Chapter 5

The Archetypal Feminine

I am all that has been, and that is, and that

Shall be and no mortal has ever raised my veil.

The fruit which I have brought forth is the sun

Inscription at Isis’s shrine in Sais,

Wheelwright, “The Archetypal Symbol” 232.

The ‘Archetypal Feminine’ is a universal symbol, which in seeking to project the image of woman, transcends the narrow confines of the social and familial contexts to embrace the fundamental nature of the feminine experience. “Exalting the feminine principle in life over the masculine” (Blotner 255), the archetypal woman, conceived as the “primum mobile, the first beginning, the material matrix out of which all comes forth” (Zimmer qtd. in Campbell, Primitive Mythology 63), stresses “the sacred nature of the female sex” (Vickery, “Myth and Ritual in the Shorter Fiction of D.H. Lawrence” 299), the mystery of motherhood raising her to the status of a goddess. Worshipped as the universal mother, the immortal, omnipotent Mother Goddess, “the natural mother of all things” (Campbell, Primitive Mythology 56), she is “the mother without a spouse, the Original Mother” (Zimmer qtd. in Primitive Mythology 63) from whose womb all life issues. Serving as an archetype for Mother Earth, for the universe “which sends forth beings only to consume them” (70), woman,
the fountainhead of creation and destruction, comes to represent the awesome mystery of life (52). She, who embodies within herself, in her menstrual cycle, the ebb and flow of all life, assumes the dual role of a creative and destructive force: Mother Nature in her fierce and benign manifestations. Focusing on the "dynamic image of woman," in both its "cherishing, satisfying, exalting," and "enslaving, betraying" aspects, the "Archetypal Feminine" explores the "tyrannous grasp" of the feminine "upon man's emotion" (Bodkin 173). Encompassing the whole horizon of the feminine experience--woman as mother, virgin, whore and witch, it emphasizes "the eternal renewal of the feminine principle" (van de Castle 390) in contrast with the predatory drive of the masculine instinct. The instinctive, intuitive nature of the feminine psyche, which is more in tune with nature, is pitted against the fierce consciousness, the divided will, of the male psyche that seeks to subdue and control the forces of nature. Woman, who embodies within herself the rhythm of the universe becomes, therefore, the symbol of the healing power of nature.

Jeffers, who repudiates the aggression of the male consciousness, the male-oriented hunger for "light and noises, wars, weeping . . . / Hot labour, lust and delight and the other blemishes" ["Night" OR 777], turns to seek the stabilizing influence of "the lost feminine principle" [Mathews 4] in nature. Woman, who harbours within herself the quietness of "the womb and the egg," the 'primal and latter silences' of the night, of the unconscious, of death itself, becomes synonymous with life, mirroring as
she does the "subtle balance that prevails in nature" (Van de Castle 389). Jeffers's poems, which embody the theme of the archetypal "return to paradise," attempt to re-orient the modern psyche, which divorced from nature, from Mother Earth, is vulnerable to psychic disorders. Nature is to him the only answer to man's relentless quest for bliss on earth, for an earthly paradise. Cut off from nature, man is "psychologically poorer" ("Biophilia," Indian Express 17 Dec. 1993: 8), his inner biological clock and biological rhythms being at variance with outer reality.

Ancient civilizations with their mother goddesses, "their vegetation cults, fertility rituals, [and] . . . sympathetic magic, represent[ed] a harmony of human culture and natural environment and express[ed] an extreme sense of the unity of life . . . " (Leavis 90). The casualty of contemporary civilization is this "sense of the unity of life" which Jeffers would have modern man cultivate. His philosophy of 'inhumanism' advocates man to turn from man to 'not-man,' to the stoic endurance of Nature, to find "a certain measure [of joy] in phenomena / The fountains of the boiling stars, the flowers on the / Foreland, the ever-returning roses of dawn" ("Apology for Bad Dreams" OB 787). Dwarfed against the majesty of nature, his self-destroying characters function as archetypes, the women assuming the role of catalysts who set in motion the forces of destruction required for cyclical change. She, who embodies "the great wheel of nature" (Estes 187), is a dual force: a Life-Death force, both life-giver and life-taker (478). She is "Shakti, the personified feminine
life force" without whom "Shiva, who encompasses the ability to act, becomes a corpse. She is the life energy that animates the male principle" which "in turn animates action in the world." (355).

The concept of the 'Archetypal Feminine,' as it evolves in the present study, takes shape from Philip Wheelwright's delineation of the feminine psyche in his essay, "The Archetypal Symbol," Clarissa Pinkola Estes's thesis on the wild woman archetype entitled, *Women who Run with the Wolves,* and Jung's concept of the 'Anima.'

