Athens Journal of Philology 2025, 12: 1-34
https://doi.org/10.30958/ajp.X-Y-Z

Greek Myths in Elizabethan Literature and Art: A Conceptual Theory Study

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Ancient Greek myths played a crucial role in the Renaissance culture taking on new meanings in textual and visual art. This article assesses the role of Greek mythology in the Elizabethan period in two particular aspects: 1) the plot forming significance of fabled Greek tales and 2) their capacity to constitute a given situation within the framework of a broader myth. Antique stories were used by Elizabethan poets, dramatists, and artists as a cognitive base, a point of departure for their works setting a general direction with a clear-cut conceptual structure. The archetypal myth was then modified to meet the needs of the early modern politics, religion, and morality, with the conceptual scheme seriously revised and extended. Old stories were subject to alterations and adaptations introducing new motifs, Christian dogmas and interpretations, and contensive typology in the discourse of praise of the female monarch and her country. Mythological enclaves (inclusions) as a figurative device are laconic references to Greek myths and are meant to add imagery beyond the limitations of the plot-forming myth. They are situation-based and create an additional layer of meaning for a given context. They have special functions and effects and extend the narrative's cognitive content and complexity.

Keywords: *Greek theology, archetypal myth, conceptual structure, mythological enclave, pictorial art, Lyly, Drayton, Peele.*

> Mythology provided a network of allusions and references for contemporary poetry and art, reinforcing the possibilities of allegorical interpretation. All artistic expressions, visual and textual, whether they belonged to a secular or a religious tradition, made use of mythology.
> (Nivre 2015, p. 2).

Introduction

Louis de Jaucourt, a renowned French philosopher and encyclopedist of the eighteenth century, contributed to the French *Encyclopédie* published in 1765 under the guidance of Denis Diderot an article about mythology, in which he described this phenomenon as the wellspring for painters, sculptors, and poets. "Myth is the patrimony of the arts, it is an inexhaustible source of unusual ideas, agreeable images, interesting subjects, allegories, and emblems" (Jaucourt 1965, p. 250). He insisted that mythology constituted the most extensive field in the study of literature of different periods. In modern times many authors recourse to mythology. As Greek civilization is the foundation of Western society, "Western

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societies have adopted Greek myths and used them alongside their own contemporary or historic legends" (Burn 1990, p. 74). Moreover, even after the appearance of Christianity, classical antiquity including Greek myths continued to exist *pari passu* with Christian conventionality and the rigorous religious system of ideas. Greek influence was less evident in northern Europe, but it captured the imagination of Elizabethan poets, dramatists and artists.

English belles-letters, in the course of its history, has been subjected to the influence of many world literatures. The distinguishing feature of the sixteenth century Elizabethan culture is a prolific use of Greek myths, this invaluable treasury of the ancient world which has had an enormous influence on European thought. "Erasmus, Colet, More, and other humanists helped to give to the Greek and the Latin Classics an authority in letters hardly less powerful than that of the Bible in religion" (Watt 1928, p 121). A mythological form of interpretation of contemporary issues was integrated into the immediate politico-cultural context of Tudor England with the purpose of transmitting important ideas in a most illuminative way. Greek culture was rediscovered in the Renaissance. Scholars consider that the period is marked by "increasing knowledge and understanding of antiquity" (Bush 1932, p. 28).

English poets and dramatists were breaking new ground reinventing famous myths. They used well known mythological themes for their plots and made them a part of the newly invented imagery. However, they never followed original myths closely. A cursory look at the mythological content in the works of leading Elizabethan writers and their Greek correspondences shows a modified form of ancient myths. Myths were adapted to promote contemporary subjects. As William Doty put it,

> ″Myths may be enacted or reflected in rituals, ceremonies, and dramas, and they may provide materials for secondary elaboration, the constituent mythic units having become merely images or reference points for a subsequent story, such as a folktale, historical legend, novella or prophecy″ (Doty 2000, p.34).

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of classical mythology is its magnetism for writers and artists of all epochs. Modern writers are no exception. Myths have continued to resonate with modern writers and audiences. Suffice it to mention James Joyce′s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and *Ulysses* (1922), Eugene O'Neill′s *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931) or John Updike′s *The Centaur* (1962); in pictorial art Pablo Picasso′s mythic images in the *Minotauromachy* and *Guernica* are vivid examples.

Modern scholars try to define the nature and purpose of myth, advancing numerous theories to explain its origin and functions. However, they somehow fail to describe the essential meaning of a novel drama or poetic pieces produced at a different time (Elizabethan), in a society with a different social order, a novel philosophic outlook, and new political exigencies. The current study is aimed at fulfilling this gap.

Literature Review

This survey embraces fundamental, ground-breaking works devoted to different aspects of Greek mythology. It includes the authors, who try give an all-embracing picture of mythology: themes, characters, interpretations. The first profound inquiry into the role of Greek myths in Shakespeare's works was published by Robert K. Root in 1903, in which he systematized numerous allusions to classical mythology and stated that it "became a vital element" in Shakespeare′s art (Root 1903, p. 2). His work comprises a detailed account of mythological allusions, which Shakespeare incorporated into all of his ″authentic works″. According to Root, an overwhelming majority of allusions are traceable to Ovid and Virgil. Comparing comedies, dramas and tragedies, Root points out, ″as the seriousness deepens, mythology weakens and disappears″ (ibid., p. 8). In Root's opinion, mythology for Shakespeare was an elegant ornament. He suggests making the employment of Greek allusions a criterion for establishing the authenticity of Shakespeare's works. Root studies the ways by which Shakespeare incorporates classical mythology into the texture of his poetry. The most common are simile, metaphor, comparisons, and personifications of natural phenomena after Greek patterns. Root emphasizes that in his treatment of classical mythology Shakespeare "took up into himself the rich and varied but discordant life of the Renaissance, and gave to it from the mythology of Ovid and Vergil the poetic beauties which it offers, and the deeper spiritual significance which it implies″ (ibid., p. 24).

Among other consequential studies is Douglas Bush's *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry* (1932), an historical analysis of poems in which mythology is employed by English authors from the Middle ages to the seventeenth century, from Chaucer to Spencer, to Marlowe and Shakespeare, to Drayton and Milton. As real knowledge of Greek was rare among ordinary Elizabethans, a considerable bulk of ancient fiction, drama, and poetry came to England through a multitude of translations. He goes as far as to point out that due to the classics, ″Elizabethan drama displayed a vitality lacking in the classicized drama of France″ (Bush 1932, p.27). He also indicates that ″medieval sources and medieval ideas were not abandoned in a general return to the pure fountains of classical literature″ (ibid., p. 28). The myths were enriched with edifying interpretations drawn from the Bible, Catholic and Protestant moral and didactic compendiums, and the heritage of medieval religion due to which myths attained a certain social and political significance. Bush comes to a conclusion that in Elizabethan literature, "mythology is inextricably mixed with heterogeneous unclassical matter" (ibid., p. 176). As it will become evident in our study, a mixture of classical and non-classical elements was typical of the Renaissance imagination.

The 1990s of the last century saw a variety of inquiries, which gave a large-scale overview of the issue in question. Fritz Graf's seminal work *Greek mythology: an introduction* (1993) emphasizes the cognitive relevance of myths, which provided answers to questions about ″the origins of the world, of society and of its institutions, about the gods and their relationship with mortals, in short, about

everything on which human existence depends″ (Graf 1993, p. 3). He offers a survey of scientific approaches to studying myths starting from the German philologist Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812), a pioneer in the scientific study of antiquity, who believed that myth came into being in prehistoric times and ″served primarily to explain natural phenomena and secondarily to memorialize events of the past″ (ibid., p. 10). In Graf's opinion myths constitute relationship between the past and the present: ″By telling something about the past, myths explain something about the present″ (ibid., p. 39). He states that the prevailing approach to myth was to interpret it allegorically: ″myths, it was thought, contained veiled truths about the moral and natural worlds″ (ibid., p. 13). Graf gives a sweeping survey of methods applied to studying myths. Among the new approaches which appeared in the twentieth century are psychoanalytic, semiotic, functional, structural, and some others. Of particular importance for the current study are Graf 's ideas about the structure of myth: ″The investigation of the structure of a myth − the isolation of its constituent elements and the analysis of their interrelationships – is known as ″the structural analysis of myth″. The analysis carried out in the current paper is greatly indebted to Graf's ideas.

Another work worth mentioning is Robin Wells′ *Elizabethan mythologies: studies in poetry, drama, and music* (1994), which concerns the employment of myths in Tudor political life when ″Tudor administration was faced with an urgent need radically to reshape social attitudes″ (Wells 1994, p. 8). They represented Elizabeth as a semi-divine figure whose historic task was to triumph over popery and establish the true church and faith. In the last two decades of the sixteenth century the cult of Elizabeth as divine royal authority was finally set up. As we shall see later, Greek myths had no small share in shaping Elizabeth′s cult.

Barry Powell in his *Classical myth* (1998) discusses a wide range of issues including the origin and the cultural background of Greek myth; the role of Romans in adapting and disseminating Greek myths in a Latinized form; types of myths, etc. However, the purport of his book is to develop Nietzschean ideas of interpretations: ″There are no facts only interpretations″ (Powell 1998, p. 617). Powell traces the major phases the history of mythological interpretations. He postulates in each myth the existence of the deeper meaning and truth. The earliest attempt to interpret a myth in antiquity was to expose a deep philosophical or psychological truth, especially in the divine myths where actors were gods and goddesses (ibid., p. 617). In the sixth century B.C., top position was awarded to allegorical interpretations concerning historical truths. Greek rulers presented themselves to their peoples as gods incarnate, an approach that was especially strong in Elizabethan England. The third type was metaphysical interpretation: ″Neoplatonists believed in a higher dimension of reality beyond the limits of time and space, where perfection and absolute truth could be found″ (ibid., p. 622). The higher world could become accessible if souls were freed from bodies and senses. In the medieval period, the Church took over the Hellenistic cultural heritage and found ″allegorical interpretation a legitimate way to interpret pagan myth, especially when a moral encouragement of righteous conduct could be found within the tale″ (ibid., p. 624). The Renaissance saw an increased interest

in Platonism. ″The Platonic conviction that myth contains profound symbolic truth concerning higher spiritual realms was highly attractive to Christian culture and led to a more elaborate allegory that combined pagan and Christian elements″ (ibid., p. 625).

