

# TRAVEL AND SEA IMAGERY IN SHAKESPEARE AND SOME OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES

By

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The image — that is, the word-picture used by the poet or prose-writer, « to illustrate, illuminate, and embellish his thought » (1) — naturally arises from the poet's imagination and is conditioned by his turn of mind or by the idiosyncrasies of his personality. But the poet, being a creature of his age, will not only use the imagery that is indicative of his personality but will also choose images that are often typical of his time and environment. In an age such as the Elizabethan, in which adornment was almost a passion, it was natural that this tendency should be carried by poets into their style. Rhetorical elaboration, the piling up of imagery as in Marlowe's work, the flowery comparisons of the sonneteers, the punning in dramatic dialogue, the

Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,  
Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,  
Figures pedantical... (2)

are typical of this love of ornament in language.

The sea has always been an important factor in the life of the people of Britain as a natural consequence of their insular position — an « island girt in with the ocean » (3). From earliest times the sea has taken its place in literature and especially in their poetry, as in *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*. It is my purpose here to show — through some of the travel and sea imagery of the 16th and early 17th centuries — how closely the sea was connected with the life and thought of the poets of the period, and particularly of Shakespeare, and how much it helped to influence their outlook in this period of expansion.

The 16th century not only saw a revival of learning but was also an age of discovery, of intellectual as well as terrestrial expansion.

(1) Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*. Boston, 1958, p. 9.

(2) *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. ii. 406 — 8. The edition used was *The Works of William Shakespeare*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1938.

(3) *3 Henry VI*, IV. viii. 20.

Horizons became infinitely extended and the mists of ignorance that had lain over those lands that were beyond the familiar but small area of Latin Christendom began to lift. Men travelled in every direction across oceans that were uncharted and full of hidden and unknown perils.

*Literature of Travel and Discovery :*

Owing to these voyages, a literature of travel and discovery began to flourish from the middle of the 16th century with such accounts as John Hawkins' voyage to the west in 1567 and the voyages of Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Martin Frobisher to the north in an attempt to find the North-West Passage that should lead to Cathay. Some of these accounts were written by the seamen themselves but others were written by men who had probably never been to sea. Nevertheless, the most important travel books of that period were undoubtedly the two collections made by Richard Hakluyt. The first, dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, was published in 1582, while his major work, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation*, were published in 1589. A second edition of the latter appeared nine years later and was even more comprehensive than the first and a true feast of sea narration. Drake, Cavendish, Hawkins, Frobisher, Gilbert, and many others were represented; every type of sea and land journey was included, from the Guinea ventures to the Muscovy Company expeditions of 1553 and 1588, as well as the correspondence associated with these voyages. In this second edition, a map of the newly discovered lands in the West Indies was included<sup>(4)</sup>.

By 1600 there was an extensive library of the sea and much of it was due to Hakluyt's efforts.

Thy Voyages attend,  
Industrious Hakluyt,  
Whose reading shall inflame  
Men to seek fame,  
And much commend  
To after times thy wit<sup>(5)</sup>.

The popularity of such travel accounts continued and further accounts of voyages to Virginia appeared, as well as a map of the

(4) D.B. Quinn, 'Sailors and the Sea' in *Shakespeare Survey*, No. 17; *Shakespeare in His Own Age*, ed. Allardyce Nicoll, Cambridge, 1964, pp. 32 — 3.

(5) Michael Drayton, *To The Virginian Voyage*, *Oxford Book of English Verse*, pp. 176 ff.

region in 1612. The point of interest here is that it is possible that two such accounts of journeys to the west — one of a voyage to Guiana and the other to the Bermudas — were possibly the sources of Shakespeare's *Tempest*(6).

Another collector of sea narratives was Samuel Purchas, who followed in Hakluyt's footsteps to the point of calling his work, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*. This was published in 1615 and added greatly to the spirit of discovery and the desire for knowledge.

### *The Poets and the Sea :*

Needless to say, the poets were much influenced by the trends in the times. Some of the poets themselves had gone to sea, notably Sir Walter Raleigh, who not only helped Hakluyt to collect some of his material but himself wrote a tract on the fighting near the Azores in 1591(7). He had sent out an expedition in 1584 to Virginia (which was unsuccessful) and himself set sail for Panama in 1592 to seize Spanish ships. In 1595, he undertook an expedition to Guiana and in the following year, published an account of his *Discoveries of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana, with a relation of the Great and Golden City of Manoa*. In that same year, 1596, he took part in an expedition against Cadiz — in which the poet, John Donne, also took part — and covered himself with glory. In 1597, he went on a voyage to the Azores — the expedition also included Donne — to intercept Spanish treasure ships. He made one more journey to Guiana in 1617, his last, tragic and fateful journey in search of his golden city(8).

It is little wonder that he wrote :

To seek new worlds for golde, for prayse, for glory,  
To try desire, to try loue seuered farr,  
When I was gonne shee sent her memory  
More stronge than weare ten thousand shippes of war(9).

Or later,

My hopes cleane out of sight, with forced wind  
To Kingdomes strange, to lands farr off address(10).

(6) Quinn, p. 33.

(7) *Report of the Truth of the Fight about the Isles of the Açores, this last Sommer* (1591), George Sampson, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, pp. 181-2.

(8) Agnes M.C. Latham, *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh*. London, 1961.

(9) Sir Walter Raleigh, *The 11th and last booke of the Ocean to Scinthia*, ll. 61 — 4.

(10) *Ibid.*, ll. 87 -- 8.

and could also speak of

the marks to finde thy hoped port,  
Into a soyle farr off them sealves remove<sup>(11)</sup>.

John Donne, whose poetic muse seemed to have absorbed all that was most advanced in geographical and scientific knowledge of the time, was constantly using imagery that mirrored the interest of the age in new worlds. As we shall see later when dealing in greater detail with sea imagery in connection with emotions such as love, hate and anger, his verse is full of references to the sea. It is thought that most of his epigrams were written at the time of the two expeditions of 1596 and 1597<sup>(12)</sup>.

Beyond th'old Pillers many have travailed  
Towards the Suns cradle, and his throne, and bed<sup>(13)</sup>.

he wrote in one epigram, and, in another,

If you from spoyle of the'old worlds farthest end  
To the new world your kindled valour bend,  
What brave examples then do prove it trew  
That one things end doth still beginne a new<sup>(14)</sup>.

Innumerable references to travel and discovery can be found. In *As You Like It*, Celia is teasing her cousin Rosalind who is dressed up as a boy, and Rosalind bursts out with humour :

Good my complexion ! dost thou think, though I am  
caparison'd like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my  
disposition ? One inch of delay more is a South-sea of  
discovery<sup>(15)</sup>.

Again, in *Twelfth Night*, where many of the puns in the dialogue between Viola, Malvolio and Sir Toby Belch deal with nautical terms, Viola says to Sir Toby :

I am bound to your niece, sir; I mean she is the list of  
my voyage<sup>(16)</sup>.

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(11) *Ibid.*, II. 485 — 6.

(12) John Hayward (ed.), *John Donne : Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, Nonesuch edition, London, 1939, p. 58.

(13) *Ibid.*, Epigram to Sir John Wingfield, p. 60.

(14) *Ibid.*, Epigram, « Cales and Guyana », p. 60.

(15) *As You Like It*, III. ii. 197 — 200.

(16) *Twelfth Night*, III. i. 78 — 9.

And later, in the same scene, when Olivia has declared her love for Viola (whom she imagines to be a man) and is sending her away :

Olivia : There lies your way, due west.

Viola : Then westward-ho !<sup>(17)</sup>

In the following scene, Maria, Olivia's maid, describes Malvolio to Sir Toby and Sir Andrew Aguecheek as crossgartered and smiling,

Maria : ... and he does smile his face into more lines than is in the new map, with the augmentation of the Indies<sup>(18)</sup>.

