

Impressum and Imprimatur

Klaus Bung: Burnt Offerings

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e: klaus.bung@rochdalewriters.org.uk

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Klaus Bung: Burnt Offerings

Deus, in adiutorium meum intende.
Domine, ad adiuvandum me festina.
(1)



Miguel Serveto of Tudela
thought too deeply about
Baptism and the Holy Trinity.
He corresponded with Calvin.

Come, Mephastophilis, let vs dispute again!

(2)

Calvin issued a fatwa against him:
"You just dare to come and see me in Geneva,
and I promise you will not leave my bloody town alive."
Serveto did not believe his fellow searcher for truth.

But it befell that some of his letters to Calvin
fell into the hands of the

Come, Mephastophilis, let vs dispute again!

Inquisitor General at Lyon.

Sur le pont de Lyon
on y mente, on y mente,
sur le pont de Lyon
on y mente tous en rond.

(3)

cheerfully chanted the innocent children.

Miguel was arrested, his books
were confiscated, during his trial
he wisely escaped.
He was found guilty
in his absence and burnt in effigy
by the Catholics.

"A pen for Serveto, a penny for Miguel!",
cheerfully called the innocent children.

Thinking he would be safe in Geneva,
Come, Mephistophilis, let vs dispute again!
because effigies were allowed neither there nor in Mecca,
and therefore couldn't be burnt
(they insist on the Real Thing Coca Cola) (4)
and considering himself
a pen-friend of Johnny Calvin, (5)
he made his way to Geneva
looking forward, in vain,
for the Red Cross to protect him. (6)
He was a visionary, far ahead of his time.

The Calvinists tried (and succeeded)
him for heresy
Come, Mephistophilis, let vs dispute again!
and found him guilty,
because he had
cleverly concocted a doctrine
about the Spirit of God
so good that it upset
all the parties, Papists
and Calvies alike.
Therefore it must
have been the truth,
or very close to it.

If he had gone
from Geneva to Constance, (7)
he would have been burnt by the Pope there
together with Hus.

Come, Mephistophilis, let vs dispute again!
It never occurred to him
to go to Ulster and get himself shot (8)
by the two parties at once.
Come, Mephistophilis, let vs dispute again!

They all did it and do it or would
do it if only they could:
Catholics and Protesters: I think
they deserve one another, they stink
each in his own peculiar way.
While most of Serveto's colleagues
were friends with one of these
parties and were burnt by the other, if only
in effigy,
Serveto managed
to needle them both
The hunted heretic was
on the run for much of his life,
had only his pen for to prick with,
and he lacked the two chairs

that are commonly needed
for sitting between them.

Come, Mephastophilis, let vs dispute again!

In Geneva the ecological movement
had taken root. Oecolampadius,
or Johann Huszgen or Home as he is homely known,
Patron of Friends of the Earth,
and balding chauvinist Hansgen Calvin (9)
wanted his scalp, his head,
not his ashes,
to reduce global warming, they said,
which at the time was progressing
at an alarming pace, Joan of Arc (10)
had lit the spark,
what with bitches
burnt as witches,
here Jan Hus (7)
there Spanish Jews. (11)
Illuminations turned Europe
into a Blackpool, flames flaring,
bin of ashes, black pool of blood,
buggers burning like candles (12)
to honour this threefool'd schizo-
phrenic man-
made God.
(13)

Would one had used the waters
of the Jordan,
of all baptismal fonts and all rivers
to put out these blasphemous fires!

On 27 October
in the Year of the Lord 1553,
the hunted Serveto, (14)
man of ancient Tudela, city of Benjamin,
of Juda Ha-Levi and wise Ibn Ezra, (15)
servants of God all,
was burned alive. I detest

this cruel mode of punishment. It depletes
our forests
and the stench of burning flesh
Auschwitz-like
pollutes the atmosphere.
The crucifix was
a much more civilised mode
of execution - only two
pieces of timber, that's just one tree
per victim. The cross can even be
recycled. Just imagine
how many more thinkers
can be executed that way

at less cost
to the environment and
to the pious tax-payer!

But, after St Jesus, St Peter
and kilted St Andrew, of course,
nobody was worthy
of being killed in that manner. (16)
Only sometimes
Yugoslavian women these days
are nailed to the cross of the bed.

