Feminine mythic patterns in Doris Lessing's The Summer Before the Park and The Memoirs of a Survivor.

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FEMININE MYTHIC PATTERNS IN DORIS LESSING'S
THE SUMMER BEFORE THE DARK AND THE MEMOIRS OF A SURVIVOR

by

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Abstract

FEMININE MYTHIC PATTERNS IN DORIS LESSING'S
THE SUMMER BEFORE THE DARK AND THE MEMOIRS OF A SURVIVOR

Doris Lessing's two novels, *The Summer Before the Dark* and *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, are concerned with their protagonists' quests for wholeness and for a new consciousness which can overcome the fragmentation of their lives. This quest has gradually emerged as being the dominant theme in Lessing's novels. It demonstrates the shift in her emphasis from social problems to the individual's inner life. Lessing's concentration on the attainment of a new vision of life for her protagonists often shows the influence of her interest in Sufi teachings, especially their exhortation to "be in the world yet not of it." Sufi ideas can also be discerned in the quality of the new consciousness and in the protagonists' feelings of being part of an evolutionary process which will result in people with psychic powers who will be the salvation of our civilization.

Despite the Eastern mystical quality of Lessing's ideas, the quest for a new consciousness is depicted in universal terms with mythic patterns underlying apparently insignificant actions in the novels. Since the protagonists of these two novels are women, their quest for wholeness does not follow the masculine pattern of the hero myth
but rather re-enacts many elements of Demeter's search for her lost daughter, Persephone. This relationship between inner psychic processes and myth was first investigated by Jung. One of his followers, Erich Neumann, postulated that a woman's search for self, or individuation, would differ from a man's primarily because of her different relationship with her mother and her unconscious. Ann Belford Ulanov further defined the stages a woman must go through in order to achieve wholeness. Kate Brown, in *The Summer Before the Dark*, passes through these stages of individuation as she moves from entrapment in the maternal role and a patriarchal marriage, through a journey of initiation, and finally re-birth as a whole person, free from the limitations of her role as Mrs. Brown. Her progress is indicated by her dreams and the mythic imagery which recalls the story of Demeter and the mysteries celebrated in her honor at Eleusus.

In *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, the unnamed narrator guides a young girl, Emily, through an initiation similar to Kate's. The narrator re-lives Emily's past for her and prepares Emily for her penetration into another world which is presided over by the One. In addition to the Sufi flavor of this new world, the mother and daughter reunion, which is central to the Demeter myth, is repeated in this novel as well as imagery which evokes ancient matriarchal goddesses.
These motifs and the feminine nature of the transcendent
One show Memoirs, like Summer, to be concerned with
Lessing's theme of the quest for wholeness as a woman exper-
iences that quest.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The novels of Doris Lessing seem to fall into two groups: her early novels concerned with racism, communism, feminism, and her later ones which deal with insanity, E.S.P., and the imminent destruction of civilization. Critics have, however, discerned a common theme which can be found in books in either group, the protagonist's quest for wholeness. The theme receives different treatment in the two groups, with the earlier novels focusing on external experiences and the later on internal ones. The turning point seems to be The Golden Notebook which could belong to the first group since it deals with African racial problems and the loss of faith in the Communist Party by liberal intellectuals. The Golden Notebook was hailed as an important feminist book, but Lessing disliked its being so labeled and insisted that its central theme is that a mental breakdown can be "A way of self-healing, of the inner self's dismissing false dichotomies and divisions." In response to Lessing's statement, and in at least one case preceding it, critics focused on the theme of madness as a way of healing, on Ana's breakthrough into a new consciousness. After The Golden Notebook, Lessing turned back to her Children of Violence series which she described as "a study of the individual conscience in its relations with the
The first four volumes in the series - *Martha Quest*, *A Proper Marriage*, *A Ripple from the Storm*, *Landlocked* - contain many autobiographical elements from Lessing's life. Like Lessing, Martha has an isolated childhood on an African farm, an early marriage to a civil servant, an involvement in the Communist Party. Finally, Martha too leaves her family and goes to London. The final volume of *Children of Violence*, *The Four Gated City*, describes Martha's life in England. It seems totally different from the preceding volumes. The influence of *The Golden Notebook* can be clearly seen in Martha's experiments with states of altered consciousness which are more deliberate and daring than Ana's had been and which result in more frightening yet enlightening mental states and insights. The novel ends with an Appendix which describes the new world inhabited by persons with telepathic powers which survives after the destruction of our present one.

The final volume of the *Children of Violence* series somewhat prepared the way for Lessing's next operation into the world of madness, *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* which she described as "an inner space voyage." Critics were quick to see the great similarity between this novel and the works of the psychiatrist R. D. Laing, especially his description of the schizophrenic experiences of one of his patients, Jesse Watkins. However, at the end of
Watkin's "trip", he returns to normal life feeling strengthened by his experiences, while Charles Watkins, Lessing's voyager, only returns to his former life by seemingly denying his new knowledge.

The disappointing ending of Briefing for a Descent into Hell seemed to be repeated in Lessing's next book, The Summer Before the Dark. It is the story of a wife and mother, Kate Brown, who, when finally free of family responsibility, tries to overcome her feelings of depression and uselessness by taking a glamorous job and a young lover. At the end of the novel, she claims to have gained new insights, as shown in her dreams, but then she returns to her former life apparently unchanged.

If the ending of The Summer Before the Dark seemed frustrating to most readers, the ending of the next novel, Memoirs of a Survivor, proved to be incomprehensible to many others. The novel describes the experiences that an unnamed older woman has during a future period in which civilization is breaking down. A stranger had entrusted her with the care of a young girl, Emily, and her unusual pet, Hugo. Emily, Hugo, and the woman remain in the city as almost everyone abandons it. The final scene is Emily, Hugo, a few others, perhaps the narrator, following a beautiful woman through the wall of the flat into another world. This ending, like The Summer Before the Dark, is not easily
understandable, has a tone of hope and optimism.

Just as Lessing's early novels were approachable by looking at the themes of racism, communism, or feminism, or could be understood by less accessible approaches, such as tracing autobiographical elements in the novels, determining the influence of other writers on Lessing or by studying the structure of the novels themselves, so, too, there are different approaches available for greater understanding of her later novels. Critical literature about Lessing generally accepts her central theme as being the quest for wholeness in her protagonists. In her earlier novels, this need led Martha Quest and Mary Turner through most of the usual life experiences of work, love, family, and some of the more unusual, such as murder and divorce. In the later novels, Lessing becomes more and more involved with the use of altered consciousness as a means of transcending the fragmentation her earlier novels were devoted to describing. This shift in emphasis is described by Marion Vlastos as a movement away from the social reform concerns of the early novels to an emphasis on the need for individual revolutions of consciousness. The product of these revolutions is a new consciousness which allows personal integration.

Critics have gone on to describe the new state of consciousness Lessing envisions in her novels. In *Martha Quest*, Martha, as an adolescent, experiences a moment of
illumination in which she feels a mystical union with all of nature. As an adult, she enters a period of altered consciousness for which she had prepared by solitude, fasting, and meditation. Her experience is analyzed by Sydney Janet Kaplan as a "truly diffused consciousness, in which one consciousness may actually tune in to another. At the last then, the boundaries of individual thought patterns...are illusions." Kaplan also suggests that Lessing may have chosen a male protagonist for Briefing in order to emphasize that the new consciousness transcends all limitations and categories, even sexual ones. Another feature of this transcendent consciousness is that its appearance in a few persons is a result of some sort of evolutionary process. Martha believes she is a forerunner of the telepathic children who inhabit the island described in the Appendix to The Four-Gated City. In Briefing, there is a section in which the descending gods are having a briefing to prepare them for earth. Merk Ury (whose name indicates the tone of this section) explains the difficulty with humans. "They have not yet evolved into an understanding of their individual selves as merely parts of a whole, first of all humanity, their own species, let alone achieving a conscious knowledge of humanity as part of Nature." In Lessing's novels, the new consciousness comes about because of the protagonist's quest for wholeness,
such as Martha, Ana, and Charlie have been shown to have undergone. At the same time, the new consciousness enables the protagonist to experience a oneness with all of creation which overcomes individual fragmentation. A final aspect remains to be examined in the relationship between Lessing's depiction of a new consciousness and her central theme of the quest for wholeness. That is the effect of an individual's changed consciousness upon the world, especially upon the destructive forces of civilization so well depicted in The Four-Gated City and Memoirs of a Survivor. Lessing seems to feel that somehow the individual's new consciousness will bring about a changed world and that, in fact, this is the only way our world will survive destruction. Such a cause/effect relationship is alien to Western thinking, yet appears to be compatible with Eastern religion and philosophy. On several occasions, Lessing has discussed her growing interest in Sufism, a form of Islamic mysticism.  

Therefore, attempting to understand Lessing's idea of a new consciousness from a Sufi perspective seems to be a valid approach. Two critics, Seligman and Hardin, have used Sufism to explain many elements of Lessing's work. They have identified and expanded the quotations from Sufi mystic writings used by Lessing to introduce sections of The Four-Gated City and Briefing. While explaining that
Sufi writing is deliberately vague and ambivalent, to keep its knowledge hidden from the uninitiated, they have been able to explicate some Sufi teachings which seem central to Lessing's later novels as well as her collection of stories, *The Temptation of Jack Orkney*. Seligman sees the whole *Children of Violence* series as Martha's rite of passage resulting in the birth of her telepathic Sufi self. Martha's rebirth is only possible after she rejects logical knowledge in order to learn directly from experience, both good and evil, as the Sufi does. Her new self is only part of an evolutionary process whose next stage can be seen in the telepathic youngsters on the island.\(^1\)\(^2\) Hardin traces Sufi themes in Lessing's short stories, *Briefing* and *Children of Violence*. She describes the Sufi quest as breaking down the walls of the ego in order to experience a new vision.\(^1\)\(^3\)

In an article dealing with *Briefing*, Robert Ryf uses Sufi beliefs to explain the ending of the novel, especially "the Sufi exhortation to be in this world but not of it."\(^1\)\(^4\) By operating in this way, Charles will not lose the vision he gained on his inner space voyage, a vision which Rys describes as "beyond ideology, which takes shape in the emerging opposition to and final rejection of categories, and the recognition of the primacy of experiential insights and values as against abstract knowledge and norms."\(^1\)\(^5\)
Charles Watkins' vision can be perhaps best understood in terms of Sufi teachings. But the process by which Charles, Ana, and Martha have come to their new consciousness, their fresh vision of themselves in the world is not limited to Sufi mysticism. The quest for wholeness for a new vision is an integral part of human experience, not the special province of any one religion or philosophy. Lessing herself seems to espouse the Sufi way and those critics who have approached her novels from this perspective have discovered much that was previously hidden from view. Translating the visions of Martha, Ana, and Charlie into Sufi terms makes them more accessible and understandable. But an understanding of the quest itself need not depend on Sufi interpretation.

Martha and Ana's journeys of self-discovery are described in terms of the ritual quest of the mythic hero by O'Fallon who uses Claire Rosenfield's *Paradise of Snakes* as the source for the hero myth. O'Fallon identifies three stages in his quest and demonstrates how Ana and Martha pass through each: introspection, battles with illusions, self-destruction, hallucinations, and emotionalism, and the final stage of rebirth. The goal of the quest is described by O'Fallon as self-knowledge and a vision of the oneness of human experience. But she sees the quest as fruitless since in the end Ana is a "burned-out crusader"
and Martha "a freak of nature - mad."

What O'Fallon considers a failure could be explained by looking at Ana and Martha as the Sufi would. Then the outward appearance of both is irrelevant. The Sufi is to be in the world but of it; he/she is to take the new vision and let it permeate life but not change it outwardly. As Rys pointed out, participation in the world, not withdrawal from it, is considered the Sufi way. As to Martha's being regarded as a freak, the Sufi would see her as a participant in the pattern of human evolution. Her "madness" merely paves the way for more highly developed people to come after her. O'Fallon's portrayal of the psychological experiences of Ana and Martha as herioc quests is incomplete because it does not take into account the quality of the new consciousness which is the goal of the quest.

If the Eastern mystical quality of the new consciousness is accepted, then the quest itself can still be considered in mythic terms. This is what I propose to do in Lessing's The Summer Before the Dark and The Memoirs of a Survivor, two novels which have not as yet been subjected to as much critical scrutiny as The Golden Notebook, The Four-Gated City, and Briefing for a Descent into Hell. Like those three novels, Summer and Memoirs are concerned
with the protagonist's quest for a new vision which will overcome fragmentation and compartmentalization. A related theme is the belief that the new consciousness achieved by the individual will help change the collective consciousness of humanity. The way of the quest in these two novels contains many elements found in the earlier three; the use of altered states of mind to break down inner barriers, the importance of dreams, the need for acceptance of all experiences - including evil, the evolutionary aspect of human progress in new perceptions. All of these themes which have gradually emerged within Lessing's novels are part of the central quest theme, a theme which could be considered central to all literature. By concentrating on the theme in Summer and Memoirs, it can be shown how Kate Brown and the writer of the memoirs undertake the same voyages as Martha, Ana, and Charles. By approaching their quests for new consciousness in mythic terms, the universal elements of the quest can be revealed.
Endnotes


8Vlastos, p. 245.


