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David L. Deratzian
SUNY Potsdam

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THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF NAMES IN
THE DAMNATION OF THERON WARE

David L. Deratzian
State University of New York at Potsdam

Harold Frederic's The Damnation of Theron Ware is a novel that treats a Methodist minister's loss of innocence and faith when he is placed in a community that is unfriendly to "enlightened thought." Because this is a novel that considers "spiritual people," it is especially significant to note any and all hints of religiosity that Frederic gives to the reader. The names in this novel are of particular interest. The importance of naming is emphasized in Chapter Seven of the Damnation, by Dr. Ledsmar, in his discourse on Biblical names. He tells us: "Practically all of the names in the Genesis chronologies are what we call eponyms."

The Oxford English Dictionary defines an eponym as a word, "given as a name, or one who gives, or is supposed to give, his name to a people, place, or institution." Hence, as Dr. Ledsmar tells us, the generations of Heber referred to in the Bible are what we call Hebrews, and the generations of Asshur, the Assyrians. Just as in the Bible, wherein a person's name is the identity of a whole people, the names used in The Damnation serve to identify the type of character that is being presented. Drawing heavily on names derived from Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, Frederic
gives his characters names that are rich in religious implication, and that give the reader insight into what the character will be like, and how other characters will relate with him.

What follows is an examination of both surnames and given names, beginning with the root of the name and the relationship of that meaning to the nature of the character. Following this is a discussion on how characters relate to each other, and why. One will notice particular emphasis on passages from the Greek New Testament, and the Old Testament in Hebrew. They are included to clarify the meaning of names within the context of the foundation of the Christian faith. This has great bearing on understanding the characters since all of them are involved in the religious affairs of the community, and identify themselves as Christian people.

There are four classes of names that appear in the novel that will be discussed herein; they are: place names, the major characters' names, the names of the lesser characters, and names that change. Where exact translation from another language was not possible, such as in the case of an legendary figure, a brief history of the namesake has been included to show
the significance of the name to the novel.

I

Two towns are seen in the novel. The first is the town of Tecumseh, where the Nedahma Conference in Chapter One is held. American history tells us of an Indian chief named Tecumseh, who in the early nineteenth century sought to form a confederation of Indian tribes to combat the white encroachment. He was most successful after he joined forces with his brother, Tenswatawa, in 1805. Tenswatawa, known as "The Prophet," would preach at Indian religious revivals, and Tecumseh would use these opportunities to further the cause of his Indian alliance. The brothers travelled together, staging these combined-purpose meetings, and were beginning to have some successes when the forces of The Prophet were defeated by General William Henry Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811.²

The story of Tecumseh the Indian Chief fits neatly into the story of the town of Tecumseh. We are told that Tecumseh is a traditionally Methodist town, with a very broad view of Methodism. They had become
"the smartest and most important congregation within the limits of the Nedahma Conference." As of the beginning of the novel, the influence in the town was shifting toward Presbyterianism. At the Conference, the Methodists were seeking the best (or most entertaining) preacher that was available. They hoped that such an orator would draw the masses back to the Methodist church, and win back control from the "fierce Presbyterian competition." Thus, the people of The Tecumseh Methodist Episcopal Church wanted to use a religious "big-gun" to win their war against the Presbyterians, just as Tecumseh the Indian used a religious leader to win his.

The second town, one that we see more in depth, is Octavius, which translates from Latin as "eighth-born." The number "eight" has a strange significance when it is viewed with respect to North American mythology. Indian tribes would conduct eight-day-long religious celebrations, four times per year. This corresponds exactly to the length and frequency of the Quarterly Conference held by the Methodists (see The Damnation, Chapters 13-17). It is indeed ironic that a group that prides itself on its Christian spirit would have a feast-week so similar to the celebrations
of the supposedly heathen Indians. Both occasions included charismatic meetings, actual feasting, and other activities that were very similar. Both groups saw these weeks as the best way to honor their deities. Thus, this town also has a name that is deeply rooted in the Native American history.

This town is so fervent in their beliefs that they exclude non-Methodists from their lives completely. Octavius is also the family name of a line of Roman emperors and military leaders. It is fitting that a people such as these Methodists finds itself in a town called Octavius. Their sense of religious discipline and rigor of faith (typified by the incident over Alice’s bonnet of flowers) does their namesake justice.

