

# STORMING HEAVEN



*Four Elizabethan Lives*

*Through History, Literature, Myth and Idea*

ESSEX, MARLOWE, RALEIGH, DONNE

*A. S. KLINE*

***POETRY IN TRANSLATION***

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This print edition is published by  
**Poetry In Translation** ([www.poetryintranslation.com](http://www.poetryintranslation.com)),

ISBN-10: 1985786184  
ISBN-13: 978-1985786189

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## ABOUT THIS WORK



Storming Heaven is an exploration of the lives of four outstanding individuals of the Elizabethan Renaissance: Essex, Marlowe, Raleigh and Donne. Each was to a greater or lesser degree a poet, though Essex and Raleigh were primarily men of action. While Essex and Marlowe are quintessential Elizabethans, Raleigh and Donne lived on beyond the Elizabethan period to see the beginnings of a new and stormy era leading to the English Civil War and beyond.

The mixture of biography, poetry, analysis, and historical narrative employed in the text, is designed to highlight the unique character and achievements of each, in the context of the greater ambitions and striving of their age. It makes use of theatrical elements of the period, including astrology and the employment of heightened language, as well as insights from our own period derived from anthropology and the history of religion, primarily the concept of the Goddess.

The lives of Donne, Raleigh and Marlowe show the close interrelation between poetry and contemporary events, and with that of Essex highlight the intense conflicts beneath the glittering surface of the age. Contrasting and complementing each other, in character and achievements, the four individuals exemplify the richness of thought and feeling within their society at a crucial moment in English history, out of which many elements of the modern age developed.



‘Nature, that fram’d us of four elements  
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:  
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend  
The wondrous architecture of the world,  
And measure every wandering planet’s course,  
Still climbing after knowledge infinite  
And always moving as the restless spheres,  
Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest...’

*Marlowe, The First Part of Tamburlaine the Great*  
*Act II, Scene VII, lines 18-29*

‘In pride, in reas’ning pride, our error lies;  
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.  
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,  
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.’

*Pope, Essay on Man, Epistle I, lines 123-126*





'Portrait of Elizabeth I, Queen of England'

Anonymous, 1550 - 1599

*The Rijksmuseum*

## I - THE ELIZABETHAN AGE



History is alive in the Individual: the Individual comes to life in History. The Individual is the unique, the differentiated, the precise leaf, or the single flower. Commitment, character, courage, love, desire, and delight are aspects of the Individual. What we are part of but cannot see, what must always lie in the past, irretrievable and unrepeatable, is our History. In the flow of time there are moments when Individuality is enhanced. Those moments throw up the remarkable, the self-contained personality, defined as if by a bounding line. Often they are moments when the flow of time seems to enter a narrow gorge, before opening out to flood the plain. Ideas, which have developed in the depths, and remained submerged, appear suddenly above the surface. They are the moments of genesis.

England in the 1590's and early 1600's is just such a moment. Its atmosphere is the essence of what we know as the Elizabethan. Essex, Marlowe, Raleigh, Donne are unique personalities thrown into dramatic relief by the actions and thoughts of that time. Marlowe and Essex die within the Elizabethan Age, but Raleigh and Donne live on beyond it to a time when the ideas alive in Elizabethan England, held in solution in the test tube, suddenly crystallise. The intellectual ambitions and aspirations of Elizabethan England, transformed, become the driving forces of the English Revolution.

Out of the cauldron emerged the new. Parliamentary democracy; secular law and justice; global trade and commerce; imperialist exploration and acquisition; naval and military power; individual human rights, and the scientific project. The former world was overturned. That world of divine kingship; arbitrary justice; limited horizons; constrained ambitions; the

temporal power of religion; and of knowledge derived from tradition rather than experience.

Essex, Marlowe, Raleigh and Donne, express the turmoil. Drama in life is paralleled by drama in Elizabethan theatre. The brilliant literature of the age feeds on and in turn feeds intellectual debate and popular opinion. Opposing ideas clash. Thoughts conflict within the same mind. There is a readiness to adopt and discard. In the turmoil there is often inconsistency. Protagonists say one thing and do another. Equally the consequences of their actions are often not what they appear to desire or anticipate.

Essex becomes a symbol of a more glorious England, full of nationalistic pride, that is past and gone, his death an example of injustice and arbitrary manipulation of the law. His Protestant allegiance and anti-Spanish stance is remembered. His failings are forgotten. His execution causes resentment against Crown and Government, and yet he himself was neither a democrat nor anti-royalist.

Donne's early works are subversive, yet he dies an orthodox servant of the State religion and the King. His espousal of the Protestant faith is an indication of the social and intellectual fate of English Catholicism. His Songs and Sonnets with their world of internalised love poetry, their adaptation of religious concepts of sacredness to private feeling and eroticism, have no visible influence on the world of revolution, but become part of the literary underground to re-surface in the sensibilities of the Romantics. His sermons on the other hand support and confirm Puritan instincts and social attitudes, and repudiate the early poetry in a transfer of human to religious love.

Raleigh takes care to explain and confirm both his loyalty to the Crown and his Protestant orthodoxy. He has been a Courtier, benefited from monopolistic favouritism, incurred popular disapproval for his perceived rivalry with Essex, and might seem the very image of a Royalist. Yet his freethinking intellectualism, which encouraged friendships with men of wide-ranging views, has also resulted in accusations of atheism, and associated him with radical thought. His voyages of exploration and sponsoring of colonial ventures, his experiments and his writings in the



Tower, broaden English horizons, and stimulate scientific effort. With Bacon he can be seen as one of the great initiators of the scientific project in England. His speeches in Parliament, and aspects of his writings, make him a respected intellectual source to Puritan political activists including Cromwell. His anti-Spanish nationalism has popular support. His achievements in war, on land and sea, represent the glorious England of the Elizabethan zenith. The injustice of his trial and execution rankle. The courage he showed can be held up as an example. His energy, multifarious abilities, and intellectual power are recognised and his loss regretted. He shines like a light on the gloomy, repressive England of the Stuarts.

Marlowe seems the most clear-cut. His radical thinking is highly subversive, and where he seems orthodox there is an ironic stance and an ambiguous dramatic voice. He is a part of that shadowy underworld of espionage and mercenary allegiances that is reflected later in the masterless men of Revolutionary London. His attitudes to sexuality, religion, social structure, authority, and traditional wisdom are ambivalent and challenging. In *Faustus* he creates a symbol of the aspiring individual, ambitious of power through new knowledge. He plays to religious fears and exhibits the old learning in his drama, but his connections with the scientific and free-thinking set around Raleigh, Essex and Bacon suggest that his personal views are more radically in favour of the scientific project. His key themes are ambition, and the attainment of power, in a poetry full of the verbal ecstasies of sensual and aesthetic worldly glory, and in that sense he represents the deep radical and libertarian undercurrent in English thought which appears similarly in Shelley.

The four individuals display the consolidation of Protestantism, even though there is also anticipation of the scientific, rational, desacralised future. There is the unquestioningly Protestant Essex, and Donne's apostasy from Catholicism to a secure position in the Anglican Church. There is also Raleigh the religious freethinker who nevertheless in his *History of the World* demonstrates his underlying orthodoxy. Marlowe alone verges on atheism yet the ending of his drama of *Faustus* is still a wholly religious conclusion appropriate to the age.

Religion was a critical compound, a catalyst, in the mixture inside the test-tube, strangely present there, as it was in the Florentine Renaissance, alongside classical reference, and secular originality. Catholicism represented the old order; hereditary power; royalty, subjection to foreign authority. It faced developing Puritanism, with its concepts of unmediated spiritual communication; the equality of believers; the power and authority of the people; independence and creative newness. In the midst was the official Protestant Church.

Elizabeth clearly asserted the Protestant religion maintaining freedom from Rome while at the same time allowing some freedom of worship. Religious extremism was curbed when necessary. She transferred to herself the attributes of the Virgin Goddess in courtly masque. A degree of tolerance was shown towards discreet Catholic allegiance. It has been said that she maintained the religious balance. It is more accurate to say that she merely created an authorised centre-ground. The suppression of extremism effectively marginalised and defused the potency of the Catholic faith, but left the Puritan radicals to find new strength under her unimpressive successors. Ironically while upholding hereditary kingship, she was a woman, who died childless, and of a dynasty which needed all Shakespeare's skill to argue its legitimacy. And by suppressing and defusing the mythical elements of Catholicism she also desacralised the Crown.

All Religion was challenged by sceptical, rational, pragmatic thought. That thought derived from the Renaissance ferment, from exploration and experiment, from the experience of living. In Marlowe this exhibits itself as something close to atheism, and as a Machiavellian realism about the motives behind power politics. Elizabeth herself and her ministers encouraged the use of Reason, even though, in a further irony, sceptical questioning and secular debate was instrumental in fomenting the English Revolution. In Raleigh, Marlowe, the young John Donne, and among Essex's set, it is evident as a wide-ranging intellectual open-mindedness and curiosity. This ferment was profoundly disturbing. Issues of religion, social order and moral values deeply affected Donne and also Shakespeare. Their Catholic background made them perhaps more sensitive to the challenge to human values that the new thinking represented.

The rituals and the values of the ancient world were still embedded in Elizabethan society, despite the long historical antagonism of the Christian Church. Those values incorporated ideas of the sacred; of the role of love and sexuality; of the relationship of Man to Nature, embodied as Woman, and worshipped as the Great Goddess. Catholicism, with the myth of the sacrificed God and the Virgin enshrined within it, was as close to religious concepts not derived from Judaism or original with Christianity, as it was to the Protestant religion of Sin and the Fall, of Redemption and Divine Mercy. However the ancient values, were repressed within all contemporary religion and often regarded as heretical, and so could only be explored internally, within the private life and mind. This process is visible in Donne's early poetry, and in Shakespeare's later plays. Ideas are retrieved from the arcane literatures of Neoplatonism, and the Mystical tradition. Religious terminology is transferred to a secular context. The Individual becomes a world, a private and personal world, which can also be a refuge, a temple, where the ancient sacred marriage and the humane values can continue to be celebrated.

The English Revolution can be presented legitimately as a battle between Catholicism and Puritanism, Crown and Parliament, positioned as old order and new order, static and progressive. The situation was more subtle than that. The Goddess worshipped across the ancient world, as far back as Paleolithic times, still appeared, though in a weakened and diminished form, in the person of the Virgin. The Church was inimical to the Goddess and to unredeemed Nature from its inception, nevertheless the deep persistence of Goddess worship can be seen by the strength of the cult of the Virgin in Medieval times. So Catholicism, though it represented stasis, superstition, mediated authority, and the powerlessness of the individual trapped in the cycles of eternal ritual, was also a refuge for some of the ancient human values and attitudes. It revealed a source of respect for Woman as expressed in the female personalities of the Old and New Testaments and gave continuing emphasis to female values of love, pity and compassion. Shakespeare expresses these human values in *Pericles*, and *The Winter's Tale*, where the ancient temple of the Goddess appears at the crucial final act of the drama, in the context of reunion, resurrection and redemption, of love and compassion. A Catholic background and classical knowledge could still make visible the benign face of the Goddess.

Equally Puritanism by preaching unmediated equality, the power and independence of the people, and a future destiny for Mankind, was a religion of social change. It did value friendship highly. It did celebrate Woman, love and sexuality within the bounds of marriage. But equally there was a denigration of Woman as Eve the perpetrator of the Fall, a marginalisation of independent female values within society, and the ruling presence of the male and militant Old Testament Jehovah. It damaged the view of external nature as potent and sacred. It placed the power of the female within closed boundaries. It easily lead to a claustrophobic sin and death oriented darkness of theological thought, as reactionary, limited and stultifying as institutionalised Catholicism. Donne's later life and sermons are only too often a human but sad expression of this.

Parliament, Crown, and Church are a set of mask-like surfaces under which the changes moved. Power was transferred to the wider social structure. Religion began to separate from the Secular State. The personal and private separated from the public and social. Science opposed tradition and superstition. Technology and exploration challenged the known and the accepted. Nature was increasingly divorced from Civilisation as urban culture developed. Imperialism and Global commerce threatened to again rework historical identities. Rights and the secular law superseded divine authority. Self-determination even if severely restricted by class began to replace inherited order. Economic, and technological, forces became the dominant drivers of social restructuring with military power as their servant. The values underlying these changes were institutionalised. The discussion of alternative values went underground, into art, into philosophy, into radical opinion and minority movements, into personal conscience, into private thought.

There was the beginning of that immense polarisation between the external world and the internal world that we have inherited. The external world has its ambitious projects of exploration, explanation and exploitation. It is the world of commerce and science. It is the place where power resides. All things in it are resources, means to a defined end, which may subsequently appear obsolete or meaningless. The internal world of

values, pleasures, appreciation, awareness, empathy, and compassion, becomes the place where love resides. All things in that world are individual and unique, sacred and unrepeatable, ends in themselves, and rich with meaning, but powerless. The individual lives at their intersection. The more deeply and fully the individual tries to live the more agonising become the conflicts. It becomes in extremis the shirt of Nessus that cannot be removed and cannot be endured.

The Elizabethan Age is the moment in England when these massive changes begin to be felt. It is an earthquake zone, where Poseidon roars underground, and the surface shakes. All the elements are there, but confused and uncertain. It is a difficult and dangerous time to live. It is, though, radically original. That can be seen by contrasting the great Elizabethan moment, the fifteen years from the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 to Elizabeth's death in 1603, with the next thirty years, which are a working through of the Elizabethan legacy. In the first period England achieves a vigorous national identity, creates a brilliant literature and drama, and tests the possibility of a colonial presence. In the second period there is an increasingly restrictive stillness, an introspective gloominess, a broad failure of policy, and repeated Court scandal. Out of that stillness the Civil war erupts, almost as a war of liberation. The Elizabethan Age contrasted with this second pre-Revolutionary period had been outward looking, optimistic and vibrantly alive.

Essex, Marlowe, Raleigh and Donne were precursors. They lived the possibilities. They shared an ambition to achieve and an ability to reach out to experience. They had the desire and the nerve to assault the heavens, in pride and aspiration.



'Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex'  
Isaac Oliver, ca. 1565-1617, French  
*The Yale Center for British Art*

## II - ESSEX



ride is a high opinion of one's own abilities, arrogance in attitude or conduct, awareness of exalted position, a sense of what is appropriate to that position. To aspire is to desire seriously, to climb towards, to yearn, to covet. As Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex went to the block shortly after sunrise on a February morning in 1601, Mars, the soldier's planet, guardian of his life's energies, of his passions, was conjunct the Sun in the watery sign of Pisces. Icarus had fallen into the sun, into the sea, his waxen wings melted and destroyed. That same Mars was burning brightly in Leo at his birth. Leo the sign of a man fixed in his opinions, intolerant, power-hungry, but also generous, enthusiastic, with a sense of the dramatic, the theatrical. In an age of theatre his life was lived on stage. Dying at thirty-three he was young enough to be an Icarus, not falling unnoticed but mourned, in spite of the aged Queen, by his public. 'The difficulty my good lord is to conquer yourself'. Lord Keeper Egerton offers his placatory advice. Icarus in flight gives an unequivocal reply. 'What! Cannot Princes err? Cannot subjects receive wrong? Is an earthly power or authority infinite? I can never subscribe to these principles.'

Or is he Phaethon who rode the chariot of the sun and scorched the earth? Zeus killed him with a thunderbolt so that he fell into the water, a royal prince sacrificed in ritual to ensure the safe continuance of kingship. Both analogies have power. 'I was ever sorry that your lordship should fly with waxen wings, doubting Icarus' fortune' says Francis Bacon. A subtle analogy. Icarus flies with wings made for him by his father Daedalus not with his own wings. Icarus flies too near the sun, and fails, not because of pride, but because of inability to follow instructions, to control his flight. Yet there is sympathy with Icarus, he is innocent. The situation is not of his making, but is forced on him. In the end his journey is beyond his abilities,

and he falls foul of circumstance. Francis Bacon, once faithful supporter, becomes an agent of prosecution, seeing which way the wind blows, choosing a new course to steer, aligning himself with power. Clever but not loyal. Wise but not generous. He too would eventually discover what it was like to fall into the depths.

Pride and aspiration. The Tower is where he dies, where Raleigh dies. Bran's castle, the White Hill, the place of the magical severed head. 'Take my head,' Bran said, 'and carry it to the White Hill in London' in an early version of the Grail Legend which is embedded in the Mabinogion. Both are sacrificed to ensure the continuance of kingship, which is the obverse of the real or assumed threat to that kingship. Elizabeth and James are terrified of the challenge to their power, a power, arbitrary, hereditary: terrified of the challenge to order. Order is divine order in their minds. It is artificial order in the mind of a Marlowe, the order held by a Tamburlaine, the Scythian shepherd risen to be God's scourge, teetering always on the brink of chaos. No wonder Elizabeth was fearful. The pent-up discontent that leads to the Civil War is already a pressure building under the surface of her society. Shakespeare, sharing in that fear, political conformist, holds back that pressure only by verbal magic in his imaginary kingdoms.

Phaethon was a bad driver. His sun-chariot first flew too high so that the earth was chilled, then too low till the world was in flames. Ovid says that he had asked for the reins of his Father Helios's chariot for one day, to be allowed, for one day, to control and drive the wing-footed horses. 'It is unsuited to your strength or to your years. You are mortal, and aim at something not granted even to the gods. A firm guiding hand is necessary.' Phaethon the rebel, attempting what is beyond his powers. Inexperience, arrogance, foolishness, inability. That is Elizabeth's view. The middle way is safest. Shakespeare's view. 'He had not the skill to handle what had been entrusted to him' says Ovid 'He was filled with indecision, neither able to let go of the reins, nor strong enough to keep hold of them.' Phaethon was flung headlong and fell through the air, leaving a meteor trail behind. Ovid describes the subsequent mourning. And England mourned its Phaethon. 'Sweet England's pride is gone'. Elizabeth also mourned.



Icarus was only a sweet lad who died of the mistake made by his father Daedalus in creating a course of action which set Icarus up for disaster, which demanded an impossible adherence to his own flight. 'Follow me closely, do not set your own course.' As they flew the shepherds and the ploughmen gazing upwards mistook them for gods. But when Daedalus looked back, there was no Icarus, only a scattering of feathers on the surface of the sea.

Phaethon wished to show his sisters what he could be and do. Penelope Devereux, one of Essex's sisters, was Sidney's Stella, whose hundred and eight sonnets of Astrophil the star-lover, to Stella, the star, signified the hundred and eight suitors of Penelope in the Odyssey. Phaethon was too weak to control the fierce white horses. He veered to extremes, before, like Milton's Mulciber, 'he fell from heaven...sheer o'er the crystal battlements...dropt from the Zenith like a falling star'. Mulciber, the Son of Morning, full of that pride which challenged the deity. Ovid says that Phaethon's sisters mourned for him so much they were transformed to trees whose branches shed drops of blood which hardened into amber.

Mars is moving with the Sun, conjunct it on the eighth of February when his foolish rising comes to nothing, the looked-for popular support non-existent in the empty streets near the Strand, and still conjunct it on the twenty-fifth when he goes to his death. Mars rises with the sun on his dark day, the executioner needing three blows to achieve the ritual murder, the sacrifice.

Aspiration is also a breathing-in. His birth was in the early November of 1567, and his astrological chart therefore shows the sun in Scorpio. Astrology is theatre, just as the Elizabethan period was theatre. The Elizabethan attitude to it was, like ours, highly ambivalent, suspecting that it had no substance but intrigued by its symbolism. Astrology is merely chance pattern but even a random play of images can illuminate, and we can use it in that way for its ability to highlight aspects of personality. What fits is useful. What does not fit is discarded. It is in no way a predictive mechanism. Not science but art.

The Elizabethans themselves frequently use the analogy of theatre for their age. It was how it seemed to them, and how it seems to us. Dramatic, often violent, prone to passions, to extremes of anger, envy, jealousy, and pride. Tragic. Gruesomely comic. Sweetly pastoral. Filled with the silvery romance of the Renaissance, translated through France from Italy, to the green countryside of England. There are sharp defining lines. Though we cannot enter into these people, though they remain opaque, defined more by what they fail to say, than the words they do say and write, they are brilliantly coloured. Hilliard and Oliver limn them in jewelled ovals. They themselves drip jewellery and exhibit costume.

Essex is quintessential aspiration. The Sun and Mercury combust together at his birth. Jupiter is conjunct both. Expansive, ambitious, stubborn, conceited, fortunate enough to win a Queen's favour. A volatile mind. Pluto the ruler of Scorpio is unsuspected, a loose cannon of fate. His destruction will come from within, from his own unconscious urges and impulses. Uranus, Neptune and Saturn sit in a tense t-square. There is no need to believe in astrology as any more than theatre, in order to see the depressions, moodiness, strain and tension of Saturn square to Uranus, the self-will, paranoia, involvement with large impractical projects of Neptune square Saturn, or the emotional intensity of Uranus opposing Neptune. These three planets activate the signs of Virgo, the Queen, Sagittarius the archer firing at the stars, and Pisces where the sun will lie on the morning of his death.

Theatre. 'What is our life? a play of passion' says Raleigh, 'our mirth the music of division, our mothers' wombs the tiring houses be, where we are dressed for this short comedy. Heaven the judicious sharp spectator is, that sits and marks still who doth act amiss. Our graves that hide us from the searching sun, are like drawn curtains when the play is done. Thus march we playing to our latest rest, only we die in earnest, that's no jest'.

Theatre. One of the keys by which we learn to understand the Elizabethan court and city. A drama played with intensity for effect. Under it the terrible and terrific tensions of religion, the desire for money and wealth, the transience of existence, the vagaries of fortune, the explosion of geographic discovery, the spread of knowledge, the recognition through the Renaissance and its rediscovery of Rome, of Man, the measure of all things.

The theatre is lifted to a new level by Marlowe, at the same time as the greater Elizabethan theatre is embroiled in its own drama.

Essex arrives at court in 1584, aged sixteen. Elizabeth is fifty-one. Raleigh favourite for two years by now is thirty-two. For neither man is Elizabeth a young goddess newly arrived at power. She has been queen since 1559, for twenty-five years. We are easily deceived by imagery and symbolism, and brought to earth by calendar dates and realities. Was it all flattery then, flattery aimed at power? Flattery of an older woman to gain a material end?

'No cause but a great action of your own may draw me out of your sight' Essex writes to her later, 'for the two windows of your...chamber shall be the poles of my sphere'. Raleigh writes his *Last Book of the Ocean* to Scinthia, the moon-goddess, the Faerie Queen, 'She is gone, She is lost, she is found, she is ever fair! 'A Queen she was to me', 'Such force her angellike appearance had, to master distance, time, or cruelty, such art to grieve, and after to make glad, such fear in love, such love in majesty'. Mere words, or was there a reality of emotion and affection, even a self-delusion, a fanciful transposition of desire and sexual energy? What, in these men, translated and transmuted itself into their attitude to the woman, made her the Virgin Queen, the incarnation of Diana the huntress? True, it was an age of obsequious flattery, those endless dedications, Shakespeare's among them, which make us squirm as the greater bows to the lesser, an inordinate respect for institutionalised authority and power, for the links in the chain, for level and order. No sign of that in Marlowe though. No obsequiousness there.

The young Essex stays at Court a while, and then goes on the Low Countries expedition of 1585, where Philip Sidney dies, after being wounded at Zutphen, and England loses its courtier-poet. He leaves his sword 'to beloved and much honoured Lord, the Earl of Essex'. He also

leaves his mantle of the romantic knight, the perfect gentleman, the Petrarchean poet (his equivalent of Petrarch's beloved Laura is Penelope, Essex's sister) which Essex cannot fill, and a young wife Frances Walsingham whom Essex later marries. He steadily becomes Elizabeth's favourite, gradually displacing Raleigh, though she rarely trusts him when he is out of sight, and starves him of resources, playing a cat and mouse game, jealous of her power.

Essex builds a military and political career, bringing round him a group of able men, among them Francis and Anthony Bacon (Burleigh's nephews, sons of Nicholas Bacon, Elizabeth's first Lord Keeper of the Great Seal), and Henry Wotton. He forges private connections in Europe. Anthony Bacon's nest of secret agents will draw in Christopher Marlowe to his service. Sir Henry Wotton is a friend of John Donne. Essex is seen as material for greatness. Or as a route to power. He finds difficulty in handling the Queen diplomatically. Power is too attractive to him. He is not like Raleigh a well-born but untitled man, risen to greatness through rare talents and abilities. He is aristocracy, inherited title. His talents are an adjunct to his greatness.

Essex is 'a great resenter'. Or is it merely the transparency of his emotions, which he hides with more difficulty than other men? 'He can conceal nothing, he carries his love and hatred on his forehead'. Never believing that he has what he deserves, is he that Achilles, vain, spoilt, argumentative, a complainer, petulant, the Achilles that Shakespeare paints in *Troilus and Cressida* 'full of his airy fame' and 'dainty of his worth'? Or is he that Achilles, brave, generous in friendship, doomed to a short life, cheated by Agamemnon the King, 'eating his heart out by his fast ships, nursing his anger'?

Achilles like Essex is defined and limited by that anger, the root of the *Iliad*. Both men have that same opaqueness, that definition by their actions, by their destinies. Either we invent motivations for them that are overly complex, or we underestimate the intricacy of their lives. We are either too simplistic or too subtle. They remain in the mind as semi-mythological

icons. Both are the symbols of rebellion, passive in Achilles case, active eventually in that of Essex. Both are frustrated, ambitious of glory, free energies that need direction. Both are silent even when they seem to speak, since what they say is only what we expect them to say. Both have a doom-laden fate hovering over them, which they run to meet sword in hand. Both hate the idea of a long, inglorious life.

One imagines Essex, like Achilles, a tall figure striding helplessly through the Underworld; one who would rather be a live dog than a dead lion. Like Achilles, Essex sulks, but also like Achilles his blind courage is indisputable. Though military genius is sadly nowhere in evidence Essex is never cowardly in physical combat. He is the last great aristocrat fighting for the crown, at the same time fighting for himself and his country. He is part of an Old World of amateurs, gifted amateurs, with immense charisma, brilliant style, open-handed, attractive, loyal. No one ever accuses Essex of disloyalty until the final period, and then it is a disloyalty, in his eyes, to a hollow crown.

Like Raleigh he finds himself, in the end, opposed by the administrators, the lawyers, the bureaucrats, the servants, the ones who have arrived by professionalism, by intellect, by skill, by craft. Like Achilles one doubts his competence as a general, it is all amateurishness, but one has sympathy with him. There is always a suspicion that the unlovable Elizabeth, as the unlovable Agammenon (both adepts at sacrifice to gain favourable winds) set up situations and then disown them; cripple their heroes and then accuse them; show anger instead of placating. 'The heroes' complaints are tedious. They whine. But perhaps there is substance behind their complaints, some injustice. Spoilt favourites they are nevertheless full of promise. Yet with a weakness, a vulnerability in themselves which allows their ultimate destruction.

So Achilles dies again and again, shining out. The tall figure sword in hand, who gathers about him an undiminishable brightness, not justified perhaps by his actions, destroyed at last by the coward who had stolen Helen, but unassailable in his own wrong-headed magnificence, clothed in his own exaggerated idea of fame, of heroism, of self, of passion. 'And so the famous Achilles was defeated' says Ovid, 'If he had to die by a woman's hand, he would rather have fallen beneath the axe of an Amazon Queen'.

Anthony Bacon created for Essex a secret service to rival that of Burleigh, Anthony's uncle, who in turn had inherited that built by Sir Francis Walsingham, father of Essex's wife. Anthony had lived abroad. He had been befriended by Henry of Navarre, who became Henry IV of France, the 'vert galant'. He had been arrested for sodomy at Montauban, but escaped death through Henry's intervention. He had known Montaigne whose essays inspired his brother Francis to create the form in English. Suffering from chronic gout he had returned to England, after twelve years, in 1592. Living in his half-brother Edward's house (leased from the Queen until 1595), Twickenham Lodge, he worked for Essex, gathering information, employing the dubious agents of Elizabethan London to investigate Catholics, atheists, plotters, enemies of the Essex faction and the Crown.

Twickenham Lodge was pleasantly sited on the Thames opposite Richmond Palace. There was a garden, embellished by Francis, and a great park. Later Essex had it in his gift and granted it to Francis in 1594 as a consolation prize for failing to advance him with the Queen. He took it back in 1601 when Bacon switched allegiance. Twickenham Park is the 'Ferie Meade' eighty-seven acres of park and meadow, orchard and wood, alongside the river. At Twickenham Francis Bacon entertains a group of young men from the lawcourts who make verses. A poem of John Donne's survives alongside ones by Bacon and Henry Wotton that are part of a poetic debate on the merits of life in the country, City, and Court. Later Donne's poem Twickenham Garden is set among the spring breezes there, as he struggles with 'the spider, love' and the sighs and tears at York House.

Anthony's web extends out to the twilight world of Frizer, Poley and Skeres, the men who are at Deptford with Kit Marlowe when he dies, stabbed in the eye. Donne, in the light, Marlowe, in the shadows, touch on the Essex circle. Anthony himself dies in May 1601 a few months after Essex, at the age of forty-three.

The Moon has a dark side, which Essex comes to know, as does Raleigh. Elizabeth is not an emotionally attractive figure. A true daughter of Henry and Anne Boleyn. Once having learnt how to grasp and hang on to power she was cautious, indecisive when it served her purposes, mean, a

user-up of men and their talents, a woman who traded brilliantly on the power of the female mythology. Sinthia is demanding and mentally cruel. She exhausts her servants. She throws them away when they no longer serve her purpose. Like Artemis, the huntress, she deserts them at the end, since Artemis cannot 'corrupt her eyes with a mortal's death throes' as Euripides says.

It is the myth of Actaeon and Artemis that comes to mind when one reads of the mad ride Essex made from Ireland in September 1599 after his disastrous campaign there (outsmarted by Tyrone), between Monday the twenty-fourth and Friday the twenty-eighth. Crossing from Ireland with a few companions, then riding non-stop through Wales, the Vale of Evesham, the Cotswolds and Chilterns, he reached the Lambeth Ferry, commandeered a change of horses, finally rode the ten miles or so to Nonesuch Palace where the Queen was staying, through the muddied autumn lanes. Rushing in on her 'she being not ready, and he so full of dirt and mire that his very face was full of it'. He was punished for that exposure of the Goddess, like Actaeon who caught Diana bathing naked, breaking the taboo, and earning a sacrificial death. Essex catches Elizabeth without her make-up, her artifice, sees the naked power instead invested in the ugly old woman, 'crooked as her carcass' in his own words.

When Tiresias saw her bathing Athene blinded him. Actaeon is turned into a stag at bay by Diana, and is brought down by his own hounds, an image Francis Bacon might have appreciated. 'Falling to his knees, as if in prayer' Ovid says 'he moved his head about in silence, stretching out his arms in supplication.' Essex before the Council. Essex at the block. As Actaeon, so Pentheus stumbling across the Maenads' mysteries, pulled down by the Bacchae. 'Now he was panic-stricken, now he was less violent; he cursed himself and confessed his fault.' 'Help me, let the ghost of Actaeon move you to pity me!' Agave tore the head from his shoulders in blind response, calling out 'See this victory, my own achievement.' 'Quickly' says Ovid 'as a tree is stripped by the autumn wind, after a deep frost, so those terrible hands tore him apart'.

Sacrifice is a purification and a re-dedication. Sacrifice expels the guilty one, and by the ritual of his death brings him back to his society. What cannot be assimilated, used, digested, has to be expelled and rejected. When

the veil is removed, then there is no way back to innocence or artifice. The court of law can also appear like a gang, a band of accomplices designed to destroy. The guilty and the innocent come together and the mantle of each falls over the other. 'Her choler did outrun all reason' said Roland Whyte. His fate was still Phaethon's, that of a man who tried.

Michael Drayton in verses published in 1603 whose subject is Edward the Second's Queen, Isabella, and her lover Roger Mortimer, First Earl of March, used poetry to make reference to the recently executed Essex. He affirmed an attitude to Essex, prevalent at the time, that to aspire and to attempt, to fulfil one's ambition even if it meant death, was still a kind of glory, a storming of the sunlit heavens. And he used a historical analogy with the aspirations of the rebellious Mortimer to do so. He and Isabella are studying a painting of the Greek myth that is Essex's analogue. 'Looking upon proud Phaethon wrapped in fire, the gentle Queen did much bewail his fall; but Mortimer commended his desire to lose one poor life or to govern all: What though (quoth he) he madly did aspire and his great mind made him proud Fortune's thrall? Yet in despite, when she her worst had done, he perished in the chariot of the Sun.'

According to Ovid it was the Italian nymphs who buried Phaethon's body, inscribing on the rock above his grave: 'Here Phaethon lies, who the sun's journey made - dared all, though he by weakness was betrayed.'

Why was he executed? There is something ridiculous about his rebellion. Temporarily imprisoning Egerton and his deputation, Knollys, Popham, Worcester, in Essex House. Wandering through the streets with his few supporters, easily arrested. Was he a real threat to the Crown? Stating clearly at his execution that he thanked God he had never been numbered amongst the friends of Spain, or the Catholics or atheists. Was it necessary, any more than Raleigh's execution was necessary? Was it a sop to Spain to further potential marriage negotiations?

The idea of order in the universe was strong in Elizabethan thinking, the Medieval idea, challenged but not overturned by the Renaissance or the new science. Shakespeare is full of it, that ideal order animating earthly



order. There is a corresponding nervousness at disorder. But the Elizabethans were not appalled by newness. They lapped up new discoveries, new worlds, new words, plants, drugs, new translations from the Latin and Greek, new plays, new commerce. There was a tension between religious order, with the associated beliefs in the Fall and Redemption; and humanism, experiment, 'essays', the re-evaluation of the classics and the Roman and Greek past. But that tension between authority and freedom was nothing new. It existed throughout the Medieval period, in the troubadours, in Abelard and Heloise, and then in the Italian Renaissance itself.

The Elizabethan obsession with order seems to issue from the Court rather than from society. It is Elizabeth who is so afraid of trouble, and James after her. A daughter of the usurping Tudor dynasty, risen to power through battle. The daughter of a king who severed England from Rome. A woman invested with the symbols of male kingship. It is fear of the boat of power being rocked that is strongest.

Shakespeare is frenetic in his attempts to bolster the Tudor legitimacy, and cement the idea of natural order around the monarchy, but there is also Marlowe, showing the other side, in Tamburlaine risen from nowhere to be many times king. The tension is acute, but perhaps more so in Elizabeth's mind, and those with interests vested in her power, than in some others.

Where the Florentine Renaissance was blessed with a certain lightness which Shakespeare's comedies capture, so Elizabethan England shares also its intensity of conflict between Reason and Passion, Will and Authority, the worship of God and the worship of the Goddess. There is an antagonism between the forces of Chaos and Order, New and Old, which is part of its deep theatre, its tragic vision. Is Essex a sacrifice to the obsession with order, with clean endings, a level playing field? Was he disposed of, as one feels Raleigh was, to make things neater, tidier? It was against the wishes of the people. He was mourned, we remember. 'Sweet England's pride is gone' He had written to Elizabeth that 'No cause but a great action of your own may draw me out of your sight.' 'When your Majesty thinks that heaven too good for me I will not fall like a star but be consumed like a vapour by the same sun that drew me up to such a height'. 'Therefore for the honour of your sex show yourself constant in kindness'.

She made him, but could not control him? She made him, and betrayed him, threw him away?

As a woman she was denied the heroic gestures of action and discovery, a sovereign who no longer went to war. What was possible for her was the Mind, policy, betrayal. She was an old woman full of fear, fixed ideas, lacking constancy and forgetting past services when it suited her, wilful, recalcitrant. She had authoritarian powers.

Perhaps Raleigh had it right? 'Undutiful words do often take deeper root than the memory of ill deeds. The late Earl of Essex told the Queen that her conditions were as crooked as her carcass, but it cost him his head, which his insurrection had not cost him, but for that speech'. Actaeon has gone too close, uncovered the nakedness of the Divine power that was monarchy, lifted the veil.

Whitehall had become less significant as a palace, more significant now as a place where clever men, toughened by political infighting and the exercise of power, replaced poetry with administration, the military centre with a judicial and legislative one. Where trade and goods in the holds of ships were more important than mythologies however powerful. The modern world was emerging, and like the genie from the bottle it spelt also the end of monarchy, the end of nobility, the diminishment of theatre. Elizabeth and James buy time, but their age is already passing.

It is Raleigh the parliamentarian ('I think the best course is to set at liberty and leave every man free') who is the future. It is Essex in a different role, as Privy Councillor in 1593 the year of Marlowe's death, 'carrying himself with honourable gravity and singularly liked of both, in Parliament and Council-table, for his speeches and judgement' who presages a different England, though not as directly as Raleigh. The Queen may win, but the victory is hollow. The Civil War, the Parliamentary forces are only a few decades away.

He was frustrated with the woman. His military expeditions are underfunded and controlled by her. She gives him rope and then hangs him out

to dry. He also is an unlucky, if not an incompetent, commander. There is a kind of desperate charm in his disasters. He is as unlucky as Actaeon, or Pentheus. Francis Bacon tells him he is presenting the wrong image, unruly, appealing directly to the affections of the people, a soldier not a courtier. It is 'a dangerous image'. He should dissemble more, play the game, play the Courtier, bow the head more, stop arguing with her.