#### *References to Lands Old and New :*

Thus lands that had been remote, shadowy and mythical became familiar names, especially to those who lived in ports or who read the accounts of the various voyages. Londoners in particular, who could see the ships setting out and returning from their distant destinations, sometimes battered by rough weather and sometimes laden with rich goods, and who lived in a city still small enough for them to meet the members of those various expeditions or to hear the talk of the sailors in the taverns, must have heard many a tale of distant lands.

In Shakespeare's plays we find references to several different parts of the world. The second merchant in *The Comedy of Errors* needed guilders for his journey to Persia<sup>(19)</sup>, while Antonio's ships in *The Merchant of Venice* were said by Shylock to be bound for Tripoli, the Indies, Mexico and England, to which Bassanio in a later passage added Barbary and Lisbon<sup>(20)</sup>.

References to India or the Indies were not always clear as to whether West or East Indies were intended. Falstaff, however, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, leaves us in no doubt when he refers to the two ladies whom he is wooing at one and the same time.

*Falstaff* : ... Here's another letter to her; she bears the purse too; she is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty. I will be cheaters to them both, and they shall be exchequers to me; they shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both...

Hold, sirrah, bear you these letters tightly;

Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores<sup>(21)</sup>.

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(17) *Ibid.*, III. i. 137.

(18) *Ibid.*, III. ii. 76 — 8. This was the map in Hakluyt's second edition.

(19) *The Comedy of Errors*, IV. i. 1 — 4.

(20) *The Merchant of Venice*, I. iii. 16 — 24 and III. ii. 266 — 270.

(21) *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. iii. 65 — 77.

Other passages, however, are not so precise and Berowne in *Love's Labour's Lost* declares that he who sees his Rosaline bows his vassal head, is struck blind, kisses the ground, « like a rude and savage man of Inde »<sup>(22)</sup>. In her quarrel with Oberon over the little Indian boy, Titania describes how the boy's mother would sit with her « in the spiced Indian air by night » and gossip by her side as they sat on Neptune's yellow sand,

Marking th' embarked traders on the flood;  
When we have laught to see the sails conceive  
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;  
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait  
Following, — her womb then rich with my young squire,  
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,  
To fetch me trifles, and return again,  
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise<sup>(23)</sup>.

In *The Tempest*, Ariel is more precise when describing the place where he has hidden the king's ship as

... the deep nook, where once  
Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew  
From the still-vest Bermoothes...<sup>(24)</sup>

To the Elizabethans, both the Indies were lands of gold mines and spices and precious stones. Speaking of Cressida, Troilus said that her bed was India and « there she lies a pearl »<sup>(25)</sup>, while in a different context, Edward Mortimer refers to Owen Glendower, his father-in-law, as a man who is valiant as a lion and « as beautiful as mines in India »<sup>(26)</sup>. « How now, my metal of India ! » said Sir Toby Belch to Maria, in admiration for the part she played in the plot against Malvolio<sup>(27)</sup>. Again, in *Henry VIII* — which, in spite of its doubtful authorship, is still an early 17th century play — the Duke of Norfolk describes the way in which the French and English both tried to outshine each other.

... today, the French,  
All clinquant, all in gold, like heathen gods,  
Shone down the English ; and, to-morrow, they

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(22) *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. iii. 219 — 222.

(23) *Midsommer Night's Dream*, II. i. 124 — 34.

(24) *The Tempest*, I. ii. 226 — 3.

(25) *Troilus and Cressida*, I. i. 101.

(26) *I Henry IV*, III. i. 166 — 7.

(27) *Twelfth Night*, II. v. 15.

Made Britain India: every man that stood  
Show'd like a mine<sup>(28)</sup>.

Later in that same play, one of the gentlemen at court declares in admiration of Anne Boleyn that

Our king has all the Indies in his arms,  
And more and richer, when he strains that lady<sup>(29)</sup>.

Russia is mentioned but the references are fewer : Rosaline, in mockery of the King of Navarre and his lords who are dressed up as Russians, calls out :

Help, hold his brows ! he'll swoond ! Why look you pale ?  
Sea-sick, I think, coming from Muscovy<sup>(30)</sup>.

In *Measure for Measure*, when Angelo is hearing a case against two men, he finds them so garrulous that he walks out saying :

This will last out a night in Russia,  
When nights are longest there...<sup>(31)</sup>

referring to the long and dark winter nights of the Arctic north.

Shakespeare also referred to the Levant and, although he used the Mediterranean area as a scene for several of his plays, he seems to have been a little vague over some of its geography. The First Witch in *Macbeth*, angry with a sailor's wife because she would not give her some of the chestnuts she was munching, determined to retaliate by harming the sailor. « Her husband's to Aleppo gone », she said, « master o' th' Tiger »...<sup>(32)</sup>.

Arabia is often referred to in three contexts, the first of which is that of a desert country. Coriolanus' mother, Volumnia, wished that her son were in Arabia with his enemies, the Tribunes, before him and with his good sword in his hand so that he could make an end of them all and their progeny<sup>(33)</sup>. Secondly, Arabia is a country of spice and frankincense and myrrh and, as Lady Macbeth said in her sleep-walking scene,

(28) *Henry VIII*, I. i. 18 - 21.

(29) *Ibid.*, IV. i. 46 -- 7.

(30) *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. ii. 392 — 3.

(31) *Measure for Measure*, II. i. 136 -- 7.

(32) *Macbeth*, I. iii. 7. Aleppo is not on the sea but the Levant Company had a trading station there.

(33) *Coriolanus*, IV. ii. 32 — 4

... all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand<sup>(34)</sup>.

Finally, Arabia is the land of the phoenix, of fables and legendary creatures. Agrippa calls Antony, « O thou Arabian bird »<sup>(35)</sup> ! and again in *Cymbeline*, Iachimo declares that if Imogen

... be furnisht with a mind so rare  
She is alone the Arabian bird<sup>(36)</sup>.

In a paean of praise to Elizabeth and the reigning monarch James I, the former queen is compared in *Henry VIII* to the phoenix who, as the bird of wonder, the « maiden phoenix », dies and whose ashes create another heir « As great in admiration as herself »<sup>(37)</sup>.

All these regions became grist to the poetic mill, « When you shall these unlucky deeds relate », said Othello,

Speak of me as I am...  
Then must you speak...  
... of one whose hand  
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
Richer than all his tribe: of one whose subdued eyes...  
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees  
Their medicinable gum. Set you down this;  
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,  
Where a malignant and a turbau'd Turk  
Beat a Venetian...<sup>(38)</sup>

In a humorous passage in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Benedict extravagantly begs Don Pedro to ask anything of him rather than speak to Beatrice with whom he is always bickering :

Will your grace command me any service to the world's end ? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the furthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch a hair off the great Cham's beard; do you any embassage to the Pignies :

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(34) *Macbeth*, V. i. 50 — 51.

(35) *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. ii. 12.

(36) *Cymbeline*, I. vi. 16 — 17.

(37) *Henry VIII*, V. iv. 40 ff. The references to the phoenix are all too frequent in Elizabethan literature : *The Phoenix and the Turtle* was attributed to Shakespeare and *The Phoenix Nest* was one of the most important Elizabethan anthologies.

(38) *Othello*, V. ii. 347 — 355.

rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy<sup>(39)</sup>.