If only we could rid ourselves of
our addiction to that mad phrenic construct

The Truth,

that Moloch, King of Shame.
(17) (18) (19)

Would that we could
like Herod the King kill all prophets
before they can train disciples!

And AIDS on both their houses!
(20)

Deus, in adiutorium meum intende.
Come, Mephistophilis, let vs dispute again!
Domine, ad adiuvandum me festina.

^NOTES

Some of the following notes are intended to give helpful background knowledge to all readers. Others are in response to enquiries from readers. And others again are intended only for printers, and are marked accordingly.

1. Make haste, o God, to deliver me: make haste to aid me, o Lord. (Psalm 70:1 [King James] = Psalm 69:1 Vulgata). To be prayed by Benedictine Monks at the beginning of services and at the beginning of any monastic enterprise.
2. Christopher Marlowe: Dr Faustus, 641
3. On the bridge of Lyon people are lying all over the place. A parody of the song
"Sur le pont
d'Avignon"
4. "the Real Thing Coca Cola": a 1969 advertising slogan
5. Theologian Jean Calvin was in charge at Geneva.
6. The headquarters of the Red Cross are in Geneva. An anachronism, "far ahead of his time".
7. Moravian reformer Jan Hus (1369-1415) was burnt at the stake during the Council of Constance (1414-1418), an assembly of the Roman Catholic Church. So the Calvinists burnt dissenters in Geneva, the Roman Catholics burnt them in Constance.
8. Ulster (Northern Ireland) was the scene of sectarian violence (Roman Catholics vs Protestants) between 1960 and 1998: "The Troubles"
9. A string of puns on the popular or Latinised names of some of the protagonists:
Johannes Oecolampadius (1482-1531) was a German reformer with views close to those of Jean Calvin.

His German name was Hussgen (little house). Greek "oikos" means house and home, hence "ecology", the science dealing with the environment of our homes. The name of Jan Hus can also be read as "John House". And several people under discussion here are called John = German Hans (or Hansgen = little Hans) = French Jean = Czech Jan. Calvin's surname means "bald". That's why he needed Serveto's scalp. Latin calvus, calvinus = bald; French chauve = bald. Calvin, Chauvin and Cauvin were Latin and French variants of the same name.

10. Joan of Arc (1412-1431) was burnt at the stake.
11. Persecution of Jews in Spain after the Christian rulers were fully in charge again 1492 and tried to Christianise the whole country.
12. "Buggers" (bougres, Bulgarians) were members of a Christian sect which originated in Bulgaria. Its members were also known as "Cathars" (the Pure Ones) or "Albigensians", citizens of the city of Albi, where this sect was particularly well established.

Their theology wanted to prevent procreation of mankind and therefore recommended homosexuality as a "stop gap", since total abstinence seemed too much to demand from their followers. Because of the Bulgarian origins of this recommendation, homosexual acts became known as buggary (Bulgary) and in due course became a term of abuse.

Similarly St Paul disapproved of procreation, felt that prohibiting sexual intercourse altogether would be demanding too much from his followers and therefore recommended that, if sex could not be totally avoided, it should be confined to the context of marriage. "1 It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." 2 But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. (Bible, New Testament, 1 Corinthians 7:1-2)

A campaign against the Albigensians was conducted from 1209 to 1229. "At least 200,000 to at most 1,000,000 [Cathars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albigensian_Crusade) were killed. (Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albigensian_Crusade)

13. Note for printer: The following line-breaks are intentional:

to honour this threefool'd schizo- phrenic man- made God.

The mid-sentence paragraph break, without punctuation marks, in the following quote is deliberate:

was burned alive. I detest this cruel mode of punishment. It depletes

14. Serveto was burnt at the stake on 27 October 1553. He was born in the town of Tudela in Northern Spain.

15. Other famous sons of Tudela were

Abraham ibn Ezra, 1089-1164, Jewish philosopher and theologian, and

Juda Ha-Levi, 1075-1141, Jewish poet and philosopher

16. Tradition says that Peter was crucified head downwards since he did not consider himself worthy to die in exactly the same manner as Jesus:.

