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Literature as mandala

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Literature as Mandala

by

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presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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May 18, 1994
My project, "Literature as Mandala," closely examines three non-traditional authors through the archetypal theories of Carl Gustav Jung, combined with close critical readings of text and narrative function. It will focus on Jung's conception of the Mandala, a meditative and circular art form which achieves meaning through the balance of diametrically opposed archetypes. The readings described below demonstrate literature as a mandalic art form, one whose success lies in "circumambulation," through defining the singular in terms of a mythical and realistic whole.

One of Jorge Luis Borges' *Labyrinths*, "TLON, UQBAR, ORBUS TERTIUS," maps the courtyard at the center of the mandala. Combined with specific references to other texts from Labyrinths, Ficciones, and The Aleph and Other Stories, "TLON, UQBAR, ORBUS TERTIUS" illuminates what Borges views as the power of projective idealistic thought. "TLON" culminates Borges' fascination with labyrinthine logic and imagery. The labyrinth can represent any externally imposed logic system; for example, the left-brain's inhibition of right brain creative or mystical experience, the realization of eros denied by the constraining fences of *logos*. Borges' labyrinth represents social structures from which individuals must escape to discover the larger context of the self. In terms of the mandala, the defeat of repressive logical structures frees the individual to explore the entire field of personal being within a collective unconsciousness.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, in its twenty unnumbered chapters, creates a circular pattern of time. Marquez weaves a narrative web of archetypal character patterns and mythic perception. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* runs the gamut of archetypal personalities, defining the mandala's center through characters who face each other from its circumference. The text documents a community's fall from paradise to apocalypse, where labyrinths of logic slowly destroy the Buendia family. Myth and magic are crucial to Marquez, who takes fantastic things and makes them real, and from the opposite end of the spectrum, the real seems fantastic.

My final chapter examines myth and heroic quest patterns in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*. Morrison's text unites the contrasts of Borges' societal and ideological structure and Marquez's magical realism. This chapter explores masculine and feminine quest patterns and how individuals escape environmental labyrinths to experience what Jung calls the numinous, a spiritual transcendence of space, causality, and linear time. In Jungian terms, the hero retreats from society to explore the collective unconscious and his or her role in relation to it. More significantly, *Song of Solomon* outlines a family's heritage and the need for myth within it. The quest defines the field of the mandala, where the hero's boon is the recognition of the context and central meaning of his or her personal mandala.
To David,
who opened my mind

To Veronica,
who opened my heart

And To Jennifer,
who nurtured both.
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Introduction

The mandala, a representation of the cosmos characterized by concentric divisions and archetypal images, signifies the unification of opposites within art and artistic patterns. Not only are these general components archetypal to human expression, but they are central to the field of literature and narrative. Specifically, the circular pattern of the mandala is prevalent in literature through the discourse of conscious and unconscious text, archetypal characters, and mythical context. This project examines the texts of Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and Toni Morrison, identifying the presence and play of mandalic contexts in postmodern literature.

Carl Gustav Jung, in his analytical psychology, noticed mandalic patterns in his patients' drawings. He understood consciousness as it emerges from the unconscious, a hierarchical, logical structure which gradually imposes control over the fields of the personal and collective unconscious. These logical labyrinths, what he calls "mandala symbolism," develop from the collective unconscious and emerge from an archetypal human desire for structure. The mandala, as a circular and archetypal signification, brings conflicting elements of consciousness and unconsciousness into union in a moment of mandalic recognition, where the observer, patient, or reader perceives all of the elements of context as a synchronic and unified representation.

In the process of individuation, i.e., the development of the human mind, psychological balance is often skewed by inflation, where the ego (the conscious self) grows to the point that it identifies
itself as the whole psyche. In its proper sense, however, individuation is the process of restoring balance between conscious and unconscious elements of personality. These two elements combine to constitute "the Self," which includes "the whole range of psychic phenomena in man. It expresses the unity of personality as a whole" ("Psychological Types," 6: 460).

The mandala expresses the recognition of conscious and unconscious context in art, which interact like components of personality. Through individuation, the balanced individual comprehends the conscious and unconscious as equally essential:

This process is, in effect, the spontaneous realization of the whole man. The ego-conscious personality is only a part of the man, and its life does not yet represent his total life. The more he is merely 'I,' the more he splits himself in opposition to him. But since every living thing strives for wholeness, the inevitable one-sidedness of our conscious life is continually being corrected and compensated by the universal human being in us, whose goal is the ultimate integration of conscious and unconscious, or better, the assimilation of the ego to a wider personality. ("On the Nature of Dreams," 8: 292)

The mandala, similarly, is the recognition of the Self, of the roles played by divisions in the psyche in relation to the whole. The mandala, as a pattern of art, can dedicate itself to the integration of both its creator and its audience through text.
Der Psyche, from the original German, translates directly as "the soul." While Bruno Bettelheim attempts to read this distinction into Freud in *Freud and Man’s Soul*, Jung generally alludes to the concept of soul through the whole of his writings. Here lies the major distinction between Freud and Jung. Freud believed every action or significant event could be attributed to some conscious or unconscious motive peculiar to the individual personality. Jung's break with Freud (and actual estrangement, as they were colleagues) arose from his belief in the human spirit as a fundamental aspect of personality. Freud's arguments were controversial enough, but at least they could be reconciled with some degree of empiricism. Jung's theories, however, suffered in the shadows of the world's addiction to Freudian thought, forced to wait decades for recognition and consideration.

What Freud calls the "psyche," Jung refers to more specifically as "the mind." Jung accommodates both mental and spiritual distinctions: where the *psyche* signifies spirit, the *mind* refers to 'what the brain does;' the mind's actions in physical relationships determine the nature of the *psyche*. He further stratifies Freud's concepts by dividing the unconscious into the personal unconscious, which denotes the whole unconscious as Freud understood it, as well as Jung's understanding of the "collective unconscious." The personal unconsciousness possesses the field of everything which was once conscious but is now repressed either by active choice or by cached (stored) memories pushed out of a conscious mind which needs the
space. But Jung also postulates the unconscious of the human community, what he calls the collective unconscious.

The collective unconscious suggests an inherent archetypal programming in the human animal at birth. Therefore, it is not acquired, but innate:

...no more than a potentiality handed down to us from primordial times in the specific form of mnemonic images or inherited in the anatomical structure of the brain. There are no inborn ideas, but there are inborn possibilities of ideas that set bounds to even the boldest fantasy and keep our fantasy activity within certain categories: a priori ideas, as it were, the existence of which cannot be ascertained except from their effects."

("The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature," 15: 80)

This "collective" itself may well include, in a hierarchical pattern, an unconscious related to immediate genetic heritage. Accordingly, what Jung termed as "racial" memory (the term is purely genetic), may be further divided into cultural and environmental distinctions. Psychologically, an extended family can claim ownership to its own collective unconscious. Just as Jung demarcates the territory of the personal unconscious, degrees of immediacy in the collective unconscious can also be established. Marquez, for example, makes this specific distinction in the community of Macondo and the Buendia family.

"Archetypes," and Jung's consideration of them follow the work of Jakob Burckhardt, who called archetypes "primordial images"
An archetype is unobservable, and thus impossible to represent. The archetype itself, encoded by generations of typical behavior patterns, is encrypted and inaccessible, except through its re-presentation in the individual. Whereas archetypes may be universal in the collective unconscious, their representations in art as archetypal images are not. The image itself is metaphor, a screen upon which the archetype plays itself. The reader must keep in mind this distinction of signification whenever archetypal contexts are discussed in this text. Authors do not express archetypes in text; they express archetypal situations through archetypal images.

Jung's concept of the collective unconscious of course contradicts Locke's tabula rasa, the theory that personality is imprinted from birth upon a blank slate. His theory is both scientifically and theoretically plausible; it accounts for the residual effects of the evolution of the human mind. Aesthetically and theoretically, the mandala itself is an archetypal pattern in the collective unconscious, essential to the human expressive process. In individual therapy, Jung encouraged his patients to express their situations through drawing and painting. What he observed in a great deal of the representations were circular patterns including details of color and abstract symbol that mirrored the tone of conflicts in personality. In successive representations, he noticed not so much new or different images, but an evolution of the existing "mandalas." He concluded that unified circular patterns of art and the expression of typical situations in them were archetypal patterns of expression, arising from the collective unconscious. Jung went on to demonstrate the mandala
in a diverse range of cultural circumstances, ranging from Chinese and eastern Indian traditions to the sand paintings of the Navajo. Circular forms in artistic expression represent an understanding of life as a unified and continual whole, and the "squaring of the circle" signifies the human attempt at structural comprehension within it ("Concerning Mandala Symbolism," 9: 368).

As meditative art, the mandala serves in a mystical and spiritual capacity, with oracular roots akin to the I Ching. Interpretation of a mandala in a Jungian reading must incorporate and value its spiritual implications. Its contemplation encourages an individual immersion in the self, a relaxation of the ego, to combine with the presence of both the personal and collective unconscious. When the individual can see beyond the immediate temporality of the art's medium and tangible presence, he or she perceives it in a space between the art and individual, as an imaginative union of subject and object.

Accordingly, mandalic art is not only that art which makes ostensible displays of these distinctions. Mandala is present wherever an artist portrays conscious and unconscious components of personality in discourse. Narrative, in this sense, is the author's mandalic expression. It reaches toward its audience, combining its conscious and unconscious elements in a movement regarded by the reader as "meaningful." This textual and symbolic discourse is Mandala; I invoke the metaphor to equate properties identical to both visual and written mandalas.

The mandala incorporates both microcosm and macrocosm, as the artist examines the interior of the Self and its interconnectedness
with place in community and the Cosmos. As with Jung's patients, the individual who examines the mandala he or she creates explores themselves in microcosm, as a single life in a dynamic continuum ("Concerning Mandala Symbolism," 9i, 358). At the same time, the immediacy of the self implies that the same mandala symbolizes everything significant in the personal sphere of that individual, allowing for interpretations of the nature of the Cosmos. Conversely, the individual who considers a macrocosm cannot help but interpret its significance into the personal sphere. The mandala's "magic" lies in the harmony it allows. By placing individuals into discourse with their universe, the mandala facilitates a recognition of an independent and symbiotic communal relationship.

The predominant form in mandalic pattern frames a circular field within an external and tangent square. (plate 1) Outside this circle, outside the boundary of the mandala, lies chaos. In the case of the Tibetan Wheel of Life, an entity, the destroyer of all alien gods, embraces the great circle and threatens to cast any godlike being emerging from the circle into chaos (plate 2). The macrocosmic mandala represents the Cosmos. Any being who comprehends its entirety has experienced more than the numinous; they have witnessed infinity. From this instance of mandalic recognition, no subsequent (higher) level of meaning exists. In my understanding, the meaningful moment becomes a sensory overload, an apocalyptic jumble where significations merge like words of babel, precipitating a fall back into the state of prelinguistic chaos.
Within the great circle typically lies a square or equilateral circular courtyard. The contents of this courtyard may vary, depending on the psychic state of the artist. In the divine mandala, the layout is simple, usually with gates which open into the courtyard's center and inner circle. This inner circle, the nucleus of the mandala, signifies the divine, "the perfect state where masculine and feminine are united...All energy has gathered together in the initial state" (Campbell, 384). This state is not a place of permanent psychological residence. Instead, it is a moment of transition, of conception. The divine moment in mandalic meditation occurs when the observer experiences this epiphany of balanced opposites. The microcosmic mandala of personal psychological significance emerges through the artistic patterns of the art, recognizing conscious and unconscious fields in a moment of balance. The moment occurs in conception, vision, or death; from that instant, its elements fragment to create a completely new mandalic context, one whose "divine" center transforms with each revelation. The courtyard's interior may be quite simple if the mandala is not cluttered with psychic strife; the courtyard looks more like a labyrinth than a chamber. The literary mandala, dominated by convoluted language and logic, often resembles the labyrinth. In the works of Jorge Luis Borges, for example, the courtyard becomes a prison-like labyrinth with man's desire for structure rivaling his ability to reconcile reduced images of meaning into a unified context.

Just inside the frontier of chaos, on the outer circle, archetypal figures mark the outer ring of the mandala like the hours on a clock or
astrological signs (plate 2). Within this outermost ring are "scenes depicting aspects of the twelve-fold law of interdependent causation: ignorance, volition, consciousness, mind-body, sense-spheres, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, becoming, birth, old age, and death." (Argüelles, 94) Mandala symbolism in the development of Jung's theory quite likely cemented his conception of archetypal traits and behaviors. Archetypes are not confined within the context of set significations such as these, for "Jung describes archetypes as 'patterns of instinctual behavior,'" saying that "[t]here are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life. Endless repetition has engraved these experiences into our psychic constitution" (Shinoda Bolen, 18).