10Doris Lessing, Briefing for a Descent into Hell. (New York: Knopf, 1971), p. 141. All further quotations from this novel are based on this edition.


15 Ryf, p. 195.


CHAPTER II

USING THE DEMETER MYTH TO ILLUMINATE THE QUEST THEME IN *SUMMER AND MEMOIRS*

Lessing's heroines in *The Summer Before the Dark* and *The Memoirs of a Survivor* are involved in inward quests which are largely unobservable to an outsider so that a mythic approach can open up much of the meaning in acts which perhaps do not appear to be significant. The study of the relationship between myth and such inward journeys was pioneered by Jung who used universal myths to help explain many of the psychological experiences of people today. As he observed, "Myth is the primordial language natural to these psychic processes, and no intellectual formulation comes anywhere near the richness and expressiveness of mythical imagery."¹ Myths can be thought of as guides through the unconscious; they can illuminate experiences which we know and feel are important but which are not adequately explained by our modern rational way of thinking. Discovering archetypal patterns in a literary work adds dimensions to it, since the patterns make the contents recognizable as belonging to universal human experience.

In identifying such patterns, it is important not to force the literature to fit the patterns, nor to distort
the patterns in order to make them more applicable to the
literature. A cautious approach was outlined by Joseph
Blotner in his study of mythic elements in literature which
he compares to the use of a colored transparency which,
when placed over a sheet of paper, will reveal an orderly
pattern. Blotner warns against considering the mythic
approach a Rosetta Stone which will unlock all the meaning
in a work.\(^2\)

Even if the quest myth is not expected to function
as a Rosetta Stone, it is a valid way to look at *Summer*
and *Memoirs* because they are concerned with the inner
growth or rebirth of individuals. Jung called such growth
individuation and devoted much of his writing to explain-
ing the process, often relying on mythic imagery after he
had observed how the motifs from myths and fairytales
showed up in the fantasies, dreams, and delusions of indi-
viduals today, many of whom have had no cultural connection
with the myth appearing in their unconscious.\(^3\) From his
studies of the myths and folklore of many cultures, as well
as from his observations of the unconscious of modern peo-
ple in his analytic practice, Jung formulated his descrip-
tion of the process of individuation which appears in myth
and the unconscious as the herioc quest or the voyage of
self-discovery. Jung's description of the goal of individ-
uation is very much like the new consciousness which
Lessing envisions:

The more we become conscious of ourselves through self-knowledge and act accordingly, the more the layer of the personal unconscious that is superimposed on the collective unconscious will be diminished. In this way there arises a conscious which is no longer imprisoned in the petty, oversensitive personal world of the ego, but participates in the wider world of objective interests.  

Like Lessing's quest for wholeness, Jung's process of individuation calls for destroying the limitations of the ego, for breaking out of the personal consciousness. Although Martha, Charles, and Ana's ways of "breaking through" are fairly well demonstrated, such inner movements are not as openly revealed in Summer and Memoirs. Furthermore, it seems to me that Lessing's last two novels are more concerned with feminine consciousness as distinct from a universal type of consciousness. The herioc myth in Western culture has always been told as a masculine myth; the mythic account of how an individual breaks free from the unconscious, the Great Mother archetype, in order to become a separate, whole self. But a follower of Jung, Erik Neumann, believed that feminine individuation, or the quest for a separate self, would not follow the same pattern as a man's since a woman has a different relationship with the unconscious than a man does. His ideas were further clarified and defined by Ann Belford Ulanov.
Ulanov described in detail the stages of development in feminine individuation which are worth looking at since they can be seen in both *Summer* and *Memoirs*. In the first stage, the infantile stage of development, there exists psychic unity with no separation between the ego and the unconscious, which is symbolized by the mother/child relationship. Since a girl identifies with her mother, she develops in relation to the unconscious, not, as a boy, in opposition to it. The feminine ego is more drawn to the unconscious, is "less estranged and less isolated from its own roots in the unconscious." Some women remain in this first stage of development, entrapped in the seductive and reassuring warmth of the Great Mother archetype. As an adult, such a woman usually marries, but she relates to others, especially her husband and children, collectively. She sees herself as being the maternal role and others as role-players, not as individuals. In many respects, which will be shown in the next chapter of this paper, Kate Brown is an example of a woman functioning collectively whose quest for individuation largely consists of breaking free from her entrapments in the Great Mother.

If a woman can progress into the next stage of development, she becomes involved with the animus, Jung's term for the masculine element within a woman corresponding to the anima within a man. The woman in this stage can
exist as an "anima woman" who is only whatever image men project upon her. Martha Quest, before and during the early years of her marriage, could be thought of as living this role. The quintessence of the role is expressed in the costume-wearing rituals enacted by Maureen in Summer and Emily in Memoirs.

It is more common for a woman at this stage to enter into a marriage in which she projects her animus onto the husband while he projects his anima onto her. Neither sees the other as an individual, but as a projected internal image. Barbara Gelpi describes such a marital relation, "man is the intellectual, spiritual director, woman the emotional material nourisher." Both the husband and wife remain one-sided, neither developing the wholeness of a complete person, but each one only developing according to masculine/feminine polarity. Because the masculine role is not as rigidly defined in our patriarchal culture, the man is not as limited in such a marriage as the woman is. This can be observed in the marriage of Kate and Michael Brown. He seems to expand as life goes on, while she feels herself becoming diminished. Ulanov describes the phenomenon as the wife's losing "the momentum of her own development by confining herself to the feminine polarity, not ever going beyond the patriarchal definition of the feminine role."
From either of these stages of nondevelopment, entrapment in the Great Mother archetype or in a patriarchal marriage, it is possible for a woman to undertake the quest for individuation. Looking for a moment at the quest in Jungian, not mythic terms, there are definite steps which must be taken. The woman must strip off her persona, the mask which has been designed for her by a patriarchal culture, so that it is an image of woman as seen by man, "a distorted image since it combines what he wants her to be and what he fears her to be." When she tries to put aside the false persona, she experiences the shock of non-being which calls for self-affirmation before the quest can even begin.

Self-affirmation entails dealing with all of the elements of the self, including the animus or the masculine element and the shadow or evil element. The animus must be withdrawn from its external object, often a husband or lover. Only by acknowledging the animus as the masculine within her can she partake of any of its strengths. According to Jung, the animus should function as a mediator between the conscious and unconscious. When a woman reclaims the animus as a part of herself, she also reclaims "a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self-knowledge." All of these qualities are necessary for the process of individuation. Another Jungian analyst,
Irene de Castellejo, described the positive aspect of the animus in this way: "The torch of the animus lights up for her the things which she already knows so that she can know them."  

The animus also has a negative aspect which makes it difficult for a woman to integrate it within herself. As Emma Jung has observed, woman's external deference to men in today's world makes her susceptible to allowing the animus to take over the unconscious since it represents the virtue of rationality. The power of the animus will be manifest in critical comments about the woman, especially as she tries to take control of it, and in commands and pronouncements which echo generally accepted viewpoints. Kate Brown is subjected to a mental barrage of such pronouncements, in her case cliches about love and marriage, when she begins to try to take control of her own life.

Confrontation with the shadow within the self means accepting evil and "recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real." Martha's struggles with the "self-hater" and Ana's with evil in various forms have been seen as central to their quests for wholeness. In discussing them, Marion Vlastos says, "Not simple acknowledging but actively accepting the fact of human evil becomes...the crucial intellectual, moral, and
spiritual step which precedes ascent into a realm of en-
lightenment."18

This summary of a woman's passage from the two
stages of entrapment, either within the Great Mother
archetype or a patriarchal marriage, through the terror of
overcoming the animus, removing the protective persona,
accepting the evil of the shadow, to the final stage of
selfhood, wholeness, or new consciousness presents it in
terms of Jungian individuation. But remembering Jung's
discovery of the connections between psychic processes
and mythic imagery, it should not be surprising if the
same progression could be found in myth. Then, using the
double-edged vision of psychic and mythic patterns, the
quests of Summer and Memoirs could be more fully illumin-
ated.

The Demeter myth and its celebration as ritual in
the Eleusinian mysteries offers a close parallel to fem-
ine individuation undertaken by Kate Brown, Emily, and
the narrator of Memoirs. The central imagery of the myth
is the relationship between Demeter and her daughter
Persephone or Kore. The relationship of mother and daugh-
ter can be found over and over in Lessing's novels. In
her first novel, The Grass is Singing, Mary Turner is
haunted by the feeling that she is not living her own life
but is merely re-living her dead mother's.19 Throughout
the *Children of Violence* series, Martha's relationship with her mother could be described as a negative mother complex in which Martha's life is dominated by her total rejection of her mother, culminating in Martha's "freeing" her own daughter, Caroline, by deserting her.\(^{20}\)

Ana is only able to achieve her breakthrough into a new consciousness when her daughter, Janet, is away at school, thus temporarily freeing Ana from her maternal role.\(^{21}\) Only in *Briefing*, Lessing's single novel with a male protagonist, is there no central mother-daughter relationship. In *Summer* and *Memoirs*, a third person has been added to the essential relationship. Kate's actual daughter, Eileen, is peripheral to the events of the novel, and Maureen, a stranger, takes Eileen's place in Kate's life. The narrator of *Memoirs* treats Emily as her own daughter but, in reality, Emily is a stranger to her. Emily, herself, fulfills a maternal role for the orphan, June.

Lessing's emphasis on the relationship between mothers and daughters leads to the Demeter myth which is our only remaining myth in Western culture to portray the relationship. The Demeter myth, and its many variations, prefigures the presentation of mothers and daughters in patriarchal culture.\(^{21}\) It describes the abduction and rape of Persephone by Hades and the subsequent grief-
stricken wanderings of Demeter. Since she is the earth goddess, guardian of the harvest, her grief causes nothing to grow on earth until all is a barren desert. Demeter is eventually reunited with Persephone, but a changed Persephone who is no longer a virgin but will soon be a mother.

The reunion of Persephone and Demeter was celebrated in the Eleusinian mysteries for over 2,000 years, yet little is known of those rites. The Hungarian classicist, C. Kerneyi, has traced some of the elements of the secret rituals. He has found that the initiates, both men and women, underwent a long journey or procession and then joined in ceremonies involving darkness and water. All of the rituals were performed in a spirit of passivity since the initiates had to first perform an act of inner surrender. When the mother and daughter are reunited and it is revealed that Persephone is now a mother, the initiates somehow experienced a spiritual rebirth which Kerenyi describes:

Objectively, the idea of the goddess regaining her daughter and therefore herself, flashed on the experient's soul. Subjectively, the same flash of revelation showed him his own continuity, the continued existence of all living things.23

Men were allowed to participate in the rites and through these rites could hope to attain the "chthonic
and spiritual fecundating, function" which prepatriarchal cultures ascribed to women. In the ceremony itself, this transmission was symbolized by Demeter's bestowal of an ear of grain to Triptolemus, one of her mortal followers. For both men and women, initiates and members, the mysteries revealed the power of life over death. How this knowledge was so overwhelmingly imparted is not certain, but a central feature of the mysteries seems to have been some sort of "hieros gamos," a sacred marriage between a god and a mortal, usually between a goddess and a man. The rite further entails the sacrifice of the child born from this union, a sacrifice of the son by his mother. However, the sacrifice of the son, possibly at one point in the ritual history an actual sacrifice, is not the central act of the Elusinian mysteries. The sacrifice of the son can be seen as the woman becoming again one-in-herself, creating the quality of virginity within her so that the reunion of mother and daughter remains the central symbol of rebirth in the myth. Jung comments on the psychological aspects of the myth:

Demeter and Kore (Persephone), mother and daughter, extend the feminine consciousness both upwards and downwards. They add an 'older and younger,' stronger and weaker, 'dimension to it and widen out the narrowly limited conscious mind bound in space and time, giving it intimations of a greater and more comprehensive personality which has a share in the eternal course of things.
Thus Jung demonstrates how the rebirth experienced by the Eluesinian initiates can be described in terms of a new consciousness which has been expanded through the reunion of mother and daughter. The reunion only takes place after the daughter and mother have both undergone a quest, a trial, or a voyage. Whatever the form of journey or task undertaken, the elements of it are essentially those described by Jung in his explanations of individuation. Translating the process into myth imagery, the experience can be described from either the viewpoint of mother or daughter. The daughter is torn away from the mother/daughter union, descends into darkness, is raped, but then willingly eats the seed of the fruit which makes her pregnant. After her return to her mother, a son is born who is loved and cherished but is eventually sacrificed. In discussing the implications of this sacrifice, M. Esther Harding observes that the sacrifice of the son brings about the mother's rejection of her instinctual maternal role and that the ritual death of the son is necessary for his rebirth as a man. For the mother, the sacrifice restores to her the ancient concept of virginity which meant a woman-in-herself, independent of any man.27

For Demeter, her daughter's abduction resulted in a period of grief and wandering. In losing her daughter,
Demeter had also lost her youth, joy, and creativity, which can be seen in her neglect of the harvest resulting in universal barrenness. Perhaps the most prevalent attitude of Demeter's experience is a watchful waiting. In her wanderings, Demeter takes up the task of nursemaid for the child Demophoon. Their relationship very much resembles that of Emily and her unnamed guardian, as well as that of Kate and Maureen. Nor Hall describes the emotion felt by a nurse for her charge: "A nursing attitude accepts a child as it is, in its weaknesses, and does not spiderlike spin fantasies around it that can immobilize or make hazy the vision of the child."28

