Neoplatonism in George Chapman's the Shadow of Night

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VITA

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>FLORENTINE PLATONISM IN THE SHADOW OF NIGHT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>THE MICROCOSM AND THE MACROCOSM</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>MYTHOLOGY IN RELATION TO NEOPLATONISM IN THE &quot;HYMNUS IN NOCTEM&quot;</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>NEOPLATONIC MYSTICISM IN THE &quot;HYMNUS IN NOCTEM&quot;</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>NEOPLATONIC SYMBOLISM OF THE MOON IN THE &quot;HYMNUS IN CYNTHIAM&quot;</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>NEOPLATONIC ALLEGORY IN THE &quot;HYMNUS IN CYNTHIAM&quot;</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>MYTHOLOGY IN RELATION TO NEOPLATONISM IN THE &quot;HYMNUS IN CYNTHIAM&quot;</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>IMAGERY IN THE SHADOW OF NIGHT</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>SOME STYLISTIC TRAITS OF THE SHADOW OF NIGHT</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>RHETORICAL FIGURES OF BALANCE AND CONTRAST</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td>NEOPLATONISM IN THE SHADOW OF NIGHT</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

FLORENTINE PLATONISM IN THE SHADOW OF NIGHT

For George Chapman, Plato was the "divine philosopher," but he did not use Plato directly in the original Greek. Like many Renaissance poets, Chapman preferred to read his Plato through the Latin writings, commentaries, and translations of Marsilio Ficino, the most influential exponent of Neoplatonism during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ernst Cassirer recognizes but overstates the nature and extent of Chapman's indebtedness to Ficino. According to Cassirer, Chapman "lives so completely in the matter and the thought of Ficino's work that his own poems are often no more than versifications or poetic paraphrases of well-known teachings of the Florentine philosophy." There is definitely a Ficinian tone to Chapman's The Shadow of Night, but as the following chapters will show, Chapman most often adapts and modifies his source material to suit his poetic purpose.


Cassirer's statement stems from Franck L. Schoell's source study of Chapman's poetry. An examination of two thousand pages of the folio of the Latin works of Ficino, printed at Basel in 1576, shows that Chapman translates literal lines from Ficino's works into his *Epicede*, *A Hymne to our Saviour on the Crosse*, and *Andromeda Liberata*. Schoell proves that the citations in Chapman's glosses are frequently the Neoplatonic writings of Marsilio Ficino. This interpretation has led critics to dismiss Chapman's poetry as uncreative and inartistic. Swinburne's comment on the shock given to one's sensibility by Chapman's verse is well known. He speaks of the

... crabbed and bombastic verbiage, the tortuous and pedantic obscurity, the rigidity and the laxity of a style which moves as it were with a stiff shuffle, at once formal and shambling; which breaks bounds with a limping gait, and plays truant from all rules without any of the grace of freedom; wanders beyond law and straggles out of order at the halting pace of age and gravity, and in the garb of a schoolmaster plays the pranks of a schoolboy with a ponderous and lumbaginous license of movement, at once rheumatic and erratic.

A more recent critic, Sears Jayne, similarly views Chapman's borrowings from Ficino, for he writes that Chapman "rarely bothers to convert his thefts from Ficino's prose into poetic imagery; and the result is that, except for the rather ambitious allegory of 'Ovid's Banquet of Sense' and

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1Schoell, p. 3.

'Andromeda Liberata,' most of the borrowings from Ficino are simply stuck into his poems as cloves are stuck into a ham."¹

Recent scholarship, however, has provided new criteria for an appreciation of Chapman's poetry in relation to the Italian humanists and the Neoplatonic tradition. The studies of Roy Battenhouse and Raymond B. Waddington are the most significant. The first is a Neoplatonic explication of The Shadow of Night and the second is a study of Chapman's poetry and seventeenth-century Platonic aesthetics.² Chapman's adaptation from Ficino, then, may be a clue to his desire to have his nondramatic poetry read within a Neoplatonic context.

The Shadow of Night, George Chapman's first published volume of poetry, comprises the two poems, "Hymnus in Noctem" and "Hymnus in Cynthiam." Entered in the Stationers' Register on "31 de. 1593," and published the following year at London "by R. F. for William Ponsonby," the volume contains a dedicatory epistle "To My Deare and Most Worthy Friend Master Mathew Roydon."³ Both the epistle and the hymns reveal the influence

¹Sears Jayne, "Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance," Comparative Literature, IV (1952), 218.


³The Poems of George Chapman, ed. by Phyllis Brooks Bartlett (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), pp. 19, 421. References to Chapman's poems will be from this edition, which will be designated simply as Poems.
of Renaissance Neoplatonism, particularly Ficino's commentaries on Plato's Ion and Symposium, with which Chapman was familiar.¹

Chapman's epistle is dedicated to Mathew Roydon (1580-1622), a minor poet and a friend, who together with Sir Walter Raleigh, Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Harriot formed a small group which dabbled in philosophical speculation and the occult sciences. They achieved notoriety because of their implication with Christopher Marlowe in the charge of atheism. It is thought by some that Shakespeare meant to satirize them in his description of the academy founded by the King of Navarre in Love's Labour's Lost. Here the group is referred to as the School of Night (IV. iii. 255).²

Little is known about the literary friendship which existed between Chapman and Roydon. Obviously, Chapman deeply respected Roydon, for he dedicates to him the epistles to his first two poems, The Shadow of Night and Ovid's Banquet of Sense. As a poet, Roydon is remembered chiefly for his elegy written on the death of Sir Philip Sidney, Elegie, or Friends passion for his Astrophill. Roydon's reputation is suggested by the deference with which Chapman addresses him in the epistles and by the comments of his contemporary Thomas Nashe. Nashe states

¹Schoell, p. 4.
²For Chapman's relationship with the School of Night, see Muriel C. Bradbrook, The School of Night: A Study in the Literary Relationships of Sir Walter Raleigh (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), pp. 127-150.
that Roydon together with Thomas Achlow and George Peele are "men living about London who are most able to provide poetry." Roydon, Nashe proceeds, "hath shewed himself singular in the immortal epitaph of his beloved Astrophill, besides many other absolute comike inventions (made more publike by every mans praise, then they can bee by my speech)."

Chapman's epistle prefixed to The Shadow of Night anticipates two Neoplatonic doctrines expressed in the poems to follow: the first is Chapman's consistent view of knowledge as resulting in virtue; the second is his sincere belief in the divinus furor theory of poetic inspiration.

Chapman follows Plato in viewing virtue as the effect of knowledge. As G. M. Grube points out, throughout the dialogues Plato maintains the doctrine that virtue is a consequence of knowledge:

He has shown that to be good at anything requires knowledge (Lysis), and so we must have knowledge to be good at the art of living. He has tried to reduce goodness in its different forms, the virtues, to some kind of knowledge (Laches, Charmides, Euthyphro, Protagoras) and to show that all virtue is essentially one (Protagoras), that even if pleasure be our aim, we must have the knowledge necessary to choose between pleasures (Gorgias, Protagoras). He has examined whether this knowledge be of oneself, inquired how such a knowledge can be (Charmides) and decided that self means the soul (Alcibiades). Finally he has drawn a picture of this supreme knowledge towering above all others and making use of them all (Euthydemus).

In addition to the idea of virtue as the result of knowledge, the divinus furor theory of poetic inspiration is a central part of Chapman's poetic creed in *The Shadow of Night*. Plato expounds the notion in the *Phaedrus* and in the *Ion*:

*Phaedrus*: The third kind is the madness of those who are possessed by the Muses; which taking hold of a delicate and virgin soul, and there inspiring frenzy, awakens lyrical and all other numbers; with these adorning the myriad actions of ancient heroes for the instruction of posterity. But he who, having no touch of the Muses' madness in his soul, comes to the door and thinks that he will get into the temple by the help of art—he, I say, and his poetry are not admitted; the same man disappears and is nowhere when he enters into rivalry with the madman.¹

In the *Ion* also, Plato emphasizes that poetry is divine and not human, the work of God and not the work of art.

Socrates explains:

For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed. And as the Corybantian revellers when they dance are not in their right mind, so the lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains: but when falling under the power of music and metre they are inspired and possessed; . . . beautiful poems are not human, or the work of man, but divine and the work of God.²

In the above dialogues it is apparent that Plato believes that knowledge is the highest and ultimate truth, the end of all

¹Plato *Phaedrus* 245 in *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. by B. Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), pp. 249-250. All subsequent quotations from Plato will be from this translation.

man's activities. As shall be seen, this is likewise true for Chapman, who opposes the pleasures of knowledge to those of the senses. Chapman continually denounces material goals or ephemeral pleasures in order to magnify knowledge or learning as the *summum bonum* in the scale of human values. Furthermore, both Plato and Chapman stress the intuitive, spontaneous, and creative aspects of poetry. The poet is a divinely inspired seer, a *vates*, and the function of poetry is to discover and express divine truths.

In the opening paragraph of the dedicatory epistle "To My Deare and Most Worthy Friend Master Mathew Roydon," Chapman speaks of the "exceeding rapture of delight" men feel "in the deepe search of knowledge." He is aware, however, that this pleasure in learning is accompanied by hardships. Chapman describes man's task of acquiring knowledge as difficult and complex, often demanding extraordinary intellectual struggle. It is a "Herculean labour" in which man's reason must be reinforced with armory from the gods:

Men must be shod by Mercurie, girt with Saturnes Adamantine sword, take the shield from Pallas, the helme from Pluto, and haue the eyes of Graea (as Hesiodus armes Perseus against Medusa) before they can cut of the viperous head of benumming ignorance, or subdue their monstrous affections to most beautifull judgement.

The above mythological allusions, borrowed from Natalis Comes' compendium of mythological lore,¹ aid Chapman in

¹Schoell, p. 179.
stressing the strength of character required of those who would attain true learning. A clue to the allusions is given in the line "as Hesiodus armes Perseus against Medusa." Perseus was armed by Athene in order to cut off Medusa's head, which had serpents for hair, huge teeth, protruding tongue, and so horrible a face that all who gazed upon it were petrified with fright. Perseus had promised the Medusa's head to Polydectes if he would refrain from marrying his mother Danaë. Athene aided Perseus by arming him with the implements mentioned in the above quotation. The phrase "shod by Mercurie" alludes to the winged sandals worn by Mercury when he was the messenger of Jupiter. "Saturnes Adamantine sword" refers to the castration of Uranus by his son Saturn with an adamantine sickle which was given to him by his mother Gaia. The "shield from Pallas" is the brightly-polished shield presented to Perseus by Athene in which he was to look at the reflection of the Medusa rather than at her directly. The "helme from Pluto" is the helmet of invisibility, which was Pluto's most prized possession, handed to him as a mark of gratitude by the Cyclopes when he agreed to release them at Zeus's order. The allusion to "the eyes of Graea" is a bit obscure, particularly because Chapman speaks of the "eyes" rather than the "eye" of Graea. Here he departs from Comes who uses the singular oculo. The Graea were the three "gray ones," daughters of Phorcys and Cato, and sisters

1Ibid.
of the Gorgons. They were gray-haired from birth and had only one eye and one tooth among them, which they shared. They were named Enyo ("horror"), Deino ("dread"), and Pemphredo ("alarm"). It was from the Graea that Perseus had to learn where the Stygian Nymphs lived, from whom he had to fetch the winged sandals, a magic wallet to contain the decapitated head, and the dark helmet of invisibility. Consequently, he crept up behind the Graea and snatched their eye and tooth and would not return either until he was told his information. He then collected his materials and flew to the Land of the Hyperboreans, where the Gorgons were sleeping. Fixing his eyes on the reflection in the shield, and with Athene guiding his hand, he cut off Medusa's head with a single stroke of the sickle. Next he thrust the head into the wallet and took flight. Made invisible by the helmet, he escaped safely.¹

As Chapman's mythological references aptly illustrate, the acquiring of knowledge is a laborious task, often beyond the capabilities of the ordinary man. This notion of the importance of struggle in attaining knowledge is not contradictory to his divinus furor theory of poetic inspiration. They are both essential elements in man's quest for truth. Mystical inspiration and "Herculean labour" are necessary and integral forces in the creation of poetry and in the perception of truth.

Chapman censors "passion-driven men" who believe knowledge or truth is obtainable without the Neoplatonic discipline of "invocation, fasting, watching; yea not without having drops of their souls like an heavenly familiar," that is, not without mystical inspiration.¹ According to MacLure, Chapman's "heavenly familiar" is similar to "the good angel who was supposed to preside over the meditations of the alchemists."²

Chapman dedicates himself to the imitation of such virtuous men as the "most ingenious Darbie, deep searching Northumberland, and skill-imbracing heir of Hunsdon," who have most profitably "entertained learning in themselves, to the vitall warmth of freezing science, & to the admirable luster of their true Nobilitie. . . ." Only by such emulation and the practice of virtue will the poet attain that state of ecstasy or divine madness necessary to create beautiful and immortal poetry, to "strike that fire out of darknesse, which the brightest Day shall enuie for beautie."³

Darbie, Northumberland, and the heir of Hunsdon, the three men alluded to by Chapman in his epistle, were, together

¹This phrase, "heavenly familiar," helps give rise to the supposition that Chapman is the rival poet of Shakespeare. See Poems, p. 422.


with the poets Raleigh, Marlowe, Roydon, Warner, and Chapman, members of the School of Night and took part in the literary war against the faction of Essex. Sir Walter Raleigh was the patron of the school, and Thomas Harriot, a mathematician, was its master. The members studied theology, philosophy, astronomy, geography, and chemistry. They were of various religious beliefs. Harriot, Marlowe, and Raleigh were suspected of being atheists; Northumberland and Derby were Catholics; Chapman and Roydon were Christians but of no specific denomination.¹

The three noblemen were all of great family backgrounds, patrons of the arts, and eccentrics. It seems that Chapman intended to approach these nobles for their patronage indirectly through his epistle to Mathew Roydon. In the epistle Chapman remembers "how joyfully oftentimes you reported vnto me," "my good Mat." that Darbie, Northumberland, and the heir of Hunsdon had themselves studied and achieved learning.²

Darbie is Ferdinando Stanley, 5th Earl of Derby. He was a poet, an alchemist, and also suspected of witchcraft. Some of his verses are contained in Belvedere, or the Garden of the Muses. He is celebrated by Spenser under the name of "Amyntas" in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe. Robert Greene dedicates his Ciceronis Amor, 1589, to him. Nashe has a

¹Bradbrook, p. 8.
²Chapman, Poems, p. 19.
panegyric on Stanley in his *Piers Pennilesse*, 1592. Stanley's death on "16 April 1594" places the publication of *The Shadow of Night* in the early part of the year.¹

It is interesting to note here that Nashe in his *Piers Pennilesse* uses the same symbolic astrology as Chapman in the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" when he describes virtuous men as "sweet Ganemades" (line 474):

> He is the Ganemede, the birde of Ioue,  
> Rapt to his soueraignes bosome for his loue,  
> His bewtie was it, not the bodies pride  
> That made him great Aquarius stellified.  
>  
> (1. 462-465)

Nashe salutes "Ioues Eagle-borne Ganemede, thrice noble Amyntas," as being significant among the "bright stars of Nobilitie, and glistening attendants of the true Diana."² McKerrow identifies Amyntas with Ferdinando Stanley, Earl of Derby. In the epistle to *The Shadow of Night* Chapman refers to Derby as "most ingenious Darbie."

*Northumberland* is Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland, known as a scholar and mathematician and for his interests in astrology and astronomy. Because of his participation in scientific experiments, he gained the title of "the Wizard Earl." After 1605, upon suspicion of complicity in the "Gunpowder Plot," he was imprisoned in the Tower with

¹ *The Dictionary of National Biography*, XVIII, 954-955.

Sir Walter Raleigh. There he gathered about him men of learning such as Thomas Harriot, Walter Warner, and Thomas Hughes. He collected in his cell a large library of books, consisting mainly of Italian books on fortification, astrology, and medicine. His only English works were Chapman's Homer, The Gardener's Labyrinth, Daniel's History of England, and Florio's Dictionary. In 1621, he was released from the Tower after an imprisonment of nearly sixteen years. He died at Petworth on "5 Nov. 1632."\(^1\)

The heire of Hunsdon is George Carey, 2nd Lord Hunsdon, known as a patron of the arts but not specifically as a scholar himself. He was Shakespeare's patron from 1596 to 1597. His wife, Lady Elizabeth Carey, and her daughter were also great friends and patrons of the poets, particularly Edmund Spenser and Thomas Nashe. Chapman, no doubt, mentions Carey in his epistle because of his connection with the School of Night and the possibility of patronage by such a favorite at court during the reign of Elizabeth. Sir George Carey was the Governor of the Isle of Wight, and his only known written works are on state affairs. He died on "9 Sept. 1603."\(^2\)

In this epistle Chapman is enunciating what is to be expanded in his future prefaces and dedications and is to become one of the most important Neoplatonic principles of his

\(^1\)The Dictionary of National Biography, XV, 856-858.
\(^2\)Ibid., III, 974-975.
poetry: the power of the _divinus furor_ to inspire the virtuous soul of man to comprehend beauty and truth and to create poetry. What is notable in Chapman's epistle and poetry is his concept of the poet as the _vates_, the divinely inspired seer who can see beyond the Many to the divine within creation, the One. This significant Neoplatonic doctrine, implied in the epistle and in the hymns of _The Shadow of Night_, remains with Chapman throughout his poetic career and becomes the characteristic sign of his Neoplatonic philosophy.

Chapman's epistle, of course, is related to _The Shadow of Night_. Thematically, the epistle and the poem might be compared in a general sense in that both stress the importance of the virtuous life and the moralistic purpose of poetry. The epistle, however, celebrates that man whom, with others, Chapman admired for having devoted himself to learning or knowledge. As Miss Bartlett points out, this "learning is not an illuminating process unless it has made a man 'noble,' for true nobility is of the spirit and is rarely attained; it is the nearest man can reach to the divine and hence Chapman calls it 'sacred.'"¹ The epithets applied to Darbie, Northumberland, and the heire of Hunsdon, "most-ingenious," "deepe searching," and "skill-imbracing," reveal the qualities Chapman expected of the man who uses his reason to overcome the passions of his brutish nature. The epistle is Chapman's first pronouncement

¹Poems, p. 2.
of his poetical creed. Naturally, since it is a prefatory letter, it presents in prose form some of the Neoplatonic elements to be developed in the poems.

The "Hymnus in Noctem" and the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" are based on the doctrine of Florentine Platonism. Basic to an understanding of these poems is Ficino's concept of man's individual soul, consisting of the lower soul (anima secunda) and the higher soul (anima prima). The lower soul, subject to fate, embraces three faculties: (1) the nourishment, growth, and reproductive organs; (2) the senses; and (3) the imagination. The higher soul, which is free, possesses two faculties: the reason, which is reflective and discursive, and the mind, which is intuitive and creative. The reason functions according to the rules of logic, while the mind communicates directly with the intellectus divinus.¹

In The Shadow of Night Chapman modifies Ficino's concept of man's soul by making a division between the powers of the body and the powers of the soul. For instance, in the "Hymnus in Noctem" he writes: "Now bodies liue without the soules of men" (line 48). Later on in the same poem Chapman speaks of "huge spirits, and outrageous passions" (line 397) which may pervert the soul. In the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" the

poet attributes to the soul a divine element: "The minde hath in her selfe a Deitie" (line 444). As the above quotations indicate, Chapman equates the faculties of the body with the lower soul and consequently considers them to be evil; the faculties of the reason and the mind he associates with the higher soul and holds them to be good. Man must continually use his reason to overcome the perturbations or passions of the body. He must turn from sensible things to the intelligible forms or Ideas. His soul will then pass to union with the divine mind or the One.

Chapman accepts Ficino's Neoplatonic doctrine that "man's immortal soul is always miserable in the body."¹ In the "Hymnus in Noctem" he prefers the primordial chaos because "Chaos had soule without a bodie then, / Now bodies liue without the soules of men" (11. 47-48). Further on he states: "... where the soule defamde, / The bodie had bene better neuer framde" (11. 65-66). In his non-dramatic verse Chapman consistently speaks of the body as being a hindrance to the soul. In Eugenia the body is the mere "instrument" (11. 633-634) of the soul. This concept is reinforced in The Teares of Peace by Chapman's description of the soul as a ray from heaven dwelling in a dunghill body (11. 981-987).

Neoplatonically, the "Hymnus in Noctem" and the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" conform to Ficino's way of achieving "temporal

¹Panofsky, p. 138, quoting Ficino, Quaestiones quinque de mente (Basel, 1576), p. 680.
Beatitude": the union of the contemplative life and the active life, the two wings which elevate the soul to celestial spheres.\(^1\)

It is the contemplative life that is exalted in Chapman's first poem. The "Hymnus in Noctem" celebrates the contemplative life (religio) whereby man's mind directly contemplates the truth and rises by means of the theological and moral virtues to a knowledge of celestial things. The second hymn, "Hymnus in Cynthiam," deals with the active life (justitia),\(^2\) whereby man's mind illuminates his reason, which is then "applied to the task of perfecting human life and destiny on earth."\(^3\) Just as the first is concerned with the theological and moral virtues and "with poetic wisdom and its enemies," the second stresses the moral virtues and "turns to the life of action, to politics, and morals. The first is concerned with art, the second with nature."\(^4\)

This neat Neoplatonic division of the two hymns as the wings of the soul is successful as a general, overall

\(^1\)Panofsky, p. 139.

\(^2\)The Platonic interpretation of justice is not that of a "particular virtue juxtaposed to Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance," but is "that fundamental power in the soul which assigns to each of them their particular function." See Edgar Wind, "Platonic Justice, Designed by Raphael," Journal of the Warburg Institute, I (1937), 69-70.

\(^3\)Panofsky, p. 138.

\(^4\)MacLure, p. 36.
description of The Shadow of Night since it contains two companion poems, one complementing the other. As will be shown later, the Neoplatonic content of the poems is further developed by Chapman's use of extended similes, insistent repetitions, apparent digressions, moralistic allegory, rhetorical figures of speech, verse paragraphs of uneven length, and enjamed deca-syllabic couplets.

A concrete analysis of the hymns reveals they are suffused with Neoplatonic doctrines. The "Hymnus in Noctem" is particularly concerned with Neoplatonic cosmology and mysticism. The "Hymnus in Cynthia," although containing aspects of cosmology and mysticism, is based on Neoplatonic allegory. An understanding of these elements is perhaps the simplest way to understand Chapman's main intention. Neoplatonic cosmology involves the creation of the world out of chaos, its governance by the cosmic-soul, and the microcosm-macrocosm belief in the interconnection of the little world of man and the large world of the universe. Neoplatonic mysticism stresses the blotting out of the world of sense, and the spontaneous intuition of truth and beauty, whereby the mind is uplifted to union with the One. For Chapman, Neoplatonic mysticism is related to the divinus furor theory of inspiration as the necessary state prior to the act of creation. Neoplatonic allegory relates to Cynthia both as Queen Elizabeth and as the World-Soul under the aspects of Divine Wisdom, Beauty, and Providence. Both hymns are
sufficiently permeated by these doctrines to justify an explanation of their primary themes as deriving from Neoplatonic cosmology, mysticism, and allegory. These concepts do not deny the presence of other Neoplatonic elements which will be mentioned in the course of the analysis of the "Hymnus in Noctem" and the "Hymnus in Cynthiam," the two parts of The Shadow of Night.

A preliminary comment on the structure of both hymns, meaning the division into component parts, will perhaps illustrate how these Neoplatonic doctrines are distributed throughout The Shadow of Night. The content of the "Hymnus in Noctem" and "Hymnus in Cynthiam" is a curious combination of Neoplatonic cosmology and mysticism. Based on its themes, but to an even greater extent on its tone, the poem falls into three parts. Part I (ll. 1-240) stresses the conventional lament over the degeneration of the soul and the decay of the world in the imagery of the microcosm-macrocosm. Part II (ll. 241-287) is an interlude between the pessimism of the first movement and the optimism of the concluding one. The tone here is vindictive as the poet calls on the Eumenides and Hercules to exercise revenge on the wicked. Towards the end of the second part the tone softens as the poet consecrates himself to the service of Night. Part III (ll. 288-403) shifts in tone from anxiety over the chaotic condition of the world to the peace and contentment to be found in contemplating the
mysteries of Night. Contemplation is Chapman's solution to the evils existing in the daytime world of man.

The structure of the "Hymnus in Cynthia" can also be divided into three uneven sections. Part I (ll. 1-170) is based primarily on political or historical allegory addressed to Queen Elizabeth. Part II (ll. 171-399), constituting the largest portion of the poem, is a moral allegory narrating the hunting of the nymph Euthimya who represents the power of reason to control the passions of the body. Part III (ll. 400-528) is an exhortation to English ladies and gentlemen to worship and to serve Cynthia, the Neoplatonic ideal of "wisedome, beautie, maiestie and dread" (line 8).

Upon first appearance, the structure of both hymns seems largely emotional and associative rather than logical and syllogistic. As will be seen, this is true to some extent, for Chapman has a tendency to insert similes, symbols, paradoxes, aphorisms, and mythological allusions as they occur to him. These elements, however, are functional and not merely decorative. They serve to amplify and to illustrate the themes of his Neoplatonic doctrine. Furthermore, there is a definite argument underlying these works, particularly when read in light of Neoplatonism. Thus it cannot be stressed enough that the poems should be viewed in accordance with Ficino's Neoplatonic concept of the soul.
Just as the structure of *The Shadow of Night* indicates its Neoplatonic content, so does Chapman's specific choice of title for the poem reflect his Neoplatonic intent. The word *shadow* recalls Plato's image of the shadows and the cave in the *Republic*. Guided by the Platonic concept of the ideal world (being) versus the copy (becoming), and by the Platonic technique of *discordia concors*, Chapman draws a similar contrast between Night and Day. Night symbolizes the time of creativity, or spiritual renewal; Day symbolizes the time of evil, or aridity. In the poem the term *shadow* refers to the daytime world of appearances which exists in a state of physical and moral chaos. It is only at Night that man shakes off the evils of an earthly existence and is his true self. This Neoplatonic interpretation of the title of the poem is confirmed by Roy Battenhouse who states that the sense-world "is but a shadow of the real world: it is, to use [Chapman's] phrase, only a 'Shadow of Night' obscuring the true Divine Dark in which man, if he be virtuous, can come to dwell like a bright star."²

Chapman's concept of Night as a principal of good is implied in the title of the poem and strongly emphasized in the last two hundred lines of the "Hymnus in Noctem." This


Platonic notion derives from the esoteric tradition of the Orphic Hymns, the Hermetica, and the writings of the medieval mystics and cosmollogists. In the Orphic cosmogony Night is the parent goddess, the first, eldest, and source of all things: "From whom at first both Gods and men arose."\(^1\) In the Hermetic tradition Night is depicted as formless and as emerging from the "downward tending darkness" as a shadow of God.\(^2\)

According to the medieval mystic Dionysius the Areopagite, the human senses and intellect are unable to attain God. Knowledge of God is a divine gift obtainable through the divine Darkness:

Do thou, then, in the intent and practice of mystic contemplation, leave behind the senses and the operations of the intellect, and all things that the senses or the intellect can perceive, and all things which are not and things which are, and strain upwards in unknowing, as far as may be, towards the union with Him Who is above all things and knowledge. For by unceasing and absolute withdrawal from thyself and all things in purity, abandoning all and set free from all, thou shalt be borne up to the ray of divine Darkness that surpasseth all being.\(^3\) [Italics mine]

To the medieval mystics darkness is a time of light. The light of faith, they say, darkens the intellect, just as the

\(^1\) The Hymns of Orpheus, translated from the original Greek by T. Taylor (London, 1792), p. 115.


sun blinds the person who looks directly at its brightness: "even as the philosopher teaches, saying that even as the ray of the sun is dark and black to the eye of the bat, even so the lofty and bright things of God are dark to our understanding."¹

St. John of the Cross writes: "Hence it follows for the soul this excessive light of faith which is given to it is thick darkness; for it overwhelms that which is great and does away with that which is little, even as the light of the sun overwhelms all other lights whatsoever, so that when it shines and disables our power of vision they appear not to be lights at all."²

Chapman's cosmology in the "Hymnus in Noctem" follows Platonic theory in supposing a pre-existent chaos prior to creation from which created things have come by a separation of the elements brought about by the action of the principle of Order: "Why letst thou order, orderlesse disperse, / The fighting parents of this vniverse?" (ll. 37-38). The pre-existent chaos here described by Chapman is equivalent to the Mysterium Magnum of the cosmologist Paracelsus. It is the mother of all created things in which the elements have not yet been separated from each other:

¹Johnston, p. 60, quoting Canticle, Stanza XXXVIII, 10.

²Johnston, p. 61, quoting St. John of the Cross, Ascent, II, III, 1, p. 61n.
This Great Mystery is the mother of all the elements, and at the same time the spleen of all the stars, trees, and carnal creatures. As children come forth from the mother, so from the Great Mystery are generated all created things, both those endowed with sense and those which are destitute thereof, all things uniformly. So, then, the Great Mystery is the only mother of all ephemeral things, from which these are borne and derived, not in order of succession or continuation, but they came forth at one and the same time, in one creation, matter, form, essence, nature, and inclination.¹

The influence of this Platonic concept of Night adhered to by these philosophers, mystics, and cosmologists is reflected in The Shadow of Night. The unifying theme of both hymns is that "Night which brings man freedom from his daytime slavery to the sense of sight is the opportunity of Philosophy and the realm of Truth." In the presence of Night the chaos of the world and the chaos of man's soul are worked into "digestion." This effect of Night has been aptly likened to the effect of divine grace on man's soul: it is a "boon granted to suffering and disordered man clear and apart from his own efforts."²


CHAPTER II

THE MICROCOSM AND THE MACROCOSM

One of the commonest and most influential doctrines of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is that of the analogy between the microcosm and the macrocosm. The exact origin of the term microcosm is unknown. It is thought to have been used by the Stoics and implied by Plato in the Timaeus when he speaks of the world as a perfect animal in unity and of man's head as a copy of the spherical form of the universe. Aristotle alludes to the theory when he refers to divine things as a "lesser cosmos" and to the universe as a "greater" cosmos. Plotinus adds to the notion when he states: "the Reason-Principles carried in animal seed fashion and shape living beings into so many universes in the small." Some authors

1Rudolf Allers, "Microcosmus from Anaximandros to Paracelsus," Traditio, II (1944), 320.


4Plotinus The Enneads IV iiii, 10, trans. by Stephen MacKenna (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), p. 269. All subsequent passages from Plotinus are from this translation.
give Philo Judaeus the credit for the invention of the name microcosmus. The Greek Fathers who employed the term felt that it was so well known that it did not need any explanation. The Latin writers depended on Macrobius for their knowledge of the word.¹

According to the Renaissance conception of the term, man is considered the epitome of the universe, a little world unto himself. A variety of epithets is applied to man to illustrate this notion. He is "the little World, wherein the Great is shown"; "this little Kingdom"; "the truest Mappe of the World, a summarie and compendious other World"; "the mirrour of nature"; "the quintessence extrac'd from the Macrocosm."²

Man is not only a "Mappe" of the world, he is a little copy of God, according to Pierre Charron (1541-1603), a French philosopher and theologian:

Man is likewise not only the Creator, but the whole Creation in Little; the Universe in one small Volume: Whence it is that Man is sometime styled a Little World; and by the same reason the World might be called a Great Man. He is, as it were, the Mediator of the different parts of Nature, that Link of this long Chain, by which Angels and Brutes, Heaven and Earth, the Spiritual and Corporeal Creation, are ty'd together; and that void Space supply'd, which wou'd make a wide and most unseemly Gap in the Universe, if not fill'd up, and the Series thus continu'd, by a Creature

¹Allers, pp. 320-321.

partaking of both Extremes. In a word, This was the last Touch, the Master-piece, the Honour, and Ornament, nay, the Prodigy, and miraculous Production of Nature.¹

In The Shadow of Night Chapman utilizes in a unique way this idea of the microcosm-macrocosm which provided such exciting and stimulating material for the creative minds of the Renaissance. In the first poem, the "Hymnus in Noctem," Chapman is not so much concerned with an exact physical correspondence between man and the universe as he is with a moral analogy. This concept of a relationship between the moral actions of man and the operations of the universe occupy the first half of the "Hymnus in Noctem," approximately lines 1-200. It is expressly stated in the following verse-paragraphs:

Sorrowes deare soueraigne, and the queene of rest,
That when vnlightsome, vast, and indigest
The formelesse matter of this world did lye,
Fildst every place with thy Diuinitie,
Why did thy absolute and endlesse sway,
Licence heauens torch, the scepter of the Day,
Distinguishd intercession to thy throne,
That long before, all matchlesse rulde alone?
Why letst thou order, orderlesse disperse,
The fighting parents of this vniverse?
When earth, the ayre, and sea, in fire remaind,
When fire, the sea, and earth, the ayre containd,
When ayre, the earth, and fire, the sea enclosde
When sea, fire, ayre, in earth were indisposde,
Nothing, as now, remainde so out of kinde,
All things in grosse, were finer than refinde,
Substance was sound within, and had no being,
Now forme giues being; all our essence seeming,
Chaos had soule without a bodie then,

Now bodies liue without the soules of men,  
Lumps being digested; monsters, in our pride.  
And as a wealthie fount, that hills did hide,  
Let forth by labor of industrious hands,  
Powres out her treasure through the fruitefull strands,  
Seemely diuided to a hunderd streames,  
Whose bwties shed such profitable beames,  
And make such Orphean Musicke in their courses,  
That Citties follow their enchanting forces,  
Who running farre, at length ech powres her hart  
Into the bosome of the gulfie desart,  
As much confounded there, and indigest,  
As in the chaos of the hills comprest:  
So all things now (extract out of the prime)  
Are turnd to chaos, and confound the time.  
(11. 29-62)

This analogy between the microcosm-macrocosm is  
continually used by Chapman as a sort of refrain throughout the  
first two hundred lines. For example, the poem's overriding  
theme is that the physical chaos of the universe, although  
"vnlightsome, vast, and indigest" (line 30), is preferable to  
the moral chaos in man's soul. The echoes of this motif are as  
follows:

So all things now (extract out of the prime)  
Are turnd to chaos, and confound the time.  
(11. 61-62)

Disjunction showes, in all things now amisse,  
By that first order, what confusion is.  
(11. 79-80)

Then if we still were wrapt, and smoothered  
In that confusion, out of which we fled.  
(11. 199-200)

In general, Chapman's theory of the analogy between the  
microcosm-macrocosm shows an indebtedness to Ficino's cosmology  
and its relationship to the individual soul. Like many of the  
writers of the Renaissance, Ficino believes firmly in the
correspondence between the body and soul of man and the body and soul of the universe. Influenced by the philosophy of Ficino, Chapman adopts this analogy in a poetical way. Erwin Panofsky succinctly explains Ficino's Neoplatonic concept of the universe. At the top of the Neoplatonic ladder of being and becoming is God from whom emanate four hierarchies of decreasing importance:

(1) The Cosmic Mind (Greek: \textit{Nous}, Latin: \textit{mens mundana, intellectus divinus sive angelicus}), which is a purely intelligible and supercelestial realm; like God it is incorruptible and stable, and unlike him it is multiple, containing as it does the ideas and intelligences (angels) which are the prototypes of whatever exists in the lower zones. (2) The Cosmic Soul (Greek: \textit{ψυχή}, Latin: \textit{anima mundana}), which is still incorruptible, but no longer stable; it moves with a self-induced motion (\textit{per se mobilis}) and is no longer a realm of pure forms but a realm of pure causes; it is therefore identical with the celestial or translunary world divided into the familiar nine spheres or heavens; the empyrean, the sphere of the fixed stars and the seven spheres of the planets. (3) The Realm of Nature, that is, the sublunary or terrestrial world, which is corruptible because it is compounded of form and matter and can therefore disintegrate when these components are parted; it moves not \textit{per se} but by and with the celestial world with which it is connected by a somewhat vaguely defined medium called \textit{spiritus mundanus}, also \textit{nodus} or \textit{vinculum}. (4) The Realm of Matter which is formless and lifeless; it is endowed with shape, movement and even existence only in so far as it ceases to be itself and enters a union with form, so as to contribute to the Realm of Nature.\footnote{Panofsky, p. 132.}

Ficino implies the analogy between the microcosm-macrocosm when he states that a \textit{spiritus mundanus} links the sublunary world
(Realm of Nature) with the translunary world (Realm of the Cosmic Soul), and a spiritus humanus links man's body with his soul. The following diagram on page 31 taken from Panofsky's work *Studies in Iconology* illustrates the Neoplatonic view of the universe and its relationship to man. The intermediary position of the soul between the material and the spiritual, and the notion that one principle of order governs the cosmic soul of the universe and the human soul of man, are of great relevance to Chapman's Neoplatonism. Ficino resolves the implied conflict between free will and fate by defining man as "a rational soul participating in the divine mind employing a body." Through Providence the soul of man is free; through nature the body of man is subject to fate. In other words, the body or matter is subject to fate, but the rational soul, because of Providence, is superior to the universe.

