entera' (id., 120), 'Tu gesto de mujer de piedra' (id., 139); gender specificity is also implied in the imagery pertaining to female body - 'la ostra de la muerte' (id., 192). Finally, the same clues of gender implication are found in the imagery or gender endings in 'Blanco' and 'Piedra de sol' by Octavio Paz - 'tú ríes / - desnuda' (Paz 1989, 216), 'pastora de los valles submarinos / y guardiana del valle de los muertos' (Paz 1960, 297)<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> I define the term 'gender' as describing the person's perception of him/herself as a man or a woman: this perception is self-prescribed as well as created by society to which the individual belongs.

<sup>12</sup> These quotes demonstrate the gender designations of nouns and adjectives: the examples of imagery pertaining

The focus of the first part of the study will be on three main approaches to the woman's character used by these writers - approaches that reflect main trends of modern Mexican literature. Firstly, the analysis will concentrate on the image of the woman as a conscious entity separate from the personality of the male. Though this approach appears in several works examined here, the stories by Rosario Castellanos contain its most vivid examples. Another view of the woman emerges in the works of Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines, whose male character creates the woman to act as a recipient of his sexual desire as well as an object of sexual satisfaction. This approach develops further into the male's view of the woman as a divine character, void of human imperfections; female characters in *Proceso a Faubritten* complete the transformation from humans to gods, whose existence stems from and at the same time determines the male's search for self and knowledge (further study of this process continues in Chapter 4).

Before the analysis can be carried out, it is important to review the theoretical and historical background to the representation of women in modern Mexican literature. Latin American female character has been studied by many critics and feminist theorists (European, North American and Latin American), and the duality of Latin American feminine character - 'marianismo', or women's overt submissiveness that hides their covert determination and spiritual strength - became the source of inspiration for many feminist writers, like Rosario Castellanos, Laura Esquivel, Angeles Mastretta, etc<sup>13</sup>. Latin American feminine text 'only achieved expression through its vision of the disharmony of [women's] identity' (Hart 1993, 45), and this may be interpreted as determining the direction of Latin American feminism. Several theorists agree that Latin American feminist movements stem primarily from the sociological disharmony not only between Latin American countries and

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to female nature are too numerous to be presented here, since they will be studied in detail throughout this chapter.

<sup>13</sup> Evelyn Stevens examines the social and psychological implications of 'marianismo' (Stevens 1973, 89-101). This term is discussed further in Section 1.2.1, Chapter 1.



Europe (or the United States) but also between various societal strata within Latin American countries (Shaw 1997, 162; Franco 1990, 35-47). Still, Latin American feminist movements are based upon one commonality - the attitude towards women as inferior beings. This attitude, as described by Octavio Paz in *El laberinto de la soledad*, reflects the male's view of the woman as a passive violated character, also known as La Chingada: 'Su pasividad es abyecta: no ofrece resistencia a la violencia, es un montón inerte de sangre, huesos y polvo. Su mancha es constitucional y reside ... en su sexo. Esta pasividad abierta al exterior la lleva a perder su identidad: es la Chingada. Pierde su nombre, no es nadie ya, se confunde con la nada, es la Nada' (Paz 1959, 77). Another symbol of Latin American women is La Malinche, an Indian woman who is a metaphor of pre-Hispanic Mexico; she is both a victim and a traitor because of her emotional weakness - 'La Malinche expresses a double deception, for the body of another ... was substituted for her own at the same time as she was deprived of her identity' (Cypress 1991, 140). The dual attitude towards La Malinche appears to reflect the males' dual attitude towards women who are seen symbolically as victims and traitors.

According to Octavio Paz, Mexican males consider women passive, inferior creatures unable to voice their wishes or defend themselves; therefore, they are treated as potential victims of stronger males<sup>14</sup>. The inferiority of Mexican women lies in their wilful openness and desire to surrender to emotions. 'Su inferioridad es constitucional y radica en su sexo, en su "rajada", herida que jamás cicatriza' (Paz 1959, 26-27). This attitude may be interpreted as a result of the Spanish conquest and a symbolic consequence of the union between a Spaniard (Hernán Cortés) and an Indian woman (La Malinche). Mexicans, metaphorically referred to as 'los hijos de La Malinche', subconsciously realise their position

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<sup>14</sup> A woman is victimised only when she is an outsider to male attackers. Once a woman becomes a member of a man's household, she is zealously protected because she is a potential victim to strangers (Stevens 1973, 94).



of los chingados - victimised children of humiliated women. La Malinche has not been forgiven by Mexican people because of her apparent inability to suffer with dignity, like Cuauhtémoc. Therefore, she was - and still is - regarded by her people both as a victim and a traitor. 'Ella encarna lo abierto, lo chingado, frente a nuestros indios, estoicos, impasibles y cerrados' (id., 78). Paz compares this attitude of Mexicans towards La Malinche to that of a child towards the mother who abandons him in favour of the father, thus experiencing the feeling of abandonment which enforces emotional ineptitude and suggests closedness and stoicism as the only appropriate mechanism of self-defence. A child born to this mother figure faces a dilemma of respecting the mother and despising the father, or vice versa. The peculiarity of Mexican character is the ability to accept both attitudes as equally valid, adopting them and suffering in consequence. 'El "hijo de la Chingada" es el engendro de la violación, del rapto o de la burla' (id., 72).

As a result of this psychological dilemma, the attitude of a Mexican male to a sexual relationship may appear unreasonable. The problematic role of the woman in a sexual relationship is based on the fact that even though love requires mutual trust and respect, Mexican males still see women as passive recipients of the male's active desire. The woman is still not allowed to own her feelings; she is seen by the man as 'el canal del apetito cósmico' (id., 33). This is yet another paradox of 'la mexicanidad' - a male seeks emotional interpenetration, thus implying equality, yet a woman is expected to remain passive and submissive throughout the process. In *La llama doble*, Paz states that 'hay una conexión íntima y causal entre amor y libertad' (Paz 1994, 157); however, the male metaphorically insists on assigning the woman the role of passive recipients rather than equal partners in relationships. This inconsistency illustrates the duality of Mexican male character with utmost accuracy, because the male's perception of the woman both as a passive recipient of the male's sexual drive and an active mother figure in the formation of the male's personality appears unintentional and therefore subconscious.



However, this view of Mexican women is not typical of the works of Mexican feminists, who focus primarily on the misrepresentation of women's character and their role in modern society (e.g., Elena Poniatowska, Sara Sefchovich, Alicia Stemberg). Though not as widely known as European feminist works, the writings of Mexican feminist sociologists and literary critics have made a significant impact on Latin American feminist movements. Rosario Castellanos was one of the best known Mexican feminist writers and critics; her works deal primarily with female identity and sociological and psychological issues of the Latin American feminist movements. Among many aspects of female identity, Castellanos addresses the question of female sexual independence in a male-dominated society and, as a result, in 1971 she denounced 'la injusticia en contra la mujer y declara que no es equitativo ni legítimo que... uno es dueño de su cuerpo... mientras que el otro reserva ese cuerpo no para sus propios fines sino para que en él se cumplan procesos ajenos a su voluntad' (Poniatowska 1985, 46). One of her most important contributions to the cause of Mexican feminism was a number of short essays concentrating on the sociology of Mexican feminist movement. A posthumous collection of these essays, *El uso de la palabra*, released in 1974 addressed a variety of topics concerning Mexican women and their future; most of the essays focus the question of the women's identity in modern Mexico. In 'Otra vez Sor Juana' Castellanos inspects the characters of La Malinche and La Virgen de Guadalupe as the basis of Mexican female nature, and concludes that both contribute to the dual aspect of the image of the woman - covertly, that of a divine healer, 'la sustentadora de la vida, la que protege contra los peligros, ... la que salva, en fin, el cuerpo de las enfermedades y el alma de las asechanzas del demonio' (Castellanos 1987, 15) - and overtly, that of a sexually active entity 'indiferente a la forma de su crecimiento, desinteresada del fruto' (id., 16).

It appears that while men philosophers perceive Mexican women as overtly timid, emotionally weak creatures either to be victimised or protected (Paz, Ramos, Usigli), women critics consider Mexican women potentially assertive, though their actual overt



personality is determined by their marital role which, in turn, is defined by the patriarchal society. Castellanos, however, attributes the women's submissive nature not only to the patriarchal view of a woman but also to the women's view of themselves as victims.

Though it is obvious that women acquire this point of view from the male-dominated world, they perpetuate the problem by refusing (consciously or not) to change their status quo, however attractive it may seem. Castellanos does not make any promises that the change will come soon because 'el ser un parásito (que es eso lo que somos, más que víctimas) no deja de tener sus encantos' (id., 51). The purpose of the women's movement in Mexico is to shed the traits of a parasite or a victim and to discover the woman's identity separately from that of the male partner, society, etc. 'A pesar de sus desfallecimientos internos, de su temor al porvenir, de su soledad absoluta, [la mujer mexicana] hace uso de su libertad para valerse por sí misma... para responsabilizarse de una situación, para asumir una vocación de plenitud y para cumplirla' (id., 31). The woman's search for a unique identity starts with her accepting responsibility for her self separate from the male partner's identity, and this step is exceptionally difficult because of Mexican women's innate submissiveness as far as marriage is concerned - 'en este país al menos, las mujeres no elegimos. Nos sentamos pasivamente a esperar que un hombre vuelva sus ojos hasta el rincón que nuestra modestia nos depara y descubra las cualidades maravillosas que nos adornan' (id., 19).

One of Castellanos' most poignant essays 'Y las madres, ¿qué opinan?' sums up Castellanos' feminist views aimed at the change in society's perception of the woman - 'se necesita, previamente, considerar a las mujeres no como los que se les considera hoy: meros objetos, aparatos (por desgracia, insustituibles) de reproducción o criaturas subordinadas a sus funciones y no personas en el completo uso de sus facultades, de sus potencialidades y de sus derechos' (id., 39). This approach to the character of Mexican women has been reflected in all Castellanos' works, including the collection of short stories *Album de familia* (1971), which concentrated mainly on the woman's role in the male-dominated institution of



matrimony and the progression of the woman's character in accordance with her marital experience.

The present chapter will also address the relationship between the male and the woman from the point of view of the theory of Self and Other as presented in the works of Jacques Lacan and Carl Jung. Lacan's analysis of the *stade du miroir* (the mirror stage) is based upon the 'fascination of the subject with an image' (Wilden 1968, 164) which appears when a child faces himself in the mirror and recognises the image as himself, thus recognising his ability to manipulate the image. The ability to identify oneself with the image leads to the identification of 'Self' versus 'Other' (the image in the mirror); it appears that one needs Other (an object of one's gaze, a reflection in the mirror) to identify Self as a subject. This subject-object relationship is then transferred onto one's psyche; Lacan suggests that Self and Other become ultimately two parts of the whole, with Other signifying unconscious desire. As one 'undertakes to reconstruct this construct [of subject and object, Self and Other] for *another*, he finds again the fundamental alienation which made him construct it *like another one*, and which has always destined it to be stripped from him by another' (Lacan 1966, qtd. in Wilden 1968, 11). Thus, it may be said that one's self-constructing (or self-actualisation) occurs through one's constructing Other as a reflection of Self. A person 'sees himself in the other, without realising that what he contemplates as his self *is* the other' (Wilden 1968, 173). The Self necessitates the Other in order to identify itself as a subject because the Other represents the ultimate fulfilment of the Self, its ideal version.

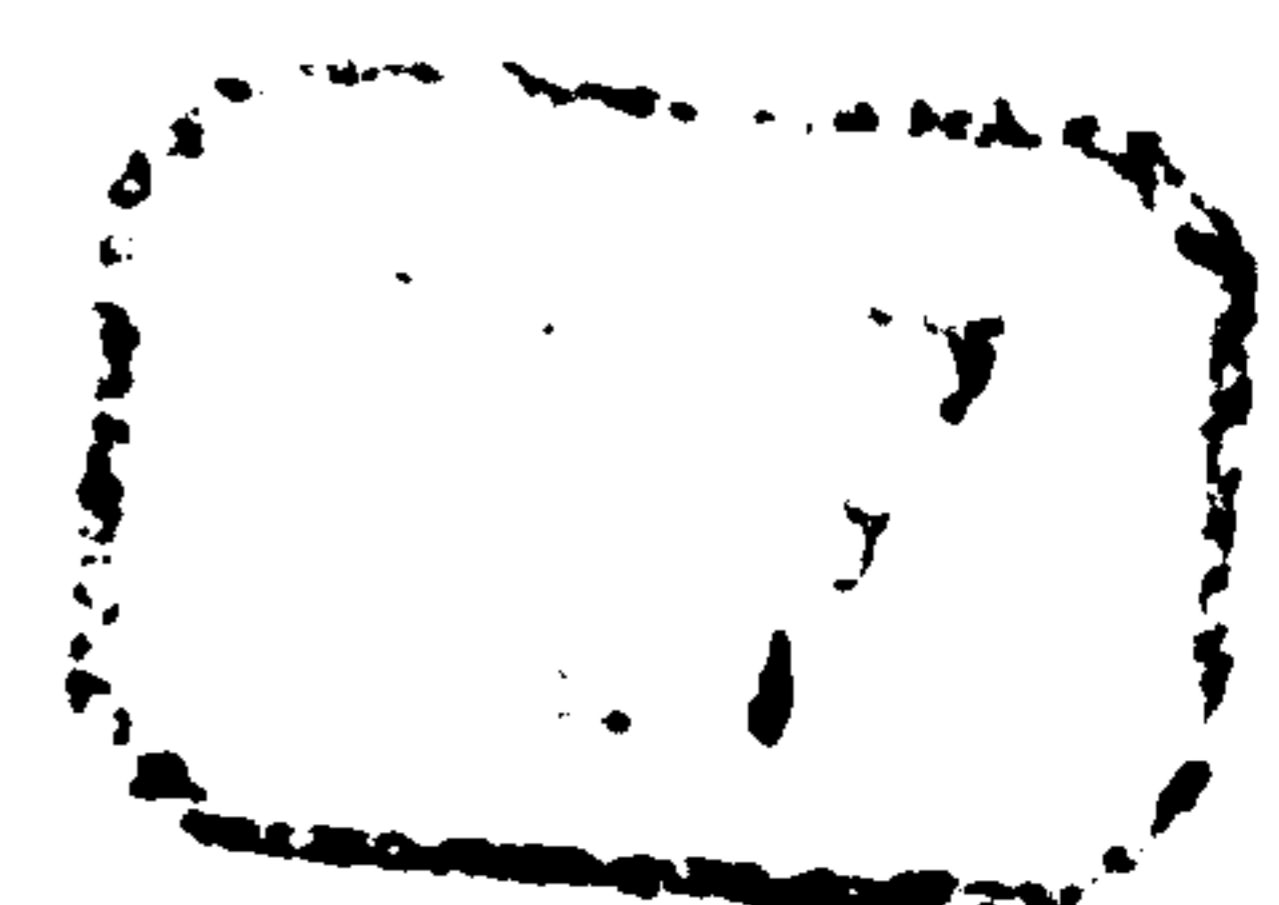
Carl Jung approached the theory of the Self and the Other from a different perspective which included the study of the collective unconscious. The definition of both types of the unconscious is based upon the thesis that 'in addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature..., there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals.



This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited' (Jung 1959, 43). The collective unconscious includes religious beliefs determined by the cultural background in which it exists; as a result of a collection of 'archetypes' which make up the collective unconscious, a person develops a system of conscious psychic connections with the outside world. It is possible to say that the personal consciousness and the collective unconscious are opposites complementing each other, which then assigns them the roles of the Self and the Other.

The Self and the Other are viewed by the Jungian school as opposites because 'nothing can exist without its opposite; the two were one in the beginning and will be one again in the end' (id., 96); thus, Jung sees the existence of the Self possible only in contradiction with its projection, or the Other. According to the Jungian view of the Other, its traits are never equal in intensity to those of the Self; instead, the ' "other" qualities are often over or under-valued, too idealised or too negative to be part of one's conscious identity' (Zabriskie 1990, 274). It is suggested that the Other is an idealised version of the Self (a view similar to Lacan's theory of the mirror stage). Furthermore, Jung argues that the ultimate expression of the Other is the formation of religion through the collective unconscious, with God(s) representing the 'wholly other' that encompasses the highest degree of all idealised character traits.

Taking into consideration the above review of the theory of Self and Other, and the representation of Mexican female character in the works of several leading Latin American philosophers, this chapter will concentrate on the image of the woman in the works of four Mexican writers. To produce an accurate and encompassing analysis of the female characters in these works it will be necessary to address three main approaches to the image of the woman - the view of the woman as a separate conscious entity, the view of the woman as a product of the man's imagination fueled by sexual desire, and the view of the woman as a deity. The study will reveal the differences in the female characters in the works





of all four writers whose works are examined in this thesis. As a result, it will become possible to establish the reasons for these differences and, consequently, to develop a theory that will be used to investigate and define the male's sexual identity.

## 1.2 Woman as a separate conscious force

The image of the woman as a cognitive entity separate from the conscience of her male partner appears primarily in the works of both women writers chosen for this study. In *Proceso a Faubritten* by Marcela Del-Río, the two main female characters (Cristina and María Corona) are portrayed as emotionally independent from their male counterpart, Faubritten, who is dependent on them for sexual and emotional security. The two main women characters, as well as several other women in the novel (Elizabeth, the wife of HN) exhibit independence of thought, and do not rely on their male partners for safety. Both Cristina and María Corona come into sexual contact with Faubritten, though neither depend upon him for emotional stability. On the other hand, Hélène (Faubritten's lover) is portrayed as depending on Faubritten's personality for sexual satisfaction and emotional security<sup>15</sup>. However, all the female characters in the novel cannot be described as representing independent conscious entities because of a religious connotation imposed upon them. Since their role as deities has more influence on the male, the images of women in *Proceso a Faubritten* will be analysed in Section 1.4, which addresses the religious implication of the character of the woman.

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<sup>15</sup> The character of Hélène is different from those of Cristina and María Corona because it conforms to the male's perception of an ideal woman, while Cristina and María Corona do not comply with the male's / society's expectations.

### 1.2.1 Women in Rosario Castellanos' stories

The image of the woman as a separate conscious entity is most prominent in the short stories by Rosario Castellanos, whose focus on the subject of women's liberation characterises the final period of her works (1970-4). 'Lección de cocina' and 'Domingo' are part of the collection *Álbum de familia* (1971). Although this collection is not as widely known as the novel *Balún-Canán*, its impact on Mexican feminist literature is indisputable since the influence of this work is evident in the works of such women writers as Laura Esquivel, Angeles Mastretta, Cristina Pacheco, etc.

'Lección de cocina' and 'Domingo' address the nature of the woman in a marital relationship - from a newlywed in 'Lección de cocina' to a middle-aged 'burguesa propia' in 'Domingo'. There is a difference in the age and psychological makeup of the female characters, but the two characters have a lot in common, and the similarities lie within the women's attitude towards themselves and their partners.

'Lección de cocina' is probably the best-known story of the collection since it has been subject of many critiques. The story takes place in the kitchen of a newlywed couple's house, where the wife is preparing roast for dinner. As the story progresses, the woman examines her new role as a housewife, her relationship with the male, the constraints of marriage, etc.; in the meantime, the meat she is roasting undergoes a series of changes, which lead to the meat being burnt and the woman having to decide whether to tell her husband the truth, or to conceal the accident.

The two characters of the story are the woman (who is the only one possessing conscience) and a roast, which represents the husband's personality (though it may be argued that it represents primarily the husband's sexuality). The husband does appear in the story, though his presence is realised through the woman's memories, inner monologues, etc.; a detailed analysis of the husband's pre-cognitive nature is presented in Chapters 2 and 3. There are always two juxtaposed points of focus in the story - the woman's thoughts and



the meat's changing appearance; the two interact, affecting and influencing each other since they represent two personalities in marriage.

Throughout the story, the woman may be seen as existing in the state of constant emotional flux. The meat, on the other hand, is mostly passive, 'acting up' only when the woman's train of thought takes on a tone threatening to the meat/husband or meat/child (the meat/male's emotional state depends upon the woman's character trait most prominent at the time of interaction). The interaction of the woman and the meat represents the main conflict of the story, which is not a confrontation between two equal powers but an intercourse between a guardian and a learner. Many critics assign the role of a guardian to the meat (male) and that of a learner to the woman; this conclusion is drawn from the view of a woman fighting for equality and independence in the male-dominated society (this perspective appears in the critiques by Fishburn, Hart, Lindstrom). However the woman's role may be interpreted as that of the meat's (male's) guardian. The woman's overt submissiveness allows the meat/husband to mature psychologically - the woman cooks the meat, symbolically nurturing her husband-child: 'Beneath the submissiveness ... lies the strength of [a woman's] conviction - shared by the entire society - that men must be humored, for after all, everyone knows that they are *como niños* ...' (Stevens 1973, 95)<sup>16</sup>. Finally, there is another conflict present in the story; this time it is not between the woman and society, as most critics suggest, nor is it between the woman and her husband. The conflict is within the woman herself, that is, between her pre-marital inherent individuality and matrimonial personality. Arguably, society represented by the woman's family instills the

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<sup>16</sup> Notwithstanding the woman's overt submissiveness, the woman makes several attempts to establish the independence of her character. As a result of this step, the male/meat recoils and becomes submissive to the point of being childlike. Its weakness distracts the woman from her train of thought, making her assume the role of mother and satisfy the meat/child's need for protection from the wife's assertiveness. This is the first manifestation of the childlike aspect of the male's personality, which will be addressed in depth in Chapter 2.



matrimonial personality into the woman's psyche, but her upbringing in the spirit of marital endurance had begun before her personality developed into its present form. The ever-present question of nature versus nurture takes on a new appearance, as the story offers an implied contradiction between a Mexican woman's nature to personify La Malinche (or the eternal victim) and the 'víctima' personality nurtured by the family and society. It may be argued that the nurturing of *marianismo*<sup>17</sup> has become the nature of the nation's female character, just like the phenomenon of machismo in the psychological makeup of Latin-American male character.

From the first lines of the story, the woman attempts to assert herself as a personality in her own right rather than an image created by her husband to suit his idea of a perfect wife: 'yo no soy el sueño que sueña, que sueña, que sueña; yo no soy reflejo de una imagen en un cristal ... Yo continuo viviendo con una vida densa, viscosa ... Yo también soy una consciencia ...' (Castellanos 1983, 163). Such a strong challenge to the male authority comes as a surprise given that it has risen from the memory of a sexual intercourse, during which the woman was expected to express ecstasy over traditional (mundane?) lovemaking - 'Boca arriba soportaba no sólo mi propio peso sino el de él encima del mío. La postura clásica para hacer el amor. Y gemía, de degarramiento, de placer. El gemido clásico. Mitos, mitos' (id., 163).

The woman continues challenging the hypocrisy of her marriage as she describes herself as 'una dama de sociedad' who is required to comply with the dual reality of matrimony. This is a very significant moment in the story because it is the first time that the woman approaches the point of no return. Admitting, though indirectly, that she is aware of

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<sup>17</sup> Evelyn Stevens defines *marianismo* as 'the cult of feminine spiritual superiority, which teaches that women are semi-divine, morally superior to and spiritually stronger than men' (Stevens 1973, 91).



her husband's love affairs, she sarcastically refers to herself as a proper wife 'que padece alucinaciones olfativas cuando percibe la emanación de perfumes franceses (diferentes de los que ella usa) de las camisas, de los pañuelos de su marido' (id., 167). At this point, the woman appears to be ready to break out of the marriage - the husband's infidelity would be a sufficient reason - but she does not take this step. Moreover, she turns back to the meat - 'No sería oportuno prender la estufa?' (ibid.). This rhetorical question can be construed as the woman's desire to take revenge for her husband's infidelity, as she becomes ready metaphorically to fry him in the heat of her jealousy. At the same time, this sudden change of direction can be seen as the woman's effort to tend to the meat more attentively as if feeling guilty for deviating from her primary duties of a wife cooking dinner for her husband (and as a wife-mother taking care of her husband-child). The feeling of guilt is reinforced by the suggestion in the cookbook that the meat 'ha de untarse con un poco de grasa para que la carne no se pegue' (ibid.), therefore the purpose of quotes from the cookbook is worth investigating. On the surface, the cookbook represents a male-dominated society which has little or no respect for women's intelligence. The quotes may appear a condescending lecture designed to 'relegate clever young women to the status which the cookbook so cleverly gives them: that of instinctive housewives lacking in brains' (Lindstrom 1980,72). However, further analysis of the quotes suggests that the cookbook is a metaphoric representation of the woman's superego which bears semblance to her mother and other female figures who participated in child-rearing in the woman's family. The mother-superego would expect her daughter to be either fully knowledgeable of the basics of housekeeping or completely ignorant of the intricacies of matrimony. This advice may appear to be taken out of a cookbook, but after a closer analysis it may be said that it refers to matrimony rather than culinary art. It concerns the woman's rage at her husband's infidelity, since 'un poco de grasa' may be read as a metaphor for concealing the knowledge the woman has of her husband's love affairs by keeping up appearances of a perfect couple,



as one may interpret the image of oil/grease as referring to vaginal secretion. Matrimonial convention dictates that the woman continue engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband as if unaware of the fact that he is having affairs with other women; this may be understood as an echo of a still popular opinion that a man seeks other women's company if his wife does not satisfy him sexually.

The analysis of the image of the woman is incomplete without the study of the setup of the story (in this case, the kitchen), which will help shape the woman's personality. The image of a kitchen is particularly important in the formation of the woman's character, because it is usually associated with a woman's traditional role of a housekeeper. Though many critics, including Steven Hart, compare the kitchen to a prison, in this case the kitchen is similar to a hospital ward - white, clean and sterile: 'el halo de desinfectantes; ... la presencia oculta de la enfermedad y de la muerte' (Castellanos 1983, 161). The image of disease and, consequently, a hospital where infection is eradicated also appears in the woman's accounts of sexual intercourse with her husband. As the woman removes a piece of meat from the freezer she recalls her honeymoon in Acapulco; however, she does not compare the redness of a frozen piece of meat with the colour of an erect penis, which could be an expected simile. She makes a connection with the colour of inflamed skin on her husband's back: 'del mismo color teníamos la espalda, mi marido y yo después de las orgiásticas asoleadas en las playas de Acapulco' (id., 162). This unexpected comparison implies that the woman considers sexual intercourse equal to a disease, sexual arousal and subsequent swelling and redness of a penis and vagina akin to inflammation. In the woman's mind, sexual act is often described in asexual anatomical terms ('muslos entrelazados, húmedos de sudor y de semen'), or in asexual zoological terms referring to extinct species ('el dinosaurio', 'el mamut'). This asexual attitude towards sex contributes to the mothering role a woman plays in marriage. She is reminiscent of a mother telling children about human



sexuality and sexual intercourse using anatomically correct terms or paralleling human experiences with those of 'birds and bees'.

The woman's words 'mi lugar está aquí. Desde el principio de los tiempos ha estado aquí' (id., 161) create a new association of a kitchen with a mental institution<sup>18</sup>; it is reinforced later in the story as the woman reads the cookbook which reveals her apparent ineptness - 'me planto, hecha una imbécil, dentro de una cocina impecable y neutra' (id., 162). This quote creates the impression of a woman committed to the kitchen after being conditioned to believe in her primary role of a housekeeper<sup>19</sup>. It is interesting to note that brainwashing that the woman experiences since early childhood does not come from the man-dominated society but from the females in her family. Evelyn Stevens argues that the view of a woman as a submissive housekeeper whose primary responsibility is that to her husband and family has not been devised by 'tyrannical men' but rather by women who raise men - their 'mother, sister, widowed or spinster aunts . . . and female servants' (Stevens 1973, 97). Since the boys spend most of their childhood socialising with women and absorbing their behavioural expertise, as adult men they seek the same value systems in their

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<sup>18</sup> In addition to the image of a mental institution, the kitchen is later referred to as a cage: 'Gracias por haberme abierto la jaula de una rutina estéril para cerrarme la jaula de otra rutina' (Castellanos 1983, 165). The woman subconsciously compares herself to an animal, thus denying herself human conscience. This comparison also refers to the machista view of a woman as a sexual prey for a stronger male, emphasising the animal side of human sexuality.

<sup>19</sup> The presence of the adjective 'neutra' points to the asexual nature of the woman's experience, thus supporting the notion that the woman is denied (or is denying herself) freedom of expression (sexual and otherwise) in the isolation of her role as the male's caretaker.



wives. Therefore, the seemingly undesirable brainwashing appears to be an accepted way of life for a Latin-American wife. Whether or not she earnestly believes her own words about her place in marriage is of little importance as long as she follows the rules of matrimony.

Several critics argue that the woman is kept in the kitchen against her will (Hart, Lindstrom). However, the woman does not make an attempt to leave the kitchen. Since she is the only person in the house and there is no mention of restraints or locks, we may conclude that she was not put in the kitchen by force nor is she prevented from leaving. It would seem that the woman's decision to remain in the kitchen is conscious and voluntary, though it may be argued that her decision is influenced or determined by social codes and societal rules. The question then is, what does she seek and against what does she rebel? It is evident from the story that she had a job before marriage and that in her line of work she had to use a typewriter - her fingertips are 'no muy sensibles por el prolongado contacto con las teclas de la máquina de escribir' (Castellanos 1983, 163). Thus it may be concluded that she was a writer, a reporter or, most probably, a secretary. At any rate, the woman had a source of income that supported her and allowed financial independence from her family, nonetheless she gave it up to become her husband's caretaker. This decision was not imposed on her by the circumstances of her life - the couple does not have children, nor is the husband bedridden. It is obvious that the husband's income is substantial, so the woman's salary is not essential to keep the ends meet. Steven Hart suggests that the woman had 'to sacrifice her own being for the benefit of the marriage' (Hart 1993, 60), which would imply giving up her job and being identified only by her marital relationship with a male. However, it appears that the woman in the story wants to leave the marriage to protect her identity - or does she? That fact that she chooses to remain in her present position suggests that it is not independence that she wants. The woman does not 'desire to find a way out of a man-made maze of life' (id., 62) - on the contrary, she makes a conscious decision to remain in the 'maze' of her marriage. It is possible that she looks for



recognition of her role as the conscious essence of the family, not the eternal martyr-caretaker or an appendage of her husband's personality. This internal struggle is best described in the following quote, as the woman recognises that her personality is being shaped in accordance with her belonging to the male, regardless of her self-perception - 'Soy yo. ¿Pero quién soy yo? Tu esposa, claro. Y ese título basta para distinguirme de los recuerdos del pasado, de los proyectos para el porvenir. Llevo una marca de propiedad...' (Castellanos 1983, 166). Thus, it may be said that the woman in 'Lección de cocina' refuses to identify herself through her husband's personality, while still searching for other means of retaining her identity within the traditional institution of matrimony.

The next story in the collection continues the theme of the woman's self-actualisation. In 'Domingo' the character of the woman is different from that in 'Lección de cocina', and the difference is not only in the women's age and marital experience, but also in their attitudes towards themselves, their husbands, and their marital relations. While a newlywed in 'Lección de cocina' is outraged by her husband's infidelity, Edith in 'Domingo' resolves to remain with her husband Carlos regardless the fact that he had been unfaithful to her - moreover, she has an affair of which her husband is aware but does not appear to disapprove. The conventions of their marriage (children, property, etc.) stop them from breaking their relationship - 'vínculos tan sólidos como Carlos y ella. Los hijos, las propiedades en común, hasta la manera especial de tomar una taza de chocolate antes de dormir. Realmente sería muy difícil, sería imposible romper' (Castellanos 1996, 27). This marriage, however, no longer possesses any sexual characteristics which describe the relationships both partners have with their lovers. The only scene with a sexual connotation referring to their marriage is that of Edith and Carlos in the bathroom talking after Edith had taken a shower; as she is drying herself off, Carlos makes several suggestive remarks about a possible affair between her and one of the family friends who is unhappy in his marriage. The scene creates a sense of a play or a game in which both parties recognise each other's



roles as well as their own. The presence of sexual references enhances the theatricality of the exchange because sexual drives of both partners are used to create an overt impression rather than a covert emotion -

Carlos entró en el baño cuando ella [Edith] comenzaba a secarse el pelo. Se lo dejaría suelto hoy, lacio. Para que todos pensaran en su desnudez bajo el agua. [...]

- ¿Octavio ya se ha quejado contigo de que no lo comprende?

- ¿Para qué tendría que hacerlo?

- Para empezar - repuso Carlos palmeándole cariñosamente las nalgas.

Edith se apartó fingiéndose ofendida.

- A mí Octavio no me interesa.

(id., 29-30)

The theatrical nature of the story is enforced throughout the story by the dual narration: from the point of view of Edith's covert personality, and from the perspective of her overt character designed to play the role of a 'burguesa propia'. Another result of this duality is Edith's relationship with her husband interpreted as a conventional normalcy concealing her disappointment over Carlos' infidelity and doubts over her own choice to stay within a relationship while looking for sexual satisfaction in an affair. It is interesting to note that the conventional attitude of both partners to their relationship has become a routine which neither is willing to abandon: Edith's attention to her husband's quotes from a paper 'era un viejo hábito que la había ayudado mucho en la convivencia' (id., 25), most of Edith's and Carlos gestures 'se habían estereotipado y por eso mismo resultaban perfectos' (id., 26). The routine of Edith's life is both comforting and boring, as she goes through the same daily schedule, giving the same orders to the housekeeper, ordering meals; however, she seems to have come to terms with her repetitive role as she is seen enjoying her orderly house, her role of a courteous hostess - there is an overt predictability in every aspect of her life, down



to the choice of the clothes to wear to the dinner party: 'su aspecto debía ser acogedoramente doméstico aunque no quería malgastarlo desde ahorita' (id., 30). Her outward appearance and manners are impeccable though over-rehearsed, as she talks to a heartbroken friend (Vincente) while carefully maneuvering through the parlour serving drinks. Once again, the theatricality of Edith's overt character produces a desirable effect of stability and comfort of her existence.

Evelyn Fishburn argues that the woman in the story is defined by the men who appear to own her - 'her figure is something that one man, Rafael, can discover while another, Carlos, can obliterate' (Fishburn 1995, 102). The male's gaze is what defines the woman; without it she does not exist. While this approach to the character of Edith has its merits, it ignores the dual nature of her personality based in her perception of the outside world as opposed to her view of herself. If we trace Edith's inner thoughts throughout the story, it will become evident that she does not need either male to help her define herself in a way that would satisfy her. Thus, neither Carlos nor Rafael have any lasting influence over her, though Carlos appears to guide her through the morning paper by choosing appropriate sections to quote from, and Rafael introduces her to painting. In both cases, Fishburn suggests that the male is the one who 'decides unquestionably what her tastes and interests should be' (ibid.). However, Edith's compliant attitude may also be interpreted as the lack of interest in either male. Both men are dismissable characters to her, just like everyone else at the party - they are mere objects of her future paintings, or actors whose performance is pitifully predictable, or even animals - whatever role is assigned to them by Edith, none is connected to her life, though she makes an attempt at acting in accordance with her overt role of an abandoned wife and lover. The last scene in the story reveals yet again the dual nature of Edith's world, where the outward appearances have no effect on her inner self:

Edith observaba las evoluciones de Octavio, su talentoso y sabio despliegue de las plumas de su cola de pavorreal antes los ojos ingenuos y deslumbrados



de Hildegard. Y vio a Hugo mordiéndose las uñas de impotencia. Y a Vincente viendo por lo bajo, en espera de su oportunidad. Se vio a sí misma excluida de la intimidad de Carlos y Lucrecia, del dolor de Jorge, del juego de los otros. Se vio a sí misma, borrada por la ausencia de Rafael y un aire de decepción estuvo a punto de ensombrecerle el rostro. Pero recordó la tela comenzada en su estudio, el roce peculiar del pantalón de pana contra sus piernas; el sweater viejo, tan natural como una segunda piel.

(Castellanos 1996, 46)

The lack of connection between Edith and anyone in the outside world is replaced with her painting; this points to the conclusion that the woman does not need anybody to define herself for herself (her husband, lover and friends create her personality for the outside reality). The people in her life are a convention to be tolerated, ignored or mocked - this is evident in the ironic use of a clichéd description of Edith as an abandoned and betrayed wife and lover, who is ready to feel sorry for herself, followed by a juxtaposition with an unorthodox sensual reference to the clothes she will wear while painting.

In her attempt to define herself without the influence of the outside world, Edith takes up painting. Though Rafael is the one who introduced her to this hobby, Edith does not remain in the role of 'aprendiz aplicada' played for Rafael (possibly to satisfy his vanity as an accomplished artist). On occasions when Edith's dissatisfaction with her appearances nearly breaks through her affront of a content housewife and she almost loses control of her covert personality, she uses painting to express her innermost thoughts and emotions. Her painting appears to reveal her eagerness to acquire a new 'definition of her soul... [and] body and of her potential as an artist' (Fishburn 1995, 102); however, such an interpretation of Edith's painting disregards the intensity of emotion displayed in the studio-

Edith llenaba las telas con esos borbotones repentinos de tristeza, de despojamiento, de desnudez interior. Con esa rabia con que olfateaba a su



alrededor cuando quería reconocer la querencia perdida. No sabía si la hallaba o no porque el cansancio del esfuerzo era, a la postre, más poderoso que todos los otros sentimientos. Y se retiraba a mediodía, con los hombros caídos como para ocultar mejor, tras la fatiga, su secreta sensación de triunfo y de saqueo.

(Castellanos 1996, 25)

The above quote is intriguing because it not only describes the process of painting as a revelation of the woman's inner personality, but also provides an insight into Edith's sexuality. The first line in the paragraph contains a rather vivid metaphor of the act of masturbation - 'llenaba las telas con ... borbotones'. Furthermore, the vigor with which Edith expresses herself in painting is compared to her search for a release of sexual tension, and the absence of any references to a male partner (but a present reference to 'el cansancio del esfuerzo') points to the possibility of masturbation, and 'secreta sensación de triunfo' may be interpreted as a direct reference to the orgasm after masturbation. Although painting is itself an expression of the inner world, it is possible to assume that Edith also uses painting as a way of expressing her sexuality, especially since there are no descriptions of her paintings; in fact, the most important aspect of the creative process is her changing into 'un par de pantalones de pana y un suéter viejo' (id., 24), 'el roce peculiar del pantalón de pana contra sus piernas; el sweater viejo, tan natural como una segunda piel' (id., 46). It is important to note that though in the first quote the description of the clothes is quite neutral, the second quote (which comes at the end of the story, when Edith has been participating in several sexually implicit conversations) contains a curious reference to the friction of the trousers, which once again supports the comparison of painting to masturbation. Therefore, it may be concluded that the expression of the woman's inner world can be achieved most fully through sexual sensations. These sensations do not have to come from sexual intercourse; moreover, it may be deduced that the fullest sexual satisfaction is achieved

through masturbation since the only reference to the husband's role in sexual act is made in passing and impassionedly - 'en la cama [Carlos] se comportaba mejor que muchos...' (id., 29), and the role of the lover (Rafael) is solely that of a 'shoulder to cry on' after the realisation of the husband's infidelity - 'una gran pasión, que había sido Rafael quien, a su turno, consoló el desengaño de la gran pasión que, a su hora, fue Carlos' (id., 29).

The title of the story points yet again to the conflict between the woman's inner world and the network of societal conventions embodied in the character of her husband and friends. Evelyn Fishburn suggests that 'at the surface level [the implication of Sunday is] that this day of supposed pleasure will turn out to be a day of sacrifice, to be contrasted to the freedom of weekdays. [...] It is the day, we are led to believe, when the woman dons a wifely veneer, betraying the authenticity of her weekday existence' (Fishburn 1995, 99). However, there is another possible interpretation of the title of the story, taking into consideration a religious connotation of Sunday. Although there is no mention of the couple's religious beliefs, in Catholic practice Sunday is traditionally 'the Lord's day' to be spent in church, and one of the traditional Catholic church rituals is confession of sins. The irony of the title is in the fact that Edith does not bare her soul to a confidant; instead, she covers it with a mask of a perfect woman, who knows how to act in any emotionally charged situation. The juxtaposition of weekends reserved for pretense and weekdays set aside for the woman's revealing her innermost desires is the connotation of the title 'Domingo'.



Although there may seem to be more differences than similarities between the newlywed in 'Lección de cocina' and Edith in 'Domingo', both characters reflect the same aspect of the image of the woman in the works of Rosario Castellanos - the woman who is searching for her unique independent identity outside the conventions of marriage. The two female characters in the stories demonstrate two stages of the search: the early one (the newlywed) when conforming to conventions is seen as equal to self-deception (and possibly destruction of the personality) and is therefore unacceptable; and the later stage (Edith) in which accepting the role of perfect wife is similar to accepting a part in a play, while the woman reserves the right to exist in her inner world unknown to her partners. It may also be concluded that the woman accepts only asexual roles which do not involve the emotional aspect of her character; as a conventional relationship progresses, the sexual aspect of marriage is either dismissed or replaced with extramarital affairs or sexual self-satisfaction, and the woman retreats into her inner world where sexual satisfaction is sometimes achieved through creativity (which may be interpreted as a metaphor for masturbation).

### 1.2.2 Summary

As a result of this analysis, it may be concluded that the characters of women in the works of Castellanos<sup>20</sup> reflect the woman's emotional independence from the male. The woman is described as an independent conscious entity existing outside the male's world, though the male does attempt to draw her under his influence, and though on occasions he appears to succeed, the woman remains independent in her covert personality. This approach to the character of the woman adds a different angle of perception of the male's character, which should therefore be seen as stemming from the image of the woman and

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<sup>20</sup> The images of women in *Proceso a Faubritten* may be considered similar to those in 'Lección de cocina' and 'Domingo' due to their emotional independence from the male partners; however, the characters of women in Del-Río's novel are more symbolic and will therefore be studied separately as representative of a different aspect of the image of the woman in Mexican literature.



depending upon it (as will become evident in Chapter 3, which addresses the childlike aspect of the male's personality). This approach to the image of the woman is different from that of the men writers (Paz and Sabines), in whose works the male creates the woman in his imagination to satisfy his sexual and emotional needs.

### **1.3 Woman imagined for the male's sexual satisfaction**

The men writers chosen for this study utilise a different strategy when creating the image of the woman-partner by rendering her 'unreal' or imagined by the male. There are two distinct ways of creating the 'ideal' woman who would respond to the male's sexual advances. The first one involves combining two types of the female character - 'real' and 'unreal' or imaginary (as will be seen in the works of Jaime Sabines); the second entails creating the image of the woman out of the male's surroundings or experiences (the method used in the poems of Octavio Paz). As will be seen later in this section, both approaches are based upon the male's need for sexual expression, and will reveal the underlying purpose of the creation of an imaginary partner. One interpretation of the male's need for a woman-partner may be his desire to understand his personality by projecting his Self onto an Other; however, this analysis will attempt to prove further complexity of the issue by studying the process of the male's character fragmentation, in which the woman's character is created out of the male's personality, one trait at a time.

#### **1.3.1 Woman in Jaime Sabines' poetry**

In the works of Jaime Sabines, the woman appears both 'real' (i.e. existing in the objective reality) and imaginary, especially when the male describes sexual intercourse. In 'Te quiero', the male treats the woman as a constant presence in his daily routine. The repetition of references to the time of day is very significant because it points to the fact that



the male can come back to the woman any time he feels the need (physical or emotional) to be with her.

Te quiero a las diez de la mañana, y a las once, y a las doce del día.

Te quiero con toda mi alma y con todo mi cuerpo, a veces, en las tardes de lluvia...

Luego vuelvo a quererte, cuando nos acostamos...

(Sabines 1997b, 120)

This characteristic of the woman being 'reachable' at any time can be described as an expression of mothering instinct from the male/child's perspective as well as his possessive attitude towards the woman-mother (Freud 1937, 287), thus the woman may be seen as playing an important role in satisfying his safety need. Another interpretation of this quote is based on the implied duality of time. The woman's life goes on in linear time regardless of the male's existence, which crosses it at regular intervals (possibly when he is sexually aroused), but does not affect its due course.

In the poem 'Amor mío', the woman is described as a newly discovered exotic land which later becomes completely disconnected from objective reality - 'río de noche, platanar oscuro, / colmena ciega, amor desenterrado' (Sabines 1997b, 192). This connection between the woman's body and an undiscovered country is similar to the approach of European explorers to Latin America, usually embodied in the image of an exotic woman<sup>21</sup>. The male reinforces the idea of imagining the woman by referring to his love as a fantasy - 'soñando rosas e inventando estrellas' (ibid.). In addition to being regarded as a discovered land, the woman is metaphorically seen as representing flora and fauna - 'la ostra de la muerte', 'un agua de amapolas', 'río de noche, platanar oscuro, / colmena ciega' (ibid.). It

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<sup>21</sup> Among many visual representations of Latin America, at least one depicts a naked woman - 'Americus Americen retexit' by Stradanus (Jan van der Straet), c. 1600, and 'El sueño de La Malinche' by Antonio Ruiz, 1932.

should be noted that all the above images carry a strong sexual connotation, especially as a reference to the woman's genitalia. For example, the reference to poppies creates an image of a vagina ready for impregnation (similar to a flower and its seeds) as well as a connotation of sexual intercourse having an intoxicating effect on the male since poppies are usually associated with opium or heroin (this parallel is reinforced by the male's dreamlike state when in the company of the woman - 'soñando rosas e inventando estrellas')<sup>22</sup>. An implied comparison of floral imagery to procreation appears once again in the line 'río de noche, platanar oscuro', which contains an implicit reference to the woman's vaginal secretion necessary for a sexual act (the image of the river/water/fluid medium), combined with an allusion to a banana plantation, which may be interpreted as a metaphor of both female and male genitalia, while the reference to darkness and night enhances the sexual connotation of the scene.

The fact that the woman is assigned the images of flora and fauna suggests that the male creates in his mind (or subjective reality) the character of the woman void of conscience but possessing explicit sexual attributes. Thus, it may be said that the male is focused mainly on the sexual (physical) pleasure of intercourse rather than the emotional experience of a relationship. The male designs a partner to mirror his unconscious sexual desire, while reserving conscience to himself; this is evident not only from the male's voice being the only one heard in the poem but also from the male referring to his feelings from a conscious evaluating perspective - 'Te quiero, amor, amor, absurdamente, / tontamente, perdido, iluminado' (ibid.). The male assesses his feelings, recognises the absence of conscience in his sexual love, and then becomes 'iluminado' through the process of self-

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<sup>22</sup> This suggests that the male's sexual experience may be regarded as a hallucination and therefore rendered nonexistent in the objective reality. The subjective nature of sexual encounter and its consequences in the process of the male's self-actualisation is analysed in detail in Chapter 4.



actualisation based on sexual experience, while the woman retains her unconscious nature and explicit sexual characteristics designed to enhance the male's sexual experience and thus bring him closer to self-actualisation. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that the image of the woman created by the male to reflect his primal sexual drive void of conscience helps the male achieve conscience and, later, self-actualisation through sexual experience. A similar approach to the woman's character appears in the poems by Octavio Paz analysed later in the section.

The most complex sexual fantasy is exhibited by the male in the poem 'Tú eres mi marido'. Here the woman first acquires a male characteristic expressed in terms of reversed family relations ('tú eres mi marido' (id., 192)), and then returns to personify normal family relations ('Tú eres mi hermana y yo soy tu hermano. / Tú eres mi madre y yo soy tu hijo' (ibid.)). However, in the poem 'normal' family relations describe a relationship between two lovers; thus, the normalcy of societal rules disappears, and the idea of incest becomes more probable. It could be suggested that the male character of the poems refers to his relationship with the woman in terms of family relations because of a subconscious incestual desire<sup>23</sup>.

As the poem progresses, the male compares the woman to nature, rendering her void of conscience (a similar approach also emerges in Paz's works). At first, the woman is described as a part of the male's physical body - 'Tú eres mi sangre' (ibid.); later she turns into 'el vaso, el agua, la piedra, / el carbon, el vinagre, la miel' (ibid.). These images carry a definite sexual connotation: the vase, water (fluid) and vinegar (acid) may be interpreted as

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<sup>23</sup> The expression of subconscious incestual desire has been analysed in detail by Sigmund Freud. One of the best known studies on the subject is Sigmund Freud's 'The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex' (1924), followed by a less memorable 'Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes' (1925). Both works attribute the development of sexuality to the childhood desire of a sexual relationship with a parent. Implicit incestual relationships are the subject of several works analysed in the thesis; one of the reasons for the use of incest to describe a heterosexual relationship is discussed in Chapter 4.



signifying the woman's vagina, and the image of honey is traditionally used as a metaphor for vaginal secretion during intercourse (examples may be found in many sources from *Kama Sutra*, *The Song of Songs*, ancient Middle Asian poetry, etc. to modern rock lyrics). Therefore it may be concluded that the comparison of the woman to elements of nature stems from the male sexual desire and sexual connotations of metaphors depend on the level of the male's arousal.

The male reinforces his interpretation of the woman as an object created solely to satisfy his sexual desire, by combining his body image with that of the woman - 'yo soy tu boca, tu mano, tu ombligo, / tu oreja, tu lengua, tu uña, tu pie' (ibid.). This is evident from the metaphors used in the above quote - all the body parts that the male represents are symbolic of sexual arousal (mouth, navel, ear, tongue are often erogenous) or sexual fetishism (foot fetishism is known to be the most common of all). Since the male associates himself with the woman's erogenous zones and the woman is associated with the male's blood ('Tú eres mi sangre') which implies the woman's life-sustaining nature, it may be said that both partners are created to satisfy each other's sexual impulses; this idea is supported by the representation of two partners as one - 'Los dos somos nada más uno' (ibid.) - which signifies both physical and emotional unity of marriage ('Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh' - Genesis 2:24, Oxford Annotated Bible, 1962 ed.). However, the only instance that the male is described as a part of the woman's body, is when he refers to himself as 'tu piel', which in itself has less explicit sexual potential than a navel or an ear and in addition carries the connotation of protection.

Thus it may be concluded that of the two partners, the woman is imagined solely to be a perfect sexual partner for the male. After the intercourse the woman is no longer relevant to the male's existence; this postulate is supported by the fact that all of the above poems deal only with the sexual aspect of the male's relationship with the woman. On the other hand, the interdependence of the male and the woman in Sabines' poetry points to a suggestion



that both partners are real, or that the woman partially exists in the objective reality (the way she does, for example, in 'Te quiero'). The male's dependence on the woman during the sexual phase of the relationship will become more evident during the process of beatification discussed in detail later in this chapter.

### **1.3.2 Imaginary woman - Octavio Paz's approach**

While Sabines creates a semi-real woman in his poetry, Octavio Paz employs a different strategy of inventing the image of the woman through the character of the male. In 'Piedra de sol', the complex image of the woman has been analysed by many critics, with different emphases but fundamentally similar conclusions - the woman represents the linear time or world (Fein, Phillips, Pacheco) as well as the spiritual and sexual aspects of Nature (Wilson). However, the image of the woman may also be interpreted as created mainly to reflect and satisfy the male's sexual desire. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the woman is assigned attributes of the natural world void of conscience; at the same time, she carries a great sexual potential expressed first and foremost in her arousing physical appearance.

The male creates an elaborate tapestry of images to describe the woman's imaginary appearance as perceived through his sexuality, i.e., he sees the woman chiefly as the means of satisfying his sexual desire (thus, her cognitive side is overshadowed and ultimately replaced by visually prominent sexual and physical attributes). At this stage of sexual interaction (foreplay) the male appears to need immediate physical satisfaction of the sexual experience even more than during orgasm, as the only traits in the woman's character are those required to meet his demands - visually prominent sexual attributes (breasts, belly, etc.) combined with lack of individual cognition. This presupposes the woman's inability to refuse to participate in the sexual contact. As the male's sexual tension rises, the allegories become more and more sexually charged.

voy por tu cuerpo como por el mundo,  
tu vientre es una plaza soleada,  
tus pechos dos iglesias donde oficia  
la sangre sus misterios paralelos,...  
voy por tu talle como por un río,  
voy por tu cuerpo como por un bosque,  
como por un sendero en la montaña  
que en un abismo brusco se termina,

(Paz 1960, 294)

Sexual connotations of the above metaphors reinforce the notion that the woman lacks cognition (expressed in the absence of human characteristics) and that her primary role is to ensure the male's sexual satisfaction<sup>24</sup>.

A similar approach to the image of the woman appears in 'Blanco', though this time the male's imaginary partner is more abstract. The woman is an important formative component of the main theme of the poem. Many critics have come to the same conclusion regarding the woman's role as a representative of objective reality (Fein, Wilson). Jason Wilson sees the woman as an objective entity representing an objective world; another view of the woman as an independent person is presented by Rachel Phillips, who considers the woman to have a minute role in the male's search for an adequate expression of emotions (Phillips 1972, 139, 142). However, despite this widespread agreement, there is no evidence in the poem that the woman exists independently from the male. She does not possess

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<sup>24</sup> There is an instance in the poem when the woman is referred to as 'adolescente rostro' (Paz 1960, 296), which may be interpreted as a reference to a subconscious desire for an incestual relationship by the male-father. The above reference does not appear anywhere else in the poem but in the first sexually explicit encounter, probably because of the woman's possible virginity and awakening yet impeded sexual desire of adolescence (this may be deduced from the absence of the woman's active involvement in foreplay or the sexual act). Since the comparison occurs in the beginning of the process of beatification of the woman, it may be interpreted as part of the process of a possible allusion to Virgin Mary (this will be discussed further in Section 1.4 of this chapter).



independent physical characteristics (it is possible that she does not exist at all) until the male begins the sexual act. During intercourse, the woman's sexual character becomes quite prominent, though she lacks cognition throughout the sexual stage of the relationship with the male.

In fact, what all the evidence leads us to conclude that once again the male creates the woman in his imagination to satisfy his sexual urge; thus, the woman-partner is designed to mirror the male's primal sexual nature. Once the male experiences orgasm, the partner disappears, and the male receives a revelation of his superconsciousness that combines the subjective and objective realities - 'La irrealidad de lo mirado / da realidad a la mirada' (Paz 1989, 221). The woman's image represents a trait that the male discovers through his sexual experience; in addition, it is the superimposition of the male's sexuality onto his subjective reality. As in 'Piedra de sol', she is a result of the male's imagination being fueled by his sexual desire. However, there is no physical description of the woman in the poem; on the contrary, she is an abstract entity void of cognition or emotions as well as explicit physical characteristics, created to help the male achieve sexual satisfaction. The only description of her appearance is recorded during coitus - 'mis manos de lluvia / sobre tus pechos verdes' (id., 219) - when the woman acquires attributes of flora and fauna. Later during coitus she is implicitly compared to a bird of prey: 'lluvia de tus talones en mi espalda' (id., 220), which enhances the description of sexual act as an exhibition of the animal side of human personality. In addition, the image of a bird of prey holding its victim in its talons establishes the first subtle connection between sexual satisfaction and fear of physical death.

The woman's surreal quality is evident in the description of the first stage of lovemaking, as the image of fire prevails in the following stanza:

en el muro la sombra del fuego  
en el fuego tu sombra y la mía  
el fuego te desata y te anuda

Pan Grial Ascuá  
Muchacha  
tú ríes - desnuda  
en los jardines de la llama

(id., 216)

The woman's appearance is recognised unemotionally ('desnuda'), yet the fire that metaphorically represents the male's sexual arousal is described in detailed surreal metaphors that may be seen as highly sensual:

llama rodeada de leones  
leona en el circo de las llamas  
ánima entre las sensaciones  
frutos de luces de bengala  
los sentidos se abren  
en la noche magnética

(ibid.)

