

UGLY DICK
AND
THE GODDESS
OF COMPLETE BEING:
THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION
OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

- by -

Michael Buhagiar

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This book is dedicated

to my mother, Marie Therese Buhagiar née McGrath
to the memory of my father,
Anthony Roland Buhagiar FRACGP OAM

and to the memory of Ted Hughes

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INTRODUCTION

The Journey of the Hero is the jewel in the crown of world culture. Thus, we read of the Twin War Gods of the Navaho in quest of their father the Sun, with the help of Spider Woman and her magic amulets; of Aeneas and his underworld journey with, as mystagogue, the Cumaean Sybil; of Dante and his harrowing of hell, and ascent into glory, with Virgil as guide; of Faust, journey with Mephistopheles; of Bilbo Baggins, with Gandalf; and so on. Thus we, or our children, sit enthralled by the story of Luke Skywalker, questing under the tutelage of Obi-Wan Kenobi. This is the story of the hero's journey of William Shakespeare with, as his protector and guide, one of the towering figures of world culture, a magician of the written word, who yet had much to learn from his pupil about the human heart, to enable the creation of the greatest work of art in the Western tradition.

*

A book appeared toward the end of the last century that got to the heart of Shakespeare as no other before. It was written by one of the greatest of modern poets, now departed, who was steeped in the mythic tradition of world culture, and had long raided its treasure chest with wonderfully successful results, to place him, in this regard, in the company of James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, and Thomas Mann. Ted Hughes' mastery of the great myths and their wisdom gave him also a piercing insight into the creative strategy of William Shakespeare, who was, like Sir Francis Bacon and the other great Elizabethans, constantly elbow-deep in the richness of this tradition, which is far older and deeper than the well-known Graeco-Roman myths, which the writer of the second rank would too easily invoke in ignorance of their provenance and philosophical weight: millenia older, in truth, than the Greeks, and stretching back into the Goddess cultures of Mycenae and Crete, and through them to Egypt and Sumer and the Black Sea region, and thence, searching the depths of the well of the past, to the

beginnings of world religion.

Ted Hughes in his *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being* isolated and analysed the mythic and symbolic constants of the tragic sequence – the fifteen plays from *As You Like It* to *The Tempest* – with the understanding of, not only a great poet (for Auden, Eliot, Joyce, and countless others have had their say on Shakespeare), but also of someone who was no stranger to tragedy himself, - the most shattering, appalling tragedy, not once, but twice, - and had been forced as a consequence to make, as a means to self-survival, the “emergency flight of the shaman” (his own term), or *Journey of the Hero*, or *Ring/Grail Quest*, to the pit of the world that lies unseen below the surface of things. The great achievement of SGCB was to show the tragedies to point unmistakably to a catastrophic psychological event in Shakespeare’s life, in which the main culprit was the libido, or will-to-eros, as cast in negative aspect by Puritanism, whose irruption into the ego which had thought to defeat it was the precipitating event of the breakdown. This event is represented in the First Folio by the “charge of the Boar”, the tusked black pig who had gored the Goddess-rejecting Puritan figure Adonis in the poem *Venus and Adonis*, and repeats the dose in so many of the plays. The long line of Shakespeare’s tragic heroes are Puritan Adonis-analogues: all have spurned the Goddess of Love, with Her constant underworld aspect of the Queen of Hell-Grail Queen, and will pay for it in the same way. Amongst many of Hughes’ very great achievements in SGCB were the isolation of the “Shakespearean moment”, when the negative libido irrupts into consciousness to incite the “double vision”, with its new perception of the loved one as a whore (e.g. “What sense had I of her stol’n hours of lust?”: *Othello* III, iii, 183) ; and his recognition of the utter centrality of the Augustan myth of Aeneas and his rejection of Dido to Shakespeare’s personal mythos. The libido will stand, throughout the plays, more broadly for the unseen world, to create a philosophical work of tremendous depth and range.

