



Appendix B

HECATE, QUEEN OF NIGHT

NIGHT. I am the sable Night; and all sleeps through my might.
Of Orpheus I'm the wife, playtime of vice and strife.
I'm guardian of the thief; of lovers friend in chief
I am the sable Night, and have it in my might
To magnify excess, and mankind to depress.
My mantle hides the face of every harlot's disgrace.
Ere Phoebus' light shall flame, I shall begin a game.
You children of my heart, daughters of lust, come start.
You Furies; up arise, and let yourselves appear:
Come diligently learn what soon must happen here.

—*Der Bestrafte Brudermord* (The German *Hamlet*)

(Prologue 1–10)



Marlowe's plays generally have a prologue or opening chorus that alludes to his past work. The prologue to *Der BB* ("Fratricide Punished"), the German version possibly incorporating material from the original *Ur-Hamlet*, appears to fit this pattern. For example, we find a possible reference to Marlowe's early play *The Massacre at Paris*, where the Duke of Guise is likened to Orpheus with his "aspiring wings" (2.43). His seductions and plotting of the St. Bartholemew's Day Massacre qualify him as "the playtime of vice and strife." "The thief" alludes to Tamburlaine, the "Scythian thief" (1.1.36) who aspires to world conquest, carrying out theft, plunder, and expropriation on a monumental scale.¹ "The lovers" appears to refer to the narrative poem *Hero and Leander*. In the last line of Kit's narrative poem, after having sheltered the romantic pair, ugly Night descends in her "loathsome carriage" (818), foreshadowing their star-crossed fate. Yet another possible ref-

erence is to *The Jew of Malta* in which Barabas strives “To magnify excess, and mankind to depress.” The reference to increase and decrease parallels one of the most famous lines in *The Jew*: “So enclose / Infinite riches in a little room” (1.1.36–37). The harlot in the next line of the *Der BB* prologue glances at Gaveston, the king’s favorite in *Edward II*, whose dalliance brings down the throne. “Phoebus’s light” points at Lightborn, the assassin, who finally slays the king with a flaming poker. The furies in the following lines call to mind the nocturnal oaths and conjuring in *Dr. Faustus*. In addition to their sable mistress, the three weird sisters are mentioned several times in this most occult and supernatural of Marlowe’s early works.

Is the prologue Marlovian or Shakespearean, and are these echoes coincidental, synchronistic, or inscribed by design? In *The New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*, the crowning achievement of nineteenth century scholarship, Horace Howard Furness, the general editor and a German scholar, examines possible connections between *Der BB* and material from the original *Ur-Hamlet*. In his two-volume commentary on *Hamlet*, including the first English translation of *Der BB*, Furness presents evidence that, at the end of the sixteenth century, at least three companies of English actors toured Germany and performed at court. Thomas Pope and George Bryan, for example, left the service of the Danish king in 1586 for the Elector of Saxony (reflecting two of the principal settings in the play). Upon returning to England, they joined Shakespeare’s company, and their names appear as actors in the First Folio. William Kempe, another member of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men who performed in *Much Ado About Nothing* and other plays, also lived for a while in Denmark. *The Merchant of Venice*, translated into German, was performed in Halle in 1611. A diary from the court of Dresden records that touring English actors performed *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear* in 1626. All of these connections suggest that the prologue to the German edition is based on an English original.

Although the main text of *Der BB* is brief, plain, and unremarkable, the prologue stands out as the only surviving poetic shard of the original *Ur-Hamlet*.² In the view of Bernhardt, it contains “some turns of expression which forcibly remind us of English poets, and some harsh un-German constructions, appear to establish the foreign origin of the piece, and that it is a translation.”³ “[T]here can be little doubt that in *Fratricide Punished*, we have a translation of an old English tragedy, and most probably the one which is the groundwork of the Quarto of 1603,” concludes Furness, upholding it as genuine.

Other internal evidence, such as Hamlet’s request to his uncle in *Der BB* to be sent to Portugal, point to an early date of composition by Marlowe

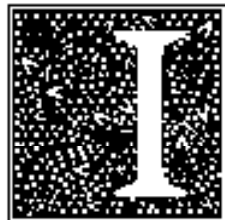
and/or Kyd. Portugal was the destination of an ill-fated English invasion in 1589 of twenty-one thousand men, over half of whom perished. Although England replaced Portugal as the prince's destination, in the later Shakespearean versions the topical allusion appears to survive as the senseless march of Fortinbras's twenty-thousand soldiers "to find quarrel in a straw" (4.4.57). Finally, the stage directions for the prologue suggest that it was performed in the Rose theatre. Hecate "descends from above in her coach covered with stars" and "Ascends" after her appearance with the three furies. The Rose, where Marlowe's and Kyd's works were produced by Philip Henslowe, featured the Heavens, or a mechanical apparatus in which gods and spirits could be raised or lowered. Thus it appears that the German prologue also reflects the performative requirements of the English stage. Combined with Henslowe's mention of performing *Hamlet* at Newington Butts (where repertoire from the Rose was occasionally performed) in 1594, the stage directions suggest that Hecate's prologue was an integral part of the play at that time and originally derived from Marlowe's hand.