Then he is underfunded, because England is underfunded. Four years of poor summers and disastrous harvests, 1594 to 1597; an increasing population; inflation due to the injection of gold and other metals into the economy; the poor state of the cloth trade; and the costly wars. Were the people in the 1590's bored with the myth, with their Virgin Queen, with Tudor repression? There is a new scepticism at the end of the century, the power of the Commons is rising, 'the new Philosophie', according to Donne, 'calls all in doubt'. Machiavelli is taken more seriously, religion is bound up with freedom of thought, Copernicus is becoming understood, the known world is expanding.

Elizabeth seems increasingly mean-spirited, indecisive, ungrateful. Still, Essex is accident-prone. The expedition to Cadiz in 1596 is militarily effective. Raleigh is there. So is the young John Donne, a gentleman adventurer. But the Spanish merchant ships are set on fire and gutted. There is little plunder. Elizabeth is furious. In 1597 the Islands Voyage to the Azores is dogged by bad weather. Donne is there again, writing poems about the storms and calms. Raleigh upstages Essex at Fayal, and the old rivals fall out again. Still Raleigh, generous as ever towards Essex, writes to Cecil. 'God having turned the heavens with fury against us, a matter beyond the power or wit of man to resist'. The Spanish treasure ship is missed at Terceira. No money. Elizabeth is furious.

Bad luck, some of it self made, dogs him. Is it the man or his stars, fate or will? The French Ambassador says in 1598 'he is a man who in nowise contents himself with a petty fortune, and aspires to greatness'. Roland Whyte in 1597 reports that 'Her Majesty as I heard resolved to break him of his will, and to pull down his great heart, who found it a thing impossible, and says he holds it from the mother's side.'

When two myths collide there is a conflict. It throws up strangeness, rawness, incompatibility. It throws up a Leonardo Da Vinci, where the Christian mystery and the natural reality blend curiously together, or a Christopher Marlowe merging in himself Latin culture, Medieval Christianity, and Renaissance thought. Elizabethan England comes late to the Renaissance, is rushed upon it, as though time has been compressed. Individual man, no longer a stone in the Gothic Cathedral of the Middle Ages, no longer a degree in the tuned order of the Deity, but something unique and self-determining, struggles caught between massive forces. On the one hand an inherited and supposedly inviolable order, a ladder of being with its path to salvation through worship of one who 'died for the world', so as to redeem man from the sin of the Fall. On the other a new universe of emerging science, geographic discovery, questioning rationalism, observation and achievement.

As in the modern world the attempt is made to fit new thought to old by expanding the terms of religion, but the result is unsatisfactory, unappealing. The physical world seems to deny the short biblical time span, there are self-contradictions in theology, free will does not seem to accord with an all-powerful deity. The very rationalism that the Tudors admire in their administrators, the conquest of Passion by Mind and Will, of itself undermines the irrational orders of monarchy and church. Marlowe is an extreme, but it is the very individuality of men like Essex and Raleigh, which challenges the state, their curiosity, their wide-ranging interests, their ambitions, their energy. The free powers of the individual mind meet the established order in a condition of challenge, a precursor to the great scientific endeavour where the world becomes explicable in terms of the how rather than the why, and Occams razor dispenses with deity.

At the same time the Protestant world-view suppresses and devalues the Goddess, the ancient mythological powers of Nature, makes the world a mechanism to be wielded rather than a sacred space to be hallowed. Elizabeth takes on herself the mantle of the Virgin, Catholicism's transformed and weakened Goddess image. Elizabeth transfers, from a religion, which no longer contains it, Nature in its sacred depth, and makes

it an aspect of herself. She is to be the Virgin, without child. She is to be the Moon, mistress of the tides. By transference the powers of the Goddess are both secularised and defused. Equally individualism, the Puritan one to one relationship with the deity, must be strictly controlled and brought within a rigid and blander ritualisation.

‘Do not go too low,’ says Helios to Phaethon ‘nor force your way through the upper atmosphere. Drive too high and you will set heaven on fire, too low and you will scorch the earth. The middle way is safest.’ Conservatism, caution, is the order of the day. But the enormous forces of collision are at work. The momentum of individualism gathering speed since the Middle Ages, re-energised in the Renaissance where, through Plutarch’s *Lives* and other works, a world of individuals is regained in Greece and Rome. That momentum suddenly absorbed by impact with the Medieval world order, and the Christian myth.

A history created in every moment, meets a history generated long ago in one supra-historical moment. The fluid meets the fixed. And this happens in England in a very short space of time, most intensely in the 1590’s, throwing up individuals who must clash with the order that Monarchy and Church desperately seek to regain and ensure. Shakespeare works away at it in nearly every play, the desire for order, an order that is in doubt.

On the Queen all the power of the nation converges. Exactly as it converges on Agamemnon in the *Iliad*. Achilles however is the Individual. He is ephemeral, short-lived, naked in his vulnerability, lacking in hereditary authority, not consecrated, not a nexus of power, but unique, and aware. He is unstable, prone to moody silences, capable of introversion, reclusiveness, but he is also expansive, formidable, energetic when roused, fatal. He is a brief flare in the darkness, but one that flawed though it is, sheds a luminescence on the age.

‘The great Achilles whom we knew’. How can Elizabeth not fear these younger men whom she raises up, these shining faces full of grace, talent, wit and energy, whose royalty is within, whose power is only an individual power, but by its nature self-generated and essentially legitimate? An Essex, a Raleigh, challenge her to play as a woman, as an intellect, as a partner, as a friend, as a lover, beyond the rules she sets. Always Elizabeth has to consciously strive to bring them back to the game, to work within the rules, within her laws.

It tires her. She is rested by the Burleighs, the Walsinghams, the Egertons. They are within the circle of her crown. But these others play outside it. Sulk in their tents, challenge her judgements, dislike her conditions. But how the safe men bore her! She likes the risk. Where risk is, the hero is born.

With risk is associated the great prize, the golden flower stolen from the underworld, the beautiful lover claimed, the Grail glimpsed. And with risk comes transience, fleeting joy, ultimate sorrow, a name, and silence. These are men who are attracted to risk, prepared to take great risks, who succeed through taking them, and who finally fail through overestimating the humanity and greatness of their enemies. They fall foul of that banality, that legalistic process, which are judgement but not justice.

The risk taking is another aspect of that collision of myths. Where more than one order exists then there is no safety anywhere. Where the laws are incompatible then we must think for ourselves. It all becomes more difficult, harder to understand. The Goddess becomes the Queen, but the Queen is illegitimate order, where the Goddess, mute and troubled, is legitimate, natural order. The Individual must conform by asserting the power of the impersonal State at the whim of an individual Queen, and while asserting by their very individuality the ultimate defeat of what they assert.

So the speeches before execution where these men ask to be forgiven seem to us a sad falling off, yet declare by contrast the deeper rebellion of their lives. Raleigh’s *History of the World* in asserting its orthodox religious views seems antiquated, almost medieval. Yet the man himself, the prisoner in the Tower, creates an unforgettable, mythic image, and a symbol of the self-sufficient world to come, the scientist in his laboratory, the artist in his

room, the modern individual life, lived for itself, for its richness and its transience.

Devereux's mother is Lettice Knollys, one of those indomitable Elizabethan women, Bess of Hardwick is another, who live long lives, and challenge the Queen. Usually they survive in a sufficiently distant part of the country, Herefordshire, or Derbyshire. They live well north of the furthest summer progressions of Elizabeth and her entourage, those expensive visits that help preserve the royal wealth to the detriment of her subjects. They live sufficiently far away from Court to offer havens to those in distress (Arabella Stuart for example is sent to Hardwick to the Cavendishes). Lettice marries four times. Her second husband is the Earl of Essex, Robert's father, who dies in Ireland when Robert is a boy. Her third is the Earl of Leicester, (to Elizabeth's secret dismay) her fourth Sir Christopher Blount, making this near contemporary of Essex, and faithful follower, his stepfather. Blount is executed for his part in Essex's insurrection.

Lettice stirs Elizabeth up enough to have her ears boxed and be banished from court, for upstaging Elizabeth. Elizabeth thinks he gets his 'high heart' from his mother. Elizabeth's own heart is high. She never lacks courage. In her it is always the war between bravery and caution, between achieving the crown and risking her mother's fate. That Anne Boleyn whom Wyatt, adapting a sonnet of Petrarch, wrote of, a woman dangerous to follow after or aspire to. 'Whoso list to hunt, I know where is a hind...And graven with diamonds with letters plain there is written her fair neck round about: Noli me tangere, for Caesar's I am, and wild to hold, though I seem tame.'

As Queen, Elizabeth must hold the middle way. Bowed under the weight of the sacred crown, that circle over the head of the monarch that creates an intercourse with glory and power; an Athene denying her body to gods and men, blinding those who like Tiresias see her naked; the Goddess restrains her wildness. She substitutes for it a dalliance with risk-taking young men, with Odysseus, or Achilles. She is ruthless in the end, helping

them, sharpening their minds and their actions, empowering their swords, appreciating the quick intelligence, the deft action, the brilliant moment, but when necessary withdrawing her protection, forcing the hero to attend, to be aware of her, to have respect, to recognise her power in the everyday and the banal. 'I will be here again' says Essex, 'and follow on the same course, stirring a discontent in her.' 'I was ever sorry that your lordship should fly with waxen wings' Bacon coolly assesses. Essex remains the symbol of all those promising individuals who outreaching their own capabilities and wisdom fall out of the sky.

Why are they so attractive to us, these people who often seem arrogant, wasteful, vain? Because our minds also aspire? Because they attempted greatness? Because their end completes their beginning, their sin is expiated by their death, the circuit completed not by the winning chariot of the sun, but by the blazing meteor that is their transit over the horizon, their bright fall? Because they stir in us the mythological, the archetypal? Because their lives illuminate a fascinating story? Because they fight clear of regret and remorse, and blame, and cowardice? Because even though they beg for their lives and turn on their followers in extremity, they make a good end? Because they embrace that transience and that nearness to death, that risk in living, which touches us all? Because they are not trivial? They give of their best, and at the last seem cheated. 'I see the fruits of these kinds of employment.... and call to mind' says Essex, 'the words of the wisest man who ever lived....Vanity of Vanities.'

The Elizabethan age remains close to the mythic. The Church replaced the pagan festivals with its own Saint's days and holy days, but the pagan gods lived on disguised, or mutilated, like worn Gothic statues, the Green Men masked in leaves, carved out of stone. It is Shakespeare who reveals most nakedly the meaning of that loss of sacred Nature, the loss of an ancient respect for what is Female, the loss of the Goddess. His Catholic family background left him sensitive to that image of the sacred mother,



still virgin, and of that goddess of the natural world, always silent but the centre of truth. Artemis, whose shrine was at Delos, who is Diana the huntress, hides in Nature, surrounded by her virgin companions, she is the silent heart of the wood, the gleaming of Moon and water. Demeter, the Mother, sees her daughter Persephone, the Maiden, abducted, raped and abused, condemned through that forcing of her innocence to a life on Earth, but also a second twilight life in Hades. Cordelia, likewise, is the Kore, the beloved Delian heart, the 'coeur de' Lear, the silence at the centre of the world, the soul of the protagonist.

Elizabeth appreciated the effect of the severance from Rome and thereby from the rituals of the Goddess. They were the ancient rituals of Venus and Adonis, of Attis and Cybele. They were the rituals of the cycle of the natural year, whereby Nature, the Great Goddess, must see her consort the sun destroyed and resurrected, buried and brought to life from the ground, executed and revived, harvested and germinated, dismembered and made whole again. The Church was forced to assimilate the great myth into itself because its own myth was a variant, but a crucial variant, on the theme of the god who dies to save the natural world.

Christianity's more important messages for the Elizabethans concerned sin and redemption, the fall of humanity and its potential salvation, the advent of divine mercy, pity, peace and love, as valid poles of social as well as private morality. Nevertheless Elizabeth sought continually to take on herself the mantle of the Virgin, the attributes of the goddess. So she is poeticised as Belphebe, Gloriana, Virginia, Artemis, Cynthia the moon goddess, Astraea the virgin goddess of justice, impartial, wise, severe, but granting affection. Elizabeth was born under Virgo, and associated herself with that constellation, which the Greek myth suggests was formed when Astraea, tired of the crimes of men, climbed to the heavens, to rejoin her father Zeus, the oak god. Astraea punishes crimes, hates disorder, is intolerant of chaotic failure, impatient with mankind.

Raleigh writes of her as the Moon Goddess, endlessly. 'Praised be Diana's faire and harmless light', 'If Synthia be a Queen, a princess and supreme', 'A queen she was to me, no more Belphebe', 'A vestal fire that burns, but never wasteth'. She was the Faerie Queen in Spenser's poem dedicated to Raleigh. For that poem Raleigh wrote his introductory verse, A

Vision. 'Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay'. He refers to the vestal flame, within the temple, Elizabeth outshining Petrarch's beloved Laura enough to make Petrarch himself weep. Raleigh calls it a vision 'upon this conceit of the Faery Queen'. Does the conceit display a faith, a belief, a genuine love, or is it merely a Courtier's tribute, a sophisticated intellectual game? Can poetry and theatre truly help to transfer the veil of the Goddess to the mortal woman? Did Raleigh really love this woman twenty years older than himself, reaching her sixties in the 1590's when he was in his forties, in his prime? She was thirty-five years older than Essex. An aged Virgin. But power is power, and it was focused on her.

Should we be cynical in that way? Raleigh never is. Essex may well have been. It shows perhaps the difference in age between the two men, the difference in temperament, the difference in background. She made Raleigh, but Essex was already nobility. Essex also wrote poetry about her. Henry Wotton served Essex, before becoming, among other things, ambassador to Venice and ultimately Provost of Eton College under Charles the First. He said of Essex that 'he liked to evaporate his soul in a sonnet' as Wotton himself, friend of Donne in his early days, also did. 'Change thy mind since she doth change' wrote Essex in his complaining mode.

Raleigh blames himself or fate, but submits to the Goddess. He fails to understand his subsequent fall, but his response is not complaint but lament. Essex prefigures his own future fall in his dissatisfaction, envy and sense of injustice. 'Life, all joys are gone from thee, others have what thou deservest. Oh! my death doth spring from hence. I must die for her offence.' Henry Wotton in his verse was more sober, realistic, and penetrating, understanding political risk and self-deception, writing in his lines on the fall of Somerset 'Dazzled thus with height of place, whilst our hopes our wits beguile, no man marks the narrow space twixt a prison and a smile'.

In Elizabeth the rational mind is always uppermost, that intellect which watches, waits, has learnt caution, demands order, duty, control, is in

itself its own power, and wields absolute power over the conscious brain. The psyche, the soul, the woman herself is in some way suppressed. She takes on the role of a man, diverts into anger, tantrums, coquetry the irrational part of her self, the hidden subconscious. She is divorced from her soul. Her answer to any challenge from her soul is to annihilate it. This is the Puritan reflex. The need for order, to legitimise the Tudor dynasty, demands that needs are controlled, that wishes are sublimated. Her femininity is translated into pageantry, the wit of courtiers, pseudo-worship of the divine queen. The myth itself, the greater life, of biology, nature, and instinct, of love and truth, simplicity and beauty, the apolitical life of silence and reverence, is bypassed, short-circuited, defused. The true Goddess is buried.

The Queen is Virgin, but it is not the sweet, sacred virginity of the maiden, rather the chilly virginity of Athene, the power which rules in sterility, demanding obedience but chary of affection. It is for her, a woman taking on the mantle of divine kingship, an absolute necessity to wear this mask. It is imposed by male society. It is a condition of maleness. The mysteries, the private worlds, the internal communions, magic, extremism, heresy, disorder, rebellion, must be viciously suppressed. It is a condition demanded of arbitrary kingship, of hereditary, unmerited power, that its survival, if it is not to be at the whim of the crowd, must be ensured by oppression and tyranny, by ruthless control, by a continually reiterated call to duty and responsibility. Uncivilised nature, passion, the attacks of the body on the mind, of appetite on reason, are inimical to the king.

Since we can only achieve peace by laying down power, then the position of power is always at odds with peace, with our best interests, with the interests of the spirit and the soul. Since the king cannot relinquish command except through self-transformation he must bury deep everything that does not support the kingdom. So the king must search out the perfect servant, the uncomplaining aspect of the soul, the Burleigh, who in a strange sexual reversal is the woman to Elizabeth's man. This is not to deny Burleigh his masculinity also. Those aspects of femininity which support the crown, its love of ornamentation, its coquetry, its sacred distance, its willingness to serve, its maternal solicitude, its remote chastity, its loyalty and reliability, are acceptable. Those aspects which undermine the crown, passion, appetite, irresponsibility, sexuality, desire for power, ambition,

sorcery, promiscuity, generation, violence, heresy, must be destroyed, and punished.

The man, like Essex, or Raleigh who challenges, who displays his capability to bear children, who shows ambition, is ungrateful or petulant, violent or offensive, must be punished, or destroyed. The women who consort with them Frances Walsingham, Elizabeth Throckmorton, Lettice Knollys (who married Elizabeth's Robin, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester) must be banished from Court as representatives of the irrational alter ego, the vessels of appetite, of nature, of potential threat.

Those who wear the mask of the Goddess, can never be ultimately trusted. In a moment the Goddess can alter from her benign to her malicious aspect, split in two, show her passionate nature, as the emblem of the total earth of which rationality is only a part. She, visible as he or she, is daemonic, other-worldly, an amoral witch, a faithless bride, a forbidden destination for the mind, a hidden soul out of consciousness, a boiling up from the deep psyche of everything true that is also everything to be denied and falsified.

The favourite, the blessed one, for whom affection is shown, on whom gifts are showered, wealth as a substitute for closeness, for sexuality, for love, is also to be feared. The soul may rise in rebellion, ambition may become insurrection, aspiration may become lust, affection may make demands and seek to demonstrate power, love may become treachery. Elizabeth is the masculine kingship, the force of reason, the source of order. In that role she must suppress the Goddess, and she does, as Catholicism, as Mary the rival Queen, as heresy, as sorcery, as deviant ambition. Her tragedy is that nature denied is barren. The Virgin Queen can have no heir. The rational mind alone cannot achieve totality of vision, and reconciliation. Nature and the Goddess conceal the face of Death behind the mask of conception and birth. The aged body is not immortal.

The irony of her denial of the Goddess in the name of rational government, is that the destruction of the myth of the Goddess brings down with it the myth of royalty and kingship. If one is not sacred neither

is the other, since it is from hereditary accident that the power derives. The generation of nature is also the generation of kings. In the following centuries the suppressed Goddess will continue to be suppressed, buried below the surface of society, or openly denied. For the Victorians, Woman is sacred, because otherwise she is the Goddess in her demonic form. Therefore she splits in two into the 'angel in the house' and the 'fallen' woman of the city's underworld. Men pay homage to both. This is what we call the Victorian hypocrisy. For the true Church similarly woman must be the virgin or the lesser vessel, lest she become Diana of the Ephesians at whose temple women prostituted themselves on behalf of the Goddess.

Elizabeth and Essex show the surface of events, the visible motivations, the tensions of politics. Behind them though are the forces and pressures, which may explain their hysteria, their over-reaction to events, the tragic outcome of those events. The transference of the myth to herself, which Elizabeth engineered, reacted viciously on the Stuarts who succeeded her. Paradoxically while it tried to rob the Catholic remnants of the Goddess myth of their power, it identified the Crown with the myth, correctly, and thereby guaranteed Puritan opposition to the monarchy if it failed to act in line with the nation's aspirations. The one jealous God would not lie down with the Goddess.

James, whom Henry of Navarre called 'the wisest fool in Christendom', carried on her work, but without her intellect, her instincts, her balance. Dissenting Mind was now disengaged from the royal myth. It had passed into the social structure where it would fight the Goddess from below rather than above, and into the Church which espoused Jehovah and the myth of sin and redemption, itself not yet understanding the destruction of all myth which was under way. Catholicism had been defeated but at the cost ultimately of kingship. Kingship would be defeated, leaving Religion standing as the last mythical nexus. That awaited the onslaught of science. Through science, democracy, law and commerce, reason triumphed. At the cost of the myths, at the price of ejecting Humanity into the Wasteland.

Who decided that Essex should die on Ash Wednesday? It is the day after Shrove Tuesday and marks the beginning of Lent, the period of repentance and fasting, commemorating Jesus of Nazareth's forty days solitude in the desert. Appropriate then, as a Christian time to repent one's sins. Ash Wednesday however is also an ancient festival. The Carnival, the week before Lent, was a time of riot and indulgence celebrated in festivity in Catholic countries (the Latin 'carnem levare' means to put away meat). The pre-Christian festival contained rituals that surround the killing of the old representative of the vegetation god in order to convey the spirit to a new incarnation. The divine king is killed in order to quicken the fields and to resurrect the god in a younger and newer form. The original hunting ritual where the slain god was an animal (Actaeon as a deer, Adonis linked to a wild boar) continued in the agricultural world. In Provence an effigy called Caramantran was stoned on Ash Wednesday. In the Ardennes a personification went through mock execution. In Normandy an effigy was rolled down the hill and then set alight, before being thrown through the air into the river, a death by all the elements. In Germany a straw man was formally condemned, beheaded, laid in a coffin, and buried in the churchyard. And so on. The young god, the former king, is deposed and executed in order to guarantee the resurrection of the god at the next turn of the sacred wheel. Why was Essex beheaded on Ash Wednesday?

February-March is the Celtic lunar ash month, the ash tree being the third letter of the tree alphabet, nion, after birch and rowan. Ash Wednesday also coincided with the start of the third zodiacal month, when the sun is in Pisces. It is in Pisces then that the Sun, conjunct Mars, rises on that February morning. Wednesday is Mercury's day. Mercury, the mind, in Aquarius the sign of change, is troubled, squaring Saturn the planet of constriction and severity in Scorpio Essex's sun sign. The Sun and Mars, his life's energies and selfhood, are debilitated, squaring the Moon as she moves into Scorpio, his birth sign. Jupiter is setting conjunct his natal Saturn, signifying the end of good fortune, falling below the horizon in Virgo, Elizabeth's sign.

At that sunrise Pluto the planet of fate, is alongside Uranus the planet of change. Pluto and Mars are the rulers of Scorpio. On the day of his insurrection, Pluto was conjunct the darkening Moon, while Mars conjunct the Sun was square his natal Sun in Scorpio and opposed by Neptune planet of illusion and self-deception. Essex carries out his insurrection in a failing dream, his fate obscured by the Queen, his energies opposed to his natural energies. He dies with fading fortune, attacked by the Moon, under the sign of altered fate.

We know there is no scientific basis for Astrology. The Elizabethans were taught by their religion that God left human beings with free will, and that Euripides was in error when he said that ‘What is ordained is master of the gods and thee’. The chances of finding significant alignments in any astrological chart are high. Any two planets have better than a one in eight chance of forming a major alignment, that is a conjunction, opposition, sextile, trine or square, with each other, assuming that a tolerance of three degrees is accepted. With sixty-six pairings, from the ten ‘planets’ plus the ascendant and midheaven, to play with, any chart will therefore show up major aspects. In addition the wealth of symbolism associated with planets and signs offers the possibility for endless interpretations. The mind unconsciously focuses on elements of the chart that ‘fit’ the subject and mutes or discards the others. As a symbolic pattern however astrology does provide interesting ways of thinking about personality and character traits, and offers a symbolic theatre where the game of fate is ‘played’ out. It is this language available for thinking about personality which is attractive to us in the absence of any profound alternative. Certainly Freud and Jung and their successors have not provided an accessible or credible means of describing normal human character and behaviour. A deep scepticism about astrology is appropriate, and in itself it can have no predictive power, but the theatre remains strangely attractive.

Perhaps we might say that in the Elizabethan age these things would have been taken seriously, where in our age it is hard to do so, and thereby legitimise an astrological view of the events of that time? Essex ‘fits’ his charts. He is the moody, touchy, fatal, attractive Scorpio par excellence, his

birth chart full of tension. Typecast as Sydney's successor, courtier, soldier, horseman, he is a part of the aristocratic culture. He is faced with a new breed of men, rising to that aristocracy, who were not raised on Castiglione's 'The Courtier', who rarely if ever held a weapon. He is also a last romantic, an intense personality steam-rollered by a rising order based on intelligence, cunning and pragmatism. He was doomed to fail.

The planet Pluto, unknown in Elizabethan times, is now assigned to Scorpio, and links to the fundamental interior of the psyche. Pluto is identified in its movements through the skies as the gateway to humility, to acceptance of greater powers than oneself. Helios warns his son Phaethon that he must pass the Scorpion's cruel pincers on his journey through that circuit where there are no sacred groves, or cities of the gods, past Taurus the white bull of Mithras, Sekhmet the lion-goddess, the Archer and the Crab, past every sign of the Zodiac, in order to return. It was a Scorpion that attacked Orion, in that aggression characteristic of the sign, ruled also by fiery Mars, lord of violent catastrophes. And Scorpion-men rebelled against Osiris in the Egyptian myth.

Scorpio erupts from the bowels of the earth, from underground, from the hidden realm, from the waters of beginning, the moisture of generation, primal, natural, powerful, and creative. The waters of Artemis's sylvan pool, secret and leaf-shadowed become the fearful tears of Actaeon as he sees his transfigured shape as a deer, and then become the blood and fluids seeping into the ground from his torn carcass. They are the libation to the earth, the token of sacrifice, the flesh and blood, the transubstantiated wine and bread, the veins and flesh. That place of dampness is the place of offering. From the dark grove in the woods, to the stone altar. In all the intimate exchanges of life.

Essex is part of the mythological tension and power of Elizabethan times. They move us because they are close to the archetypal patterns of



existence in a way our times are not. Yet he is also part of that process of challenge, rebellion, refusal of the crooked conditions, which destroyed the myths. He and Elizabeth argue. He turns his back on her, she, furious, boxes his ears. He storms out leaving the spectators dumbfounded. She is mortal, and mortally offended. He aspires, and is not afraid to challenge her. Can Essex really be a precursor of the Protestant ethic? Can the last of the aristocratic challengers be also the forerunner of the Civil War, of the men who wrested power from the Crown and vested it in Parliament? Can the receiver of Royal favours, spell also the end of Royal prerogatives? Is Essex, that sacrifice to ensure the continuity of a reign, the fruitfulness of the established order, also the revelation of that injustice and arbitrary despotism which will lead to the execution of a king, and the end of that order?

Regardless of what he himself thought, his end had symbolic meaning for others. That is also true of Raleigh. Discontent with the judgements against them, was added to that simmer of discontent, that desire for freedom, which is always apparent below the surface of Tudor and Elizabethan society. Desire for freedom of thought, for justice, for liberty of conscience and religion, for participation in the exercise of power, for removal of the burden of arbitrary taxation, for access to the means of livelihood. Ironical that Sir Edward Coke, the man who conducted travesties of justice in the trials of Essex and Raleigh, should by the end of his life have rejected the manipulation of the courts by the crown. Overturning his own prior judgements, he went on to enshrine in his exposition of the Common Law rules of justice, for future generations to enhance.

The English people preferred fair play to arbitrary justice, even arbitrary mercy. The mythic crown, the crown of power, was losing its sacred inviolability. Ideas were the new coinage, enshrined in words, passed from mind to mind, that would seal the contracts of the future. Essex did not challenge the crown in the name of the people. But the people took up the challenge in their own name. History may make myths out of men who in themselves embody something other, even something opposite. History too is confused by the bright, glittering light, and the image silhouetted against the dawn.

And that idealism too, derived from the Italian Renaissance. The idealism, which drives the fantasy of the Virgin Queen, the chivalry of the courtier-poet, that, encourages transmutation of the sordid realities for a greater dream. It is the gorgeous hyperbole of Marlowe's line. It is the sweetness of Shakespeare's verse. It is Hilliard's miniatures, those icons of jewelled excellence. It is the windowed form of the Tudor great houses, and the freshness and clarity behind the music and poetry of the age. It is the intensity and excitement, which intoxicates minds. That idealism is transferred in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, from the arts to politics, from thought to action, from the glamour of the old England to the struggle for power and liberty of the new.

It was an age obsessed with the concept of order, because it was an age reaching out for the new, and like ours struggling with the challenge of absorbing that newness into the fabric of the old. The Elizabethan frontiers were global exploration, trade, and the birth of science and empire. Our frontiers are technology, genetics, the environment, and human misery. At stake in both societies: individuality and freedom to fulfil human potential. At stake in both societies the potencies of the past, of nature and the Goddess: and the potencies of the future, the transformation of minds and bodies, the power of commerce and wealth.

The clamour at Essex's death was a small part of that great challenge the inception of which, through an irony, Elizabeth's reign saw. It challenged the ancient powers of sacred law and inherited structure. The Elizabethan Age opened the floodgates to new knowledge, allowed out the genie that can never be bottled up again, raised the lid on Pandora's box, ate from the tree. The Elizabethans continued the destruction of the Goddess. As Cordelia, as Desdemona, as Cleopatra, the loving and the carnal Goddess. They altered the forms of prayer to de-mystify. They turned power away from the Church. And what was started, what men like Marlowe, and Essex, Raleigh and Donne furthered, was an exaltation of reason and intellect, of individuality and secular energy, of direct communication with a masculine God, with Jehovah, of democratic procedure, of written law, of commerce run by men, of science carried out by men. Shakespeare's concern with justice, with the war between the rational and the bestial, understanding and blind instinct, will and appetite, reflects the fierceness with which the battle for pure reason was addressed in his age and the next.

The Goddess, metaphorically speaking, went down to defeat in the Civil War alongside the sacred crown. The irrational, the mythical, the passionate life of the feelings, the caring and loving, the power of the female, was suppressed. In the following centuries and in our own times it lives on in the arts, in music, the novel, and poetry; in environmentalism; in charitable activities; in the private and personally motivated world. But power in the secular and social world has irreparably passed. Science, commerce, consumption of the resources of nature, nature seen as a resource, the economic weight of a materialistic society, raises the secular odds against the Goddess.

The people of classical Athens also struggled with the same issues and failed to resolve them. How were spiritual needs to be fulfilled in a rational age? Were religions which originated in an outmoded social context meaningful in modern times, when the Gods were being discarded from intellectual discourse, or relegated to fringe cults, and suspect mysticism? Where was the emotional substitute for the ancient values which rationalism eroded? Yet for them and for us, the survival of the spirit, seemed absolutely to depend on the survival of sacredness and love, that is the Goddess in her benign aspects. At stake also the survival of the natural world, the survival of the very concept of the human mind and body, the survival of liberty, of freedom in time, space and thought. The rampant militarism of the imperialistic Macedonians, of Philip and Alexander, provided no answer.

There is an analogy in classical Greece also for the envy and pettiness that seems to corrode Elizabethan public life, a wasteful carelessness where talent and originality are concerned, as though the supply of greatness and originality from the tap is endless. Athens at the same time that it recognised the power and excellence of the creative individual grew nervous, exercised ostracism by vote. Cimon, Themistocles, Aristides, were all exiled. Miltiades and Socrates imprisoned and eliminated.

Jealousy is a powerful motive, in public opinion or in a monarch. Elizabeth resented those who encroached on her power, loved those who

exercised it by gift on her behalf so long as they exercised it in the way she wanted. James's envy of Raleigh was an element in Raleigh's destruction. Who else combined intellect with courage, control with eloquence, good looks with manners, grace with wit, achievement with endurance, and longevity with multifarious energies as Raleigh did? Hard not to be envious of such a Renaissance man. Jealousy and Envy - apprehension of losing what one believes is one's own, grudging contemplation of the more fortunate other. The individual, Essex, is countered by the loyal factions, by the law, by propaganda, by control and penalty, by conditions, crooked if necessary, that bind him into the body politic.

Not just those who have seen or betrayed a secret, Sisyphus, Prometheus, Actaeon, Pentheus, but also those who deviate from the norm, who pursue an individual course, must be punished. Those who exhibit excess in all its aspects are punished by gods or men. Arachne for weaving too well, Ariadne for loving too well, Lucifer and Phaethon for pride, for aspiring to be equal with the deity, Midas for love of gold, Narcissus for love of his own beauty. The individual is punished. The gods are jealous of their powers, and envious of those powers mirrored in a mortal. They are also the purveyors of justice, and punish those who overstep the mark. Hubris, pride, ends in ate, downfall.

In Shakespeare's major tragedies his male protagonists are driven by a corrupting vision to passion and by passion to excess. They are punished by the loss of their soul often embodied in a woman they loved, whose purity of motive in action is the silence of the loving spirit. Shakespeare identifies these heroines with natural order, with speechless simplicity and sincerity, with the Goddess in her beneficent mode. The passion that causes their agony is a vision of the Goddess in her malificent mode, carnal, anarchic, festering, goading and seductive. The heroines are an incarnation of natural reason. The heroes an incarnation of irrational passion. But both arise from nature. Shakespeare's problem is our problem, how to live rationally without killing the spirit, without chilling the soul, how to be passionate without destroying order, without calling down on ourselves the wrath of the gods, the wrath of society. His answer is Love. A temporary almost momentary magic exercised through creativity, awareness, intelligence, respect, and grace. Essex is a passionate protagonist who sees a corrupted vision of the Goddess. His reaction seems like madness. Is it a false vision,

in which case Elizabeth plays the role of the betrayed Goddess, and Essex's failure is the failure to offer humility, loyalty, and love? Or does it have substance, in which case Elizabeth is the Queen of Hell, tormenting, frustrating, wronging, and discarding the abused hero?

Essex steps out of line, almost wilfully. His insurrection is a half-baked affair, without sensible resources or support, unfocused, amateurish, misaligned with public opinion. It is the act of a frustrated man, frustrated with himself. Has he been scheming with James and Cecil over the Stuart succession? Elizabeth herself has accepted that succession. He is near bankrupt, how will this craziness help his depleted finances? Is he ill, deranged? Likely his summons to appear before the Privy Council, which he refuses, forces his hand. A badly planned coup is executed prematurely. The plot if there is one is forestalled. The timing is destroyed by Egerton, Knollys and Popham arriving at Essex House where they are promptly held as hostages. The Earl's march into the City runs into the soldiers in Ludgate Street. Empty streets, an unprepared populace, a nervous Sheriff, it is all an execrable fiasco.

The keynotes seem to be hysteria on Essex's part, foolish support from his immediate circle, and a lack of clear purpose or leverage. Strange. He appears as a man at the end of his tether, isolated, against the wall. To pursue him therefore, as Elizabeth now does, seems vindictive in the extreme. She too seems hysterical. They are more like crazed lovers, the pair of them, than sensible agents of power. Coke and Bacon and Egerton do the dirty work for her. On that Sunday the eighth of February the Earl of Essex effectively throws his life away. On the ninth he is in the Tower.

Why not imprison him under house arrest as had been done before? He had failed the Queen in Ireland, stormed in on her at Nonesuch. She was furious. Her response on that occasion was to place him in the custody of Lord Keeper Egerton in York House on the Strand, Egerton's official

residence. Access to his wife and newly born child was denied. He stayed there all winter and was released to his own Essex House, in March of 1600. In the June of 1600 a case against him was opened in front of eighteen Commissioners at York House. Francis Bacon spoke for the Crown after the Attorney General Coke. Essex was accused of disloyalty, of having made a bad treaty with Tyrone in Ireland, and of other things.

The Queen was interested in allusions to the play of Richard the Second, which had been performed for the Essex set, as it came dangerously close to raising the Tudor claim to the throne. Bacon quoted from a letter where Essex had said the Queen was obdurate. 'By the common law of England' said Bacon referring to Elizabeth 'a prince can do no wrong.' Essex knelt in front of his judges, was humble, and expressed his loyalty and devotion. Essex was to return to his own house, effectively imprisoned there, barred from the Privy Council, dismissed as Earl Marshal. Bacon told the Queen she had won a victory over fame and a great mind and that she might now receive Essex again with tenderness after his humiliation.

Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida* suggests through Ulysses's (Raleigh's) mouth the necessity of that humiliation. 'The seeded pride, that hath to this maturity blown up in rank Achilles must or now be cropp'd or, shedding, breed a nursery of like evil to overbulk us all.' Essex exchanged letters with Bacon. Bacon explaining that his higher loyalty was with the Queen, and speaking of Icarus. Essex was accepting and courteous in reply, professing himself a stranger to poetical conceits, and saying that if he had wings he was no bird of prey. Not the letter of a hysteric or a madman.

What was so heinous about his offence this time that required his death rather than imprisonment? Seeking to gain the popular support of the people of London, acting aggressively under the influence of Mars the soldier's planet, conspiring with the Scots? Essex, anti-Spanish, staunch Protestant, was an unlikely rebel, and his emotional appeal to the people was hardly vindicated by their indifference, their lack of support demonstrating their dislike of wilful insurrection and violence.

His defence at his trial was that he feared being attacked by his enemies; that there was a plot against him; that England was at risk from a secret deal with the Spanish Infanta over the succession. 'If I had purposed anything against other than my private enemies, I would not have stirred with so slender a company' said Essex. But it was judged treason, though Essex claimed he had no intent against the Queen. Something had mortally offended her. Raleigh's words, about Essex being too free with comments about her crookedness? The references to Richard the Second and the issue of Tudor legitimacy? Her fears that the desire of England for an English succession focused unrealistically on this man? His anti-Spanish stance? The vindictiveness of an old woman? A desire for tidiness and order? Or was it merely an opportunity to demonstrate the power of the Crown, and the punishment for dissent? Was it merely the conditioned reflex of an increasingly authoritarian State?

