The Paradox of Identity:

Women as Hidden Authoritarian Figures in Luigi Pirandello's Literary Works

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Auburn University at Montgomery
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Liberal Arts

Montgomery, AL
May 14, 2011

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Dedication

There are three men who have significantly impacted my life and allowed me to achieve my goals and thrive as a student: my late grandfather, my father, and my husband. My grandfather, Duane Echternach, is no longer here to share in the celebration of the completion of this thesis, but his guidance and love always helped me meet my aspirations. My father, Major Weiss, instilled in me at a young age a hunger to achieve, a trait which has kept me dedicated and motivated throughout graduate school. My husband, Derek Moore, has patiently endured this process with me. His understanding, love, and support helped me to complete this thesis.

I find it only fitting to dedicate my work to the people that have had the greatest influence on my life. Without these three individuals I would not be who I am today and would not have completed this thesis. I offer this work as an example of all of the time and help these men put into my education, and I hope that they are as proud of this thesis as I am.

Acknowledgments

There are several people whom I would like to thank for their contributions to this thesis: Professor Kimberly Weast, for shaping my perception of the theatre and being the first to introduce me to the works of Luigi Pirandello. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Susan Willis and Professor Mike Winkelman, for the time and support they lent me during this process. Both of you were a valuable part of this thesis, and I appreciate everything you did for me. In addition, I want to thank the faculty in the Department of English and Philosophy at Auburn University at Montgomery for making me a better student and teacher. Words cannot express how much you have given me academically, and I appreciate all of your hard work, dedication, and encouragement as I set out to complete this thesis. Thank you.

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Chapter One

Pirandello's World and His Mutable Women

Luigi Pirandello 1867-1937

Italian author and playwright Luigi Pirandello was born in the Sicilian town of Caos, translated *chaos*, during a cholera epidemic. His self-proclaimed appellation "son of Chaos" outlines the circumstances surrounding his life: anarchy, turmoil, and disease. However, Pirandello's art does not focus on these external disturbances of his life, but rather on the inner turmoil and anarchy he experienced when confronting women and society. Women were the catalyst for his chaos, and they plagued him like a disease. Pirandello is known for creating male protagonists that are in direct conflict with society. His male characters usually reject social institutions and try to survive in the world without any social labels. Social institutions were an issue for him, and he often portrayed them as the primal cause of falsities in life. His protagonists are typically viewed as strong figures that escape oppression and survive in a realm above all other characters. However, the value of Pirandello's literary women is often overlooked, along with their significant power over Pirandellian men. Women were Pirandello's crux, and they permeated every aspect of his life culturally, socially, and spiritually.

Pirandello was born on June 28, 1867 and died December 10, 1936; therefore, he had the opportunity to witness the evolution of women's position in Italian society. As a child, Pirandello observed women of the Unification era. He saw women in traditional maternal roles and the confinement of gender inequality. Yet in his teens and as an adult, Pirandello was able to watch women emerge as dominant figures within the culture. He was raised with a misogynistic view of women, and his support of fascism suggests that Pirandello had a narrow-minded perception of women's rights. However, his association with the actress Marta Abba and his devotion to his wife, mother, and daughter portray a man who glorified women. He saw their value and their dominance within his seemingly patriarchal society.

Pirandello's literary women show his contrasting views and his contradictory association with his traditional culture and his country's social history. The women in his works are representations of the women he observed, and they are integral yet fragmented figures. Pirandello captures the evolution of womanhood in Italy by creating an Everywoman, the convoluted form of femininity. His figures exude Italian women's struggle and dominance within society. Furthermore, the women of Italy changed with each transition of Lady Italy. Every political, social, and economical change experienced by the country was also felt by its women. Thus, women characters in Pirandello's works create a conundrum around the idea of femininity and try to explain the "whole" of feminine identity.

The basis of this thesis is that Pirandello was trapped by femininity. His works center on his female characters and articulate their strong feminine voice. The thesis refutes the idea that Pirandello's women are weak and instead looks at their societal conformity as a form of power, and mutability is an important attribute that Pirandello gives his women. It distinguishes them from their male counterparts and solidifies his women as divine figures. Each chapter highlights numerous aspects of femininity that influenced Pirandello. This chapter and chapter two illustrate the foundation of

Pirandello's feminine literary voice and his Everywoman, while chapters three and four explore this voice specifically in some of Pirandello's exemplary works. The final chapter of the thesis shows the extensive reach of the Pirandellian Everywoman and illustrates its correlation to Lady Italy.

Pirandello's philosophies played a major impact in the development of his Everywoman, and he used his thoughts on the unidentified self and duality to accentuate his beliefs on alienation and fragmentation. This chapter also highlights the Biblical connotations in his works and acknowledges the relevance of Eve-Mary ideology. Catholicism did have an impact on Pirandello as a child, and he developed a strong distaste for moral corruption and adultery. He believed in purity and the virginal teachings of the Catholic Church. The Biblical figures of Eve and Mary play an important role in the creation of Pirandello's Everywoman; thus the origin of each figure and its Biblical significance illuminates the dominance of the Everywoman. Furthermore, the chapter defines the difference between life versus form and its significance to feminine mutability. Although living in a world of form is the goal of Pirandello's male protagonists, Pirandello's women are his only characters who actually achieve the feat and simultaneously exist in reality and form.

One important concept in Pirandello's works is his immortalization of the women in his life. Pirandello formed his ideas, including his ideas about women, from experience and observation; therefore, chapter two evaluates the women in Pirandello's life and the relationship he had with each of them; using a psychoanalytical approach the chapter shows how Pirandello's mother, wife, love interests, sister, and daughter all influenced Pirandello's literary career and the development of the Everywoman. Chapters three and four draw a correlation between his literary characters, this concept, and the biographical. Both chapters provide a close reading of Pirandello's works and accentuate the ideas used in chapters one and two to analyze the significance and authority of his literary women.

Chapter three focuses on Pirandello's achievements in fiction, analyzing his compilation of short stories in *Loveless Love* and the novels *The Late Mattia Pascal* and *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand.* Chapter four notes Pirandello's theatrical achievements, highlighting the differences between his theatrical and fiction works. Moreover, the chapter also draws a correlation between the women in Pirandello's life and his female dramatic creations in regard to elements of society, beauty, mutability, and purity versus sin to illustrate the dominance of femininity.

The final chapter of the thesis shows Pirandello's panoramic grasp of femininity. The initial belief of this study is that Pirandello was trapped by femininity and was trying to understand women in order to make sense of his life. He wanted to define women but found the task impossible. His works reveal a man obsessed with femininity. It is ironic Pirandello's men are so widely focused upon in criticisms when the author was undoubtedly fixated on women. The point is that Pirandello realized women's power and it frightened him. He tried to control women in his works but ultimately reveals their dominance and male insecurity.

Chapter five illustrates that Pirandello's flirtation with femininity extends beyond the women in his life and works and into his culture. Social institutions were a problem for Pirandello, and he was absorbed in Italian culture because of its femininity; the chapter shows the connection between the Pirandellian Everywoman and the country. It also illustrates how deeply embedded femininity was in Pirandello's life. The thesis comes full circle and shows how Pirandello's infatuation with women was not limited to his literary endeavors; his literature reveals his personal struggle with women and acts as a testament or confession for the author.

Pirandello was trapped by femininity, for every piece of his life was influenced by women and the idea translates in his literature. His cultural makeup formed his impressions of women through social institutions and political movements, and his female characters are some of the strongest in modern literature, reflecting the transformation of women from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. Pirandello's exploration of femininity reveals the dominance of women and a highly feminine voice in Pirandello's works.

The Pirandellian Everywoman

Most critics conclude that Pirandello's literary works consist of two feminine archetypes, the mother and the woman. However, Pirandello's grasp on femininity extends beyond those two figures and encompasses a wide range of feminine characters, including the mother, woman, wife, virgin, whore, and daughter. Pirandello deals with every aspect of femininity, and he portrays women in a variety of roles, each one significant and displaying female dominance through mutability. Thus, Pirandello does not merely create two standard feminine characters; he creates an array which are portrayed through the Pirandellian Everywoman.

All of the women in Pirandello's works exhibit the same polarity between purity and sin. Pirandello viewed women as divided figures and in his works he illustrates the roles of wife, mother, daughter, virgin, and whore using the Biblical representations of Mary and Eve. He contrasts the polarity of their characteristics to show how all women are both figures at various stages, thus forming his Everywoman. He uses typical feminine characteristics, defined by these women, to display feminine authority over men and how traits that are usually considered weak, such as mutability, are actually strengths. Mutability is the key to Pirandello's Everywoman and the source behind her power. What would appear as conformity for Pirandello's women is actually an adaptation used as a way to co-exist in images of life and form. Pirandello's men also try to master an adaptive form, but fail. His women, on the other hand, cohesively exist within that realm. There are several facets that created Pirandello's belief system and contributed to the development of the Pirandellian Everywoman, notably his culture and Catholicism.

Pirandello's culture contributed to his pessimistic view on life. He viewed people as fragmented and alienated. He also believed that true communication between genders was impossible because of social institutions. German philosophy played a major role in shaping Pirandello's ideas, and two philosophers who impacted Pirandello were Schopenhauer and Nietzche. Schopenhauer presented an image of man as "doomed to isolation and unhappiness" (DiGaetani xxii). His dark, pessimistic ideology and his belief that man is in constant conflict and can never find happiness in life parallel the concepts addressed in Pirandello's works.

On the other hand, Friedrich Nietzsche believed that there was hope for society, but the hope for mankind's future rested on a superman figure who would lead people into a period of enlightenment (DiGaetani xxiii). Nietzsche's ideology influenced Pirandello's social and political thinking and opened him to the appeal of Fascism, which appeared in several of Pirandello's plays. Mussolini was the "superhero" that Italy needed, and Pirandello supported Mussolini's notions until fascist ideals became convoluted once Mussolini created a totalitarian government and reneged on his promise to support Pirandello's Arts Theatre (DiGaetani xxiii). Pirandello tries to create the "superman" motif through his male protagonist characters. His men try to renounce society, reveal its falsities, and convince people that they live in an untrue universe manipulated by social institutions. His male figures view people as prisoners of society. However, Pirandello's men fail to be "superheroes" because they reject society. Therefore, they are deemed insane and hold no authority within their culture to institute change. Their power is false, much like the power associated with Fascism. Pirandello's women, on the other hand, exist in form and life, therefore controlling both.

Two other fundamentals interwoven into his themes were the idea that "art was tied to life, and literary language should imitate the speech of the environment depicted" (Bassanese 24). His ideas were formulated from the revolutions he witnessed in scientific technology, social institutions, and cultural thought. Italy was rarely at peace, and every time it experienced a moment of cultural prosperity economic decline followed. Hence, Italy was one of the best sources of inspiration for Pirandello. Susan Bassanese illustrates Pirandello's literary struggle, writing:

> Pirandello spent a lifetime and thousands upon thousands of pages in attempting to "see better inside." Having personally experienced the displacements caused by the technological shift from oil to electricity, the

> cultural shift from romanticism to surrealism, and the psychological shift from ontological certainty to the Freudian subconscious, the author reveals their impact on the heart and mind in the questioning, reflective, tragicomic, and enlightening creations born in his vigorous imagination. (1)

As Basanese notes, Pirandello had firsthand exposure to Italy's cultural transformation. The shift from romanticism to modernism highlighted different facets, positive and negative, of the country. People changed with their culture, and Pirandello wanted to capture the simultaneous transformation. More specifically, Sicily was a region drenched in pessimism, and as Pirandello's homeland it was a major source of inspiration. He saw the impoverished condition of his cultural region contrasted to the grandiose images depicted by northerners.

Sicilian ideology was entrenched in tragedy. There were outbreaks of violence, frustration from its inhabitants, and marred land that seemed incapable of recuperation. Pirandello's philosophies portray the torment of Sicily. George Bernstein identifies the relevance of cultural dimensions in Pirandello's works, explaining that "[w]hen Pirandello wrote about the struggle between appearance and reality and the need to wear masks, he worked not only as a creative person who had found his central concern, but also as a Sicilian who expressed the torments of life on the island" (104). Sicily underwent a variety of struggles that fueled Pirandello's pessimistic thoughts. His Sicilian pessimism makes his characters' torment inescapable; they are prisoners of their environment. Pirandello's lifetime was filled with this chaos and his personal life mirrored his cultural context. For Pirandello, Lady Italy controlled its inhabitants, and its mutability left Italians confused, scared, alienated, and with an impending sense of doom.

Women appear to be Pirandello's crux in both life and literature. Pirandello's culture helped to create his philosophy on the unidentified self and duality. The theory of the unidentified self, a major theme in Pirandello's works, shows the direct correlation between Pirandello's culture and his characters. Women become the epitome of the unidentified self, for they are nothing and something all at one time; therefore, they can never be defined. Pirandello felt that people wear masks in order to conform to the pressures of society, and in doing so they hide who they really are from themselves and others. Hence, people do not truly know themselves and therefore cannot know each other. Pirandello's women outline a different aspect of this ideology. Women have a deeper capacity to understand life and themselves because of social conformity.

Pirandello's philosophy creates a deep sense of alienation, something undoubtedly familiar to Pirandello; however, only the men appear alienated and affected by their isolation. Pirandello built his ideology based on the relationship he witnessed between his parents and the one he experienced with his wife. As Bassanese notes, "[t]he impossibility of achieving authentic communication, either in marriage or any other human relationship, became a core idea in Pirandello's expanding literary production" (6). He believed that marriage was a confining institution and that men and women could not communicate within it, that instead the roles played by husband and wife turned a "sentimental relationship into a battle for control" (Donati 144). Both men and women seek power in a relationship while trying to maintain the propriety of their domestic positions and hiding their true selves. The difference is that women successfully combine their role in society with their mutable persona, whereas men try to reject society.

Furthermore, duality is a prominent theme that underlines most Pirandellian ideology. Pirandello believed that life was like a big puppet show "without connection or rationale" (Bassanese 3). All of Pirandello's characters are doubled, and the women usually reflect the male character's struggles. Duality was indicative of Pirandello's personality, and it was an idea he struggled with throughout his life. Bassanese illustrates Pirandello's thoughts on duality by exposing his own burden with it:

> The letters to his fiancée describe a dualistic "little me" and "Big Me" who constantly do battle and split the future bridegroom in two, personifying the antagonistic drives in his life. The "Big Me" is directed toward solitude, study, and achievement: the contemplative life of the serious intellectual. The "little me" is drawn to the comfortable security of marriage and family life: so-called normalcy. (5-6)

Pirandello's inner turmoil typifies the battle of the human condition. The identification of the "Big Me" and "little me" symbolizes the struggle most face when trying to establish a personal identity. Individuals' quest to find their identity solidifies Pirandello's point that people are unsure of themselves. The theme of duality creates an interesting dichotomy with the unidentified self and places individuals against society, nature, God, and themselves. For women, duality adds another component to their already incongruent identity, including their fragmentation between the two archetypal figures, Eve and Mary.

Women are at the epicenter of Pirandellian ideology. For Pirandello women exist in a realm of their own, and his feminine ideology is twofold: Women are creators of chaos, turmoil, inner subjugation, and life, as well as victims of circumstance, gender, and culture. They are an Everywoman. They exhibit a polarity between authority and subservience, skewing the lines between both and mingling the role of dictator and victim. Women, based on Pirandellian concepts, can essentially be anything or nothing. They have no true individual identity, and they do not need one to have power in Pirandello's works. Instead his women create themselves through one element that remains consistent, society. Society always exists, and therefore, since women immerse themselves within it, they become the dominant figures. Feminine duality highlights women's mutability and illustrates the formation of the Pirandellian Everywoman. In Pirandello's works, women are both Eve and Mary, and Biblical referencing is used in Pirandello's literature to acknowledge women's dominance and accentuate the power of mutability.

Eve versus Mary:
The Origin of Female Polarity

The best explanation of Pirandello's Eve and Mary dichotomy is outlined in the Bible. Although the institution of religion does not seem important to Pirandello, the moralistic teachings of the Catholic Church did influence the playwright. When Pirandello was growing up God was absent from his household; however, he was taken to church by a housemaid when he was younger and developed his own theories of life and the hereafter. His brief exposure to religion allowed him to form strong opinions about purity and sin in relation to the teachings of Catholicism. It is impossible to ignore the Biblical notions projected in Pirandello's literature, for they contribute to the development of his literary women and highlight their mutability. The Biblical Eve and Mary are represented throughout Pirandello's literature and lay the foundation for the other figures in his works. Eve and Mary ideology convolutes the roles of women and allows them to be an Everywoman.

Importantly, Biblical allusions personify the characteristics of femininity in Pirandello. For instance, the events surrounding the formation of Adam and Eve help to explain the origin of feminine mutability. Their creation also hints that men and women were once the same, pieces of each other, suggesting that men lost their femininity at the start of creation. In the Bible, Genesis retells how God created everything, the earth, Adam, animals, and lastly Eve. Mankind was formed in two different ways. God creates Adam from the ground or clay, outside the Garden of Eden. Eve, on the other hand, was created when "...the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman: and brought her to Adam" (Genesis 2:21-22). She is created from the matter that created Adam and is formed in the Garden of Eden. The creation is well known by most religious sects and usually ends with the conclusion that women are subservient to men. However, for Pirandellian ideology the matter from which Adam and Eve were formed is an important facet within the creation story and reveals the birth of feminine mutability.

Adam was fashioned from the ground or clay. The material he is made from is moldable and changeable. It can be shaped into anything or broken down and reshaped into something. Clay can also be hardened and kept in one form. The characteristics of clay suggest mutability, which in the beginning can be associated with Adam. In addition, Adam was created in God's image and although God is referred to as "He" in the Bible, God is never given a gender. In the Bible, Moses asks God His name, and God replies ".... I AM WHO AM. He said: Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: HE WHO IS, hath sent me to you" (Exodus 3:14). Notably, English language translations of the Bible interpret this iconic phrase using the King James Version of the Bible, which reads "I AM THAT I AM." In both translations, the implication in the statement is that God can be whatever He wants to be and is neither male nor female, but possibly both. Thus, if Adam was initially created in God's image, then Adam could have maintained masculine and feminine characteristics. When Eve is formed, the masculine and feminine are separated. Eve is created from Adam's rib and is thus a part of his side. She is created from a piece of Adam, suggesting that femininity derived from him. This idea is solidified through Adam's statement in the Bible, when he declares, "..., [t]his is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man" (Genesis 2:23). Adam's declaration maintains the idea that Woman was extracted from Man. Additionally, Woman being "taken out of Man" suggests that Man lost something with the development of Woman.

Moreover, Eve's creation marks the end of male mutability. Adam becomes Eve's pawn, and her authority over him is evident based on his submission to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. He is subservient to her from the moment she is created. Men become a form of "solid" clay; they stay stationary and are unable to adapt as women can. After the Fall, God deems Adam as "provider and worker." He declares to Adam, "…Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life" (Gen. 3:17). God confines Adam to a single role. Eve, on the other hand, was punished with pain in childbirth, but was not necessarily confined to a specific societal role. Male bodies do not undergo the same transitions as females. When Eve is taken from Adam, she inherits his moldable persona and takes on the attributes of clay. Women, especially in Pirandello's literature, adapt to society, shift with situations, and "shape" into whatever form they need to present at the time. Feminine mutability is a major theme in Pirandello's works. Although it is typically viewed as a weak characteristic, it is actually a divine attribute and connects women to God. Women can be whatever they want, like God. For Pirandello, women were creators, gods which dictated his life. His quest to understand women and his search for the meaning of femininity parallels Man's reflective relationship with God. Hence, Pirandello elevates women to the status of god in his works.

In addition, Eve was created in the Garden of Eden, whereas Adam was formed outside of it. Eve's formation within the Garden again suggests a divine status not given to men. Though Eve instigates Mankind's fall from grace, she also exemplifies women's open perception of various scenarios and the power they hold over men. Eve is approached by the serpent; she is open to what he says and makes the decision to defy God's word. Eve had the ability to rationalize the situation and draw conclusions. She also gives Adam the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge and he eats it, which displays Eve's authority over Adam.

Eve is also typically associated with the figures of the First Mother and the Whore. Pirandello uses those stereotypes to give each of his women a mark of sin. Eve's fall, her disobedience to God, and her manipulation of Adam have placed her in the role of *femme fatale*. In history she is viewed as a conniving figure and the cause for the ruination of mankind. Early church fathers personified Eve as the cause of instinct and desire in femininity. She breaks divine law and condemns all women for centuries. In early theological discourse church fathers such as Tertullian defame women based on the actions of Eve, writing:

> The judgment of God upon this sex lives on in this age; therefore, necessarily the guilt should live on also. You are the gateway of the devil; you are the one who unseals the curse of that tree, and you are the first one to turn your back on the divine law; you are the one who persuaded him whom the devil was not capable of corrupting; you easily destroyed the image of God, Adam. (51)

Though Tertullian's ideology was developed centuries before Pirandello, his comments remained relevant in patriarchal societies, and especially in modern Italy. Women are consistently displayed as figures of corruption and sin. In Pirandello's works, women destroy men. There is always an odd marker hanging over women in Pirandellian literature. Tertullian poses a question to women: "Do you not know that you are Eve?" (51) Women cannot escape the reputation of Eve and are reminded of her sin through the pain of childbirth. In Pirandello's literature childbirth is associated with female disfigurement, mentally and physically. In addition, as women change from one identity to the next, they undergo a metaphorical death. Pirandello gives his women both these attributes, associating them with their origins.

Sexuality is the underlying characteristic associated with Eve, and both it and adultery become exclusively correlated with her. It was perceived that women used their beauty as a way to manipulate and corrupt men, developing the belief in a *femme fatale*, as if women were men's kryptonite. Marbod of Rennes was another ancient writer that defined women as the "scheming enemy" of men. He writes, "Woman the unhappy source, evil root, and corrupt offshoot, who brings to birth every sort of outrage throughout the world. For she instigates quarrels, conflicts, dire dissensions; she provokes fighting between old friends, divides affections, shatters families" (100). In Pirandello's works, women do provoke men. Though they appear innocent, their beauty or allure often instigates quarrels, accentuates familial issues, and creates conflict.

Beauty, in Italian culture, underwent numerous changes based on shifts in societal infrastructure. Since women were personified as objects, their physical appearance could not be ignored. By making beauty a negative characteristic, men were able to place their desires on women, blaming them for male sexual desire and believing women used their sexuality as a means of control over men. Hence, men were warned of the dangers women presented. Society also plays a part in how women are perceived sexually. Oftentimes, in Pirandello's literature, innocent women are condemned for acts they did not commit, whereas guilty women are judged innocent by society. Pirandello also uses the image of the Whore to attract men; however, his women are portrayed as blameless for the attraction because of the male characters' flaws. He contrasts female innocence with sexuality as a way to showcase women's power over men. Eve becomes a symbol of beautiful innocence and also of sexuality and temptation because of her persuasion.

In history women are often viewed as desirous, sexual creatures. However, Stephen Gundle explains the beliefs of Doctor Paolo Mantegazza, whose works outlined an unconventional view of women and sexuality. Mantegazza, according to Gundle, claims:

> ...female beauty was a consequence of the patriarchal order of society. He foresaw that 'civil progress will lead us gradually to demand other virtues from the daughters of Eve,' but was swift to add that, 'as long as man walks the surface of the planet, the primary virtue of women as far as he is concerned will be that of being beautiful.' (55)

Mantegazza's point is that female sexuality is perceived negatively because of patriarchy. Men glorify sexuality and make it a focal point in society. Therefore, since beauty is a part of patriarchal society's infrastructure, all women are subjected to Eve stereotypes and can portray an image of her. Such sexuality is a conundrum in Pirandello's literature, because women do use their beauty as a way to manipulate men; however, women do not always intentionally use their sexuality as a form of persuasion.

Eve also influences the perception of motherhood, and in Pirandello's works motherhood is both negative and positive. Motherhood originates from Eve. However, the pains of childbirth and the stress of motherhood are all viewed as consequences of Eve's rebellion. As such, motherhood has two connotations in Pirandello's works. Mothers are either disfigured mentally or physically as a way to associate them with sin and Eve. However, motherhood was also valued by Italian culture, and mothers are often portrayed as powerful, self-sacrificing, and revered figures in Pirandello's literature. Christianity gets its foundation from early paganism, which valued femininity and the role of the mother. Thus, Christianity splits the role of femininity and creates a polarity between sin and purity. Eve's representation of motherhood is associated with mortality and death, unlike Mary who is the mother of Christ, the eternal savior. Adhering to Catholic theology, Pirandello does not allow women to dismiss their sinful origins associated with Eve, but he does enable his women to achieve a form of redemption simulated through images of Mary.

Mary is the second dominant figure pertinent to Pirandellian feminine ideology. She saves each woman from scorn and judgment. St. Jerome countered his Biblical peers and emphasized the relevance of Mary's presence on femininity. St. Jerome notes that "[d]eath came through Eve, but life has come through Mary. And thus the gift of virginity has been bestowed most richly upon women, seeing that it has had its beginning from a woman" (76). Mary personifies the idea that although sin began from woman, so did grace. Pirandello uses this Biblical paradox to highlight the mutability and fluidity of his women.

Mary and her immaculate conception of Christ are first mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew. The story notes how Mary becomes pregnant before she is married. Her betrothed, Joseph, contemplates ending the engagement; however, he is visited by angels who explain Mary's conception and the child. The Bible states, "*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel*, which being interpreted is, *God with us*" (Matt. 1:23). Though Mary's part in Christ's birth and resurrection is small, her status as the Virgin Mother purifies the evils of femininity brought on by Eve. Motherhood becomes a "noble profession" because of Mary; it is no longer a punishment but a divine privilege bestowed on women by God.

The contrast of Mary to Eve helps illuminate the opposing view of femininity. Motherhood in Italy, and in Pirandello's works, is connected to sentimentality and compassion. Reeder notes that the philosophical and psychological makeup of women defined by Lodovico Frati is formulated from women's inability to reason. He explains:

> Negating women's ability to reason, while lauding their capacity for affection, he [Frati] argued that sentiment was women's greatest virtue. He went on to write that: 'women's love passes through two distinct but coexistent phases: conjugal love and maternal love. In their love for their children women achieve self-sacrifice, and are capable of great acts of heroism. (101)

Women's sentimentality, love, and compassion do not appear to be associated with Eve. The self-sacrifice of motherhood and the heroism connected to it is not obtained through the First Mother. Another facet shifting the motherhood persona is the idea that Eve's path to motherhood happens through her relations with Adam, whereas Mary's are through God. Mary's virginal innocence is what establishes her as a figure of redemption. Her Biblical significance penetrated the heart of Italian culture, wherein women were not considered adults until they were married, and they were to know nothing about sexuality or marital relations until their marriage. The Virgin Mary was idolized and most Italian women married as pure, virginal "children." In addition, Mary's beauty is emphasized through her purity, not her sexuality. Most aspects of femininity are unimportant with the Mary figure, and the only feminine attribute allotted her is motherhood. Mary's mutability is expressed through her transformation of femininity. She changes male attitudes and bends them to her will. She is one of the first feminine figures in Christian theology to be revered and celebrated.

Another idea associated with Mary is the representation of Sophia. Leeming claims that aspects of pagan goddesses exist in Proverbs 8:22-31, where Wisdom is personified as a woman (95). Sophia is viewed as wisdom by some Gnostics and Christians and is portrayed as the wife of God. However, she is never depicted as a sexual being (Leeming, *From Olympus*, 151); her part as divine wisdom was overtaken by the image of the Holy Spirit, yet she still has significance. Several of Pirandello's female characters associated with Mary have a type of Immaculate Conception. They create images of the men, and their status as mother-figures portrays them as a type of divine mother. Mary immaculately conceives through God and can thus, similar to Sophia, be perceived as His wife. She also takes on the role of Mother of God and the mythological status as Queen of heaven through God's personification as the Holy Spirit. Mary's authority is partly derived from early representations of the Earth Mother. Leeming points out that the "great goddess typically took on a triune form. She was maiden, mother, and crone. She was the phases of nature—of the moon, of agriculture. She was birth, life, and death" (*From Olympus* 143). Images of Mary in Pirandello's works correspond to all three figures associated with the myth. Mary as a crone was developed during early Christianity as a way to deter individuals from deifying the virgin. However, the image of Mary as a crone faded and she is usually connected to the figures of mother and maiden in modern Christianity.

Another aspect of Mary ideology significant to Pirandello is Mary's personification as the church. For medieval Christians Mary was "not only the representation of the church as an institution—the bride and the holy mother of God—but an object of veneration and the primary receiver of prayer" (Leeming, *From Olympus* 146). This interpretation of Mary led to images of her as the Black Madonna and the goddess of the earth. Pirandello's literature serves as a shrine to women; his works are almost Biblical. There are scenes where the female characters are deified by the male figures. Pirandello's use of first person narration in his works establishes the stories as a type of confession. The strength of the female characters and their representations as Biblical figures place them in the role of witnesses for Pirandello's male protagonists who act as confessors. Several of the settings also elevate women to glorified motherly positions for the protagonist, with the men usually kneeling and the women consoling. The image is reminiscent of depictions of Mary cradling Christ after his crucifixion. When acting as Mary the mother, the women are typically the protagonist's wife taking on the role of mother, such as with Dida and Moscarda in *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand*, or Adriana and Mattia in *The Late Mattia Pascal*. Thus, women act as mother and wife at the same time. Pirandello also immortalizes his women in his literature just as images of the Virgin Mary are preserved in the Bible and history.

In Pirandello's stories womanhood is created through the juxtaposition of Eve and Mary. Women are both stained and pure. Pirandello gives his women attributes from both figures in order to show women as shifting figures and never who they appear to be. Mary-like figures can be associated with Eve as simply as Eve-like models can become Mary. Pirandello's point is that women are Eve and Mary. Women can never escape the sins that descended to them from their First Mother, but they are redeemed by their Sainted Mother. In his works Pirandello defines his Everywoman by using the contrasting characteristics of Eve and Mary to create feminine contradictions and show feminine superiority. The divine attributes of the Everywoman place her in a realm separate from Pirandello's men; she exists in form and life, a state which further illustrates aspects of her mutability.

