Reconstructing the Romantic Subject through Mythological Archetypes in Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea*

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Abstract

This essay explores the ways in which the traditional concept of the Romantic subject is redefined throughout the novel *The Sea The Sea* by Iris Murdoch. In order to do so, we will take as reference the protagonist of the novel, Charles Arrowsby, analysing the different myths developed by the author that build the character. By means of mythological archetypes such as the Minotaur, or Adam and Eve, the author explores an alternative view of the Romantic subject. We will equally consider the new approaches of the 20th century towards traditional myths, like in *La Casa de Asterió*n, by Jorge Luis Borges. Furthermore, the mythological figures of Titus, or Theseus, will be also explored in other characters, as a way of regarding the mythological influence that is presented in the novel.This essay also attempts to trace back some similarities in *The Sea The Sea* of Romantic authors, such as Edgar Allan Poe or Henry David Thoreau, and bring them together with the already mentioned approach towards Romanticism. In this way, we will see how this novel can be compared to other types of literature that go beyond the English tradition.

Key Words: Iris Murdoch, Romanticism, Mythical Archetypes, Intertextuality, Myth-Criticism.

1. Introduction

Among the different critical readings that have been made of *The Sea, The Sea*, a large corpus of romantic interpretations has been explored in the aesthetics of Iris Murdoch (Daniel Majdiak, 1972), as well as anti-moralist (Peter J. Conradi, 2010) and moralist philosophical interpretations (Maria Antonaccio, 2000). This article proposes a reading from the point of view, not only romantic, which is intended to expand –or comment from another perspective–, but in its mythical condition.

The central character and narrator of *The Sea, The* Sea*,* Charles Arrowsby, is an ageing theatrical celebrity who decides one day to withdraw from the world. In pursuance of this idea, he buys an old house by the sea, called Shruff End, and determines to live in isolation for the rest of his days. From the very beginning, we recognize in Charles the traditional pose of the Romantic loner. As the critic John Burnside says in his academic introduction to the book for Vintage Classics, what Charles Arrowsby is reproducing here is "a whole set of appealing Romantic, theatrical myths: the figure of the wise hermit; communion with nature" (21). This can be seen in the detailed description of this spot at the opening of the story, where nature initially appears as an indomitable and pleasing force. He depicts it as a sublime image, overwhelming and terrible but at the same time beautiful. The concept of the sublime, introduced to the Western literary world by Boileau's translation of Longinus' *Peri Hypsous* in 1674, must be referred to nature (*physis*), for "it is by nature that man is being gifted with speech," and "in discourse", he says, "we demand that which transcends the human" (3). "The beautiful," the critic Schiller comments in his essay *On the Sublime*, "is valuable only with reference to the human being, but the sublime with reference to the pure daemon" (210). The sadness of the location in the novel is undeniable, and the gloom and spectral feelings are prepared to flood the narration. The essential claim of the sublime is clearly evoked here by Charles:

> At one point, near to my house, the sea has actually composed an arched bridge of rock under which it roars into a deep open steepsided enclosure beyond. It affords me a curious pleasure to stand upon this bridge and watch the violent forces which the churning waves, advancing or retreating, generate within the confined space of the rocky hole. (*The Sea, The Sea* 6)

2. Charles´ Unreliability

As the reader moves onwards, however, s/he starts to find inconsistencies between what is told by Charles and his resulting dialogues and resolutions throughout the novel. It is necessary from the first moment in the story to talk about a clear unreliability of the narrator. Language is used in a poetic form; poetic in the semiotic sense. In semiotic studies there are six functions of communication, being the poetic the one that chooses form over content. In his book *Manual de Semiótica General*, the linguist and semiotic Jean-Marie Klinkenberg states that:

> [This function] bastante mal bautizada, se llama *función poética*. Centrada sobre el mensaje mismo, llama la atención sobre la manera como el mensaje se ha modelado. Por ejemplo, en poesía la rima impone al enunciado una lógica muy particular. En un mensaje en prosa, nos preocupamos de escoger las palabras en función de su sentido o de su valor expresivo, y no en función de su forma. En cambio la poesía versificada cuida de hacer aparecer esas palabras teniendo en cuenta sus características puramente formales […] La función comunicativa que estas palabras tendrían en prosa queda así puesta entre paréntesis, en provecho de otro tipo de significación que le confiere su rango particular (2006: 66).

