

SHAKESPEARE'S "SHRIEKING HARBINGER": SEASONAL PATTERN, GENRE,
AND THE SHAPES OF TIME IN THE *FIRST FOLIO* AND *THE PHOENIX AND THE*
TURTLE

by

CLIFFORD DARROW STETNER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

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Clifford Darrow Stetner

Advisor: Professor Mario Digangi

This dissertation analyzes the relationship between the structural and generic aspects of Shakespeare's Elizabethan drama as published in the *First Folio* and those of his short poem *The Phoenix and the Turtle* published at the turn of the seventeenth century in Robert Chester's *Loves Martyr*. Eight of the ten Elizabethan history plays attributed to Shakespeare generally are read as a cycle of two tetralogies, the first composed tetralogy consisting of the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*, the second tetralogy beginning with *Richard II*, running through the two parts of *Henry IV* and concluding with *Henry V*. While it frequently is noted that the two tetralogies were produced in reverse chronological order, it has not been remarked by critics of Shakespeare's work that the structure of this tetralogy cycle in its order of production conforms to what Theodor Gaster identifies as the Seasonal Pattern structuring many examples of ancient Near Eastern religious performance cycles. The plot of these archaic dramatic cycles generally consisted of the agon, death, resurrection, and marriage of the spirit of fertility, and the conformity of the myth of Shakespeare's *Phoenix and the Turtle* with its cardinal episodes agrees with a strikingly analogous conformity in the Seasonal Pattern ordering

Shakespeare's Elizabethan drama. the recuperation of linear tragic narrative by containment within a circular tragicomic metanarrative, adopted from the magical and political function of seasonal ritual drama cycles, is repeated on multiple levels both in Shakespeare's authorial development and in the posthumous organization of the *First Folio*. The central thesis of this dissertation is that, after an application of narrative circularity to the tragicomic emplotment of Tudor historiography in his Elizabethan plays, Shakespeare's rewriting of the Phoenix and Turtle myth deconstructs the myth's originally recuperative function and thus prologues the period of his Jacobean tragedies. This rewriting expresses a transition from the comical to the tragical in Shakespeare's use of dramatic genre which is symptomatic of a transition in the phenomenology of temporality from regenerative circularity towards progressive historicity in Early Modern Western culture.

Chapter 1. Seasonal Pattern and Genre in Shakespeare's Early Historiography.	1
A. <i>The Phoenix and the Turtle</i> and Shakespeare's Elizabethan Metanarrative.	8
B. Death of the Phoenix and the Birth of Shakespearean Tragedy.	13
C. Shakespeare's Elizabethan Metanarrative as Tragical-Comical-Historical.	23
D. Seasonal Pattern and Shapes of Time in the Elizabethan Metanarrative.	44
E. Seasonal Pattern in Shakespeare's <i>Folio</i> .	61
F. Shapes of Time in the <i>First Folio</i> .	71
G. Shakespeare's <i>Folio</i> as Tragical-Comical-Historical.	91
Chapter 2. Circular Time in <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> and the <i>First</i> Tetralogy.	102
A. Shakespeare's Tetralogy Cycle as Tragical-Comical-Historical.	102
B. Shapes of Time and the Shakespearean <i>Interrex</i> .	107
C. The Tragic Winter <i>Interrex</i> Richard III as Historical Scourge of God.	129
D. The Comic Winter <i>Interrex</i> Petruchio as Saturnalian Lord of Misrule.	146
E. <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> as Satyr Play for the <i>First</i> Tetralogy.	156
F. Peculiar Logic of the Inverse in <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> .	173
Chapter 3. Stretching the Circle in the Second Tetralogy.	193
A. The Second Tetralogy as Tragical-Comical-Historical.	193
B. Fortunate Fall and Seasonal Pattern in the Second Tetralogy.	200
C. Fortunate Fall and Shapes of Time in the Second Tetralogy.	219
D. <i>Henry V</i> as Problem Comedy.	236
Chapter 4. Stretching the Circle in <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> .	249
A. The Reformation as Tragical-Comical-Historical.	253
B. Reformation According to Launcelot Gobbo.	289
Chapter 5. Breaking the Circle in <i>The Phoenix and the Turtle</i> .	307
Epilogue. Structure, Sign, and Problem Play in Shakespeare's Metanarrative.	343
Works Cited.	361

Chapter 1. Seasonal Pattern and Genre in Shakespeare's Early Historiography.

Eight of the ten English history plays attributed to Shakespeare generally are read as a cycle of two tetralogies, the first composed tetralogy consisting of the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*, the second tetralogy beginning with *Richard II*, running through the two parts of *Henry IV* and concluding with *Henry V*. While it frequently is noted that the two tetralogies were produced in reverse chronological order, it has not been remarked by critics of Shakespeare's work that the structure of this tetralogy cycle in its order of production conforms to what Theodor Gaster identifies as the Seasonal Pattern structuring many examples of ancient Near Eastern religious performance cycles. The plot of these archaic dramatic cycles generally consisted of the agon, death, resurrection, and marriage of the spirit of fertility, and the conformity of the myth of Shakespeare's *Phoenix and the Turtle* with its cardinal episodes agrees with a strikingly analogous conformity in the Seasonal Pattern ordering Shakespeare's Elizabethan drama. These ancient annual performances of the winter death, spring rebirth, and summer triumph and marriage to the Earth of the spirit of fertility and order cannot be assigned dramatic genre, as their basic plot never concludes. The Seasonal Pattern of the ritual drama, traces of which are found in an astounding range of world cultures can only be described as tragic-comic-tragic-comic *ad infinitum*. It nevertheless seems tragicomic, rather than comitragic, as human passion and empathy will not rest in the lenten barrenness and despair of winter or drought. While the Wheel of Fortune turns indifferently between comedy and tragedy, human beings are partisan, and always will look forward to a joyful *dénouement* in springtime fertility where they will hope to remain.

The bias of human passion in favor of the jubilation of spring fertility and against the mourning of winter barrenness can be seen in the organization of time in the earliest cultures. According to E. K. Chambers “the earliest year that can be traced amongst the Aryan-speaking peoples,” for example, “was a bipartite one” in which “for some reason that eludes research, winter preceded summer...” (*Mediaeval* 110). The emotional force of the ritual performance cycle accompanying the passing seasons in such prehistoric cultures was to lend the cycle of time itself a tragicomic emplotment whose ultimate expression among the inventors of historical consciousness was the widespread Messianism that preceded the common era. The circular Seasonal Pattern of public performance tended to be emplotted, as in the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, as a circular narrative with its inauguration at the tragic death of the god, its *peripeteia* at his resurrection, and its *dénouement* at his comic sacred marriage after victory over his antagonists, or as the new god who takes the throne after avenging the murder of the old. In the former plot line, as with Henry V at the two endpoints of Shakespeare’s tetralogy cycle in its original order of production, the divine king married at the summer conclusion of the cycle is the same king whose death constitutes its winter inauguration.

The composition of Shakespeare’s dynastic historiography conformed to the archetypal Seasonal Pattern identified by Gaster: the birth, struggle, death, resurrection, and marriage of the sun-god, including ritual episodes of mortification, purgation, invigoration, and jubilation common to many ancient examples. Simply stated, the ritual episodes of mortification and purgation represent the tragic winter aspect of the ancient cycle and are adapted in Shakespeare’s first tetralogy which leads from mortification in the death of Henry V and the Wars of the Roses to purgation in the destruction of Richard

III, while the invigoration and jubilation episodes of the comic fertility aspect of the ritual first are promised in the brief advent of Henry Tudor at the conclusion of the first tetralogy and then are performed in the rise of Hal from the subplot of the second tetralogy to his victory at Agincourt and sacred marriage at the conclusion of the cycle as the resurrected “mirror of all Christian kings,” Henry V. Comedies such as *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merchant of Venice* serve in varying degrees to reinforce the tragicomic emplotment of the history cycle which, as will be discussed in chapter 5, Shakespeare’s *Phoenix and the Turtle* subsequently deconstructs.

As Gaster describes, while there are many variations in sequence and occasion, the oldest recovered narrative texts are almost exclusively play-scripts for seasonal rituals enacted by kings and their relatives, priests and priestesses at given points in the annual cycle by means of which successive dynasties established their claim to kinship with the gods of order, fertility and abundance. The king frequently enacts the sun-god in his progress through an annual life cycle, and he thereby derives his political authority from the deity he impersonates. In Gaster’s translation of a characteristic version from Babylon to which he attributes a derivation from ritual drama, the gods Enlil and Ishtar name the shepherd Etana king of the people.

So Etana was taken to the palace, and all the ceremonies of enthronement were performed. Priests and sorcerers besought the gods in prayer and set before them sumptuous viands and plenteous drink, that they might turn from their displeasure and bestow their grace upon monarch and realm. Then, as was the wont of that place, they led Etana into an inner chamber to be joined in marriage to a certain

high and holy bride, so that, by the power and fruit of their espousals, the land and the people might have increase. (*Oldest* 76)

From winter death and resurrection to summer connubium and back again, the entire plot represents the cycle of the year. Together with its attendant rituals of mourning and jubilation, this plot ultimately is the prototype in the European tradition for the structures of dramatic genre. Linear and circular narrative structures often identified in Shakespeare's plays make repeated subliminal references to this genealogy, and the reworking of this implicit metatext by the editors of Shakespeare's posthumous *First Folio* confirms that these references are thematically motivated. This dissertation furthermore contends that the episodes of the ancient ritual drama cycle, together with its political function regarding monarchical divine right, supplies the plot outline for the funeral / resurrection / wedding of the Phoenix and Turtle saga constructed in Robert Chester's *Loves Martyr* collection, to which Shakespeare's *Phoenix and the Turtle* is a contribution. The application of a marriage to the traditional myth of the Phoenix adapts it to this plot outline, and Shakespeare's denial of posterity to the mythical couple assigns it a tragic dramatic genre which implicitly refers to the end of the Tudor dynasty.

Ritual patterns identifiable in Shakespeare's Elizabethan drama are shown in this dissertation primarily to write Tudor history as generically tragicomic and therefore support this reading of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* ultimately as a critique of the optimism of the Tudor myth. The first four chapters of this dissertation propose that this historiographical project was the central concern of Shakespeare's Elizabethan work. Patterns of seasonal rituals of fertility jubilation recognized throughout the comedies by critics such as C. L. Barber and François Laroque "which to some extent constitute the

settings for the plots of some of the plays and which the spectators would recognize for what they were, whatever their dramatic context” (Laroque 187), primarily function as a running subplot to the history cycle. In its aspect as a coherent literary project Shakespeare’s Elizabethan work culminates, after the manner of all ritual drama, in the *hieros gamos* (sacred marriage) that concludes his final Elizabethan history play, *Henry V*. Just as the comedies written toward the end of this period develop into problem plays, however, the tragicomic plotment of the history cycle is made increasingly ambiguous. The development of this generic complexity in Shakespeare’s work at the turn of the seventeenth century with its manipulation of the “shapes of time”¹ through the structures of ritual drama is re-enacted in the enigmatic tragic narrative of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*.

Not only has recent criticism identified numerous elements of ritual drama in Shakespeare’s plays, but anthropology often assigns a changing sense of historical temporality a central role in the genesis of modernism.² The archaeological and anthropological record repeatedly shows seasonal ritual to be the most public means by which preliterate cultures maintain their collective orientation to the passage of time. Shakespeare’s pervasive use of ritual nevertheless seldom has been analyzed in light of the contemporaneity of his historiography with the suppression of public seasonal ritual during the English Reformation. By conforming history to a plot structure derived from seasonal ritual drama, Shakespeare’s work mediates the transition from the prevailing circular seasonal temporality of the multiple feudal agrarian societies of the British Isles

1 This term is adopted from David Kastan’s work cited in the bibliography.

2 See the bibliography cited by Roberto Quiñones (vi), who says that “time itself and temporal response are the factors in distinguishing Renaissance from medieval” (3).

into a unified linear teleological political history shared by the subjects of a modern nation state. In addition to recognizing many representations of seasonal ritual in Shakespeare's works, critics and anthropologists cited in this dissertation associate circularity and linearity of structure with the "shapes of time," with the cycle of seasons, and with dramatic effects of containment and uncontainment. Analyses of these structures within individual plays, as well as in the sonnet cycle, however, also imply a genetic link to the ritual plays of ancient state religion whose motivation, according to Gaster and Mircea Eliade, was the exclusion of a degenerative linear eschatology through the homoeopathic magical renewal of temporal cyclicity.³

The following lengthy excerpt should serve to clarify the nature of the ancient Near Eastern ritual drama cycle referred to throughout this dissertation.

"The War of the Gods" is more than a pure folktale. It was solemnly recited by the high priest in the innermost shrine of the temple on the fourth day of the Babylonian New Year festival, and it was, in a sense, the "book of words" of that occasion—a kind of primitive cantata. In most cities of Babylonia the New Year festival, which lasted ten or eleven days, was celebrated at the beginning of spring; in some, at the beginning of autumn. The central theme of the festival was the renewal of life. This involved a re-establishment of the world order, a re-enthronement and confirmation of the king, and a determination by the gods of all human destinies for the coming twelve months. All of this was enacted in pantomime as part of the ceremonies, and that pantomime was thought, in turn, to

³ Frazer uses the term homoeopathic magic as a synonym of *imitative* magic (*Bough* 2.3) enacted for the sake of producing the events the practitioners imitate (61.3).

represent what had likewise taken place at the beginning of time. The principal god was portrayed as doing battle with the demon forces of chaos and, after worsting them, establishing anew the order of creation. In token of his triumph, his image was formally paraded through the streets, to be finally installed in a special pavilion or shrine. All of the neighboring gods paid state visits for the occasion, and their statues too were carried along in the procession. Then the chief god, surrounded by his “visitors,” held session in a special chamber, and the fates of men were decided. As a further element of the proceedings the king was formally deposed and then reinstated, to symbolize the fact that he personified a communal life which annually passed into eclipse and was subsequently renewed. (Gaster, *Oldest* 67)

In addition to New Year, such ritual dramas were performed at various points in the agricultural calendar. The Seasonal Pattern structuring the ritual performance cycle was political insofar as it conferred the authority of the supposedly attendant spirits upon the reigning monarchy, and this political function is found today in the seasonal performances of the oldest surviving tribal cultures. Rosalind Hackett observes regarding African kingship, for instance, that “it is within the ritual context that a complex negotiation of forces and symbols occurs, recalling mythical and historical events, and evoking divine powers and experiences instrumental to the construction and maintenance of authority” (96). As this dissertation demonstrates, the co-option of the cyclical pattern of the ritual of divine kingship that developed into Western drama, along with its inherently tragicomic employment, accounts, among other structural features of Shakespeare’s Elizabethan work, for the inverted chronology of production of the

tetralogy cycle. The coherence and unity of the Seasonal Pattern structuring Shakespeare's Elizabethan historiography is maintained by an overdetermined tension between linear and circular narrative trajectories, which associates the former with tragic mortality and the latter with comic resurrection. A circle cannot be part of a line, but a line may be a small arc of a large circle, and the recuperation of linear tragic narrative by containment within a circular metanarrative, adopted from the magical and political function of seasonal ritual drama cycles, is repeated on multiple levels both in Shakespeare's authorial development and in the posthumous organization of the *First Folio*. The central thesis of this dissertation is that, after an application of narrative circularity to the tragicomic emplotment of Tudor historiography in his Elizabethan plays, Shakespeare's rewriting of the Phoenix and Turtle myth deconstructs the myth's originally recuperative function and thus prologues the period of his Jacobean tragedies. This rewriting expresses a transition from the comical to the tragical in Shakespeare's use of dramatic genre which is symptomatic of a transition in the phenomenology of temporality from regenerative circularity towards progressive historicity in Early Modern Western culture.

A. *The Phoenix and the Turtle* and Shakespeare's Elizabethan Metanarrative.

The Phoenix and the Turtle is a highly concise and highly opaque declaration of overarching ideological and aesthetic concerns at the most pivotal point in Shakespeare's dramatic development. The allegory of historical time in *The Phoenix and the Turtle* is a comment upon Shakespeare's Elizabethan work, and the poem's descent from optimism to fatalism additionally is an expression of the dissolution of premodern cultural

conceptions of time and history. A disruption of long-held, heterogeneous conceptions about the relation of the self to time, what Martin Heidegger calls *Dasein*, “temporally particular being-in-the-world” (168), whether gradual or abrupt, is generally considered to have enabled the construction of the modern historical subject that Karl Marx, Mikhail Bakhtin, Michel Foucault, and others describe as a *fait accompli* by the eighteenth century. This frequently examined cultural process amounted to a crisis in Tudor England largely owing to the Protestant Reformation, and the indeterminacy characteristic of an intermediary position between medieval and modern paradigms of temporality and historicity consequently became both catalyst and theme for the productive literary culture of Shakespeare’s London.

An engagement with this temporal and historical intermediacy, although rarely noted by critics, demonstrably is the theme of Shakespeare’s *Phoenix and the Turtle*, and the importance of this engagement to the poet is established in the thematic development of his drama. *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, as K. T. S. Campbell calls it, is a “Signpost of Shakespeare’s Development,” and the Phoenix itself serves Shakespeare as a symbol for the circularity of time and history, for the continuity of narrative genre, and for the regenerative power of seasonal ritual drama. Though published in a collection of seemingly uncritical panegyrics to the passing and succeeding monarchies, the barrenness of Shakespeare’s poetic Phoenix deconstructs and undermines the comic resolution implied by its theme and context. *The Phoenix and the Turtle* was published in 1601 in *Loves Martyr*, a collection of poems mostly written by leading dramatists of its time. The authors’ collective self-identification as a chorus of prophets (*i.e.*, *vates*) may be read either as ironic hyperbole or as a hint at serious intention. Their collaborative dedication

to John Salisbury insists that “*No Mercenarie hope did bring [their verses] forth ... But a true Zeale, borne in our spirites ... And an Inuention, freer then the Times, These were the Parents to our seuerall Rimes ... Vatum Chorus*” (173). In contrast with Chester, an unidentified “Ignoto,” John Marston, George Chapman, and Ben Jonson, who seem to join in univocal epideictic praise of the aged queen, her Scottish successor, Chester’s patron and his family, and any other possible candidates for the allegorical birds of *Loves Martyr*, Shakespeare’s birds die: “Leauing no posteritie” (59), and the poem has confused critics with this apparent negation of the collection’s happy prophecy of a beautiful new Phoenix.

In order to establish a context for the close reading of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* in chapter five, the first four chapters of this dissertation demonstrate that the ordering of Shakespeare’s Comedies and Histories, both in their original development on the Elizabethan stage, and in their arrangement in the first two sections of the posthumous *First Folio*, is largely motivated by the emplotment of the Tudor historical narrative as tragicomic. This tragicomic historiography ultimately illuminates the subtext of Shakespeare’s poem.⁴ This chapter locates the source of Shakespeare’s use of dramatic genre in the long tradition of seasonal ritual drama and analyzes the reworking of the author’s methodology by the editors of the *First Folio*. Chapter 2 demonstrates an alignment of the first tetralogy with the tragic character of the winter component of the ritual drama and argues that *The Taming of the Shrew* is a dramatized winter Saturnalia which performs the function of satire in the containment and recuperation of the tragical

4 Hayden White defines generic emplotment as “the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind (7),” *i.e.*, of a particular genre.

history of the contemporary tetralogy. The interplay between comedy and history play in Shakespeare's early work became increasingly complicated as the succession approached, and chapter 3 proposes that the morally problematic treatment of nascent British imperialism in *Henry V* undermines the comic *dénouement* that the play purports to provide to the tetralogy cycle. Chapter 4 then analyzes *The Merchant of Venice* as an inclusion of the sacred aspect of the Protestant Reformation within the tragicomic emplotment of the secular historiography of the contemporary second tetralogy. As with *Henry V* in chapter 3 and *The Phoenix and the Turtle* in chapter 5, chapter 4 shows that linear and circular structural tensions in *The Merchant of Venice* serve to undermine not only its own comic resolution, but the tragicomic emplotment of Shakespeare's entire Elizabethan historiography and the Tudor myth it represents. Chapter 5 reads *The Phoenix and the Turtle* as a declaration of despair and of abandonment of the tragicomic historiography of Shakespeare's early drama as it evolved into an interplay between problem comedy and tragedy at the termination of the Tudor dynasty. The epilogue finally applies the metanarrative principles identified in Shakespeare's Elizabethan work, canonized in the *First Folio*, and critiqued in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, demonstrating that beyond its own individual performance script, this play too serves a programmatic function in a metatext which largely accounts for its specific choice of plot elements.

The central thesis of this dissertation is that a close reading of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, written at the rough midpoint of Shakespeare's thirty year career, reveals an intensely bitter irony in its movement from the highest ideals of Truth and Beauty to its conclusion in the ashes of "dead birds" (67). In its descent from optimistic idealism to

bitter disillusionment, *The Phoenix and the Turtle* metaphorically describes Shakespeare's contemporary development from primarily comedies and histories, to problem plays and tragedies. Linear and circular plot structures derived from seasonal ritual drama also are shown in this analysis to align with the structure of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*; the poem thus illuminates the function of the linear and circular tensions structuring Shakespeare's Elizabethan metanarrative as well as of the extensive seasonal ritual allusions throughout his work. This analysis of the poem's reference to the drama furthermore is supported by the explication of the metanarrative principles identified in this chapter unifying the *First Folio* as a work of literature.

The "shrieking harbinger, / Foule precurrer of the fiend, / Augour of the feuers end" who in Shakespeare's poem "To this troupe" may come "not neere" (5-7), sometimes is taken for an incompetent intrusion into the laudatory theme of *Loves Martyr*. This dissertation instead reads the forbidden bird of the poem as the poet's sincere voice excluded from the *vatum chorus* for fear of repressive Elizabethan censorship. That the interdiction of critical voices by the state increasingly was an issue not only for Shakespeare, who refers in the Sonnets to "art made tongue-tied by authority" (66.9), but for literary production in general, is indicated in the reference of the dedication of *Loves Martyr* to "an Inuention, freer then the Times." State authority, for example, had (by some accounts) tortured into terminal illness Shakespeare's possible early mentor, Thomas Kyd, for seditious propaganda and thought crimes and might have done the same to one of his major influences, Christopher Marlowe, had he not been murdered. More recently, Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton, had been jailed for his part in the Essex rebellion, and the state would shortly jail half of the *vatum*

chorus of Loves Martyr, ostensibly for offending the new king's ethnic sensitivity.

According to Janet Clare, "the proscriptive measures of the early 1590s were intensified as a result of the *fin-de-siècle* political tensions generated by anticipation of the Queen's death and the factionalism which accompanied the uncertain succession" (81).

The Phoenix and the Turtle eludes the interdiction of its critical discourse, introducing its dissonant "shrieking harbinger" to the celebratory chorus of *Loves Martyr* by singling it out prominently in the fifth line for exclusion. This pretense of inadvertency protects the poet and his seemingly unwitting collaborators from charges of intentional seditiousness, while admitting the forbidden counter-discourse to its celebratory epideixis. The strategy that protects such a counter-discourse from the censor unfortunately also makes an ironic reading of the poem hard for present criticism to prove. The analysis of the plays in the following chapters of this dissertation is meant to support the thesis that the poem's methodical slippage from conventional terms of Neoplatonic idealism into bitterly ironic realism deconstructs the comic metanarrative both of *Loves Martyr* and of Shakespeare's Elizabethan work to which it is an epilogue. This reading of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* is consistent with clearly discernable trends in Shakespeare's work of the period of the Jacobean succession, principles that survived the author to influence the editors of the *First Folio*.

B. Death of the Phoenix and the Birth of Shakespearean Tragedy.

The polemical opacity of Shakespeare's plays does not seem to have disqualified them for frequent performance at both Elizabethan and Jacobean courts. The author himself was knighted, and his company achieved the status of royal patronage under King

James. Many attempts to align Shakespeare's political and religious convictions with the factions of his friends, patrons, relatives, associates or *dramatis personae* are based on unscientific and unverifiable assumptions in a period characterized above all by its heterogeneity and dissolution of moral absolutes, not to mention its sense of irony. All political stripes can be found in this list, and it is usually the prejudice of critics that makes one witness to the author's opinions seem more credible than another. While an empirical analysis therefore should be restricted to the discourses at work in the surviving texts rather than in the author's polemic intentions, in a literary culture rife with polemical writing, the opacity itself of Shakespeare's politics perhaps is not accidental. In the obscurantist *Phoenix and the Turtle*, on the other hand, the poet's voice paradoxically is more present than in the dialogues of the plays. The poem's obscurity of meaning nevertheless is the only point on which all critics agree. The hundreds of evaluations of its 67 lines run the gamut from "the most perfect short poem in any language" (Shahani in Underwood 193) to a dispassionate "trifle" (Herford in Rollins 564) to plain "doggerel" (Stronach in Rollins 565). Ranjee Shahani furthermore remarks that "... it is inevitable that such poetry should be obscure, mystical, and strictly unintelligible: it is too abstract for our comprehension, too essential, too little mediated" (in Underwood 193). I would argue that the poem's obscurity, while pretending such transcendental aspirations, rather amounts to a sophisticated form of political self-censorship.

As explicated in chapter 5, Shakespeare's critical voice ironically is admitted to the poem in the exclusion of the shrieking harbinger of doom from its parliament of fowls. Like a shriek owl, whose call is considered a harbinger of impending death in many cultures, the poet suggests that he has been forbidden to darken the happy occasion

by proclaiming the tragic death of “Love and Constancy” devoid of the redeeming resurrection of a new Phoenix. The poem nevertheless appears to do just this, contradicting the tragicomic conclusion that *Loves Martyr* for 200 pages has led the reader to expect, and ending, like a failed alchemist over an urn full of ashes, inviting those “That are either true or faire ... For these dead Birds [to] sigh a prayer” (65-67). This conclusion tragically resolves the dramatic tension established in the fear expressed by Dame Nature at the beginning of Chester’s *Loves Martyr* that the Phoenix will die without an heir. “This *Phoenix* I do feare me will decay, / And from her ashes neuer will arise / An other Bird her wings for to display, / And her rich beauty for to equalize (14). Though dismissed in Chester’s long poem and in the “seuerall Rimes” of the *vatum chorus*, Nature’s initial fear thus is confirmed in the last ten pages of the collection by Shakespeare, the most illustrious of the “*best and chiefest of our moderne writers*” (170).

Marston’s “narration and description of a most exact wondrous creature, arising out of the Phoenix and Turtle Doues ashes” abruptly following Shakespeare’s “dead birds” in *Loves Martyr* seems anxious to refute the saga’s tragic conclusion.

O Twas a mouing Epicidium!
 Can Fire ? can Time ? can blackest Fate consume
 So rare creation ? No; tis thwart to sence,
 Corruption quakes to touch such excellence,
 Nature exclames for Iustice, Iustice Fate,
 Ought into nought can neuer remigrate.
 Then looke ; for see what glorious issue (brighter
 Then clearest fire, and beyond faith farre whiter

Then Dians tier) now springs from yonder flame? (in Chester 177)

The tragic augury of Shakespeare's poem, however, is not erased by Marston from the conclusion of *Loves Martyr*, but only denied (on the strength of a rhetorical question), and the doubtful equations of nature and fate with justice. Marston's equally doubtful protestation that "Ought into nought can neuer remigrate," of which few readers of Shakespeare's poem ever learn in any case, amounts only to another unsuccessful attempt to silence Shakespeare's harbinger of doom.

"Internal evidence, from *Love's Martyr*, as to Elizabeth having been meant by the 'Phoenix,'" according to Grosart, "is equally established by external" (xxiv), and the Cranmer of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* accordingly makes the Phoenix myth refer to the approaching succession. Whether collaborative, antagonistic, or accidental, the collective authorship of the Phoenix and Turtle saga therefore suggests a conception of poetic historiography not particular to Shakespeare, but common to the discourse of the Elizabethan public stage. This reading therefore may help to illuminate many of the remaining obscurities of the drama of Shakespeare's age, as well as the meaning and experience of the transition into modernity for its audiences across all social strata.

The ostensible effect of the limited freedom of "the Times" on the "Inuention" of *Loves Martyr* suggests that the poem's enigmatic meaning must be sought, like its banished harbinger of doom, outside its text. The first four chapters of this dissertation locate the metaphorical terms of the poem's allegory not in specific topical references, as often has been done, but in its intertextual position in Shakespeare's dramatic development. As John Roe says, "If *The Phoenix and the Turtle* points anywhere outside itself, the direction it indicates is doubtless a literary one" (49). In its representation of

birth, death, and marriage ritual, the poem patently is involved with time, becoming, and metamorphosis, and it is coincidental with a major transition in Shakespeare's use of dramatic genre. The plot outline of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* furthermore conforms to the metanarrative outline of the tetralogy cycle which in turn mimics the characteristic cycle of performance of the death, resurrection, and *hieros gamos* of the Year-god of bronze-age religious ritual, the original source of the Phoenix myth. The ancient seasonal drama cycle functioned mimetically to recover the world from its tragic linear descent to winter barrenness and chaos by redirecting it through performance of the resurrection of the god toward the orderly circular return of summer fertility. Its plot outline, which was translated into the various genres of drama performed at winter and summer festivals in Classical Greece, likewise informs the tragicomic emplotment of Shakespeare's Elizabethan historiography.

In its earliest form, still performed in many tribal cultures, The ritual cycle drama involves the mimetic repetition of the creation of the world, enacted by spiritually possessed avatars of the gods. In the monarchical city-states of the bronze age, elaborate cosmogonic episodes were performed by political rulers who claimed kinship or special relationship to the gods they enacted. "[T]he official system of Babylonian and Assyrian religion," according to W. Robertson Smith, was "artificially moulded by priestcraft and statecraft in much the same way as the official religion of Egypt" (13). It was "an artificial combination, for imperial purposes, of elements drawn from a number of local worships" (14). In Greece, such seasonal ritual performance of the life cycle of gods of the sun and of fertility developed into the sacraments of mystery cults while their plot structures simultaneously became the basis for Classical tragedy, satire, and comedy. As

Euripides and Aristophanes begin to emphasize the aesthetic aspect of dramatic art, their plays continued to be performed as the central feature of seasonal religious festivals devoted to the regeneration of fertility. This development furthermore is associated by anthropologists such as Gaster and Eliade with the introduction, contemporary with the invention of writing, of the perception of the self as individually and collectively enacting a linear historical narrative simultaneously with the eternally circular seasonal time inherited from prehistory. Suggestions in both *Loves Martyr* and the *First Folio* attest to the collaborative aspect of Shakespeare's reiteration of this archaic genealogy of dramatic genre from seasonal ritual, and they therefore suggest a transformation of temporal phenomenological orientation clustering around the public theater analogous to the coincidence in Classical times of the invention of Western historiography with the invention of Western dramatic genre. Like the drama of Euripides and Aristophanes, Shakespeare's historiography filled a conceptual place vacated by the dissolution of agricultural feudalism with its seasonal performance cycles, including mystery pageants and seasonal folk plays. As History became distinct from the mythological pretensions of state religion in Classical Greece, the intermediary Early Modern temporality structuring Shakespeare's ritual tetralogy cycle necessarily gave way to modern historicism.

In addition to its derivation from ritual drama, Shakespeare's history cycle participates in a widely current cultural discourse which inevitably interpreted the meaning and form of human experience in terms of the potential dramatic genre of history. Like the Messianism of the dawn of the Common Era, numerous ideologies such as providentialism, apocalypticism, and millenarianism, which came into public discourse during the Reformation, are symptomatic of the construction of a collective historical

narrative from diverse fragmented premodern traditions and of the constraint of this emergent narrative to principles of generic emplotment. All the world explicitly was conceived as a stage, and all the people as players in a single history play which might imminently or in the distant future culminate in a comic return to the golden age or in a tragic apocalypse, and the eschaton would determine whether not only human history, but the living present, was a scene in a comic or tragic teleology. As David Kastan says, in the Renaissance “genre becomes a way of imagining time as it shapes and is shaped by humankind” (173).

This temporalizing function of dramatic genre, deriving from archaic seasonal pageants is traceable in Shakespeare’s sources. Plutarch, for example, already expresses an association of ritual performance with the two aspects of dramatic genre. Before the description of a scene adopted by Shakespeare as the first meeting of Antony and Cleopatra, Plutarch says that “the Alexandrians ... liked it well ... that Antonius shewed them a comical face ... and the Romans a tragical face” (*Lives* 38). The meeting itself clearly is a version of the comic conclusion of the seasonal ritual drama enacted by the Egyptian royalty described by Gaster and others. Following Plutarch’s description closely, Shakespeare’s Enobarbus tells Agrippa:

The Barge she sat in, like a burnisht Throne

Burnt on the water: the Poope was beaten Gold,

Purple the Sailes: and so perfumed that

The Windes were Loue-sicke.

With them the Owers were Siluer,

Which to the tune of Flutes kept stroke, and made

The water which they beate, to follow faster;
 As amorous of their strokes. For her owne person,
 It beggerd all discription, she did lye
 In her Pauillion, cloth of Gold, of Tissue,
 O're-picturing that Venus, [sic] where we see
 The fancie out-worke Nature. (902-913)

The tackle of Cleopatra's barge is manned by gentlewomen (i.e. Egyptian nobility) representing spirit beings whose "Flower-soft hands ... yarely frame the office" (923-924). Antony sits alone in the marketplace until the landing of the barge when the entire company proceeds to "the Feast" (938). Where Enobarbus merely describes Cleopatra as "o're-picturing that Venus," Plutarch says that she was "attired like the goddess Venus, commonly drawn in picture," and that "there went a rumour in the people's mouths, that the goddess Venus was come to play with the god Bacchus, for the general good of all Asia" (34). Plutarch elsewhere recounts the myth of Horus and Isis who searches for the dead Osiris "in a papyrus boat, sailing through the marshes" (*Isis* 145).

In *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, Frances Yates surveys the fascination of Western philosophy with Egyptian religion running from Augustine through Ficino and beyond, and elsewhere cites Angus Fletcher who draws "attention to the Hermetic-Egyptian setting of Britomart's vision in the Temple of Isis," in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (*Occult* 95). "Venus" and "Bacchus" are merely Latinized forms of the Egyptian divine couple, and Plutarch's account abstracts a key episode in the annual drama described by Gaster "Engraven, along with illustrative reliefs, on one of the walls of the temple at Edfu" (*Thespis* 91). Similar to the scene described in *Antony and*

Cleopatra, this ritual drama cycle was enacted on barges at stations along the Nile (yearly, not “yarely”) in a similar manner to the typical medieval mystery cycle enacted at stations on pageant wagons, though its religious function as a fertility ritual, as Plutarch says “for the common good of Asia,” is more explicit. Plutarch moreover seems to understand the comic association of the ritual connubial feast of Venus and Bacchus in contrast with the tragic face shown by Antony in Rome, and Enobarbus mourns its passing in Shakespeare’s late Roman tragedy.

As genre had become “a way of imagining time” for Shakespeare’s contemporaries, it is the language of temporality and history as it was developed on the Elizabethan stage. Shakespeare exploits the derivation of dramatic genre from ancient ritual performance not only in late tragedies such as *Antony and Cleopatra*, but very prominently in his Elizabethan comedies. As discussed in chapter 2, *The Taming of the Shrew* co-opts the tragic winter terms of *Richard III* and adapts them to the Saturnalian terms conventional to Roman-type New Comedy. The common seasonal principles in the two contemporary plays conflate the mourning and jubilation aspects of winter solstitial ritual. This conflation performs the traditional function of such ritual, recuperating Shakespeare’s tragic historiography and directing it back in time towards the anticipated comic summer connubium of the following series of history plays culminating in the sacred marriage of Henry V. Within this mimesis of the magical function of seasonal ritual misrule the fertility spirit is recuperated through the elopement of the idealized Lucentio and Bianca which is effected as the subplot to the momentary political chaos of *the Shrew*’s Saturnalian main plot. The chaos of *the Shrew*’s main plot is a metaphor for the political chaos of the contemporary *Richard III* and its successful elopement a

metaphor for the recuperation of the tragicomic history cycle. As a dramatic Saturnalia, *The Taming of the Shrew* thus uses laughter as a medium of subversion / containment in relation to the tragic first tetralogy, a function of satire which derives from a continuous popular tradition of jubilation and mourning aspects of seasonal ritual depicted in the Carnival festivals of agricultural societies.⁵

Chapter 4 proposes that the problematization of the containment function of narrative closure that begins to intrude into Shakespeare's comedies with *The Merchant of Venice* foreshadows the conclusion of the tetralogy cycle in *Henry V* discussed in chapter 3 whose tragic epilogue thus is made in the enigmatic *Phoenix and the Turtle* discussed in chapter 5. In generic terms, according to *Loves Martyr* as well as to the conventional myth, the implications of the failure of "Earth's" one and only "beauteous Phoenix" (Chester 1) to resurrect are not merely tragic, but a "Foule precurrer of the fiend" (*PT* 6), nothing short of apocalyptic in an apocalyptically-minded generation. It therefore is significant that, in addition to following the problematic conclusion of Shakespeare's tragicomic history cycle, the funereal *Phoenix and the Turtle* also is contemporary with the onset of the period of composition of Shakespeare's major tragedies.

5 E. K. Chambers disputes the term Saturnalia assigned to what he concludes must be the festival of *Kalends* which by contrast had a wide currency beyond the city of Rome, but I use the more familiar term for a midwinter festival whose premise often was attributed to the return of the golden age of Saturnian rule prior to the Olympian monarchy of Jupiter.

C. Shakespeare's Elizabethan Metanarrative as Tragical-Comical-Historical.

The structural unity of Shakespeare's Elizabethan metanarrative proposed in this chapter develops a mimetic temporality from a complex interplay of dramatic genres. The prominent center of this mimetic world time is Shakespeare's Elizabethan tetralogy cycle which emphatically identifies its own generic characteristics. The long history cycle metanarrative develops its generic aspect according to its series of deaths of kings before and between the two comic marriages of Henry V and Henry VII. The first tetralogy consists roughly of three chronicle histories and the tragedy of Richard III. As a unified narrative it thus is structured as a long tragedy whose comic epilogue is the Tudor present. The protagonist of the tetralogy cycle is not a specific king, but the wearer of the crown, an embodiment of the commonwealth, and "thus we have one tetralogy in which a negative and cautionary epic trilogy leads on to tragedy balanced by a second where tragedy gives way to an epic trilogy which is positive, heroic, and exemplary" (Hawkins 29). In the first tetralogy, this programmatic design is suggested in the fact that "three Henry plays lead to a Richard, while in the other, a Richard play is followed by three Henries" (29). The second tetralogy generically is comprised of the tragedy of Richard II, the two-part chronicle history of Henry IV, and the comedy of Henry V.

Hayden White says of the Western tradition of historiography that "the death of the king may be a beginning, an ending, or simply a transitional event in three different stories" (7). In addition to their relative positions in the cycle, the careful generic distinctions between the five titular royal protagonists of the tetralogies form a strong link to analogous inaugural, transitional, and terminating deaths of gods in the mourning and jubilation episodes of the ritual drama. These distinctions are reinforced in the Catalogue

(i.e. the table of contents) of the *First Folio*. *King John*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* are identified as tragical-historical, and *Henry V* and *Henry VIII* as comical-historical in the Catalogue of the *First Folio* by their labels: *The Life and Death of* and *The Life of* respectively, while the remaining five chronicle plays are labeled “Part[s].” As the death of Osiris, enacted by the Pharaoh and his consort is an inaugural motif in the Edfu drama that culminates in the “characteristic seasonal rite of connubium” (Gaster *Thespis* 91) adapted by Shakespeare in *Antony and Cleopatra*, the fall of Richard II serves as “initiating motif” for the tragicomedy of the second tetralogy as well as “transitional motif” at the center of the tetralogies’ chronologically inverted order of production. His death therefore is distinguished from the tragic terminating deaths of John and Richard III in the Catalogue of the *First Folio* with a lower case *d*. Although Henry IV dies at the conclusion of his eponymous plays, unlike any of Shakespeare’s tragic protagonists (and like the similarly transitional Edward IV), he dies in bed of more or less natural causes. As opposed to the chronically ordered *Folio*, the composition of the tetralogy cycle ran from the initiating funeral of Henry V, through the tragic “Death” of Richard III, through the transitional “death” of Richard II, and transitional “Parts” of Henry IV, and back to the comic “Life” of Henry V. The entire tetralogy cycle therefore was produced as a tragicomedy. Its culmination in the conspicuously protracted wooing of the final scene of *Henry V* links the archetypal structure of generic comedy to its ritual origins, both in form and function, as the symbolic *apotheosis* of the dynasty of a divine sun-king. Francis Bacon, at least, was familiar with “that which the Grecians call APOTHEOSIS, and the Latins, RELATIO INTER DIVOS” which was the highest of human honors “when it was given, not by a formal decree or act of state, as it was used among the Roman Emperors,

but by an inward assent and belief, and he acknowledges that it “unto the Christians is as the forbidden fruit” (7.1). In Shakespeare’s tetralogy cycle, a form of this forbidden *apotheosis* nevertheless is effected by its manipulation of generic emplotment.

In a parody of the extent which experiments with generic emplotment of historical narrative had reached by the period of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, Corambis of Q1 Hamlet refers to: “Comedy, Tragedy, Historie, Pastorall, Pastorall, Historicall, Historicall, Comicall, Comicall historicall, Pastorall, Tragedy historicall...” (1443-1445). The *Folio* organizes this list into Polonius’s: “Tragedie, Comedie, Historie, Pastorall: Pastoricall-Comicall-Historicall-Pastorall: Tragicall-Historicall: Tragicall-Comicall-Historicall-Pastorall...” (1444-1447). In both cases, the first four genres conveniently summarize the *Folio*. So does the best known version, Q2’s “Tragedie, Comedy, / History, Pastorall, Pastorall Comicall, Historicall Pastorall, scene / indeuidible, or Poem vnlimited” (c. 1444-1446). Given the accepted accounts of their separate transmissions, the fact that these catalogues manage to arrive at the same line numbers is almost as striking as their testimony to Shakespeare’s concern with issues of genre when he composed *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. Some of the genres named refer ostensibly to history plays that do not take the form of mere chronicles, but are formally indistinguishable from pastoral comedy, tragedy, and pastoral tragicomedy. Many critics have identified Shakespeare’s *Richard III* as an example of tragical-historical (albeit its emplotment as tragedy was primarily Thomas More’s work which was transmitted almost verbatim both to Hall’s and Holinshed’s *Chronicles*). E. M. W. Tillyard says it “unites the strains of tragedy and history” and deserves the solemnity associated with the Dionysia at Athens (205). More himself compares Richard’s history to “stage playes” (*R3*

62) and it had a long stage tradition as tragedy, including *The True Tragedie of Richard the Third*, c. 1594, which “carries on the Senecan treatment, although in a much cruder form than in Legge’s earlier *Richardus Tertius*” c. 1580 (Ribner 86). Friedrich von Schiller additionally calls *Richard III* “the noblest tragedy I know” (qtd. in Hammond 97) and more reminiscent of Greek tragedy than any other Shakespeare play, and Anthony Hammond enumerates its Senecan and *de casibus* elements. By the same token, *Henry V* should be called comical-historical, as “the peace with France and the marriage with Katherine provide potent images of comic resolution” (Kastan 74), and there is no other obvious motivation for the disproportionate extension of the wooing scene before the close of Act 5 than to place the play, along with all of Shakespeare’s Elizabethan comedies, firmly in the long generic tradition beginning with the concluding marriage of almost every one of Aristophanes comedies.

This tragical-historical and comical-historical pair of plays conclude the two tetralogies which were composed in the first decade of Shakespeare’s career. Because the tetralogies were produced in reverse chronological order, the composition of the whole series ended with the historically earlier and dramatically comic subject matter of the second tetralogy. As in the structure of the Edfu drama, “the cycle that begins with the funeral of Henry V ends with his marriage” (Hawkins 38). As such, Shakespeare’s composition of the tetralogy cycle mimics the oldest Indo-European year whose winter half, as remarked above, “preceded” its summer half. Although it is the midpoint of the English history depicted in Shakespeare’s plays, *Henry V* marks the endpoint of the tetralogy’s original performance, and its dual position forms the link of its linear historiography to its circular Seasonal Pattern. Analogous tensions between cyclical and

linear temporal principles characterize both ancient and Early Modern public ritual. Eliade points out that “ancient conceptions were still long to survive” (104), and a continuous development in the conception of time has been traced from the bronze-age seasonal ritual he describes to the Early Modern period. In his study of the comic aspects of the Carnival grotesque in Rabelais’s novel, for instance, Bakhtin claims that the tradition of the Roman winter ritual of Saturnalia “remained unbroken and alive in the medieval Carnival, which expressed [a] universal renewal” of the world through the repetition of a seasonal festival cycle (8).

In the early modern period, however, the long changeless cycle of agricultural and pastoral production of the mass of European peasantry was increasingly disrupted by the intrusions of “non-repetitive, non-archetypal events” (Eliade 85), such as the enclosure movement which developed in England with the rapid growth of the wool industry in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and involved “the forcible seizure of the [common lands] from the peasants by the rich landlords.” As a consequence of this late medieval development of industry, “the great mass of the peasantry found itself with no land to cultivate” (Smirnov 2), which led, among other things, to their mass urbanization as Marx, citing More and Holinshed, describes in *Capital*. “For 150 years after Henry VII,” says Marx, “the cry of the people and the legislation directed . . . against the expropriation of the small farmers and peasants, were alike fruitless” (8.27.3). The resulting heterogeneous convergence in London of far-flung rural populations combined with the disruption of religious continuity by the Reformation amounted to a collective state of temporal disorientation which both demanded and enabled Shakespeare’s dramatic historiography.

Instead of a complete metamorphosis following a period of historical trauma, Bakhtin describes the evolution of modern temporal phenomenology in the West as a long and gradual process.

The relation to time, its perception and experience ... was bound to change during [its] development over thousands of years. ... The sense of ... cyclical time, of natural and biological life...was broadened and deepened ... drawing into its cycle social and historic phenomena. The cyclical character is superseded by the sense of historic time [producing an] artistic and ideological expression of a mighty awareness of history and of historic change which appeared during the Renaissance. (25)

As an “artistic and ideological expression” of this “mighty awareness of history and of historic change,” Shakespeare’s historicist themes persisted beyond the Jacobean succession. As tragical histories *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet* signal the transition from Shakespeare’s Elizabethan production of most of the Comedies and Histories of the *Folio* to production of most of the Tragedies. The contemporaneity of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* with these two historical tragedies, as well as with the generically complicated *Troilus and Cressida*, supports the case for the preoccupation of the poem with the question of the genre of history.

The involvement of Shakespeare’s Elizabethan work with questions of genre *vis-à-vis* historical representation might have derived from a number of sources, both ancient and modern, all of which in turn derive from the development of European drama out of ancient seasonal ritual. The engagement of Shakespeare’s work in an Early Modern analogue to the invention of historical consciousness in the ancient Near East and its

consequent transvaluations of the patterns of ritual drama account for the mediation between circular and linear narrative patterns that critics have identified in Shakespeare's plays. The ordering of plays in the three generic sections of the *First Folio* furthermore reiterates Shakespeare's narrative containment of circular and linear tensions within an overarching structural circularity. The *Folio* editors thus acknowledge and reiterate the temporalizing phenomenological function of such containment which Shakespeare's work derives from an ancient and continuous performance tradition.

The invention of the history play genre took place in a period of transition towards what Irving Ribner calls the "modern conception of history" that "began to evolve" in the seventeenth century (15). This epochal transition frequently has been described in terms of a negotiation between circular and linear conceptions of world time structures. Kastan, for example, remarks that "at least two models of historical time existed for Shakespeare's age ... one, providential and fundamentally linear, derived from the patristic and medieval historical writings; and one, exemplary and essentially cyclical, derived from the traditions of late classical historiography." Kastan demonstrates that "as early as the *Henry VI* plays, Shakespeare reveals his awareness of and interest in both these temporal models" (12). Patricia Parker cites D. R. Woolf's argument that

... embedded in the Elizabethan mind were two seemingly contradictory notions of "the movement of time" [which] he defines ... as, on the one hand, the residual influence of the Judaeo-Christian providentialist model of history, which saw time as proceeding in a straight line toward the eschaton or last days; and on the other hand, the classical conception of historical cycles, based on the cycles observable

in nature, according to which “types of government not only grew and declined ... one type tended to change into another ... in a predictable anacyclosis.” (368)

Two centuries after Shakespeare, G. W. F. Hegel (who incidentally associates the Phoenix with the “most sublime” of Oriental metaphysical doctrines [32]) would distinguish between the circular time of nature and the progressive time of the Spirit that dialectically animates human history.

[T]he tree can live for many decades ... it is a tedious chronicle in which the same cycle recurs again and again. There is nothing new under the sun. But this is not so with the sun of the spirit. Its movement and progression do not repeat themselves, for the changing aspect of the spirit as it passes through endlessly varying forms is essentially progress. (61)

Such tensions between circular and linear temporal concepts thus contended for epistemological predominance in the construction of the “modern conception of history” into the early nineteenth century, as they also were central to the development of “historical consciousness” among bronze-age civilizations. Eliade says that in the ancient doctrine of cyclical time, “periodically regenerating itself *ad infinitum*,” the golden age was repeatable an infinite number of times, while in what he calls the doctrine of “limited cyclical time,” time as a single teleological progress from alpha to omega, the golden age is only repeatable once at the end of time (112).

According to Eliade, the ancient doctrine of cyclical time emerged in reaction to a view of linear history that constantly threatens to launch mankind on a temporal trajectory that is finite and decadent, and which offers no opportunities for periodic

renewal of the topocosm.⁶ Archaic man, he says, “tends to set himself in opposition, by every means in his power, to history, regarded as a succession of events that are irreversible, unforeseeable, possessed of autonomous value. He refuses to accept it and to grant it value as such, as history—without, however, always being able to exorcise it” (90). A linear temporal trajectory seemed necessarily to lead to the disintegration of the topocosm which always had been held together by mimetic participation in its eternal cycles. In Eliade’s analysis, early tribal and urban cultures ensured their annual escape from linear topocosmic mortality through the seasonally cyclical performance of originary myths of death and resurrection. Similarly according to Smith, “very primitive *piacula* ... have their origin in a purely naturalistic conception of holiness, and mean nothing more than that the mystic unity of life in the religious community is liable to wear out, and must be revived and strengthened from time to time” (406). The occasion of such regenerative rituals naturally fell during winter or dry season which consequently was thought of as the start of the New Year. The *hieros gamos* that frequently takes place on these occasions is made an episode of the very ancient epic of Gilgamesh.

It was New Year’s Even when they reached the city, and the high point of the festival had now arrived, the moment when the king was to be led to the temple to play the role of bridegroom in a holy marriage with the goddess. The streets were lined with festive throngs, and everywhere the cries of young revelers rang out, piercing the air and keeping their elders from sleep. Suddenly, above the din and

⁶ I use Gaster’s term throughout this dissertation to refer to “the entire complex of any given locality conceived as a living organism.” This topocosm, says Gaster, “possesses both a punctual and a durative aspect, representing not only the actual and present community, but also that ideal and continuous entity of which the latter is but the current manifestation” (17).

hubbub, came a sound of tinkling cymbals and faint echo of distant flutes. Louder and louder it grew, until at last, around a bend in the road, the great procession would into sight, with Gilgamesh himself the central figure in its midst. Along the street and into the courtyard of the temple it wove its way. (Gaster, *Oldest* 24)

Such annually repeated performances of cosmogonic creation involving the sacrifice, resurrection, and sacred marriage of the god of fertility preserved the eternal return of circular temporality. Eliade proposes that it was only when the warnings of the Hebrew prophets were “ratified by catastrophes (as, indeed, was the case from Elijah to Jeremiah) that ... for the first time, [they] placed a value on history, succeeded in transcending the traditional vision of the cycle (the conception that ensures all things will be repeated forever), and discovered a one-way time” (103). Like the transportation of the English serfdom to London during the enclosures, the transportation of the Hebrew populations to Assyria and Babylon interrupted the circular seasonal repetition of agricultural time, enabling the invention of a teleological historical narrative.

Tom Driver places the contention between this Hebrew linearity and a cyclicity, identified as “Hellenic,” in the context of the development of the genres of Greek drama. He cites Werner Jaeger, however, who says that during the Peloponnesian War, the Greeks also “were forced into historical thinking by the circumstances” (qtd. in Driver 33), and he concedes that: “the Greeks also thought of time as a straight line and that both line and circle are attempts to bring time into intelligibility by making it submit to a form” (Driver 28). In ancient Israel, temporality similarly was conceived according both to a linear teleological history and “the contemporaneity of time and the repetitive character of much human behavior” (43). Jane Harrison, Francis Cornford, and Gilbert

Murray place Greek dramatic genre in the context of its ritual origins, linking it explicitly to Gaster's analysis of ancient Near Eastern ritual drama and therefore implicitly to Eliade's account of the introduction of linear time and history into Western consciousness.

Regarding the theory of the cultural processes motivating Shakespeare's historiography, it should be noted that Gaster describes the discovery of linear time as a function of dramatic performance. The annual ritual combat between the god and the primordial dragon waged mimetically to regenerate the topocosmic life-lease, for example, becomes defined instead as a representation of the creation of the world. The cycle is redefined as the entire course of history at the end of which a similar combat will regenerate the world. "[A]s the concept of time develops from the cyclic to the progressive," says Gaster,

... this fight comes to be projected both backward into cosmogony and forward into eschatology; for that which was regarded in more primitive thought as the necessary preliminary to each successive lease of life comes now to be regarded as the necessary preliminary to the entire series [and] the God who engaged and vanquished Leviathan at the beginning of days will perforce do so again at the end of them in order to usher in the New Age. (*Thespis* 137)

The performance that originally merely signified the death of the Old and the birth of the New Year, in other words, gradually was redefined as representing the Creation of the World and the arrival of the Messianic Age at the end of historical time. The seasonal reenactment of ritual agon and resurrection ostensibly continued while this conceptual transmission of the terms of the eternally repeating annual cycle to a single historical

teleology was taking place. Anthropologists often describe such primitive cosmogonic mythology as a form of hindsight which is invented to explain ritual practices whose original meaning long has been forgotten. Smith, for example, refers to “that force of precedent which in all times has been so strong to keep alive religious forms of which the original meaning is lost” (404), and he observes that “in almost every case the myth was derived from the ritual, and not the ritual from the myth...” (18). Frazer also observes that “myth changes while custom remains constant,” and he claims that “the history of religion is a long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason, to find a sound theory for an absurd practice” (*Bough* 49.5.1). Such theories “would have been merely different stories as to the circumstances under which the rite first came to be established, by the command or by the direct example of the god” (W. Smith 17). It is in the gradual process of revision of such myth that linear teleology began to modify the ancient doctrine of circular time, and the magical regeneration of fertility through the performance of ritual sacrifice and resurrection developed into narrative dramas of historicized gods and dynastic heroes while retaining their earlier plot outlines.

This dissertation proposes that Shakespeare’s long dramatic chronicle of the English fifteenth century likewise is written over these same plot outlines. As has been remarked, in the sequence of their composition the two tetralogies comprise a sixteen hour tragicomedy, during which English history sinks to depths of the winter of its discontent and then rises to the “hot summer” of the ideal Christian sun-king’s marriage with a historicized representative of the Earth Goddess which figures the marriage of the two warring nations, but also the unification of the nations and social classes of Britain, as well as of the white and red roses of the *Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*

whose discord has been the theme unifying the entire cycle. Earth and sun are two of the conventional objects of ritual sacred marriages cited by Frazer. In the Roman nuptials of Numa and Egeria, for example, “we have a reminiscence of a sacred marriage which the old Roman kings regularly contracted with a goddess of vegetation and water for the purpose of enabling him to discharge his divine or magical functions.” Frazer supposes that “the King and Queen of Rome masqueraded as god and goddess at their marriage, exactly as the King and Queen of Egypt appear to have done” (*Bough* 13.1). Some time after the forms of public religious ceremony no longer rested upon seasonal ritual performances by the royal and priestly families, as with the Edfu drama reflected in *Antony and Cleopatra*, this complex of theological and temporal ideas, along with its linear and circular tensions was transferred, “some earlier and others later” to what Bakhtin describes as “a nonofficial level. ... until they became the expression of folk consciousness, of folk culture. Such were the Carnival festivities of the ancient world, especially the Roman Saturnalias, and such were medieval Carnivals” (8). Such too were the English Mummings’ Plays as well as the Saint George plays, from which, according to Barber, Shakespeare derives much of the festivity of his comedies. These seasonal folk customs show “how cryptic and arbitrary action derived from ritual becomes when it is merely a fossil remnant. In a self-conscious culture, the heritage of cult is kept alive by art...” (15).

In its intertextual development, Shakespeare’s historiography constructs a complex temporality from its intermediary position which seeks to establish an equilibrium of agrarian seasonality and modern historicity in an idealized golden age based on the Tudor myth, and it is the final demise of this ideal that makes up the

“Tragique Scene” of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. As Kastan identifies the *Henry VI* plays with the negotiation between circular and linear conceptions of historical time, Ribner insists that they “are concerned with political issues of vital interest to the Elizabethan age, and they enunciate a deliberate and consistent philosophy of history” (105). A philosophy of history, or more precisely, an alchemy of historiography that attempts to emplot history into a comic golden age through the manipulation of its narrative representations, seems to me to be the theme and focus of Shakespeare’s use of genre in all of his works. If history exists nowhere outside of its narratives, the makers of its narratives may exert some influence on its ultimate generic emplotment. Whether an experiment in Early Modern political science or not, history in Shakespeare’s work, as Eric Mallin says, is “a constant force with variable coefficients” (1).

In addition to the ten English plays reproduced in the Histories section of the *Folio*, at least twelve other plays—nearly all the tragedies, including the three Roman plays, the Greek play, the three ancient British plays; *Hamlet*, which refers to Denmark’s significant role in English history; *Othello*, with its references to the repulsion of the Turks from Christian Europe; along with at least some of the comedies: *The Merchant of Venice* which treats the origins of capitalism in medieval Italy; and *Measure for Measure* with its underlying consciousness of the character of the European Reformation—all work out conflicts involving real and accurately complex historical referents, and arguments have been made for specific historical metaphor in every one of Shakespeare’s works. It often simply is taken for granted that such a complex and unprecedented survey of the history of western civilization should supply the setting for a corpus of plays concerning individual human passions and wholly composed of interpersonal dialogues.

That well over half of Shakespeare's work explicitly treats historical themes (and much of the rest, implicitly) on the contrary strongly supports the centrality of historiography itself to its discourse. As such, Shakespeare's Elizabethan historiography is organized around the history tetralogies as two halves of a dramatic epic: the first, as noted, an eight hour tragedy culminating in the formally tragic *Richard III*, and the second an eight hour tragicomedy culminating in the historicized sacred marriage of Henry V. In the context of the tetralogy cycle, the end crowns all, and each play becomes an act in a long tragicomedy. The dramatic genre of tragical histories such as *Richard III* and *Richard II* thus is rewritten as passing scenes in a larger tragical-comical-historical play, and the tetralogy cycle thereby demonstrates that history ultimately derives its genre from its *eschaton*, but unlike Christian historiography, it does not hesitate to ascribe progress to the independent judgment and will of humanity.

Not only does the second tetralogy end as a conventional Shakespearean comedy, but, as Marjorie Garber remarks, as "the first tetralogy predicts the second; the second also predicts the first," so that "the whole pattern of history comes full circle within the reverse order of Shakespeare's two historical tetralogies" (qtd. in P. Berry 368). Philippa Berry additionally remarks that this cyclical structure of the "preposterous" (literally "reverse") order of the tetralogies is not merely aesthetic, but

... is fully consistent with an important strand in late Renaissance attitudes towards time and history that has been largely neglected by contemporary critics interested in the problem of the text's relationship to history. For many thinkers of the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century were profoundly influenced by ancient conceptions of a cyclical or repetitive model of time.... (368)

Again according to Kastan, “*I Henry VI*, at least, serves ... to explore the ... temporal model of the Renaissance that developed in the humanist historiography and was based upon the assumption, as Seneca writes, that ‘all things are connected in a circle’” (16-17). Although Kastan thinks that neither the circular nor linear temporal model “informs the history plays,” the tetralogy cycle taken not as “Parts” but as a whole reconciles degenerative linear history to regenerative cyclical ritual temporality, and it is in this way that, as Kastan says, it represents “an experiment in dramatic form designed to give full recognition to the demands of time” (23). Shakespeare’s Tudor history is a type of Viconian history which postulates “at one and the same time the immanent unfolding of historical change and the providential *storia ideale eterna*” (Bahti 130).

Owing to the “open ended structure” introduced by the Epilogue to *Henry V* who foretells the immediate dissolution of Henry’s triumph, its Aristophanic conclusion does not constitute for Kastan a complete comic resolution (18), as “this seemingly complete action is embedded in a larger temporal context that the play is unable to enclose” (49) which “forces an audience to recognize the instability of the shape of this restructured history” (59). Sherman Hawkins also thinks that “both *Richard II* and *Richard III* are tragedies as well as histories,” and he observes that “both seem relatively disjunct and self-contained, whereas the Henry plays are comparatively open-ended and continuous,” thereby adopting an “epic” generic emplotment (29). Mallin moreover observes that:

Theatrical representations of history tend toward the broken, the intermittent, and thus tend not to sponsor perfectly cogent schemas or worldviews—as would, for instance, certain types of allegory. The failure of texts to inscribe their cultures with perfect coherence is not necessarily an aesthetic failure; indeed, it may show

the playwright's genuine attempt at mimesis—a “true” perception about the fragmentary nature of the historical world. (12)

Such use of allegory to sponsor perfectly cogent historical schemas is discussed in chapter 4 regarding *The Merchant of Venice*, but Shakespeare's historiography clearly does not aspire to the verisimilitude acceptable to a modern historian. The metanarrative world history that provides the setting for Shakespeare's plays incorporates obvious fictions, such as the Boar's Head subplot; alters historical facts, such as the dating of the death of Hotspur, and, in the case of *Macbeth*, constructs a fictional royal genealogy from fragments of the chronicles of different pseudohistorical persons. As such it represents the “intermediary step” identified by Claude Lévi-Strauss between a “static” mythology, in which “we find the same mythical elements combined over and over again” in “a closed system” and the “open system” of history (34). While Lévi-Strauss is referring to Native American story telling, he elsewhere acknowledges a “real separation” from mythical thought in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (4), and it would follow that analogous levels of development from mythology to history in story telling should be detectable. The epochal development may be obscured by the fact that the literate upper classes had inherited a continuous textual historiography from the Church during the Middle Ages when the agricultural serfdom still primarily defined its place in time by means of seasonal ritual.

Lévi-Strauss' development from a closed system to an open system evokes the development from cyclic to progressive time. As the “cyclical character” of time was “superseded by the sense of historic time” according to Bakhtin, the Elizabethan history play imposed questions of dramatic genre on its inventors who, apart from their own

ideological perspective, were constrained by audience expectation to a limited repertoire of plot structures. Secular histories such as *Richard III* had been depicted in Christian Europe primarily as tragedy in the form of *de casibus* cautionary tales demonstrating the futility of worldly ambition, or as merely unfinished and pending generic emplotment in chronicles, while sacred history had been portrayed as tragicomic in the mystery pageant cycles, as it is in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. In contrast with the "mirrors for magistrates," series of tragedies concluding as tragedy, the mystery cycles predominantly present series of tragicomedies concluding as tragicomedy. Their protagonists triumph after apparent defeat and death. Although they represent the end of history as an apocalyptic last judgment, the mystery cycles translate the death of history into a teleological transitional motif toward a final triumph of the eternal which emplots them as tragicomedy.

As book production became increasingly secular in the late middle ages, patronage grew for historical narratives that did not merely point to the tragic futility of worldly fortune exemplified in Chaucer's *Monk's Tale*, a *de casibus* "mirror for magistrates" collection of *exempla* of the tragic fall of princes. "Tragedies wol I telle," says the Monk,

Of whiche I have an hundred in my celle.
 Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storei,
 As olde bookes maken us memorie,
 Of hym that stood in greet prosperitee,
 And is yfallen out of heigh degree
 Into myserie, and endeth wrecchedly. (1971-1977)

After seventeen short tales of unkind fickle “fortune” and the comment that “whan men trusteth hire, thanne wol she faille, / And covere hire brighte face with a clowde” (2761-2766), the Monk is interrupted by the Knight. Illustrating what Bakhtin calls a “growing thirst for regeneration and renewal in the purely earthly sphere” (57), the successful soldier of fortune of the company finally objects to the general tenor of the Monk’s narrative.

Hoo! quod the knyght, good sire, namoore of this!

That ye han seyde is right ynough, ywis,

And muchel moore; for litel hevynesse

Is right ynough to mucche folk, I gesse.

I seye for me, it is a greet disese,

Whereas men han been in greet welthe and ese,

To heeren of hire sodeyn fal, allas!

And the contrarie is joye and greet solas,

As whan a man hath been in povre estaat,

And clymbeth up and wexeth fortunat,

And there abideth in prosperitee. (2767-2777)

The upwardly mobile professional soldier has had enough godly sermons upon the futility of worldly ambition, and the petit bourgeois Harry Bailey agrees. “Sire Monk, namoore of this, so God yow blesse” (2788). Their premature termination of the still little read Monk’s *contemptu mundi* tales is entitled “The prologe of the Nonnes Preestes Tale ... of the Cok and Hen, Chauntecleer and Pertelote,” which still is one of the favorite comic tales of the poem.

The new bourgeois historiography of the late Middle Ages accordingly gave rise to an intellectual focus, not only upon the recoverability of an ostensibly nonfictional historical narrative, but upon its various modes of generic emplotment. The pseudo-history of the British monarchy, exemplified in the chronicle emplotment of Layamon's *Brut*, had subsisted side by side with the divine tragicomedy of the mystery pageants. Both typically were produced by scribes of the Church, and both claim to represent the nonfictional history of the world, the stage presently occupied by their audience. Their narratives, nevertheless, do not overlap.⁷ As a function of the bourgeois revolution of the late Middle Ages, secular history plays followed the cycles of mystery plays in the exploitation of comic emplotment according to the aesthetic and ideological interests of its new bourgeois patronage.

The concept of a tragicomic political history was embraced by the English Reformation, and this tradition achieves its definitive expression in Shakespeare's tetralogy cycle. As drama had done in Classical Greece, the proto-Hegelian sublation⁸ of traumatic historical change thus effected characterizes the onset in Early Modern England of what Phyllis Rackin identifies as "historical consciousness" (1) or what White refers to throughout *Metahistory* variously as "historical thinking," "historical imagination," "historical knowledge," or "the historical sense." Such a period of cultural historicization

7 Although often the Old Testament history is appended to the prologue of national mythologies, such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's and the *Brut*, which cites "Seint Beda," "Seinte Albin," "þe feire Austin," and Wace (Layamon 16-21) as precedence. These typically proceed from "æfter þan flode; þe from Drihtene com" (10) to "þa Grickes" who "hefden Troye; mid teone bi-wonen" (38). The English and French, for instance, identified their founders with characters from Homer's Troy.

8 Hegelian sublation is "the recuperation of change, loss, negation, and sheer difference through their systematic elevation from contingency to proper...meaning" (Bahti 129).

is illustrated by Herodotus, “the father of history,” according to Cicero, in whose work there nevertheless “are a countless number of legends” (qtd. in Herodotus 369). One of the first of Herodotus’ *Histories* concerns Arion, “the first person we know of to write, title and produce a *dithyramb* in Corinth” who was carried there “on the back of a dolphin” (10). The tale of Arion reproduces an episode in the life of Dionysos commonly identified in prehistoric seasonal ritual, and Arion “told the whole story when he arrived” at Corinth, no doubt in the form of a *dithyramb*. The *dithyramb* is a hymn to Dionysos recognized since Aristotle as the precursor to Euripidean tragedy (Chambers, *Mediaeval* 188), and this tale of the introduction of dramatic tragedy into Classical Greece as a thinly veiled episode in the life of Dionysos is presented as an event of the nonfictional past by “the father of history.” Herodotus thus presents a prototype of the contemporary development of scientific historiography and dramatic genre in a period of disintegration of traditions of religious ritual. Herodotus’ *Histories* in fact are largely comprised of such myths attributed to supposed historical characters. Shakespeare’s tetralogy cycle emerges similarly during a period of transference of the pattern of seasonal ritual to the plots of aesthetic drama. Constructed, like “all of Elizabethan drama” according to Ribner, on the foundations of “primitive folk ritual and the medieval religious drama” along with “the regularizing influences of classical models” (30), the tetralogy cycle superimposes a highly mythologized historical narrative on a ritual plot structure whose ultimate genre is tragicomic.

D. Seasonal Pattern and Shapes of Time in Shakespeare's Elizabethan Metanarrative.

The regenerative function of the sacred marriage of the triumphant solar-divine-king, Henry V, to the goddess of summer foison, the Princess of France, links the termination of the ritual cycle at the conclusion of the second tetralogy to its funereal inauguration at the opening of the first. In the *Folio* text of *Henry V*, in the midst of their bawdy repartee, Bourgonne accordingly tells Henry "If you would coniure in her, you must make a Circle" (3282-3283). As stage magic, this figure might evoke the circle drawn by the "Coniurer laureate" Doctor Faustus to summon Mephastophilis (263), or by Mak in the second Shepherd's Play of the Townley Cycle to confine the sleeping shepherds while he robs them. "Bot abowte you a serkyll / as rownde as a moyn, / To I haue done that I wyll / tyll that it be noyn, / ... Ouer youre heydys my hand I lyft, / Outt go youre een, fordo your syght..." (278-287). If Bourgonne indicates a rounded belly or something pornographic, on the other hand, his circle would suit the sex-magic rituals responsible for the erotic tone of dramatic comedy (Cornford 23).