Women as Life and Form:

The Power of Mutability

Pirandellian feminine ideology is a convoluted notion. In order to understand how Pirandello's women can be one, none, and one hundred thousand simultaneously, his theories on life and form have to be explored. Pirandello's women live between life and form; they are real and they are creations. Pirandello believed that women understood life better and therefore were able to handle it more wisely than men. His characters, men and women, are reflective beings. However, women conform to their surroundings and muse over their reflections, desires, and instincts differently than the men, allowing them to survive in Pirandello's world. Men are associated with logic and reason, while women are believed to be instinctual and desirous. This old world view was formatted from staunch discourse interpreted from the Bible. Early philosophers highlighted women as instinctual creatures, unable to control urges. In addition, they tried to use men's characteristics of logic and reason as examples of male mutability. For instance, philosophers such as Aristotle, referring to procreation, claimed that "[t]he female always provides the material, the male provides that which fashions the material into shape... [t]hus the physical part, the body, comes from the female, and the Soul from the male, since the Soul is the essence of a particular body" (*Defamed* 40). For a long time men were associated with mutability and the creation of the soul. Feminine mutability was overlooked, and women were simply perceived as "matter" designed to house male material.

Facets of feminine mutability were marked as evil, and men were lent credit for typically feminine attributes like procreation. Women's ability to bear children, their physical differences, and their menstruation have all been subjugated as weaknesses by male scrutiny. However, in Pirandello's literature men remain stationary because of their logic and reason, and women's instinctual attributes mark them as mutable. Although early philosophers placed women into the category of form, Pirandello illustrates that "form" is moldable. His perception of form accentuates its feministic origins and underlines the fact that women, literally and metaphorically, are more mutable then men, constantly in motion, since form in Pirandello's works allows characters to move from one identity to the next.

Life, on the other hand, remains stationary because of societal conventions. Hence, male reason and logic keep men from fully being able to dismiss life around them. In Italy, men are raised with a sense of entitlement, nostalgia, and purpose, which keeps them bound to cultural codes. Pirandello uses the idea of men's reliance on conventions in his works to portray his men as weaker. Pirandello's men cannot readily dismiss the roles they are conditioned to uphold. Italian women, on the other hand, are taught to conform to circumstances and change based on events and people. They adapt to any role they are given, yet they do not bind themselves to societal codes. Therefore, women give themselves the freedom to take on numerous roles by embracing the societal conventions and shifting within them. Society does not give women any codes they have to uphold in Pirandello's literature. Therefore, they are free and can act on their desires.

Adriano Tilgher explains Pirandello's obsession with life versus form, claiming that the feeling of life is stiffened by the boundaries used to create life such as conventions, mores, traditions, and laws (21). The idea is that people are trapped by society and cannot be who they really are because of social conventions. Individuals create their identity through society, and women have multiple identities because they assume multiple roles.

The wisdom of life, according to Tilgher, can be found through "...spiritual fusion or fluidity that one's soul may go on from form to form without finally coagulating in any, without fearing the impurities it inevitably carries along in its ceaseless flow, since that very flow will purify it: here is the practical wisdom of life" (24). Women never cease motion in Pirandello's works, but his men stay in one form and try to manipulate their surroundings through that form. Yet the idea is that true motion, living life within the moment and recognizing living in that moment, is truth. A soul that is not imprisoned in any one form and that can pass from one form to another constitutes true freedom to live and an identification of true identity.

Pirandello's point is that people have to be able to view themselves through another's eyes and understand the identity associated with them by that person in order to come to terms with who they are as individuals. Pirandello's men struggle with their desire for that freedom, but they cannot comprehend it or accept it. They reject society around them, glimpse their true self, and then become engrossed and even maddened by society's reaction toward them. Pirandello's men become alienated and cannot cohesively exist as agents of form, because they are based on the fundamental principles that associate men with logic and reason.

On the other hand, Pirandellian women shed their identity in the same way a snake sheds its skin. Women are content with shifting forms and assuming the identity expected of them at the time, which is why Pirandello's women survive within life and society, whereas his men continuously fight against it. Daniela Bini elaborates on Pirandello's interpretation and fascination with women, stating:

> Yet it is not so much the mystery of woman – the mystery of female sexuality – that intrigues Pirandello, but woman as truer to life. If the mysterious characters are always women, the reason is only in part Pirandello's fascination with and curiosity for woman's sexuality. A more important reason, I argue, is that woman is the perfect character to represent the alogical nature of life, since she is a being that does not construct herself as much as man. (*Enacting* 183)

As both life and form, women have a courage that men lack. Men, starting with Adam, have been victims of rationalism and cannot wholly abandon themselves as women can, because to let themselves become irrational would mean they become something unworthy of a man (Bini, *Enacting* 182). Pirandellian women represent true nakedness; they are mannequins, the ultimate actors, waiting to be dressed and placed in a role. His women play life and treat the world as their stage.

Chapter Two

The Creation of the Pirandellian Everywoman

The cultural evolutions that Pirandello witnessed greatly influenced his perception of women. However, although women culturally intrigued Pirandello, nothing was more inspirational than his familial unit. Pieces of Pirandello's literature contain autobiographical scenarios that Pirandello experienced or saw for himself pertaining to his family and friends. His image of women also undoubtedly derived from these experiences. In his literature, Pirandello's women are one, none, and one hundred thousand; they are "something" and "nothing" all at one time. Their ability to wear masks simultaneously is a testament to the transfiguration of the women who surrounded Pirandello. Women were an enigma for Pirandello, and their reactions and relationships with people both intrigued and baffled him. Pirandello's family exuded the juxtaposition between the established Risorgimento and emerging modern images of women. As a result, the women in Pirandello's life and his tumultuous relationship with his father laid the foundation for the Pirandellian Everywoman.

Women create a complex dichotomy in Italian history. Their roles were solidified by centuries of patriarchal conditioning, and their position in society as wives and mothers was expected to be followed. Pirandello, although a modernist writer, was shaped by the nineteenth century. As Gaspare Giudice notes:

> Nearly everybody has forgotten that Luigi Pirandello was born in the heart of the nineteenth century. His critics have always projected him forwards, into modern times, yet the thirty-three years, almost half of his life, which

> he spent in the nineteenth century, were the years of the most decisive events of his childhood and his cultural development. (1)

The polarity between the ethos he was raised with and the evolving ones he witnessed helped to create his obsession with duality. He was a man divided culturally and personally. Moreover, gender opposition created more confusion and uncertainty for Pirandello. Growing up in nineteenth-century Sicily, the societal lines between men and women were seemingly clear. George E. Dickinson and Michael R. Leming outline traditional family life in Italy, stating:

> Italian families were patriarchal in that the father was the head of the family, held the highest status, and was responsible for making a living. The typical father was highly authoritarian and a strict disciplinarian, customarily using verbal and physical punishment to control the children. In many families, the father's control was based on fear inculcated in the family members; positive reinforcement tended to be doled out sparingly. (149)

The traditional Italian folkways of nineteenth-century Italy were created from a long line of historical philosophy and theology. In Italy, male and female roles were formulated from basic principles created during the times of Plato and Aristotle. Each gender had specific responsibilities and functions within the nuclear family. Men represented logic, structure, and control. As husbands and fathers they were domineering and authoritative and were perceived as powerful because of their physicality. Hence, it was believed that men were meant to dominate over women because of women's obvious weaknesses. Yet women were considered sacred because of their ability to procreate and were needed in order to complete the Italian patriarchal dichotomy.

Women maintained power within two aspects of Italian culture, the household and their virginity. Through these areas women were able to exercise their authority over men. Pirandello is aware of women's power and understands the threat they pose to patriarchal society through their sexuality and intellect (Bini, *Enacting* 165). In his literature Pirandello explores the use of these traits within male dominated culture. He witnesses how the women in his life used their sexuality and intellect to control situations. It is not a coincidence Pirandello's literary women undergo some of the same challenges as their biographical counterparts.

The traditions that were a part of Pirandello's childhood makeup began to evolve towards the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Gender roles became convoluted after the First World War, and femininity changed as women became more involved in the workforce, and the feminine voice long subdued by patriarchy was growing. The flaws of patriarchal Italy were exposed, and the glorified values of the early nineteenth century began to decline. Italy's traditions had thrived on the illusion that women were subservient to men. However, Maggie Günsberg claims that "patriarchy can survive only through the continuing process of this endeavor, with female sexuality forever needing to be controlled and possessed and forever remaining just out of reach" (*Patriarchal* 5). Women had never been seen as equal to men. However, their entrance into the workforce manipulated the boundaries of patriarchy, and as women began to gain a voice in Italy, the matriarchal dominance in the country became evident. Female sexuality was no longer in need of being controlled. As such, male-dominated Italy also began to change.

In Italy, women dominated the household, a power that was greatly underestimated at the time. According to Dickinson and Leming, "the mother was the center of the family and had a strong voice in important family decisions." Mothers, the authorities of the house, were expected to raise children and mediate between the father and children (149). As the center of the family women influenced the way children were raised and the tone set between them and the father. Women's intellect manifested itself in the way women handled their families. By controlling the tone of the household and communication lines between father and children, women had the ability to manipulate circumstances and familial dynamics. The mother determined whether the household was peaceful or in turmoil. She dictated the father and child's actions and acted as a liaison and mediator. Though the father was expected to be the family head, he merely acted as an image versus an actual authoritarian. Stefano Pirandello projected the image of an authoritarian figure through his demeanor. However, although he was stern, Caterina was able to maneuver and manipulate Stefano's outbursts. Pirandello's parents' household was the image of traditional Italy.

Another example of feminine dominance that emerged from traditional Italian ideals was the status of women's honor. Because female honor reflected her family's reputation and status, traditionally men had an important and pertinent task as protectors. George Bernstein outlines the significance of female honor and its connection to Italian status:

> Male family members were responsible for the women's honor, and good fathers had to see to it that their daughter's virginity was preserved until marriage. Women's nature was seen as being in conflict with the interests and reputation of the family [...] If a daughter lost her virginity before marriage, it was a stain on the family's honor. (99)

Men's roles as protectors placed women in a victimized situation, as if women could not defend themselves without male protection. However, the fact that women determined the stability of the familial image through their honor was overlooked.

The theory of protection created a double bind for women. They were important "property" in need of protection, yet they were viewed as property. Bernstein explains the historical impact of this notion, claiming "[t]he general consensus is that the historical past has led Sicilians to place enormous stock in their sense of honor and respect and to be extremely vigilant about their women for fear of loss of honor by the women, a loss touching the family as a whole" (95). Women could either bring their family honor or disgrace them by the status of their own honor. The changes in Italian culture exposed the fact that these traditional Italian ideals were dictated by women. Thus, during the late nineteenth century and into the modern era, it became evident that traditional Italian ideals were dominated by women, and society was actually a matriarchal society masked by patriarchal ethos.

Pirandello's literary women mirror the transformation of women in Italy. As a young man Pirandello was fascinated by the feminine body and the lack of communication skills between genders. His curiosity, fear, compassion, and respect for women developed early in his childhood. As noted in chapter one, most critics divide

Pirandello's women into two figures, Mother and Woman, that are created from Italian ethos. Although his literature does reflect these two tumultuous characters, limiting Pirandello to the creation of only two feminine images is unjust. He developed women characters and analyzed their suffering and dominance past the idealistic figures of Mother and Woman. Pirandello's literature also encompasses the figures of Wife, Virgin, and Whore. As such, the mutability of his literary women suggests that Pirandello created an Everywoman who is each of these characters at some point. Pirandello's women cannot be limited to one image, and in order to fashion his images and mold the inevitable Everywoman, Pirandello had to use the real life women set before him.

Mother Figures

The Mother:
Caterina Ricci Gramitto

Comparatively, little is known about Pirandello's mother. Caterina Ricci Gramitto was raised in a traditional Italian household that firmly supported patriotic Sicily (Giudice 1). The ideals she was raised with established her as a subservient wife and mother. Based on all accounts Caterina was not an overly beautiful woman with the exception of her eyes. She was nearly twenty-eight when Stefano Pirandello proposed, and she considered herself an old maid who had given her youth to her country (Giudice 3). In November of 1863, Caterina and Stefano were married. Marriage was not based on love in patriarchal Italy, but was important for the unification of two families (Dickinson and Leming 149). Caterina and Stefano lived by the societal codes they were given.

According to John Louis DiGaetani, Pirandello's mother was "a mere shadow, and a nervous shadow at that, in the presence of the domineering and rigid Sicilian father" (xx). Caterina was an extension of Stefano and her mannerisms are described as meek and timid. Her timidity appears to have infiltrated into her role as a mother. Pirandello obviously loved his mother; however, biographies suggests that he did not receive enough love from her. As a shadow of her husband, Caterina fades into the background, and most of Pirandello's autobiographical information suggests that his father's actions and the lack of his mother's impacted the writer the most.

Motherhood and images of Pirandello's mother appear throughout his literature. Dickinson and Leming make the point that "no role presents women with such rewards and anxieties as motherhood" (310). In Italy, motherhood was a glorified position, and it lent women status and significance amongst men. In most cultures, the only aspect that sets femininity above masculinity is procreation. Therefore, in an effort to maintain patriarchy, men try to control birthrates by setting standards and placing value on motherhood. Institutions such as Fascism and its family propaganda are representative of men's struggle to control femininity. On the other hand, women were highly regarded for their ability to reproduce. Procreation places women on a realm separate from men and distances them from masculinity. Thus, motherhood is double binding.

Motherhood allowed women to obtain a sense of cultural and personal fulfillment, defining womanhood through motherhood. Having children gave women status in their homes because they controlled the maternal domain and had authority within it, manipulating communication lines between father and children as well as shaping their children's impressionable minds. The household reflected status, and women had the ability to create an ambiance befitting their household. In some respects, motherhood was an avenue to unrealized power for women.

However, in order for women to have power or self-worth they had to have children. Women did not have an existence of their own and could only create their identity through their children. Maggie Günsberg analyzes the idealization of motherhood:

> The consequent cultural idealization of motherhood sanctifies not merely asexuality in particular, but also humility, self-sacrifice, and suffering. Humility and obedience, as prescribed by the vows of marriage, are encouraged precisely in order to camouflage the unavoidable conflict of basic interests involved in complete and enforced abnegations of the self. (*Patriarchal* 26)

The idea of self-sacrifice in marriage can be attributed to the sins of the first mother, Eve. Part of Eve's punishment for disobeying God and eating the fruit of knowledge was the pains of childbirth, "To the woman also he said: I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children…" (Genesis 3:16). The verse continues with God declaring Eve as subservient to Adam. Through her role in the Fall she loses her identity and status.

Another idea proposed by Pirandello and highlighted in Italian culture is that women lose identity through motherhood because of the confines prescribed by marriage. Marriage is a "society" of its own and includes a set of rights and obligations essential to the social functioning of the family (Dickinson and Leming). By women and men's abiding by the conventions outlined in a marriage they reaffirm gender roles. Marriage is a contract or an agreement, and for Italian women it was an agreement oftentimes made by their fathers. As Günsberg outlines above, motherhood and marriage forces women to deny themselves, so women do not have self-identity. Viewing his own mother, Pirandello witnessed how motherhood consumed her. Caterina did not have an existence beyond her marriage, but an identity that was manipulated by the roles she had to play.

Moreover, motherhood seeks to make women asexual figures. The asexuality of motherhood is usually associated with the redeeming mother, the Virgin Mary, which glorifies the image of the mother. Sicilian mothers are expected to eliminate the aspect of female desire and are typically associated with the Virgin Mary. According to Dickinson and Leming's analysis of love, "men seem to separate sex and love while women connect them." However, the authors also acknowledge Canican's study that explains "paradoxically sexual intercourse seems to be the most meaningful way of giving and receiving love for many men" (239). The juxtaposition between these two ideas is important. Italy's social conventions teach women to fear their sexuality but revere motherhood, which can only be obtained through intercourse. Women are taught that sex is bad, but children are good, therefore creating a childlike and asexual mentality. Women cannot fully be women because they cannot explore their sexual desires, but they have to endure the outcomes of sex, childbirth. Their mind set creates a polarity between girlhood and womanhood. Women are trained to typify Mary's immaculate conception of Christ, which idealizes mothers as holy figures and views the pains of childbearing as a noble sacrifice.

However, women also exude a sense of power within their asexuality. If women typically connect love and intercourse, then nineteenth-century Italian women could associate motherhood with a type of love. Women would experience desire and achieve gratification through childbirth. Günsberg analyzes the idea that women replace the drives that would be expressed in sexual relationships and project diverted love to their children (*Patriarchal* 27). She shows that women unconventionally adapt to their loss of desire and explains that female desire has to be sublimated in order for women to achieve true motherhood/womanhood (*Patriarchal* 27). Pirandello's mother figures represent the effects of that sublimation of love. He deals with mothers who vicariously try to live through their daughters, a representation of motherhood that attaches itself to Pirandello's theories on duality and raises pertinent questions about mothers. For instance, who is the mother—her daughter or a representation of culture? In Pirandello's works the mother is both. Mothers are the most fluctuating characters in his works and maintain fluidity between subservience and power.

In addition, men have a desire to have a family and act as provider and protector; without children men's roles cannot be fulfilled. Thus, women control men's needs and purpose. The asexuality of women also places them in an arena above men. Associating women with the Virgin Mary gives women a glory and honor men do not achieve. Through women's immaculate conception, if they dismiss sexual desire, women become Mary and are personified within that image. The Virgin Mary concept associates women with everything good, just, and right within life, an idea that is translated to the children. While mothers are personified as Mary, men are devalued and become insignificant within the household.

Furthermore, the constraints of motherhood are created by women. Dickinson and Leming further explain the necessity behind social institutions such as marriage and family. They claim that human beings create those institutions as a way of meeting basic needs. People make social institutions last by repeating patterns until they eventually become customs, and as a result of those social processes an individual becomes a person, attains an identity, and carries out the roles associated with their life (38). The point is that women create motherhood as a social custom through their household and childrearing, and they abide by that custom in order to maintain their identity. Moreover, women judge women based on the criteria that women set for themselves. Cultural impressions are typically formulated by women; thus, they establish the household and societal standards that they abide by.

Caterina dictated the tone of her household, and projected her thoughts and beliefs on Pirandello. For instance, Pirandello's impression of marriage was created through the social world established by his mother. His mother appeared confined, timid, and weak; therefore, Pirandello internalized that marriage is associated with struggle and strife. His mother transferred her feeling of marital confinement onto her son. Mothers place and remove themselves from a position of dominance, an idea that is prevalent throughout Pirandello's works. Caterina was Pirandello's first representation of femininity, and her plight becomes a focal point in her son's literature. She set the standard for motherhood, and because of her mothers are one of the most interesting and sapping characters in Pirandello's works.

Through the mother figure, observers witness Pirandello's sympathy and compassion for femininity. On the other hand, it is also obvious that Pirandello was intrigued and disturbed by the influence and power of mothers. Few women in his literature have as much power as the mother figures. However, in some of Pirandello's works he denies a woman maternity, which in Sicilian codes is the only thing that can give them status (Witt 59). He toys with the idea of mother, its meaning, and the woman. Mothers are unique entities placed in a separate realm from the rest of his characters. Each mother, no matter how weak she may appear, dominates action within his works.

Family Ties: The Effects of Pirandello's Parents' Relationship on the Image of the Mother

Stefano Pirandello

One factor that inadvertently transforms motherhood is fatherhood. Fathers appear to have little influence on their children in Pirandello's works; they are incapable of relating to their children and unable to handle the burden of "maternity." Mary Ann Frese Witt, analyzing the role of paternity in *The Pleasure of Honesty*, points out that "[t]he biological father, as often in Pirandello, can be dispensed with" (59). Though her analysis pertains to only one of Pirandello's works, it foretells the role of fathers in Pirandello. Sicilian fathers never take an active role in parenting. Moreover, the biological father rarely has to take responsibility for his children and can pawn them off on other men. Mothers dictate fatherhood in Pirandello's works, and fathers simply exist as a figurehead. Thus, men are pawns, subjected to the wiles of femininity. Fathers are absent figures that are manipulated by their culture and household. The man that instituted the negative image of fatherhood in Pirandello's literature was his father Stefano.

Stefano Pirandello, born in Palermo, was the eighteenth son of a family of twenty-three. Growing up he was forced to be a strong and independent young man. Stefano's father died in 1837 from cholera, when the child was two, leaving Stefano to follow in the footsteps of his brothers and learn the hardships of survival (Giudice 4). He worked in the family business exporting sulfur and citrus fruit and later fought in the war. Stefano Pirandello is described as high-minded, contemptuous, and hard, with an adventurous temperament (Giudice 4). Pirandello and Stefano's relationship was strained, and the barrier between them became insurmountable as the years passed. His father was a difficult man and did not readily display paternal love for his son.

There are several factors that shaped Pirandello's view of his father and influenced the author's image of motherhood. One attribute that plagued Pirandello throughout his life and readily evident in his literature is the loveless institution of marriage. At an early age, Pirandello had the opportunity to witness the qualms of a loveless marriage; for love was not important in patriarchal Italy. Dickinson and Leming explain marital ideology, stating:

> Regardless of how one may wish to conceptualize love as a function of homogeneity or complementary of psychological needs in marital partners, for most cultures of the world, love, as a factor in free mate selections, is very threatening to social order. Love tends to minimize the responsibilities that individuals feel toward their extended families. Love

> also tends to undermine the stratification system and parental authority. (215)

Love was not expressed by Stefano, and culturally it was not expected for him to do so. He was a man whose roles were dictated by his country, and he did not break traditional Italian ethos. Stefano and Caterina's "loveless love" became a premise in Pirandello's literature. He viewed marriage as an entrapment, and neither parent appeared to be able to cope within the confines of it. The relationship between Pirandello's mother and father can best be seen in an excerpt from his novel *The Outcast*, 1893:

> In so many years of marriage she had managed to mollify him a little, by treating him gently, by forgiving him offences which were not always slight, but without infringing on her own dignity and without making her forgiveness weigh on him. But still he would sometimes fly into a rage over a mere trifle…and since nobody dared breathe a word he would sink into a black, silent fury for weeks on end. (qtd. Giudice 9)

Caterina learned how to pacify Stefano and was able to micromanage his outbursts. From Pirandello's personal accounts, his parents' relationship exhibited rigid formality, and his father's volatile nature made communication almost impossible. However, although the excerpt above highlights Stefano's rage, it also shows Caterina's stability. Caterina handled an encumbering husband; she adapted to her situation and played her role of wife and mother.

One important aspect of Pirandello's parents' relationship was their lack of communication, and communication became a major theme in Pirandello's works. DiGaetani maintains that "[p]erhaps because of difficulties in his relationships with both her. It is evident from his works and based on Pirandello's personal accounts that he never forgot Jenny and viewed her as one of his first loves.

Jenny was a woman who gave in to her desires, and her relationship with Pirandello would have tainted her reputation. No one would have had respect for Jenny and, with a tarnished reputation, Jenny's role as a dishonored woman would alienate her. Pirandello's impression of Jenny does not appear to be different than what other Sicilians would have thought. Pirandello apparently viewed Jenny's devotion with a vague sense of guilt. He had maintained from his childhood the traditional ideology of free love as sin and he could not separate himself from the concept. Giudice writes, "Pirandello appears to have been unable to feel much respect for Jenny. When he returned to Italy he left brutally and ungratefully—ungratefully because Jenny really had constituted a haven of affection and consolation for him while he lived away from home" (44). Giudice's remarks emphasize Pirandello's regard for Italian ethos. Like Linuccia, Pirandello's fondness for Jenny was subjective. He enjoyed his time with her but he was unable to commit. Jenny, like Linuccia, had both redeeming and condemning qualities, but for Pirandello she represented what he abhorred the most, the sin of lust.

The Age of Madness:
Antonietta Portulano

Perhaps no woman had a greater effect on Luigi Pirandello than the one who would become his wife. Barely a year after his engagement to Linuccia ended, Pirandello received a letter from his father asking if he would agree to marry the daughter of his business partner, Calogero Portulano. Antonietta Portulano had an interesting upbringing. Her father was a jealous and paranoid man, traits he transferred to his children. The Portulanos abided by traditional Italian conventions: the women of the household were guarded and expected to be conservative and pious. The family took their values to the extreme. For instance, Antonietta's mother died in childbirth because she would not let herself be seen by a doctor. Moreover, Portulano dictated how far the women of the house could open shutters, and he even refused to buy a certain house because it did not have bars on the windows (Paolucci 136). He was also prone to rage. Antonietta was expected to keep her eyes forward at all times. George Bernstein explains that if Antonietta were to look to the side her father would explode. Her innocence could only be affirmed if her gaze was kept forward; glancing around was considered a form of seduction and provocation (102). In addition, Antonietta was not even allowed to look at Pirandello during their encounters. She brought to her marriage a sense of paranoia that was consumed with fears of adultery and seduction.

Despite her paranoid upbringing Pirandello viewed her as a woman suitable to be a wife, and they were married on January 27, 1894. Her moral standing was in line with Pirandello's beliefs. He was not emasculated or uncomfortable with her demeanor as he was with Linuccia, and Antonietta's respectability far surpassed Jenny's. Giudice notes that Pirandello fell in love with Antonietta physically. She was considered a beautiful woman, with "long dark hair and a sad charm" (59). However, intellectually and psychologically Pirandello and Antonietta were opposites. They initially appeared to have an affectionate and serene life together. However, according to Giudice, less than two years after their marriage the poem "Landing place" appeared in Monaldi's *Critica* which suggests nostalgia for Linuccia and his broken engagement (64). Pirandello's marriage had periods of ups and downs for about six years. Antonietta was wrapped up in her role as a mother and took care of her and Pirandello's three children. Pirandello worked and the family lived comfortably.

The effect of Antonietta's madness on Pirandello has long been a topic of discussion within Pirandellian study. In 1903, Antonietta had her first bout with her mental illness. Stefano Pirandello had been entrusted with Antonietta's dowry, 70,000 lire, and had invested it and his own funds into a sulfur mine, which eventually flooded. The event was catastrophic and caused a loss of 400,000 lire, which was Stefano's entire capital and Antonietta's dowry (Giudice 64). The event took a major toll on Antonietta, and Pirandello came home to find her semi-paralyzed. As the years passed Antonietta's paranoia worsened. She spied on Pirandello continuously and was jealous of him and the attention he gave to his students. Antonietta's illness gradually worsened, and at one point she begged Pirandello to allow her to leave. She wanted to live on her own, but Pirandello refused: "[h]e kept her at home by force, because he would have been unable to live without her" (Giudice 84). Antonietta's father managed to convince her to stay with her husband. However, her imprisonment caused her to lash out even more.

After her father's death in 1904, Pirandello and Antonietta had periods of separation and distress. Antonietta's paranoia and anger were primarily projected on Pirandello. She went through moments when she loathed him and yet seemingly needed him. In later years her aversion to Pirandello extended to their daughter. Antonietta thought that Pirandello and their daughter, Lietta, were conspiring against her. She believed Lietta wanted to be her and replace her. Antonietta even accused Lietta of having an incestuous relationship with Pirandello, and Lietta, appalled by the accusation, tried to commit suicide (Giudice 98). Lietta eventually left home and stayed with her aunt Rosalina. Antonietta seemed to prefer her daughter's absence; thus Pirandello was left alone with his wife.

Eventually, around 1918, Pirandello had Antonietta committed to the neurological clinic in Viale Nomentano, yet Antonietta's absence left a gap in Pirandello's life. Based on his biography, Pirandello missed Antonietta shortly after she was gone. He often wanted to see her but she refused his requests (Giudice 100). For Antonietta, Pirandello was the enemy, but for Pirandello his wife had been a source of inspiration, fulfillment, and drive. He had learned about himself and life by observing Antonietta, and her commitment to the asylum marked the beginning of Pirandello's true alienation. Pirandello had spent sixteen years in a world of madness. As hectic as life was with his wife, she had provided Pirandello with a reason for living, and without her he was lost. Antonietta, through her madness, had become a part of Pirandello, and losing her was like misplacing a piece of him.

Although Antonietta's madness had a major impact on Pirandello, it was his neediness and his philosophical and intellectual development that affected the people around him. For instance, after her commitment to the mental institute Antonietta wrote to her daughter, saying, "My Dear Lietta, I cannot hate anybody anymore, perhaps because I have become the shadow of myself, but I will always feel resentment toward those who I know have contributed to reducing me to such a state" (Bini 6). Moreover, in a later passage Antonietta blamed Pirandello for her state of mind. Most studies of Pirandello focus on how he endured Antonietta's madness, but few authors try to understand Antonietta's position. She married when she was twenty-two. However, until that time she was treated like a child. Pirandello, after meeting Antonietta, commented to a friend that Antonietta would make a good wife, but he wanted to make her into a real woman (Bini 7). Sicilian society feared female sexuality. Sexuality made women impure and turned them into seductive "creatures." Thus, the growth of women's sexual mind set was stunted, and its denial created a woman child.

Marta Abba

The "Second Wife"

Although Pirandello and Marta Abba were never married and their relationship appears to have been strictly platonic, Marta Abba represents the mirror image of Antonietta. Marta, unlike Antonietta, knew herself and understood her sexuality. She is a woman of the twentieth century and her ideals were formed differently. Basically, she is not a girl trapped in a woman's body as was Antonietta. Marta becomes Pirandello's spiritual and artistic wife, and she is the idealized version of what Pirandello wanted from a spouse. She fills the void that entered Pirandello's life after his wife's commitment and his daughter's marriage. In his mind, she becomes a second wife and assumes the role of his helpmate.