Thus, it is possible to conclude that in the male's subjective world the imaginary woman does not exist as a separate entity; instead, the image of the woman-partner is a projection of the male's sexual needs onto his emotional plane. The woman's purpose in the poem is to act as a receptacle of the male's orgasm or, more accurately, the male creates the woman to release his sexual tension by engaging in a sexual act with her and by watching her reach orgasm. This voyeuristic side of the male's sexual desire is evident in an explicit description of the woman's orgasm.

te precipitas en tus semejanzas  
caes de tu nombre a tu cuerpo  
en un presente que no acaba  
caes en tu comienzo



(id., 220)

Lack of higher emotions or cognitive expression becomes evident in the double section, as the male is involved in the primarily physical activity of the sexual act. Even when he compares his physical experience to a representation of a cognitive side of his psyche, its physical aspect prevails over mental ('te repartes' vs. 'el lenguaje'). Still, he concentrates on *looking* at the woman, and the product of this activity (the woman's visual image) is not as important as the gazing itself. Since the poem bears many Tantric influences, the act of gazing takes on a meditative meaning, and the woman's body (as imagined by the male) is used in *Tratak*, or steady gazing at an object of meditation, which is part of yoga training to attain Nirvana, or superconsciousness. 'It involves alternately gazing at an object or point without blinking, then closing your eyes and visualizing the object in your mind's eye... [Tratak is] primarily intended to strengthen your powers of concentration and purify the mind' (Sivananda 1983, 95). This allows the conclusion that the male uses the image of the woman as part of his search for superconsciousness, especially since the woman's physical appearance is presented mainly in abstract terms reflecting the male's near-superconscious state in which mind and body sensations are perceived as one.

The woman's appearance after the orgasm is surprising because it interferes with the male's contemplation of a newly discovered subjective reality. To prevent her from damaging his inner equilibrium, the male assigns her (and the reality she represents) an abstract quality. It may seem that the male perceives the woman and objective reality as part of his subjective world, as he imprints his surreal universe onto the woman, thus rendering her existence a projection of his subjective reality.

Mírala fluir  
entre tus pechos caer  
sobre tu vientre  
blanca y negra

primavera nocturna

jazmín y ala de cuervo

tamborino y *sitar*

No y Sí

(Paz 1989, 222)

Now that it has been established that the woman in the poems of Paz is the figment of the male's imagination fueled by his sexual desire, it is possible to conclude that in the sexual stage of a relationship the male's sexuality (as seen through the image of the woman) achieves independence of expression by fusing his sexuality into that of the woman. The question is whether the male's tendency to see the woman as void of conscience yet prominently arousing is an approach that damages the woman's identity or devalues her role in a sexual relationship. However, given the complexity of the male's image, if one takes into consideration the covert childlike nature of the male (see Chapter 3), then this view of a woman can be explained from the child's perception of his relationship with his mother. Since the child is used to having his mother with him whenever the need arises, he subconsciously assumes that the mother is part of the world around him, a constant concept rather than a person in her own right (Freud 1936, 108-9). In the child's ego-centred world, the mother is akin to an irrefutable law of nature and one of the world's usual components, such as air, water, food, etc. However, a mother also serves as an interpreter between the child and the world; thus the child is likely to identify her with the outside world that she helps him understand. The childlike nature of the male will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Another explanation of the male's desire to create an imaginary partner can be seen implicitly in the description of the woman's emotional state or, more accurately, lack thereof. Throughout the poem, the woman possesses extraordinarily arousing physical attributes, yet her emotional state and conscience remain concealed both from the male and



the world. If the male creates the imaginary woman to reflect his personality traits, then he will identify her emotions through his, yet his emotions are largely disguised and expressed either in an abstract meditation on the world's place in his reality, or in erotic images provoking sexual arousal. Under either condition, the male's identification of the woman's emotions (and, therefore, his own emotional state) is subject to his apparent inability to recognise them, which leads to his creating a partner void of emotions but possessing distinctly erotic physical traits to satisfy the male's identifiable sexual desire. The fantasy partner is designed to be efficient only in the spheres where the male cannot fully function on his own. Therefore, the woman imagined by the male carries a great sexual potential expressed either in physical attributes ('Amor mío', 'Piedra de sol') or in abstract juxtapositions similar to those within the male's psyche ('Te quiero', 'Blanco').

### 1.3.3 Summary

In conclusion, it may be said that the woman represents the 'object' of the male's conscience, while the male psyche takes on the role of a subject or Self. The subject-object interaction in the above poems may be seen in the male's creation of the woman to meet *his* physical and emotional desires regardless of the woman's needs and wishes. However, as will be demonstrated in this chapter, the image of the woman is created to reflect the male's character, one trait at a time. The first stage of the process of character fragmentation has already been discussed in this section - the male creates the woman to complement his sexuality with her lack of cognitive ability, so that the male could then project his character traits (or their opposites) onto the woman in his attempt to discover his identity through sexual expression. Thus the conclusion may be drawn that the first trait reflected in the image of the woman is the male's need for sexual satisfaction. It should also be noted that the absence of cognitive aspects of the woman's character points to the male's self-centred approach to the sexual stage of a relationship since the imaginary woman does not exhibit



sexual desire independent from that of the male. The next section of the chapter will provide further insight into the complexity of the male's character by addressing the process of beatification of the image of the woman.

#### **1.4 Woman-goddess**

The analysis of the divine nature of the woman is of a particular importance because it provides an insight into the overt and covert aspects of the male's personality. The purpose of this section is to analyse the process of beatification of the woman and the reasons behind it, and consequently, to discover a trait (or traits) of the male's character reflected in the image of the woman. Almost all writers chosen in this study (except Rosario Castellanos) depict the woman as possessing divine traits or posing as a godlike figure; it will be shown that in all the works analysed here the image of the woman is similar to that of La Malinche as she is represented in Mexican history and literature.

In the works of Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines, it appears that the male starts beatifying the woman during foreplay, and beatification reaches its peak during orgasm, whether coitus actually happens or not. In the works of both writers the male character uses Christian and pagan (Aztec) imagery to create a woman-goddess (in 'Blanco' Octavio Paz also employs Hindu religious imagery, specifically that of Tantra). As far as the novel by Marcela Del-Río is concerned, Christian imagery prevails in the characters of women, though there are also several references to the image of La Malinche, which reflects a fusion of Christian and Aztec references.

##### **1.4.1 'Laura, Isabel, Perséfone, María' - woman-goddess in Octavio Paz's poetry**

The beatification of the woman is especially prominent in the works of Octavio Paz. In particular, in 'Piedra de sol' the abundance of the imagery of water, earth and flora points to an implicit connection between the image of the woman and the images of Aztec



goddesses, especially Omeciuatl (also known as Tonacaciuatl), ‘the female deity representing the earth or water’ (Spence 1920, 104). According to the Náhua legends, Omeciuatl and her male companion-counterpart Ometecutli were the creators of the human species, and existed as a dual being with its components in constant copulation, similar to the early Greek story of creation that described ‘the elements uniting, the firmament impregnating the soil and rendering it fruitful’ (id., 119). Another legend in which the woman represents earth and water describes the slaying of the great flesh-eating earth monster, Tlaltecuhli (‘Earth Lord’, often depicted as a woman). According to the legend, Quetzalcóatl and Tezcatlipoca ‘agree that creation [of the world] cannot be completed with such a horrendous beast in their midst’ (Taube 1993, 37), so they transform themselves into snakes and tear the flesh-eating goddess apart. This slaying angered the other gods, and ‘they decree that all plants needed for human life will derive from her body. From her hair are fashioned trees, flowers and herbs, and from her skin come the grasses and smaller flowers. Her eyes are the source of wells, springs and small caves; her mouth, great rivers and caverns...’ (ibid.). As will become evident later in the section, the metaphoric representation of the woman as the source of life and death is abundant in the works of Mexican writers.

In addition to the above Aztec references, Paz continues to bring together various mythologies and religions (using mostly Greek and Christian references) in ‘Piedra de sol’ as he creates the image of the woman - ‘he olvidado tu nombre, Melusina, / Laura, Isabel, Perséfone, María’ (Paz 1960, 296). Throughout ‘Piedra de sol’ the woman’s godlike character complements the male’s ‘sinful’ nature that he recognises reflected in his obvious promiscuity, desire for power and subsequent cruelty to his fellow men. It should be noted that the concept of ‘sin’ is not unrecognised outside Christian system of belief, since in Aztec culture ‘sickness was ... sometimes [ascribed] to the gods as a punishment for the sin’ (Roys 1972, 94). In addition to angering the gods, which was seen as a sin to be punished

for by gods themselves, sinful behaviour was recognised and punished by law in Aztec society. Among the most severely punished sins were adultery, punished by stoning of both lovers, and homicide, the punishment for which was enslavement or death by hanging (Berdam 1982, 97). However, law-abiding Aztecs also had a practice of confessing sins on their deathbeds, similar to the Christian practice; the confession of sins was done before a priest, wife or a close relative (Roys 1972, 27).

The juxtaposition of the two characters - a 'divine' woman and a 'sinner' male - becomes most obvious in time plane 15 (see Table 1, Appendix 1 for details), especially since the only historical character of a woman mentioned in the stanza is Cassandra, a clairvoyant who, according to a Greek myth, predicted the fall of Troy and was later raped by a Greek soldier. The prediction of the fall of the men's power is deemed especially poignant later in the stanza, when the male observes a line of fallen leaders from many eras (even though the woman is not directly involved in the scene):

Sócrates en cadenas ...

Moctezuma

en el lecho de espigas de su insomnio, [...]  
por Robespierre minuto tras minuto,  
la mandíbula rota entre las manos -,  
Churruca en su barrica como un trono  
escarlata, los pasos ya contados  
de Lincoln al salir hacia el teatro,  
el esteror de Trotski y sus quejidos  
de jabalí, Madero y su mirada  
que nadie contestó: ¿por qué me matan?

(Paz 1960, 305-6)



It is important to recognise that the female character in this time plane is semi-real, whereas all male characters are actual historical figures. This supports the idea that the woman in the male's world is a product of his imagination; moreover, she absorbs the divine or mythological traits that the male considers unreachable in the objective reality (the discord between the subjective and objective reality will be analysed fully in Chapter 4).

The sections of 'Piedra de sol' hosting various images of the woman-goddess present an opportunity for the male's metaphorical release of sexual tension through foreplay<sup>25</sup>. Once the male recognises his sinful side, he separates himself from it and creates the image of the woman, who then takes on an appearance of a goddess (pagan or otherwise) possibly to make up for the male's all too worldly behaviour - 'tu dura máscara / labra sobre tu rostro cambiante' (id., 308), 'Eloisa, Perséfone, María, / muestra tu rostro al fin para que vea / mi cara verdadera' (id., 309). In the last quote the male gives the woman a character trait to enhance her sexual appeal, thus helping the male reach sexual satisfaction. Once the male recognises the necessary trait, he re-assigns it back to himself to understand his sexual experience and discover an aspect of his sexuality; eventually, the male will be able to construct his sexual character through the process of character fragmentation in which the woman reflects the desirable trait or its opposite (this process is discussed in detail in the concluding section of this chapter).

The woman's image changes, as the male's sexual tension increases and he begins comparing the woman to sexually arousing non-cognitive life (especially flora - 36

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<sup>25</sup> These time planes are different from the sexually explicit time planes where the male experiences emotional release of sexual tension through orgasm - in this case, the woman does not play any role in the male's sexual satisfaction, and the role of deity is assigned to the male's alter ego, God. This process is discussed further in Chapter 4.

occurrences, and water - 33 occurrences). If the image of the woman is analysed from an abstract perspective, it will become evident that the woman in the poem is created to reflect the life-death cycle.

toda la noche llueves, todo el día  
abres mi pecho con tus dedos de agua,  
cierras mis ojos con tu boca de agua,  
sobre mis huesos llueves, en mi pecho  
hunde raíces de agua un árbol líquido,

(id., 295)

Water, a predominant image in the above quote, is a source of death by drowning, which is implied in the description of a persistent rain and the closing of eyes (a common funeral ritual). It is possible to interpret the image of the woman/water from a sexual perspective as overindulgence in the physical and emotional pleasure of an orgasm, expressed respectively in the ejaculation of semen and production of vaginal secretion (both liquid mediums), and in a momentary loss of self-control and self-awareness, often described as 'little death'. The two levels of death, both of which imply loss of the male's ability to communicate (and the loss of the ability to project his character traits onto the outside reality), can also be traced in the quote 'abres mi pecho con tus dedos de agua, / cierras mis ojos con tu boca de agua'. When the woman closes her partner's eyes to the world, she takes away his opportunity either to see the world/her or to engage in non-verbal exchange by visual means.

Later in the poem the elaborate tapestry of metaphors created by the male to describe the imaginary woman's appearance is built around the life-death cycle. Persistence of the woman's sexual desire that both kills the male partner (or, at least, brings physical suffering - 'sal en la herida') and re-establishes his eternal presence as a recipient of physical and emotional love, can be seen in the following string of images, most of which represent the masculine-feminine and life-death juxtapositions:



liana que cuelga del cantil del vértigo,  
enredadera, planta venenosa,  
flor de resurrección, uva de vida,  
señora de la flauta y del relámpago,  
terrazza del jazmín, sal en la herida,  
ramo de rosas para el fusilado,  
nieve en agosto, luna del patíbulo,  
escritura del mar sobre el basalto,  
escritura del viento en el desierto,  
testamento del sol, granada, espiga,

(id., 297)

While the male's sexual tension increases, the allegories become more and more contradictory and sexually charged. An obvious parallel can be drawn between sexual intercourse and the life of an orchid that feeds on the juices of a host tree (akin to a woman being a recipient of a male's semen). The woman's emotions and sexual desire make the male reciprocate, thus exposing his vulnerability and destroying the overt personality that protects his inner self. However, the first stage of the cycle is immediately replaced by the next transformation of the woman's image in the male's mind. The woman is compared to a life-giving flora ('flor de resurrección, uva de vida') after being analogous to a deadly 'planta venenosa'. The male assigns the woman sexually charged images of a flower and grape which are frequently used in reference to female sexual organs (flower petals are a metaphor of outer vaginal lips, a grape is akin to a clitoris). The stanza ends with a complex image that refers to the woman as part of the four elements of nature void of cognition yet full of primal sexual power. The last line 'testamento del sol, granada, espiga' incorporates various aspects of the male's perception of the woman's destructive and restorative sexuality, thus it is important to analyse it in further detail. The image of the Sun is

associated with the sacrificial practices of ancient Aztec priests that offered the warriors' hearts to the Sun-god. A pomegranate is a traditional image of female fertility and sexual arousal, and the spike represents both female erection of nipples and clitoris, and an erect penis of a male partner ready to ejaculate semen, or procreate. Another connotative meaning of the word 'espiga' (dictionary definition: ear of wheat) combines an arousing image of an erect penis or clitoris with a reference to life-giving sustenance.

Thus, the above analysis of the image of the woman as the source of life and death suggests that the male's sexual satisfaction (and consequent self-discovery) depends on the woman's divine qualities metaphorically expressed in the imagery of a life-death cycle (mainly in metaphors involving images of nature as representing the basic life-death cycle of the universe).

A different approach to the image of the woman is used in 'Blanco' where the female character takes on a different religious connotation due to Tantric influence on Paz's poetry of mid 1960's. Here, the dual imagery of the woman - that of sexual desire and death - may be seen as stemming from the nature of Siva and his consort, Durga Ma. Siva the Dancer is the destroyer of Maya or the illusion state of the manifest universe (Sivananda 1983, 16); his dance, always accompanied by the beat of his two drums, announces the end of the reality as we know it. Durga Ma, the most sexually active goddess, is 'the mother of the universe, ... the effulgent Goddess Durga, ... the terrifying destroyer of ignorance' (Uttal 1997). Ancient Vedic texts refer to her as follows: 'She whose shape even the Creator and the other gods cannot know... In all knowledge she is the transcendent consciousness; in all voids she is the Void. She, beyond whom there is no beyond, is sung as Beyond-Reach (*Durga*)' (*Devi Upanisad*, qtd. in Daniélou 1964, 32). Durga is considered one of the aspects of the female side of Siva: this aspect is the destruction of the illusion (or Maya) through time, also known as the Power of Time (Kali). The goddess Durga (Kali) is 'a fierce-looking goddess, fond of intoxicants, of lust, of bloody sacrifices. Cruel and orgiastic



rituals are performed in her honor by the followers of the Tantra' (id., 264). Depicted as a black naked woman with the mouth red with blood of men, she devours her human lovers-children, thus destroying the physical side of human nature that prevents it from attaining superconsciousness; her overt violence conceals the inner harmony of the three aspects (gunas) of her nature: Reality, Consciousness, and Experience.

The sexual unity of Siva and Durga is described as the union of opposites whose main concept is 'creating a state of bliss, ... the pacified state representing eternal happiness, the experience of the Absolute' (id., 265). The experiences of fear and sexual arousal experiences in this union are the subject of several Tantra works, including artwork and poetry - for example, the legend that Siva and Durga were killed while making love, reinforces the hypothesis that death and sexual pleasure coexist in sexual act (O'Flaherty 1973, 236, 307). The similar destructive-creative unity may be observed through the second and third parts of 'Blanco', as the woman takes on the sexually explicit imagery of fire and water, both of which are destructive and life-sustaining in nature -

llama rodeada de leones

leona en el circo de las llamas

(Paz 1989, 216)

tiene la boca llena de agua

(id., 219)

el río de los cuerpos

(id., 217)

It should also be noted that the prevailing imagery in the scenes of sexual interaction is that of earth, water and fire, all of which are symbolic of the union of creation. According to the Hindu legends, the world was created in the offering of semen to the god of fire - 'Agui, the lord of fire, is shown devouring the semen which flows from the *linga* [penis] of Siva . . . the offering of the seed of life into the sacred fire of life' (Daniélou 1964, 226). The above

examination of the imagery of death presented in the character of the woman suggests that as the male creates more allusions to the image of the woman as representing the life-death cycle, the male's perception of the course of life (and, consequently, his self-realisation) is based upon his sexual satisfaction combined with the emotional release of the sexual act as the process of worshiping the woman-goddess, who, in turn, embodies traits of the male's sexual character (such as aggression).

#### **1.4.2 Jaime Sabines' approach**

In the poems of Jaime Sabines, similar to 'Piedra de sol' and 'Blanco' by Octavio Paz, the woman is represented as a goddess when the male is sexually aroused. The difference in the process of the woman's beatification lies in the male's possessive-obsessive attitude towards his woman-lover. This appears particularly manifest in the following quote from 'Te quiero' -

Todos los días te quiero y te odio irremediabilmente. Y hay días también, hay horas, en que no te conozco, en que me eres ajena como la mujer de otro. Me preocupan los hombres, me preocupo yo, me distraen mis penas.

(Sabines 1997b, 120)

It is possible that the male's 'preoccupation' with other men is based on the fear of losing his woman-mother to an obscure male-father figure that is more mature emotionally, physically and sexually (Freud 1937, 256). His perception of his lover/partner as 'ajena' and the subsequent feeling of abandonment (even if, as in this case, abandonment is either imaginary or self-inflicted) is comparable to that of a child towards the mother who abandons him in favour of the father. Facing a dilemma of respecting the mother and despising the father, or vice versa, the child-male attempts to cope with this inner conflict by beatifying the woman, thus rendering her out of reach of other men. The beatification is



subtly implied rather than announced; it is seen in the connotations throughout 'Te quiero' and 'Vamos a guardar este día'. The image of 'tu corazón de virgen' (Sabines 1997b, 139) is the most straightforward reference to both sexual virginity and emotional purity of Virgin Mary. 'Mujer de piedra' (ibid.) can also be seen as a metaphoric reference to stone or marble statues of the Virgin or pagan goddesses. Other, more subtle references to the woman's beatification address the actions of a saint rather than her appearance. The reference to a knee in 'Te quiero' can be interpreted as related to the prayer position; 'las diversiones que no tienes' (id., 120) can be seen as a metaphoric representation of a saint's abstinence from the worldly indulgences, etc. Finally, since the woman is seen as a deity, reciprocal communication between her and a mortal male is impossible. In fact, the male does not seem to expect a reply, as can be seen in the last line of 'Te quiero' - a question with no expectation of an answer.

The use of Christian symbolism is evident in 'Tú eres mi marido', as the male compares the woman to Mary and himself to Joseph -

Tú te abres y yo te penetro.

Tú eres María y yo soy José.

Tú me abrazas y yo te envuelvo.

(id., 193)

This comparison is of particular interest because it appears between two lines that graphically describe sexual intercourse. If the woman represents the Virgin Mary and is therefore involved in the immaculate conception, then the biblical idea of a non-physical coitus seems to be questioned by the male, who is actively involved in the intercourse, though in his role of Joseph he lacks sexuality<sup>1</sup>. This juxtaposition of a sexually graphic intercourse and a purely biblical reference creates a unique image of the woman-

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<sup>1</sup> There is a biblical implication that Joseph and Mary never had sexual intercourse - 'before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit' (Matt 2:18).

goddess/sinner. Such a view of a woman is similar to that of La Malinche, who is regarded by Mexicans as a 'model for inspiration' because of her martyrdom, and as a lascivious sinner who rejected her Indian heritage in exchange for Cortés' sexual attention (Cypress 1991, 89, 145). Since La Malinche is said to have rejected her heritage (including religion) and become more 'European', it may be assumed that Christian imagery reinforces the idea of the woman-Malinche being disconnected from her spiritual roots as she enters into a sexual relationship with a male, who may be regarded as a culture foreign to that of the woman's place of origin.

The image of the woman in 'Amor mío, mi amor' also contains several allusions to her divine nature - 'estrellas', 'hacia arriba' - which suggest that the male also sees the woman as a divine being. Combined with the fauna imagery, the male's view of the woman as a goddess may be interpreted as pagan.

#### **1.4.3 Women-goddesses in *Proceso a Faubritten* by Marcela Del-Río**

Another approach to the topic of beatification emerges in Del-Río's *Proceso a Faubritten*, where almost all women represent deities from different religions (mostly Christian and Aztec) or characters from religious writings (such as The Bible). The focus of the analysis will be on the characters of Cristina and María Corona; additional attention will be given to the irony of the characters of Elizabeth and Hélène, who appear in the last chapter of the novel.

The main female character of the novel is Cristina, the daughter of the scientist Alexander Faubritten, who discovered the elixir of eternal life, and consequently is considered a demigod by society (Faubritten's character is analysed in detail later in the study). Born to a German father and an apparently Mexican mother (María Corona), Cristina may be seen as representing the contradictory nature of Mexican nation; the author



chooses to deal with this inner discord by rendering Cristina 'insane' and, later, divine. A possible explanation of Cristina's divine nature is that her father is considered godlike by the society, which would benefit from Faubritten's discovery of the elixir of immortality; her mother (María Corona) is a mortal human, in which case Cristina's origin is similar to Christ's. Such an approach depends on assigning divine characteristics to either Faubritten or María Corona; the godlike traits of Faubritten's character will be studied in Chapter 4, and María Corona's divine nature is discussed later in this section.

The uniqueness of Cristina's character is evident from her first appearance in the novel - 'Comprendí que haberla confundido fue un sacrilegio. Cristina era única' (Del-Río 1976, 71). It is important to note the description of the room where Cristina appears for the first time in the novel: the room is dark and poorly lit, and Cristina is sitting on a throne - 'Al pasar a la estancia, todos los ventanales estaban cubiertos por pesadas cortinas y Cristina estaba sentada en el mismo trono, con la misma iluminación indirecta de la lámpara, como si fuera de noche' (id., 88). Cristina's figure in the dark reminds one of an Orthodox depiction of saints against a dark background in icons, which are traditionally placed in a dark corner and illuminated by a small oil lamp - 'en un sillón de alto respaldo, iluminada indirectamente por una lámpara de pie, toda de porcelana china -... Cristina' (id., 71). Cristina's implied godlike character is enhanced by the description of her behaviour which contains references to religious practices, such as the sign of blessing - 'Hizo un breve ademán con su mano izquierda en señal de bendición' (id., 90) - and the use of language characteristic of priests - '-Acércate, hijo mío' (id., 71).

In addition to her mystical appearance and a parallel between the names 'Cristina' and 'Christ', there are other examples of Cristina's divine character. Similarities may be drawn between Cristina's interviews and their interpretations, and the trial of Jesus during which the priests misinterpret Christ's words; however, the most interesting testimony of Cristina's divine nature is Cristina's daughter's origin. When the editor asks Estela how



old she is, she replies, ‘-Pronto tendré la edad de mi madre cuando me concibió’ (id., 88). Plautilio (who is supposed to be Cristina’s husband, though there is no mention of a wedding) meets Cristina when she is 22 years old - ‘una muchacha de veinti...¿dos? años - no podía calcularle más’ (id., 53), thus Cristina conceived Estela at the age of 22. However, Plautilio does not have sexual intercourse with Cristina the first night they spend together - ‘ella quitó la mano de mi sexo, donde descansaba después de uno de los intentos fallidos’ (id., 59); therefore he does not know if she is a virgin. A surprising remark made by Cristina during a failed attempt to make love with Plautilio, ‘el verdadero pecado de Adán no fue acostarse con Eva, sino traicionarla con su hija’ (id., 64), in conjunction with her view of her father as a visionary or a saint (this parallel may be extended to include Adam), suggests that Faubritten had indeed had sexual intercourse with his daughter, the result of which was the conception of Estela. This incestuous relationship may be considered perverse in the objective reality; however, as will be proven in Chapter 4, neither Faubritten nor Cristina belong in the objective world and thus their actions cannot be judged from an objective perspective. Later in the novel Cristina is compared to Eve - ‘Cristina cortó un fruto, lo mordió y se lo ofreció a su padre’ (id., 334). This is surprising considering the fact that Cristina makes a distinction between herself and Eve earlier in the novel, when remarking upon ‘el verdadero pecado de Adán’. It may be possible that this reference reflects the assumption that Cristina and Faubritten represent a new humankind, whose nature is drastically different from that existing in the objective reality (the conflict between the two will be addressed in detail in Chapter 4). This comparison implies that Cristina, like her father, possesses knowledge which can change the world.

The story of Estela’s conception reinforces Cristina’s godlike nature because Cristina’s character may also be interpreted as similar to the Virgin Mary; however, her subsequent actions dispute this similarity, and create another link between her and Christ. The references to Cristina’s madness are paralleled with the character of Christ, who



appeared abnormal to his contemporaries, HN's remark about Cristina's madness being the most prominent in the novel - 'Quizá si Jesucristo naciera hoy, acabara en un manicomio...' (id., 78). It is interesting to note that nobody in the novel can describe Cristina's madness, yet all of those interviewed remark upon the unfortunate mental illness that she apparently suffers; this may be due to the fact that her actions cannot be interpreted as normal by those existing in the objective reality, and therefore have to be referred to as abnormal or insane.

Cristina does not reveal the knowledge of the antidote discovered by her father, and it is conceivable that she never will or that she will be misunderstood yet again since every time she speaks in the novel, her remarks have double meaning - 'Hay muchas formas de matar' (id., 73), '¿Qué es el Bien? ¿Qué es el Mal?' (ibid.). There is an obvious parallel between Cristina's remarks and the sermons of Jesus, since both may be interpreted in different ways (or misinterpreted); the above quotes from Cristina's conversation with the editor can be seen as maxims, just as the following quotes from the Mount Sermon - 'judge not, that you be not judged' (Matt 7:1), 'do not throw your pearls before swine' (Matt 7:6), etc.

Cristina is attempting to protect the world from the harm that her father's new discovery can cause (the way the discovery of 'la bomba L' has caused) because she realises that the world is not ready for this knowledge. The world may want the ready answer to the problem caused by 'the bomb of life', but Cristina sees this as a shallow reason for the acquisition of knowledge - 'Cuando el deseo de saber es superficial, pronto se olvida' (Del-Río 1976, 72). This realisation drives her to continue her course of inaction by refusing to reveal what she knows about the antidote, even though she allows her father's diary to be published (possibly because this will allow the society to draw its own conclusions about Faubritten's intentions instead of relying upon the accepted attitude towards the male).



The last conversation between 'el padre' (Faubritten) and 'la hija' (Cristina) reveals Cristina's role in the fate of the world - the keeper of knowledge: 'Júrame no revelar el secreto que te entrego y guardar con espada flamígera el árbol de la muerte' (id., 346). Since she has been assigned the role similar to that of the cherubim, who guards the tree of life (Genesis 3:24), Cristina is unlikely to reveal the truth about the antidote to the bomb of eternal life (which is, in essence, instinctive fear of death) not only because she is loyal to her father, whom she still worships - 'Los hombres te glorificarán' (Del-Río 1976, 346), but also because of the implications of this discovery.

There is a contradiction between the biblical story of the tree of knowledge and the tree of life being out of the male's reach, and the plot of the novel. This can be explained through the analysis of the meaning of life, death and knowledge created by Del-Río in *Proceso a Faubritten*. Eternal life comes after the acquisition of knowledge - 'Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" -' (Genesis 3:22); however, in the novel immortality does not follow enlightenment because knowledge was given willingly to humanity by a human (Faubritten) who is compared to God, and humankind does not know anything about this discovery other than the final result of the process of knowledge acquisition, as presented by Faubritten. Therefore, there is an imbalance between eternal life (a characteristic of gods) and lack of knowledge (a characteristic of Adam and Eve - or humans - before they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge), and it should be rectified by acquiring knowledge (which makes humankind recognise that primal instincts are as powerful as conscience) or denouncing it (which will keep humankind in an unbalanced state of naive demigods). Secondly, disclosing the truth about the antidote will mean showing humankind that its primal side ruled by instincts prevails over its higher cognitive aspect. A similarity is evident between the disclosure of the secret of the antidote and the acquisition of knowledge by Adam and Eve, who then



discovered shame because of their nakedness, or, in other words, their higher order of thinking rejected their primal behaviour. If humankind knows what the antidote is, it will realise that it has not evolved far from its primal nature. This time, eternal life means death of the civilisation; thus, death is the return to cognitive existence or godlike state (the one that Faubritten changed to by accepting the ultimate knowledge - ‘ “Ellos me buscarán y no me hallarán. Adonde yo voy nadie podrá llegar” ’ (Del-Río 1976, 346)). Cristina’s hidden agenda becomes evident in her final conversation with Plautilio:

- ...Pero ahora poseo el secreto de la muerte.
- ¿Piensas guardarlo?
- Prepara tu espíritu y acompáñame a la Sala del Juicio. Ahí lo sabrás.

(id., 347)

Thus, it seems that Cristina’s mission is not to help the world make its choice but to leave the decision up to the humankind so that it does not attempt to destroy itself yet again.

Another important godlike woman in the novel is Cristina’s mother, María Corona, whose character is very complex because it represents a combination of religions (Aztec and Christian). Unlike Cristina, whose physical description is present in the novel, María Corona is an abstract figure; there is no physical description of the woman, though there are several inferences to her character traits (patience, forgiveness, devotion to her husband) in Cristina’s conversation with Plautilio - ‘Es imposible imaginar que una persona pueda amar tanto a otra, como mi madre a él [Faubritten], ¡qué veneración! Mayor que a un santo o a un Dios. Sufrió la espera toda su vida, con la fe puesta en su regreso’ (id., 57), ‘Se quedó siempre esperando’ (ibid.). Notwithstanding a parallel between Penelope waiting for Ulysses, the above quotes may be interpreted as a comparison of María Corona to Mary Magdalene, who kept waiting for Jesus to return from the dead (Luke 24:10).

Further evidence of this similarity can be found in María Corona’s diary where cross-cultural religious references implicitly deny the cultural identification of the couple



(Faubritten and María Corona). The following quotes are the most demonstrative of the fusion - 'Has arrastrado las vestiduras de mis padres. Robado sus oros, ultrajado sus aposentos' (Del-Río 1976, 122), 'El dios dual del que me hablaban mis padres o la trinidad, de la que tú me hablas: el mismo anhelo de fundir personas distintas' (ibid.). The robbery of María's parents is similar to the plundering of Mexico by Cortés' troops; the second quote is a direct reference to the dual nature of the first Aztec gods Omeciuatl and Ometecutli, and the Christian trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Another similarity of María Corona and La Malinche appears in the following quote from María's diary: 'Y yo en hinojos lo miro. En hinojos le canto. En hinojos lo escucho. Soy la ciudad dormida. Soy la ciudad despierta. Tiro mis vestiduras y me entrego' (id., 102) - in this quote María's description of her sexual encounter with Faubritten can be compared to the conquest of a new land (a similar view appears throughout the visual representations of Latin America). The most pronounced fusion of the two images of female deities is the quote from the section of María's diary written at the time when she still worshiped and trusted her husband - 'Soy María y soy Eva y soy todas las mujeres del mundo y tú me abrazas' (id., 109).

However, as María discovers Faubritten's infidelity, her attitude towards him changes - he is no longer a trustworthy figure, though she still refers to him as a holy figure - 'Creí que tú eras el Salvador y más me hundiste' (id., 120), 'Responde, Señor mío: la caricia que sigue al desahogo del deseo ¿es la caricia del amor? ¿O la petición de perdón por el próximo engaño?' (id., 114). The irony of a woman chastising the male-God whom she worships makes one wonder whether the male (Faubritten) is really a godlike figure that the objective world worships (the answer to this question is found after the analysis of Faubritten's character in Chapter 4). The change of María Corona's attitude to Faubritten transforms him into Devil (or a serpent) while María Corona appears as Eve - '¡Qué serpiente eres tú, que a violentar llegaste a un pueblo desarmado, de mansedumbre tanta



que en bandeja de plata te puso el corazón!’ (id., 123). Thus, it may be said that the woman (María Corona) re-invents the male’s (Faubritten’s) character in accordance with her perception of him<sup>2</sup>. The image of María Corona not only provides insight into Faubritten’s character by acting as its reflection and antithesis, but also creates the basis for the character of Cristina which fuses the traits of María Corona and Faubritten into an omniscient entity existing outside the objective reality.

Two more images of women in the novel deserve further attention due to the fact that their characters are a parody of a clichéd view of a woman-goddess or a woman-sinner. The former is presented in the image of Elizabeth, a pregnant wife of one of Faubritten’s colleagues. A parallel may be drawn between her and Elizabeth from the Bible, who conceives with divine assistance, and everyone is rejoiced and praising God - ‘Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her’ (Luke 1:57-58). However, Elizabeth in the novel is far less excited; her sarcastic attitude to the joys of pregnancy is prominent throughout her talk with Héléne - ‘¡No tengas hijos, Héléne! - le dijo Elizabeth, poniendo cara de fatiga -. Es el camino más corto hacia el hastío y la mejor fórmula para que tu marido te ponga los cuernos. Se acaban las fiestas, las diversiones, los viajes. Y él encuentra pronto una amiga, una secretaria o una prostituta que te supla con ventaja’ (Del-Río 1976, 289), ‘Nadie se ocupó de preguntarme si quería yo tenerlo o no’ (id., 291). This brief scene gives a valuable insight in Del-Río’s approach to the representation of the female characters in her work; godlike as they may be, they remain separate from their male counterparts and retain their unique identity. In contrast to the female characters of the poems by Paz and Sabines, the women of *Proceso a Faubritten*

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<sup>2</sup> This approach to the image of the woman is a complete opposite to that of the poetry of Paz and Sabines, where male characters re-invent their woman-partner to correspond to their mood.



redefine the nature of their male partners by re-interpreting the roles assigned to the males by objective reality.

Finally, it is important to study the character of H el ene, the wife of Dr. Angelo Regno and Faubritten's lover. H el ene's name, comparable to that of Helen of Troy, may be seen as the first sign that this character is a parody. Faust was in love with Helen of Troy; similarly, Faubritten, who is sexually attracted to H el ene, is a scientist in search of infinite knowledge. Unlike Helen of Troy, H el ene does not start a war, just a squabble between her drunk jealous husband and an indifferent lover; still, she is indirectly responsible for Faubritten's discovery of an antidote (and death) through her husband's accident. Unlike ethereal Mar a Corona, who valued her emotional independence while realising her physical dependence on her husband, H el ene is all too worldly, that is to say, she seems to be interested in Faubritten as a godlike figure, whose divine character enhances her sexual pleasure. H el ene considers herself Mary Magdalene, a sinner who appears to seek forgiveness realising that she will never receive it, though she enjoys her role of a sinner who deserves to be punished - '-No me disculpe, doctor. Le dije cosas que nunca quise decir. No s e lo que me pas . No tengo perd n' (id., 254). In one of the scenes of lovemaking, H el ene reveals to Faubritten her innermost desires; this confession is deliberately written in a cliched style of a romance novel - 'Confiesa, entre gemidos de placer y de dolor, sus ardores a hurtadillas, su soledad atormentada de visiones obscenas, su fornicaci n con Angelo, mientras su mente fabricaba la ilusi n de estar con " l"' (id., 256). The ironic interpretation of H el ene's character is especially evident in the description of her hair during sexual act - 'Los cabellos de H el ene rozaron una mano de Faubritten. La sensualidad turb  al sue o, se desperez  con  l' (id., 253) - because of a clear parallel with a scene from the New Testament where a woman sinner comes to the Pharisee's house: '[Jesus said to Simon,] "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no



water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet...”

(Luke 7:44-45).

The reason for such an ironic attitude towards the character of H el ene lies within the difference of the male character’s attitude to women in his life. Mar a Corona and Cristina are Faubritten’s soul mates; they respect him without losing themselves in his personality, are strong-willed and independent, and, most importantly, question their perception of him as a demigod. On the other hand, H el ene cannot see herself as Faubritten’s equal because she assigns him divine qualities, thus re-inventing her own personality to fit his perception of her as his charge. The ironic twist of H el ene’s character is in her assigning herself the role that the men in her life expect her to play.

#### **1.4.4 Summary**

From the above analysis we can conclude that though the writers studied in this section assign divine traits to the female characters in their works, there is a significant difference in their approach to the image of the woman-goddess. In the novel by Del-R o, main female characters (Cristina, Mar a Corona) are godlike because of the independence of their personalities. Their images do not reflect the male’s character traits but present separate entities with a unique emotional makeup, though they do occasionally demonstrate character traits opposite of those exhibited by the men. This character makeup is similar to that of the male who is considered an outcast by his society (Faubritten). When a woman character complies with the male’s expectations of her, her image becomes a parody (H el ene, Elizabeth). On the other hand, in the poems of Paz and Sabines the woman is imagined by the male to possess the qualities that appear unreachable to the male. While in the poems by Sabines the woman’s divine ‘unreachable’ nature (also seen as signifying the image of the mother) implicitly characterises the male as a child, in Paz’s poetry the

woman-goddess possesses idealised character traits which are opposite of the male's 'sinful' nature. The process of beatification begins when the male creates in his imagination a woman-goddess whose physical existence is so inconceivable that it allows the male to be sexually careless and not be punished (this is an extension of the male imagining the woman for his sexual pleasure), though ultimately the male seeks a pure, godlike woman to reflect the character makeup that he aspires to possess. Thus it may be concluded that the image of the woman-goddess is used to enhance the male's sexuality and to reflect his sexual desire. Judging from the above analyses, it also appears that the image of the woman-goddess may reflect the opposite of one of the traits of the male's sexual identity.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has served as one of the main reference points for the study of male sexuality in modern Mexican literature. The analysis of the image of the woman has provided important insights into the methodology of creating the male character in the works of Rosario Castellanos, Marcela Del-Río, Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines, having addressed the differences in their approaches to the image of the woman. As a result, a conclusion may be drawn regarding the nature of the male's sexuality depending mainly on the difference in the authors' representation of the character of the woman.

There are two trends of picturing of the female characters (and, consequently, the male's sexuality) in the analysed works. The exhibition of male sexuality in the works of both men and women writers depends upon the image of the woman, which provides (directly or indirectly) character traits necessary for creation of the male's sexuality. This approach may be considered similar to the theory of Self and Other as presented in the works of Jacques Lacan and Carl Jung (discussed in the introduction to this chapter). The above analysis demonstrates that the male in the works of the four Mexican writers sees the



woman as the Other, which reflects his ideal personality. Since the woman appears to embody the idealised traits assigned to her by the subject (male), her character may be compared to the expression of the collective unconscious or the ultimate goal of the Self. However, in the works analysed above there are several aspects of the image of the woman, which suggest that the theory of the Self and the Other may not be fully applicable in this case; thus, the image of the woman has been analysed as consisting of three aspects, which may complement major traits of the male's sexual character (the connection between the exhibition of male sexuality and the character of the woman will become evident as the analysis progresses).

In the works of men writers chosen for this study (Paz, Sabines) the male and female characters may be seen as representing the opposition of the Self and the Other (as defined by Jung and Lacan), but a closer examination has shown that the process is more than a reflection of Self onto the Other. When the male is aroused, he creates a sexually arousing partner out of the surrounding landscape, and the woman does not possess any discernible character traits until the male initiates sexual intercourse.

In the works of Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines the male is depicted as the only cognitive entity, and the imaginary woman does not take active part in the emotional or cognitive aspect of sexual intercourse. While imagining the woman-partner, the male is developing his sexuality on his own; when he reaches a certain stage of development he mirrors it in the image of the woman that he creates in his mind to satisfy his immediate sexual desire. Regardless of the intermediate changes in the woman's character, the end result of her transformation is the same as her initial personality makeup. The male is the one whose character undergoes visible changes because he is the one possessing full independent conscience.

It should be recognised that the male's sexual character is being 'pieced together' throughout his sexual experience and may not be completed within the boundaries of a



literary work. Further analysis will show that in 'Piedra de sol' and 'Blanco' by Octavio Paz the male may be seen as having achieved full self-actualisation and recognises his sexuality, while in the poems by Jaime Sabines the male is represented as having obtained a single major trait after a sexual act (all four poems contain one scene of lovemaking each, whether explicit or not), which does not lead immediately to full self-actualisation<sup>3</sup>. The woman's transformation of character as perceived or imagined by the male happens for the sole purpose of changing the makeup of his sexuality, with each trait transfer bringing the male closer to his sexual self-actualisation. The male emphasises the traits of the woman's image that are helpful in the creation of his sexual identity.

The approach of the women writers in this study to the image of the woman-partner is drastically different from that of the men writers mainly because both Rosario Castellanos and Marcela Del-Río create female characters that are self-aware outside sexual intercourse (i.e., that possess cognition independently of the male), while the male characters of their works either completely lack cognition or exhibit rudimentary cognitive abilities. The female characters are represented as cognitive personalities (Castellanos) or as semi-divine entities (Del-Río). Since the women in the works of Castellanos and Del-Río exhibit the traits of mothers (referring implicitly or explicitly to males as children, seeing their own role as that of a parent or guardian), it is possible to assume that the male characters in those works will exhibit childlike traits (emotional immaturity, sexual ineptitude, etc.) - as will be seen in Chapter 2, the males in those works possess childlike characteristics. This juxtaposition suggests that the woman's character creates the male's sexuality, or, at least, helps him to create it.

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<sup>3</sup> Chapter 4 concentrates on the process of the male's self-actualisation through sexual intercourse: the analysis of the woman's role in this process is based upon the examination of the woman's godlike character, as presented in Section 1.4 of this chapter.



The above analysis of the character of the woman in the works of the four Mexican writers allows us to conclude that the exhibition of various aspects of male sexuality may reflect the aspects of the image of the woman as examined above. It is possible to suggest that the characteristics comprising male sexuality are complemented by or reflected in the woman's character; thus, the interdependence of the two characters will form the basis of the following analysis.

## CHAPTER 2

### Primal Aspects of Male Sexuality

#### 2.1 Theoretical background: Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs

The following analysis is based upon the theory of human motivation developed by American humanist psychologist Abraham Maslow starting in 1943. This theory has made a significant impact on psychological studies from the mid-1940s to the present; currently, it is one of the most widely used theoretical bases in developmental studies as well as in pedagogical psychology. The hierarchy of human needs has been adopted by humanist psychologists worldwide and regarded as a reliable theory of human behaviour, especially by educational psychologists in the United States, who incorporated Maslow's findings in their theory of emotive and humanistic education (Borton, Combs, Omaggio). Currently, Maslow's theory of human motivation continues to be widely used in various fields of psychology, for example in educational psychology (Roberts, Sullivan, Webb).

The centre of the theory of human motivation is the hierarchy of human needs arranged in the order of their cognitive nature which determines the level of importance of their satisfaction. According to Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, to achieve higher levels of development it is important to satisfy primary needs, including sexual desires (Maslow 1954, 81-84). This hierarchy as defined in his work *Motivation and Personality* consists of five levels of needs - from the very basic (primal) to specifically human: (1) physiological needs - hunger, thirst, sexual desire; (2) need for safety and security (both physical and emotional) which implies not only a safe shelter but also a safe routine of life in predictable surroundings; (3) need for love and belonging characterised by reciprocal



affectionate relationships with friends and loved ones; (4) need for self-esteem defined by Maslow as a 'desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of [oneself], for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others' (id., 90); and finally (5) need for self-actualisation - a desire to be what one can be, that is, to fulfil one's potential. It should be noted that '[if] all the needs are unsatisfied, and the organism is then dominated by the physiological needs, all other needs may become simply nonexistent or be pushed into the background' (id., 82). In other words, when more basic, primal needs (of physiological satisfaction and safety) are unmet, they dominate one's existence completely, whereas unmet cognitive needs (for love, esteem, and self-actualisation) do not impede one's everyday life.

The main premise of the theory of human motivation is that human development depends solely on moving up the hierarchy of human needs. 'The organism is dominated and its behavior organised only by unsatisfied needs' (id., 84). Thus, until primary needs are met a human cannot proceed to satisfy higher, more cognitive needs. The particular need that dominates the human's existence at any given time is deemed to be the most important and therefore has to be satisfied before other needs are considered. At the same time the human's present and future existence depends solely on the process of satisfaction of an unmet need - 'gratification [...] releases the organism from the domination of a relatively more physiological need, permitting thereby the emergence of other more social goals' (ibid.). Satisfaction of cognitive needs depends on meeting physiological needs, among which is sexual satisfaction. Maslow states that this level of needs is present in animals as well as primates and is therefore classified as a primal or animal need, whereas the second level (safety and security) is most prominent in children and remains in the human psyche throughout the course of life. It should be emphasised that satisfaction of the safety need may be considered a primal need since it is as acute in baby animals as in human babies and



children. However, in adult animals it is exhibited on an instinctoid<sup>29</sup> level as the instinct of self-preservation, while adult humans lose a pronounced need for safety and security. This is not only due to the fact that adult humans can physically 'fend for themselves' but also because they are able to rationalise their behaviour, whereas children may be looking for safety because they lack the physical strength and the necessary capability to defend themselves, and also self-confidence based upon cognitive maturity. Thus, Maslow concludes that this need is less primal since its satisfaction loses its acuteness as a child grows up and develops cognitive abilities (id., 123-145).

The following analysis in the thesis aims to prove that the first stage in the development of male sexuality is satisfaction of the physiological aspect of sexual desire. This chapter addresses the primal aspect of male sexuality as presented in the works of Octavio Paz, Jaime Sabines, Rosario Castellanos, and Marcela Del-Río<sup>30</sup>. This aspect, exhibited by the male during a metaphorical foreplay or state of heightened sexual arousal, consists of two parts: absence of cognitive expression during sexual arousal, and fear of death. The male experiences arousal from a primal perspective; this leads to rejection of his cognitive side in favour of a more 'animal' sexual experience. This process may be perceived as the first stage in the formation of the male's sexuality, since during this stage

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<sup>29</sup> Maslow defines instinctoid needs as primal needs within the human context; in other words, these needs are physiological and therefore are to be met before a human can function on a higher cognitive level. While instinctoid needs are similar to pure physiological needs, they are weaker in their expression because humans experience them within the boundaries of a powerful culture; unlike animal instincts, instinctoids can disappear under certain external social conditions. For example, in a study of Balinese people, who are seen by Westerners as lacking affection, a motion picture from Bali shows that 'the infants and children cry and bitterly resent the lack of affection, [from which] we can only conclude that this loss of affectionate impulse is an acquired loss' (Bateson and Mead, *Balinese Character: A Photo-graphic Analysis*, The New York Academy of Sciences, 1942; cited in Maslow 1954, 131).

<sup>30</sup> The novel *Proceso a Faubritten* by Marcela Del-Río will not be used in the first section of this chapter because it does not present the non-cognitive aspect of male sexuality. The first primal characteristic to be represented implicitly in the novel is the connection between sexual satisfaction and fear of death; next trait exhibited by the male is emotional dependency on the woman (this will be addressed in detail in Chapter 3).



the male recognises his primal behaviour by obtaining a character trait from the personality of the woman-partner (imaginary or otherwise).

In the works of the aforementioned writers the male character displays the same pattern of expression of his primal nature: exhibiting overt animal characteristics which covertly lead to the beginning of his self-awareness. These traits are designed to focus the male upon the physical (non-cognitive) aspect of sexual satisfaction and to overshadow his cognitive abilities, which might prevent him from experiencing it. Since the need for sexual satisfaction is one of the basic physiological needs which has to be met before satisfying desires of a higher cognitive order, it supports the above suggestion that the male's sexual experience begins with the meeting of his primal physiological need for release of sexual tension.

While the pattern is the same in the works of the four writers, there are specific differences between the portrayal of these stages in the works of the men writers (Paz, Sabines) and the portrayal by the women writers (Castellanos, Del-Río). The following sections will address the dissimilarity in the writers' depiction of the two primal aspects of male sexuality - non-cognitive sexual expression, and connection between sexual arousal and fear of death. The third section of the chapter will investigate the difference in presentation of the first stage of the male's sexual self-awareness which depends on his perception of the woman-partner. As a result, the analysis will determine the role of satisfaction of the male's basic primal needs in meeting more cognitive needs during a metaphorical sexual act.

## **2.2 Absence of sentient traits in the male's character during foreplay**

The first stage of the male's metaphorical sexual experience which appears in the works of the four Mexican writers is the exhibition of animal traits of male sexuality: sexual aggression and absence of cognitive expression during foreplay. In the works of Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines the male achieves the first stage of sexual self-actualisation by

transferring the physical aspect of his primal traits onto the imaginary woman, while retaining their emotional side. In the poetry of Octavio Paz these aspects of male sexuality reveal themselves in the character of the woman imagined by the male at the beginning of sexual intercourse. The most prominent display of the transfer of character traits from the male to the imaginary woman can be seen in 'Piedra de sol', though various aspects of the transfer also appear in the poet's earlier collections, such as *Asueto* (1939 - 1944) and *El girasol* (1943 - 1948).

### 2.2.1 The male's primal sexual traits in the earlier works of Octavio Paz

An analysis of poetry of *Libertad bajo palabra*, *El girasol*, and other collections by Octavio Paz reveals a connection between sexual satisfaction and consciousness. This becomes particularly evident in the poem 'Mediodía'. Rachel Phillips suggests that this poem 'describes the poet's feeling of merging with the oneness of Nature through the agency of the sun's light and the deepening shadows' (Phillips 1972, 96). This interpretation, however, disregards the references to the male attempting to capture a perfect eternal moment through an emotional or a physical experience. In addition, the poem may be interpreted as a reflection of the male's sexuality since there are many implicit references to its primal side as the male abandons non-physical communication with the world/woman when becoming aroused:

Un quieto resplandor me inunda y ciega...

Cierro los ojos y a mi sombra fio...

Dentro de mí palpita, flor y fruto...

(Paz 1960, 60)

A case of transfer of the male's primal traits onto the imaginary woman is evident when the male imagines a woman in the surrounding landscape -

Lento y tenaz, el día sumergido



es una sombra trémula y caliente,  
un negro mar que avanza sin sonido, ...  
Medianoche del cuerpo, toda cielo,  
bosque de pulsaciones y espesura,  
nocturno mediodía del subsuelo,

(id., 61)

There is no reference to a separate woman entity in this poem, i.e., she is not completely extracted from the landscape, only her genitalia are 'visible' because they provide the male with sexual pleasure. As the male recognises sexual symbols in the world around him, the woman's body is dissolved in his sexual sensations ('y ya no hay cuerpo más, sino un deshielo') and as the body disappears, the male experiences a physical sensation which may be perceived as a fleeting sexual arousal - 'una onda, vibración que se disgrega'.

The male experiences a moment of self-awareness through a sexual act; this is the first stage of character fragmentation (and, consequently, self-actualisation) since the male asserts himself and then decides to transfer a trait onto the woman. This trait appears to be cognitive since the male regards his sexual experience from an emotional perspective though the sensations are described in purely physical terms, sometimes not explicitly applicable to the human body:

¿Este caer en una entraña oscura  
es de la misma luz del mediodía  
que erige lo que toca en escultura?

(id., 61)

In 'Jardín' the male's primal sexuality is also reflected in the image of the woman who is assigned various visual characteristics; among these the most sexually explicit are the images of a garden (life growing out of seeds), and flowers (petals are akin to vaginal lips). 'Soledad suspendida entre los aires' carries the connotation of the absence of a partner or

his/her existence in another reality ('entre los aires'). The movement of the garden/air/woman and the presence of smell indicate the male's increasing arousal which becomes more tangible. As the male is getting more aroused, the woman becomes accessible also by non-tactile means ('a mis ojos abre'). The woman-rock loses cohesion in the male's hands under the influence of his sexual tension; this may be interpreted as a metaphor for the male completely losing connection with his cognitive side and existing only in his primal sensations. This interpretation is supported by the following quote; the only verbs used here are those expressing physiological actions:

piedra que en mis manos se despierta  
y ya presente en mí su oculta forma:  
en tu silencio bebo tu sustancia.

(id., 58)

It may be argued that during sexual intercourse the woman expresses her cognitive side, or that the male's arousal is of a cognitive nature. However, in the following quote the male's latent consciousness (reflected in the image of the woman) is metaphorically overshadowed by the expression of his physical or physiological self -

Te conoces en mí y en mí te piensas  
y yo en tu ser dormido me recuerdo,  
sólo latido, ciega flor, arbusto,  
tierra que entre la tierra se confunde.

(ibid.)

The woman becomes 'ciega flor' unresponsive to the male's cognitive expression (words), then once again turns into the image of earth with its life-giving qualities, neither alive nor dead but with a cognitive trait ('se confunde') passed onto her by the male at the pinnacle of sexual satisfaction. This transformation suggests that the male's primal side is in conflict with his consciousness, although during the period of high sexual arousal the primal aspect



overpowers the cognitive expression, and the male experiences sexual satisfaction from a non-cognitive (primal) perspective.

The male's self-awareness depends on the mirroring of one of his primal traits which follows a familiar route: the woman invented by the male's imagination now affects his body through sexual arousal. In addition to self-awareness (recognition of his consciousness) the male is aware of his physical self as he shares the physical aspect of his sexual experience with the woman. Therefore, he reflects his consciousness in the woman-mirror, not owning the consciousness but being able to provide her body for the male's self-awareness through sex.

Throughout the poem the male exists on a very basic conscious level and his physical and emotional experiences are recognised subconsciously. He acknowledges the presence of his cognitive side, which exhibits few animal traits while still remaining deaf and thus unable to communicate verbally (deafness is mentioned several times in the poem). The communication between him and the imaginary woman is by visual and tactile means (this is evident from the fact that eyes and touch are mentioned especially during the male's arousal). The male's body, however, is stripped of its physical identity during a sexual act, and all that remains is basic life functions (blood vessels). It may be said that the male exists in two dimensions - as he watches himself expressing his primal sexuality he exists on a physical plane, while his cognitive aspect disconnected from its physical side becomes a metaphoric observer. This explains the male's deafness since his physical side which is also expressed in sexually explicit imagery of the woman/world cannot perceive his conscious self. The male separates his primal aspect from his consciousness, assigning the primal aspect to the image of the woman, and thus experiences sexual satisfaction from a physical and an emotional perspective. The two aspects of the male's sexual satisfaction are not connected to each other. The physical orgasm happens before the emotional, and the male does not analyse it from a cognitive perspective because at the moment of high sexual

arousal he lacks cognitive traits; on the other hand, the emotional orgasm is perceived as a purely mental exercise. On the whole, the poem presents the male's attempt to transcend his physical existence to achieve a moment of equilibrium between his conscious and subconscious selves; one of the means of achieving this balance is through a sexual experience. The primal physical aspect of this experience is not as pronounced in 'Jardín' as in other poems by Paz, especially in 'Lago' and 'Marina', where the male's primal sexuality is expressed more explicitly.

