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Love, Alterity and Gender Relations: Re-Thinking the Myth of Eros and Psyche

Wernmei Yong Ade

Abstract

Central to the myth of Eros and Psyche is the theme of love and knowledge. Jungian psychologist and philosopher Erich Neumann's reading of the myth centres on the light-bringing as the point of Psyche's death and rebirth: death of her dependence, ignorance and passivity, and rebirth into womanly initiative, and most significantly, into agency and subjecthood. For Neumann, the two-fold wounding of Psyche and Eros that first gives rise to love, "creates the possibility of an encounter, which is prerequisite for love between two individuals" (1956, 86). These sentiments, published in his 1956 book *Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine*, bear out the conditions necessary in thinking of love as a discourse of alterity, conditions outlined in the philosophical writings of Luce Irigaray. Indeed, the only way to recuperate love as a positive experience for men and women, is a vision of love in which both partners move away from the totalising realm of sameness, towards otherness and alterity. Irigaray's treatment of gender identity has often been accused of being essentialist, a charge familiar to Jung and his followers, including Neumann. The processes of separation and individuation necessary for an encounter between lovers as two (self and other) as described by Neumann are not without their problems. He says, for instance, that "[Eros'] manifestation is dependent on her, he is transformed with Psyche and through her" (1956, 107), which reduces the feminine to the mere conduit and medium for masculine development. This paper argues that despite objections to the gendered Jungian archetype, Neumann's reading of the tale of Eros and Psyche can indeed contribute something of value towards thinking of love as a means of living ethically, especially where gender relations are concerned.

Key Words: Alterity, love, the encounter, philosophy in the feminine, Irigaray, Neumann.

Luce Irigaray's work on love constantly circles back to the belief in love, described as a "clearing for the advent of a dialogue or conversation between the two parts of humanity in the respect of their otherness to one another" (2007, xii). This ethical encounter between two as two, staged as a dialogue in difference, lies in opposition to the widely accepted idea of love as a union or fusion of opposites; philosophically, this popular conception of love as fusion is informed by a Hegelian dialectical overcoming of two, to arrive at absolute synthesis. For Irigaray, absolute synthesis amounts to a narcissistic, solipsistic love, being the love of one, or of the Same, almost always that of the male figure in heterosexual love. Her philosophy of love is grounded in a belief in love as an encounter with alterity, the truly other; a situation in which two maintain their positions of difference, where neither subjects the other, and where both remain subjects in love. Partly indebted to the thought of Emmanuel Levinas, the encounter with alterity also grounds Irigaray's conceptualisation of a philosophy in the feminine, one that attempts to re-vision love. In this philosophy of the feminine, "the values of intersubjectivity, of dialogue in difference, of attention to present life, in its concrete and sensible aspects, will be recognised and raised to the level of a wisdom" (2007, vii). This chapter evaluates a crucial aspect of the amorous relation central to Irigaray's re-vision of love: touch, that is, love in its concrete and sensible aspects. My examination of touch as opening up the possibility of an ethical loving relation will be limited to Irigaray's engagement with the work of Levinas, particularly the latter's conception of the feminine and the caress as outlined in "Phenomenology of Eros" in *Totality and Infinity*. Ultimately, I am interested what is being contested in Irigaray's re-vision of love *qua* Levinas: the body of the woman in love.

The revaluation of the sensible and concrete aspects of love towards an appreciation of alterity has significant implications for the way women and men love. As observed by Eileen Clements in her conference paper entitled "The (Im)possibility of Love: Women and the Problem of the Feminine", the hierarchical order that exists between dualistic terms such as mind/body, reason/passion, transcendence/immanence, masculine/feminine, terms which ground Plato's

theory of ideal love and therefore wisdom in love, has resulted in a “devaluation of the feminine in western thought, [and] combined with the oppression of women in the material world, has produced a society lacking in love, with women who cannot love – particularly themselves – as embodied representations of the feminine” (2014, n.p.). Clements thus concludes that only a revaluation of the embodied feminine can lead to ethical relations between men and women, and identifies this as the impetus that drives Irigaray’s re-vision of love. Indeed, a critique of love can hardly ignore the patriarchal conventions of love that have come to delimit the way men and women love. As observed by Adrienne Rich:

The choice still seemed to be between “love” – womanly, maternal love, altruistic love – a love defined and ruled by the weight of an entire culture; and egotism – a force directed by men into creation, achievement, ambition, often at the expense of others, but justifiably so. For weren’t they men, and wasn’t that their destiny as womanly, selfless love was ours? We know now that the alternatives are false ones – that the word “love” is itself in need of re-vision. (1979, 46-47)

Rich thus urged the need for a new narrative of love, one in which the act of re-visioning, comprising the “act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction,” would serve as “an act of survival” for women, who face the “challenge and promise of a whole new psychic geography to be explored” (1979, 35). “Re-vision” is Rich’s prescription for the female writer’s active relationship with her literary past, one that would serve the project of decolonisation of language and basic habits of thought. Forty years after the publication of Rich’s essay, love still remains in desperate need of re-vision, as evidenced in Tuija Saresma’s study of the way love continues to be used as a repressive tool to lock women and men within conventional gender roles. In her conference paper, “Love as a Repressive Concept in Masculinist Blogs”, Saresma evaluates the ways in which *Angry Harry*, a self-professed masculinist blog, exploits love as a “justification for the restoration of the traditional, patriarchal gender order within which the white heterosexual Western male dominates, subordinating people of any other gender, sexuality or ethnic background” (2014, n.p.). It is precisely the old narratives of love, such as those outlined by Rich, which enable the continued oppression of women, and thus need to be re-visioned. This article represents a small contribution towards that process, for which Erich Neumann’s critique of the tale of Eros and Psyche serves as a useful starting point. Indeed, Rich’s reference to “a whole new *psychic* geography to be explored” gestures towards a revaluation of the role that Psyche as female lover and seeker of wisdom, can play towards the possibility of an ethical loving relation.

As a philosophy in the feminine, Irigaray’s re-vision of love is invested in both Platonic views of the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love. The problem with love, going as far back as Plato, as Clements demonstrates, is its heavy reliance on binaristic thought. In “Sorcerer Love”, reprinted in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Irigaray contrasts the nature of Diotima’s dialectic with the Hegelian dialectic, in order to demonstrate the presence of an intermediary term in love in the former’s conceptualisation of ideal love. In the Hegelian dialectic, one begins with two opposites, which finally achieve synthesis after a process of passing into one another. Diotima, on the other hand, establishes, from the outset, an intermediary. This intermediary is love, and it is what permits progression, being both the path as well as that which leads the way. In Plato’s text, this path is figured by Diotima in terms of an ascent towards ideal love, a figuration that is fraught with problems, exposed by Irigaray later in her essay. During their dialogue, Diotima leads Socrates through the same process of cross-examination as Socrates will later lead Agathon, a process that culminates in the mistaken conclusion drawn by Socrates that love must be ugly and bad. Diotima’s response to this is to posit an intermediate stance, outside of dualism: “Do you think that anything which isn’t beautiful must necessarily be ugly?” (Plato 1999, 37). Socrates responds to Diotima’s question in the affirmative. Correcting Socrates, Diotima draws his attention to the existence of an intermediary state between wisdom and ignorance, the ugly and the beautiful.