Wheelwright traces four forms of the 'Archetypal Feminine,' which together constitutes the collective feminine experience. Woman is:

(1) the Mother, the Magna Mater, somehow identified with Earth, from whose womb all life germinates and comes to birth; (2) the virgin, the Feminine Ideal, for whose sake the hero and the heroic in every man bestirs himself to confront dangers and attain the goal; (3) the Siren, the Temptress, the symbol of sensual allurement which distracts man from his essential task; and (4) the Harpy, which is to say Femininity in its repellent and frightening aspect, whether as witch, vampire, erinys, lamia, medusa or whatever other configuration of female horror. (231-232)

Endowed with a "precognitive animal consciousness" (Estes 100), she, the Archetypal Feminine, is 'wild woman' who "standing between the worlds of rationality and mythos" (22) possesses a 'psychic dual-
ity" (130) of the "Life / Death / Life nature" (148): "While one side of a woman's dual nature might be called Life, Life's 'twin' sister is a force named Death" (146). Death, however, is not "death in the sense of passing into non-existence, but simply a change into a new form of life." She "who destroys, . . . causes beings to assume new phases of existence," "the Destroyer" being in actual fact "a re-Creator" (Wilkins 263).

She is also the collective image of woman, enshrined in every male heart as mother, sister, lover, wife and daughter, on the one hand, and feared, on the other, as vamp and witch, which according to Jung is the 'Anima', the encoded "feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, feeling for nature and - last but not the least - his relation to the unconscious" (Von Franz 186).

It is the 'Anima,' "the female element in every male" (Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious" 17), that helps man relate to Nature, to draw sustenance from Nature. Only Nature, the gentle healer, can soothe and imbue man with a sense of peace and contentment, and drawing him outwards help him find joy in the 'transhuman magnificence' (Jeffers qtd. in Brian Mc Ginty 8).

Tamar is no conventional heroine. She is a character who eludes comprehension and defies understanding. She is Isis, the veiled one, who remains shrouded in mystery, her true nature being beyond the divination of ordinary mortals.
The mystery of lamar's characterization may, however, be unravelled if she is viewed as the 'Archetypal Feminine,' the embodiment of the very essence of womanhood. She, who encapsulates the cyclical evolution of the concept of woman in man's consciousness, metamorphoses in the course of the narrative from life-giving mother to death perpetrating mother.

Not a modern, twentieth century woman, she is mythic woman who brings within her embrace all experience, one who has explored both the heights and the "muddy root under the rock of things" (SP 41). She is "wild woman" who is one with the wild coast, one with the fierce winds and the booming breakers, her "freedom" being the amoral freedom of the ancient world. She is the four-footed shadow behind every woman (Estes Foreword), who keeps woman in touch with her instinctual self, having at her command the wisdom of the ages. Tamar in the guise of the "Death Mother" is the inimical wild woman who lends impetus to the destructive forces of Nature. She is also the 'Anima,' the woman within every male, the "female personification" of a man's unconscious (von Franz 186).

Tamar, who embodies within herself the many faces of Eve, is unveiled in the course of the narrative to reveal glimpses of her innate nature. She, who assumes the role of mother, virgin, temptress and harpy, is archetypal woman who codifies the collective experience of woman-kind.
The mother in Tamar makes its presence felt in the first section of the narrative. The broken, bruised body of her brother, Lee, awakens to life the mother in her. Lee, who has unconsciously been seeking communion with his dead mother, is overwhelmed by the pressures of life. Unable to drown his sorrow in drinks, neither wine nor women being able to provide him the comfort he craves, he is literally driven over the edge. "Thanatos," the unconscious death-wish, which according to Freud is pictured "as a return to the womb (to the water)" (New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis 53), manifests itself in Lee, and spurring his horse over the seacliff, he crashlands on the seashore, "a shipwrecked horseman" (SP 4). The "slow pulse of the ocean beat," symbolizing the regular pulsing of the mother's heart, forms the background of the first section. The waves caress his unconscious frame, calling his "sleepy soul" back from its "blind course." The sea, "the ancient water," the primordial mother, runs "icy fingers" through his hair, bringing him back to life. He is the foetus, the "seaworm" bathed in the amniotic fluid of the sea-waves (3). The "gush of liquid noises" evokes a dim recollection of his dead mother, whom he senses "crying beside him" (4). As sundown reddens the sea, he is conscious of approaching death. He bids good-bye to life, but is rescued in the nick of time from the very jaws of death. He is nursed back to health by his sister, Tamar, who dons the mantle of the mother. Lee, who sought "the protecting, nourishing, charmed circle of the mother" (Portable Jung 148), basks for three months in the warmth
and sunshine of her love. His desire to escape the cruel world of reality, and regress to a world free from responsibility, is partially fulfilled in Tamar’s loving arms.

