Vision of unity in the prose romances of William Morris

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THE VISION OF UNITY IN THE PROSE ROMANCES OF WILLIAM MORRIS

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ABSTRACT

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The often neglected prose romances of William Morris hold a prominent position in his vast body of work. A chronological survey of these romances in the enlightening company of Carl Jung, with additional guidance from Joseph Campbell and Northrop Frye, reveals an important developing vision of unity. When examined in terms of Jungian archetypal categories, Morris's romances display an increasing concern with a unity which initially involves the self and eventually evolves into a vision of unity which encompasses nature and society. Though frequently dismissed as escapist amusements with no strong bearing on Morris's political endeavors, close scrutiny shows a close alignment of the fully developed romances with Morris's socialist concerns.

Chapter one considers the critical problems to be met with in the serious consideration of these romances and introduces the Jungian tools which will facilitate the serious investigation of romance. Chapter two examines Morris's earliest uses of romance patterns and analyzes the figures of hero and anima in the achievement of the archetypal unity of self, a unity which appears largely as potential rather than achieved.

Chapter three examines the dilemma created by Morris's early inability to reconcile a vision of unity with the reality of a transient world. A consideration of the romance patterns which appear in the poetry of Morris's middle period reveals a melancholic rumination over unobtained unity and a concern with heroic confrontation with the malign aspects of the anima.

Chapter four concerns itself with the rebirth of vision which followed the necessary darkened vision of Morris's middle period. The House of the Wolfings and The Roots of the Mountains are seen to contain not only an affirmation of self unity but also an enlarged vision of unity in which Morris's mythic sense of history, utopian politics and artistic principles are all aligned.

The final chapter undertakes an analysis of a four part romantic quest pattern as it appears in the fully developed romances of Morris's last decade. The unity of self is seen to take its place in a development which ends in a vision of man in a unified society. In these final romances, political and historical vision is fully aligned with the mythic configurations of romance. These final works are approached as the crowning expression of a lifelong concern with the archetype of unity as it may be realized both in the self and in the world.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. BEGINNINGS: MORRIS'S EARLY USES OF ROMANCE PATTERNS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. THE VISION RETURNED: THE NORTHERN ROMANCES</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. THE VISION MAINTAINED: THE LATE ROMANCES</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The prose romances of William Morris have often been dismissed as mere works of escapism, "... the holiday work of the reformer weary of platform speaking"\(^1\) and thus not deserving of consideration with his more serious work as a social activist. Criticism has frequently taken this protean artist's self-imposed appellation of "the idle singer of an empty day"\(^2\) too seriously and thus assigned his romances as well as much of his poetry to the back rooms of literature where they gather dust among the volumes of sentimental novels, melodramas and other works which are consulted for historical interest, but rarely for literary value. Under close scrutiny, however, these romances reveal a developing vision of unity which dwells at the core of Morris's mature work. This is a vision which starts with the unity of the self, but eventually escalates to include nature and society as well. What begins as a vision of the individual ends in a utopian vision compatible with Morris's public activity as a socialist.

A reason for the neglect that these romances have met with may be the fact that it is so easy to choose sides when evaluating Morris's


works. There is the side which reflects the social activist and crusader for utilitarian arts and crafts, and there is what appears to be an opposite side which reflects a day dreamer and fantast writing irrelevant romances in an affected "Wardour Street" language which is "of no slight vexation to the ordinary reader." Writing on Morris's use of ancient folk tale sources in the romances, Compton-Rickett speaks for the critical view of these works as decorative craft: "Fairy lore served him as one of his myriad methods of decoration; and the spells and sorceries that he scatters freely are pictorial excrescences, not something wrought out of his spiritual experience." In choosing between the socially active and the socially withdrawn varieties of Morris's work, most admirers laud his social conscience and excuse his romances as an eccentric quirk and a temporary private amusement which afforded an escape from the Victorian industrial world which Morris hated so deeply.

The sense of two opposing artistic directions, one towards active social involvement and confrontation with reality, the other towards escapism and fantasy, is not found only in Morris's diverse work; rather it is a trait common to Victorian art as a whole. In the cultural struggle between an aesthetic withdrawal from and engagement with the problems of reality, the temptation of escapism is gratified by an art which rejects the social realities of Morris's "six counties overhung with smoke" and retreats into an autonomous world of "art for art's sake."

4Compton-Rickett, p. 164. 5Morris, Collected Works, III, p. 3.
This is the aesthetic domain of Tennyson's "The Palace of Art" where the "soul would live alone unto herself."  

But Morris was unwilling to construct a palace of art unless all men were allowed to reside within its walls. Nor could he accept a lotus eater's paradise where "slumber is more sweet than toil," since, for Morris, "toil," political, artistic or otherwise, was more sweet than "slumber." The public lectures of Morris's socialist career show that the ideals of art for art's sake remained too exclusive for him:

This would be an art cultivated professedly by a few, and for a few, who would consider it necessary—a duty, if they could admit duties—to despise the common herd, to hold themselves aloof from all that the world has been struggling for from the first, to guard carefully every approach to their palace of art. It would be a pity to waste many words on the prospect of such a school of art as this, which does in a way, theoretically at least, exist at present, and has for its watch word a piece of slang that does not mean the harmless thing it seems to mean—art for art's sake. Its fore-doomed end must be that art at last will seem too delicate a thing for even the hands of the initiated to touch; and the initiated must at last sit and do nothing—to the grief of no one.

In spite of Morris's attempts at reforming the relationship between art and society, there is still evidence in his work of a recurring temptation to escape from grim realities. Although this temptation is consistently present, Morris, rather than succumbing to it, attempted to reconcile his dream of medieval art with the realities of the Victorian world. Being a man of his time Morris could not help but partake in the tension between social involvement and aesthetic escapism which characterizes the temperament of the era; but within this climate

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6 Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Palace of Art," line 11.
7 Tennyson, "The Lotus Eaters," line 171.
of tension Morris was able to hold to his position of being both a
dreamer and a man of action.

The characteristic tension of the culture in which Morris
appeared was recognized and raised to a more universally applicable
plane in the psychoanalytic theories of Freud, who articulates the tension
in terms of opposition between pleasure principle and reality principle. The late
nineteenth century movement of aestheticism, with which Morris
is often so readily and mistakenly aligned, takes place in a category
governed by the pleasure principle. The pleasure principle drives one
to seek gratification in a retreat to the past moment; an attempt to
escape the oppression of the present moment and the imminent future.
For Freud, art, in varying degrees, is an activity directed by the
pleasure principle and thus an escape from the reality of a present
moment moving persistently into the future. The pleasure principle seeks
a pleasure modeled on a past moment of gratification, and an art governed
by this principle will often construct a fantasy modeled on the past
moment. Rather than attempting to change the reality which is hostile
to the desired gratification, art, as perceived by Freud, creates a

9 In the development of the ego, "the ego becomes 'reasonable'" when it "is no longer controlled by the pleasure-principle, but follows
the REALITY PRINCIPLE, which at bottom also seeks pleasure--although a
delayed and diminished pleasure, one which is assured by its realization
of fact, its relation to reality." Sigmund Freud, A General Introduction
p. 365.

10 This relationship of fantasy to the past moment is part of what
Freud calls the "primary process" in which "the id considers the memory
image to be identical with the perception itself." The function of this
process is "to reduce tension by reviving memories of past events and
objects that are associated in some way with gratification." See Calvin
S. Hall, A Primer of Freudian Psychology (London: George Allen and
fantasized substitution for that reality, a substitution which is a withdrawal into illusion. "The substitute satisfactions, as offered by art, are illusions in contrast to reality, but they are none the less psychically effective, thanks to the role which fantasy has assumed in mental life."^11

Even when the work of the pleasure principal is controlled by an ego governed by the necessities of reality, that work is still the work of temporary withdrawal: "Phantasies produced by the ego are recognized for what they are, namely playful and pleasurable imaginings. Although they are never mistaken for reality, they provide a holiday from the more serious business of the ego."^12

Although all art, from the Freudian viewpoint, indulges to some degree in the action of withdrawal, the genre of the romance has been alluded to as most typical of the escapist tendency. In "The Relation of the Poet to Daydreaming," Freud singles out for examination not ". . . those writers of romances who are most highly esteemed by critics, but . . . the less pretentious writers of romances, novels and stories, who are read all the same by the widest circles of men and women."^13

If one were to accept completely the Freudian judgement of art, one would have to dismiss Morris's prose romances as pure works of escapism; a giving in to the lures of the pleasure principle; "the


^12Hall, p. 25.

holiday work" of a man weary of confronting social pressures. Although
Freudian psychology does much to reveal the nature of the tension within
Victorian art between withdrawal and confrontation, it serves only as a
hindrance to any attempt to rescue Morris's romances from the classifi­
cation of escapist literature and align them with his serious concern of
confronting social reality. In the Freudian viewpoint, any literary
form, such as romance, which partakes extensively of the fantastic and
improbable in tales of idealized heroes and heroines who pass with ease
impossible and often bizarre obstacles, is bound to be looked on as a
product of withdrawal from the obligations of reality.

Given the proper tools, however, it is possible to show that
Morris's indulgence in the writing of romance was not an escapist pursuit,
but a meaningful exploration which contains much of what is essential in
Morris's art, an art which is concerned not with escaping an oppressive
reality, but with confronting and changing that reality. The disrepute
of Morris's prose romances is not due so much to a misunderstanding of
Morris as it is to a misunderstanding of the genre in which he chose to
work. Since the romance in general has been seen largely as an escapist
medium, it has come to be held as a form typical of that less respected
direction in Victorian art, the direction of aesthetic withdrawal.

The confrontation with reality which takes place within Morris's
prose romances is not the same kind that is found in the lectures and
essays. The romances reveal a confrontation within the human psyche, a
confrontation which, rather than being a fantasized substitution for
confronting conscious social reality, is a prerequisite for any transfor­
mation of conscious reality. As a social reformer Morris's central
concern was transformation. The transformation of society must start with the confrontation of consciousness. As an avid lecturer to the working classes, Morris tried to alter the consciousness of his time and thereby prepare the ground for the transformation of society. The romances as well as the lectures were tools for the accomplishment of transformation. The romance, as a popular form, possesses a mythic appeal to the mass. The mythic patterns of romance appeal to the desire for transformation within the self and in the world. The romances seek both to portray the political ideal and arouse desire for that ideal.

If we are to take the improbable quests and dream-like landscapes of Morris's romances seriously, we must look to Jungian psychology to provide the necessary tools. The Jungian exploration of myths and fairy tales has cast a new light on the genre of romance. The romance, with its heroic quests, captive maidens and threatening witches and dragons, is the literary successor to the aural matter of folk tale. The romance, like myth and folk tale, presents flat characters who are defined by their actions and an enticing plot which overshadows the importance of realistically developing the characters. Such a literary form, if it is to be taken as more than simply an exciting story, demands an exegesis:

The novels which are most fruitful for the psychologist are those in which the author has not already given a psychological interpretation of his characters, and which therefore leave room for analysis and explanation, or even invite it by their mode of presentation. . . . An exciting narrative that is apparently quite devoid of psychological exposition is just what interests the psychologist most of all.14

14C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1939), p. 178. This "visionary" mode of art is contrasted by Jung with what he calls the "psychological" mode, for which Jung gives the first part of Goethe's Faust as an example. This latter mode, in contrast to the unconscious material of "visionary" art, "... deals
This mode of literature which Jung calls "visionary" displays certain traits that we find in the fantasies of the insane, and these latter fantasies take their place in the same family as dreams, fairy tales and myths, for all these exhibit the common factor of the archetype: "Today we can hazard the formula that the archetypes appear in myths and fairy tales just as they do in dreams and in the products of psychotic fantasy."\textsuperscript{15}

For Jung the archetypes lie at the heart of the human psyche, and access to this region can be found in fantasies, both collective (myths and fairy tales) and personal (dreams and waking fantasies).\textsuperscript{16} Fantasy, rather than being as Freud would have it, on the one hand an attempted concealment of unacceptable personal experience and on the other a substitute for that experience, is a means of entering into the deeper more essential regions of psychic reality. This is the reality of archetypal images and patterns, and such images and patterns are not limited to dream, myth and fairy tale, but can be observed in literature with materials drawn from the realm of human consciousness for instance, with the lessons of life with emotional shocks, the experience of passion and the crisis of human destiny in general--all of which go to make up the conscious life of man, and his feeling life in particular." (p. 179) In works of this nature no exegesis is demanded since "no obscurity whatever surrounds them, for they fully explain themselves." (p. 180)

\textsuperscript{15}Jung, "The Psychology of the Child-Archetype" in Jung and Kerényi, 

\textsuperscript{16}See Jung, "Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype" in \textit{Four Archetypes} (Princeton: Bollingen, 1969), pp. 9-14. Here Jung states that the archetypes are "present in every psyche" and are "living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that pre-form and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions."
as well. The appearance of archetypal images announces that we have arrived not in the realm of repressed personal experience, but in the region of the collective unconscious.¹⁷

The romance, forming as it does a part of that visionary literature which, like myth and fairy tale, grants admission to the collective unconscious, can no longer be dismissed as a purely escapist genre. Indeed it becomes ironic that romance or any form of fantasy should be labeled as escapist since in Jung's view, fantasy, rather than leading one away from reality, often confronts the very archetypal foundations of reality.

In literary criticism the connection between myth and literature has been dealt with in great depth by Northrop Frye who has established what can be called a school of archetypal criticism.¹⁸ Within his scheme of the four mythoi of literature (comedy, romance, tragedy and irony), romance has the closest relationship to myth and can be seen to contain close approximations of the archetypal images and patterns of both myths and dreams: "The romancer does not attempt to create 'real people' so much as stylized figures which expand into psychological archetypes.

¹⁷"We mean by collective unconscious a certain psychic disposition shaped by the forces of heredity; from it consciousness has developed. In the physical structure of the body we find traces of earlier stages of evolution, and we may expect the human psyche also to conform in its make-up to the law of phylogeny. It is a fact that in eclipses of consciousness—in dreams, narcotic states and cases of insanity—there come to the surface psychic products or contents that show all the traits of primitive levels of psychic development." Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, p. 190.

¹⁸See Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973). This is a work to which this thesis owes a great deal in the way of critical viewpoint. I am especially indebted to Professor Frye's enlightening treatment of the genre of romance.
It is in the romance that we find Jung's libido, anima, and shadow reflected in the hero, heroine, and villain respectively.19

Romance is for Frye a serious genre of literature which should be judged in terms of its own conventions, not those of other genres. With this in mind, one should expect to find in the prose romances of Morris, not an escapist, never-never land, but a mythicized treatment of the theme of unity which forms the heart of Morris's work. The various archetypal images of unity (mandala, royal couple, golden city, etc.) can be traced throughout the romances and are visible as well in the poetry of the sixties20 and the mandalic designs within Morris's wallpapers, illuminations and tapestries. However, these images, as they occur in the romances, do not remain static, but are developed from a personal level to a level in the late romances which is universal in that the images of unity pertain to more than the individual psyche.

The archetype of unity is first visible in the vision of a unified self and in the later romances is extended to include a vision of unity within society and the natural world. The vision of unity which is first uncovered within the collective unconscious is brought to a conscious level where it can establish a balance between conscious and unconscious material. Herein lies the importance of a literature which taps the reservoir of the collective unconscious:

19 Frye, p. 304.

20 The title of Morris's great poem from this period, The Earthly Paradise, itself is archetypal, reflecting as it does the edenic garden. That Morris was in some way aware of the archetypal image in his title is suggested in a statement of his quoted by Alfred Noyes: "The title is the best part of it and will have a meaning for men when the rest is forgotten." Alfred Noyes, William Morris (London: Macmillan, 1908), p. 144.
What is of particular importance for the study of literature in these manifestations of the collective unconscious is that they are compensatory to the conscious attitude. This is to say that they can bring a one-sided abnormal, or dangerous state of consciousness into equilibrium in an apparently purposive way. . . . Whenever the collective unconscious becomes a living experience and is brought to bear upon the conscious outlook of an age, this event is a creative act which is of importance to everyone living in that age.21

The basic pattern of romance, the fruitful quest of a hero or heroine who returns to the conscious world of men bearing the boons of the quest which will transform the society of men, brings the unconscious secrets of maturation, transformation and unification into consciousness. These secrets, in the case of Morris, are the master theme of the utopian as well as the master theme of the romancer.

In order to align Morris's romances with his political interests, great care must be taken to avoid the pitfall of the intentional fallacy. Morris, though he seldom spoke at any length about his romances, had once denied the presence of any political meaning within these works.22 We must not take the author at his word, but rather let the patterns of these works speak for themselves. One can only remark that if Morris really had no political intentions in writing his fictions, it is quite


22The following statement of 20 July 1895, a reply to an assertion that The Wood beyond the World was an allegory of capital and labor, is of interest not only because of Morris's disclaiming of allegorical content, but also because it is one of the rare moments in which Morris wrote anything on the content of his romances: "I had not the least intention of thrusting an allegory into The Wood beyond the World; it is meant for a tale pure and simple, with nothing didactic about it. If I have to write or speak on social problems, I always try to be as direct as I possibly can be. On the other hand, I should consider it bad art in anyone writing an allegory not to make it clear from the first that this was his intention, and not to take care throughout that the allegory and the story should interpenetrate as does the great master of allegory, Bunyan." Collected Works, XVII, p. xxxix.
strange that he chose a genre which had long held such mass appeal and which is so well suited to the conveyance of patterns depicting both individual and social transformation.

The romance has always possessed a utopian element in its nostalgia for a golden age. It looks to a past state of perfection to describe its vision of the future. The plot of the romance is usually in the form of a quest for a state of perfection which usually involves the union of the hero with a female figure. The quest involves a perilous journey, in the course of which some crucial battle occurs followed by the exaltation of the hero. The triumph of the hero often results in a transformation of the natural world as in the Arthurian myths of the grail quest in which the waste-land is freed from a curse of sterility. The hero's victory is a triumph over the death-sleep of winter. The hero's union with a maiden provides the image of a victorious fecundity.

The pattern traced by the hero of romance is the pattern of what Jung and his followers, chief among them, Erich Neumann and Joseph Campbell, have called individuation or the unification of the self as the totality of consciousness. The quest of the heroic figure is a process of centering, a pattern described in terms of mandala symbolism by Jung in his *Dream Symbolism in Relation to Alchemy*. Campbell has used Joyce's word "monomyth" to describe this heroic journey to the center of consciousness.²³ For both Jung and Campbell this journey, which makes the

²³See Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Bollingen, 1973). Although the term "monomyth" is Campbell's (via Joyce), the concept of the journey into the unconscious where the self is completed and the subsequent return to the conscious world is primarily Jung's conception. Although Campbell is thoroughly steeped in Jungian
unconscious and "brings it to bear upon the conscious outlook of an age," can be far more than a personal experience of individuation. It can create the change of consciousness necessary for a transformation of society and the world of nature in which men must dwell.

As Frye has shown, the genre of romance is intimately related to the images of the natural world. The sequential plot of the romance is related to the sequential cycle of the seasons from the death of winter to the rebirth of spring. The utopian element in romance is apparent in the central importance of rebirth. A romance ends with the rebirth of society as well as of the natural world. From the procession of the seasons comes the theme of transformation with which the romance is essentially concerned. The successful quest consists, in ritual terms, of a victory of fertility over sterility and, in psychological terms, the success of libido, or desiring self, in a quest for a fulfillment that will free the desiring self from the pressures of reality by transforming that reality. In apocalyptic terms, the end of the romance is the alignment of the resurrected, unified world with the fallen, fragmented world through the mediation of the Christ-like hero.

\[24^\text{Jung}, \text{Modern Man in Search of a Soul}, \text{pp. 190-191.}\]

\[25^\text{That an account of a mythic event can greatly alter the history of consciousness is attested to by Erich Neumann in his commentary on Apuleius's tale of Cupid and Psyche. According to Neumann the tale of Psyche's successful quest for wholeness represents "an event that has profoundly affected Western mankind for two thousand years." See Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine (Princeton: Bollingen, 1973), p. 139.}\]
The romance works to its climax dialectically. The characters are polarized in that they are either friends or enemies of the quest, and out of their conflict comes a final struggle which results in the final transformation of society and nature in which all oppositions are reconciled.

