

Stooping to Conquer: Heathen Idolatry and Protestant Humility in the Imperial Legend of Sir Francis Drake

by Christopher Hodgkins

THE Muses seem to have neglected Sir Francis Drake. "It is curious," writes W. T. Jewkes, "that Drake's voyages and exploits have made such a small impact on major English literature, particularly in his own age."¹ On one level, Jewkes is right; as Michael J. B. Allen has noted, there is nothing about Drake in English to compare with Luis de Camoëns's brilliantly realized *Os Lusíadas*, his national epic about the Portuguese mariner Vasco da Gama. So, says Allen, Drake's influence on English literature is only felt "gradually, obliquely, inconspicuously almost," in the imagery of *The Tempest*, in Donne's hymn in his sickness, in Marvell's ode on the Bermudas. "Drake's finest interpreter might have been Conrad," Allen suggests; but he laments that Conrad "left Drake unilluminated by his intricate, musical prose."²

Throughout this essay I have, wherever possible, cited rare printed books according to their reference numbers in these two major catalogues: A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640*, 2nd ed. (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1986), 2 vols.; and Donald Wing, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America and of English Books Printed in Other Countries, 1641-1700*, 2nd ed. (New York: Modern Language Association, 1972), 3 vols. I have used the common abbreviations for these two works, that is, "STC" and "Wing," respectively. I also wish to thank the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities for financial assistance, as well as the staffs of the British Library, the Bodleian Library, and especially the Huntington Library for practical assistance in completing this project.

¹ "Sir Francis Drake Revived: From Letters to Legend," in Norman J. W. Thrower, ed. *Sir Francis Drake and the Famous Voyage, 1577-1580* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 112.

² "Fitzgeffrey's Lamentation on the Death of Drake," in *The Famous Voyage*, 109-10.

However, while Jewkes and Allen guard admirably against overstatement, they succumb to its less culpable but still unsatisfying opposite; for in his way, Drake has prospered in the English imagination. Indeed it is to Drake's encounter with the adoring natives of northern California—at a place which he called "Nova Albion"—that we can most probably trace one of the great sustaining legends of the British Empire, the legend that pious restraint merits possession. As we will see, this legend lived not only in the early exploration narratives, but in the fictions of England's principal writers—from Spenser and Shakespeare to Kipling and Conrad—who were to illumine, in lights both splendid and ironic, Drake's colonialist credo: that one can indeed stoop to conquer.

I

The legend began on the beach. On about June 17th of 1579, Drake sailed his lone, treasure-laden ship, *The Golden Hind*, into a protected lagoon a little to the north of present-day San Francisco, probably the bay that now bears his name. Having plundered the undefended ports of Spanish America's western coast, he needed a place beyond the viceroy's reach to put ashore for repairs. This he did; and after three days the Miwok people came. What followed was fearsome, farcical, wonderful, and portentous.

At first, the natives stood looking from the nearby hills, in the words of the fullest account, "as men rauished in their mindes . . . their errand being rather with submission and feare to worship vs as Gods, then to haue any warre with vs as with mortall men."³ As they laid down their weapons and approached, Drake and his men handed them English linen loincloths, "withall signifying vnto them we were no Gods, but men, and had neede of such things to couer our own shame." However,

³ Sir Francis Drake, Bart., *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, ed. W. S. W. Vaux (London, 1854), 120. Vaux's edition is a reprint of Nicholas Bourne's 1628 edition compiled by Drake's namesake nephew and heir, based on the notes of Drake's chaplain, Francis Fletcher (London, 1628; STC 7161). For a full account of the origins of this narrative and its relation to the condensed account in Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries* (London, 1589; STC 12625), see David B. Quinn, "Early Accounts of the Famous Voyage," in *The Famous Voyage*, 33–48; and below. In Hakluyt's 1589 edition, the circumnavigation narrative appears as a last-minute insert: sigs. 3M4-10, a six-leaf gathering between pages 649 and 650; reprinted Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1903–5, 11:101–33. Except where otherwise noted, all references to the *Principal Navigations* will be to the reprint of 1903–5, and all references to *The World Encompassed* will be to the reprint of 1854.

the Englishmen's carefully modest protestations had little effect; two days later the Miwok returned. The men came down to the fort with gifts, prostrating themselves, as "the women . . . used vnnatural violence against themselues, crying and shrieking piteously, tearing their flesh with their nailes from their cheeks in a monstous manner, the blood streaming downe along their brests," throwing themselves onto the rocky ground.⁴ As they gathered around Drake and his greeting party, their cries grew louder and their prostrations more frequent. In response, Drake called all hands to himself and issued orders: the chaplain, Francis Fletcher, was to read from the Bible, and all the crew were then to join Drake in prayers and the singing of psalms, with their eyes lifted toward heaven. During these devotions, Drake and crew dropped to their knees, and Drake repeatedly pointed away from himself to the sky and motioned often for the prostrate natives to rise.⁵ Then Drake suggested again that they cover their genitals, and the Miwok departed quietly, still mystified.

After three more days they returned, this time with an important chief surrounded by one hundred skin-clad men carrying weapons. Following a ceremonial dance and then a speech by the chief, Drake allowed the male and female dancers into the fort. Again, they surrounded him, singing and shouting; they motioned for him to sit, placed a shell-and-bone necklace around his neck and a feather head-dress on his head. Then joyfully they cried "Hioh! Hioh!" and motioned toward the hills behind. Without pause, Drake formally accepted the gift of all their lands on behalf of their new sovereign Elizabeth, by the grace of God the first of that name, Queen of England, Ireland, and France, and Defender of the Faith. To prove her claim, Drake displayed her picture and her arms, in the form of a sixpence fixed into a plate and nailed to a post.⁶

For three weeks, Drake surveyed the coast; it was probably the Doverlike cliffs of the Marin headlands which suggested to him the promisingly regenerative name "New Albion." He remarked on the edenic qualities of the uplands—"a goodly country, and fruitfull soyle, stored with many blessings fit for the vse of man"—and the adamic qualities of the people, who, though seduced by "the power of Sathan," were nevertheless "of a tractable, free, and louing nature,

⁴ *World Encompassed*, 123.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 122, 123–24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

without guile or treachery"; and their weapons "more fit for children than for men."⁷ Indeed, one early narrative of the landing adds, both wishfully and prophetically, that "there is no part of earth here to be taken up, wherein there is not a reasonable quantity of gold or silver."⁸

Having surveyed the land, where "the Spaniards neuer had any dealing, or so much as set a foote," Drake put out to sea, heading straight west to the Moluccas, beyond the reach of King Philip's galleons.⁹ The Reverend Mr. Fletcher, whose careful and at times unsparing journal would provide the basis for all accounts of the voyage, observed that as the crew sang psalms over the ship's rails, the queen's new subjects stood weeping, sacrificing, and tearing their flesh on the receding California shore. Within six years, on Nichola Van Sype's 1585 map of Drake's voyages, the title of "Nova Albio" designated most of what is now the United States.¹⁰

II

Despite the grandiosity of Van Sype's map, Drake's California landfall did not amount to anything geopolitically.¹¹ Indeed even Drake was aware that the English claim to Nova Albion would be difficult to realize. That major geographic obstacle known as South America ultimately ensured that the cities of the California coast would be called San Diego, not Charleston, Monterey, not Plymouth, and San Francisco, not Boston. And actually, it is likely that the Miwok were offering

⁷ *Ibid.*, 132, 129, 131.

⁸ Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1589), sig. 3M8r; in 2nd ed. (London, 1599-1600; STC 12626), Hakluyt amends this to "some probable shew of gold or silver," 3:738; in 1903 ed., see 11:123.

⁹ *The World Encompassed*, 132.

¹⁰ John Sugden, *Sir Francis Drake* (London: H. Holt, 1990), illustration 11, between pages 164 and 165. For the journal of Francis Fletcher, see the surviving fragmentary MS in the British Library (Sloane 61), extensive excerpts in Vaux's 1854 reprint of *The World Encompassed*, and a full printing in N. M. Penzer, ed., *The World Encompassed* (London: Argonaut Press, 1926).

¹¹ In fact, many other incidents on the circumnavigation had more immediate results: his drumhead trial and execution of the mutinous gentleman Thomas Doughty began the levelling of social distinctions on board English ships; his storm-blown passage southwest of Magellan's Straits cast doubt on the supposed vastness of "Terra Australis Incognita"; his Spanish treasure raided up the "backside of America" became the nest egg for future British foreign investment; his dealings with the Sultan of Ternate began England's East Indies trade; and his twenty hours aground on a reef off of the Celebes nearly annihilated all of the above. See Sugden for each of these incidents, respectively: Doughty, 113-14; Terra Australis, 118; the "backside of America," 120-31; Ternate, 139-41; and the Celebes, 141-43.

the English neither their worship nor their land, but rather were greeting them as returning spirits of departed ancestors.¹²

Yet none of these cross-purposes diminishes the importance of this event as something imaginatively rich and strange. For, as first reported by Richard Hakluyt in his 1589 *Principal Navigations* and then revived, retold, and redacted over the next four centuries, the tale brings together in unique combination many elements crucial to England's developing imperial imagination: the exotic, paradisaical setting reached after tremendous and purifying struggle; the promise of great wealth in the rich, golden land; the handsome, friendly, apparently harmless native people who are nevertheless in bondage to dark spiritual forces and threatened by sinister European powers; the brave, kind, and pious Englishman to whom the benighted natives instinctively and gladly offer worship and sovereignty; and the Englishman's modest refusal of that worship, which further confirms his moral right to rule, and thus redeem, a gratefully subject people. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God," writes St. Peter, "that in due time he may exalt you."¹³ In Drake's case, the "due time" seemed wondrously brief, the exaltation marvelously complete.

As we will see, this legend of heathen idolatry encountering Protestant humility has had a rich and influential life in the literature of exploration and travel, particularly in the many accounts devoted to Drake's "Famous Voyage" of 1577-80—the provenance and efflorescence of which I will treat in some detail below. However, as I discuss the discovery narratives, I also will look beyond them to consider the place of Nova Albion in the works of important English poets and authors. For Drake's drama of refused deity and embraced sovereignty on the Marin shore is recognizably present in major works by England's literary masters from Drake's time on: in Una's encounter with the "salvage nation" in Book I of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*; in the themes of awe and possession central to Shakespeare's *Tempest*; and in the meeting of Defoe's Crusoe with the adoring Friday. Like Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, *The Faerie Queene* displays Britain's imperial imagination in its fast-growing youth, while *Robinson Crusoe* is an expression of that ideology in its robust young adulthood.¹⁴

¹² Sugden, *Sir Francis Drake*, 136. See also Robert F. Heizer, *Elizabethan California* (Ramona, Calif.: Ballena Press, 1974). For Drake's wish that Nova Albion "had layen so fitly for her maiesty to enioy," see *The World Encompassed*, 129.