Charles relates to us everything that happens inside his head, like an interior monologue, with a remarkable fluency and rhetorical force, but the successive dialogues

between him and the other characters are notorious for lacking these attributes. Conversations, according to John Burnside's previous quotation, are presented as in a theatrical piece. This delusional play creates a sensation of constant simulacra throughout the novel, but what seems to be apparently artificial is actually the way Charles interprets reality, as he is the only narrator in the story. Therefore, we are faced with a striking conflict between the inner world of Charles Arrowsby and the outer world, which is mainly represented in the character of Hartley, his first love, whom he has not seen since his love affair with her as an adolescent. This is translated into social awkwardness within almost every interaction:

> I got the shock again of her changed appearance, since in my intense and cherishing thought she had become young again […] I had deliberately prepared nothing to say. I said 'Oh excuse me, I was passing by, returning from a walk and I just thought I'd call in for a moment. I had time before she replied to think: I ought to have let speak first! (*The Sea, The Sea* 132)

He finds it simpler to talk to himself rather than talking to others, especially intellectuals, as he says that he is "also glad to intuit that the place is not infested with 'intellectuals', a hazard everywhere nowadays." (Murdoch 1978: 14) Charles does not get along with the townspeople either, and in fact becomes a comic figure to them.A great part of the novel becomes then a delusional play, where Charles will try to reproduce a series of archetypes that are essential to explore his own Romantic attitude and the Romantic principles in general. This attitude adds to the unreliability because, according to Thomas Weiskel:

> To the eye of the present, everything in the past looks like a compromise between the still further back and the yet to be or the new. That is not how the past felt or was lived, but it is, perhaps inevitably, the way its significance is structured. A metaphor is a compromise struck between the old and the new, between the overwhelming authority of language and the irrepressible anarchy of wit, or whatever principle of unprincipled association makes wit possible. (1986:4)

3. The Romantic Character

As it has been stated, Shruff End seems at first to be a retreat of peace and spiritual rest, becoming later the idyllic place where Charles innocently believes that his love for Hartley will be consumed. It seems to epitomize those perceptions in "The Eolian Harp" by Samuel Colleridge, where Shruff End would acquire the dimension of the "Cot":

> My pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined
> Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
> To sit beside our Cot, our Cot o'ergrown
> With white-flowered Jasmin, and the broad-leaved Myrtle,
> (Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!) (333)

In the same way, Charles repeatedly refers to Shruff End as a "cave", where no electricity is needed, reminiscing those images portrayed by William Wordsworth in

"Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour" of "some Hermit's cave, where by his fire / The Hermit sits alone" (155)At the same time, rural life is presented as the notion of purity, being in line with the visions of Wordsworth in "The Tables Turned": "Come forth into the light of things, / Let Nature be your teacher (154).Just as the novel progresses, Shruff End ends up nevertheless being a kind of labyrinth that leads Charles to have to face situations and people from the past, and it is under these circumstances when Charles' romantic attitude vanishes and, therefore, his animal instincts begin to sprout. The initial mysterious depiction of the house may even give us clues about what will be represented later. The house is described by Charles as "sparsely furnished and full of emptiness" (11). At the same time, he says that the "chief peculiarity of it, and one for which [he] can produce no rational explanation, is that on the ground floor and on the first floor there is an inner room. A room which has no external window" (12). Charles is already presenting a place where there are indeed secret or hidden areas. The house is also described as full of different and individual rooms, some of them built of stone, "extremely dark and entirely empty" (13). Therefore, the apparent paradise that is initially presented will eventually turn into the place, or prison, where Charles will take Hartley as his prisoner. Charles' Romanticism seems then to be just a thought-out mask, and Charles himself reflects upon that long before those facts begin to be present. He says: "It has even occurred to me that if I wanted to live as a hermit retired from the world, a flat in London would be a far better habitat" (165).

This observation would go against Wordsworth's previous notions of city life as the sense of corruption. Charles realizes that his retreat from the world has in fact condemned him, and it is within this labyrinth where his animal instincts will be unleashed. Charles becomes so discordant with the world around him that he turns out to be locked in a labyrinth. He becomes his own beast, guided by wild instincts, and the labyrinth emerges as literal when Hartley is kidnapped by him and locked into it. However, when Charles is finally able to put rationality aside, –an attitude that would go in consonance with the Romantic dogmas–, he ends up incarnating the opposite values that Wordsworth appealed to: "Our meddling intellect / Misshapes the beauteous forms of things" (154). The event of the kidnapping is the result of his spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.

4. Kill the Beast

A large row of characters throughout *The Sea The Sea* will parade around Shruff End trying to defeat Charles; that is, to convince him to come back to his former life, but all of them are beaten, and they inevitably become his victims. Among these characters we can find Lizzie, an actress slightly younger than him whom he has been stringing along for some time; Rosina, one of his many lovers; or Titus –who evokes that other Titus that travelled to Crete–, the son of Hartley. It is only by the arrival of James, Charles' admired cousin, when Charles' primitive naturewill be defeated. James, acting like Theseus, will kill the beast side of Charles: the Minotaur inside. Therefore, it takes place a redemptive and metaphorical death in which James will eventually save Charles' life from drowning into the sea, as we will see later, but also from something

more important: he saves him from the labyrinth. Jorge Luis Borges already explored the idea of redemption in the myth of the Minotaur in his short story "La casa de Asterión". In Borges' story, the Minotaur is the narrator itself, and it says:

> Cada nueve años entran en la casa nueve hombres para que yo los libere de todo mal. Oigo sus pasos o su voz en el fondo de las galerías de piedra y corro alegremente a buscarlos. La ceremonia dura pocos minutos. Uno tras otro caen sin que yo me ensangriente las manos. [...] Ignoro quiénes son, pero sé que uno de ellos profetizó, en la hora de su muerte, que alguna vez llegaría mi redentor. Desde entonces no me duele la soledad, porque sé que vive mi redentor y al fin se levantará sobre el polvo. [...] Ojalá me lleve a un lugar con menos galerías y menos puertas. ¿Cómo será mi redentor?, me pregunto. ¿Será un toro o un hombre? ¿Será tal vez un toro con cara de hombre? ¿O será como yo?" (50)