Even while involved in her task of nursing, Demeter continues to mourn and search for her daughter as well as spending long periods just waiting for Persephone's return. Hall describes Demeter's ordeal in universal mythic terms:

Demeter's depression...the descent to the underworld, the barren period of waiting and the long sorrowful procession on the road to Eleusis - imitating the Mother's search - these stages of the rite no longer have visible structures, symbols or spaces to manifest in, but rather, have themselves turned inward so that the initiation is an active entry into the dark terrain of an unknown self where we still search for the lost daughter, the feminine source of life.29

Hall's comparison of Demeter's quest to present day inner psychi-journeys can be regarded as a joining
together of mythic and Jungian perspectives. In the myth of Demeter and Persephone is found the pattern for feminine voyages of self-discovery or individuation. In the next chapter of this paper, I hope to show how elements from Demeter's search for Persephone and the rebirth precipitated by their reunion are present in Lessing's heroines' search for selves and new visions of life. The archetypal mother and daughter relationship is re-enacted by Kate, Maureen, and Eileen, and by Emily, her guardian, and June. Through them, Lessing has expanded her vision of the quest for new consciousness to include the unique experiences a woman encounters on the way to self-knowledge.
Chapter Two: Endnotes


7 Ibid., p. 242.


10 Gelpi, p. 230.

11 Ulanov, p. 255.

13 Mary Daly, Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), p. 36.


22 Nor Hall, Mothers and Daughters (Minneapolis: Rusoff, 1976), p. 6.

24 Neumann, p. 321.


28 Hall, p. 35.

29 Ibid.
CHAPTER III

MYTHIC PATTERNS IN THE SUMMER BEFORE THE DARK

In The Summer Before the Dark, Doris Lessing presents the progress of woman's search for wholeness and a new consciousness in the experiences of a middle-aged wife and mother, Kate Brown. Externally she appears to be quite different from the "free women" Ana and Martha. Yet she embarks on her voyage of self-discovery just as courageously as they did. The inner events of her quest are not described as graphically as were Charles', but instead are rendered in mythic patterns and imagery. The various steps outlined by Jung as being necessary for individuation are taken by Kate Brown, but are usually cloaked in archetypal situations rather than bluntly described in psychological terms. Demeter's search and reunion with her daughter, Persephone, as well as the Elusinian mysteries which celebrated the myth, form the pattern for most of Kate's quest.

In the beginning chapter of the novel, entitled "At Home," Kate appears to exist entrapped in her maternal role, engulfed in the Great Mother archetype.
Various symbols appear in descriptions of her which point out her situation, especially the repeated mention of "kettles." According to Erik Neumann, the elementary character of woman is symbolized in mythic imagery by jars, kettles, and ovens, since they, as open vessels, refer to the containing and nourishing aspect of the Great Mother. At the same time, they suggest the transformative aspect since they are concerned with changing matter to food.\(^1\) Kate, at the beginning of the novel, is pictured in the universal position of a maternal woman, "A woman stood on her back doorstep, arms folded, waiting for a kettle to boil."\(^2\) The scene is even more primitive since Kate's kettle is steaming over a campfire, necessitated by a power failure. As Kate waits for the kettle to boil, asking, "Was the note of the kettle's singing changing at all?" (SD, p. 7), the kettle also seems to reflect her inner turmoil.

Kate's outward appearance does not as yet reveal her inner struggles. She sits smiling, holding a coffee pot towards her husband and his friend while inwardly she rages:

I'm telling myself the most dreadful lies! Awful! Why do I do it? There's something here that I simply will not let myself look at... Now, look at it all, try and get hold of it, don't go on making up all these stories - stop taking down the same old dresses off the rack. (SD, p. 15).
The lies that Kate has been telling herself are mainly cliches concerning love and marriage which Lessing has set off in italics. They include time-worn statements such as "Youth is the best time of your life" or "Love is a woman's whole existence." (SD, p. 3). Kate has been trying out these various attitudes mentally, but they no longer seem to fit even though she apparently has been living her life according to these guidelines. Blindly following such admonitions is one of the signs of being entrapped in the maternal role. Such a woman, like Kate, no longer functions as an individual, but as a role itself; her behavior is described by M. Esther Harding as collective functioning:

Functioning according to a role whose characteristics and limits are already defined, having been laid down by custom...In order to live her life according to one of these roles, a woman must know, either consciously or unconsciously, the rules...of the collective pattern but no demand is made on her for consciousness of what the situation really is or how she really feels. She needs only to know how things "ought to be, 'how she ought to act,' what feelings are 'appropriate,'"3

Kate's appearance has derived from her collective functioning since she sees herself as a mirror image of how her husband and children look to her. In trying to discover some choice she has made in her life, Kate can
only find her appearance which she says, "was choice, all exquisite tact, for it was appropriate for this middle-class suburb and her position in it as her husband's wife. And, of course, as the mother of her children." (SD, p. 10). Her own preference, she admits, would be to go barefooted, in some sort of muu-muu, with long, straight hair. But instead, she wears shoes and stockings, discreet expensive dresses, and has her hair styled in soft waves. The whole effect is to tone herself down so that she is acceptable, not overwhelming, to her husband and children. She expresses it as not allowing her appearance to bloom, scaling herself down for them.

Now Kate is beginning to question her behavior and the thoughts which have controlled it so that she is afraid to let herself "bloom." She tries to explain her unease, which she describes as a cold wind blowing from the future, by connecting it to external concerns. Her husband and children are all leaving for the summer so that for the first time in many years she will be free from family responsibility. Her unconscious mind seems to realize that this is her opportunity to move out of her stagnation within the maternal role. In order to find herself as a separate individual, Kate must break away from her submergence in the Great Mother archetype.
Kate is only expressing the positive, elementary character of the Great Mother by her refusal to go beyond the first stage of feminine development. Neumann describes the elementary character as one which "tends to hold fast to everything that springs from it and to surround it like an eternal substance." Kate is caught in this situation in two ways; just as the archetype surrounds and engulfs Kate herself, so too does Kate hold fast to her own children. She herself cannot be free from the maternal role until she frees her children. Kate's maternal functioning also dominates her relationship with her husband since a woman in whom the elementary character of the Great Mother is dominant, relates collectively with her husband. They interact "not as individuals but in an archetypal situation."

In order for Kate to break free from the Great Mother, she must first come to terms with the archetype. She must accept her relationship with the Great Mother in all of its aspects, both positive and negative, which refers to the destructive, devouring side of the Mother. Then, to be able to have the strength to break away, Kate must turn to the transformative character of woman both within herself and through the archetype. The power of the transformative character will help Kate to achieve rebirth as a whole person with a new, expanded consciousness. In her search for the transforming power of the
feminine principle, Kate will be in many ways retracing Demeter's search for her daughter. In her initiation into the process of rebirth, Kate's acts will often echo those of the celebrants of the Eleusinsian mysteries. And finally, in her psychic quest, Kate will find herself crossing the path of Jungian individuation.

Her quest begins with Kate's review of her past life, an activity of middle-age which often precipitates individuation. Kate's early childhood is not mentioned; for her the first important memory is the year she spent visiting her grandfather in Portugal. The visit occurred after the death of Kate's mother about whom she says nothing except that they had had an unusually close relationship in which the father played little part. Kate's visit to Portugal was a visit to her father's family. The visit is remembered vividly by Kate and is described in mythic feminine imagery which portrays Kate, at that time, as being in harmony with the feminine principle in all of its aspects. Portugal itself she remembers as a "steamy place, full of half-concealed things." (SD. p. 18). Her grandfather's home was filled with memories of her grandmother who embodied the positive maternal attributes; "a wonderful mother, a cook for the angels, a marvellous being, all warmth and kindness, with not a fault in her." (SD. p. 18).
With her grandmother representing the Mother archetype of the feminine principle, Kate herself is described as the Virgin, or the Kore, archetype. She remembers herself as pure seductive sexuality which is described in terms reminiscent of the worship of the ancient goddesses. The mythic images include herself seated on a throne-like swing against the pillars of a veranda. The throne, porch, and pillars are all temple symbols which are emphasized by the details of moonlight, a tub of white lilies, and the men sitting in a half-circle facing her. Kate also remembers violent images, not really thoughts, which went through her mind and which she was able to accept. The contrast of the images in her mind to her virginal innocence was paralleled by the presence of her chaperone while she sat "in her shockingly seductive white dress, one foot put loose to one side, like a bird's broken wing, while the other, pushing her rhythmically in her swing chair, sent waves of sexual attractiveness in every direction." (SD. p. 44). The combination of images of fragility and sensuality recalls Persephone's frolics in the field of narcissus.

But just as Persephone cannot remain forever entranced in a field of sunlight and flowers, so also Kate does not stay enthroned on the verandah. She begins to realize her position in her grandfather's patriarchal domain: "She was sheltered and distrusted. She was
precious and despised." (SD. p. 17). Kate decides to leave Portugal for its antithesis, Oxford - northern, British, intellectual. The rejection of the one for the other could symbolize Kate's repudiation of the Eros of woman for the Logos of man. But some vestige of loyalty to the feminine self she had discovered in Portugal can be discerned in Kate's choice of the Romance languages for her studies.

Kate's review of her past now centers on her marriage to Michael whom she met at Oxford. She saw the marriage as a choice between marriage or Romance languages, and, in fact, the marriage further separated her from her feminine self, the Persephone within her. It could be described as a patriarchal marriage since they each functioned according to traditional sexual roles. Each was at first vitally important to the other. As Kate remembers, "Once upon a time she had known that her husband's life had been sustained by her, by what they found together, and the center of that was bed." (SD. p. 75). But a sign of their functioning collectively, in their respective roles rather than as individuals, was their discussions of their marriage in terms of blueprints, statements of accounts, manifestos. In Jungian terms, each began to withdraw his or her anima or animus image from the other. This resulted in what Kate
considers the turning point of the marriage - Michael's casual affairs. Although at the time, Kate had tried to cultivate an appropriate indifference to them, she now realizes the extent of harm the affairs did to her as well as to the marriage:

[They] make her feel as if a wound had been opened in her from which substance and strength drained from her...A few days ago she would have said that whatever emotions, or thoughts, or new blueprints of truth were standing offstage waiting for the chance to come on...whatever these truths were...they surely could have nothing to do with the fact that her Michael had trivial affairs by the dozen with anybody he could? ...But perhaps this is where she should begin...her feeling, childish, irrational, but absolutely undeniable, that because of Michael she felt like a doll whose sawdust was slowly trickling away. (SD. p. 72-3).

Kate tried to fill the void in her that was caused by her husband's affairs by concentrating on her children. But her review of her past forces her to relive the painful moment when her youngest son Tim shouted that she was suffocating him. Kate's retreat from the stage of patriarchal marriage back into the maternal role had caused her son to experience the ensnaring, devouring aspect of the Great Mother archetype. Kate needs to sacrifice her son for his own good so that he can become a man and for herself so that she can become a whole person. But at the time of her confrontation with Tim, Kate was not ready to make the sacrifice. Instead she transfered
her maternal instincts to a stray cat. At the same time, she had begun an inner withdrawal from her family while her husband had become even more busy, which Kate could understand, "for in his position she would take any chance to expand out, to go out and away from the narrowing of middle-age." (SD, p. 105).

During the three-year period of inner withdrawal which Kate has been experiencing between Tim's explosion and the events of the novel, she has been trying to come to terms with the reality of motherhood. Since in a patriarchal culture, "the vast majority of literary and visual images of motherhood comes to us filtered through a collective or individual male consciousness." Kate's endeavor is very difficult. It means removing her persona to go beyond the "appropriate" thoughts and feelings about motherhood in order to discover what her own really are. She sees the patriarchal image of motherhood as "a con job," her children as monsters feeding off of her, herself as a "sponge for small wants year after year" and the whole experience as a form of "dementia" which changed her from a confident girl to an obsessed maniac. (SD, pp. 103-5).

During this period, Kate is beginning to be able to see Michael as a separate person and not just the masculine half of their marriage. "She had felt as if for all
these years of marriage this man had been keeping in reserve some potential that could never find growing room inside the family." (SD, p. 14).

Throughout the painful process of trying to remove her persona of the maternal role, Kate repeatedly feels exposed to the cold wind she had been fearing which is "the sort of cold a living animal must feel if its skin is ripped off, or the cold a new lamb feels emerging from the wet warmth of a belly, dropping onto frozen ground in a sleety wind." (SD, p. 52). The image expresses both the ordeal facing Kate and the possibility for rebirth. While trying to see her children and husband as separate from herself so that she might see herself as an individual person, Kate often retreats back into the security of the maternal role. This usually occurs when she thinks about her neighbor and friend, Mary Finchley, who, although a wife and mother herself, has never been swallowed up in the role. Mary dresses the way she wants even though she knows her children don't approve, she has lovers which her husband knows about, and she often shows anger towards her children. Mary has refused to accept the patriarchal definition of her role which is revealed in her attitude towards love. "Love - all of it, romantic love, the whole bloody business of it - you know, centuries of our civilization - its been left out of her. She thinks we are all
crazy." (SD, p. 250).

