



THE BLEST FOUNTAIN:  
A Study of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus

by

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## ABSTRACT

Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, an Ovidian Romance published anonymously in 1602, relates the transformation of a water nymph and a young immortal into a hermaphrodite. The author views this transformation as a blessing, altering Ovid who describes it as a curse. In alchemy the hermaphrodite, another name for the philosopher's stone, is the culmination of the great work, which is the result of a long process of physical and spiritual purification. The stone has the power to bring all matter to perfection and once created it could transform the corruptible into the incorruptible endlessly. The alchemist used a synthesis of many systems and utilized astrology extensively. In this thesis I shall interpret Salmacis and Hermaphroditus as revealing alchemical teachings, through alchemical and astrological symbolism and philosophy. If the gods encountered by Salmacis are read as astrological symbols, and it was not uncommon in the Renaissance to interchange the stars and the gods who shared their names, then the process whereby Salmacis overcomes her corruption and moves towards unification can be delineated. Witty sensuality and serious spirituality are combined in the poem, neither subordinates the other, for in alchemy both the physical and the spiritual were equally important, if one was to achieve the perfection of matter.

To

R. L. R.

for being the focal

We must be still and still moving  
Into another intensity  
For a further union, a deeper communion  
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation,  
The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters  
Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is my beginning.

T. S. Eliot

## PREFACE

Writing a thesis like evolving an alchemical transformation requires much expert assistance and advice before the base material is transmuted. I have been especially 'blessed' with helpers; my committee who gave freely of time and knowledge; Professor Joseph Gallagher whose advice and criticism have been invaluable; Rolf Loehrich, whose knowledge of things arcane was indispensable, and whose time and library were always available; Professor Robin Blaser whose commentary on the early draft led to a deeper understanding of the background material, and Frances Roberts whose patience and skill transformed my scribblings into the completed work.

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## CHAPTER I

## Deepe Wisdomes Lore

If man does not understand his own corrupt nature, and the curse under which he consequently lies, he cannot understand the nature and curse of the earth, or presume to restore a matter from that curse, and be instrumental in its deliverance, which is the true artist's only business.

Dionisius Andreas Freher

I wish to demonstrate that Salmacis and Hermaphroditus embodies the central tenet of alchemy: that corrupt matter can be brought to perfection if its corruption is understood. In his quest the alchemist is, in fact, seeking the process of perfecting all matter. He wishes to convert the corruptible into the incorruptible at every level: metals are to become gold; vegetation is to be brought to everlasting fruitfulness; and man himself is to reach the Edenic state where instead of a conflict between the physical and the spiritual there is a perfection of each. The achievement of such perfection is the alchemist's Opus Magnum.<sup>1</sup>

I should like to argue that even when the Poet<sup>2</sup> dedicates his "wanton lines" which "treat of amorous love" to the epic figure of Caliope he is engaging in alchemy. For while he is indulging in the witty juxtaposition of opposites, he is also demonstrating that the

playfulness and the seriousness co-exist to express a single theme, that sensuality and spirituality are not in opposition but are two aspects of one perfection.

The Poet's purpose is not only to impart this theme but to transform the reader through the experiencing of the poem. This transformation will be like the transformation into the hermaphrodite or Rebis, the being who in alchemy symbolizes the unification of the masculine spiritual and the feminine sensual aspects of human nature. The reader, if he is able to become "halfe-mayd," will understand that witty sensuality does not oppose spirituality in the poem but that the sensual is purified and united with the spiritual. He will realize that physical union in the poem is not an allegory representing, at another level, spiritual union, for in the poem the perfection of the spiritual coincides with the perfection of the physical.

Alchemy and astrology were closely linked in the Renaissance and the key to the poem's alchemical secrets lies in the perception of its astrological symbolism. The Greek gods whom Salmacis encounters can be read as astrological symbols for the states through which she passes before she, a female mortal, can be unified with a male immortal. It was common in the Renaissance to regard gods and their activities as symbols of planetary influence. Thus Jupiter carries all the associations of the planet Jupiter. Two of the Poet's contemporaries, Abraham Fraunce and George Sandys, when discussing other versions

of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus both assume that Hermaphroditus, because he was the son of Venus and Mercury, was born under a conjunction of those planets, and they interpret his significance in view of the meaning of such a conjunction. Neither commentator found it necessary to explain why he made such an assumption; the mode of thinking was traditionally accepted.

Stellar influences were particularly potent because the stars were viewed either as animate beings, according to Plato and Aristotle, or as inanimate objects directed by angelic intelligences, according to the Church Fathers. Plato, in the Timæus, a work available to the medieval world through a Latin translation discusses the stars:

The sun and moon and five other stars, which are called the planets, were created by him [God] in order to preserve the numbers of time, and when he had made their several bodies, he placed them in the orbits in which the circle of the other was revolving—in seven orbits seven stars . . . Now, when each of the stars which were necessary to the creation of time had come to its proper orbit, and they had become living creatures having bodies fastened by vital chains, and learned their appointed task . . . they revolved . . . 3 .

His concept of the spindle of necessity, in the Republic, also suggests the power of the stars in controlling human destiny, for when the human soul enters into this life its fate is governed by the stars. Aristotle makes the stars gods with superhuman intelligence, from whom a

persuasive, rational influence emanated which affected the life of man. Although such beliefs seem incompatible with Christianity, with little alteration they became accepted as part of Christian belief. The major criticism of astrology by the Church Fathers was in its claim to foretell the future. However, this difficulty was overcome by stressing that the stars influenced the generation and corruption of man, but insofar as man could rise above the fleshly, sinful aspects of his life he could transcend the astral emanations. Astrology did not presume a belief in predestination; man could, by exercising his free will, overcome the malevolent aspects of his nativity. But to do so he must be aware of those aspects and therefore he consulted an astrologer. Thomas Aquinas, when discussing astrology disagrees with the Greeks regarding the animation of the stars. They do not have souls, he states, but rather are governed by angels who are in turn controlled by God:

Corporeal things have determinate actions, but they exercise such actions only according as they are moved, because it belongs to a body not to act unless moved. Hence a corporeal creature must be moved by a spiritual creature . . . But because we assert that many things are performed in the inferior bodies besides the natural corporeal actions, for which the movements of the heavenly bodies are not sufficient, therefore in our opinion we must assert that the angels possess an immediate governance not only over the heavenly bodies, but also over the inferior bodies.<sup>4</sup>

Because the stars control generation and corruption a knowledge of astrology guided those actions of man connected with his role in the temporal world. Physicians were astrologers, for the stars also were

connected with the four humours vital to man's life. Renaissance prognostications give elaborate medical tables prescribing the times of the month and the months of the year when certain operations would be successful, and when others would be disastrous. Certain days, months, and signs were unpropitious for marriage, birth, travel, planting of crops, negotiating business transactions: these were all listed in the yearly almanacs. Because the planets also governed the physical world metals were influenced astrally, thus the alchemist would carefully consult the stars before embarking on the opus magnum, and talismans made out of certain metals, engraved with certain astrological signs, at specific times, had great power over evil influences. Ficino, one of the greatest Renaissance Neo-platonists, spent considerable time studying ways of altering the influence of his natal star, malevolent Saturn, by means of talismans and natural magic, and by understanding the Saturnian temperament and attempting to overcome the specific sins which the planet indicated.

The art of casting a horoscope is extremely complex. Each planet, house, and sign has a particular significance; this alters according to various interrelations. Rather difficult mathematics and mensuration were required to place each star in the zodiac at a given moment. Popular modern astrology simplifies the intricacies of the art, as did popular Renaissance astrology, but the creditable treatises on the subject are replete with detailed tables and diagrams, and almost never give an interpretation of the individual signs of the zodiac, for a sign only has meaning in relation to its house and the planets which govern it.

Basically, the science of astrology described and warned man of the pitfalls of sin; man could, through his spiritual nature, overcome the effects of the stars.

Astrologers assigned metals to each of the stars: gold to the Sun, silver to the Moon, copper to Venus, iron to Mars, mercury to Mercury, lead to Saturn and tin to Jupiter. The alchemists used the symbols for the stars as notations for metals, and they often called the metal by its astral name:

A hundred Ounces of Saturne ye may well take;  
Seeth them on fire and melt him in a mould,  
A projection with your Medicin upon hem make,  
And anon yee shall alter him into fine Gold;<sup>5</sup>

Astrology combined with chemistry and esoteric doctrines formed the basis of alchemy. To the ignorant the alchemist belonged to that collection of fools who attempted, because of avarice or arrogance to alter base substances into gold; their aim being understood as the production of this gold and nothing else. Adepts make a different claim:

Simply stated, Hermetism, or its synonym Alchemy, was in its primary intention and office the philosophic and exact science of the regeneration of the human soul from its present sense-immersed state into the perfection and nobility of that divine condition in which it was originally created. Secondarily and incidentally, as will presently appear, it carried with it a knowledge of the way in which the life-essence of things belonging to the subhuman kingdoms—the metallic genera in particular—can correspondingly, be intensified and raised to a nobler form than that in which it exists in its present natural state.<sup>6</sup>

We do not know exactly what the nature of alchemy was. Certainly the

alchemists were interested in converting base metals into gold; they were also concerned with the spiritual purification of the adept, but which aspect was of prime importance remains a mystery. The enigmatic nature of alchemical symbolism fulfills its purpose and hides the 'secrets' from the eyes of the uninitiated.

Alchemy, like astrology, finds its basis in Greek philosophy. Its followers adhered to the belief that all matter shares a common origin. Plato expresses this in the Timæus where he speaks of "the receptacle, and in a manner the nurse, of all generation." <sup>7</sup> All matter is formed from the four elements, and these elements are interchangeable:

In the first place, we see that what we just now called water, by condensation, I suppose, becomes stone and earth, and this same element, when melted and dispersed, passes into vapor and air. Air again, when inflamed, becomes fire, and, again, fire when condensed and extinguished, passes once more into the form of air, and once more air, when collected and condensed, produces cloud and mist—and from these, when still more compressed, comes flowing water, and from water comes earth and stones once more—and thus generation appears to be transmitted from one to the other in a circle. Thus then, as the several elements never present themselves in the same form, how can anyone have the assurance to assert positively that any of them, whatever it may be, is one thing rather than another. <sup>8</sup>

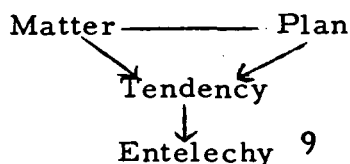
If all matter shares common substance, then it can be changed from one form to another. According to Plato all matter is universal and in some sense non-existent—the property of our misleading perceptions. Aristotle as a scientist altered Plato's formulation, admitted the reality of matter; matter which is informed by ideas produces the reality of nature. The trend in nature is to move from the imperfect to the perfect. Aristotle,



in his "Theory of Forms" analyzes growth and animate nature, applying the principles of growth to inanimate nature, thus explaining all transformations of matter:

Aristotle: Change within the Species

- We have:    1. Matter  
               2. The individualizing tendency  
               3. The plan  
               4. Entelechy



As a seed grows into the perfection of a plant so matter will grow into perfection—in metals perfection is gold—and gold itself will reproduce base metal which will convert itself into gold.<sup>10</sup> The search of the alchemists was for Prima Materia, which was often called sophic or alchemic mercury, which when properly combined with sophic sulphur and sophic salt produced the philosopher's stone.<sup>11</sup> Thomas Vaughan says of Prima Materia:

Thou must therefore . . . understand that all compositions are made by an Active, Intelligent Life; for what was done in the composure of the great world in general, the same is performed in the generation of every creature, and its sperm in particular. I suppose thou dost know that water cannot be contained but in some vessel. The natural vessel which God hath appointed for it is the earth. In earth water may be thickened and brought to a figure; but of itself, and without earth it hath an indefinite flux and is subject to no certain figure whatsoever. Air also is a fleeting and indeterminate substance, but water is his vessel; for water being

figured by means of earth the air is thickened and figured in the water. To ascend higher the air coagulates the liquid fire, and fire incorporated involves and confines the thin light. These are the means by which God unites and compounds the elements into a sperm, for the earth alters the complexion of the water, and makes it viscous and slimy. Such a water must they seek who would produce any magical extraordinary effects; for this spermatic water coagulates with the least heat so that Nature concocts and hardens it into metals.<sup>12</sup>

Vaughan stresses the ubiquity of prime matter; if one has the eyes to see he will discover it everywhere.

The alchemists strove to convert prima materia into the philosopher's stone, which has the power to purify all matter; it converts base metals into gold, it perfects the bodies of animals, it brings vegetables to fruition, and it prolongs man's life. It is the famous elixir of life. Alchemists speak of spiritual perfection, but this perfection incorporates the perfection of the body as well as the soul. The adept who discovers the alchemic secrets is empowered to overcome the corruption of the flesh and therefore returns to a prelapsarian state while on earth with the power, presumably, to exist indefinitely. Longevity rewards the alchemist who succeeds in attaining his goal; it was the quest of the Chinese alchemists, and Rosenkreutz the legendary founder of the Rosicrucians was reputed to have lived an incredibly long life. Once discovered the stone not only purifies its discoverer—who must have moved well up the ladder of perfection himself in order to make the discovery—but it also purifies the world in which he dwells, so he becomes the new Adam inhabiting an uncorrupted universe:

The stone is like the fire which purifies the rotten and soiled (beschissen) skin of the salamander and makes him to be born anew. It purifies the body of all its natural filth, with all new and young forces . . .  
All things which corrupt nature must yield before it. 13

The alchemical process was divided into a number of stages, and this number differs with different alchemists, Ripley gives twelve, Mylius twenty, Andreas seven, Valentine twelve, though different from Ripley's, and Burland lists twelve which he identifies with the signs of the zodiac, but they also differ from those of Ripley. Burland's stages are:

♈	Aries	Calcination
♉	Taurus	Congelation
♊	Gemini	Fixation
♋	Cancer	Solution
♌	Leo	Digestion
♍	Virgo	Distillation
♎	Libra	Sublimation
♏	Scorpio	Separation
♐	Sagittarius	Ceration
♑	Capricornus	Fermentation
♒	Aquarius	Multiplication
♓	Pisces	Projection 14

Albertus Magnus in his discussion of alchemy connects the processes with astrology, he states that:

. . . skilled alchemists work during the waxing of the moon because then they produce purer metals and purer stones, especially when they are really expert and do not hurry their operations but await the opportune time when the process will be aided by celestial virtue. 15

He also states that alchemists must observe time and seasons, "the process of sublimation, for instance, cannot be successfully performed in winter." 16

Alchemy was a syncretic art; it absorbed the teachings of countless religious systems and with little difficulty adopted Christianity. Magnus speaks of alchemy highly, as an experimental science, and few churchmen seemed to speak out against the art. Alchemical symbolism commonly uses that of Christianity, the stone becomes Christ, the union commonly symbolized as combining male and female takes place between Father and Son, blessed by the Holy Ghost, and resurrection culminates the opus magnum. 17

The Lord Christ died indeed, as to the humanity from this world; but he took the same human body again in his resurrection, and lost nothing of it, but the government of the four elements, wherein the wrath, curse, and mortality lieth. So in this philosophical work, the first matter is not annihilated, the curse only is destroyed, in the four elements, and the first life in the one eternal element, is raised up again, and therefore it is now fixed and can abide the fire; a glorious new body is made of the black darkness, in a fair white colour . . . Several things more could be brought forth from Behmen, which would afford many excellent considerations; but these may be sufficient to shew that harmonious analogy, which is between the restoration of fallen man, through Jesus Christ, and the restoration of fallen nature in the philosophic work. 18

Alchemy has disappeared from experimental science as known today, although certain writers speak of modern alchemists —if they exist their art is practised more or less in secret.<sup>19</sup> However, alchemical teachings are contained in the doctrines of Freemasonry and of the Rosicrucians where they are taught as purely spiritual transformations.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> See "The Emerald Table of Hermes," The Lives of the Alchemistical Philosophers (1815; rpt. London: John M. Watkins, 1955), pp. 383-84. And also Titus Burckhardt, Alchemy, trans. William Stoddart (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1971), Chapter Four.

<sup>2</sup> Because of the difficulties in obtaining an accurate and complete copy of the text I have included it in the appendix. My copy is reproduction of the 1602 version from the Folger Library, and neither spelling nor punctuation has been altered. I shall capitalize "Poet" to indicate the anonymous author of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus.

<sup>3</sup> "Timæus," 38c & 38e, The Collected Dialogues of Plato, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York: Pantheon, 1966), pp. 1167-68.

<sup>4</sup> The Summa Theologica, 110, Reply Obj. 1 & 2, Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, ed. Anton C. Pegis (New York: Random House, 1945), Vol. 1, p. 1018.

<sup>5</sup> An anonymous alchemical poem included in Elias Ashmole, Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum (1652; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1967), p. 354.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Leslie Wilmhurst, "Introduction" M. A. Atwood, Hermetic Philosophy and Alchemy (1850; rpt. New York: Julian Press, 1960), p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Timæus, 49c.

8 Timæus, 49c & d.

9 Arthur John Hopkins, Alchemy Child of Greek Philosophy (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1934), pp. 24-25.

10 Hopkins, 27.

11 See John Read, Prelude to Chemistry (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1936), p. 132.

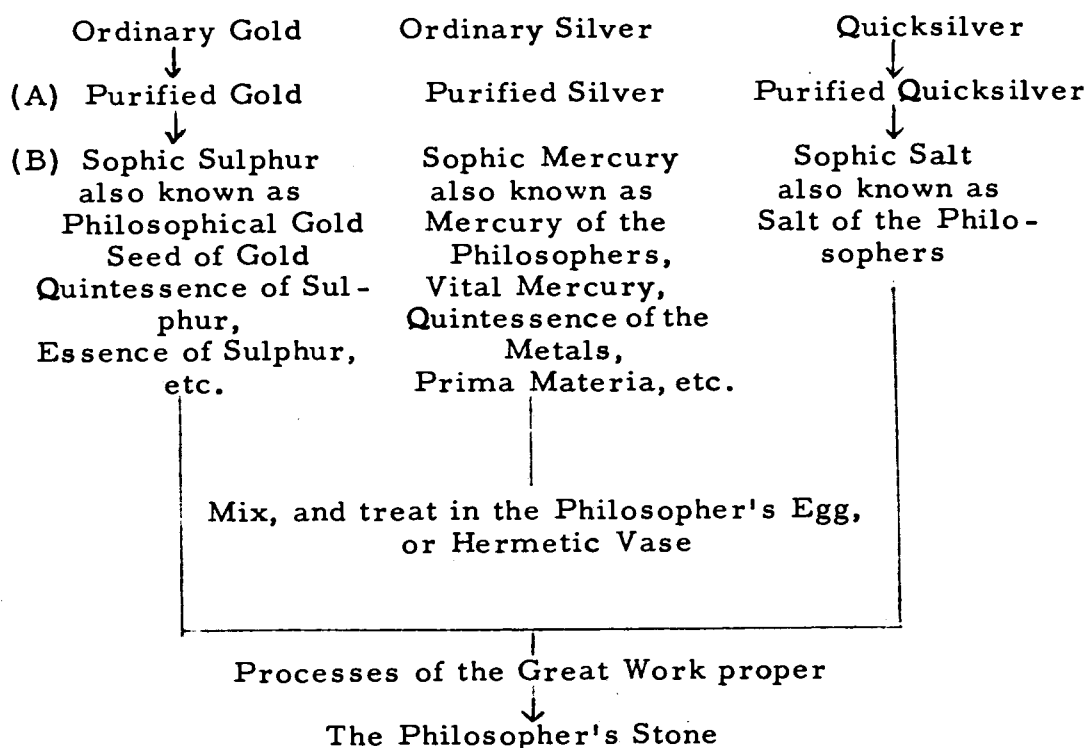


Fig. 11.—Diagrammatic Representation of a Simple Scheme for preparing the Philosopher's Stone: (A) Primitive, and (B) Proximate Materials of the Great Work.

12 Thomas Vaughan, "Lumen de Lumine," The Works of Thomas Vaughan, ed. Arthur Edward Waite (1919; rpt. New York: University Books, 1968), pp. 248-249.

- 13 Henry M. Patcher, Paracelsus: Magic into Science (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 103.
- 14 C. A. Burland, The Arts of the Alchemists (New York: MacMillan, 1968), p. 209. See also Read, p. 136.
- 15 De Causis Elementorum, I, ii, 7, cited by Lynn Thorndike, A History of Magic and Experimental Science (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1964), Vol. II, p. 569.
- 16 Thorndike, II, p. 572.
- 17 See F. Sherwood Taylor, The Alchemists (New York: Henry Schuman, 1949), pp. 152-155.
- 18 Dionisius Andreas Freher, "Of the Analogy in the Process of the Philosophic Work, to the Redemption of Man, through Jesus Christ, according to the Writings of Jacob Behmen," The Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers (1815; rpt. London: John M. Watkins, 1955), pp. 130-131.
- 19 See Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier, The Dawn of Magic, trans. Rollo Myers (London: Panther, 1967), pp. 81-90.



## CHAPTER II

## Sweet-lipt Ouid

PHOEBUS APOLLO (sacred Poesy)  
 Thus taught: for in these ancient Fables lie  
 The mysteries of all Philosophie.  
 George Sandys

The Ovidian Romance,<sup>1</sup> a genre which flourished during the last decade of the sixteenth century, combines Ovidian sensuality with Renaissance spirituality.

It may be strange to use an erotic poem as a means to strive after heavenly knowledge, but the grandeur of the marriage service itself is in a way an attempt to give dignity and purpose to common appetites. This graver sort of poetry provided a necessary balance to the frank sensuality of Ovidian myth, and most contemporary poets felt the need for both kinds of expression. We cannot properly understand Elizabethan romantic poetry without recognizing this.<sup>2</sup>

Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, one of the last poems published in the genre, delineates union through alchemy, others use Neo-platonism, comedy or Christianity. Emphasizing the power of love to unify opposites, these poems draw from a multiplicity of traditions for their symbolism; they are often marred by the scope of their material—the drive for eclecticism resulting in confusion rather than synthesis. The blatant celebration of physical love found throughout the genre does not appeal to many readers, even though it is presented under the guise of morality. Therefore the genre has not been a popular one. Even modern critics have found its apparent frivolity distasteful:

Nothing else was likely then, or is likely even now, to win an attentive reading of these poems. For one thing, their eroticism is hardly more acceptable than it was in Coleridge's day; few English or American readers nowadays will respond to such happily wanton fancies as Venus and Adonis.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Lodge's Scillaes Metamorphoses, the earliest Ovidian Romance, unites Ovid with courtly love conventions forming an uneasy alliance. Heavy-handedly he manipulates stereotyped courtly lovers through a considerably altered Ovidian tale. Where Ovid describes the sea-god in ironic detail:

. . . blue-green creature  
Longhaired, and where his manly thighs should be  
She saw a scaled and twisted fishy member.  
Was he a god? Or some aquatic devil?<sup>4</sup>

Lodge ignores the god's physical appearance focussing on his continual lamentations:

From foorth the channell, with a sorrowing crie  
The Se-god Glaucus (with his hallowed heares  
Wet in the teares of his sad mothers dye)  
With piteous lookes before my face appears;  
For whome the Niphes a mossie coate did frame,  
Embroadered with his Sillas heauenly name.<sup>5</sup>

Even when Lodge moves from the courtly world into the ironic Ovidian world he maintains the formality of courtly conventions without exploiting the humour of the situation; the lightheartedness of the tale becomes stifled under rather pretentious diction. The poem avoids eroticism but its imagery becomes lushly sensual as Glaucus is cured of his consuming passion.