This is the sort of vision one must look for in Morris's prose romances. It is a vision with which Morris, with his fervent utopianism, was engrossed, and it is a vision which is central to the very form of the romance. For Morris, the prose-romance was the most natural medium of expression, for its form fits his ideas as no other genre could. In spite of the neglect that these romances have met with, they are perhaps the most perfect expression of what is central in Morris's work. Northrop Frye has put forth an invitation to a serious reconsideration of these works, and it is an invitation that I have accepted in the writing of this thesis:

William Morris should not be left on the side lines of prose fiction merely because the critic has not learned to take the romance form seriously. Nor, in view of what has been said about the revolutionary nature of the romance, should his choice of that form be regarded as an "escape" from his social attitude.26

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26 Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 305.
Chapter 2

BEGINNINGS: MORRIS'S EARLY USES OF ROMANCE PATTERNS

Morris's early prose works, which appeared in 1856 when he was a student at Oxford, often display a nightmarish quality in which a religious doubt appears to be the central concern. His original intentions of pursuing a church career, which were partly due to the influence of his sister Emma who had married Rev. Joseph Oldham of the High Church in 1850 and partly due to an upbringing in what Mackail calls "sterile Evangelicalism,"¹ had been abandoned in favor of a career as an architect. By the time his early prose works were written, Morris was questioning his original goal of a clerical career. At Oxford, Morris discovered himself in the midst of the religious ferment left behind by such figures as Wilberforce and Newman. "The influence of Wilberforce and Pusey," writes L. W. Eshleman, "was then pronounced and during their first two years at Oxford, Morris and Burne-Jones were filled with Anglo-Catholic if not indeed with Catholic admirations."² In 1854 when Wilberforce converted to Roman Catholicism, Morris's religious position took another swing. Mackail asserts that Morris came quite close to following Wilberforce into the Roman Church, indeed a church most appealing to Morris's already highly developed interest in the medieval past.


Morris's abandonment of a clerical calling is only a single manifestation of a break which includes a rejection of religion altogether. His last years at Oxford exhibit a secularization of attitude and an extending of interest beyond the limits of Anglo-Catholic ideals. "Art and literature," writes Mackail, "were no longer thought of as handmaids to religion, but as ends to be pursued for their own sake, not indeed as a means of gaining livelihood, but as a means of realizing life."³

That Morris's break with religion was no easy matter is evidenced by the presence of religious questioning throughout many of the early prose works and in a number of poems in The Defence of Guenevere. The first work that exhibits the theme of doubt is The Hollow Land, one of Morris's stories published in Oxford and Cambridge Magazine. Here the theological theme is manifested in the problem of being aware of God's judgements and acting in accordance with such awareness. Though this theme is indeed important to an understanding of Morris's early work, it is not this theme alone that is of chief interest to this analysis; rather it is the way in which the theme of scepticism is interwoven with archetypal patterns in Morris's prose work that here concerns us. The Hollow Land displays a gradual shifting of concern in which the theological concern yields to what will become for Morris a lasting concern with the archetypal patterns of the romantic quest. Morris's treatment of the problem of knowing the judgements of God is unique to his early work, but the archetypal patterns which can be distinguished

³Mackail, p. 63.
within the plot of The Hollow Land are seminal in their relationship to Morris's later preoccupation with prose romance.

The Hollow Land contains a first example of Morris's use of an archetypal quest pattern. This work, together with the shorter tale, "A Dream,"\(^4\) exhibits a dialectic built around the confrontation of the hero with the female psychic figure, the "anima." Both the archetypal form of the quest and the archetypal figures of the male and female principles (manifested as the hero and his "anima" or the heroine and her "animus") are matters which Morris continually reworks in the development of his romances.

The appearance of these archetypes in The Hollow Land creates a pervasive tone of psychic torment. As a work of romance, this early tale is dominated by the violent and frightening imagery which is most often associated with the romance which is called "Gothic." The general themes are those of revenge and a subsequent nightmarish quest involving a descent into a purgatorial underworld from whence the hero, Florian, emerges reborn and transfigured.

The tale opens with an announcement of the quest motif. The hero tells of his longing for a mysterious land: "Do you know where it is--the Hollow Land? I have been looking for it now so long, trying to find it again--the Hollow Land--for there I saw my love first." (I, 254)

The object of this quest is something once possessed but now lost; hence the object represents that higher state or Golden Age which arouses the cosmic homesickness that lies behind the cyclic material of

\(^4\)Morris, Collected Works, I, pp. 159-175. This work also dates from the same period and is coloured with a Christian concern with sin and retribution.
romance. The hero longs not only for this unfallen kingdom, but also for his love whom he saw there. She is as much an object of the quest as the land is. The hero's reunion with his feminine counterpart is a consistent theme in all Morris's romances. This reunion is intimately connected with the final attainment of the land or the transcendent state of completion in a reborn world.

The archetypal quest pattern within The Hollow Land is by no means as clear-cut as it comes to be in the later romances. It is most often overshadowed by the overt theme of theological doubt. Although the tale opens with a trumpeting of the romantic quest theme, the story quickly leads to other concerns. The opening section, called a "Fytte" in Morris's medieval nomenclature, is entitled "Struggling in the World" and deals with an act of vengeance which the hero, Florian, believes to be sanctioned by God. Florian of the noble House of the Lilies witnessed in childhood the disgrace of his brother at the hands of the Lady Swanhilda, queen of another great house. Florian's brother had dropped the canopy which shaded Swanhilda during a procession and that queen had struck him in the face before the crowd. This slight act brings hatred between the two houses and Florian and his brother vow revenge. Following the death of the queen's husband, Florian's brother declares that he "will take it as a sign, if God does not punish her within certain years, that he means me to do so." (I, 256) On Christmas eve the men of the House of the Lilies, sacriligiously dressed in albs, enter Swanhilda's palace and murder her in the name of God's justice. The hideous ritualistic killing of this queen forms one of the most violent scenes in all of Morris's work. For all of his idealization of medieval
times, Morris remains aware here of the violence of that age, a violence often perpetuated in the name of Christian morality. Throughout the violent subduing of the queen, Florian is racked by doubt as to the morality of his "just" deed. He is in the midst of a moral dilemma but the tension, as we shall see, goes psychologically much deeper.

The awesome queen tempts Florian first to pity and then plunges him into fear. "I almost pitied her when I saw her looking so utterly desolate and despairing; her beauty too had faded, deep lines cut through her face. But when I entered she knew who I was, and her look of intense hatred was so fiend-like that it changed my pity into horror of her." (I, 261) Swanhilda's actions change rapidly from horrifying opposition to a pitiful groveling which arouses Florian's deep disgust: "But I shuddered, and drew away; it was like having an adder about one; I could have pitied her had she died bravely, but for one like her to whine and whine!--pah!--" (I, 262)

Here we can observe the more archetypal material of the tale rising to the surface. Within Swanhilda's behavior and Florian's shifting reactions to this behavior is a picture of the hero's confrontation with the anima. In this case, the event is nightmarish; the anima appears as something threateningly other and the hero cannot affirm her hideous shape. The archetypal material becomes mingled with the overt theological concerns of the tale. Florian's actions are egocentric, and the presumption of knowing and acting in accordance with God's will is an invention of the ego which takes itself as a complete and all powerful entity. The hero perceives his anima through the limited intelligence of his ego, and what is seen is something unknown
and threatening. The ego as the totality of consciousness has presumed to know what is not known (the will of God) and is now confronted with the unknown anima within itself.\(^5\)

On the more apparent level of meaning, the murder of Swanhilda is a transgression against man's position in a Christian moral hierarchy, but on a psychic level it is a transgression against unity of self. The hero has cut his ego off from the unconscious portions of the self and creates a hierarchy where the ego holds the highest seat. In this hierarchy the ego holds sway over the unconscious, driving back the images which well up from below. We have witnessed a conflict between Florian and Swanhilda which is a conflict between conscious ego and unconscious psychic content. This psychic conflict will remain unresolved until the ego can leave its high seat and submit to the unconscious content of the self.

In spite of the sudden surfacing of a psychic dilemma, the Christian moral concern continues to dominate the surface of the story. The suggestion of a scheme of divine justice is felt throughout the course of the tale, and within this scheme Florian must make a penitential journey through doubt, guilt and expurgation in order to absolve his sin of presumption.

The doubt which permeates a large portion of The Hollow Land is not so much a doubt of God's existence as it is a doubt about man's ability to know God's will. The second part of Morris's tale, "Failing

\(^5\)Jung, Aion: Phenomenology of the Self in The Portable Jung, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Viking, 1971), pp. 139-140. Here it is made clear that although the ego is "the centre of the field of consciousness," it is only a part of that totality which Jung calls the "self."
in the World," depicts the doubt of Florian as it comes to an anxious culmination in a nightmarish landscape of shifting shapes and uncertain perspectives. The army of the House of Lilies is being pursued by the forces of Red Harald, the son of Swanhilda. As the destruction of the House of Lilies becomes more certain, Florian is overwhelmed with doubt about the morality of his actions: "I felt a dull weight on my heart. Had our house been the devil's servants all along? I had thought we were God's servants." (I, 269) Florian now finds himself in the grasp of what appears to be a higher justice, and his fall into the Hollow Land constitutes a descent into a purgatorial region where he must confront and then shed his sins.

In terms of its relationship with the whole body of Morris's prose romances, the concern with the theological problem of the nature of God's justice is a very minor theme. This theme is carried on into some of the poems in The Defence of Guenevere, notably in the title poem where Guenevere argues against Gawaine's presumption of acting in union with divine will. After 1857 the issue is abandoned and Morris remains more concerned with man than with a God whose intentions cannot be known. In 1884 Morris wrote to Robert Thompson that: "I must decline to argue theological points: I don't understand them: if there is a God, he, or it, is a very different thing from what religionists imagine."6 Near the close of his life, in 1895, Morris declared that "of this I am absolutely convinced, that if there is a God, He never meant us to know

much about Himself, or indeed to concern ourselves much about Him at all."^7

Already in The Hollow Land Morris's gaze is turned towards man, and his concern gradually becomes attached to what man does not know about himself rather than what he does not know about God. Florian's descent into purgatorial regions constitutes a journey into the unconscious. The archetypal pattern of the tale becomes more obvious at this point, and the action of the remainder of the story is better explained in terms of a psychic search for unity of self than in terms of a scheme of divine justice. The call of the unconscious that was sounded at the opening of the tale ("Do you know where it is--the Hollow Land?") is now answered. Florian has already been exposed to a vision of that region in his confrontation with the anima in the form of the queen Swanhilda. Through her murder the hero has temporarily avoided a prolonged exposure to the elements of his unconscious, but these elements, once aroused, are bound to appear again, and Florian is finally plunged into the dark land within himself.

The quest of Florian within the Hollow Land is a quest for the elements which will complete the self. Florian's "love," who is mentioned in the first lines of the tale, is the major element required to complete the hero. The unity of self, symbolized by unity of male and female, releases the power which changes the world around the self. The incomplete Florian, who falls into the Hollow Land in the middle of the tale, enters the "second best of the places God has made," (I, 280)

a sterile world where the hero is beset by "fog creeping into our very bones" (I, 281) and a horrible bodily decay. When Florian, united with the heroine, enters the Hollow Land once again at the end of the tale, he enters through golden gates into a "great space of flowers." The union of hero and heroine has transformed the land into a fertile paradise, the foremost of "places God has made," the dwelling place of the completed self.

This journey towards fulfillment consists of three definite stages which relate to the maturation of the hero's relationship with his feminine aspect. The first meetings with the anima, as represented by the dark figure of Swanhilda, are characterized by a sense of fear and disgust for something that is alien to the hero's ego. Swanhilda is a dreadful "other," a queen of another house, and in her act of striking the hero's brother, she is a threat to the hero's conscious ego. Her appearance is dark and hard, and Florian likens her to a viper which encircles him. These dark poisonous traits characterize the anima in her negative aspect of witch and enchantress. Unable to affirm the mysterious force of the anima, the hero takes part in the killing of this queen and destroys his first chance for self-completion.

The power of the unconscious returns, the ground opens beneath the hero's feet and he is literally swallowed by his unconscious. In the underworld of the unconscious, Florian meets the anima again but now in the more benevolent form of Margaret, the woman he loves. This woman has the traits of anima in the positive role of a guide to the inner psychic world. As an instructive guide, she prepares Florian for the

8M. L. von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," Man and His
tasks that lie before him. She announces her intimate link with the hero's being by speaking to him as one whom he should recognize:

"Tomorrow you may, perhaps, have something hard to do or bear, I know, but now you must be as happy as you can be, quietly happy. Why did you start and turn pale when I came to you? Do you not know who I am? Nay, but you do, I see; and I have been waiting here so long for you; so you must have expected to see me. You cannot be frightened of me, are you?"
(I, 276)

Although the hero is coming closer to perceiving his "inner female" as truly inner and not threateningly alien, he is not yet ready to "dare to touch her, or even speak to her." (I, 277) Florian must accomplish much before a secure union with the heroine can be realized. This Hollow Land is a place of difficult trials and transformation. With Margaret's guidance Florian must confront the shadowy aspects of the self and recognize them as such.

Florian must first face the figure of his dead brother, who becomes an externalization of the hero's ego (it was Florian's ego which was publically insulted by Swanhilda). Florian becomes indignant in the

Symbols, ed. C. G. Jung (New York: Dell, 1970), p. 193. Von Franz speaks of the anima taking on "... the role of guide, or mediator, to the world within and to the Self ... this is the role of Beatrice in Dante's Paradiso, and also of the goddess Isis when she appeared in a dream to Apuleius, the famous author of The Golden Ass, in order to initiate him into a higher, more spiritual form of life."

9This land somewhat resembles the mythic "green world" which Northrop Frye finds in Shakespearean comedy. The "green world" is a place of transformation, a place where the unity of the final comic society, often appearing in a grand marriage, is wrought. The metamorphosis of characters in the "green world" results in their return to the "real world" of society where the comic resolution is celebrated. See Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, pp. 182-183.
face of what appears to be an undeserved death. Margaret here condemns Florian's murder of the queen and forces him to a perception of his presumptuous sin of acting in God's name. In terms of Florian's journey towards self-unity, the anima here mediates between the ego and the deeper elements of the self. She forces the hero to an awareness of the blindness of his ego. The ego may remain "dead" if Florian can recognize the ego's failure to maintain an independent existence. The ego must be cast off like an old costume; it is only one of the "personae" of the self.

The process of confronting the old costume of ego is manifested further in the images of decay found in the beginning of the tale's fourth part. The hero becomes aware of a horrible bodily decay and is disgusted and ashamed. The ego of the hero is confronted in its vilest form and now must be rejected so that the hero can continue his purgative journey. Although Margaret is no longer visibly present, her intuitive guidance is still felt in the seemingly irrational but truly inspired behavior of Florian. The hero, with no clear reason, starts running through the forest of the Hollow Land "looking downward, but not once giving heed to my way." (I, 282) Freed from the weight of his ego, Florian is now gripped by the irrational but inspirational power of the anima which soon leads him to another stage of his development.

The hero now arrives at the first stage of a rebirth, the passage through cleansing waters. Florian plunges into a stream which, though cleansing, is also perilous. He is confronted by an armed man in a boat but succeeds in passing this obstacle with little harm. When Florian arrives at the other shore he sees a great hill rising before
him. The water and the hill or mountain are images commonly associated with the process of rebirth and easily fit into the purgatorial pattern of Florian's journey. These images of water and mountain confront Dante upon his exit from the infernal regions. The hill is the purgatorial mountain which Florian must dwell upon for a time before being finally reunited with his feminine aspect. The energy of the anima is still felt in Florian's penitential actions. Within the fallen castle of his family on the hill, the hero must paint "God's judgements" until he feels renewed enough to pursue the final stage of the quest. The artistic act of painting is closely connected with the positive function of anima as an inspiring Muse.¹⁰

The image of art is of central importance to Morris's treatment of self-completion. One of the final images in the tale is that of the marble figures of a winged man and woman surrounded by carved "leafage and tendrils." (I, 290) This work of artifice is seen by Florian and Margaret just before they enter the "great space of flowers." They recognize their own features in the stone figures which here represent the completed self surrounded by and at one with the fertile leafage of a transformed world. The hero's unity with the fertility of the earth is reflected in his name, Florian, which suggests the image of the flowers with which the tale closes.

According to von Franz, the "highest and most frequent symbol of

¹⁰von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," p. 195. The experience of anima as inspiration "... occurs when a man takes seriously the feelings, moods, expectations, and fantasies sent by his anima and when he fixes them in some form—for example, in writing, painting, sculpture, musical composition, or dancing."
the Self is an object of inorganic matter."\textsuperscript{11} This symbol can be found in the alchemical stone (the "lapis"). The stone's nature is also symbolized by two lions (male and female), a royal couple seated upon lions, or simply a divine, royal or otherwise notable couple.\textsuperscript{12} Florian and Margaret are the royal couple at the end of the tale and their unity is the unity of the self. Their procession through the "golden streets" under "many-colored banners" is the royal entry of the self into a transformed fecund land. This final procession forms the positive transformation of the procession at the beginning of the tale. The procession of Swanhilda was something outer, observed by the young hero from a window above the street. This procession ended in separation and hatred, but the final procession is the culmination of a successful quest for unity.

The climax of this early tale introduces the master theme of Morris's art, the vision of unity, but it would be a grave mistake to presume that this theme, upon its first entrance, becomes statically positioned at the center of Morris's work. The archetype of unity which appears in the final pages of \textit{The Hollow Land} is undeveloped. It presents the vision of unified self and nature but fails to incorporate the social sphere in that vision. Morris has not yet been ignited by the flame of political reformation which expands the archetypal images of unity in the late romances. Even in terms of a unity of self this early vision exists not as an accomplished but as a potential wholeness.

\textsuperscript{11}von Franz, p. 226.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid. See also Jung, \textit{Dream Symbolism in Relation to Alchemy} in \textit{The Portable Jung}, pp. 324-455.
Speaking of the futurity of the archetypes of the unified self, Jung writes that "... the symbols of wholeness frequently occur at the beginning of the individuation process; indeed they can often be observed in the first dreams of early infancy. This observation says much for the a priori existence of potential wholeness."\(^{13}\) The conflict between the conscious ego and the unconscious anima dialectically produces a vision of a potential resolution which Morris as yet is unable to grasp. The conflict returns again with equal force, and in the poetry of the sixties the conflict comes close to remaining unresolved.

The achievement of Morris throughout the period between 1855 and 1870 is haunted by an anxiety which is rooted in an awareness of unacceptable conflicts. Patrick Brantlinger has noticed in Morris's The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems "a series of contrasts between the real and the ideal or between harsh fact and lovely fantasy."\(^{14}\) The conflicts are revealed in various schemes of tension; the tension between life and art, between male and female, and lastly the tension, first met with in The Hollow Land, between man and God. The poems in The Defence of Guenevere are largely a series of miniature dramas of separation. Lady Louise, in "The Blue Closet," waits for a lover who never returns. The intense love of Guenevere and Lancelot is never happily consummated. The love of Jehane and Robert is thwarted by gruesome violence and death in "The Haystack in the Floods."

\(^{13}\)Jung, "The Psychology of the Child-Archetype" in Essays on a Science of Mythology, p. 84.