We have now seen two towns that have been given names that convey the religious attitudes of their respective populations, and the appropriateness of these names to towns in America. The names of the people who are found in the latter town will now be examined.
The central character in this novel is obviously Theron Ware. Theron is presented as, "a tall, slender young man with...thoughtful eyes...the American Senatorial type." We find that he is an exceptional orator and a respected preacher. His sermons are both inspired and interesting. It would seem that his devotion to his calling and his faith is absolute. He has but one flaw: an over-zealous desire to please those around him. When he was in a congregation that wanted inspired and progressive sermons, he was eloquent and insightful. As soon as he enters Octavius he yields all that he has, including the elevated nature of this sermons. When he meets Celia, he finds that he can again have elevated pursuits, but his adherence to her studies takes him far beyond his bounds, and eventually leaves him with no faith at all.

The name Theron has its roots in two Greek words: Θέρων meaning "a beast," and Θέρος which means "summer." These words take on new meaning when looked at in the context of the New Testament. Titus 1:12 contains this passage:
Cretans are always liars, wild beasts.

Thus, θηριον comes to mean "a person of beastly nature." Theron certainly fits that description by the end of the novel. He throws off his clerical robes to be a hedonist with Celia, a "heretic" with Father Forbes, and a scientist with Dr. Ledsmar. With all of them he is a gossip, and they finally recognize him for what he is. Celia tells him in Chapter Thirty that they find him to be a bore. He has given in to egotism, pride, and even sinks into jealousy. Beastly is thus a mild adjective.

The meaning of θηριον can also be found in a Biblical context. Luke 21:30 says:

\[ \text{When you see these things you know that near is summer;} \]

\[ \text{... (likewise) you know that near is the kingdom of God.} \]

In this case, the coming of summer is equated with the
coming of the judgement. Thus the Greek word for "summer" becomes the expression of heavenly bliss. Indeed, this is how the Arndt Lexicon defines $\Omega \epsilon \rho \nu$. It should follow that to call a "man of God" by a name that means "heavenly bliss" is to reinforce his calling and devotion. We shall soon see that exactly the opposite is true of the name, by adding the surname and its meaning.

The surname Ware also comes from a Greek word; it is the verb $\lambda \varepsilon \rho \omega$, which in the third person, imperfect, indicative, active is spelled $\hat{i} \rho e$ (pronounced /hwer/). This verb has two applicable meanings: 1) "He looks up;" and 2) "he takes away." If the verb is used in conjunction with the nouns above, two very interesting sentences are formed:

1) A beast looks up; and
2) He removes heavenly bliss. (The accusative form of $\Omega \epsilon \rho \nu$ - $\Omega \epsilon \rho \nu$ makes the noun the direct object of the sentence.)

The first sentence implies that Theron Ware was deceiving himself by trying to be a clergyman— that he did not really belong. It could also mean that he was trying to advance himself into areas that he could not comprehend or know how to deal with (as with Celia, Dr.
Ledsmar, and Fr. Forbes). The second sentence is a bit more obvious in its meaning. Simply stated, in trying to advance one's knowledge of life, one necessarily gives up the comfort that fundamentalist religion provides. The more one knows, the more contradictions and inconsistencies one finds in those sects. It is interesting that in Chapter Seven, Theron makes this statement, that at the time he believes to be true, "The more we know, the nearer we shall approach the Throne." Both Ledsmar and Forbes are stunned by the statement. If the same statement were made to Theron at the end of the novel, he too would have seen the inherent error. In Chapter Seven though, he still retains a certain amount of naiveté which does not permit the recognition of the flaw. It does not permit him to see that his "heavenly bliss" is in danger.

Another meaning of Ware, from the early Anglo-Britannic language, comes very close to making the title into a pun. Ware is given to mean, "one near a dam." Hence, "The Damnation of Theron who is near a 'dam'." Putting aside the thought of the pun, the word would refer to a large, pent-up body. That large body could be knowledge of the mundane that either a beast is near, or that heavenly bliss is on the border of.
Either way, the implication of knowledge's effect on religiosity is reinforced.