Throughout Pirandello's biography and within the letters written to Marta, it is obvious the playwright was obsessed with the young woman. Marta became an integral part of Pirandello's creative process and plays. He highly respected her and valued her opinion. They often collaborated on projects, and many times Pirandello created characters with Marta in mind. However, they each viewed their relationship differently. It is evident Marta was not as in love with Pirandello as he was with her. She saw him as a creative guide and used him as a mentor. She wanted help creating her success and used Pirandello as a means to achieve her fame. Pirandello, however, developed an infatuation with Marta. He loved her, and the letters he wrote to her express his devotion and neediness for her affection. Bini writes that Marta "did not appreciate the tone of many of Pirandello's letters. She wanted his friendship, she needed his help, and she asked for plays and favors, but she did not want to read his cry of unrequited love" (*His Muse* 100). In his letters to Marta, Pirandello shows his weaknesses, needs, and desperation. To the dismay of Marta, Pirandello began to refer to himself as Luigi in several of his later letters. The act came across as too intimate for Marta and was intended as a show of commitment from Pirandello. He wanted Marta to love him, the man, instead of the artist.

Pirandello became obsessed with Marta, as he did with his mother, past loves, Antonietta, and his daughter, Lietta. Pirandello tried to make everything revolving around Marta become a part of himself, including their letters to each other and his plays. Pirandello often used the device of writing to project emotion and establish control. However, in their letters to one another Marta seems to have authority over Pirandello's thoughts. His obsession made him vulnerable within his letters. Once Marta ceased her letters and did not reciprocate Pirandello's affection, he became depressed and felt abandoned. In addition, Pirandello's obsession began to have an effect on Marta's career. As the years passed, Marta gained notable recognition under Pirandello's tutelage. However, it also caused issues among critics. Marta's acting abilities could not be denied, but her quick fame and monopoly of Pirandellian roles made her an easy target for critics and colleagues (Bini, *His Muse* 113). As a result, she distanced herself from Pirandello as much as possible but always kept him within reach for professional advice.

Through his literature Pirandello created a metaphorical marriage with Marta. He used his plays to act out the emotional and physical relationship he wanted to have with her, and the plays took the form of a ritualistic marriage consummation (Bini, *His Muse* 28). His works were pieces of both of them, like a child, and they would outlive him and Marta. Furthermore, the spiritual union Pirandello sought to achieve with Marta was the same union he had searched for within his other works. He portrayed women from his life in his literature as a way to control and manipulate them. Basically, by placing images of Marta in his works Pirandello could have her as he wanted her.

Pirandello struggled through life trying to find his image of the "perfect" woman. The women prior to his infatuation with Marta rejected his obsession with art and thus relinquished their love for Pirandello. They did not want to live within his literature or share his affections with his creative imagination. When Pirandello placed those women in his works, they seemed to view it as a form of slander. However, Marta embraced Pirandello's obsession with the arts, making her his ideal woman. Bini writes:

> Pirandello wants, therefore, to inscribe the woman he loves in the role he created for her, in order to remove her from life and keep her only for himself in the uncontaminated and external world of art. What takes place, though, while Pirandello ties to subtract Marta from the realm of life—and it will continue to happen in the following plays—is a slow process of liberation and self-determination of the female character. (*His Muse* 40)

In the "uncontaminated and external world of art" Pirandello is the creator and controls every aspect of womanhood. When the women in his life rejected this role and world, they rejected him. Pirandello wanted the woman *he* wanted, the one he imagined. Pirandello creates the "perfect" woman as a type of puppet over which he can exact his authority.

On the other hand, Marta, like the other women in Pirandello's life, rejected Pirandello's authority. Additionally, she also took control of his world of art by shifting the balance of power to her. She transformed the role by highlighting feminine dominance and released Pirandello's power over femininity through her interpretation and portrayal of feminine mutability. By "becoming" the character she embodied the "truths" that Pirandello sought to reveal. In addition, she "exposes the male power game, to show the use men make of women and men's total lack of understanding," and she does so by stepping out of the boundaries created for women (*His Muse* 52). Hence, Marta revealed the dominance of matriarchy within the guise of patriarchy. She exposes male dominance as fraudulent and empowers femininity.

Another aspect that makes Marta a powerful figure in Pirandello's life and literature is the fact that she can be typified as Pirandello's muse, the Beatrice of Pirandellian literature. Bini explains Marta's impact on Pirandello: "[a]fter their meeting and for the rest of his life, Marta Abba stimulated Pirandello's creativity. She not only inspired him; she also gave him confidence in his work" (*His Muse* 7). Marta appeared to exude the perfect mixture of the images of the Woman and the Wife. Her complexity is created from the contrast between her sexuality and her innocence, characteristics Pirandello exploited. While Pirandello had these strong feelings for Marta and believed their work together to be a consummation of their spiritual marriage, Marta, like the women in Pirandello's plays, kept the playwright at a distance and never reciprocated his obvious feelings. She was untouchable in reality.

Pirandello made it his dying mission to see Marta to international stardom and achieved his goal. He believed that in Marta "his creations had found a fertile and creative matrix in the body of his muse-spouse-actress" (*His Muse* 188). However, Marta Abba did not continue with Pirandello's creations. After his death on December 10, 1936, Marta left Broadway and married Severance A. Millikin. Unknown to Pirandello, Marta always had a desire for wealth and social status, and Millikin could provide her with both. Her husband wanted a wife, and he did not want to share her with anyone, including the deceased Pirandello. Due to her newfound social status, Marta renounced her artistic life to become a member of high society.

Pirandello had thought that Marta would carry on their legacy through her work as an actress and theatre guru. The renunciation of her artistic career was a metaphorical divorce from her collaboration with Pirandello. Like the women before her, she abandoned Pirandello. Marta's marriage to Millikin ended in divorce, and when she returned to Italy in 1953, the first time since Pirandello's death, she futilely spent the last thirty years of her life trying to regain the aura of her previous success (Bini, *His Muse* 188). Marta died in 1988, but she was immortalized in Pirandello's literature. She was Pirandello's ideal woman, and though it took a lifetime to find her, she could only exist for him in his literature.

The Creation of the Everywoman

Pirandello believed that people had to get rid of societal constraints in order to live a true life. Anne Paolucci, analyzing the play *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and the importance of dialect within it, explains Pirandello's belief system, stating, "The facts, assumptions, and prejudices we accept without question must be abandoned for an organic whole to emerge, one that corresponds to our inner being" (*The Plays* 26). Women as "creatures" of instinct are able to shield themselves from facts, assumptions, and prejudices and adapt to their surroundings. Women's mutability allows them to be true to themselves. The abandonment of the male interpretation of identity allows women to emerge as whole and fully understand their inner being. Pirandello sought to understand women and was searching for his perfect woman-mother. As he went on his quest and unearthed the different aspects of femininity, women became more of a conundrum, a mystery, and a separate entity for Pirandello. They existed in a realm of their own, caught between reality and illusion.

Lietta Pirandello

Lietta Pirandello was born in June 1897 and was the second child and only daughter of Luigi and Antonietta Pirandello. Her mother's madness and father's instability caused her to have to adopt a maternal persona for both of her parents. When Lietta was growing up, her mother had let her help with household chores or do other tasks with her throughout the day. However, as Antonietta's madness grew she convinced herself that Lietta wanted to replace her in everything (Giudice 98). Antonietta became paranoid of Lietta and hounded her incessantly. Pirandello threw himself into isolation during his wife's fits, leaving Lietta to bear the burden of her mother's wrath. Antonietta's accusations that Lietta was trying to poison her and was having an incestuous relationship with Pirandello strained the young woman, who tried but failed to commit suicide (Giudice 98). The bond between mother and daughter was evidently strained.

On the other hand, Lietta also had a complicated relationship with her father. Lietta was constantly made to feel as though she had to take care of Pirandello. The letters Pirandello sent to Lietta after her marriage show a man who is "still a child in need of a mother" (Bini, *His Muse* 8). Pirandello exhibited a sense of anguish and abandonment every time the women in his life were away. Bini, illustrating this sense of abandonment, records an excerpt from a letter Pirandello wrote to his daughter: "the house is empty, just as my life. You must come back soon, my beautiful little Lillinetta, or your Papa will die of anguish. I cannot stay a single moment without thinking of you" (*His Muse* 8). Pirandello saw Lietta's marriage and her move to Chile as abandoning him just as his wife and the women prior to her had done. He leaned on his daughter for support, and when she left he did not find a replacement until he met Marta Abba.

Within Pirandello's works father-daughter relationships are strained or non-existent. Pirandello's male characters appear incapable of understanding women and unable to form a relationship with the daughter figure. Daughters have a barrier against fatherhood. They are complex characters in his works because they include attributes of the Mother, Woman, Whore, Virgin, and Wife. A daughter's mutability evolves from parents, Luigi Pirandello remained convinced—for most of his adult life—that all personal relationships were doomed to failure, that effective communication between people must remain very difficult and probably impossible" (xx). Based on his assessment of Giudice's biography, DiGaetani relays that Stefano's rages controlled the mood of the household. His actions obviously caused tension and communication barriers between him and his family. On the other hand, Caterina had a great deal of influence on the tone of her household. In the same excerpt from *The Outcast*, Pirandello writes the following about the father, who parallels Stefano:

> He felt like an alien even in his own house; he thought his family regarded him as an alien and he consequently distrusted them. And in view of the total lack of understanding between them his wife was occasionally forced to do behind his back things of which he would have disapproved. She was forced to deceive him. (qtd. Giudice 9)

In retrospect, Caterina controlled the knowledge that Stefano received. For instance, Caterina hid from Stefano that Pirandello often went to church. Pirandello explained that his father often felt like the family was keeping things from him, which caused him to sink into darker moods. Caterina's secrecy contributed to Stefano's dark behavior. Thus, she maintained the tone of the household by deceiving her husband. For Pirandello, women had the ability to understand life better because they rationalized situations differently based on instinct and emotion. Thus, the same attributes, instinct and emotion, which make women weak are also strengths. From experience Caterina learned how to handle Stefano. She exuded power which was not readily visible at the time. His mother, though the epitome of an Italian wife, had power and manipulated her circumstances to fit within the confines of her social world.

Marriage was a loveless game in Pirandello's world. It evoked the image of his mother as a survivor and brought out the tyranny of his father. Stefano's treatment of his wife left a lasting impact on Pirandello, for he loved his mother, and his father's mistreatment of her only placed father and son further at odds. The Pirandellos relocated often based on Stefano's business ventures. In his teens Pirandello and his family lived in Palermo, while his father commuted between the capital and Porto Empedocle. During this time Stefano Pirandello engaged in an affront that would make a father-son relationship impossible: Stefano, to the horror of his family, was engaged in a love affair with his niece. According to Giudice, "Pirandello, who was about fourteen, was indignant, and the outrage done to his mother induced him to perform a dramatic gesture of protest" (17). Pirandello, who was on a mission to catch his father with his niece, visited the young woman's home and spit in her face. Stefano eventually regretted his affair and moved the family to Porto Empedocle. He also arranged for his niece to marry another man who, after he was paid, legitimized the child she bore to Stefano. After this event Pirandello had little to do with his father. Stefano's act of infidelity and his mother's silent sorrow would remain an issue for Pirandello for most of his life and would infiltrate his literature.

Stefano and Caterina's relationship helped formulate Pirandello's image of the mother, in which each mother wears various masks and exhibits positive and negative attributes; she is both a victim and a survivor. Her power and control is limitless, and although she appears timid, weak, and deconstructed, she maintains control by altering her identity. The adaptability of motherhood is what makes the Pirandellian mother a complex and convoluted figure, and motherhood becomes a symbol of glory and disfigurement in Pirandello's literature.

Rosalina Pirandello

Another woman who was important to Pirandello's works and contributed to the image of mother as well as woman is Pirandello's sister Rosalina Pirandello, who was two years older than Pirandello. According to Giudice, she was Pirandello's playmate and later his confidante in his adolescence. Pirandello remained deeply attached to Rosalina throughout his life (32). He wrote her countless letters and poems. Pirandello shared his impressions, thoughts, and inner turmoil with his sister. He often wrote to her about his fading love for his first fiancée and his feelings about marital entrapment. She appears to be an individual that he highly respected.

Though there is not much mentioned about Rosalina, other than Pirandello's fondness of her, she is an important figure. Pirandello was an extremely private individual and the fact that he shared his thoughts with his sister symbolizes her value. Rosalina appears to have given Pirandello the "parental" love and security that he did not receive from his parents. She was a major inspiration for his poems and is transfigured into his literature in the form of the mother and the virgin. Pirandello often transfers the role of mother on an unexpected figure in his works, and his sister is a representation of the "adoptive" mothers in his literature. Rosalina's conventional attributes that culminated with her intuitive demeanor make her an iconic figure in Pirandello's literature.

Maria Stella:

The Spiritual Creator

Like Rosalina, Maria Stella is briefly mentioned in Pirandello's biography. Though there is a scarcity of information on the woman, she had a major influence on his literary works. Maria Stella was a maid servant in the Pirandello household when Pirandello was a boy. This humble woman felt the need to impart to Pirandello some of her superstitious beliefs and peasant mystical tendencies as well as her Christianity (Giudice 7). In the Pirandello household God was silent, and Maria Stella's actions were hidden from Stefano. Though his mother knew about his visits to church with Maria Stella, she closed her eyes to the fact. Why religion was not placed highly in the household is not known; however, Pirandello's brief exposure to it seemed to have a lasting effect.

Maria Stella's tutelage prompted Pirandello's belief in ghosts. Giudice notes that "once superstitions had been exorcised by an aesthetic system rooted in idealist thought, these ghosts could be turned into characters" (7). As a boy Pirandello went to mass every day. However, the trips also enlightened Pirandello to the hypocrisy and falsity of the church. These events helped create Pirandello's theology. Though Pirandello did not develop a fond sense of church, he did maintain his connection to Maria Stella's superstitious teachings and Catholicism, which also helped institute Pirandello's interpretation of femininity.

Women take on various personas in Pirandello's literature. All of his women exhibit polarity between Eve and Mary, and they can represent these women separately or simultaneously. Pirandello's Biblical exposure is what allowed him to formulate his Everywoman, and without Maria Stella, Pirandello's women may not have been constructed from the same Biblical paradigm.

Unrequited Loves:

The Creators of the Woman and the Figures of the Whore, Virgin, and Wife

The Woman, another archetypal luminary in Pirandello's literature, can be divided into three separate figures: The Virgin, Whore, and Wife. Each motif portrayed in Pirandello's works is mirrored; women always have an opposite. They exist both in reality and in a realm separate from it. All of Pirandello's women have a character flaw, and that character flaw can project them into the image of their opposite. Hence, the Virgin Mother's opposite is the First Mother, Eve. In addition, the Wife figure is also subdivided into pairs that mirror one another. Therefore women are never just one; they have multiple identities and adapt with situations. The Woman figure, as denoted, is actually a group of women acting as one entity, the Everywoman.

Pirandello is trapped by women; he cannot escape them, and a part of him does not want to escape them. He immortalized the women in his life within his literature. His works are extremely autobiographical and show his obsession and need for feminine companionship. Women provided a comfort for Pirandello, giving him a sense of security, entitlement, and fulfillment in life. Though it appears Pirandello abandoned women at various points, he never forgot them and thus never escaped them. Moreover, the images of the Virgin and the Whore create a distinct polarity in Pirandello's literature. His figures are never fully innocent or guilty. Both representations embody each other and maintain an odd balance between the personas of Eve and Mary. The opposition between sin and purity within women is a major Pirandellian theme, and several of the women in his life exude the polarity of the two iconic Biblical figures.

Linuccia Pirandello

At the age of fifteen, Pirandello began to have feelings for his cousin Linuccia, who was four years older than Pirandello with a flirtatious nature. She had a string of suitors, and young Pirandello often became jealous. According to Giudice, Pirandello was obsessed with Linuccia, and although he visited her house frequently under the excuse he was visiting her brother, his shy nature kept him from declaring his feelings (20). Linuccia eventually and unexpectedly reciprocated Pirandello's feelings, rejected other worthy suitors, and became engaged to him. Since Linuccia turned down serious marriage proposals, her family insisted that Pirandello quit school and ask for Linuccia's hand. However, at the time Stefano was wealthy and saw the pressure of Linuccia's family on Pirandello to quit school as a way to take advantage of Pirandello and the girl. He did not think the two were as deeply in love as they seemed and went to great lengths to put off the marriage (Giudice 21). Stefano orchestrated a series of plans which eventually drew Pirandello away from Linuccia. Pirandello's marriage to her was put off for four years so he could finish school. Delaying the marriage gave him enough time to talk himself out of the marriage. In order to marry Linuccia, Pirandello would have to give up his dream of being a writer and become chained to the family sulfur mines, a job he loathed. He welcomed the opportunity to finish school and pursue his dream of writing.

Pirandello's engagement to Linuccia did not go far. Pirandello spent most of their engagement estranged from her and was in Germany for several years, during his time away he developed as an author and individual. By the age of twenty he had "an already inflexible attitude towards the family and female behavior" (Giudice 27). He became less and less attached to his fiancée and was looking for a way to get out of the engagement. Simply put, he was no longer in love with Linuccia. After Pirandello's sojourn in Germany, on August, 11 1891, Pirandello wrote a long letter to his father explaining why he could not get married. Stefano, who was against the marriage from the beginning, had no qualms about breaking the engagement and provoked Linuccia's family until they relented (Giudice 47). Nonetheless, Luigi's involvement with Linuccia had a major impact on his literary figures.

Luigi Pirandello's literature often contains women that are the epitome of womanhood, beautiful, mysterious, and alluring. Linuccia served as Pirandello's "bewitcher," and there is a parallel between her and the figures in his works. Giudice describes Pirandello's feelings towards Linuccia:

> She appears to have been a beautiful girl, lively and sensual, but in Pirandello's eyes she began to assume the shape of an evil fairy, a

> bewitcher, both a friend and an enemy. He was incapable of enjoying so straightforward a form of happiness. Even if he did find pleasure in being together with her in spite of all the imperfect things and people surrounding them, in spite of all the compromises their engagement involved, he was incapable of suppressing one powerful urge within himself: his vocation as a writer. (25)

In Pirandello's literature, beautiful women are typically objects of affection and male obsession. Women are condemned for their beauty and portrayed as seductresses even if they are innocent of the act. The men in his works often pine after a woman, make her an object of obsession, and desire her. However, Pirandello's male characters often experience a duality in perception evoked by the woman: they cannot relinquish what they desire but they no longer want the woman they have obtained. The men are in love with an illusion, and once they get the woman, the illusion is gone. Moreover, Linuccia's relationship with Pirandello also typifies male bonding in his literature. Pirandello often felt inadequate around other men who had vied for Linuccia's affection or who had courted her in the past. According to Günsberg, male bonding or hostility is a direct result of men's interactions with women. Günsberg claims that "the role of women in this exchange system between men is that of mediation, of providing an arena in which relations between men can take place" (65). Moreover, the relations between men are typically about women. Pirandello's jealousy of other men who had courted Linuccia helped develop this idea in his literature. Men are often vying for female attention, but are also disgusted with the women after they receive it. Women are put at fault for men's jealousy.

Linuccia also illustrates the duality between Mary and Eve within Pirandello's literature. She was an innocent woman who was a prime candidate for marriage. She exudes almost every aspect of the Virgin Mary, and in Pirandello's literature the characters that represent her are given a mystical quality that elevates them to the idolized status of the Virgin. However, those same women are flawed because of their beauty and can be viewed as a tease, placing them in the second image of women, a tempting Eve.

Jenny Schulz-Lander: The Affair

Just as Eve and Mary formulate the polarity of womanhood in Pirandello's works, Linuccia and Jenny Schulz-Lander created the same opposition in his life. Jenny was the woman with whom Pirandello had a love affair while he was engaged to Linuccia. Pirandello apparently met Jenny when he was staying in Como recuperating from an illness. Little is known about Jenny's appearance, but according to Giudice, "[a]ll we know about her is that she was dark and had unfortunately become 'a mistress of vices and an innkeeper of her body.' But she loved him. He had seen her every evening, while she had talked to him of love and had sworn to be faithful to him. She had been 'sincere'" (36). By all accounts she was a pretty, intelligent, and vivacious woman. The time Pirandello spent with Jenny developed into a strong relationship as they became more intimate. By August 1890 their relationship had turned into love, as far as Jenny was concerned, and it came with all of the consequences of love (Giudice 43). Little is known about what transpired between Jenny and Pirandello or what his exact feelings were for other generations of women; thus the daughter is each of those women. In order to understand their daughters, fathers would have to understand mothers, wives, lovers, and the whole of femininity, which was an impossible feat. In addition, fathers cannot have a relationship with their daughters because of their thoughts toward women. Men viewed women as objects and property, and daughters are viewed as a tradable possession.

Mother-daughter dynamics are more convoluted and defined in Pirandello's literature. Although this relationship is more prominent in Pirandello's works, it is vicious. There is no real love between mothers and daughters. They rarely look to each other for support and comfort. Mothers do not exhibit motherly love, but manipulate and maneuver their daughters' lives. Then again, the daughters are also seeking their own personal gain and rebel against the mothers. The duo struggles with each other for power over men, and they try to usurp each other. Mothers in Pirandello's works try to live vicariously through their daughters and manipulate their circumstances while the daughters work to ostracize their mothers. Additionally, mothers and daughters also work together for their own personal gain against men. Women, in any capacity, are a formidable force within the Pirandellian world.

The daughter is the most recognizable symbol of the Pirandellian Everywoman. However, all women in Pirandello's literature become the Everywoman. The mutability of his feminine characters is too great to deny the fact that they meld into each other. Their identities blend and separate with the change of each circumstance. Pirandello broke apart the women in his life. He observed and analyzed them while struggling to understand femininity. Ironically, what Pirandello sought from femininity was in front of him the whole time. He wanted to understand womanhood and women as complex creatures. The women in his life could not fit into a category because there was no way to categorize them; they were infinite. Additionally, he realized the effect the women in his life had on him. He was a victim of femininity. The diversity between men and women abounded in Pirandello's life and literature. By exposing the complex dichotomy of femininity Pirandello highlighted how important women were to men. His world was a women's world; therefore, so was his literature. Though men appeared to run Italy, the country was undoubtedly embedded in a women's world.

Chapter Three:

Pirandello's Literary Women

As Luigi Pirandello tried to conceptualize femininity, he dissected the image of women in an effort to understand the differences between genders and to comprehend womanhood. He viewed women as a type of noble creature that could be benevolent or malevolent when dealing with men. Pirandello's literary women are representations of some of the most important women in his life: Caterina, Linuccia, Jenny, Antonietta, Rosalina, Maria Stella, Marta Abba, and Lietta. Pirandello tried to categorize each of these women and their literary counterparts. However, his works reveal that each of these women is one and the same. Pirandello's search to define womanhood ends with an intriguing answer—women are indefinable; they are whatever they want to be and live life as mutable figures subjected to their instinctual whims. Pirandello's creation of the Everywoman helps typify the distinction between genders and matriarchal dominance in Italy. Although some view Pirandello's literary women as weak and "dismembered" characters, his works show women that dominate through their mutability, controlling male actions, responses, and perceptions toward life and each other.

In most patriarchal societies, the status of women was defined through interpretations of the Bible which were internalized and conceived by philosophers such as Aristotle. Ovid, Aristotle, and Galen all contributed to the idea that women were "weaker" than men by highlighting physical differences to establish intellectual and social inferiority. Women had long been defamed figures, and most patriarchal societies viewed women as atrocious creatures, needed but dangerous. Besides using Biblical and philosophical interpretations to fashion his women, Pirandello also focused on institutions such as marriage and family to pinpoint the foreground of feminine dominance. In his short stories and novels, Pirandello uses the confines of societal conventions to express the alienation and fragmentation men go through at the hands of their feminine counterparts.

Pirandellian Novels and Short Stories

Loveless Love, *The Late Mattia Pascal*, and *One, None, and One Hundred Thousand*

The theory of life versus form penetrates every aspect of Pirandello's works from poetry to plays. Pirandello was a prolific writer, composing seven novels, several volumes of poetry, more than forty plays, screenplays, and numerous essays, reviews, and scholarly articles. Pirandello had hoped to write a novella for each day of the year and succeeded in completing 233 tales (Radcliff-Umstead 344). He sought to capture life within his works and typically incorporates real-life scenarios and anxieties within his literature. In Pirandello's short stories, the recurring themes of death, loss, chance, and fragmentation are prevalent. Death is one of the most notable themes and coincides with the themes of alienation and fragmentation. His male protagonists, in one way or another, undergo some sort of death. Women are also deconstructed and suffer a metaphorical death in Pirandello's works; however, they reemerge and cohesively coexist with the society men denounce. Pirandello's works insinuate that there is life in death, making mutability the key to survival within Pirandello's literature. The ability to change perception, ideas, thoughts, and identity is needed to endure the precarious positions in which Pirandello places his characters. Pirandello saw life as a cruel joke and used his fiction as a way to express his beliefs. His fascination with women and their mutability is evident in his stories and parallels his obsession with women in life. He wanted to capture life and in order to do so he tried to grab it moment by moment. Pirandello capitalized on man's struggle with society and the opposition between genders. His works show women as survivors and men as victims.

Additionally, Pirandello adds a lot of detail to his works and outlines conventions within the social institutions such as courting rituals, customs, expectations, and protocol. The majority of the conventions are also primarily feminine. According to Robert S. Dombroski, Pirandello's stories "manipulate commonplace situations and highlight improbable events and eccentric personalities for the purpose of creating apprehension and anxiety about modern life. Above all, the fiction describes the uncertain status of knowledge and individuality" (369). Though Pirandello may elaborate on his character's experience, the anxiety and apprehension his characters display toward modern life were real in Sicilian culture. Life's institutions seemed confining and alienating to the author. Importantly, the institutions that seemed stifling were dominated by female perception.

In the compilation of *Loveless Love* (1894), *The Late Mattia Pascal* (1904), and *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand* (1933), Pirandello explores the core of femininity by focusing on institutions such as marriage, religion, and family. He accentuates feminine mutability and dominance through these conventions, exposing death, alienation, and fragmentation as weapons used by women to make men subordinate. Mutability is not a source of weakness in Pirandello's works. Though the lack of true identity is perceived as weak, women find identity through the many masks they wear.

His women are not deconstructed figures, but are enigmas reborn each time they assume another role. By placing femininity under a microscope, Pirandello reveals the authority and prestige associated with women's fluctuating identity. Additionally, the Biblical figures of Eve and Mary set the premise for Pirandello's female mutability. Their polarity convolutes feminine identity. Pirandello's Everywoman is both Eve and Mary. All of his works end the same, with an intangible figure, the Everywoman, dominating Pirandellian life.

Loveless Love:

"The Wave," "The Signorina," and "A Friend to the Wives"

Love is never portrayed as a "warm gooey" feeling in Pirandello's works; passion and compassion are absent in Pirandello's representation of love. Men are in love with the unattainable ideals women represent to them. Love is an unsatisfying and warped institution in Pirandello's works and is void of emotion. In *Loveless Love*, Pirandello identifies a variety of women, all different yet the same. In the three short stories, "The Wave," "The Signorina," and "A Friend to the Wives" all of the women fit into one of Pirandello's feminine motifs. However, the overall compilation reveals Pirandello's Everywoman since in each of the stories women are one and the same.

In the short story "The Wave," the images of Eve and Mary are prevalent and parallel Pirandello's relationship with Linuccia, Caterina, Antonietta, and Marta Abba. "The Wave" is a story about the flirtatious Giulio Accurzi who lives with and takes care of his paralyzed mother. He is a young man who rents out the lower part of his house to parents with daughters. Giulio devises a system to keep tenants in the house by portraying an appropriate demeanor with the parent and inconspicuously flirting with the daughter. When the daughter becomes too attached, Giulio tells the parent he has to raise the rent and the tenants leave. He never keeps a tenant longer than a year until he meets Agata.

Agata is engaged to marry Mario Corvaja, a man who puts off their engagement for three years, and later in the story dismisses Agata altogether, breaking her heart. Giulio develops an unconventional "love" for Agata. He becomes obsessed with her and his love for her is created through his pity. Giulio views Agata as a victim in need of his protection. He wants to save and coddle her. Although Agata is initially indifferent and acts uninterested in Giulio, she marries him after his and her mother's persistence. Eventually, to Giulio's dismay, Agata begins to love him and rises out of her depression. However, as she becomes happy Giulio grows irritated and frustrated. Her happiness represents his misery and his lack of usefulness to her. He is only at peace if Agata is miserable. Their relationship fluctuates between his misery and hers. Toward the end of the story, Mario Corvaja strolls back into Agata's life, remorseful for leaving her, and Giulio looks at Mario's change of heart as a way to exercise his own authority. He views Agata as a possession and sees Mario's visit as a way to make the former betrothed jealous. The story ends with Giulio's dissatisfaction. Agata is pregnant at the end of "The Wave," and Giulio perceives her disfigurement as a detriment, believing that she is no longer a "prize" that can instigate jealousy.

"The Wave" outlines facets similar to incidents that happened between Linuccia and Pirandello. For example, Pirandello, like Mario Corvaja, put his engagement to Linuccia off to pursue his education in Germany. After Pirandello achieved his educational goals he broke off his engagement and left Linuccia. In addition, Pirandello's obsession and his jealous antics are akin to what Giulio experiences with Agata. Noted in chapter two, Pirandello had trouble coping with the attentions other suitors bestowed on Linuccia, and he was often jealous. He also quickly fell in love and became obsessed with her, resembling Giulio's alacritous infatuation with Agata.

