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A SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP.

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SHAKESPEARE'S "THE PHOENIX AND TURTLE": A SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP

by
Richard Allan Underwood

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

SHAKESPEARE'S "THE PHOENIX AND TURTLE":
A SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP

by
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Chairman: John A. Arthos

In 1601, Robert Chester published a long, prosaic poem titled Love's Martyr, to which signed "Poeticall Essaies" by such major poets as Shakespeare, John Marston, George Chapman and Ben Jonson were appended. Shakespeare's contribution, "The Phoenix and Turtle," was for many years considered spurious, inconsequential, or both. Since the 1925 attack on its authenticity by J. M. Robertson, however, Shakespearean authorship has not been seriously questioned. Instead, perhaps because of renewed interest in the so-called "metaphysical" style of Donne, modern scholarship in the past thirty years or more has embraced the poem and provided a variety of sophisticated readings based upon Shakespeare's Sonnets and Plays and the intellectual environment of his time. The summaries of Hyder E. Rollins in his 1938 Variorum edition of The Poems are quoted; but the chief aim of this study has been to evaluate and bring up to date the state of opinion concerning the poem, and to that end, full summaries (digests, in some cases) have been provided. Derivative critical influences are identified, with an eye to making the whole coherent, and a history of

the legend of the phoenix is appended.

The following aspects are surveyed by Chapters: (I) matters of the poem's texts, authenticity, and date of composition; (II) the numerous allegorical readings; (III) the question of literary sources; (IV) the modal nature of the piece (with comparison to Donne), along with the poem's ideal and "platonic" overtones and certain suggested likenesses to the dramatic works. A critical afterword (V) links the poem to the songs from the plays and to Shakespeare's use of a seven-beat trochaic line with heavy use of the imperative mood in situations calling for adjurations, incantations, and enchantments. With respect to stanza 16 (of the Threnos), it is also suggested that there is an ironic intention implicit in the verse pattern and the "dramatic" situation featuring "Reason" as speaker.

The poem emerges as distinctly Shakespeare's. There is no wholly satisfactory theory of personal or historical allegory, and only one--that of Thomas P. Harrison (1951)--merits further attention. If Shakespeare's Phoenix and Turtle are real persons, as Chester's have been said to be, that fact is not clearly apparent. Few convincing literary sources have been suggested, but among them are Ovid's lines about the death of Corinna's parrot (suggested in turn by Catullus' elegy for Lesbia's sparrow), and Chaucer's Parlement of Fowles. The lines of the "anthem," in particular, have been effectively related to scholastic

theology by J. V. Cunningham (1952), who has not treated the Threnos; and such sensitive commentators as F. T. Prince (1960) and Robert Ellrodt (1962) have subjected the entire poem to a dispassionate scrutiny at once scholarly and imaginative. Daniel Seltzer's essay (1961) adduces a community of thematic and verbal concerns in "The Phoenix and Turtle" and the plays, and there are similar treatments by G. Wilson Knight (1932) and Ronald Bates (1955). With regard to the "metaphysical" question, one concludes that Shakespeare did not write his poem in the style of Donne.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was my extraordinary good fortune to secure Professor John Arthos as Chairman of my doctoral dissertation committee. Mr. Arthos the eminent scholar is well known; but those who know him personally can attest his kindliness, genial humor, and unfailing patience. For suggesting this topic itself and for his expert guidance, I can only say "thank you" to him, although it is far too little to say. The other members of the committee--Professors H. M. English, C. R. Reaske, and N. T. Whitman--have mingled their uniformly sound advice with encouragement, and I thank them all most heartily.

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CHAPTER ONE

TEXTS, AUTHENTICITY, AND THE DATE OF COMPOSITION

"The Phoenix and Turtle" first appeared as an addendum to a work by Robert Chester published in 1601, which Professor Hyder E. Rollins[1] describes as follows:

> LOVES MARTYR: / OR, / ROSALINS COMPLAINT./ Allegorically shadowing the truth of Loue, / in the constant Fate of the Phoenix / and Turtle. / A Poeme enterlaced with much varietie and raritie; / now first translated out of the venerable Italian Torquato / Caeliano, by ROBERT CHESTER. / With the true legend of famous King Arthur, the last of the nine / Worthies, being the first Essay of a new Brytish Poet: collected / out of diuerse Authenticall Records. / To these are added some new compositions, of seuerall moderne Writers / whose names are subscribed to their seuerall workes, upon the / first Subject: viz. the Phoenix and / Turtle. / Mar:--Mutare dominum non potest liber notus. / [Ornament] / LONDON / Imprinted for F. B. / (4^{o}, sigs. A-$2A^{4}$, $2B^{2}$.)
>
> Chester's own work ends on Y_4 with "Finis. quoth R. Chester." On Z_1 is the title-page:
>
> HEREAFTER / FOLLOVV DIVERSE / Poeticall Essaies on the former Sub- / iect; viz: the Turtle and Phoenix. / Done by the best and chiefest of our / moderne writers, with their names sub- / scribed to their particular workes: / neuer before extant. / And (now first) consecrated by them all generally, / to the loue and merite of the true-noble Knight, / Sir Iohn Salisburie. / Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori. / [Device] / MDCI. /
>
> Then follow poems signed "Vatum Chorus" (two, Z_2, Z_2^{v}), "Ignoto" (Z_3), "William Shake-speare" (Z_3^{v}-Z_4^{v}), "John Marston" ($2A_1$-$2A_2^{v}$), "George Chapman" ($2A_2^{v}$), "Ben Johnson" (two, $2A_3$-$2B_1^{v}$, $2B_1^{v}$-$2B_1^{v}$-$2B_2$). [p. 559]

"In 1611," continues Rollins, "the old sheets of Chester's book were reissued with a new title-page by a different publisher:

> [Ornament] / THE / Anuals [sic] of great Brittaine. / OR, / A MOST EXCEL- / lent Monument, wherein may be / seene all the antiquities of this King- / dome, to the satisfaction both of the / Vniuersities, or any other place stir- / red with Emulation of long / continuance. / Excellently figured out in a worthy Poem. / [Device, McKerrow 310] / LONDON / Printed for MATHEW LOWNES. / 1611. /
> The only copy known is in the British Museum" (pp. 559-60).

Except for its appearances in various editions, there are no comments upon the poem or references to it known in the literature of more than a century following its publication. "Its third appearance in print," according to Mr. Rollins, "was in Poems Written by Wil. Shake-speare. Gent., 1640, sigs. K6^{v}-K7^{v}, where it follows another untitled lyric of Shakespeare's, 'Take, O take those lips away.' LINTOTT in 1709 and 1711 did not know, or in any case did not reprint, the P. & T. But from the 1640 volume it made its way into GILDON's 1710 collection, and from one or the other of these sources, directly or indirectly, it reappeared in many later editions of Shakespeare's poems. In [Edmond] MALONE's ed. 1780 the poem was reproduced directly from Chester's book of 1601, but with the spelling and punctuation modernized and with a few other editorial changes. Oddly enough, Malone gave it no title but printed it as poem XX of [The Passionate Pilgrim] . . . . In his editions 1790 and 1821 MALONE, omitting two other P. P. poems, changed XX to XVIII, and those two numbers enable one to tell at a glance

when later editors follow, as many of them do follow, Malone at first or second hand. Only six of the editions later than 1780 that I have collated restore in l. 31 the original wording that Malone had corrupted[2]. . . . It is curious that, so far as I can discover, the two Boston editions of 1807 were the first to give the poem a title, 'The Phoenix and the Turtle.' One of these, with the imprint of OLIVER and MUNROE, Boston, bears on its title-page the phrase 'First American Edition.' Actually the first American edition, in vol. VIII of The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare, Philadelphia, 1796, follows Malone's 1790 text and hence prints the P. & T. as the eighteenth poem of the P. P." Rollins gives a list of editors who prefer to omit the second the of the poem's title and another of editors who choose to retain it, and provides a partial list of foreign language translations.[3] "In addition to establishing the text MALONE gave elaborate explanatory annotations. But for about a century the English and American editors ordinarily printed these difficult lines with little or no explanation. Later annotators show considerable indebtedness to Malone" (pp. 560-61).

The vexing question of the poem's authenticity must be considered now, a question by no means closed despite the fact that many recent commentators choose to ignore it while concentrating their critical energies on the work itself. Professor Rollins provides the history of the controversy: "MALONE (ed. 1780, p. 732) thought there was 'no room to

doubt of the genuineness of this little poem,' and most of his immediate successors--like apparently all his predecessors--agreed. But skeptics soon appeared."[4] Apparently Richard Grant White (Works, Riverside Shakespeare) in 1865 had doubts--"There is no other external evidence that these verses are Shakespeare's than their appearance with his signature in a collection of poems published in London while he was living there in the height of his reputation. The style, however, is at least a happy imitation of his, especially in the bold and original use of epithet" (p. 260). F. G. Fleay was non-committal in 1876, but F. J. Furnivall a year later concluded that the poem was "no doubt spurious," and he was joined almost simultaneously by Edward Dowden, who considered the authenticity "in a high degree doubtful." All three later became positive supporters of Shakespeare ascription: but meanwhile W. J. Rolfe, following the lead of White and Furnivall, pronounced the poem of "doubtful authorship, and the date . . . equally uncertain." Rolfe's confessions of wrong-headedness were later published in the Literary World in three separate issues of 1883. In the first, he called the poem "clearly Shakespeare's," and in two subsequent issues he quoted Furnivall as saying, "Alas, that 'spurious' . . . was a mistake for 'genuine,'" and Dowden to the effect that "I have long since given up my doubts." By 1890 Rolfe could speak of the poem as "almost certainly Shakespeare's." German critics--among them Max Koch, who sided neither way, and August Höhnen who favored Shakespearian authorship and

was rebuked for it by R. Sachs; and Hans Reimer, suspicious of the poem's authenticity--are representative of scholarly division on the continent. In the first (1898) edition of A Life of William Shakespeare (pp. 183 f.) Sir Sidney Lee called the poem Shakespeare's "alleged contribution," adding, "Happily Shakespeare wrote nothing else of like character," but he too later changed his mind and became a positive supporter of Shakespearian authorship. Mr. Rollins continues as follows: "[George] SAINTSBURY (History of English Prosody, 1908, II, 66) called it 'doubtfully Shakespeare's as far as proof goes' . . . whereas [Frank] MATHEW (Image of Shakespeare, 1922, p. 114 f.) qualified his comments on the poem with 'if it is his,' and the like. . . . To [A. H.] BULLEN (ed. 1907, p. 451) 'its authenticity is unquestionable,' and such is the opinion of [W. A.] NEILSON and [A. H.] THORNDIKE (Facts, 1913, p. 156), who note that the poem has 'been sometimes rejected as unworthy, but there is no other evidence against the ascription' to Shakespeare. In his own edition of Shakespeare NEILSON (ed. 1906, p. 1201) had written: 'The ascription to Shakespeare is generally, though not universally, accepted, such scepticism as exists being usually based upon the absence among his acknowledged works of anything with precisely the same characteristics'" (p. 562).

Let us pause to examine three negative views while we are still in the bosom of Rollins our guide. The producer William Poel, founder and director of the Elizabethan Stage Society, published his Prominent Points in the Life and

Writings of Shakespeare, Arranged in Four Tables (Manchester, 1919) in order to make the known and unknown of Shakespeare's life and art handily apparent. In Table I, he gives it as "Unproved" that Shakespeare wrote the poem in 1599. There are no attendant statements of opinion. A curious attack, on the other hand, is that of Ranjee (Shahani) who writes ecstatically in Toward the Stars (1931) of the merits of the poem while ascribing it to John Fletcher. His reasons for excluding Shakespeare are inconsistent (they are given on p. 579 of Rollins) and since in any event Shahani later placed himself on the side of Shakespearian authenticity, they need not be given here. Rollins is not altogether unjust when he concludes that Ranjee's interpretation is wholly "impressionistic and subjective" (p. 580). "The most determined attack [1925] on the authenticity of the poem," in Rollins' view, and surely the most detailed, is that of John MacKinnon Robertson in Part III, pp. 105-12 of The Shakespeare Canon (1922-1932). Robertson isolates "the 'stylistic elements' of the poem . . . hitherto accepted without question, though with small gratitude, as genuine." He takes note of John Middleton Murry's ecstatic treatment of the poem in Discoveries (London, 1924) and discovers it to be "an interesting instance of the kind of inverse aesthetic effect produced on some critical temperaments by a bold badness of diction, an assured aspect, and a cryptic style and substance, under an august name. . . . On what grounds or principles such [enthusiastic] judgements proceed,

their framers never tell us." Robertson associates the poem with "A Lover's Complaint" and thinks that George Chapman is a likely author for both;--the Phoenix and Turtle is "Chapmanese in spirit, in form, in theme, in diction, in vocabulary, in crudity, in convulsive infelicity, in alternate terseness and circumlocation, in force and in feebleness. In the opening stanza it executes a rhetorical collapse which recurs in nearly every quatrain to the close, the final rhyme being a flat makeshift in the manner of so many of Chapman's . . . . The fatality of the thing [the final line] is fascinating." Robertson had a literary theory of his own making to illustrate (the "Imitation Theory") and perhaps he was over-zealous in applying it. His disdain, at any rate, spares nothing: "That this workmanship is that of a supreme poet, let those affirm who will. For the assertion that it is Shakespeare's, we have simply the uncommented testimony of the publisher of Love's Martyr, who puts the signature 'WILLIAM SHAKE-SPEARE' after the 'Threnos' . . . . To begin with, the phoenix is a Chapman property; and so is the turtle; and the bizarre notion of figuring a dead husband and wife by a he-dove and a she-phoenix is quite in keeping with his artistic methods."[5] Robertson proceeds from stanza to stanza on the basis of "metaphysic" and "style" and his discussion, by no means uninformed, suffers mostly from partisan scorn: for example, after printing the twelfth quatrain ("That it cried . . . can so remain") he calls it "the same ringing

of the quibbling changes on one pseudo-poetic thesis--at best to be likened to a kitten chasing its tail--that constitutes the special purport of Andromeda, which moved Chapman to parental pride and other people to derision. The notion of finally setting 'Reason' to make 'this threne'--the only part of the composition which savours of the 'simple, passionate, sensuous' quality of poetry as distinct from ratiocination--is of a piece with the general pedantic queerness of the undertaking; and it was surely a pedant who entitled the triplets 'Threnos.'" All in all, "the judicial reader will admit that in the Phoenix and the Turtle we either have Chapman's work or an astonishingly laborious imitation of him, such as the Imitation Theory [Robertson's] so often posits . . . . It could have been quite as well put for the signed work of Chapman in the same collection.[6] An effective judgement must be prefaced by an effective analysis. In literary criticism, as in moral criticism, there are two processes, interdependent, but liable to different modes of error. The literary first thing is the aesthetic perception; in ethics, the moral sense; the second is the process of critical reflection upon that. The primary perception is vital: if that be astray (and of this the ultimate test is ultimate and universal consistency), the reflective process can only by accident yield any good result. Astray it must sometimes be, and tradition is frequently one of its misguiders." Mr. Robertson concludes as follows: "It is critically thinkable that

Shakespeare wrote the 'Threnos,' which is separated from the rest of the piece by a printer's ornament, and to which, thus separated, his name is put. It is credible only by traditionary faith that he wrote the whole" (pp. 105-12).

Robertson leaves the door slightly ajar--Shakespeare may have written the "Threnos." Rollins notes that "Considerably earlier [Henrietta C.] BARTLETT (Catalogue, 1917, pp. 9, 13) had asserted that Shakespeare wrote only the 'Threnos.' Her words are, '[There is] a poem called "Threnos" and signed by him [Shakespeare] in Chester's "Love's Martyr," 1601.' ' In the supplement . . . is one [poem] entitled "Threnos" and signed by Shakespeare'" (Rollins, p. 563 n.). "Had asserted" seems a bit strong, since Bartlett says nothing more than is quoted by Rollins, and 'asserts' nothing except by indirection. Hers seems to be the cautious attitude of the annotator confronted with the fact that Shakespeare's name appears only after the separately printed "Threnos."

According to Rollins, almost no scholars later than Poel (1919) have questioned the poem's authenticity. "For instance, [R. M.] ALDEN (Shakespeare, 1922, p. 117) admits that 'the style of the elegy is unlike any known work of Shakespeare's, in its emphasis on both symmetry of form and metaphysical processes of thought,' but decides that 'there is no convincing reason for rejecting it.' [J. Q.] ADAMS (Life, 1923, pp. 335-42) without any doubts accepts it as authentic. [C. F. Tucker] BROOKE (Shakespearian Songs,

1929, p. 152) says 'there is little reason to doubt its authenticity,' and [Sir Edmund K.] CHAMBERS (William Shakespeare, 1930, I, 549 f.) sees no reason at all . . . . In the most recent edition of Shakespeare, [George Lyman] KITTREDGE's (1936, p. 1492), the Phoenix and Turtle is called 'unquestionably genuine'" (p. 563).

Concerning the date of the poem's composition, Mr. Rollins writes that it "has come in for practically no discussion. [Alfred] VON MAUNTZ in 1893 . . . giving a symbolical interpretation of the poem, first dated it 1595-1596 and then, apparently, 1593. But his reasons are purely fanciful. Likewise [David] MASSON, sometime before 1895 (Shakespeare Personally, 1914, p. 92), declared that Shakespeare's verses may belong to any date between 1593, 'if not earlier,' and 1601. The evidence is clearly against him, and it is difficult to see how anyone could believe the Phoenix and Turtle earlier than Venus and Adonis. The views of [F. S.] BOAS (Shakespeare and his Predecessors, 1896, p. 163) are not plainly expressed: 'The fine verses [27 f.] describing the "mutual flame" of the two birds . . . are quite in Shakespeare's early lyrical manner.' Among more recent scholarly pronouncements, LEE's (Life, 1916, p. 272) stands almost alone: 'The internal evidence scarcely justifies the conclusion that Shakespeare's poem . . . was penned for Chester's book. It must have been either devised in an idle hour with merely abstract intention, or it was suggested by the death within the poet's own circle of a

pair of devoted lovers.' But he gives no details about when he supposes the lines to have been composed. Likewise without details POEL (Prominent Points, 1919, Table I) dates them 1599. By far the majority of scholars believe that the P. & T. was written as a sort of 'commendatory poem' expressly for Chester's book just before the latter was published in 1601. [F. G.] FLEAY (Chronicle History, 1886, p. 44) says that the 'new compositions, of seuerall moderne Writers' mark the end of the war of the theaters and hence prove that Chester's volume cannot 'have been issued earlier than March 1601-2'" (pp. 563-64).

These, then, are Rollins' authoritative and careful summaries of the views of a multitude of editors and scholars on the questions of authenticity and the related but less crucial date of composition. The Rollins Variorum edition was published in 1938, and for the most part includes material through 1936. In his preface, Rollins says, "With a few exceptions no book or article of a later date than 1936 has been referred to" (p. vii). The preface itself is initialed and dated "October 10, 1937" (p. viii). Probably for reasons of space, Mr. Rollins chose not to allude to a letter by Irma Reed White (TLS, 21 July 1932, p. 532) under his discussion of authenticity, whereas he discusses its contents in detail on p. 582. White mentions her planned re-edition of Loves Martyr. She omits mention of Jonson and the others: "Readers acquainted with this

book know that its claim to more than passing notice lies in the fact that appended to the volume is the threnody to which the name William Shake-speare is attached." Like Henrietta C. Bartlett (mentioned above by Rollins) White is cautiously explicit about the printing of Shakespeare's name after the "Threnos."[7] Nor does Mr. Rollins include under his discussion of authenticity (although he does elsewhere in a note to p. 583) a running exchange of letters in the Times Literary Supplement during 1936-1937, in which Mr. Bernard H. Newdigate set forth an historical explanation of the allegory and was answered by other writers. This Newdigate view as it appears in two books and several articles will be discussed in the following chapter under personal allegory interpretations; all that need concern us now is that Mr. Newdigate has this to say about authenticity: "The lines on the Phoenix and Turtle which are printed over Shakespeare's name . . . seem so remote in sentiment, language and manner from nearly everything else that he wrote that they would have been rejected from the Shakespeare canon were it not for the evidence of authenticity presented by the book in which they were printed. Most of the commentators accept them as Shakespeare's, but few offer any key to their meaning or suggest the occasion of their being written" (TLS, October 24, 1936, p. 862). This sort of statement is so common that it can be labeled "BEMUSED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY" and given out as a category. As for the date of composition, Newdigate, later along in the TLS

controversy, makes the following remark in a letter of reply to one by R. W. Short: "Whatever the date of Loves Martyr, the 'Poeticall Essaies' cannot have been written much, if at all, before 1600" (TLS, February 20, 1937, p. 131); he gives no reasons for his statement. In his own edition of The Phoenix and Turtle (Oxford, 1937) Newdigate adds the following: "One must not doubt the authenticity of these lines, printed, as they are, among the Essaies over Shakespeare's name; for Chester's book was no piratical publication. Had they not been Shakespeare's, Marston (who wrote his own verses with Shakespeare's in front of him), Chapman and Jonson could none of them have been parties to a false attribution of the kind" (p. 26).

Rollins was aware of the earlier published work of Clara Longworth, Comtesse de Chambrun, and alluded to it, but the manuscript of her Shakespeare Rediscovered by Means of Public Records, Secret Reports and Private Correspondence Newly Set Forth as Evidence on his Life and Work (New York, 1938) was apparently not at his disposal and could not be acknowledged. In Chapter Ten of her book, Chambrun sets forth an original theory of personal allegory as focus and explanation of the poem [see pp. 211-35] and she concludes as follows: "It is useless to beg the question by suggesting that 'perhaps Shakespeare was not the real author of "The Phoenix and the Turtle."' No work published under his name carries with it so complete a certificate of authenticity. For the printer's device on 'Love's Martyr' is that

of Richard Field, the poet's comrade in Stratford and his first publisher in London. I need hardly repeat that 'Venus and Adonis' and 'The Rape of Lucrece' were brought out in 1593 and 1594 respectively by this same Richard Field. Both were accompanied by signed and dated epistles inscribing the poet's work to the young Earl of Southampton. If there was one printer in the world who was fully qualified to know a poem of William Shakespeare when he saw it, that man was Richard Field, the Stratford tanner's son" (pp. 234-35).[8] Chambrun's can be called "ARMED ASSERTION OF AUTHENTICITY," a category which includes more strong-minded commentators than one might expect to find.[9]

In 1940 another exchange of views came about in the pages of Notes and Queries as the result of a relatively innocuous letter signed by "W. P. D." The writer asked about a particular Shakespeare phoenix reference in "The Phoenix and Turtle" and wondered if it were traceable to Pliny. Newdigate answered the letter (N & Q, December 28, 1940, p. 459) and so did G. Catalani and William Jaggard. Of interest is the Catalani letter, which concludes, "It does not seem to me that this passage of Pliny can have inspired Shakespeare (or the real author of 'The Phoenix and Turtle') to invoke the funeral lamentations of the sable long-lived bird" (p. 460). Catalani's observation and others like it can be called the "OPEN-ENDED DISCLAIMER"--the author of the article is aware of the controversy surrounding authorship, but decides that what interests or

concerns him is not crucial to that consideration, and that therefore the entire problem is of small moment. One can say generally of the past thirty years that there has been a change in critical emphasis concerning the poem, marked by fewer excursions into questions of authenticity and date of composition. Ascription to Shakespeare is accepted,[10] usually in the words, "Shakespeare's poem . . .," and the writer goes on to the penetralia of the temple. There are certain pockets, however, and although the three categories suggested above are artificial, they surely exist. Let us see how they fare numerically.

"ARMED ASSERTION OF AUTHENTICITY"

Under this heading surely belongs Sir Gurney Benham (TLS, July 19, 1941, p. 532): "Shakespeare's poem stands out from the [other appended poems] on account of its perfect music and his masterful use of words. We miss the clarity and the brilliant imagery distinguishing his other poems. His 'poeticall essaie' is different from anything else which he wrote, but there is no reason whatever to doubt his authorship of the poem. It is a fascinating composition, which could scarcely have been produced by any but Shakespeare. It was twice published in his lifetime with his name appended" (TLS, July 26, 1941, p. 364). Benham's article was published in two separate numbers (TLS, July 19, 1941, p. 352; July 26, p. 364) and in the first article, he was forthright enough to suggest that the fourteen lines of "IGNOTO" were "perhaps Chester again" (p. 352). Another

assertion of authenticity is met with in the Muir-O'Loughlin Voyage to Illyria (cited above) where it is observed that "a few critics have doubted the authenticity of the poem, and, in a monograph published a few years ago, 'Ranjee' suggested that John Fletcher was the real author. None of his arguments against Shakespeare's authorship will stand serious consideration, and he offers no valid evidence on behalf of Fletcher. His citation of parallel passages proves only that Fletcher had read the poem, and his admission that it has a maturity impossible to a man of twenty-five vitiates his entire argument. Actually, Fletcher was only twenty-two when Love's Martyr appeared, and, furthermore, it is unlikely that a circle in which, for example, Ben Jonson's own MSS. circulated, would either attempt or suffer deception in such an attribution of authorship [Newdigate's opinion], whatever an unscrupulous publisher might do. Internal evidence, therefore, will but confirm what was certain already" (p. 129). A much later commentator, William Matchett, makes his assertion a mere attack on disbelievers: the Phoenix and Turtle makes "the simple claim of being a poem by Shakespeare (an assertion now undisputed, barring Baconian or other similar nonsense)."[11] William Empson in Some Versions of Pastoral (London, 1935) takes a rather relaxed view of the poem which nonetheless denies John M. Robertson's argument that Chapman wrote it: "Shakespeare's Phoenix and Turtle . . . depends on the same ideas as Donne's First Anniversary, but gets very different feelings out of

them. The entire flatness of the use of the convention makes it seem first an engagingly simpleminded piece of 'idealism' and then, since the union of the birds is likely after all to be of a simple kind, an expression of cultivated and good-humoured sensuality; this does not by any means destroy the pathetic dignity of the close. There is a suggestion that the author finds the convention fascinating but absurd, which he shows mainly by his sound-effects. This seems to me intentional, very delightful, and not a thing that Chapman (who has been suggested as the author) could possibly have done." Empson conceives of the poem as an example of "mock pastoral" (pp. 139-40). In his Phönix und Taube, Heinrich Straumann makes a sweeping assertion that must almost be taken on faith if one is to give it credence: "Auch die Sonette wurden nicht auf seine Veranlassung hin veröffentlicht. Anders steht es dagegen mit den Versepen 'Venus and Adonis' und 'Lucrece' von 1593 und 1594, die der Dichter sorgfältig für den Druck vorbereitete und mit einer Widmung an eine wohlbekannte Persönlichkeit im damaligen öffentlichen Leben, den Grafen von Southampton, versah. Es ist deshalb schon von einiger Bedeutung, dass das einzige weitere Werk, das offensichtlich mit Shakespeares Willen und Wunsch zum Druck gelangte, unser Gedicht ist."[12]

"BEMUSED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY"

In this group can be placed I. A. Richards, who emphasizes the negative--"no one else seems in the least likely as author"[13]--and J. W. Lever, who includes Venus and

Adonis, Lucrece, and The Phoenix and Turtle among poems whose "Shakespearian authorship is generally accepted."[14] And finally C. S. Lewis, who in English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama (Oxford, 1959) writes that "We could not have guessed, I think, from internal evidence that this poem was by Shakespeare. As an anonymous work it would command our highest admiration. The oracular, which of all styles is most contemptible when it fails, is here completely successful; the illusion that we have been in another world and heard the voices of gods is achieved. Approached, as we usually approach it, after long familiarity with the plays, 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' has, in addition, another interest. We feel that we have been admitted to the natura naturans from which the natura naturata of the plays proceeded: as though we had reached the garden of Adonis and seen where Imogens and Cordelias are made" (p. 509).

"THE OPEN-ENDED DISCLAIMER"

Mr. Hazelton Spencer assumes authenticity for Shakespeare but little else: "Shakespeare's contribution is a poor thing, but no doubt his own. (It has been praised by some very sensitive critics.) There is no evidence for its date; presumably it was written to order for Chester's volume. What it is about no one knows. There is, accordingly, little to be gained by invoking Petrarchism or Platonism. The poem is unlike anything else in the Shakespeare canon. Perhaps its cryptic obscurity is an effect of the same thing that ruined the literary digestion

of some twentieth-century poets--an overdose of John Donne. If so, the difference is that our metaphysical contemporaries suffered from a fundamental misconception of the nature of poetry, and the remedy they took is even worse than the disease; while it is likely enough that Shakespeare wrote 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' with his tongue in his cheek, partly to amuse himself in the new crabbed style and partly to see what the world would make of it."[15] Another similar but less elaborate judgement is that of Hardin Craig in An Interpretation of Shakespeare (New York, 1948), pp. 106-107: "As to 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,' a poem marked with Shakespeare's name in Robert Chester's volume called Love's Martyr (1601), it is pretty generally accepted. It is a puzzling poem which may have some hidden topical significance. As it stands, it adds little to Shakespeare's fame."

While we are on the matter of authenticity, two related views may be mentioned, the first being the cautious opinion of Mr. Frayne Williams: "The poem entitled 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,' with Shakespeare's name attached, is written in four-line stanzas of alternating rhyme; and while it is accepted as a valid contribution of the poet, the poem is so obscure thematically that it has won few admirers, though Emerson in his Preface to Parnassus accorded it high praise . . . . The only other poem in the volume from our author's pen is entitled 'Threnos' . . . . Shakespeare's slighter poem 'Threnos,' on the deaths of the

Phœnix and the Turtle, is finer by far than his poem which precedes it, and possesses more 'Beauty, truth and rarity' and 'Grace in all simplicity.'"[16] To some it will seem almost incredible that Williams conceives of "The Phoenix and Turtle" as two separate poems, but William Matchett agrees on other grounds: "Shakespeare, who follows Ignoto, not only makes no direct reference to Chester's 'Conclusion' but flatly contradicts it . . . . In physical appearance [as printed in Loues Martyr] 'Threnos' is a poem complete in itself. All the external evidence converges to force acceptance of a fact the appearance suggests: what we have known as Shakespeare's 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' is literally two poems. Not only are there a new title, a new stanza form and the printer's ornamental border to divide 'Threnos' from the preceding stanzas, but there is the pattern of paired poems followed by each of the other contributors except Chapman. We have already seen that the poems signed 'Vatum Chorus' and 'Ignoto' are paired; it remains only to indicate that the contributions of both Marston and Jonson clearly begin with paired poems also. (The second two of the four poems, in each case, present additional problems; if they are pairs, that fact is not as obvious.) Given this consistent pattern,[17] it is probable that contributors to the volume were asked specifically for two poems, the first introducing the second . . . . Whether or not it was so planned, the second poems tend to present the main ideas while the first poems are primarily invocations

and introductions. . . . Having attested that Shakespeare contributed two poems rather than one, I must now profess that the point is, aesthetically, academic. The close integrity of the two poems is such that they should of course be considered together. Neither stands alone; for every critical purpose they are a single poem" (pp. 77-78). Matchett adds that his concern is to show that Shakespeare wrote his poem(s) for Chester's collection, and that it "was not merely, as some scholars have maintained [Sir Sidney Lee, A Life of Shakespeare (London, 1915), p. 272] . . . a miscellaneous piece that Shakespeare happened to have around and was willing to donate when asked" (p. 78).

It is no longer possible to say, with Rollins, that the poem's date of composition "has come in for practically no discussion" (p. 563). According to Muir and O'Loughlin, "The Phoenix and the Turtle appeared in 1601 as one of the additional poems in Love's Martyr, but despite this, it is an occasional poem the occasion of which is unknown. For, although Chester's poem, from which the collection took its name, was apparently written some years before, in celebration of the love of his patron Sir John Salusbury and his wife, and 'its mystical reinforcement on the occasion of the birth of their first child,' the other contributions are only superficially related to Love's Martyr . . . . Shakespeare's poem, in particular, strikes an elegiac note that is alien to its environment, and his birds who leave no

posterity are obviously not Sir John and Lady Ursula Salusbury. Sir Sidney Lee even went so far as to say that 'the internal evidence scarcely justifies the conclusion that Shakespeare's poem . . . was penned for Chester's collection.' This is hardly true. It is fairly evident, from the use he makes of the symbolism of the phoenix and the turtle that Shakespeare, like Jonson, Chapman and Marston, had at least glanced at Love's Martyr. . . . The immediate reason for its composition was doubtless a positive request, and the contents of the volume invite . . . comparison with the volume compiled in memory of Edward King. . . . Milton, setting out to celebrate the memory of a friend, actually gives us in Lycidas a piece of autobiography" (pp. 128-30).

This suggestion of an earlier date of composition is followed up by William Empson in an essay,[18] and Empson concludes that "[Chester's] book must have been ready some time earlier, before the authors began to quarrel; perhaps 1598 or early in 1599 . . . . To establish an earlier date for the whole group of poems has one important effect; Shakespeare did not write 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' while Hamlet was saying he could not bear to think what his mum did in bed, but while Henry V was saying:

> Though it appear a little out of fashion,
> There is much care and valour in this Welshman"
> (p. 148).[19]

William Matchett's views of the date of composition are involved, in a complicated way, with the meaning of the poem as personal allegory, but in Matchett's own words "the poems by

Shakespeare and Marston were written after the death of Essex, or, at the least, after it was clear that he was doomed" (p. 159). This seems to suggest 1601, but Matchett's purposeful movement makes recapitulation difficult. "It is impossible to say just when Shakespeare was asked for his contribution--he may have brooded over it during the months when Essex's fate was in doubt--but it is clear that the outcome was no longer in doubt when the poem was written" (p. 160). "The unsteadiness of the Earl's character became increasingly evident; earlier, at the trial in June, 1600 . . . or perhaps as early as the disobedient return from Ireland in September, 1599. Just when Shakespeare lost faith in Essex, we cannot say. I have tended to relate the change to the actual rebellion, on the basis of the internal chronological evidence in Loues Martyr. Whatever the precise date may have been, to the fact that he did lose faith . . . 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' offers clear testimony" (p. 192). "This, I feel, is fact: whatever his subsequent thinking, Shakespeare in 1601, in the poem(s) we have come to know as 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' paid tribute to Essex and Elizabeth, but qualified the tribute by introducing an ultimately negative rational evaluation" (p. 202). As further support, Matchett had earlier surmised that some of what Chester wrote was done after Shakespeare and the others: "Chester wrote his 'Pellican' (and therefore his later 'Conclusion') with the appended poems, including of course Shakespeare's, before him. Not only did

the contributing poets write without seeing these additions of Chester's, but Chester's additions are, specifically, comments on the contributed poems" (pp. 81-82).

T. W. Baldwin, On the Literary Genetics of Shakspere's Poems & Sonnets (Urbana, 1950), sides with the majority view: "It would appear to be clear that the idea of combining and burning the Phoenix and the Turtle in this allegory of true love belongs to Chester, who wrote the main allegory, and that the pendent poems by Shakspere, Marston, Chapman, and Jonson are by way of honorary puffs. Since the subject was assigned, grammar school style, characteristically Shakspere turned to Ovid for his Turtle, and there was directed to Lactantius for his Phoenix, if he did not himself know where to turn. This occasion and method of construction would settle also the approximate date of Shakspere's poem as not very long before publication in 1601" (p. 374).

In sum, then, what is one to make of these questions of authenticity and date of composition? With respect to the latter, it is a matter of pure speculation. In the absence of any other evidence, one must assume with the majority that Shakespeare wrote the poem sometime in 1600 or 1601. There is more to be said concerning the poem's authenticity: certainly there is the factual appeal of Chambrun's observation that "the printer's device on 'Love's Martyr' is that of Richard Field, the poet's comrade in Stratford and his

first publisher in London. I need hardly repeat that 'Venus and Adonis' and 'The Rape of Lucrece' were brought out in 1593 and 1594 respectively by this same Richard Field. . . . If there was one printer in the world who was fully qualified to know a poem of William Shakespeare when he saw it, that man was Richard Field, the Stratford tanner's son." But if printer's evidence need not be telling, then perhaps Sir Gurney Benham's observation serves here: "It is a fascinating composition, which could scarcely have been produced by any but Shakespeare. It was twice published in his lifetime with his name appended." And one thinks also of Shakespeare the businessman and established poet. As Newdigate points out, "Chester's book was no piratical publication. Had [the lines] not been Shakespeare's, Marston (who wrote his own verses with Shakespeare's in front of him), Chapman and Jonson could none of them have been parties to a false attribution of the kind." This is good circumstantial evidence, but few critics would accept it as conclusive, simply because the poem is so different from the works safely assigned to the Shakespeare canon. The positive argument most often adduced is that 'no one else could have written it.' And yet the poem is so different that some informed critics have assigned it to the 'metaphysical' mode and called it Shakespeare's one attempt, in the words of Hazelton Spencer, "in the new crabbed style . . . to see what the world would make of it." These arguments, too, have a certain power. They point to intrinsic

differences in this Shakespeare entity as opposed to more usually invoked examples. And they admit that Shakespeare wrote the poem.

Perhaps the modern critic believes most in the likenesses he sees or is made to see. Conclusive proof of authorship may never be obtained. I believe with most commentators since 1919 that Shakespeare wrote the poem; and moreover, that the key to the stylistic differences of the poem is hinted at by Robert Ellrodt in his sensitive and informed article, "An Anatomy of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'" (Shakespeare Survey, XV [1962], 99-110), in which he remarks that "some awkwardness arising from compression may even be acknowledged: it is not infrequent in Shakespeare's rhymed verse of a more or less gnomic kind" (p. 107). Ellrodt's remark justly considers the fact that the poem is unusual to Shakespeare and yet not so unusual at all, and it has led the present writer to the consideration that no one has yet compared "The Phoenix and Turtle" to the songs in the plays: and yet it is to their strange concinnity and beauty that the poem must be compared. It is strange that among scores of interpretations of the poem, including some useful comparisons to the plays by recent critics, no one, including Mr. Ellrodt, has given space to a study of "The Phoenix and Turtle" that takes such 'rhymed verse of a more or less gnomic kind' into account. This will be attempted in Chapter Five of this thesis. The next step, however, is to discuss the obvious categories of scholarship. Let us begin

with those writers who have seen in the poem a personal allegory having biographical and historical substance.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1]Ed., A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare The Poems (Philadelphia and London, 1938). In the matter of texts, authenticity, and date of composition, Mr. Rollins has made laborious investigation unnecessary: he has done all the work up to 1936 or so, and it can be found on pp, 559-64 of The Poems. Accordingly only a quick review of that discussion is given below, and the reader who craves more coherent detail is referred to The Poems. Rollins was limited for space, however, and in a very few cases only, some enlargement of his discussion of "authenticity" was thought advisable.

[2]See Rollins, p. 327. Instead of "this," in his 1780 edition Malone had printed the: correct is "Twixt this Turtle and his Queene."

[3]His survey of course could not include the fine German translation by Hans Feist which appears on pp. 7, 9, and 11 of Heinrich Straumann's Phönix und Taube (Zürich, 1953).

[4]Rollins, p. 561. That which follows, aside from some expanded quotations in the cases of R. G. White and J. M. Robertson, is a skimming of Rollins; the reader is directed to Rollins' pp. 561-63 for references and a more complete summary.

[5]The notion of a "she-phoenix" goes back to Ovid, and it was an altogether common Renaissance version of the theme (see Appendix). The "he-turtle" was not unprecedented. Robert Ellrodt in his article "An Anatomy of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,'" Shakespeare Survey, XV (1962), 99-110, finds that the male turtle dove "appeared in one of the Two Pastorals 'made by Sir Philip Sidney upon his meeting with his two worthy friends and fellow poets, Sir Edward Dyer and M. Fulke Greville,' first published in Davison's Poetical Rhapsody (1602) [ed. Bullen, I, 22] but written much earlier" (p. 102). At any rate, as Rollins notes, "this notion [of a male turtle dove] was followed by Chester and is adopted by Jonson and Marston as well as by Shakespeare and Chapman" (p. 563).

[6]The fact is that it was not set forth as Chapman's work; and no one has challenged the authenticity of the lines in Love's Martyr over Chapman's signature.

According to T. W. Baldwin, On the Literary Genetics of Shakspere's Poems & Sonnets (Urbana, 1950), in Shakespeare's poem "the turtle saw a flaming love 'in the phoenix' sight.' As her beams flowed to him, so his beams flowed to her, 'Either was the other's mine.' Chapman later uses this same figure of bodies as mines for souls.

So though our soules beames, digge in bodies Mines,
To finde them rich discourses, through their Senses.