The obsession of Charles is so frenzied that he only thinks that his redeemer will be Hartley and her love. Both characters, James and Theseus, share a military past and, curiously enough, James also proves to have supernatural strength, just like Theseus, when he rescues Charles from drowning into Minn's Cauldron, a deep whirlpool. James clings to the chasm and his powers allow him to work against the centrifugal force that pulls Charles up and out. According to some mythological sources, Theseus defeated the horned creature in a fistfight. In *The Sea, The Sea*, James saves his cousin from death by mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Following this theory, the resuscitation acquires then an equal dimension to the punishing death. Each punch becomes a breath in the mouth of Charles: James saves Charles from death and, at the same time, he destroys the Minotaur, thus acting as a redemptive death. There is a long tradition of cauldrons as forces or symbols of metamorphosis, related to witchcraft and the supernatural. It is a cliché popularized not only in Renaissance works such as Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*, but also used in Celtic mythology, Irish folklore or Welsh mythology. In the last one we can find cases where horned kings are dropped into cauldrons, like in the second book of *The Chronicles of Prydain*, called *The Black Cauldron*, where The Horned King is going after the supernatural powers of the black cauldron, being finally destroyed by its own force. It is true that in *The Sea The Sea*, it is not the cauldron itself the cause of the destruction of the Minotaur' side of Charles, but James. However, the appearance of Minn's Cauldron is essential for redemption to take place.

Within this mythological paradigm, it is also interesting to analyze the figure of Titus, the son of Hartley, the one that Charles always wanted to have with her. The relationship between Charles and Titus in the novel is given like father and son. The first and probably most obvious reference to Titus could be Shakespeare's*Titus Andronicus*. The relation between *The Sea, The Sea* and Shakespeare is not unexplored, and the recurrence of motifs from Shakespeare's plays has been acknowledged by almost every critical work on Murdoch in readings such as the one conducted by Lindsay Tucker in her "*Released from Bands: Iris Murdoch's Two Prosperos in 'The Sea, the Sea.*'" Similarly, in 1979 Richard Todd also published a study on Iris Murdoch's

fiction, entitled "*Iris Murdoch, The Shakesperian Interest*". In this chapter we propose a complementary theory centered in the figure of Titus that does not deny the previous ones, giving perhaps better account of certain interpretative elements of the novel.

When Titus arrives at Shruff End, we are faced with an authentic process of purification experienced by Charles. Charles feels that his role as a paternal figure is at last fulfilled: he is able to escape from the dimension in which he was always trapped. Following the trace of the Christian figure of Saint Titus, we can find the story of Titus, a missionary that goes to Crete to preach Christian

Titus goes to Charles' house to find out who is his father, even when he already has the conviction that Charles has always been his father. Charles, who thinks that Titus is his son, also shares this conviction. If we draw the analogy with the Christian myth, Saint Titus goes to Crete to spread Christian doctrines and the light of Jesus: Saint Titus basically goes to Crete to spread the word of the Real Father. The parallel with the story of *The Sea The Sea*, therefore, gains strength rapidly: Titus goes to Shruff End, a metaphorical Crete, to tell the Minotaur who the real father is. And the symbolic paternal figure, even if being not biologically true, lives in fact within Charles himself. At the end of the story, Titus dies drowned in Shruff End, which is the same place towards he has gone to preach, just like San Titus, who died on the island of Crete.

According to the New Testament apocrypha (Book of the Bee, XVII), after being expelled from Paradise, Adam and Eve were condemned to stay in a cavern in complete darkness for seven days, which is precisely the same description that Charles made of his house. Curiously enough, when Charles enters into Hartley's house, he also describes it as a cavern: "I felt her presence as a violent diffused magnetism which somehow pervaded the whole house, as if Hartley were the house and as if I had been swept into a cavern where she embraced me and I could not touch her." (*The Sea, The Sea* 133)

It becomes easy to relate this passage to the myth of the cavern proposed by Plato, where men chained from their birth see a series of shadows that pass before their eyes without understanding that there is are a bonfire that projects them. Nor do they understand that they are shadows of existing objects and und firmly believe those shadows as the real. The object of the metaphor is to make a person aware of his duty to escape and to see the true world he knows only through imperfect shadows. In the same way Charles sees the world from his cavern without understanding, he lives like the men of Plato's cave, even though he believes that his past life was the cavern and that this new life is a "true" reality. If movement is a deception, and there is no effective concordance between objects and their archetypes; if the universe is a curtain casting the shadows of shadows' shadows, Charles will be trapped no matter where he goes.