Marlowe, in Hero and Leander, concentrates on the relationship between two lovers, examining their love against a social and religious background which seems to oppose it. The poet describes the lovers in opulent detail, in such superfluity that the sensuality becomes the vehicle for comedy:

Buskins of shels all silvered used she,  
 And brancht with blushing corall to the knee;  
 Where sparrowes pearcht, of hollow pearle and gold,  
 Such as the world would woonder to behold:  
 Those with sweet water oft her handmaid fils,  
 Which as shee went would cherupe through the bils.<sup>6</sup>

The union of the lovers, somewhat undercut by Neptune's attempted rape of Leander as he swims to meet Hero, is almost slapstick:

And then like Mars and Ericine displayed,  
 Both in each others armes chaind as they layd.  
 Againe she knew not how to frame her looke,  
 Or speak to him who in a moment tooke,  
 That which so long so charily she kept,  
 And faine by stealth away she would have crept,  
 And to some corner secretly have gone,  
 Leaving Leander in the bed alone.  
 But as her naked feet were whipping out,  
 He on the suddaine cling'd her so about,  
 That Meremaid-like unto the floore she slid,  
 One halfe appear'd, the other halfe was hid.<sup>7</sup>

By converting a popular tragedy into comedy Marlowe exploits a wide range of possibilities in his poem; he celebrates the joys of earthy, sensuous love while laughing at the ludicrousness of human passion, he deliberately avoids explicit moral judgements while his readers know that the story ends in tragedy and implicitly with passion punished by death. Perhaps Hero and Leander is the most inhuman of all the

poems of the genre; no spiritual values are visible in the poem, and the sensuality is derided. The poem attempts a synthesis of myth, comedy, irony and tragedy, but the union achieved is closer to defeat than triumph, and the poem remains incomplete.

Whereas Marlowe in Hero and Leander laughs, albeit somewhat bitterly at unrestrained sensuality, Shakespeare, in Venus and Adonis, degrades human love into animal passion, and bitterly mocks the repulsiveness of the transformation.

Now quick desire hath caught the yielding prey,  
And glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth;  
Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,  
Paying what ransom the insulter willeth:  
Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so high,  
That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry.<sup>8</sup>

In a poem which delineates both animal and human love the animals display more discreetness and restraint than the humans. Finally the poem seems nearer a Medieval exemplum than an Elizabethan Romance, even though the morality hides behind the guise of extravagant sensuality. Richard Barnfield follows Shakespeare and in Cassandra tells much the same tale—that of sensuality punished. However, the poem lacks the skill and humour of Venus and Adonis.

Two of the poems delineate Neo-platonic ideals of love, Michael Drayton's Endimion and Phoebe and George Chapman's Ovid's Banquet of Sence. In Drayton's poem the mortal Endimion actually transcends the bounds of earthly existence, and through love ascends to heaven where he is initiated into the mysteries of the universe. Moving through sensual love to spiritual love the poem clearly exemplifies

Neo-platonism, but the last half of the poem lacks coherence, and degenerates into a catalogue of philosophic and esoteric lore. The poet, tiring of his endeavor, abruptly concludes:

Yet as a dreame he thought the tyme not long,  
 Remayning ever beautifull and yong,  
 And what in vision there to him be fell,  
 My weary Muse some other time shall tell.<sup>9</sup>

Ovid's Banquet of Sence, in contrast, presents a perfectly coherent philosophical system, in the form of a well-told, compact story. Ovid is shown in the garden watching Corynna bathe. He experiences the scene with all his senses, and then learns that through the senses one is drawn to love, and through love to the higher aspects of life, one of which is art. The poem consistently expresses Neo-platonic and humanistic thinking, and perhaps is the most unified poem of the genre.

Pure love (said she), the purest grace pursues,  
 And there is contact, not by application  
 Of lips or bodies, but of bodies vertues,  
 As in our elementale Nation  
 Stars by theyr powers, which are theyr heat and light  
 Do heavenly works, and that which hath probation  
 By vertuall contact hath the noblest plight,  
 Both for the lasting and affinite  
 It hath with natural diuinitie.<sup>10</sup>

Emphasis on human love, whether that love be physical or spiritual marks the Ovidian Romance, but the traditional roles of male and female are often strangely reversed; many of the women in these poems are aggressive and masculine, and the men are almost always passive and feminine. Often the Ovidian sources do feature rather passive males, but their femininity is not stressed nor are the

homo-erotic elements which are often present in the Elizabethan versions. This combining of sexes seems to reflect the alchemical symbol of union, the hermaphrodite, who carries both sexes. The feminine male appears in Venus and Adonis :

Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,  
And like a bold-faced suitor 'gins to woo him.

"Thrice fairer than myself, (thus she began)  
"The field's chief flower, sweet above compare,  
Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man,  
More white and red than doves or roses are."<sup>11</sup>

in Hero and Leander :

The barbarous Thracian soldier moov'd with nought,  
Was moov'd with him [Leander] and for his favour sought.  
Some swore he was a maid in mans attire,  
For in his lookes were all that men desire,  
A pleasant smiling cheeke, a speaking eye,  
A brow for love to banquet roiallye.<sup>12</sup>

in Endimion and Phoebe :

And Jove oft-times bent to lascivious sport,  
And comming where Endimion did resort,  
Hath courted him, inflamed with desire,  
Thinking some Nymph was cloth'd in boyes attire.<sup>13</sup>

in Scillaes Metamorphosis :

And on her lap her lovely Sonne [Cupid] was plaste,  
Whose beautie all his mothers pompe defaste.

A wreath of roses hem'd his Temples in,  
His tresse was curlde and cleere as beaten gold;  
Haught were his lookes, and lovely was his skin,  
Each part as pure as Heavens eternall mold,

And on his eies a milkewhite wreath was spred,  
Which longst his backe, with prettie pleits did shed.<sup>14</sup>

in Faunus and Melliflora:

Faunus a boy whose amber-stragling haire,  
So strangely trammeld all about his eares,  
The crispe dishevel'd playing with the winde . . .  
If bashfulnesse enveloped his face,  
A prettie palenesse damask't such sweet grace,  
Like Daisie with the Gilliflower distill'd.  
Or Roses on a bed of Lillies spill'd.<sup>15</sup>

in Salmacis and Hermaphroditus:

Phoebus so doted on this rosiat face,  
That he hath oft stole closely from his place,  
When he did lie by fayre Leucothoes side,  
To dally with him [Hermaphroditus] in the vales of Ide.<sup>16</sup>

The word 'hermaphrodite' carried connotations of the monstrous and the bizarre, and was commonly used in Elizabethan times to mean "a person or thing in which any two opposing attributes or qualities are combined," or "an effeminate man or virile woman."<sup>17</sup> The first definition relates to Renaissance philosophy for the hermaphrodite was viewed as one who had reconciled oppositions, and as such was an ideal in much esoteric and philosophic thought. Spenser portrays Venus as a hermaphrodite

in The Faerie Qveene:

The cause why she was couered with a vele,  
Was hard to know, for that her Priests the same  
From peoples knowledge labour'd to concele.  
But sooth it was not sure for womanish shame,  
Nor any blemish, which the worke mote blame;  
But for, they say, she hath both kinds in one,  
Both male and female, both vnder one name:

She syre and mother is her selfe alone,  
 Begets and eke conceiues, ne needeth other none.<sup>18</sup>

And John Donne uses the image as a symbol of unification as he speaks of a newly ordained deacon:

If then the' Astronomers, whereas they spie  
 A new-found Starre, their Opticks magnifie,  
 How brave are those, who with their Engines, can  
 Bring man to heaven, and heaven againe to man?  
 These are thy titles and preheminences.  
 In whom must meet Gods graces, mens offences,  
 And so the heavens which beget all things here,  
 And the 'earth our mother, which these things doth beare,  
 Both these in thee, are in thy Calling knit,  
 And make thee now a blest Hermaphrodite.<sup>19</sup>

Donne's use of the hermaphrodite follows traditional Christian thought; Christ is often portrayed as a mother nursing his people, the angels are neither male nor female, and yet both, man and Christ are joined in a heavenly marriage. The story of the creation, in Genesis i, 27, with its abrupt movement from singular to plural indicates that originally man was androgynous:

So God created man in his own image, in the  
 image of God created he him; male and female  
 created he them.

Pico della Mirandola writes of this passage:

It is not without mystery that He created man  
 [the celestial Adam] male and female. For it is  
 the prerogative of celestial souls that they fulfil  
 simultaneously the two functions of mental con-  
 templation and of physical care, without either  
 of them obstructing or impeding the other. And  
 the ancients in particular, as we may observe also



in the Orphic Hymns, adopted the custom of designating these two forces inherent in the same substance . . . by the names of male and female.<sup>20</sup>

The hermaphroditic figure does not originate with Christianity or even in Greek myth, but can be traced back to some of the earliest creation myths. The division of the first and supreme cause into two parts, one active---the universal agent---and one passive---the universal patient---is one of the most universal of religious beliefs. The Greeks inherited from the Egyptians the idea of a symbolic egg containing a hermaphrodite-being which represented the union of heaven and earth. A similar duality can be found in many of the gods of Eastern religions. In the earliest Greek myths gods procreate without consorts: from Chaos appears Eros, whom tradition has always depicted as androgynous, and Earth, who despite her strong feminine characteristics has the ability to procreate by herself, giving birth to Heaven and the Sea. Zeus, when he gives birth to Athena, is surrounded by the deities of child-birth, indicating bi-sexuality. There are two statues found of Zeus, one the Zeus Labrandeus, where he is represented as a bearded god with many breasts.<sup>21</sup> A cult which worshipped hermaphroditic gods flourished on Cyprus, where the sacrifices to a bearded statue called Aphroditus were celebrated by men and women exchanging clothing in relation to the moon. The figure, usually associated with fertility, has also been attributed to Dionysus and Priapus, and possessed both principles of reproduction---generation and conception. Plato tells of man first created double-sexed, his separation being a punishment for his

arrogance, and the Neo-platonists used the symbol of the Hermaphrodite as an image for universal man, man who had succeeded in reuniting the disparate elements of his nature.

The Greeks embodied the idea of a double-sexed being in a young god, son of Hermes, "the embodiment of universal mind," "the personified Universal Life Principle generally represented by fire,"<sup>22</sup> and Aphrodite, the "Goddess of Desire," "who rose naked from the foam of the sea and, riding on a scallop shell, stepped ashore first on the island of Cythera."<sup>23</sup> Hermaphroditus represents the combined male and female principles. Graves sees the figure as the result of the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy but the religious significance seems to be much deeper. In the Odyssey, Homer, when describing the capture of Aphrodite and Ares in the net forged by Hephaestus, relates an exchange between Apollo and Hermes as they watch the snared couple:

But to Hermes, lordly Zeus-sprung Apollo spoke thus:  
 "Hermes, son of Zeus, good guide and messenger  
 And bestower of blessings, would you really like to be  
 In that bed with golden Aphrodite, in spite of those  
 Unbreakable bonds?"

And the speedy slayer of Argus  
 Replied: "If only I might, my far-darting lord  
 Apollo, I wouldn't object to three times as many  
 Unshakable shackles. Nor would I mind having you gods  
 For an audience—and all the goddesses too—if only  
 I might be in bed with golden Aphrodite!"<sup>24</sup>

However, he never mentions the actual coupling, nor does he allude to the young boy who was the result of the union.<sup>25</sup> Later writers assumed that Aphrodite and Hermes did couple—though not in such difficult

circumstances :

A birth like that of Priapus is ascribed by some writers of myths to Hermaphroditus, as he has been called, who was born of Hermes and Aphrodite and received a name which is a combination of those of both his parents. Some say that this Hermaphroditus is a god and appears at certain times among men, and that he is born with a physical body which is a combination of that of a man and that of a woman, in that he has a body which is beautiful and delicate like that of a woman, but has the masculine quality and vigour of a man. But there are some who declare that such creatures of two sexes are monstrosities, and coming rarely into the world as they do they have the quality of pre-saging the future, sometimes for evil and sometimes for good.<sup>26</sup>

Although there is a temple of Hermes and Aphrodite near the famous spring of Salmacis, there is little mythic evidence which connects her with the figure of Hermaphroditus. Ovid appears to have linked the two figures himself, rather than utilizing existent myth:

The evil reputation of the Carian spring was not invented by Ovid. Ennius already knew of it . . . On the other hand, we do not know whether before Ovid any link had existed between these malignant properties and the origin of Hermaphrodite. Probably Ovid introduced new matter here. Greek legends unanimously represent the double god as the outcome of a birth not a metamorphosis; popular beliefs see him as a beneficent being, protector of sexual union, and by no means as a male diminished in his virility.<sup>27</sup>

Ovid tells the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus in slightly under a hundred lines. Hermaphroditus, the offspring of Hermes and Aphrodite, is a beautiful young boy, not a mythic double-sexed being:

Mercurio puerum diva Cythereide natum  
 naides Idaeis enutrivere sub antris,  
 cuius erat facies, in qua materque paterque  
 cognosci possent . . . 28

Ovid begins the tale by stressing that the fountain's power renders men impotent, therefore his view of the unification is negative. A hermaphrodite, in his interpretation is a monster rather than a transcendent being:

Unde sit infamis, quare male fortibus undis  
 Salmacis enervet tactosque remolliat artus,  
 discite. causa latet, vis set notissima fontis.<sup>29</sup>  
 (IV: 285-287)

The fountain of the nymph, which Hermaphroditus finds on his travels, is not only remarkably pure water, but it is surrounded by plants which are always green:

. . . videt hic stagnum lucentis ad imum.  
 usque solum lymphae; non illic canna palustris  
 nec sterile ulvae nec acuta cuspide iunci;  
 perspicuus liquor est; stagni tamen ultima vivo  
 caespite cinguntur semperque virentibus herbis.<sup>30</sup>  
 (IV: 297-301)

However, although the fountain is pure the nymph Salmacis is not. She becomes enamoured with the boy, attempts to seduce him, fails, and finally leaps on him as he bathes in the fountain, praying to the gods for their unification. The answer to her prayer seems rather literal — a curse rather than a blessing — for the two grow together into an impotent being. Hermaphroditus also prays to the gods, asking that his parents give the fountain the power to enervate all men who bathe

therein. His wish is granted:

"Ergo ubi se liquidas, quo vir descenderat, undas  
semimarem fecisse videt mollitaque in illis  
membra, manus tendens, sed iam non voce virili  
Hermaphroditus ait: 'nato date munera vestro,  
et pater et genetrix, amborum nomen habenti:  
quisquis in hos fontes vir venerit, exeat inde  
semivir et tactis subito mollescat in undis!'  
motus uterque parens nati rata verba biformis  
fecit et incesto fontem medicamine tinxit." <sup>31</sup>  
(IV: 380-388)

Ovid carefully avoids moralization in his tales, telling his story with lightness and sophistication. However, it remains a tale of crime and punishment, of luxury and licentiousness leading to emasculation. Modern commentators view it as such, as did Medieval and Renaissance ones. Brooks Otis sees Salmacis as the embodiment of a "blind sexual urge," <sup>32</sup> and her sexuality has an unnatural quality:

. . . the metamorphoses . . . is a direct result of the nymph's uncontrollable eroticism. The major events are quite human, even though verging on the pathological; Salmacis is both literally and clinically a nymphomaniac. <sup>33</sup>

L. P. Wilkinson, though less explicit, also views the story as expressing "abnormal sexuality."

He [Ovid] was certainly conscious of the protagonists as types of sexual abnormality, as he shows, for instance, by emphasizing the vanity of Salmacis, which would emerge as a trait of the fused Hermaphrodite; <sup>34</sup> but they are only that, not symbols of something wider.

If modern writers read the tale morally, it is not surprising that the Medieval and Renaissance commentators also moralized it, generally

imputing the same meaning as Wilkinson and Otis, although not in Freudian terms.

Though Ovid in the early centuries of Christianity was less popular than Virgil, with the increasing interest in allegorical interpretation, Ovid's Metamorphoses was regarded as a vast repository of religious exempla. A set of examples from the poem was used for the edification of nuns—the goddesses are nuns, the gods are the clergy, their marriages the chaste meetings of the two:

Abbatissarum genus et grex omnis earum  
Sunt Pallas plae, tira virginis ora Dianae,  
Juno, Venus, Vesta, Thetis; observantia vestra  
Est exressa satis culta tantae deitatis. . . 35

According to Théodulfe d'Orléans the truth in Ovid must be searched out, for it is hidden by his apparent frivolity:

. . . te modo, Naso loquax  
In quorum dicitis quamquam sint frivola multa  
Plurima sub falso tegmine vera latent.<sup>36</sup>

The search was extensive, and the tradition of reading Ovid allegorically continued well into the Renaissance, for although the allegorical interpretation altered, changing from essentially Christian to a much more eclectic mythological and occult basis, the method of reading remained much the same.

The widely read Medieval Ovid, Ovide Moralisé, a French translation, gave an extensive commentary to each of the tales. The commentary on Salmacis and Hermaphroditus begins with a short discourse on anatomy. The fountain represents the womb of woman,

divided into seven chambers which receive or collect the generative seed. The three chambers on the right conceive male children, the three on the left, females, and in the chamber in the middle, hermaphrodites. These hermaphrodites can use either sex, according to Tiresias, "duquel est parle cy devant, combien que leur sexe feminin soit plus plus puissant que le masculin quant a faire l'evre naturelle de luxure."<sup>37</sup> Salmacis can be understood as the world, replete with "orgue, cointrie, vanite, boban, envie, avarice, paresse, luxure et autre vices horribles abhominables a Diex" (p. 146).<sup>38</sup> She is the whore of Babylon who traps young innocent men with her charms. Few men can escape her, for her charms are so perilous that even the wise and valiant will probably be ensnared.

Caxton translated the Metamorphoses in 1480, though only the last five books have survived. Delightful to read, they depart radically from the original. He probably used a French text for his copy text, and he embellished the tales with copious "historical" material regarding Troy. Whether Caxton's version of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus was available to the poet who wrote the 1602 version cannot be verified, however there were three Elizabethan versions of the story. Arthur Golding published his translation of the Metamorphoses in 1567, and this was the version which was most accessible to the Elizabethans. For although they probably had all read the original in their school-days a translation is easier to work with than the original Latin when adapting a story. Golding in his introductory epistle explains that not all men are "to be accounted men," only those who live "in vertues

law." The others are like beasts, only worse, because they have rejected God-given reason. He then proceeds to give the moral for each of the tales.

Hermaphrodite and Salmacis declare that idlenesse  
Is cheefest nurce and cherisher of all voluptuousnesse,  
And that voluptuous lyfe breedes sin: which linking all toogither  
Make men too bee effeminate, unweeldy, weake and lither. 39

In "The Preface" Golding explains the meaning of the heathen names of "feyned Godds" in case some should take offence when they read of Pagan Gods instead of the Christian one. His interpretations might well be astrological ones, for the gods and the stars named after them are associated with the same sets of ideas.

But if wee yeeld too fleshlye lust, too lucre, or too wrath,  
Or if that Envy, Gluttony, or Pryde the maystry hath,  
Or any other kynd of sinne the thing the which wee serve,  
Too bee accounted for our God most justly dooth deserve,  
Then must wee thinke the learned men that did theis names

frequent,

Some further things and purposes by those devises ment.  
By Jove and Juno understand all states of princely port:  
By Ops and Saturne auncient folke that are of elder sort:  
By Phoebus yoong and lusty brutes of hand and courage stout:  
By Mars the valeant men of warre that love too feight it out:  
By Pallas and the famous troupe of all the Muses nyne,  
Such folke as in the sciences and vertuous artes doo shyne.  
By Mercurie the suttle sort that use too filch and lye,  
With theeves, and Merchants whoo too gayne theyr travell doo

applye..

By Bacchus all the meaner trades and handycraftes are ment:  
By Venus such as of the fleshe too filthie lust are bent,  
By Neptune such as keepe the seas: By Phebe maydens chast,  
And Pilgrims such as wandringly theyr tyme in travell waste.  
By Pluto such as delve in mynes, and Ghostes of persones dead:  
By Vulcane smythes and such as woorke in yron, tynne or lead.  
By Hecat witches, Conjurers, and Necromancers reede:  
With all such vayne and devilish artes as superstition breede.  
By Satyres, Sylvanes, Nymphes and Faunes with other such  
besyde,



The playne and simple country folke that every where abyde.  
(53-76)

Despite this rather overwhelming preface, Golding remains relatively faithful to Ovid in his translation of the text, confining his moralizing to his preface. Once he has stated his pious intentions he proceeds to enjoy the tales' sensuality. His major divergence from Ovid is sensual embellishment. Ovid's Salmacis expresses her desires rather bluntly:

haec tibi sive aliqua est, mea sit furtiva voluptas,  
seu nulla est, ego sim, thalamumque ineamus eundem.<sup>40</sup>  
(IV: 327-328)

Golding's nymph delineates her desires more explicitly:

Now if thou have alreedy one, let me by stelth obtaine  
That which shall pleasure both of us. Or if thou doe remaine  
A Maiden free from wedlocke bonde, let me then be thy spouse,  
And let us in the bridelie bed our selves together rouse.  
(VI: 398-401)

Ovid merely outlines the struggle of the pair in the pool:

perstat Atlantiades sperataque gaudia nymphae  
denegat, illa premit commissaque corpore toto  
sicut inhaerebat, 'pugnes licet, inprobe,' dixit,  
'non tamen effugies.'<sup>41</sup>  
(VI: 368-371)

Golding describes the same scene in terms of sexual intercourse:

But Atlas Nephew still persistes, and utterly denies  
The Nymph to have hir hoped sport: she urges him likewise,  
And pressing him with all hir weight, fast cleaving to him still,  
Strive, struggle, wrest and writhe (she said) thou froward boy  
thy fill:  
Doe what thou canst thou shalt not scape.  
(VI: 456-460)

If the 1602 Poet did use Golding, and there are strong indications in wording that he did, then he deliberately altered the text. Salmacis is less wanton than she is in other translations, and her virginity rather than her lustfulness is stressed.

In 1565 Thomas Peend published The Pleasant Fable of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis . . . With a Morall in English Verse. He had begun a translation of the Metamorphoses, but evidently discontinued his endeavour when Golding's version was published. He inserts a moral at the conclusion of each tale stating, like Golding and his Medieval predecessors, that although the tale seems to be loose and immoral, beneath its surface glibness lies a deep moral statement:

Hermaphroditus represents the youth who has just outgrown childhood, is innocent and ignorant of vice, and is just starting out into the world. The nymph Salmacis represents all kinds of vice which are present in the world. The spring represents "the pleasant sport, that doth content the wyll." The young man, thinking everything innocent because he is himself so, is deceived into sin. Hermaphroditus' fault is that he pursued his will, not reason. Peend places particular emphasis upon the nature of the spring, and it is perhaps because of his allegorical reading of the story that he has made it a lake of considerable size.<sup>42</sup>

Peend had obviously read Ovide Moralisé for most of his comments come almost directly from the Medieval exegesis.

