

PSYCHE'S DESCENT INTO THE UNDERWORLD:
THE TRANSCENDING PATTERN
IN MYTH AND LITERATURE

by

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ABSTRACT

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The myth of Cupid and Psyche first appears in the Latin novel of Apuleius entitled the Metamorphoses or Golden Ass. Its wide influence may be due, in part, to the archetypal significance and power of the myth, especially of its central event, Psyche's katabasis or descent into the underworld. Apuleius can be credited with creating both the tale and the unique novel that frames it, as well as explicitly connecting the two parts into one carefully integrated whole. Chapters I through IV of this study examine Apuleius' synthesis of his philosophical, literary, and folk-tale sources into one novel with this Neoplatonic myth at its core. The myth is seen to function as the keystone and symbolic heart of the work. Psyche's descent into the underworld, her subsequent reunion with her divine husband, her apotheosis, and the birth of her daughter Bliss set the pattern for the spiritual quest of Lucius, the novel's hero. Parallel to Psyche's descent and return are Lucius' seaside vision of the goddess Isis and his subsequent spiritual rebirth. Parallel to Psyche's elevation to Mt. Olympus and attainment of immortal status are Lucius' initiations

into the Isiac mysteries with their promise of long life and eternal bliss in the Elysian Fields. Psyche's katabasis is clearly a metaphor for the soul's descent inwards to a source of power that confers knowledge and immortality. The wide influence of the Psyche myth throughout Western literature may thus be due to its most universal spiritual meaning.

The second part of this study begins with an analysis of the spiritual descent and rebirth pattern in myth, ritual, and psychology. Based on psychophysiological research on the Transcendental Meditation technique a model of a "transcending" pattern is proposed for understanding these events as they occur in imaginative literature. The transcending model contains three stages: 1) a naturally increasing quiescence of mind and physiology, which is expressed metaphorically as a dive or descent; 2) a noetic and ineffable experience of the inner self, which may be suggested by images of an unbounded and eternal sense of being; and 3) a blissful return to activity with a more integrated, holistic psyche. Six modern novels which consciously retell the Psyche narrative are then examined in the light of this transcending model. They are: Walter Pater's Marius the Epicurean, Odessa Strickland Payne's Psyche, Pierre Louÿs's Psyché, Jules Romains's Psyché trilogy, C. S. Lewis's Till We Have Faces, and François des Ligneris's Psyché 58. The novels consistently appear to treat the katabasis event as a transcending to subtler levels of the inner self which is important to the spiritual development of the protagonist. In addition, Erich Neumann's analysis of the myth as an archetype for specifically feminine development is examined along with other views of the feminine quest. It is found that the literature of

the feminine quest also conforms to and is illuminated by the transcending model.

The study concludes by applying the transcending model to several modern novels not consciously related to the Psyche tradition. The model is found to be useful in understanding the metaphoric dives and descents of each protagonist, the basic structure of the narrative, and even of the creative process itself. Thus the transcending model proves to be a powerful technique for analyzing the form and content of literature as well as its effects upon the reader.

For Nate and Fay Bonovitz

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Chapter I

"Cupid and Psyche": A Myth for All Times

Like other classical narratives, the myth of Cupid and Psyche has at its core a journey to the underworld, or katabasis. Psyche's descent into the earth to the land of the dead is the culminating trial in her long and arduous search for reunion with her beloved Cupid. As a result of her descent, Psyche is made immortal, wed to Cupid, and delivered of a daughter named Bliss. Soul's descent into the earth appears to be a metaphor for the mind's transcendence into inner regions of knowledge and power, enabling it to reawaken to life at a level of greater psychic wholeness and integration. Recent experimental research on the nature of consciousness, and on the nature and effects of the Transcendental Meditation technique in particular, leads to the formulation of a psychological model for the transcending process, a model which can then be used to understand Psyche's katabasis and other metaphorical descents into the Self. This understanding may help explain the tale's wide influence and mythic power.

The story of Cupid and Psyche makes its first literary appearance in the second century Latin romance The Eleven Books of Metamorphoses or The Golden Ass as it later came to be called.¹ The author of this

¹ The oldest manuscript of the novel is entitled The XI Books of Metamorphoses, but it has also been known as The Metamorphoses of Lucius Apuleius. Since the novel was assumed to be autobiographical Apuleius was credited with Lucius as a first name, although there is
(Footnote continued)

work, Apuleius of Madaura, set the tale of Cupid and Psyche within the framework of a story about a man named Lucius who dabbles in witchcraft and finds himself transformed into a donkey. An extant Greek version of the ass tale, possibly based on a lost original, is a simple satirical story, unified in tone and plot. Apuleius may have adapted Lucius' story from the same Greek original,² but his version is a considerably embellished amalgam of the ass story, numerous Milesian tales,³ the Cupid and Psyche tale (which Lucius hears not long after his unfortunate metamorphosis), a description of an apparently sincere religious conversion, and finally an apology for the mysteries of Isis, an Egyptian goddess whose rites were well established in the Roman world.

Summary of "Cupid and Psyche"

The story of Cupid and Psyche begins with a disarmingly simple and standard fairy-tale opening about how in a certain city there lived a king and queen who had three beautiful daughters. The youngest daughter, Psyche (Greek for soul), was so beautiful that she was worshipped as a virginal incarnation of Venus. The real Venus, enraged by the neglect of her shrines and rites, calls her son Cupid

¹(continued)

no evidence for this appellation. By St. Augustine's day the novel was also known as The Golden Ass, "Aureus Asinus." See P. G. Walsh, The Roman Novel (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), p. 143n for a discussion of the various theories of the meaning of this title.

² The question of the Greek original, the extant version, and the relationship of Apuleius' novel to the latter will be discussed below in Chapter III.

³ Milesian tales were a form of brief bawdy tale, the prototype of the Medieval fabliau. The Milesian tradition and its influence on Apuleius' novel will be discussed below in Chapter III.

to carry out her plans of revenge. Cupid is to prick Psyche with love for some vile wretched slave, but he falls in love with her himself.

Psyche, meanwhile, desires not worship but marriage. Unable to find a suitor her father visits the Milesian oracle and hears it say to him:

King, stand the girl upon some mountain-top
adorned in fullest mourning for the dead.
No mortal husband, King, shall make her crop--
it is a raging serpent she must wed,
which, flying high, works universal Doom,
debilitating all with Flame and Sword.
Jove quails, the Gods all dread him--the Abhorred!
Streams quake before him, and the Stygian gloom.⁴

The oracle is accurate in all points, yet deceptive, because Psyche's fate is a great one. She is to marry the immortal Eros himself, known in Latin as Amor or Cupid. Jove and the other gods do indeed quail before him and his arrows.

Amid weeping and wailing, Psyche is set out on a rocky crag to meet her fate. Soon gentle winds carry her down into a beautiful valley, and she finds herself the mistress of a luxurious palace. She is cared for by invisible servants and receives her unknown husband only under cover of darkness. Psyche lives in blissful ignorance, untroubled by anything, even the mystery of her husband's identity, until she hears her sisters mourning for her on the crag above. She persuades her reluctant husband to let her sisters visit, promising not to reveal anything about him. She feasts her sisters and loads them with gifts, but she only succeeds in arousing their envy,

⁴ Apuleius, The Golden Ass, trans. Jack Lindsay (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 107-08. All translations will be taken from this edition and references will appear in the text.

especially since they suspect she is married to a god and that the child in her womb may be divine. The sisters return and instill in Psyche the suspicion that her husband is a horrible serpent who must be killed before he devours her and her unborn child.

One night when Cupid has fallen asleep, as her sisters have advised her, Psyche brings forth a lamp and knife, but instead of seeing a terrible monster on her bed she sees the beautiful god of love himself. Her adoration of her husband is disturbed when the lamp suddenly spurts hot oil on his shoulder, which burns and awakens the god. He mutely flies away, with Psyche clinging awhile to his leg and finally letting go and falling to earth. Cupid alights on a nearby tree and rebukes Psyche for breaking her promise not to look at him, and then he abandons her.

Her paradise shattered along with her ignorance, Psyche finds herself alone and miserable. She crawls to a nearby river and throws herself into its waters.

But the gentle stream, in horror and in reverent fear of the god who can heat even the dank water-deeps, took Psyche on the soft curl of a wave and laid her safe on the thick green turf of the bank (p.123).

There, by chance, is the country-god Pan, teaching Echo to sing. He compassionately comforts Psyche and encourages her to search devotedly and persistently for her husband. Soon Psyche finds herself in the city of one of her sisters. She relates the story of her discovery of Cupid and his flight, but she adds that Cupid has said that as a punishment to Psyche he will wed her sister instead, and with full marriage ceremony at that. The sister leaps up "pricked-on by ravening rash lust and rankling jealousy," travels quickly to the

crag, and jumps madly toward the valley below (p. 124). The wind is blowing from the wrong quarter, however, and she dies on the jutting rocks.

Psyche then visits her second sister and dispatches her the same way. Even though Psyche inspires her sisters' deaths, perhaps Cupid is the real instrument. In his last speech to her he says: "as for those fine advisers of yours, they shall pay heavily for their pernicious interference" (p. 123). And so they do.

While Psyche travels "resolute in quest of Cupid," her husband lies healing in his mother's house (p. 125). And how does the world fare with Venus sulking under the sea and Cupid convalescing in his room? A gossipy sea gull relates to Venus that

". . . in consequence there is no Joy, no Grace, no Elegance anywhere nothing but the Rude, the Rustic, and the Uncouth --no Marriage-bond, no Social Intercourse, no Love of Children; nothing but an utter Lack of Order, and an unpleasant Horror of anything so low as Nuptials" (p. 125).

When Venus learns of Cupid's affair with her rival, she viciously berates him. She rejects Ceres' and Juno's attempts to reconcile her with the young lovers and instead sends Mercury to bring Psyche to be her slave.

Psyche travels for many months in search of Cupid and for refuge from Venus' fury. She visits the shrines of Ceres and Juno who are sympathetic but unable to help her without angering Venus. Finally she goes directly to Venus and throws herself at her feet. Venus turns her over to Care and Sorrowing, has her abused and beaten, and then gives her four tasks, each more difficult and dangerous than the previous one.

First Psyche must sort a mound of tiny seeds (millet, poppyseed, barley). While she sits "in silent stupefaction," an ant summons all the swarms "born from Great Mother Earth" to have pity on the wife of Love (p. 134). They accomplish this task for Psyche but Venus sets her on another. She is to gather wool from a herd of dangerous sheep. Psyche leaves Venus willingly, not to attempt the task but to find release from her miseries by drowning herself in a nearby river. However, a reed by the water advises her to wait until the noon sun, whose burning rays are responsible for the sheep's frenzy and madness, has slackened its heat. Then the sheep will be calmed and Psyche can wander in the dusk and pluck the golden fleece from the twigs of the trees.

Next Venus sends Psyche to collect water from the spring that feeds the rivers of the Underworld--the Styx and the Cocytus. The spring emerges from a rocky height and is guarded by fierce dragons. Too stunned even to weep, Psyche stands still and silent until Providence sends aid. Jupiter's eagle, the very one who brought him Ganymede to be his cupbearer, offers his allegiance to the wife of Cupid and accomplishes the task for her. One last trial, a visit to the underworld, remains.

Venus commands Psyche to go below to Queen Proserpine and bring her back a box of beauty. Distracted, Psyche climbs a tower in order to leap to her death, "for this seemed to her the straight road down, the easiest road by far, to hell" (p. 138). Suddenly the tower speaks. It dissuades Psyche from her thoughtless act and advises her how to find the ventilation-hole of hell, carry out her journey there, and return safely. She is to take coins for the ferryman Charon, sops

for the three-headed dog, and she is not to aid three souls that will ask for help, a man floating in the Dead River, a man loading a donkey, and a woman weaving. She is to resist all these because they are traps set by Venus. When Psyche arrives at Proserpine's palace she is to refuse her lavish hospitability and sit humbly on the floor, eating only a crust of bread.

Psyche does as she is told. The return journey poses no problems, but when Psyche finds herself in the light once again she is tempted to use some of the beauty in the box to enhance her own looks and thus win Cupid back. When she opens the box, however, she finds something unexpected within.

In it lurked Sleep of the Innermost Darkness, the night of Styx, which freed from its cell rushed upon her and penetrated her whole body with a heavy cloud of unconsciousness and enfolded her where she lay (p. 140).

Cupid, now healed of his wound, finds her there, frees her from the sleep, and after admonishing her for her curiosity, sends her back to Venus while he goes to arrange their union with Jupiter. He easily obtains Jupiter's blessings and his promise to mollify Venus. Psyche is brought up to heaven, made immortal, and married to Cupid. Music and a glorious marriage-banquet follow and in due time Psyche is delivered of a daughter, Voluptas, or Joy.

At first glance there appears to be a lack of harmony among the elements of Apuleius' work; there is a strong contrast between the elegant and romantic tale of Cupid and Psyche and the realistic, often salacious and satirical story of Lucius, the gruesome or erotic Milesian Tales, and the reverent and serious religious conclusion to the novel. This disparity has no doubt been the reason that sub-

sequent writers have often considered the Cupid and Psyche tale in isolation from the novel and have translated, imitated, or interpreted it as an independent story or myth.

Influence and Allegorical Interpretation

With rediscovery of the manuscript of the Metamorphoses in the early Italian renaissance, the novel was soon translated into Italian, English, French, German, and Spanish. Since then the tale at its heart has inspired paintings, sculptures, operas, ballets, epic and lyric poetry, tragedies, comedies, short stories and novels right up to our time.⁵ It has attracted the attention of major writers, such as Boccaccio, Calderon, Molière, La Fontaine, Corneille, Wieland, Keats, and Walter Pater, all of whom have retold the story in some form. Many writers have responded to it as a Christian allegory, others simply as a beautiful love story.

Fulgentius, a popular mythographer of the 5th or 6th century, offers the first extant interpretation of the tale as a Christian allegory. Psyche is the spirit, her sisters flesh and free will. Psyche is the youngest because "the spirit was added after the body was formed" and the most beautiful "because it was higher than free

⁵ See Elizabeth H. Haight, Apuleius and His Influence (New York: Longmans Green, 1927); Jan-Öjvind Swahn, The Tale of Cupid and Psyche (Lund: W. K. Gleerup, 1955); p. 408, n. 58; Walsh, pp. 224-43; Balthasar Stumfall, "Das Märchen von Amor und Psyche in seinem Fortleben in der französischen, italienischen und spanischen literatur bis zum 18 Jahrhundert," Münchener Beitrag, 39 (1907); Alexander Scobie, Aspects of the Ancient Romance and its Heritage (Meisenheim am Glan, Germany: Verlag Anton Hain, 1969), pp. 91-100; H. Blümner, "Das Märchen von Amor und Psyche in der deutschen Dichtkunst," Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, 22 (1903), pp. 648-73; and Henri Lemaître, Essai sur le myth de Psyché dans la littérature française des origines à 1890 (Persan: Imprimerie de Persan-Beaumont, 1939).

will and nobler than the flesh." Fulgentius sees Cupid as greed (cupiditatem) rather than as cupido or desire. Venus (lust) sends greed to destroy spirit, "but because greed is for good and evil alike, greed is taken with the spirit and links itself to her, as it were, in marriage." Fulgentius doesn't carry the allegory very far in his Mythologies, and the works to which he alludes which complete the interpretation are unknown.⁶

Boccaccio retells the story in his Genealogy of the Gods and adds an explanation of it that weaves together Platonic and Christian allegory.⁷ Other Renaissance writers retell the story in allegorical fashion as well. In the seventeenth century, for example, Calderon wrote two Autos (c. 1640) on the Psyche theme. One of them gives Psyche's father, the King, as the world. The daughters are three ages of man; the first two are wed to Paganism and Judaism. Psyche's marriage is that of the Church to Christ, of the individual soul to God. Hate temporarily leads Psyche away from the bridegroom, but all ends well. The second auto is a variant of the first.⁸

Contemporary works by Thomas Heywood ("Loves Mistres, or the Queens Masque," 1636) and Shakerley Marmion ("Epic Poem of Cupid and his Mistress," 1637) developed similar allegorical themes. Heywood has a figure of Apuleius deliver an explanation of the piece to the effect that Psyche is the human soul who wishes to woo Heaven and wed

⁶ Fulgentius the Mythographer, trans. Leslie George Whitbread (n.p.: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 89-90.

⁷ Elizabeth H. Haight, "Apuleius and Boccaccio," in More Essays on the Greek Romances (New York: Longmans, Green, 1945), pp. 113-41.

⁸ Haight, Apuleius, pp. 125-26.

Immortality. Marmion's epic presents the King and Queen as God and Nature, the sisters as Flesh and Will and so forth.⁹ There were numerous others. The allegorizing fashion lasted well into the eighteenth century and spread throughout Europe.

Thomas Taylor (who translated Apuleius' Neoplatonic works as well as his Metamorphoses) offered a Christianized version of a Neoplatonic allegory for the tale. He saw it as a story of the "pre-existence of the human soul, its lapse from the intelligible world to the earth, and its return to thence in its pristine state of felicity."¹⁰ Similarly Bishop Warburton explained the tale as "a philosophic allegory of the progress of the soul to perfection, in the possession of divine love and the reward of immortality . . ."¹¹

German mythographers of the nineteenth century offered a wide variety of allegorical interpretations of the tale. Hildebrand saw the sisters as fleshly desires, Creuzer saw them as flesh, free will and the spirit, Carus saw them as unconsciousness, world consciousness, and self-consciousness, and Stadelmann saw them as three kingdoms of Nature. Hartung suggested that "The wanderings and dangerous tasks which Psyche has to go through, resemble the preliminary trials of those who offer themselves for initiation."¹²

⁹ Haight, Apuleius, pp. 140-45.

¹⁰ Introduction, The Metamorphosis, or Golden Ass and Philosophical Works of Apuleius (London: Robert Triphook, 1822), p. xv.

¹¹ Quoted in Alexander Scobie, Apuleius Metamorphoses (Asinus Aureas) (Meisenheim am Glan, Germany: Verlag Anton Hain, 1975), I, 4.

¹² These views are summarized in Ludwig Friedländer, Roman Life and Manners Under the Early Empire, trans. A. B. Gough from the 7th. ed. (1913; rpt. New York: Barnes & Nobles, 1965), IV, 101.

Ludwig Friedländer thought that all of the allegories were far-fetched and had little to do with the actual tale. He recognized Apuleius' version of the tale as being a variation of a genuine folk tale, signaled points of contact with the old East Indian story of Tulisa and Basnak Dau, for one, and thus denied all attempts to discover allegorical symbolism in such a broadly dispersed folk tale.¹³ After Friedlander's widely influential study the allegorical method went out of fashion.¹⁴

"Cupid and Psyche" obviously does owe quite a bit to a folk-tale tradition. We recognize the fairy tale opening, the beautiful daughter promised to a monster, the jealous mother-in-law, taboos, helpful animals, talking and sentient objects, bridal tasks, and so forth. Apuleian scholars of the twentieth century have focused primarily on research into the tale's origins in folk tale, myth, and art and have, until recently, shown little interest in allegorical interpretations. However, consideration of the possible folk-tale sources for Apuleius' "Cupid and Psyche" does not necessarily close out symbolic or archetypal interpretations. The tale has clearly been reworked and consequently invested with meanings associated with more than one tradition. It's no longer a pure folk tale or myth, but rather a literary composite, a melange of elements and influences.

To begin with, the story (unlike folk tales) is peopled with figures from classical mythology (Cupid, his mother Venus, Mercury,

¹³ Friedländer, p. 109.

¹⁴ Louis C. Purser, ed., The Story of Cupid and Psyche as related by Apuleius (London: George Bell & Sons, 1910), pp. 130-31.

Jupiter, Pan) and is rife with classical allusions and topoi, such as Psyche's trip to the underworld in the wake of Odysseus, Aeneas, Herakles, and Aristophanes' Dionysos. The tower speaks, as in a folk tale, yet its speech, it seems, is "virtually a mosaic of Virgilian phrases,"¹⁵ and its place in the tale may be due, in fact, to Herakles' advice to Dionysos in The Frogs that the quickest way for him to get to Hades is to climb a tall tower and throw himself off of it.

In addition to folk-tale elements and classical allusions are allegorical figures such as Sobriety, Care, Sorrowing, and Joy. We can also feel the influence of the Greek love-romance which was popular in Apuleius' day and always featured a pair of virtuous lovers separated by a cruel fate and eventually blissfully reunited under the auspices of some presiding diety, often Eros himself, or Isis. To these strains we must add the Neoplatonic understanding of the soul's quest for the Good, guided by Eros or Love. Apuleius was a Neoplatonic philosopher who wrote and lectured on Plato, his theories of the soul, daemons, and on his natural and moral philosophy.¹⁶ He may have known some version of this folk tale, responded to it as an archetypal form of the spiritual odyssey, and tailored it to suit his own philosophical purposes. As Perry has shown throughout his work on Apuleius, the Latin author adapted his sources in a very creative

¹⁵ Walsh, p. 57.

¹⁶ Of Apuleius' philosophical works expounding Platonic ideas all that remain are the God of Socrates and the Habitude of the Doctrines of the Philosophy of Plato in three books. These are available in Taylor, see above, n. 10.

manner, separating and combining them to create powerful emotional effects.¹⁷

Regardless of the variety of sources Apuleius may have used, his story strikes the reader with all the force and truth of a myth. As classical scholar Cedric Whitman writes, "the nature of myth, or folktale, is to reflect in external form the psyche's subconscious exploration of itself and its experience."¹⁸

Toward a Psychological Interpretation of the Tale

"Cupid and Psyche" begs to be interpreted in such a way. A preliminary version of such an interpretation might run as follows: The soul, which is beautiful and divine, searches for fulfillment. Initially united with Love in a garden of childlike innocence and ignorance the soul catches a glimpse of divine beauty. In order to win it for all times the soul must pursue a long road of purifying trials culminating in a journey to the underworld, a transcendence to the inner world of the Self.

The journey to the underworld is clearly one version of the so-called Rebirth archetype, an "experience symbolized as conquest over the dark powers within and without the mind."¹⁹ The powers within the mind are not all dark, as Joseph Campbell reminds us, and

¹⁷ Many of Ben Perry's articles consider the way Apuleius joins tales together to create his effects. His work is well summarized and integrated in his book The Ancient Romances (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967).

¹⁸ Homer and the Heroic Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), p. 297.

¹⁹ Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), p. 254.

the katabasis can be read as a symbolic penetration to an inner source of power which is followed by a "life-enhancing return."²⁰ Psyche's subsequent apotheosis can be understood as Self-realization or enlightenment.

What appears to be emerging here is a pattern for a particular kind of quest, a quest for spiritual fulfillment, complete integration and joyful unification of all aspects of life. Some sort of transcending or rebirth experience may, in fact, be essential to the spiritual quest. The sketch proposed here is certainly compatible with a Platonic scheme for the Soul's reattainment of absolute knowledge and experience of the Good, if such were Apuleius' intent.²¹ Further understanding of such a spiritual quest pattern would not only broaden our appreciation of Apuleius' tale and his frame story of Lucius, it would also help explain the enormous interest that the tale has generated, both critically and artistically. It would also lead to the formulation of a universal pattern for spiritual development that would illuminate other quest novels.

Surprisingly, little psychological research has been done on the myth to date. Erich Neumann treats the tale in isolation from the novel and considers it to be a pattern of the maturation and individuation of the female psyche.²² When taken alone, as one version of

²⁰ The Hero With a Thousand Faces (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), p. 35.

²¹ See especially Phaedrus, 244A-257B, Phaedo, 76C-84B, and Symposium, 199C-212C which will be discussed below in Chapter II.

²² Eric Neumann, Amor and Psyche, trans. Ralph Manheim (1956: rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973).

the family of folk tales to which it belongs, the Psyche story can allow for this type of approach. And insofar as his analysis accurately explores the feminine psyche, his conclusions may be equally valid for the more universal case. When the tale is considered within the novel as a whole, where the hero is a young man and Psyche can be seen as his soul, then her story may be, in Walsh's words, "the projection of Lucius's pilgrimage into the world of myth."²³ The tale could then be analyzed as the development of Lucius' soul, especially its anima aspect. Several studies have actually treated the tale in this way.²⁴ In either case, it would be useful to establish the most general or universal understanding of Psyche's katabasis and her spiritual quest. In fact, when it is seen how modern novelists have responded to the tale and have deliberately employed the myth to structure their own visions of the "psyche's subconscious exploration of itself and its experience," to use Whitman's words once again, we feel justified in appealing to the most universal approach, not to one limited to the feminine soul or the author or hero's anima.

Three deliberate novelistic retellings of the tale pre-date the age of influence of Freud and Jung, those of Walter Pater (Marius the Epicurean 1885), Odessa Strickland Payne (Psyche 1885) and Pierre Louÿs (Psyché, written 1906-1912). Pater uses the Cupid and Psyche

²³ Walsh, p. 190.

²⁴ See Ann Belford Ulanov, The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1971) and Marie-Louise Von Franz, A Psychological Interpretation of The Golden Ass of Apuleius (New York: Spring Publications, 1970). These studies will be discussed below in Chapter VII.

tale within the story of his hero Marius' quest for spiritual meaning much as Apuleius does. He sets his story in Apuleius' own time, and has the writer himself make a brief personal appearance later in the novel. Payne's novel is set in the American south of her own time and her heroine searches for fulfillment in terms of both love and a Christian missionary ideal. Louÿs' *Psyché* is his French contemporary, searching for love and fulfillment but suffering the fate of an unfulfilled quest and an incomplete novel.

The other three novels, although later in the century, may be equally innocent in their response to the tale. The heroine of Jules Romains' *Psyché* trilogy of the 1920's is named Lucienne, an obvious allusion to the Lucius story. When she and her husband are separated by his job as purser on a luxury ship she travels the distance between them by projecting her subtle body onto the ship and briefly appearing before him. Romains uses the structure of the myth to develop his own theory of unanimism, a theory which argues that groups create a unique collective consciousness potentially open to every member's personal experience. His trilogy actually focuses on the husband's psyche as he discovers his wife's astounding abilities and thus is forced to admit another level of reality. C. S. Lewis retells the story from the point of view of Psyche's elder sister in *Till We Have Faces* (1956). His heroine moves through a series of self-transcending trials (parallel to Psyche's) which expand her consciousness, refine her emotions, and lead her to a state of psychic wholeness and integration. In another line, Françoise des Ligneris's 1958 novel *Psyché 58* retells the myth in modern dress as a woman's struggle for selfhood against the confines of a suppressive marriage.

What then might be the basic or most universal archetypal significance of the tale? How these six modern novels have used the tale must shed some light on how it affects the human psyche. This question is particularly interesting in our age where the search for and recognition of means to expand and develop consciousness have often left the domain of religion and moved into meditation techniques and modern psychology. Traditional religious symbolism appears to be exhausted and without meaning for the majority of modern readers. Jung comments on the paucity of viable religious symbols in our age and on modern interest in classical gods and goddesses:

Only an unparalleled impoverishment of symbolism could enable us to rediscover the gods as psychic factors, that is, as archetypes of the unconscious. . . . That is why we have a psychology today, and why we speak of the unconscious. All this would be quite superfluous in an age of culture that possessed symbols.²⁵

The quest that ultimately takes Psyche to the divine world must exert a unique appeal to an age that, for the most part, either denies or ignores the possibility of such a world, and prefers to attempt its fulfillment in the material and emotional rewards of an everyday, or even a heightened everyday life. This is precisely the reality the novel traditionally records.

The appeal of basic patterns of consciousness in the modern age, or perhaps we should say, especially in the modern age, reveals a search for symbols to satisfy the restlessness of heart and mind. It has been noted that "Mythic archetypes, being the products, after all,

²⁵ C. G. Jung, "The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," in The Collected Works, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959), 9, 1, 23-34, para 50.

of the human imagination, appeal powerfully to even the most empirically oriented audiences through their manifestation of universal psychic patterns."²⁶ How the novel explores "universal psychic patterns" suggested by the tale of Cupid and Psyche must reveal not only something about those psychic patterns but also something of how they can affect the psychology of the reader.

Outline of this Study

Before each novelist's response to the tale can be assessed, the questions raised earlier with regard to Apuleius must be considered. Chapter II will review the history of the Platonic concepts of Eros and the psyche and consider how Apuleius fitted them to what must have been a popular folk tale. He was influenced, of course, by the Greek love-romance, one of the major genres of prose narrative in his day, and by other classical images and topoi, and went on to combine all these elements into a unified whole, a tale of lasting beauty and charm.

The following chapter will suggest how Apuleius might have transformed the comic ass story to serve as a vehicle for describing his hero's inner experiences and initiation into the mysteries of Isis. He also pieced together a number of Milesian tales and then worked them into the frame story to serve its ends. It is to this structure of ass story interspersed with bawdy tales that the radically different myth of Cupid and Psyche must be related.

²⁶ Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), p. 137.

Chapter IV gives special consideration to the way in which Apuleius set the powerful tale of Psyche's spiritual quest, religious initiation, and subsequent apotheosis in the exact center of his novel to serve as a key to Lucius' donkey trials, conversion, and joyful acceptance into the Isiac priesthood. For example, parallel to Psyche's descent into the underworld and return are Lucius' seaside vision and early morning rebirth. Parallel to Lucius' initiation into the mysteries of Isis is Psyche's elevation into Heaven and subsequent apotheosis. These four versions of initiation or rebirth must be studied together to discover their essential purpose and function in Apuleius' work, and in his version of the quest pattern.

By linking the "story within the story" to its frame tale through various structural, thematic, and verbal ties, Apuleius connects and interrelates the two tales in the reader's consciousness. Even if the authors of each of the later novels were unaware of Apuleius' subtle allusions to classical myth, Neoplatonic philosophy, or Isiac doctrine, he or she could not fail to sense the basic and universal symbolism structured in the total work.

On the ground of a thorough appreciation of Apuleius' great novel Chapter V goes on to articulate the basic pattern of the spiritual quest and to relate its central episode, the metaphoric journey to the underworld, to modern psychological theories and research on the development of consciousness. The next chapter will then consider the six modern novels mentioned earlier in order to evaluate their response to the pattern proposed and to discover how they structure their spiritual quests in terms of modern imagery and symbolism. Chapter VII will take up the question of the tale as a pattern for the

development of feminine consciousness and will consider recent literature on the feminine quest.

If the proposed transcending pattern is universal enough, it should be able to contain and integrate all the various mythological and psychological interpretations that have been developed and even provide a guide to understanding works describing the spiritual quest, but not necessarily influenced by Apuleius' work.

Chapter II

The Tale of Cupid and Psyche: "Love is a longing for immortality"¹

In order to evaluate the response of modern novelists to "Cupid and Psyche," we must consider how Apuleius might have developed and then employed the tale in his novel. That is, we must see how he adapted it from its sources, how he used it, structurally and functionally, to establish or resonate with the themes of the novel as a whole, and how he modified the ass story to enrich certain features of the tale. Apuleius was a highly trained and sophisticated rhetor, a professional speaker and writer, well acquainted with the literary and philosophical heritage of Greece and Rome. He prided himself on being a Platonic philosopher and wrote commentaries of Plato's thought for his contemporaries.² His admiration for Plato and Socrates are expressed throughout his work, and it's been observed that there is

¹ Plato, Symposium, trans. Michael Joyce, in The Collected Dialogues of Plato, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), 207A. All subsequent references to this dialogue will appear in the text by dialogue name (abbreviated) and Stephanus number.

² Apuleius translated the Phaedo and wrote a treatise called De Republica, neither of which has survived. His treatise On the God of Socrates and his three books On the Habitude of the Doctrines of the Philosophy of Plato have survived and are being cited from The Metamorphosis or Golden Ass, and Philosophical Works of Apuleius, trans. Thomas Taylor (London: Robert Triphook, 1822). Subsequent references to these works will appear in the text with an abbreviation of the title, e.g., Socrates or Plato I, and a page reference from the above edition.

not one page of the Metamorphoses which has not been directly inspired by their thought.³ The most logical beginning then, would be with an understanding of the Platonic concepts of Eros and the psyche and of their relationship to Apuleius' central thought.

Psyche: The Winged and Immortal Soul

For Homer and Hesiod, the psyche is not the soul, as we understand it today, but rather the life that leaves the body when it dies. It flutters off or ebbs away like the blood. Homer tells how a man's life (psyche) "came out through the wound of the spearstab in beating haste" and has Achilles warn that

a man's life [psyche] cannot come back again, it cannot be
lifted
 nor captured by force, once it has crossed the teeth's
barrier.⁴

In Homer psyche usually means life in the sense of life's breath. In fact the word may have come from psychein, the verb "to breathe."⁵ The word also means butterfly or moth, which, like the breath, flutters through the air.

By about 500 B.C., however, psyche had come to coalesce with nous which had developed from meaning sight or perception to meaning mind, or a conscious subjective self, not to be equated with the body. Soma had originally meant dead body or deadness, the opposite of life or

³ R. Thibau, "Les Métamorphoses d'Apulée et la Théorie Platonicienne de l'Erôs, Studia Philosophica Gandensia, 3 (1965), 142.

⁴ The Iliad of Homer, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951), 14: 518; 9: 408-09.

⁵ Julian Jaynes, The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), pp. 270-71.

psyche. As psyche came to mean soul, in the modern sense, soma remained its opposite and came to mean the physical, material body.⁶ Philosophers discussed the nature of the soul and what it might be made of, e.g. Anaximenes thought its nature to be air, Heraclitus and Parmenides fire, and Anaxagoras thought it to be a part of nous, which he believed was the force of which moves the world.⁷

By Plato's time psyche had come to mean the many complex aspects of the spirit. His translators have found the word difficult to render and prefer to use, according to various contexts, "Reason, Mind, Intelligence, Life, the vital principle in things as well as in man; it is the constant that causes changes but itself does not change."⁸

In the last dialogue that he wrote, Plato argues that soul came first. It was soul, not air or fire, that was there to begin with.⁹ Soul is the universal cause of all change and motion and stirs in all things, in sky, in earth, or sea (Laws 10:896B; 897A). In the Phaedrus Socrates explains that the immortal souls of the gods periodically ascend to the region where "true being dwells, without color or shape, that cannot be touched; reason alone, the soul's

⁶ Erwin Rohde, Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks, trans. W. B. Hillis from the 8th ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925), p. 5.

⁷ Wilhelm Windelband, A History of Philosophy, trans. James H. Tufts from the 2nd ed. (1901; rpt. New York: Harper & Bros., 1958), I, 62. See also Rohde, p. 387.

⁸ Huntington Cairns, Introd., The Collected Dialogues of Plato, p. xx.

⁹ Plato, Laws, trans. A. E. Taylor, in Collected Dialogues, 10:892C. Future references will appear in the text.

pilot, can behold it, and all true knowledge is knowledge thereof."¹⁰ The souls of the gods are nourished by this experience of reason and knowledge and return home to feast on the nectar and ambrosia of immortality (247 D-E).

Human souls, though immortal, are of a tripartite nature. The highest and most rational part of the soul is joined to both will and appetite (Phaedrus 253D-256E). When the human soul attempts to ascend with the gods, eager to reach the same heights, the rational part may be confounded by the other two, be sucked downward, and catch only a glimpse of true being. The soul that succeeds in following in the train of the gods may then remain with them. The soul that cannot do so falls to earth and takes a human birth. The soul that has "seen the most of being shall enter into the human babe that shall grow into a seeker after wisdom or beauty, a follower of the Muses and a lover; the next having seen less, shall dwell in a king" and so forth (Phaedrus 247D). That soul who "has sought after wisdom unfeignedly, or has conjoined his passion for a loved one with that seeking" three lifetimes in a row will finally speed away to rejoin the gods (Phaedrus 249A). Other souls will suffer judgment, punishment and appropriate transmigrations.

The soul of a philosopher is the one most likely to "recover its wings," Socrates advises, because the philosopher attempts to recapture his original vision of being, of true knowledge. The body (that is, the sense perception of the body), he says, "fills us with

¹⁰ Plato, Phaedrus, trans. R. Hackforth, in Collected Dialogues, 247C-D. Future references will appear in the text.

loves and desires and fears and all sorts of fancies and a great deal of nonsense."¹¹ Hence, the search for true knowledge must be conducted in the soul that is as separate as possible from the body. When the soul

investigates by itself, it passes into the realm of the pure and everlasting and immortal and changeless, and being of a kindred nature, when it is once independent and free from interference, consorts with it always and strays no longer, but remains, in that realm of the absolute, constant and invariable. . . . And this condition of the soul we call wisdom (Phaedo 79D, emphasis mine).

The true philosopher passes his life searching for wisdom and thus purifying his soul. Purification of the soul, Socrates teaches, "consists in separating the soul as much as possible from the body . . . and to have its dwelling, so far as it can, both now and in the future, alone by itself, freed from the shackles of the body" (Phaedo 67E, emphasis mine).

Since soul and body separate at death, Socrates calls his method "practicing death." True philosophers, he says, thus make dying their profession (Phaedo 67E). This is meant not in the sense of being absorbed with thoughts of the body's death, but rather practicing those techniques for separating the soul from the body while in life, thus gaining true wisdom.¹² When the purified soul finally leaves the body, it "goes away to a place that is, like itself, glorious, pure,

¹¹ Plato, Phaedo, trans. Hugh Tredennick, in Collected Dialogues, 66C. Future references will appear in the text.

¹² For this understanding of Plato's "practicing death" I am indebted to the work of Jonathan Shear. See especially his "Maharishi, Plato, and the TM-Sidhi Program on Innate Structures of Consciousness," Metaphilosophy, 12, (1981), 72-84.

and invisible--the true Hades or unseen world into the presence of the good and wise God" (Phaedo 80D, emphasis mine).

The purpose of human life, therefore, is to achieve wisdom, to pursue the "good", which Plato calls "the brightest region of being."¹³ Pure being, or the good, is "indeed the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light." It's the "authentic source of truth and reason" (Rep 7:517C). Thus purified by the good, one's immortal soul enjoys full vision of this region throughout time, after the death of the body.

In his three books on the philosophy of Plato and in his treatise On the God of Socrates, Apuleius describes Plato's accounts of the immortality of the soul, its tripartite nature, the necessity for becoming wise, practicing death, and so forth. He wonders how it is that all men desire to live most happily, and "should know that they cannot so live in any other way than by cultivating the mind, and yet leave the mind uncultivated" (Socrates, pp. 314-15). Even the wealthy man, he notes, "hungers and thirsts after true beatitude, i.e. after a genuine,¹⁴ prudent, and most fortunate life" (Socrates, p. 316). The true measure of a man, he argues, is not in his wealth, parentage, good fortune, or anything he might lose or can take no personal credit for having. Rather, we should ask about a man, "is he instructed, and

¹³ Plato, Republic, trans. Paul Shorey, in Collected Dialogues, 7:518C. Future references will appear in the text.

¹⁴ Taylor gives "genuine," yet notes that the original reads secundae vitae. He prefers, from the Roman edition, sincerae vitae. Secundae may be the correct word and "second" the correct translation since a spiritual rebirth is often called a second life, and initiates are called "twice-born."

very learned in excellent disciplines, and also wise, and skilled in the knowledge of good, as much as it is possible for man to be?" All this "my Socrates" possessed, he says, and thus, reader, "why therefore do not you apply yourself to the study of wisdom?" (Socrates, p. 317). In his second book of Plato's philosophy, which is devoted to his moral philosophy, Apuleius takes up the nature of the good, which he calls "transcendently good and primary" (Plato II, 343). This good, he says,

is true, and is that divine, most excellent, lovely, and desirable good, the beauty of which allures all rational souls, to the love of which they are instinctively impelled, nature herself being the leader of this impulse" (Plato II, p. 344).

It is clear that Apuleius' account of the good tallies well with Plato's.

Apuleius' uses of "practicing death," beauty, and love are also faithful to Plato's ideas. The whole summit of moral philosophy, Apuleius emphasizes, is "the knowledge of the methods by which it is possible to arrive at a blessed life" (Plato II, p. 343). Therefore the philosopher should practice death:

[He] should not be so attentive to any thing, as to the perpetual endeavour of separating his soul from its conjunction with the body; and on this account it is proper to think that philosophy is the desire of death, and the being accustomed to die (Plato II, pp. 363-64).

His emphasis in relating Plato's thought, is, again, not on physical death, but on philosophic death or purification, for the purpose of enjoying the "true Hades," the unseen world Plato describes. His emphasis is in developing the strength of the mind so it is "not inferior to the prevailing powers of the body" (Plato I, p. 342).

For the soul of the wise man, being liberated from its corporeal bonds, will [sic] return to the Gods; and according to the desert of a life passed with purity and sanctity, will through this procure for itself a condition similar to that of the Gods (Plato II, p. 363).

Apuleius' exposition of Plato's writings on the soul is brief, selective, and certainly no substitute for reading the dialogues themselves. Yet his works do show that Apuleius is closely reporting what he has read in Plato. He appears to be familiar with many, if not all, of the dialogues and doesn't appear to depart from them.¹⁵

Eros: Love of the Beautiful

The allegorical understanding of Eros begins in Greek literature with Hesiod's Theogony and reaches its most profound development in Diotima's exposition of the mysteries of love in Plato's Symposium. Hesiod relates that Eros was one of the first gods to emerge from the original Chaos, along with Tartaros and Gaia. He describes him as,

. . . Eros, who is love, handsomest among all
the immortals,
who breaks the limbs' strength,
who in all gods, in all human beings
overpowers the intelligence in the breast,
and all their shrewd planning.¹⁶

Eros was seen not just as human desire but as the prime productive force. Pherecydes (c. 550 BC) tells that when Zeus was about

¹⁵ Taylor notes one exception, where Apuleius says that the knowledge of God "sometimes shines forth with a most rapid coruscation, like a bright and clear light in the most profound darkness" (Socrates, p. 295). He says that this doesn't appear in Plato and may be Apuleius' own experience that he's relating. We'll return to this point in our discussion of the katabasis in Chapter IV.

¹⁶ Hesiod, Theogony, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1978), p. 130.

to manifest Creation he transformed himself into Eros in order to do so.¹⁷ He was first portrayed by artists as a handsome young athlete, then later as a boy, and finally as a fat child by the Alexandrians. The Romans called him Amor or Cupid and saw him as the mischievous son of Venus, plaguing all mankind and even the gods with his arrows. Apuleius is obviously following this latter tradition in part since he has Jupiter describe how Cupid has injured his name and fame with blots of fornication "transforming my serene majesty into snakes, flames, wild beasts, birds, and cattle" (p. 140).

All these various notions about Eros are expressed in the dialogues, chiefly in the Phaedrus and the Symposium. In these dialogues Socrates takes the myths of Eros to their most spiritual, symbolic, and allegorical level. He reports that his teacher Diotima described Eros as a daemon, that is, as one of the powerful spirits halfway between mortals and immortals:

They are the envoys and interpreters that ply between heaven and earth, flying upward with our worship and our prayers, and descending with the heavenly answers and commandments. . . . it is only through the mediation of the spirit world that man can have any intercourse with the gods (Symp 202E-203A).

According to Diotima, Eros is the son of Resource and Need. He's gallant, impetuous and energetic, she says, at once desirous and full of wisdom, and a life-long seeker after the truth, born to love the beautiful, since he was begotten on the same day as Aphrodite and became her follower and servant (Symp 203B-D). Philosophically

¹⁷ Michael Grant, Myths of the Greeks and Romans (New York: Mentor, 1962), p. 96.

speaking, Love is the love of wisdom, of beauty, and since the beautiful and the good are the same, Love is the love of the good or pure being (see esp. 201C, 204B, 204C, 206A). Since the good is immortal, Love is really a longing for immortality and happiness (205D, 207A). The longing for immortality manifests in us first as a desire for procreation. Diotima explains:

those whose procreancy is of the body . . . raise a family in the blessed hope that by doing so they will keep their memory green, 'through time and through eternity.' But those whose procreancy is of the spirit rather than the flesh . . . conceive and bear the things of the spirit. . . . [such as] Wisdom and all her sister virtues . . . (208E-209A).

She tells how the initiate into the mysteries of love passes by stages to the highest conception of the beautiful. The candidate must approach or be led toward love.

Starting from individual beauties, the quest for the universal beauty must find him ever mounting the heavenly ladder, stepping from rung to rung--that is, from one to two, and from two to every lovely body, from bodily beauty to the beauty of institutions, from institutions to learning, and from learning in general to the special lore that pertains to nothing but the beautiful itself--until at last he comes to know what beauty is (211C).

When he attains the final revelation, that is, when universal beauty "dawns upon his inward sight," then he finds it to be that which is neither words, nor fact, nor knowledge of something, "but subsisting of itself and by itself in an eternal oneness" (211B). In other words, it's identical with the good or pure being. Socrates then continues:

And if, my dear Socrates, Diotima went on, man's life was ever worth the living, it is when he has attained this vision of the very soul of beauty. And once you have seen it . . . you will care nothing for the beauties that used to take your breath away . . . (211D).

Socrates concludes, "if we are to make this gift our own, Love will help our mortal nature more than all the world" (212B). It's no wonder that the Phaedrus concludes with Socrates' prayer to Pan (i.e. to Nature) that he become "fair within" (279B).

Apuleius' understanding of what Plato meant by gods and daemons is expressed mainly in his God of Socrates. He says we can know the gods (i.e. Venus, Mars, Ceres, Diane etc.) through the intellect, "acutely surveying them with the eye of the mind" and also through the various benefits "which they impart to us in the affairs of life, in those things over which they severally preside" (p. 294).

He discusses the various species of daemons, including that to which Love (Amor) and Sleep (Somnus) belong. Love, he says, has the power of exciting to wakefulness, and Sleep of lulling to rest (p. 308). He describes the views expressed by Socrates that the best part of the soul is a species of daemon as well (p. 306). Actually, the role of intermediate beings mediating between the earthly and the heavenly was accepted by many religions in Apuleius' time, such as the Mithras cult, the Christian cult, etc.¹⁸

For Apuleius' understanding of Diotima's exposition on the mysteries of love we can return to those lines cited earlier on the good, and finally to his tale of Cupid and Psyche. The good, he wrote, is divine, excellent, lovely, and desirable, "the beauty of which allures all rational souls, to the love of which they are instinctively impelled, nature herself being the leader of this

¹⁸ James Tatum, Apuleius and The Golden Ass (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), p. 55.

impulse" (Plato II, p. 344, emphasis mine). By "rational" he of course means the highest part of the soul, as opposed to will and appetite. His equation of the good and the beautiful, and the movement toward his goal through love echo Plato's treatment of these themes.

It is ever Plato's way to cast his ideas and teachings into the form of myths or allegories. For example, in the Phaedrus he talks of the soul as having wings and losing them and growing new ones. In the same dialogue he creates imagery of reason as a charioteer driving two steeds (will and appetite) in order to discuss the soul's exposure to pure immortal being. He has Diotima explain Eros' birth from Resource and Need, and uses elaborate myths, such as the myth of Er at the end of the Republic, to explain his ideas on life after death.

Techniques of understanding or projecting myths allegorically or symbolically began long before Plato with attempts to understand the divine Homer's treatment of the gods.¹⁹ Apuleius is no stranger to these techniques. He says Homer praises Ulysses for his inner qualities by giving him "Wisdom as a companion, whom he poetically calls Minerva" (Socrates, p. 318). And from his master Plato he has also learned how to teach through the creation of myth. Before we consider "Cupid and Psyche" as a mythological expression of Apuleius' Neoplatonic theories of the soul's growth through love toward the good, we must consider the possibility that Apuleius did not create

¹⁹ See Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 117-21.

the "myth" of Psyche and Eros, but merely adapted or retold an earlier version of the tale.

Artistic Representations of Cupid and Psyche

Even though there is no literary evidence of a Cupid and Psyche myth in Greek or Latin literature before Apuleius, there are numerous artistic representations of Eros and Psyche on gems, wall paintings, scarabs, earrings, chests, terracottas, sarcophagi, etc. which occur all over the Mediterranean area and can be traced back to at least the fourth century B. C.²⁰ Representations of Psyche as a winged girl postdate the fourth century B. C. and seem to be derived from Plato's use of this image in the Phaedrus. Psyche and Eros embracing was also a common motif from the same period and no doubt "remained an enduring expression of the goal of henosis, the reunion of the divine within man with God."²¹

Figures of Eros and Cupid have been associated with a number of mysteries, both Greek and Egyptian, to illustrate the soul finding a new life after death, a blissful immortality. The pair appears, for example, with Dionysus and Ariadne, whose cult promised ecstatic communion of the soul with god both in daily life and in an eternal union after death. Also, both figures have been portrayed with pitchers or flasks of water. Water plays a sacred role in the cults of Isis and Osiris, in their funeral context; water revives the soul and ensures its immortality. Supposedly, this promise was enacted and

²⁰ For this discussion I am largely indebted to Carl C. Schlam, Cupid and Psyche: Apuleius and the Monuments (University Park, Pa.: American Philological Assn., 1976).

²¹ Schlam, p. 8.

celebrated in Isiac initiation rites. This is difficult to prove, however, because all the mysteries enjoined strict vows of secrecy which were miraculously well kept.

One scholar believes that the statuary illustrate an Iranian creation myth in which a goddess in the grip of a prince of darkness must descend into the underworld for the water of life and then win her way to heaven.²² His work has been called ingenious but not very convincing because the figures rarely appear before Plato and multiply enormously thereafter.²³

Eros and Psyche were also frequently used on funeral monuments to symbolize a belief in the soul's immortal life. They could show the soul entering a future life after leaving the body, the trials of the soul as it's purified by divine love, the pair embracing in eternal bliss, or the pair associated with other mythological figures whose stories suggest creation, rebirth, a second life, etc., such as Prometheus or Adonis.²⁴ In fact, the pair embracing became a stereotyped emblem of salvation, either as a decorative design or on a narrative tableau.

²² Richard Reitzenstein, Das Märchen von Amor und Psyche bei Apuleius (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1912), pp. 1-89; rpt. in Amor und Psyche, ed. Gerhard Binder and Reinhold Merkelbach (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), pp. 87-158.

²³ Pierre Grimal, Apulée Métamorphoses (IV, 28 - VI, 24). Le Conte d'Amour et Psyché (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1963), p. 10. Walsh observes that Apuleius would have little knowledge of Iranian sacred myth and would be much more likely to use popular Hellenistic myths (P. G. Walsh, The Roman Novel [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970], p. 195).

²⁴ Elizabeth H. Haight, Apuleius and His Influence (New York: Longmans Green, 1927), p. 168.

Eros and Psyche were also used on non-sepulchral monuments to show the joyousness of love. They were often connected with nuptial themes or associated with Aphrodite and Adonis, and were also used to illustrate the soul suffering the agonies of love. Representations of Eros pursuing or torturing Psyche are found from the Hellenistic period on. This theme doesn't occur in Apuleius' myth, but it was common in the Greek epigrams of the first and second centuries B.C. in Meleager, Crinagoras, and others.