Lee is a model ‘son’ who is ready to give up the world and all its pleasures to please his ‘mother.’ He is happy “to walk along the blessed old gray sea” (SP 5) on the shore of the ancient mother, in Tamar’s company. He is glad to remain in the magic circle of Tamar’s influence, content to be a “cripple” (5), not worried that his sense of responsibility, his initiative, his touch with reality have all been “crippled by the secret memory that the world and happiness may be had as a gift from the mother” (Portable Jung 149). He is in an infantile stage, cocooned in the “unreal dream of love, happiness and maternal warmth” (von Franz 190). He recovers from the fall, but the mother in Tamar conspires with Lee’s ‘child’ to distance him from reality (Portable Jung 149). Lee is content to remain at home in Tamar’s company. David, his father, warns him not to “close his young life into a little box... Hell’s in the box” (SP 7). He is cautioned against restricting himself to the house and is advised to make the most of his young life as he will most probably be mixed in “the bloody squabble” (the war) by summer. Lee, however, brushes aside his father’s words saying, “A soldier’s what I won’t be, Father” (8).

The world and its concerns have little attraction for Lee. Lost in the dream world conjured up by the “mother-imago” (Portable Jung 150)
within himself, he is inclined to “sit on the stone steps and watch the forest grow up the hill / or a new speck of moss on some old rock / That takes ten years agrowing. . . .” The ‘anima,’ who helps him relate to nature, brings “home to his heart the beauty of things” (SP 4). His sensitivity to nature enhanced, he is alive to the beauty of the forest, to the streaked beauty of white-oak trunks, the beauty of the canyon wildflowers.

Tamar, Lee’s projected ‘anima,’ takes on the shape of “the Virgin, the Feminine Ideal” in Section II. She surfaces in Lee’s consciousness as the ideal woman, her name a constant refrain in his mind: ‘A hundred times he wanted Tamar, to show her some new beauty / of Canyon wildflower, water / dashing its ferns, or Oaktrees thrusting, elbows at the wind, . . .” (7). She is to him the embodiment of all feminine virtue, a figment of his dreams. His fantasies of the ideal woman, woven around her person, contrive to place her on the pedestal of his mind. “Keen and fearless,” he is ready to confront dangers and attempt the heroic for her sake. Tamar intuits his frame of mind: “If I saw a snake in the water he would come now / And kill the snake . . . ” (9). He worships her, adoring the very ground she walks on. Possessive of her, he will brook no rivals. He warns off Will Andrews: “You think my bones / Aren’t mended yet, better keep off” (7). Tamar is to him the apotheosis of femininity, whose every wish is his command: “. . . In a week or two I’ll fill your arms with shining irises” (SP 5). He is sorry
to disappoint her: "Because I dropped the faded irises . . . You’re un-
happy. They were all withered, Tamar" (8). The idol, however, devel-
ops clay feet, and the virgin image is shattered as Tamar refuses to con-
form to his idealistic picturisation of her. Tamar fails to rise to the heights
of glorified womanhood that Lee’s romantic fantasy has painted for her.
The romantic illusions he had cherished are blown away, giving way to
the sensual within.

Tamar now assumes the form of the temptress, a role of which her
unconscious is already aware, for intruding into the otherwise platonic
relationship of the brother and sister is a strong sexual element. Both
Tamar and Lee are psychically forewarned of the fact. A significant dream
of herself being trampled by a wild white horse lends Tamar “mystical
foreknowledge” (6). Lee dreams of himself as a soldier:

Duelling with a German above a battle
That looked like waves, he fired his gun and mounted
In steady rhythm; he must have been winged, he suddenly
Plunged and went through the soft and deadly surface
Of the deep sea, wakening in terror. (8)

In Freudian analysis, “soldier,” “warfare” and “weapon” reflect
sexual prowess, while “flying” refers to sexual ecstasy and “duelling,” firing
“a gun,” “mounting,” “steady rhythm” are sexual in connotation. Being
“winged” (or wounded) hints at guilt and plunging through the “soft and
deadly surface of the sea” implies a “smothering in the female element,”
while going through the "deadly surface" and "wakening in terror" symbolize Oedipal fear (Brophy 22-23).

The mother-son, sister-brother relationship is heading for a crisis. Tamar and Lee are both aware of the imminent radical change in their relationship. Both are overcome with horror, at first, but Tamar learns to appreciate it as yet another facet of the feminine experience. The 'Siren' within assumes control, sweeping away all restrictions and opposition of the "ego." She is "the wild woman," the amoral life experience, which resists "society's attempts to 'civilize' her" (Estes backcover). She is the transcendent spirit of woman, who incorporates within herself aeons of experience. Man-made laws cannot hope to contain her or quell her spirit. She craves the entire gamut of passions and emotions that is woman's lot in life. She finds herself "stricken with a strange fever" (9). She "wants and wants" (8) and dares to know, to experience. She is not afraid to say "yes" to the experience. It is a challenge she rises to meet with aplomb.