An archetype can exist for any moment common to the human experience, which engenders a multitude of issues and conflicts in collective and personal mandalic meditations. In literary terms, the author can consciously or unconsciously capitalize on archetypal situations, tapping into metaphors guaranteed (by definition) to be present as meaningful in the psychological composition of the reader, regardless of whether the reader comprehends the attempt.

In terms of this "archetypal discourse," the literary artist's primary challenge is in conveying the archetypal context. If authors organize his signs in a manner which expresses an archetypal situation, an actual meaning (as eidetic concept) may be transmitted. The mandalic author paints literary text in a pattern recognized by the reader; both conscious and unconscious texts have the potential to
communicate meaning through the link the author and reader share in the collective unconscious.

The mandala relies on reconciled opposites to indicate a meaningful moment or understanding. It shows "the union of all opposites, and is embedded between yang and yin, heaven and earth; the state of everlasting balance and immutable duration" ("Concerning Mandala Symbolism," 9i: 358). Though this state is not usually achieved by humans, mandalas often represent a yearning for it, the desire to experience the archetype of God. It occurs in mandala through the recognition of conflicts and paradox; though fleeting, it encourages this possibility of balance as spiritual state. In this sense, there does not exist a text completely in possession of a text's meaning, one which acquires a "unified" or "healed" status. Jung admits that this state may not be attainable in physical life, that human beings are 'in process' until death. The circle accommodates both logos and eros; there is recognition of both bipolar classical Kantian logic, as well as a broad field of mythical undertones. A reduction of either of the two is impossible, other than to deny one at the expense of the other. The mandala, in its essential elements, demands recognition of the other.

My thesis explores how Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and Toni Morrison use archetypal images and mandalic textual patterns. In "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," Jorge Luis Borges outlines the microscopic logic system the mandala attempts to overcome. In both his Labyrinths and Ficciones, he examines the human desire for structure as a convoluted courtyard which prevents
the discourse of mandalic elements. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," actually plays a cruel joke on the novice reader, the reader who is addicted to clear-cut meanings and unable to adapt to subtle conflict in textual elements. Combined with complementary patterns in "The Aleph," and other stories with labyrinthine themes, this story documents the necessity of mandalic recognition in overcoming logical structures which impede archetypal expression and significance.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who acknowledges the influence of Borges in his writing, presents a myth-oriented text in dialogue with Borges' labyrinthine structural tenets. In its twenty unnumbered chapters, Garcia Marquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude uses a circular pattern of time to document an archetypal continuum within an extended family. One Hundred Years of Solitude runs the gamut of archetypal personalities, defining the mandala's center through characters who face each other from its circumference. The text documents a family's fall from paradise to apocalypse, implicating the repression of magic as villain. Myth and magic are crucial to Marquez, who takes fantastic things and makes them real, and makes the real seem fantastic.

Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison incorporates the mythic and the concrete. In its examination of the masculine and feminine heroic quest, Song of Solomon reconciles Borges' logical arguments with Garcia Marquez's magical realism. Morrison's heroic characters overcome their situational labyrinths to experience the mythic, the divine. The text steeped itself in the unconscious, in a dream state, and gradually incorporates conscious self-recognition on the
part of its characters. *Song of Solomon* is a testament of the role of myth in an African-American family, where the hero's boon is returning from mandalic recognition with an understanding of the microcosmic self in relation to macrocosmic heritage.

Each of these postmodern texts uses circular narratives and archetypal techniques to restore the significance of imagination and myth within text. This thesis examines archetypal play and mandalic patterns, developing readings of each text from the expansive perspective of the mandala.
I. The Mirror of Labyrinthine Text

What Jung observed consistently in the construction of the individual and collective mandala was "the squaring of the circle." ("Concerning Mandala Symbolism," 9i, 368) This squaring signifies what Jorge Luis Borges regards as a human desire for structure, a need to segment and divide the overwhelming and incomprehensible into smaller, manageable concepts. Unfortunately, such structural reductions made for the sake of comprehension establish a hierarchical process that does not allow us to view the whole without perceiving text within its own ideological constructs.

In the intermediate field of the mandala lies the courtyard or labyrinth. This area symbolizes human logical constructs. In Labyrinths, Ficciones, and The Aleph and other Stories, Jorge Luis Borges defines the essential aspects of the labyrinth. In terms of the mandala, the labyrinth represents artificial attempts at the archetypes of knowledge and God. This intermediary labyrinth prevents discourse between the mandala's ringing archetypes, thwarting the possibility of reconciling opposites. Borges' characters and readers wander within his literal and artistic labyrinths, only to discover the labyrinth's vacant center, empty because of the logical interference of the labyrinth's walls and what they keep out.

This legacy of logical thought lies at the foundation of the labyrinth created in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." Although native to Argentina, Borges writes within a western philosophical and literary tradition. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" documents the theoretical
creation, through the mirroring of text, of an entire planet. This story lures the reader into accepting the idea of this imaginary world, complete with philosophical, mythological, and societal structure. Borges' narratives in *Labyrinths, Ficciones,* and *The Aleph and Other Stories* not only document man as trapped within his labyrinth, but also incriminate him as the architect of its form. This primary assumption is essential to a thorough reading of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius."

The story opens after dinner in a Buenos Aires villa, where a narrator later named as "Borges" glances nervously down a hallway and into an "unnerving" mirror. Mirrors, as Borges perceived them, reflect unreality and portray an unreal world, completely superficial. From the opening moments of this text, the narrator warns us about the reflection of meaning in relation to actuality; to survive this text, we have to understand such subtle nuances of representation.

Borges discusses fictional techniques with his friend, Bioy Cesares. Their conversation entertains the idea of an unreliable text, expressed in the first person by a narrator who "...omitted or corrupted what happened and who ran into various contradictions, so that only a handful of readers, a very small handful, would be able to decipher the horrible or banal reality behind the novel" (3). This passage aptly describes many of Borges' contorted short stories, such as "Death and the Compass," "The South," and "The House of Asterion." Through *Labyrinths, Ficciones,* and *The Aleph and Other Stories,* Borges mirrors traditional text by representing the labyrinth from the perspective of the Minotaur, or encourages the reader to follow a
delirious hero on a journey "south" into the homeland of his youth, even though he never leaves the company of doctors who treat him for lead poisoning. Borges' self-referential narratives torture readers who lack the discerning faculty of skepticism. Accordingly, we treat "Tlön Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" as suspect, careful to distinguish significations from their misleading resonances.

Borges eases into the concept of this imaginary planet, in a taciturn and cautious manner, careful not to expose too much too soon. The text, as it reads, is paradoxical enough without the story's fictional depth complicating comprehension of text, as well:

First time readers of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" are often hard put to define the precise nature of opening events, are initially unable to sift out the real from the fantastic, fact from fiction. Only sometime later do they become aware that all of it is fiction, though some materials are even more fictional than others. (Bell-Villada, 131)

The levels of narrative discourse, labyrinthine readings stacked like layers of honeycomb, ensure the fugitive state of definitive meaning in the Borgesian text. The labyrinth, as it represents social and logical structure in the field of the mandala, is the natural enemy of understanding.

Borges owes the discovery of Uqbar, the world in which the "imaginary region" of Tlön exists to: "the conjunction of a mirror and an encyclopedia. The unnerving mirror hung at the end of a corridor...the misleading encyclopedia goes by the name of The Anglo-American Cyclopædia (New York, 1917), and is a literal, if inadequate reprint of
the 1902 *Encyclopedia Britannica*” (3). Biy Cesares, in the discussion on mirrors, recollects that "one of the heresiarchs of Uqbar had stated that mirrors and copulation are abominable, since they both multiply the numbers of man" (Labyrinths, 3). He cites the *Anglo-American Cyclopædia*’s entry on Uqbar, which the two fail to find in the villa’s collection of the same edition. Borges' association of mirrors and encyclopedias foreshadow his extended comparison of their properties, particularly in negative and superficial terms.

An encyclopedia attempts to encapsulate an entire world, providing a dictionary of its known "realities." Uqbar and Tlön's progressive appearances in the *Anglo-American Cyclopædia* document its increasing presence as "real" in this sense, through historical definition in an authoritarian text. The *Anglo-American Cyclopædia* itself mirrors the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; this "Orbis Tertius" alludes to a tertiary reflection of text, where the pirate encyclopedia locates Tlön as an "imaginary region," the subject of Uqbar's literature (Labyrinths, 5).

This story depends on reflection by mirroring text and reality in art. Borges capitalizes on the reader's tendency to sympathize with a narrator and exploits this position by undermining the central character or first person narrator, discrediting the sympathetic reading in the same action. This empty reflection of context mirrors the actual text exposed through revelation of concealed information, or a fuller comprehension revised in a second, skeptical reading. Borges' anti-detective pattern of narration peaks in the "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius"
conclusion, where the postscript will undermine an entire planet's existence by discrediting the logical structures used to create it.

Borges' linear technique leads his narrator through this text just as Erik Lonnrot stalks Red Scharlach in "Death and the Compass." His skepticism of Bioy Cesares' reference to Uqbar persists until satisfied with empirical evidence. Borges, as author, recognizes that his readers place the same requirements on his text; in order to sell a fictional world, his pitch must first satisfy the logistical requirements for its creation. Over the phone, Bioy Cesares reads the volume in question, which contains four more pages than Borges' copy, locating the original quote:

He had recalled: *Copulation and mirrors are abominable.*

The text of the encyclopedia said: *For one of these gnostics, the visible universe was an illusion or (more precisely) a sophism. Mirrors and fatherhood are abominable because they multiply and disseminate that universe.* (4)

The piece fulfills Borges' logical requirements that justify further pursuit of the issue, which he follows to exhaustion at the National Library. Fruitless, he hands the search to his book dealer, who coincidentally encounters an edition of the *Cyclopædia*, which has "not the slightest indication of Uqbar" (6). Borges, in his author function, lures both narrative and reader to believe in a reflected text, using the example of a librarian who laboriously tracks an elusive reference work. This seduction of reader begins with the mirroring and
corruption of the narrator and shapes the narrative into a superficial reflection of a deeper, more accurate meaning.

The second section of the text resumes in September of 1937, although by this point in the text we only warily trust Borges' representation of historical time. A family acquaintance of the narrator's, Mr. Herbert Ashe, dies with a volume of *A First Encyclopædia of Tlön* in his possession. Borges describes its contents as follows:

> On one of the nights of Islam called the Night of Nights, the secret doors of heaven open wide and the water in the jars becomes sweeter; if those doors opened, I would not feel what I felt that afternoon. The book was written in English and contained 1001 pages. On the yellow leather back I read these curious words which were repeated on the title page: *A First Encyclopædia of Tlön. Vol. XI. Hlaer to Jangr.* (7)

The text could very well be *One Thousand and One Nights*, except for its encyclopedic content. Followed by the mysterious volume, (which conveniently has 1001 pages), the narrator's paraphrase openly alludes to the intertextual nature of fiction. An author writes a "new" text on a palimpsest, inscribing upon an endlessly overwritten page of allusions, creating metaphors made in terms of other metaphors. Borges trifles with the idea of intertextuality throughout the entire text of "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote," contending that no text can claim independence from the tradition of language in which it is written.3
"Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" hinges on this sort of intertextuality. The narrator documents the emergence of tlönist texts with the arguments of fictional writers and critics, are presented in a non-fictional tone. In a sense, the text meets authenticating criteria of conscious readers in order to gain access to their unconscious desire to believe in an idealistic realm called "Tlön." The eleventh volume of the Anglo-American Cyclopædia provides those requirements.

. . .a methodical fragment of an unknown planet's entire history, with its architecture and its playing cards, with the dread of its mythologies and the murmur of its languages, with its emperors and its seas, with its minerals and its birds and its fish, with its algebra and its fire, with its theological and metaphysical controversy. And all of it articulated, coherent, with no visible doctrinal intent or tone of parody. (6)

These logical minutæ behave like the mandala on the conscious mind; while the conscious explores the detailed stories told in separate cells, the unconscious mind connects them. This is the mandala's meditation; if successful, it balances conscious and unconscious discourse within context. Tlön's architecture, as the narrator asserts, appears as a theoretical and logistic whole. While the Cyclopædia conveys no "doctrinal intent or tone of parody," this text does; it offers Tlön as a hierarchical alternative to our chaotic planet to a conscious reader programmed to accept it.

The schematic of Tlön attempts a revision of language, suggesting a conceptual reality beyond the conventional limits of
language. As the *Cyclopædia* indicates, Tlön's language resists paradox by undermining the concrete noun and materialism. In addition, the theoretical arguments of philosophy "invariably include both the thesis and the antithesis, the rigorous pro and con of a doctrine. A book which does not contain its counterbook is considered incomplete" (13). Tlön's solution to philosophical paradoxes lies in never letting extremes dominate discussion. The union of conflicting opposites represents a balanced, mature work.