A pattern emerges of an early spiritually profound treatment of the pair, no doubt deriving from Plato's dialogues, then a light hearted, more sensual treatment later in the Alexandrian period, followed by a renewed interest in the spiritual significance of the pair on Roman funeral art about the second century after Christ. Eros had also come to be used as a psychopompos both on pagan and Christian sarcophagi by this time. On the Christian monuments of the second century after Christ the mythological pair were once again used to illustrate the ideas of resurrection and eternal happiness. Their adoption "suggests how faint was the boundary line between Paganism at its decline and Christianity at its birth."²⁵ It also shows how universal the idea had become of divine love purifying the soul, severing it from the bonds of the flesh, and leading it to immortality.²⁶ As mentioned earlier this idea was common to Neoplatonism, the Mithras cult and to Christian thinking.

²⁵ Haight, p. 169.

²⁶ Schlam suggests that the scenes of Eros torturing Psyche may perhaps be regarded as a process of purification analogous to rites of initiation (pp. 18-19).

In summary, then, the artistic representations of Eros and Psyche illustrate the philosophic or spiritual meanings attached to the pair from Plato's time on, but none has been found which uniquely illustrates the events of Apuleius' story and could thus conclusively give evidence of a pre-existent narrative upon which Apuleius might have founded his tale. Representations of the pair are used to illustrate ideas, and virtually none of them "can be interpreted reliably as illustrating a narrative."²⁷

Since there is no trace of the story in either Greek or Latin literature prior to Apuleius, and since the monuments yield no conclusive evidence of a pre-existent myth, it seems logical to assume that either Apuleius or some other Neoplatonist immediately before him hit upon the brilliant idea of creating the "myth" of Cupid and Psyche. It is obviously superfluous to propose another literary figure of Apuleius' genius from whom he could have borrowed the myth. It seems much more likely that Apuleius himself, drawing upon Platonic philosophy, the traditions of the monuments, and popular folk tales, combined these elements to create, in Grimal's words, "une 'odysée' de l'âme humaine," an illustration of the Platonic ideal of Love leading the soul to immortality.²⁸

Folk-tale Sources for "Cupid and Psyche"

In the nineteenth century the tale of Cupid and Psyche was recognized to be essentially a folk tale. Walsh comments with the clarity of hindsight that "it is astonishing how clearly the bones of

²⁷ Schlam, p. 32.

²⁸ Grimal, p. 19.

the folk-story show through the literary and philosophizing covering."²⁹ The story is classified with folk tales where a good daughter weds a monster or supernatural creature, loves him, and then sees him transformed into a beautiful youth.³⁰ It also has an affinity to another class of tales where a young girl must perform a number of difficult tasks for a witch, usually with the help of the witch's son, whom she later marries.³¹

A great deal of interest has been generated over the origins of the tale. One school posits a Greek original, another an Egyptian, or North African source. Swahn notes that Apuleius' tale corresponds better with the Italian tradition than the Greek, and thus could hardly have sprung from a Greek source.³² Boberg posits its source to have been in countries near the Black Sea from whence it would have spread to North Africa and the Mediterranean countries.³³ Others argue for an Oriental or Indian source.³⁴ Swahn, whose study is the

²⁹ Walsh, p. 199.

³⁰ Ludwig Friedländer, Roman Life and Manners Under the Early Empire, trans. A. B. Gough from the 7th ed. (1913; rpt. New York: Barnes & Nobles, 1965), IV, 101.

³¹ Inger Boberg, "The Tale of Cupid and Psyche," Classica et Medievalia: Revue Danoise de Philologie et d'Histoire, 1 (1938), 196.

³² Swahn gives the school attributing the tale to a Greek source as Lesky, Huet, Klotz, Newell, Erbse, and Thompson. Dermengheim argues for a North African source (see Jan-Öjvind Swahn, The Tale of Cupid and Psyche [Lund: W. K. Gleerup, 1955] for a review of this question.

³³ Boberg, p. 213.

³⁴ Reitzenstein argues for an Iranian source (see above, n. 22). Friedländer believes it to be related to the Indian tales of Urvasi and Pururavas and of Tulisa and Badsnak Dau.

most recent and exhaustive, believes that an archetype for the tale never existed and that at best we can say that the story was probably of Indo-European origin or inheritance.

However, Andrew Lang comments that the tale closely resembles stories of North and Central America and Samoan and Maori märchen, and therefore it's unlikely that it originated in India and spread throughout the world. We must look for other explanations for its appearance in all these locations, such as universal custom. He notes that the elements of the tale "are almost all universally human, --in early conditions of society . . .," e.g., the looking taboo, helpful animals, visiting hell, dangerous tasks, jealousy of mother-in-law or sisters, the folly of curiosity, etc.³⁵ Hence it must have originated independently wherever curious nuptial taboos required explanation or sanction from a myth.³⁶ Whatever its origin, the tale and its various elements seem to appear in an almost infinite number of possibilities.

Twentieth-century folklorists now classify the tale as Aarne-Thompson 425.³⁷ Type Aa 425 is "The Search for the Lost Husband" under the general heading "Supernatural or Enchanted Husband (Wife) or Other Relatives." Type Aa 425 has 15 subtypes lettered A through O,

³⁵ Introd., The Most Pleasant and Delectable Tale of the Marriage of Cupid and Psyche, by Apuleius, trans. Wm. Adlington (London: David Nutt, 1887), p. lxxxv.

³⁶ Andrew Lang, Custom and Myth, 2nd. ed. rev. (1885; rpt. Yorkshire: EP Publishing, 1974), p. 85.

³⁷ The designation derives from Stith Thompson's revision of Aarne's English edition of 1928. Typenumber in Aarne is always called Aa followed by a number.

as well as some indeterminate variants. The Cupid and Psyche tale is clearly one variant of subtype A.³⁸

Subtype A is now thought to accord to the oldest sources and is apparently the only source to which all the other subtypes can be traced either directly or indirectly. Records of subtype A are found through almost the whole of Europe, Asia Minor, Persia and India (though it's almost unknown among the English, Germans, Island Celts and South and West Slavs). It has also been recorded outside the Indo-European area among the Hansa and in Indonesia. The oldest variant of this subtype is Apuleius' version.

Subtype A usually begins with a series of introductory motifs: How the husband got enchanted; How he takes the initiative in beginning a relationship with the girl; How the girl's parents affect the relationship, or how she does so. The supernatural husband usually appears as bear, dog, snake, boar, wolf or some other monster, or remains invisible. During the marriage the heroine sometimes bears children, usually three, which may be taken away. She may be given a sleeping-draught every night and know her husband only as a secret visitor.

Most commonly there is some restriction against either seeing the husband or telling anyone about him, a taboo which she violates either out of curiosity or due to some trick or accident. The husband is sometimes hurt or simply leaves or disappears. In some versions he changes into a bird and flies away but drops feathers as clues for her

³⁸ For the majority of the following discussion I am indebted to the very thorough folk-tale research of Swahn.

to find him. Sometimes the heroine is pregnant and is told she cannot give birth until she is reunited with her husband. Or she is told that when she does give birth it will break the spell on her husband. In both cases she is prevented from giving birth until she finds a means to trick her enemy.

The search is usually not emphasized in subtype A. The heroine wanders around and then finally arrives at the house of the witch who has cast the spell on her husband. There she is asked to perform a number of difficult or impossible tasks (often three), such as carrying water in a sieve, sorting seeds, or washing black wool white. She is usually assisted by her husband, although in a form she does not recognize, and she proves herself faithful to him. The witch then sends her on an errand to another witch (sometimes in Hell) to bring something back in a box (often bridal gear) for the wedding of her husband to the witch or her daughter, and/or to deliver a letter ordering her death. On this errand she must do or not do a number of critical things in order to arrive and return safely. The second witch offers her food, usually poisoned, which she has been warned not to eat. Often she tucks it in her bosom. When she tells the witch it's there, the witch assumes it has been eaten and is satisfied.

On the way home the heroine opens the box, which may contain musicians or dangerous animals. She must then attend the wedding of her husband and her rival and hold candles or torches which are intended to burn her. She manages to force the rival to hold the flames, thus destroying her and winning back her husband. Finally, the husband is released from his enchantment (sometimes by the heroine chopping off his head at his own request). The heroine's wicked

sisters are turned to stone and the witch or the heroine's rival are all destroyed, usually after the manner they had planned for the heroine. The heroine finally gives birth, and this sometimes is the act that releases the husband. The heroine and her husband are finally reunited, free from all obstacles to their happiness.

If we assume that Apuleius knew some variant of subtype A and was attracted to it because he saw in it the pattern adaptable to the Platonic ideas of Love and the soul, then we can hypothesize which motifs in "Cupid and Psyche" may have come directly from a folk tradition, which of them may have originated in a folk tradition but were transformed, and which may have been added in order to merge the folk tradition and the Neoplatonic themes into one tale.

It's possible that someone before Apuleius combined this folk tale with the Platonic allegory, but, as Walsh points out, "such evidence as exists tells against this view."³⁹ It's much more likely that Apuleius himself did the joining, and this will become more obvious when we demonstrate how he wedded the tale to the frame story of Lucius the ass.

In Table 1, which is far from exhaustive, elements of "Cupid and Psyche" which appear to be folk-themes appear in the left hand column. In the right hand column appear elements which Apuleius probably adapted from standard folk-tale motifs and transformed to suit his purposes. Even a cursory glance at the right column shows that Apuleius probably altered many folk-tale elements in order to bring the story into line with his Neoplatonic myth and added many literary

³⁹ Walsh, p. 197.

ornaments and classical allusions to increase the enjoyment of his sophisticated audience.

Helm observes that Apuleius may be drawing on numerous classical motifs, for example, loves between gods and mortals, quests for an absent beloved (e.g. Demeter and Persephone), Hera's pursuit of her pregnant rival Io, who wanders a great deal before attaining her apotheosis, and so forth.⁴⁰ Wright points out that, among other things, Apuleius' development of the lamp into a sentient and acting object plays on the motif of the lamp in the lovers' bedroom in Alexandrian love poetry, and his treatment of the river saving Psyche because of her relationship to Cupid is "a playful reference to the amatory troubles of literary river-gods".⁴¹ Friedländer believes some of the classical additions to be totally unnecessary, for example, the Pan episode.⁴² However, Pan's advice is a very necessary part of Apuleius' Neoplatonic allegory. Friedländer's rejection of any allegorical significance in the folk tale precludes his appreciation of Apuleius' many additions. We'll see that Nature's advice to strive for fulfillment through devotion to Love is at the core of the tale. It's a masterful addition for which Apuleius creates a parallel in the story of Lucius.

⁴⁰ Rudolf Helm, "Das 'Märchen' von Amor und Psyche," Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, 33 (1914), 170-209; rpt. in Binder and Merkelbach, pp. 175-234.

⁴¹ James G. Wright, "Folk-tale and Literary Technique in Cupid and Psyche," Classical Quarterly, 21 (1971), pp. 276, 277.

⁴² Friedländer, pp. 102-08.

TABLE 1
FOLK-TALE ELEMENTS IN "CUPID AND PSYCHE"

<u>Elements from Folk Tradition</u>	<u>Transformed Elements</u>
I. Introductory Motifs^a	
* Heroine is youngest and prettiest of three daughters.	* Heroine is named Psyche.
* Jealous or angry witch	* Witch named Venus.
* Witch's son or victim falls in love with heroine.	* Son named Cupid.
* Father gets in difficulty and has to give daughter to a supernatural being.	* Father consults oracle and has to marry daughter to "a raging serpent."
II. The Supernatural Husband	
* Husband usually appears as a bear, dog, snake, etc.	* Cupid is called a serpent by the oracle.
III. The Marriage	
* Husband is invisible, nightly visitor.	* Child will be named Joy.
* Heroine is pregnant and can't give birth until reunited with husband.	* Cupid warns Psyche four times.
* Three warnings	
* Jealous sisters seen three times.	
IV. The Breaking of the Taboo	
* Taboo against seeing husband	
* Taboo against asking or telling his name	
* Curiosity of heroine	

^a I am following Swahn's categories, titles, and numerals. Motifs are taken from his lists. Popular motifs, such as the jealous or cruel witch, are also included.

TABLE 1 cont'd
FOLK-TALE ELEMENTS IN "CUPID AND PSYCHE"

Elements from Folk Tradition

Transformed Elements

VI The Reunion cont'd

- * Heroine is assisted in tasks by her disguised husband who tests her fidelity.
- * Heroine is sent on an errand to another witch who is the sister of the first witch.
- * Heroine must bring back a box which she must not open.
- * Heroine is warned what she must or must not do in order to return safely.
- * Heroine must not eat poisoned food and must deceive witch into thinking she has done so.
- * Heroine breaks taboo and opens the box.

- * Psyche is aided by ants, a reed, and Jupiter's eagle, who all revere Cupid. Venus blames Cupid for helping her.
- * Venus sends Psyche to Proserpine, Queen of the underworld.
- * Box contains beauty.

- * Psyche must refuse Proserpine's hospitality and eat simply while sitting on the floor.

VII. Final Motifs

- * Enchanted husband is finally released.
- * Witch or rival is destroyed.
- * Heroine gives birth and the spell is broken.

- * Cupid is finally healed of his wound and rescues Psyche.
- * Sisters are destroyed and Venus is mollified by Jupiter.
- * After Psyche is reunited with Cupid and married, she gives birth to Joy.

In the case of other folk-tale elements, Apuleius probably had to suppress rather than add material. In most folk-tale versions, for example, the heroine's father gets himself into some sort of difficulty with the enchanted husband and is forced to give his daughter away. This episode would be at variance with the Platonic requirements since there is no real role for the "father" of the soul to play. Similarly, the injunctions or restrictions on giving birth are unnecessary to Apuleius' purpose. The birth of Voluptas, clearly an allegorical name, would naturally follow the blissful reunion of the soul with divine love.

Most folk tales of this subtype usually conclude with a harsh revenge on the heroine's enemies. This event would no doubt jar the cosmic harmony appropriate to the soul's newly won divine stature. Consequently, Apuleius does away with the sisters early in the tale and has Jupiter promise to soothe and appease Venus, thus converting her from the cruel mother-in-law to the celestial mother-goddess who graces the marriage of the immortal Soul and her divine Love.

Not all of Apuleius' transformations appear to be effected quite as smoothly as those mentioned above. When he designates the husband of the folk-tale as Cupid, Apuleius finds himself caught between the cosmic Eros, the procreative force in Plato's Symposium, and the mischievous Cupid familiar to Alexandrian readers. Indeed Jupiter's delight that Cupid will finally settle down and quit shooting him with arrows and sending him in pursuit of some female animal is quite in the style of Lucian's satires.

Wlosok points out that in Hellenistic poetry the name Cupid (as opposed to Amor) usually meant the god of love as a real being, an

actual religious power. Cupid was worshipped in Rome along with Venus in the same temple, for example, the one outside the Colline Gate.⁴³ Perhaps Apuleius selected the name Cupid in order to lend a contemporary religious reality to the abstract notion of Eros and the anonymous husband of the folk-tale tradition.

Clearly, Apuleius began with a folk tale and proceeded to develop it into a narrative with mythic power. When we examine what Apuleius added to the tale in order to develop it as a Neoplatonic myth and to link it to the story of Lucius (see below, Chapter IV, Table 3) it will become more obvious that the finished version is a profound product of his genius and not, as some would have it, a "mere fairy-tale, tricked out with all the airs and graces of Apuleian style."⁴⁴

"Cupid and Psyche" as Neoplatonic Myth

If we look at the broad outlines of the tale of Cupid and Psyche we can see how well it expresses Plato's ideas on love and the soul, as Apuleius understands them. From the Middle Ages to modern times scholars have suggested that "Cupid and Psyche" could be read as a Platonic or Neoplatonic allegory although most have done little more than indicate its parallels to the Phaedrus, or deal with the names of the characters.⁴⁵ A close analysis using the Platonic interpretation

⁴³ Antonie Wlosok, "Amor and Cupid," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, 79 (1975), 177.

⁴⁴ Louis C. Pursar, ed. The Story of Cupid and Psyche as related by Apuleius (London: George Bell & Sons, 1910), p. xlv.

⁴⁵ See Walsh's sketch on p. 200 of his book; Grimal's intro, p. 13; or Ward Hooker, "Apuleius's 'Cupid and Psyche' as a Platonic myth," Bucknell Review, V (1958), 24-38, which focuses on the Platonic myth,"

(Footnote continued)

developed earlier, however, reveals that Apuleius carefully recast the folk-tale material to add a new and profound level of meaning to the story.

After the opening fairy-tale motifs, we find that Soul falls from her royal estate into the garden of ignorance.⁴⁶ At first she knows only the sensual aspects of Love and the procreancy of the body. With the lamp, the light of knowledge, she catches a glimpse of Love "himself, a beautiful god beautifully lying on the couch" (p. 121, emphasis mine). As Diotima explains, beauty gives rise to love.⁴⁷ Soul loses self-control, pales, trembles, and yet is filled with joy. She stands "spellbound with insatiable delight and worship, impelled by wonder" (p. 122). She is in the extremity of agonized joy.

In the Phaedrus Socrates describes how when the soul of one who is fresh from the mystery (that is, the vision of the good)

beholds a godlike face or bodily form that truly expresses beauty, first there comes upon him a shuddering and a measure of that awe which the vision inspired, and then reverence as at the sight of a god. . . . Next, with the passing of the shudder, a strange sweating and fever seizes him . . . (251A-B).

The parched soul of the lover is nourished by this love and begins to

45(continued)
 characterization of Cupid and Psyche and does little more than indicate how the plot might also explicate Apuleius' philosophy. Future references to Hooker's study will appear in the text.

46 See Hooker, p. 31. He believes that her ignorance lies in her misinterpretation of the significance of her beauty which will eventually lead her to Cupid and to immortality.

47 See Hooker, p. 35, for a full discussion of love's birth in beauty.

expand (resprout its wings), which is experienced as a "ferment and painful irritation," between "joy and anguish" (251C-D).

Soul's glimpse of Beauty doesn't last. Hooker interprets Cupid's departure (and his invisibility) as indications that he represents the highest principles of love, which Psyche can only enjoy when she has purified herself (p. 29). When he disappears she "practices death" by flinging herself into a river. The river deposits her near Pan, the Nature god, who advises her to devotedly continue her search. We recall those words of Apuleius that the soul is instinctively impelled toward the good through love, "nature herself being the leader of this impulse (Plato II, p. 344, emphasis mine). Pan's words and his description of himself suggest Apuleius' beloved Socrates:

"I am a country-fellow, a shepherd, but my mind is stored with much odd knowledge as a result of long experience. If I may hazard a guess (which among wise men goes by the title of a divination) I judge by these halting and stumbling steps, and by the extreme paleness of your face, and by the incessant sighs you heave, and by the sad look in your eyes, that you are madly in love" (p. 123).

Socrates describes the soul in love as caught between joy and anguish:

She is distraught at being in such strange case [sic], perplexed and frenzied; with madness upon her she can neither sleep by night nor keep still by day, but runs hither and thither, yearning for him in whom beauty dwells (Phaedrus 251D-E).

After wandering about for some time Soul surrenders to the parent of her beloved in the hope of finding him at her house. Venus had introduced herself earlier in the tale as "the primal Mother of all living," the "elemental Source of energy" (p. 106). That, of course, is where true Beauty, Love himself, will be found. Venus treats Soul as a slave, which recalls Socrates' words about the soul surrendering to

the force of her love: "All the rules of conduct, all the graces of life, of which aforetime she was proud, she now disdains, welcoming a slave's estate . . ." (Phaedrus 252A). Before Soul can achieve her goal, she must undergo purification. Her culminating trial, a journey to the underworld (in search of a box of beauty) is an Orphic initiation for Soul.

Again and again in the dialogues Socrates praises the Mysteries and urges his friends to be initiated. In the Meno Socrates urges Meno to stay in town and be initiated so that he'll understand the true nature of forms or shapes (76C). He must have felt that some initiation experiences led to wisdom or purification. In fact, in the Phaedo Socrates explains that "wisdom itself is a sort of purification" (69C). Socrates calls the place of pure being, of "the presence of the good and wise god" the "true Hades or unseen world" (Phaedo 80D). He suggests an allegorical meaning to the doctrines of those people who direct religious initiations. Perhaps when they say that "he who enters the next world uninitiated and unenlightened shall lie in the mire" and that he "who arrives there purified and enlightened shall dwell among the gods," the real meaning is that those who have purified their minds through wisdom shall enjoy that divine state in the true Hades (Phaedo 69C). In directing Soul to Hades, Apuleius is thus indicating the path to wisdom, to the "true Hades." Also, parallel to Psyche's trip to Hades is Lucius' vision of Isis and subsequent initiation into her mysteries, so it is clear that the journey to the underworld can be read as a Neoplatonic symbol for practicing death, or turning within the self to achieve wisdom. We'll

take this up later in some detail, along with the episode's relationship to other katabases.

Now, when Soul successfully returns from Hades, she opens the box of beauty destined for Venus and is overcome by a deep Stygian sleep. Wright thinks that Apuleius is joking when he treats Venus as a Roman matron who uses pots of beauty lotions and needs a refill since her tribulations with her wayward son have depleted her supply.⁴⁸ Apuleius has no doubt structured these comic touches into the scene, but beauty has quite another significance to a Neoplatonist, as we've seen, and allows us to interpret the katabasis as Soul's final practice of death to attain true beauty. Love then comes to Soul, revives her and sends her to Venus. "Love," Socrates says, "will help our mortal nature more than all the world" (Symp 212B). Soul is then brought up to Heaven where she is made immortal in the company of the gods.

In the Symposium Socrates concludes his account of Diotima's teachings with her statement that when the philosopher rises through the mysteries of love and develops wisdom and its accompanying virtues then "he shall be called the friend of god, and if ever it is given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him" (Symp 212A). For Plato, wisdom, the true Hades, is at once the path to and the condition of immortality.

Apuleius, too, emphasizes purification and development of virtue. In his second treatise on Plato he writes that Plato says that to become completely wise one must be "purified and defecated by the

⁴⁸ Wright, p. 284.

pleasures of the mind, deriving from the parts of prudence, temperance, and endurance." He that follows this path "will suddenly become perfect, i.e. will suddenly arrive at the extreme parts of the past and future time, and become, after a certain manner, eternal" (Plato II, p. 361). The Neoplatonic message of the tale, then, is clearly that the soul, in love with beauty (or the good), and guided by nature, regains its immortal and blissful stature through the philosophical practice of death, a descent into the true Hades of the self. Hooker, too, perceives that Psyche grows in strength and wisdom and achieves a "state of enlightenment worthy of the reward of immortality" (p. 34).

Other scholars have attempted to analyze the tale as an allegory for various philosophical schemes. For example, Reinhold Merkelbach sees Psyche's search as a sequence of episodes reminiscent of the sacred legend of Isis and Osiris, including initiation in the Isiac mysteries.⁴⁹ Even though others see Merkelbach's work as an "ingenious but misguided interpretation" which "strains all credibility",⁵⁰ there may, in fact, be some truth to his general approach. Apuleius may have consciously alluded to Isiac history and ritual to enrich the tale and farther unify the novel. The important point is that even according to Merkelbach's scheme, the katabasis functions as an initiation, a subjective experience of the divine realities. Similarly, others have analyzed Psyche's labors as a

⁴⁹ See his "Eros und Psyche," Philologus, 102 (1958), 103-16; rpt. in Binder and Merkelbach, pp. 392-407.

⁵⁰ Walsh, p. 221.

process of initiation analogous to Dionysian mysteries as revealed in the Villa of the Mysteries.⁵¹ Again, the connection between the katabasis and Orphic initiation rites has been made.

Some of the variation in interpretation results from the universal nature of the symbolism. Some may be due to the various details of the folk tale. Apuleius might have left untouched or even embellished details for dramatic or artistic interest without intending them to be subject to close allegorical scrutiny. The play between narrative and allegory is always a shifting movement between imagination and intellect, satisfying only when it manages to engage both heart and mind. So the tale slides back and forth between the bride's anxious search for her husband and the Soul's persistent striving for immortality. The tale brings both aspects to fulfillment, satisfying both the philosophic mind and the personal emotions of the readers. Yes, it all ends as it should, as it will, if I continue on my search for wisdom--happily ever after.

The last major source or influence on the formation of the tale of Cupid and Psyche that should be considered is the tradition of the Greek love-romance, the classical genre with the classical happy ending.

The Greek Love-romance

By all evidence the Greek love-romance seems to have been a very popular form of prose fiction in Apuleius' time. A number of these romances have survived and they appear to be only a small portion of

⁵¹ See H. Jeanmaire, "Le conte d'Amour et de Psyché," Bulletin de l'Institut Français de Sociologie, I (1930-31), 29-48.

the output of this genre. At least two extant romances predate Apuleius' novel, the fragmentary Ninus Romance from the first century B.C. and Chariton's Chaereas and Callirhoe which was probably written before 150 A.D. These two are typical of this very stylized genre as we know it from later works.

Different romances emphasize different aspects, such as the pastoral (Longus' Daphnis and Chloe) or adventure (e.g. Xenophanes Habrocomes and Anthia), but they generally speak of the joys and agonies of love. The hero and heroine are always extraordinarily beautiful and pure. They are the playthings of Eros and Aphrodite and soon fall madly in love, suffering the conventional sighs, faintings, sleeplessness, burning, loss of appetite, etc. described by Plato. Cruel fortune soon separates the pair, subjects them to numerous assaults on their lives, chastity, and fidelity, and sends them from land to land on a course of bizarre adventures (e.g. kidnappings, premature burials, shipwreck, capture by pirates, etc.). In the end, under the auspices of some presiding benevolent deity the faithful and chaste lovers are reunited. The romance typically ends with a great festival or wedding celebrating their blissful reunion.

What is fascinating about these love-romances is their treatment of the soul as an entity separate from the body. As Haight so acutely observes, "On this foundation in the love-romances rests the inner structural arch of spatial separation and spiritual fidelity."⁵² The lovers, although separated for long periods and by vast distances,

⁵² Elizabeth H. Haight, "A Comparison of the Greek Romances and Apuleius' Metamorphoses," in Essays on the Greek Romances (New York: Longmans Green, 1943), p. 197.

remain loving and faithful each to the other, even when they believe their loved one to be dead or have lost all hope of a reunion in life. It is noteworthy, however, that they do not dream of or speak about any sort of reunion after death; it is their physical union in this life that motivates them, even to the extreme of wanting to be near the (supposedly) dead body of the beloved.

Apuleius employs a number of the Greek love-romance conventions in his tale. His formulaic fairy tale opening "In a certain city there lived a king and queen" was also used in the love-romance. He begins with an emphasis on Psyche's beauty which, Walsh observes, closely echoes the phraseology of Chariton: "In both, the fame of the heroine's radiant presence caused men to flock to her from far and near, and they show obeisance as if she were Venus herself."⁵³ Not only the beginning of the tale, but the oracle, the use of the pastoral scenes and deities, descriptions of the torments of love, and the proving of the heroine through arduous tasks all reflect Greek love-romance conventions. The celestial wedding banquet at the end of the tale also reminds us of the conventional happy ending celebration of the love-romance.

However, it is Psyche alone who wanders and searches and suffers, a situation appropriate to the trials of the soul, but not the heroine of the love-romance. Also Psyche is never kidnapped, shipwrecked, threatened with loss of chastity, or has any interaction with the rapacious human world that usually provides the milieu for the typical love-romance. Even Longus' pastoral idyll is invaded by war, pirates,

⁵³ Walsh, p. 200.

a lascivious cowherd, and so forth. Psyche moves within a clearly mythological setting, purposefully divorced from real time, space, or activity. She meets talking reeds, helpful eagles, wise towers and never a human figure, except of course, for her own sisters.

What Apuleius might have added from a genre he knew well, and purposefully did not add, is, to my mind, a powerful argument in favor of his allegorical intention in forming the tale. The soul's search for wisdom and immortality would be a symbolic narrative very much at odds with the sensually and materially oriented love-romance. We would expect to find then, in "Cupid and Psyche," only those echoes and allusions which would delight his literate readers, but not call up the adventures and erotic preoccupations of the love-romance. These latter would be more appropriate to the story of Lucius, and, in fact, Lucius' trials can be seen as a satire of this genre, much as is Voltaire's Candide.

* * * * *

It appears, then, that a large share of the credit for the beautiful and enduring tale of Cupid and Psyche goes to Apuleius. He has worked not merely the "conversion of a simple folk-tale into a mannered literary story" but has created a profound allegory of the soul's salvation through devotion and initiation.⁵⁴ As Grimal observes "c'est bien que ce conte n'est pas, ne saurait être seulement une 'histoire plaisante,' un joli 'conte de fées,' il faut que

⁵⁴ The quotation is from Walsh, p. 55.

l'auteur ait voulu exprimer, sous le voile du myth, quelque verité spirituelle."⁵⁵

The tale of Cupid and Psyche has had a very full life in literature and art as a self-sufficient work. It has been illustrated, retold, set to music, and imitated, without reference to its place in the tale of Lucius. It is to this latter narrative that we now must turn. It's only in the context of Lucius' search and spiritual salvation that the tale of Psyche and its central event, the descent into the underworld, can be most fully understood and appreciated.

⁵⁵ Grimal, p. 14.

Chapter III

The Golden Ass: Unity in Diversity

The delicate mythological romance of Cupid and Psyche occurs within a realistic novel that is often violent, bestial, and gross. Like the myth, the frame novel also contains wonders, but wonders very unlike those of "Cupid and Psyche." Instead of helpful ants, talking reeds, and kindly towers, we find blood-curdling tales of sorcery, witchcraft, and bestial transformation. It's no wonder that commentators and critics have often isolated the Psyche tale and dissociated it from its frame story. This is unfortunate because the Golden Ass and "Cupid and Psyche" interact to the enrichment of both parts. In fact, as we will see, Apuleius modified both source stories in order to bring the two into close juxtaposition and correlation. Before we take up the question of how Apuleius adapted his sources (which include a folk tale of a young man's metamorphosis into an ass and numerous Milesian tales) into a long, complex, and apparently very loosely unified novel, let us begin with a brief summary of the Golden Ass.

Summary of the Novel

The novel opens with its Corinthian hero Lucius recounting his journey to Hypata, a center of witchcraft. Lucius professes himself to be "thirsty for every sip of novelty." He says, "I want to know everything in the world . . . or at least a good part of it" (p.33).

He listens eagerly to a fellow traveller's tale about witchcraft and magic which he believes to be true. In the town he finds lodging with a miserly old friend of his family.

Book II opens with Lucius fruitlessly searching for signs of witches and witchcraft throughout the town. He is recognized by his mother's foster sister and taken to her house. In her courtyard he sees a sculpture of Actaeon being transformed into a stag while he peeks at Diana bathing. He ignores this warning against sacrilegious curiosity and when he hears that his host's wife is a famous witch, he hurries home to seduce her maid Fotis and find out her secrets. Entranced by Fotis' beauty and by her passionate response to his advances he forgets his original purpose. Later he attends a lavish banquet at his "aunt's" where he hears a guest relate a gruesome tale of witchcraft. On his way home he does drunken battle with three enchanted wineskins. The next day he's arrested, tried for murder, and when the "corpses" are shown, finds himself the butt of the town's festival of laughter. Humiliated and confused he returns to his room and that night Fotis reveals how the wineskins were enchanted as a result of her mistress' spell.

Suddenly Lucius' curiosity reawakens and he presses Fotis to let him in on her mistress' secrets. Soon he is allowed to watch the sorceress transform herself into a bird.¹ Dumbfounded and excited Lucius begs Fotis to allow him to duplicate the act. She reluctantly

¹ "Bird" is often translated as "owl," but, in fact, it is not Athena's bird, the noctua, but rather the bubo, which, according to L. A. MacKay, is "an ill-omened fowl, always connected with the dieties of the underworld," and in no way related to Athena ("The Sin of the Golden Ass," Arion, 4 [1965], 476-77).

provides him with magic ointment, but of the wrong sort, and Lucius soon finds himself transformed into an ass. Fotis promises to provide him with the antidote (roses) the following morning and leads him off to the stable, but during the night robbers break into the house and drive Lucius away laden with stolen goods. He sees some roses on the road, but prudently refrains from eating them in the robbers' presence, and so ends book III.

Book IV finds Lucius increasingly miserable in the robbers' company. He breaks away to raid a garden and when he sees some roses by a river runs over to them. They prove to be a poisonous species of rose-laurels but, feeling depressed and suicidal, Lucius resolves to eat them anyway. Before he can do so, he's attacked by the gardener, beaten, and chased back to the robbers. They all journey to the robbers' cave where Lucius overhears the robbers' tales of the deaths of three of their comrades and also the tale of Cupid and Psyche, which their old servant woman tells to a girl kidnapped by the robbers and being held for ransom.

The tale continues through all of Book V and part of Book VI. Following the tale, Lucius' miserable life with the robbers continues. He and the girl attempt an escape but are recaptured and threatened with a horrible revenge. In Book VII Lucius learns that he is being blamed for the robbery in Hypata and he complains bitterly of cruel Fortune. A new recruit arrives, tells the robbers a fabulous tale, and secretly drugs their wine. He proves to be the fiancé of the stolen girl, whom he leads home on Lucius' back. The townsfolk then destroy the robbers' band and Lucius is sent to donkey heaven (a pasture full of mares) by the grateful couple. The paradise sours,

however, when Lucius is forced to pull a millstone and is kicked by jealous stallions. In addition, he is mistreated by a vicious boy and threatened with castration.

Book VIII opens with the tale of the young couple's tragic deaths. Fearing changes in the estate the slaves flee, taking Lucius along. Their journey is full of unfortunate events and on the way Lucius hears the Tale of the Bailiff, a brief but horrible tale of adultery, jealousy, suicide, and murder. He is then sold to a perverted priest who uses him to carry a statue of his goddess as he and his cohorts ply their trade through the villages. They beat Lucius severely when he purposely brays to attract attention to their perversions. At one stop Lucius is nearly killed by a cook to replace a stolen haunch of venison.

As Book IX opens, Lucius escapes being butchered by playing at being mad. Soon he hears the Tale of the Wife's Tub, another tale of adultery. The priests journey onward, bilking villagers, until they're finally arrested for theft. Lucius is then sold to a baker who uses him to pull a millstone. He overhears the baker's lewd wife and her bawd tell a tale of adultery, the Tale of the Jealous Husband. The baker returns home, relates the Tale of the Fuller's Wife (how her adultery leads to her lover's death), and learns of his own wife's adultery when Lucius purposely exposes her lover in his hiding place. The irate wife arranges to have the baker killed and Lucius passes to a poor market gardener. While sharing the gardener's wretched existence, he hears the Tale of the Oppressive Landlord (a tale of greed, violence, murder and suicide), and then witnesses yet another suicide. When the gardener gets into difficulty trying to prevent a soldier

from taking his donkey, Lucius inadvertantly gives away his hiding place and his owner is arrested.

The soldier becomes Lucius' master temporarily, and Lucius hears the Tale of the Wicked Stepmother, another horrible story of lust and attempted murder. The rest of Book X finds Lucius' fortunes changed for the better. He's sold to a chef and a baker and grows fat on pilfered gourmet treats. When his theft is discovered, the brothers' master delights in Lucius' imitation of human behavior and enjoyment of human diet. He buys him, has him "trained" to sit at the table, call for more wine, etc., takes him to Corinth, and makes a nice profit exhibiting him. Lucius' repertoire grows to include relations with a lady. When his master, whose profession is producing public shows, learns of Lucius' new talent he arranges to have him displayed with a female convict. The woman's gory tale of jealousy, violent murder, greed, and poisonings is given. Lucius watches the first part of the show, a mime of the Judgement of Paris, and then, fearful of contact with such a polluted person as the convict and of the wild beasts scheduled to devour her, escapes to the nearby port of Cenchreae and falls asleep on the beach.

Book XI opens with Lucius' purification in the sea and prayer for help to the moon, Queen of the Heavens. He sleeps and has a vision of the goddess Isis rising from the waters. She announces her identity, her sphere of authority, her range of powers, and then promises her help. In the procession in her honor the following morning Lucius shall find a priest holding roses and expecting him. Once he regains his human form he is to become an initiate in the Isiac mysteries. If he serves the goddess diligently, he can expect a very long and happy

life and a blissful eternity in the Elysian Fields. Lucius awakens full of hope and joy, witnesses the impressive ceremonies and finds his deliverer. The priest provides the precious roses, welcomes the reborn Lucius to the favors of Isis, open-eyed Fortune, and rebukes him for his sensuality and profitless curiosity.

Lucius continues to enjoy visions of the goddess, takes initiation, and travels to Rome where he becomes a successful lawyer. There he is initiated twice more, earning the favors of Osiris himself, and joyfully leading a life both as a devotee of Isis and Osiris and as a man of the world.

The Ass: Symbol of Bestiality

When we look for the sources of Apuleius' ass story we are on far better ground than we were in our search for an original of the Cupid and Psyche tale. Another simpler version of the ass tale exists. It is called Loukios or the Ass and is often attributed to Lucian (A.D. 120 - c. 190). Controversy exists on whether or not Lucian is the author of this Ass, whether a Greek original served as the source of both the Ass and the Golden Ass of Apuleius, or whether the Ass alone served as the model for Apuleius' work.² Whatever the case, we do have a literary version of the ass story to compare with Apuleius'.

The briefly told and consistently ironic adventures of a young man named Loukios of Patrae open with his arrival in Hypata and interest in witchcraft. He meets an old friend of his mother who tells him

² Most scholars attribute the original to Lucius of Patrae and believe that both Lucian and Apuleius based their versions on this Greek source, of which nothing survives. Others think that Lucius of Patrae is the hero and not the author of the original.

that his host's wife is a witch. He eagerly seduces her maid to learn her mistress' secrets. The maid allows him to peer through a keyhole at the witch transforming herself into a bird. When he tries the same procedure he turns into an ass. Before he can be restored to his human form through eating roses he falls into the hands of a robber band. He is beaten repeatedly (for robbing a garden, not walking fast enough, etc.) and finally arrives at the robbers' headquarters. He's forced to go on raids, tries to escape with a girl the robbers have captured, and is repeatedly beaten and threatened with death. Troops arrive and run the robbers off to the magistrate and Loukios is set free by the grateful girl to pasture with mares.

Instead of finding an easy life, however, Loukios is forced to pull a millstone, is kicked by stallions, tortured by a vicious boy, and threatened with castration. When the girl and her husband are killed by a tidal wave, all her slaves flee. They reach Macedonia after three days and sell Loukios to some eunuch priests to carry their idol. When his braying reveals their perversions to the villagers, Loukios is beaten. Later he is nearly butchered to replace a stolen haunch of wild ass. He feigns madness and escapes with the priests. When they are arrested for the theft of a golden cup, he is sold to a baker. After a few months of pulling the baker's millstone Loukios is reduced to skin and bones. He is sold to a poor gardener who tries to keep him from being carried off by a soldier. When the gardener is arrested (due to Loukios' curiosity, which reveals their hiding place), he is sold to a chef.

Loukios steals the delicacies prepared by the chef and his brother and soon grows fat. Their master is delighted with a beast who eats

human food and buys him from the brothers. He has Loukios "trained" to perform tricks and exhibits him to the public. A wealthy lady takes a fancy to Loukios and bribes his trainer to leave them alone together. When Loukios' master discovers this, he features him in a public show with a female convict. Before the spectacle goes very far Loukios spies some roses, gobbles them up and regains his human form before the astonished spectators. The crowd cries "witchcraft" but the governor knows Loukios' family and takes him home. His brother arrives with clothes and money, but before they sail, Loukios goes to visit his "Pasiphae". She is uninterested in his human dimensions and tosses him out. He sails for Patrae and upon arriving gives thanks to the gods for bringing him home safe.

The summary shows that the tale of the Ass is a short humorous story without any inserted tales, either of magic, adultery, or love. Most characters are unnamed and undeveloped, and the story concludes with only a superficial reference to the gods. It is mildly erotic, full of comic invention, and may have originated from a folk tale about a lustful man who got turned into an ass. Scobie speculates that the natural habitats of the donkey (the Middle East and North Africa) must have possessed "a rich comic repertoire about the ass" that Apuleius or the author of the Loukios tale or its original could have drawn from.³

³ Alexander Scobie, Apuleius Metamorphoses (Asinus Aureas): A Commentary (Meisenheim am Glan, Germany: Verlag Anton Hain, 1975), I, 28. See also his "The Structure of Apuleius' Metamorphoses," in Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass, ed. B. L. Hijmans, Jr. and R. Th. Van der Paardt (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1978), p. 44.

The ass was widely portrayed in the literature and art of the Graeco-Roman world as a lascivious creature and was sacrificed to Priapus, a Phrygian god of fertility who was portrayed with enormous genitals and was widely worshipped in Asia Minor.⁴ The ass was proverbially ridiculed in folk tales and sayings for its lust, curiosity, and disgusting habits.⁵ When discussing transmigration Socrates relates that "those who have cultivated gluttony or selfishness or drunkenness, instead of taking pains to avoid them, are likely to assume to form of donkeys and other perverse animals."⁶

The short prose tale popular in North Africa in Apuleius' day was characteristically brief, diverse, included mythological tales, historical anecdotes, philosophical apologues, and autobiography. The tales were often strung together, and dealt in wonders, astonishing reversals, recognitions, and surprises.⁷ The Ass seems to be following this tradition, and may, in fact, have originally been such an Egyptian tale. (Lucian, if he really is the author of the Ass, was born in Syria and spent the last years of his life in Egypt.)

Byzantine lexographer Photios classified the Ass as a romance of wonders, one species of the Egyptian short story we've been discussing.⁸ At least one modern critic agrees. Scobie believes that

⁴ Scobie, Apuleius, p. 31.

⁵ James Tatum, Apuleius and The Golden Ass (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), p. 47.

⁶ Plato, Phaedo, trans. Hugh Tredennick, in The Collected Dialogues of Plato, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), 81E.

⁷ Arthur R. Heiserman, The Novel before the Novel (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 152.

Apuleius' version follows the generic pattern of the wonder-romance, for which he lists the following conventions: autobiographical method, citing of authoritative texts, locating the narratives in a familiar space and time, citing the author's own name and birthplace, witnesses supporting the author's statements, sceptics becoming convinced, and realistic detail.⁹

Apuleius' novel no doubt owes something to the Egyptian short story, the wonder-romance, folklore, the Aesopic fable, and possibly the popular mime.¹⁰ Apuleius may even have drawn from the love-romance, which he satirizes even while he's employing its conventions (dreams, epiphanies, religious festivals, dea ex machina, etc.).¹¹ Like the hero of the love-romance, Lucius goes from master to master, is threatened with death and mutilation, and survives intact, thanks to the benevolence of the goddess Isis. But he hardly remains chaste or faithful and never again sees Fotis, who anyway is hardly a suitable heroine for a love-romance.¹²

⁸ Alexander Scobie, More Essays on the Ancient Romance and its Heritage (Meisenheim am Glan, Germany: Verlag Anton Hain, 1973), p. 67.

⁹ Alexander Scobie, Aspects of the Ancient Romance and its Heritage (Meisenheim am Glan, Germany: Verlag Anton Hain, 1969), pp. 42-43.

¹⁰ H. J. Mason observes that mimes have been known to include a man speaking in the form of an ass and other related episodes ("Fabula Graecanica: Apuleius and his Greek Sources," in Hijmans and Van der Paardt, pp. 10-11).

¹¹ Elizabeth H. Haight, "A Comparison of the Greek Romance and Apuleius' Metamorphoses," Essays on the Greek Romances (New York: Longmans Green, 1943), p. 196.

¹² Haight calls attempts to compare the whole Golden Ass with the typical pattern of the Greek love-romance (with Fotis as its heroine) (Footnote continued)

Apuleius has done much more than merely adapting Lucian's wonder-romance, however, as will be seen from a comparison of his work and the Ass. He has combined and enriched his numerous sources to create an unforgettable and artful narrative.

The Search for Knowledge: From Curiosity to Celestial Perception

A detailed comparison of the two works yields some interesting differences. For example, Apuleius' hero is a seeker after knowledge, not just magic. His Lucius is more involved with Fotis than his prototype is with Palaestra.¹³ In addition, Fotis is much more charming and sympathetic and really seems to care for Lucius. Perry observes that characters are portrayed in a more lifelike manner in Apuleius' novel and that the tone is "much more serious, more moral, and more sympathetic with the thoughts and emotions of the actors, however superstitious or credulous these may be, than in the Greek original."¹⁴

Also, as several critics have pointed out, Apuleius takes great care to win the reader's sympathy for Lucius, to gradually lead him into the atmosphere of magic, and to win his belief in what Lucius has to say.¹⁵ Lucius' moral indignation and horror at the criminal

¹²(continued)
absurd ("Comparison," p. 193).

¹³ Palaestra, in fact, is a name often given to whores, and the bearer of it does little to attract the reader's sympathy or interest. See Scobie, Aspects, p. 62.

¹⁴ Ben E. Perry, The Ancient Romances (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967), p. 250.

¹⁵ See Scobie, Aspects, pp. 67-71; More Essays, pp. 36-46; and Elizabeth H. Haight, "Apuleius' Art of Story-Telling," in Essays on Ancient Fiction (1936; rpt. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries (Footnote continued)

behavior he observes all around him earns him a close relationship with the reader and prepares the reader for the visions and mystical experiences of the last chapter, which are unique to Apuleius' version.

In fact, Apuleius' work is about six times the length of Lucian's¹⁶ and the new material has been added in a very orderly way. For example, Apuleius has introduced some poetic justice to the original. The wicked boy who persecutes Lucius, sets fire to him, etc., is killed by a wild bear. Also, Apuleius enlarges on the fraud of the perverted priests so that their arrest for theft seems even more justified and satisfying. The robbers in the Metamorphoses are not merely led off to a magistrate but dispatched after their own bloodthirsty manner. Even the added tales prove to be integral components of the novel.

Table 2 compares the motifs of Loukios or the Ass with those of The Golden Ass, and lists Apuleius' additions to the Ass story. A perusal of the table shows that many of the additions are very small though important details (as we'll see later when we compare the novel to "Cupid and Psyche"). The bulk of the added material is made up by the inserted tales and the long concluding chapter describing Lucius' experiences with Isis and her mysteries.

Apuleius added about fifteen tales, all but one about lust, greed, or anger, and that one exception is "Cupid and Psyche." The other

15(continued)
Press, 1966), pp. 186-87.

16 Perry, p. 243.

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF LOUKIOS OR THE ASS AND THE GOLDEN ASS

MOTIFS FROM <u>LOUKIOS OR THE ASS</u>	BOOK	USE OF MOTIF IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>	NEW ELEMENTS IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>
Introductory Motifs			
* Journey to Hypata with servant and horse	I	* Motif duplicated, horse described as white.	* Hero's desire for knowledge and understanding * Tale of Aristomenes: lust and witchcraft lead to death.
* Stay with Hipparchus in Hypata		* Miserliness of host Milo emphasized.	
* Meets Abrora (mother's friend) who tells him he's staying with a witch.	II	* Meets Byrrhaena (mother's foster-sister) and visits her house. She warns him about his hostess.	* Statue of Actaeon peeping at Diana and being transformed into a stag.
Curiosity and Transformation			
* Plan to seduce maid (Palaestra) and thus learn her mistress' secrets		* Maid called Fotis.	* Fotis' beauty attracts Lucius and he forgets his purpose.
* Dinner with host		* Motif elaborated.	* Lucius relates prophecy of his future.
* Amorous episodes with maid		* Beauty and pleasure emphasized.	* Fotis warns Lucius to leave the banquet early.

TABLE 2 cont'd

MOTIFS FROM <u>LOUKIOS OR THE ASS</u> BOOK	USE OF MOTIF IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>	NEW ELEMENTS IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>
Curiosity and Transformation cont'd		
		* Lavish banquet at Byrrhaena's
		* Tale of Telephron: lust leads to death; witchcraft leads to trouble.
		* A drunken Lucius battles with enchanted wineskins, is arrested, tried, and released.
		* Fotis relates story of the enchanted wineskins.
* Loukios says he has been enchanted by maid, and asks to see her mistress perform magic. She agrees.	III * Motif duplicated.	
* Loukios watches witch turn into bird.	* Motif duplicated.	
* He asks to repeat the process and she agrees.	* Fotis reluctant	* Interchange between Fotis and Lucius refers to Cupid, Venus, and separation.
* Loukios turns into an ass.	* Motif duplicated.	* Enlargement of mouth, ears, genitals emphasized.

TABLE 2 cont'd

MOTIFS FROM <u>LOUKIOS OR THE ASS</u> BOOK	USE OF MOTIF IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>	NEW ELEMENTS IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>
The Trials and Wanderings of Loukios		
* Robbers break in and steal Loukios.	* Motif duplicated.	* Lucius sees roses on the road, but is afraid the robbers will kill him if he eats them, so he abstains.
* Loukios raids a vegetable garden but avoids poisonous rose-laurels.	IV * After eating vegetables, Lucius sees rose-laurels by a river.	* Feeling suicidal, Lucius goes to eat them.
* Loukios is beaten. He runs back to the robbers.	* Motif duplicated.	
* Loukios considers fainting, but the other donkey does so and is killed. He gives up the idea.	* Motif duplicated.	
* Loukios arrives at the robbers' headquarters where they are joined by others, share loot and eat.	* Robbers' headquarters is a cave. Their bestial nature is emphasized.	* The Robbers' tales: deaths of Lamachus, Alcimus, and Thrasyleon.
* Robbers go on a raid, bring back a girl, and put her in the car of their old woman	* Girl named Charite. She tells her tale of impending marriage, kidnapping, and grief.	* Old woman tells the tale of Cupid and Psyche.

TABLE 2 cont'd

MOTIFS FROM <u>LOUKIOS OR THE ASS</u> BOOK	USE OF MOTIF IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>	NEW ELEMENTS IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>
The Trials and Wanderings of Loukios cont'd		
	V	* Tale of Cupid and Psyche cont'd.
	VI	* Tale of Cupid and Psyche cont'd.
* Robbers take Loukios on an expedition, threaten him with death.	* Motif duplicated.	
* Loukios escapes with the girl.	* Motif duplicated and elaborated.	
* The pair is recaptured and threatened with a horrible death.	* Motif duplicated.	
	VII	* Robbers report that Lucius is being blamed for the robbery in Hypata.
		* Lucius complains of blind Fortune.
		* New recruit arrives, tells his tale, drugs the robbers, ties them up, and takes his fiancee home on Lucius' back.

TABLE 2 cont'd

MOTIFS FROM <u>LOUKIOS OR THE ASS</u> BOOK	USE OF MOTIF IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>	NEW ELEMENTS IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>
The Trials and Wanderings of Loukios cont'd		
* Troops arrive, defeat the robbers, tie them up,	* Townspeople throw some robbers off the cliff and behead others.	
* Loukios is rewarded by being sent to pasture with mares, but he's forced to pull a millstone, is kicked by stallions, mistreated by a boy, and threatened with castration.	* Motifs duplicated.	* Lucius complains of his bad fortune.
* Girl and her husband killed by a tidal wave.	VIII * Motif altered and elaborated.	* Tale of Murder of Charite and Tlepolemus: lust leads to murder, grief, suicide.
* Slaves run off and reach Macedonia after three days.	* Motif considerably altered.	* Tale of the Bailiff: lust leads to death, suicide, murder.
* Loukios sold to eunuch priest uses him to carry his goddess. Loukios attracts attention to their perversions and is beaten.	* Motif duplicated.	* Fortune blamed throughout.
* Loukios is threatened with death to replace a stolen thigh of venison.	* Motif duplicated.	