Tamar cunningly sets about seducing and subduing Lee. She is successful and Lee is soon ensnared in the charmed net of her wily machinations. She is triumphant after the bait is taken, and Lee falls prey to her physical charms: "We have it, we have it. Now I know," she excitedly exclaims. The assignation continues for five months till she learns of the new life that is growing within her. The knowledge fills her with dread, driving her to mastermind the scene of the second seduction. She
cannot rest on “harmless love” (SP 20) and is forced to throw herself at Will Andrews: “I want you and want you / you didn’t know that a clean girl could want a man / Now you will take me and use me and throw me away / And I’ve . . . earned it.” The guileless Andrews is completely taken in, and promises to protect her with his life. Her task accomplished, Tamar answers, “This is our marriage” (21).

A strange restlessness, however, overtakes her and resentment towards everything masculine crowds her mind. She hates both her lovers but finds the “intolerably masculine sun hatefulest of all” (23). The “sun,” the male principle, refers to consciousness, while Tamar as “Isis” is the female unconscious, the “sun” being “the fruit of her womb.” It is “the feminine kind of reality” that “precedes and gives birth to the clarity and predictability and more overt kind of power represented by the sun” (Wheelwright 232). She flees the “sun” to “the psychic ‘underworld,’” (Jung, “Approaching the Unconscious” 84), the realm of the unconscious, where she makes contact with the spirits of dead Indians, the ancient inhabitants of the once Indian land. Her dream of the races, where one race follows another dissolving into nothingness, has prepared her, to a certain extent, for just such a meeting. But, the spirits prove to be malevolent predators of the psyche who violate her. In the grip of forces stronger than herself, she is forced by a strange will, alien to herself, to strip and draw “her beauty out of its husks” (SP 25). “Clothing is removed ritually ending the former condition, . . .” (Dowden 190). All
restricting accoutrements of civilization, all trappings of the “ego,” the
masks of the “persona” are peeled off to reveal the unconscious in all
its nakedness. “Her body gone mad,” she invites, “the spirits of the night”
(NP 26). She is swamped by her negative “animus,” “the semi conscious,
cold, destructive reflections that invade a woman in the small hours,
especially when she has failed to realise some obligation of feeling” (von
Franz 202). The animus collective that invades her being are projections
of her psyche, (psychical realities), “demons of death,” who lure “her away
from all human relationships, from contacts with real men” (Wheelwright
232).

The dance on the seashore is an initiation rite which forcibly thrusts
her into her new role. She is Isis, who losing the fruit of her womb,
signifying the loss of consciousness, is taken over by the destructive
forces of the unconscious. She is in the vice-like grip of the predator
within her psyche - the seductive witch, the Harpy:

Passion and despair and grief had stripped away
Whatever is rounded and approachable
In the body of woman, hers looked hard, long lines
Narrowing down from the shoulder - bones, no appeal
A weapon and no sheath, fire without fuel . . . (SP 29).

A transformation has been effected. She is now an unsheathed
weapon of destruction, a “chthonic,” underworld being out of touch with
reality. Her descent to Avernus (to the underworld), though effected with
ease, has failed to guarantee a return to the upper air of consciousness. She is, now, wholly in the control of the negative forces of the psyche. She is propelled forward by the negative qualities of the 'animus'—brutality, recklessness, obstinate, evil ideas (Jung, “Approaching to Unconscious” 84). She is the embodiment of destruction, her hatred for the house of Cauldwell, her unreasonable anger towards its inmates, casting her in the role of the death-woman, a female Bluebeard, who craves the death of her lovers. Possessed by the evil “animus,” her burning desire is to raze the house and kill its occupants (von Franz 202).

Tamar is the terrible Medusa, the creature with living snakes for hair, who petrifies all who dare look her in the face:

... Tamar... drew the thickness of her draggled hair

Over her face and wept till it seemed heavy with blood: and like a snake lifting its head

Out of fire, she lifted up her face... (Sp 28).

Later, she tells Will Andrews who desires to marry her: “... You are not hard enough. ... / Only stone or fire / should marry into this house” (58). Only stone or fire can hope to withstand her, escape death at her hands.

Tamar’s metamorphosis into the death woman is complete. Her dreams are a foretaste of events to come:
Tamar was dreaming trivially - an axman chopping down a tree

and field-mice scampering

Out of the roots-when suddenly like a shift of wind the dream

Changed and grew awful, she watched dark horsemen coming

Out of the south. . . (SP 34).

The dream portends disaster. The field-mice which scamper out of the roots are "transcendent symbols of the depths," symbolic of the "denizens of the collective unconscious." They bring into the field of consciousness a special chthonic (underworld) message . . ." (Henderson 153). The rest of the dream is apocalyptic in intent. Tamar's "unconscious sensibility" (Campbell, *Portable Jung* xii) is now acute. Her hatred is a tangible force that makes its presence felt:

The same power moved his chair in the room, my hatred, my hatred

Disturbing the house because I failed to burn it

I must be quiet and quiet and quiet and keep

The serving spirits of my hid hatred quiet

Until my time serves too. (SP 36)

The "Spirits of hatred" are to be let loose on the world, on the house of Cauldwell. She is the evil 'anima,' the witch or the priestess,
who has links with the “forces of darkness” and “the spirit world” (von Franz 187). She is the “poison damsel,” “the beautiful creature who has weapons hidden in her body or a secret poison with which she kills her lovers . . .” (von Franz 190).