It is interesting to note the places where the scenes of Shakespeare's plays are laid, as well as the movement that takes place within the plays themselves. Many of them, particularly the historical plays, take place in England or in France, but many others have a mobility that is astonishing. Furthermore, many of these places outside England are located either in Italy, Greece or along the Mediterranean. Rome, Verona, Mantua, Milan and Padua are all inland places, but next to these we find Ephesus, Messina, Cyprus, Venice, Athens, Sicily and Alexandria. *Antony and Cleopatra* has a constant shifting of scene between Alexandria, Rome, Messina, Misenum, Athens, Actium and a plain in Syria, and one of the scenes takes place on board Pompey's galley. *The Tempest* takes place on an island with the sound of the sea breaking on the surf as a background to the play. Finally, *Pericles* has also a shifting of scene all the way up and down the east Mediterranean coast, beginning with Antioch and moving to Tyre, Tarsus, Ephesus, Mytilene, until all the characters meet on board Pericles' ship. Like a painter, Shakespeare used the whole canvas to give a background of space.

Whether Shakespeare meant, or knew, these places to be authentic or not is doubtful but the very fact that he set his plays where he did is an indication that these places were of some value to him in his desire to create, as play-wright, an atmosphere that was interesting and exciting to his audience, and would find a response in them.

In spite of eyewitness accounts and authentic geographical records, the Elizabethan still remained credulous of the exaggerated tales sometimes told by travellers. In *The Tempest* after Prospero shows the shipwrecked king and his company strange spirits and a banquet prepared by magic, Sebastian declares that

... Now I will believe  
That there are unicorns; that in Arabia  
There is one tree, the phoenix' throne; one phoenix  
At this hour reigning there.  
*Antonio* : I'll believe both:  
And what does else want credit, come to me,  
And I'll be sworn 'tis true: travellers ne'er did lie  
Though fools at home condemn them<sup>(40)</sup>.

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(39) *Much Ado About Nothing*, II. i. 253 — 261.

(40) *The Tempest*, III. iii. 21 — 27.

Again, in *Othello* one can see how credulous was Shakespeare's audience by their readiness to believe in Othello's account of his wooing of Desdemona, and how he recounted to her his life and adventures and travels :

Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,  
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,  
It was my hint to speak, — such was the process;  
And of the cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders<sup>(41)</sup>.

*Trade and Its Imagery :*

Trade was another factor responsible for the extensive travelling of the period. New trade routes were opened in every direction and the history of the main trading stations of the time are an indication of the growth of commerce, as they were later a help to the growth of British political power. Discoverer and trader were often one and the same, as later were coloniser and trader. Among the earliest companies to be established were the Muscovy Company, called the Association of Merchant Adventurers (1555), which, from the outset, took the lead in the exploration of a north-east passage to Cathay. A second trading concern was the Levant company which dealt with trade in the eastern Mediterranean and had trading stations on the coast and inland (such as Aleppo), while a third — which was to be the most remunerative and the most powerful of all — was established in India and was called the East India Company. This last was given a royal charter by Elizabeth in 1600.

In the same way as discovery and geography became part of poetic imagery, the trade theme was also to be found in 16th and 17th century verse. Ships, merchandise, «*fraught*»<sup>(42)</sup>, winds, storms and currents all became part of the metaphorical language, even in pastoral poetry. As one anonymous poet wrote in 1588, shepherds are fortunate for

All day their flocks ech tendeth,  
at night they take their rest  
more quiet than who sendeth,  
his shippes into the East,

(41) *Othello*, I. iii. 139 — 144.

(42) «*Fraught*», according to the Oxford Dictionary, is derived from the obsolete word «*fraught*», to load with cargo. The modern noun is «*freight*».

where gold and pearls are plentie,  
but getting verie duintie<sup>(43)</sup>.

The opening scene of *The Merchant of Venice* is full of suggestions of dangers to ships and merchandise from winds, shallows or rocks and, as Shylock so well expressed it in a later scene,

But ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of the waters, winds, and rocks<sup>(44)</sup>.

Very often, however, the ships returned laden with merchandise and Titania described how her Indian boy's mother would fetch her trifles

... and return again,  
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise<sup>(45)</sup>.

In *Titus Andronicus*, Titus compares himself to the ship itself laden with precious cargo as he returns victorious to Rome after his defeat of the Goths.

Hail, Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds !  
Lo, as the bark that has discharged her fraught  
Returns with precious lading to the bay  
From whence at first she weigh'd her anchorage  
Cometh Andronicus, bound with laurel-boughs...<sup>(46)</sup>

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the dialogue plays with the image in a humourous manner. After Baptista negotiated the marriage of his shrewish daughter Katherine to Petruchio, he declared :

Faith, gentlemen, now I play a merchant's part,  
And venture madly on a desperate mart.

To which his servant Tranio answered :

'Twas a commodity lay fretting by you :  
'Twill bring you gain, or perish on the seas<sup>(47)</sup>.

(43) «The Herdmen» (1588) in *English Poetry*, selected by Kenneth Muir, Oxford, 1938, p. 196.

(44) *Merchant of Venice*, I. iii. 16 — 24.

(45) *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. i. 134 — 5.

(46) *Titus Andronicus*, I. i. 70 — 74.

(47) *The Taming of the Shrew*, II. i. 319 — 322.

In the same passage quoted from *Troilus and Cressida* in which Troilus compares Cressida to a pearl, he attempts to make a definition of

What Cressid is, what Pandar and what we ?  
Her bed is India; there she lies a pearl;  
Between our Ilium and where she resides,  
Let it be call'd the wild and wandering flood,  
Ourself the merchant; and this sailing Pandar,  
Our doubtful hope, our convoy, and our bark<sup>(48)</sup>.

Perhaps the most poetic use of the image is to be found in *Romeo and Juliet*. In the balcony scene, Juliet asks Romeo how he had found his way and who had directed him. « I am no pilot », he answered,

... yet, wert thou as far  
As that vast shore washt with the furbest sea,  
I would adventure for such merchandise<sup>(49)</sup>.

When applied to the theme of love, the poet's beloved is naturally the distant shore to which he sails, or the precious merchandise that he brings back with him, while he himself is the bark that sails through perils and storms to reach the haven. The poet's heart is indeed « wondrous » :

The Andalusian merchant, that returns  
Laden with cochineal and china dishes,  
Reports in Spain how strangely Fogo burns  
Amidst an ocean full of flying fishes :  
These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,  
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry<sup>(50)</sup>.

Spenser uses a contrary image : It is his beloved who is the laden bark,

Fayre when her breast lyke a rich laden barke,  
with precious merchandise she forth doth lay...<sup>(51)</sup>

#### *Pilgrimage :*

Pilgrimage was another reason for travel and one need only think of Chaucer's 14th century Wife of Bath to realize how well established

(48) *Troilus and Cressida*, I. i. 100 — 105.

(49) *Romeo and Juliet*, II. i. 124 — 126.

(50) Anonymous poem, first published in Thomas Weelkes' *Madrigals in 6 parts*, 1600. Reprinted in *Penguin Book of Elizabethan Verse*, edited by Edward Lucie-Smith, London, 1965.

(51) Edmund Spenser, *Amoretti*, Sonnet LXXXI.

this form of travelling had been for centuries and how many places there were on the Continent for pilgrimage. The most important one remained Jerusalem, and a pilgrimage to the Holy Land became a form of salvation to all who wished to expiate their sins. In *Richard II*, Henry Bolingbroke, after deposing Richard and becoming Henry IV, declared that he must make a voyage to the Holy Land « To wash this blood off from my guilty hand » and, the opening of *1 Henry IV*, he again refers to his intention of making a pilgrimage to the sepulchre of Christ but is prevented by events in the country<sup>(52)</sup>. The pilgrimage of love and that of the soul became common images : one can quote Romeo's « two blushing pilgrims » to Juliet's « saint »<sup>(53)</sup> for the former, and the extended metaphor in Raleigh's « The Pilgrimage » ( which was said to have been written after he had learnt of his first death sentence in 1603 ) for that of the soul.

