CHAPTER VI

PYGMALION AND SPHINX: MYTHICAL AUTHENTICATION

6.1.0 In order to authenticate the respective claims and counterclaims regarding artist's gender, growth, pleasure and pain, the critics have based their premises primarily on the speculations and findings of psychology. There are writers and critics who make use of the available mythical frameworks for the purpose of legitimatizing the growth and life of the artist. Mythical experience of the artist is therefore an area that deserves a serious consideration in this study. However, this particular dimension in artistic life encompasses all the other four major aspects in creativity discussed in the foregoing chapters.

6.2.0 Critics, on their part, align themselves on certain uncompromising myths that favor exclusively either of the two sexes. While the androcentric critics uphold usually the Icarus-Daedalus as the authentic myth of the artist, the feminists identify the myth of the female artist with the likes of Demeter-Persephone combination. Consequently, enlivened by sexual polemics, the authoritative artist seeks legitimatization for the artist's
identity through versions and subversions of myths that are made to suit his/her sexual subjectivity.

6.2.1 In Maurice Beebe's work, the mythical authentication of male artistic growth is achieved by establishing the Joycean version of artist-in-exile-from-society as more or less the complete model. Joycean artist structured on Icarus-Daedalus refers also to the other popular myths of artist, like Faust and Prometheus who reject a superior authority for the sake of their choice-projects. Joseph Campbell who analyzes myths from various countries identifies the artist primarily to be a male, and he presents the pattern of initiation in which the aspirant/artist becomes a 'father' by possessing woman.

6.2.2 The feminists, on the other hand, dismiss the male-dominated myths of the artist - Icarus, Daedalus, Faust and Prometheus - as inadequate in explaining the special situation of an artist-heroine. Phyllis Chesler, Grace Stewart and others advocate the myths of Demeter, Persephone, Psyche, Athena and Artemis for authenticating the female story of artistic life. According to Linda Huf, the artist-heroines, who assume the names of the legendary and mythical women, formulate their particular development in terms of a masculine assertiveness, opposition to female foil and rejection of a male muse.
The position of the artist-hero as a son links him mythically to the crisis of the king, Oedipus. Desire for the mother and jealousy toward the father are the chief features of this personality. Laius, King of Thebes, is afraid of his son even before the child is born, owing to a Delphic Oracle. The setting for the antagonism between a developing hero and the father-figure representing the society as a whole is set from the very beginning. In course of time, as the fate is so sure to pass, Oedipus kills his father and marries his mother Jocasta, though unknown of the relations. But when Oedipus learns the truth from Teiresias the seer, he is overwhelmed by guilt, shame and grief. Oedipus blinds himself with a pin taken from Jocasta's garments (Maurus 1976:43-44). Similarly, the artist-heroine, too, does not seem to be at ease with her position as a daughter. In this, Electra is almost a substitute to Oedipus. She appears to be more loyal to the young males than to her own sex. There is a feminine reversal to Oedipus' story, as Electra takes revenge for a patriarch's humiliation and suffering. The daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, Electra saves the life of her young brother Orestes, when their father is murdered. When Orestes later returns, she even helps him to slay their mother and their mother's lover. It is Orestes' friend Pylades, Electra later marries (Britannica Encyclopaedia.
Micropaedia III, 1983:831). The plot containing the heroine's hate for her mother and love for a male is repeated in the story of Psyche. Psyche arouses the jealousy of Venus who commands her son Cupid to inspire Psyche with love for the most despicable of men. Instead, Psyche and Cupid fall in love with each other. What destroys the affair is Psyche's own irrepressible curiosity and desire for Cupid. The mother continues to persecute the daughter, though in the end, there is an eternal re-union between the two lovers through gods' own intervention. (Britannica Encyclopaedia. Micropaedia viii, 1983:270).

This structure of hero's hate for the male and desire for the woman, and that of the heroine's hate for the female and love for the man, are reaffirmed through the repetition of diverse individual versions presented in the seven male and seven female texts.

