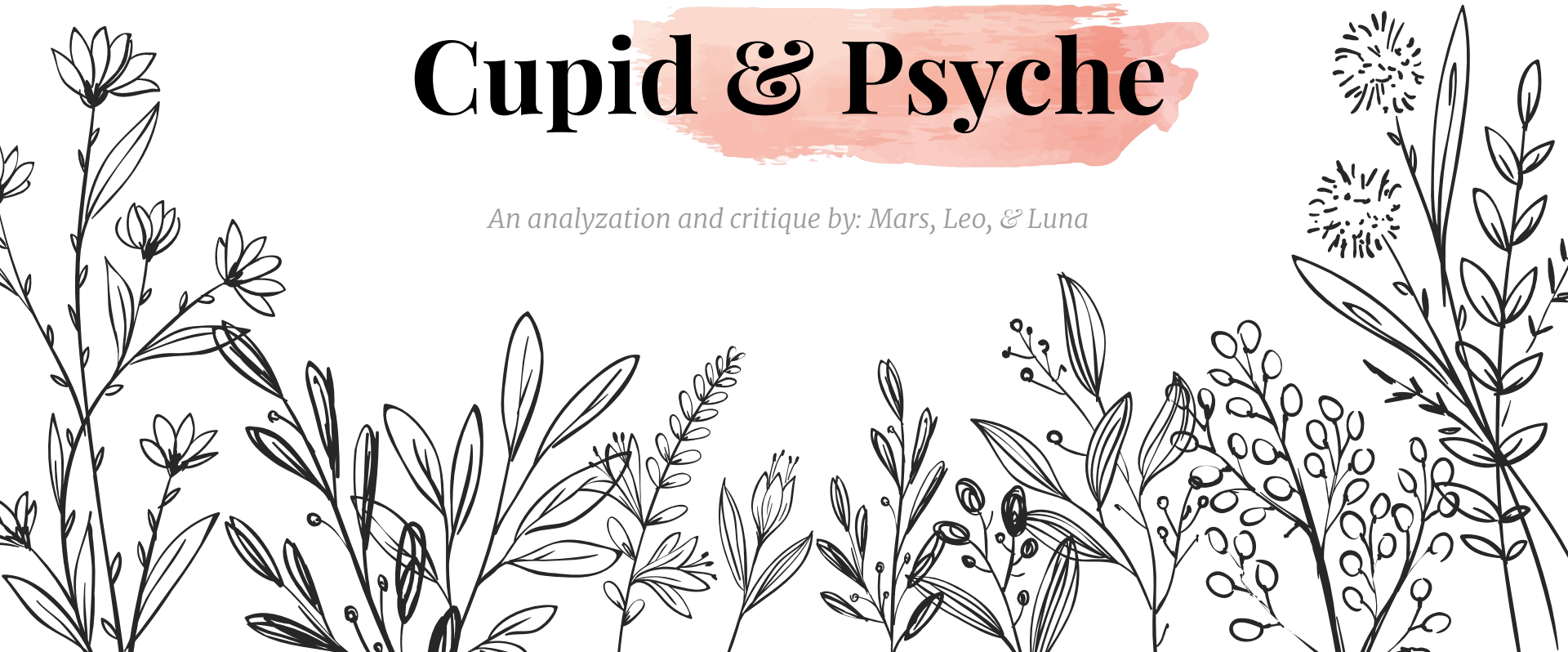


# Cupid & Psyche

*An analyzation and critique by: Mars, Leo, & Luna*



# Summary of the Story

*Cupid and Psyche* by Apuleius depicts a tale of trials and tiring feats of Cupid (or Eros), the God of Love, Psyche, the Goddess of Soul, and Venus (or Aphrodite), the Goddess of Beauty.

Psyche, the most beautiful woman in Greece, is sought out by Cupid to be cursed to fall in love with a monster due to Venus' envy. Cupid starts his task, and falls in love with Psyche instead, and pricks his finger on his arrow. Psyche decides to go to an Oracle, and is told that she will fall in love with a monster, and is brought to a castle where she spends her days with an invisible monster (who is secretly Cupid). After coercion by her sisters, she spies on Cupid at nighttime and sees his regular form and falls in love. Venus is enraged, and makes Psyche do death defying tasks, but with the help of animals, gods, and her own love, she is able to successfully finish them all, and is turned into a goddess herself to be with Cupid for eternity.