Harris, Stephen and Gloria Platzner in *Classical mythology: images and insights.* (2000) explore the nature and function of Greek myth with a special view to the relationship of myth to art, religion, history, and society. The authors point out that the Greek myths are imbued with several distinctive qualities: humanism, individualism and competitiveness. Greek myth consistently expresses an anthropocentric (human-centered) cosmos, a ″worldview that places human consciousness at the center of the universe″ (Harris & Platzner 2000, p. 19). The individual human is guided by logic and moral principles. They give reasons why Greek myths for many centuries have inspired poets, philosophers and artists.

> ″Classical mythology endures throughout the history of Western culture − through translations and revivals, through adaptations and reinterpretations, through the borrowing of themes and images, and through the use of key figures and symbols″ (ibid., p. 981).

To sum up, we see research studies have been, as a rule, focused on sources, which were accessible to English writers to get some knowledge, often incomplete, of Greek mythology, archetypal mythic patterns, poetic mythological allusions, moral perceptions of myths, religious and ethical modes of interpreting them, the functions of specific myths in the context of a given society. etc. Some theorists contend that myths are largely prescientific responses to the external world of nature or social institutions.

Theoretical Premises

Myth and its Significance in the Representation of Conceptual Knowledge

There are many theories of myth advanced by scholars from different backgrounds and disciplines. Representatives of all *literae humaniores* use the notion of myth in their works: James Frazer, Emile Durkheim, Bronislaw Malinowski, Karl Jung, Claude Lévi-Strauss to name but a few. Each of them informed the concept of myth with specific meaning in conformity with the scientific field he worked in. For all the intense scholarly attention to the problem, it is still difficult to define myth satisfactorily. Myth was regarded as a means of explaining and categorizing the world, as the personifications of natural forces in supernatural beings, as an expression of collective conscience, or *vice versa* of the collective unconscious. With the development of human society and the formation of early political systems, myths stopped being regarded simply as manifestations of natural forces. Gods were "endowed with forms similar to those of men (Anthropomorphism), and in myths a vast political system, which has its center in Zeus, the "father of gods and men," has become discernible″ (Seemann 1894, p. 16).

Despite the diversity of definitions, certain fundamental points have been worked out. A comprehensive, working definition of myths is given by Percy Cohen, who tries to cover the most important aspects of the elusive phenomenon:

> ″All myth performs a number of functions simultaneously. The chief characteristics of myth are as follows: a myth is a narrative of events; the narrative has a sacred quality; the sacred communication is made in symbolic form; at least some of the events and objects which occur in the myth neither occur nor exist in the world other than that of myth itself; and the narrative refers in dramatic form to origins or transformations″ (Cohen 1969, p. 338).

A very interesting work by Alexander Altmann analyzes the relationship between Symbol and Myth. He defines the myth as the "exegesis of the symbol", as its progenitor. "The myth unfolds what is inherent in the symbol" (Altmann 1945, 162). The concept of myth, central for this work, is understood in terms of Neo-Kantian philosophy developed by Ernst Cassirer within his ideas of mythical thinking. In his view, myth represents a specific kind of human knowledge and has its own logic. "The whole material world appeared shrouded in mythical thinking and mythical fantasy. It was these which gave its objects their form, color, and specific character" (Cassirer 1955, p. 1). In this way it becomes a vehicle, a means of performing the function of signification. It presents a concept too abstract or obscure for direct sensory representation and reworks it into a specific form of representation. "The necessity with which myth arises in relatively similar forms at specific stages of cultural development seems to constitute its only objective and tangible content" (ibid., p. 10). Cassirer considers that myth is a particular, mythopoetic way of structuring experience; he treats myth, first, as the form of primitive thought and, second, as a force in political life.

> ″It is a partial revelation of the universal divine power which acts according to constant norms. From the heavens, divine order may be followed in constant gradations down to the order of earthly, specifically human (political and social) reality as one and the same fundamental form which realizes itself in the most diverse spheres of existence″ (Cassirer 1955, p. 113).

Greek myths stand apart from those of many other cultures in that they dramatize the universals, engage their readers or listeners emotionally and cognitively, provide answers to questions about the nature of man and of the universe and about the role of man within that universe.

> ″These myths provide the single most important key for unlocking the rich treasures of the European tradition and its descendants; although poets and artists have occasionally created their own private symbols, they have again and again found that the classical world alone provides the vitality and universality that their works demand″ (Philips 1978, p. 155).

Methods, Material and Objectives

In this article, the analysis is carried out within a theoretical framework of 'conceptual structure approach', developed in the works of Ronald Langacker and Ray Jackendoff. According to Jackendoff, 'conceptual structure' of the text is understood as a layer of nonlinguistic content. As he puts it,

> ″Conceptual structure is not part of language *per se* – it is part of thought. It is the locus for the understanding of linguistic utterances in context, incorporating pragmatic considerations and "world knowledge"; it is the cognitive structure in terms of which reasoning and planning take place″ (Jackendoff 2002, p. 417).

For Langacker, meaning is equated with conceptualization. In his works, he repeatedly stresses "the conceptual basis of meaning."

> ″Linguistic semantics must therefore attempt the structural analysis and explicit description of abstract entities like thoughts and concepts. The term conceptualization is interpreted quite broadly: it encompasses novel conceptions as well as fixed concepts. Because conceptualization resides in cognitive processing, our ultimate objective must be to characterize the types of cognitive events whose occurrence constitutes a given mental experience″ (Langacker 1986, p. 3).

The structural method is complemented by the contextual approach to myth making use of insights from historical, and comparative methods. We proceed from the assumption that each literary piece is organized in terms of concepts. The fundamental structure of a play or poem is based upon a paradigm of conceptualized ideas current in the Renaissance, and as such presents a complex of language and conceptual archetypes. Methodology used in this article is based on the study of literary concepts, which can be regarded as recurring narrative elements that give shape to a larger literary theme; in the chosen literary works, there are two archetypal themes: 1) the soul's awakening and its ascent to divine spirituality, 2) Elizabeth's ascent to divinity. Each concept consists of attributes, small 'narrative units' into which a large narrative structure can be divided.

Material for the analysis includes literary works with clearly determined mythological prototypes. The authors chosen for the analysis are less known than their famous contemporaries, and are either unread of forgotten. The research material includes Lyly's plays *Endimion* and *Midas,* Drayton's poem *Endimion and Poebe,* Cascoigne's masque *The Princely Pleasures at Kenelworth Castle*, Peele's *The Arraignment of Paris,* Barnfield's *Cynthia,* Sabie's *Pan's Pipe* and three works of pictorial art by Nicolaus Reusner, Hans Eworth, and Quentin Metsys the Younger.

The hypothesis is that myths provide for the structuring of conceptual content, and the exposition of these conceptual schemata forms the grounds for interpretation. We argue that semantic interpretation has to do with conceptualizations pertaining to political, ideological, and aesthetic views. We propose to describe the conceptual structure of each of the selected works, trace ideational developments in the treatment of myths by English writers and artists, examine their

social significance, and give a feasible explanation to how and why dramatists and authors reinterpreted them. This paper is an attempt, obviously incomplete, to give an insight into various functions and diversity of mythological allusions.

Ancient Mythology in 16th Century England

The role of mythology in the sixteenth century literature and visual arts is hard to overestimate. The same themes and plots are used again and again by English poets and artists though they add a great variety of incidents and characters. Elizabethan artists display good knowledge and understanding of antiquity. It became customary to use the names of Greek deities for natural phenomena, e.g., *Phoebus* for the Sun, *Eos/Aurora* for dawn or idiomatic expressions connected with myths, e.g., *Achilles' heel*, *Sisyphean labor*, *Herculean strength*, or *Augeas stables*. Francis Bacon exposed fundamental concepts of his thought by recurring to mythological figures. Queen Elizabeth was associated with Greek goddesses and was known by many names:

> And now great Phoebe in her tryumph came,
> With all the tytles of her glorious name,
> Diana, Delia, Luna, Cynthia,
> Virago, Hecate, and Elythia,
> Prothiria, Dictinna, Proserpine,
> Latona, and Lucina, most divine
> (Drayton 1925, p. 43).

It is of interest to note that Greek myths were, to use a modern term, "*plurimedial*" they were represented in drama, poetry, pageants, processions, and visual arts, in which novel or modified mythological narratives were constructed. Due to myths' transformability, men of letters and artists strived to signify all meaningful aspects pertaining to their contemporary world. The changing cultural and historical conditions imparted different collective meanings to a myth.

For our close analysis, we have chosen two "archetypal myths": *Endimion* and *Paris Judgment.* We propose to study their conceptual structures offered by various authors. The genre of literary pieces under analysis may be called a "pseudo mythological narrative," because Elizabethan authors gave unexpected twists to their plots and were at liberty to modify the conventional semantic content.

Endimion

The conventionalized plot of the original myth is practically unknown as no complete narrative of the myth exists. The story is reconstructed from references to it by later writers, such as Ovid, Seneca, Pliny the Elder, Pausanias (a geographer), Lucian, and Cicero. In the original Greek myth, Endimion is described variously as a handsome shepherd, hunter, king, or astronomer, who watched the Moon.

He was said to live on Mount Latmus. Apollodorus believed that he was the son of Zeus. As he was of surpassing beauty, the Moon fell in love with him, and Zeus allowed him to choose what he would, and he chose to sleep for ever, remaining deathless and ageless. (Apollodorus 1921). Every night, the goddess visited him where he slept, and by him had fifty daughters. There are two salient constitutive elements in the myth, i.e., two structural concepts: 1) sensual love of a deity for a mortal and 2) deep sleep bordering on death, as Cassirer pointed out, in mythical thinking there is no definite, clearly delimited moment in which life passes into death and death into life. This is how Hesiod[1] describes it:

> ″Sleep and Death, the awesome gods who are never seen by the rays of the blazing sun, are the children of black Night. One of them passes gently over the earth and the sea's broad back, ever at peace and ever gentle to mortals, but the other, a ghoul even the gods detest, has a heart of iron and feelings hard as bronze, and no man gripped by him can free himself again″ (Hesiod 1953, p. 74).