Raleigh the rival, the Captain of the Queen's Guard, was required officially to be present at the execution. Prevented by Essex's friends from coming too near the platform, or deliberately sacrificing his own place on the platform to them, Raleigh watched the execution from a window of the Armoury. Later it was said he had smiled at the execution, puffed tobacco smoke at the Earl. He himself was told that Essex had asked for him at the end, to enable a reconciliation. He bitterly regretted that it had not happened, and mentioned it at his own execution. Raleigh could see which way the wind was blowing.

The world of myth, of daring, of enterprise, of the bright glare of the sun, is the world of risk. Everything there is larger than life, beyond life, toying with death, understanding death's many masks. The libation is poured on the ground. It is the hero's blood. Execution is a ceremony with a priest, like marriage, or coronation. The individual alone has come so far, now, limited by what the god allows, he completes the mortal journey. The grave marker is also a winning post; the stele is also a herm. To do the wrong thing at the wrong time, to worship the wrong god, is sin. Having fallen with Adam, the individual acknowledges sin, and seeks salvation through a return to the redeeming light.

The shape of Essex's fate is mythologically visible, an attempted ascent beyond the limits ordained, a Fall, and then through confession and redemption a re-ascent. It is the shape of Protestantism. It is the shape of Genesis completed by the Crucifixion and the Ascension. Life can be cured in death. To fall is only temporary in the soul that confesses. Essex confesses and regrets his crimes. He forgives those around him. They are actors in a ritual who shall not carry individual blame for an act of expiation and renewal. He is not sliding down the slippery slope to infernal torment, has not fallen forever from the glittering crest of the great wave. Now he is returning to God, on the day of the Goddess.

In myth, sacrifice, demanded by justice, or freely accepted, is a confirmation, an offering. It can be seen as purification. A mythological circuit is completed. The action burns itself out, and the promise of the myth is fulfilled, confirmed and renewed. The social bond is asserted. The sacrificed one is a victim, but also triumphs, goes down, but also goes beyond. The mortal one is the bride or bridegroom of death: is wreathed like the winner at the Games, like the poet or poetess, with laurel leaves. He or she becomes Royal. The sacred wreath is also a crown. The crowd are participants, celebrants. They are purged by tragedy, by the reliving of the myth in the emotions, and along the nerves. The community becomes a communion, a meeting in accepted truth, in common faith.

Where there is injustice however, regardless of its final acceptance by the individual sacrificed, then the crowd is not a group of participants, but of alienated spectators. Nothing is purged. Grief and burning memories are created. Tragedy is born, not reconciliation. Myth is made and charged with the energy of uncompleted business. The sacrificed one is a martyr, and the sacrifice is only absorption, destruction, annihilation, holocaust.

Out of the unjust sacrifice, as out of the mouth of raped Cassandra, comes a dark stream of warning, of 'ancestral voices prophesying war'. Essex's trial was seen as a travesty, his sentence the result of his enemies' connivance, his execution as unjust. William Camden, the historian, writing in James's reign commented "To this day there are but few that thought it a



capital crime.' Cecil and Raleigh were vilified at the time. Essex's death became part of the complaint of 'axes and taxes' which expressed London's discontent as Elizabeth's reign ended, in the perception of authoritarianism combined with meanness, that stemmed from an inadequate economy and the aged Elizabeth's mortal insecurity.

Essex's mistakes were forgotten. His glittering presence, tempered with an apparent regard for the people of London, was the image of him that was taken up in the popular ballads. He represented, in some way, the glory of English arms. The military success at Cadiz was remembered, even though to Elizabeth the venture was unsatisfactory, in failing to benefit the exchequer. Essex's death ensured his posthumous popularity. For Essex to achieve that popularity it is clear that the Tudor regime had become deeply unpopular. 'The country hath constantly a blessing for those whom the court hath a curse.' The apparent injustice of his death fed those hidden fires that were burning under Tudor and Stuart England, a deep resentment, whose fruits were to come.



Currier & Ives, American, active 1834-1907  
*The Yale University Art Gallery*

### III - MARLOWE



n a summer's morning, a small group of people gathers to witness the disposal of the body of their friend. Dead at the age of twenty-nine, a devastating loss to literature. A fiery spirit. Sceptical, freethinking, atheistic, radical, cynical of those in power, but also possessed of an unusual idealism, a rarified quality which infused his best verse with the radiance of the high sunlit or moonlit sky. A rebel. A true Individual. University educated, he carried his love of Greek and Latin lightly, utilising the myths to serve his poetic purposes. His imagination was complex, difficult, fuelled by conflicting energies, shadowed. The beauty of the poetry, the delight in words, also seemed to lead to the edge of what words can describe. Reality was a phantasmagoria, a theatre of life, where the mind must continually labour to rise above doubt and uncertainty, in intensity and rapture, to outsoar, in a struggle against the odds. His use of language was powerful, assertive, majestic. Choosing protagonists for his poetry he frequently chose outsiders, rebels, those who did not accept the established order, who sought greater powers or new knowledge, who were self-made, who lacked the hereditary authority of king or priest, who looked into themselves, in self-awareness to find their destiny. Change rather than order had been his keynote.

It is a tragedy that he has died so young, at the height of his poetic gifts. The death is a shock, but perhaps not completely unexpected. He has shown an occasional recklessness, a spiritual wildness, a sense of frustration with rules and with the limitations of existence itself. He has been prepared to cross the authorities. He has poured out his thoughts and ideas, and genius with disregard to his own best interests. He has put the spirit before the letter, and believed in redemption rather than original sin. His atheism was an attack on superstition rather than a disbelief in futurity but it had

brought him disapprobation. He has lacked the instinct for self-preservation. The shadow that has gone along with him has had an element of the death wish in it.

The scene is in 1593, in a churchyard in Deptford. The scene is in 1822 on a beach at Via Reggio. The dead man is Christopher Marlowe. The dead man is Percy Bysshe Shelley. The body is buried. The body is burnt. Between the two deaths the English Revolution has run its course. The Goddess has been defeated. Parliament has subdued the Monarchy and taken most of its powers. The institutions of society, after the upsurge of the Civil War, have been strengthened. The radical extremist elements have been suppressed or have transformed themselves into components of the Protestant ethos. The scientific enterprise is beginning in earnest. Commerce means more to the future than religion. The wheel has turned so that a different tyranny is on top. Shelley faces the modern future in sympathy with the intellect, opposed to institutional Christianity and the weight of laws that oppress, a champion of liberty, but forced to turn within to search for an alternative emotional and personal vision.

Marlowe at the beginning of the Revolution tests the idea of liberty. Shelley, at the end of it, struggles to understand why liberty has not been achieved. Marlowe exhibits the self-created human being, the arch-questioner. Faustus and Tamburlaine, Machiavelli, and the subversive Ovid challenge the status quo and critique it. Marlowe presages modern man. Shelley is already modern man, anticipating the failure of all apocalyptic visions, courting despair, knowing true liberty not yet achieved, but pessimistic of its complete achievement. Marlowe inherits the Renaissance and its optimism, its voyage of discovery and rediscovery. Shelley inherits the failure of myth, and the disillusion of English radical thought after two centuries of trade and power supported by a Christian Church serving the interests of the State. Jehovah and Mammon in triumph. The Goddess and the Myth vanquished.

Those interests of head and heart which Shakespeare tried so hard to reconcile, resorting at the end to Prospero's authoritarian magic, had been

resolved in favour of the head. What is difficult for us was already intensely difficult for Shelley. One life seems, fancifully, a consequence of the other, as though Shelley was a Marlowe reincarnated to view the results of what his age had commenced. Shelley is Marlowe. Marlowe is Shelley. They reflect each other in the same darkened mirror. It is a conceit. Marlowe has his own light and darknesses.

Edward Blunt, the publisher, was one of the friends gathered by Marlowe's graveside. His dedication of the first part of *Hero and Leander* in 1598, a poem later finished by Chapman and first printed after Marlowe's death, pays tribute to the dead friend. The dedication is to 'Thomas Walsingham cousin of Francis Walsingham the spymaster, for whom Marlowe had carried out assignments. 'Sir, we think not ourselves discharged of the duty we owe our friend, when we have brought the breathless body to earth: for albeit the eye there taketh his ever farewell of that beloved object, yet the impression of the man, that hath been dear to us, living an afterlife in our memory, there putteth us in mind of further obsequies due to the deceased....by these meditations (as by an intellectual will) I suppose my self executor to the unhappily deceased author of this poem.' 'The breathless body...that beloved object...the impression of the man....that hath been dear to us....as by an intellectual will ....' it is a heartfelt tribute. Even this work, *Hero and Leander*, has impact on Elizabethan poetry, on Shakespeare particularly. As with Marlowe's *Dido and Aeneas*, lines prompted the music of *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*. Marlowe and Shakespeare traded words and ideas, under the patronage of the Earl of Southampton, a member of Essex's set.

Shakespeare remembered Marlowe in *As You Like It*. Marlowe's death must have been startling to Shakespeare, must have saddened him, and yet also inspired him since it left the field clear. Their political temperaments were totally unlike. Marlowe was drawn to disorder, Shakespeare to order. Shakespeare searches for reconciliation, for resolution, for renewal, for rebirth. Marlowe's protagonists fail through adverse fate, through sickness, hostile powers, a strength greater than their own. Tamburlaine is felled by nature, Mortimer by superior forces, Dido by desertion, Leander by

Neptune. Ambition fails, Pride falls, but Marlowe does not suggest that human ambition is fundamentally wrong, only that in the game of consequences it may be doomed. The effect is of the forces of Death opposed to Life, as in Shelley, a natural order of things. True, Faustus repents, in fear, and recognises his sin like Adam's of reaching for forbidden knowledge. The final Chorus of the play reminds us of Apollo, God of Moderation, and suggests that the wise should only 'wonder at unlawful things' whose depths are an enticement to practise what heavenly power does not permit. It would be a boldness though to suggest that these were Marlowe's private opinions. There are enough ironic hints otherwise in his life and writings, even in *Doctor Faustus* itself.

Born between January and the end of February 1564 the son of a shoemaker, in Canterbury, Christopher Marlowe went to study at Cambridge University in 1580. At some stage he came under the patronage of Thomas Walsingham, the Secretary of State's cousin, and in 1587 was abroad on Government service. Likely he was investigating activity at the Catholic seminary at Rheims as supported by an entry in the Privy Council Register signed by Burleigh. 'Did he not draw a sort of English priests from Douay to the seminary at Rheims, to hatch forth treason 'gainst their natural queen?' says Henry of Navarre of the Duc de Guise in Marlowe's play *The Massacre at Paris*. Douai and Rheims were centres of the English Catholics in opposition abroad.

Despite his absences from the University, Cambridge granted his M.A. By 1587 at twenty-three he had written *Dido and Aeneas*, his translations of Ovid's *Amores* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, and both parts of *Tamburlaine the Great*, produced by the Lord Admiral's Company with Alleyn as the lead actor. From the first Marlowe is subversive. His natural state is restlessness of mind, a fast-moving, quick thinking, hard, bright surface. It is an internal spiritual dynamism whose energy altered English poetry and drama, creating pace and intellectual challenge. In the early verse, in the Lucan, the disturbance, expressed as the movement of the elements, is already present 'confused stars shall meet, celestial fire fleet on the floods, the earth shoulder the sea ...', 'with bright restless fire compass the earth'. In

Tamburlaine, Nature 'framed us of four elements warring within our breasts for regiment', and the poets of inspired thought leave at least one thought unexpressed to 'hover in their restless heads'.

He is involved in the Underworld, in violence, in paid intelligence work, in crime. He is homosexual or bisexual in a world where that is still officially unacceptable. He belongs to that homosexual group that includes the bisexual Shakespeare, Francis and Anthony Bacon, the Earl of Southampton, and other members of the Essex set. He also belongs to the intellectual group centred on Raleigh and including Thomas Hariot the mathematician, astrologer, and cosmographer.

Marlowe's interests are with the new, with change, with power, with ambition, with the intellectual will. He is a man who seems always at risk, physically, morally, and intellectually. He reminds one of Danton's saying 'Audace, audace, toujours l'audace'. Daring to the point of recklessness. He represents the intellectual stirring of that rebelliousness, grounded in the individual mind, that fuels the English Revolution, and he is aggressively blatant about it.

Perhaps it is only his great poetic gifts and his government service that allowed him to survive for so long. Marlowe is one of the first of the great free spirits in English, of whom Shelley is another. Finding a moral centre in him is difficult since he lacks, for example, Shakespeare's great desire to save the Goddess, the inner heart of Man. Shakespeare almost seems to anticipate the spiritual consequences of that crushing of the soul that the Protestant ethic, commerce and duty, asceticism and censorship lead towards. Marlowe is on the other side, an agent of that change which will shake English society and create the freethinking, radical, and volatile world of the Revolution. Marlowe is already releasing the genie that Shakespeare valiantly tries to control.

Marlowe is the coolness of Reason, at play under a glittering surface, the intellect of *Liaisons Dangereuses*, not of *The Winter's Tale*. Machiavelli, the political thinker, the cynic and realist of power, speaks the prologue to the *Jew of Malta*. Marlowe is crystalline, of the stars and the mantle of night, with the gleam and glow of jewellery, lights, shining flowers. His poetry is sybaritic, hyperbolic, as well as tense and swift. The pentameters are mighty, but they are also fast moving as a river. He has a precision of

description, and a control, which saves the writing from slackness or that vagueness with which Shelley achieves grandeur. Marlowe is tauter, fiercer, sharper in his attack. His poetry is the poetry of the persuader: Leander's sophistry to seduce Hero, Dido's attempts to delay Aeneas, Tamburlaine's to overcome anyone's doubts of his greatness, Faustus to convince himself, Barabas to justify his actions, Mortimer to stiffen resolve. Marlowe looks for action, for change, as Shelley cannot. Marlowe can find a social context, Shelley only a personal landscape.

When Marlowe is killed Shakespeare pays tribute. In *As You Like It*, as well as the character Oliver Martext, Touchstone refers to Ovid. That is followed by a comment intended as a further reference to Marlowe 'When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room'. Marlowe died in a hired room at Eleanor Bull's house at Deptford Strand near the river, in a quarrel over the bill, 'le recknyng', as the coroner's inquisition puts it. The reference is also to Marlowe's line in *The Jew of Malta* 'so inclose, infinite riches in a little room.' Later in *As You Like It* Shakespeare again points to Marlowe directly with a reference to Tamburlaine the Scythian Shepherd, to Marlowe's poem *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*, and with a quotation from *Hero and Leander*. 'Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might, 'Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight.'" There is also later another direct reference to *Hero and Leander*.

Shakespeare would not have agreed with the Duke of Guise in the Massacre at Paris, 'peril is the chiefest way to happiness.... what glory is there in a common good ?..... that like I best that flies beyond my reach'. It was Marlowe who had 'the aspiring wings' and the 'quenchless thirst'. He dies too young to articulate a thought-through attitude. There are certain attitudes he does display. That regarding low birth for instance. Tamburlaine is the Scythian shepherd's son who nevertheless claims 'I am a lord, for so my deeds shall prove, and yet a shepherd by my parentage.' He is the man destined for a crown 'which gracious stars have promis'd at my birth'.



George Whetstone's comments in 1586 on Tamberlaine in the English Mirror also fit Marlowe himself 'he had a reaching and an imaginative mind ...haughtiness of his heart though of low birth.' In the play Tamburlaine sets out the validity of ambition based on personal merit 'give the world to note, for all my birth, that virtue solely is the sum of glory and fashions men with true nobility', 'You that have march'd with happy Tamburlaine..deserve these titles I endow you with, by valour and by magnanimity. Your births shall be no blemish to your fame, for virtue is the fount whence honour springs, and they are worthy she investeth kings.' Ambition and ability make the man, a revolutionary sentiment.

Ambitious to the point of storming the heavens. 'Jove sometimes masked in a shepherd's weed; and by those steps that he hath scal'd the heavens may we become immortal like the gods.', 'and both our souls aspire celestial thrones'; 'and by profession be ambitious'. The ambition is combined with an aggression that would see the universe unravel, almost an apocalyptic death wish. 'Come, let us march against the powers of heaven, and set black streamers in the firmament, to signify the slaughter of the gods....that if I perish, heaven and earth may fade'. 'For so I live,' says Barabas, 'perish may all the world!'

In a mythological sense it is precisely the slaughter of the gods that the English will be about as they turn their society upside down in the Civil War. So 'break the frame of heaven; batter the shining palace of the sun, and shiver all the starry firmament'; 'I charge thee....to do whatever Faustus shall command, be it to make the moon drop from her sphere, or the ocean to overwhelm the world.' Man is greater than the heavens, Mephistopheles tells Faustus. 'Think'st thou heaven is such a glorious thing... it was made for man, therefore is man more excellent.' Marlowe tempers his revolutionary stance in describing the fate of Faustus who repents. He maintains the plays artistic shape, and he keeps his play clear of the censors, by revealing a final orthodoxy.

Power is all, and men fight 'for sceptres and for slippery crowns' but if they fail 'the worst is death'. 'Base fortune,' says Mortimer, in Edward The

Second, 'now I see, that in thy wheel there is a point to which when men aspire, they tumble headlong down: that point I touch'd, and, seeing there was no place to mount up higher, why should I grieve at my declining fall?' He is that Mortimer in *Edward The Second* 'that scorns the world, and, as a traveller, goes to discover countries yet unknown'. If men cannot 'control proud Fate, and cut the thread of Time' well 'to die.. therefore live we all; ...all live to die, and rise to fall.' This is the natural order, this ambition that comes by nature, and virtuous men keep climbing till they can climb no further in their attempt to mount to the skies. Marlowe puts these speeches into the mouths of his Machiavellian heroes, but stops short of condemning them. His heroes fail like Prometheus because the gods, fate, earthly powers, or the stars are too strong for them, not because they have sinned. Faustus has bargained away his soul, but it is not the feminine soul that Shakespeare is so fearful for, and works so hard to recover. Faustus is still Faustus, only he has to pay. How did Marlowe get past the censors with so much dangerous matter? By bringing Faustus within the framework of a conventional religious ending.

Our destiny in our stars? Or in our own control? Tamberlaine thinks both. 'Smile stars that reigned at my nativity'. A self-made man takes advantage of his fortune. 'Endure as we the malice of our stars', and with fortitude outrides the shadow. The universe is, like Tamburlaine, 'peremptory, as wrathful planets, death, or destiny.' Stars 'govern his nativity'. Marlowe's own stars? Baleful, cold and constraining Saturn is conjunct the expansive Jupiter at his birth, both planets retrograde and Saturn in detriment in Cancer. The tension between irresponsibility and hard work, between wide vision and external constraint is visible in his life. There is tenacity, potential, single-mindedness, and an urge for activity. Uranus and Neptune are in opposition, square to Pluto, setting up a tee-square of tensions. The three themes of sexuality, poetry and the underworld are therefore present from the outset. Uranus in Sagittarius significantly aspected points to his ambiguous sexuality, his attraction to change, his freedom-loving extremism that loathes restriction, his restless originality. Neptune in Gemini points to artistic and religious inspiration,

to a flair for language, intellectualism and wit, to a restless, cunning, nervous energy, to a certain careless, reckless, self-deceiving quality of mind. Pluto in Pisces indicates a fascination with the secret and concealed, with the forces behind the façade and a weak-willed attraction to the twilight world of espionage and to revolutionary and rebellious thoughts.

‘Who knows not the double motion of the planets’ asks Faustus ‘... as Saturn in thirty years?’ As with Shelley, and with Donne, at the time of their deaths, Saturn had made its approximately twenty-nine and a half year journey through the zodiac, and returned to its natal position. The Saturn return was known in astrology for its dark influence. Shelley and Marlowe die at their first Saturn return, Donne at his second. Marlowe’s Saturn returning to Cancer eclipses the happy Venus, and opposes Jupiter the planet of good fortune while squaring Pluto and his natal Sun. The sun, conjunct the moon at the dark, is also conjunct the natal Neptune, triggering the natal tee-square. Fate and change are in play, self-deception and constrained fortune, the underworld and Uranian sexuality. Hero and Leander, broken off, will not now be completed by Marlowe.

Marlowe was often in trouble with the authorities. In the summer of 1589 he and a friend Thomas Watson, a fellow dramatist, poet and translator are engaged in a quarrel with William Bradley. Bradley has said he is in fear of his life. Marlowe is caught up one afternoon, like Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, in a sword-fight on behalf of Watson, after being attacked. Watson killed Bradley. Marlowe went to Newgate prison for a fortnight. In May 1592 he uses threatening language towards a constable. In the autumn he fights a duel in Canterbury. He is not a stranger to aggressive and dangerous behaviour. It is not playing the courtier which gets you favour with great men, says Spencer in *Edward the Second*, ‘You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute, and now and then stab, as occasion serves’

Marlowe has worked for Walsingham’s secret service. He has been shipped back to England after being involved in false coining, on his own behalf or as an undercover agent. He had been drawn into the group of men working for Essex via Anthony Bacon. At the meeting in Deptford on

the day he died, he is with three men who are all associated with the Elizabethan underworld. Ingram Frizer, who accidentally stabs Marlowe to death, is a man of property, Thomas Walsingham's business agent, a loan shark. Robert Poley is a government agent, a spy, who appears in the story of the Babington Plot that indirectly cost Mary Queen of Scots her life. Nicholas Skeres, once a man of substance, worked confidence tricks with Frizer, and was a servant of Essex in 1591, as was Christopher Blount whose mother was a Poley. Marlowe was deep in something. 'I'll have them read me strange philosophy, and tell the secrets of all foreign kings' says Faust. And later 'Be silent, then, for danger is in words.'

There is another Marlowe. Searching for his mask, his persona, he begins with Rome, with the classical world of Virgil, with Lucan, and with Ovid. The Tragedy of Dido, that work of his youth, is of a rare beauty. It is a seminal piece from which Shakespeare derives elements of Anthony and Cleopatra, The Winter's Tale and the Tempest. At its heart is the betrayal and denial of the Goddess. Dido is that Astarte, Goddess of the morning star and the evening star, Goddess of the sea, carried from Sidon to Carthage by the Phoenicians. She brings with her the myth of Adonis, the Lord, the sacrificed one. She herself is also Aphrodite of the Greeks, Venus Anadyomene of the Romans. She is the rejected one. Virgil transmutes Dido and Aeneas, in the Aeneid, into Theseus and Ariadne. Marlowe retells that rejection and abandonment. Shakespeare goes back to Aphrodite and Adonis (thinking also perhaps of Phaedra and Hippolytus) for his own Venus and Adonis poem, where he alters the original myth by inserting this rejection of the Goddess. It anticipates one aspect of the Protestant drama where Woman is cast as Eve the potential seducer even when she is innocent.

Marlowe's action-driven verse is there in The Tragedy of Dido, but tempered by a sweetness that the love content brings. Perhaps Nashe who was associated with it has also exerted some influence here. 'With this my hand I give to you my heart', 'heaven, envious of our joys is waxen pale, and when we whisper then the stars fall down, to be partakers of our honey talk.' There are echoes of that gentle poem of Marlowe's 'Come live with

thee and be my love' which Raleigh answers, and Shakespeare adapts in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. Dido's speeches touch tragedy. 'If he forsake me not, I never die, for in his looks I see eternity.' She is Cleopatra. 'Is he gone? Ay, but he'll come again; he cannot go', 'That I may swim to him....that I may 'tice a dolphin to the shore, and ride upon his back unto my love!' Shakespeare wrote with Marlowe at his elbow. It is worth searching for the echoes in the later plays, there are many.

Ovid is a truer and closer mask. It fits Marlowe precisely, so that one can almost see his eyes and mouth glistening through the holes. Ovid's seriousness is at the other side of Romance. It is a clear-eyed surface glitter, a Roman seriousness, which enables irreverent laughter, cynical commentary, to co-exist with true feeling. Ovid and Propertius worked under the patronage of Messalla, as Shakespeare and Marlowe perhaps did under that of Southampton and others, a constructive rivalry, a mutual inspiration to greater depth and height. Marlowe, translating Ovid's *Amores*, the *Elegies*, is at home.

Ovid too is a city man, for whom pastoral image allows natural sunlight to shine in a seductive eroticism. Ovid is perfect for, and shapes, Marlowe's view of sexual politics, the interplay of power in relationship, which echoes Machiavelli. Ovid is not a pure cynic. He is a realist, who often tries to redeem affection and feeling from the depths. Even in the *Amores*, even in the *Art of Love* and the *Cures for Love*, Ovid never denies the possibility of feeling and emotion, of tenderness and solicitude, of the idyll.

Ovid was banished, exiled to die on the Black Sea shore, because he told too much truth, of the reality of affection abused and denied, as well as the manipulation of affection for the wrong ends. The ironic Ovid is Marlowe, parodying the clichés of Roman government and marriage, of Augustan society, mocking in a way that the Elizabethans also found challenging, in its irreverence, its subversiveness, its hard-hitting truthfulness. Ovid rejects all the ideals, moral, social, and political of Augustus's Empire. Poetry and sexuality are as with Marlowe the anti-social arenas of the independent man, the masterless man. He is part of that rebellion against the totalitarian regime, the Imperial ideal of order and duty. That rebellion also included Lucan, and Seneca, Juvenal and Petronius.

Marlowe puts Machiavelli on the stage for his society but first he translates Ovid, delighting in the language, transmitting Ovid's eroticism, his astringent laughter, and his sweetness. Ovid the rebel, the outsider, the ironist, the wearer of the defensive mask of cynicism which betrays the sadness and hurt of disillusionment. This is the poetry of experience, requiring no supernatural or divine enlightenment. It is urbane, modern, secular, clinical, incisive, rapid, personal. It is the music of individual life, the private life, which the State cannot touch. Marlowe speaks as Ovid in Elegy 4 of the Second Book; he is possessed of that same 'ambitious, ranging mind'. Ovid predicted immortality for himself. Marlowe also. In Elegy 15 of the first Book 'Then though Death rakes my bones in funerall fire, I'll live and as he pulls me down mount higher.'

There is another Marlowe, whose vision moves outwards and inwards to find a place where there is sufficient space to breath. Where Shakespeare with his complex and unstable Catholic and family background searches for an order that will rescue the soul, Marlowe looks for a movement of the spirit that can liberate the spirit. For Shakespeare order can be formulaic, a ritual or incantation that can resolve the chaos through the sacred marriage of the Goddess to the God, though it is not presented through any established system. Neither through the mystical order of the Neoplatonists, nor through the Cabal, nor through the liturgies of the Church. Marlowe is even less orthodox. Faustus rejects or explodes all the ways of knowledge which lead to individual power.

Only Tamburlaine's way of war is left. In that Marlowe presages the intellectual and then the physical struggle of the Civil War, that frustration of mind that leads to revolution, to insurrection, to rebellion. He was possessed of the 'admirable, aery and fiery spirits of freedom' said Nashe. 'His life he contemned in comparison of the liberty of speech'. He had the desire and energy to 'storm and cross all barriers'. 'His raptures' said Drayton, 'were all air and fire'.

Marlowe studies Ortelius's world map for Tamburlaine. The dimensions of a map are the degrees of freedom of the journey in space.

Through the incantations of the names in a map, as in the incantations of a spiritual diagram, the mind widens its world. Marlowe in *Tamburlaine* begins that tradition of poetic repetition of foreign place-names, which he found in the Latin authors, who chanted the boundaries of the Roman Empire, and beyond. It is a litany of Geography which feeds from the new discoveries, a kind of ritual murmur which will appear again in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and in *Lycidas*, and supports the journey of Alastor and the haunts of the Witch of Atlas in Shelley's verse. The map orders the unknown, reduces the chaos, but its borders, its margins open out into the as yet undiscovered world. Science, thought, voyage, probe the universe, and we bring back maps. Science is sometimes Marlowe's blind spot. It is Machiavelli, not Copernicus whom he brings onto the stage to scare and challenge his audience. But the maps are by his side. 'Nigra silva where the devils dance'. 'Zanzibar, the western part of Afric, where I view'd the Ethiopian sea', 'Betwixt Cutheia and Orminius' mount.' 'It is summer with them, as in India, Saba, and farther countries in the East'. 'Look here, my boys; see what a world of ground lies westward from the midst of Cancer's line unto the rising of this earthly globe' 'Sailing along the oriental sea, have fetch'd about the Indian continent, even from Persepolis to Mexico.'

From here it is not far to Milton's 'Mount Amara, ... by som supposed True Paradise under the Ethiop line by Nilus head, enclos'd with shining rock, a whole dayes journey high'. Fallen man cast out from Paradise, like Satan searches 'from Eden over Pontus and the Poole Maeotis up beyond the river Ob downward as farr Antartic; and in length West from Orontes to the Ocean barr'd at Darien.' *Lycidas* is washed far away 'whether beyond the stormy Hebrides.. or by the fable of Bellerus old where the great vision of the guarded Mount looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold.' The names are a call to the mind to look outwards.

Through Thomas Hariot, rationalist, chronologer of the Bible, early algebraist, Marlowe entered the Raleigh set, which included the mathematicians Robert Hughes and Walter Warner. Hariot wrote the 'Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia' in 1588 and his study of cosmography linked him to André Thevet, cosmographer to Charles IX, and authority on the Americas. Marlowe may have seen John White's 1585 map of Florida and the Carolinas for instance, and Theodore de Bry's maps in his *America* dating to 1590.

There is a Marlowe who also looks inward, who anticipates the long-term failure of the external marriage of the God and the Goddess, who is not yet the agent provocateur of the God's attack on the Goddess, of democracy on monarchy, of Protestantism on Catholicism. The maps are not enough. He anticipates Donne in the personal, the internalised journey of love, the final and only home and hope of hierogamy, of the sacred marriage of Reason and Passion. Hero and Leander also reveals a subtler Marlowe, still possessed of the surface brilliance, but conscious that 'true love is mute' and 'full of simplicitie and naked truth'. In verse whose turns of phrase and cadences influenced Donne, Marlowe reminds us that 'In gentle breasts, relenting thoughts, remorse, and pittie rests. And who have hard hearts, and obdurat minds, but vicious, harebrained, and illit'rate hinds? Here is 'Loves holy fire.' The maps, the countries, the worlds must be within.

So Dido proposes to Aeneas, the Goddess to the agent of incipient empire, 'in mine arms make thy Italy'. 'O sacred love! If there be any heaven in earth, 'tis love.' says the Nurse. 'Now bring him back ... and I will live a private life with him.' says Dido. It is Ovid's solution to the spiritual disaster of Imperial Rome, but a solution that could not survive exile. It is Donne's solution in the first half of his life. 'Be thine own palace' he writes to Henry Wotton 'or the world's thy gaol.' 'Seek we then ourselves in ourselves' in the lines to Rowland Woodward. In Donne's Elegies, modelled on Ovid's, the message is the same. 'Here let me war, in these arms let me lie ... thine arms imprison me and mine arms thee'. 'O my America, my new found land, my kingdom safeliest when with one man manned, my mine of precious stones, my empery'. Donne has already discovered his 'mystic books' and that 'to enter in these bonds is to be free'.

It is the personal and private solution, the rejection of the world, in a sacred sense, but outside religion. It is a translation of the marriage of the god and goddess into wholly human terms. So for Donne the maps become unnecessary. 'Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone, let maps to others, worlds on worlds have shown, let us possess one world, each hath one and is one.' He anticipates the future of Science and of the Protestant Ethic and is already turning away. 'For love all love of other sights controls, and makes one little room an everywhere.' The little room is indeed full, in Marlowe's words, of 'infinite riches.' For Donne it contains 'both th' Indias



of spice and mine' It is the room where 'She is all states, and all princes, I, nothing else is'. The world is contracted. 'All here in one bed lay.' The sun can 'shine here to us, and thou art everywhere: this bed thy centre is, these walls, thy sphere.' It is the atmosphere of Ovid's Elegy 5 of Book I of the *Amores*, Corinna in an afternoon, which Marlowe translates so beautifully, but deepened from eroticism to a sacral communion.

Not only is space conquered, and contracted, but time also, to become the eternal moment of sacred love. 'Love all alike, no season knows nor clime, nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.' Donne is exploring Lover's Infiniteness, 'and lover's hours be full eternity'. Everywhere is also everywhen, 'only ..love hath no decay,.... but truly keeps his first, last, everlasting day.' And woman is 'more than moon' she is the place where 'all... souls be emparadised'. She is 'thou, the world's soul'.

This whole language, religious terms transposed into secular, eroticism heightened to profound hierogamy, is wrongly understood if it is thought to be only a conceit. It is simply the modern position for many, the physical acceptance, but spiritual rejection, of the state and the Protestant ethic, writ large. It is the position that the West has tolerated in Saints and Mystics, but removed from the social centre. It is the position that if adopted in a society holds back science, commerce, materialism, progress. Its eastern analogue is Taoism including the Taoist erotic practices, the emphasis to a high degree being on the Individual's asocial solution outside community. It is not Marlowe's view of the future, nor the later Donne's, nor the vision of the agitators of the Civil War. The near view, the power struggle, is what occupies men's minds in Elizabethan and Stuart times and afterwards. This opposite emphasis, on the individual, fuels the revolution that did not happen, the revolution of Winstanley and others, that might have achieved wider democracy, a disestablished church, and a rejection of the Protestant work ethic. It hardly fuels that which did happen, the revolution which established the sacred rights of property, and removed all the impediments to the triumph of the ideology of men of property, the Protestant ethic itself.

Marlowe looks forward to that period when men felt newly free: free from monarchy, from worldly authorities, from priests. But Marlowe is still within the world of nature, magic, death, superior forces. Marlowe is not possessed by the myth outside, or the myth within. He is the independent, self-made man, the masterless man, freethinking, rebellious, subversive, reckless. We search the Greek myths for any analogues of real rebellion. Prometheus, Sisyphus, Antigone. It is a limited and qualified trawl. Rebellion is not truly possible in a mythical world, because the myth is always there to enfold the participants. For the rebel the stress must be on continuous change, the perpetual revolution, the search for truth and revelation, that originality and love of novelty that must shock until it becomes desirable. Winstanley of the Diggers 'never read it in any book, nor received it from any mouth'. He 'saw the light of it rise up within myself'. 'Every man is by nature a rebel against heaven' said Richard Baxter in *The Holy Commonwealth*. It is the flux of intellectual excitement, the honeyed whirlpool, that Marlowe delights in. For him, to shock is natural, to provoke and incite is a game. It is a game played on the dark side. Order, correspondence, the chain of being, the links in the chain that Shakespeare and others reiterate, those commonplaces of Elizabethan thought, commonplace because they are so vital to them, mean little to Marlowe. He is for conflict, the warring elements.

In a world of myth there is a precedent for everything. Everything is a ritual, a repetition, a consecration, a sacrifice, or a marriage. Shakespeare can tell the stories again, transformed, to convince his audience, as Sophocles and Aeschylus did, of eternal verities, of the right relationship of gods to men. Marlowe in the world not of myth, but of rebellion, has only Adam's and Satan's fall as comparators. Neither is an analogy, since Adam falls through weakness and ignorance, Satan through false pride and flawed spiritual intelligence. Or there is Mercury stealing a cup of nectar from Hebe, Jupiter's cupbearer, at which Jove 'storm'd and waxt more furious than for the fire filcht by Prometheus, and thrusts him down from heaven'. Prometheus is a thief.

But it is not theft to recover the Rights of Man. Marlowe's rebellion is purer. He is nearer the revolutionaries of later times, Danton and Robespierre, Lenin and Trotsky, the audacious ones for whom nothing is sacred, those for whom there are no precedents except the single precedent

of insurrection, and ultimately no fixed goal. It is that restlessness in Marlowe that sets him apart, shuts him off from traditional answers or easy solutions. Shakespeare drives himself to re-creation of the sacred marriage. Donne opts for personal and private meaning, and then falls back towards the established church. Essex and Raleigh never leave the orthodox framework. Raleigh's *History of the World* freezes it in time. Essex reinvokes, through his fate, the world of myth, while unknowingly creating the context within which the myths will be destroyed. But Marlowe is always ready for the new age, for the time when all myths are superceded.

Marlowe paints a portrait of Essex in *Tamburlaine*, but not as Shakespeare shows him, in the guise of Achilles in *Troilus and Cressida*, frustrated and sulking in his tent. Marlowe dying in 1593 can have only the young Essex in mind but finds the same reference point, of Achilles. 'Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned...so large of limbs... such breadth of shoulders... pale of complexion... lofty brows.... about them hangs a knot of amber hair, wrapped in curls, as fierce Achilles' was..... the face and personage of a wondrous man.' Here is the tall, broad, fiery-haired figure of Essex, already dreaming of 'steps and actions to the throne'? 'A god is not so glorious as a king' says Theridamas, 'I think the pleasure they enjoy in heaven cannot compare with kingly joys in earth,... to ask and have, command and be obey'd.' In *Tamburlaine*'s response is all of Essex. Shall we 'rest, attemptless, fair and destitute? Methinks we should not.' Marlowe's verse rings and echoes with the call to aspire, to attempt. 'As if another Phaethon had got the guidance of the sunnes rich chariot'

Lines to make a Tudor monarch shudder are put into the mouth of Machiavel. 'Many will talk of title to a crown: What right had Caesar to the Empire? Might first made kings.' Lancaster is as direct, in *Edward the Second*. 'The worst is death, and better die to live, than live in infamy under such a king' and again 'Look for rebellion, look to be depos'd.' Where in Shakespeare we wait expectantly for the balancing call to order, all revolt punished, in Marlowe 'will is over-rul'd by fate'.