# Cupid

*Eros, the God of Love*

The definition of passion,  
love, and desire

# Who is Cupid?

- Cupid; Eros: he is the personified definition of romantic love, with his power consisting of creating that said love for others
- Cupid is the son of Venus (Aphrodite) who is sent to destroy Psyche's love out of his mother's jealousy
- Cupid within various renditions is depicted inconsistently
  - ◆ Cupid has been represented as a God stronger than Zeus, or as an infantilized cherub with Venus, as well as the creator of love
    - Each rendition shows varying aspects of how vital he is to the story of two women at war with each other over him



*“Perhaps you would fear if you saw me, and love is all I ask. There is a necessity that keeps me hidden now. Only believe.”*





# Venus

*The Goddess of Beauty*

The reflection of reality within  
depiction



# Who is Venus?

Venus; Aphrodite; Beauty: Venus is the Goddess of Beauty, depicted as the antagonist within this story.

The question that lies within is, why is she so inherently jealous of Psyche? What defines beauty and why is one form of beauty superior to another?

Misogyny has created Aphrodite to be represented as a jealous and vain Goddess, willing to destroy anything in her path for beauty.

*“But if you care to prove your readiness,  
go now, with this little box, down to  
Proserpina and ask her to enclose in it  
some of her beauty, for I have grown pale  
in caring for my wounded son.”*





# Psyche

*The devoted soul*

# Who is Psyche?



- Psyche is a beautiful mortal who is burdened with loneliness because of her said beauty
- Psyche's beauty is worshipped by mortal men, which creates her conflict with Venus
- Psyche is often depicted in art with butterfly wings
  - ◆ There are not that many accounts of the Myth that explain how Psyche obtained these wings
    - It is most commonly thought that Psyche's butterfly wings appeared after she drank ambrosia and became a Goddess
    - Another contributing factor is Aristotle naming the butterfly after Psyche, comparing her journey to the metamorphosis of a caterpillar to a butterfly.



*“Surely Love has not forgotten me... but humbled as I am and worn with toil, how shall I ever please him?”*







**What is the definition of Psyche?**

# The Ancient Greek Understanding of the Psyche

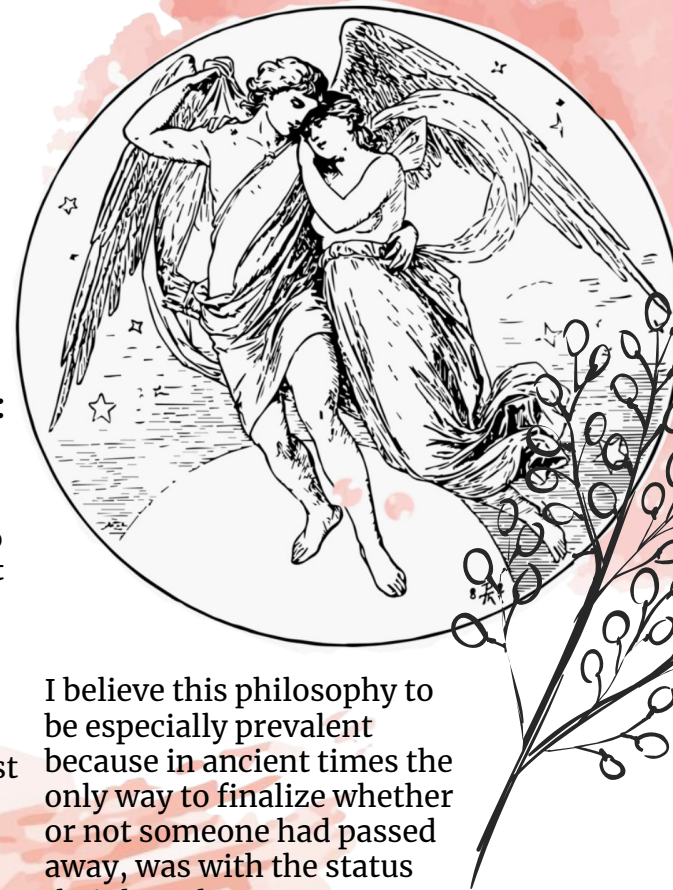
There is a grand dichotomy between how the Ancient Greeks used to understand the Psyche versus how we understand the Psyche now. In simplest terms the Greeks defined the word Psyche to mean "Soul." The Great Philosophers of the time, including Plato and Aristotle were all deeply transfixed on understanding the "Soul" that they called label "Psyche."