Diotima proceeds to tell the story of the origins of Eros, child of Poverty and Resource. At the birthday of Aphrodite, Resource gets drunk and Poverty “formed a plan of relieving her lack of resources by having a child by Resource” (Plato 1999, 39). There is thus always, within us, some of the other that we desire; that while we may lack it, we certainly do possess some knowledge of it, and this is why the lover falls in between “wisdom and ignorance” (Plato 1999, 40). Eros himself lies between mortal and immortal, being both of the in-between and a go-between: as a demi-god, he interprets and carries messages from humans to gods and from gods to humans. This halfway position also prepares the ground for the idea of the philosopher’s quest and the philosophic *eros* as the halfway position, which can be viewed not as a permanent state, but as a stage in the progression towards something more advanced and better (Hunter 2004, 84). As the dialogue between Diotima and Socrates demonstrates, Socrates’ mistake was to assume that if Eros is not in possession of beauty, then he must be ugly, a form of reasoning which begins with two opposites: beauty and ugliness. Diotima corrects Socrates, and says that a person who lacks beauty already has some knowledge of beauty, since it is only then that he can know what he lacks. Unlike Socrates, Diotima posits an intermediary state between beauty and ugliness, wisdom and ignorance. This state of being in-between is, firstly, what motivates the lover-philosopher to love, and to seek wisdom. This in-between state also constitutes the path the lover-philosopher will take, one s/he never abandons, and is key to Irigaray’s re-vision of love, where “each one attends to remaining oneself,” and takes the form of a “return to oneself, in oneself, becoming oneself which does not stay in suspension in immutable truths or essence but which provides a faithfulness to oneself in becoming” (2008, xiv).

Self-realisation as it is understood here is not self-congratulatory, narcissistic or solipsistic, which amounts to an “objectal factuality of an ‘*étant*’ – being” (Irigaray 2008, xiii). Appropriating Heidegger in *The Way of Love*, Irigaray contrasts *étant* with *être* – to be – to refer to the conscious act of assuming the fact of one’s existence in the present, specifically the fact of always existing, in every instance, in relation with an other. Moving along this path in relation with an other, one thus resists falling back into immutable truths or fixed essences, that is, into *étant*. This is exemplified in the path of love, where the self is always in relation with an other; and where the self returns to itself even as it moves towards the other, thus ensuring the preservation of difference, alterity and an ethical loving relation. What constitutes existing is the path towards self-realisation, a journey taken, in the instance of *Eros and Psyche*, by the female lover, to be distinguished from the beloved woman, who, in loving, “tends toward her own fulfilment, already unfolds herself to gather in more” (Irigaray 2001, 126). Psyche is perhaps, other than Diotima, the first female lover-philosopher in the feminine. Diotima also alerts Socrates to the notion of possession in love: one’s happiness lies in the possession of something good, forever: “Love is the desire to have the good forever” (Plato 1999, 43), and so “the object of love is not beauty... [but] reproduction and birth in beauty,” because “reproduction is the closest mortals can come to being permanently alive and immortal. If what we agreed earlier is right, that the object of love is to have the good *always*, it follows that we must desire immortality (permanence) along with the good” (Plato 1999, 44). There is thus a change in emphasis from possessing the beautiful to gazing on the beautiful, which is the difference between the desire to possess and true love. True love constitutes a vision of unfailing beauty – no longer a mere desire to possess, but “the creative relationship of ‘begetting’” (Osborne 1994, 102).

It is also at this point that Irigaray sees Diotima’s argument begin to unravel. Irigaray identifies a central contradiction in Diotima’s argument, where Diotima oscillates between positing love as intermediary, and love as a result of a cause, specifically the desire to have the beautiful and the good forever. Diotima had first of all claimed that love is an intermediary, and that love is the process of generation and regeneration itself. Diotima comes to the conclusion that love is the condition necessary for procreation, as well as being procreation itself. It is both the condition and the way. Having said this, Diotima goes on, however, to seek a cause for love in the animal world (properly understood as the physical, mortal world), which is procreation. Diotima ends by saying that love is the love for the beautiful forever, which drives us to reproduce. It is on this count that she contradicts herself. Where she starts by saying that love has no object, that love is a process and