'You stars that reign'd at my nativity.' Tamburlaine talks to them, to his ruling influences. Men are not wrong to aspire, and only defeated by greater forces. Even Faustus. Even the words that Bacon picked up perhaps from Marlowe's play, in striking an analogy for Essex, are a fatal realism, rather than a condemnation. 'Of a self-conceit, his waxen wings did mount above his reach, and, melting, heavens conspir'd his overthrow.' 'One like Actaeon... shall by the angry goddess be transform'd... by yelping hounds pull'd down.' That image, out of context, is from Edward The Second. Icarus, Phaethon, Actaeon, Achilles, Marlowe's mind fixes on those who aspire, those who challenge, those who rebel.

Was there ever a mind where the light and the darkness blend to such curious and glowing effect, other than Shelley? There is the Marlowe of the Elegies, of Dido and Aeneas, of Hero and Leander, of 'Come live with me, and be my love' the clear-minded, tough but subtle Marlowe, for whom love is a reality, even beyond eroticism, even as far as delicacy, tenderness and affection. There is the dark Marlowe, the citizen of the night, the masterless man, the Marlowe of the politics of cynicism, of sedition, espionage, violence, and cruelty. Like two views through one mirror. Like the double aspects of the moonlit sky. Like the compound vision of heaven and hell.

Marlowe was wound in to the circle of agents employed indirectly by Essex. His patron was Thomas Walsingham in whose house at Scadbury in Kent, Marlowe was staying towards the end of his life. Hero and Leander was subsequently dedicated to Walsingham. Frizer was his personal servant. Walsingham was younger cousin to Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's spymaster, whose daughter Frances, widow of Philip Sydney, Essex married. At a time of intense rivalry between Essex and Raleigh, Marlowe appears to have a place in both camps. Genuinely? Or is he a fomenter of trouble? Raleigh was accused of atheism, Marlowe was implicated. Kyd the playwright with whom Marlowe shared a room was arrested. A heretical document was found. Kyd says, perhaps under pressure, that it belonged to Marlowe. Marlowe was apprehended by the Privy Council, brought back from Scadbury ten days before his death. He was told to report daily to the

Council. Then an agent called Baines submits a note, damaging to Marlowe, around the very day of his death.

Things are complex. Richard Baines was an intelligence agent, at one time working for Walsingham. He quotes another man, Richard Cholmley, who says that Marlowe 'has read the atheist lecture to Sir Walter Raleigh and others', that he questions the orthodoxies of the Bible, that he 'persuades men to atheism'. Is Marlowe helping to work up charges against Raleigh, or himself an atheist, or is he being set up in a complex game of double-dealing? Marlowe is not central to either the Essex or Raleigh set. He is at best a go-between, a servant of two masters, or none. Is money at the root of it?

Hero and Leander that last unfinished but glorious poem has a difficult passage where Marlowe tells the tale of Mercury (Hermes) and the country maid. She ('all women are ambitious naturallie..') asks Mercury her lover to steal a cup of nectar from Jupiter (Jove). Jupiter discovers the theft and pushes him out of heaven. So in return Mercury has Cupid charm the Fates so that they give Mercury the power to banish Jupiter the usurper and reinstate his father Saturn, in a new golden age. Mercury however despises the love of the Fates, who then turn things upside-down again, restore Jupiter, and punish Mercury-Hermes. 'And but that Learning, in despite of fate, will mount aloft and enter heaven gate, and to the seat of Jove it selfe advaunce... Hermes had slept in hell with ignorance'. Mercury has knowledge in other words to save him and enable him to climb back to the skies. But to offset it, the Fates make sure that 'he and Poverty should always kiss. And to this day is every scholar poor... and fruitfull wits that in aspiring are, shall discontent run into regions farre.' Is Marlowe poor and discontent? Was it merely a quarrel 'about ....le reckonyng' after all?

Marlowe was probably an atheist. 'I count religion but a childish toy' says Machiavel 'and hold there is no sin but ignorance'. The voice sounds like that of Voltaire speaking against superstition. Marlowe was implicated in charges of atheism that touched Raleigh. A heretical document that agents for the Privy Council found, when Kyd was arrested in May of 1593

and his rooms searched, Kyd claimed was Marlowe's. He said it had got confused with his own papers. It is a Socinian treatise by Proctor taking up the heretical Arian argument denying Christ's divinity, asserting that he was a man like any other. Marlowe is asked to appear before the Privy Council and returns from Scadbury to do so. Cholmley has informed Baines, according to Baines, that Marlowe told him that 'he hath read the atheist lecture to Sir Walter Raleigh and others' and that 'Marlowe is able to show more sound reasons for atheism than any divine in England is able to give to prove divinity'.

Baines indictment of Marlowe was not acted on due to Marlowe's death. Baines highlights Marlowe's alleged heresies, which he and Hariot and others in Raleigh's circle may indeed have ascribed to. That Christ was a man and not divine; of the non-existence of the Trinity; that there is no physical hell; that Moses was an illusionist, a trickster; that the world was older than six thousand years, and that men were alive before Adam. Some of this was Biblical criticism picked up later in the seventeenth century freethinkers. Winstanley for example used the existence of men before Adam as an argument for taking the Bible metaphorically and not literally. The old myths were dying, or being transubstantiated. The Virgin Birth for Winstanley was an allegory, as was the resurrection, the rebirth of the ancient god. 'Christ lying in the grave, like a corn of wheat buried under the clods of earth for a time, and Christ rising up ... is to be seen within'. Winstanley rejects the authority of the institutionalised church, and argues for the spirit of god in every man. The Family of Love, a religious sect at the time of the Civil War, believed that heaven and hell are in the world. For Marlowe's Mephistopheles 'Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd in one self place; for where we are is hell, and where hell is, must we ever be.' Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost* expresses the sentiment that hell is separation from God as does Marlowe's Mephistopheles. 'Why this is hell, nor am I out of it. Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God, am not tormented with ten thousand hells, in being depriv'd of everlasting bliss?'

Elizabeth in 1585 denounced those who thought hell was only torment of conscience. The later freethinkers questioned this and everything else. They speculated about divine justice in the concept of original sin, were sceptical of hell and heaven, considered whether god was not within, that there might be no Creator only Nature. 'This is an age' said

Henry Power, 'wherein all men's souls are in a kind of fermentation, and the spirit of wisdom and learning begins to mount and free itself'. 'Religion hides many mischiefs from suspicion' says Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*. Tamburlaine is scathing of all the religions. 'Can there be such deceit in Christians' who 'if there be a Christ,..... in their deeds deny him?' Yet Tamburlaine acknowledges a God, 'he that sits on high and never sleeps, nor in one place is circumscribable... in his endless power and purity' and Faustus at the end cries out for his soul to be saved. 'Oh, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?'

Baines claimed that Marlowe had once said 'Moses was a juggler and that one Heriots being Sir Walter Raleigh's man can do more than he.' Thomas Hariot was a Renaissance intellect, interested in plants, agriculture, the anthropology of newly discovered countries, navigation, mathematics, optics, weather, astronomy, astrology, religion. He gave great offence with his views on Genesis and his saying that 'ex nihilo nihil fit'. 'Nothing will come of nothing', is repeated in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Chapman who completed Marlowe's unfinished *Hero and Leander*, wrote verses in praise of Hariot, and is a further link to Raleigh.

In 1594 Raleigh was investigated by an ecclesiastical enquiry held at Cerne Abbas in Dorset. Mostly what emerged was hearsay and innuendo. Carew Raleigh, Sir Walter's brother, was said to have made the pantheistic comment that 'there was a god in nature'. Raleigh had encouraged free-ranging conversation on the nature of the soul. The investigation had no material outcome for Raleigh, and he effectively killed all criticism later in his life by the passages on religion in his *History of the World*. But Marlowe...?

Marlowe is the essence of wide-ranging, freethinking, dangerous scepticism. He is with Shelley in being on 'the verge where words abandon us, and what wonder if we grow dizzy to look down the dark abyss of how little we know'. Marlowe is neither a part of myth like Essex, nor a defender of it like Raleigh and Donne. There is no orthodoxy in him, except the orthodoxy of fate. He is not obsessed with order, but with aspiration. The

creation, the fall, the incarnation, the atonement are not his paradigm. His is a reverse direction, from the mounting of ambition, to the fall of power. The stars dictate, superior force compels, but man resists and challenges. Passion and will, reason and appetite are not at war but are harnessed to ambition and aspiration. Realism, intellectual effort, intensity, materialism coupled to a strange idealism, and cynicism regarding power, institutions, established authorities. Marlowe has Ithamore say in the Jew of Malta. 'Faith sire, my birth is but mean; my name's Ithamore; my profession what you please.' In the next century the true masterless men, victims of enclosures, criminals, vagabonds, sectarians, looked within themselves for the new man, they their own masters. Individualism fuelled the dissent of the Civil War. Marlowe will 'by profession be ambitious'.

In taking up the story of Dr Faustus, Marlowe articulates the new inner aspirations of the time. The classical spirit in Marlowe is aligned with Greece and Rome, with an irreligious society or a society of many religions, with a godless world, or a world of the concealed God. In Faustus he offers up a Christian allegory, but there is a classical irony and detachment playing behind the verse. Faustus is 'base of stock', but his lowly origins like Tamburlaine's do not inhibit him from excelling. Frustrated with the inadequacy of the powers that conventional knowledge gives he is tempted by magic, by necromancy. Faustus rejects logic and philosophy, rejects medicine and law, rejects the predestination of original sin ('why then..we must sin, and so consequently die..an everlasting death') and searches for 'a world of profit and delight, of power, of honour, of omnipotence' where 'all things that move between the quiet poles shall be at my command'. It is a dream that Raleigh, Hariot and Bacon shared, it is the coming aspiration of science and technology, of exploration and imperialism, of trade and commerce. Precisely this will Protestant England and Puritan America aspire to. Faustus gives the scientific endeavour, the desire for knowledge and its application, its charter. 'His dominion that exceeds in this, stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man; A sound magician is a mighty god: Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity.' The ironic tone behind the play is that of Marlowe deceiving the censor.



Cast as a secular play without divine retribution not only would the drama have been less, but the message would have been unacceptable, as an overt statement of the hidden irreligious aspirations of the age. Cast as a secular play there could be no retribution in the plot, since Faustus's agenda is the secret secular agenda of Raleigh, Hariot, Bacon and I suspect Marlowe himself. As a play about the new science it would have cast a further shadow of suspicion over Raleigh and others. Marlowe anticipates an atheistic, scientific, imperialist age. It is already around him in the freethinking Raleigh, in the efforts of Raleigh's friend Hariot, in Dee, Hakluyt, Gilbert. Hariot corresponded with Kepler and knew Galileo's findings. Descartes later read Hariot's work. Raleigh sponsors, and Bacon consolidates, the message. It is experimental science as its own authority, leading to 'new inventions and powers'. Mathematics is a key, and technological innovation is a driving force. Dr Faustus does not reach this far, though Marlowe, in the circle of Raleigh, Hariot and Bacon clearly did. But Faustus is on the track of 'all Nature's treasure'. He wishes to 'resolve...all ambiguities', to 'ransack the ocean' to have read to him 'strange philosophy'. He trades with the Devil, his soul for power and knowledge. The medieval morality play then follows its course, poetic in its passages on the theme of hell and illicit aspiration. Its message is about divine authority, though the ironic subtext is both heretical and subversive.

Dr Faustus is another Marlowe text that Shakespeare used as source. Prospero is just such a magician whose book teaches him like Faustus 'the framing of this circle on the ground' that 'brings whirlwinds, tempests, thunder and lightning.' Prospero gives up his art, understanding the religious message of Marlowe's play, to end in Protestant, almost Puritan orthodoxy. 'Oh, something soundeth in mine ears, 'Abjure this magic, turn to God again!'" says Faustus; 'this rough magic I here abjure' says Prospero. Faustus is warned that his sins 'no comiseration may expel, but mercy, Faustus.....Then call for mercy, and avoid despair.' And Prospero does just that in his final speech. 'And my ending is despair unless I be reliev'd by prayer, which pierces so that it assaults mercy itself and frees all faults.' Prospero takes Faustus's fate seriously, and in doing so tries to redeem the spirit of the new learning, hallow the hidden agenda of Marlowe's play, the illicit magic of the scientific project.

I cannot read the ending Chorus of *Dr Faustus* without hearing the bell-note of Marlowe's ironic laughter. 'Regard his hellish fall, whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise, only to wonder at unlawful things, whose deepness doth entice such forward wits to practise more than heavenly power permits.' In his audience and among his readers no doubt were Raleigh, Bacon, Hariot, Dee, the same 'forward wits' who were already going beyond wonder, to analysis and experiment, and were already practising more than their religion formally permitted. No doubt they enjoyed the frisson. There is indeed an underlying question of the boundaries of human knowledge, the sacredness of Nature and life, the advisability and controllability of science and technology, which makes Faustus a potent and symbolic figure, and gives us and no doubt gave them reason to pause. If divine powers are not there to control us, if everything is permitted, then control can only be exercised by ourselves, humanity must regulate humanity.

Moderation was the Greek message. Sacrifice Iphigenia to get what you want, by all means, Agamemnon, betray her and destroy her, but do not expect to return home to a contented old age. Every impiety, every excess is punished. Marlowe is sensitive to that message, as is Shakespeare, the preacher of order. Elizabeth kept the lid on the cauldron of religious extremism. But in the Civil War the Puritans indulged in excess. They gave themselves the right to do so avoiding impiety, they believed, through executing the will of their God. They then reigned themselves in and invoked the secular law, to curb the Levellers, Diggers, and other extreme freedom movements, and re-order and re-establish society. It took courage, religious conviction and the driving force of the desire for freedom, and political control to ignore and overcome the instinct for moderation. It was an army of young men who fought and remade. It was a nation, of scientists, imperialists, technologists, industrialists, merchants and politicians who eventually inherited.

Perhaps Marlowe's times made him a poet of rebellion and realpolitik rather than making him that other poet who lurked beneath the surface, the poet of pity tenderness and high ideals, who almost emerges fully in *Dido*

and Aeneas, and in the last sestiad of his *Hero and Leander*. He made a revolution in the London theatre. He invented a new original verse style of great beauty. He was too early for the great Revolution in England, but he was an agent of that Revolution in thought which eroded the monarchy, sealed the fate of the Catholic church in England, and ushered in the age of science, free trade, and democracy. He is a poet of the city, of the shifting levels of new social structure, of mind. Unlike Essex, Donne and Raleigh, he is a conscious, rather than an unconscious harbinger of change. But he hastens on to the same death of the Goddess with that recklessness with which he seems to hasten to his own death.

It is evening in Deptford. The Sun is setting and Scorpio, the sign of fate, has risen over the horizon. Mars and Pluto rule the sign. Mars, the planet of aggression, killing, anger, accident. They had met at ten in the morning and dined. After walking and talking all afternoon in the garden, they returned to the room at six and supped together. After supper Marlowe is lying on a bed, the other three are seated at the table. Frizer and Marlowe 'were in speech and uttered one to the other divers malicious words for the reason that they could not agree about...the recknyng'. Marlowe drew a knife, and gave Ingram Frizer two wounds to his head. Frizer was sitting between Skeres and Poley, could not get away, struggled with Marlowe, and 'in defence of his life gave the said Christopher ... a mortal wound over his right eye of the depth of two inches and of the width of one inch: of which....he then and there instantly died'. 'No, 'Tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door, but 'tis enough' says Mercutio of his 'scratch' in *Romeo and Juliet* "twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man.' 'They offred him' writes Marlowe in *Hero and Leander*, 'the deadly fatall knife, that shears the slender threads of human life.'

They were gathered at Frizer's invitation. The Sun sets in Pisces. Scorpio rises. Something is said. About money and debts? About payment

for something other than the room, a different kind of reckoning up of the account? About Marlowe's sexual proclivities? About what Marlowe has been asked to do, betray Hariot, or Raleigh himself perhaps? Infiltrate further into Raleigh's set? Betray a friend? Has his courage been called in doubt? He is in trouble with the Privy Council over atheism, heresy; the full charges have not yet been brought. Is that being used as leverage against him? Money, sex, religion, politics, espionage, mutual dislike among a company of dangerous men? Any of these, or all of them, are possible.

Marlowe has embraced every form of subversion in his writings, perhaps also in his life. He shows an admirable Saturnian consistency. He has called in question through the masks of his characters and in his own life most of the given beliefs of his Age. The authority of the Church, the Divine Right of hereditary Kingship, conventional sexual mores, the circumscribed role of the individual, the importance of high birth, the historical basis of Christian teachings. He has created a new drama and a new English poetry. Only the new science seems to have passed him by, he dismisses it in Faustus's name along with law, medicine, divinity, analytics, leaving astrology unquestioned. Perhaps 'nothing so sweet as magic is to him'; 'Tis magic, magic that hath ravish'd me.' He has brought Machiavelli to the stage, showed the nakedness of power, the desirability of aspiration and ambition limited only by superior force, the ability of the self-made man. He has dared to think unacceptable thoughts, and portray unacceptable men whom he makes interesting and attractive. He has played with the warring elements. He has stormed, in thought and in verse, the Heavens. There has been a drama, a theatre. Verse has tried to 'mount aloft and enter heaven gate'. Now there is only the body of the young man, dead at twenty-nine, not so much older than Keats, the same age as Shelley. So much achieved, so much that might have been achievable. 'Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight, and burned is Apollo's laurel bough' say the Chorus from Faustus, say the friends around the grave. 'For there sits death; there sits imperious Death, keeping his circuit by the slicing edge' cries Tamburlaine.





'Raleigh'

Howe, Henry (1816-1893) (Author)

Posselwhite, James (1798-1884) (Engraver)

*The New York Public Library*

## IV - RALEIGH



f Shakespeare portrays Essex as Achilles in *Troilus and Cressida* then it is Raleigh who is Ulysses. Ulysses, that Odysseus who fights in distant battles and survives; who voyages among marvels and returns; whose courage is never in doubt; whose intelligence is second only to Nestor the Wise; who is cunning and proud, loyal and resilient. Odysseus is a man of fate. The Goddess is always with him. Men of fate are pious and conventional as far as the deities are concerned. For Raleigh to be accused, as he was, of atheism is as ridiculous as for an Odysseus to be accused of slighting Athene. She is his destiny. She both protects and assures. She assists survival. Odysseus always endures, and so Raleigh, even at the end, after the last disastrous voyage to Guiana, when his son was killed, when his hopes were in ruins. He does not deviate from his fate. He returns to face whatever the gods' throw of the dice will bring.

Raleigh is both the young glittering Court favourite, the poet of the moon goddess, and also the seasoned warrior, the grizzled veteran, the expert sailor, the commander of men. His stratagems in war are often successful. His wit and intellect provoke his age. Odysseus is the archetype of the individual man, the lone venturer, who against the odds makes out. He comes from the smallest place, Ithaca, as Raleigh came from a farmhouse in Devon. He wins what he wins not from birth but from talent, from ability. Odysseus 'of the nimble wits'. And he is the hero of a story. His life is a tale told. He goes on having adventures when the rest of the heroes vanish from the stage. He lives on beyond the epic into the novel, as Raleigh lives on beyond the Armada and Cadiz into the world of democracy

and the new science. He is mind, which always finds another path, like the waters of the ocean.

Like mind he is not always respected. He is not the glorious Achilles. He has his detractors, fearful of his cunning. 'What boots it to swear the fox?' cries Essex when Raleigh appears at the trial to give evidence against him. The Devon fox, capable of displaying wiliness, and lithe energy, of evading his pursuers, of scheming in the jaws of death.

He too has a Penelope, Elizabeth Throckmorton. He courts and incurs trouble and disgrace by marrying her. He encounters other women, fathers illegitimate children, but always comes back to her, she who is in turn endlessly loyal. The tenderness of Odysseus's reunion with Penelope, the recognition of the wanderer returned, is matched by the tenderness of Raleigh's letters to his wife, and hers on his behalf. If Raleigh was, in his poetry, a master of the false affection, of courtly love, he was, in his life, an exemplar of true affection and the reality of mutual love.

There are these multiple images of Raleigh in the glass of history, as there are all those of Odysseus in Homer. The 'sacker of cities', the father and husband, the speaker 'more eloquent than Nestor himself' as Ovid says, the wily fox, the courageous soldier, the voyager into empty seas, the prisoner of Circe and Calypso, the beloved of the gods even in the manner of his dying. Always ready for another adventure, another turn of fate. Always returning, always making a comeback.

Odysseus means The Victim of Enmity, named so by his grandfather, Autolycus. Sisyphus had conceived him by Anticleia the daughter of the arch-thief. Autolycus promised that if Odysseus ever came to Mount Parnassus to reproach him for enmity towards him, he would give him a share of his possessions. He duly arrived, and hunting with his uncles was gashed in the thigh by a wild boar and scarred for life. So he is also Ulysses, the man wounded in the thigh, the survivor of an ancient death appropriate to sacred kings.



One is reminded of the portrait of Raleigh after Cadiz, dated 1598, by an unknown artist. The forty-five year old commander at the height of his powers, hand on gold-hilted sword, in a dark tunic sewn with pearls, a map of Cadiz behind him, his right hand resting on a cane. He had been wounded towards the end of the engagement. He had suggested that the English ships go up to the harbour and batter the Spanish galleons. Lord Admiral Howard agreed. Essex and he would command the main body, Raleigh the vanguard. On board Warspite he showed his usual courage. 'Always I must, without Glory, say for myself, that I held single in the head of all.' That might stand as his epitaph. Here, for once, he and Essex put aside their rivalry and enmity. 'I declared....I would board, with the Queen's ship, for it was the same loss to burn or sink, for I must endure the one'. 'The Earl, finding it not in his power to command fear, told me, that whatsoever I did, he would second me in person upon his honour.' So Achilles and Odysseus at their closest.

Warping alongside the St Philip they forced the Spanish ship aground 'tumbling into the sea heaps of soldiers so thick as if coals had been poured out of a sack' The St Philip and the St Thomas took fire. 'The spectacle was very lamentable on their side; for many drowned themselves; many half-burnt leapt into the water...many swimming with grievous wounds stricken under water and put out of their pain; and withal so huge a fire and such tearing of ordnance...when the fire came to 'em, as if any man had a desire to see hell itself, it was there most lively figured.' John Donne who was there wrote an epigram on the incident 'They in the sea being burnt, they in the burnt ship drowned.' Essex went north with the army to storm Cadiz. Raleigh watched from deck, crippled by a wound in the leg 'a grievous blow, interlaced and deformed with splinters'. So he was Ulysses, also, carried ashore on the shoulders of his men 'fit for nought but ease at that time'.

Like Odysseus, Raleigh was born to be Fortune's survivor, not following the sweep of a great arc, but 'tost .. too and fro to greatness' as Sir Robert Naunton said, and like Odysseus, who struggled ashore wound round only with Leucothea's veil to find sanctuary among the Phaeacians,

eventually brought 'down to little more than to that wherein she found him, (a bare gentleman).' His strength and courage would always be put to the test.

He had the capacity to endure good and bad times, to rise above them through his character and intellect, to be aware of opportunity and danger, and at the last to dismiss fear and make an end which no one who saw it would forget. Raleigh is never indifferent to events. He is always driven by grand passions, by grandiose schemes, by an ambition to achieve. But it is his endurance rather than his achievements that impress the most. His resilience, that resilience of Odysseus who struggling to shore finds shelter for the night under the bushes in a heap of dry leaves. Odysseus is always potentially 'the bare gentleman', the beggar in disguise, the shipwrecked wanderer who has to grasp the knees of his hosts to find succour, unrecognised in his own house except by those who truly know him, relying always on his skill, his eloquence, his mind, his endurance.

And then there are those moments when Athene shines on him, clothing him in a sudden splendour, renewing his youth and vigour, quickening his spirit. It is those moments of splendour amongst the passages of suffering which Raleigh knows. They make him great in one way, as the sufferings do in another. They are the independent man's attributes 'single in the head of all'.

Raleigh's mother was Katherine Champernowne. She was the niece of Kat Ashley, companion, in adversity, to Elizabeth before she became Queen. He was half-brother to the Gilberts, the sons of Katherine's first marriage. He was 'well descended and of good alliance'. The Ashley link may have given him a route to court. His family was staunch Protestant in a Catholic Devon, which also made him hostile to Spain. He was born at the farmhouse of Hayes Barton near East Budleigh in 1554, and tried to buy the place back when he was thirty. It is a few miles from the sea. He was educated for a while at Oxford, but always was 'an indefatigable reader, whether by sea or land'. He stored his mind with knowledge. He gained experience.

Travelling abroad as a young man, he fought with the Huguenots in France, and the savagery he saw taught him about civil war and its evils, acquainted him with a ruthless streak in his own nature. Odysseus setting sail from Troy on his long way home stormed Ismarus and left a pall of smoke above the burning city, sparing from slaughter only Apollo's priest. With Diomedes at Troy he had gone out throat cutting in the night. 'Odysseus, Pallas Athene's favourite, that brave spirit whom no adventure ever finds unready. Together he and I would go through fire and still return. He has the quickest mind of any man I know.' Off they go 'picking their way amongst the corpses and the blood-stained weapons.' And again, when he returns home at last to Ithaca, the suitors are slaughtered in the hall, and then the women-servants are made to wash the place clean, before they are strung up 'like doves or long-winged thrushes caught in a net' using a hawser from one of the ships. So Homer's poem-novel ends in savagery.

Odysseus is unforgiving in an age before mercy. And Raleigh? In Ireland in 1580, fighting in the campaigns of Lord Grey, he took the surrender of Fort Smerwick and then 'entered into the castle and made a great slaughter'. Five hundred or so men and some pregnant women died according to the Spanish, and there were seventeen hangings. In 1595 he put the garrison of Port of Spain to the sword in order to protect his back as he went on to Guiana. It was an age of butchery and counter-butchery.

In contrast he seems to have dealt fairly with the natives of Guiana, and honourably in battle, by the military standards of the day. He was a tough combatant, and did what was expedient. Like Odysseus he was left with blood on his hands. No wonder the libations and sacrifices to Athene were so necessary. The hero gave thanks, but he also prayed for protection and for the impiety of the slaughter to be forgiven. So pre-historic hunters carried out rituals over the places where animals were killed, to celebrate their fortune, to hallow the victims and ensure good luck in the future, to ward off revenge for their actions, to propitiate the animal masters, and the spirits of those they had destroyed.

Odysseus is Athene's favourite. Mistress of acute vision, dexterity of mind, wiliness and cunning, experience served by intelligence. She appears as a sacred bird, a swallow; an owl; a heron. 'The Olympians have ways of their own' but Odysseus is capable of 'recognising the voice of the goddess'. With Athene reason rules. The mind separates itself from the passions and appetites. There is detachment, cool appraisal, quickness of perception, adroitness of argument, creative stratagem.

Athene is the inner voice and the secret presence, the halo of light around the hero's intelligence, the inspirer of eloquence in those who give her place, and have the courage to use what she gives. Athene is the eye of heaven. Once a Sumerian Goddess, adopted by the Phoenicians, brought to Greece from Libya where she was that Neith of Lake Tritonis, Athene is the strange, cold, alien voice among the Olympians, jealous of her favourites. She comes disguised, an optical illusion. She looks out from the icy pupils of her eyes into a world of forces, patterns, where survival is at risk. She is vision itself, virgin and rational. Raleigh, in the Tower, translates Ovid on Apollo. 'The world discerns itself while I the world behold. By me the longest years and other times are told. I the world's eye.'

Athene is the self, the individual mind, in a world which summons forth all our wit and skill to deal with it. She is the spirit that surmounts adversity, that calls to activity, to brave attempts, to the instinct of curiosity, and adventure, and to the investigative faculties. Odysseus is used to dealing with women. He gives them respect, the spinners of webs and fates. His own Penelope threads and unthreads her tapestry to delay the suitors. He is almost a victim of the Sirens' attempt to seduce him. Circe and Calypso succeed. And the sea, subject to the moon, is the element that drives him out of his course. He is a man threatened with webs, and with nets, saved by the magic entwining veil, and the covering of leaves, by Athene's opposing nets and webs of transforming light.

Raleigh navigates among women, between his two Elizabeth's, between Cynthia and Selene, the Queen and the Bride, the moon of power and the moon of intimacy. There is a feminine, poetic depth to his silvery imagination, which gleams like those pearls with which he adorns his clothes and his person. The Moon is his king, her court is among the heavens, and his Queen is the king on earth. Her light makes him and

unmakes him. She is the key to order, the being to whom he gives total obedience, as Odysseus gives obedience to Athene. 'She gave, she took, she wounded, she appeased' wrote Raleigh in his *Booke of the Ocean to Scynthia*. 'No other power effecting woe or bliss'. And it was her 'small drops of joys, sweetened great worlds of woes.'

To Ulysses, in *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare gives the great speech on 'degree, priority, and place'. Ulysses is cautious, as Shakespeare himself was, of power which turns to will, will to appetite, until 'appetite, an universal wolf ... must make perforce an universal prey'. Raleigh as Ulysses who has, earlier in the play, warned of Achilles-Essex sulking in his tent, now warns of what may happen when degree is taken away. It threatens 'primogenity, and due of birth, prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels'. The Tudors, in some minds, had questionable right to the crown. Raleigh was one of those who protected the dynasty. Though he fell from favour once under Elizabeth, he was never accused by her of disloyalty. It was his marriage like Donne's that was his misfortune in her reign. It waited for James to accuse Raleigh of a crime of which he was incapable, that of deliberately undermining the monarchy.

Raleigh, like Odysseus is a man of fate, but he is cautious about the influence of the stars. Astrology was not essentially serious to the Renaissance in the way it may have been in earlier periods. It was, as has been said, theatre, part of the glittering game. In Raleigh's *History of the World* the stars are God's handiwork, and express God's will only. He says that it is wrong to hold, with the Chaldeans and the Stoics, that the stars bind men with the chains of necessity. Equally they are not mere ornament. If God bound men through the stars without their having free will then evil actions could be excused. That would be error. Weakness falls prey to the influence of the heavens but 'Fate will be overcome, if thou resist it; if thou neglect, it conquereth.'

Nature does not always influence inferior bodies, he says. Education mitigates nature. Personality is a blend of nature and nurture. Nothing should be bound to the strict letter of the law, but everything requires judgement to be exercised. 'These laws do not deprive kings of....compassion, or bind them ... that there should be nothing left of liberty to judgment, power or conscience; the law in his own nature being nothing but a deaf tyrant.' Raleigh was to see the deaf tyrant in action in Essex's trial and in his own.

Nevertheless the stars have a God-given influence. 'Why should we rob the beautiful stars of their working powers?.... we may not think... there can be wanting, even for every star a peculiar virtue and operation; as every herb plant fruit and flower.. hath the like.'

In Raleigh's birth chart Neptune is prominent, in Taurus. It is square to Pluto, the planet of fate, which is in Aquarius. One remembers him being despoiled of his possessions in 1618 as he returns for the last time to the Tower, losing 'a diamond ring which he wore on his finger given him by the late Queen' and 'a jacinth seal, set in gold, with Neptune engraved on it.' Neptune in Taurus was his fate, his bull from the sea. Neptune the planet of the deep oceans, of poetry, of prisons and of cures. Neptune is the planet of idealism, creativity, spirituality, and of his poetic imagination. His wealth also comes from Neptune in Taurus, from mines, wines, fruits of the earth, and from the sea. And Neptune in the fixed sign of Taurus, in tension with Scorpio rising at his death, stands for loyalty in creativity and in ideals.

Pluto in turn is subconscious attraction, the planet of beginnings and endings, of wealth and of the analytical mind. Pluto in Aquarius square Scorpio, and trine Uranus is progressive, original, reforming, intellectual, idealistic and steadfast. An original man, an original mind. Uranus in Libra gave him flair and originality in the arts. It also gave him a deep spirit of friendship, so much so that the man could never tell who his true friends were. Cecil was a friend until he betrayed that friendship at his trial. But those who were his true friends, like Hariot, stayed with him to the end, loving the man.

And his melancholy? That feeling of elegiac loneliness, of transience and impermanence, that strikes a new note in English poetry; that introspective thoughtfulness; the personal and passionate quality of his verse? The poems are full of sincerity, sadness, and poignancy, all in contrast to the vigorous soldier and adventurer. There is Saturn in Pisces. Empathetic, flexible, self-sacrificing, making a man his own worst enemy, tending towards lack of hope, hypersensitivity, moodiness. Raleigh is capable of bemoaning fate, of regretting the vanishing of the past, of being saddened by injustice and the disappearance of the moon from the sky. His reply to Marlowe's 'The Passionate Shepherd to his Love' is a poem of cool realism, 'the flowers do fade' and the world and love are no longer young, and truth is not in every tongue. In his 'Farewell to the Court' his joys are expired like truthless dreams, and his dandled days past return, and his love misled, 'of all which past the sorrow only stays.' His battles were fought in the sun, but his imagination had a moonlit cast. What is displayed within his poetry is his relationship with Woman, with the Goddess in her many manifestations, and with her incarnation in the Queen.

The Goddess is the Natural World. She is also therefore the soul of man. The matrix of generation and repetition, with its implicit ritual of renewal, ripening and decay, was once embodied in the worship of the mythological female. The elemental story is the re-creation of the life of the earth by the Goddess and her male consort. The elemental tragedy is the death of that consort; the entry of death into life, wearing its many masks; his ritual sacrificial execution; her mourning for him; and his resurrection in the new life. This is the ritual of Attis and Cybele, of Ishtar and Tammuz, of Venus and Adonis, of the Goddess of the East and her Lord. It is behind the myths of Actaeon, Orpheus, Demeter and Persephone, Pentheus, Phaethon. In the Catholic Church it is the cult of the Virgin Mary, present in triad as the three Mary's; her conception of the divine Lord; his life and sacrifice; her mourning for him at the foot of the world-tree; his resurrection and the meeting in the garden; and the promise of his second coming. Out of this ritual comes the underpinning for Church and Monarchy, the eternally founded, constantly repeated, ordered cycle. 'Le Roi est mort, Vive Le Roi.'

The Elizabethan age, the dangerous 1590's which are its zenith, is the time in England when the ancient mythological structure of inherited kingship and popular worship of the Goddess meets the new age which the Renaissance conceived, through rediscovering the Classical achievement. That new age radically challenged the pre-existing order.

Greek civilisation had transformed it once before. The ancient Goddess in her triple aspect had fragmented into her attributes. Her fecundity and her eroticism became trivialised in the masks of Hera, Aphrodite, Hecate. Her representation of the natural world was given a chilly reality in the form of Artemis. Her powers were usurped by the gods, by Zeus and Poseidon, by Hades and Apollo, by Dionysus and Hermes. The male consort was fragmenting before consolidating again to become Eternal Jehovah; the one God of Judaism, and of Puritan Christianity, beside whom there would be no other.

The most potent of all the Greek creations is Athene, that strange sexless spirit, that Ariel who comes in many disguises and speaks to men most intimately, that fleshless incarnation of Mind itself in all its devious movements. She casts the glow of poetry over her favourites. She protects with cunning, guides through astuteness, sharpens the sight, gives dexterity to the hand, pleads eloquently with the Gods, with Fate, fills the world with intellect.

In Athene the Goddess is already fading, and Odysseus is the last hero, the end of an age, the beginning of a new age. Odysseus, her representative among mankind, is the archetype of the independent man, the individual, whose gifts are his abilities, whose achievement is to survive. He is the ancient trickster, and the modern mind. He is the freelance warrior and the traveller, the wanderer who will cross cultures and oceans, solve problems, invent stratagems, manipulate words. With Odysseus the age of ritual becomes the age of opportunism. As Ulysses he carries the sacred wound of the boar, but survives, avoids the ritual death of the king. 'As for your own end, Death will come to you in its gentlest guise, out of the sea.' prophesies Teiresias in the Odyssey.

In Athene the Goddess of nature, generation and ritual kingship is absent. Athene represents the power of Reason. The new world will fall to new men. With technology, commerce and the secular state, men will



establish a culture based on knowledge, on law, creating its own traditions through convention and agreement, through the word. The questioning, challenging and exploratory spirit of Marlowe, Raleigh and Hariot is an echo of Machiavel and Copernicus, and a precursor of Cromwell, Newton, and Cooke. Experience and knowledge will become more critical than inherited position, wealth and ability than primogeniture. The keynote is the emergence of the free individual, in freedom from history, in freedom of thought and religion. It is the radical call of the English, French, and American Revolutions. When the radical energy has died away what remains is Odysseus, the modern human being. But the Goddess, in some sense, also remains.

The Goddess remains as Nature damaged by humanity; as female generation transformable by genetics; as passion alive against reason; as appetite against the impersonal will, as the single one against the stifling oppression of the mass, as love against sterility. She is the sacred marriage of individual hearts and minds as the sanctuary within which humanity, compassion, the arts and all living beauty can survive. We are an age of survivors and of what remains. For the Elizabethans the old order was not yet gone, the new order was not yet arrived. Reason was still establishing itself in rule over Passion, law over appetite. 'Every human proposition' said Raleigh, quoting Charron, 'hath equal authority, if reason make not the difference.'