TABLE 2 cont'd

MOTIFS FROM <u>LOUKIOS OR THE ASS</u> BOOK	USE OF MOTIF IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>	NEW ELEMENTS IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>
The Trials and Wanderings of Loukios cont'd		
* Loukios pretends to be mad, is locked up, and then released the next morning.	IX * Motif duplicated.	* Lucius hears The Tale of the Wife's Tub (adultery).
* Priests travel onward.	* Motif considerably altered.	* Priests bilk villagers with their false prophecies.
* Priests arrested for theft of a golden cup and put in jail.	* Motifs duplicated.	* Baker's wife and her bawd added.
* Loukios sold to a baker to pull his millstone.	* Misery of working for the baker elaborated.	* Tale of the Jealous Husband (adultery)
		* Tale of the Fuller's Wife: adultery leads to death.
* After a few months, the baker sells the now scrawny Loukios to a market gardener.	* Motifs considerably altered.	* Lucius exposes the adultery of the baker's wife. The baker divorces her, she has him murdered, and she is caught. Lucius is sold to a market gardener.

TABLE 2 cont'd

MOTIFS FROM <u>LOUKIOS OR THE ASS</u> BOOK	USE OF MOTIF IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>	NEW ELEMENTS IN THE <u>GOLDEN ASS</u>
The Trials and Wanderings of Loukios cont'd		
* Loukios has a wretched life with the gardener.	* Motif duplicated.	* Lucius and his master visit a farmer, hear The Tale of the Oppressive Landlord (greed leads to violence and murder) and see the farmer's suicide.
* Loukios' master fights with a soldier and is arrested.	* Motif duplicated.	
* Loukios is sold to a chef. X	* The soldier becomes Lucius' temporary owner. Then he's sold to the chef.	* Lucius hears The Tale of the Wicked Stepmother: lust leads to poisonings, false accusations, and conviction.
* Loukios steals food from chef and fattens up. He's sold to a master who exhibits him as a trained beast.	* Motif duplicated.	
* Loukios meets his "Pasiphae." His master plans to exhibit him with a female convict in the arena.	* Motif duplicated.	* The convict's history is given: The Tale of the Jealous Wife (Jealousy leads to murder, greed, more murders).
		* At the show Lucius sees a mime of the Judgement of Paris.

TABLE 2 cont'd

MOTIFS FROM LOUKIOS OR THE ASS BOOKUSE OF MOTIF IN THE GOLDEN ASSNEW ELEMENTS IN THE GOLDEN ASS**The Trials and Wanderings of Loukios cont'd****Transformation and Salvation****XI**

* Loukios eats roses at the show, regains his shape, and is taken home by the governor.

* Loukios' brother arrives with clothes and money. He visits his "Pasiphae," but she's no longer interested. He sails for home.

* Scene completely redone.

* Motifs suppressed and replaced by religious motifs.

* Lucius escapes, runs to Cenchreae, and falls asleep on the beach.

* Lucius purifies himself in the sea, prays to the Moon goddess, sleeps, and sees a vision of Isis, who promises his release at a religious procession the next day.

* Lucius joins the procession, eats and regains his human form.

* Lucius has continuing visions, is initiated in the Mystery of Osiris. He sails for Rome, is initiated there twice more, becomes a successful lawyer, and joyfully serves the mysteries.

stories are called Milesian Tales, that is, they are almost always lewd and usually treat of bizarre adventures and/or sexual encounters. They are recounted in a realistic manner, as if they really happened to the teller or someone he knew. The genre was supposedly invented in the second century B.C. by Aristides of Miletus, hence the name. The Roman Cornelius Sisenna translated some of the tales into Latin a century later and the tales enjoyed an enormous popularity. Their reputation, and very little else, has survived, since their appeal was mainly to salacious and superstitious appetites.¹⁷

The first tale we hear is the one told to Lucius on the road to Hypata. At first glance it is a tale of witchcraft, dominated by the horror of falling under the power of a witch. It is told as a personal experience of Lucius' fellow traveller, Aristomenes. His friend Socrates, the story goes, forgets his family and becomes involved with a witch. Aristomenes tries to save him but it is too late. When Aristomenes first sees his friend he is shocked at his appearance. He says, "'My Socrates,' I cried, 'What does this mean? this change! What is your sin?'" (p. 35, emphasis mine). When Socrates tells how he yielded to the witch, Aristomenes, whose name means good counselor, retorts: "'In good faith, . . . you deserve the worst you can get, if there is anything worse than this, for preferring the festivals of the flesh and the wrinkles of a whore to your fame and your family'" (p. 37). This moral note resounds through

¹⁷ For a fuller discussion of the Milesian tale, see P. G. Walsh, The Roman Novel (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 10-17; or Tatum, pp. 96-101. Future references will appear in the text.

all the tales. Socrates deserves the worst he can get, and that turns out to be death.

The second tale of witchcraft, Telephron's tale, also has a crime of adultery at its root. Telephron tells how he was hired to guard a corpse from witches and suffers himself the mutilation intended for the dead body. Yet this tale has been joined to quite another, for it turns out that the dead man has been murdered by his unfaithful wife.¹⁸ Lust leads to murder, discovery, and punishment.

And this is the pattern of all the tales. In Books IX and X the pace of tale telling accelerates. Soon into Book IX Lucius hears the Tale of the Wife's Tub. This tale describes a clever trick by which a wife and her lover deceive her unwitting husband. The first tale Lucius hears at the baker's, The Tale of the Jealous Husband, is also about how a wife and her lover cleverly trick her husband. These two tales do not end in horror and death, but perhaps only to ensnare the unsuspecting reader, who enjoys the trickery, but doesn't fully realize that the wages of sin are death, until he reads on.

The remaining tales contain no fun, no lighthearted enjoyment of sex, nothing to attract the reader at all; all describe mean, low, and lascivious people who are motivated by lust, greed, or anger, who murder without remorse, and whose gruesome crimes are fully punished in kind. Tatum observes that "the mood of terror deepens throughout the book" until sensual voluptas is "utterly discredited. . . . One enthusiastic sensual experience is followed by a similar one which

¹⁸ See Walsh, p. 154. Perry and Scobie often describe how Apuleius joins two tales. My point is that he connects a second tale about how lust and its related vices inevitably lead to death to a first tale that's merely about magic.

'corrects' it, and prepares for a kind of doctrine which shall reject all such things."¹⁹

These tales, as Scobie justly notes, "are cautionary tales and the viewpoint of the narrator is usually severely moralistic."²⁰ Apuleius' attitude toward the characters in the tales follows Plato's remarks on their way of life. "[Those leaden weights] so to speak, of our birth and becoming, which attaching themselves to it by food and similar pleasures and gluttonies turn downward the vision of the soul. . . ." ²¹ And again, Plato describes the multitude of those who with "no experience of wisdom and virtue" are swept downward:

with eyes ever bent upon the earth and heads bowed down over their tables they feast like cattle, grazing and copulating, ever greedy for more of these delights, . . . they slay one another in sateless avidity (Rep 9:586A-B).

Apuleius is even more severe. He describes the greater part of mankind as

so depraved by all errors, so imbued with the most atrocious crimes, and . . . so excessively ferocious . . . that it may seem there is not any animal on earth viler than man. Men, therefore, dwell on the earth being endued with reason, possessing the power of speech, having immortal souls, but mortal members, light and anxious minds, brutal and infirm bodies . . . conversant with fleeting time, slow wisdom, a rapid death, and a querulous life.²²

¹⁹ James Tatum, "The Tales in Apuleius' Metamorphoses," Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Assoc., 100 (1969), 519, 522, 523.

²⁰ Scobie, More Essays, p. 78.

²¹ Plato, The Republic, trans. Paul Shorey, in Collected Dialogues, 7:519B. Future references will appear in the text.

²² Apuleius, The God of Socrates, in The Metamorphosis or Golden Ass, and Philosophical Works of Apuleius, trans. Thomas Taylor (London: Robert Triphook, 1822), pp. 295-96.

Lucius' "slow wisdom" leads him to reject the life he sees around him and eventually turn from magic to the mysteries of Isis where he finds joy, success, and the hope of immortal bliss in the Elysian Fields. Not only Lucius, but the reader as well, is filled with horror at the depths to which mankind can sink. Kenny conjectures that Apuleius purposely discomfits the reader so he can "share the hero's alienation and uncertainty about the real nature of the world."²³ And Sandy accurately observes that

in these tales the capacity of humans for cruelty and deceit is pictured as far greater than one would expect to find in traditionally cynical Milesian tales and that Lucius' disgust with humans is what drives him to seek refuge in a mystery religion.²⁴

Heine notes that Lucius actually changes very little while he's in his ass shape. What happens is that the reader changes and projects his feelings onto Lucius. Thus, from the reader's point of view, the hero, "enclosed in a dark world within the boundaries of his own ego, gradually develops into the type of the to-be-delivered, gradually gains universal meaning beyond the limits of his individuality."²⁵

²³ Brendan Kenny, "The Reader's Role in The Golden Ass," Arethusa, 7 (1974), 195-97.

²⁴ Gerald Sandy, "Knowledge and Curiosity in Apuleius' Metamorphoses," Latomus: Revue d'Études latines, 31 (1971), 181 n. Tatum notes that the Cupid and Psyche tale being followed by the old lady's death "creates a tension between the absurdities and cruelties of this world and a longing for a paradisiac release from them that will intensify with every succeeding book of Lucius' story" (p. 68).

²⁵ R. Heine, "Picaresque Novel versus Allegory," in Hijmans and Van der Paardt, p.36.

What we find in fact is that Book XI is the necessary conclusion to Lucius' wanderings and trials. Lucius' Greek predecessor, Loukios, feels no shame at being exhibited with a convict woman and as soon as he's transformed, goes off to visit his "Pasiphae" in his human shape, hoping to continue his pleasures. Apuleius' Lucius is quite another man; he undergoes moral growth as he leads his donkey life. His curiosity for knowledge far exceeds his prototype's and his end brings those desires to fulfillment. The theme of Fortune, which is unique to Apuleius' novel, illustrates this point.

The role of Fortune is introduced early in the novel.²⁶ The very first tale Lucius hears is a tale of witchcraft in which Fortune is blamed for all "the sliddery twists, the freakish whirligigs, the ceaseless vicissitudes" of fate. The victim of this tale moans, "Let Fortune still gloat over the trophy she has erected," meaning, of course, his own misery (p. 36).

When Lucius is first taken to the stable by Fotis to wait for her morning restorative visit he spies some fresh roses adorning the shrine of the goddess Epona, a Celtic agricultural deity in charge of horses. Mad with hope he tries to eat the wreath but a serving boy sees him and drives him away calling him a sacrilegious beast. And in fact he is sacrilegious. He's been dabbling in witchcraft, a path always perceived to be at odds with that of a true spiritual seeker.

²⁶ Fortune or Fors Fortuna, probably originally an agricultural diety of one of the Italian communities, became a goddess of luck or chance for the Romans, the equivalent of the Greek goddess Tyche. She was worshipped as such in many parts of Rome under various names: Fortune of the Men, Fortune of the Women, etc. (H. J. Rose, Religion in Greece and Rome [New York: Harper and Row, 1959], pp. 238-39).

His fate, like the victim of Aristomenes' tale, is to suffer at the hands of a cruel and spiteful Fortune.

It is Fortune who has new crosses in store for Lucius (p. 157), who thinks up other plagues (p. 158), who squints her blind eyes and selects a horrible master for Lucius (p. 179), who tosses him about on her waves (p. 220). She also occasionally saves him, as when he's set on fire. Lucius relates, "But Fortune had a smile left for me when in utter calamity; perhaps she merely wished to preserve me for further mishaps, but at least she rescued me for the moment from a murderous intention" (p. 159). When Lucius finds a safe birth with the cook and confectioner he attributes it to the face of Fortune smiling benignly on him (p. 222).

All in all, Lucius sees himself as the plaything of blind Fortune throughout his life as an ass. His only consolation, he says, is the knowledge he gained while on his odyssey:

There was no relief whatsoever for my tormented existence, except to indulge my inborn curiosity; for everyone acted or spoke as he pleased, without even noticing that I was there. Justly the Diving Author of the ancient poetry of the Greeks, desiring to depict a man supremely wise and humanly perfected, sang of him who had visited many cities and known many people. I therefore gratefully recall to mind the times when I was an ass, because, hidden under the ass's skin, I experienced all life's variety and acquired much knowledge if little wisdom (p. 192).

It is this knowledge of the lusts and depravity of mankind that prepares Lucius for his conversion. Right before his own entrance into the show his master has produced, Lucius watches the first act, a mime of the Judgement of Paris. The girl playing Venus "far surpassed the others in all the paraphernalia of beauty" (p. 231). She has no difficulty bribing Paris with the promise of a woman whose beauty will

equal hers. Lucius is outraged and breaks into a tirade on bribery, lust, greed, and stupidity:

O why do you wonder after this if those dregs of humanity, those forensic cattle, those gowned vultures, the judges now sell their decisions for cash? Even at the world's infancy a bribe could corrupt judgement in a question agitated between gods and men; and a young fellow (a rustic and a shepherd) appointed judge by the counsels of great Jove sold the first judicial decision for the lucre of lust, thereby entailing damnation on mankind (p. 232, emphasis mine).

Lucius has come a long way from the boy who had enslaved himself to the sensual pleasures of Fotis, whom he had described earlier as a beauty "metamorphosed into a Venus" (p. 60). We recall that he told her on the night of his transformation:

I, that have already turned down the perfumed bodies of ladies, stand here a slave, freely fettered and enthralled --and all owing to your bright eyes, and your ruddied cheeks, and your glistening hair, and your open kisses, and your scented breasts. Look at me. I am neither returning home nor making any preparations to go. I see nothing beyond or above this night (p. 81).

Now he stands ready to renounce his lust and his interest in witchcraft.

The moral message of the first ten books is continued right into the speech of the priest who offers Lucius the transforming roses, rescues him from cruel Fortune, and sets him at the feet of Isis-Videns, open-eyed Fortune. He says:

"At last, Lucius, after the long days of disaster and the heavy storms of fortune you have reached the haven of peace and the altar of mercy. Neither your high lineage, nor your pride of place, nor your learning, profited you one jot. You gave yourself to the slavery of pleasure in the lewdness of hot-blooded youth; and you have reaped the reward of your unprospering curiosity" (p. 243, emphasis mine).

In other words, Lucius' appetites and his curiosity about witchcraft

led him into his donkey life with all its torments and misery. Walsh justly observes that the "entire argument of Apuleius' Apology is developed to prove the world of differences between the practice of magic and initiation into religious mysteries" (p. 184). There is, of course, a close association between witchcraft and sensuality. Witches all use magic, not to help or save, as the Egyptian priest does in Telephron's tale, but to serve their lust.²⁷ But now his enemy, Fortune, can no longer control him. The priest goes on to say:

"Nevertheless, blind Fortune, persecuting you with horrors and snares, has led you in her shortsighted malice to this beatitude of release. . . . You are now received into the protection of Fortune, but of Fortune who is open-eyed and who lightens even the other gods with the splendours of her light" (p. 243).

Blind Fortune has inadvertently led Lucius to open-eyed Fortune. All that has happened to Lucius has conspired to save him. Just as Goethe's Mephistopheles confesses himself to be "Part of that force which would do evil evermore, and yet creates the good," so Fortune is merely a tool or an aspect of the divine goddess Isis.²⁸

Clearly, then, The Golden Ass is a well thought-out work, a complex and powerfully moving narrative that sweeps the reader from an

²⁷ See discussions on the two sorts of magic in J. Gwyn Griffiths, ed. Apuleius of Madauros: The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI) (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), p. 50 and in Gerald N. Sandy, "Serviles Voluptates in Apuleius' Metamorphoses," Phoenix, 28 (1974), 234-44. As goddess of love between husband and wife and parents and children, Isis would necessary condemn illicit lust, both Lucius' and that of the tales. See also Griffiths, "Isis in the Metamorphoses of Apuleius," in Hijmans and Van der Paardt, pp. 141-66; and Carl C. Schlam, "Sex and Sanctity: The Relationship of Male and Female in the Metamorphoses," in Hijmans and Van der Paardt, pp. 95-105.

²⁸ Goethe's Faust, trans. Walter Kaufman, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1963), p. 159 (lines 1336-37).

easy sympathy with Lucius' sensuality through a horrified recognition of the effects of lust and brutality to a satisfying and joyful experience of divine favor and release. Haight comments that "whereas Lucian through satire degraded a simple folk-tale, Apuleius exalted it by making the journeyings of Lucius a search for the spiritual meaning of life."²⁹

Book XI is obviously not extraneous to the theme and motifs of the work as a whole, but their necessary conclusion and fulfillment, as well as a corrective to the Milesian tales. From the roses at the shrine of Epona to the roses of the Isiac priest, Lucius travels the road of mankind and comes to experience for himself the highest pleasure available to human life, the pleasure of divine union. It's not enough to recognize with the intellect alone that wisdom brings the highest happiness, it is necessary to experience that happiness and be led on by its savour to a higher life.

It has probably become obvious throughout this discussion that the tale of Cupid and Psyche, which lies at the heart of The Golden Ass, is crucial to its meaning. It is not merely a "fairy tale version of Lucius' experience,"³⁰ but, as Walsh says, "the projection of Lucius' pilgrimage into the world of myth, where the message is clearer for being universalized" (p. 190). It will be valuable now to compare the motifs of the tale of Cupid and Psyche to those of The Golden Ass, much as we did with the Ass. By seeing how the elements Apuleius added to both stories function to connect them coherently together, we

²⁹ Haight, "Apuleius' Art," p. 192.

³⁰ Sandy, p. 180.

will be in a better position to appreciate both his artistry and his intent, and to fully evaluate the role of Psyche's katabasis in the entire novel.

Chapter IV

The Novel Within the Novel: The DNA of Salvation

A comparison of the tale of Cupid and Psyche to the Golden Ass shows that they follow the same general quest pattern. First, both Psyche and Lucius are in a state of ignorance before they are separated from that which they love most. Psyche is in her edenic paradise, but she is ignorant of the true nature of her lover and unable to know and enjoy her true estate. Lucius is enjoying a secret paradise also, but it is only a pale reflection of the joy awaiting him when he comes to know his divine stature.

Psyche's desire to know her divine husband results in her separation from him and she then must pursue a long road of trials until they are finally reunited. Lucius' desire for knowledge of witchcraft results in his separation from his own human body, the loss of his freedom, and with it, the power of speech, which he sadly misses. The separation from his human body includes the separation from his spiritual life, since as an ass he is limited to the world of experience and knowledge of a beast. When he prays to the Queen of Heaven, it is for his human life that he prays. "'Restore me to Lucius, my lost self,'" he says, "'But if an offended god pursues me implacably, then grant me death at least since life is denied me'" (p. 236). When Lucius is finally reunited with his lost self, he has learned to make proper use of that self.

Parallels Between the Two Tales: Echoes and Opposites

With the separation and reunion as two definite points of contact between the tale and the novel we can explore the other connections that Apuleius has developed to make the two quests resonate in the reader's consciousness. For example, just as Apuleius has equated Psyche and Lucius, he seems to make Eros or Cupid equivalent to the body, to Lucius' human body. Eros represents the creative life force, and, of course, physical love involves the physical body. His Cupid becomes Love and desire, the force of life itself, to which the soul must finally become reintegrated. By juxtaposing "Cupid and Psyche" to his reworked version of the Lucius story Apuleius thus adds another dimension of meaning to the Platonic allegory, which, as we saw above, dominates his thinking.

The contrast of Venus with Fortuna/Isis is also very intriguing. As Plato explains, there are two Aphrodite's, the elder Uranian or heavenly Aphrodite, and the younger, earthly or Pandemic Aphrodite.¹ Apuleius describes the two as follows:

Venus is a twofold goddess, each of the pair producing a peculiar passion, and in different kinds of lovers. One of them is the "Vulgar," who is prompted by the ordinary passion of love, to stimulate not only the human feelings, but even those of cattle and wild beasts, to lust, and commit the enslaved bodies of beings thus smitten by her to immoderate and furious embraces.²

¹ Plato, Symposium, trans. Michael Joyce, in The Collected Dialogues of Plato, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), 180B-E. Future references will appear in the text with the Stephanus number following the abbreviated title.

² Apology, 12. The translation is from The Works of Apuleius, (London: George Bell, 1889), p. 258.

This is the Venus who sends Cupid to strike Psyche with love for some beggar, who plays the role of the wicked witch, who drives Lucius into the embrace of Fotis, and who rules the fates of all the unfortunate subjects of the Milesian tales Lucius hears. She can be equated with the cruel Fortune responsible for fates which afflict the unfortunate victims of lust and witchcraft from Aristomenes' friend onward and including poor Lucius himself. Apuleius unmistakably unites Fortune to Venus, Psyche's enemy and persecutor, in Book VI when Cupid warns Psyche that "'termagant Fortune has an ugly trick ready for you'" (p. 112).

Venus also plays a more elevated role. As Apuleius explains:

The other is the "Heavenly" Venus, who presides over the purest love. . . . For the love that is engendered by her is not wanton or lascivious love, but, on the contrary, it is serious and unadorned, and allures its votaries to virtue by its own intrinsic beauty. . . . Nor, indeed, is there anything else in the beauty of the person deserving of love, beyond the fact that it recalls to the mind which took its origin in Diety, that beauty which in all its truth and purity it once beheld among the gods.³

Apuleius is here again stating the Platonic view of Love as that force which leads the individual towards pure beauty, truth, pure being, the source and the goal of human life and intelligence, which the soul beholds before its incarnation. Is this the Venus of the tale of Cupid and Psyche? Yes, in fact. In her first soliloquy she defines herself as: "'I the primal Mother of all living, I the elemental Source of energy, I the fostering Venus of the girdled earth'" (p. 106). This is quite parallel to Isis who identifies

³ Apology, 12.

herself to Lucius in Book XI as "'the natural mother of all life, the mistress of the elements, the first child of time, the supreme divinity, the queen of those in hell, the first among those in heaven, the uniform manifestation of all the gods and goddesses'" (p. 237). Apuleius has Isis say that she is called different names in different lands. The Cyprians call her Paphian Venus, she says. As we've discussed earlier, Isis is equated with Fortune, but Fortune with her eyes open. Apuleius thus uses Fortune in a manner that is consistent with his predecessor Virgil who often uses Fortuna in the sense of Fate or the Providence that controls the destiny of individuals, the world, and even the heavens.⁴ Apuleius uses Fate in this sense also when he relates that Plato teaches that "Fate is the divine law, through which the inevitable conceptions and undertakings of God are accomplished."⁵

Unlike Isis, Venus plays no role in leading Psyche to Heaven, but her son does. Just as there are two Aphrodites, there are two Eros's, and Eros "should be known as earthly or heavenly according to the goddess in whose company his work is done" (Symp 180E). Clearly Eros or Cupid functions in the Uranian sense when he leads Psyche up to Heaven. Besides linking the major characters of each narrative Apuleius has added innumerable details to bring the two stories into a close parallel structure.

⁴ Cyril Bailey, Religion in Virgil (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), p. 240.

⁵ On the Habitude of the Doctrines of the Philosophy of Plato, trans. Thomas Taylor, in The Metamorphosis or Golden Ass, and Philosophical Works of Apuleius, ed. Thomas Taylor (London: Robert Triphook, 1822), p. 336.

Table 3 lists the major motifs that the two quests have in common. Motifs which Apuleius added to the Metamorphoses in order to parallel the Cupid and Psyche tale appear in bold print. Motifs which he may have added to the folk tale in order to echo motifs he found in the Ass also appear in bold print. Motifs which he added to one or both stories to develop the symbolism of the Neoplatonic myth of Psyche and Eros are underlined. Even a cursory glance at the table shows that there are a large number of parallel motifs in the two stories and that the bulk of them were additions or transformations of the original material! Most of the additions are small, like adding the prophecy of Diophanes to correspond with the Milesian oracle that correctly, though abstrusely, describes Psyche's fate. Some are minor shapings of the original, like Lucius deciding to eat the rose-laurels and commit suicide. At the same point Psyche throws herself in the river in a suicide attempt. The Ass has Loukios see the rose-laurels and avoid them. Apuleius sets them by a river, so his Lucius runs to the river and then attempts suicide, like Psyche. These are small changes, placing the flowers by a river and having Lucius consider eating them, but they could only have been made to bring the two stories together through the suicide motif.

However, Apuleius contrasts the two rescues, each appropriate to its tale. Whereas Psyche is saved by the river god, Lucius is saved from suicide by the attack of the gardener who beats him quite severely. In fact, Apuleius often connects the two stories by an opposition rather than a similarity. For example, he opposes the poisoning tales to the water of life task that Psyche performs. He

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF MOTIFS IN THE GOLDEN ASS AND "CUPID AND PSYCHE"The Golden Ass

"Cupid and Psyche"

I. INTRODUCTORY MOTIFS

Lucius:

Psyche:

- | | |
|---|--|
| * Handsome, innocent young man | * Beautiful, innocent young girl |
| * Desire for knowledge ^a | * Desire for marriage |
| * Lucius is attracted to witchcraft and therefore attracts the enmity of Fortune. | * Psyche is attractive to all and thus attracts the enmity of Venus. |
| * Lucius hears the prophecy of Diophanes. | * Psyche hears the Milesian oracle. |

II. THE MARRIAGE

- | | |
|--|--|
| * Lucius enjoys the love of Fotis only at night and in secret. | * Psyche falls in love with her secret, nightly visitor. |
| * Lucius' will and his appetites are his own worst enemies. | * Psyche's paradise is threatened by the visits of her sisters. |
| * Four warnings against curiosity and witches: | * Cupid warns Psyche four times about her sisters' malice. |
| 1) Aristomenes' Tale | |
| 2) Statue of Actaeon and Diana | |
| 3) Telephron's Tale | |
| 4) Episode of wineskins | |
| * Twice Lucius persuades Fotis (who reluctantly agrees) | * Twice Psyche persuades Cupid (who reluctantly agrees) to allow her sisters to visit. |
| 1) to let him go to his aunt's | |
| 2) to let him witness magic. | |

^a Motifs added to either work in order to connect it to the other work appear in **bold type**.

TABLE 3 cont'd

COMPARISON OF MOTIFS IN THE GOLDEN ASS AND "CUPID AND PSYCHE"The Golden Ass

"Cupid and Psyche"

II. THE MARRIAGE cont'd

* Lucius personally exposed to evidence of witchcraft three times:

- 1) Aristomenes' Tale
- 2) Telephron's Tale
- 3) Episode of wineskins

* Psyche's sisters visit three times.

III. THE SEPARATION

* Curiosity to see witchcraft

* Curiosity to see husband

* Lamp illumines witch's room.

* Psyche brings in lamp to see Cupid.

* Lucius is separated from his body.

* Psyche is separated from Cupid.

IV. SUFFERINGS AND SEARCH

* Robbers are responsible for Lucius' long winter as an ass.

* Sisters are to blame for Psyche's loss of Cupid.

* Lucius runs to a river to eat poisonous rose-laurels but is stopped by the gardener.

* Psyche jumps in a river to kill herself but is saved by the River.

* Lucius hears the tale of Cupid and Psyche.^b

* Psyche hears the advice of Pan.^b

* The robbers are pushed off a cliff.

* The sisters jump off a cliff to their deaths.

^b Motifs added to either work to develop the Neoplatonic themes are underlined.

TABLE 3 cont'd

COMPARISON OF MOTIFS IN THE GOLDEN ASS AND "CUPID AND PSYCHE"The Golden Ass

"Cupid and Psyche"

IV. SUFFERINGS AND SEARCH cont'd

- | | |
|---|---|
| * Lucius suffers at the herdsman's. | * Psyche gets no help from Ceres. |
| * Lucius suffers on the road to Macedonia. | * Psyche gets no help from Juno. |
| * Cruel Fortune hands Lucius over to a series of hard masters. | * Psyche eventually surrenders to Venus. |
| * Lucius hears The Tale of the Bailiff, who is killed by ants. | * Ants help Psyche with her first trial. |
| * In Book IX Lucius hears three tales of adultery and witnesses how adultery results in the baker's death. He also hears The Tale of the Oppressive Landlord and sees the father's death. | * Psyche succeeds in getting golden fleece from the dangerous and frenzied sheep. |
| * Lucius hears two tales of poisoning and laments the poisoning of Socrates. | * Psyche brings back water from the streams that feed the underworld. |

V. VISIT TO THE UNDERWORLD

- | | |
|--|---|
| * Lucius prays to the Moon. Isis responds with directions on how to regain his form. | * The tower instructs Psyche how to descend and return. |
| * <u>Lucius falls asleep by the sea and has a dream vision of Isis (who is equated with Proserpine).</u> | * <u>Psyche visits the underworld and gets a box of beauty from Proserpine.</u> |

TABLE 3 cont'd

COMPARISON OF MOTIFS IN THE GOLDEN ASS AND "CUPID AND PSYCHE"The Golden Ass

"Cupid and Psyche"

VI. REUNION AND APOTHEOSIS

- | | |
|---|---|
| * <u>Lucius awakens to the dawn, the spring, and a new life.</u> | * <u>Psyche returns to the "tides of light" feeling "greatly enlivened."</u> |
| * Lucius eats roses and is reunited with his body. | * <u>Psyche tries to sample the "beauty" and is reunited with Cupid.</u> |
| * <u>Mithras initiates Lucius into the Mysteries of Isis.</u> | * <u>Cupid sends Psyche to Venus.</u> |
| * <u>Lucius is initiated into the Mysteries of Osiris.</u> | * <u>Psyche is raised to Heaven by Cupid and joins the company of the gods.</u> |
| * <u>In the service of Isis, Lucius will enjoy a long life and eternal bliss in the Elysian Fields.</u> | * <u>Psyche drinks nectar and ambrosia, becomes one of the immortals, and weds Cupid.</u> |
| * <u>Lucius experiences "up-bubbling joy" and increasing bliss.</u> | * <u>Psyche gives birth to her daughter Voluptas, or Joy.</u> |

seems to delight in disarming the reader by giving him clues that are clearly false and that lead him on the wrong track.

Not all the adventures of Lucius' story can be aligned to the events in Psyche's, of course, since the folk tale and the ass story were independent and very different creations and Apuleius appears to make very few important changes in the original material. As we shall see, his method is to transform the original material only slightly and to focus on adding new material to enhance the structural unity he is after. The result is that there are many points of similarity and numerous verbal echoes between the two quests that show that Apuleius obviously endeavored to link them together in the reader's consciousness.

The Quest for Salvation: From Innocence to Rebirth

Both the tale and the novel open with a description of their young heroes as beautiful and guileless, even naive and simple. Psyche's beauty becomes world-renowned and inspires the hatred of Venus. Apuleius conspicuously adds a description of Lucius' personal beauty to his source tale (which never describes its hero). More importantly, he adds Lucius' thirst for knowledge. Lucius had been initiated into several of the mysteries, or so we gather from his conversation with Fotis, but he doesn't pursue this legitimate path of gaining knowledge. Instead, he is attracted to lust and witchcraft and, through his curiosity for the latter, invokes the hostility of Fortune who mercilessly dogs his trail until he is rescued by Isis at the end of the novel.

The oracle that describes Psyche's fate weds her to a "raging serpent," the bane of all the gods. Not only does the serpent signify

instinct "but also has another, magical, mystical-religious meaning."

It is the expression of a particular

state, a "libido analogue," or a reflection of the dynamism of the psyche, representing the ceaseless flow of the psychic process. It is the quicksilver of the alchemists, the "serpens Mercurii" in man, whose psychic life drives forward, never resting, engulfing image after image in the chaos of its dark underworld, only to give them forth again, reborn and transfigured.⁶

Psyche's death or "marriage" with Cupid will initiate her own psychic growth leading to her eventual rebirth and transfiguration. But, of course, the prophecy sounds horrible, and Psyche and her family go to meet it with fear and sorrow. Lucius' oracle is a prophecy from a dubious soothsayer named Diophanes. The name means message or revelation from God, but Lucius' host reveals Diophanes to be a fraud, and we, of course, discount the prophecy. Diophanes told Lucius that he would "win some fine bouquets of Fame, and also that [he will] provide a great Tale, an incredible Plot, and material for Books." (pp. 57-58). The prophecy is, of course, completely true. We recognize Apuleius' method here of discrediting what, in fact, will prove to be true and should be taken seriously.

Lucius and Psyche go to meet their fates. Psyche's begins with a paradise on earth. She is feasted, surrounded by luxury and servants, albeit invisible. Lucius finds himself in the austere home of miser, but Fotis showers him with garlands of roses and feasts him with wine and other delicacies. Like Cupid and Psyche, Lucius and Fotis carry

⁶ Jolande Jacobi, Complex Archetype Symbol in the Psychology of C. G. Jung, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), p. 157.

on their affair secretly, meeting only at night. But whereas Psyche is falling in love with her divine husband, Lucius is in thrall to his lust for a slave girl. The parallel situations are further connected by various verbal allusions. For example, Lucius speaks of being pricked by Cupid's arrow. Both Lucius' and Psyche's happy periods continue for some time, with Psyche in blissful ignorance, untroubled by anything, even the mystery of her husband's identity, and Lucius even forgetting his interest in witchcraft. But both idyllic situations are soon threatened; Psyche's by the intrusion of her sisters, and Lucius' by his renewed interest in witchcraft.

Twice Psyche persuades her unhappy husband to allow her sisters to visit. Twice Lucius persuades Fotis to let him do what will expose him to the dangers of witchcraft, though neither of them knows it. First he asks for permission to dine with his aunt and she reluctantly agrees. Lucius' second visit to his aunt's, where he is feasted and surrounded by luxury, is parallel to Psyche feasting her wicked sisters. Both Cupid's and the aunt's homes are described in terms of gold, silver, citron wood, ivory and jewels (Met II. 19 and VI.1). And while the sisters pose a growing threat to Psyche's happiness, Lucius is warned by yet another tale of witchcraft. Aristomenes' tale had been an eye-witness account, but Telephron's tale adds not only first person involvement, but physical proof. Telephron means weak-witted, as his story illustrates, but he's no less so than Lucius who disregards this warning and the next, his own personal encounter with the dangers of witchcraft in his battle with the enchanted wine-skins.

Parallel to this intensification of the warnings against witchcraft is the escalating threat of Psyche's sisters. And just as Cupid pleads with Psyche to keep his secret ("Have mercy on yourself and on me; and by your inviolable silence save your home, your husband, yourself, and our baby from the dreadful ruin that menaces us," p. 117, emphasis mine), so Fotis pleads with Lucius to keep hers. She says, "Whatever then I entrust to the sanctuary of your godfearing breast I beg you to keep closely concealed there. Reward by the strictest seals of silence the frankness of my story" (p. 79, emphasis mine).

The two scenes of forbidden knowledge and separation are also very closely related. Both Psyche and Lucius are amazed and shocked by what they see (Met III. 22 and V. 22). Of course, Psyche's light reveals her divine husband while Lucius' light (Fotis) reveals sacrilegious or anti-divine magic. When Psyche embraces her beloved oil spurts onto him and he awakens and flies away. She grabs onto his leg for a while, but when she soon drops off from exhaustion, he perches in a nearby tree, like a bird, and rebukes her for her curiosity.⁷

Apuleius drops numerous verbal allusions to Psyche's predicament into Lucius' scene. When Lucius begs Fotis for the fateful potion he says, "Do this, and I shall stand at your side a winged Cupid by my Venus." Fotis' retort contains even more allusions to Psyche's experience. "What," she says, "You'd have me chop my own leg instead of the tree. . . . Where shall I find you roosting when you're changed into a bird? When will you nest with me?" (p. 83).

⁷ Numerous scholars have connected Psyche's sacrilegious curiosity to Lucius', but I believe that this is only a minor unifying device that Apuleius has exploited to bring the two tales closer together.

The references to winged Cupid, the leg, roosting like a bird in a tree, and the separation all tie the two events together.

The essential parallel, however, is that not long after Lucius is beguiled out of his own mind, he is beguiled out of his own body. The wrong ointment changes him into a long-eared bristling ass, with all his sensual organs--his mouth, nostrils, lips, ears, and genitals--monstrously enlarged. As Psyche is now separated from Cupid and must pursue a long road of trials until they are reunited, so Lucius is separated from his human body and must endure a long painful winter until he is reunited with his own form. The sensual focus of his life and his foolish curiosity for the occult lead to a punishment uniquely symbolic of his faults.

To the Ass's brief recounting of Loukios' life with the robbers, Apuleius adds considerable new material. The robbers relate three romantically exaggerated tales of the deaths of their friends Alcimus (stout-hearted), Thrasyleon (bold as a lion) and Lamachus (doughty in battle). Whereas characters usually remain unnamed in Milesian tales and ghost stories Apuleius frequently gives them names that either bear some relation to the quality they represent, or as Brotherton notes, the names "are an absurd contradiction to the nature of the character or event and are used by the way of irony."⁸ Since most

⁸ Blanche Brotherton, "The Introduction of Characters by Name in the Metamorphoses of Apuleius," Classical Philology, 29 (1934), 49. Numerous scholars have noted that the names Apuleius gives to his characters describe them either accurately or ironically. For example, the lascivious wife of the baker is named Arete (virtue). Also, Apuleius uses names to allude to history or myth, again in the same fashion. See B. L. Hijmans, Jr., "Significant Names and their Function in Apuleius' Metamorphoses," in Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass, ed. B. L. Hijmans, Jr. and R. Th. Van der Paardt (Groningen: (Footnote continued)

minor characters in the novel remain unnamed, those names that are given beg to be taken symbolically, e.g. Telephron, Aristomenes.

The main addition to the robbers' sequence is, of course, the tale of Cupid and Psyche. This event is parallel to Psyche's episode with Pan. Pan, who had a role as teacher and mystagogue in the circle of Dionysus,⁹ and whom we have linked to Socrates, offers the following advice:

"Seek no longer to lose your life by dashing yourself to pieces or by any other such recourse of despair. Lay grief aside. Cease your sorrow. Woo Cupid with adoring prayers. For he is the mightiest of the gods, a wanton lad and spoilt. Press him with grateful offers of compliance" (pp. 123-24).

The details are tailored to the Cupid of the tale but the message is clear: don't grieve, but devotedly continue to search for Love, for Beauty, for "the mightiest of the gods." This last phrase is parallel to how Isis describes herself in the aretology she pronounces to Lucius.

Lucius meets his version of Pan in the form of the old crone who serves the robbers. She's a simple country-woman whose mind is stored with many things, including the beautiful tale of the soul searching for and gaining immortality. She is, of course, an absurd variation of Diotima, who teaches Socrates the Mysteries of Love as he reports in the Symposium. Lucius hears the tale, not in the robbers' undesignated headquarters as in the Ass, but in a cave. Apuleius

8 (continued)
 Bouma's Boekhuis, 1978), pp. 107-22.

9 Carl C. Schlam, Cupid and Psyche: Apuleius and the Monuments (University Park, Pa.: American Philological Assoc., 1976), p. 35.

deliberately sets the tale, its teller, and its donkey listener in a mountain cave. As Bodkin points out, mountain caves are universally symbolic of the recesses of the human soul, the depths of consciousness.¹⁰ For example, Goethe has Faust withdraw to a cave to get away from Mephistopheles and from his temptation to ruin Gretchen. The episode nourishes Faust's soul and he gratefully thanks the Earth Spirit for his experiences:

Dann Fuhrst du mich zur sichern Höhle, zeigst
 Mich dann mir selbst, und meiner eignen Brust
 Geheime tiefe Wunden offnen sich (lines 3232-34).

Apuleius may also be alluding to the famous cave of Plato's Republic, where the dwellers take the shadows cast on the cave wall to be the images of reality. Penwill thus deduces that in this allusion Apuleius probably meant to discredit the tale and its gods "as flickering images" of the true reality of Isis and Osiris.¹¹ I think, rather, that he's using them as a myth to point to the underlying reality, arguing as Plutarch does that "myth is the image of reality which turns the mind back to other thoughts."¹² This is the way the Neoplatonic scholar R. Thibau sees the function of the tale. He writes that it contains "un message pour l'âne Lucius: comme dans une

¹⁰ Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (1934; rpt. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), p. 128. The role of caves in ritual and initiation is discussed in reference to Psyche's katabasis.

¹¹ J. L. Penwill, "Slavish Pleasures and Profitless Curiosity: Fall and Redemption in Apuleius' Metamorphoses," Ramus, 4 (1975), 79, n. 32.

¹² Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride, ed. J. Gwyn Griffiths (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press, 1970), 21, 358F, p. 149. Future references to this work will appear in the text with the abbreviation DIO and the section numbers of the translation.

initiation elle lui révèle l'immortalité de l'âme et son existence dans un monde sans Erôs."¹³

Lucius is enthralled by the tale, but in a typical Apuleian way discredits it: "Such was the tale told by the crazy drunken old woman to the captive young girl. I stood not far off, grieving by Hercules! that I had no tablet and pen to note down so pretty a nonsense" (p. 142). Only a reader as simple as Lucius himself could be misled by these words and fail to recognize the symbolic import of Apuleius' longest addition to the novel. Lucius has been advised by Pan/Socrates/Diotima to endure his trials, submit to his fate, and wait for the spring that will bring his second life.

Lucius is the Psyche of his story, of course, but he suffers double the woes of both Cupid and Psyche. He is beaten, forced to eat animal fodder, threatened repeatedly with mutilation and death and altogether abused. His life with the robbers can be easily described as rude, rustic and uncouth, "nothing but an utter Lack of Order," parallel to the state of affairs which holds when Venus and Cupid both absent themselves from the world.

Another interesting similarity between the novel and its centerpiece is the death of the robbers. The Ass has them marched off to a magistrate; Apuleius has them pushed off a cliff to their deaths. Why? Well, we can think of the robbers' role as somewhat parallel to that of Psyche's sisters. Just as Psyche's sisters' interference results in her separation from Cupid, so the robbers' interference

¹³ "Les Metamorphoses d'Apulée et la Théorie Platonicienne de l'Erôs," Studia Philosophica Gandensia, 3 (1965), 125.

results in Lucius being stuck in his donkey body and unable to keep his rendezvous with Fotis and the roses. Apuleius must have changed the robbers' end to suggest the similar deaths of the malicious sisters.

When Psyche seeks and is refused aid by both Juno and Ceres she desperately prays for the "hope of salvation" (spes salutis), and so does Lucius in his most desperate moments (see Met VI.5 and XI.1). Like Psyche, Lucius finds two sanctuaries that prove false, and then he endures a series of adventures and hears seven tales that are outside the main action of the novel. These adventures and tales group themselves in a way that is loosely parallel to Psyche's first three trials.

First comes the Tale of the Bailiff. In this tale jealousy and lust lead to murder and suicide. But an interesting detail of the story gives ants the role of punishing the adulterer. This is the only mention of ants in the novel except for their role in helping the "wife of Love, a sweet-faced girl in danger of her life," with her first task, sorting seeds (p. 134). Thus the motif of the ants connects the two tales, but in a contrasting way. They serve the wife of Love and they punish the servant of illicit love.

Lucius next serves a group of eunuchs, then a baker and a gardener. In Book IX he hears four tales, the Tale of the Wife's Tub, the Tale of the Jealous Husband, the Tale of the Fuller's Wife, and the Tale of the Oppressive Landlord. The first three are tales of lechery and adultery that go unpunished. By the end of them Lucius is so sickened by the lascivious behavior he's either heard about or witnessed himself that he takes a role in revealing the infidelity of

the baker's wife to her husband. Unfortunately her anger leads her to kill her husband. What started as lust and trickery ends with rage and murder. The fourth tale, the Tale of the Oppressive Landlord is also about anger and violence and results in at least five deaths. This group of tales about anger of one sort or another and its consequences corresponds roughly to Psyche's second task, gathering wool from the savage and frenetic sheep. Perhaps the point here is that rage is destructive and that one's desires may be fulfilled only when one can calm the passions.

The images of Book X are of food and drink and correspond to Psyche's third task of gathering water. In Psyche's task the water comes from a spring that leads to the underworld, the land of the dead, but it's brought to her by the eagle who brought Jupiter his cupbearer, Ganymede, from whom the God takes his drinks of nectar and ambrosia. The two tales within Book X contrast poison to Psyche's water of life and nectar of immortality. Both the tales, the Tale of the Wicked Stepmother and the Tale of the Jealous Wife, center around drinks that literally lead to the land of the dead. The wicked stepmother of the first tale tries to poison her stepson when he won't yield to her lust, but she poisons her own son by accident, and then blames the death on her stepson. The man who supplied the poison suspected foul play and gave her a potion that would produce a death-like trance, not death itself. The son returns to life and the mother is exiled. The horror intensifies in the second tale, a progression similar to the one we saw in Book IX. A jealous wife murders her rival and then poisons her husband, the doctor who gave

the drug, the doctor's wife, and finally, as greed overcomes her, her own daughter, to whom the estate would have gone.

The third poisoning incident is Lucius' indignant reference to Socrates' poisoning at the hands of the Athenians.

Was not that divinely wise old man (pronounced by the Delphic god the wisest of mortals) conquered by the lies and envy of a pack of villains who called him a corrupter of the youth when he was the bridler of excess? Was he not murdered by the deadly juices of a hellish herb, leaving his death as an indelible blot upon the state? For to this very day the most distinguished philosophers select his doctrinal teachings as supreme, and in their topmost aspirations toward happiness it is by his name that they swear (p. 233).

Lucius' invective follows his viewing of the Judgement of Paris in the arena, which contains another food image, a food that led eventually to the wholesale slaughter of the Trojan War. The Judgement of Paris centers, of course, around a golden apple marked "To the fairest." It should have gone to Wisdom, and would have, if Paris had been a Platonic philosopher. But lust delivers the apple to Venus, the Pandemic Venus, and Lucius waxes highly indignant about the "lucre of lust . . . entailing damnation on mankind" (p. 232).

When the mime is over the stage is set for the last event. The jealous wife, the convicted poisoner, will be forced to copulate in the public spectacle with Lucius. He is horrified, both by the shame of his public prostitution and the horror of contact with the polluted woman. In addition he fears death since the woman was condemned to be fed to wild beasts. If these were let in while Lucius were still in the arena he too would become their victim. Lucius escapes both the arena and Corinth and runs to the shore of the sea where he falls into a sweet sleep in the peaceful dusk.

In the Ass, a shameless Loukios is waiting in the arena upon a luxurious bed when he spies some roses, runs over to them, and is transformed right before the eyes of the spectators. Apuleius suppresses this scene and the few that follow it in his source in order to substitute a completely new resolution to the tale.

We've seen so far how Apuleius has deliberately shaped his materials to establish a close connection between his Neoplatonic myth of Cupid and Psyche and the story of Lucius. Let's turn now to a close examination of the conclusion to both, to Psyche's katabasis and apotheosis and Lucius' seaside rebirth and joyful devotion to the mysteries of Isis.

Katabasis: Experience of the "True Hades"

Psyche's last trial, her descent into the underworld, concludes with her rescue by Cupid. He arranges her reception in the Heavens and secures her apotheosis, immortality, and bliss. Lucius finds joy, success, and at least the promise of immortality once he surrenders to the care and service of Isis. Numerous scholars have observed the parallel rescue and voluptas of the two scenes, but not all have attributed the same import to them. Some, for example, believe that Apuleius was employing the love-romance convention of the final rescue by the goddess and that therefore it's unnecessary to look for a careful unity between the two endings.¹⁴ Walsh, on the other hand, observes that by "verbal correspondences and motifs too close to be coincidental, Apuleius aligns the trials of Psyche with the initiation

¹⁴ Jean-Claude Fredouille, *Introd., Apulei Metamorphoseon Liber XI / Apul e: M tamorphoses Livre XI* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1975), p. 28.

of Lucius." Walsh sees Psyche's journey as a symbolic expression of Lucius' initiation into the mysteries of Isis.¹⁵ A careful exploration of the parallels and relationships between the conclusions to both quests must shed light on what Apuleius meant by religious initiation and how he meant it to relate to the Platonic experience of wisdom.

Apulieus had a variety of sources to choose from in creating his description of Psyche's journey to the underworld, in addition to whatever folk-tale versions he might have known. The first was Homer's Odyssey, Book XI, where Odysseus visits a Hades which is not underground, but on an island on the sea's edge. Odysseus goes there for knowledge, to consult the seer Teiresias who knows past, present, and future. Besides the prophecy of Teiresias he hears the stories of many of the famous dead before he sails away. Another equally famous visitor to Hades was Hercules, who as legend had it, visited the underground world several times, once as his twelfth labor, bringing up the three-headed dog Cerberus for his master to see and then returning it, once by rescuing Alkestis, and once by rescuing Theseus. Lucius' favorite oath, in fact his only one, is "by Hercules!" He and several other characters use it throughout the novel. Though it may well have been common usage its frequent appearance is certainly no accident and serves to call the reader's attention to Hercules and to the most famous of his labors.

¹⁵ P. G. Walsh, The Roman Novel (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 222, 215. Also Schlam, p. 35.

Apuleius' most important source was no doubt Book VI of the Aeneid where Aeneas visits the underworld to find the spirit of his father and hear what his future will contain. Aeneas begins his descent by entering a cave with the Cumaean Sibyl as a guide. He passes by Agony, Age, Terror, Diseases, even Sleep and Strife, and follows the road that leads to Acheron. There Palinurus, a dead friend, holds out his hand and asks for help. Aeneas sees the judges and the judged and he stops to talk to Dido and to his Trojan allies. He finds Hell divided into Tartarus, where crimes are punished, and Elysium where the good dwell, and he discovers his father Anchises among the brave and patriotic, the pure priests and the pious poets, looking over those spirits who have been purified by their thousand year-long stay in Hell and are ready to incarnate and return to earth. Anchises explains to his son that there is a soul or consciousness within everything, a consciousness that sustains the heaven, the earth, the seas, and the stars. Human beings are composed partly of the heavenly consciousness and partly of the dull clay of matter, which leads the soul to error and sin and thus taints it, so that even after the soul separates from the body it must go through a long purification process of cleansing by air, water, and fire, until it is pure ether again. Aeneas sees his future descendants and the future leaders of Rome and he departs effortlessly through the gates of ivory.

On the comic side, Aristophanes parodied Hercules' descent into Hades in The Frogs by sending a cowardly Dionysus to harrow Hell for a tragic poet, not the three-headed dog. Lucian parodied everyone by his treatment of the Blessed Isle in his True History. There he sees Rhadamanthus conducting his court, is chided for the "idle curiosity"

that brought him there, visits with Homer and all the Greek heroes, helps them repulse an attack from the residents of the Isle of the Damned, hears his future told, and as he's leaving, agrees to deliver a note to Circe from Odysseus, who could kick himself for having refused her offer of immortality.

