

The Veil Lifted: The Wound of Knowledge in Love

Bougiouka Despoina

In Apuleius' myth *Eros and Psyche*¹, we encounter the scene where Psyche lights a lamp over her sleeping lover to finally see him. Bound by an agreement never to look upon him, she is nevertheless driven by an irresistible curiosity to know. Her jealous sisters have warned her that her unseen lover is a terrible serpent. It is then that she decides to light the lamp—only to reveal a god.

Lacan notes: “Psyche was very happy in a relationship with what was not in any way a signifier, but the reality of her love for Cupid.² But there you have it — she was Psyche — and she wanted to know. She asked herself the question, because language already exists, and one does not spend one's life simply making love, but also chatting with one's sisters.”³

Each night, Psyche experiences absolute bliss, enclosed in her castle where pleasure remains untouched by the signifier. Yet, she cannot endure ignorance. She is consumed by the need to inscribe her encounter with the Other within the order of the signifier. She wants to know what causes her desire. Her demand to see the form of her lover leads her to risk the divine gift itself. Psyche, unable to remain the object of the Other's enjoyment without signification, lifts the veil. However, the moment of revelation through the gaze is accompanied by loss. Eros, feeling betrayed, abandons her, and Psyche is henceforth condemned to seek him.

Eros's prohibition — the command never to be seen—structures a relationship founded on lack. As object *a*, he remains elusive, fueling Psyche's desire. The moment of illumination is the moment of rupture between *savoir* (knowledge) and *vérité* (truth): Psyche believes that sight will reveal the truth, yet revelation brings loss. Eros disappears.

“Lacan will say that if desire carries a sense, “love is nothing but a meaning [signification]”, a meaning that he will qualify as a 'void'. Desire carries a sense to the extent that the object that causes it imposes a direction on desire. Its sense is established by the object itself as lost.”⁴

¹ Berens, E. M., *Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome*, William Collins, 2016, p. 142.

² TN: In the English translation of Seminar VIII Eros is named as Cupid, as used in Roman mythology, whilst Eros is the Greek.

³ Lacan Jacques., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VIII: Transference*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. B. Fink, Cambridge UK: Polity, 2017, p. 243. Fort Da, Περιοδικό Λακανικής Κλινικής, τεύχος 4ο, Φερνάντες Ντανιέλα, Ψυχή και Ανταλί- Δυο γυναίκες που βλέπουν υπερβολικά, εκδ. Ψυχογιός, Αθήνα Οκτώβριος 2017, σελ. 138. Journal of Lacanian Clinic, issue 4, Fernandez Daniela, Psyche and Hadaly - Two women who see too much, Psychogios Publishing, Athens October 2017, p. 138.

⁴Fajnwaks, Fabian, Love After Love: A Real Love?, *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, Love Event, Issue 40, 2023, p.55.

The passage from the enjoyment of blindness to the desire for knowledge is traumatic. Love shifts from the realm of the Imaginary to a violent entry into the Symbolic. The tragic dimension of their love lies in Psyche's discovery that knowledge itself is what precipitates the fall. Her gaze has inscribed a loss that necessitates a new path: Psyche must pass through mourning and trials to reconstruct her desire. The myth here demonstrates that desire cannot tolerate fulfillment—it always seeks something beyond what can be possessed.

Through the pain of loss, Psyche ultimately comes to endure the fact that the Other remains partially unknowable—a site of desire and fantasy that cannot fill the void of subjective lack. Love, then, does not bridge the gap between lovers; rather, it highlights it, making love a painful yet inevitable confrontation with desire.