[Chapman, G., Euthymiae Raptus; or The Tears of Peace (1609), p. E2v; Bartlett, P. B., The Poems of George Chapman, p. 195.] But with Chapman each soul mines its own body through its own senses, while in Shakspere each soul mines the other through the eyes, since through them the two were but one" (pp. 374-75).

Baldwin's discussion usefully takes note of the writings of Castiglione.

[7]Miss White's letter contains some relevant information on the sources of Chester's poem.

[8]Mention is made in Kenneth Muir and Sean O'Loughlin's The Voyage to Illyria, A New Study of Shakespeare (London, 1937), that Venus and Adonis "was written in 1592, a year when the plague led to the closing of the theatres, and it was printed by Richard Field, a fellow townsman of Shakespeare" (p. 51).

Sir Sidney Lee in his Life of William Shakespeare, sixth edition (London, 1908), agrees that Richard Field published "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece," but says that Shakespeare's name was put to one of the "essaies" in Chester's poem "which was published by Edward Blount" (p. 190). In another place, Lee remarks that Edward Blount "had published that curious collection of mystical verse entitled 'Love's Martyr,' one poem in which, 'a poetical essay of the Phoenix and the Turtle,' was signed 'William Shakespeare.'" Lee takes pains to show that Shakespeare was not interested in promoting his works, certainly not the Sonnets. "Shakespeare, except in the case of his two narrative poems, showed utter indifference to all questions touching the publication of his works. Of the sixteen plays of his that were published in his lifetime, not one was printed with his sanction. He made no audible protest when seven contemptible dramas in which he had no hand were published with his name or initials on the title-page while his fame was at its height. With only one publisher of his time, Richard Field, his fellow-townsman, who was responsible for the issue of 'Venus' and 'Lucrece,' is it likely that he came into personal relations, and there is nothing to show that he maintained relations with Field after the publication of 'Lucrece' in 1594" (p. 412). "The publisher Edward Blount [a friend of Marlowe's], who subsequently played a chief part in the production of the First Folio, obtained a license for the publication of 'Pericles' on May 20, 1608" (p. 253). "The First Folio was doubtless printed in Jaggard's printing office near St. Dunstan's Church. Upon Blount probably fell the chief labour of seeing the work through the press. . . . The only play by Shakespeare that had been previously published and was not

included in the First Folio was 'Pericles'. . . . The book [First Folio] was described on the title page as published by Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard, and in the colophon as printed at the charges of 'W. Jaggard, I. Smithweeke, and W. Aspley,' as well as by Blount [Cf. Bibliographica, i, 489 seq.]. On the title page was engraved the Droeshout portrait" (pp. 316-18). Comparing Thorpe the publisher with Blount, Lee concludes that the latter "had already achieved a modest success in the same capacity of procurer or picker-up of neglected 'copy.' In 1598 he became proprietor of Marlowe's unfinished and unpublished 'Hero and Leander,' and found among better-equipped friends in the trade both a printer and a publisher for his treasure-trove" (pp. 409-10).

The difference of opinion does not, it seems to me, argue against the poem's authenticity. Chambrun thinks that the publisher Field would know a Shakespeare poem when he saw it, and I submit that Edward Blount, the friend of Marlowe and his circle, would have known Shakespeare's work as surely: for additional evidence, we have the vast body of Shakespearian works published under Blount's guidance: that is, both of the printers who have been suggested as cognoscenti of Shakespeare would appear to fit the bill, and Chambrun's point is still worth what it is worth.

[9]One wonders, then, given the peculiar separation of prelude and anthem from "Threnos," the latter only with Shakespeare's name to it,--did in fact Shakespeare write only the threne, after having been furnished the foregoing lines by one of the other poets involved in the project? That would explain the strange scheme of the stanzas: Shakespeare takes over someone else's poem in quatrains and gives it a personal turn by continuing in tercets--in the process developing the thought implicit in the earlier lines--and labels it "Threnos" to doubly underscore the separation. The printer Field is aware of this and his knowledge is reflected in the subscription "William Shakespeare" after the "Threnos." In the process, Shakespeare touches up the previous thirteen quatrains, as he may have touched up the 'Ignoto' portion [Newdigate in his 1937 edition of the poem suggests Donne as author, p. xxii] and what we have in "The Phoenix and Turtle" is a mixture of Shakespeare the editor-poet, and another poet. The idea has a certain negative appeal.

[10]F. T. Prince, unless I have somehow missed it, makes no mention of any question of authenticity in his Arden Edition of The Poems (London, 1960). Certainly he assumes that Shakespeare wrote "The Phoenix and Turtle."

[11]The Phoenix and the Turtle, Shakespeare's Poem and Chester's Loues Martyr, Studies in English Literature, I (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), p. 17.

[12](Zurich, 1953), p. 15. "The sonnets, also, were not published at his behest. But the case is different with the verse epics 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece' of 1593 and 1594, which the poet carefully prepared for the press, and added attached a dedication to one of the most famous personalities of the public life of that time, namely, the Earl of Southampton. Therefore it is really of considerable importance that the only other work which apparently came to printing with Shakespeare's will and wish is our poem." It would appear that Straumann's statement overstates the evidence of Shakespeare's connection with the Chester venture: that is, Straumann assumes in the absence of any other hard facts that Shakespeare's signature after the "Threnos" indicates his "will and wish" that the entire poem of eighteen stanzas be ascribed to him. We may be sympathetic to the view, but as a flat statement it is too sanguine.

[13]"The Sense of Poetry: Shakespeare's 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,'" Daedalus, LXXXVII, iii (1958), 86-94. P. 86.

[14]"The Poems," Shakespeare Survey, XV (1962), 18-30; p. 18. "Yet for many readers," writes Lever (p. 25), "The Phoenix and The Turtle has seemed to contain in its eighteen terse stanzas the quintessence of Shakespeare."

[15]The Art and Life of William Shakespeare (New York, 1940), p. 55.

[16]Mr. Shakespeare of The Globe (New York, 1941), pp. 181-82.

[17]Matchett has already discredited its consistency, and one has become aware of a churning motion to his explication.

[18]"The Phoenix and the Turtle," Essays in Criticism (Oxford), XVI (1966), 147-53.

[19]It is Empson's notion that the collection was indeed prepared for Sir John Salusbury, and that "the book was hurried out to celebrate Sir John's knighthood [1601], before he went home to make use of it; to save time, the book was not registered; and there could be no danger of the Queen suspecting it referred to her relations with Essex, as she was rewarding Sir John for his loyalty" (p. 148).

A different emphasis is supplied by Carleton F. Brown [see our Chapter Two, below], ed., Poems by Sir John Salusbury and Robert Chester, EETS (London, 1914), who theorizes that Chester's poem refers to the marriage of Sir John Salusbury and Ursula Stanley in 1586, and to the birth of their daughter Jane in 1587. Brown concludes that Chester's poem "must have been written more than a decade before its publication in 1601" (p. lxix).

CHAPTER TWO

THE POEM AS ALLEGORY

"The Phoenix and Turtle" first appeared in 1601 as part of a collection, Love's Martyr by Robert Chester; for this reason there has been a natural tendency on the part of many critics and scholars to relate Shakespeare's poem to the occasion and allegory of Chester's poem dedicated to Sir John Salusbury. It is convenient to call these men the "Chester commentators": they stress the probability that a personal allegory was carried over into Shakespeare's contribution. In general, as one surveys the accumulated scholarship, he observes on the one hand a critical tendency to relate the poem to Chester's, and a counter-tendency to treat it independently; the same situation obtains among historical and other personal allegory explanations of "The Phoenix and Turtle." That is, there are theories of personal allegory which treat Shakespeare's poem in vacuo, as we shall see, and others that have Chester, the Sonnets, or some other reference in mind.

I

Perhaps it is best to begin with the "Chester commentators" because there are so many of them to be heard from; this will necessitate a brief summary of Robert Chester's

poem. A good synopsis is Thomas P. Harrison's:[1]

> Love's Martyr begins as Dame Nature pleads the cause of the Phoenix before the court of the gods. The beauty of the Arabian Phoenix she elaborately describes in terms of womanly perfection, and she begs that this peerless creature be not suffered to perish without offspring. Won by her plea, Jove directs Nature to descend to earth and to take the Phoenix to the island of Paphos,[2] the home of the Turtle-dove, who is described as,
>
> true Honors lovely Squire,
> That for this Phoenix keepes Prometheus fire . . .
> And of their Ashes by my doome shal rise,
> Another Phoenix her to equalize.
>
> Descending to Arabia, Dame Nature finds the Phoenix in great dejection, lamenting that she "must never [be] with a poore yong Turtle graced." Her beauty is unavailing since she is persecuted by Envy, Malice, and Suspicion. After Nature exorcises the Monster Envy, who is driven from the spot, she now promises better fortune to the Phoenix on 'Paphos Ile,' where the Turtle-dove has a nest. They set out on their flight 'Over the Semi-circle of Europa' and, arriving in England, view her cities, whose history Nature relates as they pass over. The mention of Windsor suggests King Arthur, who completed the building, and then follows the protracted story of Arthur, his birth, his life, his conquests, his death. 'And now, to where we left,' announces Chester. The two travelers at length alight
>
> neere to that Ile
> In whose deep bottom plaines Delight doth smile.
>
> The Phoenix is entranced by the beauty of the island, its rivers, mountains, flowers, fruits. Then come descriptive catalogues of fish--both salt and freshwater, of precious stones, and of beasts, reptiles and birds.
>
> Presently the Phoenix catches sight of the Turtle:
>
> But what sad-mournefull drooping soule is this,
> Within whose watry eyes sit discontent, . . .
> From whom is banisht sporting Meriment, . . .
> Whose features mowt off, falling as he goes,
> The perfect picture of hart pining woes?
>
> Nature replies that it is the Turtle-Dove:

And thus he wanders seeking of his loue,
Refusing all things that may yeeld reliefe, . . .
And this will prove companion of your mone.

Nature now withdraws, and, left to themselves, the Phoenix and Turtle comfort one another with the story of their sorrows. The Turtle explains:

My teares are for my Turtle that is dead,
My sorrow springs from her want that is gone,
My heavie note sounds for the soule that's fled,
And I will dye for him [sic] left all alone.

The Phoenix is sympathetic:

I will beare
Halfe of the burdenous yoke thou dost sustaine. . . .
Thou shalt not be no more the Turtle-Doue, . . .
For thou shalt be my selfe, my perfect Loue,
Thy griefe is mine, thy sorrow is my mone.

Mutually agreeing, the two birds now decide to burn their bodies upon a pyre. Their purpose is 'to revive one name.' As the flame rises, the Turtle enters first, then the Phoenix.

And thus I end the Turtle Doues true story.

The 'finis R. C.' which follows, suggests that the poem originally ended at this point. But now, with a change in metre to the couplet, follows a funereal and moralizing speech by the Pelican, who concludes:

If that the Phoenix had bene separated . . .
Loue had bene murdered in the infancie . . .
That no sinister chance should hinder loue.
Learne thou corrupted world, learne, heare, and see
Friendships vnspotted true sincerity.

Separately now a so-called 'Conclusion' announces the birth of a new Phoenix:

From the sweet fire of perfumed wood
Another princely Phoenix upright stood
Whose feathers purified did yeeld more light
Then her late burned mother out of sight.
And in her heart restes a perpetuall loue,
Sprong from the bosome of the Turtle-doue.
Long may the new vprising bird increase,
Some humours and some motions to release,
And thus to all I offer my devotion,
Hoping that gentle minds accept my motion.

> Two long series of erotic verses, 'Cantoes Alphabet-wise' and 'Cantos Verbally written,' conclude the Chester part of the volume and precede the 'Poeticall Essaies,' which are introduced with a separate title-page. The 'cantoes' have no bearing upon the theme of Love's Martyr and hence are omitted from subsequent considerations. They appear to concern another subject and, like some parts of the longer poem, may possibly be the work of Sir John Salisbury, Chester's patron and a versifier in his own right. (pp. 66-69)

It is sufficient to say of Chester's work, including the lines possibly by Salusbury, that it is awful. The only commentator who has seen any beauty in it, to my knowledge, is G. Wilson Knight, who remarks of the concluding cantos that "Shakespeare may, indeed, have written, or doctored some of it. Even parts of the main narrative are not unworthy of him" (The Mutual Flame, [London, 1962], p. 174). Others, as Wilson Knight notes on that page, have seen similarities; but in a timid way, one would add, as if they stood before a portrait by Dwight Eisenhower and muttered something about Velasquez.

The first "Chester commentator" was the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart. In Rollins' summary, "GROSART, editing Robert Chester's 'Love's Martyr' for the New Shakespeare Society in 1878," tried to get at the poem's meaning in pp. xliii-xlv: "'Who were meant by the "Phoenix" and the "Turtle-dove" of these Poems? I must hold it as demonstrated, that the "Phoenix" was Elizabeth and the "Turtle Dove" Essex. . . . Our interpretation . . . is the more weighty and important, in that it for the first time enables us to understand Shakespeare's priceless and unique "Phoenix and Turtle". . .

[which] has universal elements in it at once of thinking, emotion and form. . . . I discern a sense of personal heart-ache and loss in these sifted and attuned stanzas, unutterably precious. . . . It seems to me unmistakable that ROBERT CHESTER, as a follower not to say partizan of Essex,[3] designed his Love's Martyr as his [i.e. Chester's] message on the consummation of the tragedy of his [i.e. Essex'] beheading. . . . [P. lvi. In the additional poems] we have SHAKESPEARE, BEN JONSON, GEORGE CHAPMAN, JOHN MARSTON and others (anonymous), siding (so-to-say) with Robert Chester in doing honour to Essex. . . .[pp. lviii f.] The fact of such a contribution by him [Shakespeare] is, in itself, noticeable. For while Ben Jonson and Chapman and others contemporary lavished their "Commendatory Verses," Shakespeare, with this solitary exception, wrote none as he sought none. This surely imparts special significance to the exception. Internally, the "Phoenix and Turtle" is on the same lines with Love's Martyr. To my mind there is pathos in the lament over the "Tragique Scene." . . . In the Threnos, Shakespeare regards not the beheaded Essex only, but his "Phoenix" too as dead. . . . All this, be it noted, fits in with the "allegorical shadowing" of Love's Martyr; for therein BOTH die. . . . [pp. lx f.] There might indeed be policy and wariness alike in Chester and Shakespeare in such representation. Let the reader take with him the golden key that by the "Phoenix" Shakespeare intended Elizabeth, and by the "Dove" Essex, and the "Phoenix and

Turtle," hitherto regarded as a mere enigmatical epicedial lay . . . will be recognized as of rarest interest. I cannot say that I see my way through it all--st. 5 . . . I do not quite understand; but it is a mere accident of the poem [!]. But I do see that Shakespeare went with Robert Chester in grief for Essex, and in sad-heartedness that the "truth of love" had not beer accomplished.' Grosart's 'evidence' has been thoroughly discredited by Furnivall and others," adds Rollins, while noting (p. 569) that Grosart never admitted defeat. Rollins continues: "[F. J.] FURNIVALL (New Shakespeare Society's Transactions, 1877-9, pp. 454 f.) paraphrased some of it thus: 'Elizabeth having had Essex's head cut off, Shakspere writes her a poem saying, in fact, that this head-off-cutting was an entire delusion; the truth was, that she really so lov'd Essex, was so one with him, that she died with him, was his wife, and only had no children by him because of their "married chastity."' He [Furnivall] decided that 'the muddle of Chester's poem seems to me too great to be untangled. But if the poets whose Essaies follow his, meant Elizabeth by their Phoenix, I believe their Turtle-Dove was a mythic man, invented to live and die with her.' Nearly all later scholars have mentioned Grosart's theory only to ridicule it," observes Rollins, but he mentions (p. 569 n.) exceptions, "the Baconians, like WALTER BEGLEY (Is It Shakespeare?, 1903, pp. 167, 288) and E. G. HARMAN ('Impersonality' of Shakespeare, 1925, pp. 111-22) . . . . According to the former (p. 288), 'the best

scholars are agreed that the Phoenix = Elizabeth and the Turtle = Essex.' The COMTESSE DE CHAMBRUN (Shakespeare, Actor-Poet, p. 196) in 1927 was convinced that in the P. & T. Shakespeare 'commemorated his loving admiration for Robert Devereux'; but by 1935, as shown above, she had changed her mind." Adherents of the Essex theory, according to Rollins (p. 569), do exist: "[Charlotte] PORTER (ed. 1912, p. 287) grants that the P. & T. may have 'an undercurrent of allusion to Elizabeth and Essex,' while C. R. HAINES (Quarterly Review, Jan., 1922, p. 4) apparently adopts Grosart's views when he remarks that 'Shakespeare seems to have had an admiration for Essex, which he showed in "Henry V" and in the "Phoenix and Turtle".'" Also on his p. 569, Rollins quotes a cautious view of the controversy, that of " [J. O.] HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS (Outlines, 1882, p. 126) . . .'It is generally thought that Chester himself intended a personal allegory, but, if that be the case, there is nothing to indicate that Shakespeare participated in the design, nor even that he had endured the punishment of reading Love's Martyr.'"

The next major "Chester commentator" is Carleton F. Brown, whose important findings are well summarized on Rollins' pp. 575-77: "BROWN (Poems by Salusbury and Chester, 1913) presents many new facts about the life of Sir John Salusbury of Lleweni, Denbighshire (1566?-1612), and about two manuscripts at Christ Church, Oxford, containing (p. xxvii) 'Welsh verse composed by various bards in praise

of members of the Salusbury family' and English verses by Salusbury himself, Chester, Jonson, and others. Though he was unsuccessful (pp. lii-liv) 'in discovering who Robert Chester was, the Christ Church MS. gives us much additional information concerning his relationship to . . . Sir John Salusbury. His poems in this MS. . . . were clearly written in the neighbourhood of Lleweni, the seat of the Salusburys in Denbighshire,' and many deal with Sir John's relatives. 'Chester may have been installed in the Salusbury household . . . as family chaplain. . . . He was in any case a person of humble social station and his relation toward his patron, though familiar, was always that of a dependant. . . . The recognition that . . . Chester was merely a satellite and dependant, helps us to understand how the publication of Loves Martyr . . . must have come about. Chester himself would hardly have been able to secure contributions from Shakspere, Jonson, and the others, to grace his volume. On the other hand, Salusbury, with the rank of a Knight and with his position as Esquire of the body to Elizabeth, would meet with no difficulty in soliciting these poems. . . . One may most easily account for the publication of Loves Martyr, then, by supposing that Sir John Salusbury, in order to gratify the literary ambition of Chester, who was his friend as well as his dependant, took the MS. . . . to London, asked a few of the most prominent poets . . . to lend their names and verses to the success of the volume, and then sent it to the printer.'"

At this point, Rollins summarizes Brown's synopsis of the poem and its allegory, continuing, "Brown argues (pp. lix f.) that 'the meeting of the Turtle and Phoenix is intended to represent a nuptial union,' and that the flame into which they plunged 'was kindled by the torch of Hymen'; in other words, that Chester is referring to the marriage of Salusbury and Ursula Stanley [natural daughter of Henry Stanley, fourth Earl of Derby] in December, 1586, and the birth of the female Phoenix, their daughter Jane, in October, 1587. Hence (p. lxix) 'Loves Martyr--or at least that portion of it which is concerned with the story of the Turtle and Phoenix--must have been written more than a decade before its publication in 1601. . . . Harry [Salusbury], the next child, was born in September, 1589, but the poem makes no reference to any male issue of the Turtle and Phoenix . . . although one readily sees that the birth of a second child would have been difficult to reconcile with the allegory of the Phoenix.' The poems signed 'Vatum Chorus' (p. lxxi) 'suggest that Sir John Salusbury was not only the person to whom the 'Essaies' were dedicated . . . but that he was also the subject of them. When we return to the 'Essaies' themselves we note the tone of friendly regard in which several of the poets refer to the Turtle-dove, as to a familiar acquaintance. Particularly is this the case with Ben Jonson. . . . It is clear that to Jonson both Turtle and Phoenix were living persons--man and wife--with whom he stood on terms of acquaintance, perhaps even friendship.[4] . . .

Marston's contribution differs from all the others in singing the praises "of a most exact wondrous creature, arising out of the Phoenix and Turtle Doues ashes." This creature was, of course, the "princely Phoenix" whose birth Chester announced in his "Conclusion" . . . [and who], he informs us, "now is growne vnto maturitie" [i.e. Jane Salusbury, who was fourteen in 1601] . . . . [pp. lxxii f.] Shakspere differs essentially in his treatment of the allegory from the other members of the "Chorus Vatum" and also from Robert Chester. . . . In his poem the note from first to last is funereal. A Requiem is sung for the Phoenix and Turtle; and over the urn which encloses their ashes is pronounced a Threnos. . . . Again, though the central point in the myth of the Phoenix is the resurrection from the ashes, Shakspere holds out no such hope for either the Phoenix or Turtle. . . . [The third stanza of the 'Threnos'] is especially remarkable, for it flatly contradicts Marston and Chester, both of whom . . . give account of a fair creature which issued from the ashes of the Phoenix. To reconcile Shakspere's allegory either with Loves Martyr or with the other "Poetical Essaies" is thus manifestly impossible. Also, besides these contradictions in matters of fact, his lines contrast sharply with the other poems in their detached and impersonal tone. One searches in vain for any such familiarity as is displayed in Ben Jonson's reference to "our Doue." The Turtle and Phoenix are declared "Co-supremes and starres of Loue," but their love is set forth in abstract and philosophical terms.

Indeed, in spite of its ingenuity and its epigrammatic brilliance, the poem as a whole impresses one as frigid and perfunctory.' This coldness cannot be fully accounted for by the conventionality of the figures employed. 'The answer which readily suggests itself is, that Shakspere's relations with Sir John Salusbury were less close than those of Jonson, Marston, and Chapman, so that his lines on the Phoenix and Turtle were a matter of courteous compliance rather than a tribute to a personal friend. The complete absence of personal allusion which one notes with surprise in Shakspere's contribution is satisfactorily explained only on this hypothesis.'"

Brown's remarks have had considerable influence. As Mr. Rollins writes (p. 577), "[C. H.] HERFORD (Sketch, 1923, p. 25) accepts Brown's interpretation. So does [J. Q.] ADAMS (Life, 1923, pp. 341 f.), with the added suggestion that 'Shakespeare seems not to have read Chester's tedious poem far enough to have unraveled its cryptic meaning. . . . Accordingly, in his haste jumping to the conclusion that the two birds died in reality "leaving no posterity," he wrote a graceful funeral song, in which, in the metaphysical style of John Donne, he played with the ideas that marriage makes two into one and that "One is no number."' Just so in the opinion of [Albert] FEUILLERAT (ed. 1927, p. 182): 'Shakespeare alone of all the contributors does not seem to have clearly understood . . . the real meaning of the allegory.' On the other hand, [Sir Sidney] LEE (Life, 1916,

pp. 272 f.) thinks that 'the internal evidence scarcely justifies the conclusion that Shakespeare's poem . . . was penned for Chester's book. . . . The resemblances with the verses of Chester and his other coadjutors are specious and superficial and Shakespeare's piece would seem to have been admitted to the miscellany at the solicitation of friends who were bent on paying as comprehensive a compliment as possible to Sir John Salusbury.'

"Such, too," continues Mr. Rollins (p. 577), "is the position of [Sir Israel] GOLLANCZ, chronicling (T.L.S., Jan. 26, 1922, p. 56) his discovery of 'a manuscript volume of over 170 leaves belonging to the early seventeenth century,' which contains plays, poems, and other items largely by members of the Salusbury family. Among them are verses congratulating Heming and Condell upon their publishing of Shakespeare's First Folio in 1623, possibly written by Sir John Salusbury's eldest son, Henry. Gollancz gives his conclusions as follows: 'Although certain baffling problems in respect of Shakespeare's poem still remain undetermined, we may be sure that Chester's Phoenix and Turtle stood for Ursula Stanley and Sir John Salusbury, and that his allegory had reference to their marriage [Brown's view]. Shakespeare's poem, however, in its purport seems so utterly apart from the other poems in the collection as to lead to the impression that, though added to the volume, it may have been originally written as an elegaic poem on some other love-story--a Phoenix and Turtle united in death, and "leaving

no posterity." Sir John Salusbury . . . evidently held a recognized position as poet and patron of poets. . . . We may safely infer that Sir John Salusbury was known to Shakespeare, and that the poet was willing to help forward Salusbury's protege, Robert Chester, . . . [by penning] a poem on some theme of "The Phoenix and Turtle," or to allow a poem already written for some other purpose to figure among the compositions consecrated' to Salusbury. In a later article on the same manuscript (T.L.S., Oct. 8, 1925, p. 655) Gollancz announces that he has found another version of the ode Jonson contributed to Love's Martyr[5] with an entirely different 'Prelude': 'The great Ode had certainly circulated in manuscript before the appearance of "Love's Martyr" in 1601. The last line . . . is quoted in "England's Parnassus," 1600 [ed. Crawford, p. 198].' 'Whatever may have been the relationship between Shakespeare and the Salusbury family, it is safe to assert that Sir John Salusbury, his son Sir Henry, and his grandson Sir Thomas were proud to number Ben Jonson among their cherished friends'" (pp. 577-78).

In general, one sees that Grosart, the first "Chester commentator," usefully directed attention to the framework in which Shakespeare's poem appeared--Chester's collection--and to the implicit thematic links of its imagery and allegory as displayed in the other poetical essays. Too often, for example, commentators forget that it was Chester who made the Phoenix female and the Turtle male. Furnivall

disputed Grosart's theory and Carleton Brown seemingly laid it to rest. Brown's careful scholarship held the field for the next twenty years and more, and any chinks in the armor of his theory went unnoticed. Mr. Rollins resumes his summary (p. 578) as follows: "[Frank] MATHEW (Image of Shakespeare, 1922, pp. 114 f.) comments on Brown's thesis: 'The title page [of Love's Martyr] . . . has been taken as meaning that Sir John Salisbury and his wife were the Turtle and the Phoenix, and this may have been an old view, for Father Henry More, telling a ghost-story in his History of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, written in 1660, says "Lord Stourton called his wife, a daughter of Edward, Earl of Derby, and sister to the Stanley whose epitaph Shakespeare wrote." . . . Father Henry More may have thought that Poems must be founded on fact, and (if he referred to this Poem) he was probably wrong in thinking that Ursula Stanley and Anne Lady Stourton were sisters. This Poem was stated to be a poetical essay written on a particular theme, and this dedication to Salisbury may have been merely a compliment without any reference to his private affairs. If Shakespeare wrote these beautiful Verses he never wrote anything else like them.[6] . . . He may have echoed Donne's brooding austerity. This is one of Donne's themes, as in The Relic, and in The Funeral in which he described himself as Love's Martyr. This Poem (if indeed it is Shakespeare's)[7] could not have been written by him when he was young enough and foolish enough to write' the

narrative poems and the early sonnets." The German scholar Max Wolff will be mentioned under our consideration of source studies in Chapter Three; but another of his short pronouncements has to do with the Carleton Brown thesis, and as summarized by Rollins (p. 582) it is given here: "WOLFF (E.S., 1932, LXVII, 159) sees a literary allegory involved. He argues (what nobody doubts) that one of the significations of the phoenix was feminine chastity, and that Queen Elizabeth was often associated with the fabulous bird; and refers to a medal struck during her reign which bore on one side an image of the queen, on the other a representation of the phoenix with certain Latin verses [See Appendix, n. 27.]. All of which is interpreted as evidence that Shakespeare's Phoenix is Queen Elizabeth, his Turtle Sir John Salusbury. How this interpretation squares with Chester's own poem is not clear."

Up to 1936, much of the commentary on Chester's and the additional poems as they related to "The Phoenix and Turtle," harked back to Grosart, Furnivall, and especially to Brown. The assertions of Bernard H. Newdigate changed all that. "In 1936," writes Rollins (pp. 582-83), "an entirely new interpretation was made by NEWDIGATE (Jonson's Poems, pp. 365 f.)." (Essentially the same view is set forth by Newdigate in his edition of The Phoenix & Turtle [Oxford, 1937], pp. xviii-xxiv; this little book contains all of the poetical essays, printed as they first appeared.) In the Jonson edition, Newdigate "calls attention to a copy of

Jonson's Love's Martyr ode in Bodley MS. Rawl. Poet. 31: '[It] is headed To: L: C: Of: B:; and she can be no other than Lucy Harington, who in December 1594 married the 3rd earl of Bedford. That affords ground for believing that the Phoenix of Loves Martyr and Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and Turtle" is the brilliant figure on whom Drayton, Chapman, Florio, Daniel, Jonson and Donne lavished their praises and their flattery. No one is more likely than Jonson himself to have brought this vatum chorus together; and the "Invocatio" and the lines to Sir John Salisbury are perhaps his work with or without the collaboration of the others. . . . Loves Martyr, or rather the story of the Phoenix and Turtle which is there told, is an allegory of married love. It ends with the mating of the two birds and the birth of a new phoenix. The allegory perhaps bears upon the married relations of the earl of Bedford and his countess and the hope of an heir. Lucy was only fourteen years old at her marriage in 1594. There was no child till February 1601, when a son was born, who died soon after his birth.' In his preface (p. x) Newdigate remarks that 'if we can accept the ascription of the MS.' the Phoenix of Jonson's poem 'was the countess of Bedford. If she is the Phoenix of Jonson's contribution to Loves Martyr, then she is the Phoenix of Chester's poem also and of the poems which follow it, including Shakespeare's The Phoenix and Turtle. The interpretation of Shakespeare's poem is a problem which has hitherto baffled all the scholars.' These if's (especially the second) seem to me

formidable obstacles in the way of accepting Newdigate's theory, but possibly he will remove all doubts in a promised book"--this may be The Phoenix & Turtle, the 1937 edition of the poetical essays mentioned above--"in which 'whatever evidence is forthcoming' will be discussed." In a note (p. 583), Rollins indicates that "Newdigate has repeated his conjectures in an essay, 'The Phoenix and Turtle. Was Lady Bedford the Phoenix,' T.L.S., Oct. 24, 1936, p. 862, and in letters printed in the same, Nov. 28, 1936, p. 996, and Feb. 20, 1937, p. 131. But his theory, at any rate so far as concerns Shakespeare, is still unproved. For some objections to it see the letter in the same, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 111, by R. W. SHORT."

What Professor Short has to say is this: "Jonson's 'Ode [Enthousiastiké]' was not the only one of his poems in 'Loves Martyr' to appear in two connexions. The earlier version of the 'Preludium' [the first of Jonson's four poetical essays] mentioned by Mr. Newdigate has been shown by Sir Israel Gollancz (The Times Literary Supplement, October 8, 1925) to have come out of the Salusbury Manuscript in the National Library of Wales, there too introducing 'Epos,' in an earlier version with interesting variations. Some of these variations are singular pronouns of the first person for the plurals in the 'Loves Martyr' version, 'And must I sing?' for 'We must sing too?' &c. These substitutions may indicate that Jonson revised an old poem for the new occasion. If he had been the means, as Mr. Newdigate

suggests ('Poems,' p. ix), of rounding up the vatum chorus, what more natural than the change of 'I, my' to 'We, our'? Possibly the 'Ode [Enthousiastiké]' is another poem in the medley which was not written to Chester's Phoenix, but was included only because it employed the common Phoenix motif."

Short continues at length:

> Chester could hardly have written 'Loves Martyr' in praise of the Bedfords, for he claimed to write only for Salusbury. A poem of 1598 among the Christ Church manuscripts says:--
>
> Therefore to thee sole patron of my good,
> I proffer vp the proffer of my hart,
> my vndeserved favoures vnderstood,
> to thee and none but thee I will impart.
>
> This is followed by a stanza of revulsion against the kind of flattery which through necessity 'shall goe from dore to dore.' The dedication of 'Loves Martyr' reads:--'To the Honorable, and (of me before all other) honored Knight, Sir John Salisburie . . . I am emboldened to put my infant wit to the eye of the world vnder your protection.' Following directly 'The Authors request to the Phoenix' connects this devotion with the Phoenix:
>
> Phoenix of beautie, beauteous Bird of any
> To thee I do entitle all my labour.
>
> Chester would hardly have said this if the Phoenix were any but the wife of his patron. Note that the second contribution by vatum chorus, naming Salusbury, echoes Chester's statement:
>
> Our rhymes
> Wherein Kind, Learned, Enuious, al may view,
> That we haue writ worthy our selues and you.
>
> Thus the poets have linked Salusbury with their allegory. Salusbury's wife was Ursula, illegitimate but recognized daughter of Henry, the fourth earl [of Derby]. She was described by the poet Danielle [sic] in terms reminiscent of Chester's Phoenix:--
>
> Ffrom princely blood & Ryale stocke she came
> of egles brood hatcht in a loftie nest
> The earle of derby & the kinge of manne
> her father was her brother now possest

> Then hapie he but thris more hapie's shee
> to mache her self with lovely Salusbury.

The poet goes on to say: 'Like turtles true so doth this cuple buyld.'

Continuing, Short indicates that much of the basis of his objection to Newdigate's theory is inherent in the scholarship of Carleton Brown.

> Salusbury beyond question not only belonged to the camp of Essex's enemies, but suffered persecution from the strong nest of Essex followers in his county, Denbigh (see Brown, pp. xv seq.). The Bedfords found their closest friends on the other side, in Southampton, Rutland, and the members of the Essex family. John Harington, the epigrammatist, cousin of the Countess, was knighted by Essex in Ireland. On the sabbath of the revolt, Essex's sister, Penelope Riche, hurried by coach to fetch Bedford from his morning prayers to join the confused throng at Essex House. It does not, therefore, seem likely that the Salusburys and the Bedfords would be yoked together in such a tribute as 'Loves Martyr.'[8]
>
> One doubts the advantage of attempting narrowly to interpret the complex allegory of Chester's poem. A great deal in it is applicable to any of the dozen great Elizabethan patronesses of literature, most of whom, incidentally, were at some time or other compared to the Phoenix. Yet certain emphasized points seem more clearly than others to refer to facts. One is the question of the Phoenix's progeny. When Chester's 'long expected labour' came out, Ursula Stanley had been married sixteen years, the Countess of Bedford seven years. The former had several children, the eldest a daughter in her fifteenth year; the latter was childless. Chester begins his story with the wooing of the Phoenix and the Dove, dwelling upon the world's high hopes that there be offspring. The 'Conclusion' triumphantly states:--
>
> > From the sweet fire of perfumed wood,
> > Another princely Phoenix vpright stood:
> > Whose feathers purified did yeeld more light,
> > Then her late burned mother out of sight,
> > And in her heart rests a perpetuall loue,
> > Sprong from the bosome of the Turtle-Doue.
> > Long may the new vprising bird increase. . . .

Marston's 'Hymnus' to the 'wondrous creature, arising out of the Phoenix and Turtle Doues ashes' adds that the offspring 'now is growne vnto maturitie.' Even if Marston be describing, as Mr. Newdigate suggests, 'not a child who is to be born but a new perfection which is to be acquired by the pair of bird as the fruit of their union and sacrifice,' it would still appear that Chester's more pedestrian muse refers to a flesh and blood daughter of the union.

Shakespeare's famous contribution, however, flatly denies that his particular Phoenix had any posterity . . . . Sidney Lee comments:-- 'The resemblances with the verses of Chester and his other coadjutors are specious and superficial and Shakespeare's piece would seem to have been admitted to the miscellany at the solicitation of friends who were bent on paying as comprehensive a compliment as possible to Sir John Salisbury.' ('Life,' 1922, p. 272) I feel, moreover, that these lines neither tactfully nor accurately describe the childless plight of the Countess of Bedford. She longed for children, but was afflicted with some condition which made it impossible for her to bear healthy offspring. A son lived a month in 1602, a later daughter lived even a shorter time. Several miscarriages are known to have taken place. Certainly by 1601 she would have tried more than once to bear children. A reference in the Sidney Papers (i, 358) implying it was common knowledge that she tried in 1595, reads:-- 'My lady of Bedford is in town, and is said to be with Child.' If London knew the Countess was expecting a child, it must have surmised her failure. This is not conclusive, but strongly in line with the probabilities. Hence a sensitive poet would not have tried to flatter the Countess with a reference to 'infirmitie.'[9]

The following references in the allegory fit the Salusbury family, but I can find no parallels for them in the Bedford history; the Phoenix was allied to royalty; the Turtle did not come from England [Salusbury, of course, was from Wales]; marriage with the Phoenix solaced the Turtle for a recent bereavement; after marriage the Turtle was apparently unfaithful to the Phoenix [Salusbury fathered at least one illegitimate child]. The Earl of Bedford will be harder than his Countess to fit into the frame. Yet the Dove, in this allegory of a nuptial union, is fully as important as the Phoenix. Finally, I can find no evidence of any connexions between the Bedfords and either Salusbury or Chester.

Professor Short concludes with two suggestions: "Mr. Newdigate has left little room for doubt that Jonson addressed his 'Ode [Enthousiastiké]' to the Countess of Bedford. Might he not, however, have used it twice, perhaps trusting to the small circulation of 'Loves Martyr' to conceal his economy? Or, might he not have written it to the Countess, then added it to the anthology in the same spirit that he apparently redacted the 'Preludium' and 'Epos' to the same purpose? Like Shakespeare's poem, this one has little connexion with the rest of the volume; only the couplet:--

> Her breath for sweete exceeding
> The Phoenix place of breeding . . .

Either possibility would mean that Lucy Bedford was not the Phoenix of the whole volume." Mr. Newdigate's reply (T.L.S., Feb. 20, 1937, p. 131) scores few rebuttal points against Short, I think, but does attack the views of Carleton Brown. As Newdigate writes, "All are agreed that the theme of Chester's allegory is the mating of the Phoenix and Turtle, so that another Phoenix may be born. To make it fit his theory, Professor Carleton Brown argues that 'Loves Martyr' must have been written for the occasion of Salusbury's marriage with Ursula Stanley, which took place in 1586. By 1601, when the poem was printed, Ursula had become the mother of ten children. So Professor Brown is obliged to assume that the poem was kept in pickle for some fifteen years before it was printed."

G. Bonnard, in an early note (p. 66) to his article, "Shakespeare's Contribution to R. Chester's 'Love's Martyr'" (English Studies, XIX [1937], 66-69), places himself on the side of R. W. Short and against Newdigate's Bedford theory. He gives a brief history of Salusbury and suggests that the "pretentious person" Chester "collected all the verse he had been writing on all sorts of subjects for the last ten years, arranged it into what purposed to be a single composition, the avowed intent of which was to celebrate the marriage of Salisbury in 1587," and dedicated it to his "former Patron." Out of kindness or "mere foolish vanity," Salusbury determined to keep the volume afloat and "appears to have called upon some of his literary friends in London, all well-known poets, begging them to honour the volume with poems of their own. This they agreed to do. But instead of composing, according to custom, complimentary pieces on the author and his work,[10] they all penned verses celebrating Sir John himself, their generous friend and patron, and penned them with their tongues in their cheeks." As they humor Salusbury, the poets take their pleasure--a mocking intent Bonnard sees apparent in the "poeticall Essaies" title page. "All the poems that follow, by Shakespeare, Marston, Chapman, Jonson and another poet who signs 'Ignoto,' refer, in accordance with the title, to the subject of the Turtle and the Phoenix: to their marriage, that is to the death of the Phoenix, to their constancy in love, and to their reward in a new little phoenix their daughter" (p. 67). [This is not

true; the poem by Shakespeare denies issue.] The various poets "wrote in a spirit of rollicking fun, apparently enjoying the joke to the full. But prudently . . . they concealed their mockery under a pretence of high seriousness calculated to lead him [Salusbury] astray . . . and all the critics so far as I know." Bonnard sees Shakespeare drawing upon the death of Cock Robin, as in the nursery rhyme. There is a dirty joke in the anthem which refers to the consummation of love:

> no space was seen
> 'Twixt the turtle and his queen,

and the burden of the rest of Bonnard's article is that Shakespeare made fun of the suggestion that Sir John Salusbury had nothing to do with the birth of his daughter. In accordance with "married chastity," therefore, he and his bride must be killed off "before anything has happened." One must, in Bonnard's view, "assume that either [Salusbury] did not see the joke, or that, if he did, he was sensible enough to pretend he did not. Until his death ten years later, he remained on excellent terms with poets and players," an interest which "became a sort of tradition in his family for several generations. . . . His son, on the publication of the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays in 1623, addressed a few lines of congratulation . . . to Heminges and Condell." Bonnard's 'dirty joke' theory has gained no adherents.

As late as 1941, echoes of the Newdigate controversy were apparent in the pages of the Times Literary Supplement.