Black Hecate

Around the pyre stood altars, and the priestess,
 Hair unbound, called in a voice of thunder
 Upon three hundred gods, on Erebus,
 On Chaos, and on triple Hecate,
 Three-faced Diana.

—Virgil, *The Aeneid*

(4.704–708)



In the play-within-the-play, *Hamlet* includes a stanza invoking Hecate of six lines—the number of lines in a hex or spell—that alludes to her presence as the divine mischief maker behind the scenes and that serves to catch the conscience of the king (3.2.244–249). As we have seen, the queen of Night and goddess of the Underworld is alluded to in other parts of the play, especially in the person of Ophelia. Some of the flowers she distributes may be associated with the goddess, and the willow tree in whose vines she dies is sacred to Hecate. The memories and thoughts she inspires in Laertes may contribute to Hamlet's death like Dido, whose dying curse called down the goddess's retribution on Aeneas. Poisons sacred to Hecate may have been used by Claudius to slay Elder Hamlet and by Laertes to kill the prince.

Hecate appears in one of the conjuring scenes in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* in verse similar to the *Der BB* prologue and the six-line stanza in *Hamlet*:

Whilst on thy head I lay my hand
 And charm thee with this magic wand.
 First wear this girdle; then appear
 Invisible to all are here.
 The planets seven, the gloomy air,
 Hell and the Furies' forkèd hair,
 Pluto's blue fire, and Hecate's tree
 With magic spells so compass thee
 That no eye may thy body see.

(3.2.15–23 B-text)

In literally the last words the historical Marlowe is known to have written, Hecate and her coach are referred to in the concluding lines of the unfinished *Hero and Leander*:

But he [Apollo] the day's bright bearing car prepared
 And ran before, as harbinger of light,
 And with his flaring beams mocked ugly Night,
 Til she, o'ercome with anguish, shame and rage,
 Dangled down to hell her loathsome carriage.

(814–818)

As the queen of Night, Hecate also appears in several other Shakespearean plays. In *1 Henry VI*, Talbot likens Joan of Arc to "that railing Hecate" (3.2.64). In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* her presence is mischievous but benign:

PUCK. Now it is the time of night
 That the graves, all gaping wide,
 Every one lets forth his sprite,
 In the church-way paths to glide.
 And we fairies, that do run
 By the triple Hecat's team
 From the presence of the sun,
 Following darkness like a dream,
 Now are frolic.

(5.1.379–387)

In this passage, as in several others, the goddess's tripartite nature is emphasized. Triplicities are a characteristic feature of *Hamlet*, as we shall see below.

Without naming her directly, Juliet invokes Hecate in *Romeo and Juliet* in a passage that highlights Hecate's ability to influence terrestrial events:

. . . Come, civil night,
 Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
 And learn me how to lose a winning match,
 Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods.
 Hood my unmann'd blood, bating in my cheeks,
 With thy black mantle, till strange love, grown bold,
 Think true love acted simple modesty.

(3.2.10–16)

In *King Lear*, Lear refers to the goddess by name in the opening scene with Cordelia: “For by the sacred radiance of the sun, / The [mysteries] of Hecat and the night” (1.1.109–110). Glancing at Kit’s first tragedy, the “barbarous Scythian” (116) a few lines later alludes anachronistically to Tamburlaine, the most barbarous Scythian of all.

Next to *Hamlet*, the most extensive reference to Hecate in the Shakespearean canon occurs in *Macbeth*, the archetypal study of evil. The play opens with a brief scene, reminiscent of the prologue to *Der BB*, in which the three furies gather, and the first witch utters the famous opening line: “When shall we three meet again?” (1.1.1). Contemplating Banquo’s murder, Macbeth invokes the queen of Night, “Now o’er the one half world / Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse / The curtain’d sleep; witchcraft celebrates / Pale Hecat’s off’rings; and wither’d Murther, / . . . Moves like a ghost” (2.1.49–56). In scheming with Lady Macbeth in the next act, Macbeth again likens their foul deeds to the goddess of the dead: “Then be thou jocund; ere the bat hath flown / His cloister’d flight, ere to black Hecat’s summons / The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums / Hath run night’s yawning peal, there shall be done / A deed of dreadful note” (3.2.40–44).