\(^{14}\)Patrick Brantlinger, "A Reading of Morris's The Defense of Guenevere and Other Poems," The Victorian Newsletter, 44 (Fall, 1973), 18.
In these dramas of dualistic tension, the eternal perfection of art, like Yeats' golden bird, mocks the transient existence of man. The carved figure on the tomb of King Arthur appears as an image of the serene unchanging beauty of art in contrast to the transient guilt-ridden love of Lancelot and Guenevere. The work of art, the carved stone king, is the image of potential self-unity which is thrown forth from the unconscious. But here the vision of potential unity stands as a mockery in relation to the unrelieved separation of the lovers.

The tension between man and God appears in the form of the theme of "God's judgements." The life of man's desiring self is contrasted with the restricted life imposed by God's judgements. In The Hollow Land, Morris is already aware that the dualism of God and man is a dualism created in the mind of man. The will of God is the creation of the ego which serves to keep the desiring portions of the self in subjugation. Jehane, in "The Haystack in the Floods," must face man's idea of God's judgement in the form of a trial by water which awaits her in Paris. In the poem, "The Judgement of God," Roger and his father prepare for a trial by combat in which God's judgement will be made clear. Morris's conception of God and His intentions creates a tyranny which is a destructive obstacle in man's inner quest for unity. This tyranny spawns guilt and doubt, and prevents that most important fulfillment of the self which involves the marriage of the masculine with the feminine. God and Christ appear as powers of unappealing puritanism which thwart the union of Lancelot and Guenevere as well as that of Jehane and Robert. The unrequited love of Lancelot and Guenevere offers no culmination in unity. In this drama of separation, each lover experiences the other as
something distant and severed from the self. Male and female never merge to complete the archetype of the unified self. Such perfect unity is the sole property of God or Christ whose presence in the minds of the lovers makes the unrequited relationship into a dark love triangle.

The tensions which dominate this collection of poems receive their dialectical synthesis in the single poem "Rapunzel," which appears as a magical formula in relation to the spellbound claustrophobic atmosphere of the other poems. The archetypes which first appeared in The Hollow Land return with greater brilliance in this reworking of the fairy tale from Grimm. All that fails in the relationships of Lancelot and Guenevere, and Jehane and Robert is here accomplished in the archetypal story of the Prince and the captive maiden. The development of the hero and his anima which was imbedded in the delirious atmosphere of The Hollow Land returns with greater clarity in "Rapunzel" where it makes up the central theme. The theme of the unification of the self replaces the theme of man's knowledge of God. However, this vision of unity still exists as a potential synthesis of opposites. This unity is still in the act of becoming, as demonstrated by the appearance of the stone figures at the end of The Hollow Land and in "King Arthur's Tomb." These stone images are related to the "lapis" symbol which appears in the early stages of individuation as "a substance in process of transmutation." When conflict is renewed, as it is in The Defense of Guenevere collection, the unconscious continues to reveal the vision of potential unification. In "Rapunzel" this vision is reasserted with considerable strength, but still without success.

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"Rapunzel" forms a link between the archetypal patterns of fairy tale and the patterns of romance. Morris's poem is not a simple retelling but an imaginative recreation of the tale found in Grimm. Morris once said that in retelling a tale, one should "Read it through and then shut the book and write it out again as a new story for yourself." What Morris has deleted from the original version betrays his concern for the development of hero and anima figures which will end in a union symbolized by a divine pair. The story of Rapunzel, as it appears in the brothers Grimm collection, begins with the tale of a childless couple whose cottage borders on a walled garden which belongs to a witch. The husband steals a forbidden vegetable, rampion, from the garden to quell his wife's craving, which only increases after the first taste. Her craving can only be continually satisfied if the couple promises to deliver their first child to the witch. After the child is born, she is given to the witch and imprisoned in a tower where the witch enters and leaves by climbing up the girl's long hair. When the Prince inevitably arrives and gains access to the tower, the witch thwarts their attempt at escape and removes the girl to a vast desert and blinds the Prince. The Prince wanders for several years and is then reunited with the girl who restores his sight with her tears.

Morris's retelling leaves out the introductory tale of the witch's garden and the "original sin" of the man and wife. The main interest is in the triangle formed by the Prince, the girl and the witch, all of whom are presented within the first ten lines of the poem.

The Prince stands in the wood which surrounds the tower and recollects his days at court where he has been told to wed some lady of the court. He has left the court in some disrespect since men did not bow their heads when he rode through the streets:

I rode throughout the town,
Men did not bow the head,
Though I was the king's own son;
"He rides to dream," they said.

(I, 96:31-34)

To ride into dream is to journey into the unconscious. The Prince wanders into a place of transformations, the beech forest of the "green world" where Florian met his lady in The Hollow Land. Beneath the beeches and elms, the Prince is led by dream. He dreams of "paths of stars let down to earth from heaven," a vision of transcendence which anticipates the appearance of the golden path made by the imprisoned maiden's hair.

The power of dream grants the Prince access to the "real life" within him. Riding armed "beneath the burning sun" he is granted both heroic strength and insight to his existence:

But then I saw my real life had begun
And that I should be strong, quite well I knew.

(I, 65:73-74)

What first appeared as illusion is turning out to be an important reality. The hero is connected, like Gawaine and numerous others in ancient tales, with the transforming powers of the sun. This solar

17Frye speaks of the literary device of displacement in which what is divine in myth is displaced to the human level in romance and comedy. Thus the myth can be distinguished from the romance by the hero's power of action, "in the myth proper he is human. This distinction is much sharper theologically than it is poetically, and myth and romance both belong in the general category of mythopoeic literature." What we experience in the deeds of heroes such as Gawaine are the divine
energy becomes a means of transforming the Prince into one fit for the quest of completion.

The prince happens upon the witch's tower and contemplates the reality of his strange quest. Gazing upon the tower he feels loneliness and separation but also a sense of imminent rebirth:

... on all sides I saw the proofs
Of a great loneliness that sickened me,

Making me feel a doubt that was not fear,
Whether my whole life long had been a dream,
And I should wake up soon in some place, where
The piled-up arms of the fighting angels gleam;

Not born as yet, but going to be born,
No naked baby as I was at first,
But an armed knight, ...  

(I, 65:89-97)

The witch appears, calls the imprisoned girl to the window and climbs up her hair as she has done every day for years. The hero's anima has been trapped in a prison of repetitive time:

Rapunzel
And yet--but I am growing old,
For want of love my heart is cold;
Years pass, the while I loose and fold
The fathoms of my hair.

(I, 64:47-50)

The witch has created this prison of repetition by her daily ascent to the tower window. The witch is the dark aspect of the Prince's anima, and her prison of repetition extends to trap the Prince for "a most strange year, /Most strange and awful in the beechen wood." (I, 67: 140-141) The dark aspects of anima hold the bright, golden, unifying aspects captive within the tower.

characteristics of a sun-god removed to the human plane. See Anatomy of Criticism, p. 188:
The tower is both a prison and a means of liberation. When the witch climbs up the tower she creates an imprisoning, atrophied routine; but if the Prince can make that ascent it will break the enslaving pattern and accomplish the self-completion which is the object of his quest. For "a most strange year" both the hero and his anima are caught in a web woven by the dark part of his feminine half. This "most strange year" takes the place of the period of the Prince's blindness in the Grim tale. The year of entrapment, like the time spent by Florian in the underworld of the Hollow Land, is not completely negative. This is a time of purgation in which the Prince must confront his condition of self-imprisonment as externalized in the repetitive actions of the witch and the maiden. At the opening of the poem the Prince is told that "Tis fit that thou should wed." For the wedding within the self, the hero must confront his negative aspects which here appear as a stifling atrophy in which the dark anima has enslaved the creative, liberating anima. When the Prince is ready to break the web of self-enchantment, the deed is swiftly accomplished and we find the Prince and maiden suddenly united in the tower.

Once united in that inner marriage of self-completion, the couple appear transformed together with their surroundings. The maiden, who has been called Rapunzel up until this point, becomes Guendolen:

O LOVE! me and my unknown name you have well won;
The witch's name was Rapunzel; eh! not so sweet?
(I, 72:80-81)

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Here, the maiden's words can mean that the witch called the girl by the witch's own name or that "Rapunzel" was a name chosen by the witch. In either case, that naming was an enslavement which is broken by the Prince's discovery of the true name.

The Prince is no longer a prince but King Sebald, and together Sebald and Guendolen form a royal couple who, like Florian and Margaret, ride triumphantly down "gold-hung" streets. Gold, the element of unity and the color of the transforming sun, dominates the end of the poem. The King's robes are gold, the maiden's hair is gold, as is the King's crown and the city streets. All is transformed and united in the image of gold. The transformation is complete and the journey that led to this final unity was a journey from darkness to the transforming light of the sun:

Guendolen
Verily, I seem like one
Who, when day is almost done,
Through a thick wood meets the sun
That blazes in her hair.
(I, 73:325-328)

The redeemed and unified self, in the image of a royal couple, becomes associated with divinity in the following stanza which is a transformation of lines 31-34:

We rode throughout the town,
A gold crown on my head,
Through all the gold-hung streets,
"Praise God!" the people said.
(I, 73:319-322)

The completed self is a realization of divinity which is not, like the Christ in "King Arthur's Tomb," something external and stifling, but internal and, like the sun, capable of transforming the world around it.
The vision of unity in "Rapunzel" appears with great force, but the ominous final warning spoken by the witch out of the lower depths indicates that Morris is not yet at home with his vision:

WOE! THAT ANY MAN COULD DARE
TO CLIMB UP THE YELLOW STAIR,
GLORIOUS GUENDOLEN'S GOLDEN HAIR.
(1, 74:339-341)

The dark aspect of the anima must be confronted on still deeper levels as it will be in the darker poetry of the sixties. The shadow cast by the voice of the witch calls us back to the dark world of male/female conflict which dominates the other poems of the collection. The union of the Prince and the maid, like the union of self represented in the stone image in "King Arthur's Tomb," marks the state of conflict out of which it rises. The vision is one of potential, a guiding light which is not yet fully grasped.
Chapter 3

A DARKENING OF VISION: THE POETRY OF THE SIXTIES

For Morris the utopian, the vision of the king and queen is only a short step from the vision of the kingdom. In both The Hollow Land and "Rapunzel," the quest ends with a procession into a transformed land. "Rapunzel" offers the vision of "gold-hung streets," and in The Hollow Land the city streets give way to the vision of a "great space of flowers." Both works culminate in what Jung has called the "solificatio" or the completion of the self in the image of the crowned Helios.¹ In the image of the "Roi du Sol," the self appears as transforming energy which alters the world upon which it looks. This process is evident in many of the medieval romances connected with the Sangrail, in which the healing of the sick or wounded king is linked to the healing of the sterile land. The king, made whole, restores the fertility of the kingdom.² The land through which Morris's royal couple journey becomes a vast field of flowers. The image of a transformed world merges the myth of the successful hero with the apocalyptic myth of accomplished "telos" or the vision of utopia. The image of the solificatio is

¹Jung, Dream Symbolism in Relation to Alchemy in The Portable Jung, pp. 323-456. According to Jung, the term "solificatio" is from the alchemical vocabulary. It relates to the Isis mystery as described by Apuleius, in which the initiate was crowned as Helios, and also to the sun, which Jung calls the "classical symbol for the unity and divinity of the self." (p. 352) The image of "solificatio" plays a large part in the series of individual dreams which Jung examines in this essay.

succeeded by an image of unified society. The body of the "Roi du Sol" becomes the body of Hobbe's Leviathan, or a society in the image of the cosmic man. In terms of Morris's romances, the unified society is founded in the image of the unified hero. The connection between the hero and the unifying golden glare of the sun is extended to include the whole of a society. This utopian linking of solifacatio with society is evident in the title of Campanella's utopian work, City of the Sun.

The vision of the telos of civilization comes either in the image of a city, such as Augustine's City of God, or in an image of regained earthly innocence in a pastoral world of sheep and gardens. The former image is more Christian and supernatural since the City of God and the apocalyptic New Jerusalem are removed from the fallen world of nature. The latter image is more classical and pagan, though vestiges of pastoral imagery do survive in the Christian metaphors of flocks, lambs and the Good Shepherd. The pastoral world is primarily part of the myth of the Golden Age to which man will return at the end of a great cycle. In the pastoral vision, the earth, rather than being abandoned for a City of God, is resuscitated and becomes the garden that it once was. It is in this latter category of imagery that Morris is located. Morris's affirmation of the world and his rejection of the Christian God, place his utopianism in a natural and historical world. Moreover, Morris's vision of telos involves the active human element in the realization of utopia. Utopia is not the Christian eschaton which is preordained but a realizable state which can be founded by man. Usually avoiding the Christian image of the city, Morris seeks a utopia rooted in the world of nature.
Although both of Morris's early excursions into the patterns of romance involve an image of the city, his vision of telos moves outside that city into that floral landscape which makes up an image of the pastoral world or the classical fields of Elysium. The later utopian vision of News from Nowhere presents a picture of London, but it is a London which breathes the atmosphere of England's hills and fields. The Houses of Parliament are used only for the storing of manure, and Trafalgar Square has been transformed into an orchard.

Morris's utopian interest, which flowered in A Dream of John Ball (1888) and News from Nowhere (1890), lies dormant within "Rapunzel" and The Hollow Land. The very nature of the romance formula exhibited in these early works implies a final vision of transformed society. Within the development of this romantic formula, a hierarchy is becoming visible. This is a hierarchy of transformations in which the unification of self is followed by that of nature and is culminated in the unification of society. Like God in the Great Chain of Being, the self is situated at the top of this hierarchy and can pull what lies below up into itself. The world as well as society becomes part of the Leviathan which is the self.

The early formulas of romance, though they point towards this final utopian transformation, are more intent upon the first stage in this hierarchy, the unity of self. The image of the "Roi du Sol" which appears in "Rapunzel," though it is one of the archetypes of the unified self, is undeniably also an image of kingship. The appearance of such an image in connection with the transformation of man and nature betrays Morris's early faith in aristocracy. "In Oxford," writes Percy R.
Cowell of Morris, "at first, he was a pronounced believer in aristocracy, but as he lived in London and saw the squalor of the workingman's life, he was irresistibly drawn into sympathy with their condition and a great desire to improve it."³

While the idea of social transformation may be nascent in "Rapunzel," the socialist ideals which will finally politically describe that transformation are yet to be discovered. The major developments of utopian vision are not clearly presented until the 1880's with the appearance of two prose works, The Roots of the Mountain and The House of the Wolfings, which reflect the fervent socialist activity of Morris during that period.

The decade following the period of The Defense of Guenevere was devoted to poetry and decorative design. In 1860 Morris moved into and began decorating the Red House. The meticulous arranging of this house and grounds reflects the developing pastoral vision of utopia. The natural motifs of Morris's chintzes, wallpapers and tapestries which decorated the interior are elaborations of that organic, floral unity seen at the end of his first romance. The enclosed garden designed for the Red House is further evidence of Morris's preoccupation with a unified vision of man in a pastoral realm.

Much has been made of the affinity between Morris's decorative work and his poetry.⁴ The poems written in the '60's (The Earthly

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Paradise and The Life and Death of Jason) are constructed with the symmetrical craft that Morris used in designing a tapestry or a decorative border in an illuminated volume. Morris had stated that "All organic art, all art that is genuinely growing . . . has two qualities in common; the epical and the ornamental."\(^5\) The unity that is essential to Morris's work in design is intimately related to the unity which is the goal of the questing hero or heroine in the prose romances.

The construction of unity is, for Morris, closely related to the unity of the natural world. The cyclical shape of the seasons provides the underlying unity of The Earthly Paradise with its division into twelve months, each of which has two tales preceded by a lyric on the nature of the particular month. The unity of the poem is constructed like that of a garden, with the aid of patterns found in the natural world. The fascination with the feminine principle is here evident in the guidance provided by the feminine, maternal body of nature. The earth with its fecundity and unity is a manifestation of the power and creative direction offered by the inner light of the anima. Everywhere in Morris's art we are reminded that the Muses are female forms. The internal guidance of these Muses can lead the visionary towards a place of glorious unity. The redeemed self in Morris's vision, having rejected the heavenly, extra-historical City of God, is to be drawn into a redeemed world of man and nature. Morris's feminine guide is a goddess of the earth, not a queen of the heavens. The hero of "Rapunzel" is drawn

upwards into the tower, but once transfigured, he returns to earth as do the vital beams of the sun.

The key to Morris's developing utopian vision in the 1860's can be found in the oxymoron which forms the title of his major work of the period: The Earthly Paradise. This title tells us that the telos of all existence is to be found on the earth rather than in a supernatural New Jerusalem which will be revealed at the predetermined end of history. Paradise exists within historical time, and the northern wanderers of Morris's poem, fleeing the black death, set out with the tree of the Hesperides emblazoned on their sails to seek that most perfect place on earth.

Unlike the heroes of Morris's romances, these wanderers are thwarted in their quest. On an island outpost of surviving classical Greek culture, they spend their waning years telling tales from both medieval and classical sources.

For a man upon whom Yeats bestowed the title "the happiest of poets," Morris creates a tone throughout The Earthly Paradise which is dominated by nostalgic sadness frequently becoming despair. Taken outside the context of Morris's entire body of work, the poem appears to be more of a farewell to a utopian vision than a further step in that vision's development. The poem contains a recurring scepticism about the possibility of achieving a Golden Age. Not only do the wanderers fail in their quest for the prototype of the emblematic tree upon their sails, but many of the heroes in the twenty-four tales fail in their quests for personal completion. The energies of love, which led to a solifacatio in "Rapunzel" and The Hollow Land, often work as forces of
destruction within the tales of *The Earthly Paradise*. When the powers of love are not presented as destructive, they are often portrayed as weak and insufficient for accomplishing the dire task of unification within the self. The hero of "The Lady of the Land" is destroyed because his passion lacked strength. In this tale, the pattern of rescuing hero, enslaved maiden and malign dragon appears as an inversion of the prototypical story of Perseus and Andromeda. The Lady of the Land is at once the malevolent dragon and the captive maiden; she is the anima in both her benign and malign aspects. In her benign human form, she is able to instruct the hero on the method of her disenchantment; in her malign animal shape, she is a hideous dragon enslaved by the curse of Diana. The hero must affirm the existence of the malign aspect by kissing the face of the dragon. By affirmatively confronting the hideous side of the double feminine form, he, like Sir Gawaine in the "Story of Dame Ragnal,"\(^6\) will be able to release the benign and beautiful side of the Lady from the spell. Unlike Perseus in the Greek tale, this hero lacks the passion and strength to confront the beast, and fleeing from his anima, he soon languishes and dies. The Lady remains in her prison of death in life, unloved and condemned to ghastly immortality. The hero has been offered "a treasure hard to attain" which is expressed in the image of the crypt filled with gold where the golden-haired Lady dwells. The hero has rejected the attainment of that treasure, and has thus destroyed the possibility of achieving "some strange lovely land,\(^6\)

Where all his life should be most fair and good." (IV, 139) The decayed landscape of the castle vaults and grounds, in which the poem is set, remains unredeemed.

The tales of The Earthly Paradise are arranged in a conflict between tales of quests and loves which are successful and tales of those which are thwarted. The seasonal arrangement of the tales forms a pattern of descent into winter. The opening tales of March ("Atalanta's Race" and "The Man Born to be King") deal with the birth and success of love, whereas the tales of the winter months mainly are given over to the demise of love and the dominance of a destructive feminine force as in "The Lovers of Gudrun." Among these winter tales, even the story of Hercules' successful quest for the edenic Hesperides is tinged with irony in its evident contrast with the failure of the northern wanderers to find that same eternal garden.