There are also several important feminine motifs that overlap one another in "The Wave." The juxtaposition between Eve and Mary is prominent in the story, and the figures are catalysts for the images of the Wife, Mother, Whore, and Virgin. Each of these motifs is highlighted by loss, grief, fragmentation, and alienation. In the opening of "The Wave" Giulio's house and its setting are described thus:

> His house had two floors. He let the lower floor, which included a terrace overlooking a pleasant little garden. This garden could only be entered by means of a narrow staircase which ran from inside the upper floor, where he lived with his paralysed mother who had been confined to a chair for some years. (5)

The introduction of the garden parallels the Biblical Garden of Eden. All of Giulio's flirtatious endeavors take place within the garden, and the women become idealized figures within it. He never gets to know them and uses the security of the garden to manifest his image of the women. The story is similar to Eve's creation. The women, at least based off of how Giulio perceives them, are created from him, as Eve was created from Adam.

The creation within the garden is significant because it represents the women's otherworldliness. They are figures caught between life and form. For instance, they are real figures living their lives, but are also the form of what Giulio wants at the time. Basically, Giulio's women exist in two different realities simultaneously. This idea parallels Pirandello's impression of Marta Abba, who portrayed herself in Pirandello's works as he saw her. Agata is described as though she is another being. Giulio is intrigued by her "mournful countenance" and she emerges for him as an illusion similar to Dante's Beatrice. Agata becomes a muse who inspires him through her sorrow. Likewise, Marta Abba was Pirandello's Beatrice. She was Pirandello's muse and her embodiment of characters was symbolic of her divinity to Pirandello. Marta became whatever Pirandellian character she portrayed. Hence, she was created in the image Pirandello set. Moreover, Giulio's women are also mutable like their Biblical counterparts. Once they become something different for him he dismisses them and searches for a replacement. However, their mutability allows them to survive Giulio's indifference while he slowly deconstructs himself. Agata becomes Giulio's Eve and undergoes the same transitions as the Biblical figure.

Agata also maintains specific attributes represented by Mary. Agata's beauty is formed through her melancholy and her innocence, not her sexuality. Periodically, she is referred to as a girl and her purity and virginity are defined. For instance, when Giulio observed Agata in the garden he notes that "[t]he girl gathered two or three violets, then she withdrew, [...]" (7). Throughout the story, Giulio describes Agata as a child. His demeanors toward her and his reasons for loving her are symbolic of a father's urge to protect and reason with his child. Even after they are married, he continues to maintain a father-like attitude when dealing with her. For example, while in the country Agata wants to jump over a fence that she and Giulio come across during a stroll; Giulio responds, "'No, Agata, you can't... Not in that dress... Let's go back instead...'" (33). Giulio strives to keep Agata in a child-like state so he can control her and morph her into his image of an ideal woman. His treatment of Agata is similar to the way Pirandello treated his wife Antonietta. Pirandello also felt the need to change Antonietta; he wanted to make Antonietta, by his definition, a real woman.

In addition, Giulio develops a sense of madness over Agata's countenance. He blames her for his mental state. Although *Loveless Love* was written before Pirandello married his wife Antonietta, there are several similarities between their relationship and Giulio and Agata's in "The Wave." Pirandello felt trapped by Antonietta's insanity and claimed that living with her brought him to the brink of madness. He could not understand Antonietta's feelings and tried to construct her in his image. It is impossible for Pirandello's women to stay within the confines male characters create. As a result, his male characters cannot understand femininity, because once they figure it out, the women have already changed. Giulio has trouble discerning his importance to Agata. He cannot understand her yet he idolizes her. Giulio seeks to control Agata and in the process is controlled by her. Her virginal and child-like innocence are representative of Mary and conflict with her Eve-like creation.

Furthermore, Giulio's image of love is contradicted by his motives. Giulio falls in love with Agata because of her vulnerability and casts blame on Mario Corvaja for Agata's demeanor. Giulio proclaims, "[s]he had fallen sick because of him, and he had abandoned her! But why? What more could the idiot want? How could he fail to love a creature who to him, Giulio Accurzi, seemed so worthy of love? And she perhaps was lamenting his loss" (13). Giulio acknowledges that Agata deserves love. He places her on a pedestal, like the figure of Mary. However, he negates her significance through his personification of her as a child and his jealousy. He lends her Eve-like attributes by diminishing her love for him. In the story Giulio expresses his doubts of Agata's love, declaring:

> He would know no peace as long as the memory of the other man remained in Agata's heart, and so on the other hand he wished to feign complete ignorance of the fact that she had been promised to Mario Corvaja. Giulio Accurzi felt that if she refused him he would immediately begin to hate her in every way in which hate may reveal itself. (19)

Ironically, Giulio draws conclusions without even asking Agata about her feelings. He believes she does not love him and her love is only constructed through her grief over Mario. Therefore, once Agata becomes happy with their marriage, Giulio becomes vexed. She has to remain miserable in order to give Giulio significance and love, a fact which she understands and abides by. Additionally, he loves her for her suffering, which parallels Eve's dichotomy. The story demonstrates his persona, acknowledging that, "[h]e was delighted to feel himself loved by her, and happy in the knowledge that she was suffering because of him" (40). This notion builds the idea that Giulio needs Agata's love but also abhors it. She is a figure of idolization and pain. Her mutability allows her to survive within his perception and to be both the figure he deifies and defames. The duality between Giulio and Agata is created because of the confusing status he gives her. He placed Agata on a pedestal and tried to morph her into his ideal woman. He tries to bestow an identity on Agata and fails because there is no way to define her. In the process of immortalizing Agata, Giulio neglects his role as a husband, which diminishes his masculinity by Italian standards.

Agata, on the other hand, successfully defines Giulio. He is jealous, though he denies it, and he is unhappy with his marriage whenever Agata is happy. In the story, Agata reflects:

> Giulio certainly never did anything reprehensible; and yet in her heart Agata reproached him for all that he did not do. She felt that he really did not wish to fall short of any promise of love which he had made; but that was a cold fulfillment of his vows, and nothing more… Yes... yes… As if he had been cheated in his expectations! Who knows…. (36)

She understands him even though he cannot comprehend her or understand himself. She also effectively becomes whatever Giulio needs her to be at the time. Therefore, her mutability is what allows her to dominate the story and define Giulio. All of Giulio's actions, thoughts, and perceptions take place because of Agata.

Motherhood and childbirth are also two themes parlayed in the story, and both themes again reveal the contradiction of femininity in the story. Like many of Pirandello's mother figures, Giulio's mother is a disfigured character physically and mentally. The text describes her as a woman who was paralyzed and "who had been confined to a chair for some years" (5). Her handicap is conducive with the image of Eve and with the women in Pirandello's life. Mothers appear throughout "The Wave" in two different forms, the physically and the mentally compromised. Motherhood is awkward and domineering within the story. The mothers in "The Wave" represent motherhood within Sicilian culture at the time. Linda Reeder defines the roles of motherhood and their relationship with their children, writing:

> As the mother of God, Mary exercised enormous power. Sicilians said 'God refuses nothing to His mother,' making Mary a far more effective intermediary than any saint.... In her honour, Sicilians generally refrained from marrying during the month of May..., and celebrated her feast days (the Immaculate Conception, her birth, the Purification, the Annunciation, and the Assumption). Even the daily rosary included prayers directed to the Virgin. Science, religion, and tradition agreed that female potential was fully realized through husbands and children. (104)

There are two opposing forms of mother in Pirandello's story: the First Mother Eve and the Holy Mother Mary. Both representations hold a different meaning, and each mother in "The Wave" becomes Eve and Mary at different times.

Giulio's invalid mother maintains the devout attributes of Mary, but her physical impairment reveals the cursed mark of Eve. Her transfiguration as a character is best outlined in the text:

> At the sound of that voice Giulio's mood immediately altered. It seemed to him then that he had never before realised what a disaster had befallen his mother. In a flash he saw her once more, still brisk, on her feet, always dressed in black after the death of his father, attending to her household affairs [...]. Immediately afterwards he saw his mother once more, as she fell across the table, suddenly stricken by paralysis, while the two of them were having a meal. (16-17)

Giulio obviously has fond memories of his mother, and before her accident she is portrayed as the epitome of motherhood. However, her impairment is not her only Eve characteristic. His mother later in the story begins "[...] continually lamenting, complaining about the noise the workmen made, impatient and curious to know what was happening in the other rooms..." (27). Her change in attitude stems from her belief that Agata makes Giulio unhappy. Though she does not become a grotesque character, she does embody the ideals of a nagging and overbearing mother. Regardless of either characteristic, Giulio values his mother's opinion and often refers to her for guidance and support in the book.

The dualistic nature of Giulio's mother is similar to that of Pirandello's mother, Caterina. For instance, as shown in chapter two, Pirandello had a deep emotional attachment to his mother. However, he also felt that he did not receive enough love from either parent. His mother's characteristics are described as typically Sicilian and, as noted, she did abide by the conventions of her time. Though she appeared to be a meek and mild mannered woman, Caterina also knew how to handle her husband Stefano. Pirandello portrays her as an innocent and trapped woman, but also one who would occasionally deceive her husband. The contrast between Caterina's characteristics exudes her polarity as a person and parallels the Eve/Mary dichotomy in Pirandellian literature.

Moreover, Giulio's relationship with his mother is similar to the one Pirandello had with his. Reeder claims that "Sicilian culture continued to idealize the mother/child relationship, identifying maternal love as the greatest love and 'stipulating that mother's requests never be denied'" (125). In "The Wave," Giulio, despite his mother's handicap, views her with affection and also seeks her approval. He appears never to deny her anything she wants in the story and waits on her constantly. When Giulio's mother meets Agata she "welcomed Agata with remarkable tenderness; she wanted Agata to sit next to her, she gazed at her for a long time, nodding her approval. Then she turned to her son" (27). Giulio waits in the story for his mother's reaction to Agata. He wants and needs her approbation, just as Pirandello sought Caterina's guidance and blessings.

Agata's mother also displays the duality of motherhood. Donna Amalia, Agata's mother, is described as "[...] grand, with a face that was calm and still beautiful despite her sixty years, with a steady tread, and never discomposed, looked after the affairs of the house; then, towards evening, she attended to the flowers, just as in the morning she had attended to her religious duties, for she was very devout" (7). Her description portrays her as the "perfect" mother. She is not disfigured and appears to carry on the demeanor becoming of motherhood. However, she also pushes Agata to marry Giulio in an effort to raise her daughter from depression but also as a means to solidify her existence. Donna Amalia likes Giulio and contrives with him to persuade Agata to marry him. She vicariously lives through her daughter, and in the process, reveals herself as a mentally flawed character. Likewise, Caterina micromanaged the Pirandellos' household and served as a pacifier, mediator, and figurehead for her family, just as Donna Amalia is in "The Wave."

Childbirth is another aspect of motherhood analyzed in "The Wave." Agata, as a personification of Mary, goes into her marriage as a virgin and conceives during it. She is also ignorant of marital interaction and enters her marriage as a child. Since she never develops a sense of love or her own sexuality, she remains a child-like figure and, therefore, maintains her Mary persona. However, her conception is identical to Eve's. She conceives through Giulio, who does not have any divine attributes. He is simply a man, like Adam, trying to act as a creator.

Additionally, her conception is viewed as a physical disfigurement. Giulio brings up her condition throughout the story and Agata in turn sees her maternal condition as a handicap. The story acknowledges that Agata dressed with care to appease Giulio, but was "discouraged though she was in front of her mirror to see her listless face and her disfigured body" (41). Her pregnancy causes her to feel less of a woman. It makes her self-conscious of her waning beauty. Furthermore, her pregnancy instills distaste in Giulio, who wants her to remain the image he conjured in the garden. At the end of the story Giulio looks forward to making Mario jealous because he is married to Agata. However, Giulio feels duped at the end because Agata is no longer beautiful due to her pregnant state. The text articulates:

> And as he looked at his wife only one thought, an almost incredible one, suddenly disturbed his sad pleasure at being hated by Mario Corvaja just as Mario Corvaja had once been hated by him: her condition did not allow him to achieve a complete victory, since by this stage Agata could perhaps no longer inspire in that man any torments of jealous love. (44)

The ending of the story can evoke several interpretations that place Giulio in a position of power over Agata. However, Agata ultimately ends up in control of Giulio. Giulio transforms his entire lifestyle for Agata. Although his manifestation of love deconstructs Agata as a character, she is reborn into various figures because of her mutability. She, unlike Giulio, maintains sustainability. She never dies and never succumbs to Giulio's odiousness. The condition of her existence is not what is important. In Pirandello's works life is always cruel, and survival is what determines power. Agata does not go mad because of Giulio's temperament, but rather he mentally suffers because of her.

The story of Agata and Giulio underscores the complex notion of female mutability. Agata mutates into whatever image Giulio wants, satisfied to play her role. Giulio, on the other hand, is never satisfied and never achieves fulfillment in his life. Agata's sanity symbolizes her ability to transgress beyond the confines Giulio sets. She becomes the image of what he wants, what he abhors, and what society expects. Like all of Pirandello's women, she adapts to her surroundings and survives her circumstances.

"The Signorina"

Signorina Giulia Antelmi, Lucio Mabelli, Tullo Marzani, and Antonio Arnoldi are all a part of a baroque love web in the story "The Signorina." The tale is about a young woman, Giulia, and three men, Lucio, Tullo, and Antonio who are vying for and hopelessly in love with her. The story begins with Lucio contemplating how his relationship with Giulia developed, lamenting, "[h]e had trifled, as one does with a spirited signorina, but that was all! In all conscious, however, had he not been aware that Giulia Antelmi was beginning to have a taste for that trifling?" (48). Giulia's vivacious attitude, her unconventional demeanor, and her looks make her an uncommon prize. Lucio is in love with Giulia. He initially began his relationship with Giulia in an effort to gain status with her father. However, he develops genuine feelings for her though he tries to deny them. He also feels that because of his circumstances and the pretenses he initiated the relationship under, he cannot marry her. Although he admits his love to her, he refuses to recognize it or make it public to others.

Lucio's friend, Tullo, is also in love with Giulia. He often muses if she is the right woman for him, contemplating "[a]s far as her looks went, yes, certainly; everyone thought her a lovely girl, but she was a little eccentric, a little too free and easy [...]" (54). Tullo is an awkward man reluctant to ask Giulia to marry him and employs Lucio to help convince her. Tullo's feelings for Giulia place Lucio in an uncomfortable position. In addition, Lucio finds out that Giulia had feelings for an old childhood friend, Antonio Arnoldi, who later in the story writes a letter to Giulia's parents asking to marry her. Lucio, asked by Giulia's father, is on a quest to find her a suitable husband. Since Lucio does not like Antonio he tries to thwart his plans to marry Giulia and make Tullo look like the agreeable choice. Initially, Giulia refuses to marry if she is not going to marry Lucio and threatens her mother with becoming a nun. Giulia turns down Tullo's ardent marriage proposal and, after finding out about Lucio's plotting and his jealousy towards Antonio, accepts Antonio's request.

The story ends with Giulia exacting revenge on Lucio for conspiring with her father and not being honest with himself and proposing to her. The intricate tale reveals a lot about love, ambition, and honor. In "The Signorina," Giulia maintains her superiority and honor by making her own decision and choosing her own fate. The text unmasks the communication barriers between genders. Additionally, "The Signorina" contains several parallels between Giulia and Jenny and between Linuccia and Giulia. Both women are immortalized within different portions of his literature, and their appearance in this tale is indicative of the Eve-Mary complex Pirandello creates in his works. The novella also contains representations that are comparable to Pirandello's relationship with Antonietta, even though the stories were published years before he met her. The fact that images of her appear in his early literature suggests that Pirandello saw all women as similar and reestablishes the idea of the Pirandellian Everywoman.

Chapter two revealed Pirandello's torrid affair with Jenny Schulz-Lander. Jenny was vivacious, intelligent, and musical; she played the piano and sang (Giudice 42). Her characteristics parallel Signorina Giulia who is described as "spirited" in the text. Giulia also plays the piano and is revered as intelligent; her reading is even something that Tullo and apparently others frown upon within the text. Lucio struggles with his feelings for Giulia. The novella builds the perception that Lucio never meant to fall in love with her. Similarly, documents claim that Pirandello did not respect Jenny and could not come to terms with his relationship with her. He could not "separate the concept of free love from the idea of sin" (Giudice 44). Jenny, by all accounts, was in love with Pirandello. However, Pirandello seems to have been unable to define his relationship with Jenny. He both desired and chastised it. In "The Signorina" Lucio eerily contemplates, "[b]esides, even he could not now fully account for what had happened between himself and Signorina Antelmi" (48). Like Pirandello, Lucio struggles with the affection he feels for Giulia. He does not want to love her although he knows he does. Giulia becomes embedded in Lucio's mind and the text reveals his inner turmoil and struggle with her impending marriage proposals. He wants to be rid of her but he also cannot escape her. Oddly, Pirandello had the same predicament with Jenny. He purged himself of her and "ungratefully" ended their relationship, yet he never forgot her and immortalized Jenny in his poem, *Rhine Elegies*.

Linuccia is also represented in "The Signorina." In the novella, Antonio followed Giulia around when they were children. Their romance is portrayed as a child-like infatuation which parallels Linuccia and Pirandello's courtship. In the text, Giulia's fondness for Antonio and their friendship is described as a form of nostalgic puppy love, "[f]or her, Arnoldi had always been that daring little lad who had accompanied her every morning right to the gates of the school. She had thought of him in this way, perhaps because he was thinking of her... And that was all" (52). Giulia looks upon the relationship as a cherished memory. The story insinuates that her love for Antonio took the shape of a girlish romance. Antonio's child-like obsession with Giulia parallels Pirandello's relationship with Linuccia and their whirlwind courtship. Additionally, Tullo is the shy character in "The Signorina." Lucio has to urge him to propose to Giulia and is constantly trying to encourage his friend in the text. Tullo and Lucio, two very dynamic characters, are symbols of Pirandello's character and represent the duality of the author.

Linuccia and Jenny were two completely different women. Although Linuccia was flirtatious, she was also a virgin and maintained the character of a nineteenth-century debutante. Jenny, however, signifies the transition of women in Italy. Her character was more conducive with the values emerging during the twentieth century. She was a free spirit and in touch with her sexuality. The polarity between the two women is indicative of the opposition Pirandello places in his literature. Giulia represents both the figures of Eve and Mary in the story. No woman is untainted in Pirandello's literature, just as no woman in his life fit into the mold he wanted. Women, to Pirandello, are both good and evil; they are Mary and Eve. Giudice notes that Linuccia took on several forms for Pirandello. Although Linuccia upheld the conventional Italian ethos, Pirandello still perceived her as a temptress and associated Eve-like attributes to her. Additionally, in "The Signorina," Lucio describes Giulia as "[...] catching him in the coils of her mischievous wit, wrapping him unawares in the momentary perturbation of a surreptitious effusion of affection [...]" (56). Lucio alternates associating Giulia with love and understanding or with temptation and flirtation.

In addition, Giulia also reveals her own polarity. She is aware of Lucio's feelings and his desire to distance himself from her. She reveals that she has continued her flirtation with Lucio as a way to conquer him. The text states that Giulia's love becomes embittered by Lucio's state of mind and she is:

> [...] ashamed of the obstinacy which had obliged her to permit him, in order to bind him more closely to her and make it more difficult for him to find a way out, some caresses which were not entirely irreproachable. Lucio could not resist her, as he should have done, given his intentions; and this was in great part the reason for her shame; inasmuch as she allowed these caresses more because of a determination to conquer than out of love, and he went too far, more embarrassed than blinded, as if submitting to her in order not offend her by holding back prudently. (64)

Giulia's musing reveals her power and dominance over Lucio. She knows that he has been reluctant to engage in a relationship with her, yet she thwarts his plans to distance himself. Giulia commands Lucio throughout the tale. As she demands Lucio confess to her who persuaded Tullo to propose, Giulia rails, "[t]ell me the truth! It was you who told him? It's quite useless to try to hide it from me anymore... You? Oh..." (86). Her goal is to conquer Lucio and in the end she does. She emotionally binds him to her. Her accepting Antonio's marriage proposal is more of a sacrifice for Lucio than her.

Motherhood is another prominent image in the story. Mother-daughter relationships are strained in the story. Giulia and her mother cannot understand one another and are at odds throughout the novella. Mother-daughter dynamics, mentioned in chapter two, appear throughout Pirandello's literature as broken, and "The Signorina" displays the animosity prevalent in mother-daughter relationship. In the tale, Giulia apparently feels distanced from her parents, she:

> [...] had always been like a closed book, well-bound, with an indecipherable title on its spine. [...] She felt, and frequently failed to conceal, an overwhelming disgust at her mother's rather coarse and slovenly ways and her father's narrow-mindedness, particularly whenever the two of them quarrelled and when, as often happened, it was over nothing. (62)

Pirandello himself felt distanced from his parents. Moreover, he saw his impending marriage to Linuccia as a trap and perceived matrimony as a prison. Family and the conventions associated with it are never happy in Pirandello's literature. It is always tainted with bitterness, imprisonment, and misunderstandings. Pirandello expressed a sense of alienation in his household. He felt that his parents' love lacked and was in constant search for something more than what they could give. Having a sister also allowed Pirandello to witness the decorum between mothers and daughters. Mothers and daughters are usually fighting for power in Pirandello's literature. In addition, men search for women who are like their mothers. Daughters, in turn, are expected to take an active role in the family and become like their mothers. Pirandello was in constant search for the love that he did not receive as a child. His quest for love and companionship from the opposite sex stems from his relationship with Caterina, his mother.

Caterina seemed to have issues expressing herself as a mother emotionally and physically. However, his mother and father did expect obedience. Pirandello, despite his antagonistic attitude towards his father was obedient towards his parents. Giulia displays hostility and irritability against her parents throughout the story, and through her Pirandello seems to emphasize the convoluted relationship he had with his. Mothers in Pirandello's literature always project the physical or emotional disfigurement of Eve, but the power and following associated with Mary.

The last theme exposed in "The Signorina" was also highlighted in "The Wave," women's child-like mentality. One aspect that places every Pirandellian woman closer to the Mary figure is her child-like countenance. Women are described with child-like attributes in Pirandello's works in order to illuminate their innocence or virginity. By giving women childish characteristics, it lends women an excuse for their actions and also projects their vulnerability, which gives men a reason to protect. By giving men a sense of purpose through protection women manipulate men in Pirandello's literature. They use the need for protection as a trigger to get men to defend their honor, express love, and bend to their will. However, women taint their childish demeanor by using it to control men. In "The Signorina," Giulia pleadingly "raised her handkerchief to her eyes, and laid her head on his breast, and he began to stroke her hair lightly with his hand. 'Love me like this...' she said, in a voice that was broken by brief sobs. 'I am not asking anything from you...'" (68-69). In the passage Lucio comforts Giulia. His simple gesture of stroking her hair shows that with a small amount of pleading and crying Giulia's demeanor compels Lucio to react. She combines her flirtation with her vulnerability as a way to gain the upper hand against Lucio.

Furthermore, her anger is expressed through tantrums. When Giulia does not get her way she becomes irate. Pirandello does not limit her childishness. Pirandello establishes her polarity through her decorum. He also embraces her need for desire and to act on instinct. For instance, her antics are displayed towards the end of the novella when Lucio is trying to convince her to marry someone else. In the story, Giulia "rose, smiling at a whimsical notion which had come into her head; she went to the writing-desk and, taking a piece of notepaper from the drawer, she began to write, as a joke, a formal declaration: 'I, the undersigned, hereby declare…'" (84). Giulio's immediate response is "[h]ow girlish!" By playing both sides of the archetypal child, Giulia controls situations without being scathed. Pirandello uses this device as a way to give women power without making them unlikable. It provides them with a subtlety to their dominance. If women are passed off as childish then they cannot be held accountable for their actions. Pirandello uses it as a way for men to rationalize women and the things they do for women.

The second story in the *Loveless Love* trilogy further defines gender antithesis. Pirandello uses the symbiotic relationship between men and women to illuminate men's need for femininity. He turns patriarchal conventions against men, showing how women use them as a way to manipulate male actions. Pirandello also delineates beauty and flirtation as women's weapons to attract, lure, and trap men. The combination of innocence and guilt helps maintain feminine polarity. Giulia is a mutable figure and shifts from one life to another with ease and grace. She chooses her fate confidently and accepts her role. Lastly, by accentuating Giulia's mutability, Pirandello shows how one woman can maintain several personas at one time.

"A Friend to the Wives"

The first two stories within the compilation laid the premise for the Pirandellian Everywoman. They established female mutability and outlined Pirandello's issues with gender relations and familial conventions. In the final story, "A Friend to the Wives," the ideals Pirandello established in the other two stories are blatantly brought forth. He places one woman, Signorina Pia Tolosani, in a position of power. She becomes every image of woman within the novella including the mother, wife, sister, and mistress. Pia personifies Pirandello's Eve/Mary dichotomy. Any of the women in Pirandello's life could represent an image of Pia. Her diversity establishes the power of feminine mutability.

"A Friend to the Wives" is about Pia's unconventional role in the lives of male friends. Several of the men in the story, at one time, showed a romantic interest in Pia. However, just as they started to advance in their relationship with her, she distanced herself from them. In turn, she helps them set up their new homes when they get engaged and acts as a trusted friend to their new wives. Filippo Venzi and Paolo Baldia are the two main men affected by Pia's kindness. In addition, the men's wives, Anna Venzi and Elena Baldia, are treated like children by Pia. She establishes superiority over everyone. Elena works to usurp Pia's power but is unsuccessful. The story ends with the men realizing that Pia has left her mark on every aspect of their lives. They cannot escape her presence which has even become a part of their wives. Although Pia's authority is revealed at the end, it is too late. Her power cannot be taken away. Filippo and Paolo realize they have to live with the love they have for Pia. Their existence appears to end in despair while the tale alludes to the idea that Pia does not change her demeanor.

The status of a wife and the indelible impression she leaves on a home is a major theme in "A Friend to the Wives." Pia is acknowledged as the ultimate image of a wife in the tale. The opening of the story not only highlights Pia's reserve towards suitors, but also her spousal potential. The text reveals Pia's character, stating:

> And yet this reserve was adorned with the most graceful ease of manner, with the most exquisite courtesy allied with a certain air of benevolent familiarity, which immediately removed any newcomer's embarrassment; and yet they all saw in her the wise intelligent little wife, and she herself appeared to put not only all her effort, but all herself indeed, into demonstrating that she would really be one, when someone eventually made the decision, without however being able to lay claim to any helping hand from her, or a glance, or a smile, or a word of anticipation. (91)

Pia's demeanor is one characteristic that ensures her power. She allows the men to get close to her without instituting flirting or coy feminine behavior. Instead, her art of manipulation is a treasured friendship. By keeping the men at a distance Pia is able to keep their attention and interest. She does not place pressure on them as a wife would. Pia has no obligation to them. However, she performs the household tasks of a wife. The men get the structure and tone of a household through her. Unfortunately, the home that is established is filled with a different wife. The men in the story begin to abhor their wives because their wives taint the household Pia establishes. It is not Anna and Elena's homely touches that build the familial nest, but Pia's. Therefore, it is as though the men have placed a stranger in the role of wife. Since she infiltrates the men's lives, they become obsessed with her and note how every aspect of their existence is in some way tied to her. For example, in the text, as Paolo is surveying his home and the items Pia purchased for it, he muses:

> [...] one figure was constantly superimposed on that of his fiancée: Pia Tolosani. In almost every object he saw her advice, her taste, her foresight. She had recommended that disposition of the drawing-room furniture; she had suggested the purchase of this or that very useful and elegant object. She had put herself in the place of the distant bride, and he had claimed for her all those comforts which a man, however much in love, would never have been able to think of. (103)

Paolo has to have Pia's approval as though she is his fiancée. She takes on the role of his wife and then abandons the status when the true wife appears; it is almost like a vicious game. The men gain a better understanding of her through their homes. Paolo, reflecting over his house, thinks to himself, "[s]o he had bought them for Pia, as if it were for her that he had set up home..." (103). Pia gains all of the status of a wife without the confines of marriage. She maintains her freedom as a "wife" and does not have to live in the confines a husband would establish.

Pia's power is noted in the beginning of the story. Initially, her helpful demeanor is portrayed as a kindness to others. Daula, a mutual friend of Paolo's and Pia's, sings

Pia's praises claiming, "She has the taste and tact that are needed, and also the experience, poor thing! This is already the third time that she has lent a hand... She thinks of others, since no one wants to think of her! What a beautiful nest she could build! Men are unfair, my friend" (95). Daula fails to realize that Pia creates a nest every time she helps one of the men. It is as though Pia has been married three times and erected three separate homes. As Paolo walks through the streets of Rome, he contemplates "She, she of all people was going to help him set up house for another woman! And she made the offer with the simplest and most natural air in the world... So then, had it meant nothing to her? that he... And he who believed... who had blushed... (95). Paolo's obsession with Pia is embedded in the quote. He cannot understand her or her desire to help. The situation confuses him. Pia does nothing wrong, yet her reaction toward his marrying another woman is nonchalant. The duality established in Pia's character is a significant clue to her mutability.

Pia represents the developed Pirandellian woman. She is the perfect combination of the Eve and Mary figure. Pia is not searching for an identity and does not flounder in existence; she builds it. She is successful in the story because she does not hold true to any one identity. Pia changes with each situation and adapts to her environment. The quality of her existence is not what is important; although her life does not appear as damaged as other Pirandellian characters, her presence and her way of life is what institutes her as a dominant figure. She easily changes into the figure that the men need at the time. Men like Filippo and Paolo place her on a pedestal. They idealize her and cannot deconstruct her because of their obsession for her. The men's obsession with Pia only criminalizes them as characters, and it diminishes Pia's guilt. They are portrayed as the individuals who bring their misery onto themselves. Pia only offers help; they do not have to accept it. The house is a reflection of the wife, and Pia being associated with that title destroys the honor that would have been bestowed on the men's wives. However, both women perceive Pia differently, and she does take on the role of a mother for the two women.