An extraordinary thing happens, which Hughes seems to have suspected, albeit obscurely, when the mythic constants of the tragedies – the Boar, the Goddess, Her Adonis-like rejector, and so on – together with the psychic properties familiar to us from depth

psychology and art – the libido, the unconscious, the conscious ego, the faculty of reason, the visual imagination, and so on – are isolated and yoked to individual characters and places of the historical cycle. In the pages to come it will be shown, as rigorously as is reasonably possible, that the nine plays from Henry the Sixth Part 1 to Henry the Eighth are not primarily about history at all, any more than Orwell's *Animal Farm* is about animals; rather, that they form a single allegory, strict and consistent in its every line, of the trauma inflicted by the bitter conflict between Pauline (Roman) Catholicism and Protestant Puritanism on the one hand, and the broadly Gnostic tradition (lately Renaissance Neoplatonic or Christian Cabalist) on the other, - on the broader society, the human psyche in general, and on Shakespeare's in particular, for whose progress they provide a record from earliest childhood to his return to Stratford at the end of his career. They will be revealed to accord with the Gnostic tenet of "As without, so within", as a vehement yet surgically precise exposition of the corruptive effects of the Catholic and Puritan errors on the macrocosm of society – felt particularly strongly in Elizabethan England - and the microcosm of Shakespeare's own psyche. The crucial question of why this encryption was necessary will be answered shortly.

This conflict, and in most cases its resolution, will be revealed as the subject of every play in the First Folio, as well as *Pericles* and the extra-canonical *Mr. Arden of Feversham*, all of which will be examined in detail. This is the point made in the very last speech of FF, by *Cymbeline* in the eponymous play, where the peace concluded between Britain and Rome after the decisive victory of the former, and his agreement to pay tribute to Augustus, represent the victory by William Shakespeare over the Puritan tyranny which had enthralled him aet.15-23, to bring him to the brink of psychosis, and his subsequent revival of it as idea, and description of its defeat, in the pages of the First Folio. This emphasis on FF is of the highest importance: for it will be shown in the argument to come to be a *livre composé*, the definitive text of a great unified work, which alone holds the many keys to its meaning.

In many of the plays a ring plays a vital part; while a diamond

appears, to complement the ring, in 2HVI, and CYM, the final play of FF. The reference is undoubtedly to King Solomon's Ring and precious stone, the Schamir. It is evident that FF is itself a Ring saga (equivalent to a Grail quest: the two immensely venerable traditions being the same, which is the point of the dominance of the Fisher King theme in Act I of All's Well That Ends Well, then of the Ring theme in the remainder), - the greatest in all literature. The hero of the quest will be shown to be Shakespeare himself; with, as his guide and teacher, - a Gandalf to his pupil-patient's Bilbo Baggins, or Virgil to his Dante, - none other than Sir Francis Bacon: the magic he wields being that of the written word as vector of the Gnostic tradition, and acted upon by reason in concert with the visual imagination. The primacy of this latter faculty in the attainment of Gnostic nobility is stressed continually throughout the plays, as represented - an excellent example of the kinds of allegorical techniques that pervade FF - by the various Watches, torches, flares, and so on. The goal of Shakespeare's quest would be the Holy Grail, which is repeatedly identified in FF as the wisdom derived from knowledge of the of the unseen world - that aspect of Nature lying below the apparent surfaces of things - as described in the written word. This is the dimension explored and mastered by the great modern scientists, artists, and depth psychologists. Juliet, Cordelia, Helena, Desdemona, Perdita, and all the other Queens of Hell of the plays, are in truth, as Goddesses of the Invisible World, all Grail Queens, guardians of the Holy Grail itself, the quest for which has been denied by the Puritan Goddess-scoring Adonis-figure - Romeo, Lear, Othello, and all their kin.

It is therefore the contention of this work that both Hero and Magician contributed to the Complete Works of Shakespeare: that they were, in truth, collaborators, with Bacon as the senior partner; and a vast amount of evidence to this end will be provided. In Chapter 44, Parzival by Wolfram von Eschenbach, the first complete Grail romance, will be shown to have been the principal inspiration and model for the allegoric strategy of FF, as conceived and directed by Bacon, who will emerge in new light as, as much as a brilliant innovator, an inheritor of an immensely old esoteric tradition, via the Gnostic Church, the Knights Templar, and Freemasonry. Remarkably, the rituals of the thirty-three degrees of

the Ancient and Accepted Rite of Scotland, - the authentic form of Freemasonry, as prevailed before its suppression by the Grand Lodge of England in the early eighteenth century, - will be shown to provide much of the philosophical backbone of FF (see especially Chs.1, 26, 44). These were in truth the teachings of Jesus himself, - the Church of Rome being a confection of St. Paul's, - as we now know, thanks to the brilliant work of Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas in their much acclaimed *The Hiram Key* and *The Second Messiah*.