a becoming, she undermines herself by attributing a cause to love, which is the desire to have the beautiful forever. In mortal love, the child comes to represent having the beautiful forever, and as the product of love, the child becomes a symbol of immortality. Love has therefore now lost its intermediary status that Diotima posited to start with. Love is now motivated by something else, which is to have the child in which we immortalise ourselves, love forever, and in which we have the good and the beautiful forever. This leads Irigaray to a further objection to Diotima's argument. Because the desire for immortality takes place on two levels (the body and the soul), these are placed in a hierarchical relationship. Immortality of the soul, or the mind (artistic reproduction), is privileged over that of the body (physical reproduction). Furthermore, this hierarchy is gendered: love between men (which will lead to superior spiritual reproduction by default) is privileged over love between men and women (which will lead to inferior physical reproduction). As Clements observes, "Plato conceives of love as being attained by the intellectual purification of Eros – intimate, passionate, sexual love – from carnal into ideal form. Plato argues that Eros is initially felt for a person, but with contemplation it can become [...] an appreciation for beauty itself in an ideal sense" (2014, n.p.). In the ascent from bodily to ideal love, women's reproductive abilities, and women's bodies, are placed low on the ladder towards love. According to Plato then, women, being fecund only in body and not in mind, are less deserving of love than men are. Clements concludes that it is this very hierarchisation of gender relations that leads women to devalue their bodies, hindering any possibility of self-love, and by extension loving relations between self and other (2014, n.p.). This is why Irigaray insists that a re-vision of love, one in which women can love as equals, must concern the concrete and sensible aspects of love. To neglect to re-vision love perpetuates the debasement of the body, and of the feminine. As noted by Kate Ince, for Irigaray, it is the "reduction of fecundity to productivity [that] marks the failure of love, including for the child, whose role is reduced to that of mediator in its parents' relation" (1996, 122-140, especially 129). It is also for this reason that Irigaray rejects Levinas's abstraction of the Eternal Feminine, and in his conceptualisation of the not-yet in the figure of the child.

Irigaray's chapter "The Fecundity of the Caress: A Reading of Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 'Phenomenology of Eros'" (1993) is one of two responses crafted by Irigaray to Levinas's conceptualisation of sexuality and femininity in *Totality and Infinity*, the other being "Questions to Emmanuel Levinas" (1991). While most agree that Irigaray regards Levinas's approach to the Other in his conception of alterity as central to developing her own formulation of the loving relation, Irigaray nonetheless finds fault with the apparent neutrality of Levinas's ethics, which recognises only the male subject. Irigaray is certainly not the first to take issue with an ethical theory that is apparently gender-neutral, where the masculine perspective masquerades as the neutral. As explained by Ince, "one central issue which gets left out when ethics ignores gender is of course, embodiment: an ethics which is universalizable [...] has to function independently of any particular corporeality" (1996, 3). This chimes with the urgency expressed by Clement over the need to revalue feminine embodiment, which brings us to the issue Irigaray takes with Levinas's conception of the feminine. The rejoinder to Levinas that opens "Questions to Emmanuel Levinas" gives us a fairly good idea of the feminine in Levinas as Irigaray understands it, and which she challenges:

Is there otherness outside of sexual difference? The feminine, as it is characterized by Levinas, is not other than himself. Defined by "modesty," "a mode of being which consists in shunning the light" (see *Time and the Other*), the feminine appears as the underside or reverse side of man's aspirations toward the light, as its negative. The feminine is apprehended not in relation to itself, but from the point of man, and through a purely erotic strategy, a strategy moreover which is dictated by masculine pleasure (*jouissance*), even if man does not recognize to what limited degree his own erotic intentions and gestures are ethical. (1991, 109)

Irigaray accuses Levinas of reducing the feminine to abstraction. Ince sums it up succinctly by saying that "Levinas's erotics are not bodily enough for Irigaray" (1996, 131). Carl Cedeberg argues,

however, that even though Levinas associates the male perspective with the loving subject's perspective, Irigaray is mistaken to claim that Levinas universalises the male perspective. Defending Levinas, Cedeberg points out that for Levinas, neutrality "distorts the representation of human existence in general, which [Levinas] understands always from intrinsically non-neutral interhuman relations" (2012, 211). Ince likewise argues that Irigaray's accusation that the feminine other in Levinas is merely a function of a love premised on the idea of the Same, is misplaced. Ince posits that the feminine and the feminine face are in fact forms of alterity in the work of Levinas, and proceeds to demonstrate how the concepts of the feminine as articulated by Levinas have more to contribute to Irigaray's ethics than she seems to think, thus exposing the very same prejudices in Irigaray's work as the latter finds fault with in Levinas's work.