Chapman does not explicitly make such philosophical distinctions as Ficino, for Chapman sees no problem in accepting the microcosm-macrocosm explanation of the relationship between man and his cosmos. Chapman's adaptation of the analogy between the microcosm-macrocosm is natural enough, for as Don Cameron Allen explains, "That there was a

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1Ibid., p. 136.
2Ibid., p. 135.
Panofsky states that the terms used in this diagram are taken chiefly from Ficino, Commentary on Plotinus, Ennead. I, 1, Bibl. 90, p. 1549 ss., and De vita triplici, III, 22, Bibl. 90, p. 564.¹

¹ Panofsky, pp. 135-36.
definite sympathy between the heavens and sublunar creatures was, of course, common knowledge. The notion of a general celestial influence on man and his world is a part of most literary men's philosophy."¹ Marjorie Hope Nicolson supports this statement:

Our Elizabethan ancestors thought of their world in metaphors. The world was not simply like an animal; it was animate. The repetition of pattern, design, function they found in the body of man was not invented by human ingenuity; it actually existed in the three worlds made by God in His image. There was basic correspondence between man's body and the body of the world, between man's soul and the soul of the universe.²

The definitions and implications of the principle of the microcosm-macrocosm have been explored by Rudolf Allers. He maintains that historically it is "a more or less Platonic or, especially, Neo-Platonic philosophy."³ In its simplest form the idea is that man contains within himself all the elements of which the universe is formed. He is a parvus mundus, for he has the life of plants, the senses of animals, the reason of man, and the mind to communicate with the divine.⁴ There are two corollaries to this description. The


² Nicolson, pp. 2-3.

³ Allers, p. 331.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 331-332.
first, "cosmocentric microcosm," is that man may be compared to the universe:

Within this view, the discovery of the world in man becomes possible. The relation between the micro- and the macrocosmic may be one of identity or analogy; in any case it is in man that the key to the cosmological riddle may be found. Man thus understands himself as imbedded in the whole of the \( \kappa \delta \sigma \gamma \sigma \), an organic part of the latter, and determined by pancosmic principles. One arrives at the conception of an all-pervading harmony and correspondence (cosmocentric microcosmism).

If "cosmocentric microcosmism" is extended too far, it deprives man of his freedom and becomes a form of pantheism.

The second corollary, "anthropocentric microcosmism," is that the universe may be compared to man:

The macrocosmos then becomes an enormously enlarged microcosm (anthropocentric microcosmism). This was the idea of Plato . . . here the cosmic laws appear as projections, as it were, of those governing human nature. The primary standpoint being chosen within man, the whole perspective is another. This view leads with a certain necessity to the assumption of a World-Soul as the intrinsic principle of existence and growth within the universe.\(^2\)

This second corollary is the underlying theory of Plato's "Timaeus." Whether it be politics, peace, painting, or poetry, the order created by man is the "one order, and whatever there is ordered is so according to one principle."\(^3\) Thus any entity, be it man, family, city, nation, or planet, will contain the same disposition of elements and be ruled by the same laws.

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 322.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 333.
\(^3\) Ibid.
Plato's Timaeus was the main source of Platonism in England prior to the mid-sixteenth century. Chapman perhaps did not read the work directly but was influenced by medieval and Renaissance commentators and translators. He finds particularly useful Plato's notion of creation in which is implied the microcosm-macrocosm principle. In this dialogue Timaeus describes the creation of the universe (body and soul) and of man (body and soul) as a consequence of the goodness of the Creator. Timaeus says:

God desired that all things should be good and nothing bad, so far as this was attainable. Wherefore also finding the whole visible sphere not at rest, but moving in an irregular and disorderly fashion, out of disorder he brought order.¹

Timaeus states that the elements existed in a state of disorder and confusion prior to the creation which consisted in the separation and ordering of the four elements.² Timaeus explains:

. . . we must consider the nature of fire, and water, and air, and earth, such as they were prior to the creation of the heaven, and what was happening to them in this previous state; for no one has as yet explained the manner of their generation, but we speak of fire and the rest of them, whatever they mean, as though men knew their natures, and we maintain them to be the first principles and letters or elements of the whole. . . .³

²Ibid.
³Ibid. 48, pp. 28-29.
This idea of a pre-existent chaos was an important doctrine widely accepted by the Platonists of the Renaissance. Roy Battenhouse writes:

To the "Platonist" (we must use the label broadly as the Renaissance did) there is a primitive metaphysical darkness which is not evil. Various philosophers from Hermes to Paracelsus acknowledged the pre-existence of a celestial chaos—a divine realm not yet illuminated by the light of the sun, and not yet differentiated into clarity by the separating out of the elements. This primitive mystery-land, being God's "first" creation, was viewed with philosophical reverence.¹

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman employs the microcosm-macrocosm principle implicitly stated in Plato's *Timaeus*. He treats the origin and structure of the universe as a matter of bringing order out of disorder. This creation of the universe, however, is given a distinctive treatment by Chapman, for he considers it worse than the original chaos in which the four elements were not yet separated one from the other. This is the central paradox of lines 1-200, first introduced by Chapman in verse-paragraph 3. The original "formelesse matter of this world" (line 31), although "vnlightsome, vast, and indigest" (line 30), was better than the moral chaos which now exists in the souls of men. The passage under consideration occurs in lines 29-49, already quoted in this dissertation.

The four elements in their natural purity were finer than they are now. Chaos had soul, but the addition of form to matter has transformed the World-Soul of the universe and the soul of man into lumpish monsters. As Miss Bartlett points out, the word _forme_ is "a key word in Chapman's metaphysical utterances, where it is often repeated in the sense given by scholastic philosophy: 'The essential determinant principle of a thing; that which makes anything (matter) a determinate species or kind of being; the essential creative quality.'"¹

It is properly the function of the soul to give form, but the world is in such a state of chaos, says Chapman, that the body or matter is giving form rather than the soul.

The genealogy of Chaos, and Night as the offspring of Chaos, is traceable to Hesiod's _Theogony_:

> Verily at the first Chaos came to be, but next wide-bosomed Earth, the ever-sure foundation of all the deathless ones who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus, and dim Tartarus in the depth of the widepathed Earth, and Eros (Love), fairest among the deathless gods, who unnerves the limbs and overcomes the mind and wise counsels of all gods and all men within them. From Chaos came forth Erebus and black Night; but of Night were born Aether and Day, whom she conceived and bare from union in love with Erebus.²

The position of Chaos as the head of the genealogy is not always consistent in ancient cosmologies. The Orphic

¹ Poems, Notes, p. 423.

cosmology, for instance, has several versions. The most common is that stated in the Rhapsodiae, or epic lays, in which Chronos (Time) is the first principle. The Orphic cosmology reported by Eudemus of Rhodes, however, begins with Night as the first principle. Finally, the cosmogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus originates with water, from which is formed slime or mud (later to solidify into Earth) out of which Chronos is born. From Chronos come Aether, Chaos, and Erebus.¹

With regard to Night there is the same diversity of opinion as to whether she is the first or second principle in the hierarchy of creation. According to the Orphic hymn To Night, she is the first, eldest, and source of all things: "From whom at first both Gods and men arose."² As Walter Clyde Curry observes in his discussion of Milton's cosmology, "these interpretations of ancient cosmogonies are not entirely in agreement." He goes on to say that it is commonplace to view Chaos as the paternal, masculine principle, and Night as the maternal, feminine principle:

But whether Chaos is established as "the One," or as the perfectly united nature of that which is intelligible, or as the second hypostasis of the intelligible triad, he is universally presented as a transcendent god and the active or masculine principle in the procession of


²The Hymns of Orpheus, translated from the original Greek by T. Taylor (London, 1792), p. 115.
other gods. And whether Night is identified with the second hypostasis of the intelligible triad or with the summit of the following order, she is always the goddess and the passive or maternal principle in all progressions even to the last things. In spite of a diversity of opinion in these interpretations, however, we may safely conclude that the Pythagorean Chaos is to be equated with the Neoplatonic infinity, and the Orphic Night with "supercelestial place."

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman's concept of Chaos is, upon first reading, a little ambiguous, for he first considers Chaos as a disordered place in which the elements still existed in a state of primordial fusion prior to the time of creation (ll. 29-38).

Later on in verse-paragraph four (ll. 50-62), Chapman speaks of chaos as a moral condition in the created world of men: "So all things now (extract out of the prime) / Are turnd to chaos, and confound the time" (ll. 61-62). Chapman here is adhering to his theme of the microcosm-macrocosm. He is forcefully reiterating his belief that man's body, parallel to the earth, is corrupt; man's soul, equivalent to the heavens, is divine. To rephrase the same idea: "As body is to soul, so earth is to heaven a shadow compared with substance. Felicity is definitely not to be found on earth."²

According to Miss Bartlett, Hesiod's concept of Chaos in the Theogony "first assumes the proportion of a physical

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theory in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (i. 5-31), a passage which Chapman certainly knew. The image of Chaos 'indigest' (30, 59-60), 'Chaos, rudis, indigestaque moles' (*Met*. i. 7), is repeated with variations both in his poems and plays."¹ Miss Bartlett conjectures that for lines 39-46 Chapman is strongly indebted to Joshua Sylvester's translation of the *Divine Weeks* of Du Bartas. She quotes the parallel passage which comes in the First Day of the First Week, taken from the folio of 1608, sig. C⁴v:

That first World (yet) was a most formless Form,  
A confus'd Heap, a Chaos most deform,  
A Gulf of Gulfs, a Body ill compact,  
An ugly medly, where all difference lackt:  
Where th'Elements lay jumbled altogether,  
Where hot and colde were iarring each with either;  
The blunt and sharp, the dank against the drie,  
The hard with soft, the base against the high;  
Bitter with sweet: and while this brawl did last,  
The Earth in Heav' n, the Heav'n in Earth was plac' t;  
Earth, Aire, and Fire were with the water mixt;  
Water, Earth, Aire within the Fire were fixt;  
Fire, Water, Earth, did in the Aire abide;  
Aire, Fire, and Water, in the Earth did hide.

Miss Bartlett no doubt is correct in her statement "that Chapman had Sylvester's book open before him" when he wrote lines 29-49. She also points out the similarity between their use of the word *form* as "the essential determinant principle of a thing; that which makes anything (matter) a determinate species or kind of being; the essential creative quality."²

¹Poems, Notes, p. 423.
²Ibid.
What is unique about Chapman's contribution to this passage is the analogy he draws between the chaos existing in the universe and the chaos disturbing man's soul. Here he adds to the theory of the microcosm-macrocosm by stating that the chaos in man's soul is more harmful than that of the universe, for it has made the souls of men "Lumps being digested; monsters, in our pride" (line 49).

In the next verse-paragraph (ll. 50-62) Chapman amplifies the theme of chaotic disorder in the souls of men by employing an extended simile. Possibly influenced by the Neoplatonic theory of emanation, Chapman uses the image of a fountain overflowing into beautiful streams, making music, until it finally drains into the "gulfie desart" (line 58). He draws a parallel between the physical chaos of the world and the moral chaos of man's soul. The downward movement of this verse-paragraph reinforces the theme of decay and disorder in the world caused by man's loss of virtue. Man's soul in its primitive state was beautiful. Now the soul no longer has this pristine loveliness because it has taken on matter. Just as the stream becomes progressively weaker as it flows away from its source, so man as he becomes more concerned with material goods departs from that first condition of goodness in which his soul existed without his body:

And as a wealthie fount, that hils did hide,  
Let forth by labor of industrious hands,  
Powres out her treasure through the fruitefull strands,
Seemely diuided to a hunderd streames,
Whose bwteties shed such profitable beames,
And make such Orphean Musicke in their courses,
That Citties follow their enchanting forces,
Who running farre, at length ech powres her hart
Into the bosome of the gulfie desart,
As much confounded there, and indigest,
As in the chaos of the hills comprest:
So all things now (extract out of the prime)
Are turnd to chaos, and confound the time.
(11. 50-62)

The Neoplatonic principle of the microcosm-macrocosm is relevant here also. The hidden treasure of the "wealthie fount" (line 50), once fruitful and beautiful, is destroyed. Man's soul because it is more concerned with its body is in a state of moral chaos. As in the preceding verse-paragraph, Chapman concludes with an epigrammatic reiteration of his paradoxical theme: "So all things now (extract out of the prime) / Are turnd to chaos, and confound the time" (11. 61-62).

As was stated earlier, an understanding of Chapman's adherence to the Neoplatonic theory of the microcosm-macrocosm is central to a comprehension of the first two hundred lines of the "Hymnus in Noctem." This principle governs the expression of his thought throughout the first portion of the poem. Although mythological allusions and extended similes intervene, the notion that there is a relationship between the universe and the little world of man is ever present. Chapman's distinctive touch is a note of pessimism which now pervades the microcosm in comparison with the pre-existent chaos of the macrocosm. Man's soul is out of harmony with its universe. Only
contemplation of true mysteries of Night will restore peace and contentment.
CHAPTER III

MYTHOLOGY IN RELATION TO NEOPLATONISM
IN THE "HYMNUS IN NOCTEM"

F. L. Schoell's scholarly study of George Chapman's sources for his poems reveals the poet to have been influenced by four writers in particular: (1) Natalis Comes' *Mythologiae sive Explicationum Fabularum Libri X* (Venice, 1551); (2) Marsilio Ficino's commentaries on Platonic philosophy, especially *In Platonis Ionem* and *In Convivium Platonis de Amore*, which are in the Basel edition of the *Opera Omnia* (1576); (3) Guilielmus Xylander's Latin rendering of Plutarch's *Moralia* edited by Wechel in 1599; and (4) Jerome Wolf's translation of the works of Epictetus. It is Natalis Comes' *Mythologiae* which is of direct concern here, for it is from this treatise that Chapman draws his mythological lore almost exclusively in the composition of *The Shadow of Night*.

Natalis Comes, the chief mythographer of the Renaissance, was born in Milan around the beginning of the sixteenth century and died about 1582. Although his *Mythologiae* first appeared in 1551, it was not until 1581, when it was published in Venice, that it met with success. This work, along with the mythological compilations of Boccaccio and L. Gregorio Giraldi, are the main source by which mythological fables ...
were transmitted throughout Europe during the sixteenth century.

The two hymns of *The Shadow of Night* are compact with mythological allusions taken from Comes' manual. W. Schrickx considers the central theme of *The Shadow of Night* to be derived from Comes' chapter *De Nocte*.¹ A close reading of the quoted passage, however, reveals that Chapman modifies his source to suit his Neoplatonic purpose:

Dicta est eadem mater omnium, quia rerum omnium partum antecesserit, & a nocendo Nox dicitur, vt quidam voluerunt, quia noctis humor infestus sit hominibus, quod vel in laborantibus scabie, vel febre, vel aliis morbis, patet: qui quidem grauiiores fiunt, magisque infestant per noctem.

The same is said to be the mother of all things because she existed before the birth of all things, and she is called night from being harmful as some would have it, because the dampness of night is harmful to men, which indeed is apparent in the case of those suffering from mange, or fever, or other diseases, which indeed become worse and trouble more during the night.²

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman's depiction of Night as the mother of all things recalls this passage in Comes' work. Chapman, however, does not view Night as bad but rather as good. Here he diverges from Comes and calls Night the "great goddesse"


²Translated by Sister Margaret Mary Toomey, O.P., Edgewood College, Madison, Wisconsin, 1969. All translations from Comes' *Mythologiae* are by this translator unless otherwise cited.
(line 1), "deare Night" (line 16), "Sorrowes deare soueraigne" (line 29), "queene of rest" (line 29), "most sacred mother both of gods and men" (line 68), and "goddesse of most worth" (line 213). Throughout the "Hymnus in Noctem" Night is identified with the period prior to the creation of time. As will be seen, this notion of primordial Night as being good is the underlying theme of the "Hymnus in Noctem."

In Gloss 7 appended to the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman himself gives a clue to the identity of the mythology within the poem. The relevant passage reads: "Vulcan is said by Natalis Comes in his Mythologie, to haue made a golden bed for the Sunne, wherein he swum sleeping till the morning."¹ The appendix to Schoell's work, Études sur l'humanisme continental en Angleterre, has convincingly demonstrated that the mythological allusions in the poem and the mythological lore couched in Latin and Greek in the glosses are from Comes' Mythologiae and not from first-hand acquaintance with classical authors.²

Although there is really no doubt as to the source of Chapman's mythological references in The Shadow of Night, there is some question as to the artistry with which he incorporates this borrowed material into his poem. Past criticism has given the impression that Chapman used little selectivity or

¹Poems, p. 29.
discrimination in his reading of Comes' manual. Chapman has been accused of lifting entire passages from Comes without assimilating or changing the material for his poetic purpose. There is some accuracy in this indictment, but it is not true for the entire poem. Frequently, Chapman has adapted Comes' mythology in a skillful and marvellously perceptive way to illustrate the ideas of his Neoplatonic philosophy. In the following discussion of Chapman's mythology in the "Hymnus in Noctem," a comparison of some of Chapman's mythology from the "Hymnus in Noctem" with passages from Comes' Mythologiae will be made in order to show that Chapman did not just literally steal from Comes but manipulated his source material in order to achieve a certain artistic end.

There are some instances of Chapman's mythology, particularly the mythological allusions in his glosses, which never become an organic part of his poetry. There are two reasons for this lack of integralness. First, Chapman's frequent employment of mythological allusions and his continual references to "auctores" in the glosses to his poems indicate his desire to appear as the "learned poet." In The Shadow of Night, for instance, Chapman in his notes to the poem refers to Aratus (twice), Hesiod (four times), Pherecydes, Callimachus (twice), Plutarch, Apollonius Rhodius, Strabo, Nicander, Euripides, and Cicero.¹ Secondly, Chapman was influenced by

¹ Poems, pp. 29, 42-45.
the "purposeful obscurity" or "hidden mysteries" concept of poetry adhered to by the Renaissance Neoplatonists and incorporated into the compendiums of Renaissance mythographers. According to Edgar Wind, this theory originated with Plato who believes the true philosopher is one who undergoes a special type of initiation ceremony, whereby he learns divine truths unknown to the vulgar multitude. Thus Plato replaces the mystères cultuels, the popular ritual of initiation administered to all without distinction, with the "mystères littéraires, that is, the figurative use of terms and images which were borrowed from popular rites but transferred to the intellectual disciplines of philosophical debate and meditation." The doctrine was systematized by Plotinus, but ended "by betraying the late Platonists into a revival of magic." By the time the doctrine reached the Florentine humanists, the term mysteries as "the ritual, the figurative, or the magic" was thoroughly mixed. Predominant, however, was the figurative meaning. Wind writes:

Whenever "the mysteries of the ancients" were invoked by De Bussi, Beroaldo, Perotti, or Landino, not to mention Ficino or Pico della Mirandola, their concern was less with the original mystery cults than with their philosophical adaptation. Good judgment alone did not impose the restriction; it was largely a case of good luck, for it derived from a historical misconception: they mistook the figurative interpretation as inherent in the original mysteries. As indefatigable readers of Plutarch, Porphyry, and Proclus, they saw the early mystery cults through the eyes of Platonic philosophers who had already interlarded them with mystères littéraires. Thus
Plato appeared to them not as a critic or transposer of mysteries, but as the heir and oracle of an ancient wisdom for which a ritual disguise had been invented by the founders of the mysteries themselves.

A necessary consequence of this "hidden mysteries" theory is the idea that true wisdom is from the East and that the Greeks and Romans are only intermediaries disguising sacred truths. Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, the two most influential Italian humanists, are examples of the syncretic ideal of reconciling all religions, a notion which occupied the minds of the Renaissance. Ficino concerns himself with Platonism and Christianity, while Pico envisions a reconciliation of Eastern religions, Hebrew learning, Platonic philosophy, and Christianity.

Natalis Comes, the Renaissance mythographer from whom Chapman borrowed quite freely in his composition of the "Hymnus in Noctem," holds the same "poetic theology" as Ficino and Pico. Like Comes, Chapman believes there are certain truths only the initiate or selected few could understand. It is with this idea in mind that Chapman says: "The prophane multitude I hate, & onelie consecrate my strange Poems to these searching spirits, whom learning hath made noble, and nobilitie sacred. . . . But that Poesie should be as a peruiall [easily seen through], as Oratorie, and plainness her special ornament, were

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the plaine way to barbarisme. . . ."¹ Poetry, the knowledge of
dive truths, should be hidden beneath the veil of myth lest
it be profaned by the multitude. Furthermore, these sacred
mysteries should contain a moral applicable to the life of man.
Here, too, Chapman is influenced by Comes' mythological
interpretations directed to "the most useful precepts
concerning the life of man."²

Influenced by the "hidden mysteries" concept of poetry,
the "high style" of heroic poetry, and the didactic
interpretations of Natalis Comes, Chapman's mythological
technique consists in "the enforcing of moral ideas with novel
figures and applications." His allusions come mainly from
Natalis Comes, "not, however, in their first simplicity, but
colored by the passage through Chapman's prismatic mind."³

Chapman's epilogue to the "Hymnus in Noctem," which supports
this judgment by Bush, implies what appears to be his
intentional "literary allusiveness."⁴ Chapman declares:

For the rest of his owne invention, figures and
similes, touching their aptnesse and noueltie he hath
not laboured to iustifie them, because he hopes that

¹George Chapman, "To the Trulie Learned, and my worthy

²Lotspeich, p. 16, quoting Comes, Mythologiae, 6. 6.

³Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition

⁴Margaret Bottrall, "George Chapman's Defense of
they will be proud enough to justifie themselues, and prove sufficiently authentical to such as understand them: for the rest, God help them, I can not (do as others), make day seeme a lighter woman then she is, by painting her.¹

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman's mythology appears as mythological symbolism and moralistic allegory. Each of these aspects will be treated in order.

The Neoplatonist's discovery of religious teachings in mythology influenced George Chapman. His mythological symbolism of Night in the "Hymnus in Noctem" reveals that he is following the syncretic tradition of Renaissance Neoplatonic theology. In the poem Night functions as both a positive and negative mythological symbol. When Chapman speaks of Night affirmatively, he uses the vocabulary of Neoplatonic theology. Night is the "great goddess" (line 1), "deare Night" (line 16), "Sorrowes deare soueraigne" (line 29), "queene of rest" (line 29), "most sacred mother both of Gods and men" (line 68), and "goddesse of most worth" (line 213). Night is identified with the Neoplatonic cosmological symbol of Chaos to represent a pre-existent realm of confusion prior to the creation of the universe (li. 1-200). Chapman also employs Night as a Neoplatonic mystical symbol for the time of light or ecstasy, "the necessary state for the act of creation, the appearance of Cynthia: in this sense it is the central image

¹ Poems, p. 30.
in many mystical writings, from those of Dionysius the Areopagite to St. John of the Cross.1

Chapman's negative symbolism of Night is based primarily on the technique of using grotesque similes and metaphors. He describes Night as "a stepdame Night of minde . . . / Who broodes beneath her hell obscuring wings, / Worlds of confusion . . ." (ll. 63-65). A few lines further, Chapman's Neoplatonic doctrine that evil is a result of ignorance is brought out in mythological metaphors comparing the "blindness of the minde" (line 71) to a "horrid stepdame" (line 71) and to "a Gorgon that with brasse, and snakie brows,/ (Most harlot-like) her naked secrets shows" (ll. 71-74).

Chapman concludes in his typical manner of epigrammatic paradox. He reiterates the theme of chaos and disorder by mythological allusions to "Calydonian bores" disrupting and destroying nature:

Disjunction showes, in all things now amisse,  
By that first order, what confusion is:  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
All are transformd to Calydonian bores,  
That kill our bleeding vines, displow our fields,  
Rend groues in peeces; all things nature yeelds  
Supplanting: tumbling vp in hills of dearth,  
The fruiteful disposition of the earth,  
Ruine creates men: all to slaughter bent,  
Like enuie fed with others famishment,  
(11. 79-80, 84-90)

Schoell's investigation of Chapman's borrowings from Comes discloses that Chapman took his ideas for lines 63-65,

1Bradbrook, p. 136.
"A stepdame Night of minde about vs clings, / Who broodes beneath her hell obscuring wings, Worlds of confusion," from Comes' text. The passage from Comes reads:

Verum de ijs, quae fabulose de Nocte dici solent, satis. Ex illa nuper commemoratae pestes natae esse dicuntur, quoniam inscitia & malitia mortalium, quae Nox est mentis, omnium prope calamitatum, quae humanum genus inuadunt, parens est & altrix.

But this is enough about the things that used to be said about Night. The plagues just mentioned are said to have been born from her, since the ignorance and malice of mortals, which is the Night of the mind, is the parent and nurse of nearly all the disasters that attack the human race.

The above extract from Comes shows that Chapman's notion that ignorance is the "Night of the mind" is derived from Comes, but Chapman adds the sinister qualifier stepdame to emphasize the evil wrought in the world by ignorance. It is also apparent from the above passage that Chapman has modified his source to suit his poetic end. He has not merely translated Comes into his verses.

Chapman's use of the mythological passage concerning the Calydonian boars reveals a more literal adherence to Comes than the ignorance as the "Night of the mind" selection. Lines 84-88 of the "Hymnus in Noctem" state:

All are transformd to Calydonian bores,
That kill our bleeding vines, disploow our fields,
Rend groues in peeces; all things nature yeelds
Supplanting: tumbling vp in hills of dearth,
The fruitefull disposition of the earth.

(11. 84-88)

The parallel passage in Comes runs:

Atque inter caetera damna, quae illi regioni
inflarebat [aper Calydonius], cultissimam Oenei vineam
... populaabatur ... vt ait Homerus Iliad. primo.

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Tunc irata Iouis proles Diana ferocem
In vites immisit aprum, qui plurima fecit
Tristia, qui plantas radicibus eruit imis,\footnote{Schoell, p. 180, quoting Comes, \textit{Myth.}, VII, 3, De Apro Calydonio, p. 471.}
Aequavitque solo pomos cum floribus ipsis.

And among other curses which [the Calydonian boar]
brought on that region, he laid waste . . . the
cultivated vineyard of Oeneus, as Homer says in
Iliad I.

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Then the angry child of Jupiter, Diana, sent
against the vines a fierce boar, which did much
harm, which tore up the plants from their deep
roots and leveled the fruit and the very flowers
to the ground.

Despite the closeness of the two extracts, it should be
pointed out that Chapman has selected the "Calydonian boar"
passage for a specific purpose. He desires to illustrate the
disorder existing in the world because man is no longer bound
by "religious curb" (line 81). Thus Chapman is adapting the
mythology in Comes to expound his Neoplatonic didactic
doctrine.

In addition to mythology as symbolism, Chapman employs
classical figures and allusions as moralistic allegory.
Chapman relates the causes of this "disjunction" (line 79) or
chaos in the souls of men and in the World-Soul of the universe.
The Capital Sins or the lack of virtue, that is, the "gaine of riches" (line 27), "enuie" (line 90), "base ambition" (line 96), and "auarice" (line 160), have turned men into "manlesse natures" (line 92). They are more concerned with pleasures of the senses and material goods than with the intellect or mind with which Chapman equates virtue. To show man's inward moral deformity, Chapman describes man grossly. Alternating the ugly description of man with moral sententiae, Chapman writes:

His armes into his shoulders crept for feare
Bountie should use them; and fierce rape forbeare,
His legges into his greedie belly runne,
The charge of hospitalitie to shunne)
In him the world is to a lump reuerst,
That shruncke from forme, that was by forme disperst,
And in nought more then thanklesse auarice,
Not rendring vertue her deserued price,
(11. 97-104)

Strongly influenced by Marsilio Ficino, Chapman here is expounding the Neoplatonic doctrine that man's physical appearance mirrors his spiritual condition. For Ficino the shape and appearance of a well-proportioned man manifests the ideal concept of man, who is in turn a reflection of the divine countenance:

From all these arguments it follows that the entire charm of the divine countenance, which is called universal beauty, is incorporeal, not only in the Angelic Mind and in the World-Soul, but also in the sight of the eyes. Nor do we love only this whole beauty all at once; but moved by our admiration, we love also its parts. There is born a particular love for a particular beauty, and so we are attracted to some man, a part of the world order, especially when in him a spark of the divine beauty clearly shines. Love of this kind springs from two causes: first, the
image of the Father's countenance pleases us, and second, the appearance and shape of a well-proportioned man agrees most clearly with that concept of mankind which our soul catches and retains from the author of everything.¹

To prove that the gods reward virtue, Chapman alludes to mythological fables. He relates the tale of "kinde Amalthaea" (line 105) who, though a goat, was transferred by Jove to heaven to live as a star for having fed him her milk when he was an infant on the island of Crete. Chapman gives the moral of this tale:

Basenesse is flintie: gentrie soft as silke,
In heauens she liues, and rules a liuing signe
In human bodies: yet not so divine
That she can work her kindnesse in our hart.

(11. 108-111)

A close look at the "kinde Amalthaea" passage with its source in Comes reveals that Chapman definitely borrowed the mythological facts from Comes. However, Schoell fails to point out that Chapman's original contribution is the addition of the moral just quoted in lines 108-111. Chapman's lines are as follows:

Kinde Amalthaea was transferd by Ioue,
Into his sparckling pauement, for her loue,
Though but a Goate, and givind him her milke.

(11. 105-107)

Schoell's extract from Comes reads:

Praeclarum est eius quod dicebam argumentum, quia capram etiam, quod de Ioue benemerita sit, cum illi lac praebuerit: . . . inter sydera collocarunt . . .

Cur inter sydera Caprae signum relatum fuerit, iam explicauimus superius, quod Jupiter neque ingratus, neque acceptorum immemor vel adversus Capram quidem videri voluerit.

The argument for what I was saying is very famous, since even the goat, because she deserved well of Jupiter, since she had given him her milk, they . . . placed among the stars . . . We have already explained above why the sign of the goat had been placed among the stars, because Jupiter did not wish to seem ungrateful or unmindful of favors even toward a goat.

In Chapman's hands the story of "kinde Amalthaea" becomes a symbol of virtue recognized in lowly things by the true spirit of nobility. With his next mythological example, the ship of the Argonauts, his technique is the same. He borrows the mythology from Comes but adds his own moral. The relevant passage in the "Hymnus in Noctem" reads:

The senselesse Argiue ship, for her deserts,
Bearing to Colchos, and for bringing backe,
The hardie Argonauts, secure of wracke,
The fautor and the God of gratitude,
Would not from number of the starres exclude.
A thousand such examples could I cite,
To damne stone-pesants . . . .
(11. 112-118)

Schoell quotes the following selection from Comes:

Hanc nauim fuisse inter sidera collocatam fabulati sunt . . . quia cum nullam beneficentiam sine remuneratione Deus esse patiatur, tum illa praecipue grata est Deo, quae a sapientia & consilio proficiscitur . . . Rem diuinam . . . liberalitatem & munificentiam esse dixerunt, quippe cum ad exemplum liberalitatis & animalia complura, & res sensu carentes, quia de Diis putarentur fuisse benemeritae, inter siderum numerum fuerint relatae.2

1Schoell, p. 180, quoting Comes, Myth., VI, 11, De Capra Caelesti, pp. 400, 401.
2Schoell, p. 181, quoting Comes, Myth., VI, 10, De Argonauti, p. 400.
They made up the story that this ship had been placed among the stars . . . because while God allows no good deed to be without reward, the good deed that proceeds from wisdom and counsel is especially pleasing to Him . . .

They said that liberality and generosity were . . . a divine thing, especially since many animals and things without sense had been placed among the stars as an example of liberality because they were thought to have deserved well of the gods.

Thus, after having related the tale of the ship of the Argonauts which was rewarded and placed among the stars for having brought the Argonauts to and from Colchos, Chapman elaborates the moral which is his own original contribution:

A thousand such examples could I cite,
To damne stone-pesants, that like Typhons fight
Against their Maker, and contend to be
Of kings, the abiect slaues of drudgerie:
Proud of that thraldome: louse the kindest lest,
And hate, not to be hated of the best.
(11. 118-123)

According to Phyllis Bartlett, Chapman's "theme is that man need not think he is cast in the highest shape,"¹ for Chapman could cite a thousand examples of Jove gratefully rewarding humble virtue in lowly things. Thus, Chapman compares man to the hundred-headed monster Typhon who fought against Jove and was conquered by a thunderbolt.