Each play's variations from the source – principally Plutarch or Holinshed – are of vital importance for the allegory, and their analyses are scepticidal agents of great potency. They fall into two main groups: those invented *de novo* for the purpose of the allegory; and the given characters, places, or events, adopted for the same purpose. An excellent example of the former is the character of Sir Walter Whitmore, invented by the playwright as murderer of Suffolk in 2*HVI* IV, i, and accompanied by a gloss on his first name, which serves to direct our attention to his key allegorical significance, as representing the ithyphallic principle in negative aspect, more broadly the unseen world, as anathematised by Puritanism; of the latter, the character of Dorset in *RIII*, who appears in this context in Holinshed, and whose name I have glossed with reference to the Druidic tree alphabet,¹ with which FF gives elsewhere evidence of the author's deepest familiarity.

Only one play steps beyond the theme of the severe anxiety/depression neurosis which had stricken down Shakespeare in 1587, and its extirpation at the hands of Sir Francis Bacon. *Hamlet* will be shown to be an examination of untreatable paranoid schizophrenia, that most destructive and tragic of all human psychiatric illnesses. Richard the Third in particular makes it clear that Shakespeare at no time descended into psychosis, the defining characteristic of which is a loss of touch with reality. Yet he must have come terrifyingly close; and that vision of the pit of hell evidently stayed with him, to make the theme of *Hamlet* a ready extrapolation from his own condition. The principal causal agent in the development of schizophrenia, and of the germane condition

¹ Robert Graves' *The White Goddess* is the classic modern text on this subject.

of Shakespeare's disabling neurosis – from which he was delivered through the ministry of Sir Francis Bacon and the Gnostic tradition – FF identifies consistently and repeatedly, in play after play, as the Puritan world-view. Further, the soil of the fleur du mal of Puritanism is firmly identified as the Pauline (Roman) Catholic tyranny (see especially 3HVI III). The modern philosopher, - such as Joseph Campbell, who summarised so memorably the state of play in this area in his wonderful essay on schizophrenia in *Myths to Live By*, - would put it more broadly than that, to include any instructional system which denies engagement with the unseen or Faustian world, the plane of tragedy, to leave the subject inane of the resources and symbols needed to deal in any effective way with both the outer world and the microcosm of his own psyche. Nevertheless, the Puritan error may be taken as a typical causal agent, and it was this insult to the innate nobility and divinity of Man that bulked so large in the apprehension of Bacon and his contemporaries. The immediately apparent (inner/outer) world in which we move every day is represented in FF by characters such as Bianca Minola in TOS; the unseen world, on engagement with which is predicated the ego's understanding of the apparent world, by such as her sister Kate. This begs the question of why not all Puritans – and they still abound - are disabled by mental illness; - which will be answered in due course.

With regard to Shakespeare's condition, FF will be shown, in the pages to come, to comprise, in the now familiar way of books by Jung and his kind, both a graphic, unmediated account in the patient's own words (histories and some other plays), and a clinical commentary by the therapist. Remarkably, these two aspects will be shown to have different authors. Firstly, the histories and many of the other plays contain descriptions of episodes in Shakespeare's life of such intimacy and detail, that their ascription to any other hand than his must be out of the question.

Equally indisputable are the findings of William Moore in his 1934 masterpiece "Shakespeare" (sic), which demonstrated with the utmost rigour the existence in the nonsense lines of *Love's Labour's Lost*, a multiplicity of hidden statements along the lines of "William Shakespeare is Francis Bacon". The relevant chapter will present a summary of his findings, and an appendix the detailed

proof of one of them, from which I trust it will become obvious that the total eclipse of his work by the fruitless gropings of the modern critic has done a massive disservice to LLL and broader Shakespearean scholarship. The allegorical content of LLL and the early comedies does not touch, consistently with Moore's findings, in any way upon the milieu intérieur, as do the contemporaneous histories. The multifarious evidence for allocations of authorship of the individual passages and plays, - of style, allegorical content, date of composition, and so on, - will be discussed fully in the pages to come, wherein it will be found to paint a wholly consistent picture. In particular, style and allegorical content will be shown invariably to be linked – the “high style” of Bacon never conveying, for example, intimate details such as the adolescent erotic experiences described in the tavern scenes in 1&2HIV. Remarkably, Bacon will emerge from the argument come as the true father of modern depth psychology, some three centuries before Freud and Jung.