*Colonization and Poetry :*

The beauty of certain areas of North America, the climate and the richness of the soil tempted many Englishmen to settle there, and their aims were well summed up by Raleigh — « To seeke new worlds, for golde, for prayse, for glory ».

In his *To the Virginian Voyage*, Drayton describes the Golden Age that the settlers would find there and the plentiful fowl, venison, fish, vines, trees and the three harvests « without your toil ». He calls upon those « heroic minds... That honour still pursue » to hurry aboard and let

... the merry gale  
Swell your stretch'd sail  
With vows as strong  
As the winds that blow you.

And cheerly at sea  
Success you still entice  
To get the pearl and gold  
And ours to hold  
*Virginia,*  
Earth's only paradise.

Furthermore, it would serve their country's glory to bring forth heroes in such far regions —

(52) *King Richard II*, V. vi. 49 and *1 Henry IV*, I. i. 18 ff.

(53) *Romeo and Juliet*, I. v. 95 ff.

And plant our name  
Under that star  
Not unknown unto our north<sup>(54)</sup>.

And, as the laurel, Apollo's sacred tree, grows there in plenty, they may one day see a crown on the brows of a poet there.

This pride in the language was reiterated by Samuel Daniel in a passage from *Musophilus* :

And who, in time, knows whither we may vent  
The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores  
This gain of our best glory shall be sent,  
T'enrich unknowing nations with our stores ?  
What worlds in th'yet unformed Occident  
May come refin'd with th'accents that are ours ?<sup>(55)</sup>

*Patriotism and Sea Imagery :*

This love of language, this pride in style and literature was indeed one of the most outstanding characteristics of the Elizabethan poets. It was thus a patriotic duty to cross the sea, to settle in new countries, to spread the influence of England abroad.

And sea or land hold Brittons farre and neare,  
Whatever course your matchles vertue shapes,  
Whether to Europes boundes or Asian plaines,  
To Affricks shore, or rich America,  
Downe to the shades of deepe Auernus craggas,  
Sayle on, pursue your honours to your graues :  
Heauen is sacred couering for your heads...  
To arms, to arms, to honourable arms !...  
You fight for Christ, and England's peerless queen,  
Elizabeth the wonder of the world...<sup>(56)</sup>

Naturally, the English came into conflict with other countries who were also keen on acquiring colonies and no less patriotic than themselves. Spain became England's most serious competitor in this field. Mexico and Peru were her richest sources of gold, and twice a year, ships laden with gold and silver, sailed for Spain. Questions of religion, succession to the English throne, and European politics

(54) Michael Drayton, *To the Virginian Voyage*.

(55) Samuel Daniel, *Musophilus*, quoted in *The Oxford Book of 16th Century Verse*, ed. E.K. Chambers, Oxford, 1955, pp. 534 — 5.

(56) George Peele, *A Farewell* (1589)

added to the hostility between the two countries, and as Elizabeth did not wish for open war at the time, the English sailors were tacitly encouraged to attack the Spanish ships returning with treasure from the west. Sea battles were common and Sir Francis Drake became a national hero for his seizure of the Spanish galleon outside Lima.

When referring to the kitchen-wench who wanted to marry him, Dromio of Syracuse said to Antipholus :

... she is spherical, like a globe; I could find out countries in her.

*Antipholus* : Where Spain ?

*Dromio* : Faith, I saw it not; but I felt it hot in her breath.

*Antipholus* : Where America, the Indies ?

*Dromio* : O, Sir, upon her nose, all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain; who sent whole armadoes of caracks to be ballast to her nose<sup>(57)</sup>.

Iago also uses the image of carracks, which were originally Spanish armed merchant ships, when replying to Cassio's question as to what the Moor was doing :

Iago : Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carrack :  
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

Cassio : I do not understand.

Iago : He's married<sup>(58)</sup>.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Hortensio describes Katherine to Petruchio as beautiful, young and wealthy, but that he himself would not marry her for a mine of gold because of her shrewish character. Petruchio, undaunted, answers :

Hortensio, peace ! thou know'st not gold's effect...  
For I will board her, though she chide as loud  
As thunder when the clouds in autumn crack<sup>(59)</sup>.

#### *England and Sea Imagery :*

Patriotism can also be seen in the poet's conception of his country and the references made to it. Shakespeare, again the richest source of imagery for this theme, called England, in one of his most dramatic passages,

(57) *Comedy of Errors*, III. ii. 112 — 134.

(58) *Othello*, I. ii. 50 — 52.

(59) *The Taming of the Shrew*, I. ii. 93 — 6.

... this scepter'd isle...  
This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand of war...  
This precious stone set in a silver sea...  
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege  
Of watery Neptune....(60)

Again, the sea is compared to a « water-walled bulwark » in a very vivid image made by the Archduke of Austria in *King John*, and in which England is personified as

... that pale, that white-faced shore,  
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides,  
And coops from other lands her islanders. —  
Even till that England, hedged in with the main,  
That water-walled bulwark, still secure  
And confident from foreign purposes(61).

In *Cymbeline*, a much later play, the image is repeated by the Queen when she reminds Cymbeline of his ancestors and the « natural bravery » of his isle,

... which stands  
As Neptune's park, ribbed and paled in  
With rocks unscalable and roaring waters;  
With sands that will not bear your enemies' boats  
But suck them up to the topmast(62).

In describing national adversity, Shakespeare again draws some of his imagery from the sea. The Earl of Northumberland compares England in *Richard II* to a ship in a storm.

We see the wind sit sore upon our sails,  
And yet we strike not, hut securely perish.  
*Lord Ross :*  
We see the very wrack that we must suffer;  
And unavoi ded is the danger now,  
For suffering so the causes of our wrack(63).

One of the servants in the play calls the country a « sea-walled garden, full of weeds »(64) and, to complete John of Gaunt's speech begun

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(60) *Richard II*, II. i. 46 — 63.

(61) *King John*, II. i. 23 — 28.

(62) *Cymbeline*, III. i. 18 — 22.

(63) *Richard II*, II. i. 263 — 9.

(64) *Ibid.*, III. iv. 43 — 4.

above, « England bound in with the triumphant sea,... is now bound in with shame »<sup>(65)</sup>.

*Kingship and the Sea :*

This patriotism was often expressed in the love of the people for their monarch. The Tudors, especially Henry VIII and Elizabeth, were not only considered sovereigns by the divine right of kings, but also evoked a close unity and loyalty between themselves and their people that only began to diminish in the Jacobean period. The theme of kingship is an important one in Elizabethan drama.

The conception of the king as an ocean is found in one of the earliest Shakespearan plays — *3 Henry VI*. After deposing Henry, Edward first orders his soldiers to seize the former king, then his peers to proclaim him king.

« You are the fount », he said to them,

... that makes small brooks to flow :  
Now stops the spring ; my sea shall suck them dry,  
And swell so much the higher by their ebb<sup>(66)</sup>.

This particular image reminds one of Chapman's *De Guiana* where, in speaking of Elizabeth, he declares that

Nor was there ever princely fount so long  
Pour'd forth a sea of rule with so free course  
And such ascending majesty as you<sup>(67)</sup>.

In a later play, Henry V speaks of his reckless youth as a river and compares his new regal position to an ocean.

The tide of blood in me  
Hath proudly flow'd in vanity till now :  
Now doth it turn, and ebb back to the sea,  
Where it shall mingle with the floods,  
And flow henceforth in formal majesty<sup>(68)</sup>.

The same metaphor of a flood is expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the following play, *Henry V*, again with reference to the new king :

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(65) *Ibid.*, II. i. 61 - 3.