Shakespeare in his plays betrays both desire that Reason should prevail, and anxiety lest the Sacrament should be lost. His protagonists are punished for falling victim to unreason, to their passions and their obsessions. Equally they are punished for the misuse of reason and of strict logic, for mislaying and denying their souls, for their transgression against the natural law, and the Goddess of the sacred marriage. That marriage is at risk throughout the major tragedies, and is rescued in *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*, by sleight of hand, by protecting magic and by magical resurrection.

One concludes that Shakespeare saw clearly the need for reason but also the potential assault of a loveless rationality on the mythological past, and thereby on ritual, nature, the female, the sacred. His instincts are for order and reason, but they are also for love. Therefore love must infuse reason, but irrational sexuality must be removed from love and love must become an expression of chaste affections. In that sense he is a prophet of Puritanism and of the Victorian dual view of Woman and a Cassandra who prophesies the rational unreason of the Civil War. His apolitical solution for the individual attempts a reconciliation of forces from within. On the other hand his order is the old order. His religion is a modification of the old religion. His society is sacred kingship. It is on their behalf that Shakespeare's appeals to reason are made. His political message is therefore conformist and inconsistent with the inconsistency of his moment in time. Reason and the new must triumph without losing the ancient and the sacred. Existing order must triumph without opposing the forces of reason. The former will happen. Marlowe, Essex, Raleigh, Donne will be precursors, without necessarily being conscious of their role in the drama. Cassandra will speak in tongues, Agamemnon the sacred king will die, and Odysseus the rational man will come alive out of the wreckage to sail the seas.

Raleigh celebrates the Goddess. The title of his poem *Walsingham* for instance is the name of an ancient English shrine to the Virgin, and its content a hymn to the power of the Goddess sung by her faithful but forgotten lover. What are the tributes to Scinthia and Diana, to Selene and Belphebe, if they are not a worship of the Goddess? 'As you came from the holy land of Walsingham'; 'In heaven Queene she is among the spheares'; 'All suddenly I saw the Faery Queen: at whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept'; 'Such force her angellike appearance had, to master distance, time or cruelty'. The Goddess is ever present in his poetry.

On the surface he pays almost religious tribute. He draws on the ageless imagery of the Goddess. He makes a conceit of love and the Virgin Queen. He may certainly have believed in his own love and devotion. There is no suggestion of insincerity in Raleigh. The man is passionate but

controlled. He is Athene's man, not an Endymion who falls helplessly for the Moon Goddess, but his character is still one of loyalty to the old order, devotion to the monarchy, a service of all his talents. He fulfils the role of Shakespeare's Ulysses, employing reason on behalf of existing order. Part of that service ironically is suppression of Catholicism, in which the Goddess as the Virgin is enshrined. It is the same service Essex was about and that he went to his death asserting. It is the same secret service that Marlowe was engaged in, and that Donne's religious efforts uphold. And one means to that end was the transfer to Elizabeth, the head of a Protestant Church severed from Rome, of the worship and cult of the Virgin Mary the remaining icon of the ancient Goddess. Elizabeth adopted her symbols, the ermine, the rose, the phoenix, and the pearl symbolic of virginity. She was the remote Moon, beautiful but chaste, enticing but pure, powerful but virtuous.

The Protestant myth is the Fall of Man, the intervention of Christ in the world, and the promise of Redemption. In that myth, as Donne would spell out in his later religious phase (retreating from his expression of the equality of the sexes in all their humanity which illuminated the Songs and Sonnets) Woman is the frail vessel, the cause of Original Sin, the lesser partner. For the Protestant ethic, as we know to our cost, Nature is merely a resource to be exploited. The rule of the Goddess is, in some respects rightly, condemned as the rule of unreason, of lawlessness, of the raw and the uncooked, of the wild.

Elizabeth took on herself the role of the sacred Virgin, the role of the Goddess, but sexlessly, as Athene, as Artemis, as Reason and Law. And Raleigh is her poet as fundamentally so is Shakespeare. Raleigh and Essex are among those who defuse the ancient ritual. And thereby, and this is the 'tragic' irony of Elizabethan England, she and they undermine the myth of sacred kingship. If order is to prevail, then might can be right, and the history of the Tudor dynasty supports that view. It only waits however for a superior might to topple it from power.

If Reason is to prevail, the ironic message states, then ability not inheritance is the formula for achievement and success in the Protestant future. If Reason is to prevail then the talents of the people and the rights of the people need expression through elected government not through

monarchy. If Reason is to prevail then science and knowledge will lead, technology will effect, and commerce will re-order. If Reason is to prevail then the sacred marriage, nature, and passion, even love itself must retreat into the personal and individual world.

For our age there is the challenge of resurrecting the sacred marriage, of harmonising the Goddess and Modernity. For the Protestant Ethic there was no such challenge. The Goddess and all her works were to be suppressed, and with them ultimately all extreme actions and thoughts, the lawlessness of the Maenads, of the Bacchantes. Witness the destruction of radical challenge after the Civil War. Dissent was too dangerous. But before that came Revolution. Raleigh is an agent of the New World, but he can appear as a figure in the Old also, casting a wistful glance backward in time. He is caught in both Worlds, in the turmoil of change.

In the Elizabethans we see the old ways coexisting with the new, the new emerging from the old. Piracy and opportunism sit alongside reason and law, Albion coexists with discovery and empire, Ptolemy is still there alongside Copernicus and Galileo, space and time expand through a grasp of geography and history, while savage executions buttress a police state.

And the new destabilises the old. The old clings to ritual order and degree. Ulysses is the spokesman for that order in *Troilus and Cressida* as Raleigh is in his *History of the World*. The reality however of the symbol, is an ageing, barren woman capable neither of sustaining the direct line of monarchy, nor of holding back the changes her reign had fostered. A waning moon sets over a stormy ocean. The Goddess is dying, killed by the Goddess's incarnation. All the glitter and glory ends as Raleigh said in this 'lady whom time hath forgot'.

Raleigh storms an old, false heaven in his poetry, a true one in his life. The true future was in the empty skies and new found lands of the voyages, military power on land and naval power on the seas, the discovery and use of new plants and drugs, colonial wealth. The future was in the speeches in parliament, the individual life, the mind with its wide interests, eloquence and rationality. He already saw the Imperialist future, tied irresistibly to

commerce. 'It is likely, by God's blessing, that a land shall flourish with increase of trade in countries before unknown; that civility and religion shall be propagated into barbarous and heathen countries'. 'Whosoever commands the sea, commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world, commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself.' This is the same thinking that Livingstone in the Victorian period will carry into darkest Africa. Science and sea power, commerce and empire, under God's Providence, was to be the English destiny, and Raleigh articulated it and embodied it, in a way that his countrymen and succeeding generations could easily understand. The false heavens of Ptolemy, of astrology, of religion, of curtailed time and space, would be transformed to the true heaven of knowledge, astronomy, physics, the chemical composition of the stars, the microcosmic scale of life, the cool rational vistas of the universe.

Among Raleigh's possessions when he entered the Tower, for the last time, after the failed second Guiana voyage, were maps. He had with him charts of Panama and the Orinoco, of Guiana and Nova Regnia. One is reminded of one of his own exquisite hand drawn maps, of the mouths of the Nile, on a page of his notebook material for *The History of the World*. Raleigh's mind was a map, as Odysseus's was. Perhaps he enjoyed voyaging in his thoughts through the long years of imprisonment, as Odysseus did through his days confined with Calypso and Circe.

The parallels are there. In the story of Ulysses is Ogygia which is Malta; Phaeacia which is Corfu; Djerba where the Lotus-eaters lived; Sicily land of Cyclops; Stromboli and Mount Circonis, Capri of the Sirens; The Straits of Messina between Scylla and Charybdis; the Plains of Troy; and Ithaca the little island which was home.

So Raleigh, with England for Ithaca; the Atlantic for the Mediterranean; the Azores and the Caribbean Islands for Malta, Corfu, Capri, Sicily and Cyprus; Guiana for North Africa. Raleigh goes east to fight as Odysseus did, and voyages west and south along the paths of the sun. Odysseus, journeying to the Underworld, grasps the strange plant that

Hermes puts into his hand. 'It had a blackish root, and milk-white flower. The gods call it Moly, and it is an awkward plant to dig up, at any rate for a mere man.' Raleigh's sponsored expeditions bring back new plants also, tobacco and potatoes, as they appear in Gerard's Herbal. He had potatoes set in his gardens at Youghal in Ireland, along with yellow wallflowers from the Azores, and the 'Affane cherry' from the Canary Islands.

He sponsored voyages to the Virginian coast, fought in Ireland, France, and Spain, sailed to the Azores with Essex on the Islands Voyage, sailed twice to Guiana. He was part of that process whereby the world grew larger, and at the same time smaller. The new worlds were mapped, became accessible. More space came with less mystery, more science, more technology. Raleigh sponsored Hariot who was a trusted member of his household, and a close friend. Hariot was mathematician and scientist, producing navigational tables and manual for the Americas expedition, delving into optics, mechanics, meteorology, and astronomy. He was one of a circle of contacts mathematicians, historians, and antiquaries, men who provided material for Raleigh's *History of the World*, which was an immense undertaking of scholarship.

Geography and History opened up minds. It is not far from practise to theory; from observation and experience, to experiment and understanding; from the discovery of new worlds to their structure; from mechanics, astronomy and optics to physics; from botany to biology; from history to government and rights. Raleigh's *History of the World* is in one sense an immense anachronism, a great defence of the Providential working of the universe as dispensed from the right hand of God. But the opening up of horizons that his life represented inspired generations of men to interpret History and Providence in another manner, to question monarchy fundamentally, to consolidate the world of trade and exploration, to achieve dominance of the seas, and military effectiveness, to provide a foundation for the advancement of science. James thought that Raleigh had been too critical of kings in his *History*.

Raleigh has a role in both worlds. An exemplar of the old England of achievement, glory, excitement, and aristocratic freedom. A precursor of the new, more bitter, world of liberty, democracy, and the Protestant ethic. The Civil War failed to create the parliament of the people ('Is not all the

controversy, whose slaves the poor shall be?’ asked a Leveller pamphlet) but it set the stage. The radical agenda was freedom – freedom from hell and from priests, from blind nature, from magic, from arbitrary authority – freedom from the Goddess in her modes of natural humankind, ignorance, superstition and dread.

In his voyages Odysseus escapes from the witches, from Circe, Calypso, and the Sirens, enters the world of the dead, and returns. Raleigh also escapes; partly through his powerful mind, that ‘sharpness of wit’; partly through his multifarious activities, always full of knowledge, interest, intellect; ultimately through his death. Pym stood in the crowd at his execution. Eliot and Hampden read his works. Cromwell recommended the *History of the World* to his son, a book where could be seen ‘those strange windings and turnings of Providence.’

Raleigh is the representative Elizabethan in action, achieving by survival and endurance, by resilience and repetition, symbolic depth and breadth. It took his death to make him loved. He did indeed ‘Do then by dying, what life cannot do....’ as his *Book of the Ocean* suggested. He had known through experience, what he anticipated in one of his early poems printed in Gascoigne’s *The Steel Glas* in 1576, that ‘whoso reaps renown above the rest, with heaps of hate shall surely be oprest.’ But he lived beyond it to a deeper popular appreciation.

Raleigh in the Tower is a Leonardo figure, the Leonardo of the Turin self-portrait, the aged magi, the old wizard, the fox knowing many things. He is an imprisoned necromancer, like Merlin. (Prisons are an emblem of the age. Essex under house-arrest in York House, Donne in *The Fleet*, Marlowe in *Newgate*.) He is Merlin who, like Ulysses, is imprisoned by magic. Merlin’s Circe is Nimue, the Lady of the Lake, who, learning his secrets, turns his own spells against him. She captures him in a tower of air, or, in other variants of the legend, in a tower of glass, under a stone in a deep cave in the rock, in a hawthorn tree, the white may tree sacred to the goddess, as Burnes-Jones painting shows him. Raleigh’s Circe is first Elizabeth, jealous of his marriage, his return to the true goddess. Then the

warlock James, whom that strange but compelling play Macbeth was written to please, with its witches and darkness, its triple Hecate and its ghostly Banquo, James's claimed ancestor.

Raleigh imprisoned is Shelley's Prince Athanase. 'His soul had wedded Wisdom, and her dower is love and justice, clothed in which he sate, apart from men, as in a lonely tower, pitying the tumult of their dark estate.' He escapes, as Odysseus escapes, twice, to return to and to leave his faithful Penelope. 'I know' says Odysseus to Calypso 'that my Penelope's looks and form are insignificant compared with yours.. nevertheless I long for the happy day of my return home... and if the powers above wreck me out on the wine-dark waters I have a heart inured to suffering since I have had much bitter experience in war and on the stormy seas.' Athene, darkly, 'wished the anguish to eat deeper yet into Odysseus's heart' says Homer. From Circe, Odysseus travelled to Hades to summon the dead, and there is a strange echo of that in the words of Raleigh's gaoler when Raleigh was imprisoned for a time, in 1618, in the Brick Tower, in a tiny cell. He said 'though it seemeth nearer heaven, yet there is no means to escape but into hell'.

Raleigh travels via execution to a reputation beyond the grave. To his Penelope, Elizabeth Throckmorton, in 1603, believing that his execution was set for the following day, he writes a moving letter, in words that the practical and long-suffering Odysseus might have used. 'If you can live free from want, care for no more, for the rest is but vanity' and 'When you have travelled, and wearied your thoughts in all sorts of worldly cogitations you shall sit down by sorrowe in the end.' Less lucky than Odysseus in his ending, he was lucky in his affections. And the same courage and endurance Odysseus showed enabled him to act out the advice which was offered to him, in an anonymous, hostile, answer to his poem *The Lie*, 'I pray you tell them how to live, and teach them how to die.'

If not a true scientist, nor a great philosopher, nor even the wizard men imagined, Raleigh was still, in his originality and wide-ranging thought, a modern. His misfortune was to be the living emblem of the old world



also. In an age of the Goddess denied, as one of those who assisted in that denial, he was also a symbol of Elizabethan England, its pressurised achievements, its glory, and its deification of Gloriana, Virginia, Belphebe, Synthia, the Virgin Queen. For that he paid the price. He was betrayed to execution by the Spanish faction, sacrificed to advance the matrimonial treaty with Spain, or merely removed as an embarrassment to James, made an example of, in that ritual tidying that English monarchs seemed to practise. Nevertheless it was said quite rightly that his 'death will do more harm to the faction that procured it than ever he did in his life.' He became a symbol of enlightened Englishness, of free-thinking rationalism, of courageous individualism, of free trade despite his holding of monopolies, of Parliament despite having been a great Courtier, of the Common Law despite having been a Royal favourite. He gained the lasting respect of Bacon and Coke, who prosecuted him, and was a truer man than either.

In the early hours of the morning of Sunday the eighth of February 1600, Raleigh rowed himself out into the Thames. In a Dickensian river meeting, amongst congealing mists and dark water, he lined up his small boat alongside that of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, the Governor of Plymouth Fort, kinsman of Raleigh, and a follower of Essex. Essex had approved the meeting if it were held mid-river with two witnesses present. Though perhaps suspicious of Gorges, Essex could hardly deny him the contact. Raleigh advised Gorges to disassociate himself from Essex and return to Plymouth. Gorges, privy to Essex's plans for insurrection, advised Raleigh to go back to Court as he was 'like to have a bloody day of it'. Four shots were then fired towards Raleigh from the shore, possibly at Sir Christopher Blount's instigation, and armed men appeared on Essex steps. Raleigh returned, and hurried to Court to issue a warning. By the evening Essex's abortive rebellion was over and Essex a prisoner. On Ash Wednesday Essex went to the block.

Only we die in earnest, that's no jest' wrote Raleigh in the poem that compares life to a play, a theatre. The Queen was then sixty-seven years old, the favourites and rivals, Essex and Raleigh thirty-three years and forty-seven years respectively. Raleigh was required to attend Essex's execution

as Captain of the Guard. He would have seen in Essex his own reflection. When the sacred king is killed, the new king sees his own ritual fate enacted. At Essex's trial Raleigh testified against him, part of a process that was a travesty of justice. He saw the great Coke, later a champion of freedom and the Common Law, twist the law to his purpose. He saw Francis Bacon distance himself from his old benefactor, and turn on him like one of Actaeon's hounds under Diana's command. He saw Cecil and the coming men, the administrators and desk-officers, lifted up by Fortune's wheel.

At Raleigh's own execution eighteen years later at the age of sixty-four, crowning sacrificially his own life, Raleigh took a few last moments to talk about Essex. 'It is said that I was persecutor of my Lord of Essex.... I confess I was of a contrary faction, but I knew my Lord of Essex was a noble gentleman, and that it would be worse with me when he was gone; for those that set me against him, afterwards set themselves against me...I understood that he asked for me at his death, to be reconciled.'

There is the ancient story. It is the tale of the birth, life, death and resurrection of the God of the Solar Year. It concerns at its heart, the God's struggle with the doomed God of the Dying Year, his fateful elder brother, whose place he comes to usurp, whose marriage with the supreme Triple Goddess he will in turn celebrate, and whose death he will have to die. He is his brother's doppel-gänger, his mirror self, his shadow, his alter ego. He is the God's murderous rival, who is driven on, at the instigation of the Goddess, to destroy her old lover, the reigning consort, and become her lover in his stead. This is the story contained within the myth of Osiris, and his brother Set. It is the story of Atreus and Thyestes, of Aegisthus and Orestes. The God, a God of the Waxing Year, can only ever be a temporary consort of the Goddess. She is Nature and remains. He is the annual inseminating power, male and temporary, destined to be crucified, beheaded, burnt, put to death in a thousand ways, so as to be resurrected in his own mirrored reflection, as his eternal rival, his immortal Self.

Raleigh and Essex, Odysseus and Achilles, live these stories which are wound together. Raleigh's is the first cycle. Adopted as the Queen's favourite around 1582, he a twenty-eight year old, she twenty years older, in her prime. By 1583 he was a rich man, granted the 'Farm of Wines' which was a monopoly unpopular with tradesmen, an annual retail licence charge on the vintners. In 1584 he held Durham House, one of that line of great Houses along the river by Whitehall. York House was next door. The old Savoy, Somerset Palace, and Essex House further down. In Durham House Raleigh had 'a little turret that looked into and over the Thames, and had the prospect which is pleasant perhaps as any in the world'. There if he wished he could learn to be a dreamer in a lonely tower.

His income was frequently increased, many times over. He played the great game of courting the Queen. He was as Spenser said 'the sommers Nightingale, thy souveraine Goddess's most deare delight'. 'In heaven Queene she is...' wrote Raleigh 'She beautie is, by her the fair endure'. Puttenham described the tall elegant courtier, as man and poet, as 'most loftie, insolent, and passionate.'

He sponsored the Virginia Voyages to the New World, entered Parliament, was Lord Warden of the Stannaries controlling the production of the Cornish tin-mines, sent his ships privateering off the Azores, and in 1587 succeeded Sir Christopher Hatton as Captain of the Queen's guard. He rode with her, laughed with her, wrote poetry. He was at the midpoint of his life, the zenith of his Court career. Then Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, twenty years old, thirteen years younger than Raleigh, arrived. Raleigh was 'damnable proud'. Essex 'a great resenter'. The Rivals began to skirmish.

Essex, the nobleman, was prepared to argue with Elizabeth over precedence. In a quarrel over the treatment of his sister Dorothy banished from Court for marrying secretly, the young Phaethon reproached Elizabeth, asked 'why she would offer this disgrace both to me and to my sister, which was only to please that knave Raleigh... For myself I told her I had no job to be in any place, but was loth to be near about her, when I knew my affection so much thrown down, and such a wretch as Raleigh highly esteemed of her. To this she made no answer, but turned away....'

Through the Armada period Essex and Raleigh jockeyed for position, Raleigh equipping ships to harass the Spanish, contending with Essex over the appointment of protégés to lucrative posts. He contributed to the actions at Corunna, Lisbon and on the Tagus, where Essex deserting his position of Master of the Queen's Horse at Court without permission chose to run the gauntlet of the Queen's disfavour. Raleigh took possession of land and houses in Ireland, at Lismore and Youghal, and sponsored Edmund Spenser's publication of his *Faerie Queen*.

In 1590 Essex was disgraced by his secret marriage to Frances Walsingham. Raleigh might then have foreseen his own destiny reflected in that of Essex. His rival, his alter ego, his other Self, shown clearly in the mirror, in that cold Tudor glass.

By early 1592 Raleigh had in turn found and married his Serena, his Penelope, Elizabeth Throckmorton, then a twenty-seven year old lady of the Privy Chamber. She was related to the risk-taking Throckmorton family, one branch of which owned Coughton Court in Warwickshire, its members involved in Wyatt's Rebellion, and the Gunpowder Plot. She gave birth to a son Damerei in the March of that year. Disaster followed. Raleigh was recalled from the Panama expedition, financed to attack the Spanish treasure fleet, on which he had set out as commander. Though he denied the marriage at first to Cecil, there clearly had been one, and he went with his wife to the Tower, 'for defiling the honour of a lady of the Queen'. Camden says the marriage was forced on him by the Queen for wronging her lady, and the child Damerei may therefore have been conceived out of wedlock.

By September he was released to hurry to Dartmouth, to prevent the plunder, by all and sundry, of treasure from the *Madre de Dios*, captured by his ships of the Panama expedition, a leviathan of 1600 tons, the single richest prize ever brought to an English port. The Crown wanted its share of the prize, and that effectively bought him his freedom. He was at liberty again after a first taste of the Tower he was to get to know so well, but still out of favour. 'No: I am still the Queen of England's poor captive' he told

Cecil, who noted 'his heart is broken; for he is very extreme pensive'. 'Like truthless dreames, so are my joys expired' he wrote in his poem Farewell to the Court, 'My minde to woe, my life in fortunes hand, of all which past, the sorrow onely stays.' And in the poem to Synthia 'but I must be the example in loves story'. He retreated to his 'fortune's fold', Sherborne Castle in Dorset. He was not to be received at Court again for five years.

In 1595 he set sail for Guiana, to find riches, and restore his position with the Queen. The Essex faction waited. Guiana was a new and intriguing land, richly wooded, with a gentle people. It gave rise to comparisons with life in the Golden Age. Though he brought back mineral ores, there was no immediate evidence of the rich mines of precious metals that Raleigh believed existed. To Elizabeth his voyage was a failure since it failed to make her wealthier. Essex the rival was once more in favour. When Howard, Essex and Vere led the 1596 expedition against Cadiz, Raleigh was also there. Essex was temporarily reconciled to him. 'For this is the action and the time in which you and I shall be taught to know and love one another'. Raleigh covered himself in glory, but the treasure ships were missed, the merchantmen were lost to fire, and in attacking Cadiz directly the Queen's order had been disobeyed. Raleigh praised Essex. Others praised Raleigh. Neither gained ground with Elizabeth.

Observing his rival in 1597, Raleigh saw how Essex was kept close to the Queen, but denied greater power, his petitions and nominations ignored. Essex saw that he might be able to use Raleigh's military experience to bolster his own position, and Raleigh saw how he might be able to use Essex to return to favour. Raleigh, Essex and Cecil grew closer. In June Raleigh was re-established as Captain of the Guard after five years. He joined Essex in the Islands Voyage to the Azores in July. Battered by a great storm, many of the ships returned to port.

Essex was a guest on Raleigh's flagship Warspite for a time, though he had doubts and jealousies 'buzzed into his ears' concerning Raleigh. They sailed for Lisbon and then the Azores in hopes of catching the Spanish treasure fleet. Separated from each other, Raleigh attacked one of the

islands Fayal without Essex in a partially successful raid on the fort at Horta. Essex's party accused Raleigh of disobeying orders, and Raleigh had to defend himself with Essex. There was considerable friction. A touchy Raleigh was reprimanded, and apologised though convinced he was in the right. The rest of the Voyage was a failure, missing the treasure fleet by a few miles and hours. They were blown back home in a series of storms. Raleigh had the success at Fayal, and a Brazil prize vessel. Essex had nothing but the Queen's displeasure.

Raleigh as Captain of the Guard must have witnessed the extraordinary scene between Essex and Elizabeth in July of 1598 when Essex quarrelled with the Queen over the appointment of a new Lord Deputy for Ireland. Essex lost his temper and turned his back on her. Angered and offended she boxed his ears. Insulted, Essex stormed out, went off to brood like Achilles in his tent over perceived wrongs.

Essex was then foolish enough to bid for and be given the Deputyship himself. Writing from Ireland in June of 1599, distant from the court, nervous and exposed, he slandered Raleigh. Essex mishandled the Irish situation, made his mad ride to Nonesuch, and was imprisoned for disobedience in York House. Raleigh would have looked down perhaps on his old rival walking in the gardens from Durham House next door. John Donne, secretary to Egerton, the Lord Keeper, was resident there, between the two forces so to speak. Raleigh wrote to Cecil maliciously 'if her Majesties favor fail him, he will again decline to a common person.' Essex was released to his own Essex House a little downriver. Raleigh was soon to row out, on that cold February Sunday, to meet Gorges midstream. Essex became a sacrifice to Artemis, like that King of the Wood by Lake Nemi in Italy who lived until deposed by his successor. The favourite, the mortal prince, was killed as offering to the immortal Goddess, a personification of the multitudinous life of nature, both animal and vegetable. Diana, the goddess of the wild, was also a moon-goddess, a Cynthia, 'a princes and supream'.

At Court, Essex and Raleigh had followed each other in and out of favour in the minor cycles of her lunar year, and in the end it was Odysseus the survivor who remained. Odysseus who escaped from Circe the witch of the moon, from Calypso's cave which was 'sheltered by a green thicket of

alder, aspen and sweet-smelling cypress'. Odysseus wounded but not slain by the boar. Odysseus who pays court to the Moon Goddess, but whose inner allegiance is to grey-eyed Athene, the Goddess of Wisdom. Odysseus who voyaged in the Moon's element, over storm-driven seas, and returned despite all dangers. Odysseus who says of himself in Homer 'For I have been through many bitter experiences.' Odysseus, son of Laertes, or maybe Sisyphus, who was warned by the oracle 'If you go to Troy, you will not return until the twentieth year, and then alone and destitute.' Odysseus who could hope for revenge on his enemies, but must always 'expect great trouble', whose 'travels would not yet be finished', whose 'death would come to him from the sea'.

In the last years of Elizabeth's reign Raleigh was again in favour. She was in her late sixties, he a vigorous man still, not yet fifty. Essex 'Sweet England's pride' was gone. Raleigh from Durham House and Sherborne, issued out to attend Parliament, act as Governor of Jersey, run the West Country, supervise the Channel Coast Fleet, Progress with the Court, take the waters at Bath. His parliamentary speeches included thoughts on free trade, on the abuse of monopolies even though he was a beneficiary, and on religious toleration.

All this ended with James's accession. To many in England, following his rivalry with Essex, and Essex's downfall, Raleigh was a 'damnable fiend of hell, mischievous Machiavel'. The popular ballad claimed that 'Essex for vengeance cries, his blood upon thee lies'. He was to redeem that view by his own death.

The Goddess, Elizabeth, dying, would take the true power of the crown with her. The process which Raleigh had unwittingly furthered, by his sponsorship of exploration and of Harriot and his circle, by parliamentary debate, free-ranging thought, by his support of free speech, and freedom of every man within the law, would put paid to the old order. In 1603 Elizabeth died. The man who said in Parliament 'I think the best course is to set at liberty, and leave every man free' was soon imprisoned in the Tower by James. He had been implicated by Lord Cobham who was

arrested with his brother George Brook soon after the accession, on a charge of high treason. Cobham made wild accusations, but they were enough to allow Raleigh's indictment. The charges of conspiring with Spain were ludicrous, but Raleigh was to be condemned to death.

At the show trial, he summoned, as Odysseus does with Athene's aid, the old eloquence. He showed 'courage, patience, dignity, intelligence' said Sir Toby Matthew, 'good temper, wit, learning, courage and judgement' said Sir Dudley Carleton. The same pack of jackals that had snapped at Essex's heels was now at his. Like Actaeon, Pentheus, Orpheus he could hear the crowd of his enemies calling for his blood. The law was twisted to suit. Coke disgraced himself, though one result may have been his own rethinking of the meaning of justice and the purpose of the law.

Raleigh defended himself with the little means at his disposal. 'No man spoke better for himself ... in half a day the mind of all the company was changed from the extremest hate to the extremest pity.' He was found guilty, condemned to death, and sent to the Tower prior to execution. He wrote letters begging for his life, on behalf of his family, which he afterwards regretted bitterly. And the touching last letter to his wife, thanking her for 'your many troubles and cares taken for me, which – though they have not taken effect as you wished – yet my debt is to you never the lesse; but pay it I never shall in this world.'

He was not, in fact, to die. After a last-minute reprieve, in one of James's disgraceful little rigmaroles, he was imprisoned for the next thirteen years, the occult and sacred thirteen, of the Celtic year, whose lunar months are echoed in the letters of the tree alphabet.

His rooms were on the second floor of the Bloody Tower in the inner wall. He had a terrace to walk on, visible from the river. He experimented, like an aged Magus, with herbs and spices, drugs and minerals. He thought about naval medical issues, dietetics, and hygiene. He had a furnace for experiments with metals, made tonics and cordials, distilled salt water to fresh, tried methods of preserving meat for sea voyages, cured tobacco, tried to devise remedies for scurvy. He supplied medicines to his friends and his 'cordial' cured Queen Anne.



He was the fox, the witch, an aged savant. He researched and wrote his *History of the World*, going down metaphorically among the dead, resurrecting past lives in words. As he wrote the *History*, like Odysseus in Homer 'a mixed crowd of ghosts swarmed to the trench, men and women of all dates and every age'. He befriended the young Prince Henry, who became his great hope and who was working with his mother Anne of Denmark for Raleigh's release. Raleigh was devastated by Henry's death in 1612. The best future for the English monarchy was gone. It is said Raleigh in despair destroyed his notes for a further part to his *History*.

Raleigh was living history. His enemies died or lost their power or changed their views. He conceived another expedition to Guiana to find gold, enrich James, earn his permanent freedom. In 1617 he was free to go on his expedition. James had little to lose. Raleigh was to keep the peace with Spain who nominally laid claim to the territories, an almost impossible condition.

'We have not yet come to the end of our trials' said Ulysses to Penelope 'there is still one last, great and hazardous adventure before me, which I must see through to its end whatever that may be.' The story of Raleigh's last voyage is sad. It was dogged by ill-luck, poor weather and sickness. While Raleigh was ill with fever disaster came. His son, Wat, went up-country and was killed in a skirmish with the Spaniards. 'I never knewe what sorrow meant till nowe' he wrote to his wife. He bemoaned his fate. 'I am sure there is never a base slave in the fleete hath taken the paines and care that I have done; hath slept so little, and travilled so much.'

In the spring he set sail for England in the *Destiny*. The adventure was over and Raleigh's hopes were wrecked again in its failure. There were no riches to swell James's coffers. He returned from the sea to his death. There was a brief attempt at escape to France. In August 1618 he was again in the Tower.

He had broken the terms of his release by his activities in territories claimed by Spain, though that was inevitable. James had leaked information to Spain about the voyage, presumably to entrap Raleigh. He was now a pawn to be used in the Spanish negotiations that were under way. In a final irony he was accused of the old charges of conspiring with Spain, he who had consistently demonstrated his antagonism to Spanish power, to

Catholicism, and to foreign intervention in English affairs. He was examined in private by a committee of six, headed by Francis Bacon. The dog had bitten his master, and now turned on his master's old enemy also. It was a forgone conclusion. Raleigh was condemned to death.

James is supposed to have set the date for Raleigh's execution. The 29th of October by chance, expediency, or otherwise was the day chosen. The first day of the twelfth Celtic lunar month, the month of ngetal, the writer's reed, in the tree alphabet, and on the eve of Samhain, the great Celtic fire festival. Samhain was the time of divination of the future, a time of omens and auguries. Throughout Europe it was the time when the paths of the dead were opened, when bonfires were lit 't'burn the witches', to eradicate the baleful forces. James was a man interested in witchcraft. Scotland one of the areas where the Celtic customs were still wholly active despite the Church.

If he did hope to exorcise the spirit of Raleigh, the wizard and sorcerer of the Tower, then the courageous manner of Raleigh's death, and the knowledge of the crowd and the people of London that the man was being done to death for specious reasons, worked against him. Pym and others were in the crowd, who would remember the abuse of the law, the misuse of royal power, the defeat of intelligence by stupidity and malice. Elizabeth's veil of the Goddess fell from James's form. There was only a mean-spirited fool behind.

The Goddess was defeated, her myths quenched once more in this last sacrifice of the old Elizabethan England. The rivals had both gone down, and there could be no new consort for the Goddess. The Puritan ethic was being established with no place for her. And no place for the old reality of royalty. With historical irony Raleigh's death prophesied the ultimate death of monarchy which would linger on into our own age, purposeless and secularised.

Odysseus is a combatant at Troy in the dying of an age of epic. He is the last of the heroes, those beings with the trappings of myth, who move out from their world into the modern world. He is the forerunner of that worship of intelligence, which creates Socrates and founds Greek Science and Mathematics. Raleigh emerges from the cyclic world of the Goddess and her sacrificed consorts into the open world of the single individual. In him the passing age of lawlessness, piracy, ambition, personal power exists alongside the new age of discipline, shared government, the search for personal liberty under the law. In his History time begins to tick. In his Voyages space begins to open.

Athene the power of Reason becomes internalised in Odysseus. The external gods are no longer necessary. The eye instead of mirroring the gods who look from without, begins to look from within and see the world and nature in their alien presence, to be objectified by subjective theory and touched by imagined experiment. Raleigh was a history of the Elizabethan times, in his own person, a catalogue of ships and men, events and places, thoughts and dreams, which were fading from sight. He was also a glass of possibility, an alternative around which ideas, not necessarily in agreement with his own, might gather, like the ghosts around the blood-filled trench seeking speech and life. His poetry sounds a new note of reflectiveness, of introspection and self-awareness. When he seeks self-justification, a balm to salve failure, a place to express frustration, room in which to brood on transience and life's vanities, a method to communicate his understanding of the past and ideas for the future, it is to books and literary composition that he turns. Odysseus, like Merlin, has a secret. It is Mind and the Word.

Sunrise on the dawn of his execution. He is Orpheus whose speech and singing for a while charmed the birds from the trees. He is the reed, the royal plant, out of which writing instruments and music pipes are made. He has failed to win back his lost Goddess from the underworld, his fortune from the darkness. He waits for the Maenads who will tear his head from his shoulders. Thrown into the River Hebrus it will float singing to the sea. His limbs will be buried at Leibethra under the slopes of Olympus 'where the nightingales sing more sweetly than anywhere in the world.' Laid to rest

in a cave at Antissa his head will continue to prophesy, or nursed in the lap of one of the servants of the God it will be made to sing, to bewail its fate, to answer questions, to advise. Diodorus Siculus said that Orpheus used the tree alphabet, where each letter signified a month, so follows the legend that he made the trees and rocks move, turning the cycle of the seasons and the earth in its rotation. He is the beginning of a cycle, and the end of a cycle.

‘Then at last the stones grew crimson’ says Ovid ‘with the poet’s blood, whose voice they could not hear.’ ‘The lyre gave out a plaintive sound, and the lifeless mouth made a sad murmur.’ And then, Ovid adds, ‘The ghost of Orpheus sank under the earth... and searching the fields of the Blessed he found his wife again and held her in his arms. There they walk together side by side: now she goes in front and he follows her, now he leads and looks back as he can do in safety now at his Eurydice.’

Sunrise on the dawn of his execution. The sun is rising in Scorpio, the sign of Essex his dead rival, the sign that opposed Raleigh’s Neptune, his guiding planet, at his birth. Pluto the planet of fate is setting in Taurus, Raleigh’s birth sign, and his natal Neptune position opposes the ascendant. Pluto in Taurus is said to be in detriment. Fate has overtaken Neptune’s last voyage. Saturn the planet of duty and loyalty, that which constrains, underlies, strengthens, chills a life, lies in a tee-square with Mars and opposing Jupiter, conjunct the Moon. Saturn ensured Raleigh returned to face his fate, his fortune and expansive journeys constrained, his energies and courage under Mars now opposed to feeling, he himself driven through the last gate.

Uranus planet of change squares his natal Uranus, activating the natal aspects to Neptune and Pluto, presaging the last change, the final journey. ‘Great are the joys, where heart obtains request’ he once wrote, ‘much is the ease, where troubled minds find rest.’ He had loved truly. ‘Farewell false love the oracle of lies’. He had in his ambition stormed Heaven, but when Heaven turned against him, he had not swerved in his allegiances, had never followed false love into ‘a way of error, a temple full of treason, in all

effects contrary unto reason.' Athene, Reason, was still his Goddess. Now Uranus summoned Fate and the long rule of Neptune, the voyage over Ocean, over the Moon's bright sea of Love and elemental meaning, came to an end.

'Desire himself runs out of breath, and getting, doth but gain his death. Desire nor Reason hath, nor rest, and blind doth seldom choose the best. Desire attained is not desire, but as the sinders of the fire.' Mercury; mind, intelligence, wit, agent of Athene, was rising conjunct the ascendant in deep-searching Scorpio, opposing Neptune, abandoning life, but enabling his eloquence even there on the scaffold, allowing the wit, the last jesting comments to his friends.