David Cauldwell, her father, recognizes the dangerous threat she poses to them:

. . . Have mercy, Tamar.

Lee, there’s a trick in it, she is a burning fire,

She is packed with death. I have learned her . . .

Too cruel to measure strychine, too cunning-cruel

To snap a gun, aiming ourselves against us. (SP 48)

The woman who snatched him from the jaws of death, who mothered him and nursed him back to health, is marked with the stamp of death, a literal death’s head. She is Kali, “the bone-wreathed lady of the place of skulls” (Wheelwright 232), the “destructive divine mother of Hindu Mythology,” who is both “the living mother of the universe and the symbol of anarchic violence. Her colours are red and black, as well as the orange of fire” (Wilson 265). Tamar is the “burning fire” (SP 48), “the fiery darkness” (22), “the female fury abiding in so beautiful a house of flesh” (23).

Lee tries to break free from her coils, to cut the psychical umbilical cord that binds him to her. In a defiant gesture, he enlists in the army as a soldier--it is a step towards re-entering the world and its
concerns. Tamar, however, is loathe to let him go. She enquires of Stella: "What does he mean to do? Go away? Kill himself, Stella?"

The siren, who distracted Lee from his "essential task," is now a repulsive witch, out to possess him body and soul, and he, a helpless victim in her cruel talons. He is torn between two worlds, convulsed with revulsion and weighed down by guilt, on the one hand, and filled with a genuine concern, on the other. Tamar, however, spurns what she considers his spurious show of sympathy. She turns lethal, and Medea-like is consumed in a fire of envy: "O you beast . . . you runaway dog / I wish you joy of your dirty Frenchwomen / you want instead of me . . ." (38). She refuses to let him go to the front, "You will never see France / Never wear uniform nor learn how to fasten / A bayonet to a gun barrel" (54). She is now poised to kill. She would rather kill him than have him leave. Lee, however, is adamant. A new spirit of adventure beckons him and he is determined to cross the seas, viewing his "tragedy of love, sin and war / At the disinterested romantic angle" (46).

Tamar, the "terrible mother," both witch and whore, who indulges in sexual orgies and symbolizes the forces of darkness and death, evokes emotions of fear and disgust (Guerin 160). Lee is nauseated by the change he discerns in her. No relationship is sacrosanct to her; even David, her father, who pleads with her is not spared.
... will you attempt
Age and the very grave, uncovering your body
To move the old bones that seventy years have broken
And dance your bosoms at me through a mist of death?

(SP 39)

"I am old," he cries, "what do you want of me?" and Tamar answers, "Nothing, old man. I have swum too deep into the mud / For this to sicken me" (40).

Her "Animus" in power, she imposes herself "on others by means of brutal emotional scenes" (von Franz 198). She is inaccessible to reason, her arguments tending towards the illogical: "Tell God we have revoked / relationship in the house, he is not / your son nor you my father." David groans in despair: "She has gone mad," he exclaims (SP 41). "Ridden by her 'animus'," no logic can shake her (Portable Jung 153). She is "hard, inexorable power" (von Franz 198). She craves power and wrests power from David: "You / thought it was your house. It is me they obey. It is mine, I shall ... destroy it. Poor old man I have earned / authority" (SP 40). David's fall is the final straw on the camel's back. He succumbs to the temptation dangled before him in the person of Tamar, and is morally vanquished. He caves in before her, pleading with her for sexual fulfilment: "Your promises / Tamar, the promises. Tamar" (43). Will Andrews, too, is lured to the trap with false hopes
of love.