Those who had seen Shakespeare's *Henry VI* on the stage a decade earlier probably did not recall that Bourgonne's "Circle" resurrects la Puzel's (*i.e.*, Joan of Arc's) English Circle that ends with the mourning ritual at the opening of the cycle. "Glory is like a Circle in the Water," she tells us, "Which neuer ceaseth to enlarge it selfe, / Till by broad spreading, it disperse to naught. / With *Henries* death, the English Circle ends, / Dispersed are the glories it included" (340-344). In the restored chronology of the *Folio* the logic of Shakespeare's circle thus lost in the original performance is recovered, as its "making" by Bourgonne leads directly to its "end" by Puzel. The Seasonal Pattern of the ritual drama from death through resurrection to sacred marriage

conversely is obscured in the *Folio* text. We are directed towards it, however, by its reiteration in microcosm in the second tetralogy in which Bourgoigne's "Garden of the World" (3025) that is to serve as the setting for the happy union resurrects the mourning ritual "Garden" of Richard II, and since which the winter supplantation, underworld agon, resurrection, and martial triumph of the sun-god had been enacted in the intervening plays.

By contrast with its stage production, in the Histories section of the *Folio*, as in history itself, Henry's funeral at the beginning of the first tetralogy follows his wedding at the close of the second tetralogy, and time as tragic linear teleology in the first tetralogy merely continues its "downward path ... ineluctably to the despotism of Richard III" (Hawkins 23). The structure of the cycle in its narrative chronological order then amounts to the comic regenerative circle of the second tetralogy followed by the downward tragic line of the first. This is the structure of the cycle as published in the *Folio* where it mimics the structure of the Shakespearean corpus: *i.e.*, an Elizabethan regenerative comical-tragical-historical circular narrative followed by a tragical Jacobean downward linear narrative. The reference of *Henry V*'s Epilogue to what "oft our stage hath shown" (3381), however, informs the careful reader that (in history itself) performance of the following tetralogy preceded the previous tetralogy and that the text therefore also has had to "make a Circle" in order to present Shakespeare's history in the *Folio* in its linear temporal aspect. In actual history, after the completion of *Henry V*, Shakespeare's historiography advanced from its tragicomic circularity artistically to the historical *Tragedie of Julius Caesar* (F1), and the *Tragicall Historie of Hamlet* (Q2)

contemporary with the turn of the century and the end of long-held hopes for a Tudor succession.

The cycle form of the tetralogies emphasizes the embeddedness of individual texts in a metanarrative, and the resulting complexity of meaning serves Shakespeare as a metaphor for history. Historical events, moments, and periods, like plays, derive their meaning simultaneously along the two axes of paradigm and syntagm. Whatever tragedies and comedies comprise its development, the genre of history as a whole, as well as of each historical moment and period, is determined by the ultimate eschatology of the long narrative. The many discourses upon “Time,” “History,” “Rumor,” etc. delivered by the Prologues and Choruses of the tetralogies and elsewhere construct an intertextual coherence analogous to the construction of history itself as a coherent periodic progression of universal humanity. Historical events, such as the marriage of Shakespeare’s Henry V to Katherine of France, furthermore, perform the identical function of many of the ancient forms of the ritual *hieros gamos* in the legitimization of political authority. The divine right of ancient kings was thought to depend on their power to act as medium for the fertility spirit in the seasonal drama. “[W]hen the king performed the ritual act of connubium (the so-called ‘sacred marriage’),” says Gaster “a purely ‘economic’ measure designed to galvanize the vitality of the topocosm, this was translated in the accompanying myth into the nuptials of a god and goddess” (*Thespis* 79).⁹ This *hieros gamos* is identified by Cornford as the link between ancient ritual and

9 “e.g., of Marduk and Zarpanitum at Babylon, Nabu and Tashmetu at Borsippa, Osiris and Isis in Egypt, Attis and Cybele in Asia Minor, and Zeus and Hera (or their local equivalents) in Greece” (79).

the marriages that also conclude the Aristophanes' comedies. According to Herodotus, there was a large shrine at the top of the ziggurat at Babylon,

... and inside the shrine is a huge, richly covered bed no human sleeps there at night except one lone native woman whom the god has chosen from all the others these priests also say that the god himself frequents the shrine and rests on the bed, just as, according to the Egyptians, the same thing happens in the same way at Egyptian Thebes (62)

This event seems the basis for the episode of the *Gilgamesh* above cited, and is similarly translated into the Babylonian story of *The War of the Gods*. According to Gaster's version "when [Ea] had conquered his enemies and set up a pillar to record his triumph, he made a gay and beautiful bower, and when he had finished it he took Damkina, his bride. And there, in that holy and blessed abode, there was born to them the mightiest and strongest of gods, the prince of princes, the king of kings, LORD MARDUK HIMSELF" (*Oldest* 54). Cornford says that in "Comedy the emphasis still falls on the phallic element, and the fertility marriage, and, from that day to this, not only has a marriage been the canonical end of Comedy, but this whole form of art ... has been marked all through its history by an erotic tone" (23).

The summer aspect of Shakespeare's ritual *hieros gamos*, foreshadowed both in the *Gilgamesh* and in the *War of the Gods*, is emphasized in Bourgoingne's equation in the final scene of *Henry V* of Katherine with "Summer'd ... Flyes at Bartholomew-tyde" (3298) and of France with the "Garden of the World," from which Peace has "too long been chas'd, / And all her Husbandry doth lye on heapes, / Corrupting in it owne fertilitie" (3025-3027). The long seduction by Henry as the sun of Katherine as the Earth

is prefaced with Bourgogne's invocation of "all our Vineyards, Fallowes, Meades, and Hedges, Defectiue in their natures" (3041-3042), and the *hieros gamos* of the tetralogy cycle thus identifies its comic resolution with its ultimately religious ancestry. This "Garden of the World" with its French Earth goddess has many prototypes in myth and ritual. Bourgogne's garden furthermore replies to Richard II's gardener who complains in the first play of the tetralogy that "our Sea-walled Garden, the whole Land, / Is full of Weedes, her fairest Flowers choakt vp, / Her Fruit-trees all vnpruin'd, her Hedges ruin'd" (1853-1855).

As Smith observes concerning the ancient Semites, "the annual mourning for the dead god seems often to have been brought into relation to agriculture and the cycle of agricultural feasts" (413). As the summer component of Shakespeare's adaptation of the ritual drama, the second tetralogy similarly involves both mourning and jubilation rituals in which collective weeping and sacrifice followed by celebratory feasting accompanied various tasks of the agricultural cycle. Despite their decades of separation, including performance presumably with opportunity to revise, the apparent errata of both Q and F versions of Richard's ritual garden confuse the choice between grief and joy. "Of sorrow or of grieffe" in the 1597 Quarto merely is emended to "Of Sorrow, or of Griefe" in the *Folio*, as Richard's queen and her maid seem to debate the genre of their play.

La. Madame, wee'le tell Tales.

Qu. Of Sorrow, or of Griefe?

La. Of eyther, Madame.

Qu. Of neyther, Girle.

For if of Ioy, being altogether wanting,

It doth remember me the more of Sorrow:

Or if of Griefe, being altogether had,

It addes more Sorrow to my want of Ioy: ...

La. I could weepe, Madame, would it doe you good.

Qu. And I could sing, would weeping doe me good,

And neuer borrow any Teare of thee. [my italics] (1817-1831)

Like the Queen of Egypt and a priestess four thousand years earlier, these two Earth goddesses in their fertility garden at least discuss the mourning and ululation for the death of Osiris that was performed in the Ramesseum drama. In Egypt, says Gaster, “the two female ‘keeners’—the two ‘kites,’ as they were called—who performed this rite were identified as the goddesses Isis and Nephthys wailing, like some early Mary and Martha, over the corpse of the discomfited Osiris” (*Thespis* 77). Shakespeare’s *Richard II* thus shows an analog of the tragic winter face of the Egyptian drama cycle just as its comic summer face is recalled in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

In order to progress to its comic conclusion, the ancient ritual drama often depicts the death and winter *agon*, usually in the underworld, of the “dead” sun-god. Like the sacrifice and resurrection of the summer spirit of fertility, the winter episodes of the cycle involve purgative and sacrificial ritual which leads to the Christmas jubilation of his nativity. The winter festival, furthermore, very frequently involved a realignment of the calendar. In Assyria from the second millennium BC the lunar calendar was kept in line with the solar year by the addition of intercalary months. “[T]he months of Ululu (the sixth month) and Addaru (the twelfth month) were used for intercalation” (Walker 45). Throughout premodern Europe, according to Frazer, “the time from mid-winter to spring,

during which the labours of the husbandmen were ... suspended, and nature herself appeared to be dormant ... was ... excluded from the calendar, the object of which was to regulate the activities of the people during the remainder of the year" (*Fasti* 385). While the mourning and jubilation ululations of seasonal ritual performed during such intercalary months were sorted into Classical tragedy, comedy, and satire, there were many variations of order and significance of episodes, and the words for cries of joy or sorrow, like their rituals, are often hard to distinguish. As the divine keepers of Shakespeare's *Richard II* can not seem to distinguish "sorrow" from "joy," "in Greek, the verb *elelizo* is used indiscriminately in both senses, as are also the analogous *ololuzo* and *alalazo*. Similarly, the Hebrew *h-l-l*, 'shout for joy,' is related to '*a-l-l* and *y-l-l*, 'cry woe,' just as is the Accadian *elelu* to the antithetical *alalu*" (Gaster *Thespis* 33). Smith accords that

Among the Semites ... the shouting (*hallel*, *iahhlil*) that accompanied the sacrifice may probably, in its oldest shape, have been a wail over the death of the victim, though it ultimately took the form of a chant of praise (Hallelujah), or, among the Arabs, degenerated into a meaningless repetition of the word *labbaika*. For it is scarcely legitimate to separate the Semitic *iahhlil* from the Greek and Libyan [*ololygi*], and indeed the roots [Heb. *a-l-l* and *y-l-l*] ... "to chant praises" and "to howl," are closely connected. (431)

Two elements, associated with "two emotional climaxes," says George Widengren, "that of laughter, associated with the celebration of the resurrection of the deity and his sacred marriage, and that of weeping, attached to the death of the deity" were prominent in the creation story enacted in the religious rituals of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Canaan (179).

As Bakhtin puts it: “at the early stage of the archaic grotesque, time is given as two parallel (actually simultaneous) phases of development, the initial and the terminal, winter and spring, death and birth” (24), and according to Plutarch “the Phrygians believe that the god sleeps in winter and is awake in summer, and with Bacchic frenzy they celebrate in the one season his being lulled to sleep and in the other his being aroused” (*Isis* 227).

This undifferentiated “Bacchic frenzy” recalls the “Sorrow” or “grief” of Richard II’s queen as well as Lysander’s response to the lamentable suicide of Pyramus performed in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. “[M]ore merrie teares,” he tells Theseus, “the passion of loud laughter / Neuer shed” (1866-1867). According to Smith, “the annual celebration of the [heathen Semitic] god’s death hardly suggested any serious thought that was not presently drowned in an outburst of mirth saluting the resurrection of the Baal on the following morning ... ” (414). It is in the differentiation in this seasonal cycle between ritual weeping and laughter, however, that Harrison, Murray, and Cornford find the origins of the structures of Euripidean tragedy and Aristophanic comedy and in which lies the probable origin of Bakhtin’s Carnival laughter. Smith adds that “in ordinary sacrificial service, the ancient attitude of awe at the death of the victim was transformed into one of gladness, and the shouting underwent a corresponding change of meaning” (432). Harrison additionally identifies myths of Theseus (such as in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* discussed in my epilogue) as episodes of the life of Dionysos historicized (327). A. B. Cook concludes that, at the Anthesteria “the begetting of Dionysos was celebrated with rites that led on towards comedy,” whereas the rites of the Rural Dionysia “developed into tragedy” (688).

Next to the wailing of the two kites in the dying Richard's garden, the association of reaping or pruning with sacrifice of the god of fertility in the ritual cycle is not neglected by Richard II's Gardener who tells his servant to "Goe thou, and like an Executioner / Cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays" (1843-1844). Here the metaphor is historicized by being referred to the "Earle of Wiltshire, Bushie, Greene" (1864). These in turn refer history back to one of the original victims of the ritual sacrifice: the bushy green god of rural agrarian paganism, a late medieval version of whom is beheaded and resurrected in *Sir Gawain and the Grene Gome*. Chambers recognizes the "beheading game" of the poem, itself, incidentally, a product of Richard's fourteenth-century literary Renaissance, to be a "Crystemas gomen." In the manner of Theseus discussing the entertainment at Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night gomen*, Arthur in the medieval poem says that the beheading game may supply the lack of "enterludez" (*Folk* 161). In the beheading of the Green gome, however, "it is summer, whose death is mimed merely as a preliminary to its joyful renewal; and ... the leaf-clad worshipper [is] ... the priest-king, once actually, and still in some sort and show, slain at the festival" (Chambers, *Mediaeval* 186). It likewise is summer whose death is mimed in the structure of *Richard II*, merely as a preliminary to its joyful renewal at the conclusion of *Henry V*. In his comparison of the patterns unifying the two tetralogies, Hawkins furthermore observes that, in the two Richard plays:

... the shift in power is marked by the execution of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan in one play and of Bushy, Green, and Wiltshire in the other. It culminates near the end of Act III in scenes strikingly alike in their staging. From below ...

Northumberland and Buckingham address their hypocritical eloquence to Richard and Gloucester, who appear with bishops on the castle walls above them. (30)

Such parallels clearly are not arranged at random, and I would add that they make repeated allusions to the parallelism of the historical narrative with the ritual Seasonal Pattern. The Grey Vaughan Rivers made cold and dead by the boar-king of the winter first tetralogy thus balance the Bushy Green Wiltshire sacrificed in the summer second tetralogy. Bourgoigne's "Garden of the World" emphasizes Henry's aspect as the ultimately triumphant sun-god. In writing the historical marriage of Henry V, an inconsequential example in fact of one of the commonest occurrences in political history, as the *hieros gamos* at the conclusion of a dramatic ritual cycle, Shakespeare constructs a demi-deified English monarch, a self-consciously idealized archetype of the providential Tudor Empire, according to a long tradition of establishment of divine right through supernatural authority and magical fertility powers. Like the king in primitive societies described by Gaster, the king of England becomes "an avatar of a preterpunctual, perpetual being [whose] divine qualities and powers [are] inherent, not conferred." Henry V becomes reigning monarch in his immediate aspect while in its continuous aspect, "the god would become 'the Crown'" (*Bough* 169 n1), a divine authority Shakespeare's ritualized avatar thus bestows upon its legitimate heirs.

In its underlying conflict between eschatology and eternal return, the linear principle of the seasonal cycle drama is more aligned with its *mythoi* (words spoken) which are essentially immaterial and fluid, and its circular principle with its *ritus* or *dromenoi*¹⁰ whose set and props are material and so tend toward long inertia and

repetition. As with the life of Hegel's tree, ritual is a "tedious chronicle in which the same cycle recurs again and again" for many centuries, while the changing aspect of myth, like Hegel's spirit, "passes through endlessly varying forms and is essentially progress." As Smith puts it "... the antique religions had for the most part no creed; they consisted entirely of institutions and practices. ... as a rule we find that while the practice was rigorously fixed, the meaning attached to it was extremely vague, and the same rite was explained by different people indifferent ways, without any question of orthodoxy or heterodoxy ..." (16). This arbitrary and contingent relationship of signifying myth to signified ritual can be seen in our own ritual sacrifice of an evergreen at the winter solstice, both in each household and at a central community sacred ground, such as Rockefeller Center, many long centuries after anyone has pretended to resurrect the sun from the netherworld and ensure the return of spring thereby. In the same way, the action of Classical comedy and tragedy from which the Western tradition of dramatic genre almost wholly derives is easily seen to follow the plot structures of ancient ritual reenactments of divine creation while their *mythoi* mix mythological episodes of national history with contemporary social critique. "The pattern of the ritual became the plot of the drama" (Gaster *Thespis* 83).

As I have attempted to demonstrate, the process of translation of ritual patterns to aesthetic drama is prototypical of the composition of Shakespeare's metanarrative tetralogy cycle. The same ritual patterns also have been suggested as the pagan source for the form and social function of the Christian mystery pageants of the European Middle Ages which likely were an element of the introduction to drama of Shakespeare and his

audience. Peter Burke, for example, observes that, by the time the Reformation attempted to supplant popular festivals with its own godly versions of vernacular *ludi*,¹¹ the Catholics already had been practicing such supplantation for centuries. “In AD 601 Pope Gregory the Great advised Bishop Augustine, who was doing mission work in darkest England, that ... idols were to be destroyed, but the temples were to be converted into churches, and since they have a custom of sacrificing many oxen to devils, let some other solemnity be substituted in its place” (229). If the survival of the mockeries of Robin Hood and Saint George-and-the-Dragon plays into the twentieth century is an indication of their original centrality to the seasonal rites of pagan religion, as I would suggest, the centrality of the mystery cycles to the same medieval festivals indicates that they originated as “some other solemnity” substituted in place of equally elaborate pagan ritual drama cycles. For Chambers, in such winter and summer *ludi* and Folk Plays “we must be content to discern, dimly enough beneath the accretion of dance pattern, chivalric romance, histrionic and folk-lore borrowings, and sentimental wooing, a primitive nucleus in which skin-clad worshippers, accompanied by a traditional Woman, capered about the slain figure of a man who had been King of the feast” (*Folk* 225).

Margaret Murray observes that what are referred to in the Middle Ages as “witches’ Sabbaths” were held quarterly, on the second of February (Candlemas day), the Eve of May, the first of August (Lammas), and the Eve of November (All Hallow E’en),” and supposes an “extreme primitiveness of the cult ... reaching back possibly to the Palaeolithic era” (77). Chambers also cites “...the well-known Wyclifite sermon against

11 The word *ludi* covers a wide range of activity, from dances, to plays, to all kinds of sports and games.

miracle plays,” in which “an imaginary opponent of the preacher’s argument is made to say that after all it is ‘lesse yvels that thei have thyre recreaceon by pleyinge of myraclis than bi pleyinge of other japis’; and again that ‘to pley in rebaudye’ is worse than ‘to pley in myriclis’” (*Mediaeval* 84). Joseph McCabe accords with the thin line between secular popular *ludi*, pre-Christian religious ritual, and witches’ Sabbaths defined by Murray.

We know that in some regions like the South of France there was no secrecy whatever about the meeting and practically everybody went. We saw that the witches numbered hundreds even in small towns, and in some cases a third of the population; and that a papal secretary speaks of Sabbaths attended by from 3,000 to 10,000. The Great Sabbath (quarter day) must have been like a fair that began after dusk (still the most popular time at such shows and lit by the moon or torches, People took food and wine; and many took their young children to be initiated. (22)

Citing “the scarcity of detailed factual records” concerning the manner in which “the continental Passion Plays and the English Cycles came into being as part of the Corpus Christi festivities,” Glynn Wickham furthermore states that:

Partly on account of the liberty of action accorded to the bishops in devising forms of celebrating the new Feast in the manner most acceptable to the local community, and partly as a result of those violent shifts in religious, political and social philosophy that were serving to change not only art forms and folk customs but life itself in the fourteenth century, the new vernacular *ludi* found a ready welcome from churchmen and laymen alike. (64)

Although Wickham identifies these “violent shifts” in religious philosophy solely with the proto-Reformation of Wyclif and Hus against Roman Catholicism, parts of Europe remained unconverted from pre-Christian religion into the fifteenth century and pagan festival practices survived much longer.

The fact that the vernal equinox, over which the Roman Church laid Easter and Corpus Christi, is one of the universal occasions for the observance of pagan rites, together with the testimony of Gregory the Great and observations of modern missionary practices, suggests that what made these official church celebrations “acceptable” to local tradition-directed communities was the close approximation of their attendant rituals to customary ribaldry and “other japes.” As Catholic saints’ names are assigned to gods that converted cultures refuse to relegate to the status of fallen angel, the forms of ritual are allowed to subsist as their *mythoi* are fundamentally transformed. While their *mythos* represented a sacred history that was providential and linearly teleological, moreover, the structure of the *dromenoi* of the medieval pageants in more palpable ways remained circular. Besides performing the same drama in the same place at the same time every year for the same people generation after generation, the pageant wagons often proceeded in a spatial circle, and the represented biblical episodes, such as *Abraham and Isaac* and *Noah’s Flood*, emphasize the circular tragicomic death and rebirth motif of seasonal ritual myth. Medieval pageants thereby rewrote the pagan performance of circular eternal return, embodied in the spirits of fertility retained in the vernacular *ludi* of seasonal festivals (exemplified in Robin Hood and Maid Marian as well as Saint George and the Dragon), as the linear sacred teleology of biblical history without completely disorienting and alienating their audiences.

According to Laroque, “the week after Easter, together with Whitsun Week and the twelve days of Christmas, were the villein’s three long holidays” (91). In addition to the vernal equinox, these are Christian approximations of summer and winter solstitial seasons whose pagan rites are turned into comedy, on the one hand, in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and in the Whitsuntide Sheepshearing festival of the long fourth act of *The Winter’s Tale*, and on the other, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and in *The Taming of the Shrew* discussed in chapter 2. According to McCabe, these dates point back to “the ancient cult of the Mother-Earth Goddess” (21), and it should be recalled that the Whitsuntide festival of *The Winter’s Tale* is attended by Perdita (“the lost maiden”) as the goddess Flora, while a ring of fairies capers about Herne the Hunter in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. “There is an old tale goes, that Herne the / Hunter (sometime a keeper heere in Windsor Forrest) / Doth all the winter time, at still midnight / Walke round about an Oake, with great rag’d-hornes (2150-2153). Chambers notes that around Whitsuntide both secular and miracle plays were performed along with pageants and May-games. “Some of these plays were doubtless miracles, but so far as they were secular, the subjects of them were naturally drawn ... from the ballads of the Robin Hood cycle” (*Mediaeval* 177). The connection between Robin Hood and Robin Goodfellow is remarked in chapter 2 regarding *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and together with descriptions of the ancient Near East by Plutarch, Ovid, Herodotus and others, the surviving remnants of pagan festival drama in the vernacular *ludi* of Mummer’s plays, Plough plays, Robin Hood plays, Sword dances, and Morris dances, and Christian pageants of Shakespeare’s provincial youth are likely sources for the generic

structuration of the ritual cycle informing in the metanarrative structures of his Elizabethan drama.

The structural tensions between tragic linearity and comic circularity suggested in the barrenness of Shakespeare's *Phoenix and Turtle* furthermore make a striking analogy to the seasonal ritual drama prototypes for the same tensions in Shakespeare's tetralogy cycle. The function of seasonal ritual as a means of escape from the tragic downward slope of linear historical temporality through the recycling of the topocosm in dramatic reenactment of an originary myth is the premise of Eliade's analysis of the "invention of history" in the ancient Near East. Regeneration rites, says Eliade, involve "in their structure and meaning, an element of regeneration through repetition of an archetypal act, usually of the cosmogonic act." The temporal function of such "antihistorical" ritual, according to Eliade, "is the abolition of concrete time." The refusal of archaic peoples to preserve memory of the linear historical past indicates a willful rejection of the value of "non-repetitive, non-archetypal" events and of themselves as historical beings (85). R. G. Collingwood similarly claims about ancient Greek thought, which he and many others, citing Aristotle, identify as based on a cyclical repetition of time, that it "has a very definite prevailing tendency not only uncongenial to the growth of historical thought but actually based ... on a rigorously anti-historical metaphysics" (qtd. in Driver 20). The repetition of episodes from the lives of Year-gods at the cardinal points of the agricultural cycle in state religion and in popular festivals defended archaic peoples from a non-repeating and thus unknown future which appeared to them to promise a permanently deteriorating state of winter barrenness. The rituals of collective laughter and weeping that accompanied these performances established the original links of temporal linearity

with tragic historical mortality, and temporal circularity with its regenerative comic recuperation.

Shakespeare's dramatization of English history confers divine right upon the Tudor dynasty in the same manner that these archaic performance cycles had co-opted popular deistic myth and ritual as a means of legitimizing the authority of the bronze-age kings and priests who seasonally performed them. The two Elizabethan comedies discussed at length in this dissertation, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merchant of Venice*, exemplify the progress of this interplay of dramatic genre and ritual patterns in relation to the first and second tetralogies, while the tetralogy cycle mimics this ancient conflation of cosmogonic myth with dynastic history. The frequently noted ambiguities of Shakespeare's historiographical tetralogy cycle, especially in its triumphal climax in the idealized sun-king Henry V, nevertheless express an increasingly ambivalent attitude toward the Tudor monarchy whose providential legitimacy Henry's dramatic deification is meant to imply. This ambivalence foreshadows the metaphoric renunciation of Shakespeare's early idealism in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. When Shakespeare conceived the structure of his historiography, as we have seen, not only were accounts of ancient ritual drama prominent in his sources, but precedence for the application of the circular and linear principles in the plots and structures of ritual performance to a tragicomic historiography was well established. It is not strange, then, that members of the King's Men responsible for the posthumous arrangement of the *First Folio*, as well as some or all of the *vatum chorus* of *Loves Martyr*, should share a familiarity and complicity with the seasonal ritual terms of Shakespeare's historiographical metanarrative.

E. Seasonal Pattern in Shakespeare's *Folio*.

An analysis of the generic sections of the *First Folio* suggests that the metanarrative principles structuring Shakespeare's dramatic development were applied to its ordering of the plays. The collaboration of the editors of the *First Folio* in Shakespeare's metanarrative discourse is seen first in the unlikelihood of a random ordering of the plays, second in the observation that, like Shakespeare's corpus, the *Folio*'s metanarrative is emplotted as a long tragicomedy, and finally in the use of the circular and linear structural elements of ritual drama in the plays as the specific mechanism of tragicomic containment. In "Textual Transmission and the Genre of Shakespeare's *Troilus*," William Elton surveys what can be reconstructed of the placement of the plays within the generic sections of the *First Folio*, but his description of the problems of transmission, while explaining why some decisions made by the *Folio* editors were compulsory, make no attempt to explain those that were not, beyond chronology of composition and placement in the appropriate section according to the editors' superficial understanding of dramatic genre.

The presumption that section assignment and "convenience" were the only considerations of the *Folio* editors in the arrangement of the whole work (79) leads Elton to accede to the conclusion, generally accepted since W. W. Greg, that the mislabeling of *Cymbeline* as a "Tragedie," and its consequent position at the end of the last section of the *Folio* was the result of "indifference or ignorance" on the part of the editors (78). I argue on the contrary that the ordering of the plays in the *First Folio* was directed by thematic and generic principles which reflect principles unifying Shakespeare's corpus. It is these unifying principles that this dissertation identifies as undergoing deconstruction

in Shakespeare's *Phoenix and the Turtle*. "Aesthetic investment in the unity of the work of art ... with its real efflorescence in the Renaissance and after" (Bahti 125) is evident in the careful arrangement of the *First Folio* described by Elton. The narrative unity of the *Folio* is inseparable from the problem of its ultimate generic emplotment which is determined, according to the literary theory of its day, above all by its conclusion. While it might not seem remarkable to a casual reader, it simply is incredible that the editors of the *First Folio*, including actors of Shakespeare's company who probably had performed *Cymbeline* as second in the series of final Romances, were so "ignorant" in the principles of genre that they could have mistaken it for a tragedy. *Cymbeline*'s generic characteristics clearly align it with the other tragicomedies which conversely are placed in the Comedies section. As the conclusion of the *Folio*, it instead effectually points to a circular reading of the work. Not only does the chronology of composition lead us back to the Comedies section after the *Folio*'s conclusion, but the tragical-comical-pastoral genre of *Cymbeline* is emblematic of the development of aesthetic drama out of seasonal ritual thus far described. As both Eliade and Gaster have said, the function of the repeating annual cycle of seasonal ritual drama was to preserve the cyclical regeneration into springtime fertility from a mortal linear descent into the permanent barrenness of winter. The Year god was aided in his combat with the demons of the underworld, of winter, night, death, and chaos, through careful periodic reenactment of the original conflict that created the world. As an example of Shakespeare's adaptation of seasonal ritual to dramatic tragicomedy, *Cymbeline* preserves the *Folio* from its descent to mortality through a cyclical regeneration towards the springtime *Tempest*.

The failed renewal of the hero's "life lease" that emplots each of the plays of the *Folio's* Tragedies section and characterizes its long metanarrative thus is contained at its conclusion by the tragicomic circular trajectory of *Cymbeline* toward *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* in the Comedies section in a manner analogous to the function of ancient religious ritual. The deaths of its two villains might seem to distinguish *Cymbeline* from Shakespeare's other tragicomedies and to justify its separate placement in the Tragedies. Driver cites John Fletcher who says that "tragi-comedy" is so called "in respect it wants deaths which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it which is enough to make it no comedy" (169). *The Tempest* accordingly would be the *Folio's* only tragicomedy, and yet the deaths of Mamillius and Antigonus do not preclude *The Winter's Tale* from the Comedies section. The principle that the conclusion of the drama determines its genre otherwise is scrupulously observed in the ordering of the *Folio*, and *Cymbeline*, like *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, ends in the affirmation of the marriage of the young protagonists and a conventional *komos*, and thus the play unquestionably belongs with them in the Comedies.¹²

Cym. Set we forward: Let

A Roman, and a Brittain Ensigne waue

Friendly together: so through *Luds-Towne* march,

12 "[*komos*, *komi*] 1. properly a village festival: a revel, carousal, merry-making, Lat. *comissatio* ... it ended in the party parading the streets crowned, bearing torches, singing, dancing, and playing frolics..." (Liddell-Scott. *Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*). Harrison, Gaster, and Cornford trace the *Komos*, the triumphal procession that concludes all of Aristophanes' comedies, "from which, in all probability, comedy (*i.e.*, *komodia*) derives its name" (Cornford 66), to early Greek religious ritual. The procession is archetypically to a feast, and thus the association with food *e.g.* Spanish *Comidas*. The conclusion of *Cymbeline* unambiguously conforms to the generic convention.

And in the Temple of great Iupiter
 Our Peace wee'l ratifie: Seale it with Feasts.
 Set on there: Neuer was a Warre did cease
 (Ere bloodie hands were wash'd) with such a Peace.

Exeunt. (3812-3819)

Unlike Shakespeare's tragedies, *Hamlet* for instance, the closing drums here are signaled by the eponymous hero of the play, rather than by a replacement after his death.

Cymbeline furthermore shares with *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* various episodes of "the child lost or exposed in infancy or captured by pirates and other evil-doers" and the mother-and-child-journey motifs. The exposed child and *mater dolorosa* according to Cornford, were derived by Roman comedy "not from the stock-in-trade of Aristophanes and his predecessors, but directly from the Tragedy of Euripides" (63), which Gilbert Murray shows to derive from the ritual cycle. J. M. Robertson remarks that "under all disguises it seems to be the Sun-Child, or Day-God, who is so born" (193). The prominence of such episodes in Shakespeare's tragicomedies is emblematic of the ultimate derivation of both tragedy and comedy from the mourning and jubilation aspects of the same religious ritual whose plot structures also are adapted to the tragicomic tetralogy cycle. In *The Winter's Tale*, Hermione travels to prison pregnant with Perdita who is then carried by Paulina out of prison and then by Antigonus to the mythical seacoast of Bohemia¹³ and exposed to the peril of a bear; in *The Tempest*, the infant

13 Bohemia is a region frequently cited by Frazer for pagan seasonal rituals surviving into the twentieth century. Gaster furthermore observes that the exposed divine child "is often said to be exposed *beside water*: Moses, on the banks of the Nile; Sargon, of the Euphrates; and Romulus and Remus, of the Tiber" (*Oldest* 170).

Miranda is set adrift with her father, as Sycorax had been enisled to give birth to Caliban, an exposed demi-divine child; in *Pericles* Thaisa is set adrift in a coffin before her magical resurrection, and Mariana is taken to the wilderness to be killed and then is kidnapped by pirates and other evil-doers to await her *anagnorisis*.¹⁴ Cymbeline's twin infant sons had been kidnapped and taken to the wilderness until their *anagnorisis*; Posthumus, who was adopted by the king as an orphaned divine child, sails into exile; Imogen is left in the wilderness for dead until her *anagnorisis* and resurrection. These sun-god ritual episodes in the three tragicomedies of the *Folio* are placed between rather than within its three generic sections, *i.e.*, *The Tempest* before the Comedies, *The Winter's Tale* between the Comedies and Histories, and *Cymbeline* after the Tragedies. As Elton shows, the generically complex *Troilus and Cressida* was moved by the editors after the beginning of the *Folio*'s first printing to occupy the place between the Histories and Tragedies. The nexus of ritual drama, tragedy, and comedy in exposed-divine-child and child-carrying motifs in Shakespeare's final Romances thereby is positioned by the *Folio* editors where it points simultaneously to tragic linear and comic circular readings, the former associated with historical eschatology and the latter with ritual topocosmic regeneration.

In tracing the complementary development in Euripidean tragedy of the exposed babe and journey-of-mother-and-child rituals (described by Cornford in the context of Old Comedy), Gilbert Murray reconstructs one myth as follows: "a son or a pair of twins, is ... cast out to die, while the mother is imprisoned and otherwise punished ... until

14 "... 'recognition' of the slain and mutilated body" (Cook 680), another chief ritual episode adapted to Classical comedy and tragedy.

eventually the son is rediscovered ... and established as king” (10). The kidnap of the twin sons of Cymbeline, Hermione imprisoned while Mamillius dies and Perdita is exposed in *The Winter’s Tale*, along with many other episodes in Shakespeare’s last plays represent fragments of this sun-god infancy and *mater dolorosa* complex. Its motifs also are found in Chaucer’s *Man of Law’s Tale*, in which Custance wanders Europe with her infant mostly by sea, and also in the source of Shakespeare’s *Pericles, Apollonius* by John Gower (Gower probably is the model for Chaucer’s Man of Law as well as the Chorus of *Pericles*). It also is a theme in Sidney’s *Arcadia*, with its several shipwrecks, which was given an immensely popular stage adaptation by Shakespeare’s company in 1610 in the anonymous *Mucedorus* once attributed to Shakespeare.

These works provide English prototypes for the “tragical-comical-historical-pastoral” genre of *Cymbeline* that concludes the *First Folio*. As in their English and ancient ritual drama predecessors, moreover, shipwrecks and their presumptive tempests are “important in three of Shakespeare’s last four plays,” as Driver remarks, “and in all three they are transition points between the old and the new” (193 n45). It should be noted, though, that they also figure in the tragedy of *Othello* as well as in *The Comedy of Errors*—adapted from Plautus’ *Menaechmi*—in which a pair of twins is cast out to die until their redemptive *anagnorisis* through another outcast pair of twins. The transference of the shipwreck episode from ritual drama to New Comedy is easily seen for example in Plautus’ *Rudens* in which an exposed divine child kidnapped by evil-doers is cast ashore by a shipwreck caused by the great bear star *Arcturus*. In addition to a *Winter’s Tale*-like association of bear with shipwreck, the plot shares many elements of *Pericles* including the intervention of a pagan priestess where it also reflects the intervention of the Abbess

of *The Comedy of Errors* on behalf of its shipwrecked twins. This complex of themes also comprising the various plots of *Cymbeline*, in other words, not only is archetypal of tragicomedy, but it marks the point of intersection in the common genealogy of tragedy and comedy from the seasonal ritual cycle.

In addition to their original association with generic emplotment, the importance of these particular ritual motifs to the development of historical narrative out of myth may be seen in the list compiled by Robertson beginning with “the parallel between the story of Krishna’s infancy and that of the infancy of Cyrus the great” (184), from which, along with the “wandering mother who bears a child to the God, or is taken by the God over seas,” he surmises “a customary child-carrying rite” (192). Cyrus’ infancy is described by Herodotus in a manner clearly derived from Krishnaic mythology and most clearly echoed in the handling of the infant Perdita in Shakespeare’s *Winter’s Tale*. After being frightened by the interpretation of a dream, Cyrus’ grandfather tells the nobleman Harpagus to “take the child Mandane has just given birth to, carry it to your house, and kill it. Then bury it any way you want.” Harpagus, like Antigonus, distraught over the madness of the king, declines to kill the infant and instead passes it on to be raised by a “herdsman” (40).

At the conclusion of his survey of the exposed divine child mythology, Robertson suggests that “a more or less dramatic ritual has preserved a Babe-Sun-God worship from immemorial antiquity” (214). By according such prominence to these episodes as the mechanism of tragicomic circular containment and regeneration in his last four plays, as well as in the child carrying ritual of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Shakespeare aligns his metanarrative with a vast tradition of allegories of the diurnal and annual courses of

the sun to which frequent reference also is made in his sonnet cycle. This tradition helps define a traditionally authoritative context for the sun-king imagery of the tetralogy cycle as well as supplying a unifying principle to its running subplot of contemporary comedies. In addition to the inherently tragicomic emplotment of seasonal rituals of solar resurrection, Shakespeare's metanarrative thus co-opts a universal cultural memory of exposed-babe-sun-god dramatic rituals in the public religions of Imperialist theocracies, and this metanarrative is canonized in the arrangement of the *Folio*. Because the ritual remnants of the original public ceremonies were preserved in myriad forms in the heterogeneous popular traditions drawn together in London by the enclosures, they were available to Shakespeare as support for the theocratic and providentialist pretensions of the emergent British Empire.¹⁵

15 Although little-known in modern Western culture, this tradition truly is vast. In addition to Krishna and Cyrus, Robertson also cites the exposure of Sargon, Romulus and Remus, Aesculapius, Attis, Semiramis, Cybele, Telephos, Ion, Iamos, Moses, Arthur, Zethos and Amphion, Telephos and Auge, Danae and Perseus, Semele and Dionysos (put to sea in a chest), Arcas (saved from a bear), Horos, etc. (184-189). There is also Atalanta, a type of Perdita and Imogen, who is "exposed by her father, because he desired male children; ... a she bear came often and gave her suck, till hunters found her and brought her up among themselves" (Apollodorus 3.9.2). Of the mother-child journey motif also prominent in all of Shakespeare's Romances Robertson cites, in addition to Rhoeo, with child by Apollo, who, like *Pericles's* Thaisa, is locked in a chest, thrown into the sea, and cast on Delos, many mythical mothers including: Mary, Maya, Myrrha, Rhea, Latona, Cyrene, Auge, Evadne, Danae, Hagar, and Hera. Gaster refers to Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*:

the Exposed Child (R 131), familiar especially from the legends of Moses, Sargon of Agade, Perseus, Oedipus, Paris, and Romulus and Remus. Lord Raglan has pointed out that the tale of the child exposed or spirited away and subsequently rescued by chance is a standard element in the sagas of great gods or national heroes in all civilizations, recurring—to cite but a few instances—in the myths of Zeus, Asclepius, Apollo, Dionysus, and Jason among the Greeks, and in those of Arthur and Llew Llawgyffes among the British and Welsh respectively. (*Oldest* 170)

Whatever the source of Shakespeare's multitude of divine orphans, identical exposed-divine-child myths attached both to a sun-god, Krishna, and a sun-king, Cyrus, and the further adaptation of the latter to the life of Alexander illustrate the long tradition of making historical narratives from myth and ritual which is emulated in Shakespeare's Elizabethan historiography. What is important to the present thesis is that the extensive echoes of these exposed babe-sun-god and child-carrying motifs in Shakespeare's tragicomedies dramatize a pivotal episode in the seasonal ritual cycle that signals the regenerative return to the beginning of the "life lease," just as the New Year festival "at the *turn* of the year" (JPS *Exodus* 34.22) [my italics], bore an "intimate connexion with the sacred marriage and the rites of jubilation" with their Carnival laughter (Widengren 197). Indian festival plays and puppet shows still preserve the babe-sun-god carrying episode in the life of Krishna. The mysterious Indian changeling over which Titania and Oberon almost bring Athens to confusion in modern productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* still likewise is carried across the stage by a mother goddess after ritual sex with a daimon-possessed worshiper. These key elements of the babe-sun-god complex, in addition to the description of the Egyptian drama adapted from Plutarch into *Antony and Cleopatra*, raise the question of how much Shakespeare knew about the geographical extent of his ritual sources. The historicized Indian mythology of the Cyrus tradition would have been of interest to the Protestant translators of the Hebrew Bible for which the liberation of the Jews from Babylon by Cyrus as the Messiah originally provided the comic conclusion. The name Cyrus has associations with the sun, with power, and with circularity. Hawkins furthermore states that Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* is the classical precedent for the epic of princely education that makes up Shakespeare's

Henriad. “Almost forgotten today, the *Cyropaedia* was widely admired in the Renaissance. It was translated into English 1576 and repeatedly cited by Sidney in his *Defense* and by Spenser in the letter to Raleigh” (29). *A play of The Wars of Cyrus ... against Antiochus* (the antagonist of Shakespeare’s *Pericles*) also was performed in 1594, possibly based on an earlier play about the same king (Chambers, *Elizabethan* 52).

The ancient association of solar myth with dynastic myth exemplified in the legends of Cyrus is exploited by Shakespeare’s Romances as well as in comedies like *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in order to reinforce the solar pretensions of his representation of the Tudor dynastic myth in the tetralogies. The solar myth is suited to this political function by its basic plot element of supplantation of summer by winter and vice versa, which can be represented as usurpation, succession, or, on occasion, as in the *Mummer’s Play*, and, as Robertson would have it, Christianity, resurrection. In many examples of the mythology, the new sun-god supplants the evil usurper of his solar predecessor, and the restored legitimacy of his sovereignty is transferred to the sun-king of the ruling dynasty. As the public ritual always performed the approach of winter defeat or summer triumph of the sun-god, the cycle generically is an eternal tragicomic circle, and its two halves are the structural prototypes for Shakespeare’s tragic and comic tetralogies, as well as for the tragic and comic aspects of Shakespeare’s last four plays, as they had been for Euripides and Aristophanes.

F. Shapes of Time in the *First Folio*.

The extension of the subject of painting beyond the frame of the canvas is characteristic of the European Renaissance, and in the gradual unfolding of the metanarrative of the tetralogy cycle, as of the sonnet cycle, and of Shakespeare's whole corpus, as is reaffirmed in the organization of the *Folio*, Shakespeare's work demonstrates the superiority of poetry over painting in the writing of its own metatext. Chapter 5 contends in support of this reading that *The Phoenix and the Turtle* is a poetic synopsis of this metatext whose organizational principles the poem identifies as historiographical. The terms of this historiographical metatext also account for the anachronistic placement of *The Tempest* at the start of the *Folio*. While the close of the *Folio* in *Cymbeline* determines its genre, the opening also is vital in establishing the terms of the conflict to be (comically or tragically) resolved. The "tempest" is Shakespeare's universal metaphor for both dramatic and historic conflict, the word itself turning up in 24 separate plays including all of the Histories and all but two of the Tragedies, but not, of course, in the "Tragedy" of *Cymbeline*, which, as we have seen, ends the *Folio* with a capitalized "Peace."

The intertextual development of dramatic genre in the *Folio* emplots a tragicomic metanarrative, beginning in a "Tempest," progressing through many Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, and concluding in a final "Peace" to be followed by an archetypal *komos* to Jupiter's temple. Owing to the omission of *Pericles*, furthermore, the three tragicomedies of the *Folio* are arranged in inverse order, beginning the book with the last and ending it with the first, and this inversion is consistent with the "anti-historical" function of tragicomedy in Shakespeare's tragicomic metanarrative. Hawkins seems

hesitant to suggest this kind of intricate design in Shakespeare's composition of the tetralogy cycle. "Is it possible," he asks, "that this pattern of reversal works play by play, so that the first in one series corresponds to the last in the other, and the two central plays match in reverse order" (29)? Regardless of authorial intention, if we find such patterning in the texts, we are compelled to admit that the editors of the *Folio* might have found it.

The ordering of the plays in the *First Folio* therefore can be understood as an idealized organization of Shakespeare's literary corpus, which had developed fragmentarily under the less than ideal conditions of a working theater company. Jonson, whose dedications are very prominent in the *First Folio*, reports himself to be one of the last people to see the author alive, and nothing excludes the possibility that Shakespeare had something to say about the organization of the book before he died. Be that as it may, seven years of rereading since Shakespeare's death gave the editors the opportunity to refine their comprehension of his art which they had helped to develop during three decades of performances. This refined comprehension is expressed in the *Folio*'s cohesive metanarrative, a unified work of literature which the editors thus collaboratively "authored." The ordering of the sections follows the chronology of composition insofar as Shakespeare's comedy and history play period preceded his tragedy period. As noted above, the placement of *Cymbeline*, therefore, additionally reflects Shakespeare's turn from bitter tragedy to redemptive tragicomedy at the end of his career, which makes the theory of its inadvertent misplacement the less credible, and which organizes the large structure of the *Folio* as a linear descent from comic to tragic emplotment concluding in a redemptive cyclical return to the comic golden age of *The Tempest* at the opening of the *Folio*.

As opposed to a combination of “convenience,” “indifference,” “ignorance,” and chronology of composition, the *Folio* ordering in sum is more credibly explained by recognizing that it both begins and ends with tragicomedy and that its end is linked to its beginning by chronology, *The Tempest* closely following *Cymbeline* in order of composition, as well as by genre, the tragicomic theme of resurrection, renewal, and regeneration after apparent death and tragedy in *Cymbeline* reaching perfect dramatic unity and resolution in *The Tempest*. This linking of ending to beginning structures the circular aspect of the *Folio*, the sources and motivations of which in ritual drama and tragicomic historiography are identified in this chapter. The *First Folio* read linearly ends with Tragedies, and its metanarrative genre according to its section ordering therefore nominally is tragedy. If the downward linear slope of the sections is eluded by following the circular link from the tragicomic close of the Tragedies in *Cymbeline* back to the tragicomic opening of the Comedies in *The Tempest*, however, the nominally tragic metanarrative is comically regenerated and securely contained within a circular metanarrative structure which mimics the circular metanarrative structure of Shakespeare’s tetralogy cycle as it originally was composed.

The adaptation in the *First Folio* of the intertextual interplay of generic emplotment and ritual cycle drama in the full development of Shakespeare’s corpus with its tragic linear / comic circular structural tensions further may be recognized in the ordering of the Comedies section itself. *The Tempest*, Shakespeare’s ultimate tragicomedy, which opens the ostensibly chronological *First Folio*, also consequently begins the Comedies section which ends with his penultimate tragicomedy, *The Winter’s Tale*. The conclusion of the Comedies then leads simultaneously in two directions:

linearly forward (but backward in order of composition) to the Histories section, and cyclically backward (but forward in order of composition) to Shakespeare's next play, *The Tempest*. Not only is the extreme abuse of temporal dramatic unity in *The Winter's Tale* corrected in *The Tempest*, which occupies a textually "prelapsarian" position as prologue to the *Folio*, but *The Tempest* fully resolves unresolved tragic tensions of the earlier composed *Winter's Tale* which it nearly duplicates. In *The Tempest*, the tragedy of Leontes, king of Sicily, only partially resolved at the conclusion of *The Winter's Tale*, is transferred to and fully resolved in the tragicomedy of Alonso, king of Naples. This fact suggests that the author anticipated the conclusion of *The Tempest* in composing *The Winter's Tale*, and that the tragicomedies, like the tetralogy cycle comprise an interlocking series.

Critics have remarked that redemption in Shakespeare's tragicomedy involves a circular trajectory back to origins, but that this redemption is imperfect. Kastan for instance quotes Douglas Peterson who relates the structure of [the Romances] to the "cyclical progression of time." "Belarius, Cymbeline, Leontes, and Prospero after failing initially to use time properly, discover years later that time has 'wheeled about again' and provided them with the opportunity to 'redeem time' and to regain what has been long lost" (qtd. in Kastan 31). According to Kastan, however, the plays "do not lead us back to the precise point at which we have begun. ... There is always in these plays an unmistakable sense of loss that cannot be reclaimed—Mamillius is dead. Hermione has aged. Renewal is possible but never recurrence, for time always proceeds in its rigorously linear fashion" (31). While the plays do not lead us back to the precise point at which we have begun, the whole structure of the Comedies section is perfectly circular, as is the

whole structure of the *Folio*. The unredeemed and apparently never completely redeemable linear time of the narrative present is revealed to be embedded in a concentrically circular metanarrative in the whole course of which “all losses are restored and sorrows end” (*Sonnet* 30.14). While “that which is lost” by Leontes partially is recovered in the *connubium* of Perdita with Florizel and in the magical resurrection of Hermione, Leontes’ son and heir, Mamillius, remains irrecoverably lost, retaining a large measure of the tragic component which casts a pall of sadness over the conclusion of the dramatic disunities of *The Winter’s Tale* and points toward future posterity for final comic resolution. *The Winter’s Tale* thus serves as thematic prologue to the linear dynastic narrative of the Histories section of the *Folio*.

As with the composition of Shakespeare’s tetralogy cycle described above, the conclusion of the Comedies section of the *Folio* engages in a complex structural and temporal *chiasmus*. If, instead of proceeding linearly forward to the Elizabethan Histories, we wheel about to Shakespeare’s following Jacobean tragicomedy, we find that Alonso reenacts Leontes’ tragedy, whose grief for the death of Ferdinand is penance for marrying Claribel to an African (symbolically corrupting the *hieros gamos*) as Leontes’ grief for Mamillius is penance for his Othello-like treatment of Hermione. Alonso is sure he has seen Ferdinand drown, and, like Leontes after the death of Mamillius and supposed deaths of Perdita and Hermione, Alonso suffers vain hope and despair for most of the play, but in the final scene, Prospero, like Paulina in *The Winter’s Tale*, throws aside a curtain and performs the miraculous vernal resurrection derived from an ancient ritual drama whose distant remnant still was seasonally performed upon Saint George by the Doctor of the Mummer’s play, a further link of comic circularity to its ritual

genealogy. The partial redemption of tragedy in *The Winter's Tale* noted by Kastan, which fails to recover the loss of Mamillius, thus is made complete by recoiling from the Histories section that follows it in the *Folio*, and “wheeling about,” as winter cycles back to spring, to the ritual resurrection in *The Tempest*.

Like the containment of the tragic conclusion of the *Folio* through the mislabeling of *Cymbeline*, this closure of circular narrative temporality strikingly reflects the recoil from the terror of linear history whereby Eliade explains the containment of tragic temporality by Near Eastern seasonal drama cycles. “In ‘Shakespeare’s Festival Plays,’ Richard Wincor additionally observes that in *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale*, supposed deaths and wonderful rebirths follow ‘the exact pattern of the old Mock death and Cure’ of seasonal ritual” (Driver 169 n1). They therefore conform to Cornford’s analysis of the ritual origins of Attic comedy in which the only possible triumph of the “mystical ‘sacrifice’ [e.g. of Mamillius] ... must take the form of a resurrection” (14) (e.g. of Ferdinand), an annual rebirth of the god into a repetition of his life cycle. Driver states, furthermore, that *The Winter's Tale* “from one point of view is built upon an idea of fullness, roundedness, and concentric circles,” and agrees with Derek Traversi, “that the scheme of the play is expressive of the four seasons, the meaning contained in the full round of the year, beginning in autumn and being complete in the abundance of summer” (181). As demonstrated throughout this dissertation, the identical observation can be made for the second tetralogy, the tetralogy cycle, the *Folio*, and the microcosmic circular narrative of its Comedies section. The circular journey of Cleomines and Dion from Sicily “to sacred Delphos, to Appollo’s Temple” in *The Winter's Tale* (801), and Perdita’s circular journey between Sicily and Bohemia, like the triple return trip of

Petruchio to Padua discussed in chapter 2, the double return trip to France of Henry V discussed in chapter 3, and the eternal circular flight of the legendary Phoenix between Arabia and Egypt discussed in chapter 5, derive from a tradition of narrative containment exemplified in the circular journey of Odysseus with “Dionysus’ train” in the *Cyclops* also discussed in chapter 2.

The fact that the tragic dissonance of *The Winter’s Tale* is deferred toward the comic resolution of *The Tempest* explains their ending and beginning positions in the circular metanarrative structure of the Comedies section of the *Folio*, and the concentric circles remarked by Driver should be extended from the sphere of the play to the Comedies to the whole *Folio*, the tragicomic meaning of each of which is “contained in the full round” of its metanarrative circle. The circular structure of the Comedies section therefore is microcosmic of the structure of the whole *Folio* by virtue of the link from its concluding tragicomedy to its opening tragicomedy. Tragicomedy is the link that redeems tragic linearity by pointing away from linear historical temporality, back to prelapsarian origin. Read circularly in macrocosm and microcosm, the *First Folio* and its Comedies section both enact circular tragicomic narrative trajectories. They begin in a *Tempest* and the apparent tragedy of a shipwreck which dramatic irony quickly reveals to the audience to be illusory. They both culminate in tragedy (*i.e.*, Leontes’ loss of Mamillius and the nominal “Tragedy of *Cymbeline*”) and recycle back by different principles to the miraculous vernal resurrection at the conclusion of the first play of the *Folio*. Northrop Frye remarks on the function of regenerative circularity in Shakespeare’s last plays and its containment of the tragic:

When we compare the Shakespearean fourth-phase comedies with the late fifth-phase “romances,” we notice how much more serious an action is appropriate to the latter: they do not avoid tragedies but contain them. The action seems to be not only a movement from a “*Winter’s tale*” to spring, but from a lower world of confusion to an upper world of order. The closing scene of *The Winter’s Tale* makes us think, not simply of a cyclical movement from tragedy and absence to happiness and return, but of bodily metamorphosis and a transformation from one kind of life to another. (*Anatomy* 184)

The upward movement remarked by Frye properly describes the movement from the nadir of a circle back towards its apex, and the “upper world of order” thus attained describes the perfect unities of Prospero’s island in relation to the tragic threat in the chaos of the other Romances.

Cymbeline is linked circularly to the Comedies as first in the series of tragicomedies that is continued there as well as prequel to the English history represented in the Histories section that follows it. As *Cymbeline* is historical prologue to the Histories, *The Winter’s Tale* is its thematic prologue. As with the other tragicomedies, complete redemption does not come during the action of *The Winter’s Tale*, or through the marriage union of the elderly protagonists, Leontes and Hermione, but will follow the play’s close in the marriage of the protagonists’ children, Perdita and Florizel, whose heirs will reunite Bohemia and Sicily. The marriages of the heirs of Pericles, *Cymbeline* and Prospero similarly are set after the close of their respective tragicomedies, but the dead prince of *The Winter’s Tale* is unique in its deferral of comic resolution beyond its conclusion. If recovery of the lost heir of *The Winter’s Tale* is to be made in the *First*

Folio without recourse to a circular trajectory back to the “miraculous resurrection” of *The Tempest*, it must be sought in the extranarrative posterity of the protagonists’ posterity, a linear progress past the end of the text: out of *The Winter’s Tale* and out of the Comedies into the wavelike narrative of the Histories section.

As prologue to the linear time of the Histories, the comic sense of regenerative temporality in the narrative present first is apologetically stretched beyond all proportion of dramatic unity of time in *The Winter’s Tale* by Time himself. According to Aristotle the dramatic unity of time demands that all the action take place in a single day. *The Winter’s Tale* by this light is Shakespeare’s least unified play both spatially and temporally. At the end of Act 3 Time asks us to “Impute it not a crime / To me, or my swift passage, that I slide / Ore sixteene yeeres” (1583-1585). As in Bakhtin’s description of Renaissance phenomenology, “the sense of cyclical time” reiterated throughout the Comedies is “broadened and deepened” in *The Winter’s Tale*, until its “cyclical character is superseded by the sense of historic time.” This explicit deferral of comic resolution, located in the “lost” Perdita, is then put in the context of monarchist dynasty: “I mentioned a sonne o’th’ Kings ...and with speed so pace To speake of Perdita ... What of her insues I list not prophesie: but let Times newes Be knowne when ‘tis brought forth. ... And what to her adheres, which followes after, Is th’argument of Time” (1598-1608).

The comic sense of regenerative temporality thus finally is deferred linearly over the course of generations in which redemption for the aging protagonists is located in their posterity, making *The Winter’s Tale* simultaneously ritual prologue to the resurrection at the conclusion of *The Tempest* and linear narrative prologue to the dynastic chronicle of the following Histories section. Traversi remarks that “the

continuity of the family relationship, by which the father is fulfilled in his child, is . . . one of the foundations on which the symbolic structure of *The Winter's Tale* rests” (qtd. in Driver 194), and Driver observes that: “The historical attitude [in *The Winter's Tale*]—that is, the attitude of man in his unique time-situation . . . is in the greatest tension with the completed, circular vision . . .” (183). G. Wilson Knight describes the “creative consciousness in the former part of *The Winter's Tale*” as “present-past” and of the latter part as “present-future” (126). The future to which its conclusion points in the *Folio* thus simultaneously is a circular return to Shakespeare’s next composed work, *The Tempest*, and a linear course to the Histories section in which the patrilinear progression of dynasty is shown to involve the agon of the fathers resolved or repeated in the agon of the sons.

The Histories are followed in the *Folio* by the Tragedies, and in the *Folio* as in Shakespeare’s authorial development, the metanarrative ultimately disburdens itself of its seventeenth-century tragic descent in the tragicomedy of the 1610’s. Contrary to its *Folio* running heads, the tragicomic *Cymbeline* is so far from “Tragedie” that Posthumus pardons the villain Iachimo from the horrific tortures inflicted upon his prototype, Ambroginolo, in the tale told by Filomena in Boccaccio’s Decameron.

Then the Soldane strictly commaunded, that on some high and eminent place of the Citie, Ambroginolo should be bound and impaled on a stake, having his naked body nointed all over with hony, and never to bee taken off, untill (of it selfe) it fell in peeces, which, according to the sentence, was presently performed

[H]ee was impaled on the stake, annointed with honey, and fixed in the place appointed, to his no meane torment: he not onely died, but likewise was devoured to the bare bones, by Flies, Waspes, and Hornets, whereof the Countrey

notoriously aboundeth. And his bones, in full forme and fashion, remained strangely blacke for a long time after, knit together by the sinewes; as a witness to many thousands of people, which afterward beheld the Carkasse of his wickednesse against so good and vertuous a Woman ... (2.9.35-36)

It might help to think of the skulls of criminals displayed on the walls of the Tower and on London Bridge as late as the sixteenth century to grasp the connotations of such story telling. Rather than ending the *Folio*, according to its source, with a blacker tragic conclusion than Iago's, however, at the end of "*The Tragedy of Cymbeline*," Posthumus merely tells Iachimo to "live and deal with others better" (3741), a strong echo of Jesus's historically contemporary sentence of the woman accused of adultery: "Go thy way; henceforth sin no more" (AV *John* 8:11). Boccaccio's tortures instead are transposed, fictionalized, and contained by Autolycus's comical play-acting in Shakespeare's next composed tragicomedy, *The Winter's Tale*. Autolycus's extravagant embellishments reduce to absurdity the threat of tragic emplotment that adherence to sources would make the conclusion of the *Folio*, and Boccaccio's history is thereby exposed as a literary device useful for terrifying a credulous audience.

Draw our Throne into a Sheep-Coat? all deaths

are too few, the sharpest too easie.

Clown. Ha's the old-man ere a Sonne Sir (doe you heare)

and't like you, Sir?

Autolycus. Hee ha's a Sonne: who shall be flayd aliue, then

'noynted ouer with Honey, set on the head of a Waspes

Nest, then stand till he be three quarters and a dram dead:

then recouer'd againe with Aquavite, or some other hot
 Infusion: then, raw as he is (and in the hottest day Prognostication proclaymes) shall he be set against a Brick-wall,
 (the Sunne looking with a South-ward eye vpon him;
 where hee is to behold him, with Flyes blown to death.)
 But what talke we of these Traitorly-Rascals, whose miseries are to be smil'd at, their offences being so capitall? (2661-2674).

Like a player between patrons and costumed in aristocratic cast-offs wandering the countryside, Autolycus would have been liable for corporal punishment or worse and no doubt speaks his lines feelingly, for, as he tells us, "Gallowes, and Knocke, are too powerfull on / the Highway. Beating and hanging are terrors to mee" (1696-1697).

Among multiple strategies of tragicomic emplotment, the complex intertextual manipulation of sources in the Romances hereby makes their own momentary illusions of historical trauma mere parodies "to be smil'd at." The tragicomic redemption effected in Shakespeare's last plays thus finally resumes the tragicomic pretext of his Elizabethan work after the decade of tragedies.

Although Shakespeare composed Autolycus's *reductio ad absurdum* of Boccaccio's tortures shortly after removing it from the conclusion of *Cymbeline*, Ambrogino's tragic conclusion simply is absent from the conclusion of the *Folio*. It is necessary to "make a Circle" to the opening Comedies section to note this intertextual containment at the near-culmination of Shakespeare's dramatic career. The capacity of *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* to perform this redemptive and recycling function does not belong to simple comedy, but derives from the genealogy of tragedy in a ritual cycle

whose metanarrative annually proceeded from its tragic to its comic aspect with the turn of the seasons, and this derivation is reinforced by the many adaptations of ritual drama elements by Shakespeare's tragicomic Romance and its sources. The "tragedy of *Cymbeline*" is the tragedy of Shakespeare's "Tragedies," and its ritual regeneration into tragicomic circularity is their redemption. Othello's jealousy, for instance, is redeemed in Posthumus' penance toward his wronged wife. The destruction of Cordelia had proven such an unsatisfactory conclusion to *King Lear* that in 1681 Nahum Tate felt compelled to emend it. This same redeeming gesture, however, already is performed by Shakespeare near the end of his written corpus in *Cymbeline*'s recovery of his "dead" daughter which is made the conclusion of the *Folio*. The three tragicomedies of the *Folio* furthermore are linked in reverse order through the containment of the tragic end of the source of *Cymbeline* by the theatrical farce of Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* and the containment of the tragic death of the royal heir in *The Winter's Tale* by the magical resurrection of the royal heir in *The Tempest* figuring return to a prelapsarian ideal unity.

The aesthetic principle that the close of a literary work determines its genre was widely exploited by authors of the period in structure as well as discourse, and the principle that "the end crowns all" governs the generic development of Shakespeare's work throughout. Despite the affinities of the romances with the tragedies, the happy endings of *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* accordingly are placed in the Comedies section of the *Folio*.¹⁶ Contrary to the theory of an inadvertent mislabeling and

16 "The end crowns all" is listed as Tilley's proverb E116, and in the *Spanish Tragedy*, Revenge says "The end is crown of every work well done" (2.6.448). Similar statements are found in the thematically historiographical *George a Greene*, *Thomas of Woodstock*,

misplacement of *Cymbeline*, the careful arrangement of the *Folio*'s sections, together with the evidence of transmission collected by Elton is conclusive that genre was a matter of careful attention in the ordering of the plays. Not the plot structure of *Cymbeline*, but only its *Folio* running titles distinguish its genre from the other tragicomedies, and contrary to accepted theory, the headers therefore must have been added speciously to seem to justify its section placement which was motivated in fact by its redemptive conclusion to the metanarrative of the whole *Folio*. Forced to admit the presence even of one such specious element, we are forced to admit a design to which it contributes.

The ostensibly appropriate close of the *First Folio*, if tragicomedies (correctly labeled) were to be placed with the Comedies, would have been the *Folio*'s last actual tragedy, *Antony and Cleopatra*. Concluding with epochal political defeat and double suicide, however, the whole *Folio* actually would be emplotted as a tragedy. All's well that ends well, and without the mislabeling of *Cymbeline* as a "Tragedie" with its bowdlerized conclusion, "time" would have been "at his Period" with Antony and Cleopatra's suicide (*AC* 2951), and the *Folio*, like its final sacred mismatch of Bacchus and Venus, would come to a bad end. The dramatic time of a *Folio* concluding in *Antony and Cleopatra* would not be regenerated, but supplanted by a decadent linear historical time outside the text. The triumphant Caesar Augustus then would serve as ultimate avatar of the Ludovico's and Fortinbras's who minister at the deaths of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists not to signal comic resurrection, but rather to emphasize their utter obliteration.

Edward Ironside, Groatworth of Wit, as well as in 2 Henry VI, 2 Henry IV, All's Well That Ends Well, obviously, and Troilus and Cressida.

The incredibility of “indifference” to or “ignorance” of genre on the part of the editors given the evidence of structural relationships in the *First Folio* consistent with the structural principles thus far shown to have organized Shakespeare’s literary development therefore suggests that they arranged the *Folio* not as a mere anthology, following an approximate order of composition, which fortuitously divided itself into three generic chapters, but rather to a large degree as a unified literary work in itself. Owing to the mislabeling of *Cymbeline*, with its child-carrying ritual motifs linking it to the romances of the Comedies section, the generic complexities of the *First Folio* ultimately resolve themselves in tragicomedy and in a narrative mimesis of the regenerative course of circular time derived from seasonal ritual cycle drama.

Despite the restoration of the plays in the Histories section to non-fictional chronology, therefore, the *Folio* ordering reaffirms not only the historiographical function of emplotment within plays and genres, but that the long Shakespearean metanarrative developed in the relationships of plays and genres to each other. Comedies and Histories furthermore are made parallel in the *Folio*, as they had been contemporary in their composition, by the anomalous placement of *Troilus and Cressida*. Elton’s description affirms that the *Folio* editors were not content simply to place *Troilus*, “the only F1 play missing from its classificatory Catalogue” and the only one which suddenly drops the generic ascription from its running heads after three pages, in the place reserved for it in the Tragedies section, but instead, struggled over its proper generic classification before its final “out-of-pagination insertion in a ‘no-man’s land’ between the Histories and Tragedies,” without “clear generic labelling” (78). That is to say that, in addition to its omission from the Catalogue and ambiguous section placement, *Troilus and Cressida* has

no page numbers in the final redaction of the *Folio*, emphasizing the generic intermediacy of its position in the metanarrative. Contrary to its *Folio* genre, the 1609 quarto furthermore entitles it *The Historie of Troilus and Cressida*, and an epistle in one version of the quarto calls it “passing full of the palme comicall.”

As does its original date of composition, *Troilus and Cressida* straddles the division in the *Folio* between the work of Shakespeare’s comical historical Elizabethan and tragic Jacobean periods, and this position in Shakespeare’s generic development is emphasized further on other levels of the play. Similarly to *The Tragedy of Cymbeline*, for instance, its running title as *The Tragedy of Troilus and Cressida* seems to contradict its early appearance of conventional romantic comedy. Apparently unsure of its own genre, *Troilus* then drops the label of *Tragedy* as its wavelike chronicle continues at length. As Elton points out, “this excision is unique in F printing: no generic ascription is suddenly dismissed by dropping the generic prefix in any other F play.” He furthermore observes that “the text assumes a very different character” from this point forward from the 1609 quarto. W. L. Godshalk rejects the many accepted versions of the play’s transmission as “narrative fictions” (2.52), and I would add that the careful attention and intimate familiarity with problems of genre characterizing the problems noted in the ordering of the *Folio* forces us to look at the pose of “ignorance” or “indifference” in the placement of at least some of the plays with suspicion.

The Trojan War setting of *Troilus and Cressida* is a comedy for ancient Greeks and a tragedy for ancient Trojans, and it adopts a chronicle emplotment for everyone else. It truly is a history play in that it is not about a war between ancient Greeks and Trojans, but about history itself, which is characterized in Shakespeare’s historiography by

implication as a narrative pending generic emplotment. It is the efficacy of drama in bestowing a comic emplotment on English history that is demonstrated in the tetralogy cycle, and *Troilus and Cressida* that closely follows its conclusion in the *Folio* as in its composition is a demonstration of the dependence of that efficacy upon human will as a response to the vicissitudes of fortune. The wavelike chronicle of the Trojan War serves as a backdrop for Troilus' tragedy and Diomedes' comedy, but because our empathy has been invested in the eponymous protagonist, *Troilus and Cressida* is crowned by its end as tragic. White identifies the representation of "the 'flow' of historical time" as a "wavelike motion" with the Contextualism of historians like Jacob Burckhardt. Such historiography, according to White, does not allow for a "comprehensive view of the whole historical process" for which we "must move outside the Contextualist framework—toward either a Mechanistic reduction ... or an Organicist synthesis of [the] data in terms of the 'principles' that are presumed to reveal the telos toward which the whole process is tending over the long haul" (19). Early Modern stage representations of history, however, are constrained to point toward Organicist teleology insofar as they are constrained to the long conditioned generic terms derived by drama from the Seasonal Pattern of the ritual cycle, and *Troilus and Cressida* finally moves outside of its Contextualist framework through the long deferred tragic verdict upon the idealized love of the protagonists.

The generic confusion of *Troilus and Cressida* was composed at the termination of Shakespeare's tragicomic Elizabethan historiography and at the inauguration of his Jacobean tragedies contemporary with Polonius's generic catalogue and Hamlet's

dilemma: “What’s Hecuba¹⁷ to him, or he to Hecuba, / That he should weepe for her?”

This might be a question for the *Folio* editors trying to place *Troilus and Cressida* in its proper section. For the brooding philosopher it might be a question regarding the generic emplotment of the historical narrative itself. *Troilus and Cressida* is a late problem comedy, as neither eponymous hero dies, and it ends with a marriage of sorts, but it also equally almost qualifies as a late Elizabethan history play and an early Jacobean tragedy. Its generically confused placement in the *First Folio* makes its tragic *dénouement*, like its original composition, preface to the Jacobean side of the corpus, to be followed by the series of interrupted regenerative cycles in Shakespeare’s Tragedies. Although *Cressida* may stand primarily as a symbol for the promiscuous and wavelike tide of contextualist history, “exchanging store with loss and loss with store” (*Sonnets* 64.4), the play concludes with “state itself confounded to decay” (64.6), and Pandarus cursing posterity with syphilis in an organicist movement towards a tragic teleology. “He sweate, and seeke about for eases; / And at that time bequeath you my diseases. / Exeunt. / FINIS” (3592-3595). Owing to the repositioning of *Troilus and Cressida*, his curse is followed in the *Folio* by a pageant of mostly childless tragic heroes, including *Romeo*, *Timon*, *Julius*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, and *Antony*.¹⁸ It is precisely such frustration of long-deferred expectation of comic containment and regeneration that characterizes the intertextuality of the contemporary *Phoenix and the Turtle*, which, like syphilis, thus denies posterity not only to *Loves Martyr*, but to Shakespeare’s own dramatic protagonists for the next decade.