A certain scenario demands to be constructed from FF as allegory. The reader may find certain aspects of it unpleasant, and many a lover and scholar of Shakespeare may be repelled; but they should come as no surprise at all to the student of depth psychology and art. A tragedy is being incubated here, and the author will omit no significant detail of its growth, for wit and infinite wisdom must prevail over delicacy of sensibility. This is the sort of honesty we have become used to in great modern authors such as James Joyce. The well-known Stratford traditions (in square brackets below) of the adolescent escapades of Will Shaksper (as he was then: the significance of his nom de plume will be revealed in due course) integrate seamlessly with it, as follows.

The tabula rasa of Will Shaksper's childhood psyche becomes deeply imprinted, under the influence of the Christian puritanism of his parents, with the familiar connexion of eros and sin (RII). The libido, thus cast in negative aspect, surges at puberty, to drive him to the defence of bookish asceticism, which is marked by wide reading, solitariness and aloofness, and the development of a rationalistic world-view (Bolingbroke phase: RII, 1HIV). This first coping mechanism collapses under weight of the libido, expressed as auto-erotism (Gads Hill robbery in 1HIV). A rebound into a

period of gregarious gentility then follows, with denial of the underworld, during which the early adolescent Shakespeare now mixes more freely, and expatiates widely on politics, religion, literature, and so on, while still being tormented by his troublesome libido (2HIV; HV I). The flow of life-blood through this gaping psychic wound is finally staunched in a Tavern or pseudo-Alexandrian phase, which will prove to be, however, no more than a band-aid solution (HV). His inspiration in this phase is the young Alexander the Great, whom Plutarch describes, in his *Life of Alexander*, as being celibate, and fond of wine (in moderation) and conversation. He haunts the tavern, and becomes an instant guru to his friends on the subject of the libido, with intense spiritualisation (visual imagining) of the *Journey of the Hero*, without ever in truth making it himself, to leave him still vulnerable to the Boar.

Shaksper is now aet.15, and in the phase of his third defence mechanism against the Boar. Inevitably the libido re-irrupts (*Timon of Athens* I, ii, 120), to shatter his peace and demoralise him [and the social drinking now becomes heavier, and is accompanied by a declension into petty crime]. [He is responsible for the nailing of satirical verses to the gates of the noted Puritan Sir Thomas Lucy, and participates in an act of poaching from his estate, for which he is prosecuted and forcibly separated from the tavern crowd and sent, in lieu of gaol, to work in London, or possibly as a master in a Puritan school]. Now the fourth and final coping mechanism takes hold, with his espousal of Protestant Puritanism (1-3 HVI), with its total suppression of Nature and the reasoning imagination. In his self-contempt, and half-consciousness of the absence of the Goddess-principle from his psyche, he seduces and marries the Aphrodite-figure Anne Hathaway (RIII). He now finds himself cohabiting with Woman as *ianus diaboli* ("Gateway to the devil"), as anathematised by Puritanism, and is tormented thereby. His Puritanism hardens in a desperate attempt to cope. Finally, aet.23, he suffers a catastrophic breakdown, with intense anxiety and depression, yet stopping just this side, by the narrowest of margins, of psychosis (RIII).

He flees Stratford and his torturous marriage to seek healing in the metropolis. Distraught and stricken, he heads for the theatres