Powell refers this myth to the so called Solar Mythology. He explains: ″Because the Greek *endyein* originally meant "to dive," the name Endymion at first simply described the sun's setting in the sea. The original meaning of *endyein* faded and was misunderstood to refer to a person, Endymion (″Diver″). The mythical story of the love of Selene and Endymion, then, began with the words ″Selene embraces Endymion,″ that is, ″Moon embraces Diver,″ which in the metaphorical expression of early peoples was a way of saying ″the sun is setting and the moon is rising″ (Powell 1998, p. 634).

The objective of this part is to study the poetical and dramatic treatment of the classical myth *Endimion*. We shall start with Lyly[2]'s play in prose *Endimion* written in 1588, but published in 1591, which had an undeniable effect on the development of subsequent English drama.

A Tale of the Man in the Moon

In the play, the Greek mythic plot is transferred to the Elizabethan environment, and Lyly gives his own version of the old myth to accommodate to contemporary moral and ideological requirements and ostensibly flatter Elizabeth I to advance himself in the court. The early literary critics regarded it as a political allegory, a "literary allusion to a famous love affair" and sought to find the true identity of each of the *dramatis persona*. (the Earl of Leicester as Endimion, Lady Sheffield as Tellus, and Lady Essex as Floscula, etc.).

[1]Hesiod was an ancient Greek poet generally thought to have been active between 750 and 650 BC. Several of Hesiod's works have survived in their entirety. Among these is *Theogony*, which tells the origins of the gods. Modern scholars refer to him as a major source for Greek mythology.

[2]John Lyly (1553--1606) was an English writer, playwright, courtier, and parliamentarian. He is perhaps best known for his eight surviving plays, six of which were performed before Queen Elizabeth. For some time, Lyly was the most successful and fashionable English writer, considered 'the father of English comedy.' He was celebrated by a peculiar style of prose called *Euphuism* employing a wide variety of literary devices such as repetitions, antitheses, alliterations, etc.

> ″Lyly's play is nearer to the reality of court life as it must have looked to those who were involved in it, showing the pursuit of elegance as a virtue, and the strange mingling of the personal, the mythological, the economic, and the moral″ (Hunter 1962, p. 292).

Lyly called his play a comedy. Probably, spectators found it funny to watch the adventures of easily recognizable courtiers and enjoy their sometimes comical, sometimes sad, sometimes amusing, at times tragic twists of fate. Moreover, the play is crowned with a happy ending – multiple marriages – typical of the genre. Today, when we are so removed in time from Elizabethan court and are not knowledgeable enough about the intrigues of the royal life, a more complex allegory comes to the fore when we read and analyze the play. I would like to offer a new interpretation of the play, namely, treat is as a philosophical contemplation of the soul-transforming mystery. In my opinion, Lyly's *Endimion* is a blending of the Greek myth with the Biblical conception of *Transfiguration of Jesus,* a pivotal moment in Christianity when God the Father called Jesus his son. According to the New Testament, the setting is on the mountain where Jesus begins to shine with bright rays of light purporting the meeting of human nature with God, of the temporal with the eternal. As Mircea Eliade pointed out, "the mystery of the *Transfiguration* forms a transcendent model of spiritual perfection" (Eliade1965, p. 58). In the play, Lyly developed and modified the model showing the ascension of the soul from the dark of its mortal life to "an entirely different world, transcendent and holy", with Cynthia as the mediatrix between heaven and earth.

Lyly revised the plot, added new characters, and enriched it with unexpected twists and turns. Endimion is hopelessly in love with Cynthia, the moon Goddess, and in his turn is loved by Tellus (her name means in Latin 'earth, land'), an ambitious and vindictive lady, who asks Dipsas, a malignant enchantress, (her name means 'a serpent whose bite causes violent thirst) to put her former lover to deep sleep (*lege* death). She "could devise a mischief so monstrous as to make thee dead with life, and living being altogether dead" (Lyly 1902, p.63). His faithful friend Eumenides (the name means "the benevolent one") finds a remedy on the bottom of Geron's fountain, which reveals its secrets only to the pure in heart, – a chaste kiss of a goddess-queen, who reigns over her court and the lunar world. Eventually, the evil spell is broken by Cynthia's kiss, forces of treachery and envy are dispersed, and every Jack gets his Jill.

Lyly had to structure his play in such a way as to insure identification of the Greek Goddesses with Elizabeth. And he started with the name. The Moon goddess, as described by Barthell is "a beautiful woman with long wings and a golden crown, from which her soft light is shed." He calls her Selene, but mentions that she is identified with Artemis and Diana. She travels across the sky in a chariot drawn by snow-white horses, "but some of the more fanciful poets describe her as pulled by cows, from whose horns they symbolize the crescent moon" (Barthell 1971, p. 56). Giordano Bruno calls her Luna – "a very lovely maiden sitting on a chariot, which is made of ebony covered for the most part with laminate silver" (Bruno 1991, p. 194). In Lyly's play, the name of the Moon goddess is predictably Cynthia due to a forceful influence of Sir Walter Raleigh's poem *The Ocean's Love to Cynthia,* a magnificently beautiful elegy, in

which he sung his love (or imitation of love) for the queen. The poem forever dubbed Elizabeth Cynthia, a *domina* of sea waters, which for the most part of Raleigh's life were his natural element.

Lyly reversed the roles of the protagonists: it is Endimion who is in love with the deity. "My loue is placed neither vnder the Moone nor aboue, but setled, eyther to die, or possesse the Moone herselfe" (Lyly 1902, p. 21). Lyly describes her virtues in a canonical way adopted in literature and especially in pictorial art – that of never-fading youth or beauty.

> ″She is a lady of infinite vertues, great honors, and unspeakeable beauty, ... getting youth by years and neuer decaying beauty by time, whose fayr face neither Summers blase can scorch, nor Winters blasts chappe, nor the numbering of years breede altering of colours. Such is my sweet Cynthia whom tyme cannot touch, because she is divine″ (Lyly 1902, p. 22).

Another deviation from the archetype is the sleep: it is not a rejuvenating dream, but a slumber sapping vitality. Forty years of evil dormition do not preserve Endimion's youth and beauty.

> "What, a gray beard? hollow eyes? withered bodie? decayed lymbes? ...for howe coulde my curled lockes bee turned to gray haires, and my stronge bodie to a dying weaknesse, hauing waxed olde and not knowing it" (Lyly 1902, p. 65).

Lyly elevates the Queen to a special level of prominence as a protectrisse of her people and the nation: when she learns about the deplorable state of Endimion, she displays magnanimity sending her emissaries to different parts of the world to look for remedy.

> ″If eyther the Soothsayers in Egipt, or the Enchaunters in Thessaly, or the Philosophers in Greece, or all the Sages of the worlde, can find remedie, I will procure it ... It shall neuer be said that Cynthia whose mercy and goodness filleth the heauens with ioyes, & the world with meruailes, will suffer eyther Endimion or any to perrish, if he may be protected″ (Lyly 1902, p. 41).

The play is not devoid of a certain degree of magic and mysticism. Cynthia is invested with magical powers: she returns youth and beauty to Endimion and turns the Aspen tree back into a maid. Eumenides sees a "writing on the bottom" in the waters of a mystic fountain: "When she whose figure of all is the perfectest shall come and kiss Endimion in his sleep, he shall then rise; else never" (Lyly 19 02, p. 51). Geron, a soothsayer and the inventor of the fountain, explains that a "figure of all the perfectest" in mathematics is the circle and "Cynthia (the Moon) of all cyrcles is the most absolute!" Her earthly incarnation is Endimion's savior. The most significate feature of Cynthia is her chastity. However, a kiss does not very well comport with it and is entirely out of regularity. But her kiss is to give a new life to the decaying body, so Lyly offers a valid justification:

> ″I will not be so statelie (good Endimion) not to stoope to doe thee good: and if thy libertie consist in a kisse from mee, thou shalt haue it. And although my mouth

> hath beene heretofore as untouched as my thoughts, yet now to recouer thy life, (though to restore thy. youth it be impossible). I will do that to Endimion which yet neuer mortall man could boast of heretofore, nor shall euer hope for hereafter″ (Lyly 1902, p. 64).

Endimion arises from his sleep a different person, renewed and transformed, enlightened by heavenly spirit. He goes a long (forty years) and hard way from "the natural to the spiritual plane" (Newmann 1970, p.56). In the Moon culture prevalent in the 1590s, the Moon is regarded as the abode of purged souls, i.e., the soul's place within the cosmos. In Plutarch's interpretation, the function of the moon is to receive the purged soul into itself and to generate it anew out of itself.

> *"L'âme restée sur la lune s'appelle à juste titre simulacre, parcequ'elle conserve l'apparence du corps. Elle se dissout dans la lune comme le corps dans la terre, rapidement sielle a été exempte de passions, mais, sielle les a subies, elle y séjourne longtemps, ou bien endormie comme Endymion ou désireuse d'une nouvelle vie sur la terre. – Tel est le mythe exposé par Plutarque." [The soul remaining on the Moon is rightfully called simulacrum, because it has been exempt from passion, but if it is prone to passion, it stays there long, or else sleeps like Endimion or is desirous of a new life on the earth. – Such is the myth explained by Plutarch] (Cumont 1966, p. 199).*

Plutarch's ideas about the Moon described above refer us to the ancient theological reflections on the role of the Moon, which was known as the *mysterium Lunae*, a typically Hellenistic awe for the mystery of this celestial body. From the point of view of Christianity, the role of the Moon expressed in terms of *natus and renatus*, corresponds to Christian *birth, death and resurrection*. This divine activity of the redemption of souls took place on the Moon where cleansed souls got a new life. Christianity made use of Greek lunar imagery and symbolism, ascribing the redemption of man to Jesus Christ and presenting Mary as ″the spiritual Luna of the union between God and humanity″ (Rahner 1971, p.161) Though Christian religiosity was rock-solid in England, Greek theology had a strong hold on the minds of Elizabethan poetical elite. In Lyly's play, Christian ideals are fused with the piety of Greek antiquity absorbing all that was of value and significance. This is how Rahner describes the process:

> ″It is to see Hellas in Christ, it is to make the Greek speech eternal by removing it from its historic particularity, to release it from the insignificance that marks it when measured by human history as a whole, by giving it a final dwelling-place in the dialogue with God″ (Rahner 1971, p. xvi).

