

Infrastructures

Gods have the wrong attendants. Why should Mars
Not have the Muses? No one ever called
The Iliad a hymn to peace, or said
Art has no wars. Miscast, Eros attends,
Who most of all should have attendants, first
Among them Mammon. Most of scholarship
Not being in the least original,
The owl whose tenure is beside the ear
Of Wisdom any parrot could contest.
And Ceres as a deity of grain
Has ram's horn as a cornucopia,
A nod to mutton. Javelin, the flash
Upraised in Zeus's hand is not more apt
In signifying than the triple threat
Of Neptune, or than Hades' two-prong fork.
A trident gleams in firelight; bidens shine
In water. Each could substitute for each
(As Roman names can substitute for Greek).
And does the Father serve the Holy Ghost,
Or with the Holy Ghost attend the Son?
Jehovah's service from the earliest
Has held out for the nothing less than all,
Defaulting to the priestesses of Baal.
Mohammed, prophet of, not son of God,
Is outside these assessments. Buddha's tree
Was in Siddhartha's servitude as shade.
A lifeless canopy would serve as well.
One god, of course, will never lack for shade.
Has he a name? Yes, many, but is one:
More uniform than any other god .
And all of us, in our variety
So inappropriate as hangers-on,
End facing eastward, supine at his feet.