

## II.

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### “PSYCHE’S BLISSFUL STATE”

Psyche’s blissful state, as Dr. Bolen describes it, cannot last. She visits her sisters, Jealousy and Envy, her blood relations that are love’s natural emotional companions. “The kernel of all jealousy,” Jung insightful, “is lack of love.” This lack of love can be extended to envy by way of projection onto others who have what you do not have manifested in your life. Psyche has been in the realm of the magician and the lover, where the energies of disguise and darkness are productive of reorganizing the energies of her life for, significantly, she emerges from darkness of her honeymoon, full of the honey of eros and under the influence of the pregnant moon. Inner life grows within her. She enters a world of light that does not cohere with the honey of eros.

She brings her sisters gifts, which her sisters hide. In the darkness, love has been conceived and is incubating; Psyche expresses one of the virtues that love gives birth to: gift what you have been given, learn that lesson if you are to be in relationship with the Inner Self, share with others the beauty that can heal, since how we heal the psychic wounds remain a mystery to humankind. Gifting what she has been given, the inner jewels and riches can grow within Psyche. How are the riches of abundance spread?

The world of beauty where she meets her sisters, the world of light is the opposite of the world of night. Her sisters tell of the kings they have married, who are the opposite of Eros: old misers who hoard and will not share their riches. Psyche’s story in the light is the lie that tells the truth of what she has discovered in the night, the opposites are sun and moon, night and light, white and black, yin-yang has again shifted in balance. There is not one without the other, neither or one or both are good and evil. Psyche’s story draws not from royal energies but from warrior energies that for the first time enter the myth. Hunter with his bow and arrow feeds his family, a human version of Eros, an attribute Psyche will sorely need, as she will soon be a huntress seeking to satisfy her hunger through the forests seeking the lost Eros, in need of food and spiritual nourishment to survive the tests she must endure to mature. Psychically, when hunger of the most basic kind and its related sibling, spiritual hunger, make a hunter of your existence soul will nurture you to hunt and find the food you require and did not know you needed. But only if you stoop low enough and turn your face toward the earth and lay yourself out so that your ear’s funnel attunes to the almost silent and whispered voice of soul.

Her sisters blister her story, so Psyche tells other stories of who her husband is, but they accuse her of not knowing to whom she is married. They remind her of the Oracle:

Psyche would marry someone not human, a monster, and she would not know it. We, just like Psyche, are in the dark and don’t know whether her husband is human or not, a monster or not. Does something live in us that is not human and may be a monster? Does something live in us that would kill us without compunctions? What does monster mean?

We next move into the revelatory scene that Octavia Paz called a turning point in Western Civilization, and it is one that has gathered a plethora of distinguished illumining interpretations

and guidances by poets, scholars, Jungians, Freudians, mythologists, and archetypalists whose shoulders, to use a soon to be pregnant phrase, I stand upon so I can use their dark and light and tao and yin-yang weavily changing balancing for we are talking to ourselves, telling ourselves what the Psyche that lives us and in which we live is, is not, and is and is not. Soul always is listening and, like moist earth, absorbing, and in the night sounds are heard more distinct and reach farther into the depth of the forest, where the eyes of darkness, as well as the waves of light carry consciousness so soul, as earth's ear, turns suffering and joy, death and life into poems that sing with fervor the very moment of movement inducing opening our morning eyes.

Two sisters fester into oil lamp and knife, each related, as Psyche, having lived briefly in darkness, learned enough of absorbency, a necessary trait to learn to teach oneself the ways of the world, spiritually, soulfully, psychically, and energetically as well as archetypically, to turn raw love-loveless based emotions- into tools of discovery. The question is will she drown in those absorbed emotions? As I've said, there are many entry points, and Psyche has entered the voyage at a rubbing raw grease spot without salve to sooth the doubt of not knowing, and creating monsters in the imagination out of the dark in response to our history as an animal species. What she does, she does naturally, as a Psyche. What happens, however, does not happen naturally. For we enter another world: Psyche has turned inward, her skill to be who she is is dependent on her ego's ability to open vision with the light of consciousness and cut through light and dark into discriminating reasons. Like other western myths, she enters the dark lair of the dragon and imagines that she may have to kill the monster in her fear.