In the novella Pia's authority over Anna is obvious. Pia tries to help Anna with her children, demeanor, and appearance. She also corrects the young woman, like a mother, when she does something wrong. In the text it is noted that:

> Pia Tolosani began also to act as a mentor to Anna, and ultimately her company became absolutely indispensible to her. She chose the material for her clothes, she recommended the right dressmaker and milliner to her, she taught her to dress her hair in a less inelegant way, and to look after her home and enrich it gradually with all those trinkets which ladies know how to find in order to build a nest for themselves. (97)

Anna becomes a version of Pia and includes Pia in every aspect of her marriage. In the story, Pia consoles Anna when she argues with Filippo and offers counsel to her when she is upset. Pia tells Anna, "'[y]ou do not know how to take your husband as he is! You ought to do this and that…'" (97). Thus, Pia inadvertently reestablishes her power over the men by controlling the women. Pia and Anne are symbiotic. They need one another to achieve their ultimate goals and maintain survival.

In addition, Pia lectures Anna like a mother. Pia exclaims to Anna, "'Oh goodness, Anna!' continued Pia, in order to change the subject suddenly. 'Pull that hair up a little! Up, up! How did you do your hair today?'" (98). Pia strives to shift Anna's appearance and begins to morph her into the illusion her husband wants. Pia's power lies in her ability to make the men think they are getting what they want. Moreover, by transforming their wives into the same figures, Pia reaffirms her power but also keeps the men subordinate. Elena is different than Anna. While Anna seeks Pia's approval and craves her guidance, Elena fights against it. Elena enters the story projecting her own demeanor and agenda. She seeks control in her household and does not mind sharing with Pia, as long as it does not benefit her husband. For instance, according to the text, Elena:

> [...] accepted some advice from her, and from time to time she made some small sacrifice of her obstinate will to her, but only when it seemed to her that Pia's advice did not apparently agree with some wish revealed to her first by her husband. If he then showed himself to be too satisfied by the concession he had obtained, she withdrew it immediately, and Pia disliked that immensely. (108)

Elena's attitude makes a significant change in Pia's authority. Elena lends Pia power by allowing her to be personified as Paolo's wife through her influence on the home, but diminishes it when it comes to directly controlling Paolo. Elena does not mind Pia's indirect control as long as Elena maintains the appearance of direct control over Paolo.

Another facet that is important in the story is the way the men change in relation to the women's actions. Men become pawns around women; they are awkward and appear to be consistently pondering their influence. For instance, when shopping for the items in his house, Paolo notices that the women are laughing and cannot comprehend why. Paolo even recognizes that he "had been taken away from his books for more than a month now, and was being forced to regard as important things which he would never be able to look at in that way, was already tired, and was looking out at the street, thinking" (102). The quote exemplifies two important points: Paolo is doing something that he does not want to do and does not value. Moreover, he cannot understand the value of what the women are doing because he does not comprehend the importance of the household.

Filippo, on the other hand, experiences an attitude change based on Pia's actions. He begins to realize the effect she has had on him. He becomes irritable, infuriated, and cold towards Paolo and the Tolosanis. Filippo employs a snake motif to describe Pia. He claims "'You must know, that snake in the fable sheltered one snowy day by the pitying peasant…'" (110). Filippo begins to view Pia as a snake that has connived her way into his life. He explains to Paolo, "Every day that goes by, my wife goes down, always further down in my estimation… She, on the contrary, always goes up! She is unblemished and untouchable! In our eyes, you see, she has remained as the ideal, whom you, stupidly, and I have let slip from our grasp!" (111). Although Filippo recognizes he has lost Pia and that she is embedded into his life, he cannot change what has happened. His wife can never be Pia and therefore she can never live up to his expectations. Filippo and Paolo remain miserable in the story, whereas the women are comfortable with their lives and circumstances.

Pia uses the most matriarchal convention in Italy to gain power over her male counterparts. The home was and has always been women's domain. Pia flaunts the power of femininity by emphasizing the significance of the home in patriarchal Italy. She embodies the ideal Pirandellian Everywoman. She transforms into the roles demanded of her and exists as an element of form. Her unstable identity strengthens her authority over men. Everyone in the story becomes an extension of Pia. She is a creator and molds the figures in the story in her image. "A Friend to the Wives" exemplifies Pirandello's evolutionary outlook on femininity; moreover, the trilogy shows the progression of the Pirandellian Everywoman. It is one of the first testaments to his devotion to femininity and matriarchal order. The *Loveless Love* compilation highlights Pirandello's tragic view on love and marriage. It is a Pirandellian gem, outlining the author's beliefs of the unidentified self and gender miscommunication.

The Novels:

The Late Mattia Pascal

Pirandello's first novel, *The Late Mattia Pascal*, brought him national success with its publication in 1904 and spawned three motion picture ideas (Radcliff-Umstead 355). The novel is about a man, Mattia Pascal, who gets trapped into marriage by Batta Malagna, who was entrusted with Mattia's family funds after his father's death. Malagna is supposed to be a trusted friend of the Pascals. However, he is actually a crook that is squandering Mattia's inheritance. Mattia's marriage to Romilda, Malagna's niece, becomes unbearable. After a quarrel between the couple Mattia leaves his house in an effort to escape. He leaves for several days, only to find out that a man who looked like him was found dead at his place of work. His wife identified the body as Mattia, and his family and friends presumed him dead. As such, Mattia tries to start life over as Adriano Meis. However, the confines of society and social conventions keep him from being able to live his life as Meis and he returns home to confront Romilda and family. Mattia becomes a man with no identity. According to society he is dead. As Donati points out, "[s]ociety has a series of strictly codified and widely binding norms that regulate individual behaviour and intersubjective exchange" (140). Basically, defying society or rejecting its social codes puts the character in direct conflict with life. Mattia dies metaphorically and spiritually because he disassociates himself from his society and from himself. He loses his identifying markers. Therefore, he is a character that never truly lives because he has no sense of himself or his identity.

Though this novel is about Mattia Pascal, the women in the story are important figures that dictate the character's actions. *The Late Mattia Pascal* consists of each Pirandellian feminine motif and parallels all of the women pertinent in Pirandello's life. The novel focuses on female interactions with each other and men as well as portraying various aspects of femininity. The main characters that illuminate Pirandellian mutability are Pascal's mother, his Aunt Scolastica, Malagna's first wife Signora Guendalina, Olivia Salvoni, Marianna Pescatore, Romilda, and Adriana. Each character is mutable and represents a different aspect of Eve and Mary femininity.

Mattia's mother is the externalization of the Sainted Mother Mary. Her suffering, sacrifice, and piousness are highlighted attributes. Mattia ardently describes his mother as "that sainted woman!" (6). She is a representation of the early views of femininity and an example of the child-mother created in Italy. Mattia's description of his mother parallels Caterina Pirandello:

> [s]hy and serene by nature, she had had little experience of life and of human dealings. When she spoke she seemed a little girl [...]. Frail by

> nature, after my father's death she was always in poor health, but she never complained of her suffering and I believe that she never thought about it, accepting it was resignation as a natural consequence of her loss. (6)

His mother wholly abandons herself to her roles as wife and mother. She protects her children and obeys her husband. She is a child-mother and is periodically referred to as "girlish" throughout the novel. Her childish attributes are conducive with female ideology of the nineteenth century when women were expected to be weak, vulnerable, and in need of male protection. According to Bini, "[m]arrying 'a dear little girl' assured male possession and total control of the woman, whose sexual and mental growth were thus stunted" (*His Muse* 6). Mattia's mother appears incapable of thinking for herself within the novel. After Mattia's father's death, his mother blindly entrusts Malagna with the Pascals' finances. Her trust and innocence are what solidify her as a representation of Mary.

Mattia's mother and Aunt Scolastica are mirrored figures. Aunt Scolastica is illustrated as a "shrewish old maid, dark and proud, with a pair of ferrety eyes [...]. But my aunt had a bitter, spiteful sense of justice; and for this reason, I believe, more than for love of us, that she couldn't bear to see Malagna stealing with impunity" (7). His aunt is not described with the same saintly attributes as his mother. Aunt Scolastica does not believe in love and perceives men as deceivers. Her intellect and boorish attitude personify her as an image of Eve. Eve was the first to eat from the Tree of Knowledge and convinced Adam to partake in the eating of the fruit. Aunt Scolastica flaunts her intellect over Mattia's mother and also uses power of persuasion to get her way. Aunt

Scolastica's renunciation of the "little girl" syndrome shows that Pirandello's women cannot be categorized into one group.

She is also not the idealistic version of a mother. She does not coddle children or display affection. However, she still exhibits a motherly ferocity over her family. Although she is portrayed as "ugly" by Mattia, her heart is not as darkened as other characters in the novel. Moreover, she was not a woman who wanted to marry. She does not marry a man she is interested in because "he was a widower! He had belonged to another woman and perhaps he might think of her occasionally" (8). The stability of a husband is not a necessity for her. Aunt Scolastica seems in control. Her comment "he belonged to another woman" suggests that she views, men not women, as property.

Marianna Pescatore, another mother figure, is one of the most villainous characters in the novel. She exudes every negative aspect of femininity. Pescatore is Mattia's mother-in-law. Her status as an in-law also stereotypes her as a blackguard. She has few redeeming attributes. During his first encounter with Pescatore, Mattia focuses on the appearance of Marianna's hands. On his first meeting with the family he extends his hand to say goodbye to the woman and, "[s]he barely held out her hand: a cold hand, dry, knotty, yellowish; she lowered her eyes and pursed her lips" (23) Hands are typically associated with love, help, nurturing, and protection. A mother's hands are usually a symbol of her love. Marianna's grotesque hands suggest that she is flawed as a mother. She is incapable of expressing love and passing it on through touch. Her hands are "cold" and "yellowish" implying that they are dead. Her hand being cold shows a lack of warmth in her touch while the "yellowish" color hints at disease or sickness. Hands can also be viewed as a conduit of power, and Marianna is always vying for power in the novel. She exacts power over most of the characters in the story and does so hostilely. Her hands are a reflection of her deranged struggle for power and lack of motherly love.

In addition, the condition of her hands directly relates to Marianna's personality in the story. She wields power and demands it from other people. She cannot give love and is also incapable of receiving it. For instance, when Mattia comes home and catches his mother-in-law maltreating his mother he reacts, and then screams for her to "get out, for your own good! Out!" (36). Romilda throws herself into her mother's arms and begs her to stay. Instead of showing love towards her daughter or accepting any solace in Romilda's plea, Marianna "thrusts" Romilda away. She then tells Romilda, "[y]ou wanted him, didn't you? Now keep him, this thief of yours! I'm going away alone!" (36) Marianna has no problem abandoning her daughter and shows no warmth to her. She has no sense of motherhood. Although she does not leave her daughter, which is one quality that does partially redeem her some, she still shows no love toward Romilda. Marianna merely acts as in a host-parasite manner with her daughter, using Romilda to ensure her survival.

Moreover, Marianna takes pleasure in torturing Mattia's mother. Her maltreatment of the woman highlights the opposing forms of the First Mother and the Sainted Mother. Interestingly, Pirandello places two Eve-like figures in direct conflict with one another. Marianna and Aunt Scolastica both represent different variations of the Eve motif. However, Aunt Scolastica portrays a more demure and honorable vision of Eve. Aunt Scolastica rescues Mattia's mother and takes her to live with her. During her visit to the Pascals' house, Marianna and Aunt Scolastica get into an argument and Aunt Scolastic wins the disagreement; the "protective" version of mother wins out over the distanced one. Marianna winds up with dough on her head and angrily railing in the kitchen. Marianna is a mother void of emotion and completely dependent on others. Her mutability is forced based on the person she is using at the time.

There are several important facets relating to motherhood in the novel. Motherhood is never perfect or well defined in any of Pirandello's works. Moreover, images of Caterina can be seen within each mother figure. Her saintly demeanor is reminiscent of the qualities attributed to Mattia's mother. Mattia's devotion to his parent and the pity he feels for her also parallels Pirandello's relationship with his mother. Although it is apparent Pirandello loved his mother, he appears to have felt sorry for her as well. He viewed her as vulnerable and child-like. However, he also saw her deceive his father, negating some of the innocence he associated with her. Pirandello played with the image of mother as a way to rationalize his feelings for his. He already believed women were dualistic "creatures" and had to apply the same concept to motherhood.

Several supporting characters in *The Late Mattia Pascal* alternate between the Eve and Mary dichotomy as well as parallel several of the women in Pirandello's life. For instance, Signora Guendalina is briefly mentioned in the novel. She would throw tantrums and use nagging as a way to get what she wanted with Malagna. Although Malagna is an antagonistic character within the novel, he treated his first wife with sincerity. However, he also wanted his wife's "endless afflictions" and constant badgering to stop. Guendalina is a representation of Eve. Her "monstrous" attitude and demeanor are personified as evil characteristics. Another character that appears in the novel and directly correlates to the figure of Eve is the woman Mattia meets when he is gambling. The woman is entrenched in sin; she is gambling and surrounds herself in a sin-city atmosphere. Pirandello uses women such as these to highlight negative attributes of femininity.

At least one Eve figure in the novel also has Mary's values, Olivia Salvoni. Mattia is in love with Olivia and helps her out of her predicament with Malagna. Olivia becomes Malagna's second wife. Since she does not get pregnant after three years of marriage, he declares her infertile and begins to treat her poorly. It never occurs to Malagna that he is the problem. Mattia, in love with and feeling sorry for Olivia, impregnates her and allows Malagna to claim the child as his thus saving Olivia's reputation. In the novel, Olivia is described as "pure; her purity was unshakable, in fact, because it came from the awareness of the mistakes she would be making if she gave in. This awareness, on the other hand, freed her from any foolish pretense of shyness, of false modesty, so she could be very bold and frank" (19). She is defined as the epitome of womanhood and innocence. Her purity and her child-like characteristics establish her as a Marian figure and contrast with the fact that her child is from another man.

However, her act of infidelity with Mattia diminishes her status, and like all of Pirandello's women, she can also be viewed as a model for Eve. In the text Mattia claims that when Olivia married, she "had vowed that she would be a faithful wife; and now she refused to break that vow, even to regain her peace of mind" (20). Pirandello creates a dilemma for Olivia. If she does not cheat on her husband he will label her as sterile and she will be subjected to his abuse. In addition, sterility was grounds for a husband to leave his wife. Olivia's entire future was based on what she chose to do. By outlining her predicament and depicting Malagna as a villain, Pirandello makes Olivia's infidelity a fleeting indiscretion. Pirandello places the character in limbo between Mary and Eve.

Two prominent female characters in the novel, Romilda and Adrianna, symbolize the polarity of femininity in Pirandellian literature. They are mirror images of one another. Both women wholeheartedly control Mattia and his actions. The women's mutability solidifies them as dominant figures in the novel, and their images transform for Mattia.

Romilda, initially portrayed as beautiful and cordial, is perceived as the exact opposite of her mother. After their first meeting, Mattia describes Romilda, explaining:

> her daughter made up for this with a friendly smile that promised a cordial welcome, and with a look, both sad and sweet, in those eyes which had such a deep impression on me from the very beginning. Her eyes were of a strange green color, dark, intense, shaded by very long lashes. They were nocturnal eyes, between two bands of waved hair, black as ebony, which came over her forehead and her temples, as if to set off the vivid whiteness of her skin. (23)

Mattia's first impression is based off of her eyes and features. He judges her moral character based on her looks, because eye color had specific meanings to Italian heritage. Light eyes are typically associated with shallowness whereas dark eyes are considered bewitching and glamorous (Gundle 52). Romilda is connected to darkness and sensuality. The fact that her eyes are described as "nocturnal" suggests that she can see within darkness. She is comfortable in a dark atmosphere. By associating her with darkness, Pirandello negates some of the positive imagery associated with her. Moreover, Romilda's looks seem hypnotic, alluring, and captivating. Her features also reveal her duality; they conceal her true moral identity. Mattia tells his friend Mino, that "the mother, indeed, seemed a witch, but the daughter was an honest girl; I would have taken my oath on that. There was no doubt about Malagna's evil aims; so the girl had to be saved, and as quickly as possible" (24). Although she is not ugly on the outside, her personality and character reflect her mother's.

Mattia is so captivated with Romilda's looks that he is oblivious to her true identity. In the novel, Mattia proclaims, "[...] I had fallen in love with Romilda, [...] I was mad with love for those sweet eyes, that delicate nose, that mouth, everything, even a little wart that she had on the nape of her neck, and an almost invisible scar on her hand, which I kissed again and again and again ..." (27). Interestingly, Romilda has a scarred hand just as her mother has deformed hands. The scar suggests that Romilda, like her mother, has a major flaw and cannot fully comprehend love and affection. She is like a siren that lures Mattia into the relationship and then reveals herself as a different figure.

Later in the novel Romilda is described differently. Her appearance begins to reflect Mattia's home life. Romilda was "always slumped in a chair, racked by constant fits of nausea, pale, disheveled, and ugly with never a moment of good health, refusing to talk or even open her eyes" (32-33). At this point in the story Romilda, like Olivia, is pregnant with Mattia's child. Olivia is mentioned as "beautiful, so plump and healthy," whereas Romilda seems to be fighting against her pregnancy and upcoming venture into motherhood.

Romilda is viewed as a miserable character. Her transition from one form to another parallels Mattia's contemplation on his life. He views his life as miserable and, as such, his wife represents misery. As Mattia contemplates the reason for Romilda's change in looks, he reasons:

> She even seemed to do everything to appear unattractive in my sight, letting whole days go by without combing her hair, uncorseted, in slippers, her clothes falling off her. Did she feel perhaps that, for a husband like me, it wasn't worth the effort to pretty herself up? For that matter, after the grave risk she had run in childbirth, she had never really regained her physical health. And, as far as her spirit was concerned, she became more bitter every day, not only against me, but against everyone. (62)

Mattia and Romilda's marriage happened as a result of trickery, deceit, and pre-marital sex. If they had never succumbed to desire they would not have been married. Their marriage was marked in sin from the beginning.

Pirandello, although he engaged in a sexual relationship before his marriage, saw pre-marital sex as a sin. He felt that it tainted a relationship and that it was a weakness of the body. Pirandello's ideology was created from the Catholic concept of sins of the flesh. For him, giving in to instinct was worse than social failure or betrayal of loyalty; it was a complete moral lapse (Giudice 27). He regarded virginity as sacred. Thus, characters that indulge in the sins of the flesh wind up in grueling circumstances. Pirandello marks Romilda and Mattia's relationship with despair because of the origin of their relationship. Giudice claims that "any rebellious attitude towards chastity came as a traumatic shock which was even greater for Pirandello himself than his characters:..." (27). Pirandello punishes his characters for their immoral act. Like Adam and Eve, Mattia and Romilda are doomed to a life of misery together. Romilda, like Eve, constantly suffers, especially in childbirth. The relationship between her difficulty in birthing and

Eve's punishment being women suffering in birth is significant; Romilda, like Eve, is punished for her sin.

Mattia's relationship with Adriana happens under different pretenses than his and Romilda's. He does not engage in a sexual relationship with Adriana. In appearance and demeanor Adriana is Romilda's opposite. She is described as "blond and pale, her light blue eyes were sweet and sad like all her other features. Adriana—the same as mine! *Think of that!* I said to myself: *as if I'd chosen on purpose*" (106). Her light features contrast to Romilda's green eyes and dark looks. The contrast of light and dark parallels the notion of good versus evil. Moreover, the idea that Adriana and Adriano have the same name is significant, since naming, too, is an important idea within Italian culture. A name establishes an identity. According to Ann Hallamore Caesar, naming is a significant attribute that underlines Mattia's predicament. She writes:

> ...who we are in terms of our biological origins is of little importance what matters is who the state understands us to be. A person is whoever she or he is legally declared to be. In the end it comes down to a question of bureaucracy. Naming is the first and most important moment in a process aimed to confer on us an identity. (114)

Mattia's problems arise because after his "death" he renounces the bureaucratic side of his identity. Society does not know him. However, as Caesar explains, naming is important and what creates an identity. It is significant Mattia chooses his new name and selects a name that is the same as Adriana's. He forms his identity in Adriana's image especially since he borrows her name. He chooses to be associated with her, unlike the way Mattia becomes attached to Romilda. Moreover, the connection of their names suggests that Mattia, Adriano, becomes an extension of Adriana.

She is also consistently connected to innocence. Mattia declares "no thought less than pure ever entered my mind concerning Adriana; her innocent goodness, suffused with melancholy, couldn't inspire anything of the kind" (128). Her looks inspire purity and goodness in Mattia's mind instead of lust and desire, as they did with Romilda. Adriana's, like Mary's mothering influence, purity, and countenance make her a noble, martyred figure in the novel. Adriana is also described as affecting Mattia's soul. She transforms his spirit, and he comments that their spirits are in tune with one another. Mattia claims:

> Our spirits have their own private way of understanding one another, of becoming intimate, while our external persons are still trapped in the commerce of ordinary words, in the slavery of social rules. Souls have their own needs and their own ambitions, which the body ignores when it sees that it's impossible to satisfy them or achieve them. (131)

Mary's immaculate conception of the Holy Spirit connects her to the soul and its salvation. In the Bible, the conception of Jesus is described, "... behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying, Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20). Mary and God are joined as one, just as Adriana and Mattia are spiritually connected. Adriana influences Mattia's soul, further emphasizes her holiness. He loves her through his spirit just as others idolize and worship Mary. Mary became an extension of God just as Mattia becomes an extension of Adriana through her soul. Women are mutable figures.

They shift from one form to another, and are associated with a transitioning soul. As such, their ability to change their identity also allows them to change men, beyond the physical and into the spiritual. Basically, Adriana instigates a physical and spiritual change in Mattia.

Another attribute that highlights Adriana's innocence and purity is her hand. Unlike Romilda and her mother, Adriana's hands are not scarred or disfigured. Mattia describes the act of touching her hand, commenting "I must confess that this unexpected 'touching' made a strange impression on me, at first.... The delicate lightness of the touch and its precision had been, in any case, marvelous" (172). The description of her hand suggests that she is a delicate, light-hearted woman. Mattia continues the perusal of her hand, declaring:

> I was making long, intense, tacit speech to that little hand, pressing it and caressing it, as it listened, trembling and submissive. [...] An ardent ecstasy had seized me, and I delighted in my own effort to repress my furious longings and express them instead with the gentle tenderness necessary for the innocence of that timid and sweet spirit. (173)

Since hands are associated with motherly love and power, Mattia's phrase implies that Adriana has managed to make Mattia succumb to her. He does not rebel against her "hands" as he does with Marianna, nor does he describe any physical characteristics of Adriana's hand. Instead, Mattia focuses on the connection he has to her hand, again highlighting her spiritual dominance over Mattia. She communicates with him on a spiritual level which not only solidifies her authority but also illustrates her spirituality and connection to the Holy Mother.

Mattia also personifies Adriana as a mother, referring to her as "our poor little godmother" (110). By personifying Adriana as a mother, Mattia further establishes her role as the Virgin Mother Mary. Moreover, the role of the Virgin Mother is also indicative of the time period, when Italian women were expected to maintain a child-like state, and pure women never fully realized their sexuality but maintain innocence throughout their lives. Throughout the novel, Adriana is viewed as girlish and in need of Mattia's protection. He falls in love with Adriana for her vulnerability, just as he fell in love with Romilda for her beauty.

Adriana's vulnerability was also a trait of Mattia's mother. Mattia, like most Italian men, searched for and found a woman that was like his mother. Pirandello was constantly searching for unquestionable love from his mother. As noted by Caesar, "Pirandello's own representation of the mother-son relationship retain elements of the child's early phantasy that his mother desires no one else other than him, that she lives for him; a phantasy that is usually overcome, with a struggle, by the entry of a third person into the mother-child dyad" (126). Motherly love is gratifying and it is perceived as the ultimate form of love. Therefore, men seek to marry women who imitate their mother. In the novel, Mattia remarks that "[o]nly she could comfort me; she had to; she who could understand better than the others how my boredom was oppressing me, consuming me in the desire to see her or at least to hear her near me" (154). Mattia's obsession with Adriana parallels a boy's dependence on his mother. Only a mother can fully understand her child. Adriana understands him, consoles him, and develops a bond with him that is reminiscent of the mother-child dyad. Adriana gives Mattia his identity as Adriano and gives him an existence beyond his illusion.

One consistent theme connected to all women in the novel is the notion that they are creatures. Although the term is typically associated with negative connotations, in Pirandello's works it is a way to establish feminine authority and mutability. One example of the creature terminology in the story is the birth of Mattia's children. There are two feminine attributes first focused on in the children's description: their hands and existence as creatures. Mattia claims:

> I can see them still, there in the crib side by side; they scratched at each other with those little hands, so delicate and yet turned into claws by some savage instinct which filled me with pity and horror. Two wretched, wretched little creatures, more miserable than the kittens I used to find in my traps every morning. And like the kittens, these two hadn't the strength to cry. Still they clawed! (46)

Women are associated either with snakes or cats in Pirandello's works. Their descriptions seem to parallel the two animals consistently. The children's portrayal suggests that they are in between worlds. They seem to be human and animalistic. For example, their hands are correlated with "claws," yet they are also "delicate." The opposition between the two words implies a duality within the two girls. Not only does it suggest their mutability, but it also gives the children a type of "other world" persona. The children are different. They are a culmination of characteristics, indescribable to Mattia, and in a world of their own that Mattia cannot comprehend. In turn, the phrase "which filled me with pity and horror" typifies the idea that women both intrigue and scar Mattia. The children are immortalized by him even after their deaths.

Furthermore, Adriana is also called a creature throughout the novel, as in "the simplicity of that sweet and gentle creature" (131). Women are always referred to as creatures after an establishment of power over male characters. For instance, Mattia is thinking about his past life and the atrocities that his wife Romilda and her mother were able to commit. Mattia ponders:

> But back at the mill, those two excellent creatures Romilda and the widow Pescatore had thrown me into the water; they hadn't thrown themselves in, alas! So it was my wife who had remained free, not I who had assumed the role of a corpse in the illusion that I could become another man, live another life. Another man, yes, but on condition that I do nothing. (181)

Mattia does not have fond feelings towards Romilda or her mother. By this point in the text he is madly in love with Adriana or at least with the image he has perceived of her. However, he cannot escape his old life as Mattia Pascal or avoid the ramifications of his wife and Marianna's actions. By referring to them as creatures he places them in another realm separate from men. The ironic phrase "excellent creatures" suggests that they are good at living their life of form. The phrase highlights the significance of feminine mutability and men's inability to comprehend it. Even the female dog is referred to as a creature in the novel when she displays a sense of authority and protection.

Another example that displays the power associated with the word *creature* is when Mattia returns home to reclaim his wife and previous life. Mattia had been gone for two years posing as Adriano Meis. When he returns home he finds Romilda married to his best friend Mino, and Romilda and Pomino also have a child together, a daughter. Mattia, holding his former wife and friend's child, muses to himself:

> Upset, dismayed, I heard again in my ears the scream of that woman who had been mine and who now was the mother of this child which was not mine. Not Mine! Whereas mine, my child—her mother had not loved her then! And therefore, no ... not now, by God! I was not to have pity on this child, nor on them.... But the little creature went on crying, crying [...]. To calm her, I held her against my chest and began to pat her lightly on the back and rock her a little as I walked up and down. My hatred died away, my violence vanished. (232)

Although Mattia wants to hate the child he is holding and abhors what she represents, he gives in to her. He again succumbs to the wiles of a woman and in an effort to explain her power refers to her as a creature. Throughout the novel illusion is mentioned and associated with femininity. At one point Mattia, as Adriano Meis, philosophically states an interesting phrase "[...] Illusion, a great merchant she is [...]" (156). The correlation between women and illusion is significant to understanding women as creatures. Mattia views illusion as a woman. The identities women exude within the novel are always an illusion; women are never what they appear and always become something different for Mattia.

The Late Mattia Pascal is an intriguing tale that exemplifies the power of femininity over men. Women determine Mattia's actions, and in the end he blames them for his twist of fate. He also cannot escape them and becomes obsessed with their influence over him. They are otherworldly creatures who manipulate his life like cruel creators. For Mattia, Adriano is a creation spawned out of necessity. He builds his alter-ego based on the whims of women and what he thinks they would want. Pirandello constructed a novel that diminishes the superiority of masculinity and illuminates woman. He uses feminine attributes such as beauty, childbirth, and the household to show how women control men within their own domain. Interestingly, these Pirandellian ideals are only in their infancy at the time this novel was written. Pirandello spent time after this novel perfecting his image of women. Although budding, the ideology expressed in this novel reveals the Pirandellian Everywoman and explores the female polarity of women as both good and evil.

One, None, and a Hundred Thousand

In Pirandello's last novel, *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand*, the main character Vitangelo Moscarda is blatantly controlled by his wife Dida. Dida is the cause of Moscarda's physical revelations and causes her husband to succumb to madness. Moscarda tries to survive within the feminine world of form and in the process loses his sanity. He essentially becomes lost and engulfed in a world of madness and dissolution. The story was written decades after Pirandello's first compilation *Loveless Love*, when Pirandello was just starting to experiment with feminine mutability. In his later novel, mutability and its control over masculinity is clearly defined. The Pirandellian Everywoman is at the forefront of *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand* and exercises her full control within the novel.

The story begins with Moscarda's wife, Dida, mentioning that her husband's nose hangs slightly lower on one side than the other. She smiles and explains, "'I thought,' she said, 'that you were looking to see which side it is hangs down lower'" (13). The story is initiated based on this simple comment. Moscarda starts to wonder why his wife never mentioned the imperfection, if he has more impurities, and how people perceive him. He realizes that to each individual person he is someone else; he has a separate identity with each person he knows. Moscarda tries to embrace the world of mutability. However, he also tries to abandon the outside world. In the end he is stuck in an asylum, pondering life, and the true meaning of identity. The entire premise of the novel is caused by Moscarda's wife; her one comment spurs a novel of contemplation for Moscarda, altering his perception about himself and others.