The things he achieved by feeling, by imagination and idealism survived him. His poetry, fine in itself; the story of his life wrapped in the fabric of Elizabethan England; his pointing of the way to exploration and trade; his deep instinct for liberty of the individual. It is as an individual that Raleigh, like Odysseus, shares the stage with us. His mind would have competed with the best in any age. He is a symbol of the human voyage from cradle to grave. He is a reminder to us to be honest and loyal, to have courage, to endure, to return, not to fear feeling, not to betray affections for ambition, not to suffer fools gladly, not to be insulted lightly.

Raleigh, like Odysseus is the solitary man who makes his own fate, yet fulfils the destiny of the species. He is the man of the middle way, respectful towards the unknown powers, but making the most of what he is given. Storming Heaven in his beginnings, he hoped to slip into Heaven at the end, Heaven which he called 'the Judicious, sharp spectator' of this 'short Comedy'.

He stands for the equality of mind and feeling, the potentially equal value of all of us. He stands for life. Not life as the medieval man and woman was expected to live it, as a stone in the cathedral of society, but life as lived by the single one, responding to the World and to the Self, to event and desire, with will and reason. The 'last of the Elizabethans' was in himself the symbol of that which was to oppose all ritual, autocratic,

inherited order, and replace it with fluid, democratic, government by ability. Shakespeare's speech about degree and order in *Troilus and Cressida* is put into precisely the wrong mouth. Ulysses is respectful of order, but by his actions, in his life, he is part of the process of disorder, of change. As Ulysses passes by the gods are let loose, Troy falls, the oceans open up, the Underworld is exhibited to the human eye, individuals are remembered, and kings are killed.

Raleigh goes bravely to the scaffold. The crowd is not the ancient crowd of Maenads, of Bacchantes, of the dogs who pursue Actaeon. They are not the murderers. They come as crowds do come, to be witnesses, to testify to the ritual, to make a communion with the living or the dead. They become the ones who saw, the intelligence which will carry the news through their society and not always in ways that the authorities would like. They are the host of sacred ones, made a sacred crew by event, by portent. They are the guardians of the head of Bran, the rescuers of the head of Orpheus, who will place it, prophesying, in their temple.

By initiation in the rite, by witnessing it, they become complicit though innocent, tainted though purified, criminals though guiltless. They witness on a stage the mortality of Everyman. They feel, as in tragic theatre, empathy, the emotions of the tragic hero. They see the edge of the axe, the knife-edge that lies between life and death, the Razor Bridge over the abyss that the hero must cross. They see how precarious being is, and also how much is achievable despite transience. They come to mourn a life and to celebrate it. They come to see a conclusion of a story that is also the beginning of a story. They are the ones in whom Justice burns for or against. They are the ones who love or hate, admire or despise. They are those who can say 'I am the one. I was there.'

Some participant says that Raleigh should turn and kneel so that his head is to the East, towards the rising sun. So that the shadows should fall away from the strike, so that he might point in the direction of his Saviour's tribulation on earth, the cross symbolised by those outstretched arms. 'So the heart be right, it is no great matter which way the head lieth' he replies.

He tells the headsman to act when he stretches out his hands. He stretches them out, once, and then again, the headsman failing to act on his first signal. 'Strike, man, strike.' he tells him. The headsman obeys the command of the god's representative. The severed head is lifted up high. And a voice cries out in the crowd 'We have not such another head to cut off.'

That cry goes up over Bran, and Orpheus, correlative with that cry of mourning over Adonis, Attis, Osiris. The cry for our mortality, our fragile existence, out of which before the marriage with Death, we can make a glory. In the myths the gods and mortals die and are killed again and again, the same god in many different ways, the same mortal in many different representations. It is life itself, which meets death over and over in the repetition that complements the repetition of birth and generation, life that by repetition is re-born, in our only re-incarnation.

Raleigh is loyal to Athene even in death. She gives him stature, self-control, the wit to jest, the eloquence to speak without faltering, the courage to maintain the great illusion of his part in the play to the end. All eyes are on him. 'I, the world's eye.' His dialogue with himself we know goes on to the end. It is the conversation within ourselves that reason allows. It is the tool of intellect, which gives us freedom, of thought, of speech, of belief, of understanding. Freedom from the gods. Dangerous and delightful freedom. Freedom which seduces like the Sirens whose song we do not know, and Freedom which torments us out on the wine-dark sea, blows us away, drives us under, spews us out onto a foreign shore with an alien horizon. Freedom which is will, or appetite, which is reason or unreason, which is order or chaos.

What takes away our freedom we hate with an abiding hate, person or State, circumstance or event. We are so filled with Athene. And what matters is that a life should be successful. And success is measured only by that life itself, by the inward journey, and the inner struggles, and the inner voyage, in how we handle ourselves on those strange islands, on how we endure, on whether we return. On Odysseus's cunning and loyalty, on Penelope's faithfulness and affections. That loyalty, and that faithfulness and endurance which Homer symbolises in the dog, Argus, found lying, vermin-ridden, on the midden, by Odysseus, after his nineteen year's absence. In the dog's eye is recognition. The world of the creatures and ourselves is one world. In Odysseus's eye is a tear. He does not shed many.

Like Odysseus, Raleigh is Everyman. He is the last, and one of the first. The personal life, the individual presence which is more important and more vital than State or Religion, Species or Discipline. At the core of that life is loyalty, to a destiny, to an image of self, to reason, to self-control, to beauty, to adventure, to feeling and affection. He emerges out of the past to take his place in the modern present.

And he brings with him the sacred. He recognises what is outside himself, what he has not created. He respects the powers that influence. He takes the middle road. And he does not cease to be the trickster, the fox, the materialist, the advocate, the mediator, the fulcrum of the balance. In his death Justice failed, and the recognition of that was a spur to a new search for law without arbitrary prerogative.

As the lone mind against Fate, Raleigh is our alter ego. He triumphs, even in death, through courage and intelligence. He is ultimately more important than others who changed the immediate course of events. He is the participant in the drama of all events, of any event. He is the underlying texture of the modern mind, the stream of consciousness that flows out from Odysseus. To the Greeks it brought the challenge of Pure Reason, in the dialectic of Socrates. To the modern world it brings the challenge of that same Pure Reason in the unfolding of Science.

In Raleigh, as in Odysseus, there is still the charm of participation in an older ethos, of powers and mysteries, the uncharted and unknown. He has the same resources we have, the body and the brain, passion and will, intelligence and effort. He voyages past similar islands. He meets with similar adversity. He needs the same self-belief, the knowledge that we have it in our own power to achieve our full humanity. 'Stab at thee he that will, no stab thy soul can kill.'

The poet who replied to Marlowe's 'Passionate Shepherd' with as withering an analysis of the transience of beauty and of life itself, as we might find anywhere, also evoked the final action of any life, making peace with existence and mortality. 'Unfold thy flocks, and leave them to the fields, to feed on hills or dales, where likes them best, of what the summer or the spring time yields, for love and time hath given thee leave to rest.'







'John Donne (W. Skelton sculp)'

Lives of Dr. John Donne (1796) - Sir Henry Wotton, Mr.  
Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert and Dr. Robert Sanderson  
by Walton, Izaak, 1593-1683 Zouch, Thomas, 1737-1815  
*Internet Archive Book Images*

## V - DONNE



Elizabeth adhered to her middle way in religion, maintaining the split from Rome that her father had instigated, embracing a Protestant theology, and punishing religious views which attempted either to move the Church towards the Lutheran and Calvinist positions or to demand that it revert to Catholicism. The Catholic agitators were hunted and persecuted. They vanished into the shadows. Apolitical Catholic adherence was expressed in private or in art, in refuge or in metaphor. To be part of a Catholic family, as John Donne was, meant entering the world with a liability, a potential source of discrimination and risk.

Born in 1572, he was in his twenties as Essex and Raleigh jostled for position, just twenty-one when Marlowe died. Out of the first, Elizabethan, half of his life rises a new and startling voice, his 'muse's white sincerity' expressed in a private, intelligent, linguistically demanding form of verse. It reveals initially a young man defending himself against the world. He was nominally a Catholic, sensitive and unsure of his reception in a hostile society. He was a poet, with deep feelings, alert to rejection by an unknown public. He became a wearer of masks. In his Satires and Elegies, in an attempt to act out identity, he adopted witty, apparently insensitive roles, but in his poems addressed to friends, and in the Epithalamion of 1595, he broke through to deeper feelings. Then in the Songs and Sonnets he made that inward turn towards intimacy, with love as the great subversive theme, which seems essentially 'modern' because it is, for us, essentially serious. Like Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Raleigh, the intellect behind the poetry overcomes the limitations of existing form and thought, to speak authentically.

Shakespeare's deepest note is his inner sweetness and tenderness; Marlowe's his restless desire for something beyond, for the extreme; Raleigh's his sensitivity to transience, his silvery elegiac quality; Donne's is intimacy, his focus on the individual life, on the self. He is the first truly autobiographical poet in English, the first in whom the emotions and events of the life are vitally presented in the content of the verse, though often indirectly and elusively.

Donne was interested in the self's changeability and inconstancy, in the instability that was part of his character and temperament. Loyalty, constancy, disloyalty, betrayal, pledges and oaths are of the scenery of love, but also vital elements of his life. A man brave in words, who found it difficult to sustain that courage in actions. A man who could stand firm in his loyalty to a woman, but relinquish his religious allegiance. Who could write verse about faithlessness and spend the second half of his life in the embrace of faith. This centring on the volatile self makes Donne an innovator in literature, 'Copernicus in poetry', someone who changed the line of sight from man moving in orbit around the world and society, to the world and society reflected and centred on man. Part of this shift was an internalisation of sacredness, the creation of an inner temple, the making of 'one little room, an everywhere'. Part of it was a retreat, a defence, a response to his practical difficulties in achieving a role in life. Part of it was the vitality of his intellect, a sensitivity to his own inner world and responses. Part of it was the reality of love in his own life, its dominance over him, his need for its consolation, to be 'taken and bound with a kiss'. It mirrored the movement within society towards Protestant individualism with the ancient values enshrined primarily within marriage and the personal life. At the same time his own nature was oriented in its sensitivities, towards love as the ultimate sacrament, the ultimate seriousness of a life. If not religious love then secular, if not secular then religious, since all love is one.

There are echoes of Saint Augustine in Donne, the echoes of a life starting in secular love and ending in religious love, of Augustine's fascination with the self and with time, of the confessional tendency in his

mind, of the change in him from rebellion to orthodoxy. 'I loved not yet,' says Augustine, 'yet I loved to love. I sought what I might love, in love with loving.' Donne begins with the desire and searches for the goal, testing his way among loyalties and betrayals, endeavouring to understand love as well as to preach it, posturing and inventing, but ultimately discovering and achieving. He explores in the world of verse the tensions of love, the paradoxes and confusions of love, the mysteries and sacraments of love, the pains of love's loss and love's betrayal, the challenge to the self's isolation which is love.

Donne also feared aspects of his own selfhood, its melancholy, its isolation, its pain, its terrors, and tried always to connect, to be 'a part of the main'. 'What torment is not a marriage bed to this damnation, to be secluded eternally, eternally, eternally from the sight of God?' he cries out in a sermon of 1622. It is resonant with that speech of Mephistopheles in Faustus 'Hell hath no limits nor is circumscrib'd in one self place; for where we are is hell, and where hell is, must we ever be.' He appears to have lacked an intuitive grasp of human relations, to have found relationship difficult, to have found it hard to escape the island of himself. There is nevertheless that thread of love in his life, which he follows tenaciously.

Like Theseus the clue was handed to him always by a woman. The labyrinth was always his own selfhood, the Minotaur his own fears, desires and unformed humanity. Theseus's betrayal of Ariadne, the Goddess, is his betrayal. But as if to compensate for his disloyalties his new pledges once made are lifelong, and in friendship, marriage, parenthood and the established Church, he found a warmth and solace.

Donne, as has been said, came of a Catholic family, his father dying young, his mother remarrying. She was the daughter of John Heywood, musician and author and descendant of Sir Thomas More, who had been executed forty years before Donne's birth. Catholic persecution was growing more severe. Being a Catholic was a risk, a constraining factor in achieving worldly success and grounds for mistrust and suspicion. Marlowe, Raleigh, Essex were non-Catholics. A dissenting attitude might be tolerated

in them as Protestants. Donne and Shakespeare however, as well as reflecting the deep myths of Catholicism in their writings – the misunderstood and powerless human life, the primacy of Love, the silent all-suffering Goddess – lived guardedly for the most part. Both were conservative and conformist in their later lives, sometimes to an uncomfortable degree. It is not an accusation of cowardice to say that they shied away from the social reality of what was happening to the old religion. Both died in the new English faith. To adhere to the Catholic religion and be deeply involved with its political destiny would have required exceptional belief and commitment.

Donne's background was not easy to escape. He was educated at home by Catholic tutors. His uncle Jasper Heywood was leader of the secret Jesuit mission to England, and was captured, imprisoned and tried when Donne was eleven years old. When Donne was twenty-one, in a period of considerable anti-Catholic activity his brother Henry was arrested for harbouring a Catholic priest, and died in Newgate of the plague. It was in May of 1593, the month of Marlowe's death. The priest was hanged, drawn and quartered in the following year. In 1612 his stepfather was imprisoned in Newgate for refusing to swear the Oath of Allegiance, by which time Donne had left the Catholic Church. Donne's earliest portrait at eighteen, a private miniature, shows him with cross-shaped ear-rings, in a Spanish looking style, with the motto in Spanish 'Antes muerto que mudado', 'Sooner dead than changed'. It was a declaration of loyalty to Catholicism that would have done him little good if it had been openly displayed.

He followed a prudent path of education, going with his younger brother Henry to Hart Hall, Oxford, where the absence of a chapel made it easier to conceal lack of public worship, and then to Cambridge. By 1592 he was at Lincoln's Inn as a law student, adopting the masks and poses of his early writings. He portrays himself as the mercenary seducer, the cruel and lewd cynic, and then with a change of voice satirises the vices and corruption of Court and society. Later in life he saw it as a time of sinfulness, like Augustine who, in his Confessions, declared 'I came to Carthage, into the hissing cauldron of unholy loves'. In a close parallel to Donne, Augustine condemned that period when 'for nine years from nineteen to twenty-eight I was led astray, and led others astray myself in

turn.’ Perhaps the errors of this time, that Donne condemned later, were those of a fundamentally moral man adrift, fearing rejection, and isolation, responding with social and verbal aggression, those ‘satiric fires which urged me to have writ in scorn of all’, to the world where he longed for admittance.

Already his great theme was Love, and there is a tender voice, even where it is sometimes the voice of the seducer, in much of the early verse. He is already ‘inquiring of that mystic trinity... body, mind and Muse.’ He is already in ‘love’s hallowed temple’, subverting religious language or in a deeper sense offering it to the service of those ‘mystic books’, the manifestations in the flesh of the Goddess.

Though Donne inherited the stigma of Catholic adherence he himself wanted to achieve social position. His education, at Oxford, Cambridge and Lincoln’s Inn, equipped him for public office, and created amicable contacts that might assist him to a career, ‘that short roll of friends writ in my heart’. At Oxford he met Henry Wotton, who was later secretary to Essex, and English Ambassador in Europe. Wotton became a link with Essex, and Francis Bacon’s circle. Like Donne, Wotton went with Essex on the Cadiz and Islands expeditions of 1596 and 1597. The voyages with Essex, where he would also have seen Raleigh at close quarters, consolidated his friendship with Thomas Egerton, the son of Elizabeth’s Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, whom he had met at Lincoln’s Inn. And, through the son’s influence perhaps, in 1597, Donne became Secretary to the Lord Keeper and moved to York House by the Thames. It was the crucial period of his early life.

He was inside the citadel of power. Egerton had himself been a practising Catholic, and that may have eased the way for Donne despite his family connections. He was within the walled Garden of the Elizabethan establishment, and in York House, with its own walled gardens down to the river, doubly enclosed. If he worked hard and loyally, and conformed to the requirements of his employment, he had a solid future ahead. Already wavering in his Catholic faith (‘inconstancy unnaturally hath begot a

constant habit' he wrote later of his own 'devout fits') he embraced the Protestant religion as Egerton had done. It meant leaving behind the difficult Catholic world, rejecting family allegiances, redirecting his own innermost instincts, his own worship of the Goddess, in a requirement to conform.

In his *Paradoxes and Problems* he had put forward the proposition 'that all things kill themselves'. As far as his career was concerned that was what he proceeded to do. In Egerton's household he found the fifteen year old Ann More, Lady Egerton's niece, daughter to Sir George More, a descendant also of Sir Thomas More. The Garden enclosed the lovers, secretly and dangerously, as the *Elegies* describe. 'Thou angel bring'st with thee a heaven like Mahomet's paradise.' The clandestine affair involved deep emotions and they made a firm commitment to each other, 'where my hand is set my seal shall be'. In a terrible breach of faith for a man in Donne's position within the household, consummating a relationship with the young girl, without the knowledge of her father, or her aunt ('close and secret as our souls, we have been') they carried on their 'long-hid love'. He writes that he taught her 'the alphabet of flowers' which 'might with speechless secrecy deliver errands mutely, and mutually' and, wreathing religious and sexual metaphor together in a statement of how he saw himself influencing her mind and body, declared 'I planted knowledge and life's tree in thee'. He had 'with amorous delicacies refined thee into a blissful paradise.'

Despite the poses, the later recriminations, and Donne's ambiguous attitude to the female sex, those 'daughters of Eve', Ann More was the recipient of his life's love. So much so that in his later religious life he found immense difficulty in re-channelling his emotions towards divine love and away from her memory. She was the incarnate Goddess, as the religious imagery of the poetry testifies. There is more than a conceit in employing the metaphors. Only an unintelligent man could use them without knowing the psychological depth of their meaning. In the private world of his poetry, and he was an immensely self-protective and private man, he replays the hidden nature of their love, in the concealed paradise of imagination and creativity.



Their relationship picked up the echoes of the adulterous and forbidden, of Tristan and Iseult, of that love 'which all love of other sights controls'. 'The secret song was her marvellous beauty' wrote the poet Gottfried, of Iseult. That heresy of the greater personal love was Donne's first allegiance in his life. It is a test of courage to affirm one's own experience against the world, the glory of secular love against the sacraments of institutionalised society. It is a part of that assertion of the individual life out of which once came personal rights and liberty, the secular state and the freedoms of the individual within it. It was part of that Copernican shift of emphasis that Donne made, from the social order to the individual as the true end of being. It requires in its sensual as well as its intellectual loyalties, a union of mind and body. 'All here in one bed lay' he says. 'She is all states, and all princes, I, nothing else is.' Of the Sun, in a counter-Copernican thought 'this bed thy centre is, these walls thy sphere'.

Nature and the earthbound lover can be one, against society and the social order, lay and ecclesiastical. The song that Heloise and Isolde sang was the song of that inner rapture, of erotic and personal values, hidden away temporarily in a Celtic, in a Medieval world. It differed fundamentally from the Greek achievement of social and ethical values linked together in the cool light of the marketplace and the assembly. 'Nous avons perdu le monde et le monde nous' Iseult says to Tristan. 'Seek we then ourselves in ourselves' Donne wrote in his youth 'so we, if we into ourselves will turn.... may outburn the straw, which doth about our hearts sojourn.' 'Know' he writes to a male friend 'that I love thee, and would be loved.'

Through his poetry run the puns on Ann's name, even in verses written after her death. He is the man who 'after one such love, can love no more' and she is 'more than Moon'. And, fancifully, Ann More is Ana, an ancient name of the Goddess, Ovid's Anna Perenna, the eternal. In Ireland the Goddess was this beneficent Ana, a title of the Goddess Danu, mother of the Danaan gods of the Celts. Earlier she was Inanna, or Nana, a name of the Sumerian Goddess Ishtar, and later she was Christianity's St Anne the mother of the Virgin. Ann More becomes an incarnation of the Triple Goddess, that goddess of love, sexuality and death who makes the undercurrent, the hidden spring, in Donne's life and work, and whom he cannot truly renounce even in the self-constriction of his final religious years. And she is Eve before the Fall.

Sometime, in the spring of 1598 or 1599, occurs the engraving of his name on a window at York House, which is described in his poem *A Valediction: of my name in the Window*. The poem itself was probably written in 1600. The dating depends on the words 'love and grief their exaltation had' which refer to the astrological 'exaltations' of Venus and Saturn which occurred at this time. The poem refers to events within the time of Ann More's presence at York House, and plays on her name. The window glass is 'more, that it shows thee to thee, and clear reflects thee to thine eye', and the cut name will make her 'as much more loving, as more sad'. It is written to assert Donne's commitment to her through 'love's magic' that makes them one, to express mock fears over her constancy, and to testify to their 'firm substantial love.' To read it tenderly is I think to read it correctly. The *Good Morrow*, *The Canonization*, *The Anniversary*, a whole cluster of the *Songs and Sonnets*, express this love for her in varying ways, in the loving, intimate, skilful poetry which must have satisfied, in its creation, both his heart and his head.

Through it runs the theme of inconstancy, the preoccupation with 'lover's contracts' that indicates his deep inner fears of rejection. Part of its power depends on its poise, between the scepticism, even cynicism, that there could be faithfulness in love, and an overt tenderness, which re-asserts the possibility, and the faith. Donne tests and affirms his own belief. In *The Relic* he summons up the full wealth of religious metaphor, bordering on the sacrilegious, to transmit the 'miracles we harmless lovers wrought' beyond the grave. 'All measure, and all language, I should pass should I tell what a miracle she was.'

In September 1599 Donne carried the sword at the funeral of his friend Thomas, Egerton's son, who, taking part in the oppressive Elizabethan military operations in Ireland, died of wounds incurred in Essex's service. At the end of that year Essex, banished from Court after his ride from Ireland to Nonesuch, was confined to York House, under Egerton's control. Essex was ill of 'the Irish flux', in depression, eating little and sleeping less. Donne wrote, from Whitehall in his all-pervading religious metaphor, that Essex was 'no more missed here than the angels

which were cast down from heaven, nor (for anything I see) likelier to return.'

Essex's illness may have been a contagious infection since in January 1600, Lady Egerton died, plunging the house into mourning. Egerton himself neglected his business for some time. Ann More went home to Losely Park, and to her father, Sir George. Essex was sent off to his own Essex House still under house arrest. The lovers were parted. In the poem 'Twickenham Gardens' Donne expressed his grief and anxiety, 'blasted with sighs, and surrounded with tears, hither I come to seek the spring'. The verse worries at the issue of female constancy and clearly pre-dates his marriage. He is the 'self-traitor' who brings love and 'the serpent' sexuality into 'true paradise', playing on double-meanings, since, at Twickenham, Bacon had laid out the type of landscaped 'paradise' described in his essay 'Of Gardens'. It was Essex who had granted Bacon Twickenham Park and Gardens in 1594 (the land was recalled in 1601). Donne would probably have had access through his friend Wotton who was Essex's secretary.

Donne had been one of the contributors of poems to a poetic debate on the merits of court, country and city life of which, among others, Bacon's and Wotton's contributions survive. Donne though he studied at Lincoln's Inn and not Gray's, where Bacon had studied, may still have been one of the group of young men whom Bacon met with at Twickenham to make verses. Donne would probably have come into contact with Bacon during Donne's and Essex's time at York House (Bacon's birthplace, which he was later to regain under James). Though Twickenham passed into the hands of Lucy, Countess of Bedford, a later patroness in 1607, the poem makes little sense in relation to her, but every sense if written in 1600.

It also employs a language echoed in verses to the Countess of Huntingdon written close to this time. She was Elizabeth Stanley whose mother the Countess of Derby, Egerton now married. She came to York House in late 1600. The verses pick up the theme of Paradise and the Fall, and the vocabulary of sighs, woman's scorns, crystal and fountain, and the freezing lover who 'talks to trees'. The theme of Paradise and the Fall was uppermost in his mind at this time and in early 1601 as that strange poem *The Progress of the Soul*, dated 16th August 1601, testifies. In the epistle which precedes it and the poem, the spider, and the serpent appear again,

and 'that apple which Eve eat'. The soul progresses through its upwards climb from plant, to animal, to woman, (and, it was intended, ultimately to Donne himself) with a good deal of unorthodox sexual commentary along the way. Through his affair with Ann More, he perhaps felt he had fallen in more than one sense, but did not yet guess the consequences of that fall.

In February 1601 the Essex rebellion took place, closely followed by Essex's arraignment and execution. Donne, as a secretary, must have been occupied with the Essex trial and its aftermath, since Egerton was responsible for the arrangements. He may have witnessed Francis Bacon displaying his disloyalty to his old master, Essex, in acting for the prosecution. It was a fine lesson in avoiding the dangers of too much commitment, and in the politic fluidity of allegiance required in meeting the needs of ambition.

Donne became Member of Parliament for Brackley, a borough in the pocket of the Lord Keeper, and in October 1601 as Parliament assembled Sir George More brought Ann back to London. Donne married her secretly, without Sir George's knowledge 'about three weeks before Christmas'.

She was seventeen, still a minor, he twenty-nine. They were either blind to the consequences, or they were hopeful that a *fait accompli* would have to be accepted by More and Egerton. More was furious, demanded Donne's dismissal of Egerton, and Donne was briefly imprisoned in the Fleet. His career was in ruins. His letter of 2nd February 1602 to More apologises for not seeing Sir George face to face because of illness (a lack of courage also?) and tries to set out the 'truth and clearness of this matter between your daughter and me'. 'So long since as her being at York House, this had foundation, and so much then of promise and contract built upon it, as without violence to conscience might not be shaken. At her lying in town this last Parliament, I found means to see her twice or thrice. We both knew the obligations that lay upon us, and we adventured equally.'

This is the language of their shared vows. Donne could not have anticipated the full consequences of their action, may have subsequently

regretted it, and been left trying to argue their case with Sir George. Equally their great love may have made it an inescapable choice for them both, and the result may have been inevitable. Donne argues that they had 'honest purposes in their hearts and those fetters in our consciences', that she is one for whom 'I tender much more than my fortunes or life, (else I would I might neither joy in this life, nor enjoy the next). 'As my love is directed unchangeably upon her, so all my labours shall concur to her contentment'. He then tries to lever More into acceptance of the situation. 'That it is irremediably done; that if you incense my Lord (Egerton) you destroy her and me; that it is easy to give us happiness, and that my endeavours and industry, if it please you to prosper them, may soon make me somewhat worthier of her.' Sir George seems to have relented, but Egerton refused to reinstate Donne. The great love had cost him dear in worldly terms. It added force to a negative aspect in his attitude towards women, which often appears in his later writing.

They had been expelled from the Garden; therefore Ann More was also Eve. Ann More was a daughter of Eve; therefore they had been expelled from the Garden. The Goddess is ambivalent; she is, as a personification of Nature, both the creator and the destroyer, the temptation and the fulfilment. Woman is both the sacred Temple, and the great betrayer. Yet 'all those oaths which I and thou have sworn, to seal joint constancy' were sworn on both sides, those 'oaths made in reverential fear of love' bound both parties to the contract. Donne knew that 'Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one', knew that instability in himself that found it hard to rise above the results of his own actions, and to endorse reality 'for better or worse'.

Through their great love he makes himself an extraordinary precursor of modern, secular love, where the sacredness of life and nature may be defended inwardly, now that the external myths of the Goddess and the God are indeed merely part of mythology. But through his adherence to the old damaging Christian views of the Fall, mythologically potent, he becomes an ordinary man of his age, a devaluer of Woman, and of his own courage to choose love. It disappoints us in him, looking from our secular age where part of the battle to establish a saner view of the sexes has been fought through. It disappoints us in our view of human rights, in an age which eventually may even get as far as the true rights of all creatures. It

disappoints us in our sense of love, its primary value to us, its encapsulation of what is deepest in us, originating in the creatures from which genetically we descend (and ascend), in their nurture, empathy, and endurance. Our values may be biologically adaptive, may indeed be the result of the workings of the indifferent genetic mechanism, but they are still our core and a world that we can endorse if we choose.

Donne fails to rise above sexuality at those moments, and fails to endorse the sacred marriage, to endorse those positive aspects of the primal Goddess, which are the sources of our deepest values. He fails to be true, or sensitive or kind. His later attempt to transfer his love to his Christ and his God can indeed seem an evasion of his essential self. Nevertheless, though his ambivalence becomes all pervasive, the love remains.

In the terms of his own age his attitudes were nothing remarkable. That was how Woman was perceived in a Protestant religious sense. He merely acquiesced in that social suppression of the dying Goddess, dying in the waning powers in England of the Catholic Church, dying in the person of the aged Queen Elizabeth, and by doing so was part of that process which confirmed the Protestant age. The elements in Christianity that were paramount were not Christ's life and his values in action in the world. They were precisely the rebellion of the sinful angels; the creation and the temptation of man; the fall, the incarnation, the atonement through crucifixion for the sins of the world; and the resurrection and regeneration through a saviour. Donne's deepest sense is of the confessional, in a Protestant and not in a Catholic sense, seeking redemption after death, rather than in life. It explains his death-obsession, beyond the sexual 'little death', and into that death 'we die in earnest, that's no jest', which Raleigh and Essex also understood.

Donne's astrological chart at this moment of his life is symbolically interesting. His own attitude to astrology was probably that of Saint Augustine who in his Confessions explained his own first enthusiasm for books of astrology, but who received the advice from a man of understanding to throw them away as there were more important things to

do. Asking for an explanation of astrology's seeming ability to foretell the future, Augustine was told 'the only possible answer that it was all due to chance.' Augustine's later writings reiterated the element of coincidence rather than interpretative skill, and he used the example of identical twins with near-identical birth charts, but differing lives, to dismiss astrology. With a little 'willing suspension of disbelief' however we can consider the symbolic elements of his chart.

Donne lived for two Saturn returns. The first when he was aged twenty-nine was the moment of his marriage, the second the time of his death. Halfway in between the two, came Ann's death. Saturn was in Scorpio at his birth, in the sign of powerful feelings and emotions, imagination and subtlety, sexuality and passionate intensity. Saturn is the planet of despondency, sorrow, and proneness to ill health. Saturn is also the planet of duty and constraint. Saturn's dogmatism and endorsement of intolerant laws is significant in Donne's later religious phase while Scorpio plumbs the depths of feelings, almost obsessively.

Pluto the ruler of Scorpio was in Pisces. The planet of fate, the subconscious, the inner mind, was therefore in the religious sign of the fish, which is secretive, weak-willed, emotional, sensitive, compassionate, and impressionable.

Neptune the planet of poetry, of spirituality and idealism, of religious and artistic creativity was in Gemini, Mercury's Sign, the place of mind and wit of linguistic flair and intellectual capability. 'His fancy was inimitably high' said Isaac Walton in his 1640 biography of Donne, 'equalled only by his great wit, both being made useful by a commanding judgement.' Neptune however is also self-deceiving, deceitful, unworldly, and Gemini is changeable, restless, inconsistent, living on nervous energy.

The uncertainty in the date of Donne's birth does not allow much interpretation of his chart, but these influences on a whole generation certainly fit Donne's life and psychology. The intellectual and witty poetry, the secretive, passionate nature, the religious depths, the later conformity and narrowness, the changeability that he recognised in himself, the compassion that Isaac Walton described. 'He was by nature highly passionate, but more apt to reluct at the extremes of it. A great lover of the offices of humanity, and of so merciful a spirit, that he never beheld the miseries of mankind without pity and relief.'

Saturn, that planet in exaltation with Venus, which had overseen the writing in the window glass, returned to Scorpio at the time of his marriage, when he was nearly thirty, 'to my six lustres almost now outwore' as the Progress of the Soul expresses it. As with Marlowe, the Saturn return was fateful. Venus, planet of love, was also in Scorpio, opposing Uranus the planet of change, while Mercury, the mind, was square the deep feelings of the female Moon. It was a fateful marriage. Saturn was unaspected, uncertain, ambiguous. Pluto, Neptune, and Mercury were in a Grand trine to each other, reinforcing the fruitful and powerful tension of poetry, mind and fate. Neptune was sextile his natal Neptune, favourable for the arts. Mars, his sexual and life energy, was square the Sun of his fortunes, prophesying difficult times. Saturn is his signifier planet, potent at key times in his life, fatefully linked to the other planets again at his death.

Woman is both creator and destroyer. The marriage for Donne is also linked to sacrifice, a destructive fire. He hovers between the two perspectives of his mind, that which saw the perfection and beauty and sacredness of love, and that which embraced it as the fall of Man, the corruption of spirituality lost in sexuality, the erosion of the higher powers in the little death. That is the Protestant even Puritan position. It is with his attitude to women, to his own wife, whom he also loved, that he can lose our modern sympathies so completely. And yet he is never far from the accepted orthodoxies of his own age. Our criticism can only be of a man who having seen the possibilities of secular love, having enshrined the dying Goddess in his own heart, inwardly, fell back into the commonplace prejudices of his society. We feel unreasonably perhaps that he reneged, that he trampled on something sacred, that he failed as a man and as a mind, while retrieving his own place in his society, and, in his opinion, his own salvation. A harsh judgement. If he had not written the Songs and Sonnets would we criticise him merely for being a man of his times? But he reached the heights, and we judge him by the highest standards.



'I was led astray' writes Augustine. 'I was in love with beauty of a lower order, which pulled me down.' 'I was bound down by this disease of the flesh. Its deadly pleasures were a chain I dragged behind me, but I feared to be free of it.' 'Why has the common opinion afforded women souls?' asks Donne in one of his Problems 'for even their loving destroys us'. 'For the great soul', he says in the Progress of The Soul 'had first in paradise, a low, but fatal room... Man all at once was there by woman slain, and one by one we're here slain o'er again by them. The Mother poisoned the well-head, the Daughters here corrupt us, rivulets, no smallness 'scapes, no greatness breaks their nets, She thrust us out, and by Them we are led astray.... She sinned, we bear; part of our pains is, thus to love them, whose fault to this painful love yoked us.' This is orthodox theology, oppressive and dispiriting orthodox theology.

Did Donne, with one half of his mind, love the woman he married and, with the other half, hate her for ruining his career? Yet they had 'adventured equally'. Was she, as in Shakespeare's terrible dual vision, both the Great Goddess and the ravening witch? One moment the beloved Desdemona, the next condemned. One moment the despised Cordelia, the next the sacred silent image, echoed also in the last plays? Donne, in his life, mirrors Shakespeare's tragic protagonists in theirs. They see the two-faced image of the Goddess, she who is reviled, and she who is worshipped.

That the theme is so potent in both men indicates its place in the life of their age. This was the compassionate Goddess of Catholicism, the sweet silence at the heart of Nature, and the God recoiling in antagonism and revulsion. This was the dark contrast between Woman seen as the Virgin Mary, the holy Mother, and Woman seen as Eve, the seductress, who precipitated the Fall of Man. 'The sphere of our loves is sublunary,' says Donne in one of his sermons 'upon things naturally inferior to our selves.... It may be said that, by one woman, sin entered, and death, and that rather than by the man.... the woman being deceived, was in the transgression....the Virgin Mary had not the same interest in our salvation, as Eve had in our destruction.' Elsewhere he says 'She was not taken out of the foot to be trodden upon, nor out of the head to be an overseer of him; but out of his side, where she weakens him enough, and therefore should do all she can, to be a helper.'

Donne expresses in his life, the dual vision. He progresses from intimacy to religion, from revelation to orthodoxy. In one half of his mind is the heresy of the body, the heresy of secular love, of the sacred marriage internalised, of that freedom from society and from repression which sexuality, love, and intimacy offer. In the other half of his mind is the entangler, the White Goddess in her orgiastic phase, the 'spider, Love'. This is not only the collision of two great mythical systems, that of the ancient pagan Mother Goddess, and that of Judeo-Christianity. It also has its roots in the primal, primitive relationship between men and women, in Man's fears, and Woman's power to give birth, Man's attraction and Woman's right to withhold, Man's physical capabilities and Woman's relational ones. Protestantism sought to resolve it by a sanctification of marriage and a demystification of society.

The primitive is always latent in us, woven into the genetic material, into the language of our inheritance, into the psyche. Shakespeare makes the step from exhibiting the primal conflict, the drama, to resolution of it in the sacred marriage protected by magical arts. Donne likewise ends in Anglican orthodoxy. As his marriage dies with Ann's death, so Donne seems to die into a narrow religious answer. (When she died it was said that he was 'crucified to the world'). Did the fear of rejection overpower him? Did he reinterpret the past in a travesty of the truth? Surely he as the older partner, if any, was the seducer. His cowardice perhaps was behind the clandestine nature of the affair, the concealed marriage.

The failure of his career seems to touch on other aspects of his personality and capabilities. Why did Egerton refuse to take Donne back into employment? Was it pique, annoyance, pressure of other State business? Was Donne's sudden scandal an embarrassment to an ex-Catholic servant of the Crown in those sensitive times? Or did Egerton see no reason to rescue Donne, not wanting to be accused of nepotism on behalf of a man from just such a strong Catholic background? Was Egerton simply, tired and irritated by the whole episode, and in an unforgiving mood? Or did Egerton finally see Donne as unfit for the role, having broken confidence, betrayed trust? Why did Donne remain for the next

thirteen years outside the regular social positions he coveted? He had many contacts in high places. Was his own personality too awkward, too complaining, too importunate, too abrasive? It seems that he transferred some of the blame for the situation not onto Ann, but onto the intrinsic weakness in himself that he rationalised as being derived from Original Sin. He, they, had committed an unwise action, in worldly terms. He, they, had betrayed a trust, for the sake of a deeper commitment.