(66) *3 Henry VI*, IV. viii. 52 - 6.

(67) George Chapman, « *De Guiana, Carmen Epicum* », *Oxford Book of 16th Century Verse*, pp. 710 ff.

(68) *2 Henry IV*, V. ii. 129 - 133.

Never came reformation in a flood,  
With such a heady current, scouring faults...<sup>(69)</sup>

When the French Ambassador mocks King Henry for his gay past, the latter quietly replies :

But tell the Dauphin, I will keep my state,  
Be like a king, and show my sail of greatness,  
When I do rouse me in my throne<sup>(70)</sup>.

The French king has later to admit to his peers that they should prepare well for war because England (i.e. Henry) is making his approaches « as fierce as waters to a sucking gulf »<sup>(71)</sup>. Again, in a subtle metaphor that is expressed obliquely, Henry V compares kingship to an ocean in his speech before Agincourt,

'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball ...  
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp  
That beats upon the high shore of this world,—<sup>(72)</sup>

Plotting against the crown was considered a heinous crime, although at times it was deemed a necessity to depose the king. Although Richard II believed that

Not all the water in the rough rude sea  
Can wash the balm from an anointed king, <sup>(73)</sup>

yet he was deposed almost immediately by Bolingbroke.

In *King John*, when the Earl of Salisbury went over to the French, his action seemed so unnatural to himself that he wished that his country could remove itself and

That Neptune's arms, who clippeth thee about,  
Would bear thee from the knowledge of thyself,  
And grapple thee unto a pagan shore<sup>(74)</sup>.

Later, when he returned to his king, he spoke of his action of going over to the French as being « rank » and the step that he had taken as an « irregular course ». Again, the king is compared to the sea :

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(69) *Henry V*, I. i. 32 — 3.

(70) *Henry V*, I. ii. 274 — 6.

(71) *Ibid.*, II. iv. 9 — 10.

(72) *Ibid.*, IV. i. 263 — 9.

(73) *Richard II*, III. ii. 54 — 55.

(74) *King John*, V. ii. 33 — 36.

And, like a hated and retired flood,  
Leaving our rankness and irregular course,  
Stoop low within those bounds we have o'erlook't,  
And calmly run on in obedience,  
Even to our ocean, to our great King John<sup>(75)</sup>.

*The Sea of Life :*

Sea-imagery was also used to express emotions of love and hatred, anger and fear and joy, or to propound a philosophy on life and death. All aspects of the sea were brought to play : its calms and storms, its rocks and shallows, currents and tides, ships, harbours, shores, and even such actions as swimming, sinking and drowning. Variety and quantity are endless.

Very often life was compared to a voyage through unknown and dangerous seas and man to the frail bark, the fragile vessel which sails through these uncertain seas and is bound in shallows and miseries.

« Life is a voyage », wrote Donne in a letter to Sir Henry Wotton, with the rocks and remoras on such a voyage being the courts and towns. « And », he advised his friend,

... in the worlds sea. do not like corke sleepe  
Upon the waters face; nor in the deepe  
Sinke like a lead without a line ; but as  
Fishes glide, leaving no print where they pass...<sup>(76)</sup>

Some years later, he wrote to his mother at the death of her daughter : « When I consider so much of your life... I find it to have been a Sea, under a continuall Tempest, where one wave hath ever overtaken another »<sup>(77)</sup>.

Turning again to Shakespeare's plays, we find Timon of Athens speaking of « life's uncertain voyage » and man as « nature's fragile vessel » that has to sustain grief, hostile strokes, aches, losses and pangs of love<sup>(78)</sup>.

In *Julius Caesar*, when Brutus speaks of the tide in the affairs

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(75) *Ibid.*, V. iv. 53 — 57.

(76) Donne, « Verse Letter to Sir Henry Wotton », pp. 152 — 4, l. 7 and ll. 53 — 6. ( c. 1597 — 8 ).

(77) *Ibid.* Letter XXIV (1616), pp. 471 — 2. In these prose letters, as in his Devotions and Sermons, Donne often used sea imagery.

(78) *Timon of Athens*, V. i. 199 — 204.

of men that leads to fortune, he declares that when this tide is not taken at the flood,

... all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat<sup>(79)</sup>.

Perhaps the saddest of all these references to life's journey is Othello's regret at having killed Desdemona :

Here is my journey's end, here is my butt.  
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail<sup>(80)</sup>.

As the play has many references to the sea, to travelling, and to storms, and as the action is set in two maritime places — Venice and Cyprus — the sea plays an important part in the background.

#### *Death :*

Man is naturally the bark that sails the sea of life, but man is frail and dies, and King John declares after being poisoned, the tackle of his heart is crackt and burn'd,

And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail,  
Are turned to one thread...<sup>(81)</sup>

The image is made more subtle with the play on the word « shrouds ».

If life is a voyage, then death is the journey's end, and man, « as a traoueller, Goes to discover countries yet vnknowne »<sup>(82)</sup>. The Elizabethan was often preoccupied with speculations on death, on man's mortality and the brevity of life :

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,  
So do our minutes hasten to their end<sup>(83)</sup>.

To Marlowe, to Shakespeare, to Shakespeare's Hamlet, death was that

... undiscover'd country, from whose bourn  
No traveller returns<sup>(84)</sup>.

Macbeth too was preoccupied with death before he murders Duncan

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(79) *Julius Caesar*, IV. iii. 217 -- 223.

(80) *Othello*, V. ii. 267 -- 8.

(81) *King John*, V. vii. 51 -- 4.

(82) Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*. Mortimer is here going to his execution for the murder of Edward II.

(83) Shakespeare, *Sonnet LX*.

(84) *Hamlet*, III. i. 78 -- 80.

and in one of his soliloquies wishes that the blow of death would be the be-all and end-all of things. For then,

... here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We'd jump the life to come<sup>(85)</sup>.

The image is here of a man standing on a narrow strip of land surrounded by sea, and of death as a leap across this sea to eternity.

Donne, as we have seen, speaks of travelling through the sea of life but it is in his religious poems that he speaks of death as the desired journey's end<sup>(86)</sup>.

In what torne ship soever I embarke,  
That ship shall be my embleme of thy Arke;  
What sea soever swallow mee, that flood  
Shall be to mee an emblem of thy blood;...  
To see God only, I goe out of sight :  
And to scape stormy dayes, I chuse  
An Everlasting night<sup>(87)</sup>.

In *The Progresse of the Soule*, he declares that although the sea may become wider and rougher, yet he will go through wave and foam,

For though through many straits, and lands I roame,  
I launch at paradise, and I saile towards home<sup>(88)</sup>.

In one of his elegies, Donne brings out another image in which « man is the world and death th'Ocean » which surrounds everything, and although God has put bounds between us and death,

Yet doth it rore, and gnaw, and still pretend,  
And breaks our bankes, when ere it takes a friend<sup>(89)</sup>.

Naturally, since sailing through the sea of life can be stormy and tempestuous, the poet often describes himself as shipwrecked and sadly treated. Fulke Greville declared that he only wrote for those « that are weather-beaten in the sea of the world »<sup>(90)</sup> while Samuel

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(85) *Macbeth*, I. vii. 6 — 7.

(86) Sermon XIX given on Easter Day, 1624 : « What a death is this life ! What a resurrection is this death ! For though this world be a sea, yet (which is most strange) our Harbour is larger than the sea; Heaven infinitely larger than this world ». Donne, op. cit., p. 607.

(87) *The Progresse of the Soule*, VI. pp. 256 — 7.

(88) « A Hymne to Christ », p. 306.

(89) « Elegie on the Lady Marckham », p. 242.