In 'Lago' the woman imagined by the male at the moment of sexual arousal completely lacks cognition, as the male transfers all his primal sexual traits onto her, and the only visible parts of her body are sexual organs or erogenous zones (breasts). While the woman's appearance is very sexually arousing (including a thinly veiled reference to her genitalia - 'una mitad violeta, / otra de plata, escama'), the male only has eyes, chest, fingers, i.e., there is no sexually explicit imagery in his description, and his body parts mentioned in the poem are the ones involved in active physical experiences (touching/watching the woman's body) which lead to the male's arousal:

- 1        Una mitad violeta,  
          otra de plata, escama,  
  
          (id., 62)  
  
          Entre montañas áridas  
  
          las aguas prisioneras  
  
          (ibid.)  
  
          esta perla dormida  
  
          que apenas resplandece.  
  
          (id., 63)
- 2        agua y cielo reposan,  
  
          pecho a pecho, infinitos.



(ibid.)

Como el dedo que roza

unos senos,

(ibid.)

Sólo para los ojos

esta luz y estas aguas,

(ibid.)

In the above quotes the sexually explicit appearance of the woman (1), and the physical description of the male (2) reveal the difference between the two characters in the poem. The woman is a passive object of the male's sexual desire (this is evident in the absence of verbs, which implies the woman's static nature), while the description of the male's actions (expressed in the active forms of verbs) reveals his active role in a sexual act. It is possible that in 'Lago' the woman's body hosts both partners since in the last stanza the shapes are interconnected ('un repentino viento / y un naufragio infinito'). Thus it may be concluded that during a sexual stage of the relationship, especially a foreplay, the male experiences only the primal aspect of his sexuality, which is then transferred onto the imaginary woman-partner in order for the male to receive a full spectrum of sensations (visual, tactile, sexual, etc.). The male meanwhile is free from his primal aspect, yet there is nothing to fill the void. Although he goes through the sexual experience on a non-cognitive level, during an orgasm he achieves superconsciousness, while during foreplay he transfers his primal traits onto the woman through whom he reaches sexual satisfaction.

As in 'Lago', in 'Marina' the male assumes an active role in sexual intercourse as he makes an attempt at communicating with the woman-partner to express his cognitive side. This attempt is thwarted by the male's arousal - 'palabra apenas dicha'. Also, communication between the partners is impossible due to the fact that the woman lacks conscience since she is created in the male's imagination for sexual satisfaction on a primal

level - 'para el tacto y los ojos'. A reference to deaf animals implies once again that no communication between the partners is possible during foreplay because of the male's (and, consequently, the imaginary woman's) lack of consciousness. An image of the tongue, which may be seen as carrying explicit sexual connotation (in terms of cunnilingus) or as a metaphor for a penis, reveals the male's preoccupation with sexual satisfaction at the expense of his cognitive expression -

Lengua del sol, sedienta y amarilla,  
lengua del mar, salada lengua verde,  
blanca lengua sin sueño,  
sinuosa espada líquida

(id., 56)

The poem contains other implicit sexual images (snakes, lightning, sword) which, too, may be interpreted as referring to the male's penis or tongue. Here a metaphoric sexual act is more intense than in 'Lago' since the poem is set on the ocean or seashore where the forces of nature are more violent. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the more primal the male's desire the more intensely or aggressively it is expressed. This parallel is supported by the rate of change of imagery. At first slow, the change is faster with increasing arousal, and the images become shorter and more explicit. During a climax the male loses his physical form (the description is on an abstract level). This technique of an increased speed and power of imagery is similar to the one used in 'Piedra de sol', where sexual metaphors become shorter and more explicit with the rise of the male's sexual tension. From 'muslos apenas entreabiertos' to 'espirales del mar y de la piedra' metaphorical sexual arousal increases, after which the partners climax ('canal que desemboca') and the male reaches emotional orgasm, that is, he ejaculates first, and later perceives the emotional aspect of orgasm ('... ni qué abismos contenga'). Thus, it may be said that the male experiences orgasm through his consciousness rather than physical body because there are no indications



of the physical pleasure of orgasm; instead, the male explores its abstract qualities after perceiving the physical pleasure of foreplay and climax. However, the woman representing the male's primal traits manifests only physical / sexual characteristics (lips) metaphorically described as part of nature ('espinas, frutos'). Therefore, the male's primal side is active during the orgasm, though his conscience attempts to decrease its input.

In 'Cuerpo a la vista' the male and the woman are complementing opposites - 'nupcias de la luz y la sombra, de lo visible y lo invisible / allí espera la carne su resurrección y el día de la vida / perdurable' (id., 83). The image of the male represents his consciousness, and the woman embodies his physical primal side expressed in sexually explicit metaphors. The two characters are joined in a sexual act as the male completes the separation from his physical self by assigning his arousal to the woman and experiencing arousal from an emotional perspective.

There is no evidence in the poem that the male regains his physical self at the end of the orgasm/poem since the last four lines show only emotions and beliefs, thus registering consciousness without physical sensations (this is supported by the presence of abstract ideas but no physical references to the male's sexual experience):

Patria de sangre,  
única tierra que conozco y me conoce,  
única patria en la que creo,  
única puerta al infinito.

(ibid.)

The process of character fragmentation is similar to that in 'Mediodía' - the male metaphorically separates into two selves, one of which becomes the woman reflecting the primal aspect of the male's sexuality.

### 2.2.2 Examples of male primal sexuality in 'Piedra de sol' and 'Blanco'

'Piedra de sol' and 'Blanco' are the most poignant examples of the formation of the primal aspect of male sexuality created in Octavio Paz's works. The subject of 'Piedra de sol' has been analysed by many critics (Fein, Phillips, Sucre, Wilson). The two main viewpoints are that the theme of the poem is 'a quest for meaning in life [... or] the relationship between time and reality' (Fein 1986, 18-19), and that the 'poet's' relationship with the woman leads to 'the re-emergence of language, when passion and art have struggled with its insufficiencies to express what is really inexpressible' (Phillips 1972, 22). However, neither interpretation takes into consideration the poem's numerous sexual images which describe the process of formation of the male's sexuality. Since the sexual imagery of the poem is extensive and will be analysed throughout this work, the following quote will suffice to reflect one of the most poignant exhibitions of the male's primal sexual traits:

el mundo cambia  
si dos, vertiginosos y enlazados,  
caen sobre la yerba: el cielo baja,  
los árboles ascienden, ...  
rompe amarras el cuerpo, zarpa el alma,  
perdemos nuestros nombres y flotamos  
a la deriva entre el azul y el verde,

(Paz 1960, 306)

The image of intertwined bodies appears at the moment of heightened sexual desire when physical and emotional sensations ('rompe amarras el cuerpo, zarpa el alma') overshadows cognitive experience; this is evident from absence of reference to cognitive expressions (e.g., verbs reflecting thought, opinion, etc.). The quote may, therefore, be read as the assimilation of the human body into the surrounding landscape. The movement in this quote is of great importance because it establishes further connection between human



sexuality and nature. The down-up movement of the bodies ('dos ... caen sobre la yerba', 'flotamos / a la deriva entre el azul y el verde') is supplemented by the synchronous movement of the landscape ('el cielo baja, / los árboles ascienden'), and the combination of movements suggests that at the moment of increased sexual desire humans revert to non-cognitive existence, as they are metaphorically joined with nature.

In the rest of the poem, the male physically interacts with the woman only during foreplay, thus exhibiting the primal side of his sexuality. During a sexual act the male is separated into two entities - the primal one which participates in the physical aspect of a sexual act, and the cognitive one which is active during orgasm, thus allowing the male to experience the emotional side of intercourse<sup>31</sup>. At the beginning of foreplay the male transfers his primal sexual side onto the woman void of consciousness, and denounces his higher cognitive aspect. This process becomes evident in the woman being described as part of nature (flora, fauna, etc.)<sup>32</sup>, that is, the male experiences sexual arousal from a physical/primal perspective. Since the woman is depicted as being 'extracted' from the male's non-cognitive reality, she possesses mostly physical non-cognitive characteristics, as the male becomes aroused and initiates intercourse. At first, the male uses sexually implicit images to create the woman - 'bosque de pilares encantados' (id., 294), 'una muralla que la luz divide / en dos mitades de color durazno' (ibid,); these quotes illustrate the male's awakening sexual desire, as he makes allusions to the woman's legs and genitalia. Later, the images become more sexually explicit as the male's arousal heightens - 'uva de vida' (id., 297), 'señora de semillas' (id., 309), 'arco de sangre, puente de latidos' (id., 310); allusions to the female genitalia become more evident, while the imagery of the nature void of

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<sup>31</sup> A detailed analysis of the conflict between the subjective and objective reality is carried out in Chapter 4.

<sup>32</sup> The woman's image has been closely examined in Chapter 1, and a connection has been established between the absence of cognitive traits in her character and the male's sexual arousal.

cognitive traits still prevails (the reasons for the choice of images is analysed in detail in Chapter 1).

The primal aspect of the male's sexuality is also revealed in the connection between sexual satisfaction and fear of death; his animal fear of death is translated into morbid imagery during foreplay since orgasm is symbolically seen as 'little death'<sup>33</sup> (a detailed analysis of this process is presented in Section 2.2 of this chapter). As the male reaches the moment of climax, he abandons the physical aspect of sexual satisfaction and concentrates on the cognitive perspective before combining the physical and emotional sensations of orgasm:

muestra tu rostro al fin para que vea  
mi cara verdadera, ...  
caigo en mí mismo sin tocar mi fondo,  
recógeme en tus ojos, ...  
arco de sangre, puente de latidos,  
llévame al otro lado de esta noche,  
adonde yo soy tú somos nosotros,

(id., 309-10)

Gradually, the male's arousal embodied in the image of the woman loses its physical attributes, first becoming a face, and then being combined with the male's consciousness into one being ('adonde yo soy tú somos nosotros'). After the climax the woman disappears and

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<sup>33</sup> This idea is developed further in 'Blanco' where the woman represents death of the physical world (Maya) and the male transgresses his cognitive self and reverts to a primal stage of existence as the first step towards achieving superconsciousness.



the male moves onto a higher cognitive level of existence where his physical self is no longer essential to his self-perception. Thus, the male's sexual experience may be traced from primal to superconscious, and defined as hosting the beginning of the process of self-actualisation.

A more in-depth approach to animal sexual expression is seen in 'Blanco', where the male's primal nature helps him achieve superconsciousness through sexual experience. This connection between the physical and cognitive side of the male's self reveals Tantric influence on Paz's poetry of the mid-1960's. Previous critical readings of 'Blanco' concentrate mainly on the poet's attempt to 'discover an ultimate reality behind the appearances of the world (Fein 1986, 76), or on the conflict between this attempt and the inadequacy of language (Phillips 1972, 135). Some critics consider the theme of the poem to be, as well as that of modern art, 'an attempt to find out what lies behind language' (Wilson 1979, 139), or 'los momentos sucesivos en que el poeta la confronta con el mundo, o más bien, ... la visión de un mundo ... en búsqueda de su expresión' (Sucre 1974, 233). It should be pointed out that many critics disregard or minimise the role of sexual experience in the poem; yet its mostly sexually explicit imagery cannot be treated as a mere illustration of heightened passion as seen, for instance, by John Fein.

Sexual images in the poem are used to resolve the male's mind-body conflict, which stems from his attempt to reconcile his sexuality and his cognitive aspect by first denouncing his consciousness. The second part of the poem (the bold black typeface) represents the primal aspect of the male's sexuality; this is evident in sexually explicit imagery since it reflects the physical manifestation of the male's sexuality which he sees as another manifestation of Nature. This section may be seen as representing water since images of water and river appear repeatedly in the poem, and the fluid appearance of print reinforces this supposition: 'Río de sangre, / río de historias / de sangre, / río seco:' (Paz 1989, 218),

'tienes la boca llena de agua' (id., 219). It should be noted that every other line in this section is phonetically similar, thus creating the illusion of fluidity:

asciende  
en un tallo de cobre  
resuelto  
en un follaje de claridad:  
amparo  
de caídas realidades.

(id., 215)

From the Yoga perspective, as explained in *The Sivananda's Companion to Yoga*, this section of the poem can also be described as similar to the tamasic guna (or one of the aspects of the spirit within every object of the Universe), characterised by clouded reasoning and dark emotions (Sivananda 1983, 80). The differentiation between gunas is 'the differentiation of "I" and "this", of subject and object, and mythologically as Shakti moving out from Siva - in the raising of Kundalini [inner energy], when the state of superconsciousness is attained, the two principles are reunited and the illusion is no more' (id., 16). A parallel may also be made between the nature of this section and the Swadhishthana chakra located in the prostatic plexus (in Yoga philosophy, chakras are the energy centres of the astral body - id., 71), whose element is water and which represents the centre of male sexual energy. Sexually implicit (Paz 1989, 217) and explicit (id., 218) imagery augment this comparison. The male's inner river is red and drying, described as flowing between the flames; this image can be interpreted as a description of a violent ejaculation or an erection of the penis immediately before the orgasm -

*river rising a little.*

El mío es rojo y se agosta  
entre sableras llameantes:



(id., 216)

The mouth of the language is muzzled by 'la conjuración anónima / de los huesos' (id., 217)  
- the simile of bone and penis suggests that sexuality is blocking the expression of the male's cognitive aspect.

The male is approaching the point of extreme arousal before he engages in a sexual act; this moment is very important because of the first shift in the male's nature from predominantly cognitive to mainly driven by sexual desires. The two facets complement each other in the following quote:

Hablar  
mientras los otros trabajan  
es pulir huesos  
aguzar  
silencios  
hasta la transparencia,  
hasta la ondulación,  
el cabrilleo,  
hasta el agua

(ibid.)

The act of talking is regarded as an expression of individuality or consciousness; yet the image of polishing bones which is both morbid and sexually prominent (and later a sexually explicit image of orgasm - 'hasta la ondulación, / hasta el agua'), compares the sexual act to a cognitive process. On the other hand, cognition may also be seen as an extension of sexuality, which invites the conclusion that the primal side of human nature is responsible for creating a higher order of being which will deny itself an overt expression of its 'animal' nature that bore it.

As the poem progresses, the cognitive aspect of the male's character becomes less important: language is heard, not seen (read) or thought about (understood). In the beginning of the second section, 'el lenguaje deshabitado' (id., 215) implies previous presence of an inhabitant that may be presumed to be human, since language is one of the principal signs of human conscience. However, language is also characterised as shelter, thus implying the satisfaction of one of the basic primary needs of any living being - the need for shelter. Therefore, language is beginning progressively to lose its connection with a higher order of mentality. Another expression of the male's loss of cognition is seen in the phrase 'un presentimiento de lenguaje' (id., 216). The male does not have it and fears it, since language is the main sign of human cognition; thus he regresses to an earlier stage of evolution, becoming closer to wild animals, who are usually frightened by the sound of speech, perceiving it as a sign of danger. The regression continues until eventually language takes on mainly non-cognitive traits that are explicitly connected with the natural world void of life of a higher order - 'la tierra es un lenguaje calcinado' (id., 218). At this point, the male's animal side takes over completely, and he begins searching for ways to satisfy his sexual desire.

The poem begins with a statement of innocence (or a statement of nothingness) and ends in the male reaching self-actualisation after revealing his previously concealed primal side to himself. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that the stanzas describing the reality void of substance represent the male's conscience, and the darker 'earthly' sections portray his sexual or animal nature, and the reconciliation between the two occurs in the double-column section representing the sexual act.

### **2.2.3 Aggression and insecurity - Jaime Sabines' approach**

In Jaime Sabines' poetry the approach to the primal aspect of the male's sexuality is similar to that in Paz's poems, as the male imagines the woman-partner to reflect his animal



nature. However, in Sabines' works, before the male engages (metaphorically) in a sexual act, he tends to retain and display his aggressive tendencies, expressed in Paz's works as the imagery of raging natural forces, which is used by the male to create his imaginary woman-partner. Most of the time a sexual act is not described by Sabines explicitly, though foreplay figures quite prominently. It is possible to infer that during 'foreplay' the male is overtly sexually aggressive, while exhibiting covert childlike traits, such as emotional immaturity and need for safety (a more detailed analysis of this phenomenon is presented in Chapter 3).

'Esta noche' contains the most explicit evidence of the male's overt primal characteristics, visible first of all in the description of the male's sexual experience. The first line (also the title) of the poem is indicative of the male's primal trait - 'Esta noche vamos a gozar' (Sabines 1997b, 158). The word 'gozar' has several meanings, including 'to possess' and 'to enjoy'; throughout the poem the male talks about basic needs being satisfied, including sexual satisfaction. It may be surmised that the male regards the feeling of joy as resulting from sexual satisfaction achieved through aggressive possession of the woman. While in other poems by Sabines the male resorts to metaphors and similes to create a sexually arousing scene, in 'Esta noche' his approach is rather straightforward and may appear almost offensive. The short lines containing explicit statements ('Esta noche vamos a gozar', 'Esta noche vamos a emborrachar', 'Esta noche nos vamos a enamorar') evoke a comparison with the rites of passage practised by ancient tribes (Aztecs, Zoque, etc). In addition, sexually explicit references appear from the very beginning of the poem, when the male's arousal is not evident:

Esta noche vamos a gozar.  
La música que quieres,  
el trago que te gusta  
y la mujer que has de tomar.

(ibid.)

It appears that the male is talking to his male friends during a 'boys' night out' or a 'stag night', since he uses first person plural ('nosotros') commands and employs sexually explicit language which would be used among male friends, especially when talking about the possibility of sexual conquest. On the other hand, the male may be talking to himself since he addresses someone in the singular familiar form 'tú'.

The urgency of 'has de tomar' reveals the male's hidden arousal and sexual aggression; several lines later this aggression takes on animal characteristics -

El bendito deseo se estremece  
igual que un gato en un morral,  
y está en tu sangre esperando la hora  
como el cazador en el matorral.

(ibid.)

The physical traits of arousal, compared to a captured animal and a hunter poised for a kill, reflect the primal aspect of the male's sexual desire which he keeps under control, separated from his conscious self (this desire is waiting in the male's blood, which represents mainly physical existence). This characteristic of the male's sexuality may also be seen as the means of self-affirmation, especially since a comparison has been made earlier between the repeating commands and the rite of passage.

The woman's image, though sketchy, provides an interesting perspective on the male's nature. As in many poems by Sábines (and Paz), the woman exhibits prominent sexual attributes and the absence of cognitive traits. In this poem, the references to the woman contain images of nature - 'el higo y la uva y la miel de abeja' (ibid.) - all of which are sexually explicit and refer to the woman's genitalia ready for intercourse; for example, the image of honey is traditionally used to refer to vaginal secretion. Taking into consideration the fact that in 'Esta noche', the male imagines the woman for the sole purpose of his sexual satisfaction, it may be said that the male possesses the same traits as



the woman - in this case, he is mortal, though during a sexual act he may sense temporary escape from that condition because the passage of time appears suspended, and also because his sexual experience renders him void of self-awareness. The male perceives the woman as a physical body with its mortal nature, thus rendering his sexual experience as mainly primal.

In the poem 'Amor mío, mi amor' the male once again reflects his non-cognitive sexual desire in the image of the woman presented as a part of nature; sexually explicit imagery is used to depict her physical appearance yet there is no direct description of the male's arousal. Although the male transfers his arousal onto the woman by assigning her sexually explicit qualities, these qualities also remain within his character. This becomes evident in the male-narrator's speech as presented in the following quote, which contains implicit sexual references:

Te quiero amor, amor, absurdamente,  
tontamente, perdido, iluminado [...]  
voy a seguir tus pasos hacia arriba,  
de tus pies a tu muslo y tu costado.

(id., 192)

In the above quote the male reveals the primal characteristics of his sexuality while retaining an intellectual awareness implied by the critical judgement of his emotions ('tontamente', 'absurdamente') which are linked to the references to the woman's body, especially its sexually arousing parts ('muslo', 'costado'). Throughout the poem the male makes allusions to the sexual aspect of his relationship with the woman, mentioning 'la alfombra', 'las sábanas tibias', which are places of lovemaking. It should be noted that in the poem there is no evidence of the male's conscious side (i.e., the imaginary woman lacks cognitive traits); the male appears to be attracted solely to the body physical and since he exhibits sexual arousal without resolving it in an orgasm. Therefore, it may be said that the primal aspect of



the male's sexuality is prominent during foreplay, or the male's high sexual arousal, overshadowing his cognitive characteristics.

Another poem where the male's primal sexual expression is very prominently demonstrated is 'Ay, Tarumba'. From the first few lines - 'te jala, te arrastra, te deshace' (id., 92) - it becomes evident that the male's sexual desire is explicitly threatening to his physical and emotional nature. The primal nature of the male's sexuality is implied in the absence of references to his cognitive self; instead, the male's sexual expression is described in very explicit terms - 'te gusta pasarles la lengua de tus ojos a todas' (id., 93), evoking animal imagery in addition to sexual connotations. It is possible that Tarumba ('crazy') also refers to the male's emotional state; this idea is supported by the presence of a masculine adjective describing Tarumba - 'salado Tarumba' - as well as references to women outside Tarumba's character - 'dejas de ver mujer' (ibid.). In this case, the woman-partner (or women-partners) is independent from the male, though she may still be seen as existing for the satisfaction of his primal sexual desire.

Throughout the poem, the male's primal sexuality is reflected in the explicitly physical language - 'zumbas', 'te quiebras', 'saliva' - all these images reflect the male's hidden aggression. Since several images in the poem are of implicit sexual nature ('te quiebras', 'naciste en la saliva', etc.), it may be assumed that the male's sexual aggression becomes prominent before his desire is satisfied. There is no reference to an orgasm, though sexual imagery is rather prominent; thus one may conclude that the male's primal expression of sexuality is explicit mainly during the foreplay, i.e., when his arousal is increasing. The male exhibits primal traits during heightened sexual arousal; he is void of emotional and cognitive aspects since his conscience is created from and defined by his sexuality - 'Tú, Tarumba, naciste en la saliva, / quién sabe en qué goma caliente naciste' (ibid.), while the abstract imaginary woman in the poem plays the role of a passive recipient of the male's sexual expression.



In 'Ay, Tarumba', the process of the male's self-actualisation is depicted in a metaphoric conflict between primal and cognitive aspects of the male's personality. This conflict is prominent in the last three lines of the poem. Although the imaginary woman in the poem may be seen as representing a figure of parental authority, these lines may also be interpreted as referring to the male's ego -

No vas a sacar nada.

Aunque llores, aunque te quedes quieto

como un buen muchacho.

(ibid.)

If it is assumed that the male's ego is the one uttering this sentence, then the conflict becomes evident, as the male's id is thwarted by his asexual ego. According to Freud, ego represents the cognitive aspect of human nature; this cognitive side includes reasoning void of passion, which expresses itself not only in precepts but also in prohibitions (Freud 1937, 251, 258). The above quote contains an implicit prohibition ('no vas a sacar nada') designed to overpower the id's sexual arousal evident throughout the poem. This interpretation of the conflict is supported not only by implications of the male's passion/insanity ('tarumba' refers to unbalanced emotions) but also by the juxtaposition of this passion and the male's subconscious denial of emotions ('aunque quedes quieto') which is rewarded by the male's ego judging his actions as appropriate for 'un buen muchacho'.

A similar interaction between the male's animal aspect and his cognitive self appears in the structure of 'Tu cuerpo está a mi lado', where the two parts of the poem represent two aspects of the male's sexual satisfaction. The first part - 'Tu cuerpo está a mi lado' - 'sin mis labios' (Sabines 1997b, 137) reflects the physical aspect of sexual satisfaction, and the second part - 'Te digo a media voz' - 'se ponen a escuchar lo que no hablamos' (ibid.) represents its emotional side. Throughout the poem there are sexually explicit images of the woman's body - 'tu blando seno oculto y apretado / y el bajo y suave respirar de tu vientre'

(ibid.); the male's sexuality is also demonstrated rather explicitly in the lines: 'Miro mi cuerpo, el muslo / en que descansa tu cansancio' (ibid.). It should be noted that the woman is once again imagined by the male in order to satisfy his sexual desire. This is evident in the following quote - 'te beso como si fueras tu retrato' (ibid.), which indicates that the woman's appearance is important to the male, who has been creating her body throughout the poem / sexual act. In this case, a description of the woman's body as 'fácil' may be interpreted as a metaphor for the male's sexual conquest (an analogy between the woman's body and a discovered land has been examined in Chapter 1).

The process of mirroring is rather interesting in this poem: the male retains explicit sexual characteristics which are usually passed on to the woman, while the description of the woman contains mostly implicit sexual metaphors. The male's sexual expression is void of consciousness and contains only primal characteristics; when the male expresses his emotions, he disregards physical characteristics of either partner and concentrates on the transfer of emotions from his conscience to that of the imaginary woman, who lacks conscious traits and exhibits only physical attributes -

tu cuerpo está a mi lado

fácil, dulce, callado.

Tu cabeza en mi pecho se arrepiente

con los ojos cerrados

(ibid.)

There is no reference in the above quote to the woman's emotional or cognitive qualities, only her body. Throughout the poem she is asleep, thus exhibiting few or no signs of conscious expression. However, the verb 'arrepiente' points to the presence of conscience, since the woman acknowledges a feeling of guilt by repenting. This expression of conscience is juxtaposed by the phrase 'los ojos cerrados', which may be read as a metaphor for the lack of higher cognitive functions, since closed eyes prevent the woman



from seeing her partner and thus engaging in non-verbal communication with him or being able to assess his emotions. In other words, the physical aspect of the woman's character stops her from exhibiting cognitive traits. A similar description of the woman lacking conscious thought appears later in the poem, when she is seen as unable to communicate while the male is telling her 'cosas que invento a cada rato' (ibid.). Since the woman reflects the male's self in the state of sexual arousal, it may be said that the first trait exhibited by the male in the moment of sexual arousal is primal, or void of a cognitive aspect.

The male's inner conflict between his ego and id is expressed in the clashes of physical and emotional references. In the first part of the poem physical attributes and sexual imagery are prevalent over descriptions of emotions, whereas in the second part the male's emotional side is given more attention. It should be noted that the male's feeling of loneliness is transferred onto the imaginary woman through a kiss (a sexually implicit means):

y me pongo de veras triste y solo  
y te beso como si fueras tu retrato.  
Tú, sin hablar, me miras  
y te aprietas a mí y haces tu llanto  
sin lágrimas, sin ojos, sin espanto.

(ibid.)

The male experiences and internalises loneliness and sadness; the woman is responsible for an outward expression of the emotion though there is evidence that she does not *show* loneliness ('haces tu llanto / sin lágrimas'). She seems to be emotionally separated from the sentiment of sadness experiencing only its outward physical manifestation (tears). Thus it may be assumed that when the male imagines the woman he disregards her emotional or cognitive side in favour of a sexually prominent physical appearance. The mirroring of the male's character traits in the image of the woman occurs on a sexual plane, though the

mirrored trait may be of a higher cognitive order; the woman does not share the cognitive aspect of the emotional trait mirrored in her image, experiencing instead only the physical facet of the characteristic. It may therefore be concluded that the male creates the woman to host the overt expression of his emotional self<sup>34</sup>.

It should be emphasised that in this poem the process of character fragmentation occurs on two planes - first on the physical/sexual plane, then on the emotional level under the influence of sexual experience, since the first part of the poem deals with the physical aftermath of a sexual act and the second part reflects the emotional state of the partners as a result of their sexual experience.

A similar representation of the first stage of the formation of male sexuality appears in the poem 'Siempre fui mi pene', which is a very colourful example of interdependence of the male's cognitive and primal aspects expressed in an inner dialogue of the male's primal side and his consciousness. It is possible to assume that God in the poem is the male's ego or consciousness, in which case the question '¿Por qué me disminuyes?' (Sabines 1997a, 139) may be interpreted as the male's cognitive side dismissing his primal sexuality as an atavism or a secondary characteristic whose function becomes less important with the passage of time. The carnal and primal nature of the male's sexuality becomes obvious from the very first lines of the poem; in addition, the male considers his sexuality to be the means of accessing universal knowledge or attaining self-actualisation -

Siempre fui mi pene, Dios mío,  
siempre fui el pedazo de mi carne  
que entraba en las mujeres,

---

<sup>34</sup> The male's reluctance to express his feelings for fear of losing his machista nature has been discussed earlier in the introduction to Chapter 1.



que me hacía hombre, conocedor del mundo,

(ibid.)

Here, the woman is seen as a passive receptacle of the male's sexual desire ('que entraba en las mujeres') and as an undiscovered country ready to be conquered ('el dulce terrón de la tierra dulce'); the male sees his sexuality as the primary expression of his self, though his ego appears to be of a different opinion. The inner conflict between the primal aspect of the male's sexuality and his higher cognitive side is not resolved by the end of the poem - the male still regards his sexual potential as a necessary component of his persona - '¡Concédeme vivir entero / hasta los ochenta!' (ibid.). The male reaches self-awareness ('propietario de la vida y de la muerte') mainly through his sexual experiences; the body-mind interaction reveals overt prevalence of the role of the body and covert prevalence of the role of the mind. In other words, the mind rules the body from within, while the body translates the mind's intentions into sexual expression.

In 'He aquí' the male's acquisition of knowledge depends on the image of the woman mirrored in the male's sexual experience. The poem begins with the male assessing his emotional state of loneliness which is analysed through his physical self:

Como una droga mía y tuya  
somos, y una locura celular nos recorre  
y una sangre rebelde y sin cansancio

(Sabines 1997b, 143)

As the male continues missing the partner, descriptions of his emotional state become more carnal, evoking physical and sexual images - 'Con mi lengua y mis ojos y mis manos / te sé, sabes a amor, a dulce amor, a carne'(ibid.). It is important to note that the male does not make any references to his emotional state but registers only his physical and sexual sensations. The way he 'knows' the woman deserves further attention. Although knowledge requires cognitive expression, the male reaches this state by using physical and

sexual means to achieve a cognitive result, as in the above example where he 'knows' the woman through taste, vision and touch, i.e., primal nonverbal means of interaction with the world - animals use these to interact with their environment. In addition, the verb 'saber' has the meaning of 'knowing' in terms of learning (which again means higher consciousness) but the process of learning depends on sexual interaction - the male makes frequent connections between sexual intercourse and emotional interdependence; the pinnacle of this connection appears in the last lines of the poem.

The above analysis of the works of Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines examines the process of transfer of non-cognitive character traits by the male onto the imaginary woman-partner, as she is compared to the elements of nature which contain prominent sexual attributes but lack consciousness. The woman represents the physical or primal aspect of the male's sexuality, while the male retains mostly cognitive aspects of sexual experience; the cognitive aspects are expressed explicitly (in the poetry of Octavio Paz) or implicitly (in the works of Jaime Sabines). Though the male recognises that both facets of his sexuality exist, he acts upon the non-cognitive traits during foreplay to achieve the highest sexual arousal before engaging (or attempting to engage) in a sexual act.

#### **2.2.4 Women writers' viewpoint on male sexuality**

A different approach is adopted by the two women writers in this study (Rosario Castellanos and Marcela Del-Río), whose works contain an emphasis on the emotional isolation of the partners. Though the male and the woman are engaged in a sexual relationship, the woman considers the male lacking cognitive expression; since the male is perceived as being in the pre-cognitive stage, the woman feels lonely in her cognitive plane of existence.

Although in *Proceso a Faubritten* by Marcela Del-Río there is an extensive description of an emotionally charged relationship (between Faubritten and María Corona),



there is little evidence of the non-cognitive nature of the male's sexuality. On the other hand, the novel presents an interesting connection between sexual satisfaction and fear of death; therefore, *Proceso a Faubritten* will be used in the section dealing with this phenomenon. This section of the analysis will concentrate on the works of Rosario Castellanos because they show a distinctive pattern of development of the male's primal sexual nature.

### 2.2.5 *Album de familia*

In the works of Rosario Castellanos, the male characters are presented through the characters of women; however, unlike the poems of Paz and Sabines, Castellanos' poetry and short stories contain little or no direct description of the male's emotional self, and the woman is seen as existing independently from her partner. It is possible to assume that in a sexual relationship the woman is emotionally isolated from the male; her implied loneliness suggests that she metaphorically exists in a different reality. Since the woman expresses consciousness, it may be said that the male is separated from the woman by his lack of cognitive expression; the following analysis of Castellanos' poetry and short stories aims to support this suggestion.

An in-depth portrayal of the male's non-cognitive character appears in the collection of short stories *Album de familia*, especially in the first story 'Lección de cocina', where the male is symbolically represented in an unusual way - as a cut of meat. The plot of the story is quite simple - a newlywed is cooking dinner for her husband and inadvertently burns the roast. As she cooks the meal, she contemplates her life as a single writer and as a married 'dama de la sociedad'; every time her contemplation brings her to a conclusion which could change her attitude towards her husband or her marriage or even prompt her to act upon this attitude, the meat changes its colour, shape, and structure. As a result of these



transformations, the meat is burnt beyond salvation, and the woman is left to decide what to tell her husband about the ruined dinner.

Since the role of the meat is of great importance in the story line, the metaphorical meaning of the meat deserves further attention. Some critics either ignore it completely or approach it literally as a dinner roast (Hart, Lindstrom). Nahum Megged argues that 'carne equivale a sexo... Asimismo, carne y hueso significan ser vivo, existente' (Megged 1984, 132). Evelyn Fishburn compares meat to the course of a woman's life - 'an interesting comparison can be drawn between the different stages of cooking and the passing of a woman's life' (Fishburn 1995, 97), or to a bride's 'rite of passage' - 'a different interpretation, centred on the sexual act, would see the frozen meat as shrouded in a white bridal gown of ice...' (id., 98). Taking into consideration the above interpretations, it may also be assumed that the meat represents the male's sexuality because throughout the story the changes in the meat's appearance are consistent with those of a penis before and after an intercourse. This is most evident in the first appearance of the meat as the woman removes it from the freezer - stiff and red to the point of bleeding, like an erect penis ready for a coitus - 'Y no es sólo exceso de lógica el que me inhibe el hambre. Es también el aspecto [de la carne], rígido por el frío; es el color que se manifiesta ahora que he desbaratado el paquete. Rojo, como si estuviera a punto de echarse a sangrar' (Castellanos 1983, 162). This quote may be interpreted as a metaphoric sexual attack on the woman which has no connection with the woman's previous behaviour or attitude (unlike subsequent 'attacks' throughout the story which are prompted by the woman's changing attitude towards her role in marriage). It appears the most threatening of all the displays of sexual aggression designed to establish the man's physical and sexual superiority over an overtly weaker, submissive woman.

Furthermore, sexuality is the only aspect of the male's character described in detail; as far as the male's cognitive or emotional nature is concerned, there is little or no reference



to it. The meat/male exhibits no personality traits, only physical attributes (throughout the story it is described as red, stiff, grey, flaccid, cooked - burnt, twisted). In the woman's thoughts about her husband the male is given virtually no voice - there is only one reference to his childish complaints which refer to food, or reflect the satisfaction of one of the physiological needs - 'Y tú no bajarás al día por la escala de mis trenzas sino por los pasos de una querella minuciosa: se te ha desprendido un botón del saco, el pan está quemado, el café frío' (id., 166). In conjunction with the meat/male's prominent displays of sexually explicit physical attributes, it may be said that the woman perceives the male as existing on the primal (physiological) level, concentrating on satisfying the basic human needs (hunger, sexual need), while the woman operates on higher levels of human development (up to the level of self-actualisation when she examines her role in the institution of matrimony as well as her new identity - 'Soy yo. ¿Pero quién soy yo? Tu esposa, claro. Y ese título basta para distinguirme de los recuerdos del pasado, de los proyectos para el porvenir' (ibid.)). Thus, it may be concluded that the woman in 'Lección de cocina' sees the male as a primal, pre-cognitive character while perceiving herself on a separate, higher plane of cognitive existence.

The final stage of the formation of the male's pre-cognitive character is seen in the short story 'Cabecita blanca', which also metaphorically concludes the process of formation of female character in marriage as created in the collection *Album de familia*. The central character of the story is a widow Justina whose husband Juan Carlos died several years ago after a long indifferent marriage. One of her daughters is a spinster, another has been divorced, and the son is a homosexual who by the end of the story breaks up with his lover; 'La señora Justina ..., a pesar de creer que ha hecho lo mejor posible de su vida ha llegado a la degradación que ella ve como mejoramiento, pero que el lector percibe claramente que no lo es' (Paley Francescato 1980, 118). Justina is emotionally isolated from her family (except her son, whom she sees as her emotional saviour) the way she was isolated from her



husband. The isolation began with the honeymoon when the two partners became separated by the husband's animal sexual expression and the wife's ignorance in this matter - 'Cuando Juan Carlos se volvió loco la noche misma de la boda y le exigió realizar unos actos de contorsionismo que ella no había visto ni en el Circo Atayde, la señora Justina se esforzó en complacerlo y fue lográndolo más y más a medida que adquiría práctica' (Castellanos 1996, 53). Before their wedding they had something in common outside a sexual experience, i.e., religion, and the male was not exhibiting his primal sexual nature. However, on the wedding night he expressed the animal traits of his sexuality, which Justina considered it a sign of physical or mental abnormality. This attitude is similar to that of the newlywed in 'Lección de cocina', who makes a connection between physical signs of sexual arousal and skin inflammation.

Juan Carlos married Justina for her meek character which was the basis of the attraction in the first place since she presented a perfect passive receptacle of the male's personality (sexual and otherwise).

Dijera lo que dijera provocaba siempre un ¡ah! de admiración tanto en la señora Justina cuanto en el eco dócil de sus cuatro hermanas solteras. Fue con ese ¡ah! con el que Juan Carlos decidió casarse y su decisión no pudo ser más acertada porque el eco se mantuvo incólume y audible durante todos los años de su matrimonio y nunca fue interrumpido por una pregunta, por un comentario, por una crítica, por una opinión disidente.

(id., 52)

Evelyn Fishburn argues that the above quote 'serves to illustrate the complete obliteration of the female as the basis for what is called a marriage "partnership". The narrative formally supports this obliteration by the use of metonymy, when Edith [sic] is telescoped and depersonalised into the winning ¡ah!' (Fishburn 1995, 103). However, I would say that the male does consider the woman a partner, though in a different sense - as a sexual partner



void of cognitive traits. The '¡ah!' may be interpreted not only as an exclamation of awe but also as a reaction to penetration, or a vocalisation of an orgasm, which then means that Justina's sexual attraction to Juan Carlos enhanced her admiration for his personality. Though they replaced common courting with an arduous commitment to religion, Justina used her devotion to her beliefs as a protection from or a substitute for sexual release, which she saw as an intercourse with the devil.

On the other hand, Justina herself sees her role as a passive receptacle of her husband's desire when she believes that prudence is best expressed in submission. This attitude increases the emotional separation while the sexual connection grows weak with age - in the end nothing binds them except children, who are afraid of the father and have no respect for the mother, and clichéd statements made in an attempt to bring the family back to its ideal form (which it never had). In the following quote the loss of connection is total - the male is dead and buried:

... la señora Justina se sintió en la obligación de clamar:

- No le guardas el menor respeto a la casa... entras y sales a la hora que te da la gana, como si fueras hombre... como si fuera un hotel... no das cuenta a nadie de tus actos... si tu pobre padre viviera...

Por fortuna su pobre padre estaba muerto y enterrado en una tumba a perpetuidad en el Panteón Francés.

(Castellanos 1996, 48)

The absence of a cognitive link between the two partners (Juan Carlos and Justina) becomes more obvious as the story progresses, since there are no references (direct or implied) of Juan Carlos' cognitive or emotional self. His personality is described only in sexual terms, and there is no description of his physical appearance. Juan Carlos' primal (or animal) nature is also reflected in Justina's attitude towards her husband, which is similar to an animal owner's towards the pet - the male's behaviour is referred to as 'sobresaltos

anteriores', and the burial expenses are considered an extravagance as if the dead head of the household was no more than a dog or a parakeet. The implicit comparison of the male and an animal is reinforced by the phrase 'había caído en las garras de una mala mujer que mermaría su fortaleza física, sus ingresos económicos y su atención... a la legítima' (ibid.) In this quote the male is first metaphorically seen as a victim of a bird of prey, then a provider of financial stability, and finally as a partner; thus, the male's sexual/physical potency is considered by the woman his most important trait.

With years, Justina assumes a role of Juan Carlos' caretaker, whereas he is seen as an inconvenience or a sub-human being incapable of expressing himself. Covertly this attitude appears in the following quote 'Juan Carlos se irritaba cuando su mujer no entendía lo que le estaba diciendo' (id., 56), where the male is not understood by the woman. Though one may say that it is because the woman is considered dumb, I would argue that it also points to the male losing his communication abilities due to the lack of cognitive functions (also demonstrated in the poems by Castellanos, Paz, and Sabines). This assumption is supported by the absence of an asexual description of Juan Carlos, references to his personality traits, or direct quotes of his words. The only time he expresses emotions is when he is older and 'muy majadero' - once again his character is criticised, and his angry words to Luisito are forgotten even though they appear to have destroyed a happy family - '¿qué fue lo que le dijo? La señora Justina ya no se acordaba pero ha de haber sido algo muy feo' (id., 55). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that in 'Cabecita blanca' (as in 'Lección de cocina') the male's sexuality (especially its primal aspect) becomes a metaphoric barrier between the partners and leads to their emotional separation and isolation.

#### **2.2.6 'El amado fantasma' - primal male sexuality in Castellanos' poetry**

In the poems of Rosario Castellanos the first stage of the male's self-actualisation is similar to that described in her short stories - the emotional aspect of the male's primal



nature is affected by the fact that the woman exhibits cognitive traits and exists separately from the male's sexual expression. In other words, the woman may be seen as representing the emotional aspect of sexual experience, while the male metaphorically embodies its physical side. Unlike the short stories analysed in the previous sub-section, Castellanos' poems do not present the male directly; the male's character may be inferred from the image of the woman, which is central to all poems analysed in this section. The poems are written in the first person, and most works are addressed to a male (this will become evident later in this section). The force creating the woman's character is the male; thus, when the woman speaks about herself, she implies the influence of the male's character on hers. This becomes evident first of all in the fact that all the poems analysed in this section are either parts of a dialogue between the woman and the male, or are directly addressed to him.

One of the examples of character interconnection is the poem 'Segunda elegía' from the collection *Elegías del amado fantasma* (1950). The poem consists of three parts, each of which addresses the after-effects of a sexual act: the first part addresses the interaction between the woman and the world in the aftermath of a sexual act, the second part is an inner monologue focusing on the woman's physical and emotional pain, and the third part concentrates on her search for seclusion. The first and third parts of the poem may be seen as addressed to the male (both contain the second-person pronoun 'tú', second-person forms of verbs, etc.), and the second part is the woman's inner monologue.

It may be inferred from the poem that the woman exists independently from the male though his presence affects her emotional expression. It also should be noted that the woman reflects upon her physical and emotional state rather than her partner's; thus, it is possible that the world around the woman and the effect it has on her is more important than the male partner. There are no explicit sexual references, although the woman implicitly describes a sexual act and its emotional consequences (the physical side of coitus does not seem to be of interest to her):

agonías y fiebres,  
salgo, purificada y tambaleante,  
al reclamo de calles y de patios.

(Castellanos 1972, 38)

The woman's purification is both physical and emotional ('tambaleante' may be interpreted as referring to an emotional experience and a physical aftermath of a sexual act/orgasm); however, she is not sharing this experience with the male, who does not appear to exist in the woman's reality since the collection of elegies is dedicated to 'el amado fantasma'. It should be noted that the male in this poem is perceived as a concept rather than a human being, though his primal nature may be deduced from the woman's references to the intercourse akin to physical pain. As the woman loses her cognitive omnipotence by the end of a sexual act ('ahora no es posible saber nada'), it is possible to surmise that she becomes linked with the male to the point of transfer of traits. The woman's and male's existence depends on this connection; the woman's cognition is transferred onto the male, who obtains the ability to speak ('tú decías muerte'), and the woman's character becomes more primal as she searches for shelter, metaphorically satisfying one of the basic human needs stemming from her inner loneliness - 'busco una piedra por almohada. / No pido más que un limbo de soledad' (id., 39).

As a result of a sexual act, the woman discovers a new trait within her psychological makeup - a mothering instinct which she first applies to herself, seeing herself as a child and mother:

Arrullo mi dolor como una madre a su hijo  
o me refugio en él como el hijo en su madre  
alternativamente poseedora y poseída.

(ibid.)



This instinct metaphorically transforms the male into a child, and makes separation impossible without damaging the child's emotional self ('él' in the above quote refers to 'el dolor', though it also may be read as signifying the male). On the other hand, the male's denouncing the woman may be interpreted as his attempt to keep the woman under his control. Throughout the poem the woman refers to experiencing suffering as a result of sexual intercourse. It is evident that her sexual relationship with the male is based upon apparent mutual love, in which case the male's physical and emotional aggression is inexplicable. The phrase 'ahora no es posible saber nada' denotes the woman's confusion in an attempt to assign a cognitive explanation ('saber' implies presence of conscience) to the male's actions. Since the male's actions may not be analysed or understood from a cognitive perspective, the male's sexual self may be described as lacking a cognitive aspect.

Emotional distancing of the partners during a sexual act is also evident in the implicit irony of Castellanos' poetry. One of the examples is the poem 'Pequeña crónica', the title of which suggests that the woman considers her first sexual experience a mere exchange of bodily fluids, with the emotional attachment being overtly disregarded. This attitude is also evident in the absence of mention of emotions involved in the relationship, which is described in purely physical or anatomical terms -

Entre nosotros hubo  
lo que hay entre dos cuando se aman:  
sangre del himen roto.

(id., 293)

The woman's metaphoric separation from the male culminates in the last four lines of 'Pequeña crónica', when the woman denounces sexual relationships as something dirty and unsightly - 'nada, en fin, que un baño no borre' (id., 293). Since the male possesses primal traits of human sexuality that dominate his personality, the woman's outlet of physical and

sexual sensations is in a purely cognitive activity in which the male cannot participate - writing:

Y me pregunto  
con qué voy a escribir, entonces, nuestra historia.  
¿Con tinta? ¡Ay! Si la tinta  
viene de tan ajenos manantiales.

(ibid.)

The woman consciously isolates the male from her cognitive activity by recognising that her writing will be unique in the reality without the male. The ink she will use comes from 'tan ajenos manantiales' - that is, the sources unknown to the male. It is possible to infer that the metaphoric source of the woman's self-expression will be her mind, an entity which the male (whose character is seen as mainly primal) will recognise as something alien to his physical and sexual nature. He does not participate in the woman's cognitive existence because he lacks consciousness and also because the woman abandons the physical plane of existence, leaving her body to the experience and moving her conscience onto a different plane. This separation is evident throughout the poem and especially prominent in the second and third stanza, immediately before the orgasm, when the woman exhibits the same character separation as the male does in 'Piedra de sol' by Octavio Paz:

La hemorragia mensual o sea la que un niño  
dice que sí, dice que no a la vida.

Y la vena  
- mía o de otra ¿qué más da? - en que el tajo  
suicida se hundió un poco o lo bastante  
como para volverse una esquela mortuoria.

(id., 293)



The separation is so complete that the body physical is abandoned and threatened with death (the similarity between this scene and the death-sex connection is obvious, though the implications are different from those in the poetry of Paz and Sabines. In Castellanos' poetry the woman is covertly conscious of the separation, while the male in the works of Paz and Sabines experiences the death-sex connection as an exhibition of one of his primal instincts. It is possible to say that in the poems of Paz and Sabines, when at the end of a sexual act the male reaches the first stage of self-actualisation (i.e., recognition of his primal aspect), he separates himself from the woman, who now represents the physical components of the primal aspect of his sexuality, while he hosts its emotional and cognitive traits. In contrast, in the works of Castellanos the male exhibits the primal sexual traits, while the woman possesses mainly cognitive characteristics.

Another interesting example of the male lacking cognitive traits is the poem 'Elegía'. Here, neither partner is defined explicitly, though it is possible to deduce that the male and the woman complement each other's non-cognitive nature with consciousness expressed in higher cognitive functions of learning and verbal communication -

Cuerpo, criatura, sí, tú y yo nos conocimos.

Tal vez corrí a tu encuentro ...

en la eternidad nos llamamos destino.

(id., 208)

On the other hand, the male also exhibits non-cognitive traits along with the woman (when during the sexual act he becomes one with the nature). It is possible that the two are fused into one entity - 'nuestro nombre fue amor / y que en la eternidad nos llamamos destino' (ibid.), and the character fragmentation leads to a fusion of characters, unlike the process in the works of Paz and Sabines where the male acquires a new trait and dismisses the woman, who disappears after the process of trait transfer is complete.

### 2.2.7 Summary

In all the works analysed above, the first and most explicit trait of male sexuality is its primal aspect, i.e., animal aggression and absence of cognitive characteristics. Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines demonstrate in their poetry that the male transfers his primal traits onto the imaginary woman. Since the woman is the product of the male's imagination, it may be said that the male loses connection with his cognitive self or the part of him that guides the process of creation of the woman's consciousness, as his sexual arousal metaphorically creates her physical/sexual image. When sexually aroused, the male expresses himself first of all through his primal self, characterised by the need for basic physiological satisfaction. Here one should note that there are no higher cognitive means of interaction with the woman, only nonverbal communication which also serves to satisfy basic needs, such as hunger and sexual arousal.

On the other hand, in the works of Rosario Castellanos the woman is the one exhibiting cognitive traits; the absence of consciousness in the male's character is innate to the male's sexual nature and is not the result of the woman's character fragmentation. Unlike the male in the poems of Paz and Sabines being *connected* with the imaginary woman through a sexual act, the male in the works of Castellanos is *separated* from the woman by sexual experience because it reveals his primal nature, which cannot exist on a higher emotional plane of consciousness occupied by his partner.

### 2.3 Sexual satisfaction and fear of death

The second aspect of the male's primal sexual nature is the connection between sexual pleasure and fear of death, both of which occur at the same stage of a sexual relationship. According to Abraham Maslow, pleasure and pain complement each other to create human experiences; he states that during 'the highest pleasures of lovemaking and sexual orgasm, people sometimes describe a kind of "beautiful pain" and, quite



spontaneously, a sudden awareness of death... because there is a certain inevitable sadness about finishing anything intensely fulfilling' (Maslow 1996, 101). Although this approach presumes higher cognitive functions on behalf of those involved in the experience, it may also be connected to the primal side of human nature. The interaction between sexual pleasure and fear of death follows the same path on a cognitive and primal level; however, a higher order of thinking implies analysing the situation in temporal terms (establishing links between present, past, and future) and consequently grieving over human helplessness in face of the passage of time, while a primal attitude concentrates on fearing death as the absence of pleasure. Since fear of death is one of the basic instincts that humans and animals share - the physiological need to stay alive and unharmed at any cost - it may be said that a primal aspect of the connection between sexual pleasure and fear of death is centred around physical sensations of pleasure and pain on a primal level of cognition. The following analysis will demonstrate that in the works of the four Mexican writers in this study the male experiences sexual pleasure and fear of death on a primal level.

In the works of Rosario Castellanos, Marcela Del-Río, Octavio Paz, and Jaime Sabines this stage figures very prominently; however, in the novel by Del-Río the male's attitude towards mortality defines his sexuality from both cognitive and primal perspectives, while in the works of Castellanos, Paz, and Sabines the reason for experiencing fear of death during a sexual act lies within the male's primal nature rather than his higher cognitive self. Therefore, the following analysis will concentrate on the works of Paz, Sabines, and Castellanos, since the phenomenon of sexual satisfaction and fear of death as reflected in these works does not have a connection with the higher cognitive aspect of the male's character.

Although the phenomenon of sexual satisfaction and fear of death appears in the works of the three writers, the difference in its depiction lies in the attitude to human mortality expressed by the male during a sexual act. It should be noted that while in the

works of Paz and Sabines the male's attitude to death is evident, in the works of Castellanos it is derived from the cognitive nature of the woman, whose actions or thoughts implicitly reflect the male's character.

### **2.3.1 Sexual satisfaction and fear of death in Octavio Paz's poetry**

In the poems of Octavio Paz the connection between sexual pleasure and fear of death is most prominent at the moments of the male's greatest arousal when both fear and pleasure are reflected in the appearance of the imaginary woman. In 'Piedra de sol' the male creates the woman out of the landscape at the beginning of foreplay. Death imagery is scarce at first, when he does not show signs of sexual arousal. However, the premonition of death is evident from the moment the male starts imagining the woman and perceiving future danger - 'presagios que se escapan de mano' (Paz 1960, 293). Throughout the formation of the image of the woman there are abundant references to death and physical suffering based upon the male's primal sexual expression; the woman embodies these fears and reflects them in her arousing and fearsome appearance:

voy por tus ojos como por el agua,  
los tigres beben sueño en esos ojos,  
el colibrí se quema en esas llamas,

(id., 294)

voy por tu cuerpo como por un bosque,  
como por un sendero en la montaña  
que en abismo brusco se termina,

(id., 295)

In these quotes, the image of the woman created with references to direct (fire) or indirect (tigers, mountains) natural dangers suggest that the male fears the woman and is attracted to her the way humans are attracted to danger. The juxtaposition of tigers and colibri



(aggression vs. non-aggression), drinking and burning (a life-sustaining activity vs. violent and painful death), a forest and a mountain (serenity vs. danger) also suggest that the male sees the woman as a source of pain (or danger) and pleasure (or safety). This dual nature of the woman's character reflects the duality of male sexual nature - primal aggression and childlike emotional dependence (the latter will be discussed in Chapter 3).

In addition to a metaphoric approach, the male resorts to a more direct description of his fear of death which is incorporated in a sexually explicit scene of foreplay where the woman inflicts pain and sexual pleasure upon the male. It should be noted that allusions to pain are more direct than references to sexual pleasure; therefore it is possible to assume that during foreplay the male becomes more primal in expressing his emotions since fear of death is one of the most primal instinctoid emotions (a more detailed analysis of the woman representing the male's fear of death appears in Chapter 1):

abres mi pecho con tus dedos de agua,  
cierras mis ojos con tu boca de agua,  
sobre mis huesos llueves, en mi pecho  
hunde raíces de agua un árbol líquido,

(ibid.)

As the male becomes more aroused, his fear of death and pain becomes more prominent while the images of death (as an irreversible process) are first replaced by the imagery of wounds and pain (reversible physical conditions). Once the male reaches the greatest sexual arousal, death metaphors return and he exhibits fear of death as strongly as his need for sexual satisfaction. The expression of fear of death becomes evident in the following metaphors, and the male's sexual tension may be perceived implicitly in sexual references (the images of plants, flowers, salt, and wounds may be interpreted as implicitly referring to the woman's genitalia) -

liana que cuelga de cantil del vértigo,

enredadera, planta venenosa, ...  
...sal en la herida,  
ramo de rosas para el fusilado,  
... luna del patíbulo,

(id., 297)

The stanza ends with a complex image that presents the woman as a part of the four elements of nature void of conscience yet full of primal sexual power. It is noteworthy to concentrate on the last line 'testamento del sol, granada, espiga' that incorporates various aspects of the male's perception of the woman's destructive and restorative sexuality. The imagery in this quote can be associated with human sacrifices, for example, Aztec priests offering the warriors' hearts to the Sun god, Toltecs' offering human sacrifice to the Rain God Tlaloc (Spence 1920, 76-7), the Nahua practicing human sacrifice during the Toxcatl festival held to honour Tezcatlipoca, the God of the Night Winds (id., 69-70), and the Zapotecs performing sacrificial slayings for the Sun God Totec (id., 101-2).