The powers which dominate these twenty-four tales are those of love, fate and death. The existence of these powers most often serves to destroy the possibilities of any Earthly Paradise. Love is either too dispassionate and weak or too passionate and destructive; fate remains forever uncontrollable and brings change and death. The hero of "The Lady of the Land" lacks sufficient passion to kiss the beast, and the love inspired by Gudrun creates a destructive triangle.

The female figures in the poetry of The Earthly Paradise are frequently destructive like Gudrun or unattainable as in "The Lady of the Land" and "The Story of Rhodope." When the anima is made available, the hero is either too weak to fulfill his quest, or in accomplishing a union with the heroine, he finds that union to be transient. The tale
which comes closest to presenting a positive vision of wholeness is the May retelling of Apuleius' "Cupid and Psyche." The essentially archetypal material of Apuleius' myth is retained by Morris. The quest of transfiguration with the young god Amor, according to Erich Neumann, presents the myth of the individuation of the benign feminine consciousness. It is not surprising that the appearance of the guiding feminine powers should appear in Morris's work in the form of Apuleius' tale, a tale which, in the view of Neumann and Jung, represents a radical shift in the history of western consciousness. This tale, with its emphasis on the importance of the power of the feminine, appears in Morris's work at a point where the vision of unity becomes increasingly distant. The retelling of Psyche's quest, like the earlier visions of wholeness in The Hollow Land and "Rapunzel," rises out of the atmosphere of conflict once again to state emphatically the possibility of wholeness. For the third time, the vision is not grasped and Morris colors the ending of the tale of the glorious couple with a sadness which emphasizes the distance between the heavenly union of Psyche and Amor and the continuing unredeemed state of the transient earth. Before attempting a picture of the heavenly union, the poet complains:

Alas! I try to think of it in vain,
My lyre is but attuned to tears and pain,
How shall I sing the never-ending day?
(II, 72)

Although this vision of feminine consciousness and final unity remains distant in The Earthly Paradise, the archetypal tale of Psyche's quest looks forward to Morris's late romance The Waters of the Wondrous Isles where the poet's lyre is completely attuned to singing of the "never-ending day" achieved by the unified self. But before Morris can
speak of the vision of wholeness with confidence and welcome the transforming rise of feminine consciousness, he must confront a darker vision. Like the hero of "The Lady of the Land," he must confront the feminine in its dark aspect. The witch from "Rapunzel" must still be dealt with, for her lingering presence is still felt casting a shadow in the darker tales of The Earthly Paradise.

This unaffirmed presence of the malign side of the feminine casts a shadow over the possibility of self-unification. The source of this sceptical attitude towards the union of male and female can partly be found in the events of Morris's own life in the '60's. Much has been ventured about the effect of the Morris, Rossetti, Jane Morris triangle on the poetry of The Earthly Paradise. It is evident from Rossetti's vast number of portraits of the mysterious wife of Morris that this creature was an alluring surface upon which to project the characteristics of anima. That this anima projection contained a malign, destructive aspect is perhaps reflected in the disastrous relationships found in many of the tales of The Earthly Paradise. At the risk of carrying the biographical parallel too far, one notices that the last tale written by Morris, "The Lovers of Gudrun," presents a triangular situation which is suggestive of that which Morris experienced in the decade prior to his trip to Iceland. The Earthly Paradise ends with the months of winter just as Morris's painful decade of the '60's ended with a trip to the wintry clime of Iceland and an interest in the often tragic sagas of northern mythology. In the progress of the monthly tales, Morris has descended from romance towards an irony in which his poetry meets with the inevitable problem of change, despair and death.
Keeping in mind Morris's eventual return to the form of romance, we can view the function of The Earthly Paradise not as an abandonment of all utopian vision, but rather as an exploration of what the social telos should not be. In delineating the earthly paradise, the poem rejects more than it affirms. The wanderers search for a land without old age or death, but all such immortal lands turn out to be hell disguised. The first draft of "The Wanderers Prologue," which was entitled "The Fool's Paradise," contains a series of false paradises to which the wandering pirates of the poem journey. One such land is an Eden in all appearances, but it is inhabited by the dead who remain frozen in the mocking postures of life. The Captain of the wandering crew dreams of a land peopled by the unhappy dead who long for life and of a land of unhappy immortals who crave only for death. Paradise cannot be found in an existence after death or in a state of immortality. The visions of immortality are visions of death in life, prisons of boring repetition and inaction. All mortal life is shadowed by death and the love of immortality, as in the tales of a mortal's love for an immortal, serves only to mock all mortal happiness. Morris, in both The Earthly Paradise and The Life and Death of Jason, has firmly rejected immortality as a prerequisite for an edenic age. In The Life and Death of Jason, Orpheus declines the offers of the Sirens who would grant a life of comfort, free from toil, change and fear. For Orpheus this would be a world of hopeless ennui. Orpheus chooses to remain in that world of action and death that the wanderers of The Earthly Paradise flee from. An existence without strife is one in which a man lives as though he had never been. Like Tennyson, Morris rejects an atrophied bliss of the type
found in "The Lotus Eaters." Orpheus' cry, "Toil rather, suffer and be free," is reminiscent of the final line of Tennyson's "Ulysses," "To strive to seek, to find, and not to yield." Inactivity breeds a death in life, and life without death becomes a living death. The immortals in the captain's dream long for the release of death.

Having rejected the paradise of immortality, Morris's vision turns towards death, which, in the words of Orpheus, "makest life so sweet." Orpheus' rejection of the gifts of the Sirens has been called "a plea against Utopias," it is rather a hinting at the direction in which a true utopia is to be found and what it should consist of. For Morris, the accomplishing of the telos of civilization must take place in the world of strife and death. Once these two dark elements are confronted and affirmed, the building of utopia can take place. The idea of building is here more appropriate than the idea of finding the earthly paradise. The accomplishment of final unity involves the creative function as it is embodied in the anima. As is evident in the darker tales of The Earthly Paradise, the anima also contains a destructive function which must somehow be affirmed. The poetry of the '60's is primarily concerned with the difficult task of confronting the anima's dark, destructive double. As the high priestess of the secrets of both life and death, the anima can teach the poet the truth of Keats' phrase: "Death is the mother of beauty."

In terms of poetic tradition, the appearance of the fatal woman in Pre-Raphaelite poetry and art owes much to a single poem of Keats.

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7Lloyd Wendell Eshleman, A Victorian Rebel: The Life of William Morris, p. 103.
From among Keats' poems, Mario Praz has emphasized the influential importance of "La Belle Dame sans Merci" since it "contains in embryo the whole world of the Pre-Raphaelites and the Symbolists from Swinburne's *Laus Veneris* to certain pictures by Moreau." To place this weight of influence upon Keats' poem is not to say that literature before Keats is by any means void of the presence of the fatal woman, but Keats' poetry held a special place in the estimation of the circle of artists with whom Morris came to be associated. Morris and Burne-Jones fell under the spell of Keats at Oxford, and upon meeting Rosetti, they discovered that the painter-poet believed Keats' poetry to be an unparalleled pinnacle in English verse.

In Keats' "La Belle Dame sans Merci" we find a picture of a world dominated by dark feminine powers. According to Praz, this image of the destructive enchantress comes to dominate the literature of the last half of the nineteenth century, just as the image of the fatal male or Byronic man had ruled much of the literature in the first half of the century.

Within Morris's circle, the fatal woman often dominates the work of Rossetti, and her presence is most apparent in his paintings. Her destructive love can be seen raging forth from the burning city of Troy which forms the background of his portrait of Helen. Helen's hypnotic smile reminds us of the "Gioconda" popularized by Pater's study of Leonardo. Pater's description of Leonardo's woman speaks for the fascination of Rossetti's women as well as for the numerous "Sphinxs" who

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haunt the art and literature of the "fin de siecle": "She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in the deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants . . ."9

This description could be transferred to Rossetti's Helen, who is surrounded by elemental destructive flames just as the "Gioconda" is surrounded by an elemental dead rocky landscape. This destructive female type, as described by Pater, is largely associated with death. She has known the darkness of the tomb and, as a vampire, knows well the death of others. She is a deadly water nymph who, like the ondine in Burne-Jones' "The Depths of the Sea," drags the unwary male to a watery grave. She is a trapper of men with her exotic webs, like the spider who devours her mate.

With Rossetti, the image of this deadly goddess was often projected onto Morris's wife, whose features remain even in the later paintings modeled by Fanny Cornforth and Marie Spartali. The hair and face of the flaming blond Helen are the hair and face of the dark Jane Morris.

The creature which gazes forth from so many of Rossetti's canvases is the cousin, if not the sister, of many of the fateful ladies in the pathetic tales of The Earthly Paradise. Whatever her true character, the dark wife of Morris came to exist like Elizabeth Siddal before her, largely for the purpose of art, an art in which the female figure becomes an image of the dark regions of the soul.

This dark lady with her aura of death and destruction (indeed she is often dead herself as in Millais' portrait of Elizabeth Siddal as the drowned Ophelia) became the Muse and mistress of Morris's great admirer, Swinburne, who dressed her in the clothing of de Sade.\(^\text{10}\)

The sadistic or masochistic woman is an image of the dark side of the "Eternal Feminine," whose alluring charms lead to the mysteries of the grave. The connection of love and death is apparent in Rossetti's obsessive relationship with his dead wife, Elizabeth Siddal. The poet's exhumation of her body reminds us of a scene from Poe and points to the "fin de siecle" obsession which is characterized in Poe's words: "The death of a beautiful woman is without doubt the most poetic subject in the world."\(^\text{11}\)

Given the rising obsession with the image of the fatal woman in the last half of the century, it is not surprising that we should meet her in the developmental course of Morris's artistic achievement. The infernal side of the Eternal Feminine appeared in the form of Swanhilda in *The Hollow Land* and the witch in "Rapunzel." In both these cases she was accompanied by her benign aspect; but increasingly in the poetry of the sixties she appears in her dark form alone, and like the fatal Gudrun, she brings death to those who would yield to her charms.

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\(^{10}\)In Swinburne's poetry, the feminine guide leads the poet into visions of torment. She appears as Dolores, "Our Lady of Pain cruel Faustine and the monstrous Mary Stewart in Chastlard. The dark lady's aspect becomes increasingly characterized by sadism and masochism. The energies of eros become shadowed and eventually dominated by the energies of death.

The dominant role of the fatal woman in this period of Morris's development aligns his poetry of the sixties with much of the art of his contemporaries. His poetry during this period lacks the originality of the earlier and later work. Though this poetry is by no means unique taken outside the context of Morris's course of development, it is of interest in terms of where it leads. The dark vision of the fatal woman is not the end of a development but a necessary stage which will eventually lead to a uniquely bright vision of wholeness. Unlike Swinburne and other of his contemporaries, Morris does not take up residence in the realm of the malign female but passes through that underworld on the way to a more positive vision of feminine energy.

As Morris's goddess becomes darker, she becomes more closely bound to a sombre and darkly mysterious imagery of the world of nature. With her close ties with natural mystery, this dark anima merges with the archetypal mother. It is inevitable that Morris, with this concern for the problem of death and his earthly vision of a utopia, should be drawn towards the image of "The mother as materia; matter." The figure of the eternal mother has a definite place in the development of utopian desires. According to Jung, "Symbols of the mother in a figurative sense

12Jung, "Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype" in Four Archetypes, pp. 19-21. Jung is careful here to point out that the mother archetype, as it appears in the masculine psychic makeup, is never unadulterated: "In a man, the mother-complex is never 'pure,' it is always mixed with the 'anima' archetype." The figure of the mother lies in and behind the anima in that the mother, who provides the first experience of the feminine, serves as a model for the construction of the anima. Since anima and mother are both facets of the eternal feminine, they possess so many elements in common that for our present purposes, there is no need to distinguish between them.

13Ibid, p. 25
appear in things representing the goal of our longing for redemption, such as Paradise, the Kingdom of God, the Heavenly Jerusalem."¹⁴ The images cited here by Jung have a Christian apocalyptic flavor which is excluded from Morris's vision. It was stated earlier that his feminine guide was a goddess of the temporal earth not of the eternal heavens, and it is from the earth that the mother archetype also draws much of its symbolism. "The archetype is often associated with things and places standing for fertility and fruitfulness: the cornucopia, a ploughed field, a garden . . ."¹⁵

Jung goes on to list images of the womb: caves, cooking vessels, etc., and numerous images of matter with which the archetype is identified. The above images, most of them drawn from nature, are associated with the benevolent function of the mother. She is associated with the world's desire, the protection of the womb and the final unity of a magic circle, square or Mandala (the enclosed garden or mandalic form of the natural world). Like the anima, the mother has her dark side in which the imagery of nature becomes malign. The grave appears as an image of the womb, the fertile land becomes a wasteland and the maternal sea is fearfully devouring, peopled with malignant femininity in the form of sirens, ondines and dragons. Here the mother breaks out in the smile of Pater's "Gioconda," whose mysterious features betray her knowledge of the tomb's secrets.

Jung makes clear that the archetype of the mother is essentially ambivalent, thus her frequent appearance as a goddess of fate (Moira, ¹⁴Jung, p. 15.
¹⁵Ibid.
Norns, Atropos, etc.). Her power is for good or ill and her face is like that of Janus.

With Morris, the pursuit of the anima leads back to the essence or matter of which the Eternal Feminine consists. The mother from whom we are born also receives us at death in her capacity as the goddess of earth. As goddess of fate and death she can become a devouring mother or fatal woman. In this latter form, she reigns over much late nineteenth century art. As the sadistic woman, her aspect is transferred to the natural world which, with Swinburne, comes to be seen as a cruel force.\(^{16}\)

Having accepted maternal nature as a guide towards the realization of unity in the self, society and the earth, the visionary's eye must confront and affirm the dark cruel aspect of the feminine body of nature. The maternal goddess who grants the vision of spring and summer also reveals the dark secret of death and winter. It is to death, fate and winter that Morris turns at the end of *The Earthly Paradise*. At the close of the sixties his imagination turned to the cold lands of the north where he was to journey in 1871. During the final years of writing *The Earthly Paradise*, Morris, under the influence of Eirikr Magnusson, had become enthralled with the grim and stoical world of the sagas of northern mythology. In 1869, Morris, with much aid from Magnusson, produced a translation of *The Story of Grettir the Strong*. This interest in saga also produced the last addition to *The Earthly Paradise*, entitled

\(^{16}\)Praz quotes a passage from a study of Swinburne's on Blake which reveals, in language paraphrasing De Sade, how the feminine body of nature has been revealed as a hideous destructive maternal principle: "Behold the ages of men are dead at her (nature's) feet; the blood of the world is on her hands; and her desire is continually toward evil, that she may see the end of things which she hath made." *The Romantic Agony*, pp. 233-234.
"The Lovers of Gudrun," and a translation in 1870 of The Volsunga Saga which was later reworked into the verse rendition Sigurd the Volsung in 1876.

This fascination with the stark culture of the north led to the Icelandic journey which was to be repeated in 1873. Within Morris's theodicy, the trips to Iceland were a pilgrimage to a shrine of the dark mother of the earth. Here Morris was able to confront the earth in her wintry fateful aspect, an aspect which is felt throughout the Eddaic literature with its themes of love, jealous hate and the inevitable death of heroes whose deeds end in the grave. The journey into Iceland with its elemental landscape of ice, fire and turbulent waters was a journey into the primordial barrenness which frames the malevolently maternal "Gioconda." The whole matter of the journey, as May Morris introduces it, indicates a deliberate and difficult abandonment of the vision of pastoral nature and a seeking out of nature in her malign aspect:

... my father was not a seasoned traveller. He had a deep love and knowledge of country things, and was country bred, but his everyday life was necessarily a sedentary one: he was going to exchange this, without any training for six week's hard riding over difficult country in a wild climate, cutting himself off from every possible communication with his own fold—no little thing for a man so deeply-rooted in the home-life.17

The second journey in 1873, as described in the somewhat piecemeal diary of July through August, indicates a deeply felt involvement with the naked vision of nature as a force which denies human life. May Morris describes his attitude as follows:

He was entirely absorbed in the country he went through; it is curious to see how little mention is made of persons. One gets

the impression that for the time he had shaken off his human sympathies, that people did not interest him—he had no need for them—and that he had withdrawn into a frame of mind in which he saw the wilderness in its real loneliness, awful, unloveable and remote from human life—the elemental horrors had seized upon him and perhaps he saw sights and heard sounds from another world than that in which he and his fellow-travellers were moving.18

Morris's confrontation with the malign body of nature in Iceland does not end in a vision as negative as that contained in Swinburne's "A Forsaken Garden." It is not a terminal vision as is Swinburne's picture of self-devouring, barren nature. Morris does meet Swinburne's death goddess, Proserpine, in Iceland, but she is not a final principle as in Swinburne's "The Garden of Proserpine." Morris's confrontation with Iceland forms a transition in which the whole ambivalent form of the feminine body of nature is seen. His pilgrimage to the shrine of primordial nature provided him with what he needed in the development of his vision. That he was aware of a deep change is evident in a passage written after his return to England:

... as I looked up at Charles' wain tonight, all my travel there seemed to come back to me, made solemn and elevated in one moment, till my heart swelled with the wonder of it: surely I have gained a great deal and it was no idle whim that drew me there, but a true instinct for what I needed.19

18May Morris, p. xxxiii.
19May Morris, p. xxxiv.
Chapter 4

THE VISION RETURNED: THE NORTHERN ROMANCES

The benefit which Morris felt he had received as a result of his visitations to Iceland is evident in the new turn his work took around 1888 with the completion of The House of the Wolfings. This portrait of a tribal Germanic world, partly in verse and partly in prose, marks a return to an exploration of the possibilities of romance. From 1888 until his death, the prose romance remained the major form of verbal expression for Morris. Within The House of the Wolfings and its successor, The Roots of the Mountain, we can detect an attempted fusion of Morris's major interests. As well as exemplifying Morris's fascination with utopia and northern saga, the two works demonstrate, in their original decorative formats, Morris's continuing interest in decorative design.

At the end of the seventies, Morris became an active advocate of social change. By the time The House of the Wolfings appeared in print, Morris was already a seasoned lecturer on the politics of socialism which he described as bearing with it "... its own ethics and religion and aesthetics: that is the hope and promise of a new and higher life in all ways."\(^1\) Morris had at last accepted the archetype of unity and the hope of attaining that unity in the social sphere. The remaining years of his life, filled with romances, lectures, essays and designs,

\(^1\) Morris, "Signs of Change," Collected Works, XXIII, p. 80.
testify to a firmness of purpose which was heretofore lacking. His experience of the people and literature of Iceland had added fuel to his vision. Morris greatly admired the hardy courageousness of Iceland's people, and above all he was inspired by the classlessness of their society. The two romances of 1888 and 1889 exhibit a reborn hope for the unification of society.

The two works present a picture of a socialist utopia, not in a classical Greek or Roman atmosphere or in the futuristic setting of a Wellsian fancy, but in a vision of the pastoral existence of northern Germanic tribes before the arrival of Roman influence. Morris's perception of the Teutonic past is here more highly idealized and certainly less Christian than that found in his near contemporary, Charles Kingsley.² Kingsley's Cambridge lectures of 1864 depict, in a nursery tale manner reminiscent of his book The Water Babies, the Teutonic tribes as innocent but strong and quarrelsome "forest children." These forest children, though they admirably destroyed the decadent empire of Rome, would have been, in Kingsley's view, irretrievably corrupted by Rome's wealth had it not been for the grace of Christianity which unified their warring tribes.³ Both Kingsley and Morris display a feeling of British allegiance to national origins in the Teutonic past as opposed to the Mediterranean past. Morris's Teutons, however, are closer

²In a letter to fellow-socialist Andreas Scheu on the fifth of September, 1883, Morris spoke of his early admiration for Kingsley: "I was a good deal influenced by the works of Charles Kingsley, and got into my head therefrom some socio-political ideas which would have developed probably but for the attractions of art and poetry." Henderson, ed., The Letters of William Morris to his Family and Friends, p. 185.

to the noble Celtic men recreated by Yeats than to the naughty pagans depicted by Kingsley. Kingsley's Teutons have a place in an historic linear progression towards improvement at the hands of Christianity, but Morris's vision reveals a people already self-unified who are threatened by linear history in the form of an invading Roman culture which they nevertheless manage to repel.

