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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Sidney Douglas Engle entitled "A Study of the Thaïs Legend with focus on the novel by Anatole France." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in French.

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A Study of the Thaïs Legend with focus on the novel by Anatole France

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Sidney Douglas Engle
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to research the various versions of the Thaïs legend, to review the previous criticism concerning the tale, and to apply a method heretofore unused in its interpretation, with a particular focus on the nineteenth-century novel by Anatole France. This was not done with the intent to disparage any previous methods or critiques, but rather to add something new to the considerable body of work that existed.

The primary research tools used were the MLA online bibliography and the WorldCat database. Books and articles were borrowed or provided through the main library as well as the department of Interlibrary Services at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

This study reveals common themes associated with the legend of Thaïs as well as some details that had been largely unaddressed in the past. It also offers new interpretations of certain characters' actions and motives, which up until now have been largely associated either with the historical period in which they were written or, in the case of Anatole France, the author's known views.

The study reaches the conclusion that Eric Berne's theories are fruitful as a literary method applied to the legend of Thaïs. Their application reveals new perspectives on the story including the idea that the novel by Anatole France is not necessarily a disparagement of religion.

Preface

This study was done for a Master's in French and focuses on versions of the Thaïs legend that have appeared in the French language. Translations for citations have been provided where available, primarily in the case of the novel of which the translation by Basia Gulati proved to be excellent. However, in the instances where translations were not available, only the original text is provided with apologies to those who do not read French.

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Introduction

The criticism that exists to date on the story of the courtesan Thaïs has largely revolved around the novel by Anatole France. France's version is unique in that the monk, Paphnutius, finds himself forced to face his overpowering love for the courtesan Thaïs.[1] The choices faced by both characters, Thaïs and Paphnutius, concerning the path to heaven versus earthly desires, are complex, and the intricacies of their very human interaction are marvelously intriguing, going beyond the simple opposition between Heaven and Earth found in earlier versions of the tale, which has survived in its various forms for over a thousand years.

Critics often address France's nineteenth-century novel either in relation to the themes of its era or, more commonly, with reference to the author's known skepticism concerning religion. While this is certainly a significant aspect of the work, the complexities of the situations described in the novel are timeless and suggest a depth that goes beyond a relationship with the author's period or his views. In fact, the questions faced by France's rendition of the character of Paphnutius are still with us today.

As a brief example, I offer a modern representation of Paphnutius' dilemma between his love for Thaïs and his devotion to God; a 2006 reality television series entitled *God or the girl?* This show features several young men in their twenties, each struggling with

[1] Earlier versions largely presented a Paphnutius immune to desire, though a tenth-century play by the German nun, Hrotsvit, reveals the potential for danger in the monk's quest to convert the courtesan in an opening scene where he asks his disciples to pray for him to be strong enough to resist temptation.

his own choice between entering the priesthood or choosing a life path that would leave open the possibility of marriage and children. Like Paphnutius, their own belief in a doctrine forces them to struggle with a choice between earthly love and heavenly rewards. Even though France's Paphnutius has, for his own reasons, already committed himself to God, his own internal war over the choice between earthly love and heavenly devotion is a parallel manifestation of the problems that arise from this sort of "black or white" thinking where earthly love comes into conflict with religious beliefs.

Before citing a second example, let us note that France's Paphnutius is presented as an ascetic and that the severe practices of the desert monk [2] are reflected in modern times by a number of Christians in the Philippines who recently volunteered to have their hands and feet nailed to a cross either in order to solicit from God the forgiveness of sins or aid for sick loved ones, or in order to fulfill a vow. Thus the idea that suffering purges the body of sin, well known in the Middle Ages, is still present in today's world.

The similarity of these current situations to those found in France's late-nineteenth-century novel show the work's capacity to transcend the period and the views of the author himself. These ideas are not unique to either Anatole France or his time. It is, of course, interesting and often useful to note the author's views and the historical situation while keeping in mind the principal of separation and the need to avoid the intentional fallacy. However, the historical-biographical method does not enable us to examine sufficiently one of the most significant aspects of the novel, namely the complexity of human relationships in the light of religious beliefs. The key to these relationships is

[2] Paphnutius is celebrated for beating himself, severe fasting, and lying face down in the dirt for days at a time. (France, p. 723.)

psychological and emotional, and I shall argue that an effective; but neglected tool for the study of this dimension of a work of literature is modern ego psychology. By employing such a method we may see the additional value of treating the text as if it were anonymous. This is not to discount the benefit of a historical-biographical approach, but rather to add a new interpretation in order to garner greater understanding of the story through the application of theories on human social interaction, an omnipresent aspect of human existence, as examined by Eric Berne in his 1964 book, *Games People Play*. [3]

I shall address the evolution of the story following with due respect the work of Oswald Kuehne, whose 1922 thesis is the most comprehensive work to date on the legend of Thaïs noting the differences in six versions and updating certain facts. I shall apply Berne's theories to reveal new viewpoints on these old stories. I shall continue in this way, examining the two versions of the tale by Anatole France, a poem and the novel, and analyze elements of previous criticism that concern these.

In applying Berne's theories mostly to the novel, we shall see that its abundant details make it the richest of all the versions for the study of human interaction. This is due to the fact that Anatole France creatively added details to the story. However, his actions are not without precedent. As we shall see, France incorporated elements unique to the tenth-century play of Hrotsvit, whose version appears to have been

[3] The theories presented by Berne of Social Intercourse, Structural Analysis, and Transactional Analysis provide an understanding of the motivating factors, conditions, and potential outcomes where human interaction is concerned. The various levels of need, *stimulus hunger*, *recognition hunger* and *structure hunger* and their consequent manifestation, *transactions*, defined as an exchange of *strokes*, are used as a basis to show how human interaction is ultimately structured according to the way people spend their time. Possible options for the structuring of time are defined as *Rituals*, *Pastimes*, *Procedures*, *Operations*, *Games*, and *Intimacy*.

his primary inspiration. However, it is important to note that the imagination of the author is always based in our shared reality of human existence. Our own relationship to the text is founded in this and, as we examine the situations of Paphnutius and Thaïs through the theories of Berne, we shall begin to reveal a new, more universal interpretation of the story of Thaïs, a legend that has stayed with us for so long.

1. Thaïs before Thaïs

The tale of Thaïs is older than French literature. Oswald Robert Kuehne provided an in-depth study of the origins of the tale in his 1922 dissertation "A Study of the Thaïs Legend with special reference to Hrothsvitha's play *Paphnutius*". His work tells of the legend itself, revealing the discovery of the actual Thaïs mummy. He recounts various ancient tales and explains the historical misunderstandings that led to the association of the monk Paphnutius with the courtesan Thaïs. These become the primary characters in the versions of the tale that I shall address, seen as early as the tenth century in the Latin example, Hrotsvit's play *Paphnutius*, and in the thirteenth century version of Jacobus de Voragine in the *Legenda Aurea*.

Hrotsvit's play has particular significance in French literature having been translated into French by Charles Magnin during the first half of the nineteenth century. Rediscovered by the German Humanist Conrad Celtes in the fifteenth century, Hrotsvit is the only woman known to have written a version of the tale of Thaïs, the story of an Egyptian courtesan who finds salvation through the intervention of a monk who convinces her to change her ways. In the older versions of the tale, he prescribes a severe penance of isolation and prayer for a prolonged period of time, most often three years, at the end of which the courtesan emerges, dies, and ascends to heaven, a saint. These earlier versions were primarily didactic and offered little or no background concerning the lives of the characters. For this reason while Berne's theories may be applied to them manner that is relevant, their efficacy is limited by the nature of the text.

In these earlier versions, the characters' motivations are described purely as either compliant with, or in opposition to, the will of God. The monk is mostly presented as beyond reproach, immune to temptation, and unwavering in his dogma. Among these are four versions in verse and Hrotsvit's version, a play that is unique in several ways and most likely contributed to the richness of the novel by Anatole France.

Les légendes en vers

A version of the legend by a French author appeared for the first time in the twelfth century in a Latin poem by Marbod, Bishop of Rennes. The *Poème Moral*, a lengthy manuscript by an anonymous author, discovered by Paul Meyer who named it, followed some time in the thirteenth century. The poem was written in Old French and is without question a moral treatise, 319 stanzas of which are devoted, with much interspersed moralizing, to the legend of Saint Thaïs entitled *La vie de sainte Thaisien, uns bons exemples as dames ki soi orguillent de lor bealteit. VII.* This version, which has as its moral basis the sin of pride in beauty, uses the tale of the courtesan and the monk to advise women on the appropriate and inappropriate use of their beauty.

The *Poème Moral* shares key elements found in Hrotsvit's play, among them: a three-year period of penance, the prayer of penitence that Thaïs is instructed to use,[4] and the erroneous interpretation by the disciple of Saint Anthony, Paulus, of his own vision, wrongly attributing the celestial seat of Thaïs to Saint

[4] "Qui me plasmasti, miserere mei." (or, as seen in the *Poème moral,* "Sire qui moi formastes, de moi mercit aiez!") (God who made me, have mercy on me.)

Anthony, another figure who is also found in the work of the *rara avis*, as Hrotsvit has been called.

Yet another version arose from the thirteenth century, in *La vie des pères*, a collection of pious tales in verse, also anonymous, of which the sixth is simply entitled *Thaïs*. This poem also addresses the beauty of the courtesan, calling it worthless though it had brought her great riches. The moralizing occurs outside the story at the beginning and end of the poem. Unique to this text is the insight given into the thoughts of the courtesan as she does her penance, a rare opportunity for psychoanalysis.

This version also differs significantly from the Hrotsvit's play and the *Poème moral* in that the vision of the courtesan's successful completion of her penance is attributed to the monk alone with no mention of Paulus or Saint Anthony. There is also the subject of the length of the penance of Thaïs, which in the versions mentioned above is three years but is five years in *La vie des pères*.

In only two other places is a penance of five years mentioned. The earlier is to be found in the work of the first editor of Hrothsvitha's works, Conrad Celtes. Kuehne notes that, in his edition of the play, *Paphnutius*, there is an addition at the beginning, a paragraph entitled *Argument of Paphnutius*. In this paragraph, Celtes summarizes the events of the story writing (Kuehne's translation) "…enclosed for penitence for a period of five years…" a phrase that prompts a footnote from Kuehne, "Evidently a slip on the part of Conrad Celtes." (Kuehne, p. 50.) This "slip" would be followed some five hundred years later by Sandro Sticca, a professor of French and Comparative Literature, who, in an excellent

article titled “Exile as Salvation in Hrothsvitha’s *Paphnutius*”, would take the details of the prefatory argument to heart and not only repeatedly mention the five-year period, but also dedicate a good portion of his writing to the meaningful symbolism of the number five. This is particularly confusing as the period of penance is easily confirmed as three years by a casual reading of scenes IX and X of the play. The mystery of the five-year reference may never be solved but at least we may note here, for the first time, the three places where it is mentioned.

Seeming to rely mostly on F. Nau’s *Histoire de Thaïs*, Kuehne missed a third and final thirteenth-century poetic rendition of the life of the penitent. Henri d’Arci is a name mistakenly given to an anonymous Templar of the thirteenth century. (DLF, p. 669.) He is credited with a poem of 168 lines, *Vie de sainte Thaïs*, which also contains the shared details listed above from the version of Hrotsvit and the *Poème moral* : a three-year period of penance, the same prayer of penitence (with slightly different wording – *Bel sire, qui me crias quant je nient ne fui, Aiez merci de moi, kar pecheresse sui*, lines 83-84), and the presence of *Antonie l’abé* and *Pol, li majur disciple Antonie* (lines 88-96). The moralizing is found at the end of this version.

In sum, these were all moral lessons concerning not only the possibility of forgiveness as motivation to convert to a more “moral” existence in exchange for eternal life but also the encouragement to women to avoid promiscuity, which was condemned for damning the souls of the men with whom they sinned.