Dida Moscarda acts as a supporting figure within the novel. Initially, the story is perceived as Moscarda's; however, his wife is an impenetrable part of the tale. Looking at the story differently and focusing on the character that has the most control, *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand* is Dida's story. Maggie Günsberg outlines the power of authorial authority, explaining:

> The power of authority subtending the subject position is at the root of a range of notions associated with 'author.' [...] first, 'author' as fount of wisdom, as teacher and guide to be obeyed; second, as father, creator and ancestor of genealogies and ideas; and third, God as the ultimate Author. [...] The exclusively patriarchal bias of this fundamental cultural complex clearly has implications for a female subject position, the most obvious implication being that of its absence. In other words, there is no genuine representation of a female subject position. (*Patriarchal* 39)

The criticism points out the power associated with the role of author. Günsberg finishes her analysis stating that in "an object position, the resulting female 'identity' is no more than a construct, an extension, of male identity/subjectivity [...]" (40). Though Günsberg's idea gives men authorial power and the novel is written from Moscarda's point of view, the novel reveals a different notion, with women maintaining the authority of the author. In this novel, women, and Dida in particular, act as figures of wisdom, teachers, obeyed guides, creators, and the "ultimate" author God. Moreover, their absence does not objectify them, but instead connects them to God. Dida's presence and absence delves into Pirandello's theme of an absent Creator. Thus, her absence, connection to God, and existence within the realm of form make Moscarda an extension of Dida.

In addition, the novel reveals the world of form that women exist in, Pirandellian femininity, and women as creators. The aspect of women as divine creatures continues within this convoluted tale. By this point, Pirandello had pondered the effects of femininity within his life. In this novel, every aspect of femininity that Pirandello tried to resonate is exposed. Even the title, *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand,* suggests the recognition of the Pirandellian Everywoman.

Dida forces Moscarda into a different reality. Moscarda tries to sustain mutability and supplant himself in the world of form. He describes the other realm, the world in which the Pirandellian woman lives, stating:

> You will quickly re-aquire it there, where all is invented and mechanical, assembling and construction, a world within a world, a manufactured, agglomerate, adjusted world, a world of twisted artifice, of adaptation, and of vanity, a world that has a meaning and a value solely by reason of the fact that man is its artificer. (71-72)

Pirandello uses Moscarda as a tool to reveal the world of femininity, exposing feminine mutability by making it recognizable through male eyes. Moscarda's revelation of mutability is best defined by Anne Paolucci, who writes:

> The misleading notion that we are the image we find posited in the external world has to be abandoned. That image of an illusionary solid *one* must be reduced to nothing, *no one*, before the *true integrated self* can emerge. And that true self is constantly changing, a hundred thousand masks, never the same form from one moment to the next. (*The Plays* 120)

Moscarda's introduction into the world of form is shocking. He does not understand it, but he does comprehend its potential and the power associated with it. Men realize women's power, but can only do so if it is revealed by a man. Dida is unaffected by Moscarda's revelation because she already exists in the realm he has discovered. Moreover, one of the most important ideas in the novel is that although Moscarda reveals the feminine world, he cannot survive in it. Women fluctuate between form and life. They maintain power in their world; Moscarda simply acts as a visitor or intruder. His inability to sustain his sanity within the world shows he does not become a cohesive part of it and lacks true mutability.

Dida's subtle control over Moscarda further exudes her power and authority. As Moscarda critiques his nose in the mirror, Dida informs him that his nose is not his only imperfection. In the text, Moscarda notes that "[i]t may be that my wife saw through this anger of mine; for she quickly added that, if I was under the firm and comforting impression of being wholly without blemishes, it was one of which I might rid myself; since, just as my nose sagged to the right--" (14). Dida continues with a long list of

Moscarda's physical flaws. Her revelations are twofold: she is pointing out physical issues with her husband. Yet Moscarda defines himself through his looks; therefore, her innocent comments trigger a chain obsession for Moscarda. Furthermore, she changes him "spiritually" simply by pointing out his physical flaws. Moscarda declares that "I at once imagined that everybody, now that my wife had made the discovery, must be aware of those same bodily defects, and that they must see nothing else in me" (18). Hence, by recognizing his flaws she devalues him. Furthermore, the point that his wife's discovery changes his outlook is significant and reaffirms her power over Moscarda.

Moreover, in the story Dida is given both masculine and feminine characteristics. A masculine attribute attributed to her is the male gaze. By feminizing the male gaze, Dida objectifies Moscarda, scrutinizing him and placing value on his physical flaws. Interestingly, Dida is never subjected to the same scrutiny, and she is not objectified by her husband as he is by her. The body is another typically male attribute that Dida gives significance. By placing value on the body, Dida is able to redefine an element typically stereotyped by men.

The body is both a masculine and feminine trait. Women, especially in early history, were perceived as figures of matter and the creators of the body. They were expected to look a certain way and gain a place in society through their looks. There were two forms of female beauty in modern Italian culture, the mother and the "crisis woman." "Crisis Women," were a cross between *femme fatale* and temptress. Mothers were expected to be healthy and ready for childbirth. Women's power in modern Italy was obtained by adhering to old world conventions and by not sexualizing their bodies (Gundle 88). In other Pirandellian novels, feminine beauty is used as a lure to trap and captivate men. Women are defined by their beauty, and if they are beautiful and flaunt their sexuality then they are labeled as temptresses. However, in this novel, the objectification of beauty is reversed. Men's appearance is taken into account. Moscarda is viewed as simply a body. Additionally, there is a difference between how feminine beauty and male beauty are personified. Women can handle being "ugly" or grotesque within Pirandello's works. They accept their role no matter the physical deformity. However, in this novel, Moscarda cannot deal with a physical imperfection. His inability to handle and embrace his flaw exhibits his subordination to Dida. The novel hints at the idea that women are comfortable with whatever identity they assume, whereas Pirandellian men cannot handle being different.

Bodies are the most mutable matter apparent to humanity. Women are distinctive in Pirandello's works because they are physically, mentally, spiritually, and environmentally mutable. Men, on the other hand, cannot wholeheartedly change every aspect of their life as women can. In the novel, Moscarda notes, "[...] I was immersed all of a sudden in the reflection that it meant—could it be possible?—that I did not so much as know my own body, the things which were most intimately a part of me: nose, ears, hands, legs. And turning to look at myself once more, I examined them again." (17). Moscarda is incapable of perceiving his body. He has no control over something that should be wholly his. His lack of control over his own body allows him to contemplate if he truly has power over anything else.

In addition, the body is also deceiving and undergoes numerous transformations especially because of old age and the environment. Moscarda cannot embrace mutability because he does not understand his body and tries to rationalize mutability by categorizing it. Women, by contrast, accept the transitions their body undergoes and accept the fluidity of mutability. They control every aspect of form, physically and spiritually. Additionally, the novel broaches the idea that women understand mutability better because they exist in between life and death. Moscarda laments:

> As I ran on like this, a fresh anxiety laid hold of me: the realization that I should not be able, while living, to depict myself to myself in the actions of my life, to see myself as others saw me, to set my body off in front of me and see it living like the body of another. When I took up my position in front of a mirror, something like a lull occurred inside me; all spontaneity vanished; every gesture impressed me as being fictitious or a repetition. (28)

Interestingly, Moscarda claims that he cannot depict himself to himself while he is living. As noted earlier, women's mutability connects them to God. Thus, it makes sense that Pirandellian women are able to float between the existence of reality and form.

Men's logic and reason keeps them from being able to be truly mutable. Moscarda's inability to understand mutability causes him to lose his sanity. He notes the point where he is able to separate his soul from his body and peruse his own identity. He declares, "I was nothing. No one. A poor, mortified body, waiting for someone to take it" (37). The idea of being nothing and waiting for someone to take over a body is prevalent throughout the novel and revealing about femininity. Women are able to transform themselves because they see their bodies as mutable objects. Moreover, because they can see men for who they really are, women are able to penetrate their souls and control them spiritually. The novel hints at the idea that women create men and shape their lives. Men, on the other hand, use society to establish their identity. Once Moscarda renounces his societal identity, he diminishes his sanity.

Women's value is drenched in their ability to form the body into whatever it has to be at the time. Moscarda sees the body as "nothing," a perception which displays his inability to live as form. He is unable to exist in the same realm women do because he cannot rationalize it. Moscarda's glimpse into the feminine world is both shocking and appealing. He claims, "[b]y the time the moment in which I fixed with my gaze was past, it was already another; as witness the fact that it was no longer what I had been as a boy, and was not yet what I should be as an old man; and here I was today endeavoring to recognize it in the one of yesterday, and so on" (39). Moscarda's excursion as form slowly begins to deconstruct his mental state. Unlike Pirandellian women, he can only allow one aspect of himself to mutate, the body or the spirit. His rush to try and accept his new found world and transform himself in it is laden and oppressive.

Another interesting facet in the story is the personification of Dida as God. Moscarda reveals that his wife calls him her Gengè. He tries to separate himself from the image, but ends up floundering for an identity and status apart from his wife. The relationship between the two juxtaposes man's religious ideology. Moscarda tries to understand his identity, his interests, and the relation of all of his existence to his wife. Like mankind, Moscarda wants to understand his Creator and his role in life. Moscarda claims that "no doubt she knew that Gengè of hers better than I knew him! Seeing it was she who had built him up! And he was not by any means a puppet. If any one, the puppet was I" (77). The quote blatantly exemplifies Dida's role as a creator.

There are several important notions that establish Dida as Creator. First, she reflects Pirandello's view of an absent God. Her creation of Gengè, her image of Moscarda, plays a significant role in this ideology. Moscarda is Gengè; however, Moscarda tries to renounce his association with the creation. Moscarda cannot abandon who he is or his creator, yet he does not understand them. Therefore, he believes that Gengè is not him. He also tries to separate Gengè and himself as two different images and feels that Dida loves Gengè more than him. The idea that Dida only loves the image she has created for Moscarda portrays distaste for organized religion. Humanity is relevant and important to God if they stay within the confines and conventions of a religious order. If man removes himself from the image he is supposed to portray and defies conventions, then he feels abandoned by God. Hence, when Moscarda renounces his identity as Dida's Gengè she abandons him.

Moreover, the creation of Gengè also parallels mankind's creation. Gengè is, to an extent, created in Dida's image. Moscarda questions how Dida formed the image of Gengè, stating:

> But she forgave him all! There were any number of things about him that did not please her; for she had not built him up altogether after her own fashion, in accordance with her own taste; no. After whose fashion, then? Certainly, not after mine; for I repeat, I could not bring myself to recognize as my own the thoughts, tastes and emotions which she attributed to her Gengè. (79)

Interestingly, the quote states that she "had not build him up altogether after her own fashion" which further solidifies Dida as God. For instance, God creates man out of his image, yet mankind is also given free will which allows them to develop their own thoughts, tastes, and emotions. Dida allows Moscarda to think and feel independently. However, Moscarda cannot recognize himself because he is deconstructing his image. He tries to portray Dida as an abandoning figure that only loves the creation she made and not the real man. Therefore, by blaming Dida, Moscarda diverts the responsibility of identity from himself.

Additionally, the phrase "but she forgave him all" signifies another attribute that establishes Dida as God. Dida forgives her Gengè for everything, just as God forgives mankind for their sins. The statement implies that Dida has forgiveness for Gengè, but none for Moscarda. Moscarda feels abandoned and forsaken by Dida, who only appears to acknowledge her Gengè. Moscarda's quest to separate himself from Gengè parallels man's search for God and the reasoning behind existence. Dida assumes the role of an abandoning Creator which is prevalent in Pirandellian work. Moscarda believes she does not love him for himself. He feels that his existence has been manipulated and dictated by her. Since she cannot see him as anything other than her Gengè and she renounces his unidentified self, Moscarda feels that she has abandoned him. He was truly a man in search of his Creator. Hence, Dida assumes that role for Moscarda. He is trying to understand who he is, what she has created, and how he fits into her creation. Moreover, Dida does not recognize the unidentified Moscarda because he no longer knows himself. By understanding himself, Moscarda could place himself closer to God. However, when he denounces his identity and everything that is attached to it, he also turns away from his Creator. He loses the ability to see himself through her eyes because he is too busy scrutinizing everyone else. By throwing away his identity and trying to make himself mutable, Moscarda diminishes every aspect of himself, physically and spiritually. Thus, he condemns himself in life and death. He has no identity in life and therefore has no identity in death; he is simply a floating form.

Moscarda does not know himself and thus cannot know his creator. He destroys himself physically and spiritually, becoming nothing. On the other hand, Dida can exist within form and reality because she does not banish herself from society and denounce its conventions. The difference between Moscarda and Pirandellian women is that their vision of themselves does not remain blurred. Caesar notes that "to see oneself one has to resort to borrowing the eyes of others, for they are in a position to draw boundaries around us, while we for ourselves remain unfocused and blurred" (76). Caesar's comment holds true for Pirandello's men, which is why they deconstruct themselves. Women survive as mutable forms because their vision does not remain blurred. Dida maintains her mutability, like all Pirandellian women, within the confines of society, which elevates her above men. She assumes new identities instead of dismissing them.

Her ability to mutate into other forms also allows her to understand other people and have a greater insight into life. Her ability to understand and live beyond the simple aspects of singular life elevates her to the status of Creator. She can create new life because she is the closer to understanding life then Moscarda. Moscarda points out that his wife knows him better than he knows himself. According to Moscarda she would declare "No, No, my darling, be quiet! Do you mean to imply that I do not know what is pleasing and what is displeasing to you? I know your tastes very well, indeed, and your way of thinking" (77). The statement reiterates Dida's power and suggests that she determines Moscarda's thoughts and desires. She sees him and knows his true identity, whereas his vision is obscured. Moscarda is too wrapped up in the falsities of life to truly examine it. He is quick to renounce it and point out its flaws instead of embracing it and his newfound knowledge. Perhaps the most revealing example of Pirandellian religious ideology, which can be linked back to Dida, is noted throughout the text. One passage states:

> It is to be noted that there is something mortifying for us and all but obscene where our fathers are concerned. It is to be noted, I am saying, that others do not attribute and cannot attribute this father of ours the reality that we are in the habit of attributing to him. The discovery of how he lives a man's life outside of us, in his own right, in his relations with others, when these others, speaking to him or leading him on to speak with laughing glances around about him, forget for a moment that we are present, and so afford us a glimpse of the man they know in him, the man that he is for them. Another being. And how is that? We cannot know. (96)

There are two important elements in this passage. The phrase "this father of ours" refers to God as a man. However, the whole passage is portraying male ideology. For instance, the term "where our fathers are concerned" implies that the issues Moscarda is facing have been passed to him from his forefathers. The statement is also a little condemning and accusing. The point of the section is that God is not what man has previously envisioned; his reality is different than what man portrayed. Moscarda gets the opportunity to view Dida as a creator and picture her in an existence of form. Women are never mentioned in the passage and the word choice displayed in the section highlights masculinity. Thus, it reaffirms the feminine connection to God. Women are never condemned and there is no mention of the passing on of ideology through the mother. The second half of the passage further exemplifies femininity's connection to God. The passage proclaims:

> Our father suddenly makes a sign, with his hand or with his eyes, that we are there. And that little, furtive sign, mark you, hollows out in us an inner abyss. He who was so very near to us, see how far away he has leaped, to be viewed there vaguely, like a stranger. And we feel as if our life had been wholly torn asunder, save for a point at which it remains yet attached to that man. (96-97)

In this section the statement "He who was so very near to us, see how far away he has leaped, to be viewed there vaguely, like a stranger" has an important connotation indicative of Pirandellian femininity. Moscarda views Dida as a creator. Therefore, he makes the connection between her and God. The point is that God is no longer close to masculinity. Men cannot understand women just as they cannot understand God in Pirandello's works. Therefore the phrase "to be viewed there vaguely, like a stranger" implies that God is a stranger to man and not women. Mutability draws the connection between God and women, and Moscarda feels left out. Dida has had the power of creation and Moscarda cannot. Thus, he feels that God has abandoned him by not giving him the same qualities. The final passage significant to the development of the Pirandellian Everywoman states:

> Our birth, our detachment, our cutting off from him, is a common enough case, was possible foreseen, and yet was an involuntary thing in the life of

> that stranger, the indication of a deed, fruit of an act, something in short that actually causes us shame, arousing in us scorn and almost hatred. And if it is not properly speaking hatred, there is a certain sharp contempt that we are now conscious of in our father's eyes also, which at this second happen to meet our own. (97)

This is probably one of the most supernal representations of Pirandello's ideology. The first sentence of the passage refers back to the Biblical separation of Adam and Eve. Mutability is detached from man and given to woman when they are formed. The Biblical Fall of man is also mentioned in the passage. The phrase, "the indication of a deed, fruit of an act, something in short that actually causes us shame" refers to Adam's partaking in the eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Man has scorn towards God because of the punishment man received for disobedience. However, man also projects scorn on women for their Fall from grace. Both God and women are met with some sort of contempt but, in addition, bestow that same contempt on man. No one is blameless in Pirandellian ideology.

There is also a section close to this passage that implies God cannot fully be free in man's image. Associating women with God is important in understanding Pirandellian creation and power. For centuries God has been portrayed as a man. However, Pirandello speculatively personifies God as any form He wants to be and places women closer to God because of their ability to shift into different forms. In the following passage Moscarda contemplates:

> We to him, as we stand upright on our feet here, with a pair of hostile eyes, are something that he did not expect from the satisfaction of a

> momentary need or pleasure, a seed that he unknowingly cast, a seed standing upright now on two feet, with a pair of snail's eyes that stealthily survey him and judge him and prevent him now from being wholly what he would like to be, free, *another man* even with respect to us. (97)

The passage again correlates a connection between women and God. Men question and judge both women and God. The idea is that man's scrutiny causes them to hide their true identity. Thus, the two exist as figures of form and elude male perception. By distancing themselves from man, they survive on a different level. They can be who they are as a whole, but cannot do so before man. Therefore, men and women exist on different planes of reality, placing women closer to God than man. Moreover, the final sentence in the passage reestablished the idea of the man originally being asexual. God can be whatever he wants to be, male or female. Thus, when he originally created man in his image, he created him without a specific gender. The separation of Adam and Eve created gender and the eating from the Tree of Knowledge made gender recognizable. Hence, the final line of the passage implies that for man to be truly free and closer to God he would have to dismiss the confines of gender categorization and be as he was originally created.

Dida changes Moscarda's world. Her simple comment shifts his reality and perception. He becomes a different person because of her. Dida's actions cause Moscarda to separate from himself spiritually. Gengè could be perceived as Moscarda's soul. Since Dida has control over Gengè, the idea implies that Dida is the keeper of souls and Moscarda undergoes a metaphorical death. He is detached from his soul, which walks with Dida. Viewing Dida as a creator opens Pirandello's novel up to several different interpretations. One point is evident within the text: women dominate over men and control every facet of their lives. Moreover, if man tries to usurp women's authority and define his connection to them, he deconstructs himself and exists as simply nothing.

Dida also has several mothering attributes. Her authoritative status over Moscarda establishes her as a mother figure. One example in the story is when Moscarda turns to Dida for protection and security. He admits "[a]ll lumpish as I was, I had taken refuge under Dida's petticoats, in the calm, dull, lazy stupidity of her Gengè" (167). This statement illustrates two poignant ideas. Moscarda accepts his role as Gengè if it saves him and seeks Dida's protection when it suits him. Basically, he returns to his creator in times of need and alienation. Furthermore, the statement also shows that Dida is the atypical mother-figure. Her role as a creator and mother makes the two figures cohesive. Motherhood is elevated to a divine status. Moscarda is comfortable and secure with Dida. The passage illustrates that Dida provides Moscarda with a sense of clarity if he remains in his designated identity, otherwise he descends into madness.

Anna Rosa is another significant figure in *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand.* Anna Rosa, Dida's friend, was "an orphan on both sides," suggesting that she was alone and alienated. Anna Rosa is probably the figure that relates most directly to Pirandello's wife Antonietta. In the text, Moscarda states, "[b]ut it does not take a great deal to drive a woman mad, when she is shut up in a nunnery. From my wife, who had been at school for three years in the convent of San Vincenzo, I had learned that all the Sisters, old and young, were a little mad in one way or another" (221). Women in Italy practically grew up in a "nunnery." They were raised in households determined to keep them pure and protect their virginity. Antonietta grew up in a very sheltered home. When she married Pirandello she had no knowledge of her own sexuality; she was like the Virgin Mother.

Therefore, Antonietta's madness stemmed from her inability to cope with adult life as a mother and woman. Her paranoia was indicative of her upbringing. Moreover, she lived a very alienated and secluded lifestyle. Her mother died when she was young, and her father ruled his household based of Italian patriarchal ethos. Later, Antonietta went back to the security of nuns when she was placed in their care after her commitment.

Anna Rosa is also the opposite of Dida. Dida's sexuality is never highlighted in the book. She remains a mutable and divine figure. However, Anna Rosa's sexuality and the way she uses it to lure Moscarda is illuminated in the text. Moscarda first notices Anna Rosa's sexuality when he sees her in the Abbey Garden, and once again Pirandello uses garden imagery to create a correlation between Eve and a character. In the Garden of Eden sexuality is born; thus, it makes sense that Moscarda does not notice Anna Rosa's sexual appeal until he beholds her in the garden. Moscarda describes her in the garden, claiming, "…, there was a flood of light revealing the person of Anna Rosa, as I never before had beheld it, all a-tremble with a mischievous loveliness" (224). The word "mischievous" hints that her beauty is tainted. It also implies that there is something abnormal about it. For example, Moscarda declares "Anna Rosa, that voice, this little parlor, the sun in the darkness, the green of the garden—my head was fairly swimming" (225). From this point on in the novel, her sexuality is highlighted and she is personified as an Eve-like character. She causes him to lose his sanity and Moscarda is befuddled by her beauty.

Further descriptions of Anna Rosa include associations with heat, ivy, and allure. She convinces Moscarda to follow her and trust her, just as Eve convinces Adam to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. She is accidently shot when she drops her purse and the gun in it goes off. She manages to convince Moscarda that the gun was not for him. However, she later shoots him, as she had planned. In her bed after the accident with her gun, Anna Rosa seduces Moscarda closer to her. Moscarda retells the event which further portrays Anna Rosa as Eve:

> It was when I, gazing at her from that distance, spoke to her words which I no longer remember, words in which she must have sensed a consuming passion to give the all of life within me, all that I was capable of being, in order to become one, as she might will me, and for myself truly no one at all, no one at all. I only know that from her bed she stretched forth her arms to me; I know she drew me to her. (253)

The description of their encounter portrays Anna Rosa as a woman luring Moscarda to her through her sexuality. At this point in the story she shoots him in the chest. Moscarda survives the attempt; however, he is a broken character. He dismisses Dida, who represents God and divinity, and depicts her as an enemy. On the other hand, he embraces Anna Rosa, who represents Eve and sin, and falls in love with her. The situations imply that Moscarda chooses sin over God.

One, None, and a Hundred Thousand solidifies Pirandello's views on femininity. His last novel exposes his entrapment, contemplation, and religious dyad over women. Women were his crux. In this novel the Pirandellian Everywoman and her connection to God is revealed. Pirandello portrays the typical Pirandellian figures of the wife, mother, virgin, whore, and daughter, as well as the idea of women as nothing and something at one time through one character. Dida and Anna Rosa are both nothing and something to Moscarda. Their representations of Eve and Mary show the polarity between femininity.

Pirandello sought to expose women for who they really were— the good, the bad, and the divine.

Chapter Four

Pirandello: The Everywoman on Center Stage

Although Pirandello wrote numerous short stories, novels, and poems, and was recognized in the nineteenth-century for those works, he is best known for his plays and contributions to the dramatic arts. Susan Bassnett and Jennifer Lorch note that as a child Pirandello experimented with playwriting but did not begin to write for the professional theatre until around the First World War (3). In fact, he had destroyed the plays he had written in his youth by the time he was twenty and did not actually begin his theatre career until he was in his fifties. He experimented with different types of theatre and sparked revolutions not only in playwriting, but also in acting and directing.

One form of theatre Pirandello was familiar with was dialect theatre. Due to Italy's political unification, the government felt that it was important to impose one official language on the nation. Literary Florentine became the established dialect since it was the language used by fourteenth-century writers such as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccacio (Bassnet and Lorch 4). Though the notion behind the uniform dialect was to preserve the unification of Italy, it actually caused more issues for theatre. Italy was a divided country and most regions areas had their own dialect. Instituting one language led to "an undervaluing of dialect drama and theatre" (Bassnett and Lorch 4). Pirandello felt that the continuation of dialect traditions in Italy was important, for differences in language showcased Italian culture and displayed Italy's rich heritage. Moreover, economic situations made the emergence of dialect theatre difficult. Many regions, including Sicily, were impoverished with high emigration and mortality rates, which made it difficult to start dialect theatre.

Pirandello valued his heritage and preserved it within his works. He also changed the way actors and directors interacted within the theatre. One major issue in early twentieth-century theatre was the development of a star system "that enhanced the status of a few actors and offered little incentives to others to improve their techniques" (Bassnett and Lorch 5). The idea of actors dominating every aspect of theatre stemmed from the ideals of the commedia dell'arte. Though the commedia dell'arte was an earlier form of theatre, it influenced the way unified Italy viewed the role of actors and the construction of theatre companies. Moreover, Pirandello changed impressions of the script which shifted the role of star actors. Scripts had often been subjected to alterations by star actors as a way to highlight their abilities and make an audience connect to them. The text had simply served as a catalyst for the actor, and the integrity of the script was compromised in order to meet the needs of the actors.

Pirandello believed that the written word was the most valuable aspect of the theatre. He viewed actors as an unnecessary part of a production. Caesar claims that Pirandello believed that the "only way… that a performance could avoid being a travesty of the written text would be if the characters were to leap, miraculously, from the page and come to life before the audience's eyes, like the figures who step down from the tapestries that line the walls of the Castle of Blaye in Heinrich Heine's poem" (204). Pirandello's point was that the actor, however unintentionally, would create a character different than the writer intended. Pirandello viewed writers as the true artists and poets, and he exercised full authority over his plays and demanded that the actors become a vessel for the characters.

As Pirandello became more influential within the theatre, he began to shift his own perceptions and expose theatre gurus to new forms of interpretation. Perhaps Pirandello's evaluation of the theatre is best described in his essay *Illustrators, Actors, and Translators* (1908). Pirandello explains his philosophy on theatre writing:

> When we read a novel or a story, we amuse ourselves in depicting the characters and the scenes as they are described and represented to us by the author. Now let us suppose for an instant that these characters suddenly, miraculously leap out of the book alive before our eyes, in our own room and begin to speak in their own voices and to move and act without any narrative or descriptive assistance from the book. Nothing to be surprised at. This miracle is precisely what the art of theatre performs. (qtd. Bassnett and Lorch 26)

Pirandellian ideology infiltrated theatre. Pirandello emerged as a genius, and his views on the theatre became important to professionals. For Pirandello, the theatre gave him a platform to showcase his belief in life versus form. Jerome Mazzaro explains Pirandello's approach to theatre, claiming "... Pirandello pits two forms of illusion against one another. The first—contemporary drama—divides the action's theatrical setting from life outside the theatre, and, although 'fixed art,' it comes within the setting to stand for 'dynamic life' and sanity" (18). He portrayed characters outside the confines of a story and presented them as actual beings struggling in a world of chaos and despair. Theatre gave Pirandello the opportunity to reveal his characters as "real" and parallel them to mankind's perilous life journey.

Pirandello found one actress whom he felt adequately embraced his characters and brought them to life, Marta Abba. Pirandello's plays elevated the status of women in theatre and Marta emerged as one of the most prominent Pirandellian actresses. Marta's significance to Pirandello is exemplified within several of his plays, as Paolo Puppa outlines:

> The characteristics of instability, impulsiveness, intolerance towards both bourgeois decorum and male authority, altruism and selflessness, disdainful and quivering sensuality, physical dissatisfaction, anxious inspiration, craving for the 'other,' and disgust towards one's own body are all creations that converge in Marta Abba, at least as she was culturally mythicized. (*Families and Characters* 74)

Pirandello's flirtation with femininity is realized through Marta's performances. Although women are often destroyed and ostracized in Pirandello's plays, they still emerge as dominant. According to Anne Paolucci, "women are isolated, struggle alone in a man's world and emerge victorious even in the face of madness and death" (*The Plays* 129). They are dominant because of their ability to follow their instinct and dissect what is right or wrong. Men rely on their logic, no matter how false, and end up tainting their own image.

Pirandello's theatrical stardom ended abruptly. In 1928, the Italian government withdrew its funding from Pirandello's theatre company, the Teatro d'Arte, despite its artistic success. Pirandello viewed the government's action as a cultural betrayal and subsequently went into a self-imposed exile for five years, though he continued to write during his stint in Germany. However, he never garnered the same success he had with *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and *Henry IV*. Many of his plays were not well received in Italy and failed in Germany. *The Changeling* was even banned in Germany (Bassnett and Lorch 15). In 1933, Pirandello returned to Italy; however, the bond he had with his country was tarnished. He felt abandoned and alienated by Italy. Pirandello's main contribution to the theatre was the exposure of its falsities, for he allowed Italian theatre to embrace originality and to do away with stifling traditions that harmed the credibility of the stage.

The Great Plays: A Close Reading

Six Characters in Search of an Author (1921)

Pirandello's plays pushed the boundaries of conventional theatre. He did not want to capture art on stage, but life, and in striving to accomplish that, Pirandello created some of the most controversial and convoluted plays of his time. Catherine Arturi Parilla says Pirandello's drama "raised universal questions about art and life, topics which were not unique to him. However, how he discursively manipulated and distorted common understandings of them or, rather, misunderstandings of illusion and reality was indeed original" (31). One play that adheres to those conventions and received mixed reviews was Pirandello's play *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and in it Pirandello uses aspects of family, sexuality, and illusion to highlight the dominance of his female characters.