¹⁷ Hecuba is the mother of *Troilus*.

¹⁸ *Antony and Cleopatra*’s son is not mentioned in the play.

The discourse on historiographical genre in *Troilus and Cressida* has associations with the *vatum chorus* of *Loves Martyr*. Elton attributes Marston with the publication of the quarto (65), and Chapman's *Seven Books of the Iliads* (1598), which explicitly links Essex to Achilles was one of Shakespeare's principle sources. The intermediary position of the complex of generic confusions of *Troilus and Cressida* obscures the neat section divisions of the Catalogue of the *Folio* from which the contingencies of history itself seem ironically to have omitted it. Without *Troilus and Cressida*, history and tragedy are distinctly divided in the table of contents, but in the text the Histories fade through the unpaginated generic "no-man's land" of *Troilus* into the Tragedies as they initially faded out of the breakdown of dramatic unities and deferral of comic resolution of *The Winter's Tale*. As I have described, Shakespeare's Elizabethan work applies a tragicomic emplotment to the Tudor Imperial myth through the exploitation of the function of containment of linear eschatology within the eternal circular return of seasonal fertility derived from the ritual origins of dramatic genre. I have further suggested that, in *The Phoenix and the Turtle* and throughout the works produced just before and following the Jacobean succession, the integrity of this circular temporality is more or less tragically interrupted. According to Philippa Berry, "Within Renaissance humanism, broadly idealized conceptions of temporal recurrence coexisted with much more fatalistic and pessimistic attitudes towards both cyclical time and that power of fate or fortune with which temporal periodicity was typically associated," and which, as in *Cressida*, she identifies with the "fickle 'turns' of a feminine-gendered force" (369).

Eliade identifies a similar attitude in all theories of "Great Time," which involve the "possibility for man to find his place in a 'period of darkness,' the close of a cycle...

To bear the burden of being contemporary with a disastrous period by becoming conscious of the position it occupies in the descending trajectory of the cosmic cycle.” Eliade is interested in the “special effectiveness” of this attitude “in the twilight of Greco-Oriental civilization,” but he observes that it occurs “in other cultures and at other historical moments” (118). As the invention of history, whose inception in the ancient Near East is described by Eliade, at last assimilated even the peasantry of the barbarian hinterlands of Western Europe, the “shapes of time” as they are expressed in the development of Shakespeare’s work shifted to the predominance of linearity over circularity along with their respective generic implications. From the problematic conclusion of the tetralogy cycle and its complementary problem plays, through the tragical historiography of *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet* and the generic complexity of *Troilus and Cressida*, to the barren death of “Earth’s beauteous Phoenix,” Shakespeare’s interplay of genres at the turn of the century thus shifts towards a “position ...in the descending trajectory of the cosmic cycle.” As such, Shakespeare’s work is expressive of a widespread shift of historical perspective in English culture at this time. John Weever’s ironic satire, “A Prophecy of This Present Year, 1600,” for instance, began with the epigraph, “Who lives past ninety-nine, / Shall afterward speak of a blessed time.” James Shapiro observes that “the couplet is purposely ambiguous, leaving it up to the reader to decide whether the time before or after 1599 was blessed.” In the banishment of Shakespeare’s shrieking harbinger, as in Weever’s *Faunus and Melliflora*, the poetic conceit that “in England, there was nothing to satirize, all is ‘spotless pure’ in ‘these halcyon times’” has turned to bitter satire (1599 323).

G. Shakespeare's *Folio* as Tragical-Comical-Historical.

In addition to the positioning between sections of *Troilus and Cressida*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale*, the motivations already suggested for the placement of *The Tempest* at the opening of the *Folio*, initiating a series of Comedies whose composition predated it by over a decade, reinforce the contention that the "aesthetic investment in the unity" of the work of literature, suggested above by Timothy Bahti, governed the arrangement of the plays in the *Folio*. Within a century of the *First Folio*'s publication, Nicholas Rowe seems to hint at editorial intentionality.

The Tempest, however it comes to be plac'd the first by the former Publishers of his Works, can never have been the first written by him: It seems to me as perfect in its Kind, as almost any thing we have of his. One may observe, that the Unities are kept here with an Exactness uncommon to the Liberties of his Writing: Tho' that was what, I suppose, he valu'd himself least upon, since his Excellencies were all of another Kind. (10)

If not a suggestion that the editors were guided by thematic motives, Rowe does find this apparent misplacement noteworthy. As Jonson notably did, Rowe understands the "Unities" as Classical principles structuring individual plays, which apart from *The Tempest* and *The Comedy of Errors* Shakespeare seems to have avoided. If his excellencies were of another kind, they included, in my view, the redefinition of dramatic unity as a function of a metanarrative which confers an abstract structure of unities upon its fragmented acts, scenes, plays and cycles.

As this chapter shows, Shakespeare's metanarrative, simply stated, is constructed from a thirty-year experiment in the tragicomic emplotment of history through

emplotment of its historiography. The generic emplotment of the nonfictional historical narrative in White's *Metahistory* involves its transformation first into chronicle "by the arrangement of the events to be dealt with in the temporal order of their occurrence" and then "from chronicle into story ... by the further arrangement of the events into the components of a 'spectacle' or process of happening, which is thought to possess a discernible beginning, middle, and end" (6). In its long development, Shakespeare's work exploits each of the modes of emplotment adopted from Northrop Frye and attributed to several nineteenth-century historians by White: "Romance, Tragedy, Comedy, and Satire" (7). Such focus on the interplay of genres in Shakespeare's metanarrative project was recognized by the *First Folio* editors who preserved the tragicomic emplotment implicit in the long development of the dramatic corpus through its specious conclusion in the tragicomic *Cymbeline*.

Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies play the roles in the *Folio* metanarrative which the Chorus of Love, Fortune and Death play in the anonymous *Solyman and Perseda*, a play whose "fatalistic and pessimistic" attitude towards cyclical time, fortune, and temporal periodicity are associated, as in *Troilus and Cressida*, with the "turns of a feminine-gendered force,"¹⁹ here personified in Perseda. The setting of this Chorus at one of the vital turning points of European history, the medieval repulsion of the Ottoman Empire (as in Shakespeare's *Othello*), identifies history itself as mere *fortuna* until it is characterized as a triumph of *eros* or *thanatos*.

Loue. What, Death and Fortune crosse the way of Loue?

19 *The tragedye of Solyman and Perseda Wherein is laide open, loues constancy, fortunes inconstancy, and deaths triumphs*. Frequently attributed to Kyd as it also is the play within the play of *The Spanish Tragedy* (Chambers, *Elizabethan* 46).

For. Why, what is Loue, but Fortunes tennis-ball?

Death. Nay, what are you both, but subiects vnto Death?

And I commaund you to forbear this place:

For heere the mouth of sad Melpomene,

Is wholly bent to tragedies discourse;

And what are Tragedies but acts of death? (A.2)

Throughout this play, the three choristers, each of whom justly claims power over the other two, contend for the right to determine the play's ultimate genre, until Love and Fortune finally are banished by death. Solyman himself explicitly tries to mediate this anagogic contention on a tropologic level. "Heere ends my deere Erastus tragedie, / And now begins my pleasant Comedie, / But if Perseda / vnderstand these newes, / Our seane will prooue but tragicomicall" (H.2). But Death triumphs in the end, and the play's genre, whose allegoric theme is history in its largest terms, and whose *personae* recall the cast of a seasonal Saint George play, in which the English saint customarily is slain by a Turkish knight before being resurrected, or a Robin Hood play "identified by ... two or more suitors for the favours of the Fair One" (Laroque 54), is emplotted as tragedy. Unlike the Folk Plays, the metaphorical rivalry of *Solyman and Perseda* is explicated for us by the Chorus.

Death. Packe Loue and Fortune, play in Commedies,

For powerfull death best fitteth Tragedies.

Loue. I go, yet Loue shall neuer yeeld to Death. [Exit Loue.]

Death. But Fortune shall, for when I waste the world,

Then times and kingdomes Fortunes shall decay. (I. 2.)

Love and Death vie for dominance over the course of Fortune in the persons of a Christian and a Turk in love with a fickle “Rodian dame.” Such reworking of the terms of the seasonal folk play also informs *Two Noble Kinsmen* and its Chaucerian source, whose antagonists, Palamon and Arcite, pray separately for the hand of Emilia in the temples of Venus and Mars and are both enemies to Creon because he “deifies alone / Voluble chance” (*TNK* 395-396). The word fortune appears twelve times in Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale*, rivaled only by its 32 occurrences in the *Monk’s Tale*, and together with which they amount to over half of its uses in the entire *Canterbury Tales* “(for wommen, as to speken in comune, / Thei folwen alle the favour of fortune)” (*KT* 2681-2682).

In the Kyd version which also defines the subtext of *The Spanish Tragedy* Solyman recognizes that both *eros* and *thanatos* are competing for the turns of voluble chance and wishes aloud that, despite his victory over Erastus, Perseda will marry him anyway, proving history “but tragicomicall,” but after the death of Erastus the playwright rejects this *dénouement* and insists on the equation of *thanatos* with tragedy. Love may live beyond the death of the beloved, but Death ultimately triumphs over the Fortune of “times and kingdoms,” and metahistory thereby is emplotted in *Solyman and Perseda* as tragic. While the characters of the folk play can be made to represent different metaphorical rivalries, these several *ménages à trois*, from Chaucer’s comic *Knight’s Tale* to Shakespeare’s tragic version of *Troilus and Cressida*, confirm Berry’s suggestion of the Early Modern association of a fickle and feminine-gendered Fortune with a tragic and pessimistic view of cyclical time. In the Saint George play, the mock sun-god killed by the Turk undergoes his solstitial resurrection at the hands of the Doctor, but in

Solyman and Perseda and in *Troilus and Cressida*, as in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, the resurrection of Love is denied along with the “tragicomicall” emplotment of the scene.

While perhaps appropriate to Kyd, who ended his life pleading for redemption from his patrons and the monarchy (Freeman App A), this surrender to a tragic history is the *dénouement* against which Shakespeare’s whole corpus can be seen at all points with varying enthusiasm to struggle. As has been outlined in this chapter, tragic emplotment: first is denied with steadily decreasing conviction in the tragicomic tetralogy cycle with its running comic subplot developing into problem plays; subsequently and abruptly is pronounced in the obscurities of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* and in Pandarus’ diseases, and reiterated throughout the major tragedies; and finally is rejected in the comic aspect of the tragicomedies which recuperate the linear course of Shakespeare’s metanarrative in a circular trajectory to its initial comic denial. This circular trajectory connotes the turning aspect of Fortune’s wheel informed by a nostalgic return to its own admittedly obsolete circular premodern temporality. As Hugh Holland’s dedication in the *First Folio* seems to declare, Shakespeare’s work, unlike his life, ultimately is preserved from the linear track of tragic mortality within its comic circular narrative line, “For though his line of life went soone about, / The life yet of his lines shall neuer out” (11).²⁰

The *Folio* editors emulate *Solyman and Perseda*’s Love in refusing to yield their author’s work to the triumph of Death by leaving time’s period at the suicide of Antony and Cleopatra. This literary gesture likely is expressive of their interpretation of his interplay of genres as a discourse upon the ultimately comic or tragicomic emplotment of

²⁰ Shakespeare, of course, was reputed to have died on the same calendar date on which he was born: April 23, Saint George’s Day.

the historical metanarrative. That the question of the genre of history engaged histories as well as history plays is attested in Philip Sidney's observation that: "even Historiographers, although their lippes sound of things done, and veritie be written in their foreheads, have been glad to borrow both fashion and perchance weight of the Poets" (qtd. in Driver 3). Without the weight of the poets, a synonym for White's concept of generic emplotment in *Metahistory*, what's he to Hecuba or Hecuba to him that he should weep for her? Kastan furthermore quotes Samuel Daniel who, like More regarding *Richard III*, "acknowledges that he is 'representing so true a History' ... framed ... 'in the ancient forme of a Tragedy'" (39). In his attempts to emplot his historiographical narrative as "but tragicomicall," then, Shakespeare is not inventing, but merely participating in a widely current discourse.

Despite its mimesis of the uncontained, unstable, and "fragmentary nature of the historical world," suggested by Mallin, the second tetralogy resolves the open linear narrative introduced to its conclusion by the Epilogue to *Henry V*. Before proceeding through the generic *peripeteia* of *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Phoenix and the Turtle* to the tragical histories, the conclusion of the cycle points the audience back to the opening of the earlier composed tetralogy, containing its narrative history within a tragicomic circular metanarrative. Shakespeare's ritualized history cycle thus serves as the model for the containment of degenerative tragic linear temporality within a circular temporal narrative emulated in the generic ordering of plays in the *First Folio*. Even within its 1623 restoration to chronological order in the *First Folio*, *Henry V* identifies itself as the conclusion of the cycle as it had progressed across the Elizabethan stage thirty years previously. The Chorus says: "Of France and England, did this king succeed; / Whose

state so many had the managing, / That they lost France and made his England bleed: / Which oft our stage hath shown” (3368-3381). Its position at the middle of the Histories section of the *Folio* thereby constructs a synchronic coextension of linear textual historiography with circular ritual performance derived from the diachronic development of Shakespeare’s metanarrative.

The wedding *komos* of Henry and Katherine at the end of the second tetralogy foreshadows his funeral procession in the first scene of the first tetralogy. In the textual history of the *Folio* these two episodes proceed in linear chronology while being identified through the Epilogue of *Henry V* as the endpoints of their ostensible original performance. The *hieros gamos* conclusion of Shakespeare’s Tudor era tragical-comical-historical ritual drama cycle thus is linked in the *Folio* to its funeral opening in a perfectly contained narrative circle. Even in its linear textual chronicle aspect, therefore, the “larger temporal context” that the comic structure of *Henry V*, according to Kastan, is “unable to enclose” is enclosed more completely and more invulnerably within the large metanarrative of the tetralogy cycle, itself enclosed in the larger metanarrative circle of the *Folio*.

The complete tetralogy cycle in its performance aspect mimics the pattern of ancient seasonal ritual, as abstracted, for a further example, by R. De Langhe from the Hebrew Bible, in which the sun-king acts as “the representative of the god, who is dead [*i.e.*, Henry V at the opening of the first tetralogy], but rises again ... is at last victorious over [his enemies], and returns in triumph to his temple, creating cosmos, fertilizing earth, [and] celebrating his marriage” (199), *i.e.*, Henry V at the close of the second. Shakespeare’s containment of the threat of unregenerative historical linearity within this

narrative circle furthermore is contemporary, as Northrop Frye observes, with most of his sonnet cycle in which “time is the enemy of all things ... the universal devourer that reduces everything to nonexistence.” Along with the tragic degenerative time of the *Sonnets*, however, “behind the daily cycle of the sun, the yearly cycle of the seasons, the generation cycle of human life, are the slower cycles of empires that build up pyramids with newer might, and the cosmological cycles glanced at in Sonnets 60 and 64” (*Fables* 100).²¹ Such coextension of circular and linear time in the same metanarrative, as in La Puzel’s circle in the water, which encloses Shakespeare’s historiography within the original ritualistic terms of tragicomedy, expresses an analogous transition in the phenomenology of temporality, primarily for the new urbanized and increasingly literate lower and middle classes. Shakespeare’s work is contemporary with a transition from feudal agrarian and pastoral seasonality to the progressive teleology of the modern nation state, after which the latter gained increasing predominance. I do not think it can be coincidence that this theoretical synopsis of Shakespeare’s historiographical metanarrative can closely explicate *The Phoenix and the Turtle* whose banished meaning thus is present only in its intertextual articulation *vis-à-vis* the drama.

Through its confusion of actual and nominal genre and its incorporation of seasonal ritual episodes into tragicomic Romance, *Cymbeline* synchronizes the tragic linear reading of the *Folio* with its comic circular reading. The Romance, according to Frye, leads towards “the victory of fertility over the waste land.” It is a nostalgic form in search of an “imaginative golden age in time or space” (*Anatomy* 186), and the golden

21 The cycles of empires is a common interpretation of the 500 year life span of the mythical Phoenix.

age was normally thought of during the Renaissance in terms of a return to prelapsarian origins. For the *First Folio* the “waste land” lies outside the book, beyond the end of its linear narrative, while its “imaginative golden age in time or space” is found in the prelapsarian *Tempest* that prologues the entire work. Early in *The Tempest* Gonzalo tells Alonso that in his ideal commonwealth, “all things in common Nature should produce / Without sweat or endeuour: Treason, fellony, / Sword, Pike, Knife, Gun, or neede of any Engine / Would I not haue: but Nature should bring forth / Of it owne kinde, all foyzon, all abundance / To feed my innocent people. ... / I vvould vvith such perfection gouerne Sir: / T’Excell the Golden Age” (837-846). Gonzalo’s Utopia closely accords with Frazer’s description of the prelapsarian Age of Saturn. Saturn’s “reign was the fabled Golden Age: the earth brought forth abundantly: no sound of war or discord troubled the happy world: no baleful love of lucre worked like poison in the blood of the industrious and contented peasantry. Slavery and private property were alike unknown: all men had all things in common” (*Bough* 58.3.1). Frazer perhaps in part was thinking of Shakespeare. I nevertheless disagree with Driver that “the shape of the romances” simply is “open-ended” (133). In the structure of the *Folio* at least, their ends are closed and comically contained by wheeling about to the beginning of the textual cycle in a mimesis of circular ritual time.

As its ancient religious prototypes ritualistically preserved the topocosm of the first historical peoples from linear mortality, closure is continually deferred in Shakespeare’s historiography, but it is deferred along a closed circular path. The breaking of the comic circle of *Henry V* by its Epilogue confirms the necessarily fictive status of any “perfectly cogent schemas” of history crammed into “this wooden O.” The function

of this confession of the limitations of dramatic representation of history, however, paradoxically is to link its narrative line to an abstract metahistorical metanarrative whose large circle retains the Tudor claim to a providentially authorized divine right.

Shakespeare's history thus represents a Lévi-Straussian "intermediary step" between mythology and historiography which inherently is unstable.

We furthermore have seen that the invocation of the homoeopathic magic of its seasonal ritual prototypes in the preposterous order of the tetralogy cycle depends upon traditional associations of circularity with tragicomic emplotment and that this equation also is affirmed in the arrangement of the *First Folio*. Temporality in the Histories section of the *Folio* is restored to linear chronology, proceeding from the Comedies through the generic ambiguity of *The Winter's Tale* into the wavelike chronicle of the Elizabethan Histories, and passing through the generic confusions of *Troilus and Cressida* into the Jacobean Tragedies. The reorganization of the author's circular historiography, along with its original contemporaneity and parallelism with the Elizabethan comedies, then is recuperated in the circular narrative trajectory of the *Folio* constructed in the placement at either end of *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*. The threat of the eschatological linearity of history reiterated in the Tragedies is recuperated by the alternative circular link from their conclusion to the opening of the Comedies. As epilogue to the Tragedies, the Comedies reenact within their own microcosm a circular recuperation analogous to their function *vis-à-vis* the eschatological linearity of the Histories and Tragedies. The equation of linearity with tragic and circularity with tragicomic emplotment implied roughly in the original order of composition and public performance therefore is retained in the thoroughly reordered sequence of the *First Folio*.

The emplotment of history still was spoken of in the Stuart Restoration of the 1660's by the Cambridge Platonist Henry More in terms of the aesthetics of literary and dramatic representation, though the seasonal ritual source of these terms no longer are visible as normal cultural practice. As Solyman had claimed that after "Erastus tragedie" and his "pleasant Comedie ... Our seane will prooue but tragicomicall," More supposed that: "the Period of Ages ought to end (so excellent a Providence attending things) as a very joyful and pleasant Tragick Comedy" (qtd. in Kastan 126 n4). The opposing principles enacted in the Comedies and Tragedies sections of the *First Folio* can be recognized as participating in this contention for the ultimate generic emplotment of history, and its long metanarrative, beginning in Prospero's "Tempest" and concluding in Cymbeline's "Peace," serves to contain Shakespeare's representation of historical change within the regenerative circularity of tragicomedy for which both Solyman and Henry More fondly hoped.

Chapter 2. Circular Time in *The Taming of the Shrew* and the First Tetralogy.

A. Shakespeare's Tetralogy Cycle as Tragical-Comical-Historical.

The reorganization of the linear chronology of the two tetralogies—*The Life & death of Richard the Second* to *The Life & Death of Richard III*—already the conventional endpoints to Tudor literary and scientific historiography, instead as a temporal circle—the ritual funeral of Henry V opening the first tetralogy, to his ritual wedding closing the second—reinforces the subordination of chronicle history to the circular principle of tragicomic renewal and regeneration. This pattern, as is described in chapter 1, mimics that identified by anthropology in the oldest record of drama—annual ritual performances of the death, resurrection, and divine marriage of the god of summer fertility—from which a continuous tradition can be traced, especially in the development of genre, through Classical to Renaissance drama, and its cardinal points additionally comprise the plot of the Phoenix and Turtle myth of *Loves Martyr*.

Shakespeare's attitude towards Elizabeth's reign at the outset of the second tetralogy, however, remains obscure, *Richard II* often being cited by modern critics in the context of the Essex rebellion, and much of it only performed well after the succession. Though increasingly problematic, the tragicomic emplotment of Tudor history remains the unifying theme of Shakespeare's epic to its conclusion. During the composition of the second tetralogy this generic scheme structures three parallel narratives: first, the development of the tetralogies toward the formally comic *Henry V*; second, the comic subplot from *I Henry IV* through *Henry V*; third, the progression of contemporary comedies from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to *Much Ado About Nothing*.²² Chapter 4

reads *The Merchant of Venice* as an extension of the strategy of tragicomic emplotment of the problematic second tetralogy to the anagogic sacred history implied in nascent Reformation theology. The conventional adaptation—from Christian exegesis of the Book of Genesis—of the tragicomic “fortunate fall” to secular Tudor history allegorically is extended in *The Merchant of Venice* to include its sacred implications in the claims of the English Reformation.²³

22 A further parallel is noted above by Northrop Frye in the contemporary Sonnet cycle.

23 Note on Metaphor and Metonymy

The distinction between metaphor and metonym is the subject of much dispute. The thesis that the history play represents history metonymically while comedies do so metaphorically depends on a simple interpretation of the “axis” drawn by Roman Jakobson. The Prologue of *Henry V* compares the play to history as a “crooked Figure may / Attest in little place a Million” (16-17), which might be said to describe synecdoche or metaphor rather than metonymy. Albert Cook claims, in fact, that “All writing of history is synecdochic” (qtd. in Bergeron 246 n9). Jakobson’s original scheme, based on a study of brain injuries, identifies only two poles: “metaphoric similarity” based on “the faculty of selecting and substituting one word for another”; and “metonymic contiguity” based on “the faculty of combining words with one another, of putting words ‘in context’” (Ruegg 142-143).

While the world of the tetralogy cycle certainly substitutes itself for the “real” past that it purports to represent, it presumes a spatio-temporal contiguity with the topocosm of the audience. Maria Ruegg takes exception to Jakobson’s simple identification of lyric and epic respectively as metaphoric and metonymic, and the metonymic character of Shakespeare’s history admittedly produces only a confessed illusion of contiguity. Its subordination of historical fact to literary convention and generic emplotment can only suggest what history would be if the world itself were a tragicomic metaphor, but it is the imagined contiguous past of the audience rather than a mere legendary past with which it takes more or less poetic license.

The world of comedy, by contrast, explicitly “supposes” itself as a metaphor for the world of the audience as a temporary vicarious topocosm, which periodically celebrates its endlessly reiterative imperviousness to historical contingency. The location of comedies more or less deeply in their historical settings, such as in a dateless Ephesus or Windsor, only emphasizes the metaphoric triumph of comic regeneration over temporality and mortality. Shakespearean comedy thereby supposes itself as a kind of metaphor for the regenerative mechanism of seasonal ritual jubilation. In simple Jakobsonian terms, in contrast with the metaphoric function of substitution or supposition in Shakespeare’s comedies, the metonymic emplotment of history as tragicomic in the tetralogy cycle involves the cycling back of the chronological narrative to culminate in its

The circular tragicomic “fortunate fall” pattern linking Shakespeare’s Elizabethan comedies to the providentialist historiography of the tetralogy cycle derives from the biblical fall of Adam and Eve. Christianity recognizes the “fall of man” as a tragicomic necessary evil in God’s plan for mankind’s salvation through the advent of Christ.²⁴ It therefore is analogous with the function of festivals of misrule in the cycle of seasons for agricultural societies which were temporary periods of debauchery thought necessary at specific times to restore and maintain the regeneration of order and fertility. It also therefore is reenacted in the archetypal tragicomic plot structure which descends into tension and the threat of chaos in order to bring the audience to a sense of resolution in its comic connubial conclusion. In discussing the historical progression from Bolingbroke’s usurpation of the English throne as Henry IV to the destruction of Richard III, the period chronologically inverted in Shakespeare’s two tetralogies, Samuel Daniel claims that:

... “the deformities of Ciuile Dissension . . . followed (as in a Circle) vpon that breach of the due course of Succession by the vsurpation of Hen. 4: ... thereby to make the blessings of Peace, and the happiness of an established Gouernment (in a direct line) the better to appeare”. The fall from the innocence of an unbroken line of rule by divine right is thus a “fortunate fall” that makes possible, in

symbolic ideal, the unification of England and France (as well as of the English aristocracy and of the nations and social classes of Great Britain) in the *hieros gamos* of “the mirror of all Christian kings.” The metonymic aspect of the resulting metanarrative makes the topocosmic present of the audience impossibly contiguous with the conception of an eternally regenerative circular historical time.

24 On the background of the concept, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, “Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall,” *ELH* 4 (1937), 161-79, whose title inspired Herbert Weisinger’s *Tragedy and the Paradox of the “fortunate fall”* (East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 1953). Driver quotes from the latter in the context of the development from circular to linear temporality among the ancient Hebrews (43 n14), as does Kastan who cites the comment that “the ‘fortunate fall’ is ‘the ideological backbone’ of tragedy” (185 n23).

Daniel's words, "the glorious Vnion of Hen. 7: from whence is descended our present Happinesse". (Kastan 45)

As has been remarked regarding the conclusion of the first tetralogy, "our present happiness," *i.e.*, the glorious summer of Elizabethan England, could not be the setting of history plays which conclude, like epic poetry, with the inception of the current dynasty. The setting of the first tetralogy, like the entire history in its chronological order described by Daniel "as in a Circle," therefore merely figures the "fall" component of the "fortunate fall" plot, the bygone winter of discontent that has produced the glorious summer now being enjoyed by the audience. By reversing nonfictional chronology, Shakespeare's comic second tetralogy extends the "fall" into its "fortunate," but historically prior, culmination, concluding in a metonymic comic resolution.

The two tetralogies, as we have seen, are furthermore structured according to the patterns of tragedy and comedy that Murray and Cornford show to have developed from the winter and summer components of the ritual drama, and as such, each tetralogy, like the whole cycle, is a unified work in itself. The first tetralogy enacts the fall of the mourning component of the Seasonal Pattern, beginning in the dead march of the coffin of Henry V inaugurating the Wars of the Roses, a ritual episode deriving from myriad ancient performances such as the funeral-of-Osiris inauguration of the war of Isis and Horus against Set in the Edfu drama. Shakespeare's tragic epic ends by deferring its triumphal conclusion, as in Daniel's explication, to the living presence of the Tudor revolution. The second then enacts the complete "fortunate fall" plot of the ritual cycle: *i.e.*, the fall from "an unbroken line of rule by divine right" in *Richard II* to the "happiness of an established government in a direct line" under Henry V. The Tudor

myth / ritual plot enacted in microcosm in the second tetralogy consequently also structures the macrocosm of the entire cycle, beginning in an inaugural death of the divine king and concluding after a kind of resurrection in his regenerative wedding.

The conventional characterization in the first tetralogy of the Wars of the Roses as a winter of discontent defers comic resolution outside the text to the present summer of the Tudor dynasty. The audience is brought to its own dynastic present with the advent of Elizabeth's grandfather at the conclusion of the tetralogy. As a preface to the authorial present, the first tetralogy thus formulates a temporal topocosm of itself which is made narratively contiguous with the topocosm of its Elizabethan audience. The poetic connotation of this textual topocosm applies particularly to the continuous duration of Tudor rule, emulating the function of Virgil's *Aeneid vis-à-vis* the Augustan dynasty and the Book of Kings *vis-à-vis* the Davidic. In the course of his composition of the long tragicomic tetralogy cycle, Shakespeare's "critical examination" of the "providentialist premises" (Kastan 17) of the Tudor myth during the 1590's intermittently turned to the writing of comedies whose tensions in one way or another reflect unresolved tensions contaminating his history plays. Chapter 1 also demonstrates that the archaic tradition of seasonal ritual cycle drama serves in Shakespeare's work as the structural prototype of recuperation and regeneration of tragic linear eschatology within a metanarrative tragicomic circular eternal return. This derivation is confirmed in the principles ordering the plays of the *First Folio* as well as in the structure of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. This chapter reads *The Taming of the Shrew*, whose composition is dated contemporary with *Richard III*, in terms of an adaptation to dramatic comedy of religious ritual celebration of the resurrection of the winter sun. The dramatized Saturnalia of Shakespeare's *Shrew*

thus serves to mark the comic *peripeteia* of the tetralogy cycle. The carnival inversions and substitutions in the comic winter of *the Shrew*, like ancient and medieval rituals of winter solstice, redirect the linear descent to tragic mortality depicted in the tragic winter of the first tetralogy into a circular course to the historically earlier tragicomic summer of the second tetralogy.

B. Shapes of Time and the Shakespearean *Interrex*.

The Scourge of God and Lord of Misrule are different forms of the substitute king or *interrex* whose periodic misrule was supposed to be necessary to the restoration of the topocosm to right government. The Petruchian Lord of Misrule of *The Taming of the Shrew* serves Shakespeare as a comic foil to Richard III, his tragic Scourge of God at the conclusion of the first tetralogy, in the manner of a Dionysian Satyr play following a trilogy of Greek tragical histories. A Hellenic analogue of the adaptation of forms of ritual to the exigencies of dramatic genre can be observed in the only surviving complete Satyr play from a *Dionysia* festival, Euripides' *Cyclops* (another name, like Cyrus, with circular and solar associations). The *Cyclops* demonstrates the function of the Satyr play in relation to the trilogy of Euripidean tragedies as they developed from their originally religious ritual forms, and Shakespeare's *Shrew* closely reiterates this function in relation to the first tetralogy.

As in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* the fickle turns of fate as the dominant force in history are associated for Euripides with dramatic tragedy. For the Classical tragedian, a world in which the great Odysseus can be rewarded, not by triumph or defeat in battle, but merely by becoming barbarian shish-kebob on his way home from Troy,

would be the “Fortune’s tennis-ball” eschewed by Kyd’s Solyman in the dispute between Love, Fortune, and Death discussed in chapter 1. In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, as remarked, this dispute between comedy and tragedy over history is figured in the dispute of Palamon and Arcite over the hand of Emilia. The villain of the piece is Creon who, like Euripides’s Cyclops, “regards not gods or men” (Euripides 606). Creon “deifies alone / Voluble chance,” and “onely attributes / The faculties of other Instruments / To his owne Nerves and act” (TNK 395-398). For Euripides’ Odysseus, as for Shakespeare’s Arcite, death by fortune is ignominiously distinct from a heroic tragic death in battle.

For Shakespeare, as for Euripides, if the play of history does not belong to Love or Death, *eros* or *thanatos*, Comedies or Tragedies, Diomedes or Troilus, Erastus or Solyman, Palamon or Arcite, Venus or Mars, then “times and kingdoms fortunes” are ruled by the Fates and not by divine providence. In the *Cyclops*, therefore, the trickster Odysseus coerces his rescue from the gods by threatening them with irrelevance. “Hephaestus, lord of Aetna, burn out the bright eye of this pest After his glorious deeds at Troy do not let Odysseus, himself and his men, die at the hands of a man who heeds not gods or men! Otherwise, we will have to regard Chance as God and the gods as weaker than Chance” (599-607). As *Cymbeline* does for Shakespeare’s *Folio*, and as shown in this chapter, *The Taming of the Shrew* does for Shakespeare’s first tetralogy, the *Cyclops* probably was written to recuperate the conclusion of a Euripidean trilogy from its tragic emplotment. Despite its gruesome violence, the *Cyclops* is replete with allusions to Bacchinalian revelry as well as to death and resurrection rites of Dionysos, and it ends the day’s dramatic agon with the *komos* and *exodos*, not of a crew of blood-soaked Greeks batted about by Fortune’s tennis racket, but in the eternal return of the *choros* of

satyroi to “be ship-mates with Odysseus and ever after serve in Dionysus’ train” (708-709).²⁵ Tragical-historical time thus is recovered at the end of the festival day within the eternally returning tragicomic circle of seasonal ritual performance. The Satyr play written by the Greek tragedian to contain within a comic world-turned-upside-down the excessive sorrows of his cathartic trilogy derives from fertility rituals of jubilation which represent the conception of the same god whose death is mourned in the harvest rituals from which the plot structure of the tragedies derives.

While Dionysos of ritual passed through the pseudo-historical Theseus to become the various tragic heroes adapted by the contemporaries of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the god himself continues to haunt the margins of the *Cyclops*. The tragicomic “resurrection” of the solar protagonist, Odysseus, out of his cave tomb is accomplished by the Dionysian spirit in the goatskin: *i.e.*, Odysseus and the *satyroi* get Polyphemos drunk on a bladder of wine. This capacity of dramatized Bacchanalian ritual to recuperate the threat of tragical-history motivates the subliminally Saturnalian *Taming of the Shrew* at the culmination of Shakespeare’s tragic first tetralogy. The intervention of *satyroi* and of Dionysos as god of wine serves in the *Cyclops* to recuperate the agon and death of Euripides’ linear tragic trilogy into a tragicomic circle, figured both in Odysseus’ homeward course and in the circular time of the seasonal ritual cycle in which it is performed. Like the roasting of Odysseus in the *Cyclops*, the climax of the tetralogy in the tragic triumph of the Machiavellian Richard III threatens to deify voluble chance and

25 According to Homer, of course, Odysseus’ crew later will perish in a shipwreck for their impieties, leaving Odysseus to wash up on the shores of Ithaca to be received by Athena in the guise of a shepherd boy, in the manner of pastoral tragicomic protagonists like Perdita and Pericles.

to give the victory, as in *Solyman and Perseda*, to Death as the prime mover of a tragical history. The satyric *Taming of the Shrew* rescues the English Crown from its tragic linear course by exploiting the original derivation both of tragedy and satire from a complete ritual cycle of death and resurrection. Like the *Cyclops* and “the entire recreational literature of the Middle Ages,” *The Taming of the Shrew* is “infused with the carnival spirit and [makes] wide use of carnival forms and images.” It is an example of “legalized carnival licentiousness” and is “systematically linked with such celebrations” as in “ancient Rome where comic literature reflected the licentiousness of the Saturnalias, to which it was closely linked” (Bakhtin 13 n4).

Aristophanic comedy and its development by Plautus, on the other hand, represents a separate tradition from Satire also developing from the same ritual prototype, and this “Old Comedy” provides the generic prototype for the comical history of the second tetralogy discussed in chapter 3. To invert the downward trajectory of the tragical historical first tetralogy, Shakespeare conjured by making a circle to the historically earlier Aristophanic second tetralogy, bending the linear historical narrative into tragicomedy. In the tradition of the *Cyclops*, he simultaneously composed a Satyr play as the mechanism of inversion. The tragic emplotment of history worked out in the first tetralogy thus is redirected toward metonymic tragicomedy by the world-turned-upside-down of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

As chapter 1 describes, the inverse or “preposterous” order of composition of Shakespeare’s history tetralogies develops the metonymic aspect of the tragicomic emplotment of Tudor history with which the author was engaged metaphorically in his alternation between comedies and history plays prior to the Jacobean succession. With

the entrance on stage of Henry VII in the last scenes of *Richard III*, the conclusion of the first tetralogy brings the historical narrative to the onset of the reigning dynasty. As we are so frequently reminded by authors of the period that “the end crowns all,” having inherited a formally tragic *Richard III*, the conclusion of the first tetralogy defers comic resolution outside of the text which itself therefore merely continues in the medieval *contemptu mundi* tradition of representation of temporal history as tragedy.

Although *Richard III* conforms to literary principles both of Greek and Senecan tragedy, the principles of *interrex* and Scourge of God, as opposed to the medieval *de casibus* “mirrors for magistrates” and *de contemptu mundi* literature, are implicitly tragicomic in that they define social trauma as necessarily evil, but transitory, means to regeneration of the political topocosm. According to Gaster, the “institution of the *interrex*” is “one of the most widespread and familiar elements of the Seasonal Pattern In the Canaanite Poem of Baal, after that god has disappeared from the earth, sovereignty is assumed by a deity named Ashtar ... Later, when Baal is restored the usurper is ousted ...” (*Thespis* 98).

So Ashtar went up to the throne of Baal to take his place as king of the earth and master of the gods. but when he sat upon the royal seat, his head did not even reach to its top, nor his feet to he footstool, for he was but a child. Howbeit, although he was too small to sit upon the throne of Baal in the Mountain of the North, Ashtar went down to earth and there reigned as king. (*Oldest* 222)

Gaster explains that, relative to Baal, “the powers of the rains,” Ashtar represents “the power of artificial irrigation” (*Oldest* 222). As described by Gaster, the conflation of the durative ritual and punctual historical archetypes of temporary kingship is typical of

periods of transition from agrarian ritual cultures to “historical peoples.” “In course of time, the real significance of [seasonal ritual] combat” for instance, “tends to be forgotten and it then comes to be explained as the commemoration of some historic encounter” (*Thespis* 38). As Driver describes the gradual transition from ritual myth to historicism in ancient Israel, “nature festivals were changed into celebrations of historical events from Israel’s past. The feast of Unleavened Bread became connected with the Exodus, Pentecost with the giving of the law at Sinai, and the feast of Tabernacles with the sojourn in the wilderness” (43). Through his positioning in the inverted tetralogy cycle, Richard III likewise personifies both teleological historical Scourge and seasonal ritual *interrex*.

Smith observes that “among the Semites the most current view of the annual *piacula* seems to have been that they commemorate a divine tragedy—the death of some god or goddess” (410). The next stage of conflation of the ritual *mythos* with historical narratives of kings, kingdoms and heroes of the past is identified by Eliade as the foundation of the Hebrew “philosophy of history” (60). Gaster shows that “even after it had emerged from the embryonic stage ... Greek drama ... [also] retained the basic form and structure of its rude prototype” (*Thespis* 83). As an expression of Bakhtin’s “mighty awareness of history and of historic change which appeared during the Renaissance,” Shakespeare’s intertextual conflation of the ritual *interrex* with the historicized Scourge of God in *Richard III* and its recuperation through Petruchio as Saturnalian *interrex* thus not only reenacts Hebrew and Greek literary development, but it testifies to an analogous stage in the cultural evolution of historical consciousness.

In his Introduction to Cornford's analysis of Attic comedy, Jeffrey Henderson observes that while the original ritual drama was essentially tragicomic, its various elements, which he enumerates, were separated into the tragic and comic forms of Greek drama. The dead year-god, represented by Henry V at the opening of Shakespeare's first tetralogy, and Richard II early in the second, analogously is supplanted by the winter spirit who is enacted by Richard III and Henry IV respectively. The resurrected year-god appears briefly in the person of Henry VII at the conclusion of the first tetralogy and ultimately triumphs in the celebratory conclusion of both macrocosmic and microcosmic metanarrative cycles as Henry V. The elements of the ritual cycle translated into Old Comedy are identified by Gilbert Murray as "an agón or 'contest'; a páthos, generally a ritual or sacrificial death; an angelía or 'messenger's speech' announcing the death; a thrénos or 'lamentation,' often involving a clash of contrary emotions; an anagnorisis or 'recognition' of the slain and mutilated body; a theophaneia or 'epiphany in glory'" which often consists of the sacred marriage (Cook 680). Shakespeare's tetralogy cycle is punctuated throughout by many examples of agon, pathos, angelia, threnos, and anagnorisis, before concluding in the theophaneia and sacred marriage of Henry V. It is the central thesis of this dissertation that the representation of the same catalogue of episodes in Shakespeare's *Phoenix and the Turtle* identifies its allegorical referent with the structural organization of the recently completed tetralogy cycle.

The object of this strategy is a form of the Althusserian "expressive causality" described by Frederic Jameson as "a vast interpretive allegory in which a sequence of historical events or texts and artifacts is rewritten in terms of some deeper, underlying, and more 'fundamental' narrative, of a hidden master narrative which is the allegorical

key or figural content of the first sequence of empirical materials.” As examples of “expressive causality,” Jameson cites “providential histories (such as those of Hegel or Marx), catastrophic visions of history (such as that of Spengler), and cyclical or Viconian visions of history alike” (28). This catalogue of comical, tragical, and tragicomical historiography recalls Polonius, as well as the modes of emplotment enumerated in White’s *Metahistory*. It is just such an “allegorical key” to the unifying patterns in Shakespeare’s Elizabethan work that this dissertation ultimately identifies as encoded in the interrupted tragicomic narrative of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. The dependence of the invention of dramatic genre on the ritual episodes identified by Cornford may be seen in his synopsis of Aristophanes comedies. When the *sacer ludus* “began to take a primarily artistic direction,” however, “it came to focus almost exclusively on stages 2, 3 and 4, while stage 6, largely absent from extant tragic drama, was specialized in the satyr-drama. As artistic drama developed [*i.e.*, into the various specialized genres], all the stages became elements that could be rearranged or omitted” (Henderson xviii).

As did the classical tragedians according to Gilbert Murray, Shakespeare thus might have found a prototype for 1.2 of *Richard III*, to take one example, in which Anne laments over the corpse of Henry VI from the feast of Adonia, the ritual source of his first major non-dramatic poem, *Venus and Adonis*,

... on the which the custom is that women do set up in divers parts of the city, in the midst of the streets, images like to dead corpses which they carry to burial, and they represent the mournings and lamentations made at the funerals of the dead, with blubbering, and beating themselves, in token of the sorrow the goddess Venus made for the death of her friend Adonis” (Plutarch qtd. in Cornford 185).

Smith refers to “the annual mourning for Tammuz or Adonis, which supplies the closest parallel in point of form to the fasting and humiliation on the Hebrew Day of atonement, [which] is the scenic commemoration of a divine tragedy in which the worshipers take part with appropriate wailing and lamentation” (411). In analyzing the elaborate burial of the god Aqhat from the Canaanite story of *The Heavenly Bow* Gaster cites the Egyptians who used “to bury and subsequently disinter images of Osiris.” He adds that “in Asia Minor mock funerals of Attis were staged,” and further observes that “in Rumania girls go out of the villages on the Monday before Assumption, carrying a miniature coffin in which is deposited a clay puppet called Kalojan (beautiful John). He is ceremonially bewailed, buried, and, a few days later, dug up again” (*Oldest* 188).

Jacob Grimm remarks of such popular ritual performances that they exhibit “a number of variations, having preserved one fragment here, and another there, of the original whole” (784). Shakespeare’s tetralogy cycle presents a reconstruction of such a “whole,” whose original form can be inferred from the oldest recovered performance texts of the ancient Near East. If the first tetralogy concluding in *Richard III* is constructed on the lines of the tragic component of the ritual Seasonal Pattern enacted in these ancient performances and popular customs, concluding in the rudimentary resurrection of the Tudor Year-God, Henry VII, following the defeat and expulsion of the winter *interrex* Richard III, then *The Taming of the Shrew*, as its comic complement, completes the seasonal tragicomedy by providing the elements of sacrifice, feast, marriage and *komos*. The final scene of *King John*, Shakespeare’s next history play, in which the boy-king weeps in an orchard over the expiring body of his father, reminiscent of Horus in the Ramesseum drama with the corpse of Osiris, similarly follows the

episodic pattern of *pathos*, *angelia*, and *threnos* (indeed involving the requisite clash of emotions) identified by Cornford with the translation of ritual drama into tragedy. “I haue a kinde soule, that would giue thanks,” says Henry III, “And knowes not how to do it, but with teares” (2720).

In one form of the ancient ritual pattern described by Gaster “there is a COMBAT between two antagonists representing ... Old Year and New, Summer and Winter, Rainfall and Drought, or simply Life and death.”

In the Egyptian text it is the combat of Horus and ...the demonic hippopotamus. — In the Hittite texts, it is that of the gods in general against Hahhimas, *i.e.*, Jack Frost (Yuzgat Tablet) or of the weather god against the Dragon Illuyankas (Puruli text). ... In the Canaanite Poem of Baal, it is the battle of that god against Yam [“Sir Sea” (signifying chaos)] ... while in the Poem of the Gracious Gods it is watered down into a description of how the spirit of fertility is lacerated and dismembered, a la Dionysus, like a trimmed vine. (*Thespis* 93)

In Shakespeare’s second tetralogy, the combat of Old Year and New is figured in the slaying of Richard II by Bolingbroke, carried on by Hal’s combat as New Year with rebels and with his own demons, and has its comic climax in the famous victory of Henry V at Agincourt. In the ritual “the victor (always predetermined!) is subsequently enthroned as king, and often enters into a SACRED MARRIAGE with a chosen bride—a kind of May queen—as a means of promoting the return of fertility and the regeneration of nature” (Gaster in Cornford xxxvi). This ritual episode, as I have pointed out, is refigured in the long courtship by Henry V of Katherine of France at the ritual termination of the tetralogy cycle.

Although the mock death sometimes represents the beheading of the corn god at harvest, as seems evoked in the mourning garden of *Richard II*, involving a short mourning ritual followed by much feasting and jubilation, it prominently is one of the cardinal points in the ritual episodes of the life cycle of the sun-god. Gaster identifies this cycle with the Seasonal Pattern unifying the fragments of cycle drama used to confer authority on the king and his priests, first in Egypt and Mesopotamia, but adopted also by the Romans, who, it should be recalled, practiced solar religions in England for the four centuries preceding the Anglo-Saxon invasions, and what the Romans called “Druids” for much longer. “Until the Norman Conquest,” moreover, “the Christianity of England was the very thinnest veneer over an underlying Paganism” (M. Murray 24). As Margaret Murray puts it, “centuries of Christian archbishops and bishops had not succeeded in doing more than wrest an outward conformity from the rulers and chiefs, while the people and many of the so-called Christian priests remained in unabated heathenism” (24).

The various traditions of pagan sacrificial ritual also are interspersed in the ritual drama of early Greek religion which provided the plots for early Greek festival drama, and the association of death and resurrection with the winter solstice remained in official pagan religion as well as in its translation into the popular *ludi* described in E. K. Chambers’ analysis of seasonal folk plays in England. The definition of narrative genre according to its emphasis on the cardinal points of the death, resurrection, ritual warfare, and sacred marriage of the sun-god also had remained prominent in Classical poetic tradition. All four of these dramatic episodes are evident in the Mummers’ Plays, Plough Plays, Robin Hood Plays and Sword Dances associated in England with midsummer and

midwinter. “A fact, noted by many writers and still unexplained, is the connection between Robin Goodfellow [Puck’s other name in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*] and Robin Hood” (M. Murray 35). Murray suggests that Robin Hood

... was more than a local hero in the places where his legend occurs. In Scotland as well as England Robin Hood was well known, and he belonged essentially to the people, not to the nobles. ... [In] 1580 Edmund Assheton wrote to William ffarington about suppressing ‘Robyn Hoode and the May games as being Lewde sportes, tending to no other end but to stir up our frail natures to wantonness.’

(35)

The holiday plays associated with Robin or with George the dragon slayer are accepted by folklorists such as Chambers as popular translations of pre-Christian ritual practice, and, apart from their protagonists and simple plot line, they are assigned an immensely varied array of characters and dialogue. It is this same simple plot line, distilled into its smallest terms in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, that was adopted into pan-European culture in the form of narrative genre. The resurrection and marriage episodes characterizing the indigenous English Folk Plays also survive in every known example of Greek comedy, and the concluding marriage continues to define Shakespearean comedy, while magical resurrection is central to all four of Shakespeare’s tragicomic romances. The combat, mock death and tragic passion provides a structural prototype for Greek tragedy, and it is represented, not only in Shakespearean tragedy, but in the plot structure incorporated into the naturalistic and ostensibly nonfictive historiography of the tetralogy cycle.

Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* testifies to an awareness of the ritual sources of tragic poetry, as Milton’s *Paradise Lost* acknowledges the identity of the god Tammuz

with Adonis “Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur’d / The Syrian damsels to lament his fate / In amorous ditties all a summer’s day, / While smooth Adonis from his native rock / Ran purple to the sea, suppos’d with blood / Of Tammuz yearly wounded” (1.447-52) “From the Babylonian *Descent of Ishtar* to Bion’s *Elegy* and Shelley’s *Adonais*,”

According to Cornford,

the name and fate of Adonis or Tammuz have always kept their solemn and mournful associations. If any form of literary drama had arisen in this cult, it would certainly have been tragic in tone. Yet, in the ritual there is only a difference of emphasis. The resurrection and epiphany of the risen God with his divine bride is the necessary conclusion, as surely as the spring must follow the winter. If the death, instead of dominating the story, had dwindled, as it has in the Thracian folk-drama and the Mummers’ Play, to a piece of frivolous pantomime, while the marriage and the triumphal *Komos* of the reunited lovers had become the prominent features, we should then have the basis for Comedy of the Aristophanic type, with its strongly marked sexual element and its riotous conclusion, drowning any serious note that is still to be heard in the *Agon*. (185)

The *agon* is the overlap between tragic and comic representations of the Seasonal Pattern. In the position of a Satyr play at the conclusion of a tragical-historical series, the *agon* of *the Shrew* rewrites the winter theme of the first tetralogy as preface to a tragicomic springtime *peripeteia*. There are two aspects to the *agon* of *the Shrew*: the rivalry for Bianca and the taming of Katherine. The winter *vs.* summer element is present in the former in the supplantation by Lucentio of the *senex* Gremio, the familiar medieval allegory of “May and January.” This widespread folk tale itself, represented in Chaucer’s

Merchant's Tale as well as frequently in Roman New Comedy, is an early specimen of the genealogy of narrative plot from ritual drama. Rather than marry a widow, as does Shakespeare's Hortensio, Chaucer's January "wol noon oold wyf han." He ignores the friendly advise that "the yongeste man that is in al this route / Is bisy ynough to bryngen it aboute / To han his wyf allone. Trusteth me, / Ye shul nat plesen hire fully yeres thre" (1559-1562). Like Shakespeare's Gremio, Chaucer's January blindly is cuckolded "while counterfeit supposes bleer'd [his] eine" (*Shr* 2498). Winter also imbues the Petruchio / Katherine plot throughout. The depredations imposed on Katherine by Petruchio are those of the winter season: scarcity of food, lack of sleep, poor habiliments, scarce and sickly beasts of burden. Grumio's desperation for the lighting of the fire in Act 4 emphasizes the harshness of his mistress's journey on a cold and muddy road sharing a single sway-backed horse with the madcap Petruchio. Petruchio's horse recalls the old "morel," too decrepit to feed in lean times, who is killed and flayed in *A merry Ieste of a shrewde and curst Wyfe lapped in Morrelles Skin, for her good behauyour*.

In the complex of allusions to the various derivations of "the peculiar logic of the ... turnabout" (Bakhtin 12) that characterizes *The Taming of the Shrew* we thus find two of the three sources attributed to the English history play by Ribner: "primitive folk ritual" together with "the regularizing influences of classical models" (30). The humor of *the Shrew* depends upon continual subliminal allusions to indigenous pre-Christian ritual practices. The sewing up and suspension of a young girl as a menstrual ritual, no doubt associated with the moon and the months of the lunar calendar, for example, is recorded widely by Frazer. In Southern Brazil, in place of the horse hide of the ballad, when symptoms of puberty appeared on a girl for the first time, she was sewn up "in her

hammock, leaving only a small opening in it to allow her to breathe” where “so long as the symptoms lasted ... she had to observe a most rigorous fast.” In Bolivia puberty was a more serious matter. The girl was kept hanging from the ceiling in her hammock for two months “and in the third month old women, armed with sticks, entered the hut and ran about striking everything they met, saying they were hunting the snake that had wounded the girl” (*Bough* 60.3.11). Frazer observes that “a superstition so widely diffused as this might be expected to leave traces in legends and folk-tales” (*Bough* 60.3.16), and gives for an example a Tyrolese story which “tells how it was the doom of a lovely maiden with golden hair to be transported into the belly of a whale if ever a sunbeam fell on her. Hearing of the fame of her beauty the king of the country sent for her to be his bride, and her brother drove the fair damsel to the palace in a carefully closed coach.” A witch “bored a hole in the closed coach. A sunbeam at once shot through the hole and fell on the fair damsel. So she vanished from the coach and was spirited away into the belly of a whale in the neighbouring sea” (*Magic* 72). Frazer further comments that the “old Greek story of Danae, who was confined by her father in a subterranean chamber or a brazen tower, but impregnated by Zeus, who reached her in the shape of a shower of gold, perhaps belongs to the same class of tales” (*Bough* 60.3.16).²⁶ He attributes the worldwide tradition of rituals of seclusion giving rise to such

26 Frazer additionally enumerates the variety of rituals of seclusion of girls at puberty among other Indians of North and South America, as well as throughout Africa, and also in New Ireland, New Guinea, Indonesia, the Torres Straits Islands, Northern Australia, India and Cambodia. Gaster remarks of the tale of Danae that it “is told in substantially the same way among the Kirghiz of Siberia; while the same powers are attributed to the sun in Chinese, Samoan, and Aztec folk tales ...” (*Oldest* 169).

tales to the “dread of menstuous blood” which often has evil influence upon, among other things, the pastoral beasts.

It might be possible to ignore analogs from other continents, and to reject the possible relevance of a Bolivian girl sewn up and suspended while wooden rods beat things to death around her to the remnants of ritual practice in medieval European ballads. Such a widely traceable ritual tradition, that is found in the twentieth century among the Khoisan of South Africa, however, must have subsisted for tens of thousands of years, descending from the common origins of human culture. If evidence of continuous tradition is lacking, on the other hand, “there is ... another way of bridging the gap,” as Gaster observes.

Tales which are told in one place are often told also in another, and there is a vast body of primitive ideas and superstitions which are the common property of man and are by no means confined to a single area. Whether this phenomenon is due to migration and diffusion, or solely to the fact that peoples at the same level of culture are apt to think in the same way, is a point which is still debated ...

(Oldest 16)

Regardless of transmission, in the medieval English ballad the shrewish wife is sewn up and suspended in a horse’s skin and beaten with birch rods, and without a recognizable and ostensibly widespread ritual practice, it is hard to account for Grumio’s choice of corporal punishment when he tells Petruchio “Master, if euer I said loose-bodied gowne, sow me in the skirts of it, and beate me to death with a bottome of browne thred” (2118-2120). I can only say that I suspect the ballad tradition, in which the shrewd wife’s

“blood ranne downe fast by [her] knee” (1044), to preserve remnants of such a menstrual ritual which would not be inappropriate to a comedy of female shrewishness.

Apart from menstrual rituals which, in any case, have no obvious relation to the circular return of winter, the allusion of *the Shrew*'s logic to the derivation of its ballad sources from horse sacrifice rituals is more apparent. This ritual also seems to be ancient among Indo-Europeans. It was practiced in Vedic India as the *Ashvamedha*, and Giraldus Cambrensis refers to the “most barbarous and abominable rite,” by which kings were created in a part of Ulster (Cook 678). According to Giraldus, in northern Ireland a king was inaugurated by having intercourse with a mare. The mare was then killed and cooked. The king bathed himself in her broth and drank it without using his hands. Although there likewise is nothing obviously seasonal about this rare piece of testimony, Hesiod in *Works and Days* identifies the winter month of Lenaeon as “ugly days all suitable for ox-skinning” (Trypanis 109). The Lenaea festival is associated by Cook with an emphasis on dramatic comedy (667), and the association of comedy with the dances of Satyrs and other hybrids of human and animal flesh, like the sword dancers of Cheshire who carried a horse's head and skin (Chambers, *Mediaeval* 200), thus reveals a particular seasonal association. The slaying of the horse as a sacrificial “charm” to domestic harmony in the ballad of the *Merry Ieste of a shrewde and curst Wyfe*, however, is given a purely utilitarian rationale.

Morell is olde, he can labour no more,
 And doe no good but alway eate,
 I trowe I haue kept him thus long in store,
 To worke a charme that shall be feate.

The horeson is blynde and faine also
 Behynde and before, he cannot stere,
 When he from the stable to the streete should go,
 He falleth downe, ryght than in the myre. (745-752)

This particular ballad represents a widespread tradition in which the taming of a new bride not only is associated with winter, when many beasts who are not worth their keeping are slaughtered, but master, mistress, servant, and beast are drawn into a comedy of class hierarchy, the husband having married above his station, and the wife being shrewish to the servants. “And specially that horeson that doth complayne, / I will quite him once if euer I liue. / I will dash the knaue vpon the brayne, / That euer after it shall him greeue” (625-628). An inversion of this episode is reported by Shakespeare’s Grumio to Curtis: “hadst thou not crost me, / thou shouldst haue heard how he beat me because her horse stumbled, / how she waded through the durt to plucke him off / me: how he swore, how she prai’d, that neuer prai’d before” (1704-1711). As in *The Taming of the Shrew* there is little hint in the ballad, which is signed “quoth Mayster Charme her,” of native pagan midwinter animal sacrifice. Some lines, however, seem particularly ritualistic; e.g., “Now good Morels skin, Receiue my curst wife in” (917-18) anomalously set alone between two stanzas. All sources are in agreement that winter is the logical season for animal slaughter, and Chambers supposes that “the strong opposition of the Church to the sacrificial use of horse-flesh may possibly account for the prejudice against it as a food-stuff in modern Europe” (*Mediaeval* 131). The idea of drinking mare’s broth like the Irish kings even if one has not bathed in it (or had intercourse with the beast), indeed is revolting, and the surviving power of this taboo testifies to the importance of

the pagan tradition. Its importance, which Frazer traces to Roman times, also is apparent in the bleeding of horses in modern times in England and Germany on St Stephen's day (December 26, an invariable occasion for plays at court by Shakespeare's company for a decade).

In the nineteenth century *Tusser Redivivus*, this activity, despite its complete utilitarian pointlessness, is made appropriate to the occasion of the sun's annual resurrection. "About Christmas is a very proper time to bleed horses in, for then they are commonly at house, then spring comes on, the sun being now coming back from the winter-solstice, and there are three or four days of rest, and if it be upon Saint Stephen's Day it is not the worse, seeing there are with it three days of rest, or at least two" (qtd. in R. Chambers 12/26). Here is a good example of reasoning backward from the assumption of the validity of a long standing ritual. While horses continued to be bled on the winter solstice, the Church allowed the occasion of animal slaughter (possibly with the omission of horses) to be associated with the feast of Martinmas on November 11. According to Martin Walsh, "English Martinmas may well have had very deep roots in the aboriginal past. Traces of blood sacrifice and prophylactic magic, so common in southern Irish Martinmas customs, can also be found in... Devonshire." Walsh concludes that "Martinmas certainly was a significant calendar date-cum-festival season in the high Middle Ages" (247). Both *The Taming of the Shrew* and *the merry Ieste of a shrewde and curst Wyfe* therefore seem to show the translation of this winter blood sacrifice into popular farce and mercantile butchery under the influence of Church repression.

Like all of the sources of the various plots of *the Shrew*, the inversion of class hierarchy is a central issue in Shakespeare's comedy. Robin of the ballad tradition, after

again evoking the winter animal slaughter/sacrifice, tries to assert his masculine, though peasant, authority over his tyrannical bourgeois wife.

An Oxe for my meyny shall be slayne,
 And the hyde at the market I will sell.
 But yet to his wife with good intent,
 He sayd sweete heart you be vnkinde.
 Entrate our meyny well alway,
 And geue them meate and drinke ynough:
 For they get our liuing euery day,
 And theirs also, at carte and plough. (657-659)

The Taming of the Shrew effects a characteristic inversion in making Petruchio rather than Kate the abuser of servants. The intervention on Grumio's behalf of Petruchio's *shrewde and curst Wyfe* thus shows her to learn this lesson without such discussion of proper class relations. As remarked in chapter 1, the "custom of sacrificing many oxen to devils" was suppressed in England by Gregory the Great in the seventh century, the devils of course being gods of the pre-Christian religion. The association of animal slaughter with winter and with the realignment of social hierarchies nevertheless is made repeatedly throughout the comic tradition from which the humor of *the Shrew* derives. The horses and oxen are slaughtered and flayed not merely to feed the hungry servants, for whom midwinter also was a long indoor rest period, or from the exigencies of peasant farming, but as magical rituals intended to restore harmony to the hierarchical community to which the beasts of burden also were integral. The slapstick rising and falling of man, woman, servant, and beast on the slippery winter passage described by Grumio thus is no

more accidental to the humor of *the Shrew* than his bottom of brown thread. The thread's very brownness can have no other possible motivation than an evocation of the ritual instrument he subliminally references. Unlike the ballads, however, no animals are hurt in *The Taming of the Shrew*, although Petruchio's horse clearly is overdue for the glue factory. Neither are the baths of broth and blood of sacrificed beasts ascribed to the British heathens by Giraldus and Gregory evident. In the ballads, the blood of the winter ritual is reduced to what runs down the shrew's leg, ostensibly either from the newly flayed skin of the old horse in which she is sewn up or her own beating. Such allusions to folk traditions would serve to reinforce the identification of Petruchio's "taming school" with familiar winter epagomenal rituals of misrule calculated to restore the ordered hierarchy of authority. The neat's foot (1995) and boiled tripe (1998) offered Katherine for dinner are the sort of scraps many people were glad to get during a bad winter, or which might be expected still to be edible at the winter solstice some weeks after the Martinmas, just as the game of feeding on the "verie name of meate" still is familiar to the often hungry.

Gru. What say you to a peece of Beefe and Mustard?

Kate. A dish that I do loue to feede vpon.

Gru. I, but the Mustard is too hot a little.

Kate. Why then the Beefe, and let the Mustard rest.

Gru. Nay then I wil not, you shal haue the Mustard

Or else you get no beefe of Grumio.

Kate. Then both or one, or any thing thou wilt.

Gru. Why then the Mustard without the beefe.

Kate. Go get thee gone, thou false deluding slaue... (2001-2009)²⁷

Petruchio's strategy, like the depredations of winter, acts as a scourge upon Kate's rebellious nature, for, as he himself observes, "winter tames man, woman, and beast" (1661). Even if we are not to guess at Grumio's actual supply of beef by the poor state of Petruchio's horse and clothing, the humor appeals to a familiar condition for many, like Christopher Sly perhaps, who barely could afford to feed their wives, let alone old and sick animals through the winter.

LaRue Love Sloan and others have identified the numerous comparisons of Kate's taming to the breaking of an unruly horse (Sloan n2), and Petruchio himself compares it also to falconry.

Another way I haue to man my Haggard,

To make her come, and know her Keepers call:

That is, to watch her, as we watch these Kites,

That baite, and beate, and will not be obedient: (1827-1830)

Whether the "Keeper" is tyrannical parent, husband, master, king, or god, a periodic winter of discontent serves alike to teach the subject to be a stooping "Faulcon" (1823) rather than a kite which must continually be watched by an undesirable and unmanageable totalitarian authority. *The Taming of the Shrew* thus serves as a cautionary tale not only for the henpecked Christopher Sly, but for his disguised Christmas servant. Whether slumming *in cognito* at the Globe or at Court on St Stephen's day, the play's

²⁷ Kate perhaps alludes to Grumio's derivation from the Slave of Roman New Comedy, further emphasizing and historicizing the transformative class relationships at work in the play.

aristocratic audience governed a state in the process of suppressing immemorial holiday festival customs with deep roots in the socializing mechanisms of thousands of years of pre-Christian paganism. The Roman Catholics attempted to co-opt such essentially pagan ritual practices in order gradually to supplant their *mythoi* with its own. By contrast, the Reformation merely demanded that they be halted (or at least “abominated”) in the name of reason and true religion.

In Great Britain the appeal of the Reformation, like the appeal of the even more fanatical Islam, was to the Pagan population; but with this difference, that in England political conditions brought in the higher classes as well. It was then that the dividing line between Christianity and heathenism became more marked, for the Old Religion was gradually relegated to the lowest classes of the community and to those who lived in remote parts at a distance from any centre of civilisation. (M. Murray 7)

The continuation of public seasonal festivals of misrule with their inversion of class hierarchies in centers of civilization like London may not be consistent with the construction of the stable social hierarchy of a modern nation state, but, according to Shakespeare’s Lord of Misrule in *The Taming of the Shrew*, the complete loss of their containment function, even in the suburban comic theater, likely would be worse.

C. The Tragic Winter *Interrex* Richard III as Historical Scourge of God.

The metonymic regeneration of tragicomic history worked out in the inverted tetralogy cycle is linked to the metaphoric regeneration of comic timelessness in Shakespeare’s Elizabethan comedies largely by their common seasonal associations. In

addition to the “heterogeneous body of ... festive customs” in Shakespeare’s comedies surveyed by Laroque (187), Steve Roth demonstrates that the use of ancient festival calendars was extensive throughout Shakespeare’s work. In tragedy he calculates that the action of Hamlet, for instance, “begins on ... All Hallows Eve, has its middle on ... Twelfth Night, and ends on ... Shrove Sunday” and notes that these dates exactly coincide with “the reigns of revels kings and Christmas princes” (81), of which the Lord of Misrule is the English archetype. A multitude of allusions in *the Shrew* and *Richard III* likewise make their common association with midwinter Misrule obvious.

In order for the link to be made between the two forms of *interrex* represented by Petruchio’s Lord of Misrule and Richard’s Scourge of God, a chiasmatic inversion is introduced to each of them. In addition to its inversion of hierarchies, *The Taming of the Shrew* also shows the winter epagomenal Saturnalia in its purgative aspect as scourge upon Padua and Katherine, just as the curst wife of the ballad is “scourge[d] with reason and right” (919). The comic scourging of Padua is allegoric of the winter of discontent between the historical scourges of Joan la Puzel and Richard III of the first tetralogy. In his role as tragic scourge, Richard conversely is a mock king to the young Edward V, and his reign temporarily turns the world of right rule upside down as a means of purging its barrenness, decay, and corruption. Probably heaping scorn on Richard’s alleged deformity, Edward says: “Vnckle, my Brother mockes both you and me, / Because that I am little, like an Ape, He thinkes that you should beare me on your shoulders” (1713-1715). The prince’s joke suggests the inversion of authority that temporarily has placed Richard above him as protector like an ape riding on a man’s back. While Richard was “not in fact a hunchback, although one shoulder may have been slightly higher than the

other” (Cheetham 7), a hunchback making merry with the children would not have appeared out of place in a Christmas farce, as in the Mummers’ Play described by Chambers, “one or other of the characters often has his jacket or head-dress padded with straw to represent a hump. ... it is most noticeable in Jack, who nearly always either has a hump, or has a number of rag dolls tied on his back and regarded as his wife and family” (*Folk* 87).

The Scourge of God, Richard, consequently serves as tragic Lord of Misrule to the *Jovian* Tudor dynasty initiated by his ritual sacrifice, while the Lord of Misrule, Petruchio, acts as comic Scourge of God, to Kate and Padua. The inversion of hierarchy figured in Petruchio and Kate, now up, now down, with their servant and beast of burden on an icy road not only rewrites the hierarchy of king and subject, Protector and prince, and man and ape in *Richard III*, but their chronological coincidence identifies their Satiric function at the winter *peripeteia* of the Seasonal Pattern structuring Shakespeare’s Elizabethan metanarrative historiography. Edward Berry in *Patterns of Decay* describes “traces a thematic pattern so systematic and coherent that it must be deliberate: play by play, the tetralogy shows the progressive disintegration of political community” (Hawkins 21). Hawkins shows that the “downward path” of the first tetralogy “ineluctably to the despotism of Richard III” is a descent through the classes of society “from loss of empire abroad through civil war at home” and “the anarchic democracy of Cade’s rebellion.” “The upward progress of the second tetralogy” begins when Hal declares “I know you all” (*I Henry IV* 296) and proceeds “from the riotous democracy of the tavern to the aristocratic rivalry of the battlefield and thence to the royal court, where he assumes his father’s crown.” In the comic climax of *Henry V*, the height of the

summer of the cycle, “commons, lords and king fight to regain their lost empire and revive the glories of the past” (Hawkins 23). The chiasmatic Lord of Misrule through its common association with disruption and inversion of normal class relations turns the tragic winter of Richard’s despotism upside-down into the comic winter taming school of Petruchio. Their intertextual complementarity enables the circular inversion of Shakespeare’s representation of the course of historical time from an ineluctable descent to despotism into an ascent toward ideal Christian empire.