But it is her actual entrance on stage that dramatically establishes Hecate as the invisible playwright and director behind the scenes. In another scene in *Macbeth* reminiscent of the prologue in the German *Hamlet*, she meets with her three underlings to plot carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts:

I. WITCH. Why, how now, Hecat? you look angrily.
 HECAT. Have I not reason, beldams as you are?
 Saucy and overbold, how did you dare
 To trade and traffic with Macbeth
 In riddles and affairs of death;
 And I, the mistress of your charms,
 The close contriver of all harms,
 Was never call’d to bear my part,
 Or show the glory of our art?
 And which is worse, all you have done

Hath been but for a wayward son,
 Spiteful and wrathful, who (as others do)
 Loves for his own ends, not for you.
 But make amends now. Get you gone,
 And at the pit of Acheron
 Meet me i' th' morning; thither he
 Will come to know his destiny.
 Your vessels and your spells provide,
 Your charms and every thing beside.
 I am for th' air; this night I'll spend
 Unto a dismal and a fatal end.
 Great business must be wrought ere noon:
 Upon the corner of the moon
 There hangs a vap'rous drop profound,
 I'll catch it ere it come to ground;
 And that, distill'd by magic sleights,
 Shall raise such artificial sprites
 As by the strength of their illusion
 Shall draw him on to his confusion.
 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
 His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear;
 And you all know, security
 Is mortal's chiefest enemy.

(3.5.1–33)

The passage, similar in tone, imagery, and rhythm to the opening of *Der BB*, reveals a possible authorial link between Marlowe, the *Ur-Hamlet*, and two of the greatest Shakespearean tragedies.⁴

In addition to the queen of Night, her furies appear several dozen times in Kit's early plays and poems. Though Hecate remains invisible, we feel her presence. The most significant is in *Dido Queen of Carthage*. In Aeneas's description of the fall of Troy, he likens Pyrrhus's slaughter of Priam to one of the fatal sisters:

So I escaped the furious Pyrrhus' wrath,
 Who then ran to the palace of the King,
 And at Jove's altar finding Priamus,
 About whose withered neck hung Hecuba,
 Folding his hand in hers, and jointly both
 Beating their breasts and falling on the ground,
 He, with his falchion's point raised up at once,
 And with Megaera's eyes, stared in their face,
 Threatening a thousand deaths at every glance.

(2.1.223–231)

Megaera is the second of the three furies. In the opening of *Der BB*, she

hotfoots it back from Acheron's pit (as she does in the *Macbeth* passage quoted above) to carry out Hecate's command, noting "*Pluto* himself can not inspire in me / More ill than men shall very shortly see performed" (Prologue 36–37). As a poetic syllogism, the train of thought between Megaera and Pyrrhus in *Dido*, her appearance in the prologue to the German *Hamlet*, and the Pyrrhus speech in the English versions of *Hamlet* further suggest that they were composed by the same hand. Overall, the furies appear in all of Marlowe's early plays and narrative poems and in nearly two-thirds of the Shakespearean canon.

As we saw, Kit probably became fascinated with the goddess, or dark muse, while studying the Homeric hymns, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The Trojan conflict, the subject of these three great poets, itself may be laid at Hecate's feet. Like Colluthus's *The Rape of Helen*, which he translated from the Greek (and is now lost), Marlowe would have seen Eris, the goddess of discord, who tossed the golden apple "to the fairest," as the daughter of Night. Indeed, the Hesperides who guarded the tree from whose bough the fatal apple was chosen, were also daughters of Hecate. As the archetypal witch or vengeful female, Eris mirrors a rejected or repressed part of the human psyche that appears as envy, jealousy, and discord. Hecate's spells and curses construct the negative feminine aspect of ourselves that we project onto others and nature. *Dr. Faustus*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest* explore the manifestations of this dark energy in the individual soul and the theater of the world.