Six Characters in Search of an Author is an intriguing play that combines reality and illusion. Fredrick May defines the play:

> Although the play is clearly an enactment of Pirandello's relativistic philosophy, it may also be seen as dramatizing the problematic relationship between art and life, between performance and existence. The characters' search for an author may also be viewed as a compelling psychological study of anxiety—even the schizophrenia—that results from the felt absence of a stable authority figure. Even the Father, the traditional image of authority, is seeking a reliable source of authority, but the only authority figure in the play, the Producer, is equally unreliable. (741)

There are two important ideas that are noted in May's definition. He acknowledges the loss of the Father's authority in the play. Italian conventions are thrown out, and the Father struggles for any sort of foothold amongst the other characters. The women dominate the Father's actions and moods. Moreover, they also determine the other three characters' mental state. The Stepdaughter and the Mother control the play. Although May claims that the Producer has power, he is actually a pawn for the characters. On more than one occasion, the Stepdaughter assertively directs the Producer and the actors. Ultimately, his authority in the play is limited and irrelevant. Fiora Bassanese claims that "[a]ccording to Pirandellian invention, characters are the incarnation of a conceptual truth generated in the authorial imagination" (98). The Stepdaughter assumes the role of the author, retelling her story and forcing the Father to act it out with her. She is the only character that assumes the role of the all-knowing author. The Mother also embraces her role as mother and does not try to reject it as do the other characters. Since the Mother and the Stepdaughter are figures of form forced to be true to their tragedies, they serve as reliable authorities.

Several versions of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* exist, including its original form as a narration. Pirandello felt strongly attached to the characters and their plight. Therefore, he morphed the idea from a story to a play so that the characters would get the opportunity to act out their drama. Over the years, several versions of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* have been produced. Pirandello himself made additions and subtractions to the stage directions and dialogue. In Eric Bentley's compilation *Naked Masks*, the play only includes the Stage Manager as the authority figure. In Frederick May's translation, there is a Producer, the figure of "authority," and a Stage Manager. Both translations maintain the integrity of the play and only contain a few word discrepancies. Eric Bentley's translation is used for the analysis in this thesis.

Six Characters in Search of an Author is set in a theatre. The play starts with a rehearsal of one of Pirandello's plays, during which six characters appear on stage, interrupt the actors' work, and demand that someone write the characters' drama. After some rebellion, the Stage Manager listens to the characters and tries to understand their drama. However, the characters constantly interrupt the Stage Manager's efforts, declaring that the actors are not properly performing their "lives," so the characters begin to act out their own tragedies. The play is a psychological conundrum that outlines Pirandello's thoughts on life versus form. Perhaps the most dynamic characters in the play are the Mother and the Stepdaughter. Both characters illustrate Pirandello's philosophy on femininity and also parallel the women in Pirandello's life.

Pirandello uses some of the motifs from his fiction in his plays, including combinations of gender conflict, dialogue, and imagery. The opening of the play begins with the Manager explaining to the Leading Man his motivation in the play they are supposed to be rehearsing. The Manager claims, "You stand for reason, your wife is instinct" (213). The patriarchal dyad between men and women is clearly established in the play. Instinct versus logic is a dominant Pirandellian theme. Women's instinct is important to *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and to the survival of a figure as form. The Mother and the Stepdaughter accept the societal roles given to them. They live within their societal conventions while still abiding by what the Father wants. Their ability to live in both worlds highlights their authority. Pirandello gives conformity power in his plays. The women concede to the Father and in the process they expose his flaws, thereby deconstructing his character. Pirandello uses dialogue and director's notes to establish first impressions of the six characters, especially the Mother and Stepdaughter.

Dialogue is one of the most revealing elements in the play, and through dialogue the Father usurps his own authority and relinquishes it to the women. For instance, The Father states:

> Nowhere! It is merely to show you that one is born to life in many forms, in many shapes, as a tree, or as stone, as water, as butterfly, or as woman. So one may also be born a character in a play. (1.217)

The Father includes "woman" in his example of forms that can be created. He states that "one is born to life in many forms, in many shapes," and then lists a set of figures. Although the statement is made simply to elaborate that many things can be brought to life, the word choice is important. Women are highlighted over men as forms that can be born and be many shapes. Man never appears in the Father's statement.

Furthermore, the list includes several elements that can be associated with femininity: trees, stone, water, and butterflies. Each of the figures correlates with nature which is construed as woman's domain in all of Pirandello's works and in patriarchal ideology. All four elements can also change shape and become something else or stay stationary. For instance, trees are the same yet different, just like women. A tree is a tree, yet there is a variety of them. The same idea holds true for stone, which can be sculpted into various forms and shapes. Water can fit into any container just as women can adapt to any role they are given. A butterfly starts off as a caterpillar, but changes into an entirely different form. It was not a mistake that Pirandello included these elements in the description. Though the Father emerges as the philosophical character in the play, his philosophy undermines his authority. He uses various analogies to associate women with mutability and in the process gives them power.

Using dialogue, the Father also tries to highlight the dominance and significance of the author. Most critics perceive the absent author in the play as Pirandello or God. Thus, many try to personify Pirandello as the absent God in the play. Also, based on his relationship with women, noted in chapter two, Pirandello viewed women as authority figures. For example, images of Antonietta are prevalent throughout the play. Her madness, accusations, and polarity are blatantly evident. In the play, the Father states the importance of the character versus the author, claiming:

> The man, the writer, the instrument of the creation will die, but his creation does not die. And to live for ever, it does not need to have

> extraordinary gifts or to be able to work wonders. Who was Sancho Panza? Who was Don Abbondio? Yet they live eternally because—live germs as they were—they had the fortune to find a fecundating matrix, a fantasy which could raise and nourish them: make them live for ever! (I.218)

Pirandello personified the women in his life as characters in his works. Therefore, they also have an eternal life. They existed for Pirandello in both reality and fantasy. The women may seem mystical and unreal; however, they do not have any special power or "gifts." His female characters are simply women. They gain their status through their own conventions and way of life. Femininity is the weapon of these indefinable creatures in Pirandello's works. They can have unbridled power over men without wielding any sort of tangible power.

Pirandello also uses description and naming as a way to delineate feminine dominance in the play. The actors in the play are not fully described. They serve as blank figures that are manipulated by the characters' requests. The actors are also only defined through their theatrical roles. For instance, the actors can only assume roles as the Leading Lady, Leading Man, and Manager. Their lack of a social identity further establishes them as puppets for the family. Thus, the six characters are the more important figures in the play. These family members are given names and become the archetypal family. They can only be identified through their societal roles. The Father, the Boy, and the Son do not deviate from the conventions associated with their named identity. The Father acts as though he is the protector, provider, and intellectual within the family. The Son portrays the scorned legitimate child who is embarrassed by his parents' actions. There is also no communication between the Son and Father, a result of his alienation from his mother. The Boy is stationary and represents the lack of male mutability. He is simply a boy and is only identified by his gender.

On the other hand, the Mother and the Stepdaughter emerge beyond their namesakes. The Mother is portrayed as "*crushed and terrified as if by an intolerable weight of shame and abasement. She is dressed in modest black and wears a thick widow's veil of crêpe. When she lifts this, she reveals a wax-like face. She always keeps her eyes downcast*" (214-215). There are various elements in the description that highlight the Eve and Mary motif prevalent in Pirandello's works. The Mother's "shame and abasement" establish her as a character that has conducted some sort of sin. The fact that she is marked by her sin is indicative of the figure of Eve who taints the image of all women.

Moreover, the color black and widow's garb suggests that a part of the Mother has died or is suffering and grieving. Motherhood attached to Eve is full of grief. On the other hand, Mary is sorrowful and laments Christ's death. Suffering and grief establish the Mother's polarity. She is burdened by her role as mother, but also grieves for her loss of that role with the Son. Additionally, the Mother's wax-like features suggest that she is a moldable character. Wax is a relevant element in the play. It can change forms and shift into any figure it is given. Its association with the Mother suggests that she can be whatever is needed of her. She has no identity other than the ones assigned to her. This idea is significant to Pirandellian ideology. Women are powerful because of their conformity into societal roles. They do not dismiss who they are supposed to be to others, yet they change forms when necessary. The Pirandellian woman also has the ability to recognize that she is someone different to each person. The capability of Pirandello's women to maintain one identity while being another and their acknowledgement that they are something and nothing at one time make them more powerful than Pirandello's male figures. Men dismiss societal conventions and therefore deconstruct themselves. If they embraced both concepts they would maintain the same authority and mutability as the women.

In addition, the Mother's downcast eyes are also important. Pirandello's biography notes that Antonietta was not allowed to look at Pirandello during their encounters. Pirandello once again places significance on eyes to emphasize the Mary and Eve dichotomy. He was raised with the idea that downcast eyes symbolized the woman's virginity was intact. Although the Mother in the play has in some way been shameful, she tries to abide by the conventions of her role as a "good wife." Furthermore, the circumstances of her extra-marital affair are conducted at the request of her husband. The Mother's description and her actions place her in both categories as Eve and Mary.

The Mother's infidelity is another aspect that is important to her development as the Pirandellian Everywoman. Her involvement in her affair is downplayed by her accusations that the Father cast her out to the man he thinks she truly loves. Her adultery is blamed on the Father. In the play, the Mother argues:

> THE MOTHER [*vigorously*]. He forced me to it, and I call God to witness it. [*To the MANAGER*] Ask him [*Indicates Husband*] if it isn't true. Let him speak. You [*to DAUGHTER*] are not in a position to know anything about it.

The Father confirms her accusation, declaring:

> It is true. It was my doing. (I.222)

The Mother, arguing with the Father, claims that he drove her away. The Father creates the notion that the Mother is in love with his secretary. Therefore, he sends the Mother to be with the other man. The Father declares: "They understood one another, were kindred souls in fact, without, however, the least suspicion of any evil existing. They were incapable even of thinking of it" (I.225). The statement absolves the Mother of any sin. She did not want the relationship; she was a pure Mary figure. However, the Father needs to see some sort of sin in the Mother. Therefore, he conceives the idea that she is in love with another man and sends her away with the man he has deemed adequate for her to love. The Mother becomes what the Father wants and attaches herself to the other man, even though her attachment to the gentleman destroys the Father and tears the family apart.

Two ideas in the Mother and Father's relationship parallel Pirandello's marriage to his wife. The Father tells the mother that "it was just for your humility that I married you. I loved this simplicity in you" (I.224). Like the Father, Pirandello married Antonietta because he believed she would make a good wife. He wanted a girl he could mold into his ideal image of a woman. Antonietta appeared to be simple, the ideal version of an Italian wife. Although she was in her mid-twenties when they married, she was a girl mentally whom Pirandello desired to make a woman. Moreover, the Father refers to the Mother's lover in the play as the "other man." The man is never given a name. Antonietta viewed Pirandello in two separate forms: the man she married and the "other man." The other man was Pirandello's literary persona, his self-proclaimed "Big me." The image of the other man appears in several of Pirandello's works. He is created in two ways: by the woman or by the man to accommodate the woman. Pirandellian women either project an "other" image on the men or the men assume an "other" identity in order to appease and cope with the women. The "other man" also appears to be a hated figure. Giudice writes "[s]uch was Antonietta's hatred of 'the other man' that she no longer wanted to live with him. Time and time again she begged to be separated from Pirandello, to go and live on her own" (84). Antonietta created Pirandello's other man and in effect divided Pirandello.

Therefore, the other man in the play could be viewed as the other half of the Father. The Mother claims that for a time she was happy with the other man until he dies. In the play, one section in particular creates an interesting conundrum. The Stepdaughter exclaims to the Mother:

> STEPDAUGHTER. I know you lived in peace and happiness with my father while he lived. Can you deny it?
>
> THE MOTHER. No, I do not deny it...
>
> THE STEPDAUGHTER. He was always full of affection and kindness for you. [*To the BOY, angrily.*] It's true, isn't it? Tell them! Why don't you speak, you little fool?
>
> THE MOTHER. Leave the poor boy alone. Why do you want to make me appear ungrateful, daughter? I don't want to offend your father. I have answered him that I didn't abandon my house and my son through any fault of mine, nor from any wilful passion.
>
> (I.222)

The Mother refers to the Father as the Stepdaughter's parent. She tells the Stepdaughter "I don't want to offend your father" hinting that the Father and the Stepdaughter are in some way connected. Women creating images of men are common in Pirandello's works. The women objectify the men. For instance, in *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand* Dida creates G[illegible]ngè, a form of her husband. In *The Late Mattia Pascal* Adriano becomes an extension of Adriana and is formed in her image. The doubling of men by the women happens periodically, and it makes sense that the Father could be divided in the play. The idea of division alludes to the notion that women create men and deconstruct them. Furthermore, the characters' mourning attire could represent the metaphorical death of the family.

Men also become helplessly obsessed with the women in their lives. The relationship between the Father and Mother again parallels Pirandello's relationship with Antonietta. Pirandello missed his wife after she was committed to the asylum, and according to his children he desperately wanted her back. Pirandello's son Stefano claimed that his father "had a single thought in his head, that of getting his wife back home, for she was as necessary to him as the air he breathed and he insisted on his children going to see her every day and telling him word for word what she said, if and how she had spoken of him…." (qtd. Giudice 100). Just as Pirandello mourned the loss of his wife, the Father in the play laments his loss of the Mother, crying:

> After she [*Indicating MOTHER*] went away, my house seemed suddenly empty. She was my incubus, but she filled my house. I was like a dazed fly, alone in the empty rooms. This boy here [*Indicating the SON*] was educated away from home, and when he came back, he seemed to me to

> be no more mine. With no mother to stand between him and me, he grew up entirely for himself, on his own, apart, with no tie of intellect or affection binding him to me. And then—strange but true—I was driven, by curiosity at first and then by some tender sentiment, towards her family, which had come into being through my will. (I.227)

The Father's statements show that he is obsessed with the mother. He was "driven" to know about her new family. He had willed her to leave, yet he also wanted to be near her. He cannot omit himself from her life, which also implies that he never left it. Not only does the Father mourn the loss of his wife, but he also shows her significance. Without the Mother, the Father has no tie to his son.

As analyzed in chapter two, mothers were the link between father and children. Without a mother the father-child relationship fails; the father and child have no source of communication without the mother. In *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, the Mother is portrayed as constantly in mourning. Her role as mother is connected to suffering. For instance, the Mother is ashamed of her connection to the Stepdaughter, the Child, and the Boy. Throughout the play, she distances herself from the three and pines for the attention of the Son. Caesar notes that "[a] mother's love is beyond price in Pirandello's work; its sanctification comes about because it is central to the shoring up of the fragile male psyche" (131). Caesar also claims that it is wives and mothers that maintain men's "legal" identity. Therefore, the Mother's absence destroys the Son's identity. He cannot be a son, which is why he rejects both of his parents, because he did not have his mother present to establish his identity and reassert it through love.

Two interesting facets emerge from the Mother's relationship with her children. First, if the other man is really a split version of the Father, then the three children are not illegitimate. Instead, they are simply representations of the pain and sacrifice attributed to motherhood which connects the Mother to Eve. The shame she connects to them could symbolize her resentment of the role of mother. However, the children's being illegitimate does not characteristically personify the Mother as Eve, but instead associates her with Mary. Jesus was the illegitimate son of Joseph. Mary endures the criticism connected to the stigma of having a child out of wedlock. Joseph even contemplates not marrying her until an angel explains the child's origin. Mary evolves as a beloved figure. However, her association to Christ is what saves her from being ostracized by society. The Mother, on the other hand, is shunned by the Son because of her association with the other three children. The Son represents morality, society, and patriarchal Italy. He casts judgment on the Mother.

Additionally, the most important aspect attributed to motherhood in the play is the conventions associated with her title. The Stepdaughter explains to the Manager that the mother "tortures herself, destroys herself on account of the neglect of that son there; and she wants him to believe that if she abandoned him when he was only two years old, it was because he [*Indicating the FATHER*] made her do so" (I.221-22). The idea of child abandonment and its effect on the Son is significant. The Mother is protective over the Son and constantly corrects the Stepdaughter when she verbally attacks him. Anne Paolucci notes that the Mother shows "resignation and quiet acceptance" when dealing with her family. She only speaks when the family is threatened or to correct the Father when he is wrong. The Mother is the figure that provides focus to the Father's explanations (132). She adheres to Italian conventions and gains her self-worth through her children. Therefore, she needs the Son to recognize her in order to maintain her status. The other three children's recognition is not sufficient. However, although the Son does not acknowledge her, she achieves her power through the Father's admisson of guilt. He agrees that he is the one who caused her to give up her son. Once again, the woman is blameless because she follows conventions. She is what she is designated to be and maintains her authority by sticking with that concept. Thus, the Mother represents both Eve and Mary.

The Stepdaughter's characteristics also illustrate the polarity between Eve and Mary. She is associated with passion, lust, and sexuality; however, she is also connected to protection and devotion. In the stage directions, Pirandello describes the Stepdaughter noting that she "*is dashing, almost impudent, beautiful. She wears mourning too, but with great elegance. She shows contempt for the timid half-frightened manner of the wretched BOY* [...] *on the other hand, she displays a lively tenderness for her little sister, THE CHILD* [...], *who is dressed in white, with a black sash at the waist*" (I.215). Importantly, Pirandello places the only description of the Boy and Child with the Stepdaughter, which lends her credence as a mother-figure. The Child is, significantly, not referred to as the girl; she is not associated with her gender. She is also the only character that appears in white. The only hint of black on the little girl is her "black sash." The Child represents mutability and the ability of women to be whatever they want. The little girl is nothing and something. She is also caught between life and death. The Boy, because he is identified as wearing black and associated with his gender, is stationary. He cannot break the confines of his gender like the little girl.

In the play, the Stepdaughter illustrates the opposition attributed to motherhood in Pirandello's works. Pirandello viewed mothers as trapped and burdened by their roles as mothers. However, he also witnessed the love and devotion that mothers bestowed on their children. Therefore, the Stepdaughter's actions illuminate both aspects of mother. For example, the Stepdaughter kisses the Child and holds her hand. She displays motherly affection towards her. However, the Stepdaughter's contempt for the Boy shows motherly abandonment. The Stepdaughter's interaction with the two children highlights the polarity of motherhood. It shows mothers as loving and caring in their duty to their children as well as their irritation with the sacrifice and suffering brought on by the role of mother.

The Stepdaughter's sexuality and her occupation as a prostitute cannot be ignored, since adultery is a recurring motif in Pirandellian works. It diminishes the institution of marriage and defies Italian conventions. Paolo Puppa explores the idea that "[j]ealousy and morbid attachments involve the transforming of oneself into a marionette moved by plots the self cannot control. One becomes, figuratively speaking, a slave to scripts that are worn-out and dangerous, dangerous to the intellectual freedom of the self" (*Families of Characters* 69). The Father, because of his obsession with women, acts as a puppet to his own desire. He blames women and his gender for his sexual urges. The Stepdaughter's tragedy is a product of the Father's desire. Ursula Fanning claims that the term *adultery* was typically associated with woman's infidelity to her husband (75). Women are not exclusively connected to adultery in Pirandello's works; instead they are usually given some sort of redeeming quality or men are given a flaw that "saves" the woman from complete condemnation.

In *Six Characters in Search of an Author,* the Stepdaughter is a representation of desire and passion. She is the opposite of the Mother. The Mother cowers in shame over her relations with the other man. She seems repulsed by the passion and happiness she had with him. The Stepdaughter, as she acts out her tragedy, hides her repulsion from others. She accepts her role and embraces passion and her sexuality. One of the main tragedies between the characters is the incestuous relationship that almost takes place between the Stepdaughter and Father. The Stepdaughter reveals that the Father is not the moralistic character he portrays. He is desirous. The Stepdaughter also admits that she tempts the Playwright, declaring:

> It's true. I too have sought to tempt him, many, many times, when he has been sitting at his writing table, feeling a bit melancholy, at the twilight hour. He would sit in his armchair too lazy to switch on the light, and all the shadows that crept into his room were full of our presence coming to tempt him. (III.268)

Her admission that she tempts him associates her with the figure of Eve. She illustrates feminine instinct with sexuality. However, her instinct also reveals her intellect. Although the Stepdaughter damns herself by admitting that she tempted the Playwright she also does not accept all of the blame.

The Stepdaughter claims that the Father and Son's actions are what cause her to turn to Madame Pace for a job. Had the Father not turned the Mother out, the new family would not have had to have found various means of work to survive when her father dies. She defames the Father's role as a provider and protector, implying that he failed at his job. She also claims that her sins are a result of the Father's actions. She explains to the Manager:

> For one who has gone wrong, sir, he who was responsible for the first fault is responsible for all that follow. He is responsible for my faults, was, even before I was born. Look at him, and see if it isn't true! (II.259)

Interestingly, the Step-Daughter's condemning of the Father marks him as Eve and portrays the Father as an extension of the Step-Daughter. Eve's sin is believed to penetrate the heart of every woman. Pirandello, at length, taints his most pious fictional women with some Eve-like characteristic. The idea that Eve's sin is passed on to all women is prevalent in patriarchal ideology. Women can only be saved through Mary. However, by correlating the notion of descending sin to the Father she acknowledges that man is just as guilty as woman. The Father is Eve, just like the Stepdaughter.

The Stepdaughter also holds the Father accountable for his actions and for his appearance at Madame Pace's. The Father tries to defend himself and his actions, claiming "[t]he eternal moment! She [*Indicating the* STEP-DAUGHTER.] is here to catch me, fix me, and hold me eternally in the stocks for that one fleeting and shameful moment of my life. She can't give it up! And you sir, cannot either fairly spare me it!" (II.260) His argument is that the Stepdaughter is as guilty of the sin of adultery as he is. However, Pirandello initially created *Six Characters in Search of an Author* as a narration, and that formation of the production illustrates the Father's moral struggle. A fragment from the narration states:

> And yet each time he saw the doorman in the distance, he felt overwhelmed by a sense of burning shame, as if all those people who

> passed him by could read in his face the fact that he was going up to the third floor where a certain Madame Pace, whose establishment bore the outward signs of *Tailleuse pour dames*, performed a service on behalf of certain select clients (and perhaps their husbands too), a quite different kind of service, as so often happens in big cities. (qtd. Bassnett and Lorch 57)

The phrase "burning shame" implies that the Father is appalled by what he is about to do. He is attracted to the building and cannot turn away from his desire even though he knows it is wrong. The narration portrays him as a victim of his lust, but the play shows him as a man consumed by lust. He has several excuses in the play and condemns himself through them.

Moreover, the Father defames the role of men, accepting his desire and arguing that it is inherent to his gender. By doing so he acquires another Eve-like characteristic. *His* gender is as instinctual as females. In the play, the Stepdaughter does not let the Father forget his sin. She makes him accountable for his actions. Therefore, she labels him as men do women. Her accusation is what establishes his reputation. The Father defends his appearance at Madame Pace's house of ill repute, exclaiming:

> Fool! That is the proof that I am a man! This seeming contradiction, gentlemen, is the strongest proof that I stand here a live man before you. Why, it is just for this very incongruity in my nature that I have had to suffer what I have. I could not live by the side of that woman [*Indicating the MOTHER*] any longer; but not so much for the boredom she inspired me with as for the pity I felt for her. (I.226)

The Father cannot remain with his wife because he seeks desire not associated with that figure. He suggests that his desires are inherent to his gender, and he craves sexual freedom not accounted for in motherhood. Proper young Italian women supposedly knew nothing about their sexuality when they entered a marriage; they were simply young girls. However, The Stepdaughter, as a prostitute, gains recognition as a woman. She has knowledge of her sexuality and thus has an intellect above her mother. The statement above also implies that men cannot help desiring women. Basically, he cannot view his wife as a woman because she is a mother. Therefore, he has to seek out another woman in order to fulfill his desire as a man. He is ignorant of his wife's needs and desire.

The Stepdaughter's accusations penetrate the Father enough that he begins to condemn his own gender. He constantly blames his need for a woman on being a man. He declares:

> …Ah! what misery, what wretchedness is that of the man who is alone and disdains debasing *liaisons*! Not old enough to do without women, and not young enough to go and look for one without shame. Misery? It's worse than misery; it's a horror; for no woman can any longer give him love; and when a man feels this …" (I.229)

The Stepdaughter's association with Madame Pace and her establishment is diminished, by the Father's acknowledgement of his sin. However, women are still guilty of adultery because they cause men to act desirously. The quote shows that the Father cannot do without a woman and he blames the Mother's departure for his weakness.

Pirandello's initial narrative version of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* illustrates the weakness of masculinity. In the narration, the Father does not concoct excuses or project his blame on the Mother. Instead, the Father's promiscuity is wholeheartedly placed on his gender. The narration exemplifies the Father's condemnation of his gender, stating:

> Contrary to the impression he must have given of being an ageing man, he could feel that grotesque, shameless desire shrieking within him, that feeling which would shortly push him in through that doorway. He could see with a brutal, savage nakedness that which was still undeniably young in him moving down that street, hidden by the serious, outer form of the ageing man. (qtd. Bassnett and Lorch 57)

The Father is vulnerable and cannot escape the "shameless desire shrieking within him." He places the blame on masculinity and in no way links women to his actions. He is the creature, shamelessly seeking appeasement. In both versions, the Father is at fault for seeking out Madame Pace's house. However, the play connects the Father to femininity by associating him with Eve. His connection to the first mother further illustrates women's authority over men.

The Stepdaughter is also connected to the idea of God in the play. She sits in judgment of the other characters and dictates several of the scenes. The Stepdaughter tells the Manager, "No sir! What you want to do is to piece together a little romantic sentimental scene out of my disgust, out of all the reasons, each more cruel and viler than the other, why I am what I am" (II.257-58). The phrase "I am what I am" signifies that the Stepdaughter is whatever she needs to be at the moment. Pirandello was not overly religious; however, he did recognize the influence of religion on people. Organized religion tries to define God and piece together aspects of religion in order to make sense of the teachings in the Bible, just as Pirandello tries to define women. The Manager is trying to piece together aspects of the Stepdaughter's tragedy in order to understand her. He cannot just accept the good and the bad; he has to rationalize her and her existence. Moreover, her mutability is consistent throughout the play. The phrase "I am what I am" parallels God's statement "I am that I am." The statement associates her mutability with God's. The Stepdaughter shifts from a devoted mother-figure to the Child to a temptress when interacting with the Father.

The Mother and Step-Daughter illustrate the polarity between Eve and Mary, culminating the different aspects of femininity at different times to portray the Pirandellian Everywoman. Though the existence of the women in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* is tragic, the figures illustrate the core of femininity. They dominate the male characters, dictating their actions and morality. Women control femininity and masculinity. The dynamics between the Stepdaughter and Mother show an odd connection between the two. They try to negate one another, but in the process end up supporting each other, further highlighting that the two characters are one and the same.

Henry IV (1922)

On February 24, 1922, *Henry IV* was performed in Rome by Virgilio Talli at the Manzoni Theatre. Although its success did not match *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, it was still regarded as a Pirandellian gem. Eric Bentley broadly defines the plot of the play, explaining that "[a] young man loves a woman and is not loved in return. What is more, he has a rival" (13). Love, desperation, and madness are culminated within the play to form one of three Pirandellian tragedies. The battle of love and love lost was not a new theme for Pirandello. However, staging it and blatantly exposing the detriments of unrequited love in life were different for him. *Henry IV* represents the ideas discussed in the compilation *Loveless Love*. Through theatre, Pirandello was able to bring to life his struggle with the love and emphasize the effect of women on men. Similar to *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, *Henry IV* underwent several revisions and there are a few original versions of the play that have been published.

In the play, the main character was participating in a masquerade cavalcade where he posed as the German emperor Henry IV. His love interest, Matilda, dressed as Matilda of Tuscany, the enemy of the historical Henry IV. Acting out his part, the eccentric man fell from his horse when it was goaded by his rival. The masquerade Henry was knocked unconscious, and when he awakens he is no longer play acting but truly believes he is Henry IV.

Henry IV remains in his delirium for twelve years before he regains his sanity. However, realizing how much time has passed, the man chooses to remain in his illusion and continue his role as Henry IV. He lives in his façade for eight additional years until the death of his sister, who had lovingly accommodated his whims and protected his fragile "mental health" by turning part of a villa into a replica of Henry IV's throne room. Believing Henry was curable, before she dies she urges her son, Charles Di Nolli, to help her brother. Therefore, he brings a psychiatrist to evaluate his delusional uncle. The psychiatrist recommends a type of shock treatment, and wants Henry to come face-to-face with reality and time. Therefore, he suggests that Charles and Frida, who look like Henry and Matilda when they were younger, assume the identities of the figures in the portraits hanging in Henry IV makeshift throne room. He also has Matilda dress as an aged version of herself from the portrait. The doctor's philosophy is that Henry will see the aged Matilda next to the image he has preserved of her and view Charles as a young version of him. The doctor believes that confronting Henry with the paintings and contrasting them to himself and Matilda will shock Henry from his delusion.

Since Henry is no longer delusional in the play when the psychiatrist visits, the test does not work. Instead, he is infuriated that Matilda visits him with her lover. In Act III, Henry flies into a rage when confronted by Belcredi, who demands Henry stop his charade. Henry, acting out of passion, stabs Belcredi and re-immerses himself in his fantasy world as Henry IV to escape the consequences of his actions.

Henry chooses illusion over life, and the play is about Henry IV and his battle with reality and madness. Bassanese claims that Pirandello bestowed upon Henry IV, "great power, albeit limited to the boards of his personal theatre, where he is concurrently producer, director, and star" (76). She concludes that his illusion allows him to see the falsities of the people around him. However, by immersing himself in his façade, Henry isolates himself from reality and thus loses his ability to understand it. Henry becomes an illusion to other people. He reduces himself culturally. Assuming the identity of the historical Henry IV does not establish his power. He remains immovable, caught in one period of time, while the rest of the world continues. Henry does not stall time; it continues and still takes its toll on him. He simply chooses to deny it. His battle with time suggests that Henry wants to regain the control over his life that he lost.