[where he works for a time minding horses for the patrons, ultimately progressing to a higher position backstage], and comes upon the great philosopher and writer Sir Francis Bacon, whom he soon recognises as his saviour. As their relationship deepens, Shaksper opens up to him unreservedly, and Bacon accepts with alacrity the challenge of restoring him to health, and leading him out of his Puritan hell to the highest realms of Gnostic enlightenment. His central therapeutic strategy would be the reading and writing of the written word, and Shaksper soon shows himself a responsive patient; and after two years of intensive reading (Melancholy Jacques phase) he embarks on his creative career (Orlando phase), with *Pericles* I&II, and *Mr. Arden of Feversham*. Bacon hits upon the stratagem of preserving for posterity his insights into his patient's condition, by encrypting them into a series of plays. He encourages Shaksper to write the story of his breakdown into a cycle of histories; with considerable help from himself and Christopher Marlowe (and possibly others of his "good pens"); while he himself sets about examining the principles involved in the aetiology, pathogenesis, crisis, and treatment of the condition in his own series of plays, the first of which is *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, soon to be followed by *Titus Andronicus* and the remaining early comedies. Bacon contributes much to the histories in the way of planning, details of Courtly life and the Law, noble speeches, philosophical speculations, symbols, language, and so on. Shaksper now becomes Shakespeare, the new name referring to the Boar spear, symbol of his new intellectual weaponry against the foe that had almost destroyed him.

As the historical cycle is completed, Shakespeare revisits (with Bacon) his Tavern or pseudo-Alexandrian phase in *Timon of Athens* and *Julius Caesar*, having already treated this period in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He examines his final breakdown once more in *Much Ado About Nothing*; and in *Troilus and Cressida* his creative life in London, during which the Boar (libido in negative aspect) continued to haunt him, though without the dire results of before. Consistently with his need to be continually at work, to keep the Boar at bay –or rather, to convert it from a demon to a god – he now sets out, with Bacon, on the great tragic sequence. Some of

these, such as Othello, Hamlet, and King Lear, will be collaborations; while Pericles will be entirely from the pen of Shakespeare, and The Tempest almost entirely so; with Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, The Winter's Tale, and Cymbeline, almost entirely from Bacon. Finally, as the great work approaches its natural end, he forces himself to come to terms with the Boar once and for all, to enable his return to his wife in Stratford (HVIII; TT), - the immediate cause of the coup of 1587, through absolutely no fault of her own. Now Prospero's books - the Baconesque mentation of his London phase - would be drowned, his magician's wand broken, and Ariel, the intellectual activity invoked by Shakespeare to deal with the Boar, - set free.

This all begs the question: Why exactly was it necessary to undergo the colossal and exhausting labour of all this encryption? The answer is that FF as allegory is a vehemently anti-Puritan tract; and Bacon was filled with anxiety for the future of Western culture under the Puritan ascendancy:

Nor is my resolution diminished by foreseeing the state of these times, a sort of declination and ruin of the learning which is now in use... [And] from civil wars, which, on account of certain manners not long ago introduced, seem to me about to visit many countries, and the malignity of sects, and from these compendiary artifices and cautions which have crept into the place of learning, no less a tempest seems to impend over letters and science.²

In this context, FF would have been, in an unencrypted state, as a snowflake in hell, and the timeless wisdom therein destroyed for all time. So much for the theme of FF; but why exactly did he have to encrypt his name? There are, of course, many secondary reasons, such as the low status of the theatre, so that his association with it would have been a huge barrier to the public career he coveted; a desire not to offend his high-minded mother (or foster-mother) Lady Anne Bacon; and so on. Yet the principal reason must be that he feared the discovery of the allegory in his

² On the Interpretation of Nature.

own lifetime. Certainly, the oddities necessary for it (such as the nonsense lines in LLL, and their encryption is often light) obtrude remarkably in many places. Explosive devices such as FF are liable to go off accidentally, and Bacon wanted to be far away if it did. In fact, in a well-documented episode involving RII, he escaped the volcanic wrath of Elizabeth by the skin of his teeth, thanks to the occlusion of his name as author. Intense cryptographic activity of this kind is often a feature of times of greatest crisis. Thus, the Old Testament atbash cipher was almost certainly conceived during the Jewish captivity in Babylon; while the development of the Enigma machine, and the breaking of its power by the English cryptanalysts, forms one of the greatest stories of WWII. Sir Francis Bacon was faced, similarly, with the obliteration of his culture, nothing less; and he had taken up the sacred sword of battle on its behalf.