Apuleius' underworld is simpler than his predecessors'. He doesn't portray Hades as a place of punishment or reward such as Pindar, Plato, and their followers had done. Psyche sees no allegorical figures, and would have no need to stop to visit with friends or relatives. She does carry the traditional coins for Charon and sops for Cerberus, but she carries no golden bough or other offering to Pluto or Proserpine. She encounters a corpse while she is being ferried across the Styx who raises his hands to her and begs her to lift him into boat, reminiscent of Aeneas' meeting with Palinurus. But she heeds the tower's warning to resist any impulses of "unlawful pity" and like Aeneas turns away from the prayers of the corpse. Her only other meetings are temptations to activity, temptations to aid the donkey man and the weaving women, which she also successfully resists. This restriction not to act, not to help those who tempt her "is a vital, and deliberate difference" in Psyche's katabasis.¹⁶ She sits humbly at the feet of Proserpine and when she has the box of beauty Venus sent her for she easily finds her way back to the surface where she gratefully worships the sun, the "tide of Light" (p. 139).

¹⁶ James R. G. Wright, "Folk-tale and Literary Technique in Cupid and Psyche," Classical Quarterly, 21 (1971), 279.

Thus Psyche's katabasis contains an effortless descent, a humble and selfless stay, and an enlivened return to light and life.

When we look for the experience of Lucius that parallels Psyche's katabasis, we find that it is not his initiation experience, which comes after he is reunited with his body, but rather his seaside dream vision of Isis. When Lucius escapes from the spectacle in Corinth he runs to the nearby town of Cenchreae, one of the two ports of the city, and a renowned center for the Isiac mysteries, the most important one in the Peloponneses. As we have seen above a visit to the land of the dead could be either a descent into the earth, like Hercules', or a voyage over the sea, like Odysseus'. In fact, the underground rivers of Hades are now recognized to have replaced the Ocean River in the myths.¹⁷ So as Psyche descends underground and is ferried across the Styx, Lucius journeys to the seaside.

Lucius falls asleep on the beach, and when he awakens he sees the moon rising from the sea. Lucius recognizes the moon as "the primal goddess of supreme sway" who provides for all creatures and even the inorganic elements of creation (p. 235).¹⁸ Hopeful that he has satisfied Fortune and that salvation might lie at hand, Lucius resolves to pray to the moon. First he plunges into the sea to purify himself. The sea was considered to be immaculate and to be able to

¹⁷ W. F. Jackson Knight, Cumean Gates: A Reference of the Sixth Aeneid to the Initiation Pattern (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), p. 43.

¹⁸ Plutarch wrote that the Egyptians say that "the affairs of the moon are like the works of reason and wisdom, while those of the sun are like blows inflicted with might and main" (DIO 41, 367D-E). Hence, Lucius is turning toward reason, the highest principle of his own soul, when he turns to Isis.

cleanse and purify man from all evil. For example, those desirous of being initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries went through preliminary purification in the sea.¹⁹

After his purification Lucius prays to the moon goddess in the most universal terms possible. He equates her with all the Mediterranean mother goddesses as he prays:

"Queen of Heaven, whether you are fostering Ceres . . . , or whether you are celestial Venus . . . , or whether you are the sister of Phoebus, . . . or whether you are Proserpine, . . . --O by whatever name, and by whatever rites, and in whatever form, it is permitted to invoke you, come now and succour me in the hour of my calamity" (pp. 235-36).

Lucius then goes into a deep sleep and within that sleep he experiences a vision of Isis rising from the sea. She identifies herself to him as "the uniform manifestation of all the gods and goddesses . . . whose single godhead is venerated all over the earth under manifold forms, varying rites, and changing names" (p. 237).²⁰ She tells him that she is Isis and describes how he may regain his human form and find a life of freedom in her service. Her speech is long and the instruction detailed, and when she is finished Isis ebbs "back into her own essence" and Lucius awakens. He commits her instructions to memory and awaits the sunrise.

Apuleius has thus set Lucius' dream-vision parallel to Psyche's katabasis. Both sea and cavern are potent symbols of consciousness,

¹⁹ George Mylonas, Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 249, 238-39.

²⁰ She gives herself as Pessinuntia, Cecropian Minerva, Paphian Venus, Diana Dictynna, Proserpine, Ceres, Juno, Bellona, Hecate, Rhamnusia, and Isis, her true name (p. 238).

of the inner recesses of the human spirit. It is recognized that "Passage through a cave is a mighty poetic symbol for a change of state."²¹ The ritual theory of religion and mythology postulates ancient beliefs that human life comes from the earth and returns to it. Hence caves, which open into the earth and are entrances to the land of the dead, became the center of rituals of birth and death.²² Mircea Eliade observes that "caves played a role in prehistoric initiations, and the primordial sacredness of the cave is still decipherable in its semantic modifications." For example, "tong" originally meant cave in Chinese. Now it means "mysterious, profound, transcendent."²³ Orphic belief sometimes emphasized journeys to the world below (seen from details on Orphic vases) and may have adopted older cave myths into the religion. The idea of being reborn is also found in the cults of Demeter at Eleusis, of Cybelle, of Mithras, and of Paulline Christianity.²⁴ In fact, Virgil may have been using old cave myths and ritual patterns and doctrines of chthonic mysteries in his own treatment of the katabasis theme. Knight suggests that

the principle of initiation, either at physical birth or death, or at any other time, was evolved from a very simple

²¹ Knight, p. 7.

²² Knight, pp. 4, 7. Knight says that "there is sufficient evidence to justify the theory that developed Greek initiation contained the idea of rebirth by entry into the earth, originally by a cave" (p. 53). I am indebted to Knight for the following discussion of the cave and rebirth rituals.

²³ Mircea Eliade, Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth, trans. Willard R. Trask (Birth and Rebirth, 1958; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 58.

²⁴ J. Gwyn Griffiths, ed., Apuleius of Madauros: The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI) (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), pp. 50-51.

myth-ritual pattern of birth and death, until the exalted spiritual conceptions of the Eleusinean mysteries, Vergil, and Dante were attained (p. 58).

Earlier it was believed that initiates into the Eleusinean mysteries in their search for the renewal of the earth as well as personal rebirth might have wandered underground passages in a symbolic descent into Hades. In fact, no such rooms or passages have been discovered by archaeological digs.²⁵ What seems more likely is that the mysteries taught some techniques or were able to generate inner experiences of some transcendental reality, such as Lucius had. Initiates in the Eleusinian mysteries returned home full of joy and inner peace, profoundly changed and strengthened.²⁶ It's difficult to believe that mere pantomimes or spectacles or religious explanations could have kept the rites active and secret for over two thousand years. Possibly Apuleius parallels Psyche's katabasis to Lucius' vision of the universal Godhead to suggest that initiation ceremonies inspired profound personal experiences of inner reality. We'll take up Lucius' own initiation experience in a moment to see what it can add to this, but first let's continue to follow the parallelism Apuleius constructs between these two events.

Lucius awakens full of joy and terror over the new vision of life that has opened to him. When he looks at the world around him he finds himself in a springtime dawn.

Soon the sun of gold arose and sent the clouds of thick night flying. . . . For sunny and placid weather had suddenly come upon us after a frosty yesterday; and the tuneful birdlets,

²⁵ Mylonas, p. 268.

²⁶ Mylonas, pp. 261, 284.

coaxed out by the warmths of the Spring, were softly singing hymns of blandishment to the Mother of the Stars, the Producer of the Seasons, the Mistress of the Universe. The trees also . . . were loosed by the southerly breezes; and glistening gaily with their budded leaves, they swished their branches gently in sibilant sighs. . . . The dusky clouds were routed; and the heavens shone with clear sheer splendour of their native light (p. 239).

The "sun of gold" and the "clear sheer splendour" of the heavens echo Psyche gazing once more upon the sun and worshipping the tide of Light when she emerges from Hades. And images of the dawn of the day in the spring of the year evoke the feeling of a new life, a second birth after the experience of the night.

When Psyche emerges from Hell, Apuleius says that she is "brimming over with new life" (p. 139, longue vegetior, Met XI.20). Lucius too is reborn. Those who witness his metamorphosis cry out that "it is as though he had been set apart from the moment of his second birth for the ministry of heaven" (p. 244, emphasis mine). Lucius comments that people brought him gifts and looked upon him "as a man divinely raised up out of death" (p. 245). Clearly then, Apuleius meant to link the two scenes and to enrich the ritual katabasis by connecting it to a profound inner experience and rebirth into a second life.

Minor parallels between the two scenes are numerous. Walsh notes that Psyche's meeting with the ass and his driver and the secret box in the underworld are echoed by an ass following an old man and a chest containing the Secret Things in the procession Lucius watches before his reunion with his body.²⁷ Perhaps one reason Psyche's box contains Sleep is that Apuleius wished to parallel Lucius awakening

²⁷ Walsh, pp. 222-23.

from sleep on the morning of his transformation. Psyche's deathlike sleep would also once again suggest Socrates' "practicing death," and this time it leads to her rescue and apotheosis.

From Reunion to Voluptas

Psyche is reunited with Cupid and Lucius regains his human body by eating a garland of roses. It's striking that Lucius' method of deliverance from his donkey shape is the eating of roses. The rose has been used repeatedly throughout literature to symbolize the full bloom of the inner life. James Joyce uses the image of the opening rose to suggest the soul of his character Stephen Dedalus blissfully unfolding its own life and creativity. And the rose is the flower of the troubadours, of the Medieval alchemists and of the Rosicrucians who take it to symbolize "the embodiment of the infinite love of God."²⁸

Parallel to Cupid sending Psyche to Venus to deliver the box of beauty is the priest Mithras who initiates Lucius into the mysteries of Isis. Plutarch tells the story of the two rival gods of the Zoroastrians, one the creator of good and the other the creator of evil, and between the two was Mithras (Mithrês). "And this is why the Persians call Mithrês the mediator" (DIO 46, 369D-E). Mithras mediates between Lucius and Isis, and the comparison is very apt because Isis, according to Plutarch, is the "female principle in nature." She is "one who is exceptionally wise and devoted to wisdom" (DIO 2, 351E). She is imbued with "a love of the foremost and most

²⁸ Manly Hall, Preface, The Fable of Cupid and Psyche, trans. Thomas Taylor (London, 1795; rpt. Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Soc., 1977).

sovereign thing of all, which is the same as the Good, and this she longs for and pursues" (DIO 53, 372E).²⁹ The enemy of Isis is Typhon (or Seth) who is "everything harmful and destructive in nature" (DIO 45, 369A). Typhon was associated with the ass, the "most stupid of the domesticated animals" and with the crocodile and hippopotamus, of "wild animals the most bestial" (DIO, 50 371C).³⁰ Typhon was also associated with that "element of the soul which is passionate . . . without reason, and brutish, and the element of the corporeal which is subject to death, disease, and confusion" (DIO 49, 371B). Lucius has personified Isis' greatest enemy and opposite and Mithras now mediates between them. When Lucius sloughs off his donkey shape, he will slough off his mortality; he will be eligible for initiation, which will lead to immortality, or so Isis promises.

When the proper day finally arrives Lucius is initiated into the mysteries of Isis. He's forbidden to describe the ceremony itself, but he can relate his subjective experiences:

I approached the confines of death. I trod the threshold
of Proserpine; and borne through the elements I returned.

²⁹ Griffiths notes that to Plutarch Isis is a "goddess of wisdom and her mysteries lead to gnosis of the highest being, that is, Osiris" (DIO, p. 57). He also comments that there is a "pallid form of this in Apuleius" but that the gulf between them is a very big one. I disagree. I think that Apuleius is employing the Isiac mysteries in the very way Plutarch describes them, as will become evident in the remainder of this chapter.

³⁰ Typhon supposedly had a ruddy complexion and asses symbolic of Typhon were sometimes thrown off cliffs at festivals (DIO, 362E). The various times that Lucius is nearly thrown off a cliff and the asses in Psyche's katabasis and the procession may play on this fact. There is considerable discussion that the title Golden Ass may be meant as "ruddy ass" (see, for example, René Martin, "Le Sens de l'expression asinus aureas et la signification du roman apulésien," Revue des Études Latines, 48 [1970], 332-54).

At midnight I saw the Sun shining in all his glory. I approached the gods below and the gods above, and I stood beside them, and I worshipped them. Behold, I have told my experience, and yet what you hear can mean nothing to you. I shall therefore keep to the facts which can be declared to the profane without offence (p. 249).

Psyche too was borne through the elements (fire animating the dangerous sheep, water pouring from the source of the Styx, air and earth as she descends through Pluto's breathing hole in the underworld) and eventually she is pure enough to ascend into the ether and join the gods above. Mithraist initiates also passed through the four elements, experienced a symbolic death, a rebirth, and a sun shining during the night.³¹ Lucius' references to the Sun shining, Proserpine and the confines of death relate this initiation to Psyche's katabasis and to his earlier dream vision. The indicatory references to the sun shining at midnight (solem candido coruscantem lumine, Met XI.23) are particularly interesting.

Plato defines the Good as:

the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light, and the author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason.³²

The way to turn from darkness to light, he relates, is to turn the organ of knowledge away from "the world of becoming . . . until the soul is able to endure the contemplation of essence and the brightest region of being. And this, we say, is the good" (Rep 7.518C).

³¹ Griffiths, Isis-Book, p. 305. Also, the Egyptians located the realm of the dead in the underworld which the sun visits during the night (p. 297).

³² The Republic, trans. Paul Shorey, in Collected Dialogues, 7.517C. Future references will appear in the text.

Apuleius, in his exposition of Plato's thought in his treatise On the God of Socrates, speaks of how, even through the technique of separating the soul from the body, knowledge of God can barely be apprehended. Apuleius goes on: "[Plato] also adds, that this knowledge sometimes shines forth with a most rapid coruscation, like a bright and clear light in the most profound darkness."³³ The translator remarks that this actually isn't in Plato but that there's something similar in the seventh epistle concerning the intuition of an idea, viz. "that from long converse with the thing itself, accompanied by a life in conformity to it, on a sudden, light, as if from a leaping fire, will be enkindled in the soul, and will therefore itself nourish itself (Socrates, p. 295 n). It seems as if Apuleius may be relating his own experience of inner light, as he describes both Platonic thought and Lucius' initiation experiences.

Of interest are also Plutarch's remarks:

But the understanding of what is spiritually intelligible and pure and holy, having shone through the soul like lightning, affords only one chance to touch and behold it. For this reason both Plato (Symp 210A) and Aristotle call this branch of philosophy that concerned with the highest mysteries, in that those who have passed beyond these conjectural, confused and widely varied matters spring up by force of reason to that primal, simple and immaterial element; and having directly grasped the pure truth attached to it, they believe that they hold the ultimate end of philosophy in the manner of a mystic revelation (DIO 77, 382D-E, emphasis mine).

I find the idea of a "mystic revelation" occurring at initiation rites much more palatable than theories that priests acted out dramas with torches, manipulating huge figures of gods, and so forth. In

³³ The God of Socrates, in Taylor, p. 295. Future references will appear in the text.

fact, Angus believes that the mystery religions "provoked in the initiate a mystical experience conducing to palegenesia (regeneration), the object of every initiation."³⁴ Whatever occurred during initiation was not there primarily to instruct, but to "induce the initiand . . . to experience his identification with the deity," to "behold an epiphany of the deity" (pp. 93, 135, emphasis mine). He notes that Aristides wrote of an experience in which "'there came from Isis a light and other unutterable things conducing to salvation,'" and is confident that Apuleius is referring to just such records of dazzling light epiphanies in his account of Lucius' initiation (pp. 135-36).³⁵ It seems difficult to believe that a philosopher as sophisticated and widely travelled as Apuleius could have been taken in by a spectacle, no matter how skillfully produced. It seems reasonable to suggest that he would attribute his own initiation experiences to Lucius and feel confident that they were perceptions of the "brightest region of being" leading to immortality, as in both tales.

³⁴ S. Angus, The Mystery-Religions (The Mystery-Religions and Christianity), London, 1925; rpt. New York: Dover, 1975), p. 45. Future references will appear in the text.

³⁵ Griffiths notes that although various scholars such as du Prel and de Jong believe that Lucius is having a "mystic light experience," he thinks that such phenomena were systematically planned. He also notes that early Christian liturgy and ceremonial used the concept and practice of "illumination" as well (Isis-Book, p. 305). Another explanation suggests that fasting, continence, and excitation all produce a cateleptic state in which such experiences could occur (Elizabeth H. Haight, Apuleius and His Influence [New York: Longmans Green, 1927], p. 57). Angus too suspects that mystic experiences were induced by such techniques (p. 101). However such experiences were produced in the initiate, the point is that an actual experience was produced, and not just a religious instruction or symbol shown.

Thus, the curiosity of Lucius and Psyche brings them ultimately to divine knowledge. As has been observed by various scholars, curiosity can be for good or for bad. It is not necessarily bad in itself. Thibau notes that curiosity is absolutely necessary for philosophical astonishment, which then leads the seeker on to search for truth (p. 95). Lucius' curiosity is a good trait and "indicates an intellectual and spiritual restlessness" even if he has at the time "no knowledge of the true reality."³⁶ Without his curiosity Lucius might still be doing business in Hypata and Psyche might have grown old in her hidden valley, never attaining immortality. Instead, both young innocents reach their destined apotheosis.

After Cupid sends Psyche to Venus, he persuades Jupiter to allow their marriage. Jupiter grants his prayer, forgiving Cupid's former blows on "'this breast of mine, in which repose the laws of the Elements and the motions of the Stars'" (p. 140). In this description Apuleius playfully combines a Lucianic satire of the father of the Gods with a hint of his profound and cosmic symbolism, "his incredible and ineffable transcendency, [which] cannot be even moderately comprehended by any definition, through the poverty of human speech" (Socrates, p. 295).

Jupiter mollifies Venus and sends Mercury to bring Psyche up to him. Similarly Lucius finds himself summoned by Osiris, "the supreme Father of the Gods," to another initiation (p. 252). Just as Jupiter, who for Virgil was the "expression of the divine will for the whole world," gives Psyche the nectar and ambrosia that will make her

³⁶ Penwill, p. 67.

immortal, so Osiris, "the most powerful of the great gods, the highest of the greater, the greatest of the highest, and the ruler of the greatest," appears to Lucius to promise him that he will remain "eternally blessed" (p. 254). Isis had promised him earlier that he would dwell forever in the Elysian fields after his death and that if he were diligent in his devotion to her she would prolong his earthly life "'beyond the limits set to it by Fate'" (p. 239).

Contact with Osiris indicates a higher stage of spiritual progress for Lucius. Plutarch describes Isis as having power over the material aspect of creation "which becomes everything and receives everything--light and darkness, day and night, fire and water, life and death, beginning and end" while Osiris is the "primal element." His robe is "one simple colour, the colour of light: for the origin of things is unadulterated and the primal element which is spiritually intelligible is unmixed" (DIO 77, 282C).

Plutarch's rendering of the Osirian religion reflects his own Neoplatonic understanding, which is not especially close to the Egyptian tradition.³⁷ His method is allegorical and symbolic. He is more interested in a Neoplatonic interpretation of the meaning of the mysteries rather than in their historical or literal aspects.³⁸ It's an understanding that would appeal to Apuleius, however, much more than one that was more accurate and less philosophical. Plutarch's work must have seemed quite relevant to his own concerns.

³⁷ Griffiths, Isis-Book, p. 74.

³⁸ Griffiths, Isis-Book, pp. 100-01.

After Psyche drinks nectar and ambrosia she is wed to Cupid. This, one scholar feels, is parallel to Lucius being initiated into the mystery of Osiris, and thus, as Osiris, being joined to Isis, his spouse.³⁹ Lucius is initiated a third time, into another mystery of Isis in order to regain his Olympic stole. Parallel to this is Psyche's Olympian wedding, the very picture of fulfillment:

The Hours emblazoned everything with roses and other flowers; the Graces scattered balsam; the Muses sang in harmony; Apollo chanted to his lyre; and beautiful Venus danced, her gestures chiming with the music (pp. 141-42).

The last parallel between the two quests, as numerous critics have observed, is the theme of voluptas or bliss. Psyche gives birth to a daughter named Voluptas and Lucius expresses joy (gaudio) in every aspect of his new life. He experiences marvellous pleasure (inexplicabilis voluptas, Met XI.24) in contemplating the statue of Isis.⁴⁰ Lucius' story ends with his pleasure in executing his office; the last two words of the novel are gaudens obibam.

Voluptas is used throughout The Golden Ass for a wide range of pleasures.⁴¹ It can mean both sensual and spiritual bliss. Divina voluptas is used by Epicurean philosophers "to characterize the freedom and joy of philosophic enlightenment and takes in something of

³⁹ Schlam, p. 35.

⁴⁰ Angus notes that contemplative adoration or meditation was very characteristic of Egyptian religion and was practiced in order to experience henosis or mystic union. Egyptian temples provided places to meditate and priests often devoted their lives to such practices (p. 133).

⁴¹ See the discussion in Henry Ebel, After Dionysus: An Essay on Where We Are Now (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 43-44.

the religious overtones of 'blessedness.'"42 In giving the name of Voluptas to the baby often born at the conclusion of folk-tale versions of the tale, Apuleius is expressing the joy and pleasure of religious initiation, the product of Soul joining the celestial company of the gods, or experiencing pure wisdom, "the brightest region of being."

The Unity of the Golden Ass

When we review the evidence in Tables 1,2, and 3 it becomes clear that nearly all of the changes and additions Apuleius made in his source material serve to link the quests of Psyche and of Lucius and to amplify their symbolic and universal meaning. Modern scholarship has tended to search for unity between the ass narrative and the interpolated tales, especially "Cupid and Psyche" and to reject the extreme separatist view of Perry that the tales are told merely "for the purpose of entertaining or amusing the reader with a good story told for its own sake, or with a display of rhetorical or dramatic virtuosity on whatever subject" and that Apuleius added the last chapter simply to "redeem his book from the appearance of complete frivolity."⁴³

Book XI can now be seen as the obvious conclusion to the preceding ten. Sandy sees it as "the moral complement to the first three books," and not as a contrived ending such as that typical in the comic romance.⁴⁴ And Griffith observes that it "carries on the

⁴² Schlam, p. 38.

⁴³ Ben E. Perry, The Ancient Romances (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967), p. 244.

narrative smoothly, providing at once a culmination and a spiritual ordering of the whole."⁴⁵ Although the irony present in the earlier books ceases, other characteristics of Apuleius' style, such as puns and word play continue.⁴⁶ The tone is loftier, however, and this no doubt "reflects the new level of understanding that Lucius has reached."⁴⁷

Although Isis enters the story rather abruptly at the beginning of Book XI, there were hints throughout of the Egyptian religious view. For example, in his preface Apuleius said he was writing his tale on Egyptian papyrus with a "subtle pen of Nilotic reeds" (p. 31). Drake argues that Apuleius is thus saying that he will "guide his readers through the subtleties of Egyptian theology" and that the word calami "proleptically implies that the theme is the Isiac road to divine love."⁴⁸ In the tale of Telephron we see how an Isiac priest brings a dead man back to life in order to reveal the cause of his death. The "magic" he performs outshines all the witchcraft Lucius ever hears about. Furthermore, it's possible that other Egyptian elements in the first ten books may point to the Isiac conclusion.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Gerald N. Sandy, "Book 11: Ballast or Anchor?" in Hijmans and Van der Paardt, p. 124.

⁴⁵ Isis-Book, p. 7.

⁴⁶ Fredouille, pp. 9-13.

⁴⁷ Penwill, p. 73.

⁴⁸ Gertrude C. Drake, "Candidus: A Unifying Theme in Apuleius' Metamorphoses," Classical Journal, 64 (1968), 103 n. 8.

⁴⁹ Fredouille observes that Lucius' unfortunate loss of his fish dinner at the close of Book I is "sans doute inspirée du rite ancien du 'piétinement des poissons' qui commémore la victoire de dieu Soleil
(Footnote continued)

Since Lucius is an ass and therefore the image of Typhon, the first ten books may be seen as the picture of life under the sway of Typhon and the eleventh as the deliverance. This is, of course, parallel to the picture the gossipy gull paints of life without Venus and Cupid: "'no Joy, no Grace, no Elegance anywhere nothing but the Rude, the Rustic, and the Uncouth--no Marriage-bond, no Social Intercourse, no Love of Children; nothing but an utter Lack of Order'" (p. 125). Venus is not usually considered to be the goddess of the "Marriage-bond" and the "Love of Children," but since Isis is known as the goddess of married and parental love, the words take on additional meaning and further link the two goddesses.

One of the major objections to the argument that Apuleius has artfully used the Isiac material to bring Lucius' quest to its logical conclusion is the question of its autobiographical value. In Book XI, after repeatedly identifying Lucius as a Corinthian, Apuleius appears to make a change. Lucius suddenly appears as a poor man from Madaura (Madaurenses sed admodum pauperem, Met XI.27). It is possible that the unexpected reference to Madaura is an identifying seal (sphragis) that dramatically reveals the author of a work.⁵⁰ And if this is

49(continued)
 (Rè) sur les éléments" (p. 21). He feels this anticipates Lucius' later victory over Fortune. Reinhold Merkelbach explicates the entire Cupid and Psyche myth as a detailed description of an Isiac initiation ("Eros und Psyche," Philologus, 102 (1958), 103-16; rpt. in Amor und Psyche, ed. Gerhard Binder and Reinhold Merkelbach [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968], pp. 392-407), and B. Lavagnini sees the first ten books as corresponding to the ten days preparation prior to Isiac initiation (Il Significato e il valore del romanzo di Apuleio [Pisa, 1923]). Apuleius may have exploited parallels between various aspects of the novel and Isiac initiation, but, as we saw earlier, the main structure of the tale derives from folk tale and from Neoplatonic philosophy.

true, does Apuleius do it for evangelical purposes, as Walsh suggests, or to claim credit for an anonymously published work not worthy of his dignified position?⁵¹ This question has generated considerable controversy. Perry thinks these words mean that Book XI "is a personal gospel in which the author intentionally makes it clear to his public that he is testifying on the basis of his own religious experience and conviction; and that 'Lucius' hitherto of Corinth . . . is none other than Apuleius of Madaura."⁵²

More than one editor suggests that the reference to Madaura may have been a scribal slip and was probably not in the original.⁵³ Fredouille argues very convincingly that sense and grammar indicate that the text should read Corinthiensem not Madaurensem, and he amends his own edition of Book XI to so read.⁵⁴ He also observes that the prayers to Isis and her aretology are derived directly from Isiac hymns and contain no new doctrinal element or personal accent.⁵⁵ It has also been pointed out that the story of Lucius' vocation is not

⁵⁰ James Tatum, Apuleius and The Golden Ass (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), p. 88.

⁵¹ Walsh, p. 6 and passim.

⁵² Perry, p. 242. Numerous others hold the same opinion, e.g., Tatum, p. 19.

⁵³ Apuleius was known throughout the Middle Ages as a sorcerer, and it's possible that some medieval copiest unwittingly transcribed Madaurensem for Corinthiensem. See, for example, the discussion of D. S. Robertson, "Lucius of Madaura: A Difficulty in Apuleius," Classical Quarterly, 4 (1910), 223.

⁵⁴ See Fredouille, pp. 14-19, for a detailed discussion of this issue.

⁵⁵ Fredouille, p. 14.

entirely original. Lucius' hesitations before his three initiations are not only psychologically sound but conventional; they appear in similar religious works. Dream visions were also common and reported by the devotees of various sects.⁵⁶ One original note may be Lucius' grateful and joyful devotion to Isis (both to her and to her statue).⁵⁷ But just because Apuleius has vividly created the experience of religious conversion and devotion doesn't mean that he personally experienced it or is evangelizing it.⁵⁸

My own feeling is that Apuleius employed the doctrines and rituals of the Isiac mysteries in his work, not because he personally was championing them over other mystery religions, but because they best suited his source materials and purposes. We know from his other writings that he participated in several mysteries and worshipped more than one god.⁵⁹ Nowhere in his treatises or Apology does he mention either The Golden Ass or a personal experience with the Isiac mysteries. There's no biographical evidence at all which can conclusively indicate when he wrote the novel and under what circumstances. But granted Apuleius' Neoplatonic interests and commitments and his pious regard for the religions of his day, we can

⁵⁶ André-Jean Festugière, Personal Religion among the Greeks (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1954), pp. 79-80.

⁵⁷ Festugière, p. 84.

⁵⁸ Festugière observes that Lucius had to be "called" in order to be initiated into the mysteries of Isis. He notes that Pausanias records the same stricture on Isiac initiation (p. 79). Hence, Lucius' conversion would not necessarily send Apuleius' readers begging for initiation. This undermines the idea that Book XI is religious propaganda or evangelism for the Isiac mysteries.

⁵⁹ See his Apology 9, 55, 56, 61, 63, and his Florida 18.

admit the strong possibility that he is relating a religious experience with a sense of personal conviction.

Why Isis and not some other god or goddess? As we've seen from Plutarch De Iside et Osiride, the Isiac religion could be selectively interpreted in terms of the Neoplatonic search for wisdom and thus used to incorporate personal mystical experiences.⁶⁰ To my mind, the strongest reason for Apuleius' choice of the Isiac mysteries over the many others available to complement the Cupid and Psyche story is the Lucius story itself. The tale of a man being turned into an ass, the Typhonic image and bestial symbol of stupidity and ignorance, cries out for an Isiac treatment. Also, the Isis religion was well known for its employment of magic practices.⁶¹ Thus, Lucius' story is ready-made for a parable of moral growth and religion conversion, if the Typhon/Isis connection is made. If we are aware of the Isiac system then Lucius' transformation into an ass is profoundly symbolic, as is his transformation back.⁶² In the broadest sense, Lucius' soul is controlled by its Typhonic aspects until he aligns himself with Isis, the principle of the search for the good, and regains rational control of his destiny. When we see how Apuleius shaped and transformed his original material to suit his ends we can readily see

60 J. Gwyn Griffith notes that Plutarch, for one, describes various crudities associated with Isiac doctrine which Apuleius obviously chose not to include ("Isis in the Metamorphoses of Apuleius," in Hijmans and Van der Paardt, p. 158).

61 Angus, p. 53.

62 Tatum notes that Lucius being transformed into an ass is therefore "an action of the highest religious significance" (p. 45).

how the Isiac mysteries, as described by Plutarch, must have seemed tailor-made to his story of the Neoplatonic search for beauty/wisdom.

In fact, Apuleius' version of the Isiac religion is "profondément revue et corrigée par le platonisme hellénistique" just as Plutarch's was.⁶³ Thibau points to innumerable allusions to Platonic ideas throughout the novel, not just in "Cupid and Psyche."⁶⁴ All in all, the evidence gathered over the last few chapters leads to the view that Apuleius based his work on a rich and complex Neoplatonic foundation. In fact, it was the Neoplatonic understanding of characters (e.g., Psyche, Cupid, Mithras, Isis, Venus), events (e.g. practicing death, the philosophical guidance of Pan/Socrates and old lady/Diotima), and motifs (e.g., the search for wisdom, the "true Hades") that led to our recognition of the many connections between the two stories.

Even critics who have not been sensitive to the unity of The Golden Ass have observed that the "typical style of the Metamorphoses is musical and repetitive. There is hardly anything in the book that doesn't have its analogy in another section."⁶⁵ We have seen here that those analogies connect the two stories inextricably together and define the soul's quest for wisdom and fulfillment.

⁶³ Thibau, p. 142.

⁶⁴ So do numerous others, e.g., Carl C. Schlam, "Platonica in the Metamorphoses of Apuleius," Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Assoc., 101 (1970), 477-87; Penwill p. 65; and Drake, who, among others, argues that Lucius' white horse is a Platonic symbol for the moral control which he loses in Book I and regains in Book XI.

⁶⁵ Ebel, p. 34.

In Apuleius' view the pursuit of wisdom is at variance with magic and sensuality, and not always easy. Yet if one perseveres, the rewards are well worth the struggle. Essential to success seems to be the spiritual katabasis. It is only after Lucius has his vision of Isis that he becomes full of joy and able to prepare himself for initiation (through continence). It is only after his second katabasis (his initiation) that he finds himself full of inexpli-
cabilis voluptas. Subsequent initiations are directly credited with his happiness and material success.

What Apuleius appears to emphasize in Neoplatonic theory is the significant part the mysteries can play in triggering inner experiences of the "brightest region of being." It is the experience itself which can set a soul in pursuit of divine knowledge, of wisdom, not necessarily the reverse. It is the experience that is morally purifying, not moral purity that necessarily leads to the experience. What produces Lucius' first katabasis, his dream vision of Isis, is not purity (he had been enjoying a gluttonous and sensual life in the care of his last master), but surrender. When Lucius purifies himself in the sea and then prays for divine aid, it comes. Psyche, too, must surrender to Venus before she can be reunited with Cupid.

Although not every aspect of the two tales can be aligned, due to their very different origins, it seems clear that Apuleius intended them to be closely connected, taken together, and used to amplify each other. "Cupid and Psyche" has often been recognized as the centerpiece of the novel, a mythic projection of Lucius' trials, but critics have maintained that the work is not "strictly and mechanically organized," and that it "lacks the homogeneity of a closely

articulated work of art."⁶⁶ I think, on the contrary, that the work is strictly organized, and the form it follows occurs in nature in the DNA molecule, that is, the double helix, a spiral within a spiral.

The spiral form was used to structure extended narratives long before Apuleius. Homer uses it in both the Iliad and the Odyssey. In the Iliad Achilles and the Achaian forces return to the point at which they were before Achilles' anger, but Achilles comes to rest on a higher plane of moral and social integration. His consciousness has expanded to comprehend the forces guiding the destiny of the Achaian and the Trojan people, as well as his own. In the Odyssey Odysseus returns home, no longer the young soldier, but a mature, battle-tested warrior, a true king, to rewin his wife and kingdom.

Both Psyche and Lucius begin their adventures in a state of unity, Psyche with Cupid and Lucius in his own body, but in a unity of ignorance. Psyche is ignorant of her true nature and her husband's. Her marriage takes place in the darkness and on a sensual plane only. She is dominated by Cupid's desires for love, secrecy, and isolation. Lucius is also in a state of ignorance. He is dominated by the sensual desires of his body; he drinks too much, loses his wits, and pursues sacrilegious curiosity rather than wisdom.

After their respective katabases both Psyche and Lucius are rescued by divine grace. Both return to a state of unity, but a unity of light, knowledge, and bliss. Psyche is deified, married openly and eternally to Cupid, and delivered of Joy, but she moves from her valley paradise to an Olympian one. Similarly Lucius returns to

⁶⁶ Ebel, p. 47. Also, see Walsh, p. 143.

Corinth (his birthplace) but finds Isis at Cenchreae, the port of Corinth. This slight displacement makes his career a spiral rather than a circle, especially since Cenchreae was known as a center of the Isis mysteries while Corinth was known as a city of great luxury and great poverty and all the abuses that come with that gap.⁶⁷ Since Apuleius chose his names and places carefully he no doubt intended to evoke the well-known reputations of both towns to highlight his symbolic use of them. Lucius finds both spiritual and worldly success in his new life as a devotee of Isis, reunited with his own body and finally using it to serve his spirit, not dull it.

We see further that both spirals relate to each other as they move along. As we read the first half of "Cupid and Psyche" we recall the first half of Lucius' career. As we read about the rest of Lucius' trials and his new life we remember Psyche's wanderings, katabasis, and apotheosis. The structure is not merely a story within a story, a technique common in Alexandrian literature,⁶⁸ but "Cupid and Psyche" is the active core and key to the work as a whole. Together the two narratives form a double helix, the DNA of spiritual growth. And at the center of the pattern of spiritual growth is the katabasis, the inner experience of a reality that transcends the senses. It is to an exploration of this crucial experience that we now turn in our effort

⁶⁷ Fredouille, p. 16-17. See also H.J. Mason, "Lucius at Corinth," Phoenix, 25 (1971), 160-65. Mason notes that Corinth was familiar to Roman readers as the city of Medea, as the first arena in the Greek world where gladiators fought, and as a city of a lively Aphrodite cult with temple prostitutes. It was known therefore for its lack of sexual restraint, its wealth (no doubt ill-gotten), and its cruelty and inhumanity.

⁶⁸ See Walsh, p. 190.

to evaluate the influence and effect of the tale of Cupid and Psyche and of the pattern it embodies.

Chapter V

The Transcending Pattern: A Penetration to the Self

In structuring the myth of Cupid and Psyche and setting it within the frame narrative of Lucius' search for spiritual knowledge and salvation Apuleius has created an archetype or original pattern for the spiritual quest. Essential to the soul's attainment of wholeness, integration, and immortality is the experience of initiation or spiritual rebirth. In order to live a life more in tune with divine harmony the soul must first experience the bliss and expanded consciousness that accompany such a life. The mystery religions that gave an initiate such an experience died away long ago, but the mere fact of their existence suggests that there must be a natural experience of katabasis, of descending into the self to a level of greater psychic wholeness and power which can revitalize the individual's life forces and even provide some transcendental knowledge of reality not normally available at the sensory level of experience. Many cultures, in fact, have observed and even formalized myths and rituals that encode such an experience of spiritual rebirth.

Spiritual Rebirth in Myth and Ritual

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropologist James Frazer studied numerous myths and rituals of Mediterranean cultures to notice that they frequently concerned death and rebirth. He observed that one member of a divine pair (e.g., Tammuz, Adonis,

Attis, Osiris, Persephone) would die or perhaps pass into the underworld. The other member (Ishtar, Aphrodite, Isis, Demeter) would grieve for her loss, search for the missing beloved, and in the end, succeed in rescuing or reviving him or her. Frazer saw in this the vegetative cycle. The seed must "die" and be buried before Mother Earth can bring it to new life. Rituals performed on these themes would create an effect upon nature, and, to the primitive mind, induce nature to come forth with life once again in the spring.

For Frazer, Persephone and Demeter were personifications of grain in the various stages of its life cycle. But, he allowed:

. . . to maintain this is not to deny that in the long course of religious evolution high moral and spiritual conceptions were grafted on this simple original stock and blossomed out into fairer flowers than the bloom of the barley and the wheat. Above all, the thought of the seed buried in the earth in order to spring up to new and higher life readily suggested a comparison with human destiny, and strengthened the hope that for man too the grave may be but the beginning of a better and happier existence in some brighter world unknown.¹

As Theodore Gaster points out, subsequent anthropology has modified Frazer's theories and now sees the gods as probably representing the whole rhythm of life, not just the cyclic vegetative rebirth rhythm.² But Frazer's argument for the ritual origin of myth stimulated considerable research and controversy, and the abridged one-volume edition of his work became an essential text for mythologists and literary critics of the early twentieth century. Now

¹ Sir James George Frazer, The New Golden Bough, ed. Theodore H. Gaster (New York: Criterion, 1959), p. 365.

² Frazer, p. 390.

it is seen to be "less a compendium of facts than a giant quest romance couched in the form of objective research."³ In any event, Frazer's work stimulated considerable research on ritual and on its connection with myth. Controversy will perhaps never cease over whether ritual gives rise to myth, myth arises to explain ritual or whether either can arise independently of the other.

For example, Jane Harrison argues in Themis that:

The myth is not at first aetiological, it does not arise to give a reason; it is representative, another form of utterance, of expression. When the emotion that started the ritual has died down and the ritual though hallowed by tradition seems unmeaning, a reason is sought in myth and it is regarded as aetiological.⁴

Lord Raglan observed that where myth is living it is associated with ritual. This, he feels, suggests that all myths once had a ritual beginning which is now lost.⁵ Wheelwright sees rituals as a "treasury of inherited wisdom and cultural cohesion," but, he points out, not all myths appear to be connected to ritual, those which attempt to explain creation, for example.⁶ It is possible, however, that those myths which appear to be independent of ritual could be so changed by

³ John B. Vickery, "The Golden Bough: Impact and Archetype," in Myth and Symbol: Critical Approaches and Applications, ed. Bernice Slote (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 184.

⁴ Quoted in Stanley Edgar Hyman, "The Ritual View of Myth and the Mythic," in Myth: A Symposium, ed. Thomas A. Seboek (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1955), p. 148.

⁵ See especially The Hero (London: Watts, 1949) and "Myth and Ritual," in Seboek, pp. 122-35.

⁶ Philip Wheelwright, The Burning Fountain, rev. ed. (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1968), p. 157.

the passage of time that their ritual origin would be undecipherable, even if the ritual itself had persisted in some unrecognizable form.

Some scholars, such as Stith Thompson, believe that myths and folk tales are created merely to entertain and that they cannot bear the weight of either allegorical or "fantastical" psychoanalytic interpretations. While he reluctantly admits that "perhaps some of these interpretations have value" Thompson steadfastly maintains that:

On the whole, however, a quest for meaning outside the tale or myth itself is doomed to failure, because we simply do not know the frame of mind of the unknown person in the unknown place and the unknown time and the unknown culture who first contrived the story.⁷

We can, like Thompson, be concerned with myth as a record of man's actual culture and history, but we can also admit that myth has value "as a means of establishing universal patterns of thought . . . motivation and conduct."⁸ Who first created a tale and where and when are simply not important to an understanding of the universal level of meaning that a particular tale may express. Myth is more consistently seen, not as a primitive fiction associated with an individual or tribe, but rather as "the dramatic representation of our deepest instinctual life."⁹ This is the view accepted today.

The Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, for example, defines myth as "a story or a complex of story elements taken as expressing and

⁷ "Myth and Folktales," in Seboek, pp. 177-78.

⁸ David Bidney, "Myth, Symbolism, and Truth," in Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice, ed. John B. Vickery (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 13.

⁹ Wilfred L. Guerin et al., A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, 2nd. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 156.

therefore as implicitly symbolizing, certain deep-lying aspects of human and transhuman experience."¹⁰ The same may be true of ritual. Anthropologists such as Van Gennep, Turner, and Eliade, have examined ritual in such a way as to uncover the basic "structures of experience" that are the "fundamental units in the study of human action."¹¹ Arnold Van Gennep's pioneering study Les rites de passage presents a valuable angle on the rebirth experience.

Van Gennep analyzed rituals regulating interactions of individuals with social groups and found that they appeared to follow the same basic pattern. Whether concerned with pregnancy or childbirth, initiation or marriage, funerals or seasonal events, all rituals seemed to fall naturally in one or more of three phases or categories: 1) rites of separation (séparation), 2) rites of transition (marge), and 3) rites of incorporation (agrégation). In his work Van Gennep brilliantly synthesized a vast body of ritual data in terms of a series of passages or transitions from one age to another or from one group to another.

For example, rites concerned with the passage of an individual from one society to another can be grouped into those concerned with his departure from the original group, those concerned with the transition, where the individual must wait at the threshold of the new society for some time, and finally rites of incorporation governing the individual's acceptance into the new society. These categories

¹⁰ Quoted in Wheelwright, p. 148.

¹¹ Victor Turner, "Social Dramas and Stories about Them," Critical Inquiry, 7 (1980), 143.

seem to hold whether the individual is leaving childhood and entering upon adult life, leaving this life and entering the world of the dead, leaving the single life and entering into married life, or any sort of change in status. The goal of these rites, Van Gennep observes, is "to insure a change of condition or a passage from one magico-religious or secular group to another."¹² One can think of our own elaborate rituals of citizenship or marriage or divorce for examples of how these ritual stages have been formalized into custom or even law.

What interests us most in van Gennep's work is his emphasis on the marge, the periods of transition that appear to be necessary for the movements of life. The period of waiting and resting in a magic or isolated situation implies a process of internal change and adjustment, a process of "enacting death in one condition and resurrection in another," he writes (p. 13). In various initiation ceremonies this process can be made quite explicit. For example, Van Gennep cites ceremonies for the "twice born" where a Brahman "undergoes initiation ceremonies enacting death in a previous world and birth into a new one" (p. 105). In other societies, a shaman may go into a trance where his spirit is believed to be travelling to another world for knowledge. When the spirit returns, the body reanimates and the shaman uses the knowledge gained to heal his patient or society. Van Gennep cites other anthropologists who

¹² The Rites of Passage, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 11. Future references will appear in the text.

observe that "the idea of a momentary death is a general theme of magical as well as religious initiation" (p. 110).

Continuing with Van Gennep's work Victor Turner identifies the marge or "liminal" phase to be the "essential, antiseccular component of true ritual."¹³ That is, the liminal phase is the transcendental part of ritual. Turner likens it "to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon."¹⁴ In other words, the liminal phase creates the possibility for a new life to come out of a field of almost limitless possibility, what Eliade calls a "preformal state," a "latent mode of being (complementary to the precosmogonic Chaos)."¹⁵ Turner maintains that for its participants the performance of ritual is actually "informed with powers both transcendental and immanent." It has an "abyss" in it, transcendently speaking, and "is an effort to make meaningful the dialectical relation of what the Silesian mystic Jakob Boehme, following Meister Eckhart, called 'ground and Uground.'¹⁶

Mircea Eliade calls the initiatory death "indispensable for the beginning of spiritual life" and emphasizes its importance (p. xiv). The beyond or the other world is not only the land of the dead (who

¹³ Turner, p. 161.

¹⁴ Victor Turner, The Ritual Process (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), p. 95.

¹⁵ Mircea Eliade, Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth, trans. Willard R. Trask (orig. Birth and Rebirth, 1958; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. xiv. Future references will appear in the text.

¹⁶ Turner, "Social Dramas," pp. 160, 163.

are usually regarded as "possessors of arcane knowledge") but also as a "place of knowledge and wisdom," an enchanted or miraculous or transcendent plane (pp. 37, 64). Hence, the symbolism of death to the profane condition is always present, is always "characteristic of every genuine religious experience" (p. 52). Eliade observes that when, in sophisticated societies, initiatory patterns lost their reality and effectiveness as ritual they became literary motifs: "This is as much as to say that they now deliver their spiritual message on a different plane of human experience, by addressing themselves directly to the imagination" (p. 126).

Whether or not the death-rebirth pattern travelled from ritual into myth or imaginative literature, it seems that the pattern describes some fundamental structural relationship between the human nervous system and experience. It may be that the very nature of life is to act, then rest, then act again at another level, and that this "law of nature" has been, on the one hand, formalized in ritual or myth, and on the other, described in literature either realistically or symbolically. Before turning to literary expressions of the pattern of transcendence into the self, let us examine how psychologists have discussed myth, ritual, and the structures of consciousness.

Philosopher Ernst Cassirer would have us seek for the unity of myth not in any genetic or causal explanation but rather to see in it the "direction followed by consciousness in conducting spiritual reality."¹⁷ That is, myths and myth-making may reveal more about the

¹⁷ Quoted in Bidney, p. 6.

human mind and its functions than they ever will about the various cultures and individuals who first gave rise to a particular expression of a myth. Human biology and psychology give rise to myth, to ritual, to art, to literature, and, as we may safely admit that the human mind is basically the same everywhere, we can profitably look to the processes that give rise to myth, and indirectly come to appreciate those processes through their expressions.

Psychological Theory and Research on Structures of Consciousness

Psychologist Carl Jung writes that when an individual experiences a myth, ritual, or work of literature containing them:

The fate of the numinous figures recorded in [the story] grips the hearer, because the story gives expression to parallel processes in his own unconsciousness which in that way are integrated with consciousness again. The reparation of the original state is tantamount to attaining once more the freshness of youth.¹⁸

In other words, the individual has a "rebirth experience" because the numinous figures of the myth stimulate his or her own psyche to undergo a transformation. Jung calls these numinous figures and the processes of the unconscious "archetypes." Since the word and the concepts behind it have directly influenced our understanding of the effects of myth and literature, it will be useful to delineate them further.

Jung's teacher Freud had established that a large portion of the human mind is unconscious, its contents (memories, fears, desires, etc.) unavailable to ordinary waking consciousness through any direct

¹⁸ C. G. Jung, "Concerning Rebirth," in Four Archetypes: Mother Rebirth Spirit Trickster, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), p. 70, para 242 (emphasis mine).

means. Dream, fantasy, and free association could uncover, in part, to the subject, and especially to the expert analyst, the contents of this personal unconscious. Jung agreed with Freud that there is indeed a personal unconscious, a repository of an individual's fears, memories, and desires. But, he wrote, and thus essentially distinguished himself from his teacher and colleague:

This personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the collective unconscious. I have chosen the "collective" because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal. . . . It has contents and modes of behavior that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a superpersonal nature which is present in every one of us.¹⁹

Jung doesn't view the collective unconscious as an encapsulated personal system. Rather, he calls it "sheer objectivity, as wide as the world. . . . This self is the world, if only a consciousness could see it."²⁰ It's not only as wide as the world, but, as another Jungian writes "from the very beginning of its development it is the inner equivalent of Creation, an inner cosmos as infinite as the cosmos outside us."²¹ Jung notes that the origin of the collective unconscious can't be any later than the origin of the human species.²²

¹⁹ C. G. Jung, "The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," trans. R. F. C. Hull, in The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious, Vol. 9, Pt. 1 of The Collected Works of C. G. Jung (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 3-4, para 3

²⁰ Jung, "Archetypes," p. 22, para 46.

²¹ Jolande Jacobi, Complex Archetype Symbol in the Psychology of C. G. Jung, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), p. 59.

In 1919 Jung adopted the term archetype to express the elements of the collective unconscious. Originally he used the term to stand for psychic motifs. Then he extended it to all sorts of patterns and configurations, and even to the dynamic processes of the psyche. "Ultimately it came to cover all psychic manifestations of a biological, psychological, or ideational character, provided they were more or less universal and typical."²³ An archetype does not have substance or form in itself, according to Jung. Its form, he wrote:

might perhaps be compared to the axial system of a crystal, which, as it were, preforms the crystalline structure in the mother liquid, although it has no material existence of its own. . . . The archetype in itself is empty and purely formal, nothing but a facultas praeformandi, a possibility of representation which is given a priori.²⁴

It would seem then that the archetype could be both the form of, say, a crystal, and also the unmanifest law of nature that determines or guides the formalization or manifestation of that which is formed, that is, the mechanics of how the mother liquid crystallizes into a predetermined form.

In the human mind archetypes can be seen as "living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that preform and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions."²⁵ These forms are hereditary, but only in the sense that we inherit our human nervous system, our

²² C. G. Jung, "Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype," in Hull, Four Archetypes, p. 12, para 152.

²³ Jacobi, p. 34.

²⁴ Jung, "Psychological," p. 13, para 155.

²⁵ Jung, "Psychological," p. 13, para 154.

modes of psychic functioning, our patterns of instinctual behavior, our motivations, etc.²⁶ When the archetype becomes conscious, that is, manifests in dream, fairy tale, etc., "it takes its color from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear."²⁷ So the fundamental pattern gives rise to an infinite variety of individual and cultural variations. By analyzing its various manifestations we may arrive at an understanding of the underlying unmanifest and unconscious archetype.