The character that most influences Theron is Celia Madden. She is a young woman who has been educated completely without guidance or restraint. What she learns she applies to life in her own way. She has what we now call a "liberal education," and is thus well versed in art, music, and literature, as well as the social sciences. She values those things that she considers beautiful and strong, and therefore considers her lifestyle to be in the "Hellenic" tradition. Her family has no understanding of her, and therefore leaves her to live out her own existence.

The name Celia has two roots: one from the Latin name "Cecilia," and the other from the Hebrew word (/tse+lly+a/). Cecilia was a woman who lived in the Sixth Century A.D., and was martyred under Marcus Aurelius for converting her betrothed to Christianity. Obviously, if this is the root of Celia's name, then its use in the novel is ironic. Although she does convert her subjects to her "religion," it is certainly not the Christian religion. Hers is the hedonistic religion, not in the sense of licentiousness, but in
terms of sensory experience.

The Hebrew root, which means "roasting," presents a slightly different picture, one more subject to interpretation. In this case, the Biblical reference is the best way to apply the word to the name in the novel. In Isaiah 44:15-17, the passage reads, "... he maketh a god... a graven image, and he falleth down thereto. ... He eateth flesh, he roasteth roast and is satisfied... he prayeth unto it and saith deliver me for thou art my god." What is being discussed here is the worship of physical sensations as a god, over the worship of the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition. This is exactly what Celia does. Moreover, she influences Theron to give up his god for hers. The two roots therefore agree in interpretation of the name, in terms of the import of sensuality.

The name Madden comes from the Gaelic word maidin which means "in the manner of." Thus, her surname emphasizes that she is a creature in the manner of Cecilia (in that she converts those around her to her religion), or in the manner of roasting (in that she worships the sensual). This meaning of Madden as a comparative will be more useful when considering the
names of the rest of her family below.

Candace Soulsby is another influential character, even though her appearance in the novel is limited to five chapters. The way that she sets Theron up in the second part influences the way that he finally ends up. Candace Soulsby began her career in the lower depths of the entertainment industry, as a chorus girl and later as a medium and fortune-teller. Her experience in the art of influencing the will of others was finely honed in these occupations. Her experience with the church began as a passing fancy, initially for the spectacle involved. She later found that the whole "business" could be made a little more professional, and did so. Her given name, Candace, comes from the Latin and means "glowing." This is vitally descriptive of her and will be discussed further below.

The name Soulsby is the most important element of the name. By breaking it down into "souls," and "-by," inferences may be drawn as to the meanings of the whole name. "Souls" comes from the Greek word ψυχή (psuke) meaning life in the spiritual sense. It is from this word that we get "psychology" (ψυχή+λογία). It can be seen that psychology is an important element
in Candace's personality. She uses psychology daily to accomplish her objectives. As mentioned above, she has a great manipulative ability.

The suffix "-by" has four relevant meanings: 1) descriptive of a person (so Soulsby=soulful); 2) maker of; 3) wrested from the right; and 4) instrumentality (lead by). When taken in sum with "soul," the first meaning is self-explanatory. The second definition suggests that by inducing people to contribute to the church, she is providing them with souls. In other words, by supporting the church, donors are made to feel more sanctified. The third meaning is descriptive of her. She is literally a "soul wrested from the right." She uses religion for monetary purposes, to make her living, without any real belief within her. She says that she is convicted every time, but the reader must assume that the conviction is just part of the show. In Mark 8:36, the following passage appears:

Το γερένευ άνθρωπον καθό τον κόσμον
For what if a man gains the world

καὶ κραθήσεται τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ;
whole but loses his life (soul).
Obviously this is what Sister Soulsby does. She uses her religiosity to gain material goods while endangering the fate of her soul. The fourth definition of "-by" refers back to the second, having to do with her hold over the congregations. She uses her glowing personality to impart the message, "To give will save your soul; to withhold is the sin of greed." Thus, she "leads by" the soul.

We have now seen how the names of three of the major characters are related to their names. Theron is a basically human character until he begins to have doubts about his faith. He then takes on a beastly persona, having lost his sense of heavenly reward. Celia is the agent of his loss; she leads him from the path (Methodist, incidentally, comes from two Greek words \( \text{μεθ}{\text{δ}}\text{όσ} \) to become \( \text{μέθοδος} \) which means "with the path"). Candace Soulsby is the character that tries to lead him back onto the path through her manipulations, but does not completely succeed.