"Origen (184-253) in his Commentary on the Book of Genesis III, quoted by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History (III, 1), said: "Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downwards, as he himself had desired to suffer." The Cross of St. Peter inverts the Latin cross based on this refusal, and on his claim of being unworthy to die the same way as his Saviour." Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter

Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross:

"... yet a tradition developed that Andrew had been crucified on a crux decussata (X-shaped cross, or "saltire"), now commonly known as a "Saint Andrew's Cross" – supposedly at his own request, as he deemed himself unworthy to be crucified on the same type of cross as Jesus had been." (Source: Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_the_Apostle)

17. Note for printer: The words 'The Truth' have been deliberately centered and should stay in this position. This is NOT a paragraph mark.
18. Leviticus 18:21: And you shall not let any of your children be sacrificed in the fire to Moloch.
19. A reader wrote: I was confused by the line breaks for 'schizo - phrenic man - made god' because they made the flow jump and it was harder to read and interpret the meaning...I had to read that part twice...

Klaus Bung replied:

re line breaks there; re having to read repeatedly. that was very much the purpose of the breaks; it produced ambiguities and emphasised a link with another part of the poem (near the end, where "phrenic" recurs). schizo = split; phrenic = brainy; schizo-phrenic = split brain;

schizophrenic God = Trinity, one God in three Persons (Serveto had offended in the area of dogma); I implicitly make the trinity a mental disease rather than a lovable or cosy divine mystery.

phrenic man: brainy man, and too proud of his brains and

his absurd inventions... hence all the slaughter of heretics (I also attacked the creation of "Truth" in the poem about My Worst Phobia, now called "His second week in Office".) "phrenic" occurs twice in the poem and I draw attention to the importance of this word by putting it here to the beginning of a line in an unnatural (uncosy, startling) way.

schizo = split; therefore, as in concrete poetry, the line is split and the word is split.

man-made God. I am asserting that God is not a Given that can be studied, and yet we now argue about His nature as if he were, whether he is like this, or like that (the debate in which Serveto participated and for which he died). But that we have created this god in our brains and now we argue about him as if he were outside our brains, an objective entity. You get this meaning, rightly, when you read it as if there were no line-break.

man /new line/, made God. This is the inverse to God who has become man (for instance in Jesus). I assert that (a) "Man made God" and (b) in another meaning of the same words "that Man has been made into God", i.e. God has been created in the likeness of man, not the other way round, as the bible says. If God appears so absurd, it is because we are so absurd, our thinking is so absurd, and yet we are so proud of it that we dare kill people in the phrenic (pun with "frenetic? also intended at end of poem) arrogant belief that we are so clever. I AM GLAD YOU PICKED OUT THESE LINES. They are startling and the philosophical essence of the poem is contained in them.

20. Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet, 3.1:102. These lines tie up the whole poem by bringing in the most popular case of useless quarrel between two parties equally at fault, and we curse them equally. It also takes up the theme of fire which now goes from the title "Burnt Offering" right through the poem, since the Mont Argues and Carp Ulets were both burning together in Purgatory (Dante, Divine Comedy, Purgatorio, 6:106-108: "Vieni a veder Montecchi e Cappelletti ... color già tristi, e questi con sospetti" = Come and see the Montagues and Capulets, the ones with depressed looks on their faces and the others sighing in anguish), while the monks (or the victims) pray in divine Latin for divine aid and yet allow their concentration to be distracted by their love for diabolical disputes. The poem peters out with a cry or chant wafting up on the clouds of burning incense.

^TRINITY FOR DUMMIES

A mother asked: "My seven-year-old son is attending classes to prepare him for Holy Communion. He is pestering me with difficult questions. He is an intelligent little fellow who cannot easily be fobbed off with traditional routine explanations. So: What is meant by "Christians believe in one God in three persons, the Holy Trinity"?

Answer:

The word person (Latin "persona") comes from Greek "πρόσωπον" (prósōpon), where it refers to the masks worn by characters on the stage to show what type they are.

Trinity means "tri-unity", the unity (one God) appearing in three (tri-) roles.

This one God appears in three roles, wearing three masks (persons) depending on what He/She is doing:

The mask (person) of a Father as the Creator,

the mask (person) of a Son as the Saviour,

the mask (person) of Holy Ghost as the Spirit who enlightens us and lives in all of us.

One God with three masks
= one God in three persons
= the Holy Trinity

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