6.3.1.1 The Oedipus-part of the artistic life highlights the hero's relationship with his parents or parental figures. Love for the mother and hate for the father are the chief characteristics of this phase in the hero's artistic growth. In The Sacred Fount the hero's general interest in the secrets of depletion and youth is expressed through his anxiety for Mr. Briss's phenomenal ageing and Mrs. Briss's miraculous rejuvenation. His sexual identification with Mr. Briss is so apt that there are even
tears in the protagonist's eyes. Though the Oedipal experience is sublimated through artistic creation, it seems to offer the male artist emotions associated with regression. In Martin Eden, the hero makes at last a symbolic return to the maternal 'sea' or womb. Charles N. Watson Jr. associates Martin Eden's "return to the mother", namely his suicide, with the rise and fall of Hyperion, the sun-god (Watson, Jr. 1983:156). Jack London who ended his life in suicide, like his protagonist, said "'To me the idea of death is sweet ... [as] to go to sleep and rest ... when I come to die it will be smiling at death, I promise you'" (cited in ibid.:275). Male sexuality, especially the Oedipal desire, is sometimes looked at as a kind of death. Eugene Witla of The "Genius" comes to the verge of total depletion because of his own over-indulgence in sexual pleasure. It is said that he almost commits a symbolic suicide by falling a "prey to the Vampire of feminine possessiveness" (Pizer 1976:142).

6.3.1.2 The 'murder' of the father is a significant feature of the successful Oedipal transition. Often the son believes that his redemption consists in eliminating the father who is his rival. Some of the Oedipal knots in the artist-stories are resolved in this manner. The male protagonist in Winesburg, Ohio kills his father to occupy his place. The patriarch, Jesse Bentley, who tries to
imitate the "stories filled [in] the pages of the Bible" (WO:106), takes his grandson David Hardy - an alter ago of George Willard - to a forest where he implores God to transform the boy into the Biblical David. For, Jesse expects that the boy should be able to protect the Bentley farm from the "Philistines and enemies of god" (WO:68). But growing apprehensive of Jesse Bentley's intentions, David Hardy shoots a stone at him as if at Goliath himself. David declares his liberation from the Oedipal fear: "'I have killed the man of God and now I will myself be a man and go into the world'" (WO:109). This ensures the son's possessing of the woman. When David West - the extended self of Gordon - in Mosquitoes, disappears with Patricia Robin, it seems that Gordon too steals away his Helen through his own habitual absences. At the end of his war with the 'mosquitoes' of the yacht-party what awaits him is the "Passion Week of the heart" (M:280). John T. Irwin comments on the artistic significance of this reference to Christ:

In Gordon's thoughts, incest, autoeroticism and self-destruction all merge in the image of the artist as a Christ figure who, because of the self's love for the self, sacrifices the personal self to that objectified other self that is the work of art (Irwin 1975:163-164).
The incest and autoerositicism of the Christ-artist also involves a Mary-figure. The artist in Pictures of Fidelman 'nails' Annamaria to her cross (PF:68). According to Irving Malin, Fidelman "regards Annamaria as a Mary-figure, a loving mother.... By sleeping with her, he will break a taboo. The Oedipal 'triangle' is present" (Malin 1980:128).

As in King Oedipus, the male artist's desire involves murder of the father, 'wedding' of the mother and a regression through autoerositicism and over-indulgence.

6.3.2.1 The daughter-position of the artist-heroine projects her as one who makes a wrong choice, namely, the heterosexual pleasure. Edna Pontellier of The Awakening is even considered a failure, because, as Rosemary F. Franklin remarks, "here ... no Eros marries Psyche" meaning to say that Edna could not be married by a male of her choice (Franklin 1984:525). Franklin is of opinion that Edna is oppressed at this stage even by mothers, many an Aphrodite in her story. Linda Huf too refers to the Aphrodite-Psyche-Eros myth in The Awakening, and she says that Edna reminds one of the "image, of course of Thanatos stalking Eros, of death of love pursuing all lovers, Edna and Robert not excepted" (Huf 1983:77-78). The daughter's desire for male's love is expressed in similar ways in other female texts. Olivia May in A Woman of Genius assumes the part of Psyche, or the woman who longs to touch the edge of the
cloak worn by Christ (Luke 8:43-48). In her desire for Helmeth Garrett, Olivia wishes if she "had touched the outer ring of his consciousness" but is diverted from the attempt as another lady in "the crowd ... took advantage to touch him on the arm" (WG:288). In *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, the artist-heroine even goes through sexual initiation with her boy-friend. But she feels immediately repulsed from her inner room and her artistic aspiration to become a musician. Heterosexual love of the heroine is always pictured as costing the heroine her artistic life. According to Constance Scheerer, in *The Bell Jar* Esther Greenwood becomes a Persephone misguided by her own aimless desire. According to her, Esther, "while gathering flowers became herself the flower gathered. Ravishment by Dis was the price Persephone paid for aimless, primal flower-picking ..." (Scheerer 1976:478). Though the artist-heroine asserts her individuality as a daughter, it also seems that she begins to lose her valuable femaleness in the process.