The recognition of Bacon as heir to a pre-existing tradition serves to explain the sudden appearance in the very first plays, fully-formed, apparently out of nowhere, of key creative symbols such as the Queen of Hell-Grail Queen, the Fool, the Ring, and so on. The influence on FF of Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* will be shown to have been massive, far beyond what the critics have suspected. Yet it is surpassed in importance by Wolfram's *Parzival*, which provided the fundamental architectonic strategy of the ego's engagement with the unseen world (e.g. Petruchio's marriage to Kate in *TOS*), as a preliminary to his new understanding of the phenomenal world (Lucentio's marriage to Bianca). (Chapter 44 will examine this influence in more detail). *Parzival* is in truth a Templar text, as Graham Hancock has shown in his *The Sign and the Seal*; while Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas have established, in their *The Second Messiah*, the clear line of inheritance of Egypt'King David'Jerusalem Church'Jesus Christ'Rex Deus tradition' Knights Templar'Freemasonry. Sir Francis Bacon was formally inducted into Freemasonry by King James in 1603; and it is fascinating to find the principles enshrined in the rituals of the thirty-three degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite of Scotland, – the authentic form of Freemasonry, rather than the travesty that has prevailed since the early 18th century, - as retrieved from oblivion by Knight and Lomas, appearing in FF (see

especially Chs.1, 26, 44). Further, they show the Tarot deck to have been a Templar innovation, for the education into Gnostic nobility of its members; and the corresponding cards of the Tarot Major Arcana will be shown, remarkably, to have provided symbols such as the Tower (Gnostic tradition), Fool, Wheel of Fate, and so on.

The Shakespeare-Bacon story is a wonderful one, and their First Folio the greatest Ring saga in literature. Shakespeare owed everything to his Gandalf, who gave him a life, instructed him in the Gnostic tradition, and supplied him with so many of the symbols, words, and philosophies of the plays he would write. Yet there remains an extra dimension in great art, which Schopenhauer memorably termed the “x” factor. This is finally the will, or unseen world, the substrate of all phenomena whatsoever, and the source of tragedy. It is felt, for example, most powerfully in *Wuthering Heights*, and not at all in the novels of Henry James. In this light, the principal reason for the solo-authorship Bacon camp’s failure to prevail thus far, in spite of a plethora of really solid evidence, is surely the difficulty of conceiving the great tragedies, as nonpareils of “x” factor art in the Western tradition, as having proceeded from a mind like Bacon’s, whose inner life was a triumph of the intellect, and who had apparently succeeded so completely in distancing himself from the “x” factor as a problem in his own life. The genesis of great tragic art is rightly thought to require a different soil to this; and Bacon’s is certainly not the riven psyche so memorably revealed by Ted Hughes.

Bacon gave his patient a life as a writer and thinker; but detailed knowledge of the “x” factor at work, derived from the pain and horrific authenticity of his own experience, is surely what Shakespeare gave in return, to enable the conception and birth of FF. Both camps have been partly right, finally wrong. The Stratfordians accuse their opponents of snobbery,³ which is often confused with true nobility by those with no absolutely knowledge of the latter. The words “noble” and “know” are derived from the same Greek root; and, while his followers may be no more or less noble than the general population, Sir Francis Bacon must be counted the noblest man that ever lived: a conviction that I hope will grow in you as it has

³ See for example “The Question of Authorship” in the Pelican Shakespeare series.

in myself, as this argument progresses. I prefer to think of them rather as unshakeable idealists, sometimes romantic, at worst a touch blinkered, and with an understandable attachment to certainly the greatest Englishman of all. The predominance of the Stratford position may rightly be regarded as a triumph of poetic values; however, the failure of the academy to deign to engage with the really solid evidence produced by their opponents, and their almost total neglect of the timeless philosophy of Bacon, which obtrudes so obviously at every turn in FF, redounds to their eternal shame and discredit.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the truth could have been available to no-one, myself included, in the pre-Ted Hughes era; so that the note struck here should be one of reconciliation, not blame. This book will sail a middle way between the Scylla and Charybdis of the opposing camps, with gaze fixed firmly on the Island of the Sun, whose boon is the timeless and wonderful story of one man's Death and Resurrection.

*

In the last great speech of the first quincunx of histories (1-3HVI, RIII, RII, written in that order) Bacon gives an apologia for just what he has been on about:

Richard I have been studying how I may compare
 This prison where I live unto the world;
 And, for because the world is populous,
 And here is not a creature but myself,
 I cannot do it. Yet I'll hammer it out.
 My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,
 My soul the father; and these two beget
 A generation of still-breeding thoughts;
 And these same thoughts people this little world,
 In humors like the people of this world...