In *La Vie des pères* we read “Taÿs ensi ce demena, les plusors a neiant mena.” In Henri d’Arci’s *Vie de Thaïs* – “E tant avoit hant de fols e de lecheurs, Que par li en enfer estoient mis plusurs.” In the *Poème moral* – “Las! Por pechiet de feme qu’il est de gent perdut!" This same idea is clearly explained by Paphnutius in Hrothsvitha’s play when he says, (Kuehne’s translation) “[The infamy of Thaïs] is not surprising because she does not deign to go to destruction with a few [men], but she is ready to seduce all by the allurement of her beauty and to drag them to destruction with her.” (Kuehne, p. 59.)

There are a number of similar consistencies in these medieval versions. Firstly, they all share the idea that, in the conversion of the courtesan by the monk, he is so good that he is able to resist any carnal urges he may have to satisfy desire. However, Sticca particularly notes that in Hrothsvitha’s play, the monk, Paphnutius, asks his disciples to pray for him that he may “not be overcome by the temptations of the vicious serpent.” (Sticca, p. 37.)

Another consistency is that, having been enclosed in her cell of penitence for three (or five) years, Thaïs refuses initial efforts to get her to come out, never believing that her penance is fulfilled until Paphnutius reassures her that it is indeed true. The monk alleviates her doubt with proof founded, in three cases, upon the vision of Paul, and, in one other account from *La Vie des pères*, where he has no contact with any others, his own vision.

The medieval version of the monk Paphnutius uses a similar device in three of the four versions. In all but the play of Hrotsvit, he pays his way in to see Thaïs as though his intention was to indulge in her services. Once inside, he

inquires as to a more private place, where no one can see them. She replies that God will see them no matter where they go.

At that point he seizes on her belief in the existence of God to effect her conversion.[5] This is a good ruse for a monk who is risking serious temptation simply by being alone with a woman described as so beautiful and so available that paying customers often fight bloody battles on her doorstep. According to Berne it is also an example of a type of social intercourse characterized by *maneuvers*, deceptive actions that appear on the surface to be *operations*, but are really moves in a *game*.

Transactional Analysis, Operations and Maneuvers

When the monk in the older stories appears to be just another paying customer, he is actually there to effect Thaïs' conversion and to take her away from the city where her activity is perceived to be damning to hell all the men who indulge in her services. Berne labels this type of social intercourse an *ulterior* transaction, defined as "those [transactions] involving the activity of more than two ego states simultaneously."[6] (Berne, p. 33.) There are two types of ulterior transactions, *angular* and *duplex*. These are distinguished from

[5] At this point, the action resumes its consistency with Hrotsvit's play as well.

[6] This refers to the three ego states that are defined as *Adult*, *Parent*, and *Child* which are the basis of *Structural Analysis* and *Transactional Analysis*. The ego states each correspond with a certain frame of mind that is often inconsistent with the others. The Parent reproduces the ego states of one's parents (or substitute parents), the Adult equals the state of objective data processing, and the Child contains relics of earlier years that may be activated under certain circumstances. (Berne, pp. 23-24.)

complementary transactions, or *crossed* transactions, both of which involve only one ego state per participant.[7] In ordinary terms, somebody is up to something and this is the basis of Games. Games are basically dishonest or, at the least, deceptive transactions.

Of the two types of ulterior transaction the first involves three ego states and is called an *angular* transaction. An angular transaction is defined as a game that is "consciously planned with professional precision under Adult control to yield the maximum gains…" (Berne, p. 49.) In pretending to be a paying customer in order to gain access to the courtesan, the medieval Paphnutius is functioning in an Adult ego state; carefully planning and using whatever means are necessary to gain access to Thaïs.

Once inside, he addresses the courtesan on a social level, providing an Adult-to-Adult transactional stimulus. However, on a psychological level, his motivation is to make her feel as though she should change her lifestyle. Thus, as he begins to question her about God, he is addressing her Child on an ulterior level. The transaction thus arrives to include three ego states constituting an angular transaction. The monk is initiating a type of social intercourse that today might be most easily identified with the approach of a certain type of salesman. [8]

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[7] Preceding this, Berne explains that when a transaction occurs, there is a *transactional stimulus* and a *transactional response*. A *complementary* transaction occurs when the response is appropriate, expected and follows the natural order of healthy human relationships, "Adult to Adult", or "Parent to Child". A *crossed* transaction occurs when the stimulus is, for example, Adult-Adult but unintentionally triggers a defensive Child-Parent response. The latter represents a breakdown in communication. These types of *simple* transactions involve only two ego states.

[8] Berne tells us that "Salemen are particularly adept at angular transactions, those involving three ego states." He gives the example of a salesman saying, "This one is

This sort of transaction differs significantly from an *operation*. "An operation is a simple transaction or set of transactions undertaken for a specific, stated purpose." (Berne, p. 48.) A regular paying customer, with no hidden agenda, coming to see the courtesan could be said to be executing an operation.

An operation performed with a hidden intent constitutes a *maneuver*. "Maneuvers are not honest requests..." (Berne, p. 49.) The Paphnutius from the medieval *légendes en vers* engages in maneuvers, resulting in an ulterior, angular transaction. This is significant as it shows the medieval Paphnutius to be operating with a hidden agenda.

Though the monk is shown to have the best of intentions, he shows himself to be manipulative and not open to an Adult response from Thaïs. By engaging her as Child, he guarantees that his role in the next transaction will be as Parent. His approach to the initial transaction reveals his true position of Parent to Child based on his goal of conversion.

The monk himself is responding to a substitute Parent figure in God. This Parent tells him that he must go convert the sinner. However, his Adult is engaged in his deceptive approach. This is evidenced by the practical nature of the ruse that, interestingly enough, was not found in the fourth, and earliest, of the medieval versions, the play by Hrotsvit.

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better but you can't afford it." The customer replies, "That's the one I'll take." The salesman appears to be addressing the customer's Adult but the ulterior, psychological vector is directed by the well-trained and experienced Adult of the salesman to the customer's Child. (Berne, p. 33.)

Hrotsvit's Play

Hrotsvit's Paphnutius speaks of going to Thaïs in the guise of a lover[9] but once he finds her he does not employ the ruse of payment, but rather calls out to her, simply identifying himself as "a man who loves her." Their conversation from this point constitutes a series of simple transactions, where the only thing close to deceit is the monk's continued request for a more private place. This prompts the courtesan to remark that she does indeed have a place so secret that only God will know where they are.[10] (Magnin, p. 319.) The reasoning behind the monk's request is unclear but the result is beneficial to his cause of conversion.

His fear of temptation, as evidenced by the earlier mention of what he calls "…the temptations of the vicious serpent" would seem to preclude a desire to be alone with Thaïs. The analogy corresponds to the tale of Adam and Eve with the serpent being the Devil who destroys the purity of the couple. Eve is traditionally associated with the ruination of Adam, and thus women as the ruination of men. In all four versions of the legend of Thaïs, men are said to engage in physical combat over the courtesan. They fight to the point of blood on her doorstep, and yet it is she who is consistently shown to be at fault for making available the prize that they seek, the gratification of their carnal desires. Thus in these medieval versions it is always the woman who is blamed for the weakness of men.

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[9] « Si j'allais la trouver sous les dehors d'un amant, peut-être pourrais-je l'amener à renoncer à ces desordres? » (Magnin, p. 311.)

[10] « Oui, il y a encore dans ce logis un lieu plus reculé, et si secret, qu'avec moi il n'y a que Dieu qui le connaisse. » (Magnin, p. 319.)

The only woman known to have written a version of the story of Thaïs, Hrotsvit, is consistent in presenting this motif of the woman as cause for the ruination of man. However, as noted by Kuehne, there are significant elements of originality in her version of the tale. Kuehne astutely reminds us that, "one was not supposed to take many liberties in the Middle Ages" with these sorts of legends. (Kuehne, p. 76.) However, Hrotsvit did and Kuehne goes on to list four additions and/or characteristics that originally appeared in her version. I shall now list and address critical responses to them.

The first of these is referred to as a "scholastic discussion of macrocosm and microcosm, of music and harmony…". Kuehne states that he does not believe this would have "weakened the force of the play to tenth century readers". (Kuehne, p. 76.) However, it can be seen in the writings of several twentieth-century dramatists that there has been no small amount of aversion to the opening scene. In her 1983 article, *The Theme of Beauty in Hrostwitha's* Paphnutius *and* Sapientia, Eril Barnett Hughes points out that Karl Young, in his 1933 book, *Drama of the Medieval Church*, "identifies [a passage] which he feels detract[s] from Hrostwitha's exposition." (Hughes, p. 56.) "At the opening of *Paphnutius,* to be sure, the hero and his adherents retard the action by an irrelevant discussion of the *quadrivium*…" (Young, p. 5.) This is not at all positive from the point of view of a dramatist who certainly would not want to "retard the action" in the opening scene of a play.

Hughes also notes that in the 1971 book *Medieval and Tudor Drama* "Sister Mary Margaret Butler omits much of the opening of *Paphnutius* because 'it does

not contribute to the dramatic development." (Gassner, p. 14.) These two comments would seem to indicate that the opening discussion between Paphnutius and his disciples could easily be included in a director's cut.

By contrast with these cited opinions, Hughes sees the passage as "fully consistent with St. [*sic*] Augustine's method of allegory, his concept of use and abuse, and his idea of beauty." Hughes tells us that Saint Augustine distinguishes between the correct use of worldly objects (which leads one to contemplation of God) and illicit use or inferior love of an object for its own sake. "St. [*sic*] Augustine advocates the allegorical method of comprehending invisible, spiritual concepts by means of visible, temporal things – the method Hrotswitha adopts in her… plays. St. [*sic*] Augustine…further describes the use and abuse of beauty in connection with number and harmony… the mind is led by the changeable beauty in inferior/earthly things to consider the unchangeable (truth). Anything beautiful in man's world of 'lower beauty' is only beautiful if used correctly." (Hughes, p. 57.) This corresponds very well to the ideas concerning beauty found in *La Vie des pères* and the *Poème moral* noted above. The idea in the former is that the beauty of Thaïs has no value if used improperly. In the latter, beautiful women are warned against having too much pride, as well as in the misuse of their beauty.

Other twentieth-century critics have also found praise for the scholastic discussion. In her 1987 chapter, *Paphnutius and the Cultural Vision*, Charlotte Thompson tells us that the play's opening "allow[s] us to understand the interactions of Paphnutius and Thais as a microcosm…of the macro-drama. In

distinguishing between the major world, which obeys God's law, and the minor world, which is in revolt, and identifying …[man as] the minor world, the lecture allows us to determine that Thaïs, as 'the whore who is ruining' the youth of a nearby town, is 'the local equivalent of man,' while the hermit who sets forth to work her salvation assumes the equivalent to the Savior of man." (Thompson, p. 116.) Thus Thompson finds the action to be symbolic, and therefore possibly worth sitting through a slow start in order to get the payoff later.

Diane Van Hoof weighs in on the opening of the play from the same collection of essays in her 1987 article *The Saint and the Sinner: Hrotsvit's* Pafnutius *and Anatole France's* Thais. Van Hoof writes, "The lengthy scholarly digressions on music and the macro- and micro-cosmos…are functional, since they portray Pafnutius as an erudite, humble, truly pious man who is admired by his disciples." (Van Hoof, p. 264.)

Van Hoof also refers to the scholarly discussion in the preceding paragraph. "Compared to the Thais legend in the *Vitae Patrum*, Hrotsvit adds liveliness and originality to her play through the use of character development and the scholastic discussion on music and the universe." (Van Hoof, p. 264.) Kuehne also makes a comparison to the *Vitae Patrum* saying, "…but when one compares it [*Paphnutius*] with its source, the *Vitae Patrum* version of the legend, one is impressed by the quite considerable originality shown by Hrothsvitha in working up the Christian legend…". (Kuehne, p. 76.)

This opening scene sparked numerous and varied responses from critics. However, it seems that these mostly address the effect that the dialogue between

Paphnutius and his disciples might have on an audience, hardly considering the implications that the scene has on the social interaction between the characters. The function of the scene from Van Hoof's point of view concerning the establishment of the character of Paphnutius as a humble, pious man may be compared with that of the opening scenes of France's novel where the dessert monk is established as a devoted, but confused, man who consults with others before making his decisions. In both versions, these opening scenes show a less than invincible version of the monk that differs from those found in the medieval *légendes en vers*. In asking his disciples to pray for him that he may "not be overcome by the temptations of the vicious serpent." (Sticca, p. 37) in Hrotsvit's play, or in seeing his consultation with Palémon in France's novel, these versions of Paphnutius are not shown to be above doubt or temptation, a theme that France develops to its utmost.