After his affair, now a frustrated love, the protagonist is enduring such pain and a sense of removal that provokes him "a permanent metaphysical crisis."(*The Sea, The Sea* 90) Then, Charles asks himself: "Did this lead me to make immorality my mask?" (91).This mask he refers is again the immoral horned creature, the Minotaur, which will

be finally redeemed. Therefore, we can recognize two archetypes in the figure of Charles Arrowsby: the Minotaur in need of redemption already explored by Borges and the mythological figure of Adam. The labyrinth and the cavern are both metaphorical places in which Charles is condemned to remain. Both archetypes are part of the immoral dimension that provokes him a permanent metaphysical crisis. Behind these two mythological figures we find a character that is trapped in need of redemption.

5. Arrowsby and Poe

We must not forget that these archetypes are developed in the novel because of the Romantic ideals that the protagonist tries to carry out from the start. This Romantic development is appreciated not only in the figure of Charles, but in multiple references during the novel to Romantic authors like William Wordsworth, or Edgar Allan Poe. There is a moment, in the chapter titled "Prehistory", when Charles is observing the sea and he is suddenly startled by what seems to be a monster that emerges from the water. This recalls the short story "The Sphinx", by Poe, where the narrator is startled from his window by the visions of a monster that is going down the mountains. At the end, the narrator realizes that this monster is nothing else but a spider that is in front of his eye; just a question of perspective.

In another passage of the novel, the protagonist is startled during the night by someone, or something, that he believes to see through a window. Arrowsby describes it as follows: "I was sitting writing the last night in my drawing room when something very disconcerting happened. I looked up and was perfectly sure that I saw the face looking through the glass of the inner room. I sat absolutely still, paralyzed by sheer terror." (74). This leads us to the event that takes place in "The Fall of the House of Usher ", when the protagonist of the story believes to see the "spirit" of Usher's sister wandering around the house and watching him. In Poe's story the event does not occur through a window, but through a door. But what is interesting here is that the ghostly figure the protagonist sees in "The Fall of the House of Usher" is described as "high and shrouded" (14). Curiously enough, in *The Sea, The Sea*, the narrator refers to it as a face that "appeared rather high up in the window and must be belonged to a very tall person, or to someone standing on something" (74).

The last three paragraphs of the mentioned chapter, describe Charles´ desire of writing overlooking Raven Bay. Evoking some of his past lovers he says: ""Can a woman´s ghost, after so many years, open the doors of the heart?" (96). Probably, this reference would not stand on its own to prove a connection with Poe, but a third remarkable moment provides confirmation when Arrowsby meets Rosina for the first time. She is one of his many lovers, and one of the victims that will try to defeat Charles in his labyrinth. When she arrives at the house, he questions her about the purpose of the visit and about the place where she is lodging. She answers that she is staying at the Raven Hostel and that she has come for him. This inevitably leads to "The Raven" (1966). She arrives at night, by surprise, to tell him how much she loves him. In that scene she plays the role of the raven, arriving by surprise in the night and taking him off guard. In the poem, the raven just repeats one word to the narrator: "Nevermore". Analyses of this particular element in Poe's poem have pointed in the direction of

ambiguity: the question being whether the word "nevermore" is just a noise produced by the raven with no meaning other than the mere repetition of a learned sound, or if, on the contrary, it is inspired by a certain intelligence, and the raven means what it is uttering, acting both as a premonitory or foreshadowing element and a statement of the truth. In the novel, Rosina constantly reminds Charles that his relationship with Hartley is finished and will not get anywhere. And the most singular element of this episode comes by chance. When Rosina finally leaves, she starts the car and the headlights light up a person who at that moment is walking down the street. It is then when Charles realizes this person is Hartley and that she is living in the town. In other words, Rosina symbolizes the Raven that, metaphorically, is pointing to the narrator his particular "Nevermore". Something that will never be reached again: the Lost Paradise.

The unreliability of Charles Arrowsby, already mentioned, comes from his inability to carry out his Romantic proposal. The author precisely presents the reader through these references the mistakes and impossibilities of Charles character and, therefore, in a meta-referential exercise, the impossibility of reaching the utopian Romantic theories. The interesting part of this romantic analysis is precisely how Charles' persona is constructed and modified throughout the plot, to the point where these romantic archetypes, which he seems to reproduce at first, arefinally inverted. If symbiosis with nature and evasion of the city can be classified under traditionally romantic aesthetics, in this novel we are precisely going to find an inversion of them. This can be seen in the words of Charles Arrowsby. After having attempted to carry out his romantic retreat, he concludes that "it has even occurred to [him] that if [he] wanted to live as a hermit retired from the world, flat in London would be a far better habitat" (165). Thus, we see that being detached or escaping from society do not necessarily have to be linked to a spiritual retreat in nature. Living as a hermit in nature requires, besides a great psychological capacity, certain physical abilities that, in neither case, our protagonist possesses.

6. Conclusion

The most evident example that probably comes to mind of romantic theories put into practice is the case of the transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau. In *Walden*, Thoreau details his experiences over the course of two years, two months, and two days in a cabin he built near Walden Pond. This example has been worldwide famous because of its apparent success, but we just need to delve into the matter to realize that Thoreau's "plan" was actually full of loopholes. Paul Theroux wrote in his studies about Thoreau, entitled "Henry D. Thoreau, The Main Woods", that he made several trips from his cabin to his home in Concord, which was just a twenty minutes' walk.