Lee, however, refuses to give in to her wishes. He makes one last attempt to be reconciled with her. Having gotten over his "mother-fixation" and the Oedipal phase of his second 'childhood' as it were, he is man enough to cut himself loose from Tamar’s apron-strings. His integrated 'anima' is mature enough to compensate him for all the risks and struggles of life (Portable Jung 150). He tells Tamar: "'I’ve got no right / To put my hands into your life, I see / That each of us lives only a little while / And must do what he can with it...'" (SP 53). He is strong enough to venture forth into the world of reality and tackle the problems it poses before him. He lays his cards before her: "... I’m going / Tonight... It won’t take me ten minutes to pack and go, my plan’s / not to risk losing temper and have half decent / Thoughts of you while I’m gone, and you of me, Tamar’" (53). His appeal to her falls on deaf ears, for she, her mind filled with intrigue and malice, is already plotting his death. She would rather have him die than lose him to another woman. He waits for her to acknowledge his generosity, but finding her silent, her ‘shining eyes’ aglow with a strange amusement, he is filled with a vague sense of fear, and is like a man “stung by a serpent” (54). They cross swords; while Tamar’s “animus draws his sword of power,” Lee's 'anima' “ejects her poison of illusion and seduction.” Realising that “only seduction or a beating or rape would have the necessary power and persuasion” (Portable Jung 153), he attempts to subdue her with
"the whip, the oiled black supple quirt, ... that seemed a living snake in the hand" (SP 54). Whipping is, here, tantamount to rape, for the whip suggests the "phallus, energy agent" (Brophy 61). Tamar, however, is unfazed, proving to be more than a match for Lee. Her consciousness hypnotized, as it were, by the illogical 'animus,' she is filled with an unshakeable sense of self-righteousness (Portable Jung 155), and her "conviction is preached with a loud, insistent masculine voice." Her mind continues to dwell on Lee’s supposed betrayal, and her "animus repeats endlessly. . . . The only thing in the world that I want is love--and he doesn’t love me" (von Franz 198). She desires revenge, only revenge can cool the fire of her anger. Taken over by the primitive evil 'anima / animus' collective, the "dead Indian spirits," she is forced to commit one violation after another.

Tamar's animus, projected on to Lee, has such a compulsive hold on her that she is wholly dependent on him (198). His imminent departure is a threat to her very existence. She cannot exist independent of him. She is a woman who fears the loss of her very soul. Desperate in her attempt to prevent him from leaving, she is ready to go to any lengths.

Will Andrews, who is drawn to the house by her signal, the lamp in her window, is frightened by the "high look of joy" on her face (SP 57). The evil within her is now a potent force that none can stem. She instigates Lee and Will Andrews against each other. She accuses her brother of "abuse worse violence" (58). Displaying the whip marks on
her body, she lies to Will, holding Lee responsible for the death of her
baby. Meanwhile, she sets Lee against Will, insinuating that he was
responsible for the fire in her cupboard. Infuriated Will strikes Lee, his
fist "hitting the sharp edge" of Lee's jawbone. Lee hits back fumbling
for Will's throat. They grapple with each other and Will, turning to Tamar,
is nauseated by the hatred etched on her face. Lee withdraws a sheath
knife and stabs Will, opening "the right cheek, The knife scraping bone
and teeth . . ." (SP 61).

Appalled by the blood, he groans, "What did you say to make him
hit me?" Will also wonders, "Why does he want to fight?" (60). He
realises that there is more to it than meets the eye.

Tamar is exultant, her desire for revenge almost appeased. The
"fluid power" (36) of her destructive thoughts, drives the idiot aunt, Jinny,
to the fire, "Dear star, dear light, O lovely fire . . . come, hug Jinny."
The fire, "The hungry beautiful bird / hopped from its bird cage to her."
She screams and runs to the window where the curtains "dance into flame"
(62). The fire spreads and the house is engulfed in flames.

Will struggles to rise, his head a mere "blood clot" on the floor.
"You devils, you devils," he screams. The house, meanwhile, fills with
"bright death." Tamar flushed with triumph, laces her arms and legs around
Lee as he tries to escape: "So lovingly wound him that he could not rise."
She exclaims: "I have my three lovers. Here in one room, none of them
will go out. How can I help being happy?" (63).
She is elated at having thwarted Lee's plans of going to France. A human whose humanity is destroyed, Tamar rejoices in the fire and the death it heralds. She is the repellent witch, the death goddess, who trails death and destruction in her wake. She has come full cycle: "And Tamar with her back to the window embraced her brother, who struggled toward it, but the floor turned like a wheel" (SP 64). The image of the wheel suggests the wheel of Nature, the wheel of Time in the course of the revolution of which, Tamar evolves from good mother to terrible mother.

California, like Tamar, contains within herself "the wheel of time" (Campbell, Oriental Mythology 17). She, the "nobly formed," "dark, stolid" woman (SP 141), is the primordial goddess, who integrates within her being the creative and destructive powers of nature. She is Mother Earth, ravished by the likes of the white man, Johnny, who is finally done to death to preserve the equilibrium of natural forces. She, who is "co-operator with Brahma in creation" (Wilkins 291), assumes the form of Kali, "the cannibal ogress," the "'Black one,' a personification of 'all consuming Time'" (Campbell, Primitive Mythology 68), who with Shiva is the perpetrator of destruction and re-creation.