Abraham Fraunce, in his version of the story published in 1592, is the first to stress the femininity of Hermaphroditus, writing after the fashion of the Ovidian Romances popular at the time:

Hermaphroditus a far; so like a God, to a Goddes;  
 That shee wisht him a God, yet feard that he might be a Goddes  
 But when man-like roabes declar'd that he was not a woman. .<sup>43</sup>

He elaborates Salmacis' lustiness:

If thou haue any wife, let mee be thy loue for a short time,  
 If thou haue no wife, let mee be thy friend for a long time:  
 Whether husband bound, or whether free as a batchler  
 Give me a lawfull joy, or priuily doe me a pleasure.  
 (49v)

But when Salmacis once had seen fayre Hermaphroditus  
 Stript stark naked, alas her loue was turned to a lusting,  
 Lust to a rage, and rage to a fire, and fire to a flaming.  
 (50r)

The gods answer Hermaphroditus' prayer, and for a "worthy reuenge"  
 (50v) charm the fountain so that he who there bathes emerges a "halfe-  
 man" (50v). Fraunce like the earlier translators appends a moral com-  
 mentary to his work, and part of this commentary, which is in Italian,  
 comes almost directly from Ovide Moralisé, explaining the seven com-  
 partments in the womb:

La secreta intelligentia di questa sauole, secundo  
 alcuni, e che nelle matrici delle donne sono sette  
 le stanze che rioglieno il seme dell' huomo: tre  
 dalla parte destra, che producono i masche, e tre  
 dalla sinistra che producono le femine, & vna nel  
 mezzo, laquale vicoglienda il seme, ha forza di  
 produrre l'uno e l'altro sesso insieme e per questa  
 cagione, vogliono dire, che Hermaphrodito nasceffe  
 di Mercurio hauendo Venere raccolto . . .<sup>44</sup>  
 (50r)

Fraunce interprets the story in terms of astrological symbolism, with-  
 out explaining his reason for speaking of Venus and Mercury as planets  
 rather than gods. Such an interpretation must have been natural to his

readers :

Elpinas was as briefe as Ergastus had been tedious in his tale of his two wantons. If qd he, at any mans birth, there be a coniunction of Venus and Mercurie, it maketh him neither man nor woman, both woman and man, giuen to inordinate and unrdatural lust, noted by Salmacis. For these two planets are so repugnant, that they can neuer be well conioyned; sith Venus is all for the body, and Mercury only for the minde.

(50r)

Contemporary astrological treatises do not support Fraunce's assertions regarding the conjunction of Venus and Mercury. The conjunction of mind and body would seem to be a positive union, leading to enrichment rather than to inordinate lust.

George Sandys translated the Metamorphses in 1621, adding a commentary in 1632. His version reflects Renaissance eclecticism, using Greek myth, Roman authors and Christian morality to explicate the text. The union of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus in his version of the tale seems a more positive one than in most previous translations, and perhaps Sandys was influenced by the 1602 version. The nymph's lustiness is not overlooked in Sandys, but placed against an almost paradisaical vision of her fountain:

But, living Turf upon the border grew;  
Whose ever -Spring no blasting Winter knew.<sup>45</sup>

This fountain undoes manly strength, but with a "soule-softning touch," (IV: 290-291, p.179). Salmacis wraps serpent-like around her prey, but once the two become one they have two forms in a single body, echoing the common representation of the rebis in alchemical writings :

. . . Even in that space  
 Their cleaving bodies mix: both have one face.  
 As when wee two divided scions joyne,  
 And see them grow together in one rine:  
 So they, by such a strict embracement glew'd,  
 Are now but one, with double forme indew'd.  
 No longer he a Boy, nor she a maid;  
 But neither, and yet either, might be said.

(VI: 373-380, p. 182)

Sandys comments on these lines, stating that:

Salmacis clings about the surprized youth like  
 a serpent till both become one body. The reason  
 why lovers so strictly imbrace; is to incorporate  
 with the bloved, which sith they cannot, can never  
 be satisfied.

(p. 207)

Presumably it follows then that since this particular pair of lovers  
 did succeed in their attempt to incorporate that they have regained the  
 prelapsarian state. Sandys cites Plato to explain the original division  
 into the sexes:

Plato recites a fable, how man at the first was  
 created double, and for his arrogancy dissected  
 into male and female: the reason of their affected  
 conjunction, as coveting to returne to their  
 originall: an obscure notion. . . of Eva's being  
 taken out of the side of Adam. So Hermaphro-  
ditus and Salmacis retaine in one person both  
 sexes: of whom the like are called Hermaphrodites.

(p. 208)

Hermaphroditus seems undismayed by the change and admires his new  
 image:

Hermaphroditus at himselfe admires:  
 Who halfe a female from the spring retires,

His manly lims now softened; and thus prayes,  
With such a voice as neither sex betrayes:

(VI: 381-384, p. 182)

Sandys stresses the softening effect of this union which could refer to the idea that the harsh masculine aspects were related to the animal side of man's nature. That Hermaphroditus' voice betrays no sex links him to the angels who were neither male nor female. Sandys in his commentary discusses the positive and negative aspects of the myth without clearly distinguishing them. He concludes with an astrological interpretation which assumes that his readers were accustomed to moving from gods to planets when reading allegorically. His interpretation of Mercury was an accepted one in Renaissance England:

Hermaphroditus is fained to be the sonne of Mercury; because whereas the other are called either masculine or foeminine, of their more or lesse vigour, heat, drouth, or humidity; the Planet of Mercury participats of both natures; hot and dry, by reason of his vicinity to the Sunne, removed never above 20 Degrees; cold and moist, by the neighborhood of the Moone & the Earth: conforming himselfe also to the auspicious or malevolent aspects of those Planets with whom he joyneth his influence.

(p. 209)

The 1602 Poet alters Ovid considerably; expanding the original one hundred lines into almost a thousand, altering the character of Salmacis, embellishing the story with lavish quasi-mythic material, and changing the significance of the fountain's power. The Poet follows Ovid relatively closely in the episodes where he describes the relationship between Salmacis and the young boy, but he departs

radically from Ovidian material whenever he discusses Salmacis' extraneous love involvements with various immortals. Although the Poet gives the traditional portraits of these gods, he, like so many other writers in this genre, tends to rely on his own creativity rather than on Greek or Roman myth when telling his stories. Salmacis is connected with some of the most important gods of the Greek pantheon, ones with whom she never associated in Classical times. The Poet underplays the nymph's negative qualities stressed by Ovid and his translators. Ovid focuses on the nymph's indolence and laziness (lines 306-314), whereas the Poet counterbalances the nymph's reluctance to leave her stream and hunt with her companions by stating that Diana's sports are "sauage and bloody," (lines 361-376). From the epigraph we know that Salmacis gains her desires without sweat or blood, and later we learn that she is anything but lazy when she returns the wheels of Phoebus. Her laziness reminds us of Venus who was forbidden to work by the gods; the similarities to the Goddess of Love are stressed throughout the poem. Ovid describes Salmacis' encounter with Hermaphroditus in her fountain in a series of extremely negative comparisons:

denique nitentem contra elabique volentem  
 implicat ut serpens, quam regia sustinet ales  
 sublimemque rapit: pendens caput illa pedesque  
 adligat et cauda spatiantes implicat alas;  
 utve solent hederæ longos intexere truncos,  
 utque sub aequoribus deprensus polypus hostem  
 continet ex omni dimissis parte flagellis.<sup>46</sup>

(VI: 361-367)

The 1602 Poet only compares her embrace to that of the ivy:

The flattering Iuy who did euer see  
 Inclaspe the huge trunk of an aged tree,  
 Let him behold the young boy as he stands,  
 Inclaspt in wanton Salmacis's hands:  
 (869-873)

He omits the similes of the serpent and the sea creature.

The most basic change is partially obscured by the Poet himself. He omits any reference to the evil name of the fountain, or its power to make men impotent but instead speaks of the "spotless soules" in one body, saying that he who bathes in the fountain "strait turnes Hermaphrodite" because of its "strange enchantment." The transformation at the poem's conclusion differs considerably from Ovid. Whereas Ovid speaks of Hermaphroditus with weakened members and a girlish voice having met his doom, the Elizabethan poet speaks of "the set voice of neither man nor mayd" and speaks of the gods "blessing" the fountain. Hermaphroditus in the 1602 version asks that any bather in the fountain:

May neuermore a manly shape retaine,  
 But halfe a virgine may returne againe.  
 (II. 917-918)

He hints that the male had at one time the female within him but that this state had been lost. If so, why is this state a blessing, rather than a curse? The Poet seems deliberately to mislead his reader, hinting at the Ovidian story while telling one which is radically different:

I sing the fortunes of a luckless payre,  
 Whose spotlesse soules now in one body be:  
 For beauty still is Prodromus to care,  
 Crost by the sad starres of natiutie;  
 (The Author to the Reader)



The transformation appears to be a negative one, but for those who can understand the secret of the "strange enchantment" it is actually a positive transformation. Perhaps this is why the Poet chose to remain anonymous; he writes a poem which to the uninitiated appears to be merely another bawdy Ovidian Romance, while to the adept a far more serious tale is told, one which contains teachings which must be deliberately hidden from the eyes of the vulgar.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> A chronological table of the genre follows. Although there are other poems which could probably, for various reasons, be included these are the major poems. The information is taken from the Chronology given in Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry (New York, Norton, 1963).

## Chronology of Ovidian Romances

- 1598 Thomas Lodge, Scillaes Metamorphosis. (re-issued in 1610 as A Most Pleasant Historie of Glaucus and Scilla).
- 1593 Christopher Marlowe, Hero and Leander. (entered, September, 1593, but no edition extant before 1598).
- 1593 William Shakespeare, Venus and Adonis.
- 1594 T(homas) H(eywood), Oenone and Paris.
- 1595 Richard Barnfield, The Legend of Cassandra.
- 1595 George Chapman, Ouids banquet of sence.
- 1595 Michael Drayton, Endimion and Phoebe: Ideas Latmus.
- 1595 Thomas Edwards, Cephalus and Procris.
- 1600 John Weever, Faunus and Melliflora, or, the original of our English saytres.
- 1602 Salmacis and Hermaphroditus.
- 1618 James Shirley, Ecco and Narcissus (not published until 1646).

<sup>2</sup> M. M. Reese, ed., Elizabethan Verse Romances (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> F. T. Prince, "Introduction," The Poems, The Arden Edition of The Works of William Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1960), p. xvii.

<sup>4</sup> Ovid, The Metamorphoses, trans. Horace Gregory (New York, 1958), p. 383.

<sup>5</sup> The Complete Works of Thomas Lodge, Vol. 1 (New York, 1963), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Hero and Leander, Elizabethan Minor Epics, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), Sestiad II, lines 31-36.

<sup>7</sup> Hero and Leander, Sestiad II, lines 305-316.

<sup>8</sup> Venus and Adonis, Poems, ed. Prince, lines 547-552.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Drayton, Endimion and Phoebe, The Works of Michael Drayton, ed. J. William Hebel, Vol. L (Oxford, 1931), p. 155, lines 989-992.

<sup>10</sup> George Chapman, Ouids Banquet of Sence, Donno, Stanza 92.

<sup>11</sup> Venus and Adonis, lines 5-10.

<sup>12</sup> Hero and Leander, First Sestiad, lines 81-86.

<sup>13</sup> Endimion and Phoebe, lines 93-96.

<sup>14</sup> Scylla's Metamorphosis, lines 515-522.

15 John Weever, Faunus and Melliflora, Donno, lines 29-42.

16 Salmacis and Hermaphroditus (London: John Hodgets, 1602), lines 35-38.

17 As defined in entries for the period in the Oxford English Dictionary.

18 Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, Poetical Works, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), III, x, 41. See also the original ending of Book III where the embracing lovers, Amoret and Scudamore, are compared to "that faire Hermaphrodite."

19 John Donne, "To Mr. Tilman after he had taken orders," The Complete Poetry of John Donne, ed. John T. Shawcross (Garden City, New York: Anchor, 1967), p. 386.

20 Heptaplus II, vi, as quoted by Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance (New York: Norton, 1968), pp. 212-213.

21 Marie Delcourt, Hermaphrodite, trans. Jennifer Nicholson (London, 1961), p. 18.

22 Manly P. Hall, An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Cabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy (Los Angeles, 1959), p. XXXIX.

23 Robert Graves, The Greek Myths, Vol. 1 (Middlesex, 1962), p. 49.

24 Homer, The Odyssey, trans. Ennis Rees (New York: Modern Library, 1960), Book VIII, p. 127.

25 See the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition. The article goes on to explain that the myth of Hermaphroditus as the son of Hermes and Aphrodite is due to a mistake in the etymology of the names. A Hermae was a phallic-like statue dedicated to Hermes, and worshipped as a monument. In later times these statues began to be used as columns upon which were placed statues of gods and goddesses. The word hermaphroditus originally meant the Hermae of Aphroditus.

26 Diodorus Siculus, trans. C.H. Oldfather (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953), Vol. II, p. 361. See also Robert Graves, The Greek Myths, Vol. 1, p. 68.

27 Delcourt, p. 54. Sandys in his commentary to Ovid refers to Strabo's discussion of the fountain:

In Caria is the fountaine of Salmacis, I knowe not how infamous, for making the drinker effeminate: since luxury neither proceeds from the quality of the ayre nor water, but rather from riches and intemperance. The Carians therefore addicted to sloath and filthy delights were called Hermaphrodites; not in that of both sexes, but for defiling themselves with either.

Ovid's Metamorphosis, ed. Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. 209.

28 Ovid, Metamorphoses, ed. & trans., Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), IV, 288-291.

All the Latin quotations from Ovid will be taken from this edition. However Miller's translation seems to have altered the tone of the original considerably and so I will not use it, using instead that of Mary M. Innes, The Metamorphoses of Ovid (Middlesex: Penguin, 1970).

Translation:

Once a son was born to Mercury and the goddess Venus, and he was brought up by the naiads in Ida's caves. In his features, it was easy to trace a resemblance to his father and to his mother. p. 101.

29 Translation:

Listen and I will tell you how the fountain Salmacis acquired its ill repute and why its enervating waters weaken and soften the limbs they touch. This property of the fountain is well known, but the reason for it has remained obscure. Innes, p. 101.

30 Translation:

In this region he spied a pool of water, so clear that he could see right to the bottom. There were no marshy reeds around it, no barren sedge or sharp-spiked rushes. The water was like crystal, and the edges of the pool were ringed with fresh turf, and grass that was always green. Innes, p. 102

31 Translation:

When he saw that the clear water into which he had descended as a man had made him but half a man, and that his limbs had become enfeebled by its touch, Hermaphroditus stretched out his hands and prayed---even his voice was no longer masculine ---"O my father, and my mother, grant

this prayer to your son, who owes his name to you both: if any man enter this pool, may he depart hence no more than half a man, may he suddenly grow weak and effeminate at the touch of these waters." Both his parents were moved with compassion, and granted this request of their child, who was not but half male, and half female. They infected the pool with this horrible magic power. Innes, p. 104.

32 Ovid as an Epic Poet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 270.

33 Otis, p. 157.

34 Ovid Surveyed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 97.

35 Jean Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods (New York: Harper, 1961), pp. 91-92.

Translation:

The abbesses and their flock are obviously Pallas, virgin Diana, Juno, Venus, Vesta, Thetis; the reverence due to you is expressed clearly enough by the cult of so great a deity.

36 Joseph Engel, Études Sur L'Ovide Moralisé (Batavia: J. B. Wolters, 1945), p. 67. The quotation is taken from M. Liebeschutz, Fulgentius Metaforalis, p. 21.

Translation:

Although you and you alone eloquent Ovid have said many lighthearted things under such a cover lies concealed a multitude of truths.

37 Ovide Moralisé en Prose, ed. C. De Boer (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1954), pp. 145-146.

Translation:

Of which was said previously how the feminine was more powerful than the masculine in so far as performing the natural task of lewdness.

38 Ovide Moralisé en Prose, p. 146.

Translation:

pride, vainglory, vanity, arrogance, envy, avarice, sloth, lechery, and other horrible vices abominable to God.

39 Arthur Golding, The XV Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis, ed. W. H. D. Rouse, Shakespeare's Ovid (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), p. 3.

40 Translation: Innes, p. 102:

If there is such a girl, let me enjoy our love in secret: but if there is not, then I pray that I may be your bride, and that we may enter upon marriage together.

41 Translation: Innes, p. 103:

Atlas' descendant resisted stubbornly, and refused the nymph the pleasure she hoped for; but she persisted clinging to him, her whole body pressed against his.

42 Hallett Smith, Elizabethan Poetry (1952; rpt. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1968). I have not seen a



copy of Peend. It has not been put on microfilm in the STC series, and to my knowledge has not appeared in print elsewhere.

<sup>43</sup> The Countesse of Pembrokes Yuichurche, Part Three (London, 1592), p. 49<sup>r</sup>

<sup>44</sup> The following translation is my own, and rather loose:

The secret wisdom of this story, according to some, is that in the womb of any woman are seven chambers, the three on the right side are the source of males, the three on the left side produce females, and the one in the middle is that which possesses the power to produce both sexes together, and for this reason it is said to be the place where Hermaphroditus was conceived by Venus from Mercury.

<sup>45</sup> George Sandys, Ovid's Metamorphosis, ed. Karl K. Hulley & Stanley T. Vandersall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 180, IV: 300-01.

<sup>46</sup> Translation: Innes, p. 103:

Finally, in spite of all his efforts to slip from her grasp, she twined around him, like a serpent when it is being carried off into the air by the king of birds: for, as it hangs from the eagle's beak, the snake coils round his head and talons and with its tail hampers his beating wings. She was like the ivy encircling tall tree trunks, or the squid which holds fast the prey it has caught in the depths of the sea, by wrapping its tentacles round on every side.

## CHAPTER III

## The Fortunes of a Lucklesse Payre

This is true, and far distant from a lie; whatsoever is below, is like that which is above; and that which is above, is like that which is below: by this are acquired and perfected the miracles of the one thing.

The Emerald Table of Hermes

Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, published anonymously in 1602, was later attributed to Francis Beaumont, in several editions by Lawrence Blaikelocke dating from 1639. No contemporary evidence exists which substantiates Beaumont's authorship, and the fact that he was probably less than eighteen when the poem was published—and the genre tended to be popular ten years earlier—casts doubt upon his authorship. If the poem The Metamorphosis of Tobacco, published anonymously in 1602, is indeed by Sir John Beaumont—Francis' elder brother—and if the initials F. B. do indeed stand for Francis Beaumont, then Francis alludes to himself as a novice in the art of poetry, "My new-borne Muse assaies her tender wing . . ." at the same time as he presumably is writing or has written a sophisticated poem of a thousand lines.<sup>1</sup> If we consider the internal evidence of Beaumont's authorship, his later poetry is more ponderous, and much less skillful than Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, and it seems unlikely that the poet's more mature works would be inferior to his first endeavors. The poem's later editions are far from trustworthy. Blaikelocke was neither a fastidious publisher nor a scrupulous one. He was forced to alter the initials in

the prefatory material to support his claim of Beaumont's authorship—he changed W. B. and I. B. to F. B., A. F. to J. F. thus using the initials of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher. In the 1660 edition, which was expanded from that of 1640, there are additional poems by a variety of sixteenth century writers, Donne, Shirley, Ben Jonson, and Waller, all of which are assigned to Beaumont. None of this evidence completely disproves Blaikelocke's claim to Beaumont's authorship, but it certainly casts considerable doubt on that claim.<sup>2</sup>

The text of Blaikelocke's editions is full of errors, and often the textual changes render the lines meaningless. In his version the first line of "To the Author" reads: "The matchless lust of a fair poesy," which may be in keeping with the tone of the poem but the original "The matchless lustre of faire poesie," does have more meaning. The line "If any's wish with thy sweet bed be blest," should read "If any wife with thy sweet bed be blest," and the last couplet of the verses "The Author to the Reader" is rendered:

I hope my poem is so lively writ,  
That thou wilt turn half-mad with reading it.

which obscures the irony and pun of the original lines:

I hope my poem is so lively writ,  
That thou wilt turn halfe-mayd with reading it.

Rev. Alexander Dyce included the poem in his 1846 editions of The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher,<sup>3</sup> assigning the poem to Beaumont as if the authorship was certain. Although Dyce knew of the 1602 version

he did not bother to examine it, using Blaikelocke's version as a copy text. The article included in the Shakespeare Society's Papers 3, published the following year,<sup>4</sup> refutes Dyce's unquestioning acceptance of Beaumont's authorship. As a further refutation of Dyce the 1602 text is reproduced—the first time it had been printed since its original publication. Although this edition is not without its errors, it is the only version using the 1602 text which prints the prefatory verses and the epigram. It does, however, divide the poem into thirty-three paragraphs, whereas no divisions exist in the original.

Salmacis and Hermaphroditus appeared for the first time in this century in 1951, edited by Gwyn Jones.<sup>5</sup> The poem, published in a separate volume is illustrated by John Buckland-Wright, and if these illustrations reflect the attitudes of Miss Jones towards the poem then she certainly has a distorted image of the two main characters. Miss Jones, in her introduction discusses the history of the text, branding the editor of 1847 as "highly inaccurate." She omits the prefatory verses with the comment that they "are neither better nor worse than their kind," but condescends to print sixteen lines from this material for the "curious." Although Miss Gwyn Jones has apparently found six or seven errors in the 1847 text—gross mistakes such as "blessing" instead of "blesseth" she herself has omitted seventy lines of the poem, which she considers irrelevant, but which are essential for its interpretation. She states that her paragraphing is modern, though fails to note that there are no paragraphs in the 1602 version.

The poem is included in two anthologies of Elizabethan poetry

published in the 1960's. The first, Elizabethan Minor Epics, edited by Elizabeth Story Donno,<sup>6</sup> from the 1602 copy in the Folger Shakespeare Library, gives none of the prefatory material. The editor fails to inform her readers that this material has been omitted. She attributes the poem to Beaumont and as she does not indicate that there is any doubt regarding such an imputation, either she doesn't understand the critical controversy or deliberately misleads her readers. The poem itself is printed with paragraph divisions. The second, included in the volume Elizabethan Narrative Verse, edited by Nigel Alexander<sup>7</sup> from the Bodleian copy of 1602, is also attributed to Beaumont, though he overlooks any allusion to the doubtfulness of his authorship. He prefaces the poem with "The Author to the Reader" but makes no reference to the sixty lines which precede this verse. He omits all paragraph divisions, though makes no note that the divisions of preceding editions were erroneous.<sup>8</sup>

Assuming that the prefatory material is an important part of the poem, and I see little reason to ignore it, then we should find expressed in it the Poet's attitudes towards his material. We also should find the opinions of his friends towards it. Even if the Poet wrote the commendatory verses himself, they tell us how he felt others should respond to his work.