There was comment by an editor (July 19, p. 347) that Shakespeare's was "a complimentary poem" but complimentary "to whom? Scarcely, one would imagine, to poor, disgraced, dead Essex [Grosart's theory], whose intimate relation to the royal Phoenix, whatever it may have been, was certainly not 'married chastity.' Then, perhaps, to Sir John Salisbury of Lleweni and his wife? But they cannot have been themselves the turtle and the phoenix, for they had a daughter." At that point appeared the deliberate, conservative article by Sir Gurney Benham (July 19, 1941, p. 352; concluded July 26, p. 364) which makes early mention of Grosart's theory. After references to the medieval and classical folklore "about birds, beasts, fishes, trees, plants, flowers, insects and jewels" in Chester's "diffuse and incoherent poem--or rather series of poems--comprising more than ten thousand lines," Benham concludes that Chester, when he "does keep to his subject," wishes the Phoenix "to be identified with Queen Elizabeth. It is by no means equally clear that he intended the Turtle as Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, Queen Elizabeth's favourite. Dr. A. B. Grosart, who in 1878 edited a valuable reprint of 'Love's Martyr' for the New Shakspere Society, came to the conclusion (for the first time) that Chester undoubtedly intended Essex. Dr. Grosart expended learning and research on his work, but (as will be seen) his conclusions are often mistaken and misleading and must be read with caution. If Chester had any intention of denoting Essex, he disguised it. This does not rule out the

possibility that he had Essex in his mind. 'Love's Martyr' was published within a few months of the execution of Essex and it would have been unsafe to represent him as Love's martyr or any other kind of martyr. Popular opinion may have so regarded him. The Queen's favour to the Earl had long been common talk and many stories of her supposed infatuation have come down to us. Very many poets had likened Elizabeth to the Phoenix and had made her and themselves ludicrous by their excessive exaggeration of her supposed superlative beauty and attainments. The flattery was amusingly overdone and it is more than possible that the gossip was also much exaggerated. When Essex was executed the Queen was 68, thirty-four years his senior." Benham acknowledges another matter: "It may be noted that Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton, a close friend of Essex, had been involved in his insurrection and that in 1601 he was in prison in consequence. Shakespeare must have known both noblemen and was specially attached to Southampton. He did honour to Essex in the Chorus Prologue to the fifth Act of Henry V.[11] . . Southampton was at this time with Essex in Ireland." Pondering the Elizabeth-as-Phoenix question, Benham concludes that "Shakespeare was always chary in his compliments to Elizabeth. He did, perhaps, on one occasion (after her death) call her 'phoenix,' namely in the version of Henry VIII, reproduced early in the reign of James I. Archbishop Cranmer is represented as addressing the infant Princess Elizabeth, at her christening in 1533, in these words:

But, as when
The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix,
Her ashes new create another heir,
As great in admiration as herself,
So shall she leave her blessedness to one,
(When heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness)
Who, from the sacred ashes of her honour
Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was.

Benham adds: "It is not certain, however, that this topical compliment to James I was added by Shakespeare." Benham's conclusion to the article appears in the following week's Supplement (July 26, 1941, p. 364) and contains two surprises, the first being the implicit suggestion that Shakespeare supplied two poems: "The concluding fifteen-line poem, headed Threnos,[12] has no difficulty except perhaps:--

Leaving no posteritie
Twas not their infirmitie,
It was married chastitie.

. . . Shakespeare wished us to understand that this union of quintessence with quintessence, of transcendent perfection of spiritualized beauty with heavenly, pure and ideal love, was incompatible with ordinary human, mundane passions. To put this into three lines of eleven words involved obscurity. One can imagine the poet saying 'I have done my best in these three lines to express to you the inexpressible, and you must take them as you find them.'" The second surprise is biographical: "Not improbably he might have added that he did not believe fervently in them, but that a poet must be allowed to have his fling and that he was writing not merely to please himself but to gratify the whim of his somewhat unaccountable friend and patron, Sir Robert Chester." It will be remembered that Carleton Brown's investigation into

the identity of Robert Chester had resulted in his conclusion (p. liii) that the poet "Chester may have been installed in the Salusbury household, possibly . . . as family chaplain. . . . He was in any case a person of humble social station and his relation toward his patron [Salusbury], though familiar, was always that of a dependant." Whereas Sir Gurney gives Chester a title and makes him the patron, not Salusbury. "Sir Robert was a man of property; he married Anne Capell, who, on her mother's side, was granddaughter of the first Earl of Rutland. Her father, Sir Henry Capell, was ancestor of the Lords Capell and Earls of Essex. It is to be assumed that Shakespeare, Marston, Chapman and Ben Jonson were handsomely rewarded for their 'poeticall essaies.'" The sources of Benham's facts are not given, but one of them is surely Grosart, of whom Benham often speaks; he seems unaware that he is suggesting anything out of the way.[13] "'Euphuism' came into fashion about 1580, and had an extraordinary vogue for about fifty years. Robert Chester was much under its influence, and 'Love's Martyr' (as already stated) is a good specimen of the fashion in exaggerated form. Shakespeare, Marston, Chapman and Jonson seem to have felt bound--or perhaps conspired--to follow the fashion in their supplementary contributions to 'Love's Martyr.'" It would not have occurred to the present writer that Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and Turtle" displays the hallmarks of euphuism. Much of Benham's article is a detailed attention to Shakespeare's diction and resultant imagery; his is also

an interesting treatment of the overall historical situation. The odd thing is that Benham has read Grosart and formed objections to the latter's Essex theory, but it is quite apparent that he has not read Carleton Brown. He follows Grosart in identifying Robert Chester as "Sir Robert" and seems otherwise unaware of Brown's Sir John Salusbury (Turtle)-Ursula Stanley (Phoenix) identification.

In 1951 Thomas P. Harrison's essay on Love's Martyr appeared, promising "a new interpretation."[14] "Though it is possible that the contributions by Shakespeare and his fellows were originally composed for purposes independent of Love's Martyr, these brief poems are to be understood presumably only in relation to it. The chief task, then, is to interpret the meaning of the longer poem [Chester's], then in the light of this meaning briefly to examine the appended verse" (p. 66). Harrison devotes most of his pages to a theory that combines those of Grosart and Brown: from Brown he takes the notion that Salusbury is Chester's Dove, from Grosart the identification of Elizabeth as Phoenix. [Brown thought the Phoenix to be Ursula Stanley, Salusbury's wife, and that the poem was an epithalamium, whereas Grosart thought it clear that the Dove was Essex.] "Incidentally, Professor Brown discovered that Salisbury was bitterly opposed to the Essex party and interests. (The present study indicates that Salisbury and Chester were members of the Sidney circle)" (p. 69). To Harrison, it is most important that the immolation of the birds at the end of Chester's

poem is achieved only through the removal of Envy and Suspicion. "Regarded as a whole, Love's Martyr reaches its climax in the fiery consummation" (p. 71). However, "far from any genuine suggestion of nuptial love . . . the immolation appears a symbol of 'friendships vnspotted true sincerity,' proof that 'no sinister chance should hinder loue.' Accordingly, the new Phoenix, emblem of reconciliation, carries

> in her heart a perpetuall loue
> Sprong from the bosome of the Turtle-doue." (p. 72)

Harrison further contends that Chester's dependence upon The Worthines of Wales by Thomas Churchyard (mentioned but not stressed by Grosart) supports his own theory; and that the place Paphos in Chester's poem is Wales. Thus Love's Martyr expresses, in Salusbury's behalf, gratification for the Queen's favor which had been blighted by Suspicion. The Queen may have had her grounds for suspicion in certain avowed Catholicism among the Salusburys and in Sir John's aggressive violence on various occasions. That is, in the former instance, Harrison suggests that Salusbury may have been a Catholic like his brother Thomas, who was executed with the Babington conspirators.[15] Harrison objects, as does Newdigate, to Carleton Brown's idea that Chester's poem was an epithalamium composed over a long period of time: "Professor Brown does not admit the contradiction that between 1586 and 1601 thirteen children were born to Ursula Stanley by Sir John" (p. 70). In sum, Harrison sees Chester's poem as a record of Salusbury's progress, during

which "Sir John bent every effort to smooth his path at court. It seems that Love's Martyr, shadowing his troubles, pleading his cause, and finally proclaiming his triumph, represents a prodigious attempt in this direction. There is a distinct possibility of his actual collaboration with Chester, his dependant [Harrison accepts Brown's view of Chester's status, not Benham's], in parts of this extravagant and grotesque compliment to Elizabeth, in whose bounty he reposes his 'whole affiance and comfort.' His final aim was to secure the adornment of commendatory verses for the volume; and in this he was eminently successful" (p. 80).

One finds all this interesting and, as a theory, appealing. The difficulty lies in the application to the appended poems. In Harrison's summary (p. 85), he avers that "with Jonson as leader, the poets who contributed to the 'Essaies' recognized Love's Martyr as a riddle but stressed themes consistent with various aspects of the poem . . . ." Moreover, "Shakespeare's 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,' impersonal, uniquely set within established tradition, dwells upon the funereal theme in full recognition of the relationship of Chester's subjects." If Shakespeare knew the secret of the allegory, then surely the others did. Why, then, are their verses so different in substance? Harrison (p. 81) thinks that "Vatum Chorus" was "probably Jonson," because it is likely that he knew Salusbury best. "The place of honor is given fourteen lines by 'Ignoto.' Relative to the present inquiry his verses are significant only

because a single line reappears some years later in a new application of the allegory,

> One Phoenix borne, another Phoenix burne.

An emblem appearing in The Mirrour of Majestie, by H. G. (1618) represents Anne of Denmark, James I's queen, as the new Phoenix and clearly alludes to Elizabeth (Eliza) as the old Phoenix. . . . Clearly the author of these lines was acquainted with Ignoto's poem, if not also with Chester's allegory of Elizabeth as Phoenix" (p. 81).[16] Shakespeare's poem appears next, then comes Marston. "As if to balance Shakespeare's silence on the new Phoenix," writes Harrison, "Marston's riddling lines pertain to this theme alone:

> What strangenesse is't that from the Turtles ashes
> Assumes such forme? . . .
> this same Metaphisicall
> God, Man, nor Woman, but elix'd of all.

Again he asks:

> What should I call this creature,
> Which now is growne into maturite?

This last line Professor Brown (p. lxxii) takes as undoubted allusion to Salisbury's first child, Jane, now fourteen years old. The present study has suggested that the new Phoenix is a symbol of reconciliation between the Queen and Salisbury. If so understood, Marston here describes this union as mature in the sense of fully established, of long standing" (p. 82).

Marston's imagery seems to me vague and non-specific, and on its basis, I can incline toward Harrison's theory. But I do not find much in support of it in the subsequent

discussion of Chapman and Jonson as contributors. Harrison (pp. 83-85) ends with Shakespeare's lines:

> From the other short poems Shakespeare's 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' is distinguished in several respects. Especially notable is its completely impersonal tone. The theme of the marvelous devotion of the two birds, Love and Constancy, is developed with complete detachment . . . . Professor Brown is probably correct in suggesting (p. lxxiii) that Shakespeare's poem betokens courteous compliance rather than actual friendship with Salisbury. Furthermore, this poem alone betrays rather definite literary affinities. The assembly of birds, each with its requiem role, is clearly reminiscent of the elegy on Sidney by Matthew Roydon as also, with a difference, of Chaucer's Parlement with its Court of Love setting.[17] The poet's wholly objective approach to his theme makes more natural its setting within a literary tradition. Finally, the reader finds no trace of the rebirth theme, the new Phoenix. Threnos follows requiem with exclusive emphasis. In fact, Shakespeare flatly contradicts Chester's account of the new bird in the lines:
>
> Leaving no posteritie,
> Twas not their infirmitie,
> It was married Chastitie.
>
> Much attention has been devoted to this startling verse. Concludes Brown (p. lxxiii): 'To reconcile Shakespeare's allegory either with Love's Martyr or with the other "Poeticall Essaies" is thus manifestly impossible.' As also with Newdigate, it is necessary to recall the theories with which these critics attempt to reconcile these lines. Widely accepted is the opinion of Adams, that Shakespeare simply did not read far enough in Chester to grasp the theme of rebirth.[18]
>
> Whereas no completely satisfying explanation of the vexing lines in question is to be ventured,[19] several comments are in order which indicate the consonance of the poem as a whole with the longer work. It will be recalled that Chester's climax is, not the rebirth, but the immolation, and that to it the narrative of the Phoenix and Turtle looks forward. For the dove this is to be proof of his truth, purity, contrition. Moreover, the theme of rebirth, forced upon the author from the traditional myth, is emphatic only in the so-called 'Conclusion.' Aside from the major motif, the only

> echoes from Love's Martyr to be found in Shakespeare's piece trace to the lines of the Pelican [in Chester]. Here is the phrase, 'that two in one,' and here the funereal theme, as in Shakespeare, is unrelieved by promise of offspring. In contrast with the incisive clarity of Shakespeare, these couplets, duller even than Chester's usual efforts, may possibly be from Salisbury's own pen. In view, then, of the unevenness of Love's Martyr, with its various contradictions, it is hardly necessary to suppose that Shakespeare saw the entire piece as it appears in the completed text.[20]
>
> Finally, Love's Martyr emphasizes the recurrent theme of conventional Platonism, which is not only consistent with the poem's interpretation in this study but wholly necessary to it. Salisbury's union with the Queen was evidence of 'friendship's true sincerity,' their flame a symbol of a union of true minds. The text is strewn with such conventionalities too numerous to cite. Briefly, it seems that, if Shakespeare did not peruse the entire poem, he fully recognized the quality of the love shadowed there. And this is the burden in his verses. Harking back to the milieu of Chaucer, Shakespeare singles out for emphasis the funereal theme which he develops in full accordance with the mutual love of subject and sovereign.

I hope to do justice to Mr. Harrison in the following summary remarks: first of all, his is a happy merging of conflicting viewpoints, in spite of its shortcomings. One suspects, however, that Harrison had first of all a biographical theory (and an appealing one) of Love's Martyr, to which he tried to fit the solicited poems of Shakespeare and the others. Perhaps that is why his vigorous exposition of certain Salusbury details gives way--as he turns to the poetical essays--to a rather dispirited recitation. He does not satisfactorily resolve the question of 'offspring' which is so clearly prominent in Chester and at least present in Marston; and, to mention one example, his theory of a

personal allegory does not stretch far enough to cover the last line of the poem,

For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

Neither Salusbury nor Elizabeth was literally dead in 1601; and if the reference is figurative, still it is not explained by Harrison. If Shakespeare were 'in on' the Salusbury-Elizabeth allegory, one thinks, he was disappointingly vague and even retrograde in describing it. That is, if a 'Platonic' reconciliation is the key to Love's Martyr and to Shakespeare's poem, why does the poet end his contribution with a reference to a pair of "dead birds," and the apparent death of truth and beauty? For "Truth and Beauty buried be" (v. 65).

Our discussion of the various "Chester commentators" has been roughly chronological up to this point. That is because the principal movements in the efforts to square Shakespeare's poem with Chester's, and with the other contributions, developed thus, and because they are most clearly presented in this way. Grosart-Furnivall led to Brown, Brown led to Newdigate-Short, and then Harrison merged Grosart-Brown: that is an oversimplified scheme of what has been said above. Let us step out of chronological sequence long enough to isolate two viewpoints, the first being that of Kenneth Muir and Sean O'Loughlin in 1937: "The Vatum Chorus declare that Salusbury's merits were parents to their several rhymes; but although Salusbury was a generous patron, and his son wrote commendatory verses to Heminge

and Condell on the publication of the First Folio [first reported by Gollancz], most of the additional poems are independent exercises in the symbolism of the phoenix and turtle. Shakespeare's poem, in particular, strikes an elegaic note that is alien to its environment, and his birds who leave no posterity are obviously not Sir John and Lady Ursula Salusbury. Sir Sidney Lee even went so far as to say that 'the internal evidence scarcely justifies the conclusion that Shakespeare's poem . . . was penned for Chester's collection.' This is hardly true. It is fairly evident, from the use he makes of the symbolism of the phoenix and the turtle that Shakespeare, like Jonson, Chapman and Marston, had at least glanced at it" (The Voyage to Illyria, p. 129). Muir and O'Loughlin have a different theory of the poem's occasion and allegory which will be discussed in part III of this Chapter. The second viewpoint is that of Arthur H. R. Fairchild, whose essay "The Phoenix and Turtle" was published in 1904.[21] Fairchild's is an important source-theory which will be treated in Chapter Three, but some of what he says belongs in this discussion insofar as he considers the possibility that "The Phoenix and Turtle" was a valentine poem to Sir John Salusbury: "In support of the Valentine-theory . . . we have to note (1) the general similarity of subject to that of The Phoenix and Turtle; (2) the dedication to Salisbury of the poems contained in Chester's volume; (3) the extensive employment of birds under dominant figurative conceptions;

and (4) the fact that Chaucer (regarding the Parlement as source, in part) makes St. Valentine's Day the occasion of his assembly. As opposed to these points we should observe the following: (1) the fact that Shakespeare's poem celebrates a funeral differentiates it almost fundamentally from Valentine-poems, which celebrate existing love and marriage; (2) the dedication of the 'new compositions' was 'by them all generally,' and is too indefinite to bear specific reference to the content of any one poem; (3) Valentine's Day is not (so far as we recall) mentioned in Chester's volume, in which the poem appeared; (4) Shakespeare's references to this day are extraordinarily few, considering the prevalence of the conception; and, finally, (5) according to our apprehension of the matter, Valentine-poems are to be regarded, in any case, as a special development of the Court of Love. . . . The central conceptions of Valentine-poems and the Court of Love are too closely allied and related to fail to suggest identification of the two forms. Even though The Phoenix and Turtle be placed in the sub-class, therefore, it would seem ultimately to belong to the Court of Love also. . . . This theory [assignment to the Court of Love tradition], moreover, affords a most inviting field for conjecture . . . . Courtly love is said by Mott [The System of Courtly Love, p. 27] to have been declared incompatible with marriage. That something of the conception came to Shakespeare as a lingering heritage . . . is not, perhaps, an altogether baseless supposition" (pp. 375-76). Fairchild tries out this

supposition on Love's Labour's Lost, the Sonnets (in particular, number 116 with its reference to "the marriage of true minds"), the "two in one" passage of Chester's pellican upon the death of the phoenix and turtle, and on The Phoenix Nest (1593). He comments upon the prose "Dialogue Between Constancy and Inconstancie" in the latter; but somehow seems to have missed Roydon's Sidney elegy utilizing Phoenix imagery. He mentions, perhaps for the first time in this connection, Nicholas Breton's poem "What is Love?" in The Longing of a Blessed Heart (1601), which refers to

> a bird within a Phoenix nest,
> Where never yet did any young one rest.

He also adduces a Wither emblem [Collection of Emblems (1635)] whose lines are reminiscent. (Details of this discussion are found on pp. 376-80 of Fairchild.) "Sidney Lee," writes Fairchild, "observes that, even with important omissions, there were nearly twelve hundred sonnets 'of the amorous kind' printed between 1591 and 1597. . . . [T]here can be no doubt as to Shakespeare's familiarity with this class of literature" (p. 380). "In the light of the evidence adduced, therefore, and of the prevalence of certain dominant conceptions, and of the common use of phrases and of such words as 'constancy,' 'rarity,' 'wonder,' 'urne,' etc., found in the companion poets, we conclude that The Phoenix and Turtle was written, possibly as a Valentine-poem (without explicit reference) to Sir John Salisbury, but most probably simply in compliance . . . with a prevalent literary vogue, which encouraged the writing of Court of Love poems of a modified

character; that it has no recondite meaning beyond that involved in the historic conditions of its production; that it contains no allusions either to the poet's own life or to that of another; and finally, that it contains the confession of metaphysical conceptions only to the extent to which they would be implied by an emotional interest in a peculiar form of poetical activity, devoid, however, of any explicit intellectual formation" (pp. 381-82). That is, there is no biographical allegory present (although the poem may have been written for a specific occasion), no self-confession or autobiography, and the poem is not concerned with ideas in any systematic way: it is a formal exercise. One may disagree with Fairchild, but he must applaud Fairchild's temerity and his orderly arrangement of evidence in support of his conclusions.

We now return to chronological progression, and happily so, because in his 1953 Phönix und Taube, which comes up next, Heinrich Straumann offers a word in support of Newdigate's theory that Lucy of Bedford was the Phoenix of Shakespeare's poem. Mr. Newdigate was deceased and so did not gather any comfort,--he must have died thinking the scholarly world was all against his theory,--but Straumann had at least given it careful attention before explaining it away in Chapter II of his book: "As far as the material is concerned, we could make up the following assumption: Chester originally wanted to put together a collection of dedicatory poems for the Countess of Bedford, in order to

be accepted in her circle. However, during his preparations the poet was given an indication by the Lady or her husband that his undertaking was not desirable. But Chester had already gathered a considerable amount of his material and could not let it waste unused without causing the anger of such outstanding associates as Ben Jonson, Chapman and Shakespeare. Therefore he sought another patron as soon as possible; he found the less-important and more easily satisfied Salusbury, who must have been flattered by the attention of such major contemporaries since he himself was a poet; he made some changes which seemed necessary, especially perhaps those historical and scientific insertions which differ from the rest and are obviously directed to a male reader, and then he went to press. Such an assumption would at least explain the material discrepancy in the motifs of the collection and the personal circumstances of the recipient, as well as the double use of the poem by Ben Jonson in the Bedford circle and in Salusbury's." Straumann concludes that a study of the collection has little to do with the Shakespeare poem (he is a qualified 'New Critic'), and that Shakespeare must have attached considerable importance to his work. "For the rest, we have to rely on the interpretations of the poem itself" (pp. 18-19).[22] Straumann's synthetic approach to the scholarship concerning the poem is important, and will be discussed in Chapter Four.

A modern editor of the Poems, G. B. Harrison,[23] refuses to take sides:

> Shakespeare's little contribution to [Chester's] collection is difficult and enigmatical, and no one has yet offered any satisfactory interpretation of its inner meaning. On the surface it celebrates, in obscure symbolism, the spiritual union of the Phoenix (true love) and the Turtle-dove (constancy). It is likely, however, that the poem has other and inner meanings that were well understood by the small circle of readers for whom it was originally intended. Until these persons and events are discovered, The Phoenix and the Turtle will remain an enigma. [p. 16]

Interest in charting a biographical or historical undershelf to Shakespeare's poem has almost disappeared in the last twenty years. But, as will be seen in the two discussions that follow, the "Chester commentators" are not extinct. William Matchett in his 1965 book (cited in Chapter One) returns to 1878 for a fresh look at Grosart's supposedly discredited identification of the Phoenix (Queen Elizabeth) and the Dove (Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex), and although he quarrels with Grosart--"the quality of Grosart's evidence is such that I at first rejected this very conclusion to which I have now been driven" (p. 187)--Matchett ends by affirming him. There is a good deal more to Professor Matchett's book, and we shall refer to it again, but its thesis can be said to pivot on a theory of biographical allegory. In the 213 pages of his book, Matchett gives a close reading to the poem and projects it against what seem to be the facts of history as they concern Love's Martyr: he searches Chester's poem and then, in his final chapter, returns to Shakespeare's poem "in context." In the process, he treats the major "Chester commentators" and also G. Wilson Knight, yet to be discussed here. Matchett's

last chapter is an effective summary in itself, and for our purposes, it usefully retraces his steps: "This study began . . . with a close textual analysis of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle.' Setting out to discover . . . what was conveyed by the words of the poem without reference to the larger context in which they originally appeared, I became convinced that their effect 'is one of following unstinted praise with an evaluation, made by Reason, modifying that praise.' The celebration in the anthem I felt to be balanced by the concluding qualifications voiced in the threne." Matchett says that he dealt in succeeding chapters "with the poem's original context, seeking to unravel Chester's allegory, examining the poems appended to that allegory, reviewing earlier interpretations, and, finally, [ended by] presenting new evidence which clarifies the relationship between historical events and the varying intentions reflected in Loues Martyr." Therefore "it remains now to re-examine the poem in the light of those discoveries" (p. 187). "Appearing as it did in Loues Martyr, Shakespeare's poem necessarily made a statement about Essex and the Queen . . . . Interpreters of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' have tended to err . . . primarily through their assumption that the poem offers only praise" (p. 187). Shakespeare demonstrably participated in a general plan: his poem deals with a Phoenix and Turtle, and (says Matchett) he adhered to "the basic structure of paired poems and the Platonic terminology" (p. 188). The first poem [that is, all but the Threnos of

what we know as "The Phoenix and Turtle"] is introductory, and draws chiefly upon Nicholas Breton's "Amoris Lachrimae" which appeared in Brittons Bowre of Delights, two editions of which were published before Shakespeare wrote "The Phoenix and Turtle." Shakespeare borrowed, or had reference to, "the general conception of assembling birds for lamentation and the inclusion in the group of an eagle and a swan," creatures present in Roydon's poem from The Phoenix Nest; whereas in Breton's poem the figure of Reason appears centrally, as it does not in Roydon's poem. Matchett here (pp. 189-90) is very sharp, as he is elsewhere, and perhaps reviewers have not always credited his original contributions. "Shakespeare's memory of the elegies for the earlier Phoenix, Sidney, may also have suggested the bold step of writing of Elizabeth in the past tense. . . . The idea that Elizabeth and Essex were Shakespeare's Phoenix and Turtle . . . meets resistance primarily because Elizabeth was unquestionably alive at the time of the publication of this poem purporting to commemorate her death.[24] Though Essex was dead when the poem was published, he too may well have been alive when it was written. However, the problem he presents is the lesser of the two. The Earl need not have been dead for Shakespeare to have imagined the poem; Shakespeare need only have seen the situation as past redeeming, need only have realized that Essex had lost his chances" (p. 191). This central insistence, like others of Matchett, often reiterated, seems weak (however probable

it may be) perhaps because it asks too much like-mindedness of the reader whereas he wishes to be convinced. Elizabeth was alive in 1601. "Yet the poem's logic, if bold, is the same for her as for the Earl. The actual length of the Queen's life is not at issue. Shakespeare sees the situation as already past redeeming. In giving up his hope for the Earl's success, he gave up also any expectation that the Queen would solve the problems which the Earl's failure had left unsolved. . . . Fortunately, we may pass over these [Shakespeare's motivational] complications in dealing with 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'" (p. 192).[25] "Shakespeare had good reason to feel that praise, in specifically Platonic terms, was required; he had equally good reason to wish to modify that praise." Obligation to praise, in Shakespeare's case--based on "expediency" and "personal obligation"--had arisen from earlier expectation, of a political nature. "Though the mutual love of the Phoenix and Turtle is eulogized, I would take such terms to have been imposed by Loues Martyr. Shakespeare's subject is not, I suggest, the supposed personal love of Elizabeth and Essex, but the mutual understanding which, it had been hoped, would make Essex the Queen's copartner in governing the country and determining the succession (p. 194). . . . Elizabeth, severed from Essex, nests in death [?], and the Earl, whether his loyalty was misguided or misunderstood, is beyond [blame]. The understanding of Essex and the Queen, from which England had reason to expect such benefit . . . has

come to a fruitless conclusion. The union of the Phoenix and the Turtle . . . has been childless; for all its promise, nothing has come of it." Matchett believes that even in the context of Chester's poem, Shakespeare's line "'Leauing no posteritie' is both logical and pejorative. The 'marriage' is a development of the imagery, not a literal fact. Shakespeare is not lamenting that the aging Queen and the young Earl have failed to produce a physical offspring; he is lamenting the fact that their mutual understanding has failed without having done England any good. Nothing has been accomplished and the succession remains in doubt." Shakespeare's threne does not "conclude in despair," however, because Reason "recognizes that others partake of the qualities supposedly lost," and "life goes on . . . . For all their glory, the Phoenix and the Turtle are now 'dead Birds,' and the living will soon become reconciled to going on without them" (pp. 195-96). The concluding pages of Matchett's book contain the same assertions in one form or another; certain intervening views with respect to the plays and Sonnets will be surveyed, here, in their turn.

The most recent "Chester commentator" is William Empson in his 1966 essay (cited in Chapter One). Empson brings to the Chester-Shakespeare question his customary wit and intelligence: "Love's Martyr by Robert Chester, dedicated to Sir John Salusbury (1601, unregistered), came out at the height of the War of the Theatres, when some at least of the contributors were quarrelling, and soon after the

execution of Essex, when it was very dangerous to print a riddle which might excite the suspicions of the Queen.[26] . . The introduction to an edition by Carleton Brown (1914) of Poems by Sir John Salusbury and Robert Chester (E.E.T.S. 113) is a mine of information and entertainment about these characters, and leaves no doubt that the whole book was intended to praise Sir John and his Lady; he was not the man to put up with any of the other things that critics have suggested [Brown (p. xxi) calls him "a Hotspur"]. He was squire of Lleweny in Denbighshire, and had married in 1586 at the age of 20 an illegitimate but recognised daughter of the King of Man (or Earl of Derby); some verses written for the wedding already call her a royal bird. In 1595 he came to London as a law student and was made squire of the body to the Queen; he was her cousin,[27] and a determined Anglican, and had a standing quarrel in Denbighshire with supporters of the Essex faction. This last would not be any help till after the execution of Essex, early in 1601, but in June of that year he was knighted by the Queen herself. By October he is back in Denbighshire at an election to Parliament as Knight of the Shire, getting in by the end of the year after scandalous disorders and probably a second election. He must have left London well before October. After the Queen's death he got no official employment, though he tried for it; such opportunities now went to Scotsmen. He died in 1612, and his surviving son bought one of James's new baronetcies in 1619, so at least the old Lion had not ruined the estate

(his coat of arms was a white lion). One can see him being a very helpful patron to the young Jonson, who probably coaxed the other playwrights into putting on a show; and Jonson would think shame of making fun of him in public too obviously" (pp. 147-48). This last may be a reference to Bonnard's 1937 theory (above) of the obscene joke; earlier, Empson says Salusbury would not have passed it, and here, that Jonson would not have perpetrated it or suggested it to his fellows. "It is thus plain that the book was hurried out to celebrate Sir John's knighthood, before he went home to make use of it; to save time, the book was not registered; and there could be no danger of the Queen suspecting it referred to her relations with Essex, as she was rewarding Sir John for his loyalty. The book must have been ready some time earlier, before the authors began to quarrel; perhaps 1598 or early in 1599. A line of Jonson's Epode here comes into an anthology Englands Parnassus of 1600, which might settle the point, but the whole poem also survives in a manuscript in his handwriting headed 'To the [sic] L.C. of B'--to Lady Bedford. This helpful patroness was married in 1594 at the age of 14 (probably) and bore her only child in February 1601; it died almost at once, and Donne in a letter speaks with a kind of horror of her disappointment. To have given her a poem just after, praising her childlessness as due to married chastity, would be such ghastly bad taste that only a commentator [B. H. Newdigate] could imagine it. It is possible that her

husband waited till she was old enough, so that a few years before 1601 the poem could be handed to her as praise of her own conduct; but surely she would think that impertinent. On the other hand, Jonson could quite well give her an autograph copy of a poem, written for Salusbury, which had recently been handed round and admired.[28] To establish an earlier date for the whole group of poems," adds Empson (p. 148), "has one important effect; Shakespeare did not write 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' while Hamlet was saying he could not bear to think what his mum did in bed, but while Henry V was saying:

> Though it appear a little out of fashion,
> There is much care and valour in this Welshman."

Although Empson does not subscribe to the dirty-joke theory of Bonnard, he finds Salusbury and Chester ludicrous and assumes that the other reputable poets must also have seen the jest. "Shakespeare was a connoisseur of absurd near-Tudors, and would be sure to run his eye over this impressive specimen," that is, Salusbury, a man "very pugnacious" but "what a later age called 'a martyr to the fair,' attentive to the ladies, so it seemed all right to make him a sacrifice as Turtle to the royal lady as Phoenix [Lady Ursula]. Before this allegorical part of Chester's poem, which is fairly short, the Phoenix complains to Nature about her difficulties (the status of the bastard of a half-king might be hard to fix), and Nature takes her on a patriotic tour of Britain, also a world tour; but at last they meet the Turtle, and Nature withdraws. The Phoenix asks whether

the Turtle has been chaste, and on being reassured explains that for her to produce issue requires burning alive; both birds at once collect twigs, so there is no long period of married chastity. The Phoenix wants to spare the Turtle, but the Turtle insists on burning with it; most fortunately, because otherwise

> Love had been murdered in the infancy;
> Without these two no love at all can be.

Shakespeare, on the other hand, says that true love cannot be found anywhere since the deaths of these two birds.[29] Both poets treat them as the magical source of all love, perhaps merely from an independent understanding of how to write metaphysical poetry, but more likely because Shakespeare had read and appreciated this part of Chester's poem.[30] It concludes with an eye-witness account of the burning, by a Pelican; some extra verses, a good deal freer in their moral tone, were probably composed by the Turtle [Salusbury]" (pp. 148-49). Empson tries to place himself in the situation: "To praise a grand marriage by calling it a martyrdom is radically absurd, and all the more so if plausible; no doubt Chester became uneasily aware of this, during the years while he was adding (by request, he says) the patriotic encyclopedia section. At last it was done, and the squire asked Ben Jonson to collect a team to help launch it; but these poets would have to be told what theme they were to write on, and Chester when driven to be definite, it seems clear, said that the hidden meaning was 'married chastity'" (pp. 149-50). According to Empson, Jonson and Shakespeare

both made use of this set idea, which they would not otherwise have done, and Jonson's poem (Epos) speaking to Vice surely has no reference to the Queen, but rather (the lines quoted p. 150) seem to refer to "a husband who spares his wife the act of sex so as not to offend her delicacy; to make sure it is from this motive only, the poet [Jonson] excludes the pious vow." This seems a new notion to Jonson, but "Shakespeare made the good man Posthumus, astonished at losing his bet on the near-frigidity of his wife, say:

> Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained
> And prayed me oft forebearance; did it with
> A pudency so rosy, the sweet view on't
> Might well have warned old Saturn . . . (Cym. II.v)

It is taken for granted that the effect would be to make the husband's demand more pressing. Shakespeare as well as Jonson reflects that one could not respect married chastity if a husband used it to hide impotence ('Twas not their infirmity')" (p. 151). Empson does not think, with G. Wilson Knight, that there is any reference to homosexuality. Moreover, "we need not accuse the Squire of married chastity in any form, not even faithfulness. His marriage produced four children in the first four years and six in the next ten (no twins), and one of his bastards had been baptised in the parish church in 1597. . . . Shakespeare does not discuss the idea [married chastity] and is merely using it as part of a dramatic effect. Only one of these additional poems concerns the production of a new Phoenix (the first child of the marriage, a daughter, would be 14 in 1601); it is the poem by Marston, which follows directly upon

Shakespeare's . . . [which] gives the [Shakespeare] poem a magnificent contradiction:

> Can Fire? Can Time? Can blackest Fate consume
> So rare creation? No, tis thwart to sense.
> Corruption quakes to touch such excellence . . .
> Let me stand numbed with wonder: never came
> So strong amazement on astonished eye
> As this, this measureless pure Rarity.

That is, Shakespeare's poem expresses the despair felt by the spectators (the 'chaste' or non-predatory birds who are the voice of Reason)[31] until at last the magic works and a new Phoenix rises from the ashes. To mark this, a new poet bounds onto the stage, using an entirely different style. So far from ignoring his brother poets, Shakespeare was restraining himself like a good trouper; and I think he echoes this bit of Marston in the last scene of The Winter's Tale" (pp. 151-52).

Empson credits The Mutual Flame by Professor Wilson Knight (soon to be discussed) for its "profound study" of the background of the poem's thought--"the Phoenix, as he showed, commonly symbolizes a love denied bodily consummation, because that would be adulterous or homosexual or politically disruptive, and the love is driven to more spiritual courses. So maybe Chester's poem was really about the squire's love for his wife's sister, for instance: that would at least avoid the absurdity of praising his marriage as a martyrdom. But one should remember an epigram of C. S. Lewis, that Spenser was the first poet who had the nerve to say it was convenient for a man to love his own wife--poor Chester was running Spenser close for the

priority" (p. 152). "We know that Chapman thought the affair funny . . . because he headed his piece . . . 'Peristeros, or the male Turtle.' He has had to invent a masculine form for the word, since the Greeks considered all doves female . . . . A female Phoenix had been invented by the Renaissance[32] to gratify a taste for Amazons--till then its solitary sex was 'known to God alone'; but it seems that a Turtle wearing the trousers was a real novelty, not only to a classicist. It proved the grandeur of the Lion, as his poet remarks, that he was safe from ridicule even when presented as a Turtle. . . . Shakespeare's poem is a wide valley brimful of an unspecified sorrow [italics supplied], but one should also feel, before hearing any explanations, the gaiety inherent in its effects of sound. As the anthem of the birds reaches its severest exultation their tweeting modulates into the arch baby-talk of a dandling nurse . . ."(p. 153).

Surely one of the pleasures of reading Mr. Empson is a confidence that he will say something funny. The Empson sense of humor is everywhere apparent in this essay, but perhaps inappropriately so in the remarks last quoted. He seems to me to have gone too far in linking Shakespeare, in his own mind, with Salusbury and Chester, and to have trapped himself into a final statement that ridicules more than he intends. A "wide valley brimful of an unspecified sorrow" is not the same thing as a nursery rhyme. As a "Chester commentator" Empson draws on Carleton Brown and throughout

affirms Brown's Sir John-Lady Salusbury theory; he attempts to resolve Newdigate's objections by suggesting that Jonson showed Lady Bedford a poem written earlier for Salusbury.