¹³ 1 Peter 5:6.

¹⁴ Thus my argument both complements and modifies Martin Green's, "that the ad-

Yet I am also interested in imperialism's guilt-ridden late middle age; for implicit in Drake's transaction with the Miwok is a great taboo: that the man who would be God is not worthy to be king. This taboo was at first associated in English minds with the "Black Legend" of Spain's demonized conquistadors but was eventually invoked against Britain's own imperial overreaching. So I will examine certain works which in one way or another invert the terms of Drake's encounter in order to question or subvert the empire's adolescent certainties: Swift's once-superior Gulliver, reduced to shame-faced Yahoo prostration on the beach before his "Houyhnhnm Master"; Kipling's Peachey Carnehan and Danny Dravot, who accept godhood as a means to kingship and learn that their subjects reserve their fiercest savagery for fallen idols; and Conrad's Marlow, who discovers the horror at the heart of imperial relations—that the light in them was darkness after all. None of these latter three writers, not even the archimperialist Kipling, could hold to the old faith—born in Elizabeth's reign—that territorial expansion and fabulous wealth dovetailed neatly with chivalric virtue and apostolic zeal. Thus each of them ironized Drake's legend of righteous possession in order to imagine the empire's moral, or actual, dissolution.

III

Significantly, the first surviving literary notice of "Syr Frauncis Drake," in 1585, portrays him as righteous "litle David" setting off to beat down the abominable Iberian "Goliah" in his projected (and eventually successful) West Indian raids of that year.¹⁵ The significance lies in the fact that England's sense of imperial identity was first formed in the giant shadow of Catholic Spain. The English were, of course, relative latecomers to the great games of Renaissance exploration and conquest. However, this laggard status worked paradoxically to its ideological advantage, for rival Spain in the New World had grasped not only tremendous power and incalculable riches; it also had acquired an international reputation for colonial cruelty on a dumbfounding scale.

venture tales that formed the light reading of Englishmen for two hundred years and more after *Robinson Crusoe* were, in fact, the energizing myth of English imperialism." This is true insofar as prose fiction is concerned, but it is prose nonfiction—the writings of Hakluyt and Purchas, and their fellow clerical colonialists—that first captured the English imagination for the expansionist cause. For Green, see *Dreams of Adventure and Deeds of Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 3, 5.

¹⁵ Henry Roberts, *A most friendly farewell . . .* (London, 1585; STC 21084), sig. A3r.

Spain's so-called Black Legend owed much of its horrific power to the graphic accounts by Bartolomé de Las Casas, Dominican missionary priest and eventually bishop of Chiapas. It was in Las Casas's writings—commonly known in English as *The Spanish Cruelties*—that the English of Elizabeth's and Drake's generation read of how Spain had set about to "murder 12, 15, or 20 millions of poore reasonable creatures, created (as our selves) after the image of the living God."¹⁶ Mutilation, mass rape, disembowelment, impaling of pregnant women, roasting, racking, tearing and trampling by horses, dismemberment by boar hounds—Las Casas's accounts exfoliate into hundreds of numbing pages. So late Tudor England learned to imagine Spanish America as a vast slave camp, controlled by military governors more arbitrary than the pharaohs, where life was cheaper than water.¹⁷ This reported cruelty merely confirmed recent English experience during the reign of Elizabeth's half-sister "Bloody Mary" Tudor—herself the wife of Spain's Philip II—when Protestants were tortured, hung, dismembered, and burned publicly and in large numbers. John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*—first published in 1563, five years after Mary's death and Elizabeth's accession—had documented these martyrdoms in moving detail, allying the Reformation with nationalism in ways which made this emerging imagination ardently Protestant.¹⁸

However, what probably horrified this Protestant imagination as much as the cruelties of Spain's colonial overlords were the numerous accounts of Spain's explorers and conquistadors allowing and even forcing the native peoples to worship them as gods. As William S. Maltby writes, Protestant polemicists typically assumed the Iberians to be "pagans at heart," their inner heathenism being "restrained only

¹⁶ Bartholomew de las Casas or Casaus [sic], *The Spanish Colonie, or, Briefe Chronicle of the Acts and gestes of the Spaniardes in the West Indies* (London, 1583; STC 4739), fol. 3v.

¹⁷ See Anthony Pagden's introduction to his translation of Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (London: Penguin, 1992), xvii–xxx, for a full biographical sketch. *Brevissima Relacion de la Destruccion de las Indias* was first published in Seville in 1552. The English translation of 1583, *The Spanish Colonie*, was generally known by its running title, which became a kind of epithet: *The Spanish Cruelties*.

¹⁸ John N. King notes that in 1571, the English bishops ordered copies of *Actes and Monuments* chained in all cathedrals, giving it "the location that Erasmus's *Paraphrases* had occupied alongside the English Bible under Edward VI"—the canonical position that it also would occupy in countless English and New England homes for the next two centuries. See *English Reformation Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 435. Significantly, Drake carried Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" with him around the world. See Sugden, *Sir Francis Drake*, 100.

by fear" — not of God, but of the king and the Inquisition.¹⁹ And the distance between America and Seville did seem to cast out fear and cast off restraint. When Ferdinand Magellan, on his voyage of circumnavigation, made his first American landfall at what is now Rio de Janeiro in Christmas of 1519, he accepted the adoration of the native Guaraní who, seeing the mariners as rain-bringing deities, fell about them with upraised hands.²⁰ In November of 1519, while Magellan was approaching Brazil, Hernando Cortés, with a small band of about 600 troops, was marching virtually unopposed into Tenochtitlán, the heart of Montezuma's Aztec Empire, because Cortés had been taken by the Aztec to be the white god Quetzalcóatl.²¹ In 1541 Hernando de Soto arrived on the banks of the Mississippi in Arkansas and proclaimed to the inhabitants that he was the Child of the Sun God, demanding and receiving their worship.²²

In contrast, the ideal English voyager behaved with becoming modesty when met by worshipful landsmen. Indeed, while Drake is probably the most famous Englishman to attract and refuse adoration on foreign shores, he was not the first. When Richard Chancellor arrived on the Arctic coast of Russia in 1553, he encountered obsequious Slavs, who, "being amazed with the strange greatnesse of his shippe . . . prostrated themselves before him, offering to kisse his feete: but hee (according to his great and singular courtesie), looked pleasantly upon them, comforting them by signes and gestures, refusing those dueties and reverences of theirs, and taking them up in all loving sort from the ground."²³ His humility with these and other "barbarians" is rewarded as he travels to Moscow, meets the Czar, and opens all the Russias to English wool. Where a Spaniard would crave gold and godhood, this Englishman is satisfied with trade and a handshake.

These contexts put us in a better position to understand Drake's imaginative transaction at Nova Albion. As with many Tudor sea-

¹⁹ William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558-1660* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1971), 93-94.

²⁰ Ian Cameron, *Magellan* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1973), 94-95.

²¹ Jon Manchip White, *Cortés and the Downfall of the Aztec Empire* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1971), 89-91, 112-13. See also Hugh Thomas, *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 184-85.

²² Lawrence A. Clayton, et al., eds., *The DeSoto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando DeSoto to North America in 1539-1543* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 1: 137-38, 415.

²³ Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 2:248-49.

captains, Drake's religious scruples played a remarkably large part in shaping his actions on sea and land. One did not need not to be, like Drake, a protopuritan enthusiast to fear God's wrath against divine impersonation, or to wish the gospel's increase among the natives on shore. As Louis B. Wright notes, most English ships' commanders deliberately and personally mixed devotion with prudence: "prayers and piety brought upon a voyage the favor of the Almighty; and the conversion of the heathen tended to the glory of God and the benefit of the English nation."²⁴ So, if in his privateering Drake sought the high moral ground of sea-going knight taking vengeance on the perfidious viceroy of New Spain, in his first encounter with the Miwok he played the role of Protestant evangelist.

Drake almost certainly knew of how Magellan, Cortés, and de Soto had accepted worship; his conceivable sources for these stories include published accounts, intelligence gleaned at court before sailing, and most likely the international network of mariners who traded (and often coerced) tales, news, and navigational details.²⁵ Indeed it is likely that Drake's fierce Protestantism assured that he would see an evil appropriateness in "popish idolators" becoming willing idols themselves.²⁶ Certainly he also knew that in the New Testament Book of Acts, when Paul and Barnabas were surrounded by an adoring heathen crowd, they tore their garments in mourning and preached an emergency sermon about the oneness of the true God.²⁷ So on the Marin beach, Drake seized the moral high ground. In a response both visceral

²⁴ Louis B. Wright, *Religion and Empire: The Alliance Between Piety and Commerce in English Expansion, 1558-1625* (New York: Octagon Press, 1965), 6.

²⁵ In addition to Las Casas's 1552 *Brevissima relacion*, relevant books that Drake might have seen by 1577 include, about Magellan, Antonio Pigafeta's *Primo viaggio intorno al globo* (1527); about Cortés, the anonymous *Neue Zeitung von dem Lande das de Spanier funden haben* (1522), and Francisco Lopez de Gómara's *Historia de la Conquista de Mexico* (1553); about both Cortés and Magellan, the second edition of Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Navigazioni et viaggi* (1554), and Richard Eden's English translation of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's *Decades of the New World* (London; STC 647); and about de Soto, the so-called Gentleman of Elvas's *Relaçam Verdadeira* (1557). Drake, who retraced much of Magellan's route and bested him by returning alive, clearly knew much about Magellan's voyage, particularly through the Straits—see Sugden, *Sir Francis Drake*, 106, 113-17; and while it is unlikely that Drake was fluent in the European languages, he probably would have developed enough facility to make out the essentials of these travelers' tales.

²⁶ Significantly, King writes that the papal claim which early Protestants would have found most offensive was "the replacement of divine will by human invention"—a claim which the English reformers saw as raising the pope to the bad eminence of a living idol. *English Reformation Literature*, 205.

²⁷ Acts 14:8-18.

and calculated, he acted, to borrow Conrad's phrase, "[s]omething like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle."²⁸

Of course, as we have noted, the meaning of the Englishmen's pious words and gestures was probably lost on the Miwok. But they were not lost on the English. By deploying this strategic counterworship, Drake was, not unconsciously, working to construct what we might call a "reformed imperialism," both in the sense that the English were to see it as morally better than earlier "cruel and bloody" Iberian imperialisms, and in the sense that they saw it as spiritually better because it was specifically Protestant—in other words, Reformed.²⁹ In keeping with his Calvinist certainties, Drake believed in the univocal, unambiguous power of words, gestures, and symbols, and in the moral rectitude of his mission and his deeds. Generations of English imperial warrior evangelists were to believe so as well. This was to be a vital source of their power—and often the cause of their undoing.