The Lord of Misrule is a form of *interrex* that derives from what Bakhtin refers to as “the genetic link of [medieval] carnivals with ancient pagan festivities, agrarian in nature, which included the comic element in their rituals” (9). The Scourge of God personified by Richard III, on the other hand, is another form of *interrex* implied in monarchical, especially theocratic, ideology, whereby the people are taught to accept the rule of tyrants rather than commit the sacrilege of rebellion against “the Lords Anointed” (R3 2925). According to the latter concept, not only were the people unqualified to decide who was a just ruler, but God sometimes inflicts mankind with tyrannical kings in order to work his mysterious providential designs. One version of the Scourge of God is given in Isaiah 19:

And I will deliver Egypt into the hand of cruel masters, and a strong king shall rule over them, saith the Lord the God of hosts. ... And the water of the sea shall be dried up, and the river shall be wasted and dry. ... For they shall cry to the Lord because of the oppressor, and he shall send them a Saviour and a defender to deliver them. ... And the Lord shall strike Egypt with a scourge, and shall heal it,

and they shall return to the Lord, and he shall be pacified towards them, and heal them. (D-R 1-22)

Here “the Lord God of hosts,” like Henry V’s “God of Battailes” (2141), conflates the eternal cosmogonic Lord of angels with the historical god of armies who will subject Egypt for some unknown period to the temporal rule of “cruel masters.” The drying up of the waters also translates seasonal cosmogonic myth into teleological temporal history. The *interrex*, Set, is represented as the enemy of Horus in the annual ritual Edfu drama that marked the cyclical occurrence of the dry season with ritual mourning (Plutarch, *Isis* 179). The biblical prophet, on the other hand associates the drying up of the waters not with an annually repeating event, but with a drought, a “non-repetitive, non-archetypal event” of the kind to which Eliade attributes the discovery of linear historical time. The Canaanite story of the death of Aqat also describes a historic rather than an annual drought. “Now,” cries Daniel, “Baal will surely withhold his mercies. For seven long years there will be neither summer showers nor winter rains, and never will the searing heat be broken by welcome thunder! The grapes will wither on the vine, and the rivers run dry!” Gaster points out that this originally is a myth of the constellation Orion, who vanishes, in Eastern climes, just at the moment when the summer drought is about to set in. no sooner, in fact, has it slipped out of sight than at once the rains cease, the rivers run dry, the earth languishes and no green thing grows up. To many an ancient mind this pointed to but one conclusion: the figure which the group portrayed was none other than that of the great lord of fertility—a god like the Babylonian Tammuz or the Syrian Adonis—who was indeed believed to die or

disappear each year at the onset of summer and to revive or return when the drought broke. (*Oldest* 187)

According to Isaiah, instead of the annual season of inundation, the Egyptian drought will end when the Lord is pacified in his own good time. Like the ratification of the catastrophic prophecies of Isaiah noted by Eliade as establishing a linear historical temporality among the ancient Hebrews, non-archetypal events such as the enclosure movement worked to break the regenerative circularity characterizing medieval feudal agrarian serfdom in England, and to stretch the experience of time as circular seasonality into the linear temporality of teleologic history.

Shakespeare's Richard III performs the same manner of conflation as Isaiah's "scourge." As boar-king, he plays the role of the demonic hippopotamus Set in the ritual pattern of the tetralogy cycle and simultaneously is characterized as the "cruel master" sent by a wrathful God in the historical teleology of the Tudor myth. In ancient times as well as in Christian doctrine, "fallen monarchs," such as Set, who "was one of the leading deities of the [Nile] valley before the days of civilization began," according to McCabe, "retained their magical faculty and they became powers of evil" (9). Set slays his divine brother Osiris as Richard slays his nephew Edward V, and he is overthrown in turn by the Tudor patriarch as Set is by Horus. As Margaret Murray describes the religious prototypes, "when by peaceful infiltration a new god ousted an old one, he was said to be the son of his predecessor. But when the invasion was warlike the conquering deity was invested with all good attributes while the god of the vanquished took a lower place and was regarded by the conquerors as the producer of evil, and was consequently often more feared than their own legitimate deity" (3). The defeat of the ritual cycle *interrex*

symbolized both in ancient hippo and modern boar in the same manner enables the regeneration of the topocosm embodied in the divine king. The Scourge of God *interrex* similarly recuperates the non-repeating, linear teleological epistemology originally defined by what Eliade identifies as the first “historical peoples ... those with whom history, properly speaking, begins—that is, the Babylonians, Egyptians, Hebrews, Iranians” (74). The Scourge of God principle characterizes Richard III in the context of Shakespeare’s linear teleological history, while he enacts the seasonal *interrex*, Set, who reigns between Osiris and Horus in the chronologically inverted performance cycle of the tetralogies.

How closely Richard III conforms to the *interrex* principle can be illustrated perhaps by comparing its *dramatis personae* with the Egyptian Edfu drama, one of the oldest extant examples of drama in the world which, like a medieval mystery pageant, was performed at stations along the Nile at the coronation of a new king:

RITUAL.	MYTH.	
The new king.	<i>Horus.</i>	[Richmond].
Mummy representing the old king.	<i>The corpse of Osiris.</i>	[The corpse of Henry VI].
Chief officiant.	<i>Thoth.</i>	[The Lord Mayor].
Two wailing women.	<i>Isis and Nephthys.</i>	[Elizabeth & Anne].
A precentor.	<i>Geb.</i>	[Richard’s asides].
Chief Steward.	<i>Sokar.</i>	[Buckingham].
Staff of embalmers, morticians, etc.	<i>Followers of Horus.</i>	[Henry’s pallbearers].
Princes.	<i>Followers of Horus.</i>	[Richmond’s allies].
Notables of Upper and Lower Egypt.	<i>Gods.</i>	[Nobles].

Regarding Richard III, whose true tragedy was performed at court at the beginning of the twelve days leading to the feast of Simeon, Ribner furthermore agrees that “on the symbolic, ritual level, we do not have a king killed by a rebellious subject; we have rather a ‘scourge of god’ destroyed by his creator as soon as he has fulfilled the purpose” (122). He cites M. M. Reese and Tillyard as demonstrating the ways that this scourge of God concept was adopted by the Tudor dynasty to argue that rebellion against one’s sovereign is never justified. The people of Egypt, according to Isaiah, are to “cry to the Lord because of the oppressor,” not to revolt and establish a republic, just as Christians are enjoined to “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (AV *Matthew* 22:21). The duty of the subject was obedience, which was never damnable, while rebellion always involved the peril of one’s soul and is tantamount to rebellion against God Himself. Regardless of whether Shakespeare’s work supports or undermines official doctrine, Antony Hammond attributes the equation of rebellion with sacrilege in the Tudor period to the fact that “the concept of history, the providential, theocentric history expounded... from Augustine to Hooker via Aquinas, was under attack by the Machiavellian, individualistic attitudes spawned by the Renaissance and Reformation” (118).

Providentialism, as opposed to “voluble chance,” is the basis for the concept of divine right and therefore the basis for all political authority in medieval Europe which resided ultimately in the king as God’s anointed, a status claimed both by Shakespeare’s Richard II (*R2* 1410) and Richard III (*R3* 2925). The Church taught that God was author of the teleological divine tragicomedy of history, that subjection to powerful states was one of the penalties of the Fall of Man, and that it was God who chose into whose hands

to place the royal scepter, just as He decided who was destined to be a nobleman with property and who a commoner without. The humanist and bourgeois attack on the premodern concept of history as theocentric providence and of the king as God's anointed therefore threatened both Church and monarchy who reacted by condemning all rebellion against social authority as rebellion against God's disposition of earthly power. The identification of Richard III, a cultural archetype of tyranny, as Scourge of God thus was calculated to recover an essentialist providentialism from the recognition of history as the mere "policy" of Machiavellian Princes against which rebellion ought not to be damnable. "The tragic past has been redeemed," for "God has used Richard as His scourge..." (Kastan 94). God had crowned Crookback Dick, and it was God who had deposed him in his own good time. God eventually delivers into the hands of just rulers those who suffer His elected worldly tyrants in pious patience. According to the ritual Seasonal Pattern of Shakespeare's historiography, moreover, the world has been redeemed for the winter *interrex* has been vanquished by the new year's sun-god.

While Shakespeare explicitly refers only once to Richard III as a "scourge," the history had been emplotted by More to conform to the principle (Hammond 103), and Shakespeare for the most part has adopted More's version. Describing his dream of the land of the dead to the Keeper of the Tower, Clarence reminds us of the theme of the preceding trilogy: "The first that there did greet my Stranger-soule, / Was my great Father-in-Law, renowned Warwicke, / Who spake aloud: What scourge for Periurie, / Can this darke Monarchy affoord false Clarence?" (886) The ambiguity of the pronoun reference of "this darke Monarchy," conflates the underworld of the dead with its temporary elevation to epagomenal hegemony under the Saturnian Richard. The first

tetralogy opens with the Duke of Bedford praying over the body of Henry V for comets to “scourge the bad reuolting Stars, / That haue consented vnto *Henries* death:” (*IHV* 12-13). Although Bedford’s curse is addressed to fate, the theme of rebellion scourged out by a heavenly prodigy in the opening soliloquy of the tetralogy identifies the specific terms of “the inescapable providentialism of the Tudor historiographers” that the tetralogy will “critically examine” (Kastan 17). It is at the close of the following scene that la Puzel soliloquizes:

Assign’d am I to be the English Scourge.
 This night the Siege assuredly Ile rayse:
 Expect Saint *Martins* Summer, *Halcyons* dayes,
 Since I haue entred into these Warres.
 Glory is like a Circle in the Water,
 Which neuer ceaseth to enlarge it selfe,
 Till by broad spreading, it disperse to naught.
 With *Henries* death, the English Circle ends,
 Dispersed are the glories it included: (336-344)

In addition to Joan’s self-identification with the Scourge of God principle, this speech evokes a conception of historical time that is put in terms of the structural models described in chapter 1. Her geometric model of historical change incorporates linear progression within a circular temporal field. The progression is made an analogy with the passing seasons, her “Saint Martin’s summer” (*i.e.*, Indian Summer) of French “glory” foreshadowing Richard III’s ironic “glorious summer” at the opening of the last play of

the tetralogy and ultimately to the triumph of Henry's "hot summer" in the long concluding scene of the cycle.

The demise of the hot fertile English summer of Henry V is now to be followed by a brief false summer in France, leading to the bloody slaughter of Martinmas and the winter of discontent of the Wars of the Roses in England. Joan's legendary vision is revealed to be an understanding of her place in a temporal providential history, rather than some transcendental spiritual insight. Her description of historical time as a series of waves allows the primitive idea of time as eternal return to be modulated while retaining its linear and circular geometrical structures. Each period of dynastic history closely duplicates but does not resurrect its predecessor; it is a unique component in a linear, non-repeating temporal progression outward from the center, and she perhaps implies that it sometimes is set in motion by the blow of a scourge. The periods of history spread out from an imperial center to encompass the world and, according to Joan, merely dissolve rather than return, but the pool of eternity through which historical time moves is itself immobile, circular and contained.

According to Joan's tragic version of Bedford's divine scourge, all glory comes to "naught" in the end in a triumph of *thanatos*. The spelling makes its ultimate fate ambiguous between merely "nothing" and "evil," and she admits that the glorious French summer she represents is only a passing warm spell. Her "Circle in the Water" thus inaugurates the historiography of the first tetralogy, in which we accordingly are shown the deeds of one generation, like waves, reenacted with changes by the next. The rise of Richard begins with the death of his father York in the second scene of *3 Henry VI* as a result of his ambition and his sacrifice of Talbot. This wavelike pattern of rising and

falling characterizes the chronicle emplotment of the tetralogy until its tragic *dénouement* in *Richard III*.

The good Duke Humphrey of Gloucester begins his decline at the beginning of *Part I*, and with his death at the end of the play begins the rise of Suffolk, who suffers retribution for his murder of Humphrey and his treachery to Henry VI by his own ignominious death in *Part II*. Upon the death of Suffolk, the slowly rising star of Richard of York really comes into ascendancy. There is the brief rise of Edward IV, to be cut off by death and his sons to be murdered in retribution for his lechery. Clifford rises briefly only to be struck down in vengeance for his brutal slaying of Rutland; there is the rise of Clarence, whose treachery to Warwick will be repaid by his own murder in *Richard III*. The fall of proud Eleanor Cobham to public ignominy is echoed by the similar fall of Mistress Jane Shore. And the catalogue might be continued. (Ribner 103)

Like *Troilus and Cressida*, the *Henry VI* trilogy thus comes close to a Contextualist representation of history defined by White as the representation of “the ‘flow’ of historical time” as a “wavelike motion.” The effect of the pattern of rising and falling described by Ribner, however, is not a generically neutral mix of comedy and tragedy, but overwhelmingly appears as a series of undecisive tragedies following the medieval *contemptu mundi* tradition exemplified in Chaucer’s *Monk’s Tale*. As Hawkins describes it, “throughout the first tetralogy we witness tragic falls of the virtuous and innocent, like Talbot, Duke Humphrey, and the princes in the Tower. But we also watch the progressive deterioration of characters at first neutral or sympathetic, like York, Margaret, Warwick, Buckingham.” So that despite “the moral evolution of Henry VI to something like

sanctity” any redemptive aspect is overwhelmed by “Gloucester’s descent into demonic evil” (21). In White’s terms, the first tetralogy thus moves toward Organicist teleology through its inevitable generic emplotment in the tragic termination of *Richard III*.

In its use of the generic aspects of the ritual cycle drama to reconcile Contextualist historiography with an Organicist providentialism, the first tetralogy exemplifies Lévi-Strauss’s “intermediary step” between myth and history. In oral histories, such as of the Nigerian Tiv, “relatively few stock incidents [are] applied to any instance of the social process ... seldom correlated with specific persons in the genealogies” (Bohannon 327). The textual historiography of the Hebrew Bible still “duplicates several sets of mythic personages, as Cain and Abel, Tubal-Cain and Jabal ... grafts the curse of Cham on the curse of Cain, making that finally the curse of Canaan ... [and] tells the same ... story twice of one patriarch and again of another” (Robertson 89). By contrast, Shakespeare’s modern historical narrative takes slightly greater pains to distinguish close doublets such as Jane Shore and Eleanor Cobham. The rise and fall of the first tetralogies’ flow of historical time, in which the hungry ocean gains of the shore and vice versa, until “state itself” is “confounded to decay,” (*Sonnets* 64.5-10), thus acknowledges the value of historical change without finally surrendering the principle of regenerative cyclicity characterizing the ritual performance sources of its plot structures.²⁸ Through the tragic emplotment of *Richard III*, the tetralogy cycle enables a

28 When I haue seene the hungry Ocean gaine
 Aduantage on the Kingdome of the shoare,
 And the firme soile win of the watry maine,
 Increasing store with losse, and losse with store.
 When I haue seene such interchange of state,
 Or state it selfe confounded, to decay,

“comprehensive view of the whole historical process” by introducing teleology to the wavelike time of the *Henry VI* trilogy initiated by la Puzel’s scourge. Shakespeare’s metanarrative then recuperates this tragic teleology through a traditional conflation of the teleological Scourge of God *mythos* with the regenerative seasonal *interrex dromenon* enacted by Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Bedford’s prayer for a divine scourge and Puzel’s answer in the first two scenes of *I Henry VI* serve to identify play and tetralogy with an historical period of divine scourging whose climactic nadir is the triumph of the quintessential tyrant Richard. The tetralogy begins with the dead march through Westminster Abbey of the demi-deified Henry V’s coffin in 1422, followed by a series of combats identified in conventional Tudor history as purgative of corruption. It concludes in the 1485 royal scapegoating of Richard as winter *interrex*. The first tetralogy thus conforms to a narrative represented in some examples of ancient ritual drama identified by Gilbert Murray as retained in Greek tragedy consisting of *threnos*, *pathos*, *agon*, and the expulsion of evil (Gaster, *Thespis* 83).

The Scourge of God principal used to emplot the history of Richard III arises from the historicization of the religious liturgy of the seasonal ritual, as, for instance, in Isaiah, in which the conflation of seasonal ritual with historicist myth is effected in the association of the cruel tyrants that come to rule Egypt with the drying up of the waters. The Scourge takes the dramatic role previously occupied by gods of winter or dry season substitute kings like Ashtar or Set in the *dromenon* and the *mythos* moves to human history from deistic cosmogony. As Eliade puts it, with the development of historical consciousness among the ancient Hebrews:

Ruine hath taught me thus to ruminare
That Time will come and take my loue away. (5-12)

... the God of the Jewish people is no longer an Oriental divinity, creator of archetypal gestures, but a personality who ceaselessly intervenes in history, who reveals his will through events (invasions, sieges, battles, and so on). Historical facts thus become “situations” of man in respect to God, and as such they acquire a religious value that nothing had previously been able to confer on them... [and which] was taken up and amplified by Christianity. (104)

Similarly to Gaster, Frazer describes the ritual *interrex* as a “temporary king” who occupied the throne for a given period, after which he was removed more or less pleasantly and replaced with the true king. The given period usually consisted of a winter intercalary or epagomenal period during which the lunar calendar has to be corrected in respect to the solar by skipping five or twelve days: as in the twelve days from Christmas to Epiphany, during which time itself was supposed to subsist in a sort of suspended animation. According to Chambers, this *Dodecahemeron* “was already known ... as a festal tide at the end of the fourth century,” and he remarks that “side by side with the establishment of Christmas proceeded the ecclesiastical denunciation of those pagan festivals whose place it was to take” (*Mediaeval* 244). We also saw that the ancient Babylonian New Year was celebrated for “ten or eleven days” (Gaster *Oldest* 67), and Grimm describes several Teutonic deities whose progresses “were made to fall between Christmas and Twelfth-day, when the supernatural has sway ...” (268). Frazer defines an intercalary period as “an abnormal time during which ordinary rules do not hold and consequently the ordinary government is suspended and replaced by the temporary sway of a mock king, who at the end of his nominal reign has sometimes to pay with his life for his brief tenure of a crown. (*Fasti* 395). According to Margaret Murray, substitute kings

... are often called Mock Kings, whose rule was usually a kind of Saturnalia, for the royal powers were largely burlesqued. [I]n every village of Upper Egypt [c. 1878] a New-Year King was elected, who for three or four days usurped the power of the Government and ruled despotically. He wore a special dress, and was treated with extravagant respect, he tried legal cases and passed ridiculous sentences on the offenders. (126)

The fact that such a remnant of ancient Egyptian ritual practice survived in modern Egypt supports the proposed survival of its contemporary analogues in Early Modern England.

Giorgio de Santillana identifies the five epagomenal days that often provided the term of rule of such mock kings also as gods worshipped by the Aztec and Maya (360). Shakespeare's adaptation of the Seasonal Pattern to the intercalary corrective function of the winter epagomenal period through the public performance of the mock kings Petruccio and Richard III both mimicks models in its sources and inherits its structural elements from the sources of those sources. Versions of such literary conformity of historical facts to a predefined mythological plot structure thus characterizing Shakespeare's Elizabethan metanarrative seem either to have migrated from the ancient Near East to every cradle of early civilization, or spontaneously to emerge when developing cultures enter the "stage of history." In Aztec myth according to David Carrasco, for example, "the victory of Huitzilopochtli over ... the four hundred siblings represents the solar dimension of Aztec religion." In medieval Mexico, then, as in ancient Mesopotamia, and, as I contend, in Shakespeare's Elizabethan metanarrative, a translation of the course of the sun through the heavens into myth is further adapted to a textual dynastic history whose non-fictional episodes are made to conform to it. The

victory of the historical Aztec sun-king is made to represent “the daily sunrise above the sacred mountain (earth) and the elimination of the moon ... and the stars ... Second, this daily experience of nature is viewed in terms of a celestial conflict, war, and sacrifice. ... A third level of significance in the myth is historical. Records tell of a crucial battle at a mountain called Coatepec ...” (Carrasco 75). The diachronic stages from annual and diurnal cyclical time to eternal cosmogony to linear teleological history identified in the development of Near Eastern dynastic myth by Gaster are represented here in Mexican dynastic myth as synchronic and paradigmatic. Like Shakespeare’s historiography, they necessarily conform to the generic rules of tragicomic emplotment. Plutarch, Shakespeare’s likeliest classical source, recounts the Egyptian myth explaining the luni-solar intercalary adjustment of the epagomenal season. “Hermes, falling in love with [Rhea (the Earth goddess)] became intimate with her, and then played draughts against the Moon. He won the seventieth part of each of her illuminations, and having put together five days out of the whole of his gains, he added them to the three hundred and sixty; these five the Egyptians now call the epagomenal days and on them they celebrate the gods’ birthdays” (*Isis* 135). It is a theatrical translation of this period of winter suspended animation, devoid of explicit paganism although retaining many pagan ritual remnants, that serves as the common temporal setting linking *the Shrew* and *Richard III* in Shakespeare’s Elizabethan metanarrative.

D. The Comic Winter *Interrex* Petruchio as Saturnalian Lord of Misrule.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the winter of discontent of the historical *interrex* Richard III is complemented by a stage version of the traditional English Christmas

festival of Misrule derived from the ancient Roman winter Saturnalia. The comedy of *the Shrew* derives from the most characteristic elements of these intercalary epagomenal festivals, namely the inversion of social hierarchies, which it adopts from George Gascoigne's *Supposes*, and from the *Shrewed and Curst Wife* ballad tradition, and the establishment of a mock *interrex*, which Shakespeare introduces to his source material both in Christopher Sly and in Petruchio. Similar references to the seasonal associations of pagan festivals have been identified in many of Shakespeare's plays. In analyzing Shakespeare's use of the festival calendar in the division of Lear's kingdom "Of all these bounds euen from this Line, to this" (*Lr* 68), appropriately on the date of the *Terminalia*, another Roman festival, Steve Sohmer, for example, enumerates the several feasts of the Christian calendar that superseded former pagan holidays. He remarks that: "since the day of Stephen's martyrdom is unrecorded, the allocation of his feast to 26 December suggests the church fathers introduced this Christian feast to supersede a pagan festival which had proven stubbornly ineradicable." Sohmer finds it "tempting to equate the 26 December with the Roman festival of the Saturnalia, which supplied our Christmas wassail tradition" (para 10). As has been remarked, it was also a singular favorite for performances of plays at Elizabeth's Court, as well as the most ideal date for the traditional bleeding of horses.

What is more pertinent than specific dates, however, is that it is a winter festival like the Saturnalian "carnival of antiquity, as it went on for seven days in the streets and public squares and houses of ancient Rome from the seventeenth to the twenty-third of December" (Frazer, *Bough* 58.3.1), that is dramatized in Shakespeare's *Shrew* which emphasizes its winter setting in the Sly frame as well as the main plot and which thereby

complements the winter of discontent of the historical *interrex* Richard III. “*Cur.* I prethee good Grumio, tell me, how goes the world? / *Gru.* A cold world Curtis in euery office but thine, & / therefore fire: do thy duty, and haue thy dutie, for my / Master and mistris are almost frozen to death (1671-1673). Here winter suddenly becomes an actor in a comedy that previously had betrayed little hint of it, other than the Induction in which Sly expects to see a Christmas folk play, and which tells us that, before being transported to the Lord’s silken sheets, if he had not been “warm’d with Ale,” the ground “were a bed but cold to sleep so soundly” (36-37).²⁹ As a comedy of the midwinter festival, *The Taming of the Shrew* could hardly get by without a central fire lighting, and I would suggest that the duty which the fire is to have from Grumio is a Yule log³⁰ he ought to be holding as he speaks these lines. “That the Yule log was only the winter counterpart of the midsummer bonfire, kindled within doors instead of in the open air on account of the cold and inclement weather of the season, was pointed out long ago by our English antiquary John Brand; and ... the many quaint superstitions attaching to the Yule log ... carry their heathen origin plainly stamped upon them” (Frazer, *Bough* 62.7.2). According to Kristen McDermott, the Astronomical Winter Solstice in December involved bonfires to “call back the light of the sun, which is at its lowest point this day, creating the longest night in the year in the Northern Hemisphere.” Grumio’s comic stage fire lighting, as remarked, is contemporary with the increasing suppression of the rural public ritual by the English Reformation. His frozen master and mistress in *the Shrew* moreover identify

29 If the play was performed at the Globe around the winter solstice, of course, the costumes would testify to the season.

30 Yule incidentally is another word probably derived from the Babylonian Ululu and its various analogues.

the stage ritual as winter *peripeteia* in Shakespeare's Elizabethan metanarrative next to the overgrown chaos of Puck's overheated master and mistress at the opposite solstice in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

As the dramatization of a winter epagomenal festival, the humor of *the Shrew* additionally is constructed upon the inversion of social hierarchies. Frazer remarks that the temporary abolition of the "distinction between the free and the servile classes" was the most significant aspect of the festival for the Romans. Beyond even Grumio's license to attend the banquet, to harry his mistress with the "name of meate" (2011), to call his master "villaine" (2141), and to crack obscene jokes:

... not even a word of reproof would be administered to [the slave] for conduct which at any other season might have been punished with stripes, imprisonment, or death. Nay, more, masters actually changed places with their slaves and waited on them at table ... So far was this inversion of ranks carried, that each household became for a time a mimic republic in which the high offices of state were discharged by the slaves, who gave their orders and laid down the law ... (*Bough* 58.3.2)

Northrop Frye attributes the attendance of parasites and slaves like Grumio at the final festivals of Shakespeare's comedies to "the tendency of the comic society to include rather than exclude" (*Anatomy* 166), but Grumio's comic impudence nonetheless exploits the same grotesque logic of the preposterous as the freedom of slaves during Saturnalia. It might be inferred that the close quarters imposed upon the master and mistress of the house with their servants by the frigid temperatures out of doors equally contribute to this inclusive tendency. Beasts of burden moreover were often kept indoors in winter, as the

ghosts of the dead often came to visit around Samhain for the same reason, and Petruchio's refuge accordingly emphatically is a crowded house.

Emphasizing its Saturnalian derivation, furthermore, the comedy of *Supposes* adopted from Gascoigne by Shakespeare as the setting for his Petruchian Lord of Misrule largely is comprised of hierarchy inversions, while Christopher Sly personates the "mock king" who Frazer says ruled by lot during the same season.³¹ "The person on whom the lot fell," he says, "enjoyed the title of king, and issued commands of a playful and ludicrous nature to his temporary subjects" (*Bough* 58.3.2). Most of Sly's commands are comically frustrated, but in the anonymous *Taming of a Shrew*, he wakes up long enough successfully to prevent the arrest of the eloping protagonists in accordance with the Saturnalian custom of forgiving all but the gravest offenses.

SLIE. I say wele have no sending to prison.

LORD. My Lord this is but the play, theyre but in jest.

SLIE. I tell thee *Sim* wele have no sending,

To prison thats flat : why *Sim* am not I *Don Christo Vary*?

Therefore I say they shall not go to prison.

LORD. No more they shall not my Lord,

They be run away.

SLIE. Are they run away *Sim*? That's well,

Then gis some more drinke, and let them play again. (Shakespeare *Shrew* 304)

31 According to the accepted later dating of the anonymous *Taming of a Shrew*, I assume it is not a source.

Like the modern Egyptian New-Year king described by Margaret Murray, Sly thus passes his ridiculous sentences on the offenders. If not a source of Shakespeare's play, *The Taming of a Shrew* does represent a contemporary interpretation and thus offers at least some subjective decoding of its subtexts. As Laroque suggests, "whatever their dramatic context," the festival elements of Shakespeare's comedies would have been recognized for what they were by their spectators (187). Along with the festival association of "Sim" as the name of Shakespeare's nameless "Lord," Sly's new title sounds suspiciously like "Christmas Charivari," or perhaps a Variation of the Christmas lord who would "have no sending to prison" on the Feast of St Simeon. This institutionalized licensing of the illicit, thus dramatized in the narrative frame of *The Taming of a Shrew* as a debate between law and drunken anarchy, simultaneously criminalizes the normally licit cultural ideal (*i.e.*, as rapine and elopement rather than *hieros gamos*) and thereby preserves it from destruction. Although the blood soaked horse sacrifice of ancient Ireland passed to the solstitial horse bleeding and the Martlemass beef of the butcher shop in Early Modern England, while folk rituals involving the heads, skins, and exuviae of beasts as well as domestic violence were also becoming socially unacceptable, the stability of the social hierarchy, like the seasonal exigencies of animal husbandry continue to seem to demand occasional violations of normal social relations.

The consequence of excessive repression of libidinal drives is identified by Sigmund Freud as neurosis, and without their fantasy enactment in dreams, complete psychotic destruction of the ego, as results from extreme sleep deprivation. In *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud furthermore contends that "reality shows us that civilization ... aims at binding the members of the community together in a libidinal way as well and

employs every means to that end” (747). Seasonal festivals of misrule more or less explicitly serve to absorb the continuous anarchic threat of libidinal drives towards sex and aggression to the social order while ultimately serving to reinforce the terms of the hierarchy of authority for each succeeding generation. They are one of the most obvious means by which civilization, according to Freud “favours every path by which strong identifications can be established between the members of the community, and ... summons up aim-inhibited libido on the largest scale so as to strengthen the communal bond ... (747). Midsummer and Midwinter Night festivals thus perform the function *vis-à-vis* the community which Freud assigns to dreams *vis-à-vis* the individual ego.

Shakespeare’s Sly is to be distracted with “a pleasant Comedie, / For so your doctors hold it very meete, / Seeing too much sadnesse hath congeal’d your blood, / And melancholly is the Nurse of frenzie, / Therefore they thought it good you heare a play, / And frame your minde to mirth and merriment... (289). Long forgotten, Sly has no role in abetting the elopement of the disguised protagonists, but its momentary criminality is emphasized for example by Hortensio after failing in his own gigolo act. “Mistake no more,” he tells Gremio, “I am not Lisio, / Nor a Musitian as I seeme to bee, / But one that scorne to liue in this disguise, / For such a one as leaues a Gentleman, / And makes a God of such a Cullion” (1864-1868). Having been rejected by Bianca, Hortensio becomes outraged at the apparent crime committed by the two lovers against her father.

The inversion of this criminal rapine of Bianca by her Latin tutor into a *hieros gamos* of aristocratic dynasties at the conclusion of Shakespeare’s winter Saturnalian comedy restores the Paduan community to sanity after its enactment of illicit drives in the intercalary dream time of the festival of misrule. It thereby performs an abstraction of

Freud's ego psychology to the level of community. As I have attempted to demonstrate, this abstraction is extended to the level of historiography in the inversion of the winter boar-king Richard III's usurpation into the divine right of the Tudor dynasty at the contemporary conclusion of the first tetralogy. In the same way that the sacred marriage concluding the second tetralogy is derived from the triumph-of-summer-fertility motif of ancient ritual, the apocalyptic destruction concluding the first tetralogy, like the festival allusions of *the Shrew*, both explicitly and subliminally associates itself with various aspects of the winter season. As suggested above, the procession of dead victims through Richard's tent represents the *Jovian* order of the preceding trilogy that sinks into a netherworld "darke monarchy" as its Saturnian complement ascends briefly into light. Winter Days of the Dead are cited across the globe by Frazer. As remarked above:

It was, perhaps, a natural thought that the approach of winter should drive the poor shivering hungry ghosts from the bare fields and the leafless woodlands to the shelter of the cottage with its familiar fireside. Did not the lowing kine then troop back from the summer pastures in the forests and on the hills to be fed and cared for in the stalls, while the bleak winds whistled among the swaying boughs and the snow-drifts deepened in the hollows? (*Bough* 6.4)

What Richard as Saturnian Scourge and Petruchio as Saturnalian Lord of Misrule have in common is that they are "winter" kings whose historically or annually periodic reigns enable the regeneration of the topocosm on punctual and durative planes. As Grumio tells Curtis after his stumbling horse story and while he is lighting his Yule fire, "'tis a cold world," at this cardinal point in Shakespeare's Seasonal Pattern, and the procession of the dead of the contemporary *Richard III* shows the development from the winter ritual

elements of the medieval sources of both plays into Ribner's "modern conception of history" (15).

Saturnalian popular celebration derives from the comic climax in the annual festival cycle, also performed on the Greek stage both in Old Comedy and Satire. *The Taming of the Shrew* serves in the *Dionysia* tradition at the conclusion of a tragical-historical series as a recuperative Satyr play to the tragic first tetralogy. By associating the biblical Scourge of God with the annual Lord of Misrule, Shakespeare's Richard co-opts the seasonal function of the winter *interrex* into an historicizing function. The common winter setting of the two plays serves to contain the "multilevel anxiety, concentrations of cultural trauma," noted by Mallin, which the history play narrative alone "cannot fully organize or analyze" (2), within an intertextual seasonal cyclicity, whose genre ultimately is tragicomic. In Europe, the derivation of tragic and comic genres from archaic ritual drama cycles is evident in the names of *tragedy* and *satire*, both of which derive from the same archaic goat sacrifice rituals: *i.e.*, *tragos* from "goat song"; *satire* from the *satyroi* who danced in goat skins both in religious worship and in Satyr plays like the *Cyclops*. As in

... Assyrian Dagon-worshipper who offers the mystic fish-sacrifice to the Fish-god draped in a fish-skin; the old Phoenician sacrifice of game by men clothed in the skin of their prey; the Cyprian sacrifice of a sheep to the Sheep-goddess, in which sheep-skins are worn ... examples are afforded by the Dionysiac mysteries and other Greek rites, and by almost every rude religion; while in later cults the old rite survives at least in the religious use of animal masks. (W. Smith 437)

The development from archaic human / animal hybrid sacrificial *piacula* towards early European drama in Satyr plays established the generic terms from which the structure of Shakespeare's *Shrew* descends. According to Cook, pre-literary performance of the life cycle of Dionysos "absorbed into itself those primitive goat-dances that had subsisted in south Europe from 'palaeolithic times.' ... Tragedy led up to the Satyr-play. And the revel-rout may well have served... to represent the joyous arrival of the re-born god" (705).

Margaret Murray observes that in Western Europe "the stag-man is the most important of the horned figures of the Palaeolithic period ... dancing singly or in groups. ... The only Palaeolithic representation of a human figure found in England," furthermore, "is the well-known engraving on bone of a man masked with a horse's head, which was discovered in the Pinhole Cave, Derbyshire" (15). In addition to a possible reference to the hobby-horses of the Christmas festival, Biondello perhaps alerts us to the *satyric* character of the comedy with a cryptic reference to the traditional equine costume of the chorus: "Nay by Saint Iamy, I hold you a penny, a horse and / a man is more then one, and yet not many" (1466-1467).³² Tillyard describes a figure on an Attic *kratér* who "seems to wear a black loin-cloth, of which only part is visible, and above it a band with a mock erect phallos and a large horse's tail. This, of course," says Tillyard, "shows that he is represented as an actor" (qtd. in Cook 700), and Cook concludes that, at some point, the goat-like *Satýroi* were contaminated by the equine *Silenói* (702).

32 Biondello literally is "little Bion." Bion was a philosopher commonly associated with satire. According to Diogenes Laërtius, Bion "was very fond of theatrical entertainments" and "was also very ingenious in parodying passages" (Diogenes 4.5-4.6).

E. *The Taming of the Shrew* as Satyr Play for the First Tetralogy.

As with the derivation of human / animal hybrids from sacrificial *piacula*, Petruchio's horseback flight from Padua on his wedding night has prototypes both in ritual and in dramatic Satire. It may be recognized in the *Cyclops*, for instance, in Odysseus' escape from Polyphemus with the horse-tailed Silenus himself. Silenus' sons, a *choros* of *Silenois*, first help Odysseus introduce the Cyclops to the god of the grape, and his response to the liquor additionally recalls the lordly Christopher Sly:

Calloo, callay! How close I was to drowning in it! This is pleasure unalloyed. I think I see the heaven and the earth swimming around together, I see Zeus's throne and the whole revered company of the gods. Shall I not kiss them? The Graces are trying to seduce me. No more! With this Ganymede here I shall go off to bed with greater glory than with the Graces. And somehow I take more pleasure in boys than in women. {He puts his arm around Silenus}. (576-584)

Like Christopher Sly with his male bride, the Cyclops is "crowned" by Silenus (558), and the deceiving Odysseus, his crew, and his equine company are forced (with doubtful success) to rescue the male bride from the "terrible fate in store" for him (587). As with the eloping couple of *Taming of a Shrew* during the drunken snooze of Don Christo Vary, Odysseus and company take advantage of Polyphemus' weak stomach for liquor to run away, also providing a prototype for Shakespeare's Lord, huntsmen, and players who likewise are forced to divert Sly from his aroused condition to effect his bride's escape.³³

33 I take the following lines to be a bawdy pun. Sly's false bride tells him that, until sunset, his "Physitians haue expressely charg'd, / In perill to incurre your former malady, / That I should yet absent me from your bed: / I hope this reason stands for my excuse." To which he answers, "I, it stands so that I may hardly tarry so long" (275-279).

This dramatic device again is as old as Babylon. In the tale of *The Snaring of the Dragon* annually recited before the rainy season at the Puruli festival, the god of the winds turns the tables on the dragon by getting him drunk (Gaster, *Oldest* 134). Sly, appropriately to the festival occasion, suspects “a Comontie” to be “a Christmas gambold,” and the subplot with several suitors in mock combat for the hand of the fair one might be a kind of Mummings’ Play. Sly however is assured by his false bride that, like the first tetralogy which it complements, the comedy of misrule to follow has developed from its medieval holiday *ludi* origins into an Early Modern “kinde of history” (295).

While there are no goats linking the satire of *The Taming of the Shrew* to the tragos of the first tetralogy, horses are prominent, as we have seen in its allusions to its ballad sources. Petruchio’s mounted flight from Padua on his wedding night recalls the *Regifugium*, associated in Rome with New Year festivals. Michael York associates the *Regifugium* with the “original” Saturnalia taking place in the suspended time of the winter epagomenal period, “a suspension of time within time and between time,” which he traces to its Egyptian origins and says that “the tradition persisted in the Lords of Misrule of Shakespeare’s era” (233). According to Frazer, the *Regifugium* was sometimes historicized as “a commemoration of the expulsion of the kings from Rome; but this appears to have been a mere afterthought devised to explain a ceremony of which the old meaning was forgotten” (*Bough* 25.14). In a footnote to Ovid’s description of the ritual, Frazer supposes that the fleeing Roman king “may originally have been a temporary king who was invested with a nominal authority during the intercalary period ... while the power of the real king was in abeyance; and ... at the end of his brief and more or less farcical reign he was obliged to take to his heels lest a worse thing should befall him”

(*Fasti* 395). At the end of his reign, the modern Egyptian mock king similarly “was tried and condemned to be burnt. He was then escorted by the whole village to the burning place and a ring of fire was made round him. When the flames became uncomfortably hot he jumped through them to safety, leaving his burlesque royal insignia to be destroyed” (M. Murray 126). When asked to explain his own precipitous flight from Padua, Petruchio characteristically demures from explanation. “I must away to day before night come, / Make it no wonder: if you knew my businesse, / You would intreat me rather goe then stay” (1572-1574). If the mounted flight of temporary kings in Rome descends from the same winter epagomenal ritual as Petruchio’s flight from Padua, then the destruction of Richard III reflects the older tradition inferred by Frazer in which, not a substitute, but the king himself was the annual fugitive, until, stripped of his royal prerogative by age, he was caught and slain by a young rival who thereby proved himself true king. After his repeated pleas for “a Horse, a Horse, my kingdom for a Horse” (3832, 3840), Richard is immediately slain, not by a usurper, but by the providentially anointed monarch, upon which Richard becomes in English history “lord of the powers of evil.” Translated into an episode of tragedy, the ritual slaying casts the old king either as protagonist, as Duncan in *Macbeth*, or antagonist, as Richard.

Another late Indo-European development of the winter Saturnalian ritual underlying Shakespeare’s Flight of the King ceremony in the *Shrew* may be recognized in the New Year festival celebrated in Frazer’s lifetime (*c.* 1920) about February 15 in Tibet, whose customs I believe derive from a common source with Petruchio’s mock *Regifugium* from Padua.

[T]he government of Lhasa, the capital, is taken out of the hands of the ordinary rulers and entrusted to the ... Jalno [the *interrex* for the Dalai Lama, the original sacrificial “lamb of god”] ... the priests ... [elect] one man ... grotesquely disguised, and carrying a coat of skin on his arm, he is called the King of the Years, and sits daily in the market-place, where he helps himself to whatever he likes and goes about shaking a black yak’s tail over the people [now all monks, as everyone else leaves town for the ceremony], who thus transfer their bad luck to him.

Petruchio also is “elected” and financed by the grandees of Padua to transfer the community’s bad luck to himself. On the tenth day the King of the Years behaves like Petruchio in church although with a bit less violence. Instead of beating up a priest, he:

...ridicules the Jalno, saying to him, “What we perceive through the five senses is no illusion. All you teach is untrue,” and the like. The Jalno... contests these heretical opinions...[and after losing a roll of loaded dice], the King of the Years...flees away upon a white horse...His face is still painted half white and half black, and he still wears his leathern coat. ...he is detained for seven days in the great chamber of horrors at the Samyas monastery [no doubt as cold as Petruchio’s castle], surrounded by monstrous and terrific images of devils
(*Bough* 57.3.12)

The King of the Years subsequently is banished to the wilderness for a year. In addition to the purgation of the evil of Padua, the sacrificial element of the Saturnalian tradition is suggested in Petruchio’s willingness to throw away his freedom in exchange for a period of high living financed by the less courageous members of the community, for “Think’st

thou Hortensio,” asks Gremio, “though / her father be verie rich, any man is so verie a foole to be / married to hell?” (427-429).³⁴ Frazer suggests that the Tibetan King of Years was a substitute for the aristocratic Jalno in the Jalno’s original role as substitute human sacrifice for the Dalai Lama, later modified to a banished scapegoat. According to Frazer, the King of Years was probably just “some poor devil,” like Christopher Sly perhaps, whose social status as tradesman tinker or plain begger is ambiguous,³⁵ or Gascoigne’s Petruchio, a servant in *The Supposes* (2.2) who appears once, does nothing, and speaks no lines. The mock king was

... some social outcast, some wretch with whom the world had gone hard, who readily agreed to throw away his life at the end of a few days if only he might have his fling in the meantime. ... Hence in the jack-pudding who now masquerades with motley countenance in the market-place of Lhasa, sweeping up misfortune with a black yak’s tail, we may fairly see the substitute of a substitute, the vicar of a vicar, the proxy on whose back the heavy burden was laid

(*Bough* 57.3.14)

As a translation of Ariosto’s *Il Suppositi*, *the Shrew*’s Italian carnival allusions link it as nearly as possible to the folk derivations of the Roman Saturnalia. This “substitute of a substitute” recalls Gascoigne’s Prologue to the translation of Ariosto in *The Supposes*: “some I see smyling as though they supposed we would trouble you with the vaine suppose of some wanton Suppose,” but he assures us instead that we shall see “the master

34 “Hell” was an underworld goddess of pre-Christian north European religion.

35 He calls himself a “Tinker,” for example (225), although the speech prefix is *Beg*. throughout.

supposed for the servant, the servant for the master: the freeman for a slave, and the bondslave for a freeman” (187).

The practice of substituting social outcasts for functions once (and still in some cultures surveyed by Frazer) performed by tribal royalty also would seem in part to explain the ubiquitous inversion of hierarchies in epagomenal ritual. Frazer only describes the systematic transference of the original sacrifice of the divine king to progressively less aristocratic substitutes and not the doctrines or mythologies by which the people were persuaded of its continuing efficacy. “The neglect of these rites,” nevertheless, “entailed the wrath of the gods; the Carthaginians, for example, in their distress in the war with Agathocles, believed that Cronus was angry because slaves had been substituted for the noble boys that were his proper victims” (W. Smith 409). As Margaret Murray synthesizes Frazer,

... the Dying God was originally the ruler of the tribe, in other words the king.

When the custom begins to die out in any country, the first change is the substitution of some person of high rank who suffers in the king's stead; for a few days before his death the substitute enjoys royal powers and honours as he is for the time being actually the king. The next step is when a volunteer, tempted by the desire for royal power though only temporary, takes the king's fate upon himself. Then comes the substitution of a criminal already condemned to die in any case, and the final stage is the sacrifice of an animal. (125)

Murray thinks that the “burnt sacrifice performed by the ‘Druids’ was ... the offering of the substitutes for the Divine King” (127). Be that as it may, it seems clear that at the late stage at which ritual practice entered the historical record, not only was animal sacrifice

predominant, but temporary kingship with its hierarchical inversions was already inseparable from the solstitial epagomenal ritual. The ritual basis of Shakespeare's comic Saturnalia thus superimposes Petruchio's purgative marriage to hell upon the winter of discontent of the linear history in the first tetralogy, converting Richard III into a king sacrifice which purges the nation of evil and initiates its return ascent towards tragicomic resolution.

Although he is not ultimately scapegoated like the King of Years, Petruchio does flee away on a horse grotesquely disguised to a house full of monstrous and fantastic creatures, including a Cooke, Iackes and Gils (1681-1685), Nathaniel, Ioseph, Nicholas, Phillip, Walter, Sugersop (1718), Troilus (a spaniel), Ferdinand (a cozen) (1779-1780), Gabrels, Peter, Adam, Rafe, and Gregory (1760-1763), where he sings a song about, of all things, a "Friar of Orders Grey" who "walked on his way" (1774-1775). The flight of the King of the Years to a Tibetan monastery and Petruchio's flight with his grey friar reflect the common source, identified by Frazer, behind the intercalary rituals of Lhasa and medieval English festivals of misrule. Such a derivation alone can account for Petruchio's unexplained behavior. As Lévi-Strauss comments regarding his study of marriage rituals: "if the same absurdity was found to reappear over and over again, and another kind of absurdity also to reappear, then this was something which was not absolutely absurd; otherwise it would not reappear" (8). In exploiting the manifold traditions of winter Lords of Misrule, *the Shrew* reinforces the cyclical aspect of temporality which defines the Regifugium occasion of the winter solstice not merely as the death of the old sun, but the birth of the new signaled by lengthening days and an

increasingly higher course across the sky, as cited above by McDermott *vis-à-vis* the ritual winter fire, and by the *Tusser Redivivus vis-à-vis* the horse bleeding.

This ancient ritual tradition of winter Lords of Misrule retained its homoeopathic efficacy in European popular culture as well as in official Tibetan Lamaism long after their original religious institutions had been supplanted. An example of the survival of the popular tradition can be seen in the Thracian sacred marriage festival cited above by Cornford which R. M. Dawkins also associates with the origins of drama:

“[A] man, called the *χόχωστος* [chochostos] or *κουκηρὸς* [koukiros], dressed in sheep or goat skins, wearing a mask ... and in his hand a broom ... goes round collecting food and presents. He is addressed as king ... With him is a boy ... They are accompanied by boys dressed as girls. The king ... mounts a two-wheeled cart and is drawn to the church. Here two bands are formed of married and unmarried men respectively ... [the king] is then thrown into the river ... and then resumes his usual dress.” (qtd. in Cook 216 n3)

Here again, as in Tibet and in Thrace, is much fuss about the broom which turns up in myriad of these ritual disguisings. One Mummers' Play script has “in comes I hind before, / With my broad broom to sweep up the floor” (Chambers, *Folk* 19). Chambers calls attention to Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* who says: “I am sent with broome before, / To sweep the dust behinde the doore” (*MND* 2172-2173). If a broom is recognizable as customarily an animal tail, Puck's “broome before” reiterates Bakhtin's peculiar logic of the turnabout. A similarly obscure preposterous joke is made by Old Gobbo on meeting his son in *The Merchant of Venice*. “[T]hou hast got more haire on thy chin, then Dobbin my / philhorse has on his taile,” he tells Launcelot, who answers “It

should seeme then that Dobbins taile / growes backward. I am sure he had more haire of his / taile then I haue of my face when I last saw him” (656-660).

While Wendy Wall interprets Puck’s broom as a marker of domesticity in Shakespeare’s Early Modern comedy (94), the fairy broom is far more ancient than any gender association with “housewifery.” The importance of animal tails to seasonal ritual can be seen as far back as the ancient Egyptian “sed-heb or Tail-festival ... one of the most important of the royal ceremonies ... when the king was invested with the [bull’s] tail,” which he wore on his girdle (M. Murray 18). As Frazer and Chambers show, in the seasonal rituals of diverse cultures across many centuries the broom (often an animal tail hanging from a stick and thus a kind of jester’s bauble) is a magical prop whose function is to purge misfortune and evil from the community and transfer it to a scapegoat who, one way or another, will carry it away from the communal topocosm. The absurdity of the broom not only is repeated in ancient Thrace and modern Tibet, but survives in modern England. As late as 1803 the May Day Dance of Shaftesbury involved a ritual procession in which a “Staffe or Besome adorned with Feathers, Pieces of Gold, Rings and other Jewells, called a Prize Besom” (Nicholas qtd. in M. Murray 92) figures prominently. Over the calf’s head on a plate, the Besom, which Murray associates with the magic broom,

is held at the end of a pole by a man dressed in singular uniform. Now comes the Mayor and his Aldermanic body; at the sound of the music, of which there is great plenty, the whole are put in motion, youth, age and even decrepitude, begin to dance, and in this way quit the town, descend the hill, and never cease leaping and

prancing till they arrive at the Well of Mottcomb (*Sporting Magazine* qtd. in M. Murray 108)

After a back and forth exchange of the besom, the whole company “return dancing in the most ridiculous way to the place from whence they came, finishing the day with May Games and the greatest Festivity” (109). That this function dates back to a common Indo-European heritage likely also to have influenced the Tibetan ritual broom can be seen in India where “the sweeper’s broom ... is a powerful agent for curing the evil eye, and mothers get the sweeper to come and wave it up and down in front of a sick child for this purpose” (M. Murray 92).

Apart from the magical broom wielded by the Thracian *koukiros*, the procession to church, the factions of married and unmarried men, and the boys dressed as girls recall episodes in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The tossing in the river of the mock king moreover is one of several ritual absurdities, along with the snatching of the substitute bride and the *élaphoi* of Plutarch whom Cook thinks were “dressed as ... deer before being chased or killed” (67 n3), repeated in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, a festival complement to the second tetralogy, as *Shrew* is to the first. As Falstaff is dressed in stag’s horns at the conclusion of the *Merry Wives*, “in England, Scotland and the south of France the usual animal disguise,” according to Margaret Murray, “was the bull or the stag” (28). As far back as the seventh century “the Liber Poenitentialis of Theodore ... Archbishop of Canterbury ... fulminates against anyone who ‘goes about as a stag or a bull; that is, making himself into a wild animal and dressing in the skin of a herd animal, and putting on the heads of beasts ... because this is devilish’. Three centuries later King Edgar [still] found that the Old Religion was more common than the official faith” (22). It is not

surprising that the practices of the Old Religion had not been entirely erased by the official faith by the period of the Reformation.

The boy who accompanies the goat-skinned Thracian *interrex* in his similar ritual procession, linking him both to tragedy and Satyr play, likewise recalls Petruchio's "lackey" in Biondello's description of their wedding procession through Padua:

Why *Petruchio* is comming, in a new hat and
 an old ierkin, a paire of old breeches thrice turn'd; a
 paire of bootes that haue beene candle-cases, one buck-
 led, another lac'd: an olde rusty sword tane out of the
 Towne Armory, with a broken hilt, and chapelesse: with
 two broken points: his horse hip'd with an olde mo-
 thy saddle, and stirrops of no kindred: ...

Bap. Who comes with him?

Bion. Oh sir, his Lackey, for all the world Capari-
 son'd like the horse: with a linnen stock on one leg, and
 a kersey boot-hose on the other, gartred with a red and
 blew list; an old hat, & the humor of forty fancies prickt
 in't for a feather: a monster, a very monster in apparell,
 & not like a Christian foot-boy, or a gentlemans Lacky. (1431-1456)

That Grumio is "not like a Christian footboy" is not surprising if his prototype is the boy who accompanied the Thracian *koukiros*, or the fool, "John Smith," who accompanied the Lord of Misrule on his New Year procession through London to the court of Edward VI.

In 1551 [the Lord of Misrule] made his entry into court “out of the mone.” He had his fool John Smith in a “vice’s coote” and a “dissard’s hoode,” a part apparently played by the famous court fool, Will Somers. He had a “brigandyne”... his “armury” and his stables with “13 hobby horses” ... [In 1552] The “serpente with sevin heddes called hydra” was to bear his arms, his crest a “wholme bush” and his “worde” *semper feriars*. ... and he required ... a disard, John Smyth ... Again there was a challenge with hobby horses, and again the Lord of Misrule visited London on January 6... He then proceeded to dinner with the Lord Mayor.” (Chambers, *Mediaeval* 406)

January 6 as remarked is Twelfth Night and the feast day of Saint Simeon alluded to in *the Shrew* sources, another of the days almost invariably set aside for plays at Tudor and Stuart courts (Chambers, *Elizabethan* 109-115), and the hobby horses that accompany the Lord of Misrule recall the horse-tailed *Sileno*i who accompanied the transference of bacchic ritual to dramatic satire in the classical *Cyclops*.

The “humor of forty fancies” serving Grumio’s hat “for a feather” echoes the equally fantastic “serpente with sevin heddes” bearing the Lord’s arms (an astronomical monster who also incidentally shows up as Leviathan, an antagonist of Baal in the Canaanite ritual drama). The Lord of Misrule’s entrance “out of the mone” would suit the intercalary premise of the traditional festival, as would the “wholme bush,” another name for Christ’s Thorn or Holly. This association of Holly with the moon thus indicates its function during the winter adjustment of the luni-solar calendar and explains its continued proliferation in Christmas decorations. We have testimony in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* that a thorn bush was an attribute of the man in the moon: “This man,

with Lanthorne, dog, and bush of thorne, / Presenteth moone-shine,” says Quince (1934-1935), and in *The Tempest*, Caliban asks the mock king Stephano “Ha’st thou not dropt from heauen?” Stephano replies “Out o’th Moone I doe assure thee. I was the / Man ith’ Moone, when time was,” at which Caliban exclaims “I haue seene thee in her: and I doe adore thee: / My Mistris shew’d me thee, and thy Dog, and thy Bush” (1181-1185). “My Mistris” may refer to Miranda, but in keeping with Stephen Greenblatt’s postcolonial reading of the play in “Invisible Bullets,” it may be Sycorax, representing indigenous tradition, who had taught Caliban an identical mythology. As such, a New World analogue to Old World myth and ritual, of which the South American menstrual rituals cited above may be another example, is exploited by an Old World conquistador to usurp sovereignty over an indigenous population. I would add that such colonization took place in Europe itself for many centuries before being exported to the Americas.

Apart from Petruchio’s aspect as intercalary Lord of Misrule, Biondello’s elaborate description begs explanation. Tranio can only offer that “‘Tis some odd humour pricks him to this fashion” (1457) and presume that Petruchio “hath some meaning in his mad attire” (1507). Petruchio claims he will offer sufficient reasons when time serves: “Tedious it were to tell, and harsh to heare, / Sufficeth I am come to keepe my word, / Though in some part inforced to digresse, / Which at more leysure I will so excuse, / As you shall well be satisfied with all” (1492-1496). “Digress” is ambiguous, referring either to Petruchio’s wayward course or discourse, and the method in Petruchio’s madness remains as unexplained as the bizarre customs attached to the Lord of Misrule in early Tudor England. The failure of the “long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason, to find a sound theory for an absurd practice,” identified by Frazer with the history of

religion, merely has become a function of the Saturnalian inversion of *Jovian* rational order, which dispenses with its reasons along with its rationality.

Petruchio's likewise unexplained mounted retreat precisely mimics the intercalary king who Frazer speculates combined the fleeing king of the *Regifugium* with the mock king of the Saturnalia at the end of the new Roman calendar in December as an attempt to mediate between lunar and solar years (*Fasti* 396), a dispute Petruchio insists upon resolving before returning to Padua to let regenerative time proceed in its course. At the approach of winter solstice, the lunar calendar begins to dispute the solar figured in Kate's refusal to submit to male sovereignty. Although the Julian calendar, recently modified by Pope Gregory XIII, got around this problem with the system of leap years, the newest version (our current system for the most part) had not been accepted in England, and *the Shrew's* evocation of the long tradition of Saturnalia does not omit the intercalary adjustment justifying its original location at the winter solstice. In terms of the Egyptian astronomy explained above by Plutarch, the moon is ready to begin a new year some days before the sun has made a complete return to its New Year's position on the horizon. The lunar and solar calendars consequently periodically fell out of sync in bronze-age Babylon, and a month was "intercalate[d]" in the year. A letter of Hammurabi (1848-1806 BC) states that "... this year has an additional month ... the second month of Ululu ..." (Walker 45).

In Shakespeare's rewriting of the Egyptian Hermes-vs.-moon mythology, the solar substitute refuses to permit the calendar to proceed until the next lunar phase obediently marks the first day of the solar year. On their return toward the comic *theoxenia* of Padua, Petruchio enacts a Saturnian equivalent to Plutarch's Hermes playing

draughts against the moon in order to bestow an orderly Year upon the Earth. He commands Kate: “Come on a Gods name, once more toward our fathers” (2297), indicating a return course, in the Satyric tradition of Odysseus in the *Cyclops*, back from the austerity of his winter habitation, toward origin and toward Padua’s restored patriarchy. Then speaking for the solar order which must succeed the play’s suspension of calendrical time, Petruchio insists on the subordination of the shifting menstrual moon to the solar calendar. Facing Kate, perhaps, as the sun faces the full moon of the night of the *Regifugium* (or three nights later, after the horse bleeding and Yule fires, when the sun begins its annual climb towards the equinox, and with Hortensio’s head for the spinning Earth between them) he declares: “Good Lord how bright and goodly shines the Moone.” Kate insists that her reckoning of the time is accurate, and it is the sun who has lost count: “The Moone, the Sunne: it is not Moonelight now.” Petruchio insists upon solar sovereignty, whether temporarily suspended, inverted, and incoherent or not: “I say it is the Moone that shines so bright.” Katherine’s course remains irrefutably consistent, and she thus is tricked into affirming solar predominance. “I know it is the Sunne that shines so bright.” Petruchio asserts solar fiat, demanding that Kate’s autonomous but dependent lunations submit to the independent autocracy of the solar calendar. “Now by my mothers sonne, and that’s my selfe, / It shall be moone, or starre, or what I list, / Or ere I iourney to your Fathers house” (2302-2304). Giordano Bruno was burnt at the stake for heresy in 1600 after asserting, among other things, that the Sun is a star. If Shakespeare agreed with this opinion, Petruchio’s apparent misrule of the heavenly bodies, rather than mere contrariness, actually applies to a metatextual higher logic hidden from Kate. Together with the failure of England to adopt Gregory’s correction of

the Augustan calendar, an element of epochal change in the development of modern cosmology thus is introduced into the annual epagomenal dispute. As winter Lord of Misrule, Petruchio finally performs his Saturnalian function of resurrecting the New Year by bringing the lunar year to the same starting point as the solar. The calendar, after all, is merely a text and not the thing itself, and the lunar cycle finally agrees to move into nominal alignment with the solar year.

Kate. Forward I pray, since we haue come so farre,

And be it moone, or sunne, or what you please:

And if you please to call it a rush Candle,

Henceforth I vowe it shall be so for me.

Petr. I say it is the Moone.

Kate. I know it is the Moone.

Petr. Nay then you lye: it is the blessed Sunne.

Kate. Then God be blest, it is the blessed sun,

But sunne it is not, when you say it is not,

And the Moone changes euen as your minde:

The shrewish moon has at last aligned her phases to their true nature as reflections of the sun's course, and sun and moon begin the New Year on the same foot. "*Hort. Petruchio,* goe thy waies, the field is won. / *Petr.* Well, forward, forward, thus the bowle should run, / And not vnluckily against the Bias" (2297-2322). On New Year's Day at the end of the solstitial epagomenal period, lunar and solar calendars are again in sync, and the "bowle" once again can proceed to spin smoothly back towards the fertility of spring and summer. In realigning the calendar from its unlucky epagomenal spin, the play's comic rub in this

belabored intercalary dispute conclusively identifies its Saturnalian pretensions to the corrective function of epagomenal ritual.

As Lord of Misrule, Petruchio, like Hermes, is not the solar deity, but rather his Saturnalian *interrex*. If there is a solar deity in the intertextual complex constructed between *the Shrew* and *Richard III* at the epagomenal winter nadir of Shakespeare's Elizabethan metatext, it would still be the emergent Richmond of the conclusion of the first tetralogy. If he has a representative in the world-turned-upside-down of *the Shrew*, it is Lucentio (literally "the bright"), the solar bridegroom in the *hieros gamos* which Petruchio's temporary Saturnalian elevation has conspired to consummate. While Petruchio therefore is not the sun, Kate may be seen as personating the rebellious moon whose avatars usually are female. In this context, Petruchio's role as Lord of Misrule quibbles upon the man in the moon, an association suggested in the London Christmas ceremony described above, as well as upon the Hermes of Plutarch in his winter contest against the lunar goddess. This inversion of male sun and female moon is reiterated and reinforced as a representative of the winter sun, Vincentio, the aged father of the vernal Lucentio, next appears and is addressed by Kate as: "Yong budding Virgin, faire, and fresh, & sweet" (2335). In the movement from the epagomenal solstice back toward vernal fertility, Vincentio is restored by the submissive Kate to his proper hierarchical status. "Pardon old father my mistaking eies, / That haue bin so bedazled with the sunne, / That euery thing I looke on seemeth greene: / Now I perceiue thou art a reuerent Father: / Pardon I pray thee for my mad mistaking" (2343-2347). The epagomenal midpoint is passed, and world-time as the cease of fertility has now become a prelude to its return to verdant spring.

Petruchio's equation of the return trip to Padua with a bowling ball similarly is calculated to evoke the Earth's circular course of regenerative seasonality.³⁶ This will be Petruchio's fifth return trip, and no reason seems to demand his inexorable circular movement other than its containment function. Sohmer thinks that "from his reading of ancient literature Shakespeare surely knew the Saturnalia celebrates the last full moon of the agricultural year." He also would have been aware of the *Regifugium* through his Ovidian source for *The Rape of Lucrece* which tell of "the Flight of the King, from it the sixth day from the end of the month has taken its name. The last to reign over the Roman people was Tarquin ... That day was the last of kingly rule" (qtd. in Sohmer n44). This ancient ritual logic is the hidden method in the madness of Shakespeare's adaptation of the familiar absurdities of holiday festivities, and it constructs the comic link from the Saturnalian *Taming of the Shrew* to the tragic death-of-the-god ritual structuring the first tetralogy.

F. Peculiar Logic of the Inverse in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

In addition to Petruchio's genealogical links with ritual Lords of Misrule thus far cited, *The Taming of the Shrew* identifies itself as a theatrical Saturnalia in a number of blatant and more subtle ways. The "exchange of dress" of the boy masquerading as Dona Christovary, for example, "reflects a custom which frequently marks Saturnalian festivals," and Cornford enumerates its usage in Aristophanes' comedies (77). The

36 As it is for the mimetic Isis and Nephthys in the Earth garden of the following tetralogy play, *Richard II*. Before their dialogue on ritual mourning and jubilation, The lady in waiting suggests a game of "Bowles." To which the Queen replies "Twill make me thinke the World is full of Rubs, / And that my fortune runnes against the Byas" (1811-1812).

episode, moreover, resembles the “false bride” motif identified by Frazer as a common practice during modern Estonian wedding feasts: “...when a bridegroom or his representative comes to fetch the bride from her home, a false bride is substituted for the real one.” The bride’s brother or some other young man is “palmed off on him as the bride” (*Fasti* 410). Again, according to Frazer, “the Germans of Western Bohemia, in whose marriage customs the False Bride figures prominently, believe that [she] will always carry away the bad luck from the true bride out of the house” (*Fasti* 411), which suggests a familiar folk-custom model for Sly’s substitute bride, as well as a functional model for Petruchio’s substitute wedding that purges Padua’s bad luck. Frazer traces the substitute bride custom to the feast of Anna Perenna (the year in eternity) on the old Roman New Year in March, whose hilarious customs might recall the wiving of Kate by Petruchio. Ovid “says that in the procession of Anna Perenna, on the Ides of March, a drunken old woman, known as the Petreia, was dragged along the streets by a drunken old man. ... [T]hey personified Anna Perenna and Mamurius Veturius (Old Mars) on whom she had been palmed off” (Gaster, *Bough* 639).

The removal of New Year from the planting season to winter solstice is an early example of the taming of the shrewish earth goddess by the Roman sky god. Such early cults of divine motherhood among the heathen Semites, according to Smith, also “gave a prominence to sexual ideas which was ... often repulsive” (58). A summer version of this displacement of originally matriarchal ritual by patriarchal forms is enacted in the repulsive sexuality employed in the dispute for sovereignty between Titania and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Smith attributes such sexualized seasonal ritual to periods when “the change in the law of kinship deprived the mother of

her old pre-eminence in the family, and transferred to the father the greater part of her authority and dignity.” As in *The Taming of the Shrew*, the surrender of the infant in the subplot of Shakespeare’s Midsummer festival comedy symbolizes the process by which “the wife became subject to her husband’s lordship ... at the same time that her children became, for all purposes of inheritance and all duties of blood, members of his and not of her kin” (58).

In *The Taming of the Shrew* at the opposite solstice of Shakespeare’s Seasonal Pattern, the mock nuptials of the old god and goddess of the New Year resemble festival rituals of mockery such as *Charivari* and the Skimmington. “Shaming rituals such as the Skimmington and other “rides” brutally mocked the husband who failed to “bridle” his unruly wife, graphically parodying his ability to control his “mount” by displaying him as seated backwards on a horse, an ass, or even a stick horse.” Such rituals, according to Sloan, parodied “the inversions effected by the husband / rider’s failure to control the unruly wife who, in refusing to be bridled, ‘turneth backward the laws of nature’” (para 3). Don Christovary of *Taming of A Shrew*, who confesses in the epilogue to having need of Petruchio’s taming school, seems like a good candidate for such treatment. According to Sloan, “Petruchio deliberately evokes the Skimmington in order to exorcise its power to emasculate him” (para 23). While Sloan’s analysis goes a long way in identifying Shakespeare’s method of adaptation of familiar ritual practice to the comedy of *the Shrew*, it is not only Petruchio, but primarily Padua whose power hierarchy is purged of its subversive threat. The Skimmington allusions are co-opted through their traditional association with the Feast of Fools in order to delimit the large social function

of the winter festival customs. When Petruchio drags Kate through the streets of Padua like the *Patreaia* of Rome, the citizens are free to revel in carnival laughter at the banquet.

Pet. Feare not sweet wench, they shall not touch thee *Kate*,

Ile buckler thee against a Million. *Exeunt.*

Bap. Nay, let them goe, a couple of quiet ones.

Gre. Went they not quickly, I should die with laughing. ...

Bap. Neighbours and friends, though Bride & Bridegroom wants

For to supply the places at the table,

You know there wants no iunkets at the feast:

Lucentio, you shall supply the Bridegroomes place,

And let *Bianca* take her sisters roome. (1624-1626)

Once the old year-god has absconded with the old year-goddess, the true *hieros gamos* can take its place at the *theoxenia*, an ancient ritual of jubilation at which even the discomfited Gremio can “die with laughing.” The true wedding couple (nominally, as Baptista apparently addresses the disguised Tranio) is now supposed in the place that had been opened up and temporarily supposed by the Saturnalian supposes, Kate and Petruchio.

Other subtle references to Festival of Misrule customs inform the hilarity of *The Taming of the Shrew*. When Grumio is offended that he should be asked to “take vp [his] Mistris gowne to his masters vse. / Oh fie, fie, fie” (2145-2146), another Saturnalian tradition is suggested. The thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, according to McCabe, was “one of the freest, sexually, in civilized history, and on festival days there was no public restraint” (23). The fact that the fathers of the Latin kings seem to have been

unknown, says Frazer, also may point to “a special relaxation of moral rules on certain occasions, when men and women reverted for a season to the licence of an earlier [*i.e.*, Saturnian] age” (*Bough* 14.3). Sexual license during Roman festivals of misrule, in other words, went so far as to make paternity anonymous even for kings. Grumio’s joke may pass for a piece of frivolous bawdy, but the continuous subtle allusion of such jokes in *the Shrew* to increasingly suppressed ritual practices is conspicuous. Even the removal of the women to their own quarters from the banquet recalls the culmination of the “Ascent” of Zeus to one of his mountain-top sanctuaries where he “was annually married to his bride. On this occasion the men were entertained by the priest in the *Komýrion* [from *komos*] and the women separately in the sanctuary ... no distinction being made between citizens, Romans, foreigners, and slaves. ... the whole account...reads like that of a joyous wedding *cortège*” (Cook 21).”

Bakhtin accords with Frazer that in the Carnival in Europe in the Middle Ages “the suspension of all hierarchical precedence ... was of particular significance.” He attributes the importance of this suspension to the fact that “the hierarchical background and the extreme corporative and caste divisions of the medieval social order were exceptionally strong” (12). But while the suspension of all hierarchy for Bakhtin results in a temporary period of utopian egalitarian democracy, he implies that hierarchy is not merely suspended, but inverted. “We find here,” he says, “a characteristic logic, the peculiar logic of the ‘inside out’ (*à l’envers*), of the ‘turnabout,’ of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear ... comic crownings and uncrownings. ... it is to a certain extent a parody of the extracarnival life, a ‘world inside out’” (12). One may translate *à l’envers* as “inside out,” but this logic of the inverse and “preposterous” is

usually referred to in England as “the world-turned-upside-down.” Philippa Berry associates Patricia Parker’s definition of the “preposterous” with the influence on Renaissance thought of “ancient conceptions of a cyclical or repetitive model of time,” By structuring the world-turned-upside-down in its winter turn circularly back to spring, festivals of misrule merely brought into greater relief the hierarchical terms of the world right side up. Had “all hierarchical precedence” been merely “suspended” for three months of every year (Bakhtin 13), it is hard to see how the normal order of these societies could return intact so consistently for so many centuries, and why the idea of progress and revolution finally became ascendant in European culture only after festivals of misrule had been for the most part suppressed. As Victor Turner says: “By making the low high and the high low ... rituals of status reversal ... reaffirm the hierarchical principle” (qtd. in Burke 201), and Peter Burke points out that “comedies built round situations of reversal ... and played during Carnival, frequently end in a similar way with a reminder to the audience that it is time to set the world the right way up again” (202).

