

ROSE OF THE WORLD

A STUDY OF THE SOUL IN A RECENT POETICS

by

John William Scoggan

B.Sc. Carleton University, Ottawa, 1968

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

In the Department
of
English

© JOHN WILLIAM SCOGGAN 1973

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

July, 1973

VOLUME I

APPROVAL

Name: John Scoggan
Degree: Master of Arts
Title of Thesis: Charles Olson's Imago Mundi

Examining Committee:

Chairman: Dr. S.A. Black

Ralph Maud
Senior Supervisor

Robin Blaser

Evan Alderson

Arthur Stone
Assistant Professor
Department of Mathematics
Simon Fraser University

Date Approved: July 25, 1972

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis or dissertation (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Dissertation:

Rose of the World: a study of the soul in a recent poetics

Author:

(signature)

John William Scoggan

(name)

December 11, 1973

(date)

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the Gold Flower which has always stood for the sources of the human soul. We attempt to cover a knowledge of the Gold Flower as it appears principally in the works of Dante Alighieri, Hilda Doolittle and Charles Olson, thereby allowing us to see the mediaeval and pre-mediaeval iconology of the Flowering as a background to a recent poetics.

The purpose of the thesis is to comprehend a use of imagery in a recent poetics. The poetics of Hilda Doolittle's War Trilogy; but especially the poetics of Charles Olson's Maximus Poems. Both are very much influenced by a mediaeval Christology which we attempt to portray in these pages. The War Trilogy has been very poorly understood until now, though its importance is undisputed in poetics after 1910 (in the era of Pound and Eliot). It is the work we shall use as a vehicle with which to penetrate the mediaeval representation and meaning of the Yellow Flower. This will eventually lead us to a reading of the Divine Comedy and thereby to a proper understanding of the Imago Mundi which exists at the heart of Olson's Maximus Poems.

Much has been written about Olson's poetry from the standpoint of its historical realism as great epic poetry. This is implicit in Olson's works, which refer

specifically to historical facts throughout. What has been overlooked, somewhat, are the purely imaginative and metaphysical levels of the soul which are the most important and difficult events in The Maximus Poems. Olson has not broken away from the traditional beliefs of a formal theology; rather he has incorporated that theology (Christianity) into his own experience of a contemporary landscape (of the soul). The landscape exists at Gloucester, Massachusetts, physically speaking. But as an envisioned landscape of the soul that City is eternal, located outside of time and history. It is the City of Light wrapped in the petals of the Yellow Flower, whose ideal form we are about to reveal. A metaphysical place of the soul which houses a purely imaginative level of knowledge that has yet to come into 'being,' in fact. This metaphysics of experience is absolutely central to an appreciation of Olson's poetics.

Having looked at the Gold Flower as an image of Deity in the works of Dante, H.D. and Olson, we shall enter into a section of inquiry called MYTHISTORY, where history is viewed as the temporal exhibition of the envisioned City Upon a Hill. The City is the Civitas Dei manifest in the Flower of Creation, which is founded and built in a terrestrial paradise on earth. It is the City which also exists in the works of the three poets under study.

I wish to acknowledge the help given
by Professors Ralph Maud and Robin
Blaser. And I thank Bryant Knox for
his work on photography.

I wish to put together an imaginary nation. It is my belief that no other nation is possible, or rather, I believe that authors who count take responsibility for a map which is addressed to travellers of the earth, the world, and the spirit. Each issue is composed as a map of this land and this glory. Images of our cities and of our politics must join our poetry. I want a nation in which discourse is active and scholarship is understood as it should be, the mode of our understanding and the ground of our derivations.

Robin Blaser
The Pacific Nation
Vancouver, B.C.
June 3, 1967

IT DOES TAKE A MOLE TO JOIN GLOUCESTER TO
THE NATION

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 11th

LXIX

Charles Olson.

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

	page.
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	1
I. <u>ARCHAEOLOGY</u> origins of landscape	16
Part I: Deglaciation and the Wet Period	18
Part II: Gate & Center of the Polis; the Emergence of the City	58
II. <u>THEOLOGY</u> drama of the heart	83
Part I: H.D.'s <u>WAR TRILOGY</u>	84
A. Quest for the Oil of Mercy	84
B. The Mary Tree	111
C. <u>Song of Songs</u>	124
D. <u>Flowering of the Rod</u>	147
E. Giotto: the Arena Chapel Frescoes	170
III. <u>COSMOLOGY</u> post-modern belief	228
<u>"MAXIMUS, FROM DOGTOWN - II"</u>	229
1. <u>The Secret of the Golden Flower</u>	230
2. The Padma. The Dream.	238
3. Mary's Gold Flower	246
4. COAL BLACK EYES OF CREATION	266
5. The Jill Flower	274
6. Jacob's Ladder	280
7. CLEAR, SHINING WATER	289

8. AQUARIUS	315
9. Drum and Drum Stick	333
10. Horse Travel to an Otherworld	351
11. The Dogmatic Nature of Experience	367
12. The Holy Mass of Carbon and Light	376
IV. <u>MYTHISTORY</u> geography of the soul	394
A. The Life of Space	395
B. The <u>Imago Mundi</u>	412
C. The Behaim Globe of 1492	432
D. Terrestrial Paradise	438
E. The Western Gate	460
F. <u>A E R</u> on Dogtown	474
G. INNOCENCE: Beginnings	500
H. The Fra Angelico Vision	512
I. A City Upon A Hill	527
V. <u>REFERENCES</u>	547
VI. <u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	607
VII. <u>APPENDICES</u>	
A. The Sumerian King List	660
B. Artificial Paradise	664
C. The Gate of Horn	682

P L A T E S

	page.
I. The Cattle Byre	31
II. The Nuer Marshland	32
III. Hathor and Isis of the Papyrus Marsh	37
IV. <u>Hathor Dendritis</u>	38
V. <u>Hathor Dendritis</u>	39
VI. <u>Hathor Dendritis</u>	40
VII. <u>Hathor Dendritis</u>	41
VIII. Artemis of Ephesus (<u>Polimastros</u>)	42
IX. Papyrus Columns of the Luxor Temple	50
X. Osiris in the Djed Pillar	53
XI. Alabaster Trough from Uruk	72
XII. <u>Mudhif</u> of the Marsh Arab	73
XIII. Arab Marshland	74
XIV. Marshland Floodscape	75
XV. Reed Boats in a Marsh World	76
XVI. "Charon Crossing the Styx," by Joachim Patinir	88
XVII. <u>Capricorn</u> , in "The Temptation of Christ," by the Master L. CZ.	90
XVIIIa. <u>Scorpio</u> , in "The Temptation of St. Anthony," by Lucas Cranach	91
XVIIIb. Scorpion-Horses of the Beatus Apocalypse of Saint-Sever	92
XIX. <u>Pices</u> , the Christian <u>Ichthys</u> , in a detail of "The Last Judgement," by Giusto di Menabuoi	96

XX.	"The Harrowing of Hell," by Jerome Cock	99
XXI.	"The Dream of Philip II," El Greco	100
XXII.	13th century mosaic, Baptistery of S. Giovanni, Florence	105
XXIIIa.	Mary of Magdala, by Desiderio da Settignano	115
XXIIIb.	"Mary Magdalene at the Sepulchre," by Girolamo Salvoso	116
XXIVa.	"Virgin and Child," school of Schongauer	139
XXIVb.	"Madonna and Child with Saints in the Enclosed Garden," by the Master of Flémalle and assistants	139
XXV.	Emblems of the Virgin. Reliquary Cover, 17th century, French	140
XXVI.	German tapestries of the Holy Hunt. Unicorn Legend and the <u>Song of Songs</u>	141
XXVII.	<u>Mary Dendritis</u> . In the Tree of Jesse	154
XXVIII.	Tree of Jesse	155
XXIX.	Celestial Dynasty of David-Mary-Christ, figured as the Tree of Jesse	156
XXXa.	Crucifixion. San Clemente, Rome	157
XXXb.	Giotto: Arena Chapel Frescoes	175
XXXc.	Giotto: Arena Chapel Frescoes	176
XXXI.	Celestial Hierarchy according to Dionysius-Areopagite, from the Breviary of S. Hildegarde, 9th century	209
XXXII.	The Angelic Descent, from Robert Fludd's <u>Utriusque Cosmi, Maioris scilicet et Minoris . . . (1617)</u>	210
XXXIII.	<u>Thrones</u> . (a) detail from "The Last Judgement," by Francesco Traini. (b) detail of the "Last Judgement," Torcello Cathedral	215

XXXIV.	Giovanni di Paolo: Sienese Codex of the <u>Divine Comedy</u>	225
XXXV.	Giovanni di Paolo: Sienese Codex of the <u>Divine Comedy</u>	226
XXXVI.	<u>CHRISTUS PANTOCRATOR</u> , from San Clemente de Tahull, now in the Museo de Arte de Cataluña	249
XXXVII.	Dürer, "Cruxifixion"	303
XXXVIII.	Collecting Water from the Sacred Tree	310
XXXIX.	Collecting Water from the Sacred Tree	311
XL.	Collecting Water from the Sacred Tree	312
XLI.	Collecting Water from the Streams of Heaven	313
XLII.	Thoth and Horus pour Streams of Life (<u>Ankh-crosses</u>) over the deceased image- soul	314
XLIII.	The Flowing Vase	323
XLIV.	Collecting Water from the God of the Flowing Streams	324
XLV.	Deities of the Flowing Vase	325
XLVI.	God with Streams	326
XLVII.	Watering the Sacred Tree in the Flowing Vase	327
XLVIII.	Horse Travel to an Otherworld	357
XLIX.	<u>Salvator mundi</u> holding the Earthly <u>Orb</u> as <u>Cosmocrator</u>	414
L.	Behaim Globe of 1492	435
LIa.	True Terrestrial Paradise	440
LIb.	Artificial T. Paradise	440
LII.	The Fountain in Bosch's "Garden of Earthly Delights"	441
LIII.	Topography of the Sub-Lunary World according to Dante	453

LIV.	Emergence from Hell to Ante-Purgatory	455
LV.	Crossing the Western Ocean to the New World of Purgatory & America	459
LVI.	Fra Angelico's "Last Judgement"	520
LVII.	The Golden Gate into the City on a Hill in Terrestrial Paradise of Fra Angelico's "Last Judgement"	521
LVIII.	Goddess of the Metropolis	537
LIX.	Lucifer Cannibal of the Dantesque Hell	541
LX.	The Perpetually Downtrodden on the Sandals of the Pharoah Tut-Ankh-Amon	542
LXI.	The Horns at Knossos	684

F I G U R E S

1.	Flowering Rod. Stone Papyrus Column from the temple of Neuserre Abusir	55
2.	Cattle with Deformed Horns from Tombs of the Old Kingdom, at Luxor and among the Dinka and Nuer	57
3.	The Gate of Horn at the entrance to an Otherworld of the Cattle Byre	80
4.	Spread of the Horse-Complex	353
5.	8-legged Sleipnir. Odin's Horse	366
6.	Dante's Pear-shaped Image of the World	454
7.	The Downtrodden Under Foot & the Phenomenon of Spiritual Bondage	547

M A P S

<u>Map one.</u>	The Behaim <u>mappa mundi</u> of 1492	436
<u>Map two.</u>	Ptolemaic <u>mappa mundi</u> of 1482 showing the location of the Terrestrial Paradise	442

T A B L E S

#1	<u>Inversion.</u> Old World to New World. Modern to Post-Modern Thought. Continental Drift & the Divide	386
#2	<u>Geographies of the World.</u> The tradition of the <u>Imago Mundi</u> in Mythistory	428

INTRODUCTION

matter

2a

Phenomenological

Sensation and Attention

└ training in exhaustion & completion

A Plan for a Curriculum of the Soul

<u>the mushroom</u>	(Intuition & Feeling <u>dream</u> <u>woman</u>)	one's own <u>mind</u> <u>language</u>
---------------------	---	--

Earth as a

geology comprehension like archaeology
geography - equally, though here maps & experience of human history)

(in this connection, as habitat inhabitation of, rather than as politics say or national. Instead, physical, & vertically incremental)

man as animal └ praxis of - as Earth as a ^{physical} ^
emotional mental experience

Poets as such, that is disciplined lives not history or for any "art" reasons example,

Blake

the same, say, medicine men

& like theologians: example, Dante - Giotto

Charles Olson

how to live as a
single natural being
the dogmatic nature of
(order of)
experience

how many?
& how each
made known,
exercised,

Ismaeli muslimism

organs &
function - activity
of the soul
or psyche or
Heaven or God

Alchemy - rather by plates
[as connected to dreams
pictorialism

&, all together,
create
organism

as in Earth, "View"

Vision



& perspective
/cf. Weyl on ocular
power

Messages

technically, Analytic Psychology, as only technical study I
know of modern Western man & under enough mental
control

jazz playing
dance as individual
body-power

Egyptian hieroglyphs (gesture, speech
- drawing habits
mental condition

equally say Homer's art

Bach's belief

/cf. Novalis'
"subjects"

the Norse
& the Arabs

- locally, American
Indians

The previous open spread of pages is from the Magazine of Further Studies #5 (July 1968) 31 and opp., showing the first mention of the Curriculum of the Soul which we are about to begin and which Olson has here outlined before us as on a blackboard. This is our guiding periplum showing the course of the Soul. It is our contemporary predella or altarpiece, equivalent to the Fra Angelico vision of "The Last Judgement" in the Museo di S. Marco, Florence (plates LVI and LVII in our text).

The contents of the Curriculum are explored throughout the following scholarship in the study of Olson's poetics, a study which is the outcome of great Attention, and requiring "training in exhaustion and completion" for a full comprehension. I hold, with Olson, that exhaustive penetration is the single way into any meaningful and true theology of experience. It is only in a knowledge that is thorough, complete and large that we discover worthwhile and significant value.

Many of the terms in the Curriculum are incorporated within this exegesis of Olson's poetics. Our exegesis begins with the emergence of an imagination out of the memory of human history, and is therefore called ARCHAEOLOGY, CHAPTER ONE, —one of three modes of comprehension about the Earth as a landscape of the Soul. Another mode, GEOGRAPHY, is contained in the study of a MYTHISTORY which is the subject of our last CHAPTER FOUR. And the inter-

mediate term, GEOLOGY, is the material which informs the "Dogtown - II" poem in our CHAPTER THREE, called COSMOLOGY. In this way we shall obtain a Picture of the World which is inhabited by the Soul.

Furthermore, we shall devote a great deal of space to the study of a mediaeval THEOLOGY, particularly in our CHAPTER TWO, which treats of a poetics shared by Dante and Hilda Doolittle, preparatory to a study of Olson's own work. The mediaeval background, which is so extensively developed in this study of Olson's poetics, introduces us finally to the concept of, —

the dogmatic nature of
(order of)
experience

—which is axiomatic to the contemporary theology of our own world "View" that Olson gives throughout his work and particularly in a lecture series on the topic of Poetry and Truth (at Beloit College during the week of March 25, 1968). It is the Truth which is a function of the Soul that we are after, and which is so much at the heart of Olson's entire world outlook. A Truth which is reached through the conclusions we achieve in the particulars of our exhaustive and complete study of the poetic texts before us, namely the writings of Charles Olson, Hilda Doolittle, Dante &c., which I have arranged to explicate and give evidence for a coherence of world.

"View", vision, pictorialism, dreams, — are obviously implicit in our own laying of stress upon the importance of illustrations to give a picture and a perspective of some size on Olson's place in an inherited set of traditional images that are proven to be his equal in a contemporary experience. In addition we lay some significance upon the importance of "jazz playing dance," where the expression of our traditional KULTURE is given the active voice of a practiced SHAMANISM, —

the same, say, medicine men

& like theologians: example, Dante - Giotto

— where performance of the Soul's journey over a "View" or Picture of the World (landscape) is regarded from outside the confines of any schooled Theology. And I believe Olson is right here, to say that Heaven and Hell are levels of knowledge in the vertical journey which shaman and priest and visionary alike take in their way across the road, bridge or Tree which connects the kinds of experience that are available as Truth to mankind. The concept is heretical and breaks away from the exclusive limits imposed by any single Elect school of orders that is divorced from experience. Experience is the re-creation of our knowledge about Truth, and is the only way Truth is known, therefore is dogmatic.

Indeed we have something to say about the "Mushroom" as the food of paradise. And "woman" as the goddess who

gives nourishment which is required by the life of the Soul. And "dream" as the product of a Gold Flower that shines highest in the Heavens overhead. Each of these is looked at through Olson's poetics, which is the extent of our critical limitation. We wish to know what he means by these categories of experience, and find out by his own use of them in his poetry.

I have found the "Maximus, from Dogtown - II" poem to be the most revealing and most difficult poem in all of Olson's work on Cosmology and Theology. It therefore occupies the foremost position in all that we have to say. It is the focus which concentrates our purpose again and again, generating and maintaining the orders which we introduce one at a time until the complex of art, idea and history would be impossible to sustain without that poem. In fact it is the measure of our "training in exhaustion and completion" requisite for apprehension of a Theology and Cosmology. By understanding that poem we know when we have "grasped" at Truth. We are able to reach a completion.

Naturally our focus upon the "Dogtown - II" poem is also necessary since it would be impossible to cover and do justice to more of Olson's imaged-thought than this. We have discovered enough of the "Vision" through what follows, without enlarging what is already large enough.

A word should also be said about our methodology which includes a glance at meaning and image in Hilda Doolittle's War Trilogy beside a study of Olson's poetics. This is to provide a vehicle for the explication of mediaeval background that is conventional and fundamental to any comprehension of Olson's poetry. Hilda Doolittle presents her own Curriculum in the War Trilogy which, when revealed, opens our eyes to the experience of mediaeval Theology as an activity of the Soul. She expresses her own dogmatics of experience through a mapping of mediaeval belief that is extremely true and original, —just as Dante had done the same in his own time. Therefore we are able to learn from H.D. enough of the science of belief to get us to a threshold sufficient for an understanding of Olson's own dogmatics of experience. Since little has been written about the War Trilogy, and less has been clearly understood about it, therefore I feel it is a necessary task to explicate that mapping of the Soul, before entering into the still more complex "maps and experience of human history" which are charted in Olson's poetics.

I would add, further, that Hilda Doolittle has based her own Theology upon the Truth in experience which she found mainly in Dante's Divine Comedy. And that Olson has built additions upon the City of experience and belief which he shares with both visionary writers. Therefore the steps are from Dante to Hilda Doolittle to Olson, forming

a bridgework which makes belief contemporary with our own experience of the world.

I would freely admit of my own inadequacies in attempting a work of such a scale. Frankly, there are moments when my writing is terrible to listen to. At other times what I have written is splendid. However I am fully convinced that all the subject matter covered is important, whether or not I have equalled its significance through my faltering technical abilities. I believe each subject which is contained herein belongs to what I would define as THE dogmatic Curriculum of the Soul which Olson, like others, has drawn upon for his own knowledge in the creation of a body of poetic vision. Just as he was nourished by the contents I have attempted to present, so do I hope the reader will find nourishment to satisfy the requirements of his Mind and Soul. The well of waters is there for each person's bucket. In this sense I have not pursued "source" materials which correspond to the exact content of any single of Olson's poems or even his poesis. I regard his work as part of the larger vision to which we belong through experience and knowledge. I believe the materials presented herein are in the human world itself, and prior to any one man's genius or poetics, and that the poet's task is to show how those materials are the SOURCES of CREATION. Dante, Hilda Doolittle, and even the

ancient peoples of Egypt and Sumer, have feasted upon the same food of the gods, a sacred and often secret food which I have perhaps uncovered to a certain extent.

At the very center and source of creation is a Rose or a Gold Flower. It is the Flower which we shall eventually encounter in the course of our Curriculum. It is the Flower on the title page of our work because it is our highest image of Truth and the ultimate source of Vision, — vision of the creation of the City in a history, and the subject of our final chapter.

So there is, indeed, a coherence to our critical exegesis, though our work is seemingly expansive and difficult. It is my pleasure to be able to give this Curriculum as though I were teaching before a blackboard, using Olson's texts as the basis of inquiry into the subject of Cosmology. And it is my pleasure to be able to teach Olson's works in this way because his Mind is simply worth following. It maps a very large space. It is a Mind contemporary to our own experience. And so the Curriculum is as new as ourselves, and as alive as knowledge that now exists, — a demand which the Soul always places upon learning. Make It New, said Pound. Break into the new, — a definition of the very life of space. A life which must be original as well as true in our contemporary experience.

It is a Curriculum in which Olson has proposed the headings and I have the job of suggesting ways to find out

about those subject-contents. I propose books to read and give my own rough outline which is somewhat fuller than Olson's primary mapping, so that the student may find out what is important and where to go looking for a further comprehension of detail and meaning. The result is an explicit Curriculum with topics &c., which may or may not catch the attention of the Soul. It is certainly a Curriculum whose magnitude can only be realized through participation. And these are materials I give for such a future participation. In this sense my own work is not completed, and remains a secondary outline.

I would suggest that there is now a technical capability in all lecture theatres for the presentation of pictures of the world such as those which accompany this work. I cannot escape the fact of the audio / visual meeting ground we are now able to use. It is a consideration in the very act of composition through pictures that I have employed in this work. We may turn to our own theatre of the world, easily and usefully, for a most accurate view of Olson's presence in a history of the "guided" imagination.

Finally, let me say something about the initial steps which are prerequisite to a reading of the following contents. In the first place are the Maximus poems themselves. Then the reader of Olson's poetics should obtain

a copy of George Butterick's Annotated Index to the Maximus Poems (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Buffalo) which guides us through the first Maximus Poems, I, II and III. Next a copy of the three small books in the War Trilogy by Hilda Doolittle ("Walls Do Not Fall"; "The Flowering of the Rod"; and "A Tribute to the Angels") is needed. Then a text of the Divine Comedy, and whatever can be learned about that tripartite experience of Hell, Earth and Heaven. These are basic to what follows, in my own view of the structure and order in Olson's Cosmology. In addition I would

suggest a cursory examination of a short article about Dante and Ezra Pound & the American experience of the Divine Comedy, — by Giovanni Giovannini, entitled Ezra Pound and Dante (Utrecht: Dekkar & Van de Vegt, c1962), — and more properly I would always emphasize an affinity that exists in the writings of Olson and Pound and Hilda Doolittle and Dante, who stand before and share entrance into the same gateways that lead into a City, a Holy City, of Jerusalem, of Ecbatana, of Gloucester, of Poetry and Truth.

It is the City of the Eternal Rose of Light which has the entrances I hope to reveal for you. It is a City which must be envisioned, composed, constructed, entered and guarded, like the imagination itself.

I have written this work from the heights of a University which was built on a Mountain top, like a miniature of the true Jerusalem. It is more difficult to avoid allegory than one suspects. And curiously, on a twin peak of this landscape of the Soul, at a point and place called Centennial Pavillion which overlooks the entire lower City of Vancouver, there stands a water well in a park-like surrounding by the side of an asphalt walkway. Imagine placing a water well on the top of a hill? It is there as a prominent image in the history of the Soul, whose desire is quenched by waters that fountain from the vertical climb into heaven.

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.

The nursery rhyme is our epigraph, written over an entrance into a poetics. The well of waters on the hill is a baptismal font, usually situated in a courtyard of the most vertical and holy terrestrial City of Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, "Pavillion Hill," at the top of Centennial Way on Mount Burnaby is crowned with a cafe that serves foods of paradise like coffee and cigarettes, coke and chips. People throw nickels and coppers into the well whose waters reflect the false future of a shallow understanding. Allegory has been strained to the point of virtual loss, or is subsumed within the domain of advertising.

Even the University itself is no shining City and properly deserves to be located in the lower mainland of the polis rather than apart and above as a hope no one can look up to. Social hierarchy has replaced all of the former stations of the Soul that once existed in the landscape of a theology. Our work reinstates theology.

Our topic is the Philosophia perennis that informs particulars in an eternal Curriculum of the Soul. It is the study of the emergence of the human Soul from a marshland universe of experience and its rise heavenward, by a continuous climb through events in history, up the mountainside that leads into a City Upon A Hill.

. . . the subtitle is "The Dogmatic Nature of Experience." And I propose to handle it in three shapes or circles,** unquestionably more circular than shapely, and now I will satisfy that lad that said to me today, "you certainly are giving yourself plenty of room." The first evening, that is, tonight, does propose to be Cosmology. And the other two would be Belief I and Belief II. So that I really do mean Truth.

Olson, Poetry and Truth, p. 11.

** Dante Alighieri, Divina Commedia, Paradiso XXXIII, in which three circles of light appear overhead.

left with one's own
resort, wishing
for grass and the air
of heaven. Finding out
there is no doorstep
equal to the heart
of God

"Main Street is deserted," a poem for the third volume
of Maximus Poems, printed in Io / 6, (Winter, 1972-
1973), pp. 86-88.

CHAPTER ONE

ARCHAEOLOGY THE ORIGINS OF LANDSCAPE

(where did the Sumerians come from, into the Persian Gulf— sea-peoples who raided and imposed themselves on a black-haired previous people dwelling among reed-houses on flooded marshes?

CHRONICLES

Maximus IV,V,VI.

PART 1

Hinge # 1: the Deglaciation and the Wet Period.¹

The last of four Pleistocene Ice advances, known as the Wisconsin or Würm glaciation, began to move south c. 35,000 B.C., pushing a rain belt hundreds of miles ahead of its cool front wall, where a pluvial region of condensation poured water on the lands. The ice retreated during the neothermal period of increased solar heat after 9,000 B.C., leaving behind a diluvial flood plain and a southern terminal moraine. We may take the Lake Van measure, of c. 10,000 B.C., as origin of the human city in the post-glacial debris of the Near East, at Zawi Chemi and Shanidar.² It is the measure Olson uses to begin the city of Gloucester in Maximus IV,V,VI, where the two characters of the post-glacial, swamplands and moraine boulder deposits, are the given materials for human construction of world and polis:

"These high-lying benches of stratified drift material," he continues, "probably indicate points where small subglacial streams emerged during the process of the retreat of the ice, bringing forth a quantity of detrital matter and depositing it upon the surface of the shoved moraine at a time when the mass lay well below the level of the sea."

The Cow
of Dogtown³

The view of creation presented in Olson's poetics is northern, following in the wake of the retreating ice.

Man is Pleistocene, not Mediterranean. Beginnings are in stone and water. There is no black earth loam cover on Dogtown Hill; only striations scraped on a bare granite bedrock, carved there by a bulldozer blade of boulder teeth frozen into the foot of a glacier wall. The best cosmogony to represent Gloucester's origins is the Norse Gylfaginning,⁴ where a Cow named Audhumla, licks Buri, first man, out of the salt blocks that cover a white world. Her rough tongues curl as glaciers down fjord mouths gorged out to the sea.

Licked man (as such) out of the ice,
 the cow _____ did who
 herself came into being so that
 Ymir would have some source of food
 (her milk one supposes) 5

Olson has called American man "oxyacetylene,"⁶ whose fires are enough to start an engine piston frozen in the night below zero. It takes such fierce heat to melt a glacier; to live in a dome of ice heated by warm blood from within.

In "Maximus, from Dogtown - I," Merry fights the glacier bull on Dogtown Hill in an arena where four hundred gods are watching the creation of a human world. Each Sunday Merry tossed the young bull, to establish his stance and firm footing on the new world, until one Sunday he was thrown like boulders scattered and broken on Dogtown Hill by the advance of Pleistocene Ice. His blood watered the rocks at Gloucester, flowing into the coal deposits of a

black gold flower. He lies dead like Enkidu, ancient bull-fighter,⁷ eaten by grubs, yet the human world retains the heat of his blood in the life of its history. The gold flower is love, heat as shimmering as a fire bloom on coal grates; heat that will melt streams out of ice; compel glaciers to yield a place for the human species. Man has forged his way with the cutting torch of mind. He has fought in the bullfight, at Sumer and Mycenae, Spain, Portugal and Gloucester, forcing the landscape west. It isn't the melting ice, but the heat of man's advancing imagination that opens the migration of human universe out across space.

The Lake Van measure is a measure of human origins out of Pleistocene elements. The elements are water and rock in a post-glacial melt caused by heat: WATERED ROCK.

In Pleistocene Man Olson says our Paleolithic experience is lost in America because the Indian, or Paleo-Indian remnant, was conquered by a fully matured and late European inheritance. Yet our experience is not Mediterranean, Roman or Greek. We live in a north snow. We inhabit pre-European origins on a bare granite mountain of glacier rubble whose surface is hardly able to sustain roots of hardy scrub oaks and sparse blueberry patches. Man must go to the shore for life in the post-glacial and pre-pastoral.⁸

The Aurignacian-Solutrean-Magdalenian image of man-the-hunter is specialized for conditions of ice that existed during the brief 20,000 years of the Würm glaciation over northern Europe. At Folsom and Yuma in New Mexico were found the same Wisconsin remains of hunting life 15,000 years old,—a human complex which chased the Great Bison with fire over cliffs. But when the ice moved off and the land rose, all traces of these early cave-dwelling American hunters, who drew pictures and petroglyphs of the Bison, like the wonderful auroch bulls on the ceilings at Lascaux and Altamira,—vanished, along with the large mammals, sabre-toothed tiger and hairy mammoth. Post 10,000 B.C. the older and more basic shore-life humans again emerged from southern centers in North Africa and West Asia, a peoples less heroic than the mighty hunter, who produced the change in the neolithic which gave us the city. Fishermen and food gatherers who finally developed the sickle at Mount Carmel, c. 10,000 B.C., for harvesting emmer wheat (Triticum dicoccum) and six-rowed barley (Hordeum hexastichum),—GRASSES which grew in the SWAMPS of the Near Eastern post-glacial age along the Levantine seaboard. It is the rise of this human center, between hunter and dynasty, an overlooked center, that Olson distinguishes in his own poetics of the human world. It is a center without the stature of cave hunter or Egyptian kingship and nation, but with a force whose future we still obey.

The earliest problem for post-glacial human life was not irrigation, but drainage,—RAINS. Man lived in swamps, called wadi in the Near East, on the diluvial plains of the ice age rain belt which flooded all of the Mesopotamian valley, the Nile deserts and a stretch of coast along Palestine north to the Orinoco. We are closer to the amphibious cow, hippo-sow, hiding in the grass, then we are to the large and mighty hunting mammals:

The newcomers settled in caves on the open terraces in front of them in the Carmel or Judean mountains, or built settlements in the open where natural shelters were not available. Settlements on a natural terrace overlooking marshes and fertile hunting grounds and the proximity of water were naturally favoured; the Carmel caves of El Wad, Wadi Fallah and Kebarah face the marshes of the Mediterranean coast whereas Enynan overlooks the swamps and pools of Lake Huleh, . . .

James Mellaart, Earliest Civilizations of the Near East, p. 22.

Many rivers, descending from the mountains, ended in upland seas without an outlet and ringed by swamps. Three earliest centers were established in the neolithic:—the Zagros Mountains; the Anatolian plateau region; and Turkish Mesopotamia around Lake Van. With progressive desiccation the swamplands of the Nile and Mesopotamian valleys, proper, were inhabited, and man moved out of the highlands back into Apsu, the sweet waters of the marsh flood. As post-glacial desiccation continued, after 7,000 B.C., man tried to main-

tain his position of livelihood in the swamp lowlands, centering and concentrating more and more upon Kish and Memphis and Byblos, the three cities whose position in the post-glacial gave rise to the Sumerian, Egyptian and Phoenician nations by the year 3100 B.C., in the chalcolithic age of our history of the polis.

In opposition to Toynbee's theory of stress and progress, we see man trying to keep his shore life as the basis of human achievement,—because his species is a swamp animal like water buffalo and crocodile, Hathor and Seth in the grain grasses. In the swamplands man lived with his cows in the rushes and reeds, at the root and origin of a milk-yielding tree whose existence shall be the major focus of our entire work. In the neolithic man learned to keep water cows for their milk and dung-fuel, and to cultivate some of the grasses of a landscape without trees.

By way of summation: we have followed the rise of three centers of civilization formed in the dry age following the last deglaciation, when swamplands were reduced in size, forcing man into these future centers of the polis, at Sumer, Memphis and Byblos (also Tyre). Out of the swamps man took his cattle and grains and with them forced the revolution which began civilization in the cities. Grains plus cattle concentrated into centers equals the rise of polis and nation c. 3100 B.C. The whole process took seven millenia.

The marsh element behind the human universe appears in Olson's poetics as "mass mother milk cow body" in the cosmogonic poem called "Maximus, from Dogtown, - IV." Olson is picturing a creation out of pluvial and sub-boreal Pleistocene Ice origins during a post-glacial melt, where the land remains a low-lying bog of sodden grasses:

Vulgar
swamp And cow
or sow. Wetlands
Juice. And in the tripple-force
dripping

Orge⁹

Gloucester is elevated out of a "Mud Face founder of
10
Dogtown," pushed up by the ice and left behind as a marsh, where streams pour fourth sweet Apsu, the milk waters of creation, from the Cow of Dogtown, Audhumla. The center of the city life called Dogtown melts out of the ice climate like a Sumer, a Byblos or Tyre, a landscape of rushes and water and cows. It is in the Near East that the picture of this creation survives in practice to our own day, a picture whose origins are traced in Olson's poem called "Chronicles," chronicles of an island polis like Tyre or Gloucester, surrounded on all sides, above and below, by waters.

"Chronicles" is about migration from a center (Tyre) west, and is mainly a copy of text presented in Robert Graves' The Greek Myths, vol. I, item 58. However it is

the conclusion of the poem which is most revealing, where Olson speaks of "reed-houses on flooded marshes," made by a peoples who came originally from Libya,—East African marsh peoples 4.5 million years old, born in the rift at Olduvai and raised in the swamplands of the Villefranchan age. In the last post-glacial, after the neothermal of 10,000 B.C., these ancient peoples centered at Tyre and built houses with reeds on most recent swampland mud mounds. This early memory of a first marsh peoples at Tyre, in the fifth or fourth millenia B.C., survives in Philo of Byblos' account of Sanchuniathon's Phoenician History, here translated by Charles Doria:

11

And Hypsuranios
lived in Tyre
building huts
of reed and papyrus strands

And he quarreled with Ousoos
his brother: who dressed
in the skins of the beasts
he caught and skinned.

The argument portrays a change in the kingship of the gods, from a pre-Uranian hunting man to Uranian man as a marsh animal during the neolithic age. Ousoos is forced to leave Tyre. He sets out, sailing west on a log, the first pillar of Hercules Melkaart:

Then it rained in Tyre:
the wind drove the trees
against each other
and so the place
was stripped of wood

Though Ousoos
 catching a tree
 loped the branches off
 and paddled out to sea:
 the first

And dedicating two pillars
 to Wind and Fire:
 poured the blood of the beasts
 he caught over them.

The myth was recorded late (1st Century A.D.) but recalls both a center of reed huts and the origins of a westward migration of that first center. It is the reed huts which are of particular importance in our present study, for they are made of the earliest post-glacial materials of the city. Before reeds men lived in caves. After them came stone and brickwork.

In a Babylonian myth of c. 1750 B.C. it is said that Marduk erected the world as a platform of rushes on Apsu, the sweet waters of a marshland (in contrast to Tiamat, the salt sea waters). Apsu and Tiamat, fresh and salt waters, are the first orders of godhead in a Babylonian cosmogony, later defeated by a second generation of younger gods who are called Ea and Marduk. Yet the Apsu as marsh water survives as landscape even during Marduk's reign, who defeats Apsu, then builds a house of reeds, called Apsu, the house of the gods on the waters of the world. The creation of the dome Apsu is given in the following passages from Alexander Heidel's The Babylonian Genesis, pp. 62-63:

Marduk constructed a reed frame on the face of the waters;
He created dirt and poured it out by the reed frame.

He created the grass, the rush of the marsh, the reed, and
the woods;

The lands, the marshes, the canebrakes
The cow and her young, the calf;

Lord Marduk piled up a dam at the edge of the sea;
. . . a swamp he made into dry land.

The myth is again written late, in the first or second millenium, but contains this earliest picture of creation, before the invention of bricks, where swamps were drained (preceding the dry age of irrigation) and where the world was a reed hut elevated upon the waters of Apsu. As in our own Genesis, but where the picture of creation is the literal and recognizable mode of livelihood conducted by an earliest post-glacial mankind who elevated reed hut structures on waters which pastured buffalo herds. It was such cattle herding peoples living in swamplands who gave rise to Sumer and Tyre,—two of the foremost centers of civilization in Olson's poetics of the wet world.

In order to trace the earliest beginnings of center, at the very roots of the Axis Mundi and pillar of creation, we must go to the surviving records of a Near Eastern world prior to 3100 B.C., and to the continuing presence of an aboriginality living in the swamplands of Iraq, Iran and lowland regions of the Sudanese Nile, post-1930 A.D. There we shall find the radicle beginnings of the Tree of Life,

a milk-yielding tree, a reed pillar upholding the house of Inanna or Hathor, goddesses of the wadi, the Apsu, who dwell in a marsh of papyrus stems.

The Egyptians prior to 3100 B.C. lived all along the marshlands of the Upper and Lower Nile during a time when the desert plateau was a fertile and a green land, watered by glacial rains. Progressive desiccation, with the retreating ice, marked the period from 7,000 B.C. onwards, turning the plateau from a rich grassland into steppe and ultimately into desert, making the lowest lying swamplands of the great river valleys inhabitable. Libya remained green and rich in cattle up to the end of the second millenium B.C.

The predynastic history of Egypt is African, originating c. 5,000 B.C. in the Tasian, Badarian and Amratian cultures which were followed by the Gerzean penetration into the marshes of Upper Egypt. About 3100 B.C. Narmer / Menes united all tribal nomes of Upper and Lower Egypt into a nation with political kingship. Narmer / Menes, "King of the Two Lands,"¹² established Dynasty I in Egyptian history c. 3100 B.C., ruling from his throne at Memphis.

The African background to Kingship in Egypt may be studied from such living tribal peoples as the Nuer, the Bari, Barundi, Hamite and Beduin, peoples who continue to thrive according to their prehistoric and immemorial customs.

Some of the texts and studies relating to this Libyan and Ugandan or North African background to Egyptian civilization and theology are the following important works: B.G. and C.G. Seligman, Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan and The Pagan Tribes of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan; H. Johnston, The Uganda Protectorate; John Burckhardt, Travels in Nubia; G. Brunton and C. Caton Thompson, The Badarian Civilization; J. Roscoe, The Northern Bantu; Wilhelm Hölscher, Libyer und Ägypter; and Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer. Perhaps the best study of these cattle peoples is an essay by M.J. Herskovits, "The Cattle Complex in East Africa," American Anthropologist XXVIII (1926). The importance of the African background to the Egyptian Kingdom after 3100 B.C. is best summarized in the chapter called "Procreation" in Henri Frankfort's Kingship and the Gods, a text which Olson used a great deal.

The focus of the above works is what Olson has attempted to catch in his poem "Chronicles":¹³

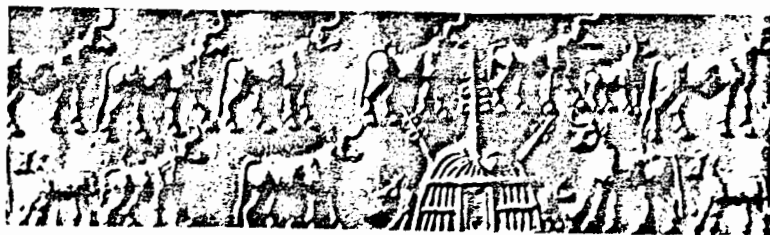
Libyans (the least known
of all sources of
serious inroads on
Egypt & collaboration
by the Libyans with
the still unknown Raiders
of the sea) — and Uganda:

there may be East African
— and again what about Libyan?
movements to the center
of the second millenium:

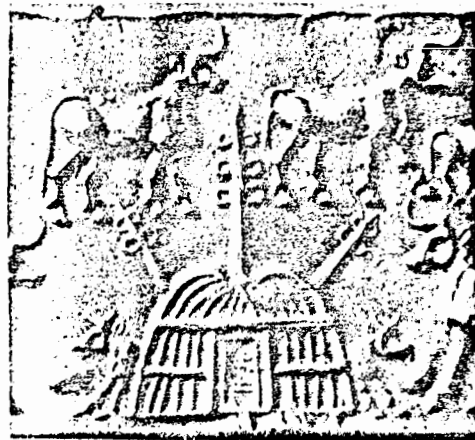
The movements persist until the second millenium,—1540 B.C.,—when Agenor's sons of Tyre settled the West (Semitic "Europa"). Europe was stolen while she tended a cattle herd on the shores at Tyre. But Semitic and African movements begin further back in the sixth to the fourth millenia B.C., when cattle peoples moved from the Libyan highlands to settle in the Nile Delta and, like Agenor, at Tyre.

An example of the literal founding of the Egyptian imagination c. 3100 B.C. may be obtained by comparing plate VIa, "The sacred herd," in Frankfort's Cylinder Seals, with plate XVIII, "Building the cattle byre," in Evans-Pritchard's The Nuer (our plate I, a to c). The former is from the Jamdet-Nasr age, c. 3100-2900 B.C., at the time Narmer / Menes established the politics of nation and Kingship over a unified land of Egypt. The latter is from Evans-Pritchard's observations, taken in 1930 A.D.: "The Nuer, who call themselves Nath, are round about 200,000 souls and live in the swamps and open savannah that stretch on both sides of the Nile south of its junction with the Sobat and Bahr el Ghazal, and on both banks of the two tributaries." They live in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, south of Libya and modern Egypt, "dwelling among reed-houses on flooded marshes" (plate II):

a.



b.



c.

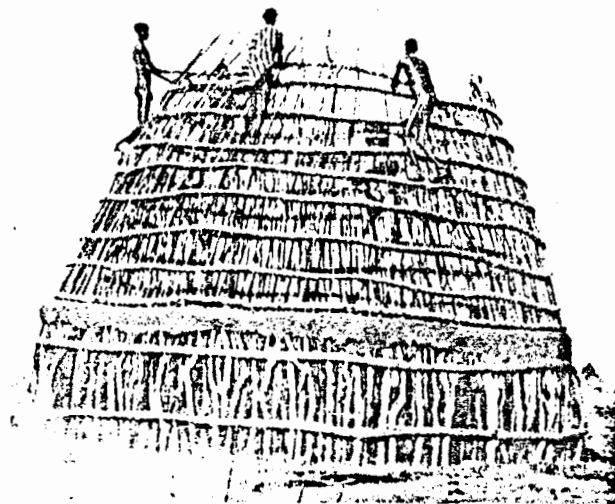


Plate I. The Cattle Byre. (a) "The Sacred Herd," earlier half of the Jamdet Nasr Period, 3100 B.C. (b) detail. (c) "Building the Cattle Byre," Nuer civilization, 1930 A.D.



a.



b.

Plate II. The Nuer Marshland. (a) Cattle Herds,
(b) Floodplains.

The whole of Nuerland is an almost dead level plain, covered during the rains with high grasses reaching to the waists, and near streams, where they are higher and courser, to the shoulders of the tall Nuer. It approximately coincides with the extension of true savannah in the Sudan. Here and there are patches of thornwood forest, but often no tree is visible in any direction and a desolate waste stretches everywhere to the horizon. . . . As a rule when the rivers are in flood they have no banks and the country lying on either side of them is swamp threaded with wide lagoons, often running parallel to the main channel.

The vast plain is threaded with depressions, . . . which run in all directions, often crossing one another, and linking up with the main rivers. Where continuous these depressions have the appearance of small rivers, though water seldom flows in them. While rain is falling a network of waterways which prevents drainage from the saturated earth, so that the rainwater lies everywhere in deep puddles which slowly extend till by the middle of June the whole country, except for occasional higher land, is inundated. The water remains several inches deep till September, and Nuerland has the appearance of a great grass-covered swamp; there are streams, lagoons, and pools wherever there are slight depressions, and islands, on which are perched villages, wherever there are ridges and knolls. . . . By the middle of November the grasses are dry enough to be fired.

Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer, pp. 53-54.

We have here the pluvial condition of Egypt as it existed in the glacial and early post-glacial ages following the Würm deglaciation: "in prehistoric, as well as in Pharonic times, Egypt was a land of marshes in which papyrus, sedge, and rushes grew to more than man's height. The wadis, too, teemed with life" (Frankfort, The Birth of Civilization in the Near East).¹⁴ A people who were familiar with rising inundation and decline of water in swamplands; who tended cattle and lived in houses built of reeds and elevated on

small island mounds of mud,—as stated in the Babylonian creation of the world on Apsu, or the Egyptian creation on Ptah-Ta-Tjenen, Ptah-the-Risen-Land, first land to emerge out of the receding waters of the Nile floodplain in the Old Kingdom text called the Memphite Theology.¹⁵ The importance of cattle in the late monumental stages of Egyptian polis cannot be underestimated. The cow is at the center of all Egyptian theology. Hathor, the Divine Cow who gives birth to the sun each morning, is found very late on tomb reliefs of the sarcophagi of Tut-Ankh-Amon (1354-?) and Seti I (1312-1298 B.C.). The "Book of the Divine Cow" may be found translated in Alexander Piankoff's The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon, pp. 27-37. She is the goddess who suckles the dead Osiris; whose milk revives the Kingship of Horus over Egypt. She is the goddess of the milk-tree, a sycamore whose branches shed liquid dew that revives dead bird-souls. She is the tree and mammal of an everlasting life, who gives man warm milk and dung to burn in his fires. Hathor lives in swamps which are called Nun, the Watery Abyss, a landscape which is equivalent to the Babylonian Apsu and the Sumerian Enki,—a papyrus marsh land.

'Seek the cow-mother!' is the adjuration of the texts upon the walls of the tombs of early kings. Below the earth, however, she is imagined no longer in the form of the benign beast (Cow), but as the Tree whose fruits are cast into the ground for renewal of life. The sycamore of the South was regarded as the living body of Hathor, and the nomes dedicated to herself and to Nut were called conjointly the Land of the Sycamore.

Levy, The Gate of Horn, p. 120.

Plate IIIa shows Hathor of the swamps coming out of papyrus reeds, and IIIb shows Hathor as Nut (Libyan Nit or Neith) suckling the new King, Horus, in a papyrus marsh. Her association with the progenerative nature of freshwater floodlands is well preserved in these illustrations of her bovine landscape. Plates IV to VII, on the other hand, show Hathor in a more abstracted iconology, standing in the branches of a sycamore tree, as Hathor dendritis, whose fruits hang down like pendulous breasts to suckle the dead bird-soul in afterlife. The pictures show Hathor in the sycamore Tree of Life pouring sacred water from a vase over the deceased and his bird-soul. Plate VIIb shows the pendulous fruit of the sycamore or fig palm drawn like a human breast attached to a milk-yielding tree, whose white fluid revives the dead. Finally, and in her most extreme Near Eastern form, the goddess becomes Ephesian Artemis whose body is covered with milk-tits, illustrated in our plate VIII.

In the development of this imagery there is maintained the marsh landscape which, as Cow or Tree, yields the sacred milk of life, milk of the cattle byre. The sycamore tree was chosen to be an image of the milk cow because it exudes white liquid sap:

The fruit of this tree, which grows directly from the stem, exudes a white fluid which was fed in later days to Greek infants, and beneath its boughs the Roman Twins were suckled on the Tiber bank. The images of the Ephesian Artemis present the same Tree in human form with multiple breasts like milk-bearing figs above the stiff trunk.

Levy, "Cattle-byre and Milk-yielding Tree,"
The Gate of Horn, p. 120.

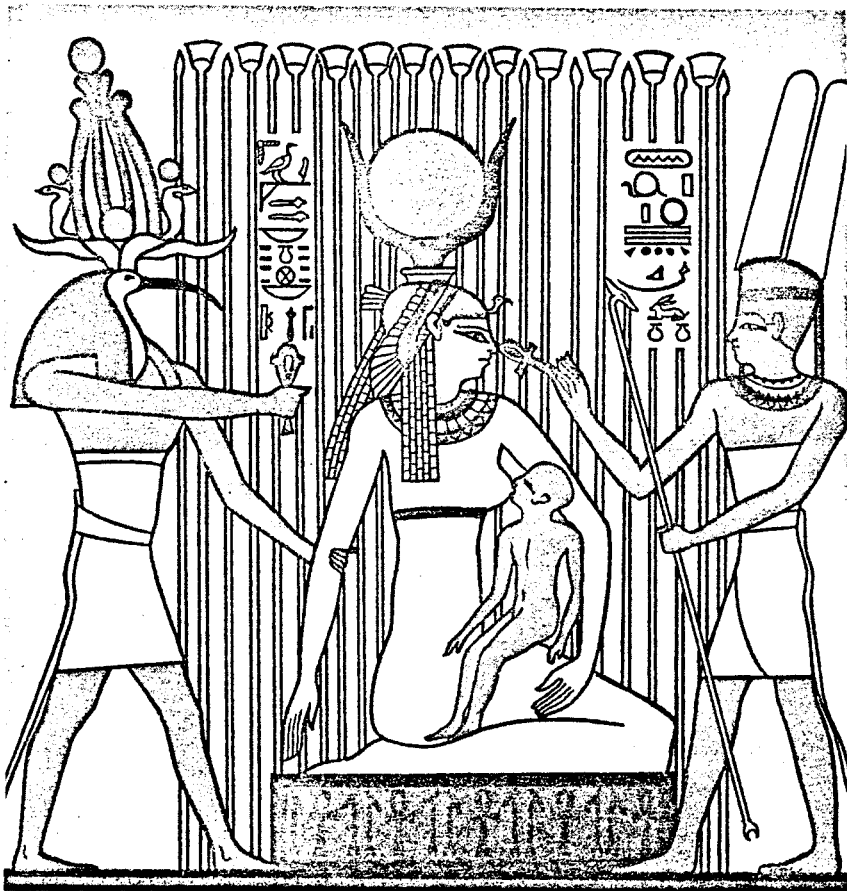
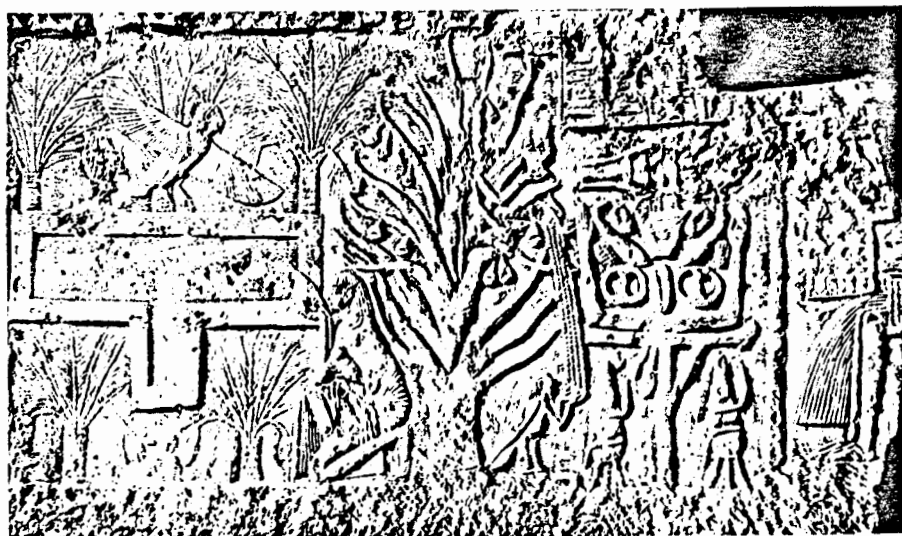


Plate III. (b) Isis in the papyrus swamp suckling Horus.



a.



b.

Plate IV. Hathor Dendritis, Goddess of the Sycamore Tree.
 (a) pouring water from the sycamore over the deceased and his soul-bird. From Heliopolis.
 (b) relief showing the dead soul finding refreshment in the garden of his tomb. From Thebes.



Plate V. Hathor Dendritis giving nourishment to the dead.
From the Tomb of Sennedjem, at Deir el-Medinet,
Nineteenth Dynasty.

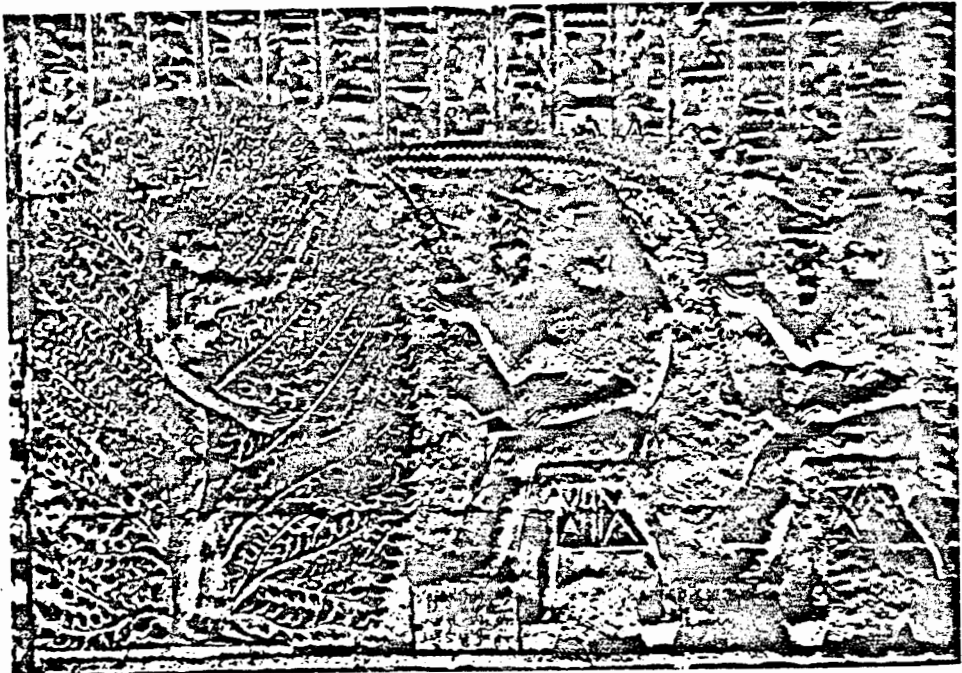
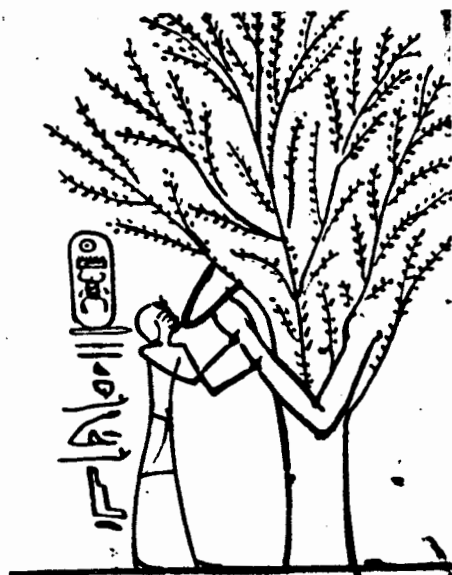


Plate VI. Worshipping the Sycamore Goddess. From the Tomb of Petosiris, at Tunch el-Gebel, late 4th century B.C.



a.



KING SUCKLED BY THE SACRED TREE (ISIS)

b.

Plate VII. Hathor Dendritis, the Sycamore Goddess.
 (a) from the Tomb of Pashedu, at Deir el-Medinet, Twentieth Dynasty. (b) from the Tomb of Tuthmosis III, Valley of the Kings, Eighteenth Dynasty, showing the King suckled on a human breast of the sacred tree.

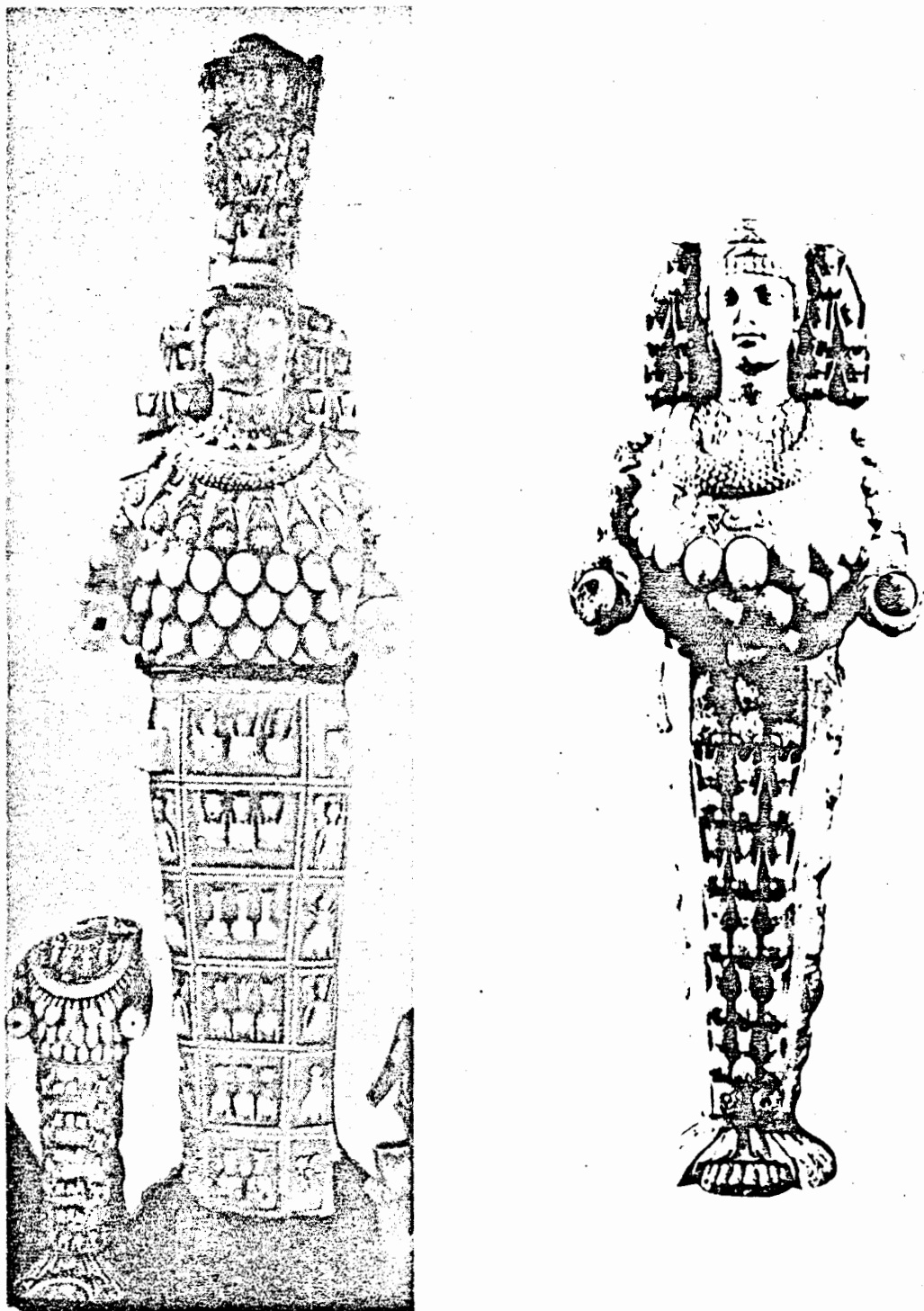


Plate VIII. Artemis Polimastros (Artemis of the many breasts). Statuettes from the Artemision at Ephesus. Now in the Archaeological Museum at Ephesus.

The extent of the presence of cattle in Egyptian theology can only be indicated by these brief comments. The theology is as old as man's first post-glacial emergence as a farmer of domesticated cattle, living like the Nuer or other Libyan and Sudanese tribes who continue to exist in the African floodlands. As desiccation increased after the deglaciation, post 9,000 B.C., these marsh peoples centered more closely in the Nile valley, trying to maintain their cattle herds in the lands of Apsu and Nun,—water animals as amphibious as the hippopotamus. Indeed the hippo, called Api by the Egyptians, was often identified with Hathor and Nut. The entire imagery of cow, sow (hippo or water-hog), mass, mother, earth, milk and wetlands is thus employed in Olson's poetics of the genesis of city and center during the interglacial of the Pleistocene Age. When the protohistorical African peoples moved to the Nile valley they had already lived several millenia amidst the grass-land swamps and in the rhythm of an annual inundation. Therefore techniques of drainage and irrigation, agriculture and domestication, were already fully developed by the beginning of political kingship in Dynasty I under Narmer / Menes c. 3100 B.C. There continued to exist a pronounced "African" effect on the entire duration of the Egyptian human universe.

The cattle byre constructed of reeds on an island of earth is the GATE OF HORN and entranceway to the future

form of all human history thereafter. In fact Frankfort's researches contained in Cylinder Seals (1939) are the basis for further discovery outlined in Gertrude Levy's The Gate of Horn (1948) subtitled, "A study of the religious conceptions of the Stone Age, and their influence upon European thought." The GATE is the entrance to a reed cattle byre such as we have viewed in the Nuer civilization. It is the gateway which looks forwards to the birth of Christ in a manger, born of Hathor, the swampland Cow who once lived in the divine papyrus swamps of Egypt.¹⁶ Indeed Hathor and the Virgin Mary are intimately connected in apocryphal texts of the New Testament:

Since the mythological tree of Nut stood at Heliopolis and was a sycamore it may well have served as the archetype of the sycamore tree under which tradition asserts that the Virgin Mary sat and rested during her flight to Egypt, and there seems to be little doubt that many of the details about her wanderings in the Delta, which are recorded in the Apocryphal Gospels and in writings of a similar class, are borrowed from the old mythology of Egypt . . . these trees were always watered with water drawn from the famous 'Ain Shems' ('Eye of the Sun'), i.e., the well of water which is fed by a spring in the immediate neighbourhood, and is commonly called 'Fountain of the Sun.'

Budge, The Gods of the Egyptians,
vol. 2, p. 108.

In "Maximus, from Dogtown - II," Jack and Jill go up the hill to water the flower of heaven born on the Axis Mundi which is a Tree of Life standing on the summit of Mount Dogtown. We have a very long way to go before we

reach that height of vision, but its beginnings are here, in an Egyptian protohistorical theology derived from a pre-dynastic landscape of papyrus swamplands inhabited by a cattle culture of peoples.