Both Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Lucan's *Pharsalia* (which Marlowe partially translated), have passages devoted to Hecate and her iconic symbols: herbs, burning torches, and hell hounds. Some of these references may be echoed in the early plays as well as in *Hamlet* and the other Shakespearean works. In the *Pharsalia*, the Thessalian witch Erictho is approached to prophesy the outcome of the civil war with Julius Caesar. She carries out a necromancy ritual in which a dead body is propped up similar to the upright corpses in *The Jew of Malta* and *Titus Andronicus*. Invoking the furies, she incants: "Thisiphone and Megaera, you who scorn my calling, do you not drive this hapless soul through the emptiness of Erebus with your cruel whips?"⁵ The lines echo "the whips and scorns of time" (3.1.76) in Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy. Then the goddess of Night herself is summoned: "You, Hecate, decaying and colorless in appearance as you are, are in the habit of showing yourself to the gods above only after first making up your face. I will show you to them and forbid you to alter your hell-face."⁶ Prince Hamlet's disgust at the painted faces of woman is a major theme in the play, as well as the Shakespearean sonnets. Lucan's description of Erictho's use of moon nectar and drawing down the emanations of the

silver orb later appears in *Macbeth* in the Hecate passage quoted above and other lunar references scattered throughout the canons.

Amulets sacred to Hecate and her priestesses are also mentioned in the classical literature and bear an affinity with props and accoutrements in *Hamlet* and the other plays. In the *Philopseudes*, the second century Greek writer Lucian (not to be confused with Lucan) describes a seal-ring associated with the goddess that is used as a good luck charm to ward off the terrors of Hades. As in myths and fairy tales like this, the signet-ring that Hamlet uses to escape death on his long sea-journey may harken back to such a device. But possibly the most potent magical talisman in antiquity was the skull. In Greek magical papyri of the fourth century there is a description of skull necromancy in which a three-headed Hecate brandishing torches in her six hands is depicted on a leaf. The leaf is then placed on the skull, a chant to the goddess is recited, and a ghost appears. Besides Yorick's skull, the image evokes the six-line stanza summoning Hecate in *Hamlet's* play-within-the-play and the torches that Claudius commands to be lit when he abruptly ends the performance. Given such potent images from classical literature with which Marlowe was intimately familiar, the magical significance of the love tokens exchanged by Hamlet and Ophelia bears further investigation.

In Greek, the word *pharmakis* means "witch" and signifies a person skilled in plants, herbs, or potions. Originally the term was neutral, and such energy could be used for good or ill. But with the rise of Christianity, witchcraft became identified with idolatry, blasphemy, and devil worship. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the height of the witch craze, and tens of thousands of people, overwhelmingly female, were persecuted, burned, and hung in Europe, the British Isles, and New England. Ophelia is bewitching, but does not fit the profile of a witch like Joan La Pucelle in *I Henry VI*. However, Ophelia's knowledge of herbs, songs, and parting gifts of flowers link her to Hecate, if only subconsciously. Even such references as "the Owl was a Baker's daughter" (4.5.38–39), a reference to a Gypsy legend usually associated with the girl who denied bread or water to Christ, probably derives from an even older myth about a priestess of Hecate baking wax votive offerings for use in spells and potions.

The supernatural dimension to *Hamlet* has emerged as a major area of recent scholarship, especially the play's stance toward purgatory and other theological doctrines. However, its mythic aspects have been overlooked. An examination of Hecate's role in the Marlovian and Shakespearean canons reveals much rich material linking the two and showing that they essentially flowed from the same hand.

No Fairy Takes

This bird of dawning singeth all night long,
 And then they say no spirit dare stir abroad
 The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,
 No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
 So hallowed, and so gracious is that time.

—*Hamlet*

(1.1.171–175)

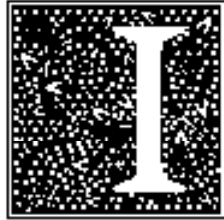


ight”—Hecate’s abode—is one of the poet’s favorite words. Altogether, it appears ninety-four times in the Marlovian works and 716 times in the Shakespearean canon, often in imagery associated with the dark goddess. By looking at a few examples, we can see how pervasive this link was in the poet’s mind. In *Much Ado About Nothing* and *As You Like It*, Hecate simply appears as the “goddess of the night” (5.3.12) and “three-crowned queen of night” (3.2.2) respectively. In *The Rape of Lucrece*, she is addressed as “sable Night, mother of dread and fear,” (117) and “Misshapen Time, copesmate of ugly Night” (925). She is also referred to as “ugly night” in *Venus and Adonis* (1041) and *Troilus and Cressida* (5.8.6). “Ugly” is one of Marlowe’s favorite adjectives, and he uses the epithet “ugly night” in *The Massacre at Paris* (2.5) and *Hero and Leander* (816), as well as “ugly darkness with her [Hecate’s] rusty coach” in *Tamburlaine* (5.1.294). In *King John* (5.6.17) and *A Midsummer’s Night Dream* (3.2.387), “the black brow of night” and “black-brow’d Night” allude to a furrowed aspect of her divine physiognomy. In *Richard III* (1.2.131), *Titus Andronicus* (5.1.64), and the *Sonnets* (73), she is addressed simply as “black night.” The *Sonnets* also mention “ghastly night” (27), while *Venus and Adonis* apostrophizes “black-fac’d night” (773) and *King Lear* “hell-black night” (3.7.60). Altogether, Hecate is named or appears under an epithet or alias in about one-third of the Shakespearean poems and plays.