The exigencies of the luni-solar calendar and of agricultural labor typically provide the occasion for the festivals of misrule giving rise to such dramatic comedy. The Carnival’s “parody of extracarnival life” was constructed through upending, not dissolution, of its mores, and only in the prescribed place and time precisely because periodic Saturnalian inversion of the *Jovian* status quo (*i.e.*, monarchical divine right), concluding like *The Taming of the Shrew*, in a marriage and banquet, was thought necessary to regenerate both the fertility and the stable social structures of the *Jovian* order. The Saturnalian license through inversion of the *Jovian* order at the winter solstice was a necessary evil that was located “outside” of the calendar, prefigured in the second

Babylonian month of Ululu, specifically to ensure that *Jovian* time was untainted by it. The most ancient prototype to the *theoxenia* that concludes *The Taming of the Shrew* likewise can be recognized in the Near East. According to Gaster, the banquet concluding the Mesopotamian ritual drama, “conveys the idea that Baal, now ensconced in his palace, holds a constitutional assembly (as does Marduk in the Babylonian version) at which he determines the cosmic order and—specifically—relegates Mot to his proper domain. For the fact is that in ancient times such [political] gatherings usually concluded with a banquet” (*Thespis* 190). The genre of comedy itself, as remarked, probably derives its name from the *komos* procession to the feast of early Greek religious ritual. As the constitutional assembly that concludes *Cymbeline* and the *First Folio* is “Seale[d] ... with Feasts” (3817), the conclusion of the ritual drama of Plutarch’s Bacchus and Venus (represented by Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*) also is followed by a procession “to the Feast” (*Lives* 938). The triple sacred marriage at the conclusion of Shakespeare’s Saturnalian epagomenal comedy in *The Taming of the Shrew* here can be traced to its ancient and more grandiose prototype in Near Eastern state religion.

The narrative frame of *the Shrew*, depicting the beggar, Christopher Sly, deceived into believing himself a lord and waited on by a lord disguised as his servant, thus clearly is a sophisticated dramatization of the world-turned-upside-down of the Feast of Fools. These winter festivals, as we have seen, included servants like Tranio waited on by their masters, who change from aristocratic Lucentios into common Cambios, and the elevation of members of the community of low social status like Christopher Sly to variations of Lord of Misrule, Abbot of Unreason, Bishop of Fools, etc. in Europe and King of the Years in Tibet. Sly and Petruchio represent different aspects of the same

temporary inversion of authority, the former evoking the real world practice and the latter its metaphorical idealization, and they make different allusions to complex festival traditions. The attendance of local aristocrats upon such Christmas Lords is parodied in the instructions given by Shakespeare's "Lord" to his servants concerning Sly.

And if he chance to speake, be readie straight
 (And with a lowe submissiue reuerence)
 Say, what is it your Honor vvil command:
 Let one attend him vvith a siluer Bason
 Full of Rose-water, and bestrew'd with Flowers,
 Another beare the Ewer: the third a Diaper,
 And say wilt please your Lordship coole your hands.
 Some one be readie with a costly suite,
 And aske him what apparel he will weare:
 Another tell him of his Hounds and Horse,
 And that his Ladie mournes at his disease,
 Perswade him that he hath bin Lunaticke,
 And when he sayes he is, say that he dreames,
 For he is nothing but a mightie Lord:
 This do, and do it kindly, gentle sirs (56-69)

The OED curiously cites these lines to demonstrate the definition of "diaper" as a "baby's clout," and Sly's happy condition as center of attention waited on hand and foot does seem to resemble an infantile regression. His "lunacy" furthermore is appropriate to the season in which the Lord of Misrule makes his entrance to London from "out of the

mone,” and his new status accords with the articles drawn up by the Right Worshipful Richard Evelyn, Esq. regarding his Christmas Lord of Misrule.

‘Imprimis, I give free leave to Owen Flood, my trumpeter, gentleman, to be Lord of Misrule of all good orders during the twelve days. And also, I give free leave to the said Owen Flood to command all and every person or persons whatsoever, as well servants as others, to be at his command whensoever he shall sound his trumpet or music, and to do him good service, as though I were present myself, at their perils ... God save the king!’ (qtd. in R. Chambers 12/24a).

This Lord of Misrule apparently played Christopher Sly at Evelyn’s house as the Petruchian Christmas Lord rode in his fantastic attire through London during the winter intercalary festival. Chambers informs us that “soon after 1554 the Masters of Revels cease to be elected” at the Inner Temple (*Mediaeval* 415). The practice seems to have continued, however, despite Puritan objections, and “in 1585 the Bench forbade that any one should ‘in time of Christmas, or any other time, take upon him, or use the name place, or commandment of *Lord*, or any such other like.’” In 1594, a Prince of Purpoole nevertheless presented a mask before Elizabeth (417), perhaps a kind of rhyming slang for “Misrule.” *The Book of Days* identifies these courtly customs as variants of “the winter ‘king’ known to the folk” (419).

The Saturnalian aspect of Shakespeare’s *Shrew* merely follows in the Elizabethan tradition of applying “the regularizing influence of classical models” to “folk ritual,” as when morality play characters appear in Senecan tragedies. The ancient and medieval sources of the Saturnalian aspect of *the Shrew* are in both cases seasonal ritual; *i.e.*, the ancient Saturnalia and the native medieval midwinter festival of misrule. The fact that

“the tradition of the [pagan] Saturnalias remained unbroken and alive in the medieval carnival...” (Bakhtin 9) was already understood in Shakespeare’s time.

“If,” says [William Prynne in] ... *Histrio-Mastix*, “we compare our Bacchanalian Christmasses and New-year’s Tides with these Saturnalia and Feasts of Janus, we shall find such near affinitye betweene them both in regard of time (they being both in the end of December and on the first of January) and in their manner of solemnising (both of them being spent in revelling, epicurisme, wantonnesse, idlenesse, dancing, drinking, stage-plaies, masques, and carnall pompe and jollity), that we must needes conclude the one to be but the very ape or issue of the other. Hence Polydore Virgil affirmes in express tearmes that our Christmas Lords of Misrule (which custom, saith he, is chiefly observed in England), together with dancing, masques, mummeries, stageplayes, and such other Christmass disorders now in use with Christians, were derived from these Roman Saturnalia and Bacchanalian festivals; which (concludes he) should cause all pious Christians eternally to abominate them.” (qtd. in R. Chambers 12/24a)

For what it’s worth, Polydore is the name of the Hortensio character in Gascoigne’s *Supposes*. Be that as it may, such associations supported increasing repression of Christmas festivities and are therefore appropriate to a comedy that purports to “suppose” itself for them as a politically tolerable alternative. Beyond the Sly frame, the logic of *The Taming of the Shrew* is precisely Bakhtin’s “peculiar logic” of Carnival: “à l’envers, the continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear” the “preposterous,” the “world-turned-upside-down.”

Gascoigne's Prologue says "this our Suppose is nothing else but a mistaking or imagination of one thing for an other," but his list makes clear that it is always mistaking a higher thing for a lower, a fair thing for a foul. Likewise in Shakespeare's version: Lucentio the student becomes Cambio the teacher; the servant Tranio becomes his master Lucentio; the aristocratic Lucentio and Hortensio become clerks; the servant Grumio "knocks" his master Petruchio (573); "to beguile the olde-folkes ... the young folkes lay their heads together" (704-705); stings end up in tongues, and tongues end up in tails (1091-1094); the beautiful younger sister becomes the spinster; the shrew becomes "pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous, but slow in speech: yet sweet as spring-time flowers" (1124-1125). Petruchio's wooing is all purely *à l'envers*:

Say that she raile, why then Ile tell her plaine,

She sings as sweetly as a Nightinghale:

Say that she frowne, Ile say she lookes as cleere

As morning Roses newly washt with dew:

Say she be mute, and will not speake a word,

Then Ile commend her volubility,

And say she vttereth piercing eloquence:

If she do bid me packe, Ile giue her thanks,

As though she bid me stay by her a weeke:

If she denie to wed, Ile craue the day

When I shall aske the banes, and when be married. (1039-1049)

A son Lucentio "[be]gets a sire," the false Vincentio (1292); the true Vincentio becomes a young girl (2325), while a middle class "Marcantant, or a pedant" becomes the

aristocratic Vincentio (1916); Biondello's "news" is "olde" (1422); "the Oates haue eaten the horses" (1591);³⁷ the Paduans are "theeues" from whom Grumio must "rescue" his mistress by stealing her (1622); the "sunne" becomes the "moone," quibbling upon the intercalary principle; the "cullion" Lucentio is "made a god" by Bianca while her ideal love for Lucentio is called harlotry by Hortensio (1868); and the premise of the general comic tension, made more explicit in the sources, is that Katherine has become master first of her father, then of her husband. As Jone warns Robin in the ballad, hinting, I think, at the archaic matriarchalism of native paganism: "... I cannot refrayne me in no wise, / For I haue it by nature a parte ywis: / It was wont to be my mothers guise, / Sometime to be mayster withouten misse" (233-236). As Sloan also remarks, in Biondello's description of Petruchio's attire, including his "thrice-turned breeches," "Virtually every item of his clothing is a product of literal inversions, or 'turnings,' complete with sexual innuendo" (para 20). Like his breeches, furthermore, Petruchio himself is thrice turned from Pisa to Padua, and like turning breeches three times, there seems little apparent point.

The identification of *the Shrew* with comic containment through a "peculiar logic" of "*l'envers*" further is suggested by the elevation to domineering protagonist of Gascoigne's silent Petruchio. But all of these inversions, many adapted from Ariosto's *Il Suppositi*, are contained within an inversion of the dramatic structure itself. The taming of the shrewish wife is a farcical plot which, in Shakespeare's comedy, following Classical convention, should serve as a below-stairs subplot to the idealized romantic

37 In addition to being perfectly rational according to Latin syntax, this perhaps is a reference to the practice of strewing or burying the *exuviae* of the sacrificed beasts in the fields to promote fertility.

comedy of Lucentio and Bianca, as with Touchstone's wooing of Audrey *vis-à-vis* the romantic comedy of Orlando and Rosalind in *As You Like It* (1615 ff.). *The Taming of the Shrew* instead elevates the farce to main plot, demoting Gascoigne's protagonists to supporting actors. Rather than merely random ways of vexing Katherine, Petruchio's preposterous behavior enacts the magical function of the Lord of Misrule during the winter Feast of Fools, who Frazer claims represented Saturn himself in the primitive Saturnalia. In the terms of the "primitive folk ritual," the license of the Saturnalia is not simply a recreation or "pastime," but it accomplishes the same function as its ancient prototypes which somehow propagated, as Prynne says, by "ape or issue," (*i.e.*, by conscious mimesis or genetic development) outward in all directions from the Near East. Finally, *The Taming of the Shrew* itself is a suppose that elevates our melancholy "congeal'd" blood above our winter of discontent where we, together with our wives who (like the temperamental moon) have perhaps become a little shrewish from seasonal poverty and monthly PMS, can look down upon God's Scourge with Christopher Sly and laugh at it.

At the concluding feast both of the Paduan marriage plots of *the Shrew* are merged, signaling the complete resolution which only the temporary inversion of the normal hierarchy of plots could have effected. In making this inversion of the normal order of dramatic structure the necessarily evil means to the ideal union of Lucentio and Bianca, *The Taming of the Shrew* simultaneously references the Saturnalian winter festival of misrule and Richard III's historical winter of discontent, despite the fact that the specific seasonal context is muted in both plays. As Cornford points out with regard to Aristophanic comedy:

It can hardly be a mere chance that so many of the extant plays are based on the general idea of an inversion of the existing order. We have seen, too, how the notion of the new God or new King is bound up with the Sacred Marriage, in which, year by year, a fresh representative of the power of fertility must take the part of divine husband in the magical sacrament. From the fact that almost every play ends with a marriage: we have conjectured that ... the underlying plot-formula of the Old Comedy preserves the outlines of a ritual or folk drama performed at some seasonal festival. (77)

Just as inversions of social hierarchies at given times of year, along with such performances of sacred marriage and magical resurrection, were considered throughout the world to be necessary to the annual regeneration of the topocosm, the inversion of plots in *The Taming of the Shrew* enables an otherwise frustrated *hieros gamos* of ideal principles, a union which metaphorically promises the union of York and Lancaster as epilogue to the tragic first tetralogy. The unification of the two plots of *The Taming of the Shrew* in the final banquet, a *theoxenia* conventional to ritual drama as well as to Aristophanes' comedies, re-turns Padua to a world-right-side-up.

As opposed to a plain marriage ritual, the wedding of *the Shrew* is a marriage of marriages metaphorically containing the troublesome history of the tetralogy within the tradition of cyclical tragicomic regeneration through winter Saturnalian ritual. The reworking in the second tetralogy of this approach to containment of dramatic tension through reunification of main and subplots, forming a kind of circular narrative structure, is discussed in this chapter. The winter principle at work in both *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Richard III* ultimately is exploited to associate the historical dynastic seasonal myth

constructed by the upper classes with the regenerative seasonal terms already familiar to the lower classes. At the end of both plays, all temporary inversions of normal social relations are restored, but *The Taming of the Shrew* works to lend the carnival laughter of comic resolution to the rudimentary restoration of right rule under Henry Tudor after the tragic conclusion of the tetralogy. Like the “bawdy inversions of the horse-and-rider trope” of the Skimmington, the inversion of plots in *The Taming of the Shrew* is “intended to restore ‘right rule’ within the household and, by extension, within the community” (Sloan para 3). While Sloan is interested in the right rule of the household thus effected, the resolution of Shakespeare’s comedies always depends on the restoration of the community. If this restoration remains unstable in Shakespeare’s dramatized Saturnalia, owing to the ominous rebelliousness of Bianca at its *theoxenia*, it is only a reminder that the lunar calendar immediately begins to fall back out of sync with the solar, and the full comic resolution of recurrent social tensions likewise is not accomplished once for all, but depends on the continued substitution of the public theater for the now suppressed seasonal folk ritual.

The popularity of Philip Stubbes’ *Anatomie of Abuses* (c. 1583) which treated the “‘satanism’ of the festivals of May and those of the Lord of Misrule ... points to the existence, among the elite and the educated, of quite a strong movement of opposition to festivity, while at the same time testifying indirectly to its persistent vitality and popularity among the masses” (Laroque 6). One last point might be made regarding Stubbes’ reference to Satanism. The identification of popular festivity deriving from pre-Christian religion with “Satanism” and “witchcraft” may seem like hyperbole, but McCabe calls the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries “Satan’s Golden Age, the period

when he became the God of millions, if not tens of millions, of Europeans” (20). The Church having identified the pre-Christian religion as “Satanism,” many popular festivals were recast even by their participants as Witches’ Sabbaths and Satan worship. “The records of the Middle Ages show the ancient god was known in many parts of [England], but to the Christian recorder he was the enemy of the New Religion and was therefore equated with the Principle of Evil, in other words the Devil” (M. Murray 7). Rites of the ancient god in England through the seventeenth century, according to McCabe, “were essentially gay festivals, and the entire cult was a glorification of joy,” as they had been in pagan times (21). In England, as Murray puts it,

the final conquest was by the Normans, whose [Christian] ruler was of the same religion as that of the king whom he defeated; but the Norman people, like the English, were largely of the Old Faith, and the Conquest made little difference to the relative position of the two religions. Therefore though the rulers professed Christianity the great mass of the people followed the old gods, and even in the highest offices of the Church the priests often served the heathen deities as well as the Christian God and practised Pagan rites. Thus in 1282 the priest of Inverkeithing led the fertility dance round the churchyard; in 1303 the bishop of Coventry, like other members of his diocese, paid homage to a deity in the form of an animal. (7)

The persistent vitality among the masses of pagan religious festivities can be inferred from the astounding record of persecutions of “witches” in the late Middle Ages.

[I]n one Swiss locality 700 were found and 200 burned; ... 5,003 were found in one Italian valley; ... in the South of France the Sabbath attracted ... 3,000 to

10,000 witches; ... 500 were burned in one German city; ... 600 were prosecuted at Toulouse; ... 503 were burned at Geneva in 1515; ... a lay judge at Nancy boasted that he burned 800 in 16 years.... [I]n the diocese of Como 1,000 were executed in a year; ... in three months (in 1515) 600 were burned in the bishopric of Wurzburg and 800 in the bishopric of Bamberg; ... in five years one-fifth of the inhabitants of the small town of Lindheim were burned, and so on.... Judge de L'Ancre found that a whole region in the south of France, including the priests ... had gone over to the cult of Satan ... and he had to get papal permission to restrict his inquiry and be lenient. (McCabe 20)

McCabe cites Murray who affirms that “there was no Inquisition in England and witchcraft was not a felony in English law until the Reformation, so there was practically no torture” (19). Expropriation from immemorial ties to the agricultural land of the feudal serfdom on the other hand aided the Reformation in the deterioration of rural pagan religious festivities along with their social functions. McCabe’s description recalls Stubbe’s abomination of popular “Satanism” and Prynne’s “Saturnalia and Bacchanalian festivals,” being spent, according to McCabe, “in an orgy of dancing, feeding, drinking, and promiscuity: a sort of harvest-thanksgiving to Satan for the fruits and pleasures of the earth” (22). McCabe remarks that, “2000 years earlier, men and women had held just such services in the blaze of the eastern sun. Now they chose the night, and they cursed the religion that brought about the change” (22), he concludes, before “the genuine cult was, generally speaking, bludgeoned out of existence in Europe in the second half of the 17th century” (26).

Regardless of any explicit association with Satan or Bacchus, as a means of containing the uncertainty of historical change within the regenerative tragicomedy of circular time, the world-turned-upside-down of Shakespeare's *Shrew* mimics the temporalizing functions of seasonal ritual as it had developed from its ancient origins through classical comedy and tragedy, primitive folk ritual, and medieval religious drama. Shakespeare's comedy of *supposes* therefore itself is a *suppose*, a "substitute of a substitute," supposed for the rural popular *ludi*, long supposed for their official religious prototypes, whose temporary misrule for immemorial generations had helped to stabilize the *Jovian* order of Church and State by giving free rein periodically to collective mourning and jubilation. Where such festivals, according to Bakhtin, took up three months of every year, they must have made the toil and repression of feudal serfdom tolerable. Murray says that the "regard which the members of the Old Religion had for the Sabbath is set forth by de Lancre ... who ... like all Christians ... called these people 'witches'." One such "witch" told him that "Those who went there found the time too short because of the pleasure and happiness they enjoyed, so that they left with infinite regret and longed for the time when they could go again" (qtd. in M. Murray 78).

Petruchio tells us that he knows no other way than the seasonal Saturnalian inversion of authority and morality represented in *The Taming of the Shrew* to man his Haggard, unless it is a futile and counterproductive resort to totalitarian surveillance, and his complaint might be addressed to Stubbes and Prynne. "He that knowes better how to tame a shrew, / Now let him speake, 'tis charity to shew" (1844-1845).

The simultaneous and complementary strategies of subversion / containment in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Richard III* in sum would seem to reflect the derivation of

the Scourge of God, an unpredictable phenomenon of providential history, from the annually recurring Saturnalian Lord of Misrule of festival tradition. Petruchio and Richard III represent symbiotic strategies of narrative resolution and “containment of the subversive and illicit” which in Shakespeare’s work evoke phenomenological and historiological rather than merely aesthetic implications. By adhering to the ritual pattern along with its appropriate satyric complement, Shakespeare’s Tudor history cycle implies an Althusserian expressive causality which is both providentially teleological and regeneratively cyclical. The allegorical rewriting of the ritual drama cycle thus serves as a metanarrative substitute for the phenomenological topocosm of the audience disrupted by the historical trauma of the late Middle Ages.

The apostrophe spoken by Henry Lancaster at the conclusion of *Richard III* regarding his happy marriage to Elizabeth York foreshadows the present reign of their granddaughter Elizabeth Tudor. This *hieros gamos* of the Tudor dynasty, metaphorically performed in the marriage of Bianca and Lucentio in the contemporary *Shrew*, bestows upon the audience of the Globe their own part in the real-world history play.

O now, let *Richmond* and *Elizabeth*,
 The true Succeeders of each Royall House,
 By Gods faire ordinance, conioyne together:
 And let thy Heires (God if thy will be so)
 Enrich the time to come, with Smooth-fac’d Peace,
 With smiling Plenty, and faire Prosperous dayes. (3875-3880)

Richmond’s “Peace” recalls *Cymbeline*’s “Peace” that is sealed with feasts at the conclusion of the *Folio*. In the Aristophanic prototypes to these comic conclusions, the

final stages of the ritual of jubilation are translated into *hieros gamos*, *theoxenia*, and *exodos*. Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* leaves us at the banquet scene, omitting the little *exodos* that concludes the anonymous *Taming of a Shrew*. "Sly. Thou hast waked me out of the best dream that ever I had in my life. But I'll to my wife presently and tame her too, and if she anger me. / Tapster. ... tarry, Sly, for I'll go home with thee, and hear the rest that thou hast dreamt tonight. (*exeunt omnes*.) Finis." Like his dramatic Midsummer festival, the midwinter Saturnalia comedy adapted by Shakespeare is equated in its anonymous interpretation with the function of a dream, an intercalary space in which psychic conflicts are resolved in order to defuse their threat to the collective social ego. The sacred marriage that resolves the comic tensions of *the Shrew* involves three couples, but it is a ritual *connubium* of the entire topocosmic community of Padua in whose unification of "bright" Lucentio and "white" Bianca is metaphorically performed the ritual *connubium* of the English commonwealth which the first tetralogy leaves potentially tragically unconsummated. Shakespeare's forgotten Christopher Sly does not return to close the narrative frame, but merely dissolves into the audience as the Globe again is set right side up and *omnes exeunt*. While the textual narrative is directed back in time towards the historiography of the second tetralogy, for the audience both of *Richard III* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, performed in and performing the suspended animation of the winter intercalary period, comic closure thus was deferred to the living present.

Chapter 3. Stretching the Circle in the Second Tetralogy.

A. The Second Tetralogy as Tragical-Comical-Historical.

As the previous chapters have described, Shakespeare's Elizabethan drama develops from an original project which applies a tragicomic generic emplotment to Tudor historiography. The system of metanarratives connecting and subsuming the various parts of the tetralogies and incorporating periodic departures into comedy in the first half of Shakespeare's career continually works to reconcile contradictory historical phenomena and discourse by describing time simultaneously both as essentially linear and essentially circular, and chapter 5 argues that it is the failure of real life to adhere to this ideal reconciliation that is mourned in the funereal *Phoenix and the Turtle* of 1600. Among the many strategies of Shakespeare's metanarrative project thus far described, the order of the tetralogies' composition and public performance reverses historical chronology, beginning with the funeral of Henry V in *1 Henry VI* and concluding after eight plays in his *hieros gamos* at the conclusion of *Henry V*.

The tetralogy cycle both translates linear chronology into circular narrative and adapts the cardinal points of the Seasonal Pattern of ancient ritual cycle drama, such as the death-of-the-god and *hieros gamos*, to dynastic history. It thus exploits and transvalues the ultimately theocratic bases of the public drama encoded in the sources of the public performances of the Middle Ages. As demonstrated in chapter 2 regarding *The Taming of the Shrew*, the long development of medieval drama through Classical comedy and tragedy from ancient ritual cycles adapted it to a Renaissance rewriting according to the original "Seasonal Pattern" inferred from an analysis of newly available sources such as Plutarch and Ovid. Contemporary comedies including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

and *The Taming of the Shrew* moreover are replete with allusions to the original relationship of religious ritual to the structural characteristics of narrative genre in terms consistent with much twentieth century anthropology.

According to Eliade, for example, the insistent circularity of time in ancient seasonal ritual was a reaction against “non-repeating, non-archetypal” historical shifts against which the repeated performance of death and resurrection according to a seasonal oscillation between dearth and bounty provided homoeopathic defense. These ritual cycles furthermore are identified as the primary source of Classical comedy, tragedy and satire, which evolved through several stages from representations of the life-cycle of Year-gods to legends of national history. Shakespeare’s exploitation of this tradition was contemporary with an emergence of historical consciousness on a scale in the West analogous to the influence of the printing press *vis-à-vis* the invention of writing in the Ancient Near East. The comic circular narrative of the tetralogy cycle in conjunction with the ritual jubilation of the early comedies serves to contain the troublesome aspects of this emergent textualized historical consciousness which had given rise to an entire spectrum of millenarianisms in public discourse both tragic and comic.

In the tradition of its ancient religious prototypes, Shakespeare’s historiography contains tragic linear eschatology, revealed as transitory illusion, within a metanarrative circularity of ritual renewal and regeneration. The performance of Shakespeare’s seasonal ritual pattern as an early form of mass media, conspicuously upon calendar occasions long dedicated to seasonal drama, is a final stage in the permanent advance of the English “nation” into an essentially linear historical / temporal phenomenology. In its intimate involvement with myth and ritual, among the most universal of human institutions,

Shakespeare's drama thus helps to illuminate more obscure stages in the evolution of Western consciousness, as it is illuminated by them. Published about two years after the completion of the tetralogy cycle, *The Phoenix and the Turtle* works through an allegory of the ultimate subsumption of a medieval temporal circularity by a modern linear history. The conformity of this poetic process with the stages of development of historical consciousness in the ancient Near East described above is not accidental, but at the very least suggests motivations for Shakespeare's fascination with the representation of history and probably is symptomatic of a stage of cultural phenomenology analogous to and more complex than its bronze-age prototypes.

The attempt to write history as tragicomedy explains the excessive length of the wooing scene at the conclusion of the tetralogy cycle. After telescoping the entire conquest of France "into an hourglass," it takes 200 lines of blank verse to give Katherine a choice that history actually could not have given her. This episode takes only fifty lines in the middle of *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and is similarly nondescript in Holinshed. As Laertes tells Ophelia of Hamlet, Katherine was subject to her birth and could not "as vnuallued persons doe" carve for herself (*Ham* 481-483). She had no more choice in the matter than the people of France, and the fictional scene therefore can not claim to be an unsuccessful attempt to show us "the warlike Harry, like himself" (*H5* 5), if to show a thing "like itself" signifies verisimilitude. If we understand enough about history to understand the issues treated in the preceding cycle of plays, we know that the impassioned, awkward, sincere, noble, Petrarchan plea Henry makes for Katherine's love, is not consistent with history like itself, but very consistent with mythology like

romantic comedy.³⁸ In contrast with Henry's soliloquies which are used to poeticize crucial historical conflicts: the awesome moral burden of the monarch in war (2079-2134) and the power of faith in a just cause against overwhelming odds (2262-2310) which take about fifty lines each, he speaks 175 of the wooing scene's 200 lines. From the perspective of the play, Henry's effusiveness is disproportionate, and the unprecedented prominence of the episode in histories of this king can only undermine the play's own nonfictional historiographical pretensions. As a conclusion to the entire sixteen hour tetralogy cycle, however, the scene places appropriate emphasis on the fertility connubium that is the end to which the entire Seasonal Pattern, beginning with the tragic death-of-the-god (*i.e.*, the death march and lamentation over Henry V's corpse in the first scene of the first play of the cycle), has tended.

According to Cornford, the origin of the marriages that conclude dramatic comedies is the "sacred marriage" in which "the bridegroom and bride are the representatives of divine or spiritual beings, the powers of fertility in nature" (65). He proceeds to show that "in several of Aristophanes' plays this idea of the succession of a new God or King of fertility is prominently associated with the concluding marriage and triumph" (67). According to Frazer, the ritual originals of this comic marriage were "annually celebrated as a charm to ensure [that] the fertility not only of the earth but of man and beast" succeeded in its cyclical resurrection (*Bough* 13.1). In addition to the feast of Bacchus and Venus "for the general good of all Asia" performed by Plutarch's Antony and Cleopatra,

38 Besides, Henry must have spoken French, as he grew up in Calais, and French had for long been the language of the English aristocracy.

Egyptian texts give evidence of a ... “sacred marriage” between the god Horus and the goddess Hathor celebrated ... on the first day of the month of Epiphi (May-June), and followed three days later by the conception of the younger Horus. ... a feature of the Theban Festival of Opet ... (December-January), was the sacred marriage of the god Amon and the goddess Mut; while an inscription in the temple at Deir-el Bahri ... describes the mating of god and goddess, impersonated (on the ritual level) by the Pharaoh and his consort. (Gaster, *Thespis* 414)

The sacred marriage thus was performed in Egypt at both the winter solstice and the summer solstice in the month of *epiphi*. Mimicking Aristophanic comedy (in every one of which, we recall, the sacred marriage is a component of its *epiphany*) rather than romantic comedy, the bride in the concluding summer wedding of *Henry V*, unlike protagonists like Beatrice and Portia, is a virtual nonentity in the rest of the play, and while she is not precisely mute, as are all of Aristophanes’ brides, she speaks only French and broken English and consequently is given only about twenty lines in the wooing scene. “Where there is a heroine at all,” says Cornford “a Lysistrata or a Praxagora—she replaces the hero, and she is not merely [already] married, but distinguished for her hostility to the other sex” (63).

As in Aristophanes’ comedies (and *Cymbeline* as discussed in chapter 1), a *komos* then concludes the second tetralogy, and the full effects of conventional comic resolution thereby are applied to the myth of origins of the Tudor dynasty. At the end of the final scene of the tetralogy cycle in its original order of composition, the mirror of all Christian kings says: “Prepare we for our Marriage: on which day, / My Lord of Burgundy wee’le

take your Oath / And all the Peeres, for suretie of our Leagues. / Then shall I sweare to Kate, and you to me, / And may our Oathes well kept and prosp'rous be. Senet. Exeunt" (3361-3365). The source of this type of conclusion to Shakespeare's comedies in Aristophanes is evident for example in the conclusion of the *Birds*. Before *omnes exeunt*, Pisthetaerus, the bridegroom king, sings "Let all the winged tribes of our fellow-citizens follow the bridal couple to the palace of Zeus and to the nuptial couch! Stretch forth your hands, my dear wife! Take hold of me by my wings and let us dance ..." Pisthetaerus and Basileia then exit dancing followed by the Chorus, who sings "Alalalai ie Paian! Tenella kallinikos! Loftiest art thou of gods!" (1755-1765). This conclusion reflects one of Aristophanes' religious prototypes in the Edfu drama in which, after a "ritual combat" and "the subsequent installation of the victor [Horus] as king," the new king performs "the characteristic seasonal rite of connubium" (Gaster, *Thespis* 91).

The Aristophanic marriage as climactic conclusion to the history of Henry V apparently is Shakespeare's invention. Holinshed only says that "the said ladie Katharine was brought by hir mother, onelie to the intent that the king of England beholding hir excellent beautie, should be so inflamed and rapt in hir loue, that he to obtaine hir to his wife, should the sooner agree to a gentle peace" Despite "manie words," and "that they met at eight seuerall times, yet no effect insued" On the "third of Julie" 1419, however, "a certain burning love was kindled in the kings heart by the sight of the ladie Katherine" (569). Later, as a peace term to King Charles, Henry offers to marry Katherine, making Charles's grandchildren heirs to the double kingdom (572). In keeping with the historical summer dating (as well as with the bawdy carried over by

Aristophanes from the original fertility ritual),³⁹ Shakespeare's Henry says "This Morall tyes me ouer to Time, and a hot / Summer; and so I shall catch the Flye, your Cousin, in / the latter end, and she must be blinde to" (3301-3303). As to Holinshed's "certain burning love," although appropriately kindled in the sun-king in July, it is hard to imagine a credible authority (which is not unusual for Holinshed). In any case, as such political marriages are one of the constant episodes of imperial history, we have to assume the marriage would have happened, "burning love" or no, and that the romantic pretense is merely a formal convention for popular consumption.

Despite this patent comic dramatic emplotment, however, the canonized final product of Shakespeare's *Henry V* vigorously problematizes what should be its own ultimately comic resolution. The breakdown of essentialist idealism in the nonfictional representation of history which, in Mallin's sense, "contaminates" the conclusion of the second tetralogy (2), additionally is reflected in the contemporary development of the comedies into problem plays. Shylock's tragedy, for example, is shown in chapter 4 to make a problematic spiritual complement to the soldier Williams' challenge to the temporal monarchy of *Henry V* at the climax of Shakespeare's history cycle discussed in chapter 3. From *The Merchant of Venice* to *Henry V* at the conclusion of Shakespeare's Elizabethan drama, a dissonant voice intrudes into the mythopoetic *apotheosis* of the English crown. As epilogue to the tragical-comical-historical metanarrative of the first half of Shakespeare's career, the "shrieking harbinger" unsuccessfully interdicted from

39 The last lines of the *Peace* for instance include "The bridegroom's fig is great and thick ... The bride's very soft and tender" (1349-1354).

The Phoenix and the Turtle thus augers the birth of Shakespearean tragedy contemporary with the Jacobean succession.

B. Fortunate Fall and Seasonal Pattern in the Second Tetralogy.

As in the first tetralogy with its Saint Martin's Summer and winter of discontent, history is represented in the second as seasonal, beginning with the "summer's dust" turning to the "fall of leaf" in *Richard II* through the winter of rebellion and moral libertinism, ruled by the winter *interrex*, Henry IV (together with Falstaff, his underworld substitute who goes so far as to enact him in a satire), scourged, purged, and returned to hot summer under the new sun-king Henry V. The double rule of Henry IV and Falstaff in the winter kingdom of the second tetralogy develops the relationship demonstrated in chapter 2 between Richard III and Petruchio and similarly reflects the epagomenal rule of the Tibetan Jalno and King of the Years until the true Dalai Lama resumes his throne, the temple of horrors of the King of Years paralleled by the monstrous creatures of the Boar's Head in place of the invisible company of Petruchio's winter castle.

Not only does the structure of the tetralogies conform to the seasonal patterns of ancient religious ritual, but the tetralogy form itself mimics the four seasons of a complete year, and, as discussed in chapter 1, each of the two tetralogies emplots its historical mimesis according to the season in which it concludes: the "winter of discontent" of *Richard III*, and the "hot summer" of *Henry V* respectively. According to historical chronology, the end of the second tetralogy, *i.e.*, the marriage of Henry V, leads to the beginning of the first, *i.e.*, the funeral of Henry V, but in the circular narrative of their original composition, the end of the first, *i.e.*, the death of Richard III leads to the beginning of the second, *i.e.*, the death of Richard II. The cycle thereby emplots a

chronicle history that actually is unconcluded, but not narratively uncontained and unregenerative. Shakespeare's representation of the position of the historical subject prior to the Jacobean succession thus functions according to the tradition of ritual drama as a recoil from a terrifyingly random linear eschatology into an eternally self-regenerating tragicomic circle without the concomitant denial of the value of historical change noted above by Driver, Eliade, and others. Such value was necessary to the legitimacy of the Tudor theocracy which it had produced, and which claimed not merely to represent a cyclical return of the ideal British monarchies of Arthur and Henry V, but owing to the Reformation, the culmination of postlapsarian providential history. Regardless of the golden age pretensions of the Tudor myth, the rapid transformation of English culture for the past century overwhelmed the inexorably cyclical phenomena of nature which immemorially had characterized the experience of time for the mass of agricultural laborers. The rapid spread of literacy by printing presses simultaneously defined immediate experience within a linear historical text. The simplistic resort to predefined narrative structures, such as the Wheel of Fortune, *de contemptu mundi*, Mirrors for Magistrates, the Falls of Princes, morality play allegory, *de casibus* or Senecan tragedy did not answer the requirements of a growing literate culture forced by the disruption of seasonal agricultural traditions to define a new historical role for itself.

The prominence of historiography in Shakespeare's Elizabethan work therefore is symptomatic of the prominence of historicism in the cultural crisis of Early Modern England. Temporal conceptions implicit in Shakespeare's narratives nevertheless cannot simply cut all ties with the dramatic traditions of the agricultural Middle Ages, and as we have seen these traditions continued to derive their structural principles from the Seasonal

Pattern structuring ancient dramatic performances. The second tetralogy partly develops its Seasonal Pattern similarly to *The Taming of the Shrew* by manipulation of its plot structure. As described in chapter 1, the underworld plot that splits off from the main plot of the second tetralogy following the murder of Richard II is identified as its winter principle by the Boar's Head, one of the oldest of English Christmas traditions and traditionally regarded in the seventeenth century as the setting for the tavern scenes of the *Henriad* (Campbell 75). "The grand feast given by the feudal chieftain to his friends and retainers," says the *Book of Days*, "took place with great pomp and circumstance on Christmas-day. Among the dishes served up on this important occasion, the boar's head was first at the feast and foremost on the board" (12/25). According to Grimm "they used in the Mid. Ages to serve it up at banquets, garnished with laurel and rosemary, to carry it about and play all manner of pranks with it" (215).

The same symbol links Richard III's heraldry to the Scourge of God in the historical winter of discontent discussed in chapter 2. In the second tetralogy, however, rather than an inversion of main plot and subplot figuring the Saturnalian inversion of the social hierarchy, as in *the Shrew*, the subplot figures the underworld in which, during his winter nadir, the nascent sun god (*i.e.*, Hal) must contend with the demons of chaos and barrenness before ascending above the horizon into a reunified main plot to his resurrected triumph.

As with other ritual pattern associations of the tetralogy cycle, the underworld as the site of the solar agon has analogs in many mythologies. The astronomical ceiling above the sarcophagus of Ramesses VI (1143-1136 BC) at Luxor shows the river "along which the solar barque with Ra must sail through the underworld each night. ... Arrayed

along the river ... are numerous deities, demigods and demons with which Ra must contend to pass through [the several Gates of Duat], which represent the hours of night” (Walker Plate II). In Mesoamerican religion the

pattern of planting and rebirth ... was also expressed in the periodic rebirth of the cosmos In the Popul Vuh these cycles of repeated cosmic creations and destructions are the setting in which a number of heroes and characters face ordeals and fabulous transformations in journeys through, among other places, Xibalba, the Maya underworld.” (Carrasco 16)

The underworld as a site of battle between the new sun-god and the spirits of night and winter also finds expression in the Aztec ball games as reported by the first Spanish visitors. “The game represented a cosmic struggle between competing factions to see which group could bring the sun out of the underworld by hitting the ball through one of the two perforated rings on the sides of the court. The ball court, then, is a kind of temple in which the solar drama is acted out in human time and space” (35).

As Smith observes, “the oldest religious and political institutions present a close analogy. It would be more correct to say that they were parts of one whole of social custom” (21). The use of public theater space to reinforce the divine pretensions of theocratic monarchies exemplified in the Mesoamerican ball game is almost universal to imperialist states from their earliest times. We therefore can infer the monarchist political rationale behind the Babylonian tablets telling of “Ishtar’s Descent into Hell,” like Persephone, “to the house of darkness, the ... dwelling of Inkalla where light they never behold, where in twilight one dwells.” According to McCabe, “the Greeks and others had a similar legend, because [likewise] it was a dramatization of the descent of the spirit of

fertility in the fall and winter” (6). A more local and more barbarian analog for Shakespeare’s version of the underworld winter agon of the divine solar king is the “Northern myth of the Sun-God Balder, who, wounded in a great battle ... by the shaft of magic mistletoe [associating the occasion with the winter solstice], goes to the underworld of Hel, where he grows strong again by drinking sacred mead, and whence he is to return at the [battle of] Ragnarok, or Twilight of the Gods, when gods and men are alike to be regenerated” (Robertson 252). Like the Mesoamerican ball game, the myth of Balder, according to Frazer, “belongs to that class of myths which have been dramatised in ritual, or, to put it otherwise, which have been performed as magical ceremonies for the sake of producing those natural effects which they describe in figurative language” (*Bough* 61.3). Sincere belief in the magic power of kings can be seen for example in their touching for scrofula in modern tribal societies as they continued to be in eighteenth-century England (14.17-18), and nothing in premodern science excluded the magical empowerment of the English crown that its many associated rituals implied. Regardless of any doctrinal belief advocated in the tetralogy cycle, its performance in human time and space of the Seasonal Pattern nevertheless works upon what the Prologue to *Henry V* calls our “imaginary forces” (19), independently of the epistemic aspect of their *mythos*, and their necessary generic emplotment identifies them alternately with rituals of combat, mourning, or jubilation.

In Shakespeare’s historiography project, such winter epagomenal associations as Flint Castle and the Boar’s Head underworld serve to contain Henry’s famously troublesome youth within the providentialist metanarrative of the Tudor myth. Falstaff as Saturnian lord of this underworld reports on Hal’s progress as the nascent sun of the

winter solstice destined to restore fertilizing warmth withheld from the main plot of history since the murder of Richard II. In an aside, Falstaff tells us: “Hereof comes it, that Prince *Harry* is valiant: for the cold blood / hee did naturally inherite of his Father, hee hath... / tyll’ d, with excellent endeauour of drinking good, and / good store of fertile Sherris, that hee is become very hot, / and valiant” (2353-2359). The blood of Henry IV is naturally cold in his character as the *Jovian* aspect of the winter *interrex*, *Hahhiimas* (translated by Gaster as “Jack Frost”), from the Hittite version of the seasonal ritual battle (*Thespis* 93) and Bolingbroke’s host against Richard II accordingly includes some old men described as “White Beares” (*R2* 1470). In the subplot of Henry IV’s winter, Hal imbibes strong drink in the Boar’s Head in preparation for Agincourt as Balder was represented at Yuletide restoring his solar heat by drinking sacred mead in *Hel* in preparation for Ragnarok. Hal’s eventual apogee as the prototypical British Emperor (stirred by a challenge to a ball game [*H5* 408], a metaphor for ritual warfare as it had been in medieval Mexico) is dramatically resolved by the unification of the double plot of the second tetralogy just prior to its concluding sacred marriage. While Holinshed devotes little space to Henry’s wooing and wedding of Katherine in the summer, he devotes two pages to her coronation complete with its menu and program of entertainment. His account of the suppression of rebels early in Henry’s reign directly is followed by the tennis challenge metaphor, which took place “in the Lent season.”

At that time [there came to Henry] from Charles Dolphin of France certeine ambassadors, that brought with them a barrell of Paris balles, which from their maister they presented to him for a token that was taken in verie ill part, as sent in scorne, to signifie, that it was more meet for the king to passe the time with

such childish exercise, than to attempt any worthie exploit. Wherefore the K.
wrote to him, that yer ought long, he would tosse him some London balles that
perchance should shake the walles of the best court in France. (545)

Holinshed's history of the reign of King Henry like Shakespeare's thus begins with a reference to ritual combat and concludes in celebratory feasting. As in Aztec myth, Henry's history is transmitted by Holinshed already partly molded to the sun-god narrative. As Michael Drayton says, "Battles so bravely won / Have ever *to the sun* / By fame been raised" ("Agincourt" 30-32 my italics).

At the opening of the tetralogy, Richard II undergoes the fall of the old Year-god that is identified by Gilbert Murray as the link from ritual drama to tragedy. "According to Murray, the triumph of the Year-God in his ritual agon involved him in hybris, for which he is slain by his adversary and successor, the embodiment of *sophrosyne* (moral balance); in tragedy this agon became internalized in the hero himself" (Henderson xx). Richard, as the old year-god, falls subject to hubris and is slain by his successor Bolingbroke. But while Bolingbroke is first presented as the heroic embodiment of *sophrosyne* in the tragic component of the ritual pattern, his aspect as villainous winter *interrex* in the comic pattern immediately emerges when Richard is forced to descend to "the base Court" to meet him. As Bolingbroke approaches to "lift shrewd Steele against [his] Golden Crowne," Richard, like kings in ritual dramas of the Ancient Near East, enacts the dying sun god of winter who increasingly pales as the days shorten toward the solstice, until he is thought to be too weak to complete his diurnal cycle. As the sun in Sonnet 7 reeling from the day "from top most height with weary car" (9-10), setting into

the ocean over the western horizon, he looks past his approaching ordeal from the western coast of England to his reemergence in London.

...when this Theefe, this Traytor Bullingbrooke,
 Who all this while hath reuell'd in the Night,
 Shall see vs rising in our Throne, the East,
 His Treasons will sit blushing in his face,
 Not able to endure the sight of Day;
 But selfe-affrighted, tremble at his sinne.
 Not all the Water in the rough rude Sea
 Can wash the Balme from an anyoynted King. (1401-1412)

Not only is Bolingbroke's icy steel contrasted with Richard's solar gold, then, but Richard's poetic conceit is not chosen at random. It rather conceals, albeit thinly, a literal allusion to a conventional form of the ancient ritual drama cycle. In the prototypical ritual drama of Baal and Yam, the sun god descends to do battle with "Sir Sea" (Gaster *Bough* 265), as Marduk battles Kingu, the consort of Tiamat, "the rebellious power of the waters" (Gaster *Thespis* 443 n3), who decrees "the fate among the gods his sons, saying: 'Let the opening of your mouth quench the Fire-god'" (*Enuma Elish* Tablet 1 l.133).

Like the late autumn sun traveling a progressively lower ecliptic path, each new rise in his spirits depletes a little more of Richard's strength. After recuperating by reminding himself of his divine right, his spirits are dismayed by the news that the expected troops of Salisbury are not coming to his defense. Aumerle says: "Comfort my Liege, why lookes your Grace so pale?" to which Richard replies, echoing Sonnet 7's "Euen so my Sunne one early morne did shine, / With all triumphant splendor on my

brow, / But out alack, he was but one houre mine” (9-12). Richard says: “But now the blood of twentie thousand men / Did triumph in my face, and they are fled” (1431-1434). He then attempts to rise again, though not as high as before, declining from declamation to rhetorical question: “I had forgot my selfe. Am I not King?” (1440), and reminding himself of reinforcements expected from York. He then is humbled again when Scroop informs him that: “Against thy Seat both young and old rebell, / And all goes worse then I haue power to tell” (1477-1478). In the representation of the New Year battle of the solar Marduk with the raging spirit of waters in the *Enuma Elish*, Ea reports that Tiamat “hath conceived a hatred for us, / With all her force she rageth, full of wrath. / All the gods have turned to her, / With those, whom ye created, they go at her side. / ... They have joined their forces and are making war (Tablet 2 l.12). As opposed to the victorious Marduk, Shakespeare’s second tetralogy accords with a variant myth, exemplified in Balder and in the mythological sources of *Hamlet*, in which the old sun-god, rather than defeating his antagonist outright, is killed or otherwise relegated to the underworld for a solstitial epagomenal period to be resurrected, or to be avenged by the New Year sun-god.

Richard accordingly repeats his rising and falling gestures in rhyming couplets which emphasize the ritual prototype of the drama. His short expressions of renewed hope are punctuated by ever longer soliloquies of despair, like progressively shorter days and longer nights, until finally he inquires after his last hope and is told by Scroop that “Your Vnckle Yorke is ioyn’d with Bullingbrooke, / And all your Northerne Castles yeelded vp / And all your Southerne Gentlemen in Armes / Vpon his Faction” (1559-1562). Scroop’s intelligence recalls Sonnet 7: When the sun “like feeble age ... reeleth

from the day, / Those eyes, fore dutious, now converted are / From his low tract and look another way” (9-12). Richard’s answer echoes Sonnet 34’s complaint to the sun: “Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day, / And make me trauaile forth without my cloake. / To let bace cloudes ore-take me in my way” (1-3). He says: “Beshrew thee Cousin, which didst lead me forth / Of that sweet way I was in, to despaire:” (1564-1565), and he finally admits defeat, vowing to “pine away” at Flint Castle (1569) and giving orders to “Discharge my followers: let them hence away, / From Richards Night, to Bullingbrookes faire Day” (1578-1579). Histories are in agreement that the following scene took place at Flint Castle (Strohm 20), and the setting helps to conform Shakespeare’s version to the conventional solar myth, for which the name of his final destination evokes Balder’s Hell, or the stony underworld blackness where the winter sun is both entombed and new-born in traditional ritual myth. The *Hel* of the dead “meant merely ‘hollow place’ or large underground cave” to the ancient Teutons and Scandinavians (McCabe 7). Robertson cites numerous examples of cave births of sun-gods, including the History of Joseph the Carpenter in which “Mary brings forth Jesus ‘...in a cave,’” as he, of course, was buried and resurrected (195). Hal in the following plays will rise from the cave of the Boar’s Head. “Bullingbrookes faire Day,” therefore is not derived from the resurrection or immediate supplantation types of ritual drama. It is meant ironically, like la Puzel’s brief “St Martin’s Summer” that opens the winter of the first tetralogy, representing only the brief day of midwinter and the intercalary suspension of lawful time from about solstice to the solar New Year, after which the sun-god will begin his spring rebirth as Henry V. The deferral of the comic *dénouement* of the cycle through its intermediary “Part[s]” is emphasized, for instance, in Henry IV’s unfulfilled

ambition to journey to the Holy Land that opens and closes his chronicle (*IH4* 105; *2H4* 2781).

The next scene shows Bolingbroke, the misused hero who has broken an unjust law to redress a righteous grievance and “the embodiment of *sophrosyne*” immediately transform into the usurper who has “breached the due course of succession,” and Shakespeare alternately associates him with the villains of the various ancient ritual dramas: night, the sea, and “Rahab, ‘the Rager’” (Gaster *Thespis* 78). The seasonal representation of the defeat of the Year-god was associated with insufficient or excessive flooding of the river valley whose proper limits he was thought to govern. Scroop likewise equates Bolingbroke’s growing force with “an vnseasonable stormie day, / Which make the Siluer Riuers drowne their Shores, / As if the World were all dissolu’d to teares: / So high, aboue his Limits, swells the Rage / Of Bullingbrooke ...” (1464-1468). Bolingbroke later emends the metaphor in order to conceal his truly threatening intentions. He tells Northumberland “Me thinkes King Richard and my selfe should meet / With no lesse terror then the Elements / Of Fire and Water, when their thundring smoake / At meeting teares the cloudie Cheekes of Heauen: / Be he the fire, Ile be the yeelding Water...” (1638-1642).

Regardless of an ironic reading of “yielding” that would have Bolingbroke pissing out Richard’s fire rather than himself dissolving into steam as he seems to intend, the character reversal both in Bolingbroke and Richard necessary to conform the political events of the historical record to the mythology is too abrupt either for historical verisimilitude or dramatic naturalism. Paul Strohm asserts that “The particular logic and sequence of Henry of Derby’s [*i.e.* Bolingbroke’s] actions upon his return to England in

July 1399 remain concealed behind the discrepant and unreliable chronicle accounts” (20), and as Dermot Cavanaugh observes, accusations of betrayal and treason are reiterated throughout the “mutating historical circumstances” of *Richard II* in order to elucidate “the political conflicts intrinsic to such allegations.” Citing Victoria Kahn, Cavanaugh conceives the “ambivalence” of Richard’s character “in the terms suggested by a recent analysis of the dialectical method of Niccolô Machiavelli’s writing: as engaged in an ‘internal critique of positive claims to authority’” (2). The tragicomic emplotment of the tetralogy metanarrative for which the treason against Richard II supplies the necessary tragic inauguration indicates that rather than elucidation, Shakespeare’s post-Machiavellian deconstruction of an essentialist conception of treason acknowledges its obsolescence in order to construct a more complex monarchist authority that seems to contain the apparent inconsistencies of its *mythos*. Cavanaugh furthermore associates the “‘historical formation of treason’” in *Richard II* with the “‘early modern relativism’” identified by Annabel Patterson. Patterson identifies such relativism as symptomatic of a “‘critical perspective on ... socially and politically constructed rules ... that particularly at this stage in history were subject to sudden and continuous change’” (qtd. in Cavanaugh 137). The tetralogy cycle, however, is not merely a symptom of but a reply to the threat of modern relativism. The ambiguity inaugurated in the Machiavellian “internal critique of positive claims to authority” that Cavanaugh reads in the discourse on treason in *Richard II* finally is resumed and resolved in the return to legitimate monarchy under Henry V whose hanging of rebels and traitors is represented apparently without ambivalence. Read in order of composition, Shakespeare’s historiography thus demonstrates that the tragic implications of a concept of historical change devoid of

providential benevolence arise only in passing scenes in an ultimately tragicomic play. An analogous collective emotional recuperation from the tragic threat of seasonal frost or drought accounts for the virtually universal practice of ritual performances of death and resurrection in early historical cultures, and Shakespeare's rewriting of Tudor history acknowledges the Seasonal Pattern as the source of the power of tragedy and comedy to confront and recuperate the threat of historical trauma.

The ambiguity that results from Bolingbroke's abrupt confession of treasonous intentions against Richard on the one hand reflects the ambiguity of mourning and jubilation rites attached to the death of the fertility god who was slain in reaping, sent to the underworld in sowing, and resurrected in sprouting. The sequence of episodes varies, but the sacrifice and underworld sojourn is mourned and bewailed before the festival concludes in a *hilaria* of jubilant comedic feasting. Such a progression is described in chapter 2 from the tragic first tetralogy to the Saturnalian *Taming of the Shrew*. Through a kind of transcendence from narrative to metanarrative, the apparent tragedy, moral relativism, and threat of transitory historical episodes depicted in plays like *Richard II* thus is recuperated in the adherence of Shakespeare's circular tetralogy cycle to the Seasonal Pattern that structured the tragicomic plot of the earliest known dramatic performances, and the cycle thereby effects a political function analogous to its traditional prototypes.

In Shakespeare's Seasonal Pattern, the usurpation of Richard II is equivalent to the winter solstice which marks both the death of the old Year-god, Richard, and the birth of the new, personified in Shakespeare's cycle by Hal, who is to replace the winter *interrex*, Henry IV, when he comes of age as Henry V in the metaphorical spring. As

Strohm describes it, the historical Richard fell under Bolingbroke's control in mid-August, and the main events of the usurpation occurred at the end of September (20). Richard finally was murdered in February 1400. Like the sun, therefore, Richard's descent to a lower path and shorter days began after summer solstice, he lost his crown as he crossed the autumn equinox, and he died near the winter solstice, the lowest position of the ecliptic and the shortest day of the year. His history, in other words, already almost conformed to the Seasonal Pattern of the sun-god mythology.

Shakespeare's Bolingbroke maintains his heroic *sophrosyne*, submissively sending his oath of allegiance to Richard still aloft at the height of his solar power, "prouided, that my Banishment repeal'd, / And Lands restor'd againe, be freely granted: / If not, Ile vse th'aduantage of my Power, / And lay the Summers dust with showers of blood..." (R2 1624-1627). Yet despite granting Bolingbroke's demands, Richard personates the last setting of the old sun god on the winter solstice, descending from the castle walls "like glist'ring Phaeton" (1766) (who fell to earth in the sun's chariot), and surrendering himself to Bolingbroke's custody. Bolingbroke as *sophrosyne* seems to protest:

My gracious Lord, I come but for mine owne.

Rich. Your owne is yours, and I am yours, and all.

Bull. So farre be mine, my most redoubted Lord,

As my true seruice shall deserue your loue.

Rich. Well you deseru'd:

They well deserue to haue,

That know the strong'st, and surest way to get. ...

What you will haue, Ile giue, and willing to,
For doe we must, what force will haue vs doe.

Set on towards London:

Cousin, is it so?

Bull. Yea, my good Lord.

Rich. Then I must not say, no. (1790-1804)

Until this scene, Shakespeare's Bolingbroke had given no overt indication of seeking Richard's throne. In point of fact, "the fifteenth-century chronicler Hardyng claims that attempts to have Henry of Derby [*i.e.* Bolingbroke] designated Richard's heir predated the actual usurpation" (Strohm 21). In *Histoire du Roy d'Angleterre Richard*, Jean Creton furthermore says:

I herde the . . . erle of Northumberlonde saie divers tymes, that he herde duke John of Lancastre [*i.e.*, Bolingbroke's father, John of Gaunt, in Shakespeare's play], amonge the lordes in counsels and in parlementes, and in the common house, amonge the knyghtes chosyn for the comons, aske the bille forto beene admytte heire apparaunte to kyng Richarde, considerynge howe the kynge wase like to haue no issue of his bodie. (qtd. in Strohm 21)

The ambiguity of Bolingbroke's true ambitions thus already is a characteristic of the historical record received by Shakespeare. Rather than attempting to efface or explicitly address the historical problem, Shakespeare's Gaunt is loyal to King Richard, and the plot can only make Bolingbroke's character unnaturally double-sided. Richard's transformation from hubristic tyrant to tragic agonist similarly has been read as the

imperfect character development of an early play.⁴⁰ The abrupt and simultaneous dropping of pretension in Bolingbroke's "Yea, my good Lord" rather serves at once to problematize and to recuperate the moral ambiguities of the historical record by containing them within the cycling structural pattern of seasonal ritual. The impossibility of reconciling the earlier literary trope of tyrant *versus* avenger with the later tragic protagonist *versus* usurper as nonfictional historical persons, however, "implodes neat distinctions between text and history and coerces the breakdown of representational categories," contaminating, in Mallin's terms, Shakespeare's study of the simplistic conventional Tudor "fortunate fall" myth.

Shakespeare's poor character development in *Richard II* therefore mimics a flaw in the Tudor historical narrative itself, one of many examples of Shakespeare's plots becoming obscure at precisely the points at which historiography becomes morally ambiguous or self-contradictory, points at which mythographers such as Daniel conventionally attempt to efface ambiguity with jingoism. By contrast with his sources, Shakespeare declines for the most part to comment on Bolingbroke's motives, instead simply presenting both Richard and him as irreconcilably self-contradictory literary characters. The ambiguous role of the usurper king in the intermediary intercalary *Parts of Henry IV*, while the nascent "mirror of all Christian kings" struggles to rise from the underworld, thereby flips the world upside down into the inverted political order of the winter epagomenal period whose restoration performs the *apotheosis* of Henry V at the comic conclusion of the tetralogy. Henry IV as historical *interrex* of the Tudor myth is

40 For convenience in his study of *The English Folk Play*, Chambers calls "the champion who falls the Agonist and his vanquisher the Antagonist" (23).

superimposed upon the seasonal *interrex* of the ritual drama pattern in part through the monarchist principle that a usurper is not a divinely anointed king, but his heir, being brought forth from the womb by divine rather than human will, resumes the interrupted divine right of the crown. The conformity of the monarchist political principle with the plot elements of the seasonal agon—fertility annually destroyed by the usurpation of the underworld monarch, then resurrected by succession of the true king—permits the frequent historicization of the mythologies to which it gave rise in terms of the reigns of usurpers supplanted by the current dynasty. The succession of Saul by David and of Macbeth by Malcolm, for example, illustrate the political use of the mythology.

While Henry IV is not slain by his successor, the ritual performance is approximated in Hal's taking of the crown from his supposedly dead father who accuses him of wishing him dead. Like the sacred marriage concluding the cycle, this scene is disproportionately protracted, and the ritual prototype is naturalized and historicized in accordance with its nonfictional pretension. "Thy wish," says Henry IV, "was Father (Harry) to that thought" (2*H4* 2625). This reworking of the New Year sun-god's slaying of the winter *interrex* provides the opportunity for Hal's confession and penance (2622-2761), a key ritual episode identified by Gaster in the Babylonian New Year drama as closing the "negative side of the ceremony" (*Thespis* 62). The positive side of the ritual structure of the second tetralogy leads toward the marriage of Henry V beginning with the rising Hal's version of the setting Richard's allusions to the solar sonnets. Early in the underworld subplot of *I Henry IV*, he confides

Yet heerein will I imitate the Sunne,
Who doth permit the base contagious cloudes

To smother vp his Beauty from the world,
 That when he please againe to be himselfe,
 Being wanted, he may be more wondred at,
 By breaking through the foule and vgly mists
 Of vapours, that did seeme to strangle him. (298-305)

This soliloquy refers to several of the same sonnets echoed in Richard's speeches cited above. Sonnet 33 refers to the sun who permits "the basest clouds to ride / With ugly rack on his celestial face, / And from the forlorn world his visage hide" (5-7). Again, Sonnet 34 accuses the sun of letting "bace cloudes ore-take me in my way, / Hiding thy brauery in their rotten smoke," and complains that "'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break, / To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face" (3-6). Sonnet 56 compares the absence of the lover to "winter, which being full of care / Makes summer's welcome thrice more wish'd, more rare" (13-14). Through their mutual identification with these solar sonnets, Hal as spring sun is identified with Richard as fall sun, and by implication, Henry IV and Falstaff are identified, as with Richard III and Petruchio, as symbiotic aspects of the winter *interrex*.

Taken together, the two generic aspects of the annual cycle reworked in Shakespeare's two tetralogies thus derive their regenerative force from their reference to the religious genealogy of tragedy and comedy as they passed from Classical Greek to European culture. In addition to its replication of the annual or semi-annual seasonal ritual pattern of the earliest dramatic tradition, culminating in the triumph and sacred marriage of the fertility god, impersonated on stage originally by the divine king himself, the second tetralogy taken as a whole is structured by the principle of tragicomic

circularity in a number of ways. The circular English crown travels a circular path from divinely anointed king to usurper and back to divinely anointed king. The unified plot of *Richard II* splits following the slaying of the king into main plot and subplot, signaled by Henry IV's complaint in the first scene of the second play of the tetralogy that he sees "Ryot and Dishonor staine the brow / Of my yong Harry" (87-89) who is haunting the London underworld. When, at the end of 5.1 of *Henry V*, Pistol informs us that the last of the Eastcheap company is dead and sets off to London to join the swelling ranks of masterless men, the subplot is officially closed, although, unlike that of *the Shrew*, the subplot of the second tetralogy is excluded from rather than absorbed by the main plot, and Pistol dissolves (like Christopher Sly) into the audience of Irish campaign veterans. The tetralogy nevertheless returns to a unified plot as Katherine enters to signal the *hieros gamos*. Lastly, the spatial trajectory of *Henry V* itself is a circular passage from England to France and, through the narration of the Chorus, back to England and finally back to France, performing the same structural function as Petruchio's triple round trip to Padua discussed in chapter 2.

In conjunction with the circular temporal progression to the first tetralogy after its conclusion, these approaches to narrative circularity in the second tetralogy compose the structural aspect of Shakespeare's tragicomic emplotment of history. In a mimesis of the original religious function of ritual cycle drama, the circularity of the tetralogy cycle constitutes a recoil from a tragically linear eschatology into a conception of time as a regenerative "eternal return." English history thus is contained by the familiar regenerative and redemptive functions traceable in public drama continually from the mystery cycles of Egypt to those of Wakefield. The demonstrable persistence of this

strategy in the development of Shakespeare's Elizabethan drama furthermore supports (and is supported by) the identification of linear/circular tensions in the arrangement of the *First Folio*, not merely as accidents of transmission, but as an interpretation of the author's metanarrative, and finally by the spatio-temporally circular allegory of the Phoenix and the Turtle myth of *Loves Martyr* discussed in chapter 5.

C. Fortunate Fall and Shapes of Time in the Second Tetralogy.

Henry V embodies the dichotomy between real and ideal in Tudor historiography. For Holinshed he was "the mirroure of magnificence" (583); for Shakespeare's Chorus, "the mirroure of all Christian kings" (*H5* 468), but Shakespeare's play expands on suggestions in his sources that the popular and official idealization of Henry is exaggerated, and critics and directors have frequently tried to emphasize the moral ambiguities of Shakespeare's version of his history. It is sometimes suggested that modern audiences of *Henry V* are troubled by actions that would not have been questioned by Shakespeare's contemporaries, but as with the question of the critique of anti-Semitism in *The Merchant of Venice*, issues of historical moral ambiguity are not projected upon *Henry V* from the future; they are clearly articulated, for example, in the Williams episode in which Henry incognito suggests to three soldiers that they should be glad to die for their king, as ironically he is glad to die for himself. "Me thinks I could not dye any where so contented, as in the Kings company," he tells them, "his Cause being just and / his Quarrell honorable" (1973-1975). One soldier, Michael Williams, replies that whether the king's cause is just is "more than we know," and another, John Bates, continues: "I, or more then wee should seeke after; for wee / know enough, if wee know

wee are the Kings Subjects: / if his Cause be wrong, our obedience to the King wipes / the Cryme of it out of vs” (1978-1980). The ensuing dispute leads to another of many episodes of ritual floiting and mock combat throughout the play and the tetralogy.

An unconflicted reading of Shakespeare’s Henry V as ideal Christian king does not easily accommodate this intrusive subplot at the climax of his conventional *apotheosis*, and many productions cut part or all of it out. It is completely missing, for instance, from perhaps the play’s most familiar version in Lawrence Olivier’s 1944 film whose propagandistic relation to its historical context during the Nazi bombardment of England is obvious. It is possible by such omissions to present on the stage a nationalistic panegyric to an ideal monarch. The most complete text, however, by including the Williams episode, must be acknowledged to include explicitly the issue of moral ambiguity in imperialist war. Apart from its moral disputations upon war and imperialism, though, the episode seems to contribute little to the representation of the warlike Harry, like himself. Williams in fact complains to Henry that “Your Maiestie came not like your selfe” (2767). Not only is the whole episode invented, there is nothing like it in any known source, and it can only act against the historian’s ideal of perfect accuracy claimed by the Chorus who humbly prays in Act 5 that the audience “admit th’excuse / Of time, of numbers, and due course of things, / Which cannot in their huge and proper life, / Be here presented” (2853-2856).

If they cannot be here presented, it is at least partly because so much time is taken up with patent fictions such as the Eastcheap subplot, and the “foure or fiue most vile and ragged foyles” (1839) by which the Chorus refers apparently to the “three Souldiers, John Bates, Alexander Court, and Michael Williams” (*sd* 1934-1935). We must assume the

Chorus knows the play, so it is curious that foils four and five are never identified, but the dignity and rationality of the three common soldiers should be contrasted with Mouldie, Shadow, Wart, Feeble, and Bull-calfe (*2H4* *sd* 1532-1533), the truly “ragged” recruits who try to bribe Falstaff into excusing them from service earlier in the tetralogy before assuming it is they who are intended. The Chorus perhaps refers to Fluellen who appears briefly with Gower, or perhaps he means Pistol and Henry who, like Fluellen, might seem “Right ill dispos’d, in brawle ridiculous” (1840). Before encountering the three soldiers, the disguised Henry identifies himself to Pistol as Welsh, and Pistol remembers Fluellen who refused to petition for the pardon of Bardolph. With Bardolph and Nym hanged on what Holinshed identifies as Henry’s own order, not much is left of the comradery of the tavern.

Pist. Tell him Ile knock his Leeke about his Pate vpon

S Dauies day.

King. Doe not you weare your Dagger in your Cappe

that day, least he knock that about yours.

Pist. Art thou his friend?

King. And his Kinsman too.

Pist. The *Figo* for thee then. (1899-1907)

Outraged at Fluellen’s betrayal of his friend to state execution, Pistol ironically gives the king the finger for his betrayal of their other mutual friend, Falstaff, a gesture that, like the seditious conversation of the three soldiers, would get him hanged if Henry came like himself. Getting away with such a gesture is only possible under theatrical disguising. The injunction of the Chorus to mind “true things, by what their Mock’ries bee” (1842)

describes not only the didactic function of low comedy and the recovery of nonfictional history from its narrative representations, but the serious intention underlying these scenes. Henry's motivation for his ridiculous brawling with Williams otherwise also is unexplained and, like the wooing of Katherine in Act 5, the episode takes up far more space than historical mimesis or comic relief justifies. I would suggest that Williams the soldier is a representative of William S the playwright (who hardly could fail to notice his use of his own name) and that the confrontation with Henry amounts to a complaint to Elizabeth regarding the moral ambiguities of the current Irish campaign and of imperialist war in general.

When the Chorus tells us that the real constraints of the material theater have prevented the play from achieving its mimetic ideal, he implies that what it tries to represent is history "like itself," the "correct or 'perfect' version of the past" that Bacon claimed was achievable through careful research into historical "facts" (Butterfield lxvi). The play has not failed to construct a *mythopoesis* sufficient to its theme; it has failed truly to transport the audience to the past like itself. But Shakespeare takes liberties with the facts that are not justified merely by the constraints of a primitive theater. If he is struggling against the temporal and spatial limits of his "vnworthy Scaffold" (*H5* 11), the invention of fictive subplots and fictive characters while omitting or altering so many historical episodes and persons in his sources, does not seem to further the aim of showing history "like itself." The hanging of Bardolph and Nym for petty thefts, for instance, attributes the fate of several anonymous soldiers briefly noted in Holinshed to characters purportedly known affectionately to many Elizabethan fans. Probably giving the hint to Shakespeare for Bardolph's hanging, Holinshed says of Henry's troops in

France, that “a souldiour tooke a pix out of a church, for which he was apprehended, & the king not once remooued till the box was restored, and the offendor strangled.” (552). Later, in a scene reminiscent of Henry’s incognito inspection of the troops in Shakespeare’s play, “the king in going about the campe, to surueie and view the warders, he espied two souldiers that were walking abroad without the limits affigned, whom he caused straightwaies to be apprehended and hanged vpon a tree of great height, for a terrour to others, that none should be so hardie to breake such orders as he commanded them to obserue” (566). The assignment of these executions, which Holinshed passes over thus lightly, to sympathetic characters problematizes the comical history of Shakespeare’s *Henry V*. As with the moralistic disputes of the Williams episode, the moral contradictions apparent in the available historical records do not merely contaminate the play’s dramatic coherence, but in *Henry V* they have become the necessary questions of the play. As the tetralogy historiography thus is contaminated towards its conclusion, furthermore, Shakespeare’s contemporary comedies likewise developed from their early lighthearted humor into the problem plays of the turn of the century.

It occasionally has been remarked that Captain Gower’s proclamation in the field of Agincourt that Henry “worthily hath caused every soldier to cut his prisoner’s throat” involves a curious treatment of Shakespeare’s sources. On finding that the French have looted the king’s luggage, Fluellen says:

Kill the poys and the luggage! ‘tis expressly
 against the law of arms: ‘tis as arrant a piece of
 knavery, mark you now, as can be offer’t; in your

conscience, now, is it not?

To which Gower replies:

‘Tis certain there’s not a boy left alive; and the
cowardly rascals that ran from the battle ha’ done
this slaughter: besides, they have burned and
carried away all that was in the king’s tent;
wherefore the king, most worthily, hath caused every
soldier to cut his prisoner’s throat. O, ‘tis a
gallant king! (2529-2535)

The iambic “worthily” modifies Henry’s violation of “the express law of arms,” which is glossed conversely by Holinshed as “a dolorous decree and pitifull proclamation.”

Gower’s favorable estimation is based on the implication introduced to Henry’s history by Shakespeare that Henry acted out of righteous anger in response to the massacre of the boys.