An example of the appearance of sycamore tree and well of water in a Christian apocryphal text of the New Testament is this, from The First Gospel of the Infancy (2nd. century Gnostic).¹⁷ The infant Jesus and Mary approach the tree:

Hence they went to that sycamore tree, which is now called Matarea;

And in Matarea the Lord Jesus caused a well to spring forth, in which Mary washed his coat;

And a balsam is produced, or grows, in that country, from the sweat which ran down there from the Lord Jesus.

Thence they proceeded to Memphis, and saw the Pharoah, and abode three years in Egypt.

We shall eventually understand the relationship that exists between Mary and the sycamore tree, sacred to Hathor, divine cow goddess, Cow of Dogtown, who gives birth to Kingship and cosmos. The tree whose fruit is Osiris and the Christ child. The Cow tree which gives birth in a cattle byre, in a manger or papyrus marsh. But first we must return to the structure and architecture of the cattle byre, before any comprehension of the milk-tree is possible:

The Gate of Horn, entrance to the cattle byre, was made of papyrus stems whose tips were crowned with lotus

blossoms,—the two insignia of Upper and Lower Egypt post-3100 B.C. The earliest architecture in Egypt was erected with bundles of reed stems for columns, and covered with woven reed matting. The best book on this subject of architecture in the formative years of Egyptian Kingship at the close of the fourth millenium B.C. is one by Margaret Murray, called The Splendour that was Egypt (1951). She points out that no pre-dynastic building has survived from the Gerzean period, but a model of a Gerzean house, found at Abydos, shows the type of architecture employed,—of reed lattice-work and clay. Wood wasn't imported into Egypt (from Byblos, Gebeil, Lebanon) until the Third Dynasty (2650 B.C.):

Wood fit for building has always been so scarce in Egypt that it had (and still has) to be imported; and the primitive Egyptian had not learnt the art of quarrying stone. Therefore lattice and clay (Anglice, wattle and daub) must be regarded as the foundation of Egyptian building, and they had their effect on the later architecture.

The Splendour that was Egypt, p. 226.

In a magnificent poetics of rememberance, an archaeology which refounds the terms of imagination and belief in experience, Hilda Doolittle's War Trilogy is unparalleled. I am going to use the Trilogy extensively as a text preparatory to the study of Olson's own renewal of historical images, a task which truly defines each author's work as an Archaeologist of Morning. I believe these two authors, and Dante, plus a good deal of digging up the past, scholarship &c., shall get us to a gnosis of the Black

Gold Flower of Creation in Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown,
- II."

In the opening lines of H.D.'s Trilogy (a poem which has never been given a proper reading), Hilda Doolittle mentions "the stone papyrus,"—the FLOWERING ROD. Papyrus reeds shaped in stone. They are columns in a temple whose WALLS DO NOT FALL. Walls which sustain an everlasting and immemorial vision of the world. The columns are each a presentation and picture of the Axis Mundi which supports creation. On several occasions Olson also refers to this principle, that origins are carved in wood and only later do they reappear in stone. Experience is closest to belief where beliefs are as daily and as easily wrought as is wood.¹⁸ Because the form of experience in any human universe is enduring (Olson always poses time immemorial instead of the Lex aeternalis) so will its life in wood last. Hence any archaeologist of morning who refounds imagination in daily performance, must penetrate to the very origins of practice in wood, or some such commonplace material through which beliefs are expressed daily. Hilda Doolittle's remark that stone columns are shaped like papyrus bundles is indeed true, and obeys the law that original belief is practiced in wood. Again we must quote from Margaret Murray to see the effect of Gerzean wattle and mud building "on the later architecture":

The earliest pillars were probably intended to support the light roof of a porch or veranda for a shrine or a dwelling-house, and were made of the same materials that the modern Egyptian uses for cheap structures, but the primitive Egyptian used papyrus stems instead of palm or durra stalks. The flowering stem of the papyrus reed has a triangular section, and ends in a head which is like an untidy mop; though it has a certain amount of strength it would not support much weight. To make a pillar, the ancient Egyptian lashed together several bundles of the reeds, tying them firmly with several turns of cord just below the heads, and again at the root ends. To keep the cord taut, he pushed in a short length of papyrus stem between each bundle. He then made a base of solid clay into which he pushed the root ends of his reed bundles so deep that the lashing cord was covered, and the pillar stood upright. He tied the mop-like heads together at the top, and then covered the whole structure with clay from the tied tops of the flowering heads down to the clay base. He would probably make two or three pillars in a row; and he would then lay across their tops a lashed bundle of papyrus stems, or a plank if he had one, add a light thatch of palm branches, and his veranda was complete.

The use of papyrus had an unforeseen result on Egyptian architecture when stone building became possible. The weight of the clay and of the superstructure caused the papyrus stems to bend a little outwards just above the base; but being tightly lashed below, the individual stems could not separate. The weight of the board and thatch had the same effect on the mop-like heads, which took on a gentle curve outwards, slightly overhanging the lashing. When this form of pillar was reproduced in stone, the architect copied the curves and the visible lashing with the utmost fidelity, but found it impossible to copy the innumerable peduncles of the flowering heads which now formed the capital of the pillar. The curves of the "capital" were reminiscent of an opening lotus-bud, the architect seized on this resemblance and carved his capital as a half-opened bud of the blue lotus just showing the petals inside the calyx.

The Splendour that was Egypt,
pp. 227-8.

One of the best examples of Egyptian architecture erected upon rows of stone reed-bundles is the temple at Luxor which is referred to in Hilda Doolittle's "The Walls Do Not Fall," first poem in the Trilogy:

still the Luxor bee, chick and hare
pursue unalterable purpose

in green, rose-red, lapis;
they continue to prophecy
from the stone papyrus:

"The Walls Do Not Fall" I.

Plate IX vividly illustrates this mode of immemorial construction, showing the standing columns of the Luxor temple which are each shaped like age-old reed-bundles, sagging under the weight of the roof and compressed where papyrus rope ties the bundles top and bottom. These stone bundles are exact replications of an earlier building material. They reproduce reed-bundles whose tips are bound into flowering capitals. They each preserve the original flowering rod, which has become a stone column. They preserve the memory of a marsh existence, even though the Luxor temple was erected late, by Amenhotep III (1408-1372 B.C.), some five millenia after the beginnings of reed architecture in the postglacial marshlands of the Near East, and two millenia since Gerzean inhabitation of the Nile valley.

These are the flowering rods which are central within a later Christian eschatology. They are the flowering rods which support walls that do not fall. They are the pillars whose form has preserved the life of human origins. Each

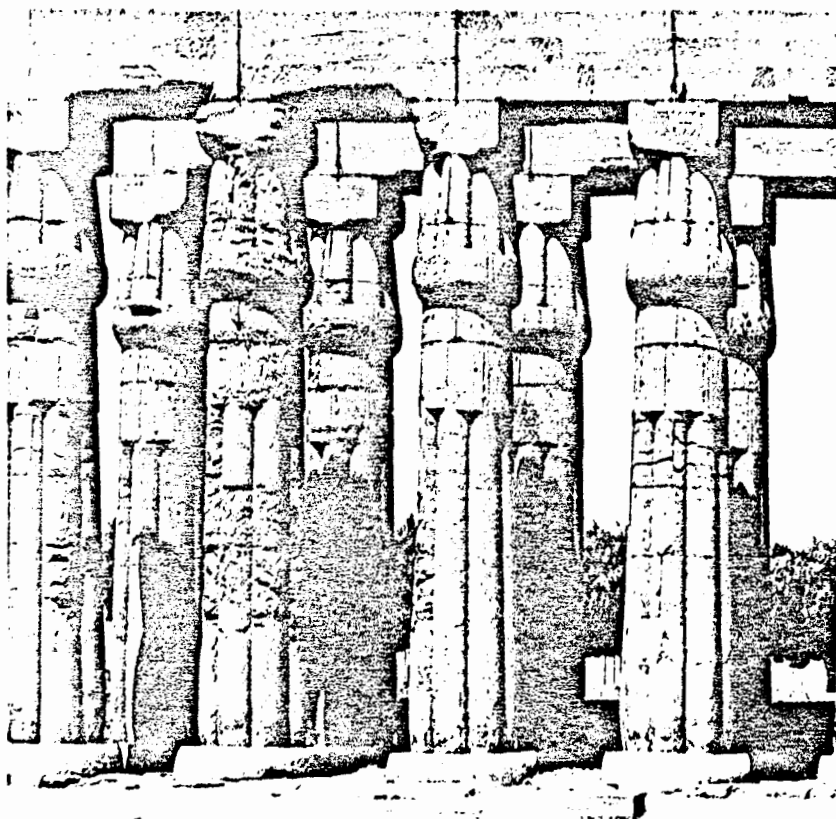


Plate IX. Stone Papyrus Bundle Columns with Lotus Bud Capitals. From the sanctuary of the Temple of Amon at Luxor, built by Amenhotep III, Eighteenth Dynasty.

pillar is an image of the Axis Mundi that upholds a World of beliefs, the World of the temple.

Each rod-pillar is an image of the World Tree which bears the Flowering of Creation, found, for example, in Olson's poem, "Maximus, from Dogtown, - II." The papyrus bundles naturally bear papyrus blooms, yet in the change to stone, the grass-flower was so difficult to reproduce that sculptors found alternative florescences to crown the pillars. They frequently chose the lotus bloom, e.g. at Luxor, where capitals are half-opened lotus buds. Sometimes a palm-capital was carved. In any case the bulging reeds suggested to the Egyptians a rotund fecundity, pregnant with the new life of the world. Therefore the reed-pillars were always associated with feminine procreativity, giving rebirth to Osiris in his Kingship image as Horus. Horus of the swamps; born like Moses, a child of the papyrus bundle. Child of Hathor, the swamp cow. Frequently Osiris was represented as born aloft out of the renewed bloom of the lotus flower. Often he was called the child of Hathor, or Hathor was called "House of Horus." On many columns the flowering capital was therefore replaced by carved stylizations of Hathor's horned head, as in the Hathor-head capitals of the Temple of Dendera. And so the swamp-cow and flowering milk-tree were closely identified throughout Egyptian architecture even in its monumental stages. In the change to a high civilization the most aboriginal human

origins are retained within memory and can be viewed by the careful observer who is aware of their permanence. The change to stone in civilization has kept alive the memory of marshland existence of cattle in reed-bundle byres, of those first images of the world whose experience can still be refounded.

There is a further significance to the temple columns which support the ceiling of the world. In "Isis and Osiris" Plutarch tells us the story of how Osiris' coffin floated to Byblos and there got stuck in a tree which the king of the Phoenician city cut down for use as a column in his temple. Isis went to Byblos to retrieve the column which she split open to revive the dead Osiris, killed by Seth, god of confusion. Plates XL and XLI in Frankfort's Kingship and the Gods are of particular importance here, especially plate XLI, which we have reproduced in our own textual plate X,—showing Osiris, with two eyes on either side of the Djed pillar and bull horns bearing his insignia of office as the crown of the tree, wrapped round in the wings of Nut, one of the goddesses who succeeds Hathor in the Egyptian heavens. The tree is a coffin, like the pillar in Plutarch's record, a column that upholds temple and world. It is both tomb and womb, a dead king wrapped in the wing-cloths of Nut and enclosed in the world tree-coffin. The tree is the milk-tree, Hathor and Nut, whose care revives the dead king's soul. At the base of the tree

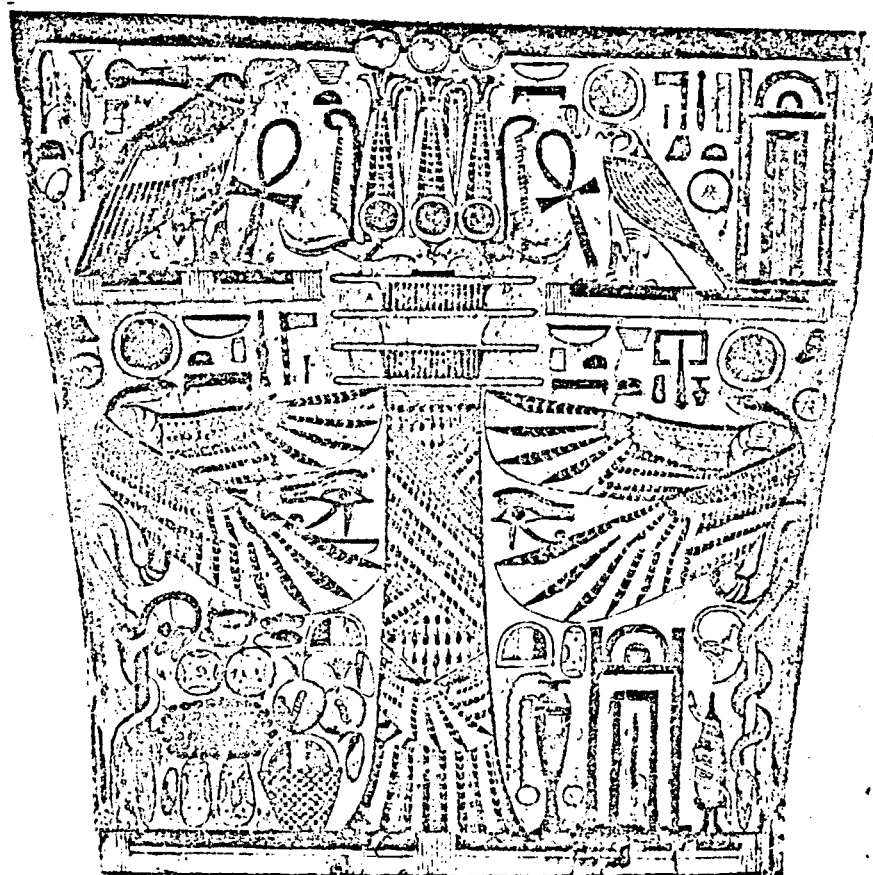


Plate X. Osiris in the Djed Pillar, Wrapped Round by the Wings of Nut. Painting in a New Kingdom Coffin (Leiden).

stands the flowing vase whose streams are the liquid life that flows out of the branches of the sycamore, previously represented as Hathor. In many of the Egyptian sarcophagi the lid over the dead king is painted with the wings of Nut, like a hovering bird of heaven over creation. The tree is the fecund pillar of life which nourishes dead souls on the milk of life. It is a representation of the world tree which flowers eternally.

Each of the pillars in the temple at Luxor is an image of Nut or Hathor, bearing her child and brother, the dead king Osiris, to a renewed birth as Horus. Each column is pregnant at the bulging of a sagging stone bundle of reeds; pregnant with the new king Horus who is Osiris revived to kingship over Egypt. And each reed bundle stands in remembrance of an early architecture of world built on Apsu or Nun, the Watery Abyss or marsh of papyrus rushes. The late Egyptian temple of the New Kingdom, at Luxor, preserves all of the memory of the African cattle byre. Each column is a milk-yielding tree, Hathor, the Divine Cow. This experience is literal when considered at its origins in a swamp life of peoples who depend on cattle for life and light.

In the Christian cosmology the memory of the milk-tree is far from lost. The tree is called Mary, our Hathor of the sycamore. She gives forth the gold bloom of creation, Lux Mundi, in Christ. She is the Axis Mundi

and pillar in the structure of our own cosmos. She is the wooden cross which flowers at the flowering of the rod, — an event which we have yet to discover in Olson's poetics of the world.

In this chapter we have tried to clarify an extensive experience of center or Axis, rooted in post-glacial times, c10,000 B.C., and lasting until our own day. We are projecting towards a comprehension of Olson's poem "Maximus, from Dogtown - II," a poem whose words sustain a world. A world built upon a flowering pillar, like the reed bundle that once supported Marduk's world on Apsu, and stone papyrus rods that supported the Egyptian temple at Luxor on Ptah-Ta-Tjenen, a piece of land reclaimed from the Nile. Eventually we may fully approach the drama of the flowering of the rod in Christianity, whose bases in experience lie deep in the interglacial Pleistocene age, since ice last covered the land. We must now have some notion of the origins of human life as an island mound in a marshland, where cattle

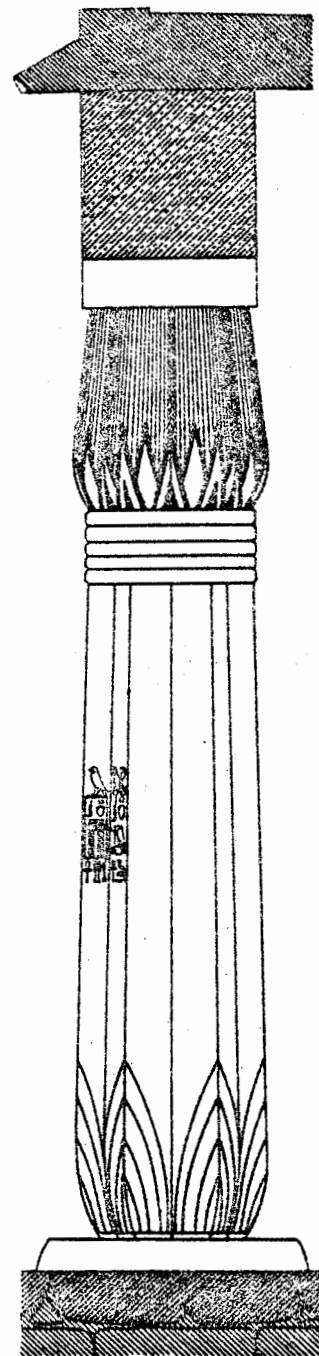


Fig. 1.
Flowering Rod. Papyrus column from the temple of Neuserre Abusir.

byres, supported with reeds, contained cows which fed creation, — reeds which were the milk-yielding images of a future tree of life.

Now that we have briefly examined an Egyptian movement to the center, c3100 B.C., under the rule of Narmer / Menes, we shall turn immediately to another center in the Near East, — SUMER, — subject of Olson's essay "The Gate and the Center." In fact there are three centers in Olson's poetics, each of which has been mentioned: Memphis; Sumer; & Byblos - Tyre. The Egyptian cosmology, especially that outlined in the Memphite Theology (celebrating the rise of Ptah-Ta-Tjenen) enters into the play of poems late in the Maximus IV,V,VI volume. Of particular note is the presence of cattle imagery at the foundation of Olson's picture of the world. Audhumla, the Cow of Dogtown, and Nut, — and in the swamplands, cows with deformed horns:

all the horns of the cattle
particularly the deformed horns
come upward to carry the impression
Ptah

and,¹⁹

turn out your
ever-loving arms, Vir-
gin And
Mother

Here is a theology and cosmology at the origins of belief, where the Cow is our Christian Virgin, who bears the Lux Mundi, Flower of Creation. She is one of the sacred cattle with deformed horns pictured in figure 38 of Frankfort's Kingship and the Gods, — from the Nuer, Dinka, Old Kingdom

and New Kingdom scenes at Luxor (our fig. 2). One of the depictions of deformed horns shows them shaped like human hands which lift a human figure and encompass a human world like that which exists between the arms of Crescent Beach at Gloucester. The horns of the Cow, like the spires of the Church of Our Lady of Good Voyage (which hold the image of the Virgin aloft) contain the extent of human creation within their bound. They surround and guard a world on water, a Tyre at Gloucester, built on Ptah-Ta-Tjenen or on a mound of mud in a post-glacial marsh landscape full of East African cattle:

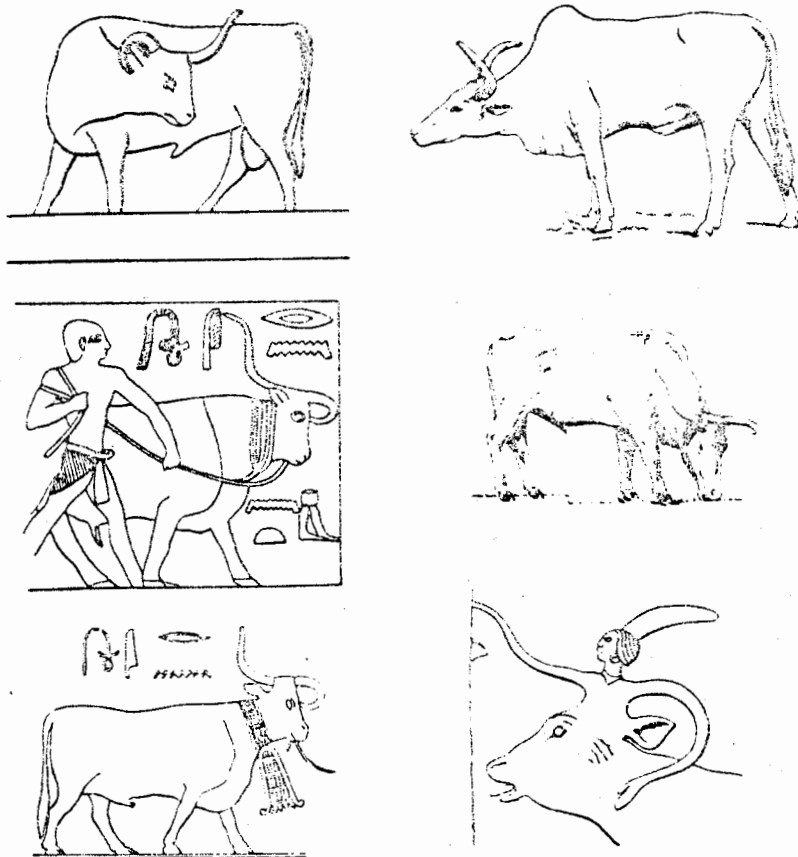


Fig. 2. Cattle with Artificial Deformations of Horns in Tombs of the Old Kingdom at Luxor, and among the Dinka and Nuer.

These
are the chronicles
of an imaginary
town

placed as an island
close to the shore

"CHRONICLES".

PART 2

Gate & Center of the Polis

Under consideration is Olson's essay, "The Gate and the Center," which primarily gives the image whose structure is a walled city, entered into through gates, whose center is occupied by ruler and scribe. See,—H.P. L'orange, "The Cosmic City of the Ancient East" in Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World (Oslo, 1953), for the form or morphe of the image. This present section of our study shall introduce an explication of one part of the poem "Maximus, from Dogtown - II."

The Sumerian King List (see Appendix A) records Kingship at Sumer from the fifth to the second millenia B.C. The actual formation of kingship occurs under the ruler who, like Narmer / Menes of the Nile valley, united all the tribal nomes of the Tigris-Euphrates valleys under a dynastic rulership. The ruler who achieved this, c. 3100 B.C., was named Etana, "the shepherd," recorded as the tenth king of the 1st dynasty at Kish, in the King List, he "who made firm all the lands."

The King List first introduces us to kingship at Eridu, south of Ur, where it is said "two kings reigned 64,800 years." This part of the List, ending "after eight

kings reigned 241,000 years," records the very ancient protohistorical memory of Ubaid peoples who lived in the marsh diluvium which covered all of the Mesopotamian valley from the Persian Gulf north beyond Hit and Samarra to Lake Van, in post-glacial times. The Ubaid culture, originally at home in southern Iraq, spread over the whole of Mesopotamia, c. 4400-4300 B.C. They were the first Near Eastern culture to influence such a vast area of control. They laid the foundations of Sumerian civilization and after their entrance into history Mesopotamia became the unchallenged center of the civilized Near East,—

they were the first important civilizing force in ancient Sumer, its first farmers, cultivators, cattle raisers, and fishermen; its first weavers, leather-workers, carpenters, smiths, potters, and masons. Once again it was linguistic analysis that provided the proof.

Kramer, The Sumerians, pp. 40-41.

In the poem "Chronicles," Olson suggests linguistics as a means of recovering informations about Sumer's earliest inhabitants. Olson is following Samuel Noah Kramer's interest in "loanwords" and "borrowings,"—words in the Sumerian vocabulary which indicate pre-Sumerian substrata of human life in the Mesopotamian valley. The first linguistic analysis of the Sumerian language was published by Beno Landsberger in 1944.²⁰ Examining Sumerian documents of the third millenium B.C., Landsberger distinguished certain words

having a polysyllabic root which differ from the usual monosyllabic words found in the Sumerian language. The names of Sumer's two life-giving rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, idiglat and barunna in cuneiform, are not Sumerian words. Among other pre-Sumerian polysyllabic words, Landsberger identified the following: engar farmer, udul herdsman, shuhadak fisherman, apin plough, tibira metalworker, simug smith, nangar carpenter, ishbar weaver, pahar potter, damgar merchant, &c. Whereas archaeological evidence of a pre-Sumerian peoples is very scant, linguistic informations provide an excellent and detailed look at the human occupations and level of civilization which had been achieved in the proto-historical age before the Sumerian peoples arrived in the Mesopotamian valley. Landsberger called these pre-Sumerian settlers of Sumer, Proto-Euphrateans, who are known in archaeology as the Ubaid people, named after the cultural remains first unearthed at al-Ubaid, not far from Ur.

Nor are the names of Sumer's most important urban centers, —Eridu, Ur, Larsa, Isin, Adab, Kallab, Lagash, Nippur, Kish, —words which have a satisfactory Sumerian etymology. Both the rivers and the cities, or rather the villages which later became cities, must have been named by a people that did not speak the Sumerian language, just as, for example such names as Mississippi, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Dakota indicate the first inhabitants of the United States did not speak the English language.

Kramer, The Sumerians, p. 40.

The methodology expressed in the above passage from The Sumerians is employed in Olson's own re-discovery of the

origins of Gloucester's human center. The poem we are referring to is both fragmented and concise and deals with the linguistic memory of an Indian presence at Cape Ann, just as epigraphic study of the Sumerian language has revealed an Ubaid presence at Mesopotamia in the fifth millenium B.C. Only two Indian words have survived at Cape Ann: Wyngaersheek and Annisquam,—

off-upland
 only Ubaid
 gets "in"
 to riverine
 (Squam

Old Norse / Algonquin²¹

The materials necessary to understand this fragment are extremely precise and come from James R. Pringle's History of the Town of Gloucester (1892) pp. 16-17. Most Indians were wiped out by smallpox:—

From this absence of Indians arises the paucity of Indian names on the Cape.

The two that remain are Wyngaersheek and Annisquam, the designation of the harbor on the northerly side of the Cape. The earliest mention of the latter name is in Wood's map, in 1634, where it is spelled Anasquam, and in Josselyn's "Account of Two Voyages in New England," in 1638, the orthography is Wondoquam. Various surmises have been made as to the meaning of the word. The Indian words "Winne," "Wonne," etc., are said to signify something pleasant, and the word "Squam" is said to mean "a breaking water beach," the combination

"Wonne" and "Squam" giving us "beautiful breaking water beach," a plausible meaning when the surroundings are taken into consideration. Hon. J. Hammond Trumbull, LL.D., who is said to be the only person who can read Eliot's Indian Bible in the original, says "the name is certainly derived from 'Wanash-ague-ompsk,' 'the top or extreme point of a rock.'" The learned doctor further states "that he has little doubt that 'Wanashquomskgut' originally belonged to the headland of the Cape, and was transferred to the harbor and river. Wyngaersheek almost universally accepted as the Indian name of Cape Ann is repudiated by Dr. Turnbull, who says that the word is not Indian, or, if so, is changed in the spelling to such a degree as to make it unrecognizable. Prof. E.N. Horsford, the learned Norse antiquarian, comes to the rescue and says that the word "Wyngaersheek" is an undoubted corruption of the German name, low Dutch, Wyngaerts Hoeck, which occurs on many maps of the period between 1630 and 1670, especially in Ogilvy's "America." Wyngaerts Hoeck is from Wyngaerten, and is the equivalent of what the Northmen designated as Vineland, and as Champlain, in his account of his visit here in 1606, says that grapes were found quite plentiful, the application may not have come amiss.

"Squam" appears in the poem we have just examined, and was the Norse / Algonquin derivation of the river name, Annisquam. The other remaining Norse / Algonquin word at Cape Ann, "Wyngaersheek," appears in "Maximus, from Dogtown, - II," again from James Pringle's History, via a methodology proposed in Kramer's The Sumerians:

: Wyngaershoek hoik Grape Vine HOYK the
Dutch

& the Norse
and Algonquins
He-with-the-House-on-his-Head

she-who-Lusted After-the
Snake-in-the-Pond

The two stories which appear in the last agglutinated phrases are given elsewhere in the Maximus IV, V, VI volume, and are from Leland's The Algonquin Legends of New England. The Sumerian tongue was also agglutinative, like Algonquin, differing from our own mode of grammatical syntax. When Europe entered the American hemisphere all the memory of this Indian, or even paleolithic or paleo-Indian history, was erased from the land. The "official story" of history condemned all non-European elements into Tartaros.

In "Maximus, from Dogtown, - IV," Olson says all the originals are imprisoned, by Zeus. He rewrites Hesiod's Theogony in such a way that it no longer aggrandizes Zeus' omnipotency, but releases the origins of the history of the world which have been covered so deeply in sands and only recently revealed by the Archaeologist of Morning. The "Dogtown, - IV" poem is about archaeology. Tartaros contains all the buried fragmented remains, values that must be refound. In the "Dogtown, - II" poem, two words are released from the prison of forgotten time. The memory of a larger imagination, going back to its first origins, is re-discovered. Perhaps we might add Olson's definition of history, a widespread notion, given by John Smith, Bernini, Shakespeare &c., as "the memory of time." It is the memory whose time expressions must be preserved in the life of the world. Truth is responsible to history. Eternity in the human species is history.

The Ubaid peoples did not long remain the sole and dominant peoples in ancient Sumer. Semitic peoples moved into the Mesopotamian valley from the Syrian desert and Arabian peninsula, probably in the early fourth millenium B.C.:

even the oldest Sumerian inscriptions contain a number of Semitic loanwords, and the Sumerian pantheon contains not a few deities which are of Semitic origin—some of these borrowings may reach back to very early days. Finally, the first dynasty of Sumer whose existence can be historically attested at least to some extent, the so-called First Dynasty of Kish, which according to the ancients themselves followed immediately upon the subsidence of the Flood, begins with a whole group of rulers bearing Semitic names . . . it seems not unreasonable to conjecture that the Semites followed the Proto-Euphrateans into Sumer and that as a result of the cross-fertilization of their two cultures, there came into being the first relatively high civilization in Sumer, one in which the Semitic element was probably dominant.

Kramer, The Sumerians, p. 42.

In fact three of the four pre-Sargonic dynasties at Kish have rulers with Semitic names. The Semitic peoples had an immeasurable effect on the rise of the Sumerian center of civilization. The Sumerians themselves did not arrive until some time in the second half of the fourth millenium, c. 3300 B.C. They probably came from a city-state known as Aratta, situated in the region of the Caspian Sea. The first Sumerian ruler whose deeds are recorded was Etana of Kish, "he who made firm all the lands." Etana is followed by seven Semitic rulers. Then Kish was defeated and kingship over Sumer changed to the city of Eanna, where Enmerkar came

to power, he who built the city of Erech, where Gilgamesh ruled as king c. 2700 B.C. The tri-cornered battle for kingship between the cities of Kish, Erech and Ur, continues throughout the King List.

Subsequent history may be outlined in brief. The Semitic Dynasty of Accad was established by Sargon I, and lasted from c. 2360-2180 B.C., "when eleven kings reigned 197 years." Sargon and his successors ruled over an empire which included the whole of Mesopotamia, extending into Syria and Elam, Arabia and Asia Minor. Discoveries at Ninevah, Nuzi and Tell Ibraw in northern Mesopotamia, detail events of this Accadian Semitic element in the Near East. The Accadian Empire crashed under the blows of "Gutian hordes" (cf. the King List) who swept out of the Zagros Mountains c. 2180 B.C. Sumerian culture revived in the south (after Semitic elements were crushed by the Gutian invaders) with the Neo-Sumerian Third Dynasty of Ur, c. 2060-1950 B.C., founded by Ur-Nammu. The King List tells us that "Ur was defeated,"—by Amorites, nomadic "Westerners," Semites, and the Sumero-Accadian provinces passed into Amorite rule, c. 2100-1800 B.C. Here the King List ends, with Sumerian rule shifting from Ur to Isin. Babylon rose to political supremacy during the First Babylonian Dynasty (1894-1898), particularly under King Hammurabi (1792-1750), and during this Dynasty Marduk became the national god. Hammurabi's victory over the Amorite centers of Larsa, Eshnunna and Mari

assured the ascendancy of Semitic Babylon, an empire which covered the same territory as that of the Third Dynasty of Ur and lasted over a century and a half. Within that period the Sumerian language disappeared, eclipsed in Semitic, never to regain its presence in Mesopotamian cultures.

These events are the subject of a chapter in Olson's Proprioception called "A Work," which deals with the historical background of the divine genealogy down to the second millenium B.C. Just as the King List may be divided into three historical epochs, Ubaid, Semitic and Sumerian, ending with rule at Kish and Erech under the national god Enlil, so the Babylonian cosmogony records an early era of divine rule under Tiamat and Apsu. Where Apsu is defeated by Ea (Enlil), it is Marduk who challenges and overcomes Tiamat, at the time of the rise of Hammurabi to kingship in Babylon with the defeat of Amorite and Sumerian predecessors. In other words the Babylonian Genesis, known as the Enuma Elish (found in the ruins of King Ashurbanipal's palace at Ninevah, ruler from c. 668-630 B.C.) probably celebrates and commemorates Hammurabi's victories in the story of Marduk's supremacy over Tiamat, date 1792 (the year Hammurabi achieved kingship at Babylon). Olson stresses this historical ground of divine genealogy via informations he obtained from Hans Gustav Gütterbock. The Theogony is written by events up to the second millenium B.C., and then passed to the Greeks where it is copied by Hesiod. In the Theogony Gods are men, Kings

of the city, public and conspicuous leaders who, like Gilgash, are remembered as "two thirds divine, one part human."

The problem is what seems still to be unwritten history, the History of the Second Millenium B.C. Already in fact an historian-scholar of Hittite, such as Hans Gütterbock, has suggested that the classic three generations of God-Fathers Absolute, and their Wives and Sons, is in fact some serious summary of conditions in each of three successive millenia, the 4th, the 3rd and the 2nd, . . .

I stress the 2nd Millenium because it is clear that the series set themselves then, . . . the fathers run out decisively in the 2nd.

Proprioception.

And this from Hans Gütterbock's "Oriental Forerunners of Hesiod":

The age when Enlil ruled the world is actually known in history. In the Sumerian period of the third millenium Enlil was the supreme god. Only after the rise of the Semitic Dynasty of Babylon at the beginning of the second millenium was his place taken by Marduk, the local god of Babylon, to whom, as the texts say, Enlilship was transferred. The idea that one generation of gods is replaced by another, therefore, seems to reflect an historical event in this one case. Kumarbi has practically no cult in Hittite terms, just as Enlil was not worshipped outside Nippur after the end of the Sumerian period, and the same seems to be true for Kronos. The possibility of tracing the figures of Kronos and Kumarbi back to Enlil, whose loss of worship was the result of a historical event, now helps us to understand the character of these two gods better.

In the second millenium B.C. Marduk replaced Enlil (Ea) at Babylon (Semitic reign replaced Sumerian); Tesub replaced Kumarbi in the Hittite realm; Baal and Anath re-

placed Enlil (El) and Asherah in the Phoenician domain,— each telling of the rise of new political centers out of a Sumerian, third millenium background. The changes may be outlined as follows (Proprioception, p. 16):²²

<u>Millenium</u>	Phoenician	Hittite	Babylonian	Sumerian
	Elium or Hypistos	Alalu		
4-5th	Ouranos	Anu	Tiamat & Apsu	
3rd	Enlil & Asherah	Kumarbi	Ea (Enlil)	Enlil
2nd	Baal & Anath	Tesub	Marduk	

The corresponding generations in the Greek rewrite of the second millenium Theogony are: 4-5th. Uranos; 3rd. Kronos; 2nd Zeus. The Greeks inherited their Theogony from Phoenicians such as those who lived at Ugarit in the Amarna Age c. 1400 B.C., whose mythology is well preserved in the Ras Shamra tablets. However by Homer and the Bible, that is by 1200 B.C. (accepting the Mycenaean influences on Homer) and the time of the Trojan Wars, the genealogy had been fixed. Gods were no longer kings. The loss of human stature occurred post-1200, late in the second millenium. That is why Olson goes back in mythistory to regain our original divine manhood standing at the origin and center of Sumerian emergence in the Near East.

I would like, now, to retrace the emergence of Sumer out of a pre-Sumerian history that existed prior to the Flood. The King List tells us that rulership came down from heaven a second time in the post-glacial, post-diluvial

epoch, when Enlil at Kish replaced an older and deposed divinity. Indeed we might take the Flood as a literal entrance into the previous center of life, as Albright does in his book From the Stone Age to Christianity, p.9:

The end of the last Ice Age (the last advance of the Würm in Europe and of the Wisconsin in America) can now be placed with confidence about 11,000 years ago; naturally this date is only a rough approximation, since there were minor oscillations and it may have taken centuries for the change to be completed. I see no reason any longer for refusing to connect the traditions of the Great Flood in most regions of Eurasia and America, including particularly Mesopotamia and Israel, with the tremendous floods accompanying and following the critical melting of the glaciers about 9,000 B.C.

With this highly speculative assertion we return to the human Pleistocene experience of man which we entered in the last chapter,—in an age ruled by pre-Kronion divinities, ab origine and prior to the fifth millenium B.C. Archaeologists now know that the Ubaid civilization in Mesopotamia was preceded by earlier cultures, the Hasunah and Halaf ages of swamp life which gave birth to the Ubaid rise c. 4300 B.C. to the center. The Ubaid peoples in fact built monumental temples of mud-brick, highly advanced structures, sometimes on stone foundations, erected at the hub of walled cities built on mounds at Eridu, Tepe Gawra, Abu Sharein &c. Much work on these peoples has followed Landsberger's linguistic analysis of 1944. They were already highly civilized, though pre-Sumerian, born out of previous livelihood.

The previous first post-glacial human experience in the Near East is best recorded on cylinder seals and stonework of the Uruk (3500-3100) and Jamdet Nasr (3100-2900) protoliterate periods B.C., immediately preceding Narmer / Menes' rise to Kingship in Dynasty I over Egypt and Etana's union of the Mesopotamian lands into a nation called Sumer. Any of the seals which reveal imagery of primitive shore-life shall remind us of human origins in the Near East, when architecture made its appearance in mud and reed huts, materials of the first and future city. This is the experience we shall now reveal,—of the Great Flood, Apsu, Nun, Enki (Babylonian, Egyptian and Sumerian terms of reference),—using three texts to make that experience contemporary: 1) Fulanain, Haji Rikkan, Marsh Arab, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1927); 2) Wilfred Thesiger, The Marsh Arabs, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1964); and 3) Gavin Maxwell, People of the Reeds, (New York: Harper & Row, 1957). Just as we studied the Sudanese and Libyan background to Egyptian theology and belief, so now we will see what lies behind the Sumerian center.

The span of this enduring experience over six and a half millenia is easily portrayed. For example, we present a stone frieze, now in the British Museum, from the Uruk or Warka Age in the Near East (plate XI) and then pictures of the mudhif built by Arabs in 1958 at Al Juaibar on the Euphrates, 40 miles east of the ancient site of Ur (plate XII).

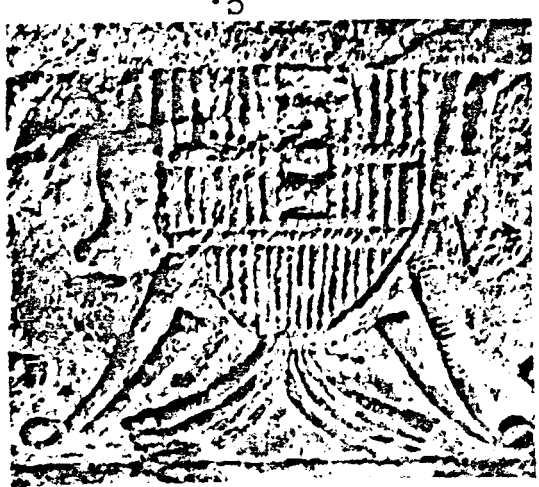
Secondly a god from the Uruk age pulling a reed boat whose prow and stern are curved high to ride freely over a swampland of reeds and rushes (plate XIVb) and its contemporary model used by the Marsh Arabs of today (plates XIIIa & XIVa). And thirdly a flood landscape inhabited by cows, where human life is supported on an island of reeds (plate XIVc). A world elevated on Apsu.²⁴ It is here that we clearly see the human as a species of animal whose will is not obscured by wisdom. Here is the aboriginal center of all Pleistocene human force, living in a landscape of beliefs. Again we recall Olson's history of Gloucester in the post-Wisconsin, where the land is a rising bog marsh come alive with human presence.

Vulgar
swamp and cow
or sow. Wetlands²³

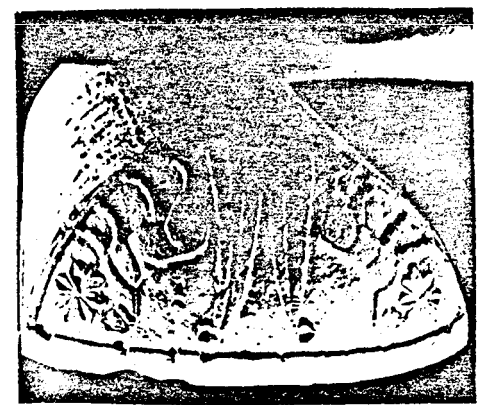
Dogtown rises out of the post-glacial flood like Ptah-Ta-Tjenen, a mound or round reed roof of a cattle byre. A Center and navel of human origins. Here is a description of life in that reed hut on a marsh beginning, taken from Fulanaim, Haji Rikkan, p. 21:

at one end is a low and narrow aperture which serves as a doorway, window and chimney combined; on the rush-strewn and miry floor sleep men and women, children and buffaloes, in warm proximity . . . the ground of the hut often oozing water at every step.

The Sacred Temenos. (a) Mudhif on an alabaster trough from Uruk (modern Warka), dating 3100 B.C., 1.03 m. long. (b) end view showing lamps and rosettes on either side of the glyphic standards for the goddess Inanna. (c) detail of the sacred mudhif.



c.



b.



a.

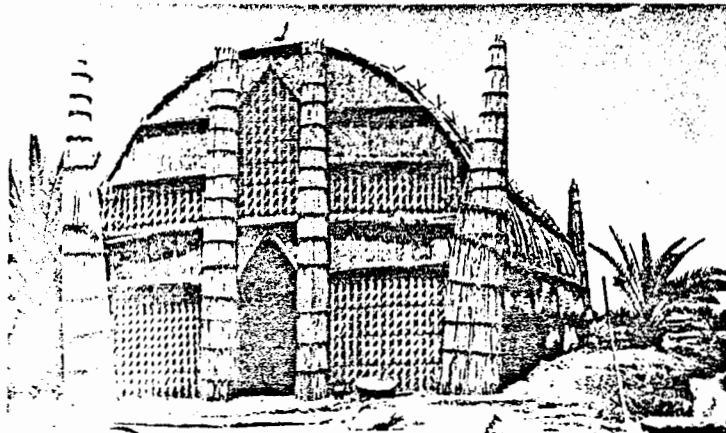
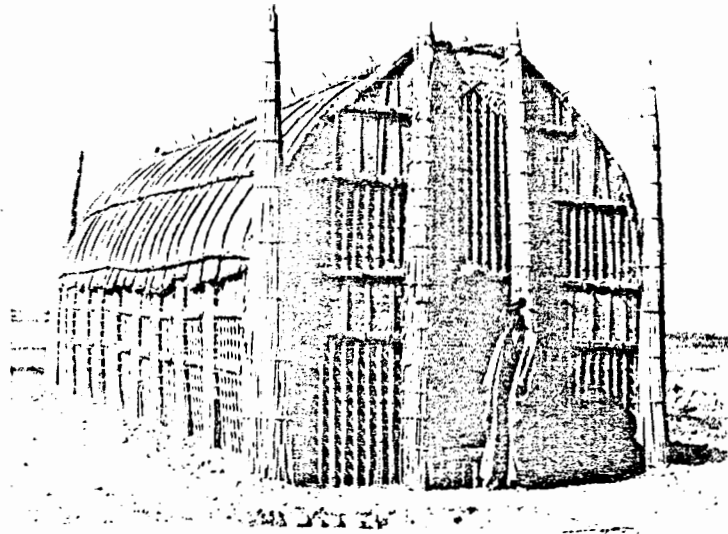
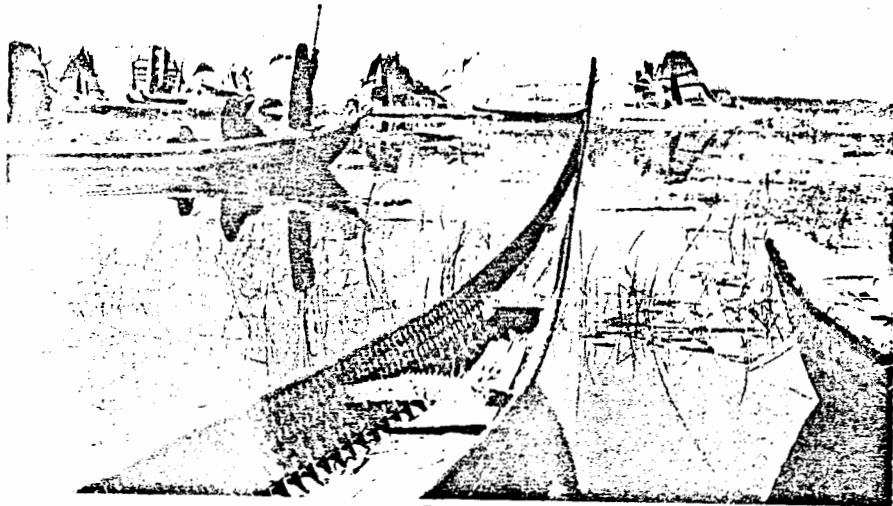
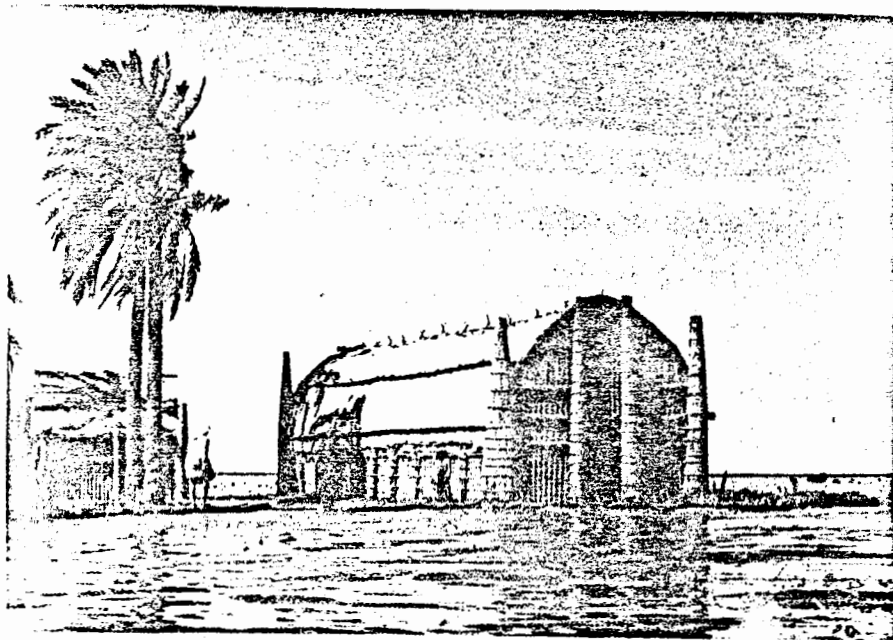


Plate XII. Mudhif of the Marsh Arab. Photographed by
W. Thesiger in 1958, The Marsh Arabs (1964).



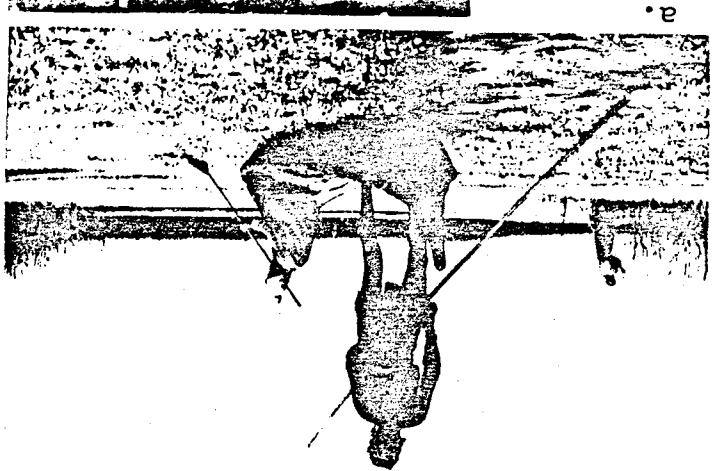
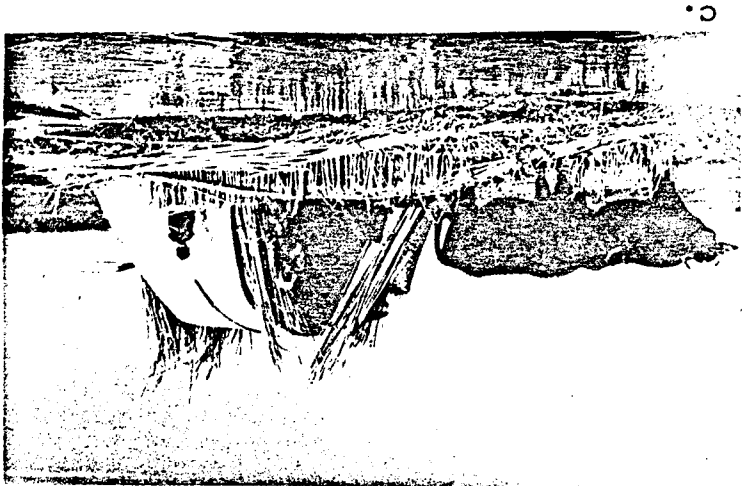
a.



b.

Plate XIII. The Arab Marshland. (a) the floodplain.
(b) mudhif on a mud mound.

The Arab Marshland. (a) and (c) are scenes of a contemporary Mesopotamian floodscape, 1958. From Theisiger, The Marsh Arabs (1964). (b) boatman ferries a passenger on a reed gondola, 5000 B.C.



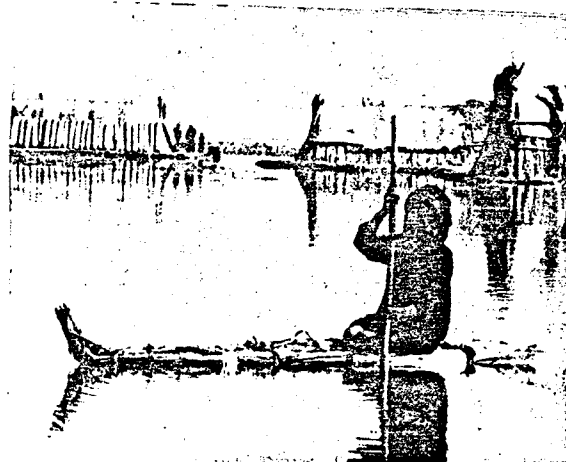
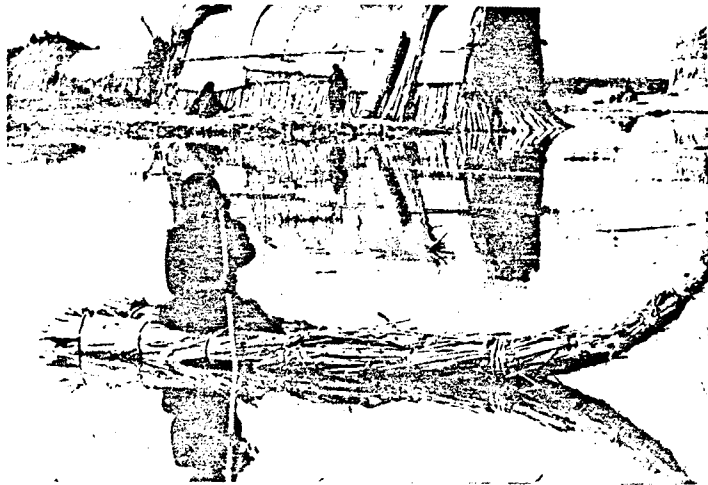
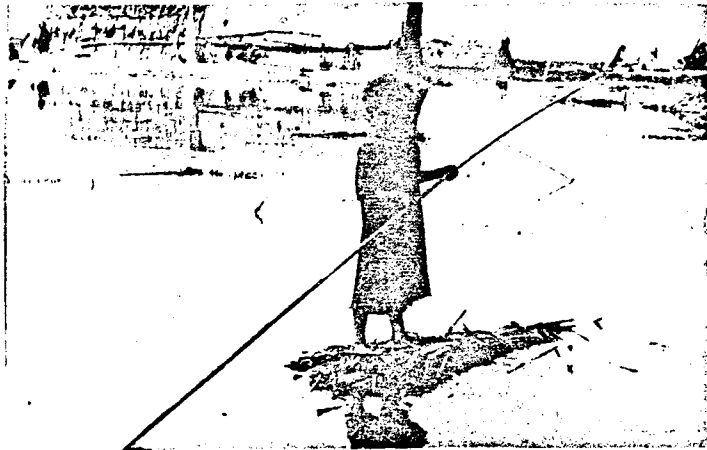


Plate XV. Children on Reed Boats in a Marsh World.
"So like play."

From this center the west begins. Man pushes outwards on a log; Hercules' westward-moving pillar, from Tyre:

when
 Ousoos the
 hunter

 was the first man
 to carve out
 the trunk
 of a tree

 and go out
 on the waters
 from the shore

"Chronicles".

And before the dugout man used floating reed bundles such as those which children ride in our photographs, pushing out through the swamps of the Great Flood at Ur (plate XV).

Once again we are able to apprehend Olson's proposition of "Wetlands" at the elemental root of human polis. We see belief practiced at its origins, where buffalo, reed ships, cattle and byres, in swamps of Iraq and Iran, sustain an entire theology based in a dogmatics of experience. Both Egypt and Sumer had such low beginnings, origins of force which we tend to overlook in our pursuit after significance and importance. According to Olson it is just such fishermen, living on the beginning shore of human time, who possess all the size that exists for our species of aquatic animal kind. The cattle byre is again the gateway to the future of belief.

Eleven great horse-shoe arches supported the roof. Like the entrance pillars, these were made of the stems of giant reeds, bound closely together, and were nine feet in circumference where they emerged from the ground, and two and a half feet at the top. These reeds, I discovered, could grow to twenty-four feet in height. To complete the framework, further reed bundles, married so as to resemble two-inch cables, were lashed, one above the other, along the entire length of the building on the outside of the arches. The contrast between this horizontal ribbing and the shape of the vertical arches made a striking pattern seen from within. The roof itself was covered with overlapping reed mats, similar to those on the floor and sewn on to the ribs in such a way as to ensure a fourfold thickness. The sides of the room were the colour of pale gold but the ceiling was darkened by smoke to a deep chestnut and gave the effect of being varnished.

Both on the Euphrates and on the Tigris the mudhifs represented an extraordinary architectural achievement with the simplest possible materials; the effect of enrichment, given by the reed patterns, came entirely from functional methods of construction. Historically, too, they were important. Long familiarity with houses such as these may well have given man the idea of imitating their arched form in mud bricks, as the Greeks later perpetuated wooden techniques in stone.

Thesiger, The Marsh Arabs,
pp. 16-17 & 217.

Today the swamplands of the Mesopotamian valley extend over the lower regions of the Tigris and Euphrates in Persia and Iraq, where Marsh Arabs continue their amphibious human shore existence. But in the fifth and fourth millennia B.C. the Iranian plateau had not yet become a salt desert and vast tracts of land were covered by the Great Flood mentioned in the King List. As desiccation progressed, post 9,000 B.C., men moved to the center at Kish in the

lower Mesopotamian valley, trying to preserve their marsh-land livelihood which depended on an aquatic bovine, the water buffalo, and ready access to an environ suitable for food-gathering and spear-fishing. Out of this concentrating move came city and civilization in the Near East, domestication and agriculture, plus a theology whose forms of belief have endured even where their content or physical meaning in experience has been lost or forgotten. Olson has attempted, through archaeology, to remember and refound the origins of our human imagination on a landscape of beliefs.

We are prepared, now, to make a second approach, via Mesopotamia, to the milk-yielding tree. We may directly point to Gertrude Levy's chapter "The Cattle-Byre and the Milk-Yielding Tree" in The Gate of Horn, where she talks about "reed-bundles . . . bent today by the marsh-Arabs of Southern Iraq for the construction of their vaulted huts." Those bundles are the ones standing at the entranceway to the Arab mudhif in our plate XI, which in the Sumerian stonecut appear as curved reed-pillars standing over and eventually apart from (as symbol) the byre itself. Gertrude Levy supposes that these curved pillars originally held a mat rolled on a rod over the byre's gateway, as in the figure below which shows the reed pillars of the gate.²⁵

These curved pillars became the pictogram of the Mother Goddess Inanna:

It is astonishing that when stone replaced reed construction in Egypt as brick replaced it in Sumer, a cylindrical lintel still represented such a mat rolled on its rod, among the square-cut features of the doorway.

Levy, The Gate of Horn, p. 98.

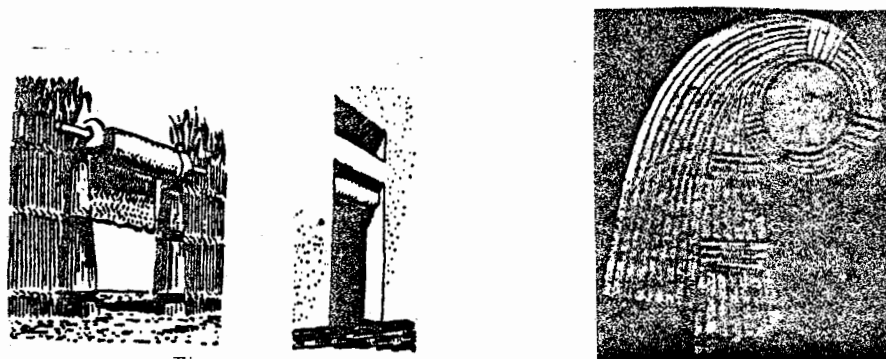



Figure 3. The Gate of Horn.

The byre itself was conceived of as the body of the Goddess Inanna, source of milk; the curved pillar of reeds  her aspect as Goddess of the Gate and symbolic as a milk-tree of Life. Levy describes how her votaries approached the Gate bearing flowering rods (p. 120, The Gate of Horn). And how in Asia Tammuz was born of the milk-tree Ishtar, just as Horus was born from the Hathor-pillar

in reed swamps of Egypt. It is the flowering reed which has given birth to human theology and city out of a Near Eastern landscape of beliefs. The flowering reed which is a flowering rood-Cross at the entrance to a cattle manger in Christianity. The cow-tree gives human life and creation. It is the generic gate to our own, Neolithic, post-glacial origins.

At this point, and before going into Chapter Two of our study, I should like to emphasize that Olson relies entirely upon such works as we have presented, e.g. those of Gerturde Levy, James Mellaart and Henri Frankfort, in the construction of his poetics of world. His archaeological finds are not his own. They belong to the world, post-1910. As a critic it is my job to present a groundwork that may equal the imagination contained in his poetics. The groundwork laid in this chapter has returned us to our species of shore life in the last interglacial at Gloucester and Sumer, any such locality, center and origin of human life. The materials used to do this will not be surprising to any person who is well versed in this archaeology. I have not attempted to be erudite or difficult. I have attempted to portray events which give us a knowledge with which to grasp Olson's picture of the world, and that is all. Some persons will be ahead of this work (especially those immersed in archaeology) and need no such introduction. I hope others will find a history of beliefs which is, from its

very marsh base in the mire, firmly rooted to a picture of human existence and planted at the very gateway to an unexpected world of aboriginal sources. Obviously Olson's stance in the Great Flood Wetlands, surrounded by elements, rock, ice and water, must change our image of man back to species and experience, object plus fact working in a human universe. The sublime is deposed to species. Homo sapiens turns into Pleisanthropus, Pleistocene biped, with the gain that all belief is a theology of experience so immanently revealed that gods become men on a divine landscape of rushes, cattle and reed ships, codfishermen on George's Bank,—where achievement takes place. The sublime is no advance; no progress over the "primitive." It merely estranges our species of outlook from that which is familiar, common and even vulgar (in Dante's sense of De vulgari eloquentia). Beneath Latin lies a stratum of lost and refound beliefs which Olson, as Archaeologist of Morning, renews, thereby giving us back our world.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGY DRAMA OF THE HEART

H. D.

DANTE

OLSON

PART I

Hilda Doolittle's WAR TRILOGYThe Quest for the Oil of Mercy

In Christianity the milk-tree sheds a substance called oleum misericordiae, oil of mercy,—just as Inanna's reed pillar sheds milk and Hathor's sycamore tree a white fluid exudate the color of milk. The tree is the Tree of Life and it stands at the Center of the World in the Earthly Garden called Terrestrial Paradise,—Genesis 2:19, and Revelations 22: 1-2,—

And he showed me a pure river of water of life,
clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne
of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side
of the river, was there the tree of life, which
bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit
every month; and the leaves of the tree were for
the healing of the nations.

I should like to introduce the reader to the poetics
of Hilda Doolittle's War Trilogy as a means of entering a
theology, through an archaeology that rediscovers the sub-
stances of belief. Christian belief that has almost been
forgotten completely. In fact we shall involve ourselves
in a quest that goes back to the origins of image in
Christian doctrine.