The furies, Hecate’s acolytes, also make their presence felt in many of the Shakespearean plays. In addition to some of the works mentioned above, the fates appear in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II*, *3 Henry 6*, *Pericles*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Winter’s Tale*, *Julius Caesar*, *All’s Well That Ends Well*, *Henry V*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest*. In *2 Henry IV*, Alecto, the first and swiftest of the furies in *Hamlet*’s prologue, is referred to by name: “revenge from ebon [ebony or black signifies Night] den with fell Alecto’s snake” (5.5.37). Altogether, Hecate or her minions appear in all of

Marlowe's major works and nearly two third's of the Shakespearean plays and poems. Once again, this shows the continuity between the two sets of works and the mythological world view of the poet and dramatist.

Thrice-Blasted, Thrice Collected



In the play-within-the-play, the climactic mention of “*Hecate*’s ban thrice blasted, thrice collected” (3.2.247) points to the goddess’s trifold aspect. In Roman iconography, she was commonly depicted with three faces, representing past, present, and future. Sometime they were divine or human in form, other times canine in recognition of her role as goddess of the dead and her pack of hell hounds. The triple invocation is also characteristic of magic spells and the occult in general. Throughout *Hamlet*, things occur in threes. There are three soldiers on the watch at the opening of the play when the ghost returns for the third time. After being told that “thrice he walk’d” (1.1.207), Hamlet salutes the apparition, “King, father, royal Dane” (1.4.28). Threes resonate through the ghost’s speech revealing his murder. “Of life, of Crown, of Queen” (1.5.78), the apparition explains, he was at once dispatched, cut off “Unhousel’d, disappointed, unanel’d” (81). “O horrible, O horrible, most horrible” (84), the ghost cries. After the specter bids “adieu” three times in a row (95), Hamlet responds in kind, “O villain, villain, smiling damned villain” (110). Vowing revenge, the prince makes his three companions take an oath three times at sword point. The ghost echoes the solemnity of the pact by uttering “swear” three times.

In the presence chamber, Claudius characteristically itemizes things in triplicate in his first meeting with Hamlet. In a reference to three generations, he reminds him that his father and his father before him went the way of all flesh. He then enumerates the faults that prolonged mourning is heir to: faults of heaven, faults of the dead, and faults of nature. Ironically, these are the very three faults that he is guilty of. Again as an antiphon to his uncle, Hamlet reiterates three times how the king and queen remarried within a month of his father’s death.

The prince’s relationship with Ophelia also touches several times on the number three. She enumerates his three major roles—courtier, soldier, and scholar—even as she mismatches their three attributes—eye, tongue, and sword. In reporting to her father, she recounts observing Hamlet in his melancholy, “thrice his head thus waving up and down” (2.1.99). In the prince’s letter to her, he uses the word “doubt” three times to assure her of his true love (2.2.121–123). “You cannot take from me any thing that I will

more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life” (2.2.219), he ironically warns the old counselor whose life he soon takes.

Following the abrupt conclusion of *The Mousetrap*, Polonius rises to the king’s aid, crying “Lights, lights, lights!” (3.2.258), echoing Hecate’s “thrice-blasted” invocation a few lines earlier. The bedchamber scene opens with Hamlet exclaiming, “Mother, mother, mother!” (3.4.6). In her mad scene, Ophelia distributes flowers to three persons: Laertes, Claudius, and Gertrude. On his return to England after foiling the plot to kill him, Hamlet sends letters to Horatio, the king, and queen. The clowns also naturally fall into the tripartite spirit. In the hilarious exchange about the drowning man and the law, the senior gravedigger explains that an “act hath three branches” (5.1.9–10) and enumerates them in a mock legal retort to Claudius’s earlier itemizations of the three faults against divine law. His gallows humor also features trifecta answers, including “Gard’ners, Ditchers, and Gravemakers” (25) and “the Mason, the Shipwright, or the Carpenter” (35–36), to several riddles. Reinforcing the triple imagery surrounding death and the hereafter, the main gravedigger uncovers three skulls in the course of his labors.