Chapman continues his technique of weaving moral allegories out of the classical myths of Prometheus, Orpheus, and Hercules. According to Erwin Panofsky, Prometheus was "a favorite humanistic symbol of the artist" and Hercules

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¹Poems, Notes, p. 424.
"a favorite humanistic symbol of man in general." Chapman's interpretation of the Promethean myth is typically Renaissance. Abraham Fraunce's explanation of the myth well describes the purpose Chapman had in mind. Prometheus symbolizes man's unhappy plight in the terrestrial world. Just as Prometheus was tied to a pillar, so "The minde is bound fast to the body, and there chained for awhile"; and the eagle devouring Prometheus' heart represents the thoughts or meditations which daily consume the mind. Only the night of contemplation can restore peace in man's heart again: "As much as by the day the Eagle devoureth somuch the night restoreth againe."  

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman depicts man's earthly struggle. In the opening verse-paragraph he asks that "deare Night" (line 16) raise his soul  

... to that perseverance,  
That in my torture, she all earths may sing,  
And force to tremble in her trumpeting  
Heauens chritstall temples: in her powrs implant  
Skill of my griefs, and she can nothing want.  

(11. 16-20)  

Chapman calls on "Promethean Poets" (line 131) to create man "With shapes of Centaurs, Harpies, Lapithes" (line 134) to show how "degenerate, and growne deprest" (line 127) man's soul has become.  

1Erwin Panofsky, "Renaissance and Renascences," Kenyon Review, VI (Spring, 1944), 233.  

Here again Chapman's adherence to Neoplatonic doctrine stands out. The poet's task is to stir man to reform. It is because of "his soules sake, and her intelligence" that man's figure has "such God-like excellence" (ll. 125-127). Now due to sin and lack of virtue, man has lost this beauty of body and soul. Man is both outwardly and inwardly deformed.

Because man has acquired a Narcissus-like love, "Seeing themselues in those Pierean founts" (line 137), Chapman turns to poetic mythology to aid mankind. He first calls on the allegorical figure of Orpheus, "the sweetest Muses sonne" (line 139), to calm "the perturbations of his minde" (line 150), "the infernal kinde" (line 149), to lead man back "To ciuill loue of Art and Fortitude" (line 144). Orpheus' sway over "rockes, forrests, floods, and winds" (line 141) is symbolical of the poet's wisdom over "savage and illiterate nature in the surrounding world as well as the passions of the lower self." These passions must be overcome before Orpheus, "the type of the truly governed man, one like Plato's 'just' man,"\(^1\) can bring back his Eurydice, "which Justice signifies" (line 152), from hell. But Orpheus' backward glance is a symbol of those "manlesse changes" (line 166) which are despised by men "enobled with a deathlesse loue / Of things eternall" (ll. 167-168).

Chapman's choice of Orpheus as an allegorical figure was particularly meaningful to the men of the Renaissance. Orpheus represented the poet, the philosopher, and the theologian. As philosopher and theologian, "he was believed to be the founder of an esoteric mystery religion; . . . he was not merely commenting on an already existing Greek religious tradition, but was providing the fundamental and sacred writings of his own." Even more important for Chapman was Orpheus' function as a poet civilizing barbarous people and teaching sacred truths. D. P. Walker has excellently described this aspect of Orpheus' character:

... we must bear in mind Orpheus as the type of the ethically influential, effect-producing singer. Orpheus with his lyre charming the rocks, trees, and wild animals was normally interpreted as meaning that he was divinely inspired poetic teacher, possessed by Platonic furor, who reformed and civilized his barbarous contemporaries, "the stony and beastly people," as Sidney calls them. Ficino, who developed the doctrine of the furores so that the greatest poets were thought to be possessed not only by the poetic furor, but also by the religious (Bacchic), prophetic, and amorous ones, gives Orpheus as an example of this: "Omnibus his furoribus occupatum fuisse Orpheum libri eius testimonio esse possunt." It was a characteristic of such inspiration that the poet received supernaturally revealed knowledge of human and divine things. Thus Orpheus the legendary singer reinforces the claim of Orpheus the theologian to be in receipt of divine revelation.


2 Ibid., pp. 100-101.
After this ethical digression on Orpheus, Chapman introduces the allegory of the golden chain of Homer:

The golden chaine of Homers high deuice
Ambition is, or cursed avarice,
Which all Gods haling being tyed to Ioue,
Him from his setted height could neuer moue:
Intending this, that though that powrefull chaine
Of most Herculean vigor to constraine
Men from true vertue, or their pristine states
Attempt a man that manlesse changes hates,
And is enobled with a deathlesse loue
Of things eternall, a dignified aboue.

(11. 159-168)

According to Homer, the other gods were unable to pull Jove down from his heights by means of the golden chain. The golden chain signifies "ambition" (line 160) or "cursed avarice" (line 160), by which "to constraine / Men from true vertue" (11. 164-165). Whereas in the instances of "kinde Amalthaea" and the ship of the Argonauts Chapman took only the mythology and not the moral from Comes, he here borrows the allegorical interpretation of Orpheus and the golden chain of Homer quite literally from Comes' Mythologiae, VII, xiv, De Orphee, and II, iv, De Iunone.¹

In lines 255-260 Chapman enlists the aid of Hercules to "cleanse this beastly stable of the world" (line 256). Here Chapman is using the Renaissance interpretation of Hercules as "a moral hero, a champion against tyranny, and a model for any young aristocrat to follow."² Sixteenth-century writers were

¹Schoell, p. 35n.
not so much concerned with the twelve labors of Hercules as they were with "the Neoplatonic interpretation of Hercules' pyre as a burning of the dross of mortality by which he purged himself to become divine."\textsuperscript{1} Abraham Fraunce writes: "At length . . . he burnt himselfe on the mount Oeta: that is to say, his terrestrial body being purged and purified, himselfe was afterwards deified and crowned with immortality."\textsuperscript{2} The story of "Hercules' Choice," or "The Hero at the Fork in the Road," in which Hercules had to choose between the path of virtue and the path of vice, was also a popular subject for the emblem books, whose main purpose was "not an illustration of the text, nor the text an explanation of the picture; their purpose is a mutual elucidation of an idea."\textsuperscript{3} Thus, a characteristic of Chapman's style is the use of allegorical myths to elucidate a moral idea. In this sense Chapman's mythology is an organic part of his poetry. As ornamentation, however, his use of mythological allusions and figures of speech lead to obscurity and give a pedantic effect to his poetry. Finally, Chapman's borrowings from Natalis Comes reveal a few instances where he borrows literally from the mythographer with little or no modification of his material.

\begin{enumerate}
\item Fraunce, fol. 47r.
\item Liselotte Dieckmann, "Renaissance Hieroglyphics," Comparative Literature, IX (1957), 313.
\end{enumerate}
More significant, however, are the examples where he took the mythological facts directly from Comes but added his own original interpretation. For the most part, it can be said that Chapman skillfully adapted his mythology to suit the Neoplatonic theme of the "Hymnus in Noctem."

James Smith was correct in naming Chapman the "poet of similes." The typical form of his similes is the "as . . . so" construction, although he does not always adhere to the logical comparison of two distinct items. Most often his similes are based on the free association of ideas. Frequently, his similes achieve penetrating insight. The following similes from the "Hymnus in Noctem" are such instances. The first simile compares the actions of man to the work of crude painters which needs a label to identify it. Man's actions must be guided by the mind, "Else may they easily passe for beasts or foules" (line 179), for "Soules praise our shapes, and not our shapes our soules" (line 180). The second simile compares the actions of men to "Rude rurall dances with their countrey loues" (line 183) seen from a distance:

And as when Chloris paints th'ennamild meads,
A flocke of shepherds to the bagpipe treads
Rude rurall dances with their countrrey loues:
Some a farre off observing their remoues,
Turnes, and returns, quicke footing, sodaine stands,
Reelings aside, od actions with their hands;
Now backe, now forwards, now lockt arme in arme,
Now hearing musicke, thinke it is a charme,

That like loose froes at Bacchanalean feasts, 
Makes them seeme franticke in their brraine iestes; 
And being clusterd in a shapelesse croude, 
With much lesse admiration are allowd. 
So our first excellence, so much abusd, 
And we (without the harmonie was vsd, 
When Saturnes golden scepter stroke the strings 
Of Ciuill gouernement) make all our doings 
Savour of rudenesse, and obscuritie, 
And in our formes, show more deformitie, 
Then if we still were wrapt, and smooothered 
In that confusion, out of which we fled. 

(11. 181-200)

In the above verse-paragraph Chapman's simile is far more subtle than the mere comparison of the depraved state of mankind to a country orgy. The peasants' dance appears to the distant observer as a crude country caper. And just as their awkward actions render their performance ludicrous, so man, as Chapman views him, is dancing the dance of civilization. But because he lacks the refinement and graciousness to perform the dance correctly, he blunders through the complex duties of civilized life.

Smith is correct in stating that similes "are never lacking in Chapman's invention, to illustrate any situation that may arise."¹ The insertion of these two similes right after the myths of Prometheus, Orpheus, and Hercules momentarily clouds the reader's vision of the central paradox of lines 1-200, namely, the chaos in the universe is worse than the original chaos in which the four elements were not yet separated one from another. The myths also account for

¹Ibid.
Chapman's reiteration of his theme in the final lines of the verse-paragraph (193-200).

Lines 201-254 function as transitional paragraphs to the second portion of the hymn, which is nocturnal contemplation. Here Chapman continues to employ simile after simile. For example, he compares the retirement of men from various tasks to rest at night, and the rout of earthly creatures by the forces of night to the moral acts of men: "All dayes of honor and of vertue spent" (line 222). Here, of course, Chapman is reverting to his original paradox of the moral chaos in the souls of men as worse than the original chaos prior to creation. Chapman concludes by using the effective image of a jewel in the midst of darkness. Man's "shadow-darkness" is evil and contrary to the contemplative darkness of true Night:

Mens faces glitter, and their hearts are blacke,
But thou (great Mistresse of heauens gloomie racke)
Art blacke in face, and glitterst in thy heart.
There is thy glorie, riches, force, and Art.

(11. 225-228)

Chapman does not adapt slavishly the borrowed passages of mythology from Natalis Comes. Rather he refines his source material to reinforce the Neoplatonic doctrine he has uppermost in his mind. His use of Comes' *Mythologiae* is skillfully, perceptively, and originally handled. Furthermore, his mythology serves a functional purpose, operating both as symbolism and mythology in the "Hymnus in Noctem." The mythological symbolism stresses the good as opposed to the bad
aspects of Night. The mythological allegory, mainly the myths of Prometheus, Orpheus, and Hercules, emphasizes the importance of the virtuous life. Finally, Chapman's abundant use of mythological allusions reveals his desire to appear as the learned poet and his belief in the "hidden mysteries" concept of Neoplatonism in which he attempts to disguise sacred truths under the veil of allegory to prevent them from being profaned by the vulgar crowd. This adept handling of mythology is powerful in unfolding the Neoplatonic doctrines of his poetic theology.
CHAPTER IV

NEOPLATONIC MYSTICISM IN THE "HYMNUM IN NOCTEM"

The opening verse-paragraph and the last two hundred lines of the "Hymnus in Noctem" deal with Neoplatonic mysticism as a solution to the decay of the world and the debasement of man's soul. Chapman's mysticism is based on a hybridization of the mystical methods of Plato, Plotinus, and Ficino. Plato's contribution to mysticism is the enunciation of "principles and beliefs in which men are always interested--the immortality of the soul, the existence of God, the basic difference between the world of sense and the world of reality, and the perpetual warfare going on in the heart of man between his higher and lower nature." Plato's mysticism involves three steps: purification, contemplation, and ascent. Purification "consists in a virtual separation of the soul from the body--the philosophical dying by which the soul even before the body's death is fitted for incorporeal existence." Plato's Phaedo stresses the importance of freeing the soul from the senses:

In this present life, I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse or communion with the body, and

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1 Joseph Collins, Christian Mysticism in the Elizabethan Age (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 3.
are not surfeited with the bodily nature, but keep ourselves pure until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us. And thus having got rid of the foolishness of the body we shall be pure and hold converse with the pure, and know of ourselves the clear light everywhere, which is no other than the light of truth. For the impure are not permitted to approach the pure.¹

In the Phaedrus, Plato uses the figure of the charioteer and the good and bad horses to demonstrate the necessity of purification, that is, the disciplining of the passions. If the charioteer and the good horse are able to subdue the behavior of the bad horse (carnal desire), then the philosophical life will prevail over the lower life of ambition, and the soul will regain its divine purity and soar to the world of true reality, of Goodness and Beauty.²

For Plato, the mystical ascent is accomplished on the wings of contemplation.³ Motivated by a desire for beauty, "the entire progress of the soul is an intellectual ascent above created things through contemplation of them, and recognition (based on the doctrine of pre-existence) of that beauty and truth which once it knew, but which now lie hidden in earthly images."⁴ In the Symposium, Diotima explains to

⁴ Collins, p. 5.
Socrates the greater mysteries of love, the steps of contemplation by which a lover of beauty ascends to the vision of absolute beauty. Briefly stated, the steps are as follows: (1) the love of one beautiful form only, from which is perceived the beauty of form in general, and then the beauty of all beautiful bodies; (2) love of the beauty of the mind rather than external beauty; (3) love of beauty of institutions, laws, and sciences; and (4) love of beauty per se, "absolute, separate, and everlasting, which without diminution and without increase or any change, is imparted to the ever growing and perishing beauties of all other things." Contemplating the divine essence of beauty, the lover will create not images of beauty but realities, becoming a friend of God and achieving immortality as far as possible for man.¹

Plato's mystical steps of purification, contemplation, and ascent profoundly influenced Plotinus, but Plato "did not make the daring metaphysical leap to an intimate union with the Absolute which is characteristic of Neoplatonic mysticism."² In the Enneads the universal desire of all things beginning and ending in the Good or First Principle corresponds to the dialectic of love in the Symposium and the Phaedrus. The system of Plotinus is one of necessary emanation, procession,

²Collins, p. 8.
or irradiation accompanied by necessary aspiration or reversion to source. Man and the entire universe flow from the divinity, and all strive to return thither and to remain there. This divinity consists of three hypostases: (1) the One or first existent; (2) the divine mind, or first thinker and thought; and (3) the all-soul, or first and only principle of life.¹

Plotinus' treatise On Beauty describes the ascent of the soul in terms definitely reminiscent of the Diotimian or Platonic ladder of love. The soul that desires "to see God and Beauty" must first become godlike and beautiful. Then mounting upward, "the Soul will come first to the Intellectual-Principle," where all forms are beautiful, and it will say that this is beauty, for it is through the ideas that all beauty comes. That which lies beyond is the Good, "the Fountain at once and Principle of Beauty."² This is union with the Good, or in Platonic terms, the love of beauty per se, "absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting."³

In the ninth chapter of the sixth Ennead, Plotinus' description of the contemplation of the One resembles the attainment of love in the Phaedrus, by which the soul, seized by

¹P. Henry, Introduction to The Enneads, trans. by Stephen MacKenna, pp. xxv-xxvi.

²Plotinus Enneads I. vi. 9, trans. by Stephen MacKenna, p. 64.

³Plato Symposium 211 in The Dialogues of Plato, trans. by B. Jowett, I, 335.
the madness of desire, achieves a sudden and ineffable intuition of the Beautiful. First, the soul must free itself of all externals. Second, the soul must turn totally inward. It must forget everything. It must not even know that it is itself applying itself to the contemplation of the One. Finally, after having dwelt with it sufficiently, the soul should, if it can, reveal to others this transcendent communion. Thus the soul "aspires" to the One. "We are ever before the Supreme--cut off is utter dissolution; we can no longer be--but we do not always attend: when we look, our Term is attained; this is rest; this is the end of singing ill; effectively before Him, we lift a choral song full of God."1

Love is as fully important in the teaching of Plotinus as it is in Plato. For Plotinus, it is the inner yearning of the soul for a union with the One, who is at once both the Good and the Beautiful, which initiates the ascent of the soul. The soul first contemplates external beauties which are but reflections of divine beauty. The soul then ascends to the universal beauty of the Absolute One and then virtually springs away from the ladder upon which it has ascended:

He belongs no longer to the order of the beautiful; he has risen beyond beauty; he has overpassed even the choir of the virtues; he is like one who, having penetrated the inner sanctuary, leaves the temple images behind him--though these become once more

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1Plotinus Enneads VI. ix. 8, trans. by Stephen MacKenna, p. 622.
first objects of regard when he leaves the holies; for
There his converse was not with image, not with trace,
but with the very Truth in the view of which all the
rest is but of secondary concern.¹

Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), the most influential
exponent of Platonism for the Italian Renaissance, synthesized
the Platonic theory of Eros and Plotinian theory of intelligible
beauty with Christianity. The first to use the terms Platonic
love in a letter to Alamanno Donati, Ficino initiated a
doctrine of love which was to have a profound effect on the
poetry of the subsequent Renaissance. To Ficino, Platonic
love meant an intellectual love between friends based on the
individual's love for God.²

The locus classicus of Ficino's philosophy of Platonic
love, or mystical ascent to God, is his commentary on Plato's
Symposium. Briefly summarized, the main ideas of Ficino's
Platonic philosophy of love and beauty which influenced
Renaissance poets are as follows.

In the first oration Ficino expounds the divine nature
and origin of love. Following the tradition of Orpheus,
Hermes, Trismegistus, Hesiod, Parmenides, and Plato, he holds
that first there existed chaos, then love, the gods, and the
world. It is the creative force of love moving over chaos that

¹Ibid., VI. ix. 11, trans. by Stephen MacKenna, p. 624.

²Paul O. Kristeller, The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino
gives order to chaos. Influenced by the emanational system of Plotinus, Ficino holds that there are three worlds created by God: the Angelic Mind, turned by love to God as the eye to the sun; the World-Soul, directed by love toward the Angelic Mind; and the World-Body, attracted by love toward the World-Soul. As in Plato, love is defined as "the desire for beauty," which is found in the threefold harmony of virtues in the soul as perceived by the mind, of several colors and lines in the body as perceived by the eyes, and of several tones as in sound perceived by the ears. These three (mind, sight, and hearing) are the only "spiritual" faculties. Ficino equates evil with the ugly, and the beautiful with the good. And it is "Love that attracts to beauty and shuns all that is intemperate. . . . For all love is beautiful and fair and properly loves the fair. But the turbulent passion by which men are seduced to wantonness since it attracts them to ugliness is considered the opposite of love." Thus Ficino emphasizes the beautiful or spiritual aspect of love. "When the body is beautiful and the soul is not at all, let us be slow and reluctant to worship the bodily beauty, like the shadowy passing image of beauty. When the soul alone is beautiful, let us love ardently this immutable beauty of the soul. When either beauty happens to coincide with the other, let us be especially adoring, and thus we shall testify to our having belonged to the Platonic family, for it knows nothing but holy, joyful, heavenly, and divine things."

In the second speech Ficino explains love in terms of beauty, the central attribute of the threefold nature of God, Who is Good when He creates, Beautiful when He attracts to Himself, and Just when He finishes according to the desert of each thing. God is, therefore, the beginning, middle, and end of all things since He is their source, attraction, and goal. Using the metaphor of a circle, Ficino describes the goodness of God as a single center around which revolves Beauty in four circles: Mind, Soul, Nature, and Matter. The goodness of God is like the single light of the sun. Beauty like the sun's rays illumines the Ideas in the Angelic Mind, concepts or reasons in the soul, seeds in nature, and matter in shapes. And "whoever sees and loves the beauty in these four, Mind, Soul, Nature, and Body, seeing the glow of God in these, through this kind of glow sees and loves God Himself." It is this glow of divinity shining in beautiful bodies which causes the lover to desire to become God. This is the whole activity of man.¹

Plato had said that just as there were two Aphrodites, so there were also two Loves: "Heavenly Aphrodite" and "Heavenly Love," daughter of Uranus having no mother; and "Common Aphrodite" and "Common Love," daughter of Zeus and Dione. Only "Heavenly Love" is worthy of praise since it has the noble purpose of assured lifelong friendship between lovers. "Common Love" is love of the body rather than the soul. Ficino

¹Ibid., pp. 134-141.
speaks of the dual natures of Venus or Love, but he accepts both kinds of Love as good and continuous aspects of one activity. "Heavenly Venus" is the intelligence of the Angelic Mind which embraces the glory or beauty of God in herself and then translates it to the "Common Venus," the power of generation in the World-Soul, which in turn translates sparks of this divine beauty into earthly matter. Like the Angelic Mind, the World-Soul also has two powers, both of which are forms of honorable love: the power of generation and the desire for propagating beauty. Dishonorable love occurs when one gives up contemplation, is too eager for procreation, or prefers the beauty of the body to the soul.¹

In the sixth oration, the most important in the Symposium, Ficino explains that in all souls there are two loves, but in man's there are five. The two extremes of love are the benevolent spirit or "good daemon," or "eternal love of seeing divine beauty," which stimulates men to study philosophy and to observe justice and piety, and the malevolent spirit, or "bad daemon," or "mysterious stimulus for propagating offspring." In reality both daemons are good, "since the creation of offspring is considered just as necessary and honorable as the quest after truth." It is the abuse of the second daemon which makes it bad; it "turns the soul aside from its own good, which consists in the contemplation of the truth, and directs it

¹Ibid., pp. 141-143.
toward baser pursuits." Between these two extremes, there are three loves or passions or emotions: (1) divine love, or the contemplative life, which from the sense of sight or bodily form is lifted immediately to the contemplation of the spiritual and divine; (2) human love, or the practical life, which continues to delight in seeing and conversing with the person loves; and (3) bestial love, or the voluptuous life, which from sight enters the "concupiscence of touch." 1

The goal of love on earth is generation in the beautiful so that everlasting life may be preserved in spiritual things. This preservation of the beautiful is done in the material order by propagation and in the mind by memory. The body nourishes itself on food and drink and perpetuates itself through the generation of a handsome offspring by a beautiful woman. The soul desires truth as its food and tries to perpetuate itself by writing or teaching wisdom, thus impressing an image of itself on the mind of others. 2

The steps in Ficino's interpretation of the Diotimian ladder of love are from the body to the soul to the Angelic Mind to God or the One. The One has neither number nor composition of parts and is not subject to change nor restricted to space. The Angelic Mind has a number of parts or forms, but it is free from motion and space. The soul has a

1Ibid., pp. 192-193.
2Ibid., pp. 202-204.
multitude of parts and feelings and is altered by reasoning and emotions, but it is exempt from the limits of space. The body is subject to all.\textsuperscript{1}

Divine love is a sort of divine madness by which "man is raised above the nature of man and passes over into God." It is a "kind of illumination of the rational soul, through which God draws the soul slipping down to the lower world back to the higher." In its fall the soul passes through four stages: mind, reason, opinion, and nature. And just as the soul descends through four steps, so must it ascend through four kinds of divine madness. The first is poetic madness (Muses), the second is that of the mysteries (Dionysus), the third is that of prophecy (Apollo), and the fourth is that of love (Venus). The soul thus purified passes into unity with God. Love is the noblest of the "furores" since all the others necessarily depend on it and since it joins us most closely to God.\textsuperscript{2}

Ficino's interpretation of Plato and Plotinus constitutes the philosophical foundation on which the poets of the Renaissance built. The poetry of George Chapman reveals (1) the Platonic separation of the soul from the body, the subduing of the passions, and the necessity of disciplining the faculties in order to arrive at a knowledge of truth and

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., pp. 208-211.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., pp. 231-233.
goodness; (2) the Plotinian concept of emanation and contemplation in which union with the One is attained; and (3) the Ficinian belief in the creative power and absolute supremacy of love, which in the "Hymnus in Noctem" is analogous to Chapman's mystical concept of Night.

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman's mysticism is limited to two phases: first, the purification of the soul from the vices of pride, greed, and envy; second, the act of contemplation by which man's soul transcends the senses and reason to an intuitive apprehension of the divine. Thus, Chapman may be termed a "philosophical" mystical poet in that he is concerned with the body-soul relationship in man and in that he advocates the contemplative life as preferable to the active.

In the last two hundred lines of the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman transfers Night from a symbol of chaos in the body and soul of the universe and of man (macrocosm-microcosm) into a symbol of contemplation or state of mind that is conducive to creativity. The movement is from chaos and disorder in the World-Soul and man's individual soul to the peace, strength, and rest to be derived from the act of contemplation. The pendulum swings from the objective and external world as related to man to the subjective and internal world of man's soul.

Chapman's use of Night as a Neoplatonic mystical symbol does not refer to the "dark night of the soul" but to a
withdrawal from the senses and a transcendence of the soul over the senses. Night assumes "that condition of the soul most conducive to contemplation and is the divine source of all true illumination in that it represents a blotting out of the world of sense and a subsequent incitement to spiritual experience." Following the tradition of natural Neoplatonic theology and medieval mysticism, Chapman equates Night with "the heavens of divinely dark spiritual knowledge of which man in his darkness-of-ignorance needs to be reminded." In the thirteenth book of his Theologia Platonica Ficino writes: "Whoever achieved something great in any noble art did it mostly when he withdrew from the body and fled to the citadel of the Soul." Roy Battenhouse points out the favorable moral connotation of Night held to by the medieval mystics:

Night stands for the blotting out of the sense-world with its beguiling flood of sense impressions. The mystic longs for Night as the bringer of his salvation. The author of The Cloud of Unknowing desires a darkness of forgetting, in which created objects cease to engage the will, which is then intent on God alone. Tauler speaks of 'the necessity of withdrawing into the bosom of the Divine Dark,' for 'this Abyss is our salvation.' To the mystic the Dark becomes a time of Light.1

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The "Hymnus in Noctem" thus reveals Chapman's belief in the Neoplatonic doctrine of the divine nature of the soul and its ability to raise itself above the senses through the power of contemplation. In the opening verse paragraph of the poem, Chapman invokes the goddess Night (a substitute for the Muses) to "sendst bold reliefe" (line 4) to "this earthlie Alter" (line 2), smoking with the fumes of human passion, or, as Chapman states, the "fires of griefe" (line 3). Consciously aware that man is concerned with his earthly existence, the "gaine of riches" (line 27), and other ephemeral pleasures, Chapman yearns for Night to blot out the world of sense.

Employing both Elizabethan ("humor") and Metaphysical ("Seas to mine eyes") imagery, Chapman implores Night:

. . . let humor giue
Seas to mine eyes, that I may quicklie weepe
The shipwracke of the world: or let soft sleepe
(Binding my sences) lose my working soule,
That in her highest pitch, she may controule
The court of skill, compact of misterie,
Wanting but franchisement and memorie
To reach all secrets.

(ll. 8-15)

As a typical Neoplatonist, he exalts his "working soule" (line 11) over the senses. He contends that all the soul needs to "controule the court of skill" (line 13) and "to reach all secrets" (line 16) is "franchisement and memorie" (line 14).

Chapman's gloss to the poem explains that the act of knowing is nothing less than recollection or remembering. Chapman writes, "Plato saith dicere is nothing else but reminisci." Also

\[1\]Poems, p. 29.
implied in these opening lines is the Neoplatonic doctrine of
the immortality of the soul. The soul needs but to recall its
former existence in the world of Ideas to arrive at sacred and
divine truths.

When Chapman asks that "soft sleepe" (line 10) bind his
senses and release his "working soule" (line 11) to comprehend
all secrets, he is again stating a Neoplatonic belief, for the
somatic effect of sleep is inherent in the act of contemplation.
This theory of the comatose soul is commonplace among the
Neoplatonists. Ficino views sleep as helpful to contemplation.
"Sleep, swoon, and solitude" interrupt the external functions
and facilitate the internal or contemplative acts of the soul.¹

In this first stanza Chapman is using the Neoplatonic mystical
terminology current in his day to describe the release of the
creative faculty of the soul. Sleep halts the functioning of
the senses, the imagination, and the discursive reason, and
allows free rein to the highest spiritual faculty of the soul—
the mind.

Closely connected to the Neoplatonic doctrine of sleep
is the Ficinian theory of grief and unrest in the soul of man.
The concluding lines of the first paragraph of the "Hymnus in
Noctem" state:

... then in blissfull trance,
Raise her (deare Night) to that perseverance,
That in my torture, she all earths may sing,

And force to tremble in her trumpeting
Heavens christall temples: in her powrs implant
Skill of my griefs, and she can nothing want.
(11. 15-20)

The significant phrases to note in the above are "in my
torture" (line 17) and "skill of my griefs" (line 20). Chapman
here is using these terms in the same context as Ficino, that
is, as one of the preliminary stages necessary to the
attainment of the "higher life." To the true Neoplatonist the
soul is never free from unrest and is constantly being driven
forth by it. Ficino writes:

The ardor of the mind is never extinguished, whether
it looks at human or divine things. If it desires
human things, what mass of wealth, what fullness of
empire ends that ardor? If it desires divine things,
it is not satisfied with any knowledge of created and
finite things. Rightly it never rests until it
receives the infinite God. . . .

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman desires his soul to
be so filled with "griefs" for eternal truths that "she" may
sing of her "torture," and thereby purify his soul of
ignorance, pride, envy, and avarice. These two Neoplatonic
doctrines, the somatic effect of sleep on the senses and the
everal unrest in the soul, are two of the steps which Chapman
considers essential to the purification of the soul in its
spiritual ascent to God.

It has been pointed out previously that in these last
two hundred lines of the "Hymnus in Noctem" the symbol of Night

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1Ibid., p. 216, quoting Ficino, p. 201.
takes on broader dimensions. After describing the chaotic state of the world and the causes for this confusion, Chapman turns to the mysteriousness and sacredness of "contentfull night" (line 202). As opposed to the light of "haughtie Day" (line 217), Chapman finds inspiration in the darkness beneath whose "soft and peaceful covert . . . Treasures unknown and more unprized" (lines 67, 69) are hidden. The vita contemplativa, attainable only through Night, is the true means to spiritual perfection. In "The Preface to the Reader" in the Iliad, Chapman writes:

And as the contemplative life is more worthily and divinely preferred by Plato to the active, as much as the head to the foote, the eye to the hand, reason to sence, the soule to the bodie, the end it selfe to all things directed to the end, quiet to motion and Eternity to Time, so much preferre I divine Poesie to all worldly wisedome.¹

In this final portion of the "Hymnus in Noctem," Night becomes Chapman's symbol for contemplation, the moment of spiritual vision essential to the creation of poetry. One is conscious that Chapman "did, so to speak, really believe in Night."² According to Caroline Spurgeon such belief is perhaps the most significant mark of the true mystic:

The true mystic then, in the full sense of the term, is one who knows there is unity under diversity at the centre of all existence, and he knows it by the most

perfect of all tests for the person concerned, because he has felt it. True mysticism—and this cannot be overemphasized—is an experience and a life. It is an experimental science, and, as Patmore has said, it is incommunicable to those who have not experienced it as the odour of a violet to those who have never smelt one. In its highest consummation it is the supreme adventure of the soul: to use the matchless words of Plotinus it is "the flight of the Alone to the Alone."¹

Repeatedly in these last two hundred lines, Chapman professes his devotion to Night. Although he occasionally returns to the theme of chaos and disorder, the tone of the "Hymnus in Noctem" is no longer one of despair but rather one of hope, or as MacLure states, "Heavenly meditation alternates with cynical meditation."² "Day of deepe students, most contentfull night" (line 202), is Chapman's remedy for the evils existing in the world. Chapman calls on the goddess Night:

Till thou (deare Night, ô goddesse of most worth)  
Letst thy sweet seas of golden humor forth  
And Eagle-like dost with thy starrie wings,  
Beate in the foules, and beasts to Somnus lodgings,  
And haughtie Day to the infernall deepe,  
Proclaiming scilence, studie, ease, and sleepe.  
(11. 213-218)

Chapman again pledges his devotion to Night. He asks the goddess Night to accept "Our better parts aspiring to thy raigne" (line 242), even though these virtues have been imprisoned in the body, that is, "Prison'd in flesh, and that

¹Caroline Spurgeon, Mysticism in English Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 11.
²MacLure, p. 39.
poore flesh in bands / Of stone, and steele, chiefe flowrs of vertues Garlands" (ll. 245-246). Although awkwardly expressed, the Neoplatonistic notion of the body as a prison or hindrance to the soul is the main point of the concluding lines of this paragraph. As Panofsky points out, it was not unusual for the Neoplatonist to arrive at a notion of the spiritual by means of the material, "and yet to complain of the terrestrial world as a 'prison' where the pure forms or ideas are 'drowned,' 'submerged,' 'perturbed,' and 'disfigured beyond recognition.'"

Panofsky continues:

As a reflex of the splendor divinæ bonitatis life on earth participates in the blissful purity of a supercelestial realm—-as a form of existence inextricably tied up with matter it shares the gloom and grief of what the Greeks had called Hades or Tartaros, the latter name supposedly derived from Greek ῥατήτειν, meaning; to perturb.1

In the following verse paragraphs Chapman again returns to mythology to enforce his didactic meaning. "Hating the whoredome of this painted light" (line 249), Chapman desires that the Eumenides, "ministers of right" (line 250), punish the world for its sinfulness. At the peak of emotion the poet cries out:

And let them wreake the wrongs of our disease, Drowning the world in bloud, and staine the skies With their spilt soules, made drunke with tyrannies. (ll. 252-254)

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1 Panofsky, p. 135.
He begs Hercules to "cleanse this beastly stable of the world" (line 256) by bending his "brasen bow against the Sunne" (line 257).

... shooote, shooote, and stoope his pride:
Suffer no more his lustfull rayes to get
The Earth with issue.
(11. 263-265)

Chapman's Platonic technique of setting up contraries is apparent here also. "Painted light" (line 248), the "lustfull rayes" (line 264), or "envious beames" (line 260) of the sun are contrasted with Night, "the tender fortresse of our woes" (line 247).

To this violent, physical action of revenge by the Eumenides, Chapman promises to join the "inward, imaginative action"\(^1\) of poetry symbolized by his personal consecration to the spirit-world of Night:

Rich-tapird sanctuarie of the blest,
Pallace of Ruth, made all of tears, and rest,
To thy blacke shades and desolation,
I consecrate my life.
(11. 268-271)

Intensifying the mood of horror and terror already evoked by the Eumenides, Chapman calls on the sinister creatures of the Night-world to assist him in executing his revenge, that is, in voicing his "confusions":

Where furies shall for euer fighting be,
And adders hisse the world for hating me,
Foxes shall barke, and Night-rauens belch in grones,

And owles shall hollow my confusions:
There will I furnish vp my funerall bed,
Strewd with the bones and reliques of the dead.