The ascent of Endimion to spiritual renovation takes several steps. The first step is Endimion's ecstatic adoration of Cynthia. "My thoughts, Eumenides, are stitched to the starres, which beeing as high as I can see, thou maist imagine how much higher they are then I can reach" (Lyly 1902, p. 21). It is more a contemplative desire than sexual infatuation. As Bozio explains, "it stems from a body that it repudiates, reaching toward a space that it does not fully inhabit" (Bozio 2016, p. 56).

The second step is dissembling with Tellus, whom Giordano Bruno depicts either as "a huge monster with eyes on every side sending off flares of cerulean blue light, which appears something totally ugly" or as "a queen who is remarkable for her swiftness that is superhuman. Nature stands next to Tellus, and Nature's crafter is Tellus" (Bruno 1991, p. 210). In Lyly's play, Tellus combines both traits – a beautiful lady and a monster. It is telling that speaking of her own feelings, Tellus echoes Bruno's description:

> ″Feeling a continual burning in all my bowels and a bursting almost in every vein, I could not smother the inward fire but it must needs be perceived by the outward smoke; and by the flying abroad of divers sparks of my scalding flames″ (Lyly 1902, p.74).

During Endimion's long sleep, the soul is displaced from the body and purged of all sin. In his mantic dream, he sees the peccancy of the royal court:

> ″Many wolues barking at Cynthia and grinding their teeth to bite; Ingratitude with an hundred eyes, gazing for benefites with a thousand teeth gnawing on the bowelles wherein shee was bred; Trecherie all cloathed in white, with a smyling countenance, but both her handes bathed in blood; Enuye with a pale and megar face shooting at starres, whose dartes fell downe againe on her owne face; Drones, or Beetles creeping vnder the winges of a princely Eagle, who being carried into her neast, sought there to sucke that veine, that woulde haue killed the Eagle″ (Lyly, 1902, p. 67).

So the final step is made in the end of the play. Cynthia's kiss brings Endimion back to life, but also to a new purpose of life of serving the Goddess – Endimion expresses almost religious devotion to Cynthia:

> ″There hath none pleased mine eye but Cynthia, none delighted mine eares but Cynthia, none possessed my hart but Cynthia. I haue forsaken all other fortunes to followe Cynthia, and heere I stande ready to die if it pleases Cynthia. Such a difference hath the Gods sette between our states, that all must be dutie, loyaltie, and reuerence; nothing be termed loue. I shall liue of al men the most content″ (Lyly 1902, p. 76).

Fundamental theological ideas play an important role in the understanding of Lyly's *Endimion*. The theological conception of the Mediator is the key note of John (Jean) Calvin's[3] *Institutes of Christian Religion* (1536) and is paid special attention in St Augustine's[4] *Confessions* written between 397 and 400. Augustine asserts that a mediator between God and man "ought to have something like unto God, and something like unto man; lest being in both like unto man, he should be far from God; or if in both like unto God, he should be far from man, and so should not be a mediator" (Augustine 1900, p. 231).

[3]Jean Calvin (1509 –1564) was a French theologian, pastor and reformer in Geneva. He was a principal figure in the development of the system of Christian theology called Calvinism.

[4]Saint Augustine (354 –430) was a theologian and philosopher. His writings influenced the development of Western philosophy and Christianity. At the age of 31, Augustine converted to Christianity. He is viewed as one of the most important Church Fathers, who established the intellectual and doctrinal foundations of Christianity. Augustine was canonized in 1298.

Similar ideas are expressed by Calvin, who believes that Christ descended to us "in the office of Mediator so that he might approach the faithful with greater familiarity" (Calvin 2006, p. 141). Christ was the Mediator by whom people were united to God. "The gate of heaven may be open to all unbelievers and profane persons with the grace of Christ, whom the Scripture universally represents as the only door of entrance into salvation" (Calvin 2006, p. 360). He puts forward an interesting idea that though many in ancient times were worshippers of the supreme Deity, because they had no Mediator, it was impossible for them to have any real acquaintance with the mercy of God.

> ″Our situation was truly deplorable, unless the Divine majesty itself would descend to us, for we could not ascend to it. Thus it was necessary that the Son of God should become Immanuel, that is, God with us; and this in order that there might be a mutual union and coalition between his divinity and the nature of man. This will still more fully appear, if we consider, that It was no mean part which the Mediator had to perform; namely, to restore us to the Divine favor, so as of children of men to make us children of God; of heirs of hell, to make us heirs of the kingdom of heaven″ (Calvin 2006, pp. 497 - 498).

Thus a person who can raise a mortal from the dead becomes God's Mediator. If we compare the conceptual structures of the archetypal myth and that of Lyly's play, we see a certain degree of extension; there are three constitutive elements upon which the action of the play is built: 'Endimion's ecstatic love for the Moon', 'deep destructive sleep' (I will add of the soul), 'chaste heaven-sent kiss' elevated to a special level of prominence. The ideological import of these three constructs explicitly designates religious profuseness of the play. As ancient religion had lost its anthropomorphic deities, there sprang up a need for a new deity appertaining to the new religion.

The story seems to move on two levels. Cynthia's duplicity as the Moon goddess and as a monarch creates a continuous shift from heavenly body to a courtly ruler and back, from cosmic space to the royal court, from eternal dominion over the cosmos to the queen's political puissance. Cynthia's final soliloquy is ambivalent, too. She speaks as a queen promising Endymion her 'favor' and as a goddess saying, "Endimion continue as thou hast begun, and thou shalt finde that Cynthia shyneth not on thee in vaine" (Lyly 1902, p.76). The dramatist shows the struggles of a pagan soul in quest of Christian holiness. For Endimion, Cynthia is the messenger of God and his Mediator.

Ideas Latmus

The conception of mediation is even more pronounced in Michael Drayton's (1563 – 1631) *Endimion and Phoebe*, a narrative in verse published in 1595. Though based on the same archetypal myth and also celebrating the spiritual climax of the soul, his handling of the material is different and unique.

In Drayton's poem, the setting is Mount Latmus in Ionia, the highest point where human nature meets the divine and the eternal.

The Mountaine Latmus over-lookes the Sea,
Smiling to see the Ocean billowes play:
Latmus, where young Endimion used to keepe
His fairest flock of silver-fleeced sheepe. (Drayton 1925 p.9).

This space is a kind of earthly paradise "For all the pleasures Nature could devise/Within this plot she did imparadize" (Drayton 1925, p. 10). It is of interest to note that in this description we find reverberations of the Moon culture, according to which, the Sun is an adversary. The grove of tufted Cedars and Pines whose bushy tops were "so intwine", that seemed" conspir'd against the piercing Sun" invited to contemplation. The young shepherd, who keeps his flocks there, has consecrated his life to the service of the chaste goddess, Phoebe – the name betrays the strongest influence of Edmund Spenser's *The Fairy Queen.* Unlike Lyly's Cynthia, Drayton's Moon-goddess returns Endimion's love.

Endimion, the lovely Shepheards boy,
Endimion, great Phebes onely joy,...
This Shepheard, Phebe ever did behold,
Whose love already had her thoughts controld...
Upon each tree she carves Endimions name
In Gordian knots, with Phebe to the same
(Drayton 1925, pp. 13-14).

In the guise of a nymph, Phoebe slides from her Sphere and tries to seduce the shepherd, but he rejects her saying "he was Phebes servant sworne,/ And that to her virginity he vowed" (Drayton 1925, p. 18). After her departure, he immediately relents it as he has fallen in love with the nymph, too. Later Phoebe returns to the sleeping Endimion. "Downe slydeth Phoebe from her Christall chayre,/ Sdayning [disdaining] to lend her light unto the ayre,/ But unto Latmus all in haste is gon,/ Longing to see her sweet Endimion" (ibid., p. 25). The deity kisses him, and with this kiss "Into his soule the Goddesse doth infuse, / The fiery nature of a heavenly Muse" (ibid., p. 30).

The motif of the love of a god for a mortal is present in several Greek myths. In all of them the mortal was to die to partake of heavenly bliss. As there are many kinds of death, this one is the most highly approved and commended both by the sages of antiquity and by the authority of the Bible: when those yearning for God and desiring to be conjoined with him (which cannot be achieved in this prison of the flesh) are carried away to heaven and freed from the body by a death which is the profoundest sleep. ″This kind of death is named *mors osculi* [death kiss]. And this was foreshadowed in the figure of Endymion, whom Diana kissed as he had fallen into the profoundest sleep″ (Wind 1958, p. 131).

This interpretation is corroborated by the part of the poem in which Phoebe takes Endimion to her own sphere and helps Endimion apprehend universal truths. First, she shows him our planet:

And carries him up from this lumpish mould,
Into the skyes, whereas he might behold,
The earth in perfect roundnes of a ball

> Exceeding globes most artificiall:
> Which in a fixed poynt Nature disposed,
> And with the sundry Elements inclosed.
> (Drayton 1925, p 37).

Then she explains to him the nature of other planets and how they influence man's life.

> Their sundry revolutions in the skies
> And how those signes their severall places take,
> Within the compasse of the Zodiacke ...
> And do from thence extend their severall powers,
> Unto this little fleshly world of ours. ...
> And that our lives effects and fortunes are,
> As is that happy or unlucky Starre
> (Drayton 1925. p. 38).

Finally, she takes him "to the starry Firmament, / Where he beheld that milky stayned place" with all its constellations comprising a perfectly ordered whole. In his description of the Universe, Drayton draws on Cicero's views expounded in *Republic*, book 6.

> ″These are the nine circles, or rather spheres, by which the whole is joined. One of them, the outermost, is that of heaven; it contains all the rest, and is itself the supreme God, holding and embracing within itself all the other spheres; in it are fixed the eternal revolving courses of the stars. ... And in the lowest sphere revolves the Moon, set on fire by the rays of the Sun. But below the Moon there is nothing except what is mortal and doomed to decay, save only the souls given to the human race by the bounty of the gods, while above the Moon all things are eternal″ (Cicero 1928, pp. 269 - 271).