Unlike other western myths, she does not find a monster. Or does she? And she opens more deeply up as ego discovers that someone else far more powerful than it is "It," and that they live in the same darkness. Or do they?

As Psyche stands over sleeping Eros, with the knife, like the butter knife I carried that caused major disturbances and reverberations echoing throughout my descent and my mind was a cutting friend, slicing me up into discriminating pieces, lopping off any relationships and from the whole that had once been a piece of the mountain but continually rolled downhill into boulders, stones, pebbles, dirt and dust, until I was at the bottom of the stream whose flooding washed me into the depths of the ocean, where Poseidon in the dream came to me to transform me, which is where Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love, goes after her rage and anger at Psyche and Eros at the beginning of our myth.

As Psyche stands over sleeping Eros, with the oil lamp shining through the darkness that Eros had enshrouded her in we stand poised between darkness and light, foreground and background, and consciousness and unconsciousness at the moment of revelation, just, as centuries later, in a dream of Dr. Jung's as he walked through a stormy, wind filled night, cupping a candle of consciousness, to protect it from going out so important was consciousness and so vast the darkness and the perils of the night. His work amplified on this image. My light went out in a moment of falling off the cliff; the skills to turn it on and into a candle, then a fire, a lamp, a lighthouse, a beacon, a dark sun, a moon, a sun I searched arduously through many stormy, windy nights, walking endless nights, until many intellectual, psychological, and spiritual sources became

a stream running into the works of Dr. Jung and his experienced psychic tool masters and the Zen masters who trained in and against the stream on the belief that the mind is a skill making heart that can learn and unlearn ways of knowing and being and, like the Tao, enter darkness and the void and be, after a long journey, where we were when we began the journey, in the original mind, though we did not know it, and now with the moon trained eyes of darkness. We, always, had what we were searching for, and, as The Buddha said, only by looking inward, not outward or to anyone else or thing or religion or movement, can you gift yourself to your life and let the lotus in the muddy water open to reveal who you really are, and aren't and can never be. So black; so bright.

Bly, once again, in "Story Food," succinctly, pulls together the works of Marie-Louise von Franz and Erich Neumann, as well as many others, on the myth's reverberations and intriguingly drawing in of psyche by Psyche to create an interior space of story and image building tools and image making.

*The lifting of the lamp, and the distress it causes, is famous in mythological and psychological commentary. Almost all commentators agree that the lifting of the lamp is related to the soul's intention to increase its consciousness; some relationship that has earlier been allowed to remain 'in the dark' becomes illuminated. In human life this illumination often causes the relationship to end. A break occurs, which is painful in the extreme. So the story asks what the soul is willing to pay for increased consciousness. That is a proper theme for the sacred story.*

Soul's courage in the face of the terrors of the untamed imagination and in the face of possible loss of its love cuts through the underbrush of terror to give light, if not hope, to her imaginal heart.

As she looks on her husband, she finds...not a monster, but the most beautiful of young men, physical splendor in form, a god, not only a god, but a god with the bow and arrows and wings of a god, a god with the power to inflict pain in the heart, love's needle and threading into mythological story to despair, and so wings, like the wings of the messenger god, Hermes, to, like the shaman bird, energize and enliven and invigorate, to soar and be in ecstasies and fantasies of lover's nests. Wings, bird's heads, erect phalluses, antlered and energized head voltage, and serpent's spine of earth's total terror and joy are the soul's drawing, creating of us out its own ethereal substance to show us how it is in the world that we may see and be seen by the universe and know we are one with it. Soul's story told teach us to learn true speech, true art. In short, Eros, god of love, her lover, who makes mortals, like Psyche, fall irresistibly in love, as he did with Psyche. That story has ended with the revelation of Eros. Psyche sees Eros for what he really is; she, however, has no experience of how eros yearns, pulls, evaporates, springs forth, weaves the unweaved, lacerates, lashes, demands, sulks, invites waterfalls and cliff diving all for the eros of eros, so self-immolating can this fire be and burn and free. Her enamored with him becomes conscious as she falls in love with the incarnation of the beauty, drawing out of Psyche's darkness the beauty that had a

home in her deep mountainous crags and recesses.