This has been a lengthy survey and it requires some summary statement and a word or two of evaluation. In brief, Grosart (p. lvi) thought Chester was "a follower not to say partizan of Essex" who wrote Love's Martyr so as to refer to the tragedy of the beheading, and that Shakespeare followed his lead. Furnivall ridiculed Grosart's theory but Brown attacked its scholarship in more telling ways:--for example, he saw that the very identity of Robert Chester was crucial, and that before that was established, speculations about his political and religious affiliations were beside the point. Brown identified Chester as an adherent of Salusbury, probably his dependant, who wrote his poems "in the neighbourhood of Lleweni, the seat of the Salusburys in Denbighshire" (pp. lii-liii). He also showed that Salusbury was an Anglican and at odds with Essex supporters in his district of Wales (pp. xviii ff.). It is of course Brown's notion that Chester's poem represents the marriage of Sir John and Ursula Stanley, and that the new Phoenix is their daughter born in 1586. (Why then Chester should refer to the "princely Phoenix" in his "Conclusion," or why the male Turtle calls his late spouse "him" at one point, we do not know: Chester was a bad artist and such slips seem to be indigenous to the kind. Empson thinks the book was hurried out; and if so, it may be that it was not proofread.) The

poem must then have been written more than a decade before it appeared in 1601, according to Brown, and this seems to me to be questionable, but not as unlikely as Newdigate suggests it to be. Brown does not attempt to reconcile Shakespeare's poem with Chester's or with any of the others, in fact calls that effort "manifestly impossible." Shakespeare's lines were a matter of "courteous compliance," according to Brown, though Jonson's were not. Newdigate put forth his Bedford theory in 1936 and it was attacked by R. W. Short on several bases: (1) Jonson's Ode has appeared elsewhere, at least once [as Gollancz showed] in a Salusbury connection; (2) Chester claimed to write only for Salusbury; (3) the Bedfords were on the Essex side and were penalized for it; and (4) Chester and Marston both seem to refer to "a flesh and blood daughter of the union," whereas the Bedfords were childless. Sir Gurney Benham in 1941 rejected Grosart's theory, remarking that "'Love's Martyr' was published within a few months of the execution of Essex and it would have been unsafe to represent him as Love's martyr or any other kind of martyr." (Empson in his essay repeats the point.) Sir Gurney also nonchalantly and without reference to sources makes Chester "Sir Robert Chester," Shakespeare's friend and patron, and provides Sir Robert with a partial genealogy. One is unsure what to make of this turn, but it seems first of all obvious that Grosart, who similarly identifies Chester, is Benham's initial source; and it seems, next, safest to hold to the

careful scholarship of Brown concerning Chester's identity, at least in the absence of documentation on Benham's side. Harrison's synthetic theory of 1951 (Elizabeth-Salusbury) attempts to resolve the Grosart-Brown theories and presents new information as to Chester's sources, but it fails to thoroughly convince when it turns to the contributors and their places in the allegorical picture. (Nor can Harrison quite make Sir John Salusbury a Catholic like his brother Thomas.) The new Phoenix offspring, according to Harrison, is a "symbol of reconciliation between the Queen and Salisbury." This, it seems to me, explains away too much concrete imagery in lines by Chester and Marston that suggest, as Professor Short says, "a flesh and blood daughter of the union." Nonetheless, I cannot help being attracted to Harrison's theory: if one dismisses the religious emphases (which do not stand up well) and concentrates instead on the sheer notion of Chester and Salusbury writing a poem to celebrate (in advance) the reconciliation of the maverick Salusbury with his cousin the Queen--with the troublesome Essex situation rapidly coming to a boil--there would seem to be opportunities for fresh analysis. Mr. Harrison's Elizabeth-Salusbury idea was a good one. I know of no other allegorical scheme that is worth pursuing. Straumann, attempting to resolve the viewpoints of Newdigate and Brown on his p. 18, assumes that "Materiell könnte man sich den Fall möglicherweise noch so zurechtlegen": he asks if it is not possible that Chester made Love's Martyr

and arranged for the additional poems in the hope that the Bedfords would underwrite its publication; when they turned him down, Chester feared the reactions of Jonson, Shakespeare, et al., and hurriedly found a new patron in Salusbury, for whom he made changes that would appeal more to the male reader. Straumann's half-hearted suggestion explains away the multiple appearances of Jonson's Ode but ignores so much biographical and historical research (some yet to be done) that it must be called a fanciful shot in the dark. For example, Brown's Chester would link his future to Salusbury; and if there ever were a Sir Robert Chester the poet, it is unlikely that he would be obliged to scurry about in this fashion. As for Mr. William Matchett's book, one applauds its enthusiasm, energy and occasional unique insights, but one remains unconvinced by its central thesis that Elizabeth and Essex are here figured. Perhaps the trouble with Matchett's theory, a difficulty shared by Newdigate's and Harrison's, is that Chester and Marston are talking about issue (although Shakespeare denies issue) and some intellectual concept must be supplied as a substitute for flesh: in Harrison's case, it is reconciliation between Elizabeth and Salusbury; in Newdigate's, a new perfection out of the Bedford's union and sacrifice; in the case of Matchett it is an understanding that would benefit England at large. The union has been childless, as far as Matchett is concerned, and fruitful in the views of Harrison and Newdigate. The trouble with all this is that Chester was not only a bad but an inconsistent poet, and it seems to me

that any all-inclusive theory of personal allegory, whose very existence postulates its energy, is finally obliged to explain away more than it clarifies. Perhaps William Empson understands this: he hangs to Brown's skirts most of the time, and his original contribution to the Newdigate-Brown controversy is the suggestion that Jonson might have given Lucy of Bedford "an autograph copy of a poem, written for Salusbury, which had recently been handed round and admired" (p. 148). If one is obliged to choose his "Chester commentator," it seems to me that Brown's theory contains the fewest improbabilities; but his insistence on a remote date of composition for the poem is a drawback.[33] That consideration aside, it must be said that Brown's array of fact and theory is ultimately in reaction to Grosart's statements:[34] and although Brown makes a number of telling objections to Grosart, Brown himself has provided no broad basis of fact and theory concerning Shakespeare's poem to which the critic can anchor himself. His major concern was to illuminate Chester and Salusbury, and that he has done superbly.[35]

II

Other Personal Allegory Theories

The "Chester commentators" are numerous, but there are other commentators who suggest a personal allegory behind Shakespeare's poem. It seems best as usual to begin with the careful summaries of Mr. Rollins: "Innumerable attempts

have been made to explain the meaning of the P. & T. Among them are such absurdities as the effort of J. F. FORBIS (Shakespearean Enigma, 1924, pp. 200-206) to prove it Shakespeare's dirge for the failure, caused by his over-indulgence in wine, of his poetical aspirations; and of ALFRED DODD (Personal Poems of Francis Bacon, 1931, pp. 34-38) to convince his readers that it is Bacon's Death Song, prophesying 'that after the black crow of slander has gone among the generations of men for three hundred years the Poet will rise once more revealing his personality to his countrymen'" (pp. 566-67). In a footnote to his p. 567, Rollins summarizes another opinion relevant to Dodd's, that of W. F. C. Wigston, who on p. xvi of his Bacon, Shakespeare and the Rosicrucians (London, 1888) "had described Love's Martyr itself as 'the product of a secret [Rosicrucian] society of men, contributing and assisting to one common end--the plays of Lord Bacon. . . . Everything in that work hints at secrecy, for fear of envy.'" Continuing, Rollins decides that "perhaps here, too, should be mentioned HENRY BROWN (Shakespeare's Patrons, 1912, p. 15), who remarks that--Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!--Shakespeare's ll. 53-55, 62-64 (printed in 1601) 'appear allusively to refer to the death of Elizabeth' (1603) . . . . Scarcely less far-fetched are the interpretations given by certain writers of fiction--though as fiction they may be pleasant enough" (p. 567). Mr. Rollins illustrates his point (p. 567) by facetiously quoting from Harvey O'Higgins' 1929 effort, Detective Duff

Unravels It, and one suspects that his amused contempt extends to his next subject:--"The COMTESSE DE CHAMBRUN, in My Shakespeare, Rise!, 1935, explains the poem as a dirge for Anne Lyne, an unfortunate woman executed on Feb. 27, 1601, with a seminary priest, Mark Barkworth (or Boseworth), whom she previously had harbored. In the poem Shakespeare (pp. 275 f.) 'summoned all free and high souls to the obsequies of the victims of oppression, but forbade the Queen and Topcliffe, or any other who was borne on tyrant wings, to approach the mourners. He invoked the presence of King James--royal Eagle--to bury with obsequious rites these emblems of love and constancy.' Identifying the 'shrieking harbinger' (p. 276 n.) 'either with Popham, the "hanging justice," or more probably with his henchman Topcliffe,' the 'treble-dated crow' with Archbishop John Whitgift, Mme. de Chambrun remarks (p. 281 n.) that 'until now critics have vainly searched for the tragic event recorded' by Shakespeare" (p. 567).

Inasmuch as Chambrun had "announced her 'discovery' in her Essential Documents, 1934, pp. 50 f.," as Rollins' wry note to his p. 567 indicates, one can assume that it is a refined version that appears in Chapter Ten (pp. 211-35) of her Shakespeare Rediscovered (New York, 1938). A carefully enthusiastic preface to that work is provided by G. B. Harrison. Chambrun hints at Shakespeare's Catholic sympathies (if not at his real affiliation) in a series of circumstantial sketches tied rather loosely to the poet's supposed

participation in the Sir Thomas Lucy hunting incident. As she says early in the chapter, "There is . . . nothing particularly daring in the assumption that Shakespeare, living in the very portion of the Essex world most tainted with recusancy, should have occasionally been in touch with graduates from the Overseas Seminary, particularly those who came from his own region" (p. 211). Lucy himself had been appointed "commissioner to put down abuses in religion" (p. 212) and exercised his power against several men who may have been Shakespeare's friends and acquaintances. "I have already shown the many literary links which exist between Shakespeare's poems and the muse of Robert Southwell, whose 'Burning Babe,' that little masterpiece, Jonson declared he would willingly sacrifice all his own work to have written." (Mme. Chambrun's footnote to p. 218 is relevant: "Jonson, it will be remembered, joined the Catholic Church in 1599 when he was for a time prisoner in Newgate. He abjured the faith twelve years later.") "At present I pass to more positive evidence showing that the key to Shakespeare's most enigmatic poem may be found at Tyburn when the last victims of the Essex conspiracy met there, on the 'triple tree'" (p. 218). Chambrun investigates the details of certain Jesuit safe-houses and pieces together a dramatic picture of conspiratorial trust; throughout, she seems preoccupied with her own investigative apparatus. "The heroic conduct of these two last victims [Anne Higham, widow of Roger Lyne, and the priest Mark Barkworth of

Lincolnshire] may have suggested Shakespeare's mysterious allegory . . ." (p. 228). Chambrun describes the circumstances of the appearance of the Shakespeare poem in Chester's Love's Martyr, quotes Gollancz as opposed to the view of Grosart, and asserts again her notion that one is dealing here with an allegory. Moreover, Shakespeare and Jonson need not have been treating the same episode as "all commentators" suggest (p. 230). "Nor do I believe that the dedication to Sir John Salisburie has any direct connection with the subject of the verses. The [unregistered] volume challenges censorship and the address to Sir John may represent a blind" (pp. 230-31).

> The tradition that it alludes in some remote manner to the Essex conspiracy, is too persistent not to contain some germs of truth.[36] The only tragic event that I can connect with the name of Salisbury which has not hitherto been examined, is that a Captain Owen Salisbury was killed in defence of Essex's house the day of the revolt. Shakespeare's poem, however, deals with the simultaneous deaths of two persons and there is undoubtedly [italics supplied] some Catholic allusion or the words 'Requiem' and 'Anthem' would not figure nor would the 'priest in surplice white' appear: [Stanza 4].
>
> In taking up the short allegorical poem contributed by Shakespeare we shall find that certain symbolic birds representing high and noble beings are summoned to commune after a tragic scene where the emblems of love and constancy have perished. These five characters may each be connected with a historical personage of Shakespeare's world, for although tyrants are warned to keep aloof, the royal Eagle is summoned: [Stanza 3].
>
> This fits King James, who had pledged himself with Essex that should the revolt place him on the English throne, he would tolerate the practice of the Catholic religion. . . . When the sovereign came to the throne without bloodshed two years later Catesby considered King James's

> promise as still binding and it was the indignation and disappointment among many leading Catholic families when they perceived that the Supremacy Act was still rigorously enforced, which caused the outbreak of the Gunpowder Plot.
>
> The author [Shakespeare] also makes an exception for another magnate: [Stanza 5. See Chambrun's explication of the crow and screech-owl passages on her pp. 232-33, and the above summaries by Rollins concerning the crow (John Whitgift, archbishop of Canterbury) and the screech-owl (Topcliff; or Popham, the "hanging justice" who sentenced the defendants).]
>
> In proposing Ann Lyne with her self-imposed vows of chastity, poverty and obedience as the Phoenix, it seems to me that a chaste martyr--a being who leaves no posterity and yet by her death quickens the faith which causes a new martyr to arise--concords with Shakespeare's lines, and also with the tragic scene of her execution: [Stanzas 15 and 16 of the Threnos. The latter stanza contains the "married chastity" line.]
>
> The allegorical union between constancy and faith as exemplified by the priest's embrace of Anne Lyne's dead body may well explain the beautiful and mysterious verses: [Stanzas 7, 11-13. Mme. Chambrun does not tell the reader that she is fitting the various stanzas together to make a smoother poem (for her purposes) than Shakespeare wrote--that is, there are no suspension dots after stanza 7 and so it seems to precede stanzas 11-13 directly.]

Perhaps one of the most appealing aspects of Chambrun's theory is that it explains Shakespeare's stanza 8,

> Hearts remote, yet not asunder;
> Distance, and no space was seen
> 'Twixt this turtle and his queen;
> But in them it were a wonder.

Mme. Chambrun quotes from a sketch of Anne Lyne written in 1609 by the Jesuit priest Father Gerard to the Roman Authority in England: "'With Anne Lyne perished Mark Barkworth of Lincolnshire. At the foot of the gibbet where Anne had just suffered, the priest embraced her dead body whilst it was still hanging, exclaiming, "Oh, blessed art thou, Mistress

Lyne, who has now happily received thy reward; thou art gone before us, but we shall quickly follow thee to bliss . . . ."'" (p. 227). Other matters are less easily explained; for example, stanza 9:

> So between them love did shine
> That the turtle saw his right
> Flaming in the phoenix' sight:
> Either was the other's mine.

If love of God is at question, however, these and other difficult lines can be interpreted so as to fit the Lyne-Barkworth allegory. The real problem is that the individuals named by Chambrun can only very tentatively be linked to Shakespeare. Chambrun is not even circumstantially convincing when she attempts to make the necessary connections; there are no point-by-point correlations between various religious fugitives and Shakespeare, except that many had reason to fear Sir Thomas Lucy and his nephew William Wayte--and so, presumably, did Shakespeare. Indeed, Mme. Chambrun links a bewildering series of biographical details with Shakespeare's poem (p. 222) in this manner: "I can only think that the Shakespeare-Wayte incident was directly connected with one of the most dramatic escapes of those dramatic times," that of Father Gerard from a safe-house run by a Mr. and Mrs. Roger Lee; in turn, Father Gerard also relied on Mrs. Lyne for safe harbor, and in 1609 he furnished the sketch of the widow Anne Lyne from which Chambrun derived her notion of a personal allegory. Mrs. Lyne had also attended mass at the Lee home. She was executed with Barkworth on the last day of February, 1601

(p. 226 n.). In a note to p. 228, Mme. Chambrun adds the following: "Tradition, as has been said above, always linked 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' with an obscure event of the Essex conspiracy, and the crowd's persistent desire to connect the priest's condemnation with the revolt which cost the Ringleader's life may be the justification for the appearance of Mark Barkworth [as the Turtle] in Shakespeare's allegory."

Says Mr. Rollins, "Scholarship, as will be seen, frequently rivals fiction. Few early editors or commentators seem to have been concerned with the meaning of the poem. Notable exceptions were [J. G.] REGIS and [Wilhelm] JORDAN. The former (Shakespeare-Almanach, Berlin, 1836, p. 351) confessed: 'What death, whether historic or poetic, is the basis of this threnody, and whether its author is Shakspeare himself or another poet, remains problematical. . . . One may almost believe that these verses were perhaps originally intended for the epilogue of an allegorical masque.' The latter (Shakespeare's Gedichte, Berlin, 1861) prints his translation not in the text of the Passionate Pilgrim but in the Notes because (p. 419) 'in spite of all efforts I don't understand it. It seems to be an occasional poem on the obsequies of a dead childless married couple. Did this couple perhaps belong to a society whose members conferred birds' names on one another? Is Shakespeare himself perhaps meant by the swan?' Impetus to interpretation--and guesswork--came from a casual remark of

EMERSON's in the preface to his anthology Parnassus, 1874, pp. v f.: 'I should like to have the Academy of Letters propose a prize for an essay on Shakspeare's poem, "Let the bird of loudest lay," and the "Threnos" with which it closes; the aim of the essay being to explain, by a historical research into the poetic myths and tendencies of the age in which it was written, the frame and allusions of the poem. . . . To unassisted readers, it would appear to be a lament on the death of a poet, and of his poetic mistress (pp. 567-68). . . . [Edward] DOWDEN, editing the Poems in 1903, wrote (p. lxi): 'Shakspere, like his fellow-poets, endeavours to do justice to the prescribed theme; his general intention is to celebrate the decease of two chaste lovers, who were perfectly united in an ideal passion; but he omits one motive of which Marston makes much--the birth of the new phoenix, ideal Love, from the ashes of the chaste and impassioned birds. If actual persons were allegorised, it must not be assumed that the fiery transmutation typifies death in the literal sense of the word'" (p. 570).

These and other cautious conclusions, according to Rollins, "were too tame for [Alfred] VON MAUNTZ. In 1893 (Jahrbuch, XXVIII, 308-10) he argued at length that the poem is complementary to the Sonnets, and is indeed 'a symbolic representation of Shakespeare's estrangement' from the Friend, or the Earl of Southampton [a theory to be summarized in part III of this chapter]. . . . Fantastic

as his ['sonnet'] explanation is," writes Rollins, "he surpassed it in 1903 when, in his Heraldik in Diensten der Shakespeare-Forschung (pp. 163-311) . . . he argued that the poem (1601) is Shakespeare's lament for the death of Marlowe (1593) and particularly for the loss of his great blank-verse. The various birds are suitably identified, the Eagle as Spenser, in whose heraldic device that bird figured; the 'treble-dated crow,' for a similar reason, as Nashe; the owl as Harvey; the swan as Shakespeare. This theory, which has met with no acceptance, was roughly assailed by FAIRCHILD." In his article [cited above], A. H. R. Fairchild writes (p. 313) that the latter Von Mauntz theory "'is absolutely without value. It does not explain a single difficult passage. It hangs by the merest thread of chance coincidence of external fact and in no respect upon anything embodied in the poem itself.' Likewise WOLFGANG KELLER (Jahrbuch, 1903, XXXIX, 285) in a review confesses that he finds the poem altogether obscure, but that von Mauntz's theory removes none of the obscurity" (pp. 570-71). The last Rollins summary, in this connection, concerns C. Knox Pooler: "POOLER (ed. 1911, pp. xci f.). . . has little regard for symbolical explanations: 'After all, it is possible that Chester meant what he said on his title-page, and in his book. The Phoenix may represent love, and the Turtle constancy, i.e. faithfulness to the memory of his dead turtle. The love between the Phoenix and the Turtle shows no sign of passion. They were united

in will and in deed; and the object of their self-immolation was attained when a new and more beautiful Phoenix arose from their ashes. This too seems to be the subject of Shakespeare's poem, though it might, as far as could be seen without Chester's guidance, have been written as an elegy on two lovers who died unmarried or at least childless. . . . Were Shakespeare and his fellows expected to write the usual complimentary verses as an introduction to Chester's poem, and did they, after consultation, decide to save their credit by substituting independent studies of Love and Constancy?'" (pp. 574-75).

In his article "The Sole Arabian Tree" published in the Times Literary Supplement (April 26, 1941, pp. 199, 206), Sir Osbert Sitwell asks (concerning the first stanza of Shakespeare's poem) if one cannot consider the Arbre Sol (or Arbre Sec) mentioned by Marco Polo to be "the sole Arabian tree" of Shakespeare's second verse. [Sitwell's opinion will be discussed in Chapter Three, with other classical and source studies.] Miss Margaret Cooper replies (May 24, 1941, p. 251) in a letter to the editor:

> Sir,--Mr. Osbert Sitwell, with his customary finesse, has essayed the problem of 'the sole Arabian tree'--perhaps the least of the perplexities in Shakespeare's strangely moving poem. As a symbol, any tree will serve, but I should like to suggest . . . that Shakespeare may have had in mind the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The symbolism of the poem thinly veils what must have been an intensely intimate and vital experience. Contrary to traditional usage, Shakespeare's phoenix is feminine, and the turtle masculine. Our poet is ever sweetly reasonable, and it may, I think, safely be assumed that the transposition has meaning. If

not why should he make it?

Giles Fletcher (sonnet 22) quotes 'Lecia,' herself, as declaring that her father '. . . for his country's good, the Persians' favour and the Sophy wan [sic],' and yields the additional information that she was born after he had escaped death by drowning at sea. These references indicate Captain Antony Jenkinson as 'Lecia's' father. Jenkinson left England in May, 1561 to open up trade with Russia and Persia. Crossing the Caspian Sea he experienced a storm which nearly wrecked his ship (Hakluyt Society Publications, 1886).

In 'Albion's England,' (chap. 68), William Warner pays poetic tribute to Jenkinson's achievements:--

> 'Rest may thy honorable boanes,
> Good old-man, in sweet peace:
> Nor have thy phoenix-ashes since
> Beene barren of increase.'

It is not impossible that the Arabian appellative [the tree?] may belong to 'Lecia.' So far as is known, Jenkinson did not marry until 1567-8, but there may have been a previous unrecorded marriage or he may have had a natural daughter. Phoenix-ashes suggests death of the mother at childbirth.

You, Mr. Editor, have quoted 'The Tempest':--

> 'There is one tree, the phoenix throne, one phoenix
> At this hour reigning there.'

If only one, was 'Lecia' Shakespeare's phoenix?

MARGARET COOPER

One assumes that the T.L.S. Editor got this letter with its small respect for logic through the mails and printed it in the spirit of a joke. (It appears, however, under C253 of Gordon Ross Smith's Bibliography.) Miss Cooper may have been a schizophrenic, and in that case any suggestion that her letter is funny would be in bad taste; it may be a sophisticated satire, however, directed at the authors of entirely fanciful literary interpretations.

This is a mixed collection, and only the suggestions of Clara Longworth, Comtesse de Chambrun (1938), need detain the scholar. The other theories are fanciful (for example, those of Forbis, Dodd, Cooper, von Mauntz) or puzzled speculations (Jordan, Regis, Pooler). Chambrun's theory possesses the advantage of featuring a male Turtle and a female Phoenix, and of having some implicit reference to fact (the Essex trials) and to English religious history. It offers an allegorical reading of the poem that fits for the most part. Its crucial fault, however, is that Mme. Chambrun cannot convincingly tie her cast of characters to Shakespeare: that is, she has discovered names and facts but fails to convince us that Shakespeare was in any way aware of them. Perhaps he was.

III

Interpretations Oriented toward the Sonnets

The commentators next to be discussed have two things in common: they all make reference to some implicit allegorical treatment (not always biographical) intended by Shakespeare; and they suggest that the 'key' to "The Phoenix and Turtle" is to be found in the Sonnets.[37] Perhaps the first critic to link "The Phoenix and Turtle" with the Sonnets was Charles Downing. As Rollins (p. 569) writes, "DOWNING (God in Shakspeare, 1890, pp. 222 f.) found the P. & T. a biographical document paralleling the story of the Sonnets: 'Shakspeare, woe-worn with love of the

dark lady, woe-worn with love of his friend [the Earl of Pembroke], found at last the Ideal. But no sooner had he become reconciled and at one with it, than he perceived that it was necessary, in an imperfect world, to act in some measure contrary to it, to sacrifice the pure ideal of love to justice, and to sacrifice the pure ideal of art to a moral purpose. Hence he conceives that, in his case, the pure ideal, and his own life in it, have suffered actual, if only temporary death. For from the ashes[38] of the pure ideal arises the practical ideal, which as it grows to maturity becomes the pure ideal again. For the present, he has adopted justice as rule of action, inspired doubtless by love, yet contrary to its idea. He therefore signs his name to the poem thus--"Wm. Shake-speare"'--rather a cloudy discussion and a cloudier ending," in Rollins' opinion.

Soon afterward the German critic Alfred von Mauntz addressed himself to the poem. Rollins (pp. 570-71) provides a paraphrase: "In 1893 (Jahrbuch, XXVIII, 308-310) he [von Mauntz] argued at length that the poem is complementary to the Sonnets, and is indeed 'a symbolic representation of Shakespeare's estrangement' from the Friend, or the Earl of Shouthampton. The Phoenix is the earl, the Turtle-dove Shakespeare. To the funeral obsequies of their friendship the bird of loudest lay invites all chaste birds, or good people, whereupon follow four stanzas with allusions to persons who are interested in the estrangement.

Excluded are the shrieking harbinger, who helped bring it about, and all tyrant birds with the exception of the eagle, feathered king. This latter is a discreet, indirect reference to Queen Elizabeth, by which Shakespeare means, 'You are indeed a tyrant, but I dare not fail to invite you, or show my anger, because you are the queen.' Ll. 13-16, on the swan, though somewhat obscure, are a reference to Elizabeth Vernon, who will sing the swan-song of her love for Southampton; and, in connection with Sonnets 33-35, they indicate that Shakespeare's estrangement from the earl came in 1595 and that the poem was written about 1595-1596. Other over-ingenious details follow, as that ll. 17-20 on the 'treble-dated crow' refer to Greene, who had called Shakespeare 'an upstart crow.'" (Von Mauntz's later explanation of the poem [1903] has been given in part II of this chapter, above.)

Rollins (pp. 573-74) returns to Downing, alluding to his article "in the Shrine, May, 1902, pp. 34-37" where Downing "developed his 1890 thesis so as to give an abstruse explanation of the poem in terms of Shakespeare's own philosophy: 'Upon careful inspection of Shakespeare's poem, and of the poems by Marston and Chapman upon the same subject, it becomes clear that the Phoenix is symbol of the Ideal, and the Turtle symbol of the Idealist; and when one finds Chapman directly comparing himself to the Turtle, and making open profession of his devotion to the Phoenix or Ideal, it is strongly suggested thereby that Shakespeare

also, in his poem, is making a less direct and open profession of idealistic faith, that the Phoenix is his Ideal also, and that he also sees himself in the Turtle. This should appear an interesting possibility, because it is not uncommonly thought--it is, indeed, the orthodox view--that Shakespeare, as a tranquil mirror of nature, had no ideal. The intimate spiritual relation of pseudo-identity described by Shakespeare as existing between the Turtle and Phoenix, the Idealist and the Ideal, must now inevitably recall to mind the similar relation of pseudo-identity represented by the poet as existing between himself and the beautiful youth of The Sonnets. Amid the various significance of The Sonnets have we, then, there Shakespeare figuring in person as the Turtle or Idealist, while his Phoenix or Ideal assumes human form as the beautiful youth? The question involves a prolonged examination of The Sonnets, but with resultant prolonged answer only, I think, in the affirmative. And the answer, with the many elucidations of the more spiritual meaning of The Sonnets which it involves, renders it not only certain that Shakespeare had an Ideal, but that his devotion to it was of the intense kind exemplified in the devotion of the Turtle to the Phoenix. But the spirit of comparison cannot stop at this point; the relations of the Turtle to the Phoenix inevitably suggest the relations of Orsino to Viola, of Ferdinand to Miranda, of Florizel to Perdita, even of Leontes to Hermione, and certainly of Posthumus to Imogen.[39] And in all these cases

it appears, upon examination, that the story of the Turtle and Phoenix, of the Idealist and his Ideal, is reproduced in human types. And the due consideration of these types, and of the plays in which they appear, leads to the conclusion that Shakespeare had not only an Ideal to which he was devoted, but that he thought much and long about it; that he had, in short, a philosophy of the Ideal, which in his works, with due regard to immediate pleasure to be afforded by them, he could only convey symbolically. Finally, the love of Shakespeare for his Ideal is to be found reflected in his works not symbolically alone. If you would seek its monument, Circumspice! We shall find him telling us himself that his works are a direct manifestation of his Ideal, wrought by him in devotion to it, and under its immediate inspiration. Thus the relations of the Phoenix and Turtle, the Ideal and Idealist, receive a supreme illustration. . . . Shakespeare's Phoenix or Ideal he characterises as--

> "Beauty, truth and rarity,
> Grace in all simplicity."

In The Sonnets he reduces these expressions to "Fair, kind and true in one." . . . An Ideal thus constituted is the perfect, all-comprehensive, absolute Ideal of the human spirit.'" Downing's exposition is not always as effective as it might be (Rollins with some justification calls the 1890 discussion "cloudy"), but there is much that is substantial and compelling in his approach to the poem; later commentators have made frequent use of it, as we shall see.

"Equally esoteric," snorts Rollins, "is J. M. (Shakespeare Self-Revealed, 1904) who (p. 114) 'can explain the enigma of the "sphinx." The enigma of this poem and the enigma of the Sonnets are one. . . . [Shakespeare] was the lover--the Turtle Dove; he loved Beauty--the Phoenix; he died to posterity (as far as his own efforts to get Fame were concerned) in witness of the purity of his love--he was Love's Martyr. Whereas "Ignoto," Marston, Chapman, Jonson, write their "new compositions on the first subject, viz., the 'Phoenix and Turtle,'" with eyes fixed on Chester's poem, Shakespeare writes his with eyes fixed on his Sonnets.' Further light is shed thus: '[p. 122] Since he began to write the Sonnets, in 1594--if not earlier,--Shakespeare had been struggling against what he considered his great failing--his passion for Fame. He felt that he ought to love the Beautiful and Good for its own sake. He felt that his thoughts of Fame prevented the perfecting of his love and perception of Truth and Beauty. At length an occasion presented itself which affected him so greatly as to cause him to come to close quarters with this enemy of his highest self, and put to the proof whether Love of Beauty or Lust of Fame were to prevail. About 1600-1601, Chester (evidently one of his friends), brought to him the poem "Love's Martyr." . . . [pp. 123 f.] Chester's request brought to a climax Shakespeare's struggle against his consuming passion: it was in no sudden heat of enthusiasm that the "Phoenix and Turtle" was written. . . . That struggle we shall not

attempt to picture. We shall merely point out that he was the man who had written of himself and his work . . . [Sonnet 62]. None knew better than he--none knew so well--of the Beauty and Truth that was enshrined in his work; and how wishful he was too to receive the credit of it, let the passion in this sonnet witness. It was through being intensely human that he so thoroughly understood human nature. But great though his passion, his faithfulness to his ideal proved greater. What a compound was he: what intellect; how tender a conscience; what passion; what firmness of will! Such a trial as he had gone through, and such a resolve as he had formed, must have had a permanent effect on him; and that effect is shown in his plays. That a great and sudden change in Shakespeare's self occurred about 1601, immediately after which year begins the great series of tragedies, has long been recognised. The decision registered in the "Phoenix and Turtle" was the cause. . . . [p. 126] "Hamlet" was the first play written after the "Phoenix and Turtle," and it reflects the experiences through which the writer had just passed'" (p. 574). Nor has Rollins omitted mention of "SYDNEY KENT (People in Shakspere's Sonnets, 1915, p. 13), who explains that "'it is Lord Wriothesley [third earl of Southampton] who is intended in Shakspere's threnody, called "The Phoenix and the Turtle," Shakspere being the Turtle, while Lord Wriothesley is the Phoenix. The poem is fanciful, and, as I think, beautiful'" (p. 567). One should add that

Southampton, according to Sydney Kent (pp. 11-12), is the fair youth of the Sonnets and "it is he to whom reference is made in 'The Lover's Complaint' as the seducer." In a footnote (p. 567) Rollins remarks that "CUNLIFFE OWEN's Phoenix and the Dove, 1933, quotes ll. 49-52 on its title-page but actually deals with personages, real and imaginary, from the Sonnets."

In the post-Rollins period of attention to the poem, there are several important studies of "The Phoenix and Turtle" that relate it intimately to the Sonnets, the first being that of Kenneth Muir and Sean O'Loughlin in Chapter V (pp. 115-40) of their 1937 Voyage to Illyria:

> In the previous chapter, we traced the development of Shakespeare's attitude to death down to the end of the century. The idea of death was naturally associated in his mind with the irreparable ravages of time, and in the Sonnets, especially, he declared that there were two ways of conquering death and time, by marriage and breed, or by the immortalizing power of art. We have seen that, in the last years of the century, he had lost his faith in the absolutes in which he had once believed, beauty, truth and goodness. Silvia, in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, was holy, fair and wise in the eyes of love, and it is love which converts these absolutes from abstractions into realities. That, as we have shown, was the significance of the imagery of Romeo and Juliet. When he wrote that play, love was Shakespeare's religion. It is also the religion expressed in the Sonnets. When, therefore, in the profound pessimism of 2 Henry IV, Shakespeare revealed his loss of faith in life, it was because he was losing or had already lost his faith in love.
>
> Either he must recover his lost faith, or he will continue to write bad imitations of his early work, all the more barren because they exhibit a more dexterous technique. The plays that followed were his three finest comedies, and Julius Caesar, the first of the great tragedies. We must infer, therefore, that by some means, by some experience, he had

> achieved a new faith in life. He must have undergone some mystical experience which transformed him from the best of the Elizabethans to the Shakespeare we all know. If we had no evidence to go upon, we could safely infer that this experience was concerned with the conquest of death and time, and with the reaffirmation of his belief in love. If we had no record, so much would be certain. The record we have, [is] in The Phoenix and the Turtle [pp. 127-28] . . . . In view of what we propose to establish later on, we can say that The Phoenix and the Turtle came not long after the final break with Southampton.[40] It must be emphasized that this break is not to be confused with the estrangement mentioned in the Sonnets themselves, but was a deeper and more disturbing one, which came after the last sonnet had been written. Despite this, the poem is not one of despair, but of quiet assurance. 'Hope creates From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.' Therein lies its significance. Southampton had destroyed the love for which the poet had been willing to sacrifice everything. 'Take all my loues, my loue, yea take them all,' and Shakespeare now proclaims that though their mutual love is ended in the actual world, it exists for ever in eternity. This may be thought a poor consolation, a sentimental brooding over what might have been; but this is to misunderstand the poem's significance. Though love has been betrayed brutally, even sordidly, the fact that it once existed is sufficient assurance to the poet that 'Loue hath Reason,' that is to say is an absolute. He will not admit, as he afterwards did in a moment of bitterness, that love's betrayal is a proof that it never existed. . . . Though 'Loue and Constancie is dead,' the miracle of perfect love exists in eternity. [pp. 131-32]

The suggestion of Muir-O'Loughlin that "Cordelia would be impossible without the emotional conviction expressed in The Phoenix and the Turtle" (p. 133), comes, as they indicate on the following page, from an observation by J. M. Murry; and in turn one finds it expressed later in another form by C. S. Lewis (see below).

> Professor Wilson Knight, in his essay, The Shakespearian Aviary, has attempted to show

that the symbolism of the first six stanzas can be referred to a particular play [i.e., that each stanza can be referred to a particular play]. But this is to consider too curiously for our purpose. All we would claim is that the mourners at the obsequies are 'heraulds sad' of the 'tragique scene' on to which the poet was about to enter, and that the essence of Shakespearean tragedy is the conflict between the vision and life as we know it. It is clear that when the poem was written, Shakespeare had a prophetic understanding of the experience he must undergo. Shakespearean tragedy is, in a very real sense, the tragedy of Shakespeare himself.[41] [p. 134]

As we can gather from the Sonnets, for example, the idea of sex was tarnished for the poet, and he still clung to the ideal of the marriage of true minds, chaste, and therefore

> Leauing no posteritie,
> Twas not their infirmitie,
> It was married Chastitie.

The poem is a recognition that this love, divorced from its original object, is the motive force behind all his poetry ('So oft haue I inuok'd thee for my Muse'--Sonnet 78); and it marks the transformation of the lovely boy into the spirit of Ariel. The validity of this love is next established:

> Truth may seeme, but cannot be,
> Beautie bragge, but tis not she.

It was not Truth, for Truth had been betrayed. It was not Beauty, for the Beauty he had worshipped played him false. The answer comes in a brief couplet:

> Loue hath Reason, Reason none,
> If what parts, can so remaine.

Love, it was, to which the others were subsumed, that inspired Shakespeare's plays, a love that would be eventually extended to embrace the whole world. He had not reached that state, but already his prophetic soul looked forward to the ultimate synthesis, the emotional serenity of The Tempest. He looked forward to the time when even Reason would recognize that Love was above Reason [pp. 134-35]. . . . Truth and Beauty had been set side by side by the poet in

Sonnet 14. Addressing the lovely boy, he had said, 'Thy end is Truthes and Beauties doome and date,'[42] and so now

> Truth may seeme, but cannot be,
> Beautie bragge, but tis not she,
> Truth and Beautie buried be.

This must not be taken to imply physical death so much as the admission of the power of Death which faithlessness brings in its train, just as fidelity, by its very existence, conquers Death. [p. 136]

The Phoenix is not only a symbol of immortality, resurrection, and love, but also of death:

> And the emphasis on death and mourning is a parallel to the thoughts of death in Julius Caesar and Hamlet. Shakespeare, at the turn of the century, stood on the threshold of the tragic period. The experience which finds expression in the poem enabled him to endure to the end. Love was the star that enabled his 'wandring barke' to survive the 'tempest.' In the plays that follow upon this new attitude, notably Antony and Cleopatra and King Lear, his concept of order in the Universe is expressed as a belief in constancy and faithfulness, a constancy and faithfulness that, in the tragedies, receives death as its reward, and is the antithesis of the betrayal that compassed the death of Caesar [pp. 137-38]. . . . Either before or just after The Phoenix and the Turtle, Shakespeare wrote one supreme comedy, Twelfth Night, his loveliest and most perfect, so wise, so tender, in its treatment of human frailty, using such gentle irony against self-deceivers, that the less perceptive critics have failed to observe how delicate was the balance of this fine equilibrium. Cast adrift from Southampton, the poet had to make a further journey, and the tragedies chart the voyage. He had seen Illyria in the setting sun, but night came on, and the tempest of his soul. [pp. 139-40]

The authors are bold in their thesis, fairly specific, and have a broad knowledge of Shakespeare's works. Southampton, as recipient of many of the Sonnets and betrayer of Shakespeare's love, necessarily plays a leading and

villainous role. On a personal level, the memory of Southampton is something that Shakespeare must overcome; on the imaginative level, for Shakespeare the artist, the experience Southampton represents with its multiple associations is a magical key to a greater range of expression and insight that must ultimately lead to universality of apprehension. (This, it seems to me, says too little for what had gone before artistically, in the case of Shakespeare.) It is a process that no one can prove, but Muir and O'Loughlin suggest it very well. It must be routinely noted that there is no documented link between Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton as "fair youth" of the Sonnets, let alone anything tying the latter to "The Phoenix and Turtle."

The views of Walter Thomson come next chronologically. His edition, Sonnets of William Shakespeare and Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton (Oxford, 1938), which includes a section reprinting the Poetical Essays of Love's Martyr, is referred to by G. Wilson Knight in The Mutual Flame (p. 41 n.): "I sometimes wonder if the 'Mr. W. H.' called 'the only begetter' of the Sonnets in Thorpe's dedication might refer to both the lovers, one initial taken from each. I am indebted for this thought to Walter Thomson [XI, 80]. Mr. Thomson is, however, arguing that the Sonnets were jointly composed by Shakespeare and Southampton. That is unlikely enough; but a more general truth, having to do with Southampton or any joint authorship

at all, might be adumbrated by his suggestion." Knight has in mind his own notion of bisexual higher integration. He refers to Thomson on two other occasions: "Thomson (IX, 63-74) brushes aside Love's Martyr, but regards the following Poetical Essays as a surreptitious method used by his stage friends to send a message of sympathy to Southampton when in prison on a charge of treason. For reasons of prudence, the meanings are veiled; the female sex of the Phoenix is a mask, the more easily used since 'the sex of the mythical Phoenix was an uncertain and variable quantity.' The author [Thomson] lays especial stress on Jonson's short poem The Phoenix Analysed . . . as giving a key to this particular masking" (p. 148).

Jonson says

> Now, after all, let no man
> Receive it for a fable,
> If a bird so amiable
> Do turn into a woman.
>
> Or (by our Turtle's augur)
> That Nature's fairest creature
> Prove of his mistress' feature,
> But a bare type and figure.

Most critics have supposed that Jonson thought of the bird, in his own mind, as male,[43] as Chapman had been accustomed to think of the Dove as female, and that with some effort both were brought to support the Chester precedent. Thomson, however, "argues that our collection of poems is being addressed to Southampton as Phoenix," to quote Knight (p. 189), "whilst he was in prison. He [Thomson] explicitly disassociates his reading from any sort of passionate romance:

the veiling, for him, is a matter of political expediency, Southampton's friends wishing to communicate surreptitiously with a man convicted of treason. Nevertheless, his [Thomson's] argument (IX, 71-2) that these lines are a veiled assertion that the Phoenix' female sex is a mask falls into line with, and indeed prompted [italics supplied], my own understanding of them, though their secondary meaning appears less simple than his brief paraphrase suggests" (p. 189). Knight's summary is accurate with regard to Thomson's general notion of the allegory, and so is not inappropriate here; furthermore, we shall soon be dealing with Knight's own better-known views of the Sonnets as integral to "The Phoenix and Turtle," and it is useful to know beforehand that Thomson's book helped shape them.

The latter fact is interesting, because Knight conceives of a chaste relationship between Shakespeare and others that is nonetheless homosexual. Whereas in his PREFACE page Thomson asserts that

> The MAIN PURPOSE of this MONOGRAPH is:
> To express strong and earnest expostulation against the allegation that Shakespeare in his Sonnets or elsewhere made confession of moral perversity:
> To point out the injustice done to Shakespeare by reading the 20th Sonnet in the present-day meaning of words instead of in the significance of Elizabethan parlance, thus giving a start to the homosexual fallacy:
> To expose the hoax perpetrated by Oscar Wilde and Samuel Butler about the 'beautiful boy actor, Willie Hughes.'
> It also serves to SUGGEST for CONSIDERATION, NOT to ASSERT:
> that Shakespeare wrote only about one hundred of the Sonnets usually attributed to him;

> that he addressed them to . . . Southampton; that the greater number of the remainder of the Sonnets are probably from the pen of Southampton or were collected by him; that Shakespeare had very little or no hand in the 'Dark Woman' series numbered 127 to 154; that in the poem of 'The Phoenix and Turtle,' which is an essential part of the Sonnet story, the 'Phoenix' represents Southampton; and that, in the same poem, Shakespeare discloses the identity of 'Mr. W. H.,' who, as we are told in the Dedication of the Sonnets, was the 'Onlie Begetter of these Insuing Sonnets.'