Kate's continual self-comparisons to Mary Finchley are a way of trying to differentiate herself from her friend so that she might find out more about herself as a person. Mary functions as a kind of shadow figure for Kate since Kate often seems to be projecting her own unacknowledged feelings about herself, her husband, and her children upon Mary. The shadow figure encountered in individuation is usually of the same sex and the source of moral conflict for the protagonist.9

As Kate struggles to free herself from the maternal persona, she keeps thinking back to her lost self, "a girl all vital energy and individuality." (SD, P. 100). The lure of this Persephone figure gives Kate the courage to continue her efforts when the endeavor becomes increasingly difficult. As Ulanov explains:

The archetypal power of the feminine as Mother assumes terrifying proportions.
The move to differentiation seems to activate the static and elemental aspect of the maternal in its most negative form. It becomes a strong regressive pull, an entrapping, devouring mother.10

The negative power of the Great Mother shows itself in Kate's career with Global Foods which begins the external events of her summer. At first the job seems a chance to reclaim her identity as the girl on her grandfather's verandah since she is hired to translate
Portuguese, the knowledge and skill which she gave up for marriage. She says good-by to her husband and children, rents a room of her own, and styles her hair and clothes to fit the appearance she wants. But soon the organization realizes that her real skill lies in mothering, although they don't, of course, refer to it as that. She is promoted to a position in which she and her male counterpart supply "some kind of invisible fluid, or emanation, like a queen termite...making a whole of individuals who could have no other connection." (SD, p. 52).

Although the promotion seems to have moved Kate beyond the elementary character of the feminine role to the transformative, she is still functioning in the maternal role and is at a standstill on her inward journey.

That Kate has, in fact, embarked on her quest is shown by her dream of the seal which begins when she leaves her home and family. In the dream, Kate struggles to carry a weak and wounded seal to the sea. The dream functions for her as a numinous experience as explained by Jung:

Experience of the numinous is nonrational, without logical coherence or apparent meaning. Nonetheless, the individual feels that in the mysterious symbolism he is drawing near to some meaning greater than himself which, if yielded to, will grant peace of mind.  

45
But despite Kate's dreams, she has reached a point of inertia in her struggles to leave the Great Mother and find herself as a whole person. Kate knows she should stop the frenetic activity she has been involved in with Global Foods and withdraw in solitude to examine her life but she does not. Her position is symbolized by the City of Istanbul:

The city, viewed from hundreds of feet in its air, but in brief glimpses, was all an enticing glitter of roofs and silvery water, and streets which were, like the Turkish language itself, far away, and energetic with a life she felt she ought to be reaching after, understanding...a bird flew past at eye level as she stood at a window. It was one she had not seen before. She felt that subtle approaches were being made to her from an unknown world." (SD, p. 56).

The imagery suggests the positive element of the Great Mother since the city is a symbol of the feminine principle and the bird is often depicted in myth as a messenger of the goddess. The city is also Lessing's usual metaphor for the new consciousness, appearing in all of her major novels. The combination of this hopeful image and Kate's dream about the seal indicates that Kate is beginning to overcome the inertia caused by the engulfing power of the Great Mother. The next stage of her quest will closely resemble the experiences of the initiates participating in the rites of rebirth in the Eleusinian worship of Demeter.
As the Global Foods conference in Turkey comes to a close, Kate is unable to decide what to do next. A part of her realizes that "She was going to have to return to London, to be alone somewhere for two months, and to look, in solitude, at her life." (SD, p. 64). Instead, she is overcome by "will-less, drifting behavior, not being able to say no, not being able to do what she would." (SD, p. 74). Kate's unsettled condition resembles what Ulanov has described as the typical emotional response to the negative expression of the elementary aspect of the Great Mother archetype, "a feeling of inertia bordering on paralysis, a feeling of being dragged down...a sense of drifting into unconsciousness." From her attempts to strip away the persona of motherhood, to look again at her past to see where she had lost her younger self, Kate realizes she must reject her absorption in the maternal role. She stands in the lobby, humming silently "not without hysteria: "I shall miss you Mrs. Brown: /How I shall miss you Mrs. Brown: /You have fed me, you have led me. /You have given me all I wanted, /But now you are supplanted / And I shall miss you Mrs. Brown." (SD, p. 65).

The will for action which Kate needs to embark on her archetypal transformation journey is supplied by her animus-figure, Jeffrey. Her puzzling decision to take off
with a man she does not know on a holiday through Spain
does not at first seem to have anything to do with her
inner quest. When Jeffrey walks up to her in the lobby
with his invitation for her to accompany him on a sight-
seeing trip, she barely recognizes him, has never spoken
to him before. She realizes her friend Mary would con-
sider him unsuitable, but that is about the extent of
her deliberation before deciding to accept his invitation.
Although some critics have seen the relationship between
Kate and Jeffrey as an essentially "false situation" her
decision to go off with a virtual stranger can be ex-
plained by Jung's idea of synchroicity. The term refers
to "a 'meaningful coincidence' of outer and inner events
what are not themselves causally connected...Synchron-
istic events, moreover, almost invariably accompany the
crucial phases of the process of individuation." Thus
Kate's inner need for decision and resolution to over-
come her paralyzing inertia is answered by the outer
event of the appearance of Jeffrey. As an animus figure,
Jeffrey with his dark hair in loose locks fits the "puer
aeternus" type towards whom the maternal woman tends to
be most drawn. He is at a stage in his own life where
he is in need of anima influence to help him decide be-
tween a settled life with a career and family or the
irresponsible existence of a vagabond. So he too is
beginning an archetypal voyage of self-discovery and is a fellow initiate with Kate. Jeffrey needs the transformative power which Kate possesses in her maternal role, while Kate needs the power of movement and deliberation which Jeffrey can offer her in his animus role.

The mythic significance of their journey through Spain is suggested in the images used in describing their first night together. Kate sits on the balcony in the moonlight wearing a white gown very reminiscent of her appearance on her grandfather's verandah. That night Jeffrey is overcome by a feverish illness during which he sees Kate as "a dark watching shape" (SD, p. 111), not as an individual person. Jeffrey's illness is a necessary part of the ritual since renewal or rebirth is possible only after the symbolic death of the initiate which can be symbolized by sleep in a cave, descent to the underworld, a night sea journey or a stupor.\(^{17}\)

While Jeffrey sleeps feverishly, Kate's seal dream continues. In the dream she finds a little wooden house in which she makes a fire to warm the seal and finds water for it. She then is involved in what could be considered a "hieros gamos," a sacred marriage:

In an upper room of the house she saw a tall fair young man, with blue eyes. She knew him. He was her lover. He always had been. They made love. They had been waiting for years and through
waiting and wanting made this love perfect. (SD, p. 113).

From a psychological perspective, the appearance of a rite of "hieros gamos" in a dream or through analysis signifies the mystical union of anima and animus or the masculine and feminine elements within a person. It "points clearly to the...condition of the human personality which cannot be fully realized in its wholeness unless the contra-sexual element is raised to the level of conscious acceptance."\(^{18}\) It creates the quality of virginity in its ancient sense since it makes the woman one-in-herself. Through such an experience, the woman comes into "the possession of her own masculine soul, which is then no longer projected entirely outside herself onto a man who has for the value of a god, with godlike authority. Thus she becomes complete, whole."\(^{19}\)

The morning after this dream, Jeffrey and Kate make love but she finds that she can only relate to him maternally, not as a "love woman." Their lovemaking recalls the next ritual of the mysteries, the incest between the goddess and her son, and also stresses the connection between the inner events of Kate's dream of the seal and the seal and the outward events of her travels with Jeffrey.

They continue their journey, leaving the coast and going inland to the heart of Spain. Jeffrey remains in a
stupor, sitting with his head on her shoulder. Kate brings him water, keeping him conscious in the same manner she is saving the seal in her dream. Her attitude recalls the inner surrender of the initiates on the long way to Eleusis. "Kate was now quite passive. Quite soon, clearly, this awful journey would end." (SD, p. 123).

Finally they reach their destination:

At eight in the evening, with a moon swelling towards full flooding everything, they stopped in a village square. It was a small place. There was a fountain trickling some dispirited water into a basin that had a cracked white china cup, lying on its edge. There were some dusty trees. (SD, p. 124).

The moonlight, the fountain, the square, the cup and the water are all feminine transformation symbols. But when Kate and Jeffrey first arrive, the moon has not yet reached its full stage, the water in the fountain is "dispirited" and the cup is cracked. A final step in the rites of initiation must take place before the transformative power of the feminine can bring about rebirth.

In the hotel this final stage, the sacrifice of the son, is re-enacted although Jeffrey does not literally die. "She went upstairs to find that Jeffrey had as it were collapsed inwardly...He looked as if the bones in his flesh had collapsed, or had shrunk. His eyes were half open. He looked corpse-like." (SD, p. 132).
He is taken naked but "cocooned" in blankets to the convent, which is reminiscent of the grotto-like shrine where the Eleusinian mysteries were offered to Demeter. It has a series of gates guarding its entrance, a flickering lamp which can be seen from afar shining through the leaves of an ancient olive tree, and an enclosed yard filled with flowers. The nuns themselves are virgins like the priestesses at Eleusis. Everyday Jeffrey's room is sprinkled with scented water just as the vessels spilling over with water were a central symbol of rebirth in the mysteries. In the convent, Jeffrey seems to have come to peace with his inner turmoil. "He said he was happy where he was; lying in that austere room, looking out into sunlight that held a tree, and a bed of petunias, some jasmine, was what he had been needing for - he did not know how long." (SD, p. 44). As the son of the goddess, Jeffrey "represents the birth of the new individuality which replaces the woman's ego, sacrificed through the temple ritual [hieros gamos]. He is the 'one who goes beyond' and represents the rebirth of hope and the possibility of transcending the past."22

While Jeffrey has been in the sunlit convent, Kate has spent her time in the hotel room watching the moonlight. Under that powerful symbol of the Great Mother, she has been fighting sexual and emotional longings for
her husband and concentrating on her dream of the seal. Her participation in the ritual rebirth of Jeffrey has given her the strength to continue alone on her own quest. She leaves without saying anything to him; it has been, like the Eleusinian mysteries, an "essentially wordless initiation that led to a knowledge which it was neither necessary nor possible to clothe in words." 23 As Kate leaves the village, she remembers it on the night they arrived, but now she visualizes the white cup as "shining, not cracked." (SD, p. 146).

When Kate leaves Jeffrey in Spain to return alone to London, just as many years before she had left Portugal for Oxford, her own initiation into rebirth begins. Like Demeter, who spent time in solitude and nursing Demophoon before beginning her descent into the Underworld in search of Persephone, Kate has spent three years in an inner withdrawal from her family and has just, in a sense, nursed Jeffrey through his "sickness of the will." (SD, p. 148). Kate realizes that "she was at the beginning of a process that might lead her to lie in a whitewashed cell beside the one Jeffrey was in." (SD, p. 146). But Kate is not beginning the same type of journey that Jeffrey had although both are involved in rituals of rebirth. As a woman, Kate must get back into touch with her feminine principle, her lost Persephone. In order to completely
break free from the Great Mother archetype she must harness its transformative power for her own use. Her role in Jeffrey's initiation ritual with its elements of "hieros gamos" and the sacrifice of the son, has restored her as a woman-in-herself, no longer totally dependent on the support of the maternal role or the guidance of projected animus or masculine qualities. But she must still renew herself through reunion with the feminine principle before her quest for wholeness can culminate in a new vision.

Kate's ritual of rebirth takes place in an expensive London hotel which is perceived by Kate as a place of mythic significance. She describes the hotel as a "cocoon of love and warmth" (SD, p. 152) in which she spends "a long, slow, underwater time, in a room...like a dark cave," (SD, pp. 153-4). In her room, Kate feels nauseous and is often sick; her only nourishment is the drink Sylvia, one of her priestess-like attendants, brings to her. The drink is one which the maid's "training prescribed for Kate's condition." (SD, p. 154). All of these details, including the atmosphere of darkness and hushed silence, recall Kerényi's description of the Eleusinian mysteries; "The initiate entered into the figure of Demeter by doing what the sorrowing and wrathful
goddess did: fasted and then drank the mixed drink."

Rousing herself from her stupor, Kate is overcome by painful longings for the love and security provided by her maternal role and her patriarchal marriage; "her being here at all, having left for one moment the pattern her life was set in, seemed a mistake chosen by a mad-woman." (SD, p. 158). Kate is strengthened to resist these feelings by the re-occurrence of her seal dream. In it she again meets her animus figure, the young king with whom she had participated in a rite of "hieros gamos." Just as she longs for security in her conscious life, in her dream Kate longs to be with the king again. They perform a dance on a platform above the people, but soon he rejects her for a younger woman. She shouts out against the injustice of it but the king chides her "for her lack of understanding the laws that governed life; it was necessary for the king to dance with one woman, one girl, after another, until everyone of them had been singled out, and had danced with the king." (SD, p. 159). The dream seems to carry a strong meaning that she should no longer feel it necessary to depend upon her animus figure, but should be concentrating on herself, on her task of saving the seal.
In her next dream, Kate returns to her task and saves the half-dead seal by applying a mixture of salt and water to it. The saline solution revives the seal which is analogous to the alchemists' efforts to call forth the feminine element in nature by their use of water and salt mixtures which were believed to represent the "feminine lunar consciousness." After reviving the seal, Kate carries it "north, always north, away from the sun," which could be seen as going away from the masculine sphere indicated by solar imagery. It is also the pattern of Kate's journey away from the sun of Portugal and Spain.