As for Hrotsvit's other variances, Kuehne lists the change in the number of virgins "grouped about the magnificent couch" that appears in Paul's vision (from three virgins to four) and notes the rhymed prose of the German nun, which he reports as "a departure from the simple prose of all previous forms of the legend." (Kuehne, p. 76.)

The fourth alteration noted by Kuehne is the addition of a character and is possibly Hrotsvit's most interesting contribution, especially in relation to the novel of Anatole France. This is the introduction of the character of the abbess who oversees the nunnery where Thaïs is taken to do her penance.

Surprisingly, Kuehne doesn't have a lot to say about this character that later plays a key role in France's novel, simply stating "the exchange of courtesies between her and Paphnutius is probably a reflection of monastic usage of the tenth century and is most interesting for that reason." (Kuehne, p. 76.) However, the addition of the abbess is the one change of the four that most clearly transferred from the tenth-century play to the nineteenth-century novel of Anatole France.

Hrotsvit's abbess is shown to be a kind character that promises to provide for Thaïs' needs. It seems much more appropriate that a woman would oversee the penance of the courtesan due to the possibility of temptation mentioned earlier on the part of the monk. However, Hrotsvit's abbess appears to follow Paphnutius' instructions to the letter and Thaïs is forced to live out her full three-year penance in isolation. By contrast, France's abbess reports an isolation of only sixty days before Thais is brought into the society of the other nuns where she thrives among them. This is an important difference in relation to the theories of Eric Berne who describes the potential effects of isolation and the need for social intercourse.

Social Intercourse and Stimulus Hunger

Berne gives an example of the importance of responding to *stimulus-hunger* [11] in noting the effect seen in adults who are deprived of social intercourse. Berne

[11] Berne tells us that emotional deprivation can have a negative, and even a fatal, outcome. The need for social intercourse in its most basic form is defined as stimulus

tells us, “An allied phenomenon is seen in grown-ups subjected to sensory deprivation. Experimentally, such deprivation may call forth a transient psychosis, or at least give rise to temporary mental disturbances… social and sensory deprivation is noted to have had similar effects in individuals condemned to long periods of solitary imprisonment… solitary confinement is one of the punishments most dreaded even by prisoners hardened to physical brutality and…a notorious procedure for inducing political compliance.” (Berne, p. 13.)

Recalling the three-year (or five-year) periods of penance in the earlier versions of the tale of Thaïs sheds a new light on her conversion. The “penance” would have been in reality a torture, a mental deprivation that could only have lead to a deterioration of the courtesan’s health. Thus the medieval idea of suffering in order to purge sins can be shown to be inhumane, something that is conspicuously absent from France’s novel.

In contrast it may be noted that the character of the abbess in the novel not only gave a flute to Thaïs, but also placed her in a little cottage as opposed to the stone cell, described in the medieval versions as having only an opening through which bread and water would be passed. This was a penance of a different sort, and would have been much healthier according to Berne.

Thaïs only stayed locked inside for sixty days, as the abbess reports to Paphnutius, saying that his seal of clay, spittle, and hair had given way without

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hunger or the need for interaction with others. Berne states, “…any social intercourse whatever has a biological advantage over no intercourse at all.” (Berne, pp. 13-15.)

being touched by any human hand. "… the door you had closed opened by itself, and the seal of clay broke without being touched by any human hand."[12] (Gulati, p. 180.) After that she interacts with the other nuns and at the end of the novel, even as she dies of a fever, she is described as more beautiful than ever. "Her eyes were shining. A sweet flush spread over her temples. Reviving, she became more sweet and beautiful than ever." [13] (Gulati, p. 182.)

Thus it is seen that Hrotsvit's work and her addition of the character of the abbess plays a very important part in the novel of Anatole France The abbess evolves into a primary force at the end of the life of Thaïs. Recall that in the medieval versions, Thaïs had to be coaxed out of her cell of penance by the monk upon his return visit. In France's novel, Thaïs has already been out in the society of the other nuns for a considerable amount of time.[14] The scenes with the abbess result in a generally more positive image of the courtesan's penance. A gentler light is cast upon the religious figures of the abbess and, to a lesser extent, Paphnutius. In contrast there is the abject suffering of the monk. Torn between his love for Thaïs and his devotion to God, he also presents a much more intriguing figure than his medieval counterpart.

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[12] « …la porte que tu avais scellée s'ouvrit d'elle-même et le sceau d'argile se rompit sans qu'aucune main humaine l'eût touché. » (France, p. 861.)

[13] « Ses yeux brillaient ; une légère ardeur colorait ses tempes. Elle revivait plus suave et plus belle que jamais. » (France, p. 862.)

[14] After leaving her at the nunnery, Paphnutius passes a small amount of time in his hermitage, over a year atop a stele, and then some time in the hills before returning to Thaïs at the time of her death.

2. Thaïs of Anatole France

The novel by Anatole France is preceded in modern French only by Charles Magnin's translation of Hrothsvitha's play, and the 1867 poem by France himself entitled "La légende de sainte Thaïs, comédienne", the novel is a well-known version of the Thaïs legend with a twist: Paphnutius has desire in his heart for the courtesan.

Kuehne tells us that the legend of Thaïs " threatened to pass into oblivion" when a renewed interest in Hrotsvit during the first half of the nineteenth-century produced Magnin's translation of *Paphnutius* in 1839. (Kuehne, p. 90.) Kuehne makes absolutely no reference to the poem of France, so it seems probable that it was for whatever reason unknown to him. It is interesting to note that in writing the story as a poem France presented a return to the *légende en vers*. It was published twenty-eight years after Magnin's translation of Hrotsvit's tenth-century play. A work of *jeunesse* by Anatole France, who would have been twenty-three at the time of its publication, the poem provides a significantly different version of the story. For this reason, as well as the differences between its narrative and that of any other version, it is an important point in the evolution of the story. [15]

Unfortunately, the poem has not often been addressed in modern criticism. However, in his 1965 article "Anatole France, *Thaïs*, et la vie des stylites", Robert Laulan discusses it in some detail.

[15] See Appendix 1 for a summary of the poem.

Laulan first points out the fact that at the time of his article, nearly one hundred years after the poem had been published, that people were hardly aware of its existence. Apparently, this would have been true in Kuehne's time as well as evidenced by his failure to acknowledge it in his thorough study of the legend of Thaïs.

Laulan attributes the knowledge of the poem's publication to Ernest La Jeunesse, whose 1896 book, *Les Nuits, les Ennuis, et les Ames de nos plus notoires Contemporains*, contains a chapter titled « Les Etapes d'un chef-d'œuvre, 'Thaïs', d'Anatole France (1867 – 1890) ». (Laulan, p. 220.) However, neither Laulan nor Ernest La Jeunesse, who both knew about the poem that Kuehne seems to have missed, seem to be at all aware of Hrothsvitha's play.

In Laulan's final paragraph concerning the poem and Ernest La Jeunesse he writes,

> « Ernest La Jeunesse voyait dans cette reprise la preuve de la prédilection d'Anatole France pour un sujet auquel il revenait après vingt-trois ans, afin de lui donner, d'ailleurs, une signification toute différente. *Vingt-trois ans se sont écoulés*, écrivait-il, *entre l'ébauche et le livre. Mais Thaïs agite encore toutes les pages du roman [sic] de sa grâce, des ses pleurs, de sa hantise, ce n'est pas elle qui est tout le roman, c'est un personnage qui surgit brusquement sans avoir été vu dans l'esquisse : c'est Paphnuce.* »

It seems these two authors did not make the connection with the tenth-century play entitled *Paphnutius*. However, it is noted that the character of Paphnutius emerges as more of a central figure, even surpassing Thaïs, whose name is prominent in title of the poem, and is the title of the novel. Anatole France himself notes the centrality of the character of Paphnutius and explains his

decision to use the name of the courtesan as the title of the novel in a piece entitled *Projet de preface pour « Thaïs »*.

> « Exactement il devrait s'appeler *Paphnuce*, du nom de mon héros, qui fut moine dans cette Égypte où le monachisme produisit seschefs-d'œuvre les plus étranges. Mais le nom [de] Paphnuce est d'un aspect bizarre et rébarbatif et l'on m'a dit qu'il valait mieux mettre cette pieuse légende sous l'invocation de sainte Thaïs. C'est ce que j'ai fiat, comme il était juste, car j'y raconte la conversion de cette prédestinée. » (France, p. 872.)

The wisdom in this decision is evident as Kuehne tells us that the nineteenth century's interest in Hrotsvit was "more forcibly turned to the Thaïs legend…by the appearance of one of Anatole France's most interesting and popular novels, *Thaïs*. (Kuehne, p. 92.) The variations in this version of the tale are even more elaborate than the poem by France. [16]

Sources of the novel

Kuehne states that "It would be a useless task and a disparagement of the author's wide reading to try to trace all the sources of this novel. Having said that, he himself offers several suggestions saying "there is no doubt but that Hrothsvitha furnished the inspiration…" and that the *Vitae Patrum* and the *Legenda Aurea* are responsible for the general trend of the story. This seems a little curious, as the general trend of the story could easily have been obtained solely from Hrotsvit. Kuehne also suggests a Latin manuscript, or derivatives of a Greek version to explain the "…suggestions about Thaïs' life as a child…" but ends in saying that "…the novel follows most closely Hrothsvitha's play." He

[16] See Appendix 2 for a summary of the novel.

also speculates that the "philosophic and religious symposium" (the banquet scene) found its origins in "the discussion of music and the universe at the beginning of Hrothsvitha's comedy." Of course, the inclusion of the abbess is again noted as her creation. (Kuehne, p. 99-100.)

Kuehne also discusses the strong influence of tales of Saints' lives noting in particular "the episode of the ascent of the column is undoubtedly borrowed form the life of Saint Simon Stylites, a feat which Anatole France himself imitated while still a boy by climbing a kitchen pump after having listened to his mother read to him of this austerity." Also mentioned is "the sojourn in the tomb teeming with snakes…is evidently taken from the Life of Saint Anthony…" and "…researches by E. Amélineau into the Coptic manuscripts buried in Egyptian monasteries and churches…, Flaubert's *La Tentation de Sainte Antoine*, and *Les Sceptiques Grecs*, by Victor Brochard. (Kuehne, p. 101.)

Later critics also suggest sources for the main story of France's novel as well as specific elements. In his 1966 article, *A Spanish Source for Anatole France's* Thaïs, Kelver Hartley also supports the likelihood "that Anatole France drew on the work of E. Amélineau, even suggesting the title of *Les Moines égyptiens*, and says "perhaps on Brochard's *Sceptiques grecs* and the *drames* of Roswitha…" (Hartley, p. 105.) Hartley's main point however is to consider a play by the seventeenth century Spanish playwright, Tirso de Molina, *El Condenado por desconfiado*. The heroes of both works are young anchorites who follow dreams and visions, and it is implied that both are influenced by the Devil.

A 1985 article by Katharina Wilson, titled *Two Notes on Anatole France's Debt to Hrotsvit*, reinforces the strong link between the Hrotsvit the playwright and France the novelist. Wilson supports the work of Karl A. Zaeruker saying that his "stratification of France's borrowings from Hrotsvit are essentially the same as the earlier findings of Oswald Kuehne" with an intriguing and accurate insight into France's motives. (Wilson, p. 18.)

Diane Van Hoof has a fairly extensive list citing, like Hartley, after Kuehne, *Les Moines égyptiens*. In addition to this Van Hoof states that "The work of Egyptologist Maspero *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient* is responsible for the subtitles of the chapters "Le Lotus" and "Le Papyrus." She goes on to echo Kuehne, with a much bolder statement however, that "France's chief source was Flaubert's *Tentation de Saint-Antoine* (1862) and "France's *Thais* follows the medieval play very explicitly and he acknowledges his great debt to Hrotsvit." (Van Hoof, p. 265.) Again, mirroring Kuehne and Hartley, she mentions *Les Sceptiques grecs* (1887) however; Van Hoof specifically refers to this in reference to the "banquet-scene". (Van Hoof, p. 269.) She also suggests the same as Kuehne in her 1987 article when she writes, "The banquet-scene constitutes France's metamorphosed version of Hrotsvit's scholarly discussions." (Van Hoof, p. 266.)