III

Having now discussed the major characters, we come to four lesser characters: Michael Madden and the
three trustees, whose names are of some interest. As previously mentioned, Madden (Gaelic maidin) means "in the manner of." Michael has two roots: one from Gaelic, and one from Hebrew. The Gaelic provides more of a physical description of the character, and the Hebrew a more spiritual description. "Michael" in Gaelic means "like a tall tower." We are indeed told in the novel that Michael Madden is plain and tall, and that he is a worker.

The Hebrew, $\text{m} \text{e} \text{cayel}$ means "liken unto the lord." When the name is broken down to its roots and $\text{n}$, the meaning of the name with respect to the character becomes more appropriate. $\text{m} \text{e} \text{cayel}$ means "to protest," which when taken from the Old Testament context takes on the meaning, "to solemnly proclaim." $\text{m}$ means God. Hence, Michael Madden means "in the manner of one who solemnly proclaims God." Nothing could be more true. In Chapter Nine, we are told that Michael takes his "religious duties with great zeal," and that he is even President of Sodality, a lay, charitable organization within the Catholic Church. This name literally fits its possessor.

The three trustees also have literally appropriate names. Loren Pierce is an old man who runs
a quarry. He is very wealthy and equally unpleasant. We are told that his face does not know how to smile and he is reputed to be very close with his money. The name Loren has a very interesting lineage. From the French, it is l'orennier, a harness maker. The French took the word from the Greek word λόρος, "a thong," an object made of leather just as a harness is. The Greek word comes from the Latin lorum, "a scourge." Thus the word meaning "a harness maker" has its basis in a word meaning "a scourge." The surname Pierce can be traced through the same languages, from French to the Greek word πλορος, meaning "rich." Thus, "Loren Pierce" means a "rich scourge," and that he is.

"Erastus Winch" requires a bit more interpretation. We know that he is considered to be a good person all-around, except by those who have done business with him. He is a persuasive speaker, but one who lacks commitment in his language and is "deceptively hearty." The name "Erastus" comes from the Hebrew ירָּשׁ (arats), which means "to oppress," or "to be feared," and יְרָשׁ (tus), meaning "haste." Two passages from the Old Testament make the combination clear. It is significant to note that these passages mark the sole usage of these words in the Old
Testament. That would seem to imply that there was little ambiguity as to the meaning of these words in the minds of the Biblical writers. The passages are found in Job 9:26 and Psalms 10:19. The former says, "As the eagle hastens to his prey," and the latter, "To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the men of the earth may no more oppress." Erastus is just the sort of oppressor that hastens to a prey. He is said to be even closer with money than Pierce. "Winch," coming from the German Winde, means the same in German as it does in English: to wrest from. He literally does wrest payment from his oppressed prey (debtors).

The third member of this trinity is Levi Gorringe. He is the most unreligious of the three. He once met a girl in church, fell in love with her, and then lost her. He continues to attend church in the hope that his loss will someday be regained. "Levi" from the Hebrew יְהִי (levi), means "joined." The Levi in the Old Testament was the father of the generations of holy men, supposedly into modernity. The Levites thus joined the church together in one family of leadership.

"Gorringe" comes from two German words: Gar, meaning "through," in the sense of agency, and ringe, the plural of ring, meaning rings. Thus we have the
full name "Levi Gorringe," which means "joined through rings." Considering his reasons for staying in the Methodist church, the statement "joined through rings" is fairly significant. He was literally joined to the church by his quest for a ring (i.e. wedding).

These four minor characters, with names literally descriptive of their natures, are important connecting and catalyzing characters. Below, in Section V, the relationship of these characters to the others will be more fully explored.

IV

Perhaps the most interesting names are those that change for one reason or another. There are usually substantial differences between the meaning of the original form and the meaning of the changed form. Those familiar with the occult sciences that deal with names, such as numerology, will cite the case of Napoleon Bonaparte as evidence of this difference. Bonaparte, originally spelled Buonaparte, had a success number attached to it by students of numerology. When he changed it, by dropping the "u," his number changed to one of defeat, and indeed he was defeated.
There are two such names in The Damnation: Alice Hastings (Ware) and Terence (Theodore) Madden. Alice is a devoted wife, who lives for her husband's work. When he loses his faith, she loses her happiness and must seek it elsewhere. This is all represented in the name change. "Alice" comes from the Teutonic name Adelaide meaning "of good cheer." "Hastings," from the early English hasta, means a symbol of something, that being expressed in an adjoining word.\(^{22}\) Thus, Alice Hastings means "a symbol of good cheer." "Hastings," an early English word in itself, means "fruit ripe early."\(^{23}\) This is also fitting, for Alice was married to Theron at a fairly early age.