The mother in California surfaces at the outset of the narrative. The maternal concern is evident in the question: "'Did you buy something, Johnny, / For our Christmas? Christmas comes in two days, . . . ." (SP 141). Johnny's callous reply, "Don't tell Christine it's Christmas," raises
the mother's hackles. She is adamant and forceful: "I shared your luck when you lost: you lost me once Johnny, remember? Tom Dell had me two nights / Here in the house: other times we've gone hungry: now that / you've won, Christine will have her Christmas" (SP 141-142). Her love for her child prompts her to undertake a journey to Monterey to "buy presents for Christine," inspite of the rough weather. It is indeed a "wet ride" (142), "a tragic journey, both physically and psychologically" (Carpenter, Robinson Jeffer 69), which propels her towards the fulfilment of her destined role.

She, who is one with the elements, one with the "wet darkness" (SP 143), is Mother Earth herself. An embodiment of maternal love, she enfolds both man and beast in her tender embrace. Realising that the mare is tired, she wakes up at the crack of dawn to feed it before starting out on her journey (142).

A long-suffering wife, she is the epitome of feminine virtue, a model of womanly patience. She endures her husband's profligate ways, his "sluggish and exacting" lovemaking (143).

Even in the midst of the storm, lost in a dark world "of sounds and no sight" with the "thunder of water" in her ears, her thoughts revolve around her child: "Christine will be asleep. It is Christmas Eve" (144). Her personal safety is not her prime concern. She, who is the "good Mother," the life principle who symbolises warmth, nourishment and protection, endeavours at the cost of her life to make safe "the baby's
things.” Afraid that “the water will come over the floor” of the carriage she fetches up “the doll, the painted wooden chick - / ens, the woolly bear, the book / of many pictures, the box of sweets” (SP 144) from under the seat and tucks them “under her clothes, about the breasts, under the arms,” fastening them “with a piece of rope,” winding it about her shoulders. The discomfort caused by “the corners / of the cardboard boxes / cut[ting] into the soft flesh” is brushed aside as of no consequence. The mare straining to cross the swollen creek is soothed by her. Climbing down between the wheels, she goes to the mare’s head patting her and whispering “Poor Dora . . . there, Dora. Quietly.” She thumps the rump of the beast in an attempt to urge her on. But the “feel of the animal surface,” “the solid wet convexity” of which “shook like the beat of a great heart,” awakens in her a dream which obscures “real danger with a dream of danger” (145). California is now in touch with her unconscious, open to the possibilities of the unconscious. When the mare desists, hesitating to plunge forward, she “touch[es] her with the whip.” The whip, failing to evoke a response, California resorts to prayer: “Dear little Jesus, / . . . I’ve got a baby too . . . / Dear baby Jesus give me light” (146).

At great personal danger, California once again climbs between the wheels weeping: “Her wet / clothes and the toys packed under / Dragged her down with their weight.” Stripping off her cloak and dress, she places ‘Christine’s presents in the buggy and bringing out from under the seat,
“Johnny’s whiskey” and wrapping all “in the dress, bottles and toys,” she ties them into a bundle slinging it over her back. She, then, unharnesses the mare, “hurting her fingers / Against the swollen straps and the wet buckles.” She mounts it after tying “the pack over her shoulders / the cords / crossing her breasts” (SP 146). Clutching the sides of the snorting rearing mare, “the roar and thunder of the invisible water” pounding in her ears, California struggles to keep her head above the “sucking water” (147).

In pitch darkness, beaten by the rain and the elements, lashed by the swift flowing mass of water, she is the ‘Archetypal Feminine’ submerged in the feminine element. The river, visualized as the precious, life giving fluid oozing out from “between the thighs of the earth” represents “feminine largess” which brings woman in touch her essential nature. "Greeted as the mother, La Madre Grande, the Great Mother,” the river whose waters not only run in the ditches and riverbeds but . . . spill out of the very bodies of women as their babies are born” represent in "symbolology the great bodies of water . . . where life itself is thought to have originated” (Estes 349).

The flooded river overflowing its limits suggests the Terrible Mother, “the negative aspects of the Earth Mother,” who symbolizes danger, darkness, death and the unconscious in its terrifying aspects (Guerin 160). It hints at the possibilities that lie in California’s unconscious. She is "the earth, in her child like prophetic sleep . . . dreaming of the bath of
a storm that . . . scours more than her sea-lines . . .” It is the “white, violent cleanness,” that washes away not only the accumulated debris of “half a year’s filth,” but also razes cities to herald a time when “the people [are] fewer and the hawks / more numerous,” when “the two-footed Mammal being someways one of the nobler animals, / [will] regain / the dignity of room, the value of rareness” (“November Surf” OB 791).