Gaining courage from her dreams, Kate dares to leave the womb-like hotel to visit her neighborhood, where she soon realizes that her home, her garden, and even her friend Mary, who does not recognize Kate, no longer have emotional power over her, "She was elated, as if she had been set free of something." Her relief at her lack of feelings about her home and friend prompts her to go to a play. She did not care which play. She wanted to see people dressed up in personalities not their own, that was all." At the theatre, Kate's grotesque appearance - due to her illness, her now ill-fitting clothes and her unkempt hair - is matched by her eccentric behavior.
She yells comments of both approval and disapproval at the actors on the stage oblivious of the audience's attempts to quiet her. She is incensed at the self-deceit the characters portray. Her fury grows until the entire audience appears to her as animals. When she returns to the hotel, she studies herself carefully in the mirror, not as in the past, trying to see herself as others, especially men, saw her, but trying to see all the possibilities present within her. She realizes that her usual range of facial expressions do not fit the violent emotions she is now feeling for the first time:

Kate was now grimacing into the hand glass, trying on different expressions, like an actress—there were hundreds she had never thought of using. She had been limiting herself to a frightfully small range, most of them, of course, creditable to her, and pleasing, or non-abrasive to others; but what of what was going on inside her now, when she was ill...when she was seething and rebelling like an army of ants on a carcass. (SD, p. 178-9).

Kate's behavior, thoughts, and emotions at the theatre had reflected the "seething and rebelling" that she says are going on within her. These inward battles were fully described by Lessing when Ana, Martha, and Charles had experienced them. But for Kate, Lessing focuses more on the external acts growing out of the inner turmoil. By allowing herself to experience raging emotions and uncensored thoughts, Kate is confronting
the shadow, accepting the evil within her. Such a descent into her own inner darkness is beginning to break apart the limits of herself as Mrs. Brown. But Kate still has to come to know the person who can live beyond those limits, she has to experience daily life without the support of appearances. Although she leaves the hotel, Kate knows that her journey is not over; she is still struggling to save the seal in her dream.

In the Demeter myth, the mother's descent into the underworld is followed by a reunion with her daughter. Their reunion was the central element in the Eleusianian mysteries and the means by which the knowledge of immortality was imparted to the initiates. By participating in the reunion between mother and daughter, a vision opened up to them in which "every maiden contains...all of her descendants - an infinite series of mothers and daughters in one...the infinity of supra-individual organic life."27 As mentioned in the first chapter of this paper, Jung pointed out how the reunion of Demeter and Persephone acts out the expansion of feminine consciousness, "widening out the narrowly limited conscious mind bound in space and time, giving it intimations of a greater and more comprehensive personality which has a share in the eternal course of things."28 Some of the spirit of the mythic reunion is
found in the last chapter of *Summer*, although there is no explicit re-telling of the myth. Kate's relationship with Maureen, especially after her underworld-like experience in the hotel, recalls the reunion of Demeter and Persephone. But it would be a distortion of the novel to try to fit the last chapter into the numinous nature of the reunion of mother and daughter as celebrated in the Mysteries.

Many aspects of the mythic motif, however, are present in the ending of *Summer*. They seem to indicate a positive interpretation of Kate's return to her home and family at the end of the novel. Critics have regarded this action of Kate's as negative and as revealing her to be engulfed with anger at facing a life with no future. According to one:

Kate remains at the end caught in a kind of experiential lag; her imagination has outrun the realistic possibilities of her life to the point where she is two separate beings: the Kate who returns to the limiting life of Blackheath and the Kate who has, on an imaginative level repudiated the false self demanded by that very life.  

This criticism resembles those made about Charles, Ana, and Martha at the end of their quests for wholeness: Charles going back to his former life as a scholar, Ana deciding to be a social worker, and Martha living on a contaminated island after the destruction of civilization.
But as was shown before, the new consciousness of these protagonists has to be understood from an Eastern, especially Sufi, perspective with its emphasis on being in the world and not of it. Kate's quest has led her to the same kind of expanded vision of life. In the last chapter of *Summer*, Kate comes to know her new consciousness and her new self. She mainly attains these realizations through her relationship with Maureen so that they do function in many ways as a Demeter/Persephone figure. Their relationship also exemplifies the "infinity of supra-ordinate life" since it is not limited to just them. It is probable that the inter-action between Maureen and Kate prefigures Kate's eventual reunion with her own daughter, Eileen. When Maureen and Kate visit the zoo, Maureen takes up with a boy and a girl. Kate watches them in a scene which will appear again in *Memoirs* and which points to the continuance of the relationship through Maureen's future. "She was looking at the three - she saw them like that, a unit of three, and herself excluded. The handsome miserable boy...the pretty little girl...the beautiful young woman who was examining her future."

(*SD*, p. 263).

Like Demeter and Persephone, Kate and Maureen represent "archetypal poles of Eternal Woman, the mature woman and the virgin."³¹ Kate's journey has taken her
beyond the role of the Great Mother so that in archetypal terms she might be described as the Wise Woman who, free of masculine projections and maternal concerns, is involved with her own psychic contents.\textsuperscript{32} Kate refuses to be drawn back into the maternal role by Maureen which is shown in such basic actions as Kate's refusal to be responsible for the flat while Maureen is away. Most of Kate's energy at this stage of her development is devoted to exorcizing patriarchal images which she has internalized along with the accompanying feelings of guilt, inferiority, and self-hatred.\textsuperscript{33} She had begun this three years ago but had only really begun to see how thoroughly she lived as a man's "projection screen" when confronting her limited appearance in the mirror at the hotel. Kate begins to experiment with how people, especially men, react to her different sets of appearances which include her walk, gestures, hair, and attitude, as well as her way of dressing. She finds she receives flattering attention when she appears as Mrs. Brown but is ignored when she appears in an unattractive guise. Kate is amazed by the violence of her reaction to being ignored:

\begin{quote}
She tied her hair dramatically with a scarf. Then she strolled back in front of the workmen, hips conscious of themselves. A storm of whistles, calls, invitations. Out of sight the other way, she made her small
\end{quote}
transformation and walked back again: the men glanced at her, did not see her. She was trembling with rage: it was a rage, it seemed to her, that she had been suppressing for a lifetime. And it was a front for worse, a misery that she did not want to answer, for it was saying again and again: This is what you have been doing for years and years. (SD, p. 242).

As Kate works at breaking apart the limits imposed on her by the role of Mrs. Brown, she begins to understand how protective a shield the role was. It becomes clearer that she needs this time in the flat with Maureen to learn how to live without the shield before she can return to her family.

Coming here, coming to the hired room where no one knew her, was the first time in her life that she had been alone and outside a cocoon of comfort and protection, the support of other people's recognition of what she had chosen to present. But here no one expected anything, knew anything about her supports, her cocoon...Maureen had been responding directly to Kate, to what Kate was, to what Maureen saw of Kate. (SD, p. 190).

In long, friendly talks with Maureen, Kate again reviews her past but now can see the good as well as the bad in it. She no longer needs a particular interpretation of the past to support her present position as she once did. She is able to tell Maureen about happy episodes with her children, loving moments with Michael as well as her terrible jealously over Michael's affair with Mary.
Although Maureen does not want to hear about the negative events in Kate's life, she does want answers to questions about life, love, marriage. To them all, Kate answers, "Can't you see that I can't answer that?" (SD, p. 204).

Kate has arrived at a type of knowledge which can be described as holistic, "in which opposition [is seen to be] only apparent, and opposing forces only aspects of the same thing as seen from different points of view." Holistic thinking occurs in Kate's answer to Maureen's questions about motherhood. When Maureen tells Kate that she never wants to be like Kate or her own mother, Kate replies, "Where I think you may be wrong is that you seem to be thinking that if you decide not to become one thing, the other thing you become has to be better." (SD, p. 226). Concerning her feelings about love as contrasted to Mary Finchley, Kate says to Maureen:

There are times you know when there's a sort of switch in the way I look at things - everything, my whole life since I was a girl - and I seem to myself like a raving lunatic. Love, and duty, and being in love and not being in love, and loving, and behaving well and you should and you shouldn't ask and you ought and oughtn't. It's a disease. Well, sometimes I think that's all it is. (SD, p. 253).

From her observations of Maureen and of the way Maureen reacts to her as Kate, not as Mrs. Brown, Kate
begins to realize that her real, lost self whom she thinks of as "that personage who had remained...quietly offstage, in observation that was more often than not humorous" (SD, p. 59), is not the girl on the verandah as she had at first supposed. She realizes that that young girl was simply another patriarchal illusion, a girl "playing the part of haltered Mediterranean woman with grandfather as a loving tyrant and an old woman as a duenna" (SD, p. 241). In perceiving the falseness of that situation, Kate is relinquishing her role as virgin or maiden as thoroughly as those of wife and mother. Jung mentions the need for a woman to give up the maiden role:

These maidens are always doomed to die, because their exclusive domination of the feminine psyche hinders the individuation process, that is, the maturation of personality. The 'maiden' corresponds to the anima of the man...But as long as a woman is content to be a 'femme a homme,' she has no feminine individuality. She is empty and merely glitters - a welcome vessel for masculine projections. Woman as personality, however, is a very different thing: here illusion no longer works. So that when the question of personality arises, which is as a rule the painful fact of the second half of life, the childish form of the self disappears too.

While Kate is giving up the maiden role, Maureen is engrossed in acting it out. She portrays the maiden archetype in many ways. She had first appeared as a figure in Kate's seal dream, the young girl with long,
blonde plaits whom the king chose to dance with when he rejected Kate. The dream suggests it is Maureen's turn to function as an "anima catcher" while Kate moves on to establish her own self. When Kate first meets Maureen in the flat, they look at themselves in the mirror while Maureen again performs a dance. The portrayal of the maiden as dancer is one of the prevalent images throughout myths. Maureen further demonstrates herself in this role by her constant costume changes which Kate thinks of as her "putting on the clothes of the circumscribed women of the past, out of need to be like them - because being herself was too much of a strain." (SD, p. 242). All of the costumes depict Maureen as patriarchal images; she is dressed as a young girl, a milk maid, a doll, a temptress. In the last role, she appears in a blatantly sexist dress which conceals her individual identity, a dress "low in front, a screen of beige lace to the waist, showing breasts whose nipples had been painted like eyes. Maureen's own face was invisible behind a mask of paint." (SD, p. 209). In addition to her appearance, Maureen's relationships with men are imbued with the anima quality of her maiden image. Men sought her out to nourish them. With Philip, "what was becoming stronger every minute, [was] his need
that Maureen should stand by him and give her support, [it] could be felt encompassing her." (SD, p. 236).

Although such a relationship can be a positive experience for a woman as in the case of Kate and Jeffrey, it more often leads to a situation of entrapment for the woman, such as Kate experienced in her marriage with Michael. As Maureen feels herself becoming overcome by her situation, she often appeals to Kate for help. But although Kate could help Jeffrey, she realizes that Maureen must eventually make the same journey that she has made.

"Kate, at the other end of what she suddenly was feeling as a long interior journey, would have been 'sensible,' made balanced remarks of one kind or another, attempted consolation, because she had still believed that consolation could be given." (SD, p. 226).

A point on which Kate and Maureen seem to instinctively agree is their rejection of Philip's masculine way of looking at the world. Philip believes that the answer to the social problems of Britain will be found in strict government control. Maureen and Kate seem to stand for a more feminine attitude - that the answer lies within individuals-which echoes Lessing's movement away from themes of social reforms to those of consciousness revolutions within individuals resulting
in a changed world. This type of thinking is described by Neumann as feminine and necessary:

Western mankind must arrive at a synthesis that includes the feminine world - which is also one-sided in its isolation. Only then will the individual human being be able to develop the psychic wholeness that is urgently needed if Western man is to face the dangers that threaten his existence from within and without. 37

The transformative power of the feminine principle was shown in Summer by Kate's participation in Jeffrey's ritual of rebirth, but there it was limited to the transforming of one person. But if the power could be developed within each woman, it could lead to world-wide changes.

At the end of Summer, Kate decides to return home. She knows she is ready when her dream comes to an end with the seal happily swimming with its fellow seals in the sunshine. The dream has performed its healing function so that Kate can now redirect her psychic energies to living her life without the support of any roles or her identity as Mrs. Brown, but as a whole person, complete within herself. She has decided to let her hair grow natural, without coloring or styling it.

Her experiences of the last months, her discoveries, her self-definition: what she hoped were now strengths, were concentrated here - that she would walk into her home with her hair tied straight back for utility; rough and streaky, and the widening grey band showing like a statement of intent...now she
was saying 'no! no, no, no, No: a statement which would be concentrated into her hair. (SD, pp. 269-70).