(90) Fulke Greville, quoted in *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, p. 290.

Daniel, in his sonnet on sleep, said that there was time enough during the day « to mourn the shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth »<sup>(91)</sup>. Sometimes it is fortune, sometimes it is love that is to blame for raising these storms in our life and for making the « fludds of sorrow and whole seas of wo »<sup>(92)</sup>; but sometimes it is the cruelty of princes who play with peoples' humours, wrote Fulke Greville, « as strong winds do work upon the sea, Stirring and tossing waves to war upon each other ».

But Crowns ! take heed; when humble things mount high,  
The winds oft calm before those billows lie (93).

The unkindness of princes is perhaps best expressed in a pre-Shakespearean sonnet by Wyatt in which the poet compares himself to a galley sailing through sharp winter seas between rock and rock, and that it is his enemy — « alas, That is my lord » — who « steereth with cruehness ». His sail is made of trusty fearfulness, while the rain of tears and the clouds of dark disdain have done the wearied cords great hindrance. The stars are hid that led him to this pain, « And I remain despairing of the port »<sup>(94)</sup>.

#### *Ebb and Flow :*

Fortune, like the frowns and smiles of princes, was also to be blamed for many misfortunes. Inconstant and fickle, fortune was like the tide and, as Brutus said, it is like the tide in the affairs of men which leads to fortune if taken at the flood<sup>(95)</sup>. In reply to Falstaff's remark that they were like Diana's foresters, Prince Hal agreed, « for the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea »<sup>(96)</sup>.

The tides with their ebb and flow were also used to compare one's fluctuating state of mind or the character and temperament of a man. In *Troilus and Cressida*, Agamemnon speaks of Achilles'

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(91) Samuel Daniel, *Sonnet on Sleep*, Muir, p. 64.

(92) Sir Walter Raleigh, « *The Ocean to Scinthia* », II, 140 — 41.

(93) Fulke Greville, *Chorus of the People*, the Fourth Chorus from *Alahant*, *Penguin Book of English Verse*, p. 143.

(94) Thomas Wyatt's sonnet was first printed in Tottel's *Miscellany* (1557) and is a fine example of the extended image, in which the image is developed and expanded throughout the 14 lines of the sonnet. It is here quoted from *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, p. 48.

(95) *Julius Caesar*, IV. iii. 217 — 23.

(96) *1 Henry IV*, I. i. 26 — 41.

... pettish lunes, his ebbs, his flows, as if  
The passage and whole carriage of this action  
Rode on his tide<sup>(97)</sup>.

In 2 *Henry IV*, the Earl of Northumberland, father of the rebel Hotspur, describes his own indecision of mind as the tide that is « swell'd up unto his height, That makes a still-stand, running neither way »<sup>(98)</sup>. In speaking of himself, Henry V in the same play declares that the tide of blood in him which had once proudly flowed in vanity, was now ebbing back to the sea, where it shall « flow henceforth in formal majesty »<sup>(99)</sup>. In *As You Like It*, the melancholy Jaques speaks of pride and asks if it « doth not flow as hugely as the sea Till that the weary very means do ebb ? »<sup>(100)</sup>. Othello, determined upon his course of action against his wife, compares his mind to the Pontic Sea,

Whose icy current and compulsive course  
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on  
To the Propontic and Hellespont;  
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,  
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,  
Till that a capable and wide revenge  
Swallow them up<sup>(101)</sup>.

The image of the tide that carries all before it is found in *Henry V* where the king describes the Scots army pouring into England « like the tide into a breach, With ample and brim fulness of his force »<sup>(102)</sup>, and in *Troilus and Cressida*, where Ulysses advises Achilles to follow the strait path of honour for, he adds, « emulation hath a thousand sons » that pursue and jostle you and

... if you give way,  
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,  
Like to an enter'd tide, they all rush by,  
And leave you hindmost<sup>(103)</sup>.

In contrast to this, an ebbing tide represented a loss of power, as in *Antony and Cleopatra* where Caesar refers to Pompey as the « ebb'd

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(97) *Troilus and Cressida*, II. iii. 129 -- 32.

(98) 2 *Henry IV*, II. iii. 62 — 4.

(99) *Ibid.*, V. ii. 129 — 33.

(100) *As You Like It*, II. vii. 70 — 73.

(101) *Othello*, III. iii. 451 — 9.

(102) *Henry V*, I. ii. 149 — 150.

(103) *Troilus and Cressida*, III. iii. 156 — 160

man » in the sense of the man whose power has slipped away<sup>(104)</sup>. In *The Tempest*, it refers to the man who is mentally slothful and drifts lazily with the tide. Sebastian declares that he is « standing water », an image in which he compares himself to the sea at the turn of the tide when it neither ebbs nor flows. Antonio, inciting him to murder, says,

I'll teach you how to flow.

*Sebastian* : Do so, to ebb

Hereditary sloth instructs me.

*Antonio* : ... Ebbing men, indeed,

Most often do so near the bottom run

By their own fear or sloth<sup>(105)</sup>.

*Shipwreck* :

Since man was often compared to a bark or a frail vessel, he naturally risked shipwreck or sinking. Enobarbus refers to Antony as a leaking and sinking ship<sup>(106)</sup>, and the servant in *Timon of Athens* speaks of their master's bark as leaking,

And we, poor mates, stand on the dying deck.

Hearing the surges threat : we must all part

Into this sea of air<sup>(107)</sup>.

Dangerous undertakings were also referred to as ventures on dangerous seas<sup>(108)</sup>, or as the hazarding of all the lives in one small boat<sup>(109)</sup>, while Cassius calls out in the last act of *Julius Caesar*,

Why, now, blow wind, swell billow, and swim bark.

The storm is up, and all is on the hazard<sup>(110)</sup>.

Titus Andronicus compares his dangerous position to one standing upon a rock, surrounded by a wilderness of sea and ever expecting the waves of the rising tide to swallow him<sup>(111)</sup>. The instinct for sensing approaching danger is compared in *Richard III* to the swelling of the waters before a boisterous storm<sup>(112)</sup>.

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(104) *Antony and Cleopatra*, I. iv. 42 — 3.

(105) *The Tempest*, II. i. 217 — 24.

(106) *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. xiii. 61 — 4.

(107) *Timon of Athens*, IV. ii. 17 — 22.

(108) *2 Henry IV*, I. i. 180 — 186.

(109) *1 Henry VI*, IV. vi. 32 — 3.

(110) *Julius Caesar*, V. i. 67 — 8.

(111) *Titus Andronicus*, III. i. 93 — 7.

(112) *Richard III*, II. iii. 42 — 5.

*Anger and Fear :*

Anger and madness are also compared to the tempestuous rage and roar of the sea. Romeo declares that time and his intents are savage-wild,

More fierce and more inexorable far  
Than empty tigers or the roaring sea<sup>(113)</sup>.

Richard II describes Bolingbroke and the Earl of Norfolk as « high-stomach'd... and full of ire, In rage as deaf as the sea, hasty as fire<sup>(114)</sup> ». Laertes' anger in *Hamlet* is also compared to the ocean which « eats not flats with more impetuous haste » than young Laertes overcomes the king's officers<sup>(115)</sup>. Hamlet himself is described by his mother as

Mud as the sea and wind, when both contend  
Which is the mightier...<sup>(116)</sup>

and Lear by his daughter Cordelia « As mad as the vex'd sea »<sup>(117)</sup>.

Fear, too, was like floating on a wild and violent sea, especially when this fear is based on intangible rumour —

But cruel are the times,...  
... when we hold rumour  
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear.  
But float upon a wild and violent sea  
Each way and move<sup>(118)</sup>.