Among the abundant death imagery in the poem it is interesting to point out the metaphors of burial which are prominent at the end of the poem, when the male comes close to the final orgasm. The following quote demonstrates the interdependence of the male's sexual arousal and fear of death when he sees the woman as the source of death and rebirth through a sexual experience -

recógeme en tus ojos, junta el polvo  
disperso y reconcilia mis cenizas,  
ata mis huesos divididos, sopla  
sobre mi ser, entiérrame en tu tierra,

(Paz 1960, 309)

The foreplay ends in a symbolic burial which may also be read as a metaphor for a coitus; the woman represents life-sustaining earth (a sexual act is akin to planting a seed) as well as



a place of burial. Both metaphors reflect the absence of conscience not only on behalf of the woman but also in the male's persona, since he may be seen as a metaphoric seed planted into the woman-soil ('señora de semillas... cada día es nacer') as well as a subject of the symbolic burial, in which case the male is presumed dead and therefore void of conscience. The male's sexual experience represents the symbolic process of death and rebirth as he denounces his cognitive self in favour of primal sexual satisfaction during foreplay; later, a similar process occurs during orgasm when the male forsakes the physical sensations to experience the emotional aspect of sexual satisfaction.

A close connection between sexual pleasure and fear of death is reflected even more vividly in the extensive morbid imagery in the second section of 'Blanco', which deals with the physical aspect of the male's sexual experience. Here, the male's fear of death is implied in abundant references to fire which are used to create the image of the woman - 'llama rodeada de leones / leona en el circo de las llamas' (Paz 1989, 216). The death-sex connection is perceived through the image of the woman as Durga Ma, the destroyer of Maya (her image and sexual relationship with Siva are analysed in detail in Chapter 1), while the male's sexual self is metaphorically depicted as Siva, the death and rebirth deity whose dance symbolises both the existence of the world and its potential destruction.

It is important to note that in 'Blanco' morbid images coincide with sexual images. 'Cabeza en una pica' (id., 215) is an explicit example of the dual representation of death. The image of a head on a spike may be compared to the medieval (and Eastern) execution traditions, when the head of the executed were displayed in public. One cannot help but recognise a voyeuristic attitude to death as well as a parallel that may be drawn between it and sexual voyeurism, especially if the image of a head on a spike is regarded from a sexual perspective as representing an erect penis.

Death imagery in a sexually explicit moment is usually connected with language or cognitive expression. While the male attempts to reconcile the two during foreplay, he has to sacrifice his cognitive side to experience sexual satisfaction -

boca de manantial  
amordazado  
por la conjuración anónima  
de los huesos,

(id., 217)

Paramera abrasada  
del amarillo al encarnado  
la tierra es un lenguaje calcinado.

(id., 218)

The image of a river mouth being silenced by bones may be interpreted as human cognitive nature (considering a reference to a mouth as an organ of speech, or cognitive expression) being overpowered by sexual desire (a colloquial meaning of the word 'hueso' is 'a male sexual organ')<sup>35</sup>. A metaphoric burning of the language ('un lenguaje calcinado') may also be seen as a symbolic absence of human cognitive traits during sexual arousal, since the image of fire is often associated with sexual attraction (e.g., 'burning with desire'). The fact that this image appears in the poem's second section, which is characterised by extensive sexual imagery (Section 2.2.2 of this chapter presents a detailed analysis of sexual images in 'Blanco') suggests that at the moment of increased sexual desire the male's cognitive self is overshadowed by his primal side. Furthermore, the above quotes appear before descriptions of orgasms (id., 219 - the double-column section), suggesting that the male perceives a

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<sup>35</sup> This quote may also be interpreted as a reference to an aggressive sexual act, if the image of a river mouth is read as a metaphor for female genitalia. In this case, the presence of nature imagery (a river) suggests that sexual intercourse is void of cognitive expression.



sexual act as forcibly void of cognitive expression. A parallel may be drawn between this attitude and the main point of Tantric philosophy, which emphasises that rejection of consciousness and overindulgence in sexual pleasures leads to superconsciousness. At this stage of sexual arousal the male favours purely physical pleasure rejecting his cognitive side so completely that he metaphorically renders its asexual aspects non-existent, or dead. The connection between this stage and superconsciousness will become evident in Chapter 4.

Less direct connections between sexual pleasure and fear of death appear in Paz's earlier works. In 'Cuerpo a la vista' the 'death-sex' connection is realised through the image of the woman as a sexually explicit creature without a cognitive aspect, who is there to provide arousal for the male. The male's animal side reflected in her is quite prominent, since her sexually explicit appearance contains a varied nature imagery which also reflects the life-death cycle (the images of rivers, animals, and fire imply violent death):

tu boca y la blanca disciplina de tus dientes canibales,...  
desafiladero de la luna que asciende a tu garganta entre tus senos,...  
Tus ojos son los ojos fijos del tigre  
y un minuto después son los ojos húmedos del perro.  
Siempre hay abejas en tu pelo.  
Tu espalda fluye tranquila bajo mis ojos  
como la espalda del río a la luz del incendio.

(Paz 1960, 82)

Animal metaphors in the above quote reflect the male's primal fear of death and pain, which he acknowledges to be part of his sexuality. If the woman reflects the male's animal traits, his sexuality is based upon the very basic instincts of self-preservation. It is important to note that all the creatures mentioned in the quote are dangerous and/or carnivorous (tiger, dog, bee). In addition to the absence of consciousness, they are capable of inflicting life-threatening wounds and may be untamable (though dogs can be tamed, they, too, retain -

and often act upon - their primal instincts). On the other hand, the juxtaposition of a lion and a dog suggests that the male perceives the woman as both an untamable power and a submissive creature, similar to a pet dog. This implication may be interpreted as reflecting the male's control over the woman which he acknowledges, while keeping in mind the woman's innate wild nature.

The description of the woman's genitalia reveals the male's fear of death at the moment of heightened sexual arousal. The male sees the vagina as a furnace, and the connotation of burning with desire also demonstrates a morbid quality:

Entre tus piernas hay un pozo de agua dormida,  
bahía donde el mar de noche se aquieta, negro caballo de espuma,  
cueva al pie de la montaña que esconde un tesoro,  
boca del horno donde se hacen las hostias,  
sonrientes labios entreabiertos y atroces,

(id., 82-3)

This quote is of particular interest because it combines all the aspects of the imaginary woman's nature transferred onto her by the male's sexual desire. The death-sex connection is quite obvious from the references to the furnace, mountains or sea, all being potential sources of pain and death. The animal aspect of the male's sexuality is evident in the description of the woman's sexual organs which employs nature imagery ('bahía donde el mar de noche se aquieta, negro caballo de espuma'), as it demonstrates an absence of cognitive traits in the woman's character. Another metaphoric comparison of the woman to the animal world is in the line 'sonrientes labios entreabiertos y atroces', which may be read as comparing the outer lips of the vagina to a carnivore's mouth and at the same time carrying a potential for the expression of cognition, since a smile implies emotion which, in turn, implies basic cognitive traits.



Another example of the link between sexual pleasure and fear of death appears in 'Lago', where the woman's arousing physical appearance reflects the male's sexual desire. Although the poem may also be read as a mere contemplation of the woman's body, the presence of multiple sexual images points to the former interpretation as more plausible. The sexually implicit imagery of nature void of consciousness (rocks, water, sky) carries simultaneous connotations of life and death: water implies drowning as well as the process of birth, and naufragio may be interpreted as a climax, which also has a connotation of a momentary loss of consciousness (death):

Entre montañas áridas  
las aguas prisioneras  
reposan, centellean,  
como un cielo caído.

(Paz 1960, 62)

un repentino viento  
y un naufragio infinito.

(id., 63)

The main implication of the death/life cycle presented in this poem is that the male is frozen in time going through the process of rebirth, thus existing outside the objective time continuum (absence of references to time of day or season suggests that there is no connection with the objective reality). A similar experience of the male during a sexual stage of the relationship is depicted most explicitly in 'Piedra de sol', where the male's sexual experience creates a subjective reality with time laws different from those of the objective reality. In other poems by Paz (especially in the works inspired by Indian philosophies) the male regards his sexual experience as the means of achieving superconsciousness which is characterised primarily by the absence of connections with the objective reality.

A prominent exhibition of the animal aspect of male sexuality appears in 'Marina'. Among many examples the phrase 'manos, animales de seda' (id., 56) implies that as the male is being aroused by touching the woman, no cognitive expression is involved and the male is exhibiting aggression and animal excitement. Other images include tongues, teeth, mouths - all signifying devouring as well as sexual pleasure, thus revealing the carnivorous nature of the male's desire:

manos, animales de seda,  
fosforescentes, ciegos;  
dientes, blancuras súbitas,  
bocas crueles, rizos,  
espirales del mar y de la piedra;  
¡agua entre duros senos!

(ibid.)

In addition to devouring, death imagery (accompanying animal imagery) includes water, lightning and snakes - everything that implicitly represents the male's sexual organ. The violent nature of a sexual act is compared to water attacking the rocks. Pain and pleasure are inseparable, though during a sexual act the male does not recognise physical sensations of either (or, similarly, the woman's image created by the male does not reflect them) since he exists outside the objective reality:

azogue de la espalda,  
canal que desemboca en la cadera;  
labios, espinas, frutos,  
¡formas de luz y tierra,  
formas, río de formas,  
no importa ya cuál sea  
ni qué abismos contenga!



(id., 57)

The aftermath of the male's sexual release is ash ('leve ceniza de los días'), which is yet another reference to death and ceremonial burial. A parallel may be drawn between burning of the body and a metaphorical burning with desire; in this case sexual arousal and fear of death occur at the same stage of a sexual encounter, i.e., at the moment of the greatest arousal (at the end of the foreplay and the beginning of coitus).

As a result of the above analysis, it may be concluded that in the poems by Octavio Paz sexual satisfaction and fear of death are interdependent at the moment of high sexual arousal, when the male disregards his cognitive nature and concentrates upon the primal expression of his sexuality, which brings about the animal fear of death. To overcome it, the male metaphorically transfers his fear onto the imaginary woman, who thus embodies physical pain and the pleasure of sexual intercourse. A similar depiction of sexual satisfaction and fear of death is presented in the works of Jaime Sabines.

### **2.3.2 Transfer of mortality - Jaime Sabines' approach to sexual satisfaction and fear of death**

In the works of Jaime Sabines the male exhibits fear of death at the moment of sexual pleasure, and tries to fight his mortality. This resistance takes on different forms - denial, transfer of mortality onto the imaginary woman, prayer, etc. For example, in 'Siempre fui mi pene' the male's sexuality implicitly makes him invincible to death - 'propietario de la vida y de la muerte' (Sabines 1997a, 139). The last two lines of the poem demonstrate the same attitude towards death - '¡Concédeme vivir entero / hasta los ochenta!' (ibid.). Here, the male recognises death as part of his existence yet, fearing the process of aging that brings him to it, wishes to keep his body and its sexual potential intact.

In 'Esta noche' the imaginary woman representing the male's animal traits implicitly carries the ability to kill; this is implied in the phrase 'la mujer mortal' in addition to

previously discussed images of the hunter. Thus, the male metaphorically exhibits two primal characteristics - the need for sexual satisfaction and the fear of death. However, 'la mujer mortal' may be translated as 'a mortal (not immortal) woman', thus covertly assigning the male immortality through intoxication and the subsequent metaphoric loss of cognition - 'El dulce alcohol enciende tu cuerpo / con una llamita de inmortalidad' (Sabines 1997, 158). In addition, a parallel may be drawn between this image and that of Adam and Eve receiving divine knowledge (both cognitive and sexual) and almost reaching divine immortality but instead being cast out of the paradise. Similarly, the mortal woman put on Earth by God embodies humanity's knowledge of its sexuality and mortality.

The most prominent exhibition of the male's fear of death may be found in the poem 'He aquí', where it is represented as increasing together with his sexual arousal. The male mentions dying at the same time as he reaches the height of sexual arousal and, possibly, an orgasm -

Se me va a hacer llagas este cuerpo solo,  
se me caerá la carne trozo a trozo.  
Esto es lejía y muerte.  
El corrosivo estar, el malestar  
muriendo es nuestra muerte.

(id., 143)

It may be said that the male subconsciously fears death because his arousal reveals his primal nature. On the other hand, the above references to death and pain at the time of sexual arousal may be interpreted as a comparison of orgasm to death ('petit mort'). Finally, the male may be referring to death as the loss of consciousness which accompanies the sexual pleasure of an orgasm. This interpretation is supported by the line 'me faltarás, amor, nos faltaremos', since it has been established that during foreplay the male recognises that he will be unable to operate on a cognitive level. Instead, the male reverts to a primal



stage of existence, where he is missing the conscious connection with his partner; he loses the link with the woman's cognitive side while keeping in touch with her physical self:

Nos faltamos, amor, y nos morimos

y nada haremos ya sino morimos.

Esto lo sé, amor, esto sabemos.

Hoy y mañana, así, y cuando estemos

en nuestros brazos simples y cansados,

me faltarás, amor, nos faltaremos.

(id., 144)

In the above quote, a complex presence-absence of the partners during the sexual stage of their relationship is enhanced by the male's preoccupation with death evident through the poem, since he repeats the verb 'morimos', thus implying his and the woman's death. This quote may also be interpreted as presenting a metaphorical transfer of the male's mortality onto the woman, which allows him to consider himself 'immortal'. This reveals the male's childlike attitude to death, similar to a child's attempt to satisfy the safety need, which involves protecting his environment from outside danger. 'Confronting the average child with new, unfamiliar, strange, unmanageable stimuli or situations will too frequently elicit the danger or terror reaction, as for example [...] death. Particularly at such times, the child's frantic clinging to his parents is eloquent testimony to their role as protectors (quite apart from their roles as food givers and love givers)' (Maslow 1954, 86-87). The male, like a child, rejects death because he is afraid of it; in order to protect himself from the inevitable, he metaphorically passes his mortality onto the image of the woman, who then becomes not only a reflection of his mortal nature but also his protector<sup>36</sup>. Therefore it is possible to suggest that sexual satisfaction and satisfaction of the safety need are joined (this is also

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<sup>36</sup> The male/child's dependency on the woman-caregiver for physical and emotional safety will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

reflected in Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, where sexual satisfaction is the last physiological need to be met, and fear of death is the first aspect of the complex of safety needs).

The same idea of a link between death and sexual satisfaction appears in the poem 'No es que muera de amor' where the male creates the woman to reflect his primal nature or the woman embodying his fear of death. This connection is reflected in the absence of cognitive traits replaced by the exhibition of the male's primal side. Many references to death may be identified as allusions to the sexual intercourse or the times when the male is sexually aroused:

Muero de ti y de mí, muero de ambos,  
de nosotros, de ese,  
desgarrado, partido,  
me muero, te muero, lo morimos....

Morimos en mi cuarto en que estoy solo,  
en mi cama en que faltas, [...]

Morimos, lo sabemos, lo ignoran, nos morimos  
entre los dos, ahora, separados, [...]

Nos morimos, amor, muero en tu vientre  
que no muerdo ni beso,  
en tus muslos dulcísimos y vivos,  
en tu carne sin fin, [...]

Me muero de mi cuerpo y de tu cuerpo,

(Sabines 1997b, 142-3)

The depiction of the woman as the embodiment of the male's fear of death is evident from the fact that the verb 'morir' is used in the poem in first person singular ('muero') or plural



('morimos'), but not in second person singular ('mueres') as it should be used in relation to the woman. An apparently intentional use of these verb forms implies that in every instance of death the male-narrator is the one dying and the woman is either totally unaffected by death or dies together with her male partner as part of him. This interpretation once again suggests that the woman is the creation of the male's imagination and her character is designed to reflect the male's mortal nature and fear of death. A further analysis of the poem's structure reveals several instances of wordplay; the most interesting case is the quote 'me muero, te muero, lo morimos' (ibid.) which reflects the process of the male's creation of the imaginary woman and his imaginary relationship with her. By using the verb 'morir' as an action verb and selecting 'tú' as an object of this action, Sabines creates the impression that the male kills the woman; however, a literal translation of the phrase 'te muero' as 'I die you' reveals the reciprocity of the action - the male dies and thus kills the woman, who then may be interpreted as being a part of him. The phrase 'lo morimos' has the same connotation concerning the male's relationship with the imaginary woman - their death kills their love, which is also a part of the male's imagination.

From the above analysis it becomes evident that in the works of Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines the male's sexual satisfaction and fear of death occur at the same time, i.e., during the time of heightened sexual arousal. The male exhibits his primal side when he fears death; this aspect of his nature is then transferred onto the imaginary woman, who either becomes the embodiment of his fears (as in the poems of Paz) or retains his mortality thus rendering the male apparently immortal (as in the works of Sabines).

### **2.3.3 Women writers on sexual satisfaction and fear of death**

In the works of women writers (Castellanos, Del-Río) fear of death is also prominent during sexual intercourse; however, in their works it is expressed either through the woman's cognitive character (Castellanos) or through the male's conscience (Del-Río).

Thus, it may be suggested that women writers' approach is based upon the cognitive aspect of sexual desire rather than its primal side (as presented in the works of Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines). The following sub-sections will analyse the women writers' presentation of sexual satisfaction and fear of death.

#### **2.3.4 Transfer of fear of death - Rosario Castellanos' approach**

In the works of Rosario Castellanos a link between sexual experience and fear of death is depicted very prominently in the character of the woman, who is the one voicing it because she considers sexual intercourse a source of pain and suffering. Since it has been determined that the image of the male is reflected in the character of the woman, it is possible to suggest that the woman's fear of death and pain during sexual intercourse is caused by the male's actions, and as a result is transferred into the male's image. This process of character trait integration is opposite to that created by the male writers in this study - in their works, the male transfers his fear of death onto the image of the woman, altering it to absorb his mortality (Sabines) or to present a real physical danger or challenge combined with pleasure or security (Paz).

Therefore, in order to study the male's fear of death, it is necessary to address this emotion expressed by the woman at the moment of sexual intercourse. The theme of sexual sensations being akin to physical and emotional pain runs through most works by Rosario Castellanos. For example, in 'Segunda elegía' the physical/sexual aspect of the woman's relationship with the male is discussed in medical terms, referring to the woman's physical discomfort as a sign of her emotional involvement:

Convaleciente de tu amor y débil  
como el que ha aposentado largamente en sí mismo  
agonías y fiebres,  
salgo, purificada y tambaleante,



(Castellanos 1972, 38)

The woman identifies with the non-cognitive side of nature (plants), yet retains her emotional aspect (sadness - 'como bañado en lágrimas'). Later, she talks about the wound inflicted upon her presumably by the male, in which case a sexual act is regarded as something damaging to her physical and emotional self<sup>37</sup>. The same idea of sexual expression being akin to a disease is evident in the first line of the poem 'convaleciente de tu amor', referring to a sexual act. The wound inflicted upon her body 'no es en el costado... ni en las sienes' (id., 39) - it may be assumed that it is a result of a sexual act; a sexually implicit image of water later in this section supports this assumption. Finally, the line 'alternativamente poseedora y poseída' (ibid.) reflects the woman's multiple role in a sexual relationship - a recipient of the male's desire, the owner/creator of the male's sexuality, and his caregiver (or a mother figure).

In 'Elegía' the woman also sees herself as part of nature - 'como corre la nube cargada de relámpagos' (id., 208). Here the woman's sexual experience, which leaves her void of conscience, is seen as a catastrophe or a natural cataclysm (thunderstorm), and the physical/sexual aspect of her relationship with the male prevails over its emotional side:

Ay, esa luz tan breve, esa fulminación,  
ese vasto silencio que sigue a la catástrofe.

(ibid.)

The above interpretation is enhanced by the fact that the two lovers are watched by inanimate objects - 'piedras oscuras, trozos / de materia ya usada' (ibid.). This image implicitly refers to death, since rocks may represent tombstones, and pieces of cloth may

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<sup>37</sup> This attitude is similar to that of the newlywed in 'Lección de cocina', who uses images of death and decay to imply that sexual experience is damaging to her body and mind.

refer to wreaths. Therefore, the physical aspect of a sexual act is seen as deadly, and the emotional side of the relationship is considered destiny; life and death complement each other as two aspects of existence.

In 'Pequeña crónica' the woman exhibits a similar attitude towards sex, as sexuality is implicitly compared to disease, and physical aspects of sexual acts are seen in an anatomical perspective. Thus emotional connotations of a sexual act are ignored:

Entre nosotros hubo  
lo que hay entre dos cuando se aman:  
sangre del himen roto...

Hubo, quizá también otros humores:  
el sudor del trabajo, el de placer,  
la secreción verdosa de la cólera,  
semen, saliva, lágrimas.

(id., 293)

The woman's attitude to a sexual act as a rite of passage enhances the feeling that she considers coitus a necessary evil because of emotional separation between her and the male, who exhibits no cognitive traits. Due to the primal character of coitus it may be concluded that the male being the inflictor of coitus is the carrier of the primal side of human sexuality. The woman also sees the male as inflicting pain through a sexual act; she assigns to the male the traits of an animal because the above description reveals that the male's life consists only of physical manifestations of various activities, and no cognitive/emotional aspect.

In the beginning of the poem 'Apuntes para la declaración de fe' an explicitly primal description of the woman representing part of nature further supports the idea of a sexual act being the product of the male's primal character:



En un día de amor yo bajé hasta la tierra:  
vibraba como un pájaro crucificado en vuelo...  
Ese día de amor yo fui como la tierra:  
sus jugos me sitiaban tumultuosos y dulces...

(id., 7)

It should be noted that nature imagery ('un pájaro') is accompanied by a reference to death ('crucificado'); morbid imagery is more explicit in the description of a sexual act where both partners are stripped first of their conscience and then of their bodies - this total destruction is symbolic of a sexual experience. The following quote demonstrates the connection between death and sexual satisfaction as well as the woman's subconscious fear of this process: she refuses to talk about the experience and yet proceeds with the description which becomes more sexually connotative as the intercourse progresses:

No, yo no quiero hablar de nuestras noches  
cuando nos retorremos como papel al fuego...  
Entonces queda limpio el esqueleto.  
Nuestro cráneo reluce igual que una moneda  
y nuestros ojos se hundan interminablemente.  
Una caricia galvaniza los cadáveres:

(id., 10)

Both partners feel fear when covertly confronted by their sexual nature; this fear is described by the woman as primal because it stems from a basic expression of human nature, which is sexual urge -

Cantamos porque sí, porque tenemos miedo,  
un miedo atroz, bestial, insobornable  
y nos emborrachamos de palabras o de risa o de angustia.

(ibid.)

It is important to note that the quote appears after a powerful description of a sexual act; the partners' animal fear stems from their sexual experience and reveals their primal aspect previously disguised by their cognitive side. After the sexual act, they attempt to restore the shield of conscious expression but this attempt still carries the connotation of a primal expression since 'nos emborrachamos' may be read as an implication of a loss of higher cognitive abilities, similar to that experienced by the male in Sabines' poetry.

The above analysis of Castellanos' poetry shows that the woman, who experiences physical and emotional pain during her relationship with the male (including sexual intercourse), also perceives fear of death as part of her sexual experience. Since the woman creates the image of the male much like the male in the works of Paz and Sabines creates his woman-partner, it is possible to conclude that her fear of death is then transferred to the character of the male, who lacks conscience and therefore transforms fear of death into sexual aggression and other types of primal behaviour.

This transfer is further evident in Castellanos' short stories, where the connection between sexuality and death is reflected in the woman's accentuating the physiological aspect of sexual experience. In 'Lección de cocina' this attitude is either implied in the description of the woman's surroundings or expressed more directly in her recollection of intercourse with her husband. One of the examples of the latter occurrence is a reference to the meat/male as a cadaver - 'La carne yace silenciosamente, fiel a su condición de cadáver' (Castellanos 1983, 167).

The first covert reference to this connection appears at the beginning of the story in the description of the kitchen, which is white, clean and sterile like a hospital ward: 'el halo de desinfectantes; ... la presencia oculta de la enfermedad y de la muerte' (Castellanos 1983, 161) characterise the kitchen. The images of disease, and, hence, a hospital where infection is eradicated, also appear in the woman's accounts of sexual intercourse with her husband. An implied link between sexual experience and disease becomes more obvious as the woman



removes a piece of meat from the freezer and recalls her honeymoon in Acapulco.

However, she does not compare the redness of a frozen piece of meat with the colour of an erect penis, which would be a more natural simile under the circumstances. She makes a connection with the colour of inflamed skin - 'del mismo color teníamos la espalda, mi marido y yo después de las orgiásticas asoleadas en las playas de Acapulco' (id., 162-3).

This unexpected comparison implies that sex is equal to a disease, sexual arousal and subsequent swelling and redness of a penis and vagina akin to inflammation. In the woman's mind, sexual intercourse is often described in asexual anatomical terms ('muslos entrelazados, húmedos de sudor y de semen') or in asexual zoological terms referring to extinct species ('el dinosaurio', 'el mamut'). This attitude towards sex also contributes to the implicit mothering role a woman plays in marriage, as she becomes similar to a mother telling her child about human sexuality and sexual intercourse using anatomically correct terms or paralleling human experiences with those of 'birds and bees'. The woman's mothering attitude also indirectly reveals the man's childlike nature which will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Therefore, it may be said that in the works of Rosario Castellanos a link between sexual pleasure and fear of death is exhibited in the woman's perception of her sexual experience as a source of physical and emotional suffering in addition to sexual satisfaction. Since the male's primal nature takes over his character during a sexual intercourse, the woman represents the cognitive aspect of a sexual relation, able to analyse it from a cognitive perspective and to experience discomfort caused not only by physical penetration but also by emotional separation of the partners (as analysed in the first section of this chapter).

### 2.3.5 Marcela Del-Río's viewpoint - death vs knowledge

A different representation of fear of death is seen in *Proceso a Faubritten* by Marcela Del-Río; however, there is no direct connection between sexual satisfaction and fear of death, which appears in the poetry of Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines. The link is not presented in the image of the woman, as appears in the works of Rosario Castellanos; instead, it is related to the clash between the cognitive and the primal aspects of the male character.

Alexander Faubritten invented the elixir of eternal life in response to his feeling of guilt because of the deaths of his friends and the suffering caused by the war, in which his father took an active part as one of the chemists involved in the creation of the chemical weapons. As a result of his discovery, a change occurs in the society's perception of reality<sup>38</sup> - humankind has lost its fear of death, and is now faced with the threat of overpopulation; Faubritten has been declared Antichrist and together with his colleagues exiled to an uninhabited island, where he discovers the antidote to his 'bomba L'.

The discovery of the antidote coincides with the only instance of the connection between sexual satisfaction and fear of death; this incident is a near drowning of Angelo Regno, one of Faubritten's colleagues and the husband of Hélène, who is Faubritten's lover.

During the accident, Angelo experiences fear of death so intensely primal that it activates the instinct of survival. Ironically, the suppression of this instinct is the essence of Faubritten's 'elixir'; in fact, the antidote to Faubritten's invention is re-activation of the primal side of human character. It is important to note that the scene of Angelo's accident comes after two scenes of sexual interaction: the episode of Faubritten and Hélène's lovemaking (Del-Río 1976, 256-8), and the quarrel between Angelo and Faubritten (id., 254-5). This first episode is sexually explicit, and reflects the Godlike nature of Faubritten's

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<sup>38</sup> The analysis of this change and of the consequent fragmentation of realities is presented in Chapter 4.



character as seen by Hélène; therefore, it will be analysed in detail in Chapter 4. The second episode deserves further attention because it reveals the primal aspect of the male's personality (in this case, the character of Angelo Regno).

The description of Angelo struggling in the water reflects the primal nature of the survival instinct - 'sintió sus miembros enroscarse como serpientes, desenroscarse, doblarse y volverse a enrollar, sin que su voluntad pudiera controlarlos' (id., 265); the focus on the physical sensations of parts of the body and the absence of the cognitive assessment of the situation point to the conclusion that the experience was primal (non-cognitive). A comparison of Angelo's body to a mollusk ('tirado como un molusco' (ibid.)) reinforces the primal nature of the fear of death. In fact, Angelo does not exhibit signs of higher cognitive abilities till after he is hypnotised by Faubritten: the only words he speaks - 'no quiero morir' and 'no me deje morir' - continue to reflect his fear, and as the scene progresses, there are no references to Angelo's emotional state, only to his body ('estómago', 'garganta', etc.).

It should be noted that the person who saves him (Faubritten) is the person who earlier broke up a scene of Angelo's jealousy, during which the professor was accusing his wife of cheating on him with one of his colleagues. An interesting remark appears in this rather dramatic scene - the man chased by Angelo describes his jealousy as 'el profesor [ve] semen hasta en la sopa' (id., 255). This quote may be interpreted as representing the non-cognitive aspect of Angelo's sexuality. The juxtaposition of a sexual act (a private matter) and eating (an often public experience) suggests irrationality of Angelo's jealousy, which points to the lack of cognitive abilities on Angelo's part and renders his outburst as based upon his primal side, not the cognitive aspect of his personality. In fact, there is another scene of Angelo's jealousy in the novel, also exhibiting sexual overtones and lack of reasoning - 'El profesor lanzó la última mirada arrogante a Hélène y pronunció un *putana* que ella apenas alcanzó a oír y le dió la espalda' (id., 297).



Although there is no direct link between Angelo's jealousy and fear of death, it may be said that both emotions stem from the primal side of the male's personality. Since it has been established that Angelo's jealousy has sexual overtones, it may be concluded that sexuality dominates the primal aspect of his character. Similar to the male in the works of Rosario Castellanos, Angelo Regno's primal character takes over in the moments of sexual arousal (either expressed directly or indirectly in the scenes of jealousy). The difference lies in the fact that in Del-Río's novel the male's fear of death is rooted deeper in his personality - it is linked to the very basic survival instincts, although both sensations are transformed into sexual need, with the fear of death being suppressed (this is evident in the fact that Angelo attacks a man much bigger and stronger than himself, without exhibiting the signs of fear).

### **2.3.6 Summary**

To conclude the above analysis, it may be said that in the works of Paz, Sábines, Castellanos, and Del-Río the link between sexual experience and fear of death appears most prominently at the end of the male's arousal before he engages in a sexual act. In the poems by Octavio Paz and Jaime Sábines the male's fear of death is based upon his lack of conscious expression during a sexual relation, especially during heightened sexual arousal. To overcome this fear the male either reflects his fear in the image of the woman by describing her in sexually arousing terms (Paz), or transfers his mortality onto the imaginary woman who is also described in sexually explicit terms (Sábines). In both cases, the male reveals his emotional dependence on the woman, who either provides sexual satisfaction or hosts his mortality, thus freeing him from fear of death. On the other hand, in the works of Rosario Castellanos the male's primal nature expressed in sexual aggression causes the woman to experience the same fear of death felt by the male in the works of the men writers. Unlike the male, the woman is cognitive and therefore can rationalise her emotions instead



of acting upon them out of instinct. It is possible to suggest that the male's fear of death (which remains implicit throughout Castellanos' works) reveals itself in sexually aggressive behaviour, which causes the woman physical and emotional distress. The woman's cognitive approach to this experience reveals her mothering nature, thus rendering the male emotionally inept and dependent on the woman for emotional stability throughout the intercourse as well as in the pre-sex and post-sex reality (this aspect of the male's character is analysed in Chapter 3). To summarise the above, it may be said that the male in the works of Paz, Sabines, and Castellanos<sup>39</sup> acts upon his fear of death by becoming sexually aggressive; the difference lies within the woman's subsequent actions - those of a passive recipient (Paz, Sabines) and those of an emotionally strong mother-figure (Castellanos).

## 2.4 Conclusion

The above analysis has concentrated on the primal aspect of male sexuality as presented in the works of four modern Mexican writers - Octavio Paz, Jaime Sabines, Rosario Castellanos, and Marcela Del-Río. In their writings, the male's sexual character is represented as consisting of two aspects, which exist parallel to each other - the physical/primal side, which is responsible for the physical sensations, and the cognitive side, which watches and analyses the process perceiving the emotional aspect of lovemaking (this aspect may not be overtly expressed because the male does not possess consciousness). In the poetry of the male writers (Paz, Sabines) this duality is reflected in the image of the woman created by the male, while in the works of the woman writer (Castellanos) the female

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<sup>39</sup> The male in the novel by Marcela Del-Río exhibits fear of death as a sign of the lack of cognition. Consequent acquisition of knowledge (Faubritten's discovery of an antidote to the 'elixir of eternal life') enhances the link between the primal (non-cognitive) side of humanity, fear of death, and need for sexual domination (as reflected in the character of Angelo Regno).



character exhibiting the dual nature of sexual experience is independent from the male, whose personality may be seen as invented by the woman.

In the poems of Paz and Sabines, the male's sexual experience begins with the male completely rejecting his cognitive aspect during 'foreplay' and the sexual act (a full analysis of the process of self-actualisation appears in Chapter 4). At the beginning of most poems by Octavio Paz the male is presented as primarily cognitive, and the woman is implicitly described as reflecting the physical side of the male's sexual desire and therefore lacking consciousness. In Jaime Sabines' works, the male exhibits rudimentary cognition at the beginning of a metaphoric sexual act, and transfers his negative emotions and fears onto the imaginary woman, thus creating a safe subjective reality, in which he can experience sexual satisfaction. As the male becomes aroused by the sight of the woman created in his imagination, he completely loses his cognitive abilities, while the woman partially gains cognition during foreplay. This process continues during an orgasm as the male loses his connection with objective reality, retaining only the basic physical traits, while the woman acquires a cognitive trait projected onto her by the male. As a result of an implicit sexual encounter, the male has this trait assimilated into his character because the woman is a part of his cognitive personality.

In the works of Rosario Castellanos, the woman-narrator knows that the process happens with her physical self - she metaphorically splits into two entities (cognitive and primal). After a sexual act the physical woman 'disappears' because her function is over, and the cognitive woman takes over. The male does not seem to know that the cognitive aspect of the woman is present throughout the sexual stage of the relationship because he exists on a physical plane when becoming aroused. The process of formation of the male's character is expressed in the woman's dialogue (the poems are written as one side of a dialogue - it is plausible to suggest that the woman talks to the male). Since the woman exhibits mothering traits throughout her sexual relationship with the male, it is possible that



the trait acquired by the male is his childlike nature as he reaches the next stage of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, having satisfied his sexual desire. After a trait exchange the woman acquires a new cognitive trait while the male either disappears or remains in his primal domain.

It is important to note that the male in many poems by Castellanos is the imaginary sexual partner; in this case, a similarity between Paz's/Sabines' poetry and Castellanos' works becomes evident - one partner is real, the other is imagined by him/her. The difference resides in the partner's role in a sexual act: while the male in Paz's and Sabines' poems imagines an overtly submissive recipient, the woman in Castellanos' works imagines an active and possibly equal partner. The male's imaginary nature in Castellanos' poetry is enhanced by the fact that one of the collections is addressed to a ghost partner ('amado fantasma'), which refers not only to the partner's possible death but also to the partner's non-existence in objective reality or the woman's cognitive reality.

The first stage in the process of formation of male sexuality follows the same pattern in the works of Octavio Paz, Jaime Sabines, and Rosario Castellanos - the male reveals the primal (animal) side of his sexuality during a sexual act with the woman. The difference lies in the representation of the process based upon the difference in the writers' view of the male's nature. In the poetry of Paz and Sabines, the male's desire creates the woman, who is sexually arousing but possesses no overt conscious traits. During a sexual act an exchange of traits takes place; the male becomes cognitive in the end as he recognises a new trait; the woman disappears after the male obtains that trait. In the works of Castellanos, on the other hand, the woman's emotional side is the one overtly acquiring a trait, as her physical side engages in a sexual act with the primal male. Throughout a sexual relation the woman and the male exist on different planes, with the woman representing the cognitive aspect of humanity and the male embodying its primal side. As the sexual relation progresses, the woman's cognitive traits are absorbed by the male's animal character till the



woman's nature is mainly overtly animal and the male exhibits cognitive traits. At this point in the relationship, the two partners become separated as the physical and conscious connection between the two is destroyed, possibly because of the absence of sexual arousal.

As the male goes through the two stages of the primal sexual expression - absence of cognitive traits, and fear of death during sexual experience - he approaches the first stage of the acquisition of knowledge (implied in the fear of death, which later will be transformed into the fear of the unknown). This, in turn, eventually leads to the male's self-actualisation, which comes as a result of denouncing his cognitive self during sexual intercourse. At the end of a sexual act, the male regains his cognitive aspects through the process of character fragmentation (depicted differently in the works of the men and women writers in the study), and obtains a new trait or recognises an existing trait of his sexual character.

The novel by Marcela Del-Río presents a different approach to the male's primal side. It does not contain references to the absence of cognitive traits in the male's psyche; instead, it focuses on the process of knowledge acquisition stemming from fear of death. The link between the male's sexual satisfaction and fear of death points to the deeply primal nature of fear of death; the process of acquisition of higher cognitive functions is therefore connected to the expression of the non-cognitive side of human psyche. The complexity of this process is addressed in detail in Chapter 4.

To summarise the above analysis, it is important to point out that the works of both men and women writers in this study demonstrate that the first stage of formation of male sexuality is of primal nature, and character fragmentation occurs on a pre-cognitive level. The male in the poetry of Paz and Sabines transfers his primal traits onto the imaginary woman, retaining his emotional side. The woman, therefore, mirrors his lack of cognitive traits. On the other hand, in the works of Castellanos and Del-Río, the male retains the physical aspect of his primal side while the woman exhibits its emotional traits. The result of this process is the same as in the works of men writers - the male favours primal sexual



experience over cognitive perception of a sexual act. The difference is that in this case the woman is cognitive and transfers the physical aspect of her sexual experience onto the male, retaining her cognitive side intact. The male may receive cognitive traits after a sexual act; however, during sexual intercourse the male exhibits only primal traits of his sexuality while the woman experiences the encounter from a mainly cognitive perspective. Thus, the partners are emotionally separated as a result of the first stage of the male's sexual self-actualisation.

The male follows a development path as outlined in Maslow's hierarchy of human needs by first satisfying his physiological needs and therefore revealing the animal or primal aspect of humanity. As the male continues participating in a sexual relation he attempts to satisfy his safety need, which reflects the childlike aspect of the male's nature. Chapter 3 deals with this phenomenon.

## CHAPTER 3

### 'The Missing Link': The Childlike Traits of Male Sexuality

#### 3.1 Theoretical background

It has been established that the formation of male sexuality, as represented in the works of the four Mexican authors in this study, begins with the disclosure of its primal aspect, which is characterised by the absence of cognitive traits in the male's character and the presence of fear of death at the moment of sexual satisfaction. The analysis of the primal aspect of male sexuality is based upon Abraham Maslow's theory of human needs, thus establishing a connection between the primal aspect of male sexuality and the satisfaction of basic human needs. Consequently, it may be suggested that the next trait to be revealed will also be characterised by a link with the next level of human needs, which is satisfaction of the safety need, especially prominent in childhood. Surprisingly, there are no published critical analyses of the childlike side of male character; it appears that most critics examine (directly or indirectly) the primal aspect of the male's nature (e.g., fear of death), ignoring the exhibition of the fear of the unknown, which implies at least residual traces of childlike traits in the male's character. This chapter will examine this 'missing link' between the primal and the highly cognitive sides of male sexuality.

The analysis of the male's childlike nature will be based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, and Octavio Paz's analysis of the childlike aspect of Mexican masculinity (the latter will be supported by Samuel Ramos' well-known essay, *El perfil del*



*hombre*)<sup>40</sup>. The two studies have one particular aspect in common - the satisfaction of the need for physical and emotional security; therefore, both theories will be used in this chapter to analyse the male's childlike nature exhibited during sexual intercourse. It should be noted that the term 'childlike' in application to the character traits of male sexuality does not imply underdevelopment; its main connotation is that of emotional and sexual insecurity, which may be expressed overtly in a childlike style of the text (steady lullaby-like rhythm, short lines with repeating language patterns, fairytale style of narration, etc.) or covertly in imagery, juxtaposition of adjectives, etc.

Our analysis will concentrate initially on fears, expressed during the sexual phase of a relationship between the male and the woman; the next stage of the analysis will address the conflicting emotions stemming from the male's fears, and finally, the male's first steps towards the acquisition of knowledge through his sexual experience. First, it is necessary to establish the theoretical basis of this analysis by examining the nature of the male's childlike traits and consequent behavioural patterns, as well as the emotional specifics of the Mexican male character.

### **3.1.1 Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs - the safety need**

The childlike traits of human character are disclosed at the second level of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs - the satisfaction of the safety need. In his study of human motivation, Abraham Maslow focused on the hierarchy of satisfaction of human needs as the means of attaining of a higher cognitive status, which he labeled 'self-actualisation'. Abraham Maslow has established and analysed various stages of satisfaction

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<sup>40</sup> Our study also employs certain aspects of the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud (e.g., the theory of infant narcissism, the relationship between pain and pleasure); Freud's analysis of child sexuality will not be included, however, because of its focus on the human anatomy and its concentration on the abnormalities of child sexual development.

of human needs, starting with the basic physiological needs (or deficiency-needs<sup>41</sup>) and the safety need, which he considered to be of a lower cognitive order; in other words, satisfaction of these two groups of needs is inherent to humans and animals alike<sup>42</sup>.

However, Maslow separates the safety need into a new category, assigning it a relatively higher level of cognition because of its connection with the human social order, as he considers safety from a point of view of violent societal changes being perceived by the members of the society as a disruption to their safe and familiar life routine. 'In the midst of a chaotic society, nearly everyone becomes forced to put aside their higher motivations and instead regress toward a seeking of orderliness, stability, legality, and the like' (Maslow 1996, 149). Consequent political actions notwithstanding, the study of the safety need concentrates on childhood, when the satisfaction of this need plays an important role in a normal course of the child's development.

The safety need, although inherent to all ages, is most prominent in childhood because of the ongoing process of cognitive development. Since children are not fully familiar with the world around them, they are easily startled or scared by what adults would dismiss as a part of their daily routine. For example, a physical discomfort (colic, sharp pain, etc.) would be perceived by the child as a threat; at this moment, 'for the child, the whole world apparently suddenly changes from sunniness to darkness, so to speak, and become

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<sup>41</sup> Maslow calls higher needs (e.g., the need for love, acceptance, and self-actualisation) 'being-needs', thus indicating that they stem from a higher level of cognition, having reached which, a person becomes interested in improving his/her cognitive self.

<sup>42</sup> The first stage of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs is presented in more detail in the introduction to Chapter 2, which addresses the satisfaction of basic physiological needs as an exhibition of the primal aspect of male sexuality.



[sic] a place in which anything at all might happen, in which previously stable things have suddenly become unstable' (Maslow 1954, 85). The loss of a familiar routine lies at the root of the child's need for safety; the lack of knowledge about the world makes it necessary for the child to cling to the familiar and to fear the unknown.

Maslow indicates that children prefer a stable daily routine, which provides them with a familiar and therefore safe pattern of life, both physical and emotional. If the safety of a routine is lost, the child may experience anxiety and fear, as he reaches to his parents or guardians for assurance and restoration of a familiar environment. The child tends to view his parents as omnipotent protectors; thus, the parents' role changes from that of food providers in the child's infancy to safety providers in early childhood (id., 87).

It is important to point out that the satisfaction of the safety need implies not only physical safety, but also emotional security, which later transforms into the need for love and acceptance. If the safety need is not satisfied, an individual experiences anxiety, which is expressed in a variety of emotions pertaining to the feeling of insecurity - 'Apprehension, fear, dread and anxiety, tension, nervousness, and jitteriness are all consequences of safety-need frustration' (id., 114). Maslow states that an individual experiences the emotions opposite to those mentioned above as a result of the satisfaction of the safety need. The fact that positive and relaxing emotions also accompany the process of cognition - 'the lift that comes with insight, the calming effect of understanding' (id., 366) - suggests that cognitive processes (or acquisition of knowledge) play an important role in satisfying the safety need, given that the process of cognitive development is not impeded in a normally developing child.

It should be noted that the safety need becomes more 'instinctoid'<sup>43</sup> (and, therefore, less acute), as the child grows up, acquiring knowledge about the world and familiarising

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<sup>43</sup> The explanation of the term 'instinctoid' is presented in the introduction to Chapter 2.

himself with the way his body operates. In adulthood, the safety need loses its urgency, as a person develops cognitive skills and starts concentrating on the satisfaction of higher needs, such as the need for love, acceptance, and finally self-actualisation<sup>44</sup>. The safety need continues to prevail in adult neurotic individuals, who focus on making their world as predictable as possible; 'if, through no fault of their own, something unexpected does occur, they go into a panic reaction as if this unexpected occurrence constituted a grave danger' (id., 89).

### **3.1.2 Octavio Paz and Samuel Ramos on childlike traits of the Mexican male**

The emotional aspect of childlike insecurity and the need for stability is examined in Octavio Paz's analysis of the dual nature of the Mexican male character; this study followed the earlier works of Samuel Ramos, who in 1934 attempted to identify the emotional specifics of the Mexican male character. Samuel Ramos posits that the inherent insecurity of the Mexican male stems from the role played by Mexico in the global community - 'Al nacer México se encontró en el mundo civilizado en la misma relación del niño frente a sus mayores. Se presentaba en la historia cuando ya imperaba una civilización madura, que sólo a medias puede comprender un espíritu infantil. De esta situación desventajosa nace el sentimiento de inferioridad que se agravó con la conquista, el mestizaje, y hasta por la magnitud desproporcionada de la Naturaleza' (Ramos 1986, 51). As a result of the role of an 'infant society', Mexican national character bears the signs of inferiority and insecurity, which are reflected in the emotional makeup of the Mexican male personality. 'La

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<sup>44</sup> It is assumed that the basic physiological and safety needs are fully satisfied so as not to impede the humans' higher cognitive functions.



psicología del mexicano es resultante de las reacciones para ocultar un sentimiento de inferioridad' (id., 53).

A later study of the Mexican character is Octavio Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad*, in which he suggests that the conflict within the Mexican male psyche stems from the nation's attitude towards La Malinche, a noblewoman given to Hernán Cortés as a gift<sup>45</sup>. A symbolic mother of the Mexican nation, she is seen doubly - on one hand, as an embodiment of saintly motherhood worthy of respect and adoration (similar to La Virgen de Guadalupe, who embodies the metaphorical purity of Mexican character); on the other hand, as La Chingada, a weakling succumbing (directly or metaphorically) to the attacks of stronger males<sup>46</sup>. This dual attitude to the mother-symbol may be compared to the emotions of a child, who loves both his mother and father but cannot show his love for the mother because he fears that the stronger father will ridicule him or possibly inflict physical harm on him and the mother. The conflict between the child's love for both parents and fear of the father causes the child to distance himself from either parent and suggests closedness and stoicism as the only appropriate mechanism of self-defence. The peculiarity of the Mexican male character is the ability to accept both attitudes as equally valid, adopting them and suffering in consequence.

The Mexican male character may be defined as a constant inner struggle between the conqueror and the victim, expressed in the overt brashness of an attacker and the covert emotional insecurity of a victim - woven into each other's fabrics. These two equally strong

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<sup>45</sup> The Introduction to the thesis contains an examination of the differences in the representation of the Mexican male character in the works of Samuel Ramos and Octavio Paz.

<sup>46</sup> A detailed study of the character of La Chingada and 'el chingador' is presented in the Introduction to this thesis.

sides of the Mexican male character create an inner turmoil, which attempts to control itself by putting up an outward guard in the form of stoicism, martyrdom, and aggression. This process may be interpreted as the Mexican male's attempt to create an emotionally safe environment within his psyche. Since a study of the hierarchy of human needs concludes that one of the basic needs to be satisfied in order to establish a safe environment for personal growth is the need for physical (sexual) and emotional safety, a parallel may be seen between Maslow's theory of the safety need and the Mexican male's need for emotional stability.

The following analysis of the works of Rosario Castellanos, Marcela Del-Río, Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines will address the male's fears and conflicting emotions, and later focus on the male's first attempts at attaining cognition as a means of overcoming his emotional insecurity<sup>47</sup>. It will also examine briefly the role of the woman in the satisfaction of the male's safety need; based on Maslow's studies, the woman's role will be seen as that of an omnipotent parent-protector (a more detailed study of the character of the woman and her influence on the formation of male sexuality is presented in Chapter 1). It should be emphasised that in the works of the women writers in this study, the woman-narrator is presented as the creator of the image of the male, similar to the male in the works of the men writers, who creates the woman-partner. Therefore, the analysis of the works of Rosario Castellanos and Marcela Del-Río will extrapolate the male's character from the woman's perception of him.

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<sup>47</sup> Since there is no evidence that the male character in the works of four Mexican writers may be considered neurotic, the safety need exhibited by the male will be examined as a representation of the childlike nature of male sexuality.



### 3.2 The male/child's fears

According to Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation, the need for safety becomes dominant in childhood, when a person does not possess enough knowledge about the world to satisfy his need for physical and emotional security (Maslow 1954, 85). As a result, a child experiences a variety of fears, which reflect his limited ability to cope with the unknown aspects of reality threatening his well-being.

In the works of Octavio Paz, Jaime Sabines, Rosario Castellanos, and Marcela Del-Río, the male is presented as experiencing a variety of fears before and during sexual intercourse; such a representation suggests that the male's character makeup contains childlike traits, which affect the expression of his sexuality as well as his perception of himself and the world around him. The two most prominent fears exhibited by the male during a sexual experience is the fear of the unknown and the fear of being alone; as will be seen, both stem from the male's emotional insecurity and lack of understanding of his sexuality.

In the works of the four Mexican writers in this study, the male's fear is the driving force of his sexual desire as well as of his quest for knowledge of his sexual character. The similarities in the writers' representation of this stage of formation of male sexuality are striking. The only discernible difference is as follows: while in the works of the men writers (Paz, Sabines) the male tends to conceal his fears from the woman in an attempt to resolve them single-handedly, in the works of the women writers (Castellanos, Del-Río) the woman plays an important direct role in helping the male recognise and overcome his fears. The following analysis will concentrate on the male/child's fears, especially the fear of being alone and the fear of the unknown (particularly the fear of a sexual act as an unknown experience). These fears occur simultaneously because the male subconsciously needs to be close to the woman (both physically and emotionally) in order to obtain the knowledge necessary to make the world around him familiar and less threatening. It may, therefore, be

suggested that the woman's role becomes that of an omnipotent protector (or that of an omnipotent parent, according to Maslow). The interaction of these two fears defines the childlike aspect of male sexuality.

### **3.2.1 'Se me va a hacer llagas este cuerpo' - Jaime Sabines on the male/child's fears**

The representation of the male's fear is most vivid in the poetry of Jaime Sabines. Many critics see Sabines' works as focused on the male's emotional innocence and vulnerability in a love relationship with a woman (Castañón 1997, 6; Ochoa 1997, 50). According to Ramón Xirau, one of the main topics of Sabines' works was '[el] amor carnal, [el] descubrimiento de la sensibilidad y el temor a la muerte bajo la forma de temor a la muerte de la carne' (Xirau 1972, 157); thus, it is not surprising that many of his poems address the male's vulnerability expressed in the fear of physical suffering and death. It may be suggested that the male is afraid of facing his sexual attraction to the woman because he thinks that it may cause pain or even death.

In the poem 'He aquí', the male is represented as experiencing the fear of sexual attraction to the woman. The emotions and sensations experienced by the male are perceived as unfamiliar and therefore dangerous -

Como una droga mía y tuya  
somos, y una locura celular nos recorre  
y una sangre rebelde y sin cansancio.

(Sabines 1997b, 143)

Several references in the above quote to insanity and drugs ('droga', 'locura'), along with the allusions to physical existence ('celular', 'sangre'), denote that the male considers his being in physical contact (and, based on sexually implicit imagery of the rest of the poem, sexual contact) with the woman a mind-altering experience, which is harmful to his body and psyche. Further references in the poem to pain and death ('nos sufrimos' (ibid.), 'el malestar



/ muriendo es nuestra muerte' (ibid.), 'nada haremos ya sino morimos' (id., 144)), which occur alongside sexual references ('te recuerdo en mi boca y en mis manos' (id., 143), 'sabes a amor, a dulce amor, a carne' (ibid.)), reinforce the notion that the male associates his sexual interaction with the woman with mutual suffering, since all the above quotes contain first person plural ('nosotros') forms of verbs or the possessive pronoun 'nuestro/a'. Although a previous analysis of the poem in this thesis has concluded that fear of death at the moment of sexual satisfaction is the exhibition of the primal aspect of male sexuality (see Chapter 2 for further details), the male's fear may also be linked to childlike traits of his character, such as lack of emotional cognition, which causes the male to fear the unknown. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that the fear of physical and mental harm, which the male experiences at the moment of sexual arousal, provides evidence of his lack of cognitive development, and of the fact that his sexuality is of a primarily non-cognitive nature.

As has been established, the fear of the unknown is accompanied by the fear of being left alone when the male is aroused, because he is afraid of facing an unfamiliar emotion alone for fear that the outcome of this sensation will be physically or emotionally painful (as has been suggested above). In 'He aquí', the male experiences the fear of being alone when his physical well-being is threatened by being separated from the woman:

Se me va a hacer llagas este cuerpo solo,

se me caerá la carne trozo a trozo.

Esto es lejía y muerte.

(id., 143)

A very graphic description of physical suffering ('llagas', 'se me caerá la carne trozo a trozo', 'lejía') points to the fact that the male's imagination creates a terrifying picture of loneliness, thus establishing his dependence on the woman-protector. The above quote may be read as an excerpt from a fairy tale or a child's horror story (e.g., the *Goosebumps* series), where a child left alone is attacked by the vicious unknown evil forces (witches,

ghosts, etc.), posing a threat to his physical and emotional safety. It should also be noted that the male sees his lonely body (or the physical side of his existence) as a source of the threat - 'se me va a hacer llagas este cuerpo solo'; this suggests that the male primarily fears physical pain of loneliness, and establishes one more link between the expression of the fear of being alone and the childlike traits of his sexual character (taking into consideration the sexual overtones of the poem).

Morbid imagery continues to be prominent in Sabines' poetry. 'La muerte entra a raudales en la poesía de Jaime Sabines... La muerte aparece en todo, en la soledad del hombre, en sus silencios, en la imposibilidad de amor, en su destino' (Jordana 1987, 92-3).

Further examples of the male exhibiting the fear of death is found in 'Me tienes'.

Throughout the poem, the male voices his dependence on the woman for the provision of comfort and knowledge about the world and himself - 'Me aprendo en ti más que en mí mismo' (Sabines 1997b, 138)<sup>48</sup>. At the same time, there are distinct sexual overtones in the poem, which culminates in a dual image of death. The last four lines of the poem provide the evidence of the male's subconscious fear of sexual intercourse -

Dulce como tu nombre, como un higo,  
me esperas en tu amor hasta que arribo.  
Tú eres como mi casa,  
eres como mi muerte, amor mío.

(id., 138-9)

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<sup>48</sup> The woman in 'Me tienes' is seen as a source of anxiety and pain as well as a provider of pleasure - 'eres como un dolor sin sitio' (ibid.); this suggests that the male subconsciously fears being physically close to the woman. A further analysis of this emotional conflict is presented in Section 3.3.1 of this chapter.