Ulanov explains the significance of such an apparently unimportant decision for a woman who had been functioning in the maternal role:

To be able to say no and without guilt, because it conflicts with her own faith in herself and what is appropriate for her at the moment, is to sever identification with the maternal instinct as the root of her identity and to develop a real sense of herself and her femininity which is not tied only to the maternal.

Since Kate has experienced the transformative character of the Great Mother and has broken away from entrapment within the archetype, she is no longer functioning collectively and so will now be able to relate to her family as individuals. For her husband, Michael, she will no longer exist as anima figure, nor will he act as her animus figure. Since she has integrated the masculine element within her instead of projecting it externally, Kate can no longer be part of a patriarchal marriage. She and Michael can work for a more androgynous relationship or they may choose to function more as separate individuals.

Since Kate has enacted the sacrifice of the son ritual with Jeffrey, she should now be able to sacrifice her maternal domination of Tim. With her daughter, Eileen,
Kate will probably re-live her experiences with Maureen in which her painfully gained knowledge could not really help Maureen avoid the same type of entrapment that Kate had gone through. Kate left Maureen enmeshed in a "romantic situation" which was similar to her dreams about Maureen as a bird in a gilded cage. The implications of Kate's leave-taking of Maureen, which will be more strongly stated in Memoirs, is that every woman must make Demeter's journey for herself. Persephone stands at the beginning of a pattern that must be retraced before rebirth as an individual can occur.

Kate's return to Blackheath is not a defeat for her new found wholeness. She will live as the Sufi, in this world but not of it. She returns in the same spirit as the initiates returning from Eleusinian mysteries: "Blessed is he among men on earth who has beheld this. Never will he who has not been initiated into these ceremonies... share in such things. He will be as a dead man in sultry darkness." Or as Cicero said about the experience: "We have been given reason not only to live in joy but also to die with better hope."
Chapter Three: Endnotes


2 Doris Lessing, The Summer Before the Dark (New York: Knopf, 1973), p. 4. All subsequent references will refer to this edition.


4 Neumann, p. 25.

5 Ibid., p. 36.


7 Ibid., pp. 39-50.


11 Ibid., p. 88


13 Ulanov, p. 159.


17 Neumann, p. 292.


20 Neumann, pp. 133-60.


22 Harding, Woman's Mysteries, p. 151.

23 Kerenyi, p. 152.

24 Kerenyi, p. 138


26 Harding, Woman's Mysteries, p. 20.

27 Kerenyi, p. 53.


30 Lefcowitz, p. 118.
31 Neumann, p. 308.

32 Ulanov, pp. 207-11.

33 Mary Daly, Beyond God the Father (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 42.

34 Singer, p. 38.

35 Jung, p. 172.

36 Ibid., p. 158.

37 Neumann, p. xliii.

38 Ulanov, p. 201.

39 Nor Hall, Mothers and Daughters (Minneapolis: Rusoff, 1976), p. 33.

40 Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

MYTHIC PATTERNS IN

THE MEMOIRS OF A SURVIVOR

The state of transcendent hopefulness achieved by Kate, which is glimpsed at the end of *Summer*, is more fully explicated by Lessing in *Memoirs*. The novel ends with a visionary scene in which the characters literally walk through the walls of the narrator's flat into another world, undescribed but presided over by "that One who went ahead showing them out of this collapsed little world into another world altogether."\(^1\) In discussing the One, the narrator reveals her to be feminine: "She was beautiful: it is a word that will do. I only saw her for a moment, in a time like the fading of a spark on dark air." (M, p. 216). Thus Lessing portrays the Sufi ideal of the One in an image which evokes the transformative powers of the feminine, the transcendent function of the Great Mother. Throughout ages and cultures this archetype has appeared in many forms and identities; perhaps closest to the One is Sophia, "the supreme essence and distillation to which life in this world can be transformed."\(^2\)

The Sophia-like One appears with Sufi images of wholeness and rebirth: a giant egg dominates the closing
scene, reminiscent of the "cosmic egg" which appears in so many early myths concerning the creation of the world. The narrator describes a brief impression of "people in a quiet room bending to lay matching pieces of patterned materials on a carpet that had no life in it until that moment when vitality was fed in it by these exactly answering patches" (M, p. 216) which suggests the Sufi device of encoding symbolism in carpet designs. The actual walls re-enact the Sufi belief in the need for breaking down the walls of the ego, a need which both Lessing and R. D. Laing also recognize. As Laing explains:

The fountain has not played itself out, the frame still shines, the river still flows, the spring still bubbles forth, the light has not faded. But between us and It, there is a veil which is more like fifty feet of solid concrete... Already everything in our time is directed to categorizing and segregating this reality from objective facts. This is precisely the concrete wall. Intellectually, emotionally, interpersonally, organizationally, intuitively, theoretically, we have to blast our way through the solid wall, even at the risk of chaos, madness, and death.

By an actual penetration of those concrete walls, Memoirs ends with a vision of transcendence which had been only hinted at in Kate's experience in Summer. Yet, in many ways, the two novels are involved with similar concerns. Their most striking similarity is the parallel
characters in each; Kate and Maureen from *Summer* have a relationship quite like the narrator and Emily in *Memoirs*. A third girl appears in each book; Eileen in *Summer* and June in *Memoirs*. Kate's relationship with Jeffrey, as well as her's with Michael, offers many areas of comparison with the relationship between Emily and Gerald. Lessing often repeats her characters and their relationships, both within a work and throughout her body of fiction. One critic has seen her use of such complementary characters and situations as a means by which Lessing underlines the universal aspect of their experiences. Such an interpretation would seem to be valid in this instance since both sets of women act out experiences universal to all women at some time in their lives.

In addition to the similarity among characters, both novels depict a background of social unrest which has come to be characteristic of Lessing's fiction. In *Summer*, Kate describes the entire world as suffering from "war, invasion, epidemic, famine, flood, quake, poisoning of soil, food, and air." (*SD*, p. 5). Kate's work with Global Foods is concerned with trying to cope with famines and periodic food shortages at the international level. *Memoirs* is set in Britain in the midst of the total collapse of its government. Little is known about events in
the rest of the world, although occasional reports of deaths of millions through disasters reach Britain. As the trappings of civilization disappear - electricity, water - most of the inhabitants flee the city, but the narrator has chosen to stay. She describes the final months in the deserted city which precede the appearance of the One.

Underlying the events observed by the narrator seems to be another, deeper, level of meaning, just as in *Summer*. Some of the actions of the characters in *Memoirs* reverberate with a heightened significance which can be understood most readily by a mythic approach. One of the features of actions which can be described as mythic or ritualistic is that their latent meaning can be seen by the observer but is concealed from the participants. An example would be the significance of Kate's trip to Spain with Jeffrey which, on the surface, did not seem to be very important, but gained significant meaning when looked at from a mythic perspective. *Memoirs* does not evoke the same atmosphere of mystery and awe as *Summer* which more openly re-enacted the Eleusinian rites of initiation. It contains mythic imagery more relevant to the ancient worship of the Triple Goddess which took place long before the worship at Eleusus. However, the Demeter
myth can be found in Emily's living through a woman's rites of passage accompanied by her pet, just as Kate was by her seal. Other mythic elements, besides the goddess imagery and Emily's initiation ritual, permeate the description and function of the narrator. She displays many of the same attributes of the Wise Woman which Kate had demonstrated while living in Maureen's flat. By concentrating on these areas of myth and ritual, Memoirs can be seen as another example of Lessing's treatment of the theme of the quest for wholeness from a feminine perspective.

The goddess imagery in Memoirs is concerned with the portrayal of the Triple Goddess which was not as evident in Summer because of the peripheral position of Eileen in the novel. In Memoirs, June, the third woman character, plays a more central role. Therefore, the narrator and Emily, along with June, present a clearer image of the triad nature of the Great Mother which existed in pre-patriarchal cultures. The almost exclusively feminine world of the narrator in Memoirs, recalls the matriarchal cultures in which the Triple Goddess was worshipped. She was always the "personification of primitive woman - woman the creatress and destructress." As Kerenyi observes, the Triple Goddess was originally
included in the Homeric myth of Demeter and Persephone, but was not prominent in the Eleusinian mysteries. The excluded goddess, Hecate, plays an important role in the myth itself. After the reunion of Demeter and Persephone (which she had taken part in bringing about), she remains as Persephone's companion in a nursing relationship, such as Demeter had had with Demophoon. Hecate is described in the myth as only able to hear the cries of the seduced Persephone which strike her deeply. She emerges from her cave with a torch to aid Demeter in her search for her daughter. After the reunion, Hecate, Demeter, and Persephone are described as a "triad of unmistakable individuals...Mother, Daughter, and the moon-goddess, Hecate."³⁹

This unmistakable individuality of the three goddesses begins to blur as the image is traced through other cultures. Although the triple form remains, the personalities and names of the goddesses change, become intermingled, or disappear altogether. Sometimes Hecate is portrayed as the goddess of the dark moon accompanied by dog messengers, with the other two goddesses identified as the huntress, Diana, and Selena, the ruler of the heavens. But even in the appearance of these new figures, the basic archetype remains "a female trinity representing the ambiguity of good and evil."³⁰ For the Greeks, the trinity was
formulated according to the phases of the moon: Artemis, ruler of the waxing moon, Selene, ruler of the full moon, and Hecate, ruler of the most powerful waning moon, which was considered responsible for both lunacy and visions.¹¹

In each of their appearances, the number of the goddesses corresponds to their realm of power: the heavens, the earth, and the underworld. This division of dominions emphasizes the vastness of the power of the Triple Goddess. For her followers, the ruler of the underworld was also the patroness of birth, procreation, and death, the ruler of the earth in charge of trees, agriculture, all living creatures, while the goddess of the heavens controlled all of the unknown elements of the sky. This last goddess herself appeared in three guises: when the moon was new in the spring, she was worshipped as a young girl; in the summer, during the full moon, as a woman, and, in the winter, under a waning moon, as an old woman.¹²

While looking at the mythic imagery associated with the Triple Goddess, it is helpful to recall Kerenyi’s explanation of the overlapping and apparent confusion which often occurs in myth. He uses the story of Persephone’s abduction to illustrate how allegorical equivalents function in mythology.

Lost maidenhood and the crossing of the borders of Hades are allegorical equivalents - the one
can stand for the other equally well. This kind of equivalence only exists in a given sphere, in an immediately recognizable spiritual connection that can combine very different things, such as marriage and death, in one comprehensive idea. Mythological ideas are like the compact buds of such connections. They always contain 'more' than the non-mythological mind could conceive.13

Thus the myriad and inter-mixed personalities of the Triple Goddess should be regarded in the mythic perspective defined by Kerenyi. Trying to positively and finally relate each character in Memoirs to her equivalent goddess image would be a fruitless endeavor. But recognizing some over-lapping characteristics between goddesses and the women in the novel can lead to a fuller understanding of the mythic elements of the novel.

The three-fold division of the realm of the Triple Goddess is echoed in the novel's associations between the narrator, Emily, and June with the earth, underworld, and heavens. The narrator, in beginning her memoirs, describes herself as existing "at earth-level" (M, p. 5), as opposed to most of the others who aspire to loftier habitations. Emily, like Persephone, is the bride of the ruler of the underworld since her Gerald is the leader of the terrible children who inhabit the Underground. June, with spring-time name and childlike appearance, seems to correspond to the goddess of the new moon. Emily could also be compared
to the young woman of the full moon and the narrator to the old woman of the waning moon. The narrator's resemblance to the goddess of the most powerful phase of the moon is strengthened by her psychic powers which resemble the visions inspired by the waning moon. Throughout the novel, the narrator is able to penetrate the wall of her flat into the other world which would eventually welcome the others.

Like Hecate, the narrator is the guardian, companion, nurse for a maiden. In the narrator's case, Emily was simply left with her by a stranger who told her the girl was henceforth her responsibility. Although, at times, the narrator experiences strong maternal feelings for Emily, there remains a distance between them more characteristic of a guardian's relationship with a child than a mother's. Just as Hecate descended into the underworld to search for Persephone, so the narrator - through her experiences in the other world beyond the wall - descends into Emily's past to search for the unhappy child. The narrator is haunted by Emily's cries just as Hecate was by Persephone's:

I wandered looking for her in adjacent rooms, but never finding the right one, though I could hear Emily's misery sometimes very close...I began to run, I ran, I had to reach her...But I could not find her, I never did find her, and the crying went on
and on and on, and I could hear it in
the day, in my 'real' life. (M, pp.
146-7).

Turning to Emily, the maiden aspect of the goddess,
like Maureen in *Summer*, best describes her. Kerényi has
delineated the progression of this archetype from the mai-
den to fulfilled woman to the woman of sorrows. Emily is presented in all of these roles. When she is
first left with the narrator, she was seen as a "solemn,
serious little girl, in her good little girl's dress."
(M, p. 27). As the months pass, especially as her rela-
tionship with Gerald becomes more intense, Emily appears
as the fulfilled woman:

One morning Emily came in, all brisk and
lively...She was wearing that morning, a
striped cotton shirt and jeans. The
shirt lacked a button at breast-level,
and gaped, showing her already strong
breasts. She looked tired, as well as
full of energy; she had not yet bathed,
and a smell of sex came from her. She
was fulfilled and easy, a bit sad, but
humorously so. She was, in short, a
woman. (M, p. 148).