The epigraph to the poem: "Salmacida spolia sine sanguine & sudore," (The spoils of Salmacis gained without blood or sweat)<sup>9</sup> indicates that the Poet regards Salmacis as the active figure in the poem, and that he feels she benefits from the concluding union. On a literal

level this makes little sense, for neither male nor female gain if they are physically united into an impotent monstrosity. Reading the statement symbolically, however, we find that the female achieves a certain goal without sweat—which can be read as a reference to sex or to work<sup>10</sup> and without bloodshed or resorting to violence. The goal is the union of male and female—at least that is what is achieved in the poem. Translated into hermetic terms, Man as the created, the flesh and as such the female, strives for unification with God, the spirit—the male. This union described in the poem is achieved without either sexual or physical violence. Actually it is achieved through prayer. Read as an internal struggle within a single male, or female, the female aspects—those associated with the body, flesh—strive for unification with the male ones—those associated with spirit—and the resultant unification must be achieved without falling prey to the sins of the flesh.

If such a serious meaning is imputed onto the epigraph it must be supported by the poem itself. The poem is dedicated "To the true patronesse of all Poetrie, Caliope," the muse of epic and heroic poetry—not to Erato, Teriscore, or Thalia as one might expect from its first line, "My wanton lines doe treat of amorous loue." Moreover Caliope is addressed as the "true patronesse of all Poetrie" which seems to indicate that the Poet feels all poetry should be epic or heroic. He goes on, in the consecration, to speak of "deepe wisdomes lore," "true and sensible desert," "such a wise Defendresse," "thou great and powerful Muse." He speaks seriously of wisdom; Caliope, as a wise defendresse guards wisdom from those who would misuse it. He seems to refute

such a reading in the last lines of the dedication, speaking of the poem as "the issue of an idle brayne." Either he is denying the seriousness of the poem, or he is setting up what is known in secret teachings as a "blind." The last lines:

I vse thee as a woman ought to bee;  
I consecrate my idle howres to thee.

could be read as referring to the epigraph, in which the woman gains her objective without sweat or blood—she achieves the union in what most would term her "idle howres."

In laudem Authoris, the second portion of these verses, signed by W. B., begins with the usual humility found in such writings, but the concluding lines:

But then I fear'd, that by such wondrous prayse  
Some men would grow suspicious of thy booke:  
For hee that doth thy due deserts reherse,  
Depriues that glory from thy worthy verse.

hint that the poem contains more than is openly revealed, and that if men know the true merits of the verse and its author they would grow "suspicious."

I. B. in the third section associates poetry with Venus, the "sweet Graces," "the wanton Nymphs," who weave "with fine Mylesian threds the verse he sings," and with Pallas Athena, who spins in "silken twists" the love stories of the gods. The concluding couplet:

If none of these, then Venus chose his sight,  
To leade the steps of her blind soone aright.

implies that the Poet can "see" the proper use of love, which is hidden to those who are blind from Cupid's arrows. This also alludes to the incident in the poem where Hermaphroditus is given Cupid's eyes, he can 'see' and understand love, whereas Cupid is left blind. The second "To the Author," signed by A. F., speaks of Ovid as a poet of the past, one who "No more shall be admired at" for the Poet shall surpass his works. In fact these works will survive the ravages of time:

But this faire issue of thy fruitfull brayne,  
Nor dreads age, enuie, cankring rust, or rayne.

The rusting canker is that which "Eates the purest gold" and by implication the Poet's work surpasses purest gold and can be regarded as containing the wisdom of alchemical gold.

The last verse in this group, "The Author to the Reader," parallels Ovid's introduction. The "luckless payre," who now inhabit one body have "spotless soules." The beauty of youth is a precursor to care because of the "sad starres of natiuitie." On one level, beauty of youth, because of the physical shortcomings of the flesh, cedes to the cares of age, and on another, because of the stars which predict the fateful aspects of the time of birth, beauty must perforce submit to care. The second power uniting the spotless souls in one body, is the "strange enchauntment of a well" which was produced through the blessing of the gods. The Poet concludes by stating that he hopes his poem has the power of transformation:

I hope my Poeme is so liuely writ,  
That thou wilt turne halfe-mayd with reading it.



All men who bathe in the fountain become androgynous—the male aspects are united with the female through the transforming power of the water—and the Poet hopes that those who read the poem will be similarly transfigured through the power of understanding.

The Poet does not regard his work as frivolous, despite his protestations to the contrary. Neither is he a humble man, for he has set himself the task of relaying to those who "know" the wisdom of the hermaphrodite, setting it as a goal, the opus magnum. One hopes that he is not a mad man, "halfe-mayd" in the Ovidian sense of impotent, but that he is "halfe-mayd," in his own sense, that he has achieved an understanding which is more than purest gold, and is presumably the wisdom of the secrets of creative power, in which the male and female aspects are harmoniously united.

Exemplifying his 'message' through the action and characters of a story which was well-known to his contemporaries, the Poet drastically alters that story. We would expect to find, in these changes, the key to the wisdom he wishes to convey. In Ovid, Salmacis, though a rather lazy nymph meets none of the gods except Hermaphroditus. However, the Poet tells us of her involvement with the most powerful gods and her extraordinary power in relation to them. Though in Greek mythology nymphs seem to have sometimes been immortal,<sup>11</sup> Salmacis' mortality is stressed:

But he a god, at last did plainly see,  
She had no marke of immortalitie.

(419-420)

Jupiter, the most powerful of the ancient gods, ruler of heaven and earth, who at various times changed himself into multifarious shapes in order to impregnate mortals, foregoes his immense power when confronted with Salmacis. He attempts to bribe her, bartering her virginity for a starry place in the heavens if she fulfills his desires (episode 4). However, though the nymph agrees, she obviously doesn't trust the word of the most powerful god, forcing him to have his promise certified by Astraea, the goddess of Justice (episode 5). Jupiter, dutifully attempting to fulfill his promise is harassed by Astraea's retainers. The goddess of Justice agrees to Jove's request (episodes 6-8) but his adopted daughter Venus-Aphrodite opposes it (episode 9). She objects violently to Jove's intention of creating Salmacis a star—although she is unconcerned about his desire for the nymph—but she is hardly the one to be disturbed by promiscuity. She reacts with extreme jealousy, fearing that she will be forced to take a subservient position to the nymph once she is created a star in the heavens:

Here Venus, fearing lest the loue of Ioue  
Should make this mayd be plac'd in heauen aboue,  
Because she thought this Nymph so wondrous bright,  
That she would dazel her accustom'd light:  
And fearing now she should not first be seene  
Of all the glittering starres, as shee had beene,  
(265-270)

Venus therefore seduces Vulcan into promising to oppose Jove by depriving him of his power. Vulcan refuses to forge Jupiter's thunderbolts if the intended transformation takes place (episodes 10 & 11).

Jove meekly cedes, foregoing the pleasures of Salmacis' bed, though still desiring her, and making her twice as beautiful as before (episode 12). The coupling has been interfered with by Venus, Hermaphroditus' mother —acting out of jealousy.

Salmacis' second meeting with a god is with Bacchus who almost succeeds in seducing the nymph, but her virginity is again preserved, though not because of her own wishes, but because of the power of Phoebus (episodes 14-16). However, Bacchus evokes Mercury who immobilizes Phoebus, and Phoebus, god of the sun, is powerless to act against the aggression of Hermaphroditus' father, and must appeal to Salmacis for aid (episodes 17 & 18). Both parents of Hermaphroditus interfere with a very powerful god when he attempts to relate to Salmacis. By overcoming this interference Salmacis meets Hermaphroditus. Also because of the incident Phoebus, the sun, and as such fire, couples with Thaetis, the water (episode 19).

Once Salmacis encounters Hermaphroditus the immense powers which she previously displayed vanish, and she courts the boy as if she were the male but fails to win his love, just as the gods who courted her failed. It is only when Hermaphroditus succumbs to his fascination for her silver fountain that she unites with the boy. Although the powers of Salmacis, the mortal, are restricted before this union, it is her evocation to the gods which brings it about. Previously Salmacis had been more powerful than the male gods, they needed her to restore their powers, just as now Hermaphroditus needs her help, though he doesn't realize his need, but merely submits to his fascination for the female's

crystal fountain.

What are we told about the two young people who combine to make the Hermaphrodite, and why should these particular two combine? They are opposites in many aspects, as the male is opposite to the female, the mortal to the immortal, but they share many characteristics, and are often described in the poem in almost identical ways. Both have golden hair:

His haire was bushie, but it was not long,  
The Nymphs had done his tresses mighty wrong,  
For, as it grew, they puld away his haire,  
And made abilliments of gold to weare.  
(55-58)

Her haire as farre surpast the burnisht gold,  
As siluer doth excell the basest mold:  
(115-116)

Both have extraordinarily bright eyes: Hermaphroditus has the eyes of Cupid:

And, therefore, more the wanton boy to grace,  
She puld the sparkling eyes from Cupids face. . .  
But Venus set those eyes in such a place,  
As grac't those cleare eyes with a clearer face,  
(69-74)

Both Jove and Bacchus were stricken with love because of Salmacis eyes:

I pine, fayre Nymph: O neuer let me dye  
For one poore glaunce from thy translucent eye;  
Farre more transparent then the clearest brooke.  
(435-437)

Hermaphroditus has a "legge . . . straighter then the thigh of Ioue," (77), which links him to the generative creative power of Jupiter, and

Salmacis has a "lustie thigh," (107), which links her to the conceptual powers so often displayed by Venus. They both have beautiful hands, those of Hermaphroditus are "whiter then the driuen snow," (76), those of Salmacis are "soft and moyst." (109). They both have cheeks the colour of the blushing rose, and both blush easily, Hermaphroditus blushes when Salmacis approaches him (659-666), Salmacis blushes when Bacchus approaches her (455). They both love to bathe in clear watery springs. In fact it is the beauty of the spring of Salmacis which fascinates the boy and later traps him. Salmacis swims often in her fountain, and bathes her "snowy limmes" therein. They both confront Diana—Hermaphroditus wins her heart—in fact she is endangered by his beauty:

Then the boy ran; for (some say) had he stayd,  
Diana had no longer bene a mayd.

(33-34)

and Salmacis rejects Diana's way of life, preferring to bathe herself rather than hunt through the forest (367-377). Both of them oppose Diana, but neither of them are destroyed because of that opposition. Salmacis, despite her affinity to the moon, is not like Diana, but resembles the goddess Venus who was not allowed to work by a decree of the gods. She also has an affinity to Mercury; she steals back the wheels which he had originally stolen from Phoebus. Hermaphroditus shares the heritage of both his parents, Aphrodite-Venus "goddess of desire" who rose naked from the sea,<sup>12</sup> and Hermes-Mercury, "the embodiment of universal mind," "the personified Universal Life

Principle generally represented by fire, " <sup>13</sup> although his affinities to his mother are weak, except that he inherits her beauty! The two could be seen as different aspects of one person.

If this is so, then there must be something which each aspect lacks, which makes the resultant union desirable. Even though they both had "spotlesse soules" before the union, Hermaphroditus lacks a heart, his is more feeble than most:

She felt his gentle heart pant through his clothes.  
At last she tooke her hand from off that part,  
And sayd, It panted like anothers heart.  
Why should it be more feeble, and lesse bold?  
Why should the bloud about it be more cold?  
(800-804)

His heart is cold and stone-like:

Be not obdurate to a silly mayd.  
A flinty heart within a snowy brest,  
Is like base mold lockt in a golden chest:  
(650-652)

As the gold must be released from the base mold by alchemical transformation brought about by the union of male and female, so must the "flinty heart" be released from its bondage by the formation of the hermaphrodite. Hermaphroditus loves no one: "This boy nor loues himselfe, nor yet a mayd," (762). When he looks into the eyes of another he can see only himself:

By this, the Nymph perceiu'd he did espie  
None but himselfe reflected in her eye,  
(697-699)

and fascination with his own reflection destroys his capacity to relate to or love the nymph. Once they are united, the boy in his coldness is warmed by the blood of the nymph, and regains his heart:

And in one body they began to grow,  
 She felt his youthfull bloud in euey vaine;  
 And he felt hers warme his cold brest againe;  
 (902-904)

For Salmacis, Hermaphroditus is one "Whose count'nance is . . . full of spotlesse truth," (678) and whereas the boy receives the warmth of blood and the ability to love from the nymph, she receives the spotless truth of the gods from him. When they become one, in that fatal embrace, they both receive what they require, the power to love and the power to know, the fires of the heart and the waters of understanding, each of them both Hermes -Mercury and Aphrodite -Venus, then joined together forever into one—a hermaphrodite who expresses both male creative potency and female generative potency, which is of both the heavens and the earth. And this embrace is fatal inasmuch as both separate aspects die to be reborn in unity, as it is also a return to virginity, to a paradisaical innocence, "but halfe a virgine may returne again," (918).

Further, according to the Poet, the oppositions of the jealousy of the mother—Aphrodite -Venus—and the hatred of the father—Hermes -Mercury—must be overcome before such a union can take place. Also this union takes place in a "crystal fountain," which gives an accurate "cleare reflection" (96-98) back to those who look into it. Read in

another way, every mortal man carries in himself both aspects, the male and immortal—the spirit—and the female and mortal—the body—which it is his task to unite. Truth and love united eliminate the oppositions of falsehood, jealousy and lust.



## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> G. C. MacAulay, Francis Beaumont: A Critical Study (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1883), p. 200. See also J. Payne Collier, A Bibliographical and Critical Account of the Rarest Books in the English Language (London, 1865), Vol. 1, pp. 60-62.

<sup>2</sup> See also Charles Mills Gayley's discussion of the probability of Beaumont's authorship in, Beaumont, the Dramatist: A Portrait (1914; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1969), pp. 38-42. Gayley feels that the evidence is certainly not conclusive in disproving Beaumont's authorship, and suggests that the J. B. who signs one of the introductory sonnets could be Beaumont's brother John, and the W. B., William Basse, both associated with Beaumont. The publisher of Salmacis & Hermaphroditus, Hodgets, also published The Woman-Hater, in 1607, a play which is of doubtful authorship, but usually ascribed to Beaumont. Philip Finkelpear, in a recent discussion of the question, "The Authorship of 'Salmacis and Hermaphroditus'" Notes and Queries (October, 1969), pp. 367-368, uses elaborate textual evidence comparing The Metamorphosis of Tobacco and Salmacis and Hermaphroditus to verify Beaumont's authorship of the latter. Although the evidence he uses is impressive, his method is questionable, for the textual similarities may well be as strong between any of the Ovidian Romances.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. XI (London: Edward Moxon, 1846), pp. 441-471.

<sup>4</sup> " 'Salmacis and Hermaphroditus,' not by Francis Beaumont: The Edition of 1602," pp. 94-126. The article, like the poem it discusses, is anonymous.

<sup>5</sup> Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, ed. Gwyn Jones, illustrated by John Buckland-Wright (Great Britain: The Golden Cockerel Press, 1951).

<sup>6</sup> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 281-304.

<sup>7</sup> (London: Edward Arnold, 1967), pp. 168-191.

<sup>8</sup> For ease of reference I have divided the poem into episodes. See appendix.

<sup>9</sup> Cicero, De Officiis, I xviii 61, trans. Walter Miller (1913; rpt. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), p. 63. Miller translates the quotation "Thou son of Salmacis, win spoils that cost nor sweat nor blood." In the original it is a taunt hurled at young men who "show a womanish soul," and the 'thou son' seems to be a generalization like, "all you who have affinities to Salmacis." The Poet has altered the Latin, which in the original reads, "Salmácida, spolia síne sudore et sángine," perhaps to put more emphasis on the sexuality by stressing 'sweat.'

<sup>10</sup> See: Eric Partridge, Shakespeare's Bawdy (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960), pp. 189-199:

Sweat: The sweat resulting from and during the physical acts of sexual caresses and intercourse. 'The rank sweat of an enseamed bed', Hamlet, III vi 93. . . 'Call it not love for Love to heaven is fled, Since sweating Lust on earth usurpt his name', Venus, vv. 793-794.

<sup>11</sup> Salmacis is a Naiad or water nymph, and there are various myths about their prophetic powers. However, generally they are thought to be neither mortals nor immortals, though the Poet seems to stress Salmacis' mortality. See: H. J. Rose, A Handbook of Greek Mythology (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1959), pp. 172-173.

<sup>12</sup> Graves, Vol. 1, p. 49.

<sup>13</sup> Manly P. Hall, An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy (Los Angeles, 1959), p. XXXIX.



## CHAPTER IV

## The Strange Enchantment of a Well

Res Rebis est bina conjuncta, sed est tamen una  
Solvitur, ut prima sint aut Sol aut Spermata Luna.  
 Eirenaeus Philalethes

In alchemy the hermaphrodite symbolized the culmination of the opus magnum—the philosopher's stone. This symbol of unification often is represented as the rebis, or "two things," surrounded by symbolism which links it with astrology, hermetic philosophy, gnosticism and masonic doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Within an egg, presumably the original world-egg, itself a symbol of the philosopher's stone, the hermaphrodite, a symbol of alchemical mercury, stands on a dragon, the symbol of alchemical salt, holding in its hands the square and the compass, masonic symbols. The seven signs of the zodiac surround the figure, Mercury sits between the two heads in the central position, because Mercury was viewed as a hermaphrodite. The dragon sits on the winged earth, symbolizing alchemical sulphur, and within the earth, which is also a circle, the square and the triangle, associated with four and three, rest. These symbols are basic in almost all esoteric and exoteric religious systems, and are central in Quabbalistic thought.

The hand attached to the male part of the figure holds a compass, that to the female, a square. The square and the compass thus distributed seem to me to indicate that originally a phallic meaning was attached to these symbols as there was to the point within the circle, which in this plate also

appears in the centre of the globe. The compass held by the male figure would represent the male generative principle, and the square held by the female, the female productive principle. The subsequent interpretation given to the combined square and compass was the transmutation from the hermetic talisman to the Masonic symbol.<sup>2</sup>

As this symbolic talisman suggests alchemy and astrology are closely related, and the two are both related to other arcane systems. One of the problems in discussing any of these systems is the multiplicity of meanings for a single symbol, because of the overlapping of symbolism. Using Mercury for an example, the symbol ☿ could stand for the Greek god Hermes, for the whole mythological tradition associated with Hermes Trismegistus, for the planet Mercury, for the metal mercury, or for alchemical or sophic mercury. The gods who people Salmacis and Hermaphroditus can be connected with both alchemy and astrology; the seven planets were given the personalities of the Greek gods from whom they took their names:

The relations between classical mythology and astrology are obvious. The planets were named for gods; the heavens were crowded with constellations whose origins mythology alone could explain; the days of the week and other time-counting devices bore the titles of deity; and by mythology, one was able to expound in an allegorical fashion the harmony between the moon and the sun or the sun and the earth.<sup>3</sup>

Not only did astrology view the stars as possessing the qualities of their namesakes, but they also acquired a whole set of symbolic attributes, a rather simplified system of virtues and vices. Henry Vaughan in a rather playful poem speaks of giving back to the stars,

or to the gods, the qualities he inherited from them:

The power of my Soul is such, I can  
 Expire, and so analyse all that's man.  
 First my dull Clay I give unto the Earth,  
 Our common Mother, which gives all their birth.  
 My growing Faculties I send as soon  
 Whence first I took them, to the humid Moon.  
 All Subtilties and every cunning Art  
 To witty Mercury I do impart.  
 Those fond Affections which made me a slave  
 To handsome Faces, Venus thou shalt have.  
 And saucy Pride (if there was ought in me,)  
Sol, I return it to thy Royalty.  
 My daring Rashness and Presumptions be  
 To Mars himself an equal Legacy.  
 My ill-plac'd Avarice ( sure 'tis but small;)  
Jove, to thy Flames I do bequeath it all.  
 And my false Magic, which I did believe,  
 And mystic Lyes to Saturn I do give.  
 My dark Imaginations rest you there,  
 This is your grave and Superstitious Sphaere.<sup>4</sup>

Vaughan expresses the Renaissance belief that the stars govern mortality, for, once he bequeaths his fleshly sins to them, then his soul can soar unencumbered to the heavens:

Get up my disintangled Soul, thy fire  
 Is now refin'd & nothing left to tire,  
 Or clog thy wings. Now my auspicious flight  
 Hath brought me to the Empyrean light.  
 (lines 75-78)


In some senses Salmacis and Hermaphroditus describes in astrological symbolism such an allegorical casting away, or dealing with, sins of the flesh, so that the soul can finally be transformed in the silver fountain. This casting away sin or overcoming imperfections has its analogies in the alchemical process, where the metals are purified chemically, as the soul of the alchemist is spiritually transformed.

All the characters in the poem are associated with Salmacis, a female and a mortal, though most of them are immortals. Some of these gods are also connected with stars in the heavens, and these stars are in turn connected with the signs of the zodiac. Those who are stars are:

Jupiter - in astrology designated by -	♃
Venus	♀
Mercury	♁
the Sun (Phoebus)	☉
the Moon (Diana)	☾

Those who are omitted from the poem are:

Mars (only mentioned as Venus' lover)	♂
Saturn	♄

These two planets are 'evil stars' which have few positive attributes.<sup>5</sup> The other three planets, Neptune, Uranus and Pluto were unknown to Renaissance astrologers. Other immortals appearing in the poem are Vulcan—associated with fire in alchemical treatises but without astrological symbolism, Bacchus, not mentioned in alchemical works nor in astrology, and Astræa, the goddess of Justice, who is connected with two signs of the zodiac, Virgo which represents Astræa departed from the earth, and Libra, whose sign  represents the scales of Justice. No other signs of the zodiac are mentioned or symbolized in the poem.

According to astrology each planet exerts influences upon the body and mind of man, and most planets exert both positive and negative



influences. The mode of influence depends upon the zodiacal sign in which the planet appears. So although Venus rules in Libra, Jupiter appearing in Libra will modify the Venusian traits of a man born under that sign. Each planet also brings to the sphere of activity of the sign in which it appears aspects of the sign in which it rules. But as each planet is in interrelation with all of the other planets its influences may be modified, disturbed or opposed by the influences of other planets. Astrology explains these interrelations and mutual influences in great detail; astrologers base their detailed analysis of an individual upon such interrelations and predict his future. As I am presuming that the Poet possessed a detailed knowledge of astrology, I shall paraphrase his account of the action of the story in accordance with astrological teachings. Hopefully I shall gain an account of the conflicts and oppositions present in the life of man as he attempts to achieve the unification of his masculine and feminine aspects.

The Poet tells us that the "lucklesse payre," were "crost by the sad starres of natiuitie," (The Author to the Reader). We are not told what stars presided over Salmacis' birth, but we know that Hermaphroditus was:

Begot and borne by powers that dwelt aboue,  
 By learned Mercury of the Queene of loue:  
 A face he had that shew'd his parents fame,  
 And from them both conioynd, he drew his name:  
 (lines 15-18)

Abraham Fraunce says of Venus:

So, Saturn destroyeth, Venus bringeth foorth, and both are necessary for the continuall propagation of these inferior bodies, sith the corruption of one is the generation of another. Venus is faire, beauty enticeth to lust. She is naked, loue cannot be conceled. She is borne of the sea, louers are inconstant like the troubled waives of the sea. . . Swans and Doues drawe her chariot; Doues are wanton, and swans are white and musicall, both being means to procure loue and lust. <sup>6</sup>

Lilly speaks of the positive and negative aspects of a man governed by Venus :

When well placed. A quiet man, loving mirth, cleanly in apparel, rather drinking much than Glottonous, prone to Venery, entangled in love matters, musical, right vertuous man or woman.