Did she see a monster? Yes and no. The yin-yang paired heart changes balance.

Beauty is the monster is one way of looking at the foolishness that the mind and heart deal out as fate to young lovers, seducing them to perpetuate the species, to immerse themselves into seas of misery, hate, jealousy, envy, fighting with shadows, and murders and lusts and rages and angers. But beauty as monster, here, is living in the river of night of the delusion that the person who sleeps next to you is what he appears to be, in an imaginative bubble that lasts only as long as unconsciousness of the imaginal hearts can stay caged and tamed and not rise like a lighthouse in a stormy night out the darkness to begin questioning how to steer in the engulfing storm. Beauty, indeed, can live as monster in one guise, especially if it is forced or in its irresistible phase.

We saw a monster, and it was not beauty. Psyche has to learn that what you see, appearances, are not what you get, and that what you get, is not what you asked for, until what you asked for turns into stones that you stub your toes on, and you learn prayer is too powerful to be expressed unless spoken out of another part of your being, perhaps, fired by an imaginal heart in love with the monster.

Let me qualify monster. As Psyche gazes upon Eros, a drop of hot burning oil burns into his shoulder, and, he is "as if mortally wounded." (Bolen, *Myth of Eros and Psyche*, tape) (Perhaps, it is a way to give an immortal a taste of mortality in order that the god and human connection can begin to know they must build the bridge if they do not wish to kill one another and learn span the river to be in wrestling and conversation over years.) The wounds of love go deep, deeper than the ego, or the personal unconscious. They go clear to the Inner Self, the Archetypal Self. From the Self's perspective, "dragon-bred", the monster is beauty for though it draws ego and Self into communion from the non-human point of view beauty is not in the eyes of the beholder. Human beauty and our species' need for propagation are in us as earth creatures. As divine creatures, the monster of love may not be archetypically understood by the gods, the immortals, as worthy of commitment and imaginal story.

The divine announcement is fulfilled as the monster is revealed as immortal, a god (from the human point of view, having monstrous proclivities, if the mythologies of human's are any guide). The dragon is present, escapes death, and the lair, and the dark Self movement out of darkness rebalances the yin-yang in creative tension, reversing black and white. Transformation of monstrous beauty must occur in Psyche as the transformation of monster as beauty must occur in the Archetypal Self that inhabits Psyche. For both to occur, ego and Self must bond, either in darkness or in light, in good or evil, in love or in war, in relationship or conquest, a foray that never ends and can embitter or enlighten.

Love wounds so deeply that its healing can only come from the night, from the unconscious, from the realm of the gods, of sacred energies. We see a monster and we do not see a monster gives us a clue as to what occurs after the drop of hot burning coals wounds the shoulder of Eros: he has no shoulder strength in which to raise his bow and arrow. He is no longer the young hunter. Aphrodite, who is furious that Psyche is being worshipped as a goddess for her beauty, berates him. (Bolen, *Myth of Eros and Psyche*, tape.) Eros flees not only the castle, but from Psyche's life.

His absence will become a presence in the myth, as he is off stage, in the dark background of the myth. Psyche seeks him and the story moves forward without attracting erotic, fully committed, energetic, loving relationship with other parts of the soul.

How are those soul threadings created in the psyche is one way to look at what occurs in this myth.

Eros has fled; erotic nurturance's absence tests whether Psyche can live without eros, without conscious relationship. Or would the story of Psyche go in the direction of her enamored with her own beauty so much that she believes the tales, that she is immortal, more beautiful than Aphrodite, and she begins to worship herself, build herself a temple to herself, make a religion of herself, where she can do no wrong, kill those who do not agree with her, and become as many petty gods and goddesses have in the past become a tyrant that turns a culture of abundance into a blight on the earth and its creatures and the humans who strive to make a living and get through life, stumbling blindly trying to find light and seeking guidance. She has a choice, and it is in her relationship with her unconscious, with her Higher Self, the god energies, the immortals that shows how beauty and monster entice and repel, hide and reveal, lure and push away as if they were a human stream worth the swim for what it reveals and what is on the other side of the river.