Finally, when June leaves without saying good-bye, Emily
becomes the woman of sorrows:

Emily, eyes shut, her hands on her thighs,
rocked herself back and forth and from
side to side, and she was weeping as a
woman weeps, which is to say as if the
earth were bleeding...I went on sitting,
watching Emily the eternal woman at her
task of weeping. (M, p. 171).
In connection with the idea of the maiden, as the sort of allegorical equivalent explained by Kerenyi, Emily also appears in the imagery associated with the Lady of the Beasts, since she is invariably accompanied by her pet Hugo. Hugo is a strange animal; the narrator thinks of him as half dog and half cat, but his selfless devotion to Emily is obvious. His position in Emily's life as her devoted companion leads to the comparison with the Lady of the Beasts. This goddess stands in opposition to Demeter as a heavenly rather than chronic goddess. The Lady is patroness of uncivilized natures, not agriculture as Demeter is, and the ruler of the outside life as opposed to the inner life of emotions and feelings. The contrast between the roles of the Lady and Demeter is reflected in the different lives of Emily and the narrator. Although at first part of the outside world, the narrator withdraws more and more to her flat and the other world beyond the wall. As Emily matures, she becomes more involved in events and people outside the flat. She is drawn to and becomes part of the tribal life outside the orderly limits of the narrator's life.

Unlike the narrator and Emily, June does not combine features from the various goddesses but remains the essential child figure. Emily becomes very dependent upon June, but their relationship is primarily a mother and
daughter one. While still a girl, June has sexual relations with Gerald which shocks the narrator and is interpreted by Emily as a betrayal of their friendship. June is described as a victim-like Persephone:

June, returning with Emily to my flat one day, about a fortnight after her induction into womanhood - I put it like that because this was how she obviously felt it - had changed physically, and in every way. Her experience had marked her face, which was even more defenseless, in her sad-waif style, than before...We saw her, that eleven-year-old, as she would look as a middle-aged woman: the thick working body, the face that accommodated, that always seemed able to accommodate, two opposing qualities - the victim's patient helplessness, of the user. (M, p. 155).

June uses Emily in the sense that she goes to her for comfort and support and then leaves her without a word. Perhaps it is significant that she leaves Emily and Gerald to run off with one of the few gangs made up only of women. Some parallel seems to exist between June and Persephone's experience, which can be thought of as "in the profoundest sense a self-sacrifice, a being-given-to womanhood, to the Great Goddess as the female self."16

Memoirs ends with the Sophia-like One presiding over a final transcendent rite of passage and is permeated throughout with imagery which recalls the Triple Goddess in all of her various manifestations. The combination of these two elements results in the portrayal of a woman's
quest for wholeness in terms of matriarchal transformation mystery with the emphasis in this novel less on initiation rituals than on the need for a transcendent vision. In Summer, Kate's experiences with Jeffrey and her own inner voyage suggested the transformative powers of the Great Mother archetype, but in Memoirs the power is more observable in the psychic abilities of the narrator and their effect on Emily's rites of passage, which culminates in renewal and rebirth.

Towards the end of Memoirs, the narrator, watching Emily and Hugo, thinks about them as Beauty and The Beast:

The girl entirely wrapped in furs, so it was hard to tell where her own glossy hair began and ended, and the poor beast, with his rough and yellow hide - Beauty and her Beast, in this guise, but Beauty was so close to her Beast now, wrapped in beast's clothing, as sharp and wary as a beast, surviving as one. (M, p. 197).

Lessing's referral to this particular fairytale is interesting because it is one long regarded by Jungians as a symbolic portrayal of a young girl's initiation into womanhood. In their interpretation of the story, the Beast represents the masculine element or animus which a girl must accept and recognize within herself. Since Jung believed that "the movement toward wholeness, the entrance to the self, is through the opposite sex each one of us contains within ourselves." Emily's relationship with
Hugo can be considered a crucial indication of her progress towards wholeness if we accept Hugo as the manifestation of her masculine self.

When Emily first comes to the narrator, she and the strange animal are inseparable. But their devotion to each other is threatened by the times they live in. With barely enough food for people, pets are regarded by most as inconceivable luxuries and by some as sources of food. Therefore, Hugo must be kept hidden from the gangs on the street, which increases Emily's conflict between the tribal life and the security of the narrator's apartment.

The narrator recalls this period of uncertainty for Emily:

Now I knew that while she wanted more than anything to be off into that savage gamblers' future with the migrating ones, she was not prepared to sacrifice her Hugo. Or, at least, was in conflict...Did I believe that she should stay with her animal? Yes, I did; absurdly, of course, for he was only a beast. But he was hers, she loved him, she must care for him; she could not leave him without harm to herself. (M, p. 79).

When Emily becomes involved with Gerald and his house full of abandoned children, she turns away from Hugo. He and the narrator spend the months until she returns, watching and waiting for her. The narrator admits "what I was really waiting for...was the moment she would step off this merry-go-round, this escalator carrying her from the dark into the dark." (M, p. 94). Hugo merely waits for
his mistress with all of the patience of a formerly favored animal: "The yellow beast, melancholy, his sorrow swallowed...in the determination to be stoic not to show his wounds...stretched along the wall in a mourner's position." (M, p. 81). By projecting her masculine element upon Gerald, Emily is denying its existence within herself which can be seen in her ignoring Hugo to concentrate on her life with Gerald.

When Emily finally returns to the narrator and Hugo in the flat, Gerald comes and tries to persuade her to come with him and his terrible children from the Underground. But Emily decides not to go with him and chooses instead to stay in the flat which "was Emily's place now." The narrator recognizes that "My flat was Emily's and I was her elderly attendant. Well, why not?" (M, p. 200). Her wry acceptance of the situation is as keenly perceptive of what is involved as is Hugo's reaction: "Hugo came and sat with his face on her knee: he was saying 'I can see that you have really chosen me at last, me against him, me instead of all the others.'" (M, p. 200). In Jungian terms, Emily's turning away from Gerald for Hugo would be explained as her withdrawing her external projections or the animus in order to integrate it within herself. Lessing's use of Hugo, like her earlier depiction of the
seal in *Summer*, is a common means of portraying the self. Having the self symbolized as an animal, focuses attention on "our instinctive nature and its connectedness with our surroundings" and so is an image often used.

The final stage of Emily's integrating her animus within her to achieve selfhood or wholeness is symbolized in the triumphant image at the end of the novel. Emily and Hugo appear transformed to the level of those ancient goddesses who strode forward with their royal animals at their sides:

Emily, yes, but quite beyond herself, transmuted, and in another key, and the yellow beast Hugo fitted her new self: a splendid animal, handsome, all kindly dignity and command, he walked beside her and her hand was on his neck. (M, p. 217).

In addition to examining the Beauty and Beast imagery, Emily's rites of passage from girlhood to womanhood can also be explored by concentrating on the initiation she undergoes in the novel. Her experiences can be thought of as an intense concentration in a period of months of Kate Brown's entire life. The many similarities between the two women's experiences seem to be another demonstration of Lessing's use of complementary characters and situations to underline their universality. Her reference to the Beauty and the Beast motif strengthens
the impression that Emily's growth to womanhood reflects to some extent the experiences of all women.

When Emily is given into the narrator's care, she is right between childhood and womanhood. To the narrator, she seems to be at a point of vacillation between the two. As the narrator looks at Emily sitting in a chair, she first sees "a child, presenting herself as one. One could almost see the white socks on her plump, well-turned legs, the bow in her hair." (M, p. 29). But at the same moment, the real appearance of Emily was that of a young beauty in jeans. Emily's being entrusted, at this vulnerable stage of her life to a stranger, an old woman with supernatural powers, living alone, strongly suggests the puberty rituals of the matriarchal societies. In them, as a girl approached womanhood, evidenced by her first menstruation, she was taken apart from the group for initiation rites which stressed isolation, withdrawal, and the power [mana] available for women in celebrating the "blood mysteries" of their lives.20

After this period of seclusion, the girl returned to the tribal life, but came back often to the seclusion of the "women only" place. Just so, Emily eventually leaves the flat to join the gangs on the street, but returns often to the narrator and Hugo to be replenished by rest and companionship without demands. This pattern also occurs
after June's sexual experiences with Gerald. She decides to move into the flat to escape the pressures of Gerald's house and is nursed by Emily. She tempts June with various kinds of food and at night "the two girls slept in each others arms for comfort." (M, p. 157). This continual reaffirming of the bond between women with the male world, represented by Gerald, perceived as alien, recalls the myth of Demeter in which the male's role is "really only that of seducer or conqueror."21

Despite her closeness to the narrator and June, Emily goes through a period in which she exists, as did Maureen and Kate, as the maiden archetype. She functions as an "anima woman" during which her total sense of herself depends on the images which men project onto her. Clothes, hair, and face become supremely important in this stage since an anima woman sees herself as a work of art. She never completely has her own experience, but presents a picture of it to others and receives the experience through their response to her picture of it.22 Like Maureen, Emily demonstrates this stage of development by going through a prolonged ritual of costume changes which the narrator calls "self-portraits":

Her first self-portrait...she had found an old dress, white with sprigs of pink flowers. Parts were stained and worn. These she cut away. Bits of lace and tulle, beads, scarves were added to and removed
from a kaleidoscope garment that changed with her needs. Most often it was a bride's dress. Then it was a young girls' dress...She wore the thing about the flat a naked girl only just veiled; she wore it flauntingly, bashful, daringly, fearfully; (M, pp. 57-8).

The narrator remembers how Emily, after outgrowing "chrysalis after chrysalis," (M, p. 62), began to show herself off to the tribe of nomadic young people gathered on the sidewalks and streets. She is soon involved with Gerald, who is described variously as a chieftain, brigand, young king. Gerald proves to be a natural leader who draws people to him; he is also deeply concerned about the children roaming in the streets and proceeds to set up a successful communal household for them. In all of these roles, Gerald typifies the father, king, hero type of figure which Ulanov describes as being most appealing to the Amazon or Hetaira (Companion) type of woman. For just as Kate Brown was an example of the Maternal type of woman, Emily appears to be a combination of the Amazon type, with its dominant archetypal type the huntress, Artemis, and the Hetaira type whose main concern is with men and children as individuals, not as role-players. One aspect of a woman's coming to wholeness which can be observed in Emily is the gradual assimilation of all of the female personality types (the three just mentioned, as well as the Wise Old Woman as exemplified by Kate at the end of her journey)
Gerald's appeal for Emily was not unique, since he was the subject of many young girls' affection, but to her amazement, she is chosen by him from all the others. Her emotional response to him is overwhelming: "From pain she would soar at once to exaltation, and stood there beside him, flushed and beautiful, her eyes soft. Or fling herself down in the sofa corner, to be by herself for a bit, for it was all too much, too powerful." (M, p. 85). In many respects, the relationship between Gerald and Emily is as traditional as the patriarchal marriage of Kate and Michael Brown had been. The narrator touches on their basic sameness when discussing why Emily did not want to be a leader in the commune:

The trouble was, she did love Gerald; and this longing for him, for his attention and his notice, the need to be the one who sustained and comforted him, who connected him with the earth, who held him steady in her common sense and warmth - this need drained her of the initiative she would need to be a leader of a commune. She wanted no more than to be the leader of the commune's women. His only woman, of course. (M, p. 110).

In expressing her feelings for Gerald by providing comfort and support, Emily, like Kate before her, is fulfilling her own need to be feminine, to provide the age-old "generating, and nourishing, protective, and transformative
feminine power." Her living out the basic feminine mode of being is not limited to her relationship with Gerald, but extends even to the maternal role.

Although involved in maternal concerns, Emily does not become entrapped in the archetype of the Great Mother as Kate had been. Emily takes over the maternal care of the children in Gerald's house because it has to be done, and probably, because it pleases Gerald. Yet she never succumbs to the seductive power inherent in this role. Emily performs all of the duties traditionally considered feminine; she is in charge of the garden, gathers herbs for healing, supervises all the kitchen activities, and takes care of the children. While she bitterly resents the authority the children accord her, she finds that she needs to exercise it in order to accomplish anything. The narrator imagines what Emily's version of this period of her life will be like in the future as she looks back on it:

'It was so hard,' she might say. 'Everything was so difficult, such an effort, such a burden, all those children in the house, not one of them would do a thing to help unless I got at them all the time, they turned me into a tyrant and laughed at me, but there was no need for that, they could have had something equal and easy if they had done their parts but no, I always had to overlook everything, comb their dirty hair and see if they had washed...and the way June got sick, it drove me crazy with worry, she kept getting ill for no particular reason - that
was it, there was never any good reason for things, and I worked and I worked and it was always the same, something happened and then it all came to nothing.' (M, p. 155).

Emily may reject the potentially destructive power which exists in the maternal role, but she is drawn to the role's nurturing aspect as revealed in her feelings about June. She shows tender regard for the young orphan, which is often expressed in maternal solicitude about June's need for food, rest, or understanding. When June leads a robbery of the narrator's flat, Emily defends her and smoothes things over between them. June's feelings for Emily are apparent in this description of her: "There beside her [Emily] was June the child, and her face was laid open and absolutely undefended in a trustful smile at Emily the woman and her friend." (M, p. 126). When June sleeps with Gerald, Emily feels like a betrayed child as she cries. "I've never had anyone before - not anyone really close, like June!" (M, p. 143). Eventually, June simply leaves Emily which sends her into the paroxysm of weeping, described earlier.