While Ince and Cedeberg offer us very convincing arguments about Irigaray's misunderstanding of Levinas' erotics and therefore ethics, I would like, however, to point out that there is something relevant in Irigaray's accusations that there is not enough of the concrete body in Levinas's erotics and ethics, particularly where the female is concerned. This is apparent in the fact that Levinas never names Psyche in his chapter "Phenomenology of Eros". The lover, being the God of Love, is named (Eros), while Psyche is not. She is referred to as the Beloved, in abstract feminine terms:

The Beloved, at once graspable but intact in her nudity, beyond object and face and thus beyond the existent, abides in virginity. The feminine essentially violable and inviolable, the "Eternal Feminine," is the virgin or an incessant recommencement of virginity, the untouchable in the very contact of voluptuousness, future in the present. Not as a freedom struggling with its conqueror, refusing its reification and its objectification, but a fragility at the limit of non-being wherein is lodged not only what is extinguished and is *no longer*, but what is not yet. (Levinas 1991, 258)

This supports Irigaray's objections: that where the male lover is given concrete existence, given over to the full gamut of human experiences of being "hungry, happy, sexually aroused, in pain, etc," (Cedeberg 2012, 211), the female in love is given over to abstraction, functioning as the underside of man. As the Eternal Feminine, Levinas's conception of the feminine falls back into *étant*, into immutable truths and fixed essences. Linked to Levinas's failure to recognise the female lover (as opposed to the Beloved) in the loving relation, is also his notion of the promise of a not-yet, invested in the figure of the child. As outlined above in her reading of Plato's *Symposium*, Irigaray objects to the child as the end product, as that which motivates love, since this reduces love to a mere means to an end. She says in "Fecundity of the Caress", that "when the lovers, male or female, substitute for, occupy, or possess the site of those who conceived them, they founder in the unethical, in profanation. They neither construct nor inhabit their love. Remaining in the no longer or the not yet. [...] Sterile, if it were not for the child." Furthermore, the idea of the child as the embodiment of the not-yet fixes women once more in their reproductive capabilities, such that "while he, the lover, is sent back to the transcendental, she, the beloved, is plunged into the depths" (Irigaray 2001, 121). And so, where both the Platonic and the Levinasian accounts of love fail, the loving encounter between Psyche and Eros appears to bear more hope for an ethical relation. Specifically, it is Eric Neumann's analysis of the account that provides the initial sketches of a possible scenography for philosophy in the feminine.

Despite serious feminist objections to Neumann's invocation of gendered archetypes in his work, there are aspects of Neumann's reading of *Eros and Psyche* that can be usefully appropriated for a feminist re-vision of love staged as an encounter between the two, as two. Due to the limitations of this chapter, I merely identify points in the encounter between the lovers staged by Neumann that correspond to the encounter sketched out by Irigaray, to reveal some surprising similarities between the way both writers conceptualise the process of individuation of the female subject in love. Frances Gray observes that Irigaray's work "has been susceptible to complaints by some feminist scholars that mirror complaints made about Jung" (2008, 133). With this in mind, it perhaps comes as little surprise that Irigaray's and Jung's work on love should share some

similarities. Feminist scholars such as Naomi Goldenberg have shown hostility towards archetypes, observing that Jungian psychology has become “a form of patriarchal religion” (1976, 444) and that, while Jung appeared to revere the feminine, his reverence “involved only recognition and support for the feminine principle in men and did not value the actual experiences of women themselves” (Lauter and Rupprecht 1985, 7). There are some who argue, however, that a re-vision, rather than a rejection, of the archetype might serve a feminist critique. Estella Lauter and Carol Rupprecht point out that Neumann himself never assumed the archetype to be eternal, but viewed it as “a formless structure of the psyche itself that is known only through its changing manifestations” (1985, 11). Far from a timeless pattern, the archetype “assumes different forms according to the personal and social history of the person who manifests it” (Lauter and Rupprecht 1985, 11). Most valuable of all, Lauter and Rupprecht recognise that culturally determined gendered qualities are equally available for development by either sex (1985, 5). Gray offers a similar argument for rethinking essence in Irigaray, as a product of one’s “causal history” (2008, 141), concerned with “the giving of the cause of something’s being what it is” (Gray 2008, 140), rather than as properties or universals. While I appreciate the problems that archetypal theory and essentialism hold for feminist criticism, this analysis finds justification in the possibility of reclaiming the archetype and essence for a feminist critique of love. In fact, Irigaray argues that in order for us to have a theory of alterity, we need a theory of difference, but not one that endorses differences that are eternally fixed, which is precisely the point on which Irigaray questions Levinas’s ethics.