In his lectures, Morris was fond of drawing parallels between the fall of Rome at the hands of the northern tribes and the hoped for fall of the capitalist empire at the hands of the workers. Speaking of the "Fury of the North," Morris writes:

But even that Fury bore with it things long strange to Rome, which once had been the food its glory fed on: hatred of lies, scorn of riches, contempt of death, faith in the fair fame won by steadfast endurance, honourable love of women: all these things the Northern Fury bore with it, as the mountain torrent bears the gold; and so Rome fell and Europe rose, and the hope of the world was born again. To those that have hearts to understand, this tale of the past is a parable of the days to come.4

In the vision of the past, Morris finds a vision of the events and society of the future. The people of the past are transformed by vision so that they may anticipate the ideal society of some future state. Morris's peoples reject undue wealth and greed and thus form a contrast to the more negative vision of warring hateful tribes found in the *Nibelungenlied* which Morris knew well. Morris's northern tribes are completely peopled with the creatures of visionary romance. The peoples of the past represent, in part, a way of life that has been lost and, more importantly, a way of life that may have never existed but might still be attained.

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The optimistic tone of Morris's "northern" romances joyously contrasts with the frustration, sadness and regret that runs through The Earthly Paradise. Morris, rather than forsaking any possibility of an earthly Eden, has discovered something which is essential for the realization of such a paradise. The House of the Wolfings contains an elaboration of the essential ingredient of an earthly Eden through the story's development of the hero's choice between death and immortality.

The tribal king, Thiodolf, is in love, like many of the heroes in the classical tales of The Earthly Paradise, with a woman of immortal origins. This half-goddess, the Wood Sun, offers Thiodolf a "Dwarf-wrought Hauberk" which will grant him immunity to death in his battles with the invading Romans. Although gravely tempted towards immortality, Thiodolf eventually chooses death. In Thiodolf's decision is found the solution to the fruitless quest of the wanderers for an Eden without death in The Earthly Paradise. The Earthly Paradise becomes possible only after death has been affirmed. The immortality which is granted to Thiodolf when he dons the magic hauberk approximates the atrophied heaven of Tennyson's lotus eaters. In battle, Thiodolf suddenly languishes in a self-centred blissful dream. His immortality severs him from the world and the deeds of men. This alienation is rejected by Morris in favor of a communal vision, a paradise for the tribe of man, not for the individual hero. Here there is no suggestion of a monarchical social vision as in "Rapunzel." This paradise is a state of true communism. The way to such a paradise involves an affirmation of death which will bind the hero to the community of men. Having accepted his mortality, Thiodolf no longer sees his own inevitable death; he sees only "the tale of the Wolfings through the
coming days of earth." Through his affirmation of personal death, Thiodolf exchanges an alienated individual immortality for a collective immortality through a unification with the tribe of the Wolfings.

The history of the Wolfings is called "a tale of the earth." The individual hero becomes dissolved into the existence of the tribe and the tribe is dissolved into the existence of the earth. The affirmation of death is an affirmation of the diurnal course of nature. It is within the "tale of the earth," with its inevitable turning cycle of seasons, that man must find a place for himself. The existence of immortal gods is no concern of men. "As for the rede of the Gods," says Thiodolf, "I know it not, nor may I know it, nor turn it this way or that."

Although The House of the Wolfings does not strictly follow the romantic patterns established earlier in Morris's work, it contains an all important element which is primary to the structure of romance. The importance of the affirmation of death within romance has been intriguingly emphasized in the work of Heinrich Zimmer, in which he detects the importance of such an affirmation in "Gawain and the Green Knight," as well as other tales from Arthurian and eastern sources.  

The central matter of Morris's tale is contained in the relationship of Thiodolf with the feminine figure, the Wood Sun. The hero's confrontation with the Wood Sun constitutes an entry into the ambivalent realm of feminine energy. The Wood Sun's attributes are two-sided, for she is half god, half mortal. She is both a destructive temptress and a maternal initiator into the mysteries of life and death. In Thiodolf's relation to this eternal female, one can detect a similarity to the

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adventures of Gawain as analyzed by Heinrich Zimmer. Both Gawain and Thiodolf are heroes who accept gifts from a tempting female. Both gifts grant immortality, but Gawain fails to give up the magical green girdle at the proper time and must suffer a small wound from the Green Knight's axe. In both cases the trial involves an affirmation of death, but Thiodolf's trial is more successful than Gawain's in that he gives up the gift of the hauberk completely after having tasted its mysteries. A further parallel can be found in Gawain's adventure of Le Chateau Merveil in which Gawain submits to the powers of the eternal feminine within an island castle of maidens described by Zimmer as "the everlasting abode of inexhaustible life, the well of death from which life pours forth in perennial rebirth." Gawain's existence here is akin to the enraptured state of Thiodolf under the influence of the magic hauberk. It is an existence containing a certain bliss but deprived of all action and adventure. Like the people of the captain's dream in the first draft of "The Wanderers Prologue," Thiodolf and Gawain are members of the melancholy dead who yearn for the world of man and nature.

The hero, by rejecting the queen of the castle, withstands the temptation which would transform him into a divine, eternal specter and escapes, transformed, into the world of rebirth. Like Thiodolf he has penetrated the maternal mysteries of life and death and has perceived their true cyclic relationship. In rejecting an eternal existence with the Wood Sun he has rejected only her dark side alone; by choosing life and inevitable death in the cyclic world of man and nature he has

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7 Zimmer, p. 82.
accepted the full dark and light character of the feminine energy embodied in the Wood Sun. To seek only one side of the feminine mystery, life without death, or death with no life or rebirth, is to seek, like the wanderers of The Earthly Paradise, a false Eden where bliss is never complete. The true vision of paradise is to be sought in the natural cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Like Gawain, Thiodolf experiences the journey of the romantic hero into the mysteries of death and rebirth. This journey, which approximates the motion of the sun, creates a unified cycle—circumscribes a mandalic unity which has its center in the natural world. Within this cycle, night and death are necessary coefficients of day and life. In Morris's vision, man's essence is not contrary to this cycle but becomes deeply attuned to its natural flux through a penetration of the feminine mysteries.

The awareness of the whole body of the natural cycle can be linked with Morris's experience of Iceland where he was drawn by "a true instinct for what I needed." What was needed was an affirmation of the inevitability of death and its essential role in the unified cycle of nature. The House of the Wolfings is the tale of such an affirmation. In the language of the sagas, with which the tale is permeated, this romance is a story of the acceptance of being "fey" or fated, a concept which Morris makes synonymous with the inevitable turning wheel of nature.

For Morris, affirmation of mortality is the necessary act for arriving at this final romantic vision. This unification or solifacatio of the individual proceeds to a communal solifacatio of man and the cyclic world of nature. The arrival at such an all-inclusive vision binds the vision of utopia and the vision of romance firmly together.
The deeds of the hero, Thiodolf, are linked to the life of the community. For Thiodolf to accept personal divinity and immortality would be to fail and be forgotten by the world of men. There is no suggestion here of Carlyle's idea of hero worship. Thiodolf's confrontation with the mysteries of life, death and rebirth is the confrontation of a collective ego. Thiodolf's deeds become one with the deeds of the Wolfings. With Carlyle, there is the sense of the hero remaining ever above the community even though the community is bettered by worshipping him. In the world of Morris's tribe, the hero raises up the community and becomes one with its existence, losing his individuality in the communal flow of life.

Nor is Morris's sense of history akin to Carlyle's more linear conception of a history which is "the history of great men."\(^8\) Morris's concept is cyclic and natural--history is seen as a "tale of the earth," which is not a vicious circle or "same dull round," but a benevolent cycle like that of the sun which "ever seeketh Life fashioned out of death." (XIV, 204)

The place of the individual hero is within the unity of the peoples of the earth. His immortality lies within the "tale of the Wolfings through the coming days of Earth." The vision of the hero's place is poetically presented by Thiodolf's daughter, the Hall Sun, who speaks as the voice of complete feminine energy embodying the whole mystery of the natural cycle. Pleading with her half-goddess mother, the Wood Sun, she declares:

Lo! yesterday this was a man, and to-morrow it might have been
The very joy of the people, though never again it were seen;
Yet a part of all they hoped for through all the lapse of years,
To make their laughter happy and dull the sting of tears;

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To quicken all remembrance of deeds that never die,
And death that maketh eager to live as the days go by.
Yea, many a deed had he done as he lay in the dark of the mound;
As the seed-wheat plotteth of spring, laid under the face of the ground
That the foot of the husbandman treadeth, that the wind of the winter wears,
That the turbid cold flood hideth from the constant hope of the years.
This man that should leave in his death his life unto many an one
Wilt thou make him a God of the fearful who live lone under the sun?

I shall bid my mighty father make choice of death in life,
Or life in death victorious and the crowned end of strife.

(XIV, 164-165)

Here the world of man is entwined, as in a woven cloth, with the world of natural flux. This affirmation of the death and the values of daily life in preservation of the community of "kindreds" forms an answer to the "formless and wailing/thoughts" which tormented Jason as well as the Wanderers towards the ever evasive Earthly Paradise. The idyllic vision of community, which is achieved first in The House of the Wolfings and repeatedly throughout the subsequent romances of the eighties and nineties, forms the point where Morris the romancer and poet joins Morris the great socialist. The formula of romance becomes a vehicle for arriving at an idyllic world in which the political x of the "good" is given a definite value. The culminating solifacatio of the crowning of the royal heroic couple becomes a celebration and description of communal unity. In the crowning of the heroic couple, we no longer see a suggestion of monarchy; rather a symbolic celebration of the democratic union of all men.
"The great use of the idyllic in literature," says C. S. Lewis, "is to find and illustrate the good."\(^9\) This application continues to be evident throughout the remainder of Morris's prose romances in which the political utopian function becomes less and less deniable. These romances, especially the two "northern" romances with their prolonged vision of communal life, are realizations of what Northrop Frye calls the proletarian element in romance.\(^10\) Coming as they do from the pen of a man as politically aware as Morris, these works function as propaganda intended to arouse hope and desire for a realizable better world. These romances consistently tell the tale of how such a better world is sought and found, and how it is not found in some ineffable heaven without death or pain but in the very world around us where it lies dormant waiting to be molded from the earth and its mortal inhabitants.

In *The Roots of the Mountain*, the hero, Face of God, does not journey to some land beyond the sea never to return, but journeys towards a unity with the female forces within him. He weds the woman who is most essential to him and becomes happily absorbed into a new life with "the folk" whose existence is identical to that of the Wolfings. The pattern of a quest ending with a transfigured return and a marriage which is already familiar from its unadorned introduction in "Rapunzel" is here embellished with epic warfare and idyllic description.

The hero's name, Face of God or Gold Mane, contains all the suggestion of solification and transcendence that was connected with the

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Prince in "Rapunzel." Like the Prince, Face of God sets forth led by an undefined "longing." Like all heroes who seek unity in the depths of the self, he is led forth instinctively. He begins his journey with the words, "I will go backward—or forward, but will think no more." Led only by "longing," he inevitably meets the feminine creature within him, the Wood Woman whose dwelling is in the dark, secretive forest among a tribe of bandits who wear the skins of wolves, the costume of the desiring self.

In seeking union with this essential female of the tribe of the wolf, Face of God must abandon the more superficial union with his originally intended bride. This bride, however, is only temporarily abandoned, for she too finds a union with a man of the wolf. The tale ends in the grand comic tradition of a mass marriage in which the union of individuals is lost in the union of the tribes of the Face and the Wolf.

In the course of the tale, it is revealed that the House of the Face and that of the Wolf were once unified but were sundered by an evil people, the "dusky men" who drove the tribe from its mountain home. Some descended to the valley and others lived as outlaws in the mountains. The truly political and propagandistic sphere becomes most apparent with the appearance of the undesirable Dusky Men who polarize the romance into an opposition of god-like hero (as evident in the name "Face of God") and demonic enemy. The enemy in romance, as Frye points out, functions on the mythic level as an embodiment of "winter darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life and old age."\(^{11}\) In terms of propaganda, the forces of the Dusky Men provide a vision of the energies of an oppressive

\(^{11}\)Frye, p. 187
system which denies the achievement of personal and social transcendence and unity. In the general mythic scheme, the Dusky Men represent the forces of winter which are annually vanquished by the sun god. In Morris's development of this pattern, these Dusky Men, by reason of their prolonged tyranny, represent an imbalance in the natural cycle. They represent a domination by one side of the natural cycle, an atrophied state in which death and sterility are held as absolutes. The Dusky Men are incomplete creatures who completely lack a feminine side to their being. They are a male race who steal women from other tribes for purposes of reproduction. These beings live in denial of the earth and its fecundity. The victory of the unified tribes of the Face and the Wolf over these creatures of negation constitutes, in mythic terms, a victory over the domination of winter. In political terms, the victory is a defeat of a repressive, exploitative society by the revolutionary forces of free, united and creative men and women.

The political level is here in no way at odds with the mythic level of meaning. The two levels are made compatible by the most basic meaning of the word "revolution" which is firmly ensconced in the pattern of romance. The sense of a turning around forms the very essence of the romance with its imagery of the seasonal cycle. The victory of spring over winter, the profound faith in rebirth to which the romance firmly holds, forever constitutes a revolution in which the liberating powers of man and nature are affirmed.

The idyllic vision of the life among the tribes of the dale and the mountain, contrasted as it is with the sterile, destructive ugliness of the tyrannical Dusky Men, forms a political vision of the good.
Yeats has said of Morris that "He found it enough to hold up, as it were, life as it is to-day beside his visions, and to show how faded its colours were and how sapless it was."\textsuperscript{12} By ceaselessly holding up a vision of the good, Morris participates in the essentially political activity of what Herbert Marcuse has called "the rationality of negation . . . the Great Refusal--the protest against that which is."\textsuperscript{13} Morris's descriptions of pastoral men at one with the great cycle of nature, shrinking neither from life nor death and not "desiring things out of measure" are denials of the values of industrial society. Whether weaving, lecturing on happy work, preserving old buildings or making books, Morris was always holding up this vision so that we might not forget that something better is possible. The political purpose of the romances is realized the minute one recognizes the negation of the repressive existing society and comes to side with the vision of the good which Morris presents. The envisioned life of the northern dale dwellers is not founded on intangible fancies but on the recognizable world of nature to which Morris's eyes were constantly turned. When we turn to the Song of Returning and the vision of abundance with which The Roots of the Mountain closes, we are invited to change our perception of nature as "the same dull round" to a perception that pierces to the core of the cyclic mysteries and finds there a model upon which to base the lives of men.

The political achievement of portraying the good, of envisioning the communal, earthly unity towards which society should direct its

\textsuperscript{12}W. B. Yeats, "The Happiest of the Poets" in Essays and Introductions (New York: Collier, 1968), p. 63.

\textsuperscript{13}Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man (Boston: Beacon, 1969), p. 63.
energies can easily become an escapist pastime if it remains severed from the means by which such a telos can be accomplished. The vision of the Paradiso is perhaps less sublime without the necessary journey through the underworld and up the purgatorial mountain. A utopian vision of the good should properly arouse our desire for that good, but it does not necessarily provide the procedure for gratifying that desire. The utopia stands removed, expressing a lacuna between desire and gratification. The pastoral London of News from Nowhere remains in a distant future and Butler's Erewhon is an anagram for "nowhere."

The vision of the telos of man and society, as pointed out already, is endemic to the final phase of the romance. The unity which contains man, society and nature is the reward of the questing hero. The vision of utopia is an embellishing of the fairy tale phrase, "they lived happily ever after" or, in the words of Morris's ending to The Waters of the Wondrous Isles, "they lived without shame and died without fear." (XX, 387) In Romance and Comedy (especially Dante's Divine Comedy) the vision of telos appears in its proper place as a culmination to a heroic quest which bridges the lacuna between an imperfect state from which all men must start and a state of transcendent completeness where "the inadequate /To fullness groweth."14 The journey and deeds of the hero supply a universal formula for the attainment of the vision of unity. The hero's journey through the essential mysteries and his resulting apotheosis are followed by a return to the world of men who may benefit from the boons which the hero bestows. The greatest of these boons is the very example set by his successful journey. His spirit becomes

14Goethe, Faust, II:12104-5.
installed in the community, making it possible for the community to attain transformation.\textsuperscript{15}

The heroic quest demonstrates the possibility of the attainment of a telos, the birth of a new society. The society of Rome became possible only after the perilous journey of its founder Aeneas, and Athens rested on the glorious deeds of Theseus. The importance of the quest story in all of Morris's late romances demonstrates the central position of the heroic in his political utopian vision. The history of the hero is the model for the history of society. All that remains is for the community to enter fully into the heroic spirit as the hero in his return reenters the community. The appeal to hero worship afforded by the literature of the romantic quest is as important to Morris as the idyllic vision of the good in stimulating political desire and action. The mythic quest shows the way of transcendence to the desiring self. The final prose romances of William Morris are a continual revivification of a guiding myth, and as Joseph Campbell has pointed out, "It is the business of mythology proper, and of the fairy tale, to reveal the specific dangers and techniques of the dark interior way from tragedy to comedy."\textsuperscript{16} The myth of the quest illuminates the road from the gates of the forest where we have lost our way to the culminating comic vision of paradisiacal unity. This is the myth which underlies

\textsuperscript{15}See Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, pp. 36-37. Campbell underlines both the importance and the difficulty of the hero's return to society: "The return and reintegration with society, which is indispensable to the continuous circulation of spiritual energy into the world, and which, from the standpoint of the community, is the justification of the long retreat, the hero himself may find the most difficult requirement of all."

\textsuperscript{16}Campbell, p. 29.
Morris's sense of history, the myth of the return of the golden age. It is a sense of history which appeals not to scientific rational analysis but to desire and imagination.

In 1886, Morris was asked by a newspaper editor to compile a list of books which had made the deepest mark upon his thought. In the category of history, Morris listed books which he described as "uncritical or traditional history." "Almost all these books," said Morris, "are admirable pieces of tale telling: some of them rise into the dignity of prose epics."17 This mythic history is "a tale of the earth." Being "traditional" it ties consciousness to the deeds of the past while at the same time revealing a pattern which generates hope for the future. In Jung's terms, Morris's mythic sense of history exists "in order to connect the life of the past that still exists in us with the life of the present, which threatens to slip away from it." If the past becomes "'insignificant,' devalued, and incapable of revaluation, the savior is lost too."18 The appearance of the hero in Morris's mytho-historic romances is the appearance of that savior out of the myth of the past where "he rises up as the prophet or first-born of a new generation."19 The heroic figure points the way to the golden age, the goal of the myth of history.

It was the mythic sense of history which Morris found appealing in Marx. Although he admitted that the technical aspect of Marx's

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17Morris, Collected Works, XXII, p. xiv.
19Jung, p. 77.
writing was often beyond his grasp, Morris held what he called "the historical part of Capital" in the highest esteem. The mythic element in Marxism which fit so well with Morris's historic views has been described by Mircea Eliade as "the myth of the Golden Age" which "lies at the beginning and end of History." In Morris's evocation of this myth, he sought an appeal to the remnants of primitive mythic consciousness in that audience to whom he directed his lectures. In the lectures the myth is couched, like Marx's, in political terms, but in the popular adventurous form of the romance, the dormant sense of myth is addressed directly.