When ill placed. Riotous, expensive, wholly given to loosnesse and lewd companies of women, incestuous, adulteer Fanatical, nothing careful of the things of this Life or any thing Religious, atheist. <sup>7</sup>

Mercury when well placed

represents man of a subtil and politick brain, intellect and cogitation. Excellent Logician, arguing with Learning and discretion, using much eloquence in speech, a searcher into all kind of mysteries and Learning, sharp, witty, ambitious of being exquisite in every science, curious in search for occult knowledge, able by his own Genius to produce wonders desirous naturaly of travell, given to Divination and more secret knowledge.

and when ill placed is

Troublesome, prating, great liar, boaster, given to wicked Arts. . . cheating or theeving. <sup>8</sup>

Conjunction in astrological terms means two planets which are so placed in the zodiac that they are in one and the same degree and minute of any sign. A conjunction, notated ♄ can be either good or ill depending on the nature of the planets and the sign. Because of his nature, Mercury acquires the characteristics of that planet to which he is conjoined:

we may not call him either masculine or Feminine for he is either the one or other as joined to any Planet, for if in ♄ with a masculine Planet he becomes masculine, and with a Feminine, Feminine. . . with the good he is good with the evil planets evil.<sup>9</sup>

The conjunction of Venus and Mercury, according to Ferrier:

maketh the man pleasant, joyful, a player, a dauncer, musitian, well furnished, and bringeth hym damage by the side of women. If they be conjoynd vnder the beames of the sun they make great hinderance in the parts of generation.<sup>10</sup>

From Venus and Mercury Hermaphrōditus inherits his physical beauty, his interest in travel and things occult, displayed as an interest in fountains. But because of the conjunction of Venus and Mercury he possesses an overly feminine appearance and nature, and he is fated to suffer at the hands of a woman. However, it is only once he is united with Salmacis that he can accept those Venusian aspects of loving. The union of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus does take place under Phoebus' beams and the "hinderance in the parts of generation" is one of the positive aspects of this union, for generation has been transcended by the hermaphrodite who is himself complete and who no longer needs to

procreate in his Edenic state.

Hermaphroditus meets two other gods in the course of the story, Diana and Phoebus. Diana is fascinated by the boy:

So wondrous fayre he was, that (as they say)  
Diana being hunting on a day,  
 Shee saw the boy vpon a greene banke lay him,  
 And there the virgin-huntresse meant to slay him, . . .  
 But when that beauteous face Diana saw,  
 Her armes were nummed, & shee could not draw;  
 (lines 19-26)

The Poet compares him to the moon:

Then might a man his shamefast colour see,  
 Like the ripe apple on the sunny tree,  
 Or luory dide o're with a pleasing red,  
 Or like the pale Moone being shadowed.  
 (lines 663-666)

Astrologically, according to Lilly, the Moon signifies:

When dignified, one of composed manners, a soft tender creature lover of all honest and ingenious sciences, searcher and Delighter in Novelties, unsteadfast, wholly caring for present times, timourous, prodigal, easily frightened, loving peace. When ill, a mere vagabond, idle person hating Labour, a Drunkard, a sot, no spirit. . .<sup>11</sup>

Hermaphroditus in his temerity and femininity reflects his affinities to the Moon, both positively and negatively. His fascination for the silver fountain of Salmacis—silver is the Moon's metal—results in his transfiguration. Phoebus is drawn towards Hermaphroditus:

Phoebus so doted on this rosiat face,  
 That he hath oft stole closely from his place,

When he did lie by fayre Leucothoes side,  
 To dally with him in the vales of Ide:  
 (lines 35-38)

His hair is golden, the colour associated with the Sun, his eyes are described in terms of the Sun:

Besides, his glorious eye is wondrous bright:  
 So is the fierie and all-seeing light  
 Of Phoebus. . .  
 (lines 763-765)

The Sun promises Hermaphroditus to Salmacis as a reward for returning his wheels. Fraunce compares Phoebus to the "light of reason,"<sup>12</sup> and Maplet says concerning his influence:

The heat of Sol in man bringeth about boldness and rashnesse, rather then properly Purssant and more venturouse, rather rashe and bold then considerate and polliticke. For it is the eccesse of heate which burning and boyling within a man that bringeth boldnesse and rashnesse, when as the bloude about the heart is immoderately and to much set on fire. . . The sun is to the world like the heart to the body. . . Those born under Sol are. . . studious of difficult and hard matter, very desirous of glory and renowne, also fast and faythful to friendship, and constant in fact and worde. . .<sup>13</sup>

However, the man governed by Sol when ill disposed is "arrogant, proud, disdainful."<sup>14</sup> Hermaphroditus lacks the brashness of the Sun, only when he unites with Salmacis does he regain the heat of the blood. He is both vain and disdainful throughout the poem. In view of the above we could say that Hermaphroditus partakes of Mercury ☿ and Venus ♀ with affinities to the Sun ☉ and the Moon ☾ .

Salmacis, as a complement to Hermaphroditus, also partakes of Venus and Mercury, though her nature, as a woman, is closer to the goddess of Love. She has affinities to Phoebus, as she has golden hair, though her hair is described in terms of silver:

Her haire as farre surpast the burnisht gold,  
As siluer doth excell the basest mold:  
(lines 115-116)

Phoebus himself bears her "an old affection," and brings Salmacis to the young boy. Bacchus, as he flatters her, compares her to the Sun:

Then might I liue, then by the sunny light  
That should proceed from thy thrise-radiant sight,  
(lines 431-432)

Her eyes are "radiant" and yet they reflect beauty, as the moon reflects the sun's light. As a water nymph she is ruled by Diana, even though she resists following Diana's ways, and she presides over a silver fountain, the colour associated with the Moon. Salmacis is characterized by her lust, from Venus, her craftiness from Mercury, her laziness from Luna, and her brashness from Sol. The poem allegorically relates her overcoming these negative characteristics of her nativity, transforming them into positive ones. This story is told through her encounters with the various gods who people the poem.

Salmacis first meets Jupiter, ruler of heaven and earth. He falls passionately in love with her, much influenced by the beauty of her fountain, and promises to make the nymph a star if she will cede to his wishes. He visits Astræa seeking her approval of their union.

Jupiterian characteristics are those of aspiration, faithfulness, magnanimity and dignity:<sup>15</sup>

Jupiters power is good in all things, namely to peace, loue and accord. Who that hath hyse starre to this planet he is sanguine. . . and goeth a large pace, neither too harsh nor too soft. His nature is seemly and shingge. He hath a fayre visage . . . He is sweet, peaceable and softe.<sup>16</sup>

Astræa symbolizes the signs Virgo, ruled by Mercury, and Libra ruled by Venus, and Jupiter has no enmity to either of these planets so a conjunction will be favourable.<sup>17</sup> The faithfulness and aspiration towards Justice will be propitious in both masculine spiritual endeavours and feminine emotional ones. Read symbolically the Poet asserts that man should aspire towards the intellectual and religious aspects of life, and towards the emotional and sensual aspects. Astræa represents the need to pursue these goals under the law of absolute Justice, without corruption, for only then will the aspirations lead to a unity which removes oppositions and conflicts.

Venus opposes Jupiter in his quest, because she jealously guards her prerogative to be the most beautiful star in the heavens.

She [Venus] causeth Joye especially amonge yonge folke for greatly she reyneth on them and on all men that ben Jalous and women also for Jalousy is but a loue inardynat as when a man or a woman loueth more feruently than they shuld. . . For there is no man that loueth a Woman by Carnall affeccion but it is the influence of Venus and but few men can escape of her daunger.<sup>18</sup>

The opposition of Jupiter and Venus "signifieth vnconstant friends,

vngratitude of them where hee hath doone good,"<sup>19</sup> The Poet then states that jealousy, selfishness and lust will interfere in the quest for unity and in religious aspirations. Salmacis wants to become a star like Astræa, leaving the carnality of the Earth and aspiring to the heavens. Unity cannot be achieved by the disavowal of the earthly aspects of life, it is only through purifying the corruption of the mortal that the mortal can be united with the immortal. Salmacis must achieve her goal through aspects of herself—she is only united with Hermaphroditus, the immortal, because of her fountain, and this unification takes place on Earth.

Vulcan's opposition of Jupiter represents man fallen prey to the seductiveness of lust thereby blocking, with threats of violence, desired spiritual goals. Although Salmacis fails in her attempt to gain the heavens she does, because of her positive Jupiterian trait of generosity, become twice as beautiful as before, and presumably this beauty is spiritual as well as physical.

Salmacis is threatened by Bacchus who symbolizes licentiousness and luxurious excess, but his attempts to seduce her are thwarted by Phoebus. Although Salmacis is almost overcome by lust her prudence, honour, and dignity, positive Sun attributes,<sup>20</sup> prevent disaster. Again the drive towards unity is threatened, this time by licentiousness. Salmacis almost succumbs but is saved by the power and vitality of the Sun.

Bacchus appeals to Mercury to revenge his defeat and Mercury steals Phoebus' wheels. Because of lust the negative aspects of Mercury—the misuse of spiritual drives for "wicked art," craftiness, lying,



and stealing—are evoked and given power. This lack of principles incapacitates the positive drives of the Sun, and unity is blocked.

Phoebus asks Salmacis to return the wheels of his chariot, which she does, and Phoebus promises to send Hermaphroditus to her. Salmacis must now use the negative aspects of Mercury—stealing—for a positive end—the replenishment of power, which she does, thus overcoming not only those negative aspects, but also the licentiousness which caused the loss. Hence the Poet asserts that if the powers have been depleted and the positive aspects carried by the Sun rendered useless, then man must himself replenish those powers before the heavenly influences can again function for him. The words of Cassius seem to express this concept:

Men at some time are masters of their fates.  
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.<sup>21</sup>

Thus after Salmacis returns the wheels, Phoebus the Sun rests in the arms of Thætis, the sea-goddess and fire is embraced by water, resulting in unification. Then Aurora can proclaim a new day, for the process of regeneration has begun and man through his own efforts has been able to overcome temptation.

When Salmacis meets Hermaphroditus however, she acts towards him as one who is dominated by the negative qualities of the Sun, she is rash, overly bold, and unable to control the passionate fires in her heart. Hermaphroditus responds with the temerity of the Moon and the vanity of Venus, although he carries the "spotless truth" of Mercury which Salmacis lacks. Hermaphroditus cannot love nor respond to

another, he has a "flinty heart." Before unity can be achieved each must acquire the positive aspects possessed by the other, and this can only be done through an understanding of those aspects which are lacking. Salmacis, in her despair, realizes that Hermaphroditus represents the truth, and Hermaphroditus, despite his aversion to the nymph, and his vain, narcissistic reaction to her approaches, yields to his fascination for her silver fountain. Salmacis functions as the male, Hermaphroditus as the female, and when united the female-male and the male-female become a hermaphrodite. When they are unified in response to the nymph's prayer to the gods those planets which were formerly opposed are no longer in opposition, Venus and Jupiter, Mercury and Sol. Salmacis and Hermaphroditus now carry within themselves all these aspects, which although they may still remain opposite in nature, function now in harmonious union. The Poet asserts that unity is attained if jealousy, envy, luxury and all the other deadly sins are overcome, and when the capacity to love, and the capacity to search for truth through correct thought, are made fully available to man and are no longer viewed as conflicting. He also implies that neither loving nor thinking deplete our vitality and our individuality, but instead they form a unity which enhances and enriches life, making it harmonious. With such a union Justice functions.

The gods grant Hermaphroditus' request, and the fountain is blessed. Hereafter all those who bathe in it are transformed into a hermaphrodite. The Poet asserts that the fountain has magical powers, and those who come in contact with it will be transfigured through death

and rebirth, as Hermaphroditus died to Salmacis only to be reborn in unity with her. Blessed by the gods, this transformation occurs on Earth, to mortals, because one mortal, Salmacis, and one immortal, Hermaphroditus, have been joined. If man can discover the secret underlying their story, can overcome the oppositions which exist within himself, can realize that not only the power inherent in the stars, but that power which he himself possesses must be utilized, then he will be able, with the blessing of the gods, to transform into a unified being, characterized by potency, vitality, and harmony. For the positive legacy of the stars has become his own, and he has nullified the negative powers which he inherited from them.

In astrology each of the signs of the zodiac has a ruler which is a star and one ruler may be connected with two signs. If we survey the zodiac signs ruled by those stars associated with the hermaphrodite we find:

Mercury ☿ rules in Gemini ♊ characterized by masculine, hot, moist, air,

and in Virgo ♍ characterized by feminine, cold, dry, earth,

Venus ♀ rules in Taurus ♉ characterized by feminine, cold, dry, earth,

and in Libra ♎ characterized by masculine, hot, moist, air,

the Sun ☉ rules and only rules in Leo ♌ characterized by masculine, hot, dry, fire,

the Moon ☾ rules and only rules in Cancer ♋ characterized by feminine, cold, moist, water. 22

In the union of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus the female aspects of feminine earth and feminine water are symbolically united with the male aspects of masculine air and masculine fire. The only months in which these stars rule are those of late spring, summer and early autumn—the months of productivity, germination, growth and harvest.

Taurus	Gemini	Cancer	Leo	Virgo	Libra
♉	♊	♋ <sup>?</sup> ♋	♌	♍	♎

ruled by

Venus	Mercury	Moon	Sun	Mercury	Venus
♀	♿	☾	☉	♿	♀

None of the late autumn, winter, or early spring months are found associated with the hermaphrodite.

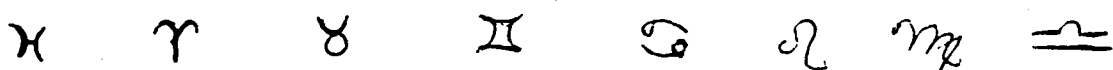
Scorpio	Sagittarius	Capricorn	Acquarius	Pisces	Aries
♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈

ruled by

Mars	Jupiter	Saturn	Saturn	Jupiter	Mars
♂	♃	♄	♄	♃	♂

Stars are said to be exalted in houses other than those they rule, and a star exalted in a house governs the house together with the star which rules it. The Sun has its exaltation in Aries, the Moon in Taurus, Mercury in Virgo, the house which it rules, and Venus in the twenty-sixth of Pisces. Thus the hermaphrodite becomes associated with early spring—beginning in the last few days before the Spring <sup>Equinox</sup> ~~Solstice~~. The progression of the months associated with the hermaphrodite then

becomes:

Pisces    Aries    Taurus    Gemini    Cancer    Leo    Virgo    Libra  


The hermaphrodite also symbolizes the unification of masculine air—Mercury ♃ in Gemini ♊ and Venus ♀ in Libra ♎—Hermaphroditus, with feminine earth—Venus ♀ in Taurus ♉ and Mercury ♃ in Virgo ♍—Salmacis, and the unification of feminine water, the Moon ☾ in Cancer ♋ and in Pisces ♓ with masculine fire, the Sun ☉ in Leo ♌ and Aries ♈. All the elements are combined without opposition. Another aspect of the hermaphrodite is that in it we find the union of Mercury ♃ in Virgo ♍ and Venus ♀ in Libra ♎, both of which are the signs of Astræa-Justice. This is some part of the secret; the union of Hermaphroditus as Mercury with Salmacis as Venus (though each of them has the two complementary natures) under the rule of Astræa. Or in other words, the union of two opposites without opposition, of Truth and Love, which when so unified represent Justice while Life is unfolding—from early spring to autumn.

In alchemy the great work begins when the Sun ascends in Aries—the beginning of spring:

When ☉ in ♈ and Phoebus shine bright,  
 The Elements reviving the new Year springing  
 The Son by his vertue gives Nature & Light,  
 And moisture refresheth all things growing:  
 In the season of the Yeare when the Sun waxeth warme,  
 Freshly and fragrante the Flowers doe grow,  
 Of Natures subtile working we cannot discern,  
 Nor yet by our Reason we can it not know,  
 In foure Elements is comprehended things Three,  
 Animalls, Vegetabills, Mineralls must be,

Of this is our Principle that we make our Stone,  
Quality and Quantity is unknowne to many one.<sup>23</sup>

Visions or dreams of alchemical portent also begin then, indicating to the adept the propitious time for beginning his labours :

When Phoebus was entred the signe of the Ramme,  
In the Moneth of March when all things do spring;  
Lying in my bed an old Man to me came,  
Laying his hand on my buisy head slumbering;  
I am, said he, Tyme, The Producer of all thing:  
Awake and rise, prepaire thy selfe quickly,  
My intent is to bring thee to the Campe of Philosophy.<sup>24</sup>

In Salmacis and Hermaphroditus the Poet stresses that the operator work under the propitious influences of Venus, Mercury, the Sun and the Moon, calling also upon Jupiter for assistance, but that he avoid Mars and Saturn in his undertaking. He also stresses the desirability of proceeding during the fertile times of the year—from early spring to autumn. In a similar work John Dastin speaks allegorically of the gods and the stars, and unites Sol and Luna in the early spring :

And to comfort hys Brethren that were full dull,  
The Sun hath chosen without warr or strife,  
The bright Moone when she was at the full,  
To be his Mother first, and after hys wedded wife;  
In tyme of Ver the season vegetative,  
In Aries when Titan doth appeare,  
Inspired by grace with the Spirit of Lyfe,  
This marriage hallowed at midday Spheare.<sup>25</sup>

Astrology effects the alchemical process because the metals with which the alchemist works are susceptible to the "suttle influence," of the stars. According to Norton all metals are formed because the "Heavenly Spheare / Sendeth his beames directly everie yeare."<sup>26</sup>

The adept, therefore, is one who knows the propitious times to begin his work, and who also knows which heavenly influences he must receive before his work will succeed:

A Judicious man helps forward the Celestial operation, even as a discreet Husbandman assists Nature in his plowing and preparing the Ground. But Nativities are the Radices of Elections, and therefore we ought chiefly to looke backe upon them as the principall Root and Foundation of all Operations, and next to them the quality of the Thing we intend to fit, must be respected: so that by an apt position of Heaven, and fortifying the Planets and Houses in the Nativity of the Operator, and making them agree with the thing signified; the Impression made by that Influence, will abundantly augment the Operation. 27

The alchemists practised their art in secret, and the wisest of them judiciously kept their secrets for fear of retribution from church and state. Because of the opposing desires for secrecy and for communication, the alchemists resorted to the most elaborate and confusing system of analogies, parables, allegories and symbolism to obscure their meaning. As Ashmole says, in the beginning of his introduction:

The Subject of this ensuing Worke, is a Philosophicall account of that Eminent Secret treasur'd up in the bosome of Nature; which hath been sought for of Many, but found by a Few, notwithstanding Experienc'd Antiquity hath afforded faithfull(though not frequent) Discoveries thereof. Past Ages have like Rivers conveied downe to us, (upon the floate,) the more light, and Sophisticall pieces of Learning; but what were Profound and Misterious, the weight and solidity thereof, sunke to the Bottome; whence every one who attempts to dive, cannot easily fetch them up: So, that what our Saviour said to his Disciples, may (I hope without offence) be spoken to the Elected Sons of Art; Unto you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdome of God; but to others in Parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. 28

If an author of an esoteric treatise deliberately proceeds to confuse his reader then there is little chance of anyone deciphering his message who does not possess the 'secrets' of his system. There are essentially three types of alchemical literature; the first, the biographical or autobiographical account of the author, his discoveries and his associations. This first type is the most lucid, however it seldom reveals any of the secrets of the art. The second category describes the alchemical process itself as used by the adept couched in obscurities, symbolism, and in sufficient vagaries that even the most diligent reader would find it impossible to reproduce the experiment. The third, of which Salmacis and Hermaphroditus is a member, outlines the theory and secrets behind the craft, and probably doesn't attempt to outline the precise practical chemical forms. Because it is also couched in difficult symbolism and allegory, this class of literature has probably been the least explored, for the majority of readers are caught up in the parable that "seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." The Poet, in Salmacis and Hermaphroditus alludes to secrets — secrets which are to be hidden from women, women probably standing for the uninitiated of both sexes :

And then the Moone, mother of mortal ease,  
 Would fayne have come from the Antipodes,  
 To haue beheld him naked as he stood, . . .  
 But might not: for the lawes of heauen deny,  
 To shew mens secrets to a womans eye:  
 (845-850)

As the Moone was not the mother of mortal ease, but rather associated with travelling, the Poet maintains that those who haven't worked to



attain the secrets will not be permitted to understand them.

Without describing the actual process of alchemical transformation the Poet outlines in great detail the necessary spiritual conditions which must take place in man before he can achieve regeneration. He does so in the language and symbolism of traditional alchemy. The colours used in the poem, the fountain, the union of male and female, the personification of the gods to represent elements in the alchemical process, are all commonly found in alchemical literature.

Alchemists used colour in their treatises to indicate the stages of the chemical process. Although the works are by no means uniform, certain colours are found repeatedly:

The constant and essential colours, that appear in the digesting of the matter, and before it comes to perfection, are three, viz. black, which signifies the putrefaction and conjunction of the elements; —white, which demonstrates its purification; and red, which denotes its maturation.<sup>29</sup>

Norton speaks of "the faire White Woman / Married to the Ruddy Man,"<sup>30</sup> and Ripley directs to note "where the Red Man and the Whyte Woman be made one."<sup>31</sup> In Salmacis and Hermaphroditus there are surprisingly few colours, and they appear to be used symbolically in alchemical terms. Both Salmacis and Hermaphroditus are described only in terms of white and red: the boy has a "rosiate Face" (35), a "sanguine" cheek (43), his lip is red, he is compared to the roses —both red and white. He has "iuory skin," (88) hands which are "whiter then the driuen snow," (78) he is compared to the moon (660). He carries the colours of both male

and female, white and red, and is associated with the gold of the sun and the silver of the moon. The only other colour connected with him in the poem is grey; Salmacis describes his eyes as grey like the morning. Although Salmacis blushes, the only colour directly associated with her is white, apart from the gold and silver of her hair. She carries the colour of the female and those of the sun and the moon. Venus wears green, which is the colour associated with copper, her metal, and there are no other colours of clothing described in the poem. Vulcan, who is always associated with fire in alchemy is referred to as "black Vulcan" (198). The two flowers mentioned in the poem, the rose and the lily are also common alchemical symbols.