> During his famous experiment in his cabin at Walden, moralizing about his solitude, he did not mention that he brought his mother his dirty laundry and went on enjoying her apple pies. His friend William Ellery Channing wrote that, after his graduation from Harvard at the age of twenty, when his mother broached the subject of his leaving home, Thoreau became weepy—and didn't leave. (23)

There are several studies about the artificiality and partial concealment of some actions that lay underneath the experiment of Thoreau, which would definitively detract it from its romantic value. Richard Smith already made similar observations in his essay called *Thoreau's First Year at Walden in Fact and Fiction.* He says that "it should be obvious to anyone who's read Walden that Thoreau was not a hermit. Just the chapter called 'Visitors' is enough to put the myth to rest" (2007: 4). The mythology of Walden Pond becomes then a partial truth. Gregory McNamee, for instance, explores this idea by stating that:

> Thoreau's notion of self-sufficiency did not involve standoffishness, then, and it made ample room for conviviality and company. Let's not incorrectly remember him, on this anniversary, as a loner, but instead as an ardent student of simplicity, pleasure, and the best of the good life, dinner and drinks included. (2012 n.p)

The idea of letting loose of the myth of the traditional "hermit", as we have already explored it through different examples within the Romantic tradition, is therefore essential to explore the reconstruction of the Romantic subject. Once reversed, we accept to acquire a new sense, or dimension, of the archetype. In *The Sea, The Sea*, Iris Murdoch accepts to invert the myth. And it is precisely through the use of different mythological figures, embodied in the character of Charles, how the Romantic archetype is finally inverted.

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Of intertextuality: A comparative study of *Doctor Faustus and The Rape of Lucrece*

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Abstract

This study makes an extended parallel between Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. The parallel between the lust and honour debate in *The Rape of Lucrece* and the necromancy and life dilemma in *Doctor Faustus* dramatize the pitfalls of the idea of a renaissance man. The texts are set in the time characterised by desire for individualism especially in the renaissance, an era characterised by a yearning for private agency and personal autonomy. The study argues that the identification of Tarquin's moral dilemma as well as incidents in the poem with their Faustus counterparts extend beyond the thematic concerns of free-will and hubris to allusions such as the Greek myth of Icarus and the ancient Roman practice of equites. The equivalence in the texts is also manifest in that they exhibit parallel incidents. The study concludes that Tarquin and Faustus are classic cases of excess. They are driven by vaulting desire for self-actualisation, especially that quest for private agency and personal autonomy was key in the renaissance period.

Key words: Necromancy, narcissism, free-will, Faustian bargain, hubris.

1. Introduction

There are critics who believe that the canon under the name William Shakespeare belongs to writers other than Shakespeare himself. Such Critics include Calvin Hoffman who strongly believes that Shakespeare was chosen as a front behind whom Christopher Marlowe would continue to write. According to these criticsthe fronting was an arrangement meant to save Marlowe from possible execution was he to be convicted for subversive atheism. Critics who subscribe to this Marlovian conspiracy theory conduct 'literary homicide' investigations into the question of Shakespeare's authorship and Marlowe's supposed staged death. They delve into the intricate nuancesof stylistic similarities of the authors in an attempt to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that Shakespeare became Shakespeare because of Marlowe's death. In other words, the critics metaphorically exhume the authors and conduct literary forensic investigations into Shakespeare's and Marlowe's bodies of work. However, this study will not in any way contest or support Hoffman et al proposition. The paper will establish intertextuality between Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* based on: the theme free-will, parallel incidents and allusions.

2. The Shakespeare-Marlowe nexus

> "*Shakespeare seems to be very much aware of what Marlowe is up to and chooses to plot a parallel course, virtually stalking his rival*."
>
> *James Shapiro,* **1991**

There is a striking resemblance between Shakespeare's Tarquin and Marlowe's Faustus. For example, the decisions that the protagonists make spell their ruin. Tarquin's moral dilemma, dramatised in the long-drawn-out examination of his alternatives (honour and lust), culminates in a choice that spawns psychological mayhem. One can equate the alternatives to the characters whodramatise Faustus's mental turbulence, the Good Angel and the Bad Angel. In the poem, honour is the equivalent of the Good Angel, while lust represents the Bad Angel. We witness the triumph of evil over good in the poem when Tarquin,with Machiavellian scorn, tosses morality out of the window:

> Then childish fear avaunt, debating die!
> Respect and reason wait on wrinkled age!
> My heart shall never countermand mine eye.
> Sad pause and deep regard beseems the sage;
> My part is youth, and beats this from the stage.
> Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize;
> Then who fears sinking where such treasure is?(274-280)