As the funeral procession winds its way to the site, Laertes exclaims “O treble woe” (5.1.217) when he realizes that his sister has died. In the contest with the foils, Hamlet taunts him to “Come for the third” pass (5.2.289). It is the encounter that proves fatal to the prince. But before he dies, he manages to force Claudius to drink from the poisoned chalice that kills three people. Fortinbras, whose armies have crossed Denmark three times, inherits the kingdom, as Horatio resolves to tell Hamlet’s story to the assembled multitude, the returned ambassadors, and the new monarch. Ironically, like Hamlet and Laertes, Fortinbras is one of three sons avenging his father’s death.

Some of the triplicities in *Hamlet* may be coincidental, unavoidable, or, as the clown would say, meet. After all, much of our thought and language is structured in threes. And some are thematic such as the delays by Hamlet, Pyrrhus, and Lucianus. But the unusual number of triplicities in the play reinforces its ghostly theme, especially its invocation of hexes, spells, and the supernatural, and offers a subtle counterpoise to the Trinity.¹³

Reflecting the tripartite nature of life, the three versions of the Shakespearean *Hamlets*—the First Quarto, the Second Quarto, and the Folio—have delighted, challenged, and confounded audiences, readers, and critics ever since.

The Snare of Murderous Mind



he possible literary rivalry between Marlowe and Thomas Sackville, co-author of *Gorboduc*, the earliest English tragedy composed in blank verse, also has a curious link to Hecate and her minions. The First and Second Quartos of *Hamlet* appear to go back to the *Ur-Hamlet* that Marlowe and/or Thomas Kyd probably scripted in the mid to late 1580s. A strong influ-

ence on this early version, especially the prologue, may have been *Gorboduc*, the play that Sackville had a hand in before he abandoned the stage for government service and, as Lord Buckhurst, performed the role as a prime instigator in the events leading up to Marlowe's "death."

Thomas Norton composed the first three acts of *Gorboduc*, which deals with an ancient king of Britain who divided his kingdom between his sons. One son slew the other, the mother in turn killed him, and in the resulting civil war, the monarchs were slain. Critics believe this was a veiled warning to Elizabeth, before whom it was performed in the early years of her reign, to avoid a royal marriage that could provoke a civil war between Protestant and Catholic and imperil the realm. According to some critics, the famous scene in *3 Henry VI* in which a father slays his son and a son his father may also stem from this source.⁷

Sackville penned the last two acts of *Gorboduc*, which open with a Dumb Show accompanied by the sounds of hautboys (high-pitched reed instruments). From beneath the stage, "as though out of Hell," come Alecto, Megaera, and Thisiphone, Hecate's three furies, attired in black garments sprinkled with blood and flames. Each of the fates, holding a whip and a burning firebrand, drives before her one of England's early kings and queens, inciting them to murder their own children. After circling the stage three times, the furies depart and the music ceases.

The similarities to the opening of the German *Hamlet*, the witches scene in *Macbeth*, and the scene in *Tamburlaine* in which the Scythian ruler rides in a carriage drawn by his conquered kings are striking. And the resemblances don't stop there. The Trojan war figures prominently in *Gorboduc*'s previous act, and Priam and Hecuba are mentioned by name. Medea, Hecate's daughter, is identified as one of the queens in *Gorboduc*'s Dumb Show who is driven mad. Whether *Gorboduc*, the first English tragedy written in blank verse, influenced the *Ur-Hamlet*, *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*, or the First and Second Quarto of *Hamlet*, the literary link between Sackville and Marlowe needs to be further explored. One particular line in *Gorboduc* about lawless resolute stands out as the conventional epitaph of Marlowe: "Careless of Country and aweless of God." But perhaps more appropriate to

Kit's fate is the passage spoken by Eubulus, secretary to the sovereign:

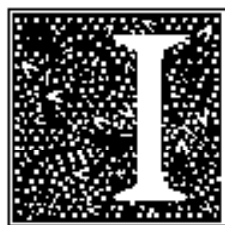
O happy wight [person] that suffers not the snare
 Of murderous mind to tangle him in blood:
 And happy he that can in time beware
 By others harms and turn it to his good
 (4.2.289–92)

No more ironic description of Marlowe's fate could be constructed.