Furthermore, when he reveals that he has been voluntarily living in an illusion he shatters the existence he created. He used the identity of Henry IV as security. It was safe and familiar. Therefore, he dismissed life, not to understand it but to hide from it. Importantly, he is only known as Henry in the play and his original identity is never revealed. Henry has not really existed between life and form because he has only embraced form and lives a life already planned out. Therefore, he cannot interpret or judge life because he has abandoned it. In addition, Henry's madness is a result of one woman, Matilda. The cause of his self-imposed exile and the reasons behind his charade are because of his infatuation with her. The role of women in the play illustrates the dominance of Pirandellian femininity. Using elements of womanhood, such as beauty and mutability, and emphasizing the importance of time and the mother-daughter relationship, Pirandello establishes Matilda and Frida as dictating figures in *Henry IV*.

Henry's power is limited. It extends to the male consorts that surround him and pretend to be his servants. He does not exercise any real authority over Matilda or Frida. The women control each other and struggle for power over the men. Frida mirrors the Stepdaughter in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* just as Matilda parallels the Mother. Pirandello constantly constructs his women as contrasting forms. The polarity of the women is highlighted through their descriptions and their interaction with each other and the other characters. Pirandello uses descriptions, dialogue, and naming to emphasize the dominance of femininity.

Donna Matilda Spina is described as a forty-five year old woman, "*still handsome, although there are too patent signs of her attempts to remedy the ravages of time with makeup. Her head is thus rather like a Walkyrie. This facial make-up contrasts* *with her beautiful sad mouth"* (149). One phrase stands out in the passage, "Walkyrie," a variant of the word *Valkyrie*. Valkyries were Nordic female warriors, corpse goddesses, 'chosen' by their gods. Acting as Odin's maids, their specific purpose was to summon deceased warriors to Valhalla (Leeming 106). Matilda's association with these warriors is important. Her head paralleled to a Valkyrie suggests that her makeup is designed for war. Valkyries embody masculine and feminine characteristics. For instance, they acted as mother-figures, leading warriors to Valhalla, the Nordic version of heaven, and cared for the deceased heroes. Helen Damico defines Valkyries as armed, powerful, and priestly figures who act as intermediaries between men and deity (176). Their significance as intermediaries between men and deity parallels Mary ideology. Mary was one figure that bridged the gap between man and God through the birth of Christ.

Matilda's Valkyrie-like head being like a Valkyrie also implies that her intellect is associated with masculinity. The fact that Valkyries lead the dead is relevant to *Henry IV,* for Henry IV lives the life of a dead man. He only assumes his living identity when Matilda arrives. Henry has undergone two deaths, the death of his true identity and the death of his character. Thus, Matilda could be viewed as divine figure that leads Henry onto a path of self-discovery. She assumes the role of Henry's savior and destroyer.

On the other hand, Valkyries are also associated with power and beauty. Mythology tells stories of their ferocity and bravery. By giving Matilda warrior attributes, Pirandello makes her an asexual figure. The fact that only her head is adorned implies that a part of her is given masculine characteristics. However, she is still feminine. Matilda is a warrior, like most Pirandellian women, ready to tackle life. Some interpretations have portrayed Valkyrie women with the bodies of women, but the souls of men. Characteristically, the comparison exemplifies Matilda's authority and power. Whether viewing Matilda as a protective mother or fierce warrior, the association of her with these figures illustrates her mutability.

The mention of time is also important. Time is a struggle for all of the characters in the play. Its effect on youth and beauty is a main concern. Although Matilda has aged, she retains her beauty. Moreover, her beauty and youth are immortalized in her daughter and the portrait. She may physically age but a piece of her is always preserved within one of those images. Therefore, she in a sense has eternal youth. Frida's description mentions that she lives in her mother's shadow. Matilda reclaims her youth by vicariously living through her daughter and in a way escapes time.

Frida's description also reveals the power and authority associated with Matilda. Frida, "*the daughter of the Marchioness is 19. She is sad; because her imperious and too beautiful mother puts her in the shade, and provokes facile gossip against her daughter as well as against herself. Fortunately for her, she is engaged to the* MARQUIS CHARLES DI NOLLI" (149). The first line of Frida's description associates her with her mother. Her identity and her mother's are one and the same. Matilda continuously pairs herself and Frida as though they are attached. For instance, the relationship between the mother-daughter pair is evident when the characters view the portrait. The play states:

> DONNA MATILDA. [*glancing around for her portrait, discovers it, and goes up close to it*]. Ah! Here it is! [*Going back to admire it, while mixed emotions stir within her.*] Yes ... yes ... [*Calls her daughter* FRIDA.]
>
> FRIDA. Ah, your portrait!
>
> DONNA MATILDA. No, no ... look again; it's you, not I, there! (I.150)

The mother rejects her youthful image and projects it on Frida. Matilda is complex. By denying her youth she accepts the position society has granted her as a mother. However, by placing herself within her daughter she regains her youth. Frida is an extension of her mother. Her only identifying marker is her sadness. Otherwise, she is defined through her mother and her actions. Both women exude mutability. Matilda has the ability to be whatever she wants, while Frida becomes whatever is necessary of her.

Matilda illustrates the fluidity of time and her authority over her daughter, stating:

> DONNA MATILDA. Naturally! She cannot recognize herself in me as I was at her age; while I, there, can very well recognize myself in her as she is now!
>
> DOCTOR. Quite right! Because a portrait is always there fixed in the twinkling of an eye: for the young lady something far away and without memories, while, for the Marchioness, it can bring back everything: movements, gestures, looks, smiles, a whole heap of things …
>
> DONNA MATILDA. Exactly!
>
> DOCTOR. [*continuing, turning towards her*]. Naturally enough, you can live all these old sensations again in your daughter. (I.151-52)

The statements between the Doctor and Matilda exemplify her mutability. Through the portrait and her daughter Matilda exists in the past, present, and future. Time merges and each vision of Matilda exists simultaneously.

Matilda's warrior demeanor also dominates the play. She not only commands her daughter, but also the men. She acts as their leader, providing information and keeping them in line. For example, Matilda consistently exercises her authority over Belcredi. When she is explaining to the doctor her relationship with Henry and the reason her portrait is in the room, Belcredi interrupts. The play outlines the argument:

> DONNA MATILDA. –No, that isn't true! I didn't dislike him. Not at all! But for me, when a man begins to want to be taken seriously, well …
>
> BELCREDI [*continuing for her*]. He gives you the clearest proof of his stupidity.
>
> DONNA MATILDA. No, dear; not in this case; because he was never a fool like you. (I.156)

Matilda dominates Belcredi, insulting him in front of other men. She is quick to establish her authority over Belcredi, her daughter, and the others. In addition, she also illustrates the power of femininity, emphasizing its association with love. Matilda tells the doctor:

> MATILDA. […] One of the many misfortunes which happen to us woman, Doctor, is to see before us every now and again a pair of eyes glaring at us with a contained intense promise of eternal devotion. [*Bursts out laughing.*] There is nothing quite so funny. If men could only see themselves with that eternal look of fidelity in their faces! I've always thought it comic; then more even than now. (I.156)

Matilda alludes to the idea that women deny men the right to fall in love with them. Women do not trust or believe men's promise of fidelity. Moreover, her comments portray the idea that women know more than men when it comes to emotions. By laughing off affection women dismiss their vulnerability. Her statement also hints that the idea of "eternal" fidelity is comical. Men cannot express eternal devotion because they do not exist in the same form as women.

Pirandello repeatedly places one phrase in each of his works that associates women with God. He always correlates some form of God's testament "I am that I am" to women. In *Henry IV*, Matilda says "I am as I am" (I.164). She makes the statement proudly, connecting her to two different forms. The phrase highlights Matilda as an otherworldly figure. It also reestablishes her mutability. She truly can be whatever she wants to be. The phrase shows that she makes no excuses for who she is or what she does. Matilda is to be accepted for who she is at the time without question. In addition, Matilda created Henry. His obsession with Matilda culminated with his fall causes his delusion. It was because he was vying for her affection that a rival caused Henry's horse to trip. Henry has immersed himself in the past and tried to exist within it. He does not punish the other characters by his isolation but himself. He misses out on life and the one opportunity he wanted with Matilda.

One aspect of Henry's description highlights his immovability. Bassanese relates Henry to a master puppeteer and portrays him as a manipulator (88). Although Henry exercises moderate control over the men that serve him, he does not wholeheartedly control anyone. The people who work for Henry assume the roles that are expected of them. They are supposed to do as he asks. They abide by the conventions that were allotted to them. Henry also only exercises power over men. Matilda is not controlled by Henry. Parilla also claims that Henry IV is the "quintessential director and actor who orchestrates the performance" (78). However, his performance is initiated, the idea conceived, because of Matilda. She is the inspiration for his play. She also acts as his director. Henry reveals his façade because of her visit. Had she not been with the other characters he might have continued his play. His performance is like a rerun that continued without interruption until his director, Matilda, yelled "cut." Furthermore, Henry is portrayed as having "doll-like dabs of color" on his cheeks (I.166). Henry is like a puppet. He is Matilda's pawn and bases his actions on her. She is his creator. Had he not been vying for her attention he might not have been forced into a delusional state for twelve years.

Moreover, he is obsessed with her. He immortalizes her through her portrait. His throne room becomes a shrine for Matilda. She is his Mary and he worships her. For Henry, Matilda represents two different women. She becomes Mary and Eve for him. His younger image of her is untarnished. She is preserved the way he remembers and in the way he chooses to view her. However, the woman who stands before him symbolizes abandonment and mockery. The contrast between the two characters is interesting. Matilda reveals that she had dark hair when she was young, a feature associated with bewitching beauty. She also dyes her hair a lighter color which is supposed to connect her to innocence. Henry switches light and dark imagery. He portrays her darker self as his Mary and her current image as his Eve.

When Henry switches forms of Matilda he associates her motherly image with evil. She was purer as a young woman unknowledgeable of the world. Although her status as mother establishes her mutability, it also highlights the knowledge she has gained from the world. She is not innocent and stands before him as a mother and widow. His idealistic image of her can only survive within the portrait. Additionally, Matilda portrays motherhood in two forms, figuratively and metaphorically. She is a mother when she assumes the role of one. For example, Henry talks about the value of a mother and how his mother was stolen from him. He expresses a sense of abandonment. Although he is referring to the historical Henry IV's mother and life, and to his own sister who just died, the idea applies to him. Henry elevates Matilda to the status of mother. When she rejects his devotion it is a motherly abandonment. He even refers to Matilda as having a "motherly heart." However, the term is only associated with her when she is dressed up as a mother. She has to be in the role of mother in order to be perceived as one.

Furthermore, she employs motherly conventions to control situations. For instance, in Act II, Pirandello makes a point to mention Matilda's control over the tone of the scene. The director's notes state:

> DONNA MATILDA, *the* DOCTOR *and* BELCREDI *are on the stage engaged in conversation; but* DONNA MATILDA *stands to one side, evidently annoyed with what the other two are saying; although she cannot help listening, because, in her agitated state, everything interests her in spite of herself. The talk of the other two attracts her attention, because she instinctively feels the need for calm at the moment.* (II.173)

The men in the play are at odds with one another. Tension builds between Belcredi and Henry. Matilda is the only figure that tries to pacify the men and keep them contained. However, her emotions are projected on them. When she is nervous, the tempo of the play picks up and animosity builds between the men. Matilda controls the tone of the play.

Her mother imagery parallels Eve and Mary. She embodies all of the devout and pious characteristics of a protective mother. She even declares to Henry, when he reveals he is not insane, that she went along with his shock treatment to help him. She declares to him "I did it for your sake" (III. 201). She has his interest at heart and is a woman that devotes herself to any role placed before her. However, she also embodies a warped sense of motherhood, especially when it pertains to her daughter. For Frida, Matilda is a mother but she is also a parasite. The women are the same and in this play cannot be separated.

Though criticisms have marked Henry IV as one of Pirandello's most domineering and controlling characters, his power is over emphasized. He is a remarkable representation of the Pirandellian male. His survival in madness, continued performance, and escape from reality mark him as one of Pirandello's most dynamic characters. However, even Henry is not safe from the grasp of femininity. Pirandello's ultimate hero is thrown into his production by a woman and then left to perform each act. He is also chooses to act in a "play" that is being replayed. It is stilted and the ending and actions are already written. He relives the same existence every day. His life has no spontaneity because the play has already been lived. Henry's monotony does not end until he encounters Matilda, the true director of his play. Matilda exemplifies the power and authority associated with Pirandello's Everywoman. She is an ever changing figure and assumes designated roles. However, she also lives beyond reality and time, acting as a creator and dictating Henry's motions. Matilda is the ultimate puppeteer.

Pirandello wrote some of the best examples of modern fiction and drama. Although he is not viewed as a feminist writer, his works reveal women. He places femininity on a pedestal and highlights women's dominance using the same conventions that typically defame them. He spent his life trying to understand women and their authority over him. Women evoked both fear and curiosity in Pirandello, becoming his obsession and touching every aspect of his life. Pirandello dissected femininity and exposed the degradation, grievance, suffering, power, compassion, and love attributed to women. He believed in the dualistic nature of humanity, and everyone has a double in his works. However, the doubling of women leads to a plethora of other roles. Pirandello turns to the origins of femininity to expose women and their hidden personae.

Although Pirandello's women do not always exude perfection, they never lose control or power. The works analyzed and others such as *Naked* and *Each in His Own Way* emphasize the power and authority of women through Biblical connections, naming, and the household. Pirandello used description in his plays to present the actor with a visual idea of his creations. Though his plays consist of different situations, they all end with the same woman. Pirandello used theatre to expose feminine duality and provide a vessel for the Everywoman. He portrays women in a world incomprehensible to men. His women, real and fictitious, are both good and bad, Eve and Mary. They live mutably in a world between life and form.

Chapter Five

Mother Italy:

A Panoramic View of Pirandellian Femininity

Nature and femininity have been inseparable since the beginning of time. The awe inspiring beauty and mysticism associated with nature has permeated the feminine form and elevated women to the status of creator. Pirandello found in women the inherent ability to be loving, compassionate, volatile, and conniving. He personified women as figures of great importance, capable of nurturing men or destroying them. He took power away from patriarchy and placed it where it had always been, in the hands of women. Pirandello searched and strove for common ground amongst women and pined for feminine affection. He placed the women in his life in literature as a way to control them. However, even his literary "creatures" defied him. The grasp of the Pirandellian Everywoman extends beyond the pages of Pirandello's literature and into the heart of Italy. Pirandello truly was consumed by femininity. He could not escape it because he lived within its bosom. Italy's personification as a woman parallels Pirandello's interpretation of the Everywoman. The presence of the Pirandellian Everywoman is panoramic and correlates to nature and Mother Italy through the concepts of identity, religion, and theatre explored in Pirandello's literature.

Italy's personification as a woman is not a new concept. Most countries are given a feminine persona and revered as a distant mother. There is a fondness that develops between people and their homeland. Moreover, the treatment of a country parallels the struggles of femininity. Inhabitants looked to their country for security but also would defend it and protect it with their lives. For centuries, Italy had been personified as a woman with its beauty defining the female gender. Italy's femininity went beyond the personification of the land and penetrated its national ideology. Every ounce of patriarchy was in some way touched by femininity. Travel writers romanticized Italy's allure and made it a sought-after country. Italy became a captivating woman that could be gracious or unforgiving. The contrast of Italy's interpretations stemmed from the differences between the north and south.

What is striking about Italy's femininity is its correlation to the Pirandellian Everywoman. The concepts that define the Pirandellian Everywoman also illustrate Italy's womanhood. Both figures illuminate an interesting polarity that reveals the duality of femininity. For example, northern Italy handled the ravages of war better than the south. It seemed to stay prosperous while southern Italy suffered from impoverished conditions. Most travel writers focused on the sublimity of northern Italy for inspiration. However, the south could not be ignored, and the polarity of femininity was expressed in literature. Maura O'Connor explains the contrast of the country claiming that "[t]he Italian peninsula was romantically (and metaphorically) recast as a woman in distress, a tragic figure, a country poised, in Byron's words, 'between glory and desolation' at precisely these crossings" (20). Pirandello used Mary and Eve ideology to express feminine duality. Ironically, Italy also has a double image. The north took on the persona of the virginal mother; it was untouched land, pure, holy, and divine. The south, on the other hand, portrayed a landscape that looked as though it had been raped and ravished. Moreover, the people reflected their cultural conditions.

Identity and naming are two major themes used by Pirandello to note the mutability of womanhood. Pirandello's women are caught between Eve and Mary ideology, existing between two personalities, which live simultaneously within one figure. Both personalities stand for different roles that morph into varying images of wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters. Thus, in essence, the duality of women culminates into numerous figures at one time. Italy undergoes the same transformation. O'Connor notes that the polarity of Italy went beyond the interpretation of the landscape:

> These contrasting characteristics were projected onto the many women's bodies who came to represent or stand in for Italy's nobility, charm, and seduction. "She" was simultaneously Corinne and a whore, a fair maiden donning a nun's veil, and a philandering wife, the mother of two civilizations, and a dethroned queen. Gender played a constitutive role in the complex way in which English middle-class men and women reinterpreted and reimagined Italy during the nineteenth century. (32)

The need for assuming an identity is a male trait. Pirandello struggles to define women and can only do so by labeling them as dualistic images of Mary and Eve. Italy endures the same patriarchal complex. The nineteenth-century revealed a country that is indefinable. Men tried to place significance on Italy's unification and define her culturally. The idea of one unified country as a single entity could not exist because Italy was divided into different regions or personas. Each Italian region had its own culture. Women accept their inconsistencies. They do not feel the need to give themselves an identity, but will assume an identity to pacify men. The same concept is true for Italy.

Naming gives men a sense of authority. If men can define something, they can understand it, and thus control it. They use naming as a way to give something an identity. Women's inability to be pinpointed and identified highlights their superiority over men. All of Pirandello's men are labeled. However, some of his leading male figures try to dismiss their societal roles and exist as neutral figures like the Pirandellian Everywoman. They could succeed as images of form just as Pirandello's women do. The difference is that Pirandellian women do not abandon their societal identities. They embrace a neutral concept of themselves, becoming numerous figures at once. By embracing their cultural identity, women can exist in form and life. Women's mutability establishes them as sublime forms like Italy. Stephen Gundle articulates the relevance of feminine symbols on national movements, claiming:

> Feminine symbols are a recurrent feature in nationalist movements because they act as a banner of health and fecundity of the nation and allude to the idea of its family. They also arouse the desires of men and harness them to the nation. In Italy, the national allegorical symbol was significant, but much more important was the wider phenomenon of identifying all sorts of young women with the nation by means of the mediation of literature or art. The beauty of women was one of the most striking and continuous themes in the formation of Italian national identity in the early and mid-nineteenth century. (1)

The natural characteristics associated with femininity are what define woman. Thus, Italy as a country is perceived through feminine identifying markers. Femininity is not controlled by male naming because women never fully become a singular form. They are only highlighted by their natural characteristics of beauty or labeled as a mother. Beauty is uncontrollable just as motherhood is indicative of being a woman. Men, however, do not label themselves based on their gender features; instead they are identified as workers or providers.

Nature is one element that preserves femininity; it is always personified as a woman. As illustrated in chapter one, Nature is a recurring figure in creation. Most religious sects, before westernized Christianity, worshipped feminine figures. Matriarchal religions dominated culture and women were revered for their ability to give birth. Although patriarchal ethos reshaped the image of women in religion and reduced them to figures in nature or martyred virginal maids, femininity never disappeared. Matriarchal ideology hides behind the guise of patriarchy and wields a subtle power over it. Men's desire for naming did not deconstruct femininity or cause its conformity; it just rationalized it for them and placed it under a name. Likewise, Italy endured national labels that sought to masculinize her but failed. Her beauty and her suffering kept her from becoming a masculine form. Pirandello is aware that concepts defining women "are the product of a patriarchal society which fears woman's power. The abasement of woman's intellect and sexuality is a clear sign that society fears the threat she poses" (Bini, *Enacting* 165). The same theology is true for Italy. As a woman, Italy is objectified through her beauty. She is defied and enamors people who become obsessed with her just as Pirandello's men become obsessed with the women.

Moreover, women exude power within the conventional labels men give them. For instance, traditional Italy placed women in the role of mother and housewife. Mothers controlled the relationships between the father and children and helped with the growth of the children's mental development. Without the stability of a mother a household was in chaos. Women always controlled something within the backdrop of patriarchy. The condition of Italy often determined the connection between generations. For instance, the need for unification arose in Italy because of the lack of communal support; hence, Italy set the tone between each generation. Women allow themselves to be categorized by men, especially in Pirandello's works. They set the tone of a nation in the same way they set the tone of a household. The idea reverts to women's origin with nature.

Nature is one of the most powerful and formidable figures yet men easily subdue and destroy it. The land becomes a part of patriarchal society; it is fought over, used, and divided. Nature is deconstructed just like the Pirandellian woman and it appears that she succumbs to male ideology. However, nature also rebels and often turns man's destruction back on himself. The idea is indicative of Pirandello. In most cases, men destroy themselves while women idly watch and turn the circumstance back on men. Basically, men's form of labeling fails because they try to categorize women by the characteristics that are inherent to them. Women can live up to their label and do not experience failure within the label because it is conducive to their gender.

Lady Italy, like the Pirandellian Everywoman, also controlled men's actions, responses, and emotions. She evoked jealousy, curiosity, and fear in the hearts of many men. At a young age, Pirandello was taught the value of land. His family sulfur mines ensured stability and survival. Italy revolts against Pirandello when the family mines flood. As a result of the flood Pirandello was forced to take a job as a teacher, Antonietta's sanity was pushed to the brink, and the family struggled. One event, caused by a woman, changed the course of Pirandello's life. Land was fought over constantly in Italy. While the land was glorified it was also feared for its violent outbursts. In Pirandello's works, jealousy is a common theme. In "The Signorina" and "A Friend to the Wives" men are vying for women's attention and go to great lengths to receive it. Those same women deconstruct the men for their obsession.

Italy is also immortalized as are Pirandello's women. Italy was viewed as a great source of inspiration and was captured in paintings and literature. Pirandello placed his wife, mother, sister, daughter, and love interests within his works. His women live even in death and undergo a "rebirth" every time a story is read or a play enacted. Italy underwent several deaths and rebirths throughout the centuries. Even if Italy died as a country, she would survive through the glorified images admirers portrayed in art and literature. As a country, Italy is constantly giving birth and is full of life. Several Italian admirers viewed Italy as a stage. The vibrancy of the culture with its carnivals and religious rituals set up an atmosphere similar to a theatre. O'Connor, taking note of travel writing that glorified Italy, comments:

> Rogers saw the Italian people themselves as spectacle—there to entertain or indulge the imagination—much like the sculptures or monuments of Italy's past and the rituals associated with Catholicism such as Carnival. *Carnivale* provided Rogers with the perfect play within the play; the masks, the games, the costumes, and the processions that accompanied the winter Catholic ritual also characterized its participants for Rogers. (35)

Such costumes and masks define the Pirandellian Everywoman. Her appearance changes with her role. The idea of masks and veiled images highlights the complexity of

Pirandello's women. His women, even in narration, are always performing spectacles. They garner attention and steal the stage from men. Life is a continuing play, and Pirandello tried to capture that dynamic through his most movable figure, the Everywoman.

Pirandello correlated playwriting and productions to a metaphorical conception and birth. As Marta Abba became an integral part of Pirandello's plays, Pirandello conceptualized their relationship as "two parents of the play become one; and they become one in the realization of their creative accomplishment" (Bini, *His Muse*, 101), as in sexual intercourse. Together they brought his women to life on stage. Similarly, Italy bore different representations of women and illustrated the many faces of the Everywoman.

One of the most pertinent concepts in Pirandello's literature is his women's relationship to religion. Religion permeates every aspect of the Pirandellian Everywoman. Her identity, actions, and appearance are defined through religious figures. Pirandello places her in gardens similar to those associated with the Garden of Eden. He focuses on hands, eyes, nature, and other images that connect his women to the Bible. His theatrical works, such as *Each in His Own Way*, include scenery that is reminiscent of a chapel. Moreover, characters like Adriana in *The Late Mattia Pascal* are similar to the Biblical representation of Sophia. The Pirandellian Everywoman changes her male counterparts physically and spiritually. She develops an unbreakable bond with them; importantly, she creates them. For instance, Dida creates and recreates her Gengè and Moscarda throughout *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand* and does so through a simple comment. The Everywoman is God in Pirandello's works; Italy takes on the same significance.

Lady Italy can be Mother Italy, a mistress and mother for men. The connection made between her and her inhabitants is like a spiritual bond. Lady Italy can also determine the actions of men. She forms their culture by shaping their opinions and lives. Like the Everywoman's role as a creator, Italy shapes her inhabitants. The country also endures change. New ideas, philosophy, industry, and land masses form periodically. She can also be viewed as a version of Sophia. As noted in chapter one, the idea that God had a wife through the Christianization of paganism was reduced to the Mother Mary. Hence, the phrase Mother Nature is usually attributed to that figure. Italy's sublimity suggests that there is some sort of divine nostalgia attributed to her. She is as intricate in the creation of the people and land around her as God.

The celebration of Italy is also conducive to the worship of Sophia and Mother Mary. O'Connor mentions the religious ideology that developed from Italian travel literature. She acknowledges the importance of the country as a theatrical stage and highlights that one of the most dramatic events in the country was religious celebrations. Noting Waldie, O'Connor claims, "Waldie looked upon the Italian culture (apart from its art and architecture) as a theatre especially in terms of its religious ceremonies as well as its cloisters and monasteries. Catholic rituals and practices were spectacles, performances with pagan influences and full of subtle contrasts" (48). The same productions "played" in Italian culture are similar to the ones portrayed on Pirandello's stage. His works are like a spiritual ritual or homage to the Biblical figures Mary and Eve. By portraying the

Everywoman through the figures of Eve and Mary, Pirandello feminizes religion and gives power back to matriarchal theology.

One of the best examples that define Italy as a woman is religion. Just as Pirandello feminized religion in his works, Italy has its own matriarchal aspects. Catholicism has devout Mary followers and also highlights the sanctity of the Holy Spirit. In Pirandello's works, men fight against the power of women. They do so in an effort to avoid being feminized, but are unsuccessful. Men try to deny the power of femininity out of fear. If women control religion, then they elevate their status above men. Changing patriarchal Christianity into a feminized version usurps male authority and restructures religious ideology. According to O'Connor's study, similar issues develop in Italy. Men feared the implications associated with Mary worship. O'Connor claims, "[t]hey feared that giving license to such emotions effeminized men, by encouraging their worship of the Virgin Mary and made woman beholden to, and dependent upon, their confessors" (50). However, Christianity gets its foothold from paganism and feminized religions. Pirandello exposes the femininity in religion. Italy acted as a sanctuary for religious ideology. Italy is embedded in the Catholic religion, and the feminine influence, though feared, cannot be ignored.

Pirandello was obsessed with women because he was trapped by them. Every aspect of his culture religiously, socially, and physically was touch by femininity. Every piece of Italy, just like the Pirandellian Everywoman, is marked by womanhood. Italy is a complex woman who cannot be defined; she is both the Lady and the Mother. Italy is a picturesque image of the Pirandellian Everywoman. Moreover, Mother Italy and the Everywoman reveal two important concepts about Pirandello. Pirandello's love for his country and his devotion to it solidifies the country as a woman. However, more importantly, it is a woman Pirandello tried to capture and conceptualize. He was constantly in search of the "perfect" woman. He wanted an idealized version of a woman, held in time and forever stationary as his muse. Women always changed and could never be what Pirandello needed. After the loss of his theatre company Pirandello felt abandoned by his country. In addition, the women in his life and literature always seemed to elude the author. He was truly isolated and every woman in his life, including his country, alienated him.

Pirandello was a remarkable author who created some of modernism's most intriguing works. However, he was also broken, searching for who he was in a world that seemed foreign. The women in his life did not intentionally ostracize Pirandello, but as shown within his works, the miscommunication between genders alienated them from each other. However, he seems to have the utmost admiration for women. He creates a convoluted relationship between himself and them, for they appear to leave him in awe, inspiring and frightening him at the same time. Pirandello elevates women to the status of creator. God and women share several characteristics, and Pirandello plays with the idea that women are next to God. History shows that femininity had a strong foothold in religion. It was not until the development of patriarchal Christianity that the role of women as creators was diminished.

In Pirandello's works, women reclaim their glory as gods. They alter men, acting as Fates that dictate male actions and responses. He associates women with the Biblical phrase "I am that I am," giving women one power that is only associated with God, mutability. Many would comment that Pirandello formed works that highlighted male protagonists engulfed in madness and trying to escape reality. Pirandello is known for his psychological conundrums, insane characters, doubled identities, and philosophy on creation. However, one figure stands in the background and is ironically the strongest, his Everywoman. Even if it is not her story, she still penetrates it and dictates its outcome.

Pirandello's quest to define women leads him to an unpredictable answer. Women can be whoever or whatever they want. Years of mutability and conformity transformed women into a chameleon. Pirandello builds the idea that men cannot understand women because they are always changing. Two forms of femininity expound women into several roles. The names mother, wife, daughter, whore, and virgin are universally associated with every Pirandellian woman because of the figures of Eve and Mary. Biblical allusions and contrasts between sexuality and purity appear throughout Pirandello's works. He does not portray a single female character without some sort of conflicting identity. Thus, Pirandello reveals women for who they really are, Everywoman.

The Everywoman's reach extends three hundred and sixty degrees, breaking the fourth wall between reality and form and wrapping Pirandello in femininity. He cannot escape it in life or fiction. The value of the Everywoman is in her ability to penetrate every part of humanity, physically and spiritually. In the end, the grasp of the Everywoman impacts Pirandello's soul and feminizes him.

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