The enhanced salience of the cosmic travel does not reduce the ambiguity in the antinomies of Death and Sleep, body and soul. The celestial journey and the all-embracing view of the cosmos exposing its divine rationality made Endimion feel alignment with that boundless deep of space. But who was taken to high spheres – a mortal body or the soul freed of "the dull flesh" is not clear. As we remember, in the *Iliad*, like in Hesiod's Theogony, Death and Sleep are "the twin brethren". When Sarpedon, a Trojan War hero and Zeus' son, was mortally wounded, Apollo "gave him to swift conveyers to bear with them, even to the twin brethren, Sleep and Death, who set him speedily in the rich land of wide Lycia" where he was to be buried with honors (Homer 1947, p. 215).

Figure 1. *Diana Releases the Soul from the Mortal Body*

Source: Nicolaus Reusner. *Emblemata* (1581), p. 105

If we go by Reusner's conception of Endimion's sleep in his *Emblemata* (Fig. 1), we see Diana releases the soul from the mortal body.

> ″Diana holds Endimion in her lap. Here, under the motto "Cupio dissolui" [I wish to be dissolved], Diana figures Christ, her love releasing Endimion from the flesh, her sweet kiss making him sleep to this life and wake to the next. This is the *mors oscula* [the kiss of death] which paradoxically releases the pious man from death; it brings Reusner's Endimion to heaven″ (Knapp 1976, p. 355).

In the end, Phoebe conveys him again to Latmus, where she lays him "under a bushie Lawrells pleasing shade,/ Shee meant to honor her Endimion, /And glorifie him on that stately Mount" (Drayton 1925, p. 40). However, the final scene of laying Endimion to sleep looks more like a funeral ceremony though it is hinted that he can awake and rise of his own free will.

> Upon a Charriot was Exdimion layd,
> In snowy Tissue gorgeously arayd,
> Of precious Ivory covered overe with Lawne,
> Which by foure stately Unicornes was drawne.
> With rarest flowers inchaste and over-spred,
> Which serv'd as Curtaynes to this glorious bed, ...
> Upon his head a Coronet instald,
> Of one intire and mighty Emerald ...
> A bevy of fayre Swans, which flying over,
> With their large wings him from the Sun do cover.
> (Drayton 1925, pp. 42 - 43)

Endimion is impercipient to the flow of time. "Yet as a dreame he thought the tyme not long, / Remayning ever beautifull and yong" (Drayton 1925, p. 50). The final lines of the poem sound ambiguous, not in tune with the previous description of spiritual love, but look more like a return to the original myth.

> She layd Endimion on a grassy bed,
> Where from her sacred Mantion next above,
> She might descend and sport her with her love.
> (Drayton 1925, p. 50)

Central to these two works is an opposition between the soul aspiring to eternity and the body which is biased to earthly life and pleasures. The 'Soul and Body' theme was very popular in medieval English texts from the tenth to the fifteenth century and presented a well-defined literary tradition. There were two ways of presenting the theme: the damned soul rebukes its former body for sins committed or there is a debate between the soul and the body, each arguing for and justifying its own way of life. Lyly and Drayton offer a new resolution to the centuries-long topos. The soul may achieve enlightenment and become epopt remaining within the temporal body.

We find elements of continuity and innovation in the works of Lyly and Drayton. The writers extended and modified the original conceptual elements to give the myth important new meanings. For Lyly, they are: 'Platonic (religious) love of a mortal for the deity', the 'revitalizing chaste kiss of the queen', 'the ambiguity of the queen's image' a combination of divinity and royal majesty, and most important, 'a spiritual rebirth'. Drayton's poem is closer to the classical myth though he, too, introduced new motifs. He kept intact the obsession of Phoebe with the shepherd, but invested it with spiritual meaning – her kiss imbued a mortal soul with divinity. An entirely new motif is a 'journey across the infinitude of the outer space', which establishes a closer connection between man and God. In the both literary works, religious dimension becomes topical.

Paris Judgement

Other famous myths were incorporated into the early modern literary context. One theme that stands out throughout the whole of Elizabethan period is *The Judgement of Paris.* It is a well-known myth describing the event that is considered to have led up to the Trojan War. In the original myth, the setting is a wedding to which Eris, the goddess of discord, was not invited. Nevertheless, Eris arrived at the celebration with the golden apple from the garden of Hesperides engraved with the inscription 'To the fairest one' and threw it in the wedding procession. Three goddesses claimed the apple: Hera/Juno, Athena/ Pallas, and Aphrodite/Venus. Zeus refused to judge the case, and Paris, the shepherd-prince, was invited. Bribed by Aphrodite, he adjudged the prize to her and was awarded with the most beautiful woman in the world – Helen, the wife of Menelaus.

The elaboration of the theme 'The Judgement of Paris' began in the 1560s. The three goddesses that feature in all poems and paintings − Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite – may be traced back to the Great Goddess of early Europe, who performed three functions:

> ″The Great Goddess was typically associated with three functions − the source of life, of death, and of transfiguration or rebirth. Uniting opposites within herself, the Great Goddess encompasses both light and darkness, both upper and lower worlds, embracing the totality of the cycle of birth, death, and renewal in all its aspects − both literal and spiritual″ (Harris & Platzner 2000, p. 100).

The Great Goddess is also associated with the moon. The lunar cycle, recapitulating the cycle of life, death, and rebirth, creates a link between the physical and spiritual realms of existence. ″Eventually, the three aspects of the Great Goddess are divided into separate figures, each of which represents one aspect of her totality″ (ibid., p.101). Born from the head of Zeus, Athena appears fully grown, as a goddess of war, she is armed with weapons. At her birth she received the divine intellect and wisdom. The most powerful of the Olympian goddesses Hera is the goddess of marriage. And foam-born Aphrodite is a personification of erotic desire and sensual pleasure. ″ From her come young girls′ whispers and smiles and deception and honey-sweet love and its joyful pleasures″ (Hesiod 1953, p. 19).

Erzsébet Stróbl considers that the first attempt to use the imagery of female goddesses was by Master Henry Bust, who wrote in Latin a two-verse rhyme in 1566 to greet the queen during her visit to Magdalen College at Oxford.

> Juno boasts wealth: yet why is she not wiser?
> Pallas is wise, but not wealthy.
> Likewise, Venus (kindly Venus) lacks royal virtue.
> All these qualities belong to you:
> You are Juno, Minerva, and Venus
> (Stróbl 2018, p. 207)

Three years later, the device of placing Elizabeth into the classical myth of the Judgement of Paris in pictorial art was used in 1569 by Hans Eworth (1520 – 1574), a most distinguished Netherlandish artist who worked in England. He combined the real world of 16th century England and the allegorical world of Olympian goddesses. It was the first allegorical painting based on the beauty contest judged by Paris, which placed the queen above ancient goddesses as the one surpassing them in beauty, power, learning, and judgment. The iconography of the canvass weaves together early modernity and hoary antiquity, which allows of interesting interpretations. The queen, wearing a crown and carrying the orb in her left hand, emerges from the palace with her two ladies-in-waiting. The pose of the queen and the royal insignia convey an image of her power as a ruler. An important peculiarity of the picture is the golden orb, which attaches the painting a deeper meaning. The original apple of discord is replaced with a symbol of Christian authority. In Constantinople, there was a famous equestrian statue of Justinian, in his left hand he held an orb, which was believed to be inscribed with the words, "I own the world as long as this ball is in my hand" (Littlewood 1968, p. 172). The canvass was placed at Whitehall among the portraits of other European monarchs, "which carried a strong implication that she was *prima inter pares* [first among peers], the most powerful monarch in the display" (Hackett 2014, p. 237).

Elizabeth I stands on the steps, which visually elevates her above the goddesses: Hera, representing statecraft, Athena wisdom and war craft, and Aphrodite love and beauty. All the three goddesses are overwhelmed at the English Queen's majestic appearance. The artist depicts commotion among them: Hera is fleeing from Elizabeth pointing with her hand to the skies, her scepter lying on the ground. It

may mean her surrender of heavenly power to Elizabeth. Her hand pointing upward is eloquent of her acceptance of Elizabeth's divine supremacy. Pallas in armor with the breastplate and a standard is watching the scene in awe. She looks more like a bellicose Amazon than a personification of wisdom and sapience. Only Aphrodite remains calm protecting her son Cupid (Fig.2). The painting depicts Elizabeth's triumph over the three deities, which is confirmed by the following lines inscribed on the frame: "Pallas was keen of brain, Juno was queen of might, / The rosy face of Venus was in beauty shining bright,/ Elizabeth then came,/ And, overwhelmed, Queen Juno took flight:/ Pallas was silenced: Venus blushed for shame" (Lloyd 1991, p 62). These four lines became a source for the rich imagery in the description of Elizabeth I.

> ″There is no precedent [in art] for a figure who embodies the majesty of Hera, the wisdom of Athena, and the beauty of Aphrodite – the artist's use of a motif containing three disparate figures is a sign of the concept of a woman comprising all of these traits″ (Moss 1999, p. 31).

Figure 2. *Hans Eworth. Elizabeth I and Three Goddesses (1569)*

Source: Wikipedia

As a result, a constant recurrence of the myth took place in many genres. A conceptual structure of the theme 'Three goddesses' was elaborated combining three attributes of Elizabeth: kingly power, wisdom, beauty. They became a "commonplace" with certain modifications in late Elizabethan literature. The first poet who used the myth for his masque in England, was George Gascoigne[5] (1525 – 1577), whom Ivor Winters considered "The greatest poet, a precursor in the history of certain major forms, who deserves to be ranked among the six or seven greatest lyric poets of the century, and perhaps higher" (Winters 1939, p. 266). He wrote a masque *The Princely Pleasures at Kenelworth Castle* (1575) for the festivities at Kenilworth Castle at the behest of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who cherished his own marital plans. The entertainment "never came to execution" as political objectives promoted in it were inadmissible for the queen, namely, that her proper destiny was marriage.

[5]George Gascoigne (1535 –1577) was an English poet, soldier and unsuccessful courtier. He is considered the most important poet of the early Elizabethan era. He was the first poet to deify the queen. Most of his works were published during the last years of his life after his return from the wars.