In another curious parallel, Kit may have been inspired to translate Lucan because of Buckhurst's literary fame. The subversive Roman poet was taboo—and not only for Elizabethan reasons of state. In *Tragical Tales*, George Turberville noted that as soon as he made a stab at Lucan, the Muse of tragedy appeared in a dream warning him to desist or suffer the fate of Phaeton. In the archetypal tale of teenage recklessness, the young demi-god lost control of his father the Sun god's chariot and had to be slain by a thunderbolt from Zeus. "Lofty Lucan's verse," the Muse told Turberville in demi-iambic hexameter, "[is] meet for noble Buckhurst's brain."⁸ The warning may have goaded Marlowe to rise to the occasion, as David Riggs observes. "The assertion that only an aristocrat like Lord Buckhurst could write English blank verse posed a challenge to Marlowe, the poor scholar who already possessed 'metre meet / To furnish Lucan's style'."⁹

Whatever their rivalry, Buckhurst's and Marlowe's destinies converged in early 1593. On May 30, the annual feast day of Hecate, the goddess of the dead, Marlowe partook of his last supper in Deptford. Protected by a special providence, he appears to have escaped the furies unleashed by Queen Elizabeth and Archbishop Whitgift, her "little black"—or sable—"husband." And as the muses' darling, he evidently went on, in collaboration with his new dramatic partner, Shakespeare, to "unmask falsehood, and bring truth to light" (*Rape of Lucrece* 940).

Fair, Correcting Hand



In his biography, Lacey Baldwin Smith catches the essence of Queen Elizabeth's vacillating nature: "Henry VIII sought to protect himself by never changing his mind once he had come to a decision, for those who are filled with the spirit of divinity cannot forever be shifting their grounds. Elizabeth shielded herself as far as she could by never making a decision, or at least never making one which was irrevocable."¹⁰

Ironically, Cynthia and Artemis, two of Elizabeth's public personae, were

traditional aspects of Hecate. In contrast to her decisive but inflexible father, Elizabeth's indecision mirrored the waxing and waning of Cynthia, the moon. Like Artemis, the goddess of the fields, the queen's virginal posturing also concealed a tragic flaw. The Shakespearean plays are well aware of the connection between Artemis and Hecate, as we would expect from Marlowe's classical background. In *As You Like It*, for example, Rosalind is depicted as a youthful, exuberant Artemis, and Orlando links her with the goddess of Night:

ORLANDO. Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love,
 And thou, three-crowned queen of night, survey
 With thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above,
 Thy huntress' name that my full life doth sway.
 (3.2.1–4)

In *Hamlet*, the triple-faced goddess manifests in her archetypal guises as maiden, matron, and crone. She appears as Ophelia (the young Artemis pursued by the poet prince), as Gertrude (the Juno personality), and as the queen of Night in the prologue and the play-within-the-play. The similarities between Gertrude and Elizabeth, as we saw, are striking. In Hamlet's aversion to his mother's painted face (or false countenance) the association with Hecate is most pronounced. (In one myth, the dark goddess incurs Juno's wrath for filching rouge for Europa, Jove's mistress.) When the mob storms the palace led by Laertes, the queen exclaims: "How cheerfully on the false trail they cry. / O this is counter you false Danish dogs" (4.5.102–103). The image calls to mind the dogs in the Artemis myth that turned against Acteon and derives originally from Hecate's hell hounds. It is a frequent theme in the Shakespearean plays, appearing in *Titus Andronicus*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*. In a mythic touch worthy of the queen of Night, Elizabeth's own royal foxhounds were kenneled in Deptford in baying distance of Marlowe's unmarked grave.

In her youth and prime, the queen was physically striking. She had curly, golden-red hair, pale skin, grey wide-set eyes, and narrow brows, and her appearance and tastes set the standard of fashion for her era. But as she aged, like the Greek goddess, Elizabeth was terrified of being seen in a state of undress. In the war of the sexes, Essex's fate was sealed when he burst into the queen's bedchamber and accosted her without her wig, robes, and make up. The impetuous commander of her Irish campaign was banished from her sight and placed under detention. With an ironic allusion to the province of the dark queen, Essex lamented, "[T]ime itself is a perpetual night" until he could appear in her heavenly presence and "kiss her Majesty's fair, correcting hand."¹¹ But the gesture was too late. The spell that Elizabeth had cast

on her onetime favorite—and by extension on the realm—was irrevocably broken. Accosted with her hair down, she was as “naked” as Prince Hamlet proclaims himself to be in his missives to Gertrude and Claudius (4.7.46). The prince’s forced entry into his mother’s quarters glances at the Essex intrusion, while Laertes’s arrival at the palace at the head of a mob, reprises the earl’s uprising in the streets. Prince Hamlet’s invective against painted ladies is a recurrent theme in the play.