Having noted sources, it is also worthy to note the influence on later works of literature with which the novel has been credited though at present this writer has found only one example mentioned. In 1965, Maria Teresa Maiorana published an article titled *Anatole France en Amerique Latine: Guillermo Valencia et*

Thaïs. Maiorana notes two poems by Valencia, *Palemón el Estilita* et *San Antonio y el Centauro*, both published in 1914. She writes, « malgré les différences imposées par le genre, le thème de Thaïs apparaît scindé, mais nettement reconnaissable. » (Maiorana, p. 302.) The first poem is about the undoing of a stylite before the charms of a courtesan, the second develops a discussion concerning Christianity and paganism.

As these projections are inconclusive, one might agree with Kuehne's statement that trying to trace all the sources would be a useless task. Tracking down the examples of the novel's influence might be even more daunting. Still, the works noted by these critics may share great commonalities with the story of Thaïs and be worth examining for that reason alone.

Anatole France on the Subject of Sources

Kuehne may be correct is stating that trying to trace all the novel's sources would be a disparagement of the author's wide reading. In a way, France himself may confirm this. In closing on this speculation concerning the novel's sources, it is worthy to note the comments of the author himself found in his *Projet de preface pour « Thaïs »*.

> « L'histoire de sainte Thaïs et de sainte paphnuce est un vieux conte copte qui, traduit en latin au temps de Théodose par Torannius rufinus, prêtre, fit pendant quatorze siècles les délices de la chrétienté. Recueilli dans les Vies des pères des déserts où tous les enfants au XVIII siècle apprenaient à lire, il se peut qu'il édifie encore aujourd'hui, au fond d'une province auelaue vieille dame jansénsiste. Ces petits volumes reliés en veau, tout pleins de gravures d'un ascétisme naïf, sont peut-être ce que la mythologie chrétienne a produit de plus extraordinaire. »
> (France, pp. 872-873.)

While this neither confirms nor refutes the speculations listed above, it is certainly interesting to note that the primary source cited by the author is *La Vie des pères* which has far fewer parallels to the action of his novel than the play of Hrotswitha, of which he makes no mention whatsoever.

3. Thaïs after Thaïs

The characters' background

France's novel is by far the longest version of the tale, exceeding even the seventy-plus pages/319 stanzas of the *Poème moral* that are dedicated to the story of Thaïs. Instead of moralizing, however, the author provides us with more of a story.

One of the most unique and intriguing elements of France's novel is the background information provided by the author concerning the lives of Paphnutius and Thaïs. Van Hoof notes this difference in comparing Hrotsvit's play *Paphnutius* with the France's novel *Thaïs*, saying, "Unlike Hrotsvit, France includes Thais' and Paphnutius' past, episodes which turn out to be important in order to convince the (positivist) nineteenth century reader of the psychological probability of Thais' conversion from sinner to saint." (Van Hoof, pp. 265-266.) Van Hoof also notes a heretofore-unseen motivation for Thaïs' willingness to follow Paphnutius when she states, "…she [Thaïs] consents to be converted to Christianity because she is approaching middle age and fears loneliness, poverty and death." (Van Hoof, p. 267.)

Without considering Van Hoof's second point, Joseph S. Schick disputes the idea that Thaïs' background information makes the rather rapid conversion of the courtesan more convincing.

In his 1932 article, *A Note on Thaïs*, Schick implies that he does not find the "long recital of [Thaïs'] earlier Christian life" convincing justification for the

"sudden reversion." [17] (Schick, p. 316.) He subsequently notes that Thaïs had boldly asserted to Paphnutius that "she was not ashamed of her life…nor should God be angry with her because of it 'since he has created us he can be neither angry nor surprised to see us such as he has made us and acting according to the nature he has given us.'" He concludes that Thaïs' conversion must be the result of her fear of Paphnutius. (Schick, p. 316.)

In stating that Thaïs fears Paphnutius, Schick is ignoring the events in the novel that occurred immediately before the phrases referred to above. Using Transactional Analysis, I will show how there is a fairly complicated, but communicative, process occurring between Thaïs and Paphnutius during the scene to which Schick is referring. This sustained communication, the types of transactions that take place, and the ego states which are consequently shown to be involved, all give evidence to the fact that Thaïs is not afraid of Paphnutius but strong and even calculating in her transactions with the monk.

The words of Thaïs cited above from Schick's article are spoken in response to Paphnutius' question, "If you give yourself to me, is it because think you are hidden from God?" [18] (Gulati, p.89) Paphnutius question comes after Thaïs assumes a seductive posture, effectively offering herself to him. The narration

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[17] Schick's actual statement is "France apparently tries to justify this sudden reversion by a long recital of her earlier Christian life." (Schick, p. 316.)

[18] « Si tu te livres à moi, crois-tu donce être cachée à Dieu ? » (France, p. 780.) Paphnutius' question is likely inspired by his counterpart in Act II, Scene II of Hrothsvitha's play who, in demanding an ever-more private place, finally gets the courtesan to say that there is a place known only to her and to God at which point he seizes the opportunity to begin her conversion. (Kuehne, p. 62.)

reveals her thoughts and that she has come to the conclusion, "This man speaks of eternal life, and his language seems learned from a talisman. He must be a seer with secrets for avoiding old age and death." [19] (Gulati, p.88.) A key aspect of what motivates Thaïs at this point in the story is thus made evident. As noted by Van Hoof, Thaïs seeks an escape from the effects of ageing and fears not Paphnutius, but death.

Transactional Analysis - Ulterior Transactions, Duplex and Angular

As noted earlier [20] a transaction that involves more than two ego states constitutes an ulterior transaction. There are two types, the *angular* transaction, which involves three ego states, and the *duplex* transaction, which involves four. The first encounter between Thaïs and Paphnutius, referred to above by Van Hoof and Schick, is an example of the latter.

Paphnutius thoughts are given to us by the text when he first readies himself to speak, praying silently, "O God, grant that this woman's face, instead of scandalizing, may edify thy servant." [21] (Gulati, p. 86.) As in Hrotsvit's script, he does not employ a ruse but begins to speak (in the novel he has made himself visible to Thaïs rather than calling out to her), delivering the transactional

[19] « Cet homme…parle de vie éternelle et tout ce qu'il dit semble écrit sur un talisman. Nul doute que ce ne soit un mage et qu'il n'ait des secrets contre la vieillesse et la morte. » (France, pp. 779-780.)

[20] see page 11 above.

[21] « Fais, ô mon Dieu, que le visage de cette femme, loin de me scandaliser, édifie ton serviteur. » (France, p. 777.) This passage reflects the fear of his counterpart in Hrotsvit's version, when he asks his servants to pray for him not to succumb to temptation.

stimulus from his Adult ego state, speaking honestly to Thaïs of his love for her, a spiritual love unlike the charnel love she has known up to this point. He speaks to her of her beauty and of his desire to create a new beauty within her.[22] She responds to his Adult as Adult but the psychological undercurrent involves their Child ego states and the conversation is about sex. Thus there are the four ego states present, two Adult and two Child, constituting a duplex transaction.

Paphnutius' prayer that he not be shamed and the fact that he speaks what the text tells us are feints (Gulati's translation calls them "rehearsed") [23] with "true ardor" shows that his passion for Thaï. Thus it is his Adult that is engaged. The duplex nature of this transaction on the part of Paphnutius is displayed to us by the narration, which reveals his fear of shame and his unexpected ardor in the delivery of his speech, both of which reflect the presence of his Child. He speaks as Adult on the social level, but on the psychological level his Child is making allusions to sexual desire.

Thaïs as Adult responds strongly to his statements, defending her social position as one of great power. However, the text tells us that she then feigns fear, offering herself to Paphnutius by falling back onto her bed, where she awaits him with confidence. Therefore, while Thaïs acts as Adult on the social level, bantering with the monk about his statements, on a psychological level,

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[22] This corresponds with the narration from *La Vie des pères* where the beauty of the courtesan is considered without worth because of the way it is used for earthly pleasure.

[23] "The monk had rehearsed his speech, but now, animated with pious zeal, he spoke his lines with true ardor." (Gulati, p. 86.)
« Ces paroles étaient feintes; mais le moine, animé d'un zèle pieux, les répandait avec une ardeur veritable. » (France, p. 777.)

she decides that he must hold the secrets to defying ageing and death and so makes the decision to offer herself to him sexually.

Considering the motivation, given to us by the narration, Thaïs can be seen to be both participating in the duplex transaction initiated by the monk and as initiating her own angular transaction in return. In the first case she reacts as Child, bantering as an Adult while physically responding to the sexual tension of the monk.[24] Simultaneously, her Adult is initiating the next transaction, an angular transaction where her Adult employs the ruse of acting as though she is overwhelmed. This is done with the hope of activating the monk's Child in order to seduce him. She may then discover the secrets against ageing and death that she has decided he must hold.

This seamless transition between different types of transactions shows an ongoing communication that is maintained between the two from that point on. This does not correspond with the idea that Thaïs fears Paphnutius or anything that he suggests. Their short relationship is, however, very dynamic, and all three ego states on both sides are engaged in the course of their interactions.

Thaïs' motivation for conversion

Schick's continues with his argument that Thaïs agrees to reconvert because she fears Paphnutius. He offers into evidence words that she utters when the

[24] "Now, looking at you, I say to myself, 'One cannot come near her without reeling like a drunken man.'" (translation, Gulati, p. 86.)
« Et maintenant aue je te vois, je me dis : "Il est impossible d'approacher d'elle sans chanceler comme un homme ivre." » (France, p. 777.)

monk emphatically explains his identity and his purpose. “Do not pronounce magic words which will destroy my beauty and change me into a pillar of salt. Do not frighten me! I am already very much afraid. Do not make me die! I fear death so much.” (Schick, p. 316.) The text does say she grew pale with fear at his name. [25] However, Paphnutius reassures her immediately thereafter and their communication continues without faltering.

Schick did not note Thaïs’ fear of ageing as motivation and neither Schick nor Van Hoof mentions the explanations offered by Thaïs herself after Paphnutius speaks to her of charitable love, “Monk, if you love me can you protect me from death?” and after he assures her that he speaks of eternal life, “Monk, I want to believe you… I certainly have not found happiness in this world… I have often thought that only the poor are good and happy and blessed and there is a great calm in the lives of the meek.” [26] (Gulati, p. 91.)

Schick’s argument that “France apparently tries to justify this sudden reversion by a long recital of her earlier Christian life.” (Schick, p. 316) ignores this dialogue from the courtesan. Even without knowledge of her baptism, such a reaction to Paphnutius’ words seems quite reasonable. However, the idea that the background information affects the plausibility of the conversion is not without

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[25] « Aux noms de Paphnuce, de moine et d’abbé, elle avait pâli d’épouvante. » (France, p. 781.)

[26] « Moine, si tu m’aimes, peux-tu m’empecher de mourir ? »
« Moine, je voudrais te croire. Car je t’avoue que je n’ai pas trouvé le bonheur en ce monde…c’est une idée qui m’est venue bien des fois, que seuls les pauvres sont bons, sont heureux, sont bénis, et qu’il y a une grande douceur à vivre humble et petit. » (France, pp. 782-783.)

precedent. Schick's skepticism might apply to another version of the tale, the poem by France.

The idea that the religious education of Thaïs that might provoke her reversion is apparent in the 1867 poem of France, where, after several bad experiences, the baptized courtesan (this is confirmed by the opening lines of the poem) [27] confesses her shame and speaks of her childhood and of her mother, who told her of God. The *Elle* below is Thaïs, the *Lui* the monk.

> Elle : « J'ai honte ô ciel ! » Lui : « Pour cette parole,
> Dieu rallume ta lampe, ô pauvre vierge folle ! »
> Thaïs alors : « Je vois clair enfin, et je sens
> S'élever dans mon cœur des repentirs puissants.
> Par-delà les longs jours de ma jeunesse amère,
> Je me souviens *[sic]* l'*Ave* que m'apprenait ma mère ;
> Puis elle me parlait de Notre Père aux Cieux,
> Et j'avais vaguement un viellard dans mes yeux…
> (France, p. 869.)