"If I can't be the laureate of reading men," Morris once declared, "I'll be the laureate of sweating men." It was to these "sweating men" that the work of Morris's last decades was devoted. In an address to the students of the Birmingham Municipal School of Art in 1894, Morris declared that "if we are to make anything of Art, we must awaken in them (the mass of men) that 'divine discontent' which is the mother of improvement in mankind." (XXII, 424) Morris's romances not only arouse discontent by displaying a vision of something better, but they revivify the ancient myth of how the desired state of unity can be obtained.

Marx's classless society, and the consequent disappearance of all historical tensions, find their most exact precedent in the myth of the Golden Age which, according to a number of traditions, lies at the beginning and the end of History. Marx has enriched this venerable myth with a truly messianic Judaeo-Christian ideology; on the one hand, by the prophetic and soteriological function he ascribes to the proletariat; and, on the other, by the final struggle between Good and Evil, which may well be compared with the apocalyptic conflict between Christ and Antichrist, ending in the decisive victory of the former." Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, trans. P. Mairet (London: Fontana Library, 1968), p. 26.

There is truth in the statement of Yeats that Morris "has but one story to tell us,"\(^1\) for in terms of the mythic level of meaning, Morris's prose romances hold firmly to what Joseph Campbell calls the "monomyth" or the circular pattern of departure, initiation and return traced by the hero in his experience of the "rites of passage."\(^2\) In the heroic quest, the process of individuation studied by Jung appears in a pattern of quaternity: departure, labors of the quest, accomplishment of self-unity (marriage with the psychic opposite), and finally the return of the heroic figure. The fourth element here is of primary importance for both Jung and Campbell. The number four is a symbol of unity,\(^3\) and in the pattern of the quest, the fourth stage brings about the unification of society. It relates the deeds of the hero with the world of men. "The hero's main feat," says Jung, "is to overcome the monster of darkness: it is the long-hoped-for and expected triumph of consciousness over the unconscious."\(^4\) This triumph is not to be

\(^1\)Yeats, "The Happiest of the Poets" in Essays and Introductions, p. 61.

\(^2\)Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 30 (diagram).

\(^3\)See Jung, Dream Symbolism in Relation to Alchemy in The Portable Jung, pp. 398-399; see also "The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairytales" in Four Archetypes, pp. 111-117.

misunderstood as an obliteration of unconscious material but as a bringing into consciousness of that which once worked only in the dark. Once brought to light, the once unconscious secrets may accomplish the much desired change in consciousness which may alter man and society.

The mythic four part journey of individuation as outlined by both Jung and Campbell can be found in the body of the most ancient myths. In revivifying the mythic quest, Morris has, in Jung's phrase, "dreamed the myth onwards"\(^5\) that it may not become part of a forgotten past "incapable of revaluation."\(^6\)

Morris's great talent for retelling the old stories of the world is kept alive in the late romances in which the surface embellishments are original but the age-old essence remains the same. The hypnotic retelling of the successful journey of the hero is like the repetitive drawing of a magic circle. It is a ritual act which revivifies the participant as well as the concentrating observer. The reading of such a tale is like the mystic contemplation of an intricate mandala. It is like walking a maze such as those on the floors of some cathedrals where the walker, in tracing the intricate pattern, reproduces the journey to the Holy Land. Like mazes, which are all similar in their awesome function of challenging puzzlement but rarely identical in detail, Morris's last romances maintain interest through the variation of imagery. Where in one tale the quest crosses vast waters dotted with perilous and deceivingly attractive islands, in another the heroic journey follows the torrential course of a vast river wending to the sea.


\(^{6}\)Jung, p. 79
The Story of the Glittering Plain is the first prose romance to fully utilize the pattern of individuation which was given such an unadorned exposition in "Rapunzel." The heroic journey, although present in compacted form, was somewhat overshadowed in the two northern romances by the idyllic description and epic battles with Romans and mountain men. In The Story of the Glittering Plain there is little to distract from the central events of the hero Hallblithe's quest.

Although all the romances of Morris's final period can be considered together because of their distinct four part divisions, it is best for the sake of clarity in examining those divisions to deal with the four part pattern first as it appears within a single work. The first stage of the quest, called the stage of separation or departure by Joseph Campbell, is illustrated by Hallblithe's discovery that his intended bride has been stolen by pirates from the sea. The adventure begins with the hero's insight that he is lacking something. He is an incomplete being having been severed from his feminine half. The quest thus starts in the tragic realm of heroic flaws and symbolic dismemberment. The hero, like Adam the primal man and hero of the primal tragedy, has been deprived of the female form which was once wholly part of his being. The lost woman's tribal name is the Hostage, which indicates that she must be ransomed by means of the hero's ritual descent through difficult trials and death. This first stage which precedes the labors of the quest parallels that sense of "Divine discontent" which Morris spoke of in his lectures. In identifying with the heroic figure, the reader is called upon to identify with his initial feelings of incompleteness.
The invitation to adventure is issued initially by three wanderers—one young but "dark and sad," the second old, and the third very old and feeble. They seek a land of eternal life where old age and sorrow can be forgotten. In their initial appearance they represent three aspects of the hero in the course of life, but before the hero is aware of his loss he has no use for such a quest for mysteries like those the wanderers seek. Following the departure of the three searchers, the women of the tribe announce the theft of the hero's future bride. The female voices beckon the hero to commence his search for what has been lost, and Hallblithe's sister brings him armor and weapons for the quest. The lost unity of hero and anima can only be retrieved through the hero's continued attentiveness to feminine power wherever it may appear.

Hallblithe's next meeting is with a man in a boat whose function, like that of Charon, is to allow the soul passage into the realm of mystery and death. The character of this boatman betrays his connections with the darker realms of the unconscious. He is at home with the sea and acts as a threshold guardian for those who would seek passage across the ocean of the unconscious. He is a thief whose name, the Puny Fox, connects him with the animal elements within the dark regions of the psyche. Although he turns out to be an aid to the hero, his beneficial nature is hidden behind a malicious deceitfulness. His flippant deceitfulness, his talents as a "skin changer," his animal amorality and finally his hidden ability to help the hero in his great quest, mark the Puny Fox as a manifestation of the trickster figure.7 This trickster

7See Jung, "On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure" in Four Archetypes, pp. 135-152.
embodies the negative animal level of Hallblithe's being which the hero's rational ego rebels against. Hallblithe's confrontation with this scintillating figure takes on the form of an initiatory trial in which the trickster is not to be overcome by physical prowess but by incredible restraint and acceptance. Hallblithe is seen throughout the tale to succumb with difficulty to the complex and seemingly misleading web of the boatman's guidance.

The first sea journey of the hero ends with the arrival at an island peopled by thieves, the kinsmen of the trickster. Upon this island, Hallblithe dreams of his destined bride who urges him to seek her in the land of the Glittering Plain. The hero, though severed from his feminine half, can successfully fulfill his quest by remaining attuned to the guidance of feminine voices within the soul.

The next figure that wells from the hero's unconscious is that which is common in the fairy tale literature, the old man. The old man bestows wisdom on the hero that will allow him to survive his stay among the thieves of the island. Hallblithe must speak few words and restrain his actions to the utmost. The subduing of the ego is the key to receiving the aid of the amoral animal figures of the unconscious. The hero witnesses a fight between the thieves and three of the hero's kinsmen who are overcome and killed, but Hallblithe may not speak a word lest he too die. The appearance of the trickster and the old man relate the hero's quest to the unconscious past. Both these figures are ancestral and relate the hero's consciousness to a half forgotten primitive state. The trickster, according to Jung, is noted for his "animal unconsciousness," but this does not restrict him to a level
which is inferior to the conscious mind. "The trickster is a primitive 'cosmic' being of divine-animal nature, on the one hand superior to man because of his superhuman qualities, and on the other hand inferior to him because of his unreason and unconsciousness."\(^8\) At the same time that he points to our origins in the past, the trickster points towards transformation in the future. "He is a forerunner of the savior and like him, God, man, and animal at once."\(^9\) Thus he contains three distinct stages of psychic development—unconsciousness, fragmented consciousness and transfigured, completed consciousness. The appearance of such ancestral figures in Morris's romances, like those of the northern tribes in the two preceding works, supplies the historic element which was lacking in the works before Morris's return from Iceland. The hero's confrontation with such figures reminds us that future unity is not available to a consciousness which is severed from its origins. By submitting to the whims of the primitive ancestral powers, the hero gains passage with the old man to the land of the Glittering Plain.

At this point one would expect the hero, accompanied by the fatherly figure of the old man, to arrive like Aeneas and Odysseus at the land of the dead, but what is found in the Glittering Plain is not Hades but a tempting lotus eater's paradise of eternal atrophied youth. Hallblithe here learns, like the earlier hero Thiodolf, of the natural place of man by observing an unnatural existence in which life and death are mixed in disorder. The land is called by two other names: The Acre of the Undying, and The Land of Living Men. These names are ironic, for

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\(^8\) Jung, "On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure," p. 144.

\(^9\) Jung, p. 143.
as Hallblithe discovers there can be no true meaningful life without death and strife. Hallblithe's questioning words to his aged companion the Sea Eagle could well be addressed to Tennyson's lotus eaters:

O Eagle of the Sea, thou hast thy youth again: what then wilt thou do with it? Wilt thou not weary for the moonlit main, and the washing of waves and the dashing spray, and thy fellows all glistening with the brine? Where now shall be the alien shores before three, and the landing for fame, and departure for the gain of goods? Wilt thou forget the ship's black side, and the dripping of the windward oars, as the squall falleth on when the sun hath arisen, and the sail tuggeth hard on the sheet, and the ship lieth over and the lads shout against the whistle of the wind? Has the spear fallen from thine hand, and hast thou buried the sword of thy fathers in the grave from which thy body hath escaped?

(XIV, 256)

The Glittering Plain is truly the paradise of the escapist. For Morris it is a hideous place in that there is no activity. It is a beautiful land filled with the work of draftsmen, but we see no man creating these works. The inhabitants are like the idle rich who surround themselves with art but create none themselves. This paradise, although lovely in appearance, is sterile and incomplete. Its incompleteness is obvious to the questing hero, for he finds there neither the mysteries of death nor the promise of unity with his anima, the Hostage. Hallblithe is subjected to temptation by the daughter of the King of this deathless land but resists her love which would hold him forever in this atrophied state. Hallblithe proceeds to the stage of the quest in which death is met and affirmed. His rejection of the false paradise prepares him for a meeting with death. Seeking to escape from the Glittering Plain he journeys into a wasteland in the mountains. Without food or water the hero strides forth to meet death. At this point he is fully conscious that his deeds are incomplete but also aware
that the life of the kindred continues:

Now is my last hour come; and here is Hallblithe of the Raven perishing, with his deeds undone and his longing unfulfilled, and his bridal-bed acold for ever. Long may the House of the Raven abide and flourish, with many a man and maiden, valiant and fair and fruitful! O kindred, cast thy blessing on this man about to die here, doing none otherwise than ye would have him!

(XIV, 280)

The acceptance of death leads to the hero's awareness of his dissolution in the cycle of eternity and constitutes the highest point of his journey. From this point the cycle of the quest returns to its starting point. Hallblithe awakes from his meeting with death to behold again the three wanderers who appeared at the beginning of the quest. Hallblithe returns to the Glittering Plain leading these three spirits of unrest who are then abandoned in this false eden, shed by the hero like an old skin. They are manifestations of a longing for escape which the hero has overcome. Having returned to the Glittering Plain, the hero, in a dream, gains prophetic aid from the king's daughter who shows him a book of pictures which predicts Hallblithe's union with his bride. The hero has gained power over the dark tempting feminine elements and is able now to gain aid and inspiration from what was once dangerous. He guilds a boat in which he is able to retrace his journey over the ocean without aid from any boatman. The waters which once held mysterious dangers are now familiar waters of renewed life over which the hero floats at ease to the island of thieves. Here he is reunited with the Hostage through the aid of the trickster, Puny Fox. Upon his return, Hallblithe gains control over the trickster and not only elicits his aid but exposes his web of lies and gains his lifelong friendship. The Puny Fox is taken home by the hero and his bride and absorbed into
the life of the tribe. The hero is completed in the union with his feminine counterpart and in a union with his amoral animal self, the primitive trickster. The instinctual energies of the trickster, if not repressed, become an aid to the hero and an essential part of his final unity. The trickster, though often expelled like a scapegoat, is here incorporated, like Autolycus in The Winter's Tale, into the new unified society. With the hero's return, the circular pattern of the monomyth is complete. It is the hero's chief danger that he will not return but, like Galahad, remain in some Sarras beyond the sea and later be assumed into the heavens. A Galahad is of no use to Morris, whose heroes' greatest purpose is their return to resuscitate society with the example of their success and their sensitive awareness of the mysteries of life and death. Throughout the later romances of William Morris, the pattern of departure and return to the world of men remains unbroken. The pattern is not so much a continuing circle but a spiral in which the hero and society are moved from a lower imperfect circle to a higher more unified cycle. The romantic monomyth begins in the area of tragedy and moves to the final vision of comic redemption. From Hallblithe's opening loss and dismemberment in being severed from the female element, we move to a comic ending involving unity and gain. From Hallblithe's initial infernal journey over dark waters to a land of thieves, we rise to a paradisiacal vision of joy and reunion.

The pattern of individuation that appears in The Story of the Glittering Plain and is retained throughout the late romances is decidedly more complex than the earlier romance patterns of "Rapunzel" and The Hollow Land. Not only has the final vision of unity become more
complex in its inclusion of society, but the means of attaining that
unity, the labors of the quest, have become more diverse. Such added
complexity indicates that Morris has become more attuned to the config­
urations of myth. The appearance of ancestral figures such as the
primitive trickster archetype, completely absent in the earlier romances,
attest to Morris's new awareness of mythic history. The diverse nature
of the anima, which becomes more apparent in The Well at the World's End,
demonstrates a greater understanding of the complexity as well as the
importance of the feminine forces within the psyche. The importance of
feminine consciousness as a central principle in the conscious union of
man, nature and society is attested to in The Waters of the Wondrous
Isles in which the feminine consciousness is celebrated in much the same
manner as in Apuleius's tale of Psyche.

The last four romances all follow the quaternal pattern of
individuation set forth in The Story of the Glittering Plain. Having
examined that pattern in its first appearance in a single romance, we
may now more easily examine the remaining romances as a whole under the
four headings which describe the stages of the quest: departure, labors,
attainment of self-unity and the return with the resulting final unity
of society and nature.

The quest may often begin, as in The Story of the Glittering
Plain, with the hero's discovery of something lacking in himself or in
the world around him. This discovery may take on the form of a vague
discontent or undefined yearning for adventure, as it does with Ralph in
The Well at the World's End, or it may involve a specific loss such as
Osberne's loss of the girl, Elfhild, in The Sundering Flood. The idea
of initial separation is underlined in the story of Osberne by the geography which is split by the impassable river. Osberne's discovery of his female counterpart is both a meeting and a separation since they are held apart by the rushing waters.

In The Wood Beyond the World the hero, Golden Walter, is introduced in the tragic state of being sundered from his world and battered by an unsuccessful union with a woman:

But when they had been wedded some six months he found by manifest tokens, that his fairness was not so much to her but that she must seek to the foulness of one worser than he in all ways; wherefore his rest departed from him, whereas he hated her for her untruth and her hatred of him; yet would the sound of her voice, as she came and went in the house, make his heart beat; and the sight of her stirred desire within him, so that he longed for her to be sweet and kind with him, and deemed that, might it be so, he should forget all the evil gone by. But it was not so; for ever when she saw him, her face changed, and her hatred of him became manifest, and howsoever she were sweet with others, with him she was hard and sour.

(XVII, 1)

The mistake of having chosen wrongly in marriage, of having chosen a woman who could not complete the missing half of the hero, taints the beauties of the world where the hero walks: "... the chambers of his father's house, yea the very streets of the city, became loathsome to him; and yet he called to mind that the world was wide and he but a young man." (XVII, 1-2) Although divided from his anima in a misguided marriage, Walter still possesses the instinctual urge for the quest. His yearning, like Ralph's, is vague because the hero has not yet discovered the driving powers within the self.

Once the heroic figure is aware of the insufficiency within himself or his surroundings, he becomes open to the direction of the instinctual driving forces which seek to sever him further from his
present world and propel him away into the caverns of the self. Often the heroic figure is enslaved by his or her initial condition as in the case of Morris's great heroine, Birdalone, in The Waters of the Wondrous Isles. Birdalone is nurtured by the maternal element, dwelling among woods and waters, educated by the benevolent wise Wood Mother but held captive by the dark maternal element of the witch. Although she is only instinctually aware of it, through what Yeats has called her "innocent desire of the body,“¹⁰ she lacks the masculine counterpart of herself. Like her prototype, Psyche, who is at first kept in a prison of unconsciousness by the tyrannical mother goddess Venus, Birdalone's development is stifled by the maternal powers of the witch. Her departure from her forest home is due to conscious rebellion against the dark mother who would prevent her development, and to the as yet unconscious desire to complete herself in finding the animus within her soul. Being female, Birdalone is more closely aligned with the mysterious feminine powers of nature, but her need for union with the male elements of the self is as intense as the hero's need for union with the female elements.

The opening chapters of the life of the heroic figure often contain references to the hero's or heroine's association with mysterious powers. The heroic figure is frequently set apart from other men by a special endowment or strange origins. Hercules strangled snakes in his cradle, Romulus and Remus were mothered by a she-wolf, the young King Arthur was watched over by the old magician Merlin, and Jason was raised by the centaur, Chiron. In The Well at the World's End, we find the familiar opening fairy tale formula in which the hero is the third son

¹⁰Yeats, "The Happiest of the Poets," p. 57.
who is not allowed to venture into the world of adventure with the older brothers. This hero, Ralph, is also set apart in that he "is one with whom all women are in love." His appeal to all feminine forces assures that he will be watched over by benevolent spirits and will be successful in his quest. The child Osberne in The Sundering Flood is befriended by a dwarf, an ancient earth spirit from the mountains who takes him to his cave and shows him mysteries and promises him a magic sword. Osberne's destined bride, Elfhild, is likewise given boons by the spirits of the earth and is watched over by a kindly old lady with magical talents. Golden Walter in The Wood beyond the World is marked as a special being by his name which connects him, like the hero of Morris's "Rapunzel," with the alchemical gold of unity and the life-endowing rays of the sun.

In Morris's romances, the special traits of the hero are of a twofold significance. They first of all embellish the theme of disunity which dominates the first stage of the pattern of individuation. The hero's special endowments set him apart from his society and heighten the sense of discontent, but these traits are also boons in that they can facilitate the journey into the unconscious in quest for the power necessary to remedy the disunity of nature and society. It is the heroic figure's connections with the unconscious that sever him from his society and also aid in the unification of that society. The special traits of the hero create the feeling of "Divine discontent" that Morris sought to arouse in his lectures. The heroic figure experiences the discontent which will become "the mother of improvement in mankind."

Often the heroic figure is the abandoned child, like Oedipus or Jason. Morris's Birdalone is the stolen child, taken in infancy by the
Witch Wife. Through her early association with the dark magic of the witch and the mother of abundance, Habundia, she is endowed with the powers which make her at home in the woods and waters of the natural world. She is transformed by the witch for awhile into a cow which represents an initiation into the maternal mysteries which eventually give her power over the Witch Wife. Before her heroic journey, she is granted the gift of hairs from the Earth Mother Habundia's head, which she may burn when in need of aid. The heroic female, raised by the elements of the earth, will never be far from the helpful powers which the earth provides.