Many of the archetypes Jung postulates group themselves around the individuation process, "a process of psychic development that aims at the broadening of the field of consciousness and maturation of the personality."²⁸ It is the process of "the becoming of the self," writes Jung.²⁹ Individuation is accelerated when the individual responds to the archetype, hears its message and orients life toward "wholeness." The goal of this process is "illumination or higher consciousness, by means of which the initial situation is overcome on a higher level."³⁰ As a result of his own experiences and his clinical observations Jung felt he could not over-emphasize the importance of the individuation process, the quest for wholeness. He called unconsciousness "the primal sin, evil itself."³¹

²⁶ C. G. Jung, "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious," in Hull, Archetypes, pp. 43-44, para 91.

²⁷ Jung, "Archetypes," p. 5, para 6.

²⁸ Jacobi, p. 13.

²⁹ Jung, "Archetypes," p. 35, para 73.

³⁰ Jung, "Archetypes," p. 39, para 82.

The encounter with numinous figures or symbols can trigger the process Jung calls rebirth. By rebirth or the rebirth archetype Jung means the "rebirth within the span of individual life;" the idea of "renewal, or even improvement" of the personality so that its parts "are subjected to healing, strengthening, or improvement."³² Whereas the individuation process may be a lifetime affair, rebirth may be a sudden powerful experience. As one Jungian psychologist puts it:

The process of development demands a return to the beginning, a descent into the dark, hot depths of the unconscious. To a sojourn into these depths, to withstand their dangers, is a journey to hell and "death." But he who comes through safe and sound, who is "reborn," will return full of knowledge and wisdom, equipped for the outward and inward demands of life.³³

The conscious mind thus recognizes or experiences aspects of the unconscious or inner self and then integrates them with the conscious mind, that is, draws them outward into a more integrated state or style of functioning. The rebirth experience triggered by myth or literature may thus have a beneficial and lasting effect on human life.

Independently of Jung and his theories, psychologist William James set out to study personal accounts of inner phenomena that act as rebirth experiences. He called them "mystical states of conscious-

31 Jung, "Psychological," p. 30, para 178.

32 Jung, "Concerning Rebirth," p. 98, para 203.

33 Quoted in Ralph Berets, "A Jungian Interpretation of the Dream Sequence in Doris Lessing's The Summer Before the Dark," Modern Fiction Studies, 26 (1980), 129.

ness" and defined them by four important qualities.³⁴ First is their ineffability. These states cannot be expressed adequately in words nor can their quality be imparted or transferred to others; they must be directly experienced to be known. The second is their noetic quality. These states are experienced as states of knowledge, as

states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain; and as a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time (p. 293).

These states are usually also marked by their transiency and passivity. They rarely last very long at a time but when they do continue to recur it is with a "continuous development in what is felt as inner richness and importance" (p.293). By passivity James means that the experiencer feels that he or she has surrendered to some superior force for the duration of the event.

Alfred Lord Tennyson cultivated and prized such experiences and his account of them illustrates these qualities that James observes:

A kind of waking trance--this for lack of a better word-- I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been alone. . . . All at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this is not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words-- where death was an almost laughable impossibility--the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life.³⁵

James quotes numerous such accounts and goes on to discuss how such

³⁴ William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902; rpt. New York: New American Library, 1958), p. 292. Future references will appear in the text.

experiences are brought about. For many they happen spontaneously when the mind and body are quiet and alert yet attention is undirected. For example, Dr. R. M. Bucke writes that after he had spent an evening reading and discussing poetry and philosophy with two friends he had the following experience:

My mind, deeply under the influence of the ideas, images, and emotions called up by the reading and talk, was calm and peaceful. I was in a state of quiet, almost passive enjoyment, not actually thinking, but letting ideas, images, and emotions flow of themselves, as it were, through my mind. All at once, without warning of any kind, I found myself wrapped in a flame-colored cloud. . . . Directly afterwards there came upon me a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination impossible to describe. . . . I became conscious in myself of eternal life. . . . I saw that all men are immortal; that the cosmic order is such that . . . all things work together for the good of each and all; that the foundation principle of the world, of all the worlds, is what we call love.³⁶

Dr. Bucke's experience reminds us of Lucius' initiation experience and of the various "visions" that preceded and followed it. James notes that whereas for some the experiences come spontaneously, for others the noetic experience may be triggered by an anaesthetic or by techniques methodically cultivated by various religious groups such as Hindus, Buddhists, Mohammedans, and Christians. In fact, Plato suggests in the Republic that "there might be an art, an art of the speediest and most effective shifting or conversion of the soul."³⁷

35 Letter to Dr. B. P. Blood, quoted in James, p. 295.

36 Quoted in James, pp. 306-07.

37 Trans. Paul Shorey, in The Collected Dialogues of Plato, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), 7.518D.

That is, there might be a way to direct the attention of the soul inward. Whatever the method, "the mystical feeling of enlargement, union, and emancipation has no specific intellectual content of its own," James notes (p. 326). That is, the experience is content-free, but when it occurs within the context of a given religion which includes a place for it, then the experiencer may take it to be a religious event.

This is, of course, analogous to Jung's notion of individual expressions of universal archetypes. The archetype is itself universal and unmanifest, yet its expression may be highly individualized and culturally determined. Thus while Psyche's rebirth comes in terms of a classical katabasis, her modern counterpart may descend into a cave or dive into a lake, rather than visiting Hades. Yet the archetype or essential pattern remains the same--a penetration to the inner depths of the Self which yields knowledge, bliss, a changed view of reality and of one's place in it. Whether or not the non-mystic can understand or accept the value of such states of experience, James concludes, "the existence of mystical states absolutely overthrows the pretensions of non-mystical states to be the sole and ultimate dictators of what we may believe" (p. 327).

Recent psychological research into states of consciousness has opened up a new area of study and may, in fact, provide an experimental and theoretical model for understanding the states of consciousness that James, Jung, and other psychologists such as Abraham Maslow³⁸ have studied, and that literature expresses either

³⁸ See, for example, his Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences
(Footnote continued)

realistically or symbolically. The largest body of experimental research on states of consciousness has been concerned with evaluating the effects produced by the Transcendental Meditation technique, both during the technique itself and on its long-term effects.

Individuals practicing the technique report experiences similar to those collected by James. That is, they are without religious content, they are ineffable, noetic, transient, and, in his sense, passive. For example, one subject reports: "The experience was very blissful, super-clear--it was infinite correlation, because I found that I was infinite, unbounded, existing everywhere the same. The experience has greatly deepened my inner silence." Another reports:

The predominant experience in meditation was a deep, expansive silence, stable and immovable in its character, with thoughts proceeding on the surface. . . . It seemed as if there was no coming or going, only absolute pure consciousness moving within and for itself.³⁹

Reaching or attaining this state of "pure consciousness" is effected through a technique that allows the mind and body to settle down and directs the attention inward. The Transcendental Meditation technique has been developed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a scholar and master in the Vedic tradition. He describes the goal of the technique to be a state where "the experiencer or mind is left awake in full

³⁸(continued)
(New York: Viking, 1970). Maslow's description of peak-experiences or "transcendent" experiences accords perfectly with James's mystical experiences. He emphasizes the value of these events in transforming personality and leading to more holistic mental functioning.

³⁹ David W. Orme-Johnson and Christopher T. Haynes, "EEG Phase Coherence, Pure Consciousness, Creativity, and TM-Sidhi Experiences," International Journal of Neuroscience, 13 (1981), 213.

awareness of itself without the experience of any object. The conscious mind reaches a state of pure consciousness, which is the source of all thinking."⁴⁰

A large body of scientific data now exists which has developed a psychophysiological description of the process of "transcending", that is, the process of allowing the awareness to settle down into "awareness of itself." As the mind quiets down, so does the physiology. For example, transcending produces a metabolic rate lower than that normally achieved in deep sleep as well as reduced heart rate and respiration rate.⁴¹ In fact, the breath often spontaneously stops for up to 53 seconds, naturally, without showing the compensatory speeding up expected from voluntary cessation of respiration.⁴² During the moments of extended breath stops, Dr. Farrow's subject reports that "the awareness becomes fully expanded and locks into place. Everything feels synchronous and complete in that state--the mind stops thinking, the breath is very light, the body seems to stop, yet awareness is full."

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi calls "pure consciousness" the state of least excitation of consciousness or Being or the unmanifest level of

⁴⁰ The Science of Being and Art of Living (London: International SRM Pub., 1966), p. 28. Future references will appear in the text.

⁴¹ See especially Robert Keith Wallace, Herbert Benson, and Archie F. Wilson, "A Wakeful Hypometabolic Physiologic State," American Journal of Physiology, 221 (1971), 795-99; and Robert Keith Wallace and Herbert Benson, "The Physiology of Meditation," Scientific American, 226 (1972), 84-90.

⁴² John T. Farrow and Russell Hebert, "Breath Suspension during the Transcendental Meditation Technique," Psychosomatic Medicine, 44 (1982), 133-53.

reality and defines it as the personally experienced substratum of existence. Being, he writes, lies in the transcendent field, "transcendent" because it transcends the layers of manifest reality, both subjective and objective (p. 31). He goes on to relate how the Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita describe Being "in terms of Ananda, or bliss, and locate It at the source of creation in the transcendental region of life . . . within man himself . . . as his own inseparable Self" (pp. 35-36).

Experience of such an apperception, whether purposefully cultivated or spontaneously realized, would no doubt change an individual's world view. This was certainly the case with Wordsworth, who repeatedly experienced the "transcendent" and whose remarkable description of the event in "Tintern Abbey" illustrates both the physiological and the noetic qualities of the state.

Wordsworth first describes his "technique," how he sits quietly in his room in town and effortlessly brings to mind the beauty of the countryside. The memories produce in him

. . . sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration. . . . (ll. 27-30)

He then literally describes the process of increasing psychophysiological quiescence until the "purer mind" is reached and experienced as a source of knowledge and joy. He describes how the emotions or

. . . affections gently lead us on,--
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:

While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things. (ll. 42-49, emphasis mine)

From the research described above we can recognize Wordsworth's lines as being a literal rendering of his experience of his mind and body settling into a deep state of silence which provides the necessary conditions for his mind to experience its purer and most noetic and joyful state.

The value of the transcending experience for the poet, or for any individual is very great. The privileged experience of the substratum of existence gives not only a more comprehensive knowledge of both subjective and objective reality, but has a lasting and beneficial effect on the personality. For example, research on the effects of systematically and regularly transcending through the mechanics of the Transcendental Meditation technique has shown increasing self-actualization,⁴³ "increased general fluid intelligence, the capacity to learn and to perceive complex relationships and to respond adaptively and effectively to new situations,"⁴⁴ greater creativity (that is, more originality, flexibility, and fluency of verbal thinking),⁴⁵ and a higher level of moral reasoning.⁴⁶ In effect,

⁴³ S. I. Nidich, W. Seeman, and T. Dreskin, "Influence of Transcendental Meditation: A Replication," Journal of Counseling Psychology, 22 (1977), 565-66.

⁴⁴ David Orme-Johnson, "Prison Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention through the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Program," in Holistic Approaches to Offender Rehabilitation, ed. Leonard J. Hippchen (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1982), p. 358. The research demonstrating these effects is in A. S. Tjoa, "Meditation, Neuroticism, and Intelligence: A Follow-up," Gedrag: Tijdschrift voor Psychologie, 3 (1975), 167-82 and H. Shecter, "The Transcendental Meditation Program in the Classroom: A Psychological Evaluation," Diss. York University, Canada 1975.

repeated transcending experiences appear to allow the individual to unfold his or her full potential.⁴⁷ The founder of the technique, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, describes the effects of transcending and thus coming to know the Self in terms of natural law:

That knowledge of the Self is the basis of all the laws. It is the first law. That is natural law. This is the reason why Self-realization has been emphasized throughout the ages. In every generation there was an emphasis on realizing the Self. In terms of law, it is realizing the home of all the laws of nature, and that is within yourself. That is the potentiality of all action, that is the pure potentiality of all knowledge--the Upanishads are very clear about this--nothing else will remain worthwhile in the field of knowing because you will be seated in the home of all knowledge.⁴⁸

As a result of her transcendence Psyche is reunited with Cupid, brought into the company of the gods, and delivered of Voluptas. As a result of his transcendental experiences Lucius becomes freed from his lower nature, enjoys inexplicibilis voluptas, and lives a life in harmony with divine nature. It is only after repeated experiences that Lucius can be continent, patient, and abandon his former

⁴⁵ M. J. MacCallum, "The Transcendental Meditation Program and Creativity," in Scientific Research on the Transcendental Meditation Program: Collected Papers, ed. David W. Orme-Johnson and John T. Farrow, vol. I (Reinweiler, W. Germany: MERU Press, 1976), pp. 410-14 and Orme-Johnson and Haynes, "EEG Phase Coherence."

⁴⁶ S. I. Nidich, "A Study of the Relationship of the Transcendental Meditation Program to Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Reasoning," Diss. Univ. of Cincinnati 1975.

⁴⁷ See Orme-Johnson and Farrow for a compendium of research papers on physiological, biochemical, psychological, and sociological effects of the Transcendental Meditation technique.

⁴⁸ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, "Inaugural Address," First World Assembly on Law, Justice and Rehabilitation, (Reinweiler, W. Germany: MERU Press, 1977), p. 25.

licentious habits. In other words, moral reasoning is a function of consciousness. In order to develop moral reasoning it is necessary to develop consciousness, that is, to unfold the full potential of natural law within the individual. Of interest also are some recent studies which demonstrate that repeated experiences of transcending produced by the Transcendental Meditation technique act to dramatically slow down the process of biological aging.⁴⁹ Hence, Isis' promise to Lucius--that if he serves her mysteries, i.e., meditates, she will be able to prolong his life beyond the limits set to it by fate--may have some basis in scientific fact!

The importance of the scientific research on the Transcendental Meditation technique and its relevance to the development of the concept of a literary archetype or pattern of transcending are perhaps too obvious to mention. A scientifically verifiable psychophysiological basis or experiential ground from which a literary pattern can arise brings a large area of literary experience out of the realm of the "imagination" and into the area of common understanding. It may even provide a theoretical model for understanding how literature that recreates a transcending experience may work to refine or expand the consciousness of the reader. It certainly indicates a method by which any individual can cultivate these experiences, expand his or her consciousness, and come to understand a realm of reality known in the past to only a "precious few."

⁴⁹ Robert Keith Wallace, et al., "The Effects of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Program on the Aging Process, International Journal of Neuroscience, 16 (1982), 53-58.

The transcending model, then, describes an experience that can be analyzed as having three stages. First is the descent into the self where mind and body quiet down and cease directed activity. This is often described in terms of descending metaphors, e.g.:

It is like skiing down a ski jump; at a certain point you leave the ski jump and suddenly you are in the air. In transcending, you dive down and down, then "click," you find yourself in that other state, just "there."⁵⁰

The "other state" may be reported in an infinite variety of ways since it is essentially indescribable. Eugene Ionesco relates it as follows:

I found myself suddenly at the center of pure, ineffable existence . . . I became one with the one essential reality, when, along with an immense, serene joy, I was overcome by what I might call the stupefaction of being, the certainty of being. . . . I say that with words that can only disfigure, that cannot describe the light of this profound total, organic, intuition.⁵¹

The third stage is the return to everyday reality, but with a sense of bliss and freshness and a knowledge of the transcendent reality at the basis of life. Ionesco writes:

I was saved now. It was impossible for me to become the prey of the mud of shadows again, because I knew now, in a luminous sort of way, I knew and could no longer forget that I am, I myself am, everything is. The miracle of being, the miracle of being, the miracle of being (p. 156).

The experience often creates the desire to express this reality, ineffable though it is. Poe, for example, tried very hard to capture

⁵⁰ Farrow, "Breath Suspension," p. 144, emphasis mine.

⁵¹ Present Past Past Present, trans. Helen R. Lane (New York: Grove, 1971), pp. 150-51. Future references will appear in the text.

his transcendental experiences, certain that:

even a partial record of the impressions would startle the universal intellect of mankind, by the supremeness of the novelty of the material employed, and of its consequent suggestions. In a word--should I ever write a paper on this topic, the world will be compelled to acknowledge that, at last, I have done an original thing.⁵²

When we turn to the area of literature and literary criticism with this model we find ourselves able to understand and organize a vast body of imaginative and critical writing.

Spiritual Rebirth in Imaginative Literature

Inspired by studies of anthropologists like James Frazer or Arnold Van Gennep and by the descriptions of archetypes of consciousness developed by Carl Jung and his school, numerous literary critics have been led to examine and interpret mythic structures in literature in their light. In her Archetypal Patterns in Poetry Maud Bodkin examines the poetry of Coleridge, Dante, Virgil, Milton, and others, and identifies the rebirth archetype that dominates their major work.⁵³ For example, in her examination of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" Bodkin notes that

Within the image-sequences examined the pattern appears of a movement, downward, or inward toward the earth's centre, or a cessation of movement--a physical change which, as we urge metaphor closer to the impalpable forces of life and soul, appears also as a transition toward severed relation with the outer world, and, it may be, toward disintegration and death. This element in the pattern is balanced by a movement upward and outward--an expansion or outburst of activity, a transition toward reintegration and life-renewal (p. 54).

⁵² Edgar Allen Poe, "Between Wakefulness and Sleep," in The Portable Poe, ed. Philip V. Stein (New York: Penguin, 1977), p. 660.

⁵³ (1934; rpt. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), p. 136. Future references will appear in the text.

In the "movement, downward, or inward," and the "cessation of movement" we recognize the descent imagery typical of descriptions of transcending. Bodkin also finds Aeneas' mythic descent toward the earth's center to be symbolic of an "introversion of the mind upon itself and upon its past--plunging into the depth to gain knowledge and power over self and destiny" (pp. 124-25). The downward or inward movement might be experienced or expressed as a movement toward quiescence or as a movement toward disintegration or death.

She observes in Coleridge's poem that after the downward or inward movement has been fully developed and "before the description of the outburst of activity in the elements, there comes a moment of true and blissful quiescence" (p. 69). We can see that this quiet moment is the crucial one in the transformation of the mariner's world view. In an atmosphere of "rest," and "silent joy," and softness he gazes upon the water-snakes moving in the sea. His heart, which was formerly "as dry as dust," suddenly gives way to a gush of love, and the spell on him is broken. Then comes a "gentle sleep from Heaven," after which the mariner feels so light that "almost / I thought that I had died in sleep, / and was a blessed ghost" (ll. 306-308). That is, the quiescence is so profound it appears deathlike. Thus the poet describes the mariner's inward changes in terms of a movement toward rest, silent joy, and a lightness resembling that of the spirit unencumbered by the body.

Bodkin observes that the imagery recreates this effect in the reader and stimulates a similar re-integration and joy. She writes that "the tidal ebb toward death followed by life renewal, affords us

a means of increased awareness, and of fuller expression and control of our own lives in their secret and momentous obedience to universal rhythms" (p. 88). Whether it's the quiescence of the natural world around the mariner or Aeneas' descent toward the earth's center, the essential symbolic meaning of the event, to use Bodkin's words once again, is an "introversion of the mind upon itself and upon its past--a plunging into the depth to gain knowledge and power over self and destiny" (pp. 124-25).

Bodkin later rejected the word "archetype" and adopted the term "type-image"⁵⁴ but she consistently draws our attention to all three phases of the transcending pattern, the metaphoric movement downward or inward, the moment of "true and blissful quiescence," and the "life-renewal" which follows. Aeneas' descent follows this pattern as well, if we remember his long descent into the cave, his timeless moments with his father as he observes the innermost workings of the cosmic scheme, and his purposeful and successful return to activity armed with his newly-won knowledge.

The same scheme applies, of course, to Psyche's katabasis and Lucius' parallel experiences. Parallel to Psyche's effortless descent into the underworld (with all activity forbidden to her) and her "enlivened" return to the light is Lucius' seaside revelation of Isis followed by his own springtime rebirth. Psyche's effortless ascent to Mt. Olympus where she is made immortal is paralleled by Lucius'

⁵⁴ According to Walter Sutton, Bodkin distrusted Jung's archetypal theories and thus coined her own term. He approves of the term because it "implies uniformity and recurrence but is free of the mythic and Jungian associations of archetype" (Modern American Criticism [Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1963], p. 190).

initiations which will lead to his immortality. Lucius' ever increasing joy and Psyche's daughter Joy both directly follow the unitizing experiences which occur during the katabases. We recognize the metaphoric or literal descents inward, the silent or noetic moments within, and the life-enhancing return of the transcending pattern. In his story of the growth of consciousness Apuleius plays upon the transcending nature of the events to awaken in the reader a foretaste or memory of his own highest moments.

In a very creative synthesis of Van Gennep's Rites de Passage and Jung's work,⁵⁵ Joseph Campbell "discovered" the transcending pattern to be at the heart of much mythic and folk-literature of the world. He calls his pattern the "monomyth" of the hero's quest and links it to Jung's theories of psychoanalysis. In his description of the monomyth we recognize the stages of the transcending pattern developed above.

Campbell's first stage is the hero's Departure which symbolizes a "detachment or withdrawal." He writes that it

consists in a radical transfer of emphasis from the external to the internal world, macro- to microcosm, a retreat from the desperations of the wasteland to the peace of the everlasting realm that is within.⁵⁶

He calls the trials of the hero the Initiation phase and notes:

The passage of the mythological hero may be overground, incidentally; fundamentally it is inward--into depths where

⁵⁵ Hyman notes that Campbell's concept of the monomyth is derived from Van Gennep (p. 144).

⁵⁶ Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces, 2nd ed. (1968; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), p. 17. Future references will appear in the text.

obscure resistances are overcome, and long lost, forgotten powers are revived, to be made available for the transfiguration of the world (p. 29).

Thus, the third phase is to bring this knowledge out "for the transfiguration of the world." The hero must transcend, know himself to be god, and return to enliven the world with his presence and his knowledge. With the advent of the TM-Sidhi techniques, advanced techniques to simultaneously stabilize and challenge the meditator's pure consciousness, came a new stage of transcending. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi predicted that if the square root of 1% of a population (a formula derived by physicists from the mechanics of coherent or laser light) were practicing the TM-Sidhi techniques together in a group, then the group dynamics of consciousness would produce a transcending effect for an entire society. That is, the group effect, or "superradiance" effect, would intensify the individual effects and thus influence not only the meditators involved but the surrounding society as a whole, thus both creating and stabilizing, not just personal enlightenment, but "social" enlightenment, or an age of enlightenment.⁵⁷

Psyche's return with the box of beauty and her subsequent apotheosis would thus mark her as a great hero. She points the way for all souls to discover absolute, pure being and know their own

⁵⁷ This project is currently underway at Maharishi International University in Fairfield, Iowa. For a summary of research on superradiance and the 1% effect see Orme-Johnson, "Prison Rehabilitation," pp. 366-70. For research demonstrating that such a group can affect the brain waves of individuals at a great distance from the group, see David Orme-Johnson, et al, "Intersubject EEG Coherence: Is Consciousness a Field?" International Journal of Neuroscience, 16 (1982), in press.

immortality. What is Apuleius' work but the quintessential spiritual quest with the katabasis or transcending pattern at its core?

Beside the symbolic or metaphoric quest for enlightenment that Campbell and others describe is the Bildungsroman, the modern novel form that attempts to show its hero's spiritual growth in terms of psychological and social realism. In such a genre we would expect to find the transcending pattern expressed in psychological terms (such as in Wordsworth's lines) rather than in terms of classical topoi or folkloric images like the belly of the whale.⁵⁸ Experiences of transcendent states of consciousness have appeared in poetry and prose, in letters and journals since the beginnings of civilization. They have been called mystic states, privileged moments, or epiphanies, but whatever their appellation they can be recognized as transcending experiences.

For example, Morris Beja calls the epiphany an "instantaneous, intuitive illumination," which can function as a conversion experience or a mystical experience.⁵⁹ He likens it to satori, the Zen Buddhist term for enlightenment, and discusses the many writers who have

⁵⁸ For collections of various mythological descents see David Adams Leeming, Mythology: The Voyage of the Hero (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1973) and Joseph L. Henderson and Maud Oakes, The Wisdom of the Serpent: The Myths of Death, Rebirth, and Resurrection (New York: George Braziller, 1963). Arthur Koestler links the various forms of descent (classical katabases, Joseph in the bottom of the well, Jesus buried in the grave, Joseph swallowed by a whale, etc.) to the "plunge downward and backward to the sources and . . . undercurrents of existence, into the fluid magma, of which the Trivial Plane of everyday life is merely the thin crust" (The Act of Creation [New York: Dell, 1967], pp. 358-59).

⁵⁹ Morris Beja, Epiphany in the Modern Novel (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1971), pp. 21, 24. Future references will appear in the text.

written about such experiences, such as Joyce, Woolf, and Pater (p. 25). He postulates that the artist who features epiphanies in his work is not merely recording or describing them, but actually trying to "produce or reproduce them" in his reader (p. 232). He argues that literary epiphanies yield an actual aesthetic sensation because they can provide "the privileged moment, the sudden spiritual manifestation, the moment of being, the blaze of light, the flash, the glare that only great art can generate" (p. 233). He may be right. When we look at Pater's descriptions of his own privileged moments in The Renaissance we observe that his language has been carefully refined in order to reproduce the moment it seeks to describe. For example, Pater describes those "exquisite pauses in time, in which, arrested thus, we seem to be spectators of all the fullness of existence, and which are like some consummate extract or quintessence of life."⁶⁰

Jephcott defines the privileged moment as one in which "consciousness seems to expand--when the mind takes in the world with rare and strange intensity."⁶¹ He believes that these moments are the source of the creative impulse; they not only are unique in content, but they represent a mental process different from the usual ones. He writes:

The privileged moment . . . has two essential characteristics: both the quality and structure of awareness are changed. The qualitative change involves a heightening of sensations and of the apparent meaning they convey. The structural change involves a unification of all parts of

⁶⁰ Walter Pater, "The School of Giorgione," in The Renaissance (1873; rpt. Cleveland & New York: World, 1961), p. 141.

⁶¹ E. F. N. Jephcott, Proust and Rilke: The Literature of Expanded Consciousness (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1972), p. 11.

awareness to form a total system. In embracing this unified system, the field of consciousness expands far beyond its normal limits. These and all other characteristics of the experience [are] related to a reduced participation of abstract thought in consciousness, which in turn can be seen as an increased participation of a faculty which may be called imagination. Above all, the privileged moment is characterised by an intense feeling of joy and liberation which is not given by any other experience.⁶²

Whether the moment is called privileged or an epiphany, an "exquisite pause in time," or whatever, it inevitably contains one or more aspects of the transcending process described above. When the moment appears in fiction it is often related as the personal experience of the hero, as we will see in our discussion of Pater's novel Marius the Epicurean. But because the moment is essentially ineffable, the writer will inevitably fall back on metaphor and render the experience, if not as an actual descent into the underworld, at least in terms we can recognize as such. If we look, for example, at the last scene of Tolstoy's story "The Death of Ivan Ilych" we see just such a rendering.

Surrounded by his grieving family Ivan is bedridden and dying. Suddenly it seems as if his awareness is falling through a black hole. He lets himself fall into the black hole and at the bottom he sees light. New truths come to him and the pain and fear cease.

And suddenly it grew clear to him that what had been oppressing him and would not leave him was all dropping away at once from two sides, from ten sides, and from all sides. He was sorry for them, he must act so as not to hurt them: release them and free himself from these sufferings. "How good and how simple!" he thought. "And the pain?" he asked himself. "What has become of it? Where are you, pain?"

He turned his attention to it.

⁶² Jephcott, p. 29.

"Yes, here it is. Well, what of it? Let the pain be."

"And death . . . where is it?"

He sought his former accustomed fear of death and did not find it. "Where is it? What death?" There was no fear because there was no death.

In place of death there was light.

"So that's what it is!" he suddenly exclaimed aloud.

"What joy!"

To him this all happened in a single instant, and the meaning of that instant did not change.⁶³

In a psychophysiological sense, Ivan Ilych transcends his pain and his fears and experiences his own inner self. Tolstoy attempts to render the actual experience of transcending by his metaphoric language. Ivan Ilych falls through a black hole and at the bottom there is light. In other words, he transcends the superficial layers of consciousness until his awareness reaches or experiences its own self-effulgent nature. The experience of his eternal unbounded being replaces death and the fear of death and turns his pain into a harmless companion. For the first time in his life his dry heart can feel something for his wife and son and he dies, peaceful within, in spite of his physical suffering.

The point is that the experience of transcending is an actual one that may be described personally by an Ionesco, attributed to a persona as in "Tintern Abbey" or "The Death of Ivan Illych" or described symbolically as a descent into the land of the dead, such as

⁶³ Trans. Louise and Aylmer Maude, in An Introduction to Literature, ed. Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman, and William Burto, 7th ed. (Boston: Little Brown, 1981), p. 156.

that Aeneas or Psyche takes. The reader responds to the transcending pattern with as much force as his own experience permits.

We have argued here that the tale of Cupid and Psyche has at its core a metaphor for the soul's self-transcendence, a katabasis which yields knowledge and power. We've seen that Apuleius sets the tale at the center of his hero Lucius' quest for spiritual knowledge and parallels Psyche's katabasis with Lucius' own "privileged" or transcendent experiences.

If our analysis of the myth correctly identifies its universal effect and appeal, then we should be able to see a very similar response in novels that have consciously based their plot or structure on the Psyche tale. We will go on now to examine six modern Psyche novels in terms of their response to the theme of spiritual evolution and the core katabasis or transcending event.

Chapter VI

"Cupid and Psyche" in the Modern Novel

At least six modern novelists have been directly inspired by the structure of the Cupid and Psyche story, and have deliberately retold it in novel form. Before considering unconscious or disguised uses of the transcending archetype it will be useful to consider these conscious versions to see how they respond to Psyche's katabasis. Do they consider it to be merely one of Psyche's trials, which may then be dispensed with, or do they intuitively recognize it as the essential action of the tale and render it as a psychological transcendence? A close consideration of their plots and themes will shed light on how the transcending pattern may appear in modern fiction.

At first glance, Walter Pater's Marius the Epicurean does not appear to be directly based on the Cupid and Psyche myth, yet the pattern of Marius' search for spiritual wholeness and his yearning for initiation and religious experience echo Apuleius' story (see Table 4). Within his novel Pater summarizes the Latin work and retells the Cupid and Psyche tale at length, citing it as a major influence in Marius' formation. In addition, he conscientiously parallels Psyche's katabasis in order to justify his hero's spiritual transformation.

C. S. Lewis called his Psyche novel Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold, and introduced it by saying:

This re-interpretation of an old story has lived in the author's mind, thickening and hardening with the years, ever since he was an undergraduate. This way, he could be said to have worked at it most of his life.¹

Lewis tried out his idea of Orual's inability to see the palace of Psyche as early as 1922, first as a masque and later in poetry.² As Glover observes, "His comments and the recorded grip of the myth on his imagination, from early maturity onward, show that it contained for him significant meaning."³

The remaining four novels respond to the tale in modern terms, only hinting at the source through names and the use of minor motifs from the original story (see Table 4). For example, Odessa Strickland Payne's Psyche (1885) is set in the American south of its time with a heroine named Lynne Psyche Heywood. Lynne's life has little to do with her namesake's adventures, but some connections can be found between the pattern of her life and the landmarks of Psyche's quest.

Pierre Louÿs's unfinished Psyché (pub. 1927) tells the story of Parisien Psyché Vannetty as she encounters love for the first time, and it drops her just as she discovers her lover's cooling affections and thus intuits their eventual separation. Louÿs is careful to include many signposts to Psyche's tale, and the appended summary of the lost portions of his work suggest that Louÿs may have scrupulously tried to adhere to the outline of the classical plot.

¹ C. S. Lewis, Till We Have Faces (London: G. Bles, 1956).

² Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper, C. S. Lewis: A Biography (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), pp. 261-62.

³ Donald E. Glover, C. S. Lewis: The Art of Enchantment (Athens, Ohio: Ohio Univ. Press, 1981), p. 191.

TABLE 4

MOTIF CORRESPONDENCES IN "CUPID AND PSYCHE" AND SIX MODERN NOVELS

"Cupid and Psyche"	<u>The Golden Ass</u>	<u>Marius</u>	Payne's <u>Psyche</u>
I. Introductory Motifs			
* Psyche	* Lucius	* Marius	* Lynne
* Cupid	* His own body or Fotis/Isis	* Flavian/ Cornelius	* Garnet Earl/ Paul Gordon
* Venus' enmity	* Fortune		* Old aunt
* Milesian oracle	* Prophecy of Diophanes		* John Gordon's prophecy
II. The Marriage			
* Secret, nightly visits of Cupid	* Secret nightly visits to Fotis		* Secret engage- ment
* Invisible servants	* Servant's bed moved away.		* Cousin Floyd Gordon
* Jealous sisters	* Lucius' will and appetite		
* Four warnings against sisters	* Four warnings against witches		
* Three visits of sisters	* Three exposures to witchcraft		
III. The Separation			
* Curiosity about husband	* Curiosity about witches	* Death of mother and Flavian destroy Marius' faith in religion.	* Paul curious about Lynne
* Breaking taboo	* Tries magic		
* Separation from Cupid	* Lucius separated from his body.		* Lynne goes to prove herself.

Louÿs' Psyché

Romains' Psyché

Till We Have Faces

Psyché 58

I. Introductory Motifs

- * Psyché Vannetty
- * Aimery Jouvelle
- * Friend's prophecy
- * Secret rendez-vous at chateau
- * Servants stay out of sight.
- * Aracoeli
- * Psyché warned by friend, priest.
- * Lucienne
- * Pierre Febvre
- * Mme. Barbelenet
- * Orual
- * Separated from her body, soul and sister.
- * Ungit (Aphrodite)
- * God's prophecy
- * Mahaut
- * Eric Oliver

II. The Marriage

- * Orual's youth with Psyche
- * Orual jealous of Psyche's happiness.
- * Honeymoon on desert island
- * Becomes blind.
- * Martine, Roberte
- * Martine, Roberte both visit.
- * Cécile, Marthe

III. The Separation

- * Curiosity about the god
- * Orual forces Psyche to look at the god.
- * Loses Psyche, puts on mask.
- * Curiosity about Eric
- * Mahaut's vision is restored.
- * Eric's trip
- * Brings in lamp and reads poem.
- * Intuits separation
- * Pierre goes off to sea.

TABLE 4 cont'd

"Cupid and Psyche"	<u>The Golden Ass</u>	<u>Marius</u>	Payne's <u>Psyche</u>
IV. Sufferings and Search			
* Pan's advice	* Old woman's tale		
* Revenge on sisters	* Robbers destroyed.		
* Dangerous tasks	* Lucius' trials and Milesian tales		
* Natural aid	* Good Fortune		
V. Visit to the underworld			
* Tower guide	* Prayer to Moon	* Cornelius	
* Descent	* Dream vision of Isis	* Cecilia's crypt	* Deathly illness
VI. Reunion and Apotheosis			
* Enlivenment	* Rebirth	* Marius feels hopeful.	* Rebirth
* Opens box of beauty.	* Lucius eats roses.	* Sees beauty of Christianity.	* Paul now sees her as beautiful.
* Rescued by Cupid.	* Reunited with body.		* Paul comes to her when she faints.
* Made immortal.	* Promised immortality.	* Martyrdom with plenary grace	* Promise of Heaven to missionaries
* Married to Cupid.	* Initiated into Mysteries.		* Marriage to Paul
* Birth of Joy	* Experience of joy	* Happy anticipation	* Final bliss

Louÿs' Psyché

Romains' Psyché Till We Have Faces Psyché 58

* Fragment ends here.

IV. Sufferings and Search

* Pierre advised to be alert. * God's advice: "Die before you die"

* Near revenge on Roberte

* Lucienne deems further attempts dangerous. * Dream visions of dangerous trials

* Visions continue.

V. Visit to the underworld

* Spirit of the Fox * Grandmother
* Both go within to contact each other. * Vision of Psyche's descent * Night of dreams

VI. Reunion and Apotheosis

* New view of universe * Orual feels love, joy. * Mahaut has more self-confidence.

* Accepts box, becomes beautiful.

* Rescued by the god.

* Orual is identified with deified sister.

* Reunited with soul, body, and sister.

* Joy of reunion * Bliss * Happiness

The most ambitious modern version of the tale is Jules Romain's Psyché trilogy. His heroine is named Lucienne, but this allusion to Lucius (and the title of the work) are almost the only obvious nods Romain makes in the direction of Apuleius' material. He had planned only one novel but when the material demanded first two and then three volumes, Romain's publisher insisted that he name the set. Only then did he choose the title Psyché for the trilogy.⁴

When asked about his theme he described his trilogy as:

un triptyque moderne sur le thème d'Eros et Psyché, triptyque dont les trois panneaux pourraient s'intituler, à la façon de la Renaissance italienne: l'Amour sentimental, l'Amour charnel, l'Amour métaphysique.⁵

This description is apt and does give one main theme of each novel, but in fact, although he never says so, Jules Romain does follow the essential outline of the myth. For example, his Psyché has two jealous rivals (the Barbelenet sisters), enjoys her dark Edenic marriage, struggles to overcome her separation from her husband when he goes to sea as purser of a luxury liner, and is reunited with him in the end. The central event of the third novel, the one equivalent to Psyche's katabasis, is a very unusual experience that challenges the materialistic world view of both the characters and the reader. How deliberate Romain was with his parallel to the myth is uncertain, but his remarks on the themes (and obvious omission of any mention of

⁴ Jules Romain, "Lettre à René Maublanc," Europe, 18 (1928), 576. See also Jules Romain, Ai-je fait ce que j'ai voulu? (Paris: Wesmael-Charlier, 1964), p. 94.

⁵ Jules Romain, Souvenirs et confidences d'un écrivain (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1958), p. 134.

Apuleius' tale) did cause the one critic who attempted to find links between Apuleius' tale and the trilogy to abandon this line of study.⁶ Other critics and reviewers have for the most part been unaware of the classical connection, or have merely made mention of Apuleius' work. Denis Boak, for example, cites the evidence that Romain didn't come up with the Psyché title until after the appearance of Le Dieu des corps as reason not to expect the work to be an explicit treatment of the Psyche myth.⁷

The most modern of the novels dealing with the tale is Françoise des Ligneris's Psyché 58 (1958). Her heroine Mahaut Oliver breaks loose from the domination of a repressive yet beloved husband. Des Ligneris consciously takes more than one incident from Apuleius, but she changes the myth in order to tell a story of modern feminist liberation.

When we look closely at these very different novels we see a universal pattern emerge. They all delineate the protagonist's growth from a lesser to a greater psychic integration or wholeness, and they

⁶ In her 1931 study Jules Romain: Sa vie son oeuvre (Paris: Éditions Kra) Madeleine Israël briefly discussed the work in terms of Apuleius' Platonism. She says, "psyché a toujours symbolisé les noces immortelles où, après ses luttes aveugles, l'âme s'unit pour jamais à l'amour" (p. 116). She sees Cécile in the role of the jealous Venus because she throws obstacles in the lovers' path. Actually Cécile aids the lovers in order to spite her younger sister, and her attempted suicide links her more strongly to the jealous sisters than to Venus, it would seem. Israël doesn't seem to see the marriage-separation-reunion pattern in Apuleius as being parallel to Romain's. In the second edition of her work (Paris: Éditions du Conquistador, 1953), under the name of Madeleine Berry, she abandons her interest in Apuleius and merely repeats several of Romain's comments from his Souvenirs (p. 202).

⁷ Jules Romain (New York: Twayne, 1974), p. 85.

all parallel Psyche's last trial, her visit to the underworld, using modern and familiar images of transcending. The means may differ but the authors' responses to the transcending archetype are essentially similar: they emphasize the importance of the event for the hero or heroine, describe it as an occurrence preceded by physical and/or mental quiescence, and as one which yields increased self-knowledge, and often, joy. As a result of the event the Psyche figure rises to a higher level of psychic wholeness and the novels all close with this important gain.

The Psyche-Cupid Pair

Taking their cue from the meaning of psyche, the authors all develop their characters in terms of their souls or spiritual traits.

For example, Pater's Marius, with a youth spent

animating his solitude, as he read eagerly and intelligently, with the traditions of the past, already . . . lived much in the realm of the imagination, and became betimes, as he was to continue all his life, something of an idealist, constructing the world for himself in great measure from within, by the exercise of meditative power.⁸

As a youth Marius is concerned with the immortality of his soul, as a young man, with its development. At the close of Marius' brief life Pater calls him an anima naturaliter Christiana, a naturally Christian soul.

Payne's Lynne Heywood is depicted as an unusually intelligent student, eager to master philosophy and theology, and with a strong penchant for the charitable Christian duties expected of a southern

⁸ Walter Pater, Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1910), I, 24-25. Future references will appear in the text.

lady. Her soul is described as that of an artist appreciating God's creation, "so impressively alive to all beauty, and through every fine fibre of her sensitive being she was drinking it in, while the undercurrent of her thoughts flowed toward the infinite."⁹ Like Marius, her physical beauty is not emphasized. In fact, when young she is thought to be rather plain.

Love, in the person of Aimery Jouvelle, sees Louÿs's Psyché as beautiful and pure, and, as he looks deep within her eyes, imagines that he sees her soul as yet untouched by love, as innocent as when she was born. "Vous êtes mon âme," he tells her.¹⁰

Romains's Lucienne is a musician, extremely subtle and sensitive in her perceptions and expressions, an "alliance du sensible et de l'intellectuel."¹¹ Her world is "le monde de l'intuition poétique ou mystique," in the words of one reviewer.¹² She easily reads the innermost thoughts and feelings of others, and their deepest emotional outpouring is presented within her mind. When Lucienne appeared, many reviewers praised both the subtlety of Lucienne's character and of Romains's treatment of her story. Conrad Aiken was especially cognizant of Lucienne's deep spirituality. He wrote that Romains

endows her with an awareness that amounts to genius. The real beauty of the story is precisely this flowing

⁹ Odessa Strickland Payne, Psyche. A novel (Atlanta: J. P. Harrison, 1885), p. 129. Future references will appear in the text.

¹⁰ Pierre Louÿs, Psyché (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1927), p. 164. Future references will appear in the text.

¹¹ Israël, p. 213.

¹² René Maublanc, rev. of Quand le navire . . ., by Jules Romains, Europe, 21 (1929), 454.

consciousness. Its quality is particularly exciting; it is intense and simple; it is at the same time deep and lucid. . . . One has the sensation, now and then, of falling through plane below plane of reality, and of discovering new subliminal hierarchies in the order of things.¹³

After the trilogy appeared under the name of Psyché, critics took note of the significance of the title and observed that Romain was not merely interested in a psychological study of love but in the soul of modern man and woman.¹⁴ Lucienne thinks of her soul as that region where she loses her superficial characteristics and becomes unbounded, "cette région où la personne perd ses particularités superficielles et ses limites."¹⁵ One of her most striking memories is of a time when she receded within and found that "dans mon corps, qui me paraît alors vaste comme une contrée, comme une province bornée de montagnes et couverte d'un ciel orageux, il se fait un grand silence" (L, p. 206).

Once, as she experiences waves of bliss throughout her soul and body, Lucienne longs for "la naïveté des saintes et des sibylles, leur audace à se soulager par la parole, à payer leur passion par un cri" (L, p. 158). This is the only form of religion Lucienne expresses. Romain wrote that before it is a religion, "Catholicism . . . is an intimate state of being, a system of spiritual facts, a style of inner life, and, in certain cases, of the mystic life."¹⁶ The first volume

¹³ Conrad Aiken, "The Dead Novel," rev. of Lucienne, by Jules Romain, Dial, 79 (1925), 63.

¹⁴ Benjamin Crémieux, rev. of Le Dieu des corps, by Jules Romain, Annales Politiques et Littéraires, 91 (1928), 162. See also Philo M. Buck, Jr., Directions in Contemporary Literature (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1942), p. 206.

¹⁵ Jules Romain, Lucienne (Paris: Gallimard, 1922), p. 95. Future references will appear in the text with the letter "L" to indicate this volume of the trilogy.

of the trilogy is the story of this "naturally religious soul" growing towards love and finding it, a story told in her own refined and beautiful language, in a manner "as fragile as James could have desired it, but admirably direct."¹⁷

Des Ligneris tells us little of Mahaut's soul as the novel opens, because in fact, there is little to tell. Mahaut has suppressed her soul in becoming veritably the slave of her husband, and the rediscovery and nurture of her own soul becomes the central action of the novel.

Psyche herself appears in C. S. Lewis's novel as "an instance of the anima naturaliter Christiana."¹⁸ She is a soul naturally good, naturally full of faith and a longing for union with the divine. The beauty of the god's grey mountain near her home sets her yearning for the source of that beauty. She feels it calling her and when she is sentenced to be "offered" to the god she feels in some sense as if she'll be returning "home"; her soul will regain the beauty it has longed for. She later tells her sister Orual that when she was tied to the Holy Tree and was waiting for the god to appear she felt comforted by her own soul, by something subtler even than thought:

It seemed to come from somewhere deep inside me, deeper than that part that sees [imaginary] pictures of gold and amber palaces, deeper than fears and tears. It was shapeless, but you could hold onto it; or just let it hold onto you."¹⁹

¹⁶ Frederic Lefèvre, "An Hour with Jules Romains," The Living Age, 345 (1934), 521.

¹⁷ Lisle Bell, "Fiction by an Expert," rev. of Lucienne, by Jules Romains, The Nation, 120 (1925), 606.

¹⁸ W. H. Lewis, ed., Letters of C. S. Lewis (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), p. 274.

Psyche's natural innocence, her spirituality, and her willingness to sacrifice herself for the good of other people suggest a Christ-figure.²⁰ Lewis wrote, "She is in some ways like Christ because every good man or woman is like Christ. What else could they be like? But of course my interest is primarily in Orual."²¹

Our interest, too, lies with Orual. Psyche may be the ideal Christian soul, but Orual is the heroine of the novel. She says she has a soul seething with "unspeakable foulness." She is ugly within and without, blind to the selfish and possessive aspects of her love, and unaware of the true feelings of others. In Psyche and Orual Lewis uses beauty as a reflection of spiritual purity.²² For example, when Orual rides up the grey mountain in search of Psyche she has a momentary experience of a state of consciousness quite different from her usual unhappy one. An inner voice questions, "Why should your heart not dance?" She relates:

The sight of the huge world put mad ideas into me, as if I could wander away, wander forever, see strange and beautiful things, one after the other to the world's end. The freshness and wetness all about me . . . made me feel that I

¹⁹ C. S. Lewis, Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold (London, 1956; rpt. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978), p. 110. Future references will appear in the text.

²⁰ Starr also cites Psyche's forgiveness of her sister Redival, her compassion, and various images, such as being offered to the god by being tied to the Holy Tree, as opposed to the rock in Apuleius (Nathan Comfort Starr, C. S. Lewis's Till We Have Faces [New York: Seabury Press, 1968], pp. 19-20). See also Clyde S. Kilby's discussion in his The Christian World of C. S. Lewis (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 52-64.

²¹ W. H. Lewis, p. 274.

²² See W. D. Norwood, "C. S. Lewis' Portrait of Aphrodite," Southern Quarterly, 8 (1970), 259.

had misjudged the world; it seemed kind, laughing, as if its heart also danced. Even my ugliness I could not quite believe in. Who can feel ugly when the heart meets delight? It is as if, somewhere inside, within the hideous face and boney limbs, one is soft, fresh, lissom and desirable (p. 96).

But she struggles against this "fool-happy mood," asserting once more her hatred of "this god-haunted, plague-breeding, decaying, tyrannous world" (p. 97). Clearly, if she is to become Psyche, as the god tells her, she must first uncover the beautiful and joyful psyche within herself.²³ Her search for her sister Psyche is actually her quest for divine love and mystic bliss.²⁴

The Cupid of each Psyche often acts both to draw the soul onwards in its search for wholeness and also to complement its qualities, as if the authors were responding to both the soul-body duality and the role of Love in leading the soul to immortality. Lucius had two beloveds, Fotis in his ignorant sensual stage, and Isis in his later reintegrated phase, but the essential separation was between his soul, lodged in an assinine form, and his own body, to which he is later reunited. The opposition or juxtaposition of mind and body appears in some form in every one of the six novels.

²³ Charles Moorman points out that Orual's search for "joy" is parallel to the theme of Lewis's spiritual autobiography Surprised by Joy (Arthurian Triptych: Mythic Materials in Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis, and T. S. Eliot [New York: Russell & Russell, 1960], p. 106).

²⁴ Gunnar Urang says that the story is that of "Orual's struggle and final surrender to, belief" (Shadows of Heaven. Religion and Fantasy in the Writing of C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and J. R. R. Tolkien [Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1971], p. 41). Actually, Orual believes in the gods as soon as Psyche's husband reveals himself. What she struggles against is her hatred and resentment for the gods and what she perceives as their injustice. Her goal, as the ending reveals, is a recognition of their justice and the experience of joy and love.

Marius, for example, has no beloved, and, in fact, remains chaste throughout his life. In a scene no doubt unconscious of the psycho-analytic interpretation it now invites, Marius expresses his disgust and hatred for snakes (i.e., his own libido, sexuality, or life force).²⁵ Marius cannot understand his repugnance, but it certainly accords well with his dry, wistful, uninvolved life.

Like Lucius he has two friends, one of his youth and one of his mature years. Both provide a sensual or virile complement to Marius' contemplative nature. For example, his worldly young friend Flavian is manly, yet refined, a sceptic who "believed only in himself, in the brilliant, and mainly sensuous gifts he had, or meant to acquire" (I, 52). Cornelius, the friend of his mature years, also acts as "a vivid personal presence [which] broke through [Marius'] dreamy idealism, which had almost come to doubt of other men's reality" (I, 169). He became the "clear, cold corrective, which the fever of [Marius'] present life demanded" (I, 232). And like the friendship of Flavian, the very different one with the Christian Cornelius acts as "a reconciliation to the world of sense, the visible world" (I, 234).

Buckler believes that the Cupid and Psyche myth acts for Marius as a dream in which he works out his conflicts. It represents "his faith in his ultimate ability, though after prolonged struggle, to solemnize a private marriage of body and soul. He is, in his dream myth, both Cupid and Psyche, androgynous."²⁶ Although Marius never

²⁵ A propos of the snake episode Gordon McKenzie observes that Marius rejects the normal physical side of relationships "in the process of looking for something more valuable and more beautiful for him" (The Literary Character of Walter Pater [Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967], p. 83).

succeeds with this integration of body and soul, here in Buckler's observation is a recognition of the disrupting duality that motivates his quest for wholeness.

Lynne Heywood, in Payne's novel, has a youthful love to whom she becomes engaged, but he soon fades out of the novel never to return. Instead, the love which inspires her to develop herself to her highest potential is that for Paul Gordon, a doctor, scientist, and very bold, handsome opposite to Lynne's shy, spiritual, and retiring nature.