Thomson describes in his treatment of the Sonnets a warm, affectionate, even humorous relationship between Shakespeare and Southampton; when Shakespeare in Sonnet 20 said "passion" he meant it to be equivalent to "poem" and "sonnet" (p. 1-12). Matthew Roydon's poem is headed "AN ELEGIE/ OR/ FRIENDS PASSION/ Written upon the death of the Right Honourable/ SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, KNIGHT,/ Lord Governour of Flushing," according to Thomson, and so "we cannot doubt," for reasons that include its Phoenix imagery, "that Shakespeare took his cue from this poem when writing his 'Phoenix and Turtle'" (p. 17).[44] It is impossible to include here Thomson's views of the Sonnets. In his ninth chapter (pp. 63-74) Thomson reaches "The Phoenix and Turtle":

> The person who is the subject of this poem has never been unanimously or satisfactorily identified, although various guesses have been made. When it first came under our eye we had just spent a few months of somewhat intensive study of the Sonnets . . . . We remembered the theory of 'two-in-oneness' which appears in the Sonnets, notably in No. 22:
>
> '. . . my heart
> Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me:'

and in No. 42:

> 'But here's the joy: my friend and I are one';

and No. 109:

> 'As easy might I from myself depart
> As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie';

and it struck us at once that we have the same rather unusual . . . idea of duality mentioned and elaborated with emphasis in 'The Phoenix and Turtle' . . . . Then, a reasonably careful reader with a reasonably retentive memory coming upon 'Truth and Beautie buried be' in the Threnos could hardly fail to hark back to Sonnet No. 14, where we have:

> 'Or else of thee this I prognosticate:
> Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.'

There have we not a prognostication and the fulfilment of it? We find Southampton behind the Sonnets, and he was the Phoenix of 'A Lover's Complaint.' We find him also behind 'The Phoenix and Turtle.' Is it possible for these to be accidents? [pp. 63-64]

Thomson thinks (pp. 64-66) that Shakespeare's constancy and love toward Southampton required expression when the latter was jailed in 1601: in addition to "The Phoenix and Turtle" there are the testaments of Sonnets 123, 124 and 125.

> Readers of this unique poem . . . have been thrown on to a false scent by its being published within the same covers as a bleak and tedious work called 'Love's Martyr . . .', the author's name being Robert Chester. <u>In that work we have little interest</u> [italics supplied] except that it appeared inside the cover which also contained a separate series of poems [p. 66] . . . . After saturating our mind with these 'Essaies' we have developed a firm belief that they are a tribute from theatrical friends to Southampton . . . . Being a convicted rebel and traitor, his communications with the outside world would be jealously watched and all his correspondence closely censored. . . . His four friends [Shakespeare, Jonson, Marston and Chapman]

probably invented the 'Essaies' as a means to get into his hands a communication declaring their admiration and affection and imparting a ray of hope. A careful examination of their contents justifies, we believe, this conclusion. Profound personal feeling and a deep sense of pity lie behind 'The Phoenix and Turtle' and its touching Threnos. For good reasons guarded expression and under-statement mark them both [pp. 66-68]. . . . Finally we have [Ben Jonson] . . . . He is specially distinguished and deserves special thanks from us for one thing--he gives us the key to the 'Poeticall Essaies' in his eight lines 'The Phoenix Analysde [see above] . . . the 'Diverse Poeticall Essaies' are all ostensibly addressed to a woman but in reality to a man, the Earl of Southampton, who was held captive in the Tower [p. 69]. . . . Something in the nature of a cypher was being used. The 'Poeticall Essaies,' which included Shakespeare's 'Phoenix and Turtle,' were, on the surface, addressed to a woman while it seemed that the recipient must have been a man. It was mystifying to find Shakespeare in his poem referring to 'his Queene.'[45] The ninth and tenth stanzas, and especially the words--'the selfe was not the same'--appear to convey that a change of sex had taken place. The sex of the mythical phoenix was an uncertain and variable quantity.

The Phoenix is first introduced to us in 'A Lover's Complaint,' where he is described as a man: 'The Phoenix down began but to appear like unshorn velvet.'[46] Later that bird is brought before us as a woman in 'The Phoenix and Turtle': 'Twixt this Turtle and his Queene,' the Queene being the Phoenix [p. 70].

[p. 71] When we come to Ben Johnson's eight lines, 'The Phoenix Analysde,' and read them patiently and attentively, the blinkers fall from our eyes.

> 'Now, after all, let no man
> Receive it for a Fable
> If a Bird so amiable,
> Do turne into a Woman.
>
> 'Or (by our Turtles Augure)
> That Natures farest Creature
> Prove of his Mistris Feature,
> But a bare Type and Figure.'

From the first stanza we are to believe that the amiable bird, The Phoenix, has turned into a woman

(metaphorically, of course, because the poem is metaphorical throughout). The second stanza seems to say that in the 'Turtles Augure' (that is, Shakespeare's poem of 'The Phoenix and Turtle') [italics supplied] the author [Shakespeare] takes the feature or personality of the Phoenix and uses it as a type or figure merely. In other words he speaks figuratively about it. He calls the Phoenix his 'Queene' in a figurative (and intentionally deceptive) sense only.[47]

Jonson's lines 'The Phoenix Analysde' ought to be read in their setting between his 'Epos' and his 'Ode,' in both of which he addresses the Phoenix as a female in terms of highly exalted admiration, even devotion. He makes us feel that he has been protesting rather too much (perhaps with his tongue in his cheek?) because he explodes his balloon of hyperbolic flattery of a lady in the 'Epos' and the 'Ode' by interpolating between these two poems the information that the amiable bird, the Phoenix, must be understood to have changed (figuratively) from a man to a woman. We cannot doubt that Shakespeare in the ninth and tenth stanzas . . . [p. 72] deals in his own way with this identical feature--an allegorical change of sex to which Ben Jonson refers in the first four lines of 'The Phoenix Analysde.'

Jonson also deserves our gratitude for his warning in the lines signed 'Vatum Chorus' (which seem without doubt [italics supplied] to be from his pen), when he tells us that the 'Essaies' were inspired by

> '. . . a true Zeale . . .
> And an Invention freer than the Times.
> These were the Parents to our severall Rimes.'

There are many things in the 'Essaies' we cannot take literally. They are all couched in symbolical terms which must not be accepted as actual fact.

In the 'Essaies' the authors were publicly telling Southampton things which they did not want his custodians to know [?], so they spoke in parable. They could not be explicit without endangering their own freedom and the success of the entire scheme; they had to be circumspect and economical of truth [italics mine], and sometimes even actually misleading, in the cause of safety. They had to make themselves understood by Southampton or all their trouble would be in vain. It is left to us to comb as much fact as possible out of a great deal of intentional mystification [p. 72] . . . . And their plot succeeded, so far as we

> know. A scheme so kindly and cleverly conceived deserved success. Down the years people have asked 'Who was the woman?' Ben Jonson's reply roughly is, 'There is no woman, there is a man made to masquerade as a woman.' That man is the Phoenix, and the Phoenix is Southampton [p. 73].

In Thomson's tenth chapter (pp. 75-77) he affirms again that Roydon's poem of 1593 was Shakespeare's model (p. 75). "The name 'Phoenix,'" he continues, "was reserved by Shakespeare for his most admired characters, characters distinguished by superlative qualities of beauty, grace and strength. Southampton, Antony and Imogen were three persons on whom Shakespeare bestowed the title" (p. 75). Thomson at last comes out for Shakespeare himself as the Turtle: "We cannot doubt that Southampton was the Phoenix, 'the bird of loudest lay, on the sole Arabian tree,' Shakespeare being the Turtle" (pp. 75-76). The bird imagery of the first five stanzas, it is explained, comes from Roydon (Phoenix, Eagle, Swan, Turtle), and Shakespeare "adds two entirely original birds of his own, viz. the Owl and the Crow" (p. 76). The owl is Robert Greene, and the crow Shakespeare himself. (A complete summary of this aspect of Thomson's views appears in our Chapter Three, below.) Thomson's eleventh chapter (pp. 78-85) concludes that Shakespeare furnished the identity of Mr. W. H. in "The Phoenix and Turtle": "There are prominently before us two persons--William Shakespeare and Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. Remove the double or surnames, and there stand out--'W' and 'H'" . . . (p. 79). Thomson says (p. 80) that he had earlier decided that the "onlie begetter

of the Sonnets--and he thought Shakespeare and Southampton had jointly written them--"was likely to be either the writer or the person causing them to be written." Southampton in jail "must have been deeply moved by the piety of his associates, when they sent him the beautiful tribute of the 'Poeticall Essaies' and ingeniously invented a means of communication to convey them to him. In the first stanza of 'The Phoenix and Turtle' Southampton would probably recognize himself as the Phoenix, which he had been called in 'A Lover's Complaint'" (p. 80). As we shall soon discover, Professor Wilson Knight in The Mutual Flame thinks that Shakespeare is describing a general bisexual experience in the Sonnets, and that he may have had more than one lover. Knight has taken over many Thomson premises and few conclusions. Thomson himself asks, "Was Shakespeare likely to have, about the same time, more than one friend about whom these passages could have been written? If so he would have merited the name of a spiritual bigamist and philanderer. No, in both Sonnets and poem one man--Southampton--was surely the individual concerned" (p. 82). "Bearing in mind what we find in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth stanzas . . . we think we may assume that Shakespeare wished to make . . . some statement about the joint authorship of the Sonnets. We are not surprised that he should have selected that medium for his disclosure, because the end of his last poem connected with the Sonnets would seem to be the natural place for such an announcement" (p. 84).

The reader will have noticed Thomson's irritating habit of prefacing his guesswork with 'it cannot be doubted,' 'there can be no doubt,' and the like phrases. His general theory is unsupported by fact and fanciful in the extreme. Thomson's exposition of it, however, merits a summary. First, one is never told clearly what the conspirators wished to convey, or conveyed, to Southampton in the Tower. Presumably it is identical with the spirit of friendship expressed in the Sonnets, and an affirmation of joint authorship. Second, Thomson strangely ignores the context of Love's Martyr itself:--perhaps Chester, and Salusbury, wished to be remembered too. Third, the link between Shakespeare and the "Turtles Augure" line of Jonson's is never made explicit. The principal significence of Thomson's theory, in fact, is that G. Wilson Knight took it over for its "two-in-oneness" (p. 83) postulate and used it in his sophisticated suggestion of a chaste homosexuality identical with the poetic process itself; whereas for poor Thomson, "the ground for basing a charge of perversity against Shakespeare is his own 20th Sonnet, the reading of which, in the light of the English language as it existed in the Elizabethan age, destroys the monstrous allegation. Honestly considered, it is not Shakespeare who stands at the bar of trial but we ourselves, his countrymen . . . . Our self-respect is in question until we have taken all steps possible to right this deplorable wrong" (p. 11)

It is possible to say of the next commentator, Florens C.

Rang (who died in 1924 and whose book was brought out by his son), that he conceives Shakespeare der Christ, Eine Deutung der Sonette (Darmstadt, 1954)[48] around the Sonnets, and that he suggests that the dramas are built on them as expansions upon theme. Beyond that, it is difficult to say anything. In his discussion of the Sonnets in Shakespeare Survey, XV (1962), 10-18, Mr. A. Nejgebauer remarks (p. 16) that "F. C. Rang . . . built his whole book towards sonnet 146, or rather on it." Professor Hans Schnyder's review in the Archiv für das Studium der Neuren Sprachen, 193 (1957), 332, accurately summarizes the intent of the book, after acknowledging its opacity: "Rang's book makes great demands on the reader, especially in the matter of language. Rang's intensive search for the deeply-felt and nonetheless concise expression requires of one's understanding an out of the ordinary likeness of mind. In his 'messianic' interpretation the author sees in the Sonnets, which he appraises as the core of Shakespeare's poetic creations, the expression of a super-temporal religious basic-experience. His concern is not with the eventual manifestations of a dogmatic religious belief, but with the release of a vision of transcendent love, grace, time, and eternity through the poet's experience of friendship. The author knows for himself with great exactness the tiring riddles concerning the exact biographical content of the sonnets: the historical existence of Shakespeare's friend is completely meaningless vis-a-vis the fact that for the poet, through the time-bound

coincidence [coming together with the friend], the full self-realization, the highest faculty of expression was permitted his genius." Rang himself says that in "The Phoenix and Turtle" one is able "to feel the unendingness of the perpetuating love of pure beauty which sight distorts; one finds the rich thoughts to perceive beyond selfness of being, oppositeness in oneness, overcoming of the material body". . . (p. 194). From what I can understand, Rang thinks Shakespeare in "The Phoenix and Turtle" shows a new oscillation of religious belief (p. 194). Whereas at the same time the poem is an allegory whose meaning has to do with Logos (Das Wort) and the likeness of the poet's creative expression to God's. The poet's art must give up the world in order to unite with God, who is Love and also the "you" (thou) to the poet's "I" (pp. 198-99). In other words, Shakespeare's poem is a colloquy with God, a supreme reaching into the beyond, the effort of which enables the expression (the poem). "Dichtkunst ist nur Nachwort, Gott nach und hin zu ihm" (p. 199). Pages 194-200 of Rang's book are devoted to "The Phoenix and Turtle," and he does not mention the Sonnets there: their influence is implicit.

Rang (p. 194) begins, "One has to be at least touched by the philological discussion of Shakespeare in order to know that Shakespeare wrote an elegy called 'The Phoenix and the Dove.'" He is speaking to German readers. "The poem was considered silly by many or as 'allegorical nonsense' not worthy of the 'practical and clear' Shakespeare.

But the opposite is true. We have to work ourselves into the poem with increasing astonishment about its depth. We have to feel in the power of short verses of concise image-sequences the infiniteness of eternifying love eternifying into pure beauty whose vision consumes us. We have to recognize the richness of thought concerning the selfness of the beings, the other-worldliness in union and the victory over material body. We have to ponder Shakespeare's painfulness as it is expressed in this poem, his tragic grief and weeping tiredness which overcomes the poem in such insights of blessifying power. We have to ponder the unhappiness too with which he bewails the joyful hymn of resurrection of the Phoenix into a dirge.[49] We have to think over the un-Christian attitude of this heathen of Fate! Only having put off this heavy faithlessness out of the depression of his lamentations, [do we grow] the apostolic wing which makes our faith swing up anew. Thus our elegy may be a work of high meaning . . . and may show an abstract symbolism instead of an abstruse one, which puts [the abstract] highest statements of the mind into the earthen shape of living body. But access to such art of ideas is not an everyday path. 'If you want true joy, you must work seriously'" (p. 195).

Rang conceives of the poem as allegory, and concludes that a new discussion of allegory is required that takes account of its historical origin. Generally, allegory "is considered frosty and that means unfelt. . . . If it

[feeling] were admitted as its blood-warm pulse, allegory is stone without feeling. This was different in the time of the Renaissance, antiquity, and Near East, when the masters thought differently. . . . Jesus has spoken in allegories. Parables, fables, myths are allegorical speech." The late Renaissance is responsible for the dislike of allegory because play with forms took away from "the god Seriousness in which every great art breathes, even while playing, and because the Rococo ended in hectic beauty and because Louis XVI and the Empire style" only held the way of life tenaciously. Intellectual concepts, according to Rang, came to replace "ideas in symbolic image expressed in liveliness": personified tools came to be used routinely at weddings, funerals, in battle portraits, in almanacs, on castles and churches. The use of "personified sublimities" in pastoral poetry, and "in the moralizing cultivation of the fable" resulted in a "calcification of allegory," which can be contrasted to the vital uses by Rubens, Michelangelo, Milton, and Bunyan (p. 195). "In order to show the depth of these artists and to disdain realism and seize symbolism, an old wise man Macrobius in his dream of Scipio explains, 'If the philosophers want to treat of God and spirit they resort to parables and paradigms.' Our century of naturalness is so naturified that it scarcely understands that another century being god-like saw nature only as raw material which needed to be enlivened by the spirit" (p. 196). This other century, unlike certain

Dutch painters, "saw man, not men in the battle" and "the fortunes of war in the teeming masses." In its paintings, one finds battle tumult "as a concord of spiritual powers" which reveals "symbolical traits in individual warriors, instead of in the masses of the actual battle." The Renaissance used characters from the mythological armory because they suggested "an atmosphere around things of the mind" in which "what is clearly stated finds itself in that which it is impossible to express" (pp. 196-97). Mars does not stand for 'war' but represents a creation of character that in turn suggests the spirit of the Roman people which followed him to the ends of the known world. The symbolic Roman Eagle lifts one's thoughts toward Jupiter, "from earth into cosmic space," in which war is at once the father of all things and in the star, Mars, "the torch of heaven." There is a downward suggestion toward the human, "toward Aries and toward that which the Greek bard tells about him and Aphrodite." Rang makes the connection between war and lust. "Who could exhaust the well of relationships . . . comprised by an image pouring out of myths?"

If painting, or the art of imagery [Bildkunst] "whose material character cannot represent spiritual connections between things" tries to buttress its meaning "in emblems or subscriptions for the mere sake of not missing those connections . . . how then did poetry have to cultivate its own power in the cultivation of allegory in order to make deeper connections sound out in the word! For poetry has

to talk about non-sensual things which all art of imagery was unable to master." Bildkunst has trouble with such abstract concepts as friendship, loyalty, eternity and holiness because "it is bound with its allegories to the sign world of the affections, impressions and expressions," except when it is supported by the word; and even then, as in the case of Michelangelo's Medici tombs: "we only accept them if we are told by word what the meaning of these figures is . . . we cannot grasp more from the figures themselves than a meaning of man- or woman-body being aroused in passion or calmed by spirit [pp. 197-98]. Figurative allegory is under the command of the word, and where the word is missing, as in Titian's portraits, where the human and divine are called love, in such a case the observer is compelled to look for the word that could give a name to those figures. . . . The contrast of form and content arises only in the word"--"Der Gegensatz von Form und Inhalt entsteht erst im Wort." Rang's subsequent comments constitute a psychological theory of aesthetics, and, although he does not label them, they are his explication of the poem in part. I believe he means first of all to suggest that the Phoenix and Turtle represent form and content, united by a word that is originally God's, as in the creative fiat, but which here is the poet's word as creator.

> The sense of sight, of seeing, is unambiguous: through it the I [Ich] brings what appears to be outside of itself inside. Thus the I becomes

larger, grows even to be a world I, but stays within itself and whatever it does not work out within itself stays outside so that no connection is possible. Hearing, however, is two-sided and so is voice. As the two organs mouth and ear create it, in this way it turns out on the highest level where word is heard and not just sound, as a detour of a relationship of the two I's. Or in the communication with one's self, of two I's in one I. The path which leads man around himself even materially in the breath which vibrates around him leads from perception to forming of concept, from mind to spirit. Now the art of the word knows itself to be the form of the content, to be the extent to create content. Word itself is without form because of being infinite. The I-thou of love is inexhaustible. If all other arts touch upon the nature of the world, thus the word touches on the nature of God, for He is Love. He is Thou or even the Thou-I. Only in the Thou of God can human consciousness kindle its I. Only the I of God creates the thou of man and the world. In the beginning was the Word. God spoke and it became Light. Only the word shapes and shaped things; the creative arts are only imitating.[50] This is true for the word. Something else is true for the art of word. Since the word is the Word of God in the highest sense, form and content become meaningless before him, as being contemplations which would make the absolute to be dependent. But in the mouth of man, word no longer is absolute, it has wholly left behind sovereignty and expresses its I-thou without anything to hold onto, in proportions which should hold each other since they need support. It expresses connections and no longer the unity in the plurality. It no longer speaks with the original Word, as prophecy [does] which speaks in the name [p. 199] of God. The art of poetry is an after-word, being after God and toward him. It [poetry] carries God's keys well but is not God's lock nor his door. So poetry has to give itself up to the world, and this is the deepest sense of allegory.

Namely, of saying it differently; of half-truth, of myth which contradicts the Logos,[51] and interrupts him. Which [half-truth] transforms the image which man is into the word which God speaks. And then expresses the divine according to the appearances of the world. Religion has to protest against this half-truth [lit., half-lie] of Mytho-Logie as soon as religion enters the stage of Protestantism, namely, into the consciousness of the contrast of image and word.

The reader will find Rang's discussion wholly irrelevant until he discovers that the author has been progressing toward an explication of the poem. The progression, however, is stated as an allegory to explain the allegory Rang sees behind Shakespeare's poem. In the above, Rang is tackling the unity-in-duality theme of the poem in several ways: first, he suggests that form and content are two things which become one in God's word--therefore on the highest level--and because God alone can do this (not poetic art, man's effort to emulate God), and because God is Love, Love on the highest level has powers to superpose what earthly man identifies as Logos, the rational principle. The Logos is also God's Word and hence his Spirit. In it, form and content are one. Second, Rang suggests that the word, like man, is fallen, and "expresses connections and no longer the unity in the plurality"; whereas prophecy speaks with the original Word "in the name of God." Poetry or Mytho-Logie is a half-truth which plays God: it "expresses the divine according to the appearances of the world" and in the process, "transforms the image which man is into the word which God speaks." Third, he <u>seems</u>, when we interrupted him (p. 199), to have been identifying Reason, the principal speaker of Shakespeare's poem, with Protestantism, which is nothing more than "the consciousness of the contrast of image and word." Rang says nothing about "Reason," but nevertheless it would appear that Shakespeare's actor has come onstage. Let us see.

> But its [religion's] protest is unjust before and afterward. This Protest does not recognize that it breaks down in the holy word as much as it wants to hallow when destroying the images.[52] But taking away form and only leaving content which he now calls essence, he [Protest] assumes, in an equation of two unknowns, one as being known while suppressing the other. Thus he makes absolute a part relation, and he turns what was the body of the word into a ghost of the idea. But against this ghost he tries in vain to set up the demon of moral instruction, of dogma, of Bible, as a kind of support in which speech and counter-speech should have to become one. This Protest being freed from the sin of myth commits a sin against Logos since he [Protest] subjects him [Logos] to thought, subjects the Spirit of God[53] to human spirit, as if by using the word 'spirit' in both cases, the dependance of man's spirit and word on the image-power of the ideas could be overcome. But this Protestant Protest also lacks the consciousness that it has destroyed prophecy together with myth. For although admittedly myth is the opposite of prophecy, yet it [myth] should not remain the same as it was. Word and image want to become one in the fulfillment of creation, in the image of man in whom the Word of the Creator is fulfilled, namely in God's Messiah. It is about Him that mythology prophesies unwittingly.[54]
>
> If we now understand the Baroque of allegory on one hand, as the mixture of bad and good conscience in the use of image-language while the bad conscience is pushing forward more strongly during the anti-Protestant Renaissance of Catholicism, the so-called Counter-Reformation, while at another time good conscience pushes forward, but always [p. 200] the conscience of the less-good than before,--then we have the duty to grant to poetry that it might represent myth as allegory, that is to say, to maintain itself--for it [poetry] is myth,--but only in reference to the essentially different. And especially to bring forth the myth of primeval time by whose hand [myth's] the human spirit was led as though by a nurse's hand [p. 200].

One imagines Mr. Rollins calling this 'a cloudy discussion with a cloudier ending,' for such it is. The Catholics furthered true allegory and the Protestants

destroyed it, that much is plain. Rang does not tell his reader what to make of his chapter, but one can make a few general observations: first of all, it would seem clear that Rang has constructed an allegory of his own--based on theoretical histories of European art, philosophy, literature and theology--and has formed a notion of aesthetics that is heavily ethical, in order to explain "The Phoenix and Turtle." There are many borrowings from Church dogma and at least one or two from Plato. His discussion moves from the historical (painting, emblems, allegory) to the psychological (the form-content dichotomy and human perception), and at last its theological drift is revealed (p. 199): "Protest [that is, Protestantism] being freed from the sin of myth commits a sin against Logos since he [Protest] subjects him [Logos] to thought, subjects the Spirit of God to human spirit . . . ." Plato seems to be present at the end of Rang's discussion. In the Republic, Plato acknowledges that Homer's myths were the educators of Greece; but myth is only an imitative art that does not show reality and therefore myth can't be admitted into his state, which after all is one of the mind. Rang counters that poetry "is myth . . . but only in reference to the essentially different" (p. 200). That is, the word in its fallen state "expresses connections and no longer the unity in the plurality," but still it "touches on the nature of God, for He is Love" (p. 198). Further, it seems to me that Rang's allegory-upon-an-'allegory' celebrates two

deaths--the death of allegory, which partakes of word and image; and the demise of Christian notional unity under the pressure of a movement (Protestantism) which persists in separating image and word (p. 199). The two deaths, like the two "birds," are intimately linked. Whether or not he means that the Phoenix and Turtle are the True Church and Allegory; or whether they are the intimate unity-in-duality of form and content, image and word, I cannot say, and Rang does not. We know that Reason, in Shakespeare's poem, is at first antagonistic and puzzled by the illogical unity of the two creatures, but at last sings their threne. Rang may have assumed that the protestant faith at large had become aware of its sin against the Logos, and was giving grudging acknowledgement of the truth it had sought to destroy. I do not intend to defend my reading, which is simply an effort to say something for the silent Rang. The only thing one can say with confidence is that Rang thinks that true allegory died with the Reformation. It is probable, also, that he read in Shakespeare's poem a kindling of the human consciousness in the 'I' of God (Love), resulting in a unity which Reason (Protestantism, or perhaps simply 'reason' in its most worldly sense) with its denial of a unity of form and content, word and image, unsuccessfully challenged. Rang does not use the word 'reason' in his discussion. The Phoenix and Turtle may be, in Rang's view, the True Church and the Logos; or the Church and faith; there are several other possibilities but it is not our purpose here to pursue

them. Like Chambrun, Rang seems to assume that Shakespeare was privately a Roman Catholic, but the point is not crucial. In his review [cited above], Hans Schnyder provides a clue that may help explain Rang's opacity: "Als Florens Christian Rang 1924 starb, war es sein Wunsch an den Sohn, dass sein unvollendetes Werk über Shakespeares Sonette als sein geistiges Testament veröffentlich werden möge. Rang hatte sich schon jahrzehntelang mit den Sonetten beschäftigt und plante die Herausgabe einer grösseren Arbeit, die eine Verdeutschung sämtlicher Sonette, eine ausführliche Interpretation und einen textkritischen Anhang umfassen sollte. Das vorliegende Buch besteht im wesentlichen aus dem Material für den zweiten Teil jenes beabsichtigten Werkes." One must assume, given the care with which Rang pursues his discussion, that he intended to clarify what must be bare working notes, with which he alone was familiar. Had he lived longer, there could have been no alteration of his religious emphases, but surely he would have fleshed out the interpretation of "The Phoenix and Turtle" given on pp. 194-200 of the 1954 book, and relieved the reader of the absurd burden of explicating a piece of criticism.

G. Wilson Knight's earliest views of the poem will be found summarized below in Chapter Four, under dramatic interpretations. We turn now to The Mutual Flame, first published in 1955 and reprinted with minor corrections in 1962. Part I of the book deals with the Sonnets (pp. 3-142), part II with "The Phoenix and Turtle" (pp. 145-224). Knight

has seen a great deal in the poem, and in connection with the poem, and whereas I should like to provide a full digest of his views here, much summary compression will be necessary. On his p. 145, Knight suggests that he will refer frequently to the Sonnets, and (p. 146) to Love's Martyr. "Grosart argues that this poem, and indeed the whole collection, refers to the tragedy of Queen Elizabeth's love for Essex. This is however hard to accept. There are far too many lines which contradict the thesis" (p. 146). Knight quotes examples of contradictory lines (from Grosart's 1878 edition) and then provides others which show that "there was some reason for Grosart's theory" (p. 146). He discusses the findings of Carleton Brown and balks at Brown's notion that Marston was referring to Sir John Salusbury's fourteen-year-old daughter as the new Phoenix because Marston's line "God, Man, nor Woman, but elix'd of all" does not fit.[55] Knight continues: "We can also question whether the title Love's Martyr makes the best possible device for a poem honouring a patron's marriage, the more so since we know from a number of Sir John's own acrostic lyrics, included in the collection [edited by Carleton Brown], that he was, at one period at least, passionately devoted to Dorothy Halsall, his wife's sister . . . . But it is very doubtful whether Salusbury or his ladies have anything to do with the book's contents. After all, dedication does not necessarily involve identification. . . . Brown is, necessarily, baffled by

Shakespeare's contribution: 'Shakespeare,' he writes, 'chose to develop his theme along a widely diverging line. In his poem the note from first to last is funereal'" (p. 147). Knight speaks (pp. 147-48) of the views of John Middleton Murry (see Chapter Four of this thesis) and of interpretations which come nearer to his own, those of Kenneth Muir and Sean O'Loughlin, who in The Voyage to Illyria (1937) described the poem "as a record of Shakespeare's final break with Southampton, taken to be the Fair Youth of the Sonnets:

> Though love has been betrayed brutally, even sordidly, the fact that it once existed is sufficient assurance to the poet that 'love hath reason,' that is to say, is an absolute.
> (V, 132)

The deaths of Phoenix and Turtle signify the tragedy of this love, but perfect love somehow continues to exist 'in eternity' (V, 132). . . . Without confining ourselves to any exact biographical pattern [italics supplied]," Knight acknowledges that he can agree "that some such experience may lie behind the poem. But the Sonnets certainly suggest that there was 'betrayal,' if so strong a word be in place, on both sides. Nor can we be sure that Shakespeare's emotional experiences were limited to a single affair: he may have had many" (p. 148).

Knight summarizes the views of Walter Thomson (as above) and quotes with approval Thomson's remark that the sex of the Phoenix "was an uncertain and variable quantity." Taking note of Newdigate's oft-repeated theories concerning

the Ode Enthousiastiké and Lady Bedford, Knight decides that "Jonson's poem may, indeed, have been at one time offered to this lady, but in our present context it surely holds its own significance" (p. 149). "In his monograph Phönix und Taube (1953) Heinrich Straumann does well to remind us that Love's Martyr was, in fact, dedicated to Sir John Salusbury.[56] The dedication, though this need not involve identification within the fictions, is phrased in no uncertain terms [italics supplied], which suggest a devotion and admiration corroborated by the adulatory verses of Chester and others, including Jonson, published in Carleton Brown's Poems by Salusbury and Chester. Whatever be the validity of our various ascriptions, we can surely agree with Prof. Straumann that different levels of meaning may co-exist in Shakespeare's poem; and if in Shakespeare's, then perhaps in the others too. What we really want to decide is this: What meanings can the poems hold for us?" "We shall assume that the Phoenix holds a significance in its own right (p. 150) . . . the Phoenix is certainly a symbol of personal, indeed intimate, experience. . . . It is transcendent without ceasing to be physical. . . . In study of these poems [Chester's in Love's Martyr] we are continually forced to the equation Dove = Poet. . . . The birds' sexes throughout our collection appear baffling. . . . The Phoenix, though the female partner, is a creature of royal power, as well as beauty (p. 151). . . . But it certainly hits the imagination with a suggestion of male

virility; it is male in Hesiod and Herodotus; and in ancient Greece 'Phoenix' was a male name" (p. 152). It is Knight's view that "whenever the Phoenix is mentioned we must suppose that a universal meaning of some kind is being conveyed," which may in turn relate "to Platonic love and its reflection in Castiglione's Courtier; to the courtly love, in so far as sexual consummation was not attained, of medievalism; and to Christian mysticism, in so far as it approaches the flaming mysticism of a Crashaw" (p. 153), as well as to other nebulous suggestions that comprehend "a difficult, tragic, and yet victorious experience" (p. 155). Knight has in mind a liaison (such as Sir John Salusbury and his sister-in-law). "Such examples of poetic passion are always more likely to refer to some elevated and ideal, or otherwise difficult, and perhaps dangerous relationship . . . than to a settled marriage; the relationship may be homosexual or heterosexual, but it must be hampered . . . (p. 155). Knight thereby serves fair warning that his emphasis is to be on the sexual aspects of the Chester poem, the poetical essays, and Shakespeare's poem, insofar as it appears "a condensed miniature of our whole story" (p. 140).

He turns next to Love's Martyr and subjects it to a selective analysis: "The Phoenix is a creature of virile power and 'piercing eye.' The poetry is often powerful; some of it is reminiscent, and parts not unworthy, of Shakespeare; and whatever be the exact meaning, the Sonnets are continually recalled" (p. 158). "On arrival at Paphos,

we are given a long description of its vegetation and bird-life, with much irksome lore" in which "the bisexual emphasis is again noteworthy" (p. 159). . . . Eventually, at Paphos, we meet the male Turtle-Dove . . . the Turtle's lost mate is considered first female ('her') and next male ('him') within a single stanza . . . . Carleton Brown says that the discrepancy 'defies explanation' . . . . However that may be, the birds' sexes throughout these poems are a positive torment. We shall find more instances" (pp. 159-60).

Indeed we shall. Chester's lines are minutely examined and one finds such distinctions as "There the suggestion is male, but the thought recurs with more feminine impact when the same quality is called simply 'woman's peevishness'" (p. 164). In another case (p. 165) Knight finds that "whether the object be male or female, and it is certainly supposed to be female, the tonings are virile." With great justification, Knight remarks (pp. 168-71) that textual confusions abound in a certain section of Love's Martyr; he concludes that "the sexual and other confusions are throughout so closely interwoven that they appear to be part of the plan. There is a limit beyond which analysis becomes unprofitable. . . . For our present purpose, it is enough to note the sexual ambiguities. We might compare the contention of Kenneth Muir and Sean O'Loughlin in The Voyage to Illyria (VI, 145) that the erroneous use of 'his' or 'her' in Orlando's verses to Rosalind (As You Like It,

III, ii, 154) represents an unconscious self-revelation on the part of the dramatist, for whom Rosalind in boy's dress inevitably recalled the Fair Youth of the Sonnets. . . . In our present example, there seems to be little unconsciousness about it: the stanzas have been deliberately constructed in this way" (p. 171).

"One way of resolving our various sexual and stylistic problems," suggests Knight (pp. 175-76), "would be to suppose that Chester's work had been crudely devised to pay compliments to Sir John Salusbury and his wife or sister-in-law . . ., and that Shakespeare, or some other able poet well acquainted with Shakespeare's work, having undertaken to polish the lines, succeeded only too well, using the Phoenix-symbol with a greater respect for its bisexual nature, and working into the finished version much of his own [bisexual] experience. In his dedication to Sir John Salusbury Chester speaks of his 'long-expected labour' as having been completed 'according to the directions of some of my best-minded friends.' Shakespeare may have been one of them . . . ." Knight quotes various lines usually ascribed to Chester and suggests that Chester lacked the necessary talent to have written them; he concludes that "whatever be the truth, we have a love with similar sun and gold imagery to Shakespeare's and a similar insistence on constancy and truth, concepts so obvious and frequent as applied to the Turtle-Dove that quotation is unnecessary. It must be admitted that these Cantos witness a more

intimately physical eroticism than the other Phoenix poems of our collection; but satisfaction appears to be withheld. . . . About the love, or loves, recorded, there is certainly a mystery of sorts, or all these poetic contortions would be a waste of time. The sexes are bafflingly used. . . . We must beware of any too precise definitions in sexual, homosexual, or bisexual terms; but in interpretation our thoughts must be allowed freely to explore all possibilities" (pp. 177-78).

His thoughts freely do so in the next section dealing with the appended poems. "These various poems appear to be symbolical definitions of experiences not too dissimilar, whatever the sex of the loved one, from that celebrated in Shakespeare's Sonnets, and therefore also of what I have called (pp. 36, 44) 'the higher, or bisexual, integration'" (p. 179).[57] The reader has perhaps already guessed where this will lead in the case of "The Phoenix and Turtle." (Further elaboration of Knight's concept appears on his p. 44 f.)

Not only did Shakespeare, Ignoto, Marston, Chapman and Jonson have the same thing in mind, argues Knight, but even Salusbury's verse "in his rough but powerful Amazement . . . whatever the sex involved, is Phoenix-stuff. In our poems [the additional poems to Love's Martyr] the Phoenix is regularly referred to as though everyone concerned knew precisely what it was" (p. 179).[58] Presumably Knight means more than the fact that the others followed Chester's notion

of a female Phoenix and male Turtle. "The Invocatio by 'Vatum Chorus' is addressed to the god of male beauty, Apollo,[59] and the Muses" (p. 180). Knight's reading is, needless to say, aware of many sexual innuendoes; we may pass over his opinions of the successive poems (he reserves Shakespeare's for later) until we come to his incredible speculations concerning Jonson's Epos, a poem which clearly seems to take the Turtle to task for being unfaithful to the Phoenix. The Phoenix, to Jonson, is "a beauty . . . whose od'rous breath . . . makes the air as sweet as she is fair." The poet asks,

> O, so divine a creature,
> Who could be false to? chiefly when he knows [the Dove]
> How only she bestows
> The wealthy treasure of her love in him . . .

"She" is, moreover, referred to as "a dame of this excelling frame." Knight is unconvinced: "The Phoenix is still considered feminine. I can give no clear reason why the 'harmoniously composed' body compacting all Nature's 'best symmetry' . . . should suggest the male form; but it may do so, the word 'symmetry' being more applicable to flatness than to rondure. . . . I cannot see that the lines would be much of a compliment to a lady, though to the Elizabethans, who could write of a lady's chastity in terms that to us appear crude, they might pass. The use of 'dame' may be a mask. It seems that the Epos was not specifically written for this occasion. . . . This can have little bearing on our interpretation, except to remind us that the kind of work we are discussing was, like Shakespeare's 'sugred Sonnets,'

coterie poetry, with its own free-masonry of allusion and intent" (pp. 187-88). O rare Ben Jonson! Knight (pp. 188-90) stumbles over the other Jonson poems in the collection, and he admits that he is on uncertain ground. He concludes that "whatever be the sexes involved in our various love-impressions [in the appended poems], "the Phoenix itself is close to the poetic essence; is to be related very exactly to what we call 'genius'; and is really all but a symbol of poetry" (pp. 190-91). He quotes variously from Michelangelo's sonnets with their frequent Phoenix allusions, including Sonnet 36, "where the loved one is definitely male" (p. 191), and suggests that "the experience behind these sonnets, many of which derive from a man-to-man relationship, is of a similar sort to that celebrated in our various Phoenix-and-Turtle poems" (p. 192).

Knight then takes up Shakespeare's poem. He surveys (p. 193) some of the relevant criticism, and then decides, by way of introduction, that "we need commit ourselves to no biographical details. Shakespeare may have had more than one ardent love, and The Phoenix and the Turtle need be referred to no particular person or event. Even so, we shall, I think, be right in allowing it to include, to gather up and transmute, the experience of the Sonnets, in its own particular fashion. It is quite different in tone," having a "hard, resistant, tempered quality" (p. 194). "It is not obviously optimistic. If Marston's contribution is the most ecstatic and Jonson's the most moral,

Shakespeare's may be called, as Carleton Brown observed, the most tragic. Such love as the love of the Sonnets is, as we have seen (p. 69), naturally tragic . . . . Much of it, in substance, if not in form, recalls the Sonnets. We have 'truth' and 'beauty' together as in the Sonnets (p. 45), and a similar, and greater, stress on chastity" (pp. 194-95). Carleton Brown found the birds' failure to leave any posterity a stumbling-block, as well as a flat contradiction of Marston and Chester, and Knight remarks that "his comment well illustrates the inadequacy of the biographical approach. The new Phoenix is as surely present within Shakespeare's poem as in the lyric ecstasy of Marston which follows; the sequence is vital. Besides, as we shall see, the 'bird of loudest lay' is itself a likely candidate" (p. 195).