The two agents in the alchemical process are constantly referred to as masculine and feminine:

Minerals taken out of the earth, may be changed,  
if beforehand they be spiritualized, and reduced  
into their sulphureous and argent vive (quicksilver-  
mercury) nature, which are the two sperms, com-  
posed of the elements, the one masculine, the other  
feminine. <sup>32</sup>

The masculine and feminine principles were designated by Sol and Luna, Sol standing for sophic sulphur, the best source of which was gold, and Luna for sophic mercury, linked with silver. <sup>33</sup>

Our Stone is made of one simple thing,  
That in him hath both Soule and Lyfe,  
He is Two and One in kinde,  
Married together as Man and Wife:  
Our Sulphur is our Masculine,  
Our Mercury is our Femenine,  
Our Earth is our Water cleere;

Our Sulphur also is our Fier,  
 And as Earth is in our Water cleare,  
 So is Aer in our Fier. 34

The unification of masculine and feminine is common in alchemical literature. Usually this process is described in terms of marriage, or as a hermaphroditic union:

In effect, these two substances which are of the same nature but of two different sexes, embrace one another with the same love, and the same satisfaction, as the male and the female, and ascend insensibly together, leaving but a little faeces in the bottom of the vessel; so that the soul, the spirit, and the body, after an exact purification, appear at last inseparately united under a more noble and more perfect form than it was before . . . 35

The alchemical process requires all the elements, and in the poem the elements are not only symbolized by the stars, but also all four are connected with Salmacis. When she kneels to the earth spring appears:

When to the ground bending her Snow-white knee,  
 The glad earth gaue new coates to euery tree.  
 (lines 825-826)

She is a water nymph who presides over a clear fountain, her blood burns with "Cupids fire" (795), and the wind plays with her hair:

Sometimes she comb'd her soft discheuel'd hayre,  
 Which with a fillet tide she oft did weare:  
 But sometimes loose she did it hang behind,  
 When she was pleas'd to grace the Easterne wind:  
 For vp and downe it would her tresses hurle,  
 And as she went, it made her loose hayre curle.  
 (lines 377-382)

The elements are associated with Salmacis who is mortal, but not with the immortal Hermaphroditus. Another poem, "A Description of the Stone" describes the making of the stone in terms of the union of a male god and a female mortal:

Though Daphne fly from Phoebus bright,  
 Yet shall they both be one,  
 And if you understand this right,  
 You have our hidden Stone.  
 For Daphne she is faire and white:  
 But Volatile is she;  
Phoebus a fixed God of might,  
 And red as blood is he.  
Daphne is a Water Nymph,  
 And hath of Moysture store,  
 Which Phoebus doth consume with heate,  
 And dryes her very sore.  
 They being dried into one,  
 Of christall flood must drinke,  
 Till they be brought to a white Stone:  
 Which wash with Virgins milke,  
 So longe untill they flow as wax,  
 And no fume you can see,  
 Then have you all you neede to aske,  
 Praise God and thankfull be.<sup>36</sup>

Once again the colours red and white are associated with the alchemical process taking place in a "christall flood," which can be equalized to Salmacis' crystal fountain. This fountain or stream occurs repeatedly in alchemical literature, carrying the power of regeneration. One writer speaks of the fountain as symbolizing "the truth of nature,"<sup>37</sup> and certainly the "blessed fountain" carries connotations of the Christian baptismal fountain. Eirenæus, in the "Marrow of Alchemy" describes the fountain as the mother of the stone:

For Argent Vive is gold essential  
 Only unripe, which, if thou canst prepare

By art, it gives the secret menstrual:  
 The mother of our Stone which is so rare.  
     Our oil, our unguent, and our marchasite;  
     Which we do name also our fountain bright. .

O crystal fountain! which with fourfold spring  
 Runs down the valleys with its pearly drops  
 Distilling, with the which our noble king  
 Is washed and carried to the mountain tops,  
     Where he the virtue of the Heavens receives,  
     Which never after him, when fixed, leaves.<sup>38</sup>

The fountain is central in Salmacis and Hermaphroditus for not only does it entice both Jupiter and Hermaphroditus, but its waters eternally have the power to transform—they are identified with alchemical mercury in a work which uses much of the symbolism found in Salmacis and Hermaphroditus:

Now hear me, and I shall disclose the secret, which like a rose has been guarded by thorns, so that few in times past could pull the flower. There is a substance of a metalline species, which looks so cloudy, that the unwise will have nothing to do with it; its visible form is vile—it defiles metalline bodies, and no one can readily imagine, that the pearly drink of bright Phoebus should spring from thence.

O strange and wonderous ! At this spring, Diana sat naked . . . Although they (sulphur and mercury) have no fundamental union, yet the secret communion is prevented between the virgin nymph called our lead, and her dear sister which runs down abundantly in silver streams. Then should the beams of bright Apollo cause the dews of these commixt waters that fall from the high mountains, and glide through the vallies to conceive the fire of nature, which warms the bath for Sol to descend and wash himself with fair Phoebe, till they renew their flesh and youth—to shine with glory, and multiply without end . . . this is our stone appearing at first in a defiled garb . . .<sup>39</sup>

The fountain is equal to the hermaphrodite which is equal to alchemical mercury which symbolizes the philosopher's stone. This explains why

the gods "bless" the fountain with the power to create hermaphrodites, for it can, like the stone, convert base matter into its purest form.

"This is the true nymph's bath, which on trial is found to be the mercury of the wise."<sup>40</sup> The power which creates the hermaphrodite is available to transform others; once the philosopher's stone has been formed, it has the power to purify all base metals. This symbolism is found in other alchemical works:

So it was in Christ . . . who after his resurrection, had no more the form of a male in his human body, but that of a paradisaical virgin, as Adam had before his fall. And so it is in this philosophical work, this terror and mutual killing, though there is properly no death, but only a transmutation and union of two into one, where Venus yieldeth up her life to the wrathful properties; and when these having lost their pre-dominion, are raised up again to a new life, the life of the anger, and the life of the love, are no more two but only one; no more a male and female properly, but a whole male virgin with both tinctures united in one.<sup>41</sup>

The hermaphrodite who is man become "halfe a virgine" again symbolizes the new Adam; he has regained the joys of sinless existence; the "two spotlesse soules" conjoined enter into a renewed Edenic state.

There are three symbols which recur continually in alchemical writings, referred to as Mercury, Salt and Sulphur. Alchemical mercury is portrayed by alchemists as a man and woman, winged, crowned by flames, and by a Heranubis with a dog's head. It symbolizes what man as a mind requires for expressing his aptitude for the labours to be performed. Alchemical salt is symbolized by a winged dragon, also referred to as the blood of the dragon, or the menstruum of the

earth. It is said that the transformation of the salt is the great work—the Opus Magnum. Alchemical sulphur is symbolized by Baphomet with the goat's head, and by the flying eagle. It is said that sulphur is what man as a soul requires and that it gives man as a soul the ardour and will to pursue the great work. If we use these symbols and look again at the diagram of the hermaphrodite on page 67a, the hermaphrodite symbolizes alchemical mercury, the dragon, alchemical salt, and the winged earth, alchemical sulphur. If we read the poem symbolically according to these terms then Salmacis is to be equalized to alchemical salt, for her name contains the Latin word for salt, and 'macis' suggests the Latin word "macerare," "to make soft, tender, to weaken, to harass." Salmacis as a mortal represents corrupted matter which must be transformed, salt which is weakened and must become strong. Alchemical sulphur would be equalized to Jupiter, who has for his symbol a flying eagle. Jupiter woos Salmacis but is prevented from joining with her, but makes her twice as beautiful as before, thus enabling her to meet Bacchus, Phoebus, and hence Hermaphroditus. Alchemical mercury symbolized by a male and female joined, is the hermaphrodite who emerges when Salmacis and Hermaphroditus are united by the gods—the same gods who previously were in opposition to the mortal Salmacis because of her weakness.

If we attempt to analyze the poem from an alchemical point of view we find that, though the details differ from the analysis given before, the essential content of the poem remains the same. Salmacis, a water nymph, and symbolic of alchemical salt—corruptible nature—meets

with Jupiter, alchemical sulphur, who falls in love with her, and she makes 'stardom' a term of their union. However, this union fails to take place because of Venus' intervention—salt cannot at this point be united with sulphur because matter has not been sufficiently purified, even though the spirit is anxious and longs for such a union to take place. The corruption of the earth is stressed throughout the poem, Astræa has left for this reason, Aurora blushes when she is forced to look upon it, and both Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, and the roses blush frequently. However, though Salmacis originates in corrupted matter, she has a spotless soul—which signifies that she can undertake the Opus Magnum. Her encounter with Jupiter—alchemical sulphur—signifies that she now possesses the required ardour and zeal for such a quest. Hermaphroditus though born in the heavens is nurtured on Earth, for it is on Earth that he must search out and find those aspects which he lacks. Salmacis finds Hermaphroditus because of the Sun—Phoebus sends the boy to Salmacis because of her success in returning the wheels of the Sun. She falls in love, woos him and fails. Fascinated by her fountain—the water—Hermaphroditus leaps in and they are united, forming the alchemical mercury. This union, that of spirit with the soul and body, in the fountain which possesses the magical power to so transform anyone who bathes in it, symbolizes the philosopher's stone—the unification of masculine and feminine, of the Creator with his Creation, and of the three alchemical substances, salt, mercury and sulphur.



## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See the illustration of the rebis, page 67a .
- <sup>2</sup> Albert G. Mackey, Encyclopedia of Freemasonry (Philadelphia: McClure Publishing Co., 1917), p. 901.
- <sup>3</sup> Don Cameron Allen, The Star-Crossed Renaissance (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1941), p. 48.
- <sup>4</sup> "The Importunate Fortune, Written to Doctor Powel of Cantre," The Complete Poetry of Henry Vaughan, ed. French Fogle (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor, 1963), p. 48.
- <sup>5</sup> See Johnstone Parr, Tamburlaine's Malady (University, Alabama: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1963), pp. 39-44:

Alchabitus explains :

Saturn is evil . . . produces and fosters . . . men of melancholic complexion. He signifies . . . profound silence, . . . mistrust and suspicion, moving men to complaints and mutterings.

and Albohazen Haly describes the general nature of Mars thus :

Mars is a planet . . . fiery and violent; he is a destroyer and a conqueror, delighting in slaughter and death, in quarrels, brawls, disputes, contests, and other contraventions . . . He is instrumental in stirring up seditions; he inspires wars and battles and rules over the ravaging and laying waste of lands, over pillage, plundering, ruin, and destruction.

- <sup>6</sup> The Countesse of Pembrokes Yuichurche, Part Three (London, 1592), sig. 45<sup>r</sup>.

- 7 William Lilly, Christian Astrology (London, 1647), p. 74.
- 8 Lilly, pp. 77-78.
- 9 Lilly, p. 76
- 10 Oger Ferrier, A Learned Astronomical Discourse of the Judgement of Nativities, trans. Thomas Kelway (London: Richard Watkins, 1593), sig. 38<sup>v</sup>.
- 11 Lilly, pp. 80-81.
- 12 Fraunce, sig. 32<sup>v</sup>.
- 13 John Maplet, The Dial of Destiny (London, 1581), sig. D2.
- 14 Lilly, pp. 69-70.
- 15 Lilly, pp. 61-63.
- 16 Godfridus, The Knowledge of Thinges Unknown (London: H. Jackson, 1585).
- 17 See Maplet: "Iupiters friends are all the others except Mars," sig. A4<sup>r</sup>.
- 18 Ptolomy, Compost of Ptholomeus, translated oute of Frenche into Englysse for them that wolde haue knowledge of the Compost (1532).
- 19 Ferrier, sig. 40<sup>r</sup>.
- 20 Lilly, p. 70.

21 William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, II ii 139-141.

22 See Lilly, pp. 88-90.

Some Signs are masculine, Diurnal, and therefore hot

♄ ♀ ♃ =♁ ♂ ☰☷

Some are feminine, Nocturnal, and therefore cold

♃ ♁ ♄ ♀ ♁ ♃

Fiery	♄	♂	♁	♃	☰☷
	♄	♂	♁	♃	☰☷
Earthly	♃	♁	♄	♂	☰☷
	♃	♁	♄	♂	☰☷
Airy	♂	♁	♃	♄	☰☷
	♂	♁	♃	♄	☰☷
Watery	♁	♃	♄	♂	☰☷
	♁	♃	♄	♂	☰☷

23 Sir George Ripley, "The Mistery of Alchymists," Elias Ashmole, Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum (1652; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1967), p. 380.

24 "Bloomefields Blossoms: or the Campe of Philosophy," Ashmole, p. 305.

25 "Dastin's Dreame," Ashmole, p. 265.

26 Thomas Norton, "The Ordinall of Alchimy," Ashmole, p. 19.

27 Ashmole, "Notes," p. 450.

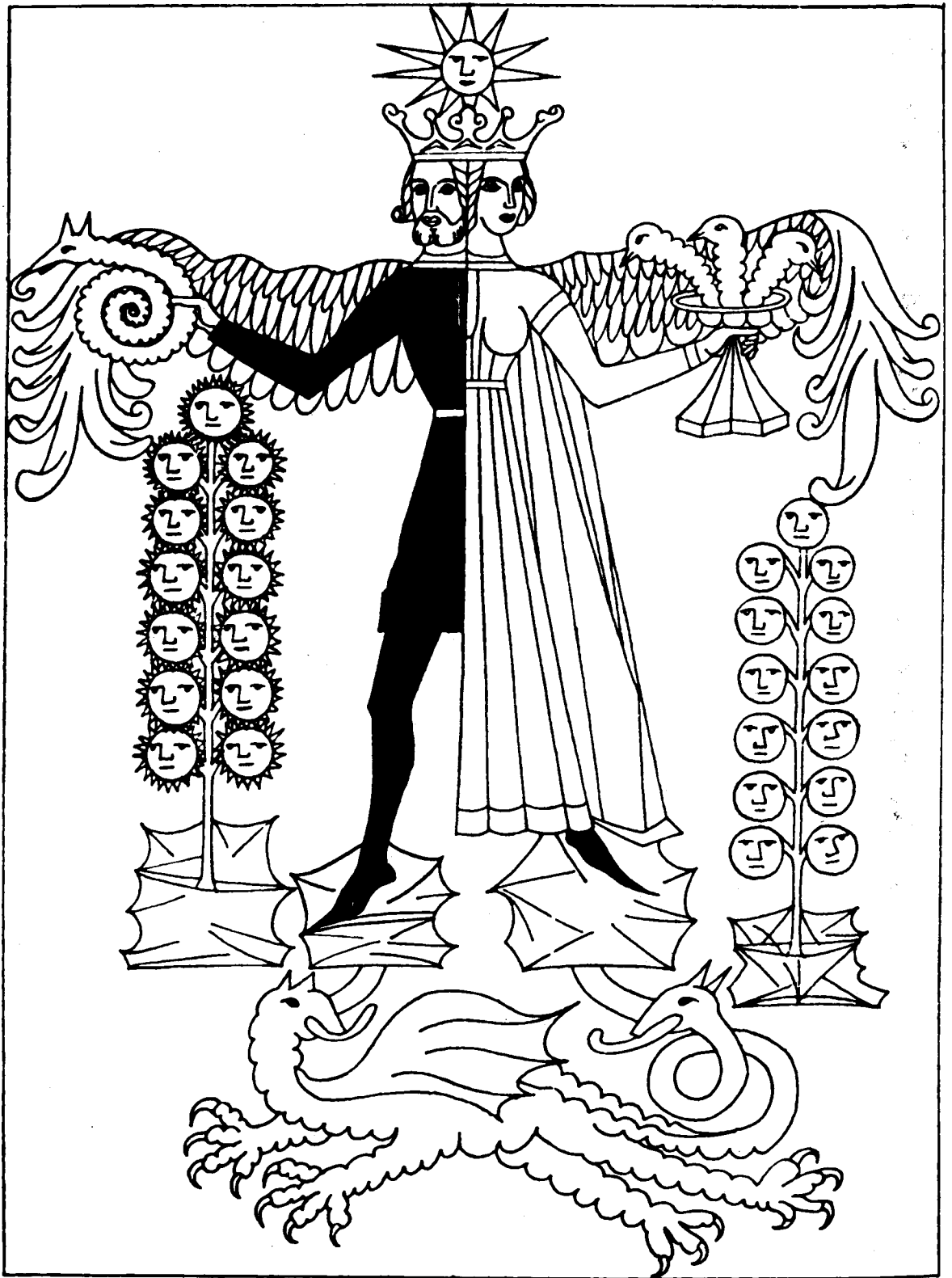
28 Ashmole, sig. A2<sup>v</sup>.

- 29 Baro Urbigerus, "One Hundred Aphorisms Demonstrating the Preparation of the Grand Elixir," The Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers (1815; rpt. London: John M. Watkins, 1955), p. 250, facsimile ed.
- 30 "The Ordinall of Alchimy," Ashmole, p. 90.
- 31 "The Compovnd of Alchymie," Ashmole, p. 186.
- 32 Nicholas Flamel, "The Summary of Philosophy" (1409), The Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers, p. 252.
- 33 See John Read, Prelude to Chemistry (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1936), pp. 102-03.
- 34 From an anonymous poem included in Ashmole, p. 352.
- 35 "A Letter To the True Disciples of Hermes Containing Six Principal Keys to the Secret Philosophy," by a French Adept, The Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers, p. 209.
- 36 Ashmole, p. 420.
- 37 "The True Book of Synesius," The Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers, p. 347.
- 38 M. A. Atwood, Hermetic Philosophy and Alchemy (1850; rpt. New York: The Julian Press, 1960), pp. 319-320.

39 Eirenæus Philalethes, "The Learned Sophies Feast," The Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers , pp. 174-175.

40 Ibid., p. 175.

41 Dionisius Andreas Freher, "Of the Analogy in the Process of the Philosophic Work, to the Redemption of Man, through Jesus Christ, according to the Writings of Jacob Behmen," (d. 1728), printed for the first time in The Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers, p. 131.



## CHAPTER V

## Nor Man nor Mayd

Und so lang du das nicht hast,  
Dieses: Stirb und werde!  
Bist du nur ein truber Gast  
Auf der dunklen Erde.

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

I have attempted, in the foregoing discussion, to explicate a poem in terms of two esoteric systems contemporary with it, but essentially foreign to this century. My approach could be applied to many Renaissance poems which draw from esoteric traditions: using mythology after Ficino and Pico della Mirandola to elucidate and to obscure secret teachings. I would hypothesize that other Ovidian poetry would lend itself to this approach, transformation being a central theme. As alchemy and Christianity are often united, much religious poetry might also express alchemical teachings.

Christianity teaches of the Word made flesh, of the resurrection of the body, of the need of the Creator to become one with his creation, and through his example to lead creation into salvation. Alchemy seeks to transform creation, to overcome the corruption of the universe and re-establish Paradise on earth, thus unifying the creation with its Creator. In alchemy resurrection comes on Earth, not after death. The Hermaphrodite is the symbol of matter transformed and unified, of man aspiring to Godliness: the Christ, the symbol of God in grace descending to man.

Salmacis and Hermaphroditus expresses the alchemical doctrine of the necessity of the creation for the Creator. Whereas Christianity stresses the dependence of man upon the grace of God, alchemy views man as capable of reaching towards God, and finally of achieving a union with him which enriches them both: "whatsoever is below, is like that which is above; and what is above is like that which is below." In the poem, which takes place on Earth, Salmacis, a mortal, is endowed with powers which are as great as or greater than those of the gods in the heavens, they descend to earth and attempt to unite with her. The gods themselves are incomplete, they require creation in order to satisfy their need for completion. Hermaphroditus, though a god, dwells on earth, in symbolic terms he represents spirit; Salmacis, a mortal, represents soul joined to body. As the soul embraces the spirit, and as the soul and spirit become one, so the spirit becomes one with the body. Thus the corruptible body is transformed into the incorruptible one, and spirit, soul and body are unified. The creation and the Creator have gained completeness. Speaking in other terms, each man or woman is a soul, or has a soul which is twofold, both male and female, which is bound to, or imprisoned by, the body which it inhabits. Because of its bondage man, as a soul, is corrupted; he is forced by the limitations of creation to deal with the universe in imperfect ways. But the soul yearns for the spirit to release it from its bondage and because of this yearning man as a soul attempts to overcome his corruption by expressing the spirit. The change of the corrupted cannot be willed, but results from a quest which finds its fulfilment in a transformation of the flesh and a unification of the two-foldness of the soul.



## APPENDIX I

Salmacis and Hermaphroditus consists of 922 lines, plus 70 lines of prefatory verses; the entire poem being almost ten times longer than Ovid's version of the story. The 1847 edition divides the poem into 33 paragraphs, and though there are no paragraph divisions in the original poem, I have used the paragraphing as a means of identifying sections of the poem for ease of reference, referring to each paragraph as an episode.

- 1 (lines 1-12) Consecration—the poet consecrates his wanton lines to Venus.
- 2 (13-78) Youth of Hermaphroditus—his parentage, early exploits, beauty.
- 3 (79-94) Hermaphroditus begins his travels.
- 4 (95-134) Beauty of Salmacis—Hermaphroditus discovers her fountain, Jupiter promises to make her a star.
- 5 (135-158) Jupiter must obtain Astræa's pledge of his intentions.
- 6 (159-180) Jupiter attempts to see Astræa.
- 7 (181-210) Jupiter finds Astræa, after losing his money to her porter, he finds Venus complaining of Vulcan.
- 8 (211-252) Astræa consents to Jupiter's request.
- 9 (253-296) Venus opposes Jupiter.
- 10 (297-318) Venus bribes Vulcan to oppose Jupiter.
- 11 (319-350) Vulcan's threat—Jupiter is forced to give up Salmacis.
- 12 (351-360) Salmacis' beauty doubled.
- 13 (361-404) Salmacis sees Hermaphroditus.

- 14 (405-424) Bacchus woos Salmacis. (flashback)
- 15 (425-437) Bacchus flatters Salmacis.
- 16 (438-468) Bacchus attempts to seduce Salmacis, is thwarted by Phoebus.
- 17 (469-506) Bacchus and Mercury—Mercury promises to avenge Bacchus.
- 18 (507-542) Mercury steals Phoebus' wheels—Phoebus appeals to Salmacis.
- 19 (543-572) Salmacis recovers Phoebus' wheels—Phoebus rests with Thætis.
- 20 (573-608) Vulcan mends Phoebus' wheels.
- 21 (609-614) Phoebus arises.
- 22 (615-648) Phoebus sends Hermaphroditus to Salmacis.
- 23 (649-666) Hermaphroditus resists Salmacis.
- 24 (667-684) Salmacis continues her wooing.
- 25 (685-730) Hermaphroditus sees himself in Salmacis' eyes.
- 26 (731-778) Salmacis questions Hermaphroditus' reluctance.
- 27 (779-800) Salmacis attempts to seduce Hermaphroditus.
- 28 (801-826) Salmacis departs.
- 29 (827-850) Hermaphroditus undresses—prepares to enter the fountain.
- 30 (851-864) Hermaphroditus leaps into the fountain.
- 31 (865-900) Salmacis follows, prays they will never be separated.
- 32 (901-918) The two become one.
- 33 (919-922) Mercury and Venus bestow power onto the fountain.

The prefatory material is divided into five poems, two of which are dedicatory verse by the poet,<sup>8</sup> three are commendatory—presumably

to conjecture that they were all written by the Poet himself, although Elizabethan conventions frowned on such procedures. I will use the names of these sections for identification:

Dedication

In laudem Authoris: W. B.

To the Author: I. B.

To the Author: A. F.

The Author to the Reader.

## APPENDIX II

A copy of the text is included here because of the difficulties of obtaining a complete and accurate version. This is a transcription of the 1602 edition, with no changes in spelling or punctuation.

S A L M A C I S

and

HERMAPHRO-

DITVS.

Salmacida spolia sine sanguine

& sudore.

Imprinted at London for Iohn Hodgets:  
And are to be sold at his shop in Fleete-  
street, at the signe of the Flowre  
de Luce, neere Fetter-lane.  
1602.

To the true patronesse of all Poetrie,

C A L I O P E .