He regretted his lack of a career, bitterly. It is difficult now to say whether this was all due to the one mistake, or also to his Catholic background, his own personality and temperament, his priorities as to what he saw as acceptable employment. His ambitions may have been unreasonable, the obstacles partially self-created. This is where history descends into the obscured streams of mind and motive. Events may be clear, but their origins are tangled. The words express the two men inside a single mind. On the one hand the positive love of the Songs and Sonnets, the acknowledgement of his own responsibility, the pain and grief at Ann's death, the difficulty in forgetting her. On the other hand there is the orthodox condemnation of Woman as sinful, the scepticism regarding Woman's capability for constancy in those same poems. There is the melancholy and plaintive way in which he writes of the difficult years. There is the darkness of his later vision, the narrow conservatism and conformity, the focus on sin and death. On the one hand a celebration of sexuality, life, mutual trust, the tender and loving tone of the verse. On the other hand the religious anguish, the complaints, the sense and fear of rejection, disgrace, failure, and continuing exclusion, which dogs the letters, the later verse, many of the sermons.

The reality was the expulsion from the Garden. If Ann is Eve, she has the silent face of Eve. We cannot hear her voice. We only glimpse her now and then, as Everywoman, as the subject of verse, or through a comment in a letter. She is continuously pregnant, or giving birth, until her death, which itself came a week after giving birth to a stillborn child. The first seventeen years of her life were childhood, love, and marriage. The last seventeen were childbearing, miscarriage, and stillbirth. She gave birth in 1603, 1604,

1605, 1607, 1608, 1609, 1611, 1613, 1615, and 1616. Four of their children died young. Gaps in the sequence fall when Donne journeys abroad, in late 1605 and early 1606, in late 1611 and in 1612. On this occasion he saw a vision of his wife 'with her hair hanging about her shoulders, and a dead child in her arms' which was confirmed by a messenger from London. Ann had given birth to a stillborn child 'the same day, and about the very hour'.

Was this life her choice, or her lot? Cynically one might imagine his trips abroad as a great relief! Or was she a woman who loved children, loved family life, loved him so much that it seemed right to her? After the tragic death of three children in 1613 and 1614 was she trying to replace them in her continued pregnancies? Was she a free woman making her decisions, or a martyr to the demands of her husband? Was it ignorance of birth control, or an acceptance of her destiny?

She can seem the bright shining face of the Goddess in her loving incarnations or the voiceless face of all those women in the past that a male-dominated history relegates to silence. We know she is there. She is the name in the poems, endlessly punned upon, and the embodiment of love in the poems, endlessly exalted, and worried over. She is seen through a mirror darkly, in brief flashes, in the letters. 'I write... by the side of her, whom because I have transplanted into a wretched fortune, I must labour to disguise that from her, by all such honest devices as giving her my company and discourse; therefore I steal from her all the time which I give this letter.....But if I melt into melancholy whilst I write, I shall be taken in the manner, and I sit by one too tender towards those impressions..' he writes from their damp, cramped house at Mitcham. In another letter, he talks about the ability to change the mind's moods 'I hang lead at my heels, and reduce to my thoughts my fortunes, my years, the duties of a friend, of a husband, of a father, and all the incumbencies of a family'.

In the Holy Sonnet he wrote at her death, playing, with her name, he mourned that 'she whom I loved....my good is dead..... here the admiring her my mind did whet to seek thee God.... why should I beg more love ....', and again in the Hymn to Christ 'Thou lov'st not, till from loving more, thou free my soul'. And sadly, we see her again, in the last great sermon, Death's Duel, preached before Charles the First, in 1631, in the moment before Donne's own death. 'In the womb, the dead child kills the mother that conceived it, and is a murderer, nay, a parricide, even after it is dead.'

In the Songs and Sonnets, written in his youth, everything, religion also, is turned to a celebration of their Love and the Sacred Marriage. Innocence may be lost, with the Paradise Garden, but these early poems carry Paradise along with them into the wider world outside the Gates. The emblems and ideas and feelings of Catholicism, saints, relics, angels, oaths and sacraments, miracles and spirits, are brought to serve the mind searching out images of its adoration, its idolatry. 'Souls where nothing dwells but love (all other thoughts being inmates) then shall prove this, or a love increased, there above, when bodies to their graves, souls from their graves remove.'

In Babylon, and Thebes, at Athens and Eleusis, and all over the early world, men and women celebrated the Sacred marriage of the Sun and the Earth to ensure the fertility of the universe. The marriage is echoed in alchemy, and in mystic Christianity, where Christ himself may be the Bride. In the sacred grove at Nemi a marriage like that of the King and Queen of the May, was celebrated each year between the mortal King of the Wood, and Diana, the immortal Queen of the Wood. He impersonated the oak-god Jupiter. The marriage of the priestly kings of Rome to the oak-goddess was a repetition of this rite, and Homer in the *Iliad* describes the union of Zeus and Hera on Mount Gargarus, the highest peak of Ida. 'I will hide you in a golden cloud' says Zeus 'so that the sun himself, with his penetrating light, cannot find us through the mist'. The earth 'threw out a bed of soft grasses beneath them, the crocus and the dew-wet lotus, and a host of hyacinth flowers, to cushion them from the ground.' 'Love the entangler wove their hearts together' says Gottfried, of Iseult and Tristan 'with a bond of sweetness, with such skill and miraculous force, that, throughout their lives that knot was never undone.' 'There would be given them, one death and one life, one sorrow and one joy.'

It is during these years of Donne's marriage that Shakespeare writes the great tragedies, and the final plays, those tales of love's disasters that end in love's resurrection. 'I my poor self did exchange for you, to your so infinite loss' says Posthumous to Imogen in *Cymbeline*. Pericles at last recognising Thaisa, high-priestess as she now is of the Temple of Diana at

Ephesus, tells the gods 'You shall do well that on the touching of her lips I may melt and no more be seen ...'. 'O, she's warm!' cries Leontes at the ending of *The Winter's Tale*, 'If this be magic, let it be an art lawful as eating.' And in *The Tempest*, Shakespeare creates his masque in which the Goddess in triple form as Juno, Ceres and Iris, the rainbow messenger, appears. 'Spirits, which by mine art I have from their confines call'd to enact my present fancies' bless 'a contract of true love' between the lovers, Ferdinand and Miranda, entering into their 'brave new world'. The marriage chamber is also a temple. Heirogamy, the marriage of the god and goddess, is the heart of the myth. Society makes the laws of the world, but the human heart makes the laws of love. Sacredness also sits within the circle of the marriage crown.

Is not Love a deity? Love is not merely appetite. 'Why love among the virtues is not known, is that love is them all, contract in one.' For the virtuous man, Love must encompass every good. And the incarnation of love, that which allows the sacred marriage, is Woman. The soul, with its frailties, is female, and Women are angels. 'As is 'twixt air and angel's purity, 'twixt women's love, and men's will ever be.' 'Yet I thought thee, (For thou lov'st truth) an angel, at first sight.' Woman is the divine essence brought below, embodied, as Shakespeare embodies her in those arcane personifications of the Pearl, in his heroines of the last plays. 'Or if when thou, the world's soul, go'st, it stay, 'tis but thy carcase then' Donne attests. She is his 'dearest heart, and dearer image' on whose name he plays, waking from his dream 'to love more'. And dream is the halfway house between the substantial world and the world of spirit, between earth and heaven. 'If ever any beauty I did see, which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.'

If Woman is the world's soul, an angel in a dream, and Love is all virtue, marriage is a temple, and a divine union, or an image of one. The universe is made and is renewed in the infinite contracted space where lovers are. 'This our marriage bed, and marriage temple is'. 'So we shall be one, and one another's all.' They 'one another keep alive' and 'lover's hours be full eternity'. They 'sigh one another's breath' and when they wept tears

they wept floods 'and so drowned the whole world, us two; oft did we grow to be two chaoses'. As the lovers re-create in their bubble of space and time the hierogamy of the gods in the infinite and eternal, so all change to their world changes the universe also. They indeed become one another's body as well as spirit 'so to ingraft our hands, as yet was all the means to make us one, and pictures in our eyes to get was all our propagation.' This holy marriage is, as Donne celebrates in an epithalamion, 'joy's bonfire, then, where love's strong arts make, of so noble individual parts, one fire of four inflaming eyes, and of two loving hearts.' And remembering Augustine, and the imagery of the alchemical mystic wedding 'Here lies a she sun, and a he moon here, she gives the best light to this sphere, or each is both, and all, and so they unto one another nothing owe.'

'And though they make Apollo a wizard and a physician' writes Augustine in the City of God 'to make him a part of the world they say he is the sun, and Diana, his sister, is the moon.... And Ceres, the great mother, her they make the earth and Juno besides. Thus the secondary causes of things are in her power, though Jove is called the full parent, as they affirm him.....and so, by all these specific gods they intend the world: sometimes totally and sometimes partially: totally as Jove is: partially as ... Sol and Luna, or rather Apollo and Diana. Sometimes one god stands for many things, and sometimes one thing presents many gods.'

This marriage, completely achieved, goes beyond sexuality into that realm where sex is irrelevant, the lovers 'forget the He and She', since 'to one neutral thing both sexes fit. We die and rise the same, and prove mysterious by this love'. In the Ecstasy, Donne's deepest poem on the theme 'This ecstasy doth unperplex (We said) and tell us what we love, we see by this it was not sex, we see, we saw not what did move'. And yet love is only possible for the lovers in the flesh. 'We are the intelligences, they the spheres' and there is no reality in space and time but through the physical body. 'The soul with body, is a heaven combined with earth'. 'This soul limbs, these limbs a soul attend, and now they joined'. In Air and Angels, Donne is explicit. 'But since my soul, whose child love is, takes limbs of flesh, and else could nothing do, more subtle than the parent is, Love must not be, but take a body too..'. Elsewhere 'though mind be the heaven, where love doth sit, beauty a convenient type may be to figure it.' and finally in the Ecstasy 'So must pure lovers' souls descend t'affections, and

to faculties, which sense may reach and apprehend, else a great prince in prison lies. To our bodies turn we then, that so weak men on love revealed may look; Love's mysteries in souls do grow, but yet the body is his book.'

Donne is not making a system. He is playing in a sense among inherited metaphors, but the effect is clear. The divine, incarnate in Woman, descends to the sphere of the actual. In a mystical marriage, encompassing sexuality and spirituality, Love which is all the virtues, may, in the bounded and limited space and time of the lovers, reach out to contain the whole Universe and Eternity, in a complete and inward union, hidden from the outside world. It is both sacrilegious, and a celebration of the most sacred. It is a turning inward into the private, hidden, and secret universe of the individual mind, and still an ultimate reaching out to the other. It can appear socially subversive. It nevertheless represents a refuge for the Goddess, for the abused and persecuted image of ancient holiness, in a place beyond place, and a time beyond time. It is also the Protestant solution as long as it is kept within orthodoxy, within marriage. Yet it represents a fatal dichotomy. Sexuality and sacredness withdraw from the outer world to be celebrated only within the inner world.

The transubstantiation of spirit into flesh mirrors the conversion of the bread and the wine, which became a crux of the argument between the Elizabethan Churches. As Shakespeare in the drama, so Donne in his Songs and Sonnets attempted to save the Goddess, the image of tender love, and hold out a testimony and a warning. That he seems partially to renege on this, in his later life, does not detract from the achievement, which carries across to modernity, while his Anglican faith seems now the superseded voice of the past.

'And since the lovers realised' says Gottfried, 'that there was between them just one mind, one heart, and one will, the pain began at the same time to die and to come to life....He kissed her and she kissed him, lovingly, tenderly: and that, for Love's cure, was a joyful start.' Love is the lovers' response to power, to the established forces of a society that dehumanises the individual and seeks to destroy and seduce his or her integrity. The single one, or the union of two, is the true and authentic life, in that island of the human, where society is included as mind, but excluded as power. The genuine has to overcome, continually, the conventional and the authorised, in order to defeat the wasteland.



Donne, despite contacts with influential patrons, only achieved a solid social position, when in 1615 he was ordained, and entered the Anglican Church. He had, he says, defending his earlier apostasy, 'for a long time, wrestled with the examples and reasons of Catholicism. I apprehended well enough that this irresolution not only retarded my fortune, but also bred some scandal.' His hands on a secure and respectable living, he becomes socially authoritarian, and reactionary. Achieving an orthodox career at last, he seems to become more orthodox than the orthodox, compensating for past rejections in his new conformism. A sympathetic view is that he had come in from the cold, later than he should have done, repairing his betrayal of trust by a commitment to the coming world of Protestant dominance. A sympathetic view takes into account the agonies of Catholic persecution and the irrelevance of dogma to a genuine loving Christianity. The unsympathetic view sees yet another betrayal, of his background and true faith, of the territory of individual love, which he had marked out, as a tender refuge, and an unfallen paradise. The subverter has been subverted. He has sold out his principles.

Motives are inscrutable, often unconscious. In the end judgement is of no consequence to those who think he had reached, at least for one period of his life, the modern truth of personal life, in a way which helps delineate the battleground of our future. The future is where the species will be forced to consider the life that is human, and the life in a Nature under threat. The future is where mind and body will become transmutable, separated, engineered and replicated, where we have to confront our own transformation of the planet and of ourselves. What might we be, beyond the natural, human processes recreated and amplified in conscious circuitry? Those beings, that circuitry, a separate or a related mind-laden species, no longer wholly organic - our lifespan, our parenthood, our sexuality, our sensations, our environment, and our aspirations mutated radically and forever?

Donne is a reference point for the sphere of inward, humane values, which we must understand in order to influence the future. Those values are real. They are in us from our own genetic inheritance, and from what our cultures have built upon them. They are ours by Nature and by Nurture. They include love, compassion, honesty and courage.

Donne's own complex self, that changeable inner universe, the 'infinite hive of honey, this insatiable whirlpool of the covetous mind, no anatomy, no dissection hath discovered to us' suffered its own self-inflicted agonies, there is no doubt. He said, even while his wife was alive, that he had 'much quenched my senses, and disused my body from pleasure, and so tried how I can endure to be mine own grave.' His belief in his own sinfulness became stronger, feeling he had been 'a temple of the spirit divine', 'till I betrayed myself'. He quotes Augustine, confessing all sins to be his sins. 'The sin that I have done, the sin that I would have done, is my sin....'. He makes a final plea, or is it a final sad betrayal of what he once was and of the woman he loved. He tells his Christ (who 'with clouds of anger do disguise thy face; yet through that mask I know those eyes') that 'Thou lov'st not, till from loving more, thou free my soul.' Here was a man who feared rejection all his life, and now in his heart sought to avoid it, even by asking that his love of her be expunged.

'Whisper in my heart' says Augustine to his God; 'you who are my only Refuge, all that is left me in this world of men.' Donne's fears are real to him. 'My ever-waking part shall see that face, whose fear already shakes my every joint', his 'horror beyond our expression, beyond our imagination' to 'fall out of the hands of the living God.' 'I have a sin of fear' he writes 'that when I have spun my last thread, I shall perish on the shore'.

He has the sensitivity to time, which is Existential. 'What if this present were the world's last night?' 'What a minute is man's life'. 'Do you not know' writes Kierkegaard, 'that there comes a midnight hour when every one has to throw off his mask?' 'God never says you should have come yesterday' says Donne 'he never says you must again tomorrow, but today if you will hear his voice, today he will hear you.' 'Your today' says Augustine 'is eternity'. 'The minute that is left, is that eternity' says Donne 'which we speak of; upon this minute dependeth that eternity: And this minute, God is in this congregation, and puts his ear to every one of your hearts.'

Death also is one of his themes, not that dying of the body in the 'little death' of sexual union, but that 'desire of the next life', which he wrote of in one of his letters. It is coupled with the theme of the dissolution of the body in physical death 'that excremental jelly'. 'Who knows the revolutions of the dust?' in the graveyard, of 'they whom we tread upon', 'a dissolution of dust'. Death 'comes equally to all, and makes us all equal when it comes.' That was a truth already causing others in his society to question the many inequalities that existed before death.

He puts his faith in that resurrection which his religion promised, in the otherworld. 'It is in his higher power to give us an issue and a deliverance, even then when we are brought to the jaws and teeth of death, and to the lips of the whirlpool, the grave.'

Yet it is sometimes in strange terms that he envisages that next world. He assaults heaven in order to assume an otherworldly mantle. Or seeks to be assaulted. 'Batter my heart, three-personed God; for you as yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend.....Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again, take me to you, imprison me, for I except you enthrall me, never shall be free, nor ever chaste, except you ravish me'. Yet he declares 'I launch at paradise'. 'As soon as my soul enters into heaven I shall be able to say to the angels, I am of the same stuff as you, spirit and spirit, and therefore let me stand with you'. 'Those beams of glory which shall issue from my God, and fall upon me, shall make me ... an angel of light ... I shall be like God ... I shall be so like God as that the Devil himself shall not know me from God.' Whether or not this is good theology it is all of a piece with that fear of rejection, that longing for identity, that desire for union and a sensual closeness, which erupt out of Donne's inner being all his life through.

Ann died in 1617. It was after her death that Donne was elected as Dean of St Paul's preaching his great sermons, in front of James the First, and after James's death in front of Charles. In 1623 his daughter Constance married Edward Alleyn, the great actor who had played the lead in Marlowe's tragedies. In 1627 his daughter Lucy died, and in the January of 1631 his mother. On the 25th of February that year, ill himself, he preached his last sermon, *Death's Duel*, before Charles, based on Psalm 68, a meditation on death. There is an irony. For Donne was a part, as Essex, and Raleigh, and Marlowe were a part, of that movement towards a Protestant, Parliamentary, commercial and ultimately secular England, which had no meaningful place for the myth of the Divine Right of Kings. There was no place for hereditary privilege, for arbitrary royal power, which itself derived obliquely from the ancient worship of the Goddess, and the reign of her divine consort. This King to whom he preached was to feel the full weight of that change.

Though later, England, for reasons of political stability, reinstated the monarchy, and watched the revolutionary principles go abroad to France and America, carried by Tom Paine and others, the monarchy, in the sense of a nexus of power, mythologically conceived and unquestionable in its authority, was over. The Divine Right of Kings, which Elizabeth tried to uphold, was gone. The modern world, the secular state, democracy, science, commerce, industry, emerged from the chrysalis.

The Elizabethans may not have understood that process, or consciously wished it to happen. They may even have perceived themselves to be doing the opposite; Essex seeking to modify the power of the Queen but not destroy it; Raleigh writing his *History of the World* to demonstrate the workings of Providence; Donne preaching orthodoxy and salvation in the next world, not in this. Only Marlowe may have half-realised what was in train in the depths of his own society, though he too is focused on the structures of the old world-order. It is in their lives, the effect of their lives, and what other men and women thought as a result of their actions and writings, that they influenced the future.

Essex and Raleigh weakened kingship, through popular reaction to the injustice and arbitrariness of their executions, and the process they assisted, transference of the divine myth to a mortal woman. With converts like

Donne they weakened the remnants of Catholicism and paved the way for the Protestant world. Sitting in Parliament they strengthened its role. Raleigh in particular, unwittingly, gave a model for balanced participative government. Marlowe is a type of the ambitious extremist writer who is the life-blood of revolution. Donne's Songs and Sonnets authorise that individual view of life, that subverts hereditary power in favour of what Kierkegaard called 'the most inward and sacred thing of all in a man, the unifying power of personality'.

All of them, by being Individuals, in the fullest sense, opened the way for other individuals, for the testing of experience against one's own inner and outer experience, for the right to apply reason and analysis, intellect and judgement, to received wisdom and to the world beyond. Raleigh is the geographical explorer, but Marlowe and Donne explore internally, casting and recasting thought and situation to clarify and celebrate.

Sitting in the congregation to which Donne preached were many who eleven years later would see England enter a Civil War, precipitated by the King's policies. Donne was preaching to the last English monarch for whom Divine Right seemed a reality. Economic mismanagement, unjust taxation, individualism and ambition, the growth of secular and democratic power in Parliament, above all the suppressed Puritan extreme reacting against Catholicism and eager to establish its presence, as it had already in America, were all factors in Charles' miserable fate. Deeper than that, was the reality that the myth had died, that Divine Kingship was finished.

And Kingship diminished to the actions of an arbitrary mortal, is merely the rule of power. If power is lost, then the role of royalty is lost, and where it is perpetuated it becomes a pitiful comedy, at the last a farce. The ideas set in train in Elizabethan England, the complex undercurrents; of justice, expanding horizons, secular authority, democratic government, individual conscience, and commercial ambition even though not ascribed to by the actors, often are carried forward by their actions. As Donne preached to Charles the First on Death, he strangely embodied, and had sealed with his own apostasy, the Protestantism that was the precursor of the Puritan Revolution. Just as in his earlier secularisation of the myth in the poetry of Love he embodied the Individualism that was to deal ritual death to the king, in a symbolic ending of sacred kingship, the myth putting paid to the myth for all time, in England.

Before he died, Donne left his sickbed to stand naked under his shroud on a large wooden urn, so that, eyes closed, a life-sized sketch could be made. Nicholas Stone later carved the statue that, miraculously surviving the Great Fire, still stands in Wren's new St. Paul's. Donne's illness was fatal. He died on the 31st March 1631.

His astrological chart for the day of his death shows Saturn returned for the second time to its natal place in Scorpio, and Pluto the planet of fate in detriment in the opposing sign of Taurus. Moon, Mars and Mercury, which are emotion, life-energy and mind, were all conjunct his natal Pluto in Pisces, the Sign of religion, and all in opposition to Uranus the planet of this final, fatal change, while linked in trine to Saturn, which in turn was sextile Uranus. The sun was square his natal Uranus, also signalling fundamental change.

Astrology's chance pattern, its random configuration is apt and fit for the man. Saturn returns to mark the completion of the second half of his life, marriage to death, making two halves of approximately twenty-nine and a half years, that period of an average circuit of Saturn around the Sun. That second half was punctuated in turn halfway by Ann's death. At the end fate looks across at cold, constricting Saturn, from earthy Taurus, and life, mind, heart and sexuality are challenged finally by the planet of change Uranus. Neptune, ruler of poetry is silent. Pisces the sign of religion and of tears, Scorpio the sign of depth and sexuality, have their last say.

Donne had exalted secular love and made it sacred. Coming from a Catholic background, living through the dangerous 1590's and into the Stuart age, he brought a new autobiographical sincerity, a new individualistic voice into poetry. If he made mistakes he knew himself to be fallible. If he altered from his early Catholicism, if he denied his own early triumph of love, if he fought the cramping and dark battle to wean his loving feelings to an abstract deity, if he feared rejection, and sought in the end the comfort of acceptance, if ultimately he did violence to the truths of his own heart, then those were his decisions.

He is, like Marlowe, Essex and Raleigh, a great Individual, in an age of individual courage, moral intensity, and freedom of thought. England recapitulated in a sense the Greek experience, which had lain dormant for two thousand years until the Renaissance. The Greeks also had exchanged the gods for pure reason, Athene's legacy. They also replaced myth by Socratic questioning. They too had reached, though they could not sustain, in Athens, the conditions for the modern world, for the emergence of science and technology, democracy, and rational justice, upheld by the laws, embodied in the citizen. They too killed the Goddess, and the Gods, as Euripides knew.

If we look at both experiences, it informs our own situation. How to counter the rapaciousness of physical power and the assault of pure reason which potentially lay waste both Nature and Human Nature? How to save a vision of sacred humanity within an intrinsically and irreversibly secular world? How to balance the sceptical, enquiring, pragmatic and desacralising mind, with the mind of unconditional Love?

'Man is a world' said Donne. Within that world, within the mind, he exhorted 'Be thine own palace or the world's thy gaol.' He had seen Essex, the great courtier, confined, imprisoned, incapable of turning his thoughts ambitions and aspirations into coherent action. Donne was sensitive, who more so, to the dangers of isolation, separation, division, the possibilities of rejection, and self-destruction. His truest vision is of unity, a sacred unity, of man and the world, of body and spirit. 'So must pure lovers' souls descend t'affections, and to faculties, which sense may reach and apprehend, else a great prince in prison lies.'



'A Procession of Shakespeare Characters'  
Unknown artist, 19th century - formerly attributed to  
Daniel Maclise, 1806-1870



Donne

*The Yale Center for British Art*

## VI - THE IDEA OF THE GODDESS



The Goddess is the ancient and sacred Idea of Woman conceived as divinity in order to personify and express the creative power of Nature. This manifold of concepts of Nature, Woman, and the Goddess derived its power from the numinous and not from the world of scientific definition. Complex mythologies developed around the Idea multi-formed and historically various, in which the concepts themselves shift and change through time.

The concepts are in some sense interchangeable. The natural world in a mythological sense is Woman, nurturing, generative and accepting, but also enticing, beautiful and destructive. Woman in a mythological sense is the world, in its completeness, embodying Nature's rich aspects. Woman, celebrated, in this double-view, as the world and the human female, elevated to a worshipped divinity, and surrounded by religious awe and ritual, is the Goddess. So the Goddess can be manifest as Nature, and Nature reveal the Goddess. Or the Goddess can be manifest as Woman and Woman's presence invoke the Goddess. The Goddess enters wearing multiple masks, animal or human, raw or civilised, powerful or powerless.

One goddess may be many goddesses; many goddesses may be one. Each manifestation, each invocation, each embodiment, each mask, is richly varied, and the mythological hub, spinning in space and time, draws around it a tapestry of detail, ornament and reference, winds in about its shining centre all particles of the myth, in complex orbit.

The Idea came out of the mind, out of deep biology and psychology. For Man, Woman is the recipient of his sexual desire, the source of new life, and his own first origin. She is the virgin maiden, the moonlit lover, the grieving mother. She is, in her nurturing aspect, his own sensitivity, his own

feelings, the quickness of intuitive intelligence, his own tenderness, his own capability to care, to protect, to love. She is, in the mythological sense, his soul.

In that sense, she may be seen as all that is best in him. In that sense, she is both within him and beyond him. In that sense, she expresses and reflects the movements of his own inner being. If he loses the ability to see her, he dies spiritually. If he rejects her, he rejects himself, and all Nature, and therefore the totality of existence. The masculine component of the self recognises also the feminine component of the self. And she is a mystery to him. Since she is himself also, then when she is embodied in a woman, she can, also be within him. The lovers are one.

Above and beyond his own being he creates the symbolic and mythological embodiment of all being, as the Goddess. And he gives her many names. For Woman, the Goddess is herself, in all her masks. She is her own mother, and Nature as a mother, she is her own sexuality and desire, and her own inner processes. She is the mystery of conception and birth. She is the silence and subtlety of her seductions. She is the image of herself, and Man's mirror. Looking into the shining face of the Goddess, Woman looks into herself, and into the depths of a man. Looking into the Goddess she sees all landscapes, all forests, all rivers and seas, all clouds and rain, all caves and sacred groves, all temples and palaces, all created creatures. She sees all objects that can be her masks and her resting-places, and all events that can be her voices and her oracles. As the Goddess she can give Man the thread to understand his life, within the labyrinth of himself and the world, and she herself can comprehend her life in relationship to Man, and to existence. She is life and death. She is the self within and the universe beyond. She is the silence and the sound. She is the reality and the dream.

We can trace the presence of this idea of the Goddess from earliest times to latest. She appears in the Paleolithic, in tiny statuettes of bone and ivory, in rock signs and carvings, from Siberia to the Pyrenees, and beyond. She is a bird, a pregnant creature, a face, a moon or a wave sign, a spiral or

a labyrinthine meander. Twenty thousand years ago she is already associated with the images of lion and bull, bird, and fish, moon and snake, which later accompany her image in Sumeria and Babylon, Egypt and Crete, Greece and Rome. They appear again in Celtic religion and in the representations of the Virgin Mary.

In the Neolithic she is the Great Mother, the Great Goddess, multiple or bird-headed, in vase shaped images marked with running water, in the form of a fish, as a mother holding her child, as a bear holding a cub, as Goddess of the animals. We can follow her to Crete, as Mistress of the sea and the creatures, to Babylon as Inanna and Ishtar the evening and morning star. We can find her as Isis in Ancient Egypt, 'the natural mother of all things, governess of the elements' queen of earth, heaven and hell.

In Imperial Rome, she is not only Isis, but Cybele of the Anatolians, Venus and Minerva and Juno. In ancient China and India the same Great Goddess appears, and again in other forms she appears in Africa, the Americas, Polynesia, Japan. A plethora of masks and faces but with a consistency of motifs. All biological, natural, intuitive reflections of some aspect of Nature and Woman.

She gives rise to the Yin concept in China, the feminine side of reality. The moon for its phases, changeability, night presence, mystery. Blood and water, and all things that flow; seas and rivers, streams and clouds. Everything that contains and conceals; caves and woods, clouds and valleys, buildings and labyrinths. Her shining beauty is in stars, flowers, lakes, the leaves of trees, in precious metals and rare jewels. Her generative fecundity is shown in herbs and fruits, in the child on her lap. She is the human soul, elusive, transient, flickering and so she is seen with symbols of birds in flight, butterflies and bees.

The Greeks with their usual elegance capture her many faces in multiple Goddesses. She is the Cretan Nature Goddess of the animals. She is Aphrodite's subversive glittering and perfumed sexuality. She is Artemis's silence, stillness and virginity, renewing as the moon renews. She is Demeter the Mother, and Persephone the Maiden, the guarantors of the harvest, the roots of generation. And as Persephone she goes down to the Underworld, following the seasons. She is permanent in the constellations, and planets. She is variable in the moon and the months. She is vanishing

and mysterious in night, death, time, and prophecy. She is the triple face of Woman, as child, lover and mother. She is the triple aspect of Nature in the heavens, earth and the underworld, Skelton's 'Diana in the leaves green, Luna who so bright doth sheen, Persephone in Hell'. She is the three Graces, who are Giving, Receiving, and Thanking. She is the three illusions, truth, love and beauty. She is the triple reality of outwardness, inwardness and stillness. She is the light, the twilight, and the dark. She is birth, life and death.

If Woman is a Goddess, then Man through his power to dominate her, as Nature or in her human form, can become a God. At first he can only be a consort. He is the temporary lover, Adonis, Attis, Osiris who makes a sacred marriage with the Goddess, so that together they renew the vegetation and the harvest. He is the god whose year will wax and then wane. Who will meet his rival, the new-year's god, and be destroyed. Or he will be sacrificed, and his flesh and blood returned to the earth. She bears him, mates with him variously, sometimes capriciously, betrays him, mourns him and buries him. She is mother, bride, and layer-out. The battles of the rival gods will go on endlessly and ritually. They are the rival brothers of Renaissance plays, the kindred kings of the Greek myths, their assassins, their warring sons. They are the Gemini, the Dioscuri, the Kabiri, the twin pillars of the temple, the two giants Gog and Magog. They are Jehovah and Satan, the conflict eternal and unresolved.

Bearing the god, the Goddess is still the Great Mother, Ana, Demeter. As his bride she is the seductress who leads him to glory but also to his destruction, she is Cybele the voracious, the man-eater, and Sekhmet the lion-headed destroyer of Ancient Egypt. She is Ishtar and Aphrodite, the adorned and voluptuous. She is Venus Anadyomene, created from sperm, risen naked from the foam of the sea, standing on the vulva-shaped scallop shell, blown to the shore by zephyrs, greeted by the Spring. She brings with her perfumes and love-tokens, night-whispers and music, sensual delight and the 'little death' of orgasm. She can dissolve the earth, transform the night, shrink the universe, still the mind. Her eyes dart arrows.

From her silence comes the language of poetry. She is the demanding Muse, and the tormenting paramour. She is Cleopatra, and Lesbia, Doricha and Thais, and 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'. She is the arresting apparition, the Bav, 'the washer by the ford', the priestess, the Sybil, the oracular voice of the Pythia at Delphi, or Cassandra bringing doom.

As his seductress she is the princess under the sea, the mermaid who draws him down to drown, the Queen of the Night, the flower-daughter, the lady of the magic garden, or of the sealed tower, of the lake or the well. As his mother and layer-out she is Venus with Adonis in her arms, the Mater Dolorosa, Ishtar mourning Tammuz, Cybele mourning Attis, the archetype of grief. She will be for him, the triple incarnation, the magical source and the silent inwardness, the dangerous, detonating force of the erotic, the sweetness of the hive mingled with the fear of the final darkness. He will pity her tears, and thereby pity his own mortality. He will drown in her eyes and thereby go willingly to his fate. She is the sea, with its charms and treacheries. Pain and joy, beauty and disaster are inextricably mixed into the love potion. She will curl in the hollow of his breast, draw him down into the deeps of space and time, and release him at the last through the gates of ecstasy to an eternal sleep. She is Isolde. He is Tristan.

The God grows in power as Man begins to control society, nature and woman. The great city-states, in Sumeria and Ancient Egypt, in India and China, display hereditary male rulers, institutionalised priesthoods, economic muscle, and the attributes of civilisation. They have writing and mathematics, pottery and metalworking, agriculture and the calendar, pyramid building and slavery. The intellectual and technological adventure has begun. Man is at play in games of his own devising, and in turn the Universe is seen as a game, a play, a ritual where the God dances.

His relationship with the Goddess alters. He is the Sun, she is the Moon. He dies only in metaphor, or effigy. She seduces him only in ritual, and mourns him only in show. This is the external image of the Sacred Marriage. In the myths of Knossos, the Cretan sun-bull marries the moon, through the generations. Zeus couples with Europa. Minos and Poseidon,

as bulls from the sea, couple with Pasiphae. Theseus couples with Ariadne. At Eleusis, in rite or reality, the priestess and the hierophant celebrate a sacramental union, and give 'birth' to the image of the Holy Child. In Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Crete the Goddess unites with the God.

Inwardly the worshipper merges with what is worshipped, the mortal is filled with the divine. In the private union of man and woman, in the sexual fulfilment of the lovers, minds and bodies meet and thereby reflect the greater union of the deities. 'What is above, that is below' say the Mysteries. Mutual commitments, exchanges of tokens (rings and necklaces which encircle and crown in sacred, sexual imagery), sharing of thoughts, mingling of bodies, joint action and harmonious stillness, the intermingling of glances, tendernesses and endearments, alternating service and command. The eyes meet and the world stills.

Hierogamy, the 'marriage' of the Goddess and the God, is every 'marriage' of lovers, is every deeper union, is the marriage of the planter with the earth, the hunter with the quarry, the priest with the sacrifice. It is both external act, and internal mystery. It is private and hidden as at Eleusis. It is public and ceremonial as at the altar. It is Nature whose veil may not be lifted without meeting death, like Actaeon and Pentheus, or being blinded like Tiresias and Oedipus. But it is also the open communion, which every citizen, every participant can partake of, in the congregation, as in the congress.

The Greeks, it may be said, go rapidly beyond the mysteries. In the East Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism take a rational direction away from divinity. In the West Athene the spirit of pure reason invades the Greek mind. In a moment we are on the verge of modernity; the secular state; the rule of law; the scientific enquiry; logical analysis; mathematics and physics; biology and astronomy; democracy and commerce. Plato celebrates Socrates. The dialectic of Pure Reason begins, and 'The Republic' anticipates the possibilities of the future social order. It is a defining moment. But before it can be fulfilled, in the Renaissance, in the Great Revolutions, in the Enlightenment, and finally in the modern scientific

world, there is one more great delaying movement of the mythological story in the West.

It is the coming of the all-powerful God, the jealous God, Jehovah and Allah out of the religions of the Middle East. It involves the enshrouding within Jehovah's myth of the older myth, where the weeping Virgin will cradle in her arms the all-suffering consort, he who descends and then ascends. It is a moment of disaster for the Goddess. The gods become one. The God out of Israel is a faceless, nameless, God of the Word. This voice of the jealous God, allowing no rivals, will defame and subdue the Goddess in all her manifestations, whether she is Astarte of the Canaanites, or Ishtar of Babylon, or Diana of the Ephesians.

The legacy of Sumeria, Babylon, Egypt and Assyria enters the minds of the authors of the Pentateuch. Genesis places Man and Woman in the Paradise Garden. Instead of Crete, the island paradise, where the Goddess was Mistress of the Animals, here we have the Fall. Into the consciousness of the West, for two thousand years, enters a degraded and degrading view of Woman. From this moment the Goddess begins to die.

The names of God are masculine. Since he has usurped the role of the Goddess, and is everything and everywhere, since he owns nature as the Creator and made Man in his image, so Woman must become part and not whole, a fragment, a secondary piece of Man. His maleness is appropriate for a military God warring against tribes loyal to the Goddess. He is a God of History, of Destiny, of a nation, of a time to come. His inwardness is obedience and awe. He is fire, and mountain, voice and language, the Yang attributes of the male. He is a God of the tamed and not the wild, of the law and not that beyond the law. The female is subdued, and submerged, becomes personal and private.

There is still tenderness in the Old Testament. Women figure in it as individuals. Rachel, and Leah, Lot's wife, Bathsheba, Judith, the mystic bride of the Song of Solomon. In the third century BC the feminine is present in Judaism as Wisdom, Hokhmah or in the later Greek world, Sophia. And is there as early as the first century AD as the Shekhinah, the presence of Yahweh, the Holy Spirit binding the human and the divine, in the story of Moses, in the figure of Miriam. This is the Soul of Wisdom, the Matronit, who will reappear in the Middle Ages in the Kabbalah, the



mystical tradition of Judaism. Judaism remained supremely ethical. But authority had been transferred to the male deity, to the nation and the people.