Louÿs's Psyché falls in love with Aimery Jouvelle, his name a play on aimer (to love) and jouvence (youth). Psyché's soul is undeveloped because she has never loved, and her body is equally innocent of the pleasures of love. Louÿs comments:

Toute expérience passionnelle, toute éducation des sens manquaient également à son histoire. Ses troubles amoureux ou tendres se transposaient aussitôt en musiques intellectuelles, et elle ne les reconnaissait plus à travers leurs métamorphoses dans le murmure de ses rêveries (p. 36).

Aimery offers her a sensual awakening, a physical transformation to accompany the emotional blossoming that love produces. "Mais je suis votre corps," he tells her, "vous êtes mon âme" (p. 164). Together they will be complete, but only for a moment in time.

Louÿs attempted to separate the soul and the body in his own life. He handled his erotic desires, not by controlling or

26 William E. Buckler, "Marius the Epicurean: Beyond Victorianism," Victorian Poetry, 16 (1978), 153. Lawrence F. Schuetz also writes that "Cupid and Psyche represent the union of body and soul, matter and spirit. Like Christ, Cupid is the concrete physical manifestation of the divine Ideal" ("Pater's Marius: The Temple of God and the Palace of Art," English Literature in Transition, 15 [1972], p. 3).

suppressing them, but by giving them free rein. And he tried to keep his soul detached. He wrote:

J'ai fait deux parts dans ma vie, pour la plus grande pureté de mon être. . . . Le Corps, ai-je pensé, ne vaut pas la peine qu'on cherche à le sauver; pourquoi donner à l'âme un but inférieur à elle-même. . . . Puisque je ne veux pas avoir conscience de mon corps, mon âme tend avec liberté vers un but inflexible: L'Idéal du Beau.²⁷

In Romain's trilogy, Lucienne's Pierre plays the same kind of opposite role that Paul Gordon provides for Lynne Heywood or that Aimery Jouvelle gives to Psyché. Pierre is Lucienne's complement in many ways. Although he shares her love for music he is interested in the science of the body (he's reading biology at the time they meet) and has little religious bent. Like Aimery he offers his beloved an opportunity for new sensual experiences. Before falling in love, Lucienne is aware she's incomplete because she lacks the knowledge of the physical aspects of love. She writes: "La seule chose que je me représente faiblement, c'est la possession physique de la femme par l'homme, et le tumulte de l'âme autour de cet événement sans égal" (L, 209). The first volume ends with the couple's engagement, on the threshold of the mysteries of love.

Des Ligneris's heroine is blind due to an accident early in her marriage. Thus she's physically separated from her reality and lives in a dark inner world of sounds, sensations, and aromas. Her husband Eric (Eros) leads her around and actually prefers her to be blind and dependent upon him. Mahaut refers to her husband as a god, "le dieu

²⁷ Letter of April 14, 1890 quoted in H. P. Clive, Pierre Louÿs (1870-1925): A Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 52-53.

Eric, le grand Eric" and practically worships him as such.²⁸ She too owes her sensual education to her husband, though her subjugation to him is decidedly morbid. She thinks:

Elle est là pour se prêter aux décisions de son maître en amour, qui en ce moment même connaît son désir jusque dans ses zones les plus obscures, les plus ignorées d'elle et qui est le seul être au monde dont elle puisse accepter jamais cette science un peu terrifiante qu'il a de son corps (p. 40).

Physical separation from reality, which may have been inspired in part by Lucius' loss of his own human body, is also in Lewis's novel. Orual is so uncomfortable with her self that she begins to wear a veil, and from the time she loses Psyche keeps her features hidden from all but a few personal attendants. She never has a lover, nor is she interested in physical love. But, by an interesting twist, she is the body in search of a soul. She builds up her physical strength, becomes a swordswoman and warrior, and rules her kingdom, attending principally to its material needs (improving the breed of cattle, etc.). Christopher writes that the veil suggests the mysterious "flesh" of the Queen and provokes speculation about the nature of her physical appearance. Thus her body is opposed to her "soul" in which the grieving and bitterness go on.²⁹ Zogby sees Orual and Psyche as "two halves of the soul, really the two halves of Lewis, reason and

²⁸ Françoise des Ligneris, Psyché 58 (Montrouge [Seine]: Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1958), p. 52. Future references will appear in the text.

²⁹ Joe R. Christopher, "Archetypal Patterns in Till We Have Faces," in The Longing for a Form: Essays on the Fiction of C. S. Lewis, ed. Peter J. Schakel (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 201, 200.

imagination in tension."³⁰ But there is more in tension than merely reason and imagination. Lewis's opposition of Orual's soul and body signify her lack of spiritual wholeness.

Each Psyche exists in an incomplete state prior to the first union with Cupid. Each represents a soul, but a soul undeveloped. The theme of enlivening the inner soul and raising it to a higher level of psychic integration and wholeness is common to all the novels. Other motifs from Apuleius' work seem to be less important.

For example, the motif of Psyche's beauty offending Venus and earning her enmity doesn't initiate the quest of any hero or heroine. None of the novels features a jealous mother-in-law, nor for that matter any of the other introductory motifs that belong more to the fairy-tale or folk-tale traditions than to the symbolic meaning of the soul's quest. Only Lewis's novel contains some version of the Milesian oracle, and he uses it to call attention to the main theme of the work, the spiritual development of its heroine. The god tells a mystified Orual, who has been responsible for the loss of Psyche's Paradise, that "'You, woman, shall know yourself and your work. You also shall be Psyche'" (p. 174). The oracle is obscure to Orual but it is clear to the reader: Orual will come to know her own soul and realize the meaning of what she has done. She like her sister will be a soul in search of wholeness, incomplete and unhappy until she has found it.

³⁰ Like so many of Lewis's critics, he interprets his observations in a Christian manner: "Lewis is saying that the cerebral and visceral, the rational and imaginative, are united by the Incarnate Christ, who was alone able to unite the human and the divine within Himself" (Edward G. Zogby, "Triadic Patterns in Lewis's Life and Thought," in Schakel, pp. 34, 35).

Separation and Search

Just as the authors generally pay little heed to the tale's introductory motifs, so they also put little emphasis on the details of the marriage, concentrating instead on its edenic darkness. Louÿs, an ardent classicist, carefully parallels the secret marriage, the invisible servants, Psyche bringing in the lamp, and so forth, but the others focus on the deficiencies of the first union of Psyche with her husband or the undeveloped psychological state of the male or female hero at this stage of the story.

The jealous sisters, when they do appear, are not necessarily Psyche's sisters, just some rival for Cupid's love. They may appear prior to the marriage and not again (Lucienne's rivalry with the Barbelenet sisters) or throughout the marriage and separation (Mahaut's rivalry first with her friend Martine and later with her sister Roberte; Psyché's rivalry with Aimery's mistress Aracoeli; Lynne's rivalry with Paul's cousin Floyd). Though none of the rivals appears to represent Psyche's own lower will and appetite in the Neoplatonic sense, they all are less admirable than the Psyche figure. They are either immature (Marthe Barbelenet), sensual and irresponsible (Orual's younger sister Redival, Louÿs's Aracoeli, or Roberte), or selfish and bad-tempered (Floyd Gordon, Cécile Barbelenet). In other words, they represent a lower level of psychic wholeness than does the Psyche figure, even before her trials. Thus the authors may be unaware of Apuleius' Neoplatonism and seem to respond to the tale without reference to it. Also, the sisters do not usually precipitate the separation, as in Apuleius. The separation is often more a

symbolic than a literal effect and acts to propel the protagonist on a long search for a higher level of unity and fulfillment.

For example, Pater's young Marius lives in the comforting yet morbid atmosphere of the ancient religion of Numa, with its intricate worship of household gods and kindly ancestral spirits. With his boyhood friend Flavian he reads Apuleius' Golden Ass and is particularly taken with the tale of Cupid and Psyche. Pater retells the story as it "composed itself in the memory of Marius, with an expression changed in some ways from the original and on the whole graver" (I, 92). Pater trimmed as much as one third of the original to give his own personal interpretation to the work. In the interest of "elevated charm" and "ideal quality" he omitted the realistic complaints of the sisters, Psyche's trick on them, and all the "unseemly touches of comedy and distracting naturalism, especially the bits of humor at the expense of the gods."³¹ In addition, Pater refined Apuleius' diction, rejecting absurd conceits, flourishes, surpluses, triplets, negativity, and usually substituting general words for particular ones, thereby losing Apuleius' subtler and often ironic effects.³²

Although the tale appears to be a lengthy and refined digression from the main action, and has been criticized as such,³³ Pater

³¹ Eugene J. Brzenk, "Pater and Apuleius," Comparative Literature, 10 (1958), 56-57.

³² See Paul Turner, "Pater and Apuleius," Victorian Studies, 3 (1960), 291-93.

³³ Both A. C. Benson (Walter Pater [New York: Macmillan, 1906], p. 92) and Jerome Hamilton Buckley (Season of Youth [Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1974], p. 149) object to Pater's lengthy and "unrelated" (Footnote continued)

intended the tale to operate as an allegorical or mythic preview of what would follow. He wrote:

this episode of Cupid and Psyche served to combine many lines of meditation already familiar to Marius, into the ideal of a perfect imaginative love, centered upon a type of beauty entirely flawless and clean--an ideal which never wholly faded from his thoughts, though he valued it at various times in different degrees (I, 92).

Monson believes Pater was quite familiar with the history of Christian allegorizing of the tale and intended to "bring to mind the well-known image of Christ as the bridegroom of 'the living soul.'" In this context, he speculates that Marius may be a masculine form of Mary, "the sorrowing and questing Demeter of the Middle Ages."³⁴

No doubt Marius is struck by the beauty of the tale as well as the implication that the mortal soul can win both divine love and immortality. Also, as has been noted, Psyche's deification and reunion with her divine lover "have an immediate bearing on Marius' own search for harmony between earthly and heavenly reality."³⁵

Marius' love for Flavian and their cultivation of the beauties of language and life are interrupted by his sudden death from a plague. The last things the boys do together is work on a nuptial hymn until death cuts their work short. Flavian's gruesome end closes out

³³(continued) Buckley admits the possibility that the tale may be interpolation. Buckley admits the possibility that the tale may be functioning as an allegory but insists that "it still seems too obtrusively long and very oblique" (p. 307, n. 19).

³⁴ Gerald Monson, Pater's Portraits: Mythic Patterns in the Fiction of Walter Pater (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 72, 74.

³⁵ U. C. Knoepfelmacher, Letter, Victorian Studies, 4 (1961), 411.

Marius' last hopes in the consolations of pagan religion and in an immortality of the soul.³⁶

To Marius, greatly agitated by that event, the earthly end of Flavian came like a final revelation of nothing less than the soul's extinction. . . . Even that wistful suspense of judgment . . . regarding further stages of being possible for the soul in some dim journey hence, seemed wholly untenable, and, with it, almost all that remained of the religion of childhood (I, 123).

From this point onward Marius' life becomes a search for meaning, a search to recapture the ideals of childhood and of "Cupid and Psyche." Monsmon writes:

The drama, the real action of the novel, is a duplication of the allegorical and mythical pattern of the quest of Psyche for Cupid, a pattern reflected in Marius' quest for the God of Love. . . . Like Psyche of the allegorical tradition, he has been plunged into sensuous nature, a fallen creature in a fallen creation.³⁷

His quest, however, is completely within the province of the mind. The novel becomes an "inner journey rehearsing the successive steps of Marius' philosophical quest."³⁸

³⁶ Monsmon proposes that the name Flavian derives from flavus which means golden yellow and would indicate Apollo, the Golden God. But he's only the summer Dionysius who displays his wintry side with his "rather sinister Epicureanism." In any case, with Flavian's death goes the death of all the classical gods (p. 70).

³⁷ Monsmon, pp. 66, 75.

³⁸ E. J. Brzenk, "Apuleius, Pater and the Bildungsroman," in Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass, ed. B. L. Hijmans, Jr. and R. Th. Van der Paardt (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1978), p. 234. Schuetz, too, proposes that Marius is basically structured on the myth of Cupid and Psyche and argues that "Pater proposes an archetypal pattern for personal resolution and stability through cultivation of a total aesthetic anima." He recognizes that "Marius . . ., like Psyche, must descend into the Hades of his own soul, act to achieve union" (pp. 17, 15).

Marius studies Epicurus, Lucretius, Heraclitus and settles finally on Cyrenaicism, an aesthetic variety of Epicureanism, as a practical philosophy for life. Pater points out that:

It is one of those subjective and partial ideals, based on vivid, because limited, apprehension of the truth of one aspect of experience (in this case, of the beauty of the world and the brevity of man's life there) which it may be said to be the special vocation of the young to express (II, 15).

Marius devotes his days "to the contemplation of what is beautiful, a sort of perpetual religious service" (II, 17). As James Harley points out, both Psyche and Marius must perform "obedience to the Goddess of Beauty as a means of reunion with the God of Love."³⁹

Yet the transitory nature of life and his desperate fear of death overshadow Marius. He's aware of a powerful "inward need of something permanent in its character, to hold by" and aspires after "nothing less than an 'initiation'" (II, 18; I, 142). As he grows older his Cyrenaicism widens out beyond even the broad moral stoicism of the cultural elite, leaving a divided Marius with both an intense yearning to experience "the trace of some celestial wing" and the equally intense conviction that "he must still hold by what his eyes really saw" (II, 90).

Payne's Lynne Heywood separates for good from her first fiancé Garnet Earl because his father doesn't approve of the match. But the real separations occur between Lynne and Paul Gordon, her future husband, and mark the stages of the growth of their love and

³⁹ "Walter Pater's 'Marius' and the Technique of Modern Fiction," Modern Fiction Studies, 3 (1957), 106.

appreciation for each other. When Paul returns from a five-year scientific and medical tour it becomes obvious that he and Lynne are well suited to each other. She, however, is hurt by his undervaluation of her intelligence and learning. His mistake is understandable because Lynne has refrained from expressing her thoughts and feelings in his presence. Carrying her wounded pride to extremes, she fosters his ignorance by willfully appearing dull or silent before him. Eventually she leaves him and goes off to write the book that will win his respect and love. Her quest is both to become the soul he will love as well as to teach his eyes to see and love the soul she already is.

Louÿs's Psyché secretly flees Paris with Aimery by train. In the morning they arrive at his estate, le Chateau de la Belle-au-Bois-Dormant, the Chateau of the Sleeping Beauty of the Woods. The name is perfect; Psyche is a sleeping beauty waiting to be awakened by Love's first kiss. The gardens are beautiful, springtime is just beginning, the servants stay out of sight (by Aimery's orders), and, due to Psyché's modesty, the couple's love can be expressed only under cover of night. In all these details we recognize Louÿs's treatment of the original fairy-tale motifs.

Aimery offers Psyché not sensual bliss (which she cannot as yet understand), but a spiritual union which will be effected by a physical union. He tells her:

Quand deux amants ont uni leurs lèvres, l'amour leur a donné,
non ce qu'il a de plus pur, car tout est pur autour de lui,
mais ce qui'il a d'inexprimable et ce qu'il nous laisse
d'éternel (p. 160).

It is not a festival of the flesh, he tells her, but rather

"l'évocation sublime de l'être immatériel que se révèle en nous!" (p. 160). Psyché comes to feel something of the bliss and all-pervasiveness of their union. When she feels Aimery's arm around her, she asks, "'Pourquoi nous toucher? . . . Si loin que tu sois, il me semble toujours que tu me caresses'" (p. 191).

Even Psyche's physical bliss translates itself into spiritual terms:

C'était une clarté intérieure, une paix envahissante et saine, un frémissement lumineux qui montait, toujours plus tendre, de ses entrailles à sa pensée, de sa chair à son esprit, de son bien-être à son bonheur (p. 198).

Soon after an experience of the heights of physical and spiritual bliss, Psyche realizes the affair is over. She breaks no taboo; she merely brings in a lamp and reads some verses Aimery wrote as if looking back on the perfect hour of their love from some time in the future. Louÿs's fragment ends with Aimery's assurance that his love is still vibrant. According to Louÿs's friend Claude Farrère, the novel was completed in 1913, but the missing portions were never found among Louÿs's papers after his death.⁴⁰ Farrère remembers reading a portion in which the lovers return to Paris and the distance between them grows. Then Aimery goes off to meet Aracoeli and Psyché returns alone to revisit the remote chateau where her soul first unfolded in love. It's winter, the tower is locked, and she dies in the snow.

Whether the conclusion is lost or Louÿs destroyed it, we shall never know. He certainly chose not to publish any of the work during his lifetime and evidently didn't want to leave the "complete" version

⁴⁰ See Claude Farrère, Postface, to Louÿs's Psyché.

to posterity, if such a version indeed ever existed. Farrère speculates that Psyché, Aimery and even Aracoeli were aspects of Louÿs's own soul, and that the novel was too intimate for him to release.⁴¹ Another biographer observed that Louÿs "ne parlait jamais de Psyché sans une émotion qui me paraissait disproportionnée avec le sentiment qui peut inspirer une fiction littéraire."⁴² Louÿs may have been protecting his own privacy or that of the women whose love inspired sections of the work. Or perhaps Louÿs wanted to terminate the work on the note of wholeness that his Psyché had thus far attained, even though he left the story incomplete.

The second novel of Romain's trilogy, Le Dieu des corps, reviews the main events of the first novel and carries the action forward up to the moment of separation, but this time from the point of view of Lucienne's husband Pierre. It mainly concerns Lucienne's sensual awakening and the couple's complete engrossment in what they call "le royaume des choses charnelles." Pierre plays the role of Eros, and together the pair evoke the god of the flesh. Lucienne is the initiate, yet she leads Pierre in an almost religious devotion to their physical union, to an appreciation of how their spirits can speak through the flesh. Pierre writes:

Mon amour était dispensé de remonter vers l'esprit. C'était l'esprit qui venait le rejoindre, se répandre et affluer dans la chair, dans tous ces lieux charnels . . . C'étaient les pensées de Lucienne, ses attitudes mentales, la plénitude de son être que je rencontrais partout où allaient mes yeux, mes

⁴¹ Farrère, p. 249.

⁴² R. Cardinne-Petit, Pierre Louÿs inconnu (Paris: Les Éditions de l'Élan, 1948), p. 172.

lèvres. . . . Et c'étaient aussi des pensées que je me flattais d'offrir en échange à ce corps féminin, de porter en lui avec feu.⁴³

Lucienne desires an absolute union and oneness with her beloved, a union that can transcend their physical bodies and their separation in time and space. Her search for just such a union begins only when they are separated by Pierre's job. When she finally achieves it she looks back upon their earlier physical union as a less fulfilling state. She comments:

Comme l'amour a suivi des voies étranges! Il a commencé par m'attirer dans la chair. Il m'y a fait entrer comme dans un palais plein d'or, de fêtes et de musique. Il m'y a enfermée. J'ai cru que j'y étais prisonnière. Ivre de fêtes, mais prisonnière. Oui, j'ai découvert un jour que le "royaume" était un prison.⁴⁴

Yet she sees that if Love imprisoned her (according to motifs of Apuleius), he also delivered her by leading her towards ever more profound and satisfying unions with her beloved. It is only when she thinks of her body that she feels she has escaped from a prison. When she thinks of her beloved she is filled with the sense of union with him.

When Le Dieu des corps first appeared it shocked some reviewers by its frankness and by the way it deified physical love. With no notion of the higher union Romain had in view for the concluding novel many were offended and accused Romain of writing pornography.⁴⁵ One

⁴³ Jules Romain, Le Dieu des corps (Paris: Gallimard, 1928), pp. 181-82. Future references to this volume will appear in the text following the letter "D".

⁴⁴ Jules Romain, Quand le navire . . . (Paris: Gallimard, 1929), p. 245. Future references to this volume will appear in the text following the letter "Q".

critic felt that Romain had sullied the myth of Psyche, that he had "perdu ce trésor de décence et de pureté."⁴⁶ When the final novel appeared reviewers apologized for their harsh treatment of the second volume and accepted Romain's use of the sexual material in terms of his higher purpose, to show the complete union possible for a loving couple.⁴⁷ Later critics, perhaps more accustomed to sexual frankness, praised Romain for "a subtlety and a fineness of perception . . . far superior to the despairing eroticism of Lawrence."⁴⁸ Others were able to appreciate the physical union with the same religious awe with which Lucienne experiences it and recognize that "le geste devient rite par le tempérament religieux de Romain."⁴⁹

Lucienne's perception of the early experience of marriage as a prison finds a parallel in Des Ligneris's novel. Her heroine Mahaut is the most benighted of all the Psyches. She suffers Eric's affairs with other women, feels "le poids presque étouffant de son amour," and completely subjugates herself to his will (p. 21). She is not allowed to express her desires or deviate at all from his will. When he

⁴⁵ See Buck, p. 207 and Israël, p. 128.

⁴⁶ André Rousseaux, "Jules Romain ou la mystification universelle," in Portraits Littéraires Choisis (n.p.: Éditions Albert Skira, 1947), pp. 221-22. Rousseaux also felt that Romain had reduced love to mere physiological affinity, while in an obsessive eroticism he had raised Priapus to a supreme diety.

⁴⁷ See John Charpentier, rev. of Quand le navire . . ., by Jules Romain, Mercure de France, 214 (1929), 290.

⁴⁸ Herbert Read, "Jules Romain," rev. of Men of Good Will, Books I and II, and The Body's Rapture (trans. John Rodker), The Spectator, 151 (1933), 711.

⁴⁹ Israël, p. 224. See also Buck, p. 208.

chooses to spend the night with her he places a heavy palladium bracelet on her arm, as he had done since their honeymoon, explaining at the time that he would do so "chaque fois qu'il aurait décidé de disposer d'elle" (p. 42).

Mahaut finds her servitude humiliating but exciting, her pleasure mixed with bruises and exhaustion. Eric disappears on business trips or goes off for evenings or days without telling Mahaut where or why he's leaving, preferring her to wait passively in her darkness for him to return and to couple the heavy chain on her arm, if he so desires. When she tells him of an operation that might restore her sight, he discourages her and insists that she is infinitely more dear to him as she is. She hears his words echoing in her mind, yet "elle entendait aussi son désir, infini, de le connaître" (p. 109). Why should she be the only one of his lovers not to see his face?

During a long separation Mahaut breaks the "taboo" and regains her sight through an operation, but she keeps the fact a secret, intending to surprise Eric and her family. Once he returns, however, she is witness to such astounding scenes of Roberte's flirtations and Eric's lust that she cannot find the right occasion to reveal herself. As she waits and watches her own sense of self grows.

One interesting motif is Des Ligneris's use of Mahaut's children. Early in her marriage (rather than after the reunion, as in the *Psyche* story) Mahaut gives birth to female twins. As females and as twins they are symbols for her own divided self.⁵⁰ Des Ligneris doesn't

⁵⁰ See Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother*, trans. Ralph Manheim, 2nd. ed. (1955; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 197, 275.

develop the twins very much, yet they do appear to have opposite opinions of the bracelet. One dislikes it, for example, and thinks it's in bad taste, while the other does like it. She says, "'Ça me fait penser aux captives de mon histoire ancienne. Tu devrais en mettre aux deux mains'" (p. 98). It's as if the twins represent the two souls of Mahaut, one in sensual servitude to her love-master, the other struggling for self-sufficiency.

Mahaut's soul is continually in conflict. When Eric announces his impending trip she is:

envahie de sentiments contraires. L'idée qu'elle avait de nouveau s'appartenir lui inspirait à la fois de la joie et de la terreur, mais il ne s'agissait pas plus d'une vraie joie que d'une terreur qui puisse clairement se faire connaître. Tout se combinait en elle pour former un état de trouble où les sentiments se mêlaient à leurs contraires (p. 70).

After Eric's return, Mahaut's search becomes a struggle with herself, with her growing vision of her husband not as a god but rather as a hunter in pursuit of his prey. She gradually shakes off her passivity and considers acting to alter her situation, to change her life. From the moment she disregards Eric's wish to keep her blind and dependent she has embarked on a course of self-realization, whatever the consequences may be.

Nowhere is the search for the soul's own wholeness and integration more explicit than in C. S. Lewis's novel. Once Orual sees the god's light and his own face she is forced to believe in a world beyond that of the senses. Yet for her it is a world which hates her and desires her destruction. She wounds and loses her sister Psyche, but this loss additionally symbolizes the loss of her own psyche. She throws herself into the role of Queen and tries to forget both Psyche and her

own soul or self (Orual). From this time forward she wears a veil over her face and never tells her trusted friends that she saw the god or his palace when she visited with Psyche. As the years pass, she says:

The Queen of Glome had more and more part in me and Orual less and less. I locked Orual up or laid her asleep as best I could somewhere deep down inside me; she lay curled there. It was like being with child, but reversed; the thing I carried in me grew slowly smaller and less alive (p. 226).

A chain in a well makes a sound that reminds her of Psyche's terrible weeping when she loses her paradise. The Queen hides from the noise; she changes her room in the palace to get away from it,

always afraid of hearing one sound; and at the same time (that was Orual, Orual refusing to die) terribly afraid of not hearing it if for once . . . it should be real, if Psyche had come back (p. 229).

Eventually she has thick walls built around the well and the sound is silenced. But in her dreams the "ugly fancy" comes that "I had walled up, gagged with stone, not a well but Psyche (or Orual) herself" (p. 235). Eventually she is just a "nothingness" within.

An accident (?!) late in her life reopens the whole question. The Queen visits a small chapel and hears Psyche's story transformed into a Persephone-like fertility myth. In the spring and summer Psyche is with the god; in fall and winter she is veiled, like Orual, and wanders forlornly in search of him. Their separation is caused by Psyche's sisters, who, jealous of her happiness and good fortune . . . , and so forth. The Queen is outraged to be so misrepresented, so she writes her own version, her own complaint against the gods who

had refused to reveal themselves until after she made her fatal mistake.⁵¹

Orual's complaint forms the large first part of the novel. It cannot stand as it is, however, because the process of remembering, of writing and reconstructing, begins to wake up the sleeping Orual. She learns that she had ignored her younger sister Redival and left the child lonely and desperate for attention. In her selfishness she had worn out Bardia, her chief advisor, and driven him to an early death. In a series of visions or dreams she experiences in parallel the trials or tasks of Psyche, learning more and more about the depths of her pride and selfishness.

Urang believes it to be a "serious weakness" that Orual's visions are "mere dreams."⁵² But Orual only calls the visions dreams in her effort to explain her experiences, which she has even when she is wide awake. Even if they were dreams, the fact that she is awake inside and cognizant of every detail as they unfold sets them apart from the half-remembered confusion of ordinary dreams and makes them true spiritual experiences. Orual herself recognizes that what is given her by the dreams (or visions or "seeings") "may be spears and water-spouts of truth from the very depth of truth" (p. 277). The plunges within yield self-knowledge and concurrently, as her soul

⁵¹ Clyde Kilby points out that Orual has "proof" of the gods' existence and power in the rain that results from the Offering, but she has no "spiritual recognition," and according to the Fox's stoical teaching, insists on a natural explanation for the event ("An Interpretation of 'Till We Have Faces,'" Orcrest, 6 (1971-1972), pp. 7-8).

⁵² Urang, p. 48.

waxes, Orual's body wanes. She gives up her veil from this time, a very significant act, because she has begun to know and accept her self, to allow herself to see her soul.

In her desperation, she attempts suicide, but the god stops her and forbids it. He counsels her to "'Die before you die. There is no chance after'" (p. 279). She ruminates on the meaning of his words: "I knew there were certain initiations, far away at Eleusis in the Greeklands, whereby a man was said to die and live again before the soul left the body" (p. 281). But it's too late for long trips. She remembers that Socrates had said that "true wisdom is the skill and practice of death" (p. 281). She supposes that by the death which is wisdom he meant the death of our "passions and desires and vain opinion" and immediately becomes hopeful (p. 282). Orual's naturalistic interpretation of Socrates' advice is true to the Fox's stoicism. She hopes that she can perhaps mend her soul and escape from her ugly self, from her "dark witch-shape and [her] tapping stick" (p. 280). Her self-imposed moods of being just, calm, and wise cannot last, of course, and she quickly slips into "some old rage, resentment, gnawing fantasy, or sullen bitterness" (p. 282). By herself she can do nothing.⁵³ But the gods send the necessary help; the seeings continue and Orual's last illusions crumble before her growing inner vision. She learns that her love for Psyche had been largely selfish and possessive. In the vision parallel to Psyche's

⁵³ As Kilby points out, Orual's self-reformation is based on the Fox's stoic philosophy (p. 9). That philosophy is useful to a certain extent, but it is limited (see Norwood, p. 263). What Orual needs is a knowledge which transcends that gained from reason and the senses.

third task, she cries: "What should I care for some horrible, new happiness which I hadn't given her and which separated her from me?" (p. 292). That she recognizes as her true selfish voice. She is now ready for the coup de grace.

Transcending, Reunion, and Wholeness

Crucial to each hero or heroine's search is the event parallel to Psyche's descent into the underworld, the transcending episode which yields knowledge, joy, and greater degree of psychic wholeness, if not, as in the original tale, divine status and immortality. Each transcending episode can be recognized not only by its imagery suggestive of the realm of death, but, more importantly, by the obvious mental and physical quiescence that precedes the experience, by the quality of knowledge gained, and by the joy and integration which follow the event.

Orual's first vision begins with "I sank into deep thought" (p. 273). Thereupon Orual's father appears to her and leads her along. They find a dark hole, like a wide well, and jump into it. They fall a long way and land softly in a warm dark place and then must jump into another black hole, again falling a long way into an even darker place. He asks her, "Who is Ungit?" and leads her to a mirror, as he had once done to show her her ugliness. There she sees, not her own face, but Ungit's (Aphrodite's) shapeless and blood encrusted rock face. "I am Ungit," she wails, realizing that she is that "all-devouring wormlike, yet barren thing. Glome was a web--I the swollen spider, squat at its center, gorged with men's stolen lives" (p. 276).

This pattern of mental quiescence, followed by a metaphoric fall inward upon the self, to be shown the self, is repeated several times, though with different imagery. In her next vision she again descends, this time into water:

I went into the cold water, up to my knee, up to my belly, up to my neck, and then lost the bottom and swam and found the bottom again and came up out of the river into the pastures of the gods (p. 283).

Again a descent into consciousness, again revelation, and onwards to the next task.

In the third vision she is led out of the sunlight "into the dark inwards of the mountain, and then further and further in" until she stands "in silent darkness" before tens of thousands of ghosts (p. 288). Again the imagery of a descent into the depths of the self, again the revelation of self-knowledge. As this seeing continues she is led by her long dead friend and tutor the Fox, playing the role of the tower, to a cool chamber from which she can see grass and shining water, there to witness and share Psyche's descent into the underworld. First she sees moving pictures of Psyche's trials, in which she recognizes her own, and comes finally to the last one, Psyche's descent to the Queen of the Deadlands (which she must perform in absolute silence), in order to be "united with the Divine Nature" (p. 304).

Psyche, the soul, is tempted by the pride that inflates the temporal self, by the rational view of life that denies the unseen eternal basis of it (the Fox's stoic rationalism), and by the hungry possessive love (Orual's) that binds one to individuals rather than to the wholeness of divine love. Psyche's descent is Orual's too. Again

self-knowledge follows for Orual in the characteristic pattern. Orual can finally say to Psyche, "I never wished you well, never had one selfless thought of you. I was a craver" (p. 305).

Inner or pure knowledge changes consciousness, however, and as a result of her transcending experiences Orual is transformed. She can feel selfless love for the first time as she is reunited with Psyche and is silenced by joy. She feels herself coming to the "highest, and the utmost fullness of being which the human soul can contain" (p. 306). From this height the happiness continues to build with the approach of the god, reminding the reader of the divine ecstasies of the mystics: "Each breath I drew led me into new terror, joy, overpowering sweetness. I was pierced through and through with the arrows of it" (p. 307). As she and Psyche stand before a great pool of clear water (her now purified soul) Orual sees their joint reflection: "both Psyche, both beautiful (if that mattered now) beyond all imagining, yet not exactly the same" (pp. 307-308). The god's great voice confirms the sight: "'You also are Psyche'" (p. 308).

Psyche is by now divine, and thus, by implication, so is the soul of Orual. When she sees the deified Psyche she observes that along with her celestial breath and radiance:

She was the old Psyche still; a thousand times more her very self than she had been before the Offering. For all that had then but flashed out in a glance or a gesture, all that one meant most when one spoke her name, was now wholly present, not to be gathered up from hints nor in shreds, not some of it in one moment and some in another. Goddess? I had never seen a real woman before (p. 306).

In other words, the purified soul is simply the great potential beauty within everyone, expressed and obvious for the first time. Orual is

finally a soul, united with Divine Nature, beautiful and full. She dies over the last page of her manuscript. If the first part was a complaint against the gods, the second part has become a hymn of praise. She ends her conversation with the gods: "Long did I hate you, long did I fear you. I might--" (p. 308). The undecipherable words that follow could be "have loved you."

In Till We Have Faces Orual dies in a state of grace, reborn from her old ugly self. Moorman points out that Lewis earlier used the "common mythical pattern of death and rebirth" to explain the transformation of another hero who is dragged beneath the sea to an underwater cave and reemerges changed.⁵⁴ Others have noted the occurrence of more than one rebirth in Till We Have Faces⁵⁵ and suggested parallels between Orual and Psyche's katabases and the descent of Ishtar into the Realm of Eresh-Kigal⁵⁶ or of Christ's descent into death.⁵⁷ In his book Miracles Lewis discussed the death-rebirth cycle as part of the more inclusive pattern of descent and re-ascent. "The pattern is there in Nature because it was first there in God. All the instances of it . . . turn out to be but transpositions of the Divine theme into a minor key." He felt that

⁵⁴ Moorman, pp. 124-25.

⁵⁵ Norwood says that the pattern of death-rebirth-transformation can be seen in "the increased strength and beauty of Psyche after the Great Offering, in the increased wisdom of the Fox after he has visited the deadlands . . . , in the death of the veiled Queen and the birth in naked beauty of Orual-Queen-Psyche" (p. 270).

⁵⁶ Carl F. Keppler, rev. of Till We Have Faces, by C. S. Lewis, Arizona Quarterly, 14 (1958), 82.

⁵⁷ Kilby, p. 9.

the descent and re-ascent pattern may well be the "very formula of reality."⁵⁸ Hence Psyche's katabasis becomes the pattern for Orual's. As heroine of a spiritual quest Orual follows the archetypal journey of Psyche.⁵⁹

The other novels likewise emphasize the transcending episode, and since they deal less with visions and celestial visitations and more with the reality our eyes normally see, they describe the transcending process in more "realistic" and less metaphoric terms. For example, Des Ligneris's Mahaut also has her transcendence in the form of a dream, but a more naturalistic dream, not a religious vision. Prior to the dream, and in order to avoid seeing her sister and husband's lust for each other (which they take no pains to conceal from her "unseeing" eyes), Mahaut retires to her room and to her bed, feigning illness. She uses the long hours alone to think deeply about what to do. Her sibyl-like grandmother, in the role of the tower, advises her to calm herself and to "'Retire-toi en toi aussi loin qu'il faut, là où ils ne peuvent plus t'atteindre'" (p. 216).

The night is stormy. Mahaut lies awake, falling into nightmares from time to time and emerging from them wondering if she had really slept and dreamt or if they were feverish hallucinations. She dreams

⁵⁸ C. S. Lewis, Miracles (New York: Macmillan, 1947), pp. 136, 151.

⁵⁹ Christopher suggests that Psyche's life parallels Christ's because "Christ's life is the archetypal way of salvation," (p. 197). However, Orual does not repeat this "way." She does not begin her journey from a high and beautiful spiritual plane and she does not sacrifice herself for the good of her people. She follows rather the more fundamental process of gaining expansion of the mind and heart through transcending and thus winning her spiritual beauty and divine "seeings."

about loving and raising her little sister and finally killing her with hatred. Roberte is in a boat in a storm, and the boat is sinking under the weight of Mahaut's hatred. The others in the boat are trying to bail out the hatred and they pray to Mahaut to renounce it and lift the weight that is forcing the boat under. She pretends not to be present, as in the rooms where Roberte and Eric carried on in front of her. The boat sinks and disappears beneath a calm, quiet, flat, and empty sea. Outside the storm noisily rages while Mahaut clearly dreams of a vast, empty, silent sea. When she awakes she feels her appetite return and she makes plans to leave the following day.

The final day dawns beautifully after a month of constant storms. Mahaut feels detached from all her surroundings in "une zone d'incertitude qui la rendait plus mystérieuse et plus lointaine que si elle s'était promenée en ce moment en Australie ou au Brésil" (p. 224). She feels distant from the others: "Elle avait l'impression de se trouver en avance des autres, seule à un carrefour." (p. 204). She dispassionately considers their passion for which they would no doubt risk "leur vie s'il avait fallu, et, pour autant qu'ils pensent en avoir une, leur âme" (p. 227). She sees that Eric is no longer triumphant, can no longer serve as the model of a god: "Il avait renoncé à être autre chose que lui-même, un être affolé de désir et d'amour" (p. 228).

Outside a car is pulling up to take her off to meet her children and then take them all to spend the month with her friend Thibaut and his family. Inside Roberte and Eric are locked in a visual embrace of incipient passion. Mahaut chooses this moment to reveal herself. She

ostentatiously crosses the room, climbs upon a chair, conspicuously consults her wristwatch, resets the stopped cuckoo clock, replaces the chair, and walks toward the door, brushing past the stunned Roberte and Eric. She cheerfully greets Thibault: "Nous partons," she cries. "Demain il fera très beau" (p. 229).

The novel closes on this note. Mahaut has nourished the soul within her until she can see things as they are and yet act with inner happiness and an awareness of her own life forces. The night of dreams closes out her rage and hatred and leaves her peaceful. She hints that she will maintain her household with Eric, but it's difficult to believe that she will ever again play the role of his love slave. Like Orual she is reunited, or perhaps united for the first time, with her own newly grown soul. Like Orual she feels joy, but unlike Orual she wins no reunion with her beloved. That may come, of course, but this novel ends with a victory much more circumscribed than Lewis's. Still the transcending pattern and growth toward greater psychic wholeness is quite evident.

Payne's heroine also dreams and visits the land of the dead, but in a different sense. Exhausted by long periods of study and writing Lynne collapses into a severe illness. The shock that breaks her health is the news of her guardian's death, immediately followed by the death of his mother and hers (in a spiritual sense). Lynne nearly follows. Paul works hard to save her, even offering his blood in a risky transfusion operation. Lynne recovers without it, and as she convalesces in the early spring, she realizes "with keen delight that she had come back to life" (p. 195).

Even though Lynne's "transcendence" gives no self knowledge, and is totally unconscious, Payne clearly indicates that it is a rebirth with a very definite renewal. Lynne's eyes are full of a "dawn-like radiance".

Evidently something had happened, or perhaps she was only transfigured by some thought, or hope suggested to her; some rose-colored promise outlined by her newly awakened imagination, on the canvas of her future (p. 195).

Actually, she is exalted by Paul's "grand magnanimous act" and credits him with rescuing her from the atheistic depression that followed her losses. She confesses to him that his generous act "deified" life once more for her. Paul, from his side, learned to love and admire her as he watched her through her long illness.

The expected reunion does not occur, however, because Lynne is convinced she means little or nothing to Paul. While he continues to discover how intelligent and thoughtful she is, she continues to avoid him and goes off to another city to write her book and speak to him through its pages. In her absence Paul gives up his medical practice, is ordained as a minister, and falls completely in love with her when he reads her book.

The reunion finally comes on the eve of Paul's departure as a missionary to the Far East. Lynne first grieves and meditates over her love:

She had studied to be what the world calls a great woman, that she might be his equal. She had spared herself neither suffering nor toil; she had given her youth up to a painful servitude to art; she had endured all things in uncomplaining silence for his sake. She had let her heart beat loud enough for him to hear it in her book; had in vain filled its pages with the wistful, wooing witchery of a metaphysical genius. She had done everything, allowed by a wholly refined nature, to win him (pp. 268-69).

Lynne's despair at losing Paul is increased by her observations of how he has changed. As Paul bids his farewells to the congregation, she observes how considerate and courtly he has become, how generous in his smiles and words to the humblest of the factory workers among them. "How different religion had made him! What an exclusive selfish man he had once appeared to be! but t'was only in appearance as this night proved" (p. 275). While Lynne was maturing into beautiful womanhood, Paul was becoming less materialistic and more spiritual.

The inevitable discovery of mutual love and admiration follows and the two plan to marry and go off in joyous service to God. The novel ends with Paul's use of Lynne's middle name and recognition of its meaning for both of them: "Oh! Butterfly, the summer has come at last, my wife, soul of my soul, Psyche!" (p. 287). Payne rearranges Apuleius' motifs and separations, making both Paul and Lynne wait, as Lucius does for his own inner readiness for initiation and reunion with Isis, but she fulfills the promise of the original tale. The missionary work of Paul and Lynne promises them an immortality on the Christian Olympus.

In Lynne's near-fatal illness Payne conscientiously structures a parallel to Psyche's visit to the underworld, though she perhaps only half understood its meaning. She then uses the imagery of rebirth to make the event crucial to the development of love between Lynne and Paul, even though she does not invest it with any actual experience of self-transcendence or self-knowledge. Pater, too, conscientiously

parallels the underworld episode in Marius' visit to a catacomb, but it too falls flat.⁶⁰

By the time of this event Marius has found a new friend, the Christian soldier Cornelius. His "knightly array seemed to be but sign or symbol of some other thing far beyond it," Marius observes (I, 233). Cornelius can be perceived as an allegorical knight of Christ,⁶¹ or as Perceval the grail knight, going through the wasteland and associated with the sound of water, perhaps an indication that his mission will be fruitful.⁶² Cornelius introduces Marius into a Christian community which meets at the home of the widow Cecilia. Pater alerts the reader that this experience will define for Marius "the critical turning-point in his days" (II, 95). Marius' appreciation for all the elements of this ideal Christian enclave is such that it forms one of the high moments in his Cyrenaic economy. "If the true value of souls is in proportion to what they can admire, Marius was just then an acceptable soul," Pater says (II, 97).

In the scene parallel to Psyche's katabasis, Cornelius acts as the tower guide⁶³ and conducts Marius into a cave cut into a hillside,

⁶⁰ Only one of the many critics who have considered parallels between Apuleius' and Pater's stories has noted that this event corresponds to Psyche's final task, and that is James Hafley (p. 108). The reason that readers do not respond to this rendering of Psyche's descent may be because it is contrived and fails to create the required and expected expansion of consciousness. However, readers do respond strongly both to Marius' "privileged moment" in Part III and to his actual death, as will be seen in the ensuing discussion.

⁶¹ Robert M. Scotto, "'Visions' and 'Epiphanies': Fictional Technique in Pater's Marius and Joyce's Portrait," James Joyce Quarterly, 11 (1973), 44.

⁶² Martha Salmon Vogeler, "The Religious Meaning of Marius the Epicurean," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 19 (1964), 296.

leading him through first the family crypt of the Cecillii and then that of the Christian community. The catacomb is, in fact, the center of the sanctity of the "peculiar religious expressiveness" of the whole scene. Marius is very moved by the devout attentions to the buried members of the community, both those who died natural deaths and those who were martyred. Many of the tombs are adorned with classical images of "succor, of regeneration, of escape from the grave," images of Hercules and Orpheus. Marius feels the effect of

tranquil hope there--a kind of heroic cheerfulness and grateful expansion of heart, as with the sense, again, of some real deliverance, which seemed to deepen the longer one lingered through these strange and awful passages (II, 103).

Pater suggests Dante's pilgrimage with his description of Marius' return: "with no feeling of suddenness or change Marius found himself emerging again, like a later mystic traveller through similar dark places 'quieted by hope,' into the daylight" (II, 104). Hafley notes that the word "hope" occurs ten times in the scene. He suggests that this "powerfully rendered experience of hope in the catacombs is a definite image of modern experience" which resolves questions posed earlier in the work. Cecilia's attitude toward the dead Christian child answers Aurelius's despair over his dead child, the Christian rites for the dead answer Marius' childhood sense of responsibility for his ancestors, and Cecilia herself replaces Marius' mother and is a Madonna image, a combination of chastity and motherhood.⁶⁴ In this

⁶³ Hafley sees Cornelius's role as "Cupid's triumphant return" after the death of Flavian (p. 106). But, as Monsmon observes, this can't be so because Marius is incomplete, still a questing soul (p. 95).

sense she evokes Pater's version of Psyche's conception, which sounds very much like an annunciation, with echoes of King James's rhetoric, such as "tidings" and "divine seed." In fact, the whole passage uses biblical rhythm and diction.⁶⁵ Marius' hope for some divine enlivenment (seed) within is the highest value Pater seems able to wring from this scene.

Pater emphasizes but doesn't show the importance of this scene for Marius. Marius claims that his new vision offers him an alternative to his old weariness and melancholy, which in fact continue. He muses:

Here, it might be, was, if not the cure, yet the solace or anodyne of his great sorrows--of that constitutional sorrowfulness, not peculiar to himself perhaps, but which made his life certainly like one long "disease of the spirit" (II, 107).

Unfortunately he looked for reunion with a divine order lost with his youth never comes. Marius' eulogies of Christian life, love, and virtue don't seem to touch him deeply enough. He intellectually appreciates the beauty of the love and chastity, of the grace and "mystic attractiveness" of the believers, but he himself has no experience of belief and never joins their ranks. He sees that their courage, hope, and inner happiness were due to "some science, or light of knowledge they had, to which there had certainly been no parallel in the older world," but the light itself eludes him (II, 131).

⁶⁴ Hafley, p. 108.

⁶⁵ See Billie Andrew Inman, "The Organic Structure of Marius the Epicurean," Philological Quarterly, 41 (1962), 481-82.

As he lies dying from an illness contracted during his accidental arrest as a Christian, Marius experiences a Faustian moment of satisfaction in anticipation of fulfillment. From his experiences with the Christian community he can envision the beginning of a perfect humanity creating a perfect world. He peacefully awaits his death, his soul clear and receptive, "the house ready for the possible guest; the tablet of the mind white and smooth, for whatsoever divine fingers might choose to write there" (II, 220). However, nothing comes but hope that something better might lie after death, or in the world after his death, some new age to dawn. He dies, in the eyes of his attendants, as a martyr, "and martyrdom, as the church has always said, [is] a kind of sacrament with plenary grace" (II, 224).

Are we to assume that as a martyr, Marius has achieved immortality, a Christian paradise, in spite of his lack of personal commitment? One can argue that "an accurate reading of the text makes it abundantly clear that Pater has Marius assent to Christianity as it was then constituted and to the degree that he understood it" and that the main action of the novel "is the conversion of a fine pagan to the Christian faith."⁶⁶

Other readers are not so optimistic. They do not assume Marius' salvation and are swayed instead by Pater's weary, cautious, and melancholy tone and by Marius' inability to embrace the Christian faith personally and practically. Typical of this more common line of thinking is Brzenk's comparison of Pater's ending to Apuleius':

⁶⁶ David Anthony Downes, The Temper of Victorian Belief: Studies in the Religious Novels of Pater, Kingsley, and Newman (New York: Twayne, 1972), p. 38.

In Pater, on the contrary, there is no final ecstasy, no ultimate revelation, and Marius on his deathbed is still contemplating alternatives, though this lack of a specific resolution may itself be Pater's way of saying there are no final answers.⁶⁷

Harold Bloom sees the novel as moving through a pattern which sets up a dialectic "by which no apparent spiritual advancement becomes an artistic retreat. The consequence is that the spiritual quest is not from error to truth, but only from alienation to near-sympathy."⁶⁸

Although Marius dies uncommitted and the ending is inconclusive, Monsmon argues that it is in no way confused or befuddled, but only stops there because that's where human experience stops, with hope and anticipation, not a clear showing forth. He feels that even so, a certain "momentum has been generated which carries the reader into the future."⁶⁹

By his death, in which he transcends the mortal veil, he reaches God. For Marius, as for Psyche, the sting of death is in reality the prick of Cupid's arrow, an awakening from that death-in-life which is the state of all mortals.⁷⁰

Thus the novel would end with the katabasis itself, with the descent into death. Psyche carried bread along to ensure her safe return. Marius has his bread for the journey placed between his lips.

⁶⁷ Brzenk, "Apuleius," p. 234.

⁶⁸ The Ringers in the Tower (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 192.

⁶⁹ Monsmon, p. 97. Others agree. Benson insists that Marius, if he hadn't died, "would have become a professed Christian" (p. 90).

⁷⁰ Monsmon, p. 96. Monsmon also points out that the year of Marius' death was 177 A. D., the year in which St. Cecilia was martyred and thus married to Christ, according to early Christians. Thus he concludes that the same salvation attends Marius (p. 97).

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But "At his death, Marius is still the questing soul, Psyche, who descends into the realm of the dead to beg a boon from Persephone, goddess of death. This was Psyche's last labor before Love comes down and makes her his."⁷¹ Marius' future is open; the reader is left only with the "implications of a 'plenary grace' and the mythic pattern of Cupid and Psyche."⁷²

Interestingly, one of the best moments of Marius' life comes a few years before his exposure to Christianity. It is, in fact, a rather classic transcending experience. It is both a culminating and an initiatory experience for Marius and it opens his mind to the possible validity of other world views, including Christianity. Scholars have almost always taken note of this event in Marius' development, calling it variously an "epiphany," "mystic experience," "revelation," "privileged moment," "illumination," or "moment of vision." Some have gone on to relate it either to other secular experiences of this sort, such as Wordsworth's "spots of time" or Joyce's epiphanies, or to the powerful aesthetic experiences Pater describes in The Renaissance.⁷³

A look at the event reveals the familiar transcending imagery of mental and physical quiescence followed by an expansion of consciousness and experience of bliss. Marius observes that Rome "seemed to settle down into a singular quiet" and he takes advantage of this

71 Monsmon, p. 95.

72 Schuetz, p. 16.

73 See Gerald Monsmon, Walter Pater (Boston: Twayne, 1977), p. 93; Robert Scholes, "In Search of James Joyce," James Joyce Quarterly, 11 (1973), 12-13; Hafley, p. 100; and Anthony Ward, Walter Pater: The Idea in Nature (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1966), p. 162.

quiet to study more than usual. One day he goes out to one of his favorite spots in the Sabine hills "for a quiet even greater than that of Rome in the country air" (II, 62). He had awakened that morning feeling unusually refreshed, joyful, and in possession of his "own best and happiest self," treasuring his experience of that "flawless serenity, better than the most pleasurable excitement" (II, 62, 63).

Against the background of external quiet, beauty, the thin and pure air and his own tranquility, his thoughts lead him to contemplate first the idea from Plato and others of a spirit or consciousness within man and within all the things around him. From these he considers the concept of that Great Ideal which, Pater comments, the Greeks called Eternal Reason, the Old Testament gives the name of Creator and the New Testament, the Father of Men. He calls the hour "peculiar and privileged," "fortunate," and, as he notes his body's "passive surrender" to its apprehension of the external world, he asks himself, if his own mind, his life and consciousness, could be but an impulse

or series of impulses, a single process, in an intellectual or spiritual system external to it, diffused through all time and place--that great stream of spiritual energy. . . . Might not this entire material world, the very scene around him, the immemorial rocks, the firm marble, the olive gardens, the falling water, be themselves but reflections in, or a creation of, that one indefectible mind, wherein he too became conscious, for an hour, a day, for so many years? (II, 70).