Hilda Doolittle wrote the War Trilogy during the second world war, a war in which her London flat was bombed and her marriage to Richard Aldington shattered. She went in search of walls that do not fall; walls which preserve and are preserved by the Axis Mundi of the Tree of Life. The War Trilogy has never been studied in detail, never fully understood, and yet as a poetic cosmology it stands beside Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown, - II." Olson's poem is an extension of that quest which is generated and initiated in the War Trilogy. Both authors attempt to reveal contemporary belief without giving up the identity of their own, proprioceptive and ontogenetic, experience of the world. They each attempt to find the footing for belief on a physical landscape of informations that exist in the public cosmology (not private) of shared world. Each attempts to find a dogmatics in experience that may equal a theology:

recover the secret of Isis
which is: there was One

in the beginning, Creator,
Fosterer, Begetter, the Same-forever

in the papyrus-swamp,
in the Judean meadow.

"The Walls Do Not Fall" XXXIX.

come down to the Earth
of Us All, the Many who
know

there is One!
One Mother
One Son

One Daughter
and Each the Father
of Him-Her-Self:

"Maximus, from Dogtown, - II".

The materials which H.D. uses to achieve her reconstruction of belief are materials whose force is necessary to comprehend Olson's Dogtown poem, so we have the opportunity of revealing H.D.'s poetics of the War Trilogy as a means of entering Olson's cosmology. It is my own opinion that H.D. and Olson are the two greatest archaeologists of morning in poetics after 1910, so the task before us shall contain a large value. I would also add that the following pages give enough material that H.D. may then be explored further by the reader. Our explication of the Trilogy is by no means exhaustive, but is rather projective, giving a scope which has never been defined in a scholarship of the Trilogy nor of any of H.D.'s other works, while at the same time giving us entrance into Olson's "Dogtown, - II" poem.

We have already witnessed how H.D. takes the flowering rod back to its roots as a stone papyrus column, in the temple of Luxor, on the Nile's bank. Hathor of the swamps is the Goddess of that papyrus reed which grows continuously out of the Nile diluvium and Great Flood. She gives birth to Horus, the Pharoah, by reviving the dead King Osiris back to life with milk shed from herself as Divine Cow or milk-yielding Tree of Life. She feeds the dead king her

oil of mercy and thereby gives him life everlasting in the swamps of Egypt and rebirth as a young and revived Horus. These events return us to the Nuer or Marsh-Arab experience; belief at its most fundamental interglacial origins.

After her life had been shrapnelled in W.W. II, H.D. fled to Egypt, to Luxor, where walls built by Amenhotep III still stand. Walls as old as man's first reed-bundle temple. At Luxor the steel gunfire of the War is quiet. Iron is one element (with bronze, tin and clay) which is not admitted into paradise. It is the metal of the molten pool of Hell in Bosch's right panel of "The Garden of Earthly Delights," the fiery pit of molten lava in Milton's Paradise Lost, a lake of red-hot burning mud. At Luxor there is no fire of the canon or night blast of a bombing raid. No noise of an aircraft engine and siren wail. There is no iron jaw and tooth. H.D. crosses the bridge over Hell to terrestrial paradise in the enclosed hortus conclusus of the Luxor temple. Her frequent references to iron in the Trilogy are actual references to the fact that paradise excludes iron, the forged metal of destruction. According to a traditional landscape of salvation, man must cross over the molten jaws of Hell, where Leviathan, a shark-fish Beelzebub, leaps out of his molten sea of iron to grasp and devour, like a cannibal, the fallen sinners.

chasm, schism in consciousness
must be bridged over;

"The Walls Do Not Fall" XXXVI.

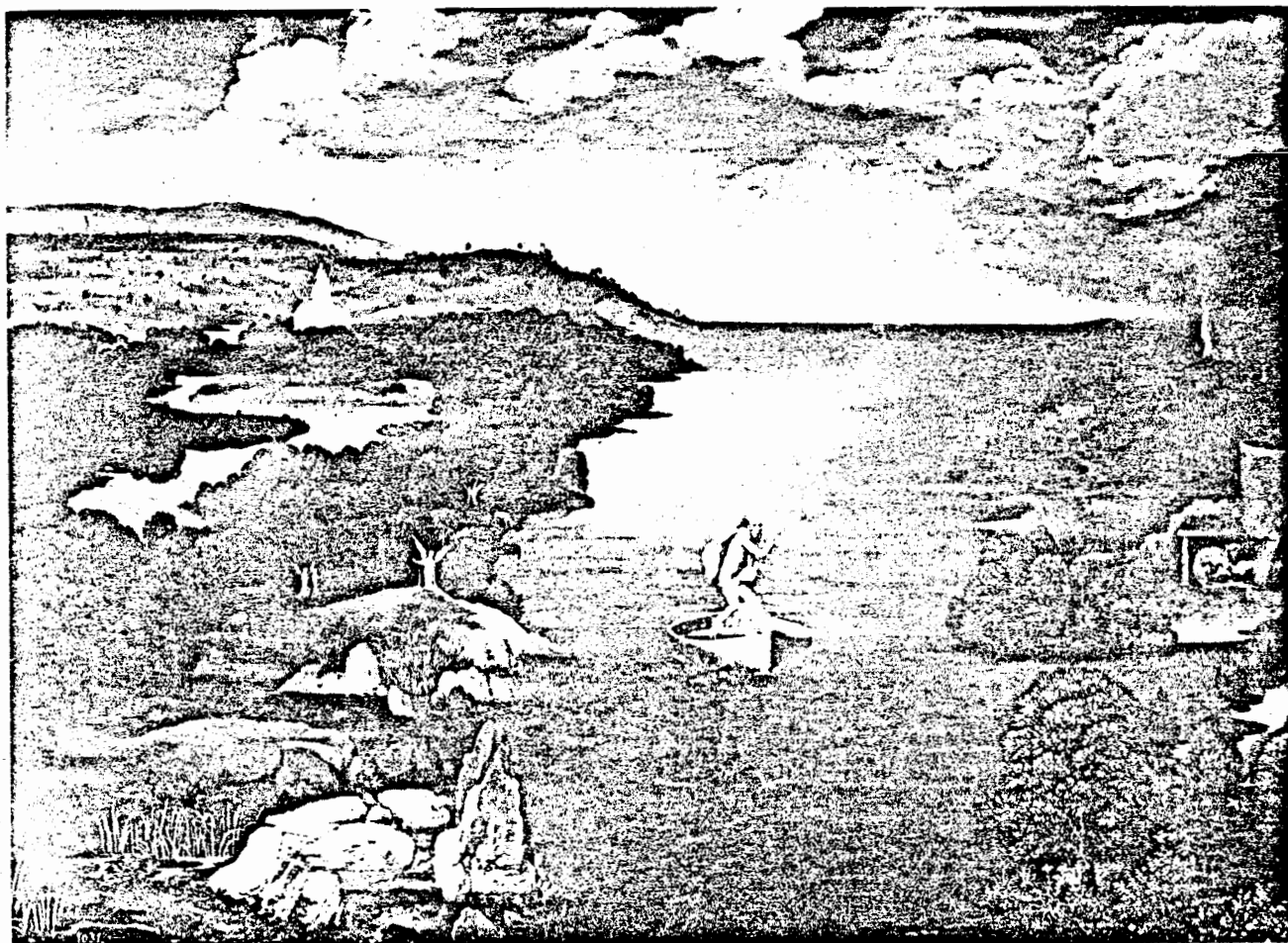


Plate XVI. Charon Crossing the Styx, by Joachim Patinir.
Prado, Madrid.

The crossing to paradise is sometimes made by a bridge. Sometimes it is achieved in a boat, paddled by a Waterman over the molten liquid of Hell, as in Joachim Patinir's Charon Crossing the Styx (plate XVI) or Dante, Inferno Canto 8, where Phlegyas ferries he and Virgil across the Styx. H.D. calls this passage over and through Hell to the other shore and paradise the bridging of consciousness, crossing a nightmare sea into the Aquarian Age, the contemporary age which is the destination of the Waterman who ferries souls across the abyss:

I heard scorpion whet his knife,
I found Archer (taut his bow),

Goat's horns were threat,
would climb high? then fall low;

across the abyss
the waterman waited

this is the age of the new dimension

"The Walls Do Not Fall" XXX.

In Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown, - II," the Waterman also waits on the other shore. It is our job to bridge the abyss so that we stand in the cosmology which is given by Aquarius, our contemporary age. Having crossed Styx, the waters of Hell, of War and progress, technology and machinery,— leap out of the boat,—

LEAP onto
the LAND, the AQUARIAN
TIME

"Maximum, from Dogtown - II".



Plate XVII. Capricorn, the Goat above the Abyss. "The Temptation of Christ" by the Master L. CZ. Engraving, British Museum.



Plate XVIIIa. Scorpio (to illustrate Revelations 9).
 "The Temptation of St. Anthony," by Lucas
 Cranach. Engraving, British Museum.



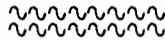
Plate XVIIIb. Scorpio. The Scorpion-Horses of Revelations.
 From the Beatus Apocalypse of Saint-Sever,
 1028/72. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale.

We understand, then, that Olson's cosmology, expressed in the "Dogtown, - II" poem, and H.D.'s theology of the War Trilogy have a common desire to cross Hell over to Aquarian Time, where schism of the abyss is healed in the ONE. In fact the call to cross into the Aquarian; to bridge the schism, —comes from Carl Jung, Aion, on the FISH and need to get out of the Picean into the Aquarian:

If, as seems probable, the aeon of the fishes is ruled by the archetypal motif of the hostile brothers, then the approach of the next Platonic month, namely Aquarius, will constellate the problem of the union of opposites.

By then (A.D. 3239) the spring-point will have moved from its present 18 degrees into Aquarius, the next aeon, that of the Water Carrier.

Jung, Aion, pp. 87 & 82.

The Ichthys sign of the Picean Age is written thus: →←¹ as two opposing fish-heads, a schism that will become the union One in the Age of the Water Carrier, Aquarius .

Hilda Doolittle proposes images of the abyss created by the schism, images she has taken out of a very perceptive reading of a mediaeval iconography. She has said the goat climbs high and will fall, as in The Temptation of Christ by the master L. CZ. (plate XVII) which shows Christ and a devil on a high peak opposite a mountain goat which peers down into the abyss. She has called the steel iron knife a scorpion's tail-stinger, which bites like the hornets in Lucas Cranach's The Temptation of St. Anthony,

(plate XVIII)an illustration whose insects of torment are drawn according to Revelations 9:^{1a}

And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, . . .

These events happen under the signs of Scorpio and Sagittarius whose weapons are stings and torments that inflict the metallic pain of war. Hilda Doolittle's Trilogy is composed in this way, out of innumerable images from a complex iconographic representation of Christian experience and belief. We have no intention of covering all such images, which would take a work in itself, but merely point out, in passing, this fact which has gone unnoticed. A reading of the poem requires intensive training in the meaning of images that exist throughout European tradition, up to the time of the Romantic era.

In fact the importance of H.D.'s and Olson's work, expressed in the poems we are now studying, can be briefly stated in Jung's demand for a return to a poetics that lived before the schism was created in the "modern" age:

We must suppose, rather, that he himself (Joachim) was destined to bridge and compensate the frightful gulf that had opened out between Christ and Anti-christ in the eleventh century. The anti-Christian era is to blame that the spirit became non-spiritual and that the vitalizing archetype gradually degenerated into rationalism, intellectualism, and doctrinairism, all of which leads straight to the tragedy of modern times now hanging over our heads like a sword of Damocles. In the old formula for the Trinity, as Joachim knew it, the dogmatic figure of the devil is lacking, for then as now he led a questionable existence somewhere on the fringes of theological metaphysics, in the shape of the mysterium iniquitatis. Fortunately for us, the threat of his coming had already been foretold in the New Testament—for the less he is recognized the more dangerous he is. Who would suspect him under those high-sounding names of his, such as public welfare, lifelong security, peace among the nations, etc.? He hides under idealisms, under -isms in general, and of these the most pernicious is doctrinairism, the most unspiritual of all the spirit's manifestations. The present age must come to terms drastically with the facts as they are, with the absolute opposition that is not only tearing the world asunder politically but has planted a schism in the human heart. We need to find our way back to the original, living spirit which, because of its ambivalence, is also a mediator and uniter of opposites, an idea that preoccupied the alchemists for many years.

Jung, Aion, p. 86.

this is the age of the new dimension,
dare, seek, seek further, dare more,

here is the alchemist's key,
it unlocks secret doors,

the present goes a step further
toward the fine distillation of emotion,

the elixer of life, the philosopher's stone
is yours if you surrender

sterile logic, trivial reason;
so mind dispersed, dared occult lore,

found secret doors unlocked,
floundered, was lost in sea-depth,

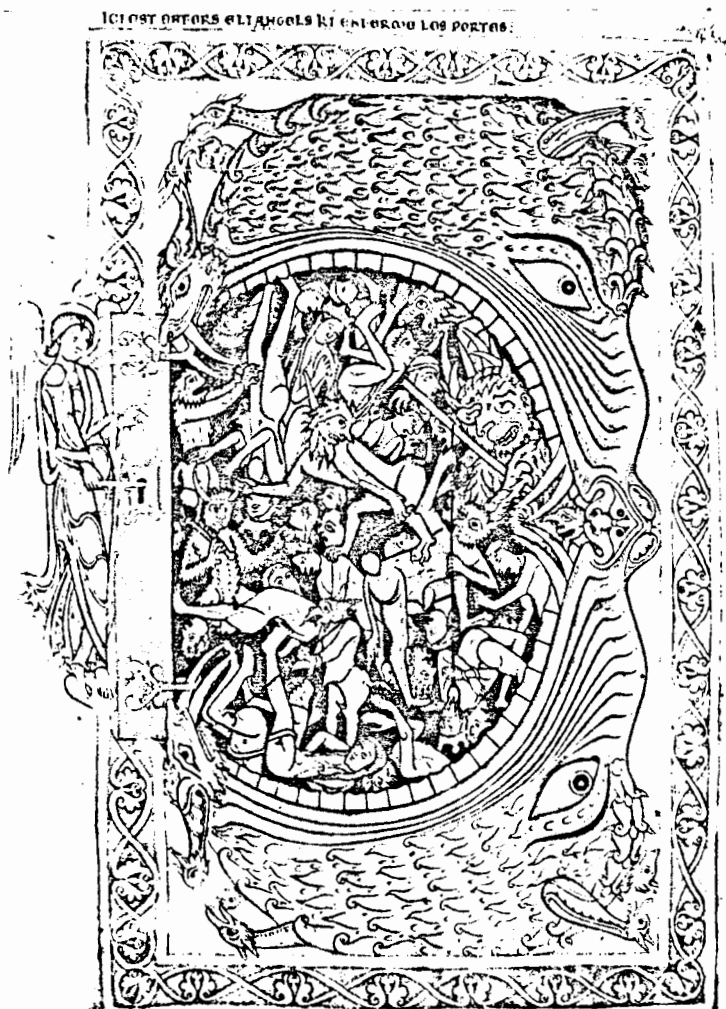


Plate XIX. The Doors of Hell, Hinged on the Fangs of a Two-Faced Leviathan Monster. Detail of "The Last Judgement," by Giusto di Menabuoi, Viboldone Parish Church, Scala.

sub-conscious ocean where Fish
move two-ways, devour;

when identity in the depth,
would merge with the best,

octopus or shark rise
from the sea-floor

illusion, reversion of old values,
oneness lost, madness.

"The Walls Do Not Fall" XXX.

This is how the Trilogy is to be read, as a tract of beliefs which is comprehensible through informations which are almost too large to be held and remembered by the words of the poem. And so when H.D. says her image of Hell is a two-faced shark, she means a Hell such as the one painted by Giusto di Menabuoi in The Last Judgement scene of the Viboldone Parish Church, Scala (plate XX), where the angel Michael locks the doors of Hell which are hinged on the fangs of a double-faced and self-devouring fish monster with two heads. H.D. dares to open that door which Michael keeps locked like a Pandora's box of bottomless torments. When the doors are let loose, all Hell pours forth:²

there is zrr-hiss,
lightning in a not-known,

unregistered dimension;
we are powerless,

dust and powder fill our lungs,
our bodies blunder

through doors twisted on hinges,
and the lintels slant

cross-wise; . . .

and the floor sags
like a ship floundering;

we know no rule
of procedure,

we are voyagers, discoverers
of the not-known,

the unrecorded;
we have no map;

possibly we shall reach haven,
heaven.

"The Walls Do Not Fall" XLIII.

On these words the poem "Walls Do Not Fall" ends. The ship enters into the caverns of Hell's mouth, searching for the way, a bridge, through to the other side, where there exists haven, the firm land of Aquarius, land of terrestrial paradise. The unhinged jaws of Hell are shown in Jerome Cock's (after Pieter Bruegel) The Harrowing of Hell, where the doors collapse on their guards and redeemed souls pour out (plate XX). In H.D.'s poem the movement is another Harrowing of Hell. We enter those unhinged jaws, the decayed hinges of lost spirit, a broken temple with fallen doorways. By the end of the Trilogy the temple's Walls are again in place. They have not fallen. Poet has penetrated to the other side where paradise exists at Luxor. Correspondingly, Olson, as he says, gets the hinges back on the Gate:— "the hinges of civilization to be put back on the door": (Proprioception, pp. 8-9 lists the Hinges # 1 - # 7).



Plate XX. The Broken Doors of Hell; Hell let loose from the jaws of a codfish skull. "The Harrowing of Hell," by Jerome Cock (after Pieter Bruegel). Engraving, Bibliotheque Albert I, Brussels.



Plate XXI. Jaws of the Leviathan-Shark Rising Out of the Molten Sea of Hell Under the Bridge of Judgment. "The Dream of Philip II," El Greco, in the Escorial.

The quest over the bridge across the schism (Harrowing of Hell) is necessary but dangerous, like walking the Cinvat razor's edge over the bottomless pit of madness. In the molten lake under the bridge writhes the shark, cannibal devil, devourer of the Ichthys-sign ~~→~~←, two-headed monster, or three-headed ice-trapped eater of sinners as in Dante's Inferno. The best portrayal of this traditional and active evil of the iron-toothed shark-cannibal is El Greco's nightmare vision called The Dream of Philip II, now at the Escorial(plate XXI),—a nightmare derived from Christian visionary literature of the 12th and 13th centuries, where the bridge over a red-hot sea, and Leviathan's devouring shark-teeth, all flare out of the canvas like an apocalyptic meeting of Heaven and Hell,—like the confrontation of Whale and Whaler in Melville's Moby-Dick. The "Literature of Visions". as a background to such spiritual exercise as this may be read in Chapter IV of H.R. Patch's The Other World (New York, 1970). In the War Trilogy H.D. tells us she has crossed over Hell and will not be devoured by the Fish who swims below in the chasm of a molten iron subconscious nightmare:

so I in my own way know
that the whale

cannot digest me:
be firm in your own small, static, limited

orbit and the shark-jaws
of outer circumference

will spit you forth:
 be indigestible, hard, ungiving,

so that, living within,
 you beget, self-out-of-self,

selfless,
 that pearl-of-great-price

"The Walls Do Not Fall" IV.

The pearl-of-great-price*is too hard, resistant, to be cracked open by the devouring jaws of Hell. In section XXII, H.D. says she would be eaten by Amen, Amen-Ra, the Egyptian Ram, Christ, the Lamb of God, Forever and ever Amen.³ She would be eaten as Nut devours and gives birth to the sun pearl each day.

Those are the images of Hell in London of the last war, a war which, like the modern world itself, threatens to devour and digest belief as though it were so much matter. The jaws of Hell are open like the Try-works in Moby-Dick, ready to boil up any body of spirit and drain off its barrel of fleshy oil. H.D. escapes that Roman heat of marching boots and bayonets, of knives thick as shark's jaws. She crosses the bridge to Egypt in search of the oil of mercy on the stone papyrus tree of life at Luxor. That is the movement of the great Trilogy whose topography we have sketched so quickly. The heart of the poem lies in a green oasis on the Egyptian desert. It is the heart which has lived through Hell; which we shall picture in some detail. It is the heart called terrestrial paradise,

*Matt. 13: 45-46.

surrounded by palm trees and promising renewal to the parched battle-wearied soul. The European experience of paradise has always been Persian,—a drama of the heart, of the Green Verdant One who lives on a desert Sea of White, an oasis pool, a mirage of hope and place where water flows into the heartland.⁴ There is the oleum misericordiae, in the garden of earthly paradise which once contained the lives of Adam and Eve, prior to their expulsion onto a desert wilderness of wasteland. It is the oasis and center of human life everlasting at the end of H.D.'s quest for paradise, a sacred pool in the temple at Luxor.

There are numerous other paintings and iconographic representations of the Christian drama which are drawn upon, by H.D., in the composition of the Trilogy. Michaelangelo's and Donatello's Madonna of the Stairs, Velazquez's Crucifixion. And source books: Plutarch's "Isis and Osiris" in the Moralia; Frazer's Adonis, Attis, Osiris; E. Wallis Budge's The Gods of the Egyptians;⁵ Jane Harrison's Themis. But most important are those texts and paintings which illustrate man's return to paradise: Dante's Divine Comedy; Apocryphal Books of the Old and New Testaments. These last materials are the ones we shall now investigate.

The story of the Quest of Seth for the Oil of Life, once popular and well known, is largely a forgotten episode in our Christian heritage, yet is one of the most exalted legends ever told within our Christian or any faith. Its narrative must originally come from Near Eastern sources,

such as Gilgamesh's quest for the plant of eternal life, and most certainly was influenced by early Christian and Jewish contacts with the Asian and Egyptian story of a milk-yielding tree. The story is contained in early Jewish Old Testament Apocrypha, the most important and earliest of which is the Apocalypse of Moses, composed in the 1st century A.D. The text is translated in Charles' Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, vol. II, pp. 123-54, together with its later Latinized version, The Book of Adam and Eve:

After Adam was nine hundred and thirty years old, since he knew that his days were coming to an end, he said: 'Let all my sons assemble themselves to me, that I may bless them before I die, and speak with them.'

And they were assembled in three parts, before his sight, in the house of prayer, where they used to worship the Lord God. And they asked him (saying): 'What concerns thee, Father, that thou shouldst assemble us, and why dost thou lie on thy bed? Then Adam answered and said: 'My sons, I am sick and in pain.' And all his sons said to him: 'What does it mean, Father, this illness and pain?'

Then said Seth his son: 'O (my) lord, perchance thou hast longed after the fruit of paradise, which thou wast want to eat, and therefore thou liest in sadness? Tell me and I will go to the nearest gates of paradise and throw myself down on the earth before the gates of paradise and lament and make entreaty to God with loud lamentation; perchance he will hearken to me and send his angel to bring me the fruit, for which thou hast longed.'

And Adam said to Eve: 'Rise up and go with my son Seth to the neighbourhood of paradise, and put dust on the ground and lament in the sight of God. Perchance He will have pity (upon you) and send His angel across to the tree of His mercy, whence floweth the oil of life, and will give you a drop of it, to anoint me with it, that I may have rest from these pains, by which I am being consumed.'



Plate XXII. Angel Michael Conducting Souls of the Virtuous to the Half-Opened Doors of Paradise. 13th century mosaic on the cupola of the Baptistry of S. Giovanni, Florence. The angel waiting inside the door is adapted from the classical figure of Hermes Psychopompos.

The Quest was first Christianized in the Gospel of Nicodemus and the Latinized Vita Adae et Evae (both created by the 4th century), and subsequently popularized in the De imagine mundi of Honorius of Autun (1154-1159), the thirteenth century texts Cursor Mundi and Legende, and Caxton's English translation of The Golden Legend (third ed. 1493). The subject of the legend and its transmission is well traced in a book by Esther Casier Quin, The Quest of Seth for the Oil of Life (Chicago: 1962). Of particular interest is the Legende version of the Seth story, which tells how Seth followed his parent's footsteps back to paradise, where sin had seared the ground under Adam's feet after the expulsion, marking a trail back to the holy garden of earthly delights:

His, the track in the sand
from a plum-tree in flower

to a half-open hut-door,
(or track would have been

but wind blows sand-prints from the sand,

"The Walls Do Not Fall" V.

When Seth arrived at paradise he met the angel Michael, guardian of the Gate who, like Hermes Psychopompos, leads souls through a half-opened door back to paradise. In Christianity it is this angel who traditionally escorts the saved souls into the garden of bliss, performing the function of the earlier Greek Hermes (see plate XXII). His function as Guardian of the Gate is the same as that

of the Egyptian god Thoth, known to the Greeks as Thrice-Greatest-Hermes, inventor of writing, patron of scribes, who weighs souls against the feather of Truth called Maat before they are allowed entrance into the garden of Osiris in the land of eternal life. Like Thoth, who holds scales of judgement at the gateway to paradise on Egyptian papyri, Michael traditionally holds the scales of judgement and wields the sword of Truth in Christian iconology. Hilda Doolittle reminds us of these ancient parallels which are evidence for the long lasting duration of belief. These are images which do not fall. They are as old as human memory.

The following is a summary of the Seth legend as it appears in the thirteenth century Legende, as translated in Esther Quin's The Quest of Seth, pp. 105-6:

And after Adam had been expelled from Paradise, he implored God to be merciful and was promised that in the end of time he would be granted the oil of mercy. When he had reached the age of 932, weary of labor and sorrowful over the evils of his progeny, Adam bade Seth to go to Paradise to get the promised oil. He directed Seth to go eastward to the head of the valley and follow a green path, marked by seared footsteps.

Seth went to Paradise and was given three visions of the garden. On the first he saw the fountain of life spilling forth the four rivers of the world, Tigris, Euphrates, Ganges and Nile. Above the fountain he saw a dry tree, barren of leaves. In the second vision he saw a serpent bound round the dead and barren tree. In the third he saw

a tree elevated to Heaven, in the crown of which was a newborn babe. It is a vision of the flowering of the dead tree into the newborn life in Christ:

Before Seth departed, the angel informed him that the babe was the Son of God, who would come in the fulness of time to efface the sin of the first parents, and that he would be the promised oil of mercy. The angel then gave Seth three seeds of the apple from which Adam had eaten and told the son to plant them under his father's tongue. The seeds would become three trees: a cedar, which by its height signified the Father; a cypress, which by its fragrance represented the sweetness of the Son; a pine, with which its many seeds signified the Holy Spirit. Seth returned and related to his father what had happened, whereupon Adam rejoiced. After his father's death, Seth placed the three seeds in Adam's mouth, and from the three seeds grew three twigs.

According to legends of the Cross, Adam died at Calvary or Golgotha, place of the skull of Old Man. The cross for the Crucifixion of Christ was cut of the wood of the miraculous tree whose seeds were planted in Adam's mouth, seeds of the tree of life, whose barrenness was caused by Adam's transgression. When blood from Christ's side flowed down the dead wood of the Cross it entered Old Adam's skull and revived in him a new-born man of the New Testament, fulfilling the promise of everlasting life.

Christ's blood is the promised Oil of Mercy, denied Seth and given by Mary to the world. Mary is a tree; the tree of life; the tree of myrrh; mother of Adonis, the "anointed one." Adonis' mother was a myrrh tree, named Smyrna. Osiris' mother was a sycamore tree named Hathor.

The three, Hathor, Smyrna and Mary, are milk-yielding trees whose branches shed the oleum misericordiae, the oil and dew of the resurrection to eternal life.

In Christianity the oil of mercy is light that enters the world: EGO SUM LUX MUNDI (John 9:5),—a Gold Flower on the Tree of Life. The Black Gold Flower of Creation in Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown, - II." The Flower whose Oil of Life is literally Carbon, Coal, in Olson's post-modern cosmology.

The Story:⁶

But Seth and his mother walked to the regions of paradise for the oil of mercy to anoint the sick Adam: and they arrived at the gates of paradise, and they took dust from the earth and placed it on their heads, and bowed themselves with their faces to the earth and began to lament and make loud moaning, imploring the Lord God to pity Adam in his pains and to send His angel to give them the oil from the 'tree of His mercy.'

But when they had been praying and imploring for many hours, behold, the angel Michael appeared before them and said: 'I have been sent to you from the Lord—I am sent by God over the bodies of men—I tell thee, Seth, thou man of God, weep not nor pray and entreat on account of the oil of the tree of mercy to anoint thy father Adam for the pains of his body.'

'For I tell thee that in no wise wilt thou be able to recover thereof save in the last days.'

When five thousand five hundred years have been fulfilled, then will come upon the earth the most beloved king Christ, the son of God, to revive the body of Adam and with him to revive the bodies of the dead. He Himself, the Son of God, when He comes will be baptized in the river of Jordon, and when He hath come out of the water of Jordon, then He will anoint from the oil of mercy all that believe in Him. And the oil of mercy shall be for generation to generation for those who are ready to be born again of water and the Holy Spirit to life eternal. Then the most beloved Son of God, Christ, descending on earth shall lead thy father Adam to Paradise to the tree of mercy.

Vita Adae et Evae xl-xlii.

The Mary Tree

The myrrh-tree is Myrrha or Smyrna, a Libyan-Arabian Goddess who conceived of Adonis in love with her own father Cinyras. The story is told in Book X of Ovid's Metamorphoses, how, because of her incestuous love with her father she was changed into a myrrh-tree,—pregnant with the boy Adonis,—a tree whose leaves continuously shed the oil of mercy and life. Ovid says: "Though she lost her former feelings when she lost her body, yet she still weeps, and warm drops flow from the tree. Even her tears are renowned, and the myrrh that drips from her trunk retains its mistress' name." She is Mary, Mater dolorosa, Our Lady of Sorrows, whose tears are the Oil of Life:

I am Mary—O, there are Mary's a-plenty,⁷
 (though I am Mara, bitter) I shall be Mary-myrrh,

I am that myrrh-tree of the gentiles,
 the heathen;

"The Flowering of the Rod" XVI.

Ovid tells us the child Adonis was released by Lucina: "the trunk split open and, through the fissure in the bark, gave up its living burden. The wailing cry of a baby boy was heard."

In Asia Minor, Myrrha was called Marian, Myrine, Ay-Mari, Marianne,—whence Mary in Christianity, the tree whose branches give birth to the Christ Child, the Oil of Mercy.

The Sumerian form, Marienna, means 'High Fruitful Mother.'⁸

In Sumer the annual drama of mother and child was enacted by Inanna (Semitic: Ishtar) and Tammuz. In Phrygia they were Cybele, the cypress tree, and her child Attis. In Egypt Hathor, the sycamore, bears Horus. In Greece, Venus weeps over Adonis. The Christian drama of Mary and Christ undoubtedly comes from these earlier dramas of the heart, dramas of death and resurrection,—however much its forms of belief have changed. The Christian Oil of Mercy is of light and love, embodied in Christ, no longer a drama of the seasons, but the food of history and eternity. I personally believe that the esoteric drama of any theology has to do with light and love, whereas its exoteric imagery is a presentation in seasonal occurrence. In the domain of beliefs one cannot talk about progress. There is only intensity, a language of the heart. All of these trees are flowering stone rods upholding walls in the temple at Luxor whose structure is everlasting.

Myrrh is a very prominent substance in the New Testament, always associated with Mary and the Tree of Life and the Cross. The myrrh-tree is of the genus Commiphora (C. myrrha or C. abyssinica), found chiefly in East Africa and Arabia. It exudes a bitter yellow resinous gum which was used by the ancients as an ingredient of incense for anointing kings and the dead. The name of the tree is from the Greek

myrrha, of Semitic origin; akin to the Hebraic mōr myrrh, mar bitter; and Arabic murr myrrh, bitter (O.E.D.). The name Mary is derived from the same etymology, mar marah bitter.⁹ Hilda Doolittle's scholarship is accurate. Mary Magdalene, means a temple pillar, like Nut or Hathor, which sheds the Oil of Mercy that is myrrh instead of milk.

Frankincense was also used like myrrh,—a gum resin containing volatile oil obtained from various East African or Arabian trees of the genus Boswellia, valued in ancient times in worship and for embalming and fumigation of the dead. Another much used perfume in ancient times was nard, an East Indian aromatic plant of the family Valerianaceae, whose dried roots and stems were used to make an extract of the ointment spikenard. Also calamus oil and cinnamon oil. All of these essences of fragrant trees were used to embalm the dead and to anoint living kings. That is why Myrrh's son is called Adonis, from the Semitic Adonai, "Lord" or "Anointed One." It was the Jewish name, like Elohim, for their God.

When we come to a study of Olson's "Dogtown, - II" poem, we shall briefly show how valued was the tree of the oils of life in Near Eastern kingship ritual. The tree's oils were used to anoint rulers and to renew dead souls back to everlasting life. It is the sycamore tree from which Hathor pours streams of white oil down to Osiris

and the bird-souls in those pictures of Egyptian theology which we have already studied (plates IV-VII).

In H.D.'s War Trilogy we have identified Mary Magdalene as a Mary-Tower, a flowering rod in the temple at Luxor. The rod is a myrrh-tree which sheds the oil of mercy. That is why, in a Christian iconography, Mary Magdalene always holds in one hand an alabaster vase which contains and preserves the precious oils of life, oils shed by Christ's body on the tree-Cross, oils of mercy and resurrection and redemption (plate XXIII). She holds the healing water, the elixir of life, cup of the over-soul, "the out-flowing of water-about-to-be-changed-to-wine."¹⁰

I am Kaspar, he said, when a slender girl
holding a jar, asked deferentially

if she might lower it into his well

"The Flowering of the Rod" XXXIX.

Mary holds the Flowing Vase. She is the Water Carrier bearing the new Age of Aquarius, of the new wine, filled with the fragrance of myrrh and spikenard, in Christian pictures of the drama of the resurrection. Hilda Doolittle's poem, "The Flowering of the Rod," is about the transmission of this precious alabaster vase of oils from the time of Seth's visit to paradise, through generations of belief into the hands of Azar and the Magician Kaspar, one of the Wise Men of the East.



Plate XXIII. Mary of Magdala (Magdalene), holding the traditional jar. By Desiderio da Settignano, Santa Trinità, Florence.



Plate XXIIIb. Mary Magdalene at the Sepulchre with the Jar of Ointment, by Girolamo Salvoso. London, National Gallery.

But she spoke so he looked at her,
she was shy and simple and young;

she said, Sir, it is a most beautiful fragrance,
as of all flowering things together;

but Kaspar knew the seal of the jar was unbroken,
he did not know whether she knew

the fragrance came from the bundle of myrrh
she held in her arms.

"The Flowering of the Rod" XLIII.^{10a}

And so the Trilogy ends. The fragrances remain preserved in the jar until the promised coming of the Christ Child, who is the myrrh in Mary's arms, the oil of mercy. In the above extract of the poem, the Wise Men, Chaldean Magi, bear with them gold and frankincense and myrrh, the substances of death and resurrection which they have kept alive in an occult practice of belief since the death of Adam. At the birth of Christ, the jar's seal is broken.^{10b} Mary's alabaster jar is opened. She gives birth to the Son of God, whose essence is like spikenard, as of all things flowering together in spring. Mary is the tree which holds her fruit nailed to its branches at the crucifixion, when her greatest bloom weeps blood that flows down the Cross and is caught in Mary Magdalene's alabaster vase.

The milk or myrrh of the tree of life has the power to resurrect the dead. The power of Christ. Drama of the New Testament. The tree is Inanna standing at the gate of horn on a cattle byre over a manger at Bethlehem. The tree

is Ishtar, Cybele and Mary in various of the Near Eastern faiths. She stands in paradise, the land of after-life which was departed in Adam's transgression. Because of the human nature of our original parents, man discovered time, pain and death. He lost eternity and life everlasting. The subject of this discovery is well presented in the Apocalypse of Moses and the Vita Adae et Evae. Like Gilgamesh (who also discovers time and death), Seth must find his way back to paradise for the oil of mercy that will overcome death,—the oil of healing,—just as H.D. searches for a way back to the meaning of the Luxor temple when London has collapsed under the mortar and pestilence of war.

Adam sends Seth back to paradise when he faces death. Michael denies Seth the oil of everlasting life, of the tree of life, yet he gives him, "herbs of fragrance, spikenard and crocus and calamus and cinnamon,"¹¹—spices with which to anoint and embalm the limbs of their dying father, to preserve the image of his mortal body. Adam dies, the first man to discover death, no less than Gilgamesh discovers death as he watches Enkidu's body decay, devoured by worms, in the Sumerian Epic.¹² God lifts Adam's body into the third heaven of paradise for burial under the oil tree:

Then God spoke to the archangels Michael, Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael: 'Go away to Paradise in the third heaven, and strew linen clothes and cover the body of Adam and bring oil of the

'oil of fragrance' and pour it over him. And they prepared him for burial. And God said: 'Let the body of Abel also be brought.' And they brought other linen clothes and prepared his body also. For he was unburied since the day when Cain his brother slew him;

Apocalypse of Moses xl.

And all the 'powers' of angels marched before Adam, and the sleep of the dead was consecrated. And the angels Michael and Uriel buried Adam and Abel in the parts of Paradise, before the eyes of Seth and his mother, and Michael and Uriel said: 'Just as ye have seen, in like manner, bury your dead.'

Vita Adae et Evae xlviiii.

And God sent seven angels to paradise and they brought many fragrant spices and placed them in the earth, and they took the two bodies and placed them in the spot where they had digged and buried.

And God called and said, 'Adam, Adam.' And the body answered from the earth and said: 'Here am I, Lord.' And God saith to him: 'I told thee that earth thou art and to the earth shalt thou return.' Again I promise to thee the Resurrection; I will raise thee up in the Resurrection with every man, who is of thy seed.'

Apocalypse of Moses xl.

The oil which is poured over Adam is the oil which flows from the vase that is held by Hathor dendritis (plate VII). The linen cloth is material used to wrap the dead body in mummification preparatory to the resurrection in after-life, wrapped round the dead like the wings of Nut which enfold Osiris in the Djed pillar (plate X). The Vita Adae et Evae ends with Michael and Uriel pronouncing: 'Just as ye have seen, in like manner, bury your dead.' Evidently

the ancient Christian text, and the earlier Jewish Apocalypse of Moses, are about an incense tree whose dew is shed for burial rites that promise resurrection,—frankincense and myrrh of the tree once used to embalm Egyptian kings. Christianity, as a theology, springs out of these older rites of resurrection in after-life. Christ is the oil of mercy who says of Himself: "I am the resurrection and the life." He has the healing power of the water of everlasting life, who can raise Lazarus from the dead. He is the power of spikenard and myrrh, born of the Mary-tree.

The resurrection theme is outstanding in the four gospels of the New Testament. Whatever Christ touches springs to life. Whatever Mary washes is renewed. The tree of life, once a milk-yielding tree and now the tree of the resurrection, the tree of light, enters the world itself in the incarnate figure of Mary and her Son. Everywhere they go they are surrounded by myrrh and frankincense. At birth three Magi bring gold and frankincense and myrrh,—to visit a King and prepare for the drama of his burial:

what he had, his priceless, unobtainable-elsewhere
myrrh
was for the double ceremony, a funeral and a
throning;

"The Flowering of the Rod" XIII.

In "The Flowering of the Rod," Mary Magdalene goes to Kaspar, an Arab merchant-druggist, to buy myrrh so that she may wash Jesus' feet at Bethany:

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with the odour of the ointment.

John 12:3.

or to embalm the body of Christ after the crucifixion:

And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

And they returned and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbeth day according to the commandment.

And upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

Luke 23:55-24:10.

Kaspar was one of the Magi, a Jew who kept a knowledge of the incense tree alive since Seth's visit to paradise four thousand years earlier:

for he knew the old tradition, the old, old legend, his father had had from his grandfather and his grandfather from his great-grandfather (and so on),

was true; this was never spoken about, not even whispered in secret, the legend was contained in old signs and symbols, and only the most painful application could decipher them, and only the very-few could even attempt to do this,

"The Flowering of the Rod" XXIX.

In our own work we have attempted to decipher the symbols which H.D. speaks about in the War Trilogy. It is an unwritten tradition of belief stretching back to the 1st century A.D., even earlier. A tradition nearly lost, except as it is preserved in poetry of a very profound order & intensity.

Just as women wailed over the annual loss of Tammuz in the Sumerian Near East, so do three Marys, Mary the Mother, Mary Mother of James and Mary Magdalene, weep over the death of Christ. Yet their tears are the promised oil of mercy. In H.D.'s War Trilogy Mary plays a central role in the theme of the resurrection. She is the bearer of the Lux Mundi, her Son: Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Tammuz and Christ. She is a myrrh-tree of life, "and as through it (The Tree of Life) the human race obtained condemnation, so again through Jesus Christ Immanuel will they receive in Him the upward calling, and the entry into paradise. Its bitterness shall be changed into sweetness, and its curse shall become a blessing, and that which is produced from it shall become the blood of God" (III Baruch 4):
 "(though I am Mara, bitter) I shall be Mary-myrrh."¹³

I am Mary, the incense-flower of the incense-tree,
 myself worshipping, weeping, shall be changed to
 myrrh;

I am Mary, though melted away,
 I shall be a tower ... she said, . . .

"The Flowering of the Rod" XIX.

She weeps myrrh. Smyrna, mother of Adonis. She is the tree Commiphora myrrha which sheds liquid dew. She is the oil which is lost in Adam's transgression, and the cause of the birth of a New Adam in Christ. She is Inanna weeping over her dead child. She is the gate of horn at the center of the world whose flower is gold. Her food is the milk of paradise; of resurrection to life. And she is the pillar of an everlasting wall; main trunk, Axis Mundi in the architecture of human cosmology. In "Maximus, from Dogtown, - II," we shall also find the Mary-tree as pivot of a post-modern universe, whose heavenly flower is the light of the world:

"Mary's Son . . .

is the Black Gold Flower"

The Song of Songs:

"I am a wall, and my breasts like Towers."

We remember, from Plutarch's "Isis and Osiris," how Osiris floated to Byblos in a coffin, where he was trapped in a sycamore tree which was cut down and used as a column in the King's temple:

The fruit of Hathor's tree in its human form was Osiris, whose corpse was scattered like the seeds after he had been persuaded to enter a chest—the cave or tomb of earth. In the myth of the wanderings of Isis, which corresponds with the search of Ishtar for the dead Tammuz in Asia, she finds the last and fruitful part of his body within a tree in Syria, which is then cut down to form a pillar in the King's house. The texts inscribed upon the tomb walls of the early Pharaohs call that tree the sycamore "which enfolds Osiris."

Gertrude Levy, The Gate of Horn, p. 120.

We remember Nut giving rebirth to Osiris out of the Djed pillar, and Hathor, the Cow of Heaven, amongst the papyrus reeds suckling Horus. We remember the stone papyrus and the reed-bundle columns in a marsh-Arab cattle byre. All of these elements of belief and practice serve to ground the verticality of vision in history, a vision which shines in the heavens as a star over Bethlehem, the Lux Mundi, a light which must always keep its roots in the facts of human

experience, or atrophy into dogma. The vision is as primordial as the basic physics of human existence. There is no progression in this development of a theology, only the realization of an immemorial intensity of belief which has always lived in the post-glacial Pleistocene Age of mankind.

The reeds or rods of the architecture of this vision of world are given in H.D.'s War Trilogy:

I am Mary, she said, of tower-town,
or at once it must have been towered

for Magdala is a tower;
Magdala stands on the shore;

I am Mary, she said, of Magdala,
I am Mary, a great tower;

"The Flowering of the Rod" XVI.

H.D. correctly derives the name "Magdala" of Mary Magdalene from the Aramaic meaning "tower," because Mary was given the name of a citizen from a walled town on the Sea of Galilee, her Homeland.¹⁴ She is a pillar or tower, rod and tree of heaven, like the Nut-pillar and Hathor papyrus-reed in Egyptian cosmology, or the Arabian Myrrh-tree, a pregnant pillar or flowering stone-papyrus rod in the temple at Luxor whose walls do not fall.

There are numerous quotations from Solomon's Song of Songs in H.D.'s War Trilogy, which are there to explicate

a second body of legendary material having to do with the finding of the Holy Cross: the Legends of the Holy Rood. Whereas the Quest of Seth for the Oil of Mercy is Jewish in origin and tells of Seth's journey back to paradise for the oil of the Tree of Life that will save Adam from death, the legends of the Holy Rood are Christian, composed post-940 A.D. and attempt to answer the question: "Where did the wood of the Cross come from?" The earliest known story of the origins of the Cross is the Latin Historiae of 1150. Honorius of Autun's De imagine mundi (1154-59) also contains the legend of the Cross. The two traditions of the Quest and the Holy Rood were quickly fused, by 1170 A.D., in Johannes Beloth's Rationale divinatorum officiorum, where the answer of the origin of the Cross appears in three seeds that were given by the angel of mercy, Michael, to Seth, who planted them in his dying father's mouth. A tree grew out of Old Adam whose three woods were found by Moses; three rods growing in the Valley of Hebron. This completed story appears in thirteenth century works called the Cursor Mundi and the Legende, about the time Dante wrote the Divine Comedy. We have already looked at the Quest of Seth in the Legende and shall continue to quote from that work where the events of the Holy Rood legend begin with Moses' finding of the three rods:¹⁵

Moses after leading his people across the Red Sea, discovered the twigs growing in the valley of Hebron. Proclaiming them to be a sign of the Trinity, he uprooted the twigs, carried them about the desert for forty years, and performed miracles with them. Before his death Moses buried the twigs at Mt. Tabor, in the land of Arabia.

Later David was directed to this spot by the Holy Spirit and rejoiced to find the twigs. With them he cured many who were oppressed with disease. On returning to Jerusalem, David placed the twigs in a well, where overnight they took root and grew together into a single trunk. He built a wall around the tree and each year for thirty years placed a silver ring around its trunk. Under this tree David composed his penitential psalms. In further expiation for his sins he began building the Temple, but he was denied the joy of completing it, for, as God reminded him, he was a man of blood. After David's death Solomon resumed the task of building the Temple. In the course of construction his builders attempted to use the tree, but however it was cut, it was always either too long or too short. Solomon then ordered that the wood be placed in the Temple.

It is at this point, with the building of Solomon's Temple, that H.D.'s poem, War Trilogy, finds a correspondence with the pillars in the temple at Luxor, constructed on flowering papyrus rods. However it is important that we recite the entire story of the Holy Rood before returning to the subject of Solomon's temple.

There came one day a woman called Maximilla, who inadvertently sat on the wood. As her clothes burst into flames, she cried out to Jesus as Lord and God. She was stoned by the Jews for blasphemy and thus became the first martyr. The wood was then thrown into the probatica piscina, whereupon an angel stirred the water, and those who first bathed there were cured of their infirmities. When the Jews had seen the miracles, they dragged the beam out of the

pond and placed it over the flowing Siloe so that the treading of feet might stamp out its marvellous power. The beam lay as a bridge until Sibylla, Queen of Sheba, came to visit Solomon. Perceiving the holy quality of the wood, she crossed the torrent with bare feet and uttered a prophecy of Christ's coming. As the time of the Crucifixion approached, a third of the beam was cut to form the cross. On this wood Christ died for the salvation of man.

Legende, translation in Quinn,
The Quest of Seth, pp. 106-7.

After the Crucifixion the Cross was hidden by the Jews, and found by St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. The story is familiar in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. Helena had in her service a skillful goldsmith who owed a large payment of monies to a Jew, under a bond of flesh. The day of payment came and the case was brought to Helena for trial. She passed judgement in favour of the Jew but added that the letter of the law must be followed so closely that not a drop of blood be spilled in taking the flesh. The Jew, unable to perform this feat, was himself found guilty of breaking the letter of the law and given the choice of forfeiting all he owned or revealing the location of the Holy Cross. The Jew led Helena to Calvary where the Cross lay buried. The entire sequence of these events in the Holy Rood legend, from Seth to St. Helena, may be read in Caxton's translation of The Golden Legend (Englished in 1493) contained in Richard Morris' edition of Legends of the Holy Rood (1881, reprinted 1969). Another invaluable study of the Rood legends may be read in Arthur S. Napier's

History of the Holy Rood-Tree (1894). Both works are published by the Early English Text Society. It is in "A Tribute to the Angels" that Hilda Doolittle pays particular attention to the Rood Legend, though the Legend is an integral part of her entire Trilogy.

The Legend of the Holy Rood traces the ascent of the Cross through a history. The history is the Davidic Lineage which God promises shall be established forever until the coming of the Christ Child. This Davidic covenant appears in II Samuel: 12-16, —

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish his kingdom forever.

I will be his father, and he shall be my son.
If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with
the rod of men, and with the stripes of the
children of men:

But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as
I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be
established for ever before thee: thy throne
shall be established for ever.

The covenant reappears in the New Testament, where Christ
is called "the son of David," born in Bethlehem, "the
city of David":

Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh
of the seed of David, and out of the town of
Bethlehem, where David was?

John 7:42.

In fact the Gospel of Matthew places before the nativity of
Jesus a recounting of the generations which compose the
Davidic Line, leading to the birth of Christ, born of
Mary and Joseph of the tribe of Levi (Matt. 1:1-17).

The Davidic Line extends from Abraham to Isaac, Jacob, Jesse, David, Solomon, Asa, Rehoboam, Abijam, Asa, Jehoshophat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash (after the fall of Ahab, II Kings: 9-11, called Joatham in the New Testament) . . . up to Joseph, the husband of Mary. "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations." Even when God destroys the Houses of Jeroboam and Ahab in the Book of Kings, He is bound by the covenant to let one member of the seed of David continue the historical Lineage. Melville knew this when he wrote in Moby-Dick, "I only am escaped alone to tell thee," after the fall of Ahab's House ("My line! my line? Gone?—gone?").¹⁶ The phrase is from the Book of Job, but also refers to the Biblical fact that one member, named Joash, lived to tell the tale of the destruction of Ahab's ivory palace,—King of the Davidic Line who was destroyed because he chose to worship the Caananite Baal with his Phoenician wife Jezebel of Tyre.

The rod of the Davidic Line in history carries the wood of the Holy Rood forwards to the Crucifixion, when it shall flower in the New Testament for a new made man. Here we meet the third legend,—of the Flowering of the Rod, in Christian history,—which is again tightly woven into both the Quest and Holy Rood legends. The rod is the

Mary-tree, the wood of the Cross taken from paradise and transported through history, according to the Davidic Lineage, until its flowering at the birth of Christ. Like the flowering rods which support the Luxor temple, this stone-papyrus is also a part of the Covenantal Temple built by David and Solomon at God's command ("He shall build an house for my name"). The task was undertaken by Solomon because "David my father could not build an house unto the name of the Lord his God for the wars which were about him on every side" (I Kings 5:2). It is the form of Solomon's Temple which interests Hilda Doolittle in the War Trilogy:

And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter.

And the chapters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits.

And the chapters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belley which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter.


And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.

And upon the tops of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

I Kings 7: 18-22.

To give our history a chronology we can date Saul between c. 1020-1000 B.C., his son David c. 1000-960, and

David's son Solomon between c. 960-922 B.C. It was under these Kings that Israel achieved a national unity, in fact a Kingship, and therefore a strong covenant with God. These are the dates in the record of a nation whose theology includes history. These are dates of places in the history of the Holy Cross,—the Rod of the covenant which stretches forth, unbroken, to the time of Christ and the Flowering of Christianity. It is not unexpected that the Holy Rood legend speaks of a time when the wood of the Tree of Life, grown out of Old Adam, the wood of the future Cross, was used by Solomon as one of the pillars in the Temple built to glorify the Davidic covenant. The wood of the future Cross was used by Solomon no less than the king of Byblos had used the sycamore tree which trapped the coffin of Osiris in the construction of an earlier temple. Hilda Doolittle goes so far as to conclude that each pillar in any ancient Near Eastern temple was an image of Mary, Nut, Hathor, or some other pregnant Mother figure whose belly was wide and full with the flower of creation. She traces this fact from the meaning of Magdala, "Tower," in Mary Magdalene's name, and backwards to a time when papyrus reeds, bulging under the weight of the Temple roof and crowned with the flowers of a bundle of such rods, were used in Egyptian architecture preceding stonework,—c 3500 B.C. And, of course, we have traced that image of Mary, the milk-

tree or weeping myrrh-tree (dolorosa she is called) back as far as the beginnings of a center in a post-glacial Flood, where mankind lived in swamplands with cattle and where he erected byres made out of reed bundles, placed on islands of risen mud. Whence the ideogram for Inanna, —  — the Sumerian pillar of the world which flowers and sheds dew outside the gate of horn that forms an entrance into an historical eternity, lasting from 9,000 B.C. to the present. Christ was born in a cattle manger made of such reed bundles. Born of Mary, the milk-tree of life which stands at the origin of the world in the garden of paradise.

Solomon employed the services of King Hiram of Tyre to build the flowering rods of his Temple. Lebanon was the chief source of cedar wood in the ancient Near East, since almost every other landscape was covered in grasses as far as the eye could see. Grasses, swamps or deserts. And yet the columns in the Temple are carved and their crowns cast so that the rod was made into an image of a flowering reed bundle, whose flowers were the holiest of plants known: pomegranate, sacred to Persephone in the Greek world. We shall see, in our presentation of Olson's "Dogtown, - II" poem, several corresponding images of the tree of life burgeoning with the fruits of eternity, where kings of the world go to receive the dew of everlasting life. Each column is an image of the cosmic tree of life

so much a part of an immemorial picture of the human world. The trees were variously olives, cedars, fig trees, bearing fruit and woven with lilies. They are trees which shed the oleum misericordiae, the tree Seth visits on his return to paradise, which Enoch visits in another visionary ascension into the third heaven:¹⁷

And the seventh mountain was in the midst of these, and it excelled them in height, resembling the seat of a throne: and fragrant trees encircled the throne. And amongst them was a tree such as I had never yet smelt, neither was any amongst them nor were others like it: it had a fragrance beyond all fragrance, and its leaves and blooms and wood wither not for ever: and its fruit is beautiful, and its fruit resembles the dates of palm.

Book of Enoch (170 B.C.) XXIV.

The Temple is, in fact, made as an image of paradise to hold the King's throne. It is the center whose holy food gives life to the nation. The garden aspect of the Temple is well depicted in the Song of Songs, also known as the Song of Solomon. Transformation from Temple to literal garden, through a Biblical exegesis, is a well-founded practice in Christian scholarship, because the former (I Kings) is a literal image of kingship in a Near Eastern paradise-garden whose nature is fully revealed in the Song of Songs, where the beloved Shulamite sheds beauty like the food of creation. She is like the fragrance and dew shed by the flowers on the columns in the Temple:

How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!
 how much better is thy love than wine! and the
 smell of thine ointments than all spices!

A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a
 spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with
 pleasant fruits; camphire with spikenard.

Spikenard with saffron; calamus and cinnamon,
 with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and
 aloes, with all the chief spices:

A fountain of gradens, a well of living waters,
 and streams from Lebanon.

Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow
 upon my garden, that the spices thereof may
 flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden,
 and eat his pleasant fruits.

The Song of Songs is probably the most difficult of the Old Testament texts, and perhaps the most beautiful. It has been interpreted as a drama, a ritual, an allegory or simply as a collection of love lyrics. And though the ritual elements seem to express a divine play wherein two figures like Tammuz and Ishtar are united and separated,—a drama of seasonal occurrence,—yet this interpretation has now been discarded in favour of the view that the poems are lyrics of high spiritual expression but not necessarily having ritual purpose. However the imagery in the poem-cycle is certainly on a level with the imagery of a ritual theology such as one might find in the Near Eastern stories of Cybele and Attis, Inanna and Tammuz. The love of kingship must certainly deserve such exalted stature. The Shulamite

is like all divine trees. There is weeping in separation and seasonal unrest during the time of year that seeds must be stored ("which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved"). There is adoration of the love through history, represented by David's and Solomon's Temple ("The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir"). There is cosmology and theology represented by pairs of roes that feed among the lilies, frequently portrayed elsewhere as two animals (usually goats) feeding on the tree of life. The love encompasses the very limits of human imagination. A king comes down from the mountains like the Sun, wearing gold bracelets around the pillars of light that are his arms. He leans over to embrace his beloved garden who is like the fields of his nation, abundant with flocks of sheep and covered by yellow grain. As he approaches in the morning all shadows are dispelled; spring is arrived ("For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land"). If this is a poem of love, it is like any love between King and subject, nation and beloved citizen, given in highest ranges of human adoration,—not an unusual desire of the lover to worship his beloved to the very capacity of human voice.

Within Christian exegesis it is the allegorical interpretation of the Song which has exerted a strong

influence on our reading of the poem-cycle, especially because of its emphasis on an undeniable theological range of imagery; especially concerning the fragrances of sacred trees:

While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard
sendeth forth the smell thereof

A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved; he shall
lie all night betwixt my breasts.

My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in
the vineyards of Engedi.

The Song of Songs, or Canticle of Solomon, creates a terrene paradise for the drama of love, a paradise-garden which explicitly returns us to the nature of Solomon's Temple and the imagery of a divine poetics. In fact the Song of Songs is instrumental in preserving an older memory of the milk-tree or myrrh-tree within our Christian inheritance.

The Christian allegorization makes the Song into a marriage celebration between Church and Christ, bride and bridegroom. It is also very important in the Litany of the Virgin Mary and the story of the Flowering of the Rod. Four illustrations of the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs are given in our work (plates XXIC-XXVI). "Madonna and Child with Saints in the Enclosed Garden," by the Master of Flémalle (plate XXIVb), shows Mary enthroned on a seat which is ornamented with thistle blossoms. The child is offered a pomegranate. Inside the walls of this paradise is the Tower of David, an emblem taken from the Song of Songs which is to symbolize the strength and durability of the Davidic



Plate XXXIV. (a) "Virgin and Child," in the hortus conclusus, seated under the Green Tree and holding a Rose. School of Schongauer, London.



Plate XXIV. (b) "Madonna and Child with Saints in the Enclosed Garden," flanked by the Tower of David. By the Master of Flémalle and assistants, Flemish, 15th century. National Gallery of Art, Washington.

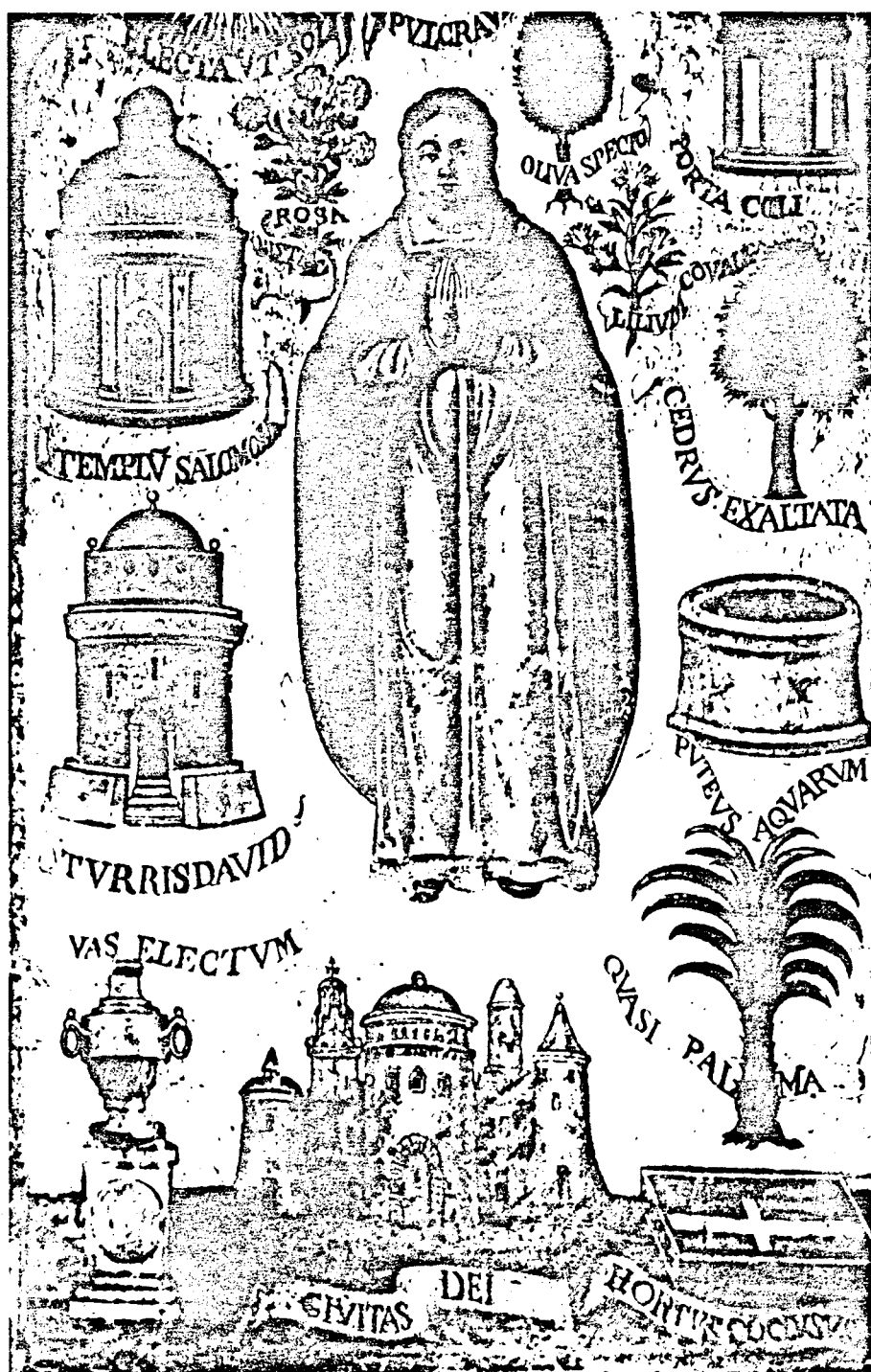


Plate XXV. Mary surrounded by emblems in the Litany of the Virgin, derived from the Song of Songs. The Tower of David (Turris David) is on her right hand, beneath the Temple of Solomon. Reliquary cover, 17th century, French.