The intensity of Emily's feelings for June come about after her love for Gerald had somewhat quieted from its first emotional heights when "she was being filled over and over again with a violence of need that exploded in her, dazzling her eyes and shaking her body so that

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she was astonished." (M, p. 86). Although Emily's actual sexual experiences are unknown by the narrator, and therefore unrelated to us, their effect on Emily recalls the ritualistic sex between Kate and the young king in her dream. Their enactment of the rites of "hieros gamos" led to Kate's being able to integrate the masculine element within her, thus ending her dependence on the king as an animus figure. The same process seems to take place with Emily and Gerald through their private sexual experiences. After Emily's euphoria with Gerald, she begins to realize that she is not his only lover. Emily explains to the narrator, "He just has to make the rounds, I suppose. Like a cat marking his territory." (M, p. 144). Emily's bitterness is like Kate's desolation and shocked sense of outrage when she was rejected by the king for a younger woman. Just as that younger woman resembled Maureen, so Emily's replacement is June. And just as Kate lost Jeffrey in a symbolic sacrifice of the son, so Emily looses June. But for Emily, as it was for Kate, the loss of the child "represents the rebirth of hope and the possibility of transcending the past."27

For it is Emily's grief over June's desertion that is the final rite of passage for her, when she realizes, like Kate did, that she cannot function an an anima woman
or lose herself in the maternal role if she is to be her-
self:

She loves - oh, yes, but somewhere in
her is a deadly weariness. She has known
it all, and doesn't want any more - but
what can she do? She knows herself - the
eyes of men and boys say so - as a source;
if she is not this, then she is nothing.
So she still thinks - she has not yet shed
that delusion...she knew 'falling in love'
was an illness to be endured, a trap which
might lead her to betray her own nature,
her good sense, and her real purposes. It
was not a door to anything but itself; not
a key to living. It was a state, a condi-
tion, sufficient unto itself, almost inde-
pendent of its object. (M, p. 201).

The tone of this passage echoes the ambivalent
ending of Summer when Kate's optimism and the happy con-
clusion of the seal dream did not seem to be justified by
her external situations of returning to her family. In
Emily's case, Lessing appears determined to underline the
achievement of her new consciousness by the unusual ending
of the novel. Whether or not the ending is considered
successful, Lessing's portrayal of the transcendent final
vision seems to fully support the hope and optimism which
shone only fitfully at Kate's return to Blackheath. The
ending of Memoirs reveals Emily's initiation to have been
more than an initiation into womanhood but an initiation
into an entirely new quality of life in accordance with
the Sufi belief in an evolutionary process, resulting in
people destined for the new world opened up by the One.
The unifying presence throughout *Memoirs* is the narrator who remains unnamed and basically unknown, although her perspective is the filter through which Emily's experiences are related. The narrator very much resembles Kate Brown as she appeared in Maureen's flat and probably as she seemed to her family upon her return to Blackheath. Like Kate, the narrator typifies the female personality type of the Wise Old Woman whose involvement in psychic phenomenon causes her to act as a medium between the two worlds of the conscious and unconscious mind. The narrator is presented as even more of an archetypal figure than Kate was since Lessing gives no details about her appearance or her past, and little insight into her personality. She engages in very little dialogue and is shown as an essentially solitary figure, except in her relationship with Emily. Her principle activity is her gradual penetration of the world beyond the wall of her flat, but even that is not determined by her own decision:

After all, it was never myself who ordained that I must interrupt my ordinary life, since it was time to step from one life into another; not I who thinned the sunlight wall; not I who set the stage behind it. I had never had a choice. Very strong was the feeling that I did as I was bid...was held always in the hollow of a great hand which enclosed my life, and used me for purposes I was too much beetle or earthworm to understand. (*M*, p. 101).
The narrator's directed incursions into the other world do offer her comfort and sustenance in the midst of the turmoil of the external world. But as she observes, "It was seeming to me more and more that in inheriting this extension of my ordinary life, I had been handed, again, a task." (M, p. 64). This task, which is the total concern of her inner life, is reflected by her other task of caring for Emily which is another instance in which she was simply chosen to take on a responsibility. As the narrator accepts both tasks and devotes her life to them, she is embarking on another type of journey of self-discovery which parallels Emily's. Both women are involved in the quest for wholeness and transcendence which has been shown to be the fate of all of Lessing's protagonists. The narrator seems to have already gone through Emily's rites of passage and is now searching for a clearer vision of the One: "But the person I had been looking for all this time was there: there she was." (M, p. 216). Both Emily and the narrator pursue their quests in the spirit of inner surrender which characterized Kate's experience and which is one of the distinguishing features of a woman's way towards a new consciousness:

She performs heroic tasks. But these tasks differ from those of the masculine hero in that they have something of the character of ancient ceremonials and rituals rather than
raiding expeditions; her voyages are more like seasonal migrations or sacred embassies, processionals outward and return, which become circumambulations illustrating a fundamental circulation of psychic energy.28

Lessing uses the carpet design metaphor to further describe the type of task required of the narrator:

I stood on the carpet looking down as they did at its incompleteness...I, too, sought for fragments of materials that could bring life to the carpet, and did in fact find one, and bent down to match and fit...I realized that everywhere around, in all the other rooms, were people who would in their turn drift in here, see this central activity, find their matching piece - would lay it down, and drift off again to other tasks...The room disappeared. I could not find it...But I knew it was there waiting; I knew it had not disappeared, and the work in it continued, must continue, would go on always. (M, p. 80).

Just as the narrator tries to fit together the unknown design of the carpet, so also does she try to fit together the pieces of Emily's life to form a pattern. Like Jack Orkney, in one of Lessing's short stories, the narrator laments the inability of people to learn from experience. Orkney expressed the feeling that "things were too desperate, the future of humanity depended on humanity being able to achieve new forms of intelligence, of being able to learn from experience." As the narrator watches Emily and Gerald act out the never-changing rituals between men and women, she realizes she is merely having "old thoughts
about stale old social patterns...which kept repeating them-
selves, re-forming themselves even when events seemed to
license any experiment or deviation or mutation." (M,
p. 136). Like Lessing and the Sufi, the narrator appears to
believe in an evolutionary sort of process which is the only
way people can escape the repetition of the stale old pat-
terns, escape them by the gradual creation of a new type of
being. The narrator feels these types of beings are already
in existence: "I think that all this time human beings have
been watched by creatures whose perceptions and understand-
ing have been so far in advance of anything we have been
able to accept." (M, p. 82). For the narrator then, the
final scene means the coming together of some of these crea-
tures with Emily and the selected others who together would
break free of the old patterns of experience just as they
had broken free of the walls of the old world.

But Emily is only able to join these other beings
after the narrator has helped to free her from the limita-
tions imposed on her by her past. The narrator goes into the
"personal rooms," like prisons "where the air was tight and
limited and above all where time was a strict unalterable
law and long" (M, p. 42) to re-live Emily's past in order to
free her from it. Lessing's portrayal of Emily's past in
these prison-like rooms recalls the Sufi tale:

But they were like children born in a house
from which they had never been allowed to
stray, doomed to walk from one room to another without knowing that there could be another house, elsewhere, with different furnishings and a different view from its windows. 29

The incidents from Emily's past which the narrator encounters all are the type which Emily might have blocked from her conscious mind. In bringing them forth, the narrator functions as an archetypal Wise Old Woman, since she serves as a bridge between Emily's conscious and unconscious minds. The narrator accepts all of the hidden events of Emily's childhood; scenes of Emily eating her excretement, masturbating, being consumed with jealously of her new brother. She accepts repressed memories of Emily's parents; her father's erotic tickling, her mother's complaining hatred of her, their exclusion of her from their love for her brother. The narrator sees her task as transforming the past so that Emily can re-claim it as her own: "I had to reach her...I was not to show my repugnance as her mother had done." (M, p. 147). Although the narrator never achieves this in the sense that she never comforts Emily in that world, she does accept Emily's past for her. The task calls for the power of the Great Mother archetype, the ability to "project a psychic symbolism upon the real world and so transform it." 31

Through re-living crucial moments from Emily's past, the narrator becomes a figure in another pattern of motifs
from the Demeter myth. While searching for the sobbing
Emily, she finds instead Emily's mother:

I never found Emily. But I did find... the thing is, what I did find was inevi-
table, I could have foreseen it... What else could I find... when behind that wall I ran and ran along passages, along cor-
ridors, into rooms where I knew she must be, but where she was not, until at last I found her; a blond blue-eyed child, but the blue eyes were reddened and sullen with weeping. Who else could it possibly be but Emily's mother, the large cart-
horse woman, her tormentor, the world's image? It was not Emily I took up in my arms and whose weeping I tried to shush. Up went the little arms, desperate for comfort, but they would be one day those great arms that had never been taught tenderness." (M, p. 15).

The narrator is able to see Emily's mother as a victim of neglect who then perpetuates the vicious circle upon Emily. The narrator also can understand that Emily's mother felt trapped, "isolated in her distress and her bafflement" (M, p. 70). Somehow by achieving this understanding and acceptance of Emily's mother, the narrator is able to transform her so that she appears in the final scene as a "large laughing gallant mother." (M, p. 216). Thus, in going into Emily's past, the narrator has found both mother and daughter, which is the essential motif of all matriarchal mysteries.32

Finding mother and daughter, however, is only part of the narrator's task. She must also prepare the way for
the coming of the One whose existence was known to the narrator since she first began the task. In her first visits beyond the wall, she experiences the One:

Perhaps it was more of a feeling than something seen. There was a sweetness, certainly - a welcome, a reassurance. Perhaps I did see a face, or the shadow of one. The face I saw clearly later was familiar to me...This was the rightful inhabitant of the rooms behind the wall, I had no doubt of it then or later. The exiled inhabitant; for surely she could not live, never could have lived, in that chill empty shell full of dirty and stale air? (M, p. 14).

The One, as the exiled inhabitant, only returns when the narrator has fulfilled her interior task of re-living Emily's past and her external task of guiding Emily through her initiation into womanhood. When Emily has gone through the necessary rites of passage, she returns to the narrator and Hugo who have both been waiting patiently. Emily has come to terms with her animus and has accepted the masculine within her instead of outwardly projecting it. This can be seen in her reunion with Hugo. Then she must come to terms with the contents of her unconscious which the narrator, as the Wise Old Woman, enables her to do. Now Emily is ready for the "return to the primary relationship of feminine ego with feminine self, but in a more developed form."33 She has, like Kate but through the narrator, confronted her shadow and removed the persona from herself and
her past. Only after all of these rites of passage is Emily ready for the reunion with the feminine principle, the One. It is another mother and daughter reunion, another Demeter and Persephone.
Chaper Four: Endnotes


5 R. D. Laing as cited in Ibid., p. 155.


12 Graves, p. 387
13 Kerenyi, p. 109.

14 Ibid., p. 121.

15 Neumann, pp. 275-80.

16 Ibid., p. 121.


18 Ulanov, p. 213.


20 Harding, pp. 69-76.


24 Ibid.


26 Neumann, p. 33.


29 Mulla Nasrudin, cited in Hardin, p. 29.
30 Doris Lessing, cited in Hardin, p. 151.
31 Neumann, p. 282.
32 Ibid., p. 308.
33 Ulanov, p. 276.
CHAPTER V

FEMININE QUEST FOR WHOLENESS IN SUMMER AND MEMOIRS

Both The Summer Before the Dark and The Memoirs of a Survivor arise naturally from the progression of themes in the novels of Doris Lessing. As she has shifted her attention from social problems to the individual consciousness, her novels have become more concerned with her protagonists' attempts to transcend the divisions and fragmentation of their lives. Their attempts to achieve a new vision of life, as well as the quality of the vision itself, can perhaps be best understood in terms of the Sufi beliefs which Lessing holds. But their actual quest for the vision is a universal experience approachable from many perspectives. By discovering mythic patterns in the quest, its universal aspect is revealed as well as the exclusively feminine characteristics which come to light. In these two novels, Lessing has portrayed the quest for wholeness in feminine terms which becomes apparent as patterns and motifs from the Demeter myth and the matriarchal worship of the Triple Goddess are uncovered.

The movement of Kate and Emily from entrapment in patriarchal situations to transcendence is accomplished
primarily through the transforming power of the feminine principle. The resemblance of Kate and the narrator to the Wise Old Woman archetype further explores the transforming power of the feminine. Lessing's depiction of a woman's quest for wholeness reveals the Great Mother archetype in both its destructive, devouring aspect as well as its nourishing transforming one. By showing how her heroines come to know and accept both aspects within themselves, she shows the way for others to make the necessary journey of self-discovery. In her presentation of the pain and suffering involved in breaking free from patriarchal modes of being and the difficulty of trying to integrate the masculine element within oneself, Lessing points out the courage and determination which is needed. The reward cannot be fully described, but is only symbolically suggested by Memoir's final scene of transcendence under the compassionate presence of the One.
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