It's not just the idea of such a world-view, such as we might have reading over it, but the actual experience of such a reality, of inner knowledge of such a reality, that makes Marius (or Pater) call the hour "privileged" and describe it as "marked point in life never to be

forgotten" (II, 71). Ward agrees that Marius has had an experience, not just an hour of contemplation. He cites the whole tableau as an image of rest, the usual prerequisite for a transcending experience, and observes that the "language of the passage itself tends to be emptied of content so that it may be used to invoke the serene and unthinking state of mind which allows a moment of vision."⁷⁴

The experience inspires Marius to dedicate the remainder of his life to a search for the ideal he has cognized, or the equivalent of it, in the life around him. It changes his world-view once and for all, and opens him up to a consideration of the Christian life described above. Unfortunately for Marius, his intellectual appreciation for the aesthetic value of this life is not accompanied by an actual experience of it and his search never ends satisfactorily.

It's interesting that Pater does not set this important experience of Marius' in the context of Christian revelation, but describes it in more universal, and therefore less specifically religious terms. In fact, as Morris Beja notes, all of Pater's epiphanies (in Marius, The Renaissance, and elsewhere) are "clearly secular and above all aesthetic."⁷⁵ Buckley suggests that "Marius' vision in the olive garden may be as valid as Eliot's moment in the rose-garden. Religious experience is not limited to a single orthodoxy."⁷⁶ Benson's contention that Pater had "no sense of union with God" or

⁷⁴ Ward, pp. 163-64.

⁷⁵ Epiphany in the Modern Novel (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1971), p. 39.

⁷⁶ Buckley, p. 159.

that "the mystical union of the personality with God is outside the writer's ken" reflects this critic's inability to understand the nature of Pater's experiences and of spiritual experiences in general.⁷⁷

Romains too is concerned to describe a set of personal experiences outside the pale of traditional Christianity. While discussing the last volume of his trilogy with an interviewer, Romains said:

The mysticism of Quand le navire is not Catholic but there is a profound resemblance between all mystical methods. Every mystical experience aids one to penetrate other[s]. . . . I tried to acquire some experience of what we might call, for simplicity's sake, mystical states, or the mystical life. I believe that no external acquaintance with religious behavior enables us to penetrate into that universe if we have not explored it subjectively.⁷⁸

And, as with Pater, these subjective "mystical" experiences serve to alter and expand the earlier view of reality of both characters and readers.

In the last novel of the Psyché trilogy, Pierre looks back after many years have passed, to describe his experiences when Lucienne attempted to join him at sea by projecting her consciousness from Marseilles to the ship, somewhere in the Mediterranean. He includes Lucienne's diaries from that time at the appropriate intervals so the reader can view the same events from two perspectives. Both versions describe the "transcending" nature of the experiences: both Lucienne and Pierre calm themselves in preparation for the events; both arrive

77 Benson, p. 111.

78 Lefèvre, p. 521.

at a new knowledge of reality; and both are exalted by their experiences.

As she describes it, Lucienne struggles with her unhappiness at being separated from her husband. She keeps telling herself that he does exist somewhere and therefore she should be able to reach him or rejoin him somehow or other. She suspects that there is a remedy and that the remedy lies in herself, "Mais à une certaine profondeur" (Q, 125). She feels sure it is only a matter of courage and of a difficult clairvoyance, and she begins her efforts. Each time she starts by quieting herself and her surroundings. For example, on her first attempt she closes the shutters, draws the curtains, sits comfortably in an armchair and lets nothing distract her. She closes her eyes and tries to visualize, even feel the ship, not just imagine it, but see it as it really is at that moment in time.

She continues her attempts until she finally discovers her method. All she need do is "d'apaiser en soi toute l'agitation" and just allow that which is waiting to be needed or desired to come into being by itself (Q, 230). On several occasions she reaches the ship, sees Pierre, and finally becomes so visible that he sees her.

Pierre's experiences parallel Lucienne's. On board ship at the outset he begins to sense something unusual. A passenger reputed to be clairvoyant warns him that something very special is happening to him which he might fail to see because it is outside the usual range of his expectation. When the feeling of something indefinable yet real, natural but completely new, comes over him he responds to it by remaining very still and alert, attentive, but with his attention unfocussed. He even forgets to breathe.

Expecting subsequent events he prepares by retiring to his cabin, sitting in his armchair, giving himself up to a state of calmness, and purifying his attention of all possible contents. He succeeds in seeing a feminine form enter his cabin and sit on his bunk. The form distinctly becomes that of Lucienne. It is not ethereal; it appears to have mass and weight, to "occuper l'espace avec la plénitude d'un corps vivant" (Q, 186). His heart is moved, extremely moved, but he senses the complete calmness of his spirit. The separation between them has been bridged. No matter where they were, they would be together. He calls it the greatest emotional experience he has ever passed through, and yet he notes that it feels completely natural.

As a result of her success, Lucienne is exalted, "ivre de [son] triomphe." Her heart "déborde d'hymnes" (Q, 244). She has conquered the distance between them! She then feels urged on to attain a union higher than the physical one. They must not merely see each other, but "Nous pénétrer et nous mêler" (Q, 246). It seems possible, and yet she becomes afraid to allow the soul free rein, fearful of the fragile pact between the will and the universe. That is enough. She feels she has come to the limit of what is permitted to her and that if she were to attempt any more it would be death, "le royaume de la mort" (Q, 244). She holds back, swearing to ask nothing more, swearing to her beloved, but absent, husband: "je serai sage" (Q, 247).

When he returned to shore, Pierre waited for Lucienne to say something about what had happened, yet she never did. He, too, kept silent and the years passed in mutual silence about those extraordinary happenings. Yet, as Pierre writes in his attempts to finally

come to terms with them, such events change a person's whole way of seeing. The universe in which we live begins to bulge under the pressure of that immense unseen universe beyond it. The awareness of one fact, such as a person's clairvoyant knowledge, can shatter a whole materialistic philosophy, can rupture the boundaries within which we live, and point to the enormous universe beyond our ordinary sight. The materialist (the body) must become aware of the possibilities of the soul.

This was, in fact, Romain's intent. He wished to encourage scientific investigation of psychic phenomena, convinced that science would eventually have to recognize the facts of human experience. And when these facts were proved, he wrote:

Human reason will have to discard very nearly all its current ideas about time, space, causality, the determinism or indeterminism of phenomena, human free-will, the nature of the soul and the cosmos, and so on. Briefly, this would be the greatest revolution conceivable.⁷⁹

He first attempted to interest the public in psychic phenomena in his book La Vision Extrarétinienne. He believed that in certain privileged cases the soul has "the power of discovering reality by direct inspiration."⁸⁰ Reason must then distinguish which psychic experiences are genuine illuminations, and which are dreams or illusions. Hence, Pierre and Romain's readers and critics must decide for themselves whether they can admit the possible reality of such subjective experiences, and in so doing, admit the existence of

⁷⁹ Jules Romain, "Reason and Experience," trans. Christopher Lazare, Nation, 148 (1939), 585.

⁸⁰ Romain, "Reason," p. 583.

another universe. Many found the novel difficult to handle and were uncomfortable with its premises.⁸¹

In the novel Pierre and Lucienne are afraid to explore all the possibilities of the soul. Their fear of rupturing the boundaries between the seen and the unseen makes them create a pact with themselves not to go too far. René Maublanc finds their timidity depressing. He writes:

Il y a quelque mélancolie dans la fin de ce livre, qui marque comme une reculade, un aveu d'impuissance. La belle aventure s'achève par un retour à la banalité de la vie quotidienne. C'est, au sens propre du mot, un désenchantement, la fin de l'enchantement. Le beau livre nous laisse une amertume ou, comme le dit Romain, "un goût de cendres."⁸²

Actually, however sad the ending may be for the principle characters, it had the desired effect. Some critics accepted the authenticity of the experiences reported in the work and praised Romain's courage in writing about them.⁸³ One wrote, "Romain décrit ici, avec la précision d'un homme qui a éprouvé la méthode sur lui-même, l'attitude mentale qui prépare aux expériences de ce genre et qui est très voisine de l'extase religieuse." There was lively excitement about how these experiences could open "la voie aux plus hautes spéculations philosophiques. De quoi l'âme est-elle capable?"⁸⁴ The excitement of the reader, the awareness awakened to

⁸¹ See Boak, pp. 87-89; Benjamin Crémieux, rev. of Quand le navire, by Jules Romain, Annales Politiques et Littéraires, 92 (1929), 110.

⁸² Maublanc, p. 460.

⁸³ Charpentier, pp. 290-91; Maublanc, p. 456.

⁸⁴ Maublanc, p. 457.

hitherto unsuspected possibilities, is precisely Romain's intent. He believed that "the human soul, beyond the rational operations of the mind, has a power of poetic discovery, of penetration into reality . . . a deep communion with the real."⁸⁵

The realities Romain was most interested in were the realities of collective consciousness. According to Romain and his fellow unanimists, each group, from the couple to great masses of humanity, creates a psychic continuum, a group consciousness, a "unanime" unique in time and space. As Romain explained in the introduction to his first unanimist work, La Mort de quelqu'un, we can open our awareness to these subtle realities and by so doing "bring them to a kind of existence which is in itself new and superior, penetrated with light and spirit."⁸⁶ Ultimately all of humanity could be united on the psychic continuum and achieve a new degree of consciousness. Early in his career, Romain had expressed this as a goal:

One of the functions of literature was going to be precisely to help this consciousness to free and express itself. For the individual soul this of course implied new states of sensibility. . . . A whole renewed world seemed to present itself to the human soul.⁸⁷

Thus, the individuals Lucienne and Pierre interact with the unanime of the Barbelenet family, come to form their own unanime as a couple, and finally, as they become aware of their psychic union, take

⁸⁵ Jules Romain, "Introduction," trans. Haakon Chevalier, The Death of a Nobody, trans. Desmond MacCarthy and Sidney Waterlow (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. x.

⁸⁶ Romain, "Introduction," p. viii.

⁸⁷ Romain, "Introduction," p. vi.

their unanime to a higher, more fulfilling and powerful level. When asked if the theme of his trilogy wasn't that "a profound experience of love can, in certain cases, lead to a mystical state, to a vision, and to mystical power," Romaine replied, "Certainly."⁸⁸ Romaine, like Pater and C. S. Lewis, uses the myth of Psyche to explore the limits of the soul in its search for knowledge of the self and the world. It's a myth which invites one to transcend modern materialistic thinking and sound the depths of human experience.

We can see, then, that whereas the novelists seem little concerned to duplicate most of the fairy-tale aspects of the Cupid and Psyche myth, they all respond to the broad outline of the tale as a quest for spiritual growth and maturation. The central episode is usually the novelist's rehandling of Psyche's katabasis in terms of the protagonist's plunge into the self and subsequent achievement of a more holistic and integrated psychic state. From the frame story of the Golden Ass comes the suggestion, via Lucius's separation from his human body, that the Psyche and Cupid pair are mind and body, joined initially in an uneasy alliance and later reintegrated in a more holistic way. This is especially so for the novels of Payne, Pater, and Lewis.

Before going on to examine how the pattern of the Cupid and Psyche myth and the transcending episode in particular can be found even in works which are not necessarily inspired by it, it will be useful to consider interpretations of the myth as an archetype for specifically feminine development and to look at the novels in this light. Are

⁸⁸ Lefèvre, p. 521.

they attempting to comment on the woman's special response to experience, to the experience of love in particular, or are they operating on a more universal plane? Psyche is a feminine noun, but are our female Psyches all specifically feminine in their search and success?

Chapter VII

Psyche's Quest: The Evolution of Feminine Consciousness?

Jungian psychologist Erich Neumann has interpreted the Cupid and Psyche tale as an archetype of feminine individuation. In his work he ingeniously analyzes each motif of the story in great detail, positing an archetypal significance for each stage of the tale and its relation to the whole theme of feminine development. His conclusion is that

Feminine individuation and the spiritual development of the feminine--and herein lies the basic significance of this myth--are always effected through love. Through Eros, through her love of him, Psyche develops not only toward him, but toward herself.¹

It seems apparent to classical scholars that Apuleius had no such intention in his construction of the tale, and that Neumann's interpretation has little or nothing to do with the tale in its Latin context.² As we've shown earlier, Apuleius was concerned with the spiritual development of the human psyche in its most universal sense.

Neumann is familiar with the Neoplatonic orientation of Apuleius and in the Postscript to his Commentary discusses very briefly how

¹ Erich Neumann, Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), p. 110. Future references will appear in the text.

² James Tatum, Apuleius and The Golden Ass (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), p. 58. P. G. Walsh comments that Neumann's "interpretation is acute, but it relates more to the wellsprings of the original folk-tale than to any conscious aims of Apuleius himself" (The Roman Novel [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970], p. 220).

Apuleius might have produced "this central document of feminine psychology." He allows that if Apuleius understood Diotoma's mystery of Eros, and it seems likely that he did, then "he must have related it to the mysteries of Isis, the Eleusinian mysteries, and the ancient folk tales about the suffering Psyche," and he posits, therefore, that Apuleius was influenced by the matriarchal religions of his time (p. 159). For Apuleius, as for many men of his time, this

objective cultural datum became subjective experience through his initiation into the mysteries of Isis, which he describes in his Golden Ass, and in which matriarchal psychology becomes masculine experience. But another reason why with Apuleius the experience of religious initiation became the personal experience of the man is that he was one of those creative men who, like the feminine, must give birth, one of those "whom Psyche guides" (pp. 160-61).

In other words, Neumann resorts at the last moment to the Jungian idea that each human soul has "masculine" and "feminine" components, and appears to be generalizing the results of his work from the psychology of the feminine mind to the psychology of all minds with (perhaps predominantly) feminine orientations.³ Jung also wrote that:

It is a woman's outstanding characteristic that she can do anything for the love of a man. But those women who can achieve something important for the love of a thing are most exceptional, because this does not really agree with their nature. Love for a thing is a man's prerogative.⁴

³ The Jungian designation of "masculine" and "feminine" aspects of the psyche are problematic because of the obvious value judgments implied by the language. The feminine aspect is related as being essence, psychic relatedness, feelings, and unconsciousness. The masculine aspect is related to interest in and interaction with the objective world, i.e., discrimination, judgment, intellect, and consciousness.

⁴ C. G. Jung, "Women in Europe," in Civilization in Transition, vol. 10 in The Collected Works, p. 118, para 243.

Feminist critics and more recent Jungian analysts, while appreciating Neumann's pioneering work, have taken issue with his conclusions and have attempted to either undermine the value of his work on female psychology or to extend his conclusions to male psychology as well. Before taking up some examples of this criticism, it would be good to examine Neumann's ideas in detail and evaluate his theory with regard to the Psyche novels under discussion, four of which antedate his work.

Of the six Psyche novels considered in the previous chapter, at least three lend themselves to a direct consideration of whether their heroines develop along the lines laid out by Neumann. Pierre Louÿs' *Psyché*, although married, is still a maiden in areas of love and the sexual expression of love. She does bloom as a person when she finally experiences a true "marriage." Unfortunately, we can only take the novel up through this point since it doesn't continue beyond the initial marriage stage. Romain's *Lucienne* also realizes the full meaning of love when she marries, but Romain is clearly more concerned with delineating Pierre's response to her teleportation than he is with *Lucienne's* mind as she loses and then regains her husband. As we've seen, the last two books of the trilogy are told by Pierre with only two brief portions of *Lucienne's* diaries inserted. *Françoise des Ligneris* is also dealing with a modern woman in her *Psyché 58*. *Mahaut* becomes a woman when she marries and tries to develop her consciousness, even if, like *Psyche*, she risks separation from her husband, but her story, like Louÿs's, ends before a reunion, so our analysis can only go so far. Still these three novels can be examined in the light of Neumann's interpretation of the myth.

Pater's Marius the Epicurean concerns a male hero, and one who never experiences erotic love, so it appears to lie outside the range of Neumann's model. C.S. Lewis' Till We Have Faces concerns a heroine who is little concerned with her femininity, never marries, never fully knows sexual love, and yet is very much involved in a struggle for individuation or spiritual evolution in which the growth of selfless or divine love plays a large part. Clearly both novels, most especially Lewis's, have something to say about Neumann's ideas, if only to testify to their incompleteness.

The sixth novel, the Psyche of Odessa Strickland Payne, is the one most ostensibly concerned with a woman's development. Living and working against a background of opinion that women are inferior to men, Mrs. Payne and her heroine are concerned to prove to the world that women have souls, can succeed in their own right, and can still reach fulfillment as complete feminine women. For example, when Lynne slips out of the room to avoid intruding on a personal moment, the author comments:

Perhaps her instincts were too fine to permit her to stay. There might have been that in her which merited the nobler half of her unique name, though some bitter thinkers deny it to her sex--a soul.⁵

This novel of the American south of 1885 has some close affinities with a class of popular fiction written by and for women from about 1820 to 1870.⁶ Typical of the heroine of this type of fiction, Lynne

⁵ Psyche (Atlanta: J. B. Harrison, 1885), p. 10. Future references will appear in the text.

⁶ See Nina Baym, Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870 (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1978).

is orphaned at an early age and left in the care of a hostile aunt. She finds a surrogate family with the Gordons and devotes herself to books and to the cultivation of her mind and her religious feelings. Although she is not obligated to earn her own living, like the usual heroine of this fiction she goes out into the world to be a teacher, to develop her self, and to show that a woman can "develop a truly noble, moral, and intellectual nature" (p.20). Like the other novels of this type, Payne's emphasizes that feeling must be combined with will and intelligence; love must be linked to wisdom, responsibility, rationality, and self-command.

Payne's novel rejects celebration of domesticity, of the home as woman's power base, common to these novels, however. Lynne creates no home and must triumph over Paul's anti-feminist sentiments. After she and Paul have been publicly recognized for restoring a chapel, the bishop asks Paul why he doesn't marry Lynne. Paul replies: "Because, sir, my wife will neither write books nor build churches." The bishop rebukes him in a true nineteenth-century pro-feminist manner:

"And why not, sir, if she remains thoroughly womanly? Has she disgraced herself by using her brains advantageously, or in offering this church to the God she worships? . . . Do not send for me, my boy, when you get ready to have yourself united to a woman who hasn't brains enough to write a book, if she had the requisite inspiration, nor heart enough to build a church if she could make the money" (p. 267).

Lynne wants not just Paul's love, but his understanding, and this she finally wins. She wins also his appreciation for her hard won accomplishments. He admires her inspiring book, her "uncompromising

individuality," her genius, and all the efforts which resulted in "authorship and the glorious aftermath of womanhood" (p. 279).

The novel ends with the conventional happy marriage but not necessarily the conventional home, since the couple will go off to become missionaries in Japan. In the last analysis the novel seems to be an unlikely parallel to Neumann's model, which turns upon sexual confrontation, since as a somewhat typical Victorian and Christian, Payne was no doubt "disinclined to acknowledge the body and physical sexuality as elements of self either inherently spiritual or capable of being spiritualized," as Louÿs and Romain were able to do a generation or two later.⁷ For Neumann, as we shall see, "the fateful moment in the life of the feminine [is that] in which for the first time woman emerges from the darkness of her unconsciousness and . . . love, that is, recognizes Eros" (p. 78). By this Neumann means that Psyche is able to reject the matriarchal antagonism toward the rapacious male, and to recognize, connect, and love both the sexual and the spiritual aspects of her husband. Yet even with the sexual aspects of love completely suppressed in Payne's novel, it is still possible to examine Lynne's individuation as a function of her love, according to Neumann's scheme. Consequently Payne's novel will be considered with the others in terms of Neumann's interpretation.

Neumann's archetypal theory of the feminine quest

Neumann divides the tale into five stages: the introduction, the marriage of death, the act, the four tasks, and the happy end. The central motif of the "introduction" is the conflict between Aphrodite

⁷ Baym, p. 18.

and Psyche; the sin is human hybris. The human feminine soul sets itself up in opposition to Aphrodite's traditional role of promoting sexual lust and procreation, and seeks to assert a higher, more conscious, i.e., masculine, existence. The soul cannot sustain conflict with her own physical nature, however; the two aspects must be connected somehow in order to resolve the situation.

As we have seen, however, none of the Psyche novels sets up more than a token conflict with an Aphrodite-type figure, an older female committed to the traditional matriarchal role. Like the mythic hero, every one of the Psyches is either orphaned (Marius, Lynne, Psyché, Mahaut) or estranged from her one living parent (Orual and Lucienne), and none finds her destiny threatened or even set into motion by some version of the Great Mother. The one possible exception is the role of Ungit in Lewis's novel. The priests interpret the ill times fallen upon Glome as a sign of Ungit's displeasure with the people's worship of Psyche's beauty. This necessitates the Offering of Psyche to Ungit's son, an act which leads to the separation of Orual and Psyche, and indirectly, to their reunion on a higher plane. Orual's fear and hatred of Ungit, and of all the gods, lasts until nearly the end of her life, but Ungit herself plays no active role in the story, never speaks or is even referred to by her "son," the god of the Grey Mountain (Eros). In summary, then, none of the novels responds to the first stage of the tale as Neumann defines it.

In his second phase, the "marriage of death," Neumann highlights the archetypal significance of marriage. He sees it as essentially a separation from the mother, the death of maidenhood, and at same time, a mysterious transformation into womanhood and even nascent

motherhood. Neumann comments that "what for the masculine is aggression, victory, rape, and the satisfaction of desire . . . is for the feminine destiny, transformation, and the profoundest mystery of life" (p. 63). The bride accepts her destiny, as Psyche does, and willingly goes to meet her fate.

Several of the novels respond to the motif of Psyche's abandonment to the unknown monster in just the way Neumann indicates. Louÿs's Psyché resists the proposition of Aimery but in the last moment flies to him frightened and breathless. As she looks at him with solemn eyes, Louÿs interjects:

Les femmes regardent l'Amour parfois comme elles regarderaient la Mort, avec les terreurs de l'Au-delà inconnu. Il semble qu'à l'instant de céder, leur avenir terrestre se partage comme leur avenir éternel, entre la menace d'un enfer et l'éblouissement d'un paradis.⁸

It's possible that Louÿs was responding to the tale's motif of the marriage of death in all the archetypal significance that Neumann suggests. It's also possible that he was more interested in describing the nature of his Psyché. She will either live in bliss with her beloved or die in misery without him--for her there is no middle ground. This is what her friend has predicted and what Louÿs had apparently planned for her.

When Lucienne falls in love with Pierre, what astonishes her is the attitude of her soul. She feels condemned--not with a sense of sadness, though. She says:

⁸ Pierre Louÿs, *Psyché* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1927) pp. 124-25. Future references will appear in the text.

Je pense à un condamné qui accepte sa condamnation, qui la tient pour inéluctable, qui est prêt à s'y adapter, par conséquent, dans une certaine mesure, à en tirer du bonheur. Mais condamné tout de même, courbé.⁹

She feels some sort of ravishment and she compares herself to a nun who knows she will die soon and go to her Creator, but has mixed feelings. She experiences a joyful transport of course, but she can't forget that her life has been condemned:

non pas seulement sa vie à elle, mais toute la vie sous les formes qu'elle a connues jusque-là; et que sa félicité prochaine aura été payée d'un anéantissement. Oui, je me sentais comme elle appelée à l'autre monde, et c'est en tremblant que j'y entraîs.¹⁰

Romains is subtly describing in Lucienne's psychology what Neumann believes characterizes the event, the loss of a certain state of life, along with the willful acceptance of a new, somewhat terrifying fate.

François des Ligneris' heroine also feels condemned in a sense. She feels that Eric knows her and possesses her, even before they know each others' names, and the marriage seems to be inescapable. For a honeymoon he takes her on a strange voyage to a deserted and barren island. She remembers that Eric's decision to not even kiss her until their first night on the island "faisait ressembler ce singulier voyage de noces à une marche au sacrifice."¹¹ She is exalted at times, afraid at times, and at the last, not disappointed.

⁹ Jules Romains, Lucienne (Paris: Gallimard, 1922), p. 211. Future references will appear in the text following the letter "L."

¹⁰ Jules Romains, Quand le navire . . . (Paris: Gallimard, 1929), p. 114. Future references will appear in the text following "Q."

¹¹ Françoise des Ligneris, Psyché 58 (Montrouge: Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1958), p. 28. Future references will appear in the text.

All three novels emphasize the transformation that accompanies the marriage, to a greater or lesser degree. Mahaut becomes a woman, soon a mother, but her edenic darkness lasts overlong. Psyché is transformed by her first kiss. She experiences "un enchantement immense, bien-faisant et léger" which is soon apparent in her face (p. 128). Aimery sees plainly that "Psyché entrain en métamorphose. La trace du baiser qui faisait luire sa bouche rayonnait sur toute sa personne" (p. 131). Later her hair is compared to a silken chrysalis surrounding the two lovers "où germait leur métamorphose" (p. 195). She clearly experiences happiness for the first time in her life when she learns to love with her heart, body, and senses. Looking back on her first days of marriage, Lucienne remembers that she felt as if she were summoned by a mystery, and entering fully into it she believed herself to be at the summit of her destiny as a living woman ("J'ai cru me sentir au sommet de mon destin de femme vivante," (Q, p. 119).

Love and marriage do transform all three of these heroines as they enter into a completely new phase of their lives and of their destinies as women. The women's transformation may be seen in its more universal sense, however, and not as a transformation they alone undergo. Van Gennep identifies marriage as one among many rites of passage for both sexes, and, we recall, describes these important events as "enacting death in one condition and resurrection in another."¹² Pierre and Paul Gordon do undergo a similar though not nearly as dramatic transformation. Aimery and Eric are not changed by

¹² Arnold Van Gennep, The Rites of Passage, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 13.

their experiences of love, but this may be because the authors are not relating their first experience of erotic love.

We find no experience of the marriage of death in the story of Lynne Heywood, and Orual and Marius have no encounter with erotic love at all. In fact, Marius experiences almost a reverse transformation. When Flavian becomes ill, the friends are working on the nuptial hymn Flavian had begun. His suffering and death convince Marius that nothing spiritual survives the body, so he, in a sense, survives this "marriage with death" with a truncated, or rather decapitated, view of human life, a view which persists until the end of his life. Since Marius also rejects erotic or sensual love completely he is left with only his very pale friendship with Cornelius.

Even though marriage transforms the individual, Neumann sees its initial stage to be one of ignorance and lack of self-consciousness. He describes Psyche's original happiness with Eros as

an ecstasy of darkness. It is a state of not-knowing and not-seeing . . . a nonexistence, a being-in-the-dark, a rapture of sexual sensuality which may fittingly be characterized as being devoured by a demon, a monster (pp. 70, 74).

We have seen that this is especially true for Mahaut, and less true for Lucienne and Psyche. Mahaut "enjoys" a sexual slavery to her husband. Her actual blindness is symbolic of her failure to see their inadequate and unequal relationship. Lucienne later looks back and sees her "kingdom" as a prison, but only relatively. The joy of union with her beloved still outweighs the fact that the merely physical union falls short of the higher, more pervasive spiritual union that she demands. Psyché's eden is also a luxurious prison. She is

blissfully happy and very much in love, but unaware that Aimery doesn't return her love in equal measure. He will tire of her and miss his sensual freedom with his mistress. Louÿs suggests that Aimery, for all his talk of spiritual union attained through physical love, is incapable of carrying a relationship beyond sensuality and possession.

Within the unconscious darkness of the early stage of marriage, Neumann develops the jealous sisters as "projections of suppressed or totally unconscious matriarchal tendencies of Psyche herself, whose irruption produces a conflict within her" (p. 73). What the sisters do is represent the matriarchal antagonism toward males and thus to make Psyche conscious of the beast-husband duality and awaken her hatred and fear of the beast aspect of her husband, her devourer. Neumann writes that

Only in a squalid, lightless existence can Psyche mistake her lover for a beast, a violator, a dragon, and only as a childishly ignorant girl . . . can she suppose that she is in love with a "higher husband" distinct from the lower dragon (pp. 78-79).

The suggestion that she unmask the beast and cut its head off is "an ancient symbol of castration sublimated to the spiritual sphere" (p. 72). Neumann believes that the plurality of the sisters shows that they represent the transpersonal strata of Psyche's mind.

We suggested earlier that Apuleius may have developed the envious sister motif as a mythological projection of Plato's idea of the tripartite soul, with the sisters representing the lower functions of will and appetite which draw the soul away from its celestial

pursuits. Neumann's view of the sisters, as Psyche's lesser evolved aspects, is certainly congenial with the Platonic interpretation.

However, none of the novels picks up this motif or uses it in quite this way. Lucienne's jealous rivals, the Barbelenet sisters, have disappeared by the time of the marriage and in no way do they represent Lucienne's fears or lower nature, or stir up resentful or hateful feelings in her. In fact, when Cécile Barbelenet tries to commit suicide, Lucienne saves her. Nothing makes Lucienne see Pierre as half beast, half husband. In fact, their lovemaking takes place in the afternoons and Lucienne's discovery of her own and her husband's erotic nature is a delight to her.

While Aimery's mistress Aracoeli is jealous of Psyché, Psyché never meets Aracoeli nor is even aware of her existence. In a sense, Aracoeli is Psyché's opposite. Where Psyché is modest, almost to a fault, Aracoeli is immodest, almost to a fault. Psyché will not make love or be intimate with her lover except in the dark, whereas Aracoeli prefers not to wear clothes, regardless of who may be visiting her. But otherwise, she's as loving and faithful as Psyché and in no way inspires Psyche, at least in the fragment we have, to resent or even recognize Aimery's erotic side. Once Psyché overcomes her scruples and yields to love, she too enjoys the discovery of her lover's erotic nature and doesn't see it to be in conflict with his higher spiritual nature.

Mahaut's rivals for Eric's affections, her friend Martine and her sister Roberte, are not jealous of her. Rather she is jealous of them! She pities Martine and truly hates Roberte with an intense jealous rage. Neither "sister" inspires her to hate or resent her

husband, although Roberte's presence does in fact lead Mahaut to see Eric's beastly aspect because she elicits it. Thus, Mahaut alone owes some vision of her husband's bestial nature to her sister. When she finally sees Eric crazed with lust she can no longer see his god-like aspects at all.

The absence in these novels of what Neumann feels is most essential to his interpretation of the tale, that is, the matriarchal history of feminine psychology which the sisters represent, makes us wonder whether this element is really necessary to an understanding of feminine, or for that matter, masculine psychology.

For Neumann, the third stage, "the act," is Psyche's violation of Eros' taboo against seeing him as he really is and thus disrupting his carefully bifurcated life. By the light of her lamp "with which she illumines the unconscious darkness of her previous existence," Psyche has discovered that beast and husband are one, that Eros is a "a god, who is the upper and the lower in one, and who connects the two" (pp. 78, 79). For the first time she has seen, recognized, and loved Eros. That is, Psyche has discovered both the actual Eros before her and her own inner Eros, which is a "higher and invisible form" of the sleeping Eros (p. 80). The lover and the beloved are both discovered to have an erotic and a spiritual nature and love is the power that unites and appreciates both aspects.

This confrontation between a Psyche who sees and loves Eros and an Eros who wanted Psyche to remain only as a part of his life, the nighttime part, inevitably leads to separation. Eros is angry and hurt because Psyche's unconscious tendency towards consciousness, towards knowledge, was obviously stronger than her love for him. He

leaves her and she must suffer this loss. It is here that we again see the importance of the ideas of the matriarchal and patriarchal worlds for Neumann. If Eros were not firmly entrenched in the patriarchal world, where the male dominates, the separation would not be necessary. By loving Eros, body and soul, as Neumann points out, Psyche rejects her former matriarchal resentment and hatred of men, and confronts him as an individual, a wholeness. Eros, however, is too selfish and immature to accept Psyche on these terms, so he leaves. In a culture where each partner can accept the full individuality and consciousness of the other, the confrontation would not necessarily lead to separation. In this light we can examine our three novels, none of which wholly conforms to Neumann's model.

Lucienne breaks no taboo which might cause her husband to leave her. The separation is necessitated rather by his job. But Lucienne's rebellion against their physical separation indicates how much she craves a complete union with Pierre that gross separation cannot challenge:

Je me dis que dans l'union l'âme arrive à une exaltation trop intense, à un sentiment de ses pouvoirs trop aigu, pour qu'ensuite quelque chose d'aussi grossier, d'aussi absurde que la distance suffise à tout effacer (Q pp. 120-21).

The separation challenges Lucienne to overcome it and thus she begins her experiments with the possibilities of her soul. For Neumann, the loss of Eros "is among the deepest truths of this myth" (p. 81) In this moment of loss the feminine psyche enters her destiny which is none other "than an attempt to transcend, through suffering and struggle, the separation accomplished by her act" (p. 83). Since Lucienne did not cause the separation, Neumann's point does not apply.

Psyché's situation has both similarities and differences with Lucienne's. Like Lucienne, the discovery, albeit by darkness, of her own and her lover's erotic natures doubles the joy she experiences in loving. She breaks no taboo when she brings in the light. What she finds are Aimery's lines of poetry celebrating their supreme happiness but describing it as a memory that will outlive their "fragile amour" (p. 214). She immediately knows that he is thinking of her as an episode in his life, that he is already beginning to cool. Thus closes the second part of Louÿs' novel. (The first part had described everything up to Psyché joining Aimery on the train to run away to his chateau.) The third part begins with Aimery discovering her tears and expressing such love and tenderness that she doubts her doubt. There the manuscript breaks off. Claude Farrère's summary of the lost conclusion makes no mention of Psyché's attempts to transcend the separation, and, of course, this would be impossible. Aimery's love is shallow and lasts only until he has fully "possessed" Psyché. So Louÿs breaks off his story close to the summit of the only happiness his Psyché will ever know.

Françoise des Ligneris' Psyché 58 is at once the closest and the most distant from Neumann's model. Mahaut disregards Eric's desire to have her remain blind, and takes steps to break the taboo and to regain her sight. What Neumann says of Psyche--"She is imprisoned in darkness, but now the drive toward light and knowledge has become imperious"--is most true of Mahaut (p. 76). Neither Psyché nor Lucienne is as unconscious as she is, and consequently neither is motivated by a great unmet need to know more about their beloved. Once the taboo is broken, Mahaut sees her husband as the beast, as no

longer godlike. This is, of course, the reverse of Neumann's interpretation. Seeing him does not connect husband and beast, but rather emphasizes his bestial nature. She leaves him, and the reader is left in doubt about whether he will be able to accept her as a full human being and somehow act to reunify her vision of him. Des Ligneris's story is a clever reworking of the motifs of the tale in order to delineate the psychological awakening and maturation of her heroine, but it does not turn on the development of erotic love but rather on the development of self-love!

It may be argued that Mahaut's consciousness has only begun to be awakened, that she has not yet even recognized her own matriarchal stratum. She never expresses anger toward Eric for his pursuit of Roberte. She almost pushes her sister off a cliff, but she never expresses anger at Eric's treatment of her. In a sense, des Ligneris has dislocated the whole myth, consciously going on with the literary motifs of taboo, bringing in the light, and separation, before the sisters have had a chance to make Mahaut hate the beast even while she loves the husband. When the novel ends she has just lost respect for her husband and he has just become aware that she has violated his taboo. So like Louÿs's novel, des Ligneris's story abruptly ceases with "the act." In both novels the failure lies with the husband and with the woman's inability to transcend the separation his behavior creates between them. Lucienne is the only one of the three who succeeds in bridging the separation, but even then the separation and her acts do not conform to Neumann's model.

There is an interesting link between Eros' selfishness and Lewis's novel, however, Orual's selfish and possessive love for Psyche does

lead to their separation. When, as a result of her transcending trials, she learns to love selflessly, she is finally reunited with her sister, her own psyche, and with divine nature. Hence, what is a minor motif in Neumann's interpretation--Eros' selfish patriarchal love of Psyche which she must overcome by yielding to him in a completely feminine manner--becomes a major theme in Lewis's work. Orual must develop her own consciousness in order to reunite herself with Psyche. Again, Neumann's striking insight must be universalized or extended beyond the narrow limits of his thesis.

Neumann's fourth stage is a consideration of the trials of Psyche, especially of the four tasks that Aphrodite sets for her. Psyche labors to restore the original unity, but on a higher celestial plane this time. Neumann calls it a "a development toward consciousness that is accompanied throughout by consciousness" (p. 107). He feels that all of the tasks involve the arduous development of the "masculine" aspects of Psyche's consciousness. We remember that Psyche begins her road of trials by an attempted suicide, which Neumann interprets, along with her later suicide attempts, as a desire to regress to an easier, less conscious stage. But regression is impossible; she must go on.

The first task, the seed-sorting task, is a fairy-tale motif, of course, but none the less rich in meaning. For Neumann the mound of seeds symbolizes "a uroboric mixture of the masculine" (p. 95). Psyche's task is to put order into masculine promiscuity through her own instinctual ordering principle: the ants as earthly creatures represent Psyche's own instincts. She selects, sifts, correlates and evaluates, says Neumann, and thus finds her way "amid the confusion of

the masculine" (p. 95). Neumann's understanding of this task as a challenge to the discriminating power of the intellect is echoed by C. S. Lewis. Lewis alone uses this motif and the next two tasks. His Orual confronts a welter of memories and ideas of her past by day, "a labor of sifting and sorting, separating motive from motive and both from pretext."¹³ By night she dreams of sorting seeds. In some dreams she becomes a little ant breaking under the weight of seeds much bigger than she. Orual is clearly trying to discriminate the true motives for her own actions in the past. That this would represent her confrontation with masculine promiscuity seems unlikely; there is nothing particularly masculine about the selfish and near-sighted actions of her past. Neumann points out that a more universal interpretation of this labor would see the confused seeds as "the disordered welter of fruitful predispositions and potentialities that are present in the feminine nature" as well. So Psyche and Orual bring order to themselves as well as to their experience. The more universal reading seems more applicable.

Neumann sees the second task as another confrontation with the masculine, this time in the shape of the solar rams, symbols, Neumann feels, of the aggressively destructive power of the masculine. Psyche's task is to gather their wool, a symbolic castration or depotentiation (e.g. Sampson and Delilah). A reed advises her to be patient and wait for dusk when the rams quiet down and then she can effortlessly gather the fleece they have left behind them. Like the

¹³ C. S. Lewis, Till We Have Faces (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978), p. 256. Future references will appear in the text.

ants, the reed represents Psyche's own instinctual nature. So once again Psyche turns inward (transcends) and meets her challenge. She succeeds not by directly confronting the masculine, but by using patience and allowing the powers to revert to their own nocturnal and quiescent phase.

As we saw earlier, the episode with the rams may rather indicate the need to quiet the passions in order to gather the magical boon. Desire will be fulfilled from the level of greatest power, the level of the full inner resources of the self. C. S. Lewis's use of this trial emphasizes force versus surrender, rather than Orual or Psyche developing the "masculine" aspects of her psyche. In Lewis's version Orual has a vision of herself directly confronting the rams who butt and trample her down. Then she sees Psyche effortlessly gathering the golden wool from the hedges. Orual despairs: "She won without effort what utmost effort would not win for me" (p. 284). Orual doesn't yet understand that her angry challenges to Divine Nature can't work; Psyche's simple and innocent love wins divine aid. Orual's deep desire to better her soul, however, is the same thing as love for the divine and the visions which come are her divine aid. Orual must learn to operate on the level of innocent love and subtle feeling in order to progress on her quest.

The third labor is getting a vessel of water from the circular stream that feeds the depths of the underworld and then returns to a high mountain crag guarded by monsters. The stream universally symbolizes the water of life, its vital energy and eternal movement. Psyche's task is to contain the uncontainable, give form to the formless, infuse the unmanifest into the manifest. Neumann sees the

stream, however, as male-generative since, he notes, the classical deities of rivers are usually gods. (In India, however, all the rivers are goddesses.) Psyche is aided by Zeus' eagle. Birds are usually thought of as symbols for the spirit, for obvious reasons, and Neumann identifies the eagle as a "masculine spirit symbol" (p. 104). The eagle holding the vessel, then, "profoundly symbolizes the already male-female spirituality of Psyche" who, with his help, has completed the task (p. 105). That is, according to Neumann, Psyche has been gradually developing the masculine side of her psyche while at the same time retaining her femininity.

C. S. Lewis has Orual's vision take her across burning sands to get the "water of death," but when the eagle arrives he says it was not her he was sent to help. The vessel in her hands has become her book, her complaint against the gods, and, as she presents it, Orual hears her own voice for the first time. A different response to this motif from Neumann's certainly, but then Orual is performing her tasks to be unified with Psyche, with her own psyche. She has to learn that she preferred the water of death to Psyche's happiness if that happiness had nothing to do with her.

The fourth trial is Psyche's journey to the underworld. Neumann begins with the tower and notes that as a mandala-precinct it is feminine and as a phallic structure it is masculine. Also, it is not a helpful animal but is rather "a product of man's collective spiritual labor" and as such it is a symbol of "human culture and of the human consciousness" (p. 111). The tower is Psyche's Virgil, her Cumean Sibyl, her guide to a safe journey below.

Neumann properly calls Psyche's trip to the underworld "the heroic path of rebirth," and he sees that all of her acts "present a rite of initiation" (p. 112). Her final and most frightening "marriage with death" is equivalent to the solar hero's night-sea journey through the darkness of the underworld. It is a journey which demands the ego stability characteristic of every initiation ritual where the initiate must maintain purpose in the face of temptation or distraction.

Neumann takes pains to describe Psyche's underworld tasks as specifically feminine. Whereas among male heroes the task may be endurance of pain or hunger, "in the feminine sphere it characteristically takes the form of resistance to pity" (p. 112). Neumann doesn't concern himself with the classical katabasis motifs, such as the coins for Charon or the sops for Cerberus, and focuses instead on those motifs specific to Psyche's tale, her meetings with the corpse, the donkey driver, and the weaving woman. The tower enjoins her against feeling pity for these three and counsels her to proceed directly to Proserpine. The three situations she must avoid will tempt her essential femininity, her propensity to help others, to bond with the group.¹⁴ So once again, according to Neumann, Psyche must struggle against her feminine nature and strengthen her masculine side in order to develop her consciousness. Neumann emphasizes that "while ego stability is a very masculine virtue, it is more; for it is the presupposition of consciousness and of all conscious activity" (p. 113). Does this mean that consciousness is somehow a masculine as opposed to a feminine virtue?

¹⁴ Neumann, p. 113.

C. S. Lewis treats Psyche's underworld temptations somewhat differently. The first is the rabble of Glome appealing to Psyche's pride to be their goddess and queen. The second is the voice of materialism (her tutor, the Fox) arguing that there are no gods, only the lies of priests and poets. The third is Orual appealing to her as a possessive mother to regress into childhood. Only this last trial really tempts Psyche because her love and pity are so intense. This seems to support Neumann's thesis that resistance to pity is a distinctly feminine trial. But the Fox immediately generalizes this last temptation to the masculine soul. He says that the closer the soul gets to the beauty of the gods, the more jealous other mortals will become, "And mother and wife and child and friend will all be in league to keep a soul from being united with the Divine Nature" (p. 304). This, of course, would only apply if the "friends" of the soul were selfish and were not making spiritual progress themselves.

By this time Orual is so far along her own way to union with Divine Nature that she rejoices in Psyche's success and can finally love her unselfishly. If we extend the meaning of Psyche's trials to Orual, who vicariously shares in them, we can see that Orual too was blocked by her pride in being a queen, her own inner materialistic voice and her own selfish loves, all of which she overcomes as the visions continue. She loses interest in being queen and wishes she had loved more people more completely. In other words, Orual's progress is predicated on the development of her emotional and spiritual nature, since her rational and materialistic side was too dominant. And, as we've seen above, the essential meaning of the descent is to resist activity and descend deeper into the Self.

The last aspect of this trial, Psyche opening the box of beauty, represents for Neumann her particularly womanly desire to beautify herself for her beloved, to even sacrifice her consciousness for her love, thus reuniting herself with the feminine in her nature. Lewis sees it as Psyche winning spiritual beauty from the underworld. Psyche offers the beauty to Orual who now becomes beautiful, and with this beauty, the god comes. Lewis's treatment of the box is decidedly Platonic and much more spiritual than Neumann's.

For Neumann the box of beauty ointment represents "Persephone's eternal youth, the eternal youth of death . . . the barren frigid beauty of mere maidenhood" (p. 118). That would account for Psyche's falling into a deathly sleep (like Snow White or the Sleeping Beauty), and thus attracting her prince. Psyche confronts the various overwhelming numinous powers of the masculine and manages to create a "fruitful contact between masculine and feminine" which somehow draws Eros in (p. 102). Eros has been burned by the oil of the lamp, which, for Neumann is equivalent to that "fire of passion, the flame and ardor of emotion that provide the basis of illumination, that is, of an illumined consciousness" (p. 84), and thus he too becomes conscious. As Psyche apprehends and accomodates herself to each facet of the masculine embodied in the tasks, Eros heals. He grows to meet her. He is finally ready to recognize her, that is, to confront his mother, and to marry her publicly. This interpretation of Eros' healing implies that confrontation with love is instrumental in the evolution of his consciousness and that the woman is the creative agent of the transformation! Neumann does not acknowledge or address these questions.

As mentioned above, none of the novels develops the motifs of the three trials preceding the journey to the underworld. The only motif used from the last trail is perhaps the tower guide. Lucienne and Psyché have none, but Mahaut's grandmother is a wise old woman interested in consciousness. Roberte even calls her a "sibyl". It is she who advises Mahaut to go within to find her way out of her difficult situation. As we've seen, the novels employ the last trial in terms of a rebirth or initiation, as Neumann notes, a going within or transcending gross reality to find a subtler inner source of strength and knowledge. For the novelists, the trials, such as they appear, do develop the hero or heroine's maturity.

For example, Lucienne's attempts to rejoin Pierre on board ship represent and express her psychic development. The two brief sections from her diaries that are inserted into Pierre's account give evidence of her maturation. She comes to see her earlier engulfment in the kingdom of the flesh as a less realized union of her own and Pierre's souls. She's motivated by love for Pierre and a desire to unify herself with him on a higher level. As in the case of Orual, her trials do not develop the "masculine" side of her psyche. In fact, Romaine consciously created Lucienne with a quality and seriousness in her learning similar to men's, not incapable of forming abstract ideas or afraid of admitting them, he says. She is intelligent, he wrote, in the sense where intelligence "veut dire aptitude, inclination à la vie intellectuelle," yet she remains very feminine. "Sa vocation est de l'être en profondeur."¹⁵

¹⁵ Jules Romaine, Souvenirs et confidences d'un écrivain (Paris: (Footnote continued)

Although Payne does not develop the specific motifs of the trials, her heroine does consciously attempt to develop the more expressed (masculine?) side of her psyche. She leaves Paul Gordon in a self-imposed separation to teach, write a book, paint, etc. "She studied to be what the world calls a great woman, that she might be his equal."¹⁶ She succeeds in publishing a book full of metaphysics, winning critical acclaim for it, and making her way in what is basically a man's world. Finally, she believes that "she had done everything, allowed by a wholly refined nature, to win him, and she had failed" (p. 269). In despair she faints, an act which is parallel to Psyche's deep faint after opening the box of beauty.

Thus we see that what Neumann believes the trial stage represents, the development of the masculine side of Psyche, does not necessarily strike the authors of the novels in a similar fashion. As observed in Chapter VI the trials describe the development and maturation of the protagonist, in whatever way it is needed. Orual and Psyché must learn to love, though in Orual's case not erotically, while Lynne must learn to give up her shyness and express her love (though only in a "refined" way). Lucienne and Marius must develop their spiritual natures. And Mahaut must even put her love of Eros aside in order to achieve self-love. It would seem, then, that the more universal value Neumann gives to the trials, that of individuation, prevails over his specific thesis that the woman must develop her "masculine" nature.

15(continued)

Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1958), p. 132.

16 Odessa Strickland Payne, Psyche: A Novel (Atlanta: J. P. Harrison, 1885), p. 268. Future references will appear in the text.

It is true that the protagonist must develop his or her consciousness --that is the central point taken all through Neumann's work--but can that consciousness be defined as "masculine"?

Neumann's last stage, the "happy end", begins with Eros' rescue of Psyche after she has fallen asleep over the box of beauty. She has made her final "marriage with death." Eros is now no longer a mere boy hiding his wanton affair from his mother, but a man, a savior. What he confronts in Psyche is "the feminine mystery of rebirth through love" (p. 125). The idea of the parallel development of Eros inspired by the labors of Psyche appears in both Payne's and Romain's novels. While Lynne Heywood is off developing the so-called masculine aspects of her psyche, the man who loves her develops the so-called feminine aspects of his psyche; he turns from medicine to theology and develops a true concern for the factory people. And while Lucienne is searching deeply into the possibilities of the soul, Pierre learns, through her acts, to recognize the subtler, more spiritual side of reality, both of psychic and of objective reality. His effort in writing is to develop an understanding of what occurred, and, in so doing, he comes closer to his wife. For Neumann, Eros becomes a man (i.e. more masculine) while for Payne and Romain's Eros becomes more spiritual. The implication surely is that growth of consciousness means a more holistic development not the strengthening of one or more specific qualities.

Neumann emphasized the matriarchal themes of the last stage: Psyche's reconciliation with Aphrodite; her winning the good will of Zeus; her subsequent apotheosis; and the birth of a divine daughter. He emphasizes that "the myth of Psyche is archetypal and in this sense

historically paradigmatic; it announces a development that had not yet taken place in the individual men of antiquity" (p. 129). In the matriarchal phase the Great Mother is whole, with her several aspects; the Good and the Bad Mother are aspects of the One (p. 116). Even in her role as the Terrible Mother, Aphrodite helps Psyche by sending her on her path to individuation. The patriarchal phase of culture splits off the "bad" from the "good," and even banishes the goddesses from heaven (as in the patriarchal monotheistic religions). Hence this phase is characterized by "a recession of feminine psychology and its dominants; now feminine existence is almost entirely determined by the masculine world of consciousness and its values" (p. 130). It therefore becomes necessary to confront the patriarchate, to develop toward and beyond the masculine to the whole self. Thus Psyche's atonement with the Mother is the woman's experience of feminine unity, her experience of her self. This also expressed in the birth of a daughter, not a son, as Eros predicted. Neumann observes that whereas the birth of a divine son means a renewal and deification of the woman's animus spirit aspect of the psyche, "the birth of the divine daughter represents a still more central process, relevant to woman's self and wholeness" (p. 140).

Psyche's admission to heaven, under Zeus' aegis, is the beginning of an acceptance of the feminine in the celestial sphere. Neumann writes:

Seen from the feminine standpoint, this signifies that the soul's individual ability to love is divine, and that transformation by love is a mystery that deifies . . . Human womanhood as an individual has mounted to Olympus, and here, in the perfection achieved by the mystery of love, woman stands beside the archetypes of mankind, the gods (pp. 136, 137).