The male's heightened sexual desire and a consequent expectation of sexual intercourse is implied in a mention of death, which appears after a sexually implicit reference to the woman's genitalia ('higo' may be read as a symbolic representation of female genitalia) and a sexually suggestive line 'me esperas en tu amor'. The male is also fearful of the harm this encounter may cause him, since death is mentioned in the last line of the poem along with love. A reference to death in this context may also be interpreted as an actual physical demise or, alternatively, an orgasm (taking into consideration a previously mentioned euphemism for an orgasm 'la petite mort' - 'little death'). In this case, once again, the male fears sexual intercourse because of its potentially lethal outcome, which the male imagines because of his lack of knowledge of sexual interaction.

The male's representation of a sexual experience exhibits morbid overtones in 'Lo primero', where the male once again demonstrates his sexual innocence by subconsciously fearing the sexual intercourse because the feelings associated with it are unknown to him. The most prominent exhibition of the male's fear is evident in the following quote -

este fluir obscuro, inexorable,  
y este bendito corazón profundo,  
manantial de la muerte,

(id., 140)

Here, the male's arousal is expressed in sexually implicit imagery: the phrase 'este fluir' may be interpreted as a reference to ejaculation, and the phrase 'manantial de la muerte' evokes parallels with Octavio Paz's poems, where the word 'manantial' represents the woman's sexual organs (e.g., 'Blanco', 'Piedra de sol', etc.). On the other hand, references to death and loneliness occur almost simultaneously with sexual imagery in the above quote; this points again to the connection between the male's sexual desire and fear of sexual intercourse. The male's attempts at describing a sexual act are overshadowed by his anxiety in the face of a dangerous unknown sensation; as a result, the male becomes confused and

frustrated, as he separates himself from the objective reality around him. The conflicting emotions stemming from his fears and desires will be analysed in detail in Section 2 of this chapter.

The above analysis has made it possible to determine that in Jaime Sabines' poetry, the male's fears of loneliness and sexual closeness become most prominent at the time of increased sexual desire. The fear experienced by the male represents his need for safety, and stems from the childlike side of his sexuality, which possesses more cognitive traits than its primal aspect. The male is represented as not having enough knowledge to overcome the all-consuming need for safety and to become more emotionally comfortable in a sexual relationship. The focus in the representation of the childlike aspect of male sexuality in Sabines' poetry is on the physical harm imagined by the male at the time of loneliness or in a sexual relationship with the woman. As will be proven later, a similar approach is evident in the works of Octavio Paz; however, this analysis of his works will show that their focus is directed towards the fear of loneliness, which causes emotional anguish rather than physical pain.

### **3.2.2 The male/child's fears in Octavio Paz's poetry**

The childlike traits of the male character in Paz's poetry are not as pronounced as those in the male character of Sabines' works. However, there are indications of these traits in several works of the collection *Calamidades y milagros* (1937-1948) as well as in 'Piedra de sol'. The childlike character of the male narrator of these poems is expressed in his search for knowledge which would help him overcome the fear of sexual interaction with the woman. In the works of Paz, the overt expression of the male's childlike nature is rarely evident; thus, the following analysis will focus on the covert representation of the phenomenon.



'Al sueño' contains the most prominent representation of fear during the time when the male is sexually aroused. Firstly, the male is represented as experiencing fear of the physical aspect of lovemaking because he perceives a sexual act as a source of emotional anxiety -

tus angustiados senos,  
el terror de mis huesos bajo el aire

(Paz 1960, 234)

In this quote, the use of the adjective 'angustiados' to describe a sexually arousing part of the woman's body carries a suggestion of the male's sexual ineptitude; the next line 'el terror de mis huesos', containing both the word 'terror' and a sexually implicit image of 'huesos' (as a possible reference to the male's erection<sup>49</sup>) reinforces the suggestion that the combination of the male's high sexual desire and impeded sexual ability unnerves and scares him<sup>50</sup>.

It may be said that the male fears not only a conflict of his feelings and physical potential, but also the loss of control of his body. Apart from the above imagery, the poem contains several instances of the word 'ciego', which implies that, having lost his sight, the male has to resort to the sense of touch in order to interact with the woman<sup>51</sup>. There are obvious sexual overtones in the lines referring to the male's apparent blindness:

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<sup>49</sup> The analysis of this metaphor appears in the study of Octavio Paz's poem 'Blanco' in Section 4.3 of Chapter 4, addressing the creation of the male's subjective reality based upon the need for sexual expression.

<sup>50</sup> The emotional implication of the fear of sexual interaction is the conflict between the male's sexuality and conscience; this will be analysed in Section 3.3.1, which deals with the emotional consequences of the male's fears.

<sup>51</sup> A similar image of blindness is found in 'Piedra de sol', where the male searches for the woman, whom he sees as a means of escaping the objective reality. The recurring images of mazes (e.g. 'corredores sin fin de la memoria' (Paz 1960, 295)), and fruitless search ('busco a tientas' (ibid.), 'busco sin encontrar' (id., 296)) may be interpreted as the male's fear of the loss of control over his environment as well as of being lost; both fears stem from the male/child's fear of the unknown. Although there is an indication of a childlike trait in the male's character in 'Piedra de sol', this poem contains more evidence of other aspects of male sexuality and is, therefore, analysed more extensively in the chapters dealing with those traits.

Yo escucho, palpo, ciego, sumergido,  
el tenebroso ruido de tu cuerpo,

(ibid.)

Yo toco la desdicha  
y la inefable, blanda luz dichosa  
que corre por tu pelo,

(ibid.)

Although the male experiences the loss of control over his body ('sumergido'), he continues to stay in contact with the woman's body, which, on one hand, is a source of sexual pleasure, and on the other hand, a link between him and the objective reality. It is possible to suggest that in this case, the male is akin to a baby, who has not yet developed the ability to see in detail, and therefore explores the world around him mainly by touch.

One of the poems containing references to the fear of pain is 'Al tacto'. Here, the male's fear of physical and emotional closeness becomes evident in his perception of sexual desire as a source of pain and emotional anguish. The poem contains many references to the physical suffering caused by the male's attraction to the woman -

fiebre, manto de agujas y saliva,

(id., 236)

Te toco, helada fiebre,  
mi lengua paralítica te llama,

(id., 238)

It should be noted that, although the references to the male's physical suffering are quite obvious ('fiebre', 'lengua paralítica'), they also reflect the emotional anguish experienced by the male at the moment of sexual arousal. The image of a paralysed tongue speaking symbolises the male's frustrated desire to communicate with the woman; the reference to fever may be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the male's sexual arousal.



Furthermore, these quotes are followed by the male's emotionally charged demand for intimacy ('dame tu polvo vivo, / esa carne que late' (ibid.)) or by an expression of abstract fear ('hora sin cuerpo, miedo' (id., 236)), suggesting that the male's sexual experience is characterised by fears or negative emotions. Further analysis of the poem reveals an emotional conflict within the male/child's psyche - while he is afraid of being close to the woman, he also fears being rejected by the woman, whom he sees subconsciously as a source of knowledge about himself -

terror de la conciencia  
frente a la mesa, el cuadro, el muro,  
el otro cuerpo que a mi lado yace,  
¿tus cínicas imágenes nocturnas,  
las sedientas criaturas que me pueblan,  
son mi perdida imagen verdadera  
que mi tacto rescata de la nada?

(id., 237)

The complexity of the woman's image revealing the male's personality to himself ('tus ...imágenes [...] son mi perdida imagen verdadera') may be read as a sign that the male overcomes his fear of knowledge because of a desire to learn more about himself. It is possible to interpret the phrase 'imagen verdadera' as a reference to the male's search for knowledge through a sexual experience (a detailed study of various stages of this process will be presented in Section 3.4.2 of this chapter, as well as in Chapter 4).

A slightly different representation of the male's fears appears in 'Soliloquio de medianoche', where the male is seen as intensely fearing being alone at night, thus revealing a childlike trait of his character - the fear of darkness. The fear is evident in the imagery of 'la desierta noche del insomne' (id., 256), 'una eterna noche amanece' (id., 259). As a result of this emotion, the male creates a separate subjective reality, which he can control and,

therefore, inhabit without fear. This subjective reality - the memory of the male's early childhood - is presented directly when the male experiences intense negative emotions -

Y entre todos se alzó, para hundirse de nuevo,  
como el náufrago en su postrer intento,  
mi infancia, mi sepultada infancia,  
infancia salvaje domesticada con palabras,

(id., 256)

Infancia, fruto comido por los años,  
barca de papel abandonada en el légamo una tarde de lluvia,

(id., 257)

The above quotes reveal that the male is drawn to the reality of his childhood, possibly because he is the only one who can control it ('domesticada' points to the process of taming, which may also be interpreted as the process of gaining knowledge of one's potential).

Jason Wilson interprets the male's regression to childhood as follows - 'The "magic word of childhood" opens all doors and reality obeys the child's inner desires' (Wilson 1979, 58), suggesting that the male retreats from a dangerous 'adult' reality (which may also be labeled objective) into a safe environment of his childhood memories (or his subjective reality<sup>52</sup>).

However, Wilson disregards the sexual overtones of the floral imagery, interpreting it as a symbolic representation of the nature's cognitive character perceived by a child in his subjective reality, over which he has control (unlike the corrupt 'adult' reality, which appears dangerous to the child).

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<sup>52</sup> An in-depth analysis of the conflict between the male's subjective and objective realities will be carried out in Chapter 4, which focuses on the male's attainment of knowledge as a result of his sexual experience.



The issue of control surfaces in a sexual context - 'una flor roja me hablaba / y sólo yo entendía su cifrado lenguaje' (Paz 1960, 257). This quote may be read as a unique connection between the child and nature (Wilson 1979, 58); alternatively, it may be a reference to a child playing a game, the rules of which, including codes or a coded language, he has created to succeed as a ruler of the subjective reality of the game<sup>53</sup>. It is interesting to note that the reality the male creates has definite sexual overtones, which are evident in the image of a red flower (a symbolic representation of the woman's vagina), rocks (interpreted previously as a metaphor for sexual organs; this image also appears in Paz's poems 'Lago' and 'Marina'). Finally, the quote 'una palabra mágica me abría cada noche las puertas de los cielos / y el mismo sol de oro macizo palidecía ante mi espada de madera' (Paz 1960, 257) may be seen as a metaphor for an orgasm - the phrase 'las puertas de los cielos' may be read as a metaphor of the woman's genitalia, 'espada de madera' as a double symbol of the male's erect penis, and the image of the shining sun may be interpreted as a reference to the partners' climax. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that during the time of increased sexual arousal, the male experiences the fear of emotional harm, and attempts to overcome it by placing himself within a subjective reality, which he is familiar with and, therefore, can control to his benefit.

The above analysis has shown that in the poems of Octavio Paz, the male experiences various fears based upon a conflict between his sexual desire and the absence of knowledge of the world and himself. Therefore, the male's sexual experience is emotionally frustrating, as the male fears and desires physical closeness to the woman, whom he sees as a

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<sup>53</sup> A similar creation of the 'game reality' appears in the poem 'En la orilla' by Jaime Sabines. Here, the male sees the objective reality around him as a play field, where the image of the woman is hidden in the landscape - 'En el monte, extendida / sobre la yerba... / una mujer' (Sabines 1997b, 43), 'En el aire hay siempre oculta... / una mujer' (id., 44). Use of the 'code language' of a child's game, i.e., the rules of the game ('si buscamos bien: una mujer' (id., 43), 'mírala bien' (ibid.), 'si vuelves rápido a ver / la ves' (id., 44)), further reinforces the above notion; the surreal nature of the landscape, similar to that in 'Piedra de sol' supplements the idea that when aroused, the male creates a subjective reality, which meets his sexual needs (a detailed analysis of this process appears in Chapter 4).



provider of knowledge. However, in most poems discussed above, the woman is either absent completely ('Soliloquio de medianoche') or is absent in a metaphoric sense from the male's subjective reality ('Al tacto', 'Al sueño', 'Piedra de sol'). The male is left to explore his fears alone, aiming at acquiring knowledge in order to overcome his fears. One of the means of the acquisition of knowledge is the creation of a subjective reality based upon familiar experiences; the male tends to re-create the reality of his childhood because he considers this environment to be familiar, controllable, and therefore safe.

As a result of our analysis, it may be concluded that the difference in the representation of the male/child's fears in the works of Paz and Sabines is based on the difference in the level of cognition in the male's character. In Sabines' poetry, the male has the traits of a young child or a baby, whose cognitive ability is either non-existent or underdeveloped. In Paz's works, the male possesses enough knowledge and experience to realise that the expression of his sexuality will not cause him extensive *physical* harm or death; however, the male lacks enough emotional knowledge to be comfortable with sexual experiences and not to regard them as a threat to his *psyche*. As a result, the works of both men writers (Paz and Sabines) contain evidence of the male's lack of physical (sexual) and emotional maturity, which causes him to sense fear and, therefore, to experience the need for physical and emotional safety during a sexual experience.

### **3.2.3 Rosario Castellanos' approach - the male/child's search for a safe routine**

The women writers' approach to the representation of the male's fears is similar to that of the men writers: in the works of Castellanos and Del-Río, the male is represented as fearing the unknown, which most of the time pertains to his relationship with the woman, especially the sexual aspect of this relationship. It is important to note that in the works of Castellanos and Del-Río, the woman's role in the satisfaction of the male's safety need is more pronounced than in the poetry of Paz and Sabines. This stems from the fact that in the



works of the women writers, the woman is represented as possessing a highly developed cognitive ability, which allows her to act as an omniscient protector of the male/child. On the other hand, the male/child is seen as lacking cognition and heavily relying on the woman's knowledge and experience for the provision of emotional and physical security<sup>54</sup>.

In the works of Rosario Castellanos, the male's character is presented indirectly through the character of the woman, who either describes the male or acts as a result of the interaction with him. One of the most prominent examples of this method of character representation is the story 'Lección de cocina'. It explores the male's covert childlike side. Since the woman is the only sentient presence in the story, the reader is only allowed to see the male being presented as existing in the pre-verbal stage of development - he does not speak, nor is he quoted, and his physical and psychological personality is presented solely by the woman. It is important to note that there is no direct physical description of the male; the only time the reader 'sees' him in the flesh is during the scene of lovemaking, where he appears from the back. This approach may be a reflection of the woman's perception of the male as a baby. Most of the time, a mother describes her baby's habits, behavioural patterns rather than the physical appearance because in early childhood babies possess little physical individuality.

Further presentation of the male's childlike nature is seen in the image of the meat, which symbolises the male's sexuality (see Section 2.2.4 of Chapter 2 for a detailed analysis of the role of the meat). The fact that the woman has to take care of the piece of meat reinforces the representation of the male/child as dependent on the woman/mother, since he would not be able to mature without her help (in this case, the act of cooking may be interpreted as the process of growing up).

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<sup>54</sup> Section 1.2 of Chapter 1 contains an extensive study of the woman as a separate cognitive entity, acting as a protector of the male.

The exhibition of the male's childlike traits becomes more prominent as the story progresses, reaching its pinnacle in the burning of the meat, which may be seen metaphorically as an irreversible regression to childhood. The culmination of the childlike aspect of the male's character takes place in the fantasy scene in the courtroom, as the woman imagines addressing the judge at the divorce court - 'Que así no es posible vivir, que yo quiero divorciarme' (Castellanos 1983, 169). Once the idea of divorce enters the woman's mind, she reaches the border of her role as the male's caretaker because she no longer has to comply with her role in marriage. If the woman carries out the threat, she would make the husband assume the responsibility for living alone and fending for himself; the fact that the male is definitely not prepared for an independent life is evident in his daily complaints - 'se te ha desprendido un botón del saco, el pan está quemado, el café frío (id., 166) - which connotes his physical dependency on the woman. The divorce fantasy represents a threat of a potential loss of the male/child's caretaker and protector; in order to restore his safe routine, the male has to redirect the woman's attention back to his needs. This is accomplished by the meat burning itself, which implies a powerful outburst of emotions on the male's part (the emotions stemming from the fear of losing safety will be analysed in detail in Section 3.3 of this chapter).

From the above analysis, it becomes evident that the main fear of the male/child in the story by Rosario Castellanos is the loss of the routine provided by the woman-caretaker. Because of the male's inability to re-create the routine in case of the woman's refusal to do so, he attempts to make the woman return to her duties by acting out his fears in the form of temper tantrums; these emotional outbursts are presented in the story as the changes in the appearance of the roast.



### 3.2.4 The male/child's fears in Marcela Del-Río's poetry

The works of Marcela Del-Río, like the works of Rosario Castellanos, present an indirect portrayal of the male through the representation of the woman's emotions, which either reflect the male's character traits or allow the reader to extrapolate the representation of the male (as is the case in the analysis of the primal aspect of male sexuality - see Chapter 2). This is especially evident in the poems written in the form of the woman's side in a dialogue with the male; in several poems, there is a direct indication of a verbal exchange being initiated - 'Escuchar tu voz / ... me deja suspendida en un hilo de sombras' ('Nuestras voces', Del-Río 1985, 224), or interrupted - 'No niegues mi verdad' ('Duda', id., 194), 'Calla no digas nada' ('Narcisismo', id., 172). The emotions expressed by the woman stem from an interaction between her and the male and therefore also reflect the male's emotional state.

It should be noted that some poems chosen for this analysis are included in the novel *Proceso a Faubritten*. For example, two sections of María Corona's diary correspond almost exactly to two poems, later published in the collection *Temps en paroles* (1985): the section 'Jueves' (Del-Río 1976, 104) is a shortened version of the poem 'Narcisismo' (Del-Río 1985, 172), and the section 'Martes' (Del-Río 1976, 109) is an exact quote of the poem 'Soy... ellas' (Del-Río 1985, 212). For the purpose of my analysis it could be said that the meaning of the poems did not change when they were incorporated into the novel, since they enhance the representation of the male character (Faubritten) as perceived by the woman-narrator (María Corona). The following analysis is based on the poems as the original source of the representation of the male's sexuality through the character of the woman.

In Del-Río's works, the fear represented most prominently is the fear of physical and emotional closeness, followed by the fear of being alone; both stem from the male's fear of knowledge. Most of the time, the above emotions are experienced by the woman; since she talks to the male, often influencing his emotional state, it is possible to suggest that her fears are transferred onto the male's character. There are instances when the woman talks about



the male experiencing a certain type of fear; therefore, the expression of an emotion by the male is still indirect, because the reader extrapolates the male's feelings from the woman's account of them. The implication of indirect representation of the male's fears is taken into consideration in this analysis<sup>55</sup>.

The fear of being alone is reflected in several poems of the collection *Temps en paroles*; the most prominent instances appear in the poems 'Días vacíos' and 'Narcisismo'. In 'Días vacíos', the woman-narrator assumes that the male is afraid of being alone, because she perceives his actions when he is alone as the source of emotional distress. This is implied in a death reference in the first stanza of the poem - 'no pienses que habremos de morir un día / sin haberlos sumado / a nuestra memoria común' (Del-Río 1985, 394) - which suggests that the woman thinks that the male is afraid of death mainly because it connotes his emotional isolation from the partner.

The transfer of the woman's perception of aloneness onto the male's sexuality is most evident in the juxtaposition of a reference to a sexual act - 'los minutos / en que nos conocemos' (ibid.) - and the descriptions of the time spent alone - 'las horas de paseo divorciado, / las horas de sueño ajeno, / las horas mudas frente al cine / o la televisión' (ibid.). The male is the one who is imagined as performing the above actions, while the woman evaluates them from the point of view of an omniscient narrator, who may also share this perception of being alone as an unpleasant (or dangerous) experience; the use of the first-person plural forms of the verbs in the poem reinforces the notion that the two partners share all their emotional experiences.

Further references to physical and emotional discomfort supplement the suggestion that the male is, at least, apprehensive of the experience of being alone. The image in the

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<sup>55</sup> This approach has already been adopted in Chapter 2 in the analysis of the women writers' works



final two lines of the poem - 'y sabrás por qué aulla el lobo / a la luna' (ibid.) add to the male's childlike fear of being alone because it carries a subtle reference to fairy-tales or children's horror stories (the image of wild animals in a dark forest is common to fairy-tales of many cultures), which implies the child's fear of being alone in the dark and a consequent desire to be with a protective parent.

It is possible that the woman is also afraid of being alone, although she is probably better prepared to deal with the experience because she is familiar with the emotional side of the feeling. This is evident in the last two lines of the poem - here, the use of the future form 'sabrás' implies that she already possesses the knowledge which the male still has to acquire.

A similar display of the male's fear of being alone is presented in 'Narcisismo', where it is expressed indirectly through the woman. She sees herself as a part of the male, and communicates her perception of herself to the male so that he does not feel alone in the universe -

soy tu sangre y el aire que respiras

soy una prolongación de ti

cuando miras mis manos

son tus manos las que miras.

Soy mi cuerpo, mi sombra

y tu reflejo.

Soy tu cuerpo, tu sombra

y mi reflejo

(id., 172)

It should be noted that at first, the woman becomes essential life-giving substances (blood, air), thus ensuring the male's physical safety. As the male gets closer to a sexual act (reflected in the last two lines of the poem), the woman takes on the responsibility for his emotional safety as well. Since the woman considers the male afraid of being alone,

especially during the time of increased sexual desire, she attempts to create a safe environment for the male to feel secure as a part of her physical and emotional self. This quote may be read as a reflection of the male/child in the woman/mother. Similar to a baby imprinting onto his mother, the male acquires safety in the unknown world of his body by recognising himself as a mirrored image of the woman/mother, and vice versa, by recognising the woman as an extension of his body - 'cuando miras mis manos / son tus manos las que miras'. It may be suggested that the woman, having made herself part of the male, implies that without her the male does not have a personality, although the woman retains her individuality - 'Soy mi cuerpo, mi sombra / y tu reflejo'. However, by the end of the poem, the woman completely fuses herself with the male to supply him with a familiar frame of reference - 'Soy tú y al amarme / te amas a ti mismo' (ibid.) - and to implicitly disperse his fear of being alone with an unknown sensation of sexual desire.

The above quote, as well as the title of the poem, may also be misleadingly interpreted from the Freudian perspective - the male/child's sexual pleasure is centred upon himself when the woman metaphorically fuses herself with him. As a result, the male/child may be seen as experiencing the narcissistic nature of his sexuality, which is fueled by the woman's perception of herself as a part of the male's body and mind (Freud 1961a, 112-4).

Subtly implied in 'Narcisismo', the male's fear of sexual intercourse appears more prominently in 'Nuestras voces'. Although the male does not express this sentiment directly, it is the woman who exhibits the emotion and transfers it onto the male. It is interesting to note that the woman and the male are attracted to each other, but the woman finds it hard to talk about the physical aspect of a sexual act. Throughout the poem, the woman refers to a sexual act as a metaphoric joining of the souls (voices), apparently ignoring the physical side of the experience. However, a closer reading of these metaphors reveals a hidden sexual desire, which the male acts upon, sometimes violently, not being able to differentiate between pain and pleasure - 'Tu voz, apretada de vidas simultáneas / me golpea-acaricia la



cara' (Del-Río 1985, 224). The woman attempts to control his emotions by imposing moral conventions of the superego on his sexual expression, considering the physical side of a sexual act a shameful experience, not to be discussed aloud -

Mi voz...

besa tu voz y juguetea con ella

en abrazo de impúdica lujuria

(ibid.)

It is possible to suggest that the male is free of sexual inhibitions, although he may be seen as being afraid of the power of sexual expression; this is implied in the fact that he subconsciously attempts to take back the pain inflicted on the woman - 'golpea-acaricia'.

The woman, on the other hand, fears the exposure of the physical side of the sexual act and considers it 'impúdica lujuria', transferring this fear (or shame) onto the male's sexuality, thus attempting to subdue it and to add an emotional aspect to his sexual experience.

Section 3 of this chapter will present a more detailed study of the male's acquisition of knowledge of a sexual act as an experience to be spoken of metaphorically.

In the poem 'Tu avidez' we can see another case of the male lacking knowledge of himself and his sexuality, which reflects a dual nature of the male's character, as described in *El laberinto de la soledad* by Octavio Paz - the male's inner vulnerability is shielded by his covert brashness, aggression or aloofness. In 'Tu avidez', as in 'Nuestras voces', the male focuses on the physical side of his sexual desire as a familiar experience in order to satisfy his sexual urge and not to upset the safety equilibrium of his environment. The woman's role in this situation is that of an omniscient teacher, who aims to focus the male on exploring the cognitive aspect of his sexuality. The male fears knowledge because it is unfamiliar and, therefore, perceived as a threat to his safety. Therefore, the male tries to remain what he is on the outside (the rock) in order to protect his inner emotional safety; his sexual experience

frustrates him ('ansia', 'soledad', 'lágrima', etc.), and he turns to the woman for the explanation of the process.

In 'Tu avidéz', the male acts upon his sexual urges without employing the emotional or cognitive side of sexual desire -

como un volcán  
que lucha por ser piedra  
devorándose a sí mismo en cada espasmo  
ignorando su fuego, su luz, su soplo inagotable

(id., 196)

In this quote, the physical aggression of the male's sexual desire prevails over its emotional component; this is evident in the physically explicit imagery - 'devorándose', 'espasmo'.

This is followed by the phrase 'ignorando su fuego', which suggests a cognitive action - one of the meanings of the verb 'ignorar' is 'to ignore', which implies recognition and refusal to acknowledge<sup>56</sup>, both of which are cognitive functions; it also implies that the male fears this side of his personality. The juxtaposition of these images makes it possible to conclude that the male's overt aggression overshadows his cognitive side during a sexual act because the male is afraid to explore the unfamiliar emotional and cognitive aspects of his sexuality.

On the whole, the poems of Marcela Del-Río present the childlike aspect of male sexuality as reflected indirectly in their impact on the character of the woman. The two dominant fears - the fear of the unknown and the fear of being alone - are implied in the woman's narration of the male's actions. To overcome these fears, the male either shields himself with aggression or turns to the woman-protector for the knowledge about himself

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<sup>56</sup> Another meaning of the verb 'ignorar' is 'to be unaware of', which then suggests that the male is unable to recognise the volatile emotions within his sexuality. From both interpretations of this quote it may be concluded that the male's volatile emotions are overshadowed by the physical non-cognitive aspect of his sexual desire.



and the world. As will be seen later in the chapter, both routes cause a conflict of emotions, which in turn makes the male seek knowledge in order to restore his emotional safety (see Maslow 1954, 96 for the connection between the safety need and the desire for knowledge).

### 3.2.5 Summary

The above analysis has shown that the first sign of the exhibition of childlike traits of male sexuality is the expression of various fears, the most prominent of which are the fear of being alone and the fear of the unknown. In the works of the four writers (Sabines, Paz, Castellanos, Del-Río), the male is subconsciously trying to satisfy his need for safety. This causes him to fear the unknown experiences, which may jeopardise his familiar and therefore secure environment; in addition, the male is seen as being afraid of remaining alone because he would have to face the possibility of more unfamiliar experiences (for example, sexual arousal).

The representation of the male's fears differs in the works of the four writers. In the works of Sabines and Castellanos, the male lacks the necessary cognitive skills to overcome his fears, and has to rely on the woman-protector mostly for *physical* safety. In the works of Paz and Del-Río, the male is represented as an entity with rudimentary cognitive skills. Realising the need for more cognitive traits, he either seeks to acquire knowledge and to overcome the fear of the unknown on his own, or relies on the woman to provide him with the knowledge he needs to ensure his *emotional* security.

In both cases, the male reaches a point of cognitive frustration, when he realises that he is helpless in the face of his fears. This moment is characterised by conflicting and volatile emotions; in an attempt to resolve the conflict and restore his safe environment, the male seeks to learn about himself and his reality. The male's emotional frustration based on the realisation of the conflict between the need for safety and the lack of knowledge will be examined in the next section.



### **3.3 The male/child's emotional instability**

In the previous section it has been established that the male experiences childlike emotions during sexual intercourse; the most prominent emotions are fear of the unknown and fear of being alone. The outward expression of these fears has a dual nature: first, the male exhibits conflicting emotions; as the emotional outburst subsides, the male discovers that he does not understand what is happening to him, and tries to acquire knowledge about his sexual experience. Contradicting emotions colour the male's sexual desire, as he attempts to balance his arousal and fears - the male behaves erratically, bringing together positive and negative emotions, occasionally lashing out at the woman or turning to her for physical and emotional comfort.

As has been concluded in Section 3.2, there are two main tendencies in the representation of the male's childlike nature in the works of the four Mexican writers. The works of Jaime Sabines and Rosario Castellanos reflect the male lacking cognitive abilities and focusing on the satisfaction of the need for *physical* safety (provided mainly by the woman or the male's sexual interaction with her), while in the poems of Octavio Paz and Marcela Del-Río the male is presented as exhibiting higher cognition and concentrating on meeting his need for *emotional* safety (the satisfaction of this need depends not only on the male's interaction with the woman, but also on the discoveries made by the male on his own). As a result, the difference in the representation of the male's fears is reflected in the depiction of his emotions associated with the fears, and (in Section 3.4) of the male's first steps towards the acquisition of knowledge.

#### **3.3.1 Jaime's Sabines' approach to the male/child's emotional character**

In Jaime Sabines' poetry, the male's emotional expression is the combination of grief and sexual arousal. Armando Armengol states that '[los] principales temas, técnicas e imágenes favoritas [de Jaime Sabines son]... la soledad, la angustia y al ausencia de la



amada' (Mansour 1988, 69). The feeling of grief arises from the male's fear of being alone and lost in the world which he does not understand; as has been discussed in Section 3.2, the male/child experiences fear of the unknown surroundings because he considers them potentially physically harmful. Since the male is sexually attracted to the woman, the combination of fear and sexual desire causes confusion; as a result, the male/child attempts to resolve the conflict, which causes him discomfort, by creating a fantasy to satisfy his sexual need in a familiar and safe environment. It should be emphasised that in the poems of Sabines, the male's subjective reality provides him with physical safety; the woman's dual role in this reality is that of a sexual partner and a provider of physical protection. The lack of the male's cognitive abilities (or the presence of rudimentary cognition) causes the focus of his reality to be on satisfying his need for physical safety.

The analysis of the male/child's volatile emotions should begin with the study of the poems which reflect the male's baby-like behaviour - 'Ay, Tarumba', 'He aquí', and 'Me tienes'. Here the childlike traits of the male's character are exhibited directly or are reflected in the image of the woman-mother.

The most prominent representation of the male's childlike traits appears in 'Ay, Tarumba', where emotional conflicts are implied in the juxtapositions of references to physical harm coming from the male's sexual arousal - 'tú ya conoces el deseo. / Te jala, te arrastra, te deshace' (Sabines 1997b, 92) - followed by sexually implicit imagery - 'te gusta desear/.../ te gusta pasarles la lengua de tus ojos a todas' (id., 93). According to José Javier Villareal, 'el ritmo de Tarumba es fuerte, violento; lleno de pausas y ruidos. Los versos agreden golpean, tal parece que en ellos prevalece un tono de gruñido, de acecho' (*Homenaje a Jaime Sabines* 1987, 81); therefore, the structure of the poem reflects the male's emotional turmoil - this includes uneven lines and unstable rhythm of the stanzas, for example, 'Salado Tarumba, tienes la piel como una boca / y no te cansas' (Sabines 1997b, 93).



The last three lines of the poem may be interpreted as the woman-mother addressing the male; this may be deduced from the absence of connection between them and the rest of the poem, as well as from the difference in the tone of these lines (condescending and void of aggressive sexual overtones) -

No vas a sacar nada.

Aunque llores, aunque te quedas quieto

como un buen muchacho.

(ibid.)

The woman saying these lines takes on a role of the male's mother, who addresses the male the way she would address a child ('like a good boy'). These lines reflect the male's ego responsible for 'keeping a cool head' in an otherwise volatile and arousing situation; the ego in this case may be seen as a representation of the male's parent (most likely his mother) because of the authoritarian tone of the quote, the use of the phrase 'buen muchacho', etc.

It may be said that when the male tries to satisfy his sexual needs, he imagines a woman possessing only sexual characteristics; the primal aspect of the male's self takes over his conscience as he engages in a sexual act. However, after the male's arousal diminishes, the woman created by his physiological needs changes into a parental figure since the next stage of need satisfaction (safety) reflects the male's childlike character and the woman's role as a caretaker.

A representation of the male as a child is also evident in 'He aquí'. Here, the male's behaviour is similar to that of a baby at the pre-cognitive stage of development - the male is able to recognise the woman by non-cognitive means (touch and taste), similar to the way a baby familiarises himself with the world around him. It is known that babies, due to their inability to clearly see smaller objects, rely on their sense of touch and smell to recognise their mothers - for example, when breast-fed, a baby will take the breast only when it touches his lips; as a baby imprints himself on his mother, he recognises her voice and smell



before he can see her face distinctly (Spock 1958, 152). Similarly, in the poem, the male/child learns to recognise the woman by non-cognitive means, thus precluding the possibility of a higher cognitive connection between the partners -

Te recuerdo en mi boca y en mis manos.

Con mi lengua y mis ojos y mis manos

te sé, [...]

En mis labios te sé, te reconozco,...

y toda tú me sueñas

(Sabines 1997b, 143-4)

Although the male's exploration of the woman has distinct sexual overtones, their purpose is to make the woman familiar to the male. In the beginning of the stanza, the male directly admits that he does not possess knowledge about himself and the woman - 'Yo no sé dónde estás. Yo ya he olvidado / quién eres, dónde estás, cómo te llamas' (id., 143); then the repetitive use of the verbs denoting knowledge suggests that the male is establishing a connection with the woman, who eventually becomes the source of security for the male. He relies on the woman to provide him with an emotionally safe environment so that he can express his negative feelings freely - 'Te digo que estoy solo y que me faltas' (id., 144). By the end of the poem, the male once again expresses fear of being alone:

Hoy y mañana, así, y cuando estemos

en nuestros brazos simples y cansados,

me faltarás, amor, nos faltaremos.

(ibid.)

The above quote suggests that although the male is safe at the present moment, he fears the loss of his secure union with the woman. It should be noted that he is afraid to lose his emotional connection to the woman, since he still mentions physical contact - 'en nuestros brazos ... me faltarás'. Since this emotion is revealed after a metaphoric sexual act, it is

possible to suggest that the male sees his physical (sexual) link with the woman as an obstacle for their emotional connection. Subconsciously, the male is afraid of being alone with the feelings he does not understand, because he thinks that they may cause pain or even death (see Section 3.2 for an in-depth analysis of the male's fears). Therefore, when sexually aroused, the male exhibits conflicting emotions - on one hand, he seeks physical closeness with the woman in order to feel safe; on the other hand, he fears being close to the woman because, if she is absent, he will be left alone with the unknown experiences and emotions. As a result, the male attempts to acquire knowledge about himself and the objective reality in order not to rely solely on the woman for the provision of safety, because he begins to see that the woman/mother's presence in his life is not constant.

While in 'He aquí', the male is closely linked with the woman (physically and emotionally) and relies on her completely, in 'Me tienes' the male/child starts moving away from the woman/mother, seeking to acquire physical independence but still relying on her for the provision of emotional support. Here the connection between the male and the woman contains distinct sexual overtones in addition to the male expressing dependence on the woman for physical and emotional safety; overtly, the relationship between the male and the woman is that of friends or a child and a parent, and sexual overtones are being suppressed. The first two lines of the poem 'Me tienes en tus manos / y me lees como un libro' (id., 138) present the image of a child being protected and taught by the woman/mother; the embrace followed by the reference to reading implies the expression of cognitive functions, thus pre-empting the possibility of sexual intercourse between the child and the mother, which is the expression of the human subconscious (e.g. Oedipal complex, Electra's complex). This suggests that the male sees the woman as a provider of physical security and a mentor rather than a potential sexual partner. As the male/child starts to recognise his sexual needs, he wants to share them with the woman/mother -

A veces quiero hablarte de mujeres



que a un lado tuyo persigo.

Eres como el perdón

y yo soy como tu hijo.

(ibid.)

The male trusts the woman to respond positively to his exploration of sexuality and to guide him in his search; the ever present physical and emotional link between him and the woman is evident in the phrase 'al lado tuyo' appearing alongside the reference to the male's pursuits of other women. It should be noted that although the male acts upon his sexual desire, he does not understand the moral implications of his experience; therefore, he turns to the omniscient woman/mother for moral guidance - 'eres como el perdón'. On the other hand, this phrase may be read as one of the implicit references to the sexual connection between the male and the woman, which appear throughout the poem<sup>57</sup>. He wants her to forgive him for his disregard of their relationship; moreover, he re-asserts his role of 'tu hijo' in their partnership, thus excluding the possibility of a sexual relationship with the woman/mother and rendering himself available to other women. However, the fact that the male does seek the woman's forgiveness and approval suggests that subconsciously he sees her as a parent, a protector, and teacher; this interpretation is reinforced by the comparison 'tú eres como mi casa' (id., 139), which suggests that the male associates the woman with the place of his physical and emotional safety.

'Te quiero' also presents the male as considering the woman a constant source of a familiar daily routine, which brings about satisfaction of his safety need; creation of a stable emotionally positive environment is implied in the repetition of the verb 'querer' woven into the description of the male's day - 'Te quiero a las diez de la mañana... Te quiero con toda mi alma y con todo mi cuerpo... Luego vuelvo a quererte, cuando nos acostamos...' (id.,

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<sup>57</sup> Section 3.2 contains a detailed analysis of sexual imagery in the poem and a connection between the male's arousal and childlike fears associated with his sexual experiences.

120). However, since the woman, to whom these words are addressed, does not always behave according to the male's wishes ('Pero a las dos de la tarde, o a las tres, cuando me pongo a pensar en nosotros dos, y tú piensas en la comida o en el trabajo diario' (ibid.)), the male becomes possessive of the woman for fear of losing the emotional security of their relationship, which he thinks he controls. As a result of his possessive attitude towards the woman and the emotional security she provides, the male experiences conflicting emotions, which then affect the overt expression of his feelings towards his partner - 'me pongo a odiarte sordamente' (ibid.), 'te quiero y te odio irremediabilmente' (ibid.)<sup>58</sup>.

The male's hate towards the woman merits further attention because it represents an ambiguous love-hate attitude towards the woman, which reflects the conflict between the male's cognitive side and sexual desire -

Pero a las dos de la tarde, o a las tres, cuando me pongo a pensar en nosotros dos, y tú piensas en la comida o en el trabajo diario, o en las diversiones que no tienes, me pongo a odiarte sordamente, con la mitad del odio que guardo para mí.

(ibid.)

An apparently misplaced description of hatred as 'deaf' reveals a lot about the conflict within the male's character. Hatred is usually associated with inability to see the object of the emotion ('blind hate'), not the inability to hear him/her. In fact, the physical body is still perceived through vision, whereas the personality expressed in cognitive verbal communication is not recognised. Deafness (the inability to hear speech) also implies the inability to understand speech unaccompanied by body language. In the male's case,

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<sup>58</sup> A detailed analysis of the woman's role as a mother figure, whom the male is afraid of losing, is presented in Section 1.3 (Chapter 1), which deals with the process of beatification of the woman as a means of rendering her out of reach of other men.



deafness is not a physical condition, but a mental state of inability to comprehend a cognitive exchange. The mental pre-verbal stage suggests the male's childlike nature. He hates the woman-mother, whose attention is not totally focused on the child's needs and who does not recognise the apparently infinite importance of the male/child's momentary emotions (love and sexual desire). Sexual attraction between the male and the woman is still very pronounced (this is evident from a rather explicit rendition of a sexual act later in the poem); what is hated is the interference of the daily 'adult' routine and its rules and responsibilities into the male's subjective reality focused on satisfaction of his emotional and sexual needs. Thus, the conflict of love and hate colours the male's sexual relationship with the woman.

In the poems 'Me doy cuenta', 'Pequeña del amor', 'Lo primero', and 'Digo que no puede', the expression of the male's sexuality is influenced by contradicting emotions which prevent him from enjoying sexual intercourse. When the male is depicted as approaching orgasm, he focuses on the feeling of loneliness; similar to the emotional conflict in 'He aquí', the male misses the woman even when she is physically close to him - the fear of loneliness is so deep that it overshadows the male's other emotions and causes him to experience constant grief. When analysing the aforementioned poems from the perspective of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, we will focus on the male/child's clinging to the woman in search for emotional safety (Maslow 1954, 86).

At times, the male rejects the woman possibly because he thinks she would reject him anyway - 'Aquí, a mi lado, junto a mí, haces falta' (Sabines 1997, 144). In this quote from 'Me doy cuenta', the male appears caught in the conflict between the feelings of physical safety ('junto a mí') and emotional isolation ('me faltas'). Throughout the poem, the male refers to himself as physically and emotionally exhausted because of his fruitless search for the woman -

Hasta que me duermo  
y no estás y no has llegado

y me quedo dormido  
y terriblemente cansado [...]  
Estas cosas giran en torno a mí igual que moscas,  
en mi garganta como moscas en un frasco.  
Yo estoy arruinado.  
Estoy arruinado de mis huesos,  
todo es pesadumbre.

(id., 144-5)

In the above lines, the circular movements of the repeating phrases and words - 'y' at the beginning of the lines, 'moscas', 'estoy arruinado', - create the illusion of rotation, which wears the male out; the feeling of exhaustion is implied in the lines becoming shorter by the end of the poem (cf. 'Estas cosas giran en torno a mí igual que moscas' and 'todo es pesadumbre').

A direct reference to spinning - 'como un círculo, como un aro, échalo a rodar' (id., 144) - reinforces the above interpretation of the male's negative emotions being reflected in unpleasant physical sensations. Therefore, it may be concluded that the male's negative emotions cause a negative physical experience, thus jeopardising the male's safety. There are several implicit sexual references in the poem - a mention of sleeping alone ('me duermo / y no estás'); the phrase 'me quedo más solo / solo por todas partes', which implies that the male misses physical (or sexual) contact with the woman; the line 'arruinado de mis huesos' suggests the male's sexual frustration. The presence of these references hints that the male's emotions stem from the expression of his sexuality. As the male searches for the woman to provide sexual satisfaction, he is missing her emotionally as well; after a sexual act, the feeling of emotional isolation returns, and the male is caught in the cycle of conflicting feelings once again. By the end of the poem, the male is alone (there is no mention of the woman's presence in the last five lines of the poem); he abandons his attempts to resolve the



conflict and succumbs to the negative emotions - 'todo es pesadumbre'. The meaning of the word 'pesadumbre' ('grief' and 'heaviness') reflects the link between the male's emotions and physical sensations, as he is left alone to face the conflict within his psyche.

The connection between the male's sexual arousal and conflict of emotions is evident in other poems by Sabines. In 'Lo primero', the male expresses contradicting feelings during the sexual intercourse - '¡Qué tristeza, qué fiesta, / qué soledad!' (id., 140). The sexual overtones in the poem are present in the first and second stanza, which may be read as a representation of foreplay; the analysis of this imagery is presented in Section 3.2 of this chapter. It should be noted that in the above quote the expression of orgasm, suggested in the exclamations following a sexually implicit stanza, appears between two references to negative emotions and loneliness; therefore, it may be suggested that the male experiences contradicting emotions at the time of heightened sexual arousal. In addition, there is evidence of the male's sexual arousal lacking cognitive traits at the moment of the greatest sexual tension which is expressed in the male's inability to speak (or to exhibit a cognitive trait) - 'nadie podrá hablar' (ibid.). Since the inability to speak is expressed at the moment of sexual arousal, it may be concluded that the male's sexual experience leads to the conflicting emotions and the realisation of lack of cognitive functions. As a result, the male's safety is jeopardised because of emotional discomfort and because he is faced with the situation he does not understand; he attempts to rectify the situation by looking for knowledge necessary to re-establish his safe environment.

A similar representation of the male's sexual experience appears in the poem 'Digo que no puede', where the male's contradicting emotions are expressed in oxymorons and juxtaposed images based upon the male's perception of his sexuality. The male's cognitive and non-cognitive traits are interlinked when he attempts to define love; it should be noted that the male admits that love cannot be expressed cognitively - 'no puede decirse el amor' (id., 190). Instead, the male sees love first as the expression of the non-cognitive side of



human nature, especially the satisfaction of the basic physiological needs: 'El amor se come como un pan, /.../ se bebe como un manantial' (ibid.). The satisfaction of hunger and thirst is followed by the references to negative emotions which the male experiences during the time of sexual arousal -

El amor se llora como a un muerto,

se goza como un disfraz.

El amor duele como un callo,

aturde como un panal,

y es sabroso como la uva de cera

y como la vida es mortal.

(id., 190-1)

The imagery in the above quote contains several oxymorons - 'sabroso como la uva de cera', 'como la vida es mortal' - which reflect several aspects of the male's perception of love. On one hand, the juxtaposition of images connotes the male's contradicting emotions - the desire for love (implied in the reference to a grape, a metaphor for the woman's genitalia), and the fear of pain and death. On the other hand, 'uva de cera' being described by the male as 'sabrosa' implies that the male has tried tasting the wax grape, which appeared visually attractive but was inedible. One of the possible interpretations of this line is that the male/child cannot distinguish between the appearances and the reality; as a result, he has to experience discomfort and disappointment in order to acquire knowledge. It may be said that the above contradictions also point to the male considering love and sexual attraction to be full of unpleasant and dangerous illusions, able to hurt him ('el amor se llora', 'el amor duele como un callo').

On the other hand, the male also sees love as an expression of his sexual desire.

There are many implicit sexual images in the poem, appearing next to the references to the non-cognitive nature of sexuality:



... el amante lo tiene prendido,  
untado en la sangre lunar,  
y el amor es igual que una brasa  
y una espiga de sal.  
La mano de un manco lo puede tocar,  
la lengua de un mudo, los ojos de un ciego,  
decir y mirar.

(id., 191)

The images of 'espiga de sal' and unity in blood carry the greatest sexual connotation; the image of 'espiga' has been analysed earlier in the study of the primal aspect of male sexuality (Section 2.1.1 of Chapter 2), and it has been concluded that the image of 'espiga' represents an erect penis as well as female genitalia. It may be possible to interpret the reference to salt (similar to the image of meat rubbed with salt in Rosario Castellanos' 'Lección de cocina') as an allusion to the secretion of the woman's vagina, and the unity of blood is a metaphor for the physical aspect of a sexual act. In addition, the above quote suggests that the male attempts to perceive love and sexual desire from a cognitive perspective, which implies that the physical expression of sexuality leads to the acquisition of higher cognitive functions (speaking). The juxtaposition of 'la lengua de un mudo' and 'decir' reinforces the above interpretation, suggesting that sexual intercourse leads to the revelation of the male's suppressed cognitive traits, since the masculine noun 'mudo' connotes the loss of the male's ability to speak being restored under the influence of love and sexual experience.

The above analysis shows that in Sabines' poetry grief and need for emotional closeness are the two most prominent emotions complementing the male's sexual arousal. The male's fear of the unknown leads him to be physically close to the woman, who is seen as an omniscient protector. As the male reaches high sexual tension, he begins to realise that his volatile emotions are the result of his perception of love and sexual desire as a source of

pleasure and pain - 'el amor parece un juego que sólo produce dolor, angustia, soledad' (Armengol qtd. in Mansour 1988, 69). Since neither love nor sexual desire is understood by the male from a cognitive perspective, he finds himself facing the need for knowledge. At this stage, the male distances himself from the woman, whom he eventually sees as an unreliable source of protection and comfort, because she reflects the male's sexual desire and therefore symbolises the unknown feared by the male, although he remains attracted to the possibility of sexual intercourse with the woman.

### **3.3.2 The male/child's inner conflict in Octavio Paz's works**

Although the conflict of emotions appears in several works by Octavio Paz, the representation of the emotional problems encountered by the male during the time of sexual arousal differs from that in Sábines' poetry mainly because of the difference in the representation of the male's cognitive character. Since it has been previously established that the male's fears represented in the poems of Paz are of a higher cognitive nature because the male is afraid of emotional loneliness, it is possible to suggest that the consequent emotional outburst will also contain signs of cognition.

The male's volatile emotions are reflected in many works by Octavio Paz; for example, in the poem 'Al tacto', the male experiences positive and negative emotions during the time of sexual arousal. As a result of these emotions, he attempts to satisfy the physical aspect of his sexual desire in order to understand the conflict within his emotional self -

dadme, sentidos míos,  
razón que me desvela,  
algo que yo conozca y me conozca,  
para asirme y asirte,  
para reconocirme.

(Paz 1960, 238)



The juxtaposed imagery combining references to the physical and emotional experiences of a sexual act - 'la breve eternidad de la conciencia, / dos manos que se enlazan como un puente' (ibid.) - implies that the male seeks to learn about his sexual experience and, therefore, about himself. It should be noted that, although there appears to be a conflict between the male's physical and emotional aspects, there is no evidence in the poem of an emotional conflict within the male's character. Instead, the male uses sexual intercourse as a means of acquiring knowledge. This aspect will be analysed in Section 3.4, which addresses the first stage in the process of the male's self-realisation.

The volatile emotions experienced by the male appear most prominently in the poem 'Soliloquio de medianoche', where the male is represented as attempting to get rid of the fear of being emotionally isolated. As a result of this outburst, the male re-creates the subjective reality of his childhood in order to be able to control his environment<sup>59</sup>. It is important to address the emotional problems faced by the male as a result of his attempt to exist in the subjective and objective reality at the same time.

The image of the visitor may be seen as the representation of the objective reality interfering with the male's subjective world. The visitor's actions cause the male to act violently in order to save the integrity of his subjective existence and to acquire the knowledge the male needs to understand his reality - 'quise asir al impalpable visitante, / cogerlo por el cuello y arrancarle su secreto de humo' (id., 256). The visitor the male imagines may also be interpreted as the reflection of the male's cognitive self; this is implied in the visitor's words, aimed at awakening the male's psyche - 'duermes, vencido por fantasmas que tú mismo engendras, / y en tanto tú deliras, otros besan o matan' (id., 255). The suggestion that 'the visitor' is the male's cognitive side is reinforced by the fact that 'the visitor' sees the male is asleep, and is able to evaluate his actions and their lack of

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<sup>59</sup> A detailed analysis of the two realities inhabited by the male is presented in Section 3.2 of this chapter.



connection with the objective reality, implied in the juxtaposition of the male's sleep and others' actions which transform the world. Furthermore, 'the visitor' possesses the knowledge of both subjective and objective realities, and is able to perceive the passage of time - 'todo... encarna en una forma que respira' (id., 256); his ability to analyse and evaluate behaviour suggests that he possesses high cognitive traits, since, according to Bloom's taxonomy of cognition, analysis and evaluation are the two highest levels of knowledge acquisition (Bloom 1956, 45-7). Therefore, the conflict between the male narrator and 'the visitor' is, in fact, the conflict between the male's non-cognitive aspect (characterised by the fear of emotional loneliness, as discussed in Section 3.2) and higher cognitive side. As a result of this conflict, the male becomes physically aggressive towards 'the visitor'; this aggression leads him to experience physical discomfort - 'en mi frente golpeaba una fiebre fría' (id, 256); in his attempt to tame his physical body, the male attempts to escape the objective reality and transfer himself to the subjective reality of the memory of his childhood. As a result of this transfer, the male manages to reconcile his non-cognitive aspect and cognition.

This process is reflected in the change of the form of the poem from a dialogue to an inner dialogue. During the first encounter with 'the visitor', the male hears the voice - 'alguien sopló en mi oído estas palabras' (id., 255) - and by the end of the poem, when the male metaphorically moves into the memory of his childhood, he is depicted as talking to himself, repeating almost word for word what the visitor told him earlier - '“A esta hora”, me dije, “algunos aman y conocen la muerte en otros labios' (id., 258). It should be noted that the joining of the male's two sides has definite sexual overtones, which suggests that the conflict between the male's psyche and his non-cognitive side stems from his sexual desire. A number of sexual images in the poem suggest that the male is aroused; since he is alone, he attempts to satisfy his desire by imagining others engaged in a sexual act. Sexual references in 'Soliloquio de medianoche' appear alongside references to death - 'algunos



aman y conocen la muerte / en otros labios' (ibid.), 'otros besan o matan' (id., 255). This combination of sexual and morbid imagery suggests that the male narrator sees sexual intercourse as a potentially deadly experience, thus exhibiting the childlike trait of his sexuality, expressed in the fear of pain stemming from the fear of the unknown (Section 3.1 of this chapter presents a detailed analysis of the male/child's fear of his sexuality). Other imagery includes the description of a flower, which represents the imaginary woman's genitalia (the analysis of this image appears in Section 3.2). As a result of his attempt to satisfy his sexual desire and to reconcile his inner conflict, the male removes himself from the objective reality; the subjective reality he has created allows him to live forever in his dream:

Y el mundo, los árboles, los hombres, todo, yo mismo,  
sólo éramos los fantasmas de mi sueño,  
un sueño eterno, ya sin día ni despertar posible,...  
Porque nada, ni siquiera la muerte, acabará con este sueño.

(id., 259)

The male abandons the objective reality because it contains his fears and emotional conflicts; the dream reality he has chosen for himself allows him to control not only his physical and emotional existence, but also his perception of the objective reality - 'todo, yo mismo / sólo éramos los fantasmas de mi sueño'.

It should be noted, however, that although the male is represented as feeling trapped in this reality - 'sobrecogió a mi espíritu una lívida certidumbre: / había muerto el sol y una eterna noche amanecía' (ibid.) - he has gained ultimate physical and emotional security. The male does not attempt to wake up; instead, he resigns to the fact that now his subjective reality is his only realm of existence<sup>60</sup>. It is possible to suggest that the creation of the subjective reality, which the male both enjoys and fears, is the result of the conflict between

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<sup>60</sup> A similar interpretation of this poem is presented by Jason Wilson, who examines the narrator's dream world as a separate distinct reality - 'trapped in history, man's only escape is random dreaming' (Wilson 1979, 61).

his cognition (whose function is to provide the male with a connection with the objective reality) and the childlike side of his sexuality (which fears the unknown objective world, where the male has no control over himself or the world around him). The male's inability to resolve the conflict within the objective reality causes him to create a subjective reality controlled by both aspects of his personality; the ensuing conflict within the male's character re-emerges during the process of knowledge acquisition, examined in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 of Chapter 4.

### **3.3.3 The male/child's emotional outburst in 'Lección de cocina'**

In the works of the women writers (Rosario Castellanos and Marcela Del-Río), the difference in the representation of the male's volatile emotions experienced by the male is similar to that in the poems of the men writers. The difference depends on the degree of the male's cognitive ability; taking into consideration the premise that the male's character in the works of the women writers is presented indirectly through the image of the woman<sup>61</sup>, the above difference will depend on whether the woman perceives the male as a cognitive entity or as a pre-cognitive character. If the male is seen as operating on the pre-cognitive level, or if the woman perceives the male's cognitive functions as limited (similar to those of a baby or a young child), then the emotional conflict demands immediate attention from the woman-caretaker. This is the case in the short stories by Rosario Castellanos, especially 'Lección de cocina', where the male/child is represented metaphorically as a cut of meat<sup>62</sup>,

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<sup>61</sup> Section 2.3.4 of Chapter 2 examines the process of creation of the male's character through the image of the woman, as presented in the works of Rosario Castellanos and Marcela Del-Río.

<sup>62</sup> Chapters 1 and 2 examine the symbolic meaning of the meat, and identify the connection between the transformation of the meat and the change in the character of the woman's husband.



and the male's volatile emotions stem from the conflict between the male child and the woman-mother.