To the vast Elizabethan readership of Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, it would be clear that Shakespeare here works to put the best possible light on Henry’s ambiguous reputation. Because it is clear that the theory of righteous anger is an invention, however, it is counterproductive as propaganda. To emphasize this point, the claim is attributed solely to Captain Gower, who appears nowhere in the sources and must reference John Gower the fifteenth century nationalist poet who was poet laureate to Henry IV. Fluellen calls Captain Gower “literatured in the wars,” as opposed, ostensibly, to “experienced.” The historical John Gower began as a propagandist for Richard II, but became increasingly critical of his reign until finally becoming an early propagandist for Henry

IV. “However one interprets the rededication of the *Confessio* [*Amantis*] from Richard to Henry,” suggests Frank Grady, “as a principled act of admiration ... or as Gower’s opportunistic (and amazingly foresightful) switching of horses in midstream, it is clear from the evidence of the vehemently anti-Ricardian *Cronica* that by early 1400 Gower’s adherence to the Lancastrian cause was wholehearted” (554). Another Gower who might have suggested the name was one of Elizabeth’s portraitists, but this, of course, would be an anachronism. John Gower died before the accession of Henry V, and the suggestion of his presence at Agincourt likewise ironically is a violation of the pretension to nonfictional historiography.

The faint emphasis of Holinshed’s passing reference to some servants being slain in the luggage while dwelling at length on the dolorous and pitiful fate of the French prisoners is inverted by Captain Gower in conventionally rhetorical fashion, but Shakespeare undermines Gower’s abuse of poetic license in several ways. In addition to removing the mitigating detail (weak as it is) in Holinshed’s account of Henry’s hearing the outcry of some boys and lackeys who were fleeing the French looting of the English tents before giving the order for all soldiers on pain of death to kill their prisoners, he has Gower base his characterization instead on the bald assertion that it is certain that all the boys are dead. Anyone concerned with the facts of the case would quickly discover this claim to be unsupported both in the play and in the historical record, and he has Fluellen raise the issue of the “law of arms” which likewise condemns the act that Gower then deems “worthy.”

Gower’s poetic apostrophe: “O ‘tis a gallant king” echoes some of Holinshed’s marginalia: “A Charitable Proclamation,” “Princelie and wiselie” (549), “The kings

mercifull dealing with the French prifoners” (550), “A right wise and valiant challenge of the king,” “A worthie example of a godlie prince” (555), “A vertuous and charitable prince” (566), but Holinshed makes no such comment in his version of the summary execution, where it seems perversely out of place. Gower’s prominence, especially in scenes in which moral evaluation of history is shown to depend upon the subtleties of its textual representations, prefigures the discourse concerning the relation of public drama to state authority informing the equally unhistorical Williams episode. Shakespeare illustrates the role of dramatic poet of English history partly through Gower, whom he shows misrepresenting chronological sequence and carefully choosing words like “gallant,” “worthily,” and “wherefore.”⁴¹ Like a royal portraitist, Shakespeare has somehow to deal with the increasingly apparent warts on his subject. In leading a careful reader to the inescapable conclusion that Gower is misrepresenting the facts of the historical record, and even of the play’s own already bowdlerized version of events, Shakespeare sabotages his own rhetorical rehabilitation of Henry’s reputation and thereby demonstrates the inadequacy of the conventional jingoistic approach to English nationalist historiography.

41 The use of “worthy” ironically to describe a knight of arms has sometimes been identified in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (Knapp 17). In the “General Prologue” the knight is described as “worthy” four times, the last one seeming to equate worthiness with the high cost of his mercenary service: “And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys; / And though that he were worthy, he was wys” (43-68). As a Middle English synonym of expensive it would likewise render ironic Gower’s choice of adverb, as ransom was the chief source of booty for Henry’s knights. Pistol’s resort to thievery and begging as he exits the play is a consequence in part of his loss of the ransom he expects from the French prisoner he must have murdered on Henry’s order. Irony can not be proven, but Fluellen later explicitly calls attention to the semantic ambiguities of the English language in mispronouncing “big” as “pig,” which would argue against carelessness in this scene, and some scattered details of the tetralogy, such as the raid on some Canterbury pilgrims, seem also to reference Gower’s more famous friend.

On the stage, unable to turn back to check Gower's propaganda against the rapid confusion of the preceding events, we can only accede to his characterization as our attention is drawn to the approaching *dénouement*. On the page, we are at leisure to check the order of events against the record, and we can confirm that Gower indeed is exploiting poetic license. We may furthermore learn that this was not the only such worthy act in Henry's career. Like Fluellen's one-sided application of the "law of arms," therefore, an episode in his source that Shakespeare goes to exceptional lengths to revise, ostensibly to mitigate our preconceptions that Henry V was possibly a war criminal, is so imperfectly written as to force an interested reader to Holinshed's account, which only expands upon Henry's offenses. Through omissions, interpolations, and reorderings of the sources, Shakespeare thereby produces simultaneously, a mythopoetic ideal on the stage, and a realpolitikal history lesson on the page as Henry V embodied the dichotomy between real and ideal in Tudor historiography. A further contrast thus is established between the tetralogies as a tragicomic cycle of ritual performance and as a tragic linear textual history, the former chronologically inverted and the latter presumably read in chronological order as it is published in the Folio. As cultural temporalizing mechanisms, textual history clearly was in increasing ascendancy over seasonal ritual performance, but while Shakespeare's textual historiography accords with a modern acknowledgment of *realpolitik*, the recuperation of moral ambiguity in the comic emplotment of the public performance cycle retains its premodern regenerative function.

A few scenes before the summary execution, Pistol tells his French prisoner "O Signieur / Dewe, thou dyest on point of Fox, except O Signieur / thou doe giue to me egregious Ransome," to which the latter pitifully replies "*O prenes miserecordie aye*

pitez de moy" (2393-2396). As with the French prisoners, Shakespeare similarly makes a sympathetic character victim of the "slaughter" of boys in the king's luggage. The episode is introduced by the boy left alone on stage by Pistol. He says: "I must stay with the / Lackies with the luggage of our camp, the French might / have a good pray of vs, if he knew of it, for there is none / to guard it but boyes" (2453-2456). The alteration of Holinshed's "lackies and boies" to "none but boyes" implies that anyone slain protecting the luggage must be boys, but the retention of "lackies" also acknowledges its source and thus admits to its obvious alteration in favor of mitigation of Henry's war crime. The short scene following the boy's exit shows us the French despairing of the order of battle in the face of defeat: *Orl. O signeur le iour et perdia, toute et perdie. / Dol. Mor Dieu ma vie, all is confounded all... / O meschante Fortune, do not runne away. / Con. Why all our rankes are broke*" (2460-2464). The massacre scenario suggested by the boy, followed by the chaotic image of deserting French nobles amid broken ranks of soldiers in the rapid movement from short scene to short scene create the sense of the inevitable atrocity following the exit of the French. Although this seems to include the Dolphin in the offending party, Holinshed says that the Dolphin would have hanged the looters had he "longer liued" (554). The next scene begins with a long speech by the Duke of Exeter which allows time for the suggested massacre to take place so that Henry's war crime seems to the audience, at least chronologically, to follow the war crime of the French nobility which will be reported by Gower at the opening of the following act.

Both the killing of the innocent "boys" and Henry's order to cut the French prisoners' throats would have been considered war crimes in all societies (Sutherland and Watts 108). Holinshed only says that some retreating French nobles:

... entred upon the kings campe, and there spoiled the hails, robbed the tents, brake up chests, and carried awaie caskets, and slue such seruants as they found to make anie resistance. ... But when the outcrie of the lackies and boies, which ran awaie for feare of the Frenchmen thus spoiling the campe, came to the kings eares, he doubting least his enemies should gather together againe, and begin a new field; and mistrusting further that the prisoners would be an aid to his enimies, or the verie enimies to their takers in deed if they were suffered to liue, contrarie to his accustomed gentlenes, commanded by sound of trumpet, that euerie man (upon paine of death) should incontinentlie slaie his prisoner. When this dolorous decree, and pitifull proclamation was pronounced, pitie it was to see how some Frenchmen were suddenlie sticked with daggers, some were brained with pollares, some slaine with malls, other had their throats cut, and some their bellies pached ... (554)

While Holinshed's Henry heard the cries of the fleeing boys before ordering the bloody summary execution, he apparently was not aware that some of those guarding the tents had been killed. Clearly it was not all the boys, as they were running away, not making "anie resistance," when he heard them.⁴² The syntax of "the boys that ran away" denotes either that he heard "those of the boys that ran away" or that he heard "the boys, all of whom ran away." Holinshed's whole description thus allows for the conclusion that there was not a boy killed better than it does for Gower's "'Tis certain there's not a boy left

42 There is thus good hope *pace* Gower that the boy of the Boar's Head yet lives.

alive,” unless Gower intentionally is misrepresenting the escape of the boys as their massacre. In the absence of other sources, the historian attempting to idealize his subject is free to move around within such syntactical ambiguity. Gower’s “wherefore” itself ambiguously identifies Henry’s motive more directly with the burning and theft of the king’s luggage than with “this slaughter,” but the audience finally is steered by his “worthily” and “gallant king” to the nobler interpretation.

Holinshed essentially describes a mere looting in which only some who resisted were killed, probably not boys who would not likely resist a mounted assault, and certainly not a massacre, and, as even Shakespeare shows us, Henry ordered the execution only because the enemy seemed to be regrouping, and he feared rebellion behind the lines. In the *Famous Victories*, the tents are burned, but no one is mentioned killed in the act, and Henry’s order is omitted altogether. In Shakespeare’s version, after Exeter’s 26 lines of euphuistic blank verse describing the heroic death of two English peers, and with the unlucky French victims (including Pistol’s pathetic prisoner) on stage, Shakespeare has Henry give the order so offhandedly before exiting (and closing Act 4) that it is often dropped in performance (Sutherland and Watts 109): “But hearke, what new alarum is this same? / The French haue re-enforc’d their scatter’d men: / Then euery souldiour kill his Prisoners, / Giue the word through. Exit” (2520-2523).

It is impossible to tell from the series of short scenes which event actually occurs first, but it is clear that, contrary to the account of Shakespeare’s Gower in the following scene, Shakespeare’s Henry did not know of any slaughter of boys when he gave the order. He hears an alarum not of fleeing boys and / or lackeys, but of the French mounting a new assault. According to the represented events then, as in Holinshed, this

was not a crime of passion, but a “pitifull” and “dolorous decree” of cold-blooded murder. The discrepancy between what the play shows and what Gower reports easily might be erased by emending one or the other. If Shakespeare was uncharacteristically unwilling to alter the ostensible historical facts to suit Gower’s propaganda, the whole problem might be erased in the manner of *The Famous Victories of Henry V* by omitting the episode. The sequence of events on the stage instead allows for Gower’s “wherefore” to create the impression that Henry’s deed was a justified and even “gallant” and “most worthy” act of passion while the source in Holinshed, as we have seen, makes no such implication. For the Henry of Holinshed, the order to kill the French prisoners is a particularly atrocious example (perhaps because the victims are noblemen) among several similar matter-of-fact expediencies. After the starving town of Rouen puts its poor out to die miserably in the ditches outside the walls because it can no longer feed them, Henry refuses to take them in and continues to fight over the terrible cries of starving children. It is when he gives them some food on Christmas that Holinshed calls him “a vertuous and charitable prince” (566). In addition to the anonymous English soldiers made examples of throughout, Henry hangs twelve French soldiers for giving opprobrious words to his herald (576) and he hangs twenty Scots for fighting on the French side against their king Robert (577). This last act exemplifies Henry’s merciless treatment of rebels and traitors, depicted by Shakespeare with an unspoken accusation of hypocrisy, in my view, as his participation in his father’s domestic wars against Richard II’s loyalists laid him open to the same charge.

Shakespeare therefore must have introduced the Lancastrian propagandist anachronistically to the French battlefield as a demonstration of bad historiography.

Finding the summary execution in Holinshed together with the firing of the English tents, Shakespeare demonstrates their potential misuse to produce a false justification for Henry's bloody reputation and develops the episode as support for the critique of the monarchy implicit in the confrontation of Henry and Williams. By means of its pretense of propagandistic incompetence Henry V foreshadows the method of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* in its critique of the monarchy. The textualized account of Shakespeare's Gower throws the entire historical record into question, but the episode is written so that stage productions speciously seem to support his approving evaluation of Henry's actions, and they thereby demonstrate the temptations and pitfalls facing a dramatist treating non-fictional subjects on the public stage. In attributing the confusion of events to Gower and forcing a source study upon interested readers, however, the written text allows us to place its own distorted chronology next to Holinshed's contrary evaluation of events, providing readers an analysis of the bad historiography of which the stage performance easily can be made an example. Together with further departures from the historical record in the belabored Williams dispute, this analysis of Gower's propaganda *vis-à-vis* Fluellen's obsession with the "express law of arms" amounts to a critique of a jingoism associated with the historical Gower's Lancastrian propaganda. Its expression at the conclusion of Shakespeare's tetralogy cycle is a response to Elizabeth's repressive censorship during the succession period cited above by Clare.

Chiefly in evidence in Shakespeare's complaint as a dramatist attempting loyally to serve his country are the unreliability, ambiguity, omissions, and obvious falsifications of the historical record and the difficulties and perils entailed in the polemical use of historical representation in a state repressive of free speech. The problematics of

historical representation intrude into the aftermath of the offstage massacre when Fluellen's Welsh interferes with his search for an historical parallel to legitimize Henry's repudiation of Falstaff. His provincialism is a foil to Gower's command of the subtleties of English. Trying with all his might to fit Henry into a Plutarchian parallel life, "for there is figures in all things," Fluellen offers "Alexander the pig," for the compelling reason that there are salmon in the river at Macedon, just as in the Wye at Monmouth,⁴³ and because Alexander killed his friend in a drunken rage just as Henry has "turn'd away the fat Knight with the great belly doublet." Gower supplies him with the name of "Sir John Falstaff" and corrects his epithet: "Alexander the Great." "Why I pray you, is not pig, great?" Fluellen replies. "The pig, or / the great, or the mighty, or the huge, or the magnanimous, / are all one reckonings, saue the phrase is a litle / variations" (2539-2543).

But Alexander the Great is not the same as Alexander the pig, as with Henry V (and as yet Elizabeth), an open verdict for historians suggested perhaps by the name of Williams' and Bates' fellow soldier Alexander Court. "Big," "huge," and "mighty" is not "one reckonings" with "great" or "magnanimous," even in the Middle English of the setting, and between them is more than "a little variations." The fate of the fifteenth-century composer of the verses on Richard III's henchmen: "The Rat, the Catte and Louell our dogge rule al England under the hogge" (Hall 34), demonstrates the perils of such humor. According to Hall, the reference in the verse to Richard as "the hogge" was a poor choice of variations.

43 Salmon, in fact, only inhabit rivers on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. A salmon however does appear incidentally as the metamorphosed Loki who has brought about the death of Balder, a mythological prototype for Henry discussed above.

Meanynge by the hogge, the dreadfull wylde bore which was the kinges
 cognisaunce, but because the fyrste lyne ended in dogge, the metrician coulde not
 obseruinge the regymentes of metre ende the second verse in Bore, but called the
 Bore an hogge. Thys poetycall schoole mayster Corrector of breues and longes,
 caused Collynborne to bee abbreuyate shorter by the heade, and to bee deuyded
 into foure quarters. (34)

Similarly to the Chorus' ambiguous vocabulary, Fluellen's pidgin English admits another apparently inadvertent critique of imperialism into the apparently comic resolution of the tetralogy history. His ambitious attempt to emulate Gower in idealizing his beloved royal countryman involves the "pig"-ish aspect of imperialist war with the question of the true greatness of princes, providing a further demonstration of bad historiography and the several tactics by which textual representations (such as the jingoist propaganda attributed to John Gower) often succeed in converting the pigs of history into the Great. Fluellen's clumsiness evokes the dialectic of real vs. ideal embodied in Tudor mythology by Henry V and thereby covers for the critique of the monarchy in Shakespeare's "art made tounge-tied by authority." It is this same kind of calculated clumsiness that admits the shrieking harbinger of doom to the funeral of the Phoenix and Turtle in the very act of banishing it. Hawkins, citing David Riggs, points out that Fluellen historiographic technique exemplifies the rhetorical figure of *comparatio* with which Shakespeare would have been familiar from his school days (27). The political implications of the joke therefore are unlikely merely to be accidental. Fluellen's yoking together of examples from the recent and remote past furthermore recalls one of the common methods of Machiavelli's historiography which was opposed by other modernists such as Francesco

Guicciardini. Like Guicciardini, Shakespeare's mockery of Fluellen "anticipates much later thinking on the uniqueness of discrete historical events and the incommensurability of different historical epochs [which was] more skeptical about the capacity of past examples to serve the present, owing to variations of circumstance between superficially similar historical situations" (Butterfield xliv). Shakespeare accordingly mocks this Machiavellian tendency, along with its circular temporal implications, through Fluellen.

While Fluellen's "pig" is made into cheap comedy, Shakespeare's only explicit reference anywhere to current events in the prayer of the Epilogue for "the Generall of our gracious Emprresse" to return from Ireland "in good time...Bringing Rebellion broached on his Sword" (2880-2882) also might have caught Elizabeth's censors' attention. Although the OED quotes only the play itself for one obsolete definition of *to broach* as "to stick (something) *on* a spit or pointed weapon which transfixes it ; to spit" (3b), the more common sense of the verb is "to tap" as in a keg (4), or as in "... so reddi to broche debate" The Chorus could have prayed for the Earl of Essex's return with rebellion "dead" on his sword without risking a misreading by state authority, especially after Essex did return without the Chorus's prayer fulfilled, but allegedly having contracted with the Irish to aid him in the broaching of his own rebellion, when Shakespeare's obsolete English might have had him accused of conspiracy. This kind of dangerous double reading foreshadows the primary mechanism of bitter irony in *The Phoenix and the Turtle* explicated below.

D. *Henry V* as Problem Comedy.

The allusion to “the Generall of our gracious Empresse” and Ireland in the Epilogue to *Henry V* affirm that the issues of war and imperialism on which the play discourses were not remote and abstract speculation about the dead past, but immediate and concrete, and were therefore dangerous subjects under conditions of Elizabethan censorship. Some in the audience may have just bribed a fat knight to excuse them from campaign; some recently may have spent long nights in the Irish fens thinking about whether they should seek after the justice of the queen’s cause, or whether their obedience to their sovereign wiped the crime of it out of them. This last concern, expressed by Bates in the Williams episode, also strikingly echoes the chief anxiety for the commoner during the religious Reformation. If the sovereign is a heretic in the eyes of God, as Shakespeare’s contemporaries were forced to ponder, does obedience wipe the crime of it out of one’s soul, or is every man’s bad religion upon his own head? Christological echoes run throughout *Henry V*, as in the ultimatum to Harfleur: “...to our best mercy giue your selues” (1262), [for later] ... The Gates of Mercy shall be all shut vp” (1269). Regarding Henry’s role throughout the tetralogy, Hawkins observes that the proclamation to Falstaff that “‘I know thee not’ [2 *Henry IV* 3259] recalls three separate New Testament passages,” and he finds that “the staging as well as the allusion is apocalyptic: the king whom Falstaff last saw in the form of a servant now comes in glory, heralded by trumpets, his crown upon his head.” Not only does Hawkins detect this messianic subtext in the inverted chronology cycle culminating in Henry’s *apotheosis*, but it is embellished in the Folio redaction, which “has Henry and his train pass over the stage and then return, [which] makes this literally his second coming!” (38 n27). The

sacred aspect of the imperial myth, while absent from the literal plots of the plays, thus informs the dramatic structure of the cycle, and this alignment further is reinforced by the characters' occasional choice of metaphors. The secular aspect of ecclesiastic history is introduced into *Henry V* in the first two scenes in which the self-interested sanction of the war by the Archbishop of Canterbury is supposed to wipe the crime of it out of Henry. As prologue to the play, the ambiguity of the justice of the king's cause, who here accepts a service from the Archbishop which he later refuses to provide the common soldiers, thus is defined as centrally thematic.

In the context of a palpable anxiety over the justice of the Queen's cause in war and religion the carrying forward of the Williams episode for 200 lines during the climax of Henry's conquest of France seems less a dissonant intrusion than one of the "Mock'ries" by which, according to the Chorus, we are to "mind true things." After his altercation with Pistol over Fluellen, Henry surreptitiously infiltrates the trio of common soldiers who are despairing of their chances around a fire on the eve of the battle and launches into a discussion of the king's character (fishing for compliments, perhaps, but a good way to elicit treasonous self-incrimination). After some argument about the king's responsibility *vis-à-vis* his soldiers, Williams suggests that the king's vow that he will not be ransomed alive (iterated twice in Holinshed 553, 554) might merely be conventional propaganda calculated to "to make vs fight chearefully: but / when our throats are cut [echoing perhaps the cut French throats of Holinshed and Shakespeare's Gower], hee may be ransom'd. and wee / ne're the wiser" (2040-2042), the choice Henry denies to the French prisoners. This observation clearly is a critique of the jingoistic propaganda the play often is mistaken for. The disguised Henry suggests that "the king" would not break

his word, as he himself as a common soldier would never trust his word again. Shakespeare here implies that it is unreasonable for the state on the strength of its simplistic propaganda to expect commoners to ignore the evidence of history and their own reason. The apparent hubris of another common soldier threatening the king with his “poore and a priuate displeasure” angers Williams, who replies with a peculiarly stretched metaphor. He jokes that the upstart might as well try “to turne the Sunne to yce, with fanning in his face with a / Peacocks feather” (2046-2049). Having lost the argument, Henry nevertheless succumbs to his warlike nature and tells Williams he would take offense if time permitted. Williams offers to look him up after the battle, and they exchange gloves which they wear in their hats so they may find each other later. After the miraculous victory at Agincourt, Henry sees Williams and, now like himself, asks about the glove in his hat. Williams humbly tells the story to his dread sovereign, and Henry sends him off to fetch Gower. Henry then gives Williams’ glove to Fluellen to wear in his hat and sends him off to fetch Gower. He then sends two peers (Warwick and Gloucester, possibly representing the soon to be brawling houses of York and Lancaster) to follow and make sure no harm comes of it. When Williams sees his glove he picks a fight with Fluellen which is interrupted by the lords, until Henry enters to make peace on all sides. Williams fearing the consequences of his rash words to the disguised king weakly defends himself, and the king shows his magnanimity, forgiving Williams’ impudence and giving him his glove full of crowns for being a man of honor. Williams exits and the play is allowed to proceed to its comic conclusion.

As expressive of the plight of the Early Modern common soldier facing death in the wars of the monarchy, the initial dialogue between the disguised Henry and the three

soldiers can arguably further the representation of history like itself (if “like itself” is understood as a synopsis rather than a copy). After denying the soldiers’ right to plead that they are only following orders, Henry gives his one real soliloquy in which, as he is about to lead hundreds of tired and sick soldiers to almost certain slaughter because he wishes to sit on the throne of France, he ponders the hardships of being a king. Instead of ending the Williams episode there, which would seem proportional to its historical insignificance, Shakespeare, instead has him challenge Henry, who has taken umbrage at his sarcastic reply. The intrusiveness of the ensuing episode partially interrupts the dramatic illusion in order to enact the author’s rhetorical position. Williams, a commoner, comes close to being hanged for being too free of his tongue regarding the king’s character, coercive state propaganda, and the injustices of war. After explaining himself to the king, he is instead rewarded with a glove full of crowns. William S (a glover by birth, though the glove as a conventional symbol of challenge admittedly needs no rationale) is rewarded with a mess of crowns by the state (suggesting the royal patronage he achieved three years later) for fanning in the sovereign’s face with a feather, *i.e.*, for representing the complaints of the commoners to the monarchy with a quill pen.

By performing the Henry and Williams dispute at popular and courtly venues, as its disguisings move on the stage between the fire circle of the common soldiers and the king’s tent, Shakespeare positions the role of the dramatist of the public theater as an intermediary between the complaints and sentiments of the commoners and the state. In raising problematic issues of English history and politics in both popular and aristocratic theaters (as well as universities and Inns of Court), the subtext of *Henry V* suggests that the acting company is, on the one hand, like the disguised Henry (albeit in reverse:

commoners dressed as monarchs) representing state ideology to the commoners, so they fight the state's wars cheerfully (while aware that they were being watched by agents of the state), and on the other, like Williams, representing to the state the voice of those whom it needs to fight its wars cheerfully. The state surveillance thus figured by the king, incognito as the agent of a noble patron, is demonstrated by Clare particularly to be focused on historiography. She cites a proclamation of 1587 which "prohibited the spread of seditious rumours" and which "extended to restrictions on the publication of history of topical interest" including those "which rejected the traditional providential interpretation in favour of a secular analysis of political actions," such as Machiavelli's which was refused license.

Regarding the suppression of John Hayward's *First Part of the Life and Raigne of King Henrie III*, Clare also suggests that "Attorney General Coke, who conducted the prosecution of Hayward, entertained no doubts about the historian's intentions, as is evident from his note that 'the Doctor selected a story 200 years old, and published it last year, intending the application of it to this time'" (47). Whether or not the irrecoverability of authorial intention prevents us from recognizing the topical discourses in his work, nothing but interpretation prevented the state from laying this same charge upon Shakespeare. In Henry's double character as representative of state surveillance of the political discourse of the commons and representative of the commoners' perception of the state, Henry's soliloquy following his argument with the soldiers is the product that Shakespeare markets to the state in his historiography. It simultaneously presents the character of English monarchy in the most credibly flattering light to the audience of the public theater and in aristocratic venues points the monarchy to the ambiguities of its

character in the eyes of the commoners that may prevent them fighting the Irish war cheerfully (and therefore effectively, which they were not). As Clare also observes, fears of domestic insurrection “intensified as successive attempts to subdue the [Irish] rebels miscarried. By the end of the decade it was forbidden ‘on pain of death, to write or speak of Irish affairs’,” and “in the latter part of the decade ... the current Irish troubles came to present ever more serious threats to Crown ascendancy” (62).

The example of the happy resolution of the Williams dispute, in which a royal grant befalls the insubordinate soldier instead of the hanging suggested by Fluellen and characterizing Holinshed’s version of Henry’s military discipline, therefore makes a plea for relaxation of state censorship of the public theater. The dramatist and audience (much more vocal and participatory than in modern theater) should be allowed to express their political sentiments freely, as Williams initially does to the disguised Henry, rather than being terrorized by the state into obsequious silence, so that the state may know and address their discontents. If Williams is self-referential of William S, he had good reason to fear the consequences of inadvertently incurring the wrath of the queen by too openly staging a critique of the myths of just war, as they were canonized in Tudor historiography and were currently being pretended in the bloody suppression of the Irish. David Hume critiques this claim to just war by contrasting Spenser’s support of Elizabeth’s suppression of the Irish with Walter Raleigh’s simultaneous condemnation of Philip II in the Netherlands. While Raleigh calls the Spanish king “Turk-like, to tread under his feet all their natural and fundamental laws, privileges, and antient rights,” Spenser defends Elizabeth who, speaking of some grants of the English kings to the Irish corporations, says,

All which, tho', at the time of their first grant, they were tolerable, and perhaps reasonable, yet now are most unreasonable and inconvenient. But all these will easily be cut off with the superior power of her majesty's prerogative, against which her own grants are not to be pleaded or inforced." (qtd. in *Essays* VR.2.261)

Consistent with Gower's falsification of the luggage episode as a just *casus belli*, and Fluellen's selective application of the law of arms, Hume thus recognizes the tendency toward double standards that early entered the modern ideology of just war. The year that Shakespeare's *Henry V* likely was being written, Hayward came close to being racked for questioning the Queen's prerogative as reported by Bacon who says that:

The Queen was mightily incensed against Haywarde, on account of a book he dedicated to Lord Essex, being a story of the first year of Henry IV, thinking it a seditious prelude to put into the people's heads boldness and faction: She said, she had an opinion that there was treason in it, and asked me, if I could not find any places in it, that might be drawn within the case of treason? Whereto I answered, for treason, sure I found none; but for felony very many: And when her majesty hastily asked me, Wherein? I told her, the author had committed very apparent theft: For he had taken most of the sentences of Cornelius Tacitus...(in Parry 39)

Bacon's intercession seems in part to have saved Hayward not only from the corporal rack but from a more capital charge of treason. It is treason for which Fluellen, angry over being challenged by a common soldier, wishes to see Williams hanged: "And please your Maiestie, let his Neck answer / for it, if there is any Marshall Law in the World" (2760-2761), and it is the same kind of Baconian intervention for which Pistol

unsuccessfully pleads to Fluellen on behalf of Bardolph who is to be hanged for stealing from a church against the king's express orders.

Fluellen's continual evocation of the law of arms, however, exemplifies the irony which deconstructs the play's pretended idealization of its historical subject. In the first place, there can be no other reason for altering Holinshed's "pix" to a "pax" other than an imputation that Bardolph's theft is a "crooked Figure" that attests "in little place" the "Million" of the theft of the "peace" from churches from Calais to Paris by Henry. In the second place, we are told in Holinshed that, on landing in France, Henry commanded, in addition to not stealing from churches, that "no man fould renew anie quarell or ftrife, whereby anie fraie might arife to the difquieting of the armie" (549), yet this offence is committed repeatedly in Shakespeare's play. Fluellen's endorsement of the justice of Bardolph's hanging leads to another in a long series of quarrels and strifes, running beneath the larger tide of war. "*Flu.* I peseech you heartily, scuruie lowsie Knaue, at / my desires, and my requests, and my petitions, to eate, / looke you, this Leeke ... / *Pist.* Not for *Cadwallader* and all his Goats. / *Flu.* There is one Goat for you. *Strikes him*" (2920-2927). *Henry V* begins, like the second tetralogy, with a challenge to ritual combat. As with the joust of Bolingbroke and Mowbray in *Richard II*, the challenge of the Dauphin's Paris balls at Henry's first appearance in his play is prologue to a long series of bombastic floiting and combat: from Pistol and Nym over Nell Quickly (530); through Fluellen, Macmorris, and Jamy (1250); through Henry and Pistol (1899); through Fluellen and Williams; to finally Fluellen and Pistol (2911), within which the altercation between Henry and Williams is contextualized.

Apart from its ritual associations, the undercurrent of brawling in *Henry V* helps to undermine Henry's pretensions to just war asserted three times in Holinshed (553). Fluellen endorses the law that hangs Bardolph, "for if, looke you, he were my Brother, / I would desire the Duke to vse his good pleasure, and put him to execution; / for discipline ought to be vsed" (1501-1503). This rule, however, should likewise hang, not only Henry, who "renews his quarrel" with Williams, but Pistol, Macmorris, and Fluellen himself. To emphasize this point, Shakespeare's Henry explicitly endorses the principle that a ruthless judge deserves no mercy for his own offences. He first asks an unwitting group of traitors to sentence a supposed traitor, saying that he himself would pardon him. "That's mercy," one answers, "but too much security: / Let him be punish'd Soueraigne, least example / Breed (by his sufferance) more of such a kind" (673-679), to which they all agree. Next confronting them with the proof of their own crime, he tells them "You must not dare (for shame) to talke of mercy, / For your owne reasons turne into your bosomes, / As dogs vpon their maisters, worrying you" (710-712). He then inveighs upon the sin of rebellion eloquently for fifty lines, all of which might easily be spoken to his father, finally comparing the rebellion of his friends to a second fall rendering all men untrustworthy: "Shew men dutifull, / Why so didst thou: seeme they graue and learned? / Why so didst thou. Come they of Noble Family? / Why so didst thou. Seeme they religious? / Why so didst thou" (756-760).

"Why so didst thou" seems to me ultimately to be the answer to Henry's eloquent and merciless damnation of rebellion and the essence of Shakespeare's challenge to the British Empire in his representation of its most idealized myth of legitimacy, of its claim to greatness rather than mere pigness. Did Grey, Scroop, and Cambridge conspire to

overthrow their lawful sovereign? Why so didst thou in putting down the partisans of Richard II in your father's cause. Have the common soldiers moreover put the guilt of an unjust war "Vpon the King" that led them to it (2079)? Why so didst thou in allowing the Archbishop of Canterbury to take "The sinne vpon my head, dread Soueraigne" (244). Does Charles claim legitimate inheritance of a usurped throne? Why so didst thou in claiming legitimately to hold your father's usurped throne. Has he excluded your claim through a female line to his throne? Why so didst thou in excluding Mortimer's claim through a female line to yours. Did Bardolph and Nym violate military discipline? Why so didst thou in accepting Williams' challenge to a duel. If Henry's charges against the rebellious noblemen thus are meant to turn into his own bosom, Shakespeare implies not only that the king should hang himself for high treason, but that his role as "Mirroure of Magnificence" may merely be calculated by propagandists like Gower to "make vs fight chearefully."

Critics have remarked that Henry does not really answer the question raised by Williams' hypothesis: "if the cause be not good." Instead he compares the king to a father who sends his son on a voyage, and insists that if the son dies unshriven, the father is not damned for it (1995-1998), but if plain obedience to parent or king, and by implication husband or master does not protect subjects from damnation for sinful acts, unquestioning obedience justly can not be required from them. Like Henry's oath not to be ransomed, his claim to the justice of his cause is identified as a major theme of the play by its central place in the first two scenes. As in Holinshed, however, Shakespeare's Henry justifies himself merely by accepting the tortured legalism of the Church, shown to be acting in its own temporal interests. Despite Canterbury's open confession in Henry's

absence of ulterior motives in the first scene of the play, Henry vows to “beleue in heart, / That what [Canterbury speaks, is in his] ... Conscience washt, / As pure as sinne with Baptisme” (177-179). That the cause is just is, according to Williams, more than the common soldiers know, but it is also more than the careful reader knows. Shakespeare’s Henry fails to answer this question because history fails to answer it. It is what makes the difference between Henry the pig and Henry the “mirroure of magnificence,” and its irresolution casts a long shadow over the outward show of comic closure that the tetralogy cycle’s conclusion bestows upon the Tudor myth. If Shakespeare has contaminated his tragicomic Elizabethan historiography at its conclusion by fanning in the sun’s face with his feather, it must be as an admonition regarding the yet-to-be-written history of Elizabeth. On the eve of Essex’ return from an unedifying early adventure in British imperialism to attempt the first of several revolutions against the absolute monarchy, and without a Tudor successor despite almost five decades of unbroken admonition, Shakespeare’s tetralogy cycle still has not achieved its promise of regenerative comic closure. As the Epilogue of *Henry V* breaks the narrative circle, pointing back to its sequel in the first tetralogy, the Tudor myth still waits upon its ultimate emplotment in a providential return to a prelapsarian golden age under the rule of Elizabeth the “Phoenix queen” or in the mercenary imperialist war crimes of Elizabeth the pig.

Williams the soldier swears that his intentions in challenging Henry are not treasonous: “All offences, my Lord, come from the heart: neuer came any from mine, that might offend your Maiestie” (2763-2764). Henry’s reply that “It was our selfe thou didst abuse” equally might be Elizabeth complaining about a recent history play (possibly

Shakespeare's) in which she feels herself, like Henry, abused while disguised as another: "I am Richard II," she famously complained, "know ye not that?" William S, the poet tongue-tied by authority, justly may have been concerned that his "why so didst thou[s]" subjected him to the charge of treason that Elizabeth tried to lay against Hayward. Like Williams' complaint, a close reading of Shakespeare's text insists that political critique is appropriate to the public theater, where jingoistic propaganda, such as Fluellen's simple-minded salmons and pigs and Gower's sophisticated "wherefore" and "worthily" inevitably sabotage themselves, as does censorship of commonly held opinions of the justice of the state's cause in war. As a client of state patronage, Shakespeare offers the public theater as a venue where such opinions can be known and addressed. As a representative of the commoners, however, he insists that the state has no viable alternative but to make certain that the wars it asks its subjects to fight cheerfully in fact are just wars.

The life of Henry V falls in the middle of the historical period represented in Shakespeare's history plays, but *The Life of Henry V* is the climax of his history cycle project, immediately after which he began his series of great tragedies with the tragical histories of Julius Caesar and Hamlet. Unlike *Richard III*, its tragical historical antithesis that closes the first tetralogy, *Henry V* closes the second tetralogy by emplotting history as tragicomedy, emphasizing its ritualizing cyclical trajectory, and culminating in the symbolic wedding of the British Empire, closing the circle in comic connubial regeneration. In *Myth and Meaning*, Lévi-Strauss suggests that the function of myth is to secure "the open character of history" by "the innumerable ways according to which mythical cells, or explanatory cells which were originally mythical, can be arranged and rearranged" and that in order to bridge the conceptual gap between myth and history, we

should look for the “intermediary step” in the form of “histories... conceived as...a continuation of mythology” (34). While Lèvi-Strauss is speaking in the context of Native American oral tradition, his “intermediary step” is an apt description of Shakespeare’s history plays, and especially of the *Henry V* of the public stage. Shakespeare’s historiography occupies an intermediary position, as Ribner’s analysis of the English history play implies, between idealized myth and scientific historiography, and this development in his approach to generic emplotment of historical narrative coincided with the development from the circular time of preliterate agricultural societies into the linear teleology of modern historicism. As the culmination of Shakespeare’s epic cycle of English history, *Henry V* fulfills the apparent intention, perceptible throughout its sixteen hour development, of comic containment of linear eschatology within the narrative circle of ritual drama, but in the same way that *The Phoenix and the Turtle* deconstructs the long comic narrative of *Loves Martyr*, the tetralogy cycle diverges at its conclusion from its initial conception as a completely resolved tragicomedy, withholding and putting into contention its long-deferred resolution, suggesting finally that the principle of comic regeneration implicit in the Tudor myth remains unrealized and “leaving no posterity” at the termination of the dynasty.

Chapter 4. Stretching the Circle in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Despite their problematic resolution the comic emplotment both of *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1597) and *Henry V* (c. 1599) are vital to the regenerative tragicomedy of Shakespeare's historiography. Both nonetheless introduce plot elements that serve to complicate the flawless continuity of the metanarrative circle, calling the comic aspect of the whole historiography into question and initiating a movement towards the non-regenerative tragic linearity developed in *Julius Caesar* (c. 1599) as well as in the barren death of *The Phoenix and Turtle* (c. 1600) and the "generic no man's land" of *Troilus and Cressida* (c. 1601-2) (Elton 78). The comic emplotment of the second tetralogy adopts the "fortunate fall" plot from the Tudor myth, which conventionally recovered the illicit murder of Richard II as the necessarily evil means to the providentially directed triumph of the Tudor dynasty. As sacred complement to the secular second tetralogy, *The Merchant of Venice* allegorizes the problematic schism of Henry VIII with the Roman Catholic Church as the necessarily evil means to the providential new dispensation of the Church of England. Aligned thus with the "fortunate fall" pattern of its tragicomic metanarrative, the English Reformation in Shakespeare's Elizabethan historiography is made to seem tragically providential.

The movement by the more Puritan elements of the Reformation against the banishment of Jews with which Elizabeth is thought largely to have sympathized, and the reaction against reassimilation, renewed the currency of anti-Semitism as an issue in England. But just as *Henry V* derives its dramatic power and relevance from the war in Ireland the religious conflict represented in *The Merchant of Venice* is an allegory for the drama of the present world stage, and just as Henry's invasion of France signifies

Elizabeth's invasion of Ireland, Shylock's bond signifies the bond of England to the Roman Catholic Church. On its allegorical level, *The Merchant of Venice* thus demonizes Shylock as a signifier for the Roman Church while interjecting a critique of anti-Semitism on the moral / tropological level of the narrative. Although it is not constrained to a medieval aesthetic of flawless symmetry, as exemplified in Dante's *Divina Comedia*, the allegory of *The Merchant of Venice* intermittently references the same four levels of narrative meaning derived from biblical exegesis. A letter appended to Dante's poem addressed to its patron Can Grande Della Scala claims that

the sense of this work is not simple, rather it may be called polysemantic, that is, of many senses [*polysemos, hoc est plurium sensuum*]; the first sense is that which comes from the letter [*per literam*], the second is that of that which is signified by the letter [*per significata per literam*]. And the first is called the literal [*literalis*], the second allegorical [*allegoricus*] or moral [*moralis*] or anagogical [*anagogicus*]. (para 7)

Dante's authorship of this letter is doubtful, but it here outlines a conventional medieval exegetical formula that applies well to his poem. It then refers to *Exodus* to illustrate the approach to polysemantic poetry in *The Divine Comedy*.

If we look at it from the letter alone it means to us the exit of the Children of Israel from Egypt at the time of Moses; if from allegory, it means for us our redemption done by Christ; if from the moral sense, it means to us the conversion of the soul from the struggle and misery of sin to the status of grace; if from the anagogical, it means the leave taking of the blessed soul from the slavery of this corruption to the freedom of eternal glory. (para 7)

The literal narrative of Shakespeare's similarly polysemantic *Merchant of Venice* supports a moral / tropological narrative concerned with characters involved in the fundamental struggle for the fate of their souls. On the allegorical level concerning "our redemption" the literal characters represent, rather than the "visible Church" of Elizabeth's 39 *Articles of Religion*, what Foxe in the preface to the *Book of Martyrs* calls "Trve and Faithfvll Congregation of Christes vniuersall Church ... wheresoeuer congregated, or dispersed through the Realme of England" (1) in its historical crisis. The anagogical level of the narrative finally represents the agon of universal divine principles themselves in the sacred aspect of the New Dispensation of the Anglican Reformation. "And though these mystical senses are called by various names, in general all can be called allegorical, because they are different from the literal or the historical. ... from Greek *alleon*, which in Latin means other or different [*alienum, sive diversum*]" (para 7). Barbara Lewalski agrees that the allegory of *The Merchant of Venice* adheres approximately to the model attributed to Dante (237), and Francis Fergusson compares the allegory of the play to the precepts enumerated by Hamlet. "'Holding the mirror up to nature,' describes the letter [literal meaning]; 'showing virtue her own feature, scorn her own image,' indicates the moral [tropological] meaning; and 'the age and body of the time, his form and pressure,' refers to the allegory, the meaning of the historic moment ..." (4-5).

On the allegorical level, then, the several escapes from bondage in *The Merchant of Venice* represent the successful escape of the English people from spiritual servitude to a foreign and antagonistic master, as well as from the damnation of excommunication in the new dispensation of the Anglican Church. Although Elizabeth was certainly

“Supreme Governor,” the doctrine of the Church of England remained vaguely defined during her reign in an attempt to be as inclusive as possible, prescribing only a minimal number of liturgical requirements, endorsing some of the doctrine of John Calvin and Martin Luther, and leaving the details of personal belief largely to the individual. This doctrine of “comprehension,” also referred to as the *via media* or Elizabethan “middle way,” developed into the religious and class conflicts between Puritans, conservatives, Catholics, and antinomians of the next century which eventually brought down the monarchy. With the polysemantic discomfiture of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, as with the death of Falstaff in the second tetralogy (and the probably contemporary last section of the sonnet cycle), the comic resolution of Shakespeare’s tragicomic historiography cycle begins to grow problematic in a development which this dissertation argues culminates in the broken regenerative circle of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* leading to the downward sloping narrative line of the decade of Jacobean tragedies. This chapter suggests that the emphasis on sadness and peril at the beginning of *The Merchant of Venice* responds to Elizabeth’s unresolved religious settlement, and that the play’s religious allegory offers a dramatic basis for the Church’s merely legalistic claims to a divinely ordained and historically providential new dispensation and New Covenant between God and mankind. At the same time, *The Merchant of Venice* stretches the circular structures of its medieval sources toward linear temporality, withholding their perfect comic resolution and preserving the sense of crisis continuing to threaten the English Reformation towards the end of Elizabeth’s reign.

A. The Reformation as Tragical-Comical-Historical.

The theocratic aspect of the Tudor monarchy joined secular to sacred history which its historiographers were therefore obliged to emplot as ultimately comic. Augustine's dualistic conception of secular history (the *saeculum*), in opposition to the divine tragicomedy of sacred anagogical history, as a wheel of Fortune, whose providential purpose merely was to emphasize the folly of earthly ambition could not apply to the Tudor dynasty. English Reformation historiography, following Luther and Melancthon, instead claimed once and for all to have united secular and sacred history in a "New Jerusalem" (Zakai 306). While the Catholic Thomas More had self-consciously given the history of Richard III its tragic emplotment, the Tudor Protestants worked it into a larger tragicomedy whose political premises were theocratic. Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, "a study not merely of Protestant sufferings (involving the use of bishops' registers), but the englobing of this within a framework of Church history—the whole highly polemical, even dishonest in its use of the sources" (Butterfield 484), with Holinshed's *Chronicles*, one of the most widely read Elizabethan books, "became almost the Bible of Protestant England, and was ordered by Convocation to be placed in churches where everyone might have access to it" (Thompson in Zakai 310). Foxe's Tudor apocalypse defines ecclesiastical history as a bygone religious trauma complementing the political Wars of the Roses in Holinshed's Tudor historiography. The tragicomic emplotment of Foxe's sacred history nevertheless is deferred, as is Shakespeare's both in the Elizabethan *Richard III* and in the Jacobean *Henry VIII*, to the authorial present. For Foxe, the winter of our discontent has been made glorious summer in "to the yeare now present. 1570. ... In which the full seenty yeares of the Babilonickall

captiuitie draweth now well to an end” (6). As with Gloucester’s pronouncement of the arrival of “glorious summer,” Foxe’s good news might seem premature to Elizabethans caught up in religious controversy. Like Fluellen, in his *comparatio* of Henry V with Alexander, Foxe applies the principle of historical parallels associated with Plutarch and with Machiavelli to describe the still unrevealed *dénouement*, comparing Elizabeth to the Lord’s “mild Constantine” sent “to cease blood, to stay persecution, to refresh his people” (qtd. in Zakai 308). Historical hindsight, however, identifies Elizabeth’s reign, not as the end of religious controversy, but as an era of continual Protestant factionalism that survived her and culminated in the English revolution of the seventeenth century.

Along with these Protestant polemical histories, the setting of the history play genre likewise was restricted to Catholic England, and beyond the depiction of Henry V as a metaphorical messiah, or of King John as a prototype of heroic political resistance to the Roman Church, they could no more than the “chronicles” of Hall and Holinshed represent the sacred aspect of the Tudor myth. Shakespeare’s *King John*, for instance, composed between the end of the first and the beginning of the second tetralogy (returning to the origins of the Anglo-Norman dynasties and emphasizing the circular course of Shakespeare’s historiography), represents a thoroughly temporal history despite the political machinations of the papal legate and the play’s basis on the earlier *Kynge Johan*, by John Bale. Bale was a contemporary of More and Foxe, and a “major figure of English Protestant historiography.” In *The Image of Both Churches* (1547), an ecclesiastical history based on the *Book of Revelation* and on Augustine’s *City of God*, Bale writes “eyther wee are citizens in the new Hierusalem with Iesus Christ, or els in the old superstitious Babylon with Antichrist ye vicar of sathā.” (Preface para 3). The history

play genre was invented by Reformation ideologues such as Bale in order to move temporal historiography away from the tragic *de casibus* tradition exemplified by More's *Richard III*. It is this same bipartite division of the world adopted by Bale "after the true opinion of saint Austen" that is translated into the Venice and Belmont of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

The early Elizabethan historiography of Bale worked to reconcile an identification of Rome as the apocalyptic whore of Babylon, and Anglican England as the Augustinian City of God, with New Testament prophecy and the historical record. In its attempt "to contradict [Polydore] Vergil, to tell the story of King John from a Protestant point of view" (Ribner 38), Bale's *Kynge Johan*, one of the earliest Tudor history plays and an influence on Holinshed, effaces its historiographical contradictions by containing them within the terms of a morality play. The simplistic terms of medieval morality plays, however, like the simplistic propaganda of *Henry V's* Fluellen and Gower discussed in chapter 3, were inadequate to serve as the historiography of an increasingly literate audience with its increasingly modern political consciousness. In the course of his composition of the second tetralogy, following *King John*, Shakespeare therefore displaces the function of medieval sacred allegory exploited in Bale's play from history to the comedy of *The Merchant of Venice*. This displacement preserves the nonfictional pretense of the historiography of the tetralogy cycle while continuing the containment function of the contemporary comedies described in the previous three chapters of this dissertation. As Mallin above implies, "certain types of allegory" can serve "to sponsor perfectly cogent schemas or worldviews," and the allegory of *The Merchant of Venice*

accordingly compensates for the “broken” and “intermittent” “representations of history,” increasingly contaminating the contemporary second tetralogy.

Bale’s attempt in the theology of *The Image of Both Churches* to reconcile the comic historiography of the Anglican “New Jerusalem” with the tragic historiography of the biblical Apocalypse, furthermore engages the problematic terms of the generic emplotment of historiography. It is these terms which Shakespeare’s Elizabethan work resolves in its circular metanarrative interplay between comedies and history plays. The Protestant representation of the Reformation as a phenomenon both of spiritual and temporal history implied a divine providential design in the usurpation of the authority of the Roman Pope by the Protestant monarch. The sacred aspect of the Tudor myth, however, could not be adapted to a tragic secular history such as More’s *Richard III*. Without recourse to such obsolete medieval dramatic tropes as Bale’s morality play, the Early Modern history play moreover could only represent in a pre-Reformation setting the political aspect of religious conflict. Neither Bale nor Foxe had given “providential history the encompassing historical interpretation that was called for.” Along with More, they merely represented the tragic historical prelude to an ideal Christian commonwealth. It was not until Thomas Brightman’s *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos*, or a *Revelation of the Revelation* of 1609 that Puritan historical interpretation widely identified the present as “the period of the millennium at hand” (Zakai 312). Brightman, however, did not locate the New Jerusalem, or “City of Philadelphia,” in Jacobean England, but instead identified Jacobean Anglicanism with the doomed Church of Laodicea, and this redefinition of England’s role in the Millennium is shown in chapter 5 to be proclaimed in the interdicted augury of the “shrieking harbinger” of Shakespeare’s *Phoenix and the Turtle*.

Three years before Shakespeare's shrieking prophecy of doom, at Portia's first appearance at the beginning of the second scene of *The Merchant of Venice*, Nerissa seems to evoke the rationale of Elizabeth's middle way, which emerged after the swing first to radical Protestantism under her brother, then back to Roman Catholicism under her sister, when she tells Portia that "it is no small happiness ... to be seated in the meane, superfluitie / comes sooner by white haire, but competencie / liues longer" (202-204). The absence of a positivistic Anglican doctrine together with her excommunication by the Church whose authority was sanctioned by tradition placed Elizabeth's claim to sacred authority as Supreme Governor of the new Church of England in contention. This contention threatened the coherence of the tragicomic dynastic historiography of Shakespeare's second tetralogy. As the tetralogy works to contain the ambiguities of secular Tudor history within a "fortunate fall" narrative structure, *The Merchant of Venice* turns from dramatized rituals of seasonal festivals in Shakespeare's early comedies to the more serious function of allegory in order to contain the ambiguities of the sacred history of the English Reformation.

This shift in approach to comedy exemplifies the large shift in the consciousness of historical time that the previous chapters have argued fundamentally defines the English Renaissance as well as directing the development of Shakespeare's use of dramatic genre. The regenerative circularity of the early *Comedy of Errors* and of the seasonal popular *ludi* adapted in Shakespeare's early Elizabethan comedies has proven itself obsolete in both contexts. For the urbanized proletariat of the Reformation, as for Shakespeare's comedy, to recall Bakhtin's observation,

... the sense of ... cyclical time, of natural and biological life was broadened and deepened ... drawing into its cycle social and historic phenomena. The cyclical character is superseded by the sense of historic time [producing an] artistic and ideological expression of a mighty awareness of history and of historic change which appeared during the Renaissance.” (25)

In its movement into allegory, *The Merchant of Venice* moves to theology from an obsolete magical theism that attempted to translate the monarchy into legitimate theocracy by translating the monarch into a kind of divinity. The use of comic *dénouement* to perform this *apotheosis* of the English crown (equated by Bacon with the “forbidden fruit” for Christian kings) is described in its winter and summer aspect in this dissertation in *The Taming of the Shrew* (c. 1593-1594) and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (c. 1595-1596). Neither are seasonal festival elements absent from *The Merchant of Venice*. The play’s schism episode, during which Bassanio, Jessica, and Launcelot attempt their escape from the bondage of Venice to the salvation of Belmont takes place during a medieval Italian festival of misrule. As observed above, these festivals constitute an analogy to the biblical “fortunate fall” of Adam and Eve which Shakespeare’s theology hereby makes a further analogy to the English Reformation. As we have seen, Bakhtin and others identify such festivals of misrule as popularizations of older and more religious ritual performance whose political function is co-opted in Shakespeare’s approach to Tudor historiography.

Like Shakespeare’s earlier comedies, the plot of *The Merchant of Venice* includes a version of the circle of death, resurrection, and sacred marriage of the solar-divine-king adapted in the tetralogy cycle. Bassanio seems to vow that he will keep the ring given

him by Portia on his finger as long as he lives. “When this ring / Parts from this finger,” he says, “ ... O then be bold to say Bassanio’s dead” (1530-1532). Once again, ambiguous language allows for another theological metaphor. In surrendering up his ring and receiving it back from Portia, Bassanio figures not only allegorically the England of the schism and Reformation, as well as the dying and reviving god of ritual drama, but tropologically the Christian of the true faith who dies and is born again in Christ. As allegory, however, *The Merchant of Venice* moves Shakespearean comedy towards Bakhtin’s “mighty awareness of history and of historic change which appeared during the Renaissance.” On the allegorical level, that concerned with the true church in its pilgrimage through world history, showing “the verie Age and / Bodie of the Time, his forme and pressure,” Bassanio represents the Anglican Protestant ethic. It is Bassanio alone who wins salvation, and through him it passes from Portia to the Anglican community: Gratiano and Nerissa; Lorenzo and Jessica; and on a less ideal level, Antonio. Shylock remains in Venice, representing allegorically perhaps the chastened Church of the Counterreformation after the loss of its allegorical daughter (*i.e.*, the Protestant congregations) and many of its very real ducats.

The Merchant of Venice allegorically represents a condition of schism in order to contain its attendant anxiety within a comic dramatic emplotment. Although the Anglican Church had been founded by her father, Henry VIII, there was “no official formulation of the doctrine of the Church of England until Elizabeth” (Bainton 201). The dispute which precipitated the founding of the Anglican Church was not a positive theological doctrine, throwing the English Church into dispute with Papal teaching, as with Lutheranism and Calvinism, but rather the question of the legality of a bond, specifically, the marriage

binding Henry to Katherine of Aragon represented in *Henry VIII* and figured in Antonio's (and by extension, Bassanio's) bond to Shylock. As such, Anglican Christianity amounted to a kind of negative theology in the sense that English Protestantism remained defined not by what it was but by what it was not, i.e. subject to the Roman Pope. During the reign of Henry VIII, Anglican theology was undistinguished from Catholicism beyond its rejection of the sovereignty of the Roman Pope and its permission of the royal divorce. The principle of negative theology informing the subsequent development of Anglicanism had been adopted by the Lollards from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite as an attempt to define the ineffable divine nature by a process of elimination. An idea of God as what is expressible only as what remains after all that He is not is removed must have contributed to the iconoclastic tendency of Puritanism with its plain white churches, and further allowed for Tudor Anglicanism to become established without a fully developed theology. This doctrinal reticence continuing under Elizabeth nevertheless was increasingly destabilized by competing factions, and an ironic use of Dionysian negative theology is shown in chapter 5 to inform the critique of Neoplatonism in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*.

Early apocalyptic historiography similarly was not based upon explicit doctrinal principles, but rather defined the Election of the Church of England almost entirely in terms of its historical persecution by the demonstrable Antichrist of Rome. Avihu Zakai thinks that Bale, even less than Foxe, described "great eschatological visions of millennial expectation of the final conflagration, for he did not expect God's mysteries to be revealed during his lifetime" (308). Twenty years after Foxe's identification of the end of the Babylonish captivity, and Bale's declaration that "since Christes ascension hath the

church continued by vj. other ages of much lesse tyme cōprehended in the .vj. seales, in the latter end of whom we are now” (449), the Church of England tarried with its negative theology on the verge of the yet to be opened seventh seal of biblical *Revelation*. It continued to “languish” in what Slavoj Žižek calls “that intermediate phase when the former Master Signifier, although it has already lost the hegemonical power, has not yet been replaced by the new one” (1). It is the centrality of the issue of broken bonds—legal, social, and spiritual—to the (as yet merely) negative theology of Elizabethan Anglicanism that undergoes comic subversion / containment in Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*. To the early Tudor state, the marriage binding Henry VIII to Katherine of Aragon merely amounted to the improbability of a male heir, which they considered necessary to prevent a reversal of the Tudor revolution. To many, it symbolized the tyranny of the thoroughly corrupt Catholic Church and the Spanish monarchs who held political control over Rome. Because “for Elizabethans, Protestants of rather recent vintage, theater had in large measure replaced some of the high ritual and ceremony that went missing with the diminishment of Catholicism and the rise of Calvinism” (Remnick 75), it also was an appropriate place to address cultural *mythoi*, including the *mythoi* of religion.

The establishment of the Church of England as the true religion is allegorized in the breaking of Shylock’s pound-of-flesh bond through Bassanio’s success in the trial of the three caskets, and the containment function of Shakespeare’s comedy thereby is extended to include a problematic sacred history within the providentialist political claims of the Tudor theocracy implied in the tetralogy cycle. *The Merchant of Venice* thus is a response to a condition of spiritual peril created by the English schism with the

Roman Church which threatened the resolution of Shakespeare's tragicomic historiography during the period of the second tetralogy. The question of the duty of the Christian subject *vis-à-vis* monarch and church is fundamental to the cultural crisis of the Reformation, and its temporal analogy is addressed in the episode of *Henry V* described in chapter 3 in which Henry incognito suggests to Williams, Bates, and Court that they should be as glad as he is himself to die for their king, "his Cause being iust, and / his Quarrell honorable" (1975-1976). Williams here challenges the claims of British Imperialism and, by implication, its sacred adjunct in the English Reformation, when he objects that the justice of the king's cause is more than common soldiers can know. Bates's comment that "if his cause be wrong, our obedience to the king wipes the crime of it out of us" similarly exonerates the commoners who abandoned mother church for the new state religion.

Explicitly aligning his argument with religious issues, Williams adds concerning those who will be slaughtered the following day: "Now, if these men doe not dye well, it will be a black matter for the King, / that led them to it; who to disobey, were against all pro- / portion of subiection" (1991-1994). To "die well" is shown by Holinshed to be meant in the Catholic sense, "reconciling themselues with God by hoossell and shrift" (552), *i.e.*, properly shriven by a priest and therefore bound for heaven. "[I]f the Cause be not good," Williams suggests, "the King him- / selfe hath a heauie Reckoning to make, when all those / Legges, and Armes, and Heads, chopt off in a Battaile, / shall ioyn together at the latter day, and cry all, Wee dy- / ed at such a place..." (1982-1986). Although Henry disagrees with this conclusion, the duty of the subject to die and kill regardless of the justice of the king's cause is assumed by king and subjects to be a

theological, rather than merely a political question. The comic *Merchant of Venice* works metaphorically to contain the same anxiety confronting the English subjects of the Reformation who were not guaranteed that their heresy, if it was what the Pope called it, rather than what the excommunicated English monarchy called it, would fall alone to the queen's account on judgment day. The Calvinists, it should be recalled, were not heterodox in their Reformation and burned people for heresy, just like the Roman Catholics (Rice 157), as Henry V, apparently did not hesitate to hang people for sedition despite his father's culpability for the same crime.

Next to the second tetralogy's metonymic tragicomedy of the historico-political aspect of the Tudor Myth, *The Merchant of Venice* provides multiple levels of comic allegory containing anxieties that were destabilizing its sacred aspect toward the end of the Tudor reign. The prominence given to the completely unhistorical dispute between Henry and Williams in the final scenes of the play attest to the centrality of the question of sacrosanct obedience to the reigning monarch at the end of Shakespeare's tetralogy project. A. P. Rossiter observes that in the Elizabethan history play "the old allegory of man's duty towards God, within His Catholic and universal church ... was narrowed toward the allegory of men's duties as subjects under a God-representing king" (qtd. in Ribner 35). As the previous chapters have demonstrated, in the Seasonal Pattern of Shakespeare's history cycle, the possessor of the English Crown, through his several personal avatars, is "God-representing," not only as the Lord's anointed, but insofar as he is made the protagonist of a seasonal cycle of ritual drama whose original function was royal *apotheosis*. According to Shakespeare's ideal Christian king, the commoner was responsible before God for his own sinful actions whether or not he was following the

orders of rulers who frequently punished disobedience with torture and execution, a tendency emphasized in the hanging of Bardolph and Nym for petty crimes merely as examples. If Henry's principle reflects official orthodoxy, the concern of the Elizabethan commoners for their eternal souls obliged them not only to look into the justice of the state's ongoing imperialist adventures, but forced the question of God's will in the matter of His True Church for which obedience to one's masters likewise had always been called sufficient to wipe any crime of it out of us. At the same time, Elizabeth's government was intolerant of any public discourse it perceived as potentially seditious or heretical. Elizabethan intolerance of artistic expression and political dissidence is demonstrated in the fate of several of Shakespeare's associates, including Kyd, Marlowe, and Essex.

According to Clare, a "measure of increased cultural surveillance" that followed the publication of John Hayward's *The First Part of the Life and Raigne of King Henrie IIII* in 1599 discussed in chapter 3, as well as the conclusion of the composition of Shakespeare's tetralogy cycle was "the bishop's stipulation that before publication all histories must be approved by a member of the Privy Council ... which resulted in the suppression of the book, followed by the trial of [Hayward] and his imprisonment for three years" (83). According to the early providentialist pretensions of Tudor ideology the legitimacy of Elizabeth's divine authority is necessarily linked to the legitimacy of Elizabeth's political sovereignty ostensibly as contemporary expressions of what Bacon calls the "History of Providence," the correspondence "between God's revealed will and His secret will" in human history (3.2). As the visible political reality seemed to drift away from rather than towards the New Jerusalem promised by the sacred history of Bale

and Foxe, and before the development of Brightman's millenarianism, Elizabeth's spiritual authority, resting on a still undefined doctrinal orthodoxy, was threatened along with the temporal. In its attempt to approximate a "perfectly cogent schema" of legitimacy through a generically comic and providentialist historiography, yet unable or unwilling to make theology dangerously explicit, Shakespeare's metanarrative thus exploits the religious connotations of allegory in *The Merchant of Venice*. This development of the containment function of his comedies is contemporary with the representation of usurpation overshadowing the second tetralogy which still was associated with the problematic Tudor claim to the throne.

An Anglican theology which aspires to the biblically defined role of "elect" must somehow interpret the schism with Rome in spiritual anagogical terms, rather than in the worldly political terms of an inconvenient royal marriage. God's covenant with the people of Israel is established in the Old Testament; His covenant with the Church of Peter is in the New Testament. Many English Catholics, along with More, failed to see the claim of the Anglican Church to being rightful heir to that covenant. This theological controversy dates at least to the Lollards, who publicly identified Catholic Rome with the Babylon of the Apocalypse (Bainton 19). That the question had not yet been resolved by the death of Henry VIII is evidenced by the brief return to official Roman Catholicism under Mary, before the accession of Elizabeth. The 39 Articles modified early in Elizabeth's reign from a version drafted for her brother continues to emphasize Anglicanism as a negative rejection of Roman Catholicism rather than a positive revealed doctrine. It rejects *e.g.* sacrificial masses, the use of Latin, the "Bishop of Rome," idols, unauthorized public preaching, and all sacraments beyond baptism and the Lord's

Supper. On the other hand, it allows for the marriage of bishops, priests, and deacons; it permits war, execution, and private property; and Article 34 proclaims that “every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man’s authority” The 39 Articles therefore make positive claims only for temporal practice, while “all things necessary to man’s salvation” are located in the “Holy Scriptures,” whose authorized books are enumerated in Article 6. Richard II early in the second tetralogy complains of religious dogma, “thoughts of things Diuine, are intermixt / With scruples, and do set the Faith it selfe / Against the Faith: as thus: Come litle ones: & then again, / It is as hard to come, as for a Camell / To thred the posterne of a Needles eye” (2679-2683). He thus articulates Lollard heresy which became official doctrine under the Tudors.

Article 20 states that “it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything contrary to God’s Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another.” The New Dispensation claimed by the Anglican Church, which is defined only in the negative terms of what is “not lawful,” thus still depended upon the language of Holy Scripture required to be read and interpreted personally and privately. In her first appearance in the Elizabethan Reformation allegory of *The Merchant of Venice*, we therefore find Portia, representing the Queen of the New Jerusalem, fretting over the still unfulfilled bequest of her dead father, allegorically representing the continuing absence of a sufficiently positivistic Anglican doctrine. *The Merchant of Venice* opens in the previous scene with the unexplained sadness of Antonio, and a sense of peril created by the description of his hazardous ventures. It culminates in Bassanio’s financial predicament, symbolized in the allegory of his lost arrow. “In my schoole

dayes,” he tells Antonio regarding his plans to attempt Portia’s casket trial, “when I had lost one shaft / I shot his fellow of the selfesame flight / The selfesame way, with more aduised watch / To finde the other forth, and by aduenturing both, / I oft found both” (149-153). In addition to the peril of the pound of flesh bond, further perils will be introduced in the escape from bondage both of Jessica and Launcelot. As with Bassanio’s arrow, in all cases it becomes necessary to enter more deeply into the peril of damnation in order to escape it.

Antonio’s sadness remains unexplained on the literal level, but its reference to the peril of religious schism ironically is prefigured in another allegory earlier in the scene. Salerio’s comment that going to church itself can increase one’s anxiety, if the stone structure make him think on the rocks his ship might encounter at sea, reflects one of Calvin’s first objections to Catholic dogma. “Should I goe to Church,” he asks Antonio, “And see the holy edifice of stone, / And not bethinke me straight of dangerous rocks, / Which touching but my gentle Vessels side / Would scatter all her spices on the streame...” (33-37)? Calvin argued against Roman Catholicism that God cannot intend for Christians to live under constant dread of perdition and that religious worship should be a source of comfort rather than fear and sadness. Going to church should make one think of the joys of election, not the perils of damnation, a terror which the schism had amplified for the Tudor apostates. In place of a Dantesque epistle conveniently attached to the text explaining the allegory of *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare signals its theological context by having characters use religion in their own metaphors. In the theological context thus constructed, Bassanio’s arrow parable also refers to schism, indicating that salvation from the anxiety of excommunication expressed in Antonio’s

unexplained sadness and his own unpaid debts should be guided by its precedent in the original Christian apostasy from Judaism, and Shylock's bond is defined here by implication as allegorical of the bondage of Roman Catholicism. Bassanio's parable implies that apostasy merely as a negative theology constitutes a condition of spiritual peril. One arrow, representing the covenant with God, had been lost in the original Christian apostasy from Judaism. The recovery of the covenant rejected by Anglicanism along with the spiritual sovereignty of the Roman Church should be guided by its original apostolic prototype. To achieve salvation, the English Reformation must be carried forward to the casket trial, *i.e.*, the correct choice of positive doctrine.

While Calvin's "doctrine of election" claimed the status of "elect" for anyone who passed the three tests of profession of faith, an upright life, and participation in the sacraments, such doctrine is notably absent from the early English Reformation. "The Reformation, which had originally involved the application of the spirit of enquiry to the system of *Mediaeval* Christianity," consequently "had in fact ushered in a period not of 'enlightenment,' but of embittered controversy. The Reformed Churches, appealing to Scripture against Rome found themselves, in self-defense, compelled to define their positions in creeds and articles" (Willey 126). What is evident, in place of new doctrine in the early Anglican Reformation, is a great deal of legalistic argument over the status of Henry's marriage. As represented in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (1908-1916), "Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury under Henry, a Catholic with Lutheran leanings, wanted the divorce judged by university rather than canon lawyers" (Bainton 190). Like Portia's (Balthazar's) approach to dissolving Shylock's bond in *The Merchant of Venice*, Cranmer argued that the letter of Catholic law itself rendered Henry's marriage to

Katherine illegal, as Portia argues that the letter of Shylock's bond renders itself illegal. Cranmer claimed that Katherine's earlier betrothal to Henry's late brother meant that the second marriage was incestuous according to strict canon law. The Church was bowing to pressure from the Spanish Holy Roman Emperor whose troops occupied Rome, but as Shylock's insistence upon the letter over the spirit of the law would oblige himself to commit murder according to the same law, the Pope's insistence on the letter of the law would oblige himself to compel incest. The application of mercy and interpretation of the letter according to the spirit are therefore necessary, and, as Portia shows Shylock to be the real criminal according to the spirit of the law, Cranmer similarly claimed that it was the Pope and not the English monarch who was guilty of "sinful and unwarranted usurpation of ecclesiastical and regal powers" (Zakai 306), for which his own arguments demanded just punishment. In perverting the spirit of a benevolent legal system to advance his own malignant motives Shylock enacts the Roman Church whose reasons for insisting on the marriage bond should turn into its bosom "as dogs vpon their maisters," worrying it (*H5* 712). Portia's legal decision thus allegorically confirms the Protestant historiography of Bale, Foxe, and Brightman, which "implied that it was the Church of England that was founded upon apostolic origins, and that Rome was the harmful usurper" (Zakai 306).

The comic plot of *The Merchant of Venice* exploits the tradition of Christian allegorical exegesis, co-opting the "fortunate fall" of the second tetralogy in order to encompass sacred history within the multiple strategies of tragicomic emplotment in Shakespeare's metanarrative historiography. This complex allegory of religious redemption reconciles Augustine's two cities and reifies Bale's New Jerusalem in its

contrast of Portia's Belmont with the Antichristian Babylon of Shylock's Venice. Augustine concludes that "*Fecerunt itaque civitates duas amores duo, terrenam scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei, caelestem vero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui*" [Two cities, then, have been created by two loves; that is, the earthly love of self extending even to contempt of God, and the heavenly love of God extending to contempt of self.] (*City of God* 14.28). He however allows for a "pattern, dimly visible but obscured by sin, according to which the heavenly city lives. It is the task of revelation to remove the scales from the eyes of those who would look for this pattern; it is the role of exegesis to bring home that message" (O'Donnell para 47). The allegory of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* accordingly identifies the Anglicans of the Reformation, figured by the Venetian Christians, as inheritors of a state of grace forfeited by the Roman Church, figured by Shylock.