Curiously, Elizabethan make up emphasized the three major colors—red, white, and black (symbolic of the three horsemen of the Apocalypse who ride with pale Death)—featured in Kit’s works. A light foundation was created with white powder dusted on the face. This was followed by a light application of blush in an oval along the cheek and a matte red lipstick in ochre or red brick. Finally, a black or dark grey eyeliner silhouetted the eyes, which were plucked or drawn in high arches to complete the period look.¹² The progression from white to red to black parallels the three banners unfurled in *Tamburlaine*. It also mimics the tripartite color theme in *Hamlet* symbolized by ghosts and skulls (white), carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts (red), and death and mourning (black). The irony of the frailer sex employing a color strategy to effect a conquest did not go unnoticed.

Like the Amleth myth, the trope of the goddess who cannot be seen in the natural light of day is universal. In Greek literature, Artemis turns Acteon into a stag and turns his own hounds on him when he happens to catch sight of her unclothed in the woods. In Japanese mythology, Izanami, the primal female, turns her wrath against Izanagi, the primal male, when he encounters her in the Underworld without her robes and make up. As icons of power and beauty, the three sacred objects in Shinto—the mirror, the comb, and the jewel—turn up the world over. In *Hamlet*, they appear as the mirror the theater holds up to nature, the prince’s combed and uncombed locks, and the diadem or crown jewels, as well as fashion accessories on Gertrude’s dressing table.

Just as Izanami turned into a fury, Elizabeth transformed over the years into an avenging angel. When an anonymous book appeared openly questioning her proposed marriage to a French prince, Elizabeth’s wrath knew no bounds. She mobilized the entire apparatus of state to unmask and track down the culprit, Thomas Stubbe, and against the advice of Burghley and her Privy Council, ordered his right hand and that of his printer, Page, chopped off. Two judges who declared her sentence illegal were imprisoned, and on the block the aptly named Stubbe, an early martyr to freedom of the press, punningly declared, “nowe my calamitie is at hande.” Holding up his severed stump, he valiantly cried, “God save the Queen.”¹³ The lesson was not lost on budding young writers and dramatists like Marlowe, and they

learned to conceal their criticism. *Titus Andronicus* was probably the first tragedy that came out after Marlowe “died” and Shakespeare took his place. As Heather James shows, it is a wicked “assault on the Virgin Queen in the figure of Tamora” and parodies the celestial guises that Elizabeth cloaked herself in such as Astraea and Artemis.¹⁴ Ostensibly set against the backdrop of the collapse of Rome, the play subtly inscribes contemporary Elizabethan politics. Typical lines such as “The Emperor’s court is like the house of Fame, / The palace full of tongues, of eyes, and ears” (2.1.126-127) capture the authoritarian nature of Elizabeth’s reign. The description prefigures the stifling atmosphere of Elsinore where the royal couple retain their power by spying and subterfuge. It also alludes to Elizabeth’s magnificent dress patterned with scores of eyes and ears, signifying that no secrets could be kept from England’s omniscient ruler (see her portrait in this dress on p. 13). In her persecution of the Martinists, the Puritans, and Catholics she truly turned into an Anglican Hecate “with Megaera’s eyes, stared in their face, / Threatening a thousand deaths at every glance” (2.1.230–231), as Kit put it in *Dido Queen of Carthage*. After her death, Elizabeth’s wardrobe was ransacked by the court ladies (including Arbella Stuart and Audrey Walsingham) to be used as costumes in holiday masques staged for the new Stuart court. It is not clear who inherited her Argus-eyed robe.

Athena, the paragon of learning and one of the queen’s favorite guises, may have been the “spear shaker,” an epithet advanced by some classicists as a possible explanation for the use of Shakespeare as a penname. But in the actual Shakespearean works, like those of Marlowe, Ovid, and Homer, Aphrodite always wins the heavenly beauty pageant. No wonder the muse’s manifestations as Discord, Elizabeth, and Gertrude are so jealous of Helen, Arbella, and Ophelia’s natural beauty and sweet bloom of youth.

Given the visible or invisible presence of Hecate and her furies in *Gorboduc*, *Tamburlaine*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Ur-Hamlet*, *Dr. Faustus*, *Hero and Leander*, and other plays and poems, it is not surprising that Marlowe staged his murder on May 30, the annual festival of the goddess of the dead, and embarked on his journey into the Underworld like Odysseus, Virgil, and Dante before him.¹⁵ But if it were truly coincidence, a strong case can be made that neither Kit nor Will, but the pale queen of Night composed the works that have come down in their names and deserves the laurel bough. Stage managing her productions from a star-spangled chariot on the cusp of the moon, the real Dark Lady of the sonnets and plays conceals her gentle and loving nature (as the Homeric hymns express it) behind an antic disposition of discord and revenge. In the words of *3 Henry VI*, one of the first joint Marlovian and Shakespearean ventures, “[S]he was the author, thou the instrument” (4.6.18).