"We have already (pp. 48, 185) equated the Turtle, or Turtle-Dove, with the female element in the Shakespearian bisexuality which loved the Fair Youth and composed the plays" (p. 195). There is not space for a complete record of Professor Knight's explication (pp. 195-203) of the poem; it is fair to say, however, that Knight sees the poem's "central purpose" as residing in the lines of the anthem: "All our many sexual confusions and abnormalities are component to the poem's central purpose in celebration of a mystical love-union beyond sex, as we understand it, and all normal biological categories" (p. 199).[60]

Knight calls upon Michelangelo again,[61] although his

own discussion of the anthem seems clear enough: "Once agree that each person has, or is related to, some higher soul-self holding its being in another dimension, and all becomes clear. Donne regularly thinks in these terms; as in A Valediction and throughout The Ecstasy. Lovelace, in To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas, says that Faith and Troth, 'like separated souls,' can yet meet, beyond space, 'above the highest sphere,' greeting each other as angels, even though 'unknown' (i.e. to the earthly consciousness). We may suppose that true lovers are attuned, through love, to this dimension; in each other's eyes,[62] to use Shakespeare's imagery, they see the dimension in which exist both souls in unison and unity. The two personalities remain distinct, until in death they attain each their greater selves, which are one . . . that is the meaning of Michelangelo's 'one life,' 'one will,' 'one soul'; but the 'smitten breasts' remain two. In such terms you can also see why the lover's love of the loved one is simultaneously self-union and integration (pp. 35-7) within his own total self [this is a cardinal aspect of Knight's theory of bisexual higher integration]" (pp. 201-202). Shakespeare's concluding Threnos is routinely treated (p. 202) by Knight, whereupon he turns to the question of "the bird of loudest lay":--he had once ("in my 'additional note' to Appendix A of the 1953 re-issue of The Shakespearian Tempest") considered the bird of loudest lay to be "the Phoenix itself" (pp. 202-203). "But surely," he asks (p. 204), "within the

poem, the establishment of a living Phoenix rather weakens the point and pathos of the close? In so far, however, as we are prepared to agree with those . . . who see Shakespeare's dramas as flowering from whatever love experience, or experiences, lie behind the Sonnets and The Phoenix and the Turtle, there is a possible answer. The 'bird of loudest lay' becomes Shakespeare's greater poetry,[63] rising from the ashes of the love from which it draws its inspiration. Many years ago I suggested, in The Shakespearian Tempest (App. A, 323-4), that stanzas 2 to 6, being made of leading Shakespearian themes and symbols, might be said to constitute a brief summing up of Shakespeare's total work. . . . . But that is not the whole truth. In Timon of Athens and Antony and Cleopatra we feel as, later, in Byron's Sardanapalus,[64] 'the mutual flame' itself; we are within its warmth, its sphere of radiation; and in the Final Plays, concluding with Cymbeline, The Tempest and Henry VIII, we are aware of some new Phoenix, some new, earthly and yet unearthly, perfection, rising from the flame. Each of these five plays just mentioned contains one of our few Phoenix references."[65]

In his concluding discussion (pp. 205-224), entitled "Other Poets," Knight writes that "many of our supposedly heterosexual poems in any age may have a different origin; and, if so, it is well that we should know of it" (p. 206). "We may, in conclusion, and for the sake of simplicity, give the Phoenix a certain negative definition in terms of

Shakespeare's Sonnets. As a symbol both of spiritual propagation and of the eternal self-regeneration of nature hinted in Sonnet 126 (p. 97), it is a creature in whom the problems of the Sonnets are answered. It is the supreme positive to which these problems negatively point. Through it the wonder is perpetuated, not by marriage and a child, but by the new Phoenix; the loved thing is preserved, not merely by the 'black ink' of poetry (pp. 86, 90), but within that other dimension to which Phoenix and Turtle are for ever fleeing in their 'mutual flame' and of which the greatest poetry is but a miserable reflection. In it eternity and immortality are manifested, not as ghostly concepts, but as a marvellous fire-nested bird of eagle eye and wondrous plumage" (pp. 222-23).[66]

Many commentators have mentioned Wilson Knight's perspicacity and some have suggested that he must be read if one is to have a thorough knowledge of "The Phoenix and Turtle." An attempt has been made here to summarize his opinions of the poem in The Mutual Flame, using his own words whenever possible. Since it was seldom possible for reasons of space to quote as freely as Knight has done, the reader has been referred to the pages nearest the heart of Knight's discussion. The portion of The Mutual Flame devoted to the Sonnets was not summarized above and so comment would be pointless, but it must be said of Knight's Phoenix and Turtle pages that they are disappointing (with the exception of pp. 202-204 on the "bird of loudest lay")

for the little real illumination they shed on Shakespeare's poem. Perhaps--had Knight applied his notions intensively to "The Phoenix and Turtle" alone, after a reading of the Sonnets--one would not feel misled; but Knight's extensive approach to the poem lacks genuine structural integrity, and in fact seems to be governed by an obsession: he is frequently obliged to conform it so as to envelope Love's Martyr and its contents. The reader eventually suspects that Knight is simply talking in order to conceal an absence of insight, and Knight several times admits that he is perplexed. His supporting discussions on all too many occasions are busy, but have little consequent or purposive function: each is a sort of entrebâillement to a series of suspect interpretations that only one intensely sympathetic to the emotional state ascribed to Shakespeare could applaud. Certainly there are bisexual implications to the Phoenix myth, and certainly Shakespeare wrote sonnets to a young male friend. No literary theory should be rejected without a hearing. But when a commentator has a theory that is to cover nearly a score of poems by six or seven poets, he must support his contentions with more than intuitions or mere assertions of similarity to something else. In the latter respect, Knight's frequent references to the supposedly homosexual sonnets of Michelangelo are an intrusive irrelevancy, despite their Phoenix imagery. He sees too many one::one relationships. Moreover, when a critic in a deliberate way sets out,--first assuming with many others

that Shakespeare's appended poem has at least something to do with Chester's poem and the others,--to tar them all, including poor virile Salusbury, with the same bisexual brush, he can become ridiculous, then offensive, and end by being insulting. One asks: how can this man read Jonson's Epos and wonder if the plainly-expressed sexual identitites are a 'mask?' The Mutual Flame is all too fanciful, and the entire conflation "perversely ingenious," to quote Robert Ellrodt. To sum up: Knight has a thorough knowledge of the poem and its critical attention--but he has read it all in one light. There is no want of intelligence, penetration, and indeed brilliance, but he is looking everywhere for something and he must find it; whenever he does not find it, he simply suggests that it is there. Or, as in the case of Jonson's Epos, he says that although it is not apparent, it must be there. Knight's theory at large, to borrow one of his recurrent words, is a "mask" for an imputation of homosexuality that is never quite supported. On at least three occasions he suggests that Shakespeare, like the type of most homosexuals, may have had many such loves. Some of Knight's earlier opinions of "The Phoenix and Turtle," entirely different in emphasis, will be considered with other "structural and dramatic studies" in Chapter Four.[67]

William Matchett's The Phoenix and the Turtle (1965) is not based upon the Sonnets, but he supports some of his original contentions (part I of this Chapter, above)

concerning an Elizabeth-Essex identification with Sonnet references. "We have ample grounds," he writes, "to suspect that Shakespeare, whatever his former partisanship, would have viewed the Essex rebellion with horror and would, by 1601, consider Elizabeth, whatever her undeniable glories, a failure in her supreme duty as a Queen. The history plays are built around two basic political assumptions: that sedition is never justified and that England was in dire trouble whenever the succession was in doubt" (p. 196). Matchett seems to suggest (p. 197) that the actor "Reason" in the poem is Shakespeare himself, and that he judges both Essex and Elizabeth harshly.

> The harshness of this rational judgement is tempered, however, by the emotional commitment against which it is forced to contend in order even to express itself. 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' is not a cold and calculated rejection; it is a poem of ambivalence, a poem in which Reason, almost bedazzled by the glory of what it has seen, must struggle before it can assert itself. Though Reason's final judgement is tempered, even unfavorable, it is so only in spite of a full emotional involvement in the tragedy.
>
> Reason's struggle to assert itself in spite of emotional involvement is reminiscent of the ambivalence in Sonnets 137 and 138, in which, for the sake of 'love,' the poet denies his reason. These sonnets, representing a state in which reason has been knowingly abandoned, are, in the effect of their word play--especially on the word 'lie'--mordantly clever, not tragic. The resemblance is not, then, a matter of tone, but simply of the existence of the ambivalence and of its expression in terms of 'beauty' and 'truth.' Neither the outcome nor the issue itself is the same in the sonnets as it is in 'The Phoenix and the Turtle.' In the two sonnets, the poet, infatuated, acknowledges himself willing to pretend to accept lies, but his admission that it is pretense, his knowledge

of the true situation, reveals his ambivalence. He pretends to possess beauty and truth, knowing that he does not; there is pretense, but no delusion. 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' represents Reason as reasserting itself after a tragic loss. There was no pretense, but there was delusion; beauty and truth have proved inadequate. Reason is not concerned to disparage, but only to appraise fairly.

There are other ties between 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' and the Sonnets. I suggested in Chapter 1 that the paradoxes of mutual love which form the basis of the anthem find analogues there. [p. 198] The paradoxes, I claimed, were poetic commonplaces which, when taken literally as in the anthem, result in casuistry. In the anthem, in other words, the poet, to indicate the relationship of the Phoenix and the Turtle, purposely overdoes a kind of imagery he has used effectively to indicate his own relationship to the young man in the Sonnets. In the threne, Shakespeare continues to deal with concepts also in the Sonnets, but, in contrast to the anthem, the threne presents them as qualified by Reason. 'Beauty' and 'truth,' 'fair' and 'true' are, indeed, thematic words in the Sonnets, and not alone for the pretense of the lady. The young man, like the relationship of the Phoenix and the Turtle, is said to embody the Platonic ideas--'Both truth and beauty on my loue depends' (Sonnet 101)--which will expire when he does--'Thy end is Truthes and Beauties doome and date' (Sonnet 14). The word 'rarity,' proper to the Loues Martyr context as the quality of the phoenix itself, appears only once in the Sonnets, where again it is associated with 'beauty' and 'truth':

> Time doth transfixe the florish set on youth,
> And delues the paralels in beauties brow,
> Feedes on the rarities of natures truth,
> And nothing stands but for his sieth [scythe] to mow
> (Sonnet 60)

'Rare' is associated with 'true' and 'fair' in Sonnet 21, but not in its other three appearances. 'Grace' is, like 'truth' and 'beauty,' a relatively common word in the Sonnets, associated at times with 'beauty' (Sonnets 17, 53, 132) and at least once with 'truth' (Sonnet 96). 'Simplicity,' though it is associated with 'truth' in its single appearance in the Sonnets, is there used in a

pejorative sense--'And simple-Truth miscalde Simplicitie' (Sonnet 66)--so that the noun in the threne is, in its meaning, more like the adjective in this line than it is like the formally identical noun. 'Grace in all simplicitie' reminds us not of any analogous concept in the Sonnets so much as of its antithesis in Sonnet 40: 'Lasciuious grace, in whom all il wel showes.'

Reason does not suggest that there has been any pretense, any ill showing well, in the Phoenix and the Turtle. Their appearance was no disguise but 'Grace in all simplicitie.' The loss is a true loss, 'Beauty, Truth and Raritie . . . . Leauing no posteritie.'

The latter line reminds us again of the Sonnets, especially of Sonnet 6: 'Then what could death doe if thou should'st depart,/ Leauing thee liuing in posterity?' If 'Leauing no posteritie' is pejorative in the context of Chester's poem, it is so also in the context of Shakespeare's other poetry. The duty of propagation is not only the argument of the first seventeen sonnets but the primary . . . argument of Venus in her wooing of Adonis: [vs. 751-762] . . . . Against the background of Shakespeare's other poetry, the effect of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' is verified and intensified; 'Married Chastitie,' though [p. 200] perhaps a condition to be viewed with wonder, is not a condition to be applauded.[68] Shakespeare, in his use of Platonic imagery in 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,' first establishes a triumph worthy of praise, but ultimately undercuts that triumph by asserting Reason's reluctant acceptance of it.

Various factors may well have entered into this ultimate rejection. Having already praised the young man in the Sonnets as the sole embodiment of Platonic ideas, Shakespeare would be either in a position to object to the application of the same--and therefore contradictory--praise to others, or in a position simply to reflect upon the imposture of applying to public figures superlatives which can have an intelligible basis only in personal emotional experience. Whether or not Shakespeare was led to examine the language of Platonism only in order to express an appraisal of the Phoenix and the Turtle, the effect of his poem is that of rejecting also the very idea of Platonic love. Whatever its triumph, 'married Chastitie' is not a state of which Reason can approve.

Through the introduction of Reason, Shakespeare devalues the Platonic metaphors of the anthem. The

> possible emotional truth of any metaphor may be converted into undoubted nonsense merely by treating that metaphor as though it were a statement of literal fact. . . . Shakespeare was . . . in this poem, defending metaphor against an opposite danger, the danger of being cheapened through extravagance. Reason cries out against inexactness, against a misuse of metaphor, not against metaphor itself.[69] To be rational is not to deny value; not devaluation but evaluation is Reason's ultimate aim. The process is negative in effect only when, as in 'The Phoenix [p. 201] and the Turtle,' evaluation requires the correction of an earlier estimate which was inflated.

Some of the views expressed in part III of this Chapter will have seemed incomplete or capricious, but even the most misdirected strike some sort of sympathetic chord in the reader, who somehow feels the connection between the Sonnets and "The Phoenix and Turtle." C. S. Lewis gets at the quality of this apprehension when he says that the Sonnets "very seldom present or even feign to present passionate thought growing and changing in the heat of a situation; they are not dramatic. The end of each is clearly in view from the beginning, the theme already chosen. Instead of a single developing thought we get what musicians call an 'arrangement,' what we might call a pattern or minuet, of thoughts and images. There are arithmetical elements in the beauty of this pattern as in all formal beauty, and its basic principle is idem in alio. Of course it affects those who have no notion what is affecting them. It is partly responsible for that immense pleasurableness which we find in the Sonnets even where their matter is most painful: and also for their curious stillness or tranquillity. Shakespeare is always standing back a little

from the emotions he treats. He left it to his created persons, his Lears and Othellos, to pour out raw experience, scalding hot. In his own person he does not do so. He sings (always sings, never talks) of shame and degradation and the divided will, but it is as if he sang from above, moved and yet not moved; a Golden, Olympian poet." Lewis thinks that "The Phoenix and Turtle" is the "most secret" of Shakespeare's poems. "Whatever the external occasion may have been, Shakespeare uses his poem to expound a philosophy of love; the last word, presumably, that he has given us in his own person on that subject. Its doctrine consummates that of the Sonnets. In them the 'naughting' has been one sided. He had lost himself in another but that other had not lost himself in Shakespeare. Now Shakespeare celebrates the exchanged death, and life, of a fully mutual love. He is not writing 'metaphysical poetry' in the technical sense critics give to that term, but he is writing in the true sense, a metaphysical poem" (English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, pp. 508-509). And the nature of the poem's resemblance to the Sonnets is more than one of theme, one would emphasize with Lewis, it is manifestly a formal quality and a curious detachment.

Certain thematic similarities, however, are apparent. For example, in William Shakespeare: A Biography (New York, 1963), A. L. Rowse quotes Stanza 7:

> So they lov'd as love in twain
> Had the essence but in one;
> Two distincts, division none:
> Number there in love was slain.

Rowse asks: "Where have we met this before? In the Sonnets:

> Let me confess that we two must be twain
> Although our undivided loves are one."

He understands the poem's theme to be "love, now dead, grieved over, folded and laid away for good" (pp. 332-33).

The occasion and subject(s) of "The Phoenix and Turtle" are unknown. It is a formal piece of art, as Professor Lewis observes of the Sonnets, and it reflects great detachment. It seems to be a real monument, but perhaps not to a real love; it would be nice to know more about the facts surrounding its composition but it is unlikely that these will ever be forthcoming. My own view is that the poem is an essentially idealistic syllogism that takes very little account of the world and the flesh, and that it requires no tenuous guesswork for underpinning. The Sonnets help us to know the poem; but we know very little about the background of the Sonnets and less about "The Phoenix and Turtle." The situation seems made to order for the "New Critical" commentators,--and as we shall see in Chapter Four, they are aware of the poem.

IV

The Poem as Formal Allegory

We have been speaking of "The Phoenix and Turtle" as allegory throughout this chapter, and the reader, it is hoped, has taken our use of "allegory" to loosely suggest an underlying scheme of posited identifications that can be

tied to the abstractions and creatures assembled on the printed page. But there are formal or literary considerations that one should mention, too, when considering the poem as an "allegory." The area of study is highly technical, and for reasons of space, we must confine our attention to Angus J. S. Fletcher's Allegory, The Theory of a Symbolic Mode (Ithaca, 1964) in which "The Phoenix and Turtle" frequently appears as an example of a radical type. "The typical 'pure' allegory would be a poem like 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,' where we find the following lines: [stanzas 10-12]. . . . Throughout these stanzas," writes Fletcher, "Shakespeare has ascribed a degree of logical interaction to the ideas of property, nature, reason, division, and love. Even though they may not be given personality, these ideas are partially personified and can be said to operate within a dynamic system. They all modify each other in some way. The concept, Property, according to which the two lovers ought to have remained two distinct selves, appears by the death of one to have suffered an almost human loss; it is appalled in the sense of 'taken aback,' as well as in the punning sense of 'dressed in the death-shroud.' In either case Property is given a characteristic which normally a philosophical abstraction would lack, namely feeling. While this and the other 'Ideas' of the poem are interrelated in a complex syllogistic system, each one preserves its identity with a sharpness no humanized portraiture would allow. The Ideas remain philosophically

distinct (they seem not to dare touch each other), almost in inverse proportion to the degree of interaction they exhibit. The very paradox of Property's gainful loss depends upon a rigid separation of each Idea from every other. This means that along with a complicating movement there goes a simplifying movement. While the overall effect is one of syllogism and system, the particular effect at any given moment is one of discrete particularity: the Ideas are presented, each one in turn, as entities capable of the most refined and narrow dilineation. The reader has a strong sense of the barriers between ideas. There is nothing like the feeling one gets of a common humanity binding together the characters of a mimetic drama. This lack of a common humanity is, we shall see, not always a characteristic of allegory--witness the Seven Deadly Sins in Langland's satire--but it is more frequent than its opposite." According to Fletcher, "Even when the ideas of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' are complex, they remain closely circumscribed by their function in the overall syllogistic structure of the poem" (pp. 28-30). This is clarified on his pp. 32-33: "The typical personified agent can 'act' only in consort with other similar agents, a combination which limits each work to a given problem or set of problems. The highly controlled interaction of ideas requires a corresponding definition of the limits of each. . . . Each of the fabled birds in 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' has one meaning, and as each is brought into the funeral procession it presents

that meaning to us, while passing in review. Such strong control of 'message' may be thought of as a narrowing, a constriction, a compartmentalizing of meaning." A subsequent Fletcher discussion (pp. 34-35) sheds light on the poem while it advances a theory concerning the allegorical hero: "When writers wish to see a more complex moral world . . . we may ask how restricted the hero will be. Are Dante's self-image, his Virgil, his Beatrice, single in meaning? Is any main protagonist of The Faerie Queene restricted to a single virtue? Is Bunyan's Christian one-sided in character? Surely these all add up to complex figures, which would suggest that allegories may have very human agents. In some sense, especially with Bunyan, major allegorical heroes can have a range of human weaknesses and strength. They may live through many adventures, in which different trials occur. But is not the nature of such heroes comparable to the nature of a whole poem like 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,' where the whole was a complex system of interrelated terms, each of which was circumscribed? Putting the matter another way, for allegorical heroes life has a segmented character, and as each event occurs a new discrete characteristic of the hero is revealed, almost as if it had no connection with prior events or with other tied-in characteristics. The allegorical hero is not so much a real person as he is a generator of other secondary personalities, which are partial aspects of himself." It is Fletcher's opinion that the mode, allegory, "seems to aim

at both clarity and obscurity together, each effect depending upon the other," and he does not think with Cicero, Quintilian, and perhaps Rosemund Tuve, "that allegory is metaphoric in a 'normal' way" (p. 73).[70] For example, "a poem like 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' may in fact use submetaphors, but they are of the most conventional, ponderous, thought-out, nonintuited sort; they do not flash with the 'liveliness' Aristotle so prized; they do not give us new perceptions of living experience. They are drawn from a scholarly account book of images and are combined in a rigid sequence. Shakespeare intended every bit of this inflexibility, and I doubt if we do this poetry a service in trying to bring it into line with the standard metaphoric usage of dramatic verse, a technique characterized by great freedom from iconographic pedantry. 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' at least does not make use of metaphor as dramatic verse makes use of it, while the usages of mimetic drama would seem a possible norm for metaphoric language" (pp. 73-74). The notion of a 'progress' is frequently implicit in allegorical works, says Fletcher in a later discussion. "The progress need not be plausible, as long as the momentum of symbolic invention is great. It does not even need to involve a physical journey. . . . All that is required . . . is that it have a constant forward motion, that it be unremittingly directed toward a goal, that it attempt an undeviating movement in a given direction" (pp. 153-54). "We began with a fine example of an ideal progress, 'The Phoenix

and the Turtle.' The form of this poem is given by its subject, a funeral procession, a mass for the dead, where every stanza constitutes a slow paced ritual step toward the threnody that concludes the poem. Another form very close to this funerary, processional form is the common medieval sequence of the procession of the Seven Deadly Sins, and yet another is the Dance of Death" (p. 154). "The progress is manifestly a ritual form . . . . Ritual tends to exaggerate equality of step. Sometimes it can openly do this, when form and content coincide, as in poems like 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'" (p. 159). "There is always a strong tendency for any ritual to remain essentially unfinished, in the sense that all rituals, whether religious or otherwise, show a tendency to increase in length and elaboration over time. The church ritual known as the liturgy tends to elaborate itself indefinitely until we get a fundamentalist 'reformation,' because each past order of worship is felt to have lost some of its original efficacy. As each ritual is elaborated, given new ornaments, given new stages and subdivisions, it necessarily increases in length. Two results are possible, and both can be found in allegorical literature. First, the poet can arbitrarily refuse to elaborate, and then we have a strong sense of 'closure,' as when he cuts off a procession of allegorical devices with what is called in medieval literature a 'summation scheme.' The 'Threnos' of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' is a classic example of the summation scheme closing the end of a

potentially endless sequence of steps"(p. 175). Finally, Fletcher makes an analogy between allegory and the sort of ritualistic behavior found in compulsion neuroses. "It follows from the ruminant character of such ritual behavior that there will always be new rituals added onto the existing sequences. This proliferation of ritual suggests what actually occurs all the time in allegory, where either the progress is turned aside in a 'digression,' or else there are double, triple, and quadruple plots all going at once with Gothic exuberance. . . . The classic criterion of brevity has no place here, except as an arbitrary imposition as in a poem like 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,' or 'The Dialogue of Self and Soul' of Marvell, where one feels a definite constraint and a search for the most dessicated form possible. This form is a naming of parts, since compulsive rumination seeks the stability of feeling that is conferred by the verbal spell itself" (p. 293). Fletcher's approach to the poem as representative allegory is Freudian; but not intrusively so. His remarks on the connection between ritual, progress, and verbal incantations are useful, and he has directed attention to the function of metaphor in the poem; we shall return to this last matter in Chapter Four.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1]"Love's Martyr, by Robert Chester: A New Interpretation," TxSE, XXX (1951), 66-85.

[2]The affinities to the Court of Love tradition are obvious, as Harrison's diction indicates--"plea," "court," "directs" (p. 66).

[3]Grosart's remark that Robert Chester was a follower of Essex is based on his (apparently) mistaken identification of Robert Chester of Royston (later Sir Robert Chester) as author of Love's Martyr. We shall read more about this matter in the pages that follow.

[4]It seems to me that Brown's remark is close to the truth, and is the strongest argument for an allegorical reading of Jonson's additional poems. The application to Shakespeare, however, is another matter. "The Phoenix and Turtle" not only lacks a familiar tone, but is estranged from the appended poems even in the details of its subject matter; the obvious example is the "married chastity" line. By denying offspring, as he seems to do, Shakespeare also denies the traditional Phoenix myth.

[5]The reference is to Jonson's Ode ἐνθουσιαστική or Enthousiastiké, which plays a leading role in several allegorical theories concerning Love's Martyr and the poetical essays.

[6]I hope to demonstrate in Chapter Five that this is not the case.

[7]"The Open-ended Disclaimer"

[8]At the time of his T.L.S. letter, Short was engaged in writing a biography of Lucy Harington, Countess of Bedford.

[9]This is all very reasonable, but it could point as well to the suggestions of some commentators that Shakespeare had not read Chester's poem thoroughly: if we say that the Phoenix was Ursula Stanley Salusbury, who had "several children," the Chester-Shakespeare link in this respect is all but obliterated. Short thinks, with Sidney Lee, that Shakespeare's poem was written for another occasion entirely.

[10]Bonnard assumes that Sir John contributed no lines. Other commentators believe that he did.

[11]These facts are crucial to theories concerning the recipient of the Sonnets, and to at least one (William Matchett's) of those which have to do with the biographical matter behind "The Phoenix and Turtle."

[12]See my Chapter One, p. 20, for the views of Frayne Williams and William Matchett, the latter's a clear assertion that Shakespeare handed in two poems.

[13]G. Wilson Knight in The Mutual Flame writes (p. 175) that "Chester's identity has not been with any certainty established. Grosart's tentative relation of him to the Chesters of Royston, or Roysdon, in Hertfordshire, appears to have been followed by Sir Gurney Benham . . . and also by F. E. Halliday in his A Shakespeare Companion. But surely Carleton Brown's insistence . . . that he was probably a humble dependant of Sir John Salusbury at his home seat in Wales, Lleweni, appears, his adulatory poems in Brown's collection duly considered (especially his Welcome Home; Christ Church MS. XVII; 23), to be incontrovertible." Knight's note to his p. 175 adds, concerning Robert Chester of Royston, "Sir Gurney Benham calls him Sir Robert (which he became later; see Grosart, Int., ix-x), and regards him as a man of consequence and a patron of Shakespeare. This I cannot follow. Surely it is Sir John Salusbury who is, in this context, acting as patron? There appears to be some confusion here." Knight correctly identifies the opinion of F. E. Halliday in the latter's A Shakespeare Companion 1550-1950: Halliday says that Robert Chester "(c. 1566-1640), was probably the son of Edward Chester of Roysdon. He was the author of Love's Martyr (1601), the volume that contains The Phoenix and Turtle (q.v.)" (p. 115). The matter of Chester's identity is far from trifling: it bears on the entire question of a literary allegory. That is, identification of Chester the poet with Sir Robert of Roysdon, allows one to associate Chester with the Essex side; whereas Chester the humble dependant of Salusbury would have opposite ties, for Salusbury was a foe of the Essex party in his county and a staunch supporter of the Queen. Grosart's Chester identification, as Carleton Brown showed rather conclusively, was in error; but Sir Gurney Benham accepts it. However he discounts Grosart's Essex-as-Turtle thesis. Benham is plainly unaware of Brown's book,--and of Brown's view that Sir John Salusbury and his Lady are the Turtle and Phoenix.

[14]Harrison has been cited above.

[15]However Mark Eccles, reviewing Harrison's article in SQ, IV (1953), 353, quotes A. H. Dodd ("North Wales in the Essex Revolt of 1601," English Historical Review, LIX [1944]) to the effect that Sir John "spent the rest of his days living down this taint of treason by an ostentatious loyalty to church and state."

[16]In Sir Henry Goodere's book of emblems (p. B3) the verse is, "One Phoenix borne, another Phoenix burnes." B. H. Newdigate was the first to notice this, and he commented

in his edition The Phoenix & Turtle (Oxford, 1937), pp. 24-26. In the Ignoto poem, "The silver Vault of Heaven, hath but one Eie, . . . And that's the Sunne." Newdigate notes that "Donne uses this metaphor of the sun in Metempsychosis, First Song, II: 'Thee, eye of heaven, this great Soule envies not.' Metempsychosis is dated 16 August 1601, in which year Loves' [sic] Martyr was printed. It is possible that Ignoto's lines were written by Donne . . . and Donne would be likely to insist that his anonymity should be kept. The priority given to them over the contributions by Shakespeare, Marston and Chapman suggests some degree of importance in the writer." If the writer is Donne, the subscription is then arch or simply misleading, for ignoto means literally 'one without fame,' and this was not the case with Donne. Donne's connection with Goodere (or Goodyere) is well-known, however, and the two were intimate correspondents for years.

[17]Sir Sidney Lee in his Life of William Shakespeare (London, 1916), p. 272, was the first to comment upon the similarity to Roydon's poem which appeared in The Phoenix Nest (1593), then in Spenser's Colin Clout (1595). The Roydon poem is most conveniently found in H. E. Rollins' edition of The Phoenix Nest (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), pp. 9-16. The Chaucer parallels were first adduced by A. H. R. Fairchild in his long essay "The Phoenix and Turtle," Englische Studien, XXXIII (1904), 337-84, especially 346 ff. The remarks of Lee and Fairchild will be considered in Chapter Three, along with other source studies.

[18]Joseph Quincy Adams, A Life of William Shakespeare (London, 1923), p. 341.

[19]It is a surprise that Harrison does not come down harder on his own theory's implications insofar as they explain Shakespeare's "vexing lines." If we are speaking of John Salusbury and Elizabeth, whose relations are not at all physical but those of the spirit, admirer and idol, it is perfectly natural that their married chastity had no issue. Once she had conferred knighthood on him, there was indeed little that Elizabeth could do for Salusbury.

[20]Harrison "resolves" the suggestion of J. Q. Adams that Shakespeare had not taken time or had chosen not to familiarize himself with Chester's poem.

[21]Cited above.

[22]Straumann's views are at least sympathetic to Newdigate's, and so in effect Straumann assigns an indeterminate earlier date to the poem's time of composition. Newdigate thought Jonson's Ode Enthousiastiké was much earlier than 1601.

[23]Harrison: The Narrative Poems, The Penguin Shakespeare (Harmondsworth, 1959).

[24]The objection is natural on the part of anyone who considers the allegory theories involving Elizabeth, and was raised earlier to Harrison's Salusbury-Elizabeth scheme. Matchett recognizes the problem.

[25]I am not so sure that we may, but the reader is referred to Matchett's p. 192.

[26]Probably Empson is indicating a personal disinclination to accept Grosart's Elizabeth-Essex theory. At any rate, he echoes Sir Gurney Benham, p. 352, cited above.

[27]In his biography, William Shakespeare (New York, 1963), A. L. Rowse explains this point: "Sir John was himself the son of the celebrated Katherine of Berain, daughter of a natural son of Henry VII. Salusbury was Esquire of the Body to his cousin, the Queen . . . ." (p. 330).

[28]Plainly Empson is suggesting a way out of the inconsistencies of Newdigate's theory. It is interesting that, in a way, he has turned Straumann's suggestion inside out. Straumann offered the notion that Chester had everything ready to go, including Jonson's additional poems, written to describe the Bedfords, and then when they rebuffed him, Chester found a patron in Salusbury and made some changes in his own poem that the male reader would find more interesting. Here, Jonson's poem written for Salusbury is shown to Lady Bedford.

[29]One laughs with Empson; but he has made a worthwhile point here. Shakespeare's emphasis is different from Chester's (and yet similar) and is expressed most clearly in the threne; it is the same emphasis that we find in Venus and Adonis. In both Shakespeare poems, the lovers are identified with love itself, but the stumbling blocks in the way of love's supreme expression in Venus and Adonis (the reticence of Adonis, for one) are absent in "The Phoenix and Turtle," where all is mutual trust and sacrifice. (Cf. Venus and Adonis, vs. 1129-1164 with the Threnos, vs. 53-67.) The death of Adonis, like the demise of the two birds, means that love shall hereafter exist in a fallen state. Another obvious similarity is Shakespeare's emphasis on eye-contact: in stanza 9 of "The Phoenix and Turtle," love so shown between the two birds that "the turtle saw his right/ Flaming in the phoenix' sight"; in Venus, the goddess lifts the lids of the dead Adonis (vs. 1127-1134) and finds his eyes "Two glasses, where herself beheld/ A thousand times, and now no more reflect,/ Their virtue lost wherein they late excell'd," and she wonders that "the day should yet be light." Another likeness: Venus is immortal (like the Phoenix), Adonis (and the Turtle) are mortal.

In both poems, an effort is made by the lover assured of immortality to raise up the mortal lover, a common theme in Greek mythology, and in both poems there are extraordinary results. In Venus and Adonis, the youth's blood engenders a flower to be forever worshipped by the goddess; in "The Phoenix and Turtle," there is fiery union, and afterward,

> Truth may seem, but cannot be;
> Beauty brag, but 'tis not she:
> Truth and beauty buried be.

Perhaps Shakespeare undertook the Chester commission because he was dissatisfied with his statement concerning the supremacy of love in Venus and Adonis and saw how he might improve on it. That is, with the scene set by Chester, he need concern himself only with essentials; he need not body forth the myth, as he had in Venus and Adonis, running the risk of a suspect statement (as by the frustrated Venus), but could say what he had to say in concentrated form, using symbols so potent that they had become emblems. Possibly the difference in treatment and emphasis we observe in Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and Turtle," as compared to the others, results from the poet's single-minded intention to restate vs. 1135-1164 of Venus and Adonis in an unambiguous setting, and with unambiguous values, in their purest form,--and, if this be the case, perhaps he cared nothing for the anthology beyond its themes and the occasion it presented.

[30]Empson does not say that Shakespeare was familiar with all of Chester's poem, but the implication is that Shakespeare was not dependent on hearsay for knowledge of it, and that he did some picking and choosing before writing his contribution.

[31]I disagree with this reading.

[32]The invention is Ovid's. See Appendix to this thesis.

[33]Mr. John Ciardi once told me that one of Robert Frost's poems, which I had admired for its youthful tone, had come from a trunkful of early poems, and that Frost had been revising that particular poem for thirty years. Chester was no Frost; but his was a long poem and he may have spent many years touching it up.

[34]In his Cambridge (1966) version of The Poems, James C. Maxwell notes that "the old view (that of Grosart) that the Phoenix is Elizabeth is accepted, but not argued, on p. 124 of Elizabeth Watson's 'Natural History in Love's Martyr' (Renaissance and Modern Studies, VIII, Nottingham, 1964)."

[35]There are various studies of Chester's sources that will be of interest to the scholar, among them the following: Irma R. White (T.L.S., July 21, 1932, p. 532), a letter that is summarized by Rollins on his p. 582 (see also Rollins' several notes); Charlotte D'Evelyn, "Sources of the Arthur Story in Chester's Loves Martyr" (JEGP, 1915, XIV, 75-88); Charles H. Green's 1952 doctoral dissertation (which I have not read), The Sources of "Love's Martyr," by Robert Chester, University of Texas. One should of course read Carleton Brown's introduction and Thomas P. Harrison's essay (both cited above). The several notes to Harrison's p. 74 are especially relevant.

[36]This is also Matchett's view. But the 'tradition' extends back only to Grosart's notions of 1878, and to his Essex-Elizabeth suggestion.

[37]The reader may object to the inclusion of Professor G. Wilson Knight under this heading, on grounds that much space is devoted to Chester and Love's Martyr in The Mutual Flame (London, 1962);--therefore Knight would seem to be a "Chester commentator." In The Mutual Flame, however, Knight's emphasis is on the Sonnets as thematic precursors to "The Phoenix and Turtle," and whereas he relates his study to the occasion and allegory of Love's Martyr, he does not first of all draw his insights from Shakespeare's work in conjunction with Chester's, but from the intense concerns expressed by Shakespeare in the Sonnets: he is therefore only accidentally a "Chester commentator." It is hoped that this bit of hair-splitting will satisfy the reader, particularly since other Knight attention to the poem will appear under various headings.

[38]Perhaps a reference to Roydon's poem.

[39]The same connections will later be seen by Heinrich Straumann and G. Wilson Knight.

[40]Apparently Muir-O'Loughlin do not share Rollins' contempt for this theory, first advanced (1893) by von Mauntz.

[41]This is a view, one can imagine, that G. Wilson Knight consciously accepts; he may not.

[42]None of the proponents of an implicitly homosexual theory has yet had the courage to gloss this verse. We may confidently expect it.

[43]Jonson was a classical scholar but there is no use citing periods in this connection. The reader is referred to the Appendix.

[44]This is a view that we shall see again in various forms; it was first suggested by Sir Sidney Lee. Since

Thomson gives no references, it is not clear from what source he is quoting. The Roydon poem first appeared in The Phoenix Nest (1593) and a careful editor of that collection, H. E. Rollins (Cambridge, Mass., 1931) shows the words "for his Astrophill" after "friends passion." Thomson has most of his facts straight, but the reader is left insecure about the quality of Thomson's scholarship because he omits so much: for example, he prints three stanzas without explanation and suggests that they take Roydon's meaning. The poem (as reproduced exactly by Rollins) is forty stanzas long and Thomson's are stanzas 6,7, and 35.

[45]Vs. 30-31: "Distance, and no space was seen/ 'Twixt this turtle and his queen." Shakespeare seems merely to be following the pattern of male Turtle and female Phoenix established by Chester, and so Thomson's mystification strikes one as strange.

[46]Thomson misquotes Shakespeare, although the poem appears (p. 103) in his own book. The verses in question (92-95) are:

> Small show of man was yet upon his chin;
> His phoenix down began but to appear
> Like unshorn velvet, on that termless skin,
> Whose bare out-bragg'd the web it seem'd to wear;

Far more serious liberties, however, are taken. Aside from questions of Complaint's authenticity, it cannot be said that this is Shakespeare's first use of Phoenix imagery (see Bartlett's Concordance, pp. 1169, 1860). Sonnet 19 contains the verse (4): "Burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood." Finally, the metaphor "phoenix down" has very little to do with sexual identity, as I read it, but refers to the inevitable regeneration of hair on the face of the male human: the metaphor is about hair. Surely Shakespeare is not describing the Phoenix "as a man" in these lines.

[47]How is Shakespeare's poem the "Turtles Augure"? Thomson thinks (he does not say so until pp. 75-76) that Shakespeare is the Turtle, but for the moment it is the grossest misreading to insist that it is the poet Shakespeare who calls someone his "Queene" when in fact he simply describes a connection: "'Twixt this turtle and his queen" (v. 31).

[48]Reprinted by the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung Veröffentlichungen, II.

[49]The Phoenix was a common symbol, and emblem, of Christ. See the Appendix.

[50]This is probably a borrowing from Plato's Republic.

[51]The rational principle; as opposed to Mythos, story. Apparently Rang throughout uses Logos and -Logie to suggest the rational principle as well as God's Spirit in the Word; not in the sense of "talking about something," the meaning one finds in certain word compounds (e.g., 'philology').

[52]An allusion to German history of the Reformation period.

[53]I take it that Rang here identifies Logos with "the Spirit of God."

[54]A traditional Christian view, of course, that is prominent in Milton's Nativity Ode and in Paradise Lost.

[55]Grosart's edition, from which Knight quotes, is now a rare book; but the poetical essays are reproduced in Newdigate's edition of The Phoenix & Turtle (Oxford, 1937) and in Walter Thomson's book (cited above). The Marston line in question is on Newdigate's p. 11, Thomson's p. 184.

[56]Straumann has already been cited above. The burden of Straumann's critical resolution, based on Mehrdeutigkeit, will appear in Chapter Four.

[57]Knight's concept of bisexual higher integration is central to The Mutual Flame, and should be explained at this point. "The bisexual appeal," he writes, "can, dramatically at least, flower from either sex. Whenever, as so often in Shakespeare's plots, girls appear, to quote Lorenzo, 'in the lovely garnish of a boy' (The Merchant of Venice, II, vi, 45), we are close to the Sonnets; and as I once, in a note to my discussion of Orsino's love of Viola in Principles of Shakespearian Production (III), suggested, the discovery of the girl beneath the boy's dress may hold a considerable meaning in answer to Sonnet 20. . . . In, or through, such youthful figures the poet glimpses a visual objectification, or symbol, of the higher, bisexual, integration which he himself at moments of composition enjoys. Poetry is itself a bisexual awareness, or action. We have already referred to the use of Tiresias by Byron and Eliot. . . . Shakespeare's loved youth accordingly represents an ideal beyond the opposition of biological desire and moral reason so torturingly present in Sonnet 147. True, the youth shows only the lower integration, and it is a transient thing. But the poet is bound for the higher integration . . ."(p. 36). Shakespeare's Sonnets, in Knight's opinion, "are, like the comparable sonnets of Michelangelo, simultaneously sexually impregnated, and indeed burning with sexual, or homosexual, passion, yet chaste; as when Socrates in The Symposium is shown as refusing physical contact with Alcibiades. The lover may even compare himself to a 'father' or 'nurse' (37, 22); but we must

guard against any dilution of the sexual content. The higher integration is non-physical, not through any absence of sexual power, but through an abundance and plenitude of sexual accomplishment within. . . . The lover . . . desires, and at choice moments reaches, union; but the union can only be given physical expression through 'eyes'" (p. 37).

[58]Knight's point is well taken. I believe this to be true.

[59]Apollo's functions were manifold; but surely his presence in an invocation may have much to do with his association with poetry, music, and oracles.

[60]Knight then distinguishes (pp. 199-200) his own apprehensions from those of the Indian scholar Ranjee: a discussion of Ranjee, and Knight's views, will be found in Chapter Four of this thesis.

[61]Sonnet 32, available in J. A. Symonds' translation of Michelangelo's Sonnets (London, 1950).

[62]Knight frequently refers to T. W. Baldwin's On the Literary Genetics of Shakspere's Poems & Sonnets (Urbana, 1950), particularly in connection with the neo-platonic importance of eye-contact between lovers. In Chapter Three of this thesis, Baldwin is quoted at length.

[63]Shakespeare, it would seem, considered his "greater poetry" to be the two narrative poems Venus and Lucrece; at least he wrote dedications to them and may have assisted in their publication. Historical scholarship has not yet shown that he troubled himself about the possible fate of the plays that contain the "greater poetry" Knight speaks of.

[64]Knight (p. 36) buttresses his initial discussion of bisexual higher integration with this example: "Byron's greatest single human creation, Sardanapalus, is an effeminate type."

[65]The Henry VIII reference (V.v.41) is usually thought to refer to Queen Elizabeth, whose sex was not in question.

[66] A just and expert appraisal of Knight's Mutual Flame study of "The Phoenix and Turtle" is provided by F. T. Prince, editor of the Arden Poems (London, 1960), pp. xlv-xlvi. William Empson (Essays in Criticism XVI [1966], 147-53) implies (pp. 152-53) that Knight's reading has limited value.