The underlying theology of *The Merchant of Venice* thus is grounded in the doctrines of the Anglican Church, as they were in process of development during the reign of Elizabeth. The theme of *The Merchant of Venice*, suggested in its allegorical sources, is based on the theological proposition, expressed by Calvin and echoed by Luther and Ulrich Zwingli, adopted into the historiography of Foxe and Bale, and into the history play by the latter, that the covenant of Abraham had passed from the nation of Israel to the body of Christ and, by extension, from the Catholic to the Protestant part of that body (Bainton 115). This second new dispensation and new covenant claimed by the Elizabethan Anglicans is referenced by Bassanio's second arrow "of the selfesame flight" shot "the selfesame way, with more aduised watch." Roland Frye conversely attempts to distinguish Shakespeare from the "tradition of explicit integration of Protestant theology

with literary form” which runs from Spenser through Milton and Bunyan. He suggests that “Shakespeare’s theological usage is instinctively drawn from intimate awareness” (12), as opposed to any self-conscious doctrinaire thematic intention. Frye thus evades the bardolatry of Shakespeare as a sophisticated theologian by appealing to the bardolatry of Shakespeare as a “natural genius.” The more common view is that the “patterns of Biblical allusion and imagery” in *The Merchant of Venice* “clearly reveal an important theological dimension” (Lewalski 237). Details such as its adoption from Marlowe’s play of the use of “Abram,” the patriarch’s name before his covenant with Yahweh, should therefore be recognized as thematically motivated, perhaps denying the covenant claimed by the Roman Church allegorized in the graceless Shylock. Shylock thus in part simultaneously references English recusancy. As the literal Jew of the play, Shylock insists upon the letter of the law, as Jews trust in the letter of the three covenants made between God and the people of Israel in the Hebrew Bible. During the Reformation, English Catholics, including perhaps Shakespeare’s father, claimed a new covenant made between God and the Roman Catholic Church in two verses of the *New Testament*. Although Joseph Wheless calls it “a forged, and forced, Greek Pun put into the mouth of the Jewish Aramaic-speaking Jesus” (210), and thus casts doubt on the Vatican claim to scripturally authoritative hegemony, the *Book of Matthew* has Christ say “thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ... And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ...” (AV 18-19). Peter is credited with founding the Church of Rome where he is purportedly buried. By insisting on the letter of his bond, Shylock thus additionally represents those English Catholics who insisted on the scriptural authority of the Roman Church and the damnation of the Anglican heresy.

The courtroom scene, where Harold Bloom also finds allegory, “the medieval allegorical theme of the ‘Parliament of Heaven,’ in which Mercy and Justice, two of the four daughters of God, argue over the fate of mankind after the fall” (236), is read by Barbara Lewalski as a moral / tropological metaphor for forced conversion in an allegory of the “New Dispensation” (242). It was the Protestant claim to a new dispensation that made this theological issue relevant to Shakespeare’s audience, and as Shapiro shows, and Bale’s millenarianism confirms, the role of the Jews in this new new dispensation was still ambivalent. Lewalski contends that the allegory of the “Shylock-Antonio opposition ... symbolizes the confrontation of Judaism and Christianity as theological systems—the Old Law and the New—and also as historic societies” (240), and recent criticism has tended toward the view that a racist reading of Shylock “accurately reflects Shakespeare’s intentions in a Renaissance England even more anti-Semitic than previously imagined” (D. Smith 15). According to my view of Shakespeare’s Elizabethan work as dictated by a metanarrative tragicomic emplotment of English history, on the other hand, any discourse of anti-Semitism in *The Merchant of Venice* is staged primarily in the context of an allegorical claim to divine authority for Tudor Anglicanism *vis-à-vis* the Roman Catholic Church, in order to define the Elizabethan present as progressing towards comic *dénouement*. The play’s discourse on race supports this claim by equating the error of Roman Catholic anti-Semitism with its false claim to ecclesiastical hegemony.

Critical ambivalence towards the character of Shylock is due to the fact that the play’s allegory supports polysemantic readings. As representative of Roman Catholicism, he is the villain and antagonist of the historical allegory of Foxe’s Invisible Church. On

the play's moral / tropological level, however, showing "Vertue her owne / Feature, Scorne her owne Image" (1870-1871), he is a human being with eyes, hands, etc. who is tragic hero of *The Jew of Venice* (the play's second title in the Stationer's Register). In *Shakespeare and the Jews*, Shapiro demonstrates that the period of *the Merchant* was above all a period of transformation of attitudes towards the Jews in England which is evident in Brightman's early Jacobean Apocalypse. In contrast with "the Pope of Rome" who "is the Beast" (483) and destined for destruction, just before the establishment of the "New Ierusalem," God "shal draw the Iewes, whom first he woed, to his love, and company" in a *hieros gamos* "with ioyful & glad minds" (628), for "in the same place it is said, *he made marriages for his Sonne*, not one, but moe; the former at his first comming; the second at this calling of the Iewes. Which is more evident in the Greeke..." (629). Shakespeare's play, like Brightman's Apocalypse, puts English anti-Semitism into public contention, but, anticipating the later theology, the Elizabethan comedy aligns anti-Semitism with the Roman overlord. Next to Portia, Bassanio is presented as the noblest character in the drama, and like her he is exceptional in never expressing a hint of anti-Semitic sentiment despite numerous opportunities. If Shakespeare's comedy has one foot in medieval archetypes as a whole it expresses neither its inherited value system or its modern critique, but the polysemy of transformation. As Brightman argues against a clearly current anti-Semitic theology, the moral / tropological Shylock of *The Merchant of Venice* critically represents popular anti-Semitism in order to undermine doctrinal anti-Semitism.

As with the critique of imperialist jingoism in *Henry V*, the critique of a medieval Catholic Anti-Semitism in *The Merchant of Venice* is reinforced through the

manipulation and problematization of dramatic genre. As a Shakespearean tragedy entitled *The Jew of Venice*, at the licensee's discretion, Shylock's tragedy lacks the requisite death of the eponymous hero. Instead of death, Shylock suffers forced conversion according to conventional usage. Shylock's "pecuniary punishment under the laws of Venice precisely parallels the conditions imposed upon a Jewish convert to Christianity throughout most of Europe and also in England during the Middle Ages and after" (Lewalski 247), although Shapiro states that, owing to the absence of Jewish communities, forced conversion was not practiced in Early Modern England (*Jews* 11). In place of tragic barrenness, Shylock will be given gentile grandchildren. He has traded his wedding ring, suggesting also perhaps his parental obligation in lieu of his late wife, for what looks to his ethnic pride like a "wilderness of Monkeys" (1333). When he witnesses the surrender by Bassanio and Gratiano of their rings later in the play, Shylock remarks "These be the Christian husbands: I haue a daughter / Would any of the stocke of *Barrabas* / Had beene her husband, rather then a Christian" (2210-2212), a sentiment he is shown to carry beyond his blessed conversion. Given the conversion of the Jews intended by Anglican millenarianism and practiced by the Spanish Inquisition, there no longer is any reason that a Christian husband might not derive from the stock of Barrabas. Shylock, in any case, suffers a kind of barrenness, but it is not quite the obliteration that generically defines Shakespearean tragedy. According to Christian doctrine inherited from Catholicism, but in contention in nascent Anglicanism, conversion and Christian grandchildren are happy blessings bestowed upon the unworthy and ungrateful Jew. According to Shakespeare's generic rules, the play therefore is the merchant's comedy rather than the Jew's tragedy and is included with the comedies in the *Folio*. This

principle of generic emplotment has nothing to do with humor apart from allowing for the inclusion of verbal slapstick among the clowns. There is some of this farce, however, even in *Hamlet* where equally it is comic relief for the tragic tensions of the main plot. It is the concluding wedding and absence of requisite death of its eponymous hero that determines the placement of *The Merchant of Venice* in the Comedies section of the *Folio*. As a substitute for the absent tragic death, forced conversion is the basis for the play's claim to comic genre. As villain of Othello's tragedy, Iago is not saved from perdition, but is dragged off to cruel tortures. By contrast, along with characters like Hortensio married off to his widow in *the Shrew* or Egeus persuaded to accept his daughter's choice of husband in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *the Merchant* expects us to recognize Shylock's fate as happy despite undeniably being tragic to him. By closely representing the actual practice of the Catholic inquisition, Shakespeare thus places the problematization of genre in *The Merchant of Venice* upon the issue, tragic to Jews but comic to Christians, of forced conversion and the situation of the Jews in authorized Anglican doctrine.

The condemnation of Jewish usury in *The Merchant of Venice* further exemplifies its approach to Reformation allegory as Bassanio's second arrow shot "to finde the other forth" which transfers the medieval Catholic anti-Semitic principle to a modern Protestant anti-Catholic one. Antonio, railing against Shylock's "bargaines, and ... well-worne thrift, / Which he cal's interrest" (374-375), as the earthly Christ overturning the tables of the money-changers, casts aspersions on Catholic Italy which had effectively usurped the lion's share of the banking business by the late sixteenth century, both in Venice and London. "Ask your merchants who visit Marseilles, Avignon, and the whole

of Provence, Bruges, Antwerp, London, and other cities where there are great banks ... whether they have seen the banks of the Medici, the Pazzi, the Capponi the Buondelmonti, the Corsini, the Falconieri, the Portinari, and the Ghini, and a hundred of others” (Dei 166).⁴⁴ Because economic, religious and social factors had combined inextricably to associate usury with Jews in the Elizabethan popular imagination, a Jew was still the most appropriate allegorical symbol of usurious political economies, but Bassanio’s parable additionally transfers the condemnation to Catholic Italy, which was represented both by Medici popes and Medici banks as well as by Guinea coins, condemning its medieval anti-Semitism and tarring it with its own brush. Woolsey, the Cardinal whose treacherous dealings with Rome are depicted in *Henry VIII*, was passed over in his bid for the papacy by a Medici, and the role of the Medici in the Early Modern corruption of the Roman Church as a precursor to the providential Reformation may be indicated in the name of Shakespeare’s morally ambiguous Lorenzo.

Jessica, like Shylock, plays a secondary moral / tropological role as a literal Jew, while playing a primary role in the allegory of the English religious schism. In allegorical and in anagogical terms, in opposition to Shylock as Roman Church, Jessica exemplifies the historic Hebrew paradigm as a metaphor for Reformation England. “Like the Israelites of old, she seeks to escape from Shylock’s all-too-Egyptian house of bondage to a land of promise. Like Jacob, she takes with her property to which she has a natural right. And like Rachel ... Jessica carries off, concealed under her clothes, her father’s household gods, his barren metal” (Dobbins and Battenhouse 95). Like Jessica, and like

⁴⁴ It remains to observe that the British Monarchy was becoming the greatest rival to the Italian Catholic banking cartel.

the Hebrews in “Dante’s” demonstration of exegesis, the Tudor Protestants seek to escape from the “old superstitious Babylon” of the Roman Church to an Augustinian New Jerusalem. They seized the Roman Church’s property in England which they considered theirs by right, and they retain possession of the ecclesiastical materials from which to construct the True Church under the sovereignty of the queen.

As I have suggested above, however, within its construction of this comic Reformation allegory, *The Merchant of Venice*, like *Henry V*, incorporates problematic elements which stretch the circular containment of its comic structure towards a potentially tragic linear eschatology. In *The Merchant of Venice* the result is a repeatedly emphasized lopsidedness of structure (as opposed to a mere Renaissance *contraposto* in the interest of naturalism). Although its primary ideological concern is with the relation of England to the Roman Church and Spanish monarchs, Shakespeare introduces its generic lopsidedness through its moral / tropological racist discourse. The play’s lopsided morality is reinforced through the multiple juxtaposition of triads and dualities exemplified in the third of its three marriages: the elopement of Lorenzo and Jessica. Despite the anti-Semitic presumptions of the play’s comic tradition, on the literal level of the narrative, this happy event would not be socially acceptable to an Elizabethan audience.

A very similar episode occurs in Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta*, in which the Christians, rather than allies in her escape from hellish bondage, for the most part are villains from whom the virtuous daughter helps the father recover his money. Although she repents in the end, becomes a nun, and finally is murdered by Barabas, it is only after he has tricked her into conspiring in the death of her lover that she betrays him to his

Christian enemies. In contrast to the multiple murders of Barabas, Shylock murders no one (at least successfully). His murderous wish towards his daughter naturalistically represents a fit of extreme parental grief. Shapiro observes that Shylock meanwhile is spending untold sums in searching for Jessica. The Jewish daughter tossing bags of her father's gold out of her father's window in the two Jew plays contrasts the saintly Abigail's filial loyalty with the ambiguous Jessica's elopement and theft which consequently amounts to another problematic breaking of sacred bonds in Shakespeare's Reformation allegory. The obvious source for Shakespeare's elopement scene puts Barabas' daughter (as an *ersatz* nun) at the window of the convent that is Barabas' former house, appropriated by the Maltese Christians.

Abigall Who's that?

Barabas Peace, *Abigal*, 'tis I.

Abigall Then father here receive thy happinesse.

Barabas Hast thou't?

... Throwes downe bags.

There's more, and more, and more.

Barabas ... Oh girle, oh gold, oh beauty, oh my blisse!

Hugs his bags. (2.1.44-58)

In contrast with its source, the comments of Lorenzo, as he prepares to abscond with Shylock's daughter and ducats, including that "true she is, as she hath prou'd her selfe" (956), sound like ironic humor.

The lopsided triple made up by the shameful elopement of Jessica with Lorenzo similarly characterizes the ring bond. The lost ring which, Tubal tells Shylock, Jessica

and Lorenzo traded for a monkey on their wild spending spree around Italy after the elopement is the one loss of his goods that really hurts him. Shylock in this light is not a stereotypical greedy bag-hugging devil who would only care about the monetary value of the monkey Jessica got for the ring. Jessica says the house she is cooped up in “is hell” (773), and the anti-Semitic view of the play makes this charge seem instantly credible and so to justify her elopement and robbery. In its allegorical discourse on Reformation, elopement and robbery in *The Merchant of Venice* would constitute the Roman Catholic view of the English schism. In its tropological discourse on racism, we must recognize that many gentile adolescent girls say the same thing about their fathers, when they are not allowed to go to parties, and Shakespeare gives no independent confirmation of her or of his servant Launcelot’s complaints. Many fathers who had scolded daughters for shamelessly sticking their heads out of windows during frequently lewd festivals of misrule might squirm at the situation, and many successful bourgeois would be familiar with servants like Launcelot who do nothing but eat and sleep all day and still complain that they are being starved and worked to death by the “verie diuell incarnation” (590). Shylock’s devilishness thus falls a long way short of his obvious prototype in the convent-poisoning Barabas.

Shylock’s conventional representation as a greedy Jew distracted over the loss of his goods is summed up in his wandering the streets crying “O my ducats, O my daughter” (echoing Barabas’s “Oh girle, oh gold, oh beauty, oh my blisse!”), as though he cares no more for one than the other, but Shakespeare does not have Shylock speak these memorable lines; the anti-Semitic portrait is only the hearsay of Christians who are

shown to be consistently bigoted against him. It strikes me as Shakespeare's rewriting of a bigoted conversation overheard outside a performance of *The Jew of Malta*.

Sol. I neuer heard a passion so confusd,
 So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
 As the dogge *Iew* did vtter in the streets;
 My daughter, O my ducats, O my daughter,
 Fled with a Christian, O my Christian ducats! ...

Sal. Why all the boyes in Venice follow him,
 Crying his stones, his daughter, and his ducats (1067-1079).

The dynamics of bigotry and stereotyping are demonstrated in Salarino's embellishment of Solanio's unverified report of the Jew's behavior. Barabas's "Stones infinite" which he has "closely hid" (1.2.252-254) become Shylock's "two rich and precious stones" that Jessica "hath ... vpon her" (1075-1077). This irresistibly bawdy turn of phrase is made racist humor by the Venetian Christians, which leads inevitably to the kind of public persecution from the boys of Venice that Shylock complains of to Antonio. "Many a time and oft / In the Ryalto you haue rated me / ... / You call me misbeleeeuer, cut-throate dog, / And spet vpon my Iewish gabardine" (434-440). "You that did voide your rume vpon my beard, / And foote me as you spurne a stranger curre" (445-446).

In the same way that *Henry V* is argued in chapter 3 to constitute a demonstration of bad historiography rather than bad history, *The Merchant of Venice* includes a demonstration of anti-Semitism rather than anti-Semitism, and in both cases they thereby effect a deconstructionist critique. As the history play's jingoistic enormities are put into the mouth of Gower, historically an unapologetic propagandist, Shylock's stereotypical

greed is merely hearsay, modeled perhaps on two London bigots misquoting Barabas, the only Jew they likely had ever seen. Antonio on the other hand confirms that Shylock's charge is accurate. "I am as like to call thee so againe, / To spet on thee againe, to spurne thee too" (457-458). Shakespeare, however, does not share the bigotry demonstrated in Salerio and Solanio who include Tubal in their demonization of the "tribe."

Shakespeare's Tubal can be played as a perfectly good and reasonable man. He responds to Shylock's outburst of self-pity by remarking that other men, including the Christian Antonio, have ill luck too. This comment might be read as anti-Christian malice, but if Tubal's model is the "Three Jewes" who try to comfort Barabas, telling him to "remember Job" (1.1.383), then, rather than malice, this is an admonition to Shylock against thinking all the world's sorrows lie on his shoulders alone. Shakespeare's Tubal therefore seems more magnanimous than the Christians who reflexively demonize him, and Shylock looks like a widower who has been overzealous and unsuccessful in protecting his daughter from a town full of professed gigolos. Tubal tells Shylock that Antonio's ships have had some bad luck on the seas, and it is the first time Shylock displays relish at the idea that the forfeit of Antonio's bond will permit him to kill the Christian who he knows has enabled his tragedy. Solanio ultimately acknowledges that this crime, rather than motiveless Jewish malignancy, leads Shylock to demand his pound of flesh. "Let good Anthonio looke he keepe his day," he says, "or he shall pay for this" (1080-1081).

In a conventionally anti-Semitic play, the author would not mitigate Shylock's blood lust for Christians by putting it into the context of his grief over the sentimental value of his lost wife's ring and the collapse of his paternal hopes. He unambiguously

would make Tubal another stereotypical Jew, complicit with Shylock's anti-Christian plots, which, like Barabas, would involve more than one unsuccessful murder. As it is, we end up only with Jessica's report that Shylock did not mean it when he said the interest free loan to Antonio was intended to make peace with the Christian who had always spurned and spat upon him. "When I was with him," she tells Bassanio (*i.e.*, even before her elopement), "I haue heard him sweare / To *Tuball* and to *Chus*, his Countrymen, / That he would rather haue *Anthonio's* flesh, / Then twenty times the value of the summe / That he did owe him" (1640-1645). Shylock, after all, suffers his heartbreaking tragedy when he is away from home having dinner with the Christians after presumably breaking his own Mosaic bond: "I will buy with you, sell with you, talke with / you, walke with you, and so following: but I will / not eate with you, drinke with you, nor pray with you" (359-361). Although he easily might be quoting the Christians here rather than voicing his own convictions, his intense resolution to have his bond, after suffering the penalty for smelling pork at the Christian table, shows him to have learned his lesson. "Ile haue my bond," he tells Antonio, "speake not against my bond, / I haue sworne an oath that I will haue my bond: / Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause, / But since I am a dog, beware my phangs..." (1690-1693). His Jewish lust for vengeance is not made the fatal flaw initiating his tragic *peripeteia*, but contrary to the emphatic theme of the play, his lapse in strict observance of the letter of Jewish law. He furthermore clearly is protesting, although we are induced to dismiss it, that he only now has resolved to kill Antonio after his ill-fated attempt to apply the kind of leniency toward the letter of the law advocated in Portia's courtroom argument. It is Jessica who takes advantage of Shylock's lapse, and it is she alone who testifies to his original motives, but while, for all

we know, she is trying to justify her filial rebellion, our tendency uncritically to accept her testimony again depends on taking for granted the anti-Semitic and generic conventions that the play thus problematizes. Tubal and Chus are non-Hebrew biblical characters, and if her estimation of their nationality in a manner is inaccurate, so may be her estimation of her father.

Shylock's drive for revenge results from his heartbreaking losses, and it yet seems to an audience much more evil than Hamlet's. An anti-Semitic reading of *The Merchant of Venice* thus relies on audience expectation regarding dramatic genre, and Shakespeare perhaps implies that this aesthetic prejudice is analogous to racial prejudice, coloring our interpretation of actions and words and coercing us into interpretations which the evidence of the "text" does not actually support. The ambivalent representation of racism in the text of *The Merchant of Venice*, however, often is erased in performance by character acting or directorial emphasis on one side or the other. Modern performances tend to represent the play's racist aspect ambivalently, but criticism continues frequently to identify such ambivalence as anachronistic. Its allegory nevertheless reflects its polysemantic double title in the Stationer's Register, and indicates the dependence of the tropology of racism upon the prejudice inherent in dramatic genre. As Portia asks, and many modern readers of the play still wonder, "Which is the Merchant heere? and which the Iew" (2082)? The Stationer's Register seems likewise to ask "is this the comic *Merchant of Venice*, or the tragic *Jew of Venice*?" Contemporary with the repudiation of Falstaff by Henry V and the problematization of the putatively comic second tetralogy, Shakespeare's first problem play thus expresses the ambivalence of Tudor apocalyptic historiography during Elizabeth's last decade.

In lapsing in his adherence to Mosaic law in the interest of better business relations by going to dinner with Antonio, Shylock forfeits possession of his treasured ring, which consequently symbolizes the comic connubial regeneration embodied in Jessica and aligns him with Shakespeare's Jacobean tragic heroes whose regenerative paternalism (excepting Coriolanus) always is aborted. It also contrasts him with the two Christians, Bassanio and Gratiano, who also violate sacred oaths in giving away their rings at the end of the play. As mentioned above, this parable of three rings references an allegory often found in medieval collections of tales along with the three caskets trial. *The Merchant of Venice* interweaves its version of the three rings symbolism together with the pound of flesh tale and the casket trial in order to allegorize its myth of origins for the New Anglican Dispensation. Primarily through complication of the ring bond, however, the play's comic resolution is undermined by deferring the closure of its comic circularity, setting a precedent for Shakespeare's ensuing problem plays and foreshadowing the ascendancy in his drama of tragic linearity marked by the publication of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*.

The medieval parable of three rings, although not an acknowledged source of *The Merchant of Venice*, is recognizable as an analogue of the trial of the three caskets. In the three rings tale, a father, symbolizing God, bequeaths his three sons each a ring symbolizing Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, but declines to say which is the authentic ring.

And they (after his death) presuming severally upon their right to the inheritance and honor, grew to great contradiction and square: each man producing then his Ring, which were so truly all alike in resemblance, as no one could know the

right Ring from the other. And therefore, suite in Law, to distinguish the true heire to his Father, continued long time, and so it dooth yet to this very day. In like manner my good Lord, concerning those three Lawes given by God the Father, to three such people as you have propounded: each of them do imagine that they have the heritage of God, and his true Law, and also duely to performe his Commandements; but which of them do so indeede, the question (as of the three Rings) is yet remaining. (Boccaccio 1.3.9)

This *Decameron* allegory is attributed to “a rich Jew named Melchisedech” speaking to Saladine, the Sultan of Babylon who is trying to trick him into forfeiting his property, and Masuccio’s *Novellino* draws roughly the same moral. The Latin *Gesta Romanorum* of the early fourteenth century is more partisan. The true ring cures the sick showing that “the knight is Christ. The three sons are the Jews, Saracens, and Christians. The most valuable ring is faith, which is the property of the younger, that is, of the Christians” (*Gesta* 162). The fifteenth century English translation seems to lean toward the Reformation. “[B]y the firste sone we vndirstonde Iewes & sarsinis; by the secounde sone fals Cristen men, that aftir hir baptim drawithe toward þe devil; and by the thirde sone we vndirstonde the chosyn childerin of god” (Herrtage 170). Analogous to the symbolism of the three rings, the casket trial of *The Merchant of Venice* makes the three disputants who appear on stage Moslem, Spanish Catholic, and “Christian.” The explicit theology of its sources is effaced, but the *Merchant*’s emendation of its sources works to apply the allegory of the *Gesta* triad of caskets, which itself works to contain the medieval conflict between the “religions of the book,” to the containment of the crisis of the English schism with Rome.

Despite its broadening and deepening of comic cyclical time into theological allegory, *The Merchant of Venice* thus continues the function of metaphorical containment of historical trauma in Shakespeare's Elizabethan comedies, as the contemporary history tetralogies worked metonymically to contain the political instability of the Tudor revolution.

In addition to its analogy with the three caskets tale, the three rings tale also is referenced by the ring bond, whose resolution in Act 5 purports to close the comedy neatly and conventionally within the regenerative union of marriage, figured in the flawless circle of circles. Just as the double wedding of Portia / Bassanio, Nerissa / Gratiano is part of a triple wedding including the less ideal elopement of Jessica / Lorenzo, the double ring bond of Portia / Bassanio, Nerissa / Gratiano, is part of a triple ring structure including the even less ideal loss of Leah's ring by Shylock. The English *Gesta Romanorum* is dominated by triads of religious connotation, including, in addition to the three caskets and three rings, a version of Lear's three daughters, three knights frequently, three friends, etc. Two of the six Jew plays cited by Shapiro interestingly echo this tradition: *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (1588) and *Three English Brothers* (1607) (*Jews* 232 n25). In its reference to the *Gesta* tale, the three rings subplot of *The Merchant of Venice* establishes the theological theme implicit in the choice of sources and their interplay of metaphors. Its contrast with the symmetry of the triple weddings of Shakespeare's earlier *Love's Labours Lost*, *Taming of the Shrew*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, however, confirms the identification of *The Merchant of Venice* as a "problem play," which undermines the comic resolution it has led us to expect.

In addition to the Anglican historiographers cited, theologians such as Richard Hooker and Lancelot Andrews attempted to set out the doctrinal terms of Elizabeth's claim to divine authority. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare constructs a myth of the triumph of the inward spirit over the outward letter of the law, in which several bonds must be broken for England, primarily figured in Bassanio, in Jessica, and in Launcelot Gobbo, as the allegorical three estates, to escape a condition of spiritual peril and to achieve a new state of grace in Portia's Belmont. The representation of the political "fortunate fall" in *Richard II*, in which regicide, rebellion and civil war make possible the triumph of the ideal Christian monarchy in *Henry V*, implied for Shakespeare an analogous theological principle in the Protestant Reformation, for which schism, excommunications, and persecutions, precipitated by the divorce of Henry VIII, make possible the triumph of the new dispensation of the Church of England. The theological aspect of this "fortunate fall" is allegorized in Bassanio's successful negotiation of the trial imposed by Portia's dead father.

Bassanio reflects Lutheran doctrine, in that only faith embodied in the leaden casket, and grace, embodied in the preferment of Portia are necessary for his salvation. He reflects the Calvinist doctrine of election in that, once assured of salvation [Portia and her wealth], he need no longer worry about his fate, but may live happily in the Calvinist 'Holy Commonwealth' (Bainton 117).

Portia's kingdom, like Elizabeth's is constrained by the legacy of her father to a trial in which the most authentic of a given set of moral and spiritual principles must be chosen to avoid tragedy and bring about the play's comic resolution. That Shakespeare's weaving of the casket trial tale of the *Gesta Romanorum* into the pound of flesh tale of

the *Gesta* and of *Il Pecorone* constitutes an allegory is clear from the exegesis appended by the English translator of the *Gesta* source tales. The casket trial itself is an allegory of allegories in the sense that selections are made between pieces of text that are merely labels whose concealed meaning is *alienum*, and in the sources, the casket trial story begins with the interpretation of a dream which is a demonstration of allegorical exegesis. The “divinours, and lordis of all þe Empire” inform Ancelmus, emperor of Rome that his dream signifies the long awaited birth of an heir by his wife, “þe kynges doȝter of Ierusalem.” “For þe firmament þat þou sawe so clere is þe Empire, þe which h̄ hens forward shall be in prosperite; The paale mone is þe Emperesse, þe which h̄ hathe conceivid, and for hire conceiving is þe mor discolourid; The litill bryd is þe faire sone whom þe Emperesse shall bryng fort h̄, when tyme comit h̄ ...” (Herrtage 296).⁴⁵ The trial of the three caskets that concludes the tale is finally explicated by the *Gesta* author in Christian terms. In medieval versions of the pound-of-flesh tale, the trial instead is a “bed trick” in which the merchant’s son (the *mercator juvenis*) succeeds by magic on the third attempt in deflowering the queen of Belmont. Shakespeare’s substitution of the *Gesta* allegory of theological and textual allegories, as the trial rescuing comic play from tragic, comes as near to an explicit statement of allegorical intention as Early Modern drama is capable of, and an allegory of a matriarchal state in search of a patriarch, a motive emphasized in *Il Pecorone*, is obviously contemporarily Elizabethan.

45 It is noteworthy, in passing, that this explication is very close to many interpretations of the explicitly allegorical Phoenix saga of *Loves Martyr*, and it also recalls the prophecy of Archbishop Cranmer regarding Elizabeth at the end of *Henry VIII*: “as when / The Bird of Wonder dyes, the Mayden Phoenix, / Her Ashes new create another Heyre, / As great in admiration as her selfe. / So shall she leaue her Blessednesse to One, / ... Who, from the sacred Ashes of her Honour / Shall Star- like rise, as great in fame as she was...” (3410-3420).

The contention of the present thesis is that the context of the allegory of *The Merchant of Venice* is a specifically theological complement to the historicist political discourse of the second tetralogy. In the first place, the Gesta source allegories are explicitly theological, and in the second, Shakespeare's emendations of the sources reinforce their original theological premises and adapt them to a Reformation context. Contrary to the preponderance of readings of the play's theology, the hypothesis of topical allegory defines the terms in question, not as a dispute between the relative merits of Christianity and Judaism, but primarily as between Anglican and Catholic Christianity. As the English Reformation theologians equated the Catholic persecutions of the Book of Martyrs with the persecutions of the early Christians by the Pharisees, Shakespeare's Shylock stands as a villain, not of English anti-Semitism, of which he rather is a sympathetic victim on the moral / tropological level of the narrative, but of English Protestantism which, from this period forward, increasingly controverted the anti-Semitism of Catholic Europe.

B. Reformation According to Launcelot Gobbo.

Launcelot, identified as Shylock's servant, but modeled on the slave of Roman comedy (*e.g.* the slave of the *mercator juvenis*), considers the damnable offense of fleeing his God-given condition of servitude. "[T]o be rul'd by my conscience," he says,

I should stay with the Iew
 my Maister, (who God blesse the marke) is a kinde of diuell;
 and to run away from the Iew I should be ruled by
 the fiend, who sauing your reuerence is the diuell him-

selfe: certainly the Iew is the verie diuell incarnation,
 and in my conscience, my conscience is a kinde of hard
 conscience, to offer to counsaile me to stay with the Iew;
 the fiend giues the more friendly counsaile: I will runne
 fiend, my heeles are at your commandement, I will
 runne. Enter old Gobbo with a Basket. (568-596)

Launcelot's monologue allegorically interprets the spiritual jeopardy entailed in schism. Launcelot's dilemma, in the literal context of pre-Reformation Italy, is good New Comedy, but in the allegorical context of schism and Reformation, it is an expression of the same predicament contemplated by Williams, Bates, and Court concerning the souls of commoners compelled by "all order of subjection" to obey their lawful masters. As allegorical representative of the English lower classes, Launcelot struggles with official Church doctrine according to which God only asks that we serve our masters, patiently wait our reward, and leave judgment to His infinite wisdom, but He also forbids us to serve the devil (*i.e.*, the corrupt Church of Rome). If the state's position is that given by Shakespeare to Henry V, that "Euery Subiects Dutie is the Kings, but / euery Subiects Soule is his owne" (*H5* 2024-2025), then, Launcelot, no more than the commoners of the Reformation, simply can obey Church or state in matters of religion. Unable to resolve the paradox, he decides that a merciful God can not hold him to the letter of two contradictory decrees, and throws his hazardous lot in with Bassanio, the allegorical representative of the English gentry of the Anglican Reformation. The allegory of *The Merchant of Venice* is polysemantic, so identification of characters and situations as "representative" should be understood as describing one of several levels of the narrative.

Launcelot's predicament, for example, does not only figure the plight of the commoners but on another level is allegoric of the entire Reformation. As Article 20 of the 39 reads, the Church may not "expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another," it also "ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation." Echoing the complaint of Richard II cited above, Launcelot thus reiterates one of the constant thematic refrains of the play as well as of the Reformation: the choice of the spirit over the letter of the law. A literalist interpretation of the law would damn Launcelot upon his final resolution to flee his master, as it would damn him for continuing to serve the devil. Shakespeare, however, moots the question with a Gobbo *ex machina*, and further later on, with the news that Launcelot's service has already been promised to Bassanio by Shylock.

The ring bond episode at the play's conclusion purports to enact the same "fortunate fall" principle as Launcelot's escape from Shylock. As the gift of Bassanio and Gratiano's rings to the disguised Portia and Nerissa, although a sin of intention, would be no sin in fact Launcelot's flight to the master to whom he already had been sold, even at the behest of the "fiend,"⁴⁶ is no sin in fact. Bassanio tells Launcelot "Shylocke thy Maister spoke with me this daie, / And hath prefer'd thee" (705-706). Launcelot's "preferment" makes his flight from Shylock ambiguous. The transference of his service apparently has been sold but not yet paid for. The ambiguity of the term itself evokes his elect status, but the letter of the law would still damn him as a rebel, and his moral salvation waits upon Bassanio's success at the casket trial. Without this reinforcement of the condition of peril between schism and New Dispensation, the detail of Launcelot's

46 Unlike Brabantio who "will not serue God, / if the deuill bid" him (*Oth* 121-122).

preferment prior to his rebellion serves little purpose other than another opportunity to undermine the play's pretended anti-Semitism. In an aside, Barrabas says of the slave he has just purchased "this is he / That by my help shall do much villany" (2.3.135-136). Far again from Barrabas' murderous dealings with Ithamore, Shylock says of Launcelot, "the patch is kinde enough, but a huge feeder: / Snaike-slow in profit, but he sleeps by day / More then the wilde-cat: drones hiue not with me, / Therefore I part with him, and part with him / To one that I would haue him helpe to waste / His borrowed purse" (882-887). Although this confession seems to attribute malignant motives to Shylock, such malignancy requires accepting his account of the quality of Launcelot's service, rather than Launcelot's charge of serving "the verie diuell / incarnation" (590) for which there is no other evidence, and it may only refer to the expectation of more business for Shylock from the wasted Christian, which the audience again is coerced into perceiving as something more sinister.

Through its ambiguous doctrinal status, Launcelot's dilemma nevertheless reinforces the allegorical claims for the lawfulness of schism in the name of Reformation symbolized in the ring bond episode. In the former case, we are shown that when Launcelot resolves even to commit a sin of intention, he is prevented by what is apparently accidental on the literal level, but which represents divine Providence on the anagogical. Launcelot, for instance, repeats his last name six times in this soliloquy, usually pronounced on stage according to the *dramatis personae* and speech prefixes as "Gobbo," but curiously spelled each time: "Iobbe" (a few lines before "Master Jew's" is spelled "Maister Iewes" [598]), indicating a hidden pronunciation alluding to its anagogic connotation: the predicament of the commoner of the Reformation as a trial of Job

(which, without the aid of providence, he apparently fails). Launcelot's irresolvable dilemma, however, is not an injunction to the English commons to pass with their new religious masters into the New Jerusalem, as it does not identify their actual options, but only their metaphorical predicament. It is Bassanio alone who must make the choice for all to "giue and hazard all" (981). Like the complaint of Williams in *Henry V*, and Petruchio's complaint in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Launcelot's complaint is an admonition addressed to the state regarding the as yet untenable position of the English subject in an as yet undetermined sacred historiography of the Elect Church of England.

In their representation of the excommunicated English monarchy, by the strict letter of the law, Bassanio and Gratiano forfeit their nuptial rights in relinquishing their wedding rings. But as with Portia's arguments against Shylock, this legal forfeiture is recovered by adherence to the spirit over the letter of the bond, which often demands mercy on either part and which is emphasized by the fact that Bassanio and Gratiano give away the rings in a spirit of Christian selflessness to those to whom they, in fact, really belong (in contrast with Shylock who loses his ring to oblivion by trying too hard to keep it, *i.e.*, "fast binde, fast finde" [890]). This salvation from the guilt of an apparent sin by an unseen providence reiterates Launcelot's flight from a master who, unbeknownst to him, had already preferred him to the master he runs to. No real bond is broken, despite the letter of the law, and the sin is forgiven, but under the condition of future fidelity. The repetition of the forfeiture and mending of legalistic bonds in *The Merchant of Venice* references the apostasy of the early Christians and associates its flesh sacrifice with the crucifixion of Christ by the Pharisees. Its allegory primarily evokes the events of the English Reformation which began with a divorce, followed by excommunication, the

forfeiture of the thousand-year-old bond to the Roman Church; and a period of spiritual jeopardy necessary to arrive at the Belmont of the new dispensation and New Jerusalem of Anglican Protestantism under Elizabeth. The forfeiture of the ring bond in Venice and the conditions of its forgiveness in Belmont are necessary to forge a more ideal marriage union, as the breaking of the bond to Rome is necessary to forge a more ideal marriage of Church to Christ in England. As with Bassanio's arrow parable in the first scene of the play, the revelation that no sacrilege attends the breaking of the letter of Catholic law is achieved only in the successful achievement of providential destiny. The failure of the Reformation to establish a positivistic Anglican doctrine loses both arrows and all sins remain damnable. Had Bassanio and Gratiano chosen the letter of the ring bond over the spirit of Christian principles, they would be unworthy of their wives and of the salvation of Belmont. Such obstinacy in the literal bond would express the tropology of Catholic recusancy for the individual, and the allegory of Marian England for the commonwealth.

In the same way that Williams, Bates, and Court's souls are argued to be at stake in the justice of Henry's chosen cause, Launcelot's, Jessica's and Lorenzo's, Gratiano's, and Antonio's fate all depend on Bassanio's choice of caskets, as do Portia's, Nerissa's, and ultimately Shylock's. Portia might allegorically evoke Beatrice who descends from her beautiful mountain Paradise (*i.e.*, Belmont), to rescue Dante (Fergusson 119), or perhaps the *Gesta Romanorum* "daughter of Christ" of the casket trial, in the imagination of the Elizabethan spectator, but it seems as likely that she would have evoked Elizabeth herself, in her Gloriana persona, the mature virginal embodiment of English nationalism. According to Zakai, Protestant histories often "emphasized their respective nations' role in the struggle against the Church of Rome. At the same time, they stripped Rome and the

Catholic Church of all historical significance and sought to fill the resulting vacuum with national-historical contents” (306). This sense of vacuum remaining in the Elizabethan settlement explains Portia’s disparaging description of her suitors. The Englishman is fatally flawed along with the other foreigners, but only in his dependence upon foreign ideas, allegorically figuring the need for a positivistic native Anglican claim to the role of Elect Nation. “[H]ow odly he is suited,” Portia tells Nerissa, “I thinke he *Bought* / his doublet in Italie, his round hose in France, his bonnet / in Germanie, and his behaiour euery where” (264-266). Not being enough of an Englishman is nationalistic flattery compared with the other suitors: the Neopolitane Prince, whose mother “plaid false with a Smyth” (236-237); the Countie Palentine, who “will proue the weeping / Phylosopher when he growes old” (241-242); the French Lord, “let him passe for a / man” (248-249); the Germaine who “when he is best ... is a little worse then a man, and when / he is worst ... little better then a beast” (277-278).

After thus denying her grace to various representatives of the Huguenots, Lutherans, Catholics, and Calvinists, and praising the Englishman with faint damnation, she flatters his valor by having him box the ears of the Scottish and French suitors (263-273).⁴⁷ Scotland and France, of course, were allied with Spain in Catholic opposition to the English Reformation. The multi-level allegorical choice demanded of Bassanio is of the true religion from among its rivals suggested first by his Moslem and Spanish Catholic rivals in the trial, but also in the ring bond episode at the close of the play. In

47 The Scottish suitor of Q, who “borrowed a boxe of the eare of the Englishman” is identified only as “the other Lord his neighbour” in the *Folio*, no doubt in deference to the king, but, depending on the pronoun referent, allowing also perhaps for Spain’s other ally, Ireland.

order to transfer the traditional Gesta exegesis of the triad of religions of the book to an allegory of the Reformation, Judaism is separated from the contention for Portia. This displacement reflects the absence of a Jewish contender for world empire as well as relative Jewish powerlessness in the crisis of the Reformation. It also aggravates the lopsidedness of the comic structure which is emphasized by the overlapping throughout the play of dualistic and triadic elements.⁴⁸ The casket trial and ring bond are two of the play's pervasive lopsidedly triadic elements. In the casket trial, the lopsided triadic structures of the problem play again are refigured in the inscriptions, the gold and silver caskets appealing to "gaining" and "getting," while the lead demands "giving." The courtroom scene likewise can be divided into three phases, the first two containing three appeals, the last containing three penalties (Brennan 42). The lopsidedness of this complex structure, with two elements of the triad falling on one side of a duality, and one on the other, further is expressed in the two Christians and one Moslem who vie for Portia on stage. All of the play's triads are subsumed under a larger geographic duality: the forfeit blood bond of Antonio and Shylock in Venice lying on one side; the salvation of Portia and Belmont lying on the other side of a palpable dramatic barrier. This large diptych is diachronically analogous to the synchronic plot / subplot divide of the previous comedies and second tetralogy, over which the fortunate and few elect cross to safety and happiness, and in *The Merchant of Venice* it is allegorical of Augustine's two cities adopted into the millenarianism exemplified in Bale's *Image of Both Churches*.

48 The structural juxtaposition of doubles and triples may also have been influenced by Dante's epistle which claims that the form of the *Divine Comedy* "is twofold, the form of the treatise and the form of the treatment. The form of the treatise is three-fold, according to the three-fold division" (para 9).

While it is generally thought to be the result of a printer's error, the confusion of the three names of two of Antonio's Christian friends seems to mimic the plays double / triple confusions. The confusion of speech prefixes may be assigned either to two or three different characters in the first 72 lines of the 1600 quarto. "Enter *Anthonio, Salaryno,* and *Salanio*. ... *An*. ... *Salarino* ... *Salanio* ... *Salar*. ... *Anth*. ... *Sola*. ... *Anth*. ... *Sola*. ... *Sola*. ... *Sala*. ... *Anth*. ... *Sal*. ... *Bass*. ... *Sal*. ... *Exeunt Salarino, and Solanio*." Despite the intervening decades, the 1623 Folio has only advanced to "*Enter Anthonio, Salarino, and Salanio*. ... *Anthonio*. ... *Sal*. ... *Salar*. ... *Sal*. ... *Anth*. ... *Sola*. ... *Anth*. ... *Sola*. ... *Sola*. ... *Sala*. ... *Ant*. ... *Sal*. ... *Bass*. ... *Sal*. ... *Exeunt Salarino, and Solanio*." As the same character is only by mistake ever given two consecutive speeches, some of these "Sals" must be Salanios, and others Salarinos who together with "Sola" following "Sola" seem to require at least three actors. "Salarino and Salanio" enter, but "Salarino and Solanio" exit. Merely taking "Solanio" and "Salanio" as alternate spellings still leaves "Solanio" speaking after "Solanio" and both speaking after "Sal," who may be either. If this double triple humorously reiterates a structural pattern in the text of the comedy, however, it cannot remain part of the stage performance. The overdetermined lopsidedness it seems to contribute to nevertheless finally provides a structural basis for the comedy's failure to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

The protagonistic Bassanio's exegetical dilemma is the agon with which the audience empathizes, and there are several ways in which the casket trial specifically resolves its tension in the choice of Anglican theology, as Morocco's and Arragon's choices represent theologies opposed to Anglicanism. The character of Morocco is a representative of medieval Islam. The preoccupation with outward appearance he

exemplifies also is polysemantic and can be taken to condemn, not only the ostentation of the Islamic princes, as on display in formerly Moorish Spain, but the grandiose ceremony and ritual of the Roman Catholics, as well as the Hebrew adherence to the letter over the spirit of the law. He represents a state religion which wielded tremendous wealth and power, but which Anglicans considered purely temporal and devoid of true grace. Early in *The Image of Both Churches*, Bale places Islam along with the Pope of Rome in opposition to the True Church as the Gog and Magog of *Revelation*. According to Bale, the Pope claims:

... he may constitute lawes, kepe vnder the Gospell, distribute kyngdoms, sell promocions and benifices, set vp a Purgatorie ... redeme dead mens soules, and remit sinne for money. Mahomete braggeth also ... that he is ye great prophet, ye promises [sic] Messias· ye Apostle of both testamēt, abled both by ye law & the gospel, & that he hath his name frō ye eternall throne of God. ... Thus though they outwardly appeare very vertuous ... yet are they the malignaunt ministers of Sathan... (Preface para 26)

The skull within Morocco's chosen casket nevertheless points to the transitory nature of the temporal wealth of the Moslem empire, while his rejection of the lead, owing only to its outward appearance earns him Portia's rejection on the same grounds: "Let all of his complexion choose me so" (1053).

In relation to the caskets, Arragon serves as a representative of the Spanish Catholics who had had control of the Vatican since the early sixteenth century. Shakespeare's "Arragon" might evoke Charles V, the Aragon Holy Roman Emperor, who insisted upon the letter of the law in preventing Pope Clement II from setting aside

Henry VIII's marriage bond in Spain's political interests. As an unwanted suitor, he assuredly evoked the marriage of the Aragon Philip II to Mary Tudor and his continuing courtship of Elizabeth after her sister's death, which was extremely unpopular, not only because it represented a marriage of England to Catholicism, but because it offended growing English nationalism. In choosing the silver casket "which this promise carries, / Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserues" (978-979) Arragon enacts the question the sufficiency of human endeavor to merit salvation, a central dispute in the Protestant schism with Rome. Portia's argument in the courtroom scene: "For as thou vrgest iustice, be assur'd / Thou shalt haue iustice more then thou desirest" (2232-2233) is an answer to Arragon's error which allegorically identifies her with Protestant opinion. Article 13 of the 39 states that "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace."

Earlier in the play, as an allegorical representative of the Roman Church, Shylock also erroneously affirms the sufficiency of meritorious works, referring to the Genesis tale of the trick played by Jacob upon Rachel's father Laban involving the breeding of sheep. Antonio objects to the implications of Shylock's use of scriptural allegory. "This was a venture sir that Iacob seru'd for," he tells Shylock, "A thing not in his power to bring to passe, / But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heauen. / Was this inserted to make interest good? / Or is your gold and siluer Ewes and Rams" (418-422)? Antonio, denying that Jacob's wisdom could be sufficient to bring him his success against Laban, without grace bestowed by a merciful and generous God aligns himself with the European Protestant tradition derived by Luther from Saint Bernard "from whom he

began to understand that ‘man is freely justified by faith’ rather than works—a principle that would form the core of his theology” (Remnick 71). This opinion is affirmed by Calvin who accords with Luther and Hooker, as with Portia, “when he writes that ‘we are received into the grace of God out of sheer mercy ... why is it that we still trust or glory in works?’” (in R. Frye 208). As a representative of a marriage bond with Catholic Spain, Arragon, like Morrocco, falls victim to the principle he represents. Like Shylock he urges justice and therefore receives no mercy. “With one fooles head I came to woo, / But I goe away with two” (1188-1199).

The doctrine of the insufficiency of works originally is defended in the *Summa Theologica* of Aquinas. “Hence man, by his natural endowments, cannot produce meritorious works proportionate to everlasting life; and for this a higher force is needed, viz., the force of grace ... “ (60). It also again is canonized in the 39 Articles. “Albeit that Good Works” are “pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ” (12), “We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings” (11). This Thomist theological doctrine concerning the insufficiency of good works to merit salvation, taken as a *New Testament* repudiation of *Old Testament* legalism, and by extension, of the Catholic doctrine of salvation by works, finds expression throughout *The Merchant of Venice*. Portia’s comment that “in the course of Iustice, none of vs / Should see saluation” (2110-211) is echoed in other of Shakespeare’s plays including *Hamlet*, whose hero in a Lutheran mood asks “Vse euerie man / after his desart, and who should scape whipping” (1570-1571), and *I Henry IV*, in which Poin exclaims regarding Falstaff: “O, if men were to be saued by merit, what hole / in Hell were hot enough for him?” (215-216). Because the contest

of the caskets is the most significant emendation of sources in *The Merchant of Venice* (along with the secondary episode of Jessica's elopement) (Evans vi), it offers strong evidence regarding the theme of its allegory. The Catholic Church had been the Church of the Apocalypse throughout the middle ages, and its insistence that holy acts and good deeds could tip the scales of the last judgment was the basis of its power to sell indulgences, which practice most offended early Protestants from Wyclif to Bale. According to Article 10 of the 39, "Of Free Will," "The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God...."

As an allegory of the Anglican state of grace, Portia clearly has chosen Bassanio, above all other suitors, and he therefore represents the only hope for a happy resolution of the spiritual jeopardy that is her father's legacy. Her grace however is insufficient, in itself, as is demonstrated in the apparent ineffectiveness of her minstrel's song, while Bassanio is mulling it over, in which the first three lines rhyme with *lead*, and whose subject is the transitory and deceptive nature of outward appearances. "*Tell me where is fancie bred, / Or in the heart, or in the head: / How begot, how nourished. Replie, replie / It is engendred in the eyes, / With gazing fed, and Fancie dies, / In the cradle where it lies*" (1409-1414). The "contaminating element" that is suggested by literal readings of Portia as giving clues to Bassanio unfairly withheld from the other suitors, is recovered on the anagogic, tropologic, and allegoric levels, by figuring the state of grace required for salvation in all forms of Protestantism and claimed as an inheritance by the Anglicans. What appears on the literal level of the narrative as a violation of her father's bond, thus is redeemed as an allegory of grace, and by the faith of Bassanio, who does

“not doubt” that his hazardous venture will meet with success (158). While fancy may be bred in his heart by Portia’s minstrelsy, Bassanio’s salvation, and the salvation of his friends depends on his intellectual choice of the principle which best expresses Elizabethan Anglicanism, faith in what is hidden from outward appearance, and the state of grace of the elect of God. Bassanio chooses rationally among doctrinal principles based upon a close reading of inscribed texts, rather than exemplifying a set of values through his actions. In accordance with Shakespeare’s one real venture in his drama into the mode of allegory, the theology of *The Merchant of Venice* primarily is an intellectual theology concerned with textual encoding and decoding. In rejecting the golden casket, Bassanio is not rejecting gold, as it is Portia’s gold which is, in large measure, the prize for which he hazards. No more did Reformation England have any less use for gold than Islamic Morocco. Bassanio rather is rejecting the moral principle to which the golden casket makes its allegorical appeal, the choice of that which “men desire” (977) as an outward sign of God’s grace.

Nor does he forgo the attempt to merit Portia by rejecting the silver casket, but by rejecting it as a device of commutative justice, “pale and common drudge / ‘Tweene man and man” (1449-1450), rather than the distributive justice of grace, and appealing to faith in a hidden treasure, as implied in several Gospel parables. Although a truly comic resolution of the dramatic tension still depends on Portia’s special favor. Bassanio is shown to merit his salvation both in his noble character and in his correct interpretation of the spirit of scriptural precepts. As he contemplates the wisdom of the text on the leaden casket: “Who chooseth me, must giue and hazard all he hath” (981), Bassanio tropologically enacts an Elizabethan Anglican of the literate propertied classes. Like

Portia's English suitor, having "neither *Latine, French, / nor Italian*" (260-261), the new Anglicans read in the Douay-Rheims Bible that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field. Which a man having found, hid it, and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (*Matthew* 13:44). As opposed to Church dogma, the authority of Holy Scripture is emphasized in the 39 Articles as containing "all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man" (6), and Bassanio is left to decode the casket parables alone. He thus further exemplifies the tropological Anglican for whom such private contemplation of scriptural text, in place of priestly instruction and commandment, increasingly was democratized by the printing of English Bibles.

The principle of judging by outward appearance which is exemplified in the golden casket and specifically negated in the lead, while reflecting the loosely and personally defined approach to doctrine of the Church of England as well as the austerity of Puritan practices of worship, furthermore reiterates the repudiation of legalism, both Jewish and Papist, and supports the play's emphasis on the spirit over the ritual of worship. This theological position is introduced by Antonio in response to Shylock's perversion of the story of Jacob and Laban: "The diuell can cite Scripture for his purpose ... O what a goodly outside falsehood hath" (430) and reiterated by Bassanio as he contemplates the caskets.

In Law, what Plea so tainted and corrupt,
 But being season'd with a gracious voice,
 Obscures the show of euill? In Religion,
 What damned error, but some sober brow

Will blesse it, and approue it with a text,

Hiding the grosenesse with faire ornament:

There is no voice so simple, but assumes

Some marke of vertue on his outward parts... (1421-1428).

As with the reference to the stones of the church in the first scene of the play, Shakespeare ironically reveals the theological connotation of his allegory by having several of its allegorical characters use theology in their metaphorical conceits. In the case of Antonio and Bassanio, the value of the spirit of text over the letter of text, especially legalistic and theological text, is specifically associated with the ability of “faire ornament” to conceal rotten interiors, as with the virtuous outward appearance of Bale’s Gog and Magog as Roman Catholicism and Islam. This principle is observed in the Reformation attitude toward allegorical readings of Holy Scripture as well as in the recent memory of the Catholic attempt to enforce the legal bond of Henry’s marriage and the religious persecutions that followed it, which precipitated the foundation of the Church of England. If the inscriptions upon the caskets signify an intellectual engagement with the allegorical meaning of Holy Scripture, moreover, the music of Portia’s minstrel further suggests the aspiration of Shakespeare’s poetry in response to the crisis of the English Reformation.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, *The Merchant of Venice* as itself a complex parable of the Reformation, does not place its protagonists freely and clearly in the New Jerusalem of Belmont. As a problem comedy, it instead undermines its own comic *dénouement* in order to express a growing sense of the possible failure of the sacred aspect of the Tudor revolution. The problematization of the comedy, structurally

reinforced in its lopsided double / triples however, ultimately is symbolized in Shakespeare's rewriting of the *Gesta* parable of the three rings. Leah's lost ring is the symbol evoking the humanized moral / tropological Jew as distinct from the demonized allegorical Roman Catholic Church. Shylock's loss of his ring is identified as a lopsided triple to the double ring bond episode insofar as the happiness of all three husbands depends upon possession of their rings. At the end of *The Merchant of Venice*, Bassanio and Gratiano recover their surrendered rings, but Shylock never does.

This early refusal in Shakespeare's comedies to close the regenerative circle is contemporary with what Zakai calls the Puritan failure under Elizabeth to realize "the relationship among the Church of England, the prince, and the millennial prospect." At the end of the sixteenth century, Foxe's deferred tragicomic sacred historiography "underwent a radical reassessment, and the Protestants' millennial expectations of the prince began to wane and disperse. Centrifugal millenarianism replaced centripetal millenarianism" (314). Shylock's third ring bond, like the illicit third marriage of Lorenzo and Jessica, conclusively problematizes the structure of comic resolution of *The Merchant of Venice*. If not the broken regenerative line of tragedy (Shylock likely will be given grandchildren after all), this stretching of the perfectly enclosed circularity characterizing the earlier comedies foreshadows the problematic conclusion to the tetralogy cycle and begins the transition of Shakespeare's drama through problem plays toward the series of broken regenerative circles of the Jacobean tragedies.

The threatening failure of Tudor England to actualize the millenarian Elect Nation of Bale and Foxe, and as this chapter contends, informing the circular narrative of the secular tetralogies as well as the sacred allegories of *The Merchant of Venice*, compelled

Shakespeare to alter England's role in his tragicomic historiography. Brightman likewise would recast the Anglican Church from a comic New Jerusalem to a tragic "Laodicea, the sinful church in *Revelation* which rejected God's word and was therefore warned by the Lord that He would 'spue thee out of my mouth'" (Zakai 317). This equation, according to Zakai, motivated both the English Revolution, "an attempt to bring England back to the center of providential history, from corrupted Laodicea to Philadelphia and consequently to build in England the New Jerusalem" and the Puritan Exodus to America (317). From the broken ring of rings of *The Merchant of Venice*, allegorically representing the imperfect resolution of the Tudor Reformation in Elizabeth's last decade, until the end of his career, Shakespeare's historiography represents an intermediary transition from the medieval agrarian circularity from which it derives into the linear eschatology of modern historicism to which it finally surrenders dominance. As the next chapter argues, it is this surrender that is bitterly declared at the turn of the century in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. Through its alignment with the large metanarrative cycle structuring Shakespeare's Elizabethan drama, the shrieking harbinger forbidden to attend its funeral / wedding nevertheless manages to convey the poem's augury of doom to the Laodicean monarchy.

Chapter 5. Breaking the Circle in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*.

The previous four chapters identify overarching ideological and aesthetic concerns involving the generic emplotment of the historical narrative which direct the course of development of the drama of Shakespeare's Elizabethan decade. Chapter 1 also shows that the recognition of these unifying principles by the members of the King's Men who inherited possession of Shakespeare's manuscripts provides a more credible explanation for the ordering of the plays and sections of the *First Folio* than the rough chronology and accidents of transmission generally accepted. This chapter demonstrates that *The Phoenix and the Turtle* confirms the changing orientation in Shakespeare's work of the period of the succession towards historiography, the meaning of dramatic genre, and what Kastan calls "the shapes of time." The poem itself, moreover, continues to be incompletely understood, and its intertextual relationship with Shakespeare's contemporary drama helps to illuminate its obscurities. The structural patterns unifying Shakespeare's drama outlined in the previous chapters may be perceived without reference to the poem, but apart from its representation of this metanarrative unity, the meaning of the poem remains intractably enigmatic. The evident affinity of the structure of the poem with the structure manifest in the development of Shakespeare's Elizabethan work thus reciprocally lends support to the analysis of the drama in the previous chapters.

This thesis places Shakespeare's career in the cultural context of a temporal and historical intermediacy, "tarrying with the negative," on a fundamental level of cultural phenomenology, which is characteristic of periods of epochal transition, as several of the authorities cited help to elucidate. Driver, for example, draws an analogy between the functions of temporality and historicity in "Greek and Shakespearean drama," and I have

referred to several theorists connected with the “Cambridge school” of anthropology to extend this analogy to the official religious drama of the ancient Near East. In all of these cultures, drama was central to the process of management of the life cycle of what Gaster calls the “living topocosm” of the community, and, “whether by ape or issue” (to use William Prynne’s terms regarding Christmas celebrations *vis-à-vis* the Roman Saturnalia), or by a complex interplay of both, as I suggest, Shakespeare’s drama utilizes structural and generic devices inherited from its cultural genealogy in order to perform analogous social functions.

The first four chapters of this dissertation argue that these structural principles account for the sequence and much of the content of Shakespeare’s Elizabethan plays, both in their stage development and in their arrangement in the *Folio*. This chapter proposes that these temporal and historical functions of dramatic form, common to the Western dramatic tradition, provide the metaphoric theme of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. Most prominently, the poem’s discourse upon time and history provides an allegorical referent to its most troubling crux: the death of the two birds “Leaving no posteritie” (59), which seems to refute the comic emplotment of *Loves Martyr* as well as of the entire mythological Phoenix tradition. Because of this frustration of audience expectation of comic *dénouement*, *The Phoenix and the Turtle* is a “problem poem,” as *Henry V* and *The Merchant of Venice* are shown in chapters 3 and 4 to be problem comedies. *The Phoenix and the Turtle* undermines not only its own expected comic resolution, but the tragicomic emplotment of *Loves Martyr* consisting in the death, resurrection, and sacred marriage of allegorical ideals in the same way that the problem plays Shakespeare produced around the turn of the century undermine the complete cycle of death,

resurrection and sacred marriage structuring his own Elizabethan historiography. *The Phoenix and the Turtle* thus is a declaration, however heartfelt, of despair for and abandonment of the tragicomic historiography of Shakespeare's early drama as it evolved into an interplay between problem comedy and tragedy at the long-feared termination of the Tudor dynasty. Like Shakespeare's dead birds, the dynasty under which the author was born will produce "no posteritie," but rather will be supplanted by the Scottish monarchy.

Shakespeare's poem can be read as a self-contained aesthetic object, or it can be read in the context of his own corpus or of the collection in which it was published. The main body of the *Loves Martyr* collection is taken up with Chester's poem of the same title. There follows an appendix beginning with the invocation and dedication of the *vatum chorus*, then four poems signed "Ignoto," after which comes Shakespeare's contribution, followed by works on the Phoenix and Turtle theme by John Marston, George Chapman, and Ben Jonson. Whether or not "*an Inuention, freer then the Times*" (Chester 172), Shakespeare's abandonment of the comic emplotment of his historiographical drama, together with its implications of sacred kingship, is not made explicit in his poem. In a sort of dualistic approach to reading as described in Schiller's "Naïve and Sentimental Poetry," and exemplified in William Blake's "Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience," Shakespeare's *Phoenix and the Turtle* effects a progressive slippage from what I will refer to as naïve epideictic praise of the monarchist ideal of the cult of Elizabeth into an ambiguously sentimental reading, in Schiller's sense of the term, amounting to a bitter prophecy of doom leveled at the relative civil peace of the Tudor period. The tragically barren marriage of the two birds, like the forbidden

“shrieking harbinger” is symbolic of the poet’s bitter prophecy regarding the new monarchy. The poem thus is allegorical of a period of politico-historical transition, and of the accompanying transformation of the phenomenology of time across all social classes in Early Modern England regardless of its possible personal allusions.

The derivation of the structure of Shakespeare’s cycle historiography from a continuous ritual drama cycle tradition explains the location of such fundamental cultural processes in the public theater, and it explains why *Loves Martyr’s vatum chorus* consists mostly of dramatic poets. In the context of his own dramatic poetry, the descent in Shakespeare’s *Phoenix and the Turtle* from optimistic idealism to bitter disillusionment describes the development of historical themes in his plays from comical to tragical emplotment. Shakespeare’s use of genre underwent an abrupt change contemporary with the publication of the poem’s abrupt pronouncement of the expiration of the resurrection cycle of the Phoenix, and barrenness prominently characterizes the protagonists of his plays for the ensuing decade. The obscurity of the poem’s meaning read as a sophisticated form of self-censorship of its political discourse moreover is consistent with Clare’s attribution of an increasingly censorious artistic culture in the 1590s to the uncertainties of the approaching succession.

As in Shakespeare’s drama, *The Phoenix and the Turtle* effects its generic reversal through the manipulation of linear and circular plot structures, and as in the drama, these plot structures and their generic functions ultimately derive from the long genealogy of seasonal ritual into aesthetic drama in western culture. In Shakespeare’s work this manipulation of genre is thoroughly historicized, representing the providential development of the English monarchy in both its temporal and spiritual aspects. The

barrenness of Shakespeare's Phoenix therefore rises to the level of apocalypticism, and the accuracy of the poem's dark prophecy can be seen in the steady decay towards revolution and regicide over the ensuing generation. On the one hand, the poem allows for a naïve reading as a somewhat unclearly expressed, but conventionally laudatory, celebration of the Tudor / Stuart succession. The ambiguity established in its opacity, on the other hand, supports a sentimental reading that is ironically antithetical. The poem hints at the resolution of this ambiguity on the side of ironic sentimentalism rather than epideictic naïveté most loudly in the "shrieking harbinger" explicitly banished from the celebratory chorus of *Loves Martyr*. Without being apparently seditious, Shakespeare's *Phoenix and the Turtle* contradicts the encomium to Elizabeth and panegyric to the impending Jacobean succession to which *Loves Martyr* is dedicated. Beneath a veil of linguistic opacity and irony, an undertone of bitterness and mourning expresses the poet's own resignation to an ultimately tragic historical narrative. According to the allegorical interpretation suggested by the modern editor of *Loves Martyr*, Alexander Grosart, and accepted by many critics, "the 'Phoenix' was Elizabeth and the 'Turtle Dove' Essex" (xliv). Theories (as well as Hollywood movies) accordingly have been developed involving a possible romantic understanding between the Queen and her favorite which, despite the fact that he was married with children, identify Essex as the likeliest source of an heir to the Tudor dynasty.

When the Phoenix and Turtle meet near the end of Chester's poem, the Turtle is mourning another "turtle that is dead" (125). Rather than a specific historical person such as Grosart's Essex, I agree with critics who identify the surviving Turtle of *Loves Martyr* and of Shakespeare's poem as symbolic of a collective identity. I do not, for example,

think that the allusion to Bruno, who explicates the Phoenix myth in *Heroic Frenzies*, suggested by Roy Eriksen, can be said to be any more or less present or absent from the Turtle's allegory than Essex. He certainly qualifies as an idolater of the Phoenix Elizabeth. Frances Yates cites Bruno, who was in England from 1584-1586, speaking of Elizabeth as the "unique Diana' and as 'diva Elizabetta.'" Yates says that this pseudo-religious cult of personality "afterwards got him into trouble with the Inquisitors" (*Astraea* 84). While Essex was the patron of the Earl of Southampton who was a patron of Shakespeare's poetry, Bruno's relationship to the literary cult of Elizabeth, represented to some degree by the *vatum chorus* of *Loves Martyr*, is more intimate and obvious. Yates thinks that Bruno had "helped to inspire the 'Sidney circle' and the Elizabethan poetic Renaissance" (*Occult* 92), and "according to himself he was better received by ... Sidney and his circle than by the Oxford 'pedants'" (*Bruno* 178). Whether Shakespeare would identify half of the ashes in the funeral urn as those of Bruno, burnt at the stake in 1600, or Essex, beheaded in 1601, is less important than that various readers of the poem will think of both men, as well as of Shakespeare himself, as cultural symbols and cults of personality in their own rights. If the poem represents the end of an epoch, as the traditional use of the phoenix symbol implies, any single individual involved in its passing need not be crucial to its meaning.

What is crucial is the literary expression of this epochal process. "If *The Phoenix and the Turtle* points anywhere outside itself, the direction it indicates," as John Roe says, in large part "is doubtless a literary one" (49). Rather than a merely political cult, I would identify the collective Turtle-dove of *Loves Martyr* with a politically oriented literary collective. Like the Mechanicals of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the editors

of Shakespeare's posthumous *First Folio*, the *vatum chorus* of *Loves Martyr* and the Parliament of Fowls they collectively construct then would follow in the tradition of the Sidney circle. Everyone is a poet in Sidney's *Arcadia*; even the shepherds are an idyllic version of Shakespeare's Mechanicals. "[I]t would delight you," Kalendar tells Palladius "vnder some tree, or by some riuers side (when two or three of them meet together) to heare their rurall muse, how pretily it will deliuer out, sometimes ioyes, sometimes lamentations, sometimes chalenginges one of the other, sometimes vnder hidden formes vttering such matters, as otherwise they durst not deale with." Like the *vatum chorus*, the spirit of invention of the Arcadian poets apparently sometimes is "freer than the times." Their best poetic lines then are selected and redacted. "Then haue they most commonly one, who iudgeth the Price to the best doer, of which they are no lesse glad, then great Princes are of triumphes: and his parte is to sette downe in writing all that is saide, saue that it may be, his pen with more leasure doth polish the rudnesse of an vnthought-on songe" (20, fol. 8, sig. B2). As it would be hard to say whose name should be signed to the *Pyramus and Thisbe* of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Sidney declines to say what name is signed to the finished work, but the poetic ideal he thus bequeaths to the Elizabethan literary Renaissance and which is inherited by the *vatum chorus* of *Love's Martyr* is a collaborative one.

In addition to its association with fidelity in mating, the turtle dove's call has earned it the name of mourning dove in America, and the symbolism of bird calls as poetry is ancient. While I am not concerned here with specific individuals, then, I would assign a prominent place to poetry and drama in a collaborative allegorical discourse of

dramatic poets,⁴⁹ and identify the Turtle with the ambiguously collective *Vatum chorus*. *Vatum chorus* is signed both to the dedication referring to “our verses” and to the “Invocatio” (171) following Chester’s long work. The authorship of these poems has not been determined, but the signature, while possibly following the oldest Greek tradition in which the Chorus was a single actor, clearly evokes collaboration.

Most theories assign the Turtle of Shakespeare’s poem an individual rather than a collective identity. William Matchett sums up the interpretations of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* found in the variorum in two sentences. He rejects readings of the poem “merely as an example of Platonism, the Court of Love, mysticism, the parliament of birds, or the legend of the phoenix,” and insists that “to decide too quickly that the poem is an allegory of Essex and Elizabeth, Shakespeare and Southampton, the poet and his art, the body and the soul, Christ and the Church, the death of Marlowe, the marriage of Sir John Salusbury or that of Lucy, Countess of Bedford, leads inevitably to a combination of ingenuity and blindness” (18). To Matchett’s examples may be added the theory expounded by Marie Axton and emended by Anthea Hume, that the Phoenix represents Queen Elizabeth while the Turtle represents, rather than the Earl of Essex, her loyal English subjects. Chester’s “turtle that is dead” is associated with the idea of “False Love,” and the poem, according to this interpretation, contains subtle praise of the queen as the “True Love” to whom the living Turtle, the English people, have turned from their former adoration of Essex. Although I agree with the identification of the Turtle with a collective rather than an individual, I disagree with critics like Axton, Hume, and

49 The 1601 Title Page reads: “LOVES MARTYR: / OR, / ROSALINS COMPLAINT. / *Allegorically shadowing the truth of Loue, / in the constant Fate of the Phoenix / and Turtle.*” To which “*are added some new compositions of seuerall moderne Writers.*”

Elizabeth Watson who assert that Shakespeare's poem also expresses this fulsome praise of the dying queen. On the contrary, its ironic realism points to the unattainability of True Love in its reified Neoplatonic form in the earthly realm of the sensible, and its mode therefore is not epideixis but sarcasm and irony. "Loue and Constance is dead, / *Phoenix and the Turtle* fled, / In a mutuall flame from hence" (21-23). The perfect union of Love and Constancy is symbolized in the "mutual flame" of the Phoenix and Turtle. Love and Constancy, however, only coexist in an ideal world of Platonic forms. In the bitter realism of Shakespeare's poem, although they continually burn with desire for each other, love and constancy inevitably destroy each other, as it is in the nature of constancy to be destroyed by new love, and in the nature of love to be destroyed along with the object of its constancy. The product of Shakespeare's mutual flame does not fulfill its promise of a transcendent Neoplatonic union of ideal principles, but ends only in a commingling of indistinguishable ashes.