But before moving further, let us first consider the narrative in question, “Eros and Psyche” as told by Apuleius, and read by Neumann in his 1956 publication, *Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine, A Commentary on the Tale by Apuleius*. Very briefly, the tale goes that Psyche, in spite of her beauty, can find no one to marry her. Aphrodite, angered by the fact that her own beauty and power as a Goddess has been usurped by that of a mere human, sends her son Eros to punish Psyche by making sure she falls in love with, and marries, a vile-looking man. Meanwhile, an oracle pronounces that the fate awaiting Psyche is a marriage to death. As her family prepares to send her to her death, Psyche is, instead, transported to a paradise because Eros has fallen in love with her. Eros, however, imposes a condition on their love: he forbids her knowledge of his identity. They thus spend their days loving in darkness. Psyche grows lonely in her paradise, as her companion visits her only in the night, and expresses a desire to see her two sisters. At the behest of her jealous sisters, who manage to convince her that her lover is in fact a murderous beast, Psyche vows to reveal his identity and to kill him. Holding up a lamp to her sleeping lover, she discovers he is in fact the God of Love himself. Overcome with shock and anxiety, she accidentally pricks herself on his arrow: “So all unwitting, yet of her own doing, Psyche fell in love with Love” (Neumann 1956, 26). In her passion, a drop of oil from her lamp spills onto his shoulder, and he wakes. Because of her betrayal, Eros flees from her, and thus begins Psyche’s journey to win her lover back.

Acts of seeing and touching are central to the tale of Eros and Psyche. Neumann’s reading of the tale centres on the light-bringing as the point of Psyche’s death and rebirth: the death of her dependence, ignorance and passivity, and rebirth into womanly initiative, and most significantly, into agency and subjecthood. For Neumann, the two-fold wounding of Psyche and Eros first gives rise to love, and “creates the possibility of an encounter, which is a prerequisite for love between two individuals” (1956, 86). Neumann’s reading thus bears out the conditions necessary in thinking of love as an ethical relation: “Psyche’s act leads, then, to all the pain of individuation, in which a personality experiences itself in relation to a partner as something other, that is, as not only connected with the partner” (1956, 85). More significantly, the moment of light-bringing is also the moment of a face-to-face encounter, where the lovers had previously not seen each other, and therefore marks the beginning of an ethical relation. The initial conditions in which Eros and Psyche love bear out the tension between touch and sight outlined in Irigaray’s philosophy of the feminine, specifically in relation to Psyche having to love in darkness, literally and figuratively. Irigaray describes touch as naïve (“this naïve or native sense of touch, in which the subject does not yet exist” (2001, 119)) and contrasts it with an eros whose origins lie in a subject that sees. The

latter is a subject already “fixed,” one that “already knows its objects and controls its relations with the world and others” (Irigaray 2001, 119). In contrast, touch, or sensual pleasure, can:

...reopen and reverse this conception and construction of the world. It can return to the evanescence of the subject and the object. [...] *Eros* can arrive at that innocence which has never taken place with the other as other. (Irigaray 2001, 120)