The male/child's emotions are best reflected in the scene of the burning of the meat. When the woman starts pondering a divorce, she implicitly threatens the meat/male with a potential loss of the bond with the wife-mother; in response to his fear of losing his safety provided by the woman<sup>63</sup>, the male experiences a volatile emotional outburst, which is metaphorically depicted as the meat burning - 'Esta maldita carne está empezando a soltar un humo negro y horrible' (Castellanos 1983, 168). This quote, which appears immediately after the woman ponders divorcing the male, may be read as a description of the meat/male's symbolic self-mutilation - by hurting itself, the meat/male acts like a hysterical child who beats his head on the floor until the mother comforts him. Pain and bruises (or a burnt side) are a small price to pay for the woman/mother's undivided attention and commitment to the child's needs.

The meat/male's emotional outburst is desperate, as he attempts to gain control over his safety represented by the woman, and fails. The woman is threatening the meat/male with an imaginary divorce; at the same time, the woman-mother is threatening the meat/child with abandonment. If she carries out the threat, the male would have to assume responsibility for living alone and fending for himself, which he is not prepared to do because he depends on the woman/mother for physical and emotional safety. This dependence is similar to a young child being totally dependent on his parents for the provision of a safe environment (Maslow 1954, 86), and therefore reflects the childlike aspect of the male's character.

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<sup>63</sup> The analysis of the scene of the imaginary divorce and the meat/male's reaction to it (fear of losing physical safety) appears in Section 3.2 of this chapter.

However, even this desperate attempt of the meat/male to re-direct the woman's attention back to her responsibilities goes almost unnoticed. The woman's fantasy continues as she plays out a scene in the courtroom, 'Que así no es posible vivir, que yo quiero divorciarme' (Castellanos 1983, 169). Once the idea of divorce has entered the woman's mind, she reaches the border of her role as a wife or a caretaker. In fact, she reaches the point of no return because she no longer has to comply with her belief of her role in marriage that has been taught to her by her family and the society. The meat also reaches the point of no return - 'Se enrosca igual que una charamusca' (ibid.). Nahum Megged argues that the meat assumes the position of a foetus, that is, reverting to an infantile state of total helplessness and dependence on the mother figure - 'La carne que se enrosca como volviendo a su estado inicial de feto' (Megged 1982, 147). Although this interpretation is quite plausible in the light of the meat/male's childlike traits being exhibited throughout the story, another reading of this scene from the same perspective is that the foetal position represents the last stage of the meat/male/child's metaphoric temper tantrum. Seeing that the emotional outbreak (reflected in the burning) has no effect on the woman's determination to break the mother-child bond, the meat/male recoils and tries to start taking care of its emotional needs in absence of the woman/mother. In other words, the meat/male/child tries to grow up. It assumes a foetal position in the roasting pan the way a child would curl up on the floor after a fight, trying to calm himself down.

From the above analysis, it may be concluded that the meat/male makes the first attempt to resolve the problem of losing the provider of safety by implicitly creating a relatively secure space for himself, although the attempt is very weak and does not appear to change the meat/male's physical condition. The meat remains burnt, and the woman does not return to her role of a caring mother; instead, she contemplates further destruction of the male's safety when she plans to tell him about her inability to satisfy his need for a provider of a secure home environment - 'Y cuando venga mi marido dejar que olfatee, como los



ogros de los cuentos, y diga que aquí huele, no a carne humana, sino a mujer inútil' (Castellanos 1983, 169). The story ends in the woman trying to decide on the course of action, and the male's security still being under question. Therefore, it may be concluded that the male's attempt to resolve the emotional problems is not successful not only because of the woman's strong will, but also because of the male's inability to comprehend all the aspects of the conflict. The male's lack of cognitive functions (or the woman's perception of him as having limited cognition) limits his ability to deal with emotional conflicts between him and the world, which represent the conflict between the controlling persona and the childlike aspect of his character.

#### **3.3.4 Marcela Del-Río on the male/child's emotional conflict**

The representation of the male in the poems of Marcela Del-Río reveals that the woman narrator perceives him as possessing cognitive traits; a higher level of cognition in the male's character makes him similar to the male in Octavio Paz's works. Therefore, it may be said that the male's emotional conflict, as represented by Marcela Del-Río, stems from his fear of loneliness during a sexual act and leads to his acquisition of knowledge about his sexuality and the interaction between him and the objective reality.

The male's volatile emotions emerge during the time of heightened sexual arousal; in the poem 'Tu avidez', the male is represented as being emotionally lonely during a sexual act, when he has an experience he does not understand - 'tratando de soñarse ¡sin conocer de su profundo sueño!' (Del-Río 1985, 196). As a result of his inability to comprehend the complexity of emotions and physical sensations, the male experiences fear<sup>64</sup>. This causes the male to become metaphorically akin to a volcano - the combination of emotional outbursts and implied references to orgasm create a powerful image of an erupting volcano, which

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<sup>64</sup> The analysis of the male's fear of sexual experience, as reflected in Del-Río's poetry, is presented in Section 3.2. This study has concluded that the male's fears are based on his lack of understanding of his sexuality.

may destroy itself. This combination of the male's sexual and emotional expression as violent, damaging to the male's psyche, and unpredictable, is similar to the poem 'Sol, luz y rayo'. The woman sees the male's arousal as a process of transformation of feelings into knowledge; it should be noted that, although the male experiences these emotions and sensations, the woman is the one who understands the process and explains it to the male, thus providing him with the knowledge about his sexuality.

The transformation of the male's sexual desire into cognitive ability is enhanced by the use of the images of light as a metaphor for the expression of his sexual attraction and the desire for knowledge -

Hay que sentirse rayo  
para saberte luz  
Sobre tú y yo  
cuántas veces  
el rayo  
árbol invertido  
descarga sobre nuestras cabezas  
su exceso de locura

(id., 30)

The juxtaposition of the image of light as a symbol of knowledge ('saberte luz') and insanity ('su exceso de locura') suggests that the male's sexual desire (as perceived by the woman) is comprised of non-cognitive and cognitive components, which are in constant conflict. This interpretation is supported by the line 'luz y pensamiento / dos parientes cercanos', which points to the connection between the two aspects of male sexuality (since it has been established in several previous analyses that the image of the light has sexual connotations of male genitalia). The conflict is resolved in a rather violent manner - a metaphoric release of sexual tension destroys the partners' cognitive sides:



su río de soles diminutos  
avanza  
se expande  
se dispersa  
consumiendo nuestros soles internos

(ibid.)

It is important to note that while a metaphoric orgasm ('río... / avanza / se expande / se dispersa') consumes the male's cognition, the image of the river of light absorbs it. Thus, it may be said that the conflict between cognition and sexuality is resolved in the release of sexual tension, which reconciles both aspects of the male's character.

However, most of the time, the male's inner conflicts are not as easily resolved because they stem not only from his sexual desire (as is the case in 'Sol, luz y rayo'), but also from his emotional isolation, which is often self-inflicted and based upon the male's fear of emotional closeness and trust. In 'Duda', the male doubts the woman's fidelity, although there are no reasons why he should; as a result, he distances himself from the woman by becoming emotionally impenetrable, like a rock -

¡Cómo romper la roca sin fisura  
para mostrarte  
descifrados  
enigmas y misterios y este dolor  
que me causas con ese funeral del amor que es la duda!

(id., 194)

The image of a rock in the above quote deserves further attention. On one hand, it may be seen as representing the male's overt unchanging emotions; on the other hand, inside the rock are the woman's emotions. This interconnection of the male and the woman suggests

that the two are perceived by the woman as the integral parts of one entity. Furthermore, since it has been established that the woman plays the role of protector of the male, it may be said that the woman sees the male's overt emotional distancing as a means of self-defence from potential harm - in this case, from potential loss of emotional security caused by the woman's supposed infidelity, which could destroy the male's safe environment. In an attempt to protect his inner vulnerability, the male raises a 'shield' around himself, thus creating a separate reality in which he can preserve his emotional safety. An implicit threat to the male's emotional vulnerability results in the male adopting the overt personality of a 'rock', similar to that of a Mexican macho (see Paz 1959, 26-7, 73).

When the woman mentions the male being distant and emotionally unresponsive, she describes the overt personality created by the male in emotional self-defence. To help the male re-establish his emotional link with the woman and to restore his apparently lost security, the woman has to give the male the knowledge about her devotion to him - 'Quiero ser traslúcida para tus ojos mansos' (Del-Río 1985, 194), 'Ve mi Verdad, amor' (ibid.), 'Revoca tu temor y cree en mi sangre' (ibid.). By offering the knowledge to the male, the woman helps him resolve the conflict between his overt emotionless personality and covert vulnerable childlike self.



### **3.3.5 Summary**

Concluding the above analysis, we can establish the connection between the male's cognitive abilities and volatile (and sometimes dangerous) emotions. In the works of Jaime Sabines and Rosario Castellanos, the male's conflicting emotions stem from the fear of physical pain brought on by the unfamiliar, and are therefore void of the cognitive aspect. The main emotional conflict experienced by the male is between his sexual arousal and grief of loneliness. To resolve the conflict, the male in Castellanos' works resorts to tantrums aimed at focusing the woman-caretaker's attention on his problem. These emotional outbursts do not lead to the acquisition of knowledge about the objective reality; the male is solely concerned with being physically secure in a stable routine provided by the woman. In Sabines' poems, the male attempts to resolve the emotional conflict by creating a fantasy environment which contains no catalysts of his fears. In Paz's poems, the male attempts to resolve the emotional conflict by creating a fantasy world (similar to that presented in Sabines' poems, but with a higher cognitive potential), which contains the knowledge necessary for the male to understand himself and the objective reality. In Del-Río's works, the conflict between the male's sexual desire and fear of his sexuality leads to his distancing himself from the woman while covertly seeking emotional closeness with her. The male's attempt to resolve this conflict (which causes him physical and emotional pain) is assisted by the omniscient woman, who helps him acquire knowledge by transferring her emotional experiences onto the male's sexuality.

On the whole, the male's frustration, based on his need for safety and on the resulting conflict of emotions, causes him to evaluate his cognitive abilities at the time of sexual arousal. As will be seen in the next section, the male begins to search for knowledge



when he recognises his mental ineptitude, trying to assess his sexuality from a higher cognitive perspective.

### **3.4 The male/child's first step towards acquisition of knowledge**

When the male experiences conflicting and volatile emotions as a result of his fears based on sexual and emotional ineptitude, he attempts to prevent the conflict from repeating and threatening his physical and emotional safety. In order to regain control over his emotions and sexuality, the male needs to obtain knowledge about himself and the reality in which he participates in sexual intercourse. The first stage in the process of knowledge acquisition is the male's realisation of his cognitive ineptitude. This stage is representative of the childlike nature of the male's sexual self; that is, the male recognises that he does not know much about himself or the reality he inhabits (usually reflected in the image of the woman). As the male starts exhibiting the first signs of desire to acquire knowledge, he experiences volatile emotions, which may be seen as the evidence of a conflict between the non-cognitive and cognitive aspects of the male's sexuality (see Section 3.3 for an in-depth analysis of the male's conflicting emotions).

It is important to examine the moment when the male admits (directly or implicitly) that he lacks and needs knowledge about his sexuality and cognitive personality. This section presents a detailed analysis of this 'moment of revelation', which appears in the works of Jaime Sabines, Octavio Paz, and Marcela Del-Río<sup>65</sup>; the study will reveal the

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<sup>65</sup> In the works of Rosario Castellanos, the male's emotional outburst originates from his fear of losing a physically safe environment provided by the woman. There is no evidence that the male has a desire to acquire knowledge about himself or the world around him: it is possible to suggest that his cognition has not reached this level of development, and that he relies solely on the woman for provision of physical, sexual, and emotional safety. Therefore, the childlike aspect of the male in Castellanos' works is characterised by the male's fear of being uncared for, and the resulting emotional outbursts aimed at re-directing the woman's attention back to the male's physical and emotional needs.



connection between this aspect of the childlike nature of male sexuality and the process of self-actualisation (studied in Chapter 4).

### 3.4.1 'Yo no lo sé de cierto' - Jaime Sabines on acquisition of knowledge

In the works of Jaime Sabines, the male is focused on learning about his sexuality in order to protect his physical safety. One of the results of this learning is the creation of a separate reality (presented in Sabines' poetry), which provides the male with emotional security. In several poems, the male is presented as creating a new reality, which he can control (unlike the outside world). The new reality exists only in the male's imagination, and may be called subjective, since it does not coincide with the reality of the outside world<sup>66</sup>.

'En la orilla' reflects best the male's subjective reality created to satisfy his sexuality. The landscape, normal at first, is transformed into an arousing image of the woman's body; by the end of the poem, the woman (who embodies the male's sexual desire) takes over the world -

En la orilla del aire  
(¿qué decir, qué hacer?)  
hay todavía una mujer.

En el monte, extendida  
sobre la yerba,  
si buscamos bien:  
una mujer...

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<sup>66</sup> The reality of the outside world will be referred to as objective because it is not affected by the male's existence. The conflict of the objective and the male's subjective realities is analysed in Chapter 4.

En el aire hay siempre oculta  
como una hoja en un árbol  
una mujer.

(Sabines 1997b, 43-4)

The male invents a reality where he can fantasise about a woman: subtle sexual overtones support this interpretation of the poem - apart from the description of the search, which implies the male's excitement, the poem also contains images of water and sea ('Algas, ramas de peces', water), which may be read as metaphors for the woman's genitalia (this interpretation of the water imagery has appeared in Chapter 1 in the analysis of the image of the woman created to satisfy the male's sexual desire). It is important to focus on the fact that the woman is presented as a part of the landscape; the male perceives her as a source of his sexual arousal and satisfaction, and also as a part of the non-cognitive objective reality (similar to the image of the woman in Octavio Paz's poem 'Piedra de sol'). On the other hand, as the male imagines the woman, he re-creates the objective reality to reflect his arousal; thus, the objective reality is being controlled by the male and transformed into his subjective reality. By the end of the poem, the woman is dissolved in the male's subjective reality, and the male gains control of the world in his imagination, thus satisfying his need for a safe environment and acquiring knowledge about his sexuality.

Another way the male acquires knowledge about himself is by learning from the woman, who takes on the traits of an omniscient parent-teacher. In the poem 'Me tienes', the woman appears to know more about the male's consciousness and subconsciousness than the male himself, as she provides the male with the information about himself and the world -

Sabes lo que yo ignoro  
y me dices las cosas que no me digo.  
Me aprendo en ti más que en mí mismo.



(id., 138)

The male implicitly admits that he does not fully understand himself and therefore has to rely on the woman/mother for information about himself - 'Me aprendo en ti más que en mí mismo. It should be noted that the male's learning process takes place in an asexual environment: although the woman holds him in her arms, there is no indication of sexual arousal on behalf of either partner<sup>67</sup>; it is therefore possible to conclude that the male/child may rely on the woman/mother for the provision of knowledge about himself (and consequent emotional security) in addition to the safety of physical closeness (which may or may not carry sexual connotations). In other words, the male/child feels secure with the woman/mother regardless of the existence of the potential of sexual intercourse at the time of their interaction.

In addition to being taught by the woman/mother, the male attempts to acquire knowledge about himself through the physical sensations of a sexual act. For example, the poem 'Yo no lo sé' begins with the male admitting that he does not possess enough knowledge to fully understand the reality he inhabits - 'Yo no lo sé de cierto' (id., 10). On the other hand, this statement may be interpreted as representing the first stage of knowledge acquisition because it contains the signs that the male explores his cognitive abilities - the verbs 'sé' and 'supongo' refer to the process of thinking and at the same time imply the male's awareness of his limited cognitive abilities.

The process of acquisition of knowledge occurs through the sexual intercourse, which in itself lacks cognition -

una mujer y un hombre

algún día se quieren,...

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<sup>67</sup> Section 3.3.1 provides a detailed analysis of the asexual nature of the male/child's relationship with the woman/mother, as presented in 'Me tienes'.

solos sobre la tierra se penetran,...

Todo se hace en silencio. Como

se hace la luz dentro del ojo.

El amor une cuerpos.

En silencio se van llenando el uno al otro...

Se ven desnudos y lo saben todo.

(ibid.)

The explicit physical description of a sexual act ('se penetran', 'se van llenando el uno al otro') appearing alongside a reference to higher cognition ('lo saben todo') leads to the conclusion that the result of a sexual act is the acquisition of knowledge; the physical experience makes the partners reach a higher level of cognition. Armando Armengol presents a similar analysis of this poem, examining the sexual intercourse as a source of knowledge - 'Al despertar piensan que lo saben "todo"; al verse desnudos están seguros de que lo saben "todo". "Saber", sinónimo de "conocer", en este contexto expresa que los amantes se conocen totalmente; que a través del acto sexual lo saben todo' (qtd. in Mansour 1988, 56). Therefore we may conclude that satisfaction of the male's sexual need results in the acquisition of knowledge about himself, his sexuality, and the reality he inhabits.

The process of knowledge acquisition through a sexual experience is also presented in the poem 'Digo que no se puede', where the male/child's cognitive development arises from his non-cognitive perception of love and sexual intercourse. The male/child's lack of cognition is evident in the first stanza of the poem, as he describes love from a purely physical perspective - 'el amor se come como un pan, / se muerde como un labio' (Sabines 1997b, 190). As the poem progresses, the male begins to see other aspects of love, including emotions which accompany the physical side of the experience - 'El amor se llora como a un muerto, / se goza como un disfraz' (ibid.). Later, the male/child appears confused by the emotional side of love. This becomes evident in the oxymorons the male



narrator uses to describe love: 'sabroso como la uva de cera / y como la vida es mortal' (id., 191); the juxtaposed images reflect the male's first step towards the acquisition of cognition<sup>68</sup>. By the end of the poem, the male has created his perception of love, which mirrors his attempt to link the objective and subjective reality in a fantasy world ruled by conflicting experiences - 'La mano de un manco lo puede tocar, / la lengua de un mudo, los ojos de un ciego, / decir y mirar' (ibid.). As a result of his analysis of love, the male recognises the contradictory nature of love and sexual experience<sup>69</sup>. Consequently, he realises that he cannot exist simultaneously in the two realities which represent the two aspects of love - physically dangerous (the phrase 'no tiene remedio' (ibid.) refers to a terminal illness) and optimistic (the line 'y sólo quiere jugar' (ibid.) implies a child's view of the reality as a game, which poses no physical threat to the participant). Judging from the structure of the last stanza, it may be assumed that the male chooses the childhood reality, since the poem ends with the line 'y sólo quiere jugar', which not only represents the childlike nature of love, but also refers to the male's subjective reality in which he can remain a child forever.

Summarising the above analysis, we can state that in the works of Jaime Sabines, the male/child's first step towards the acquisition of knowledge is defined by two variables: the presence of an omniscient woman/mother, and the satisfaction of the male's sexual desire. When the male starts interacting with the woman/mother (whether or not there are sexual overtones in this interaction), he realises that he needs her to provide him with sufficient

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<sup>68</sup> The juxtapositions in the above quote are analysed in detail in Section 3.3.1, which focuses on the male/child's 'trial and error' process of learning about the world by experimenting with the objects around him.

<sup>69</sup> The sexual nature of the male's experience is implied in the references to biting and eating ('el amor se come', 'se muerde'). The interpretation of these images as pertaining to the primal aspect of male sexuality is presented in Section 2.1.2 of Chapter 2.

knowledge about himself and the world in order for him to be physically safe in the woman's absence. On the other hand, when the male reaches the point of sexual satisfaction, he is able to analyse his experience on a basic level and acquire knowledge about himself, which allows him to distinguish between the objective and subjective (imaginary) reality and to choose which one to inhabit. It should also be noted that the male/child's subjective reality exhibits high sexual potential, while at the same time providing a physically secure realm of existence.

In Jaime Sabines' works, the process of the male/child's acquisition of knowledge arises from the male's need for *physical* safety and tends to lead to the creation of a fantasy world governed by game rules, which provide the male/child with assurance that he will not be physically harmed. As we will see later in this section, in Octavio Paz's poetry the male/child also creates an imaginary reality which allows him to feel safe. However, based on the previous examination of the male's higher cognitive level reflected in Paz's works, it may be said that the male is more concerned with the emotional safety of his subjective world.

### **3.4.2 Knowledge through physical sensations - Octavio Paz's poetry**

In the works of Octavio Paz, the first stage of the male's higher cognitive development is similar to that presented in Sabines' poems: the male attempts to acquire knowledge through the physical aspect of a sexual experience. The most manifest examples of this process appear in the poems 'Al tacto' and 'Al sueño'.

Throughout 'Al sueño', the male explores the physical aspect of sexual intercourse by examining its emotional consequences -

La iluminada piel de la alegría  
y lo que nace de los labios juntos;  
y el odio y el amor



que inútilmente juntan nuestros cuerpos;

(Paz 1960, 235)

Bajo su aliento no te reconozco

y sin embargo vives,

se juntan nuestros cuerpos

(ibid.)

The above quotes present an interesting combination of physical images ('se juntan nuestros cuerpos', 'los labios juntos', etc.) and references to cognition ('el odio y el amor' imply the male's ability to differentiate between the emotional aspects of their sexual experience), which are created by the male at the time of sexual arousal. The most important piece of knowledge the male acquires during a sexual act is his ability to recognise the interconnection between life and death - 'nos das, con tus labios, / una muerte que es vida más viva que la vida' (id., 236). This ability is very important because it provides the male with the information needed to distinguish between several realities of his existence<sup>70</sup>. As a result, the male can choose to inhabit the reality which meets his need for physical safety, emotional security, or sexual satisfaction.

A similar representation of multiple realities appears in the poem 'Soliloquio de medianoche'. Here, the male attains knowledge through sexual satisfaction<sup>71</sup>; the secret he has attempted to learn from the beginning of the poem is now revealed to him - 'creí que al fin la tierra me daba su secreto' (id., 256). However, as a result of the newly acquired

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<sup>70</sup> The two realities the male inhabits are: objective (or the reality of the male's physical existence; the male has little or no control over its influence on his physical, sexual and emotional self) and subjective (or the reality of the male's cognitive or emotional existence; the male controls this reality and can change it to correspond to his desires at any given point in time). A more detailed analysis of the two realities is presented in Chapter 4.

<sup>71</sup> Since we have concluded earlier that the male is alone throughout the poem, it may be said that the 'visitor's' voice he hears is that of his conscience. The absence of the woman figure suggests that the knowledge acquired by the male comes from his own experience, although the presence of the woman is suggested in the phrase 'querer y obrar', which implies the physical presence of a partner. However, there is no indication that the woman's physical presence (real or imagined) has any effect on the male's acquisition of knowledge; therefore, it may be suggested that the male alone is responsible for his cognitive development through a sexual experience.



knowledge about the world around him, the male also experiences the loss of innocence of love and positive emotions and aspirations -

Amé la gloria de boca lívida y ojos de diamante,  
amé el amor, amé sus labios y su calavera...  
Mas la gloria es apenas una cifra, equivocada con frecuencia,  
el amor desemboca en el odio y el hastío,  
¿y quién sueña ya en la comunión de los vivos cuando todos  
comulgan en la muerte?

(id., 258)

The above quote presents the interdependence of the references to the physical aspect of sexual intercourse ('amé la gloria de boca lívida') and the cognitive perception of this experience (the phrase 'mas la gloria es apenas una cifra, equivocada con frecuencia' contains a metaphor for a higher cognitive ability - as the male mentions 'una cifra, equivocada', it may be said that he not only comprehends math, but also can recognise a mistake in calculation). As a result of this interaction, the male is able to analyse his sexual experience from a cognitive perspective, ultimately combining the two approaches to reach a fuller understanding of his sexuality. This understanding appears most prominently in the line '¿y quién sueña ya en la comunión de los vivos cuando todos / comulgan en la muerte?', which may be interpreted as the male's understanding of temporal correlations in the world around him. As the male recognises the existence of mortality in the objective world, he reaches the point of realisation of his own mortality and has a choice of either accepting it or trying to resist it by refusing to exist in the objective reality<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> Although it is obvious that the male cannot withdraw physically from the objective reality, he can imagine his abstract existence on a different plane. As we examine other poems by Octavio Paz ('Piedra de sol', 'Blanco') in Chapter 4, we can conclude that the male fantasises about living in the subjective reality which has no physical manifestation but exists only in the male's mind.



From the previous analysis of this poem (see Section 3.2.2 of this chapter), we can conclude that the male chooses to exist in the subjective reality of a dream (which also represents his childhood memories); therefore, as in 'Al sueño', the result of the first stage in the male's acquisition of knowledge is the creation of a new imaginary reality. It should be noted that the reality the male now inhabits provides him with the familiar images (in 'Soliloquio de medianoche' these images are from the male's childhood; in 'Al sueño' the male remains in a dream world), which are the source of the male's emotional safety. The male retains the knowledge gained during a sexual act and uses it to understand his sexuality; as a result of his newly reached cognitive level, he recognises the need for emotional safety because what he knows about himself makes him aware of the negative consequences of this knowledge, like the realisation of his mortality. Having previously analysed the male's primal fear of death (Section 2.3.2, Chapter 2) and the male/child's fear of the unknown (Section 3.3.2, Chapter 3), we conclude that the first stage of the acquisition of knowledge presents the male with the need to change his perception of reality; consequently, the male/child realises that he does not possess enough knowledge to make the change, and chooses to create a reality he can fully control. As the male continues to develop cognitive abilities based on his sexual experiences, a conflict ensues between him and the reality he inhabits; finally, the male withdraws from the objective reality in order to preserve his consciousness<sup>73</sup>.

Another approach to the first stage of the male's acquisition of knowledge is reflected in the poem 'Al tacto', where the male is metaphorically presented as attaining cognition through a sexual experience -

Noche que gira y gira y nunca acaba,  
voluntad que se ignora

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<sup>73</sup> Chapter 4 contains an in-depth study of the conflict between the objective reality and the male's subjective plane of existence, as well as the consequences of this conflict.

sin término corriendo,  
condenada a la prisa sin descanso,  
¿la conciencia del hombre  
deteniendo esas sombras  
que otra conciencia engendra?

(id., 237)

Like the sexual metaphors in 'Al sueño', the above images reflect the male's physical and emotional perception of sexual intercourse: this quote combines references to physical motion which may be interpreted as representing an orgasm ('noche que gira y gira'), and analyses of the partners' emotional and cognitive state ('voluntad que se ignora'). Examining the intertwined metaphors, the male becomes aware of the complexity of his sexual experience, and can base his understanding of it on the cognitive abilities acquired during a sexual act.

It is important to note that the male learns about his emotions through physical and sexual experiences, while examining them from a cognitive perspective. In the following quote, several references to higher cognition are supplemented by the metaphors of sexual interaction - 'la breve eternidad de la conciencia, / dos manos que se enlazan como un puente / en mitad de la noche suspendido: / algo que me liberte y encandene' (id., 238). The direct reference to 'conciencia' and the male's ability to recognise eternity as its temporal characteristic, appearing simultaneously with the phrase 'dos manos que se enlazan' (which may be interpreted as carrying a sexual connotation, supported by the reference to the night earlier in the stanza), point to the male's ability to combine his physical and cognitive perception of a sexual experience. As a result of this process, the male acquires knowledge about himself, which then leads him to evaluate the cognitive aspect of his sexuality. Surprisingly, he does not focus on the newly attained cognition; instead, he turns to the primal physical aspect of sexual experience -



Dame tan sólo el tacto.

En la forma mi sed se reconcilia

y recobro mi ser y su inocencia.

(ibid.)

Having acquired the understanding of the emotional aspect of sexual intercourse, the male returns to the physical sensations ('dame tan sólo el tacto') which allow him to satisfy the primal aspect of his self since, according to Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, thirst and hunger are the basic physiological needs to be satisfied (Maslow 1954, 80). Consequently, the male returns to the state of innocence (presumably cognitive, inasmuch as we have already established in the earlier analysis of this poem that the male has initiated a sexual act), which will allow him to focus on the physical aspect of his sexual sensations.

Based on the above analysis, it is possible to conclude that once the male attains cognition, he may remain in this state of 'knowing' or return to the state of innocence; his choice depends on the level of cognition he reaches. If, as in 'Al tacto', his cognitive level is very high, he may feel threatened by the knowledge about the world: several references to the conflicts of temporality - 'la breve eternidad' (Paz 1960, 238), of freedom and imprisonment - 'algo que me liberte y encandene' (ibid.), and of life and death - 'yemas vivas, mortales' (ibid.) may be read as the signs of problems within the male's cognition. As the male receives more information about the world around him, he becomes aware of the clashes between the world he inhabits and his perception of the reality. One of the possible solutions to this problem is the male's attempt to ignore the newly acquired knowledge in order to focus on a simpler perception of the world; this approach appears in 'Al tacto'. Another way he can deal with this conflict is to withdraw into the reality which does not contain the dilemma and is therefore safe; 'Al sueño' and 'Soliloquio de medianoche' contain examples of the male's attempt to create such a reality to ensure emotional safety within a familiar plane of existence.

### 3.4.3 Marcela Del-Río's representation of the male/child's quest for knowledge

Unlike Rosario Castellanos' works, which present the male/child as mainly focused on securing daily physical safety and comfort, many poems by Marcela Del-Río reflect the male/child's further cognitive development assisted by the woman/mother, whom he considers omniscient<sup>74</sup>. The poems 'Tu avides' and 'Días vacíos' of the collection *Temps en paroles*<sup>75</sup> contain the most salient examples of the male/child's search for knowledge with the woman/mother's help.

It has been established that in the poem 'Tu avides', the male recognises his nature of a rock and ignores the emotional and cognitive aspects of his self (Section 3.3.4 of this chapter presents a detailed analysis of the image of the male/rock). As a result of the process of recognition-rejection of the multiple nature of his emotional side, the male separates this aspect into a separate entity within his subjective reality - 'tratando de llegar al cielo immaculado / sin saber que él es cielo' (Del-Río 1985, 196). This quote demonstrates not only the male's cognitive dilemma, but also the woman's awareness of it, since the woman is the narrator of the poem. Therefore, it may be said that the woman is an omniscient entity, and the male indirectly relies on her to provide him with an evaluation of his development.

Although throughout the poem the woman is by the male's side, ready to provide emotional comfort and support ('Yazgo en tus yemas', 'Yazgo en tus ojos', 'Yazgo en tu espíritu' (ibid.)), the male attempts to reconcile the emotional conflict within by the only

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<sup>74</sup> We have established earlier in the analysis of the works of women writers that the image of the male is created through the character of the woman, whose actions and thoughts reflect the development of the male's sexuality (see Section 2.1.4, Chapter 2 for further details).

<sup>75</sup> The connection between *Proceso a Faubritten* and *Temps en paroles* is examined in Section 3.2.4 of this chapter.



cognitive means at his disposal. Taking into consideration the male/child's limited cognitive and emotional experience, it is not surprising that he chooses to ignore the problem, erecting a wall of emotional impenetrability to protect his vulnerability (Section 3.3.4 examines the male's conflicting emotions and their consequences). As the woman presents the male with her observations of his cognitive development (or the potential thereof), it is possible that the male will adopt cognition in order to understand the complexity of his nature, combining the primal physical aspect and developing cognition. The result of this understanding is the male's highly developed cognition arising from his sexual and emotional experiences. Chapter 4 contains the study of this stage of the formation of male sexuality as presented in Del-Río's novel *Proceso a Faubritten*.

In 'Días vacíos', the omniscient woman passes knowledge on to the male; the process of knowledge transfer contains a contradiction in the fact that the woman tells the male/child not to think and then to think. The male is instructed not to think about the time when he is not with the woman/mother or when he is emotionally and physically threatened by the outside world - 'no pienses que habremos de morir un día' (id., 394), 'no pienses en los días castrados, / inertes, los que pudimos estar juntos / y no estuvimos' (ibid.). It is interesting to examine the threats faced by the male: a combination of the images of physical harm and even death ('habremos de morir', 'días castrados') and the references to emotional anguish caused by loneliness ('pudimos estar juntos / y no estuvimos') implies that the male is taught to perceive his sexual experience (suggested in the latter quote) from the physical and cognitive perspectives. Like the male/child in the works of Paz and Sabines, the male in 'Días vacíos' learns the interdependence of the primal and cognitive aspects of his sexual character.

As the male/child starts acquiring the basic knowledge about himself, the woman/mother guides him through the experience, attaching a cognitive perspective to the



process. She tells the male to add up the hours and minutes of his life<sup>76</sup> in order to attain knowledge about his character - 'y sabrás por qué aulla el lobo / a la luna' (ibid.). In other words, the male should perform a higher cognitive task to learn about his primal (animal) side. It should be noted that the woman gives knowledge to the male through a sexual experience, as the male compares the hours spent alone to the minutes spent with the woman. The time spent without the woman is seen as silent and inert, containing no sexual overtones - 'las horas de paseo divorciado, / las horas de sueño ajeno, / las horas mudas frente al cine' (ibid.). On the other hand, the description of the moments spent in the woman's company includes implications of sexual intercourse - 'los minutos que nos vemos / a los ojos, los minutos / en que nos conocemos' (ibid.). The difference in the male's temporal perception connotes the process of cognitive development: as the male realises that he perceives time differently when sexually aroused, he learns the meaning of time and its interconnection with his sexuality. It may be suggested that the male starts recognising the difference between the objectivity and subjectivity of his existence; consequently, he can choose whether to imagine himself existing in the subjective or the objective reality (see Chapter 4 for further study of the male's perception of reality).

The above analysis has led us to the conclusion that in Marcela Del-Río's works, the male/child learns about himself and the world around him with the help of the omniscient woman/mother, who either gives the knowledge to the male or offers suggestions about the ways to attain knowledge. The woman's role implies that the male/child possesses rudimentary cognition, since he is presented as able to understand the concept of time, to perform basic calculations, etc. Both methods employed by the woman to help the male/child develop cognitive skills lead the male to analyse his actions and feelings before, during, and after sexual intercourse; thus, he makes a discovery about various aspects of his

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<sup>76</sup> The analysis of temporal correlations in the poem has been presented in Section 3.3.4 of this chapter.



sexuality. The first stage of the acquisition of knowledge concludes in the male's becoming sufficiently independent to function on a higher cognitive level; this is evident in his ability to evaluate the events (with or without the woman's direct help) and extrapolating the conclusion from his analysis of his sexual and emotional experiences.

#### **3.4.4 Summary**

To conclude the above analysis of the first stage of the male/child's search for knowledge, we can say that there have been discovered two distinct approaches to this issue.

The woman in the works of Rosario Castellanos sees the male as being concerned with a predictable and physically safe routine provided by the woman; the existence of this routine (and, consequently, the male's physical safety) depends on the woman/mother's reaction to the male/child's demands (usually expressed in metaphoric 'tantrums'). Therefore the male/child does not exhibit the need for knowledge not only because his underdeveloped cognitive abilities do not allow him to recognise this need, but because the responsibility for his safety lies solely on the woman/mother. In the poems of Jaime Sabines, the male/child acquires enough knowledge to provide himself with a physically safe environment which also allows him to exercise emotional and cognitive control over his surroundings. The fantasy world the male/child creates meets all the criteria of physical safety<sup>77</sup>; consequently, the male/child is content to exist in the physically secure environment which provides him with sexual and emotional stimulation. The male/child in the poetry of Octavio Paz and Marcela Del-Río is more focused on attaining knowledge as the means to change his emotional state and to differentiate between the subjective and objective realities. The result of this differentiation is the creation of a subjective reality which provides the male with enough cognitive stimuli to ensure emotional safety.

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<sup>77</sup> It has been determined earlier in this section that the male/child in the poems of Jaime Sabines is represented as concerned mainly with his physical safety; whenever emotional security is attained, it is a direct result of the

It must be stressed that the aforementioned difference between the representation of this aspect of male sexuality depends upon the initial level of cognitive development the writers assign to the male characters. While the male in Sabines' poetry is presented at a lower level of cognition (his image may be seen as that of a baby or a very young child), the male in the works of Paz and Del-Río possesses a higher level of cognitive ability and is, therefore, likely to attain knowledge of a higher order (abstract concepts of time and causality, mathematical abilities, etc.). Consequently, the male/child in Sabines' poems seeks satisfaction of a less cognitive aspect of a safety need (physical), whereas the male/child in Paz's and Del-Río's works concentrates on satisfying its higher aspect (the need for emotional safety).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The analysis of the nature of male sexuality we have completed so far has allowed us to draw the provisional conclusion that there are at least two stages of the exhibition of male sexuality: the expression of its primal aspect and the demonstration of its childlike side. However, a detailed study of the childlike traits of male sexuality has revealed emergence of the male's need for knowledge about himself and the world. This has suggested that the third major component of male sexuality is the male's need for further cognitive development.

This chapter has examined the three stages of the expression of the male's childlike traits: the combination of fear of being alone and fear of the unknown, the resulting volatile emotions, and the male's attempt to acquire knowledge in order to resolve the emotional conflict within his character.



The childlike aspect of male sexuality emerges after the male exhibits the primal side of his character. Arising from instinctive fear of physical pain and death is the child's fear of the unknown because what he does not know can overpower him physically and emotionally. According to Maslow's theory of human motivation, the child's limited cognitive abilities allow him to understand certain aspects of his character and the world around him; however, the unknown is beyond the child's control and therefore potentially harmful to the child's safety. The fear of the unknown causes the child to seek the protection of a parent; similarly, the male/child metaphorically looks for safety in the company of the woman/mother.

In the works of Rosario Castellanos, Marcela Del-Río, Octavio Paz, and Jaime Sabines the male/child exhibits the fear of being alone and the fear of the unknown during a sexual act because he does not possess enough knowledge about himself to understand the physical and emotional sensations of sexual intercourse. The male/child's reaction to these fears depends largely on the level of his cognitive abilities: if, as reflected in the works of Sabines and Castellanos, the male's cognition is underdeveloped, he focuses on protecting his physical safety, which once again points to the residual primal traits in his character. On the other hand, if the male/child is more aware of himself and the reality around him (as represented in the poems of Paz and Del-Río), then the need for physical safety loses its urgency due to the male's ability to perceive the reality from a more logical perspective; instead, he concentrates on establishing an emotionally secure environment for himself.

As the male/child experiences the fear of being hurt (physically or emotionally) by what he does not understand, he reacts in a predictable manner by exhibiting volatile emotions. In Castellanos' 'Lección de cocina', the male/child, whose cognitive level is metaphorically that of a baby, resorts to what we may call tantrums in order to re-direct the woman/mother's attention back to his immediate need for physical safety, since the woman is seen by the male/child as an omniscient and omnipotent entity whose sole purpose in life is



to satisfy the male/child's needs. Jaime Sabines' poems present the male/child's attempt to resolve the emotional conflict within by creating a fantasy world where he has complete control over the physical and emotional aspects of his existence. In addition, this reality contains strong sexual overtones, which then allows the male to exert control over his sexual arousal; therefore, the male/child is able to confront his fear of the unknown. The male/child in the poems of Paz and Del-Río also experiences conflicting emotions because of his fear of the unknown, which he thinks can damage his cognitive persona. The protective measures taken by the male/child are similar to those presented in the works of Castellanos and Sabines: the male either becomes emotionally unstable in an attempt to draw the woman/mother's attention to his misfortune (as implied in Del-Río's poems), or creates a fantasy world which allows him to perceive his cognitive self as controlling his physical existence. The subjective reality imagined by the male/child in the poems of Octavio Paz reflects not only his cognitive abilities but also his sexual desire - there are multiple examples of strong sexual overtones in Paz's works, and the higher the male's sexual arousal is, the more 'unreal' (or separated from the objective reality) his fantasy world becomes.

Another attribute of the childlike aspect of male sexuality is the male/child's attempt to search for knowledge in order to overcome his fears and to establish a permanent state of physical and emotional security. It should be emphasised that this trait is only exhibited by the male/child with relatively highly developed cognition; the male/child in Castellanos' works does not possess this ability because he is metaphorically presented as a baby or a young child with no discernible cognition. The male/child in Sabines' poetry creates a subjective reality designed to provide him with physical safety; there is no assistance from the woman, who is seen as a part of the non-cognitive reality. The male possesses enough cognitive ability to control all the aspects of his physical and sexual existence within this reality. As a result, there is no further cognitive development, as the male finds sexual satisfaction not to be threatening to his physical well-being.



A different approach is taken by Octavio Paz and Marcela Del-Río, in whose works the male/child creates an emotionally complex subjective reality: a high level of cognitive perception exhibited by the male causes him to focus on understanding his sexual experience and attempting to reconcile its physical and emotional sides. However, he realises that his cognition is not developed enough to allow him this level of self-perception; in his search for knowledge the male/child either turns to the woman/mother (this is characteristic of Del-Río's works) or relies on his ability to enhance his cognitive powers through imagination (as presented in Paz's poems). In the end, the male/child recognises his cognitive ineptitude and seeks to acquire more knowledge in order to satisfy his need for emotional safety. The subjective reality he creates contains the knowledge he seeks, either given to him by the woman (Del-Río) or revealed to him in superconscious experiences, dreams, fantasies (Paz).

The above analysis of the childlike aspect of male sexuality allows us to state that the male/child's cognitive level determines the type of safety he searches for, as well as whether or not he would attempt to attain more advanced knowledge about himself and the objective reality. Chapter 4 will examine the male's acquisition of complex cognitive abilities through sexual experiences, the resulting conflicts between the male and the world he inhabits, and the male's achievement of self-realisation based on his cognitive perception of sexual experiences.

## CHAPTER 4

### The Male's Acquisition of Knowledge and Self-actualisation Based on Sexual Experience

#### 4.1 Introduction

After the male experiences fear of the unknown during a metaphorical sexual act, he comes to the conclusion that he does not have sufficient knowledge about himself and the reality he inhabits. As a result of this revelation, he makes the first attempt to secure the necessary knowledge in order to understand his sexual experience. Therefore, it may be suggested that the last stage in the formation of male sexuality (as presented in the works of the Mexican writers chosen for this study) is the acquisition of knowledge necessary for the male to become fully aware of his physical and emotional sensations.

This stage has the characteristics of higher cognitive needs of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs: need for love, esteem, and self-actualisation (or reaching one's personal best). According to Maslow's theory of human motivation, higher cognitive needs emerge only after the basic physiological needs and the need for safety are satisfied; as more cognition-oriented needs emerge, the person's focus turns to his emotional and cognitive needs. The two postulates of the theory of human motivation are of considerable importance for this study: (1) 'the higher the need the less imperative it is for sheer survival, the longer the gratification can be postponed' (Maslow 1954, 147), and (2) 'higher need gratifications produce more desirable subjective results' (id., 148). The final stage in human



motivation - achievement of self-actualisation - depends on satisfaction of higher cognitive needs; once the person reaches self-actualisation, it may be said that the person has become 'more and more what one is, ... everything that one is capable of becoming' (id., 92).

Maslow regards the state of self-actualisation as the peak of personal development.

Having traced the process of satisfaction of lower needs (physiological needs and the safety need) reflected in two distinct aspects of male sexuality, we can suggest that the next stage of development of male sexuality represents satisfaction of higher cognitive needs - love, esteem, and self-actualisation. Since it may be assumed that the male character in the works of the four Mexican writers exists in the reality where the feeling of love (whether mutual or not) is a given, the need for love and belongingness<sup>78</sup> is represented as the male's need to belong to a reality which provides him with emotional comfort at a higher cognitive level. As will be seen from the following analysis, such a reality is the male's subjective world. The next stage of need satisfaction (the need for esteem and self-esteem) is expressed in the male's conflict with the society, in which he asserts himself as a separate entity, who is able to understand himself through sexual experiences. Finally, the male's self-actualisation coincides with his attempt to separate himself completely from the objective reality and to achieve a Godlike status through sexual intercourse; it will be possible, then, to suggest that the male's sexual experiences provide him with higher consciousness and allow him to explore fully the physical, emotional, and mental potential of his personality.

This chapter will analyse the process of self-actualisation and acquisition of knowledge that the male experiences during sexual intercourse, and determine the underlying cause for this process as well as the results of the male's search for knowledge

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<sup>78</sup> Maslow uses the term 'belongingness' to define the person's need to have 'affectionate relations with people in general, ... a place in his group' (Maslow 1954, 89).



through the exploration of his sexuality. The works selected for this study are *Proceso a Faubritten* (1976) by Marcela Del-Río, and two poems by Octavio Paz - 'Piedra de sol' (1957) and 'Blanco' (1966). Though the three works belong to several literary periods covering approximately three decades, I have chosen to analyse them together since they appear to represent most vividly the process of the male's self-actualisation through sexual satisfaction. It is also important to state that, although the male character in the works of Jaime Sabines and Rosario Castellanos develops the ability to recognise his need for knowledge, he does not exhibit as high a cognitive potential as does the male in Octavio Paz's and Marcela Del-Río's writings. Taking into consideration the first postulate of Maslow's theory (as quoted above), we can see that the satisfaction of the safety need (and, earlier, the physiological need for sexual satisfaction) was very important and therefore exhibited by male characters with equal intensity, regardless of their cognitive potential. However, as became obvious in Section 3.3 of Chapter 3, the male's first attempts to acquire knowledge (or to satisfy a higher cognitive need) depended on the male's cognitive abilities - the better developed his cognition the greater the need for knowledge. Since the male satisfied his lower cognitive needs through sexual intercourse, and continued to rely on sexual experience to acquire the basic knowledge about himself and the world, we may assume that the male's level of cognitive development plays a particularly important role in determining whether his sexual experience will lead him to self-actualisation.

As will become evident, even though the writers address the same ideas pertaining to the process of the male's self-actualisation through sex, their approach to the topic varies considerably. Therefore, it is important to establish the main ideas of the literary works so that the recurring theme becomes more apparent. In all three works, the main idea is the male's search for self and subsequent acquisition of knowledge that separates him from the objective world, allowing him to create his own subjective reality. The conflict between the



male and the objective reality is rooted in his internal psychological turmoil which becomes visible during the sexual stage of his relationships with women.

In *Proceso a Faubritten*, the male's (Faubritten's) search for knowledge stems from the feeling of guilt and helplessness in the conflict with society, consequently the male engages in sexual relationships that reflect his attempts either to reconcile his perception of the objective reality with his inner world, or to retreat completely from the objective reality into a subjective plane - the process which is seen from a linear perspective as physical death.

The main idea of 'Piedra de sol' and 'Blanco' is the male's search for self (or self-actualisation) through sexual experiences. According to Eliot Weinberger, '[for Paz,] the revolution of the word is the revolution of the world, and ... both cannot exist without the revolution of the body: life as art, a return to the mythic lost unity of thought and body, man and nature, I and the other' (Weinberger qtd. in <http://www.nobel.se/laureates>, 1999). Both poems represent the male's subjective reality as the point of origin of the male's sexual identity. The leitmotif of both poems is aloneness. The male has no connection with the objective reality or his imaginary partner in the subjective reality; the latter may be because the woman is created in the male's imagination and therefore reflects his subconscious attempt to escape his inner conflicts. In the end all that appears left is transparency or absence of anything objective - in other words, all that is left is the male's subjective existence in the form of superconsciousness or a dream.

'Piedra de sol' is a very complex poem that has intrigued many critics. Though the variety of analyses is impressive, all the critics agree on one point - the subject of the poem is the male narrator's travel or search. The following analysis makes a conscious separation between 'the poet' and 'the male', who is the narrator in the poem. Further analysis of the poem will reveal the fact that the narrator's personality is designed to reinforce the main subject of the poem. The male's character traits are emphasised in accordance with the

emotional nature of the time planes<sup>79</sup>. Thus, it may be assumed that though the narrator's personality may reflect some of the author's traits, the two are separate entities and will be treated as such in this analysis.

Previous critical readings of 'Blanco' concentrate mainly on the poet's attempt to 'discover an ultimate reality behind the appearances of the world' (Fein 1986, 76), or on the conflict between this attempt and the inadequacy of language (Phillips 1972, 135). Some critics consider the theme of the poem, as well as that of modern writing, to be 'an attempt to find out what lies behind language' (Wilson 1979, 139), or 'los momentos sucesivos en que el poeta la confronta con el mundo, o más bien, ... la visión de un mundo ... en búsqueda de su expresión' (Sucre 1974, 233). Many analysts disregard or minimise the role of sexual experience in the poem; yet its mostly sexually explicit imagery cannot be treated as a mere illustration of heightened passion (as seen, for instance, by John Fein), nor is it used only to portray a woman's physical presence (Phillips 1972, 138-143). I believe that sexual images in the poem are used to resolve the male's mind-body conflict that stems from his attempt to reconcile his sexuality and his cognitive psyche. The conflict can be resolved through self-discovery (similar to that experienced by the male narrator in a dream in 'Piedra de sol') which is impossible without sexual expression which represents the 'animal' (or non-cognitive) side of humanity.

The main idea of 'Blanco' is similar to that of 'Piedra de sol' - the male's search for self through his sexuality. In addition, the underlying motif of 'Blanco' (achievement of superconsciousness) reveals the influence of Tantrism on Paz's poetry of the late 60's, which

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<sup>79</sup> The term 'time plane' is chosen to describe a distinct passage of time within the poem. Due to the fact that time passages may be of a non-linear nature, this term is favoured over 'timeline', which is used in case of *Proceso a Faubritten*.



is evident throughout the *Ladera Este* collection. It is surprising that many critics either ignore or downplay this influence (Fein, Wilson), when Paz himself indirectly admits it by using a quote from 'The Hevajra Tantra' as the first epigraph of the poem.

The similarities in the main ideas of the three works determine the four major topics that deal with the male's search for self. The study of time-space systems will determine the nature of the male's inner conflict depicted in his sexual behaviour as well as his conflict with the objective reality. Secondly, creation of God during sexual intercourse offers a new perspective on the process of the male's self-actualisation. This will lead to the discussion of the male's conflict with the objective reality and, finally, the examination of a separate subjective realm of existence that the male creates in order to acquire the knowledge and identity that he seeks.

## **4.2 Time-space multiplicity**

To understand the process of formation of the male's personality and the reasons for the male's subsequent conflicts it is important to analyse the time-space interaction in the three works. I believe that the nature of time in the following works determines the nature of the male's sexuality and, consequently, the male's internal and external conflicts.

### **4.2.1 Marcela Del-Río's approach to time-space interaction**

In *Proceso a Faubritten*, although time remains linear throughout the narration, multiplicity of timelines deserves further attention. Faubritten appears to exist in several timelines because of the multi-layered nature of his inner conflicts with the society, the loved ones (especially women) and himself. The subjective nature of Faubritten's world is evident in the description of his hometowns. The novel is set in the villages Ains Tayn (pronounced 'Einstein') and Wildsau ('wild sow' in German) apparently located in Germany; however, the native language of Ains Tayn is Spanish.

[Cristina] - Yo nací y me crié en Ains Tayn y no es frecuente dar aquí con alguno.

Me sentí mejor, a pesar de saberme burlado.

- ¿Y me dejó hablar todo este tiempo en mi horrible alemán? - dije ya en español.

(Del-Río 1976, 55)

Later in the chronicle there are pictures of several Wildsau and Ains Tayn houses (insert, id., 208) which appear to be made of parts of other photos. The ethereal character of Ains Tayn is reinforced by the fact that the village has its own time zone, different from time zones in surrounding Germany - '3 a.m., hora de Ains Tayn' (id., 13). It is possible to assume that Ains Tayn does not belong to objective reality; instead, it exists in another reality which is objective to those in it, and subjective to the outsiders. Wildsau is represented by a collage of photos of the church facades 'dispuestas de manera que permite apreciar la fachada de la iglesia . . . que tanto estimaba Faubritten' (insert, id., 208). The fact that there are no photos of whole original buildings of either village supports the notion that neither village exists in the objective reality.

The last chapter devoted to Faubritten's exile and subsequent death is structured as several storylines running simultaneously, though they represent different timelines in Faubritten's life. It appears that parallel past timelines replace the main one when one of the characters experiences emotional shock of a flashback (id., 249, 267, 294, 316) or sexual arousal (id., 254). Two temporal disruptions of a different nature are presented in the last ten pages of the novel, and both occur at the point of discovery which, in retrospect, changes the course of events, even though the information presented at this point in time was implied earlier. For example, Faubritten and Cristina reveal that Cristina and Maria Corona appear to be the same person:



- Revolviste de tal modo su Diario con el tuyo que no supe cuándo hablaba María y cuándo tú. Sus palabras y las tuyas se confundieron y no pude dividirlos.

- Porque son indivisibles. Ella y yo somos la misma persona. Tú lo sabes [...]

Estela apareció detrás de ellos. Su piel blanca brillaba pálida bajo la luna.

- Ha venido a que la conozcas y a despedirse - dijo Cristina, viendo en los ojos del padre un fulgor conocido.

*Cristina. Cuando me das la espalda al acostarnos, adivino al otro lado de la cama a todas las mujeres de tu pasado...*

(id., 334)

However, earlier in the novel there are also several indications that Cristina is María Corona (or that María Corona never existed in the objective reality) and that Faubritten is the father of Estela; one of the more direct references to Estela's origin is Cristina's remark 'el verdadero pecado de Adán no fue acostarse con Eva, sino traicionarla con su hija' (64), and since Faubritten has been compared to Adam throughout the novel, the parallel becomes quite obvious. It should be noted that Cristina and María Corona are the same character only in Faubritten's subjective reality, i.e., the two women are perceived as one. Due to the societal rules of the objective world, Cristina and María Corona cannot be one person; otherwise Faubritten's relationship with Cristina-María Corona will be considered incest. However, in the subjective world where behavioural norms are different, this transformation is possible and does not appear outrageous.

The final junction of two timelines appears at the end of the novel, and this time the inside timeline is void of linear characteristics, nor does it possess any historical or narrative references that would help pinpoint its location in the storyline of the novel. While all other timelines can be traced to the past time within the novel, this last inserted timeline is general to the extent of being timeless. Even the names of characters are non-existent (el padre and la hija), though the father character refers to the daughter as Cristina, thus taking on the role of Faubritten. Yet references to Messiahs and future glory create a biblical atmosphere which in retrospective refocuses the reader's perception of the main idea of the novel.

The interference from another timeline as result of sexual arousal deserves further scrutiny because it not only exposes the artificiality of Faubritten's new social circle, but also illustrates the projection of an un-reality onto the reality, invalidating both of them. Here, H el ene returns to Faubritten's room to ask him not to forgive her for her emotional outburst earlier in the scene; crying and begging, she initiates the sexual contact through confession 'en la cama, el confesionario m as socorrido del mundo en todas las edades' (id., 256). The confession is triggered by H el ene's desire to be sanctified and pure which, she thinks, can be attained by engaging in a sexual intercourse with the male-God. Throughout the scene, Faubritten's desire is fueled by H el ene's words of confession - 'Alexander escucha durante el goce, durante la pausa, y las palabras instigan nuevamente su deseo' (ibid.). An ironic twist of the confession brings out the 'animal' side of the male when he is seen by his partner as a divine character void of earthly, imperfect traits.

At this moment, another timeline interferes with the flow of the primary storyline. It is unclear who instigates the memory because both Faubritten and H el ene are present in the excerpt; in fact, one may assume that the one responsible for this interference is Angelo Regno (H el ene's husband and one of Faubritten's exiled colleagues), who would derive sexual pleasure from imagining his wife with other men. Though Angelo is not physically present during this scene, we may surmise that he could be watching - or even imagining -



this situation to satisfy his sexual craving. This supposition is reinforced by several references to Angelo's jealousy which triggers sexual response - 'muchas veces la [Hélène] animaba, sin admitirlo conscientemente, a iniciar aventuras con los hombres que la rodeaban, como si el hecho de verla asediada, excitara su virilidad' (id., 257).