This passage confirms the idea that a religious past might have been a primary factor in affecting the conversion. However, in this case it is quite convincing and Schick's skepticism is not warranted in the case of the novel for the reasons mentioned above. However, this particular passage of the poem brings us to another interesting point concerning the unique perspective offered by the inclusion of the characters' background information in the novel: the possibility of deducing the respective ages of Paphnutius and Thaïs.

[27] « De plus, bien que Thaïs eût reçu le baptême… » (France, p. 865.)

The Relative Ages of Paphnutius and Thaïs

The description in the last line of the above citation, *un viellard*, reinforces the description of Paphnutius given earlier in the poem as a silver-bearded old man. This calls to mind another effect of the background information offered in the novel of France, a significant difference in the perception of Paphnutius between the novel and the earlier tales, including the poem of France himself. In the latter, Paphnutius is presented as an older man. In France's novel, Paphnutius and Thaïs are roughly the same age.

Their ages are readily discernable from the given information. We are told that « Thaïs achevait sa [*sic*] onzième année, quand son ami mourut dans les tourments. » (France, p. 766.) The secondary clause describes the death of Ahmes, the servant who had Thaïs baptized as a child. Shortly thereafter, she finds herself under the care and guidance of the old woman, Mœré, who runs a traveling theatre troupe. Thaïs tours with the troupe, learning the profession of entertainer at the end of a whip. She falls in love with a young man named Lollius and the narration states that their affair endures for about six months. After this, a significant amount of time passes in Antioch as noted below.

> "After she had been the center of the love and the admiration of the Antiochians for a number of years, she began to think of returning to Alexandria where she could display her glory to the city in which she had been so shamed and miserable… The golden city received her joyfully and brought her more wealth."[28] (Gulati, p. 79.)

[28] « Après avoir joui pendant plusieurs années de l'admiration et de l'amour des Antiochiens, elle fut prise du désir de revoir Alexandrie et de montrer sa gloire à la ville dans laquelle, enfant, elle errait sous la misère et la honte…La ville d'or la reçut avec joie et la combla de nouvelles richesses. » (France, p. 771.)

It is reasonable to deduce that, if Thaïs were eleven at the time she left home, then after "a number of years", not even counting the time she spent in Mœré's traveling troupe, that she might have been anywhere from fourteen to seventeen years old when she returned to Alexandria. As for Paphnutius, the narration tells us that it's likely that he's no older, if not younger than, Thaïs in describing an encounter with the courtesan, in Alexandria, during the monk's youth.

> "She had aroused the fever of desire in his veins; and on one occasion he had approached her house. He had halted, however, at the courtesan's door, stayed by the natural timidity of youth (he was only fifteen) and by the fear of being expelled because he had no money—for his parents saw to it that he should not be able to spend large sums."[29] (Gulati, p. 31.)

From this information we can garner that Thaïs and Paphnutius are very close to the same age. In fact, in France's novel, it seems possible that Thaïs could be a little older than the monk, depending upon how one interprets the phase *plusieurs années*.

This is a significant difference from the earlier tales where it seems most likely that Paphnutius is an old man compared to Thaïs.[30] In France's poem, for example, though unnamed, he is described as « Un grand vieillard farouche »

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[29] « Elle avait allumé le désir dans ses veines et il s'était une fois approché de la maison de Thaïs. Mais il avait été arrêté au seuil de la courtisane par la timidité naturelle à l'extrême jeunesse (il avait alors quinze ans), et par la peur de se voir repoussé, faute d'argent, car ses parents veillaient à ce qu'il ne pût faire de grandes dépenses. » (France, p. 725.)

[30] There is an exception to this found in a 1966 translation of Hrotsvit's *Paphnutius* by Christopher St. John. In Scene II, Paphnutius tells a group of young townsmen that he has made a long and difficult journey to see Thaïs. One replies, "Well, what should prevent you? You are young and handsome." (St. John, p. 105.) The second phrase, which refers to the age of the monk is not included in Magnin's translation in which the townsman's (prompted as *Les jeunes gens*) reply reads simply, « Rien ne s'oppose à ce que vous la voyiez. » (Magnin, p. 317.) St. John takes a liberty which I cannot explain.

who states « J'ai prié soixante ans… » (France, p. 868.) In the novel, it seems possible that, instead of an old monk coming out of the dessert to save the soul of a beautiful, young woman, that the Paphnutius in France's novel had a teenage crush on Thaïs.

This changes the dynamic between the two characters in comparison to that found in the *Legendes en vers*, examined earlier in relation to angular transactions. Recall that in these accounts of the tale, the monk poses as a customer and issues payment in order to gain admittance, an ulterior, angular transaction. As previously noted, in both Hrotsvit's and France's version, the monk simply begins a conversation with her. This could be seen as the transactional stimulus for either a simple, complementary transaction, as in Hrotsvit's play, or, the more complex ulterior, duplex transaction from France's novel, analyzed above. The idea that Thaïs and Paphnutius would be close to the same age lends even greater plausibility to the sexual tension that would form the basis of the latter. This presents yet another twist in comparison with the majority of the medieval versions which no one seems to have noticed.

The text of the novel states that at the time when he went to Alexandria to convert Thaïs, he had passed only ten years in the desert and that he had converted to Christianity around the age of twenty and stayed for one year after that among the people. (France, pp. 724-725.) Therefore, logically the Paphnutius of the novel has to be about thirty-one years old.

The temptation mentioned specifically in the opening scene of Hrotsvit's play would have been augmented for France's Paphnutius both by his experience as a

teenager as well as his relatively young age. Thus, the background information provided by France goes a long way toward explaining the character of Paphnutius in the novel concerning his doubts and confusion.

Images of the Paphnutius of Thaïs and the Theme of Uncertainty

Maybe never having considered the facts as noted above, Van Hoof sees Paphnutius as a despicable character. This is one of the strongest examples of using supposed knowledge of the author to support an interpretation of the novel. Van Hoof justifies her analysis by referring to the author saying, "France presents us with his philosophy. His personal touch is most obvious in the depiction of Paphnutius who is portrayed as a repulsive, hypocritical character, lacking the traditional Christian virtues of gentleness and humility…The author's sarcastic way of treating his protagonist is most obvious when he alludes to the doubtfulness of Paphnutius' vocation. As an adolescent, the hermit already lusted after the actress Thais whom he saw a couple of times on stage. At the age of fifteen, he even approached her house, but without money, he was not able to satisfy his desires." (Van Hoof, pp. 267-268.)

We can see from the passages quoted above, and more so in reading the scenes described in context, that Van Hoof is giving a subjective view of Paphnutius based on what she perceives to be the author's philosophy. This is particularly inaccurate as Van Hoof is taking events out of context. In trying to disparage the vocation of Paphnutius, Van Hoof is ignoring key descriptive features of the monk's development. Among the many factors already examined,

provided by the France himself in the background information that is exclusive to his novel, there is the pointed fact that Paphnutius hadn't turned to God until he was about twenty years old.

> "As a matter of fact, up to the age of twenty he had led a wordly life—which should rather be called death than life. But after receiving instruction from the priest Macrinus he became a new man." [31] (Gulati, p. 30.)

As for the "doubtfulness of Paphnutius' vocation," after the fact, many of the characters in the novel confirm his legendary status as a holy man. Thaïs herself confirms the good reputation and extraordinary nature of the monk.

> "Your name was not unknown to me, and I have been told that even when you were young, you equaled in virtue the oldest anchorites. As soon as I saw you, without knowning who you were, I felt you were not an ordinary man." [32] (Gulati, pp. 90-91)

Paphnutius is also revered by Zozime, abbot of the hermits who find Paphnutius suffering in a tomb towards the end of the story. His response upon discovering the identity of the tortured abbot of Antinoé is noteworthy.

> "Can you be that holy man Paphnutius, celebrated for such great works that people think he will equal the great Anthony himself one day?" [33] (Gulati, p. 171.)

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[31] « En effet, il avait mené jusqu'à sa vingtième année cette vie du siècle, qu'il conviendrait mieux d'appeler mort que vie. Mais, ayant reçu les leçons du prête Macrin, il devint un homme noveau. » (France, pp. 724-725.)

[32] « Ton nom ne m'était pas inconnu et l'on m'a dit que, jeune encore, tu égaliais en vertu les plus vieux anachorètes. Dès que je t'ai vu, sans savoir qui tu étais, j'ai senti que tu n'étais pas un homme ordinaire. » (France, p. 782.)

[33] « Se peut-il que tu sois ce saint Paphnuce, célèbre par de tels travaux qu'on doute s'il n'egalera pas un jour le grand Antoine lui-même ? » (France, p. 852.)

Further undermining Van Hoof's evaluation of Paphnutius, and the "doubtfulness" of his "vocation", the abbot Zozime himself admits to having been an exceptional fornicator who came to benefit from the presence of God in his life, never having lost hope. He recounts his own experience to Paphnutius and it becomes evident that even having had a sinful past (much less the experiencing of desire) is shown to be a negligible factor in the life of a holy man in the world of France's novel. Paphnutius in response shows his continuing confusion as he questions God in prayer.

> "Lord, this man soiled by so many crimes, this adulterer, this sacrilegious being thou lookest upon with gentleness, and thou turnest away from me, who have always observed thy commandments! How obscure is thy justice, my God! How impenetrable are thy ways!" [34] (Gulati, p.174.)

Here, very near to the end of the story, though he feels abandoned, we still see Paphnutius being very humble in regard to God. However, Van Hoof 's estimation that he lacks the traditional Christian virtue of humility should be addressed, as others have made similar observations.

In her 1996 book article, *Thaïs d'Anatole France, adaptation originale d'une légende antique*, Bernadette Pasquier-Bret also notes pride to be the essential weakness of the monk.

> « Sa faiblesse essentielle est l'orgueil ; il fait une confiance aveugle en la grâce reçue comme serviteur de Dieu pour interpréter les signes perçus en songe. Il refuse de suivre les conseils de prudence du vieillard Palémon, de reconnaître le danger de sa situation pareille au pluvier (le pluvier du

[34] « Seigneur, cet homme souillé de tant de crimes, cet adultère, ce sacrilège, tu le regardes avec douceur, et tu te détournes de moi, qui ai toujours observé tes commandements ! Que ta justice est obscure, ô mon Dieu ! et que tes voies sont impénétrables ! » (France, p. 854.)

> Nil se trouve prisonnier du filet du chasseur après en avoir libéré sa compagne). » (Pasquier-Bret, p. 152.)

Again, however, we have an extracted reading that seems reasonable, but in context, we see Paphnutius painted as much more rational and concerned. For example, when Paphnutius addresses Palémon he does so in a most humble manner to which Palémon replies with equal respect.

> "Brother Palemon, I do propose to glorify the Lord. Strengthen me with your advice, as you are so wise, and sin has never clouded the light of your intelligence."
>
> "Brother Paphnutius, I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of your shoe, and my sins are as many as the grains of sand in the desert." [35] (Gulati, p. 34.)

Again, the reverence with which even this holiest of characters addresses Paphnutius is extraordinary. Upon Paphnutius revealing his plan to journey to Alexandria and convert Thaïs, Palémon warns him,

> "Dear Paphnutius, God help me if I suspect the intentions of my brother! But Father Anthony used to say also: 'Fish thrown onto dry land die; likewise, when monks leave their huts to mix with the world, they may stray from their good intentions.'" [36] (Gulati, p. 35.)

Paphnutius' response is not one of haughty rejection. He considers this rather ominous statement by Palémon.

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[35] « Frère Palémon, je me propose en effet de glorifier le Seigneur. Fortifie-moi de ton conseil, car tu as beaucoup de lumières et le péché n'a jamais obscuri la clarté de ton intelligence. »
« Frère Paphnuce, je ne suis pas digne de délier la courroie de tes sandales et mes iniquités sont innombrables comme les sables du désert. » (France, p. 728.)