However, the masque is interesting in that it disseminated the model – Elizabeth I's supremacy over all Olympian deities and, as a result, over European rulers. Gascoigne displays inventiveness in intertwining old myths in the fabric of the masque. He explains that seventeen years ago, "Dyana passing in chase with her Nymphs, lost in the unknown coasts one of her best beloved Nimphes called Zabeta " (Gascoigne 1910, p. 106). The poet calls that land "Brutus land" alluding to Brute of Troy, a fictional character who is depicted as a legendary eponymous founder and first king of Britain. The play confirms the Trojan origin of Britain as presented by Geoffrey of Monmouth: Brutus, the descendant of Aeneas, having involuntarily killed his father, was driven out of Italy; he landed in Albion and built a city on the Thames which was called Troia Nova, Trinovantum (London). The queen who reigns there "in joy and peace" is "some Queene on earth, whose like was never none" (Gascoigne 1910, p. 97).

In another poem *The vanities of Bewtie* [beauty], Gascoigne continues this theme and alludes to the Paris myth hinting that if at the time of the judgment Zabeta had been in the field, "the prize were hers, for she deserves it well" (Gascoigne 1910, p. 256).

> This is the Queene whose onely looke subdewed,
> Her prowdest foes, withowten speare or sheeld/
> This is the Queene whome never eye yet viewed,
> But streight the hart, was forst thereby to yeelde/
> This Queene it is, who (had she satt in feeld,
> When Parts judged, that Venus bare the bell)
> (Gascoigne 1910, p. 526)

Diana's description of the rare virtues of Zabeta became a template for all those who translated the myth into literary works. The range of virtues was extended and included those pertaining to male gods – musical skills of Apollo and eloquence of Mercury.

> Hyr excellencie was such,
> In all respects of every qualitie,
> As Gods themselves, those gifts in hir did grutch [grudge].
> My sister first, which Pallas hath to name,
> Envyed Zabeta for hyr learned brayne.
> My sister Venus feared Zabetaes fame,
> Whose gleames of grace, hyr beuties blase dydstayne,
> Apollo dread to touch an Instrument,
> Where my Zabeta chaunst to come in place:
> Yea Mercurie was not so eloquent,
> Nor in his words had halfe so good a grace.
> My stepdame, Juno in hyr glittering guyse,
> Was nothing like so heavenlie to beholde:
> Short tale to make, Zabeta was the wight,
> On whom to thinke my heart now waxeth cold.
> (Gascoigne 1910, p. 109)

In 1580, one more modified version of the myth was offered in Lyly's poem *Iovis Elizabeth* written in Latin, in which the three goddesses contend for the possession of Eliza, but the judgment of Jove is indisputable – Elizabeth is his. The poem is attached to Lyly's treatise *Euphues and his England*, in which England is described as a perfect Glass (Mirror) for all European monarchs to look into and learn.

> Haec Iuno, haec Pallas, Venus haec, et quaeque ″Dearum,
> Divisum Elizabeth cum Iove numen(d) habit
> ″Ergo quid obstrepitis? Frustra contenditis," inquit,
> "Ultima vox haec est, Elizabetha mea est."
> [She is Juno, she is Pallas, she is Venus, and each of the Goddesses
> Elizabeth has divided with Jove divine majesty.
> ″So what are you clamoring for? You strive in vain," said he,
> "This is the last word, Elizabeth is mine."]
> (Lyly 1916, p. 449)

Helen Hackett considers that in this poem, "Elizabeth's *numen* – quality of sacred mystery – is on a different level from those of Juno, Pallas, and Venus, a higher quality uniting her with Jove – or God" (Hackett 2014, p. 240). A paraphrase of this poem is found in Francis Sabie[6]'s *Pan's Pipe* written in 1595. In *Thestilis*[7] *Ode,* a story of Elizabeth I and Olympian deities is told. In a country where silver streaming *Thamasis* resounds [the River Thames], "a Princesse beareth [lives], who with euerduring vertues aboundeth" (Sabie 1910, p. 462). Nymphs and Naiads from other countries come "to behold her honor." Then Juno, Venus and Minerva, seeing her stately procession laid claims to possessing Elizabeth, each of them advancing already known arguments: "she's a Queene most royal" (Juno), "sh'ath a wit notable" (Pallas), "She's amiable" (Venus). Paris is no longer a trustworthy judge, "so Rose-cheek'd *Citherea*" (another name of Venus) suggests that Jove be the judge. Juno explains to him the cause of their contention:

> O Joue, for doubtles many times thou hast view'd
> Albions Princesse, sweet Eliza, we three
> Contend whose monarch she may be, she's thou know'st
> wise, noble, comelie.
> (Sabie 1910, p 463)

Jupiter considers that all the three deities make their claims out of vanity. He concludes, "This is my judgment, sweet Eliza, Ladies, shall be mine onlie" (Sabie 1910, p. 463). The next lines are the description of Eliza's achievements and miracles she worked. Religious overtones are evident in Sabie's work. This new motif is added to the mythological content – the poet emphasizes Elizabeth's role as a paragon of faith. Stróbl stresses that Sabie turns to a Protestant rhetoric when he describes how Eliza, delivered Olympian Gods from "Romish Pharaohs tyrannous

[6]Francis Sabie (dates not known) was a schoolmaster and an English poet. *Pan's Pipe*, includes three pastoral eclogues.
[7]A stock poetic name for a rustic maiden, from a young female slave of that name in the Idylls.

bondage". The poet compares Elizabeth to Mosses who "people through the sea led, / As by the drie land"; she is a nourisher who for many years fed her people with "manna, nectar, and water from craggy mountains" (Sabie 1910, p. 463). Moreover, she assisted Jove and protected him from many *Scillas*; in return, Jove "From Spanish armies hath her protected". She rules her land in peace, has got rid it of Romish wiles, crashed rebels, "she reformeth vices, / Vertue rewarding." (ibid., p. 463) The *Ode* finishes with the traditional praise of and prayer for the queen.

> A Phoenix rare she is on earth amongst vs,
> A mother vs her people she doth nourish
> Let vs all therefore, with one heart, pray
> Ioue that long she may flourish.
> (Sabie 1910, p. 464)

The *Three goddesses* remained a favorite theme with poets and dramatists. Barnfield[8] based his *Cynthia* (1595) on this myth. The poet used the old device of a dream vision in introducing the theme. He depicts a trial placed in the Olympian framework so that justice is attached more objectivity as Jupiter is the judge. The poet in his sleep is directed by "an Angell bright" to a Dale where under a lofty Pine sat gods and goddesses: Jupiter with a wheel of fortune, Mercury, Volcano, three furies, all in armor, Priam's son Paris "wrapt in the Mantle of eternal Night," Pallas Athena, Venus "In glistring Golde," and Juno all in tears. Juno is a Plaintiff and appeals to Jupiter "to judge with equitie." After hearing Juno's complaint, Jupiter pronounces his decision to award the "fairest Fayrie Queene," the sacred Virgin, Muse of chastity – Elizabeth. The poem ends with the poet's awakening at dawn "Frō pleasant slumbring sleepe"; he almost wept "Depriu'd so soone of my sweet Dreame" (Barnfield 1876, p.122).

Barnfield's *Cynthia* is another step in the development of the royal panegyric genre. He offers practically the same interpretation as Sabie, but he adds a *Conclusion* in which he extols Elizabeth as a divinity that gives light both to the Moon and the Sun. "So hee [the Sun], by thee, is onely made so bright:/ Yet neither Sun, nor Moone, thou canst he named, / Because thy light hath both their beauties shamed″ (Barnfield 1876, p. 76).

Fifteen years have elapsed between Eworth's *Three Goddesses* and George Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*. Peele[9] rewrote the painter's allegory in a play to be performed at court in 1584. Helen Hacket considers that Peele's play is "the most extensive treatment of the theme," combining mythological and pastoral elements. We can spot several interesting changes introduced by the author. In the play, Paris abandons Oenone, his mistress, in pursuit of Helen of Troy

[8] Richard Barnfield (1574 – 1620) was an English poet. His first work the *Affectionate Shepheard* was published in 1594. It was criticized for its openly homosexual content. In 1595, Barnfield published his second volume, *Cynthia, with certain Sonnets. Cynthia* is a panegyric on Queen Elizabeth written in the Spenserian stanza whom Barnfield was imitating.

[9] George Peele (1556 – 1596) was an English translator, poet, and dramatist. He experimented in many forms of theatrical art: pastoral, history, melodrama, tragedy, folk play, and pageant. He also experimented with poetry in various forms.

promised to him by Venus on condition that he should award the prize of golden apple to her. Juno and Pallas complain to Jupiter of injustice, and Paris is brought before the Olympian gods for trial. David Moss advances a hypothesis that "The *Judgment* has been elevated from a simple beauty contest to a contest of merits, one which only Elizabeth can win – she is the only figure who contains all three of the strengths of the others" (Moss 1999, p 33). This "new" Judgment centers on merits and virtues. The author praises regal power, wisdom, and Elizabeth's special political acumen, "which had nothing whatsoever to do with the original story, in which the goddesses display few if any virtues" (ibid., p.33). Peele's skills of incorporating new motifs are difficult to overestimate. One more new motif rarely noticed and discussed by critics is the issue of justice, a concept central to the Tudor cosmology (recall Case's Spheres) and an issue crucial for Elizabeth's own rule. As Reynolds puts it "a charge of partial judgment could become a charge of tyranny" (Reynolds 2010 p. 273). In Lyly's play the motif of justice is touched upon, but is not central to the plot. Cynthia is "the sole dispenser of justice" – she punishes and awards other characters of the play. In Peele's play, it becomes an important subplot where Elizabeth's role is of one standing trial, and passively accepting the judgment of Diana.

The first part of Peele's play conforms to the archetypal myth. The novel element begins when Mercury pronounces, "Paris, King Priam's son, thou art arraigned of partiality" (Peele 1887, p. 59) and brings him before Zeus and the tribunal of Olympus. The trial by the council of gods is commonly accepted as Peele's innovation. In order to make the trial impartial, Paris is given an opportunity to defend his decision. He states, "Unguilty of the fact" and explains his motif subtly avoiding the charge of partiality: had it concerned Royal majesty, he would have given the prize to Juno, had Wisdom been involved, the ball would have been adjudged to Pallas, but when beauty is dealt with, Venus is second to none.

> Now, for I must add reason for my deed,
> Why Venus rather pleased me of the three;
> The question standing upon Beauty's blaze,
> The name of her that hight the Queen of Love,
> Methought in beauty should not be excelled.
> (Peele 1887, p. 62)

It is a funny thing to see how elements of earthly jurisprudence penetrate the highest judicial practice of Gods. Paris advises the discontented goddesses to file an appeal against his sentence: "If warlike Pallas or the Queen of Heaven/ Sue to reverse my sentence by appeal, / Be it as please your majesties divine" (Peele 1887, p. 63). Though Paris is acquitted of all charges, a feeling that justice has not been met remains.