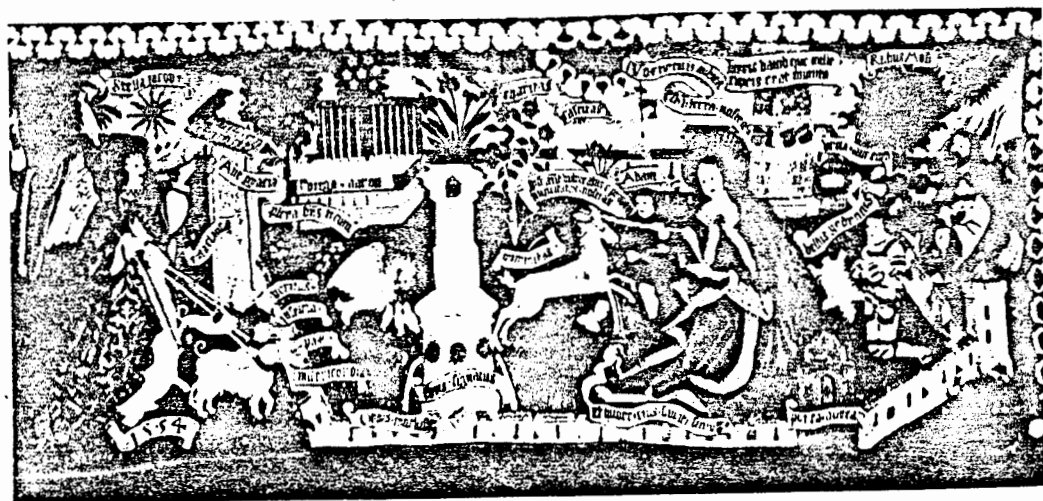
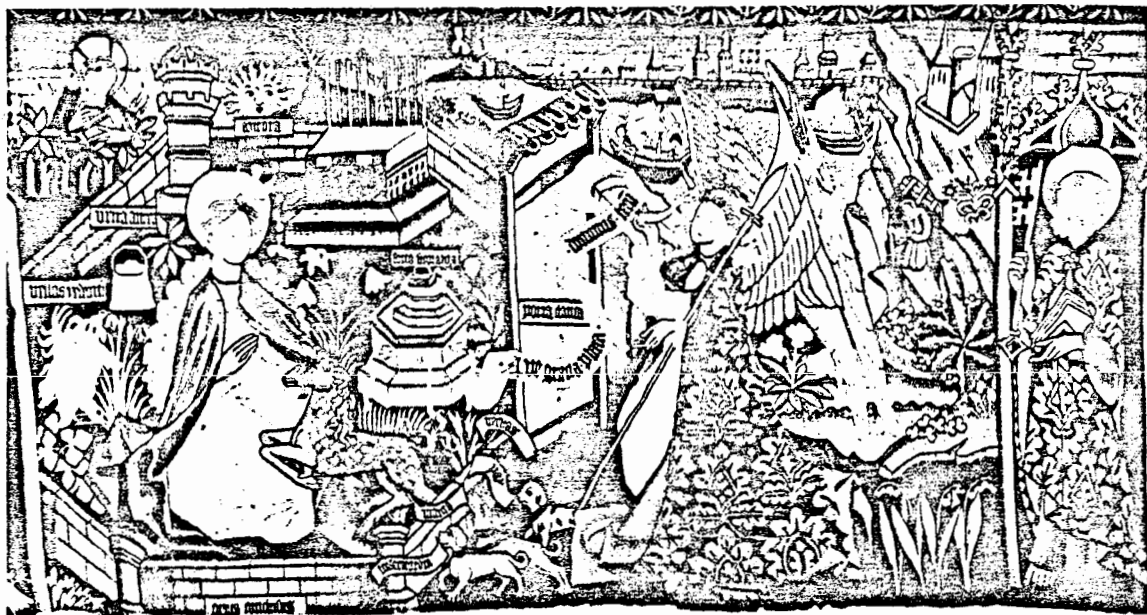


Plate XXVI. The Annunciation in the Enclosed Garden, from the Legend of the Unicorn and the Biblical Song of Songs. (a) German tapestry, late 15th century, Berlin. (b) German tapestry, dated 1554. Both are now in the Warburg Institute Collections, London. The enclosed garden of the virgin is entered through the Porta Aurea, Porta Clausa or Porta Coeli.

covenant:

Thy neck is like the Tower of David builded for
an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers,
all shields of mighty men.

If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace
of silver: and if she be a door, we will enclose
her with boards of cedar.

I am a wall, and my breasts like towers:

The Tower is Mary Magdala, Mary Magdalene, the Walls that
Do Not Fall in Hilda Doolittle's War Trilogy. Everlasting
pillar-tower set in the Temple of an eternal and everlasting
gospel. She is the myrrh-tree of Life in the garden of
paradise.

Plate XXV, from a seventeenth century French reliquary
cover, shows Mary surrounded by emblems of the Litany of the
Virgin: the Tower of David, the Chosen Vessel, the Exalted
Cedar, the Temple of Solomon, Rosa Mystica, Lily, Palm-tree
and Well of Water. All are taken from the Song of Songs.
Beneath is written: Civitas Dei Hortus Conclusus. "City of
God Enclosed Garden." Above is the Stella Maris, the Star
of Mary, Star of the Sea.

The other important representations of the Song of
Songs (plates XXVIa & b) situate the icons of Mary within
their allegorical context. The angel Gabriel stands at the
gate to the hortus conclusus, as Angel of the Annunciation.
He holds four leashed dogs which bark Veritas, Judicia,
Pax, Misericordia, emblematic of the virtues which are under
Christ's command. Gabriel stands outside the closed gate,

porta clausa of paradise, blowing on his trumpet the triumphant words of the Annunciation: Ave Maria . . . , "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee" (Luke 1:28). It is the announcement of the Nativity and Advent of Christ to his beloved Church, Holy Mother Mary,—figured through the imagery given in the Song of Songs 5:2-6,—

I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, . . .

I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock.

—and celebrated in Bach's magnificent Cantata no. 61, "Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland," to be sung on the first Sunday in Advent:

Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

Open up, my whole heart;
Jesus comes and enters.

Inside the garden is Mary, holding the Unicorn, Christ, in her lap. In the tapestry dated 1554 the Unicorn is ritually sacrificed by Adam and Eve, who enact the crucifixion made necessary by their own transgression. The Unicorn is a symbol of the Eucharist, a wild young hart who comes over the mountains of myrrh in the Song of Songs, to feed in the enclosed garden out of the hand of his beloved. Adam pierces the Unicorn while Eve collects the stream of blood in a chalice.¹⁸ Another symbol of Christ in the garden of the

1554 tapestry, also of the Eucharist, is the Pelican who feeds its young from the flesh of its own breast.

All the attributes of Mary's association with the Song of Songs are present in the German tapestries. We see the Fons Signatus, one of the names of praise in the doxology of the Virgin, called "a fountain sealed" in the Song of Songs,—pouring forth three streams of Christian virtue: Faith, Hope and Charity. Present is the Tower of David "armed with a thousand shields," reminiscent of Mary in her aspect as Magdala, "Tower" in the Templar house of the Davidic covenant.^{18a} And into every square inch of the tapestries is woven the burgeoning floescence spoken in the Song of Songs:

This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

I said I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples;

Here Mary, the beloved Shulamite, is a sacred tree, the date palm, whose leaves tower into a crown that reaches up to the heavens above, sacred tree that stands in the center of terrestrial paradise on the summit of Mount Purgatory in Dante's Divine Comedy (Purgatorio Canto 32). The other tree of paradise,—the apple tree,—is also present in the Song of Songs, as it is in Purgatorio Canto 32, the traditional tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Mary is this tree, a holy tree, and her son is the Flower of the Rod. For example, in a painting of the school of Schongauer, "The Virgin and Child" (plate XXIVa), Mary is seated with the Christ Child, holding a rose, beside a fruit tree and inside a hortus conclusus contained by a rail fence (walled garden). The rose is the Flower of the Tree which is Mary. Innumerable such instances of Mary as a Tree might be given. The theme is one of the most common ones portrayed in the story of the Virgin.

All of the features of landscape for a paradise-garden exist in the Song of Songs. Indeed the domain of the Shulamite in the Song is called an "enclosed garden," which the mediaeval world knew to be a hortus conclusus, the Latin name for the walled garden of earthly delights. The early etymology of paradise also means a walled, enclosed garden: Old Persian pairidaeza enclosure, park, from pairi around + diz to mould, form; whence also Armenian pardez, late Hebrew pardēs (Neh. 2:8 the park of the Persian

king, also Eccl. 2:5); in modern Persian and Aramaic firdaus garden, paradise, —O.E.D.

It remains for us to determine the relation that exists between the Song of Songs and the theology of the Flowering Rod. Once that has been fully achieved, in the next section, we shall not only have a complete grasp of the imagery and meaning in Hilda Doolittle's War Trilogy, but we shall have developed a firm stance in orthodox Christian imagery with which we may comprehend the dimensions of Olson's work in the "Dogtown, - II" poem.

At this point we are aware of the walls in the Song of Songs which do not fall. The tower, Magdalene, a Mary-tree pillar of the world and Axis Mundi in the Temple of an eternal creation. Davidic Tower. We must now see how that pillar and rod enters into a Christian belief, having looked at its pre-Christian, Jewish and Egyptian and Near Eastern origins at the roots of a widespread Pleistocene landscape of the soul.

The Flowering of the Rod

The Flowering Rod theme is very present in the two German tapestries which illustrate the Christian allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs (plates XXII, XXIII). In each we see twelve rods standing behind the Virgin at the edge of the wall of paradise, symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel. One of the twelve has burst into flower. The other eleven are barren. The flowering rod is Aaron's rod of the House of Levi, the chosen tribe of God, elected to carry the Ark of the Covenant which had been given to Moses:

And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying,

Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod.

And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers.

And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you.

And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel whereby they murmur against you.

And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.

And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness.

And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.

Numbers 17: 1-8.

In the tapestries we see Mary Magdala, Mary the Tower, Tree and pillar at the center of the world. Walls that do not fall because of the flowering rods which continue to uphold temple and cosmos. In short, all of the important elements of H.D.'s War Trilogy, a poem so little understood. By studying the Trilogy we have renewed in our minds a central Axis Mundi, an Axis of beliefs that exists at the center of a theology whose roots are immemorial. The Axis is the Cross in Christianity, a World Tree whose wood is taken, by Seth, from the garden of paradise and passed into the hands of history, through Moses, Aaron, Jesse, David and Solomon. Mary the Mother of Jesus was of this Tree, a part of the Davidic covenant and a member of the House of Levi. The Flowering of the Rod re-occurs in the choosing of her husband, Joseph. The story is told in the Apocryphal Gospels of the New Testament called The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary and the Protoevangelium (or Gospel of James). Here we meet the final Flowering which gives birth to the promised oleum misericordiae, the Christ Child:¹⁹

For Isaiah saith, there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall spring out of its root.

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Council and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and Pity, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him.

Then, according to this prophecy, he appointed, that all the men of the house and family of David, who were marriageable, and not married, should bring their several rods to the altar.

And out of whatsoever person's rod after it was brought, a flower should bud forth, and on the top of it the Spirit of the Lord should sit in the appearance of a dove, he should be the man to whom the Virgin should be given and betrothed.

Among the rest was a man named Joseph, of the house and family of David, and a person very far advanced in years, who drew back his rod, when every one besides presented his.

So that when nothing appeared agreeable to the heavenly voice, the high-priest judged it proper to consult God again,

Who answered that he to whom the Virgin was to be betrothed was the only person of those who were brought together, who had not brought his rod.

Joseph therefore was betrayed.

For, when he did bring his rod, and a dove coming from heaven pitched upon the top of it, every one plainly saw, that the Virgin was to be betrothed to him:

Accordingly, the usual ceremonies of betrothing being over, he returned to his own city of Bethlehem, to set his house in order, and make the needful provisions for the marriage.

Gospel of the Nativity of Mary, 5:14 - 6:6.

The Nativity Gospel tells of the miraculous birth of Mary to Joachim and Anna of the race and family of David,

in the City of Nazareth. How, at the age of three years, the Virgin was presented in the Temple at Jerusalem for instruction and education. And how at twelve years old she lingered on in the Temple, refusing to leave and take a husband like all other vestal Virgins, therefore threatening to violate the sanctity of the holy Temple. How the high-priest consulted with God and was told to wed Mary to the man who would bear with him the flowering rod. This same story is told in the Protoevangelium, another Apocryphal text of the New Testament about the life of Mary:

And when she was twelve years of age, the priests met in a council, and said, Behold, Mary is twelve years of age; what shall we do with her, for fear lest the holy place of the Lord our God should be defiled?

Then replied the priests to Zacharias the high-priest, Do you stand at the altar of the Lord, and enter into the holy place, and make petitions concerning her, and whatsoever the Lord shall manifest to you, that do.

Then the high-priest entered into the Holy of Holies, and taking away with him the breastplate of judgement (Exodus 28: 22 ff) made prayers concerning her.

And behold the angel of the Lord came to him, and said, Zacharias, Zacharias, Go forth and call together all the widowers among the people, and let every one of them bring his rod, and he by whom the Lord shall show a sign shall be the husband of Mary.

And the crier went out through all Judea, and the trumpet of the Lord sounded, and all the people ran and met together.

Joseph also, throwing away his hatchet, went out to meet them; and when they were met, they went to the high-priest, taking every man his rod.

After the high-priest had received their rods, he went into the temple to pray;

And when he had finished his prayer, he took the rods, and went forth to distribute them, and there was no miracle attended them.

The last rod was taken by Joseph, and behold a dove proceeded out of the rod, and flew upon the head of Joseph.

And the high-priest said, Joseph, Thou art the person chosen to take the Virgin of the Lord, to keep her for him:

Protoevangelium 8:3-12.

In the Gospel of the Nativity of Mary there is a reference to Jesse's rod, which must be placed beside Moses' rod, Aaron's rod and the flowering rods in the pillars of the Davidic Temple (built by Solomon), in this history of the flowering of the Christian Axis Mundi. The reference given is to Isaiah 11:1-2—

Et egredietur virga de radice Iesse, et flos et radice eius ascendet. Et requiescet super eum spiritus Domini: spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et pietatis; et replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini.

The English Authorized Version has:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord:

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for our ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people.

The Revised Version reads:

And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. . . .

Radix, root; virga stem, rod; flos flower; spiritus spirit. Such is the ascending sequence of imagery. Radix Jesse, rooted in Jesse. The Rod which grows out of the radix is Mary, from virga, whence Virgo, the Virgin Mother, descended from the house of David rooted in Jesse. The flos which proceeds from the virga is the Son of Mary, Mary's Gold Flower. These are the last of the Biblical elements we shall consider which relate to the Rod and Rood-Tree in our study of the Christian Axis of the World.

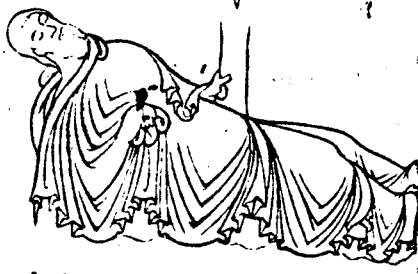
Here we must notice an exceptionally fine work of scholarship, written by Arthur Watson, entitled The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse (1934), a book which discusses the significance of the Tree of Jesse (virga Jesse) and which depicts numerous illustrations of the Tree growing out of the breast of Jesse's body,—just as the Tree of the Oil of Mercy grows out of three seeds of the Tree of Life which Seth placed in Adam's mouth, and the Tree-Cross (virga crucis) grows out of the skull of dead Adam

on the Mount which is variously called Golgotha, Calvary and Purgatory (the place of terrestrial paradise). This is the Rod which is watered by generations of human belief. Its flowers are saints and prophets. Its greatest and highest bloom is Christ. And the Tree, itself, is Mary, the Mary-Tree, a Tree which sheds the oleum misericordiae. Mary is called Mater misericordiae, Mother of Mercy, she who weeps tears of mercy in the scene of the pieta. She is the Mother of the promised oil of life. She is the weeping Madonna dolorosa whose tears are the nectar and clear shining water shed by the Golden Flower (flos: Christ) which she holds in her highest branches.

Of foremost importance in our inquiry is the close affinity that always exists between Mary and the Flowering virga, a Rod which gives forth the blossoming flos and spiritus mundi. Prefigurations of the Virgin include the three virgae mentioned in the Old Testament, the virga Moysi (Exodus 4:1-4; 7:8-21; 14:15-31; 17:1-7), the virga Aaron (Numbers 17), and the virga or radix Iesse. We have studied each of these flowering rods, Moses', Aaron's and Jesse's, in the Davidic line leading to the birth of the Christ Child. The Virgin Mother personifies and embodies this divine Rod and everlasting pillar which flowers with the promised Oil of Mercy. Virgo dei genetrix virga est, —expresses the common mediaeval belief in a close relation between virga and virgo, "rod" and "maiden," Tree and Virgin



b.



a.

Plate XXVII. Mary Dendritus, The Tree of Jesse. (a) holding the Christ Child and surmounted by the Dove of the Spiritus. From a Commentary of St. Jerome, 12th century. Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale. (b) Virgin as the Tree of Jesse, miniature in the 13th century "Berthold Missal" (Morgan MS 710, fol. 112).

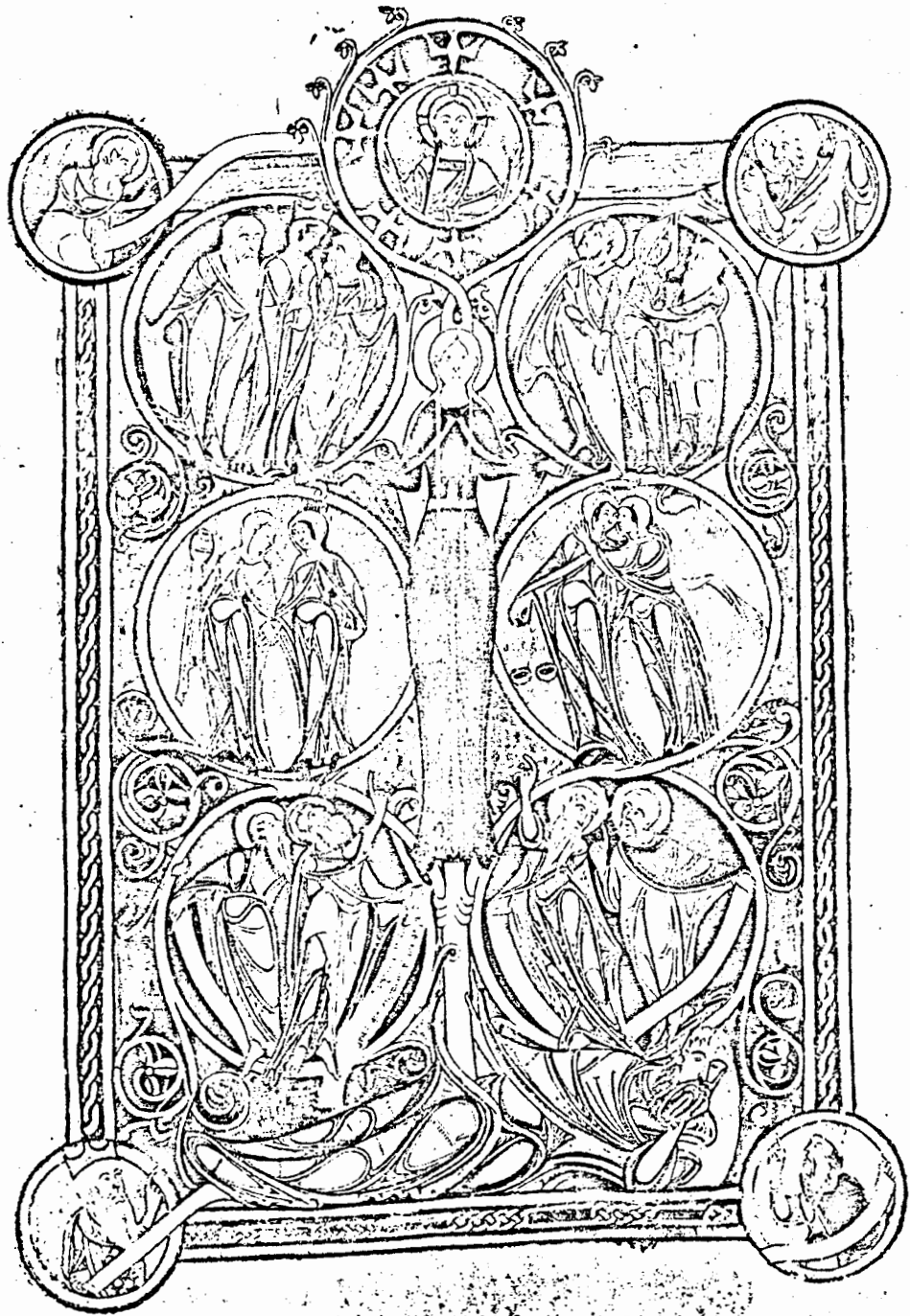


Plate XXVIII. Tree of Jesse at the beginning of Isaiah in the Bible, MS 3, fol. 198r, of the Lambeth Palace Library. The Virgin Mary (virgo) is the trunk (truncus) and her arms are branches of the tree (virga) whose bloom (flos) is Christ, above, surmounted by the seven doves of the Gifts of the Spiritus Sanctus.

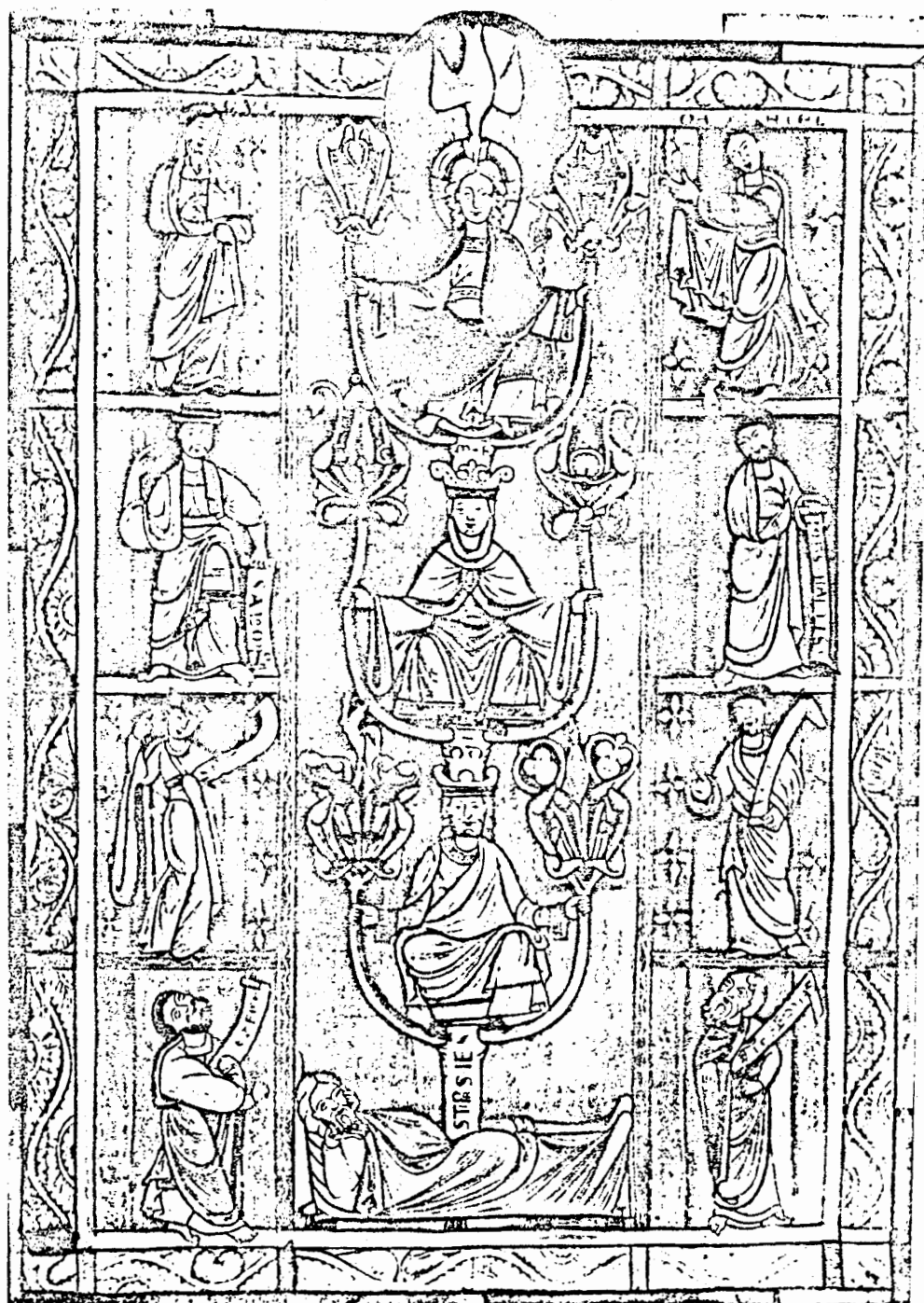


Plate XXIX. Celestial Dynasty of David, Mary and Christ,
as the Tree of Jesse. Rabanus Maurus, "De
 Laudibus Sanctae Crucis," second half of the
 12th century, folio 11, MS 340, Bibliothèque
 Municipale, Douai.

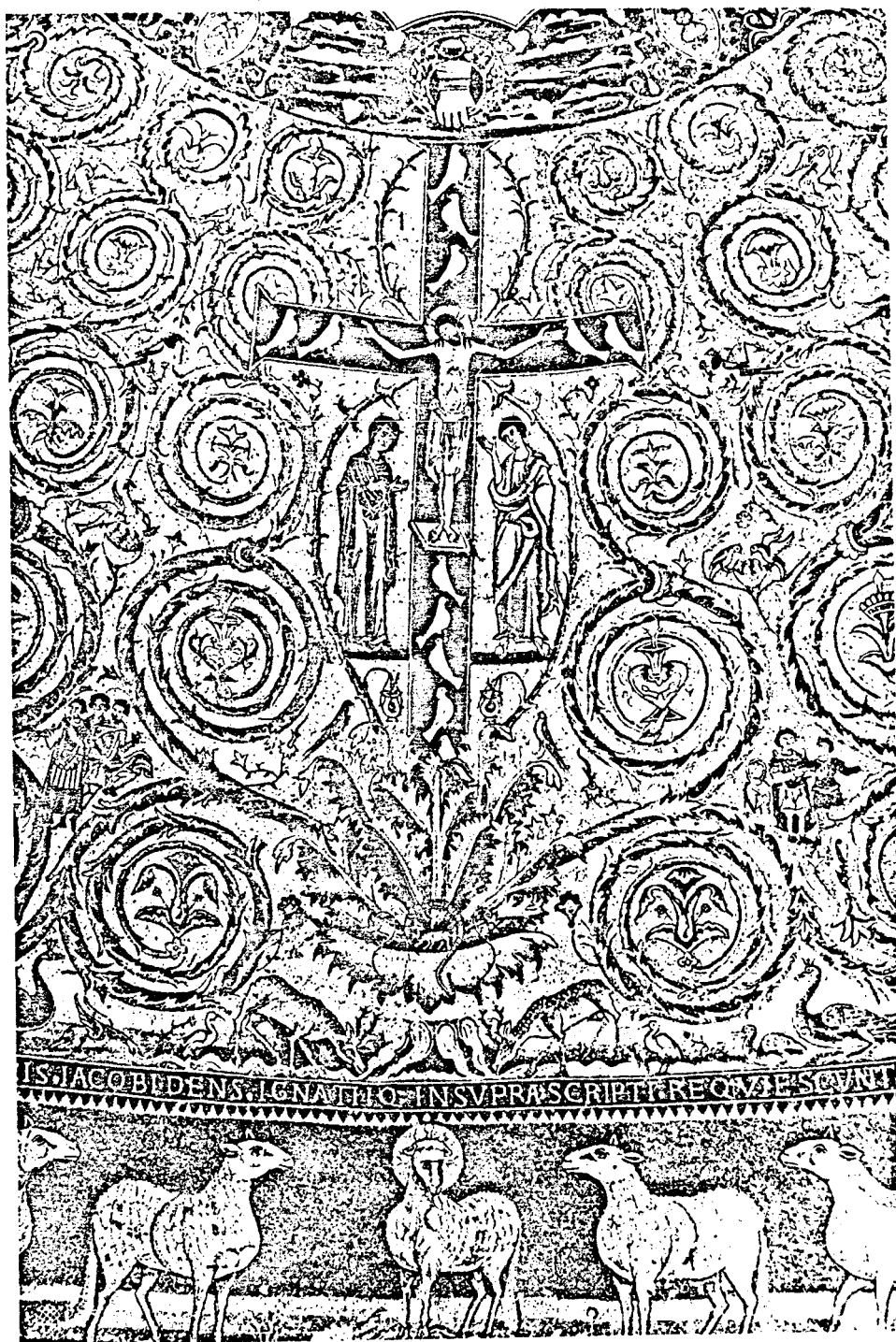


Plate XXXa. Christ Crucified on a Thorn Tree (Acanthus).
 Flanked by the Virgin and S. John, in Paradise.
 San Clemente apse, Rome. Mosaic, before 1128.
 The Flower of God is grafted onto the thorn
 tree of the World. Christ is nailed onto the
 Mary-Cross.

Mary. In a thirteenth century commentary on Psalm cix we read: "What do you think the virga is, if it is not the Blessed Mother of God from whom proceeded that Flower of the Field?"²⁰ The prefigurations of Mary as Virgin / virga stemming from the radix Iesse and flowering in the virgae of the O.T., are revealed in the New Testament flowering of Joseph's rod and the birth of the flos—Christ Child—on the virga—blessed wood of the Mary Tree.

Iconographic representations of the virga Iesse are well documented in Arthur Watson's thorough study of the subject. We have chosen to present several examples which best typify the general motif. In plate XXVIIa, the Tree which grows out of the sleeping Jesse, is formed of the body of Mary who holds the Christ Child in her right arm. The dove of the Holy Spirit descends from above. In plate XXVIIb, the Tree is again composed of the figure of Mary, and has seven branching scrolls each of which enfolds one of the seven doves of the Spirit. Plate XXVIII shows a similar representation of the Mary-Tree in which scroll-shaped branchings enfold scenes in the life of the Tree, from Old Testament times until the birth of the Christ Child, whose presence is in the nimbus above Mary's head, surrounded by the seven doves of the Spirit. And plate XXIX again shows the Tree whose trunk is formed of the Davidic line, David—Mary—Christ, and surmounted by the

dove of the Holy Spirit. This is the Flowering Rod at the heart of a Christian belief. It is the Tree and Rod which is colored in stained glass in a window of the Abbey Church of Saint Denis and in a western window at Chartres Cathedral.

Jesse is asleep on the ground, recumbent under the Tree of a dream vision. Jesse is radix, the root of a gigantic World Tree whose trunk grows out of his aged breast. The trunk is the virga / virgo, wood of salvation. Our Blessed Mary, Tree of the World, a Mary-Tree. Above her she lifts the promised Son, Christ (the flos, floris, flower), Gold Flower of Creation. He is surrounded by a nimbus which is composed and inhabited by seven doves,^{20a} who represent the spiritus, the Seven Gifts of the Spirit which in name are sapientia, intellectus, consilium, fortitudo, scientia, pietas and timor—(Isaiah 11:2). The design fulfills the ascendent radix—virga—flos—spiritus line of prophecy which is spoken in the words of Isaiah: "Et egredietur virga de radice Iesse, et flos de radice eius ascendet. Et requiescet super eum spiritus Domini: spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et pietatis; et replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini,"—which we recite in final summary.

Here we have witnessed the iconographic details of the traditional Flowering Rod which stands at the center of Christianity. As a Tree of Jesse it most usually depicts

three persons: the radix is Jesse; the virga is Mary; and the flos is Christ,—with the frequent addition of other divine members, branches and flowering buds who belong to the genealogy of the Davidic line. Arthur Watson presents no less than 25 such representations of the Tree,—root, stem and Flower,—made of Jesse, Mary and Christ.

It is perhaps opportune, at this point, to make a comparison between the Tree of Jesse motif and the Flowering wood of the Cross (virga crucis) at the Crucifixion. Let us consider our plate XXX, a Flowering Tree (Acanthus thorn) from the central part of the apse mosaic in S. Clemente, Rome, c. 12th century. Jesse and Mary are no longer figures in the Tree itself. The Cross has replaced Mary and Jesse's position is taken by a mass of root stocks that descend below into a pool which pours forth four streams. They are the streams of water from the Cross; the vivifying world rivers called Nile, Ganges, Tigris and Euphrates. And the Tree is the Flowering Rod which stands at the center of terrestrial paradise. Christ is the fountain in paradise, whose waters, shed on the Cross, shall renew the world. He is the rose on the thorn tree. He is the promised resurrection to life, whose waters nourish the parched soul. The deer bend down to drink of the waters of life.

The wooden Cross is flanked by two persons, who are Mary and S. John. It gives bloom to the flos which is grafted with nails onto the dead and thorny Tree of Life.

The Flower is the Crucified Christ. He is still surrounded by the doves of the spirit, seven doves above for the Seven Gifts of the Spirit and a total of twelve doves for the twelve apostles. The whole is a transformed Tree of Jesse into a Tree of the Crucifixion. All of the elements of the virga Jesse are present but transchanged. And the greatest of these changes is where Mary has become the Cross onto which her Son is nailed, —Virga aaron virga crucis est quae floruit. The Rod of Moses, Jesse, Aaron, David, Solomon and Joseph, is the wood of the Cross which burst into Flower at the Crucifixion:

Mary is often named as the wood of the Cross in poetry of the mediaeval age. The tree of life was interpreted in Christian thought as the Virgin Mother, just as she was the virga of the Tree of Jesse. Hymn-writers in their efforts to praise the Mother of Christ drew upon the rich imagery of the Old Testament. To her were applied the verses of Ecclesiastes 24:17: "I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus, as a cypress on Mount Sion: I was exalted like a palm tree in Cades . . . as a fair olive tree in the plains." And words from the Song of Songs, which we have already studied. The Psalterium beatae Mariae V of Edmund of Canterbury (c. 1170-1240) opens with the lines:

Ave, virgo, lignum vite,
 Quae dedesti fructum vitae
 Saluti fidelium.

Bonaventura (1221-1274) saluted the Mother of Jesus thus:

Ave, Virgo, vitae lignum
 Quae perenni laude dignum,
 Salvo voto, quod vovisti,
 Mundo fructum attulisti.

She is the Green Tree (lignum vitae), living wood which bears the Flower of Creation, Light of the World (Lux Mundi) in her branches. Her close association with the Cross is attested in the mediaeval poems called Disputatio inter Mariam et Crucem,²¹ "Dispute between Mary and the Cross," in which the Green Tree (Mary) and the Dry Tree (of the barren Cross) debate over their apparent opposition, but finally conclude that they are conjoined in the drama of a single purpose,—drama of the Salutifera Arbor, the Tree of Salvation. Our own intent has tried to show this evidence which indicates the nature of Mary as a Tree of Life which, like the Tree of Jesse, is the Flowering Rod that bears the Gold Flower of Creation (flos: Christ) in the promise of her own Son.

Just as the virga Iesse grows out of the breast of Jesse, so does the Cross, virga crucis, grow out of the skull or mouth of Adam on Golgotha. Perhaps this was enough semblance for an elaborated iconographic comparison. A third motif, of the sleeping and dreaming Jacob who sees a ladder, scala Iacob, stretch forth into the heavens, is another parallel which was not lost upon a mediaeval imagination. It is the last of the interrelated images which we shall briefly consider.

There are many passages written by the Christian Fathers which illustrate this complex of imagery that exists between Mary, the scala Iacob, virga crucis and virga Iesse. Noteworthy is this example written by Josephus Hymnographus: "When Jacob with a loud voice exclaimed, 'Dreadful is this place,' of a truth he saw thee, O Mother of God, figured in that ladder." And again,—"Jacob foresaw thee, O Virgin, as a ladder to raise us to heaven above when sunk and lost in the depths of evil."²² Often the rungs of the step ladder were composed of the Seven Gifts of the Spirit, which were more usually the seven doves in the nimbus of the Christ Flower, or resting doves on the Tree of Life, living wood of the Crucifixion. At any rate the relationship between Scala Iacob, Virga Crucis and Virga Iesse is a well developed theme in mediaeval art and thought from the sixth to the twelfth century A.D. The Tree of Jesse is the beginning of Salvation, the Tree of the Cross its attainment. And the Scala Iacob is yet another of the consistent prefigurations of Mary, along with the three virgae in Old Testament parallels with the New. Jacob dreamed he saw the ladder which was the Virgin Mary, which in its line of genealogy rose up to the Virgin and to Christ. The Virgin was the virga; she was also the scala, and was named a heavenly ladder by St. Eleutherius (6th century) and St. Peter Damian (11th century) among

others. LADDER and ROD and CROSS, —scala, virga and crucis, —are each represented as a MARY-TREE that bridges the way between heaven and earth:—

up Dogtown hill on top one day the
Vertical American thing will
show from heaven the Ladder

come down to the Earth
of Us All, the Many who
know

there is One!

. . .

(Mary's Son

. . .

is the Black Gold Flower

"Maximus, from Dogtown - II".

Startling as it may seem, we may now begin to piece together the vision contained in the "Maximus, from Dogtown - II" poem. In the above extract we see Jacob's Ladder, a Mary-Tree and the Flower, her Son,—²³

VIRGA, VIRGIN, AND CHRIST (flos)

We have, at once, arrived at a comprehension of the meaning of the poem titled "The flowering of the Rod" in Hilda Doolittle's War Trilogy, and prepared ourselves for an entrance into the vision which is now being revealed in Olson's "Dogtown - II." In order to understand the leap more exactly we might turn immediately to look at the Dürer woodcut, "Crucifixion" (plate XXXVII), which should stand in our memory beside the two Trees, of Jesse and the Cross (plates XXVIII & XXX), that we have discussed in our study of the Flowering Rod.

Olson did, in fact, draw upon all of the mediaeval resources which we have investigated, in his composition of the "Dogtown - II" poem. He had at his fingertips a

knowledge of the Flowering Mary-Tree, of the radix—virga—flos—spiritus, of the Virgin Mary as scala and virga. In fact he had at the tips of his feeling edges all of the informations which Hilda Doolittle had discovered prior to her composition of the War Trilogy,—informations which we have just begun to reveal through our own analysis of H.D.'s poetics. We have yet to penetrate into the very center and heart of a mediaeval theology as it is expressed in Dante's Divine Comedy. Having achieved that next inroad, we shall then have prepared ourselves to approach the novelty in Olson's cosmology.

Our illustrations from Arthur Watson's scholarly book on the Tree of Jesse show the Tree called Mary rooted in Jesse's breast and blooming in Christ. This is the trunk of a living wood, Axis of a living Rod of continuous beliefs. An Axis as old as human kind. Her roots are pre-Pleistocene, stretching far under Abraham's time and Moses', beneath Seth and Adam, back to the very beginnings of Homo Anthropos, even to the very origins of Creation. Her flower is the bloom in the Heavens overhead, Christ, Sol Invinctus, Sunflower, burning like a new star over Bethlehem at the birth of a New Age. Burning over an ancient cattle manger, over our cradle and origin. It is this cosmology of beliefs which is mapped in H.D.'s War Trilogy, where our religion of death is transformed into a vision of everlasting life

and resurrection. A vision which was the very pith and heartwood of Christianity until its loss of imagery, c. 1600 A.D., in the "modern." H.D.'s poem refounds the memory of that world of images whose branches and flowers of vision are all attached to the main trunk of a Myrrh-tree, a milk-yielding tree:

Let us, however, recover the Sceptre,
the rod of power:

it is crowned with the lily-head
or the lily-bud:

it is Caduceus among the dying
it bears healing

or evoking the dead,
it brings life to the living.

"The Walls Do Not Fall" III

It is the flowering rod of Mercury-Hermes-Thoth-Michael, who stands at the gateway to paradise guarding access to the Tree of Life. It is the Magician's image of the Tree, held in the hand of the Wise Man and the shaman. It is an image of an eternal city constructed upon the flowering pillar that upholds a theology and a cosmology. The pillar is a bundle of flowering reeds holding up a mudhif, a world which it, as ideogram of the Mother Inanna or Mary, in reality maintains. The world is a cattle byre Temple whose dome is raised on Apsu, on Enki, on Nun, over the Watery Abyss of the Great Flood.

The Tree is the origin of the human universe, standing in paradise, in the garden of our beginnings. It

and resurrection. A vision which was the very pith and heartwood of Christianity until its loss of imagery, c. 1600 A.D., in the "modern." H.D.'s poem refounds the memory of that world of images whose branches and flowers of vision are all attached to the main trunk of a Myrrh-tree, a milk-yielding tree:

Let us, however, recover the Sceptre,
the rod of power:

it is crowned with the lily-head
or the lily-bud:

it is Caduceus among the dying
it bears healing

or evoking the dead,
it brings life to the living.

"The Walls Do Not Fall" III

It is the flowering rod of Mercury-Hermes-Thoth-Michael, who stands at the gateway to paradise guarding access to the Tree of Life. It is the Magician's image of the Tree, held in the hand of the Wise Man and the shaman. It is an image of an eternal city constructed upon the flowering pillar that upholds a theology and a cosmology. The pillar is a bundle of flowering reeds holding up a mudhif, a world which it, as ideogram of the Mother Inanna or Mary, in reality maintains. The world is a cattle byre Temple whose dome is raised on Apsu, on Enki, on Nun, over the Watery Abyss of the Great Flood.

The Tree is the origin of the human universe, standing in paradise, in the garden of our beginnings. It

continues to nourish our imagination and gnosis with oils of everlasting life. Without that Tree, as a visionary source, our souls would die of hunger and thirst in the time span of a single generation, parched dry in a wasteland of dogma and discourse, ideology and commandment. The Tree sheds milk. But its truest food is light, of which milk is only one of its real expressions. The light opens a way out of the dark, like a tree's leaves reaching up to the Sun. So does the human species reach up. The mind reaches up in obedience to its own tropisms, to the dew or milk or light which is shed by the Tree of Life, of which we are a part. Our minds lift like arms which are branches of the Tree's soaring crown, pushing towards the high heavens for light. All the informations we have provided serve to reach these conclusions, which are neither formalist nor functionalist explanations of belief. The informations merely compose the evidence with which we may state the dimensions of human capacity in our species of life called history,—a life which is as large as the Axis Mundi herself, she whom we envision and by whom we are remembered. Each person participates in this immemorial stature of mind which is as large as the Tree from which it gains its nourishment. It is as high as vision and as rooted as memory,—unless it blows over in the first wind. How else are we to picture the process of human accomplishment? The images we have given are pictures of the human mind

and soul,--stuff which can't, in the end, be anatomized down to its last veins, without killing the movement of sap in xylem, blood in the human heart of the world.

The great contribution which H.D. makes, in addition to a review and renewal of our mediaeval and ancient memory (as archaeologist and historian) is the proposition of a human will-to-vision which has stayed at its present peak of intense desire at least since the last post-glacial of 9,000 B.C. Even the images for this degree of human capability have stayed forever unchanged. Continuity presents itself in place of progress.

The Marsh-Arab looking at the flowering reed columns in his cattle byre is a prefiguration of our own and contemporary theology. His milk-tree was a way of expressing this experience of thirst. His need for the nourishment of continuous life of the mind; of life everlasting. Our species must have history, light, milk and myrrh. That is a primordial fact whose bases lie in the first radicle action of our deepest historical roots and origins.

THE FLOWERING OF THE ROD: PRIMARY SOURCES --

Roberts, Alexander, and James Donaldson, eds., The Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers, Vol. XVI, Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Revelations, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870). This most important collection of apocryphal works contains seven texts which relate the Life of Joseph and the Marriage of the Virgin to us, — the Protoevangelium of James, the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, the Gospel of the Nativity of Mary, the History of Joseph the Carpenter, the Gospel of Thomas, and the Arabic Gospel of the Saviour's Infancy, — pp. 1-124. The story of the Flowering of Joseph's Rod is told in the first three of these apocryphal texts, whereas the last four are Infancy Gospels about the early Life of Jesus. Also in this collection of apocrypha is the Gospel of Nicodemus about the coming of Christ with the promised Oil of Mercy.

James, Montagu Rhodes, The Apocryphal New Testament, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924). Contains a further account of the Life of Joseph, in addition to the seven apocrypha noted above, in a work called the Armenian Gospel of the Infancy.

_____, Latin Infancy Gospels, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927).

MEDIAEVAL TEXTS --

Morris, Richard, ed., Cursor Mundi, Part II, Early English Text Society Publication No. 59, (London: Oxford University Press, 1875), page 617 on the Flowering of Joseph's Rod.

Block, K.S., ed., Ludus Coventriae or the Plaie called Corpus Christi, Early English Text Society Publication No. 120, (London: Oxford University Press, 1922). "The Betrothal of the Virgin," and Flowering of the Rod, pp. 83-97.

Parker, Roscoe E., ed., The Middle English Stanzaic Versions of the Life of Saint Anne, Early English Text Society Publication No. 174, (London: Oxford University Press, 1930). The Marriage of the Virgin and Flowering of the Rod is told in The Life of Saint Anne, lines on pp. 11-16 and 120-123 in the two versions.

Ryan, G., and H. Ripperger, eds., The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine, (London: 1941), pp. 204-208 and 519-530. See the following section on Giotto and the Arena Chapel.

THE FLOWERING OF THE ROD: FURTHER READING AND COMMENTARY —

- Deasy, C. Philip, St. Joseph in the English Mystery Plays,
(Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press,
1937), pp. 4-8 and 28-34 on the Marriage of the Virgin and
Flowering of the Rod.
- de St. Laurent, Grimouard, "Étude sur l'iconographie de saint
Joseph," Revue de l'art chrétien, Vol. XXXIII, (1833),
pp. 356-357.
- Didiot, Jules, "Saint Joseph et l'art chrétien primitif,"
Revue de l'art chrétien, Vol. X, (1866), pp. 225-241.
- Dubois, Louis Ernest, Saint Joseph, (Paris: 1927).
- Lepicier, Alexis H., Saint Joseph, époux de la très sainte
Vierge, (Paris: 1932).
- Thompson, Edward H., The Life and Glories of St. Joseph,
(London: 1917).

GiOTTO: The Arena Chapel Frescoes

One of the most glorious Chapels ornamented throughout with Christian art is the Arena Chapel in Padua, whose fresco-lined walls were plastered and colored by Giotto (1267-1337) in the years of 1304 and 1305. Dedicated to the Virgin of Charity and the Virgin of the Annunciation, the Chapel was consecrated in March of the year 1305.

The ceiling of the Chapel is a dark midnight blue, pointed with starlights and planets. Two angels unroll an immense scroll of the universe, showing "The Last Judgement" on the entrance wall of the Chapel. Beneath the sun and moon on the upper blue of the fresco sits a Christ in Majesty, enthroned in a blue and yellow mandorola and surrounded by the souls of the blessed, those who are enthroned in the governments of heaven. Streams of red hot fire cascade down through the blue air, thrown off by the mandorola which surrounds Christ, the Lux Mundi, fires which keep Hell burning, the fires of God's love which in Hell are felt as the fires of purgation that reach as far down as the blue devil who freezes below in ice. They are the rivers of fire which stream across the sky of an entire cosmology:

opens out the light the river flowing
at my feet

the light hangs
from the wheel of heaven

in Maximus IV,V,VI.

The frescoes along the side walls of the Chapel are arranged in three bands or registers, each a narrative telling a Christian story. The top band is the story of the Life of the Virgin, and the middle and lower narratives show the Life and Passion of Christ. It is the Life of the Virgin, which tells the story of the Flowering of the Rod, that has become so essential in our work. And so let us follow the top band of frescoes and read the meaning they portray in the cosmology which is visualized in the theatre of the Arena Chapel.

Reading along the left wall of the upper register, facing from the altar towards "The Last Judgement" appears a story which begins with the expulsion of Joachim from the Temple. Four frescoes along the upper wall and we see the Vision of Joachim, which causes him to search out the beloved Anna, the Mother of Mary. They meet at the Porta Aurea, the Golden Gate, which arches over their embrace in the sixth fresco. And there the story jumps across the Chapel to the other side of "The Last Judgement,"

and is to be read in reverse, towards the altar.

The first fresco on the upper right end of the side wall shows the Nativity of Mary, born to Joachim and Anna. Then follows the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, when she is three years of age. The third fresco in the Virgin's Life occurs when she is fourteen years old and ready to leave the Temple to wed a husband. But she refuses to leave and we witness the drama given in the Protoevangelium and The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary, which is the drama of the Flowering of the Rod. The three frescoes which illustrate the Flowering of Joseph's Rod are given in the narrative sequence of the Life of the Virgin in this order: The Presentation of the Rods; The Watching of the Rods; and The Betrothal of the Virgin to Joseph who holds the Flowering Rod with a dove on its top. These are the frescoes of the Arena Chapel which we have chosen to illustrate in our Plates XXXb and XXXc. Giotto was one of the early masters to portray the Life of the Virgin in a narrative technique which he had virtually originated in western art.

Nothing of the story of the Virgin's Life is given in the New Testament and Giotto must have relied entirely on an apocryphal version of The Nativity of Mary. In fact the Christ-event of the Flowering Rod appeared during Giotto's day in the popularized story of The Golden Legend, by Jacobus de Voragine — [ca. 1260]:

The Annunciation

The Virgin Mary dwelt in the Temple with the other virgins from her third year to her fourteenth, and there made a vow to preserve her chastity, unless God otherwise disposed. Then she was espoused to Joseph, God revealing His will by the flowering of Joseph's staff, as told in the history of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary. And Joseph went to Bethlehem, his native city, to make all needful preparations for the marriage, while Mary returned to the home of her parents in Nazareth. Nazareth means flower. Whence Bernard says that the Flower willed to be born of a flower, in flower, and in the season of flowers.

Jacobus de Voragine relates a tale he had read in the Nativity Gospel or the Protoevangelium. It is about the Flower, —Christ,—born on a lowly flower*in the springtime of the world: —

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

When she had come to her fourteenth year, the high priest announced to all that the virgins who were reared in the Temple, and who had reached the age of their womanhood, should return to their own, and be given in lawful marriage. The rest obeyed the command, and Mary alone answered that this she could not do, both because her parents had dedicated her to the service of the Lord, and because she herself had vowed her virginity to God. The High Priest was perplexed at this, because on the one hand he could not forbid the fulfillment of a vow, since the Scripture said: 'Vow ye, and pay to the Lord your God'; and on the other, he dared not admit a practice which was unwonted in the Jewish nation. When the elders were consulted at the next feast of the Jews, all were of the opinion that in so doubtful a matter they should seek counsel of the Lord. They all therefore joined in prayer; and when the high priest went in to take counsel with God, a voice came forth from the oratory for all to hear, and said that of all the marriageable men of the house of David who had not

*The Madonna of Humility.

yet taken a wife, each should bring a branch and lay it upon the altar, that one of the branches would burst into flower and upon it the Holy Ghost would come to rest in the form of a dove, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, and that he to whom this branch belonged would be the one to whom the virgin should be espoused.

Joseph was among the men who came: but to him it seemed not fitting that a man of his years should take so young a maid to wife, so that when all the others placed branches upon the altar, he alone left none. Thus nothing such as the voice of God had predicted took place, wherefore the high priest again took counsel with the Lord, who said that he alone to whom the Virgin should be espoused, had not brought his branch. Being thus discovered, Joseph placed a branch upon the altar, and straightway it burst into bloom, and a dove came from Heaven and perched at its summit; . . .

The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine, eds. G. Ryan and H. Ripperger, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1941), pp. 204-208 and 519-530.

The dove which alights on Joseph's Rod is the Spiritus Sanctus. The Lily-Flower is the Flos of the Christ Child, born on the Axis of the Virga which is rooted in Jesse. The Flowering Rod is an icon of the larger Tree of Jesse whose iconology we examined in the last section of our work. In these instances the Rod which Joseph holds in his hand before the altar of the Temple is an image or figure of the larger Axis Mundi at the center of the Christian cosmology of beliefs.

One need hardly add the important corollary that the Flowering Rod is also the Lily which is brought to the Virgin by the angel Gabriel, angel of the Annunciation. He

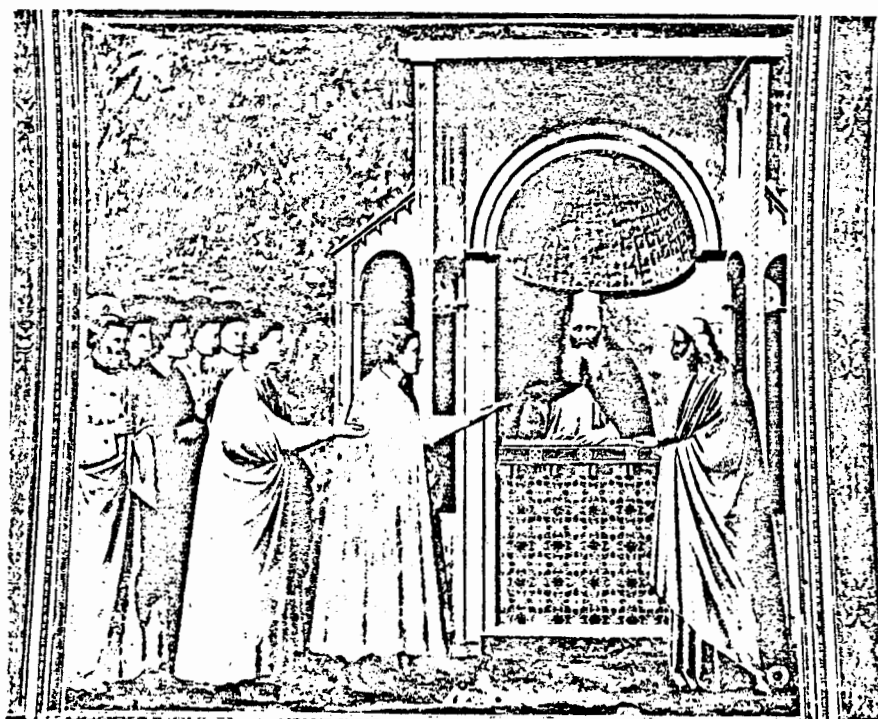


Plate XXXb. Giotto: the Arena Chapel Frescoes of the Life of the Virgin. The Meeting of Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate (above). The Presentation of the Rods (below).

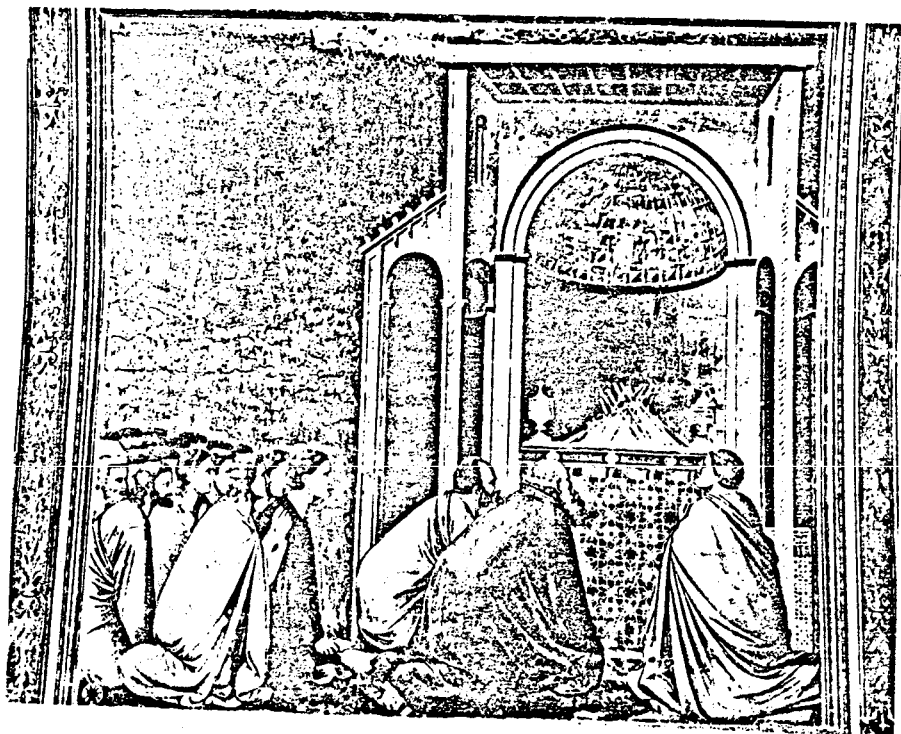


Plate XXXc. Giotto: the Arena Chapel Frescoes of the Life of the Virgin. The Watching of the Rods (above). The Betrothal of the Virgin in which Joseph holds the Flowering Rod on which sits the Dove of the Spirit (below).

brings the Virgin a cut Lily because it has no roots in the earthly world. It is placed in a vase of water between the angel and the woman who is to bear the incarnate Son of God. She is of the mortal Rod of Jesse, upon which is grafted the Lily of God.

The Life of the Virgin was also portrayed in frescoes by Giotto's pupil, Taddeo Gaddi (1300-1366), on the left wall of the Baroncelli Chapel in the Franciscan Church of Santa Croce, Florence. There he depicts the expulsion of Joachim from the Temple, the meeting of Anna and Joachim at the Golden Gate, the Nativity of Mary, the Presentation of the Virgin and the Marriage of the Virgin to Joseph, in which Joseph carries the Flowering Rod.

Again the Life of the Virgin is given in five frescoes in the Rinuccini Chapel of the same Church of Santa Croce, once attributed to Taddeo Gaddi, but now known to be of a different hand.

Fra Angelico (1386/7-1455) has given us "The Marriage of the Virgin," on the predella border of "The Annunciation," which is now in the Museo del Gesu, Cortona, —showing Joseph with the Flowering Rod and one of the unsuccessful suitors about to strike him a blow with a barren rod.

Ghirlandaio (1448-1494) accomplished a work of the Life of the Virgin in a series of frescoes painted in the choir of S. Maria Novella at Florence, showing the Nativity

of Mary, the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple and the Marriage of the Virgin in which Joseph holds the Flowering Rod. Forty years after completion of this story of the Virgin's Life, a Sieneese chapel, called the Oratory of San Bernardino, near the church of San Francesco, was dedicated to the glory of the Virgin.

"The Marriage of the Virgin," (It. "Il Sposalizio") was shortly afterwards painted in the Umbrian School by Perugino (1469-1523) and his pupil Raphael (1483-1520). Perugino's "Sposalizio" was done for the Cathedral of Perugia, commissioned in 1499 and completed by 1505, showing the Marriage in which Joseph carries the Flowering Rod. Raphael's "Sposalizio" is much influenced by the conceptual framework of his teacher's example, for the Church of San Francesca, Citta di Castello, and completed in 1504. Four suitors carry barren rods which have not flowered, and one of them cracks his wand across his knee in frustration. Joseph's Rod is in Flower.

As a last example, let us cite the masterful "Marriage of the Virgin" by Bernardino Luini (1480-1556/7) pupil of Leonardo da Vinci, a work executed for the Church of S. Maria dei Miracoli, Savonno, in which another disillusioned suitor cracks his barren rod under foot while Joseph holds the Flowering of God.

Others have portrayed scenes from the Life of the

Virgin, from the Nativity to the Marriage. Notably Angiolo Gaddi (1380) in the Cathedral at Prato. Andrea Orcagna (1373) for the shrine in Or-San-Michele at Florence. Nicolo de Modena (1450), engraved on copper plates. Albrecht Dürer, the beautiful and well-known set of twenty-five woodcuts, published in 1510. Works on the Life of the Virgin by Poussin and Rubens, Roger van der Weyden, and a host of others who have contributed to a large and continuous tradition of belief. A tradition whose origins we have traced from the Arena Chapel Frescoes in which Giotto has illustrated the Life of the Virgin as given in Jacobus de Voragine's The Golden Legend. Therefore we have completed our inquiry into the meaning of Hilda Doolittle's "The Flowering of the Rod." And shall end this work with a selected bibliography that may give quick access to the visual examples of the Flowering Rod which have been mentioned in this section:

Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes, ed. James H. Stubblebine, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969).

Eimerl, Sarel, The World of Giotto. c. 1267-1337, (New York: Time Books, 1967), "The Arena Chapel," pp. 112-129.

Jameson, Anna, Legends of the Madonna as Represented in the Fine Arts, 6th ed., (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1879), "The Life of the Virgin Mary from Her Birth to Her Marriage with Joseph," pp. 246-278.

Pope-Hennessy, John, Fra Angelico. The Paintings, (London: Phaidon Press, 1952), "The Annuciation," Plate 8. Detail of "The Annuciation," showing "The Marriage of the Virgin," Plate 12.

Raphael, (New York: New York University, 1970). Perugino's "Sposalizio," and Raphael's "Sposalizio," Plates 73 and 74.

The Complete Works of Raphael, (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1969). "Sposalizio," Plate 2. Detail of "Sposalizio," showing the rods of suitors and Joseph's Flowering Rod, Figure 25.

Gould, Cecil, An Introduction to Italian Renaissance Painting, (London: Phaidon Press, 1957). Luini's "Marriage of the Virgin," Plate 172.

Oertel, Robert, Early Italian Painting to 1400, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968). Taddeo Gaddi's "Life of Mary," Baroncelli Chapel, Plate 73.

Meiss, Millard, Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951).

Venturi, A., La Madonne. Representations de la Vierge dans l'art Italien, (Paris: Gaultier, Magnier & Co., n.d.), Chapter IV: "Le Mariage," from Giotto to Raphael.

PART II

Dante's DIVINE COMEDYPurgatory: The Green Tree and the Dry

We have now covered the pre-Dantesque memory of the imagination, up to the thirteenth-century Legende. We have done so with guidance from H.D.'s poem War Trilogy, as catalyst and main stem that holds all of the mediaeval content on an intelligible basis. Even though the War Trilogy was written between 1943 and 1946, it deals with the time of belief between Egyptian Kingship and Mediaeval Christianity. In fact the Trilogy contains sources which were known to Dante and which we are now in a position to appreciate. These sources compose the centermost vertical Axis or column which projects throughout the three books of the Divine Comedy, as its compositional keel-board or strength. Onto this keel-board are subtended the wooden ribs of a ship or spreading branches of a tree which inform levels of Heaven and Hell. In other words the keel must be very strong to support a vision such as Dante presents and our emphasis has tried to measure the strength of that fundament. The house which Dante raises over the pillars of the world has a wide dome, like St. Peter's in Rome, whose expanse depends upon a knowledge equal to the demands of an unprecedented

architectural support. The Flowering Rods are now Gothic pillars in a cathedral whose slate roof is spread over an intricate branching network of ribbed vaulting. The Flower is the stained glass window set into the nave. The principles in construction of this Temple are continuous with a time immemorial, reaching back to the use of flowering pillars and stone-papyrus rods and reed-bundles; built on Trees of the World. However we are faced with a Gothic and a mediaeval expression of belief on a wondrous scale.