Neumann sees this as a new event in western culture. It marks the onset of the mystery phenomenon of love which has "occupied the center of psychic development and of culture, art, and religion" for two milleniums, from courtly love to Faust's Eternal Feminine and beyond (p. 139). In fact, Psyche's apotheosis lifts the whole human realm to the divine. If she can be divine this means that the human soul is divine and equal to the gods.

With a consideration of the birth of the daughter motif, Neumann begins to abandon his position that the myth is an archetype for the development of feminine psychology. The above argument appears to generalize Psyche's achievements to all of human culture. He also notes that the love of Psyche for her divine lover is a central motif in the love mysticism of all times and the approach of the god as savior at the very moment of failure and self-abandonment corresponds "exactly to the highest phase of mystical ecstasy, in which the soul commends itself to the godhead" (p. 140). The child called Pleasure or Joy or Bliss is really "the mystical joy which among all peoples is described as the fruit of the highest mystical union. It is 'Joy indeed, but surpassing sensuality.'"¹⁷ This conclusion, of course, is suggested by Apuleius in the Lucius story, and is also the natural result of transcending. This is perhaps what Neumann means when he says that this bliss defies description and almost defies understanding, "although it is manifested time and time again as the determining borderline experience of the psyche and of psychic life"

17 Neumann, p. 140. The quotation is from the Tejobindu Upanishad

(p. 141). That is, bliss is experienced as psychic life (the awareness) touches on the psyche itself, the unbounded, unmanifest, transcendent source of psychic life.

Neumann is concerned in his commentary on the myth to show how "the heroism of the feminine differs from that of the masculine," (p. 93), but his analysis, as we've seen above, is not very convincing either in his broad motifs or specific details. For example, early in the work he comments that Psyche's naivete, her "passionate murmurs," and her propensity to despair are "thoroughly feminine" (p. 97). As a matter of fact, Lucius is equally naive, he passionately murmurs his pleas to Fotis that he be allowed to attend his aunt's banquet, and his despair upon being turned into a donkey make him consider suicide just as often as Psyche does. If she achieves her first three trials rather passively with the help of the ants, the reed, and the eagle, so does the questing hero frequently have his impossible tasks accomplished by supernatural helpers.¹⁸ Many of the gender distinctions Neumann makes are, in fact, trivial, and not central to the myth.

The one thing, however, that he feels is specifically feminine is the nature of Psyche's temptations. The snares set by Aphrodite to make her drop her sops for Cerberus and hence be detained in Hades are all temptations to help a fellow human being. But the desire to help another is hardly predominantly feminine. Psyche's predecessor Aeneas encounters the corpse of his friend Palinurus and has to be prevented

¹⁸ Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 69-77.

by the Cumean Sibyl from unlawfully helping him to cross the river Styx. Dante's main task in his descent into hell is to learn how the punishment suits the crime and is thus a manifestation of divine justice. He even faints from pity of Paolo and Francesca and must be frequently enjoined against "unlawful" pity by his guide Virgil. Neumann believes ego stability to be a "very masculine virtue" and that the feminine psyche has a particularly difficult time sacrificing the immediate pleasure for the future goal. However, scientific research has shown this ability to be a function not of gender, but of maturity.¹⁹

The other major feminine aspect of Psyche's travail is her preference of beauty to consciousness when she opens the box destined for Aphrodite. With this act, Neumann says, she reunites herself with the feminine in her nature. This controversion, or tendency toward wholeness, is an aspect of Psyche's growth in consciousness. She's no longer the young girl who sees only her own self-contained beauty, or even the woman who, like Aphrodite, uses her beauty as a lure, but rather "a woman in love, who wishes to be beautiful for the beloved, for Eros, and for no one else" (p. 123). In taking what now properly belongs to her, she becomes the goddess.

It's also possible, even without the Platonic concept of beauty, to see the box as a symbol for the self, along with globes, roses, lotus, and other mandala forms. In Jungian terms, "Mandalas often appear after long periods of psychological development as if to

¹⁹ Edward P. Sarafino and James W. Armstrong, Child and Adolescent Development (Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman, 1980), pp. 112-13, 472-73.

symbolize release from the conflict of opposites and to convey the numinous impact of their reconciliation.²⁰ Hence, after her katabasis, or most significant transcending experience, Psyche has won and takes possession of her own self. The arrival of Eros underscores the end of duality and final reintegration and is necessary to bring that gain into the Manifest sphere.

Neumann comments that "Love as an expression of feminine wholeness is not possible in the dark, as a merely unconscious process; an authentic encounter with another involves consciousness" (p. 85). But this is surely true of love whether it is an expression of masculine or feminine wholeness. In his interpretation of fairy tales psychologist Bruno Bettelheim classes Psyche's adventures with other animal-groom tales, tales in which the animal husband is eventually turned into a prince.²¹ The heroine must learn that sexuality is not beastly, but is, in fact, a necessary component of romantic love. He explains that the story shows that Cupid wants to keep his sex life separate from the rest of his life. Psyche finds her life pleasurable but empty and refuses to allow the separation and isolation of the purely sexual aspects, and thus she tries to force a reunification.

The incredible hardships Psyche has to endure suggest the difficulties man encounters when the highest psychic qualities (Psyche) are to be wedded to sexuality (Eros). Not physical man, but spiritual man must be reborn to become ready for the marriage of sexuality with wisdom. This is

²⁰ Ann Belford Ulanov, The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1971), p. 65.

²¹ The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Vintage, 1977). Future references will appear in the text.

represented by Psyche having to enter the underworld and return from it; wedding of the two aspects of man requires a rebirth (p. 293, emphasis mine).

He goes on with his interpretation of the tale to conclude that "for the happiness of both partners they must have a full life in the world, and with each other as equals" (p. 295). Both partners must integrate mind and body (Psyche and Eros) to achieve mature love and happiness.

What about Neumann's central thesis that "feminine individuation and the spiritual development of the feminine . . . are always effected through love" (p. 110). In another work Neumann emphasizes the importance of love for the masculine hero, changing him from a "callow youth" into a hero.²² What makes his thesis here, then, exclusively feminine? When we look at the six novels we find that Neumann's insights demand a broader application. Those that have female heroes and deal with romantic or erotic love do not fall into very close alignment with Neumann's model (see Table 5 which summarizes the points of contact). But they all show a definite transformation and maturation of the personality due to love. Two of them also show a parallel development in the hero. Through love for Lynne Paul Gordon becomes a better, more compassionate person. Pierre's experiences with Lucienne change his vision of reality. In fact, Romaines alters Lucienne's role in the last two volumes of the trilogy to make her into "une espèce de Béatrice" for Pierre.²³

²² Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 202-03.

²³ Romaines, Souvenirs, p. 134.

TABLE 5

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN NEUMANN'S STAGES AND FOUR PSYCHE NOVELS

<u>Neumann</u>	<u>Payne</u>	<u>Louÿs</u>	<u>Romains</u>	<u>des Ligneris</u>
I. Introduction				
* Conflict between Aphrodite and Psyche	*	*	*	*
II. Marriage of Death				
* Acceptance of destiny	*	* Psyché tries to resist but cannot.	* Lucienne feels called and condemned.	* Mahaut feels the inevitability of her marriage.
* Mystery of transformation	*	* Psyché sees Love as Death.	* She is awakened into a new selfhood.	* Her wedding is like a sacrificial march.
III. The Act				
* Ecstasy of darkness	*	* Psyché deceived about Aimery's constancy	* She sees the kingdom as a prison.	* She is in sexual slavery to her husband.
* Jealous sisters lead Psyche to hate the "beast."				* Eric's passion for Roberte reveals his lower nature.

TABLE 5 cont'd

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN NEUMANN'S STAGES AND FOUR PSYCHE NOVELS

<u>Neumann</u>	<u>Payne</u>	<u>Louÿs</u>	<u>Romains</u>	<u>des Ligneris</u>
III. The Act cont'd				
* Breaking the taboo				* Mahaut has her sight restored contrary to Eric's wishes.
* Falling in love: connecting the husband and the beast		* She learns to accept the sexual aspects of love.		
* Confrontation leads to separation.				* Mahaut leaves Eric-- at least temporarily.
IV. The Four Tasks				
* Suicide as a regression		* Psyché returns to the estate and dies in the snow.		
* Four tasks	* Lynne's development of her mind and talents.		* Lucienne's development of her psychic abilities.	
* Psyche's failure: opening box of beauty and being overcome	* Lynne faints in the chapel.			

TABLE 5 cont'd

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN NEUMANN'S STAGES AND FOUR PSYCHE NOVELS

<u>Neumann</u>	<u>Payne</u>	<u>Louÿs</u>	<u>Romains</u>	<u>des Ligneris</u>
V. The Happy End				
* Eros' transformation and rescue	* Paul's transformation into a minister. He rescues Lynne from her grief.		* Pierre transformed by loving Lucienne and learning about other realities.	
* Reconciliation with the Gods			* Pact with the soul's possibilities	
* Psyche's apotheosis	* Lynne becomes a missionary.			
* Birth of the divine child	* Joy of union		* Joy of reunion	

Pierre says that he and Lucienne come to resemble those beings who have found "à la fois une croyance stabilisante pour leur esprit, et un nouvel équilibre vital."²⁴ Life becomes meaningful and harmonious for him due to the unity their love brings. Marius, who never really loves anyone, never really becomes whole.

Hence the Psyche novels appear not to corroborate Neumann's interpretation but, if they conform to it at all, to generalize it to masculine consciousness. In addition, as Orual develops she learns to love wholly and unselfishly. This development is the most important one she experiences and whether this development results from her growth of consciousness, gives rise to it, or accompanies it is not important. What is important is that the love she learns to experience is not erotic but divine. She learns to love Psyche, to love herself, to love god, to love all her friends with a love that cherishes their wholeness and not her selfish needs.

Love may, in fact, be crucial to individuation, but not only in the sense in which Neumann develops it, as merely the confrontation with Eros or erotic love. If we consider Louÿs's novel as his own psychomachia, in which he kills off his "psyche" and lets his ego return to an erotic and uncommitted freedom, then it can perhaps shed light on why he spent his last fifteen or twenty years immured in his Paris home unable to finish his novel or to create anything else. His inability to experience any kind of transcendence that would enable

²⁴ Jules Romains, Le Dieu des corps (Paris: Gallimard, 1928), p. 132.

him to connect soul and body in a holistic way, to evolve spiritually, must have resulted in an atrophy of his creative life.

Criticism of Neumann's interpretation of the tale

In a recent article Lee Edwards argues that the tale is timeless and asexual and the fact that the hero is a woman illustrates that a woman can also play the heroic role in a story applicable to all human life. Neumann is criticized for emphasizing the tale's relevance to feminine psychology alone:

What Neumann fails to see, despite the brilliance of his analysis of Psyche's dilemma and its resolution, is that Psyche is not simply a female self on a quest for a particularly "feminine" kind of individuation but is rather the emblem of humanity whose actions, like those of Achilles, Ulysses, Hamlet, and Ahab, resonate for all of us regardless of our sex.²⁵

Several other critics have challenged Neumann's reading of the myth and proposed alternate or modified versions of it. One takes issue with Neumann's basic thesis that a woman gains awareness of her true identity through love of a man because it assumes that the female identity "is largely instinctive and unconscious."²⁶ Another critic, Ann Belford Ulanov, works within the framework of Jungian terms and principles, but she believes that the general stages of individuation apply to both men and women and that the tale of Cupid and Psyche is "more accurately read as the development of man's anima" since the tale is an episode in "a larger narrative of a man's psychological

²⁵ Lee R. Edwards, "The Labors of Psyche: Toward a Theory of Female Heroism," Critical Inquiry, 6 (1979), 42.

²⁶ Penelope Washbourn, Becoming Woman: The Quest for Wholeness in Female Experience (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 54.

transformation; the all-embracing context is masculine."²⁷ Neumann emphasizes that the tale is told by an old woman to the young girl kidnapped by the robbers and is thus a message to her about her feminine destiny. (This would be quite ironic since the girl's love affair ends in murder and suicide, not unity and immortality.) Ulanov's treatment of the tale as related to Lucius' adventures seems more reasonable, and, in fact, something Neumann would have to recognize, since he himself points out the parallel nature of Psyche's katabasis and Lucius' initiation.

Briefly, Ulanov's treatment unfolds like this: the birth of Psyche is the emergence of the anima, the marriage is the beginning of the differentiation of the anima from the unconscious, the awakening of the basic life energy. The sisters represent the neglected elements in the anima which are then summoned to full consciousness, leading the man to differentiate and reconcile his inner oppositions. Eros (the ego) can't yet relate to the new anima and flees. The four tasks symbolize "the stages in which the anima frees herself from the collective maternal unconscious and secures her unique role in the polarity of being" (p. 232). The katabasis is an occasion for the anima to achieve "full religious stature as mediatrix of the reality of death, which must be met, accepted, and then overcome" (p. 236). The anima must break its identification with the maternal instinct and thus must give up the desire to help and nurture everyone, hence the

²⁷ Ulanov, p. 215. Future references will appear in the text. The anima in Jungian psychology is the projection of the feminine aspects of the psyche onto a female figure in myth, dream, or real life.

necessity not to pity or help the inhabitants of the underworld. The reunion of Psyche and Eros signals the "emergence of the anima in full and effective relation to the ego" (p. 232). The Eros figure symbolizes both "the transpersonal archetype of relatedness to a deity" and also "the masculine ego that depends on the anima to free its eros drive from the maternal unconscious" (p. 238). Ulanov believes the story to be "a remarkably accurate description of the inner sexual polarity of the male" (p. 240). Psyche is thus the feminine anima and Eros the masculine ego of Lucius. The transformation of Psyche initiates the development of the masculine personality to the "redeemer god." Another book-length study also investigates the tale as the story of the growth of Lucius (or Apuleius') anima.²⁸

Ulanov generalizes her statement about the growth of the male personality, especially his anima, by positing that Psyche stands for the feminine anima, as well. After Jung developed the concept of the anima he belatedly assumed that the female must have a masculine counterpart mediating the individuation of her psyche and dubbed it an animus. Recent thinking on that "problematic archetype, the anima, and its more problematic counterpart, the animus" has developed in new directions.²⁹ Ulanov, among others, believes that a feminine-type

²⁸ Marie-Louise Von Franz, A Psychological Interpretation of The Golden Ass of Apuleius (New York: Spring, 1970).

²⁹ Diane F. Sadoff, "Mythopoeia, the Moon, and Contemporary Women's Poetry," in Feminist Criticism: Essays on Theory, Poetry, and Prose, ed. Cheryl L. Brown and Karen Olson (Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow, 1978), p. 142.

archetype mediates the final stages of individuation for both men and women:

This highest phase of confrontation and individuation in both sexes is initiated by the feminine: for the man, through the anima, which leads to the self; for the woman, through the feminine self, not through any contrasexual elements. . . . It is the feminine which completes the individuation of each sex (p. 269).

Thus Ulanov would have the tale seen as the development of the anima archetype for both sexes and points to the journey to the underworld as the decisive transformation it undergoes.

Another recent article attempts a structural analysis of the myth using the methods developed by Lévi-Strauss. The author rejects Neumann's whole cultural approach and finds that Neumann's view that Psyche's struggle to transcend her separation from the male is a conscious attempt to be "a subjective interpretation that is nowhere substantiated in the text of the myth." She breaks the myth and its family of folk and fairy tales into their basic structural elements and finds that they depict "a reality of feminine existence, not a transcendence of it." The structure may be seen as four alternating stages: the bad or false marriage, the (symbolic) death of the uninitiated female, the initiation of the female, and the good or true marriage. She claims that "all the variants present a consistent pattern and the pattern is a real and actual one: marriage is a means of resolving sexual conflict in many cultures, and it is a test or rite of passage for one or both partners."³⁰

³⁰ Phyllis B. Katz, "The Myth of Psyche: A Definition of the Nature of the Feminine," Arethusa, 9 (1976), 116.

If "Cupid and Psyche" has universal significance and cannot be analyzed in terms of one sex only, then how might the feminine quest be distinguished from the masculine one, if such a distinction can be made?

Definitions of the feminine quest

Numerous recent studies in the area of feminine criticism have called for an adequate literary representation of the feminine quest for self-knowledge and self-fulfillment. For example, in their monumental study of nineteenth-century women's fiction, Gilbert and Gubar find that the one plot concealed in this fiction is "the story of the woman writer's quest for her own story; it is the story, in other words, of the woman's quest for self-definition."³¹ Others have pointed out that most of the myths of western literature are male, not female and that women working in this predominantly male tradition too often borrow these myths, rather than creating their own, with the result that they must distort or "twist those myths in order to say something about the female condition rather than the male."³²

In a pioneering essay on feminist criticism, Annis Pratt notes with dismay that volumes have been written about the development of male psyche as if it stood for the human soul. "If there is a 'myth of the hero' there must also be a 'myth of the heroine,' a female as well as a male Bildungroman, parallel, perhaps, but by no means

31 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), p. 76.

32 Ann Ronald, "The Female Faust," in Brown and Olson, p. 211. See also Ellen Morgan, "Humanbecoming: Form and Focus in NeoFeminist Novel," in Brown and Olson, pp. 272-78.

identical." She calls for the development of an "archetypal mode of new feminist criticism which will describe the psycho-mythological development of the female individual in literature."³³ Answering her own call for the definition of archetypes to describe the feminine quest Pratt later developed a comprehensive model parallel to Campbell's monomyth in figures and sequences but different in detail. Crucial to the quest is what Pratt calls the inner journey or rebirth experience. In her sequence she calls it "Phase V: The Plunge into the Unconscious."³⁴

In an effort to create a comprehensive typology of female portraits in literature, a recent anthology classifies women's roles into two major categories, the female protagonist or hero, and the female supporting character or heroine.³⁵ Authors Pearson and Pope find that

The similarity between male and female main and supporting characters shows that on the deepest psychological level -- the level of archetypal patterns -- there is little if any difference between the experience of the sexes. When the central character is male, the principle of the world or of the spiritual goal is often personified as a woman. When the woman is the protagonist, the goal is male. In literature, it is appropriate for both female and male protagonists to encounter characters who essentially are projections of aspects of their psyches (p. 6).

Therefore most female portraits in literature are projections of the

³³ Annis Pratt, "The New Feminist Criticism," College English, 32 (1971), 877.

³⁴ Annis Pratt, et al, Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 141-43.

³⁵ Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope, Who Am I This Time? Female Portraits in British and American Literature (New York: McGraw Hill, 1976). Future references will appear in the text.

male hero's psyche (the heroine as anima, great Mother, etc.), and thus have little to do with real women. When it is a matter of a female hero, like Pratt the authors find that her heroic actions basically conform to patterns described by Lord Raglan in The Hero or Joseph Campbell's monomyth. Since the archetype of the heroic pattern can apply equally to men and women, variations in this pattern may be understood in terms of the restrictions and opportunities afforded to each sex in a given society.

Pearson and Pope describe three types of heroes, the sage, the artist, and the warrior. The sage is seen acquiring knowledge but she often finds the world unwilling to listen, e.g., Cassandra. The artist creates beauty, roles, relationships, but is usually forced by society to act covertly or indirectly. The warrior, however, initiates action which affects the world. The warrior-hero's search is often a version of the quest myth, as described by Campbell. The authors note that these works tend to focus on the departure, because since "a woman is not expected to engage in heroic quest, embarking on the quest at all is a revolutionary and heroic refusal to conform" (p. 247). Consequently the female warrior may often refuse the first call to adventure and may have to be forced across the first threshold. She may then meet the god or "light male," or tempters, "dark men" such as the rake, or the older guide, who can be a female mentor "who has strength and wisdom not acknowledged by her culture," in other words, the sage as heroine rather than hero. Mahaut's grandmother falls into this category.

The female warrior goes from being an object to being a subject, from being a passive observer to being an active participant; she must

become her own creator. "Symbolically, she descends into the underworld of the unknown, uncategorized experience, and returns wise, whole, and free" (p. 243). The return can be problematical in a patriarchal society unprepared to listen to her new voice. But even with this limitation, the authors conclude, the warrior has a greater chance for fulfillment and social effectiveness than the sage or artist:

This insistence on a free and active life distinguishes the warrior from the sage and the artist. The sage is entrapped by her wisdom; the artist is restricted by the need to act indirectly. The warrior may be punished for her violation of the strictures--sexual, religious, or economic--of her society, but inside she is free and whole, having created and acted upon her own inner voices and having openly confronted the world (p. 251).

Thus Pearson and Pope argue for the same pattern of spiritual growth for men and women, and signal the transcending, or symbolic descent in to the underworld of the unknown self, as the crucial factor in self-creation.³⁶

Carol Christ's recent study of women artists makes a similar point. Christ defines the spiritual quest as a quest for "a wholeness that unites the dualism of spirit and body, rational and irrational, nature and freedom, spiritual and social, life and death."³⁷ It "concerns a woman's awakening to the depths of her soul and her

³⁶ Their later study, however, focuses on the social problems of female heroes and gives little attention to their spiritual development (Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope, The Female Hero in American and British Literature [New York: R. R. Bowker, 1981]).

³⁷ Carol P. Christ, Diving Deep and Surfacing: Woman Writers on a Spiritual Quest (Boston: Beacon, 1980), p. 8. Future references will appear in the text.

position in the universe" (p. 8). She identifies four stages of the spiritual quest. The first is "the experience of nothingness" -- the woman's experience of emptiness, victimization, self-hatred, etc. The second is called "awakening" and is a direct "experience of the really 'real' or ground of being, from ordinary to extraordinary consciousness, from bondage to freedom" (p. 18). She prefers the term "awakening" to William James's use of "conversion" because the former suggests that the self need only notice what is already there within it. Echoing Campbell she writes: "It seems to be characteristic of women's awakening that the great powers, while larger than the self, are within as well as without" (p. 18). She emphasizes that this experience is not one of mere learning but rather "a transition in consciousness and a new perception of reality" (p. 18). The third stage, which is closely connected to the second and which recognized as a transcending experience, is "mystical identification or insight." This experience usually occurs out in nature and involves the woman's "direct experience of her grounding in the powers of being" which sometimes takes the form of her identification of the inner self with the powers of being (p. 19). This union often "leads to a new-found self-awareness and self-confidence" (p. 21). The final stage is a "new naming" of self and reality. The movement towards integration and wholeness leads to a new understanding and new verbal expressions. The four-stage cycle keeps repeating itself to "form a spiral of ever-deepening but never final understanding" (p. 14). Again we see a model of spiritual growth that has its critical center in transcending, in what Christ calls an inward experience of the ground of being with a resultant change in consciousness and perception.

Grace Stewart also examines the feminine Kunstlerroman in the light of Campbell's monomyth. Stewart cites Erich Heller's observation that the quest pattern has been changing in the twentieth century, that the quest is leading finally to a "world of human inwardness," to a quest for the self.³⁸ She finds that Campbell's monomyth has to be changed only slightly to fit the woman's situation. Like the male artist the woman artist's movement inward is portrayed metaphorically in terms of journeys to caves, wells, pools, lakes, oceans, quarries, etc. in order to give birth. "But the female artist's well is often dry; the quarry must be violently blasted before it will hold water; and rebirth from the womb of cave, earth, or pool often strips her womanhood or damages her mirror image." (pp. 177-78).

Stewart also emphasizes the rebirth theme in her study. She observes that:

Because the artist becomes acutely aware of his status in relation to the external world, he often depicts the process of this discovery in terms of birth-death-rebirth. The self is depicted sometimes as dying, leaving its surroundings, and being reborn as a separate entity; at other times as dying, leaving its individual state to be reborn through nature or love as a transcendent being in tune with the universe. Both processes involve the creation or re-creation of the self (p. 5).

The heroine must give birth to a new self, like Psyche, and also accept her total feminine self, represented by the mother. Hence the mother-daughter relationship is often central to the woman writer's persona.³⁹

³⁸ Grace Stewart, A New Mythos: The Novel of the Artist as Heroine 1877-1977 (St. Albans, Vt.: Eden Press Women's Pub., 1979), p. 7.

In others words, the primary pattern of the journey involves transcending, but the woman's surfacing or return may be problematic due to her hostile environment. Stewart notes that among the several distinguishing features of the female Kunstlerroman that birds (images of spirituality) may appear as "broken, crippled, strangled, or hung" (p. 177). Joyce, of course, uses similar imagery in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. As Stephen gathers inner strength and readies himself to take flight from Ireland, birds change from heavy or threatening images to free-wheeling symbols of freedom.

Thus, in the work of Stewart, Christ, Pearson and Pope, we see other versions of the quest myth with transcending metaphors or symbols at its core. It would seem then that Neumann's commentary has validity only as a particularized version of this more universal pattern, a pattern which is central to the spiritual growth or individuation of both sexes. At the heart of any change in consciousness is the experience of transcending, of turning inward upon the self to find knowledge, power, and a new harmony with the transcendent order of nature. And this is what the myth of Cupid and Psyche so clearly enacts.

It seems clear now from this consideration of the feminine quest that the transcending pattern we see embodied in "Cupid and Psyche" is a very widespread and universal one, applicable to quests not consciously related to the tale. Let us move now to a consideration

39 Stewart, p. 41. Susan Friedman emphasizes this point in her article on H. D.'s need to see her mother as a goddess before she can give birth to herself ("Psyche reborn: Tradition, re-vision and the goddess as mother-symbol in H. D.'s epic poetry," Women's Studies, 6 (1979), 147-60.

of how the transcending pattern or model can illuminate various modern novels concerned with spiritual growth or evolution.

Chapter VIII

Conclusion: Transcending in the Modern Novel

From the Golden Ass to recent literature on the feminine quest we can observe that the tale of spiritual growth revolves around at least one crucial episode where the protagonist takes a metaphoric or symbolic dive into the self to release or revive inner powers, to discover there transcendent strata of knowledge, and as a result to forge a strengthened and more holistic psyche. Psyche returns from her katabasis to be raised to immortal bliss; as a result of his transcending experiences Lucius enjoys a blissful life both as a man of the world and as a devotee of Isis; and their literary successors achieve a higher level of psychic integration after they have enlivened their inner selves. Marius' privileged moment opens his awareness to a level of reality not accounted for in his previous philosophical positions; Lucienne and Pierre come to appreciate a level of consciousness that at once unites them and opens out into a vast unseen universe; Orual transcends into her inner self and discovers there a spiritual beauty and selfless love that will unite her with Divine Nature; and Mahaut, following the advice of her grandmother to go as deep within herself as possible and leave everything else behind, heals herself of hatred, rediscovers her self-confidence and inner joy, and begins a new life. And just as the spiritual quest of the male hero contains at its core a plunge within,

so the quest of the female hero, though different in detail, includes a similar grounding event which leads to growth and fulfillment.

From the model of transcending developed from psychophysiological research on the Transcendental Meditation technique we recognize in these literary descents first the metaphoric or concretely portrayed quiescence that precedes the event, then the transcending episode itself, which is profound, knowledge-conferring, luminous and blissful, and finally, the return to everyday life with a heightened sense of the wholeness, justice, and power of the self and the world. As we have seen, this experience, in part or in its fullness, is a natural one which has been frequently reported and discussed. Whether an individual has experienced the transcendent itself or only observed the increasing mental and physiological quiescence that accompanies experiences of profound feeling and thinking,¹ a taste of the transcending process is a reality to nearly every reader.

Metaphoric Descents: Margaret Atwood's Surfacing and

Willa Cather's The Song of the Lark

Our model thus allows us to generalize the pattern observed in "Cupid and Psyche" and to apply it broadly to works of literature that are primarily about the growth of consciousness and to observe how the pattern functions both in the structure of the work and in the protagonist's consciousness. There are numerous modern novels with potent symbolic or literal transcending episodes at their core. One

¹ See for example Michael Angelotti, Ralph R. Behnke, and Larry W. Carlile, "Heart Rate: A Measure of Reading Involvement," Research in the Teaching of English, 9 (1975), 192-99, where the authors observe that heart rate decreases more during the reading of fiction than during the reading of several pages of history.

example that leaps to mind when we discuss the dive within is the Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood's Surfacing. Her heroine's struggle to first deny and then integrate the major events of her personal history into her consciousness culminates in a very deep dive into a lake. What she sees under the water is ostensibly the dead body of her father, but the dive and the sights trigger other suppressed memories which she then comes to recognize and accept. The heroine achieves greater psychic wholeness as a result of her katabasis and "surfaces" from her quest with a more integrated and holistic sense of self. In her dive into the lake she metaphorically transcends deep within the self, discovers knowledge and power hidden there, and returns to a fuller life. In addition, Atwood's novel gradually turns from a rather gross portrayal of outer behavior to an increasingly poetic rendition of emotions and inner experiences. Crude social realism gives way to mythic self-discovery as the boundaries of the heroine's consciousness are expanded by her metaphoric dive within the self.

A similar pattern structures Willa Cather's novel the Song of the Lark. After a long difficult winter in the city Thea Kronborg is disenchanted and confused. She travels to the southwest and spends several weeks alone exploring a deep canyon with a river at its bottom and ancient Indian cliff dwellings along its sides. She gathers strength and courage until one day she discovers the deepest meaning of her life, and with it her vocation. She is bathing in the stream in the sunlight, which she senses to be the "continuity of life that reached back into the old time. The glittering thread of current had a kind of lightly worn, loosely knit personality, graceful and

laughing." Thea's bath seems invested with ritual, with a "ceremonial gravity." Suddenly she stops and stands silent and unmoving in the water and the light and experiences an epiphany:

. . . what was art but an effort to make a sheath, a mould in which to imprison for a moment the shining, elusive element which is life itself--life hurrying past us and running away, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose? . . . In singing, one made a vessel of one's throat and nostrils and held it on one's breath, caught the stream in a scale of natural intervals.²

Thea thus discovers herself to be a singer and goes to become one of the great divas of the Metropolitan Opera.

The silence, water, light, and noetic quality of the event, which occurs at the depths of a canyon, mark it as a transcending episode. Cather's works are sprinkled with such transcending scenes, both actual and metaphoric. A very recent novel in the "space fiction" genre not only describes similar events and episodes, but bases its whole structure on the transcending pattern.

Form and Structure: Doris Lessing's Marriages

Doris Lessing's recent novel The Marriages between Zones Three, Four, and Five involves a very extended and profound use of the transcending pattern. An analysis of the novel shows how the transcending model can elucidate its basic structure as well as defining the spiritual growth of its heroes. Briefly, the story takes place in a series of zones which surround the planet earth at some unknown point in time and are being managed or directed by the Providers, some extraordinarily developed beings of another planet.

² Willa Cather, The Song of the Lark (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), p. 378.

The six zones lie in hierarchical strata with Six being the least and One the most evolved zone. When we examine the characteristics of the zones, set as they are at different altitudes with different geographical and cultural features, we see that by them Lessing means to indicate not merely a "hierarchy of moral states,"³ but different levels of consciousness. Lessing sees the concept of the city in mythology as "archetypal, . . . a metaphor for states of mind, states of being."⁴ It appears that her concept of the zones is likewise a metaphor for states of being or states of consciousness.

The narrative begins with the Provider's order that the queen of Zone Three, a beautiful and self-sufficient woman named Al*Ith, leave her zone and marry the king of Zone Four. The queen is at first resentful and reacts as if she were being wed to a lower species, but she finally acquiesces when she realizes that the marriage is intended in some way to heal a disease that is disrupting the harmony of her people. Signs have begun to appear indicating that a certain stagnation is afflicting her zone--humans and animals have stopped conceiving, plants will be affected next, and the process may turn her realm into a wasteland. She resignedly accepts her responsibility and role as scapegoat. She is in a sense being sacrificed in a marriage of death in order to right the wrong in the natural order. The

³ Nicholas Shrimpton, "Somewhere Else," rev. of The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five, by Doris Lessing, New Statesman, 23 May 1980, p. 783.

⁴ Lessing, in Minda Bikman, "A Talk with Doris Lessing," The New York Times Book Review, 30 March 1980, p. 26.

situation is similar thus far to Psyche's marriage of death in Apuleius and to Psyche's Offering in Till We Have Faces.

At first, the story goes, the queen Al*Ith is very reluctant to submit herself to the life-style of the lower zone, but soon awakens to her responsibility to her people, and, with the equally reluctant king of Zone Four, begins to learn about herself and her world. When king and queen finally achieve a union of mutual love, respect, and understanding, they are ordered apart: Al*Ith is to return to Zone Three, and the king Ben Ata is to marry a fierce and wild amazon who is the queen of Zone Five. Ben Ata goes on to restructure his land on the basis of what he learned to see and feel with Al*Ith and takes this civilizing influence with him to Zone Five. Al*Ith, on the other hand, finds she has gone beyond the life in her former home, and soon disappears into the higher Zone Two. Thus the basic structure of the narrative is a descent followed by an ascent, the structure of the transcending pattern.

Lessing relates the tale through the Chroniclers of Zone Three who are attempting to rescue the history of Al*Ith's quest from distorted legend and elevate it into a mythic pattern for their people. Marriages reads more like a fable than a novel, gripping the reader with the force of myth, but there is sufficient realism of detail and emotion to draw the reader into the narrative. Lessing is obviously concerned with delineating a real woman's spiritual growth, even if she consciously structures Al*Ith's descent with ritual and myth in mind. Though the detail shows that her conception of Al*Ith's rebirth may derive from writers such as Jung, Campbell, or Van Gennep, her response to the katabasis is in terms of the transcending model.

Lessing relates the Queen's marriage as a descent into hell, a katabasis to a lower world, which is a necessary condition for life to evolve once again. As the novel unfolds it becomes clear that the distinctions between the zones are in the areas of refined perception, broader comprehension, subtler and more expanded feelings and intellect, in short, a difference in state of consciousness, almost as different as the waking state is from the sleep state. Zone Four is a boggy lowland with a heavy oppressive air in which an authoritarian military society suppresses everyone, especially its women. Light, airy, fertile and beautiful, Zone Three is a refined land where equality, mutual respect, and friendliness prevail in all personal and social relationships. The differences between the people of Zones Three and Four are not merely moral or cultural. The inhabitants of the superior Zone Three can communicate on the level of thought and feeling. Al*Ith hears the Providers' order to marry Ben Ata in her own mind. Ben Ata, however, must be told by messenger. Al*Ith knows the feelings of the animals, her own horse, in particular, and can direct his activity merely by thinking. The soldiers of Zone Four are dependent on conventional bits and bridals, saddles and spurs, and they treat their beasts as they treat their women, as inferior creatures to be subjugated and confined. In fact, the militaristic regime imposes two styles of relationships upon the whole population--either dominance or submission. There is no middle ground of respect, equality, and consideration. Zone Four has order enough, but no "inner listening to the Law."⁵

⁵ Doris Lessing, The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five
(Footnote continued)

Zone Four is not only lower in altitude but its air is so coarse that Al*Ith needs a breathing device until she can accommodate her nervous system to the change. And likewise the soldiers that travel to Zone Three to fetch the queen need breathing devices to help them survive in the lighter, more rarified heights. It is a hell also in the sense that life in the lower zone is cruder, more brutal. Fear, anger, lust, shame, tears and grief are the usual emotions of the zone. They overshadow or displace subtler feelings of love and tenderness. When Al*Ith finally returns to her own land after her long stay in Zone Four she discovers that her people, and even her children thought of her as dead and have forgotten her. No one seems to recognize her. She feels like a ghost in her own land.

In addition to suggesting a mythic death and rebirth, Lessing invokes the mystery of rituals. When Al*Ith and Ben Ata's marriage is really consummated, that is, when they come together in mutual respect and love and conceive a son, then invisible drums begin to beat and their pulse is felt throughout the zones,

signalling to the whole land, and beyond it to her land, that the marriage was properly accomplished. And the drum was to beat, from that time on, from when they met, until they parted, so that everyone could know they were together, and share in the marriage, in thought, and in sympathetic support--and, of course, in emulation (p. 69).

Lessing has evoked here the sense of a fertility ritual, a ritual that will serve to reenliven the dormant forces of nature and send creative impulses throughout all the living kingdoms.

5 (continued)
 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), p. 56. Future references will appear in the text.

What makes this ritual marriage and mythic descent a transcending experience for Al*Ith is her drive for knowledge, her discovery and development of her own refined levels of feeling, and the resultant effect on her total comprehension of reality. What initially brings the very disparate couple together in love and understanding is their need to know, first, what is wrong with their zones, and next, what their marriage is supposed to do to heal this wrong. Ultimately they must face the basic question: what is their purpose in life? "There is something we should have been doing," Al*Ith tells her sister on one of her trips back to Zone Three. It has something to do with her attraction to the tantalizing azure heights of the higher Zone Two, she feels, but what? That is what we must find out, she tells her sister. "We must find out what we are for" (p. 118).

It is the desire for knowledge that first leads us to see Al*Ith's descent into Zone Four as a descent into the Self. Like Odysseus, like Aeneas, like Dante, Al*Ith must plumb the depths of a lower world in order to find a higher one, to find her purpose in life, her true self. As she comes to respect, like, and then love Ben Ata with an intensity she had never before experienced, Al*Ith discovers a whole host of emotions in her depth. She is often amazed even shocked at what she feels. The learning process is sometimes uncomfortable yet "she knew, she knew better every day and every hour, that she was on the verge of a descent into possibilities of herself she had not believed open to her." Ben Ata also transcends and discovers deeper strata of knowledge and emotions. For example, as they talk together, Al*Ith leads her husband inward to try to understand their problem and their responsibility.

And she realized, with what delight and relief, that he was operating from within that part of him which meant he was open and ready for understandings to come into him. . . . She sat absolutely still, subduing her breathing. . . .

His own breathing was slower, slower, he was stilled, his eyes fixed on the cup had no sight in them--he was deep within himself. . . .

The slow rain soaked down, they were inside a bright shell drowned in water, they were inside a hush of wet sound. Neither moved. He breathed now hardly at all. . . . A long time later he came to himself . . .

He did not know what had just happened. Yet she could see on his face a maturity that spoke for the deep processes that had been accomplished in him (p. 100).

In addition, Al*Ith learns from the women of Zone Four to cherish those impulses that inspire the individual to evolve, to expand comprehension, and to refine feelings in order to live in greater freedom and joy. She observes the women of Zone Four secretly gazing up at the forbidden heights of her homeland, nourishing their spirits with a vision of something higher and better, and she remembers that in her childhood she had looked up into the azure heights of Zone Two for a similar sort of nourishment, now long since forgotten and ignored totally by the people of her zone. She finds herself awakened to the possibility that a higher life might exist for herself and for her people.

When the "deep processes" are finally accomplished in her, Al*Ith is summoned by the Providers to leave Zone Four. The marriage is over and she must move onward. Her reentry into the higher zone is shown in terms of her new vision, broader comprehension, and stronger sense of self. Just as Psyche emerges into the tides of light Al*Ith finds herself at dawn back in her land watching the sky lighten and realizing that she has grown far beyond her former life. Even as early as her first visit to her homeland after her marriage she finds

that she has ceased to see her own land as "finite, bounded, known utterly and in every detail, self-enclosed" and now knows that it really "lapped and rippled out and upwards beyond there into hinterlands that were like unknown possibilities in her own mind" (p. 61). Now she feels completely separate from her old self, her people, her old life. "It was as if she was being made distant from everything she had been--lighter, dryer, more herself in a way she had never imagined" (p. 189).

Al*Ith is now unable to "incorporate," to use Van Gennep's term, because there's no level of her old society into which she can incorporate with the higher level of consciousness she has achieved as a result of the inner knowledge gained in Zone Four. She now sees her people as "fat and mindless," smug and self-satisfied, content with their superficial pleasures and unaware of the higher reaches of human feeling and consciousness. "She wondered how it could be that these people here, her people, could live all their lives through without ever wanting anything more" (pp. 191, 192). She is drawn beyond her realm toward the azure heights of Zone Two.

In working with Zone Two Lessing is struggling to describe Al*Ith's continuing spiritual evolution. She must continue to transcend in order to evolve and this time Lessing invokes an image of blue haze that, like the sea, symbolizes consciousness in its infinite potentiality. On her return from her very first visit to Zone Four Al*Ith had looked up and for the first time in years allowed her gaze to be drawn upwards into the blue haze between the mountains of Zone Two. She stands:

gazing there, wondering, allowing her eyes to be drawn into those long, blue, deceiving distances . . . her eyes seemed to be drawn and follow, and become dissolved in blue, blue, blue . . . a mingling, changing, rippling blue . . . Al*Ith came to herself after a lapse into the deepest regions of herself, with a knowledge born that she knew would hatch out (p. 59, ellipses all in the original, emphasis mine).

On another visit home Al*Ith pursues this unhatched knowledge. She takes her sister Murti up to the highest tower and they look long into the blue, Al*Ith remembering that as a child she used to do so often, and yet somehow ceased doing--"it had been as if her own mind had closed itself off to what it could do. Should do. Wanted to do . . ." (p. 81). Murti's experience of the blue is similar to Al*Ith's. She is nourished, enlivened--

her eyes shining. She seemed to shine everywhere; the strong evening light polished her soft gold hair, and the embroideries on her yellow dress glowed. She had seen!

When she turned to Al*Ith all she said was, "Why did we forget it?"

And Al*Ith had no reply (p. 81).

In forgetting to look upward toward Zone Two, to transcend in its azure haze, and to remember the way toward something higher and finer may have been where Al*Ith's zone went wrong. The knowledge of the value of this act is hinted at in a song that one of the children sings, a song almost completely forgotten by her culture. Al*Ith tries to recover the text of the song but it is forgotten. The situation is parallel to Zone Four's edict forbidding its people to look up at the glorious heights of Zone Three. Only the women in their secret organization preserve and cherish the now outlawed adulation of the heights to which they might strive.

Al*Ith finally visits Zone Two and Lessing pushes her metaphor of consciousness into new regions. Al*Ith goes upward until she has difficulty breathing in the blue mists. The ground she walks on, the vegetation, the sky are more like flames or fires, unfamiliar, and yet familiar, she was "at home, even while she recognized nothing at all" (p. 193). The strangeness yet familiarity of the (inner?) landscape may be due to the coarseness of her nervous system. As the people of Zone Four appeared crude to her, so may Al*Ith be too crude to see the life forms there in the blue air. The narrator suggests:

Probably, with different eyes, the eyes of someone set much finer than Al*Ith's, this world she was walking through would show itself as one of springing flames. An iridescence of flames over this dull blue base (pp. 192-93).

She senses beings around her whom she can almost see, voices she can almost hear. She sleeps and hears in her dream that she should go back down. What seemed like a brief timeless experience has lasted for months. She went up in spring and when she returns to the border between the zones winter is coming on.

Al*Ith's "technique" for refining her nervous system and her perception until she can enter Zone Two permanently is to visit it for longer and longer periods. In other words, she accomodates herself to the subtler zone until she can live in it. Thus, both Al*Ith's descents and ascents can be seen as transcending episodes. The pattern can also be seen in the narrative of Ben Ata's growth as well. Like Al*Ith he discovers deeper levels of feeling within himself. He also learns a great deal about how he might improve his realm and about things and relationships he had never dreamt of. Yet he cannot really use or put into action what he has learned until he experiences

his own symbolic transcendence. The crucial scene occurs after Al*Ith has gone and he has grieved and sorrowed and questioned and puzzled over the order from the Providers. Finally word comes that his armies need him at the frontiers of Zone Five. He listlessly goes to join them, longing for Al*Ith, hearing her voice in his mind commenting on his realm and his people as he rides. Once there he sits for a long time alone in his tent, deep in his thoughts when suddenly his soldiers bring him a captive girl for his pleasure. At first he ignores the girl, sitting there, staring out into a "a very dark night." Then he suddenly realizes by the way the girl is dressed that she's no ordinary captive.

The truth came to him suddenly, and he said, "You are the queen of Zone Five?"

"Yes, of course," she said. He laughed. He had not known he was going to, but it was an event so apt, coming so pat and right, so magnificently challenging and even--so he recognized in his innermost self--expected, as if nothing else could have happened, that he could only laugh. And she, in a moment, laughed with him, showing her beautiful strong teeth (p. 207).

This scene of Ben Ata alone in his tent, shut off from the rest of his camp, sitting quietly in the night, coming to a knowledge of how the Providers are working, and then laughing with the bliss of his realizations--these details lead us to recognize the scene as a metaphor for transcending. It becomes the crucial turning point in Ben Ata's reign. Bringing all he had learned from Al*Ith into action he marries the new Queen, reorganizes his entire realm and hers, and eventually is ready for a series of visits to Zone Three. The result of his transcendence and Al*Ith's is a healing and revitalizing of all the zones. "There was a lightness, a freshness, and an enquiry and a

remaking and an inspiration where there had been only stagnation. And closed frontiers" (p. 245). Life is moving again.

Some reviewers have seen Al*Ith's descent into Zone Four (and subsequent loss of her kingdom and husband) as a self-sacrifice.⁶ Something similar might be said of Ben Ata. However, it seems clear that both Al*Ith and Ben Ata gain immeasurably from their whole experience. As a direct result of her transcendence, her descent into hell, Al*Ith comes to a deeper realization of her own nature, broadens her awareness, refines her consciousness, develops her heart, and, if the differences between Zones Two and Three are anything in magnitude like the differences between Zones Three and Four, and Four and Five, then she, at least, attains an unimaginable paradise.

This extended analysis shows the power of the transcending archetype for understanding the growth of consciousness of the novelistic hero or heroine. It can be seen at work not only in the spiritual quest, as we observed in Atwood's, Cather's, and Lessing's novels, but in various key scenes where any protagonist is reaching a deeper level of feeling or understanding, as in the scene of Ben Ata learning to think deeply which was discussed above.

A less obvious but very interesting example of the transcending pattern occurs in Joyce's Portrait. I'm referring not to the scene on the strand which is an obvious rebirth episode replete with images of

⁶ Robert Towers, "A Visionary Romance," rev. of The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five, by Doris Lessing, The New York Times Book Review, 30 March 1980, p. 23. Also Lindsay Van Gelder, rev. of Canopus in Argos Archives: The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five (As Narrated by the Chroniclers of Zone Three), by Doris Lessing, Ms., July 1980, p. 30.

Stephen's soul "spurning her grave clothes," but rather the morning in his room where he writes his villanelle.

Transcending and the creative process: James Joyce's Portrait

As he awakens from sleep Stephen is experiencing the transcendent. Joyce describes the ineffable moment in terms of its silence, light, knowledge, and bliss:

Towards dawn he awoke. O what sweet music! His soul was all dewy wet. Over his limbs in sleep pale cool waves of light had passed. He lay still, as if his soul lay amid cool waters, conscious of faint sweet music. His mind was waking slowly to tremulous morning knowledge, a morning inspiration. A spirit filled him, pure as the purest water, sweet as dew, moving as music. But how faintly it was inbreathed, how passionlessly, as if the seraphim themselves were breathing upon him! His soul was waking slowly, fearing to awake wholly.⁷

As Stephen wakes, the images gently floating in his mind come together in the rhythmic movement of a villanelle. He spontaneously forms three stanzas when abruptly one of his associations leads his mind to a level much grosser than the one he has been experiencing. From an image of the earth swinging like a ball, he remembers the phrase "ellipsoidal ball" which had occurred earlier in a crude classroom joke. As his attention moves to the grosser level, "The rhythm died out at once; the cry of his heart was broken" (p. 218). Now fully awake, he moves about in order to write down the verses before, like Coleridge, he loses them forever. He lies back down and his thoughts wander around his relaxed and still fertile mind until another association provokes an angry response. The effect? "Rude

⁷ James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916; rpt. New York: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 217, emphasis mine.

brutal anger routed the last lingering instant of ecstasy from his soul" (p. 220).

As his thoughts continue Stephen finally entertains an image of himself as "a priest of eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life" (p. 221). This very potent image of himself as a priest and of his work as a eucharist bringing the communicant into union with the divine takes his consciousness once again to a subtler level: "The radiant image of the eucharist united again in an instant his bitter and despairing thoughts," and once again the creative process begins (p. 221). Stephen writes two more stanzas and then allows himself to slip from his newly settled state toward sleep. His mind entertains images which "enfolded them like a shining cloud, enfolded him like water with a liquid life: and like a cloud of vapour or like waters circumfluent in space the liquid letters of speech, symbols of the element of mystery, flowed forth over his brain" (p. 223, emphasis mine). He completes the poem.

Stephen's experience of the subtle flow of attention in and out of the deeper states of consciousness associating and synthesizing thoughts, memories, and images may be the essence of the creative process. It has the flavor of an actual experience and reminds us of Shelley's "evanescent visitations of thought and feeling sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone, and always arising unforseen and departing unbidden; but elevating and delightful beyond all expression."⁸

⁸ Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry," in The English
(Footnote continued)

None would deny that these experiences of Stephen's and his esthetic theories are most crucial to Joyce's novel of the spiritual and artistic maturation of his hero. Stephen is a Psyche who must plunge within and discover there the sources of knowledge and power which will give him the ability and the courage to embark on his adulthood as an artist. Joyce also links transcending to the whole creative process, following Shelley closely, as we saw earlier.

Thus whether we label a structure in literature an epiphany, a "spot of time," a rebirth, a katabasis, a "privileged moment," or whatever, we can see that it is a variation of the basic and natural experience of transcending. It is at once a personal experience and a structural principle. It is not merely a literary pattern to be identified but a pattern so universal and familiar as to be perhaps the essential movement of both literary creation and re-creation (i.e., the reading process). From Psyche to Al*ith, the soul must go within to go without, must descend in order to ascend. As writers, as readers, we participate in this most basic rhythm of life. To experience it is to see its movement and effect everywhere.

Literature and the refinement of consciousness

When the literary work reproduces the transcending experience in part or in its plenitude, the reader's own consciousness can accompany the persona's dive and go as deeply as he or she is accustomed to travel on that path. Even without a metaphoric dive within, the beauty and harmony of the language of a work of literature can settle

9 (continued)
 sion or aesthetic pleasure differed.

the intellect and emotions of the reader and produce some measure of transcending. Since the dive within, however effected, has a beneficial effect on the heart and mind of the reader and writer, as the research on the Transcendental Meditation program discussed above in Chapter V indicates, then we may have here the beginnings of a model for understanding how, in Shelley's words, poetry "acts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness," and thus "awakens and enlarges the mind" and "strengthens the faculty which is the moral nature of man" (pp. 538-39).

The purpose of literature is to enhance life, to allow it to flow in bliss, in inexplicibilis voluptas. Every expression of speech and writing is the flow of the consciousness and coherence of its author. Speech should be such as to awaken the inner life of the individual, to bring the listener or reader into harmony with the laws of his or her own nature and thus to gain the support of these laws of nature, which are, in fact, identical to the very laws that describe the workings of nature herself. It is the role of literature (and of literary criticism) to create models and examples of the kind of writing that will produce this effect. The wide range of effects produced by transcending, as reported by the scientific literature on the Transcendental Meditation technique, suggest that the whole quality of life could thereby be greatly enhanced. Literature records the flow of consciousness, not only on the level of superficial reality, but on the level of infinite correlation of consciousness described by the various individuals who have experienced its existence. The purpose of speech, of writing, is to inspire thought,

feeling, and action. The purpose of action is to end action in its goal--fulfillment.

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