[36] « Doux Paphnuce, Dieu me garde de soupçonner les intentions de mon frère ! Mais notre père Antoine disait encore : 'Les poissons qui sont tirés en un lieu sec y trouvent la mort : pareillement, il advient que les moints qui s'en vont hors de leurs cellules et se mèlent aux gens du siècle s'écartent des bons propos. » (France, pp. 728-729.)

> "This hermit…gives good advice; the spirit of prudence is in him. And he doubts the wisdom of my plan. Still, it would be cruel of me to abandon Thaïs any long to the demon who possesses her. May God enlighten me and guide my way!" [37] (Gulati, pp. 35-36.)

As for the *pluvier* trapped in the net, mentioned by Pasquier-Bret, the text specifically tells us Paphnutius state of mind.

> "But then, seeing the plover become entangled in the trap that he [the pluvier] had earlier torn, Paphnutius felt uncertain once more." [38] (Gulati, p. 36.)

Thus, we see that the text shows Paphnutius to be a revered yet uncertain man who ultimately puts his faith in visions thinking them to be communications from God. It is ultimately a dream that drives him forth to save Thaïs. The confusion brought upon Paphnutius by his visions is tragic in nature and leads to his tragic state at the end of the novel.

Structural Analysis – Paphnutius as Altered Child

In Paphnutius' transactions with people, such as Palémon and Thaïs, the monk's behavior is that of a well-balanced, considerate, if opinionated individual. His communication with Palémon is an Adult-Adult transaction wherein they discuss the pros and cons of Paphnutius' plan to journey to the city to save Thaïs. As the advice is given with such respect, there is no concrete

[37] « Ce solitaire…est de bon conseil ; l'esprit de prudence est en lui. Et il doute de la sagesse de mon dessein. Pourtant il me serait cruel d'abandonner plus longtemps cette Thaïs au démon qui la possède. Que Dieu m'éclaire et me conduise ! » (France, pp. 729-730.)

[38] « Mais, ayant vu ensuite le pluvier pris par les pattes et embarrassé lui-même au piège qu'il avait rompu, il retomba dans son incertitude. » (France, p. 730.)

conclusion. Had Palémon taken on a Parent ego state, perhaps he could have engaged what appears to be Paphnutius' dominant ego state when he is alone, that of adapted Child.

Berne explains, "The adapted Child is the one who modifies his behavior under the Parental influence. He behaves as father (or mother) wanted him to behave: compliantly or precociously, for example. Or he adapts himself by withdrawing or whining. Thus the Parental influence is a cause, and the adapted Child an effect." (Berne, p.26.) It is important to also recall Berne's explanation concerning the Adult ego state. "The implications are that every individual has had parents (*or substitute parents*) an that he carries within him a set of ego states that reproduce the ego states of these parents (*as he perceived them* and that these parental ego states can be activated under certain circumstances (exteropsychic functioning)." (Berne, p. 24, *italics, mine*.)

On page 37 (see footnote 29) it was noted that Paphnutius's parents kept strict control of him, preventing him from spending money, thus contributing to his inability to visit Thaïs. Since this is the only background information that the narration gives us on Paphnutius's parents, it is possible to interpret them as controlling but not so much as to have kept their son from living what he considered to be a worldly lifestyle (see footnote 40). The Parental influence is shown as inconsistent and speaks of a miserly Parent who neglects the Child.

Berne's idea of substitute Parents can be used to offer an explanation as to why Paphnutius turned to a religious life. Paphnutius' own view of his "worldly life" is stated in the narration, as "which should rather be called death than life."

It is clear that the young Paphnutius found his limited freedom frustrating. He was exposed to the temptations but was not allowed to indulge in them. In fact, the narration tells us that he recounted to his fellow monks that he "'…boiled in the caldron of false delights.' By which he meant that he ate exquisitely prepared meat dishes and frequented the public baths." [39] (Gulati, p. 30.) This limited hedonism could have driven him to conversion. Forced to choose between temptation without gratification and the repression of temptation through a change in lifestyle, the latter might have seemed preferable.

Thus Paphnutius would adopt a new Parent figure, God, in place of his original parents. Thus whenever Paphnutius is alone, his altered Child is engaged, for he is with *his perception* of God. This new Parent, being more restrictive, would have a lot of appeal as Paphnutius tried to escape the temptation that he could not fulfill. This would also explain Paphnutius' more extreme conversion to asceticism one year after his initial conversion (see France, p. 725) as it allowed him to escape from society. Unfortunately, he had already experienced *un coup de foudre* upon seeing Thaïs, something he could not deny and which doubtlessly contributes to his perpetual uncertainty.

Uncertainty *à l'époque*

Other critics have alluded to uncertainty as a revealing theme in the novel in relation to the time in which the story is set. Christophe Ippolito, in his 2000 article, *La Décadence au miroir alexandrin*, speaks of Alexandria as the cultural

[39] « 'Durant ces jours…je bouillais dans la chaudière des fausses délices.' Il entendait par là qu'il mangeait des viandes habilement apprêtées et qu'il fréquentait le bains publics. » (France, p. 724.)

mirror into which the end-of-the-century spirit projected its uncertainties during the time of Anatole France. Kelver Hartley also mentions uncertainty, which he equates with "…the seeds of damnation. Not the least fertile of these is the equivalent in religion of modern psychology's 'death-wish', the vertigo that seizes a man bent over the Pit, the urge to have done with uncertainty once and for all by accepting that which is worst and most final in all the universes.

Just as Paphnutius' conversion an attempt to eliminate the frustration and uncertainty caused by the limited freedom of his youth, the monk eventually acknowledges his own 'damnation-wish', when…at the news of Thaïs' approaching death, he defies God with the words, 'Plonge-moi dans la damnation'." (Hartley, p.108.) This viewpoint serves to further augment the idea of Paphnutius as a character confused by conflicting feelings between a loyalty to God and an insuppressible desire for Thaïs.

The doubts of a religious person might also be seen as naturally augmented by the époque in which the story is set. Pasquier-Bret addresses this addressing the simultaneous presence not only of Greco-roman mythology but also the beliefs of oriental and Egyptian cults.[40] We see the fear of the old beliefs in Paphnutius, the follower of the new, early in his journey to Alexandria when he arrives in *Silsilé* and encounters idols, carved long ago by the Egyptians.

[40] « Le christianisme est alors en Egypte une religion nouvelle représentée dans le roman par les moines du désert égyptien. La pratique de la religion n'a pu encore se débarrasser d'un fonds de mythologie gréco-romaine toujours présent ni de croyances à des cultes oreintaux et égyptiens. Les superstitions antiques y sont encore bien vivaces. » (Pasquier-Bret, p. 146.)

> "Paphnutius saw an enormous sphinx head still set in the rocs. Fearing that it might be possessed with some diabolical strength, he made the sign of the cross and spoke Christ's name. Immediately a bat flew out of one of the sphinx's ears, and Paphnutius knew he had rid the beast of an evil spirit which had inhabited it for many centuries." (Gulati, p. 37.)

Paphnutius' zeal increases and it becomes apparent, in the action that follows, that this character is emotional and that his visions are not limited to dreams.

> "…he picked up a large stone and threw it in the face of the idol. Then the mysterious face of the sphinx looked so saddened that Paphnutius was moved. …Paphnutius said to the sphinx, 'O beast, as did the satyrs and centaurs that Saint Anthony met in the desert, may you also confess the divinity of Christ! I will bless you…'…a rosy light shone from the eyes of the sphinx. The heavy eyelids quivered, and the granite lips…formed the name of Jesus Christ. In response, Paphnutius extended his right hand and blessed the sphinx of Sisileh." [41] (Gulati, pp. 38-39.)

While establishing the uncertainty that results by the combined presence of the old and the new, the description of this elaborate hallucination experienced by Paphnuce also calls into question the mental health and sanity of the monk.

The mental state of Paphnutius is observed by other characters in the narration, at a point when the monk's interaction with other people has been cut off. I'm alluding to a later episode (part 3 of the novel) when Cotta, Prefect of

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[41] « Paphnuce y vit une énorme tête de Sphinx, encore engagée dans la roche. Craignant qu'elle ne fût animée de quelque vertu diabolique, il fit le signe de la croix et prononça le nom de Jésus ; aussitôt une chauve-souris s'échappa d'une des oreilles de la bête, et Paphnuce connut qu'il avait chassé le mauvais esprit qui était en cette figure depuis plusieurs siècles. »
« Son zèle s'en accrut et, ayant ramassé une grosse pierre, il la jeta à la face de l'idole. Alors le visage mystérieux du Sphinx exprima une si profonde tristesse, que Paphnuce en fut ému. …Paphnuce dit au Sphinx : 'Ô Bête, à l'example des Satyres et des Centaures que vit dans le désert notre père Antoine, confesse la divinité du Christ Jésus ! et je te bénirai...'…une lueur rose sortit des yeux du Sphinx ; les lourdes paupières de la bête tressaillirent et les lèvres de granit articulèrent …le saint nom de Jésus-Christ ; c'est pourquoi Paphnuce, étendant la main droite, bénit le Sphinx de Silsilé. » (France, pp. 731-732.)

the fleet of Alexandria observes Paphnutius sitting upon his stele above the city of Stylopolis which has grown up around him as sat there for many months.

Laulan addresses this in his 1965 article through the character of Aristée, secretary to Cotta, who responds to the Prefect's question concerning how it is possible for a man to sit atop a column for an entire year. Aristée replies that it is possible for a crazy man or a sick man explaining that sometimes sickness of the body or mind give, to the afflicted, powers not possessed by those in good health. However, he goes on to say that there isn't really good or bad health, just different states of the organs.[42] (Laulan, p. 231.)

Maria Teresa Maiorana in her 1965 article also discusses the stylitic scene, stating her idea that, in the poem from 1867, we can discern the identity of the godhead on Paphnutius' stele which is described in the novel as « …une haute colonne de pierre, surmontée d'une figure humaine… » et « Elle [la colonne] avait pour chapiteau la tête d'une femme aux yeux longs, aux joues rondes, qui souriait, portant au front des cornes de vache. » (France, p. 831.) The lines from the poem to which Maiorana refers are:

> Les grands sphinx, accroupis le long des avenues,
> Se sentaient pénétrés de douceurs inconnues ;
> Les passants, aveugles de ses gorgerins d'or,
> Disaient : « Nous en mourrons, c'est la déesse Hâtor ! »
> (France, p. 867.)

[42] « Des personnes dignes de foi m'ont assuré que depuis un an qu'il est monté sur cette colonne, notre moine ne l'a pas un moment. Aristée, cela est-il possible ?
— Cela est possible à un fou et à un malade, répondit Aristée, et ce serait impossible à un homme sain de corps et d'esprit. Ne sais-tu pas, Lucius, que parfois les maladies de l'âme et du corps communiquent à ceux qui en sont affligés des pouvoirs que ne possèdent pas les hommes bien portants ? Et, à vrai dire, il n'y a pas réellement ni bonne ni mauvaise santé. Il y a seulement des états différents des organes. »
(France, p. 839.)

Maiorana introduces the idea that this is the ancient Egyptian goddess of love, music, and beauty, Hathor. The image of Hathor marks the stele upon which Paphnutius sits and from which he ultimately flees feeling as though he has been tricked by the devil. [43] (see France, pp. 842-843)

Thus Maiorana reminds us of the ominous foreshadowing of the words of Nicias. Nicias, who always shows Paphnutius kindness in spite of their different beliefs, receives curses from Paphnutius, even after he saves his old friend, and Thaïs, by throwing coins to the angry mob as they attempt to flee Alexandria. Nicias seems to have no doubts about the choices he has made and thus stands in contrast to Paphnutius who, while wearing the borrowed tunic and gilt sandals, is a simultaneous mockery of Nicias and of himself. In combining the Alexandrian's rich tunic with his ascetic's hair-shirt, the abbot of Antinoé is, for a time, the very embodiment of his own confusion, mixing the asceticism of the dessert with the hedonism of the city.