When Alice Hastings becomes Alice Ware, the meaning of her name changes considerably. Remembering that Ware means "to take away," her name comes to mean "he takes away good cheer." That is exactly what Theron does to Alice, once all is said and done. In the end of the novel, Alice is no longer the happy wife, but a disappointed and thwarted woman.

"Terence Madden," the other changing name, is a case where the name changes to suit the true nature of the character. "Terence," from the Latin teres,\(^{24}\) meaning "smooth," and the Greek, meaning "tender,"\(^{25}\)
does not seem to be an appropriate name for the character so named. He is irreligious, and is described as, "beautiful, willful, and showy." Unlike his brother Michael, he is a player. He has the sin of pride: he knows that he is good looking and acts as if he does. Such adjectives as smooth and tender do not seem to fit.

The name "Theodore" is far more appropriate. This name comes from two Greek words: θεός meaning "God," and either ἔργον or ἐρώτικόν, both of which mean "gift." The name as a whole can be traced to John 4:10 in the New Testament. The phrase is:

Τὸ εὖ δῶρον τοῦ Θεοῦ

The gift of God

He perceives himself as (in an often used phrase) "God's gift to the world." The whole name "Theodore Madden" then means, "in the manner of a gift from God."

Thus we can see that name changes can either reflect a change in the course of one's life (as with Alice), or more precisely define the character (as with Terence/Theodore).
So far, we have considered the names from the perspective of their root meanings, and the application of the meaning to the nature of the character. The names and the characters that they define are also vital with respect to how the characters interrelate. For the most part, two characters become involved to satisfy a mutual need. At the outset, Theron is married to Alice. They satisfy each other's need for support. Theron needs a wife to support him, and Alice needs a husband to support. She devotes herself to him totally. Then Celia Madden appears on the scene. Her need to convert followers is matched by Theron's desire to advance himself. Thus the "beast looks upward" and sees the path of knowledge in Celia's sensual world. Theron has no further need of Alice since he is now satisfied by Celia, and he feels that she is now his support.

Candace Soulsby attempts to steer him back toward the path and to make his position in Octavius more secure. She does succeed in winning the majority of the trustees over to Theron's side, but alienates Levi Gorringe, the only trustee to side with
him originally. Levi then seeks refuge with the other cast-off: Alice. He provides her with a flower garden, and thus satisfies her need for fulfillment. Whether Levi is trying to make advances toward Alice is a debatable point, but the relationship that he creates provides him with someone to give his attentions to. Naturally, with Theron's disposition worsening every day, he assumes the worst, and finalizes the separation of Levi from the church, and widens the void that separates him from Alice.

Theodore, acting as God's gift, and the self-proclaimed judge of all, passes his judgement on Theron at the picnic by telling him that he should leave "Catholic girls" alone and otherwise insulting him. Theron chooses to ignore these statements. The same is true when the pious Michael, for Theron's good, tries to warn him of his folly. Theron again sees this counsel as an insult from a lesser being and ignores him. Finally, when Theron confronts Celia in New York, she tells him the same things that Michael and Theodore had, and he finally seems to understand. By then, though, it is far too late, for the beast is already on the loose. He goes on a two-day drunk, and it is finally Sister Soulsby who places him back on the
pathway to life.

All of these happenings are perfectly consistent with the characters as their names define them. When one reads the novel with these meanings in mind, he sees that, just as in the Bible, names do not merely identify a person, but also a whole class of people that are similar in nature, and redefines the particular character in the context of the broader class. In The Damnation of Theron Ware, it is the name that is the mirror of men's souls.

David L. Deratzian
State University of New York
College at Potsdam
NOTES


6-see also Hebrews 12:20, James 3:7, and Revelations.

7-see also Matthew 24:32 and Mark 13:28.


9-Liddel and Scott, Lexicon, s.v. "Δέφω ."