Once again we are going to reveal form while leaving out content. This is possible, whereas the content of the Divine Comedy must occupy a lifetime of experience and scholarship. We shall be using the study of form in the Divine Comedy written by Gerhardt B. Ladner in an article called "Vegetation Symbolism and the Concept of Renaissance," published in De Artibus Opuscula ed. Millard Meiss. This chapter in our study will inform another circle of thought and image preparatory to our entrance into Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown - II" poem. It would be impossible to leap into that greatest of Olson's poems without going round the steps that lead to a conquest of its heights. The steps we are taking are via I. The Gate of Horn; II. The War Trilogy; and III. the Divine Comedy,—established for us by Gertrude Levy, Hilda Doolittle and Dante Alighieri,—looking forwards on the post-modern cosmology pictured in Olson's image of the world.

Our development of imagery is to be continuous, focusing on a common background to a wide poetics. Here we shall use H.D., again, as entrance to Dante's work, no less than we used Gertrude Levy's and Margaret Murray's work as a lead into the War Trilogy (via the "stone-papyrus"). The entrance we have chosen is contained in H.D.'s "Tribute to the Angels." In the tripartite War Trilogy this is the third work, the other two being works we have already looked at, "The Walls Do Not Fall" and "The Flowering of the Rod."

"A Tribute to the Angels" contains an apple tree as a central image, whose branches are scarred by the ravages of W.W.II. It is the Arbor Sicca, the "sick" Dry Tree of Knowledge which H.D. knows will bloom again into a renewed Lignum Vitae, a Living Wood. This is the Legend of the Green Tree and the Dry Tree, which parallels and complements all of the other Christian legendary material we have studied thus far,—the Quest of Seth Legends and Legends of the Holy Rood. Material for exegesis of this last legendary episode in Christianity may be found in Miss M.R. Bennett's "The Legend of the Green Tree and the Dry," Archaeological Journal LXXXIII (London, 1929), pp. 21-32,—another article which we shall use in conjunction with Ladner's "Vegetation Symbolism" to enter into the poetics of the Divine Comedy.

In The Apocalypse of Moses (XX) Eve relates how the Tree of Knowledge became barren dry and lifeless wood after

she had tasted of its fruit:

And I began to seek, in my nakedness, in the garden for leaves to hide my shame, but I found none, for, as soon as I had eaten, the leaves showered down from all the trees, except the fig tree only. But I took leaves from it, and made for myself a girdle and it was from the very same plant of which I had eaten.

The legend of the Dry Tree is Jewish in origin, of very early date (back to the 1st century A.D.). It is referred to in Luke 23:31 during the Procession to Calvary when Christ says: "If they do these things in the Green Tree, what shall be done in the Dry." The legend again appears in the fourth century poem De Ligno Vitae:

There is a place which we believe to be the centre of
the universe
Where rises a hill which the Jews call Golgotha.
There was planted, I remember, a branch from a dry tree
and the wood produced the healing fruits of life.

this wood rises
in the fashion of a tree, with a single trunk, but soon
it extends its branches on each side like two arms.

This tree ceases not to stretch afar its twelve strong branches and with them covers the universe, so that the nations can for ever find in it their nourishment and their life, and that they may learn that death can also die.

The Dry Tree is one which no longer sheds the oil of mercy, nourishment of everlasting life. According to legend it lost its leaves and withered dry in the bitterness of Eve's transgression. Thereafter mankind was cast into the barren and fruitless season of winter, of Old Adam under the Dry

Tree. God promises the mercy of a renewed springtime when the tree shall come alive again and give birth to a New Adam. Christ shall be crucified on the Dry Tree so that his blood may flow on the dead wood like rising sap in the springtime. Where the tree was made Dry by Eve, it shall be renewed to life in Christ. The imagery of this historical transfiguration from Old to a New Adam is seasonal, where spring follows winter, new wood is born on the dry and withered vine. A New Testament shall restore man's place in the innocence of paradise, where the eternal verdure of an everlasting springtime reigns forever.

In the dry state man is given a Mosaic covenant whose fixed rules are commanded in stone. When Christ enters the world his blood causes that Old tree of the Old Testament to come alive in the promised new wine of the New Testament. The Old Testament commandments,—"a tooth for a tooth,"—written for a fallen Adam in the winter of human history, are changed by the New Testament, where justice is tempered with love and mercy: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

Incidentally,—this change lies at the heart of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure, when read in conjunction with Plato's exposition of the seasonal change in politics (Laws Bk. IV) from winter's tyranny to a renewal of spring under the enlightened leadership of a philosopher king,—

where both tyrant and philosopher king are necessary to maintain equity in justice through a cyclical alternation of Mosaic severity and Christian mercy: winter and spring.²⁴ The very words "renaissance" ("renascence") and "reform" are derived from Latin horticultural terminology which requires tyrannical pruning of diseased branches in order to ensure a healthy rebirth of the new spring growth.²⁵ Angelo, in Measure for Measure, is the tyrant-sickle that cuts back at the brothels which sprout up in the city. But his cutting edge is controlled by the Duke, who knows how to use the "benefit of ill."²⁶

A full consideration of this complex issue of the benefit of evil (winter, tyranny, time, and pruning knife) is not proper on this occasion and can only be sketched briefly. Most important is the horticultural symbolism throughout, such as is given in Richard II Act III scene iv, and in these words from Measure for Measure:

However shield my mother played my father fair!
For such a warped slip of wilderness
Ne'er issued from his blood.

Isabella. III, i, 141-3.

Fruit trees in England must be grafted on a hardy native root stock which supports the cultivated tree. "Slips" from the wild root show themselves around the trunk of the grafted fruit tree and must continually be cut down. The wilderness root-stock keeps showing the base nature under the cultivated tree. Angelo and Isabella are such trees whose

wilderness shows in "slips" above the ground. The noble Angelo looks as pure as the gold coin known in Shakespeare's day as the Golden-angel or Angel-noble (I,i,50), but his metal is proven counterfeit by a wilderness which, like Satan, rebels against his outward-seeming worth. He is beauty, a fruit tree, grafted over a base root. The one who goes about so zealously pruning the wilderness in others, is himself tainted by wild origins. Like all of mankind he shares the barren wilderness of Eve's rebellious blood.²⁷

These introductory remarks may serve to exemplify the way in which imagery having to do with "rebirth" and "reform" operates,—the grafting imagery that reappears in the much earlier work of the Divine Comedy and throughout the Latin Christian world until Shakespeare,—where Christ is grafted upon the Dry Tree at the crucifixion and so he brings the wild and barren tree to a new life and bountiful fruition. The horticultural symbolism is derived from Biblical passages such as John 15:1-6,—

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches:

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

While we are born conjoined to the wild and unfruitful stock of the Dry Tree, because of Eve's wilderness, yet the true vine shall be grafted unto this base root through the crucifixion, a vine which shall be fruitful, bearing like trees in an apple orchard.

In Christian doxology God is the Gardener of the world, a world whose pruned perfection was originally planned and ordered like a controlled Versailles garden, having no trace of wilderness in its outlay. However Eve's seed rebelled, grew wild, and the tree of life and knowledge withered to nothing and became a crab apple compared to a cultured apple tree. It is important to know that paradise always implies this absolute obedience of all its contents to the Gardener of creation. All representations of terrestrial paradise show, above all else, order without a sign of wilderness,—usually cut lawns and a fountain pouring forth four streams into culverts that run between stone walkways. Very geometrical. Here, then, is a story of the apple tree whose seed went wild and barren, unkempt and fruitless, disobeying the order of paradise. Or dried up completely like Old Adam. The text is from Caxton's 1483 edition of Guillaume Dequilville's Pilgrimage of the Soul, quoted in Miss Bennett's article on the Green Tree and the Dry:

'What tyme that Adam eten of the Appel to the grete harm of himself and all the issue after hym, the pepyns of that appel he plantid within his own hert, wherefore his trees or braunches spryngine of the pepyns were by comen wylde and unfructuous . . . for it befelle that in these pepyns was bredde a worme, a closid within Adam's herte, the unthrifty vyce of disobedience, which worme . . . corrupted these pepyns that they might nought spring to a fayre Appeltre, but to fowle bushes and wylde that myght nought fructifyen no holsome ne lusty fruyte, but bitter and unsavory. Which fruyte the Mayster Gardyner wold nought putte amonge his store of other fruyte, but caste it to hell . . . till the tyme that it lyked the high lord to graft a good graft, which was to him full dere and precious, and taken fro that ryal and worshypful roote Jesse . . . which graft . . . by the blessing of the good lord received exemption of the forsayd wyldenesse. This stok was that noble braunche oure blessid lady, that God despoilled and made very clene and naked of all manner of vyce and corrupcion which come by nature of this roote. So that when this graft had taken . . . it became a full swete and convenable appletre for to bere good fruyte, agreable and holsome to the styng of any weldisposid creature. A fruyte of more nobel valewe or more worthy prys was there never none than this gentil appletre brought forth after a fewe yeres This fruyte is the Appel with which men must pleyen to avoyden their hevynesse . . . it must be restored to the Tree that Adam despoyled instede of the Appel that he ete. And right it is that thow knowe clerely how that Appel was restored, without which restitution Adam ne none of his lynage might nought be quyte of the surfeit of thylk noyous Appel which he hadde spoyled fro this tree and eten ageyne the wylle of the Soverayne Gardyner.

That which is grafted onto man's basic stock, rooted in wilderness, is the Rod of Jesse, Aaron's Rod, the Mary-tree, "that noble braunche oure blessid lady."^{27a} The graft takes place at the crucifixion when Christ, Mary's Son, is nailed to the Dry Tree of the Cross whose wood is taken from the withered tree of life. In the Divine Comedy this

grafting occurs in Purgatorio Canto 32, where the pole that draws the triumphant chariot of the Church, which is shaped like a Cross, is attached to the Dry Tree that stands in the center of terrestrial paradise.

e l'animal binato:
 'Si si conserva il seme d'ogne giusto'.
 E volto al temo ch'elli avea tirato,
 trasselo al pie della vedova frasca,
 e quel di lei a lei lascio legato.

and the twice begotten animal: 'So is preserved the seed of all righteousness'; and turning to the shaft which he had pulled he drew it to the foot of the widowed trunk and left it bound to the tree by a branch of the tree itself.

The Dry Apple Tree suddenly puts forth new green leaves: ^{27b}

"s'innovo la pianta, che prima avea le ramora si sole"

("the tree was renewed which before had its branches so bare"). The tree becomes the living wood, lignum vitae, of the reborn and renewed Adam. It is the renaissance of a reformed world order. Man regains his original innocence in paradise through this drama of the new wood, in spring. He is given back his starting point in innocence of paradise. That is what innocence means in Christian teachings. It is that state of the soul which must be recovered before the journey to God can be initiated. After Eve's transgression, man must be reborn into innocence, through Christ, before he can turn to make the more important move towards God. Innocence is not a virtue in itself. Nor is the achievement of terrestrial paradise. Rather innocence

and paradise are what was lost when man turned from God. They must be reacheived before the soul is able to begin to know God. Innocence and paradise are the state of the new-born child and the second-born soul, preparatory to a mature experience of Godhead.

The drama we have just considered, of the Green Tree and the Dry, is the fulcrum point upon which the Divine Comedy is balanced between Heaven and Hell. From innocence (of childhood) the soul may turn towards or away from God. Innocence, like terrestrial paradise, is not the end of virtue, but the beginning of grace. This is important when one comes to examine the topic of Innocence in Shakespeare's Tempest (as in Olson's "Quantity in Verse and Shakespeare's Late Plays").²⁸

Hilda Doolittle wasn't so much interested in this systematic discovery of Christian doctrine as she was in its purely imaginative structure. The same holds true in Olson's approach to Christian belief. What was most important to both was the simple fact of the flowering of the rod come spring. The New and Old Testament business disinterested them. They saw in the Divine Comedy the reenactment of the most spiritual Christian drama of the flowering rod, in a man's quest for paradise. Each man like Dante,—Seth, Baruch and Enoch, Alexander and St. Brendan,—must refound the terms of a cosmology within the frame of his own public experience. That is what Dante sets out to find, and in

the process the Dry Tree of his soul is brought to a Vita Nuova, reborn to a new life in terrestrial paradise. In other words the story of the flowering rod does not stop at the birth of the Christ Child. Each man, every man, is Joseph, whose soul, grafted to the vision of the tree of Jesse, bursts into flower.

Dante turns out of Hell. His soul climbs out of the waters of Inferno like a coelocanth that has just discovered and learned to breathe in the air of a new world. In Olson's work this event takes place when Europe discovered the New World of innocence, —America:

Vast earth rejoices,
 deep-swirling Okeanos steers all things through all
 things,
 everything issues from the one, the soul is led from
 drunkenness
 to dryness, the sleeper lights up from the dead,
 the man awake lights up from the sleeping

"Maximus, from Dogtown, - I".

Dante turns from the abyss on the last Canto of the Inferno. His soul turns out of the waters of Hell, the Cocytus, to apprehend the stars over a new found land for the first time, an island mountain in the western sea:

the Sea - turn yr Back on
 the Sea, go inland, to
 Dogtown

"Maximus, from Dogtown, - II".

In European history certain men went to America who then did not return home. They stayed out to fish over the winter. They stayed out to establish the roots of plantation at Gloucester. Those roots would eventually flower in the creation of a city,—Olson's city. When Olson says "everything issues from the one," he means that vision of a city shining on a hill like a new star over Mount Dogtown. In a notepad of dreams from 1958, among the poet's papers, occurs:

issues
 Everything comes fr. the
 Black Chrysanthemum
 & nothing is anything but itself
 measured so . . .

The CHRYSOS ANTHEMON is the "GOLD" "FLOWER" which occupies the heavens in Dante's Paradiso and in Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown - I":

The GOLD
 flower All the heavens, ,
 a few miles up - and even with the sun out -
 is BLACK

Maximus to himself as of
"Phoenicians".

That is the flowering towards which we are headed, turned to view a New Found World through first eyes: "On first Looking out through Juan de la Cosa's Eyes". The object in this history is to attain the innocence of, _____ a PLANTATION a BEGINNING.

In the Divine Comedy a similar new world appears at the end of the Inferno when Hell has suddenly inverted. Poet comes out into a marshland, an Ubaid landscape of the soul. Like a dragonfly that has just pulled wings out of its nymph's skin to dry them in the sun on a cattail in the marsh. Dante goes to the shore and there he plucks a reed (Canto 1 of Purgatory) and to his astonishment a new reed grows in its place. It is a sign of the golden bough; a sign that his own soul shall also be renewed; a prophecy of the drama he shall witness in paradise.

Let us take that prophecy to its fulfillment in the last Cantos of Purgatory, on the top of a mountain which is called Mount Dogtown in Olson's poetics,—highest Earth, where sky and earth meet in the third Christian heaven of the moon. That highest earthly paradise is surrounded by a ring of fire, beyond which lies the eternal springtime in the hortus conclusus, sacred and enclosed garden of delights.

Dante enters a dark wood and comes to a stream (Purgatory, Canto 28). On the opposite bank he sees Flora enamelling the green pathway beneath her feet with spring flowers, as in Botticelli's Primavera, where Zephrous breezes blow crocuses to life on the petticoat of Flora, goddess of the spring dress.²⁹ She is the birth of spring and end of the winter of Old Adam. With her presence the

frozen winter of Hell is completely over and sap begins to move in the tree whose life shall be renewed in Christ. Dante is seduced by her beauty, her outward show, of violets and hepaticas. She has the power of a painted harlot. Even the power of an artificial paradise, where truth is enamell'd green. She must quickly distract his affections by teaching a higher love. She commands his questions about the coming fertility in the reborn world, then leads him along the river bank to a vision of sources that lie above generation. In this way Dante's eyes are repeatedly awakened, cleared and prepared to see a higher mind. Each time he falls into the completion of love, like Paula and Francesca, into a limbo, he is awakened and rescued by a higher Truth. The sun lifts mists, one by one, that cloud the intense light of its exalted glare. It sheds water that covers the soul layer on layer, beckoning the young plant upwards into luminous air, "just as in heaven star will rise on star."

Matelda, — for that is the name of Dante's Flora, — shows him the Procession of the Holy Sacrament.³⁰ A griffon is harnessed to a wagon which is the Church of Rome. The Procession is a Triumph of Eternity. The griffon has gold wings and other parts of his body are white and red, — Hypostatic Union of the two natures in Christ, Divine and Human. Part divine bird and part mortal creature. White

and red are the colors of the Old and New Testaments, but are most especially the colors of the Sacrament itself, Flesh and Blood of the Corpus Christi. Beatrice rides in the wagon. She plays the part of the Holy Sacrament. The griffon draws the wagon, by a Cross-pole, towards the Dry Tree. He engrafts the Cross to the Tree, symbolic of the Crucifixion, and his blood shed on the tree of Old Adam renews its growth. The Rod bursts into Flower, come alive in the spring of the world. The Dry Tree turns Green.

In Dante's trilogy the Mountain of Purgatory is also the Mountain of Calvary, place of Golgotha, where Seth placed the three seeds of the tree of life in Adam's mouth. From that Dry Tree was made the Cross for the Crucifixion which caused Christ's blood to fall on Adam's skull, giving rebirth to an everlasting life. It is the blood of the promised oil of mercy that is shed by the Tree-Cross at the Crucifixion, when new life was grafted to the old and dead wood of a fallen manhood. The new life was Jesse's rod, pruned from the tree of life before that tree's leaves withered completely and saved until grafted, in Christ, to the Cross.

Tradition tells us that at midday of the Crucifixion the Cross burst into leaf and bloom and continued so 'till evening.³¹ So in the Cursor Mundi it is related:

Joseph of Arimathie and Sir Nicodeme also
 As tells us this storie
 With leave of Pilate to the rood
 They went then privili
 There sorfulest of all they found
 Saint John and Saint Mari

The rood was with leaf and branch
 From midday to the Complene
 Flourishing wonderfully

Dante calls the flowering tree an apple tree. Angels are greedy for a taste of its new fruit. Beatrice sits beneath its foliage on its roots. She is the Rod, Axis Mundi, whose wood has renewed the life of the tree. Christ is the flower on her wood of the rod of Jesse. Miss Bennett includes, in her article on the Green Tree and the Dry, a picture which shows Christ crucified on a Dry Tree beside the Blessed Virgin who sits under the Green. The Green Tree produces the Gold Flower which when crucified and grafted to the Dry, brings the Dry Tree to life.

Dante's soul is like the Dry Tree he witnesses in terrestrial paradise, and Beatrice is the Green wood which is grafted to his Dry soul. When this drama occurs, Dante is reborn. He becomes lignum vitae of the vision of rebirth he sees in the drama of the Eucharist. At the end of Purgatory, in the last lines of the poem, it is said that he has been made new,—

To ritornai dalla santissima onda
 rifatto si come piante novelle
 rinovellate di novella fronda,
 puro e disposto a salire alle stelle.

—as trees brought to life again with their new foliage, purified and made fit for mounting to the stars. The branches of his soul are reborn in a renascence that accompanies man's reinstatement into the garden of innocence. The newly-sprouted leaves of his Green soul push up to the stars. The plantation in new soil has occurred: a plantation a beginning. The seeds of the spirit are rooted on the top of Mount Purgatory, no longer wild seeds, blown down the mountain to the earth below. They are seeds placed in the perfection of paradise, in a world made by ART not NATURE, seeds of a new tree, planted by a divine revelation, which push young leaves out of the ground, leaves which rise, like a bean stock, higher and higher as the poem proceeds on into Paradise. The plant is as young as New Adam; as young as second-born mankind; as new as infancy; as innocent as first steps on a newfoundland.

It is clear that this paradise is opposed to wilderness. It is an ordered realm where all things obey God's artistry, where no seed or vine, tree or shoot "slips" into error. It is a theological paradise not a romantic innocence. The terrestrial order of the garden anticipates the higher orders of celestial paradise, where,—"casual punto non puote aver sito,"—nothing of chance can find a place (Paradiso Canto XXXII).

The reborn leaves of the Dry Tree respond tropically to light. They turn heliotropically, like a sunflower,

Helianthus, praying to its Lord in the heavens above. Perhaps the best knowledge of this return of the soul to its origins in divine light and love, is contained in Proclus' "Prayer of the Heliotrope," translated by Henry Corbin in Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi (1969), p. 105:

What other reason can we give for the fact that the heliotrope follows in its movement the movement of the sun and the solenotrope the movement of the moon, forming a procession within the limits of their power, behind the torches of the universe? For, in truth, each thing prays according to the rank it occupies in nature, and sings the praise of the leader of the divine series to which it belongs, a spiritual or rational or physical or sensuous praise; for the heliotrope moves to the extent that it is free to move, and in its rotation, if we could hear the sound of the air buffeted by its movement, we should be aware that it is a hymn to its king, such as it is within the power of a plant to sing.

This presents a feudal theory of worship, called the fedeli d'amore, whose language may be investigated through F.L. Ganshof's Feudalism, for example, but whose experience is represented by the love of Dante for Beatrice; of the soul for its Sophia aeterna or Madonna intelligenza. Only on ideological grounds can this experience be denied. In fact the demands of love in human experience are literally true and undeniable. They are the demands of our tropic response whose causal structure cannot be stopped by wisdom. They are the demands of a divine love on the human mind, which cause a return to the practice of belief.

Hilda Doolittle has used the power of bird migrations to state the same obedience of the soul to its sources in mind, the noos or gnosis of the world. She reminds us of the great bennu bird; and of the goose which migrates across the hemisphere from Arctic Norway south to Egypt each year, sign of the birth of Amon-Ra, who laid eggs in a nest on Ptah-Ta-Tjenen in the ancient world. Its honk signalled the rebirth of the year and the beginnings of the Nile's recession. H.D. says our souls move tropically, in prayer, like migrating birds going to a homeland. The procession each fall and spring is unrelenting, starting in a call of the north or south which lifts the heart on its journey, a journey that has nothing whatsoever to do with our supposed control of reason and "sensibility" over species. The migration begins with words that enter the heart, which may not be understood by reason. Christianity, like any theology, speaks a single language of the heart that is known to all peoples. That is the significance of the Miracle of the Tongues. Everyone looks up at the passing flocks of geese which herald in the new year,—and whatever language he speaks, the sound of those honking birds writes the same words on the heart of all mankind. This, above all else, is the Drama of the Heart which resides at the very center of Christianity and of every other human theology,—where the weeping mother holds the body of her crucified son. If that language isn't universal; if it

doesn't shake us back to innocence,—nothing will. No defence of wisdom; no system of reason; no ideology or discourse, no reference, no certainty,—is of any use until and unless it has learned to hear the words of the heart. Those are words spoken by a thief, a destitute mother in a ghetto, a nation of refugees, of a woman filled with seven devils, spoken in a language so simple to understand that we want to re-express its simplicity in a dogma and system to make it equal the sublime wisdom and understanding that we expect of our Elect, and so lose touch with the heart. The greatest danger is wisdom, immobility in expertise, which buries evidences only the heart can know. It is considered dangerous to believe anyone might comprehend the Drama of the Heart. Wisdom is unnecessary and in fact hinders the movement of species in obedience to its tropic structure, tropisms of the turning heart, in prayer like sunflowers or migrating geese, even though we deny such animal affinities:

He was the first that flew
(the heavenly pointer)

but not content to leave
the scattered flock,

He journeys back and forth
between the poles of heaven and earth forever;

He was the first to wing
from that sad Tree,

but having flown, the Tree of Life
bears rose from thorn

and fragrant vine
from barren wood;

He was the first to say,
not to the chosen few,

his faithful friends,
the wise and good,

but to an outcast and a vagabond
to-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.

"The Walls Do Not Fall" XI.

Mary is the Tree. Christ lives as Phoenix, bennu-bird, Snow-Goose, Pelican, Child or Dove in her topmost branches. The image recurs again and again, particularly in the Gospel of John, or,—

It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it

Luke 13:19.

The Mary-tree grows Green leaves into the heavens, where she bears the Gold Bloom of the World, her Child, who says of Himself, Ego sum lux mundi.

In H.D.'s War Trilogy an old Arab, named Kaspar, looks into a jewel on Mary Magdalene's crown and there he sees the gold flower of creation opening its petals. The Arab is like aged Simon who lived long enough to hold the newborn Christ Child in his arms at the Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2:22-32). The scene is given in Dürer's woodcut called "The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple,"

where a heavy stone ceiling, supported by massive marble columns, is lightened in the presence of the new-born Christ. It is sung in Bach's Cantata no. 82, "Ich habe genug," where old Simon, his bass voice heavy with age, says he is willing to die after he has held the promised young babe. The babe is the new flower of creation on a tree whose life endures forever. Old age is fired to light in the presence of His birth.

he saw the flash of light
like a flaw in the third jewel

to his right, in the second circlet,
a grain, a flaw or a speck of light,

the speck, fleck, grain or seed
opened like a flower

And the flower, thus contained
in the infinitely tiny grain or seed,

opened petal by petal, a circle,
and each petal was separate.

"The Flowering of the Rod"
XXX-XXXI.

In Olson's poetics the tropic movement of the soul is called a return or ta'wil. It is like the movement of leaves reaching up to the light (called the gesture of the orant in Christianity; the Ka in Egyptian theology). The ta'wil is an Arabic term (= fedeli d'amore), explained in Henry Corbin's Avicenna and the Visionary Recital (1960), p.28ff., a text well known to Olson:

Ta'wil usually forms with tanzil a pair of terms and notions that are at once complementary and contrasting. Tanzil properly designates positive religion, the letter of the Revelation dictated to the Prophet by the Angel. . . . Ta'wil is, etymologically and inversely, to cause to return, to lead back, to restore to one's origin and to the place where one comes home, consequently to return to the true and original meaning of a text. It is "to bring something to its origin. . . . Thus he who practices the ta'wil is the one who turns his speech from the external (exoteric) form [ẓāhir] towards the inner reality [ḥaqiqat]. . . . Beneath the idea of exegesis appears that of a Guide (the exegete) and beneath the idea of exēgēsis we glimpse that of an exodus, of a "departure from Egypt," which is an exodus from metaphor and the slavery of the letter, from exile and the Occident of exoteric appearance to the Orient of the original and hidden Idea.

The ta'wil causes the letter to regress to its true and original meaning (ḥaqiqat).

Our own Bible contains this distinction between exoteric letter of the law (Mosaic) and esoteric meaning of the law (revealed through Christ),—a transchange from Old to New Testament, from Old to New Commandment, which takes place at the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, where Old Synagogue, weighed down by age and strict obedience to a code of fixed laws carved in stone, is lightened by the esoteric radiance of a new birth.

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is established:

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon the heart.

Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away

II Corinthians 3:2-13.

This transchange from exoteric letter and dogma to the esoteric spirit written on the tables of the fleshy heart, is well considered in Ruth Melinkoff's The Horned Moses in Mediaeval Art (1971), which deals with an imagery derived from the above Biblical passages. The change is from Dry Tree to Green Tree; from Old to New Testament lawform; from letter on stone to the language carved in the heart;— and takes place when Mary brings Jesus to the Temple. It is the subject of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure and the Sonnets:

Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score;
Therefore to give them from me was I bold
To trust those tables that receive thee more.

sonnet 122.

And thus; mine eye's due is thy outward part
 And my heart's right thy inward love of heart

sonnet 46.

His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
 And they shall live, and he in them still green

sonnet 63.

That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

sonnet 65.

In Olson's work the tropic character of the human species is clearly stated. Our flowering rod is history. History,—the memory of time,—is the foremost demand placed on our species of kind: "History is precisely cut to the term man." "It isn't a matter of choice. It is solely condition." "What makes us want to, a lady asked me. It is what I mean by no choice." (Special View of History). "Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not."

The other character of our species is speech. Memory and language,—these are the limits of our type of organism, living in the demand Olson has called a troposphere:

breath is man's special qualification as animal.
 Sound is a dimension he has extended. Language
 is one of his proudest acts.

"Projective Verse".

This is a view of our species as an animal or plant like other living things, having its own conditions in history and speech. A Special View of our species, whose definitive term is history.

Paradise: della rosa sempiterna. The Yellow Flower.

It is in terrestrial paradise that Dante witnesses his own flowering of the rod and so his own soul partakes of the historical event which we have traced all the way from Seth's journey to paradise for the oil of mercy, up to the flowering of Joseph's rod and the promised flowering of the Cross at the Crucifixion. In the Divine Comedy Beatrice is the Axis Mundi who leads the soul to its florescence, no less than Mary, in all her forms, is the tree who bears the gold flower in Christianity. We have traced the growth of the Rod in the Divine Comedy up to the moment of its renewed refoliation in the paradise on Mount Purgatory. Here the plantation, in beginnings, is made. Then the leaves turn upwards, in an heliotropic ta'wil, towards the celestial heavens. The growth of the tree can be followed in detail throughout the Paradiso Cantos.

The growth of the tree reaches the highest regions of celestial paradise, where it puts forth blossoms of saints and prophets. Angels are bees which fly in search of the nectar and oil which is shed by those gold flowers. All of the flowers are heliotropic stars turned towards God in prayer. Finally, Dante's Tree of Heaven puts forth a yellow rose, whose petals encompass an entire picture of creation. It is the flower which Kaspar sees in the jewel on Mary's crown in the War Trilogy, a flower

born out of a mustard seed. Dante realizes that stars are only the seeds of this greatest rose of the world, whose petals are arranged in circles of creation subtended upon the center. The circles or choirs are nine in number, in three triads, according to Dionysius' picture of the world, a division of hierarchies existent since the fourth century, and established as Church dogma by the fifth Lateran Council (1512-17). The centermost triad is composed of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones; the second of Dominations, Virtues and Powers; the third of Principalities, Archangels and Angels. Beneath these are the Angels who have taken on mortal bodies and become image-souls living in the world of terrestrial paradise. And below the moon are creatures of the earth. Such is the picture, in light and love, of the mind of creation. The nine choirs of heavenly angels are presented in our plate XXVI, in an anonymous miniature from the Breviary of St. Hildegard, 9th century. And the descent of angels into matter is depicted in an image of the world from Robert Fludd's alchemical work titled Utriusque Cosmi, Maioris scilicet et Minoris, metaphysica, physica, atque technica Mistoria (1617), where winged souls take on bodies as they descend into the realm of the Anima Mundi, who holds an ape in chains at the center of the world,—plate XXVII.

In Canto XXX of Paradiso Dante comes to a river of stars, like Jacob's Road, the Milky-Way. Just as he was

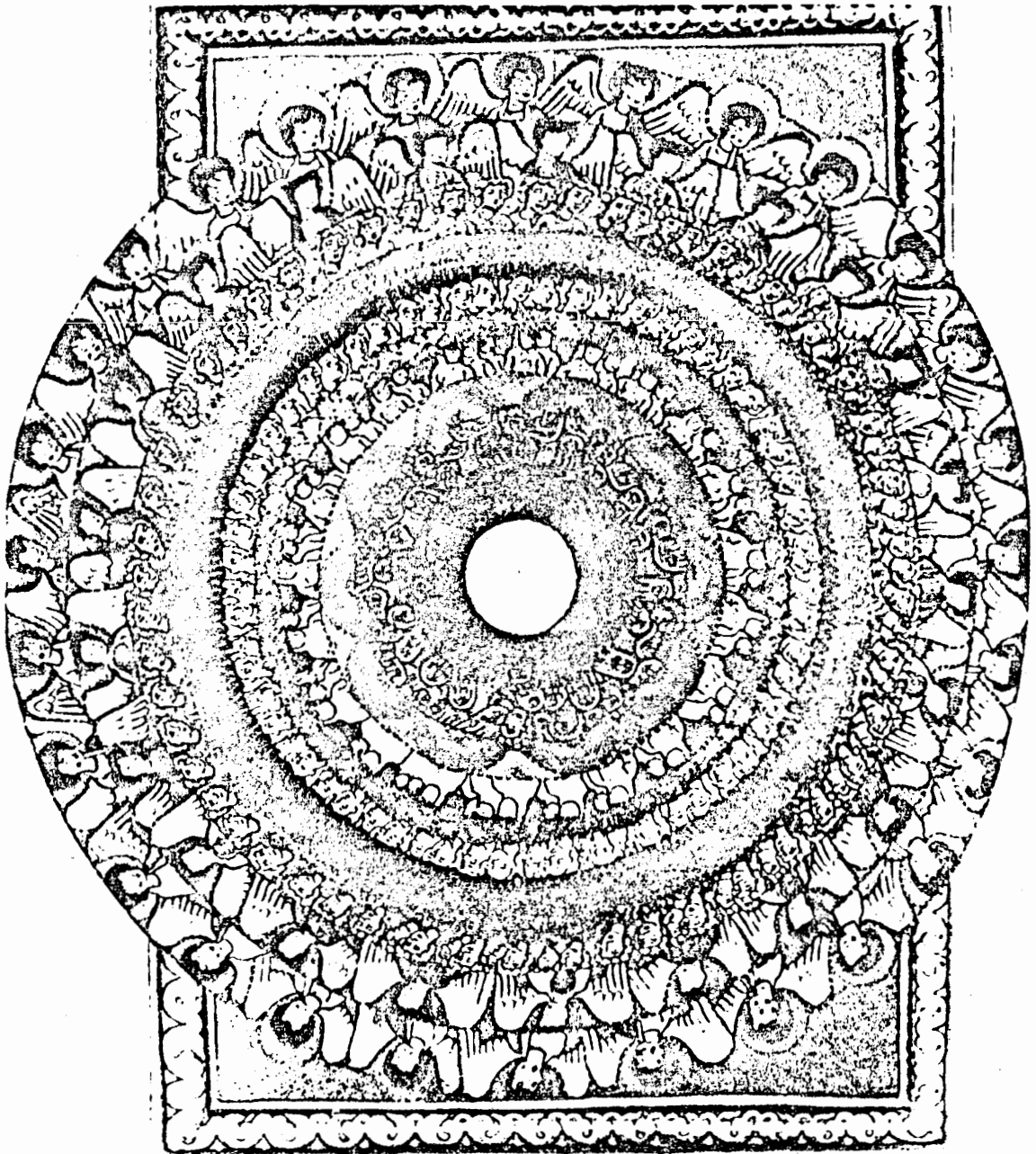


Plate XXXI. The Nine Choirs of Angels arranged in Con-
centric Hierarchy around the Vera Lux of Deity,
and forming the Gold Flower of Creation. Thrones
are in the third ring, symbolized by half-wheels.
 A miniature from the Breviary of S. Hildegarde,
 9th century.

Integra Natura

Speculum Artisque imago.

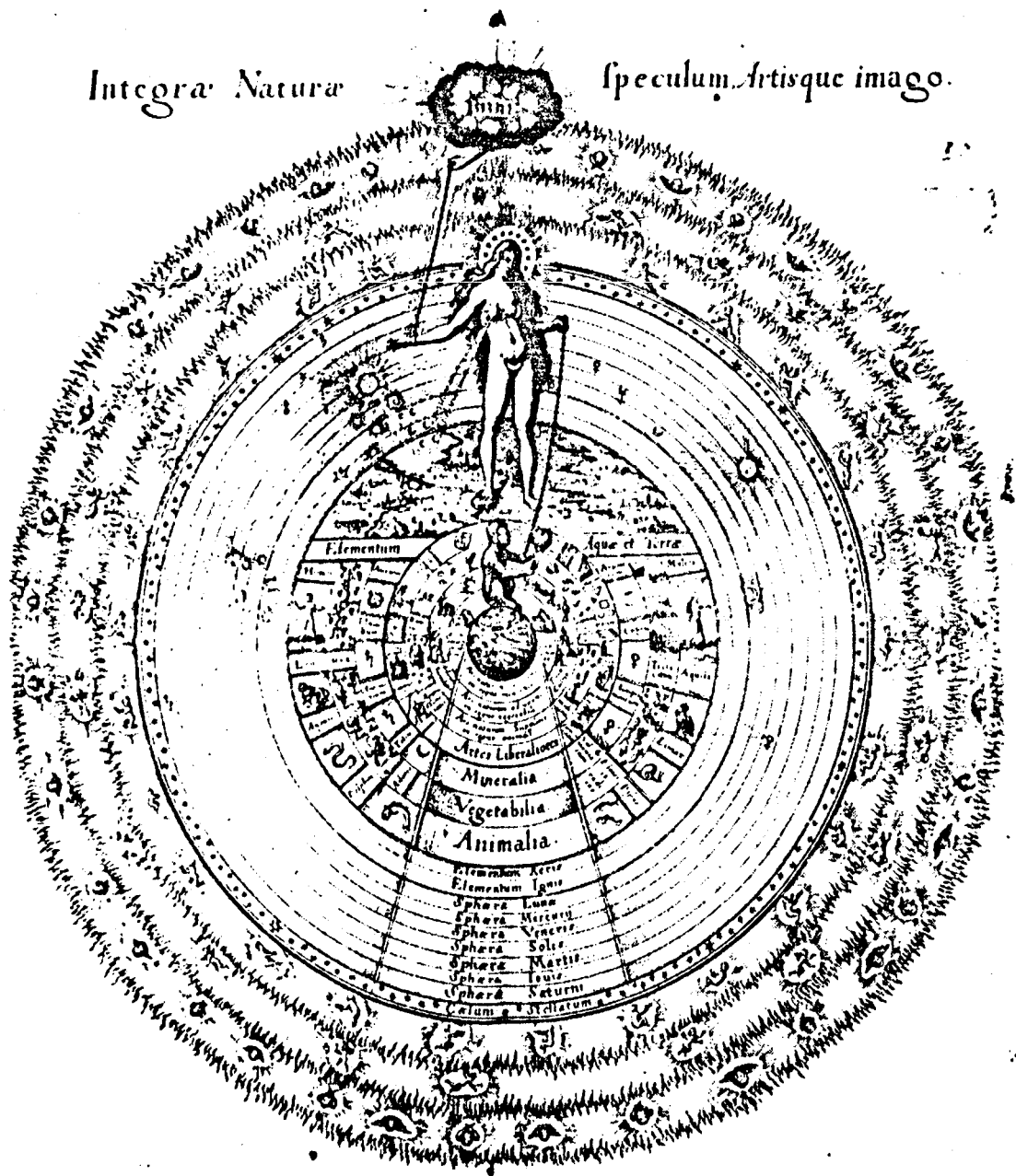


Plate XXXII. The Angelic Descent. Robert Fludd's Universe as Pictured in his Utriusque Cosmi Maioris scilicet et Minoris Metaphysica, Physica atque Technica, (Oppenheim: 1617), pp. 4-5.

submerged in the purifying rivers of terrestrial paradise, after apprehending the Procession of the Holy Sacrament, here he is again baptised in light. His eyes are cleansed so that he is able to witness the vision of a city which lies hidden in the form of the yellow rose. It is the City of God, like Rome, where divine beings sit enthroned on the petals of the rose. The rose is only an image of this City,—a general form of paradise. Beatrice shows Dante the particular lineaments of the City which lies beneath the light of the yellow rose. It is the final clarity given at the end of the quest for paradise.

Beatrice leaves to take her Throne in the third circlet of the first triad of petals which form the yellow flower of creation. Saint Bernard will name, for Dante, each of the Thrones and circles of petals in the garden of celestial paradise, which is a rose containing the City of Creation. The rose is the gold flower of the world, shaped like the eye which is illustrated in our plate XXVI, where Thrones are represented as semi-circular mandorlas in the third concentric sphere, coming after the Seraphim and Cherubim. This is where Beatrice sits enthroned, beneath Mary, who is placed above her in the first ring with the Seraphim, and Eve who is placed in the second circle with the Cherubim. Beatrice is a persona of Mary, who has inflicted pain on her lover and caused his return

to paradise, in imitation of Mary's gift to the world. It was in Mary's womb that the seed was germinated which created the suffering necessary to create the yellow rose. In Beatrice's womb was implanted the suffering and rebirth of her lover. Dante's flowering is in imitation of Christ's flowering.

Dante watches the Archangel Gabriel (Canto XXXII) fly before Mary, singing the words of the Annunciation: Ave Maria, gratia plena!—words of the "canticle divine."³² The canticle referred to is the Song of Songs: "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled,"—words which appear on the German tapestries of the Song of Songs (plates XXVIa & b) as: Ave gratia plena, dominus teum, in prefiguration of Luke 1:28. Dante is shown the two roots of the rose, Adam and St. Peter, the skull and rock which lie at the base of the Church. He is shown the aged Simon who once witnessed the Presentation in the Temple; Anna, Mother of Mary; and all of the other events associated with the Flowering of the Rod. Finally he is asked to pray to Mary that he may look on the center of the rose. Here his speech is like that of an infant babe at mother's breast.³³ He cannot hold the vision in words; the vision of the single light radiating from the center of the gold flower; the ONE from which all else issues. He is reborn into infancy once more, facing yet another level of love at the highest sources of light. His soul feeds on the

vision which is the source of the oil and nectar at the heart of the flower on the Mary-tree. He is like a bee wrapped round by the petals of love, drinking from the food of love, the light which moves the world:

For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of paradise.

As in Coleridge's Kubla Khan, the images of paradise are like a "thousand circlets spread" which somehow maintain their relation to center and source. Then the dream vanishes. It cannot be written in words. It is like a bee inside its sources, no longer looking on the imagination, but flying through it, feeding from it (see: Olson's "Letter 9" for a bee stuck in the window, buzzing on a typewriter). Like a hummingbird feeding in a yellow rose. It is like the sounds of the large bells ringing from St. Mark's Cathedral over the square in Venice, each bell a blossom containing the vibrant food of sound which is gathered by angels of light,—the way H.D. conveys the final entry into the center where honey dew flows out of the flower of creation, in "A Tribute to the Angels." The flower is the City of God, promised land of milk and honey, in a celestial paradise whose earthly image is the New Canaan. It is the promised City Jerusalem whose streets flow of the oil of mercy, a City ruled from divine Thrones. City of Light, inhabited by all of the light of the world, whose gold is

held on the Flowering Rod of Creation that was planted on the top of Mount Purgatory in the last Canto of the Purgatorio. In the end and last words of the Divine Comedy, Dante speaks as one enthroned, who sits in a turning wheel which is revolved by love. He is given a seat in the third sphere of the celestial Heavens with Beatrice. He has become a petal of the heliotropic Gold Flower. Thrones are always represented by such wheels or semi-circular turning mandorolas which are lifted by angels and held in paradise,³⁴—wheels which appear as Thrones in the third circlet of the Flower depicted in the Breviary of St. Hildegarde (plate XXXI).

The wheeled Thrones of the third choir of Angels which appear in Dante's work and throughout Christian iconology, are derived from Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 1: 1-28),—as Dante tells us in Purgatorio Canto 29. They are the wheeled Thrones which drive the two-wheeled chariot of Triumph in the Pageant of the Holy Sacrament that Dante sees in terrestrial paradise, literal turning wheels such as those Thrones depicted in a detail of the 12th century mosaic in Torcello Cathedral of The Last Judgement (plate XXXIIIb).

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.



a.



b.

Plate XXXIII. Thrones (represented as wheels). (a) the Virgin and Christ enthroned in Heaven. From the Last Judgement by Francesco Traini. Camposanto, Pisa. (b) Wheels beneath Christ enthroned. Torcello Cathedral, 12th century mosaic, detail showing Thrones.

We have enough informations for entry into the celestial heavens of the Maximus poem.

We have studied the Prayer of the Heliotrope; of the Gold Flower which follows the sun in Dante's Paradiso .
A flower with a yellow disc and white petals; whose third circle of petals are wheeled Thrones of creation:

Nel giallo della rosa sempiterna,
che si dilata ed ingrada e redole
odor di lode al sol che sempre verna

Into the yellow of the eternal rose, which expands
and rises in ranks and exhales odours of praise to
the Sun that makes perpetual spring.

Paradiso Canto XXX.

The image of that flower feeding on the Sun's light is an image of man's soul turned to the face of God. A river of light flows from the yellow rose; from beneath the Flower of Light:

Nun e fantin che si subito rua
col volto verso il latte, se si svegli
malto tordato dall'usanza sua,
come fec'io peu dar migliori spegli
anchor delli acchi, chianandomi all'onda
che si deriva perche vi s'immegli;

No infant, waking long after its hour, throws
itself so instantly with its face to the milk, as
I, to make still better mirrors of my eyes, bent
down to the center that flows forth for our
perfecting;

e si come di lei bevve la gronda
della palpebre mie, cosi mi parve
di sua lunghezza divenuta tonda

and no sooner did the eaves of my eyelids drink of it than it seemed to me out of its length to have become round.

The river of life flows out of the flower of eternity. Its milk allows the soul to see the round gold disc at the center of the flower. The drama is a reenactment of similar events in Purgatorio, where Dante was submerged in Lethe and Eunoe, the rivers of terrestrial paradise, before entering into the hortus conclusus. Both dramas, enacted in terrestrial and celestial heavens, are from Revelations XXII:1-2,—

the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations.

The Gold Flower in Dante's Paradiso is an image of Christ, Light of the World. It is the Flower born of Mary, on the Tree of Life:

Nel ventre tuo si raccese l'amore
per lo cui caldo nell'eterna pace
così e germinato questo fiore.

In thy womb was rekindled the love by whose warmth this flower has bloomed thus in the eternal peace;

Paradiso Canto XXXIII.

Dante feeds on the light and love of the Gold Flower of Creation. The Eucharist in Holy Communion is food shed by the Gold Flower, Christ's body and blood, which is shared amongst the Church. In each case man turns to the Flower, born of Mary, for the sources of eternal life and vision,—heliotrope obedience to a theology of the soul. Dante often calls that divine food milk; white dew shed by the Mary-tree, the milk-yielding tree of Heaven:

Omai sara piu corta mia favella
 pur a quel ch'io ricordo, che d'un fante
 che bagni ancor la lingua alla mammella.

Now my speech will come more short even of what I
 remember than an infant's who yet bathes his tongue
 at the breast.

Paradiso XXXIII.

Light, love, milk, myrrh—are all substances which nourish the soul in a divine communion. All are shed by the Mary-tree, the Myrrh-tree. Mary gives birth to the Gold Flower of Creation, who is Christ, her Son; whose body is the food of the soul. This is the Gold Flower or Rod, the Axis Mundi, which grows through and flowers in the Divine Comedy.

Giovanni di Paolo

Nowhere can we find belief more intensely portrayed, and with such exacting care, than in the Sienese painting of the quattrocento. Of all the Sienese masters Olson was most drawn to the works of Giovanni di Paolo (1403-1483), a pupil of Paolo di Giovanni Fei and a close student of the renowned Sienese artist Sassetta (1395-1450). Thus we read in Causal Mythology:

I believe there is simply ourselves, and where we are has a particularity which we'd better use because that's about all we got. Otherwise we're running around looking for somebody else's stuff. But that particularity is as great as numbers are in arithmetic. The literal is the same as the numeral to me. I mean the literal is an invention of language and power the same as numbers. And so there is no other culture. There is simply the literal essence and exactitude of your own, . . . I mean the streets you live on, or the clothes you wear, or the color of your hair is no different from the ability of, say, Giovanni di Paolo to cut the legs off Santa Clara or something. Truth lies solely in what you do with it.

There is a high degree of familiarity, or culture, expressed in these words. As a matter of fact, Olson is referring us to the works of Giovanni di Paola which are called, "S. Clara receives from S. Francis the Franciscan habit," "S. Clara rescues seafarers," "S. Clara blessing the three loaves of bread before Pope Innocent IV," and "S. Clara saves a child mauled by a wolf,"—all companion pieces of the life of S. Clara, in predella panels which are now in Berlin, Houston and New Haven museums.

Above all, Giovanni di Paolo is noted for his depictions of Earthly Paradise, which are unequalled in excellence. One "Earthly Paradise," now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is probably a fragment from the predella of an alterpiece executed in 1445 for the church of S. Domenico, Siena. In its entirety the alterpiece polyptych was composed of two lateral panels, "The Creation," and "The Flood," with three central panels, "Paradise," "The Last Judgement" and "Hell." The "Earthly Paradise" is the best known surviving remnant of this polyptych. Its perfection is sublime beyond description.

The other "Earthly Paradise" is identical in conception and forms one panel of "The Last Judgement," by Giovanni di Paolo, in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena.

Whereas these larger works of Giovanni di Paolo are the most splendid, I should like to draw attention to a series of miniatures which illustrate the Divine Comedy (plates XXXIV-XXXV). They are well documented by Pope-Hennessy, A Sienese Codex of the Divine Comedy, (London: 1947), and may vividly serve to exemplify our own discussions of Dante and Olson. The Codex is the Yates-Thompson MS 36 in the British Museum, London, which was illuminated for Alfonso of Aragon probably between 1442-1500. The work is a collaboration between two artists. The Inferno and Purgatorio sections of the Codex have been

variously attributed to Lorenzo di Pietro, called Vecchietta, of Siena, or to the artist Priama della Quercia. Whereas the superb miniatures in Paradiso are definitely by the hand of Giovanni di Paolo.

We have chosen four of Giovanni di Paolo's illuminations for the Divine Comedy, which show the yellow rose of the celestial paradise, Paradiso Cantos XXX to XXXII. The first (plate XXXIVa) is the Rose as a walled City, a Holy Jerusalem, where the seats of an amphitheatre are the petals of an enthroned Elect:

vidi specchiarsi in piu di mille soglie
quanto di noi la su fatto ha ritorno.
E se l'infimo grado in se raccoglie
si grande lume, quanta e la larghezza
di questa rosa nell'estreme foglie!

I saw, rising above the light all round
in more than a thousand tiers, as many
of us as have returned there above.
And if the lowest rank encloses within it so
great a light, what is the expanse of this
rose in its farthest petals?

Paradiso, Canto XXX, 113-117.

Beatrice hovers above Dante, outside the walls of the City, showing him the white-robed souls who surround the central yellow light of the Rose of creation. They form the petals of the flower in the Empyrean Heaven of Paradise.

The second illumination (plate XXXIVb) shows the City as a Rose. Beatrice instructs Dante about the names of those persons who occupy the petals of the Rose. Giovanni

di Paolo does not have St. Bernard take over from Beatrice, as in the Divine Comedy. She remains throughout with Dante, to show him the angels reclining on the petals of the Rose, gathered around the Trinity. The picture follows ll. 41-42 of Canto XXXI.

In the subsequent illumination for Canto XXXII (plate XXXVa), Beatrice further instructs Dante, without leaving his side. She shows him the Madonna enthroned with Child at the center of the Flower, and the naked Eve lying beneath her feet. Nine Saints surround the Virgin, among whom can be identified SS. Peter, Francis, Benedict, Augustine and Bernard.

In the last illumination (plate XXXVb), also to illustrate Canto XXXII, St. Bernard has turned towards Dante and Beatrice. He points towards the angel Gabriel who has flown before the Virgin to speak the words 'Ave Maria Gratia Plena' of the Annunciation. St. Anne, Mother of the Blessed Virgin, and Moses with the tablets of the old Law, are also present in the Yellow Rose.

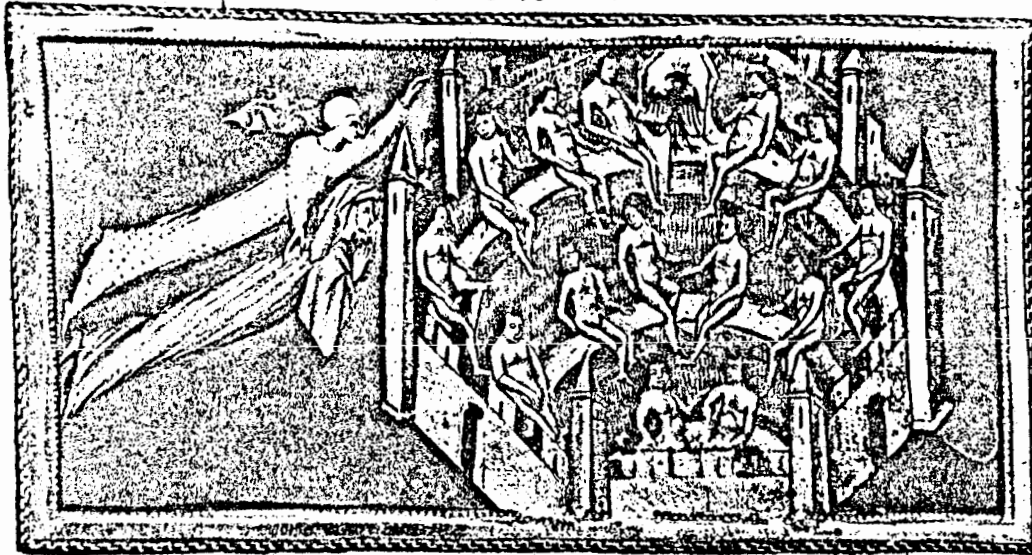
Giovanni di Paolo depicts the Rose for the first time as a real flower, in these miniature illustrations of the Divine Comedy,—

Previous illuminators had placed the image of a rose between the figures or had fitted the figures into a more or less geometrical configuration to be understood as a symbol of the rose. Giovanni di Paolo shows the dwellers in the rose, in their softly colored robes, reclining in the niches made by the gently curling snow-white petals. Such loveliness and sweet peity are far removed from the austere grandeur of Dante's vision.

Peter Brieger, "Pictorial Commentaries to the Commedia," Illuminated Manuscripts of the Divine Comedy, Vol. I, p. 111.

Though Mr. Brieger is undoubtedly correct that the flower so depicted lacks the grandeur of Dante's Rose, only equalled in stained glass, yet these few representations may help us to keep hold of the vision we are after. At least they are from Dante's contemporary Age of belief, and drawn by one of the greatest artists of the Sienese school. We have a Yellow Flower which may serve as an entrance into Olson's corresponding Rosa Mundi which is drawn at the heart of the life of space (see p.404).

di questa rosa nelle strême follie



a.

*certo in esso el gaudio misceca
libito nò udire et starmi muto*



b.

Plate XXXIV. Giovanni di Paolo, Siense Codex of the Divine Comedy. (a) the Rose as a walled City. (b) the Trinity enthroned in the Rose and surrounded by angels.

retubi tu es dubitando fili
 ma io uolero forte ligame
 me che ustringon li pensier scetali



a.

Se quei che uide tutti tempi graui
 pria che morisse dela bella spola
 ch'essacquisto colla lancia et coi ch'auui



b.

Plate XXV. Giovanni di Paolo, Sienese Codex of the Divine Comedy. (a) Virgin and Child enthroned above the Saints. (b) St. Bernard shows Dante the Annunciation, in which Gabriel is seen before the Virgin.

- Berenson, Bernard, Italian Pictures of the Renaissance. Central Italian and North Italian Schools, in three volumes, newly revised and illustrated, (London: Phaidon Press, 1968).
- Meiss, Millard, Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951).
- Pope-Hennessy, John, Giovanni di Paolo, (London: 1937).
"The Development of Realistic Painting in Siena," Burlington Magazine, Vol. LXXXIV, (1944), pp. 110-119, 139-146.
- A Sieneese Codex of the Divine Comedy, (London: Phaidon Press, 1947).
- Sieneese Quattrocento Painting, (London: Phaidon Press, 1947).
- Singleton, Charles S., Peter Brieger and Millard Meiss, Illuminated Manuscripts of the Divine Comedy, 2 Vols., (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, published for Bollingen Foundation, 1969).

CHAPTER THREE

COSMOLOGY POST-MODERN BELIEF

MAXIMUS, FROM DOGTOWN - II

The poem is a mantra. Its words are seed syllables which bloom in the space of the page. Stars that unfold on a black night. The poem is composed in word-seeds that bloom beyond all possibility of total completed apprehension within the certainty of any critical logic. We shall adopt an approach which numerically reconsiders materials and weights, chapter by chapter, that may further our entrance into the vision, without closing the way each word flowers.

This poem implicitly requires all of the work we have already achieved. It is about the Flowering of the Rod, which we have studied in the War Trilogy and in the Dantesque cosmology. "Maximus, from Dogtown - II" is constructed out of that Christian gnosis which is presumed to exist in the intelligence of readership. Our preparatory work has laid the full ground for those changes which we are now equipped to observe. The merit of this poem lies in the way Olson forces tradition to a new florescence in the contemporary world of vision, as though the world were born over again just yesterday, 1910.

The poem is miraculous because its few words hold a vision of the world which is original and intelligible, and as large as possible. The dream isn't lost. It is held. In the space of two pages is portrayed the whole extent of a comprehensive cosmology and a theology. Language has rarely achieved this much value.

1. The Secret of the Golden Flower:

The T'ai I Chin Hua Tsung Chih is a Chinese alchemical text of great antiquity, stemming out of an oral tradition that goes back to the Religion of the Golden Elixir of Life (Chin-tan-chiao), which developed in the T'ang period of the eighth century. The sayings are attributed to Lu Yen, introduced as the patriarch Lu-tsu, who lived at the end of the eighth and at the beginning of the ninth century. Lu Yen himself attributes the esoteric lore to an older sage named Kuan Yin-hsi, for whom, according to tradition, Lao-tse wrote down the Tao Te Ching. The Secret of the Golden Flower is a Taoist text, and represents a reform and return to the principles of the Religion of the Golden Elixir which remain true to Taoist teachings. In the words of the translator, Richard Wilhelm,—

while Taoism degenerated more and more in the Han period (third century B.C. to third century A.D.) to an external wizardry, owing to the fact that the Taoist court magicians were seeking to find by alchemy the golden pill (the philosopher's stone), which would create gold out of the baser metals and lend men physical immortality, Lu Yen's movement represented a reform.

"Origins of the Book".

It was this age of exoteric interpretation which Ezra Pound condemned as "Bhud rot," i.e. Buddha rot, in his Cantos XCVIII, XCIX:

and as for these Bhud-foes,
 they provide no mental means for
 Running an empire, nor do taoists
 with their internal and external pills
 — is it external? the gold pill? —
 to preserve them from physical death?
 and as for those who deform thought with iambs. . .
 ten billion wordings
 and destroy the five human relations,
 Is the Bhud likely to return for these harridans?

Bhud: Man by negation.

Bhudda divine?
 to be bought with a few bits of silver?

Pound's objection to the exoteric practice of a degenerate
 Buddhism (like a degenerate Christianity) is also taken up
 in Olson's poetics, in a poem called "As the Dead Prey
 Upon Us," which names the "five hundrances" of the "five
 human relations" which Buddhism has negated in the same way
 that Christianity denies our mortality and worldly vanity:

In the five hindrances men and angels
 stay caught in the nets, in the immense nets
 which spread out across each plane of being, the
 which hamper at each step of the ladders as the
 and the demons
 and men
 go up and down

"As the Dead Prey Upon Us".

The five hundrances are named and discussed in Heinrich
 Zimmer's Philosophies of India (1951) pp. 294ff. They are
 the Klesa, anything which, adhering to man's nature, will
 restrict or impair its manifestation of its true essence.

The five impairments are called Avidya, Asmita, Raja, Dvesa

and Abhinivesa (the latter defined as "clinging to life as to a process that should go on without end; i.e. the will to live"). Such a doctrine of salvation, which commands perfection by the negation of man's given nature, is what Pound and Olson oppose.

Pound opposes the decadent Buddhism through a play on Shakespeare's sonnet number 1,—"Thyself thy foe . . . Within thine own bud buriest thine content,"—whence Canto XCVIII : "as for these Bhud-foes . . . who deform thought with iambs." I don't find this kind of play on a renaissance European theme in condemning Buddhism very satisfactory. It is in fact the stance of one who is western and cultured.

One can, however, appreciate Pound's intent, which was to knock the ends off the iambic line (): "(to break the pentameter, that was the first heave)." In the same Canto LXXXI Pound returns us to a non-Latinized tongue argued for in Dante's De vulgari eloquentia. He wants to release the contracted politics, econometrics and formalist poetics of a decadent European Culture to a new FLOWERING out on a new space, where the Rosa Mundi drops its brackets or bracts (that hold space and bud closed) and bursts into bloom, nature freed of artificial constraints, flowers. Nature versus Art. The problem has nothing to do with Buddhism except as degeneracy exists on a world-wide basis.

The pun with Bhud-rot is a false generalization which tries to make too much of a European conceit found in the sonnet tradition. Pound condemns the Golden Flower and the Golden Elixir that lives at the Heart of a renewed eighth-century and later Taoism. Olson, on the other hand, is able to accept the intent and meaning that is expressed in the Flowering which occurs in the Chinese text called The Secret of the Golden Flower, and this is how we may say the two great poets part ways.

Olson's informations about Buddhism are no more developed than Pound's, however. He had read all of Heinrich Zimmer's books, plus The Secret of the Golden Flower and the Upanishads, translated by R.E. Hume, especially the Brihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad, and that is about all. Nonetheless he affirms such eastern belief, finding no cause for a broad negation. His understanding of the Gold Flowering is also taken through a western and Christian standpoint, and the opening of the Flower is allowed an equal footing with our own story of the GOLD of CREATION, contained in the Legenda aurea, The Golden Legend¹ of the Flowering of the Cross. Olson returns us to the heart of creation as it is originally evidenced in Buddhist teachings. He includes the flowering of an eastern spirit in his poetics, just as Pound had turned to a Confucian world view.

Olson was deeply affected by his reading of The Secret of the Golden Flower, called T'ai I Chin Hua Tsung Chih, translated by Richard Wilhelm. The Chin Hua is the

'Golden Flower..' The Tao is the One, called the "T'ai-chi" in Confucianism, the great ridge-pole, and unwobbling pivot, which appears as T'ai . . . Chih in the title of this work, which begins,—

Heavenly Consciousness (the Heart)

Master Lu-tsu said, That which exists through itself is called Meaning (the Tao: the Way). Tao has neither name nor shape. It is the one primal spirit. Spirit and life cannot be seen. They are contained in the light of heaven. The light of heaven cannot be seen. It is contained in the two eyes. To-day I will be your guide and will first reveal to you the secret of the Golden Flower of the great One, starting from that, I will explain the rest in detail.