IV

For an event that was to have such lasting influence, Drake's Nova Albion encounter took what now seems a surprisingly long time—nine years—to see print, in Richard Hakluyt's 1589 *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*. What makes this delay even more striking is that, from early in his career, Drake had shown a knack for capturing the popular imagination. When he dropped anchor in Plymouth after his first West Indian raids, on a summer Sunday morning in 1573, "the newes of our Captaines returne . . . did so speedily passe ouer all the Church, and surpasse their mindes, with desire and delight to see him, that very fewe or none remained with the Preacher, all hastening to see the evidence of Gods loue and blessing towards our Gracious Queene and Countrey." Even here, the beginnings of an imperial religion are discernible—a religion parallel to, derivative of, but already competing with Protestant Christianity.

²⁸ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989), 39.

²⁹ Discussing Drake's dealings both with Spanish prisoners and with "peoples of another culture and color," John Sugden writes instructively of Drake's "relative humanitarianism"—relative to the harshness of other Englishmen like his cousin John Hawkins and of Richard Grenville, and of course relative to the famous cruelty of the conquistadors. Sugden sees this quality as an expression of Drake's personality and piety, but also of his policy: "beneath his kindness lay thoughts of eventual profit." See Sugden, *Sir Francis Drake*, 106–7.

Thus the narrator's concluding tag carries an unintended, almost corrective irony: "Soli Deo gloria."³⁰ It would not be the last time that Drake's particularly muscular piety muscled the preacher aside.³¹

His status as national hero was sealed when he returned from the circumnavigation in 1580. Having bearded Goliath in single combat, and plundered him to boot, Drake drew tremendous national adulation, becoming one of the first commoner "celebrities" in English history. Queen Elizabeth, with her unerring eye for symbolic gesture, appropriated not only much of Drake's treasure, but also his glamor, to herself: she knighted him aboard the *Golden Hind* in Deptford harbor, in the presence of a crowd so large that a bridge holding hundreds of spectators collapsed—though in miraculous keeping with the festive occasion, none were injured.³²

Yet at first his tremendous reputation spread without the help, or for that matter the hindrance, of published accounts about his voyages. For to many on the Queen's Council, particularly Burghley and Walsingham, the idolized mariner was an object of suspicion, and his successful thievery a diplomatic embarrassment. This courtly cloud helps to explain why no account of the "famous voyage" was published until Hakluyt's in 1589, and why even that account was much shortened from its sources, and nearly suppressed, as we might say, for "security reasons."³³

But the pious and patriotic masses of merchants, sailors, laborers, and stall-keepers loved Drake, so it is not surprising that his first surviving published notices in 1585 and 1587 were doggerel ballads worthy of Peter Quince. Henry Roberts, as we have seen, compares Drake to David in his "Most Friendly Farewell," a poem otherwise notable for its tone of aggrieved advocacy for Drake as a sufferer of poetic neglect, and of calumny in high places. He apologetically and rather endearingly likens his poem to a compensatory "sweatie hat"

³⁰ Philip Nichols, *Sir Francis Drake Reuiued* . . . (London, 1626; STC 18544), 94.

³¹ One important instance showing Drake's impatience with clerical authority took place after the execution of Thomas Doughty for treason. Drake called a worship service for group repentance and confession, but when Chaplain Fletcher stood up to deliver the sermon, Drake stepped in, saying, "Nay, soft, Master Fletcher, I must preach this day myself." His homily was a precedent-setting call for equal work from seaman and gentleman alike—and for firm obedience to God and the "General," Drake himself. Sugden, *Sir Francis Drake*, 113–14.

³² John Stow, *The Annales of England* . . . from the first inhabitation vntill this present yeere 1592 (London, 1592; STC 23334), 1177–78.

³³ Quinn, "Early Accounts," 35–36.

full of water offered by a poor shepherd to a Persian king, and proceeds then to compare Drake with Alexander the Great.³⁴ So were the "middling sort" already quick to class the thrusting commoner with the highest and most ancient royalty; he had that in his countenance which they would fain call master.

Ironically, by the time that Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* introduced general readers to Nova Albion, Drake's star—while even higher with the populace for his role in defeating the Spanish Armada of 1588—was in eclipse at court after his failed invasion of Portugal in the summer of 1589. David B. Quinn gives a thorough and persuasive account of Hakluyt's remarkable achievement in finally getting his excellent short version of the circumnavigation into print. Not only did he have to reduce his probable source—some redaction of Francis Fletcher's voluminous journal—to twelve pages of type, but he had to do so at great speed and under the probing eye of his employer, Francis Walsingham, who was by this time no friend to Drake. His success can be measured by the proportion, tightness and elegance of the prose, the eyewitness immediacy and relative objectivity of the tone, and, most impressively, the demonstrable match between Hakluyt's version and the independently surviving half of the Fletcher journal on which it is probably based.³⁵ Significantly, Hakluyt gives strong emphasis to the Nova Albion landing, particularly to Drake's rejection of worship as an authorizing prelude to his claiming the land in the queen's name.³⁶

A year after this first printing of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, Drake was still in temporary self-exile at his Buckland Abbey estate near Plymouth. Yet it was then that Edmund Spenser made, under the veil of allegory, what is arguably the first extended allusion to the California encounter in all of English literature—in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser was fascinated by the "salvage man" as a type of fundamental human nature, as yet untouched by civilization or saving grace. Thus "salvages" appear in a variety of forms, both positive and negative, throughout the epic—as amatory consorts to Hellenore in

³⁴ Roberts, "Farewell," sigs. A2v, A2r. See also Henry Haslop, *Newes out of the Coast of Spaine* (London, 1587; STC 12926), celebrating Drake's Cadiz exploits of that year.

³⁵ Quinn, "Early Accounts," 33–36.

³⁶ Though Hakluyt, with his special concern for marketing English textiles, seems to suggest that it is the offered loincloths which provoke the Miwok to worship Drake and his crew; clothes make the god, as it were. See Joan Pong Linton, "Jack of Newbery and Drake in California: Domestic and Colonial Narratives of English Cloth and Manhood," *ELH* 59 (1992): 23–51.

Book III; as Lust and Artegall, and as would-be ravishers and consumers of Serena, in Book IV; and as the Salvage Man himself, whose natural force is finally directed into his service of Arthur in Book VI. But it is Una's encounter with the satyrs that gives us the first of Spenser's many reimaginings of savagery.

Spenser was, of course, schooled in the Neoplatonic and Pauline notions of the "carnal" (or "fleshly") and the "natural" man. Clearly, he applied these categories to interpreting published descriptions of European encounters with real savages, particularly such English works as Hakluyt's 1582 *Divers Voyages* and Hariot's 1588 *Newfound Land of Virginia*. Although Hakluyt's 1589 *Principal Navigations* was by 1590 probably known to Spenser, he need not have relied on it for his knowledge of something as sensational as Drake's circumnavigation; he would likely have had the details of the voyage years earlier through many sources, especially his contacts with Raleigh and his circle.³⁷

In any case, the resemblances between Spenser's poetic "salvage nation" and Nova Albion seem more than coincidental. In canto vi of Book I, Una—having just escaped rape at the hands of the infidel Sansloy—meets with the pagan people of the wood:

The doubtful Damzell dare not yet commit
 Her single person to their barbarous truth . . .
 They in compassion of her tender youth,
 And wonder of her beautie soueraine,
 Are wonne with pittie and vnwonted ruth,
 And all prostrate vpon the lowly plaine,
 Do kisse her feete, and fawne on her with count'nance faine.

Their harts she ghesseth by their humble guise,
 And yieldes her to extremitie of time;
 So from the ground she fearlesse doth arise,
 And walketh forth without suspect of crime:
 They all as glad, as birdes of ioyous Prime,
 Thence lead her forth, about her dauncing round,
 Shouting, and singing all a shepheards ryme,
 And with greene braunches strowing all the ground,
 Do worship her, as Queene, with oliue girlond croud.

.
 Glad of such lucke, the luckelesse lucky maid,
 Did her content to please their feeble eyes,

³⁷ For Spenser's likely reading list of exploration narratives, see Roy Harvey Pearce, "Primitivistic Ideas in the *Faerie Queene*," *JEGP* 44 (1945): 139–51.

And long time with that saluage people staid,
 To gather breath in many miseries.
 During which time her gentle wit she plyes,
 To teach them truth, which worshipt her in vaine,
 And made her th'Image of Idolatryes;
 But when their bootlesse zeale she did restraine
 From her own worship, they her Asse would worship fayn.³⁸

While Drake on the beach no doubt lacks Una's "tender youth" and venereal attractions, the two share in common a vital significance: each represents a Virgin Queen who combines true religion and godly rule. Indeed, Una's "beautie," which excites the benighted satyrs to idolatry, is "soueraine," a sign of her true right to reign.³⁹ Thus, like Drake's guileless Miwok, Una's savages possess the instinct to know majesty when they see it but in their spiritual blindness worship the creature rather than the Creator.

Besides this adoration and subjection offered by ingenuous natives in an exotic, peaceful setting, one other crucial element of the Protestant possession myth is present here, as well—the adamant rejection of the offered worship, confirmed by zealous attempts at catechizing the idolators. Again, the worthy ruler's worth is demonstrated by modest piety. Yet interestingly, as at Nova Albion, these protestations and efforts are amusingly "bootlesse": the Miwok keep up their wailing and lacerations; the satyrs deify a donkey. Harry Berger, Jr., has noted the "innocence and ignorance of pagan inertia" portrayed in this passage—"the satyrs are momentarily touched by a reality beyond them, but . . . they gravitate back to their ancient, natural service."⁴⁰ In the end, the "naturals" are portrayed as more interested in their god's person and effects than in his or her religious opinions.

So, in Spenser's hands, the emerging myth seems already to be developing a useful loophole: possession depends not on the immediate conversion of the natives, but rather on the possessors' pious efforts, and on the natives' willing submission, all taken in good faith. Complete evangelization will follow only from full occupation. Perhaps, in

³⁸ *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), I.vi.12-13, 19 (pp. 30-31).

³⁹ On "Una" as an allegorical name applied to Elizabeth by others besides Spenser, see Lawrence Rosinger, "Spenser's Una and Queen Elizabeth," *ELN* 6 (1968): 12-17.