Elsewhere, Jean-Luc Marion has also argued that to see the other, to subject the other to my gaze, is to immediately disqualify subjects from participating in the loving encounter, since “everything that I perceive and comprehend, I experience first and finally in my consciousness, and not outside of it” (2002, 74). To love, “the other must remain invisible so as to offer himself to a possible love, because if, by chance, I saw him, he would be ipso facto already disqualified as other” (Marion 2002, 80). In contrast to the touching of bodies, the act of gazing upon the beloved “reduces her to less than nothing if this gaze is seduced by an image, if her nudity, not perceived as endlessly pulsating, becomes the site of a disguise rather than of astonishment at something that moves, unceasingly and inwardly” (Marion 2002, 125). Sensual pleasure, however, initiates a return to an encounter before *seeing* and thus *knowing* of one’s gendered status. More importantly, touch is a caress that “without going through me, gives me back the borders of my body” (Marion 2002, 121).

Psyche’s initial situation is one of paradise, certainly, one in which, for her at least, sight is subject to touch. She loves Eros in touch, not sight. But this loving in darkness is no genuine paradise; Eros can in fact see her. His falling in love with her is based on sight, seduced by her beauty, her image. This inequity undermines the innocence of the loving touch, for he dictates the conditions of their love. This is not love between equals, because one sees and the other is denied sight. This paradise disguises what for Neumann is an ideological situation: the powerful male subjects the woman to his desires, yet refuses her knowledge of him, even as he gains full access to her. From them to love as equals, Psyche needs to be given equal access to her lover, for “though she yielded to him in the darkness, she had not loved him [...] It is in the light of knowledge, her knowledge of Eros, that she begins to love” (Neumann 1956, 81). In his analysis of the psychic development of the feminine, as revealed in Psyche’s story, Neumann is interested primarily in the transformation Psyche goes through at the moment of revelation. She moves from being passive to a woman who acts: “Psyche emerges from the darkness and enters upon her destiny as a woman in love” (Neumann 1956, 81). Her act of defiance also ushers in the age of human love, by which Neumann means an age where love is determined by human action, rather than being subject to the power of the Gods. After all, Aphrodite’s punishment for Psyche was precisely that Eros should make Psyche fall in love with a beast. Psyche, however, by her own action, falls in love with Eros, and from this time forth, does everything she can to win him back. Her new action-driven self is not limited to pursuing her lover; she also enacts a cruel revenge upon her sisters that leads to their deaths. Neumann thus identifies the moment of love as the moment she sees his face, in the light of her knowledge of Eros. More importantly, her act of bringing to light her lover’s face marks the beginning of an ethical relation. But the sight of his face, which begins the ethical relation, appears incompatible with philosophy in the feminine, since, as Irigaray and Marion note, in love, neither must be visible to the other. However, Neumann goes on to adduce that the moment Psyche sees, and loves, is also the moment she has to suffer loss and individuation. She must experience Eros’ absence, and to continue to love him in his absence:

...she deprives Eros of his divine power over her. Psyche and Eros now confront one another as equals. But confrontation implies separateness. [...] By her courageous readiness to embark on her independent development, to sacrifice him in order to know him, Psyche drives Eros and herself out of the paradise of uroboric consciousness. (Neumann 1956, 83)

Her separation and individuation thus constitutes a gesture of return to oneself, in oneself, becoming oneself. This brings us to the question of the nature of Psyche's separation and individuation. When the two sisters tell Psyche that her husband is a monster, she is conflicted: "In the same body," the tale reads, "she hated the beast and loved the husband" (Neumann 1956, 72). According to Neumann, Psyche's revelation brings with it a new psychic situation, in which opposite terms enter into conflict with one another: beast and husband. This is congruent with the phase of separation, manifest here as a polar relation of opposites. The trials she undergoes to win Eros back become a means of bridging these opposites, towards what Neumann refers to as "the highest manifestation of the archetype of relatedness: a divine Eros joined with a divine Psyche" (1956, 110). As such, "Psyche's course from labour to labour becomes a *way*" (Neumann 1956, 98) and "through her love for him, Psyche develops not only toward him, but toward herself" (Neumann 1956, 110). Paradoxically, while Psyche moves towards Eros, she moves, at the same time, towards herself, and hence remains separate from him. This paradox underlines the process of individuation which, for Neumann, is necessary in love as an encounter between two, or as Irigaray argues, a philosophy in the feminine. What happens to Psyche adheres to the notion of love as a path or a way. She is led precisely by her love for Eros, who is Love himself, and the trials Aphrodite sends her are the path of love, towards Love. In my understanding of Neumann, Psyche is the lover-philosopher in search of wisdom. Her conflict of hating the beast but loving the husband places her in-between the states of love and hate, in the presence of beauty and ugliness. Although the light makes visible the terms of opposition, as suggested by Neumann – in shining her light, she now sees that he is a God, not a beast – this is followed by her immediate loss; armed with the knowledge of the beautiful but lacking in it, she goes in pursuit of the beautiful. This is the path she never abandons, just as Plato's lover-philosopher knows beauty but lacks it, and whose pursuit of it constitutes love.