6.3.2.2 Another important feature of this phase of artistic development is the heroine's desire to be the daughter of a mother. For instance, Avis Dobell of *The Story of Avis* wants to begin where Aurora Leigh - the heroine of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's artist-novel in verse by the same title - ceases in her development to be an
ideal artist. For, Aurora Leigh attempts an 'illogical' compromise between marriage and art at the end of her story though the conflict between these two in the major portion of the poem does not warrant such an easy resolution. However, Aurora who "justifies to herself the poet's role" (Kessler 1985:253) has in turn been influenced by Mme de Staël's Corinne, or Italy (1807). For "the 'myth of Corinne' ... [was] the private fantasy of two generations of genteel women readers" (Kaplan 1985:147). It is significant that Avis wants to imagine herself to be a daughter of the unfulfilled artist-mothers like Aurora or Corinne. Avis's intention is identifiable in her advice to her own daughter: "'My child shall not repeat my blunders'" (SA:245). Similarly in The Song of the Lark, Thea Kronborg whose name is foregrounded in the novel as "Thee-a" and "Thee" (SL:345) bears the name of the "goddess" Thia who is the daughter of Gaia, the first mother in the generation myths (Huf 1983:8). None of these artist-heroines wants to identify herself as the daughter of an oppressive father. Alabama Beggs of Save Me the Waltz seeks to complete her artistic self further through her daughter who is encouraged to take up the art of dancing. However, there is caution attached to her advice to the daughter that she should not be the daughter of a father: "'I'll be ... [a female] Agamemnon fish ... [and] I could be a whole world to myself
if I didn't like living in Daddy's better'" (SW:82). It is in the position of a daughter the artist-heroine succumbs herself to the destructive male love. A redemption is guaranteed only in her self-identification as the daughter of the mother and a simultaneous resistance to becoming the daughter of a father.

6.4.0 In the second major phase in artistic development, the artist-hero and the artist-heroine resolve the tug with the Patriarch or society by identifying oneself with the like sex. The artist-hero tries to react to the aversion of the society towards him by associating himself with a figure similar to Icarus. For Icarus is of a profound inspiration to the artist-hero, since this mythical character achieves maturity by flying out of Crete along with his father Daedalus who is himself an architect and inventor, in other words, a master-artist (Maurus 1976:149-150). Similarly the young artist-heroine becomes a matured artist as soon as she succeeds in joining her profession with the sex of her mother, viz., motherhood. For this, she assumes the role of Persephone, the daughter of a creative mother, Demeter who is the goddess empowered to bring forth grain on earth. Demeter witholds her creativity whenever her daughter Persephone is confined by the male god, Pluto, in the Underworld. The earth becomes rich with vegetation, blossoming and fruity whenever the daughter makes her return.
from the Hades to join her mother (Stewart 1981:45). These two patterns - one male and one female - of attaining maturity in artistic development through the rejection of society (hero) or the male-centered elements (heroine) and also through one's identification of oneself with the like sex are followed in the male and female artist-novels with individual variations.

6.4.1.1 The model of Daedalus, Icarus or Faust primarily denotes the artist-hero's resistance to and even rebellion against the Great Father, the Society. In their onward journey to become creative persons, the artist-heroes invariably feel rejected by the society. Therefore his escape also consists in equally rejecting the society. It is not the disposition of Christ but Judas the betrayer, with an artistic, Faustian dimension, one finds with the artist-hero in *Pictures of Fidelman*. Fidelman's father-figure, Shimon Susskind who "preacheth to the multitude on the shore of the green sea of Galilee ... " says: "Verily I say, one of you who eats now at this table will betray me ... Fidelman blusheth red" (PF:164-165). While having sex with Annamaria, Fidelman in fact, nails 'Suss King' or Jesus the King, to his cross (PF:167). Sometimes, the society's attitude toward the male-artist is represented by a woman who stands against his possessing the object of his
desire. Therefore, she can be called the 'anti-muse' of the artist. What imprisons the Daedalus/Icarus of The Sacred Fount are the hands of "a harridan or Jezebel" who is the "'dreadful old woman'" representing the antagonistic society of the artist-hero (SF:87). For the Biblical character Jezebel is

an archetype of the wicked woman.... A woman of fierce energy, she tried to destroy those who opposed her; most of the prophets of Yahweh were killed at her command (Britiannica Encyclopaedia. Micropædia vi. 1986: 547).

Fulfilling Elijah's prophecy, her body after death would be eaten away by dogs (I Kings 21: 23). In fact, the theme of artistic depletion at the hands of an "anti-muse" is found in almost all of James's works (Edel 1953: xxvii-xxix) In Martin Eden, Ruth Morse as an anti-muse represents the society's oppositional attitude towards the artist. The presence of a labyrinth of an adverse society necessitates a flight in the life of the artist.