Having been nurtured by the maternal energies of earth, the heroine, Birdalone, gains a mastery over the dark powers of the witch. The witch's instruments aid the departure of the heroine, who steals the witch's magic boat and proceeds across the waters of an unconscious, which is not dark as in the beginning of Hallblithe's sea journey but familiar as part of the feminine element that Birdalone embodies. The departure by water, an initial plunge into feminine elements, also occurs in The Wood beyond the World. Here Walter's quest is announced by the appearance of three mysterious figures. The vague yearning for adventure begins to take on a definite object. The hero, having been severed from his familiar surroundings, becomes open to the appearance of figures from the unconscious. Three times Walter observes a vision of a tall, arrogant woman accompanied by a lovely slave girl and a loathsome and destructive dwarf who represents the animal energies of the self which appeared in the more likeable form of the trickster in the quest of Hallblithe. These three figures, appearing to the hero at a
distance, announce by their presence that the hero's journey is no ordinary one but a trip propelled by mysterious powers within the self.

The departure of Ralph is propelled by a female friend who urges him to try the quest and grants him a talisman which will aid him in his quest. Unknown to Ralph, his receiving of this talisman was ordained by a wise woman who granted that the wearer would be led to the waters of the well. From the moment of departure, the heroic figure is guided by often unseen figures from the soul.

Osberne's departure becomes mandatory when he hears that the girl Elfhild has been carried away by slave traders. With his magical sword and the guidance of his dwarf friend, he is ready to undertake the quest for final union with the female object which was always at a distance across the rushing river. His quest is encouraged by the dwarf spirit of earth. "Call to mind," says this guiding spirit to Osberne, "what thou thyself saidst unto Elfhild, that the only way to bridge the Sundering Flood, is for one of you or both, to wander wide in the world." (XXI, 133). By wandering down the length of the great river, the hero may unlock the mysteries of the waters which bring not only separation and death but union and life.

The labors of heroic figures begin with their arrival within the unconscious realm. This zone is unfamiliar to the as yet incomplete quester and provides great dangers to the acrophobic. In its initial appearance, the unconscious is a region of confused shifting shapes, warring factors, incomprehensible dangers and primal darkness. Vast bodies of water are often encountered in the capacity of symbols for the unknown realm. Hallblithe's meeting with the ambiguous trickster takes
place on an ocean strand, and the major phases of his journey involve a
sea journey. Walter's last vision of the three figures of witch, maid,
and dwarf takes place by the sea as he watches them board a ship, and
the first stage of Walter's quest involves a perilous sea journey. A
huge mysterious lake is a central image in The Waters of the Wondrous
Isles where the heroine flees the witch by traversing the unexplored
waters of her being. The image of a great river dominates Morris's
final romance, The Sundering Flood, and it is by means of following the
course of this river towards the sea that the hero eventually attains
the reward of union with the heroine. When first seen by Osberne, this
river is an impassable, dangerous obstacle, flowing swiftly through dark
clefts and caverns.

The dark and fluctuating forms represented by oceans, lakes and
rivers often appear with an equivalent mysteriousness in the image of
the primeval forest untrammeled by conscious understanding. "Ah how
hard a thing it is to tell of that wood, savage and harsh and dense, the
thought of which renews my fear."11 This is the wood where Dante lost
his way at the beginning of his soul's pilgrimage. This is also the
perilous wood which Ralph enters in The Well at the World's End. Here,
where beasts and outlaws roam and the bands of the men of the Dry Tree
and the forces of the Burg of the Four Firths clash in battle, Ralph is
beset by confusion. The hero, stopping at an inn before his entrance
into the wood, has met the female form, the anima, with whom he is
destined to unite, but he has not recognized her importance and goes on
his way. His awareness is still obscured and he cannot choose the right

11Dante, Inferno, I:4-6.
path within the wood. All choices seem equally fatal, and the hero hears many contradictory tales of the dangers of going to the bold men of the Dry Tree or to the Burg of the Four Firths. He meets a lovely woman held captive by men of the Burg and frees her. He then meets his anima again and still does not recognize her importance even though she too has now taken up the quest for the well. A trickster called Roger appears who convinces the hero that the safe way lies through the Burg of the Four Firths where Ralph follows him and discovers a dangerous city of slave-owning warriors. Here is the land of the hero's shadow where all men are the opposite of the hero's nature. Ralph has now met the case of figures that dwell within the unexplored self. The negating shadows of the Burg represent the animal instinctual energies as well as all the characteristics which the good hero has avoided. His introduction to the perils of the unconscious is now complete, but more confusion lies in store. His deceitful guide reveals himself as one of the enemies of the Burg, a member of the knights of the Dry Tree of whom the hero has heard evil tales. The guide helps Ralph escape from the city and leads him once more into the forest.

The entrance of the unconscious world of wood or water involves the introduction of a cast of characters who play their parts within the being of the hero. On the heroic journey, the hero may meet these representations of the energies within him. They may appear in the benign forms of the hero's beloved and destined bride, helpful animal figures as in folk tales, wise old man or woman, benign mother or power-bestowing father. These inner beings may also be malign such as the dark enchantress, devouring mother, tyrant father, shadow, and perilous animal
forms such as the familiar dragon. Such polarized forms are often mixed with amoral figures such as the trickster, Puny Fox, or Roger, who misleads Ralph into the dangerous city but also helps him escape.

The multiplicity of forms within the unconscious in these late romances demonstrates Morris's enlarged understanding of that region. Among the diverse forms that Morris's questers meet with, the anima (or animus in the case of Birdalone) retains its central position. The diversity of her guises, not found in the earlier romances, reinforces her importance in the labyrinthian windings of the quest.

The heroic figure may also encounter situations which indicate possibilities and choices in his development. Often these situations will represent a choice to be avoided, a warning of the consequences the hero will suffer lest he change his course of action. Such situations, inner dramas staged by the fragmented characters of the unconscious for the hero's temptation or enlightenment, often resemble an elaborate psychomachia.

The principal actors in Walter's adventure in *The Wood beyond the World* are the witch, the maiden and the dwarf. Before he can confront this mysterious trio, he must traverse a range of barren mountains which surround the land of the soul. The mountain pass is watched by a guardian, an old man who possesses the attributes of a tyrannical father. He has attained his position by killing his predecessor and violently withholds his secrets from Ralph. The hero defies the old man's warnings and proceeds to the mountain pass. This encounter of father and son reminds us that the quest for the unified self is one of maturation in which the boy must succeed to the knowledge and power
of the father whether the father is willing or not. Having surmounted this barrier, the hero easily passes the mountains and arrives at the secluded beautiful land of the soul. This land, though lovely to behold, is a garden with a curse, for here the hero's beautiful anima serves as a thrall to the witch and the dwarf.

Walter first meets the enslaved maiden, who instructs him in what he must do to gain her freedom. The secret to the hero's success here, as in *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, lies not in deeds of arms but in submission and restraint. He must trust the words of his anima, submit to the advances of the witch, and endure patiently the loathsome behavior of the dwarf. The dark side of one's being must be affirmed before it can be subdued or made serviceable. The hero must here make love to the witch but in so doing must not forget his love for the enslaved maiden.

Walter's endurance of the presence of the dwarf constitutes an encounter with the shadow which, because of the hero's extremely light and good character, appears in the contrasting form of something hideous, dark and malign. The role of shadow need not be allocated to a single character but may be diffused among a number of figures, each of which may represent a different degree of the shadow's power. In *The Wood beyond the World*, a second shadow figure appears in the character of the King's Son. In the dwarf, the negative potential of the hero appears unadorned, but in the King's Son, the shadow powers are more subtle. The appellation, "King's Son," is often that held by the hero of folk

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12Jung has recounted a dream of his own in which he encountered "first and second editions of the shadow." See *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 218.
tale. Walter, though of humble origins, is also a King's Son since, if he is successful, he stands to gain the throne of the completed self. This other King's Son, who is the lover of the witch, is a shadowy reflection of Walter. His character serves as a warning of what Walter may become if he does not maintain the submission prescribed for him by the anima. The hero, having abandoned the voice of the ego which calls for action, tyranny and exploitation, sees the ego externally personified in this figure of the King's Son. The ego is merely a portion of the self, which if given complete command takes itself as a totality. The King's Son seeks to gain the enslaved maiden, not through love and obedience, but through tyrannical force and lust. The ego, if it gains complete control, is deaf to the voices of the other creatures within the self. These other voices can only be heard if the noisy ego is put away. In putting away the ego, it becomes externalized as part of the egoless hero's shadow. The King's Son represents the condition of self-deception which Walter could have fallen into had he not taken the road of submission to the feminine cry within him.

The attributes of the hero's shadow, divided between two characters in The Wood beyond the World, can be diffused even further as is the case in The Sundering Flood. Here the hero's quest largely involves deeds of arms. Osberne is the warrior hero and his success relies less on contemplated restraint or insight into confused situations than on headlong action led on by his magic sword. His journey is one long encounter with the force of the shadow which is here represented not as one or two men, but as whole tribes of evil-doers. They are, like the Dusky Men in The Roots of the Mountain, not personal shadows of the
hero, but collective shadows representing all the negative possibilities within a society. This clear-cut polarity between the hero's ascendent society and the shadow forces which oppose that society makes for the most propagandistic form of the romance. The closer the hero and his companions are aligned to the bright images of the sun, spring and the life of the day, the closer the shadow figures will be aligned with the images of darkness, winter and night. The opposing forces of the shadow in such polarized romances carry names denoting darkness such as the Black Skinners in *The Sundering Flood* and the Dusky Men in *The Roots of the Mountain*. The main body of the hero's adventures involves victorious battles with a shadow which is easily identified in its polarized location. These encounters are simplistic and the hero rarely is beset with the confusion that Ralph experiences when choosing among the ambivalent forms of the perilous forest. Osberne's attainment of his bride depends on little more than a cleansing of the land by subduing those elements that would threaten both the final marriage and the reinforcement of the hero's society.

These forces of the shadow bear a resemblance to the nature of the trickster in that both are associated with the primitive level of animal unconsciousness. The fact that such primitive energy appears in a wholly negative form in the images of dwarf, Dusky Men and Black Skinners indicates that there is an undesirable element in the ancestral past of which Morris was much aware. A complete return to the past would be a return to unconscious barbarism and would represent the hero's defeat at the hands of the dragon of the unconscious. The ancestral past must be drawn into consciousness and tempered in such a way as to help accomplish
the future vision of unity. The appearance of the Dusky Men and Black Skinners demonstrates that Morris was in no way naive in his vision of the tribal world of the past. His lectures contain frequent warnings against a possible return to barbarism. Such a return is seen by Jung as a possible result of a consciousness cut off from its unconscious origins. By confronting our shadowy origins, a new wholeness is made possible. The subduing of the Black Skinners is the hero's victory over the dragon of the unacknowledged unconscious.

The adventures on the way to the life-fulfilling Well at the end of the world involve more complex encounters than those of hero and shadow. Being closely aligned with the powers of the eternal feminine, Ralph is able to confront these powers in a single ambivalent form. The hero of *The Wood beyond the World* meets with two women, one dark and one light, but Ralph is able to meet both the malign and benign aspects within one creature. Within the wood he frees a captive woman who draws his interest away from his yet unrecognized anima. He later is brought out of the wood to the Castle of Abundance in a land of pastoral innocence where he is to await the arrival of this woman. For the hero this is a false paradise where he falls into languishment over his love for the woman who is called the Lady of Abundance, the goddess of the people in this lethargic land. She is worshipped as the source of the vegetable world and is thought to be deathless.

On the most apparent level of plot, this Lady of Abundance appears as a distinct character existing apart from the hero's anima, but in terms of the psychology of individuation she is but another manifestation of the anima. She is a psychopomp to the mysteries of feminine
energies within the self, energies which the hero must confront and affirm before he can be finally unified with his psychic opposite. Her title of Lady of Abundance indicates that she is, among other things, a manifestation of the maternal aspect of the anima.

In his love for this Lady, Ralph temporarily forgets his quest. He is under the spell of the maternal goddess and is held in the powers of the womb where he forgets all action. Finally his enchantress appears and her ambivalent aspect evolves further. She appears to Ralph in the company of two men, one of whom has just, as he thinks, slain the other who is his friend. He accuses the Lady of having perpetrated this horrible deed. Her beauty has deranged him and caused him to kill his own friend through a jealousy spawned by the Lady's wiles. The anima now appears, not as the benevolent mother, but as the vile enchantress whose beauty, like Gudrun's, brings strife and death. The maternal aspect of the anima is as much a power of sterility and death as she is a power of fecundity and life. She has drunk from the Well which Ralph seeks and holds knowledge of its secret, but she is also queen of the company of warriors whose symbol is the Dry Tree of the wasteland. This goddess promises Ralph that she will lead him to the marvelous Well, but something stands in their way. The jealous partner of the goddess, the Knight of the Sun, stands in the way of the hero's fulfillment of the quest through the guidance of the maternal anima. This knight is of the same class of shadow figure as the King's Son in the earlier romance. His name indicates an attribute of the hero, his association with the life-giving sun. Here, as with the King's Son, the title is a misnomer which conceals the figure's darker nature. The Knight of the Sun is no
more than what Freud called "His Majesty the Ego." The sun here does not symbolize a solifacatio but an ego which thinks itself to be omnipotent and complete. The knight's appearance, like that of the King's Son, serves to gravely warn Ralph of what may happen if his ego, in the service of untamed instincts, gains control and deceives him with the thought that a part of the self is equal to the whole. The Knight of the Sun seeks to tyrannically control the energy of anima. By the destructive use of the will and a deaf response to all feminine voices, he would imprison this goddess of abundance and withhold her fecund powers of which he has no understanding.

Ralph and the Lady of Abundance flee from this destructive figure, but Ralph's initiation into her maternal love is interrupted by this knight's second appearance in which he kills the Lady of Abundance in a fit of jealousy. The power of the ego to destroy the feminine powers of the self is here made painfully evident to Ralph who immediately slays this apparition of the ego and proceeds, now sadly but also receptively, on his journey.

Birdalone too must encounter the maternal goddess in her quest, but her purpose is not to unite herself further with feminine energies but to avoid being enslaved completely by these energies. Birdalone must also succeed to the position of the mother in such a way that she is in command of that position. Her childhood under the tyranny of the Witch-Mother is a period of maternal domination. The extent of this domination is made manifest in the witch's punishment of Birdalone. The heroine is transformed temporarily into a cow, during which period Birdalone loses all consciousness and is totally imprisoned by the limited role of animal
Birdalone's story is more than a mirror image of the masculine quest for unity. Hers is the mythic tale of the struggle and rise to consciousness of the feminine principle which Morris served so faithfully. The patriarchal male consciousness in its opposition to a primitive matriarchal consciousness, may easily cut itself off from the feminine energies required for a new wholeness. Birdalone, like Psyche, bridges the gap between maternal unconsciousness and male consciousness. She brings the feminine principle into the conscious light of the world, an event which is mandatory for the completion of unified consciousness.

After her escape from the witch's prison of unconsciousness, Birdalone's adventures consist of encounters with various aspects of an untempered maternal goddess. Her journey through the waters and the islands therein is a journey through the body of the mother goddess. This is a body of a feminine energy which lacks its male counterpart, and the conditions of the various isles seen in Birdalone's journey depict unbalanced states of nature.

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14Erich Neumann takes the Psyche Figure to be an archetype in its own right. As such, she, as well as Birdalone, represents something more than the anima. The "Psyche Archetype" comes to stand for the totality of the psyche in either a man or a woman. If this is taken to be the case, then the story of Psyche and the parallel story of Birdalone are stories of the individuation of consciousness itself. See *Amor and Psyche*, p. 141.
The dominance of the witch's sister is reflected in the name of the first island, The Isle of Increase Unsought, where we find, in Yeats' words, a "disordered abundance." Here we witness nature deprived of its essential cyclic movement: The island is a primeval place where all things exist statically. All things to the witch queen of this place exist in the present, for she has no ability to remember events. She exists in an eternal atrophy, an unconsciousness like that within the womb.

Due to the witch's lack of memory, Birdalone is able to escape her. Birdalone already has a degree of command over the feminine energies of the mother but only enough to save herself. She is not able to take the three women slaves whom she meets on the island with her. In order to gain aid for the three captives and completely overcome the power of the witch, Birdalone must look to the masculine powers just as Psyche looked for aid in the masculine powers of Zeus's eagle and the lusty goat-god Pan.

The second isle on Birdalone's journey also displays the effects of the tyranny of the goddess. The Isle of the Young and the Old is peopled by an aged man and a group of children who all exist on a level of animal semi-awareness much like the rabbits and other small creatures which Birdalone finds there playing with the children who never grow up. Here death awaits the old man, but he has no past since his memory is gone. Here there is no growth, and like the witch of the first isle, things exist in an eternal motionless present.

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The next two islands visited by the wandering heroine express lucidly the central curse of the Wondrous Isles. This is the curse of the severed self, masculine separated from feminine. On the Isle of the Kings, Birdalone visits a vast castle peopled by lordly men who are frozen in statuesque imitation of life. They stand in the central hall around a bier upon which lies a dead queen. The Isle of the Queens contains the reverse of this image, for here the stiff silent ladies stand forever in mourning over a dead king. Both these people are mere shadows of themselves, incomplete beings frozen into inaction.

One last mystery remains in this journey through the body of the goddess. In the Isle of Nothing, Birdalone experiences the undisguised nature of the devouring womb. Here is found the bottom of the dark side of the great mother, the empty womb, the void which is the negation of all abundance. Having descended to the roots of the dark mother, Birdalone's knowledge and command of her femininity is complete. The Isle of Nothing is no trap for her since she holds command of the benign mother, Habundia. Burning one of Habundia's magic hairs, Birdalone is led safely back to the edge of the dark isle. Reborn from the great womb, she proceeds to the world of men to find the animus which will complete her being.

At a certain point in the quest, the heroic figure must recognize his reliance on aid from the sexual opposite who makes up the other half of the soul. At the end of her watery journey, Birdalone arrives at the Castle of the Quest where she enters the world of her animus. Here she becomes a woman whom all men love. She meets the lovers of the three women who are enslaved on the Isle of Increase Unsought and elicits their
aid. The three men set off to break the witch's enchantment and free their brides. Among the three men, Birdalone identifies the knight who is her destined groom.

While anxiously awaiting the return of the three knights, the heroine ventures to a forbidden spot, the Valley of the Greywehters, where great phallic stones stand, the remains of giant male spirits of earth. Here Birdalone asks for a message concerning her union with her chosen groom. Following her invocation, a black knight appears who is a servant of the dread Knight of the Red Hold. In this knight, Birdalone first experiences the dark side of the male animus. Any relationship with such a figure may prove fatal to the heroine. This knight may deliver her up to his master who will love her and then destroy her. The Red Knight of the Red Hold, the unrestrained dark animus, arrives and kills the Black Knight and drags away the heroine. Here Birdalone experiences the root of the malign animus just as she experienced the radical mystery of the dark mother. She is exposed to the undisguised destructiveness of the male but is saved from annihilation by the aid of the benevolent animus powers she has already elicited from the three knights who, having returned with their brides, come to save her. Birdalone has thrown herself over to the will of the masculine power within, and through their guidance has looked upon the malign figure of the male and returned unscathed.¹⁶

¹⁶This is equivalent to Psyche's initiation into male mysteries when she is to be sacrificed to the devouring god upon the mountain and is rescued by the benign male in the form of the unseen Amor. See Neumann, Amor and Psyche, pp. 61-63.
Ralph too, having killed the will of his ego in slaying the Knight of the Sun, submits himself to feminine guidance. The goddess, although bodily removed by the domination of the egoist knight, can never be completely disposed of. She was a single manifestation of a power that continually surrounds the hero "whom all women love" throughout his quest. The power of the Lady of Abundance continues to direct Ralph towards his goal. She has met Ralph's destined bride, Ursula, and granted her the necessary wisdom to accomplish the quest for the Well. The Lady of Abundance appears to the hero in a dream and introduces him to the final shape in which his anima will appear. The energy of the anima has not been destroyed; it has only assumed a new guise. The anima now appears to Ralph as the maid Ursula, whom Ralph has met, but not recognized as his destined mate. Ursula tells Ralph that he must seek her if he is to find the Well. Having removed the obstruction of the ego and submitted to the inner feminine voice, the hero can now perceive the tasks that lie ahead. Feminine aid follows the hero along the road to the Well and when Ralph is captured by the soldiers of Utterbol, he gains his freedom because of the love that the Lord's wife feels for him.