This moment of seeing and loss is accompanied by a somatic instant; she is pricked by his arrow, and he is burned by the oil of her lamp. Interestingly, while touch is involved, it is nevertheless one that is mediated by objects associated with each of them: his arrow that pricks her, and her oil that burns him. Significantly, the caress, usurped now by her sight, gives way to mediated touch. And it is in their separation that she is spurred to consider the other, a separation ushered in by the initial face-to-face encounter. Warning Psyche about her sisters, Eros says, "Those false she-wolves are weaving some deep plot of sin against you, whose purpose is this: to persuade you to seek to know my face" (Neumann 1956, 18). Undaunted by his refusal, Psyche begs for him to let them see her: "By your locks that hang all round your brow, sweet as scent of cinnamon, by the soft delicate cheeks so like mine, by your bosom that burns with strange heat, I implore you, by my hopes that at least I may behold your face in the face of our babe..." (Neumann 1956, 19). Eros' refusal to allow Psyche to see his face suggests a refusal of an ethical relation, which is a consequence of one's necessary confrontation with the other. It is only when one has to negotiate between one's existence and another that the ethical relation arises. Accepting that she will never, in her lifetime, see the face of her lover, Psyche hopes instead that she may see his face in the face of their child. The child then comes to embody "the evanescence of the caress [that] opens on a future," which is distinct from "an approach to the other's skin here and now" (Irigaray 2001, 122). As end product, the child in whose face the female lover beholds the face of her male lover, thus signifies attention not to present life, or *être*, but to love as future investment and future pleasure. It is perhaps fitting then that the child will not be the way of love for Psyche: she is abandoned by her lover, forced into separation and a process of individuation, culminating in a sleep as deep as death, "no better than a sleeping corpse" (Neumann 1956, 50). At this point, Eros wakes her up, and they come face to face, for the second time, significantly after Psyche's journey is complete.

After Psyche's sisters convince her a second time to expose the murderous beast who is her lover, the tale describes Psyche's state of mind thus: "Impatience, indecision, daring and terror, diffidence and anger, all strove within her, and, worst of all, in the same body she hated the beast and loved the husband" (Neumann 1956, 25). To whom does this body refer? Psyche? Eros? Both? The conflict expressed here comes at a time prior to her seeing his face, and so, prior to separation

and individuation. The ambiguity here is unsurprising, since she has yet to realise her self. I previously pointed out that Levinas never names Psyche, but as it turns out, neither does Irigaray. While Irigaray does at least acknowledge the female lover, a step closer to the ethical relation from Levinas's conceptualisation of the Eternal Feminine or the Beloved Woman, her failure to name Psyche is inimical to her attempts to revalue the concrete and sensible aspects of love as a first step towards her philosophy in the feminine. It stands to reason that concrete bodily experience belongs to a particular lived and living body. Arguably, it would seem that even Irigaray's erotics are not bodily – understood as particular and bounded – enough, a point of contention feminist critics of Irigaray's work will be familiar with. For this reason, I see Neumann's evaluation of the loving encounter between Psyche and Eros, one that preserves the identity of Psyche the female lover, as indeed having something of value to contribute to thinking of love as a means of living ethically, especially where gender relations are concerned.

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