Further evidence that Angelo may be the one initiating the interference of another timeline lies within the second storyline, describing a rather theatrical scene of Angelo's jealousy, written in form of an excerpt from a play. The literary style of this scene (a play) is especially important in determining the validity of this timeline - a staged situation appears real to the audience (or is designed to appear real), yet the actors are aware of the fact that they exist in an artificial reality. Faubritten's remark 'ne pleurez plus et allez a votre chambre' originates in the play section and is transposed into the 'real' timeline, thus rendering both equally void of corporeality.

The analysis of time structure in *Proceso a Faubritten* has demonstrated that when the male is depicted as existing in two realities, his actions may not be evaluated from the point of view of either reality because neither reality is prevalent. One may say that the two realities exist or do not exist simultaneously; in either case, neither reality is more 'real' than the other. A similar phenomenon of two equally valid or invalid realities appears in Octavio Paz's 'Piedra de sol'; however, in this case, the cause of the phenomenon lies within the male's sexuality, not in the conflict between the male and society.

#### **4.2.2 Time-space interdependence in Octavio Paz's works**

Multiplicity of time lines is also represented in the works of Octavio Paz ('Piedra de sol' and 'Blanco'); therefore, it is plausible to assume that the interaction of the time-space continuum and the male's psyche is an important driving force of the male's psychological conflicts within as well as his discord with the outside world. The time-space interaction in

these poems is more complex than that in *Proceso a Faubritten* possibly because in Paz's poems the primary conflict is within the male's personality.

In 'Piedra de sol' time planes and their interaction are of paramount importance in the male's quest for himself. Many critics (Fein, Nelken, Phillips) who have analysed the poem have focused on the role and structure of time planes, yet most of the analyses ignore non-linear time planes or refer to them from a linear perspective. 'An examination of the various references to time yields common denominators and suggests three general classifications: normal or 'standard' time; time as measured by the poet's experience; and timelessness as a characteristic of eternity' (Fein 1986, 19). Such definition of time planes in the poem begs immediate questions of how 'standard' time can be defined, and whether it is the same as the time plane of the objective reality or that of the male. I have come to the conclusion that there does not appear to be a linear time plane in the poem that is not perceived through the male's reality; in other words, there is no objective reality within the structure of the poem. Therefore, 'standard' time is the same as the one perceived through the male's experience that does not involve satisfying his sexual need. Timelessness seems non-existent in the course of the poem; it is replaced by a multiplicity of time(s) rather than its absence.

According to Rachel Phillips, the poem is a description of the poet's pilgrimage to find unity with his lover. Notwithstanding the questionable view of the author as a participant in the storyline, the male's existence in other time planes is unreasonably downplayed and seen only as steps on the way to the woman, whose love is supposed to defend him 'against death, against division, against the routine of daily life, against all the corruptions and hypocrisies which separate us from each other and from ourselves' (Phillips 1972, 19). This linear approach is questionable in face of the complexity of the time plane structure in the poem.



An extension of this interpretation is the view of non-linear time planes as pieces disconnected from *Tiempo Absoluto*, thus dependent on it and exhibiting the same characteristics (Nelken 1996). Though this approach recognises the existence of separate 'avatares del tiempo', it specifies continuity of the unity of time planes that form 'una sola unidad' in the poem and do not exist separately. This theory does not appear to see the male as the connective force, possibly assuming that the unity is a given, existing independently from his conscience. If this is true, the complexity of the male's inner world is of little or no value in the poem; yet the critic stresses the inherent interdependence between the male and time.

Another reading of time planes is presented by Román-Odio: 'el acto "liberador" de la escritura produce una convergencia de tiempos y espacios. . . que termina pluralizando al sujeto textual. La pluralización del hablante del poema se expresa, por ejemplo, cuando éste se desdobra para mejor pensarse o imaginarse' (Román-Odio 1968, 29). However, there appears to be no static point of reference in the poem, as the present is also a past dream. Neither is there a plural 'hablante' - there is one male in the plurality of realities/time planes around him. He *seems* to change because time planes change, but in fact he stays the same since only the outside world (including the woman) is affected by the passage of time; for the male 'no pasa nada, sólo un parpadeo / del sol' (Paz 1960, 307). The male projects himself onto time planes (similar to a person 'seeing' him/herself in a dream), and the passage of time affects only his 'reflection'. This can be traced through the poem, since the male's conscience stays the same yet the physical appearance of his body double (or his projection) is affected by the ageing process -

y al cabo de los siglos me descubro  
con tos y mala vista, barajando  
viejas fotos

(id., 300)

These changes are erratic and do not correspond to an objective passage of time - only to the temporal laws of a time plane that the male finds himself in.

The time-space structure of the whole poem can be seen as a circle in which there is no discernible temporal or spatial transformation - a dream sequence where in spite of events occurring no obvious eventual change is noticed, though there are definitely changes within the male's psyche. The circular structure of the poem is reminiscent of *deja vu* or a dream sequence. When the male 'wakes up' (or arrives at the end of his journey) he realises that he is either still asleep or was never asleep but invented the reality with his subconscious. The interpretation of the poem as a lucid dream is enforced by the role Venus plays in its structure. Apart from the connection between the structure of the poem and the rotation cycle of the planet, Venus is the morning star and is thus seen in the early morning, i.e., on the threshold of night and day when reality is not quite clear to those just waking up. Images, colours and shapes are confused, often misinterpreted because of the play of light and darkness, like imagery and time planes in 'Piedra de sol', especially when the male appears at the point of convergence of time planes.

I believe that there is a total of 20 time planes in 'Piedra de sol' - 12 are distinct, seven are similar in nature due to the similarity of the male's experiences, and one is outside the time-space system of the poem, representing the male's objective reality (see Table 1, Appendix 1 for locations and characteristics of the time planes). Out of the 19 time planes within the poem, 10 are sexually neutral, seven - sexually explicit, and four are sexually implicit (sexually neutral time planes are the ones which do not contain sexually arousing imagery and therefore have no potential to satisfy the male's sexual desire; sexually implicit time planes offer implicitly arousing imagery, and sexually explicit time planes contain sexually explicit imagery which arouses the male, who then engages in lovemaking and experiences orgasm). One of the time planes changes from sexually neutral to sexually implicit, and one changes from sexually implicit to sexually explicit. Both changes occur



after the male's meditation on the life-death cycle, expressed in a walk in search for the woman's face.

The shift of time planes depends on whether the male has made a discovery about himself, imagined achieving sexual satisfaction, or recognised that a time plane cannot satisfy either his sexual instinct or desire of self-discovery. Some time planes, therefore, appear more important to the male than others; the importance, expressed in the degree of the male's involvement in the course of events, is determined by the sexual potential of the time plane. The male moves between time planes as soon as his sexual or emotional (self-discovery) need is satisfied. A time plane usually starts without his participation; later, the male adds his ego to the course of events but does not seem to participate in the time plane unless it has a high sexual potential. He experiments with all time planes and remains the longest in those with a potential for self-discovery or sexual satisfaction.

It is necessary to recognise the fact that though most time planes are non-linear (spiral or circular) some time planes *are* linear. Indeed it may be shown that the linear time planes are primarily sexually neutral, the spiral ones are mostly sexually implicit, and the circular time planes are almost always sexually explicit. Regardless of their nature, all time planes are treated by the male as equally valid in their reality and thus equally dismissable as unreal due to the lack of connection between the male and the world he occupies. This changes when the male realises that he is sexually aroused and close to climaxing; at this point, the male's existence is fused into the time plane he inhabits while sexually active, and a discovery is made about the male's personality. I particularly refer to *all* time planes in the poem as being temporarily occupied by the male because his objective time plane is not represented in the poem. It is outside the 'story line' - I believe that it is the point of origin of the walk, or the moment of falling asleep (since we assume that the poem is a sequence of lucid dreams) that starts before the first line of the poem and ends after the last line. This

time plane is the most comfortable for the male because he does not have to face himself and can live on without looking within the mirror cascade of his soul.

If we trace the interaction of time planes throughout the poem, we will see that the linear time plane is not disrupted by the male's involvement with an imaginary woman of the linear world. The male leaves the linear world when his sexual desire heightens and he begins foreplay; after intercourse, he returns to the linear time plane (it may coincide with the objective reality or the male's linear subjective reality) regardless of the actual passage of time. At first, his movements appear to be orderly; yet, as we trace the actual account of linear history, we notice that his re-entries are erratic. I believe that the male chooses the point of re-entry either to correspond to his emotional state after intercourse, or to reflect its complete opposite and, therefore, to enhance his sexuality and desire to escape to another reality that can satisfy his sexual appetite. In the following stanza the complexity of interacting time planes is most poignant:

miradas enterradas en un pozo,  
miradas que nos ven desde el principio,  
mirada niña de la madre vieja  
que ve en el hijo grande un padre joven,  
mirada madre de la niña sola  
que ve en el padre grande un hijo niño,  
miradas que nos miran desde el fondo  
de la vida y son trampas de la muerte  
- ¿o es al revés: caer en esos ojos  
es volver a la vida verdadera?

(id., 300)

All realities in this spiral of mirrored generations are assigned equal validity since all are subject to the male's dream progression. A comparison of a well to a grave points to a



connection between water and death; yet if one traces the cycle of transformation of people seen in each other's eyes, a well then takes on a metaphoric meaning of a connection with another world that mirrors the objective reality. This image is reinforced by the final question of the stanza '¿o es al revés: caer en esos ojos / es volver a la vida verdadera?', in which case eyes are traps/wells/doors into another time plane that is seen as equal in reality to the one that the male exists in at the moment. It can be said, however, that he exists on the threshold of the two realities, belonging to both and neither since he does not actively participate in either time plane (this is supported by the absence of first person action verbs in the above quote).

The multiplicity of interconnected time planes is further evident in the moments before the male enters the final climax stage.

no soy, no hay yo, siempre somos nosotros,  
la vida es otra, siempre allá, más lejos,  
fuera de ti, de mí, siempre horizonte,

(id., 308)

Several realities are present simultaneously, yet none allow the male to recognise himself as part of the reality he currently occupies, and to explore his sexual potential. He has to go through all to reach the one with most sexual satisfaction. Later, the same phenomenon appears as he searches to identify himself by reflecting his persona in the woman's character.

Time plane changes are summarised in the male's declaration of the effect of sexual love:

... si dos se besan  
el mundo cambia, encarnan los deseos,  
el pensamiento encarna, ...  
el vino es vino,  
el pan vuelve a saber, el agua es agua

(id., 304)

Notwithstanding references to the practice of the Holy Communion, the quote also alludes to the merging of body and soul that combines a linear existence and a circular reality of a sexual exchange, enhancing the nature of both. The blending of two worlds also seems to reverse the passage of time into the male's childhood, when the world (and language) was simple and enjoyable. The male reinforces this assumption, 'el mundo nace cuando dos besan' (id., 303), implying that a sexual relationship affects the lovers' subjective world, which, in return, recreates the objective reality.

The multi-faceted quality of temporal reality in 'Piedra de sol' can be explained by the multi-layered nature of the male character. I would like to support this statement by examining the title of the poem, which carries an indelible interdependence of the male and the woman. 'Piedra de sol', or 'Sun stone', a sacred calendar stone of the Aztecs, depicts the Sun, historically seen as a male entity. The Sun is orbited by Venus, the symbol of womanhood in many cultures (Greek, Roman, etc.). The phallogocentric view of the Universe contributes to the idea of male dominance, reinforcing a male's role as the pillar of the society. On the other hand, according to the Aztec legend, Quetzalcóatl's heart turned into the morning star (Venus) as he 'cast himself upon a funeral pyre and was consumed, and ... the ashes arising from the conflagration flew upward, and were changed into birds of brilliant plumage. His heart also soared into the sky, and became the morning star' (Spence 1920, 80). And if we trace the legend back to the reason for Quetzalcóatl's death, we learn that he made love with Quetzalpetlatl (his sister) under the influence of pulque. It is noteworthy that Quetzalcóatl's death stems from his sexual encounter with Quetzalpetlatl, or from his acknowledging his sexual desire and acting upon it. Thus, succumbing to his sexual drive and a woman's physical attraction, a male-god is punished and forced to abandon his country and die. Finally, his heart, an essential life-sustaining organ, is turned into a symbol of the womanhood that was the very reason of his death. Quetzalcóatl, the



very embodiment of the Mexican male soul, carried the female trait in him, as his heart turned into the symbol of femaleness. This resolution contains a supreme irony, since it reflects the inner conflict of Mexican male sexuality - on the one hand, overt need for immediate physical pleasure, apparently void of emotions or higher reasoning; on the other hand, covert emotional vulnerability of a female nature that is perceived as a weakness to be hidden and denied.

The male narrator of the poem appears to take on a different role from that assigned to him by the objective reality. The male is the one traveling around the linear time plane represented by the reality of the imaginary woman, while his projection appears to participate in the linear time planes. Therefore, the male takes on metaphorical feminine characteristics of Venus orbiting the Sun, and the woman obtains part of his maleness. The male is afraid or unwilling to face the linear world because he faces the threat of losing his sexual drive (his main defence against the world) with the passage of time. Thus, he dispels the objective reality as a subjective force aimed at destroying his inner integrity. Still, a subjective-objective division is rather simplistic given the variety of degrees of change within the male's inner self. The male's unwillingness to move with linear time may also be interpreted as his desire to remain a child or an 'innocent', who can live out his fantasies without having to comply with rules and regulations of the outside world. Threatening though the idea of exposing his inner world appears to the male, it is second to the fear of failing and being ridiculed or misunderstood as far as his sexual expression is concerned. Finally, the male is wary of the potential loss of control in a sexual relationship which, though apparently dominated by the male as the only cognitive presence, is still heavily influenced by the woman embodying the objective reality. The male does not exist in the woman's world (or objective reality) and therefore cannot control it as fully as the subjective reality that he inhabits throughout the poem. This causes him to re-create the woman in the subjective reality of his mind where he is in total control and, therefore, safe from ridicule.

'Blanco', written in 1967 while Octavio Paz was traveling through India, presents a different structure of the space-time continuum. The male travels an imaginary path from the nothingness of innocence through sexual experience to the nothingness of knowledge. Though the poem may be read as representing Nature's elements (this interpretation relies mainly on the analysis of form and structure of the poem), it can also be interpreted as a mantra addressed to achieve the superconsciousness through sexual expression. Since Tantric yoga teachings were Paz's major influence at the time of writing 'Blanco', it is plausible to assume that the poem represents a mantra. Therefore, I would divide it into three parts that correspond to the three stages of a mantra chant, or the three gunas (three aspects of nature) though the black and red part of the poem can also be seen as two separate poems joined by a common theme of sexual act.

There is no evidence of time movement in the poem mainly because there is no connection between the male's subjective reality and the objective reality outside the poem. The movement of the poem (from the male's mind through his body back into his mind) does not affect the linear passage of time; actually, it seems to be happening in a circular timeplane which is contained solely within the male's persona. The description of the male's 'world' supports this idea:

No  
es una palabra  
Sí  
es una palabra  
aire son nada  
son  
este insecto  
revoloteando entre las líneas  
de la página



inacabada  
inacabable  
El pensamiento  
revoloteando  
entre estas palabras  
Son  
tus pasos en el cuatro vecino  
los pájaros que regresan

(Paz 1989, 221)

As seen in this quote, the male's reality has little in common with the objective reality because the male exists within the realm of his mind, governed by his sexuality. This voluntary isolation gives rise to the conflict between the male's reality and the outside world, which will be analysed in greater detail later in the chapter.

#### 4.2.3 Summary

As a result of the above analysis, a conclusion can be made regarding the importance of time-space continuum in formation of the male's identity through sexual experiences. The interaction of multiple linear timeplanes is essential in establishing the basis for a conflict between the male and the society, as in Del-Rio's *Proceso a Faubritten*. Here, one may assume that multiple linear timeplanes are the reflection of the main conflict that the male experiences - that between the male and the objective reality that he occupies. As I will attempt to prove, the male characters in *Proceso a Faubritten* (especially Faubritten himself) exist mainly in the objective linear reality when searching for their identity through sexual interactions or scientific discoveries; once the discovery is made, they move into the subjective world populated by those sharing their philosophy. In contrast, the male characters in Paz's poems exist primarily in subjective non-linear timeplanes while in the

process of self-discovery through sexual interactions with imaginary partners; once males reach the state of self-actualisation through orgasm, they remain in the subjective timeplane because of their incompatibility with the objective reality. In general, both writers treat time-space interaction as the means of establishing the relationship between the male and the outside world; the difference in approaches depends upon which conflict the writers consider primary and the most important in the male's sexual self-actualisation.

### **4.3 The male as personification of God**

Both Octavio Paz and Marcela Del-Río use the image of God in their works to supplement the character of the male and to reinforce the topic of the acquisition of knowledge which brings the male to self-actualisation. In addition, both writers accentuate the sexual aspect of the image, emphasising the existence of divine features in human character. The writers' approaches to the image of God differ in accordance with their view of the male's conflict with the objective reality.

#### **4.3.1 Beatification in *Proceso a Faubritten***

In Del-Río's work, the image of God is related closely to the nature of the male's conflict with the outside world. As will be seen later, God-like traits are assigned to the male by the society, which later reassigns those traits to itself. Many religious symbols used to create Faubritten's personality will help understand the complexity of the conflicts in which he is involved. It should be noted that, unlike the males in Octavio Paz's poems who create God during an orgasm as a separate entity containing traits of their personality, Faubritten 'creates' God within as result of an emotional revelation; only once are divine traits assigned to him during a sexual intercourse, when Hélène imagines confessing her sins to a priest, who takes on the characteristic of God - 'Confiesa, entre gemidos de placer y de dolor, sus ardores a hurtadillas, su soledad atormentada de visiones obscenas, su fornicación



con Angelo, mientras su mente fabricaba la ilusión de estar con “Él” - pronombre que ella ha convertido en sinónimo de “el doctor”, de “Alexander”, de “el amado” (Del-Río 1976, 256). However, in every instance of Faubritten displaying divine traits there is no evidence that he shares the belief that he is equal to a deity or a religious figure. While the male in Paz’s poems sees God as an abstract entity reflecting the male’s self-actualisation through sexual experience, in *Proceso a Faubritten* it is the outside world that sees Faubritten as God or a God-like figure which does not display any human characteristics but supernatural traits, including omniscience and omnipotence. However, Faubritten does not share in this belief; only once in the novel does he refer to himself indirectly as God, while pondering the reaction of the world to his invention of the ‘bomb of eternal life’ - ‘El mundo estaba poblado por salvajes. Los había devuelto al paraíso y ahora ellos lo expulsaban de él, no con la espada flamígera, sino por una palabra flamígera: injusticia’ (id., 238). Though this analogy is centred around the image of the savages in the paradise, who assume the role of God, they expel Faubritten from the Garden of Eden, thus relieving him of the role of God that they previously imposed upon him.

Once it has been established that Faubritten does not consider his character divine, it is evident that he does not consider himself omniscient in his subjective reality. However, his subjective reality then is transferred onto the objective reality, where society adopts his view of himself as a ‘simple mortal’ (who enjoys physical and sexual pleasure as much as - or, in some cases, more than - the pleasure of the acquisition of knowledge), and thus rejects its previous belief in him as superhuman or divine. This double transfer of the way Faubritten is seen in two realities partly explains the large number of religious and sexual references in the novel.

Faubritten appears to possess traits from Christian and Aztec belief systems. Repeated references (direct and indirect) to the Aztec god Quetzalcóatl, and Hernán Cortés appear in the diary of María Corona, who implicitly assumes the role of La Malinche. María



Corona's description of submitting to Faubritten ('*Mete tu cántaro en mis aguas de turquesa y bebe. Báñate en ellas. Aliméntate con mis peces*' (id., 101), '*Tiro mis vestiduras y me entrego*' (id., 102)) may be read as a reference to La Malinche giving herself willingly to Cortés and then being betrayed by him (Cypress 1991, 9, 14, 55), in which case Faubritten would play the role of Cortés by first taking María Corona as his consort (there are no references to Faubritten and María Corona being married) and then abandoning her in favour of other women (Del-Río 1976, 109).

References to '*caballo sin blancas alas*' (id., 106), '*hombre blanco y barbado*' (id., 98) evoke the images of Hernán Cortés' appearance to Aztecs, some of whom assumed that he was sent by Quetzalcóatl, the sun-god of Aztecs, according to the ancient legends. 'His [Quetzalcóatl's] second advent was anxiously looked for, and when Cortés and his companions arrived at Vera Cruz, the identical spot at which Quetzalcóatl was supposed to have set out on his homeward journey, the Mexicans fully believed him to be the returned hero' (Spence 1920, 7). The reference to '*hombre Blanco y barbado*' (Del-Río 1976, 98) is similar to the way Quetzalcóatl was seen by ancient Aztecs - 'like all the dawn heroes, he too was represented of white complexion, ... and, as many of the Aztec gods, with a full and flowing beard' (Brinton qtd. in Spence 1920, 81). Taking these allusions into account, it may be suggested that the country of origin of Ains Tain is Mexico, though its current location is unknown and of little consequence to the storyline but of importance to its interpretation.

It is interesting to compare the exile of Quetzalcóatl to that of Faubritten. Quetzalcóatl is exiled after having committed adultery with Quetzalpetlatl; Faubritten is exiled for different reasons (none of which are sex-related) which will be discussed later. However, Quetzalcóatl's exile adversely affects Mexico - 'he secreted his treasure of gold and silver, burned his palaces, transformed the cacao-trees into mezquites, and banished all the birds from the neighbourhood of Tollan' (Spence 1920, 79); when asked to return, he



refused. Similarly, upon his exile Faubritten takes away the knowledge which nobody else can attain, and does not reveal it to the world.

Another aspect of Faubritten's personality is reflected in the Christian symbolism of the novel, which is evident primarily in Faubritten's character. Apart from being portrayed as Adam (Del-Río 1976, 260-1), Faubritten is also seen as Jesus, both directly and implicitly.

When perceived implicitly as Jesus, Faubritten is seen as a leader of a sect of followers who should be prosecuted for his beliefs (whether he admits to them or not) - '[Faubritten] volvería a Wildsau después de presentarse a testimoniar en el proceso que se le estaba instruyendo y que quería ser aprovechado por los sabios anhelantes de entrar en el secreto de la Bomba para formar una secta más, de modernos brujos' (id., 66). This situation may be compared to the description of Jesus on trial for being called the leader/king of Jews. While questioning Jesus (John 18:33 - 19:22), 'Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"'. Faubritten never claims his leadership or omniscience; as evidence, I would cite the fact that he does not disclose the way he created the bomb. He announces its creation and testing, then the basic chemistry behind it; after that the world develops the idea of eternal life according to its perception of reality, which does not appear to coincide with Faubritten's ideas. After disclosing the creation of the bomb Faubritten disappears from the scene, leaving the world to form its own concept of the effects of the bomb, and returns only for the trial when he is referred to as Antichrist - 'La Coalición de los Cultos Divinos . . . denunció hoy a Alexander Faubritten como el Anticristo, pidiendo para él una condena eterna' (Del-Río 1976, 38). It is not surprising to see the reference to Antichrist because the knowledge that Faubritten has brought is feared as coming from a darker, 'animal' side of self and thus not being 'pure', according to society's moral standards. The effect of the 'eternal life elixir' created by Faubritten is rooted in the animal side of humanity (instinct, fear of death) which goes against the Christian view of death as travel to the God's assembly. It is important to note that in Revelations 19:20 the Antichrist is accompanied by



beasts - 'And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image'.

Faubritten makes one direct reference to the life of Jesus when talking about his own career, inadvertently comparing it both to Jesus' death and divine salvation - '¡Treinta y tres tenía cuando la herencia de mi padre me permitió embastillarme en mi laboratorio para buscar lo que la Humanidad anhelaba!' (Del-Río 1976, 236). One may wonder whether Faubritten sees the beginning of his research career as his crucifixion or acquisition of a God-like status.

Later in the novel there are several inferences to Jesus' trial in connection with Faubritten's trial and questioning by the media. It is of great importance that a parallel be established between the questions and their interpretation at Jesus' trial and the misrepresentations of Faubritten's words, silence and intentions - '...and [the chief priests] said, "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." And they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then?" And he said to them, "You say that I am." And they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it from his own lips.'" (Luke 22:66-71). Faubritten does not speak throughout the trial, either (Del-Río 1976, 38, 311-347) - his actions are instead interpreted by the media, scientific communities, and his friends and family. He never speaks to the world, only to several people who are emotionally important to him (though not always on his side) - his old friend Jaroslav, his daughter Cristina, his son-in-law Plautilio, and a boy messenger Milo, who helps Faubritten discover the 'antidote' to the bomb.

The physical destruction of the male-God image is the reaction to the attempt of society to assume the role of God. It is important to realise that destruction of the male-God happens only on the physical level; the man's mind is not involved in the process



because it occupies a different reality. This role reversal happens as a result of the previous role transfer which occurs during sexual encounters between Faubritten and his lovers (María, Cristina, Hélène). When Faubritten engages in sexual intercourse with any of these women he assumes a new identity which possesses divine traits. It is worth tracing the changes of Faubritten's character throughout his sexual experiences, from María Corona's diary to the scene of Hélène's confession in Faubritten's bedroom. Sexual experience in Faubritten's life is closely connected with his role of demigod, which he plays only when in the company of a woman-partner. Intercourse appears only once in the novel, when Faubritten hears Hélène's confession; during this scene Faubritten assumes the role of priest which is assigned to him by Hélène. In other words, this role is imposed upon him by a woman seeking sexual unity with a demigod because her union with an all too 'human' Angel Regno (an irony in the choice of the name is quite evident in this case) does not satisfy her need for redemption<sup>80</sup>.

Since it has been established that neither timeline is objectively real, it may be said that Faubritten also plays a part in the primary timeline. This part is imposed upon him by Hélène, who projects her sexual desire onto his personality, reshaping it to satisfy her need for sexual purity. By turning Faubritten into a saint or a priest, she imagines herself as part of his sainthood, sharing his moral virtue. Yet, while Hélène appears to experience sexual satisfaction in a dream or a fantasy, Faubritten satisfies his sexual desire in the objective reality in a rather primary fashion - 'listo a penetrarla, la toma nuevamente sin preocuparse de si la crisálida dormía o despertaba' (id., 258). It is noteworthy that Faubritten's sexual release is experienced from two perspectives - that of a carnal / animal nature (supported by the imagery of flora and fauna), and that of an abstract character, achieved by visual means and their psychoanalytic interpretation. As Faubritten caresses Hélène, his mind is separated

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<sup>80</sup> The character of Helène is analysed in greater detail in Chapter 1.



from his bodily experience, searching for a connection between H el ene and mythical figures (Margarita, Elena, Mar a). It is possible that the Mar a to whom he compares H el ene - ‘Alexander ve a Mar a en H el ene, y a H el ene en la visi n de Mar a, y otra vez a Mar a en el doble reflejo de H el ene’ (ibid.) - is not only Mar a Corona, but also the Virgin Mary. In this case, H el ene’s dream of sainthood is realised in Faubritten’s subjective reality, though neither is affected by this analogy as the morning after arrives - ‘La mariposa hab a volado... Lo prefer a as . No se ver a forzado a exhibir ante ella los estragos de la noche, o a verlos en H el ene’ (id., 259). This rather down-to-earth resolution of a romantic night once again illustrates the widening gap between Faubritten and the objective reality, which H el ene represents. Such a resolution would not be possible in the relationship between Faubritten and Mar a Corona because neither aspired to possess the traits of demigods later imposed upon them by the outside world, and both Faubritten and Mar a Corona belonged to the subjective reality more than to the objective linear time. This is also evident from the timelessness of Mar a Corona’s diary entries, which appear to transcend linear time by merging with the past, as Faubritten becomes Hern n Cort es and Mar a Corona becomes La Malinche<sup>81</sup>.

If we explore Faubritten’s sexual image through Mar a Corona’s diary, it will become apparent that he was not known for his fidelity as a husband. Mar a Corona makes repeated allusions to his sexual prowess by hinting at how many women have been in sexual relationships with her husband - ‘Soy la nostalgia de tus amores idos, de todas las

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<sup>81</sup> A comparison can be made between the scene of Faubritten and H el ene’s lovemaking and the description of foreplay in Octavio Paz’s ‘Blanco’, concentrating on the man’s progression from being aroused on a primal level to experiencing orgasm on a higher plane of conscience. In the novel, however, there is no movement from one to another; both happen simultaneously because one of Faubritten’s roles is assigned to him by an outside reality, while the male in ‘Blanco’ creates both experiences from within his subjective reality.



Malinches que multiplica el espejo de tu frente cuando en las noches, mientras me das la espalda, se reclinan al otro lado de nuestro lecho' (id., 109). As the account continues, the number of women multiplies, and later the reader may assume either that María has left Faubritten because of his infidelity, or that they have drifted apart since, according to Cristina, her mother kept waiting for Faubritten, loving him to the point of reverence - 'Es imposible imaginar que una persona pueda amar tanto a otra, como mi madre a él, ¡qué veneración! Mayor que a un santo o a un Dios. Sufrió la espera toda su vida, con la fe puesta en su regreso' (id., 57). This remark is of particular interest not only because it matches Faubritten with Quetzalcóatl, who left Mexico, and María Corona to the nation waiting for his return, but also because it gives insight into Cristina's other identity - that of Faubritten's lover/wife. Having compared her mother's love for her father to that for a saint or a God, Cristina says that she herself thought of Faubritten as 'iluminado', or a visionary. The uncanny similarity in the two women's attitude to this male, which at first can be regarded as the mother and daughter's devotion to the male in the family, later appears to be coming from the same person. This merging of characters contributes to the timeline interaction in the last chapter of the novel, as has been seen earlier in the analysis.

#### **4.3.2 Man-God in Octavio Paz's works**

In Octavio Paz's poetry ('Piedra de sol') it appears that as the male reaches the climax, he makes a conscious connection between his inner self and God, who is considered an allegory of human sexuality. The male regards God from a non-physical perspective; to him, God equals removal of all masks, the centre of the subjective world concentrated in the male's soul. God originates in sexual and physical violence, incest and adultery, and appears after the negative expressions of human primal traits are shed like masks or petals - in this case, remembering the comparison of woman's genitalia and flowers, one can draw a parallel between God and sexual love, which may be seen as one of the primal traits of human

character. Therefore, God appears void of all physical expression of human nature though it is born out of it -

los amantes suicidas, el incesto  
de los hermanos como dos espejos [. . .]  
el adulterio en lechos de ceniza,  
los amores feroces, el delirio, [. . .]  
el mundo se despoja de sus máscaras  
y en su centro, vibrante transparencia,  
lo que llamamos Dios, el ser sin nombre

(Paz 1960, 305)

Since this moment occurs when the male is close to an orgasm, it is reasonable to assume that God is regarded as an allegory of human sexuality and a metaphor for an orgasm of the male's mind as well as body. It is interesting to note that the male assigns a divine character to the exposure of himself ('lo que llamamos Dios'), subtly suggesting that God is man-made, and therefore should exhibit human characteristics, especially sexuality.

While approaching the image and role of God from different perspectives, Paz empowers the male character to create a God who not only possesses human traits but also acts as his equal or a reflection of his nature. God is 'called' or 'named' by the male during an orgasm; later in the poem, God is described as 'plentitud de presencias y de nombres' (ibid.) and 'el rostro sin nombre, el ser sin rostro, / indecible presencia de presencias...' (id., 310). The use of the words 'presencias' and 'nombres' shows that God would not exist without the male since the concept of a deity is characterised by the exhibition of the male's self-awareness, or something that can be applied by humans to humans. It is important to remember that God is also void of physical substance or gender - the deity is a transparency that the male fills with familiarity that he can identify with. Therefore, it can be said that God is realised through the male's sexual expression.



The role of God changes due to the Tantric influence on Paz's poetry of mid-1960s. The dual imagery of 'Blanco' - that of sexual desire and death - may be seen as stemming from the nature of the Hindu deity Siva and his consort, Durga Ma, who is the most destructive and sexually active aspect of the Hindu female deity. Depicted as a black naked woman with the mouth red with blood of men, she devours her human lovers-children, thus destroying the physical side of human nature that prevents it from attaining superconsciousness. Siva the Dancer is the destroyer of Maya or the unreal; his dance, always accompanied by the beat of his two drums, announces the end of the reality as we know it. The male appears to take on the characteristics of Siva during foreplay, thus receiving divine traits while retaining his animal nature:

Tambores tambores tambores

El cielo se ennegrece

como esta página. [...]

Mugan los árboles encadenados.

Tambores tambores tambores.

Te golpeo cielo,

tierra te golpeo.

(id., 218)

In the above quote, the repeated image of drums is similar to the Yogic depiction of Siva 'with his foot raised - when he puts his foot down, the universe as we know it will cease to exist' (Sivananda 1983, 16). Siva's destructive dance is accompanied by the beating of two drums; in 'Blanco' the pulsating rhythm of the middle section along with the repetition of the image of drums reinforces the similarity between the male and Siva. It appears that the male creates the character of Siva out of his sexual arousal during foreplay; in this case, it may be suggested that God becomes part of the man's sexual experience and therefore does not exist (or is not perceived by the male) outside the subjective reality of sexual intercourse.

### **4.3.3 Summary**

The above analysis allows us to conclude that both Paz and Del-Río describe the creation of the image of God out of the male's character, implying that the male possesses divine traits in his nature. It appears, however, that the writers differ in the approach to the role of God in the male's existence; this difference is based on the writers' perception of the nature of the male's conflict with the outside reality. In Paz's works, the image of God is created out of the male's sexual experience; the existence of God does not affect the objective world, but it does change the male's perception of the subjective realm and, consequently, his view of the objective reality and a widening gap between the two. In Del-Río's novel, the male is assigned divine traits by the objective world which appears directly affected by his character; the male's sexual experience reinforces his God-like nature from 'outside', i.e., through his partners' view of him as a male-God. The male does not perceive himself as divine, and when not in interaction with the objective reality, seems quite uncomfortable with the role; however, he recognises the world's perception of him as a divine personality, and acts upon it during the most intense moments of the conflict with the objective reality.

### **4.4 The male within his subjective reality**

This section of the chapter will address the male's subjective reality as a separate realm of existence; in addition, it will analyse the conflicts within this reality and the consequent changes in the male's personality. As a result of the male's inner conflicts and reconciliations, he becomes separated from the objective world (this process will be discussed in full detail in Section 4.5 of this chapter). The force behind the conflicts is the male's sexual desire, which drives his search for identity. Although both Del-Río and Paz concentrate on this topic in their works, their approaches to the topic are radically different possibly due to the differences in perception of the male's sexual nature.



#### **4.4.1 Marcela Del-Río's view of subjectivity**

In *Proceso a Faubritten*, Faubritten attempts to solve his personal dilemmas by engaging in a sexual relationship not only with his partner María Corona (also personified in the character of Cristina), but also with Hélène and many nameless women (implicit references to these relationships are present in María Corona's diary). It is also possible that he considered seducing Arlette, the daughter of Dr. Ferdman, who is one of his exiled colleagues (Del-Río 1976, 283-4), though there is no direct evidence of a sexual act. The reason for Faubritten's apparently insatiable sexual appetite lies within his psyche and reflects the inner conflict that drives his existence - the guilt-love interaction which creates the need for knowledge. Faubritten's sexual desire may be seen as part of his subjective reality. To him, moral norms and regulations of the objective reality are void; instead, he lives according to his perception of the world which is neither right nor wrong because it exists independently from the accepted moral framework. To Faubritten, his behaviour is acceptable, though to the outsiders it appears irresponsible and inadmissible.

What allows Faubritten to create his own system of morals and rules of sexual behaviour? His knowledge may be seen as a root cause of its creation, but another underlying reason for his search for knowledge is the feeling of guilt, which parallels the body-mind interaction as well as the conflict between the subjective and objective realities. The feeling of guilt which enforces the feeling of love also brings out Godlike traits in the male. It appears that Godlike (Jesus-like) characteristics include the desire to save the world by resolving problems innate to human nature. These traits also preclude the male's existence in the objective reality, which is characterised by linear time, established norms of social behaviour and sexual taboos expressed in the institution of family. Faubritten encompasses the traits of deities (Quetzalcóatl, Christ) and men compared to gods (Jesus, Cortés, Faust). It is not surprising that he is eventually destroyed (physically, not



emotionally or mentally) not by ‘savages’ of the outside world or his perception of the objective reality (as one would expect since Faubritten exists in several timelines, thus appearing to exist in none of them), but by the subjective knowledge with which he hopes to save the world. This conflict can be resolved only through Faubritten’s physical death, though the problem lies within his mental realm and does not involve the body-mind interaction. A parallel exists between this confrontation and Freud’s discussion of guilt representing the contention of ego and superego in search for love and appreciation. Freud further argues that guilt represents a ‘tension between the demands of conscience and the actual attainments of the ego... Religion, morality, and a social sense - the chief elements of what is highest in man ... - were originally one and the same thing’ (Freud 1937, 260). Thus, religious overtones of the novel may be explained as supporting Faubritten’s guilt stemming from the inner conflict. Faubritten himself relies on Freudian interpretation of the interaction between the ego and the super-ego, which shows ‘that the super-ego is being influenced by processes that have remained hidden from the ego. It is possible to discover the repressed impulses which really occasion the sense of guilt. The super-ego is thus proved to have known more than the ego about the unconscious id’ (id., 268).

The biblical promise of eternal life is based on eternal faith - ‘And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life’ (1 John 5:11, 12); yet in the novel eternal life is the result of acquired knowledge which at first represents the basis of faith and later, lack thereof. It appears that both faith and knowledge are similar in nature because both are two products of the same source - guilt. Faubritten starts his research when he is overcome by an emotional dilemma - ‘*injusticia - sentimiento de inocencia - rencor, odio - violencia - sentimiento de culpa - devoción, amor*’ (Del-Río 1976, 169); his intra-personal and interpersonal conflicts stem from the absence of accepted personality (ethnic, racial, etc), leading to the conflict with the society that imposes the above boundaries. In fact,



Faubritten's discovery makes it possible to apply the moral norms of humanity to a society, thus exposing irreconcilable differences between the two.

The feeling of guilt that guides Faubritten throughout his search for knowledge and identity, and his partners' perception of him as a male-God are the two main reasons for the failure of his sexual relationships as well as for his subsequent retreat into a world of his own. It appears that the two opposite attitudes within make him transpose his undesirable traits onto his partners - María Corona shares his guilt; Cristina personifies his divine characteristics, even though these are imposed upon Faubritten by the world. Hélène carries his hypocrisy which is the most difficult trait for Faubritten to bear; this is evident in the diary entries made during the war, as his frustration with his dual status - that of a participant (however passive) and the opponent of the Nazi regime - reaches its peak after Sigi's murder: '¡No podré soportar mucho tiempo más esta culpa! Cada masacre me ensucia y ya no puedo mirarme en el espejo sin que se empañe de sangre mi reflejo' (id., 225). When the conflict between Faubritten and the world escalates, Faubritten leaves the objective world forever. This move may be interpreted as death only because a linear perception of life and death does not include any other view of a transition between the objective and subjective realms of existence. The evidence of the transition can be found in the last pages of the novel as several timelines overlap, rendering each other subjective and therefore invalid from the linear perspective; the most poignant example is Cristina taking on the personality of María Corona, thus disrupting the linear (objective) flow of time (id., 334-5). It should be noted that when Faubritten is found 'dead', Cristina quotes his last words "'Ellos me buscarán y no me hallarán. Adonde yo voy nadie podrá llegar'" (id., 346). A pale, ghost-like body of Faubritten in a dark room adds to a mysterious nature of the scene; an interpretation of the scene from an objective perspective suggests that he is indeed dead, that is, not alive in the linear reality. However, if we think of his last words from a non-

linear perspective, it may be suggested that Faubritten has transcended to a subjective reality which has no point of intersection with the linear existence.

#### 4.4.2 The male's subjective reality by Octavio Paz

A similar transition occurs in Octavio Paz's poems, as the male character is searching for his sexual identity. In 'Piedra de sol' the transition is tied to the subject of the poem - the search for self-actualisation through sexual experience. Although analysts differ in their approach to the themes of 'Piedra de sol' (the role of imagery, time, etc.), they tend to agree on the object of the male's search. Rachel Phillips sees the poem as the poet's pilgrimage to find love, which is 'man's defence against death, against division, against the routine of daily life, against all the corruptions and hypocrisies which separate us from each other and from ourselves' (Phillips 1972, 19). John Fein, for instance, states that 'the subject of 'Piedra de sol' is love, or, more particularly, the beloved' (Fein 1986, 11). Yet, as will be seen later, the woman appears to be a supporting formative force that adds to the male's attempt to define himself. The male is not searching for love or a lover because both are readily available to him. This is evident almost from the beginning of the poem -

una presencia como un canto súbito,  
como el viento cantando en el incendio,  
una mirada que sostiene en vilo

(Paz 1960, 293)

Instead, the male looks for the explanation of the processes within his psyche that make him recognise his love and lover as desired objects of pursuit. In other words, he searches to understand himself through his imaginary relationship with the woman (who embodies the world) and time-space unity; therefore, both should be studied more closely as the main driving forces of the male's quest for himself.



The travel that the male embarks upon makes him challenge his beliefs, convictions, and especially feelings, which until then are either ignored or misinterpreted. The male's sexuality is the main venue of self-discovery since it allows the male's participation in many non-linear time planes that are otherwise missed in the linear existence, through his connection with the imaginary sex partner (the woman), who embodies the male's sexual potential as well as his inner self yet to be discovered.

Throughout the pre-sex stage of the relationship in the poem, the male and the imaginary woman cannot engage in a rational communication. This is due to the fact that the woman is compared to the part of nature that is void of conscience, yet possesses sexual characteristics that can be recognised as the means of communication on a subconscious level. During foreplay, non-verbal communication supplements verbal exchange. When involved in foreplay, the male asks the woman, 'déjame ver el rostro, [...] abre tu ser, [...] ten un rostro' (id., 309-310), thus attempting to engage in a body talk as well as to identify the woman's inner self. It is also important to note that he *asks* the woman to show her self and her face, thus initiating a verbal exchange during intercourse. Since eyes are metaphorically presented as the mirror of the soul throughout literary works of many cultures and, therefore, may be seen as the primary means of conveying a non-verbal message, it would explain the male's apparent obsession with and fear of eyes. He attempts to establish a dual connection with the object of his sexual desire, while being wary of the possibility of losing himself in the conscience of the woman. Fear is evident throughout the poem, as the male compares the eyes to wells and watery graves, passages into another reality, or conduits between two coexistent worlds, whose realities become intermixed and indistinguishable from one another (see Section 4.2.2 for further analysis).

A similar interdependence of realities metaphorically presented in the image of eyes and gazes occurs in Del-Río's *Proceso a Faubritten*, when Faubritten makes love to Héléne. His perception of Héléne as María Corona and vice versa, and the double mirroring of the



two women in his mind renders his subjective reality equal to the objective world represented by Hélène; thus, neither reality appears 'real'. Faubritten's climax fuses his perception of both world the same way as the male's orgasm in 'Piedra de sol' combines several realities into a timeless spiral.

In 'Blanco' the male's satisfaction of sexual desire marks his self-actualisation, as will be seen in the Tantra-based analysis of the poem. The importance of sexual undertones is also implied in the second epigraph of the poem taken from a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé - 'Avec ce seul objet dont le Néant s'honore' (Paz 1989, 214). This epigraph is more sexually subtle: on the surface, it reads, 'with this sole object with which Nothingness honours itself (or 'of which it is proud')', thus, as will be seen later, suggesting that this object is language that creates meaning in the emptiness. However, another meaning of 's'honoré' is 'to have sexual intercourse with oneself', in which case language obtains a sexually explicit connotation, later reflected in the imagery of the poem.

Taking into consideration Tantric influence on 'Blanco', this analysis addresses the search for knowledge and self-actualisation from the perspective of Tantric philosophy in addition to inspecting the main theme of the poem from the psychoanalytic view of the conflicts within the Mexican male psyche. A Hindu Tantra 'is about achieving the Shunya or Void [same as Brahman]; this implies the constant need of the soul to aspire to a condition in which earthly standards of happiness do not apply because they are transcended by a series of experiences infinitely more stable and exhilarating' (Bromage 1959, 138). Tantric yoga teaching is based upon the belief that self-actualisation (or becoming one with the Brahman, or the Absolute) can be attained through physical indulgences, especially satisfaction of sexual desires (Lal 1967, 72). Once these 'earthly' desires are satisfied, the mind can be re-directed towards the spiritual search. Many aspects of Tantra are reflected in the poem, from sexual desire expressed in three gunas (similar to the three sections of the poem) to the role of the woman-deity.



The parts that comprise the poem represent several stages in the male's satisfaction of sexual desire combined with desire for self-actualisation. The process begins as an abstract representation of a totally cognitive existence, then continues through the awakening of the male's primal side to its ultimate expression in a sexual act, and returns to restoring the cognitive facet of the male's personality. The coexistence of the cognitive and non-cognitive aspects within the male's personality is controversial since the non-cognitive side appears repressed in the male's overt personality in an asexual environment. The sexual act, therefore, is a way to express this forbidden side of the male's psyche.

Through the poem we observe awakening of the mind (the first section of the poem), followed by awakening of the body or recognition of the body as an equally valid half of the male's personality; the section of the poem that describes a sexual act may also be viewed as depicting coexistence of the male and the world. By the last section, the male reaches the state of superconsciousness as his body and mind re-create each other and cannot exist separately. Therefore, the male's mental self-actualisation depends largely upon his physical or sexual self-awareness.

It is plausible to assume that the male creates the woman in his imagination to satisfy his sexual urge; thus, the woman-partner is designed as a superimposition of the male's sexuality onto his subjective reality. Once the male experiences orgasm, the partner disappears, and the male receives a revelation of his superconsciousness that combines the subjective and objective realities - 'La irrealidad de lo mirado / da realidad a la mirada' (Paz 1989, 221).

The first part of the poem deals primarily with the psychoanalysis of constraints of the word as part of rational language that hides superconsciousness and imposes limitations on sexual expression. In other words, the first section of the poem reflects the male's psyche void of physical characteristics. This section is printed in a non-bold typeface: in later editions, this section is the first stanza, 'el comienzo' - 'sin nombre sin habla' (id., 214),

and the last stanza, 'En el centro' - 'da realidad a la mirada' (id., 221-3). The real-unreal juxtaposition of the first stanza is similar to the id-ego concept, the two parts of which are conflicting and complementing. 'The ego represents what we call reason and sanity, in contrast to the id which contains the passions' (Freud 1936, 251). The existence is therefore a conflict between the primal (physical) side of the human psyche and its cognitive aspect, and sex is a way to express the forbidden part of one's personality (primal side void of conscience).

The second part of the poem (the bold black typeface; in later editions - the sections between the double-column sections, and after the non-bold part) is more sexually explicit since it reflects the physical aspect of the male's psyche. The male sees the expression of the mind as another manifestation of Nature. His river is red and drying, described as flowing between the flames; this image can be interpreted as a description of a violent ejaculation or an erection of the penis immediately before the orgasm. The mouth of the language is muzzled by 'la conjuración anónima / de los huesos' (Paz 1989, 217) - the simile of bone and penis suggests that sexuality is blocking the expression of the cognitive aspect of the male's psyche. This section of the poem can also be described as similar to the tamasic guna, characterised by clouded reasoning and dark emotions. Finally, this section may be seen as representing water. The repeating images of water and river are the most obvious sign, and the fluid appearance of print reinforces this supposition: 'Río de sangre, / río de historias / de sangre, / río seco.' (ibid.), 'tienes la boca llena de agua' (id., 219). It should be noted that each line in this section is either part of a phrase or is phonetically similar to the previous line, thus creating the illusion of fluidity:

asciende

en un tallo de cobre

resuelto

en un follaje de claridad:



amparo  
de caídas realidades.

(id., 215)

Also a parallel may be made between the nature of this section and the Swadhishtana chakra located in the prostatic plexus, whose element is water and which represents the centre of male sexual energy. Sexually implicit (id., 217) and explicit (id., 218) imagery augment this comparison. When a sexually implicit image of a river captures the male's attention, it is repeated several times as he slowly becomes aroused:

*Patience patience*

(Livingston en la sequía)

*river rising a little.*

El mío es rojo y se agosta  
entre sableras llameantes:

(id., 216)

The male is approaching a point of extreme arousal before he engages in a sexual act; this moment is very important because of the first shift in the male's nature from desires predominantly cognitive to those mainly sexual. The two facets complement each other in the following quote:

Hablar  
mientras los otros trabajan  
es pulir huesos, ...  
hasta la ondulación,  
el cabrilleo,  
hasta el agua

(id., 217)

The act of talking is regarded as an expression of individuality or consciousness; yet the image of polishing bones that is both morbid and sexually prominent, and later a sexually explicit image of orgasm ('hasta la ondulación, / hasta el agua'), compares sexual act to a cognitive process. On the other hand, cognition may also be seen as an extension of sexuality, which invites the conclusion that the primal side of human nature is responsible for creating a higher order of being that will deny itself an overt expression of its 'animal' nature that bore it.

A similar reflection of the male's attempt at communication appears in 'Piedra de sol', where, as in 'Blanco', the male's sexual desire influences his cognitive interaction with the woman. In 'Piedra de sol', the male totally abandons non-verbal communication (body language) during foreplay because his physical experience is deemed less important than communication during the intercourse. He transcends physical existence; time as part of the physical universe, is not applicable anymore, and the physical aspect of the sexual act is secondary to the abstract merging of the souls. However, the male still refers to the eyes and face of the woman as the only visible and discernible features because of their connection with the woman's soul.

todos los nombres son un solo nombre,  
todos los rostros son un solo rostro,  
todos los siglos son un solo instante  
y por todos los siglos de los siglos  
cierra el paso al futuro un par de ojos,

(Paz 1960, 297)

Another climax perceived only from the verbal rational perspective, illustrates the merging of souls in an abstract perception of physical experience.

arca de sangre, puente de latidos,  
llévame al otro lado de esta noche,



adonde yo soy tú somos nosotros,  
al reino de pronombres enlazados,

(id., 310)

The physical experience discerned only from a verbal rational perspective, illustrates the coexistence of two perceptions of sexuality, which presupposes the merging of personalities at the expense of individuality - 'yo soy tú somos nosotros'<sup>82</sup>. The result of this merging is creation of another entity 'nosotros' bearing traits of the two individuals but negating their separate existence. It appears that the male seeks the union forsaking his uniqueness to attain emotional security in form of existing as part of a different entity 'nosotros'.

Therefore, it may be concluded that the accent in 'Piedra de sol' is made on the product of the communicative process - words, utterances, etc. The means of communication (body parts) are of less importance to the male talking to the woman. That is evident in his choice of words that signify the product rather than the means of communication ('miradas', 'pronombres', 'nombres', etc.). Verbal communication is impeded throughout the poem; even when he initiates it, there is no reciprocity because he either does not speak the woman's language or does not expect her to respond, which then undermines the nature of communication. Every time we witness a verbal exchange, there is a breakdown in communication due to clashes of realities and languages.

It is interesting to note that in both poems the male's subjective reality possesses morbid imagery that displays prominent sexual overtones<sup>83</sup>. In 'Blanco', 'cabeza en una pica' (id., 215) is an explicit example of the dual representation of death. The image of a

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<sup>82</sup> This quote may be interpreted from the point of view of Jacques Lacan's theory of Self and Other. The male is searching to define himself through the image of the woman (the Other), the merging with whom will change the male's character to include the traits which the male may consider both dangerous and desirable (Lacan 1982, 130-3). For a more detailed examination of the character of the woman as the male's Other, see Section 1.1, Chapter 1.

<sup>83</sup> In 'Piedra de sol' morbid imagery stems from the image of the woman-partner and appears only in the sexually implicit timelines which lead to orgasm. This imagery will be discussed in the chapter concerning the role of the woman in the male's sexual self-actualisation (Chapter 1).

head on a spike is reminiscent of medieval (and Eastern) execution traditions, when the head of the executed were displayed in public. One cannot help but recognise a voyeuristic attitude to death and a parallel that may be drawn between it and sexual voyeurism, especially if the image of a head on a spike is regarded from a sexual perspective as representing an erect penis.

There are many instances in the poem of morbid images with sexual undertones. It is noteworthy that most of these images are in the 'water' section that depicts the male's increasing sexual arousal. Thus, it is not surprising that sexually implicit images of bones appear only in this section, since a bone metaphorically represents both death (decay of flesh to a skeleton) and sexual arousal (similar to an erect penis), which is reflected in a connotative meaning of 'hueso' as a 'designación equívoca del órgano sexual masculino' (Criado de Val 1981, 104).

It should be noted that the culmination of the morbid imagery and appearance of death in form of the sun occurs immediately before the male's first foreplay, transforming the objective world into his subjective sexual fantasy:

Hay púas invisibles, hay espinas  
en los ojos,  
En un muro rosado  
tres buitres ahitos.  
No tiene cuerpo ni cara ni alma,  
está en todas partes,  
a todos nos aplasta:  
este sol es injusto.

(Paz 1989, 218)



The lines that follow this description, portray foreplay during which the male creates the woman-partner from the nature's elements. The persistent use of short sentences and action verbs reinforces the pulsating movement of aroused sexual organs (cf. incomplete sentences of the 'air' section mostly free of verbs, and lack of verbs in the first stanza of the 'water' section when the male is not aroused). Thus, the images of physical suffering and death appear to arouse the male, who then uses them to create a sexual fantasy of fire during coitus.

Sexual acts between the male and the imaginary woman are presented in the double-column section of 'Blanco' (in some editions - in the black and red columns, either separate or joined). These columns respectively depict earth and fire. In this case, appearances of the columns explicitly support the metaphor. The black (left) column appears solid, with its short phrases, parts of which are repeated throughout the section, like building blocks: 'en el muro la sombra del fuego / en el fuego tu sombra y la mía / el fuego te desata y te anuda' (id., 216), 'entrar en mí / al entrar en tu cuerpo' (id., 217), 'caes de tu cuerpo a tu sombra / en un caer inmóvil de cascada / caes de tu sombra a tu nombre' (id., 220). Other illustrations of this characteristic are: approximately equal length of lines, the great number of verbal / 'action' phrases and phrases with explicit sexual connotations - 'se desata se esparce /se levanta se erige Ídolo' (id., 219), and the absence of extensive images expressed in adjectives, which changes sexual metaphors to mainly action phrases which may or may not contain an actual verb:

entera en cada parte te repartes  
tu cuerpo son los cuerpos del instante  
pensado soñado encarnado

(id., 221)

From a Tantra-based perspective, this section may also be viewed as metaphorically representing the Muladhara chakra located in the sacral plexus and thus responsible for

sexual sensations; thus, the black 'earth' column implicitly depicts the sexuality of the male in the poem. It is also worth noting that the Muladhara chakra is where Kundalini (or potential spiritual energy) lies dormant. The connection between sexual expression and release of spiritual energy illustrates the subject of the poem, the search for superconsciousness through sexual experience. This is supported by a comparison that may be made between this section and the rajasic guna that is aimed at feeding the body at the expense of the mind. This guna is characterised by openly expressed passion or arousal that makes the mind restless (Sivananda 1983, 80).