In these lines, Tarquin wittily portrays himself as someone against whom physiology has conspired. He renounces respect and reason as attributes of old people. He is trying to justify his failure to control his raging libido, by laying blame on his youthful exuberance. He insinuates that old people are cautious in the face of sexual temptation because they are not sexually active. Tarquin, therefore, uses his age as the first justification of his moral turpitude. The second justification comes with his use of the military image of the martial order. He isolates his body entities, both tangible and abstract, from his being. His affection, heart, eye, and desire are accorded military ranks. For example, 'affection' is the captain. His body, therefore, is in a way a battalion or a platoon with 'affection' in command. Junior 'officers' such as the eye and the heart cannot go against the command of 'affection.' The metaphor of the 'heart' and the 'eye' suggests the contrast between the physical and the spiritual. The 'eye' represents the physical, what the Bible calls the flesh. The 'heart,' on the other hand, represents the spiritual, or the soul. 'Desire' and 'beauty' in line 279 are causally linked with the 'eye.'When Tarquin makes the declaration above, we are reminded of the tragic words of Marlowe's Faustus:

Philosophy is odious and obscure,
Both law and physic are for petty wits,
Divinity is basest of the three—
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible, and vile.
'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravished me! (I.i.100-104)

In this passage, Faustus fails to make a wise choice. He renounces his academic attainments in Philosophy, Law, Divinity, and Medicine, and opts for necromancy, which he presents as a metaphor of a rapist who 'hath ravished me.' These speeches are not only the parallel incidents found in the play and the poem, but are also central dramatic situations that render the utterances tragic.Tarquin rapes Lucrece against his better judgement given the logical debate he has with himself about whether or not to sexually assault Lucrece. Faustus, on the other hand, loses his salvation for he chooses necromancy at the expense of his educational achievements especially Divinity.

The quotations above are not the only ones that make the characters similar. Apart from the immediate fact that Faustus and Tarquin are in similar circumstances, each man has a chance to make a good choice. Tarquin is a member of the royal family, and as such he is supposed to be exemplary in the moral sense. It is the idea of honour that is supposed to keep his raging libido in check. Faustus's moral campus' spur is his education. With his qualifications in Divinity, one would expect him not to form a pact with the devil. Yet he does. What Tarquin and Faustus do is a mockery of the qualities that are supposed to guide them to good moral choices. It is worth noting that the characters are aware of the consequences of their evil alternatives. In his debate, Tarquin makes a statement that clearly expresses his awareness of the dire consequences of rape:

O shame to knighthood, and to shining arms.
O foul dishonour to my household's grave.
O impious act including all foul harms,
A martial man to be soft fancy's slave.
True valour still a true respect should have;
Then my digression is so vile, so base,
That it will lie engraven in my face. (Lines 197-203)

Shakespeare's reference to knighthood is crucial. The use of an ancient Roman practice is intended to turn the reader against Tarquin after he rapes Lucrece. Christopher Gravatt's *The World of the Medieval Knight* (1996), states that knighthood is closely related to the Roman equites. 'Equites' is a Latin word meaning horsemen.Knights in the early Middle Ages were just horsemen, but it became a sign of nobility and social status as it grew more expensive to equip for fighting on horseback. Eventually, knight became a formal title.Knighthood was about more than just fighting, it was also about courtliness. Knights were expected to be brave and honourable, to uphold the honour of women, and to protect the weak. Tales of chivalry were very popular during the Middle Ages, but even so, many knights failed to live up to these high standards (p. 8).Tarquin argues in the passage above that if he commits rape, he will flagrantly

violate qualities of knighthood such as humility, honour and protection of the weak. In other words, he would have failed to live up to the expectations of his social status.

One of the ills of the rape is to put the royal house and military into disrepute. Tarquin rightly describes the imminent rape as an 'impious act including all foul harms.' The description expresses the gravity of the misdemeanour. The magnitude of the crime is such that it surpasses all other forms of debauchery. One may argue that Tarquin is aware that, by raping Lucrece, he will not only be committing an offence against Lucrece, but also against Collatine and the whole of Rome. One of Tarquin's character traits is highlighted in the line 'A martial man to be soft fancy's slave.' When he succumbs to sexual coercion in the later part of the poem, it becomes apparent that he is morally weak. He is a martial man who reduces himself to a mere slave of infatuation. The word martial connotes 'hardness.' Therefore, it is the antithesis of the word 'soft' in the same line.

Faustus too is aware of the repercussions of choosing necromancy. Like Tarquin, he utters a statement which shows that he knows what will happen to him: 'The reward of sin is death?'(I. i. line 38). The interrogative utterance is not intended to solicit an answer, it is rhetorical. Faustus chooses to practise black magic because he wants temporary power over the world. What is particularly interesting about Tarquin and Faustus is that they are aware of the brevity of their objects of infatuation. Faustus wants pleasures for 'four and twenty years,' while Tarquin wants sexual gratification which normally lasts a few minutes. In *Rome's Disgrace: The Politics of Rape in Shakespeare's Lucrece* (2005), Peter J. Smith argues that the actual rape only occupies a perfunctory sentence. This, according to the critic, is a tiny fragment of the poem. In his opinion the poem is more about politics than any other issue (p. 19). However, in my opinion, the fact that the poem does not pay close attention to the details of the rape is in keeping with the brevity of the act itself. Although the act unleashes unforgettable consequences for the perpetrator and the victim, the act itself is brief. Therefore, we can conclude that the narcissist's self-centred tendency renders it almost impossible for him to make good decisions.