The same image is applied by Henry VIII to his conscience,

Thus hulling in  
The wild sea of my conscience, I did steer  
Towards this remedy<sup>(119)</sup>.

*Tears and Joy :*

As for the comparison of tears with the sea, the images are plentifully scattered throughout the plays. As Capulet told his daughter Juliet, she was counterfeiting a bark, a sea, a wind :

(113) *Romeo and Juliet*, V. iii. 37 — 9.

(114) *Richard II*, I. i. 18 — 19.

(115) *Hamlet*, IV. v. 98 — 101.

(116) *Ibid*, IV. i. 7 — 8.

(117) *King Lear*, IV. iv. 1 — 2.

(118) *Macbeth*, IV. ii. 18 — 22.

(119) *Henry VIII*, II. iv. 197 — 9.

For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,  
Do ebb and flow with tears : the bark thy body is,  
Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs;  
Who, raging with thy tears, and they with them,  
Thy tempest-tossed body<sup>(120)</sup>.

Melancholy, too, was as fathomless as the sea,

Who ever yet could sound thy bottom ? find  
The ooze, to show what coast thy sluggish crave  
Might easiliest harbour in ? <sup>(121)</sup>

But sadness and a sea of troubles<sup>(122)</sup> could be contrasted to happiness. Aptly enough, it is Pericles who suffered so much from the sea, who bore tempests « which his mortal vessel tears »<sup>(123)</sup> and yet who rode them out, that cried out in happiness at finding his daughter,

Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me  
O'erbear the shores of my mortality,  
And drown their sweetness<sup>(124)</sup>.

#### *Love and the Sea :*

The subject that was perhaps of the greatest importance to the Elizabethan and 17th century poet — especially in the shorter lyric — was that of love. Sonnets, madrigals, and pastorals were all tuned to the same theme and every figure of speech was employed to glorify the poet's love and the unmatched beauty of his beloved.

It was only natural then that the poet should declare his love to be as vast and as deep as the ocean. Julia, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, speaks of Proteus' thousand oaths, the ocean of his tears and « instances of infinite of love »<sup>(125)</sup>. Juliet declares to Romeo that her bounty is as boundless as the sea and her love as deep :

... the more I give to thee,  
The more I have, for both are infinite<sup>(126)</sup>.

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(120) *Romeo and Juliet*, III. v. 129 — 37. Some of the other references are : « tears as salt as the Sea » : 2 *Henry VI*, 151. ii. 96; « to rain... an ocean of salt tears, » : *Ibid.*, II. 142 — 3; « seas of tears » : 3 *Henry VI* II. v. 106; « oceans of tears » : *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III. i. 224; « to weep seas » : « *Troilus and Cressida* », III. ii. 56 — 77.

(121) *Cymbeline*, IV. ii. 203 — 6.

(122) *Hamlet*, III. i. 59.

(123) *Pericles*, IV. iii. 80 — 82.

(124) *Ibid.*, V. i. 191 — 3.

(125) *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II. vii 69 — 71.

(126) *Romeo and Juliet*, II. i. 176 — 77.

This fathomless depth of love is echoed by Rosalind in her outburst to Celia :

O, ... my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love - But it cannot be sounded : my affection hath an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal.

Celia, not yet in love, replies :

Or rather, bottomless; that as fast as you pour affection in, it runs out<sup>(127)</sup>.

Orsino, with the same idea in mind, calls upon the spirit of love.

That, notwithstanding thy capacity,  
Receiveth as the sea, naught enters there,  
Of what validity and pitch so'er,  
But falls into abatement and low price<sup>(128)</sup>.

His own love, however, is « all as hungry as the sea, And can digest as much »<sup>(129)</sup>.

To Romeo at the beginning of the play, love is a smoke of lovers' sighs, a fire sparkling in their eyes and, when « vext, a sea nourisht with lovers' tears »<sup>(130)</sup>. Proteus, on the other hand, declares that although he had shunned the fire for fear of burning, he was now drowning in the sea of love for his Julia<sup>(131)</sup>. To Troilus, however, it is his hopes of love that are drowned :

O Pandarus ! I tell thee, Pandarus, --  
When I do tell thee, there my hopes lie drown'd,  
Reply not in how many fathoms deep  
They lie indrencht<sup>(132)</sup>.

The sea is a subject that is suggestive of ships and the poet often compared his love to

... a steady ship doth strongly part  
the raging waues and keeps her course aright :  
no ought her tempest doth from it depart,  
no ought for fayrer weathers false delight<sup>(133)</sup>.

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(127) *As You Like It*, IV. i. 199 — 204.

(128) *Twelfth Night*, I. i. 9 — 11.

(129) *Ibid.*, II. iv. 101 -- 2.

(130) *Romeo and Juliet*, I. i. 188 — 92.

(131) *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I. iii. 78 — 9.

(132) *Troilus and Cressida*, I. i. 48 — 51.

(133) Spenser, Sonnet LIX.

At other times it is the lover who compares himself to a ship tossed by storms and tempests and in dread of death and dangerous dismay, but

I do at length desery the happy shore,  
in which I hope ere long for to arryue;  
fayre soyle it seemes from far and fraught with store  
of all that deare and daynty is alyue.

Most happy he that can at last achyue  
the ioyous safety of so sweet a rest<sup>(134)</sup>.

Spenser also compared himself to a tree prostrated by storm, to a feeble beast killed by a tiger, and to a ship wrecked by a rock.

Fayre be ye sure, but hard and obstinate,  
As is a rocke amidst the raging floods :  
gaynst which a ship of succour desolate,  
doth suffer wreck both of her selfe and goods.

That ship, that tree, and that same beast am I,  
whom he doe wreck, doe ruine, and destroy<sup>(135)</sup>.

Henry VI also compares himself to a ship driven, by breath of Margaret's renown,

Either to suffer shipwreck, or arrive  
Where I may have fruition of her love<sup>(136)</sup>.

In a metaphysical conceit that is far more complex, Donne first describes her tears to a globe

Till thy teares mixt with mine doe overflow  
This world, by waters sent from thee, my heaven dissolved  
so.

O more than Moone,  
Draw not up seas to drowne me in thy spheare,  
Weepe me not dead, in thine armes, but forbear  
To teach the sea, what it may doe too soone:...(137)

It follows therefore that the lover finds a haven in his beloved :

Fayre losome fraught with vertues richest treasures,  
the neast of loue, the lodging of delight :

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(134) Spenser, *Sonnet LXIII*.

(135) Spenser, *Sonnet LVI*.

(136) *I Henry VI*, V, v. 8 — 9.

(137) Donne, « A Valediction of Weeping », pp 27 — 8

the bowre of blisse, the paradice of pleasure,  
the sacred harbour of that heuently spright...(138)

In Sidney's *Arcadia*, the disguised Pyrocles sings of himself as » ... tossed in my shipp of huge desyre, Thus toyled in my work of raging love », while his dreads augment « Now that I spye the haven my thoughtes reqyre ... » (139). In *The Spanish Tragedy*, Belimperia tells Horatio that her heart is like a ship at sea :

She wisheth port, where, riding all at ease,  
She may repair what stormy times have worn,  
And leaning on the shore may sing with joy...  
Possession of thy love is the only port,  
Wherein my heart, with fears and hopes long tossed,  
Each hour doth wish and long to make resort,  
There to repair the joys that it hath lost...(140)

Using the same image of a haven, Lucentio declares, after winning Bianca's hand ( in *The Taming of the Shrew* ), that he has happily arrived at last to the wished haven of his bliss(141).

*The Beloved, A Treasure Beyond Price :*

Not content to compare their beloved to a ship, the poets extended the image to that of a galley laden with treasure.