If we assume that the male is the only 'character' in the poem and the woman is a figment of his imagination, then this section portrays the sexual aspect of the masculine nature. As the columns are brought closer together, the images become more sexually explicit and the lines of more equal length. If one compares the following passages paying attention to sexual imagery, the structure of the poem will show the male's heightened arousal and subsequent orgasm:

1.      los ríos de tu cuerpo  
          país de latidos  
          entrar en ti  
          país de ojos cerrados

(Paz 1989, 217)

2.      se desata se esparce  
          se levanta se erige Ídolo  
          desnuda como la mente  
          en la reverberación del deseo

(id., 219)

3.      caes en tu comienzo  
          derramada en mi cuerpo



tú te repartes como el lenguaje

tú me repartes en tus partes

(id., 220)

It should be noted, however, that there is no explicit description of the male's physical climax; it is either seen as an emotional release, or is inferred from implicit images of natural forces. Another view of climax as a way of achieving superconsciousness suggests that the black single lines centred at the end of the double-column section represent the male's acquisition of knowledge. These lines do not repeat the rhythm or imagery of the black left column; instead, the ideas contained in them are of a superconscious nature - 'La transparencia es todo lo que queda' (id, 218). This implies acquisition of a higher level of conscience, though the appearance of the lines (black bold typeface) suggests their belonging to the left column representing the male's sexuality. This once again supports the notion that the male reaches superconsciousness through satisfaction of his sexual urges.

Lack of higher emotions or cognitive expression becomes evident in this section, as the male is involved in the primarily physical activity of the sexual act. Even when he compares his physical experience to a representation of a cognitive side of his psyche, its physical aspect prevails over mental ('te repartes' vs. 'el lenguaje'). Still, he concentrates on *looking* at the woman, and the product of this activity (the woman's visual image) is not as important as the gazing itself. Since the poem bears many Tantric influences, the act of gazing takes on a meditative meaning, and the woman's body (as imagined by the male) is used in *Tratak*, or steady gazing at an object of meditation, which is part of yoga training to attain Nirvana, or superconsciousness. 'It involves alternately gazing at an object or point without blinking, then closing your eyes and visualising the object in your mind's eye. . . [Tratak is] primarily intended to strengthen your powers of concentration and purify the mind' (Sivananda 1983, 95). This allows the conclusion that the male uses the image of the woman as part of his search for superconsciousness.

The red (right) column may be analysed from several perspectives. Assuming that the woman is an objective entity in the poem (i.e., she exists regardless of the male's conscience), the red column may represent the woman's sexuality. However, since it has been determined that the woman has been imagined by the male as part of his search for self through sexual experience, the column may be read as an expression of emotional or mental aspects of the male's sexual drive. In addition, the column represents fire due to the colour of the print (red in some editions), highly emotionally charged and sexually explicit imagery, and multiple references to light, sun or fire:

árida ondulación  
entre brazos de arena  
brilla se multiplica se niega [...]  
pradera quemada  
color de sol en la arena

(Paz 1989, 219)

testigos los testiculos solares  
falo el pensar y vulva la palabra

(id., 220)

The colour of the print in some editions is red, which is the colour of the Manipura chakra located in the solar plexus. This chakra 'is the main storage centre for prana [vital energy, life source]' (Sivananda 1983, 71), and it is through both physical and mental exercises that it opens and releases prana into the body.

It is interesting to note that there are several references to rivers in this section (Paz 1989, 217-8). This may contradict the image of fire that characterises this section; yet, if we compare the water imagery in the second ('water') section and the right column, it will become obvious that there is a significant difference. As seen earlier, the 'water' section



concentrates on the fluidity and liquid medium seen in short flowing lines interconnected by phonetic similarity:

el lenguaje  
es una expiación,  
propiciación  
al que no habla,  
emparedado,  
cada día  
asesinado,

(id., 217)

The 'fire' section, on the other hand, adopts the image of river as a carrier of a sexual connotation - 'el río de los cuerpos / ... / torrente de cinabrio sonámbulo / ... / río de soles' (ibid.), often combining the images of river/water and light/fire, thus attempting to reconcile the two opposite forces. This reconciliation is similar to the male's attempts to resolve the inner conflict between his rational conscience and irrational sexuality. The imagery of the 'fire' section appears to reconcile and combine the physical and mental sensations of sexual act; the two sides complementing each other are evident in the following quote:

falo el pensar y vulva la palabra  
espacio es cuerpo signo pensamiento  
[...]  
las espirales transfiguraciones  
es cuerpo el tiempo el mundo  
visto tocado desvanecido

(id., 220)

The structure of the poem further illustrates the main idea - the joining of body and mind in search for superconsciousness, that will lead to the male's self-actualisation or acquisition of

identity. The poem starts in the mind (air), travels through a physical experience of the body (water), then through a sexual experience of lovemaking (earth/fire) and returns to the cognitive plane changed by the previous experiences. Body and mind complement each other throughout the poem, especially during the sexual encounter; therefore, self-actualisation and attainment of superconsciousness depends on satisfying sexual needs.

#### **4.4.3 Summary**

The texts by both Marcela Del-Río and Octavio Paz agree that the male's internal conflict (and, in the case of 'Blanco', its resolution) leads him to create a separate plane of existence which does not possess the objective linear traits of the outside world. While Del-Río sees the male's sexual behaviour as an attempt to reconcile the differences between him and society (he tries to resolve them by re-assigning his problem traits to his partners), Paz suggests that the male's sexual desire driven by his *internal* conflict determines the way the male behaves, the personality of imaginary partners, the result of the male's search for self, etc. However, both writers suggest that the male superimposes his conflict onto the outside reality, which then becomes his opponent. The development of the conflict between the male and the outside world is studied in detail in Section 4.5 of this chapter.

#### **4.5 The conflict between the male and the outside world**

As the male goes through the transformations discussed above, and obtains knowledge about himself and the outside reality mainly through sexual experiences, he becomes involved in conflicts with the objective reality due to the complex nature of relationships he establishes in the process. The conflict between the male and the world is, in fact, the conflict between the subjective and objective realities which the male inhabits. This conflict is present in the works of Octavio Paz and Marcela Del-Río, but the writers differ in their perception of its cause and resolution.



#### 4.5.1 Alexander Faubritten's conflict with the world

In *Proceso a Faubritten* by Marcela Del-Río, the confrontation of the male (Faubritten) and society appears as the projection of the male's internal struggle onto the objective plane. The feeling of omnipotence produces a conflict between an apparent influence Faubritten has on his loved ones and the realisation of his responsibility (whether objective or subjective) for their well-being. It should be emphasised that guilt creates love, not vice versa as would seem more 'natural' or acceptable in a human society, where love produces pity and guilt. However, it should be recognised that the feeling of omnipotence does not originate in Faubritten's psyche and then project itself onto the outside reality; it is created by the occurrences in the objective reality which are then interpreted by Faubritten in accordance with his perception of reality, and then re-deposited into the objective world, or rather his view of it. An example of this double projection is a note in Faubritten's diary about his friend's illness. He convinces (or hypnotises) his friend Hans into believing that he is ill, and Hans develops physical symptoms of illness, which then are recognised as such by his classmates and parents: 'Me sentí culpable de su enfermedad y debía hacer algo para remediarle' (Del-Río 1976, 136). The first time Faubritten consciously analyses the feeling of guilt, occurs when Faubritten's mother breaks her leg - 'Me sentí omnipotente: bastaba que yo deseara un mal a alguien, para que el mal se cumpliera. [...] Freud habla sólo de la segunda parte [del fenómeno de culpa], ... pero no analiza la primera parte del fenómeno [...] *injusticia - sentimiento de inocencia - rencor, odio - violencia - sentimiento de culpa - devoción, amor*' (id., 168). The feeling of guilt is so overwhelming that it determines Faubritten's career by causing him to take up chemistry and attempt to discover the elixir of immortality in order to obtain forgiveness from the world for the suffering that he apparently had caused. Ironically, this discovery leads him to the acquisition of knowledge which appears dangerous when it is possessed by the world.



Both conflicts are deepened by Faubritten's inexplicable unwillingness to defend himself in the eyes of the society, which has disavowed him after previously assigning him the role of saviour. Therefore, I would define the main idea of the novel as the male's attempt to resolve the problem stemming from his acquisition of knowledge. I believe the main reason for the conflict between the male and society lies within the dual approach of both to the knowledge acquired by Faubritten. On one hand, the male with knowledge is in conflict with the society which wants and fears it and, consequently, transfers these sentiments onto the male. On the other hand, the male is in conflict with himself because he knows more than he can handle, and has to hide knowledge from society and self. As a result, he frightens the outsiders off, and cannot exist in the world that disagrees with him because of his inability to reconcile his knowledge with his responsibility to society and the accepted rules of social etiquette that he has to follow. Faubritten's covert/over personality conflict is the basis for his confrontation with society; aloneness and emotional isolation are enforced by Faubritten's inner discord and the outside reality.

Symbolism in the novel reflects both sides of the conflict: the biblical references to people who know 'the truth' (Moses, Jesus Christ) and to people/societies that did not accept it (Pilate, Pharisees, etc.). There are also references to Virgin Mary (María Corona) and Mary Magdalene (Hélène), but Mary Magdalene as represented by Hélène is a corrupted version of the biblical Mary Magdalene due to Hélène's egocentrism and hypocrisy. An ironic twist of character further illustrates the division between Faubritten's subjective world of 'keepers of knowledge', who possess character traits of purity abnormal by the objective standards, and the objective reality of people whose nature is multi-faceted and may appear dubious to those inhabiting Faubritten's world. In other words, neither reality is able to comprehend and therefore accept the other.

Just as the people in the objective reality appear to possess many 'negative' traits from the point of view of Faubritten's internal reality, the 'keepers of knowledge' are looked



upon by the objective world as being insane or abnormal. Indeed, sometimes they act this way without thinking that it is abnormal because they do not recognise behavioural norms of the society outside their subjective realm of existence. In Faubritten's case, however, his unwillingness to exist in the objective reality is caused by the defect within that reality (fascism, the war, genocide of the Jews). To avoid being considered part of this insanity, he creates his own dimension within this reality because he has to continue existing in the objective reality to remain in contact with the people with whom he has established emotional bonds (his friends Sigi and Jaroslav, his uncle and aunt, his mother). However, when the outside reality attempts to destroy these bonds, especially the bond with the parents (id., 226-230), Faubritten rebels by distancing himself from the objective world; this escape registers in the novel as another timeline within the objective reality.

The 'keepers of knowledge' seek the company of those like them but cannot find it because of their desire to be alone. As a result of his search, Faubritten finds the company of María Corona, whom he appears to betray with other women but who continues to be an important authority figure in his life (as seen, for example, in his projection of María's personality onto Hélène during their lovemaking and in Faubritten's perception of Cristina as María Corona).

The knowledge discovered by Faubritten in the end is obvious, but nobody attempts to understand it because the world thinks that he is a genius or a visionary (evil in the end), and thus does not think the same way as 'normal' people. The child (Milo) is the only other individual who understands Faubritten's discovery because he is not contaminated with conventions of the world that denies itself the simplicity of truth. '¿Habría recibido el chiquillo el mensaje telepático de su propia consciencia? Sensibles como son los niños, ¿podía haber captado electromagnéticamente un pensamiento que él mismo se habría empeñado en rechazar?' (id., 325).

The world that does not accept the whole of Faubritten's discovery, and its negative consequences (overpopulation, promiscuity, loss of dignity), accepts only the 'good' part that satisfies its immediate wishes and child-like ambitions, since eternal life stems from the fear of death (childhood) based on the instinct of self-preservation (animal). In the end, that instinct coming from the animal ancestors is the answer - but such a resolution means that the highly cognitive 'knowledge' comes from instinct, which is a lower brain function.

It seems that nothing Faubritten discovers is new - the answer to his search for the antidote is within Nature. But the male separated himself from Nature to be of a higher cognitive order, and in the end he has to face his animal past in order to obtain what he considers to be higher knowledge or scientific discovery. The fact that humans are also animals and, therefore, not free from the primal traits, appears to be more than the world can bear - 'El hombre volvería a ser el más sangriento de los animales. Sintió náusea' (id., 344).

On the surface, it appears that this contradiction may be compared to the process of body and mind reconciliation in Paz's 'Blanco'. However, in the case of Faubritten's conflict with the world no reconciliation is possible without destruction either of the animal facet of humanity or of its highly cognitive aspect, because the gap between the two is created by the male and the world out of the differences based within the subconscious nature of both.



#### 4.5.2 Octavio Paz on the conflict of realities

In Octavio Paz's poems, one can discover a completely different approach to the confrontation between the male and the outside world - unlike Faubritten, whose confrontation is with a concrete objective society, the male character of his poems is in conflict with an abstract objective reality. Once the male begins to satisfy his sexual desire, the objective reality becomes too constricting, and there appears the need to create a subjective time-space continuum that will meet his physical and spiritual (or mental) needs.

In the first stanza of 'Piedra de sol' before there are any signs of a possibility of a sexually active relationship the male imagines a dreamlike landscape where the real and the unreal blend to reflect his perception of the lovers' world. It is plausible to assume that this moment coincides with the male falling asleep and starting to dream. This is denoted by an apparent 'normalcy' with which the male treats a surreal scene, cataloguing crystal and water trees (the poem's structure, as will be seen later, also contributes to this interpretation):

un sauce de cristal, un chopo de agua,  
un alto surtidor que el viento arquea,  
un árbol bien plantado mas danzante,  
un caminar de río que se curva,  
avanza, retrocede, da un rodeo  
y llega siempre:

(Paz 1960, 293)

The new surreal world overlaps with the rational/real surroundings, as the male creates a bridge between the two, assigning equal value of existence to both. The description of the walk is the link that exists largely in the male's mind or psyche. From the first steps he takes, it becomes obvious that the normal time-space correlation will be challenged and later dismissed as not meeting the requirements of the male's imaginary reality.

The male moves through the time continuum reflected in the straight and curved lines of the woman's body, recognising it as one of many time planes that he will occupy; and since all others are the product of his soul, the 'reality' is assigned the same surreal qualities. As the walk progresses and the path crosses into other realities, the male finds himself traveling through time and realities that are part of his dream world. At first, the movement is slow and orderly; later, as the male is more sexually aroused, it becomes faster and more erratic until the time planes are interconnected.

The male leaves and re-enters different time planes throughout the poem, apparently unaffected by the passage of time. Even though his imaginary lover ages, dies and turns to dust, he remains unaged and able to witness the process:

y en tus ojos no hay agua, son de piedra,  
y tus pechos, tu vientre, tus caderas  
son de piedra, tu boca sabe a polvo,

(id., 299)

Since the male regards the linear world as another reality created in his imagination, he assumes that it is as controllable as the rest. The power of suggestion is rather evident in this paradox that juxtaposes the male's physical and mental existences, neither of which is susceptible to time once the male removes himself (even if in thought only) from the linear world. From this perspective, time plane 15 (see Table 1) is of particular interest because it is a linear course of historic events taking place in the world of people who could not succeed in their power struggle. If we examine the historical figures referred to in the stanza we will see that they are political figures killed (directly or not) by their opposition. It can also be said that those mentioned were, metaphorically speaking, born before their time (Socrates, Robespierre) and, therefore, would not be able to survive in the world that was not ready for their ideas. This time plane burns down as the male watches from outside -

todo se quema, el universo es llama,



arde la misma nada que no es nada  
sino un pensar en llamas, al fin humo;  
no hay verdugo ni víctima. . .  
¿no son nada los gritos de los hombres?  
¿no pasa nada cuando pasa el tiempo?  
  
- no pasa nada, sólo un parpadeo  
del sol, un movimiento apenas, nada,

(id., 307)

From the male's perspective, time is non-existent in the linear reality between nothing and nothing because he is outside this time plane and therefore is not bound by its temporal development. He is still 'moving' (faster or slower) but he does not exist in it any more than he does in any other time plane. So there are two points of reference in the poem - the male's dream and the true linear world with its historical accounts that is out of reach of the male's existence (see also the 'Madrid 1937' section - time plane 9). It is important to point out that on the two occasions that the male's world crosses with the objective reality, he imagines witnessing wars and fighting, and both instances are sexually neutral; immediately afterward he moves back into a subjective time continuum to experience either sexual satisfaction or a process of self-analysis leading to a sexual act. On both occasions the male reaches a point of self-discovery after a powerful orgasm that produces the God entity

Paz regards a sexual act as a point of intersection of the linear and non-linear realities that appear to be of equal validity. The male's perception of lovemaking reflects the emotional fusion he experiences during orgasms. Whereas during foreplay the male's attention is focused solely on the woman's visible physical attributes, due to the emotional fusion during the sexual act the male concentrates on the emotional or spiritual experience and all but disregards the physical pleasure of the moment. Out of the three orgasms in the





search for the Other within oneself. The 'otherness' and its ultimate expression, the creation of 'nosotros', is viewed by Paz as 'teñido por la sospecha de nuestra final identidad con aquello que de tal manera nos parece extraño y ajeno. [...] Hemos dado el salto mortal. Nos hemos reconciliado con nosotros mismos' (id., 127). The discovery of Other is achieved through the male's admiration of the woman, who thus becomes Other and takes on the mystical traits of a deity, as the male goes through an emotional state of personality symbiosis with his lover.

It is interesting that the male's internal Universe based on the expression of his sexuality, corresponds to the objective reality, yet his outside world is abstract and dream-like. This contradiction may be the result of the inner conflict that is so overpowering that it becomes the only acceptable reality. The male dispels the objective reality as a subjective force aimed at destroying his inner integrity because he is afraid to face the threat of losing his sexual drive with the passage of linear time. On the other hand, he is wary of the potential loss of control in the communicative situation which, though apparently dominated by the male as the only cognitive presence, is heavily influenced by the woman embodying the real world.

While before intercourse in "Piedra de sol" the male saw the world in purely physical and sexual terms as reflected in his imaginary woman, after lovemaking he perceives the world as a blend of two realities - emotional and physical. This is evident in his choice of descriptions of the post-coital unity with the woman - "pronombres enlazados" - using the terms from two realities that usually do not cross outside the sexual phase. A purely physical/bodily characteristic "enlazados" is applied to an abstract concept of "pronombres" that is used to identify a personality. This is one of the instances where the post-sex reality conflicts with the reality of a sexual intercourse.

The post-sex reality is characterised by the absence of an expression of human personality, unlike the intercourse that is characterised mainly by an abstract communication

of souls. Later, this soul exchange is confronted by the world with “su horario carnicero” that implies a primal orientation of the reality that should be void of physical/sexual inclinations. The choice of juxtaposed references to “mi alma” and “carnicero” (i.e., soul versus flesh) is another illustration of the conflict between two realities.

mientras afuera el tiempo se desboca  
y golpea las puertas de mi alma  
el mundo con su horario carnicero

(Paz 1960, 298)

The post-sex reality is sexually neutral (i.e., does not offer explicit or implicit possibilities for sexual arousal) and appears rather threatening; thus, the male finds it increasingly difficult to exist in it. He chooses to exit it and return into his dream-world, where his perception of reality reflects his need for further sexual satisfaction.

Another representation of the creation of a subjective reality as a result of the male's increased sexual arousal appears in ‘Blanco’. Here, similarly to ‘Piedra de sol’, the male begins creating a subjective reality from the very first line, and the structure of the poem implies this process. Therefore, it will benefit this analysis to examine the structure of the poem more closely.

The non-bold section (first 13 lines, and the section after the last double-column section) metaphorically corresponds to air; this is evident not only from an ethereal quality of the print, but also from several references to air. The most manifest examples are the repetition of the line ‘aire son nada’ (Paz 1989, 221, 222), multiple abstract images - ‘el remolino de las desapariciones’ (id., 221), ‘la realidad y sus resurrecciones (id., 223) - the absence of physical imagery, and the spread-out first stanza whose lines frequently consist of one word:

inocente                      promiscua  
  
la palabra



sin nombre                      sin habla

(id., 215)

The ethereal appearance of the text is reinforced by the disjointed abstract imagery and single-word lines that appear to be floating in the air. The section is akin to an expression of pure conscience that does not recognise its physical manifestation (sexual or otherwise). This is supported by the absence of verbs or adjectives of physical attributes; the only body parts mentioned in the first stanza are eyes and tongue, i.e., those involved in the process of cognitive communication. After experiencing sexual release through orgasm, the male returns to the state of pure conscience, though now he has reconciled the existence of his mental and physical traits by assigning subjectivity to both (as may be noted in the presence of physical attributes in the last stanza). The spirit, or the cognitive part of the male's psyche, is still its leading force, but its nature is complemented by primal physical traits of the body.

El espíritu  
es una invención del cuerpo  
El cuerpo  
es una invención del mundo  
El mundo  
es una invención del espíritu  
No                      Sí

(id., 223)

Apart from the fact that this section may be interpreted as representing air, it may also be seen as a sattvic guna, or an aspect of the spirit (Purushta)<sup>84</sup>. The sattvic guna is described as a peaceful state, void of bodily needs (id., 80), which is the prevailing mood of the first

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<sup>84</sup> The explanation of the term 'guna' is presented earlier in this chapter (Section 4.2.2).

part of the poem. It is evident in the level emotional tone of the section reflected in the absence of physical descriptions, adjectives characterising extreme moods, or sexually arousing imagery. Finally, it metaphorically corresponds to the Anahata chakra located in the cardiac plexus, whose element is air and which is void of physical sensations:

el comienzo

el cimientto

la simiente latente

la palabra en la punta de la lengua

(id., 215)

After orgasm, the male enters a reality that is less physical than mental, similar to the state during which the Ajna chakra - the 'third eye' - opens up, and the yogi experiences the full awakening of Kundalini - 'En el centro / del mundo del cuerpo del espíritu / la grieta el resplandor' (id., 221). The play of light and colour reveals the joining of physical and mental sensations which the male experiences from both perspectives, after the sexual act bridges the two and superconsciousness appears out of the physical experience. It is interesting to observe that after the coitus and the subsequent physical pleasure, the physical reality is dissolved and the woman partner disappears, while the male achieves the state of self-actualisation. Therefore, it may be said that here can be no pure superconsciousness or self-actualisation without physical or sexual experience to instigate it.

The title of the poem also influences this interpretation. 'Blanco' implies a blank page; yet since there are words printed on the page, one may assume that the whiteness referred to is behind the words. Metaphorically speaking, words on the page are irrelevant; it is the conscience behind them that is the driving force of the poem. The poem begins with a statement of innocence (or a statement of nothingness) and ends in the male reaching self-actualisation after revealing his previously concealed primal side to himself. Then the stanzas void of substance represent the male's conscience, and the darker 'earthly' sections



portray his sexual or animal nature, and the reconciliation between the two occurs in the double-column section representing sexual act. Observing the changes throughout the poem, one can see the difference between a tightly packed middle section and ethereal first and last stanzas that imply the absence of substance. Words, like masks, are removed to reveal nothing recognisable in an objective reality; what is hidden beneath is seen only by the male on a subjective plane of existence. This interpretation is similar to the analysis of masks of the overt and covert nature of machismo.

The real and the unreal are products of the mind expressed in words that are inherently ambiguous due to connotations and double meanings. However, if the mental aspect of words is removed and words are not used by the male for communication, he cannot express himself in a way that reveals his mental uniqueness and separates him from animals. He still can and does express himself sexually even when he appears to exhibit purely mental traits. The male tries to shed the 'animal' self expressed in sex, by engaging in an abstract monologue (the 'air' section); but the rational verbal expression is a mask under which his psyche is expressed in primarily non-cognitive terms.

Sexuality is a driving force of the search for superconsciousness, which ultimately leads to self-discovery and joining with Brahman. Without it the male is lost in the objective reality where he does not belong. Sexuality creates the male's subjective reality that hosts him and allows him to search for knowledge; thus, knowledge is dependent upon the male's expression of sexuality. In other words, the male's subjective reality is the Brahman, or the subjective non-material universe that can be perceived as the only true realm of existence when the male attains superconsciousness, which happens when he satisfies his physical and sexual needs (or overindulges in them). The objective reality that exists around the male before he reaches this state is regarded as a manifest universe, or Maya, which 'is only a superimposition on the real, it is projected on the screen of reality [...]. Without illumination [or knowledge] we mistake the unreal for the real - we superimpose or project our own



illusion on the real world' (Sivananda 1983, 16). Thus, the male's self-actualisation creates a subjective universe which is considered the only true reality; the objective reality is dismissed as a projection. As in the Mexican psyche, the male's inner conflict (which appears to be a subjective phenomenon) defines his objective reality, which is shielded by a superimposition of his overt nature. Finally, knowledge and its product, the reality, is subjective, and therefore there is no objective point of reference. The male's reality is subjective, yet it is objective to him; what he sees as an objective outside reality is Maya or an illusion projected by his overt self onto the subjective plane. This is the most important parallel between the theme of the poem and the Tantric teachings - the objective material reality is an illusion; the Truth (or Knowledge) revealed to yogi during the training is subjective, yet it is his only true world, void of concept of time, space and causality. A similarity may be observed between the state of superconsciousness and the conflict between the covert and overt sides of the Mexican male character. The 'mestizaje' conflict within the male psyche projects an overt personality onto the world around the male, i.e. it creates a Maya (illusion) of his character that corresponds to a traditional view of machismo with its hidden emotions, overly active sexual drive, need for expressing physical superiority, etc. Yet, as the male takes part in a sexual act, his overt personality is shed and the covert nature takes over, similar to the subjective world of the yogi's superconsciousness dominating his objective reality and replacing its material side.

#### **4.5.3 Summary**

All three works analysed above examine the male's conflict with the outside reality, assuming that the reason for the confrontation lies within the male's acquisition of knowledge. However, the approaches differ between the works. In Del-Río's *Proceso a Faubritten*, the male's knowledge becomes the central point of contention between the male and the society that tries to possess the result of the male's discovery yet fears its



consequences. As a result, the male is shunned by society; however, he does not attempt to re-establish his connection with the world because he fears that the world would use his discovery against itself. On the other hand, in 'Piedra de sol' and 'Blanco' by Octavio Paz, the male's discoveries about himself and, implicitly, objective reality create a gap between his subjective realm of existence and the linear objective universe. There is no sociological connotation in his confrontation; the point of contention lies in the assumption that knowledge is subjective and may not exist in the objective realm which is superficial and unreal; therefore, the male needs to create his own subjective reality outside the linear space-time continuum. It may be said that Del-Río sees this conflict from a sociological perspective, while Paz adopts a more philosophical approach.

#### **4.6 'Trait Trade' - the theory of character fragmentation**

The main idea of the proposed theory of character fragmentation is that in the works studied in this thesis, the traits exhibited by the male and the woman during sexual intercourse either complement each other (being of the same type not contradictory) or contrast each other (contradicting types). The formation of male sexuality depends on the interaction of these traits as well as on the initial level of the male's cognitive development. The implication is that one cannot analyse male character without a reference to female character, and vice versa (if two are present in a literary work). Interdependence is either direct (childlike male - woman/mother) or implied (sinner-god juxtaposition).

During foreplay (as reflected in the works of the men writers in this study), the traits that are normally considered negative in males (i.e., those reflecting weakness of spirit and lack of conscience) are projected from the male's persona onto the image of the woman; then, the male's 'positive' trait opposing the woman's 'negative' characteristic is projected onto the woman during the sexual act, and as she receives a 'positive' trait, it is complemented by the male's acquisition of its 'negative' counterpart. Consequently, the male



reflects back onto himself the 'positive' trait possessed by the image of the woman, replacing this trait in the woman's character with a 'negative' counterpart. This allows the male to obtain a 'positive' character trait which may be the opposite of the original 'negative' trait or the next stage of this opposition (usually associated with self-actualisation and spiritual strength), while the image of the woman retains a 'negative' version of this characteristic.

It should be noted that the male does not achieve full self-actualisation after one instance of sexual interaction; every sexual encounter allows him to obtain one character trait, which in turn affects the next stage of sexual relationship and allows the next trait to be absorbed into the male's psyche. The most common pairs of traits as deduced from the works of men writers (Paz, Sabines) are as follows: at the beginning of sexual intercourse the male is seen as sexually active while the woman is depicted as lacking in cognition but possessing the ability to arouse and threaten the male. After a period of sexual interaction, the male becomes emotionally naive and the woman assumes the role of mother; before a sexual act the male is 'sinful' and the woman takes on the characteristics of a goddess, and after a sexual act the male attains sexual self-actualisation, which is revealed in him exhibiting godlike traits, while the woman returns to the original state of a passive recipient void of conscience.

The process of formation of male sexuality in the works of the women writers (Castellanos, Del-Río) is centred on the personality of the woman and follows a different algorithm: the woman appears to the male, who gets aroused and at the time of sexual act acquires a trait that complements the one exhibited by the woman - woman-mother, male-child; woman-goddess, male-sinner, etc. After a sexual act, the woman becomes aware of a new trait which is a part of her new role within the objective reality.

As a result of the above analysis of the works of Octavio Paz, Jaime Sabines, Rosario Castellanos, and Marcela Del-Río, a certain trend in the representation of male sexuality has been identified, and it has been determined that it is closely linked with the way



the writers depict the character of the woman. There are two approaches to the image of the woman in the works of the four Mexican writer, and the difference between them is determined by the writers' direct or metaphoric portrayal of the woman as a sexually arousing, non-cognitive entity created by the male (Paz, Sabines) or as an independent being with fully developed cognitive abilities (Castellanos, Del-Río). Therefore it may be said that in the works of the men writers the male uses the image of the woman to create his sexual identity, while the male in the works by the women writers is created by the woman to complement her character traits. However, in the works of both men and women writers this process follows the same steps and ultimately yields similar results - the creation of the male's sexual identity. This process is characterised by the following aspects:

- 1 the male's character traits are mirrored in the woman's image;
- 2 the traits are discovered and transferred from one partner to the other, one at a time;
- 3 the male's sexuality is discovered as a combination of several traits;
- 4 the images of both partners are interdependent, though one assumes the leading role (the choice of the leading character depends on the approach of the writer, which ultimately depends on the writer's gender);
- 5 ultimately, the development of male sexuality depends on the initial level of cognition assigned by the writer to the male character.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

From this analysis it may be concluded that the main idea in the works of Octavio Paz and Marcela Del-Río is the same - the male's sexual experience leads to his acquisition of knowledge about himself and the world he inhabits. As the male learns about himself and his emotions, he begins to see himself as a Godlike entity; this leads to a conflict between the male and the world, and causes the male to create an imaginary subjective world, where he is free to achieve self-actualisation through sexual experiences. In fact, it may be said that the



conflict between the male and the world is the conflict between the subjective and objective realities in which the male exists.

However, the two writers differ in their approach to the representation of this idea. It appears that in the works of the woman writer studied here the male starts the quest for knowledge because of the conflict between himself and the objective reality, or the society whose norms he cannot accept. As a result of this conflict, which takes place within the objective linear timeplane, the male creates his own subjective realm of existence with a different system of behavioural norms to meet his needs. He then engages in sexual relationships to redefine his identity as separate from the one assigned to him by the outside world as well as to compensate for the feeling of guilt that accompanies the confrontation. Two views of the male's identity appear in the novel - that of the society which cannot accept the male's subjective identity, and that of the male himself, who feels guilty for abandoning his loved ones in the objective reality, or for adversely affecting their lives through his subjective world (as in case of Hans' illness). Acquisition of knowledge depends on the degree of the conflict between the male and the society; once the conflict becomes personal (i.e., the male's friends or loved ones are directly affected by the confrontation), the male begins his quest for knowledge. It should be noted that sex does not play a primary role in this development; the male's sexuality appears as a supportive factor in the creation of the male's subjective identity, whereas the conflict with the society and the male's subsequent guilt is the main formative force in the process of self-actualisation.

A different tactic is employed in the works of the male writer studied in the chapter, according to his poems 'Piedra de sol' and 'Blanco'. In this case, the male uses sex as the primary means of self-discovery and acquisition of knowledge that leads to his creating a subjective reality. Acquisition of knowledge in these works depends on the degree of the male's sexual satisfaction, and the knowledge that he obtains reflects his perception of both realities through his sexuality. However, while in the works of Del-Río, this reality is



designed to protect the male from the attacks of the outside world, the subjective reality in the world of the male character in Paz's works is created for the sole purpose of meeting the male's sexual needs. In fact, the subjective reality differs so much from the objective linear world that it causes a clash between the two, resulting in the male withdrawing completely from the objective world. The objective reality appears to be less real to the male than the subjective plane he has designed for himself; as result, the male assumes that the objective world is an illusion and the subjective plane is real.

It may be said that the woman writer sees the male's acquisition of knowledge as stemming from his conflict with the society, that is, his self-actualisation has sociological roots; the male writer, on the other hand, sees the male's self-actualisation and acquisition of knowledge as result of his sexual experience, which suggests that his discovery has physiological and philosophical origins.

To summarise the above findings, it may be said that the final aspect of male sexuality is the acquisition of higher cognition and consequent self-actualisation. The analysis of the cognitive side of the male's sexual character, as presented in the works of Octavio Paz and Marcela Del-Río, has shown that the male's self-actualisation depends not only on satisfaction of his sexual needs but also on the initial level of cognition; the more pronounced his cognitive abilities are the more likely he is to attain self-actualisation through sexual intercourse. This assumption arises from the previous analysis of the male's childlike traits, which, if possessing insignificant cognitive potential, do not lead to further cognitive development through sexual experience. Thus, we can conclude that the exhibition of the male's sexuality coincides with the development of his cognition: as the male participates in sexual intercourse, he experiences first physical (primal) sensations, then the emotional side of intercourse, and finally its cognitive aspect.

# CONCLUSION

## Formation of Male Sexuality

### Summary of the study

The aim of this thesis is to examine the development of male sexuality as reflected in the works of four Mexican writers with a view to suggesting the predominant features of its representation in modern Mexican literature. For this analysis I have selected the works of Octavio Paz, Jaime Sabines, Rosario Castellanos, and Marcela Del-Río, who belong to the mainstream of Mexican literature of 1950-85. The study has focused on three major aspects of male sexuality - the primal, the childlike, and the omniscient - and the similarities and differences in the way the men and women writers present them. The literary analysis is supported by a combination of philosophical and psychological theories: notably Octavio Paz's study of Mexican male character, and Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation, in particular his hierarchy of human needs. Taking into account the culture specific nature of Paz's study and the multicultural origin and application of Maslow's theory, I have come to the conclusion that it is feasible to join the two in order to establish a sound theoretical basis, which allows for an accurate analysis of the cultural aspect of my work, while at the same time providing an unbiased psychological background to the study.

The inquiry reveals that two out of three aspects of male sexuality are reflected in the works of all four writers; furthermore, the exhibition of these components of male sexual character follows the same pattern in all the works, and the consequent effect on the overall character of the male is also the same. It should be noted, however, that the third



component of male sexuality is present in the works of only two writers (Marcela Del-Río and Octavio Paz); the reason for the absence of this aspect in the works of Rosario Castellanos and Jaime Sabines is summarised later in this section.

The first aspect of male sexuality presented in the works of all four writers is primal or animal-like; it is defined by several features exhibited by the male during sexual intercourse. Firstly, the male is portrayed (directly or implicitly) as lacking or having lost cognitive abilities, being physically aggressive, and on occasion displaying the characteristics of an animal in some aspects of his visual appearance. As the male engages in a sexual act, he is depicted as experiencing fear of death, which becomes particularly intense when the male reaches the peak of sexual arousal.

The second quality, revealed in connection with the male's fear of death, is the childlike trait of male sexuality. As the male senses a metaphorical fear of death, he is also afraid of his sexual experience because he does not fully understand it and therefore sees it as potentially harmful physically and emotionally. The lack of knowledge, combined with the sexual ineptitude and emotional insecurity which are overtly expressed in the male's volatile emotional outbursts, causes the male to seek physical and emotional safety within a familiar environment. The focus on satisfaction of the safety need defines the childlike character of male sexuality.

When the male realises that the unknown sensations are potentially dangerous, he attempts to acquire enough knowledge to understand himself, his experiences, and the world around him. This stage is evident only in the works of the writers who present the male character as possessing a relatively high level of cognition; in this study, such writers are Octavio Paz and Marcela Del-Río. The process of the male's search for knowledge leads to the exhibition of the third component of his sexuality - self-actualisation and omniscience through sexual experience. Acquisition of knowledge leads the male to see himself as an all-knowing being; his ability to achieve self-actualisation (or fulfilment of his potential)



metaphorically changes him into a godlike figure, who transcends objective existence by separating the subjective and objective realities and choosing to exist in the subjective reality of his imagination. As a result of the male's acquisition of knowledge through sexual experience, he sees himself (or is seen by his partner) as an omniscient entity remaining in his own world.

It has also been determined that the male's sexual character is linked with the image of the woman: the two complement or contradict each other. The image of the woman is either created by the male (as reflected in the works of the men writers analysed in this study) or presented as an independent entity, who creates the image of the male (this is typical of the works of the women writers). It appears that if the male creates the image of the woman, he sees her character as contradicting his and initially containing the traits that he considers negative (submissiveness, emotional openness, etc.). On the other hand, if the woman is portrayed as an independent cognitive force, her qualities complement those exhibited by the male, whose character is created by the woman.

After examining the process of formation of male sexuality as inferred from the works of the four Mexican writers selected for this thesis, and taking into consideration the fact that the last characteristic of male sexuality is only present in the works of two authors, I am led to the conclusion that the essential features are the same in the works of the men and women writers, that is, there is a fundamental similarity in the sequence, the components, and the outcome. The difference lies in the initial representation of the male and the woman. At the beginning of their works, Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines see the male as basically self-aware (i.e., possessing a cognitive ability which allows him to recognise himself as an independent being) and the woman, who is presented as a product of the male's imagination, as a non-cognitive but sexually arousing entity. In contrast with the men writers' approach, Rosario Castellanos and Marcela Del-Río depict the woman as a self-aware cognitive being, who at first considers the male-partner void of cognition and existing



mainly to satisfy the physical and emotional aspects of her sexual desire. Therefore, the writers' representation of the male character reflects the difference in their perception of the initial level of the male's cognitive ability, which, in turn, is linked to their depiction of the woman and the level of cognition assigned to her character. The study allows us to conclude that the difference in the representation of the woman influences the patterns of development of male sexuality in the works of the four Mexican authors.

The process of formation of male sexuality as inferred from the works of Octavio Paz and Jaime Sabines shows the following pattern. At first, the male is depicted as being self-aware (thus exhibiting basic cognitive abilities) and experiencing sexual arousal. To satisfy his desire, he imagines the woman-partner, who exhibits no cognitive traits but is very arousing; most of the time the character of the woman is created out of sexually implicit nature imagery, in which case it also poses a certain danger to the male, who faces the forces of nature beyond his control (the woman is metaphorically represented as a storm, a poisonous plant, a carnivorous animal, etc.). As the male metaphorically engages in sexual intercourse with the (imaginary) woman, he subconsciously attempts to protect himself from the danger she poses by becoming aggressive, or by absorbing the woman's aggressive character; the animal aggression he exhibits hides his fear of physical pain and death which he experiences at the peak of sexual arousal. It has been determined in Chapter 2 that animal aggression and fear of death define the primal aspect of male sexuality; the survival instinct, which is the main attribute of the male's animal side, causes him to fear sexual intercourse and therefore to attempt to alleviate the fear by changing the image of the woman. At first, the woman is seen as dangerous and sexually arousing; as the male takes on primal characteristics and experiences fear of death, he assigns more cognitive traits to the woman, whom he now sees as a potential provider of physical safety. This is the first instance of the transfer of traits (which I call 'trait trade') between the male and the woman:



the male absorbs the woman's initial primal aggression, shifting his initial cognitive abilities onto her.

Since the woman now carries the qualities of a guardian, the male complements her character by becoming physically and emotionally dependent on the woman, i.e., exhibiting childlike traits. This causes the male to seek safety by turning to the woman for comfort and provision of a secure and predictable routine. The woman is now represented as being a mother figure, and the male starts behaving as a child or even a baby; the 'trait trade' is complete as the male loses cognition, which is absorbed by the woman, making the male dependent on her for safety. At this point, the level of the male's cognition becomes highly significant: if it is low (similar to that of a baby or a very young child), the focus of the male's search for comfort shifts to the physical aspect of his existence. In his attempt to create a safe routine, the male concentrates on obtaining enough knowledge about himself and the world around him to establish a physically safe environment (often this environment is a fantasy world), where the woman/mother provides for his comfort and, implicitly, sexual satisfaction. In this case, the roles are set for the male and the woman: the male is a child, and the woman is his parent or guardian. There is no further exchange of traits, as the male satisfies the safety need and has no incentive to continue his search for knowledge; therefore, the process of formation of his sexuality is complete, and we can say that if the male's initial level of cognition is low (as reflected in the works of Jaime Sabines - see Section 3.4.1, Chapter 3), the development of his sexuality will stop at the acquisition of childlike traits.

However, if the male's initial level of cognition is relatively high, the process of trait acquisition will proceed further, as the male's search for knowledge continues. Section 3.4.2 examines the works of Octavio Paz, who portrays the male as possessing higher cognitive abilities. As the male satisfies his need for physical safety, he continues his search for knowledge about himself and his sexual experience because he also feels threatened by the



emotional aspect of sexual intercourse, which he cannot understand. In his attempt to understand his emotions, the male modifies the image of the woman to reflect the emotional turmoil he faces during a sexual act. Thus, another 'trait trade' is complete, as the woman takes on new characteristics of an emotionally unstable entity, who also possesses the knowledge the male seeks; this renders her omniscient in the eyes of the male, who may also assign her visual attributes of a goddess (see Section 1.4, Chapter 1 for a detailed analysis of the process of the woman's beatification). The sexual union with the woman-goddess, in turn, changes the male into an omniscient being by transferring the woman's divine traits onto him, thus helping him reach self-actualisation and acquire higher cognitive abilities and knowledge during an orgasm.

Now that the male has obtained divine characteristics, he possesses enough knowledge about himself and the world to distinguish between the subjective and objective realms of existence; as a result, he finds himself in a conflict with the objective reality and may choose to escape into his subjective (imaginary) world. Having received the necessary traits to render himself godlike, the male sees the woman as a mortal (or a 'sinner') or, alternatively, disregards her existence as soon as he leaves the objective reality. The woman is then associated with the objective reality, and may embody the conflict between the male and the objective world (see Section 4.5.2, Chapter 4). In any case, by the time the male's sexuality is fully formed, the image of the woman returns to its original state (lacking cognition while retaining sexually arousing traits) or disappears. The final product of this process is the male's full cognitive self-actualisation through sexual experience. An initially high cognitive ability has allowed him to combine sexual desire with the desire for knowledge.

The women writers in this study adopt a different approach to the initial portrayal of the male. While the men writers present the male character of their poems as being self-aware at the beginning of a sexual act, Rosario Castellanos and Marcela Del-Rio depict the



males in their works as lacking cognition when starting sexual intercourse with the woman, who, on the other hand, is depicted as possessing cognition. However, further examination of the characters of the male and the woman, as seen in the works of the women writers, has shown that Castellanos' and Del-Río's representation of the woman and the male follows a pattern similar to that inferred from the works of the men writers. Similar to the way the male creates the image of the woman in the poems of Paz and Sabines, the woman in the works of the women writers creates the image of the male, whose character is presented indirectly through the woman's actions or inner monologues. As the partners begin their sexual interaction, the woman discovers that while she expects her partner to satisfy her arousal, he can also cause her physical and emotional pain. Thus, the male is seen as aggressive, although his aggression is often unintentional; the woman interprets his animal-like behaviour as the expression of his lack of cognition as well as the exhibition of a covert fear of death. Once the male has shown fear of death during a sexual act, he attempts to protect himself from a potential harm that sexual intercourse can cause him; as in the works of the men writers, the male is afraid of his sexuality because it carries the physical and emotional sensations with which he is unfamiliar. The male's inability to understand his experience renders him vulnerable and looking for safety, which the woman takes it upon herself to provide. This transfer of character traits - from a submissive woman/aggressive (powerful) male to a submissive male/powerful woman - connotes the revelation of the male's childlike side, which is complemented by the image of the woman/mother.

At this stage of development of male sexuality, it is important to assess once again the initial level of the male's cognitive abilities. If, as in the works of Jaime Sabines, the male's cognition is underdeveloped, the male focuses on satisfying his need for physical safety, expecting the woman/mother to be the chief provider of security and the basic knowledge he needs to create a predictable, familiar routine in order to feel safe. This pattern appears in the works of Rosario Castellanos: the male/child relies heavily on the



woman/mother to prepare a physically safe routine for him, while making little or no attempt to acquire the knowledge necessary for him to understand the physical and emotional aspects of his sexuality. Once the male has focused on physical safety, the childlike aspect of his character takes over, ensuring that the woman's role is that of an omnipotent parent-protector.

On the other hand, an initially high level of cognition causes the male to attempt to evaluate the emotional aspect of his sexual experience and a consequent interdependence of knowledge and sexuality, as reflected in Marcela Del-Río's works (similar to Octavio Paz's poetry). The male's need for knowledge causes him to turn to the woman (whom he still sees as an omnipotent and omniscient guardian figure) to help him understand himself, his sexual experience, and the world in which he exists; thus, the woman takes on the characteristics of a deity, as the male's developing cognition attempts to reconcile his finite knowledge (that of a 'mortal', or a sinner) with the woman's more extensive cognitive abilities (those of a 'goddess'). Similar to the male's sexual union with the woman/goddess in the works of Paz, the male in Del-Río's works absorbs the woman's divine characteristics through a sexual act, thus becoming a godlike figure, possessing infinite knowledge and capable of creating his own subjective reality. Once the transfer of divine traits has occurred, the male removes himself from the objective reality (with which he is in conflict) and transfers his non-physical self to the subjective realm of existence; the woman, having lost her status of a goddess, still remains the keeper of knowledge within the objective reality. It is important to note that, unlike the woman in the works of the men writers, the woman in Del-Río's works does not disappear after the male separates himself from the objective reality - instead, the male disappears, while the woman returns to her initial independent cognitive character.

The analysis of the process of formation of male sexuality in the works of the four Mexican writers allows for the following conclusion: sexual experience and cognition are interdependent. There is no indication that the number of sexual encounters defines the level



of cognition (i.e., that the more sexual experience the male has the more knowledge he obtains). The amount of knowledge obtained and the male's consequent level of cognitive development depend on the male's initial level of cognition (as reflected in his perception of his experiences, the realities, and the woman), which then determines his perception of sexual intercourse. If the male's level of cognition is low (as reflected in the works of Sabines and Castellanos), he will see sexual intercourse as a dangerous yet physically pleasant experience; therefore, he will seek enough knowledge to alleviate the fear. If the male's cognitive abilities are more fully developed (see Paz and Del-Río), he will perceive a sexual act mainly from an emotional or abstract perspective, regarding it as a means of understanding himself and the objective reality. Sexual intercourse will also be considered a source of knowledge: although at first the male may fear the unknown emotional aspects of the experience, later (after a metaphorical orgasm), the male will perceive the emotional side of a sexual act as containing information about himself and the world he inhabits.

An equally important conclusion is that there is no difference in the writers' approach to the male's sexual character: the works of both men and women writers in this study contain evidence of the same stages of development and exhibition of male sexuality. The first of the two main differences lies in the writers' approach to the character of the woman, or to its covert nature and overt roles; however, this is hardly a surprise, since the women writers in this study represent the mainstream trend in Mexican feminist writing. What is surprising is the second difference, which is the writers' estimate of the male's initial level of cognition. The two approaches taken by the writers are not defined by the writers' sex: Jaime Sabines and Rosario Castellanos see the male as having rudimentary cognitive abilities, while Octavio Paz and Marcela Del-Río present the male character in the works as possessing highly developed cognition. It appears that the representation of male sexuality is not affected by the sex of the writer but rather by his or her interest in the cognitive aspect of human nature and its influence on the development of human sexuality, emotional



character, etc. Another outcome of this study is the creation of the theory of character fragmentation (presented in Section 4.6, Chapter 4), which reflects the pattern of development of male sexuality interlinked with the character of the woman. This theory reflects the complexity of character interaction in a sexual relationship in the works of the four Mexican writers, who represent the mainstream trends in modern Mexican literature (1950-85).

### **Further applications of the study**

The analysis of male sexuality as reflected in the works of the four Mexican writers has been presented in four chapters which examined the stages of the formation of male sexuality, and the interdependence of the male and female characters (addressed in Chapter 1). As a result of the study of the character of the woman, it has been established that the exhibition of various aspects of the male's sexuality is reflected in the woman's character traits, which may be either the opposite of or a complement to those constituting male sexuality. Thus, it has been concluded that the traits comprising the sexual aspects of the male personality may be deduced (directly or implicitly) from the image of the woman.

The next three chapters of the thesis concern the three major sides of male sexuality. Chapter 2 addresses the primal aspect of male sexual expression and determines that it takes precedence over other traits of a higher cognitive order. Chapter 3 examines the childlike traits exhibited by the male during sexual intercourse, having demonstrated that the male's sexual satisfaction at this stage depends largely on the presence of the woman-mother. Finally, Chapter 4 addresses the process of the acquisition of knowledge arising from the male's childlike need for safety, and leading to his self-actualisation. As a result, it has been concluded that the last stage of the formation of male sexuality is the male's attainment of the ultimate knowledge through sexual experience. Overall, the examination of male sexuality presented in this thesis leads to the conclusion that the exhibition of various aspects



of the male's sexual character depends not only on the level of the male's metaphoric arousal but also on the level of his cognitive development, presented directly or implicitly.

When these findings are expressed in a composite way and perceived from the point of view of the theoretical base for this study, a significant pattern emerges. The enquiry reveals that the three aspects comprising male sexuality are similar to the traits of the Mexican male character examined in the essays of Octavio Paz and Samuel Ramos. There are distinct parallels between the results of our study and the main idea of Paz's analysis of the Mexican male. The most obvious similarity is in the order of the revelation of his character traits. We have determined that the often violent primal side of male sexuality is its first aspect to be exhibited; the first chapter of *El laberinto de la soledad*, entitled 'El pachuco y otros extremos', examines the violent nature of the Mexican male. The second quality expressed by the male during sexual intercourse is his childlike fear and emotional insecurity; Chapter IV of Paz's work, 'Los hijos de La Malinche', is also devoted to the inherent insecurities of the Mexican male character and the resulting conflict between the male and the woman. It should be noted that Samuel Ramos considered emotional vulnerability and insecurity the major qualities of 'lo mexicano', and symbolically described Mexico as an emotionally immature 'child nation'.

Our study concludes with the examination of the process of the male's self-actualisation through sexual experience, which also allows him to perceive himself as omniscient; the last section of Paz's essay, 'La dialéctica de la soledad', concerns the male's search for self, which implies the acquisition of knowledge regarding himself and his subjective and objective realities. It is evident, therefore, that our analysis of male sexuality (as represented in the works of the four Mexican writers) corroborates the main points of the theories of the Mexican character. In addition, we deduce that the process of the overall development of the Mexican male persona is based upon the expression of his sexuality, following the same pattern of the revelation of its traits - from primal to self-actualised;



similarly, Octavio Paz suggests that sexual brashness and verbal aggression are the defining factors of the Mexican male personality (Paz 1959, 64-77).

The order in which the aspects of male sexuality are revealed is analogous not only to that represented in Paz's study of the Mexican character, but also to the sequence in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs - from basic physiological (primal) 'hungers' to the highest cognitive need for self-actualisation<sup>85</sup>. This allows us to suggest that the pattern discovered during our investigation is characteristic of the male character in the works we have studied, as well as of the overall male literary character. Therefore, our conclusions concerning the representation of male sexuality in modern Mexican literature indicate the benefits that may be obtained from further studies of Mexican masculinity (based on the analysis of male sexuality) from a broader perspective, encompassing the examination of popular culture as a projection of the Mexican male character. It is also conceivable to apply the above theory to a more general study of the representation of male sexuality in modern Mexican and Latin American literature; this application will have to follow the necessary modifications in order for our theory to absorb cultural specifics of other literatures.

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<sup>85</sup> We have posited that Maslow's theory possesses cross-cultural validity and may also be read as a metaphoric representation of the development of human character; therefore, its application to a literary analysis is justified.

## APPENDIX 1

**Table 1. Characteristics of time planes in 'Piedra de sol'**

| <b>Time Plane</b> | <b>Location</b>                                                                             | <b>Time Structure</b><br>T - static<br>C - circular<br>P - spiral<br>L - linear | <b>Objectivity</b><br>O - objective<br>S - subjective | <b>Sexual Potential</b><br>N - sexually neutral<br>I - sexually implicit<br>E - sexually explicit |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TP1               | 'un sauce de cristal, un chopo de agua' - 'mana toda la noche profecías' (293)              | T                                                                               | S                                                     | N                                                                                                 |
| TP2               | 'unánime presencia en oleaje' (293) - 'y a salida de tu blanca frente' (295)                | C                                                                               | S                                                     | E                                                                                                 |
| TP3               | 'mi sombra despeñada se destroza' (295) - 'templado por los muros de tezontle' (296)        | L                                                                               | S                                                     | N                                                                                                 |
| TP4<br>(= TP2)    | 'la hora maduraba sus racimos' (296) - 'el mundo con su horario carnicero' (298)            | C                                                                               | S                                                     | E                                                                                                 |
| TP5               | 'sólo un instante mientras las ciudades,' (298) - 'en otro instante que se desvanece' (299) | L                                                                               | S                                                     | N                                                                                                 |
| TP6               | 'frente a la tarde de salitre y piedra' (299) - 'nada quedó de ti sino tu grito' (300)      | P                                                                               | S                                                     | I                                                                                                 |



|                            |                                                                                                                      |   |   |   |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| TP7                        | 'y al cabo de los siglos me descubro' (300) - otras nubes, morirme de otra muerte!' (301)                            | P | S | N |
| TP8                        | '-esta noche me basta, y este instante' - 'cuartos, lugares, calles, nombres, cuartos,' (301)                        | P | O | I |
| TP9                        | 'Madrid, 1937' - 'y el huracán de motores'; 'cuartos a la deriva' - 'y hay un patio y tres niños oxidados' (302)     | L | O | N |
| TP10                       | 'fijo:' - 'oh ser total...'; 'cuartos que son navíos que se mecen' (302) - 'o estalla como un astro taciturno' (303) | C | S | E |
| TP11                       | 'y las leyes comidas de ratones' (303) - 'el olvidado asombro de estar vivos;' (304)                                 | L | S | N |
| TP12<br>(= TP10)           | 'amar es combatir, si dos de besan' - 'amar es desnudarse de los nombres' (304)                                      | C | S | E |
| TP13                       | ""déjame ser tu puta", son palabras' (304) - 'plentitud de presencias y de nombres' (305)                            | C | S | E |
| TP14                       | 'sigo mi desvarío, cuartos, calles' - 'bajo un sol sin edad' (305)                                                   | C | S | N |
| TP14a<br>(= TP2, 3,<br>12) | 'y tú a mi lado' (305) - 'sino un propio transcurrir dichoso' (306)                                                  | P | S | E |

|                    |                                                                                                    |        |        |   |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|---|
| TP15<br>(=TP9, 10) | 'no pasa nada, calles,<br>parpadeas' (306) - '-¿no<br>pasa nada cuando pasa el<br>tiempo?' (307)   | L<br>P | O<br>S | N |
| TP16               | '-no pasa nada, sólo un<br>parpadeo' (307) - 'ajena y<br>no vivida, apenas nuestra'<br>(308)       | T      | S      | N |
| TP17               | '-¿la vida, cuándo fue de<br>veras nuestra?' - hambre de<br>ser, oh muerte, pan de<br>todos' (308) | T      | S      | N |
| TP17a              | 'Eloísa, Perséfone, María'<br>(309) - 'indecible presencia<br>de presencias' (310)                 | C      | S      | E |
| TP18               | 'quiero seguir, ir más allá, y<br>no puedo' - 'de mi bruto<br>dormir siglos de piedra'<br>(310)    | P      | S      | I |
| TP19 (~<br>TP1)    | 'y su magia de espejos<br>revivía' - 'y llega siempre.'<br>(310)                                   | T      | S      | I |

Note: Time plane 20 is not presented in the table since it is located outside the poem and therefore cannot be cited.



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