Tlön's language, by overthrowing the noun and its dependence on the metaphor, can conquer a labyrinth's worth of paradox. The resolution of paradox in the parable of the coins illustrates this:

*On Tuesday, X crosses a deserted road and loses nine copper coins. On Thursday, Y finds in the road four coins, somewhat rusted by Wednesday's rain. On Friday, Z discovers three coins in the road. On Friday morning, X finds two coins in the corridor of his house. the heresiarch would deduce from this story the reality--i.e., the continuity--of the nine coins which were recovered. It is absurd (he affirmed) to imagine that four of the coins have not existed between Tuesday and Thursday, Three between Tuesday and Friday afternoon, to between Tuesday and Friday morning. It is logical to think that they have existed--at least in some secret way, hidden from the comprehension of men--at every moment of those three periods. (11)*
Bishop George Berkeley's omnipresent God, obviously, does not reside in Tlön. When someone forgets a real "imaginary" object, it ceases to exist until remembered. Tlönic logic defends this anecdote by placing a synchronistic link between representation and the projected existence of an object through imagination.

Through the development of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," the reader observes an imaginary world whose exponential growth feeds off its own conceptualization. The investment of power, creative power, in the concept of projection makes this growth possible. The tangible creation of object by reality, namely through "Projections of Expectations," called "hröni," lend a sort of visual magic to Tlön's adult world that perhaps only children experience in our "real" world.

According to Borges' modified Berkeleyan ideal, reality is subject to the definition of imaginative power in Tlön. If imagination defines existence, then it can easily determine spatial normalcy. Reality therefore represents a component of mental function, ostensible facts that reside in the individual psyche, allowing for Tlön's only hard science, psychology. One of Tlön's schools of thought reasons that "the present is undefined, that the future has no other reality than as present hope, and the past is no more than a present memory" (9). Like the future, the subjective past defines itself by idealistic memories, asserting that reality has no more influence on the past than the individual remembering it. The fad of "Tlön" encourages that the reader lend more credence to the realm of the idea than that of "reality," a suggestion that instantly appeals to the human mind. If the
reader accepts this strange stance prior to the revelation in the postscript or retains it after a complete reading, the author has succeeded in his narrative seduction.

Borges demonstrates a profound understanding of language in the above passages. These ideas cannot be conveyed by language, because a revision of traditional language and what is proper facilitates this understanding. Similarly, context and signification collide in the conceptual moment of mandalic recognition. At the moment when a reader recognizes text as mandala, i.e., when all of the text's subordinate meanings combine to form a single signification, they experience a phenomenon outside of language. The experience is common to the genre of the novel, in the sense that the reader collects all of the individual instances of text in its denouement, recognizing it as a significant whole, as opposed to a linear sequence of independent events.

The concept of the mandala eludes the terms of critical explanation, primarily because it functions outside of language. In its literary function, the mandala does not attempt to template structure on text. Instead, its action is deconstructive; by examining context as a whole and removing structural divisions, the mandalic process places text into discourse with itself. Mandalic recognition is itself a sort of madness. The individual who achieves it cannot communicate the entirety of the concept without turning around and encrypting it back into the logical and linguistic systems it has just transcended. The observer of text who reaches this level of comprehension cannot share the essence of the experience in the linguistic terms of the
dominant discourse and appearing completely "mad;" with the likely exception of the Tibetan tradition, most cultures marginalize the numinous experience. This visionary moment, this "mandalic recognition," is non-transferable, as the visionary experience of meaning is non-empirical and non-reducible. The mandala does reduce art into individual moments of significance, but it displays them in terms of the active, collective whole of context. Thus, rather than compartmentalize signification, it unifies elements of meaning previously reduced from this illogical, unmanageable whole, which were reduced for the sake of consumption by the feeble human mind.

This insanity of communication finds its roots in the first moments of language, which uses metaphor to speak in terms of assigned similarities. Metaphor and language disallow any possibility of the expression of what is other, for what is different may only be described in terms of similarities. By signifying these concepts with words like "mandalic recognition" and "unconscious" or "conscious" contexts we engage in the empty metaphor, attempting to draw a representation of the non-re-presentable.

The archetype, however, reconciles the conflict of metaphor by using a signifier whose signified resides in the unconscious of every human being. Borges' texts invoke an archetypal desire for structure to lure his readers into labyrinths of tangled logic; Gabriel Garcia Marquez connects the reader to character with archetypal personality traits, through the familiar. While the archetypal image, as an expression, may not meet formal philosophical criteria for what is "proper," it approaches as close to the origin of language as a
metaphor can come. The archetypal situation and its meaning are prelinguistic and could be conveyed as readily with gestures or sand drawings as through language. Both authors use archetypal images as the original root for important metaphors, recognizing the potential for universal understanding by employing the universal concept. This field of signification, therefore, does not compare the similarities of opposites, but endeavors to indicate a meaning that already resides in the discourse's speaker and listener.

Tlön, as it develops in this story, revolves completely around an axis of idealism. Borges' fascination with idealism facilitates its existence; his conjectures owe particular credit to the eighteenth-century Irish bishop, George Berkeley. Berkeley modified existing theories of material existence in terms of perceptual thought by integrating the sensory distinctions of space and texture. Prior to Berkeley, philosophers set spatial and material concerns of the perceived as empiricals, established as independent of individual sensory processes. The empirical represents the first instance. The second instance involves the aesthetic or textural aspects of the object. This latter discrimination allowed for variances in the interpretation of signs, as subjective perception introduced bias to the conceptual process. For example: a water tower viewed from a distance of a mile looks round. At fifty meters, however, the tower actually appears as octagonal. According to these biases in recognition, Berkeley posits that the first incidence, that of spatiality, is synonymous with the second, of texture, in determining existence. His subsequent conclusion dissolves material existence as fundamental,
reestablisahing it as an element of individual perceptual bias, ultimately
dependent upon imagination.

In the Berkeleyan argument, the tree that falls in the woods
without anyone to hear it makes no sound. Material objects owe their
existence to the individuals who comprehend them; if an object were
not perceived, it would vanish. Berkeley (after all; he was a bishop)
completes his theory by attributing material permanence to divine
function; since the unperceived world would vanish, it is the
omniscient observation of God which sustains it. Though the lonely
tree in Berkeley's forest falls unobserved, it decays in place, saved in
God's passive memory until activated by a new iteration of sensory
observation.

Utilizing these philosophical tenets from the outset of Borges'
research on Tlön, the author allows his characters and their obscure
references to answer the Berkeleyan call and project, through
imagined reflection, through the cumulative creation of a planet. A
discrepancy between Berkeley and Borges arises in the postscript; the
bishop's omniscient God is nowhere to be seen in Tlön, and the
imaginary theory takes on an increasingly acrid flavor when we learn
that the millionaire American atheist, Ezra Buckley, finances the entire
Uqbar project. Subtle textual hints like these lead us to consider that
we stare into a mirror of textual plotting, and yet take it quite seriously.
Tlön's idealistic foundation appeals to readers as a new slant on a
legitimate philosophical position. The argument seems sensible and
warrants examination. Unfortunately, when the human mind
comprehends something, it will let it go only with great reluctance.
Borges realizes this, and continues to develop a seductive plot, from which even the skeptical reader fails to maintain a safe distance.

The text, in terms of its tone and schematic development, seduces the reader in the same manner that Borges follows Bioy Cesares' lead to his library. My first and second readings of this text, as well as a short paper, revelled in Borges' invention: an entire planet, even a universe ordered and created by imaginary thought. These themes are significant, yet subordinate to Borges' larger project. The tone of the postscript, reconciled with the central narrative, reveal Tlön as an intertextual hoax. Individuals, and even the entire human race, may invoke the power of imagination to escape the constraints of physical and logical labyrinths. The problem with this, as Borges notes in the 1947 post-script (which he post-dates), suggests that the labyrinth's occupants leap from within its walls into another artificial ontological structure.

Therefore, Borges' text acts as mandala in the dichotomous moments where the inferred and actual narratives come into conflict. A reader desires to conclude their first pass through a text with an established and secure reading. This labyrinthise need for structural order is the security blanket of the human mind. Text, then, functions as labyrinth within the intermediate field of mandalic expression, separating the author's conscious and unconscious text. In this distinction, we must be allowed to consider text as mandala, so long as it aspires to even a minimal degree of unity. Even abstract, disjointed, or chaotic texts display consistencies in their attempts; the
mandala expresses archetype through art, whether frustrated, stagnant, or transcendent.

Reading then, in terms of the mandala, is a continual meditation based on the consolidation of context. Successive readings contribute additional information to context, enlarging and shifting the mandalic field. Each revisionist reading represents the process of interpreting a new conglomerate of textual information, which supersedes the labyrinthine framework of the preceding chain of signification, followed by bricklaying on the foundations of a new and improved maze. In the personal meditation, mandalic heroes and characters travel the concourses of their respective puzzles, trapped within them until they reach the solution that their unconscious hides; their need for structural limitation constructs the labyrinth. The irony of reading as mandalic interpretation, as Borges suggests, that the moment readers fix themselves upon the presented meaning, the sight of illumination has already moved. In mandalic recognition, meaning moves with changes in context in a constant state of transition.

The mandala functions in a manner analogous to the invocation of a new philosophical theory. The disgruntled sophist wanders the labyrinth of his current school of thought, keeping record of its inadequacies. He then meditates upon the context of the issue in conflict, allowing conscious issues to access the stored context of the unconscious. In a moment of recognition, the individual views the labyrinth from which he wishes to escape. The unconscious supplies the raw database to be manipulated by conscious conjecture. The scholar returns from epiphany with the insight necessary to operate
outside of the existing structural system (teleologically speaking) to devise his new theory. While the process of recognition is circular in both artistic and intellectual perception, the basic nature of time (if only as determined by the concept of time itself) remains linear. Jung's analytic psychology suggests the use of mandala not only for expression, but also as a reflection of continual cycles of intellectual processes tangent to a linear time line.

The possibility for a "whole" text, or the healing of a disjointed text is always deferred. Text is art, specifically, a long chain of metaphoric patterns. What myth attempts to describe or reconcile on the cosmic scale, the metaphor attempts in the basic narrative of the sentence. In both cases, expression attempts to circle and outline the incomprehensible. In terms of archetypal play in text, the labyrinth interferes by stratifying the field which begins at the chaotic and reaches to the unified and infinite. The process of suspending conscious control, the emergence of the unconscious, and the moment of recognition never attains an invincible or permanent status. The mandala moves in constant flux, directed more by recurring patterns of typical situations than by logical guidance. Perceptual walls block the comprehension of context, whose missing elements must be retrieved from stored memory and experience.

The mandalic meditation is the recognition of the totality of the individual or collective fields of personality, a sampling of the essence of being, represented by a primordial and prelinguistic past. Any sense of future possibility, however, suffers the realization of the possibilities in archetypal patterns, soldered with the flux of a revolving
past which the individual may not escape. Chaos is the possibility of possibility. Meaning in text (in terms of the mandalic pattern) relies on the communication of conflicting archetypes, then the logical obstacle presented by the labyrinth accounts for the epidemic lack of it. Recognition of meaning within the mandala consists of microcosmic and macrocosmic translations, a recognition of conscious place and presence within the personal and collective unconscious. The individual recognizes his personality as example, as microcosmic. In the same sense that the collective unconscious resides within the individual, this individual is essential to the personality of the macrocosmic representation of any conventional sense of "reality."

Through his family of short stories, Borges represents labyrinthine logic as the obstacle to understanding and meaning. Yet independent of his fascination with the labyrinth, he understands and seems to value the meaningful moment which occurs when text overcomes structure. Where "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" expresses a logical structure that actually impedes mandalic recognition, complementary stories like "The Aleph" offer a direct and immediate exhibit of the moment where archetypes meet. In "The Aleph," we again meet "Borges," the subdued and rational narrator who stumbles onto the supernatural completely by accident. The text's style and approach mimic "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" by using the Borges persona and a similar mundane setting. This story further capitalizes on the fictional Borges' fear of superficial reflection and mirrors, although the narrator of "The Aleph" might prefer the flat textual
mires of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" to the reality he ultimately finds behind reflections.

While "Tlön, Uqbar Orbis Tertius" represents the logical labyrinth inside the macrocosmic mandala, "The Aleph" represents its antithetical work, a "microscopic vision" (Alazraki, 31). This vision allows and contains a complete understanding of the world in the moment (a Kabbalistic point of view). "Aleph" is a Hebrew term for the first letter in the alphabet, the origin of all other signs. As a singular and essential meaning, an "aleph" does not exist, but only the Aleph, in its proper form. The Aleph itself represents the Tao or the Logos, the word that is the source of all other words. In "The Aleph," Borges elucidates on the finite nature of literature and language, whose attempts at meanings and accompanying confusion compound like debt. As a symbolic system, the mind must process language and Borges realizes its increasing distance from significant meaning the further it moves away from the initial moment of linguistic expression. Recognition of the microcosmic mandala, as the context of individual being, also finds its bane in the roots of language and linear perception. Language multiplies from the moment of conception empowered by that first word, by the first utterance of the conceptual alphabet. In terms of the Aleph, language represses unity and magic; linear and inherently logical, it is divine at first utterance and, in the second, vulgar and impotent.