> Shepherd, thou hast been heard with equity and law, ...
> We here dismiss thee hence, by order of our senate:
> Go take thy way to Troy, and there abide thy fate.
> (Peele 1887, p. 65).

Since Paris failed to be unbiased and impartial as a judge (and what is still worse not averse to bribery), the authority to judge must be delegated to somebody else. Male Gods discuss the issue and wash their hands off as "the holy law of heaven denies / One god to meddle in another's power. ... by justice of our laws/ We were not suffered to conclude the cause" (Peele 1887, p. 63-64). So, "A woman must be judge among her feres [companions]" (ibid., p.69). As the incident took place in Diana's territory, the Gods cannot suppress her right to "law and equity". Diana's appearance in the play performs a dual function; 1) she is a Virgin and solidifies the fourth virtue of Elizabeth – her virginity; 2) Diana is a female judge in a trial in which Elizabeth "is judged".

> In state Queene Iunos peere, for power in armes,
> And vertues of the mind Minervaes mate:
> As fayre and lovely as the queene of love:
> As chast as Dian in her chast desires.
> (Peele 1887, p. 73)

For Diana, this is a "thankless office" imposed on her, she has been called on "of this quarrel make a final end." She makes the goddesses "promise with some sacred oath" that they will not be offended, whether they like her doom or not. The three goddesses make oaths to take Diana's judgment in good part. From this scene on, the play becomes a panegyric to Elizabeth. As Reynolds puts it, "Peele elevates Elizabeth and assigns her various meanings and values – she is the culmination of the best found in each of the four goddesses" (Reynolds p. 275). "In her do meet so many gifts in one" (Peele 1887, p. 73). Diana decides that the "ball in merit doth belong to Eliza" (ibid., p. 73). Once again she repeats the well-known pattern that has become the staple of Elizabethan panegyrics. The play ends with the three goddesses recognizing Elizabeth's supremacy and echo Diana's words:

Venus:	So, fair Eliza, Venus doth resign
	The honour of this honour to be thine.
Juno:	So is the Queen of Heaven content likewise
	To yield to thee her title in the prize.
Pallas:	So Pallas yields the praise hereof to thee,
	For Wisdom, princely State, and peerless Beauty.

(Peele 1887, p. 77)

The analysis of the texts in this part has shown the formation of a dominant tradition – that of extolling Elizabeth I. Enough textual connections were found to single out important motifs such as Elizabeth's supremacy over all pagan goddesses, her equality with the highest god, her multiple virtues.

Myths within a Plot-forming Myth

So far, we have been discussing plot-forming myths, which frame the content of the entire literary work. But the practice of resorting to myths extends much further. The texts contain multiple references/allusions to other mythic narratives embedded in the texture of the main myth. They have little or no connection to the archetypal myth, are chosen to serve immediate contextual situations but do not violate the harmony of the narrative. For describing them, we borrow the term "semantic enclave" coined by Mieczyslaw Wallis for the description of the iconography of the 16th century pictorial art, by which he means "such a part of a work of art, which is composed of signs representing different types or different systems of signs than the rest of that work" (Wallis 1973, p. 1). We use this term in mythological perspective for the analysis of autonomous entities related to other mythological narratives inserted in the text to achieve a desirable effect. They add additional dimension to the main theme and enhance thematic complexity of literary pieces. As Weldon Thornton, who made up an exhaustive list of James Joyce's use of allusion in Ulysses, put it:

> ″The purpose of allusion in a literary work is essentially the same as that of all other types of metaphor – the development and revelation of character, structure, and theme – and, when skillfully used, it does all of these simultaneously, ... Allusion achieves its purposes through inviting a comparison and contrast of the context in which it is used with its original context. An allusion is a metaphor with an almost inexhaustible number of points of comparison″ (Thornton 1968, p.3).

Peele's *Arraignment of Paris* is a striking example of the issue in question. In scene V of Act I, Paris is courting the nymph Oenone, who possesses the powers of prophecy and knows many tales. He asks the girl to sing some of them. Oenone reminds him of the stories she knows and asks him to choose. She already knows that Paris will leave her for Helen of Troy, and that this will lead to his own ruin. The nymph is trying to warn her lover of the impending danger, which accounts for the choice of the myths: they all contain some wrong doing and severe punishment for it. We are impressed by the extent and thoroughness of these allusions. The short passage below comprises allusions to the *Battle of the Titans* in which the brothers divided the universe amongst themselves, with Zeus/Jupiter becoming the ruler of the heavens and earth, Neptune ruler of the seas, and Pluto the underworld; to the *Battle of the Giants,* who challenged the supremacy of the Olympians but lost; to the story of *Medusa* punished by Athena for her love affair with Neptune; to Pluto's kidnapping *Proserpine,* the daughter of Ceres, who ate half of a pomegranate and could leave Hades for only half of each year; to *Daphne's* story, who was turned by gods to a laurel tree to help her escape Apollo's rape.

> How Saturn did divide his kingdom tho
> To Jove, to Neptune, and to Dis [Pluto] below;
> How mighty men made foul successless war
> Against the gods and state of Jupiter;

How Phorcys' imp[10], that was so trick and fair,
That tangled Neptune in her golden hair,
Became a Gorgon for her lewd misdeed, ...
How Pluto caught Queen Ceres' daughter thence,
And what did follow of that love-offence;
Of Daphne turned into the laurel-tree
That shows a mirror of virginity.
(Peele 1887, p. 24)

The passage is much longer and includes semantic enclaves of the story of *Narcissus*, who fell in love with his own reflection; *Philomela and Tereus*, the king of Thrace, who was punished for his rape of Philomena, his wife's sister, by being served his own son for dinner; *Ixion's wheel*, who was punished by Jupiter for trying to seduce Juno by tying him to a wheel which forever spins around in the Hades. *Tantal's pining woe*, a story about Jupiter's son who could not keep his father's secrets, so was punished by being placed in a lake to suffer permanent thirst and hunger; *Prometheus'* punishment for delivering fire to mankind; the story of *Danaides*, daughters of the Egyptian King of Argos, who killed their husbands on the wedding night at the instigation of their father, who suspected his sons-in-law of plotting against him, and had to pour water into vessels full of holes for all eternity; and of course *Sisyphus'* toil, who was condemned for murders to eternally push an enormous stone up a hill, which inevitably rolled down when he almost reached the top. The most interesting thing is that the myths are not told but either the names of the key actors are mentioned, or the purport of the myth is formulated in a laconic, concise manner. Oenone hopes that Paris will be "cunning", *id est*, clever enough to understand her warning. The allusive contexts have an aim to stimulate Paris's reflection of his fate.

Especially significant are those that tell stories about tragic love. Thus, in Act III appears *Colin*, a shepherd, who is desperately in love with one Thestylis, who has rejected him. Colin takes his life, Venus punishes Thestylis by causing her to fall in love with a "foul crooked Churl", who rejects her with "foul disdain". In her lamentation Thestylis mentions *Iphis' pain:* "And let me die of Iphis' pain" (Peele 1887, p. 52), a reference to a tragic story of Anaxarete, a Cyprian maiden, who scorned one *Iphis*, who was madly in love with her, as a result, he hanged himself in his despair. When Anaxarete looked with apathy on Iphis' funeral cortège, an enraged Venus turned her into stone.

There are humorous allusions, too. Juno, who is aware of her husband's many love affairs, nevertheless is sure that Jupiter "a never strayed so wide" [has never really strayed that far from me], but acknowledges that "A lovely nut-brown lass or lusty trull / Have power perhaps to make a god a bull" (Peele 1887, p. 28) referring to the story in which Jove turned himself into an attractive white bull with gem-like horns, between which ran a single black streak in order to seduce the beautiful maiden Europa. Europa was struck by his beauty and, on finding him gentle as a lamb, mastered her fear and began to play with him, putting flowers in his mouth and hanging garlands on his horns; in the end, she

[10] God Phorcys had a daughter, a beautiful mortal named Medusa, the most famous of the three sisters.

climbed upon his shoulders, and let him amble down with her to the edge of the sea. Suddenly he swam away to the island of Crete where Europa became the first queen (Graves 1960, p. 194).

This technique is honed to perfection in Lyly's *Midas*. The play composed in 1589 and performed at Court on January 6, 1590 is based on the famous myth about Midas, whose golden touch turned everything to gold and nearly destroyed himself. The myth was described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, who made Midas a mythological character whether or not there was an historical prototype. The play consists of two stories: Bacchus' gift to Midas, king of Phrygia, for his hospitality and Apollo's punishment for Midas' unwise and biased judgment of the musical contest between the Sun god and Pan – the king was adorned with ass' ears. Midas' both decisions were unwise, "Unfortunate in thy wish, unwise in thy judgment; first a golden fool, now a leaden ass" (Lyly 1902, p. 144). However, what interests us in this play is the abundance of allusions to other myths within the two main themes.

Midas' court counselor Mellacrites advises his King to ask gods for a rare gift that everything he touched might turn to gold. In his long speech which is a laud to gold, he alludes to several well-known myths, which perform here a persuasive function. Mellacrites states that gold can win love of any woman. "Jupiter was a god, but he knew gold was a greater: and flewe into those grates with his golden winges, where he coulde not enter with his Swannes wings" (Lyly 1902, p. 118). In this line there are references to two popular myths. First, the myth of Danae, the daughter of Acrisius, the king of Argos, who was foretold that his grandson would kill him. To prevent this event, Acrisius kept Danae under lock and key. Jupiter outwitted the king and penetrated her dungeon in the form of a shower of gold. The prophesy came to pass later when Perseus' discus accidentally killed Acrisius. The second is the myth of Leda, whom Jupiter seduced in the image of a swan. The next line refers the reader to the myth of Atalanta. "What stayed Atalanta's course with Hippomenes? an apple of gold" (Lyly 1902, p. 118). Atalanta was a beautiful, swift-footed maiden, who refused to get married. She announced that she would marry if a suitor could outrun her. A young man, Hippomenes, in love with Atalanta, received from Venus three golden apples, which he threw during their race to distract Atalanta. Sure enough, every time Hippomenes tossed an apple, Atalanta would chase and pick it up. While Atalanta stopped to gather the fruit, Hippomenes won the race.