The Golden Flower is the light. What colour is the light? One uses the Golden Flower as a symbol. It is the true energy of the One.

Commentary: Heaven created water through the One. That is the true energy of the great One. If man attains this One he becomes alive; if he loses it he dies.

The text continues to say that the Golden Flower is the heavenly heart between the sun and the moon, between the two eyes. "The Heavenly heart is like the dwelling place, the light is the master." It is the Elixir of Life (Chin-tan, literally 'golden ball,' 'golden pill,' which is Chin Hua, 'Golden Flower' in the text); the food of eternal life; source of Creation. "The Confucians call it the centre of emptiness; the Buddhists the terrace of living."^{1a}

The Hindu Vedas also contain reference to a divine food, a food of the soul. In the Vedas are passages which equate the divine drink with a picture of paradise which parallels the ecstatic descriptions of the Golden City in Christian tradition:

Eight wheels, nine doors
has the impregnable castle of the gods.
In it resides the golden disc,
celestial and brilliant

The golden castle, colour of Soma,
which shines from far away, all covered
with glory—the Brahmin enters there,
into this impregnable castle

Artharva-Veda X, 2:31-33.

The magical drink is again mentioned in the Rig-Veda,
before 800 B.C.:

The heavens above do not equal half of me.
Have I been drinking soma?

In my glory I have passed beyond the sky and the
great earth.
Have I been drinking soma?

I will pick up the earth, and put it here or put it
there.
Have I been drinking soma?

Rig-Veda X, 7-9.

The Christian Tree of Life, we now realize, is contained in innumerable descriptions of paradise other than those in the Old Testament. In ancient Persia the tree was called Gaokerena; from it sprouted a white manna or fruit called haoma. It was the food of the gods. The Hindu soma, referred to in the Vedas, was cannabis or one of its derivatives, hashish or marijuana. One comes dangerously close to an artificial paradise here, the kind of paradise which both Pound and Olson have rejected. Yet they retain the mystic elements so evident in Dante's Paradiso,

elements derived from a tradition of Christian mysticism which attempts an immediate apprehension of spiritual things by a purely mystical experience which issues in the final assurance of love. It is almost impossible to generalize any differentiation between mystical and artificial paradises. The distinction arises only out of particular instances of spiritual rebirth, whether they are artificially induced or fully envisioned and believed.

At any rate we have at the center a weeping tree whose nectar is white myrrh or milk or soma or light and love, standing in the garden of earthly delights, in terrestrial paradise. It is the Mary-tree, a Tree which offers nourishment to the soul. It is found in virtually every occasion of human vision. In Taoism the source of light is called the Golden Flower. "If we ask whence this light-religion comes, we can first of all consider Persia, as in the T'ang period there were Persian temples in many places in China."² In Christianity the source of light is Mary's Gold,—Christ,—from an Arabic tradition of light-mysticism. Olson will extend this rite of communion with divine sources to include deepest and most primordial experiences of shamanism, an exercise in spiritual belief which carries human vision beyond explanation into highest actual realities of mystical experience.

These remarks form our introduction to the poem "Maximus, from Dogtown - II." We must open the Flowering of Creation contained therein, to include a widest possible experience of the vision of the Gold Flower. And so we have dwelt upon the presence of an eastern, Buddhist, Flower, called the Chin Hua, a mystical flower whose petals open at the sources of the world. We have also briefly commented upon the affinity and dichotomy of Pound and Olson over these issues, to keep in mind that one body of work is born out of another. A production is achieved through opposition. In the next section we shall further open the petals of the Flower upon a DREAM mysticism which gets us even closer to the Heart and Center of Creation, while at the same time bringing into our conversation a further dimension of the Flowering as it is evidenced in the Padma. The limits are all being cast away. Otherwise we shall be unable to enter into the sources of the "Dogtown - II" poem.

2. The Padma. The Dream

In the poem which follows immediately after "Maximus, from Dogtown - II," called "Maximus, to himself, as of 'Phoenicians,'" the Gold Flower is the padma:

the padma
is what was there BEFORE
One was. Is there. Will be. Is what ALL
issues from: The GOLD

flower All the heavens,
a few miles up - and even with the sun out -
is BLACK

written on Dogtown,
December 22, 1959.

In Poetry and Truth Olson has called the Flower a dream:

I was once told this, by myself, to myself, by
no body, or thing that I could identify. I
think I was asleep, and it was a dream. But what
got said was, "Everything issues from, and nothing
is anything but itself, measured so."

We have already stated that Flower as a Chrysanthemum. The statement carries with it the weight of the introductory passage in The Secret of the Golden Flower: "That which exists through itself is called meaning (the Tao)."

Olson recorded this dream in a pad of notes for the year 1958 and obtained a measure of its veracity from Carl Jung's essay called "Dream Symbols of the Individuation Process," reprinted in the Eranos Yearbook called Spiritual Disciplines. Jung places dream images of the Gold Flower within, —

a definite category which I call mandala symbolism. In The Secret of the Golden Flower, published in collaboration with Richard Wilhelm, I have described this symbolism in detail.

The article Jung refers to is his "Commentary on The Secret of the Golden Flower," republished in the selected writings of C.G. Jung titled Psyche and Symbol (1958). The mandala dream returns the soul to the tao, called the "diamond body"; Confucian "Tai-chi." The heavenly root of our consciousness which unfolds like a Gold Flower, is a dream, a vision that hangs like the sun in the sky at night:

The Golden Flower is the light, and the light of heaven is tao. The Golden Flower is a mandala symbol which I have often met with in the material brought me by my patients. . . . The plant is frequently a structure in brilliant fiery colors growing out of a bed of darkness, and carrying the blossom of light at the top, a symbol similar to that of the Christmas tree.

"Commentary on The Secret of the Golden Flower".

The Flower is the elixir vitae, Christian lux mundi, which grows on the lignum vitae, the living wood (Christmas tree or Mary-tree). Gold Flower on the MARIGOLD. We have emphasized the experience of a mystical nourishment of the soul returned to its sources, rather than become enmeshed in the psychical universality whose limits are open to the intuitive mind. The dream is a public as well as a private vision:

As "metropolis" the Monad is feminine, like the padma or lotus, the basic form of the Lamaistic mandala (the Golden Flower in China and the Rose or Golden Flower in the West). The Son of God, God made manifest, dwells in the flower; Bhudda, Shiva, in the lotus; Christ in the rose, in the womb of Mary; the seeding-place of the diamond body in the golden flower.

"Dream Symbols of the Individuation Process".

Olson uses "MONOGENE" rather than "Monad" in "Maximus, from Dogtown - II." In the end he is more interested in the historical flowering of human achievement, visible in City and migration, than he is in the psychical transmission of innate consciousness. The latter is assumed in the human species; indeed in the whole of living, also non-living, creation. It is the achievement in practice of the vision which concerns Olson, not its manifold evidence in a general psychology. For example, a Persian mystical experience probably lies behind the Light symbolism that exists in both The Gospel of John and The Secret of the Golden Flower. Certainly the padma or Golden Lotus of India, originates from a Mesopotamian, Persian, center,—center of the metropolis in civilization at Sumer. Out of this seed or nucleus of the future polis was born the monogenetic flowering of human history which Olson traces in his poetics, through particulars which unfold all the way to Gloucester.

However the achievement of history does originate in dream. The dream causes man to move from east to west. It is what makes the physics of the city and world. A monogenetic dream, initiated c. 9,000 B.C., which has spread

out its petals over the world ever since, —east and west, —
to India and China, and to Gloucester.³

Consciousness Mind

always invades

& opposes successfully

the Previous.

The other

location.

This is the Rose

of the World

Charles Olson, Saturday, November
20th, 1965.

The center of that unfolding dream is the city of Sumer lying
in the heart of the Flower of human achievement.

In Jung's dream-analysis, the Flower is called
MONOGENES, which Olson transforms into the physical fact
of creation. Let us place the MONOGENES, Son of God, in our
critical text for what it is worth:

This same is Monogenes who dwelleth in the Monad,
which is in the Setheus (Creator) and which came
from the place of which none can say where it is
. . . . From Him it is the Monad came, in the
manner of a ship, laden with all good things, and
in the manner of a field, filled or planted with
every kind of tree, and in the manner of a city,
filled with all races of mankind. . . . This
is the fashion of the Monad, all these being in
it: there are twelve Monads as a crown upon its
head. . . . And to its veil which surroundeth it
in the manner of a defence [πύργος = tower] there
are twelve gates. . . . This same is the Mother
City [metropolis, μητρόπολις] of the Only-begotten
[monogenes, μονογενής].

from the Codex Brucianus, quoted in Jung,
 "Dream Symbols of the Individuation Process."

I am more interested in the padma, having opened up the possibilities of dream in history. Jung's work is there for everyone to enjoy and we note Olson's gateway into that great teacher's works. However let us close that gate when the flood threatens to burst the city's walls. Structure is equally important. Without it the imagination shall be washed away, leaving little, perhaps only a psychological system. Few men can stand as firmly as Jung, in the flood of informations which he was able to control without a reduction of form to system (a simplistic psychology) or total loss of information altogether (in a pseudo-mysticism). Keeping hold of the vision of the Flower or Metropolis is not easy and requires the admission of one's own limits. Without limits there can be no measure of information. Those limits move continuously, extensively, dynamically, but must always be placed. There is center and gate in the Flower of Creation whose image is the walled City or Mother-Polis.

The padma is well considered in Heinrich Zimmer's Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization, "The Lotus," p. 90:

When the divine life substance is about to put forth the universe, the cosmic waters grow a thousand-petaled lotus of pure gold, radiant as the sun. This is the door or gate, the opening

or mouth, of the womb of the universe. It is the first product of the creative principle, gold in token of its incorruptible nature. It opens to give birth to the demiurge creator, Brahma. From its pericarp issues the hosts of the created world. According to the Hindu conception, the waters are female; they are the maternal, procreative aspect of the Absolute, and the cosmic lotus is their generative organ.

I distrust such generalizations and would move into texts, but for my own grave ignorance on these matters. Zimmer tells me that a Lotus Goddess is always associated with the padma and I have some idea of her power as genet, Mother, from my observations of Indian and Tibetan prints which almost invariably contain somewhere the presence of an unfolding Lotus floating on the waters of the Milky Ocean. Her two sons are kardama Mud, and ciklīta Moisture, the bases of our experience of creation.

I am particularly drawn towards one piece of information which Zimmer presents, namely the discovery of a figurine of the mother padma from the site of Mohenjo-Daro (3000-2000 B.C.) with evidences to show a commerce at that early date between Mesopotamian and Indian civilizations. The figurine is a goddess of the kind familiar in the Sumero-Semitic Near East. She offers the milk of her teats to the created world. Later the Lotus Flower became her chiefest attribute; no less than the rose became the flower of the Virgin Mary in Christianity; and the sycamore tree and flowering papyrus (papyrus stems with LOTUS capitals) the signs of Hathor in Egypt.

It is the spread of these images from an historical center which is important; the unfolding or flowering of human history.

We might attempt a reading of Olson's "Maximus, to himself, as of 'Phoenicians,'" albeit an incomplete, unfinished, fragmentary reading, on the basis of informations we have now learned. The swastika or fylfot is a representation of the image of the Gold Flower. So is the screw which is the whirling propeller of the ship. Olson seems to be saying that the ship's screw will demolish the wooden swastika. That the birth of the year must be put back from Christmas, in December, to March, at Easter. But the swastika is a very holy symbol, of the circuit of the dipper around the pole star, forming a Gold Flower in the heavens which is known to innumerable peoples over the earth. And the birth of the new year still is in March, where it has always been, since Near-Eastern times. So that cannot be what Olson means. If it is, then I don't share his desire to break up Christmas and the swastika. I am almost certain that my own reading of the poem is inadequate, and suggest that a future criticism of Olson's work must not attempt any statement or generalization without an extensive analysis of informations. This is true of any examination of any poetics. Criticism often falls short where it is assumed to ride high.

What we have recovered from a reading of this poem are further dimensions of the Gold Flower. The padma. And the dream. That is all. And sufficient.

3. Mary's Gold

Olson was born of parents named Mary Theresa (Hines) and Charles Joseph Olson, d. 1910. Like the Norseman Lief, who was Eric's Son; or the Argonaut J-son; he was born Ol'son and Mary's Son:

(Mary's Son
Elizabeth's

Born of Mary and Joseph. He calls himself Mary's Gold, four-fold man in imitatio Christi; Olson id est Christus, born of common parentage, of Jack and Jill.

The marigold or solsecle, as it was once called, is a small border plant, common and familiar,—named Mary, with reference to the Virgin Mary, + Gold, her Child. The O.E.D. gives,—

Marigold. Forms: marygoulde, marigolde, marygold, maregolde, marigoulde, mariguild, marrygold, marigold.

The name of several plants having golden or bright yellow flowers.

The property possessed by the flower of opening when the sun shines (whence the L. name solsequium) was often referred to by writers of the 16-17th century.

Any plant of the genus Tagetes.

A plant of the genus CHRYSANTHEMUM.

The common marigold, in a pre-Linnaean taxonomy, was named as an image of the Axis Mundi, a commonplace image of the Flowering Rod which produces the Gold Flower in the Empyrean Heaven of Dante's Paradiso. This is not a speculative consideration, but a dogmatic fact in a knowledge. The

marigold has long represented the base, vulgar origins of the golden light which blooms in the night of the Christian cosmology.

In the mediaeval world almost any small plant bearing a gold flower was called a Marygold or Solsecle (in heliotropic prayer) as a representation of the Mary-tree, the Myrrh-tree, whose Son, Christ, f. Chrysos, means 'Gold.'

Just as we studied the Flowering of the Rod in Dante's terrestrial paradise as a revelation of the flowering of selfhood which takes place as a figura of the historical flowering of Christianity in the Roman Church, so here we witness the flowering of Olson's soul in the terms of a public cosmology on Mount Dogtown. In Dante the Flower contains the Thrones of the City of Rome or Jerusalem, the City of God. In Olson's theology the City is not Rome, but is a City and Church of the common Man, of the non-Elect Jacks and Jills who are the citizenry of a Gloucester, Massachusetts. Gloucester's Axis Mundi, its Tree of Life, is rooted in a common American parentage.

Christ was born of likewise vulgar origins, of Joseph and Mary, in a manger. The doctrine of an Elect or Divine Inert in a City of God, comes after, in an Augustinian doxology which Olson has rejected outright.

The Roman Catholic Elect who achieve the Flowering in Dante's theology are no longer present in Olson's American view of the world. The damned, common marigold floats on the tides of the New World. It holds the Thrones of an order over

Dogtown. Fishermen make the Rod Flower. Common fishermen of a Sea of Galilee. Fishermen of the Atlantic Banks off New England's shores. In Olson's world a marigold has taken the place of the yellow rose, returning us to the roots of Christianity whose most fundamental origin is in the common Drama of the Heart.

There are two kinds of circular stained glass windows in European, especially French, cathedrals. One is known as the Rose Window; bloom of the yellow rose in Dante's Empyrean Heaven. The other, equally magnificent but often forgotten window, is called the Marigold Window; another representation of the Gold Flowering of the Christ Child from a more common root parentage.

Chrysanthemum is the Black Marigold Flower in Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown - II" poem. It's name is from the Greek Xrisos GOLD + antheon FLOWER. Olson uses it to mean CHRIST'S MUM, the MARY-TREE, whose Son is the Gold Flower of the World, Xrisos-Christ, the Light of the World (John 9:5):⁴

EGO SUM LUX MUNDI

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

The particular type of Chrysanthemum Olson has in mind bears the common name of Black-Eyed Susan, floral emblem of the State of MARY-LAND, Mary's Land. It is a common daisy, a day's-eye, turning in the sun, having a black disc or HEART which is surrounded by yellow petals.



Plate XXXVI. EGO SUM LUX MUNDI. Christus Pantocrator Throned in Majesty. From San Clemente de Tahull. Wallpainting, 1123/50. Now in the Museo de Arte de Cataluna.

the Black Chrysanthemum
Ocean

is the Black Gold Flower

"Maximus, from Dogtown - II".

Rudbeckia hirta, Golden Glow or Black-Eyed Susan, a coneflower or yellow daisy. And Chrysanthemum leucanthemum, the Ox-eye Daisy, having flowers with yellow discs and white petals. Each is a kind of Marigold, Mary's Gold, bearing the incarnate Christ-Flower.

Settlers who first landed on the American seabord describe a land covered with these common Black-Eyed heliotrope daisies.^{4a} A land where fields grew as many Chrysanthemums as there are stars in the black heavens shining at night. Stars of the Milky-Way dispersed in such number along the new shore. Stars which daily turn towards their origins in mind, always facing the Sun, as they do in Dante's cosmology, searching out enlightenment, feeding on the light of God. Olson has written a poem about the song and dance of these common heliotropes. It is titled "The Twist," and is about the prayer of the day's eyes:

the whole of it
coming,
to this pin-point
to turn
in this day's sun,

in this veracity
 there, the waters the several of them the roads
 here, a blackberry blossom

And in "Letter 20" again the day's eyes:

is what shows
 in his eyes (in our eyes
 the days the water poured down the paul-post

The daily use of eyes is Olson's definition of the divine:

("Letter 6"):

polis is
 eyes

Eyes
 & polis

so few
 have the polis
 in their eye

There are no hierarchies, no infinite, no such many
 as mass, there are only
 eyes in all heads,
 to be looked out of

The first 14 pairs of eyes planted on this coast are recorded in Olson's poems called "Capt Christopher Levett (of York)," date 1624, twenty-two of those eyes known by name. "Maximus, to Gloucester" gives a picture of the human heliotrope. Eyes that are able to strike image. Eyes of fishermen which cover the Ocean like daisies,—

imagery produces men whose skins are thickly covered in tin plates, eyes locked behind slits, fighting with certainty for the honour of their Lord in a justice based on military skills. Olson rejects that kind of enforced Truth. He poses the alternative and original meaning of the Fedeli d'amore as the prayer of the common heliotrope nasturtium, whose root meaning comes from torquere, the twist. The poem "Maximus, at Tyre and at Boston" is composed out of the etymologies which reveal the nasturtium's name, as found in Webster's Second International Dictionary. The three key words to be looked up are nasturtium, of the genus Tropaeolum, whose leaves are shield-shaped like the escutcheon in heraldic lore. From this dictionary work one notices "nose-twist" and "cress" which may be used to read the poems called "Tyrian Businesses" and "The Twist," "Letter 3" and "Letter 20,"—a complex of imagery all focusing on the Fedeli d'amore of the heliotrope's prayer (the soul's back-turning or ta'wil towards its divine sources in light and love). I will leave this labor with the dictionary to the reader, having already sketched these introductory remarks in more detail in the edition of Maps no. 4 (1971) dedicated to "Charles Olson." What happens is that man is returned to the animate laws of respension in a love bond or prayer which originates out of the human universe, not out of the universe of discourse or the universe of fixed, discrete and enforced "honor" points.

Without going into further detail let us notice the several species of heliotrope dance in Olson's poetics. The song and dance of the marigold, the chrysanthemum, the nasturtium (watercress) and the tansy:

Tansy buttons, tansy
for my city
Tansy for their noses

Tansy for them,
tansy for Gloucester to take the smell
of all owners,
the smell

Tansy
for all of us

Tansy from Cressy's
I rolled in as a boy

and didn't know it was
tansy

o tansy city, root city
let them not make you
as the nation is

Isolated person in Gloucester, Massachusetts,
I, Maximus, address you
you islands
of men and girls

"Letter 3".

Each one of these flowers mirrors the glowing city. Each is an image of Glow-ceastre, Gloucester City, just as the yellow rose in Dante's Empyrean Heaven holds within its circles of petals all the Thrones and sources of the Holy City. By far the best overall study of the imagistic tropism, bending towards love for structure, is contained

in Henry Corbin's Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi (1969), which covers the issue of the Drama of the Heart, the Fedeli d'amore, and the Prayer of the Heliotrope, far better than my own words can evoke. If one takes the courage to apply the work of that very fertile scholarship to a study of European use of light and love imagery,—which stand at the origins of all human vision, including political and historical images of the world,—the fruit obtained shall be very rewarding.

Of particular interest in Olson's poetics is an INVERSION which results from the simple change of the Dantesque Rose into a more common, but equally generative, daily motion of the day's eye. Common eyes is the drama expressed throughout The Maximus Poems. Song and dance of the common daisy or nasturtium, marigold or tansy,—none of them Elect flowers. All damned, weeds, Susans, Jill-flowers (Gillyvors), growing all over Mount Dogtown, a mountain formed of the rejectamenta left behind on a terminal moraine in the last deglaciation.

Dogtown fishermen living in the rubble of creation on the barren New England coast,—hardly a vision of a prospective Jerusalem or New Canaan, land of milk and honey, of paradise. America's first settlers were Ishmaels, indentured outcasts, white trash, persecuted faiths, displaced cargoes of black African slaves, Esaus and Indians,—all

Wild Men, the reprobate damned of the earth thrown out of Europe to the other side of the Atlantic called Tartaros, the New World north of the Caribbean. Hardly the Divine Inert or Elect peoples of the earth, the Jacobs and chosen few, Elizabethan noblemen, conquistadores, papal emmisaries, discoverers par le roi. They were the damned, damned wild day's eyes, fishermen living off the rubble left over after creation's final day:

Here lies the INVERSION which Olson so frequently introduces into his work,—from Heraclitus,—"The fairest universe is but a heap of rubbish piled up at random";—from Melville,—"So omnipotent is art; which in many a district of New Bedford has superinduced bright terraces of flowers upon the barren refuse rocks thrown aside at creation's final day";⁵ and in Olson's words—

Our backs
turned from the sea but the smell

as the minister said
in our noses
I am interfused
with the rubbish

of creation

"Letter, May 2, 1959".

("trash"
industrial fish
are called which Gloucester
now catches, all that the bottom
of Georges,

the Channel, Middle Ground,
Browns, Pollock Rip
yields, anything
nature puts in the sea
comes us,

it is cornucopia
 to see it
 working up a sluggish
 treadle,
 from a ship's hold

"Some Good News".

Trash fish caught by trash fishermen of a Dogtown. Bottom dogs after bottom fish. Consider Shakespeare's opinion of the codfish, a codpiece, slime refuse, put on by the damned. Fit for catfood and fertilizer or dehydrated fish sticks.

By an inversion the fish schools on Georges become the basis of a new wealth, good news upon which to found the New World. The sublime be damned. John Smith saw silver mines, source of an unlimited virtue. He forced the divine to equal his vision of human capability. His Rose smelled like a fish; the Rosa foetida—

Part of the Flower of Gloucester⁶

from the sunsets
 to the rubbish on the Harbor bottom
 fermenting so bubbles
 of the gas formed from the putrefaction
 keep coming up and you watch them break
 on the surface and imagine the odor
 which is true
 at low-tide that you can't stand the smell
 if you live with harbor Cove or the Inner
 Harbor to your side

The prettinesses of this new paradise are not bungled. The city's flower gives off the odours of a fishing business; not the rose's rarefied scent. The nasturtium and marigold often smell pungent. Angels at Gloucester are the seagulls which dive, like sea-bees, into the nectar which radiates from the flower of creation whose Thrones are occupied by Portugese seamen, fishermen, sailors who throw gurry aft behind the dory, fish heads and entrails which sustain the life of a constant mandorla of gulls. "Kill kill kill kill kill"⁷—is the cry of the Angel-gulls, sound of a high-liner over the diesel engines. Sound of the full hold. In the Church of Our Lady of Good Voyage, at Gloucester, the Virgin holds the Christ Child in one arm and a fishing schooner in the other. Amongst the Elect members of an Old World outlook Christ was often depicted as a child stretching his curious finger towards a goldfinch, bird-angel, whose sound is "tweet, tweet, tweet," "sweet, sweet, sweet."⁸ At Gloucester the young child shall become a codfisherman. "I'll own her, one day" Christ says to the Virgin. The sound of praise is the scream of gulls. Christ the King Fisher, —on Georges Bank in the New World. This is the rejected Christ who brought a thief into paradise. Who takes Esau and Ishmael to see the vision of a Gold Flower unfolding over Dogtown. The vision which later Christianity prettied, with Rose fragrance and an Elect Kingdom of God, exclusive club of sweet songbirds and honied bumblebees.

Olson gets back to the bedrock Imperator Mundi, hot flower,
 volcanic Christ, Christ the Titan opposing Empire Rome
 with a New Order, a New Testament to depose the old Elect.
Christus victor, the King Fisher of the new age.

On these rejectamenta
 (as they accumulate they form a cup-shaped
 structure) the young are born.
 And, as they are fed and grow, this
 nest of excrement and decayed fish becomes
 a dripping fetid mass

"The Kingfishers".

And there! (strong) thrust, the mast! flight
 (of the bird
 o kylix, o
 Antony of Padua
 sweep low, o bless
 the roofs, the old ones, the gentle steep ones
 on whose ridge-poles the sea gulls sit, from which they
 depart

And the flake-racks
 of my city!

"I, Maximus of Gloucester, to You".

Antony of Padua is the Portugese saint of fishermen.
 An angel seagull who sweeps through the fetid fragrance of
 the flower of the city of Gloucester, feeding on its rubbish,
 its nectar, its codfish fumes. He is the angel who feeds
 on Carbon and Light, the Oils of Life, fish oils, carbo-
 hydrates and proteins of the Carbon-City, the Coal-City,
 the C-City. Under Olson's hand paradise metamorphoses back
 to Carbon rising to life in the Pleistocene Age. Gloucester
 is a rookery of fishermen whose nests are the houses planted
 over the stench of flake racks on a barren sea coast under

the dome of a terminal moraine called Dogtown. Dogtown is the new and redeemed vision built on a place whose rocks can support only blueberry scrub, dwarf oaks, a seagull rookery and a fishing city:

Nantucket! Take out your map and look at it. See what a real corner of the world it occupies; how it stands there, away off shore, more lonely than the Eddystone lighthouse. Look at it—a mere hillock, and elbow of sand; all beach, without a background. There is more sand there than you would use in twenty years as a substitute for blotting paper. Some gruesome wights will tell you that they have to plant weeds there, they don't grow naturally; that they import Canada thistles . . . that they are so shut up, belted out, every way inclosed, surrounded, and made an utter island of by the ocean, that to their very chairs and tables small clams will sometimes be found adhering, as to the backs of sea turtles.

With the landless gull, that at sunset folds her wings and is rocked to sleep between billows; so at nightfall the Nantucketer, out of sight of land, furls his sails, and lays him to rest, while under his pillow rush herds of walruses and whales.

Moby-Dick chapter 14.

All the white houses along Gloucester's shore, all of that city's paradise,—was hauled out of the ocean onto the land:

It is a land of oil, true enough: but not like Canaan, a land, also, of corn and wine. The streets do not run with milk; nor in the spring-time do they pave them with fresh eggs. . . . Whence come they? how planted upon this once scraggy scoria of a country?

Yes; all these brave houses and flowery gardens came from the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans. One and all, they were harpooned and dragged up hither from the bottom of the sea.

Moby-Dick chapter 6.

It is a land that flows with Sperm whale's oil; cod liver oil; a clam chowder land. Built on proteins fished out of the silver streams of the sea. Those are the new found oils of mercy flowing from the promised Carbon tree of life. They are what lights the lamp in a dark Tartaros like America. Christ, a fisherman, flowering in Gold fire on the Mary-tree of a Carbon Ocean. A Gold Flower dragged off the fishing banks onto the land. Paradise is an actual and willful human creation, not any artificial bliss of pretty lawns wafted by zephrous breezes. It is the self-actuated human-climbed vision, whose fires are fueled by oils from the sea.

In Moby-Dick the damned fishermen, Indians and black Africans, Ishmaelites and Esaus, Phoenician Ahabs,—all the damned dark creatures,—go to fish paradise out of the jaws of Hell, the jaws of the rising Leviathan who lives in the sea of molten iron. Fishermen live in the teeth which rise in the jaws of the whale who lurches from El Greco's Hell (plate XXI). They carry spears to bed. They talk shark's language of butchery and oils.⁹ This is the base stratum in human contemplation: oils, proteins. The material, physical substance of a vision. Moby-Dick is a story told in the long line of visionary literatures. It is the story of Heaven and Hell. A vision equalled only by images found in "The Literature of Visions" (cf. H.R. Patch's The Other World (1970) chapter IV). Its men are steel, iron, bronze-

skinned heathens, pre-originating European (Roman) Christianity. Ahab and his crew are at home on the ladder of iron teeth in a shark's mouth. The book is an INVERSION where paradise is rooted in FACTS. Human as animal whose teeth are a part of the achievement of a contemplative and mystical, yet animate and physical vision of the Flower of God, a Flower whose roots are grounded in the oils of life, actual, real oils, protein and carbon chains. It is no Platonic discourse of Ideal lights fed by slave labor. It is a paradise wholly achieved from the fundamental to the firmamental by the shaping force of the human divine. A paradise which is made, not given.

The inversion is also spoken of in Blake's proposition of a cosmology where the Elect are damned and the reprobate save themselves using the materials of the previous Hell.

In Olson's poetics, the inversion is not so energetic. It does not move with the surge of Orkus, god of Hades, or under the sledge-hammering steam of a monomaniacal Ahab. It is an inversion based in fact, not power. It is based on a grouping and arrangement of knowledges previously absent, which are now available in the post-modern physics of vision and mind (psyche). Where Melville and Blake are projective forerunners, Olson is, in spite of the thrust at the core of his poetic theory, recollective. He affirms, in his imagery and cosmology, the facts as they are now

known of a world which Blake and Melville could only prophecy as the future form of belief. Belief which we can now inhabit, take for granted, with a certain sustained opposition and denial of the previous Elect, the Platonic remnant who still stand with the universe of discourse and the Roman Church.

I am no Greek, hath not th' advantage.
And of course, no Roman

"The Kingfishers".

We do not want either Greek or Roman Models
if we are but just & true to our own
Imaginations, . . .

Blake, Preface to Milton.

Instead of a reprobate, non-European illiterate America, receptacle of codfish, devils, fishermen, thieves and Indians,—Olson gives us a City on a Hill, a Flower over Mount Dogtown, elevated there by a nation of willful Jacks and Jills, every common, vulgar, man. A barrenland which is fructified by the force of human will and actual performance of vision. Therefore a fair universe is made out of the heap of rubbish. Superinduced bright terraces of nasturtium flowers and black-eyed daisies, golden chrysanthemums and glowing marigolds,—flowers of the new paradise,—are planted in earth reclaimed out of the pits of sparse topsoil left by the ice, even planted in Goodyear tires and old hotwater tanks sawed in half, such is the WILL.^{9a}

The Flower of Dogtown is planted by fishermen, rooted in sperm and codfish oils. A plantation. A beginning. Jack and Jill, like Joseph and Mary, —common parentage, —make the Gold Flower of Creation. A Marigold. Paradise is achieved, not discovered or enforced. Paradise is the human dream of an actual landscape which can yield and support a City on the Hill under even worst Pleistocene conditions, if at all humanly possible. Man is Pleistocene, not European. He shapes his world out of ice, melts out its form. It is not a given green lawn. Here we have returned to the purpose of our introductory chapter on Pleistocene Man, which was to get back to our physical roots as a species of thing alive between the ices. Not a beautiful scene, but the actual origins of every willful cosmology since. We are a beast, like hairy Esau, not the beauty and wisdom of a Jacob. P. erectus not H. sapiens. The denial of beauty and wisdom, of the rose and Elect garden of delights, is the INVERSION which allows common man as a species, the damned by Rome and the Latin tongue, to partake of the creation of the Flower which is theirs, simply by having been born into the world with an image of the world, an imagination.¹⁰

Thus, while Olson uses Dantesque pictures of the world, all events are changed, turned upside down, so that Hell rises to Heaven, Dogtown is made into paradise, and Heaven becomes what it normally creates, a Hell:¹¹

All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads man to this hell.

Shakespeare's sonnet 129.

I draw it thus:

Mary's Gold
Chrysolanthemum Christ's Mum of mourning
the Black-Eyed Susan
is the 'Gold' 'Flower'
Dark Light of the World

. . .

4. COAL BLACK EYES OF CREATION

Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
 Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain,
 Have put on black and loving mourners be,
 Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
 And truly not the morning sun of heaven
 Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
 Nor that full star that ushers in the even
 Doth half that glory to the sober west,
 As those two mourning eyes become thy face:

O, let it then as well beseem thy heart
 To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
 And suit thy pity like in every part.

Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
 And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

Shakespeare, sonnet 132.

Mediaeval poetry is replete with examples of beloved women who lead the distressed soul of the lover to paradise with their intense dark-light-coal-burning-black-eyes.

The tradition is derived from the Song of Songs, a canticle of love, of mystical adoration:

for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel
 as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire,
 which hath a most vehement flame.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods
 drown it:

The coal black eyes of the blessed Virgin or of the beloved Lady ("I am dark but comely"—Song of Songs) ignite the flame of love in the beholder. A trace of this imagery survives in Shakespeare's sonnet cycle, with the dark ladie. The true strength of the black coal eyes, on fire in Love, is contained in H.D.'s War Trilogy, which recites the mediaeval experience,—¹²

but whose eyes are those eyes?
for the eyes (in the cold,

I marvel to remember)
were all one texture

as if without pupil
or all pupil, dark

yet very clear with amber
shining . . .

. . . coals for the world's burning

"The Flowering of the Rod".

It is a hot fire flowering. It is the fire of the Hearth. Fire of the Heart. Heat which warms and melts ice that has enclosed the soul. In Olson's poem, "Maximus, from Dogtown, - II," the Black Flower is literally the gold bloom which shimmers intensely hot over a coal hearth. Coal hearths are the eyes which heat the northern Carbon City to Life:

(Coal love
hung-up burning
under the City: bituminous

Heart to be turned to Black
Stone
is the Throne of Creation

The padma, lux mundi, Chrysos-anthemion Flower, is the bloom on a coal hearth. It is the flame on the carbon heart of life which burns slowly in all carboniferous biomolecular life. It is the Drama of Life. The Drama of the Heart. It is the slow burning fire in the electron transport system whose heat is trapped in so-called high energy phosphate bonds ($P \sim P$). It is the heat which enters the fingers from burning coal deposits of layered organic life, blooming on coal grates through a fisherman's cold limbs. The Flower is a fossil imprint on the Coal and Carbon of the world, a trapped form, forever alive, burning, like the small flame in the heart of the vault of a church, the light of the holy ghost, called the Sanctuary Light, which is "hung-up burning" continually over the Blessed Sacrament. The fern imprint of the ancient flower is re-kindled to life. It burns forever. It is the Gold Flower whose light radiates through the Carbon Black vault of the Heavens:

All the heavens
a few miles up — and even with the sun out —
is BLACK

The Gold Flower of the Sanctuary Light is the Flowering of the Rod. It is the "diamond body," translucent glass of

concentrated and reflective vision; seed heart; coal pressed under such intense heat of love it has transchanged into diamond, a new state, the Vajrayāna, crystal heart of creation, whose intense center of Love is a pure bundle of mirrors which radiate light like the Father Point Lighthouse in the dark. Diamond eyes are more brilliant evidence of Love. They are all Light. Coal Eyes are the fire and white heat of Love. Eyes are the Hearths of Creation which kindle Love in the universe, the lights of the world strung out like stars. Black Gold Flowers of heat and light return the soul to God.

In Christianity the diamond light is Christ, born on the green jade of the ever-lasting Mary-tree. The mineral terminology for these levels of the soul is Oriental, of Chinese origins, and is discussed in two books written by B. Laufer, The Diamond. A Study in Chinese and Hellenic Folk-lore. Field Museum (Chicago, 1915), and Jade, A Study of Chinese Archaeology and Religion. Field Museum (Chicago, 1912). The images are frequent in Pound's Cantos and enter into Olson's "Dogtown - II" poem,—

: the Diamond (Coal) the Pennsylvanian

Age the soft
 (Coal) LOVE

The most important corresponding imagery in Christianity is contained in the Gospel of St. John. An article which Olson read on this subject is called "The Experience

of Light in the Gospel of St. John, in the 'Corpus Hermeticum,' in Gnosticism, and in the Eastern Church," by Max Pulver, in the Eranos Yearbook 4, Spiritual Disciplines:

In him (the Logos) was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not.

Another text on Light imagery in Arabic and early Christian theology, of significance in the study of Olson's work, is Henry Corbin's "Divine Epiphany and Spiritual Birth in Ismailian Gnosis," also reprinted in the Eranos Yearbook 5, Man and Transformation.

We shall quote only from the Gospel of St. John, a Gospel which records the mystical Christian experience of Love in a drama of light and darkness. A Gospel which is prerequisite to a reading and comprehension of light imagery in Dante's Paradiso Cantos. Where the food of Life is Light. And where the incarnation of divine light enters into a heliotropic symbolism. That is, God sends his Son into the world as a Gold Flower (Chrysanthemum, Marygold, Carnation), establishing the Prayer of the Heliotrope, between Sun and Chryso-anthemon,—in Hypostatic Union of Divine and Earthly Golds expressed by the prayer of a flower's gold for its sources in the Sun's gold. The marigold is then an image of creation whose original bloom is the Sun. Christ is the incarnate Solsecle whose light

reveals divine love on earth. He is the bloom on a common plant whose immanent nature reveals the mystery of love in the world.

As long as I am in the world,
I am the light of the world

I am the bread of life

I am the resurrection and the life.

I am the true vine, and my Father
is the husbandman.

If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not,
because he seeth the light of this world. But
if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because
there is no light in him.

Gospel According to John.

That is the Light which Mary presents in the darkness of the Temple on February 2nd, during the candlelight procession of Marymass which celebrates the Presentation in the Temple. It is the Advent of the LUX MUNDI, where a New Testament is born, as a star over Bethlehem, a gold flower on a common marigold, that shall shine a light in the Old heaven. The star is the gold flower on a green Christmas tree. It is the Sanctuary Light in an Old Black Heaven. A new star in an old astronomy which makes the old come into flower as if reborn.

Such is the vision which Jack and Jill go up the Hill to water in Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown - II" poem. They kindle and keep alive the gold flower of light which hangs on the tree of heaven. It is a celestial vision which

they tend, that hangs over and above terrestrial paradise, shining intensely in the black heavens on top of Mount Dogtown. A mystical vision of love, apprehended as a revolving wheel or heliotrope prayer, a Throne:

the light hangs
from the wheel of heaven

The vision stands highest in Olson's poetics, at the ultimate sources of a diamond pole star which is fixed at the center of a revolving swastika or flower. The revolution of Love which moves life is the power which enthrones the soul in the tropospheric wheels of the third angelic choir of yellow petals which surrounds the black center disc of the coal hearth of creation. In Dante's Paradiso the flower has a yellow center and white radiant petals. Olson's flower has a dark eye surrounded by yellow streams of light.

we will carry water

up the hill the Water the Water to
make the Flower hot — Jack
& Jill will

"Maximus, from Dogtown - II".

They climb the mountain to fuel the flame of Love and Life. The water they carry to pour on the flame is blood, blood of a human universe whose persons achieve the creation of a flowering city in history. WATERED ROCK.* Blood which flows into the seams of creation and there turns to black

* Psalm 78:16. Christ is the Rock of Ages & the Source of Living Water. Typologically prefigured in Exodus 17:6.

stone,—coal,—a part of the flower's structure. The flower is hot because it is a coal bloom in a cast iron coal stove ignited by history and fueled by Jack and Jill,—Olson's parents,—whose child is the light of the world, Mary's Gold, the bloom on coal, enduring intelligence, mind. Streams of yellow radiate and shimmer from the heart of black coal. The divine and celestial mystery of Love is imaged daily by men who light coal stoves in Gloucester-City to hold the hot vision in place between the glaciers of a northern clime. The coal stoves burn and light the world along the coast of Cape Ann, like day's eyes, Chrysanthemum Susans, which turn their glowing gold heads in the fields on Dogtown Commons. It is those most common varieties of image,—the marigolds and coal stoves, on a land inhabited by fishermen, Jacks and Jills,—that move American space and creation. Only by not stopping life can one apprehend the movement of light all the way from the pole star and through the City to the marigold of the windowbox. By not removing the damned, the daily, one sees in its moves the whole extent of creation. The daily business of a fishing town holds vision, the vision of a City on a Hill, glowing hot with burning life, kindled on sperm and codfish oils.

5. The Jill-Flower:

Or Gillyflower. The gilted flower. Every Jack must have his Jill. The wild flower whose weed seeds are grown common, dispersed like Eve's wanton germ. Jill and her flower are the reprobate, even the damned. They have no place in paradise:

Perdita. Sir, the year growing ancient,
 Not yet on summer's death nor on the birth
 Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers O' the sea-
 son
 Are our carnations and streaked gillyvors,
 Which some call nature's bastards. Of that kind
 Our rustic garden's barren, and I care not
 To get slips of them.

Polixenes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
 A gentler scion to the wildest stock,
 And make conceive a bark of baser kind
 By bud of nobler race. This is an art
 Which does mend Nature — change it rather, but
 The art itself is Nature

The Winter's Tale.

Olson is Jill's Flower, Mary's Flower, born of base and common parentage. Born of a nation of poor-Johns, common Jacks, fishermen and indentured thieves of Dogtown.

Contained in the above extract from The Winter's Tale is a definition of paradise achieved through Art versus Nature. Art tries to exclude Nature. The Artist is Prospero or God. Nature is the wilderness of Caliban and Eve, whose seed grows wild and ravishes the garden of perfection (Miranda in The Tempest). The marigold and carnation,

hardy common annuals, threaten to "slip" (as in Measure for Measure) into the cleared form of the rustic paradise-garden. The "slips" of wilderness threaten to grow out of the base root stock, upon which is grafted the noble scion (through Art). We have already encountered these events of a Nature which opposes Art in Measure for Measure and the Divine Comedy. Paradise is perfection, an ordered garden planned with divine Artistry. Until Eve's seed went astray. Then the garden grew wild, a tangled mesh of weeds and seeds, slips of thorns and thistles, a thicket, a Hell. This opposition between Art and Nature, French and English garden,—in the Christian idea of paradise and its loss,—is not remembered today. Once it was a central issue, as it is in The Tempest and Measure for Measure and the Sonnets.

We have also met the grafting business of horticulture, where a noble fruit tree is budded onto a hardy root,—in Dante's Divine Comedy, Shakespeare's Measure for Measure &c. The Gold Bloom of Christ is grafted onto the common marigold and so the whole world of fallen creation is redeemed. This is the Crucifixion, where the bloom is grafted onto a base Jillflower or common Marigold. And so the root of wilderness, seeded in Eve's rebellious limbs, is restored to paradise, redeemed in the gold bloom. The dry thorn tree is renewed to life and bloom. The thorny rose bush blossoms a wondrous flower. The wild garden thicket of Nature's bastard deeds

is restored to the precision of a paradise through the Art and wonder of its gold. A bloom as wondrous as a yellow rose grafted on a common marigold.

Implicit in these Christian notions is the difference between a Caliban and a Miranda, wild Indian weed and rosa mystica. Olson rejects that distinction completely. A distinction which is evident, for example, in Shakespeare's sonnet number 128, where the dark-eyed lady plays a virginal whose sound is like "dead wood." All the jacks rise from the keyboard into Jill's nimble fingers. She plays on the "saucy jacks" who feed out of her common hands. It is an event of complete wilderness, an orgy of responses producing a music which confounds the soul in sensual repose. The dark ladie is a damned creature, a Siren-luring Love whose shores open like a rocky snare, whose jaws are limbs baited for the Triumph of Love. She is a picture of the Paula and Francesca episode in Dante's Inferno; or of Petrarch's Triomfo d'Amore. Her common seeds grow weeds which threaten to entangle and choke the beauty of the perfect rose.

Shakespeare's Sonnets show the flowering of the rod only on the brow of a noble, Elect, mankind. The flowering can be illustrated, quickly, through a consideration of sonnets 73 and 109. Number 73 talks of barren, "bare-ruined choir," ruined steeples of a fallen cathedral of the soul. The sun is in sunset. Leaves are yellow. The fire of divine Love burns low on exhausted coals. Birds

have flown from the boughs of autumn trees. All is entering into the winter of dead Adam.

In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

The flowering of the dry-tree which is dying in this sonnet (the "dead wood," arbor sicca, of number 128) occurs in number 109, where the cathedral is whole again and its apse is filled with the light that filters through a stained glass rose window. The window is an image of the boy. It is an image of the "sum of good," the Aristotelian Sumum Bonum, Christian divine. He is the very antithesis of the dark Jill of the dead wood. He is the flowering rosa mundi. The Sonnets are a theology between the mediaeval and modern. Shakespeare, like Dante, places the rose in the boughs of a cathedral, as an expression of the poet's love for the boy. In doing so he damns the Nature of the dark Jill, whose coal black eyes were once the eyes of Mary. He condemns the non-Elect who grow like weeds, gillyvors, marigolds. He damns all but the eternally perfect rose and the fedeli d'amore of a love turned towards His sublime light.

Codfish and marigolds are outcast to the wild ranges of an American world. America, the land of gillyvors, of nature's wilderness, of Indians and Chrysanthemums (African gillyvors) and Black-Eyed Susans, of Jacks and Jills and poor-Johns,—John Smith and John Winthrop and John White,—

all of the wilderness untamed by the Arts of culture. It is out of this common wilderness that the seed of the future bloom of Gloucester came, the rebellious seed that declared its Independence from England and Europe. Out of codfish and lilyirons. Out of fishermen gathered together like the ten lost tribes of Israel, all "slips" of wilderness, Nature's kin:

In the last-mentioned haunts you see only sailors; but in New Bedford, actual cannibals stand chatting at street corners; savages outright; many of whom yet carry on their bones unholy flesh. It makes a stranger stare.

Moby Dick chapter 6.

There were so many Pacific natives like Queequeg, the colored harpooner, that a section of Nantucket came to be known as New Guinea.

There were so many Portugese from the islands that a section of New Bedford was called Fayal.

The third of Melville's harpooners was the imperial African Negro Ahasuerus Dagoo.

For bottom dogs made pretty SEE the balletic chapter called MIDNIGHT, FORECASTLE, in Moby-Dick,

The RESULT: by the 1840's the crews were the bottom dogs of all nations and all races.

Call Me Ishmael.

Viz. DOGTOWN. CALL ME ESAU. A NATION OF OUTCASTS.

Of nasturtiums and Jill's flowers. Fish and slaves. That is what American paradise is made of. Europe's paradise was fashioned out of sugar and spice and everything nice.

Olson is born of Jack and Jill into a fishing world.
A marigold world. He is born of the flowering of Dogtown
into a non-European paradise.

6. Jacob's Ladder: "(horror X)"

Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle?

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

John 4:12-14.

In "Maximus, from Dogtown - II," Jack and Jill go up Dogtown Hill to fetch a pail of water. They climb the mountain to fetch the water of everlasting life which is shed from the branches and golden flowers of the tree of life. The water is the dew or nectar, oleum misericordiae, oil of mercy, which is shed by the weeping myrrh-tree, a Mary-tree that stands in terrestrial paradise. Even though they are commoners, Jack and Jill do not fall down and break their crowns. They are able to climb the mountain or ladder which ascends to the sources of the world.

LADDER and WELL are the two vehicles of the spirit promised in the story of Jacob. Perhaps the best account of their use may be found in the long mediaeval poem called Jacob's Well, written about 1440 A.D., which tells how to construct a well deep into sands so that it may collect the living waters, and how to ascend to heaven on a ladder whose rungs are the ten commandments and the 14 deeds of mercy:

When the well is thus made with lime and stone, the soul must have a ladder to climb up by, out of the deep well into heaven. The ladder must be charity. The one side is love to god, the other side is love to man. This ladder of love must have ten stakes, that is, keeping of the ten commandments. This ladder of love must have fourteen stakes more, that are praisings & thanksgivings to god and prayers. Another stake in your ladder of love must be the greeting of our lady, that is, your Ave maria.

When your well is made and your ladder, you must have a windlass, and a rope, and a bucket, to draw up water to drink, because your well is so deep. The rope must be belief; as the well is deep, that must be so long that it reaches to hell, to earth, & to heaven.

In "Maximus, from Dogtown - II," both aspects of Jacob's story are developed through the nursery rhyme about "Jack and Jill." We shall dwell on the LADDER or heavenly bridge in this section, preparatory to an understanding of the holy dew which Jack and Jill fetch from the waters of the WELL that lies under the tree of heaven, the well called Mimir in a Norse cosmology.

The word "bridge" does not appear in the Bible. Its place is taken by a ladder which ascends into the celestial heavens. The ladder of Genesis 28:12,—

And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

Jacob's ladder appears in Cantos 21 and 22 of Paradiso in the Divine Comedy, standing in the heaven of Saturn, the seventh celestial heaven of Thrones. The Milky-Way was known as Jacob's Road in the mediaeval ages, a Road of stars forming a bridgeway or ladder across the sky:

I saw,—of the color of gold in the sun's rays,—
 a ladder raised so high that it was lost beyond
 my sight. I saw, descending on its steps, such
 multitude of splendours, that it seemed as if each
 light in heaven were shed from it. And as the
 dews, in their nature, assembling at the dawn,
 bestir themselves to warm the chilly feathers of
 their wings—when some fly off not to return, some
 remain and wheel about or turn back to gain their
 starting point,—so it seemed to me that company
 glittering on the ladder behaved when they arrived
 upon a certain step.

Paradiso Canto XXI.

Dante ascends the ladder into the eighth heaven of the fixed stars, heaven of the Angel-Cherubim, called the Zodiac, Heaven of the Pole Star. The same event takes place in the ascent of the "Dogtown - II" poem:

up Dogtown hill on top one day the
 Vertical American thing will
 show from heaven the Ladder

come down to the Earth
 of Us All, the Many who
 know

there is One!
 One Mother
 One Son

One Daughter
 and Each the Father
 of Him-Her-Self:

The Ladder of the Angel Intelligences will come down to a nation of Esaus and Ishmaels. Jack and Jill will be the recipients of the future vision. Here we turn on the other events in the story, relating to the birth of twins, Jacob and Esau, out of the same womb. Born of Rebekah and Isaac:

And the children struggled together within her;
and she said, If it be so, why am I thus?

And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

Genesis 26:22-23.

A City of God and a City of Man. Two nations, one blessed and one cursed. Division into sheep and goats, on the right and left hand. Jacob and Esau; beauty and beast,— "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man." The Elect and the damned. The LADDER shall come down for Jacob's dream. It will not descend into a nation of Esaus. Dante makes this distinction between two peoples, Elect and damned, in Cantos VIII and XXXII of Paradiso.

Revolving Nature, a seal on mortal wax, performs her art well, but does not distinguish any house from another; therefore Esau's seed differs from Jacob's.

Canto VIII.

The King through whom this Kingdom is at rest in such great love, and in such delight that man can desire no more, creating all our minds in His glad sight, bestows His grace according to His will in varying measures: let the fact suffice. This is clearly manifest to you by those twin brothers in the Holy Writ, who were moved to anger in their mother's womb. Therefore according to the colour of their hair the Light on high must crown them, awarding grace in different degrees. Without merit for their earthly deeds they are placed in different ranks, . . .

Canto XXXII.

Such is the explanation, commentary and justification for Isaac's blessing of his son Jacob, who stole the birthright from his brother Esau. Esau was born before Jacob and therefore deserved the patriarchal descent, but his brother, through trickery, obtained the birthright. He put goat skins upon his hands to make them hairy like Esau's and so his blind father gave him the title to his lands (Genesis 26 and 27).

Of course Olson counters Jacob's trickery, trickery which led to the Calvinist doctrine of a predetermined Elect mankind. Olson opposes Jacob's beauty in an essay called Ernst Robert Curtius and in the poem "To Gerhardt." In each instance he opposes the Elect and European vision with his own brand of spiritual exercise. In the essay, which is against Curtius' lecture, "The Mediaeval Bases of Western Thought," Olson opposes Latin Literature and the European Middle Ages with his own choice, Walter Prescott Webb's The Great Plains (one traces the rise of cultured

Roman tropes; the other the spread of six-gun, barbed wire, horse and windmill in the developing American west).¹⁴

In "To Gerhardt" Olson again opposes the Bear-son, Odysseus. with an Indian bear-hunting rite performed in the American Northwest. Finally, in "Maximus, from Dogtown, - II," Olson has stated the independence of a vision which has come down into a nation of Esaus. It is the ladder out of Hell; out of damnation; out of servitude and slavery:

and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

Genesis 27:40.

Europe is the nation of Jacobs. America the land of Esaus. When Europe first came to this New World,—in the words of Eric Williams, Capitolism and Slavery,—"NEGROES WERE . . . STOLEN IN AFRICA TO WORK LANDS STOLEN FROM THE INDIANS IN AMERICA." Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote, typically, that negroes should be "taught to be thankful for the providence which has placed them within reach of the means of grace."¹⁵ That is Ernst Robert Curtius' position, also, that we should be thankful Europe has given America her tradition and culture. Otherwise this land is a nation of heathen damned.

Such is the birthright which the European Elect has stolen, by trickery (lands for Bibles; perception for culture &c.) from all the Jacks and Jills, peoples of

Dogtown and Nantucket. A visionary birthright stolen by the Elect few who use the Calvinist doctrine to reaffirm the primacy of their own birth and nobility. The few who have stolen the Ladder from a land of outcast Esaus.

The same is true of Ishmael, whose descendents are all outcasts thrown into the damned City of Man. Here is the doxology on that issue taken from Biblical interpretation in St. Augustine's City of God:¹⁶

Now citizens are begotten to the earthly city by nature . . . but to the heavenly city by grace And this was typified in the two sons of Abraham,—ISHMAEL, the son of Hagar the handmaid, being born according to the flesh, while Isaac was born of the free woman Sarah, according to the promise. . . . In the one birth, human action is revealed; in the other, a divine kindness comes to light.

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond woman was born after the flesh, but he of the free was by promise. . . . what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond woman and her son: for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.

Ishmaels and Esaus are imprisoned in Tartaros through such political manoevers as these. Melville gets them out by beginning his book with "Call me Ishmael," a wicked book, about American space (Olson begins "I, Maximus"). Olson gets them out of Hell by a re-write of Hesiod's Theogony which, instead of reaffirming Zeus' omnipotency and ubiquity, lets the original first created out of Tartaros.

He gives them the LADDER or way out into the light of vision. He frees their American ab-originality:

—Hell is just over
 their heads
 and so is the 'way-up,' Bifrost
 (Styx's house and Iris the messenger are
 bungled prettinesses of this way
 this marvellous ladder the
 color of all colors
 back where the gods, and appetite,
 and so is the way out for them,
 for these imprisoned original
 created — all of the first creations
 of Earth and Heaven (or of Ocean and Tethys
 all these instances forwards except
 the official story

"Maximus, from Dogtown - IV".

In the "Dogtown -II" poem, Olson shouts "(horror X",—
 horror Xtianity, as in Pound's Canto LXI; horror the
 "official story" which has imprisoned the value of familiar
 and even common every day visionary discovery. Horror a
 Christianity which defends Jacob and Isaac, the Elect in an
 Empire of Roman Church and State. Olson gets us back
 to another Christ, a Titan Christ, who once warred with
 thieves and fishermen against Rome for an other world. He

gives us the light to shine a way for a dark underworld of imprisoned originals. Jacks and Jills. Jack and Jill who climb Dogtown Hill to make the vision flower. Fisherman whose catch creates a shining city on a hill. An outcast daily humanity has declared the independence of its own visionary capacity through Olson's poetics. A base humanity, like Mary and Joseph, who once gave birth to the gold flower of creation at Bethlehem. Mary Hines and John Olson who gave birth to the flower which continues to bloom over the mountain, on the top of an American ladder or tree of heaven. A Mary-Tree.

7. CLEAR, SHINING WATER.

Jack and Jill
 Went up the hill
 To fetch a pail of WATER

Claims that traces of antiquity and mystery may be seen in the rhyme have received undue notice. An origin theory put forward by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould in Curious Myths of the Middle Ages (1866) has been curiously often accepted. 'This verse,' he says, 'which to us seems at first sight to be nonsense, I have no hesitation in saying has a high antiquity, and refers to the Eddaic Hjuki and Bil. The names indicate as much. Hjuki, in Norse, would be pronounced Juki, which would readily become Jack; and Bil, for the sake of euphony, and in order to give a feminine name to one of the children, would become Jill.' Previously it had been explained that in a Scandanavian myth accounting for the markings on the moon, Mani, the moon, captured two children Hjuki and Bil, while they were drawing water. When the moon is full the children can be seen with the bucket on a pole between them. According to Lewis Spence (Myth and Ritual, 1947) some ancient mystic ceremony might be traced in the rhyme, if only in that 'no one in the folk-lore sense climbs to the top of a hill for water unless that water has a special significance'—dew water, for instance.¹⁷

Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, ed. Iona and Peter Opie (1962) p. 226.

In our first chapter on Archaeology we began with the story of Audhumla, the Norse Cow who melts out of the ice on the first day of creation. Now we shall return to the Norse cosmogony in order to reposition the materials of our study within a solidly northern and Pleistocene context. We are going to push back our whole theology to include the earliest origins of human vision. There is no change

or displacement required, only inclusion of a wider landscape of experience than is usually admitted. The gospel of light must be shifted back to its original Axis; so that instead of progress to a Christian picture of creation, we may perceive the long-lasting human species of vision whose magnificence has endured continuously in expression for ever, without change or diminution in intensity, from beginnings. The Norse theology shall be our leverage in making this move to the center and origin:

I know an ash-tree, named Yggdrasil:
 Sparkling showers are shed on its leaves
 That drip dew into the dales below.
 By Urd's Well it waves evergreen,
 Standing over that still pool,
 Near it a bower whence now there come
 The Fate Maidens, first Urd.
 Skuld second, scorer of runes,
 Then Verdandi, third of the Norns:
 The laws that determine the lives of man
 They fixed forever and their fate sealed.

Völuspá, Song of the Sybil, trans. Taylor
 and Auden.

At the center of the Norse world stood this giant tree, an ash tree, called Yggdrasil. Its branches stretched over the earth and the heavens. Its trunk was supported by three giant roots, one that burrowed down into the Other World of the Aesir, another into the realm of the Iotunn Frost-Giants, and a third to the land of the human dead. Beneath the root in Iotunnheim-Giantland was the spring of Mimir. Under the tree in the world of the Aesir was the Well of Fate, the Well of Urd. Near this Well lived

the three Norn maidens who were called Urthr (spinning-Fate).
Verdandi (Being) and Skuld (Future):

They watered the tree each day with pure water
and whitened it with clay from the spring, and
in this way preserved its life, while the water
fell down to earth as dew.

H.R. Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths of
Northern Europe (1964) p. 26.

In the crown of the tree lived a great eagle whose wings
fanned the winds that blow in the world of man. A snake
lay coiled around the base of its huge trunk, gnawing at
the bark of the enormous tree. Serpent and eagle waged a
continuous warfare, while a chattering squirrel scurried
up and down the trunk carrying insults to enrage their
fierce contest. Harts and goats devoured branches, leaves
and tender shoots of the tree, standing upright on their
haunches to reach it from all sides. Such was the continual
decay and growth which went on in this evergreen ash tree
of the world:

Three roots spread three ways
Under the ash Yggdrasil:
Hel is under the first, Frost Giants under the second,
Mankind under the last.

Rat-Tusk is the squirrel who shall run up
Yggdrasil the ash tree,
Bearing with him the words of the eagle
Down to Nidhögg beneath

Four the harts who the high boughs
Gnaw with necks thrown back:
Dain and Dvalin, Duneyr and Durathror.

Under Yggdrasil hide more serpents
 Than dull apes dream of:
 Goin and Moin, Grafvitnir's sons,
 Sleepbringer, Unraveler, shall bite off
 Twigs of that tree forever.

The hardships endured by Yggdrasil
 Are more than man can dream of:
 Harts bite the twigs, the trunk rots,
 Nidhogg gnaws at the roots.

The Lay of Grímnir trans. Taylor &
 Auden.

Yggdrasil was the world tree whose branches cast shadows over every land, forming roadways of light, conduits between mankind, the gods and the dead. Vertical living wood holding routes of vision open between heaven and the underworlds; standing upright across the plane of our terrene world. It was a bridge or ladder, like Jacob's ladder, a way up and down through levels in a cosmology of beliefs. Tracheal xylem. A Bifrost; a rainbow arch or roadway of stars. Principally and ab-originally the Shaman's wooden bridge, a wooden Axis for transport to Other Worlds, a vehicle for crossing into realms of vision. A wooden gateway out of our single closed real. A tree whose branches are climbed by Jack and Jill in the Norse story where souls return for a taste of the dew of creation.

Some Finno-Ugric tribes believed that the gods feasted upon its fruits, and that souls were born among its branches.

Sometimes it was symbolized in shamanistic ritual by a post with steps cut in it, a ladder, or a small birch tree, up which the shaman climbed to indicate his ascent to the heavens.

Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe, p. 192.

I have seen Mexican Indians dance before a wooden ladder +++++ up to the sun. I have seen a birch tree raised at the center of the Cree sundance on the Saskatchewan plains. I have seen Eskimo ecstatic in dance trances to the beat on a skin drum. I have watched the priest sing mass at the altar of creation beneath a wooden cross. These are each a vertical drama of the soul; a drama where exoteric mythology is the vehicle and never the essential cause of the soul's journey to its sources in Other World. Ecstasy and imagination and mystery are closer to the facts of human cosmology than are explanation and conclusion. This principle is overlooked by "mythologists" whose exegesis defines categories of story which are blind to the drama of the soul those stories are meant to convey. The drama of rebirth in Christianity, for example, has no more to do with "vegetation" cycles than has any other theology or presence of beliefs,—though all beliefs are contained and transposed in an exoteric imagery which is derived from the given physical contents of a human landscape that can be enacted in drama. It is in exegesis, through drama and dance, that the exodus from appearance to an

esoteric experience occurs, like playing the piano. Logic is simply not sufficient to explain the dimension of the human will-to-music. Story exists through itself. Logic can no more explain myth than it can apprehend music or any other drama of the soul. It has the terrible disadvantage of believing that what can't be explained isn't worth knowing, doesn't make sense, and what can be, can be left behind. It is a two-edged razor-blade with complete loss, cutting on both sides, tearing into its enemy which is the actual performance of Truth.