[67]Knight's critical approach has worked better for him in other books. Summarizing his dramatic studies,

Professor Arthur M. Eastman, in A Short History of Shakespearean Criticism (New York, 1968), finds that Knight "neglects the conventional analytic categories of character and plot, suppresses the moral imperatives, focuses of theme, seeks the ultimate statement of significance, and assumes a unity highly organic, like that of an expanded metaphor or a dream" (p. 247). Most of these critical characteristics are present in The Mutual Flame. "Knight's amorality can stun," writes Eastman (p. 238). "In general, he appears not to distinguish the sensual from the spiritual in human relations."

[68]Matchett might also have mentioned the numerous testimonies of Shakespeare's plays. My own understanding of the poem centers on this very point, the natural duty and desirability of procreation, and I must agree with Matchett, that married chastity would seem to be, for Shakespeare, an anomaly.

[69]Walter J. Ong in "Metaphor and the Twinned Vision," SR, LXIII (1955), 193-201, treats the entire poem as if it were a metaphor for metaphor. See Chapter Four of this thesis.

[70]See especially Fletcher's pp. 72-75. He believes (p. 72) that "equating allegory with metaphor is likely to lead to a narrow, stultifying view of those works that are most interesting."

CHAPTER THREE

CLASSICAL AND SOURCE STUDIES

Certain commentators have adduced formal and thematic sources for "The Phoenix and Turtle," and let us turn to these now.[1] Apparently the German critic Alfred von Mauntz was the first to suggest an Ovid parallel. It will be remembered from Chapter Two that von Mauntz in 1893 also was the first to suggest that the poem is complementary to the Sonnets: Shakespeare being the Turtle-dove, Southampton the Phoenix. "The interpretation," writes Professor Rollins (p. 571), "is repeated in von Mauntz's edition of Shakespeare's Gedichte, 1894, pp. 157 f., 319-322, with the added detail that Shakespeare made use of Ovid's Amores, II. vi, which begins, 'Psittacus . . . Occidit--exequias ite frequenter, aves! Ite, piae volucres. . . . Omnes, quae liquido libratis in aere cursus, Tu tamen ante alios, turtur amice, dole! Plena fuit vobis omni concordia vita, Et stetit ad finem longa tenaxque fides.'" (In a note to his p. 571, Rollins remarks that [Sir G. G.] "GREENWOOD [The Shakespeare Problem Restated, 1908, p. 522] likewise cites the Amores, but with no reference to von Mauntz.") Continuing his summary of von Mauntz, Mr. Rollins writes that "the funeral obsequies, the selection of the dove as

the representative of faithfulness, the unusual comparison of a bird's song to the sound of a trumpet, and still other smaller correspondences with Ovid cannot, [von Mauntz] insists, be accidental; and the borrowing from the Amores merely reinforces his other arguments for a date of composition about 1595-1596. It will be seen that von Mauntz takes no account whatever of the part played by Chester's own book in [Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and Turtle"]" (p. 571).

Several other theories concerning the poem's sources have been summarized by Rollins, who quotes, for example, from pp. 183 f. of Sir Sidney Lee's A Life of William Shakespeare, the 1898 edition: "'The poem may be a mere play of fancy without recondite intention, or it may be of allegorical import; but whether it bear relation to pending ecclesiastical, political, or metaphysical controversy, or whether it interpret popular grief for the death of some leaders of contemporary society, is not easily determined.' In a footnote, he [Lee] suggested that it is a 'fanciful adaptation' of Matthew Roydon's elegy on Sidney 'without ulterior significance.' This latter suggestion reappears in the text of his 1916 Life (p. 272): '[The] closest affinity [of the P. & T.] seems to lie with the imagery of Matthew Roydon's elegy on Sir Philip Sidney, where the turtle-dove and phoenix meet the swan and eagle at the dead hero's funeral, and there play rôles somewhat similar to those [of Shakespeare's birds].' The elegy in question was

first published in The Phoenix Nest, 1593 (ed. Rollins, 1931, pp. 9-16), and thence in Spenser's Colin Clout volume, 1595. In each it is anonymous, though Roydon's authorship is generally accepted" (p. 570).

We have discussed Professor Arthur Fairchild's approach to the poem in Chapter Two of this thesis. "FAIRCHILD's . . . explanation," writes Rollins, "appeared in 1904 (E.S., XXXIII, 337-384). The P. & T. (pp. 346 f.) 'belongs to that class of poems connected with the institution (real or otherwise) known as the Court of Love. It has a two-fold source, stanzas (I-V) especially being suggested by Chaucer's poem The Parlement of Foules, part IV (ll. 323 to end); the remaining stanzas (VI-XVIII) being adapted to these from the emblem literature and conception's of Shakespeare's period. . . . [p. 350] The Parlement of Foules, while unquestionably belonging to the Court of Love literature, departs in several respects from the set traditions. The prominence of birds "as erotic symbols" is especially noticeable. The Court of Love commonly closed with a service sung by birds in honor of the God of love, and this feature seems to have been selected as a prolific source for poetic material. It is that which affords the central situation in The Phoenix and Turtle. . . . [p. 376] The features which specially characterize the Court of Love . . . make it apparent . . . that this poem falls readily into this class. This is because the symbols employed in it, the peculiar manner of their arrangement, the

subject itself, and the method of treatment, all harmonize with the dominant conceptions of the class as seen in their later development. This theory, moreover, affords a most inviting field for conjecture, which is not entirely unsupported by historical evidence. Courtly love is said by Mott to have been declared incompatible with marriage. That something of the conception came to Shakespeare as a lingering heritage, which was finally vitalized by the great preceptors of love, is not, perhaps, an altogether baseless supposition. . . . [pp. 381 f.] The one indisputable fact . . . is that The Phoenix and Turtle is a poem of a common class and that that class is the Court of Love. Viewed in the light of this fact and of the evidence generally which has been presented, the logical inference is that Shakespeare, in company with Jonson, Chapman, Marston, and some unknown writer, contributed verses for a volume all of which were upon a conventional Court of Love subject, though not all written in precisely the same conventional manner. In the light of the evidence adduced, therefore, and of the prevalence of certain dominant conceptions, and of the common use of phrases and of such words as "constancy," "rarity," "wonder," "urne," etc., found in the companion poems, we conclude that The Phoenix and Turtle was written, possibly as a Valentine-poem (without explicit reference) to Sir John Salisbury, but most probably simply in compliance (such as is adequately paralleled) with a prevalent literary vogue, which encouraged the writing of Court of Love poems

of a modified character; that it has no recondite meaning beyond that involved in the historic conditions of its production; that it contains no allusions either to the poet's own life or to that of another; and finally, that it contains the confession of metaphysical conceptions only to the extent to which they would be implied by an emotional interest in a peculiar form of poetic activity, devoid, however, of any explicit intellectual formulation. . . . [pp. 383 f.] [In Chaucer's Parlement of Foules] we have the source of suggestion, in part, for Shakespeare's poem. The remainder . . . was doubtless adapted from the emblem literature and conceptions of the period. . . . On the assumption of emblems as completing the suggestion . . . [we acquire] a reasonable explanation of Shakespeare's departure from his usual style, as manifested in the peculiar Platonic and epigrammatic qualities of The Phoenix and Turtle. Conciseness was the cardinal virtue of emblems; and the subtleties of love afforded a subject of perennial interest. No other poem by Shakespeare possesses the same peculiar epigrammatic quality; and none is so manifestly indebted to emblems for its suggestions'" (pp. 571-72).

Rollins finds that "the interest and value of Fairchild's article are usually admitted by critics, even when they fail to accept all its conclusions. Thus [Carleton] BROWN (ed. 1913, p. xxvi) is of the opinion that in Shakespeare's verses 'one detects the influence of the conventions of the "Courts of Love," the Birds' Parliament,

and the Platonic theories of the Renaissance'; [Sidney] LEE (Life, 1916, p. 272) asserts, 'Chaucer's "Parliament of Foules" and the abstruse symbolism of sixteenth-century emblem books are thought to be echoed in Shakespeare's lines'; and [Albert] FEUILLERAT (ed. 1927, p. 184) agrees that 'some of the resemblances with Chaucer's Parlement of Foules are striking enough,' though he wonders 'whether it is necessary to find any particular source at all for Shakespeare's use of the different emblems of the allegory, for they were part of the symbolical language of the time'" (pp. 572-73). One might add the remarks of Professor M. C. Bradbrook in her Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry (New York: Oxford, 1952), who writes that "in the one poem which he wrote in a courtly kind . . . the Phoenix and the Turtle are united by Nature, who appears in this poem to play much the same role that she does in Chaucer's Parlement of Foules. . . . The union of natures which is Platonic Love, Shakespeare like Spenser, sees as a relationship between one immortal and another immortal, in which their mutual relationship, the third term, is the dominant, and not the persons themselves. . . . This great poem, Shakespeare's one work in the Platonic mode, might alone be taken as the justification of courtly poetry. Its concentration and simplicity show what can be achieved when the great artist finds the proper occasion to make full use of a great tradition" (pp. 32-34). And not one word about Fairchild: this is a common situation, as Mr. Rollins

indicates. We shall return to Miss Bradbrook's remarks. Rollins, finally, summarizes a different suggestion of source: "[Max] WOLFF (Shakespeare, 1907, I, 280 f.) objects to all attempts at giving the poem a metaphysical, spiritual, or political interpretation. They seem to him profitless; and indeed, the P. & T. deserves mention, not for any intrinsic value, but because it shows a side of Shakespeare's character otherwise unknown, its interest lying simply in the fact that Shakespeare made use of the allegorical stuff common in the medieval bestiaries" (p. 574).

In The Voyage to Illyria (1937), Muir and O'Loughlin considered the question of literary sources:--"It is clear, we have said, that Shakespeare had glanced at Love's Martyr, but there was another book, The Phoenix Nest, published in 1593, the contents of which were certainly in his mind. In Matthew Roydon's elegy on Sir Philip Sidney there is a passage of some importance. The author describes the mourners at the funeral thus:

> The skie bred Egle roiall bird,
> Percht there vpon an oke aboue,
> The Turtle by him neuer stird,
> Example of immortall loue.
> The swan that sings about to dy,
> Leauing Meander stood thereby.
>
> And that which was of woonder most,
> The Phoenix left sweete Arabie.

This coincidence is not fortuitous, since the line in Shakespeare's poem, 'Death is now the Phoenix nest,' suggests another link. Furthermore, the idea of chastity is

the subject of a subsequent poem in the same book, and, in 'An excellent Dialogue between Constancie and Inconstancie' which comes immediately after it, we have a reference to 'loue, which is for the most part, reason beyond reason.' It seems natural to suppose that this is the 'source' of 'Loue hath Reason, Reason none'" (pp. 130-31). With his usual aplomb, Walter Thomson, in The Sonnets of William Shakespeare & Henry Wriothesley (1938), writes that "no one reading Matthew Roydon's 'Eligie' . . . on Sir Philip Sidney published in 1593, can fail to observe that it was the model which Shakespeare followed when writing 'The Phoenix and Turtle'" (p. 75). It is surprising how many times the erratic von Mauntz is met with in modern criticism. Thomson, for example, thinks that the crow of Shakespeare's poem reflects the "upstart crow" epithet of Greene; but, he adds, "doubtless also [Shakespeare] had at the back of his mind Pliny's tag about the vulgar belief that the crow generates its young by the mouth" (p. 77).

The exchange of opinion concerning the poem on the pages of the Times Literary Supplement in the late thirties and early forties of this century has been rather fully documented in our Chapter Two, but we have yet to treat a few source theories which appeared there. Before doing so, let us consider the spillover of the controversy as it appears on the pages of Notes and Queries in 1940. A correspondent who signed himself "W. P. D." (December 7, 1940, p. 408) asked about Shakespeare's knowledge of Pliny in the

original, relating his question to the fifth stanza of the poem and its crow imagery, and was answered by B. H. Newdigate (December 28, 1940, p. 459), who remarks that

> Philemon Holland's translation of Pliny's 'Natural History' was printed in 1601, in which year Chester's 'Loves Martyr,' containing Shakespeare's and the other 'Poeticall Essaies' on the Phoenix and Turtle, was also printed. . . . But Shakespeare's lines [from stanza 5] seem to have been suggested by [a passage] in which Pliny says, not indeed of crows, but of ravens:
>
> > the common sort are of opinion, that they conceive and engender at the mouth, or lay their eggs in it. (Nat. Hist., x, 12)
>
> Shakespeare seems to imply that crows, like ravens, were supposed to breed by the exchange of breath between cock and hen.
>
> In this poem Shakespeare makes use of other allusions to bird-lore out of classical writers. (See my edition of 'The Phoenix and Turtle,' Shakespeare Head Press, 1937.)

In the same issue of Notes and Queries (pp. 459-60) there appeared the reply to "W. P. D." of G. Catalani:

> Since the [Holland] translation of Pliny was issued . . . in 1601, that is in the same year, as the printing of Robert Chester's 'Loves Martyr,' to which the verses of Shakespeare were appended, it is possible that the poet may have been acquainted with Philemon Holland's version. Before 1600 many editions . . . had been printed in Italy . . . but neither these, nor the French version by Antoine de Pinet, published in 1562, are likely to have been easily accessible in England at the time.
>
> Moreover, as Richard Farmer points out in his 'Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare' (Cambridge, 1767), the poet usually acquired his knowledge of the classics from translations so that, if he had in mind a passage of Pliny when he wrote [the poem], which seems very doubtful, he probably owed this knowledge to the work of Philemon Holland.

Meanwhile, a rather inconsequential T.L.S. article produced some worthwhile comment: in "The Sole Arabian

Tree" (April 26, 1941, pp. 199, 206) Sir Osbert Sitwell asked if Shakespeare's source for the second verse of his poem might not "be derived, equally with 'Kubla Khan,' from the mind of a great poet who has read 'Marco Polo's Travels'?" In turn the T.L.S. editor wonders, on p. 203 of the same, "Why Marco Polo especially? The phoenix bird and the phoenix tree were ever ready images with the Elizabethans and with earlier poets, Chaucer and Skelton among them. Florio (1598) defined the sole Arabian tree. . . . If contemporary translators [of Pliny] alone are to be considered as the sources--the only begetters--then Mr. Sitwell has a case with John Frampton (1579) as against Philemon Holland (1601). But was Marco Polo the first to bring us news of the one and only bird enthroned on its sole Arabian tree?" Of course he was not; the legend was thousands of years old (see our Appendix) and every Elizabethan poet knew it.

In the June 14, 1941 Supplement, p. 287, T. W. Baldwin offered his views:

> . . .There appears to be no evidence that Shakespeare ever used Holland's translation [of Pliny's Historia Naturalis] though he seems to have used the original of Pliny, once probably in the first edition of Dalecampius, 1587 (Baldwin, T. W., 'A Note Upon William Shakespeare's Use of Pliny,' in 'The Parrott Presentation Volume' (1935), pp. 157 ff.). Had Shakespeare needed, he could have found through the index to Pliny
>
> that in Arabia
> There is one tree, the phoenix throne, one phoenix
> At this hour reigning there.

But he would not have found that the phoenix was in chastity 'the bird of loudest lay,' the figure upon which his whole poem turns.

If Shakespeare had referred to the 'Adages' of Erasmus, as he had been taught in grammar school to do, he would have found under 'Phoenice rarior' that besides Pliny, Ovid in the fifteenth book of 'Metamorphoses' had devoted a few lines to the phoenix and that Lactantius was credited with a longish poem on the subject. In the supplement, Junius under 'Phoenicis instar reuiuiscere' gives a full bibliography of early writers who mention the phoenix. The ever-present Textor with his 'Epitheta' would also have given the key to numerous references. Ovid and Lactantius were grammar school authors.[2] Ovid could have supplied but few of Shakespeare's details, though the editors would regularly have referred him to Pliny for further information.

It is clear, however, that the 'Incerti Auctoris Phoenix' to be found in contemporary editions of Lactantius is Shakespeare's ultimate and probably proximate chief source. At sunrise, the phoenix there bursts into song; so far as I have observed, in Lactantius alone of the source authors does the phoenix have song, as in Shakespeare.[3] . . . The phoenix sings, and she outsings Shakespeare's 'death-divining swan.'

After renewal, the young phoenix flies back to her sole tree, accompanied by the other birds.

> Contrahit in coetum sese genus omne volantum;
> Nec praedae memor est vlla, nec vlla metus.
> Alituum stipata choro volat illa per altum,
> Turbaque prosequitur munere laeta pio.[4]

Here is the call of the phoenix, which Shakespeare demands that 'chaste wings obey,' to take part in the funeral; but for complete safety from mindfulness of prey or any fear he invites the owl, 'Foul precurrer of the fiend,' to be absent, as also 'Every fowl of tyrant wing' save the kingly eagle--perhaps this means that the sovereign, Elizabeth casta, might attend. The swan had been mentioned earlier as the next sweetest singer to the phoenix, and so it is to officiate as 'the priest in surplice white.'

The specific mention of the 'treble-dated crow' is Shakespeare's symbolic addition. For, as Textor stood ready to tell any learned grammarian 'Cornices fidem et castitatem seruant in matrimonio . . . Diu uiuunt. Vnde Hesiodus, Ter tria saecla hominis transmittit garrula cornix.' To

> Cooper, and so no doubt to Shakespeare and others, cornix and corvus were both crow, and it is properly of the corvus that Shakespeare is here thinking. For as Pliny puts it, Hesiodus, qui primus aliqua de hoc prodidit, fabulose (vt reor) multa de hominum aeuo referens, cornici nouem nostras attribuit aetates, quadruplum eius ceruis, id triplicatum coruis. Et reliqua fabulosius in phoenice ac Nymphis. The allowance of life to the crow was 'triplicatum'; he was the 'treble-headed crow,' only less long-lived than the phoenix herself. Further, as Textor says, 'Ore coeunt,' referring to Pliny's statement, Ore eos parere aut coire vulgus arbitratur. As Shakespeare puts it,
>
> thy sable gender makest
> With the breath thou givest and takest.
>
> The chaste, long-lived, black-clad crow makes a fitting mourner for the phoenix. For, the phoenix was a symbol of chastity.
>
> Felix, quae Veneris foedera nulla colit.
> Mors illi Venus est; sola est in morte voluptas;
> Vt possit nasci, haec appetit ante mori.
>
> So Shakespeare had said that the phoenix and turtle had died
>
> Leaving no posterity:
> 'Twas not their infirmity,
> It was married chastity
>
> and had invited 'chaste wings' to the funeral.
> Here is certainly Shakespeare's ultimate chief source in this poem which Erasmus, who edited Lactantius, justly speaks of as 'non inconcinnum, per Musas, neque fastidiendum.' Being a grammar school text, Lactantius is likely to have been Shakespeare's actual source.

By the time he writes his book, On the Literary Genetics of Shakspere's Poems & Sonnets (Urbana, 1950), Baldwin has become more aware of the Amores as a possible source. He opens his Chapter XVI (pp. 363-77) devoted to Shakespeare's poem, by remarking that "in The Phoenix and the Turtle, Shakspere has taken his pattern from Ovid, Amores II, 6,

some material eventually from Lactantius, and has put the whole into the setting of a contemporary funeral" (p. 363). Baldwin uses the Latin commentary of one Dominicus upon Ovid (Amatoria [Basle, 1549], pp. 296-97), which mentions a Catullus elegy of the same sort as Ovid's, on Lesbia's sparrow,[5] and suggests that Shakespeare used the Basle edition, including the Dominicus commentary which calls Ovid's the "elegia pulcherrima," as his model. Especially significant are Ovid's opening lines. Showerman (cited above) translates them in the Loeb edition (pp. 398-99) as follows: "Our parrot, winged mimic from Indian land of dawn, is no more--come flocking, ye birds, to his obsequies! Come, all ye feathered faithful, come beat your breasts with the wing, and mark your tender cheeks with the rigid claw; let your ruffled plumage be rent in place of mourning hair, and in place of the long trumpet let your songs sound out!" Dominicus had explained the traditional aspects of the latter rite (Baldwin, p. 363). "This was a major death," writes Baldwin (p. 364), "worthy of a trumpet," and Shakespeare adapted the tradition to make the "bird of loudest lay . . . Herald sad and trumpet . . ." "The herald-trumpet now directs the funeral," according to Baldwin, "as Shakspere's allegory demands, and by consequence one bird must officiate. This bird is to occupy 'the sole Arabian tree,' which was the perquisite of the Phoenix. . . . From some source, Shakspere follows Herodotus and the majority that the sole Phoenix was to be found in

Arabia" (p. 364).

The tradition that there was but one tree on which the Phoenix sat had been well established in Shakespeare's day by Lyly in Euphues, Florio in his Dictionary of 1598. Our previous note suggested the resemblances between Ovid's mock elegy and Shakespeare's poem; these are discussed in detail by Baldwin on his pp. 364-67. He then turns to the influences of Lactantius (or the 'Incerti Auctoris Phoenix' commonly ascribed to him): "On her sole tree," writes Baldwin, "the Phoenix outsings all other birds, even the 'olor moriens,' which is Shakspere's 'death-divining swan.' And after renewal the Phoenix returns to her tree, with all the other birds in her train" (p. 368). This aspect of the myth was contributed by Tacitus (see Appendix). Baldwin quotes the Latin verses of Lactantius (155-58) concerning the flock.[6] "Shakspere has chosen this exact time to begin his funeral [Stanza One] . . . . Here the mortal phoenix has just suffered death in mutual flame with her faithful turtle. For them, there is no hint of rebirth, only this funeral. So the immortal Phoenix, who herself passes through the flame only to live again, is presiding at the funeral of the mortal one,[7] and now gets it under way. The immortal Phoenix becomes 'the bird of loudest lay' because of Ovid's trumpet,[8] whereas in Lactantius the Phoenix is the bird of sweetest lay, and her music is compared, among other things, to that of the tibia. . . . Shakspere does not follow Lactantius in having all birds forget fear and

rapine to accompany the Phoenix, but follows Ovid in keeping away all 'foul' birds and those of 'tyrant wing.' When, however, in his second stanza Shakspere selects the owl as the representative of 'foul' birds, he is using his own symbolism, since neither Lactantius nor Ovid had mentioned the owl. Nevertheless, Shakspere's owl is from Ovid (pp. 368-69). . . . The suggestion for this particular turn is in Ovid's story of why Ascalaphus had been turned into an owl . . . . For Ceres turned Ascalaphus into an owl because he told Pluto that Proserpine had eaten of the pomegranate, thus preventing her return. He was a messenger of the fiend. . . . Chester had quoted Ovid's two lines in Love's Martyr, to which Shakspere's poem is attached, and had translated them thus,

> The filthy messenger of ill to come
> The sluggish Owle is, and to danger some.

Shakspere is evidently adapting the original, from dim memory as likely as not" (p. 370). Moreover, as Baldwin points out, John Foxe's Actes and Monumentes (1570), Vol. I, pp. 705-706, contained a "most certain & true" story of the time "a hougly and dreadefull Owle . . . the euil signe of some mischaūce or of death to folow" issued from "the backe halfe" of Pope John during a council meeting "agaynst the articles and bookes of John Wicliffe." This story in Foxe, writes Baldwin, "is accompanied by a half-page cut, with the staring owl the center of quite a commotion. . . . The chances are very strong that Shakspere acquired [Foxe's volume] as a boy, though I know of no hint from his work

that he did" (pp. 370-71).

> The birds 'of tyrant wing' in the third stanza were suggested by Ovid's kite,[9] but the exception of the eagle is again Shakspere's specification to fit the conditions of his allegory. The swan of the fourth stanza was in Ovid, but the swan-song was probably the contribution of Lactantius. Then, the swan becomes the priest in Shakspere's allegory.
>
> Having provided for herald-trumpet and for priest, Shakspere needs also mourners, and selects the treble-dated crow. The suggestion for the crow comes from Ovid's long-lived villain, the cornix. [Cornix is properly 'raven,' but Baldwin repeats his argument from the 1941 T.L.S. letter, quoted above, that Shakespeare had in mind the corvus, or crow, a long-lived bird by vulgar account, and one which was chaste because it propagated bill-to-bill.]
>
> . . . This idea of conception through kissing had been put prominently to use early in the century. As Foxe explains [Actes and Monumentes, pp. 924-25], in the contention of the Gray Friars and the Black over the question, 'Whether the Virgyn Mary was conceaued wythout orygynall synne,' to bolster their side, 'The gray friers had made a picture of Ioachim and Anna kissing, by the which kisse Anna was conceiued with Mary. Ex Rob. Lycio. Minorita.' Presumably the Gray Friars could think of no greater symbol of married chastity. And so the similarly engendering crow becomes to Shakspere the supreme symbol of engendering chastity, though since his chaste couple had not engendered even so, he finds it necessary, as we shall see, to have them communicate only with eyes.
>
> Thus it appears that in Ovid and in Ovid's commentator, Dominicus, Shakspere found his framework story, and suggestions as to where to find other materials. . . . His bird allegory from Ovid and Lactantius, Shakspere put into an English funeral, as Ovid had put his bird allegory into a Roman funeral. Pliny, who had also been referred to by Dominicus, has, at least ultimately, furnished other details.
>
> It would appear to be clear that the idea of combining and burning the Phoenix and the Turtle . . . belongs to Chester . . . and that the pendent poems . . . are by way of honorary puffs. . . . Shakspere's resultant poem has, of course, no consonance with Chester's floundering allegory, and this fact should be a warning to us not to apply others of his poems too literally. [pp. 371-74]

Having speculated on the setting of Shakespeare's poem, Baldwin remarks that the anthem and the threnos "are the usual Platonic subtleties of love and beauty. . . . Incidentally, 'Flaming in the phoenix' sight' alludes to the fact that the phoenix as bird of the sun had flaming eyes,"[10] and the fundamental image of Stanza 9 also "takes the form of the Platonic fascination in love through the eyes. So in this case the turtle saw a flaming love 'in the phoenix' sight.' As her beams flowed to him, so his beams flowed to her, 'Either was the other's mine'" (p. 374). Baldwin usefully provides a Neo-Platonic background of thought concerning eye-communion (see Baldwin's Venus and Adonis discussion, pp. 75-84 in particular, with just quotations from Ficino and Castiglione); and since kissing, to Castiglione, is a coupling of souls, "these lovers of Shakspere's in married chastity use eyes only; they do not risk even mouth to mouth. . . . The crow and the Gray Friars had indicated what might come of mouthing. So Shakspere's lovers in married chastity risk their flow of soul only through the eyes" (pp. 374-75). Baldwin (pp. 375-76) ends with a quotation from Annibale Romei, The Courtiers Academie (1598), pp. 39-41, which illustrates the divine nature of the love of Phoenix and Turtle:--"'With such loue, not onely yong men, but olde, religious, and men married may be inamored; and it is in the highest and most perfect degree of temperature.'"[11]

We have moved forward with Baldwin somewhat prematurely. Let us return to the pages of the Times Literary Supplement. According to Sir Gurney Benham in his article (July 19, 1941, p. 352; July 26, p. 364),

> One key to the mysteries of 'Love's Martyr' and Shakespeare's accompanying lines is to realize that [the Phoenix] was regarded as synonymous with 'Perfection.' A Phoenix meant a Paragon, a unique personage. This had been understood for centuries. . . . In his 'Book of the Duchesse' (1369) Chaucer wrote:
>
> > For I dar sweren, if that she
> > Had among ten thousand be,
> > She wolde have be, at the leste,
> > A chief mirour of al the feste.
> > . . . . . .
> > Trewely she was, to myn ye,
> > The soleyn fenix of Arabye,
> > For ther liveth never but oon;
> > Ne swich as she ne knew I noon.
>
> 'Soleyn' here means 'only' or 'unique,' the tradition being that there could never be more than one Phoenix in existence at the same time. . . . In like manner the 'sole Arabian tree' was also unique. Shakespeare testifies to this belief in The Tempest (iii, 3) . . . . At least five other references might be quoted from Shakespeare's plays, showing that the phoenix was in his time the symbol of unique rarity and unique super-excellence. The Turtle was the accepted emblem of absolute fidelity in love. Chaucer describes it as the symbol of wedded constancy ('Parlement of Foules,' l. 355).

Turning to analysis of the poem, Benham sides with Grosart, who dismissed the notion that the Phoenix herself was "the bird of loudest lay"; Grosart thought of the nightingale, Sitwell of the peacock. "There is no doubt of the loudness of the peacock's lay," writes Benham. "On the other hand the bird has always had an unpleasant reputation for its hatefully discordant voice and its ostentatious vanity. Witness Robert Chester himself, in his preceding

poem, where he describes the 'proud peacock' as

> thinking himselfe a King
> Although God knowes but badly he doth sing."

No, thinks Benham, probably "the graceful and lordly Crane" was meant, whose trumpeting calls are mentioned in the "Parlement of Foules." The bird of the next stanza "is unmistakably the screech-owl. Compare again the 'Parlement of Foules':--

'The oule eek, that of dethe the bode bringeth'

--derived by Chaucer from Alain de Lille's twelfth century Planctus Naturae: 'Illic bubo, propheta miseriae, psalmodias funereae lamentationis praecinebat.' (There the owl, prophet of evil, sings forebodingly the incantations of the funeral lamentation.)"[12]

> The third stanza intimates the exclusion from the funeral rites of all birds of prey, except the royal eagle. Here again an echo of Chaucer, who in the 'Parlement of Foules' makes Nature admonish the birds that they are to obey the eagle,
>
> The foul royal, above yow in degree,
> The wyse and worthy, secree, trewe as stel.
>
> The 'death-devining Swan,' 'that defunctive Musicke can,'--that is 'that can (provide) funereal music,' needs no explanation. Alain de Lille again corroborates:--'Illic olor, sui funeris praeco, mellitae citherationis organo vitae prophetabat apocopam' (There the Swan, herald of his own death, predicted, by means of his honeyed music, the cutting off of life).
>
> As to the word 'can' . . . 'Can' always meant 'knows how to,' or (consequently) 'is able to.' Shakespeare uses 'can' freely as it is now used . . . . In all his poems and plays there is no instance of his using it in the obsolete sense for 'knows' [as Grosart had glossed the word]. . . .
>
> 'Treble-dated' means long-lived [crow]. The supposed longevity of the crow is mentioned by

> Lucretius and by Pliny, who quotes from Hesiod a statement that the crow's life is nine times that of a man.
>
> Chapman in his 'Hesiod's Book of Days' reproduces this as follows:--
>
> For all the store
> Of years man boasts the prating crow has more
> By thrice three lives.[13]
>
> 'Gender' has nothing to do with sex, as Dr. Grosart oddly imagined. It means genre, 'nature' or disposition.' There is an old classic legend mentioned by Lucretius, that the crow, by changing his voice, can bring either rain or fine weather. Here Shakespeare seems to mean only that the crow's 'sable gender,' that is black or mournful disposition is 'made,' that is 'induced' or 'caused' by its habit of constantly cawing as it takes or emits breath ('with the breath thou giv'st and tak'st').[14] Chaucer ('Parlement of Foules') writes of 'the crow with vois of care,' the word 'care' being probably used here onomatopoetically. 'The Crow' was a generic term, including rooks, ravens and even jays. In Wycliffe's English Bible Noah is said to have sent forth a 'crow' from the ark. [p. 352]

Sir Gurney is ignorant of much of the relevant modern scholarship concerning the poem, as we mentioned in Chapter Two, but he has read and thoroughly digested the remarks of a good editor, Grosart, and his exceptions are clearly stated and bear the strong imprint of a knowledge of classical and Renaissance literature in general. He seems aware of Fairchild, for example, but usefully brings The Book of the Duchesse to bear upon the poem, as well as Lucretius, Alain de Lille, and Chapman's Hesiod. He is at once conservative and strongly original.

In 1955, an essay on the poem by Ronald Bates appeared in Shakespeare Quarterly, VI, pp. 19-30. Bates points out that Fairchild identified the crane as the "bird of loudest

lay,[15] whereas Grosart, on the basis of a faulty reading, thought it was the nightingale. Concentrating on bird imagery, Bates finds that

> There are thirty-one other occurrences of 'crow' (the bird) in the works of Shakespeare. Nine times its carrion role is emphasized . . . . Nine times 'crow' is used in a setting of evil . . . or in an evil or depreciatory sense . . . . Seven times it figures as a color and value contrast . . . . [p. 20]

In like manner, Bates (pp. 21-25) makes surveys of "eagle"; "owl" and its attendant epithets; "herald"; "trumpet" (once associated with the cock in Hamlet, I.i.149-52); and eventually decides on the cock as "the more appropriate choice" (over the lark) as bird of loudest lay (p. 25). We shall return to Bates' article in our next chapter, and to her reply to Bates by M. C. Bradbrook.[16] Miss Bradbrook, however, says in part that the bird of loudest lay represents no "champion shouter among the birds," or "identification," but as a phrase it is "merely the proper qualification for any herald" (p. 356).

F. T. Prince, in his introduction (pp. xxxviii-xlvi) to the Arden edition of The Poems (London, 1960), writes that

> The Phoenix and Turtle is not usually thought of as having a literary source, although Chaucer's Parlement of Fowles is sometimes mentioned in this connection . . . . But it would be well if we could fix firmly in our minds that Shakespeare's 'subject' has a source, and that source is Chester's fantastic compilation. [pp. xxxviii-xxxix]
>
> [Shakespeare] has not troubled himself to master the details of Chester's invention; we need only look at Chester's pitiful picture of the self-immolation of the two birds to measure the distance between such confused fancy and the unearthly

> simplicity of Shakespeare's effect. Yet Chester had stumbled upon a strangely effective emblem, the germ of a myth, in his tale of a union in death between the apparently ill-assorted Dove and Phoenix. And Shakespeare, however he came to be drawn into the venture, seized to the full the opportunity proffered by 'the first Subject.' . . . [p. xlii]
>
> Shakespeare took the notion of the Phoenix and Turtle from Loves Martyr and treated it as he might have treated a dramatic subject, projecting himself into it and giving what he saw. . . . Shakespeare did not need to think of the Parlement of Foules, though that poem is an evocation of a kindred image. The kingdom of the birds, their divisions and occupations, was a theme deeply rooted in European and Oriental folk-lore. The natural poetry of these fancies was bound to leave its mark on literature, as it had become involved with pagan religion and with popular superstition. . . . And among the innumerable associations of Shakespeare's verses there is indeed to be found this ancient folk memory of the significance of birds, their suggestions of myth; a homeliness like that of the burial of Cock-Robin is fused with apprehensions of the mystery of death and the migration of the soul. [p. xliii]

J. W. Lever's survey of Shakespeare's poems and their critical attention in this century appeared in Shakespeare Survey, XV (1962), pp. 18-30.[17] Lever observes that "Fairchild in Englische Studien (1904) set the pattern by tracing [the poem's] literary antecedents back, in part to the Court of Love poetic tradition with its bird-symbolism, in part to sixteenth-century emblem literature with its epigrammatic and Platonic modes of expression. As for the work in itself, Fairchild saw no more in it than an occasional exercise. No recondite meanings, biographical significances or metaphysical profundities need be sought" (p. 25). Muir and O'Loughlin in their book display "scholarship and common sense," writes Lever. "The Phoenix

in Golding's Ovid, the Eagle, Turtle and Swan of Roydon's elegy on Sidney in The Phoenix Nest, with a 'Dialogue' in the same book, were shown to be likely influences. Shakespeare's poem was nevertheless an expression of personal experience; if commissioned for an occasion, so too was Lycidas, where Milton wrote of his own conflicts" (pp. 26-27). In Lever's opinion, "no precise 'source' can be claimed for a poem of the order of The Phoenix and the Turtle, and the discussion of 'influences' has tended to elaborate on earlier suggestions. Fairchild's (1904) analogies with Chaucer's Parlement of Foules and with a number of emblem-books[18] have been repeated down the years without much strengthening of his case, which Muir and O'Loughlin (1937) rightly questioned. Classical influences were very widely diffused and broad resemblances are insubstantial evidence. Von Mauntz in Shakespeares Gedichte (1894) had pointed out the similarity of the invocation to Ovid's parrot elegy in Amores, II.vi.; Baldwin (1950) reaffirmed its relevance, and added Lactantius' De Phoenice. Lee, however, had noted in his Life of Shakespeare (1898; expanded 1916) that the poem might be a 'fanciful adaptation' of Matthew Roydon's elegy on Sidney in The Phoenix Nest, itself derived ultimately from Latin 'sources.' Muir and O'Loughlin (1937) took up Lee's suggestion and showed interesting resemblances to Roydon's verses, as well as to his[19] 'Dialogue between Constancie and Inconstancie' in the same book. Affinities to the 'neither two nor one'

theme in Drayton, in Donne and in much verse of the period had been perceived as far back as Malone" (pp. 29-30).

In the same issue of Shakespeare Survey appears the thoughtful article of Robert Ellrodt, "An Anatomy of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'" (pp. 99-110), surely one of the more careful, succinct, and intelligent appraisals of the poem in recent times. Our summary here is limited to Ellrodt's remarks concerning possible sources, and source theorists.

> [p. 99] Irony may be detected in the pieces signed by the 'Vatum Chorus,' Marston and Jonson, but Shakespeare's poem never verges on burlesque. The oracular utterance, though high-pitched, never suggests mock solemnity as in Ovid's playful elegy on his mistress' parrot. Besides, though Shakespeare did take the notion of the Phoenix and the Turtle from Loves Martyr, he altered the story. The 'dead birds,' whoever they may be, leave no posterity although their love was not without offspring in Chester's poem. Truth and Beauty vanish from the earth, the tone is throughout funereal and the theme of the Threnos not unlike that of Donne in The First Anniversary. . . . [p. 100] When claiming that no prospect of rebirth is suggested in the poem I am aware that Wilson Knight identifies 'the bird of loudest lay' with the Phoenix reborn from its ashes. This, indeed, is the only ground for his strange understatement when he describes as 'not obviously optimistic' a poem which begins in sadness and ends on a 'sigh.' He will grant, though, that the bird may be but a symbol of Shakespeare's own poetic creation (pp. 202-3, 194, 204). Yet nothing suggests that it arose from the mutual flame either as its natural offspring or as a poem inspired by the recorded experience. Baldwin's distinction between the mortal Phoenix and Turtle, the lovers for whom there is 'no hint of rebirth' and 'the immortal Phoenix' presiding at their funeral may not be unfounded but it is hardly necessary. It rests on the assumption that the bird sitting 'on the sole Arabian tree' must be the Phoenix since that tree has been described by Lyly, Florio and Shakespeare himself as 'the phoenix throne' (Tempest, III, iii, 23). But this

> was a distortion of the legend as related by Lactantius. It cannot be claimed that the tree was never 'vacant,' since the Phoenix only sat on it for his dawn and death rites. Besides, some time elapsed between his immolation and rebirth. The 'herald sad' may surely be allowed to blow his trumpet from that tree. Lastly, as a 'trumpeter,' he does not 'preside' at the funeral, as Baldwin and Wilson Knight assume: he is less important than the swan who acts the priest's part (ll. 13-16), an office devoted to the newborn Phoenix when he burnt his father's ashes on the altar of the Sun God in Heliopolis. [pp. 99-100]

In support of his views, Ellrodt notes Lactantius (see Appendix); William Smith's Chloris (1596), sonnet XXIII; and Claudian, or Claudianus. Almost alone, among commentators on the poem, Ellrodt has a thorough knowledge of the history of the legend of the Phoenix, and he is particularly knowledgeable concerning the Renaissance aspects. It is recommended that his article be read in conjunction with the Appendix to this dissertation.