Faustus, for his part, sells his soul to the devil for a bit of knowledge in the form of juvenile pranks. From his occasional public performance of exploits of magic, he gets temporary corporeal pleasure. One may argue that, unlike Tarquin whose mental debate is fairly presented, the contest for Faustus's soul between the Good Angel and the Bad Angel favours the latter. The language of the Bad Angel is poetic and highly persuasive compared with the Good Angel's prosaic utterances. The utterances of the Bad Angel make use of poetic devices such as alliteration as shown in the first line, 'Go forward Faustus, in that famous art' (I. i. Line 71). The use of the voiceless fricative /f/ in the line suggests a conspiratorial voice, which is musical and, therefore, appealing. The Bad Angel also entices Faustus by mentioning that the 'famous art' will afford him worldly treasures,which will make him a god.

As though to underscore the parallel between the poem and the play, the openings of the works are derived from a similar allusion. Both *TheRape of Lucrece*

and *Doctor Faustus* foreground the Greek mythology of Icarus. *The Rape of Lucrece* opens with:

> From the besieged Ardea all in post,
> Borne by trustless wings of false desire
> Lust-breathed Tarquin leaves the Roman host… (Lines 1-3).

In *Doctor Faustus* the prologue by the Chorus portrays a similar idea:

> So much he profits in divinity
> That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,
> Excelling all, and sweetly can dispute
> In th' heavenly matters of theology;
> Till swoll'n with cunning, of self-conceit,
> His waxen wings did mount above his reach
> And melting, heavens conspired his overthrow! (I. i. 15-21)

According to Thomas Bulfinch's online book, *The Age of Fable*,Icarus's father, Daedalus, warned his son not to fly too close to the sun, or too close to the sea after he made him wings to help him escape imprisonment. Overcome by the giddiness that flying lent him, Icarus soared through the sky curiously, but in the process he came too close to the sun, which melted the wax used to attach the wings to his body. He fell down and died instantly.

Tarquin is like Icarus in the sense that, although he is aware of the mores of the Roman society, he transgresses against it with apparent impunity. Daedalus has warned Icarus not to fly close to the sun, but because of curiosity Icarus does not heed the warning. Tarquin, on the other hand,despite his well-reasoned debate against rape, brushes all the positive qualities of humanity and royalty aside as he commits a serious offence. When reading the poem with the mythology of Icarus in mind, the second line of the poem carries an important metaphor that foreshadows Tarquin's ultimate penalty. Tarquin's wings are trustless because they are waxed by infatuation ('false desire').One,therefore, expects him to fall, just as Icarus does. The phrase 'Trustless wings' is reminiscent of the fate of the hubristic Icarus.Therefore, one can conclude that Shakespeare introduces theRoman theme of megalomania by alluding to Greek mythology. Faustus's craving for unlimited power also highlights the idea of hubris. His obsession with knowledge makes him lose everything that he achieved.

Marlowe also opens his play with the allusion. It is, therefore, not surprising that Faustus falls in the play because he practises more than the heavens permit. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-IV); American Psychiatric Association,* (1994),would characterise Faustus and Tarquin as narcissists. The characters exhibit the following traits:

(a) A grandiose sense of self-importance
(b) Fantasies of great success, power and brilliance;
(c) Aquest for excessive admiration;
(d) An unreasonable sense of entitlement;
(e) Arrogance,
(f) Envyof others or a belief that others envy one.

These traits are some of the criteria used to deduce whether or not a person is narcissistic.Therefore, we may conclude that Tarquin and Faustus have delusions of grandeur. Tarquin sexually violates Lucrece because, as a member of the royal family, he thinks that people should admire him. The feeling that he is admired results in an unreasonable sense of entitlement, which in turn leads to rape. His quest for admiration by others is congruous with Faustus's insatiable craving for worldly power.

Although longevity is relative, in the face of their infatuation, Faustus and Tarquin are consumed by their fortunes so much that they seem to lose touch with time. Driven by desire, time becomes insignificant to them until the critical momentarrives. One can, therefore, argue that Tarquin and Faustus embrace Niccolo Machiavelli's view that the bold will succeed better than the hesitant. In his famous chapter twenty-five of *ThePrince*entitled 'How far human affairs are governed by fortune and how fortune can be opposed,' the writer argues that more often than not, human actions are out of free-will asopposed to the widely held view that events are controlled by fortune and by God. He concludesthe chapter with a thought-provokingmetaphor to describe fortune. He writes:

> It is better to be impetuous than circumspect; because
> fortune is a woman and if she is to be submissive
> it is necessary to beat and coerce her. She is more
> often subdued by men who do this than by those who act coldly.
> Always, being a woman, she favours young men, because
> they are less circumspect and more ardent, because they
> command her with greater audacity.' (p. 81)

In the introduction to *The Prince*,Machiavelli frames an image which was often cited in his own time, and which is still cited today, that the courageous will succeed better thanthe cautious (1961:xxv). His view best describes Tarquin. Reading *The Prince*, especially chapter twenty-five, with Tarquin's rape premeditation in mind, persuades one to argue that thebook is not only a manual for statecraft, but also a handbook of apolitical ventures. As a prince,Shakespeare's Tarquin seems to follow the teachings of *The Prince*. Although at some point hesitant, he is essentially ardent and impetuous. However pedantic, gluttonous, amorous and thoroughly foolishhe appears to be after the rape, his unrelenting will to get what he wants earlier on should be emphasised. During repressive situations, as shown in his premeditation on the rape, he hurlshimself forward against all impediments.