(11. 272-277)

Chapman's "working soule" (line 11), desiring to be
dead to the world of sinfulness, is in a state of torture and
unrest. He will find "teares and rest" (line 269) only when
his mind (the equivalent of the soul to Chapman) returns to
"the old essence, and insensieu prime" (line 284), that is, the
original state of the soul prior to creation or the addition of
matter ("bodie"). Implied in these lines is the Neoplatonic
doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the necessity of
its return to the source from whence it comes. Of equal
significance is the Ficinian theory of torture and grief in
man's soul and its catharsis by means of the moral function of
poetry.

According to Battenhouse, the above passage can best be
understood if one recalls in The Teares of Peace the figure of
poesy treading upon the "breast of Death" aided by the Furies,
night-rauens, and owls. The moral function of poetry is to
confer immortality and to lament the death of love in the sinful
world. Battenhouse states: "Chapman is, apparently,
consecrating himself to the poetic office, which as he conceives
of it involves suffering and song, death and rest."¹ In the
"Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman links the themes of chaos and

¹Ibid.
disorder, the soul's "perturbation" and "unrest," with the moral or educative function of poetry:

Still all the powre of Art into your grones,
Scorning your triuiall and remissiue mones,
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
But paint, or else create in serious truth,
A bodie figur'd to your vertues ruth,
That to the sence may shew what damned sinne,
For your extreames this Chaos tumbles in.
(11. 310-311, 316-319)

Throughout the remaining verse paragraph of the poem, Chapman continues to stress the Neoplatonic dichotomy of body and soul, centered on the contrasting symbols of light and darkness, day and night. In a highly emotional state he exhorts those who have never had birth "of Platonic love through reminiscence":

Shun, shun this cruell light, and end your thrall,
In these soft shades of sable funerall:
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Thunder your wrongs, your miseries and hells,
And with the dimsmall accents of your knells,
Reuiue the dead, and make the living dye
In ruth, and terror of your torturie.
(11. 290-291, 306-309)

Chapman advocates the Neoplatonic life of virtue to be found in serving the Night by means of contemplation:

Kneele then with me, fall worm-like on the ground,
And from th' infectious dunghill of this Round,
From mens brasse wits, and golden foolerie,
Weepe, weepe your soules, into felicitie:
Come to this house of mourning, serue the night,
To whom pale day (with whoredome soked quite)
Is but a drudge, selling her beauties vse
To rapes, adultries, and to all abuse.
(11. 324-331)

1Ibid., p. 595.
Beginning with line 268 and continuing to the conclusion of the "Hymnus in Noctem," the poem acquires an "apocalyptic tone, appropriate to its prophetic function."¹ From Night's ivory gate come "sweet Protean dreames" (line 341), but from her "port of horne" (line 352) come "grauer dreames inspir'd with prophesies" (line 353). In perhaps the most successful lines of the poem, Night assumes the form of celestial or heavenly contemplation indispensable to the soul of the truly inspired artist:

All you possess with indepressed spirits,  
Indu'd with nimble, and aspiring wits,  
Come consecrate with me, to sacred Night  
Your whole endeavors, and detest the light.  
Sweete Peaces richest crowne is made of starres,  
Most certaine guides of honord Marinars,  
No pen can any thing eternall wright,  
That is not steept in humor of the Night.  
(11. 370-377)

According to Battenhouse, "These lines can be interpreted with fair certainty." He interprets "humor of the Night" as meaning:

contemplation, attention to the inner life, knowledge of the mysteries of our moral world—specially knowledge of the dark fact of man's degeneration, its cause in self-love and ingratitude, its punishment in God's avenging justice, and its remedy through sorrow and submission. The mind that (guided by the "sacred precedents" of men of virtue) steeps itself in these matters will discover both the way to sweet peace and the inspiration for immortal verse.²

¹MacLure, p. 40.

The "Hymnus in Noctem" concludes optimistically with an unusual Epithalamion. The "Bride of Brides" (line 384), or the empress Cynthia, ascends in a rather strange and incongruous mythological procession accompanied by music, "nuptials and triumphs" (line 385), "Juno and Hymen" (line 386), "ten thousand torches" (line 387), and "meteors, comets, lightenings" (line 400). Her "dreadfull presence" (line 401) has power to hold in check the "huge spirits, and outrageous passions" (line 397) of beastly man. The poem ends with the poet's passionate wish that through "eternal Night" (line 402) virtue might "flourish in the light of light" (line 403).
CHAPTER V

NEOPATONIC SYMBOLISM OF THE MOON IN
THE "HYMNUS IN CYNTHIAM"

The "Hymnus in Cynthiam," the second of the two poems comprising The Shadow of Night, also contains elements of Neoplatonic cosmology and mysticism. As was indicated earlier in the discussion of the general structure of The Shadow of Night (pp. 49-20), they are companion pieces whose individual themes complement each other. The "Hymnus in Noctem" exalts the contemplative life of the mind in its search for truth and in its struggle against pride, envy, and greed as the enemies of truth. The "Hymnus in Cynthiam" deals with the active life, that is, with the practical application of truth through the use of reason.

This schematic relationship of the mind (mens) in the "Hymnus in Noctem" and the reason (ratio) in the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" is frequently explained by Renaissance Neoplatonists by analogy with the sun and moon. Symbolically the sun represents the Divine Intellect, the image of God. This sun-image of divine truth, or God, is often used by Ficino, for "just as the light of the sun is to the eye of the body, so
is the light of truth to the eye of the soul."¹ Spenser in 
Book I of the Faerie Queene describes Una, the personification 
of Truth, in terms associated with the sun:

```
    Her angels face
    As the great eye of heauen shyned bright,
    And made a sunshine in the shadie place;
    Did neuer mortall eye behold such heauenly grace.²

    (I. iii. 4)
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Renaissance Neoplatonists usually regard the moon as a 
symbol of the anima mundi.³ Leone Ebreo in his Dialoghi 
d'Amore views the sun and moon as corresponding to the mind and 
soul. He describes the moon as an "image of the anima mundi, 
from which every anima proceeds."⁴ The Neoplatonists consider 
the moon also as a spiritus mundanus, that is, as the 
connecting link between the celestial and the terrestrial.

Leone Ebreo depicts the moon or anima as the mean between the 
intellect and the body:

```
    Just as anima comes between intellect and body, and is 
    formed compositely, out of intellectual stability and 
    unity on the one hand, and corporeal diversity and 
    changeableness on the other; so the moon comes between 
    the sun--an image of intellect--and the corporeal
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¹Ficino, Opera omnia (Basel, 1576), p. 90.
²Edmund Spenser, The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, 
ed. by J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt (London: Oxford 
³The source for this symbol is Plotinus Enneads V. vi, 
trans. by Stephen MacKenna, p. 4.
⁴Alastair Fowler, Spenser and the Numbers of Time (New 
York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), p. 87, quoting Leone Ebreo, 
Dialoghi d'Amore, ed. by Santiano Caramella (Bari, 1929), p. 179.
earth, and is formed compositely, out of unified stable solar light, and diversified mutable terrestrial shade.

In this sense the moon or anima as a symbol of man's soul is of extreme importance, for man, depending on his free will, has the power to ascend to the divine or to descend to the earthly. Thus the significance of Ficino's definition of man as "a rational soul participating in the divine mind employing a body" is again apparent.

In addition to the moon as the anima mundi and the spiritus mundanus, the moon is "a symbol of anima in its form-bestowing capacity: the builder, that is to say, of the human body." As will be seen in the analysis of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam," Chapman uses the moon in all three of its symbolic functions.

In The Shadow of Night Chapman does not adhere to the traditional sun-moon, mind-soul, analogy. The "Hymnus in Noctem" deals with the mind, but in place of the sun-image Chapman uses Night. Day, light, and the sun are symbols of evil. In the "Hymnus in Cynthiam," however, Chapman follows orthodox Platonic theology in his use of the moon to symbolize the cosmic-soul to serve as the mean between the spirit and the body and to function as the form-giving-substance to the body.

1 Fowler, p. 87, quoting Ebreo, Dialoghi d'Amore, p. 187.
2 Ficino, Opera omnia, p. 133.
3 Fowler, p. 87.
He continues to employ the Neoplatonic technique of *discordia concors* between the body and soul, sense and intellect, chaos and order, by using the symbols of Night and Day to signify good and evil. Chapman's distinct departure from orthodox Neoplatonists, particularly Ficino and Leone Ebreo, is in his use of sun and day symbolism to represent evil. The guiding theme of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam," therefore, is the exposition of the various forces of the moon, and specifically it is the power of the soul (*anima*) to control the passions of the human body.

Various critics have tried to determine the meaning of Cynthia, the central symbol of the poem. It is a multi-faceted one. Muriel Bradbrook, basing her interpretation on the phrases "soueraigne kinde" (line 152) and "forces of the minde" (line 153), states that Chapman means respectively "Elizabeth" and "the power of the Contemplative Intellect."¹ Roy Battenhouse sees no contradiction in extending the moon symbol of Cynthia to include the transcendental Mind and the individual human mind, "that is, as a reference to the Platonic Ideas which the World-Soul embodies in the cosmos and in man."² Battenhouse's authority is Plotinus' use of the moon as a symbol of the World-Soul in *The Enneads*. Describing the Good as "simplex and without need," Plotinus states:

¹Bradbrook, p. 138.
We may use the figure of, first, light; then, following it, the sun; as a third, the orb of the moon taking its light from the sun: Soul carries the Intellectual-Principle as something imparted and lending the light which makes it essentially intellective; Intellectual-Principle carries the light as its own though it is not purely the light but is the being into whose very essence the light has been received; highest is That which, giving forth the light to its sequent, is no other than the pure light itself by whose power the Intellectual-Principle takes character.1

Battenhouse also cites Ficino's identification of the World-Soul with the translunary heavens in which the moon is "thus in a position to act as beacon or gatekeeper to the celestial realm--to stand as a sort of St. Peter at guard over the incorruptible heavens to which man in moments of contemplation longs to attain."2 Millar MacLure interprets Cynthia as Ficino's *spiritus mundanus*, the connecting link or *nodus* or *vinculum*, by which the World-Soul operates upon the realm of matter. Basing his interpretation on the form-producing aspect of Cynthia, MacLure views Cynthia as an illuminating principle.3

As was stated earlier, Cynthia is a multi-faceted symbol in which all three of these interpretations are applicable at some point in the 528 lines of the poem. From a Neoplatonic standpoint, however, Battenhouse's view is the most logical and appropriate. In the area of Neoplatonic cosmology

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2Battenhouse, pp. 598-599, n. 31.

3MacLure, p. 42, n. 27.
Cynthia represents the World-Soul, while in the area of Neoplatonic mysticism Cynthia signifies man's individual soul.

Chapman's choice of the "Hymnus in Cynthia" as the title for his second hymn was rich in connotation for the poets, philosophers, and artists of the Renaissance. As Marjorie Hope Nicolson demonstrates in the well-chosen title of her book, The Breaking of the Circle, "No metaphor was more loved by Renaissance poets than that of the circle, which they had inherited from Pythagorean and Platonic ancestors, to whom the serpent, swallowing its tail, was an 'hieroglyphick' of eternity,

because in your mouth you hold your Tail, As coupling Ages past with times to come."

In the Renaissance the circle could represent God, or the world, or man. As a symbol of God it signified perfection, eternity, the beginning and end of all things. For Ficino, God is the center of the circle and His circumference everywhere:

The ancient theologians were not far wrong when they placed Goodness in the center and Beauty on the circumference of a circle: Goodness, I say, is in a single center, and Beauty is in four circles. The single center of everything is God. Around this continually revolve four circles: Mind, Soul, Nature, and Matter. Mind is a fixed circle; Soul moves of itself; Nature moves in another, but not by another; and Matter moves both by another and in another. I shall explain why we call God the center of them all, and why we call these four 'circles.'

---

1 Nicolson, p. 47, quoting Fulke Greville, "Eternitie."

2 Ficino, Commentarius in Convivium Platonis, p. 135.
The Ptolemaic universe was conceived of as a series of concentric spheres, including the earth at its center, the perfect spheres of the planets, and the outermost circle of the fixed stars. It is notable that Northrop Frye contends that this "form of cosmology is clearly much closer to that of poetry, and the thought suggests itself that symmetrical cosmology may be a branch of myth":

If so, then it would be, like myth, a structural principle of poetry, whereas in science itself, symmetrical cosmology is exactly what Bacon said it was, an idol of the theatre. Perhaps, then this whole pseudo-scientific world of three spirits, four humors, five elements, seven planets, nine spheres, twelve zodiacal signs, and so on, belongs in fact, as it does in practice, to the grammar of literary imagery. It has long been noticed that the Ptolemaic universe provides a better framework of symbolism, with all the identities, associations, and correspondences that symbolism demands, than the Copernican one does. Perhaps it not only provides a framework of poetic symbols but is one. . . .

Man's head was also regarded as spherical, "the seat of human reason, a little copy of the Great Circle in its roundness." The doctrine of the microcosm-macrocosm principle is again apparent, for the world was viewed as "animate, even, some said, animal. The 'world's body' lived, as did the 'world soul.' Like man and like plants, it grew; like them it was subject to decay and perhaps to death." Thus Chapman's image

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2Nicolson, p. 21.
3Ibid.
of the circular moon implied in the title of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" was particularly appropriate for his concept of the good man, who is, by virtue of his goodness, a microcosm: "He, in himselfe, worldlike, full, round, and sure" (line 8).1

The "Hymnus in Cynthiam" falls into three sections. Part I (lines 1-170) is concerned mainly with historical allegory directed to Queen Elizabeth. Part II (lines 171-399) is an allegorical narrative of the hunting of the nymph Euthimya who represents the power of reason to control the passions of the body. Part III (lines 400-528) is an exhortation to English gentlemen and ladies to worship and to serve Cynthia.

In his praise and flattery of Queen Elizabeth in Part I, Chapman is adhering to a typical genre of Renaissance poetry. Spenser, Sidney, Raleigh, and Jonson, all Bestow compliment upon compliment upon their queen. This is not mere "lip service" or "mercenary flattery," but a sincere form of patriotism. They honor a queen whom they regard as the "Virgin Queen," "lady sovereign," and the "Soul" of England:

Some call her **Pandora**: some **Cynthia**: some **Belphoebe**: some **Astrae**: all by several names to express several loues: Yet all these names make but one celestial body, as all these loues meet to create but one soul. 2


2 From the prologue to Old Fortunatus, quoted by Frances A. Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, IX (1947), 27.
In this first portion of the poem the historical allegory overrides the Neoplatonic elements also present. This is apparent in allusions to Elizabeth's possible marriage to a foreign prince, an ever-present fear in the minds of Englishmen:

No otherwise (0 Queene celestiall)
Can we beleue Ephesias state wilbe
But spoile with forreine grace, and change with thee
The purenesse of thy neuer-tainted life,
Scorning the subject title of a wife.

Commit most willing rapes on all our harts:
And make vs tremble, lest thy soueraigne parts
(The whole preseruers of our happinesse)
Should yeeld to change, Eclips, or heauinesse.

Then set thy Christall, and Imperiall throne,
(Girt in thy chast, and neuer-loosing zone)
Gainst Europa Sunne directly opposit,
And giue him darknesse, that doth threat thy light.

(11. 95-99, 106-109, 116-119)

As Phyllis Bartlett points out in her notes to the poem, these last four lines make explicit the compliments and addresses to Queen Elizabeth implied in the earlier lines.¹

Although Part I is mainly concerned with historical allegory, the moral or ethical allegory also is present and is related to Chapman's Neoplatonic philosophy. Battenhouse, for instance, interprets the eclipse image in the following lines as meaning: "in the dark day of spiritual ignorance when worldly concerns ('interposed earth') cut off man's vision of the light of Divine Wisdom (Cynthia) there will be occasion to fear for the bloody consequences of moral fall":²

¹Poems, p. 426.
So (gracious Cynthia) in that sable day,  
When interposed earth takes thee away,  
(Our sacred chiefe and soueraigne generall,)  
As chrimstine a retrait, and steepe a fall  
We feare to suffer from this peace, and height,  
Whose thancklesse sweet now cloies vs with receipt.  
(11. 58-63)

Chapman's Neoplatonism is evident in the opening of the  
hymn. Chapman describes Cynthia as "Natures bright eye-sight,  
and the Nights faire soule" (line 1). Chapman's gloss explains  
these two epithets in accordance with the Neoplatonic  
philosophy of the World-Soul. He calls her "Natures bright eye  
sight, because that by her store of humors, issue is giuen to  
all birth. . . ." Chapman calls her "the soule of the Night,  
since she is the purest part of her according to common  
conceipt."¹  

Like Spenser's Sapience in "An Hymne of Heavenly  
Beautie," Cynthia, as the World-Soul, controls and animates the  
universe. She is "the greatest, the swiftest Planet in the  
skie" (line 4). All power to control the "earth, seas, and  
hell" (line 3) is hers. She is the Neoplatonic ideal of  
"wisedome, beautie, maiestie and dread" (line 8). Her  
"All-ill-purging puritie" (line 13) is able "to cut of all  
desire / Of fleshly sports, and quench to Cupids fire"  
(lines 27-28). Those who scorn her favor are cursed with  
ilness, blight, and sterility:

¹Poems, pp. 42-43.
Diseases pine their flockes, tares spoile their corne:
Old men are blind of issue, and young wiuues
Bring forth abortiue frute, that neuer thriues.
(11. 121-123)

Those who accept her favors are blest:

Peace in their hearts, and youth raignes in their faces:
Health strengthens their bodies, to subdue the seas,
And dare the Sunne, like Thebane Hercules
To calme the furies, and to quench the fire.
(11. 125-128)

As is apparent in the above lines and those to follow,
Chapman's Neoplatonism consistently takes the form of anti-
thesis between the body and the soul. The "Sunne," as in the
"Hymnus in Noctem," is the symbol of sin. Only the "vertue-
tempered mind" (line 132) has the power to resist temptation and
"quench lusts fire" (line 134). To show the effect of virtue
on man's soul, Chapman uses tactual imagery to its fullest
extent: soothing oils strengthen man to such a degree that he
can march on the points of needles:

The vertue-tempered mind, euer preserues,
Oyles, and expulsatorie Balme that servues
To quench lusts fire, in all things it annoints,
And steeles our feet to march on needles points:
And mongst her armes, hath armour to repell
The canon, and the firie darts of hell.
(11. 132-137)

Chapman's meaning is that the man of virtue has the strength of
character to overcome the temptations or passions of the body.
Chapman repeatedly employs the imagery of fire to illustrate
the passions or lusts of the body.

In the following lines Chapman's Neoplatonism is more
concretely expressed. He describes the "mightie Cynthia"
(line 151) as "truely figuring" (line 151):

(As she is Heccate) her soueraigne kinde,
And in her force, the forces of the mind.

(11. 152-153)

These lines reveal Chapman's technique of double allegory. The phrase "her soueraigne kinde" refers to Queen Elizabeth; but even more important is the phrase "forces of the mind," which could refer either to Queen Elizabeth or to man's highest spiritual faculty influencing the passions of the body. The mind illuminates man's reason which is free to descend to the material or to ascend to the spiritual. It is the contemplation of Cynthia that raises man's "earthly soule" (line 155) to the level of divinity.

Chapman concludes this first portion of the poem by reiterating his Neoplatonic theme of the flesh or body as opposed to the intellect or wisdom of the soul. In lines that may be a rebuke at Shakespeare's Ovidian epigraph to Venus and Adonis,¹ Chapman excludes from comprehending the true import of the poem certain souls--

... flesh confounded soules,
That cannot beare the full Castalian bowles,
Which seuer mounting spirits from the sences,
To looke in this deepe fount for thy pretenses.

(11. 162-165)

¹Poems, p. 426.

Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.
CHAPTER VI

NEOPLATONIC ALLEGORY IN THE "HYMNUS IN CYNTHIAM"

Upon first appearance, the allegory of the shadowy hunt which constitutes the central and major portion of Chapman's second hymn, "Hymnus in Cynthiam," appears to be superimposed in an artificial way upon the poem as a whole. But this is not true. The allegory of the hunt is artistically linked both structurally and thematically to its companion poem, the "Hymnus in Noctem." At the conclusion of the "Hymnus in Noctem," the reader is prepared for the presence of Cynthia, the symbol of divinity, by the mythological procession which announces her arrival. The poet proclaims:

See now ascends, the glorious Bride of Brides, Nuptials, and triumphs, glittering by her sides, Iuno and Hymen do her traine adorne, Ten thousand torches round about them borne: Dumbbe Silence mounted on the Cyprian starre, With becks, rebukes the winds before his carre, Where she aduanst; beates downe with cloudie mace, The feeble light to blacke Saturnius pallace: Behind her, with a brase of siluer Hynds, In Iuorie chariot, swifter then the winds, Is great Hyperions horned daughter drawne Enchantresse-like, deckt in disparent lawne, Circkled with charmes, and incantations, That ride huge spirits, and outrageous passions: Musicke, and moode, she loues, but loue she hates, (As curious Ladies do, their publique cates) This traine, with meteors, comets, lightenings, The dreadfull presence of our Empresse sings: Which grant for euer (6 eternal Night) Till vertue flourish in the light of light. (11. 384-403)
Thematically, the hymns are united by their exaltation of the nobility and excellence of the soul in controlling the lower faculties of the body. ¹ In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman establishes a dualism between Night and Day, the respective symbols of contemplation and sin, the powers of the mind and worldly activity. In the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" Chapman again uses a Neoplatonic conflict between the soul and the body² to illustrate the necessity of wisdom in ordering man's passions and affections. As has been seen, Cynthia is introduced in the "Hymnus in Noctem" as possessing charms to quiet "huge spirits, and outrageous passions" (line 397). In the "Hymnus in Cynthiam," Cynthia is "the forces of the mind" (line 153); Cynthia creates the nymph Euthimya in order that she might "bid the base, to all affection" (line 217), that is, challenge passions and affections of worldly man. Thus the unifying element of the two hymns is the necessity of the soul to maintain control over the faculties of the body. Both hymns stress the superiority of the soul in contrast to the body.

¹ This positive and negative view of the body is also stated in Chapman's other non-dramatic poems. In The Teares of Peace man's soul is described as a ray from heaven dwelling in a hunghill body (ll. 981-988). Eugenia defines the body as the mere "instrument" of the mind (ll. 633-634); man's flesh is spoken of as a Shirt of Nessus (line 828), the poisoned tunic that took the life of Hercules.

² Chapman's source for this Neoplatonic doctrine might well have been Marsilio Ficino for whom man's soul is always miserable in the body. See Panofsky, pp. 135-138, and Kristeller, p. 332.
For Chapman, the soul consists of the higher powers of reason and mind which enable man to aspire to the divine; opposed to the soul is the body consisting of the lower faculties of sustenance, bestial desires, and sensual perception. The body is evil and distinct from the soul, which is good and links man with divinity. In both the "Hymnus in Noctem" and the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" Chapman is espousing the essential Neoplatonic doctrine of the nobility and excellence of the soul.¹

Part II, occupying the major portion of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" (ll. 171-399), reveals in the form of allegorical narrative the wisdom of controlling the passions and affections by means of the soul. The narrative of the hunting of the nymph Euthimya is Chapman's Neoplatonic version of the One and the Many, the celestial and terrestrial.² As MacLure states, the idea of the allegory of the hunting of Euthimya representing man's desire for passionate pleasure is frequently used by Renaissance poets.³

¹Chapman's view of the conflict between the body and soul is a familiar one in Renaissance Neoplatonism. Such writers as La Primaudaye, Charron, Bacon, and Fulke Greville embody this doctrine in their writings. See Anderson, Elizabethan Psychology, Chapter viii.

²From a Neoplatonic standpoint the One refers to the stable, unchanging aspect of reality; it is the world of Ideas. The Many is the changing, flexible appearance of reality; it is a copy of the essence of truth which exists in the mind of God. In a certain sense, Plato's myth of the shadows reflecting on the walls of the cave in the Republic appears the reverse of Chapman's concept of the One and the Many. Unlike Plato's myth, light or day in Chapman's hymns does not refer to reality or the world of Ideas. For Chapman, Night is the time of creativity and contemplation of the divinity.

³MacLure, p. 43.
The narrative relates that during the day Cynthia fashions out of matter, "To wit, a bright, a daseling meteor" (line 211), a beautiful nymph named Euthimya. Her "bewtie, bewtie staines / Heau'ns with her iewells" (ll. 212-213).

Cynthia next organizes a hunt in which the prey is Euthimya who has the power to "turne her selfe to euerie shape" (line 226).

Cynthia, who desires to "bide the base, to all affection" (line 217), then creates out of "the flowrs, the shadowes and the mists" (line 220) the hunters mounted upon "Lyons, Vnicorns, and Bores" (line 285) and the hounds whose names come from Comes' De Actaeone (Myth., VI, 24):

The hounds that she created, vast, and fleece
Were grimme Melampus, with th'Ethiops feete,
White Leucon; all eating Pamphagus,
Sharp-sighted Dorceus, wild Oribasus
Storme-breathing Lelaps, and the saugage Theron,
Wing-footed Pterelas, and Hinde-like Ladon,
Greedie Harpyia, and the painted Stycte,
Fierce Tigris, and the thicket-searching Agre,
The blacke Melaneus, and the bristled Lachne,
Leane-lustfull Cyprius, and big chested Alce.
(11. 232-242)

Because Euthimya wants to participate in the hunt, she must take on an earthly form, that is, she must bind her "golden wings . . . vp close with purple strings" (ll. 214-215), and descend into matter. Having assumed matter, Euthimya takes on the form of a panther and leads the hunt into a dark thicket

1Although the names of the hounds and the epithets applied to them are borrowed from Comes, it should be noted that Chapman has a predilection for using the hyphenated epithet. This is a typical characteristic of his style, as is obvious here and in the prose dedication to the entire poem.
where the tormented souls of those unfaithful to Cynthia are rent in pieces:

And Euthimya to a Panther chang'd,
Holds them sweet chase; their mouths they freely spend,
As if the earth in sunder they would rend.
(11. 243-245)

The discovery of the nymph in the thicket causes the dogs to begin "howling in their happinesse" (line 255). Chapman typically illustrates this scene with a simile of young boys starting the first day of their vacation from school when suddenly they are seized in the woods by a wolf or bear:

As when a flocke of schoole-boys, whom their mistresse (Held closelie to their bookes) gets leaue to sport,
And then like toyle-freed deare, in headlong sort
With shouts, and shrieks, they hurrey from the schoole.
Some strow the woods, some swimme the siluer poole:
All as they list to seuerall pastimes fall,
To feede their famisht wantonnenes with all.
When strait, within the woods some wolfe or beare,
The heedlesse lyms of one doth pecemeale teare,
Affrighteth other, sends some bleeding backe,
And some in greedioe whirle pitts suffer wracke:
So did the bristled couert check with wounds
The licorous hast of these game greedie hounds.
(11. 256-268)

The hunters find their way into the thicket "whose descriptions task / The pens of furies and of feends would aske" (11. 269-270). Once inside the thicket, the hunters are filled with fear, for they see hellish sights:

But preasing further, saw such cursed sights,
Such Aëtnas filld with strange tormented sprites,
That now the vaprous object of the eye
Out-pierst the intellect in facultie.
Basenesse was Nobler then Nobilitie:
For ruth (first shaken from the braine of Loue,
And loue the soule of vertue) now did moe,
Not in their soules (spheres meane enought for such) But in their eyes: and thence did conscience touch Their harts with pitie: where her proper throne, Is in the minde, and there should first haue shone: Eyes should guide bodies, and our soules our eyes, But now the world consistes on contraries. (11. 309-321)

Chapman concludes the above lines with a moralistic phrase embodying his Neoplatonic doctrine of the soul ruling the senses of the body. In lines 364-365 of the "Hymnus in Noctem," Chapman warns the reader of the danger of inflaming the heart by means of the eyes: "And since the eyes most quick and dangerous vse, / Enflames the heart, and learns the soule abuse."

After entering the thicket, the hunters are so frightened that they decide to retreat. Chapman again uses a simile to demonstrate this action. This time it is a historical simile:

As when th'Italian Duke, a troupe of horse Sent out in hast against some English force, From statelie sited sconce-torne Nimigan, Vnder whose walles the Wall most Cynthia, Stretcheth her siluer limms loded with wealth, Hearing our horse were marching downe by stealth. (Who looking for them) warres quicke Artizan Fame-thriuing Vere, that in those Countries wan More fame then guerdon; ambuscadoes laide Of certaine foote, and made full well appaide The hopefull enemie, in sending those The long-expected subjectes of their blowes To moue their charge; which strait they giue amaine, When we retiring to our strength againe, The foe pursewes assured of our liues, And vs within our ambuscado driues, Who straight with thunder of the drums and shot, Tempest their wrath on them that wist it not. (11. 328-345)
Miss Bartlett's notes to these lines are helpful. "Th'Italian Duke" is the Duke of Parma who views the defeat of his own men. Regarding "sconce-torne Nimigan" (line 330), Miss Bartlett says:

I cannot find any reference to a fort (sconce) in Nymeghen having been "torne." The phrase probably means that the town was shot at past the sconce which Prince Maurice built on the River Wall, in the defiance of an Ordinance of Nymeghen. This was the Knodsenborgh sconce, built by the Estates in the spring and summer of 1590, and is consistently called the sconce in Grimestone.¹

"Vere" in line 335 refers to Sir Francis Vere who was in charge of the English forces. In this simile Chapman is comparing the ambush of the hounds and hunters in the thicket to that of the Duke of Parma's army by the English. Miss Bartlett explains the simile by quoting Grimestone's A Generall Historie of the Netherlands:

"Prince Maurice, hearing that the Spaniard was coming into the Betuwe, leauing Groning he went thether, going downe at Arnhen in Guelderland, he past the Rhine there, vpon a bridge which he caused to be made with all speed, meaning to doe the Spaniard an affront. Hauing layd an ambush of horse and foote not farre from the Rhine vnder the conduct of the Earle of Solms, and of Sir Francis Vere, Generall of the English: he sent two Cornets to view the Dukes campe, who being discovered, were charged by six companies of horse, amongst the which the Dukes was one, who at the first made some shew of resistance, but turning their backes suddenly they fled, the Spaniards following them vntill they had past their ambush; they that fled turning head againe they were compassed in of all sides, and charged so furiously, as in a short time they were all defeated or put to rout; many were slaine, or prisoners. . . . The Duke of Parma beeing in a high place, within Nymeghen, did with his owne eyes see this defeate of his men." Whereupon they

¹Poems, Notes, p. 427.
retired precipitately, accompanied by jeers from the citizens of Nymeghen.

The chase, however, is not over. The nymph now changes herself into a boar and leads the hunt into a "fruitfull Iland" (line 366), "Full of all wealth, delight, and Emperie" (line 367):

Hither this Panther fled, now turnd a Bore
More huge then that th'Ætolians plagud so sore,
And led the chase through noblest mansions,
Gardens and groues, exempt from Parragons,
In all things ruinous, and slaughtersome,
As was that scourge to the Ætolian kingdome.
(11. 378-383)

The hounds continue their hot pursuit of the nymph which is analogous to a pursuit of fleeting shadows. The hounds "fright the earth with sound" (line 386) and go after the nymph "as if a whirlewind draue them one" (line 384). But day is over and night is here. The goddess blows retreat and mounts again into her sphere, leaving "vs miserable creatures here" (line 399):

The Goddesse blew retraite, and with her blast,
Her morns creation did like vapours wast:
The windes made wing, into the vpper light,
And blew abrood the sparckles of the night.
Then (swift as thought) the bright Titanides
Guide and great soueraigne of the marble seas,
With milkwhite Heiffers, mounts into her Sphere,
And leaues vs miserable creatures here.
(11. 392-399)

The allegorical narrative has received several interpretations. Janet Spens' autobiographical analysis of the allegory contends that the shadowy hunt reflects the inner

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1Ibid., pp. 427-428.
struggle of the poet to create poetry. "All day the hounds
chase the nymph fruitlessly, as the poet's thoughts, yearning,
pursue poetry or his ideal. With night comes peace."¹

Although Miss Spens' view of the myth as an expression
of the intimate life of Chapman the poet is interesting, it is
unlikely that this is the main point Chapman wished to express.
Chapman's primary interest or intent in the "Hymnus in
Cynthiam" is a moral or didactic one. His concern is to
portray the important Neoplatonic doctrine of the necessity of
the soul's control over the bodily passions. This moral or
didactic aim is stated in the following lines which name
Cynthia as the power of the mind, the predominant faculty of the
soul, which is able to control and command the lower faculties
of the body:

... and the praises sing
Of mighty Cynthia: truely figuring,
(As she is Heccate) her soueraigne kinde,
And in her force, the forces of the mind:
An argument to rauish and refine
An earthly soule, and make it meere diuine.
(11. 150-155)

The above lines announce the theme of the narrative and prepare
the reader for the "misteries" (line 169) which "flesh
confounded soules" (line 162) will be unable to comprehend.

Douglas Bush's explanation of the mythological allegory
partly anticipates a Neoplatonic interpretation. According to

¹Janet Spens, "Chapman's Ethical Thought," Essays and
Studies by Members of the English Association, XI (1925), 166.
Bush, it is "more in harmony with the orthodox moralization of Actaeon to take the hounds as the 'monstrous affections,' the irrational senses and emotions, which day, the time of evil, starts into activity, to disturb the poetic soul, and which at night are subdued."¹

Muriel Bradbrook elaborates on the moral view of the myth stated by Bush. Euthimya, the nymph, is "spiritual Joy." In her bestial form Euthimya "represents the earthly and sensuous embodiments of joy pursued by unspiritual man." Miss Bradbrook sees the panther as symbolizing pride, the boar as lust, and the island palace as a sort of Bower of Bliss. "The Shadowy Hunt is a recognized symbol for the pursuit of earthly desires."²

Battenhouse recognizes the validity of the interpretations by Bush and Bradbrook but goes on to amplify their statements in light of Neoplatonism. Basing his analysis on the Enneads of Plotinus, he identifies Cynthia as the World-Soul "exercising her powers of Divine Providence."³ This view of Cynthia as the World-Soul animating the universe and functioning


²Bradbrook, pp. 139-140. Miss Bradbrook also comments on the political significance of the myth which she correctly assumes to be "of subsidiary interest: it will obtrude for a few lines and then die away like Spenser's politics in the Faerie Queene" (p. 41).

in it as a universal providence is a recognized doctrine of Neoplatonism. In the *Enneads* Plotinus writes:

> Providence which rises from Divine Mind, is the content of the Unmingled Soul, and, through this Soul, is communicated to the Sphere of living things.¹

This Providence reaches to all that comes into being; its scope therefore includes living things with their actions and states, the total of their history at once overruled by the Reason-Principle and yet subject in some degree to Necessity.²

Cynthia (Providence) exercises her power differently during the day and during the night. Day stands for the Active Life, while Night represents the Contemplative Life. Cynthia by Day is but a shadow of Night. She creates the nymph Euthimya who in the daytime (Active Life) symbolizes sensual satisfaction. Cynthia here is governing men "by making sport of their base passions."³ Her purpose is to "bid the base to all affection" (line 217), that is, offer a challenge to men's appetites and passions. But in order for Euthimya to take part in the hunt, she must bind up her golden wings with purple strings and put on earthly matter, that is, she must assume a bodily form. This notion of losing one's wings and descending into matter echoes the imagery of Plato's *Phaedrus* wherein the

¹Plotinus *Enneads* III. iii. 5, trans. by Stephen MacKenna, p. 182.