⁴⁰ Harry Berger, Jr., *Revisionary Play: Studies in Spenserian Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 75, 74. In this connection, see also Liam O. Purdon, "A Reconsideration of the Ass Image in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*," *ELN* 26 (1988): 18-21. Purdon, like Berger, argues that the "Asse" is an image of recalcitrant human fleshliness.

this view, one finally can't help being taken for a deity; one tries to discourage it, but submission is submission, after all. And the likely connection of this passage to Drake's real act of possession—the first for England on the North American mainland—rings true to Spenser's central concern in the epic with the spiritual foundations of a destined British Empire.

While Spenser and Hakluyt were engaged in literary empire-building, Drake himself seems to have been busy about a publishing project of his own, for the purposes of rebuilding his own reputation at court. It is probably to this effort in the early 1590s that we owe our most complete published version of the circumnavigation, and especially of the California episode under discussion. At this time, Drake apparently commissioned the Reverend Philip Nichols, his ship's chaplain on the successful Cadiz expedition of 1587, to write thorough accounts of his voyages, in order to demonstrate the extent of his service to the queen. Nichols probably worked from Drake's personal recollections and the circumnavigation journals confiscated from Francis Fletcher and others. By 1593, he had very likely completed two narratives, one about the 1572–73 West Indian raids, the other about "the world encompassed" from 1577–80. However, by this time, with further Spanish trouble stirring, Drake had been restored to royal favor without such documentary assistance. Thus Nichols's works remained unpublished until 1626 and 1628 respectively, when, as we will see below, Drake's nephew seized an opportune time to print them.⁴¹

In 1595 Drake, back from disgrace, sailed with his cousin Hawkins for another raid on the West Indies, hoping to prosecute the renewed war with Spain and repeat their successes of the last three decades. They were again urged on by the rather proprietary Henry Roberts, whose latest valedictory compared the "Noble Generall" to Moses, who "[l]earned hath, that God is our Chieftaine, / [Who] brings him forth and safely back again."⁴² The comparison was perversely apt; like Moses on Pisgah, Drake and Hawkins would never return, and never know a grave among their people. Having died aboard ship, Drake quite miserably of the "bloody flux," they were buried at sea, leaving the treasure-house of Nombre de Dios unachieved.

The news of Drake's ignominious failure and death off Panama's north coast produced mainly silence at the English court, rejoicing in

⁴¹ Quinn, "Early Accounts," 36–40.

⁴² *The Trumpet of Fame* (London, 1595; STC 21088), 2.

Seville, Havana, and Carthage, and heartfelt grief in the Protestant homelands of London and the West Country. It also inspired the Reverend Charles Fitzgeffrey to write and publish in 1596 the single most ambitious literary celebration of the hero, an elegaic epic of 285 rhyme royal stanzas entitled *Sir Francis Drake, His Honorable lifes commendation, and his Tragicall Deathes lamentation*. This effort has been admirably described and discussed by Michael J. B. Allen, who speculates appealingly about what this work might have been had the twenty-year-old Fitzgeffrey's not inconsiderable poetic abilities been matched by a more mature sense of theme; he might have created a new *Odyssey* about the Circumnavigator, a Reformed mariner who by courage and self-restraint escapes "both Atlantic Polyphemuses and Pacific Circes."⁴³

Instead, Fitzgeffrey's admiring fervor compels him to perform a conventionally ornate classical lamentation, and then apotheosis of Drake —laying special emphasis on the perfidy of Drake's detractors and the ingratitude of England's still-negligent poets. He refers repeatedly to the circumnavigation, but only in general terms, and only once in passing to Nova Albion. Having fled deification by pagans on the Marin shore, Drake cannot escape it at the hands of a Calvinist parson.

v

So, at the end of his own century, Drake was paradoxically both adored and ignored. During the first three decades of the seventeenth century, Drake's official semieclipse continued. Hakluyt's 1600 edition of the *Principal Navigations* did print the Nova Albion episode as a separate piece (in keeping with Hakluyt's desire to establish English rights in North America); however, despite his voluminous expansion of the overall collection, the summary account of the whole circumnavigation remained virtually unchanged from the 1589 version—a fact also true of Samuel Purchas's reprintings in 1615 and 1625.⁴⁴

After Elizabeth's death in 1603 and James's coronation in 1604, the court's silence about Drake deepened. Not only had James inaugurated his reign by proclaiming a policy of peace with Spain and hostility to

⁴³ Allen, "Fitzgeffrey's Lamentation," 106-7.

⁴⁴ In Hakluyt's 1599-1600 second edition, the Nova Albion excerpt appears independently in 3:440-42; the full account is in 3:730-42. In the 1903 reprint, these selections appear, respectively, in 9:319-26 and in 11:101-33. The 1905 Purchas reprints the circumnavigation in 2:119-49. See also Quinn, "Early Accounts," 42-43.

puritanism, but he sought to obscure and even obliterate the glories of the dead queen (who had, after all, executed his mother, Mary Stuart)—the most famous object of his jealous retribution being Raleigh, whom he sent to the Tower and, after fourteen years' delay, to the block.

Still, one could hardly have called Drake a forgotten man. His exploits were dearly remembered by the puritan and anti-Spanish parties in court and city: his prayer from atop a Panamanian palm tree to sail the great South Sea in an English ship; his remarkably reciprocal alliance with the Afro-Spanish *cimarrones* in their guerilla war against the viceroy; his audacity at Carthagen and Cadiz; his homely *sprezzatura* in finishing the game of bowls though the Dons were sighted off Devon's coast; the fireships and "God's Wind" of '88; and, for admirers of drainage systems, his epic cloacal feat, as mayor, of flushing and filling Plymouth with fresh water. And one needn't have been a puritan to have Drake ingrained in the memory. During these decades, his legend began to burgeon in the intertextual space, into fanciful tales of a superhero who could hurl a cannonball through the earth, transform wood chips into ships, and, Arthurlike, return from the dead when his old drum beat to signal a threat of invasion by sea.⁴⁵ In particular, Drake's encounter with godhood in a far Eden seems already to have become fixed in the national imagination. One finds the theme prominently displayed in *The Tempest*.

The play presents heathen idolatry most patently in Caliban's short-lived devotion to Stephano and Trinculo. As a pathetic burlesque of the credulous and obsequious native, Caliban tastes from Stephano's bottle and immediately offers him both worship and service, which to him are identical things:

That's a brave god and bears celestial liquor.

I will kneel to him.

.

And I will kiss thy foot. I prithee be my god.

.

I'll swear myself thy subject.⁴⁶

As an answering burlesque of the overreaching, outlandish conqueror, Stephano haughtily accepts Caliban's prostration, the blasphemy made

⁴⁵ Sugden, *Sir Francis Drake*, 317; Jewkes, "Letters to Legend," 118–20.

⁴⁶ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 2.2.117–18, 147, 150. All further references to Shakespeare's plays will be to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text.

laughable by their shared drunkenness: "Come on then. Down and swear! . . . Come, kiss" (2.2.151, 155). But Caliban desires more from his god than the inspirations of his bibulous "book"; like Drake's Miwok, he needs protection from another, harsher overlord:

A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!
 I'll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee,
 Thou wondrous man.

 'Ban, 'Ban, Ca-Caliban
 Has a new master: get a new man.
 Freedom, high-day! high-day, freedom! freedom! freedom!
 (2.2.160-62, 182-83)

Ironically, Caliban conceives of liberty only in terms of shifting service and expects a kind of regeneration from the change; he can "get a new man"—become a new person—while his old "tyrant" must "get a new man"—another slave.

The old tyrant is, of course, Prospero—now cast by Caliban as an oppressor worthy of the *Leyenda Negra*. Typically of Shakespeare, the clowning is no mere relief from, but a complement to, the play's central themes: here Caliban and Stephano provide an antimasquers' parody of the protagonist's struggle with possession. For Prospero has taken hold of the island, of Ariel, and especially of Caliban by filling the metaphysical vacuum left by the banishment of the witch Sycorax and of her (and Caliban's) god, Setebos (a deity of Brazil's Guaraní whom Magellan encountered). At first he comes as deliverer, freeing Ariel from the "cloven pine" in which Sycorax had imprisoned him, and treating Caliban with well-remembered kindness:

Thou strok'st me and made much of me; wouldst give me
 Water with berries in't; and teach me how
 To name the bigger light, and how the less,
 That burn by day and night; and then I loved thee
 And showed thee all the qualities o' th' isle.
 (1.2.279, 335-40)

But Shakespeare is alive to the fragility of such relations; whereas the explorer Drake could simply leave California while the inhabitants were still awestruck and obliging, the exiled Prospero is perforce a colonist; he must stay, and the welcome wears. In the wake of Caliban's advances to Miranda, Prospero discovers that the soft superior hand is not enough; if he is to rule at all, he must rule by fear and coercion.

Having stepped reluctantly into the place of a savage deity, Prospero warms to the office. He dismisses the indentured Ariel's just request for "liberty" as ingratitude, and, through the metaphysical technology of his magic, shackles and torments the erring Caliban. In so doing, the magus reverses Drake's transaction, expediently violating what I have called the "great taboo": he would, for a time, be king, so he must, for a while, be a god. Hence the wide variations in our emotional response to Prospero. Even from a Eurocentric viewpoint, he is a troubled and troubling ruler—alternately beneficent and vindictive, serene and capricious, the good man in a devil's bargain who is rapidly being possessed by his possession.

So, even in the infancy of England's colonial enterprise, *The Tempest* is already interrogating the kind of sunny, eager native subjection associated with Nova Albion—what Conrad was to call "an exotic Immensity ruled by an august Benevolence."⁴⁷ Yet the play ends in a hopeful reaffirmation of the possession myth. For Prospero, unlike Kurtz, is finally able to break his own spell and renounce his transgressive power. The old Duke has perhaps glimpsed "the horror," but he has discovered the deeper magic of forgiveness. By grasping a sorcerer's rod as a scepter and compelling abject service, he had shown himself less than worthy, and morally less than able, to rule the island; but by drowning his books and breaking his staff—as well as by embracing his humble mortality and showing mercy to the usurping Antonio—he shows worthiness to rule again in Milan.

Of course, one hesitates to invoke this swansong romance yet again in connection with colonialist issues, for it has become the *locus classicus* (and at times the *igniis fatuus*) of new historicist and cultural materialist discussions of the playwright and empire. It is too easily overlooked that the play is not really about "imperialism"; rather, these echoes of colonial possession—at Bermuda, Jamestown, Roanoke, and before them all, at Nova Albion—are present as metaphors for something else, for the dramatist's powers over us, the audience, and for the costs of these powers to the artist and his eventual renunciation of them.⁴⁸ Yet Prospero's disquieting ambiguity remains the play's cen-

⁴⁷ Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 87.