"The Aleph," as a mandalic pattern, defines a moment of union and recognition. While the recognition at the center of this mandala may not represent the archetype of God, it signifies the archetypal
moment of godlike knowledge. Its images are concrete and unique; individual representations in the mandala are specific historical memories or symbolic moments in the personal experience of its author. The Aleph demonstrates this knowledge as Borges recollects and re-experiences the significant people and moments from his past, particularly Beatriz Viterbo. Borges stares at the stark representations of the Aleph, which resonates images like the facets of a diamond whose faces are inward-reflecting mirrors. Borges simultaneously experiences the deconstruction of his personal knowledge and access to "the truth" of situations hidden beneath that stratified veneer.

The Aleph, as object, denotes the moment of mandalic recognition, where the form of art maps the individual's personal context, providing them with the means to rise directly above the labyrinth and comprehend the united components of their personal experience; the unconscious, its collective, and the conscious individual meet in a single moment of comprehension. Moreover, at this moment, individual consciousness loses its domain over the archetypal context of the unconscious. Rather than contend with these emerging elements, the mandala demands appreciation of their presence.

In this meditative text, Borges experiences the personal mandala, a recognition immediate in his consciousness, which includes the retention of immediate traces of experience balanced by stored unconscious experience of past significances. Mandalic recognition incorporates the personal and collective unconscious within the lucid presence of the conscious mind. This sort of presence
of comprehension threatens the narrator, who lives his life within a labyrinth and would be unable to adapt without it.

Borges’ vision of the Aleph is both macro and microcosmic, containing the occupation and realization of all that is other, as well as the possibility of perceiving the presentation of an image and its appresentation in the same sensory moment. The observer's eye becomes the retinal chrome of every mirror in every room of any person he ever cared about, perceiving marginal information from the unconscious they may not have originally considered significant. A completely independent scene, viewed as objective, becomes subjective as the viewer screens it on the unconscious field of personal experience; revelation in this moment is immediate, and comprehension of the individual's implication in the signification fires across the very next synapse.

As in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," "The Aleph" expounds on the deficiencies of language, trading traditional signs for "anaphoric sentences which sketch the chaos of the world" (Alazraki, 32). The Aleph dwells in the original moment of language, whose intensity degrades with each additional generation of use. Perhaps, for this very reason, Tlön refuses to employ the proper noun to name spatial relationships or objects. In Tlön, material objects do not exist, except as suggested by idea. The Aleph itself answers the linear, self-referential, and intertextual phenomenon of speech with a conceptual union of opposites. This union creates significance in the balance, which Marquez acknowledges as central to community and myth,
while Borges primarily confines the relationship to its semantic elements.

Meaning in "The Aleph" recognizes an empty center, where "meaning and form converge in the performance of the same function: the representation of the chaos of the Universe" (Alazraki, 32). If the microcosmic mandala enables individual recognition of Self (and self) in a moment of absolute vision, how does an absolute void succeed this revelation in sensation? The mandala finds its roots in the same structures it transcends. After grasping the infinite, the individual must acknowledge his or her membership within the finite and chaotic to continue living as a physical being. In terms of surfacing from an immersion in the personal and collective unconscious, the mandalic spectator must step back into the order of the Conscious, or risk lucid insanity from an overload of meaning. This is the archetypal function maintained by the Destroyer of all Alien Gods on the Wheel of Life, who returns any would-be gods back into Chaos (plate 1).

In the divine mandala, the ultimate meditation signifies the archetype of God. This transitory moment addresses all personal strife and archetypal struggles, and the mandala's subject initiates themselves into the next higher, more refined plane of self-acuity. In this capacity, the mandala works within the mystical tradition as oracle, a ritualistic conversation with the unconscious self akin to the I Ching, the Tarot, or Germanic runes.

"The Aleph," complements the understanding of conscious structural function offered in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" with an example of the lucidity of perception that allows an entire range of
contexts to enter a single discourse. The narrative Borges' near-divine vision contrasted with a text that writhes in a purgatory of labyrinthine logic demonstrates the personality of language. Throughout *Labyrinths, Ficciones, and The Aleph and other Stories*, Borges uses mandalic techniques to bring disjointed textual elements into union, while at the same time places us within the labyrinths of logic that interfere with a text's meaningful discourse. In these stories, narrative moves like a mandala, with constant shifts in signification and recognition, with each new comprehension adding to the richness and depth of the text's fictional lattice.
NOTES

I. The Mirror of Labyrinthine Text

1. I draw all citations of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" from the 1964 edition of Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings. The text also appears in Ficciones, in another translation.

2. In "The House of Asterion," the narrator is the son of Minos, Asterion, who describes the Labyrinth as he understands it. For Asterion, the outsiders sent to the labyrinth hate it as much as he does. Accordingly, by killing them, he does them the favor of liberating them from its torturous structure.

3. "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" was written immediately prior to "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius."

4. "Hume remarked once and for all that the arguments of Berkeley were not only thoroughly unanswerable, but thoroughly unconvincing" (Ficciones, 23). Borges introduces George Berkeley's theories of idealism to the project of Tlön, as the traditional refutations against it would not apply there.
II. Marquez's Mandala

Garcia Marquez . . . presents circularity as the moment of total vision and perception, as the instant of complete self-knowledge and identity. Reflecting the existential preoccupation of other twentieth-century writers, this instant could be called "the ultimate epiphany" in James Joyces' terms, "the ultimate moment of being" for Virginia Woolf . . ., or the perfect "Aleph of time" for Jorge Luis Borges . . . (Simas, A "Gyrating Wheel," 141-2)

Whereas Jorge Luis Borges delineates the labyrinths of logic and introduces mandalic vision, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude continues the tradition of circular text. In addition, he revises traditional use of the metaphor to express his narrative "with words the size of our reality" (qtd. in Jara and Duque, 75). For Marquez, literary expression of that which is "real" demands a revision of traditional metaphors. Central and South American literary art develops out of a logos unique to the region. The difference between Borges' and Marquez's texts manifests itself in metaphor, particularly through its use in narrative chronicle. Marquez's so-called "magical realism" simply expresses his perspectives from a cultural tradition which freely recognizes myth and archetype as they manifest themselves in the physical world.

Through One Hundred Years of Solitude, Marquez unravels the history of the Buendia clan like spiders' silk. As the
narrative web diverges, its seminal center becomes all the more obvious. Marquez's narrative paints a circular cycle of archetypes, a type of *mandala*, an art form in which theme is the legitimate child of paradoxical relationships, the marriage of opposites.

By undertaking a new metaphorical tack in literature, Marquez recognizes that he engages in the quixotic elements of novelistic discourse:

"The reduction of the marvelous into everyday proportions, which was the great find of the novel of chivalry, . . . helped me to resolve the problem of language, for, what was once true when told in one way, had to be true each time that it was retold in the same manner. That is to say, I had to tell the story simply, utilizing the same language that my grandparents had used. This was a very difficult task, recovering a whole new vocabulary and a way of saying things that is uncommon within the urban settings in which we writers live, a way that is on the verge of disappearing forever." (qtd. in Simas, 42)

In this same sense of re-vision, the mandala displays previously unconnected forms and ideas as synchronous and significant. Marquez's connection of subordinate contexts through suspension of linear time leads his reader into a meditation, "simply" telling the story through one overreaching signification, rather than through a chain of events. By returning to the clarity of archetypal storytelling in the form of the mandala, Marquez deconstructs the labyrinth of language to express the circular chronicle of Macondo and the Buendia family.
From the opening sentence of his text, the author indicates that this novel will unweave its narrative in a non-linear and non-traditional manner: "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice" (11). This temporal image includes prolepsis, a projection to future narrative where analepsis will project it back. It does not return to the beginning, however; this flashback occurs in a moment that will exist as future from the point of departure. This melee of temporal patterning suggests that linear time will be made absurd in this text. In place of linear, historical progressions, narrative events form a collective significance, with each vignette representing an intricate piece of the presence of meaning in Marquez's text. He feeds the linear snake its tail, indicating that the reader must interpret each episode as it contributes to the whole context.

The narrative "starts with one main event, jumps backwards and forwards in time with the same first event. Like a circle, it finishes where it starts and starts where it finishes" (Caldas, 26). The novel occurs in a narrative present, where the presence of past and future narratives converge only in the final moments of the text. When Aureliano Babilonia deciphers Melquíades' text, past fictional events close with their future significances like a city train approaching a station. The reader anticipates an arrival at some sort of destination, but recognizes "beginning" or "ending" as subjective to their experience as spectator. "Garcia Marquez's novel moves inexorably toward synchronicity, toward the totality of human perception and self-
knowledge which occurs with the prophetic revelation of the final paragraph" (Simas, 130). This train's original station is the same as its destination. Where the observer boards the narrative is of little consequence, for the order in which the narrative's vignettes play out do not change the course or destination of the greater textual route.

The specific divisions in the collective unconscious we recognized in the introduction apply directly to the case of Macondo and Central American culture. Marquez recognizes and values the difference of his homeland:

"Latin America is outsized and disproportionate, towering mountains and waterfalls, endless plains, impenetrable jungles. An anarchic urban sprawl overlies breathless virgin expanses. The ancient rubs elbows with the new, the archaic with the futuristic, the technological with the feudal, the prehistoric with the utopic. In our cities skyscrapers stand side by side with Indian markets that sell totemic amulets." (qtd. in Harss and Dohrmann, 39)

Although this story begins before major capitalist intrusions into Colombia, Macondo's founders bring with them, in the collective unconscious, the warring elements of aboriginal and colonial culture.

In One Hundred Years of Solitude, Marquez focuses the narrative by using representative characters, archetypal individuals, whom he places within Macondo's society and family relationships. The text's José Arcadios and Aurelianos signify the most obvious juxtaposition; passion and physical presence drive the José Arcadios while the Aurelianos brood within the confines of taciturn
temperaments and sober, rational thought. The José Arcadios exist in the realm of sensual gratification. Like their progenitor, they are "impulsive and enterprising, but . . . marked with a tragic sign" (Bell-Villada, 95) In many ways, their skills in enterprise invite the seeds of tragedy to grow in Macondo. They also live, quite literally, for sex, often becoming its prisoners. In the Aurelianos, by comparison, the erotic and affective drives are largely subordinate to their roles as leaders, craftsmen, or scholars. They develop with archetypal qualities opposite to the José Arcadios, "withdrawn, but with lucid minds" (Bell-Villada, 95). Aureliano, born with his eyes open, symbolizes clairvoyance and intense rational presence. The descendants of the original pair remain psychologically consistent with their naming patterns. Although some of the later José Arcadio/Aureliano pairs fall outside this field, their basic archetypal personalities remain intact.

A blatant binary opposition of archetypal traits applies to every significant character in the text. The text contrasts Amaranta, in her introversion and martyrdom, with her orally-fixated and passionate adopted sister, Rebeca. Likewise, the archetypal patterns of wife and the other woman play out repeatedly, defining each Buendia matriarch in relation to a sexual other. The psychological opposition of Ursula and Pilar Ternera, for example, foreshadows the family situation four generations later. The text does not present Ursula and José Arcadio Buendia as having any lovers, which suggests that the pattern of the Buendia male and his lover begin with José Arcadio and Pilar. Likewise, Aureliano Segundo casually contributes a new situation to
the Buendia's collective unconscious by maintaining both a domestic and clandestine partner, his wife, Fernanda, and his lover, Petra Cotes. Like Pilar, Petra plays the lover, while Fernanda maintains the puritanistic hearth. Character oppositions apply uniformly, and far too neatly to be overlooked in this text. Marquez consistently uses bipolar relationships between pairs of complementary characters, who are extreme in their respective solitudes, to suggest a balance between opposite characters. Though each character appears to reside in solitude, they all function in the margins which determine the central context of the community and Marquez's mandala.

Ursula Buendia, who journeys to Macondo with José Arcadio Buendia and the pilgrims, develops into her role as matriarch. The Buendia household resembles a mandala, complete with an increasingly developing structural labyrinth held together by its matriarch and the interwoven solitudes of its inhabitants. Ursula drives the family unit in the physical or psychological absence of the Father, José Arcadio Buendia. Ursula commands more power than her husband throughout the text, not only by virtue of a more demanding workload, but by way of sheer determination.