²Ibid., III. iii. 6, trans. by Stephen MacKenna, p. 184.

soul loses its wings upon entering the body. The wings, however, are the most divine aspect of the body and soul; and hence nourished by beauty, wisdom, and goodness, the soul is able to ascend again to the realm of the divine. Chapman's use of this Platonic doctrine is apparent in the following quotation from the Phaedrus:

I will endeavour to explain to you in what way the mortal differs from the immortal creature. The soul in her totality has the care of inanimate being everywhere, and traverses the whole heaven in diverse forms appearing:—when perfect and fully winged she soars upward, and orders the whole world; whereas the imperfect soul, losing her wings and drooping in her flight at last settles on the solid ground—there, finding a home, she receives an earthly frame which appears to be self-moved, but is really moved by her power; and this composition of soul and body is called a living and mortal creature. . . .

The wing is the corporeal element which is most akin to the divine, and which by nature tends to soar aloft and carry that which gravitates downward into the upper region, which is the habitation of the gods. The divine is beauty, wisdom, goodness, and the like; and by these the wing of the soul is nourished, and grows apace; but when fed upon evil and foulness and the opposite of good, wastes and falls away.

Now that Euthimya possesses a bodily form, she becomes the object of the hurt by transforming herself into a panther and then into a boar, respectively symbolizing the sin of spirit (Pride) and the sin of flesh (Lust). Chapman moralizes on this bestial transformation of Euthimya:


Wealth faunes on fooles; vertues are meate for vices, 
Wisedome conforms her selfe to all earths guises, 
Good gifts are often giuen to men past good, 
And Noblesse stoops sometimes beneath his blood.  
(11. 228-231)

What Chapman is saying in these lines is that Euthimya has a 
dual nature, both a good and evil side. When Euthimya is first 
created golden-winged, she is joy, or peace, or contemplation.¹ 
During the day, however, the bad aspect of Euthimya appears in 
the various animal shapes (panther and boar)² she assumes. She 
thus becomes the symbol of man's irrational passions and bestial 
affections. For Chapman, "spiritual Joy," is attainable only 
through wisdom. But "Wisedome conforms her selfe to all earths 
guises" (line 229), that is, wisdom can appear to be different 
things to different men. To some, Euthimya is wealth or a 
materialistic goal, and thus Euthimya is to them "this fowle 
panther earth" (line 46), which Chapman speaks of as most 
dangerous to the soul in the poem To Harriots, Achilles Shield.³

In describing the course of the hunt Chapman preserves 
Plato's tripartite division of the soul into reason, affections, 
and passions.⁴ The hunters are the rational souls of men, the

¹The alternate title of Chapman's poem The Teares of Peace is Euthymiae Raptus. Bradbrook views Euthimya as "Concord" and as "spiritual Joy" (p. 159).
²This relationship of Euthimya as a panther representing a form of bestial joy is indicated in Chapman's poem To Harriots, in which he speaks of "this fowle panther earth" (line 46).
³Poems, p. 382.
hounds are the base affections, and the steeds are the spirited passions. The narrative thus relates how Euthimya, disguised as a form of joy, lures men's base affections (hounds) to pursue her, while men's rational souls or reason (hunters) also enter into the race by urging their mounts (spirited passions) to participate in the hot pursuit.1 This is Chapman's allegorical depiction of one of his important Neoplatonic beliefs, namely, the power of the soul to maintain control over the passions and affections.

A final evocation of Neoplatonism which occurs in the allegory of the shadowy hunt is the moral apothegm uttered by the poet when the hunters view the hellish sights within the thicket:

But pressing further, saw such cursed sights,  
Such Etnas fillel with strange tormentcd sprites,  
That now the vaprous objects of the eye  
Out-pierst the intellect in facultie.  
Basenesse was Nobler then Nobilitie:  
For ruth (first shaken from the braine of Loue,  
And loue the soule of vertue) now did moue,  
Not in their soules (spheres meane enough for such)  
But in their eyes: and thence did conscience touch  
Their harts with pitie: where her proper throne,  
Is in the minde, and there should first have shone:  
Eyes should guide bodies, and our soules our eyes,  
But now the world consistes on contraries.  
(11. 309-321)

In the above quotation line 320 is significant, for it implicitly states the frequent contrast in Renaissance Neoplatonic literature between rational and irrational love.

Love may be either rational, following the reason, or irrational, following the senses. Anderson concisely states the difference between these two kinds of love:

Irrational affection is truly engendered in the eyes and fed with gazing; it takes the reason prisoner and causes man to pay his heart "for that his eye eats only." It dies in the cradle of sense, as a result either of satiation or of a new impression by which one fire drives out another. Rational love is common to men and divine beings. It is a chaste and noble affection guided by the intellect.¹

Chapman's statement that "Eyes should guide bodies, and our soules our eyes" (line 320) means that if one allows his sight to feast merely upon his mistress' body, his love is of the irrational type; it is in Neoplatonic terms a form of bestial love. However, if one allows his eyes to function as a gateway or path to the soul, then love can be of a rational kind, a form of Neoplatonic love.

Chapman's notion that our souls must guide our eyes in order to have true love recalls the ladder of love in Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier, translated by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561. In the ascent to true love Castiglione shows that the soul must not allow itself to be guided by the senses alone. As the ascent illustrates, the soul must not think that by possessing the body it will enjoy true love. Castiglione describes the rise of the soul to God in a series of stages. The first stage is the love of beauty in a particular woman.

¹Anderson, p. 125.
The eyes of the lover snatch the image of a beautiful woman and carry it to the heart. Sensual desire is stirred. The lover must consider that "beautie is bodilesse, and an heavenly shining beame," and therefore abstain from all pleasures of the sense but sight and hearing, "for these have little bodily substance in them, and be minister of reason."

The second stage of the ascent refers to love, not of the body, but of the idealized image of the lady.

The third step is love of the universal beauty of womanhood. The lover, "meddling all beautie together ... shall make an universal conceite."

The fourth movement is love of beauty of the soul. Generalization must be followed by introversion. The lover must "come into his wit," look into his mind, "to beholde the beautie that is seen with the eyes of the mind, which then begin to be sharp and thorough-seeing, when the eyes of the body lose the flour of sightliness."

The fifth stage is love of universal beauty which is identical with divine love, wisdom, and goodness. The soul "ravished with the shining of that light" couples herself with it and "ariseth to the noblest part of her, which is the understanding . . . ."

The final step in the ascent is love of the One, the God who sums up all truth, virtue, and beauty. The soul is not satisfied in beholding the heavenly beauty "only in her
particular understanding." Whereupon love "guideth her to the
universall understanding." Then the soul "seeth the main sea of
the pure heavenly beauty, and receiveth it into her, and
enjoyeth that sovereigne happinesse," the beatific vision.¹

As Castiglione indicates, hearing and seeing may be the
noblest of the senses, but they are not sufficient to attain
true love. Chapman adheres to Castiglione's theory in his
belief that true love or wisdom is granted only to the soul of
man.

Chapman's allegory, like Spenser's, can operate on
different levels of meaning. It can function on the literal,
political, and moral levels, both separately and simultaneously.
In the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" it is the moral allegory which
predominates. Chapman believes that poetry should be morally
instructive, that it should be the conveyor of moral truths.
This predominance of the moral allegory is related to Chapman's
Neoplatonic concept of poetry. His definition of poetry
emphasizes his allegorical viewpoint of reality as matter and
spirit, that is, the physical or natural world is symbolical of
the spiritual world. In the epistle to Ovid's Banquet of Sense
poetry is by definition a "shadowing," a speaking picture.
Chapman, however, contends: "But that Poesie should be as

¹Baldassare Castiglione, The Courtier, trans. Thomas
Hoby (1561), in The Renaissance in England, ed. Hyder E. Rollins
and Herschel Baker (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1954),
pp. 533-536. All quotations from Castiglione's The Courtier
are from this edition.
peruiall [easily seen through] as Oratorie, and plainness her speciall ornament, were the plaine way to barbarisme. 1

As was stated in the opening paragraph of this chapter, Chapman's allegory is not artificially imposed upon the "Hymnus in Cynthiam." Both structurally and thematically it is integral to the poem as a whole. If viewed in the light of Neoplatonism, this integralness of the allegory of the shadowy hunt becomes apparent. Chapman, no doubt, was prompted to use the allegorical technique because he was a follower of the "hidden mysteries" doctrine of Neoplatonism. Chapman believes that the truths embodied in his poetry are to be understood only by those who are divinely inspired. These truths are otherwise to be concealed from the eyes of the vulgar crowd. Chapman's allegory, thus, is divinely inspired for the purpose of conveying moral truths.

1Poems, p. 49.
CHAPTER VII

MYTHOLOGY IN RELATION TO NEOPLATONISM

IN THE "HYMNUS IN CYNTHIAM"

The third and final portion of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" relies quite heavily on mythology to espouse its Neoplatonic content. This section of the poem opens with the poet mourning at the departure of Cynthia from the earth, for only she can bring true joy or wisdom:

O then thou great Elixir of all treasures,
From whom we multiplie our world of pleasures,
Discend againe, ah never leave the earth.

(11. 404-406)

Chapman then cites the mythological fables of Orion and Alpheus to show that Cynthia will not tolerate the worship of presumptuous men. The first tale relates how Orion, the lover of Diana, tried to rape her and, as a consequence, was stung to death by a scorpion. After his death he became a constellation in the sky. Chapman borrows the mythological facts of his fable from Comes. His versification of the story in the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" is as follows:

Come Goddesse come, the double fatherd sonne,
Shall dare no more amongst thy traine to runne,
Nor with poluted handes to touch thy vaile:
His death was darted from the Scorpions taile,
For which her forme to endlesse memorie,
With other lamps, doth lend the heauens an eye,
And he that shewd such great presumption,
Is hidden now, beneath a little stone.
(11. 410-417)

As Schoell's source study points out, Chapman's use of
Comes here is practically a direct literal borrowing. The lines
from Comes read:

Scripsit Nicander in *Theriaca* scorpium immisum
Orioni a Diana, quia peplum Dianae etiam apprehendere,
cum illam violare niteretur, ausus sit impuris manibus,
vt patet ex his: . . . Atque scorpij idcirco forma ad
sempiternam memoriam dicitur fuisse inter syndera
relata: . . .

. . . talum percussit scorpius illi,
Sub paruo lapide occultus vestigia propter. 1

Nicander wrote in the *Theriaca* that a scorpion was
sent against Orion by Diana because he dared to seize
Diana's garment with impure hands when he was trying
to rape her, as is apparent from the following: . . .
And therefore the form of the scorpion is said to have
been brought to eternal memory among the stars . . .

. . . a scorpion struck his ankle, hiding under
a small stone near his path.

Line 410 of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" which reads "the
double fatherd sonne" refers to Orion as Chapman's Gloss 22
indicates: "The double-fatherd sonne is Orion, so cald since
he was the sonne of Ioue and Appollo, borne of their seede
enclosed in a Bulls hide, which abhorreth not from Philosophie
(according to Poets intentions) that one sonne should haue two
fathers: for in the generation of elements it is true, since
omnia sint in omnibus. He offering violence, was stong of a

1 Schoell, p. 191, quoting Comes, *Myth.*, VIII, 12,
De Orione, p. 579.
Scorpion to death, for which: the Scorpions figure was made a signe in heaven, as Nicander in *Theriacas* affirmes.¹ A comparison of this gloss with the extract from Comes reinforces the proof that Chapman's primary source for the hymn is Comes' *Mythologicae*.

The tale of Alpheus, likewise borrowed from Comes,² is another moral example used by Chapman to illustrate that Cynthia will not stand for the worship of presumptuous and immoral men:

If proude Alpheus offer force againe,
Because he could not once thy loue obtaine,
Thou and thy Nymphs shall stop his mouth with mire,
And mocke the fondling, for his mad aspire.  

(11. 418-421)

Comes' version of the story is as follows:

Fama est quod Alpheus amore Dianae captus vbi neque gratia neque precibus se quidquam ad nuptias proficere intelligeret, sit ad vim conversus: at illa fugiendo insequentem Alpheum vsque ad Letrinos ad nocturnos choros protraxit, vbi interesse Nympharum lusibus consueuerat. Ibi Dea sibi, suisque socijs os coeno obleuit, quam cum dignoscere non posset Alpheus elusus abijt.³

The story is that Alpheus, seized by love of Diana, when he understood that he was getting nowhere toward marriage either by favor or by prayers, turned to force; but she by running away led Alpheus in pursuit as far as Letrini to the nightly dances, where she used to take part in the sports of the nymphs. There the goddess

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¹ *Poems*, p. 44.
² See Schoell, p. 191.
smeared her own and her companions' faces with mire, and when Alpheus could not tell them apart, he went away frustrated.

Here again, Chapman seems to have added little of his own inspiration to the mythological account. His versification appears to be a literal translation of his source material. Chapman, of course, is original in the sense that he has selected these two mythological fables to illustrate the evil of presumption and the lack of chastity in the world. For their immoral acts, these men are justly punished by Cynthia.

Continuing to borrow his mythological lore from Comes, Chapman explains what proper devotion to Cynthia should be. It should be modelled after the worship paid to Diana in ancient Ephesus. Just as the Ephesians built a glorious temple for Diana, the poet wishes that English ladies may rebuild the temple of Ephesus with their jewels by setting "their iewels in their myndes" (line 442). The lines from Chapman's "Hymnus in Cynthiam" read:

Thy glorious temple (great Lucifera)  
That was the studie of all Asia,  
Two hundred twentie sommers to erect,  
Built by Chersiphrone thy Architect,  
In which two hundred, twentie columnes stood,  
Built by two hundred twentie kings of blood,  
Of curious bewtie, and admired height,  
Pictures and statues, of as praysefull sleight,  
Conuenient for so chast a Goddesse phane,  
(Burnt by Herostratus) shall now againe,  
Be reexstruct, and this Ephesiabe  
Thy countries happie name, come here with thee,  
As it was there so shall it now be framde,  
And thy faire virgine-chamber euer namde:  
And as in reconstruction of it there,
There Ladies did no more their iewells weare,
But franckly contribute them all to raise,
A work of such a chast Religious prayse:
So will our Ladies; for in them it lyes,
To spare so much as would that worke suffice:
Our Dames well set their iewels in their myndes.  
(11. 422-442)

A comparison of the above lines with Chapman's source shows that Chapman has contributed his own allegorical ideas to the mere description of the temple by Comes:

Habuit celeberrimum omnium templorum et augustissimum Ephesium, quod totius Asiae studio ducentis et viginti annis architecto Chersiphrone fuerat aedificatum, . . . in quo fuerant centum et viginti septem columnae a totidem Regibus erectae, admirabilis longitudinis ac pulchritudinis. Aderant et picturae mirificae, et pulcherrimae statuae magnificentiae eius templi conuenientes: quae omnia ab Herostrato viro Ephesio incensa fuerunt . . . Atque huius magnificentissimi templi sublimitatem praecclare expressit poeta in illo epigrammate, quod etiam ipsum templum Parthenonem vocavit, siue virginum thalamum . . . Scriptum reliquit Strabo in libro decimo quarto quod cum illud templum, quod affabre et multo artificio a Chersiphrone exstructum fuerat, conflagrasset, aliiud Ephesij non minus magnificentum construxerent refectis prioribus columnis, detractis mulieribus aureis ornamentis, multisque opibus et publice et privatim vndique in vnnum collatis.¹

Ephesus contained the most celebrated and most august of all temples, which had been erected by virtue of the devotion of all Asia, during 220 years, by the architect Chersiphrone in which temple there had been 127 columns erected by as many kings, of admirable dimension and beauty. There were found also marvelous paintings, and most beautiful, magnificent statues appropriate for that temple . . . all of which were burned by Herostratus, a man of Ephesus . . . And the poet proclaimed in the clearest terms the sublimity of this most splendid temple in that epigram, which also called that very same temple a Parthenon, or a chamber

¹Schoell, p. 36, quoting Comes, Myth., III, 18, De Diana
of virgins. Strabo wrote down in his fourteenth volume that, when that temple, which had been erected with skill and with great talent by Cherisphrone, was burned down, the Ephesians built another one no less resplendent, restoring the former columns, removing the golden ornaments from the women, and assembling great wealth, both publicly and privately, from everywhere into one place.

As Schoell comments, in Come's text it is only a question of the description of the temple of Ephesus and of legendary facts relative to this temple. Chapman takes off from this base and "mythologizes" the temple. It becomes a temple of Intellectual Beauty which worshippers of Diana (Elizabeth) will "reexstruct" (line 433) in their "virtuous parts" (line 451).

In the next lines Chapman's Neoplatonic doctrine that true beauty exists only in the mind emerges strikingly:

Our Dames well set their jewels in their myndes,
In-sight illustrates; outward brauerie blindes,
The minde hath in her selfe a Deitie,
And in the stretching circle of her eye
All things are compast, all things present still,
Will framd to powre, doth make vs what we will,
But keep your iewels, make ye brauer yet,
Elisian Ladies; and (in riches set,
Vpon your foreheads), let vs see your harts:
Build Cynthiaes Temple in your vertuous parts,
Let euerie iewell be a vertues glasse:
And no Herostratus shall euer race,
Those holy monuments: but pillers stand,
Where euery Grace, and Muse shall hang her garland.

(11. 442-455)

In order to explain further that the beauty of the mind is virtue, Chapman turns to the myth of Ganymede. The passage

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1Schoell, p. 36.
relating the myth begins with "Plotinus' well-known figure that man is a sculptor self-modelling himself, striving to chip away the gross matter and reveal the ideal form."\(^1\) Stressing the importance of the mind as the ruler of the body, the passage states:

> The minde in that we like, rules euerie limme, Giveth hands to bodies, makes them make them trimme. (ll. 456-457)

Erwin Panofsky gives an excellent account of the various interpretations to which the Ganymede myth has been subjected during the course of the centuries. In the fourth century B.C. there were two opposing conceptions: (1) the Platonic notion that the myth was a justification of the amorous relations between men and boys; and (2) Xenophon's theory that the myth was a moral allegory of the superiority of the mind or intelligence over the body.

The Ganymede myth went through both a realistic and an idealistic interpretation. The more realistic version "was either developed in a Euhemeristic spirit, or interpreted as an astral myth. The idealistic version, on the other hand, was transferred from a moral plane to a metaphysical or even mystical one."

The High Middle Ages accepted the Euhemeristic and astronomical interpretations but later also followed the

\(^1\)Battenhouse, "Chapman's The Shadow of Night: An Interpretation," p. 605.
Christian moralization of the myth, such as the parallel between St. John the Evangelist and Ganymede. For the Renaissance, however, "it was a matter of course to prefer an interpretation which connected the myth of Ganymede with the Neoplatonic doctrine of the furor divinus."

Landino, a humanist and member of Ficino's academy, favored the interpretation of Ganymede as "the Mind (mens), as opposed to the lower faculties of the human soul, and that his abduction denotes the rise of the Mind to a state of enraptured contemplation: 'Ganymede, then, would signify the mens humana, beloved by Jupiter, that is: the Supreme Being. His companions would stand for the other faculties of the soul, to wit the vegetal and sensorial. Jupiter, realizing that the Mind is in the forest—that is, remote from mortal things, transports it to heaven by means of the eagle. Thus it leaves behind its companions—that is, the vegetative and sensitive souls; and being removed, or, as Plato says, divorced from the body, and forgetting corporeal things, it concentrates entirely on contemplating the secrets of Heaven.'"¹

This Neoplatonic interpretation of the Ganymede myth, widely accepted during the Renaissance, is the one adhered to by Natalis Comes whose account of the Ganymede myth served as Chapman's source in the closing portion of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam." The lines from Chapman are as follows:

¹Panofsky, pp. 213-215.
He is the Ganymede, the bird of Ioue,  
Rapt to his soueraignes bosome for his loue,  
His bewtie was it, not the bodies pride,  
That made him great Aquarius stellified:  
And that minde most is bewtiful and hye,  
And nearest comes to a Diuinitie,  
That furthest is from spot of earths delight,  
Pleasures that lose their substance with their sight,  
Such one, Saturnius rauisheth to loue,  
And fills the cup of all content to Ioue.  

If wisdome be the mindes true bewtie then,  
And that such bewtie shines in vertuous men,  
If those sweet Ganemedes shall onely finde.  
(11. 462-474)

Comes' relation of the Ganymede myth is typically Renaissance  
and accords with the account given by Landino:

Hic (Ganymedes) cum esset eximiae & prope inauditae pulchritudinis, ob eam dignus habitus est, non qui ad libidinem, vt crediderunt plerique, raperetur, sed qui poca Ioui ministraret, vt scripsit Homerus libro Iliadis: . . . Alij vero inter quos fuit Xenophon, vt scripsit in Symposio, Ganymedem propter animi pulchritudinem & prudentiam potius, quam propter formam corporis, in coelum ascitum esse voluerunt . . . Atque illis persuasum denique Ganymedem inter sydera relatum esse, & in id signum quod dicitur Aquarius . . . Nam quid aliud per hand fabulam demonstrabant sapientes, quam prudentem virum a Deo amari, & illum solum proxime accedere ad diuinam naturam? est enim Ganymedes anima hominum, quam, vt diximus, ob eximiam prudentiam Deus ad se rapit . . . Illa vero anima pulcherrima est, quae minimum sit humanis sordibus, aut flagitijs corporis contaminata: quam Deus diligens ad se rapit . . . Quid enim aliud est poca Ioui ministre, quam Deum mirifice delectari officijs sapientiae?

Since he (Ganymede) was possessed of unusual and almost unheard of beauty, because of this he was held worthy, not to be carried off for immoral purposes, as many believe, but to serve cups to Jupiter, as Homer wrote in Book XX of the Iliad:

1 Schoell, pp. 191-192, quoting Comes, Myth., IX, 13, pp. 656-658.
... Others indeed, among whom was Xenophon, as he wrote in the Symposium would have it that Ganymede was called to heaven on account of the beauty and wisdom of his soul rather than on account of the comeliness of his body. ... And they are persuaded finally that Ganymede was placed among the stars and in that constellation which is called Aquarius. ... For what else did the wise men show by this story but that a prudent man is loved by God and he alone approaches nearest to the divine nature? For Ganymede is the human soul, which, as we have said, God takes to Himself because of its unusual prudence. ... Indeed that soul is most beautiful which is least contaminated by human baseness or disgraces of the body, which God loves and takes to Himself. ... What is it to serve cups to Jupiter but to please God in a wonderful way by the services of wisdom?

After stressing the error of being concerned with worldly goods, the poet begins the recapitulation and conclusion of the hymn. Here the Neoplatonic content of Chapman's philosophy is very apparent. The Intellectual Beauty of the moon-goddess Cynthia is set in contrast to the beauty of the sun: "This bewtie hath a fire vpon her brow, / That dimmes the Sunne of base desire in you" (ll. 477-478). Cynthia is opposed to the passionate flames of Cupid: "Thrise mightie Cynthia should be frozen dead, / To all the lawlesse flames of Cupids Godhead" (ll. 483-484). Cynthia, then, is greater than the sun, which is as usual an unfavorable symbol, and is cold to "all the lawlesse flames of Cupids Godhead" (line 484). Her beams shall "be as quench to those pestiferent fires" (line 487) that entering through men's eyes "impoison their desires":

To this end let thy beames diuinities
For euer shine vpon their sparckling eyes,
And be as quench to those pestiferent fires,
That through their eyes, impoison their desires.

(11. 485-488)

Cynthia is revolted by "dalliance" (line 500), and as for Endymion, she loved him for his "studious intellect" (line 494):

Thou neuer yet wouldst stoope to base assault,
Therefore those Poetes did most highly fault,
That faunde thee fiftie children by Endimion,
And they that write thou hadst but three alone,
Thou neuer any hadst, but didst affect,
Endimion for his studious intellect.
Thy soule-chast kisses were for vertues sake,
And since his eyes were euermore awake,
To search for knowledge of thy excellence,
And all Astrologie: no negligence,
Or female softnesse fede his learned trance,
Nor was thy vaille once toucht with dalliance.

(11. 489-500)

The above reference to Endymion comes from Comes'

Mythologiae:

Endymion, vt scribit Pausanias in Prioribus Eliacis,
a' Luna fuit amatus, ex qua filias quinquaginta
suscepisse fabulantur, cum tamen alii tres tantum
filios inquiant . . . Cicero tamen lib. primo Tusculanarum
disputationum perpetuo dormientem Endymionem in Latmo
Cariae monte a luna adamatam dicit sola osula lunae
accepisse, neque unquam experrectum fuisse . . . Alii
dicunt primum Endymionem rerum sublimium speculationem
inuenisse . . . qui cum noctu his considerationibus
esset intentus, somno non fruebatur . . . Neque mirum
videri debet Endymionem virum Astronomiae peritum, &
in considerandis stellarum cursibus diligentissimum
. . .

1 Schoell, p. 192, quoting Comes, Myth., IV, 8,
De Endymione, pp. 221-223.
won the moon's affection and received only the kisses of the moon and was never awakened . . . Others say that Endymion first discovered the observation of heavenly bodies . . . and that since he was intent on these studies by night, he took no sleep . . . And it should not seem strange that Endymion was a man learned in astronomy and very diligent in studying the courses of the stars . . .

The above parallel passages and Chapman's Gloss 26 leave no doubt in the reader's mind that Chapman bases lines 493-500 of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" on Comes' Mythologiae. The Gloss reads: "Pausanias in Eliacis, affirmes it: others that she had but three, viz. Paeon, which Homer calls the Gods Phisition, Epeus, and Aëtolus, &c. Cicero saith she had none, but onely for his loue to the studie of Astrologie, gaue him chast kisses."¹ What is most significant about Chapman's use of Comes as his source is Chapman's manipulation of the material to emphasize the Neoplatonic elements in his hymn.

Particularly important are such phrases as "studious intellect," "Thy soule-chast kisses were for vertues sake," and "learned trance." Here it must be granted, however, that Chapman's attempt at originality is slight in comparison with other lines in which he modifies the source material of Comes.

In the following lines Chapman once again employs the technique of double allegory. He pays tribute to Queen Elizabeth and to her counterpart, Divine Wisdom. Chapman states that "Wise Poets" (line 501) serve Cynthia "in most religious feare" (line 504). Cynthia is the "Deare precident

¹Poems, p. 45.
for vs to imitate" (line 505), for it is she who keeps "our
peacefull households safe from sack, / And free'st our ships,
when others suffer wracke" (11. 507-508). As Battenhouse
correctly points out, "the lines imply (1) that loyal servitors
of Elizabeth find their ships preserved from enemy Armadas;
while (2) devoted worshippers of Divine Wisdom find their
ships-of-life preserved from the evils which threaten all
voyagers on the sea-of-this-world."¹

In the early lines of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" Chapman
had announced his intention of singing the praises of Cynthia
as "the forces of the mind" (line 153) and also "(As she is
Hecate) her soueraigne kinde" (line 152). Thus in the final
verse-paragraph of the hymn he invokes Cynthia in her aspect as
Hecate in order to enumerate her more terrible and violent
characteristics. Chapman's Gloss 28 to the "Hymnus in
Cynthiam" identifies Cynthia as Hecate: "All these are proper
to her as she is Hecate."² The purpose of the verse-paragraph
is to illustrate "that Cynthia can be a terror-strong huntress
and punisher, as well as a beneficent preserver and
protectress."³ The closing lines read:

¹Battenhouse, "Chapman's The Shadow of Night: An
Interpretation," p. 607.

²Poems, p. 45.

³Battenhouse, "Chapman's The Shadow of Night: An
Interpretation," p. 607.
Then in thy cleare and Isie Pentacle,
Now execute a Magicke miracle:
Slip euerie sort of poisoned herbes, and plants,
And bring thy rabid mastiffs to these hants.
Looke with thy fierce aspect, be terror-strong;
Assume thy wondrous shape of halfe a furlong:
Put on thy feete of Serpents, viperous hayres,
And act the fearefulst part of thy affaires:
Conuert the violent courses of thy floods,
Remoue whole fields of corne, and hugest woods,
Cast hills into the sea, and make the starrs,
Drop out of heauen, and lose thy Marinars.
So shall the wonders of thy power be scene,
And thou for euer liue the Planets Queene.
(11. 515-528)

For some unknown reason Schoell has overlooked the
indebtedness of Chapman to Comes for the mythology of this
passage. W. Schrickx, however, has noted that Chapman took his
ideas from Comes' chapter De Hecate. He cites the Latin
quotations from the Venetian edition of the Mythologiae of 1568:

Hanc terribilem aspectu, proceritateque corporis vel
ad mensuram dimidii stadii accedere dixerunt: pedesque
habuisse ad serpentis formam, cum vultus & aspectus
figura proxime ad Gorgonum naturam accederet. Pro
coma densissimi dracones & viperae, aliae in cincinnorum
morem contortae, atque sbilantes visebantur: aliae collum
ipsum amplexabantur, aliae spargebantur in humeros
demissae, uti testatur Lucianus . . .

Quid aliud canes sunt rabidi illam comitantes, quam
calamitates & molestiae, quae homines e fato assidue
infestant? cius item forma tam formidabilis varietatem
aerumnarum praesevert. Potest cadem rursus veneficiorum
praefecta fluuiorum cursus conuertere, segetes alio
transf erre, montes in profundum delicere, astra,
deducere de coelo, quia fatorum necessitati ac voluntati
diuinac nihil est quod non pateat.

They have said that she was terrifying to behold and
that she reached in the height of her body the full
extent of half a stadium: and that she had feet in the
form of a serpent, while her visage and her glance
approximated very nearly the characteristics of the
Gorgons. Instead of hair a mass of snakes and vipers were to be seen, some twisted in the same way as curly hair is and hissing; others were embracing her very neck, others having fallen onto her shoulders were scattered about, as Lucan attests . . .

What else are those mad dogs which accompany her, than the calamities and troubles from fate which relentlessly beseege human beings? In a similar way her very formidable shape manifests a diversity of tribulations. On the other hand, this same superintendent of sorcery is able to alter the course of rivers, to transport the growing corn to another place, to cast down mountains into the depths, to bring down the stars from heavens, since there is nothing which is not evident to the necessity of the Fates and to the divine will.

A comparison of these two passages from Comes with the concluding verse-paragraph of the "Hymnus in Cynthia" shows that Chapman has made a meager attempt at an original contribution, consisting approximately of four lines, two at the beginning and two at the end of the verse-paragraph.

In conclusion, it can be said that the central theme of the "Hymnus in Cynthia" is the praise of the moon goddess Cynthia under the guise of a double allegory: (1) "her soueraigne kinde" (line 154) or Queen Elizabeth and (2) "the forces of the mind" (line 153), that is, the Platonic World-Soul in its function of Divine Wisdom, Beauty, and Providence. Chapman's thesis is that the health and happiness of England are dependent on the jurisdiction of Cynthia, "who rewards the virtuous and punishes the wicked, who grant piece and prosperity to those who serve her chastely with pure affections, while she deliberately makes sport of those who incontently give
themselves to vain affection. The chief concern of Cynthia's rule is the promotion of intellectual virtue and the quenching of sensual desires. To such sovereignty, Chapman believes all Elizabethans ought to bow in religious praise and submission.  

CHAPTER VIII

IMAGERY IN THE SHADOW OF NIGHT

In addition to being influenced by medieval and Elizabethan poetry, Chapman's imagery in The Shadow of Night shows a relationship with the Metaphysical conceit, particularly that of John Donne. A comparison of lines on the moon from "A Valediction: of weeping" with lines in Chapman's "Hymnus in Cynthiam" reveals the mutual affinity of thought and passion each poet achieves in his poetry. Donne begs his beloved:

0 more than Moon,
Draw not up seas to drown me in thy sphere,
Weep me not dead, in thine arms, but forbear
To teach the sea, what it may do too soon;
Let not the wind
Example find
To do me more harm than it purposeth;
Since thou and I sigh one another's breath,
Whoe'er sighs most, is cruellest, and hastes the other's death.  
(11. 19-27)

Chapman describes Cynthia, the moon, as follows:

The greatest, and swiftest Planet in the skie:
Peacefull, and warlike, and the powre of fate,
In perfect circle of whose sacred state,
The circles of our hopes are compassed:
All wisedome, beautie, maiestie and dread,
Wrought in the speaking pourtrait of thy face:

0 let thy beautie scorch the wings of time,
That fluttering he may fall before thine eyes,
And beate him selfe to death before he rise.
(11. 4-9, 18-20)

In the above lines of Chapman there is what Eliot calls "a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a direct recreation of thought into feeling, which is exactly what we find in Donne."

This kinship between Donne and Chapman is also noted by George Williamson who recognizes in Chapman "a poet whose qualities have so much in common with the Metaphysical school that he might be called the first Metaphysical poet."

Commenting on Chapman's imagery, Elizabeth Holmes enumerates the similarities between Donne and Chapman. She concludes that although Chapman has the desire to express his thought through emotion, he does not always attain the artistry of Donne's poetry. She comments:

"The introduction of allusions to science or philosophy in other images, and a more occasional turn of thought or phrase result in analogies with Donne or his successors, though again the finish, the last distillation by wit, is often wanting. But the aim is there, the desire for distinction and novelty, and especially for the epiphany of thought through sense."