Nicias' warnings in Alexandria lead Paphnutius to more uncertainty. Suffering from confusion upon his return to the desert, Paphnutius is led again to

[43] « C'est bien la déesse Hathor, la divinité égyptienne identifiée avec Aphrodite que le romancier a figurée sur la stèle de Paphnuce…Les circonstances du contexte en rendent l'interpretation aisée : la déese Hathor soutient Paphnuce pour affirmer que les excentricités des mystiques ne sont que des formes tortuées et déguisées de l'amour humain, plus exactement encore, de l'amour physique. Voilà qui s'enchaîne avec le désir refoulé – torture secrète du moine et ressort de toute sa vie ; voilà qui est encore ratifié par les avertissements et les constations de Nicias, le seul à avoir vu clair dans l'intimité de son cœur. 'Crains d'offenser Vénus.' l'a-t-il prévenu tout d'abord. Puis, lorsque la conduite de Paphnuce devient de plus en plus bizarre, il insiste : 'Je t'avais bien averti, mon frère, que Vénus était puissante. C'est elle dont la douce violence t'a amené ici malgré toi… si tu ne reconnais pas qu'elle est la mère des dieux, ta ruine est certaine. » (Maiorana, p. 308.)

seek the advice of Palémon, and again to follow his own vision instead of the advice, that of the column by which he ascends to his greater glory in the eyes of the people, but, ultimately, to what appears to be his own ruin.

However, twice trusting his own visions over the advice of Palémon, he does meet with what appears to be outstanding success. It's important to note that in neither the poem nor the novel of France does Paphnutius fail to truly save the courtesan Thaïs, who is shown in both works to be in a blissful state at the end of her life. In addition to that, the city of Stylopolis is a place where miracles occur and, as the monk Zozime states, everyone but Paul the Simple believes Paphnutius to have been carried off by angels. However, confronted by the goddess of love in Alexandria and, per Maiorana's analysis, in the desert, Paphnutius is running from something from which he cannot hide, his love for Thaïs. Even as he comes to lie in a tomb, where he tries to find peace, he struggles with endless visions and conflicting desires.

This idea is also supported by the general uncertainty that is represented in the banquet scene, where, as Van Hoof tells us, "…Stoics, Skeptics, and Christians discuss the essence of life and the after-life only to assert that there is not one religion or philosophical system which proves to be the only true one." (Van Hoof, p. 266.) Considering the idea of the possible presence of Venus and/or Hothar in a mix of Antiquity and Christianity, in the world of France's novel, as noted by Van Hoof, there is not one religion or philosophical system that proves to be the only true one. Deities are as plentiful as those who believe in them and their existence is manifested in everything from stone pillars to

childhood memories and staunch beliefs and it is perhaps their presence that leads to the confusion, and decline, of Paphnutius.

The Rise, or Fall, of Paphnutius?

Schick questions the idea of a descent in the life of Paphnuce (and the corresponding ascent in that of Thaïs). Schick claims to find "a great deal of the spirit of Nietzsche in the work – the spirit of the will to live." (Schick, p. 315.) Thus, Schick finds a positive side to Paphnutius' situation in his newfound desire to live in spite of the suffering of the monk.

It is important to note that even though the suffering Paphnutius himself asks God to damn him to a hell where he can exhale an eternity of rage, he cannot be considered lost. He is still alive and talking to God, which indicates he still believes in him, and thus, there must logically be the option of penance for him as well. We know from the text that Paphnutius lived a life of mild hedonism for his first twenty years and was then converted in stages, first to Christianity, and then his more extreme ascetic practices. At the time when he went to Alexandria to convert Thaïs, he had passed only ten years in the desert so less than half of his life had been spent as an ascetic. (France, pp. 724-725.) And yet, he had achieved greatness, as the opening pages of the novel tell us, « Or, depuis qu'Antoine, âgé de plus de cent ans, s'était retiré sur le mont Colzin…il n'y avait pas dans toute la Thébaïde de moine plus abondant en œuvres que Paphnuce, abbé d'Antinoé. » (France, p. 723.)

Schick also supports the idea of Paphnutius strength in his vocation, stating his belief that "The religious zeal and sincerity of Paphnutius, up to [the] knowledge that Thaïs is dying, cannot be questioned," continuing in saying that "It is true that he was inspired more often by Satan than by God, but since he was ignorant of this in a large measure…" he shouldn't be held responsible. (Schick, p. 317.)

While the idea that Paphnutius' ordeal is ultimately an ascent is intriguing, but it is based upon an opposition between Paphnutius and Thaïs, that may not be accurate in the light this paper's previous analysis. Paphnutius is confused and he's trying to run from his feelings for Thaïs which even ten years in the desert have been unable to purge from him. By the end of the novel, he is likely suffering from the effects of isolation and sensory deprivation as a result of his prolonged isolation atop the stele and in the tomb. Recall that Berne tells us, "Experimentally, such deprivation may call forth a transient psychosis, or at least give rise to temporary mental disturbances." (Berne, p. 13.)

In excusing Paphnutius for having been tempted by the Devil, Schick had not considered the possibility that the source might have been psychological. What if Paphnutius' inspirations are mere distortions of his beliefs that are spawned by his own confusion and uncertainty? What if his visions are merely products of his imagination? To wit, Paphnutius may be inspired/tricked by his own perceptions of Satan, or God, (or even his subconscious perceptions of Hothar/Venus). He may be deceiving himself.

Today, we would typically not consider the influence of Venus as a deity even though she can hardly be ignored in examining the text due to Nicias' repeated and stern warnings. Rather than debate the existence of deities, I propose to consider the possibility that the source of Paphnutius' troubles is own unbalanced state of mind.

Berne tells us that in his system, "there are only people in whom the Child takes over inappropriately or unproductively, but all such people have a complete, well-structured Adult which only needs to be uncovered or activated." (Berne, p. 26.) He subsequently states, "Thus all three aspects of the personality have a high survival and living value, and it is only when one or the other of them disturbs the healthy balance that analysis and reorganization are indicated. (Berne, p. 28.)

I propose then to examine the effect, not of unseen deities, but of the needs and functions of the human mind as a way to evaluate Paphnutius' situation. This was the direction taken by Freud after 1920, followed by Anna Freud and Eric Erikson, and further developed by Eric Berne. Berne's theories of Social Intercourse, Structural Analysis, and Transactional Analysis, in conjunction with the text itself and the previous criticism, have been instrumental in revealing new possibilities and explanations concerning Paphnutius' situation independently of either the author's known views or a detailed historical analysis.

Conclusion

Elements of Social Intercourse

Berne's observations regarding stimulus hunger [44] are very reminiscent of the background that France provides for Thaïs, in particular the neglect by her parents during her early childhood.

> « Ce père inerte et cette mère avide la laissaient chercher sa vie comme les bêtes de la basse-cour. Aussi était-elle devenue très habile à tirer une à une les oboles de la ceinture des matelots ivres, en les amusant par des chansons naïves et par des paroles infâmes dont elle ignorait le sens. Elle passait de genoux en genoux dans la salle imprégnée de l'odeur des boissons fermentées… » (France, p. 757.)

Her interaction with the sailors represents the need to satisfy the natural craving for social interaction. Stimulus-hunger is thus defined as a root force that drives us to social intercourse the ultimate goal of which Berne tells us is physical intimacy.[45] This correspondence with the events of the novel further shows the relevance of Berne's theories. Paphnutius likewise suffered from parents who restricted him and yet allowed him to be exposed to temptations that he could not fulfill. This could have led to one of the most significant aspects of Paphnutius' problematic state of mind, an imbalance between his ego states

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[44] Berne explains the concept of *social intercourse* stating, "infants deprived of handling...will tend…to sink into irreversible decline…" meaning, "…emotional deprivation can have a fatal outcome. These observations give rise to the idea of *stimulus-hunger*, and indicate that the most favored forms of stimuli are those provided by physical intimacy…" (Berne, p. 13.)

[45] Berne also explains *recognition hunger*, a more individualized form or stimulus hunger, and *structure-hunger*, which is the need to address how time is spent. (Berne, pp. 15-16.) He later states that physical intimacy is "the only completely satisfying answer" to these. (Berne, p. 18.)

wherein his Adult became an under-developed subservient to his (substitute) Parent and his altered Child.

Structural Analysis

Human behavior is marked by shifts in feeling which result from the three ego states of Parent, Adult, and Child, one of which will be dominant in any given transaction. The Child has intuition, creativity, spontaneous drive and enjoyment. The Parent functions as a guide ("Do as I do" or "Do as I say"), creating automatic responses. This reduces certain matters to routine freeing the Adult to execute the calculations necessary to perform the role that it is allotted, that of survival. Thus the Adult, as the thinking ego state, regulates between the Parent and the Child.

Parent, Adult, and Child may all serve in a healthy balance but when one is out of balance, Berne tells us that analysis and reorganization is required stating for example, that a confused and unhealthy child may yield unfortunate consequences. The Child may exist in two states, natural and adapted. In the adapted state, the Child modifies behavior under the influence of the Parent.

Paphnutius often displays the ego state of adapted Child. His extreme ascetic lifestyle represents his modified behavior as commanded by the Parent, which corresponds with his perception of God. However, he may shift into a Parent ego state, for example, when preaching to his disciples. The effect on him is that his Adult, the rational, thinking ego state, is nearly always repressed in favor of his perceived Parent or his adapted Child.

For example, while his exchanges with Palémon could be viewed as rational, Adult transactions, ultimately, it is his own perceived communication with God, via visions and dreams that determines his course of action. Therefore, Paphnuce as adapted Child responds only to his own perception of God and by consequence his Adult becomes submissive to his adapted child in the majority of his situations. The Parent saying, "That's the way it's done…" struggles with the Adult, which might logically conclude that Paphnuce's version of the ascetic lifestyle is unreasonable and is preventing him from achieving the goal of physical intimacy. From this point of view, Paphnuce is not a victim of pride but rather of a psychological imbalance. He is neither ascending nor descending, but rather is trapped in a state where he can neither progress nor decline.

In contrast, Thaïs is able to make a change in her life, but only with the help of Paphnutius. She displays an ego state of the rebellious natural Child, which functions within her lifestyle as an entertainer. She also has a substitute Parent in the old woman who trained her in performance art. This Parent guides her up to the point of her conversion just as Paphnutius' substitute parent, his own distorted perception of God, guides him.

Thaïs' natural Child rebels against her Parent, challenging and limiting the influence of the latter, enabling her to make a change when the opportunity is presented to go with Paphnutius to Albina's nunnery. This is the result of Thaïs' readily apparent Adult ego state, in which she calculates her social transactions and pursues that which is immediately advantageous, achieving physical intimacy on a regular basis. Ultimately, it is her Adult that reasons that the life

with the abbess, Albina, is the answer to her worries of aging. Thaïs no longer finds comfort in intimacy, and seeks her solace in reassurances concerning a greater fear, her own death. It is the healthy balance between her ego states that allows her to accomplish this.

With Paphnuce we see a character unable to effect this desirable change due to the repression of his Adult ego state by the over-dominant Parent. He cannot respond properly to the love he feels for Thaïs, eternally doomed to recreate that moment when he was fifteen and due to his own natural fears in conjunction with his over-dominant parents, failed to act on his desires. In contrast we see Thaïs' Adult freeing her from her Parent influence in an effort to quell her fears of aging and death. This is done by returning to an earlier, gentler Parent influence, God, which for Thaïs was not related to a domineering parent but rather to a gracious and kind parent figure in the house-servant Ahmes.

In stark contrast to the earlier versions of the tale, Thaïs benefits from the social intercourse at the nunnery of Albina while Paphnuce suffers horribly from his tortured, self-imposed form of isolation. As Thaïs turned to God, and had a favorable outcome, in spite of the known religious skepticism of Anatole France, the message of the novel is not a disparagement of religion. In contrast with the earlier versions, where we see a harsher version of penance, we are shown that the view of religion depends upon a given perception and that it may also be seen as gracious, healing, and forgiving.

France's novel does show the suffering of a religious man. However, this character, in spite of being unable to reconcile his love for a woman with his

perceived duty to his God, manages to bring happiness to her at the end of her life, unfortunately at the sacrifice of his own well being.