When the Moscotes move into Macondo, Ursula recalls the vestiges of civilized society that she and the pilgrims left twenty years earlier. She prophesizes impending marriages, social visits, and a house overflowing with people. She replaces "the primitive building of the founders" with "the largest house in town," "the most hospitable and cool house that had ever existed in the region of the swamp" (60). In this text, this sort of codependence defines balance between
husband and wife; Ursula succeeds where José Arcadio Buendia fails. She overcomes logistical obstacles from which her masculine counterparts might have cowered in laziness. She leaves Macondo on a search for José Arcadio and returns having discovered the route to civilization that the village's collected masculine effort failed to find. Ursula wields a practical understanding of family and social life that keeps the Buendia family welded together like an eclectic collage, a mandala.

The matriarch also possesses a profound knowledge of the nature of time. While generation after generation of Buendia male attempts to decipher Melquiades' secret of time, Ursula possesses their modest secret—"time passes":

José Arcadio Segundo was still reading over the parchments. The only thing visible in the intricate tangle of hair was the teeth striped with green slime and his motionless eyes. When he recognized his great-grandmother's voice he turned his head toward the door, tried to smile, and without knowing it repeated an old phrase of Ursula's.

"What did you expect?" he murmured. "Time passes."
"That's how it goes," Ursula said, "but not so much."

Ursula, as the Buendia family's matriarchal mother, cements the family together in Macondo and the household. Even in her death she proves that time does not pass "so much". After living over one hundred years, she slowly shrinks into a fetal posture, so that at the
time of her funeral, her family buries her in a coffin the size of the latest Aureliano's cradle. She understands death in cyclic terms, as natural as marriage, building a house, or the birth of a new generation.

Pilar Ternera, the jocund woman who begins in Macondo by helping Ursula in her home, leaves the house after sexually initiating young José Arcadio. Pilar represents the community's concupiscent sexual free agent, the community's good witch. During the insomnia plague, while José Arcadio Buendia and his son Aureliano invent methods for remembering things, Pilar recalls the past by using her Tarot. She recreates history in terms of its smallest common denominator, the archetype:

There was no mystery in the heart of a Buendía that was impenetrable for [Pilar] because a century of cards and experience had taught her that the history of the family was a machine with unavoidable repetitions, a turning wheel that would have gone on spilling into eternity were it not for the progressive and irremediable wearing of the axle. (364)

Time, for the Buendias, is a collection of archetypal situations. Jung allows an infinite number of archetypal situations, as many as are typical. Yet Macondo's heritage and specific collective unconscious limit these situations to a certain range, definite enough for Pilar to decode them with her oracle.

Pilar, like Ursula, comprehends time in its more essential sense as a slowly turning cycle. Since Pilar exists outside of a family unit, she can also remain out of the reach of linear time's sweeping hands.
She outlives Ursula, adopting Melquiades' method of living in an alternate temporality to the Buendias' reality. Throughout the rest of her life, she facilitates the passions of Macondo's young lovers, by conducting readings for them or lending them a place to tryst. In this text, Pilar Ternera commands the archetype of sensual desire.

Of Macondo's characters and relationships, the evolution of the José Arcadio and Aureliano iterations demand the greatest scrutiny. The first and second generations fit the clear-cut patterns described above, through unimaginative sensualists in direct opposition to melancholy clairvoyants. Marquez only bothers to name a few of the seventeen Aurelianos; doing so is unnecessary, they fit the visionary pattern precisely as clandestine clones of their father. The José Arcadio pattern, while far less proliferate, also survives to the second generation. Variations in the pattern do not occur until the third generation with the appearance of the interchangeable Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo. Genetically, both are descendents of the passionate Pilar Ternera, which may account for their departure from the established pattern. The two brothers reverse the poles in character patterning, adopting character traits opposite to their namesakes. José Arcadio Segundo, despite his bacchanal roots, plays the role of the disenchanted and Hermetic leader, nearly identical to Colonel Aureliano Buendia. Conversely, Aureliano Segundo nurses the formerly Arcadian archetype of sensual excess, coupled with his devotion to Melquiades' encryptions.

The thematic significance of all of these paired relationships emerges in the externalization of their actions into the collective
heritage, as individual significations in Macondo's mandala of community. Unfortunately, Macondo diminishes into the rubbish of scattered egos expatriated from community into the labyrinth, wandering expressions of thwarted existence. As Gene Bell-Villada notes, Marquez leaves off the numbering of chapters to divert the reader's attention from textual episodes, favoring instead the perception of the Buendia saga as a conceptual whole. He divides the text into four themes: utopian innocence and social harmony; military heroism and struggle for autonomy; economic prosperity and social decline; and final decadence and physical destruction. Essentially, the text's central mandalic context develops from significant events between marginal and archetypal characters.

While Bell-Villada recognizes the play of archetype in this text, Robert Sims, in "Archetypal Approaches" places them in relation to their collective context: "In this category [of archetypal patterns], we can include the archetypal motifs of creation, circular time, paradise, the quest myth, the family, and the biblical pattern from Genesis to Apocalypse and the idea of Macondo as the seat of time and myth" (Sims, 103). In terms of the circular cycles of the mandala, Macondo develops within the chaos of the Colombian jungle, through paradise, where the collective unconscious is in dialogue with its subjects, and finally loses itself in the labyrinths of imposed language and logic systems.

Linear time loses significance in paradise; the introduction, like this text's twenty unnumbered chapters, makes a mockery of historical and linear novelistic time. The unworking of this convention suspends
traditional expectations, announcing that this text concentrates on symbolic patterns, rather than historical moments. In it, the logical is replaced by the sensual possibilities of paradise. Utopia remains a possibility as long as the village avoids external impositions of logic. Unfortunately, Macondo suffers the same fate as Eden, as logic gradually represses its idyllic unconsciousness.

The first five chapters document the Springtime of the Patriarch, the birth of an idyllic community deep within the jungle. Early in this narrative, before José Arcadio Buendia convinces his pilgrimage to settle at Macondo, the jungle represents chaos. The pilgrims choose to found Macondo, rather than turn back after a twenty-six month journey. This chaotic state of physical and psychological wilderness, in terms of both habitat and community, symbolizes pre-consciousness. Chaos is not yet even unconscious; what is unconscious, by definition, must once have been conscious.

The dominant myth in Latin American literature is that of the jungle. The jungle, whose overflowing denseness keeps one from seeing the trees, symbolizes better than any other image the resistance of nature to the ordering will of man. The jungle is the remnant of pre-creation, of formlessness proliferating in an overwhelmingly unchecked manner, anterior--and hostile--to the regulating hand of the creator. The jungle is the chaos of dawn, and its labyrinth. (Gullón, 45. italics mine)

Though the jungle might survive as the habitat of an indigenous tribe, José Arcadio Buendia and his followers carry with them, both in their
experience and collective unconsciousness, the roots of civilization. The fact that Macondo is not founded by a native tribe becomes significant in terms of the socio-economic decay that follows. Macondo is, from the outset, a colony.

In the early stages of this colony, José Arcadio Buendia assumes the archetypal role of patriarch and, despite his fantastic leanings, effectively structures the village. He acts as the architect of a utopian community, where the farming is a socialist cooperative and the inhabitants live in a circle at equal distance from the water source. Much of the community's success results from its lack of overwhelming structure. In its paradisical state, early Macondo resides in the prelinguistic: "The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point" (11). As Macondo becomes increasingly dependent on language, it wanders further into the labyrinth that disconnects meaning and expression.

The jungle frustrates the patriarch when he attempts to tame it by using the same logic he uses to build his homestead. When José Arcadio Buendia tries to seek out a link to neighboring civilization, he discovers a galleon in a marshy lagoon. Like Columbus, José Arcadio Buendia plays the accidental explorer: "He considered it a trick of his whimsical fate to have searched for the sea without finding it, at the cost of countless sacrifices and suffering, and to have found it all of a sudden without looking for it" (Marquez, 21). What he discovers is that conscious exploration of the unconscious will not work. Only the access to the unconscious allows consciousness the faculty of self-
exploration. The principal criterion for recognition in the mandala requires that consciousness (ego) immerse itself in the unconscious, and stop repressing the unconscious to access it. The unconscious, then, surfaces into awareness only after consciousness relinquishes control.

Just as Marquez acknowledges the influence of chivalric romance on his text, so does the patriarch participate in anachronism, in the quixotic. As his public role fades, his fascination with Melquiades' texts and alchemy explodes. One of his dominating pursuits involves capturing the face of God in a series of photographic negatives: "Through a complicated process of superimposed exposures taken in different parts of the house, he was sure that sooner or later he would get a daguerrotype of God, if he existed . . ." (58). His workshop provides a haunt for seven generation's worth of would-be kabbalists. Everything in the workshop exists in an atemporal state that defies the rest of the household:

In the small isolated room where the arid air had never penetrated, nor the dust, nor the heat, both had the atavistic vision of an old man, his back to the window, wearing a hat with a brim like the wings of a crow who spoke about the world many years before they had been born. Both described at the same time how it was always March there and always Monday, and then they understood that José Arcadio Buendía was not as crazy as the family said, but that he was the only one with enough lucidity to sense the truth of the fact that time also
stumbled and had accidents and could therefore splinter
and leave an eternalized fragment in the room. (322)

Both Aureliano Segundo and little Aureliano Babilonia, the surviving
Buendia male who decodes Melquiades' Sanskrit manuscripts,
witness the timelessness of the room, perhaps preserved by the wise
man's presence. They recognize the legitimate presence of
something other, something magic, that qualifies José Arcadio
Buendia's quixotism. The Buendia males successively inherit their
grandfather's workshop, its mystical traditions, and his supposed
madness; Melquiades' spirit mentors each new generation of mystics
in their discourse with what is other to Macondo's decaying "reality."

As with the Ursula/Pilar and José Arcadio/Aureliano pairings, the
archetype specific to a character's social role remains continuous,
while new generations of Buendias and others move up to occupy
vacancies in Macondo's archetypal continuum. For example,
Aureliano Segundo, Macondo's fourth generation patriarch, inherits
José Arcadio Buendia's quixotism:

On one occasion he came across a man on horseback
who in spite of his strange outfit had a familiar look, and
after examining him closely he came to the conclusion that
it was a picture of Colonel Aureliano Buendia. He showed
it to Fernanda and she also admitted the resemblance of
the horseman not only to the colonel but to everybody in
the family, although he was actually a Tartar warrior. (297)

Marquez mocks history by portraying it as little more than present
reinvention of the past. This situation also demonstrates an
understanding of sexual politics in the patriarchy; the matriarch allows her husband textual authority as a concession to maintain him as the figurehead, the Don, of the family. The charismatic Buendia patriarch ultimately depends on the nurturance of the matriarch, particularly after the public recognizes his quixotism as anachronistic.

The image of José Arcadio Buendia, the essential patriarch, chained to a chestnut tree acts as the text's empty center. The Buendias do not label him as mad until well into the advanced stages of Macondo's political development. The patriarch comes to symbolize everything that is mad by retaining his anachronistic fascination with myth and alchemy, even in the face of "progress." By removing himself from text as a lucid character, he remains stationary while his community's context shifts, abandoning him as authority.

In spite of all these inherently human predispositions for failure, Macondo still succeeds as a community. While the first of the Buendia children are still young, the village enjoys a direct connection with the collective unconscious state, where the conscious ego has not yet veiled the ability to perceive myth and magic, even though conscious control over this collective begins to emerge.

In its dichotomous Borgesian sense as both powerful and impotent, language's development in Macondo's primitive society eventually succeeds in repressing the individual and collective unconscious within its community. When Don Apolinar Moscote enters Macondo as the Government's representative, he brings with him language which, for the first time in Macondo's experience, is other than expressive. Moscote introduces the law of patriarchal
civilization to José Arcadio Buendia, the man who encourages societal advances until it threatens to paint his house blue: "In this town we do not give orders with pieces of paper," he said without losing his calm. "And so that you know once and for all, we don't need any judges here because there's nothing that needs judging" (61).

Moscote infiltrates Macondo like an airborne disease with his logic and law, as well as the weapons to enforce them: "I must warn you, I'm armed." Moscote's statement marks the beginning of Macondo's decline into ego-centered "civility." José Arcadio Buendia carries him by the lapels to the edge of town, expelling him from the field of the mandala. Unfortunately, Moscote's structural [labyrinthine] seed has been planted, and it grows like a tumor in the fertile collective of Macondo's spirit. "We'll never get anywhere," the patriarch had earlier lamented to his wife. "We're going to rot our lives away here without receiving the benefits of science" (21). Ironically, Don Apolinar Moscote returns with armed soldiers and social disruption. The fruit of knowledge, of the technology that José Arcadio Buendia yearns for slithers into the jungle with a snake who does not have the hands to possess it. In his quest for promethean trinkets of technology, José Arcadio Buendia fails to recognize that he already possessed everything he needed in his utopian community. His desire for something other than his current experience leads him to reside and die within the quixotic.