RII, V, v

Bacon's allegorical method was to attach to each character a principle, or "humor", as he calls it here. In the histories for example, - which we will examine first, as the basis for the subsequent argument, - Richard the Third represents the libido,

more broadly the unseen world, as cast in negative aspect by Puritanism; Richmond, that world in positive aspect, as described in the Gnostic written word; Buckingham, the unconscious; Queen Margaret, the Goddess of the Invisible World (Queen of Hell-Grail Queen); Suffolk, the ithyphallic principle as will; Norfolk, that principle as idea; Elizabeth, the sham Goddess of Puritanism; and so on. As with Watson and Crick's theory of the molecular double helix, where each base has a mate to which alone it can bind, if any character were to be found to fail to represent his principle at his every appearance, then the theory would be shown to be inadequate. This will be found not to be the case, however; and in fact with every blind alley of the vast magical city connected, every transient given a home, every old friend recognised, every tremor detected, every hushed conversation understood, the double helix will be shown to bind together ever more tightly, to spiral the receptive mind to the womb of Bacon's creativity.

This then is the basis of the proof of the allegorical nature of the histories: that every character be found to bind to his particular principle at his every appearance without exception (bearing in mind that characters of the same name appear in several plays of the relevant group). A helpful analogy may be with the alphabetical decryption of a message of 200 words (approximate number of episodes in the nine histories) of 5 letters each (number of characters in each episode) based on an alphabet of 100 letters (number of characters in cycle)(note that all of these numbers are underestimations). If then a value is assigned to each of the 200 letters, based on previous experience, context, probability, and so on, and a hidden message is revealed thereby which is not only in perfect English, but of the utmost relevance in the context of the broader investigation, - then the probability of this result occurring by chance must be conceded to be infinitesimally small.

Norrie Epstein, in his *The Friendly Shakespeare*, takes the typical line when he dismisses the "arbitrary" systems of investigators such as Moore. Granted, in the absence of a key provided by the author, then intuition and trial-and-error must play a huge part in determining the conditions of a cipher; but once the correct allocations have been found, then the

decryption runs of itself, like a computer program, to strict parameters, beyond all question of intervention. A good example is the character of Peter, who will be found to bear the allegoric value of the Roman (Pauline) Church. This allocation was clearly based on intuition, St. Peter being one of the best-known Biblical figures in the Western cultural inheritance. Yet, far from having a different principle arbitrarily yoked to him at his every new entry, he bears this value at his every appearance without exception. So does each and every character with whom he comes in contact always represent his principle, to weave a consistent and utterly convincing story.

Another analogy of the theory of the Baconian Double Helix is with the theory of evolution. The Bible belt preacher implores: "Isn't it [Creationism] simpler to believe?" At the most superficial level the answer may be yes; but as soon as one drills down to detail, then Creationism is found to be a seething mess of inconsistencies, - like a landscape by Cristo, perhaps, where a huge white tarpaulin is fitted over a landscape to which it does not belong; whereas the theory of evolution grows out of the facts as does a membrane, contiguous and deep-rooted, from the organ beneath. Just so does the First Folio as allegory form organically from the text, following its every contour, however microscopic; whereas the current state of Shakespearean theory, which the solo-authorship Stratford camp overwhelmingly predominates, is beset by a multitude of intractable problems, a vast number of which will be solved in the pages to come.

A similar story is revealed beyond the historical sequence. For example, the horse or horse-and-rider will be shown to bear the value of the libido in action, as sourced by Bacon from Socrates' famous metaphor in Plato's Phaedrus; the figure hidden behind an arras (Falstaff, Polonius, Boracho, torturer of Arthur in KJ), - the libido suppressed from the Puritan ego, to anticipate Freud by some centuries; Augustus Caesar, as patron of Virgil, creator of Aeneas, the archetypal Goddess-rejector of the plays, - the Puritan ego; Mantua, as birthplace of Virgil, - similarly, the Puritan ego; the many woods, forests, groves, and trees, - the written word, undoubtedly sourced from the Druid grove, on the barks of which were nicked their sacred works; the innumerable letters and Pages, - similarly, the written

word; the handkerchiefs or napkins, often blood-stained, or in Othello woven with strawberries, as referring to menstruation, - the Goddess as Woman, Who is anathematised by the Puritan, and will storm back into the vacuum to claim Her rightful place, to precipitate the breakdown; the many Katherines, - the Queen of Hell-Grail Queen, whose realm is the world which lies unseen below the surface of things; and so on: all at their every appearance without exception. The argument to follow will shirk nothing. If a character or place, or passage, line, word, or even single letter, stands out as demanding attention, then it will be given, with bells on, until the meaning be revealed.