The Goddess is dying though love is not. To the old religion, comes the new. Jesus the man teaching a caring, compassionate democracy of feeling and being, where all may be freed from their various bonds, where power and status mean nothing in the universe of the spirit, where woman is still individual and redeemable from sin. Jesus talks to all women, and has women as his companions as well as men. He brings back into a Roman Palestine the benign face of the Goddess, in his curiously neutral and androgynous form, the merged form of the sacred marriage, of the union of lovers, that Donne claims, beyond sex and beyond separate identity.

He refreshes and reinvigorates the ancient message of compassion, and empathy, of caring and kindness, of universality and the right to life. He is subversive of state power; he preaches a world outside the social. He has a voice for the voiceless and the oppressed, the slave and the downtrodden, the disadvantaged and the unequal. The spirit has rights, the individual has rights, implicit not articulated. Anyone who can feel is to be looked on equally, to be cared for equally, to be redeemed equally, in a kingdom of the mind and spirit, if not in the realms of the body. Christianity levels the field, and sets the scene for the Rights of Man to be articulated. Democracy, Marxism, Feminism all are supported by that vision of the equality of feeling and spirit, of the rights of anyone who has senses and emotions, regardless of their rational powers, to be considered an individual with inalienable rights. And if for Man, why not for the animals also, though we have not yet got that far?

Jesus, the suffering God, born of a mother (later a 'Virgin' mother), living in love, and dying, to be cradled in the Goddess's lap and mourned, a reincarnation of the older myth, reinvigorated and renewed, to be eternally

resurrected in 'Heaven'. His myth completes the partial myth of the Old Testament. The Fall is complemented by the Resurrection. Original Sin is redeemed by the Passion. The myth is superimposed on his teachings by his followers, and spreads across the ancient world. It overlays itself on Goddess worship and that of the pagan Gods, renaming their festivals, rededicating their sacred places, persuading their priests and priestesses to his congregation.

Institutionalised, compromised, both victim and aggressor, his Church converts the West, though carrying always within its womb, the message of love, compassion and equality. But its theology is deeply damaging. The disaster for the Goddess, since she is Woman deified, is a disaster for Woman also, and since Nature also is the Goddess, it will become a disaster for Nature. Sacred joy, delight, and wonder are turned to fear, guilt, punishment and blame. The fault is disobedience. The perpetrator of the fault is the woman, seduced by the voice of the beguiling serpent, the wild murmur of nature. Sexuality, knowledge, life itself are tainted by sin. The man is an offender but at second hand.

Prehistoric themes of human incompleteness through mortality, of guilt at consuming animal and vegetable life, and of the moral ambivalence of cunning and curiosity surface in the concept of sin. No myth survives unless it has deep content, and here the image of Faustian restlessness and yearning is also born, of the mortal to achieve the immortal, of the limited to reach eternal truth, of the bounded to become all-powerful, of the human to become divine. To be pushed out of Heaven is to wish to return. To lose Paradise is to dream of it endlessly. The deep theme is human unease at passing the boundaries of the life that Nature prescribed, while embracing the human destiny in History, to know, to outwit, to control, and to command. Christianity, as the Church, bound its people, devalued the Goddess and her nature, weighed humanity down with guilt, and offered a counter-seduction, of the next life, of the paradise to come. It is promised to those who confess, to the contrite and the humble, to those whose love is not of the material world, to those whose sins will be redeemed by the one life which takes away all sins.

The whole of Nature becomes fallen and cursed, the place of sex and death. This is nowhere in the teachings of Jesus but everywhere in the

teachings of the early Church. For Tertullian 'Man issues through the parts of shame', woman is 'a temple built over a sewer'. For Augustine we are born 'inter faeces et urinam'. It is the war between the spirit and the flesh. The womb was Woman, Nature and the Goddess, and the womb was source of both attraction and aversion, seduction and sinfulness. The tragedy, exemplified by Augustine, is the tragedy of a deep and affirmative teaching in thrall to a pernicious and perverted idea. Yet it flows in full logic from the testaments, and the myth would not have persisted without it finding a response in the darker aspects of male sexuality, of mind subject to a body, as body is also subject to mind, the twin aspects of our being. The results of the dichotomy are still all around us, despite a pretended liberation from superstition and prejudice.

Woman is the soul, and is Nature. As the Goddess she is neither power nor destiny. She is completeness, stillness. She is the amorphous background sound, of the wind in the trees, or the waves of the sea. If the Goddess is lost and betrayed, then so is the woman, and so is love. In the twelfth Century, Heloise fights free for a moment, beyond the understanding of Abelard her lover, to assert the independence of woman's mind and the human spirit in 'a love that knows no bounds' 'Wholly guilty though I am' she writes 'I am also, as you know, wholly innocent.' 'I would have had no hesitation in following you or going ahead at your command into the fires of Hell.' She is Iseult, beyond the world. And in the mystic and pagan traditions, and in the cult of the Virgin, the old values somehow continued to operate, below the level of official society, throughout the Medieval period. The troubadours, the Arthurian legends, the poetry of Gottfried, using Arabic and Celtic sources, maintain the sweetness of love, and secular identity, preserve the full-blooded and richly articulated sensitivity to love and all its ways. The Virgin Mary, as the Black Virgin, and at other shrines, receives the full weight of the Goddess's attributes. Her mother is Anne, the ancient Ana. The Virgin is shown with her lions, and pillars, her doves and flowers. Her imagery echoes in the later paintings of the Venetian and Florentine Renaissance, placed amongst Leonardo's mysterious waters, or against Bellini's tender skies. She has all the names of

the Goddess, the Holy Mother, the Mirror of Justice, the Morning Star, the Tower of Ivory, and the Queen of Peace. She is Stella Maris, and the Seat of Wisdom. She is the Gate of Heaven, and the mystic Rose.

The Goddess is love grieving, love lost, love defamed, love betrayed and love abandoned, but not love defeated. If we examine the Elizabethan drama in England, then we can see Shakespeare weaving the theme of the abandoned, or lost, or traduced, or defamed, or imprisoned Goddess into his plays. The theme was articulated for him in Virgil's *Aeneid*, the abandonment of Dido by Aeneas, recreated in Marlowe's verse as the *Tragedy of Dido Queen of Carthage*. Dido is the Phoenecian Astarte brought from Tyre to North Africa, and her fate echoes that of Ariadne, abandoned on Naxos by Theseus. Ariadne likewise is the shining face of the Goddess, noted for the multiplicity of her sacred deaths, that Ariadne who in the most potent of the Greek myths enabled Theseus to thread the maze of the labyrinth and emerge alive.

Aeneas and Theseus are the heroes who throw away their own souls, exchanging spiritual achievement for worldly success. Theseus rules Athens, Aeneas founds Rome. The Goddess goes into the shadows, or into the sky as a constellation, or into the flames of the funeral pyre of love. Marlowe's text with Nashe's editing, appeared in 1594 the year after Marlowe's death, at the beginning of the dozen or so years when Shakespeare and Donne place love between man and woman at the core of their writing. At the end of that period Shakespeare writes *The Tempest* with Marlowe's text at his elbow, echoing lines here and there, allowing the sea and storm imagery of Marlowe to infuse his own play, likewise set on a sea-shore, beside and within a cave or cell.

Aeneas meeting a disguised Venus (his mother) on reaching land calls her a 'fair virgin'. 'Thou art a goddess that delud'st our eyes.....instruct us under what good heaven we breathe as now, and what this world is call'd on which by tempest's fury we are cast.' In similar words Ferdinand also finding Miranda, 'Most sure, the goddess on whom these airs attend!' It is from Marlowe that Shakespeare learnt that language of awe, admiration and breathless delight, which he then proceeded to transform. A delight in woman as goddess permeates his last plays, where things that are lost or abandoned are found safe, the supposed dead are resurrected, and the loving soul is reunited to the soul that loved.

There are echoes of Dido too in Cleopatra, of Aeneas in Antony. It is instructive to look for these verbal echoes in Shakespeare and there are many, in order to realise how important Marlowe's work was to him. Above all it is the atmosphere of the Dido, the mythological setting, the core theme, the notes of adoration, of almost mystical awe, in rich description, which both poets achieve, that mattered to him. It is the note that Marlowe brings to English verse, and Shakespeare takes up, the sweet, rich, burdened, hesitant voice of the lover to the beloved, as it describes the Goddess in Nature, her flowers, her sacred paradisiacal landscapes, and her creatures, as worshipped woman or man. It is a voice that goes beyond Petrarch or Sydney, to a more direct utterance.

Shakespeare has other sources for the wrongly accused female. Eve is his hidden source, but in the Greek myths there is lost Persephone, found to be lost again; Alcestis like Cordelia loyal to the grave; the ravaged nymphs and mortals who in pity or escape are transformed to trees like Daphne's laurel, or stars like Ariadne, or birds, like Procne and Philomela.

As Venus she is rejected in Venus and Adonis, as Lucrece she is ravaged in *The Rape of Lucrece*. Shakespeare projects this image on to so many of his heroines. They are vilified, like Eve, or lose what they love like Mary Magdalen, or are forced to wait for reunion with what they love, like Rachel. An aspect of the great theme in Shakespeare is a dramatisation of attitudes to Woman and Woman's attitudes. Part of it no doubt surges up out of his own life-history, but part also seems to be in him as an instinctive empathy with the betrayed and devalued. His heroines are symbols of devalued Love, devalued Nature, the devalued sincerity and simplicity which properly valued are the heart of silence and the centre of his ethical world. Love, as the lost daughter Sophia, the Heavenly Bride, or the exiled Shekhinah who is the Precious Stone and the Pearl, must be rescued, by the agency of the good, and returned to her father and mother in the sacred Heavens. She is the lost soul, fallen, wandering, seeking and yearning for its true home. And Shakespeare's heroines are the twin souls and hearts of his male protagonists. An example is Rosalind. Her name is an anagram of Orlando, so that she and Orlando are like male and female twins, with twinned names. As an anagram, and in the play as a youth, she is disguised and concealed. Similarly Cordelia is grammatically, Lear's loving sacred heart the 'coeur de Lear', and also the Kore, the Maiden, the Delian

Goddess with the values of moderation of Apollo, and the sacredness of Apollo's sister Artemis, both sun and moon, hidden from Lear in his blindness.

The male protagonists in Shakespeare's later plays are blinded to the Goddess, and to the sincerity and loyalty of enduring love, in some way, and therefore are separated from their own souls. In that state Woman becomes Eve, the source of sin and the Fall, concupiscent, ravening, slippery, cloacal, a dark womb, a vicious whirlpool into which man is drawn. She is a witch, a sorceress, an adulteress, unfaithful, dissembling, cruel. She is the lie, the devil's presence on earth. She is all the foul things in Nature, adverse to Man, those things he battles in order to create civilisation. She is the raw, the uncooked, the wild, the untamed. She demands the surrender of his Reason, subverts it, corrupts it, and in the end overturns it. As his soul she constantly seeks to be heard, to be found, to be reconciled, and to be loved. As his condemned and fallen shadow she is to be vilified, destroyed, and damned.

In the distorted imagination, this dark shadow weaves a substantial being around itself, summons up its double the dark other, and in this dual form assaults the mind and body of the protagonist. As Nature, the dark duality is disorder, chaos, the storm, the tempest, out of which ultimately truth and calm might come reborn. Truth is the stillness of the marriage sacrament, the silence of love, or, as in the Greek myths, a tree in leaf, a star in the sky, or some small bird or flower resonant with beauty. In relation to Woman the duality is wilfully misunderstood love, perceived as love's opposite, disobedience, manipulative deceit, dishonesty, concealment, indifferent carelessness, veniality, evil, sin. As the dual male component, it is some antagonistic brother of the body or the soul; some upsurge of the denied self demanding justice, return to order; some agent of good, or merely some counter-force.

From a sexual point of view the protagonist is in the world of the extreme Puritans, of Augustine and Tertullian, of the later Donne. Of Prospero also, where there is a coldness in the character which makes him

hard to like, that stiff mantle, that wizard's severity, that remoteness from laughter. The protagonist is suspicious of the body and the womb, celebrating the virginal and chaste, the snow-cold, the immaculate. He is the justice that 'tries all offenders', the steely lawmaker, the hair-splitting rationalist, the intricate logician. He suppresses his tenderness, his mutual love, his union of hearts and minds, his instinctive affections for wife, mother, daughter, companion, his own soul. Seeing in her, the darkness of night, the fickle sea, the changeable moon, the amoral reproductive drive, the orgiastic maenad, the inimical, and forbidden, the animalistic and deathly, the supernatural and cursed, he pushes her down into the depths. He drives her away or seeks to ensnare her, imprison her, defuse her, disarm her.

The trapped and imprisoned psychic forces then do what all trapped psychic forces do, they emerge irrationally, usurp the protagonists reason and will, drag him into a chaos of disrupted Nature, Society and Self, topple him and defeat him. The end of that defeat is silence and death, as in *Hamlet*, and *Lear*, suicide as in *Othello*, or ultimate knowledge, reconciliation and forgiveness as in *Cymbeline*, *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*.

Or something else happens, as in the *Tempest*. That something else is the alternative ending, the path that England took in reality, that Donne took in the second half of his life: that the modern world resulted from. The Goddess is stilled. Irrational desire and passion are abated. Virginity before marriage is celebrated, and demanded. Ferdinand is faced with austere 'trials of thy love'. Authority, civil order, society, the law, and the magician Prospero, force a contract, blessed by spirits, which are invoked not real, within a masque, not a religious revelation. The Goddess is diminished, and remains imprisoned in the bonds of magic, or in the private world of the subdued self. Venus vanishes, and Cupid breaks his arrows. There is a sacred marriage, but it is overseen by the chilly severity of Prospero.

The staff is broken, the book is drowned, Ariel, his creative soul, is released, and Prospero abjures 'rough magic'. All the arts and spells of the Goddess are foregone. He goes out into the dark, still, silent, and barren landscape. There are no more 'spirits to enforce, art to enchant; and my ending is despair, unless I be reliev'd by prayer, which pierces so that it assaults Mercy itself and frees all faults.' That last plea of Prospero's is kin to Donne's prayer in one of the Holy Sonnets, 'Take me to you, imprison me, for I, except you enthrall me, never shall be free, nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.' It is the same language of magical constraint in order to end beyond magic in spiritual freedom. It is the Puritan message. And one reading of the *Tempest* is that far from being a reconciliation of the Goddess with the God, of Catholicism with the Protestant theme of sin and forgiveness, it is a final conceding or even fulfilment of Shakespeare's position in the face of his own imminent death. It is the recognition of the colder Puritan world, without irreverent laughter, overt sexuality, sacred nature, ritual theatre, without any of the spirits or arts or magic of the Goddess, where only within marriage love, compassion and joy will survive, contained and controlled.

And Caliban, who is the corrupted spirit in man, the fallen one, the brute, the potential rapist, the outsider, the 'natural' man. Caliban, who knows 'all the qualities o' the' isle', the dreamer whose irrational dream is full of rare music and lulling voices sounding in a paradise garden, will be 'wise hereafter and seek for grace.' Prospero's 'imperialist' mercy allows even Caliban to be part of the community if he behaves. Prospero's severity is also Donne's, who calls beggars 'dogs' and 'vermin', and for whom the 'herd of vagabonds' are not fit for charity being outcasts from 'the household of God'. Donne, who argues 'an inherent right in the Christians, to plant Christianity in any part of the dominions of the infidels, and consequently, to despoil them even of their possession, if they oppose such plantations.' All shall conform, accept, obey the laws, constrain their thoughts. It is the cold message of Puritanism, which will become the cold message of Protestant imperialism, and parliamentary democracy. It is a clinical, scientific coldness, Prospero's coldness, the coldness of Plato'



Republic. And just as reading Plato leaves an uncomfortable chill behind, so does *The Tempest*. So does a reading of Donne's sermons. Compassion, and pity, and mercy, and love are still there, but they do not somehow seem to mean what they meant. The reconciliation is still a defeat for the Goddess.

The Civil War sealed it. The suppressed forces of Puritanism finally overthrew in a mighty convulsion the forces of hereditary kingship, and the last sanctuaries of the Goddess. And the Restoration in England disguised but did not alter the triumph of the modern world. The stream of Greek experience, modified by Christianity, flows forward again towards the Enlightenment, social Revolution, democracy, global trade and commerce, industrialisation, and the scientific project. What wild Nature is left gives way to continued plantation and enclosure. What is unmapped will become mapped, and Nature and her creatures, having become a resource, will be exploited and desacralised. Men have been clearing the English forest to create woodlands and pasture since Neolithic times, but there is a new view of that process, a new absence of respect, religious awe, sense of guilt. Society will become secular. Religion will be used to endorse commerce, imperialism, war. Sexuality will become pornography. Love will become Romance. Art, poetry and the theatre will lose their sacred imagery and potency.

Science will invade Nature, commit Tarquin's rape of Lucrece, lift her veil, tear apart her limbs, cut out her tongue. As Bacon said, Nature will be 'hounded in her wandering...bound into service...made a slave.' Authority, severity, duty, the work ethic, activity, the need to consume, will rule under the law. Joy, awe, delight, mystery, the true erotic, the inner worship, will vanish into the private and personal domain. Or into an underworld, the gate to it concealed by hypocrisy, the mysteries sanitised, trivialised, and democratised as commerce, the Goddess imprisoned in her flesh, hung with adornments from which the meaning has bled away.

The Elizabethan 1590's and the early 1600's, are a lens through which we can see the defining moment when our modern world emerged. It is a focal point of English History, out of which social revolution comes, to influence and direct the later revolutions in France, and America.

Greek philosophy and Roman law and the concept of the secular state have triumphed in the West, and will, if reason continues to rule, do so globally. Puritanism yoked together the triumph of the God, and the triumph of Reason to create a world out of which came the Enlightenment, the release of ordinary humanity from the grip of superstition, from the nightmare of the past. As the God and all religions wither away, we are left with three legacies.

One is the legacy of equality and rights, upheld by secular law, mediated by participative government. Within that legacy, loyalty, compassion, mercy, empathy and kindness have historically found space and influence. So has the individual, locking away in inwardness personal values and spiritual and sensual raptures, behind the walls of the acceptable whenever they cannot be accepted by the majority. It is not a world of external magic. It is civilised, patterned, organised, controlled, managed. The Goddess exists only as an inner paradigm. We are free of her constraining and constrained rituals, sometimes bloody, always elitist, and her unscientific superstitions. We have given up the raw, the primitive, and the mythical, and accepted the cooked, the cultivated and the secular.

Within our world slavery, inequality, sexual, racial and other kinds of discrimination are in principle unacceptable. And women in redefining their social roles are freeing themselves from the taint of the imagery of Eve and the Virgin, leaving Man to come to terms with the more difficult areas of his inherited sexuality. Reason rules, and if we have any knowledge of History we are grateful. Perish those who cherish passions and desires that are outside the law. If it is a blander, safer, quieter, stiller world with less social colour in it, so be it. We have saved the primal virtue of Love within the private individual mind and within the union of minds. We have saved the religious qualities of compassion, empathy, generosity, and loyalty,

understanding and forgiveness, to inform, influence and permeate our society. We might have failed.

The second legacy is much more ambivalent. Commerce, Industrialisation, and Capitalism, driven by and driving new technologies have attacked Nature and put pressure on Human Nature. We have destroyed external solitude and been pulled out of our own inner solitude, which is a part of our true, authentic life. Nature instead of containing us is now contained. The wild is now only a garden, though not the Paradise Garden, and we are now the gardeners.

We have not extended rights to the creatures in the garden, though we now know our own animal origins. Instead Nature has become a resource. The landscapes and the creatures, the plants and the minerals have become ours to ruthlessly exploit. What primitive man never dreamed of possessing, because he was only a small insignificant element of the natural world, we now parcel up, divide between us, sign away, and own. Nature is no longer the Goddess, the soul, and therefore the soul has departed from Nature. We recapture it in moments, in fragments, in isolated spaces, in part, and not as a whole.

Love is not to exploit, to ravage, to destroy. Therefore to exploit, to ravage, to destroy is not to Love. This external aspect of the Goddess as the natural world cannot pass within, become inward, a part of the private spirit. This aspect of the Goddess can only live or die, perish or be saved. This aspect of the Goddess is Perdita, is Marina, is The Pearl, is Artemis of the wooded glades, is the Cretan Mistress of the Creatures, is Astarte the morning and evening star, is the Great Goddess of the Paleolithic world. If we have no respect for Nature, then by analogy we have no respect for our deepest feminine creative impulse, and no longer any respect for the Goddess who is Love.

Where there is no respect then desecration can only bring desolation. The reign of the disassociated God, divorced from his creation, in tyranny over it, has in a secular world become the Wasteland, with rapacious industry and commerce, greed and consumerism, as the new accepted

tyranny. Marketing and the media may lull, and the dying religions may still promise, but the deep mind knows. We are civilised animals. We are rapacious. We are destroying our world. We are mortal, and transient. We are alone.

The third legacy is a double-mask. One face is benign Reason, examining, understanding, achieving knowledge, applying it to cure the world's ills. Success will bring endless energy, boundless leisure, increased lifespan, cures for all sicknesses, greater beauty and intelligence. It will explain all, save all, and manage all. It will comfort all, and bless all. It is Science. The second face is Faustian experiment, prying, testing, opening, torturing, altering, distorting, inventing, loosing, and then erasing. Success will bring restless novelty, boundless complexity, invasion of privacy, mounting ethical dilemmas, a dangerous uprooting of Humanity from its original form, spiritual impoverishment, and the potential redundancy of our species. It will uproot all, destabilise all, destroy all. It will condemn all, and harm all. It is Science.

Is this God with two faces a good benevolent God, or an evil, malicious God? It is neither. It is a neutral, blind, burrowing God. It is a sexless, amoral, indifferent God. It has one value Truth, and one method Knowledge, and one work Technology. When Faustus has his knowledge and his power, when it will do 'whatever Faustus shall command', what then? What will he command? Can he control the forces he has let loose well enough to be obeyed? Or will he be the Sorcerer's apprentice?

'Heaven,' says Mephistopheles 'was made for man, therefore is man more excellent.' What is it, this heaven, humanity is after? 'There is a midnight hour' says Kierkegaard. 'Faustus' says Lucifer, 'in hell is all manner of delight.' 'Oh might I see hell, and return again', says Faustus, 'how happy were I then!' 'Thou shalt,' says Lucifer 'I will send for thee at midnight.'

One face of the God is Greek. It is Apollo's mask. Asclepius's medicine is in his care, astronomy and mathematics, philosophy and the arts. He is a God of moderation, of civilisation. The other face of the God is modern, obscured, difficult to read. It has something of Daedalus, Icarus, Phaethon, Faustus in its features. Its voice speaks its message, which is 'let us try'. In its care is Pandora's box, full of ideas, curiosity, desires. It is the face of a powerful magician, of Merlin, of Faustus. He can invoke twin daemons. They can have modern, secular names. They can be labelled Genetics and Artificial Intelligence. Their forms are woven out of information, out of language, but it is the language of human reality, of the body and the mind. They are weak, and embryonic, not yet powers, but they will be. With them we will have the knowledge to change ourselves, to remake ourselves, to transfer ourselves into other forms.

With our knowledge of the genetic code we will alter our physical nature. We will increase our lifespan, conquer diseases, reproduce, without sex, outside the body. We will clone and replicate ourselves, engineer our children and determine the characteristics of those children. We will evade disability without needing to employ abortion, increase beauty and intelligence, identify who it is safe to mate with, know our genetic identity and have it known by others, and know the risks it brings us. We will have learnt enough to alter identity, temperament, personality, ability. Our own genetic nature will be 'a resource'.

And we can do all this to animals too. We can make them redundant as food by engineering equivalents, and stop torturing them in experiments to help us to new knowledge. We can store their genetic forms, and resurrect them, clone them, and extinguish them. All this will be ruled by economic and political forces? Human beings will be commoditised, tailored, sanitised, and pressurised to adopt the technology or fail to compete? Or perhaps, if we are very clever, it will be ruled by ethical debate, a feeling for the sacred, a sense of genetic responsibility, a moral framework, where love, compassion, freedom, and kindness drive reason and technology?

With artificial intelligence, rather than working from the gene outwards, we will work from the mind inwards. Understanding mental processes of which consciousness will be one (and many), and using the increasing power of computer technology, we will enhance our minds, and build minds. We will amplify our memories, our processing capabilities, our reasoning powers. We will compete with each other, by enabling ourselves to become cleverer than each other, by altering our own brains to become different individuals, a different self. Or we will transfer our mental abilities into machines. We will create computers that think. Not twentieth century computers, that carry out limited logical instructions, without senses or self-reference, without emotions or reasoning, without consciousness. But fully conscious machines which will have personalities, individuality (and feelings, or they will not be able to think fully). They will be freed from the limitations of our bodies, as powerful as physics will allow, cleverer than us, more intelligent than us, rendering us an inferior species, capable of retiring us, and building their own successors. Should we not say, they will be us? That it is not the species that will end but our old organic bodies? The species will migrate into other substance, and another level of intelligence and consciousness. The Goddess and the God, as Woman and Man, as Nature and World will no longer exist. What we know now is not what we will be, then.

This is not fiction. It is potentially, at some near stage in our future, cold scientific fact. The direction of Science is already laid out. Biotechnology and Information technology are already two massive growth areas in Science, and, with more direct impact on us, in applied Technology. Some things may not be attempted for a very long time. But the reality of Science is that its developments always take longer than we think but always come upon us faster than we can control. These are 'brave new worlds'. They can be as Miranda imagined them, or, as Prospero's reply, 'Tis new, to thee', with a realism born of experience, expressed, replete with all the old evils, compounded by Scientific power, robbed of the values of the benign creative incarnations of the Goddess.

Might we have the power to control the God we have created, this two-faced God of Science? Coupled with Commerce he is a ravening God. Where will Love live? Where will solitude be? Will Love be our refuge, in the sacred temple of the individual, the human mind? We know we are only creatures. We know the process, Evolution, which brought us here. We can see where we have come from. The spiritual and the sacred were in Nature, and in our minds and bodies. There was nowhere else for them to be. If we destroy Nature, and sever ourselves from our existing bodies, if we transform our minds, our worlds, and the universe, what will we be, and how can we be? The Goddess is silent, so is the God.

Science often gives the impression that nothing in its research is wrong, that nothing will go wrong. There are issues to be faced in applying knowledge but all will be well. Why then do we feel unease and an instinctive deep concern? Are these visions the visions of the better worlds Humanity dreamed of? These new territories of Science are infinitely more challenging, infinitely more dangerous than those of the past, because they are the worlds of which we ourselves are made. To destroy external Nature, to rape the Goddess is one thing. To destroy one's own self, is something quite different, as Shakespeare's antagonists discover, as Faustus discovers. The descent to hell is easy, said Hesiod, and Virgil. 'Come not, Lucifer!' cried Marlowe's Faustus 'I'll burn my books!'

We can remember the Goddess. We can remember her benign values, to be true, to be sensitive, to be kind. They are the values that come out of empathy, and nurture, out of our genetic history, out of the animal kingdom, out of Nature. They are compromised and often rejected by the rapacious, tyrannical God, the God who is technology and commerce. It is the God we allow ourselves to worship, the one to whom, if we lose our nerve, we transfer our love. There is nothing more evil to the soul than to worship the wrong God.

We can retell our own story. Nature was once a vast external mystery. Powerless in front of mystery, our response was fear and awe, and the creation of religions. Gradually reason allowed us to dispel mystery. We took food and fire from Nature, energy subdued it, mind explained the chains of cause and effect, and theory anticipated the future. Experiment, and action, successfully repeated became knowledge. A social order was built on the back of our technologies.

Then emotion held us back. Knowledge brought guilt; the fear of having broken some externally imposed law, of having initiated actions with terrible consequences. Too much knowledge might be error, sin. Guilt was assuaged by sacrifice, by piety, by prayer. It was in the interests of an existing social order to encourage guilt, to create taboos, to embed sacrifice in ritual, to warn of the dangers of excess, so that challenge to that order was minimised. To break the taboos, to think the unacceptable, was heresy.

To change the existing order required exceptional courage and a social Revolution. So that each step forward in knowledge was dangerous, and often it was followed by disaster, by backward steps, dark ages. But gradually knowledge increased, regardless of problems within the social order. The social order was fallible, but true knowledge was immune from that fallibility. The method of acquiring true knowledge was scientific theory, supported by experiment and application. The true knowledge itself is Science.

In the process of acquiring knowledge we have understood that the Universe is indifferent to us, and without directing mind. Given sufficient knowledge we will acquire sufficient power to make all Nature, the everything outside us, a resource. Nature is then totally our possession, our object, neutral and pliable. Given knowledge we will have endless energy at our disposal. We can then mould Nature as we desire, and the mysteries will be dispelled.

We have also understood that we ourselves, our own bodies and minds, are built of neutral and indifferent content. We are here because we have passed through the filter of natural selection. The random mutations within our genetic structure were eliminated if they were relatively harmful to survival, otherwise retained and coded into the information content of our cells. We have begun to understand that genetic information, to read



the code, and comprehend the book of the body. In that process we have seen that there is nothing but process, nothing but information, nothing but what is bounded inside the mind and body themselves. Consciousness is a feature of the structure and process in our minds, is itself a set of processes. The mind is difficult to enter, difficult to experiment with. We are only at the first beginnings of understanding the processes of mind. We will have to move from the simplest functions to the most complex, but we will eventually understand how it works. We have always, when we set our minds to it, been able to progress our understanding of how things work.

We have learnt therefore that we will be able to change ourselves and to transform ourselves, until we no longer are ourselves. If what we are is information, then we can do with it what we can do with any information. We can copy it, alter it, add to it, subtract from it, store it elsewhere in a different medium, and translate it from one language to another. The body can be a different body, made from different matter, equipped with different senses, imperishable, infinitely more powerful, needing little or no resources to run. The mind can be recreated as its processes in any medium that can sustain them. We can have mind without, in a sense, any body at all, just as we can have body without mind. We can have spare bodies or spare minds, we can have enhanced bodies or enhanced minds, we can have networks of linked bodies and minds. We can, in a further extension, become merely information, located as one entity, a network of entities, or individual entities. We can disperse the self, and change the meaning of self. What science fiction has speculated about, we will do.

That is the agenda of Science. If we pretend otherwise we will be deceiving ourselves. Curiosity runs too deep for us ever to call a universal halt. Those who remain religious will continue to operate a dual system for their own mental convenience. It does not matter how many philosophers or theologians debate the issue, it will not change the agenda. It has not done so for the last four hundred years, and there are no signs of it doing so now.

But we have also learnt something else. That we, as we are currently constituted, have a value system embedded deep within us, that came out of our mammalian heritage, out of nurture, bonding, survival through co-operation. It is built into our sexual rituals and into our social structures. We are an inconsistent species, though, since that system is not operational in all its individuals, or in all societies, or for all of the time. Alongside it is another value system we also inherited that came out of our predatory heritage, that of curiosity, cunning and competition.

The first value system is based on seeking truth and being true, on feeling empathy and understanding others, on generosity and kindness. We have extended it culturally to reflect our compromise between living as individuals, and living as a group. If we are fully intelligent we are culturally conditioned now to see the world in terms of rights, fairness, and justice. The nurturing approach combined with our sexual warmth is Love. Love wishes the best for what it loves. Out of that wish comes the desire for equality, for justice, for rights, for the individual to fulfil its potential whatever that might be. It is a value system without fear except fear for what is loved, full of joy in what is loved, creating peace as its context. It delights the spirit, and it extends through creativity the capability of the human. But it is not universal.

The second value system is based on achievement, on knowing more, on having more, on controlling more. We have used it to fuel our projects, to increase our wealth, to empower our fragile bodies, to extend our life span, to conquer all other species. There have been many disasters in human and animal terms along the way, and so we have curbed it with law, and surrounded it with guardians. We have failed to curb it universally, but that is a stage we are passing through. Its by-product is a cultural conditioning, in most of the species, that declares power to be effective. Power can be misused if individuals do not feel love in all its aspects, or only perhaps a limited self-love or a love of chosen objects only. Since its misuse is rarely punished, or may not be capable of being punished, then cunning, competition, and knowledge rule. This is the way of Power.

Between Love and Power there is no easy compromise. Since the Greeks Western Society has sought to impose the way of Love on the way of Power, using Power itself to serve Love and punish the misuse of Power.

Unfortunately Love is damaged by Power. Some individuals have chosen the way of Love without Power. Some groups have chosen to try and balance Love with limited Power, to attempt the Utopia of a self-restraining Love. All Utopias have fallen to the ravages of Power from within or without.

Science as a servant of Love is beneficent. Science in the service of misused Power is malificent. Science as a path of cumulative knowledge, as the search for Truth is neither. The challenge for the future is therefore this. The Scientific agenda will progress. We know conceptually what will be delivered, without knowing yet the 'what' or the 'how' of the actual delivery. The result of our second value system has been to threaten the first. Where nature is only a resource, then we have exploitation and destruction. Where everything is mindless and knowable, then how can we feel awe? And how can we create? Where there is no mystery, we have only ourselves. 'And if I am only for myself, then what am I?' said Hillel. In the future if we are only information, not this mind, not this body, then what are we?

Our social reflex is to hold on to the order we have for fear of the disorder we might bring, and yet the irony is that the scientific project and the deployment of innovation driven by competition will implicitly destabilise the world we are in. Faced with instability and endless change, lacking any external support, dependent only on our own biological and cultural values, we are putting our hands to the reins of the Sun God's chariot. Power's tragedy is the desolation of the spirit. Love's tragedy is the isolation and powerlessness of the spirit. What use is it to complain of the wasteland if it is one we have made?

Science, by searching for Truth, has exposed us to the indifference of the Universe. Our sole resource is Love and Love's values, empathy, endurance, kindness. If the deepest awe that we can feel is not the awe of mystery but only the awe of beauty, and if the deepest solace we can find is only the solace of escaping from humanity into the constantly assailed silence of the non-human, and if our deepest delights are in the private, the

personal, and the insignificant, then perhaps the highest aspirations of our society have to be that beauty, that solace, that friendship, and that privacy. If we do not know what we want, then no God or Goddess will tell us.

Science is Daedalus the artificer, making the maze, the dancing floor of Ariadne, which imprisons the Minotaur. The creature is an image of ourselves, half-human, half-animal. Daedalus bends to make the wings of wax for Icarus. They take flight, but Icarus cannot control his path. Like Phaethon he challenges the Sun, and plunges from Heaven to Earth. It is all beyond his strength. He falls into the waves. But Daedalus safely travels beyond. In Cumae he dedicates his wings to Apollo, God of Moderation, and builds a golden temple for him, where Diophebe, the Sybil will prophesy. Finally in Sicily he makes, for the Goddess at Eryx, a golden honeycomb. 'This infinite hive of honey, this insatiable whirlpool of the covetous mind' said Donne 'no dissection hath discovered to us' and yet 'for spiritual things.... we have no room; for temporal things... we have no bounds.' Plato through the mouth of Socrates tells us, in the Protagoras, what was inscribed in Apollo's temple at Delphi, as a warning to Humanity. 'Know yourself'. 'Nothing in excess'.

The myth of the Goddess is the history of our inner nature, reflected in an outer Nature. In her are the natural values we say we desire, those values which are grounded in our origins, woven through natural selection into the honeycomb of our bodies, embedded in our civilisation. There is no conflict between our knowledge of our animal descent, through the sieve of natural selection, written in our genetic inheritance, our physical reality, and the benign values of the Goddess which come out of that same history. They are the values of nurture, empathy, generosity, loyalty and courage. From the animal base, from the primitive acropolis, we have lifted to the Heavens on our waxen wings. We are still, though, the creature imprisoned in the Labyrinth we also have made. We are surrounded by walls, mazed by knowledge, mirrored by the bronze, trapped in a body half human mind, and half animal origin.

External Nature is the shrine of Artemis, full of her creatures, her distance, her silence, her still and moving waters, her woods and hills, echoing back to humanity, in deep resonance, the creative forces in ourselves. What is sacrilege, but to enter mindlessly, and destroy wantonly, the sacred grove? Our internal Nature likewise, is a mortal labyrinth where we can go fearfully and with awe, or mindlessly with violence and crudeness. When Theseus reached the centre of the labyrinth, and killed Asterion, the man-bull, without compassion, he in turn became the monster. He in turn was the living thing imprisoned in the corridors and behind walls, in the darkness, separated from Nature. 'He slew there the Minotaur' says Plutarch, 'by the means and help of Ariadne; who being fallen in fancy with him, did give him a clue of thread, by the help whereof she taught him, how he might wind out of the turnings and cranks of the Labyrinth'. That Ariadne, the 'most pure', the incarnation of the Goddess and her values, Theseus abandoned and betrayed. From his Athens, through means of powerful ideas originating in the Greek experience, Humanity, the artificer, has gone on to make this scientific world, this New Labyrinth. We are Daedalus. We are the Minotaur. We are Theseus, and Ariadne has placed the thread in our hands.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Anthony Kline lives in England. He graduated in Mathematics from the University of Manchester, and was Chief Information Officer (Systems Director) of a large UK Company, before dedicating himself to his literary work and interests. He was born in 1947. His work consists of translations of poetry; critical works, biographical history with poetry as a central theme; and his own original poetry. He has translated into English from Latin, Ancient Greek, Classical Chinese and the European languages. He also maintains a deep interest in developments in Mathematics and the Sciences.

He continues to write predominantly for the Internet, making all works available in download format, with an added focus on the rapidly developing area of electronic books. His most extensive works are complete translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.