Political and economic interference in One Hundred Years of Solitude signifies the end of Macondo's age of innocence, the transitional state between unconscious continuity and troubled
knowledge. Later, when Americans develop a banana plantation in Macondo, language again becomes the harbinger of misfortune. Ironically, Marquez presents American lawyers as the masters of this omnipotent language:

Many of the fantasies...are indeed absurd but logical exaggerations of real situations. Thus if the Americans, backed by their lawyers--"those illusionists of the bar"--can change reality (the lawyers had declared during the strike that there were no workers employed by the company), it follows that they are all powerful. So, in order to punish Macondo, they order a flood and as a result it rains in Macondo for "four years, eleven months, and two days."

(Gallagher, 116-117)

In Borges' "Aleph," language completes a vicious sort of merger, combining the omnipotence of the initial utterance with the empty direction of phallogocentric thought. In retaliation for Macondo's resistance to exploitation, the banana company's lawyers invoke a voice which the narrative equivocates with the *logos*, the *Tao* of God's voice. The flow of recognition at this moment in the mandala has reversed. Rather than being unworked to unite conscious and unconscious opposites, these labyrinthine logic systems further suppress the unconscious elements of text, turning its characters around and marching them back towards chaos.

The Banana Strike and its ensuing massacre demonstrates the abysmal depths to which language can plunge, by cementing the forgetfulness of solitude:
"There must have been three thousand of them," he murmured.
"What?"
"The dead," he clarified. "It must have been all of the people who were at the station."
The woman measured him with a pitying look. "There haven't been any dead here," she said. "Since the time of your uncle, the colonel, nothing has happened in Macondo." In the three kitchens where José Arcadio Segundo stopped before reaching home they told him the same thing: "there weren't any dead." (285, 86)

In addition to the confusion of labyrinthine language, the government imposes denial on Macondo's collective psyche, the final step in pushing its inhabitants into an irretrievable solitude. As with the lawyers' power to suggest a flood, the government uses language to erase the memory of an injustice. The incident seems so plausible that Colombia incorporates this fictional account into its history, to Marquez's chagrin:

...Let me tell you something very curious about that incident. Nobody has studied the real events around the real banana strike...and now when the talk about it in the newspapers, even once in congress, they speak about the 3000 who died! And I wonder if, with time, it will become true that 3000 were killed. (Simas, 145)

In a manner identical to the imaginary projections that Borges seduces us with in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," Marquez's text unnervingly
introduces a virus into postmodern historical time. The fact that people so readily accept such historical revisions indicates the extent to which traditional logic represses the human spirit and imagination.

Economic prosperity puts Macondo on the map, literally, but also destroys the relative political immunity the province enjoys to that point. Even in the narrative's final chapters, individual relationships project their reality into the surrounding community. The incestuous trysts of Aureliano Babilonia and Amaranta Ursula (Aureliano is the son of Mauricio Babilonia, whom Aureliano Segundo shot climbing over his fence) do not confine themselves to the curtained bedrooms of the Buendia estate. Instead, their decadence overruns Macondo like waves of red ants, creeping slowly and insipidly, like rust.

In the text's final chapter, Aureliano Babilonia, the sole surviving member of six generations worth of Buendias, finally achieves what his progenitors all attempted without success--the decryption of Melquiádes' manuscript: "Melquiádes had not put events in the order of man's conventional time, but had concentrated a century of daily episodes in such a way that they coexisted in one instant" (332). This synchronic moment in narrative incorporates the presence of Macondo's decay, the future of Melquiádes' manuscript, and the past origins of the first Buendia who attempts to decode them.

Melquiádes writes text like a mandala, because his subject matter is mandalic. Aureliano Babilonia's decryption of his text, then, represents a moment of macrocosmic mandalic recognition. In this vision, he recognizes the eternal instant, the entirety of the context of his individual and collective life. What Aureliano Babilonia
experiences is the union of all the contextual elements (for us, textual elements, as we experience that mandalic recognition vicariously through him) in the Buendia family's life. But the meaning of the revelation is apocalypse, a fleeting opportunity for understanding that will not be repeated.

Rosa Maria Simas' essay, "A 'Gyrating Wheel,'" analyzes Marquez's text in terms of circular and archetypal forms:

One Hundred Years of Solitude...not only allows this process of collective creation and expression, but actually makes it necessary, since the circular structure of each novel draws into its circumference the many voices which together create the text and its circularity and meaning.

(45)

However, her work does not connect the text's representative elements with their next larger context, the mandala. She specifically notes that Marquez's text links "the human search for knowledge and understanding to the ultimate enlightenment coinciding with the simultaneous instant of ontological realization" (203). In "The Aleph," Borges brings "enlightenment" and "realization" together simultaneously in the moment of mandalic recognition. In the same sense, most recent critical discourse on One Hundred Years of Solitude notes elements of "circular time," "synchronicity," "anachronistic," "eternal return," "archetype," "myth," "the collective," the wheel, and circular patterns as unconnected textual phenomenon. They share the shortcoming of deconstructing and segregating elements of circular time, linguistic structure, and archetype, rather
than reconciling and unifying them in a meaningful manner. As with Simas' "Gyrating Wheel," none of the works consulted in this argument unite these concepts as they participate in dialogue within the collective context of the mandala.

In her comparison of Marquez and William Faulkner, Simas identifies similar suspensions of linear time:

Marquez himself takes on the project of Melquiades: to organize the facts not according to the conventional time of men but . . . to concentrate a century of daily episodes so that they all coexisted within the same instant . . .

This is the dream of totum simul, of a divine and transcendent vision . . . Through this alliance of the marvelous and the everyday, Marquez found his own personal register . . . a true Latin American voice.

(Simas, 32)

Chronologically, Marquez writes in terms conducive to the mandala. Marquez resists patterns and structuralist approaches to interpreting literature because of their tendency to devalue other approaches to metaphor and narrative; in interviews he convincingly argues that a Latin American text should not be measured with an English yardstick (Simas, 41).

Yet, because the mandala's circular pattern of expression resides in the collective unconscious, its use in examining art (and subsequently, text) retains a privileged independence from both structuralist and deconstructuralist approaches to text. Recognition of the mandala as an archetypal pattern in human expression, along with
its potential for interpreting art and personality originates with a Swiss psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung. Therefore, it also comments on the psychology of text, on the interaction of the conscious and unconscious functions of author, text, and reader as interconnected in the process of signification. This is the extent to which the mandala imports a structured reading; it will speak in these terms and search for them as textual dynamics.

Conversely, the mandala overcomes artificial structural impositions by deconstructing the most complicated of conscious repression and logical labyrinths, as evidenced in Borges' "Aleph" and "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." The mandala is Tlön's balanced argument; it accounts for both its thesis and antithesis. It can even operate within and around the paradoxes of structuralist and deconstructuralist arguments; the process of mandalic meditation recognizes meaning through reconciling opposites.

With its circular structure and opposition of archetypes, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* forms a mandala by bringing into union a paradox of human excellence and utter baseness. Gabriel Marquez claims the mandalic pattern as his own, reconciling magic and reality as unified and meaningful. He understands the Buendias, an entire cultural dynasty, as unable to reconcile archetypal conflicts. Ultimately, the Buendia family engenders their own apocalyptic fate. They accept the gradual imposition of external logic that denies community by fragmenting it into individuals who wander its labyrinth. Wrapped inside their respective solitudes, the Buendias read their own history without comprehending it. The labyrinth of this text
develops from individual solitudes that prevent knowledge of the Self. Like historical time, solitude deceives the Buendías into forgetting the past, oblivious to their positions within the cycle, unaware that "races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth" (383).
III. To Fly Above The Labyrinth

The hero of the feminine quest, according to Dana Heller, "lights out' into strange continents, collecting out of the darkness stories never heard before" (Heller, 1). In Joseph Campbell's interpretation, the masculine hero experiences "departure, fulfillment, [and] return." (Myth, 166) In these terms, the hero of Song of Solomon engages in both feminine and masculine heroic quests into the mandala, exploring everything present in Self, but buried by the hero's environment. Song of Solomon represents more than the hero's departure from and return to community; the hero in this text undertakes a reinvention of self through an investigation of self in relation to community. As Toni Morrison's Milkman suggests, a male character can participate in feminine quest patterns, varying only in slight degrees from the female hero over the course of the quest, towards the experience of mandalic recognition of Self and community.

In her introduction to The Feminization of Quest Romance, Dana Heller focuses specifically on differentiating the feminine quest from the traditional masculine hero myth. In Song of Solomon, discoveries of powerful feminine archetypes characterize Milkman's evolution. Patriarchal society, embodied in the overpowering figure of his father, succeeds in programming Milkman with every self-denying, male-oriented instruction, the majority of them destructive and selfish. Self-centeredness dominates the early stages of Milkman's accidental
journey. His growth marks gradual attempts to redirect the locus of his perception outward from within the instinctual inner sphere of self-promotion to incorporate the world around him and increase his awareness. Heller's feminine quest theory helps to examine Milkman and Song of Solomon, particularly because of the powerful feminine influence surrounding his character. A significant by-product of Milkman's journey is his increased sensitivity to the women around him and a more intense awareness of the feminine archetypes at work in his own unconscious.

To examine myth and archetype in Song of Solomon, we must explore the extent to which this text creates or finds its own myths:

Morrison's novel is neither erotic nor religious. The title must be taken literally, without allegorical interpretation: the song is about a man named Solomon, who flew off to Africa, leaving a lover and twenty-one children. His flight is at the heart of the novel, and the song tells of this event. (de Weever, 131)

The Bible's "Song of Solomon" narrates a love poem, often interpreted in Christian myth as an expression of the relationship of divine love between man and God. Yet even as a canticle of erotic love poems between lovers, the book does not express a relationship with Song of Solomon's many archetypal situations. Therefore, we will examine legitimate allusions in the text, based on the interpretation that Song of Solomon creates its own analog, rather than continuing in the biblical tradition. In fact, where the author does allude to biblical myth, the reference usually broadcasts bitterness and irony.
Pilate, for example, receives her name from her illiterate father, Jake. He selects the name by randomly pointing at a page in his bible:

"I want that for the baby's name."
"You can't name a baby this."
"Say it."
"It's a man's name."
"Say it."
"Pilate."
"What?"
"Pilate. You wrote down Pilate."
"Like a riverboat pilot?"
"No. Not like a riverboat pilot. Like a Christ-killing Pilate. You can't get much worse than that for a name. And a baby girl at that."
"That's where my finger went down at."
"Well, your brain ain't got to follow it. You don't want to give this motherless child the name of the man that killed Jesus, do you?"
"I asked Jesus to save me my wife." (18-19)

The naming event burns with bitterness, and the narrative presents it from the first-person in an analepsis. The narrative encourages the reader to participate in the mandala of text, not only vicariously characters in the narrative, but to move one step ahead of them by connecting marginal information in context. Morrison's text evolves much like this passage, as random, chance events that appear to
have no meaning, but turn out to be poignant testimonies. This scene emerges from the unconscious and collective unconscious of Pilate and the Dead family's past into the present narrative, as information revealed to the reader but concealed from character.

In terms of the mandala, the reader participates in the mandalic meditation of text by following Milkman's journey and reconstructing his family's unconscious context along with him. The mandalic recognitions of meaning in this text occur on several levels because it presents the reader with multiple contexts. Milkman eventually circumvents his personal labyrinthine obstacles to recognize the microcosmic mandala of his Self, and also deciphers the collective labyrinth that conceals the macroscopic mandala of his family's heritage.

Naming drawn from biblical sources carries a skewed sense of allusion in this text. Rather than dote on her mother-in-law as the biblical Ruth does, Morrison's Ruth devotes her faith to the memory of her father and the presence of the husband who refuses to love her. Reba, short for Rebecca, does not emulate the matriarch of Israel; instead, she lives with her mother and illegitimate child. Magdalena called Lena "is not a reformed prostitute; she never takes a lover and remains in her father's house" (de Weever, 132). The sheer irony of the allusions in naming suggests that we cannot make direct correlations between biblical figures and the characters in this text.

The actual Song of Solomon, the original version that Milkman seeks, does not originate in a book of the bible; it is a myth specific to African-Americans, born in the early days of the slave trade.1 The
flight myth begins in the African-American tradition in the earliest roots of slavery, as African slaves suffered imprisonment on a foreign continent. The dream often centers on a patriarch who begins a chant and either transforming into a bird (usually a crow, blackbird or raven) or retaining his human form, rises above the fields, and flies back to Africa. Often, other field workers join in the chant and flight, leaving others behind who cannot invoke the power of flight. The desire for escaping the oppressive (and repressive) as expressed through the flight myth, therefore, belongs to the specific collective of the Black American experience. This archetypal programming follows the same distinction made earlier in relation to Marquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude and the Buendias family; the collective unconscious can range from broad distinctions of species to the more specific contexts of race and even family. The collective unconscious specific to the Dead family represents the anthropological field of the mandala in which Milkman unearths the individual significances which contribute to the macrocosmic recognition of the Song of Solomon.