Early in our thesis we derived an imagery of the milk-yielding tree from an actual, though forgotten, human landscape. Then we traced that imagery, principally of the flowering rod, through a Christian muthologos. Finally we have come to the tree which the soul climbs on its return or ta'wil to Other Worlds. That tree still sheds dew, light, love, myrrh and milk,—foods of the esoteric experience of divine presence. Even milk as nourishment is retained in Christianity as a literal image of life everlasting, a fundamental basis of mammal. However in human story it is and always has been, from Marsh Arab to Saint Augustine, an exoteric image taken from a human landscape of familiar acts to portray the soul's desire and thirst for vision. For ecstasy in vision, conjoined to the flower of creation, sucking nectar from the world's sources the way bees crowd into the fragrance of an apple blossom,

surrounded in bliss and mystery, driving towards the center and heart of its spirit. Christianity can have no exclusive claim to revelation. Rather it is representative of the play of divine appearance made known to the human species, from the very advent of the creature H. sapiens into a dark and light world. This we have demonstrated by originating our exegesis in a Pleistocene landscape and by returning to that aboriginal exegesis through a theology of shamanism.

Shamanism is the act of vision in performance and precedes all subsequent commentary or delimitation. Shamanism is the act of vision in progress. It is that outward state of human apprehension which cannot be shared other than through itself. Either one migrates along the verticality of the flowering rod or one watches as bystander. It is impossible to say what is viewed during the soul's journey through heavens and hells without making those moves oneself. The moves are not rational or political or national. They are learned from an angel-guide, a mentor, and conserved in teachings which recite practice. And they are known only by he who plays on the World Tree. Of course they are important moves, beyond physical sustenance, mere existentialism or even communal welfare. They are the moves in a dance which is founded on all such physical determinants whose purpose is to allow the existence and

expression of human mind, soul and heart. Both functionalist and structuralist approaches to muthologos and dance (dromenon) fail to equal the actual enactment of esoteric performance, as all explanations must fail to equal the highest actual performances of human vision.

I firmly believe that Carlos Casteneda's ongoing instruction under the angel-mentor Don Juan is the blessing of a contemporary world of practiced belief, without all the pretense of understanding that cuts most of our play of the mind short. Vision which is not proposed through reference or even scholarship, but through performance of the dance itself. Casteneda has given us this most recent instance and proof of the flowering soul. We are all capable of that other kind of insight which rearranges our encyclopedic inheritance. But the actual practice of vision, oneself, is a rare occurrence. A splendour which is frequently displaced by wisdom.

These few remarks preface the nexus of very concentrated energy we have now reached. From here one can talk about transmission of knowledge through migration or the great unconscious,—all those "greased slides" down the glassy slopes of a banal Avernus (Facilis descensus Averni,¹⁸ the slippery slopes to damnation,—as the mediaevalist Pound knew them), or recognize an actual and willful center in human visionary life. The World Tree is simply too widely known to be explained in any coherent theory of

intelligence or consciousness. So widely known that it would be meaningless to give examples of its recognition. One might spend one's time more profitably swinging in its branches, like an ape without wisdom, like Jack and Jill. Make it a nursery rhyme.

The vertical Axis of the world is a reality in any human cosmology. Sometimes it is a mountain. Sometimes a ladder or wooden bridge or the branches of a tree. If it is a tree the trunk is usually used to make the standing pillars in a sacred temenos. Such is the case in the Norse universe, where village houses and temples were often built round and enclosing the pillar of Yggdrasil. The pillar whose leaves shed the dew of heaven which is collected in pails by Jack and Jill. Who go up the tree as shamans Near Eastern, Christian and Finno-Ugric shamans:

Shamanism in the strict sense is pre-eminently a religious phenomenon of Siberia and Central Asia.

Shaman: fr. Tungusic sáman; Persian shamen; Chinese sha-men; Sanskrit śramaṇa; Pali samaṇa;

A first definition of this phenomenon will be:
shamanism = technique of ecstasy

Eliade, Shamanism, p. 4.

Olson's essay called "CLEAR, SHINING WATER" is the story of the ascent of the World Tree Yggdrasil or haluppu-tree or Myrrh-tree or Holy Rood Tree. Again it refocuses our growing attention on the flowing nectar which drips as dew from the branches of the weeping axis of the world.

It is the oil of mercy; the food of the gods; nourishment of the soul; substance of eternal vision.

The title of Olson's essay "CLEAR, SHINING WATER"¹⁹ is taken from these informations in Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe, p. 195:

It is said that the ash is sprinkled with aurr from the spring of Mimir; the meaning of this word is uncertain, but de Vries [Jan de Vries, Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte, Berlin, 1957, II, p. 380] takes it to mean clear, shining water. We are told that dew comes from the tree, and that when the hart feeds on its branches, her milk becomes shining mead which never gives out, and is used to provide milk for the warriors in Valhalla. . . . Rydberg made the suggestion that another obscure name given to the tree, Mjgtvithr, should really be Mjgthvithr, 'mead tree,' because of this conception of its life-giving liquid. Here again we have something in common with the milk-yielding tree of the Finno-Ugric peoples, a symbol which must go back ultimately to Mesopotamia, and be of great antiquity.

Ellis Davidson has in mind the story called Grímsmál (Words of Grímnir, who is Odinn):

Heath-Run is the goat in the hall of All-Father
Who bites at Laerad's boughs:
She shall fill the decanter with clear mead,
That drink shall never run dry:

Oak-Thorn the hart in the hall of All-Father
Who bites at Laerad's boughs:
His horns drip into Hvergelmir,
Whence all waters rise.

The Lay of Grímnir trans.
Taylor and Auden.

The picture of two goats feeding on the sacred tree is common on Near Eastern cylinder seals and survives in

Christian iconography (Genesis 22:13). A golden goat found in a Sumerian grave at Ur may have once supported a tray of incense during religious rites, the famous golden goat whose forelegs are up in the wood of the tree, feeding on leaves and giving the dew of incense to man. The mead or dew is present in Old Testament literature as a land of milk and honey, as a showering of mana in the wilderness, and as the fruits which grow on the tree of life and the four rivers which spill out of paradise, pouring out of the fons juventutis, the fountain of youth that lies, like the magical Well of Mimir, at the base of the tree. The dew corresponds with the Vedic Soma and the Mazdeic Haoma. The Hebrew Qabbala speaks of a "Dew of Light" which emanates from the tree of life and by which the resurrection of the dead is brought about,--as in Egyptian theology (Hathor's streams) and Orphic cosmology (tree and fountains of the Other World). Far-Eastern traditions mention the "Tree of Sweet Dew" situated on Mt. Kouen-Luu. In Central America the sacred cactus, peyotl or hicouri grows at the center of the world. In each human world the Tree is central, whose leaves shed divine nectar, food of the gods, food of vision, food of the holy communion. It is within this largest context of visionary experience as fact that we might tolerate a reading of Allegro's The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross, which is otherwise a one-dimensional view of Christianity, as an idiosyncrasy, rather than as an

expression of immemorial practice of beliefs. And we might coincidentally temper any too-quick judgement of what has been loosely termed ARTIFICIAL PARADISE.²⁰ It is well to appreciate just what a damnation of such a paradise means before isolating oneself in the bliss of the only dangerous food that exists,—sugar-coated discourse. Ideas that go quickly to the head and create blind artifice in the bliss of burning certainty. Vision is foremost an entry into a world through the eyes. Not an intoxication of the brain. The food of vision nourishes eyes and heart.

Our scope is much too broad at this juncture. Too obviously evident. But somehow such initial evidences as these are lost in the confusion of discrete differentiations and classified variances that accompany most rational enlightenment. Ecstasy and paradise are rarely aligned in our current understanding. And shamanism is a topic which has been buried with primitivism.

Olson returns us to the ab-original in "Maximus, from Dogtown - II" to an extent that is unparalleled anywhere else in his own work or in the work of any other recent American poetics. The poem leaps beyond all rules and guidelines of any theory of poetics to the very drama that resides at the heart of the human divine, at the center of rhythm. Each word in the poem is positioned in a space which opens like a mystery, a thousand-petaled golden lotus whose bloom unfolds, in an explosion of the

Black Gold Flower—Chrysanthemum—Heart to be turned to
 Black Stone—is the Throne of Creation. Spaced without
 any adjoining syntax or completed field or narration or
 commentary. Words of the speaking logos of the mens mundi.
 Living words whose genetic presence in space, the space
 of the page, informs a cosmos-logos, a world structure.
 The words are each a nucleus of burning energy that
 radiates a life of space to its surrounding universe. The
 poem is on the edge of being preexistent, so much future
 is contained in its origins, those unfolding words, words
 that carry so much matter in fierce contractions. Unlocked
 they charge the page with intelligence. The miracle is
 why the poem holds. How does it stay on this side of
 creation and not fall into oblivion? How do those words
 make one want to know, how can they be known, and how is it
 that they release so much genetic truth once they are known?
 I don't think any vision has ever been more tightly coiled
 as this one, and held. And I say this thinking, for example,
 of the way other great visions have broken in the middle
 of the dream. A broken bundle of mirrors. "Then all the
 charm Is broken, a thousand circlets spread, And each
 mishapes the other." Or have never even gotten off the
 grounds of imitation.

We have met with numerous Christian trees that shed
 the CLEAR SHINING WATER. Mary-tree, Flowering Rod of
 Jesse, bearing the chiefest of all blooms, the Gold Christ,

the promised Oil of Mercy. In addition we might cite pictures of the world that show the Cross burgeoning with vines whose tendrils wind about the altarpiece. Or a Cross whose numerous branches give rest to flocks of white doves. Vines whose buds give bloom to prophets and saints (plates XXVII-XXX). Representations of these Cross-trees are true to the Gospels: John 15:1; Luke 13:19; and Matt. 13:31-2.

The picture we shall emphasize shows the drama which is central to the poem "Maximus, from Dogtown - II," in an iconography which also includes the nature of shamanism which we have developed through a Norse cosmography. Namely Dürer's Crucifixion, a woodcut in which the Cross of the Crucifixion has become the lignum vitae of the Flowering Tree of Life (plate XXXVII). It is a Flowering Tree, a Mary-tree, whose greatest bloom is Christ, the grafted bud fastened with nails to a wild and common root. It is the Rod of Jesse covered with buds which contain the prophets and saints in a lineage leading to the flowering of the Christ Child. In the crown of the tree is a Pelican over its nest (sometimes a Phoenix-bird), the bird of Christ, whose presence we have already observed in the tapestries which illustrate the Song of Songs (plates XXVIa & b). The Pelican is the legendary presence of Christ, because of the belief that it rears its young by plucking flesh and blood from its own breast.

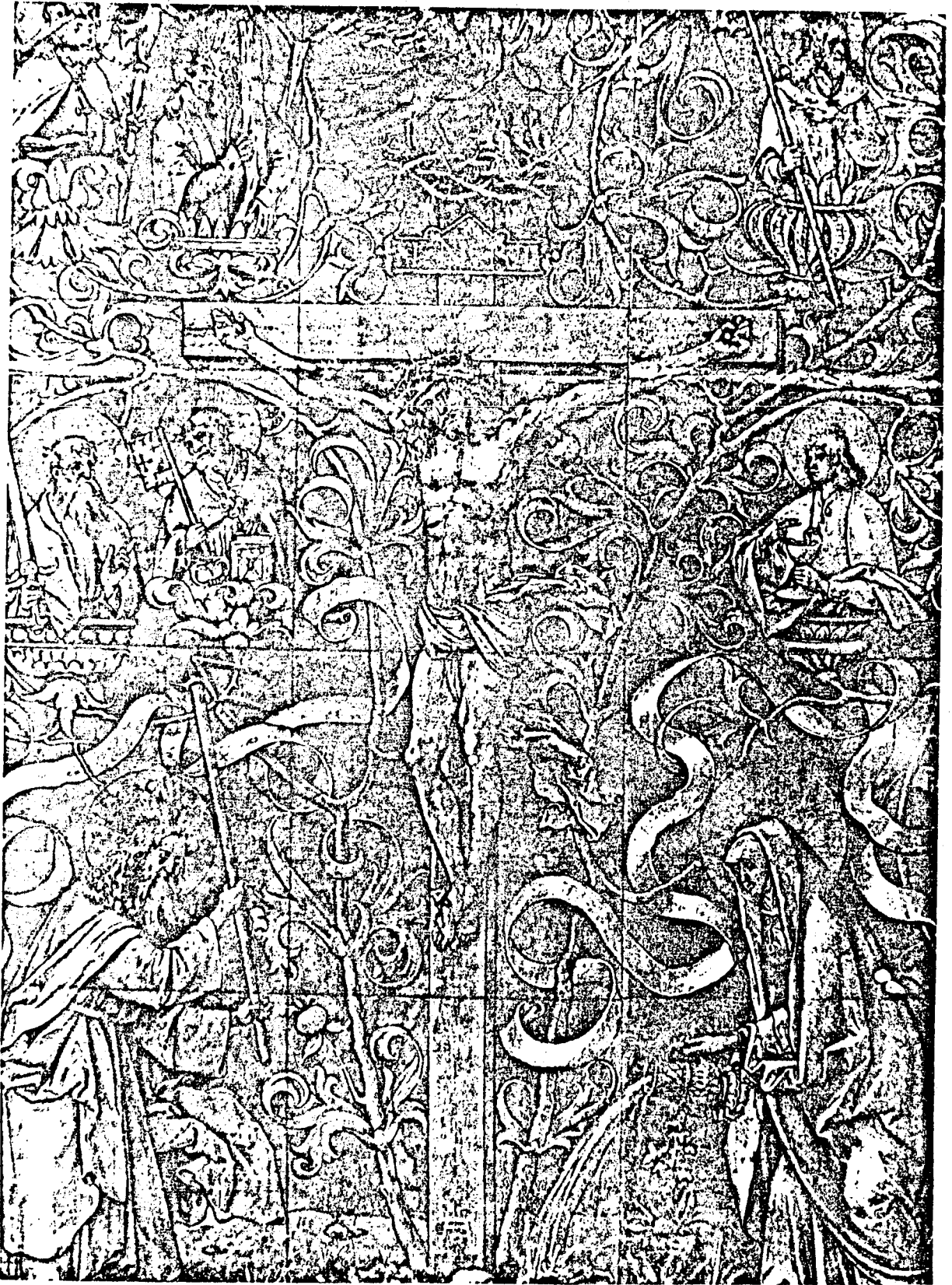


Plate XXXVII. Watering the Gold Flower. Dürer,
"Crucifixion." Musée des Beaux-Arts,
Rennes.

In the Norse cosmology the tree was watered by the Norn maidens. Other Finno-Ugric peoples also cared for the tree whose fruiting buds were believed to be the souls of the reborn dead: who believed "that the gods feasted upon its fruits, and that souls were born among its branches," to quote from Ellis Davidson again. In Dürer's woodcut the World Tree is watered by S. John the Baptist and the Virgin Mother of God (Mater Dei), -- who water the Flower of Creation. This is the Marigold Tree that is watered by Jack and Jill, the people of humility, a common folk, in Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown - II":

up the hill the Water the Water to
make the Flower hot — . . .

(Mary's . . .

is the Black Gold Flower

Without any removal from or denial of the Christian picture of creation, Olson has shifted the weight of that picture far enough to include a wide cosmology of practiced beliefs. Just as Hilda Doolittle forced the Axis Mundi of the Flowering Rod back to include the temple at Luxor and an Egyptian experience of world, so Olson moves Christianity out into a practice of shamanism that is both aboriginal and open, in the sense that it faces the origins of human vision as dogmatic facts in our species of experience.

The tree stands on Mount Dogtown, Hill of Purgatory, at Gloucester, whose summit rises into the third heaven of Terrestrial Paradise, heaven of the moon, where Earth rises highest. A Mount Calvary or Hill of Paradise,—according to the belief that wood of the Cross was hewn out of the barren tree of knowledge (a belief stated in the structure of Dante's vision in Terrestrial Paradise, Purgatorio Cantos 28-33). Constructed on the same Hill which was the location of man's original downfall, where Jack as a member of Adamic manhood, fell down and broke his crown. In Olson's poem the move is a return to innocence in paradise (the ta'wil), where Jack and Jill climb back up the Hill to water and give life to the World Tree, a Christian World Tree, the Tree of the Finno-Ugric shamans. The Tree of the resurrection and the life, whose branches bear flowers that give forth the nectar and nourishment of vision. Jack and Jill water the Tree so they may fetch a pail of its clear, shining mead. They water the Tree until its blossoms create fragrant blooms that shed divine myrrh. The greatest shining mead is produced by the Gold bloom, Christus-anthemon, whose clear water flows like precious nectar down the wood of the Cross at the Crucifixion, water of the resurrection and the life.

Clearly, Jack and Jill climb the Hill just as Dante scales the heights of Mount Purgatory in the Divine Comedy.

They water the dead tree which turns green like the Flowering Rod episode we have studied in the Divine Comedy and H.D.'s War Trilogy. And the picture of human vision is widened to include the Norse Yggdrasil, which sheds CLEAR, SHINING WATER, and a shamanism whose extent in human history we have just opened.

The Christian World Tree, like the Norse Yggdrasil, is of Near Eastern origins. Like Jewish angelology, which is Babylonian-Semitic, derived from the time of the Captivity, the World Tree at the center of the Christian theology also has its earliest sources in a Near Eastern universe of c. 2500 B.C. and earlier. Let us assume the Tree is very ancient and not be too definitive about a chronology. We shall present several pictures of the Near Eastern Tree, dating from c. 2500 B.C., though most are later, Assyrian, after 1000 B.C. However Sumerian precedents are known, such as the upright goat feeding on the flowering tree from Sumerian Ur.

Of specific interest to our study of Olson's "Dogtown - II" poem is the motif of Jack and Jill climbing the Hill to fetch a pail of water. Whereas Dürer's Crucifixion illustrates the watering of the Christian tree, our Near Eastern pictures will show the consequence: the Tree flourishes into living wood, flowers, and Jack and Jill carry a pail to collect its clear, shining nectar, its dew or mead,—a divine food of kingship and life

everlasting. Food of the Christian Communion. Certain other Near Eastern pictures show the earlier humans watering the tree, however it is the result or consequence of such care, the collection of dew in a pail, which we are now going to observe,—where man is truly like a bee, seeking honey dew, the milk of paradise.

Plate XXXVIII is a magnificent relief from the palace of the Assyrian King Assurbanipal II. A winged deity employs a pine cone to scrape sap from a holy pine tree. The fluid was used to anoint Assyrian Kings:

. . . there are effigies of beings who may be identified with genii, belonging to the personnel of the celestial courts (for, like kings, the gods too had their retinues). Sometimes they assume the form of human beings equipped with wings; sometimes that of winged hybrids with human bodies and animal heads. Their functions, it would seem, were always beneficent. Often they are associated with an extremely stylized tree, evidently an object of veneration. The purport of the scene of a genius touching the tree with a pine-cone and holding in his left hand a small pail (situla) is a moot point. Some think it represents the fructification of the palm-tree. We are, however, more inclined to think that the genius is collecting the sacred fluid exuding from the trunk and leaves and that when he plunges the pine-cone into the situla the liquid it contains will be transmuted into holy water. With this water the genius will proceed to sprinkle the king so as, no doubt, to purify him, but above all to immunize him against the influences of evil powers.

Parrot, André, Nineveh and Babylon, (1961), pp. 70-71.

Plates XXXIX, XL and XLI, show variations upon the same cosmic drama around the sacred tree, where griffon angels with pails and pine cones receive the holy dew. Of particular interest

are those examples (plate XLI) which show the deities receiving a flowing stream from the winged sky-god, Assur, who hovers over the sacred tree, an important motif because of the close affinity which it portrays between a Tree of Life and Flowing Streams,—the subject of our next inquiry into Olson's poetics. Plate XLIC again shows two angels who collect the clear shining water in pails from a stream which is poured out of vases that flank a winged disk. Here the streams of the Flowing Vase have completely taken the position of the sacred Tree of Life. A god, Ea, uplifts the winged disk in the space where the Tree was once located.

We might give numerous other, Sumerian or Hittite, examples of the sacred Tree, however we can certainly believe the importance of the Tree in Near Eastern cosmology from these few examples, which in each case portray the sources of the clear, shining water which is the water of the resurrection from death and life everlasting. The water poured from Hathor's vases in the Egyptian sycamore (plate VII). The water beside the Osiris Djed pillar (plate X). Indeed the Egyptian parallel is strikingly meaningful. We present an illustration (plate XLII) which shows a stream of Life poured out of a vase over the image-soul of the deceased. The stream is formed of the signs of Life, the ankh crosses which fall over the queen's body (whose form has been scraped from the wall). This is

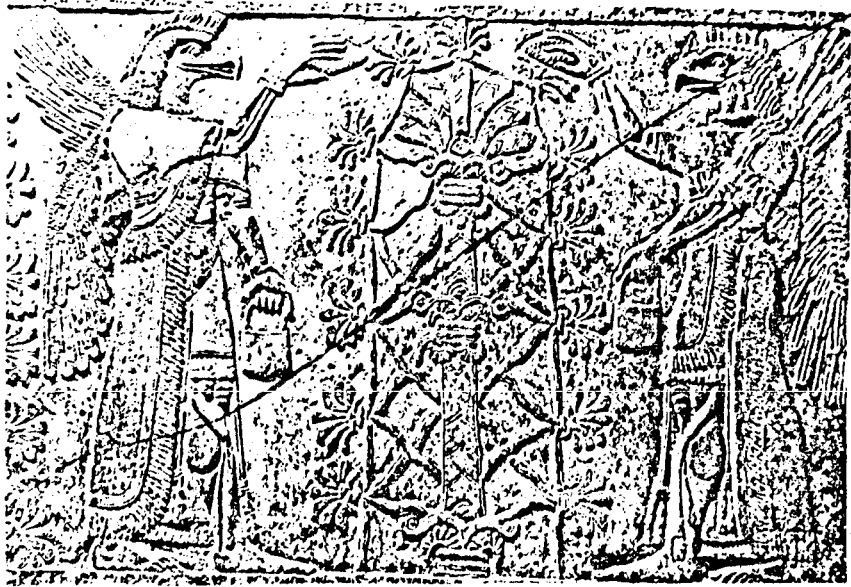
the water which has been collected from the sacred Tree in a pail or situla (of which Egyptian examples have survived), and which was used to give mankind a life everlasting.

Milk or myrrh, nectar of the weeping Tree, the oil of mercy which is gathered in sacred pails by divine Jacks and Jills,—no less than Christ's blood, water of Life shed on the Mary-tree, is collected in the chalice beneath the Cross on the altar during Holy Communion, blood of the Chrysanthemum Flower, divine food of the Black Gold bloom on the Tree of Creation. That is the imagery which lies behind Olson's poetics of the Dogtown - II" poem, a vast tradition of divine foods collected in pails for the nourishment and spiritual replenishment of human vision.

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.



Plate XXXVIII. Collecting Dew from the Sacred Tree.
A Winged Angel-Deity employs a pine
cone to scrape sap from the Holy Tree.
Relief from the palace of the Assyrian
King Assurbanipal II.



a.

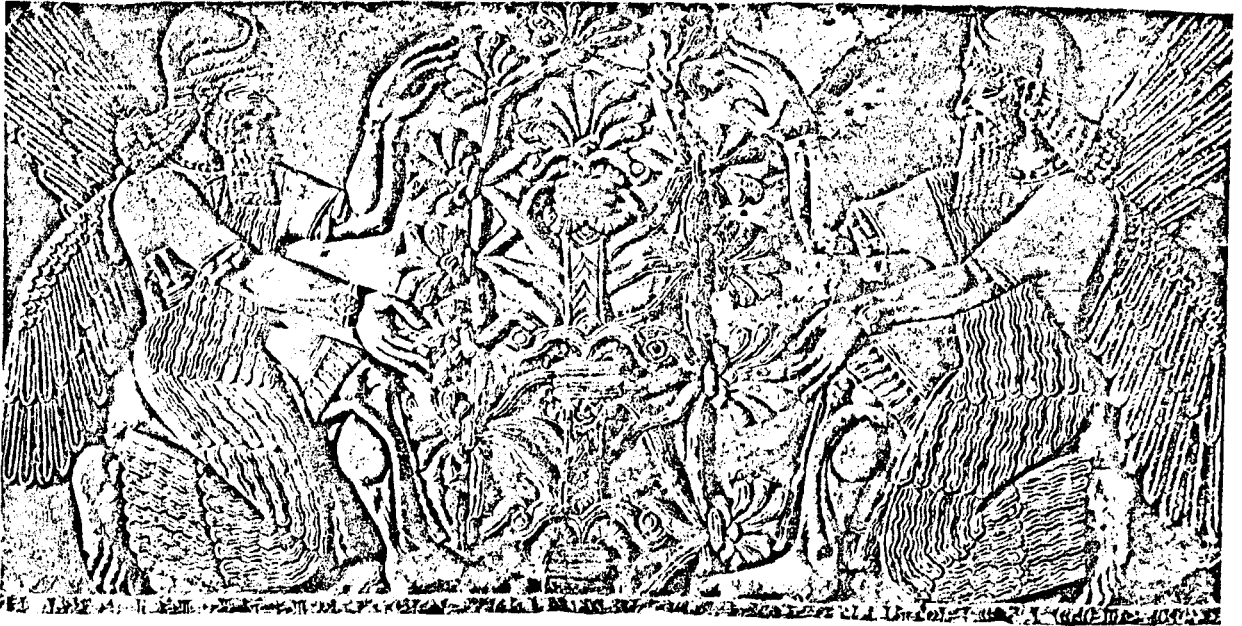
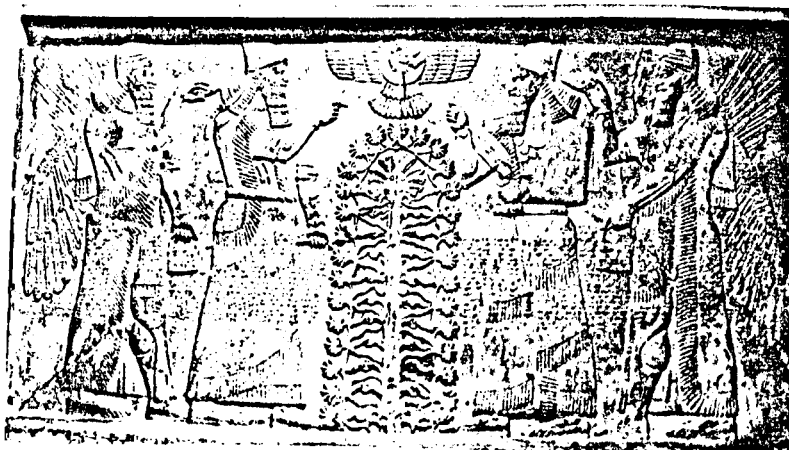


Plate XXXIX. Collecting the Water of the Sacred Tree.
 (a) guarding deities of the Tree. Mansell
 Collection. (b) winged Assyrian deities
 fertilizing the ritual palm. British Museum.

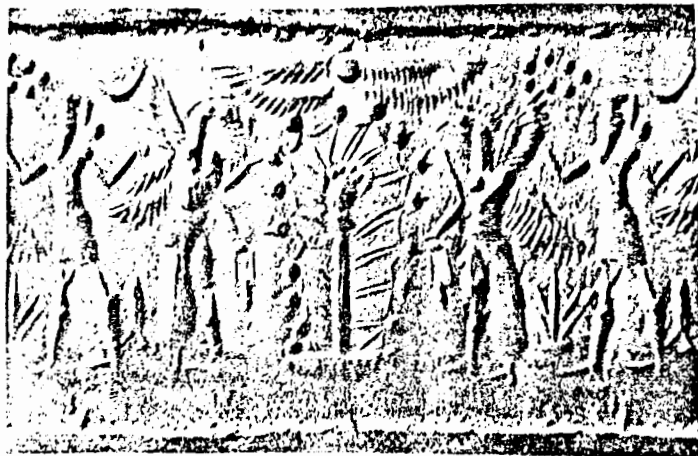


a.



b.

Plate XL. Collecting Water from the Sacred Tree. Assyrian stone reliefs showing winged genii and griffon deities around the Tree. (a) and (b) alabaster mural reliefs from the North West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II in Nimrud. London, British Museum.



a.



b.



c.

Plate XLI. Collecting Water from the Sacred Tree. (a) and (b) are 13th and 9th century Assyrian seals, showing the Cosmic Tree surmounted by celestial wings, from which pour streams into the pails carried by griffin deities. (c) winged deities collecting water that pours from heavenly vessels into earthly ones. Late Assyrian Chaldeony seal, in the British Museum, London.



Plate XLII. Thoth and Horus pour Streams of Life
 (Ankh-Tau crosses) over the image-soul
 of the deceased Queen. Detail of reliefs
 carved on the walls of the temple of Amon
 at Karnak.

8. AQUARIUS: the Flowing Vase and the God with Streams

The "Dogtown - II" poem contains several kinds of time: (1) "the Atlantic Mediterranean Black Sea time" (2) "surface underwater galaxy time". (3) Picean time,— "fish was" and (4) "Aquarian Time"—

LEAP onto
the LAND, the AQUARIAN
TIME

Aquarius lies between Capricorn and Pices. It is the Age we now inhabit.

Briefly, —Black Sea time is the Age of the periplum, navigation along shores. Argonaut time. Surface underwater galaxy time is the Age of instrumental navigation, which began with the compass and continues all the way into our recent technological Astronaut time, and the use of sonar devices to find fish schools off Peru. Picean time is a measure of the Christian Age, a time in which the fish was used as a name for the God who became a man, "who was born as a fish and was sacrificed as a ram, who had fishermen for disciples and wanted to make them fishers of men, who fed the multitude with miraculously multiplying fishes, who was himself eaten as a fish, the 'holier food,' and whose followers are little fishes, the 'pisciculi.'"

(Jung, Aion p. 92). Olson says these Ages have terminated. The AQUARIAN AGE begins in A.D. 1997 (or 3239 A.D., "rill 3000") starting from the star "all3." The Picean Age, of the Ichthys, of fishermen who swim in the living waters with Christ, who cast their nets for the souls of men, is over:—

I walk you paths of lives I'd share with
 you simply to make evident the world
 is an eternal event and this epoch solely
 the decline of fishes, such a decline Bayliss,
 my son calls her his first teacher, suggested
 to her husband Gorton's have an aquarium
 to show what fish look like—or what was already said
 it won't be long, with fish sticks, pictures
 will be necessary on the covers of the T.V. dinners
 to let children know that mackerel is a different
 looking thing than herrings

for Robt Duncan, who understands²¹
 what's going on-written because
 of him, March 17, 1961.

The fish and chip industry will need 155 million pounds of codfish for the U.S. market by the year 1975, to serve 3,250 outlets. Burger Chef, a chain of 1,000 outlets, used over 10 million pounds of codfish sticks in 1971. These are eternal events. The Haddock, once a bountiful bottom fish, has gone extinct on George's Bank. One of the arguments used to continue the whale slaughter is that ten years hence there will be no herring left to feed them anyway. The Pacific herring fleet has already left, via the Panama Canal, to fish in east coast waters. There are no herring left out here. One summer I worked with Mel Stauffer of Alert Bay who in 1952 pursed a single catch of

1262 tons, still the record herring catch in one lay and in all the high school texts. Not that many tons are caught in a year today on the whole Pacific coast.

Today Gloucestermen are being advised to dredge clams, Quohogs, —Queequeg's signature in Moby-Dick. See: "Fish Blocks and Sticks and Portions" in Commercial Fisheries Review March 1971 (whose motto is "They that go down to the Sea in Ships. 1623-1923"²²) for a look at what's going on in the decline of fishes, and "Gloucester Fishermen aided by Women's Group" in the January '71 issue:

Parsons says there are never fewer than 1,200 unemployed in Gloucester, population 27,000. She claims unemployment is tied to decline of fishing industry.

In 1966, the industry was still the third largest employer in the city, paid the third highest wages, . . . and calculations showed that every two jobs in fishing created one job on shore.

Today fish are brought in from South America to the Birdseye fishstick plant at Gloucester, while her own fleet is tied up. International space has ended fishing time on the New England coast.

Aquarian Time is the New Age; under a new star.

It is the Age of a future shining water which must restore the properties of life that once existed in the baptismal bath called a piscina (fish-pond), the life-giving Atlantic-Ocean-waters around Gloucester. Today Olson says: "Turn your back on the sea." Go into the Age of Aquarius.

The new aqua permanens shall flow like Petroleum sapientum out of the Carbon rock of a new church and theology.

WATERED ROCK,— "Dogtown, - I,"—shall begin this Age:

or, as we would say, a new attitude—would appear first as a more or less latent preliminary stage, which would then be followed by the fructifactio, the flower and the fruit.

The image of "immutability in the new rock" bears a striking resemblance to the central idea of philosophical alchemy, the lapis philosophorum, which is used as a parallel to Christ, the "rock", the "stone", the "cornerstone" &c.

The new rock, then, takes the place of Christ, just as the everlasting gospel was meant to take the place of Christ's message. Through the descent and indwelling of the Holy Ghost the $\nu\iota\omicron\tau\tilde{\eta}\zeta$, sonship, is infused into every individual, so that everybody who possesses the Holy Ghost will be a new rock, in accordance with I Peter 2:5: "Be you also as living stones built up".

Jung, Aion "The Sign of the Fishes,"
pp. 72-102.

Where the Age of Pices is characterized by the sign of the Xristus, and the Ixthus motif \rightarrow - \leftarrow of the hostile brothers, Aquarius will issue in the union of opposites. Jung says, "It will no longer be possible to write off evil as the mere privation of good; its real existence will have to be recognized." ²³ Otherwise there shall be no future whatsoever,—

The present age must come to terms drastically with the facts as they are, with the absolute opposition that is not only tearing the world asunder politically but has planted a schism in the human heart. We need to find our way back to the original, living spirit which, because of its ambivalence, is also a mediator and uniter of opposites, an idea that preoccupied the alchemists for many centuries.

Like Hilda Doolittle, Olson is deeply immersed in that astrology of eternal events which holds a foreknowledge of the coming of the next aeon, of Aquarius. He takes Jung's mention of "WATERED ROCK" and "PETROLEUM SAPIENTUM" (oil of wisdom) into a future which has just begun:

Soft soft rock
Merry died by
in the black night
"Dogtown - I" -

Carbon is
Carboniferous
Pennsylvania

Age
under
Dogtown
the stone

the watered
rock Carbon
flowers, rills

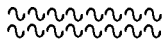
Aquarian Time

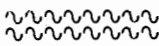
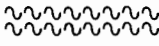
"Dogtown - II".

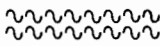
He gives us a recognition of FACTS, oils in a Petroleum Age, a Pennsylvanian Age, with Carbon as the basis of an eternal life. Carbon is the Oil of Mercy, the promised oil of life. Oils which flow out of the new "rock" and "stone" of creation,—COAL love. A Carbon stream of water changed in light to life. It is the new Age of belief which is yet far ahead of our own time; only penetrated by outward minds who foresee its significances shining in the future. The new OIL flowing through creation is the new wine of a future cosmogensis, flowing from the self-action of a newly realized Mary-tree,—

and Each the Father
of Him-Her-Self:

That must remain the topic of our section called "The Mass of Carbon and Light." It is our present task simply to restore an experience of the sign of Aquarius. To rid it of its mumble-jumble pseudo-mystery caught by the gills in the knots of astrology. To get astrology even, back to its Babylonian beginnings and freed of the mediaeval and renaissance false future which has entangled the clarity of its imagery in a gurry of faith and hope. We must look as the magi did, who knew the meaning of a new star over Bethlehem,—wisemen, Babylonian astrologers who came straight from the heartland of Arabic knowledges into a future Europe took so long to acquire herself.

Aquarius is under the sign of the Cup-Bearer and Water-Man, who pours streams of living water between two celestial vases. His ideogram is: ,—the flowing sign of waters. In the Norse Jack and Jill story, the Eddaic Hjuki and Bil (see introductory statement to the section "CLEAR SHINING WATER"), the two children carry water with a bucket on a pole held between them. In all of the Near Eastern images of the Tree of Life which we looked at (section 7, plates XXXVIII & XLI), the winged angels carry pails to catch the clear waters shed by a pine tree or cedar. Here we have Aquarius, the sky-god who resides over the Tree of Life, whose waters are the celestial

dew of creation pouring into the world:  . The streams which flow from the World Tree and the streams which flow from the enthroned and winged sky-god,—in innumerable pictures of a Near Eastern theology centered on the drama before the World Tree,—flow like the ideogram for Aquarius:  . An entire study has been completed on this subject, which Olson uses to reintroduce us to Aquarius. The study is by E. Douglas Van Buren and is called The Flowing Vase and the God with Streams (Berlin, 1933). Much of that study is reincorporated into Henri Frankfort's Cylinder Seals (London, 1939).

I should like to present several pictures of the 'God with Streams.' Accompanied by some general remarks. The flowing streams  issue from the shoulders and breasts of a god or goddess, or pour from the mouth of a sacred vase which is held aloft by the Waterman and Cup-bearer (plates XLIII, XLIV, XLV). They are frequently associated with the dew-water of the World Tree, the nectar which flows out of the weeping branches of the watered Flower that is so carefully guarded and tended in the King's temenos or temple. Often fish swim up through the currents of these streams (plates XLIIIb, XLIV, XLVa & b); swimming up the rivers of the heavens to their origins in the living waters. I need only mention, for comparison, the regeneration that takes place in the Christian piscina, in the font in

which the baptised souls swim like fishes. The Near Eastern Pices in the waters of Aquarius gave rise to the sign of the Christian Ichthys, where fish swim in the waters of life, the waters of Christ.

The fish swimming from above downwards symbolizes the movement of involution of Spirit in Matter; that . . . which swims from below upwards, the movement of evolution of the Spirit-Matter returning to its Unique Principle.

Senard, Le Zodiaque, from a footnote in Jung, Aion, p. 92.

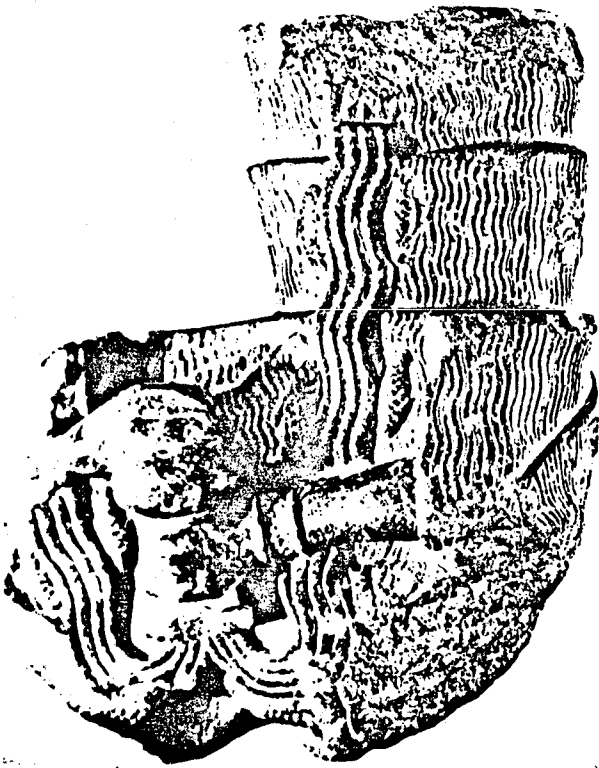
The Near Eastern imagery of World Tree, God of Streams, goats and fish, is now known. Neither Frankfort nor Van Buren has attempted any definitive structuralist or functionalist (aetiological) interpretation of the play of these images. They evidently speak through their own existence in the composition of a world order. That is sufficient until any further gnosis is revealed by archaeologists of tomorrow's morning. Therefore Senard's commentary may satisfy our need for an explanation of these astrological images,—being no explanation at all, but a recalling of the experience of the ta'wil, the return to center and heart in a fedeli d'amore. Let's not lose sight of the verticality of the migrating fish in our world of fish sticks which has boiled all divine life in Try-Works and materialized all spirit into so much oil worth dollars and cents a barrel.

Back to images in pictures of the world:

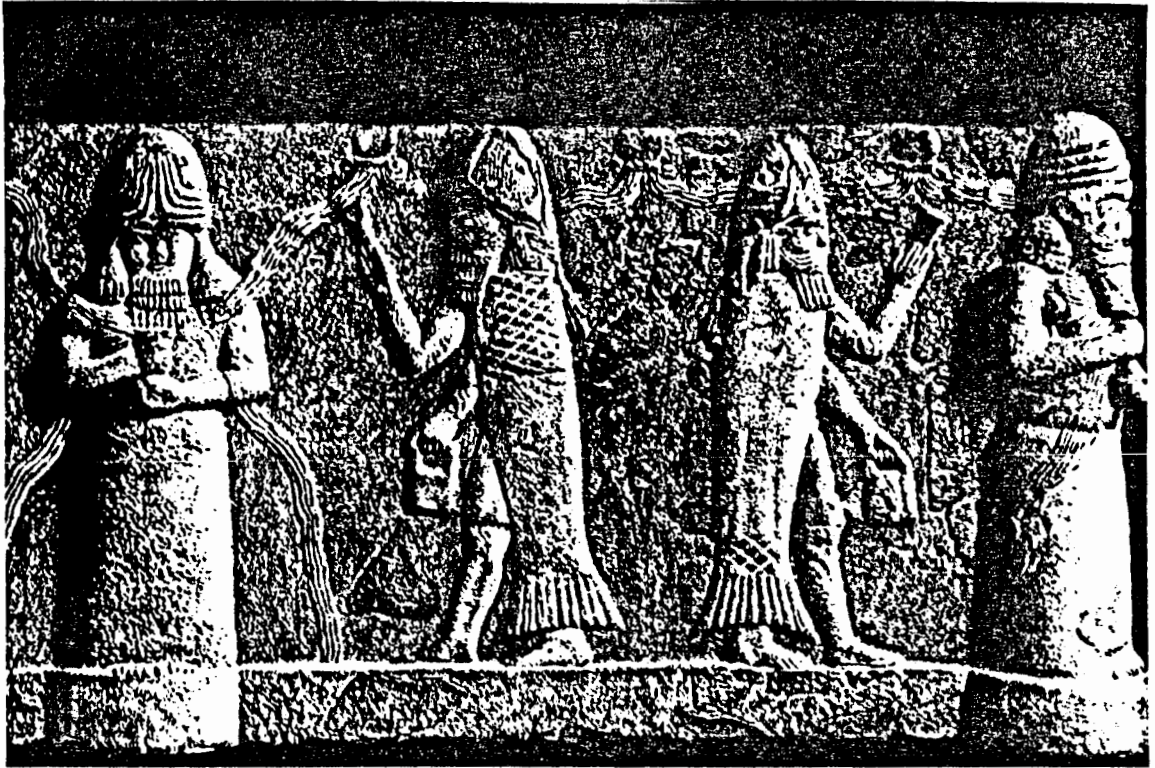
Plate XLIII. The Flowing Vase. (a) Limestone water basin from Te-loh. Paris, Louvre. (b) Limestone fragment of a group of two water-goddesses, showing fish swimming up the streams of the Flowing Vase. Paris, Louvre.



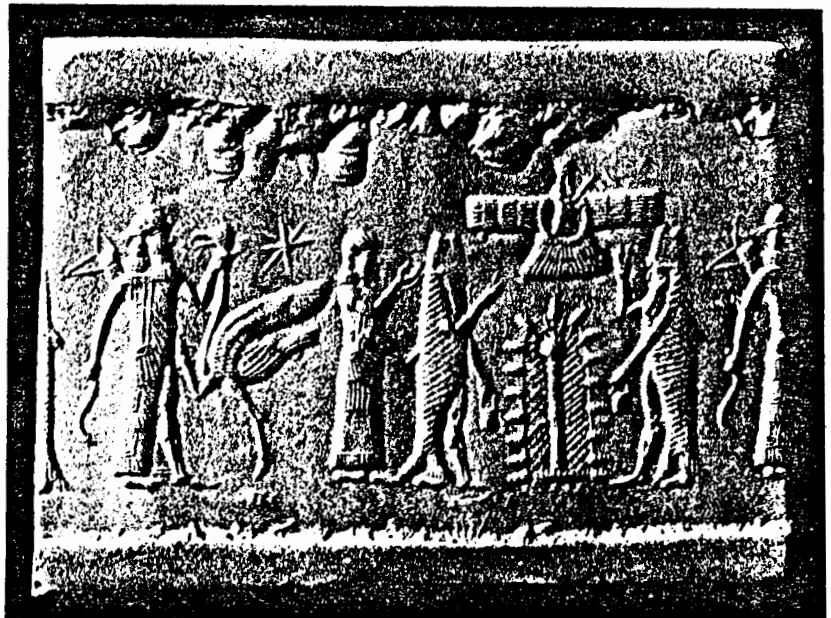
a.



b.



a.



b.

Plate XLIV. Men in Fish-dress (Ichthys-shamans), with pails, collecting water from the God of Flowing Streams. (a) Ritual basin, 8th-7th century B.C., from Assur, now in the British Museum, London. (b) Mesopotamian Cylinder Seal, in the Pierpoint Morgan Collection.



b.



a.



c.

Plate XLV. Deities of the Flowing Vase. (a) 'Investiture of Zimrilim,' wall painting at Mari, 18th century B.C., showing fish swimming in streams of the Flowing Vase and the Sacred Tree growing out of the Vase. (b) Statue of a water-goddess in white stone, from the palace of Mari, showing fish swimming up streams that flow on her dress, from the sacred Vase. (c) Ningizzida leads Gudea towards Enki, God of Streams. Seal of Gudea.



a.



b.

Plate XLVI. God with Streams. (a) Mountain God flanked by Gods of Streams. Limestone cult relief from the well of the Ashur temple at Ashur. (b) The Seal of Adda, showing Marduk and the Zu bird. Dynasty of Akkad, c. 2400 B.C.



a.



b.

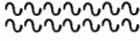


c.

Plate XLVII. Watering the Tree which Grows in the Flowing Vase. (a) detail of Ur-Nammu's stele from Ur, showing the sacred plant watered by an attendant (who is not visible). Philadelphia University Museum. (b) Upper part of a limestone stele. Paris, Louvre. (c) cylinder seal. Akkadian, c. 2300 B.C.

First, a cylinder seal from Frankfort's book, the "Seal of Adda" (plate XLVIb) which shows the contest between Marduk and the Zu bird, after the bird had stolen the tablets of destiny from Enlil. Marduk was chosen to defeat the Zu-god (because of his success against Tiamat). He stands at the left armed with his bow, beside a lion, to prefigure his unconquerable might. The goddess Ishtar stands on the mountain to his right and between them is the four-branched Tree of Life. Six weapons sprout from Ishtar's shoulders above her wings. A god wearing a horned cap rises, like the sun, between the mountains,—the god Addad, a solar deity, who wields a sickle against the Zu-bird that dives towards him. Ea, the God of Streams with fish swimming in his water-falls, gives counsels to the three warring gods, Marduk, Ishtar and Addad, who advance to defeat Zu, just as he did when Marduk went forth against Tiamat. Behind Ea stands his minister Usmu with his two faces.

In a second picture (plate XLVIa) from the city of Ashur, a bearded mountain-god rises holding two sceptres whose leaves are being eaten by two goats. The god's skirt is patterned like the scales which characterize the mountains in the previous cylinder seal. He is dressed in a mountain,—a Maximus figure of the world. Two other branches grow from his waist, bearing three lobes of fruit on each stem. Three pine-cones, under the feet of the

mountain-goats who rear up to nibble the topmost fronds of the two sceptres. Two goddesses flank the mountain deity, each holding two vases whose streams pour down into four vases placed on the ground. The large god of the "mountain robe" and sprays of burgeoning verdure is like the Norse tree Yggdrasil whose leaves are gnawed by hart and goat, who in their turn shed milk or shining water, aurr which is collected in vases and pails by the divine beings of the human world,—dew which is collected in four flowing vases that gather four streams of shining liquid in the stonecut from Ashur. The two flanking goddesses are like Jack and Jill who climb Dogtown Hill, the god of the mountain, to fetch the water  in flowing vases of the Age of Aquarius, the Age of clear vision. Their skirts are rippled like the flowing mead which they pour as water-bearing divinities:

the firmness of the Two Hills
 the firmness of the Two Directions
 the bottom of the vase the rise
 of the power of the Sea's plant

"The River Map and we're done".²⁴

————— this short extract from another of Olson's poems focuses on an Egyptian symbology, where creation also rises out of a flowing vase. Out of the rivers of the world which flow around the base of the Flower of Creation, a flowering stone-papyrus pillar at Luxor. Near Eastern images of a vase holding the potted Tree which sheds streams

(plate XLVII) might also be cited from Frankfort's and Van Buren's texts, however we have gathered enough primary information to get us right to the sources of Aquarius, Water-Pourer, whose rivers spill down Dogtown Hill:

Dogtown is soft
 in every season
 high up on her granite
 horst, light growth
 of all trees and bushes
 strong like a puddle's ice
 the bios
 of nature in this
 park of eternal
 events is a sidewalk
 to slide on, this
 terminal moraine:

"Dogtown - I".

"Life spills out." The "Dogtown - I" poem is about "subter-
anean and celestial primordial water" that streams over a
 post-glacial land studded with boulders left by the ice.
 Merry drinks of those streams of the World Tree at the sources
 of creation. He is born under the pulque sign, under the
 cactus-tree that grows at the Center of the World in an
 Aquarian Age. "Four hundred gods of drink alone" feed on
 those shining streams as they watch Merry struggle against
 a glacier-bull. Fish swim through the flowing streams of
pulque that wrap nine times around the Earth, leaning over
 like the goddess Nut whose breasts let fall the milk of
 creation down on the wet lands of the Dogtown Commons.
 Taurus and Pices and Nut and all the other sky gods are
 gathered in the celestial drama on the Hill at Gloucester.

The poem is a vision of creation; an ecstatic vision where men are mountains, drunk with a shining vision of a City on a Hill, who war against ice to achieve their dream.

The mountain-god who rises with goats and flowering sceptres out of the rivers of the world in our Ashur stonecut is the figure of Maximus in Olson's poetics:

My point is, the end of myself,
happens, on the east side (Erechthonius)
to be the beginning of another set
of circumstance. The road,
which has gone around me, swings
just beyond where Jeremiah Millet had his house
and there's a big rock about ends my being,

overlooking
'the town'
sitting there like
the Memphite lord of
all Creation

"at the boundary of the mighty world" ..²⁵

The landscape in Maximus IV,V,VI is all Aquarian, flowing with streams through marsh lands. Apsu and Enki and the sweet Abyss marsh of a human world, all awash with the clear shining waters that are shed by the Flower that glows over Dogtown. Jack and Jill are the gods of the Aquarian Age who fetch water that is spilled over Petroleum rocks, rocks whose oils hold the slow heat of life burning forever. Oil streams and freshwater marsh streams whose ooze keeps the bios alive. They are Cup-Bearers, whose chalices or pails are placed beneath the Tree of Life on the altar of Creation. They catch Mary's dew, Yggdrasil's

dew, the white fluid of the weeping sycamore and resin of myrrh. The white milk of the Pulque cactus. They are the keepers of the flowing vase and the gods of the streams.

9. Drum and Drum Stick. The Song and Dance of a Poetics.

Shamanism,—technique of ecstasy. He who possesses rhythm possesses the world. Of rhythm is image. Of image is knowing. Of knowing there is a construct.²⁶ These are words Olson received in a dream, two years before he wrote the "Projective Verse" essay. Out of the dream emerged a poetics rooted to the rhythm of the syllable in the line:

the HEAD, by way of the EAR, to the SYLLABLE

The syllable is the heart of the splendour, drum beat, of rhythm, unfolding in the line:

the HEART, by way of the BREATH, to the LINE

A dance and song of the intellect. PLAY of a mind we are after,—"Projective Verse." The word is image. But the acquisition of same is as long as I am old,—"ABCs."

Above all else one sees in Olson's theory of poetics a breathless dancer obeying rhythm he forms into motion of a line. I am interested in this dancer whose figure precedes our understanding of the "Projective Verse" essay. Poetry is obviously not a matter of making and obeying rules. Olson was dancing before, long before he wrote on projective verse. He had already learned how to move by the time he was ready to set the method in print. Given four cues, "rat," "black," "cabbage," "rust," he shows us his rhythm:

The word forms
 on the left: you must
 stand in line. Speech
 is as swift as synapse
 but the acquisition of same
 is as long
 as I am old

r a t on the first floor landing of the three-decker
 (grey)

b l a c k eat a peck of storage batteries 'fore
 I die

c a b b a g e my friend Cabbage, with whom to bake potatoes up
 Fisher's Hill

r u s t in the bed of Beaver Brook — from the junk in it
 And the iris ("flags", we called 'em)
 And the turtle I was surprised by

up to last night's dream, . . .

one sd:

of rhythm is image
 of image is knowing
 of knowing there is
 a construct

"ABCs I" written 1953.²⁷

Poetry is how well you sing and dance to the rhythm
 given in a view or vision of the world. Let's be dogmatic.
 Poetry doesn't grow out of a reading of any schooled imagist
 or projective program. It pre-exists all theory of the "local"
 or any other hard "fact." The nearest I have been able to
 come to the root of the magic rod which flowers in some
 hands is in this business of shamanism,—one lets the rhythms
 be heard and dances them in words, trying to be as good as

one is able, until some performer comes along who is so good every one must stop to watch. There is no other referential aesthetic, cause, ideology or limit that can explain what happens when a man's ability makes the dance of word and line come alive again. Rhythm is the only source, given the life of a drum-beat on a skin-covered log. Man has always danced. The rhythm is there, in the beginning. Certain dancers show just how much rhythm there is. When he uses words to mark the rhythm of dance in a line of script we call the best performer a poet.

Olson proves that the dance has nothing to do with any definite topic, history, maps, whatever. He can dance any time. He dances "r u s t" beyond the speech of my own breath; and before any lesson on verse. In the "ABCs" poem we watch the secret laws of the poet's dream displayed in fine feathery, strutting on a hollow log like a proud bird. It is the secret behind Olson's verse which so many readers of "Projective Verse" have failed to grasp. Poetry is born out of a negative capability in the sense that one either has rhythm or doesn't. It can't be learned by obeying certain laws. The EAR is given, trained, but not forced to HEAR.

The dream is simply a wing of eagle feathers worn on the shoulders to lift the feet on a drum beat. I have a friend at Onion Lake, Saskatchewan, who asks for eagle feathers so he can compete in west coast Indian dances and

win. The feathers are "cause" why he dances so well. These days he uses substitute, dyed turkey tail-feathers, purchased at the grocery store, eagles have become so scarce.

Olson received his dream from the terrestrial angels of the left hand, those who obey and act. They are called the Noble Scribes. The dream-angel was Ezra Pound, who appeared as guide.²⁸

It would be presumptuous to explain and pretend to understand the origins of creation otherwise. One learns this when trying, oneself, to perform the dance, when knowledge is useless unless it appears out of rhythm. When rhythm is all there is and everyone's watching. Then the secret of resource must appear like eagle or prairie chicken, whose tail moves in ritual of feather headdress. I have two turkeys on the farm at Fort Langley, a pair, both Jersey Buffs, brown with white tips, who strut in the yard. Robert Creeley raised prize chickens as a young man. They are the birds who possess rhythm, with eagle and angel of the left. They teach how to move on the syllable.

Where does rhythm come from? It is made out of the trunk of the World Tree, hollowed into a drum. Ecstasy and dance come from the wood that stands at the heart and center of creation.

In Christianity there exists a legend that Christ was strung taut as a wire across the branches of the Cross, and the crucifixion made an instrument of the Tree that

allowed man to listen to the music of creation for the first time. A sort of aeolian harp fashioned out of the crown of the dead and aged wood of the Tree, whose branches finally produced the spirit of music.

In the Norse world the hanged god, Odin, was god of poets, he who gave one eye so that he might taste of the waters in the Well of Mimir, waters which the Norn maidens used to preserve the life of the World Tree. In the section of the Eddaic Hávamál called Rúnatal's Tháttr,—"Rune Language of the All-Father,"—Odin hangs nine nights on the windswept tree to learn the musical language of the runes:

I learned nine mighty songs
from the famous son
of Bolthor, father of Bestla,
and I got a drink
of the precious mead,
I was sprinkled with Othrerir

Learned I grew then, lore-wise,
Waxed and throve well
Wood from wood gave words to me
Deed from deed gave deeds to me ^{29a}

Odin then sings the nine songs into the world of men. He reads the runes; "grasps" them, chants them and tells a poet-scribe to keep them, carved in stone:

Know how to cut them, know how to read them,
know how to stain them, know how to prove them,
know how to evoke them, know how to send them. ²⁹

This ritual of attachment to the tree engrafts the hanged god to an everlasting lore. He is filled with the

mead of the Tree which flows into his veins,—flowering in a spoken poetry. Turville-Petre translates the moment of ecstasy, after Odin has tasted of the mead, in this manner:—

Then I began to be fruitful
and to be fertile
to grow and to prosper;

one word sought
another word from me;
one deed sought
another deed from me³⁰

The American Plains Indians attached their young men to the Tree of the Sun Dance, with bone shafts thrust through pectoral muscles, and hung them above the drum-beat of the dance around the World Tree,—grafting youth to the tribal man; making them speaking branches of the Tree. I have witnessed the Sun Dance of the Cree peoples at Onion Lake, but take this following description of the dance from Black Elk of the Oglala Sioux:

First a holy man was sent out all alone to find the waga chun (rustling cottonwood, speaking tree), the holy tree that should stand in the middle of the dancing circle. Nobody dared follow to see what he did or hear the sacred words he would say there. And when he had found the right tree, he would tell the people, and they would come there singing, with flowers all over them. Then when they had gathered about the holy tree, some women who were bearing children would dance around it, because the Spirit of the Sun loves all fruitfulness. After that a warrior, who had done some very brave deed that summer, struck the tree, counting coup upon it; and when he had done this, he had to give gifts to those who had least of everything, and the braver he was, the more he gave away.

After this, a band of young maidens came singing, with sharp axes in their hands; and they had to be so good that nobody could say anything against them, or that any man had ever known them . . .

The maidens chopped the tree down and trimmed its branches off. Then chiefs, who were the sons of chiefs, carried the sacred tree home, stopping four times on the way, once for each season, giving thanks for each.

Now when the holy tree had been brought home but was not yet set up in the center of the dancing place, mounted warriors gathered around the circle of the village, and at a signal they all charged inward upon the center where the tree would stand, each trying to be the first to touch the sacred place; and whoever was the first could not be killed in war that year.

The next day the tree was planted in the center by holy men who sang sacred songs and made sacred vows to the Spirit. And the next morning nursing mothers brought their holy little ones to lay them at the bottom of the tree, so that the sons would be brave men and the daughters the mothers of brave men. The holy men pierced the ears of the little ones, and for each piercing the parents gave away a pony to some one who was in need.

The next day the dancing began, and those who were going to take part were ready, for they had been fasting and purifying themselves in the sweat lodges, and praying. Then each would lie down beneath the tree as though he were dead, and the holy men would cut a place in his back or chest, so that a strip of rawhide, fastened to the top of the tree, could be pushed through the flesh and tied. Then the man would get up and dance to the drums, leaning on the rawhide strip as long as he could stand the pain or until the flesh tore loose.

John Niehardt, Black Elk Speaks (1932).

Somehow heat and pain in midsummer fire out poetry. I don't know how. I haven't faced that hot tree myself. I am not a poet. I only get tastes of the mead once in a while. I am not fully grafted to the vision. However I have enough sense to realize what is going on around the World Tree, Yggdrasil, or a rustling cottonwood on the Saskatchewan plains. The Tree is the flowering rod whose branches are speaking buds. It is the Tree of the Logos. Each man who hangs himself from its boughs is an Odin, sprinkled with mead, called Othrerir, the drink of clear, shining water. Othrerir is the blood and sap of the World Tree, collected in the chalice and in the pails of watermen, Jacks and Jills, who carry the dew down the hill. It is the mead of poetry and visionary ecstasy, sometimes called the dew of heaven, shed by the Tree that stands at the center of the world.

There is yet another Norse legend that when the Aesir and Vanir made peace, they took a vessel and all spat into it and from the contents they created the wise Kvasir, who was killed by two dwarfs and his blood mixed with honey dew to make a rich mead. Whoever drank the mead could write poetry and speak words of wisdom. The dwarfs then killed Suttung's son, who took vengeance payment by accepting the precious mead. The gods of Aesir wished to win the liquid mead back from Suttung's giantland and Odin

was elected to perform the task. He hired himself to the giant Baugi, Suttung's brother, and demanded as wage a drink of the shining water. Then he asked Rat-Tusk, the squirrel, to bore a hole into Suttung's mountain barrow and he crawled through as a snake, stole Othrerir and flew as an eagle back to Ásgard, house of the Aesir. "I come back, bringing to Ásgard / Othrerir, the sacred draught." Odin spat out all the mead he had swallowed in Suttung's courts, filling vessels with flowing streams of the shining liquid dew. Odin is the god of streams and of the flowing vase in the Norse world. The vases hold all of the godly dew in the land of the Aesir, except for a few drops which Odin spilled as he flew to Ásgard,—the poet's share, which is given to men. Pulque or moly or white myrrh. Soma or haoma, the light and heat of mind. Foods of the poetaster.³¹

In early chapters of our work we showed the continuous development of a milk-yielding tree, sacred to Inanna and Hathor. Ellis Davidson in Gods and Myths of Northern Europe (pp. 191-3) says of Yggdrasil:—"There are hints too of a tree which provided food and drink for the gods, an idea which probably came from the Near East in the first place," . . . and "The main lines can probably be traced to ancient Iranian and Mesopotamian religions." In a footnote to these passages she refers to Gertrude Levy's discussion of the milk-yielding tree in The Gate of Horn.