⁴⁸ Seminal to colonialist interpretations of *The Tempest* is Stephen Greenblatt's "Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century," in Fredi Chiappelli, ed. *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World upon the Old* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 561–80. For other examples of cultural materialist and new historicist readings of the play, see Francis Barker and Peter Hulme, "'Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish': The Discursive Con-texts of *The Tempest*," in John Drakakis, ed.,

tral artistic problem, and that ambiguity consists largely in his mixed relation to an ideal of colonial conduct modeled on Drake. And the very prominence of colonialism as a figure for artistic possession demonstrates how well established, even by 1611, were these imaginative tropes of discovery and conquest.

After these decades in the Jacobean shadows, Drake's sun reemerges at the king's death and shines, one might say, with a vengeance. Indeed, retellings of Drake's life and deeds constitute a minor publishing phenomenon throughout the rest of the century and well into the next. James was less than a year in his grave when, in 1626, there appears the first of three different seventeenth-century books entitled—in this case, almost crowingly—*Sir Francis Drake Reuiued*. With young King Charles on the throne eager to renew hostilities with Spain over the failed match with the Infanta, the time seemed ripe for the spirit of the old Elizabethan dragon to rise, censorious, "Calling vpon this Dull or Effeminate Age, to folowe his Noble Steps for Golde & Siluer."⁴⁹

For thirty-four years, Drake's namesake nephew and heir had stewarded the earlier-noted manuscript written by the (now late) Reverend Philip Nichols; at this point he published it, dedicated to the new king, and prefaced with old Drake's 1592 epistle to his queen, in which he promised a thorough accounting of "service done to your Ma^{ty} by your poore vassall against your great enemy."⁵⁰ These dedications are followed by a third, "To the Courteous Reader," calling on us "to obserue with me the power and Iustice of the Lord of Hostes, who could enable so meane a person, to right himselfe vpon so mighty Prince"; here the Protestant David and the knightly challenger are combined.⁵¹ The subject of this book is not the circumnavigation, but the West Indian raids of 1572–73. Yet even here we see Drake celebrated not only for his anti-Spanish boldness and fierceness, but also for his friendly alliance with the Panamanian Indians and the "Symerons"—*cimarrones*, or escaped African slaves—and his magnanimous restraint in handling captured Spaniards themselves.

Alternative Shakespeares (London: Methuen, 1985); Paul E. Brown, "'This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine': *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism," in Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, eds., *Political Shakespeare* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); and Stephen Orgel, "Prospero's Wife," *Representations* 8 (1985): 1–13. For a fine stylistic assessment of the play along with a critique of some recent "colonialist" over-readings, see Russ McDonald, "Reading *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare Survey* 43 (1991): 15–28.

⁴⁹ Nichols, *Sir Francis Drake Reuiued* (1626), title page.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. A3v.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, sig. A4r.

Far more important for my discussion is the younger Drake's publication, two years later in 1628, of *The World Encompassed By Sir Francis Drake*. This book, along with its surviving manuscript sources, remains our most complete account of the famous voyage. As I have noted before, it is "carefully collected out of the notes of Master Francis Fletcher," again by Philip Nichols and the older Drake, and dedicated by the younger to the earl of Warwick.⁵² However, while it is filled with often gripping eyewitness testimony in far more detail than Hakluyt's brief version, it is hardly an unbiased account. Drake is portrayed throughout in the best possible light; all of Fletcher's hostile commentary has been removed, most of which centered upon the murky proceedings leading to the execution of Thomas Doughty for treason at Port St. Julian near the Straits of Magellan.⁵³

At the beginning of the narrative, Drake is introduced as a kind of seafaring Adam, fulfilling the Almighty's original mandate "to subdue the earth," and as a surveyor of the "maine Ocean"; this great watery estate "by right is the Lords alone [not the Pope's or the Spaniard's], and by nature left free, for all men to deale withall."⁵⁴ In keeping with this biblicist frame, the narrative lays even more emphasis than Hakluyt's does on the metaphysics of the New Albion transaction. The natives' frenzied idolatry and the Englishmen's heartfelt horror at being its objects are portrayed in literally gory detail: the worshipping women approach,

their bodies bruised, their faces torne, their dugges, breasts and other parts spotted with bloud, trickling downe from the wounds, which with their nailes they had made before their comming . . . crying out with lamentable shreekes and moanes, weeping and scratching and tearing their very flesh off their faces . . . euen old men, roaring and crying out, were as violent as the women were.

We groaned in spirit to see the power of Sathan so farre preuaile in seducing these so harmlesse soules, and laboured by all meanes, both by showing our great dislike, and when that serued not, by violent withholding of their hands from that madnesse, directing them (by our eyes and hands lift vp towards heauen) to the liuing god whom they ought to serue; but so mad were they vpon their Idolatry, that forcible withholding them would not preuaile. . . .

Their griefes we could not but take pittie on them, and to our power desire

⁵² Sir Francis Drake, Bart., *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake* (London, 1628; STC 7161), title page; sig. A2r.

⁵³ Vaux, ed., *World Encompassed*, 61–63, n. 1. For a thorough and balanced weighing of this still controversial incident, see Sugden, *Sir Francis Drake*, 102–14.

⁵⁴ Vaux, ed., *World Encompassed*, 5–6.

to help them: but that (if it pleased God to open their eyes) they might vnderstand we were but men and no gods.

With similar emphasis, the Miwok ceremony of submission to Drake is joyously voluntary: having crowned him, they perform

a song and dance of triumph; because they were not onely visited of the gods (for so they still iudged vs to be), but the great and chiefe God was become their God, their king and patron, and themselues were to become the onely happie and blessed people in the world.⁵⁵

It is, then, in these terms that the next four generations of English readers would conceive of their "colony" on the far shore of California, and, by imaginative association, of their presently expanding colonial holdings elsewhere.

VI

I have mentioned that Drake's legend became attached to the Arthurian myth of a returning king, come to redeem the imperiled nation. The power of this attachment is immediately evident in the later seventeenth-century publishing history of the Drake story; not only do three different book titles announce herewith his "revival," but all of these, and most others, appear at moments of national anxiety and crisis. I have discussed the 1626 *Sir Francis Drake Reuiued*, from the first year of Charles I's disastrous reign, and the 1628 *World Encompassed*, printed soon after Buckingham's assassination (it went into other editions in 1636 and 1652).

After these come Thomas Fuller's brief "Life of Drake" in 1642, as the kingdom collapsed at the outbreak of civil war; an anonymous *Voyages and Travels* in 1652 and Nicholas Bourne's *Sir Francis Drake Revived* in 1653, as Oliver Cromwell moved to establish his Protectorate and reassert English sea power; William Davenant's opera *The History of Sir Francis Drake* in 1659, during the last tottering months of Richard Cromwell's regime; Samuel Clarke's *Life & Death of the Valiant and Renowned Sir Francis Drake* in 1671; and Nathaniel Crouch's *The English Heroe: or, Sir Francis Drake Revived* in 1687, on the eve of the Glorious Revolution.⁵⁶ Most of these books repeat the story of Nova Albion as told

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 128–30.

⁵⁶ Thomas Fuller, "The Good Sea-Captain" and "The Life of Sir Francis Drake," in *The Holy State and the Profane State*, ed. Maximilian Graff Walten (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), 2:128–41; *The Voyages & Travels of that Renowned Captain, Sir Francis*

in the *World Encompassed*, while all of them derive in some way from Hakluyt or from the works published by Drake's nephew in 1626 and 1628. Even those that do not mention the California landfall emphasize the virtues on display there—Drake's courage, his magnanimity, and above all his pious restraint.

Fuller, for example, extracts maxims for the "Good Sea-Captain" from Drake's life: the first is that "the more power he hath, the more careful he is not to abuse it"; and the second is that "in taking a prize he most prizeth the mens lives whom he takes." The latter is especially illustrative of the "reformed imperialist" mind; privateering is a given, but the godly privateer will observe humane protocols.⁵⁷

Indeed, such compassionate plunder provides the central spectacle of Davenant's *History of Sir Francis Drake*. Of course, the notion of a puritan opera may seem something of a spectacle in itself. Yet it suited the Cromwellian regime, having presided over the theatrical famine begun in 1642, to ease that hunger with a few carefully "reformed" entertainments complementary to the Protectorate's war with Spain, and its expansionist West Indian initiatives, particularly its conquest of Jamaica. So it is that this confluence of Drake's legend with a campaign of propaganda, and with the considerable talents of Davenant, helped popularize opera in England.⁵⁸

Loosely based on Nichols's account of Drake's Panamanian raids of 1572–73, the action is set in an exotically imagined "Peru," represented by "Coco-Trees, Pines, and Palmitos. And on the boughs of other Trees are seen Munkies, Apes, and Parrots."⁵⁹ It is a landscape that stirs rapacious desire. The English mariners who appear sing lustily (in both senses) that soon "The bowels of Peru / Shall be ript up and be

Drake (London, 1652; Wing D 2122B); Nicholas Bourne, *Sir Francis Drake Revived* (London, 1653; Wing D 84); William Davenant, *The History of Sir Francis Drake* (London, 1659; Wing D 327); Samuel Clarke, *The Life & Death of the Valiant and Renowned Sir Francis Drake* (London, 1671; Wing C 4533); and Nathaniel Crouch, *The English Heroe: or, Sir Francis Drake Revived* (London, 1687; Wing C 7321A).

⁵⁷ Fuller, *Holy State* 2:128–29.

⁵⁸ See Susan J. Wiseman, "Opera and Colonialism in the 1650s," in *Literature and the English Civil War*, ed. Thomas Healey and Jonathan Sawday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 189–204, esp. 194–98. Significantly, preceding the Drake opera at the Cockpit, Davenant wrote and produced *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (London, 1658; Wing D 321), a sensational reworking of passages from Las Casas's *Brevissima Relación*, which had itself just been newly retranslated and printed as *The Teares of the Indians* (London, 1656; Wing C 799) with a dedication to Oliver Cromwell.