6.4.1.2 The flight of the Icarus along with his father Daedalus is a recurring motif in male artist-novels. This flight is the artist-hero's response to the rejection of the society and thus an essential part of his growth in realizing his ambition. In This Side of Paradise, for instance, when Amory Blaine's "world became pale" (TSP: 57) he resorts to alcoholism which, according to William
Wasserstrom, is "a suicidal flight" (Wasserstrom 1977: 301). But Amory's father-figure, Monsignor Darcy, directs him to another sort of flight: "'Amory, lately I reread AEschylus and there in the divine irony of the 'Agamemnon' I find the only answer to this bitter age - ... resignation'" (TSP:171). Amory whose actual father is Stephen Blaine seems to take Stephen Dedalus of A Portrait of the Artist or Joyce himself as his artistic ideal when he aspires to become "The Big Man with Goggles" (TSP:287). Wasserstrom who thinks that This Side of Paradise is a response to The Education of Henry Adams by means of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man suggests Amory's artist-hero to be "Stephen Dedalus, another personage to whom Amory is designedly kin" (Wasserstrom 1977:295). Gordon of Mosquitoes seems to attempt the 'resignation' of Agamemnon in his disappearance from the yacht-party. While it is a pseudo-death with Gordon, through an actual suicide, the artist-hero in Martin Eden flies into the dark night along with his master-poet and mentor, Russ Brissenden. Between Brissenden who makes a flight through suicide setting an example for the young artist, and Martin Eden himself, the pattern of Daedalus/Icarus is easily discernible.

6.4.1.3 The flight of the artist-hero brings a resolution to and relief from the extreme difficulties of the Oedipal
knot and provides him with possibilities for realizing his ambition. In the artist-hero of *The "Genius*" there is a continuous struggle between inner ambition and personal weaknesses. Eugene tries to resolve the conflict through love, many life-experiences, diverse professions, and Christian Science. But Eugene at last emerges a victorious new Adam born out of the old one subject to inexplicable sufferings and frailties. Eugene's fall and flight cohere with a corresponding conflict between the spirit and evil within himself. Dorothy Klopf compares Eugene's resolution of inner fight to a similar theme in *Paradise Lost*:

> The "Genius", then can be understood as a platonic version of *Paradise Lost*; its structure strictly follows a pattern of Fall and Restoration ... in Book III ("Revolt"), spirit encounters a 'devil' but at last finds salvation (Klopf 1977:445).

Ultimate success is sometimes the hope in the flight, as one can notice in the artist-hero of *Winesburg, Ohio*. Doctor Parcival who tells countless stories to George Willard becomes a Daedalus to the growing artist. Doctor Parcival, according to Martin Bidney, "is named after Sir Parceval or Parsifal, the Holy Grail visionary" (Bidney 1988:269). But since Doctor Parcival is a failed artist, he bequeaths his ambition encouragingly to George Willard, saying: "' If something happens perhaps you will be able to write the book that I may never get written'" (WO:48). The artist-hero's
journey to city and his artistic awakening signify this hope of success through his flight to become a 'father' himself.

6.4.2.1 The delimiting aspect of the daughter-position of the artist-heroine is resolved when she resists the societal expectation of her to be a man's muse. This resistance, she generally achieves in her growth that consists of her return to the country and her artistic awakening. Avis Dobell of The Story of Avis rejects "the old imperious story" in which the woman plays the muse of Faust, Abélard, Petrarch and Dante (SA:22). The awakened woman is a new being. As Grace Stewart remarks, Alabama Beggs of Save Me the Waltz, in her hospitalized condition, "gives birth to the woman she will be in future" (Stewart 1981:134). Therefore she can no more be the woman man uses for his desire-fulfilment. Alabama's life assumes fulfilment as she becomes the Ariel who is an airy spirit (The Tempest), a rebel angel (Paradise Lost), and the chief of the sylphs (Rape of the Lock). The narrator of Zelda's artist-novel announces the emergence of this new woman: "It had already gone from a god to a myth to Shakespeare - nobody seemed to mind. People still recognized the word: 'Ariel!' it was" (SW:104, emphasis added). Edna Pontellier in The Awakening too appears to be attempting an alternative 'Passion Week' in which the woman, instead of a Christ, takes the lead in sexual selection. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar view Edna's dinner party
as a Last Supper which is a prologue to the attainment of her complete "erotic freedom" (Gilbert and Gubar 1989:96). This self-assertion is one of her strongest reactions to a male-centered expectations regarding conventional female roles.