In its application to Anatole France's version of the age-old legend of Thaïs, the work of Eric Berne offers fresh insight into the characters of Thaïs and Paphnutius. These old characters emerge in a new light, richly presented to us with the background provided by France, but interpreted independently of his known views. Berne's psychological analysis takes us out of the past and lands us in a world of shared human experience were our ideas and interpretations may continue to grow.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

The poem starts out like the older ones: in Egypt there lived a woman named Thaïs. Because of her infamous behavior the old Christian men, who had come from Galilée to preach the word of the new God, always frowned when they passed her in the street. The poem speaks of the blackened, deformed body of the Virgin Mary, who supposedly was like this because she had rid her body of all trouble and perdition. Thus we have the rather medieval concept that a beautiful body is full of sin, but that an ugly body would be free of it. Even though Thais had received baptism, she did not live a holy lifestyle. She was a shameless dancer, beautiful to behold.

Another theme seen in the medieval versions is addressed when the poem tells us that Thaïs was *Faite comme Eve enfin pour la perte de l'homme* and when the *Pères* complained that *cette femme perdait les âmes à foison*. (France, p. 866.)

Thaïs had both the governor and a centurion as lovers and that one day, the former has the latter commit suicide for being her lover. This event troubled Thaïs to the point that the governor let her go, for he preferred docile women. Thaïs passes through the village and comes upon a group of unwashed Christians who, upon seeing her, pick up rocks and are preparing to stone her when a tall, old man with sparkling eyes and a silver beard arrives and, with his speech, causes the others to flee, saving Thaïs. We have an idea of how old he is from his description and in addition he states "J'ai prié soixante ans…" (France, p. 868.)

When she tries to thank him, the old man tells her that she's impure. She cries, "J'ai honte ô ciel!" and he replies that there may be hope for her. As in the other tales, she rids herself of her possessions and goes to do penance in a cell in the desert for three years, designated here as twenty-one months. As in the old tales, the monk tells her how to pray. After he breaks the lead seal that he had put on the door he demands benediction from Thaïs, as she is now holier than he, due to the suffering she has endured.

> « Puis, ayant vu le front de celle qui pécha,
> Lui, le saint et le fort entre tous, il coucha
> Son front dans la poussière et dit : « Femme très sainte,
> Car la gloire t'éclaire et ta tête en est ceinte
> Je te viens demander ta bénédiction;
> Je suis le bouc impur, brebis d'élection !
> Au nom du bon pasteur, verse-moi l'espérance :
> Le verbe est dans ton sein, car le verbe est SOUFFRANCE. »

At this point an angel appears, saying

> « Tu n'as pas versé, femme, ainsi que Madeleine,
> L'amphore de parfums en ton cœur encore plein… »

The angel then produces a shimmering star *comme un doigt féminin laisse échapper un voile* and tells her to follow it. It leads her to an unidentified woman, who addresses her as *sœur* and the two are left in a pleasant scène with the angel, who has given them a place to sit on his wings and who tells them « Aimez-vous… car le verbe est AMOUR. »

There are clearly many differences between this and the older versions. For example, the old man we find roaming the streets is not said to be not present in the city because he hears of Thaïs and wishes to convert her in order to save

souls. There is background information on Thaïs - we find out that she was baptized. Also, the monk does not seek her out. Rather, they meet by chance in the street. There is no celestial vision to let the monk know her penance is fulfilled. The ending is completely different, a vision of Thaïs with another woman, sitting safely in the wings of an angel.

Appendix 2

The Lotus (Chapter One)

A background is established for the monk, Paphnuce. This is in contrast with the earlier versions, including France's poem. With the exception of Hrotsvit's play, the monk is only ever defined as a good and holy man. The ascetic lifestyles of the anchorites and cenobites are described, and Paphnuce's current status as one of the most devout, as well as a brief history is established.

We learn that he was born into a noble family in Alexandria and had lived a less than ascetic lifestyle though his indulgences were limited to things like fine dining. At the age of twenty, he converted to Christianity. Later hearing a sermon telling him « Si tu veux être parfait, va et vends et donnes-en l'argent aux pauvres. », (France, p. 725) he gave up everything, moved to the desert, and began his life of asceticism.

Rather than hearing tell of a famous prostitute, this Paphnuce is, after ten years, troubled by visions of the actress whose seductive dances had brought passionate thoughts to his mind. His young age (fifteen) and a lack of money (his parents guarded him) had prevented him from acting on his thoughts. As in earlier tales, she is said to be a destroyer of souls, « En sorte qu'en perdant son âme, elle perdait un très grand nombre d'autres âmes. » (France, p. 725)

The unprecedented character development of the monk is completed by two encounters; the first with Timocles of Cos, a skeptic hermit, who lives life like an ascetic but is not. Arriving in Alexandria, he's stoned by children for his appearance but, undaunted, makes his way to the house of an old friend, Nicias,

who is glad to see Paphnuce, thinking he's renounced the desert life to return to his former ways. Paphnutius asks him for a fine tunic, nice shoes, and a purse of money, stating his purpose to convert the courtesan for which he is warned about the wrath of Venus, which will be incurred if he succeeds in taking Thaïs away. Undaunted, Paphnuce finds his way to a performance of Thaïs and then, perhaps recreating the experience of his youth, to her home where she sits in her garden.

The Papyrus (Chapter Two)

We are given an even more detailed background, but less current action, concerning Thaïs who, neglected by her parents, found company, and coins, with the sailors who frequented the inn owned by her father. She learned of Christianity and was baptized under the guidance of the house servant, Ahmes, who himself was destined to be sainted as an executed martyr. As a result of this Thaïs associated goodness with suffering and feared suffering above all else. We see here a more-detailed version of the baptized Thaïs in the poem.

She learned to make her way pleasuring young boys and soliciting money from old men. Her mother, a penny-pincher, beat her over the money, which Thaïs spent on herself, and drove her away. Thus she came into the care of an old woman who managed a traveling troop of young thespians. She taught Thaïs to dance and to act, using a whip to speed her to excellence in music, pantomime, and dance. She became known as an unscrupulous lover to the lecherous men who would lead her away after the performances.

She was freed from this life by a rich young lover who after repeatedly paying the old woman, had her arrested. She was found guilty of old crimes and put to death. Thus was Thaïs freed but left her young lover when, all of a sudden, her love for him inexplicably vanished. She returned to Alexandria where she triumphed as a performer and received many lovers. We are told that thoughts of her baptism troubled her and that she was realizing that gray hair and wrinkles were in her near future. It's in this state of mind that Paphnutius finds her. This is very different than the monk who visits the courtesan in the medieval tales and the chance meeting of the poem.

The rest of the tale also has some interesting differences among them the banquet scene where philosophers debate in the midst of their debaucheries. The tale of Eunoia, *la pensée de Dieu*, is told, and Thaïs is easily seen as an incarnation of this figure who « passant de corps en corps, et traversant parmi nous les âges mauvais,…prend sur elle les péches du monde. » (France, p. 802) After a time, one philosopher commits suicide and this, in conjunction with the grotesque orgy scene that the banquet has become prompts Paphnuce and Thaïs to leave.

France incorporates a feature heretofore unique to the play of Hrotsvit. Paphnuce takes Thaïs to the abbess who is given a name, Albina, and a history as a daughter of royalty who had taken up a holy life. As in previous versions, she destroys all her possessions. Passers-by begin to riot, angered by the scene both because she owes some and because she sustains others. Paphnutius even comes

to blows with one man, as he preaches to the mob to repent, an event that is unique to the action of the novel.

Also unique to France's version, are the details of the journey to the nunnery. Paphnutius is very hard on Thaïs as they cross the desert, even spitting in her face at one point but pitying her to the point of servitude when her feet bleed. He acquires a donkey for her to ride and is kind to her after that. They arrive at the convent where Albina leads her to a little house, not a stone cell

As in other versions of the tale, Paphnuce seals the door and goes. Albina calls for food, water, and a three-holed flute to be brought to Thaïs. France's abbess is more developed than her counterpart from Hrotsvit's play, though the introduction of the gift of a musical instrument to the penitent courtesan shows a compassion, which was suggested, in the earlier version. In this version, Thaïs serves a penance of sixty days, compared to the unthinkable three (or five) years of the medieval versions.

The Euphorbium (chapter 3)

This part of the novel shows the suffering of Paphnuce after his return. There are several indications that he has changed: Paul the Simple doesn't recognize him and all of his belongings seem strange to him. He even asks himself « Et qui suis-je ? » (France, p. 824) and he suffers as he dreams of Thaïs.

In the earlier versions that feature Saint Anthony, including Hrotsvit's *Paphnutius*, the monk experiences uncertainty as to whether or not Thaïs may leave her cell. The uncertainty experienced by Paphnuce in France's novel is

magnified many times over and it's more than implied that he is not the same person.

Following is the stylitic episode, unique to France's novel. As Paphnuce seeks to repress his feelings and to maintain his holy state, he dreams of a high stone column and a voice telling him, « Monte sur cette colonne ! » (France, p. 831) He leaves, finds the column and climbs it, there to sit by way of penance for his unceasing thoughts of Thaïs. Initially people supply him with food, and then a whole city, Stylopolis, grows up around him. Miracles occur, such as people being miraculously healed. All of this is reflects the tradition of saints' lives in French literature where, through self-sacrifice, a saint brings blessings to those around him. However, it all ends when he hears a voice, mocking him with visions of grandeur and telling him to jump from the pillar rather than descend safely by the ladder. Paphnuce feels the voice belongs to the devil. Deciding that this penance is a farce, he descends the pillar at night and sneaks away.

In the hills, he falls asleep inside a tomb after driving the snakes out of it and is taunted by a vision that claims to be one of the many incarnations of Thais. He despairs, « Pensée, où m'as-tu conduit ? » He resolves to work with his hands, making a cord to gird his waist (his other stolen by one of the many devils that torment him there) and then baskets and such. He is tortured by voices and visions, at one point crying out to a vision of a woman to stay with him. After bearing the rebuttal of the spirit who tells him he has sinned, he prays, is further mocked by the demons, and falls unconscious.

He awakens to a group of monks, on their way to venerate Saint Anthony who will be 105 years old. They were drawn by his cries and praise him when they discover his identity. Paphnuce speaks of his curse and the leader of the group, Zozime, proceeds to tell of his own personal life of debauchery where he did unimaginable things with a number of women. He speaks of his current life of peace with the spirit of the Lord inside him, causing Paphnutius to question God as to why he, having avoided such behavior himself, feels abandoned while the former sinner knows the peace of God in his heart.

Zozime tells him of how Paphnuce's own chief disciple, Flavius, had spread the word that Paphnuce had been carried off the top of the pillar by angels but that Paul the Simple had told of a vision where the abbot had been carried off by demons. They travel to Mount Colzin where, at the appearance of Saint Anthony, all the monks shout « Heureux l'homme qui crainte le Seigneur ! » (France, p. 855)

Paphnutius falls to his knees and asks for the blessing of Saint Anthony who ignores him and calls Paul the Simple for a vision instead. Paul sees a bed in heaven and Paphnutius believes it to be the sign of his own destiny and forgiveness but Paul says it is for Thaïs, that she is dying, and that it is surrounded by her three virtues, *la Foi, la Crainte, et l'Amour.* Prompted by Saint Anthony, he continues in saying that he sees three demons carrying Paphnutius off, *Orgueil, Luxure, et Doute*.

Paphnutius hears nothing but « *Thaïs is dying*, » and runs away, hops onto a boat, where experiences hatred for all Thaïs' past lovers, especially Nicias. He

then collapses into tears and gentler visions but finishes by wishing God to damn him, wishing upon himself an eternal hell where he can spew out the eternity of rage that is within him.

When he arrives at the nunnery, Albina tells him that the flute she gave Thaïs had been played daily and that after sixty days, the seal he had placed on the door had opened by itself, the seal broken without the touch of any human hand. He learns that she had performed as an actress and a musician before God and that she was currently dying of a fever. Albina takes him to her deathbed where she thanks him for leading her to love and life. He recants to Thaïs all that he had told her, begging for earthly love and saying he wants to live. She seems not to hear him and dies, after sitting up in her bed and saying that she sees God. He embraces her in such a way that Albina tells him to go away. As he leaves, the nuns all flee in terror, calling him a vampire. The last line of the novel is, « Il était devenu si hideux, qu'en passant la main sur son visage, il sentit sa laideur. » (France, p. 863)

Vita

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