In the discussion of different identities of Jupiter, the line "The same Jupiter was an eagle, a swan, a bull" (Lyly 1902, p.124) evokes three myths simultaneously. Two – about Leda and Europa – have already been mentioned. The third is the myths about Ganymede. According to this myth, Ganymedes, the son of King Tros who gave his name to Troy, was the most beautiful youth alive and therefore chosen by the gods to be Zeus's cup-bearer. It is said that Zeus, desiring Ganymedes also as his bedfellow, disguised himself in eagle's feathers and abducted him from the Trojan plain. On Zeus's behalf, Hermes presented Tros with a golden vine and two fine horses, in compensation for his loss, assuring him at the same time that Ganymedes had become immortal, exempt from the miseries of old age (Graves 1960, p. 71).

There are interesting cases of semantic enclaves in the second part of the play where a contest between Apollo and Pan takes place. In the description of their instruments the author alludes to Greek myths. Pan's pipe was once a nymph. This is a reference to Pan's love for land Nymph Syrinx, who wishing to preserve her virginity, rejected Pan's advances and fled back to her friend nymphs, who changed her into reeds. Pan collected and bound a bunch of them, creating the instrument which produced hushed murmuring sounds. Pan asks Apollo if his lute has "been made of laurel, and the strings of Daphne's hair, for then Daphne would have added to thy stroke sweetness, and to thy thoughts melody" (Lyly 1902, p. 140), making reference to the story of Apollo and Daphne discussed above.

Each literary piece developed a whole paradigm of mythological allusions expressing the core idea of a certain separate part. For educated people, these allusions were easily understood and revealed an additional meaningful layer. Not so with lowly classes. Lyly ridicules their ignorance. Licio, a servant, does not know that Apollo never caught Daphne, but tries to joke mentioning the myth. "Tis true girl, else how could Titan have troaden [trodden] Daphne?" (Lyly 1902, p. 127). He compares Apollo to a cock and Daphne to a hen.

The tendency to intersperse additional myths into the framework of the title myth was taken up by pictorial art and is especially evident in The *Sieve portrait* (1583) by Quentin Metsys', a celebrated Flemish Renaissance painter, who lived and worked in England during the 1580's. When it became clear that Elizabeth would never marry and bear a successor to the throne, poets and artists began to eulogize virginal chastity trying to emulate each other. Elizabeth I occupies most of the portrait's space; behind her left shoulder is a globe with ships heading West signifying the world power and England's imperial ambitions. Her left hand holds a sieve, a metaphor of virginity and chastity, an object that gave name to several portraits. This is probably the last painting showing a natural likenesses of the queen. The painting incorporating the symbol of virginity is related to the story of the ancient Roman Vestal Virgin Tuccia, who, when her chastity was questioned by alleged accusations, to prove her unblemished reputation, carried water from the Tiber to her Temple in the sieve without spilling a drop of water to the ground. The sieve had become an esoteric symbol of virginity.

The painting's iconography is unique in that it includes a pillar with inset medallions of scenes from another mythological story, the tale of Dido and Aeneas from Virgil's epic, the *Aeneid* (Fig.3). The Roman poet described the story of Dido's doomed love affair with the Trojan prince Aeneas whose destiny was to found the city of Rome. During a storm, he takes refuge in the city of Carthage founded by Dido, the Queen of Carthage. They fall in love, but he could not disobey the gods' bidding to go on with his mission. When he leaves, Dido takes her life. The purport of the myth is that the hero was prepared to sacrifice the love of a beautiful queen to fulfill his fate. Though his heart was weak because of love, and groan rose from his bosom, "Aeneas, [was] faithful to a task divine" because "no whit [being] did fail/ To do the will of Heaven". He resumed command of his fleet and "pushed the lofty ships into the sea" (Virgil 1972, p 127). When he was away in open sea "on his unswerving course", he looked back on Carthage and saw "the glare of hapless Dido's fire" (Virgil 1972, p. 143).

Situationally, the use of the epic was very timely. At the time of this painting, a lengthy courtship or love affair of Elizabeth with François of Valois, Duke of Alençon (France), who was twenty years younger, came to its logical end, considering a strong opposition among Privy Counselors to a Catholic consort. In the epic, Aeneas honors his duty over his love for Dido. Elizabeth wrote a heart-breaking poem *On Monsieur's Departure,* in which she laments her love sacrificed for a great cause to command the destiny of her nation.

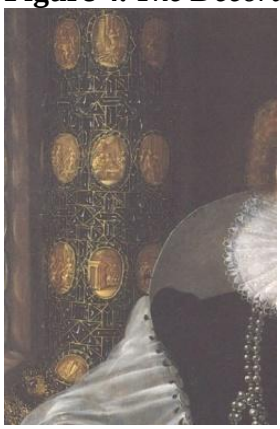
> I am and not, I freeze and yet am burned.
> Since from myself another self I turned.
> I grieve and dare not show my discontent,
> I love and yet am forced to seem to hate, ...
> No means I find to rid him from my breast,
> Till by the end of things it be supprest. ...
> Or be more cruel, love, and so be kind.
> Let me or float or sink, be high or low.
> Or let me live with some more sweet content,
> Or die and so forget what love ere meant.
> (Brander 1964, p. 5).

These lines reveal Elizabeth's restless, injured soul, which is torn between her female body and body politic. The pillar in *The Siena Sieve Portrait* unknown until 1895 depicts the scenes from the *Aeneid* by Virgil which resonate with Elizabeth's emotions (Fig 4). The highest medallion presents a picture of Dido's funeral pyre. Other medallions depict Dido's first meeting with Aeneas at Juno's temple, their idylls in the cave, and, ultimately, Dido's self-immolation – committing suicide with Aeneas' sword. Dido was completely broken down and neglected her duties to her people and country. The name Dido is equivalent to the Latin *virago*, a woman who has all the strength of a man (Williams 2006, p. 33), but in Vigil's interpretation this strength fails her. Dean Williams emphasizes the connection between Elizabeth and Aeneas, not Dido (ibid., p. 41). Anne Bradstreet, a most prominent of early English poets of North America of the seventeenth century, in her poem *In honour of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth*, states that Elizabeth preponderates over all heroic women of the past including Dido:

> Dido first Foundresse of proud Carthage walls,
> (Who living consummates her Funerals)
> A great Eliza[11], but compar'd with ours,
> How vanisheth her glory, wealth, and powers,
> (Bradstreet 1981, p. 157)

[11]Dido's name was Elissa.

Figure 4. *The Decorative Pillar in the Siena Sieve Portrait. A Close-up*



Source: https://robertstephenparry.com/endymion/elizabeth-sieve-portrait.html

Elizabeth in her actions may be compared to Aeneas, an individual who overcame temptation in love and chose his destiny to found Rome. The lowest medallion, close to Elizabeth's elbow, features the imperial crown that reflects the queen's acute awareness of her destination – to build an empire. Roy Strong thus described the kindredness of Elizabeth and Aeneas. ″Elizabeth is cast as this century's Aeneas. She too is of imperial descent, she too is destined to found a mighty (British) empire and in order to achieve it she too has spurned the wiles of human passion″ (Strong 1987, p. 107).

The *Aeneid* story is applicable to Elizabeth in that she like Aeneas, preferred her predestination to love. As Mary Hazard put it, "the moral strength of a most important hero has been translated into feminine usage. Moreover, the ascription of Aeneas' imperial destiny enhances her [Elizabeth's] political power. She is a virgin combining the qualities of a chaste heroine and an epic hero" (Hazard 1990, p. 74).

Mythological enclaves provide for a polycentric conceptual structure of a text or painting creating a special kind of imagery for situation-based meanings with the help of references to a variety of well-known myths. They are cognitive events whose occurrence enhances the overall message.

Conclusion

Literary appropriations of Greek mythology in the Elizabethan culture was its distinctive mark. It permeated all genres of literature and played a role in pictorial art. We do not pretend to a comprehensive treatment of the stated subject. The current article concentrates on two aspects: 1) myth as a constitutive conceptual base of a literary piece as a whole and 2) mythological inclusions in the tissue of the narrative as a specific form of nuanced representation of minor motifs or the development of the main theme.

In all the literary works analyzed, the base is an archetypal myth essential to the content of a new literary work. The base myth provides an abstract conceptual scheme for the plot development. But it is never a simple retelling of classical

myths, on the contrary, old myths are subject to modification. On the cognitive base, additional constructs bearing new values are imposed forming a complex conceptual scheme within which some values are elevated to a certain degree of prominence. Conceptualizing new values/virtues modifies the original myth in accordance with the requirements of contemporary morality, theology, and mainstream politics. In this way, myths adjust themselves to the new social and cultural situation. Poets infused mythological discourse with new meanings. Thus, the revision of the theme *Endimion* received an explicitly stated religious content suggesting a resolution to the ages-old antinomy between 'body and soul'. The tale of the *Judgement of Paris* and Virgil's *Aeneid* provided a model, a cognitive source for a mega-discourse embracing not only literary works but painting, too, whose main motif was related to female sovereignty elevating Elizabeth to the status of a goddess above all heathenish deities.

Intertextual relations are dense in this period. They provide for textual and thematic parallelisms, form convergent patterns of imagery and expression. Writers exploit the previously established conceptual patterns and a paradigm of tropes forming a new type of typology concerned mainly with value judgments and the figure of Elizabeth I, in whom multiple virtues were implanted by God. The recurring narrative elements give shape to a large literary theme – the construction of Elizabeth's cult. The mythologized and deified Eliza/Zabeta/ Cynthia/Phoebe merged in collective consciousness into a personality typologically categorized within more-than-one-merit frame. This kind of typology sweeps across all genres underscoring Elizabeth's supremacy and making her equal to the highest God and a mediator between him and the world of mortals.

Intratextual mythological enclaves are one more example of a successful use of mythology. Mythological allusions performed various functions: persuasive, descriptive, explanatory, illustrative, etc. They described a certain feature of a person in question, an attitude, a significant event or historical occurrence and thus enhanced the extent of topical coverage, incorporated mythology as a part of imagery – all this makes attractiveness of mythology in this period indisputable.

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