6.4.2.2 The artist-heroine's opposition to the patriarchal prescriptions with regard to the female position is more effectively achieved when she succeeds to associate herself as a daughter of a mother of her own fiber. In this daughter-mother association the artist-heroine imagines herself and her mother to be a Persephone and a Demeter wronged though by patriarchal possessiveness. Esther Greenwood of The Bell Jar imagines herself to be the daughter of the Jewish Julius and Ethel Rosenbergs who were found guilty of conveying the U.S. atomic secrets to the then U.S.S.R., during the postwar nationalistic obstinacy of cold war. Though they were electrocuted, the evidences were strongly disputed, and the "myth persists that they were framed" (Time. Feb. 24, 1967:51). Sylvia Plath whose parents were also German-speaking Jews (Alvarez 1972:7) is said to have reconstructed the electrocution of the Rosenbergs, in The Bell Jar (Ames 1971:286). Esther who seems to begin as an Electra desiring the love of her father turns to be a Persephone later, by identifying herself with her mythical mother through her bath in hot water, her
electrotherapy, and the sexual assault on her on the night of the Rosenberg-execution. Hence, the electrotherapy and the various suicide attempts which Esther takes to be "a punishment" rather than a treatment (Bundtzen 1983:127), nevertheless help her to descend to the darkness of her consciousness and to give birth to herself (Stewart 1981:148-150). In *A Woman of Genius*, Persephone joins at last her jealous mother Demeter, who says, "... when I knew you were coming [from the husband's house/the Underworld] I - hated you, Olivia" (WG:213). It is this love-hate relationship of the mother and the daughter that redeems Olivia May. According to Grace Stewart, "to remain on stage she can play roles for the artificial, loveless, but less restricting, approval of the audience" (Stewart 1981:64). Discussing *The Awakening*, Gilbert and Gubar consider Edna's "feminist myth of Aphrodite/Venus as an alternative to the patriarchal Western myth of Jesus" (Gilbert and Gubar 1989:96). When the artist-heroine imagines herself as the daughter of a female-centered mother-figure, she is rebelling against the phallocratic conventions regarding woman's vocation.

6.4.2.3 The daughter mother identification - parallel to the Daedalus/Icarus of the male story - also resolves the impediment caused by the daughter's desire for male love and guarantees her success as an artist. Mick Kelly of *The*
Heart Is a Lonely Hunter solves the riddle of the Sphinx (Kessler 1985:256) by affirming that she wants to be both a woman and a genius. In fact, all the artist-heroines ultimately assert that they possess these two facets in their identity as they assume the role of artistic motherhood. As the riddle is answered, Singer, like the mythical Sphinx, commits suicide. This in turn re-affirms Mick's own survival as a female artist, though a male-centered reading would "see the novel as an allegory which is centered on the role of John Singer as a Christ figure ..." (Smith 1979:258). In Thea's awakening in The Song of the Lark the artist-heroine "goes back to a source beyond family, back to the 'noble unconsciousness' of Indian dwellers" (Stewart 1981:122). As the term Thiasoi suggests, she seems to join the women-artists of the Indian dwellers in initiation (Eliade 1987:483). Thea Kronborg resolves the constraints of her 'daughterhood' by identifying herself with her mother; for, "their frame work, their foundation, was very much the same" (SL:631). The Persephone/Demeter unification is also effected when the mother conveys her artistic ambition to her daughter to continue. For this purpose Phelps feminizes and updates the Grail Legend in favor of her artist-heroine in The Story of Avis. Rachel Blau DuPlessis elaborates this strategy that insures the heroine the possibilities of artistic development:
... we understand that while the first generation (Sir Lancelot [here Avis]) failed, the second, purer generation of seekers will achieve the quest. The thwarted mother bequeathes her ambition to the child, and that emergent daughter becomes, as we shall see, the main character of the twentieth century Künstlerroman (DuPlessis 1985:90-91).

In this manner the artist-heroine -- Corinne, Aurora Leigh, Avis or her daughter -- does not fail as an artist since the female's artistic fulfilment is a continuation of an endeavor extending from the mothers to the daughters. A mother's presence in her artistic consciousness assures the heroine of her future emergence as a sexually and artistically assertive individual.