Fayre when her brest lyke a rich laden barke,  
With pretious merchandise she forth doth lay ... (142)

wrote Spenser, and Shakespeare wrote of his rival,

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,  
Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you... (143)

Galleys, however, were often attacked and taken at sea and Shakespeare uses the image in Petruchio's light-hearted determination to woo the shrew, which has been quoted above :

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(138) Spenser, Sonnet LXXVI.

(139) Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, Book 3, in *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. by William A. Ringler, Jr., ( Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1962 ), pp. 71 — 2.

(140) Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, II. ii.

(141) *The Taming of the Shrew*, V. i. 116 — 7.

(142) Spenser, Sonnet LXXXI.

(143) Shakespeare, Sonnet LXXXVI.

For I will hoard her, though she chide as loud  
As thunder when the clouds in autumn crack<sup>(144)</sup>.

Or, as Pistol gaily calls out in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* :

Clap on more sails; pursue; up with your fights;  
Give fire; she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all<sup>(145)</sup>.

Thus, the beloved was described in terms of what was most precious, most rare, and thus, too, we come full circle to our starting-point. « Her sweat drops bright, white, round, like pearls of Ind », wrote Fairfax of the enchantress of Rinaldo; « her tears a sea of melting pearl », said Proteus; « Her bed is India », said Troilus, « there she lies a pearl »; and Othello said that his hand, like that of the base Indian, « three a pearl away Richer than all his tribe »<sup>(146)</sup>.

It is Donne in particular whose poetry is rich in imagery taken from the treasures of the New World. In one of his elegies, he called his mistress,

O my America! my new-found-land,  
My kingdome, safest when with one man man'd,  
My Myne of precious stones, My Emperie,  
How blest am I in this discovering thee<sup>(147)</sup>.

« Looke », said he in one of his love lyrics, « and to morrow late, tell mee ».

Whether both the' India's of spice and Myne  
Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with mee<sup>(148)</sup>.

The same comparison but no longer of a beloved, can be found in a letter to Lady Bedford written on the death of her friend. The friend's flesh, Donne declared, rests in the earth and her virtues return to dwell in Lady Bedford and,

As perfect motions are all circular,  
So they to you, their sea, whence lease streames are.  
Shee was all spices, you all metall; so  
In you two wee did both rich Indies know...<sup>(149)</sup>

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(144) *The Taming of the Shrew*, I. ii. 95 — 6.

(145) *Merry Wives of Windsor*, II. ii. 134 — 6.

(146) Edward Fairfax, *Godfrey de Bulloigne* in *Penguin Book of Elizabethan Verse*, p. 118; *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III. i. 224; the next two quotations have been referred to before.

(147) Donne, « Elegie XIX : To His Mistres Going to Bed », pp. 96 — 7.

(148) Donne, « The Sunne Rising », p. 6.

(149) Donne, « To the Lady Bedford », pp. 190 — 191.

In his *Anatomic of the World* and the *Anniversaries*, which Sir Henry Grierson considers as marking a transition in Donne's development from poet to divine<sup>(150)</sup>, he refers to the young girl, Elizabeth Drury, who has just died, as

... she whose rich eyes, and breast  
Guilt the West Indies, and perfum'd the East;  
Whose having breath'd in this world, did bestow  
Spice on these Isles, and had them still smell so  
And that rich Indie which doth gold interre,  
Is but as single money, coynd from her...<sup>(151)</sup>

On the second anniversary of her death, he again laments her in whose body

The Westerne treasure, Easterne spicerie,  
Europe, and Afrique, and the unknowne rest  
Were easily found, or what in them was best<sup>(152)</sup>.

\* \* \*

Coming full circle, we return to the image itself and its use and effect. In its simplest form, the image is used by the poet in the form of a simile or metaphor, as a word or phrase placed within a sentence or a line or two of verse. The image, however, has also been used as an extended conceit or metaphor in which the comparison is extended to cover almost every aspect of an emotion or an idea. This was especially the case in the Elizabethan sonnet for, within its fourteen lines, the sonneteer could develop one theme, one comparison, without making his poem too lengthy and going over the bounds of good taste, and yet giving his work organic unity. We have already seen this extended image in the Wyatt sonnet and we have it again in the Spenser sonnet in which he compares himself to a ship sailing through the ocean, through perils placed around him. His guiding light, his lodestar, Helice, has been dimmed by clouds and he will continue to wander « careful comfortlesse, in secret sorrow and sad pensiuenesse » until she shines on him again « with louely light to cleare my cloudy grief »<sup>(153)</sup>.

The following dizaine is taken from Sidney's *Arcadia* in which the poet uses an extended metaphor of the sea :

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(150) *Ibid.*, p. 191.

(151) *Ibid.*, *The Anatomic of the World*, p. 203.

(152) *Ibid.*, *Of the Progresse of the Soule, The Second Anniversary*, p. 220.

(153) Spenser, Sonnet XXXIII.

So close unto my selfe wrackes doo lie,  
Both cause, effect, beginning, and the ende  
Are all in me; what helpe, then, can I trie?  
My ship, my selfe, whose course to loue doth bend,  
Sore beaten doth her mast of comfort spend;  
Her cable, Reason, breakes from anchor. Hope;  
Fancie, her tackling, torne away doth flie;  
Ruine, the wind, hath blowne her from her scope.  
Brusèd with waues of cares, but broken is  
On rocke, Despaire. the buriall of my blisse<sup>(154)</sup>.

This is one of a series of dizaines written as a dialogue, each dizaine using a different metaphor. At times, therefore, these extended images are nothing more than a verbal tour de force, « three-piled hyperboles », « spruce affectation », an exercise in versifying that any Elizabethan poet worth his salt could turn out without effort.

In dramatic verse, however, the image has greater importance than in the shorter lyric, for « each image, each metaphor, forms a link in the complicated chain of the drama »<sup>(155)</sup>. It is no longer a mirror of the poet's individual outlook on things, but — as in Shakespeare's case — his « choice of an image or simile at a given moment in the play is determined far more by the dramatic issues arising out of that moment than by his individual sympathies »<sup>(156)</sup>.

To follow Prof. Clemen further.

Each tragedy has its own unmistakable individual nature, its own colours; ... its own diction ... It is amazing to observe what part the imagery plays in helping to make the dramatic texture coherent as well as intricate. The same motif which was touched upon in the first act through the imagery, is taken up again in the second; it undergoes a fuller execution and expansion, perhaps, in the third or fourth. As Professor Spurgeon has demonstrated, these leitmotifs of the imagery run through the play like a brightly coloured thread ... And the imagery of the tragedy plays an important part, not only in creating a dramatic unity of the atmosphere, but also in binding the separate

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(154) Sidney, *The Fourth Elogues in The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, p. 114.

(155) Wolfgang H. Clemen, *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery*, London, 1969, p. 7.

(156) *Ibid.*, p. 13.

elements of the play together into a real organic structure<sup>(157)</sup>.

As an example of the effect of imagery, Prof. Clemen gives a very subtle analysis of the characters of Othello and Iago and shows how their language and imagery bring out all the characteristic differences between the two men. Iago looks at the sea as a professional man, using maritime technical terms :

In Othello's imagination, on the other hand, the sea lives in its whole breadth and adventurous power. In his language it appears as a force of nature and as scenery. Again and again it occurs to Othello for the expression of his inner emotions through vivid, connected images<sup>(158)</sup>.

A final word must be repeated : the image may embellish a line of verse, or reflect a poet's identity, or, as in Shakespeare, may go beyond the poet to represent character or *leitmotif* — yet still, the very choice of that image mirrors the age in which it was written. The richness of sea imagery in that period can only be an indication of the impassioned interest of the people in travel and the sea.

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(157) *Ibid.*, pp. 104 — 105.

(158) *Ibid.*, p. 126.

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