The beginning of the psychological investigation of the psyche began with the works of the philosopher Plato. In his famous Book *Phaedo*, Plato writes about his beloved mentor Socrates in a prison, where he will soon be facing his death. Socrates goes on to say that he does not fear death, he actually embraces it because to him the Psyche is eternal and he is ready to be reborn.

In Aristotle's works, he takes a more biological, instead of metapsychical, approach. Aristotle believes that the soul (Psyche) is the force that animates every single living being on Earth, including plants. Aristotle describes the soul as corporeal whereas, Socrates and Plato understood it to be contained someplace in the living organism's body.

**Stoic Pneuma (In Stoic Philosophy):**  
"Pneuma is the spiritual concept of the elements air and fire combined together to create the *Breath of Life*. For humanity the Psyche is composed of "Pneuma" granted to them by the Gods. (It is often speculated that the word Psyche is derived from Pneuma because Psyche can also translate into "breath/blow.")

An example of Stoic Pneuma in a Greek Myth is Athena breathing life into the first man who was shaped out of clay/mud by Prometheus.



I believe this philosophy to be especially prevalent because in ancient times the only way to finalize whether or not someone had passed away, was with the status their breath.

# The Present Day Interpretation of the Psyche

## Carl G. Jung:

“By the psyche I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious.”



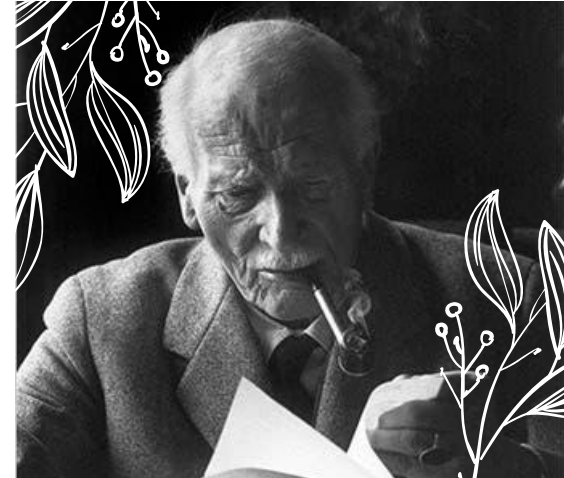
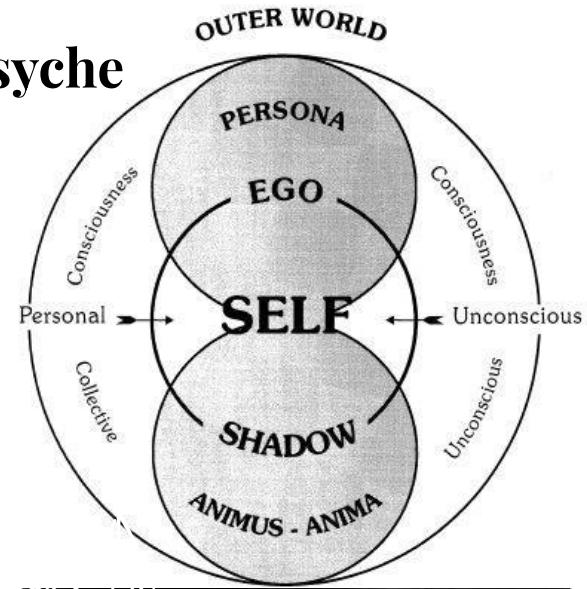
## The Jungian Model of the Psyche

The most notable name among modern philosophers and psychologists studying the “Psyche” is Swiss Psychologist: Carl Gustav Jung.

Jung created the Map of the Soul/Psyche, which depicts the self regulating system of the human mind.

The ancient definition of Psyche broke apart from its original understanding of the corporeal “Soul” Psyche, into the mysterious landscape of the human mind Psyche.

To Jung, the Psyche/Human Mind is separated by what can be reached by own consciousness (Ego, Persona, etc.) and what can be reached by our subconscious (Dreams, Collective/Personal Unconscious.).