Tarquin's fortune is Lucrece's beauty. The prospect of sexual intercourse with her causes him to toss morality and caution to the winds. By so doing he proves that he is determined to rise abovethe adversities such as shame and disrepute, which stand between him and his fortune. To coerce Lucrece into submitting to his will, he threatens to kill her.The act echoes Machiavelli's recommendation on handling fortune. To achieve his goal, 'he himself himself confounds' (Line160). Tarquin betrays his own words that 'True valour still true respect should have'(Line 201). In other words, he disregards the appropriate exercise of valour. He forsakes his principlesbecause, as Machiavelli argues, fortune has enormous power over man.

The parallel between Shakespeare's and Marlowe's work extends beyond Tarquin'smoral dilemma with its Faustian counterpart: the theme of free-will and hubris, and the allusion to the mythology of Icarus. Central dramatic situations in the poem and the play are also congruent. For example,nature and/or providence seem to afford both Tarquin and Faustus a chance to rethink and repeal the tragic decisions they have made. In the poem the narrator catalogues some of the (super) natural events that attempted to thwart Tarquin's efforts to rape Lucrece. For example, the door to Lucrece's chamber creeks, 'the night-wandering weasel shrieks to see him there,' the wind blows smoke from his torch into his face, and the needles in Lucrece's gloves prick his fingers. However, Tarquin disregards these ominous incidents that seem to attempt to remind him to restrain himself. He misconstrues them for incidents intended to make his escapade even more fulfilling. Providence also comes to Faustus's redemption but its efforts are in vain. Mephostophilis tells Faustus to courageously cut his arm and use his blood to sign 'a deed of gift' to Lucifer, the latter's blood congeals and he cannot write. Faustus immediately suspects the clotting of his blood portends something sinister, however, Mephostophilis fetches fire to melt the blood and the deal is sealed.

The narrator in *The Rape of Lucrece* makes a summation that effectively captures the futility of both Faustus's and Tarquin's quests by observing that:

> Those that much covet are with gain so fond,
> For what they have not, that which they possess
> They scatter and unloose it from their bond,
> And so, by hoping more, they have but less;
> Or, gaining more, the profit of excess
> Is but to surfeit, and such griefs sustain,
> That they prove bankrupt in this poor rich gain.

The use of paradox in the quotation above is in keeping with what transpires in *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Doctor Faustus*. Tarquin and Faustus quests are inherently paradoxical. They want to be admired yet they engage in activities that work against their quest for admiration. Tarquin rapes Lucrece while Faustus 'unloose' himself from his bond to God by forming a pact with the devil. It is from the tragedy of Faustus that the expression 'Faustian bargain' was coined. The idea of the Faustian bargain, as it is commonly understood, is that some people are so bent on gaining immediate reward, power or benefits that they engage in actions that they know are evil. Their moral choices become erratic because all they want is the reward, not how the reward is to be accomplished. Therefore, one can conclude that Faustus and Tarquin are classic examples excesses owing to the faustian bargain they each strike. The protagonists are consumed by their lusts so much that they cease to make rational decisions. As a result of their insatiable desire for unlimited success lies an unmitigated reversal in their fortunes.

3. Conclusion

The decision that Tarquin makes is equivalent to that of Marlowe's Faustus. Faustus, the embodiment of the Renaissance quest for knowledge, also illustrates

man's failure to make moral choices.He falls because of excessive pride of intellect. The Chorus says that Faustus's sin is towering pride and vaulting ambition. He is a man so swollen with knowledge and self-confidence that his grasp exceeds his reach. According to the Prologue, Faustus' craving for unlimited power makes 'the Heavens conspire his overthrow' (Act I, scene I, lines 21–2). In *The Rape of Lucrece*, Tarquin engages in a Faustian bargain.Because of his raging lust, he sells his honour for a few minutes of sexual gratification. Like Faustus, he is responsible for his erratic choice. He deliberately chooses evil (rape), over good (honour). Before he makes the decision that leads him into complications, there occurs a strugglefor his soul between good and evil. It is his choice to allow 'affection' to control him that leads to his destruction. Impulsive and youthful, he is heedless of the brevity of the impending sensual pleasure that rape will afford him. His choice of evil as his good is a conscious act of his own free-will, although he tries to deny this by insinuating that his physiology is acting against his goodness. His weighing of the relative merits of honour and the evil alternative is presented logically in his speechbetween lines 197 and 357, when he debates whether or not to rape Lucrece. The alternatives are fairly presented before he makes his choice. One may, therefore, argue that Tarquin and Faustus fall as a result of the exercise of free-will.

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