6.5.0 After the artist-hero and the artist-heroine become independent geniuses, they display their creativity as having two distinctly diverse modes chiefly determined by their differing sexuality. In this the artist-hero assumes the role of a Pygmalion who often displays the hero's sexual bias towards female sex. Pygmalion was a sculptor in Greece who wanted to remain a bachelor. He shunned women because he said he could find no woman in whom he could fulfill the ideal he had of woman. He therefore carves a woman in ivory with whom he falls passionately in love. Indeed, Galatea, his creation, comes to life for his pleasure. A similar polemical edge can be noticed while the artist-heroine ventures to create in the manner of Sphinx who puzzled many
a man. The artist-heroine achieves the independence and self-assertion of a female artist as she assumes the role of the Sphinx who terrified men by her monstrous appearance with the body of a lion and the head and breast of a woman. She further puzzles men with her texts of questions and riddles. It is the ambition of each of the artist-heroines to appropriate the Sphinx or the like in creating art that is 'disruptive', multi-voiced and silent, at the same time. Whatever be the versions these two models generate in individual texts, Pygmalion and Sphinx and their variants seem to encompass the experiences associated with the artistic pleasure and pain of the artist-hero and the heroine respectively.

6.5.1.1 When the artist-protagonist in the male text creates in pleasure and in the order of the beautiful, his creativity becomes expressive of his sexual desire for woman. In The "Genius" Eugene Witta's artistic experience is expressed in the manner of many 'mythical' love-pairs. While being with Suzanne Dale, Eugene feels that they are like Edgar Allan Poe and Jenny and they fall to ardent love-making. With Angela being available to him, Eugene becomes creative like Faust through his Marguerita or Dutch Gretchan. The Faustian artist is relentless towards the woman whom he subdues through his art. In this he is even
comparable to the city, which according to Thomas P. Riggio, "is theoretically benevolent but emotionally disturbing. [For the] Faustian man seduces Marguerita in the new world garden ... " (Riggio 1977:128). Man is the indisputable creator while woman is his creature. What Eugene sees in a woman is "what Dante saw in Beatrice, what Abélard saw in Héloïse, Romeo in Juliet" (TG:501). In This Side of Paradise the artist-hero takes the position of Eros who claims the attention of Psyche for his masculinity and valor. When Amory Blaine becomes an artist, his girl-friend declares: ",... you can recite 'Ulalume' and I'll be Psyche, your soul" (TSP:242). Psyche is made to depend on the man to beget her beloved child Joy through their marriage (Franklin 1984:511). Similarly, Gordon of Mosquitoes takes a woman to be his muse. He goes to Edgar Allan Poe's Israfel for his inspiration-source (Bassett 1980:54). Gordon wants to take his flight off the society with his muse: "o israfel ay wax your wings ... o israfel winged with loneliness feathered bitter with pride" (M:157). But woman is only a means for reliving "the whole burden of man's history of his impossible heart's desire" (M:280).

According to Cleanth Brooks, Gordon's ideal woman is, like Dante's Beatrice, a female which he has created for himself (Brooks 1977:222). For, in the end, one finds Gordon visiting brothel after brothel "creating himself a maid"
In Winesburg, Ohio, similarly, the artist-hero creates art like a typical male through sexual union with a woman. This is, according to Martin Bidney, the inner meaning of the Blake–Shelly tradition of androgynous mythmaking. For, when a male creates art, it means that "Albion must unite with Jerusalem, Prometheus with Asia, a male psychic/cosmic force with its female counterpart ..." (Bidney 1988:262). Thus in the sexual and artistic creativity of the artist-hero, the woman is conceived to be the object of his pleasure which alone seems to grant her the only meaningful existence available in male system.

6.5.1.2 When the artist-hero has a tussle with the society for the sake of possessing his desire-object, his creative mind takes a turn in the direction of pain, split or the grotesque. In his mimetic response to the desire-frustration, he follows the course taken by certain mythical figures who have suffered similar splits in coping up with situations of frustration. The artist-hero in Martin Eden when disappointed in love and public acceptance, resorts to Nietzsche philosophy. He is then able to assert his will to live, through his will to die or suicide. Nietzsche himself was interested in the Dionysian double, a concept now favorite with artists as sacred fount vs. ivory tower, depletion vs. rejuvenation, etc. Martin Eden's suicide seems to be the culmination of the Dionysian split. Charles
N. Watson, Jr. outlines the artistic version of the double in Martin Eden's life as follows:

The logic of the ending [viz., suicide of Martin] then is finally the logic of myth. Subtly invoked throughout the novel but more frequently toward the end are the myth of the dying God ["Savage God" in Alvarez 1972] discussed by Frazer in Golden Bough (1890;1900) and the Dionysian prototype of the tragic hero described by Nietzsche in The Birth of Tragedy (1872;1886) (Watson Jr., 1983:156).