# Love Rules Them All

## The “Love Triangle” Strife

The interconnected  
relationships between Venus,  
Psyche, and Cupid



# Details about the Triangle



## Romance

Cupid & Psyche's relationship:

Cupid and Psyche's love is the easiest side of the triangle to identify, but was only possible due to Venus' vanity and hatred towards Psyche.



## Maternal

Cupid & Venus' relationship:

Venus' love is difficult to see for her son Cupid, but there are many actions she could have done to hurt Psyche that she did not do, due to her son's love for Psyche.



## Vanity

Psyche & Venus' relationship:

Psyche doesn't deny her beauty, but doesn't suffer the consequences of said beauty because of her humility. Venus' hubris is what creates her downfall of her plan against Psyche.

# Romance

**The romance between Psyche and Cupid is strong because their love defeated the obstacles impeding their relationship from being possible.**

**Cupid falls in love in spite of the maternal relationship and obligations he has with his mother, and Psyche falls in love even with her fears of the unknown creature of Cupid, because of her faith in the Oracle and to love itself.**



# Maternal

The maternal love between Venus and Cupid is incredibly strong, despite the villainization of Venus. Venus hated Psyche for her beauty, and yet she kept Psyche alive for the sake of her son to be loved.

Venus may have given Psyche tasks to prove herself and (hopefully) die so she wouldn't marry Cupid, but she gave her the possibility because of the love she has for her son.



# *Vanity*

The aspect of vanity reflects differently upon Psyche and Venus, both ending in the same result of dissatisfaction with their beauty and relationship with it.

Psyche despises her beauty because it causes loneliness, whereas Venus despises her beauty because she isn't as beautiful in the eyes of her worshippers. This causes her innate jealousy of Psyche because the worship she receives is for the coveted beauty Venus desires.



# Déjà vu?

*Romance, Maternal, and Vanity*

How the story of Cupid and  
Psyche influenced modern  
media





# Various Media with the Same Principals



- Cinderella
- The White Bear King Valemon
- Ode to Psyche
- Till We Have Faces

**Literature**

- Romeo and Juliet
- Psyche: A Rock Opera
- Amor und Psyche
- The Golden Ass

**Plays**

- Shrek (yes, really)
- The Scarlet Flower
- Beauty and the Beast
- The Polar Bear King
- Psyche Ascending

**Movies**





# Bear King Valemon


## A Scandanavian Retelling

The story of the white bear king is very similar to the myth of Eros and Psyche. It features similar elements such as three beautiful sisters, a woman sneaking up on her hidden lover while he sleeps, dripping wax causing the lover to wake up. However, in this myth, “Eros” is a polar bear during the day, and a beautiful man at night. It also doesn’t include a character in aphrodite’s role.




A large black and white butterfly is in the top left corner. Below it are two black hearts. To the right of the hearts is another black and white butterfly. The title 'Romeo and Juliet' is centered in a large, bold, black serif font, set against a light red watercolor splash background.

# Romeo and Juliet

A black and white silhouette of Romeo and Juliet in a romantic embrace, framed by a decorative archway. Below the archway is a decorative railing with a repeating diamond pattern. The background is white.

Another classic love story that overlaps heavily with the story of Eros and Psyche is that of Romeo and Juliet. Strong central themes of young love, being impulsive, and love at first sight are present in both works. Shakespeare (through Romeo) also references Cupid's arrows directly, stating:

“Well in that hit you miss. She'll not be hit//  
With Cupid's arrow.” in act 1, scene 1.

A black and white butterfly is in the top right corner. Below it is a black heart. To the right of the heart is a black and white butterfly. A large black and white branch with leaves and small flowers is on the right side. A light red watercolor splash is in the background. A black and white butterfly is in the bottom right corner. Below it is a black heart.

# Shrek!

*I am 100% serious. The story of Eros and Psyche has influence on Shrek*

While it's not quite as cut and dry as the other two examples, the 2001 classic Shrek has a lot of overlapping themes with the myth of Eros and Psyche. In Shrek, Princess Fiona acts as the Eros character, with her true form being obscured during the day. Shrek acts as Psyche, set on impossible quests to earn the favor of a powerful figure. In Shrek, Lord Farquaad is placed in the role of the goddess Aphrodite. Where Aphrodite is motivated with jealousy, Lord Farquaad is driven by his own toxic masculinity.



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