⁵⁹ Davenant, *History*, 2–3.

our own," and even "Drake Junior" (a fictional composite of Drake's brothers and cousins) seems eager for brutal pursuits.⁶⁰

Worst of all, as "Drake Senior" prepares for his assault on golden "Venta Cruz," he receives word that some of his overzealous "Symeron" allies have captured a Spanish bride and bridegroom and are plotting unspecified and unspeakable cruelties against them. It is at this point that the opera's most sensational special effect unfolds:

The Scene is suddenly chang'd into the former prospect of . . . Venta Cruz; but, about the Middle, it is vary'd with the discov'ry of a Beautiful Lady ty'd to a Tree, adorn'd with the Ornaments of a Bride, with her hair dishevel'd, and complaining with her hands towards Heaven: near her are likewise discern'd the Symerons who took her prisoner.

"Drake Senior" responds to this spectacle with virtuous anger: "Arm! Arm! the honour of my Nation turns / To shame, when an afflicted Beauty mourns." He calls off his planned raid on the Spaniards and vows instead to attack the "cruel Symerons," who outnumber him; but he is forestalled when Pedro, a virtuous Symeron leader, rushes in to assure him that Beauty has been freed. After the scene "is suddenly chang'd again, where the Lady is vanisht," Drake relents and shows mercy to the captors, on the grounds of "the cruelties which they have often felt beneath the Spaniards sway."⁶¹ Thus he shows his own restraint even in the act of restraining others.

The opera ends with moral exempla all around: Drake Senior has upbraided Junior for his cruelty to a wounded boar, and exhorted the soldiers and mariners that their mission of ambushing a treasure convoy "is not for Gold, but Fame." When the attack is joined, the Spaniards cravenly abandon their piles of bullion, and Drake praises the glory of the victory, not the prize itself. A multicultural "Grand Dance" precedes the curtain: "two Land-souldiers, two Sea-men, two Symerons, and a Peruvian; intimating, by their severall interchange of salutations, their mutuall desires of amity."⁶²

Again, the elements of the possession myth are present: the exotic setting, the fabulous wealth, the abominable European rival, the noble but misguided savages in need of proper nurture. Above all, the action quite literally centers on the hero's self-mastery as prerequisite for

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 26–29.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 32–37.

command. And the wages of humility are rich and impressively automatic. As Drake Senior tells his friend the Symeron King, subjection to virtue is far more than its own reward:

Slave to my Queen! to whom thy vertue shows
How low thou canst to vertue be;
And, since declar'd a Foe to all her Foes,
Thou mak'st them lower bow to thee.⁶³

Thus the old Prayer Book paradox is extended into the realm of colonial relations; the black ally's service to England is indeed perfect freedom.

It is revealing of Drake's increasingly exalted status that as the seventeenth century progressed, printed accounts about him grew more unified and more complete—indeed more like biographies. On the one hand, Fuller's *Life*, though brief, attempts to sum up the man, not merely his travels. On the other hand, Bourne's 1653 *Sir Francis Drake Revived* brings together both the 1626 West Indies and 1628 circumnavigation narratives with accounts of his later Caribbean cruises in 1585 and 1595.⁶⁴ Then, in 1671, Samuel Clarke's *Life & Death* does both, recounting all these travels with relative thoroughness while drawing out lessons in character and divine providence. What is probably most significant about this quarto volume is that its author's name uniquely signaled Drake's entrance into the pantheon: between 1665 and 1683, the prolific Clarke published a highly successful series of popular "Lives," each devoted to one of "those eminent persons who obtained the surnames of Magni, or the Great." His subjects include Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Artaxerxes, Alexander, Hannibal, Pompey, Julius and Augustus Caesar, Herod, Charlemagne, Tamburlaine, William the Conqueror, Edward the Black Prince, and Queen Elizabeth. Among these ancients, monarchs, and emperors, the only commoner so honored is Drake.⁶⁵

Furthermore, the favored themes of Clarke, an ejected nonconforming minister and a close friend of Richard Baxter, are the destructive hubris of kingship and the exalting power of humility. Especially noteworthy among the overreaching heathen "Great" are Nebuchadnezzar,

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁴ Ironically, in 1653, four years after the execution of Charles I, the held-over phrase about "so mean a person right[ing] himself upon so mighty a prince" seems almost to enlist Drake posthumously in the cause of regicide. Bourne, *Sir Francis Drake Revived*, sigs. A3v–A4r.

⁶⁵ While many of these lives were, like Drake's, published separately, most also were printed together in Clarke's *Marrow of Ecclesiastical History* (London, 1675; Wing C 4537), vol. 4.

whose demand for worship drives him to madness as a grass-eating beast; Alexander, whose pretenses to deity wreck all of his tremendous virtues and condemn his corpse to lie stinking and unburied for two years; and Julius Caesar, whose acceptance of godhood is swiftly followed by his assassination.⁶⁶ Christian kings are not immune, either: Clarke gives rather gloating attention to the demise of William the Conqueror, who, having raised the wrath of God by abrogating the English common law, is abandoned and stripped at death, left rather too long awaiting interment, and then forced into much too small a tomb, with nauseating results.⁶⁷

But the way down is the way up: piety, even pre-Christian piety, attracts blessing. Cyrus, the restorer of Jerusalem, is unbeatable; Augustus refuses deification, and reigns in peace; and "Tamerlane" — here the utter opposite of Christopher Marlowe's implacable scourge — equably refuses the offered Greek empire because his has grown large enough.⁶⁸ Best of all is Elizabeth, whose early experiences of persecution and humiliation at popish hands supply her with the devotion and inner command necessary to prosper so splendidly in her eventual exaltation.⁶⁹ Yet, with the exception of the Virgin Queen, Drake equals or excels them all. In his world-girding skill and courage, in his fairness and kindness to Christian and heathen alike, in his love of Scripture and his heartfelt recourse to prayer, he is, in all but blood and title, greater than "the Great."

The seventeenth-century popular exaltation of Drake is crowned, in 1687 and thereafter, with the third "revival": *The English Heroe: or, Sir Francis Drake Revived*. Even the title's definite article suggests Drake's stature. Nathaniel Crouch, writing under his more sonorous pseudonym of Richard Burton, provides a reasonably complete popular "life" in 206 duodecimo pages, with woodcuts. He works a thorough stylistic revision on the materials found in the first and second "revivals" of 1626 and 1653, modernizing the language and changing first person to third person throughout; but in substance and in emphases, the book is identical to its sources.

⁶⁶ For Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, and Caesar, see respectively Clarke, *Marrow* 4:11–12; 4:60–61, 71–72; and 4:216–19.

⁶⁷ *The Life and Death of William, Surnamed The Conqueror: King of England and Duke of Normandy. Who dyed Anno Christi, 1087* (London, 1671; Wing C 4534), 33–34, 39–40.

⁶⁸ For Cyrus, Augustus, and "Tamerlane," see respectively *Marrow* 4:24; 4:242; and 4:269–70.

⁶⁹ *The Historie of the Glorious Life, Reign, and Death of the Illustrious Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1682; Wing C 4523), "To the Reader," sigs. A2–A4.

Furthermore, especially after Clarke's death in 1683, Crouch/Burton came to occupy what we might call Clarke's market niche—books of Nonconformist devotion, geographical surveys, English history, and lives of "the Great"—but on an even larger scale. *The Dictionary of National Biography* attributes forty-four separate titles to Crouch, in hundreds of editions; indeed, *The English Heroe* ran through at least twelve editions before his death in 1725, and was still in print in 1769.⁷⁰ Drake had, as the saying went, humbled himself in the sight of the Lord; now his name was exalted.

Clarke's *Life and Death of Pompey the Great* crystallizes this paradox of authorizing humility. After a victory over some pirates early in his career, the dutiful Roman general forwent a ceremonial triumph and

hoisting sail, passed to Athens, where he landed and sacrificed to the Gods, and so returned to his ships. As he was going out of the city there were two writings in his praise affixed to the gate. That within was this,

The humbler that thou dost thy self as Man behave,

The more thou dost deserve the name of God to have.

That on the outside of the gate was this,

We wisht for thee, we wait for thee,

We worship thee, we wait on thee.⁷¹

So the epic apotheosis that Charles Fitzgeffrey had attempted in verse was finally accomplished in prose; it now remained for the prose masters of the next centuries to turn his legend to their varying ends.

VII

There can then be little doubt that most early eighteenth-century readers were familiar with Drake's California encounter as an ideal of Protestant colonial possession. So we would expect to find his experiences, and not merely those of more recent models like William Dampier and Alexander Selkirk, behind the archetypal work of fictional colonization, *Robinson Crusoe*.⁷²

Although Crusoe's fruitful island is, unlike New Albion, at first conveniently uninhabited, nevertheless he discovers that alarming foot-

⁷⁰ Leslie Stephen, ed., *The Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1885), vol. 8, "Burton." See also the twelfth edition of *The English Heroe* (London, 1727; Wing C 7321A).

⁷¹ Clarke, *Marrow* 4:174.

⁷² Indeed, at about the time that Defoe wrote *Crusoe*, he was proposing that England follow through on Drake's New Albion landing and actually lay claim to California—still not in Spanish hands. See Green, *Dreams of Adventure*, 73.

print in the sand, and eventually witnesses a cannibal feast carried out by interlopers from another island. Revolted and incensed, he vows to massacre the whole lot with his guns and save their victims, when he begins to have second thoughts along a line that would now be called multicultural:

what authority or call [had I], to pretend to be judge and executioner upon these men as criminals, whom Heaven had thought fit for so many ages to suffer unpunished, . . . how far [were these] people . . . offenders against me, and what right [had I] to engage in the quarrel of that blood which they shed promiscuously upon one another [?]⁷³

Defoe gives a good deal of space to this moral struggle; Crusoe wrestles with his revulsion for many pages covering five full years, foregoing other opportunities to intervene against cannibalism, painfully maintaining this policy of toleration. Then comes the day when he sees a savage fleeing two fellow cannibals: "It came now very warmly upon my thoughts . . . that now was my time to get me a servant . . . and that I was called plainly by Providence to save this poor creature's life." It is important to note which thought comes first to mind.

His crisis of conscience ended by this "divine motion," Crusoe dispatches the pursuers with his guns, and the rescued man obligingly resolves any question of authority as do Drake's California natives: "[H]e came nearer and nearer, kneeling down every ten or twelve steps . . . at length he came close to me, and then kneeled down again, kissed the ground, and then laid his head upon the ground, and taking me by the foot, set my foot upon his head." Crusoe's immediate response is that of "God's Englishman": "I took him up, and made much of him, and encouraged him all I could." As with Drake, this refusal of worship confirms worthiness to rule; having renamed "my savage" for the Friday of his deliverance, the first word Crusoe teaches him, without a hint of self-contradiction, is "Master."⁷⁴

Obviously, Drake was unable to fulfill the possession myth in ways available to the fictional Crusoe. Following Friday's rescue, Crusoe's

⁷³ Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. Angus Ross (London: Penguin, 1985), 177, 172-207, passim. J. Paul Hunter sees Crusoe's inner struggle as one against his own bad motives. Crusoe's righteous indignation in wanting to exterminate the brutes is fueled mainly by an impulse for self-preservation; and his outrage "bears a tinge of pharasaism: Crusoe reports that he "gave God Thanks that . . . I was distinguished from such dreadful creatures." However, Hunter does not note Crusoe's obviously mixed motives in saving a "savage" to make him a servant. *The Reluctant Pilgrim* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), 183 n. 21.