While Martin Eden reacts to the rejection of the society in an inward or introverted manner, the artist-hero of Pictures of Fidelman rejects the society or the imposing Father by rendering his anger into artistic form. When he seduces Annamaria, a Mary-figure, Fidelman feels that he acts like Judas not only by betraying Christ but even by nailing to cross Shimon Susskind who is Fidelman's father-figure. For Susskind is Suss the King who in turn represents Christ the King whom Fidelman transforms into a totem by crucifying him. Fidelman's betrayal of authority is expressed through a picture appropriately painted by him:

The Crucifixion he painteth red on red ....

P
to
tem
L
E
Suss
King

(PF:166-167)
When Fidelman crucifies Suss the King/Christ the King by having sex with Anna-maria, he not only sends away the Christ from earth to heaven, but he himself becomes an artist in the manner of Prometheus who takes his flight from heaven to earth. He becomes a "Prometheus Fidelman" as he creates artistic objects of glass from the flowing fire in the noisy furnace (PF:201). In a situation of desire-frustration, the artist-heroes authenticate their split-consciousness as well as their rejection of society through suitable myths.

6.5.1.3 The split of the artist-hero caused by the skirmish with an adverse society indicates his pain and fear of losing his object of desire which would also mean a loss of his youth or artistic vigor. The fear of the artist is also typical as an outcome of his Oedipal experience. When Eugene Witla of The "Genius" desires woman in the same manner "as Abélard might have looked at Héloïse" (TG:126), it nevertheless, as this historical episode suggests, presupposes an antagonistic male parent and a similarly hostile society. Eugene Witla falls into a Hamletean "procrastinating .... Like Hamlet, he was too fond of cogitating, too anxious to seek the less desperate way ..." (TG:202). Eugene here becomes the Hamlet who is so disappointed with life that suicide seems to him the only way-out. Eugene's suffering is projected from the personal
rather than from the external situation of the one who is afflicted by the threat of one's father's desire and mother's betrayal. For a proneness to sexual overindulgence causes the greatest anxiety to this Hamlet in Eugene. The 'Hamlet'in The Sacred Fount is troubled by a similar fear. For what threatens most the narratorprotagonist of James's text is the depletion of virility of sexual and artistic desire in the hands of 'a sacred fount'. He, therefore, considers that the possibility of his survival as an artist lies in discovering "'the right woman ... [the] mystic Egeria'" (SF:31). In Roman mythology, Egeria is one of "the fountain nymphs", or a water spirit worshipped in connection with Diana at Aricia (Lexicon Universal Encyclopedia. vii, 1984:72). In this myth, Numa Pompilius, the legendary second king of Rome, successor of Romulus, meets Egeria in a grove which has a kind of sacred fount. But later, when Numa dies, a greatly disconsolated Egeria melts into tears and becomes a fountain herself (Edel 1953:xxvii). The artist-hero confronts his fear of death of his own desire by depleting the woman he desires. She is then idealized to be a muse for satisfying the artistic desire of the hero. Now Egeria assumes the smart woman type--Eos, for example--who is the "'daughter of the dawn'" (SF:197) as she is begotten by Hyperion and Thea (Grimal 1986:146). At other times, Egeria also becomes the
"Cinderella ... [for whom the artist-hero makes] the glass shoe to fit!" (SF:203). Thus, the survival of the hero as an artist depends on his successful subjugation of the female muse.

6.5.2.1 In situations of desire-fulfilment, the artist-heroine becomes a creative artist like a Sphinx who speaks a language of silence. In The Story of Avis, it is the great muse, Sphinx, who teaches Avis Dobell "the secrets of beauty" (SA:54). When Avis herself assumes the role of the lioness-woman, she also becomes Una or Truth (SA:9). But the female Una is hidden from a male-centered comprehension. For the secrets of the Sphinx seem to be a language mastered by an artist-heroine and shared by a mother and her children. Mick Kelly of The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter appears to have become a successful artist after she is able to answer the riddle of the Sphinx, which is: how to be both a woman and an artist. Initially, Mick wonders what goes on in the mind of the mute and mysterious Singer: "Maybe it was a thing that could not be spoken with words or writing" (HLH:449). One positive element in her sexual initiation through a male is the assurance given to her that she can be a woman sexually as much as artistically. More than being a male, John Singer through his dumbness and an over-dose of feminine qualities becomes in the words of McCullers a
"'unifying principle'" for Mick Kelly to transform into her art the aspects of the "'chimerical and fantastic'" (cited in McDowell 1980:33-34). Sphinx is the most outstanding representative model of the female artistic expression of the beautiful and the harmonious. But the female goddess is elusive to the male understanding since she speaks in riddles and is creative beyond a male space. In The Song of the Lark, Thea Kronborg is modeled on the mythical Thia, the daughter of Gaia who gave birth to Uranus (Heaven), the Mountains and the marine element without the aid of any male. Thia herself who creates the Sun, Dawn, and the Moon from Hyperion "was considered by the ancients as the deity from whom all light proceeded" (Ryder 1990:31). The Sphinx and her versions authenticate the unique female creativity performed in the state of her desire-fulfilment, and presumably beyond the male reach.