Finally, James Smith, a twentieth-century British critic, stresses the difference between Donne and Chapman in

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3 Holmes, p. 73.
relation to the term \textit{obscurity}. After distinguishing obscurity from the nonsensical, Smith divides obscurity into two types: "the one more properly called 'obscurer,' the other much less so, if at all." Smith continues:

The properly obscure is that associated with the term "metaphysical," and whose presence in Chapman I am concerned to deny. It occurs throughout a complete poem or a play, as an atmosphere one might say or, in another figure, as a texture--whose consistent closeness for some time defies penetration. By its ubiquity within a work it is the sign of a mind, more skilled at least than the reader's in the simultaneous handling of numerous references, or in the simultaneous consideration of numerous relations; of a mind, too, more than normally sensitive to situations of which such complexity can be predicated.

It is the first type of obscurity that Smith considers typical of Donne's poetry, but it is "far from being a permanent character of Chapman's work." It is the second type of obscurity which Smith applies to Chapman:

[It] distinguishes itself in that its limits are not a whole poem or a play, but a line or a few consecutive lines, sometimes a single word. It can be compared, not to an atmosphere or a texture, but to a body foreign to a substance in which it is embedded. If obscurity occurs in Chapman, it is of this kind; and it should be noted how insignificant it is. For it is a sign, not of a habit of mind in the author--an occasional tendency to carelessness is not a habit; ... but of what may perhaps be called, in terms which it is not always safe to employ, a failure of one of the devices used to establish communication.

Smith contends that Chapman's type of obscurity can easily be overcome by mechanical means, such as knowledge of scientific jargon, or by a clarification of vocabulary or syntax. Smith praises Chapman's verse for its "self-effacing quality which
... is one of the most remarkable things about it. Because of this quality I would call it, not only clear, but transparent like good glass, looking through which as a medium one is not aware of looking through anything.\textsuperscript{1}

The presence of medieval, Elizabethan, and Metaphysical traditions or schools of poetry in Chapman's poetic style marks him as a uniquely transitional poet. As Elizabeth Holmes points out, his verse exhibits "some lingering mediaevalisms," and "spacious images born of the Elizabethan grandeur of conception ... crossed by a curious and restless habit of thought, and the result is a special kind of image, frequently approaching the metaphysical kind of the seventeenth century."\textsuperscript{2} Charlotte Spivack supports this evaluation by Miss Holmes:

As a poet, Chapman was by no means an unconventional individualist; he was instead a tireless, skilled experimenter who achieved at different times a mastery of several traditions of poetry. He turned early to the metaphysical style of "conceited" verse; he later became a neo-Classic satirist wielding the heroic couplet; he often reverted to a decidedly medieval allegorical form; and he ultimately settled down to the scholarly art of Homeric translation with a perverse penchant for the archaic fourteener, the long medieval line of fourteen syllables.

Miss Spivack continues by drawing a relationship between Chapman's theory of poetry and his Platonic philosophy. She comments: Chapman's "poetics, like his metaphysics, was Platonic; and although dispersed throughout his poems,  

\textsuperscript{1}James Smith, "George Chapman," pp. 344-345.  
\textsuperscript{2}Holmes, pp. 72-73.
prefatory verses, and epistles, these pronouncements on the art of poesy are unified by the governing principles of Platonic dualism."

Chapman's imagery in *The Shadow of Night* reflects the dualistic technique inherent in his Neoplatonic philosophy. Fire and darkness are the two major images recurring throughout the poem. Chapman does not use these images indiscriminately but gives them a definite and precise meaning in *The Shadow of Night*. Fire and its manifold associations of heat, brightness, and day are connected with the lack of virtue, with the lustful life. Darkness and its various forms such as shadows, blackness, and night are linked with the virtuous life, with the conditions essential to creativity.

Chapman's equation of fire with evil is apparent in the opening lines of the "Hymnus in Noctem" in which the earth is described as an altar smoking with human passions. In the following lines the linking of fire with passion establishes the basic symbolism to be carried out in the remainder of the poem:

Great Goddesse to whose throne in Cynthian fires,
This earthlie Alter endlesse fumes exspires,
Therefore, in fumes of sighes and fires of griefe,
To fearefull chances thou sendst bold reliefe.

(11. 1-4)

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In this passage, line two is the significant one to note. In Chapman's Neoplatonic philosophy, "earthlie Alter" would be aligned with matter or body. He equates "earthlie Alter" with aspects of fire such as "Cynthian fires," "fumes," and "fires of grieve." In *The Shadow of Night* this concept of fire as bad is vital to an understanding of Chapman's Neoplatonism.

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" the best example of Chapman's Neoplatonic belief that fire is evil appears when Chapman calls on Hercules to "bend thy brasen bow against the Sunne" (line 257). The poet continues:

Then thou wouldst suffer, with his enuius beames:  
Now make him leave the world to Night and dreames.  
Neuer were vertues labours so enuy'd  
As in this light: *shooe*, *shooe*, and *stoope his pride*:  
Suffer no more his lustfull rayes to get  
The Earth with *issue*: let him still be set  
In Somnus thickets: bound about the browes,  
With pitchie vapours, and with Ebene bowes.  
(11. 260-267)

In the underscored references to the sun, the connotation is one of harmfulness. Chapman sinisterly refers to the "enuius beames," to the "pride," and to the "lustfull rayes" of the sun.

In the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" the evil meaning of fire, or any of its forms, is repeated. In lines 26-28, for example, Chapman says to Cynthia who may represent the moon, the World-Soul, or Queen Elizabeth, or all three:

So since that adamantine powre is giuen  
To thy chast hands, to cut of all desire  
Of fleshly sports, and quench to Cupids fire.  
(11. 26-28)
Here Chapman is connecting "Cupids fire" with human passion.

The power to control this dangerous passion rests in the moon symbol of Cynthia. Her authority is brought out later on when the poet says to those who have Cynthia's favor:

But then how blest are they thy fauour graces,
Peace in their hearts, and youth raignes in their faces:
Health strengthens their bodies, to subdue the seas,
And dare the Sunne, like Thbane Hercules
To calme the furies, and to quench the fire.
(11. 124-128)

In these lines Chapman is stating his Neoplatonic principle mentioned earlier: "the Sunne" needs to be controlled because it is associated with the body, with human passion. Only Cynthia or the World-Soul can "quench the fire."

Throughout the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" Chapman draws many analogies between fire and the lustful life. The second section of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam," that is, the shadowy hunting of the nymph Euthymia, illustrates implicitly Chapman's Neoplatonic symbolism of fire and the lustful life. In the allegorical narrative Chapman speaks of Cynthia as forming out of the purest matter of earth a nymph called Euthymia, meaning contentment or joy. Chapman describes this creation as follows:

She frames of matter intimate before,
(To wit, a bright, and daselting meteor)
A goodlie Nymph, whose bwtie, bwtie staines
Heau'ns with her ieweells; guies all the raines
Of wished pleasance; frames her golden wings,
But them she bindes vp close with purple strings,
Because she now will haue her run alone,
And bid the base, to all affection.
(11. 210-217)
As was discussed earlier in this dissertation, the pursuit of Euthimya under the various guises of the panther and boar allegorically represents the striving of all men for human passion, or more specifically, for worldly ambition and physical desire. These examples thus illustrate Chapman's basic Neoplatonic notion of fire or any of its forms such as heat, brightness, or day as destructive to man's soul.

In addition to these analogies between fire and the lustful life, Chapman makes allusions to other aspects of fire. Some examples selected at random are the following: "Natures bright eye-sight" (line 1), "tapers, nor torches, nor the forrests burning" (line 33), "When men as many as the lamps above" (line 43), "That two Auroraeas did in one day rise" (line 45), "Held torches vp to heauen, and flaming glasse, / Made a whole forrest but a burning eye" (ll. 67-68), "Times motion, being like the reeling sunnes" (line 82), "Sing then withall, her Pallace brightnesse bright, / The dasle-sunne perfections of her light" (ll. 155-156), "Her rare Ælisian Pallace she did build . . . With sunnie foyle, that lasted but a day" (ll. 176, 178), and "As when the fierie coursers of the sunne, / Vp to the pallace of the morning runne" (ll. 305-306).

In contrast to the imagery of fire to suggest evil, Chapman employs the imagery of darkness to mean good. In the "Hymnus in Noctem" the adjectives modifying Night supply this connotation. Chapman applies the epithets "contentfull"
(line 202), "deare" (line 213), and "sacred" (line 372) to Night. In line 291 the poet consecrates himself to her "soft shades of sable funerall." Finally, in line 338 Chapman speaks of Night's "trustie shadowes." Thus it is in the "Hymnus in Noctem" that Chapman becomes enthralled by the mystery of Night, by its ability to vitalize the creative faculties of man.

In the "Hymnus in Cynthia" darkness functions in a different way than in the first poem. Darkness is used more as a technique of contrast than as a time essential to creativity or to mysticism. In the following examples there is usually some aspect of light mentioned or implied: "Nights darke robes (whose objects blind vs all)" (line 38), "Who (set in absolute remotion) reaues / Thy face of light, and thee all darkned leaues" (ll. 112-113), "Old men are blind of issue" (line 122), "The juice more cleare then day, yet shadows night" (line 166), "This tender building, Pax Imperij nam'd, / Which cast a shadow like a Pyramis" (ll. 189-190), "As when the sunne beames on high billowes falls, / And make their shadowes dance upon a wall" (ll. 355-356), ". . . as when a man in summer evenings, / Something before sunneset, when shadows bee / Rackt with his stooping, to the highest degree, / His shadow clymes the trees, and skales a hill" (ll. 358-361), and "So let them drowne the world in night, and death" (line 408). These foregoing examples of imagery of light and darkness show MacLure to be
accurate in his observation that "the dominant motif of The Shadow of Night is fire striking out of darkness."¹

Chapman's images of fire and darkness are predominant in The Shadow of Night, but there are also subsidiary images within the poem. The most important of these secondary images are those from the area of nature. They are of two types: (1) the relatively simple, descriptive kind which reveals him hypnotized by the night and the moon and their forces; and (2) the more complex imagery of cosmology and mysticism in which he expresses his Neoplatonic philosophy.

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman frequently refers to the creative, inspiring aspect of night. Night is a mystery beneath whose "soft, and peacefull couert ... Treasures vknown, and more vnprisde" (ll. 67, 69) are hidden. The poet invites his followers to consecrate themselves to "sacred Night":

All you possesse with indepressed spirits,  
Indu'd with nimble, and aspiring wits,  
Come consecrate with me, to sacred Night  
Your whole endeauours, and detest the light.  
Sweete Peaces richest crowne is made of starres,  
Most certaine guides of honord Marinars,  
No pen can any thing eternall wright,  
That is not steept in humor of the Night.  
(11. 370-377)

According to MacLure, Chapman is the first English poet to write of the divine quality of night:

¹MacLure, p. 45.
A pleasantly discursive essay might be written on Night and the poetic sensibility in English literature, taking into account Drummond, Milton, Young, Thomas, Dylan Thomas and others; but it would have to begin with Chapman, the first, I think, to sing of "darkness aiding intellectual light and sacred silence whisp'ring truths divine."  

Chapman's concept of night is notable as "the product of his inmost self." Night has the power to inspire within the poet the mood for creativity. According to Miss Holmes, "Not till the mid-seventeenth century is there any such realization in English poetry of the beauty and mystery of darkness, its power to stir quick impulses and long memories." She cites Vaughan's "The Night" as the first poem to approach a personal description of night. She says of The Shadow of Night that "while still keeping the grandeur of the natural image, it becomes the symbol of untamed imaginations and inspirations, and the boundless freedom of the individual soul. . . ."  

As for Chapman's simple images of nature, there is an "emotional beauty" in his description of night as a "Rich-tapird sanctuarie of the blest" (line 268), or in his depiction of night as a jewel in the midst of the earth's darkness:

Mens faces glitter, and their hearts are blacke,  
But thou (great Mistresse of heauens gloomie racke)  
Art blacke in face, and glitterst in thy heart.  
There is thy glorie, riches, force, and Art.  
("HN," 11. 225-228)
Chapman's simple images of nature frequently reveal intimate details of expression which could be written only by a poet overwhelmed by the beauty of night and its forces. In the "Hymnus in Cynthia" Time is represented as a moth dazed by the beauty of the moon:

> O let thy beautie scorch the wings of time, 
> That fluttering he may fall before thine eyes, 
> And beate him selfe to death before he rise. 

(11. 18-20)

Thus in this first kind of simple images of nature it is the expression of the poet's personal emotion which is most striking. In fact, these images of nature have been characterized as "cosmic and lonely like the images in Paradise Lost, though different from Milton's in being generally symbolic of a human quality or destiny, or of some indefinable, overwhelming emotion which they stir in the mind of the poet himself."¹

Chapman's second type of nature imagery, namely, cosmological imagery, lacks the clarity and simplicity of the poet inspired by the mysterious forces of the night. Here his images are more difficult to comprehend because he is using them to express his Neoplatonic philosophy, which by its very nature is abstract and complex. An appropriate example of this abstruse imagery occurs in lines 29-49. In the following lines Chapman uses the Neoplatonic imagery of chaos and confusion to

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¹Ibid., p. 83.
express his paradoxical theme: the physical chaos of the universe and the moral chaos of man's soul are worse than the original chaos prior to the creation of the universe and of man. Chapman writes:

Sorrowes deare soueraigne, and the queene of rest, 
That when vnlightsome, vast, and indigist 
The formlesse matter of this world did lye, 
Fildst euery place with thy Diuinitie, 
Why did thy absolute and endlesse sway, 
License heauens torch, the scepter of the Day, 
Distinguishyt intercession to thy throne, 
That long before, all matchlesse rulde alone? 
Why letst thou order, orderlesse disperse, 
The fighting parents of this uniuers? 
When earth, the ayre, and sea, in fire remaind, 
When fire, the sea, and earth, the ayre contaid, 
When ayre, the earth, and fire, the sea enclosde 
When sea, fire, ayre, in earth were indisposde, 
Nothing, as now, remainde so out of kinde, 
All things in grosse, were finer than refinde, 
Substance was sound within, and had no being, 
Now forme giues being; all our essence seeming, 
Chaos had soule without a bodie then, 
Now bodies liue without the soules of men, 
Lumps being digested; monsters, in our pride. 
(11. 29-49)

A detailed commentary on the Neoplatonic theme of this verse-paragraph has been given in Chapter One. It is sufficient to point out here that Chapman is dealing with an idea rather than with concrete items. Consequently, his choice of words is general rather than specific. His main thesis is that when the elements existed in a unity, when they were not yet separated into fire, air, water, and earth, there was harmony and order. Paradoxically, chaos was organized; it then had a "soule," but no "bodie." "Now bodies liue without the
soules of men, / Lumps being digested; monsters in our pride" (11. 48-49). This is Chapman's expression of the Neoplatonic theme of the One and the Many. The One, of course, is the primordial chaos; the Many is the physical chaos in the universe and the moral chaos in man's soul.

The abstract complexity of Chapman's Neoplatonic imagery of nature is apparent in the continual reiteration of the theme of chaos in the "Hymnus in Noctem":

So all things now (extract out of the prime)
Are turnd to chaos, and confound the time.
(11. 61-62)

... where the soule defamde,
The bodie had bene better neuer framde.
(11. 65-66)

Disjuncition showes, in all things now amisse,
By that first order, what confusion is.
(11. 79-80)

And in our formes shew more deformitie,
Then if we still were wrapt, and smoothered
In that confusion, out of which we fled.
(11. 198-200)

A final critical statement on the quality of Chapman's images of nature is that made by Millar MacLure:

The "Hymnus in Noctem" is as tedious, as repetitious, as inflated as an evangelical sermon—which in a sense is what it is; Chapman is preaching the mantic, zealous, intuitive visionary gospel of his neoplatonic sources. Yet the quality of the imagery is not of a refined, sleek or smooth pastoral sort which one might naturally associate with a mode so sophisticated as this. The impression is rather of "broken shapes of heroic grandeur," as Elizabeth Holmes noted, and the objects of external nature, where they appear, are rough and massive, of the kind we associate with the romantic temperament, though Chapman's shades, precipices, and
torrents were not inspired by any Alpine journey, but
by the bleak and surrealistic landscapes of the emblem
books.¹

In addition to drawing his imagery from fire and
darkness and from nature, Chapman's images come also from the
areas of war and astronomy. It is not known when Chapman first
became aware of Homer, but the images of war in The Shadow of
Night show a definite Homeric influence. According to MacLure,
"Homer taught Chapman the glory of arms first, the Achillean
virtues, and then, after reflection, the lessons of inward
peace, the perils of the 'baneful wrath' which gives rein to
th' impious lust of Mars.'"²

By images of war is meant those images concerned with
fighting or weapons or military science in general. In the
"Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman often resorts to images of war to
express his emotional anxiety over the lack of virtue in the
world. For example, in the opening verse-paragraph (11. 1-20)
the poet desires to "quicklie weepe / The shipwracke of the
world" (11. 9-10). In the second verse-paragraph (11. 21-28)
Chapman begs that his words be heard like Jove's artillary so
that those who are concerned with the "gaine of riches" may
have their hearts "lanced wide":

Then like fierce bolts, well ramm'd with heate & cold
In Ioues Artillerie; my words vnfold,
To breake the labyrinth of euery eare,
And make ech frighted soule come forth and heare,

¹MacLure, p. 40.
²Ibid., p. 7.
Let them breake harts, as well as yeelding ayre,
That all mens bosoms (pierst with no affaires,
But gaine of riches) may be lanced wide,
And with the threates of vertue terrified.

(11. 21-28)

In the next verse-paragraph (11. 29-49) Chapman describes the present physical chaos in the world by reference to "The fighting parents of this vniuerse" (line 38), that is, fire, air, water, and earth. Further on, Chapman describes men as fighting like "Typhons" (line 118) "against their Maker" (line 119). In one of the most passionate sections the poet calls on Hercules to "cleanse this beastly stable of the world" (line 256) by bending "thy brasen bow against the Sunne" (line 257). Chapman calls on men to "shun this cruell light" (line 290), that is, the lack of virtue, by using the simile of "men whose parents tyrannie hath slaine, / Whose sisters rape, and bondage do sustaine" (11. 294-295).

In the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" Chapman uses images of war, not only to express the necessity for virtue in the world, but also to make historical and political allusions to Queen Elizabeth and to the wars of Rome and the Netherlands. In the second verse-paragraph (11. 5-64) of the second poem, Chapman alludes to the political strength of Queen Elizabeth:

Peacefull, and warlike, and the powre of fate,
In perfect circle of whose sacred state,
The circles of our hopes are compassed.

(11. 5-7)

In the same verse-paragraph Chapman's mention of the field of Cannae refers to Hannibal's defeat of the Romans during the
Second Punic War:

But as in that thrise dreadful foughten field
Of ruthless Cannae, when sweet Rule did yield,
Her beauties strongest proofs, and hugest loue:
When men as many as the lamps aboue,
Arm'd Earth in steele, and made her like the skies,
That two Auroraes did in one day rise;
Then with the terror of the trumpets call,
The battles joynd as if the world did fall:
Continewd long in life-disdaining fight,
Ioues thundring Eagles featherd like the night,
You'reing aboue them with indifferent wings,
Till Bloods sterne daughter, cruell Tyche flings
The chiefe of one side, to the blushing ground,
And then his men (whom griefs, and feares confound)
Turnd all their cheerfull hopes to grimm despaire,
Some casting of their soules into the aire,
Some taken prisoners, some extremely maimd,
And all (as men accurst) on fate exclaimed:
So (gracious Cynthia) in that sable day,
When interposed earth takes thee away,
(Our sacred chiefe and soueraigne generall,)
As chrimoine a retrait, and steepe a fall
We feare to suffer from this peace, and height,
Whose thancklesse sweet now clothes vs with receipt.
(ll. 40-63)

In the above lines Chapman's choice of words definitely reveals
a predilection for using images of war to express his basic
theme, namely, the disaster which will occur when Queen
Elizabeth, their chief and general, is taken away.

In lines 328-345 Chapman again employs a Homeric simile
in his allusion to the wars of the Netherlands:

As when th'Italian Duke, a troupe of horse
Sent out in hast against some English force,
From statelie sited sconce-torne Nimigan,
Vnder whose walles the Wall most Cynthia,
Stretcheth her siluer limms loded with wealth,
Hearing our horse were marching downe by stealth.
(Who looking for them) warres quicke Artizan
Fame-thriuing Vere, that in those Countries wan
More fame then guerdon; ambuscadoes laide
Of certaine foote, and made full well appaide
The hopefull enemie, in sending those
The long-expected subiects of their blowes
To moue their charge; which strait they glue amaine,
When we retiriing to our strength againe,
The foe pursuethes assured of our liues,
And vs within our ambuscado driues,
Who straight with thunder of the drums and shot,
Tempest their wraths on them that wist it not.

(11. 328-345)

This passage could be taken as evidence that Chapman took part in the wars of the Netherlands. In these lines Chapman is comparing the ambush of the hunters and hounds in the thicket to the capture of the Italian Duke's, or Duke of Parma's, forces by the English in a similar war ambush.

In the remainder of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" Chapman occasionally returns to images of war to elucidate his Neoplatonic theme of the virtuous life as superior to the lustful one:

The vertue-tamperd mind, euer preserues,
Oyles, and expulsatorie Balme that serues
To quench lusts fire, in all things it annoints,
And steeles our feet to march on needles points:
And mon: t her armes, hath armour to repell
The canoun, and the firie darts of hell.

(11. 132-137)

Apart from images selected from the areas of fire, darkness, nature, and war, Chapman's minor images reveal an interest or familiarity with astronomy. These images are related to the microcosm and macrocosm of Neoplatonism. The most obvious example of this relationship appears in lines 29-49 of the "Hymnus in Noctem" in which the poet's diction shows
a concern with the heavens and the elements and their influence on man's body and soul. In the following quotation such words as "heauens," "vniverse," "earth," "ayre," "sea," "fire," "substance," "being," "forme," and "essence," are significant in exhibiting how man's world or man's body and soul are influenced by the World-Soul:

Sorrows deare soueraigne, and the queene of rest,
That when vnlightsome, vast, and indigest
The formelesse matter of this world did lye,
Fildst every place with thy Diuinitie,
Why did thy absolute and endlesse sway,
Licence heauens torch, the scept~r or the Day,
Distinguisht intercession to thy throne,
That long before, all matchlesse rulde alone?
Why letst thou order, orderlesse disperse,
The fighting parents of this vniverse?
When earth, the ayre, and sea, in fire remaind,

Nothing, as now, remainde so out of kinde,
All things in grosse, were finer than refinde,
Substance was sound within, and had no being,
Now forme giues being; all our essence seeming,
Chaos had soule without a bodie then,
Now bodies liue without the soules of men,
Lumps being digested; monsters, in our pride.
(11. 29-49)

In the "Hymnus in Cynthia" the astronomical imagery is more pronounced than in the "Hymnus in Noctem." Chapman's use of such terms as "planets" and "meteors" helps to substantiate George Williamson's statement that Chapman is "the first Metaphysical poet."¹ Selected at random, the following are examples of Chapman's astronomical images: "The greatest, and

¹Williamson, p. 58.
swiftest Planet in the skie" (line 4), "That two Auroraes did in one day rise" (line 44), "When interposed earth takes thee away" (line 59), "Would follow that afflicting Augurie" (line 75), "Times motion, being like the reeling sunnes" (line 82), "should yeeld to change, Eclips, or heauinesse" (line 109), "Of flowrs, and shadows, mists, and meteors" (line 175), "Of what souuer the Olympick skie" (line 199), "The chiefest Planet, that doth heauen embrace" (line 201), and "Because her night starre soone will call away" (line 209). Finally, Chapman refers to the zodiac sign of Aquarius which belongs to the moon:

He is the Ganemed, the birde of Ioue, 
Rapt to his soueraigne bosome for his loue, 
His bewtie was it, not the bodies pride, 
That made him great Aquarius stellified.  
(11. 462-465)

From the foregoing examples it is apparent that imagery of fire and darkness representing the lustful and virtuous life is of great importance in The Shadow of Night. Roy Battenhouse is accurate in his observation that there is in Renaissance poetry "nowhere a systematic philosophy of night comparable to Chapman's."¹ The imagery of Night as good and light as evil is related to a mystical Neoplatonic tradition in contrast to the orthodox Christian tradition which views Night as inimical to man. Night is associated, as was illustrated, with the

contemplative life, with the blotting out of the senses, with the time of creativity and inspiration. Day, on the other hand, is associated with the lustful life, with the passions and the lack of virtue. This is the major significance of the predominant imagery in *The Shadow of Night*. Any interpretation of this poem must take into consideration the symbolic importance of these two images: darkness and fire. Other images essential to an adequate appreciation of the poem are those from the areas of nature, war, and astronomy. These images constitute the basic image patterns in *The Shadow of Night*. 
CHAPTER IX

SOME STYLISTIC TRAITS OF THE SHADOW OF NIGHT

In addition to imagery from the diversified areas of fire, darkness, nature, war, astronomy, and philosophy, Chapman has also certain stylistic qualities which mark his poetry as distinctly and unmistakably his own. As was stated earlier, Chapman is a moral poet and The Shadow of Night is a didactic poem. Perhaps the most obvious characteristic of his style in this poem is his use of moral sententiae expressed in decasyllabic couplets to reinforce his Neoplatonic theme of physical and moral chaos caused by a lack of virtue in the world. Moral sententiae are most frequent in the first two hundred lines of the "Hymnus in Noctem." In lines 43-44 Chapman announces his theme:

Nothing, as now, remainde so out of kinde,
   All things in grosse, were finer than refinde.
   (ll. 43-44)

Chapman concludes the verse-paragraph by reiterating the same theme:

Chaos had soule without a bodie then,
   Now bodies liue without the soules of men,
   Lumps being digested; monsters, in our pride.
   (ll. 47-49)

In lines 61-62 Chapman again closes the verse-paragraph with a moralization in the form of a decasyllabic couplet:
So all things now (extract out of the prime)
Are turnd to chaos, and confound the time.
(11. 61-62)

Midway through the next verse-paragraph (11. 63-90) Chapman writes:

Disjunction showes, in all things now amisse,
By that first order, what confusion is.
(11. 79-80)

Chapman completes this verse-paragraph with an explicit moral statement:

Ruine creates men: all to slaughter bent,
Like enuiie, fed with others famishment.
(11. 89-90)

Other examples of *sententiae* appear intermittently throughout the poem:

Basenesse is flintie; gentrie softe as silke
(line 108)

Soules praise our shapes, and not our shapes our soules.
(line 180)

Vertue feeds scorne, and noblest honor, shame:
Pride bathes in teares of poore submission,
And makes his soule, the purple he puts on.
(11. 321-323)

In the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" Chapman continues to use the moral *sententiae* to enforce his didactic Neoplatonic theme:

Basenesse was Nobler then Nobilitie.
(line 313)

Eyes should guide bodies, and our soules our eyes.
(line 320)

In-sight illustrates; outward brauerie blindes.
(line 443)
Stylistically, it might be noted here that Chapman has a tendency to repeat his ideas with only a slight variation of a word or two. He frequently phrases these moral platitudes in the form of paradox. Thus it is important to realize that Chapman is influenced by Elizabethan rhetorical theories in the composition of his poetry. For him, poetry being divinely inspired, should teach a moral. According to George Puttenham, the author of the Arte of English Poesie and the best known rhetorician of the sixteenth century, a poet should employ moral sententiae in "weightie causes and for great purpose, [for] wise persuaders vse graue & weighty speachess, specially in matter of advise or counsel."¹

As was mentioned earlier, another characteristic of Chapman's style is his profuse use of similes. James Smith aptly describes Chapman as the "poet of similes." This ability to use similes is Chapman's most important quality. According to Smith, this "habit of similes" requires three qualities in a poet: (1) a sensitivity to the two objects as independent substances; (2) an ability to capture the abstract, that is, the common quality of the two objects being compared; and (3) a taste for parable or allegory.²

The Shadow of Night exhibits the qualities which Smith considers necessary for the successful use of similes. In the

¹Puttenham, p. 235.
"Hymnus in Noctem" the best example occurs in lines 171-220. Here Chapman uses three extended similes, one after the other, to describe the chaotic condition of the world, namely, the simile of rude painters who need a label to identify their work, the simile of rude rural dancers, and the simile of men retiring at night from a day of labor. All three similes function as examples of the beastlike and deformed condition to which man has descended. A close analysis of one of these similes will reveal Chapman's control of this poetic technique. Lines 181-200 compare man's inhuman action which "Sauour of rudenesse, and obscuritie" (line 197) to the frantic movements of rude rural dancers as seen by the distant observers. The following lines show Chapman's sensitivity to the concrete details of objects:

   And as when Chloris paints th'ennamild meads,  
   A flocke of shepherds to the bagpipe treads  
Rude rurall dances with their countrey loues:  
Some a farre off observing their remoues,  
  Turnes, and returns, quicke footing, sodaine stands,  
  Reelings aside, od actions with their hands;  
Now backe, now forwards, now lockt arme in arme,  
Now hearing musicke, thinke it is a charme,  
That like loose froes at Bacchanalean feasts,  
Makes them seeme franticke in their barraine iestes;  
And being clustered in a shapelesse croude,  
With much lesse admiration are allowd.  
So our first excellence, so much abusd,  
And we (without the harmonie was vsd,  
When Saturnes golden scepter stroke the strings  
Of Ciuill gouernement) make all our doings  
Sauour of rudeness, and obscuritie,  
And in our formes shew more deformitie,  
Then if we still were wrapt, and smoothered  
In that confusion, out of which we fled.  
(11. 181-200)
In this simile Chapman is showing that the actions of man are formless and confused, like those of rustic dancers at a distance. This formlessness is worse than the primordial chaos out of which man has come. The abstract or common quality shared by the two objects is their formlessness and confusion. The allegory or lesson implied in the simile is the analogy Chapman draws between the original chaos of the world and the moral chaos of man's soul.

A better example of Chapman's taste for the allegorical occurs in the "Hymnus in Cynthia" in the episode of the hunting of the nymph Euthimya, already discussed earlier in this dissertation. Here Chapman supports Smith's statement that "a case could be made out for him [Chapman] as the most Dantesque of English poets." Chapman is "Dantesque" in the sense that he speaks of one world in terms of another. In the allegorical myth of shadowy hunting, the nymph Euthimya, meaning inner contentment or joy, is able to assume the shape first of a panther, then of a boar. She attracts men's base affections, that is, their desire for physical delight. Thus the shadowy hunting is a pageant of earthly or bodily gratifications. The moral of the allegorical narrative is that true joy or contentment is achieved only by the intellect or mind in the ecstasy of nightly solitude.

1 Ibid., p. 349.
Chapman's diction also is distinctive throughout *The Shadow of Night*. According to Carpenter, "there are many words and phrases, whether used metaphorically or literally, which occur so often, or in such characteristic collocations that it is almost safe to set them down as hallmarks of Chapman's diction."¹ Some examples in the "Hymnus in Noctem" are those words used primarily in relation to Neoplatonic cosmology and mysticism. When Chapman is speaking of the Neoplatonic belief in a darkness or pre-existent chaos which is good, he emphasizes such words and phrases as *unlightsome*, *vast*, and *indigest* (line 30). These three adjectives are used to define as well as to introduce the subject, *formelese matter*, in line 31. Chapman adds to the Saxon word *light* the prefix *un* and the suffix *some*. *Vast* refers to the spaciousness of the primordial world. The word *indigest* in this instance means *uncreated*. *Perturbations* probably means the torments of his mind. The words *confusion* (line 200) and *chaos* (line 221) allude to that time prior to creation when the elements were intermixed. *Inward parts* (line 349), of course, refers to the mind or soul in contrast to the body or matter. *Indepressed spirits* (line 370) refers to those with the desire for true wisdom. Finally, *humor of the Night* (line 377) alludes to the mysteries of creativity induced by the spiritual world of night.

Other examples of Chapman's distinctive diction in the "Hymnus in Noctem" are the following. Noteworthy are two adjectives combined for emphasis with all: all matchlesse (line 36) and all artlesse (line 172). Chapman uses the term orderlesse (line 37) for purposes of antithesis: "Why letst thou order, orderlesse disperse, / The fighting parents of this vniverse?" (ll. 37-38). The combination of gulfie desart (line 58), resulting in oxymoron, is another significant Chapman invention. The word vnprisde used in the line "Treasures vnknowne, and more vnprisde did dwell" (line 69) means priceless, according to Nicoll.¹ The noun famishment stands out as an example of antithesis and paradox in lines 89-90: "Ruine creates men: all to slaughter bent, / Like enuie, fed with others famishment." Contentfull night meaning "full of content" is another unusual example of Chapman's choice of diction.

Chapman's technique of combining a concrete image with an abstraction is exemplified in the following passage:

Meane while, accept, as followers of thy traine,
(Our better parts aspiring to thy raigne)
Vertues obscur'd, and banished the day,
With all the glories of this spongie sway,
Prisond in flesh, and that poore flesh in bands
Of stone, and steele, chiefe flowrs of vertues Garlands.
(ll. 241-246)

Although a bit obscure, the phrase spongie sway means that the spongie sway of Day hides virtue in contrast to the reign of Cynthia where our souls provide the chief flowers of virtue.

¹Nicoll, II, 654.
Spongie, the concrete image, and sway, the abstraction, must be read within the context of the whole passage.

Cloudie mace (line 390) is another instance of Chapman's employment of the concrete and abstract. Cloudie mace is the instrument wielded by Dumbe Silence (line 388) at the conclusion of the "Hymnus in Noctem." Cloudie infers the nebulous, while mace suggests the definite or concrete object.

Another example of Chapman's distinctive diction is the word vntombed (line 279) which, according to Sister Maria del Rey Kelly who cites the Oxford English Dictionary, means "not provided with or placed in a tomb." The passage reads as follows:

I consecrate my life; and liuing mone,
Where furies shall for euer fighting be,
And adders hisse the world for hating me,
Foxes shall barke, and Night-rauens belch in grones,
And owles shall hollow my confusions:
There will I furnish vp my funerall bed,
Strewd with the bones and relickes of the dead.
Atlas shall let th'Olimpick burthen fall,
To couer my vntombed face withall.

(ll. 271-279)

The poet has consecrated himself to the service of Night. Among his chosen companions are the symbols of Night, such as furies, adders, foxes, Night-rauens, and owls. Also part of death in his funerall bed is th'Olimpick burthen of Atlas, a periphrastic phrase for the heavens, will fall and cover his untombed face.