⁷⁴ Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 206-7, 209.

evangelistic work bears fruit in the cannibal's wholehearted conversion to the Protestant gospel, and in Friday's zeal (rather in excess of his master's) to proselytize the cannibal mainland. Their two-man, two-tier commonwealth thrives, and Crusoe's position as its lord exalts him even in European eyes; when mutineers strand their captain on the island, and Crusoe appears suddenly to offer help, the captain, "looking like one astonished, returned, 'Am I talking to god or man! Is it a real man, or an angel!'" Apotheosis beckons, but again the godly deliverer demurs: "'Be in no fear about that, sir,' said I, 'if God had sent an angel to relieve you, he would have come better clothed . . . I am a man, an Englishman.'" ⁷⁵

So Crusoe's foray into self-doubt about cross-cultural intervention seems designed to relieve the reader's doubts about the colonial enterprise after all. However, Jonathan Swift gives no such quarter. *Gulliver's Travels*, like *Utopia* and *Don Quixote*, belongs to the Christian humanist tradition of anti-imperial satire; and it is a critical commonplace that Gulliver personifies an optimistic, expansionist Whiggery, driven mad by confrontation with the Augustinian (if not Calvinist) reality of his own innate depravity.⁷⁶ Swift's satire of Whiggish hubris would strike with special ferocity for any reader schooled in the Elizabethan possession myth, because its climactic episode in Book 4—on the beach in Houyhnhnmland—explodes the iconography of Drake's New Albion encounter.

In Book 2, Swift had already begun inverting the terms of intercultural engagement. The gigantic King of Brobdingnag, far from worshipping his tiny English castaway, listens carefully to Gulliver's boastful account of England's institutions and concludes "the bulk of your natives, to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the face of the earth"—a judgment which Gulliver confidently dismisses as resulting from the isolated king's "*prejudices*, and a certain *narrowness of thinking*."⁷⁷ But it is not until Book 4

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 252–53.

⁷⁶ Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Peter Dixon and John Chalker (London: Penguin, 1985), Introduction, 25–26. See also William S. Anderson's account of Swift's sustained thematic allusion throughout Book 4 to biblical and Miltonic paradises lost. In Anderson's view, Swift portrays Gulliver as markedly "obtuse towards religion" and as "a foolish Adam in a false or fool's paradise," eventually banished for his unavoidable identification with Yahoo nature. "Paradise Gained by Horace, Lost by Gulliver," in Claude Rawson, ed., *English Satire and the Satiric Tradition* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1984), 151–66.

⁷⁷ Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, 173–74.

that Gulliver's Anglocentrism begins to give way, and when it does, the collapse is total; for Swift brings him into collision with human corruption in the form of the Yahoos, the most outrageously ignoble savages in fiction. Whether defecating on him from the trees or making fulsome sexual advances to him during his bath, these utterly carnal, scatological Others produce a visceral revulsion in Gulliver which only increases as his resemblance to them becomes more apparent—especially to the equine Houyhnhnm master whom he serves and, increasingly, venerates. Eventually these supremely rational horses vote to banish him, being unable to abide his savagery and his smell; “for now I could no longer deny, that I was a real Yahoo in every limb and feature, since the females had a natural propensity to me as one of their own species.”⁷⁸

So, constructing a canoe of Yahoo skins (the children's making the best sailcloth), Gulliver bids farewell on the beach. In so doing he recapitulates in reverse the part of all submissive barbarians, from the Russian coast to Crusoe's Island: “I took a second leave of my master [Houyhnhnm]; but as I was going to prostrate myself to kiss his hoof, he did me the honor of raising it gently to my mouth.” Like Chancellor's and Drake's adoring greeters and Crusoe's man Friday, Gulliver revels in his self-abasement; like Chancellor, Drake and Crusoe themselves, the Houyhnhnm master, by raising his abject worshiper, exalts himself yet more in the worshiper's eyes. “Detractors are pleased to think it improbable that so illustrious a person should descend to give so great a mark of distinction to a creature so inferior as I.”⁷⁹

It is instructive that the last chapters of Book 4 have been cited from Swift's time until our own as proving the author's actual insanity.⁸⁰ Certainly this recurring confusion of a fictional character's psyche with his creator's—without corroborating evidence outside the text itself—has much to do with Gulliver's final disgust at his family and his misanthropic preference for the company of horses. But perhaps it has as much to do with Swift's direct attack on England's increasingly cen-

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 331.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Introduction, 19–21. In connection with the tradition of Swift's madness while writing Book 4, W. B. Carnochan notes that although William Thackeray admired Gulliver's hoof-kissing incident as Swift's “best bit of humor,” Thackeray goes on immediately to advise his Victorian readers against reading Book 4. W. B. Carnochan, *Lemuel Gulliver's Mirror For Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 59, 197 n. 22; commenting on William Thackeray, *The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. William Lyon Phelps (New York: H. Holt, 1900), 34–36.

tral self-image as modest possessor of the world. The “benign eccentric” deviates from the cultural center but still responds to its orienting gravity; the “dangerous madman” navigates by a different gravity altogether. Swift’s anti-imperialist madness would not come to occupy the gravitational center of English consciousness for more than two centuries; it would take Britain that long to lose its mind—and find another.

It took a different sort of Tory, Samuel Johnson, to recast Drake’s story for the Augustan sensibility. His 1740 *Life of Sir Francis Drake* preserves the narrative line of the 1653 *Sir Francis Drake Revived*, the 1628 *World Encompassed*, and of Hakluyt, but with an important change in emphasis: Drake is no longer praised for his flamboyant daring, but rather for his diligence and industry in raising himself from low to high station. Yet he remains a hero of piety; Johnson gives special attention to the Nova Albion landing (nearly ten percent of the entire *Life*), particularly stressing Drake’s refusal to accept worship from the “Indians.”⁸¹ Johnson also uses the California episode as an opportunity to pronounce, in his characteristically sententious and symmetrical style, for the benefits of Christian civilization and against the rising European cult of romantic primitivism: “The question is not, whether a good Indian or a bad Englishman be most happy; but, which state is most desirable, supposing virtue and reason the same in both.”⁸² Johnson clearly believes the Miwok have gained from their brief encounter with a good Englishman like Drake.

Though literary revivals of Drake grew less frequent as the eighteenth century passed, these decades saw the fulfillment of Drake’s vision for British sea power on a scale that would have delighted him; indeed, by century’s end he seemed to have been reincarnated in the equally diminutive and indomitable Lord Nelson—and it was claimed that both Nelson and Napoleon had heard “Drake’s Drum” beating out judgment on England’s enemies.⁸³ But Drake’s paradigm of pious restraint could be invoked against England’s heroes as well, as in the case of Captain James Cook.

The circumnavigator Cook, so much like Drake in courage, endurance, kindness to his crew, and relative humaneness with native peoples, was strikingly lacking in Drake’s religious zeal. As Bernard

⁸¹ *The Works of Samuel Johnson* (Troy, New York: Praefacts Press, 1903), 14:207–95; the California episode takes up pages 277–84.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 284.

⁸³ Jewkes, “Letters to Legend,” 118–19.

Smith writes, "Cook did not depend much upon God; he kept his powder dry, mentioned Providence rarely, and performed the Sunday naval service intermittently; but he was perfectly willing to play God himself, as he did at Hawaii, if the cultivation of peaceful relations depended upon it."⁸⁴ When, after Cook's murder at Kealakekua Bay in 1779, it eventually became known that he had previously accepted some form of adoration as the white deity Lono, his reputation suffered a severe blow. In particular, Cook's name was execrated in the "Sandwich Islands" and the United States, especially after the publication of a diatribe by the American missionary Sheldon Dibble, who wrote:

Captain Cook allowed himself to be worshipped as a god. . . . The priests [at Kealakekua] approached him in a crouching attitude, uttering prayers, and exhibiting all the formalities of worship. . . . He was conducted to the house of the gods, and into the sacred enclosure, and received there the highest homage. In view of this fact, and of the death of Captain Cook which speedily ensued, who can fail being admonished to give to God at all times, and even among barbarous tribes, the glory which is his due? Captain Cook might have directed the rude and ignorant natives to the great Jehovah, instead of receiving divine homage himself. If he had done so, it would have been less painful to contemplate his death.⁸⁵

"If only Cook had read *The World Encompassed*," Dibble seems to be saying, "he would not be in hell!" Indeed, Cook had read it; but, pragmatic apostle of Enlightenment that he was, he seems to have felt insufficient awe at monotheistic thunder.⁸⁶ So the spectacle of his hubris and of the damning divine retribution served warning that Jehovah, despite his fondness for Protestant England, would tolerate no trifling with his prerogatives. Pious Englishmen agreed; as the poet William Cowper wrote when he learned how Cook had died, "God is a jealous god."⁸⁷

VIII

As I have mentioned, Drake was seen by some as having been re-incarnated in Nelson as the nineteenth century began. In any case, Drake certainly was to be seen—revived, singing, and dancing—in

⁸⁴ "Cook's Posthumous Reputation," in *Captain James Cook and His Times*, ed. Robin Fisher and H. Johnson (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 168.

⁸⁵ *History and General Views of the Sandwich Islands' Mission* (New York, 1839), 27–28.

⁸⁶ For Cook's knowledge of *The World Encompassed*, see Richard Hough, *Captain James Cook* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 246.

⁸⁷ Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 134.

1800 at the New Royal Circus in “the entirely new and splendid national spectacle,” *Sir Francis Drake and Iron-Arm*. This patriotic war-time pastiche, which rather impertinently claims a basis in Johnson’s *Life of Drake*, conflates the Caribbean raids of 1573 and 1585 with the treachery of Doughty during the circumnavigation. The prologue extols Drake for his “fortitude, perseverance, and magnanimity”; and, to display Drake’s manly restraint to maximum effect, the librettist J. C. Cross has given him as an adversary the prodigiously rapacious Spanish giant of the title.⁸⁸ Iron-Arm is the Iberian Goliath incarnate, the Black Legend on two legs. With the help of the turncoat Doughty, he multiplies atrocities against Englishmen, Indians, Negroes, and Spaniards alike (as with Davenant, one victim is a young virgin), until the long-suffering Drake, in the rousing finale, incinerates the beast along with the entire city of Carthage. Drake is becoming what we would today call an “action hero,” accompanied by an implicit warning: beware the fury of a patient man.