Not the least fascinating aspect of the First Folio as Ring Quest is the author's extensive mining of Plutarch and the other sources for the raw material of symbols. For example, Dame Frances Yates and others have shown⁴ the tremendous influence on John Dee and the other great Elizabethans of the new Christian Cabalism, or Renaissance Neoplatonism, which forged a synthesis of Christianity and the magic of the ancient world. Indeed, Christian symbolism abounds in the plays: for example, in Hubert's carriage of the dead Arthur in his arms in KJ IV, iii (mater dolorosa: Michelangelo's Pieta); or the hauling of the dying Antony up to Cleopatra's cell (Resurrection of Christ). Alexander the Great (from Plutarch's Life) will be shown to bear throughout the plays the allegoric value of the Gnostic Christ; Demetrius, of the Puritan sham Christ, as sourced from Plutarch's Life of Pyrrus, which describes a conflict between Demetrius and Pyrrus (an Alexander figure). This is also undoubtedly the source of the Pyrrhus who slays Priam (King of Troy, whence Aeneas, and therefore a Puritan figure) in Hamlet: the defeat of the Puritan disease by the Gnostic tradition, as represented in the Player's speech, the part that Hamlet (incipient schizophrenic) has forgotten. Countless other examples of this sort of symbolic strategy will be found throughout the plays.

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The great Renaissance mages regarded Clio, the Muse of history, as the lowest of the sisterhood (fig.2); Stephen Daedalus declared,

⁴ Dame Frances Yates, *ibid.*; Peter Blake and Paul S. Belzard, *The Arcadian Cipher*. and others

⁵ *The World as Will and Idea*. All excerpts are from the Everyman Library edition, 1995, (trans. Jill Berman).

famously, that “History is a nightmare from which I am trying to escape”; but Schopenhauer said it best:

The poet comprehends the Idea, man’s inner nature apart from all relations, outside all time... and therefore, however paradoxical it may sound, far more actual genuine inner truth is to be imputed to poetry than to history... Anyone who wants to know Man in his inner nature, identical in all its phenomena and developments, to know him according to the Idea, will find that the works of the great, immortal poets present a far truer, clearer picture than the historians can ever give.⁵

The genesis of this book lay in my first reading of King John. The precision and power of its symbolism, and its utter consistency with the tragic sequence as explicated by Ted Hughes, whose epochal revelations I had been pondering for some years, suggested to me that, as in this least of the histories, so it must be in the remainder: and the conviction established itself that the matchless artist of the tragedies and tragi-comedies could not possibly have been satisfied with the writing of mere history.

Schopenhauer also drew attention, tantalisingly, to the consistency of the characterisation throughout the histories of the Earl of Northumberland in his poetical rather than historical sense. The meaning of the characterisations of Northumberland and the vast company of others can now be illumined, and the poetical significance of their kaleidoscopic interactions revealed. Let us begin, as a gentle introduction, with the early HVI trilogy; before grappling with the magnificent Richard the Third, which will be shown to hold a supreme place in the Western canon, as an autobiographical fragment wrought in a spirit of incorruptible patience, unwearying tenacity, and the most brutal honesty, and more vividly recollective of the ego progressing toward breakdown than any other Life in literature. The path at first may seem unfamiliar, the moon veiled by cloud, the only light a flickering star; but, patience... patience...

I have been studying, how to compare
This prison where I live, unto the world;
And, for because the world is populous,
And here is not a creature, but myself,
I cannot do it: yet I'll hammer it out.
My brain, I'll prove the female to my soul,
My soul, the father; and these two beget
A generation of still-breeding thoughts;
And these same thoughts, people this little world
In humors, like the people of this world...

Richard the Second

And so, proceeding, we come to the question of translating an actual experience into the language of these dead - who are, however, not dead, but sleep, and among whom (as even the most pessimistic social critics must know) there move many who are