How then does myth function in this text? Just as the mandala communicates the non-communicable, myths attempt to explain the non-explainable: "Myth presents unique situations: the founding of a race or nation, the creation of the world, the origins of things, set in the very distant past. The ending is very often tragic, although the happy ending is not rare" (de Weever, 132). Where archetype exemplifies a universal situation, myth represents the attempt to explain it. The archetype of flight resides in the collective unconscious of black men in Song of Solomon's community. The apocryphal story of the
archetype's source is mythical, the Song of Solomon. Because of its function as myth, the reader does not need to qualify the reality of Milkman's flight. In this sense, the text suspends knowledge of Milkman's survival after his final leap; he functions outside of the dominant discourse and its empiricism. Through his quest into the source of his heritage, and his recognition of his extended family's macroscopic mandala, Milkman possesses the archetype of Solomon's flight and enters myth. After all, this work is a fiction, and Morrison works within the intertextualities of a relatively recent African-American mythical tradition. Milkman's flight brings the Solomon myth full circle and is as much an origin as an ending. Works which treat myth in narrative inevitably unwork historical time. Conceivably, Milkman's great grandchildren could mature in a tradition where materialism again obscures their family's flight myth, requiring the emergence of the hero who quests for the myth behind the archetype.

Like myth, we use fairy tales as archetypal tools. But instead of using them to explain our nebulous questions, we share them with our children as a means for resolving archetypal conflicts. Jacqueline de Weever recognizes this aspect of *Song of Solomon*:

*The Song of Solomon* is a combination of myth and fairy tale. It is a story about flying, encompassing the myth of Daedalus and Icarus. While the myth ends in the death of Icarus . . . Milkman Dead rides the air at the end of the novel (illustrating the possibility of transcending human limitations). But, before he can ride the air, he has to leave his parents' house,
encounter dangers and obstacles along the way . . . .
Only then, after he has thrown off the psychic baggage he has been bearing in his soul, can he fly as he leaps into the air. (133)

Dædalus intimately understood the nature of labyrinthine structures and how to escape them.2 He warns his son "to keep a moderate height" over the water, for if the boy flies too low, he will soak his wings and if he ventures too high, he will melt them (Bullfinch, 156).

Like Dædalus, Milkman rises above the consequences of the labyrinth that conceal significant pieces of his collective past and prevents them from forming meaningful relationships. By identifying and discarding his "psychic baggage," Milkman escapes the conscious and unconscious labyrinths of community and familial programming. On his quest for the Song of Solomon, the series of frustrations he encounters lend him the wisdom Icarus lacked, gradually bringing these obscure components of the mandala back into active context.

Like Icarus, Robert Smith makes an artificial attempt at flying. Similar to the analog, his artificial wings fail him and he dies. Logistically, we expect Song of Solomon's ending to work this way. Morrison leaves it open, however. She freezes the narrative in the moment where Milkman grasps the numinous, understanding the empowerment of the macrocosmic mandala and the place of his microcosmic mandala within it. Pilate is present from opening to closing moments of text as the voice of the unconscious, the text's chorus. At the hospital, before Mr. Smith's well-advertised leap, she sings the song:
Pilate's soulful song echoes through the depression-stricken community into the Dead household where the former warmth of Ruth's family decays into a materialistic game whose score equals the number of keys on Macon Dead's chain. In the Dead household, the father has no knowledge of the labyrinth's architecture, so the son must weave his own thread to escape it. Milkman grows to understand the labyrinth he transcends primarily through his relationship with the text's wise woman, Pilate.

In her textual function as a choral character, shared at times with her daughter and granddaughter, Pilate interjects the ironic commentary of the vulgar, soulful, and primitive that her brother Macon so zealously represses in his family. Milkman's attraction to her is unavoidable and inevitable. Pilate represents other in this community, particularly in regard to Macon. Their separation begins with a misunderstanding in the Virginia cave, where he thinks she steals a bag of gold from the dead man they encounter. Later, Pilate arrives to live with Macon and Ruth before the birth of Milkman.

At this point, Macon no longer sleeps with his wife. His remembrance of the episode where Ruth kisses her dead father's hand feeds on itself, reinventing and corrupting the original incident like a pornographic image. Macon admits that: "Little by little he remembered fewer and fewer of the details, until finally he had to
imagine them, even fabricate them, guess what they must have been" (16). As with Aureliano Segundo's Tartar warrior, fictional re-
presentation displaces the original presentation, an ironic indictment of history which absolutely intrudes into reality by twisting the judgment which shapes the characters' physical behavior. After physically attacking his father for assaulting Ruth, Milkman listens incredulously as Macon relates his version of the story.

This incident, combined with the earlier episode in which Macon reminisces about his father, Jake, and his Virginia childhood represent the only real moments of tenderness he shares with Milkman. When Macon recounts the deathbed story, he brings Milkman into an awareness of his own existential labyrinth. Milkman could have lived content without learning the source of his parents' enmity, but knowing the reason creates an awareness in Milkman of an incomplete understanding of Self, of information absent from his personal mandala. Through this recognition of a new and larger context of personality, Milkman begins to perceive his life in terms of the mandala, where his distracted conscious mind allows repressed unconscious memories to emerge through gaps in its repression:

"My mother nursed me when I was old enough to talk, stand up, and wear knickers, and somebody saw it and laughed and--and that is why they call me Milkman and that is why my father never does and that is why my mother never does, but everyone else does. And how did I forget that? And why?" (78)
If he had never been aware of these things, his life might have been easier, but this new apprehension with an incomplete Self creates problems that he can only reconcile with the quest, which itself will transform from a greedy errand for his father into the discovery of a quintessential family archetype—flight.

In terms of his participation in text, Milkman's quest parallels Heller's feminine quest criteria. Throughout his life, masculine authority succeeds in perpetuating sexual difference in sex roles, particularly in male-female relationships, where self-interest dominates masculine behavior more than love. Milkman, as hero, spends the greater part of his life endorsing stereotypical gender roles. By questing for the missing components of Self, he initiates the quest from that repressed patriarchal community. Milkman's feminine quest empowers him with his family's heritage of flight. In the final moment of text, he does not re-enter community, but ends his quest with one of two possibilities: death, or an improbable freedom in the margins of his traditional community.

The situation Milkman flees at the moment of his departure on his quest represents an environment antithetical to the person he later becomes. The city represents unnatural, completely artificial surroundings. Milkman inherits his social status from his father, a not altogether favorably regarded man. His position as the son of Macon Dead and the grandson of the eminent Dr. Foster is only a façade. Like the description of Macon, Ruth, the Hudson, and their dressed-up daughters, Milkman's social standing acts as an artificial veil to hide a dysfunctional and anesthetized family. They are more miserable than
any of the most impoverished blacks in the text. Pilate, Reba, and Hagar accentuate the misery of their sister family. Pilate doesn't wear shoes, Reba coasts from orgasm to orgasm, and Hagar loves Milkman naturally and without reservation. The Dead family, pun intended, is led by a cold man who incites his wife into bathroom abortions with knitting needles and keeps his daughters under lock and key for fear of endangering his social position. Dysfunction has worked its way so deeply into Macon Dead's family that he no longer acknowledges his sister, as she threatens his patriarchal authority. This is the community from which Milkman embarks on his quest, searching for the golden talisman that will be his escape from his pitiable situation.

Pilate represents Milkman's greatest resource in discovering himself and family. She plays the role of the good witch in the fairy tale where Milkman escapes the control of his mother and father, makes foolish transactions, climbs the beanstalk, kills the giant, and regains the golden treasure of his great-grandfather's flight. Like the biblical Eve, Pilate has no navel, and she introduces discriminating judgment to Milkman. She has to deceive the lover with whom she conceives Reba by letting him come to her only at night, so that her lack of a navel would not scare him away. Yet, even after she has become pregnant and he offers to marry her, she rejects him. Unlike Eve, Pilate recognizes her difference, freely choosing to occupy a place outside conventional roles and relationships. Pilate commands the personality to become a strong matriarch, and still chooses to remain outside of marriage. Even though she does not quest until the
closing chapter of the text, she occupies a heroic place in the feminine quest pattern.

All three of the independent Dead women recognize this difference, either choosing or failing to remain in traditional relationships. Like their mother, Reba and Hagar command the power of enchantment, as Milkman experiences in his first visit to Pilate's:

Pilate began to hum as she returned to plucking the berries. After a moment, Reba joined her, and they hummed together in perfect harmony until Pilate took the lead . . .When the two women got to the chorus, Hagar raised her head and sang too . . .Milkman could hardly breathe. Hagar's voice scooped up what little pieces of heart he had left to call his own. When he thought he was going to faint from the weight of what he was feeling, he risked a glance at his friend and saw the setting sun gilding Guitar's eyes, putting into shadow a slow smile of recognition. (48)

The three women possess him completely in their song, the vernacular Song of Solomon. He experiences an unconscious meditation on the women's part, yet for Milkman it represents everything he and his family have never known, never felt.

In many ways, Pilate develops alongside Milkman for she undertakes a companion quest. She also suffers from missing components of her personality that she must reintegrate with her conscious being. Her father's ghost appears to her to communicate her mother's name, Sing, and she thinks that he means for her to
continue to sing her song. None of the characters in text understand themselves fully, and they seem to understand each other even less. This mutual misunderstanding causes them to interact in unpredictable ways within the context of the textual mandala. The characters experience higher levels of understanding only through the outcomes of chaotic and selfish actions. Macon instigates Milkman and Guitar's theft of Pilate's green canvas bag through his neurotic reinvention and remembrance of history. The situation results in Milkman and Guitar's arrest, revealing the contents of the bag as bones, the bones of the man Macon "killed" in the cave. Macon's own labyrinthine thought process causes most of the tension between him and his sister, where interactions among actual, physical elements expose a true relationship, rather than a perceived one. Pilate's inheritance is ironic in the sense that she inherits the body, the bones of her father. The literal image asserts what we assume about the Buendias in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, children carry with them the archetypes of the fathers.

Even after the chance events that initiate Milkman's process of self-realization, he still wishes to maintain his childish labyrinth of repression rather than contend with overwhelming spiritual and psychological issues:

He avoided commitment and strong feelings, and shied away from decisions. He wanted to know as little as possible, to feel only enough to get through the day amiably and to be interesting enough to warrant the curiosity of other people— but not their all consuming
devotion . . . And this latest Jack and the Beanstalk bid for freedom, even though it had been handed to him by his father--assigned almost--stood some chance of success. (181)

Milkman maintains this adolescent attitude until he returns from the cave, empty-handed and foolish. At that moment, he begins to connect the context of his behavior with its implications for others, a process of discrimination that Macon neither practiced nor taught him.

Sexuality also represents a problematic issue for our hero. For Milkman, sexual awakening brings not guilt, but strength, as he taps into the wellspring of blind masculine pleasure. He uses Hagar as the vehicle for his manly rite of passage. In defiance of his father, he possesses the physical strength which accompanies late adolescent prowess. At the dinner table, where he physically assaults Macon to defend his mother, he comprehends the dark side of sexuality, a dark secret which festers like a tumor in the recesses of Macon's mind. After the incident, Macon relates his version of the scene where Ruth kisses her dying father's hand, "something he wishes he had not known" and Milkman must acknowledge his parent's sexual relationship (de Weever, 135). Also, Milkman's strength manifests itself in relation to Hagar, for he survives her attempted assassinations which come in menstrual frequency.

Water imagery in this text marks a significant moment in the questor's life. The entire story alludes to submersion of self in the personal unconscious (Milkman's microcosmic mandala), for the purpose of connecting the conscious with the depths of known, but
non-present experience. On his way to the cave, Milkman soils his clothes and splits open his high-society dress shoes, removing the artifice and exposing the man—a natural, dirty man. At this moment, he realizes the superficiality of all the trappings his father values so much, recognizing a newfound self-awareness that allows him to feel remorse for his former arrogance and self-importance.