6.5.2.2 The artist-heroines become creative in grotesque situation too. In The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter, the Sphinx, masculinized through John Singer, may also represent the artist-heroine's self-doubt with regard to the choice between marriage and artistic vocation, as much as a patriarch's objection to her becoming an artist. But the woman is not prepared to attain the motherhood of self-effacement but one of self-assertion that enables her to
revolt against a patriarchal dominion. In this, as Olivia May of *A Woman of Genius* shows, the artist-heroine should become a Lady Macbeth. From her experiences of beating Charlie Gower and Cousin Judd, Olivia May becomes wise enough to proclaim, "I drew the authority for how Lady Macbeth must have felt, about to do a murder, from which if I had a taste for it, I might have drawn ... like assurance ..." (WG:14). Avis Dobell of *The Story of Avis*, who refuses to play the muse of a male artist, wishes to be a Cassandra who is regarded as an inspired prophetess like a Pythian Oracle or the Sibyl (Grimal 1986:91). Cassandra is specially appealing to Avis, because this prophetess is rebellious, mad, and at the same time, beautiful (SA:112). The mute Sphinx also stands for such conflicting characteristics in the artistic consciousness of the heroine, though outwardly Avis seems to have emerged only a "wearied and mute" Sphinx (Stewart 1981:111). Weariness affects the artist-heroine of *Save Me the Waltz*, also, to an extent. Her desire to achieve that which has the mythical magnitude of Agamemnon's ambition comes short of an unqualified fulfilment as her heels get injured from severe ballet practice. The doctors are uttering the word "'incision'" many times over, but she hears it as if they are praying Hail Mary repeatedly (SW:192). Alabama gains a peculiar pleasure in this since the males are made to praise
and hail the Holy Mother as she conceived and gave birth to a male God, without the help of a man.

6.5.2.3 The desire-frustration and the phallocratic impediments thwart the artist-heroine's ambition to realize her vocation. In her response to this situation, she becomes mad like Cassandra in *The Story of Avis*, or suicidal like the heroines in *The Awakening* and *The Bell Jar*. However, even in this, they attempt to legitimize their experience through appropriate myths. In *The Awakening*, it appears that it is Edna Pontellier's particularized sexual quest that impedes her artistic vocation to be a mother to all. From this position one can even say that Edna as Psyche resorts to suicide, believing it to be the only way to reach Eros in the Underworld. But from another perspective, it can also be said that Edna as Persephone is proudly returning through her suicide to the Mother Sea, Demeter, to join her in the pleasure of motherhood. In this sense, Esther Greenwood of *The Bell Jar*, through her many suicide-attempts, seems to be expressing her desire to return to her mythical mother periodically. The autobiographical heroine assumes even a legendary status in the novel. The Persephone who has emerged from the Underworld to be united with Demeter has now become "the myth of Sylvia" (Alvarez 1972:40) and a muse to various poems, of the writers like Richard Wilbur, Paula Rothholz...
and Ann Sexton (Bassnett 1987:153). Thus, whether in madness or suicide, there are myths for the artist-heroine to justify her stand in favor of the demands of her artistic call.

6.6.0 The mythical authentication to the artist-stories, which is sexually polarized by the critics, and self-consciously rendered into many versions by the novelists, denotes that one single myth alone is inadequate to touch upon the various important polemical aspects of gender-consciousness, awakening, sexual-textual pleasure and sexual-textual pain. Hence the broad outlines of Oedipus-Daedalus/Icarus-Pygmalion for the artist-hero and Electra/Psyche-Demeter/Persephone-Sphinx for the artist-heroine have to be taken as general patterns of his/her stories, for which a full-fledged reading is nearly impossible within the scope of this study. The purpose, however, has been to point out the creative role of the polemics of myth-making and myth-unmaking that add to the artistic richness of the Künstlerromane. However, the mythical outlines drawn for the male and female artistic lives could be understood in their full and proper shape not only from the various versions exposed in this chapter but also by a retrospective awareness of the earlier discussions of the artist's gender, growth, pleasure and pain.