Another unique word used by Chapman is *insensive* (line 284), the meaning of which ("not feeling") is apparent from the context:

And when as well, the matter of our kind,
As the material substance of the mind,
Shall cease their revolutions, in abode
Of such impure and ugly period,
As the old essence, and *insensive* prime.

(11. 280-284)

*Remissive* (line 311) is another adjective akin to *insensive*. In the line "Scorning your triuiall and *remissive* mones" (line 311) the word *remissive* means "careless" or "negligent."

A final example of Chapman's unusual diction in the "Hymnus in Noctem" is *disparent* (line 395). The connotation here is "diverse, of various appearances." The lines read:

Is great Hyperions horned daughter drawne
Enchantresse-like, deckt in *disparent* lawne.

(11. 394-395)

*Disparent* is effective because it is used in conjunction with *Enchantresse-like* which suggests a variation of colors, which would be appropriate to Cynthia, goddess of the moon.

The "Hymnus in Cynthia" also contains examples of Chapman's distinctive diction:

All wisedome, beautie, maiestie and dread,
Wrought in the *speaking pourtrait* of thy face.

(11. 8-9)

So since that *adamantine* powre is giuen
To thy chast hands, to cut of all desire
Of *fleshy* sports, and quench to Cupids fire.

(11. 26-28)
As chrimsaine a retrait, and steepe a fall
We feare to suffer from this peace, and height,
Whose thancklesse sweet now cloies vs with receipt.
(11. 61-63)

Chapman has a tendency to use participles ending in en
or ed. For example, in the phrase, "But as in that thrise
dreadfull foughten field" (line 40), Chapman uses the archaic
form of the past participle fight. Drunken (line 146) is
another example of a participle ending in en: "Making her
drunken with Gorgonean Dews" (line 146). Another unusual
participle employed by Chapman in the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" is
thoughted (line 271). The context is:

In this vast thicket, (whose descriptions task
The pennis of furies, and of feends would aske:
So more then humane thoughted horrible).
(11. 269-271)

The meaning here is that the situation is so terrible that it is
beyond what a human would have thought horrible.

Skillesse (line 71) is a word used effectively by
Chapman in the "Hymnus in Cynthiam":

The Macedonians were so stricken dead,
With skillesse horrour of thy changes dread.
(11. 70-71)

The sense of these lines is that the Macedonians were stricken
with "skillesse horror" or ignorant dread of the changes of the
moon.

In the following instance Chapman combines the noun
Pleasance (line 214) with the participial adjective wished:
A goodlie Nimph, whose bewtie, bewtie stains
Heau'ns with her iewells; giues all the raines
Of wished pleasance. . . .
(11. 212-214)

In line 429 Chapman makes an unusual use of the word praysefull with the term sleight:

In which two hundred, twentie columns stood,
Built by two hunderd twentie kings of blood,
Of curious bewtie, and admired height,
Pictures and statues, of as praysefull sleight.
(11. 426-429)

It is the curious combination of the two words that accounts for the distinctiveness of the phrase.

From the foregoing examples it is apparent that many of these words can be found in the work of other poets, but it is the presence of these words together within the context of the poem that constitutes Chapman's originality.

The use of the hyphenated epithet is another noteworthy mark of Chapman's style. Some examples from the "Hymnus in Noctem" are "passion-driuen men" (Ded., p. 19), "skill-imbracing heire of Hunsdon" (Ded., p. 19), "harlot-like" (line 74), "God-like excellence" (line 124), "more-then-humane soul" (line 132), "date-exceeding excellence" (line 146), "his hel-danting kinde" (line 158), "Eagle-like" (line 215), "vertue-famed traine" (line 231), "not to sea-men guides alone" (line 235), "Rich-tapird sanctuarie of the blest" (line 268), "fall worm-like on the ground" (line 324), "far-shot rayes" (line 334), and "Enchantresse-like" (line 395).
In the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" attention should be drawn to a whole series of epithets used to describe the hounds in pursuit of Euthimya. The names of the hounds Chapman borrows from Natalis Comes' *Mythologiae* (VI, 24, "De Actaeone"), who in turn gets them from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (iii, 206-225):

The hounds that she created, vast, and fleete were grimme Melampus, with th'Ethiops feete, White Leucon; all eating Pamphagus, Sharp-sighted Dorceus, wild Oribasus Storme-breathing Lelaps, and the sauage Theron, Wingd-footed Pterelas, and Hinde-like Ladon, Greedie Harpyia, and the painted Stycte', Fierce Tigris, and the thicket-searcher Agre, The blacke Melaneus, and the bristled Lachne, Leane-lustfull Cyprius, and big chested Alce. (ll. 232-241)

Other hyphenated epithets used in the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" are "All-ill-purging-puritie" (line 13), "Soule-winging musicke" (line 34), "life-disdaining fight" (line 48), "neuer-loosing zone" (line 117), "vertue-temperd mind" (line 132), "his seuen-fold heights" (line 140), "top-lesse starrie brows" (line 148), "dasle-sunne perfections" (line 157), "windie-footed queene" (line 250), "toyle-f'reed deare" (line 258), "Fame-thriuuing Vere" (line 335), "long-expected subjectts" (line 339), "Thy soule-chast kisses" (line 495), and "well-steeld lances" (line 513).

Chapman's reliance on concrete verbs gives a certain vigor and compactness to his style. Particularly effective examples occur in lines 273-277:

Where furies shall for euer fighting be, And adders hisse the world for hating me,
Foxes shall barke, and Night-rauens belch in grones,  
And owles shall hollow my confusions.  
("HN," 11. 272-275)

These vigorous verbs, combined with the animal imagery of the night world, create a cumulative effect of horror.

Other forceful verbs contained in the "Hymnus in Noctem" are "rammd" (line 21), "fildst" (line 32), "licence" (line 34), "digested" (line 49), "defamde" (line 65), "framde" (line 66), "manadgd" (line 81), "shruncke" (line 95), "bewrayes" (line 142), "vshers" (line 204), "glitterst" (line 227), "wreake" (line 252), "shun, shun" (line 290), "thunder" (line 306), "marble" (line 369), "rebukes" (line 389), and "deckt" (line 395).

The "Hymnus in Cynthiam" has such forceful verbs as "scorch" (line 18), "beate" (line 20), "quench" (line 134), "importune" (line 179), "conjurd" (line 182), "blew" (line 392), and "drowne" (line 408). Lines 515-526 in which almost every line begins with a verb is a good example of the vigor and compactness Chapman is capable of achieving:

Then in thy cleare, and Isie Pentacle,  
Now execute a Magicke miracle:  
Slip euerie sort of poisiond herbes, and plants,  
And bring thy rabid mastiffs to these hants.  
Looke with thy fierce aspect, be terror-strong;  
Assume thy wondrous shape of halfe a furlong:  
Put on thy feete of Serpents, viperous hayres,  
And act the fearefulst part of thy affaires:  
Convert the violent courses of thy floods,  
Remoue whole fields of corne, and hugest woods,  
Cast hills into the sea, and make the starrs,  
Drop out of heauen, and lose thy Mariners.  
(11. 515-526)
Another quality which contributes to Chapman's compactness is the frequent use of elliptical expressions. An example from the "Hymnus in Noctem" is: "Vertues feedes scorne, and noblest honor, [feedes] shame" (line 321). An extended example is the following:

Vertues obscur'd, and banished the day,
With all the glories of this spongie sway,
Prisond in flesh, and that poore flesh in bands
Of stone, and steele, chiefe flowrs of vertues Garlands.

(11. 243-246)

Finally, in the "Hymnus in Cynthia" Chapman writes: "Thus nights, faire dayes: thus griefs do ioyes supplant" (line 400).

Chapman delights in periphrasis, a rhetorical device which frequently leads him into verbosity and obscurity. The abuse of periphrasis is the major weakness contributing to Chapman's reputation for quaintness. For example, in the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman writes of the world: "To fill all corners of this round Exchange" (line 212); or of men's homes: "their sundrie roofes of rest" (line 205). He describes men as "huge impolisht heapes of filthinesse" (line 224). In the "Hymnus in Cynthia" Chapman employs periphrasis to describe Cynthia as "Natures bright eye-sight, and the Nights faire soule" (line 1). As Chapman's gloss explains: "He giues her that Periphrasis, viz. Natures bright eye sight, because that by her store of humors, issue is giuen to all birth."\(^1\)

\(^1\)Bartlett, Poems, p. 42.
on, Chapman explains that Cynthia is "the soule of Night, since she is the purest part of her according to common conceipt."\(^1\)

Chapman's use of *periphrasis*, as the above examples show, is not necessarily a fault. In fact, they help to amplify his meaning and thereby make very explicit and clear to the reader his basic Neoplatonic intention or meaning.

The abundancy of parentheses also has been described as a fault, but this is not necessarily true. More frequently than not, the parenthetical material is related to the meaning of the verse-paragraph and often adds to its clarity. Lines 201-218 are a pertinent example:

And as when hosts of starres attend thy flight,
(Day of deepe students, most contentfull night)
The morning (mounted on the Muses stead)
Vshers the sonne from Vulcans golden bed,

Till thou (deare Night, © goddesse of most worth)
Letst thy sweet seas of golden humor forth
And Eagle-like dost with thy starrie wings,
Beate in the foules, and beasts to Somnus lodgings,
And haughtie Day to the infernall deepe,
Proclaiming scilence, studie, ease, and sleepe.

(11. 201-218)

This parenthetical material taken within context does not distract the reader from the main idea that true darkness is concerned with honor and virtue and not with moral chaos.

Chapman's poetry also has been criticized for its numerous elliptical phrases, for its accumulation of appositional and parenthetical elements which expand the

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 43. Chapman does not give a reference for this conception.
sentences to extreme lengths and interrupt the flow of thought, and for its lax punctuation which also adds to the obscurity of thought. The following sentence from the "Hymnus in Noctem" is an excellent example of these stylistic attributes of Chapman:

A stepdame Night of minde about vs clings,
Who broodes beneath her hell obscuring wings,
Worlds of confusion, where the soule defamde,
The bodie had bene better neuer framde,
Beneath thy soft, and peace-full couert then,
(Most sacred mother both of Gods and men)
Treasures vnknowne, and more vnprisde did dwell;
But in the blind borne shadow of this hell,
This horrid stepdame, blindness of the minde,
Nought worth the sight, no sight, but worse then blind,
A Gorgon that with brasse, and snakie brows,
(Most harlot-like) her naked secrets shows:
For in th'expansure, and distinct attire,
Of light, and darcknesse, of the sea, and fire,
Of ayre, and earth, and all, all these create,
First set and rulde, in most harmonious state,
Disjunction showes, in all things now amisse,
By that first order, what confusion is:
Religious curb, that manadgd men in bounds,
Of publique wellfare; lothing privete grounds,
(Now cast away, by selfe-lou's paramores)
All are transCormd to Calydonian bores,
That kill our bleeding vines, displow our fields,
Rend groues in peeces; all things nature yeelds
Supplanting: tumbling vp in hills of dearth,
The fruitefull disposition of the earth,
Ruine creates men: all to slaughter bent,
Like enuie, fed with others famishment.
(11. 63-90)

It should first be noted that the above passage is one sentence with an over-abundance of phrases and clauses which make it difficult to determine the central thought of the sentence. The opening lines state the subject of the sentence and reveal the confusion and chaos caused by human ignorance or a "stepdame Night of minde" (line 63) in contrast to the peace brought by
the true primordial Night. This is followed by the statement that it would have been better if bodies had never been created since they have corrupted the souls to such an extent. "Sacred mother" Night contained priceless and unknown treasures. The main theme, then, is in the first five lines, but since the comma in lines 63-68 is the only form of punctuation, the ideas tend to merge.

The next section of the verse-paragraph continues the contrast between the darkness of the mind and primordial darkness. Here Chapman employs a typical technique of a series of appositions following the subject of the clause:

This horrid stepdame, blindness of the minde, Nought worth the sight, no sight, but worse then blind, A Gorgon that with brasse, and snakie brows, (Most harlot-like) her naked secrets shows. (11. 71-74)

Ambiguity with regard to the grammatical construction is inevitable unless one realizes that Chapman probably intended the verb (dwells) to be understood. "This horrid stepdame" is the subject of the clause.

In the next five lines the poet mourns the disorder in the universe. Disjunction shows what confusion is.

For in th'expansure, and distinct attire, 
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Disjunction showes, in all things now amisse, By that first order, what confusion is. (11. 75-80)

In the following lines of the passage, a long participial construction is prefixed to the main clause. This
participial element is further obscured by the addition of a parenthesis within the phrase:

Religious curb, that manadgd men in bounds,
Of publique welfare, lothing priuate grounds,
(Now cast away, by self-lou's paramores)
All are transformd to Calydonian bores.

(ll. 81-84)

The interpretation of the above clause is that religion is no longer able to control man who, as a result, has degenerated into a beast. The image of the mythological Calydonian boars is, as Miss Bartlett suggests in her notes, a result of Chapman's reading. Just as these boars once destroyed physical nature by killing vines, displowing fields, and rending groves, so man is ruining his own nature: "Ruine creates men: all to slaughter bent, / Like enuie fed with others famishment" (ll. 89-90).

The ideas and images in the above passage just explicated are essential to the theme of the "Hymnus in Noctem." Consequently, it is most important that one comprehend the grammatical construction of the passage. Chapman's Neoplatonic ideas are clear, but it is often their stylistic expression that accounts for the charge of obscurity against his poetry.

Two aspects of Chapman's style remain to be discussed: his patterns of alliteration and his rhyming devices. As

1According to Miss Bartlett, Chapman may have remembered the story, "De Apro Calydonio," from Comes' Mythologiae, VII, 3, as well as the episode in The Iliad IX, 536 seq., Poema, p. 424.
Sister Maria del Rey Kelly points out, Chapman employs four basic patterns of alliteration which he artistically varies throughout The Shadow of Night: (1) the triple repetition of the initial letter; (2) the alternate repetition of the initial letter; (3) the repetition of the first sound after the second one has been repeated; and (4) simply the repetition of two sounds consecutively in the same line.1

Some examples of these patterns of alliteration from the "Hymnus in Noctem" are the following: "The bodie had bene better neuer framde" (line 66), "Most sacred mother both of Gods and men" (line 68), "Proclaiming scilence, studie, ease, and sleepe" (line 218), "Opposed earth, beates blacke and blewe thy face" (line 229), "In these soft shades of sable funerall" (line 291), "Substance was sound within, and had no being" (line 45), "And then from forth their sundrie roofes of rest" (line 205), "With ghosts, fiends, monsters: as men robd and rackt" (line 304), and "Is great Hyperions horned daughter drawne" (line 394).

The "Hymnus in Cynthia" adheres to the same patterns of alliteration as the "Hymnus in Noctem." A few examples are the following: "Of fleshly sports, and quench to Cupids fire" (line 28), "But as in that thrise dreadfull foughten field" (line 40), and "To calme the furies, and to quench the fire" (line 128).

1Kelly, p. 82.
At times Chapman extends the alliteration to two or three lines: "The shipwracke of the world: or let soft sleepe / (Binding my sences) lose my working soule" ("HN," ll. 10-11); or "And what makes men without the parts of men / Or in their manhoods, lesse then children, / But manlesse natures? . . ." ("HN," ll. 91-93).

Chapman's employment of alliteration in The Shadow of Night is artistically handled. The repetition of sounds is neither monotonous nor tiring to the ear. The alliteration is deftly woven into the thought of the poem, and it serves to emphasize key words in Chapman's Neoplatonic doctrine.

Chapman's rhyming devices likewise reveal the potentialities of a skillfull poet. The Shadow of Night is written in decasyllabic couplets arranged in verse-paragraphs of uneven length. The "Hymnus in Noctem" contains twenty-two verse-paragraphs varying from six lines to seventy-seven lines. The "Hymnus in Cynthiam" has twenty-one verse-paragraphs ranging from two lines to thirty-eight lines. This arrangement of uneven verse-paragraphs is not heterodox, even though externally it might appear so. It contributes to the variety of the poem and counteracts any monotony that might occur in the reading of the poem.

Although The Shadow of Night is Chapman's first published poem and although he has not yet perfectly mastered the metrics of his poem, there is much within the work to
commend it. One such element worth careful attention is Chapman's use of perfect rhyme as an important functional element in The Shadow of Night. His precise choice of perfect rhyme helps to create the poet's desired tone and mood. With the exception of lines 15-16 and 19-20, which are examples of imperfect rhyme, the formal and decorous opening of the "Hymnus in Noctem" is an example of Chapman's technique of perfect rhyming:

Great Goddesse to whose throne in Cynthia fires,
This earthlie Alter endlesse fumes expires,
Therefore, in fumes of sighes and fires of griefe,
To fearefull chances thou sendst bold reliefe,
Happie, thrise happie, Type, and nurse of death,
Who breathlesse, feedes on nothing but our breath,
In whom must vertue and her issue liue,
Or dye for euer; now let humor giue
Seas to mine eyes, that I may quicklie wepe
The shipwracke of the world: or let soft sleepe
(Binding my senses) lose my working soule,
That in her highest pitch, she may controule
The court of skill, compact of misterie,
Wanting but franchisement and memorie
To reach all secrets: then in blissfull trance,
Raise her (deare Night) to that perseuerance,
That in my torture, she all earths may sing,
And force to tremble in her trumpeiting
Heauens christall temples: in her powrs implant
Skill of my griefs, and she can nothing want.
(11. 1-20)

The rhymes in this first verse-paragraph help to maintain Chapman's theme "to quicklie wepe / The shipwracke of the world" (11. 10-11). Furthermore, the rhymes accentuate the distinction between the senses and the soul, the earthly and celestial, which is also basic to a proper Neoplatonic understanding of the poem. Thus perfect rhyme, a regularly
recurring structural element in *The Shadow of Night*, is skillfully adapted by Chapman to the thought content of his poem.

Throughout *The Shadow of Night* Chapman's rhyme words are not the commonplace ones usually found in the poetry of his day. His choice of diction is governed by the Neoplatonic content of his thought. In the above verse-paragraph most of Chapman's rhymes are artistically related to the expression of his Neoplatonic doctrine of the distinction between the soul and the body and the necessity for virtue in the world. Such words as *fires*, *expires*, or *weepe*, *sleepe*, or *soule*, *controule*, or *misterie*, *memorie*, are perfect rhymes in addition to being fresh, original, and unexpected in the expounding of Neoplatonic theories.