The poem opens with an invocation: "LEt the bird of lowdest lay, / On the sole *Arabian* tree, / Herald sad and trumpet be : / To whose sound chaste wings obey" (1-4). The poetic voice, also unidentified, may be summoning another, *i.e.*, "Let him do it," or "the phoenix may be its own trumpeter" (Roe 51), *i.e.*, "Let me do it." The sadness of its herald already identifies the tragic genre of the poem, though the identity of this "bird of lowdest lay" has been the subject of a great deal of speculation. Most first-time readers familiar with the myth, of which educated Elizabethans were aware from a wide range of sources, would naturally take this to be a reference to the Phoenix of the poem's title. On discerning later in the poem that the occasion to which the "bird of lowdest lay" is to summon "chaste wings" is the funeral of the already deceased Phoenix, the reader must

go back and reexamine the opening lines of the poem. The bird nevertheless remains unnamed. Among the theories advanced are the nightingale, the peacock, and the phoenix itself (Knight 11), but such theories end in irrecoverable authorial intention. What is certain is that the “sole Arabian tree” (*PT 2*) is the conventional “Phoenix throne” (*Tmp* 1544), but in Shakespeare’s poem the Phoenix can not certainly be placed upon it. By declining to name the “bird of lowdest lay,” the poem’s first line forces a specific misreading, and it is this misreading that thus constitutes its meaning. The discovery of the mistaken Phoenix leads inevitably to a search for the poem’s missing master signifier, and this redefinition of the allegorical theme is disguised under a pose of accidental incompetence.

One of the oldest and most widespread attributes of the mythological Phoenix, as in the Old English adaptation by Lactantius, concerns the beauty of the epideictic song it sings as it gazes upon the circular passage of the sun across the sky above its head. The anonymous translator describes the beauty of this song in terms reminiscent of the negative theology of *Denis hid Divinity*.

The harmony of the song is sweeter and more beautiful than all the musical instruments and more delightsome than every melody. Not trumpets, nor horns, nor the sound of the harp, nor the voice of any man on earth, nor the strain of the organ’s melody, nor the wings of the swan, nor any of the joys, which the Lord created for men’s mirth in this mournful world may match that effusion. (Bradley 288-289)

Earlier in the poem, the earthly paradise of the Phoenix is described in similarly negative terms.

There in that land is no loathsome foe, not weeping nor anguish, no sign of woe, not senility nor disease nor painful death nor losing of life, no onset of the abhorrent, neither sin or strife nor wounding anguish, neither poverty's struggle nor want of wealth, not sorrow nor sleep nor grievous illness, not wintry squalls nor the flurry of tempests and stormy weather beneath the heavens, nor does harsh frost oppress anyone with its freezing icicles. Neither hail nor rime is there, falling to the earth, nor wind-blown cloud (287)

The Cloud author in his application of Neoplatonic metaphysics to Christian mysticism in *Denis hid Divinity* similarly says of God:

... he is no number, nor order, nor greatness, nor littleness, nor equality, nor likeness, nor unlikeness; nor he standeth, nor he moveth, nor he holdeth no silence, nor he speaketh ... he hath no virtue, nor he is virtue, nor time, nor there is any understandable touching of him, nor his is unity, nor Godhead or goodness; nor he is spirit, as we understand spirit; nor sonhood, nor fatherhood, nor any other thing known by us or by any that be; nor he is anything of not-being things, nor anything of being things... (qtd. in McCann 144)

The Phoenix and the Turtle plays off of the derivation of negative theology from Neoplatonism, but its negativity in the emptiness of the Arabian tree, in the banishment of the harbinger of doom, and in its denial of posterity to the Phoenix ironically deconstructs both traditions along with the Tudor myth to which they are adapted both in *Loves Martyr* and in Shakespeare's tetralogy cycle. Shakespeare's Phoenix, like the divine essence of the Cloud author, is not "anything of being things." The poem's ironic

negative theology thus leaves only absence where the ineffable ideal is supposed to be, and it conveys only resignation and despair in place of Neoplatonic transcendence.

Negative theology attempts to express the inexpressible nature of God, as Pseudo-Dionysius says, as one would carve a statue from wood. Rather than mold it as clay, one must “void away all the outward parts of that wood, being about and hindering the sight of that same image” (qtd. in McCann 140). Negative theology is deconstructionist insofar as meaning is situated not in the signifier itself, but in “différance” from its negative signifiers. The ineffable can be spoken only by gainsaying all of the things that it is not. The denial of the prophecy of doom in *The Phoenix and the Turtle* apparently intended in the voiding away of the shriek owl nevertheless loudly defeats its pretended purpose, decentering the meaning by making what Derrida would call the supplement into the signifier, one of the deconstructionist gestures we have seen repeatedly in the texts analyzed in this dissertation. “Inadvertently” antithetical to its comic aspiration, in Shakespeare’s *Phoenix and the Turtle* the beautiful song of the new Phoenix is tragically absent, while the shriek of the harbinger of doom is tragically present.

The Neoplatonism also adopted by Pseudo-Dionysius places transcendent union with the godhead on a plane above reason and consequently above the material world. Like the metaphysical ideal of Neoplatonism, the posterity denied to Shakespeare’s Phoenix and Turtle would signify an ideal commonwealth, but like More’s Utopia, it is a “good place” that also is “no place” in the real world, and like Sebastian and Antonio’s Machiavellian mockery of Gonzalo’s golden age kingdom in *The Tempest*, Shakespeare’s poem rejects the *realpolitikal* impossibility even as a guiding ideal. The “sigh” that concludes *The Phoenix and the Turtle* finally surrenders the idealistic political aspirations

informing Shakespeare's Elizabethan work to heaven, for, as Richard III ironically says of the pious Henry VI, they are "fitter for that place then earth" (*R3* 291). The context of Shakespeare's poem leads us inevitably to expect an expression of the presence of a new Phoenix. Its rewriting of its Neoplatonic terms instead produces a multifaceted expression of absence, and its deconstruction of its own master signifier rebounds on the metaphysical pretensions from which it derives.

Like Pseudo-Dionysius, for example, the translator of Lactantius can describe the beauty of the Phoenix's song only in negative terms. But this ideal music is missing from Shakespeare's poem in a different way. The bird we necessarily misread as the Phoenix is attributed in the first line with the "lowdest lay." Volume, however, is virtually never equated with beauty. "the bird of lowdest lay, / On the sole *Arabian* tree," is an impostor, a substitute for the true "New Phoenix" who, if all were right with the world, would be doing the funeral honors, as prescribed by the ancient myth. This implicit contrast of volume with beauty prologues the poem with the dialectic of real vs. ideal characterizing the conclusion of the history tetralogies that it epilogues.

Contrary to evaluations of the poem as incompetent, it should be remembered that in addition to *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, Shakespeare probably had completed the sonnet cycle, and was working on the blank verse of *Hamlet*. Dissonances in this late piece of non-dramatic verse might be attributed to indifference but not incompetence. The Phoenix traditionally is a symbol of epochal transition. The period of the writing of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* was the end of decade, century, monarch, dynasty, and of several of Shakespeare's associates, and, as Shapiro's *Year in the Life* shows, it was a critical period for Shakespeare. Indifference, therefore, does not seem

likely either. The opening stanzas of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* coerce the misidentification of “the bird of lowdest lay” as the beautiful and exalted ideal, when it is only a vulgar substitute, and then frustrates the inevitable attempt to identify the bird in the tree, as well as to locate the Phoenix elsewhere in the poem. The Phoenix and Turtle are already dead and fled in Shakespeare’s poem and only ashes appear in their place. It seems unlikely that the author of *A Lover’s Complaint*, with its multiple overlapping voices, was unaware of the invisibility of the protagonist of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* or that he was indifferent about the way he used a symbol so significant in his culture and in his own plays.

As Grosart says, “Internal evidence, from Love’s Martyr, as to Elizabeth having been meant by the ‘Phoenix’ is equally established by external” evidence (xxiv), as in Shakespeare’s own reference a decade later to the young queen as a “maiden phoenix” in *Henry VIII* (3411), as well as the circulation of the “Phoenix Jewel,” “a gold and enamel medallion showing a profile of the Queen on one side and a phoenix in flames on the other” (Matchett 23). The OED (*s.v.* phoenix) additionally cites a dedication from 1603 to “Her late sacred Majestie ... the rare Phoenix of her sex, who now resteth in glorie,” as well as Philip Stubbes who calls Elizabeth “vertuous Ladie and Phenix Queene.” Susan Frye quotes the epideictic praise of Elizabeth, in whom “virtues perfect image [is] cast,” by Walter Raleigh in the collaborative *Phoenix Nest*, a collection of poems dedicated to the Phoenix Sidney by various noblemen published in 1593. She argues that “between 1593 and 1601, Elizabeth [herself] politicized her position as intercessor between God and her subjects (107), using elements of “Petrarchism, Neoplatonism, and medieval political theology” (112).

Loves Martyr clearly responds to the terminology of its aristocratic prototype in *The Phoenix Nest*, and Elizabeth's own terms are echoed in Shakespeare's poem. She describes her subjects' love for her in negative terms as "of such kind as has never been known or heard of in the memory of man. Love of this nature is not possessed by parents; it happens not among friends, no, not even among lovers" (S. Frye 112). The Neoplatonic "ladder of love" implicitly is employed here, as it had been by Spenser, to conflate the love between monarch and subject with the Plotinian concept of transcendental union with the One. Like the hierarchy of Mary, Santa Lucia, and Beatrice in Dante's poem, Spenser addresses his sonnet cycle to "*Ye three Elizabeths.*" "The first my being to me gaue by kind, / from mothers womb deriu'd by dew descent, / the second is my souereigne Queene most kind, / that honour and large riches to me lent. / The third my loue, my liues last ornament" (*Amoretti* 74). The Elizabethan ideological tradition inherited by the *vatum chorus* of *Loves Martyr* places the queen in a hierarchy of hypostases between God and subjects, modeled after the Neoplatonic trinitarian hierarchy of Reason, Love, and the One, and the middle third of Shakespeare's poem is a versification of a scholastic discussion of this Neoplatonic ideal.

The problematic elements of the poem nevertheless render a tragic verdict upon this ideal which is contemporary with the end of Neoplatonism as a serious philosophy in Europe (apart from its brief renaissance among the Cambridge Platonists of the Restoration), as well as of the Tudor myth that had co-opted it. Again, this renunciation is contemporary with the end of tragicomic historiography in Shakespeare's drama, and as I have argued, the end of the coextension of religious ritual and aesthetic drama together with their homoeopathic regenerative social functions, which had been highly prominent

in the British Isles but, as Frazer shows, is virtually universal to premodern (and unmodernized) societies. The division of the functions of public performance between religion and aesthetic drama in Early Modern England, as in Classical Greece, coincided with the emergence of a collective sense of teleological historicity, while public seasonal ritual, with its eternally circular temporality, increasingly was suppressed. Performance of the death and resurrection of the god of fertility enact “a fundamental dogma of the pre-Christian religion of Europe, believed in and practised as ardently as among the Africans of to-day” (M. Murray 166), and it is exemplified both in the metanarrative of Shakespeare’s tetralogy cycle and in the plot of *Loves Martyr*.

While a naïve reading of Shakespeare’s *Phoenix and the Turtle* might have been written by a panegyrist like Raleigh, its sentimental reading repeatedly expresses the unattainability of Elizabeth’s Neoplatonic ideal in material existence. As such, the poem denies its own initial comic expectations, and concludes by confirming the prophecy of doom it begins by interdicting. It similarly is this reconciliation between mythopoetic ideal and politico-historical realism that is made problematic in *Henry V*, and while naïve and sentimental readings subsist side by side throughout, *Henry V* remains ambiguous in most interpretations while *The Phoenix and the Turtle* progresses from absolute naïveté to a “Tragique Scene” (52) of absolute sentimentalism. Although Reason struggles throughout the anthem to reconcile itself to the unity of Love and Constancy, it finds that these two elements cannot exist as a single entity in material reality, but, as Plotinian metaphysics admits, such unity is only possible on the higher hypostasis of Intellect to which there is no material access.

The poem's clearest allusion to Neoplatonism is made in two verses of the anthem (24-31). For J. V. Cunningham the terminology of these verses' Neoplatonism "is obviously scholastic, and its context is the doctrine of the Trinity" (87). He cites Thomas Aquinas who says that, "we can ... use the term distinction." However, "to avoid taking away the simplicity of the divine essence we must avoid the terms separation and division, which apply to parts of a whole ..." (qtd. in Cunningham 87). The scholastic terminology employed in the anthem of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (Rollins 326 n27), including Aquinas' "distincts" (27), "remote" (for separation) (29), "division" (42), and "simple" (44), originally had been appropriated from the Neoplatonists by the church fathers in order to lend the doctrine of the Trinity greater authority against the pagans. While appearing to follow a time-worn formula, however, each stanza of the poem allow for strikingly ambiguous readings. Returning to the second stanza, for example, we read the lines that this dissertation equates with the meaning of the poem. "But thou shrieking harbinger, / Foule precurrer of the fiend, / Augour of the feuers end, / To this troupe come thou not neere" (5-9). That the identity of this "shrieking harbinger" is an owl has been asserted many times by critics. As Ronald Bates points out, it is one of the two creatures of unidentified species in the poem, and like the "bird of loudest lay," its invisibility elicits a variety of irresolvable theories. By tracing the use of terminology throughout Shakespeare's plays and their association with birds, Bates ends up placing a rooster anomalously on the tree⁵⁰ and identifying the shrieking bird, as does most ornithological criticism, as the screech owl.

50 Grimm does refer to "... a heathen custom of tying cocks to the tops of holy trees ..." (671).

The poem's reticence forces at least an attempt at this puzzle, and I would only point out that, as opposed to the "screech owl," the bird known as the "shriek owl" is not an owl but a martin, a bird which Banquo refers to as a "Temple-haunting" "Guest of Summer" (*Macbeth* 437-438).⁵¹ Webster's says that "The common European swift ... nests in church steeples and under the tiles of roofs, and is noted for its rapid flight and shrill screams. It is called also black martin ... devil bird, swingdevil, screech martin, and shriek owl" (1913 *s.v.* swift). As epilogue to the hot summer of *Henry V*, the poem's shriek of doom signals the tragic peripeteia in Shakespeare's long metanarrative from comical-historical to tragical dramatic genre. Its identification with an owl or a martin, however, as far as I can see, is a matter of taste. Its anonymity is an example of the pose of inadvertency, similar to the confusion over the bird in the first stanza, by which Shakespeare customarily draws the reader's attention to narrative problematics. Owl or martin (or what you will) the sound it makes is cacophonous and an evil omen, and if the bird itself is invisible or absent from the poem, its shriek is emphatically present.⁵² It may seem a candidate for the "lowdest lay" of the first line of the previous stanza, and it introduces the voice of ironic antithesis into the poem. The "fever's end" it augurs is not the cooling of restoration to health, as in the customary resurrection of the phoenix out of the fire, but the coldness of death. This admitted double meaning hints at the implicit double meaning throughout the poem culminating in the confusion of Neoplatonic

51 Assuming with most editors "Barlet" to be a misprint for "martlet," another name for a martin.

52 In favor of the usual theory, I would add that the stage of the medieval morality characteristic of the drama current during Shakespeare's youth sometimes represented "hell mouth" as a gaping owl.

transcendental unity with the mixed ashes of the “dead birds” (67). The life-cycle of the phoenix through many deaths and rebirths was equated from at least the time of Hesiod with the Great Year (Van den Broek 399), a period varying from culture to culture, but comprising many centuries and often equated with the periodicity of human history. Admission of the shrieking bird to the funeral of the Phoenix would signal an apocalyptic fever’s end, a termination of the cycles of epochal rebirth, rather than a time of renewal as unambiguously is implied in the rest of *Loves Martyr*.

Shakespeare seems to forbid the attendance of the shriek owl, but in the deterring of a messenger, he does not deny the truth of the message. As with the other anonymous bird of the poem, the interdiction of the shrieking bird may allegorize the poet’s situation. He has been invited to contribute his work to the collection, but he has been forbidden to augur the impending doom he would attribute to the theme if the “times” were “freer.” He therefore introduces the shriek of doom, whose augury only can be the denial of the promised new phoenix, informs us of the censorship of this message, and proceeds to deconstruct the comic employment of the narrative. The poem itself thereby becomes the augury it pretends to censor. As remarked in chapter 3, this tactic of hiding counter-discourse under a pose of inadvertancy or incompetence is foreshadowed in Fluellen’s pidgin English which introduces the idea of “Alexander the pig” into the *apotheosis* of Henry V.

The stanza following the injunction to the harbinger of doom to “come ... not neere” lends itself to a similar ironic double reading. “From this Session interdict / Euey foule of tyrant wing, / Saue the Eagle feathered King, / Keepe the obsequie so strict” (9-12). If Shakespeare’s Phoenix is taken to imply the succession of Elizabeth by James, as

in the phoenix imagery of *Henry VIII*, the poem seems consistent with Chester's epideictic intention towards the succession. If read as sarcasm, as in the "blessed time" cited by Shapiro, as "purposely ambiguous, leaving it up to the reader to decide whether the time before or after 1599 was blessed," however, it becomes a declaration of loss and regret rather than of optimism and of a Kyd-like tragic verdict upon a previously comical history. The interdiction of minor birds of prey while permitting the biggest predator of them all, ostensibly to have his way with the "chaste" birds, accordingly is a further condemnation of Elizabeth's resolution of the succession problem that had subsisted in England for the previous fifty years. As remarked in chapter 4 regarding Portia's nationalist bigotry, Scotland for most of the Reformation had been another Catholic ally of Rome against the Tudor Protestants. After the defeat of the Spanish Catholics, when Shakespeare began his dramatic study of the history of the monarchy, Elizabeth had been exalted as a wise protector of her people, whom she had saved from tyranny. If all this had been accomplished only to hand over the nation's care to an absolutist Scottish monarch, the "so strict" obsequy may be read as "only so strict," *i.e.*, not quite sufficiently.

After thus addressing the monarch, the next stanza turns to the Church. "Let the Priest in Surples white, / That defunctiue Musicke can, / Be the death-deuining Swan, / Lest the *Requiem* lacke his right" (13-16). Because the *Physiologus* tradition claimed that the swan, after a lifetime of silence, sang a beautiful melody as it was dying, this stanza has been read by almost all critics according to the appropriateness of this bird to funerals of fowls. The poetic syntax, however, contradicts the normal emphasis on word order in English. In an inflected language like Latin, "let the swan be our priest" can be

interchangeable with “let the priest be our swan,” whereas in English they tend toward different denotations. This line first attracted Bates to study the poem because it seemed “for some reason, a more weighted idea than the poem alone demands. The fact that the structural order in stanza four (let priest be swan) is the reverse of the other stanzas (e.g. let bird be herald) seems to draw attention to this” (26). Bates therefore agrees that such poetic dissonances are not attributable to incompetence. The syntactical reversal of swan and priest is another example of the pose of inadvertent ambiguity as a medium of interdicted meaning. If the tragic emplotment and tone of despair of the poem respond to the death of the Tudor revolution, the English priest in his white surplice is not a singer of hymns to a golden age in the New Jerusalem, but a “death-deuining” chanter of the Church of England’s swan song. As observed in chapter 4 the threat of this outcome is foreshadowed and incompletely contained in the problem comedy of *The Merchant of Venice*.

After the exclusion of the “shrieking harbinger,” and the summoning of representatives of Church and State, “the bird of lowdest lay” turns from a white bird to a black bird, reiterating the poem’s movement from comic to tragic emplotment. “And thou treble dated Crow, / That thy sable gender mak’st. / With the breath thou giu’st and tak’st, / Mongst our mourners shalt thou go” (17-20). This bird too has received a great deal of attention in terms of its appropriateness to the Phoenix’s funeral. The traditional notion that the crow conceives its young with its breath, associates it with the asexually reproductive Phoenix. “Neither (as is thought) doth the raven conceive by conjunction of male and female, but rather by a kinde of billing at the mouth” (Swan in Rollins 326). Shakespeare’s crow is shown in Rollins’ *Variorum* here and elsewhere to be confused

with legends attached to ravens. Crow or raven, it is likely that sophisticated Elizabethans knew the story was myth and not zoology. The skepticism expressed by Sebastian and Antonio in *The Tempest* with regard to the actual existence of phoenixes and unicorns indicates that disbelief in *Physiologus* traditions like the asexual crow was not unheard of, perhaps even emblematic of a certain type of cynical realism associated with the “Machiavellian” politics antithetical to Gonzalo’s idealism they also exemplify. After witnessing “seuerall strange shapes, bringing in a Banket” who “dance about it” at the invisible Prospero’s command (1535-1536), Sebastian says he now will believe “that there are Vnicornes: that in *Arabia* / There is one Tree, the Phoenix throne, one Phoenix / At this houre reigning there.” To which Antonio replies “Ile beleue both” (1543-1547). In the poem as in the play, the resolution to believe what is utterly absurd and impossible is to refute the object of belief as a thing utterly absurd and impossible.

Echoing the disbelief of Shakespeare’s Sebastian and Antonio in the *Tempest* of 1611, Thomas Browne refers in *Hydriotaphia* (“Urn Burial”) 1658 to those “that are so thick skinned as still to credit the story of the phoenix” (9). Resolution of the ambiguity of Shakespeare’s crow myth between a naïve reading as a conventional poetic conceit, and a sentimental reading as ironic scepticism depends on tone of poetic voice, but the capacity of every stanza to support such dialectically opposed meanings is conspicuous. A tone of sarcasm makes the crow a symbol, not of the miracle of asexual reproduction in nature, but of its patent impossibility.⁵³ The period in the original spelling at the end of line 18 additionally reinforces this ironic reading by referring the breath given and taken to the crow’s mourning rather than its conception. According to the punctuation, the last

53 There are rare exceptions, such as trout which sometimes change sex in order to breed.

two lines are a sentence reading “With the breath thou giu’st and tak’st, / Mongst our mourners shalt thou go,” *i.e.*, “along with us, you shall mourn with every breath you take.” The crow thus introduces a paradox through the disparity between its mythological ideal, as a bird that need not have sexual intercourse to procreate (despite its treble-dated age), and harsh reality, which is that neither crows, nor even the most exalted beings like phoenixes or monarchs can reproduce without physical conjugation or youth. It is hard to imagine a more appropriate example of this harsh reality than Elizabeth, who was outspokenly criticized for sabotaging her likeliest means to producing an heir. Consistent with Grosart’s theory, for example, Elizabeth was criticized for the banishment of the Essex circle from court. It was his house arrest which created the “court of exiles” that led to the disastrous rebellion. Regardless of Grosart’s theory of a plan for Essex, who already had some claim to family relations, to continue the Tudor dynasty, in 1601 Elizabeth, and through her, the Tudor imperial myth, clearly was not going to produce posterity by any means, natural or magical. The naïve invitation to go in procession “mongst our mourners” becomes a curse of regret proclaimed upon the barren queen who shall be numbered among the rueful of her own folly. Calling the monarch a “treble-dated crow” calls for the most profound disguising. The tension established between the idealized mythology with its comic *dénouement* embodied in the magical procreation of the crow and the tragic realism of barrenness and regret, like the loudness of the bird in the tree, thus continues the poem’s deconstruction of Neoplatonic idealism.

The catalogue of birds is followed by the anthem expounding the poem’s Neoplatonism, but its aspiration to idealism is sabotaged. The anthem begins with the lines which first signal the mistaken identification of the Phoenix in the first line. “Here

the Antheme doth commence, / Loue and Constance is dead, / *Phoenix and the Turtle* fled, / In a mutuell flame from hence” (20-23), leading to a necessary rereading of the previous stanzas which, as we have seen, is irresolvably problematic. The announcement of poetic trope, unique for Shakespeare, in the first line of the stanza introduces a mechanistic tone, and the unexpected proclamation of apocalyptic tragedy in the following line (though the first-time reader likely still expects the poem to end conventionally in tragicomedy) is jarring. Such dissonances in the poem indicate to some critics that Shakespeare fulfilled this commission reluctantly or indifferently and therefore badly. Anthea Hume gives compelling evidence that “in celebrating James as the New Phoenix, *Loves Martyr* gave support to the policy for which Cecil was working: hence [Chester’s] poem may have been in part a bid for his favour or his continuing favour” (64). Because Shakespeare agreed to contribute to the collection, Hume assumes that he joined in the ideological support of Cecil. John Roe, however, finds evidence that “Jonson, Marston, and Chapman were all collaborating closely with each other. But Shakespeare was on a different plane” (46). It is noteworthy that the former all contributed to the “war of the theaters” in which it is hard to find traces of Shakespeare’s involvement, and I would add moreover that they suffered significant state sanctions, such as jail and the burning of their papers, which Shakespeare seems to have eluded. Roe observes that Shakespeare was “known by now as the creator of Falstaff, of the second tetralogy, of *Twelfth Night* ... and possibly ... *Hamlet*” and contends that “Chester’s patron would have been glad to have Shakespeare in the volume on the latter’s own terms” (45), even terms of outright political antipathy. The apparent flaws in the poem, according to this view, display Shakespeare’s purely mercenary interest in the

theme. Roe thus acknowledges the discrepancy between the poetic quality of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* and Shakespeare's other poetic works, as well as its contrast with the other *Loves Martyr* poems, but he attributes its flaws to indifference. I rather read the perfunctory tone as itself thematically motivated. Once again, the appearance of inadvertancy serves to protect the poet from the charge of seditious intention, as his appearance of remaining aloof "on a different plane" protects his collaborators.

The abrupt proclamation that "Love and constancy is dead" is not a statement of perpetual renewal, but of irrecoverable expiration of the highest poetic ideals. It is a statement of realism and resignation, and it explicates the shriek of doom of the banished harbinger into its only possible meaning. In the next stanza, Shakespeare reveals his partisanship in the tragic affair. "So betweene them Loue did shine, / That the *Turtle* saw his right, / Flaming in the *Phoenix* sight; / Either was the others mine" (32-35). If anyone according to an ironic reading of the poem has been betrayed, it is the loyal Turtle whose right depends upon the Phoenix in a way that is not made reciprocal. Accepting Elizabeth as the Phoenix would be consistent with such an inequality. The word "mine" has been interpreted merely as the literal first person possessive or as the figurative gold mine in which each found the other's spiritual treasures, "a rich source of wealth" (in Rollins 327 n36). The poem's growing ambiguity between ideal spiritual myth and the material reality nevertheless leads the poet to increasingly materialistic metaphors. The ideals of courtly love evoked in this terminology thus begin to decay towards the naked materialistic concerns of mining rights.

While the poem describes this process pessimistically in the context of decay, Marx identifies such decay optimistically as a necessary step in "the era of primitive

accumulation” towards the revolution of the proletariat. While Shakespeare’s poem makes this historical process the inevitable consequence of the expiration of the medieval aristocratic ideals encoded in the Tudor myth, Marx and Engels attribute it to the rise of the bourgeoisie, who:

... wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal rites that bound man to his “natural superiors,” and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment.” It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless infeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. (*Manifesto* 57)

The resolution of feudal, idyllic relations and heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor into callous materialism is evoked in the steady resolution of naïve epideixis into sentimental irony in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. As it is for Marx, this metamorphosis according to Shakespeare’s poetic world view is a “precurrer of the fiend” (6) that will destroy the succeeding social order and lead to a return to civil conflict. Such transvaluation of sacred ideals is historico-political rather than personal, but from Shakespeare’s Early Modern perspective the resolution of the ensuing conflict into world socialism is not yet visible. *The Phoenix and the Turtle* therefore contradicts the tragicomic premises of its narrative context by interrupting its expected circular movement from funeral and resurrection to sacred marriage, concluding abruptly in its mourning ritual.

In the next stanza “Propertie was thus appalled, / That the selfe was not the same: / Single Natures double name, / Neither two nor one was called” (36-39). The naïve reading again makes a conventional poetic play on the terminology of Platonic love to describe a romantic relationship. C. S. Lewis, however, refers to such terminology when removed from his reading of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* as a “metaphysical” poem, as “the stalest claptrap” (509), and apparent incompetence once again serves to construct and conceal the poem’s bitterly ironic sentimental reading. While the allusion of Shakespeare’s “Propertie” to scholastic metaphysics often has been remarked, it reinforces the ambiguity of the word “mine” that directly precedes it. Property as a metaphysical quality of being in scholastic thought and in the naïve sense of this poem is more or less synonymous with its “single nature.” *The Phoenix and the Turtle* proclaims that an entity of a single property should by reason bear a single name. In the era of the birth of capitalism, however, the term “property” begins to have a strong connotation of ownership, especially of land, such as in an example as far back as 1489: “Tyll it myth be undyrstond wedyr the propyrte ware in the Kyng or in my lord” (*OED s.v. property*). “appall” also has variant definitions. The *OED* gives “To cause to fade or cease to flourish” from the root, “to pale.” The conventional Neoplatonic reading of this verse that the scholastic quality of *proprietas* stands in awe that what has two names can be unified into a single nature bends toward materialistic terms of flourishing mines and property rights in their modern connotation. This engagement with modern materialism is explicit in the reference on the title page of *Loves Martyr* to “new compositions of seuerall moderne Writers” who explicitly deny any mercenary motive.

In this context, the trinitarian, Neoplatonic metaphysics, with its scholastic terminology of the two stanzas cited by Cunningham seem to confirm the Neoplatonic terms employed by Elizabeth to idealize her political sovereignty, but they support an ironic sentimental reading in the mode of Sebastian's vow to believe in absurdities. "So they loued as loue in twaine, / Had the essence but in one, / Two distincts, Diuision none, / Number there in loue was slane" (24-27). Naïvely, the Phoenix and Turtle have been joined in a perfect love as a perfect union. Sentimentally, they foolishly thought their continued separation could produce any union at all. "Hearts remote, yet not asunder; / Distance and no space was seene, / Twixt this *Turtle* and his *Queene*; / But in them it were a wonder" (28-31).⁵⁴ While this indescribable and utterly unique love recalls Elizabeth's "of such kind as has never been known or heard of in the memory of man," underlying these stanzas is a continuation of the irony of the crow's asexuality. In order to remain free from accusation of treason either toward Elizabeth for supporting rebellion, or toward James for opposing his succession, Shakespeare gives a plausible allegorical discourse on the truth of Platonic Love, but, it is a rational paradox that that which is twain can have a single essence, and it is therefore, except in the terms of Neoplatonism or metaphysical poetry, impossible.

54 The rhyme words "twaine," "one," "none," "slane" curiously are echoed in lines 45-48 as "twain," "one," "none," "remain." I frankly am uncertain of the meaning of this obviously meaningful coincidence. In keeping with my thesis, I would suppose the archetypal comic ending, "none slain," to balance the archetypal tragic ending, "none remain," and that this reflects the comic and tragic halves of Shakespeare's Elizabethan metanarrative described in this dissertation. If so, as in the movement from white swan to black crow, Shakespeare reverses the tragicomic order of the tetralogy cycle identifying the poem as its comitragic epilogue. These stanzas also are inexplicably confused in the version published in *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

According to Grosart, furthermore, “it seems manifest that ... somehow or other Chester had intimate, almost confidential, knowledge of Elizabeth’s feeling for Essex,” and that “in her unlifted melancholy over the death of her favorite, the might-have-been came back upon her with sovran potency and accusation” (xlvi). The exile of Essex to the Irish campaign and later to house arrest then would be to blame for preventing “the might-have-been.” If read ironically, the paradoxes of “Two distincts, Diuision none,” “Hearts remote, yet not asunder” and “Distance and no space was seene,” rather than the astounding miracles they pretend, merely reiterate their impossibility in the real world. The poem’s final tragedy thus is defined as the inevitable consequence of Elizabeth’s refusal to compromise upon impossible ideals. The poet observes ironically that it would be “a wonder” if any other couple thought to produce posterity under conditions of continual physical separation.

After developing through the anthem the paradox of unity in division, Shakespeare introduces the character of Reason which is unable to resolve the contradictions with which it is confronted.

Reason in itselue confounded,
 Saw Diuision grow together,
 To themselues yet either neither,
 Simple were so well compounded.
 That it cried, how true a twaine,
 Seemeth this concordant one,
 Loue hath Reason, Reason none,
 If what parts, can so remaine. (40-47)

In its naïve conventional sense, the principle of Reason in these stanzas performs its function in the evolution of individual human *ratio* according to Plotinus. In the ascent toward union with the hypostasis of the One, Plotinus' reason brings the soul to the limit of understanding through rational arguments. Reason is the principle in Neoplatonic and scholastic thought of reduction of the universal into the specific, a process of division.⁵⁵ Plotinian *ratio* is confounded by what A. H. Armstrong describes, like Shakespeare's perfectly united birds, as the "absolute absence of limitation and determination seen primarily as the absence of duality, making analytic description impossible" (237).

In its Neoplatonic context, the exclamation of surrender of the Reason is the necessary step which impels it to a higher form of understanding outside of Plato's cave where rational thought is transcended. As Plotinus' *Enneads* describes the Neoplatonic visionary who has reached the limit of reason, "up to this stage, he thinks. But carried out by the wave, as it were, of intellect itself, lifted up high by it as it swells, so to speak, he suddenly saw, not seeing how, but the sight, filling the eyes with light, does not make him see another through itself, but the light itself was the sight seen." (qtd. in O'Meara 103). This experience is not a simple process of philosophic understanding as Plato's published dialogues imply, but a higher state which Plotinus attributed to Plato, which he claimed to have experienced, and which he promised to his adherents. It was this promise of transcendent union with the One that attracted early Christian theologians like Pseudo-Dionysius in his *Mystical Theology*, who uses Plotinian concepts in an exegesis of Old Testament allegory.

⁵⁵ We still find this sense for example in modern references to the rationalization of a corporation.

Then [Moses, ascending Mt. Sinai,] abandons the seen things themselves and also those who see [them], and enters into the truly mystical darkness of unknowing. There, belonging entirely to what is above all and to nothing [else], whether himself or another, he shuts out all cognitive apprehensions and emerges in the altogether intangible and invisible. By the inactivity of all knowledge, he is united in his better part with the entirely unknown. And by knowing nothing, he knows superintellectually. (78-87)⁵⁶

Although Shakespeare's poem gives every appearance of participating in the familiar Neoplatonic progression to a higher state of consciousness, his Reason offers no transcendent superintellectual nirvana. Knowing nothing, as Plotinus' enlightened philosopher, Shakespeare's Reason does not know "superintellectually," but merely knows nothing, and offers only a *threnos*, a form of poetry derived from the hymn of mourning at funerals and rituals of dying gods. "Whereupon it made this *Threne*, / To the *Phoenix* and the *Doue*, / Co-supremes and starres of Loue, / As *Chorus* to their Tragique Scene" (49-52). Here the opposition between exalted ideals again is resolved into realism and an explicit tragic dramatic emplotment. Reason reaching the limit of its understanding, trapped in the paradox of an impossible unity, thinks the irrational must grow rational since Reason cannot reconcile such impossibilities.

Rather than any transcendent union with the One, however, Reason can offer only an ejaculation of tragic dramatic poetry. Reason's exclamation implies a conventional Neoplatonic reading as a statement of disbelief at the unity of what seems rationally

56 This work was translated into Middle English as the *Cloud of Unknowing* along with the translator's *Denis hid Divinity* expounding the theme of negative theology more concisely.

separate, namely the separate elements of intelligible being that are unified in the One. As the earlier line “let the priest be our swan” pretends to say what it does not, Reason’s exclamation “how true a twaine, / seemeth this concordant one” is different from “how true a one seemeth this concordant twaine.” Shakespeare’s Reason is overcome by the division between the two, not their unity toward which the Neoplatonic ladder of love conventionally ascends, and so implies that what is unified by Neoplatonic ideal continues truly twain in material reality. I further would suggest that Shakespeare’s Reason seems dismayed also by a unification of what should remain divided. It is confounded both by the impossibility of the ideal unity and the unnaturalness of the real unity. “This concordant one” might then seditiously refer to the Stuart dynasty which seems to the poet’s reason truly a twain with England. While “Reason in itself confounded,” is unable to achieve an impossible Neoplatonic ideal, what does “grow together” fundamentally is incompatible, as they “to themselves yet [are] either neither,” and while “Simple,” (*i.e.*, unified), by implication seem not “so well compounded.” This prospect painful to the poet and contradictory to Reason elicits a cry not of astonishment but of anguish, to be followed by its composition of the final “Tragique” *Threnos*.

The poem therefore no longer is the exaltation of the glorious tragical-comical-historical destiny of an ideal English commonwealth, but, contrary to the disclaimer of the *vatum chorus* regarding their verses that “*No Mercenarie hope did bring them forth*,” Shakespeare’s *Phoenix and the Turtle* ironically proclaims itself the simple mercenary venture critics have mistaken it for, merely dictated by “callous cash payment.” Consistent with a Marxist assessment of the bourgeois revolution in England, the poet mechanistically delivers *item*: one induction, one anthem, and one threnos, and we

assume he is being remunerated. In the *threnes* which closes the poem the trochaic stanzas are abandoned for a series of triplets which create a contrast analogous to the frequent movement from prose to verse and from blank verse to rhyming couplets in Shakespeare's plays. The five stanzas of the *Threnos* which close the poem acknowledge the end of the exalted ideals of human history embodied in the Tudor myth and confirm the failure to achieve renewal in a "New Phoenix." Reason enjoins the reader to share in his lamentation of what has been lost, and to make the best of what remains on earth. The *threnos* begins by seeming to celebrate its exalted ideal, but abruptly descends from comic to tragic employment.

BEautie, Truth, and Raritie,
 Grace in all simplicitie,
 Here enclosde, in cinders lie.
 Death is now the *Phoenix* nest,
 And the *Turtles* loyall brest,
 To eternitie doth rest.
 Leauing no posteritie,
 Twas not their infirmitie,
 It was married Chastitie.
 Truth may seeme, but cannot be,
 Beautie bragge, but tis not she,
 Truth and Beautie buried be.
 To this vrne let those repaire,

That are either true or faire,
 For these dead Birds, sigh a prayer.

William Shake-speare. (52-68)

Bates remarks (30) that the rhyming of three or more consecutive lines is mocked in *As You Like It*. When Rosalind reads: *From the east to westerne Inde, / no iewel is like Rosalinde, / Hir worth being mounted on the winde* (1286-1288), Touchstone calls it “the verie false gallop of Verses” (1311). It is the poem’s culmination in mourning, or at least resignation to loss, though, that most accounts for its enigmatic character and which has prevented virtually any critical consensus regarding its ultimate meaning. The posterity of this allegorical marriage after all is the *raison d’etre* of the entire 200 page work. *Loves Martyr* itself amounts to a denial of the possible failure of this posterity, merely suggested at the outset, and Marston’s poem makes this denial explicitly in its first stanza after the declaration of barrenness in Shakespeare’s *Threnos. The Phoenix and the Turtle* as a self-contained poetic work nevertheless does not end with a magical resurrection and *hieros gamos*, or with a transcendental Plotinian vision of light itself as Marston’s poem evokes. Rather than Marston’s glorious issue (brighter / Then clearest fire, and beyond faith farre whiter / Then Dians tier),” that “now springs from yonder flame” (in Chester 177), Shakespeare’s poem concludes with a sigh over the unregenerative expiration of such metaphysical ideals. The alchemy of historiography, identified in the previous chapters as the function of Shakespeare’s Elizabethan drama, has led to no prelapsarian golden age, but only cold dead ashes. The poetic ideal of the union of perfect beauty with perfect truth, of perfect love with perfect constancy, and on its politico-historical allegorical level, the ideal commonwealth ruled by an idealized monarchy, has departed

from earth. The poetry delivered by Shakespeare's Reason no longer strives for "the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour" of Elizabethan ideological Neoplatonism, but instead drowns the "philistine sentimentalism" of his Elizabethan tragicomic historiography cycle in "the icy water of egotistical calculation" appearing unenthusiastically to fulfil his patrons' commission according to its "exchange value." The unity of Truth and Beauty is consigned to Neoplatonic idealism and the poet settles for the realism of either that which is true or that which is fair which the world still affords.

The circular temporal pattern of death and resurrection of the ancient Phoenix myth takes place in repeated spatial round trips from Arabia to Egypt, and the Phoenix repeatedly sings its most beautiful lay while gazing at the diurnal circular passage of the sun from dawn to dusk. Circularity in the Phoenix myth, as in Shakespeare's drama, denotes resurrection and emplots the narrative as tragicomedy. Shakespeare's unique rewriting of the myth emphatically interrupts the circle the poem's readers must expect, concluding as a downward sloping linear narrative which, as in his drama for the following decade, signifies the failure of posterity and emplots its narrative as tragedy. The poem thus confirms that the contemporary development of Shakespeare's drama from tragicomic circularity to tragic downward linearity constitutes its subliminal structural principles. The ritual drama and festival elements recognized in individual plays in this context are fragments of a unifying metanarrative that helps to illuminate much of the opacity of Shakespeare's meaning and discourse. Questions concerning the anti-Semitism of *The Merchant of Venice* and Hamlet's insanity can not be answered by reference to the play alone any more than *The Phoenix and the Turtle* contains its own

meaning abstracted from *Loves Martyr* or from its chronological place in Shakespeare's corpus.

Epilogue. Structure, Sign, and Problem Play in Shakespeare's Metanarrative.

In the ancient prototypes from Egypt to Rome of Shakespeare's metanarrative Seasonal Pattern, as in the connubium of "Venus" and "Bacchus" described by Plutarch, the god himself was claimed to inhabit the body of the king as he moved through the episodes of the drama from ritual to ritual. God for many ancient (as for modern tribal) peoples therefore was not invisible. In later times the coronation ritual episode of the Seasonal Pattern, like the Eucharist, retained its official status, as is illustrated in Jacques David's clearly theatrical *Coronation of Napoleon*, while its other religious sacraments, such as sacred marriage and ritual warfare, became part of folk culture, as in the Saint George plays, sword dances, and ball games described by Chambers, Bakhtin, Carrasco, and others cited in the previous chapters.⁵⁷ In Hellenic culture, the Seasonal Pattern plot was adapted in stages to aesthetic drama in the winter *Lenaia* and summer *Dionysia*, which, like Shakespeare's tetralogies, divided the performance cycle into tragic and comic halves, and which replaced the king as sun-god with heroes of history from whom the Greek aristocracy claimed descent.

Shakespeare's history plays likewise purport to represent dynastic history, but their metanarrative conformity to the Seasonal Pattern works to co-opt its original political function in cycle dramas: the homoeopathic *apotheosis* of the reigning monarchy. While, as Bacon insists, a Christian king can not be called a god (7.1), location of the English monarch's biography within a metanarrative ritual plot line derived from the mythical biography of a god suggests the virtual deification of the

⁵⁷ David's painting, in which it is Josephine who is crowned by the emperor, might be seen also to include a ritual *hieros gamos*.

monarchical Crown to the “inward assent and belief” of the audience. The circular aspect of the metanarrative equates its implicit *apotheosis* of the English monarchy with principles of completeness, unification, regeneration, fertility, bounty, and order, equations reiterated throughout Shakespeare’s contemporary comedies and for the history cycle itself in the sacred marriage of Henry V that serves as alpha and omega to its metanarrative.

In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (c. 1595-96), following the conclusion of the first tetralogy (c. 1590-93) in *Richard III* and *King John* (c. 1594-96), Shakespeare continued the strategy of containment of tragical history within the terms of regenerative seasonal ritual identified in chapter 2 in *The Taming of the Shrew* (c. 1593-1594). Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (or Beltane festival comedy) next juxtaposes the legendary conquest of Amazonian Hippolyta by Athenian Theseus with the exposed-divine-child motif, an “immemorial” dramatic ritual also pervasive throughout Shakespeare’s late tragicomedies. In the tradition identified by Robertson in chapter 1, the Indian boy of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is representative of the course of the babe-sun-god who, like imperial power, is passed from the eastern mother goddess Titania to the western patriarch Oberon. The domestic relations of the midwinter *Taming of the Shrew* here are reworked in their midsummer aspect, the troublesome baby symbolizing the threat of ungoverned fertility in contrast with the threat of the cease of fertility overcome in the previous comedy. The underworld subplot of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* involves the fairy queen, representative of the female principle in nature at the height of fecundity, made unruly by love madness in contrast to Kate’s rebelling against the winter hardships of Petruchio’s ice palace. As in the Padua of *the Shrew*, Athenian society is restored in *A*

Midsummer Night's Dream to patriarchal order by means of a “fortunate fall” into the misrule of a seasonal festival.

The studies cited in the previous chapters demonstrate that the analogy between the “fortunate fall” of Adam and Eve, of the seasonal festival of misrule, and of the plot structure of dramatic tragicomedy are not merely coincidentally parallel phenomena exploited by Shakespeare as poetic conceit, but rather indicate their common origins in the “Seasonal Pattern” plot of bronze-age ritual drama and its historicizing mythologies of solar divine kings. An abbreviated version of the original “fortunate fall” is given in the Old English adaptation of Lactantius’s *Phoenix* which makes explicit what was perceived to be the myth’s Christian subtext. After Adam and Eve “both partook of the apple against the permission of God and tasted the fruit ... bitter was the misery upon them there and upon their children too after the eating” (Bradley 403-405). After the bitter consequences of their original sin, during which “the worthier existence was hidden from them ... for a great number of years ... the King of glory ... through his advent opened it again to the holy” (417-423). The *Phoenix* poet affirms that “most similar to this, according to what scholars in their pronouncements tell us and writings testify, is the migration of this bird...” (424).

An understanding of the common origins of these “fortunate fall” analogies and their application to the Tudor myth is testified in numerous obscure details of Shakespeare’s Elizabethan dramas, from the choice of character names to the apparent nonsense of the clowns. Such devices reveal more or less obscurely the functional principles of Shakespeare’s tragicomic historiography project, and, as shown in chapter 1, their unifying principles are canonized in the ordering of the plays in the *First Folio*. The

scarcity of explicit discourse upon the ritual drama of divine kingship in Shakespeare's Elizabethan history plays, like the role of divine providence, does not indicate the absence of such designs from their historiographical structure, but rather amounts to a kind of poetic mimesis of what Bacon calls the "History of Providence," "that excellent correspondence which is between God's revealed will and His secret will: which ... for the most part ... is not legible to the natural man; no, nor many times to those that behold it from the Tabernacle" (3.3). As God's providential design is hidden beneath a narrative that appears on a superficial reading to be organized by historical accidents, Shakespeare's providentialism is a dimly visible pattern of correspondence concealed beneath a pose of inadvertency and accident.

Seldom is the ritual genealogy of Shakespeare's historiography more blatantly confessed than in the choice of Theseus as the governing patriarch of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In chapter 2, *The Taming of the Shrew* is read as *Jovian* monarchical rule temporarily turned upside down in a *mimesis* of the Saturnian monarchy accompanying the epagomenal underworld agon of the winter sun-god in ancient religious drama cycles as well as premodern popular *ludi*. The ahistorical (*i.e.*, intercalary) setting of *the Shrew* itself, whether the Padua of Petruchio, the England of Sly or the Globe audience for which it is supposed and into which Sly dissolves, thereby serves as comic underworld to the tragic *Jovian* history of the first tetralogy. The winter epagomenal underworld also is identified in chapter 3 as motivating and informing the Boar's Head subplot of the second tetralogy (*c.* 1595-99). In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the underworld principle is complicated by the interweaving of its six plot lines⁵⁸ so that its solstitial occasion is

defined not as a world-turned-upside-down, but rather as the nexus of normally hierarchically distinct worlds which restores the chaos of excessive summer fecundity to the right rule and good patriarchal order necessary for benevolent fertility. Theseus, like Lucentio, is a bridegroom protagonist who for the duration of misrule is upstaged by his Saturnian underworld complement Oberon as Lucentio is by Petruchio. Although he remains in the subplot, Oberon is a summer version of Petruchio's *rex Saturnalitiis*, the temporary king who lead the revels during the *liberas Decembris* (Chambers, *Mediaeval* 236). Shakespeare's "King of Fairies ... with his traine" (*MND s.d.* 2174) therefore appropriately returns to earth with the spirits in the "wild hunt" held to take place at the "primitive festival" which began the summer (*Mediaeval* 264).

Theseus embodies rational order as a foil to Oberon's fairy wildness, as he had slain the animalistic Minotaur, abandoned the Baccante Ariadne, and conquered the barbarian Hippolyta in classical mythology. As opposed to a king of fairies, the ancient Theseus developed, as described by Jane Harrison, from an *Eniautos* or year-*daimon*. Like the solar Apollo of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, the quasi-historical Theseus repressed the Bacchanalia of primitive Greek religion, yet still "found it impossible to live without Dionysos" (Nietzsche 34). In the prehistory of Greek religion, says Harrison, Theseus "the saga-hero, the quasi-historical personality, took on the life-history, the year-history of a fertility-*daimon*, that *daimon* himself, figured by the youth with the Eiresione, having assimilated another *daimon*, him of the grape—Dionysos"

58 1. the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta; 2. the nocturnal ludi of the Athenian "louters"; 3. the dispute between Titania and Oberon over custody of the divine child; 4. the mock connubium of Bottom and Titania; 5. the rehearsal and performance of the Clowns; 6. the legend of Pyramus and Thisbe; all in all, a display of textual (*i.e.*, weaving) virtuosity with a weaver for one of its mock kings.

(327). This moment of assimilation by Athenian rationality of “the Dionysiac voice” (Nietzsche 35) is captured in Titian’s *Bacchus and Ariadne*, after the latter’s abandonment by Theseus. Titian’s painting is populated with the same “tipsie bachanals” rejected as wedding performers by Shakespeare’s *Theseus* (1845).

The ritual performance of these same episodes from the life of Dionysos (by various names), of his death, resurrection, and sacred marriage, developed by stages into tragedy, satire, and comedy in the various dramatic contests of Greek calendar festivals. Margaret Murray claims that the fairy dances of western Europe derive from a common tradition with the Cretan “dance of Ariadne, performed by youths and maidens” along with “the processional dance of the Bacchantes” (106). According to Murray, “in all serious accounts of the fairies they are recorded as taking part in two important ceremonies in public; one is the procession, the other is the round dance. The dates of these ceremonies are the four great quarterly festivals,” their origin “was undoubtedly religious, and they were in all probability derived from some form of imitative magic” (106). This common derivation is recognized in Shakespeare’s play as Oberon accuses Titania of sowing the discord between Athenian rationality and Bacchic ritual. “Didst thou not leade him through the glimmering night ... And make him ... breake his faith ... With Ariadne, and Antiopa?” he asks her. Titania protests that Oberon always prevented her.

These are the forgeries of iealousie,
 And neuer since the middle Summers spring
 Met vve on hil, in dale, forrest, or mead,
 ...

To dance our ringlets to the whistling Winde,

But vvith thy braules thou hast disturb'd our sport. (452-462)

Like the ring dances and processions of the fairies of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, then, the allusion explicitly to Bacchantes and to Ariadne in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* associate an indigenous ritual tradition with its ancient pre-Christian religious sources. In England, according to Murray:

The ring dance was specially connected with the fairies, who were reported to move in a ring holding hands. ... [T]here is a representation of one ... which dates to the Late Palaeolithic ... period. The dancers are all women ... They are apparently dancing round a small male figure who stands in the middle. A similar dance was performed and represented several thousand years later, with Robin Goodfellow in the centre of the ring and his worshippers forming a moving circle round him. Though the interval of time between the two representations is very great it is obvious that the ceremony is the same in both cases ... (M. Murray 110)

E. K. Chambers, we recall, discerns in such English popular *ludi* as the Mummer's play "dimly enough beneath the accretion of dance pattern, chivalric romance, histrionic and folk-lore borrowings, and sentimental wooing, a primitive nucleus in which skin-clad worshippers, accompanied by a traditional Woman, capered about the slain figure of a man who had been King of the feast" (*Folk* 225). The continuing remnants of such ritual dancing contemporary with Shakespeare's drama is demonstrated in the meeting in 1590 of Barbara Napier with "the covens of North Berwick at the church, 'where she danced endlong the kirkyard, and Gelie Duncan played on a trump, John Fian masked led the

ring, Agnes Sampson and her daughters and all the rest following the said Barbara to the number of seven score persons'" (M. Murray 107).

Theseus' sovereignty over Shakespeare's Midsummer Bacchanalia appeared on stage at the Globe as such ceremonies were becoming provincial oddities in England. The Greek Theseus similarly had become by Classical times "the embodiment of the Athenian people assembled in the theatre to pay homage to Dionysos on his throne" (Cook 710), and it is his peculiar character as heir to Dionysos in presiding over the festival drama that qualifies him to preside over Shakespeare's Midsummer festival between his linear tragic first and circular tragicomic second tetralogies. The development of Theseus from *daimon* presence in a magical rite to hero of a quasi-historical tragedy or comedy serves to associate Shakespeare's Elizabethan drama cycle with the genealogy of dramatic genre from religious ritual. This genealogy is described by Cook as an "easy transition" from rituals of goat sacrifice and feasting, through archaic tragedies of Pelops, who is chopped up, cooked, and eaten, to Apsyrtos murdered and dismembered by Medeia, to the tragicomedy of "Hippolytos dragged to death by his horses but brought to life again by Asklepios, Orestes reported as dead but returning to wreak vengeance on his foes ... and many another who, as old-fashioned folk were apt to complain, had 'nothing to do with Dionysos'" (680).⁵⁹ The ritual element of resurrection by intercession of Asklepios survives in England in the resurrecting doctor of the Christmas Mummers' play as well as the Plough Play, which like the former, includes "the Mock Death and the Revival, and in many places ... the Doctor who is its agent" (Chambers, *Folk* 210). Chambers traces this

59 Although Pelops is resurrected, this happy ending only occurs on the higher plane of Olympos. Some critics attribute a similar approach to tragicomic emplotment in Shakespeare's *Phoenix and the Turtle*.

miraculous physician to his ritual sources, and Shakespeare acknowledges his place in the genealogical development from ritual to drama in the tragicomic *Pericles* by adopting from the *Apollonius* of Gower (8.1166) the doctor Cerimon who ceremonially resurrects Thaisa. Thaisa herself, as an archetypal wandering *mater dolorosa*, is associated with a vast tradition of solar mythology. Like the Indian babe of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and like Cyrus the Great, Aesculapius also is an exposed divine child from the East, as is the original Apollonius of Tyana, and it is the ritual resurrection of Ferdinand by Prospero in the last scene of the first play of the *First Folio* that performs the circular regeneration of its long narrative.

As in the ancient development of dramatic comedy and tragedy from ritual representations of death and resurrection in mystery cults of Dionysos, Theseus in Shakespeare's Elizabethan metanarrative cycle presides not only over the nexus of plot lines within *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but over the nexus of pre-Christian ritual performance, the several dramatic genres, and historiography aligning the Seasonal Pattern of Shakespeare's inverted tetralogy cycle with its ancient and Classical prototypes. Theseus represented in relief on the wall of the Theater of Dionysos does not merely embody the advanced political stage of the Classical drama, but, according to Harrison and Cook, he marks the point of emergence of distinct dramatic genres from the complete tragicomic ritual cycle. The easy transition from sacrificial rituals to dramatic tragedy described by Gilbert Murray and Cook furthermore is shown by Cornford to be equally plain in the transition from Dionysiac ritual, through Pelops, to the regenerative comedies of Aristophanes. In chapter 2 the same goat sacrifice rituals adapted to the

tragos of Medea and Orestes are identified also as the source for the plot structure of the Satyr play as well as for Old Comedy.

Shakespeare unmistakably acknowledges the complex genealogy of his own generic principles by frequent reference to its most recognizable stages, dramatic tropes that were retained both by comedy and tragedy as it developed from the same ultimately tragicomic ritual of death and resurrection of the spirit of fertility. The oldest forms of tragedy often involved, for example, the cooking of a murder victim, as with Pelops, and this tragic preliminary to the ritual of resurrection is represented in Shakespeare's first tragedy by the culinary arts of Titus Andronicus. Not only does the play begin with a textbook king sacrifice, *i.e.*, the slaughter of the most noble of the Goths by the Roman soldiers, demonstrating Shakespeare's knowledge of the history of public ritual sacrifice, but it extends the tradition to its adaptation into dramatic genre. In the last scene, Titus enters "like a Cooke, placing the meat on / the Table" (s.d. 2525-2526). After he ritually sacrifices his daughter before Saturninus, he accuses Chiron and Demetrius in rhyming couplets, which, as in the passage of *Richard II* cited in chapter 3, serve to emphasize the ritual origin of the action:

They rausht her, and cut away her tongue,
 And they, 'twas they, that did her all this wrong.
 Satu. Go fetch them hither to vs presently.
 Tit. Why there they are both, baked in that Pie,
 Whereof their Mother daintily hath fed,
 Eating the flesh that she herselfe hath bred. (2560-2565)

This unappetizing prospect recalls not only Pelops, noted by Cook as one of the oldest protagonists of Greek tragedy, who is cooked by his father and then feasted upon by the Olympians, but also the death of Pentheus in the more developed classical tragedy of Euripides' *Bacchae*,⁶⁰ eaten raw by his mother.

Titus Andronicus thus begins with a naturalistically reported ritual sacrifice and concludes with a reproduction of the early form of translation of ritual sacrifice into the aesthetics of dramatic genre. The tragic cook represented by Titus Andronicus also is one of the comic characters who appears in all of Aristophanes' plays. In the *Knights*, for example, the cook is a "Sausage-Seller" who cooks the king, Demos, into renewed youth. "[G]ather at the theater to chant the Paean" (1317), says the cook, identifying the transitional aspect of the represented sacrifice from religious ritual into stage play. "I have freshened Demos up somewhat on the stove and have turned his ugliness into beauty" (1321). This cook then describes the rejuvenated monarch as a sort of resurrected sun-god rising from the East, a personification of the solar resurrection represented likewise in the Phoenix tradition, the resurrection that Shakespeare's tragic poem denies. As Marston's poem follows Shakespeare's dead birds with "glorious issue (brighter / Then clearest fire, and beyond faith farre whiter / Then Dians tier," Aristophanes' Cook says of the sausaged king: "Lo! here he is coming with his hair held in place with a golden band and in all the glory of his old-world dress; perfumed with myrrh" (1328).

Cornford agrees with Cook that the Aristophanic "Cook who can perform such miraculous operations is manifestly a magician, and his profession coalesces with that of the Doctor in the primitive functions of the medicine-man—a figure who ... stands out in

⁶⁰ *i.e.*, *Bacchantes*, the followers of Dionysos (Bacchus).

the dim past behind the Doctor who revives the slain in the folk-plays” (44) which were seasonally performed throughout Europe and especially in England into the twentieth century. The homoeopathic association of the resurrection of the mock solar-king of the *Knights* with human and agrarian fertility, however, is transferred by Aristophanes to the temporal concerns of a historical people. The resurrected Demos now “spreads around him not the odor of lawsuits, but that of peace” (1328). Like Theseus, Demos thus represents the co-option of the sacred ritual performance by temporal aesthetic drama that Eliade and Driver specifically interpret as an expression of the development of “historical consciousness” among the ancient Greeks. Having been cooked into sausage and then resurrected, Demos shows the common origin of his comedy with classical tragedy and the source for the lamentable comedy finally chosen as most appropriate nuptial entertainment by Shakespeare’s Theseus.

Shakespeare positions the nexus of religious ritual, dramatic genre, and historiography, thus uniquely embodied in the character of Theseus, at the Midsummer midpoint following the tragic tetralogy, concluding with the purgative death of Richard III, and makes it prologue to the tragicomic tetralogy, leading toward the sacred marriage of Henry V. The choice of Theseus to govern over this *peripeteia* in the tragicomic tetralogy cycle identifies the Seasonal Pattern of the ancient ritual drama cycle structuring Shakespeare’s historiography. Like the classical Theseus, Shakespeare’s duke is no longer the “fertility daimon” of prehistoric Greek religion. He therefore declares that the sacrificial ritual offered by Lysander involving “the riot of the tipsie Bacchanals, / Tearing the Thracian singer, in their rage” (*i.e.*, Bacchantes tearing Dionysos or his goat substitute) no longer serves the regenerative function of public performance for an

historicized nation state. “That is an old deuce,” he says, “and it was plaid / When I from Thebes came last a Conqueror” (1845-1848). The riot of “tipsie Bachanals,” depicted in Titian’s painting, is rendered as tragedy in Euripides’ Theban woods, and a comic attenuation of its gruesome violence perhaps can be recognized in the lovesick youths, intoxicated with fairy potions, slugging it out in Shakespeare’s Athenian woods. The ritual omophagia, represented by Euripides as a mother, Agave, tearing her son, the rationalist Pentheus, in her rage, conventionally is associated with the matriarchal religions of the East, and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* recalls this association both in Titania’s Indian “Votresse” (499) and in the conquered queen of Amazons who also is Oberon’s “buskin’d Mistresse” (446). Theseus’s citation of his historical military conquest identifies his Shakespearean role as a reiteration of his historicizing role in the development of Greek drama, and it is interjected to suppress the traditional midsummer sacrifice, as *The Taming of the Shrew* is shown in chapter 2 to develop from the repression of midwinter horse sacrifice. The historicized Theseus defines the present not in terms of an eternally repeating moment for which the homoeopathic repetition of the traditional ritual is demanded, but rather in terms of “non-repetitive, non-archetypal events” such as “invasions, sieges, battles, and so on” (Eliade 85).

Shakespeare’s Theseus thus advances from what Driver identifies in Greek and Shakespearean drama as a “Hellenic” circularity of time towards linear historical temporal consciousness. Like his classical prototype, Shakespeare’s Athens thereby moves from a religious ritual complex to the separate narrative modes of aesthetic drama and historiography. Cook gives an example of this epochal progression in Crete where “the human victim was replaced by a bull, the cannibal feast by a bovine omophagy.”

Chambers thus reiterates the development from rituals of sacrifice of divine kings through stages to animal substitutes suggested by Frazer and synopsized above by Margaret Murray. Chambers then identifies a further stage of development in Athens. The more modern Ionic civilization of Greece “would not permit even this attenuated orgy: the slaughter became dramatic make-belief, and the omophagy a banquet for the successful poet and his troupe” (695). According to Chambers, “the Athenians of the fourth century, sitting on cushions in their theatre to witness a triumph of the tragedian’s art, had travelled far indeed from the primitive simplicity of that *mimus*, in which the celebrants had identified themselves with the god to become the consorts of the goddess and so share in her all-pervading life” (695). It is worth mentioning, I think, that the blood of savage bull and bear-baitings had not dried from the ground when the substitute animal blood of the first Elizabethan tragedies appeared in the same arenas. The function of Shakespeare’s Theseus in a comedy involving a successful poet and his troupe together with a goddess and her animal / human hybrid consort, if not proof of the author’s familiarity with the complex genealogy of his dramatic art, is implausibly coincidental.

From this enumeration of the stages of development from prehistoric religion to historicized tragedy, Cook turns to the genealogy of the human-animal hybrid of the Satyr play, representing the most primitive form of drama emerging from the Dionysian ritual, and the logic of this sequence is observed by the Early Modern Theseus who next rejects the proffered “Satire” as “not sorting with a nuptial ceremonie” (1852).

Shakespeare’s Midsummer celebration amounts to a kind of Adonia, which according to Smith are “a special form of annual piaculum, in which the sacrifice has come to be

overshadowed by its popular and dramatic accompaniments” (411). It should be recalled that, in slaying the Minotaur and rescuing the noble youths and maidens that annually were sent to Crete to be his victims, Theseus also symbolized the end of human sacrifice in Greece. From the remnants of ancient sacrificial ritual, and in the context of his historical role as an imperialist “Conqueror,” Shakespeare’s Theseus accordingly is drawn at last to what sounds like a primitive study in dramatic genre, the “very tragicall mirth” (1854) of “the most lamentable Comedy, and most cruell death of Pyramvs and Thisbie” (280). The performance of this lamentable comedy, moreover, is punctuated by expressions of attenuation of the terror of blood and savagery. Although the tragedy concludes with a double suicide enacted in a farcical vein, the threat of a virgin eaten by a savage lion is displaced in the neoclassical legend. The virgin is frightened off stage and the savage beast only attacks her garment. The blood on the mantle belongs to an animal supposed for the human victim, and Shakespeare’s lion apologizes in advance to the ladies of the audience “whose gentle harts do feare / The smallest monstrovvs mouse that creepes on floore” (2021-2022), for which Theseus calls him “A verie gentle beast, and of good conscience” (2030). The play is “tragicall,” according to Lysander, “for *Piramus* / Therein doth kill himselfe. Which when I saw / Rehearst, I must confesse, made mine eyes water: / But more merrie teares, the passion of loud laughter / Neuer shed” (1863-1867). Like the two “kites” in the garden of Richard II discussed in chapter 1, the primitive sacrificial ritual mourning derivation of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is hard to distinguish from jubilation. Shakespeare’s Theseus explicitly governs the transformation from the savage homoeopathic rituals of “tipsie Bachanals” or of their English equivalent in the popular Beltane *ludi* into the genres of aesthetic theater in Early Modern England

just as he had in Classical Greece. He thus identifies the ritual origins of the circular tragicomic structure of Shakespeare's Elizabethan interplay between comedies and history plays. As in ancient Greece, furthermore, this transformation was driven by the transformation from the predominance of the circular seasonal temporality of agricultural societies toward modern linear historicity.

Like the sacred marriage of Henry V, the marriage of Theseus as presiding intermediary between cosmogonic and historical myth and between ritual mourning / jubilation and dramatic tragedy and comedy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* thereby marks a cardinal point in Shakespeare's Elizabethan metanarrative Seasonal Pattern. The triple marriage of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* follows the winter of discontent of the first tetralogy which opens in the expectation of "Saint Martins Summer" in la Pucelle's France (*IH6* 338). Following the sacrifice of the winter boar-king, Richard III, the Seasonal Pattern is recycled towards the spring in the solstitial Saturnalia of *the Shrew*. The springtime conclusion of *the Shrew* and the ensuing *Midsummer Night's Dream* are followed in turn by the tragic fall of Richard II from the height of summer, "like glist'ring Phaeton" (1766), through the "summer's dust" (1627), who by the third act of his play "hath now himself met with the fall of leaf" (1860). The fall of Richard II serves, not as a terminating motif, to use White's terms, but as a transitional motif toward the winter of usurpation and rebellion in the second tetralogy which finally returns to "hot Summer" at the marriage of Henry V (3303), before the narrative line "make[s] a Circle" (3283) back to his funeral in la Pucelle's false summer and end of "the English circle" (*IH6* 343), at the beginning of the first tetralogy. Although *The Merchant of Venice* develops a sacred allegory of Anglicanism, containing the terror of schism with the

Roman Church in its circular comic structures, as shown in chapter 4, it ultimately contaminates its own affirmation of regeneration. As shown in chapter 3, *Henry V* then undermines the often unambiguous jingoism of its stage performance (and of its sources), not merely contaminating, but engaging in a discourse on the contamination of historical truth by textual transmission. In so doing, the text subverts the regenerative ritual power of the performance of sacred marriage that concludes *Henry V* and the tetralogy cycle, anticipating Shakespeare's development toward tragedy as well as the continuing political and religious troubles that eventually overwhelmed the succeeding dynasty.

As Marx and Zakai identify different aspects of the end of the fifteenth century with the prelude to revolution, Franco Moretti claims that Shakespeare's history plays prepare the way for the Puritan revolution of the seventeenth century. The monarch having been "deconsecrated" by representation on the public stage, "it became possible to decapitate him" (qtd. in Tiffany 277). I have argued that Shakespeare's early career was motivated by an attempt to consecrate rather than deconsecrate the Tudor dynasty to which end he mobilized all of the traditions of sacred kingship as a function of the ancient seasonal ritual performance cycle. These traditions could be inferred by comparison of his Classical sources with native popular ludi, folk, and religious drama, and their traditional efficacy in the *apotheosis* of the sacred king was not excluded by the principles of Early Modern political science. If the Phoenix is allegorical, as the title page of *Loves Martyr* claims, it is representative of this consecrated universal Tudor monarch, embodied in Gloriana, in Astraea, in the avatar of Arthur, or in the Faery Queene, whose death, it had been hoped since before Shakespeare's birth, would be succeeded by a male heir to the mythohistorical tradition constructed around the cult of Elizabeth. The Scottish

succession could not be made mythopoetically to serve this end, if only because James's own participation in the Elizabethan mythology with its providentialist Neoplatonic interpretation of the English Reformation is scarcely evident. The mystical *apotheosis* of the monarch through dramatic performance continued under the Stuarts, but within the court in the form of aristocratic masques, in which the actions of gods, as in the ancient Near East, once again were performed by princes, while public theater turned to less ideological themes, such as in city comedies, perhaps as the absolutist state's reaction to the logic of deconsecration observed by Moretti. But the Stuart dynasty supplanted rather than continued the cult of Elizabeth, as Fortinbras replaces rather than continues the Hamlet line, and the abandonment of comic regeneration for tragic supplantation characterizes the *dénouement* of Shakespeare's drama continuing from the death of Elizabeth in 1603 until the last four redemptive tragicomedies of the 1610's.

Whether because familiarity with the monarch through frequent public impersonation bred contempt, as Moretti argues, or because the rising bourgeoisie was tearing asunder all hitherto sacred relations as Marx describes, or merely because Elizabeth refused to compromise her power by participating in her own relegation to the status merely of wife and mother in union with a flesh and blood representative of the adoring Turtle, as Susan Frye suggests, the tragic emplotment of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* amounts to a renunciation of the attribution of sacred kingship to the English Crown. This renunciation led to the tragic death of kings throughout Shakespeare's ensuing dramas, and, as Moretti observes, to the beginning of the age of revolution.

Works Cited.

All dates from *Riverside Shakespeare*

All Shakespeare quotes from *Folio* cited below unless otherwise designated.

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