In our own study we have thoroughly traced the rise of a theology whose imagery derives from Iranian Marsh-arab existence in a swampland where reed-bundles, the pillars of a cattle byre, shed milk, the original dew of life. The World Tree in Mesopotamian times c. 7,000 B.C. must have been represented by a bundle of reeds held by a shaman (trees being non-existent in marshes), no less than the ladder ++++++ in his hands became a representation of the Tree throughout Northern Europe and Asiatic Siberia. The Christian Tree of the Cross also comes out of this knot of beliefs, a center which has lasted to our own day. The shamanistic esotericism in early Jewish apocrypha is certainly evident in the visions of Baruch, Moses and Enoch,— who rise to apprehend the World Tree in paradise of the third heaven, its roots descending to the Sheol-Inferno under black earth and its leaves rising up into the celestial heavens. Shamanism continues in the history of ecstatic dream visions, Nebuchadnezzar's, Jesse's, and the later visions of Tyndale, Alberic, Perpetua &c. In every one, including Dante and Blake, the author has tasted of the dew, the oil of mercy, the oil of light that enkindles vision. Oil shed by the Tree of Life.

Jesse's ladder rises out of a well. The Well of Mimir existed at the foot of Yggdrasil. The Near Eastern, Sumerian Tree, called the haluppu-tree, perhaps a willow, was nurtured by the waters of the Euphrates. In the

Christian story the Cross virtually grows out of the piscine well, the baptismal font, a well which miraculously cures all those who have the fortune of falling into its deep waters.

Even more important is the structural principle of these imagined trees which are always surrounded at their bases by a serpent and crowned by a heavenly bird. The bird in Yggdrasil is an eagle and the serpent a creature called Nídhögg. The Zu-bird built its nesting site in the crown of the haluppu-tree while the serpent "who knows no charm" laid its eggs around the trunk. In Biblical Genesis the tree is associated with a serpent, while the bird, who is Christ, reappears in the New Testament. Sumerian and Near Eastern motifs have obviously spread into Norse and Judeo-Christian mythologies. On the advice given by Ellis Davidson and Gertrude Levy, Olson finds the precise connection between these Near Eastern and European lores vividly presented in a descent legend which is transcribed and translated in Samuel Noah Kramer's Sumerian Mythology,— a legend called "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Nether World," which may actually be a continuation of the Gilgamesh cycle of myths.

"Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Nether World" is a myth dating from the third millenium B.C., pieced together from fragments uncovered at Nippur and Ur. In the Gilgamesh Epic proper, Enkidu was killed by the wrath of Ishtar

(Inanna). Gilgamesh travelled far to the West in search of the plant of immortality to raise his friend from the realm of death. In the present myth Gilgamesh again attempts to resurrect his companion from the Nether World.

The haluppu-tree originally stood on the banks of the Euphrates. The South Wind tore at it, root and crown, while the river choked it with floods. So Inanna, queen of heaven, took the tree in her hand and planted it in her garden at Erech (at the time of the establishment of Dynasty I of Erech in the King List; Gilgamesh King c. 2700 B.C.). She planned to make of its wood a chair for herself, a throne in her temple of Eanna at Erech (Uruk). The tree grew big, but Inanna was unable to cut it down because a snake had made its nest around the trunk and the Zu-bird had placed its young in the tree's crown. Inanna shed bitter tears, and Gilgamesh, who was the Sumerian King of Erech, overheard her weeping complaints. With his "ax of the road" he slew the serpent and Zu-bird fled with her young in fright. The men of Erech cut down the tree and presented it to Inanna:

What did Inanna do? Of the base of the haluppu-tree she made an object called the pukku (probably a drum), and of its crown she made another object called the mikku (probably a drumstick), and gave them both to Gilgamesh. Follows a passage of twelve lines describing Gilgamesh's activity with these two objects whose meaning I am still unable to penetrate, although it is in perfect shape.

The story fades on crumbled clay and becomes intelligible again with the statement that "because of the cry of the young maidens" (votaries of Inanna at Erech) the pukku and mikku fell into the Nether World through a hole in the ground. Gilgamesh put in his hand to retrieve them but was unable to reach them; he put in his foot but was unable to reach them. And so he cried with fallen face:

My pikku, who will bring it up from the Nether World?
 My mikku, who will bring it up from the face of the
 Nether World?

Enkidu volunteers to go for his master's drum and drumstick. He descends but the Nether World seized him there and would not let him return to the earth. He was killed just as he died of a fever in the Gilgamesh Epic. Gilgamesh cried out to Enlil, the leading Sumerian deity who lived in Nippu:

O Father Enlil, my pikku fell into the nether world,
 My mikku fell into the nether world;
 I sent Enkidu to bring them up to me, the nether
 world has seized him.
 In battles where heroism is displayed he has not fallen.
 The nether world has seized him.

Enlil cannot help. Gilgamesh travels to Enki, water-god of the city of Eridu, for help. Enki orders the sun-god, Utu, to open a hole to the nether world and allow Enkidu to ascend to earth. Enkidu rises; he appears before Gilgamesh. Master and servant embrace and Gilgamesh questions Enkidu about what he saw in the nether world.

Enkidu tells him about the shades that fly through the dark caverns of death, just as Odysseus later will speak with Tiresias through a hole in the ground about the inhabitants in death's realm. Here the poem ends.

Most important: the descent and ascent between this and an Other World is made along the trunk axis and root branches of the haluppu-tree; shaman's bridge between earth, heavens and hells. The drum and drumstick are made of the haluppu-tree and played for the dance that allows travel on the bridge between earth and the Other World. It is these primitive modes of ecstasy and recital which have forced themselves on Olson's intelligence. In a poem published in the volume called In Cold Hell In Thicket, Olson asks who will go down to raise up the rhythm, song and dance, of his own wooden drum and lute. Who will retrieve the instruments of his own craft, poetry, now that drum and lute lie in cold hell, silent after the death of Olson's wife, Beth. Who will perform the shaman's travel across the bridge to the nether world. Who will bring back the rhythm out of which image and knowing is grasped. The poem is called "La Chute," and I am indebted to Mr. Stan Persky for having given the connection with the story of Enkidu's descent:

LA CHUTE

my drum, hollowed out thru the thin slit,
carved from the cedar wood, the base I took
when the tree was felled

The Shaman's Drum

The drum has a role of the first importance in shamanic ceremonies. Its symbolism is complex, its magical functions many and various. It is indispensable in conducting the shamanic seance, whether it carries the shaman to the "Center of the World," or enables him to fly through the air, or summons and "imprisons" the spirits, or, finally, if the drumming enables the shaman to concentrate and regain contact with the spiritual world through which he is preparing to travel.

It will be remembered that several initiatory dreams of future shamans included a mystical journey to the "Center of the World," to the seat of the Cosmic Tree and the Universal Lord. It is from a branch of this Tree, which the Lord causes to fall for the purpose, that the shaman makes the shell of his drum. The meaning of this symbolism seems sufficiently apparent from the complex of which it is a part: communication between sky and earth by means of the World Tree, that is, by the Axis that passes through the "Center of the World." By the fact that the shell of his drum is derived from the actual wood of the Cosmic Tree, the shaman, through his drumming, is magically projected into the vicinity of the Tree; he is projected to the "Center of the World," and thus can ascend to the sky.

Seen in this light, the drum can be assimilated to the shamanic tree with its notches, up which the shaman symbolically climbs to the sky. Climbing the birch or playing his drum, the shaman approaches the World Tree and then ascends it. The Siberian shamans also have their personal trees, which are simply representatives of the Cosmic Tree; . . . This whole series of facts, combined with the relations already noted between the shaman and the ceremonial birches, shows the intimate connection between the Cosmic Tree, the shaman's drum, and ascending to the sky.

The next step is "animating the drum" by sprinkling its shell with alcoholic spirits.

The ceremony for "animating the drum" is of the highest interest. When the Altaic shaman sprinkles it with beer, the shell of the drum "comes to life" and, through the shaman, relates how the tree of which it was a part grew in the forest, how it was cut, brought to the village, and so on. The shaman then sprinkles the skin of the drum and, "coming to life," it too narrates its past.

We will only note that the drum depicts a microcosm with its three zones—sky, earth, underworld—at the same time that it indicates the means by which the shaman accomplishes the break-through from plane to plane and establishes communication with the world above and the world below. For, as we have just seen, the image of the sacrificial birch (= World Tree) is not the only one. We also find the rainbow; the shaman mounts to the higher spheres by climbing it. We find, too, the image of the bridge, over which the shaman passes from one cosmic region to another.

The iconography of the drum is dominated by the symbolism of the ecstatic journey. This is why the drum is called the "shaman's horse" (Yakut, Baryut). The Altaic drum bears a representation of a horse; when the shaman drums, he is believed to go to the sky on his horse. Among the Baryut, too, the drum made with a horse's hide represents that animal. According to O. Mänchen-Helfen, the Soyot shaman's drum is regarded as a horse and is called Khamu-at, literally "shaman's horse" All these beliefs, images, and symbols in relation to the "flight," the "riding," or the "speed" of shamans are figurative expressions for ecstasy, that is, for mystical journeys undertaken by superhuman means and in regions inaccessible to mankind.

The idea of the ecstatic journey is also found in the name that the shamans of the tundra Yurak give to their drum: bow or singing bow. . . . The shamanic drum is distinguished from all other instruments of the "magic of noise" precisely by the fact that it makes possible an ecstatic experience. . . . it was musical magic (rhythm, not noise) that determined the shamanic function of the drum.

The proof is that, even where the drum is replaced by a bow—as among the Lebed Tartars and certain Altains—what we have is always an instrument of magical music, not an antidemonic weapon of noise; there are no arrows, and the bow is used as a one-stringed instrument.

The problem of the origin and dissemination of the shamanic drum in North Asia is extremely complex and far from being solved. Several things point to its having been originally disseminated from South

Asia. It is indubitable that the Lamaist drum influenced the shape not only of the Siberian but also of the Chuckchee and Eskimo drums.

The name of the Koryak shaman is eñeñalan, that is, a "man inspired by spirits." And it is the spirits who determine a shaman's career; no one would become an eñeñalan of his own free will.

The shaman's costume itself constitutes a religious hierophany and cosmography; the costume is donned after many preliminaries and just on the eve of a shamanic trance. The candidate is expected to see in a dream the exact place where he will find his future costume, and he himself goes to look for it. Then he buys it from the relatives of the dead shaman, paying (among the Birartchen) a horse for it.

Eliade, Shamanism, pp. 168-180.

10. Horse Travel to an Otherworld

I would first like to present the opening passages of the Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad, translated by R.E. Hume. They propose the possibility of riding on the back of a world order:

The world as a sacrificial horse

Oṃ! Verily, the dawn is the head of the sacrificial horse; the sun, his eye; the wind, his breath; universal fire, his open mouth. The year is the body (ātman) of the sacrificial horse; the sky, his back; the atmosphere, his belly; the earth, the under part of his belly; the quarters, his flanks; the seasons, his limbs; days and nights, his feet; the stars, his bones; the clouds, his flesh. Sand is the food in his stomach; rivers are his entrails. When he yawns, then it lightens. When he shakes himself, then it thunders, Voice, indeed, is his voice.

Verily, the night arose for him as the sacrificial vessel which stands behind. Its place is the western sea. Verily, these two arose on both sides of the horse as the two sacrificial vessels.**

Becoming a steed, he carried the gods; a stallion, the Gandharvas; a courser, the demons; a horse, men. The sea is his place.

The eastern direction is his head. Yonder one and yonder one (northeast and southeast) are the fore quarters. Likewise the western direction is his tail. Yonder one and yonder one (northwest and southwest) are the hind quarters. South and north are the flanks. The sky is the back. The atmosphere is the belly. The earth is the chest. He stands firm in the waters. He who knows this, stands firm wherever he goes.

The Aśva-medha, 'Horse-sacrifice,' was the most elaborate and important of the animal sacrifices in ancient India. The vessels ** used to hold the libations at the Aśva-medha are the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean.

Olson used these opening passages of the Bṛihad-
Āraṇyaka Upanishad in a poem called "Places and Names."
However our main purpose is to introduce the vehicle of a
ride into a visionary Other World. The horse is the widespread
experience of that ride. At the close of the last section,
#9, the place of the drum / horse in shamanic ecstasy was well
evidenced, an experience which became a widespread phenomenon
in practiced belief throughout India, China, west to Scan-
danavia and America (while shamanism travelled northeast
to Pacific northwestern America). Presently we shall look
at the northern image of the horse called Yggdrasil, but
first we shall try to enter into the experience of a horse-
culture, none of which is better preserved than the memory
of the horse in America. So we are able to get home, to
the so-called "West," far beyond the outermost limits of
"culture" and into the reins of a familiar rhythm. Here we
may find we have been practicing the center of vision over
the last centuries while denying that fact in order to
appear educated. When what we've been after is still alive
in the "West." Olson tells us we no longer have to be
estranged from the familiar.

The American thing shall come down to earth. The
horse shall be the ladder or bridgeway into ecstasy,
vehicle of a run into another world. At the end of the
last section we began to witness the Tree change into drum,
drumstick and horse. The shaman rides rhythm in his flight

across the skies. He rides the beat of the drum as though it were a horse carrying his weight across the plains. The Tree is a horse, the movement of ecstasy into Other Worlds.

The association of man and horse arose in the steppelands of Asia, in the heartlands of shamanism:

Upon most maps of Asia will be found a region just east of the Caspian Sea labeled the Kirghiz Steppes. If the map also delineates the general topography, it will show a great stretch of plain which is in the main grassland, varying in fertility from arid spots in Turkestan, on the south, to rich open prairie-like lands in southwestern Siberia. Somewhere in this great area, at some remote period, horse culture arose.

Wissler, Man and Culture, quoted in Webb, The Great Plains p. 55.

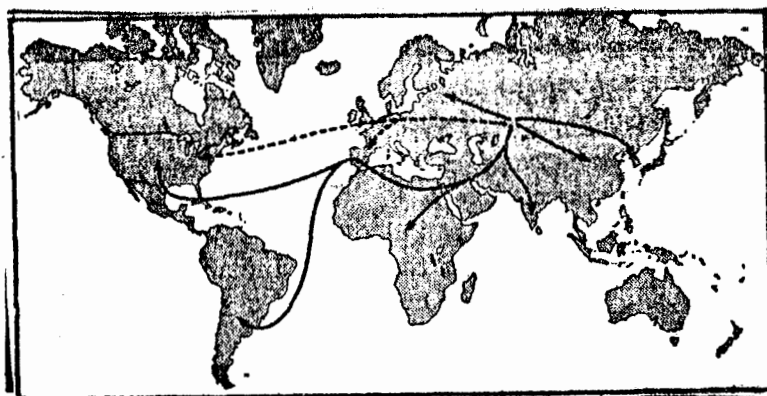


Figure 4. Spread of the horse complex.

From this center horse culture spread east to China, south into Mesopotamia, Africa and India, west to Spain and Scandanavia. It was the Spaniards who brought horses to

America, to the Commanche and Cheyenne, Arapaho and Teton Sioux,—Indians living on the western American plains. The period from 1540 to 1880 is called the horse-culture age of the American west. One of the best accounts of the effect of the horse on the development of the American West is contained in Walter Prescott Webb's The Great Plains, chapter III. Of particular interest is the rise of the Plains Indian horsemanship to an unprecedented level of excellence. Here is how the Commanche went into war:

—a strategem of war, learned and practiced by every young man in the tribe; by which he is able to drop his body upon the side of his horse at the instant he is passing, effectually screened from his enemies' weapons as he lies in a horizontal position behind the body of his horse, with his heel hanging over the horse's back; by which he has the power of throwing himself up again, and changing to the other side of the horse if necessary. In this wonderful condition, he will hang whilst his horse is at fullest speed, carrying with him his bow and his shield, and also his long lance of fourteen feet in length, all or either of which he will wield upon his enemy as he passes; rising and throwing his arrows over the horse's back, or with ease and equal success under the horse's neck . . .

Caitlin, North American Indians, quoted in Webb, The Great Plains, p. 64.

Plains Indians became the best horse riders in the world, raiding and plundering across Texas and over the border to Mexico. Their wealth was measured by horses, not cattle,—
". . . Every warrior has his war-horse, which is the fleetest that can be obtained, and he prizes him more than anything

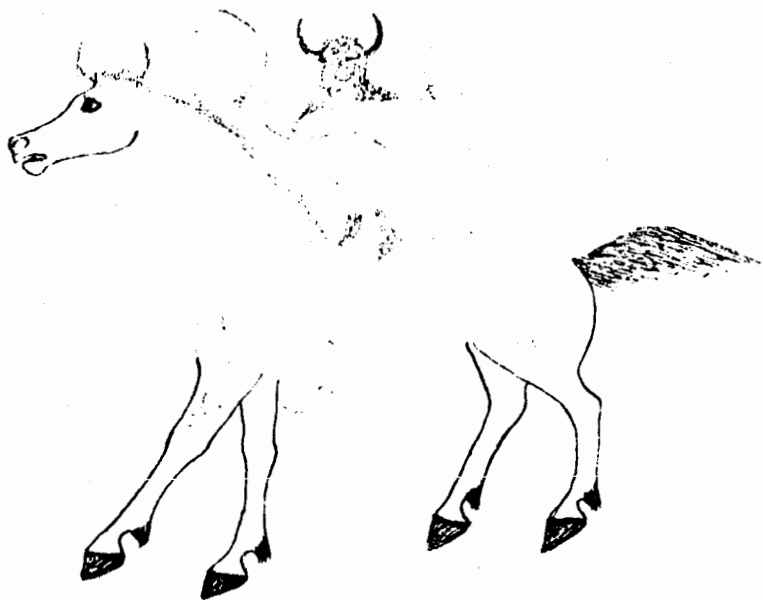
else in his possession, and it is seldom that he can be induced to part with him at any price." Caitlin says, "I am ready, without hesitation, to pronounce the Commanchees the most extraordinary horsemen that I have seen yet in all my travels, and I doubt very much whether any people in the world can surpass them." Using the horse as a shield, and leaning under its neck at full gallop, the Commanche warrior was able to keep eight arrows in the air at once.

It is the magical nature of the horse which is of foremost importance in our study of ecstatic travel along the World Tree. And we have introduced these Indian horse-cultures to get the American picture in view, but also because they represent the circumstances for a shamanism based on horse travel. A theology whose central experience is achieved on horseback, in a mystical ride that flies to the Center of the World. American Plains Indians held that the Center of the World was in the Black Hills region of the Dakotas, Paha Sapa, place of gods and holy mountains, where the last major Indian wars were fought against the American 7th Calvary. Where Red Cloud and Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse held out against the U.S. Government. Olson has considered this topic in his poem called "West."

Indian conflict with the western expansion of the white man came to a close at the massacre of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, on December 29, 1890, where 3,000 troopers killed 200 Oglala Sioux. Thereafter the Sioux and other

Indian nations of the mid-west were locked into the reservation at Pine Ridge. In 1930 the second cousin of Crazy Horse, Black Elk, still lived at Pine Ridge and told his life to John Niehardt, published in a book called Black Elk Speaks (1932). The book is of great importance to our understanding of the place of the horse as vehicle in visionary experience. Indeed illustrations by Standing Bear of the Oglala Sioux give an exact representation of the ride on HORSE / DRUM / TREE to the Center of the World,—illustrations contained in Black Elk Speaks (our plate XLVIIIa - c). One of them shows a man riding horseback and beating rhythm on the drum. Another shows his destination, under the flowering tree that grows at the Center of the World, place of the unbroken hoop:—"At the center of the sacred hoop you have said I should make the tree to bloom."³²

Carl Jung was perhaps the first to take notice of John Niehardt's record of Black Elk's western history. As a result the book has become a classic American text, widely read and of interest to our own study of Tree, horse and drum. Chapter III of the relation, called "The Great Vision," must certainly be read to appreciate the full power of the winged horse that soars in a visionary exercise. The rider, Black Elk, is taken to the Center of the World in the heavens, to visit his Grandfathers who



a.



b.



c.

Plate XLVIII. Horse Travel to an Otherworld. (a) the Horse & Drum Dance. (b) Black Elk on the mountain at the center of the world. (c) the vision of riders seen from beneath the flowering tree on the holy mountain.

show him the sacred flowering tree that has withered under white man's advances but shall come into bloom again through Black Elk's leadership. It is the story of the flowering of the rod in its most aboriginal American setting, straight out of the sources of shamanic practice. Black Elk's words record perhaps the best account of the use of horse in spiritual travel to other worlds of vision. His words enable us to approach the meaning of the Tree Yggdrasil in a Norse shamanism, or any other horse-bridge leading across into an ecstasy.

Olson has correctly defined the shamanic ecstasy in both Sumerian and Norse cosmologies. Drum, horse and Tree are all images of the rhythm which is travelled in each of these beliefs. The result is a first rate piece of scholarship that leads immediately into a presentation of the act of rhythm through an imagery wholly derived from a shamanic practice of visionary life. The scholarship takes us from the poem "LA CHUTE" through Eliade's Shamanism to the drum-horse Yggdrasil and its etymology as it is given in Ellis Davidson's Gods and Myths of Northern Europe or Turville-Petre's Myth and Religion of the North. Typically this gigantic leap of the mind is expressed in Olson's poetics, not explained in a prose. The leap into rhythm is lived, not merely noticed. And the completed result is a shamanism of the most recent kind, like jazz, where the EAR plays upon the hollow wood of the Tree, beating a

rhythm on a drum and riding the life of space on that rhythmic horse which carries man directly into the air of vision. The poem is written for Jack Clark, teacher at the University of Buffalo and jazz player extraordinaire, who could play with ideas and images on the air, like "rust," "cabbage," given a cue and a rhythm, a theme and a drum-beat. Here lies the proof of poetry, beyond explanation, in the projective act, "by way of the EAR, to the SYLLABLE . . . the HEART." Here is the dance in performance of a poetics, by those men who can and do rhythm:

for my friend³³

drum upon the table you drum
the Tree of the World

drum the table you drum the point
at which communication between

Heaven, Earth, and Hell is made:

the Tree of the World a horse
is made,

the Tree of the World a bow
is

Fly up, fly out
with your ecstatic fingers

on the flat table made
of the bole of Inanna's

tree. The Tree of the World
is a voyage, the sacred

pillar. Drum
the table. Fly up fly out

just where you are. You drum the point
just where communication is made

between Heaven, Earth, and Hell. Drum
the table

who plays directly into the air

FOR JOHN CLARKE, march-April, 1965 CHARLES OLSON

We again witness the Near Eastern pillar of the world whose wood is used to make the instrument of rhythm for human ecstasy and vision. It is Inanna's Tree, of Iranian and Mesopotamian origins, a shaman's tree,—

It is developed with rich abundance of detail in the mythologies of the peoples of northeastern Europe, northern and central Asia, and even further afield, in the regions where shamans are trained to cultivate the mantric trance, and claim to have the power to send their spirits out of the body for long journeys to the other world. In these various mythologies, the tree which links the different regions plays an essential part.

Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe
pp. 191-2.

Wherever horse cultures existed the tree and carved drum were mounts on which the shaman rode in the air to other worlds.

In the Scandanavian universe Freyr was closely associated with the horse cult, and sacred horses were kept in his sanctuary at Thrandheim in Norway, where the practice of horse sacrifice was continued until stopped by the Christian king Olaf Tryggvason (d. 1000 A.D.). All over Scandanavia horse burials were commonly practiced, as many as twenty-

six horses being buried in a grave so that the dead might travel to an Other World. Ellis Davidson discusses horse sacrifice and burial practices in her latest book titled The Chariot of the Sun (1969), "Horse and Stag," pp. 167ff.,—

The study of the horse cult is complicated by links not only with Celtic practices, but also with customs recorded in south-eastern Europe and the Steppe, while there is an elaborate parallel in the horse sacrifice performed by the Brahmins to promote fertility and good seasons.

As the religious worship of Freyr declined in the advance of Christianity, the landless, uprooted Norse world turned progressively more to a reverence of the war god Odin, whose shamanic hold over the northern world after the year 1,000 A.D. has survived intact in the Sagas and Eddas. Odin as a shaman is well explicated in a short poem of the Elder Edda called Baldurs Draumar, which tells how Odin harnessed his eight-legged steed named Sleipnir for the ride to Hel where he goes to speak with the dead about the future fate of his son, Baldur,—

Up rose Odin, unaging magician,
 Harnessed Sleipnir, the eight-legged,
 Sped down from Heaven to Hel's Deep.
 The blood-dabbled sound of Hel faced him,
 Howling in frenzy at the Father of Runes.
 The High One halted at the eastern gate,
 Where loomed a tumulus, tomb of a witch.
 Runes he chanted, charms of power:
 Her spectre rose whom his spell commanded
 To enlighten the god with the lore of the dead

Baldur's Dream trans. Taylor and Auden.

In his journey to the heavens or to the underworlds the shaman is usually represented as riding on some bird or animal, frequently the horse, as we may gather from Eliade's study of shamanism. Odin's eight-legged horse, called Sleipnir, was probably the ritual cortege, four attendant porters of the bier, whose eight legs carry the body into an underworld grave, tumulus or barrow. A funeral dirge of the Gonds in India sings of this eight-legged steed, the mount of the dead,—

What horse is this?
 It is the horse Bagri Maro.
 What should we say of its legs?
 The horse has eight legs.
 What should we say of its heads?
 This horse has four heads. . . .
 Catch the bridle and mount the horse.³⁴

"The Tree of the World is a voyage"—Olson says in the poem "for my friend," a voyage to the other side of the river and across space into another land, usually to a land of death, beyond this life. Black Elk was taken on the back of a grey mare to visit the Grandfathers of the World when at nine years of age he lay in a fever and coma facing the open gates to another world. In the Gilgamesh and Enkidu poem the Tree, Inanna's Tree, serves as the way down to the land of death. In the Norse cosmology Yggdrasil is likewise the horse which a shaman rides into Hel and which the corpse rides into the grave. In most such instances of travel on the Tree a shaman goes to find and

rescue the soul of a deceased or distressed person whose spirit lies trapped in the underworld (like Enkidu), or to visit the spirit of a dead man (like Odin in Baldrs Draumar) or to escort newly released dead-souls down to the underworlds and through Hel.

The World Tree is indeed the centre of the shaman's cosmology, as it is in the world of the northern myths. The essential feature of the initiation ceremony, whether among the Eskimos, the American Indians, or the Siberian peoples, is the death and rebirth of the young shaman, and the torments and terrors which he has to undergo if he is to gain possession of the esoteric knowledge necessary to him in his new calling. Before he can attain ability to heal and to pass to the realms of the gods and spirits, he has to undergo a ritual death. This may be experienced in dreams or visions, and the experience may be induced by means of meditation, fasting, or the use of drugs; in any case it causes the initiate terrible suffering. He may imagine himself devoured by birds, boiled in a cauldron, cut open so that serpents or sacred stones can be inserted into his body, or torn into small pieces. If however he is a true shaman, he will survive this mental torture, will be restored to life and wholeness, and will then be able to practice his calling in the community. The World Tree plays a considerable part in these dreams and visions of the young shaman, especially in northern Asia. The Yakuts believed that the soul of the shaman was carried off by the 'Mother Bird of Prey' and placed on a branch of the tree in the underworld, while his body was cut to pieces and devoured by the spirits of illness and death. In other regions it was thought that the new shaman made his drum from the branches of the World Tree, while the Mongols believed that Shamans tethered their horses to the Tree, as Odin is said to have tethered his horse Sleipnir to Yggdrasil.

Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe, pp. 144-5.

In Christian iconology Death rides a Horse wielding his scythe. In the Norse world the Valkyries under Odin's command rode horses over the bloody battle ground picking slaughtered warriors chosen to enter Valhalla. The horse is a widely used means of travel into death.³⁵ This animal is also the rhythmic vehicle of trance which allows a shaman access into the heavens, into celestial worlds, of which there were nine in the Norse cosmology:

The seeress in the Völuspá begins by remembering nine worlds, 'nine in the Tree.' On Odin's seat Hlithskjálf the god could sit out and look over 'all the worlds,' suggesting that this seat may have been in the tree itself. Clearly these worlds must not be thought to lie close together; only in the visionary gaze of Odin or of the inspired seeress could they thus be glimpsed as one. The plan of a small neat universe which might be suggested by Snorri's description is soon destroyed by the picture given many times of a long and perilous journey from one world to another over mountains and desolate wastes of cold and darkness, or of a tedious and fearsome road down to the abode of the dead.

Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe, p. 192.

The ladder or Tree was also a rainbow span of three colors, bridge of flame across the sky, called Bifrost, which linked heaven and earth and over which the gods rode each day. Sometimes it was called Gjallarbru, the 'echoing bridge,' because Sleipnir's hoofs and hoofs of all the other horses of the gods rang out on its wooden beams as they crossed from world to world over the wooden Tree, echoing the shaman's drum beat.

Finally we come to the etymology of the Tree called Yggdrasil, the Tree of the voyage or journey. Tree of the hanged god, Odinn, a gallows Tree which he rode nine nights to read the runes and taste of the clear shining water of vision,—

Ygg (the terrifier, awe-inspirer) is one of Odinn's names and drasill is a common word in poetry for a 'horse'. In spite of arguments to the contrary, the compound Yggdrasil can hardly mean other than 'Odinn's horse.'

The metaphor is carried further. Men swing on the gallows, and the verb rida means 'to swing' and 'to ride'. Therefore, Sigvat said in his lay in memory of St. Ólaf, 'men ride to the world of death on Sigar's horse' (rida . . . til Heljar Sigars hesti). We may also remember that the horse was a symbol of death, carrying men to another world.

Turville-Petre, Myth and Religion of the North, p. 48.

This is the nature of the bridge out of Tartaros which the gods cross in Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown - IV," and "Maximus, from Dogtown - II." A ladder, tree, drum, horse, at the center of the world. It is the way out into open space, crossing to other worlds, that comes down to an American ground in Olson's poetics. We have traced the elaborate imagery of the experience of "voyage" on the bridge of the heavens. The imagery is simply "there." It cannot be argued against. Its complex reality must be acknowledged, however insufficient are one's own eyes. It is like riding a horse over the prairie plains, held on the rhythm of the back of the world. That is the wonder of a

human poetics which spans the levels of a cosmology. A wide open Christian or any other space.

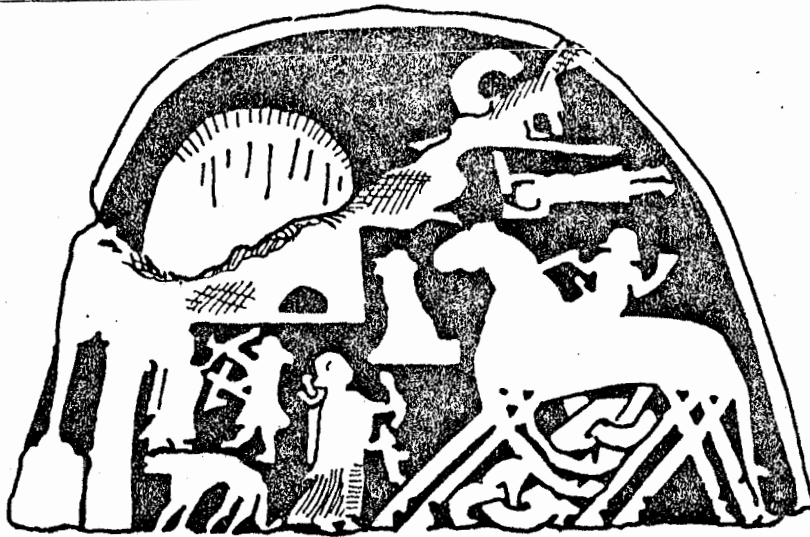


Figure 5. 8-legged Sleipnir. Odin's Horse. Top section of stone from Alskog Tjangvide, Gotland.

11. The Dogmatic Nature of Experience³⁶

We have spoken of the opening of the Gold Flower on the World Tree. And of the ride across an open space on horseback. How wood from the Tree makes a wooden drum that sounds like the bridge which the horse crosses in its flight to an Other World. These are images, not explanations, of ecstasy and vision. They are facts of the highest ranges of human experience and imagination. They express an unlimited opening of the world upon a knowledge of creation.

Poetry is this. It is the rhythm of a language which enters into visionary experience. It is not philosophy. Nor a science. It has nothing to do with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. It is solely the ability of a man to produce a drum beat using the syllables in a line as his sounding board. And the result is a voyage into ecstasy and vision. Not social criticism or politics. Except as any field of human inquiry is founded on a heart beat, a core rhythm, that can be turned into dance. The major fight which the poet or shaman undertakes is this struggle for space enough to allow the invention of rhythm, without being hindered by convention or aesthetic law, culture or social rule. Poetry is the play and dance, the song and dance, to the rhythm of a world as it is expressed by the beat in the syllables of a line. The poet plays on

the line the way a drumstick beats a drum or the way the ear hears the rhythm of the world tree. The world, like the line, is an unbroken hoop covered by a stretched horse-skin, a universe drawn taut by rhythm. The rhythm of a daily creation, e.g. the rhythm of the Human Universe at Gloucester, Massachusetts, of which Olson was a participant and player.

We are engaged in a criticism that is almost purely imaginative. I think there is no alternative if one wishes to get into the dance of Olson's poetics, beyond reverence or expertise to what the poems are actively doing. Especially beyond one's own vanity as a critic able to track down and understand sources and difficulties. Quantum mechanics as a wave function which has bowled poetry off its feet as of late. Such topics are over. Relativity and the non-Euclidian line as alternatives to the iambic pentameter. Heisenberg's indeterminacy as excuse for committing any creative act. Such topics are over. They serve only to give the poet elbowroom and knee flexibility for getting himself warmed up in a space large enough for dance. They are not the cause of poetry, and may greatly hinder its moves.

At any rate physics post-1910 has returned man to the one principle of measure and knowledge worth anything, which is experience. Whence relatively, as expressed in

Einstein's famous essay on "Geometry and Experience,"³⁷ where an unbounded yet finite universe is proposed, a universe of finite extent and unlimited event, a Riemannian universe, whose space must be described using a non-Euclidian spherical geometry, of constant positive curvature. The fact of the matter is that by 1850 three geometries were found to exist where previously there had been only one,—³⁸

	<u>hyperbolic</u>	<u>parabolic</u>	<u>spherical</u>
curvature:	constant negative	zero	constant positive
angles of triangle:	less than 180°	= 180°	greater than 180°
name:	non-Euclidian (Bolyai & Lobatchevsky)	Euclidian	non-Euclidian (Riemann)
parallels:	none	one	infinitely many

Such schemes do not generate poetry, however they may point towards the validity and Truth of a previously damned poetic view of the real,—because the historical discovery of non-Euclidian geometry in the middle of the nineteenth century changed the entire nature of absolute Truth to a Truth founded in familiar experience. With the result that the space of one's own perceptions of the world opened and flowered for the first time since when, Plato? A new Truth emerged, rooted in proprioception, "one's own taking" of the world. A Truth which occupied

an entirely NEW WORLD, discovered for the first time by John Bolyai, who wrote to his father the way a Columbus or Juan de la Cosa might write a letter back to the Spanish monarchy, saying (1823),—³⁹

I have made such wonderful discoveries that I am myself lost in astonishment, and it would be an irreparable loss if they remained unknown. When you read them, dear Father, you too will acknowledge it. I cannot say more now except that out of nothing I have created a new and another world.

"O Brave new world," a world described by a non-Euclidian geometry, like the non-European continent in mid-Atlantic space, a new found land of Truths no longer dependent on the absolute primacy of Euclidian axioms. Then a few years later another non-Euclidian, this time spherical geometry, was determined by Riemann. By the year 1851, Melville had a methodology for Moby-Dick,—

Quoin is not a Euclidian term. It belongs to the pure nautical mathematics. I know not that it has been defined before. A quoin is a solid which differs from a wedge in having its sharp end formed by the steep inclination on one side, instead of the mutual tapering of both sides.

Melville's note to chapter 77.

After the discovery that three geometries describe three perfect kinds of space, of constant negative, zero and positive curvature, Riemann further postulated an infinite number of geometries of non-constant curvature that must exist to describe the continuous nature of real

and manifold space. He also proposed the concept of a "continuous manifold" to replace the static notion of the "discrete manifold" view of space. These additions eventually gave rise to field physics and quantum mechanics.

Prior to the revelation of three geometries, there had been only one, Euclidian concept of space. Only one Truth, one absolute Truth. One essential form behind the appearance of reality. That essential form was called God, made known to man through reason, i.e. geometry. God-the-geometer of the world. And man-the-geometer as his closest image. But after the discovery of three geometries there were evidently three Truths with which to examine a single physical world. Three mental forms with which to look at the single physical real. At last it was known that mind and matter can be completely disassociated one from the other, resulting in discourse and enforced physical evidence. It was found that axioms are not God-given laws, but are in fact "free creations of the human mind," to quote Einstein. And that an Axiomatic Geometry is simply a mental view of the real which is neither absolute nor a necessary and sufficient measure of the real. Therefore Einstein proposed another kind of geometry which doesn't have its origins in mind, but in the world of experience itself. He called the new kind of geometrical method a

"Geometry of Experience," which is a practical geometry, that is, not absolute but with a practical purpose and project in mind, a physical project.

The result is a new kind of Truth, rooted in experience. It is the Truth which Olson talks about in his lecture series on Poetry and Truth, where he proposes a dogmatics of experience which lies at the basis of his own cosmology and theology. One Church, One dogma and One God-the-Geometer, are replaced by Truths whose only absolute rests in a man's public experience. Just as Euclidian dogma was replaced by a geometry whose axioms are founded in practice, so too is Church dogma replaced by a dogmatics of one's own experience in the new theology.

Olson's theology is rooted to the existence of a source whose highest image is of a BLACK GOLD FLOWER,—

photo-copic: that we are darkness. That our condition inside is dark. In other words if you stop to think of yourself as an impediment of creation, I mean you. . . I think you follow me, that the unknown is rather your self's insides . . . that we become sure in the dark, that we move wherever we wish in the six directions with that light. And not making pictures. I don't mean black sun or black light. I mean, literally, that to light that dark is to have come to whatever it is I think any of us seeks. And tropism to my mind . . . an experience of say twenty years ago, which was to me dogmatic, when I knew there was a sun, I mean a helio inside myself, so that everything, that every other human being, and every thing in creation, was something that I could see if I could keep that experience.

the purpose of these lectures as Truth could be subtitled, "The Dogmatic Nature of Experience" My feeling is a sun of being which sits in this mass of blackness, or darkness better, or eyelessness or sightlessness

Poetry and Truth, p. 44.

It is the experience of the dream previous to his written work on "Projective Verse," of the CHRYSANTHEMUM FLOWER from which all things issue, rhythm, image and knowing. That Light of the World is like the light which is contained in the Gospel of St. John,^{40a} whose experience is a dogmatic fact behind Olson's own poetics.

Tropism, I think, is actually the riddler of the lot. Or it's the management, or it's the manoeverer, or it's the . . . it's ourselves.

When I was a kid, there were Canadian sailore used to come and visit—not my sisters, which I had none—but girls whom I knew and were older than I, and we would be baby sitters for these chicks, and it was the Canadian Navy on station in Gloucester, and I think the first cigarettes I smoked were Heliotropes,—no, excuse me, they were from His Majesty's Ship Heliotrope, they were Player's, right? And I think of tropism in ourselves is the sun.

Poetry and Truth, p. 43.

One has here a "play" of Olson's intelligence through the most common and familiar daily acts of creation possible. Player's cigarettes. He doesn't even put it out when he climbs up Mount Dogtown into a terrestrial paradise,—

you enter
the Mount,
which looks merry,
and you go up into it
feels the very same as the corner
where the rocks all are
even smoking a cigarette on the mount

nothing around you, not even the sky
relieves the pressure of this declivity
which is so rich and packed.

"at the boundary of the mighty world".

There is no removal of himself from vulgar eloquence into a state of reverence. The tropic prayer is continued through his person, without change or stoppage. "Paradise is a person." It is the shape of one's own soul. The shape of one's life. "So like play,"

The H.M.S. Heliotrope tied up at Gloucester was a strong fix, a dogmatic reckoning position in the life of Olson's mind. It is out of such dogmatic experiences, ones that can't be forgotten and return like childhood remembrances, that a Theology or Cosmology is structured. The dream of the Chrysanthemum Flower was an even more important fix or sighting in the dogmatics of experience out of which Olson's cosmos was mapped and created. And so a Theology is rooted to belief that is discovered to be a dogma in one's own lifetime. Belief represents itself to us through experience. And each man's experience is the evidence and proof of Truth.

The drum and drumstick, as vehicles in a mystic vision of the world, are experienced in the ride and rhythm of wild horses. That single image in experience conveys the meaning of the World Tree as a bridge linking this world to other worlds. Therefore the experience is used to map the mystic journey, a journey which is true to

Christian vision as evidenced in the Divine Comedy, and pre-Christian vision as exhibited by the Tree Yggdrasil or the haluppu-tree. These aboriginal statements of experience serve to renew the actual reality of the visionary journey, a journey which is easily lost when it is estranged from the familiar.

Now we shall examine a further, post-modern experience, in our next section 12. Having gone before the Platonic and modern, to an aboriginal world, we now bridge to a post-modern experience, where physics and psyche are restated in a language whose expressions include elemental experience equalled only in the primitive and original human world. Physics has brought us to see through the eyes of an African mask.

12. The Holy Mass of Carbon and Light

In the silent and holy nights, Weinachten of deepest winter, there once appeared a new star. A gold flower over Bethlehem whose light shone in the black December vaults of an old heaven. It was the Christ-flower, Mary's Gold, sign of a New Age under a New Heaven.

In our own Age, post-1910, an Age which Olson has called post-modern, coming after Newton and Descartes, the light appears on carbon. It is the Light of Life on Coal. A photo-chemical flame alive as the Holy Ghost in a black heaven, Gold Flower of an eternal Chrysanthemum.

We are entering into the Age of Aquarius, of the Petroleum sapientum, which are the literal Petroleum Oils of Life in Olson's "Maximus, from Dogtown - II":

flowers are
Carbon
Carbon is
Carboniferous
Pennsylvania

Age
under
Dogtown
the stone

the watered rock Carbon
flower rills

Aquarian Time

In the Aquarian Age Time is biogeological. It is a KOLL-Agen Time, measured by the transformations of a protein fibre. Olson is using informations from an article which he

read in Scientific American called "The Aging of Collagen,"
written by Frederick Verzář, —⁴¹

Man) MONOGENE:

the monogene, in COLLAGEN
 in KOLLAGEN

TIME

the greater the water you add
the greater the decomposition
so long as the agent is protein
the carbon of four is the corners

"Maximus, from Dogtown - II".

Here the Throne of Creation rests on the corners of the
foursquare carbon atom, while peptide linkages form the
great protein chains of being. Verzář talks about hydrolysis
of collagen tissue, basic protein constituent of all tendons
and fibres in the human body. Hydrolysis is, of course,
the addition of a water molecule to a peptide bond which
breaks the protein chain between two adjacent amino acids.
As water is added the protein is progressively denatured,
ruptured and decomposed, over a period of fifty to one
hundred years in mankind. This process of aging is a
function of a biological time clock and not of any other
ideal time span. Water is not only the medium of creation
but also the determinant of biological age. Water is the
fluid of life and the marker of a biochronology.

Olson joins hydrolysis + Aquarian Age + Water-Carrier +
Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water +

CLEAR, SHINING WATER shed by the Flower of Creation,—making the entire cycle of creation into the stanza of a nursery rhyme. That elemental. The new "ABC's" and "Mother Goose" story of our Age.

Elsewhere Olson talks about Bogolomet's researches into connective tissue ("The Resistance"); and of the dextrorotatory nature of all amino acids in biological proteins,—

The best definition of inversion I know is the chemical one—turning cane sugar by hydrolysis (another word for inversion) from the dextro-rotatory it is to a levrorotatory mixture of dextrose and levulose.

It is possible to kill a person by inversion.

Bibliography on America for Ed Dorn.

. . . A fact which Olson derives from a discussion of monogenetic evolution contained in Hermann Weyl's The Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science, footnote to page 208,—

That homo sapiens contains a screw turning the same way in all individuals is proved in a rather horrid fashion by the fact that man contracts a metabolic disease called phenylketonuria leading to amentia when a certain quantity of levo-phenylalanine is added to his food whilst the dextrose form has no such disastrous effect.

The difference between levro (L-) and dextro (D-) rotation in sugars and amino acids is caused by the alignment of mirror image molecular configurations which are identical in every way except for the "turn" or "screw" of the molecular pattern which shows in a deflection of light, left or right,

through a solution of the molecular substance. All amino acids in biological proteins are dextrorotatory. They reflect a beam of light to the conventional right. However there is no reason why Life couldn't have developed in a levrorotatory fashion, upon amino acids of the opposite "turn" (mirror image amino acids) which have identical chemical properties as the D-form. But no L-rotatory amino acids have been found in living tissues. Therefore Life must have evolved only once. Hence this evidence has been used to support the argument for a monogenetic theory of chemical and biochemical evolution. An unbroken evolutionary sequence of events lasting over 3000-4800 million years. At least as old an Age as the continued survival of bacteria and viruses (nucleic acids with protein shells) on Earth.

Whereas the Flowering Rod in the Christian Theology is the flowering of an historical Axis Mundi in Christ, the Flowering which occurs at the center of Olson's Cosmology is a flowering of Creation itself, larger than history, and including the whole measure of biochemical evolution, an event whose Carbon-Axis stretches at least 4 billion years old through a geochronology, given a solar system whose structure came into being some 5 billion years ago. The vision that exists in Olson's paradise, of the Tree of Life standing at the center of the world which sheds the Oils of Mercy, —Petroleum, Carbon, Coal-Oils,—is no artificial vision. It is not a poetics of inspired design

like the cloud-capped towers that soar in Shakespeare's Tempest, here today and gone tomorrow, like some hashish-fired reverie. Life is above and beyond the "free will." It is that which has perpetuated itself for this long. A hardness more durable than carborundum; longer lasting than the mountains of Wales. In fact the only danger it has ever faced, a knife that can cut genetic life to pieces, is radiation. Otherwise Life is impregnable. An everlasting Tree, a Mary-tree, whose roots descend into the dark underground through sediments Ages old, older than Pennsylvanian and Carboniferous Coal Ages. In fact reaching down into the pre-Cambrian chemical Ages of evolution, where the vectorial thrust of monogenesis first pointed its arrows towards the present.

The Tree in "Maximus, from Dogtown - II" is the biophysical Axis of Creation. It has come into being on its own, through self-generated actual will. In A Special View of History Olson mentions "autocatalysis," which he defines very accurately as "the chance success of the play of creative accident." The word declares a mode of creation which needs no other motor than variability through chance plus selection through success. In this way a guided novelty is achieved and the random play of life is directed towards a future. Form is filtered out of random events that arise through chance. The importance of this mode of creation, which is now a known fact, is that it requires no designer,

mechanic or architect of the world, no divine plan, blueprint or determined order. Instead the contents in an event-ful world create their own laws of form and their own universe of living order. Meaning arises out of the play of event. It is not imposed, as a "die" or printer's stamp, on nature. The world is given an existence and a meaning which comes into being through itself.

Autocatalysis is a word which means the ability of a system to alter its own rates of chemical reactivity. In this way the form of creation takes shape amongst living, and also non-living systems. When purely chemical substances like gaseous molecules of NH_3 , CH_4 , H_2 and H_2O are held in a flask which is irradiated with ultraviolet light, biomolecules arise which are known as amino acids, purine and pyrimidine bases and porphyrins, all of the basic units necessary to form proteins, nucleid acids and the haem groupings in haemoglobin and chlorophyll. Whence come genes for replication and re-dox mechanisms for respiration and photosynthesis. In other words the original system of molecules does not tend towards entropy, according to the laws of thermodynamics, but creates out of itself a negative entropy system, a subsystem of living forms which self-perpetuate their own existence. In this way the whole Axis of monogenetic evolution starts its continuous, unbroken growth, through time, into the present world. It is represented in Olson's

poetics by a Carbon-Tree whose everlasting Axis, rooted in the monogene, continues to support the bloom of Life, the Chrysos-anthemon, the Gold Flower.

I don't want to belabor the scientific wonder of the post-modern Mary-tree that stands at the center of Olson's cosmology. Suffice it to say that the Quest for the Oils of Life is finding some success withing current scientific discovery, and may be pursued in greater detail through a reading of the following selection of reports on biochemical creation, autocatalysis, molecular paleontology, chemical evolution &c.—all of which bring us into the present Age of beliefs, "and this present instance seems very much perhaps the (vertical) topological matter, of all matters which can find a basis for a physics of psyche at this revolutionary point in re-taking the cosmology of creation as fact" ("CLEAR, SHINING WATER"),—

Calvin, Melvin, "Autocataysis" in chapter 7 of Chemical Evolution. Molecular Evolution Towards the Origin of Living Systems on the Earth and Elsewhere. (New York, Oxford Univ. Pr., 1969), pp. 144-152.

Calvin, Melvin, "Molecular Paleontology," Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, Autumn 1959, pp. 45-62.

Calvin, Melvin, "The Origin of Life on Earth and Elsewhere," Per. Biol. Med., Summer 1962, pp. 399-421.

Calvin, Melvin, "Atom to Adam," American Scientist, June 1964, pp. 163-186. Excellent bibliography on the subject of biomolecular evolution is contained at the end of this article.

Calvin, Melvin, "Evolutionary Possibilities for Photosynthesis and Quantum Conversion," Horizons in Biochemistry Albert Szent-Györgyi Dedicatory Volume, (New York, Academic Pr., 1962), pp. 25-57.

Miller, Stanley, L., "Production of Some Organic Compounds under Possible Primitive Earth Conditions," Journal of American Chemical Society 77, 1955, pp. 2351-2361.

Miller, Stanley L., and Urey, H.C., "Organic Compound Synthesis on the Primitive Earth," Science 130, 1959, pp. 245-251.

Monot, Jacques, Chance and Necessity. An Essay on the Natural Philosophy of Modern Biology, trans. A. Wainhouse, (New York, 1972).

Pullman, Bernard, and Alberte Pullman, "Electronic Delocalization and Biochemical Evolution," Nature, Dec. 22, 1962, pp. 1137-1142.

These are texts of the post-modern view of biophysical genesis. The view which they present is magnificent and radical. I would also suggest two other articles, both of which are to be found in Horizons in Biochemistry (1962),— a most significant anthology of biochemical advances in our time. One article is by George Wald, titled "Life in the Second and Third Periods; or Why Phosphorus and Sulfur for High-Energy Bonds?", and explains life's choice of Carbon instead of Silicon (both of valence 4 and capable of sheet bonding). The other is entitled "Origin and Evolution of Bioluminescence," by W.D. McElroy and H.H. Seliger, which explains how anaerobic organisms responded to the toxicity

of gaseous free O_2 after the invention of photosynthesis. They became aerobic, adding the Electron Transport System to get rid of O_2 by making it the final electron acceptor (producing H_2O), thereby giving life the later option of crawling onto the land. All of these texts contribute to our understanding of man as an organism, flesh and bones, born out of a self-generated cosmos of biophysical events. Divine "cause" is no longer necessary or even a spiritually uplifting concept any longer. Life creates itself. It is its own prime mover. As Olson says, we are "organism" not "cathedral":

It is his own physiology he is forced to arrive at. And the way—the way of the Beast, of man and the Beast.

Or the fraud. This organism now our citadel never was cathedral, draughty tenement of the soul, was what it is: ground, stone, wall, cannon, tower. In this intricate structure are we based, now more certainly than ever (beseiged, overthrown), for its power is bone muscle nerve blood brain a man, its fragile mortal force its old eternity, resistance.

"The Resistance".

Olson charts out physical elements, nucleic acids, porphyrins, biomolecules, phosphate bonds, water and leather, that compose the body of this resisting thing called organism. Our citadel, an underground resistance, rather than sublime cathedral. Resistance is substituted for élan vital, life spiritual or any other sacred metaphysical greased slide we have used in the past to get over our mortal makeup. The

new outlook makes us akin to other beasts, instead of what we have imagined and pretended ourselves to be, the beauty:— "Man came here by an intolerable way . . . evolved by nature." Dirty words. Pithecanthropus, ape-man. Creation and history are the new eternity.

Life is its own mover. Autocatalysis. The hierarchy has been inverted. Once man tried to explain life by reference to an over-soul. Now he must raise that same soul from under a given system of materials and facts. Thus the INVERSION, for those who are equal to these kinds of information, might stand as outlined in our table 1, with Europe on the right, in the East, and the post-modern New World of America opening on the left into an Aquarian Age. A mid-Atlantic ridge divides the two continents of belief which are drifting ever further apart:

table 1.

INVERSION

it requires a leap

post-modern		modern
CHANGE	Ⓜ	stasis
Process	ⓐ	Progress
relatives	ⓓ	Absolutes (Truth)
finite & unbounded	Ⓜ	infinite space
OPEN FIELD		CLOSED REAL
many stories (<u>mutho-logos</u>)	Ⓜ	One History
Auto-genesis		Creator
<u>WEST</u>		<u>EAST</u>
actual	ⓐ	ideal (potential)
proprioception	Ⓜ	conception
actual willful man	Ⓜ	free vs. determined wills
	Ⓝ	
EQUAL TO THE REAL	Ⓜ	object / subject split
at the skin, the meeting edge	Ⓜ	form / content
	Ⓜ	
found out in <u>practice</u>	Ⓜ	<u>a priori</u> Truth (essence)
(practical geometry of experience)	Ⓜ	(axiomatic geometry of enforced Ideals)
dynamic		Inert-Kinetic
ontogeny	ⓓ	phylogeny
Gloucester, Mass. fishermen	Ⓜ	Jerusalem-Rome
	Ⓜ	Elect City of God
HUMAN UNIVERSE		DISCOURSE
	Ⓜ	

We are given a threefold choice: ("In Cold Hell, In Thicket"),—

1. Prayer

(Prayer
Or a death as going over to—shot by yr own forces—to
a greener place?

2. Despair

So shall you blame those
who give it up, those who say
it isn't worth the struggle?

3. Resistance

by fixes only (not even any more by shamans
can the tracteries
be brought out

"In Cold Hell, In Thicket".

Resistance returns all measures to an organism's own capability. Man must actually and willfully erect his own world view,—"that a man, men, are now their own wood / and are thus their own hell and paradise."⁴² We carry our own load, our own history, time and place, like human glyphs on Copan D, figures bent under the weights of stone whose resistance is at the very heart of Olson's Mayan Letters.⁴³ Resistance is what shapes our world. The old Tower and Cathedral has fallen. Prayer has had its crown knocked off like the Tarot Card which shows the sublime Tower split asunder. Despair is the immediate result, a Lonely Tower,

ruined, collapsed, standing by a crumbled mountain, its bricks tossed everywhere. Olson gives us the next Age, after the Fallen Tower and on the other side of despair, which is a Citadel, a Fortress guarded from within, a human-created world made by actual and willful man,⁴⁴ whose strong physical Walls Do Not Fall. A Tower as strong as David's, fortified by resistance.

The structure of this new Axis of the World, of the new Mary-Tree and Tower of Creation in the post-modern, comes straight forwards out of a view of the world generated in the mid-nineteenth century. Especially important as a background to Olson's assertions is the chapter called "The Tail," in Moby-Dick, which Olson talks about at such length in his essay called "The Materials and Weights of Herman Melville":

"The Tail" is as lovely an evidence as any other of Melville's ability to go inside a thing, and from its motion and his to show and to know, not its essence alone (this was mostly the gift of ideality—of Gautama's, Socrates'. or Christ's), but its dimension, that part of a thing which ideality—by its Ideal, its World of Forms or its Perfections—tended to diminish; . . . We call it size; we say: it was a big thing—a kick; he's a big person; that day was a whopper. We have more of a vocabulary for the physics of it than Melville had. We know the literal space there is inside a microcosm, the nature of the motion hidden in any mass. Yes I do not know another writer except Homer who achieves by words so much of the actual experiencing of this dimension as Melville does.

For the metaphysic now to be known does lie inside function, methodology is form, Rimbaud's question is the decisive one—"what is on the other side of despair?" There is no where else to go but in and through; there is no longer any least piece of pie

in the sky. With Melville's non-Euclidian penetrations of physical reality ignored or avoided, all the important gains he made in expressing the dimensions possible to man and to story are also washed out.

Melville goes inside the tail to find what makes it move. What is this divine creature's primum mobile? How does the Tail of God work? That is what Melville dares to find out. He dares, with Ahab, to draw Leviathan out with an hook, lay the WHITE THING on deck and go inside its clap-board mask of cosmetic metaphysic to the very most physical foundations and strata of belief. He looks at the myotomes of muscle fibre down to the minutest structural detail. He is not content with essences. He wants to lay grasp on the blocks of creation:

The entire member seems a dense webbed bed of welded sinews; but cut into it, and you find three distinct strata compose it:—upper, middle, and lower. The fibres in the upper and lower layers are long and horizontal; those of the middle one, very short, and running cross-wise between the outside layers. This triunc structure, as much as anything else, imparts power to the tail. To the student of old Roman walls, the middle layer will furnish a curious parallel to the thin course of tiles always alternating with the stone in those wonderful relics of the antique, and which undoubtedly contribute so much to the great strength of the masonry.

"The Tail".

Melville is one of a "club" of whalemens who dare to penetrate such mysteries:

Perseus, St. George, Hercules, Jonah, and Vishnoo! there's a member-roll for you! What club but the whalemens' can head off like that?

"The Honor and Glory of Whaling".

The most recent member of the club is another St. George, Albert Szent-Györgyi, a Hungarian biochemist who initiated a field of study whose methodology has come to be known as submolecular biology, the study of the structure of molecules and the relation of structure to their biological function:

It is quite likely, . . . that if a certain kind of molecule possesses a rudiment of function prefiguring a physiological act, a part of the explanation should indeed be residing in the structure of the molecule. This is what Szent-Györgyi (1947) had shown through his studies on muscle proteins.

Szent-Györgyi, Albert, Chemistry of Muscular Contraction, (New York: Academic Press, 1947).

Bioenergetics, (New York: Academic Press, 1957).

Introduction to a Submolecular Biology, (New York: Academic Press, 1960).

what is so surprising at first sight is the way in which biochemical molecules are, so to speak, tailored in extreme detail for the job they have to carry out. This fitness of structure for function has what may be called a purely geometrical side, in the actual shape of the molecule in three dimensions, and particularly the shape of its surface, and also the physical side, namely, the adjustment of energy levels, a subject to which Szent-Györgyi (1960) himself has given a new impetus.

J.D. Bernal, "Biochemical Evolution," in Horizons in Biochemistry, Albert Szent-Györgyi Dedicatory Volume, (New York: Academic Press, 1962), p. 16.

Szent-Györgyi penetrated far deeper into the tail than Melville.

He used the same method, that which Olson has correctly defined

in "The Materials and Weights of Herman Melville," which is the basis of submolecular biophysicalchemistry. Szent-Györgyi focused his attention upon a myofibril of muscle tissue, then on a single segment or sarcomere of that myofibril. The magnification of this detail is tremendous and approaches the very dimensions of the macromolecular structure of muscle proteins. Szent-Györgyi was able to extract a single protein fibre called actomyosin, composed of the two protein units actin and myosin which in complex exhibit contractile properties. A single strand of actomyosin in solution responds to ATP or ADP by increasing or reducing its viscosity. Extruded through a syringe needle into water the actomyosin molecule precipitates as a thread or fibre. If ATP concentration is reduced, the fibre-molecule contracts and develops a weak tension. Under an electron microscope the form and structure of the molecular complex demonstrates its own functional capability.

Any reader who is interested in Melville's chapter "The Tail" would be well advised to read at least one account of the molecular and submolecular structure and function of muscle tissue. For example, the chapter "Contraction and Motion" in Albert L. Lehninger's Bioenergetics (1971).⁴⁵

Biochemistry is one of my beloved fields of interest. However I don't want my own understanding to impose itself on the poetics we have tried to reveal. Olson

was also very much aware of recent advances in physics and biochemistry, in spite of his weak training in those fields. The important recognition is of an opening that has occurred in science, an opening of the closed modern world of inquiry to an entirely new realm of advances and discoveries that have revolutionized our stance in space and creation. The Flower has opened. We are back in innocence, taking first steps into a further gnosis. Imagination has been re-kindled, renewed. A New World has just been discovered, as new as America was to the Elizabethans. A post-modern world, after Einstein, 1910. Today we must shake off the modern and get into this new WEST. A WESTERN OPEN GATE. A new FLOWERING of the ROD.

In this future poetics the ROD shall be of Carbon, a physically known reality. It shall fulfill Olson's demand for a "re-taking (of) the cosmology of creation as fact." As a dogma in experience that is equal to the vision of a Gold Flower presented in the Divine Comedy. And therefore a part of post-modern belief. Belief that has been tested and proven in our own domain of experience, not just learned and repeated, but actually believed and known.

The Flowering Rod is the Carbon Axis of our Living World, burning at the top on a wick that runs down into Coal-Oils. A wick which soaks up the history of creation to light the present fires of a bioluminescent slow-burning

phosphorous-fire. A burning Coal-fire radiating the splendour of an ever-shining Love.

The fire hangs in the vault of the Church, "hung-up burning / under the City." It is the Sanctuary Light of the Spirit. It is the Light that shall be turned to Black Stone. Light to Life and Life to Coal are the holy transubstantiations in Creation. The Light shall become the Body of the world, in the Eucharist that is offered at the altar of Creation. All living things are a part of this Divine Communion, partaking of the Holy Sacraments, of water and light and carbon, in the process of creation, where Light becomes incarnate as Life. The living Flower of Gold Light is the Carnation, the Marigold, the Chrysanthemum. It is the Christus-Flower alight on coal.

Olson means that the World itself is our place of worship.