The key to Walter's success in The Wood beyond the World is likewise governed by the will of the feminine. He must restrain himself and may not display his love for the maid or resist the whims of the witch. The answer to the problem of freeing the beautiful form of the anima is, as in the medieval tale of Gawain and Dame Ragnell, to grant sovereignty to the woman. Through the hero's submission, the anima is able to free herself. The slave maiden of the enchanted wood stealthily

17Zimmer, The King and the Corpse, pp. 93-95.
arranges matters so that the egoist King's Son is destroyed by the witch who then destroys herself, leaving the maid free to flee with Walter. All that stands in the couple's way is the gruesome figure of the dwarf, the animal shadow of the hero, which Walter destroys thus removing the lust and destruction which would barricade the way to union with the maid.

Birdalone too must restrain herself concerning her animus. Union must be forced; Birdalone's chosen groom is entangled with another woman. In order to avoid the destructive triangle she journeys onward awaiting the turning of fate. She goes to wait until her instinct announces the time of union, and in going she returns again to her beginnings. She finds her true mortal mother from whom she was stolen by the Wood Witch and lives with her while awaiting the call to union.

Having confronted, fought with, subdued or submitted to the elements of the unconscious realm in their various manifestations, the hero or heroine will often be faced with the necessity of reincorporating these elements into the self which is moving rapidly towards a final unity. The energy of the shadow, like that of the goddess in The Well at the World's End, cannot be destroyed, only transformed. The shadow, having been overcome in its most threatening form, may return begging for reconciliation.

The heroic figure must recognize that this representation of all that he is not contains beneficent elements which may serve in the hero's self-completion. The shadow, as seen in Puny Fox of The Story of the Glittering Plain, is often an embodiment of animal powers and amoral deceits. Such instinctual, crafty energy is indeed a useful tool if it does not come to dominate the other energies of the psyche. For Walter,
who has slain the shadow in the vicious shape of the dwarf, the shadow form reappears in the form of a primitive tribe called by the totemic name, the Bears. These creatures like the animal power they stand for, are extremely dangerous, but with the aid of the maiden, Walter and his companion are able to gain the friendship of these creatures. These beings, once ruled by the dark witch, now submit to the glorious feminine partner of the hero and crown her their queen. The freeing of the anima constitutes a conscious return to a natural order of fecundity, and the maiden displays her powers of abundance by renewing withered flowers with her touch. The shadowy tribe of the Bears, like the trickster Puny Fox and numerous rogues of comic drama, is absorbed into this renewed natural order.

Ralph is reintroduced to his shadow when he meets the wild half-man, Bull Shockhead, a member of a violent slave-owning tribe that waylays the hero and his company. The wild man is physically subdued by Ralph and then enlisted for the hero's aid. Like the animals and manikins of fairy tales, Bull Shockhead becomes a great help to the hero. This embodiment of instinctual energy is left behind by the hero during the last portion of the journey, and in the hero's absence the wild man accomplishes deeds of prowess and frees the city of Utterbol from its evil king.

The final stage of the journey is often characterized by the facility with which the heroic figure moves towards the goal. The last stage often involves a return to the origins of the quest where the appointed partner awaits unification with the heroic figure. The return followed by the prize is the pattern found in The Glittering Plain and it
is repeated in *The Waters of the Wondrous Isles*. Here Birdalone's final journey is a return to her beginnings. Returning over the feminine waters after the death of her natural mother, she finds the islands transformed for the better. Having moved so close to her self-completion, the land which was once cursed by a feminine tyranny is now renewed and moves rapidly towards a balanced state. The Isle of Nothing is now a populated land of pastoral fertility. On the Isle of the Queens, Birdalone meets active, desiring women who seek union with their male half. In the Isle of the Kings, men seek knowledge of their lost feminine partners. These people, like the heroine herself, are on the verge of unity with the other side of their souls. The Isle of the Young and the Old is now freed from its static condition, and Birdalone finds that the old man has been granted the gift of death and the children now grow within the reinstated natural cycle of life and death. The Isle of Increase Unsought alone appears barren and cursed. The enchantment of the witch has been broken by the three heroes who freed the three maiden friends of Birdalone. The burgeoning fecundity of the place was an illusion of the witch which is now gone, leaving visible the true condition of the dark mother. The land is overrun with rank weeds and smells of stagnation and death. The heroine tries to leave hurriedly but discovers that her magic boat, stolen from her witch mother, has disappeared. The heroine, no longer needing such aid, plunges into the water which is so familiar to her nature. Giving herself up totally to the waters of the subconscious, she is saved and drawn ashore by the wood through the power of the benign mother, Habundia.

In *The Well at the World's End*, the bride is only a part of the reward that awaits the hero. After Ralph's escape from the soldiers of
Utterbol, he meets his anima again in a vast wood and this time recognizes her as his bride. Together they proceed to the house of the aged hermit, an ancient master of the secrets of the Well. In contrast to the jealous father figure who guarded the threshold to the Wood beyond the World, this guardian is willing to help the hero succeed to the powers which he possesses. After learning the old hermit's wisdom, Ralph and Ursula enter an inner sanctum wherein lie the primal mysteries of death and life. They pass the last boundary of consciousness, the Wall of the World beyond, where lie regions normally avoided by consciousness. They pass through a land in which the extremes of nature appear unadorned in all their primal intensity. Here Morris's descriptions are reminiscent of his Iceland journals, for the land is primarily one of fire and ice. The couple pass the lava wastes of the Mountains of Fire, on the other side of which the starkness of the winter season awaits them. They spend the winter in a place designated by the instruction of the wise man and await the return of spring when their union will be consummated in marriage. All this while, Ralph, like his counterpart Walter in The Wood beyond the World, has been subservient to the will of his mate, withholding patiently his embraces until Ursula shall call an end to this abstinence with the coming of spring. In the spring their marriage is witnessed by the innocent pastoral people of the nearby fruitful valley.

The mystical marriage of the soul of the hero is the last preparation for the attainment of the mystery of the Well which lies beyond the last wasteland that must be traversed. This vast waste, littered with the dried bodies of those who have failed in the quest, holds few perils for the united couple. The attainment of their reward is now only a matter of time.
Walter's final trial before the joyous completion of his quest comes in the form of a nocturnal separation from the maid. After leaving the land of the Bears, the couple sunder in the mountains and Walter plunges into a deep despair. The maid, however, soon returns and tells him that the separation was merely a test of his love for her. The hero has been reminded of the grave importance of the feminine pools of power within him. Having met the anima and submitted to her guidance, the hero cannot continue without her. Her existence has been made conscious and now must be incorporated into the self or the hero will fail at the very last and languish and die like the failed hero of Morris's poem, "The Lady of the Land."

Osberne, in *The Sundering Flood*, having spent most of his search by battling the forces of the shadow, must endure one final trial, the rendezvous with death. In the pattern of Osberne's quest, the hero must sink to the very edge of life and, abandoned by the fame of his past deeds of prowess, stare into the abyss of death. Osberne abandons his valiant deeds, and in one last hope of meeting the lost girl Elfhild, he sets out to return to his homeland. On the way he is beguiled by felons who knife him and leave him for dead. At this point the guardian forces which watch the hero, acting like the "deus ex machina" of classical comedy, arrive to direct the hero's rebirth. The dwarf, spirit of the earth, brings the body of Osberne to a wise hermit who tends the hero's wounds and makes him ready for a meeting with the lost bride. Just as Osberne has been propelled by his guiding spirit, his future bride has been guided in her journey by a wise woman, a spirit of maternal energy. She brings Elfhild across The Sundering Flood and, together with Osberne's
dwarf guide, accomplishes the union of hero and bride. The hero, having descended to the pit of death and tragic loss, awakens to the beginning of the comic finale of renewal.

In all but one of Morris's last four romances, the reward of the quest appears in the form of the mystical marriage in the soul. For Birdalonde, the return to her beginnings in the wood of Evilshaw marks the time for union with her male mate, Arthur. Within the primal wood, the knight Arthur lives now as a madman, and like Lancelot of Arthurian legend who also lived like an animal in the forest, his cure will be delivered by female hands.

This knight, like Osberne, has sunk to the bottom of his fortunes but will be united with his lost love with the aid of the heroine's wise maternal guardian. After the heroic couple's union, they are brought together with their friends who also wander the forest in search of them. The Green Knight and his bride, together with the woman whose place in Arthur's heart was usurped by Birdalonde, are rescued from the robbers of the wood. The comic theme of union and reconciliation prevails, and the lone woman is unified in lasting friendship with the two couples.

The Well at the World's End presents a reward which lies beyond the mystic marriage or is rather an extension of that marriage into a broader field of imagery. The mystical marriage is a prerequisite for the involvement in the mystery of the Well. The Well of the waters of life lies beyond the waters of death from which rises the Dry Tree. The couple pass by this tree of death and arrive at the ocean shore. The ocean, source of fluctuating life, recedes with the tide and reveals the Well from which the couple drinks the "elixer vitae." The water of the
Well grants not immortality as Ralph has often been told, but a deep oneness with the natural cycle. The couple is told by an old man who witnesses their springtime marriage that: "true it is that the water of that Well shall cause a man to thrive in all ways, and to live through many generations of men, maybe, in honour and good living; but it may not keep any man alive for ever; for so have the Gods given us the gift of death lest we weary of life." (XIX, 65)

The Well is the "omphalos" or the center of the world where lies the secret of the world. It is the central point of the mandala whose labyrinthian ways the hero has trod. In finding the center he attains the mystery of unity of self and the world. The Well lies beneath the ocean when the tide is in; it therefore lies within the collective unconscious and is the foremost and deepest secret of that realm. Here within the circle of the Well, the hero and his bride receive not only the gift of life but "the gift of death lest we weary of life." Within the "omphalos," the world navel, life and death appear in their true form as parts of one great unity. The union of the bride and heroic groom becomes a part of an even greater unity, the unity of the whole world.

This culminating unity, as in the other late romances, includes human society. When Ralph and Ursula drink the water of the Well, they toast "To the Earth and the World of Manfolk." (XIX, 83) It is the triumphant return to the world of men to which the greater portion of the second volume is devoted. The return journey proceeds through a transformed land where what was once oppressed is now liberated and what was

18Jung, Dream Symbolism in Relation to Alchemy, p. 330. "The sea is the symbol of the collective unconscious because unfathomed depths lie concealed beneath its reflecting surface."
sterile bears fruit. Ralph meets his shadowy companion the wildman, Bull Shockhead, who having been reconciled with the hero has worked in his behalf and become king of the once oppressive kingdom of Utterbol. The Land of Abundance, having lost its former queen, recognizes the hero's bride as her successor and crowns her as their goddess of abundance. The remainder of the journey is concerned with deeds of arms in which the hero and his retinue form a reconstituted society and drive out the elements of the collective shadow which, like the Dusky Men of The Roots of the Mountain, cannot be absorbed into the new social order.

The appearance here of violence in the final moments before social unification is in accord with Morris's advocation of armed revolutionary violence. Shaw tells us that Morris was at one with his hero John Ball in affirming the necessity of insurrection.\(^1^9\) In an essay entitled "Useful Work versus Useless Toil" printed in 1884, Morris indicates that although he had no great love for violence, its necessity must often be affirmed:

> It may be that the best we can hope to see is that struggle getting sharper and bitterer day by day, until it breaks out openly at last into the slaughter of men by actual warfare instead of by the slower crueler methods of "peaceful" commerce. If we live to see that, we shall live to see much; for it will mean the rich classes grown conscious of their own wrong and robbery, and consciously defending them by open violence; and then the end will be drawing near.

(XXIII, 119)

The final stages of the return are marked by comic devices which emphasize the themes of reconciliation and formation of a new social order. The once ominous men of the Dry Tree are welcomed into the society

founded around the hero and his bride. The incompatible slave traders of the Burg and robbers of the forest are cast out like the scapegoats of classical comedy. Ralph's appearance before his parents utilizes the device of disguise in which the lost hero reveals himself suddenly like the burst of light from the rising sun.

The necessity for the return of the hero to human society is emphatic in the conclusion of The Wood beyond the World. Here we return to the imagery of the early poem "Rapunzel" where the solifacatio of the self is presented in terms of the Royal Couple entering the great renewed city, the world of man as a work of deliberate organized geometry. The men of this city are aware of their dependence on the directions of the unconscious, for they wait at the border of the wilderness to accept the first man who can exit from that region unscathed and renewed as their ruler. The hero must return with his gifts to society but society must also be ready to accept his arrival.

It appears odd in the light of Morris's socialism that this romance returns to the image of royalty. Whether or not Morris was conscious of this possible contradiction in his social vision, we cannot say. Because of the political implications of the royal couple image, the archetypal content and the social vision remain momentarily at odds. The description of the new society which forms the last three chapters of the work gives the feeling that Morris was not quite comfortable with the image of king and queen, for he takes pains to describe the social leveling wrought by King Walter: "... and first he bade open the prison-doors, and feed the needy and clothe them, and make good cheer to all men, high, low, rich and unrich." (XVII, 128) When the king dies, Morris tells
us that the needy did not lament him, "for no needy had he left in his own land." (XVII, 128) This great renewed city becomes a community of tribal equality, but the heroic figure remains enthroned rather than being absorbed into the community like the earlier hero, Thiodolf.

In spite of this flaw, *The Wood beyond the World* remained highly susceptible to political interpretation, for one early critic, in a review in *The Spectator*, wrote that the work is an allegory of labor and capital.21 The social vision at the end of Birdalone's quest is troubled by no such unfortunate flaw. Birdalone's reunion with her companions and long absent groom in the wood of Evilshaw is a reinnstitution of human society on a small scale, a new order born from the wilderness of the unconscious. This small group is only a beginning, however, since the five friends decide they must choose a city of men to dwell in. They leave the magical wood and enter a nearby city where they are welcomed not as kings and queens but essential members of the human family. Throughout the remainder of their years, the heroine and her friends pass easily back and forth between the city and the wood, between the conscious world of men and the secretive world of spirits and gods.

The finale to Birdalone's quest is Morris's affirmation of the myth of Psyche on his own terms. In his retelling of that myth in *The Earthly Paradise*, Psyche's deification was a departure from the world of man and nature, a negative vision of the inaccessibility of the eternal feminine. Here in the late romances, the eternal feminine remains an

21 The review appeared in *The Spectator* sometime in the week previous to 10 July 1895. Morris's letter in response to this review is found in *Collected Works*, XVII, p. xxxix (see footnote 22 in Chapter 1, Introduction, p. 11).
active principle in the life of society and nature, not a dark unconscious mother or a remote goddess of the heavens. The power of the eternal female provides the guidance necessary to bridge the gap between the conscious and the unconscious. Having come to an understanding of both realms, Birdalone and her community continually bring unconscious material into the conscious world of men where it can be of aid. The heroic figures cause the unconscious waters of the Well to flow into the cities of men where these waters nurture the life of a unified society.

Morris's late romances, with their optimistic vision of social renewal, are unique products of late romanticism. He provides us with the landscape of "sweetness and light" which is lacking in much of the work of his contemporaries. Tennyson too used the romantic patterns of heroic quest in his great poem, Idylls of the King, but his story is often tinted with the sadness of defeat. Tennyson's heroes either never arrive at their goal or having arrived, like Galahad, they are transformed but never return with their treasure to the world of men. The great mystery of the Grail remains removed, and its brief appearance in the court of Arthur does more to sunder than to unify the society of men. The ancient pagan symbolism of fecund renewal which perhaps dwells in the background of the Grail mythology is never realized; its life-giving energy is never brought back by the questing heroes. In place of Tennyson's sublime Christian icon, Morris gives us the pagan waters of life brimming from the Well at the end of the world. His heroes share the power of these waters with the world of men. The Well is not beyond the world, like the dwelling place of the Grail, but at the "omphalos," the navel of the world-body, the center of the walled garden of the natural world in which men must dwell.
Tennyson too envisions a telos of social existence in the image of the knighthood of the Round Table, but the great hero of this ideal community, Arthur, passes beyond the sea to a magic world beyond the reach of men. In Arthur's words—"The old order changeth, yielding place to new" (XIII, 408)—and in Tennyson's closing image—"And the new sun rose bringing the new year" (XIII, 469)—there is a glimmer of a social telos in the offing, but the dominant tone is one of loss. The "new year" is not presented in the glorious robes with which Morris clothes the utopian finales of his romances.

Morris was never content to stop with the sun rising upon a new year. The rising of the sun is the coronation of the unified self whose transforming journey over the natural world of men forms a great part of the tale which Morris told and told again.

There is little reason to doubt that Morris, had he lived longer, would have continued the quasi-religious practice of what Shaw called "his prose word-weaving." Judging from the prose fragments that Morris left behind, the prose romance was the art form which Morris held as central to his sensibility. The repeated telling of essentially the same tale of joyous transformation reveals Morris's revolutionary fervor. It was never good enough to say something well once and be done with it; if it was worth saying, Morris, like the persuasive orator that he was, would say it again and again.

Morris's ritualistic repetition is not a product of ennui but exuberance and, because of its ritual nature, indicates the close proximity

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of his romances to their mythic roots. The patterns of the tales, rather than being reduced to meaningless aesthetic embroideries, are given back the burden of meaning which was once their rightful property. "Literature," said Yeats, "dwindles to a mere chronicle of circumstances, or passionless fantasies and passionless meditations, unless it is constantly flooded with the passions and beliefs of ancient times."23 The appearance of the ancient archetypes within Morris's tales and the "passions and beliefs" with which these archetypal images are fused raise Morris's work far above a "passionless" aesthetic product. The pagan passion of the past, as retained in folk tale and myth and which forms the undercurrent of much medieval romance, is retained in Morris's romances. The archetypal images and patterns of the romance only become aesthetic decorations for those who are not attuned to those patterns. If one seeks out these patterns, the interplay of otherwise possibly stale images is given life, and one perceives the grand images of hero and heroine, anima and animus absorbed in the great evolution of unity. The image of the Well at the World's End is no longer a pleasingly mysterious picture but a living vision of the unity of the world, man and the self.

Morris presents an essentially pagan vision of unity, the union of man and nature. The centrality of the feminine body of nature marks Morris's work as a primarily matriarchal vision. The power of the feminine is always the means of redemption and attainment of unity. His positive vision of the feminine contrasts strongly with the dark sado-masochistic fantasies of Swinburne and other "fin de siecle" worshippers

23Yeats, "The Celtic Element in Literature" in Essays and Introductions, p. 185.
of the fatal woman. The feminine angel of Morris may lead one to the mysteries of the grave but always returns one to the light of an abundant natural world. Morris's guide was always that mother of the Wondrous Isles, Habundia, whose garments are formed from the face of the earth.

As a socialist, an artist, a myth maker and high priest of the feminine mysteries, Morris was an "unacknowledged legislator" of his age. Amid the birth pangs of the modern age he found a guiding truth welling from the mythic past. The following words of C. G. Jung may be comfortably applied to the historical place of Morris, a man who in times much out of joint where Arnold's "ignorant armies clash by night," was able to uphold the bright, glorious eternally relevant myth of rebirth and unification:

An epoch is like an individual; it has its own limitations of conscious outlook and therefore requires a compensatory adjustment. This is effected by the collective unconscious in that a poet, a seer or a leader allows himself to be guided by the unexpressed desire of his times and shows the way to the attainment of that which everyone blindly craves and expects.  

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