The "Hymnus in Cynthia" likewise is replete with perfect rhymes which are stimulative and evocative of Neoplatonic thought. Chapman's statement of his intention in composing this poem is an example of perfect rhyme combined with Neoplatonic subject matter:

```
... and the praises sing
Of mightie Cynthia: truely figuring,
(As she is Heccate) her soueraigne kinde,
And in her force, the forces of the mind:
An argument to rauish and refine
An earthly soule, and make it meere diuine.
(11. 150-155)
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The term *kinde* alludes to Queen Elizabeth, while the words *forces of the mind* refer to Cynthia, the World-Soul. The poet
promises the reader an argument that will make divine an earthly soul. Such a statement or reference to the divine is, of course, evidence of the Neoplatonic purpose in Chapman's mind.

From these two examples from each of the respective hymns, it can be seen that Chapman's handling of rhyme is of no little artistry. He consciously chooses his words with regard to content and to sound. His work is all the more arduous because he is poetizing a philosophical doctrine.

A second variety of rhyme used extensively by Chapman in *The Shadow of Night* is that of imperfect rhyme, also called near-rhyme, off-rhyme, and partial-rhyme. To have perfect rhyme, any sounds following the vowel sound must be the same in both rhymed words or phrases: *kinde, minde* (*HC,* 11. 149-150) or *fram'd, nam'd* (*HC,* 11. 188-189) or *traine, raigne* (*HN,* 231-232) or *soule, controule* (*HC,* 11. 1-2). If the final consonant sounds are the same, but the vowel sounds are different, the result is imperfect or near-rhyme.

Both the "Hymnus in Noctem" and the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" give ample proof of Chapman's tendency to employ imperfect rhyme. Some examples of this stylistic rhyming technique are the following from both hymns: *being, seeming* (*HN,* 11. 45-46), *emissee, is* (*HN,* 11. 79-80), *deprest, beast* (*HN,* 11. 127-128), *feasts, iesstes* (*HN,* 11. 189-190), *alone, one* (*HN,* 11. 235-236), *else, sentinels* (*HN,* 11. 350-351),

To demonstrate Chapman's technique of imperfect rhyme, it may be helpful to examine a single passage in the "Hymnus in Noctem" in which imperfect rhyme occurs:

If then we frame mans figure by his mind,  
And that at first, his fashion was assignd,  
Erection in such God-like excellence  
For his soules sake, and her intelligence:  
She so degenerate, and growne deprest,  
Content to share affections with a beast,  
The shape wherewith he should be now indude,  
Must beare no signe of mans similitude.  
(11. 123-130)

Obviously, what Chapman mistakes as perfect rhyme is due to the similarity of the st sounds when pronouncing the words. However, the final vowels are not the same and thus the words do not rhyme perfectly. Chapman was more intent on expressing the meaning of the soul's degeneration into a beast than he was in stressing the precise accuracy in rhyming the words.

There are also minor inconsistencies in Chapman's technique of rhyming. An instance of the use of "eye-rhyme" which Sister Maria del Rey Kelly points out is based "upon quite another principle" than near-rhyme: "the sounds involved are not so close in resemblance to each other" and depend more

Chapman frequently repeats his sets of rhyming words:


Another minor defect which possibly detracts from the Neoplatonic content of Chapman's poem is his departure from the couplet form to use a triple rhyme: **extreames, beames, dreames** ("HN," 11. 259-261), **recall, all, funeral** ("HC," 11. 37-39), and **seene, keene, queene** ("HC," 11. 248-250).

As has been indicated earlier, these faults are slight in *The Shadow of Night*, for there are also many merits in the poem. One of the most beautiful passages in the "Hymnus in Noctem" reads:

Come consecrate with me, to sacred Night
Your whole endeavours, and detest the light.
Sweete Peaces richest crowne is made of starres,

---

1Ibid., p. 87.
Most certain guides of honord Marinars,
No pen can any thing eternall wright,
That is not steept in humor of the Night.
(11. 372-377)

As this example proves, Chapman is capable of the smooth
melodious line when he desires to draw attention to the inner
contemplative life of nightly mysticism. On the other hand,
Chapman seems to anticipate Donne in the high emotional key,
the breathlessness, and the colloquialness of some of his lines
from the "Hymnus in Noctem":

Shūn, shūn | this crū|ēll līght, | ānd ēnd| your thrāll,||
In these | soft shādes | of sāb|lē fun|ērāll.||
(11. 290-291)

Kneele then | with mé, | fall wōrm|-like ŏn | the ground,||
And from | th'|infēc|tiōus dūn|hill ŏf | this Rōund,||
From māns | brāsse wīts, | ānd gōl|dēn foō|ērē,||
Weepe, weepe | your sōules, | into | fēlīcitō.||
(11. 324-327)

A study of Chapman's metrics in The Shadow of Night
confirms the impression that he viewed the basic importance of
the poem to be the elucidation of his Neoplatonic doctrine
rather than poetry for poetry's sake. He uses perfect rhyme,
imperfect rhyme, and "eye-rhyme." As a poet he is more
concerned with thought than with ornamentation. At times he
neglects to adhere scrupulously to standard rhyming criteria.
This, no doubt, diminishes him to a certain degree as a great
poet. However, it also enlarges our view of The Shadow of Night.
as a poem that is not "amorphous" in theme and structure. It is
a poem uniquely constructed upon the doctrines of Neoplatonism.
It should also be remembered that both hymns constitute
approximately one thousand lines of verse. Discrepancies or
minor defects might naturally be expected. This is not to
excuse Chapman's errors but only to view The Shadow of Night in
a realistic manner.
CHAPTER X

RHETORICAL FIGURES OF REPETITION AND CONTRAST

As was seen in the previous chapter, certain unmistakable aspects of style mark *The Shadow of Night* as distinctly Chapman's. Particular lines reveal poetic genius, while other lines show him to be merely an average writer. Hence the truth of Coleridge's observation on the simultaneous presence of good and bad elements in Chapman's style: "What is stupidly said of Shakespeare, is really true and appropriate of Chapman: mighty faults counterpoised by mighty beauties."¹

*The Shadow of Night* is medieval, Elizabethan, and Metaphysical. The poem contains imagery and figures of speech traceable to the medieval theories of decoration and to the rhetorical textbooks of the Elizabethans. Moreover, Chapman's imagery has an affinity with the Metaphysical conceit, particularly that of John Donne. It is with the relationship of specific figures of repetition and contrast to Neoplatonism that this chapter is concerned.

Chapman's deliberate use of rhetoric in *The Shadow of Night* is not a mere artificial device. An understanding of his

rhetoric is essential and indispensable to the expression of his Neoplatonic doctrines. As shall be seen, particularly important are the rhetorical figures of repetition and contrast. Some of Chapman's most vital and forceful statements owe a great deal of their power to the underlying pattern of these rhetorical figures of speech.¹

One of Chapman's stylistic techniques is the statement of a theme and then the repetition of this theme as though it were a refrain. Usually he enlists mythological fables and allusions, extended similes, imagery of night and day, and figures of speech to vary the outward aspects of his thought. Rhetorical figures of repetition and contrast are two of his chief methods for maintaining thematic variation.

Perhaps the most recurrent figure of repetition in The Shadow of Night is that of polyptoton. According to John Hoskins' _Directions for Speech and Style_, which was written about 1599 and contains an informal discussion of some forty figures, polyptoton is the "repetition of words of the same lineage, that differ only in termination."²

¹This chapter is indebted to the following study of diction in Chapman's non-dramatic poems: Sister Maria del Rey Kelly, "Poetic Diction in the Nondramatic Works of George Chapman," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1965), pp. 60-81. She does not, however, relate the rhetorical figures to Chapman's Neoplatonic thought.

²John Hoskins, _Directions for Speech and Style_ (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), p. 17. Hoskins cites the following examples:
An early example occurs in line 6 in the "Hymnus in Noctem" in which Death is described as one "Who breathlesse, feedes on nothing but our breath." The figure polyptoton in the underscored words "breathlesse . . . breath" is obvious.

Another example of polyptoton appears in line 44 of the "Hymnus in Noctem" when Chapman writes: "All things in grosse, were finer than refinde." Chapman is here referring to the Neoplatonic doctrine of the analogy between the microcosm and the macrocosm which was so well known during the Renaissance. In the period prior to the creation of the world when the elements were not placed in a precise order, things were purer than they are now. But this primordial fusion has disappeared, and there is chaos in the physical world and in man's soul.

Because of the two possible interpretations, an interesting case of polyptoton is in the passage containing the word manlesse:

And what makes men without the parts of men, Or in their manhoods, lesse than children, But manlesse nature? (ll. 90-93)

Exceedingly exceeding that exceedingness. By this faulty using of our faults.

Sometimes the same word in several cases, as

For fear hid his fear.

Sometimes the same verb in several voices, as

Forsaken by all friends and forsaking all comfort.

1For a discussion of the analogy between the microcosm and the macrocosm, see Chapter II of this dissertation.
In analyzing these lines Janet Spens sees two different meanings. *Manlesse* could refer to the bestial element in man's nature, his lack of human reason, or it could be alluding to man's "unique personality." Miss Spens writes:

Chapman seems to have coined the word "manless" to express utter worthlessness, lacking in the essential humane qualities. By that he means, in the first place, and in common with all the writers of his time, lacking in that which distinguishes man from the brutes, namely reason or judgement. But his second meaning, although derived from Cicero, is rather more peculiar to himself. By "manless" he means chiefly "lacking in a consistent and unique personality."¹

Sister Maria del Rey Kelly, after citing the *Oxford English Dictionary* and Nicoll's definition of the term as "inhuman, brutal," contends that *manlesse* is "more akin to Miss Spens' second sense of the word."² Strictly speaking, both meanings are applicable to Chapman. Neoplatonically, however, the notion of lacking reason or judgment would seem to be the more appropriate and predominant one which Chapman wished to express through the figure of *polyptoton* in the "Hymnus in Noctem."

*Polyptoton* is again represented in the "Hymnus in Noctem" in conjunction with a mythological allusion to "kinde Amalthaea" (line 105). She was changed into a heavenly goat for having aided Jove by giving him her milk while on the island of Crete. She thus becomes a symbol of humanity or kindness in

¹Spens, p. 152.

²Kelly, p. 33.
simple things. Because of her thoughtfulness, Jove has permitted her to dwell in heaven. Chapman writes:

In heauens she liues, and rules a liuing signe
In humane bodies: yet not so diuine,
That she can worke her kindnesse in our harts.  
(11. 109-111)

Amalthea whose home is now in heaven is at the same time a vital or living symbol of virtue to mankind on earth. Hence Chapman employs polyptoton by contrasting the verb liues with the verbal adjective liuing.

In line 288 of the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman repeats his use of polyptoton with the words liues and liuing: "Ye liuing spirits then, if any liue" (line 288). Under the figure of polyptoton Chapman here is urging men or all "liuing spirits" to shun the cruel light of day and end their "thrall" (line 290) in Night's "soft shades of sable funerall" (line 291).

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" polyptoton is again used in the mythological tale of the Argonauts. After relating how the "Argiue ship" (line 112) won a place in the heavens from Jove for having brought the "hardie Argonauts secure of wracke" (line 114), Chapman moralized his conclusion. He ends with the figure of polyptoton:

A thousand such examples could I cite,  
To damne stone-pesants, that like Typhons fight  
Against their Maker, and contend to be

---

1 For Chapman's Neoplatonic concept of the imagery of Night and Day, see Chapter VIII of this dissertation.
Of kings, the abject slaves of drudgerie:
Proud of that thraldome: love the kindest lest,
And hate, not to be hated of the best.

(11. 117-122)

Chapman thus terminates his story with a description of the base and degenerate "stone-pesants" who are proud of their slavery, lack love, and desire to be hated by the best of men.

In addition to using polyptoton in connection with mythological tales, Chapman also has a tendency to employ polyptoton when writing extended similes. In the following instance Chapman compares man's bestial actions to crude movements of rural dancers as viewed from the distance.

Polyptoton is represented twice:

And as when Chloris paints th'ennamild meads,
A flocke of shepherds to the bagpipe treads
Rude rurall dances with their countrey lowes:
Some a farre off observing their remoues,
Turnes, and returns, quicke footing, sodaine strands,
Reelings aside, od actions with their hands;
Now backe, now forwards, now lockt arme in arme,
Now hearing musicke, thinke it is a charme,
That like loose froes at Bacchanalean feasts,
Makes them seeme frantick in their barraine iestes;
And being clusterd in a shapelesse croude,
With much lesse admiration are allowd.
So our first excellence, so much abusd,
And we (without the harmonie was vsd,
When Saturnes golden scepter stroke the strings
Of Ciuill gouernement) make all our doings
Sauour of rudenesse, and obscuritie,
And in our formes shew more deformatie,
Then if we still were wrapt, and smoothered
In that confusion, out of which we fled.

(11. 181-200)

The concluding lines of this verse-paragraph from the "Hymnus in Noctem" recap the Neoplatonic doctrine of a pre-existent
chaos commented upon earlier.¹ Man's present condition is now in a state of moral deformity. Primordial chaos, the period before the separation of the elements by the principle of Order, was superior to this moral chaos in man's soul.

In the examples of polyptoton just cited from the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman has made a highly significant application of the figure to his philosophy. Practically all instances of its recurrence uncover a Neoplatonic notion or idea the poet is intent on developing within the poem. This Neoplatonic function of polyptoton becomes particularly apparent to the reader when the example is read within the context of the entire passage.

An attribute of Cynthia brought out by polyptoton is that she is the goddess of purity. She is able to instill virtue in man, for one of her abilities is "to quench lusts fire" (line 134). Moreover, she has the power to command the fiery elements of hell. These qualities of Cynthia as a Neoplatonic World-Soul are revealed in the following lines which conclude in the figure of polyptoton:

The vertue-tempered mind, euer preserues,
Oyles, and expulsatorie Balme that serues
To quench lusts fire, in all things it annoints,
And steels our feet to march on needles points:
And mongst her armes, hath armour to repell
The canon, and the firie darts of hell.

(11. 132-137)

¹See Chapter II of this dissertation.
In the early part of the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" the poet urges the praise of Cynthia and gives the key to the meaning of the double allegory which is to follow. Since Cynthia is both Queen Elizabeth and the divine World-Soul, one should sing of her greatness:


Of mightie Cynthia: truely figuring,
(As she is Heccate) her soueraigne kinde,
And in her force, the forces of the mind:
An argument to rauish and refine
An earthly soule, and make it meere diuine.
Since then withall, her Pallace brightnesse bright.
(11. 151-156)

Because she is richly endowed with many attributes, Cynthia has the power to grant many gifts. She is the World-Soul, the goddess of purity and chastity; she has the command of the elements and the authority of fate. Hence the appropriateness of polypoton in line 204: "Large riches giues, since she is largely giuen."

In addition to employing polypoton to bring out the qualities of Cynthia, Chapman has a propensity for using polypoton in conjunction with paradoxical statements: "The huntsmen hearing (since they could not heare)" (line 283). This line refers to the hunting of Euthimya (panther) by the huntsmen, the representatives of the monstrous affections. Having chased the panther, the symbol of the sins of the spirit, into the thicket, the hunters become aware that they no longer can hear the baying of the dogs. The hounds are "at fault"
(line 84) because they have lost their scent. Chapman's repetition of the word *heare* in line 184 serves the purpose of paradox.

After describing the horrible destruction of the hounds, Chapman proceeds to explain the effect on the hunters. In doing so, he moralizes that "Basenesse was Nobler than Nobilitie" (line 313). The points of the paradoxical statement and the polyptoton is that the debase and degenerate hunters pitied those to whom Cynthia herself has been merciless. The import of the passage is caught when read within the context of the verse-paragraph:

But pressing further, /hunters/ saw such cursed sights, Such Etnas filld with strange tormented sprites, That now the vaprous object of the eye Out-pierst the intellect in facultie, Basenesse was Nobler than Nobilitie: For ruth (first shaken from the braine of Loue, And loue the soule of vertue) now did move, Not in their soules (spheres meane enough for such) But in their eyes: and thence did conscience touch Their harts with pitie: where her proper throne, Is in the minde, and there should first haue shone. (11. 309-319)

Once the hunt, the symbol of the pursuit of worldly and passionate things, is over and Cynthia has ascended to her nightly throne, Chapman moralizes on the true joy that only the wisdom of Cynthia can grant. The figure of polyptoton occurs in line 402:

Thus nights, faire dayes: thus griefs do ioyes supplant; Thus glories grauen in steele and Adamant Neuer supposd to wast, but grow by wasting, (Like snow in riuers falne) consume by lasting.
O then thou great Elixer of all treasures,  
From whom we multiply our world of pleasures,  
Discend againe, ah neuer leave the earth.  
(ll. 400-406)

**Polyptoton**, the most frequently recurring rhetorical figure of repetition in *The Shadow of Night*, is equally important in both hymns. Except for a few minor incidents, the examples of **polyptoton** are related to the Neoplatonic doctrine that Chapman is espousing. His style is characterized by the use of **polyptoton** when relating mythological tales, when stressing the word *liue*, when writing extended similes, when composing brief passages of description, when depicting the Neoplatonic attributes of Cynthia, and finally when moralizing or commenting on a point in a paradoxical statement.

Another significant figure of repetition in *The Shadow of Night* is **antimetabole**. Although not appearing as frequently as **polyptoton**, **antimetabole** is equally as forceful in expressing Chapman's Neoplatonism. According to John Hoskins' definition, **antimetabole** is "sentence inverted or turned back."\(^1\) It derives from the Greek word "turning about." **Antimetabole**, states the modern writer Lanham who modifies and clarifies Hoskins' definition in modern terminology, is the inversion of

\(^{1}\)Hoskins, p. 14. Hoskins' example is:

Either not striving because he was content, contented because he would not strive.
"the order of repeated words to sharpen the sense or to contrast the ideas they convey or both."\(^1\)

Antimetabole occurs significantly in the beginning lines of the "Hymnus in Noctem." As will be seen in the following chapter on imagery, Chapman is introducing the reader to his Neoplatonic image patterns of darkness (good) and fire (evil) which will be carried out in the hymns. The lines read:

Great Goddesse to whose throne in Cynthian \(\text{fires}\),
This \(\text{earthlie Alter endlesse fumes expires}\),
Therefore, in \(\text{fumes of sighes and fires of griefe}\),
To fearefull chances thou sendst bold reliefe.
(ll. 1-4)

The apostrophe to the "Great Goddesse," namely, Night, the assonance in line 2, and the inverted word order of antimetabole give the passage a tone of formality which sets the keynote for the remainder of the poem.

Chapman's repetition and reversal of the words \(\text{fires}\) and \(\text{fumes}\) (ll. 1-3) result in the figure of antimetabole ("fires . . . fumes . . . fumes . . . fires"). Here Chapman is establishing for the reader the significant terminology of his own personal Neoplatonic philosophy. Following the tradition of medieval Platonic philosophers and mystics, Night is the good principle, the time for creativity and contemplation. She is

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\(^1\)Richard A. Lanham, \textit{A Handbook of Rhetorical Terms} (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), p. 10. Lanham cites the following example:

I pretty, and my saying apt? or I apt, and my saying pretty? (\textit{Love's Labour's Lost}, I, i).
the maternal, feminine principle, that is, the "Great Goddess" (line 1). In contrast to Night as a beneficent symbol, "this earthlie Alter," smoking with the "fires" and "fumes" of human passion, is a symbol of evil.¹ The figure of antimetabole thus helps to illustrate the simultaneous existence of good and evil in the world. To Chapman, this figure of speech is important, for it is his consciously chosen rhetorical technique for conveying his Neoplatonic thought.

An attempt at simple antimetabole to illustrate Chapman's Neoplatonic concept of sacred Night is in the following lines from the "Hymnus in Noctem":

Mens faces glitter, and their hearts are blacke,
But thou (great Mistresse of heauens gloomie racke)
Art blacke in face, and glitterst in thy heart.

(11. 225-227)

Although there is no inversion, the figure antimetabole emphasizes the contrast in meaning between the phrases ("faces glitter . . . hearts are blacke . . . blacke in face . . . glitterst in thy heart") and has the effect of wordplay. The sense of this passage is that men's darkness is just the opposite of true Night. Outwardly in their faces men appear to be good but inwardly in their hearts they are evil. Night, on the other hand, is black in her face but glitters in her heart. Night has the true inner goodness. Thus through the use of

¹ For a discussion of Chapman's Night and Day, good and evil symbolism, see Chapter I and Chapter VIII of this dissertation.
antimetabole the contrast in meaning between the goodness of Night and the deceptive wickedness of men becomes sharp.

With regard to figures of speech and Chapman's belief in the doctrine of Neoplatonism, perhaps the most revealing line in the "Hymnus in Cynthia" is line 153: "And in her force, the forces of the mind." Again eliminating the inversion, Chapman through the repetition of the words "force . . . forces" identifies or gives the key to the primary function of Cynthia as the World-Soul.

Another figure quite relevant to the expression of Chapman's Neoplatonism is *plece*, defined by Lanham as the "repetition of a word with a new signification after the intervention of another word or words."¹ The close relationship existing between the repeated words requires perceptive reading in order to distinguish the different meanings implied in the words. A pertinent example occurs in lines 71-72 in the "Hymnus in Noctem" where Chapman deviates from his primary meaning of Night as good to speak of its evil aspect.² Viewing Night as bad or harmful he writes: "A stepdame Night of minde about vs

¹Lanham, pp. 77-78. Lanham cites the following example:

He whilst he liued, happie was through thee,
And being dead is happie now much more;
Liuing, that lincked chaunst with thee to bee,
And dead, because him dead thou dost adore
As liuing, and thy lost deare loue deplore.
(Spenser, The Ruines of Time)

²See Chapter I and Chapter III of this dissertation.
clings" (line 63). In the same verse-paragraph he describes blindness of the mind as the stepdame: "This horrid stepdame, blindnesse of the minde, / Nought worth the sight, no sight, but worse then blind" (ll. 71-72). The paradoxical implication of these lines is that lack of true intelligence, or spiritual ignorance, is a worse evil than being physically blind. The figure ploce admirably demonstrates Chapman's Neoplatonic tenet that lack of true wisdom or spiritual insight is more disastrous than the defect of blindness.

In another example of ploce Chapman turns to the simile of crude painters who need to label the object they paint lest it be mistaken for something else. So men who truly have character, who are more than mere outward show, should rely on their minds or "forheads," and express "their first nobility" by their actions. Ploce is exemplified in line 175:

But as rude painters that contend to show
Beasts, foules or fish, all artlesse to bestow
On euery side his native counterfet,
Aboue his head, his name had neede to set:
So men that will be men, in more then face,
(As in their foreheads) should in actions place
More perfect characters, to prowe they be
No mockers of their first nobilitie.

(11. 171-178)

In the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" the following example of ploce could refer to either Cynthia as Queen Elizabeth or Cynthia as the World-Soul. Both the historical and moral allegories are applicable. The lines read:
Peaceful, and warlike, and the powre of fate,
In perfect circle of whose sacred state,
The circles of our hopes are compassed.

(11. 5-7)

Historically, the lines are praising Queen Elizabeth as the sovereign ruler of England in whom her people have placed their faith. Queen Elizabeth is "the perfect circle," the symbol of divine authority who can grant the hopes and desires of her people. Philosophically, the symbol of "the perfect circle" is Cynthia as the World-Soul exercising her powers of divine providence. Because of her strong influence on nature and man, in her are "the circles of our hopes compassed."

In these few instances cited, Chapman has made a direct relationship between the rhetorical figure of personification and his Neoplatonic doctrine. He has deftly given new significance to identical words, while simultaneously expressing his basic Neoplatonic principles. As it has been seen, the variation of a theme by a figure of speech is characteristic of Chapman's style of writing.

Epanalepsis, the "repetition at the end of a clause or sentence of the word with which it began,"¹ is another figure used by Chapman in The Shadow of Night. The examples in the "Hymnus in Cynthia" are important because they express in the form of a gnome or maxim Chapman's Neoplatonic doctrines. The

¹Lanham, p. 42. Lanham cites the following example:

I might, unhappy word, O me, I might.
(Sidney, Astrophil and Stella, XXXIII)
first example is line 230: "Good gifts are often given to men past good." Chapman's contention is simply that good gifts are de facto given to wicked and corrupt men who have great abilities.

Chapman's second example of epanalepsis is the didactic maxim which preaches that "Eyes should guide bodies, and our soules our eyes" (line 320). Here Chapman is enunciating his belief in the Neoplatonic dichotomy of the soul and body. For Chapman, the bodily faculties serve the soul, and unless directed by the soul, they will result in sin. The repetition of the term eyes as the initial and concluding words of the sentence strongly brings out the subordinate role of the eyes in relationship to the soul.¹

The Neoplatonic idea that the mind is divine and is man's highest intuitive faculty giving true inner knowledge² is stressed in the following passage which concludes with the figure of epanalepsis:

In-sight illustrates; outward brauerie blindes,
The minde hath in her selfe a Deitie,
And in the stretching circle of her eye
All things are compast, and things present still,
Will framd to powre, doth make vs what we will.
(11. 443-447)

In the above lines Chapman indicates his belief in man's free will, namely, the power of the mind to make choices or decisions.

¹See Chapter VI of this dissertation.

²See Chapter VI of this dissertation.
He nicely ties up this significant passage by repeating the noun will at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize its connection with the power of the mind and the verb will at the conclusion to bring out man's capacity to determine his own being.

In both hymns there is the figure of epizeuxis, the "repetition of the same word or sound immediately or without interposition of any other." Lanham, adding the qualifier emphatic, defines the figure as "emphatic repetition of a word with no other words between." The first example from the "Hymnus in Noctem" illustrates the need for emphasis in the lines. It occurs in the passage concerning the four elements of earth, air, water, and fire. The lines emphasize the word all: "Of ayre, and earth, and all, all these create" (line 77).

The next three instances of epizeuxis from the "Hymnus in Noctem" evoke a tone of passion or urgency, at the same time revealing aspects of Chapman's Neoplatonic thought. In the first example the poet calls on Hercules to bend his bow against the sun, the symbol of evil, and to "shoote, shoote, and stoope

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1Hoskins, p. 12. Hoskins uses the following example:

O let not, let not from you be poured upon me destruction.
Tormented? Tormented? torment of my soul, Philoclea, tormented?

2Lanham, p. 46. Lanham's example is:

O horror, horror, horror!
his pride" (line 263). The imperatives _shooe, shooe_ show Chapman's intense desire to rid the world of evil, or more precisely, of the wickedness of pride. The sun here is Chapman's Neoplatonic symbol for sinfulness.

In line 290 of the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman employs two imperatives with the Neoplatonic symbol of the light of day as harmful to man's soul. He calls on all "living spirits" (line 288) to _"Shun, shun this cruell light, and end your thrall"_ (line 290). The cry of emotion which is characteristic of _epizeuxis_ is obvious here.

The same Neoplatonic notion of scorning the light of day and serving Night is evident in the following example of _epizeuxis_. Man should disband himself _"from mens brasse wits, and golden foolerie"_ (line 326) and _"Weepe, weepe your soules, into felicitie"_ (line 327).

From the foregoing examples a characteristic of Chapman's style would seem to be the use of _epizeuxis_, particularly in its emotional aspect, in the form of imperatives to reveal the ugliness of sin in the world.

In _The Shadow of Night_ Chapman has relied strongly on five figures of repetition to express and vary the main theme of his poem. These figures are _polyptoton, antimetabole, ploce, epanalepsis_, and _epizeuxis_. Each contributes to the unique quality in a poetic statement of Chapman's Neoplatonic beliefs.

1See Chapter I and Chapter VIII of this dissertation.
In addition to figures of repetition Chapman has an affinity for figures of contrast, particularly antitheton and oxymoron. One of the most noteworthy features of his style in The Shadow of Night is his conscious construction of the poem around a series of contrasts between Night and Day, fire and darkness, sense and mind, and body and soul. Night and Day are Chapman's fundamental images of contrast. Although Night plays a dual role of both good and evil, it is primarily the Neoplatonic symbol for goodness, the time for creativity and inspiration. Night refers to that primeval period before creation when things existed in formless matter, when the elements were not yet separated one from the other. Day, on the other hand, is antithetical to Night. Day is symbolical of evil and functions throughout the hymn as the lustful principle.

Various connotations of Day and Night continually reappear in both poems. Their purpose is to emphasize the Neoplatonic dichotomy which constitutes the basic pattern in The Shadow of Night.¹

In The Shadow of Night the most significant and influential figure of contrast is that of antitheton defined by Puttenham as "The Quarreller, for so be al such persons as delight in taking the contrary part of whatsoeuer shalbe spoken."² The predominance of antitheton overrides the presence

¹See Chapter I and Chapter VIII of this dissertation.

²George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, ed. by Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: At the
of such other minor figures of contrast as zeugma and isocolon.

Antitheton is exemplified in the "Hymnus in Noctem" when the poet speaks of the elements composing the universe:

For in th'expansure, and distinct attire,
Of light, and darknesse, of the sea, and fire,
Of ayre, and earth, and all, all these create,
First set and rulde, in most harmonious state,
Disjunction showes, in all things now amisse,
By that first order, what confusion is.

(11. 75-80)

Before the present world was created, all things were in a state of shapeless confusion. Light, darkness, earth, air, water, and fire were all part or the dark abyss of infinite space. Chapman's Neoplatonic contention is that this apparent physical chaos is not as harmful to man as the moral chaos which now exists in his soul.¹

The figure of antitheton, the expression of contrasting ideas in adjoining phrases or clauses, is strongly effective in bringing out the Neoplatonic doctrine that virtue is corrupted by the vices of ambition, greed, envy, and self-desire. After relating the myth of Amalthaea, the symbol of thoughtfulness and

University Press, 1936), p. 210. Puttenham cites the following example:

Good haue I doone you, harme did I neuer none,
Ready to ioy your gaines, your losses to bemone,
Why therefore should you grutch so sore at my welfare:
Who onely bred your blisse, and neuer causd your care.

¹See Chapter II of this dissertation.
humble virtue in lowly things, Chapman moralizes on the true meaning of nobility: "Basenesse is flintie; gentrie soft as silke" (line 108). The debasement of the soul is compared to flint which gives the connotation of hardness. True nobility or "gentrie," on the other hand, is smooth like a beautiful piece of soft material. The figure of antitheton is thus particularly striking in this instance because it expresses the contrast between the two ideas.

Another instance of antitheton occurs in the "Hymnus in Noctem" in the myth of Orpheus whose wisdom drew men to the love ofArt, and Fortitude" (line 144), and who brought Eurydice (Justice) back from hell. Chapman observes that if any man "Looke backe, with boldnesse lesse then Orphean, / Soone falls he to the hell from whence he rose" (ll. 154-155). The antitheton ("falls ... rose") reveals Chapman's Neoplatonic belief that the truly governed man is one who is able to control his passions and not be hampered by the lower faculties of the body. Unless a man has the strength of character of Orpheus, that is, unless he is able to calm "the perturbations of his minde" (line 150), he will fall back into that hell from which he has just escaped. He will become "manlesse" or un-human.

Antitheton again occurs in the latter portion of the "Hymnus in Noctem" when Chapman not only dedicates himself to the service of Night but also calls on the Eumenides to exert
physical action against those who have spread wickedness in the world. The corruption of the soul through lack of virtue, "Vertues obscur'd, and banished the day" (line 243), is his main concern. He turns to Night, the "tender fortresse of our woes" (line 247), to raise her daughters, the Furies, to avenge the world for its sinfulness:

O then most tender fortresse of our woes,
That bleeding lye in vertues overthoes,
Hating the whoredome of this painted light:
Raise thy chast daughters, ministers of right,
The dreadfull and the iust Eumenides,
And let them wreake the wrongs of our disease,
Drowning the world in bloud, and staine the skies
With their spilt soules, made drunke with tyrannies.

(11. 247-254)

Chapman's technique of contrast is particularly evident in the words whoredome and chast. Contrast is further noticeable in his denunciation of "painted light" (line 247) and praise of sacred Night as the "tender fortresse of our woes" (line 249).

A final example of antitheton in the "Hymnus in Noctem" appears in Chapman's urging of people to pledge their allegiance and service to Night. He states that "Since mournings are preferd to banquettings" (line 366), that is, the virtuous life is favored over the lustful one, men should consecrate themselves to Night.

The "Hymnus in Cynthiam" also has examples of antitheton. In this hymn Cynthia is the Neoplatonic World-Soul with all its powers and functions. As for those to whom she gives her blessing, "Peace raignes in their hearts, and youth
[raignes] in their faces" (line 125). Those who scorn her favor are cursed:

Diseases pine their flockes, tares spoile their corne:

Old men are blind of issue, and young wives
Bring forth abortiue frute, that neuer thriues.

(11. 121-123)

The figure of antitheton, occurring in line 122 ("Old men ... young wives"), helps to emphasize the providential qualities of Cynthia.

In The Shadow of Night there is one other significant rhetorical figure of contrast which Chapman has artfully employed—synecesis or oxymoron. Lanham gives the brief definition of oxymoron as "a witty, paradoxical saying" or "a condensed paradox." The following instances of oxymoron reemphasize the point that the poem is constructed on a series of contrast with regard to words, clauses, and sentences.

The opening lines of the "Hymnus in Noctem" announce Chapman's intention of inculcating virtue in men's souls. He desires that "all mens bosoms" (line 26), concerned only with "gaine of riches" (line 27), may be lanced open "And with the threatens of vertue terrified" (line 28). Here Chapman's unique combination of "threatens" with "vertues" makes an unusual impression upon the reader. Virtue is essential to the well-being or health of the soul. Unless men acquire virtue their souls will be threatened with sinfulness. Thus Chapman unites

1Lanham, p. 70. As an example, Lanham cites Milton's "darkness visible."
the two words "threats" and "virtue" to convey his Neoplatonic doctrine of the necessity of virtue in the soul.

A similar original instance of *synoecesis* or *oxymoron* appears in the phrase "gulfie desart" (line 58) in the "Hymnus in Noctem." It occurs in Chapman's comparison of the degenerate world to the "wealthie fount" (line 50) that mysteriously rises out of nowhere only to lose itself in the "gulfie desart," "Gulfie" meaning "deep as an abyss," and "desart" meaning ocean. Thus the combination of the two words result in *oxymoron*.

Another example of *oxymoron* in which the figure is combined with *periphrasis* in line 212 in the "Hymnus in Noctem": "To fill all corners of this round Exchange." Here Chapman is using two words to express the one word *world*. Furthermore, the contrast between the connotation of squareness of corners and the roundness of the globe is also evident. The figures of *oxymoron* and *periphrasis* are thus the result of linking these within the same line.

*Synoecesis* or *oxymoron* again occurs in the poet's tribute to Night as the "tender fortresse of our woes" (line 247) in the "Hymnus in Noctem." The connotation of hardness in the term "fortresse," qualified by the adjective "tender," gives Night a unique quality of strength and gentleness, of being both courageous and sympathetic in aiding man's cause.

Even more striking than the above examples of *oxymoron* is the poet's injunction to Cynthia to "Commit most *willing*
rapes on all our harts" (line 106), that is, man is willing to suffer rape by Cynthia. The unusual union of the words willing rapes shocks the reader into an awareness of how strongly the poet feels that man must be governed and ruled by his allegiance to Cynthia, the symbol of divinity.

In *The Shadow of Night* Chapman has woven the figures of *antitheton* and *oxymoron* in an artistic way into his poem. These figures help to illustrate the fundamental contrast between Day and Night which is essential to the meaning of the poem and to Chapman's Neoplatonism. Chapman's Neoplatonic theory equates Day with the senses and considers it evil; it equates Night with the soul and considers it good.¹ This dualism between the mind and the body is forcefully brought out by the rhetorical figures of contrast, that is, *antitheton* and *oxymoron*.

Chapman's rhetoric in *The Shadow of Night* is distinctly related to his ideas of Neoplatonism. Because of his obsession with the expression of this philosophy, there may be instances when he has not mastered these figures to the highest degree possible. Nevertheless, there are many rhetorical figures that prove that the "mighty faults" spoken of by Coleridge are outweighed by the "mighty beauties." Despite small defects in the expression of his notion, Chapman has achieved his aim, namely, that the Neoplatonic belief in the life of virtue be expounded. His desire is that "vertue flourish in the light of light" ("HN," line 403).

¹See Chapter I of this dissertation.
CHAPTER XI

NEOPLATONISM IN THE SHADOW OF NIGHT

A study of Chapman's first published poem, *The Shadow of Night* (1594), reveals it to be suffused with Neoplatonic doctrines. In the composition of this early work, Chapman is basically a Florentine Neoplatonist, accepting in a modified way the traditional hierarchy of body, soul, and mind. Orthodox Ficinian Neoplatonism views the soul as the intermediary between the material and the spiritual, able to descend and be subdued by matter or to ascend and be absorbed by the mind. Chapman modifies Ficinian Neoplatonism in that he makes a distinct division or separation between the body on the one hand, and the mind and soul on the other. In *The Shadow of Night* the mind and the soul are almost interchangeable terms and are considered good as opposed to the body which is viewed as evil. This dichotomy between the soul and the body has a distinct bearing on the theme, structure, and style of *The Shadow of Night*.

Neoplatonism, reaching Chapman through Ficino's commentaries on Plato's *Ion* and *Symposium* and on Plotinus' *Enneads*, pervades the entire poem. Chapman's first Neoplatonic utterance occurs in the epistle prefixed to *The Shadow of Night*. Here Chapman shows that in his view of learning he accepts the
Platonic doctrine of virtue as the effect of knowledge. To Chapman, knowledge is a sort of moral truth which penetrates into the divine. This knowledge, which Chapman sometimes calls learning, requires strenuous discipline and intellectual effort, or as Chapman aptly describes it, "Herculean labour."\(^1\) In the same epistle Chapman speaks scornfully of the dilettantes and book-skimmers who read "but to curtoll a tedious houre."

Chapman's concept of the ideal good man is that of the scholar who actively pursues virtue.

In addition to this laborious intellectual struggle required for the comprehending and the creating of true poetry, the genuine poet is one who is divinely inspired. In *The Shadow of Night* Chapman accepts the divinus furor theory of poetic inspiration given in Plato's *Phaedrus*, according to which the soul is possessed by the Muses and is aroused and stirred to "strike that fire out of darknesse, which the brightest Day shall enue for beautie."\(^2\) The furor poeticus soothes the discord of the life of the soul in the body and brings the soul to a realization of its divine nature. The power of the furor poeticus to illuminate the soul and to cause it to remember divine things is illustrated in the following passage from the "Hymnus in Noctem":

\(^1\)Poems, p. 19.

\(^2\)Ibid.
Thus once the soul is freed from the perturbations of the body, it will remember divine things; and knowing them, it will in its ecstasy sing them throughout the world.

For George Chapman, poetry is the most nearly perfect expression of truth, involving both intellectual struggle and mystical inspiration. The true poet is a mystic with a "light-bearing intellect" and engaged in a "Herculean labour."¹

As was stated earlier, a strong Neoplatonic doctrine preached by Chapman in The Shadow of Night is his depreciatory view of the body as harmful to the health of the soul. This is Chapman's own personal interpretation and adaptation of Ficinian Neoplatonism. He applies this negative view of the body in his use of the analogy between the microcosm and the macrocosm in the first two hundred lines of the "Hymnus in Noctem." Just as man is composed of soul and body, so the universe is composed of heaven and earth. The soul is parallel to heaven or spiritual things and the body is parallel to the earth or material things.

¹Ibid., pp. 19, 50.
Thus man is related to his cosmos as the microcosm is to the macrocosm.

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman speaks of a pre-existent chaos in which all things existed in a state of disorder. According to the poet, this confusion was good, for "Chaos had soule without a bodie then" (line 47). But now the creation of man and the addition of form to matter, soul to body, has resulted in creating a moral chaos in the microcosm, the little world of man. This moral chaos is far more harmful than the physical chaos which had existed in the realm of formless matter prior to the creation.

Chapman's employment of the analogy between the microcosm and the macrocosm is Neoplatonic, for it derives primarily from Ficino's cosmology which holds that there is a direct correspondence between the body and the soul of man and the body and the soul of the universe. Chapman's originality lies in his conception of the moral chaos in the souls of men as worse than the original chaos in the universe.

The disorder and chaos of the microcosm and the macrocosm stressed by Chapman in the first portion of the "Hymnus in Noctem" is subtly related to the Neoplatonic doctrine of mysticism which he espouses in the latter portion of the hymn. For Chapman, the lack of true love among men is the cause of all the sinfulness in the world. When love is absent, the whole world consists in "contraries": "So all things now (extract
out of the prime) / Are turnd to chaos, and confound the time" (11. 61-62).

Because man has capitulated to self-love, because he is more concerned with pleasures of the body than with those of the soul, he will not be saved unless he weeps tears of repentance. In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman advocates for the salvation of mankind a program of mysticism based on the doctrines of Plato, Plotinus, and Ficino. Here Chapman's originality as a philosophical mystical poet stands out. Chapman does not adhere strictly to the systems of any of these philosophers. He borrows and modifies those aspects of their theories which will aid him in solving the problem of the lack of love in the world.

In the "Hymnus in Noctem" Chapman's mysticism consists of two phases: first, the purification of the soul from the vices of pride, greed, and envy; and second, the act of contemplation by which man's soul transcends the senses by an intuitive apprehension of the divine. Thus, in the formation of his Neoplatonic mysticism Chapman reveals an indebtedness to (1) Plato's belief in the separation of the soul from the body, the subduing of the passions, and the necessity of disciplining the faculties in order to arrive at a knowledge of truth and goodness; (2) Plotinus' concept of emanation and contemplation in which union with the One is attained; and (3) Ficino's belief in the creative power and absolute supremacy of love,
which in the "Hymnus in Noctem" is analogous to Chapman's mystical concept of Night.

Chapman's mysticism, in which he employs the two major symbols of the Night and the moon, is not of the orthodox Christian variety. His mysticism is in the tradition of a Platonic natural religion in which Night purifies the mind and fosters the inward knowledge of divine things by blotting out the world of the senses. The moon symbol of Cynthia likewise follows in this classical tradition of Platonic natural religion. The moon is a symbol of spiritual illumination. Within the "Hymnus in Cynthia," Cynthia is the World-Soul, the purifying and shaping spirit dwelling in Night and severing "all desire / Of fleshly sports" (ll. 27-28), and "truly figuring . . . the forces of the mind" (ll. 151-153).¹

Adhering to the Platonic tradition of mysticism, Chapman employs the day and the sun as rival symbols to the Night and the moon. Here he is using the technique of Platonic logic which, revised by Ramus in the Renaissance, reasons by a method of setting up contraries. In the "Hymnus in Noctem" sacred Night symbolizes the time of creativity and spiritual renewal. Day, as opposed to Night, symbolizes the time of evil and aridity. It is only at Night that man, shaking off the evils of his earthly existence, is his true self. In the "Hymnus in Cynthia" there is the same harsh dichotomy between

¹Ibid., pp. 31, 34.
the sun as a "false beacon" and a symbol of contemplation. In adopting this dualistic system of symbols, Chapman is once again giving evidence of his adherence to the modified theory of Neoplatonism which lays stress on the separation or disjunction between the body and soul in man.

Chapman's Neoplatonic doctrine of the soul as controlling the passions of the body is also reflected in his allegorical narrative of the shadowy hunt in the "Hymnus in Cynthiam." In describing the hunting of Euthimya, who symbolically represents the panther of worldly ambition and the boar of physical desire, Chapman preserves Plato's threefold division of the soul into reason (the hunters), the affections (the hounds), and the passions (the steeds). Cynthia in the moral allegory of the narrative is the World-Soul, exercising her powers of divine Providence. Chapman's use of the allegorical interpretation of Actaeon's hounds as the base affections is conventional in Renaissance poetry. He gives, however, a new variation to an old motif by relating it to his Neoplatonic doctrine of the One and the Many, the celestial and the terrestrial.

Just as Chapman relies on allegory in The Shadow of Night, he makes extensive use of mythology to reveal his Neoplatonism. Several reasons underlie his adoption of this mythological technique: First, there is his desire to appear as the learned poet; second, there is the ever-ready and
available compendium of mythological lore compiled by Natalis Comes; and last, but most important, there is his sincere belief in the "purposeful obscurity" or "hidden mysteries" conception of poetry adhered to by such Renaissance Neoplatonists as Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. According to this Neoplatonic doctrine, there are certain truths that only the initiate or select few can comprehend. For Chapman, this technique of concealing truths beneath the veil of myth lest it be profaned by the vulgar crowd is quite compatible with his theory of poetry as the knowledge of divine truths. Consequently, in The Shadow of Night his employment of such myths as those of Orpheus, Hercules, Prometheus, Ganymede, Orion, and others has primarily a religious or moral function rather than a mere decorative one.

Since Franck Schoell's source study of Chapman's poetry has demonstrated Chapman's strong reliance on Natalis Comes for his mythology, some comment on Chapman's originality as a poet in this regard is in order. As Chapters III and VII have indicated, Chapman in his borrowing of mythology from Comes makes a strong attempt at originality and does not merely translate Comes into verse. For the most part, Chapman relates his mythology to the theme which he is expressing within the poem. Frequently he takes only the mythological facts and adds his own moral to the passage. As a poet, Chapman feels that his technique of applying mythological incidents as illustrations
of moral precepts is a valid and creative one. His borrowings from Comes are not slavish enough to deprive him of the rank of an original poet who is expressing his Neoplatonic philosophy in *The Shadow of Night*.

Chapman's belief in the "purposeful obscurity" conception of poetry is related to the poetic style of *The Shadow of Night*. As his epistle to Roydon states, Chapman expects the reader of his poetry to be not only intelligent but willing to expend effort in order to comprehend his esoteric doctrines. Because of this necessity for intellectual struggle, the most frequent criticism against Chapman's style has been that of obscurity. Those critics, such as Swinburne and Schoell, who level the charge of obscurity against Chapman's style indicate that they are basing their judgment on Chapman's diction, syntax, sentence structure, and figures of speech. Schoell concurs with Swinburne's denunciation of Chapman for his difficult and obscure style. Swinburne writes:

> It is not merely the heavy and convulsive movement of the broken and jarring sentences, the hurried broken-winded rhetoric that seems to wheeze and pant at every painful step, the incessant byplay of incongruous digressions and impenetrable allusions, that make the first reading of the poems as tough and tedious a task for the mind as oakumpicking or stone-breaking can be for the body. Worse than all this is the want of any perceptible centre towards which these tangled and ravelled lines of thought may seem at least to converge.  

It would be foolish to deny the presence of obscurity with regard to these elements. But this type of obscurity is

1Swinburne, pp. 13-14. See also Schoell, pp. 37, 179.
easily overcome by knowledge of the age in which Chapman lived and by an understanding of the language and poetic techniques which were employed by himself and his contemporaries. Obscurity of this nature is by no means equivalent to a poor poetic style and can be resolved by scholarly study.

Chapman's deliberate cultivation of obscurity is of another nature altogether. It stems from the "hidden mysteries" doctrine of the Neoplatonists and is intimately connected with his theory of poetics. Chapman equates poetry with truth and is quite anxious that it be read for a serious purpose and not for mere entertainment. He advocates a heightened style suitable to expressing the lofty and dignified truths which constitute the content of poetry. For Chapman, the difficulty encountered in poetry is a grace to be encouraged, since the true poet does not try to please the vulgar crowd. Just as critics in the twentieth century do not condemn the poetry of T. S. Eliot for its esoteric allusions and complicated symbolism, neither should the poetry of Chapman be dismissed as the work of a confused or befuddled mind. In The Shadow of Night Chapman is expressing what he considers to be the sacred or secret doctrines of Platonic natural theology. His manner of expression may be obscure in Swinburne's sense, but his intent or purpose is clear.

A reading of The Shadow of Night in light of Neoplatonism shows the poem to have a definite plan based on
the doctrines of the Florentine humanists. Neoplatonically, the
"Hymnus in Noctem" and the "Hymnus in Cynthiam" conform to
Ficino's way of achieving "temporal Beatitute": the union of
the contemplative life and the active life, the two wings which
elevate the soul to celestial spheres.\(^1\) The hymns are
complementary. The "Hymnus in Noctem" exalts the contemplative
life, whereby man's mind directly contemplates the truth and
rises to a knowledge of celestial things. The "Hymnus in
Cynthiam" is concerned with the active life, whereby man's
reason is "applied to the task of perfecting human life and
destiny on earth."\(^2\)

Chapman's imagery, like the argument of *The Shadow of
Night*, is not obscure, haphazard, or elusive. It is based on
the Neoplatonic dualistic technique of setting up contraries.
The imagery falls chiefly into the two patterns of darkness and
fire. Darkness and its various forms such as shadows, blackness,
and night are linked to the virtuous life. Fire and its
manifold associations of heat, brightness, and day are concerned
with the lack of virtue, with the lustful life. An awareness of
these symbolic patterns clarifies rather than obscures Chapman's
Neoplatonic imagery in *The Shadow of Night*. If Chapman's
imagery is viewed from this perspective, then James Smith is
accurate in his observation that Chapman's verse is "not only

\(^1\) Panofsky, p. 139.

\(^2\) Ibid.
clear, but transparent: like good glass, looking through which as a medium one is not aware of looking through anything."

Even Chapman's use of rhetorical figures of speech, particularly those of repetition and contrast, should not be viewed as contributing to an obscure style in the bad sense of the term. His figures of speech are drawn from the Elizabethan rhetorical textbooks of his day. These textbooks define the rhetorical figure and supply an apt example to illustrate the definition. When one realizes that Chapman is incorporating into his poetry the rhetorical figures he learned as a schoolboy, one understands Chapman's natural inclination to employ polyptoton or oxymoron. Furthermore, the obscurity which might be caused by such rhetorical figures is lessened by the reader who is able to transport himself to Chapman's times and to view such poetic technique as part of the heightened style Chapman desires to achieve in his poetry.

Thus criticism has misjudged Chapman's first published poem The Shadow of Night. The poem is not an obscure, amorphous, illogically constructed work. Rather it is the product of the early Chapman who composed his poem under the influence of Marsilio Ficino, the most influential exponent of Neoplatonism during the Renaissance. The central Neoplatonic idea reflected in the poem is the Neoplatonic code of virtue which emphasizes

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1James Smith, "George Chapman," pp. 344-345.
the superiority of the soul over the body. The Shadow of Night is essentially a Renaissance Neoplatonic poem evolving out of Chapman's Neoplatonic conception of man and his universe. Only when read in light of its Neoplatonic doctrines does it become apparent that Chapman has struck "that fire out of darknesse, which the brightest Day shall enuie for beautie."¹

¹ Poems, p. 19.
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APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Miss Kathleen Elizabeth Toomey has been read and approved by members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation, and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

January 14, 1970

[Signature of Advisor]