California, who emerges safe on the bank after fighting a watery death, is the Good Mother who has been initiated into the role of the Death Mother: “Washing or passing through water is the archetypal transitional ritual” (Dowden 171). Arriving home in the dead of night, she finds both Johnny and Christine asleep. Exhausted as she is, she does not sleep but kindling the fire, she kneels “patiently over it, / shaping and drying the dear-bought gifts for Christmas morning” (SP 147). She, who is Patience personified, is oblivious to her own needs, her fatigue, concentrating instead her whole attention on making her family happy. She is the Good Mother, who in dying to herself can accept with resignation the pain of child-birth. A sexual tension, however, awakens within her, disturbing her equanimity. The stallion, the virile male, the animal consciousness, takes possession of her dimming her motherly instincts. Restless, divided within herself, she is “the woman covered by a huge beast” (154), the woman swamped by animal instincts. Taken over by animal passions, unable to hold her emotions in check, she flounders in
the depths of her unconscious. Absent mindedly twisting the cloth of the child's dress, she tears the dress she is supposed to have been mending. Irritated, guilt-stricken, she strikes the child in a fit of anger, only to embrace almost at once, "the small, blonde sickly body" (NP 148).

She undergoes a subtle transformation, almost unconsciously assuming the role of a siren. She is a "loose fire" of disruptive passion (150), the good mother in her giving way to the terrible Mother, the femme fatale, who brings in her wake death and destruction. She is the "dark water" of the unconscious, the split psyche, the "furrowed water," riven apart by jets of lighting. The destructive side of her dual nature is now apparent, the death mother assuming control. She, who had known Johnny for years "with neither love nor loathing," finds herself hating him. She is, however, considerate of the child. Gathering "the child against her breasts," she lays her on the bed covering her with a blanket (154). The image of the mother, "associated almost equally with beatitude and danger, birth and death, the inexhaustible nourishing breast and the tearing claws of the ogress" (Campbell, Primitive Mythology 71), manifests itself in California.

Donning the mask of the Death Mother, she who adored "the formidable dark strength" of the stallion (NP 155) is now ready to sacrifice it. "The interface between fertility and initiation is one of explosive power... It is a dangerous process often attended by an angry goddess... requiring a placation equivalent to sacrifice" (Dowden 6).
She is “Black Time, both the life and the death of all beings, the womb and tomb of the world,” “the primal, one and only ultimate reality of nature, of whom the gods themselves are but the functioning agents” (Campbell, *Occidental Mythology* 25-26). She, who is the mystic mother of rebirth,” the “goddess, darkly ominous, who might appear as one, two, three, or many . . . mother of both the living and the dead” (17), watches with hard-hearted indifference Johnny’s death agony. “Wailing a thin and bitter bird’s cry,” he lurches to his knees, only to be struck down, trampled under the hooves of “the roan thunder” (SP 157). The dog, “the dancing fury,” charges at “the plunging stallion” to give Johnny “the space” to drag his injured body to the fence. “The dog was barking and the moon was shining” as California, with stone-faced impassivity, shoots the dog. “without doubting, without hesitance” (156). Christine’s agonising cry: “O mother, you’ve hit Bruno!” is answered with a lie, “I couldn’t see the sights in the moonlight”” (157). She, who witnessed the whole gory drama, is driven by “some obscure human fidelity” to shoot the horse, only after the man, her husband is reduced to “a smear on the moon-like earth” (157). The bloody ritual, conducted on a full moon night after “the moon had risen” (154), is an initiation into rebirth for the “waxing and waning” moon, the “measure of the life-creating rhythm of the womb. . . . of time, through which beings come and go,” symbolises “the mystery of birth and equally of death which two, in sum, are aspects of one state of being” (Campbell, *Occidental Mythology* 9).
California is the Earth Goddess, the feminine life-force who annihilates only to rejuvenate. She who fires three times, her face "the mask of a woman who has killed God" (*SP 157*), is the triune goddess of creation, preservation and destruction.

Jeffers, to whom consciousness is but "the blasphemies of glow worms," rejects the "blond favorite" of the "sun-lovers," "the father of lights and noises" to embrace the "calm mother" the "charm of the dark," the primal and latter silences" of the unconscious ("Night" OB 777). He summons up, from the depths of the unconscious, the archetypal woman, the agent of the life-force who represents "the eternally present, world-supporting principle: at once the frame of the world and [the] maternal force operating within it . . ." (Campbell, *Oriental Mythology* 54). Synonymous with "the bearing and nourishing powers of the female," she who embodies the "generative force of nature" acquires the aura of a goddess, the "lunar rhythm of the womb" functioning as an archetype for "the structuring rhythm of the universe" (Campbell, *Oriental Mythology* 128).
I entered the life of the brown forest
And the great life of the ancient peaks, the patience of stone,
I felt the changes in the veins,
In the throat of the mountain. a grain in many centuries, we
have
our own time, not yours; and I was the stream
Draining the mountain wood; and I the stag drinking; and I
was
the stars.
Boiling with light, wandering alone, each one the lord of his
own
summit; and I was the darkness
Outside the stars, I included them, they were a part of me.
I was
mankind also, a moving lichen
On the cheek of the round stone... they have not made words
for it, to go behind things, beyond hours and ages,
And be all things in all time, in their returns and passages,
in the
motionless and timeless centre, ...

"The Tower Beyond Tragedy," SP 139.