For Milkman, particularly in relation to his landowning heritage, presence and residence in a given place works as a substantive issue. Milkman's grandfather, Jake, dies protecting the land he nurtured and called his own. From this legacy grew Macon Dead's obsession with property: "Own things. And let the things you own own other things. Then you'll own yourself and other people too" (Song of Solomon, 55). Macon's material obsession marks itself indelibly within Milkman's psyche, so deeply that when he first enters Shalimar, he nearly gets himself killed for casually mulling the purchase of a second car and the possible pursuit of the local women:

His manner, his clothes were reminders that they had no crops of their own and no land to speak of either . . . He was telling them that they weren't men, that they relied on women and children for their food. And that the lint and tobacco in their pants pockets where dollar bills should have been was the measure . . . They had seen him watching their women and rubbing his fly as he stood on the steps. They had also seen him lock his car as soon as he got out of it in a place where there
couldn't be more than two keys twenty-five miles around. (269)

This third person representation illustrates how thoroughly Macon imprints upon Milkman the same patriarchal programming to which he subscribes. Milkman's sexual behavior presents the only major problem in the text's denouement, particularly the guilt he experiences for rejecting Hagar. Ironically, after Shalimar's local men initiate him on the hunt they connect him with one of their women, Sweet. The fact that this unconscious sexual behavior persists even as the male hero recognizes his feminine strengths suggests that Morrison is aware of the socialization process that brings Milkman into the dominant discourse of the patriarchy. Even after recognizing the boon of the quest, the masculine imprint of Milkman's society seems indelibly ingrained.

Milkman begins to resemble a regular person, but only after being separated from the bulk of his pretentions. The midnight hunt with Omar marks another initiation rite in his journey. Clothing Milkman like a woodsman, the locals invite him on their hunt. The trip introduces Milkman to his ancestral woods and the hunter archetype. Instinct, a close relative of synchronicity, saves him from Guitar's attempted strangling by suggesting action before thought based on pure subliminal knowledge. By the completion of his tenure in Shalimar, Milkman attaches enough value to intuition that he recognizes and follows up on the nuances of Susan Byrd's evasion. And, more significantly, he deciphers the sing-song jump-rope ditty that contains, encoded within it, the key to his family's heritage.
Milkman exhibits similarities to both the masculine and feminine patterns in the search for Self through the heroic quest. The only major discrepancy between the masculine and feminine quest relates to resolution and the hero's ability to return to the community he or she departs from. In Milkman's case, the masculine hero returns to share the knowledge of his heroic insight. In terms of Campbell's masculine quest, this return to community marks the apparent completion of Milkman's heroic journey. After recovering from Pilate's vengeful frypan, Milkman basks in the glow of the recovery of his family's lost heritage; his discovery of the Song of Solomon offers the key to decrypting his family's stagnant past. But he does not actually complete the quest until he recognizes his situation in its mandalic wholeness, i.e. the realization of his flight and escape from patriarchal history. More important, the rediscovery of flight reconciles Milkman and Pilate with Guitar's blind and selfish revenge; Milkman's flight symbolizes a victory for both individuals. Guitar represents the arrogant masculine society that Milkman gradually evolves out of, as he matures into a more balanced, individuated person. Their relationship shifts as this growth occurs. When Milkman initiates the quest for self-understanding, he becomes a threat by abandoning his friend and making him feel vulnerable in his ignorance.

In its attempt to work outside of traditional sex roles, the feminine quest suffers from its inability to reintegrate the feminine hero back into society. The resolution of Song of Solomon's quest fails to provide a niche in which the feminine hero can continue growth, or at least hold ground as a completely autonomous individual. The return
of an exceptional individual to his or her immediate society is problematic in any case, as the extraordinary hero must rejoin a mundane community. The boon discovered through a feminine quest values knowledge of the other, recognizes difference. Society, on the other hand, may not.

In this same sense, the mandala represents a feminine perspective because it defeats phallogocentric divisions in this text that prevent meaningful discourse. As we observed in Borges' *Labyrinths*, the mandala overcomes structural obstacles to unify conscious and unconscious elements of a larger context. Once these elements are in discourse, the reader can recognize their collective meaning. Unfortunately, the mandala must re-enter language to communicate the epiphany, which it cannot do. The mandala resembles the feminine hero in two ways: first, in the sense that the mandala signifies an empty center, which concrete terms or empirical means may never characterize; second, the mandala signifies an other outside of language, condemned to operate outside of language if it wishes to continue its function, or suffer instantaneous death.

Conversely, the concept of Campbell's (masculine) heroic monomyth grounds its boon in gaining a sense of unity, i.e. some resolution for the hero's conflict. While Milkman's sex qualifies him as a masculine hero, examining him in relation to the feminine quest proves more effective. Although Milkman completes the steps of the masculine journey proposed in Joseph Campbell's attempt at a monomythical heroic quest (departure, fulfillment, and return), his character development corresponds more completely to Heller's
theory. Milkman finishes the masculine quest, but recognizes his journey as incomplete. Like the mandala, Milkman enters the moment outside of both time and language--myth.

The masculine hero slays the oppressive Sphinx and restores order to the kingdom. The quest cycle deconstructs and reconstructs the hero’s character, assuming a reassembly greater than the sum of its parts. Conflict within the Self necessitates a departure in search of the second phase of the quest, fulfillment. Milkman leaves his place in community in search of gold, the prize in the cave that will grant him his independence from his father. Unconsciously, even after his failure to find the gold, Milkman has already initiated the journey that will return him to his family as a hero, a sentient individual with privileged information. The hero’s return marks the discovery of the masculine quest’s boon, the specific benefit that resolves the issue which made separation from community necessary.

In the microcosmic sense of the mandala, Milkman’s quest is primarily masculine. In the macrocosmic mandala of family and race however, Milkman participates in the feminine quest. Through his journey into the mandala, he grasps his boon and basks in the heroic limelight of returning its benefit to his community, only to discover his place within a larger mandalic context. In the text’s apocryphal closing lines, he achieves freedom and the possibility of flight into destiny. Morrison suspends the narrative in the mythical moment to avoid marginalizing the hero; she refuses to melt his wings and cast him back into the labyrinth. The unfortunate reality for the feminine hero evolves as Heller suggests: the hero achieves the boon of self-
actualization, only to realize that keeping it means reintegration into a patriarchal society that will do everything in its power to repress it.
III. To Fly Above the Labyrinth

1. Where Song of Solomon appears without quotes, it refers to the actual song in text, the "Sugarman" of the corrupt version that Pilate and her daughters remember, and its original "Solomon" text that Milkman discovers in Shalimar.

2. de Weever's selection of the Icarus analogy is fitting; his father Dædalus was the architect of Minos' labyrinth, a complex underground prison designed to house his son, the Minotaur. He constructs the wings to escape King Minos, who learned that he had provided Ariadne with the means to understand the Minotaur's labyrinth. Incidentally, Borges' "The House of Asterion" (Labyrinths) names the Minotaur, explaining the labyrinth from his perspective.

The People Could Fly

They say the people could fly. Say that long ago in Africa, some of the people knew magic. And they would walk up on the air like climbin up on a gate. And they flew like blackbirds over the fields. Black, shiny wings flappin against the blue up there.

Then, many of the people were captured for Slavery. The ones that could fly shed their wings. They couldn’t take their wings across the water on the slave ships. Too crowded, don’t you know.

The folks were full of misery, then. Got sick with the up and down of the sea. So they forgot about flyin when they could no longer breathe the sweet scent of Africa.
Say the people who could fly kept their power, although they shed their wings. They kept their secret magic in the land of slavery. They looked the same as the other people from Africa who had been coming over, who had dark skin. Say you couldn’t tell anymore one who could fly from one who couldn’t.

One such who could was an old man, call him Toby. And standin tall, yet afraid, was a young woman who once had wings. Call her Sarah. Now Sarah carried a babe tied to her back. She trembled to be so hard worked and scorned.

The slaves labored in the fields from sunup to sundown. The owner of the slaves callin himself their Master. Say he was a hard lump of clay. A hard, glinty coal. A hard rock pile, wouldn’t be moved. His Overseer on horseback pointed out the slaves who were slowin down. So the one called Driver cracked his whip over the slow ones to make them move faster. That whip was a slice-open cut of pain. So they did move faster. Had to.

Sarah hoed and chopped the row as the babe on her back slept.

Say the child grew hungry. That babe started up bawling too loud. Sarah couldn’t stop to feed it. Couldn’t stop to soothe and quiet it down. She let it cry. She didn’t want to. She had no heart to croon to it.

“Keep that thing quiet,” called the Overseer. He pointed his fin­ger at the babe. The woman scrunched low. The Driver cracked his whip across the babe anyhow. The babe hollered like any hurt child, and the woman fell to the earth.

The old man that was there, Toby, came and helped her to her feet.
"I must go soon," she told him.

"Soon," he said.

Sarah couldn't stand up straight any longer. She was too weak. The sun burned her face. The babe cried and cried, "Pity me, oh, pity me," say it sounded like. Sarah was so sad and starvin', she sat down in the row.

"Get up, you black cow," called the Overseer. He pointed his hand, and the Driver's whip snarled around Sarah's legs. Her sack dress tore into rags. Her legs bled onto the earth. She couldn't get up.

Toby was there where there was no one to help her and the babe.

"Now, before it's too late," panted Sarah. "Now, Father!"

"Yes, Daughter, the time is come," Toby answered. "Go, as you know how to go!"

He raised his arms, holding them out to her. "*Kum . . . yali, kum bubu tambe,*" and more magic words, said so quickly, they sounded like whispers and sighs.

The young woman lifted one foot on the air. Then the other. She flew clumsily at first, with the child now held tightly in her arms. Then she felt the magic, the African mystery. Say she rose just as free as a bird. As light as a feather.

The Overseer rode after her, hollerin. Sarah flew over the fences. She flew over the woods. Tall trees could not snag her. Nor could the Overseer. She flew like an eagle now, until she was gone from sight. No one dared speak about it. Couldn't believe it. But it was, because they that was there saw that it was.
Say the next day was dead hot in the fields. A young man slave fell from the heat. The Driver come and whipped him. Toby come over and spoke words to the fallen one. The words of ancient Africa once heard are never remembered completely. The young man forgot them as soon as he heard them. They went way inside him. He got up and rolled over on the air. He rode it awhile. And he flew away.

Another and another fell from the heat. Toby was there. He cried out to the fallen and reached his arms out to them. "Kum kunka yali, kum ... tambe!" Whispers and sighs. And they too rose on the air. They rode the hot breezes. The ones flyin were black and shinin sticks, wheelin above the head of the Overseer. They crossed the rows, the fields, the fences, the streams, and were away.
"Seize the old man!" cried the Overseer. "I heard him say the magic words. Seize him!"

The one callin himself Master come runnin. The Driver got his whip ready to curl around old Toby and tie him up. The slaveowner took his hip gun from its place. He meant to kill old, black Toby.

But Toby just laughed. Say he threw back his head and said, "Hee, hee! Don’t you know who I am? Don’t you know some of us in this field?" He said it to their faces. "We are ones who fly!"

And he sighed the ancient words that were a dark promise. He said them all around to the others in the field under the whip, "...buba yali... buba tambe...."

There was a great outcryin. The bent backs straighted up. Old and young who were called slaves and could fly joined hands. Say like they would ring-sing. But they didn’t shuffle in a circle. They didn’t sing. They rose on the air. They flew in a flock that was black against the heavenly blue. Black crows or black shadows. It didn’t matter, they went so high. Way above the plantation, way over the slavery land. Say they flew away to Free-dom.

And the old man, old Toby, flew behind them, takin care of them. He wasn’t cryin. He wasn’t laughin. He was the seer. His gaze fell on the plantation where the slaves who could not fly waited.

"Take us with you!" Their looks spoke it but they were afraid to shout it. Toby couldn’t take them with him. Hadn’t the time to teach them to fly. They must wait for a chance to run.

"Goodie-bye!" The old man called Toby spoke to them, poor souls! And he was flyin gone.
So they say. The Overseer told it. The one called Master said it was a lie, a trick of the light. The Driver kept his mouth shut.

The slaves who could not fly told about the people who could fly to their children. When they were free. When they sat close before the fire in the free land, they told it. They did so love firelight and Freedom, and tellin.

They say that the children of the ones who could not fly told their children. And now, me, I have told it to you.


“The People Could Fly” is one of the most extraordinary, moving tales in black folklore. It almost makes us believe that the people could fly. There are numerous separate accounts of flying Africans and slaves in the black folktale literature. Such accounts are often combined with tales of slaves disappearing. A plausible explanation might be the slaves running away from slavery, slipping away while in the fields or under cover of darkness. In code language murmured from one slave to another, “Come fly away!” might have been the words used. Another explanation is the wish-fulfillment motif.

The magic hoe variant is often combined with the flying-African tale. A magic hoe is left still hoeing in an empty field after all the slaves have flown away. Magic with the hoe and other farm tools, and the power of disappearing, are often attributed to Gullah (Angolan) African slaves. Angolan slaves were thought by other slaves to have exceptional powers.

“The People Could Fly” is a detailed fantasy tale of suffering, of magic power exerted against the so-called Master and his underlings. Finally, it is a powerful
testament to the millions of slaves who never had the opportunity to "fly" away. They remained slaves, as did their children. "The People Could Fly" was first told and retold by those who had only their imaginations to set them free.
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