It is a statute in deepe wisdomes lore,  
 That for his lines none should a patrō chuse  
 By wealth or pouerty, by lesse or more,  
 But who the same is able to peruse;  
 Nor ought a man his labors dedicate,  
 Without a true and sensible desert,  
 To any power of such a mighty state,  
 And such a wise Defendresse as thou art.  
 Thou great and powerfull Muse, then pardon mee,  
 10 That I presume thy Mayden-cheeke to stayne,  
 In dedicating such a worke to thee,  
 Sprung from the issue of an idle brayne.  
 I vse thee as a woman ought to bee:  
 I consecrate my idle howres to thee.

In laudem Authoris.

Like to the weake estate of a poore friend,  
 To whome sweet fortune hath bene euer slow,  
 Which dayly doth that happy howre attend,  
 When his poore state may his affection shew:  
 So fares my loue, not able as the rest,  
 20 To chaunt thy prayses in a lofty vayne,  
 Yet my poor Muse doth vow to doe her best,  
 And wanting wings, shee'le tread an humble strayne.  
 I thought at first her homely steps to rayse,  
 And for some blazing Epithites to looke;  
 But then I fear'd, that by such wondrous prayse  
 Some men would grow suspicious of thy booke:  
 For hee that doth thy due deserts reherse,  
 Depriues that glory from thy worthy verse.  
 W. B.

## To the Authour.

Eyther the goddesse drawes her troupe of loues  
 30 From Paphos, where she erst was held diuine,  
 And doth vnyoke her tender-necked Doues,  
 Placing her seat in this small papry shrine;  
 Or the sweet Graces through th' Idalian groue,  
 Led the blest Author in their daunced rings;  
 Or wanton Nymphs in watry bowres haue woue,  
 With fine Mylesian threds, the verse he sings;  
 Or curious Pallas once againe doth striue,  
 With prowde Arachne for illustrious glory,  
 And once againe doth loues of gods reuiue,  
 40 Spinning in silken twists a lasting story:  
 If none of these, then Venus chose his sight,  
 To leade the steps of her blind sonne aright.  
 I. B.

## To the Author.

The matchlesse Lustre of faire poesie,  
 Which erst was bury'd in old Romes decayes,  
 Now 'gins with height of rising maiesty,  
 Her dust-wrapt head from rotten tombes to rayse,  
 And with fresh splendor gilds her toplesse crest,  
 Rearing her palace in our Poets brest.

The wanton Ouid, whose inticing rimes  
 50 Haue with attractiue wonder forc't attention,  
 No more shall be admir'd at: for these times  
 Produce a Poet, whose more mouing passion  
 Will teare the loue-sick mirtle from his browes,  
 T'adorne his Temples with deserued bowes.

The strongest Marble feares the smallest rayne;  
 The rusting Canker eats the purest gold:  
 Honours best dye dreads enuies blackest stayne:  
 The crimson badge of beautie must waxe old.  
 But this faire issue of thy fruitfull brayne,  
 60 Nor dreads age, enuie, cankring rust, or rayne.  
 A. F.

## The Author to the Reader.

I sing the fortunes of a lucklesse payre,  
Whose spotlesse soules now in one body be:  
For beauty still is Prodromus to care,  
Croست by the sad starres of natiuitie;  
And of the strange enchauntment of a well  
Gi'n by the gods my sportiue Muse doth write,  
Which sweet-lipt Ouid long agoe did tell,  
Wherein who bathes, strait turnes Hermaphrodite.

70 I hope my Poeme is so liuely writ,  
That thou wilt turne halfe-mayd with reading it.



SALMACIS AND HERMAPHRODITUS.

- My wanton lines doe treate of amorous loue,  
 Such as would bow the hearts of gods aboue:  
 Then Venus, thou great Citherean Queene,  
 That hourelly tripst on the Idalian greene,  
 Thou laughing Erycina, daygne to see  
 The verses wholly consecrate to thee;  
 Temper them so within thy Paphian shrine,  
 That euery louers eye may melt a line;  
 Commaund the god of Loue that little King,  
 10 To giue each verse a sleight touch with his wing,  
 That as I write, one line may draw the tother,  
 And euery word skip nimbly o're another.  
 There was a louely boy the Nymphs had kept,  
 That on the Idane mountaines oft had slept,  
 Begot and borne by powers that dwelt aboue,  
 By learned Mercury of the Queene of loue:  
 A face he had that shew'd his parents fame,  
 And from them both conioynd, he drew his name:  
 So wondrous fayre he was, that (as they say)  
 20 Diana being hunting on a day,  
 Shee saw the boy vpon a greene banke lay him,  
 And there the virgin-huntresse meant to slay him,  
 Because no Nymphes did now pursue the chase:  
 For all were strooke blind with the wantons face.  
 But when that beauteous face Diana saw,  
 Her armes were nummed, & shee could not draw;  
 Yet did she striue to shoot, but all in vaine,  
 Shee bent her bow, and loos'd it streight againe.  
 Then she began to chide her wanton eye,  
 30 And fayne would shoot, but durst not see him die.  
 She turnd and shot, and did of purpose misse him,  
 She turnd againe, and did of purpose kisse him.  
 Then the boy ran: for (some say) had he stayd,  
Diana had no longer bene a mayd.  
Phoebus so doted on this rosiat face,  
 That he hath oft stole closely from his place,  
 When he did lie by fayre Leucothoes side,  
 To dally with him in the vales of Ide:  
 And euer since this louely boy did die,  
 40 Phoebus each day about the world doth flie,  
 And on the earth he seekes him all the day,  
 And euery night he seekes him in the sea:  
 His cheeke was sanguine, and his lip as red  
 As are the blushing leaues of the Rose spred:

And I haue heard, that till this boy was borne,  
 Roses grew white vpon the virgin thorne,  
 Till one day walking to a pleasant spring,  
 To heare how cunningly the birds could sing,  
 Laying him downe vpon a flowry bed,  
 50 The Roses blush'd, and turnd themselues to red.  
 The Rose that blush'd not, for his great offence,  
 The gods did punish, and for impudence  
 They gave this doome that was agreed by all;  
 The smell of the white Rose should be but small.  
 His haire was bushie, but it was not long,  
 The Nymphs had done his tresses mighty wrong,  
 For, as it grew, they puld away his haire,  
 And made abilliments of gold to weare.  
 His eyes were Cupids: for, vntill his birth,  
 60 Cupid had eyes, and liu'd vpon the earth,  
 Till on a day, when the great Queene of loue,  
 Was by her white doues drawn frō heauen aboue,  
 Vnto the top of the Idalian hill,  
 To see how well the Nymphs their charge fulfill,  
 And whether they had done the goddesse right,  
 In nursing of her sweet Hermaphrodite:  
 VVhom when she saw, although complete & full,  
 Yet she complaynd, his eyes were somewhat dull:  
 And therefore, more the wanton boy to grace,  
 70 She puld the sparkling eyes from Cupids face,  
 Fayning a cause to take away his sight,  
 Because the Ape would sometimes shoot for spight.  
 But Venus set those eyes in such a place,  
 As grac't those cleare eyes with a clearer face.  
 For his white hand each goddesse did him woo:  
 For it was whiter then the driuen snow:  
 His legge was straighter then the thigh of Ioue:  
 And he farre fairer then the god of loue.  
 When first this wel-shapt boy, beauties chiefe king,  
 80 Had seene the labour of the fifteenth spring,  
 How curiously it paynted all the earth,  
 He 'gan to trauaile from his place of birth,  
 Leauing the stately hils where he was nurst,  
 And where the Nymphs had brought him vp at first:  
 He lou'd to trauaile to the coasts vnknowne,  
 To see the regions farre beyond his owne,  
 Seeking cleare watry springs to bathe him in:  
 (For he did loue to wash his iuory skinne)  
 The louely Nymphes haue oft times seene him swimme,  
 90 And closely stole his clothes from off the brim,

Because the wanton wenches would so fayne  
 See him come nak'd to aske his clothes againe.  
 He lou'd besides to see the Lycian grounds,  
 And know the wealthy Carians vtmost bounds.  
 Vsing to trauaile thus, one day he found  
 A cristall brooke, that tril'd along the ground,  
 A brooke, that in reflection did surpasse  
 The cleare reflection of the clearest glasse.  
 About the side there grew no soggy reedes,  
 100 Nor was the fount compast with barren weedes :  
 But liuing turfe grew all along the side,  
 And grasse that euer flourisht in his pride.  
 Within this brook a beauteous Nymph did dwell,  
 Who for her comely feature did excell;  
 So faire she vvas, of such a pleasing grace,  
 So straight a body, and so sweet a face,  
 So soft a belly, such a lustie thigh,  
 So large a forehead, such a cristall eye,  
 So soft and moyst a hand, so smooth a brest,  
 110 So faire a cheeke, so well in all the rest,  
 That Iupiter would reuell in her bowre,  
 Were he to spend againe his golden showre :  
 Her teeth were whiter then the mornings milke,  
 Her lip was softer then the softest silke,  
 Her haire as farre surpast the burnisht gold,  
 As siluer doth excell the basest mold :  
Ioue courted her for her translucent eye,  
 And told her, he would place her in the skye,  
 Promising her, if she would be his loue,  
 120 He would ingraue her in the heauen aboue,  
 Telling this louely Nymph, that if he would,  
 He could deceiue her in a showre of gold,  
 Or like a Swanne come to her naked bed,  
 And so deceiue her of her maiden-head :  
 But yet, because he thought that pleasure best,  
 Where each consenting ioynes each louing brest,  
 He would put off that all-commaunding crowne,  
 Whose terrour strooke th' aspiring Giants downe,  
 That glittering crown, whose radiāt sight did tosse  
 130 Great Pelion from the top of mighty Osse,  
 He would depose from his world-swaying head,  
 To taste the amorous pleasures of her bed :  
 This added he besides, the more to grace her,  
 Like a bright starre he would in heauens vault place her.  
 By this the proud lasciuious Nymph was mou'd,  
 Perceiuing by great Ioue shee was belou'd,

And hoping as a starre she should ere long  
 Be sterne or gracious to the Sea-mans song,  
 (For mortalls still are subiect to their eye,  
 140 And what it sees, they striue to get as hie:)  
 Shee was contented that almighty Ioue  
 Should haue the first and best fruits of her loue:  
 (For women may be likened to the yeere,  
 Whose first fruites still do make the dayntiest cheere)  
 But yet Astræa first should plight her troth  
 For the performance of Ioues sacred oth.  
 (Iust times decline, and all good dayes are dead,  
 When heauenly othes had need be warranted)  
 This heard great Iupiter and lik'd it well,  
 150 And hastily he seekes Astræas cell,  
 About the massie earth searching her towre;  
 But she had long since left this earthly bowre,  
 And flew to heauen aboue, lothing to see  
 The sinfull actions of humanitie.  
 Which when Ioue did perceiue, he left the earth,  
 And flew vp to the place of his owne birth,  
 The burning heauenly throne where he did spy  
Astræas palace in the glittering skie.  
 This stately towre was builded vp on hie,  
 160 Farre from the reach of any mortall eye;  
 And from the palace side there did distill  
 A little water, through a little quill,  
 The dewe of iustice, which did seldome fall,  
 And when it dropt, the drops were very small.  
 Glad was great Ioue when he beheld her towre,  
 Meaning a while to rest him in her bowre;  
 And therefore sought to enter at her dore:  
 But there was such a busie rout before;  
 Some seruing men, and some promoters bee,  
 170 That he could passe no foote without a fee:  
 But as he goes, he reaches out his hands,  
 And payes each one in order as he stands;  
 And still, as he was paying those before,  
 Some slipt againe betwixt him and the dore.  
 At length (with much adoo) he past them all,  
 And entred straight into a spacious hall,  
 Full of darke angles and of hidden wayes,  
 Crooked Mæanders, infinite delayes;  
 All which delayes and entries he must passe,  
 180 Ere he could come where iust Astræa was.  
 All these being past by his immortall wit,  
 Without her doore he saw a porter sit,  
 An aged man, that long time there had beene,  
 Who vs'd to search all those that entred in,

And still to euery one he gaue this curse,  
 None must see Iustice but with emptie purse.  
 This man searcht Ioue for his owne priuate gaine,  
 To haue the money which did yet remaine,  
 Which was but small: for much was spent before  
 190 On the tumultuous rout that kept the dore.  
 When he had done, he brought him to the place  
 Where he should see diuine Astræas face.  
 Then the great King of gods and men in went,  
 And saw his daughter Venus there lament,  
 And crying lowd for iustice, whom Ioue found  
 Kneeling before Astræa on the ground,  
 And still she cry'd and beg'd for a iust doome  
 Against blacke Vulcan, that vnseemely groome,  
 Whome she had chosen for her onely loue,  
 200 Though she was daughter to great thundring Ioue :  
 And though the fairest goddessse, yet content  
 To marrie him, though weake and impotent;  
 But for all this they alwayes were at strife :  
 For euermore he rayld at her his wife,  
 Telling her still, Thou art no wife of mine,  
 Anothers strumpet, Mars his concubine.  
 By this Astræa spyde almighty Ioue,  
 And bow'd her finger to the Queene of loue,  
 To cease her sute, which she would heare anon,  
 210 When the great King of all the world was gone.  
 Then she descended from her stately throne,  
 Which seat was builded all of Iasper stone,  
 And o're the seat was paynted all aboue,  
 The wanton vnseene stealths of amorous Ioue;  
 There might a man behold the naked pride  
 Of louely Venus in the vales of Ide,  
 When Pallas, and Ioues beauteous wife and she  
 Stroue for the prise of beauties raritie :  
 And there lame Vulcan and his Cyclops stroue  
 220 To make the thunderbolts for mighty Ioue :  
 From this same stately throne she down descēded,  
 And sayd, The griefs of Ioue should be amended,  
 Asking the King of gods what lucklesse cause,  
 What great contēpt of state, what breach of lawes  
 (For sure she thought, some vncouth cause befell,  
 That made him visit poore Astræas cell)  
 Troubled his thought: and if she might decide it,  
 VWho vext great Ioue, he dearly should abide it.  
Ioue onely thankt her, and beganne to show  
 230 His cause of comming (for each one doth know  
 The longing words of Louers are not many,

If they desire to be inioyd of any)  
 Telling Astræa, It might now befall,  
 That she might make him blest, that blesseth all:  
 For as he walk'd vpon the flowry earth,  
 To which his owne hands whilome gaue a birth,  
 To see how streight he held it and how iust  
 He rold this massy pondrous heape of dust,  
 He laid him downe by a coole riuer side,  
 240 Whose pleasant water did so gently slide  
 With such soft whispering: for the brooke was deepe,  
 That it had lul'd him in a heauenly sleepe,  
 When first he laid him downe, there was none neere him,  
 (For he did call before, but none could heare him)  
 But a faire Nymph was bathing when he wak'd  
 (Here sigh'd great Ioue, and after brought forth) nak'd,  
 He seeing lou'd, the Nymph yet here did rest,  
 Where iust Astræa might make Ioue be blest,  
 If she would passe her faithfull word so farre,  
 250 As that great Ioue should make the mayd a starre.  
Astræa yeelded: at which Ioue was pleas'd,  
 And all his longing hopes and feares were eas'd.  
Ioue tooke his leaue, and parted from her sight,  
 Whose thoughts were ful of louers sweet delight,  
 And she ascended to her throne aboue,  
 To heare the griefes of the great Queene of loue:  
 But she was satisfied, and would no more  
 Rayle at her husband as she did before:  
 But forth she tript apace, because she stroue,  
 260 With her swift feet to ouertake great Ioue;  
 She skipt so nimbly as she went to looke him,  
 That at the palace doore she ouertooke him,  
 Which way was plaine and broad as they went out,  
 And now they could see no tumultuous rout.  
 Here Venus, fearing lest the loue of Ioue  
 Should make this mayd be plac'd in heauen aboue,  
 Because she thought this Nymph so wondrous bright,  
 That she would dazel her accustom'd light:  
 And fearing now she should not first be seene  
 270 Of all the glittering starres as shee had beene,  
 But that the wanton Nymph would eu'ry night  
 Be first that should salute eche mortall sight,  
 Began to tell great Ioue, she grieu'd to see  
 The heauen so full of his iniquity,  
 Complayning that eche strumpet now was grac'd,  
 And with immortall goddesses was plac'd,  
 Intreating him to place in heauen no more  
 Eche wanton strumpet and lasciuious whore.

Ioue mad with loue, harkned not what she sayd.  
 280 His thoughts were so intangled with the mayd,  
 But furiously he to his Palace lept,  
 Being minded there till morning to have slept:  
 For the next morne, as soone as Phoebus rayes  
 Should yet shine coole, by reason of the seas,  
 And ere the parting teares of Thætis bed,  
 Should be quite shak't from off his glittering head,  
Astræa promis'd to attend great Ioue,  
 At his owne Palace in the heauen aboue,  
 And at that Palace she would set her hand  
 290 To what the loue-sick god should her command:  
 But to descend to earth she did deny,  
 She loath'd the sight of any mortall eye;  
 And for the compasse of the earthly round,  
 She would not set one foot vpon the ground.  
 Therefore Ioue meant to rise but with the sunne,  
 Yet thought it long vntill the night was done.  
 In the meane space Venus was drawne along  
 By her white Doues vnto the sweating throng  
 Of hammering Black-smithes, at the lofty hill  
 300 Of stately Etna, whose top burneth still:  
 (For at that burning mountaynes glittering top,  
 Her cripple husband Vulcan kept his shop)  
 To him she went, and so collogues that night  
 With the best straines of pleasures sweet delight,  
 That ere they parted, she made Vulcan sweare  
 By dreadfull Stix, an othe the gods do feare,  
 If Ioue would make the mortall mayd a starre,  
 Himselfe should frame his instruments of warre,  
 And tooke his othe by blacke Cocitus Lake,  
 310 He neuer more a thunder-bolt would make:  
 For Venus so this night his sences pleas'd,  
 That now he thought his former griefs were eas'd.  
 She with her hands the black-smiths body bound,  
 And with her Iu'ry armes she twyn'd him round,  
 And still the faire Queene with a prety grace,  
 Disperst her sweet breath o're his swarthy face:  
 Her snowy armes so well she did display,  
 That Vulcan thought they melted as they lay.  
 Vntill the morne in this delight they lay:  
 320 Then vp they got, and hasted fast away  
 In the white Chariot of the Queene of loue,  
 Towards the Palace of great thundring Ioue,  
 Where they did see diuine Astræa stand,  
 To passe her word for what Ioue should command.

In limpt the Blacke-smith, after stept his Queene,  
 Whose light arrayment was of louely greene.  
 When they were in, Vulcan began to sweare  
 By othes that Iupiter himselfe doth feare,  
 330 If any whore in heauens bright vault were seene,  
 To dimme the shining of his beauteous Queene,  
 Each mortall man should the great gods disgrace,  
 And mocke almightie Ioue vnto his face,  
 And Giants should enforce bright heauen to fall,  
 Ere he would frame one thunderbolt at all.  
Ioue did intreat him that he would forbear.  
 The more he spoke, the more did Vulcan sweare.  
Ioue heard his words, and 'gan to make his mone,  
 That mortall men would plucke him from his throne,  
 Or else he must incurre this plague, he said,  
 340 Quite to forgoe the pleasure of the mayd:  
 And once he thought, rather then lose her blisses,  
 Her heauenly sweets, her most delicious kisses,  
 Her soft embraces, and the amorous nights,  
 That he should often spend in her delights,  
 He would be quite thrown down by mortal hands,  
 From the blest place where his bright palace stands.  
 But afterwards hee saw with better sight,  
 He should be scorn'd by euery mortall wight,  
 If he should want his thunderbolts, to beate  
 350 Aspiring mortals from his glittering seate:  
 Therefore the god no more did woo or proue her,  
 But left to seeke her loue, though not to loue her.  
 Yet he forgot not that he woo'd the lasse,  
 But made her wise as beauteous as she was,  
 Because his wonted loue he needs would shew.  
 This have I heard, but yet scarce thought it true.  
 And whether her cleare beautie was so bright,  
 That it could dazel the immortall sight  
 Of gods, and make them for her loue despaire,  
 360 I do not know, but sure the maid was faire.  
 Yet the faire Nymph was neuer seene resort  
 Vnto the sauage and the bloody sport  
 Of chaste Diana, nor was euer wont  
 To bend a bow, nor euer did she hunt,  
 Nor did she euer striue with pretie cunning,  
 To ouergoe her fellow Nymphs in running:  
 For she was the faire water-Nymph alone,  
 That vnto chaste Diana was unknowne.  
 It is reported, that her fellowes vs'd  
 370 To bid her (though the beauteous Nymph refus'd)  
 To take, or painted quiuers or a dart,



And put her lazy idlenesse apart.  
 Nor tooke she painted quiuers, nor a dart,  
 Nor put her lazy idlenesse apart,  
 But in her cristall fountaine oft she swimmes,  
 And oft she washes o're her snowy limmes:  
 Sometimes she comb'd her soft discheuel'd hayre,  
 Which with a fillet tide she oft did weare:  
 But sometimes loose she did it hang behind,  
 380 When she was pleas'd to grace the Easterne wind:  
 For vp and downe it would her tresses hurle,  
 And as she went, it made her loose hayre curle.  
 Oft in the water did she looke her face,  
 And oft she vs'd to practise what quaint grace  
 Might well become her, and what comely feature  
 Might be best fitting so diuine a creature.  
 Her skinne was with a thinne vaile ouerthrowne,  
 Through which her naked beauty clearely shone.  
 She vs'd, in this light rayment as she was,  
 390 To spread her body on the dewy grasse:  
 Sometimes by her owne fountaine as she walkes,  
 She nips the flowres from off the fertile stalkes,  
 And with a garland of the sweating vine,  
 Sometimes she doth her beauteous front in-twine:  
 But she was gathring flowres with her white hand,  
 When she beheld Hermaphroditus stand  
 By her cleare fountaine, wondring at the sight,  
 That there was any brooke could be so bright:  
 For this was the bright riuer where the boy  
 400 Did dye himselfe, that he could not enioy  
 Himselfe in pleasure, nor could taste the blisses  
 Of his owne melting and delicious kisses.  
 Here did she see him, and by Venus law,  
 She did desire to haue him as she saw.  
 But the fayre Nymph had neuer seene the place,  
 Where the boy was, nor his enchanting face,  
 But by an vncouth accident of loue  
 Betwixt great Phoebus and the sonne of loue,  
 Light-headed Bacchus: for vpon a day,  
 410 As the boy-god was keeping on his way,  
 Bearing his Vine leaues and his Iuie bands,  
 To Naxos, where his house and temple stands,  
 He saw the Nymph; and seeing, he did stay,  
 And threw his leaues and Iuie bands away,  
 Thinking at first she was of heauenly birth,  
 Some goddesse that did liue vpon the earth,  
 Virgin Diana that so liuely shone,  
 When she did court her sweet Endimion:

But he a god, at last did plainly see,  
 420 She had no marke of immortalitie.  
 Vnto the Nymph went the yong god of wine,  
 Whose head was chaf'd so with the bleeding vine,  
 That now, or feare or terrour had he none,  
 But 'gan to court her as she sate alone:  
 Fayrer then fayrest (thus began his speech)  
 Would but your radiant eye please to enrich  
 My eye with looking, or one glaunce to giue,  
 Whereby my other parts might feede and liue,  
 Or with one sight my sences to inspire,  
 430 Far liuelier then the stole Promethean fire;  
 Then might I liue, then by the sunny light  
 That should proceed from thy thrise-radiant sight,  
 I might suruiue to ages; but that missing,  
 (At that same word he would haue faine bin kissing)  
 I pine, fayre Nymph: O neuer let me dye  
 For one poore glaunce from thy translucēt eye,  
 Farre more transparent then the clearest brooke.  
 The Nymph was taken with his golden hooke:  
 Yet she turn'd backe, and would haue tript away,  
 440 But Bacchus forc't the louely mayd to stay,  
 Asking her why she struggled to be gone,  
 Why such a Nymph should wish to be alone?  
 Heauen neuer made her faire, that she should vaunt  
 She kept all beautie, it would neuer graunt:  
 She should be borne so beauteous from her mother,  
 But to reflect her beauty on another:  
 Then with a sweet kisse cast thy beames on mee,  
 And Ile reflect them backe againe on thee.  
 At Naxos stands my Temple and my Shrine,  
 450 Where I do presse the lusty swelling Vine,  
 There with greene luie shall thy head be bound,  
 And with the red Grape be incircled round;  
 There shall Silenus sing vnto thy praise,  
 His drunken reeling songs and tickling layes.  
 Come hither, gentle Nymph. Here blusht the maid,  
 And faine she would haue gone, but yet she staid.  
Bacchus perceiu'd he had o'recome the lasse,  
 And downe he throwes her in the dewy grasse,  
 And kist the helplesse Nymph vpon the ground,  
 460 And would haue stray'd beyond that lawful boūd.  
 This saw bright Phoebus: for his glittering eye  
 Sees all that lies below the starry skye;  
 And for an old affection that he bore  
 Vnto this louely Nymph long time before,  
 (For he would oft times in his circla stand,

To sport himselfe vpon her snowy hand)  
 He kept her from the sweets of Bacchus bed,  
 And 'gainst her wil he sau'd her maiden-head.  
Bacchus perceiuing this, apace did hie  
 470 Vnto the Palace of swift Mercury,  
 But he did find him farre below his birth,  
 Drinking with theeues and catch-poles on the earth;  
 And they were drinking what they stole to day,  
 In consultation for to morrowes prey.  
 To him went youthful Bacchus, and begun  
 To shew his cause of griefe against the Sunne,  
 How he bereft him of his heauenly blisses,  
 His sweet delights, his Nectar-flowing kisses,  
 And other sweeter sweetes that he had wonne,  
 480 But for the malice of the bright-fac't Sunne,  
 Intreating Mercury by all the loue,  
 That had bene borne amongst the sonnes of loue,  
 Of which they two were part, to stand his friend,  
 Against the god that did him so offend:  
 The quaint-tongu'd issue of great Atlas race,  
 Swift Mercury, that with delightfull grace,  
 And pleasing accents of his fayned tongue,  
 Hath oft reform'd a rude vnciuill throng  
 Of mortals, that great messenger of loue,  
 490 And all the meaner gods that dwell aboue:  
 He whose acute wit was so quicke and sharpe  
 In the inuention of the crooked Harpe:  
 He that's so cunning with his iesting flights,  
 To steale from heauenly gods or earthly wights,  
 Bearing a great hate in his griued brest,  
 Against that great commaunder of the West,  
 Bright-fac't Apollo: for vpon a day,  
 Yong Mercury did steale his beasts away:  
 Which the great god perceiuing, streight did shew  
 500 The pearcing arrowes and the fearefull bow  
 That kild great Pithon, & with that did threat him,  
 To bring his beasts againe, or he would beat him.  
 Which Mercury perceiuing, vnespide,  
 Did closely steale his arrowes from his side.  
 For this old grudge, he was the easlyer wonne  
 To helpe young Bacchus 'gainst the fierie Sunne.  
 And now the Sunne was in the middle way,  
 And had o'recome the one halfe of the day,  
 Scorching so hot vpon the reeking sand,  
 510 That lies vpon the neere Egyptian land,  
 That the hot people burnt e'ne from their birth,  
 Do creepe againe into their mother earth,

When Mercury did take his powerfull wand,  
 His charming Cadusaus in his hand,  
 And a thicke Beuer which he vs'd to weare,  
 When ought from Ioue he to the Sunne did beare,  
 That did protect him from the piercing light,  
 Which did proceed from Phoebus glittering sight.  
 Clad in these powerfull ornaments he flies,  
 520 With out-stretcht wings vp to the azure skies :  
 Where seeing Phoebus in his orient shrine,  
 He did so well reuenge the god of wine,  
 That whil'st the Sun wonders his Chariot reeles,  
 The craftie god had stole away his wheelles.  
 Which when he did perceiue, he downe did slide,  
 (Laying his glittering Coronet aside)  
 From the bright spangled firmament aboue,  
 To seeke the Nymph that Bacchus so did loue,  
 And found her looking in her watry glasse,  
 530 To see how cleare her radiant beauty was :  
 And, for he had but little time to stay,  
 Because he meant to finish out his day,  
 At the first sight he 'gan to make his mone,  
 Telling her how his fiery wheelles were gone;  
 Promising her, if she would but obtaine  
 The wheelles, that Mercury had stolne, againe,  
 That he might end his day, she should enioy  
 The heauenly sight of the most beauteous boy  
 That euer was. The Nymph was pleas'd with this,  
 540 Hoping to reape some vnaccustom'd blisse  
 By the sweet pleasure that she should enioy,  
 In the blest sight of such a melting boy.  
 Therefore at his request she did obtaine  
 The burning wheelles, that he had lost, againe :  
 VVhich when he had receiu'd, he left the land,  
 And brought them thither where his Coach did stand,  
 And there he set them on: for all this space,  
 The horses had not stirr'd from out their place.  
 VVhich when he saw, he wept and 'gan to say,  
 550 VVould Mercury had stole my wheelles away,  
 When Phaeton my hare-brain'd issue tride,  
 What a laborious thing it was to guide  
 My burning chariot, the he might haue pleas'd me,  
 And of one fathers grieve he might haue eas'd me :  
 For then the Steeds would haue obayd his will,  
 Or else at least they would haue rested still.  
 When he had done he tooke his whip of steele,  
 Whose bitter smart he made his horses feele :  
 For, he did lash so hard, to end the day,

560 That he was quickly at the Westerne sea,  
 And there with Thaëtis did he rest a space:  
 For he did neuer rest in any place  
 Before that time: but euer since his wheelles  
 Were stole away, his burning chariot reeles  
 Tow'rds the declining of the parting day:  
 Therefore he lights and mends them in the sea.  
 And though the Poets fayne, that Ioue did make  
 A treble night for faire Alcmena's sake,  
 That he might sleepe securely with his loue;  
 570 Yet sure the long night was vnknowne to Ioue:  
 But the Sunnes wheelles one day disordred more,  
 Were thrise as long amending as before.  
 Now was the Sunne inuiron'd with the Sea,  
 Cooling his watrie tresses as he lay,  
 And in dread Neptunes kingdome while he sleeps,  
 Faire Thaëtis clips him in the watry deeps,  
 The Mayre-maids and the Tritons of the West  
 Straying their voyces, to make Titan rest.  
 And while the blacke night with her pitchie hand,  
 580 Tooke iust possession of the swarfie land:  
 He spent the darkesome howres in this delight,  
 Giuing his power vp to the gladsome night:  
 For ne're before he was so truely blest,  
 To take an houre or one poore minutes rest.  
 But now the burning god this pleasure feeles,  
 By reason of his newly crazed wheelles,  
 There must he stay vntill lame Vulcan send  
 The fierie wheelles which he had tooke to mend.  
 Now al the night the Smith so hard had wrought,  
 590 That ere the Sunne could wake, his wheelles were brought.  
Titan being pleas'd with rest, and not to rise,  
 And loth to open yet his slumbring eyes:  
 And yet perceiuing how the longing sight  
 Of mortals wayted for his glittering light,  
 He sent Aurora from him to the skie,  
 To giue a glimsing to each mortall eye.  
Aurora much asham'd of that same place  
 That great Apollos light was wont to grace,  
 Finding no place to hide her shamefull head,  
 600 Paynted her chaste cheeks with a blushing red,  
 Which euer since remain'd vpon her face,  
 In token of her new receiu'd disgrace:  
 Therefore she not so white as she had beene,  
 Loting of eu'ry mortall to be seene,  
 No sooner can the rosie fingred morne  
 Kisse eu'ry flowre that by her dew is borne,

But from her golden window she doth peepe,  
 When the most part of earthly creatures sleepe.  
 By this, bright Titan opened had his eyes,  
 610 And 'gan to ierke his horses through the skies,  
 And taking in his hand his fierie whip,  
 He made AEous and swift AEthon skip  
 So fast, that straight he dazled had the sight  
 of faire Aurora, glad to see his light.  
 And now the Sunne in all his fierie haste,  
 Did call to mind his promise lately past,  
 And all the vowes and othes that he did passe  
 Vnto faire Salmacis, the beauteous lasse.  
 For he had promis'd her she should enioy  
 620 So louely faire, and such a well shap't boy,  
 As ne're before his owne all-seeing eye  
 Saw from his bright seate in the starry skye:  
 Remembring this, he sent the boy that way,  
 Where the cleare fountain of the fayre Nymph lay.  
 There was he comne to seeke some pleasing brooke.  
 No sooner came he, but the Nymph was strooke:  
 And though she hasted to imbrace the boy,  
 Yet did the Nymph awhile deferre her ioy,  
 Till she had bound vp her loose flagging haire,  
 630 And ordred well the garments she did weare,  
 Fayning her count'nance with a louers care,  
 And did deserue to be accounted fayre.  
 And thus much spake she while the boy abode:  
 O boy, most worthy to be thought a god,  
 Thou mayst inhabit in the glorious place  
 Of gods, or maist proceed from humane race:  
 Thou mayst be Cupid, or the god of wine,  
 That lately woo'd me with the swelling vine:  
 But whosoe're thou art, O happy he,  
 640 That was so blest, to be a sire to thee;  
 Thy happy mother is most blest of many,  
 Blessed thy sisters, if her wombe bare any,  
 Both fortunate, and O thrise happy shee,  
 Whose too much blessed brests gaue suck to thee:  
 If any wife with thy sweet bed be blest,  
 O, she is farre more happy then the rest,  
 If thou hast any, let my sport be sto'ne,  
 Or else let me be she, if thou hast none.  
 Here did she pause awhile, and then she sayd,  
 650 Be not obdurate to a silly mayd.  
 A flinty heart within a snowy brest,  
 Is like base mold lockt in a golden chest:  
 They say the eye's the index of the heart,

And shewes th' affection of eache inward part:  
 There loue plays liuely, there the little god  
 Hath a cleare cristall Palace of bode.  
 O barre him not from playing in thy heart,  
 That sports himselfe vpon eche outward part.  
 Thus much she spake, & then her tongue was husht.  
 660 At her loose speach Hermaphroditus blusht:  
 He knew not what loue was, yet loue did shame him,  
 Making him blush, and yet his blush became him:  
 Then might a man his shamefast colour see,  
 Like the ripe apple on the sunny tree,  
 Or Iuory dide o're with a pleasing red,  
 Or like the pale Moone being shadowed.  
 By this, the Nymph recouer'd had her tongue,  
 That to her thinking lay in silence long,  
 And sayd, Thy cheeke is milde, O be thou so,  
 670 Thy cheeke, saith I, then do not answere no,  
 Thy cheeke doth shame, then doe thou shame, she sayd;  
 It is a mans shame to deny a mayd.  
 Thou look'st to sport with Venus in her towre,  
 And be belou'd of euery heauenly powre.  
 Men are but mortals, so are women too,  
 Why should your thoughts aspire more then ours doo?  
 For sure they doe aspire: Else could a youthe,  
 Whose count'nance is so full of spotlesse truth,  
 Be so relentlesse to a virgins tongue?  
 680 Let me be woo'd by thee but halfe so long,  
 With halfe those tearmes doe but my loue require,  
 And I will easly graunt thee thy desire.  
 Ages are bad, when men become so slow,  
 That poore unskilfill mayds are forc't to woo.  
 Her radiant beauty and her subtill arte  
 So deeply strooke Hermaphroditus heart,  
 That she had wonne his loue, but that the light  
 Of her translucent eyes did shine too bright:  
 For long he look'd vpon the louely mayd,  
 690 And at the last Hermaphroditus sayd,  
 How should I loue thee, when I doe espie  
 A farre more beauteous Nymph hid in thy eye?  
 When thou doost loue, let not that Nymph be nie thee;  
 Nor when thou woo'st, let that same Nymph be by thee:  
 Or quite obscure her from thy louers face,  
 Or hide her beauty in a darker place.  
 By this, the Nymph perceiu'd he did espie  
 None but himselfe reflected in her eye,  
 And, for himselfe no more she meant to shew him,  
 700 She shut her eyes, & blind-fold thus did woo him:

Fayre boy, thinke not thy beauty can dispence  
 With any payne due to a bad offence;  
 Remember how the gods punisht that boy  
 That scorn'd to let a beauteous Nymph enioy  
 Her long wisht pleasure; for the peeuish elfe,  
 Lou'd of all others, needs would loue himselfe.  
 So mayst thou loue, perhaps thou mayst be blest,  
 By graunting to a lucklesse Nymphs request:  
 Then rest awhile with me amid these weeds.  
 710 The Sunne that sees all, sees not louers deeds;  
Phoebus is blind when loue-sports are begun,  
 And neuer sees vntill their sports be done:  
 Beleeue me, boy, thy blood is very stayd,  
 That art so loth to kisse a youthfull mayd.  
 Wert thou a mayd, and I a man, Ile show thee,  
 With what a manly boldnesse I could woo thee:  
 Fayre then loues Queene, thus I would begin,  
 Might not my ouer-boldnesse be a sinne,  
 I would intreat this fauour, if I could,  
 720 Thy ro siat cheeke a little to behold:  
 Then would I beg a touch, and then a kisse,  
 And then a lower, yet a higher blisse:  
 Then would I aske what loue and Leda did;  
 When like a Swan the craftie god was hid?  
 What came he for? why did he there abide?  
 Surely I thinke hee did not come to chide:  
 He came to see her face, to talke, and chat,  
 To touch, to kisse: came he for nought but that?  
 Yes, something else: what was it he would haue?  
 730 That which all men of maydens ought to craue.  
 This sayd, her eye-lids wide she did display;  
 But in this space the boy was runne away:  
 The wanton speches of the louely lasse  
 Forc't him for shame to hide him in the grasse.  
 When she perceiu'd she could not see him neere her,  
 When she had cal'd, and yet he could not heare her,  
 Looke how when Autumne comes, a little space  
 Paleth the red blush of the Summers face,  
 Tearing the leaues the Summers couering,  
 740 Three months in weauing by the curious spring,  
 Making the grasse his greene locks go to wracke,  
 Tearing each ornament from off his backe;  
 So did she spoyle the garments she did weare,  
 Tearing whole ounces of her golden hayre:  
 She thus deluded of her longed blisse,  
 With much adoo at last she vttred this:  
 Why wert thou bashfull, boy? Thou hast no part



Shewes thee to be of such a female heart.  
 His eye is gray, so is the mornings eye,  
 750 That blusheth alwayes when the day is nye.  
 Then his gray eye's the cause; that cannot be:  
 The gray-ey'd morne is farre more bold then he:  
 For with a gentle dew from heauens bright towre,  
 It gets the mayden-head of eu'ry flowre.  
 I would to God, he were the rosiat morne,  
 And I a flowre from out the earthe new borne!  
 His face was smooth; Narcissus face was so,  
 And he was carelesse of a sad Nymphs woe.  
 Then that's the cause; and yet that cannot be:  
 760 Youthfull Narcissus was more bold then he,  
 Because he dide for loue, though of his shade:  
 This boy nor loues himselfe, nor yet a mayd.  
 Besides, his glorious eye is wondrous bright:  
 So is the fierie and all-seeing light  
 Of Phoebus, who at eu'ry mornings birth  
 Blusheth for shame vpon the sullen earth.  
 Then that's the cause; and yet that cannot be:  
 The fierie Sunne is farre more bold then he;  
 He nightly kisseth Thaetis in the sea:  
 770 All know the story of Leucothie.  
 His cheeke is red; so is the fragrant Rose,  
 Whose ruddie cheeke with ouer-blushing gloes:  
 Then that's the cause; and yet that cannot be:  
 Eche blushing Rose is farre more bold then he,  
 Whose boldnesse may be plainely seene in this,  
 The ruddy Rose is not asham'd to kisse;  
 For alwayes when the day is new begun,  
 The spreading Rose will kisse the morning Sun.  
 This sayd, hid in the grasse she did espie him,  
 780 And stumbling with her will, she fel down by him,  
 And with her wanton talke, because he woo'd not,  
 Beg'd that, which he poore nouice vnderstood not:  
 And, for she could not get a greater blisse,  
 She did intreat at least a sisters kisse;  
 But still the more she did the boy beseech,  
 The more he powted at her wanton speech.  
 At last the Nymph began to touch his skin,  
 Whiter then mountaine snow hath euer bin,  
 And did in purenesse that cleare spring surpasse,  
 790 Wherein Actæon saw th' Arcadian lasse.  
 Thus did she dally long, till at the last,  
 In her moyst palme she lockt his white hand fast:  
 Then in her hand his wrest she 'gan to close,  
 When through his pulses strait the warme bloud gloes,

Whose youthfull musike, fanning Cupids fire,  
 In her warme brest kindled a fresh desire.  
 Then did she lift her hand vnto his brest,  
 A part as white and youthfull as the rest,  
 Where, as his flowry breath still comes and goes,  
 800 She felt his gentle heart pant through his clothes.  
 At last she tooke her hand from off that part,  
 And sayd, It panted like anothers heart.  
 Why should it be more feeble, and lesse bold?  
 Why should the bloud about it be more cold?  
 Nay sure, that yeelds, onely thy tongue denyes,  
 And the true fancy of thy heart belyes.  
 Then did she lift her hand vnto his chin,  
 And prays'd the prety dimpling of his skin:  
 But straight his chin she 'gan to ouerslip,  
 810 When she beheld the rednesse of his lip;  
 And sayd, thy lips are soft, presse them to mine,  
 And thou shalt see they are as soft as thine.  
 Then would she faine haue gone vnto his eye,  
 But still his ruddy lip standing so nie,  
 Drew her hand backe, therefore his eye she mist,  
 'Ginning to claspe his necke, and would haue kist;  
 But then the boy did struggle to be gone,  
 Vowing to leaue her and that place alone.  
 But then bright Salmacis began to feare,  
 820 And sayd, Fayre stranger, I wil leaue thee here  
 Amid these pleasant places all alone.  
 So turning back, she fayned to be gone;  
 But from his sight she had no power to passe,  
 Therefore she turn'd and hid her in the grasse,  
 When to the ground bending her snow-white knee,  
 The glad earth gaue new coates to euery tree.  
 He then supposing he was all alone,  
 (Like a young boy that is espy'd of none)  
 Runnes here, and there, then on the bankes doth looke,  
 830 Then on the cristall current of the brooke,  
 Then with his foote he toucht the siluer streames,  
 Whose drowzy waues made musike in their dreames,  
 And, for he was not wholly in, did weepe,  
 Talking alowd and babbling in their sleepe:  
 Whose pleasant coolnesse when the boy did feele,  
 He thrust his foote downe lower to the heele:  
 O'recome with whose sweet noyse, he did begin  
 To strip his soft clothes from his tender skin,  
 When strait the scorching Sun wept teares of brine,  
 840 Because he durst not touch him with his shine,  
 For feare of spolying that same lu'ry skin,  
 Whose whitenesse he so much delighted in;  
 And then the Moone, mother of mortal ease,

Would fayne have come from the Antipodes,  
 To haue beheld him naked as he stood,  
 Ready to leape into the siluer flood;  
 But might not: for the lawes of heauen deny,  
 To shew mens secrets to a womans eye:  
 And therefore was her sad and gloomy light  
 850 Confin'd vnto the secret-keeping night.  
 When beauteous Salmacis awhile had gaz'd  
 Vpon his naked corps, she stood amaz'd,  
 And both her sparkling eyes burnt in her face,  
 Like the bright Sunne reflected in a glasse:  
 Scarce can she stay from running to the boy,  
 Scarce can she now deferre her hoped ioy;  
 So fast her youthfull bloud playes in her vaynes,  
 That almost mad, she scarce her selfe contaynes.  
 When young Hermaphroditus as he stands,  
 860 Clapping his white side with his hollow hands,  
 Leapt liuely from the land, whereon he stood,  
 Into the mayne part of the cristall flood.  
 Like lu'ry then his snowy body was,  
 Or a white Lilly in a cristall glasse.  
 Then rose the water-Nymph from where she lay,  
 As hauing wonne the glory of the day,  
 And her light garments cast from off her skin.  
 Hee's mine, she cry'd; and so leapt spritely in.  
 The flattering luy who did euer see  
 870 Inclaspe the huge trunke of an aged tree,  
 Let him behold the young boy as he stands,  
 Inclaspt in wanton Salmacis's hands:  
 Betwixt those lu'ry arms she lockt him fast,  
 Striuing to get away, till at the last,  
 Fondling, she sayd, why striu'st thou to be gone?  
 Why shouldst thou so desire to be alone?  
 Thy cheeke is neuer fayre, when none is by:  
 For what is red and white, but to the eye?  
 And for that cause the heauens are darke at night,  
 880 Because all creatures close their weary sight;  
 For there's no mortall can so earely rise,  
 But still the morning waytes vpon his eyes.  
 The earely-rising and soone-singing Larke  
 Can neuer chaunt her sweete notes in the darke;  
 For sleepe she ne're so little or so long,  
 Yet still the morning will attend her song.  
 All creatures that beneath bright Cynthia be,  
 Haue appetite vnto society;  
 The ouerflowing waues would haue a bound  
 890 Within the confines of the spacious ground,

And all their shady currents would be plaste  
 In hollow of the solitary vaste,  
 But that they lothe to let their soft streames sing,  
 Where none can heare their gentle murmuring.  
 Yet still the boy, regardlesse what she sayd,  
 Struggled apace to ouerswimme the mayd.  
 Which when the Nymph perceiu'd, she 'gan to say,  
 Struggle thou mayst, but neuer get away.  
 So graunt, iust gods, that neuer day may see  
 900 The separation twixt this boy and mee.  
 The gods did heare her pray'r and feele her woe;  
 And in one body they began to grow.  
 She felt his youthfull bloud in euery vaine;  
 And he felt hers warme his cold brest againe.  
 And euer since was womans loue so blest,  
 That it will draw bloud from the strongest brest.  
 Nor man nor mayd now could they be esteem'd:  
 Neither, and either, might they well be deem'd,  
 When the young boy Hermaphroditus sayd,  
 910 VVith the set voyce of neither man nor mayd,  
 Swift Mercury, thou author of my life,  
 And thou my mother Vulcans louely wife,  
 Let your poore offsprings latest breath be blest,  
 In but obtayning this his last request,  
 Grant that who e're heated by Phoebus beames,  
 Shall come to coole him in these siluer streames,  
 May neuermore a manly shape retaine,  
 But halfe a virgine may returne againe.  
 His parents hark'ned to his last request,  
 920 And with that great power they the fountaine blest.  
 And since that time who in that fountaine swimmes,  
 A mayden smoothnesse seyzeth halfe his limmes.

FINIS.

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