It is as a swashbuckling figure of the popular imagination that Drake appears most often in nineteenth-century books—indeed usually “boys’ books.” After the period of increasingly inward-looking domesticity between the Napoleonic and Crimean Wars, England again grew more aggressively interested in imperial expansion, and by the High Victorian age Drake titles were rolling off the presses: *Under Drake’s Flag*, *With Hawkins and Drake*, *At Sea With Drake*, *Drake on the Spanish Main*, *For Drake and Merry England*, *Sea Dogs All*, *The Fighting Lads of Devon*, *The Boy’s Drake*, and so on.⁸⁹ In the meantime, the Hakluyt Society edition of *The World Encompassed* (1854) had made the fullest account of the circumnavigation and the exemplary encounter at New Albion widely available to a rising generation of empire-builders.

So it is in 1888, with the imperial sun near its apogee, that Rudyard Kipling transmutes the action-packed adventure tale into an elegy for empire’s end in “The Man Who Would Be King.” The setting of “Kafiristan” is, of course, exceedingly distant in time and geography from Drake’s California landing; the story’s most obvious historical models, to which it explicitly alludes, are the regime of Sir James (“White Rajah”) Brooke in East Indian Sarawak during the 1840s, 50s, and 60s, and the Indian Mutiny of 1857.⁹⁰ But this is a tale of the “great taboo”—

⁸⁸ J. C. Cross, *Sir Francis Drake and Iron-Arm. As represented at the New Royal Circus, on Monday, August 4, 1800* (London, 1802; Huntington KD 391), 3.

⁸⁹ Sugden, *Sir Francis Drake*, 318.

⁹⁰ Rudyard Kipling, *The Man Who Would Be King and Other Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 252 (Sarawak), 275 (Mutiny).

that the man who would be God is not worthy to be king—and Kipling could not have been ignorant of Drake's precedent three centuries before.

The story's principals, the soldiers of fortune Danny Dravot and Peachey Carnehan, take breezy blasphemy as their starting point. They have outgrown the Raj and cross the Hindu Kush with a load of rifles to create an army of conquest and to become "Kings of Kafiristan with crowns upon our heads. . . . The Kafiris have two-and-thirty heathen idols," the two say to the narrator before departing, "and we'll be the thirty-third."⁹¹ Their strategy of exploiting native credulity is a quick and stunning success, and soon Danny has unified a vast and rich mountain empire, which he rules as the divine reincarnation of Alexander the Great, with Peachey as his godlike advisor. However, there is soon a falling out among the gods. The practical Peachey wants them to load the vast Kafir treasure on their mules and run back to India before their game is discovered; while Danny has come to believe in his own deity and in the goodness of his imperial rule. In dispensing his laws, Danny decrees that he will marry to produce an heir. But on the wedding day Danny's bride, a tool of the local priests, bites Danny's cheek, which bleeds, displaying his mortality in the sight of all. His fall is memorably literal: marched to the middle of a rope bridge shouting, "Cut, you beggars!" he plummets "turning round and round and round twenty thousand miles" into the ravine below. Peachey carries even more iconic weight; "crucified between two pine trees," he survives and then is sent to limp over the mountains back to India, all the way clutching Danny's crowned, severed head.⁹²

"You behold now," says the returned Peachey to the revolted and fascinated narrator, "the Emperor in his habit as he lived—the King of Kafiristan with his crown upon his head. Poor old Daniel that was a monarch once!"⁹³ Danny and Peachey violate the great taboo, and they learn at a cost its terrible lesson: that the man who would be a god-king must, willingly or unwillingly, walk the *via dolorosa*. He must pay for his grab at deity by receiving the *stigmata*; he will end by wearing a crown of pain, or by losing his crowned head altogether.

Yet Kipling's story goes beyond merely reaffirming the great taboo; it interrogates the imperial myth more deeply. For over against Drake's sunny confidence in the clarity of signs, in the beneficence of his inten-

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 252.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 277–78.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 278.

tions, and in the compatibility of the cross with the sword, Kipling's tale, as fantastic as it is, is built around the clash of mutually uncomprehending cultures, the disastrous unintended consequences of that clash, and, above all, the inevitable claim to divine favor, if not to actual deity, undergirding the imperial faith. Certainly, the ill-fated action is displaced across the Hindu Kush, away from the real business of empire in India, and is performed by a pair of rogues; but these rogues display all of the virtues for which the Englishman congratulates himself: magnanimity, good humor, shrewdness, and, at the hour of death, solidarity, high bravery, and defiance. They are such unintentionally beneficent conquerors that, despite their devil's bargain, it is difficult not to admire them—just as, in the context of brutal Renaissance discoverers, it is difficult not to admire Drake's restraint and humanity. Indeed, as Kipling's story progresses, we come to feel that the devil's bargain is inseparable from the sovereignty itself. Thus, while the denouement apotheosizes Danny and Peachey in memory, it also dramatizes how inherently unstable are regimes built by the sword in the name of the conqueror's spiritual superiority. Their tale ends in a kind of glory, but it is the glory of funeral music.

The years between Kipling's story and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* were pivotal for the empire. The official pursuit and celebration of imperialism were still emphatic—this period saw the "Scramble for Africa" completed, the apotheosis of the martyrs Livingstone and Gordon, and the exaltation of living heroes like Kitchener, "General Bobs," Stanley, and the young Churchill (to his own delight, a distant relative of Drake). It also saw the painstaking and voluminous republication of Hakluyt—whose works the atavistically named literary critic Walter Raleigh called "the great prose epic of the modern English nation."⁹⁴ But by the end of 1903—when Conrad's tale came out in book form—England had also seen the Boer War fought to a shockingly bloody draw; the death of Victoria herself; and the continued Darwinian erosion of old metaphysical certainties—William James reconsidering religion, and J. A. Hobson imperialism itself.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ For Churchill's relation to Drake, see William Manchester, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill: Visions of Glory, 1874-1932* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1983), 93. For Raleigh on Hakluyt, see *Principal Navigations* 12:1.

⁹⁵ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York and London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902); J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: J. Nisbet, 1902). Conrad first published the story as "The Heart of Darkness" in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1899; he dropped the definite article when he republished it as part of *Youth* in 1903.

The grand loss portrayed elegiacally by Kipling may prophesy the empire's doom, but Conrad writes its grisly and sardonic epitaph: "The horror! The horror!"⁹⁶ Yet *Heart of Darkness* begins by evoking Drake, a "great knight-errant of the sea," and "the Golden Hind returning with her round flanks full of treasure, to be visited by the Queen's Highness and thus pass out of the gigantic tale."⁹⁷ Significantly, Conrad mentions Drake's glittering feat along with the disastrous polar expedition of Sir John Franklin, thus placing the Elizabethan possession myth in an ironic setting of foreboding and defeat. The "venerable stream" of the Thames is observed in the "august light of abiding memories," but there is only "gloom to the west" brooding over the "monstrous town" of London.⁹⁸ The literal light of August always presages a fall.

Of course it is Kurtz who inflicts the story's most wrenching inversion on Drake's imperial legend. Kurtz is far from rejecting worship, or even from accepting it for mainly pragmatic reasons, like Cook or Kipling's Dan and Peachey. Rather, this former "emissary of light" counts godhood a thing to be grasped, shaken out, throttled, and devoured with a relish—rather like the victim at a cannibal feast. The Darwinian beastliness that Marlow discovers and Kurtz enacts is not, like Swift's Augustinian beastliness, abominable because it is fallen from an original state of grace; rather, it *is* the original state, the once-and-future darkness that becomes immediately present in any place beyond the reach of "women, shame, and the police." We may execrate "the horror," but not exorcise it—it is a natural force, susceptible merely of suppression, not redemption. If we wish to eradicate it, we can only "exterminate the brutes," who include, not so incidentally, ourselves.

⁹⁶ Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 111. It is surprising that these strikingly similar stories have seldom been compared. The only two critics who seem to have done so in any detail make contrasting political judgments of the stories, but agree that the difference in concluding tone between the stories relates to the crucial difference in the framing narrators' moral stances. Tim Bascom concludes that Kipling's unnamed journalist alter ego, having tried to maintain an objective voice, nevertheless finally succumbs to the powerful emotional pull of imperial "Brotherhood" with Dan and Peachey, and finally tries to induct us as well; David H. Stewart praises this attraction and decries Conrad's Marlow for his "atomistic" isolating despair. See, respectively, "Secret Imperialism: The Reader's Response to the Narrator in 'The Man Who Would Be King,'" *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)* 31 (1988): 170-71; and "Kipling, Conrad, and the Dark Heart," *Conradiana* 19 (1987), 203-4.

⁹⁷ Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 29.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

"The strength of empire is in religion," wrote Ben Jonson; thus disillusion usually precedes dissolution.⁹⁹ The heart of England's imperial myth stopped with Conrad, and the killing cold spread to the empire's extremities in the relatively brief span of forty-five years. Yet we have seen that for more than three hundred years the British Empire sustained itself on that legend, derived in part from Drake's calculated humility on the Marin shore. England's imperial religion closely mimicked the Protestantism that attended its birth and growth, and Drake provided the imperialist faithful with a simulacrum of *kenosis*, Christ's incarnational emptying of himself: "He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped," writes Paul to the Philippians, "therefore God has highly exalted him."¹⁰⁰ In the English imagination, Drake, as a kind of second Adam in a new Eden, had redeemed by his modest piety the imperial scepter from the old Adam of overreaching Spain; so England would not merely grasp but actually merit the supremacy.

Drake's transaction is of course a shoddy parody of Christian humiliation—he hardly suffers, in Paul's further words, "death on a cross"—but his Anglo-Saxon condescension could pass for self-abasement in the context of his more rapacious rivals. For Drake zealously observed all divine law—consistent with personal and national interests; he was absolutist—in a relative sort of way. Thus he made an appropriate patron for the truncated creed of Anglican empire: Christ calls all men to a life of service; you serve him and us, while we serve him. This formula for possession puts one in mind of Lucio in *Measure for Measure*, quibbling with a companion's self-serving prayer: "Thou concludest like the sanctimonious pirate, that went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but scraped one out of the table" (1.2.7–9).

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⁹⁹ *Timber: or Discoveries*, in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems*, ed. George Parfitt (London: Penguin, 1988), 410, 1479.

¹⁰⁰ Philippians 2:5–11.