10-Elsdon C. Smith, American Surnames,

13-See also Exodus 12:8-9.  
18-Liddel and Scott, *lexicon*, s.v. "יוֹלַיַּהְוָה."  
21-Interview with Dr. Arthur A. Wachslser, Professor of Foreign Language, Potsdam College.  
23-See also Samuel Johnson, ed., *A Dictionary of..."

24-Lewis and Short, Latin, s.v. "teres."

25-Liddel and Scott, Lexicon, s.v. "τέρας ."

26-Liddel and Scott, Lexicon, s.v. ἄλοπος.

27-see also Acts 8:20.
Scandinavian mythology - the creation, the origin of man, how evil and death were brought into the world—and concludes by a prediction of the destruction and renovation of the universe, and a description of the future abodes of bliss and misery.

The idea of creation is founded on the doctrine of an eternal supreme Essence, regulating primordial matter, and producing the mundane deities to whom this being entrusted the formation of the visible universe.

The poem *Vpluspa* begins by a description of chaos. The matter already existed, but without order and without life. The coarser particles of matter were concentrated in the nebulous sphere, Niflheim, and the more etherealized particles in the luminous sphere, Muspellheim, and the latter by working on the former produced a gigantic being, Ymir.

Ár var alda,  
pat er Ymir byggði:
vara sandr né saer     né svalar unnir,
igrð fannz aeva     né upphiminn,
gap var ginnunga,  en gras hvergi.¹

Old was the age when Ymir lived;
Sea nor sand nor cool waves there were;
Earth had not been, nor heaven above,
But yawning gap, and grass nowhere.
Like the German god Twisto, the Scandinavian giant reproduced creatures from himself alone: a son and daughter were born. They were giants.

When the cold vapours had been resolved into drops, there was formed out of them the cow named Auðhumla. Four streams of milk ran from her teats, and thus she fed the giant Ymir. The cow supported herself by licking the stones that were covered with salt and frost, and licked Bur into being. Bur had a son, Bör, who took for wife Besla, the daughter of the giant Bóðthorn. And they had three sons, Oðinn, Hoenir, and Lóðurr; it is the belief that Oðinn, with his brothers, rules both heaven and earth, and that Oðinn is his true name, and that he is the most mighty of all the gods. Oðinn and his brothers killed Ymir, and created the world from his body.

One day, as Oðinn and his brothers were walking along the sea-beach, they created a man and a woman. Oðinn infused into them life and spirit; the second (Hoenir) endowed them with reason and the power of motion; the third (Lóðurr) gave them speech and features, hearing and vision. The man they called Askr, "Ash," and the woman Embla, "Elm." From Askr and Embla descended the whole human race.

The earth on which men live was conceived of as a central enclosure, Midgardr, surrounded by the sea, in which the cosmic serpent Midgardrsormr lies.

Then Oðinn and his brothers built in the middle of the Midgardr the city called Asgardr, where the gods dwell. Asgardr can be
reached by the bridge of rainbow, Bifrost, "Coloured Way." In Asgard is a place called Hlidskjalf, "Gate Tower," and when Odin is seated there on his throne he sees over the whole world, discerns all the actions of man, and comprehends whatever he contemplates. His wife is Frigga, the daughter of Fjorgyn, and they and their offspring form the race that are called Aesir, a race that dwells in Asgard and the regions around it. Odin may justly be called All-father, for he is the father of all.

The universe is supported by a great ash tree, Yggdrasill, "Horse of Yggr." The roots of the tree Yggdrasill grow through every world of living and dead. It is watered from a well, where Urdr, "Destiny," decides the fates of men. Meadlike dew falls on the earth from its branches. The tree also suffers: a dragon, Nidhogg, "Malicious one," gnaws at the roots. In the branches an eagle sits. A squirrel runs up and down the tree stirring up strife.

This world is not imagined as lasting forever. The cyclic conception of history is found in Norse mythology. There is a conflict at the end of the world, Ragnarok, "Doom of the Gods," when monsters break loose and overwhelm gods and men. The earth sinks into the sea. But a new earth rises, and the gods return to a hallowed peace.

Many passages in the Voluspá are obscure. Most scholars would probably agree that the poem was composed in Iceland. The poet's background was pagan, but his thoughts were coloured by Christian legends of the end of the world. He probably worked about A.D.1000.