> To ascertain the meaning of the phoenix symbol in Shakespeare's poem, Renaissance adaptations of the myth must be considered rather than the time-honoured poems of Lactantius and Claudianus, though commentators have strangely ignored the latter. Many parallels, ranging from Michelangelo to Drayton, have been offered. Among these, Roydon's Elegy for Astrophil, first adduced by Sir Sidney Lee, has not been duly stressed in recent studies. . . . . Like Shakespeare and unlike Chester, Roydon . . . departs from the myth of rebirth [stanzas 35-36] to enhance the hero's praise. No such Phoenix will arise . . . . [p. 100]
>
> In the same elegy Roydon described Astrophel as a love poet and Stella as a nymph most rare (st. 22-7). Now, Astrophel's and Stella's well-known 'flame' became 'mutual' while remaining chaste. If Shakespeare was influenced by Roydon's elegy and thought of Sidney's Sonnets, he may well have had in mind a love relationship of this kind. But in the Elegy for Astrophil love and the phoenix myth are unconnected.[20]

> The Phoenix symbol in the love poetry of the Renaissance may be traced back to Petrarch's Canzoniere, the fountainhead whence flowed two different streams of conceits. Generally, the Phoenix is feminine. Laura is, indeed, so insistently identified with the Arabian bird that the symbol might appear to be a hall-mark of Petrarchism. Emphasis is laid on the uniqueness and matchless beauty of a heavenly creature secure of immortality, crossing our path for a while, proud and lonely, and flying back to her far country. . . . But from Phoenix-Laura to 'Phoenix-Stella' (Astrophel, XCII)[21] the celestial glory somewhat faded into the light of common day. In their search for hyperboles the Elizabethan love poets on the whole were surprisingly chary of the phoenix symbol to heighten their praises of their ladies. Sidney himself and Dyer [see Sir Edward Dyer's "Coridon to his Phillis" in Englands Helicon (1600)] were satisfied with brief and random allusions, stressing, like Petrarch, beauty and rarity.
>
> In one instance only [no. 135] had Petrarch relied on the actual myth of rebirth. He then applied it to the lover. . . . The conceit of the ever-dying, ever-reviving lover was magnificently recast by Michelangelo. But in riddles, epigrams and sonnets, from Pontanus to Thomas Lodge, Giles Fletcher and Drayton, it had become little more than a rhetorical flourish.[22] A sonnet [xxiii] from William Smith's Chloris (1596) . . . offers one of the fullest Phoenix figures in lyrical poetry . . . . [p. 101]

The value of the Smith quotation is its reflection of "the conventional association of the Phoenix with the renewed pangs of the lover," a fact which "may have half-consciously connected the myth of rebirth with torment rather than with triumph in the minds of many Elizabethan love poets" (p. 101). According to Ellrodt, Donne's contribution to the myth's history was therefore all the more original, in that Donne "retained the Petrarchan idea of the lover's death but made it a triumphant resurrection by boldly playing upon the erotic sense of the verb 'to die.' This ambiguity, though,

must have been intended also in Chester's poem if the immolation did represent the consummation of wedded love. Donne introduced a further innovation in describing the two lovers as making up one Phoenix. This was no refinement of Petrarchism, but a new conceit, based both on the myth of rebirth and on the assumption of the bird's bisexuality.[23] Metaphysical wit achieved a transmutation of the well-worn paradoxes of Lactantius" (pp. 101-102). One cannot, however, quite suggest Donne as a source. We shall return to the Donne likenesses in Chapter Four.

> Shakespeare's Phoenix is of kin to Phoenix-Laura as a symbol of the beloved, the male turtle's 'queen.' 'Beauty' and 'rarity' or uniqueness are again emphasized. This agrees with the various tributes to Chester's She-Phoenix: 'Nature long time hath stor'd up vertue, fairenesse, Shaping the rest as foiles unto this Rarenesse' (Loves Martyr, pp. 178-9). . . . Wilson Knight [in The Mutual Flame] is not justified in claiming that the bird symbolism suggests a confusion of the sexes. Though the Phoenix was male in Hesiod and Herodotus, Phoenix-Laura and Phoenix-Stella are unequivocally feminine. So is Chester's Phoenix 'analysde' by Jonson: Knight's reading only displays perverse ingenuity (pp. 188-9). One may further add that the legendary bird could be feminine in Elizabethan poetry even when 'she' typified a male lover or hero.[24] No ambiguity was intended: a female Phoenix could be a symbol of rarity irrespective of sex. As to the male turtle dove, though uncommon, it was not unprecedented. It appeared in one of the Two Pastorals 'made by Sir Philip Sidney upon his meeting with his two worthy friends and fellow poets, Sir Edward Dyer and M. Fulke Greville,' first published in Davison's Poetical Rhapsody (1602) but written much earlier:
>
> My two and I be met,
> A happy blessed trinity,
> As three most jointly set
> In firmest band of unity.
> Join hearts and hands, so let it be,
> Make but one mind in bodies three.

And as the turtle Dove
To mate with whom he liveth,
Such comfort fervent love
Of you to my heart giveth.
Join hands, &c.

Now joined be our hands,
Let them be ne'er asunder,
But linked in binding bands
By metamorphosed wonder.
So should our severed bodies three
As one for ever joined be.

. . . The mating of the Phoenix with a Turtle allowed [Shakespeare] to bring together the extremes of love, constancy and chastity. The Turtle was a bird dedicated to Venus, yet chaste since it had but one mate in its life and therefore was a type of absolute constancy in married love. The chastity of the Phoenix was absolute in a different way. Lactantius had praised it for 'knowing not the bonds of Venus' (l. 164). Claudianus had even declared it free from all the taints of our human world (Phoenix, l. 10). In A Contention betwixt a Wife, a Widow, and a Maid, a poetic dialogue by Sir John Davies, presented before Queen Elizabeth on 6 December 1602, the Turtle stood for love and truth, the Phoenix for maidenhead and 'oneness':

Wife. The wife is as a turtle with her mate;
Widow. The widow as the widow dove alone,
Whose truth shines most in her forsaken state;
Maid. The maid a Phoenix, and is still but one.

To an Elizabethan, therefore, there must have been from the outset something of a paradox in mating the amorous and hymeneal Turtle with the virginal Phoenix.[25] In Chester's floundering allegory it may mean no more than the sacrifice of maidenhead to 'put on perfection, and a woman's name,' to use Donne's words.[26] But in Shakespeare's poem, through this very paradox, the bird symbolism becomes the fitting expression of the tension created by a certain type of 'Platonic' love. [pp. 102-103]. . . . . .

[p. 106] The originality of Shakespeare's handling of the Phoenix theme stands out more clearly from a comparison with other Phoenix poems in his own and previous ages. The compositions of Lactantius and Claudianus were narrative and pictorial. Only in the closing lines did they muster the standard array of paradoxes which later writers

> marshalled to various ends. Du Monin[27] aimed at writing metaphysical poetry. Yet he inserted a long narration of the myth among his abstract or allegorical disquisitions (ff. 5-11). The same trend may be discerned in lyrical poetry. Setting aside epigrammatic riddles or flashing conceits, one discovers that Petrarch and Pontanus, Ronsard and Drayton, whenever they expanded the Phoenix symbol, were apt to rely on pictorial features such as the bird's plumage, the death scene or the flight of the new Phoenix.[28] . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> [p. 107] Shakespeare's . . . very subject, the Phoenix and the Turtle, was a modification of the Phoenix myth which implied disbelief in, or at least disregard for, the time-honoured legend. Yet he is not merely dealing with 'bodied Ideas.' Birds are present from the first line to the last and some willing suspension of disbelief is required. It need not be romantic, for the symbolism is ruthlessly stripped of unessential detail. The Phoenix and the Turtle are not described. The very escort of the Phoenix was a mere flock of birds in earlier poems. Shakespeare availed himself of the convention to call attention to the values symbolized by his heroes or connected with their love. Eagle, crow and swan become emblems of royalty, chastity, holiness and poetry. The kingly eagle is further contrasted with the 'tyrant' birds of prey, and one may remember that eagle and phoenix symbolism often overlapped. . . .[29]
>
> The appeal of the symbols to the sensuous imagination is superseded by an appeal to our intellectual imagination in the anthem. Shakespeare's handling of paradox is far more serious and philosophical than in the poems of Lactantius and Claudianus[30] or in the conceits of most sonneteers.

William Matchett, it will be recalled from Chapter Two, identifies the Phoenix as Elizabeth and the Turtle as the Earl of Essex, in his book The Phoenix and the Turtle (1965). Matchett also makes at least one original contribution to the list of suggested literary sources for Shakespeare's poem. "Chaucer's The Parlement of Foules," writes Matchett, "Matthew Roydon's elegy on Sir Phillip [sic] Sidney, Lactantius and Ovid have all been suggested as

Shakespeare's source . . . . We may concede that Shakespeare could have worked from what Baldwin . . . calls a 'dim memory' (Genetics, p. 370) of these poems . . . but this is merely to agree that the bird images in the first third of Shakespeare's poem are largely traditional" (p. 188). In a note (pp. 188-89), Matchett makes an interesting point: "Add to these suggested sources J. V. Cunningham's study of the scholastic terminology in the anthem ('"Essence" and the Phoenix and Turtle,' ELH, XIX [1952], 265-76), and we have the interesting fact that the threne, the poem's culmination, is precisely that portion which has not been discussed in terms of literary parallels.[31] Shakespeare may have been influenced by various sources in getting under way and in explaining the relationship which was his subject, but no one has shown us that he depended on any source but himself in creating his balanced consideration and eventual rejection of that relationship."

We shall be discussing Cunningham's essay in the next chapter, and of course Matchett's final assertions have to do with his own theory; but the observation that no source studies have been advanced for the Threnos, though exaggerated, is well taken. "Of the sources suggested," continues Matchett, "Roydon's is the most relevant. This poem, 'An Elegie, or friends passion, for his Astrophill,' was first published in 1593 in The Phoenix Nest, and was reprinted at the end of Spenser's Colin Clouts Come Home Againe in 1595. Roydon has the nightingale, the turtledove,

the swan, the phoenix and the eagle mourn Astrophill with traditionally appropriate symbolic acts or remarks. Though Shakespeare may have known either copy of the poem, his use of the phrase 'the Phoenix nest' has been taken to imply his remembering the volume in which it first appeared. Kenneth Muir and Sean o'Loughlin have further suggested that Shakespeare's line 'Loue hath Reason, Reason none' also had its source in a later item in the same 1593 volume" (pp. 188-89). On page 131 of The Voyage to Illyria, notes Matchett (p. 189 n.), "the source to which they point is 'An excellent Dialogue between Constancie and Inconstancie' where 'we have a reference to "loue, which is for the most part, reason beyond reason."' Possibly so. But the line which they quote is spoken by Inconstancy, only to be rejected by Constancy with the remark, 'You may rather call it reason without reason' (D), a closer parallel. If we were to credit the Dialogue with being the source of 'Loue hath Reason, Reason none,' we could go on and credit it equally with being the source of Shakespeare's ultimate rejection of that position in the threne." It is Matchett's opinion that Shakespeare does reject that position, and that Shakespeare's views (from the standpoint of a truly personal allegory) can be identified with those of Reason as speaker.

> If we must have a specific source for Shakespeare's conception, however, there is another which is more convincing than any of these. Nicholas Breton's 'Amoris Lachrimae' appeared in Brittons Bowre of Delights, of which two editions,

1591 and 1597, were published before Shakespeare wrote 'The Phoenix and the Turtle.' Breton's poem, like Roydon's, is a lament for Sidney, for whom the traditionally symbolic birds mourn in a single stanza:

> The Nightingale is stopped in her throte,
> And shriking Owles do make a fearefull noise,
> The dolefull Rauens sing a deadly note,
> And little Wrennes the end of Eagles ioyes:
> The Phoenix droopes, and Falcons beate their wings,
> To heare how Swans of death and sorrow sings
> (1591, B^{v}).

[p. 190] Breton lists the phoenix among the other birds, unembarrassed by the fact that, earlier in the poem, he has claimed that death, in taking Sidney, has killed 'a Phoenix when there were no mo' (A3^{v}).

Since both Shakespeare's Phoenix and his Turtle were a part of his 'assignment,' the most that we could say he borrowed from Roydon's poem would be the general conception of assembling birds for lamentation and the inclusion in the group of an eagle and a swan--and he would not have had to go to Roydon for this conventional conception. Breton's poem, however, could have provided him not only with these same suggestions but with others, a few of them quite specific. Thus Shakespeare's poem follows Breton's in emphasizing the voices of the birds. Furthermore, each of Shakespeare's five bird-stanzas develops from one of Breton's birds. The opening call for 'the bird of loudest lay' is like a specific rejection of Breton's nightingale, 'stopped in her throte.' In undertaking an invocation, one in which a first bird invokes others, Shakespeare would find Breton's mute nightingale of assistance only in suggesting its opposite.[32] A striking, direct duplication occurs, however, in Shakespeare's second stanza, and this is, of course, the word 'shriking.' Shakespeare's 'shriking harbinger' improves on Breton's 'shriking Owles' . . . . By the time he reached his fifth stanza, Shakespeare may well have felt that he had already developed sufficiently ideas related to 'dolefull' and 'deadly note,' but though he calls the bird a 'Crow' for the sake of the rhyme, the distinction was not made in the period and his stanza develops ideas related to the raven. As if to make complete the possibility that Shakespeare remembered Breton's poem, even the suggestion of Muir and O'Loughlin may there be balanced. Not ten pages and four items later, as in The Phoenix Nest,

but two stanzas later in the same poem we find the figure of Reason:

> Oh what a wo it is to see the woes,
> Where nought but wo is left to looke vpon,
> A griefe too great for Reason to disclose,
> And in effect a death to studie on (B2).

> [p. 191] Breton's Reason, like his nightingale, is mute; Shakespeare's regains its voice.
> Thus, if we must have a specific source for the opening stanzas of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,' I would think that not Chaucer or Ovid, certainly not Lactantius, and not even Roydon, but Nicholas Breton wrote the poem which exerted the most direct influence. . . . However, I see no reason for restricting any poet to a single influence. Even a direct dependence upon Breton would not rule out Shakespeare's being influenced at the same time by others. Knowledge of his use of, say, Hall, or Holinshed, or Cinthio, should serve as sufficient warning that one does not speak of Shakespeare's 'sources' as one does of Chester's. Chester, in long stretches of his poem, actually transcribes, rearranging only as necessary for the verse. Shakespeare, from a point of inception, creates. His first five stanzas, compared to whatever may have been their origins in his literary experience, are musically superior, emotionally and intellectually richer, and his own.

It seems to me that Matchett, in the preceding paragraph, has put the question of literary 'sources' into its proper relationship to the poem.[33] He adds (p. 193) that it was necessary for Shakespeare to move from an avian ceremony, as setting, to "a world of human values" in order to "provide sufficient scope for an appraisal of the loss"; and that "several influences" may have contributed to the shift.

> 'Reason,' as we have seen, turns up specifically in Breton's poem in the immediate context of the passage Shakespeare recalled. Muir and O'Loughlin, though they missed the full implications of their observation, may have been right that Shakespeare's conception was influenced by the dialogue

> in The Phoenix Nest--in which 'the common places of loue' are held by Inconstancy to be the source of 'reason beyond reason,' and by Constancy, of 'reason without reason' (D). As we have seen, it was probably part of Shakespeare's assignment that he deal with the Phoenix and the Turtle in Platonic terms. Whatever the impetus, the fact is that Shakespeare, in his sixth stanza, drops the lesser symbolic birds and begins an anthem to the lost glory, the now-concluded relationship of the Phoenix and the Turtle. . . . The world of birds is left behind and we move into a world of increasingly personified abstractions. The relationship of the Phoenix and Turtle is praised through the intellectual game of extending, as though they were literal truths, the common Platonic metaphors of love. [pp. 193-94]

These "common Platonic metaphors of love," among others, will be discussed in our next chapter.

Source studies are almost always interesting, and often they can uniquely illuminate a work of art; on occasion they can suggest too much, however, or be overstated. It seems to me that Fairchild carries his findings too far when he assumes that likenesses are a reason for existence--that is, that marked similarities in the work at hand to another set of works or a tradition suggest merely that the poet intended to imitate for the sake of an occasion, or to try his skills, and that consequently "The Phoenix and Turtle" is a formal exercise. Another danger is that too much obscure learning can be presumed (T. W. Baldwin): one doubts that Shakespeare was aware of Lactantius; he could have gotten the bird assemblage notion from Ovid or Tacitus, and there are no references in the poem to the beauty of the song of the Phoenix. Ellrodt refers to Laevius and

Macrobius, but without insisting upon their influence. Shakespeare was surely aware of Ovid and Pliny, however, and I lean toward the notion that he knew Ovid's parrot elegy, a suggestion first made by the much-maligned von Mauntz. It is difficult to suppose that the greatest English love poet did not know the Amores, either in the original or (at the very least) in translation. The approach of such writers as Robert Ellrodt is ultimately more conservative, in that they postulate a merging of classical forms and motifs as a result of the Renaissance, and, therefore, the existence of a viable tradition whose presence is insistent. They look to the works of the Renaissance for what I would call "sub-sources." Chaucer, of course, is not easily disposed of, nor should he be. Shakespeare seems to have been aware of Robert Henryson's poem The Testament of Cresseid, accessible in Thynne's edition of Chaucer (1532, 1542, ca. 1550) and in the editions of Stow (1561) and Speght (1598), in all of which it follows Chaucer's Troilus: we have Mr. Kittredge's word for this. From this fact of the writing of Troilus and Cressida, one can assume that the Parlement of Foules was known to Shakespeare, and perhaps, as Benham suggests, The Book of the Duchesse as well.

Max Wolff's belief that Shakespeare used the medieval bestiaries is an undeveloped source possibility,[34] Osbert Sitwell's reference to Marco Polo is unnecessary and trivial. Baldwin's allusions to Erasmus are fetching

because Erasmus edited Lactantius, and Baldwin skillfully builds up an aura of phoenix-knowledge available (indeed insistently so) at the grammar school level: but I am unconvinced. And it would be far-fetched to think that Shakespeare was aware of the Anglo-Saxon Phoenix poem (see Appendix) based on Lactantius;--no one has suggested it. The evil associations of the owl were too prominent in folklore to require a source. Shakespeare's use of the Neo-Platonic eye-contact commonplace received fuller expression in Venus and Adonis, and could have come from a variety of sources: Ficino and Castiglione are likely enough. Benham's tracing of Chaucer imagery to Alain de Lille is useful in the case of the owl and swan. F. T. Prince thinks, insofar as the Phoenix and Turtle are concerned, that the most relevant source of Shakespeare's poem is Chester's, and that the funeral of Cock Robin has associative links to the funeral of the two birds. (Bonnard among others also refers to Cock Robin's funeral.) Robert Ellrodt offers some parallel poems by Sidney, William Smith, and Sir Edward Dyer; his references to poems by Pontanus, Thomas Lodge, Sir John Davies and Giles Fletcher are new in this connection. Ellrodt's many Donne parallels will be taken up in Chapter Four.

One recognizes, of course, that the Roydon and Breton poems are likely contemporary sources. Matchett, however, usefully reminds us (p. 188 n.) that "the threne, the poem's culmination, is precisely that portion which has not

been discussed in terms of literary parallels." But it seems rather clear that Shakespeare, in Matchett's words, "may have been influenced by various sources in getting under way and in explaining the relationship which was his subject"; and if so, the only questions are,--how many sources did he use, and which ones? No one can say with certainty, and even the extant source studies are incomplete. For example, Tacitus was the first to write (Annales VI, 28) that the Phoenix on its flight to Heliopolis is accompanied by a flock of other birds--"multo ceterarum volucrum comitatu novam faciem mirantium." No one has yet suggested Tacitus as a literary source, although we take for granted Shakespeare's interest in Roman history. Moreover, there was considerable folk-knowledge of the birds gathered for the obsequies, and one can point to no 'source' with certainty. I tend to think that the origin of the assemblage itself was Ovid's Amores.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1]There are scores of critical suggestions concerning the poem's imagery and the symbolical roles and significations of the birds. Not all of them can be treated specifically here, but the reader is referred to Rollins, pp. 323-331 of the New Variorum edition (1938); F. T. Prince, the Arden edition of The Poems (London, 1960), pp. 179-83; James C. Maxwell, ed., The Poems (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 220-22; and Edward Hubler, ed., Shakespeare's Songs and Poems (New York, 1959), pp. 318-23.

[2]Baldwin probably means that the Metamorphoses was a common grammar school text, surely not the Ars Amatoria; or the Amores, wherein (II. vi) Ovid's playful elegy on the death of Corinna's pet parrot appears, with its several startling likenesses to Shakespeare's poem; see vs. 49-62 especially. Grant Showerman (Ovid, Heroides and Amores, Cambridge, Mass., 1963) in the Loeb bilingual version (pp. 401-403) translates these lines as follows: "At the foot of a hill in Elysium is a leafy grove of dark ilex, and the moist earth is green with never-fading grass. If we may have faith in doubtful things, that place, we are told, is the abode of the pious winged bird, and from it impure fowl are kept away. There far and wide feed the harmless swans and the long-lived phoenix, bird ever alone of its kind; there the bird of Juno spreads for her own eye her plumage, and the winsome dove gives kisses to her eager mate. Our parrot, welcomed among them to this woodland seat, attracts to himself by his words the feathered faithful." If Shakespeare knew Ovid's poem, he might have had in mind the parrot as "the bird of loudest lay," whereas Chester's poem had obliged him to describe the rites of the Phoenix and Turtle. The tone of Ovid's poem is very different from Shakespeare's, and is in fact flippant, but nonetheless Ovid's concluding lines about the parrot are a formal counterpart to Shakespeare's threne: "His bones are covered by a mound--mound such as fits his body's size--on which a scant stone bears a legend that just fits the space:--'YOU MAY JUDGE FROM MY VERY MONUMENT MY MISTRESS LOVED ME WELL./ I HAD A MOUTH WAS SKILLED IN SPEECH BEYOND A BIRD'" (Showerman, p. 403). Ovid's role in the promulgation of the phoenix myth was central; see Appendix to this thesis.

[3]Baldwin thinks "the bird of loudest lay" is the new Phoenix; therefore the Phoenix "has song" in Shakespeare's poem. He quotes from Lactantius (Plantin, 1570), pp. 551 ff.; --in the de ave Phoenice of Lactantius, the verses quoted are 35-50: see the Appendix to this thesis. With regard to the bird's song, there are references to it in Herodotus and Philostratus; only Lactantius, however, describes its matchless beauty.

[4]Lactantius, vs. 155-58.

[5]Catullus wrote two poems concerning Lesbia's sparrow, normally numbered 2 and 3 in collections. Number 2 is addressed to the living bird, number 3 is an elegy upon its death. The latter is a mock elegy, but it has serious overtones.

[6]In the Loeb Minor Latin Poets (1934), translated by J. Wight Duff and Arnold M. Duff, the lines appear on pp. 662-63, and are rendered as follows: "Every breed of fowl unites in the assemblage: no bird has thoughts of prey nor yet of fear. Attended by a chorus of winged creatures, she [the Phoenix] flits through the high air, and the band escorts her, gladdened by their pious task." Cf. the Phoenix of Claudius Claudianus (Claudian) in Vol. II (pp. 223-31) of the Loeb Claudian, translated by Maurice Platnauer: while the bird flies to Egypt, "innumerae comitantur aves stipatque volantem alituum suspensa cohors: Birds innumerable accompany him, and whole flocks thereof throng his airy flight. . . . non ferus accipiter, non armiger ipse Tonantis bella movet: commune facit reverentia foedus: Neither the fierce hawk nor the eagle, Jove's own armour-bearer, fall to fighting; in honour of their common master a truce is observed by all."

[7]This is at best a suspect distinction; for the Phoenix is by legend an immortal bird, one which periodically renews itself.

[8]This is an appealing idea, but one thinks of Sir Gurney Benham's article (T.L.S., July 19, 1941, p. 352), next to be discussed below, in which Benham treats the first stanza in the light of Fairchild's 1904 essay: "From his use of the word 'trumpet' it is possible that Shakespeare may have had in mind the graceful and lordly Crane, of the resonant voice, the one bird known always as the 'trumpeter.' In the 'Parlement of Foules,' as Shakespeare would be well aware, he is

'The crane, the geaunt, with his trompes soune.'

To this day a variety of this bird is called 'Golden-breasted Trumpeter' (Psophia crepitans). The crane, though now rare in England, was a fairly common visitor in Shakespeare's time."

[9]See Showerman, pp. 400-401. Although the worthy parrot is dead, writes Ovid,

> vivit edax vultur ducensque per aera gyros
> miluus et pluviae graculus auctor aquae;
> vivit et armiferae cornix invisa Minervae--
> illa quidem saeclis vix moritura novem;
> [Amores II. vi. 33-36]

That is, in Showerman's translation, "the greedy vulture lives on, and the kite that traces circles through the air, and the daw, the harbinger of rain; the raven [cornix], too, hated by armour-bearing Minerva, lives on--it, at least, will hardly die after nine generations."

[10]Baldwin might have mentioned Claudian's Phoenix in this connection: "arcanum radiant oculi iubar" (v. 17).

See also the bird/flame reference in The Birds Parliament by Attar, the 12th century Persian poet, who makes the Phoenix the leader in the soul's return to God. (Quoted by I. A. Richards on p. 91 of his essay, "The Sense of Poetry: Shakespeare's The Phoenix and the Turtle," Daedalus, 87, iii [1958], 86-94.)

[11]Cf. Les Essais de Michel de Montaigne, ed. Pierre Villey, 3 vols. (Paris, 1922). Montaigne in his essay "De L'Amitié" (I, xxviii, 235-51) speaks of his love for Estienne de la Boetie as "une chaleur generale et universelle, temperée au demeurant et égale, une chaleur constante et rassize, toute douceur et pollissure, qui n'a rien d'aspre et de poignant" (I, 239). The two friends loved each other before they met, "je croy par quelque ordonnance du ciel"; and Montaigne's reason for loving is, "par ce que c'estoit luy; par ce que c'estoit moy" (I, 242).

[12]Unmentioned by any commentator is the delightful debat known as "The Owl and the Nightingale," written by an unknown poet in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, with its frequent references (by the nightingale) to the owl's evil reputation. The Middle English version is conveniently found on pp. 2-27 of Early Middle English Verse and Prose, ed. J. A. W. Bennett and G. V. Smithers (Oxford, 1966), and a modernized version appears on pp. 35-46 of Medieval English Verse and Prose by Roger S. Loomis and Rudolph Willard (New York, 1948). In the Loomis and Willard version, the nightingale tells the owl, "Thou singest where some man will die;/ Always thou bodest evil nigh" (vs. 1151-52), and wills that "Evil befall the messenger/ Who comes but when mishaps occur,/ And only tales of misery brings,/ And always speaks of wretched things" (vs. 1169-72). Because the owl knows witchcraft, thinks the nightingale, "thou art under curse" (v. 1313). One might put forth this poem as another Chaucer source; but more interesting, in our connection, is that soon the nightingale "began to trill/ And sang so blithely and so shrill/ That she was heard both far and near./ At once around her did appear/ Throstle and woodpecker and thrush/ And divers birds from tree and bush" (vs. 1655-60). The irritated owl remarks (v. 1672), "Thou summonest a host, it seems!" The owl says he could summon his own friends, "All those birds whose bills are hooked,/ And talons are right sharp and crooked,/ My kindred are they, one and all,/ And will come gladly if I call./ The

cock himself, who well can fight,/ Must naturally uphold my right./ For both of us have voices bright" (vs. 1675-81). These are birds of "tyrant wing"; and on the basis of the earlier identifications, the nightingale as well as the cock are candidates for "bird of loudest lay." At dawn the wren arrives to succor the nightingale, the former a bird who "had so good and shrill a voice/ her song caused many to rejoice" (vs. 1721-22). I do not suggest that Shakespeare knew the poem (though Chaucer may have), simply that it is clear that the putting forth of "sources" can go on almost indefinitely.

[13]Chapman, of course, was one of the contributors to Love's Martyr. I have not seen this book; but perhaps a diligent search of Chapman's translations would disclose other "sources." If he and Shakespeare were on speaking terms, one thinks, Chapman could have suggested all the imagery of Shakespeare's first five stanzas over a glass of sherry.

[14]The sexual association makes more sense.

[15]As does Benham, who, after all, may have been unaware of Fairchild's essay.

[16]SQ, VI (1955), 356-58.

[17]"Twentieth Century Studies in Shakespeare's Songs, Sonnets, and Poems." Pages 25-30 are devoted to "The Phoenix and Turtle."

[18]See pp. 350-55 of Fairchild's essay, cited above.

[19]It is by no means certain that Roydon wrote the prose dialogue. H. E. Rollins edited The Phoenix Nest in 1931, and in his introductory pages (xix-xx) he remarks that "in certain manuscripts Dr. Richard Eedes is named as the author of the prose dialogue between Constancy and Inconstancy (24.2) . . . . Dr. Eedes is well known, and his claim to the dialogue may perhaps be accepted."

[20]That is, the Phoenix is only peripherally present at the obsequies and is not integrally a participant. No commentator has yet mentioned the fact that Roydon's is a fourth-rate poem with some ludicrous verses, and that Shakespeare is unlikely to have chosen it as a model for that reason. It is on a level with Chester's work, but Shakespeare may have been committed to follow Chester.

[21]William A. Ringler, Jr., ed., The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney (Oxford, 1962), p. 225.

[22]Ellrodt (n. 18) cites, respectively, "'De Phoenice ave et de Amanti' in Pontani Carmina, ed. Soldati (Florence,

1902), II, 350; Lodge's Phillis (1593), XXV; Fletcher's Licia (1593), XV; Drayton's Ideas Mirrour (1594), 'Amours' 17 and 32. Drayton's alone have been previously cited."

[23]Implicit, too, is the "dying" analogy; the lovers "die" together as they consummate their love.

[24]See Smith's Sonnet XXIII and Roydon's Astrophil.

[25]Ellrodt notes that "the same contradiction appears in the history of the Phoenix myth. The bird was first associated with Venus in the Pterygion Phoenicis of Laevius, some lines of which have been preserved in the Ars Grammatica of Charisius (IV, 6) and the Saturnalia of Macrobius (III, 8, 3), both available to the Elizabethans. On the development of the virginity symbol, see [Jean Hubaux and Maxime Leroy, Le Mythe du Phénix dans les littératures Grecque et Latine (Liège, 1939)], pp. 3, 113-15."

[26]Refrain from "Epithalamion Made at Lincolnes Inne." See The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne, ed. Charles M. Coffin (New York: Modern Library, 1952), pp. 168-71.

[27]Ellrodt (pp. 105-106), for the first time in connection with Love's Martyr, mentions Le Phoenix de Jan Edouard du Monin, published in Paris, 1585. The work is not put forth as a source, but rather as an illustration of "how freely the Renaissance mind could range in the field of symbolism"; du Monin's is "the most ambitious philosophical poem inspired by the Phoenix myth," in Ellrodt's opinion.

[28]See Canzoniere, 185, 321; Pontani Carmina; "Eridanus," I, xi; Ideas Mirrour, "Amour 6"; Ronsard, "Panégyrique de la Renomée" in Oeuvres, ed. Vagany (Paris, 1923), IV, 419-20.

[29]See Hubaux-Leroy, pp. 52, 58, 128-29.

[30]"Lactantius," notes Ellrodt, "indeed asserted that 'the self was not the same' when he wrote: 'est eadem sed non eadem, quae est ipsa nec ipsa est.' But, unlike Shakespeare, he did not really call in question the principle of identity for the conceit only applied to the bird reborn from its ashes, a wonder in natural history but no contradiction in the realm of logic and ontology."

[31]This is not precisely true--Fairchild (p. 347) thought that the last thirteen stanzas, which include the threne, were adaptations of "the emblem literature and conceptions of Shakespeare's period." It is true, however, that the early stanzas (1-5) have been given the greatest attention by source theorists, the next eight (6-13)

finishing a distant second. The Threnos is Shakespeare's own conception, but I think it has something remotely to do with the way Ovid ends his parrot elegy (Amores, II, 6).

[32]This seems far-fetched.

[33]J. C. Maxwell, editor of The Poems (Cambridge, 1966), says bluntly (p. xxviii) that "literary sources are hard to find." See his related survey, pp. xxviii-xxix.

[34]See the Appendix to this thesis, however, and note 15, which refers to the Bestiary (c. 1121) of the Anglo-Norman poet Philippe de Thaun. De Thaun relied heavily on Ysidorus and the early Physiologus.

CHAPTER FOUR

CRITICAL AND "DRAMATIC" INTERPRETATIONS

In this chapter we shall be examining (1) critical studies of "The Phoenix and Turtle" that consider its relationship to the intellectual environment of the period; for example, to such staples as "platonism" in its many forms, courtly love, scholastic theology, and the like. The reader will also find that certain studies and appreciations stressing the poem as a symbolization of spiritual values have been included here: these are the approaches that Professor Heinrich Straumann, in his 1953 monograph Phönix und Taube, calls "idealistic" because they have to do with Shakespeare's symbolization of the eternal union of beauty and truth in love. We shall then examine (2) the question of whether or not to assign "The Phoenix and Turtle" to the "metaphysical" style of John Donne; in short, after having examined the question of allegory (Chapter Two) and the influence of literary conventions (Chapter Three), we shall consider with some thoroughness the modal nature of the piece, after an examination of its spiritual, philosophical, theological and ideal aspects. Finally, after summarizing studies in which there is an attempt to relate the poem to currents of thought extant in

the period, and to contemporary poetic styles, we shall consider (3) what one may call the "dramatic interpretations"--those which identify matters of content and style in the poem and relate them to similar concerns in Shakespeare's plays.

I

Few of the pre-1938 articles and editions summarized by Rollins offer detailed studies of the poem's reflection of the platonic and ideal.

> In 1879 the distinguished poet, [Sidney] LANIER (Shakspere and his Forerunners, 1902, I, 94 f.) . . . admired 'Shakspere's singular threnody . . . where the Phoenix represents constancy . . . and the Turtle-dove represents true love. . . . [p. 569] [J. O.] HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS (Outlines, 1882, p. 126) referred to the obsequies of the phoenix and turtle-dove subservient to the delineation of spiritual union. . . . [p. 573] In the Shrine, May 1902, pp. 34-37--[Charles] DOWNING developed his 1890 thesis so as to give an abstruse explanation of the poem in terms of Shakespeare's own philosophy: . . . 'The Phoenix is symbol of the Ideal, and the turtle symbol of the Idealist . . . the Phoenix is his Ideal also, and . . . Shakespeare sees himself in the Turtle . . . . Shakespeare had not only an Ideal to which he was devoted, but . . . he thought much and long about it . . . . [p. 574] An Ideal thus constituted is the perfect, all-comprehensive, absolute Ideal of the human spirit. . . . [p. 570] [George] WYNDHAM (ed. 1898, p. 258) thought it 'impossible to understand exactly what these poems [in Chester's book] are about. But it is interesting to note that they all contain attacks on Time and that they all draw on the catch-words of Platonism.' . . . [Edward] DOWDEN, editing the Poems in 1903, wrote (p. lxi): 'Shakspere, like his fellow-poets, endeavours to do justice to the prescribed theme; his general intention is to celebrate the decease of two chaste lovers, who were perfectly united in an ideal passion; but he omits one motive of which Marston makes much--the birth of the new phoenix, ideal Love, from the

> ashes of the chaste and impassioned birds. . . . [p. 565] [George] SAINTSBURY (C.H.E.L., 1910, V, 262) [says that] 'The extreme metaphysicality of parts of it . . . [as ll. 37 f.] is by no means inconceivable in the Shakespeare of Love's Labour Lost and of some of the Sonnets . . . . [p. 572] [Carleton] BROWN (ed. 1913, p. xxvi) is of the opinion that in Shakespeare's verses 'one detects the influence of . . . the Platonic theories of the Renaissance.' . . . [p. 565] Totally unexpected is the rhapsody of [J. M.] MURRY in 1922 (Discoveries, 1924, pp. 22-26, 43), where idolatry of Shakespeare reaches its apex: ['There is] one sole poem in which Shakespeare's inspiration seems strangely akin to Shelley's. The Phoenix and the Turtle is platonic and mystical; it can be compared to Shelley's Sensitive Plant. . . . [However,] in spite of all apparent similarity of conception, the quality of Shakespeare's poem is absolutely different from that of anything Shelley wrote. Shakespeare is secure and serene; in his poem we can detect no tremor of the agitation by which Shelley is incessantly disturbed. . . . On the face of it, [the poem] is a requiem over the death of a phoenix and a turtledove, who are the symbols of a love made perfect by refinement from all earthly passion and become virginal. . . . . [p. 566] But the poem floats high above the plane of intellectual apprehension . . . . And in the poet's own imagination it is Reason itself which makes and chants the dirge, Reason baffled by the sight of perfect individuality in perfect union. . . . For reasons which evade expression in ordinary speech, The Phoenix and the Turtle is the most perfect short poem in any language. It is pure poetry in the loftiest and most abstract meaning of the words . . . . 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.'

There is little to be learned from these treatments. "For a parallel to Murry's enthusiasm," writes Rollins (p. 566), "one must turn to the Hindu critic, Shahani, who is quoted on pp. 578-580, below." (It will be remembered from our Chapter One that Ranjee in 1931 believed John Fletcher to be the real author of "The Phoenix and Turtle.")

The following is from Rollins' p. 578:

> RANJEE [R. G. Shahani] (Towards the Stars, 1931) writes exuberantly of the merits of the poem. It has (pp. 11 f.) 'supreme poetic quality. . . . This poem concentrates as in a dew-drop the mellow philosophy of a life-time's devotion.' . . . Finally (pp. 59-62), 'The first thing that impresses me about the poem is its fearless, uncompromising assurance. It is a brave poem. There is nothing quite like it in all English literature. . . . The elusive Platonism of the poem is another of its precious features.'

And yet, there is more here than mere appreciation. True, Towards the Stars contains such inconsistencies as Shahani's remark (p. 47) that the difficult stanza 16 "is perfectly clear" to him, "but directly an attempt is made to translate it into the dialect of thought called common-sense, all meaning vanishes. The poet has expressed his idea simply and perfectly." Rollins (p. 580) considers Ranjee's interpretation "altogether impressionistic and subjective," and concludes his summary thus:

> Various phrases are said to be derived from scholasticism. For example (p. 42), l. 32 'shows kinship in thought with the dialect of Trinitarian Doctrine. It means: duality transcended into unity'; while (p. 44) 'the words "Property was thus appalled" mean that there was a logical conflict with the very concept of "proprium." Existence in its metaphysical aspect was scandalised at this impossible condition.' Other words 'are taken from alchemy.'

I consider these to be worthwhile observations; and it is a fact that a number of later commentators follow much the same tack as Shahani. (We shall discuss, below, Ranjee's mature views of the poem, as expressed in his 1946 essay.) In our Chapter Two, we summarized and discussed G. Wilson Knight's The Mutual Flame (1955); Knight also wrote about

the poem in 1931 and 1932, relating the poem to the dramas, and we shall be giving these earlier views attention later in this Chapter. We must, however, include here a portion of Knight's discussion of the poem in "The Shakespearian Aviary" (Appendix A, VI [p. 324] to The Shakespearian Tempest [London, 1932]):

> 'Mutual flame'--fire imagery is powerful here: so later we have love 'shining' or 'flaming' (33, 35), 'stars of love' (51), 'cinders' (55). And the theme here is clearly the offering up of differentiation, slain on the altar of love: 'twain' is resolved by love into 'one,' there are 'two distincts' without 'division' (one of Shakespeare's usual tempest words); 'number' itself is 'slain' (25-8); 'space' and 'distance' are transcended (29-30); each lover was the very being of the other, the 'self' indeed no longer itself; the 'single,' or simple duality of 'nature' was now neither 'one' nor 'two' (33-40). Not merely is dualism transcended into unity, but rather the unity-dualism antinomy is itself transcended. Before such a state, reason fails, 'confounded,' as it sees 'division' melted into unity (42), the 'twain,' still twain, yet now also a 'concordant one' (45-6), a single music--we remember 'the true concord of well-tuned sounds' in a similar context (Sonnet VIII). Such is the mystery of this love-death intercourse. Even 'truth' and 'beauty' falsify the intuition since 'truth' and 'beauty' are buried with the Phoenix and the Turtle (62-4). They are but mortal categories: yet the very death of 'truth' and 'beauty' creates a third unknown immortality. So fine a mystic paradox vitalizes this bird-song of tragic joy.

Knight's emphasis on the transcendent is well met. And, to quote Rollins (p. 565),

> [G. H. W.] RYLANDS (in Granville-Barker and Harrison's Companion to Shakespeare Studies, 1934, p. 111) sees in the P. & T. 'the quality of a proposition in Euclid and of a piece of music. It is pure, abstract, symbolical and complete.

These are the views Straumann calls "idealistic." Straumann's label, coined in 1953, has a certain inclusive accuracy; but, as we shall see, it fails to describe the more sophisticated studies of the poem one encounters at a later date, studies whose emphasis and attack are similar but which display critical insight, and scholarship, instead of casual attention to obvious features. For example, in Some Versions of Pastoral (London, 1950), a book first published in 1935, William Empson at one point approaches the pastoral concept through his notion of "incarnation," a willingness to take personification seriously, often involving a generalization of hero-concepts and a localization of Nature ideas.

> [p. 80] Mr. James Smith, in an excellent essay (Scrutiny III, No. 2), said that the metaphysical conceit was always built out of the immediate realisation of a philosophical problem such as that of the One and the Many. I [p. 81] should agree with this, but I think it was nearly always arrived at in the way I am trying to describe. The supreme example of the problem of the One and the Many was given by the Logos who was an individual man. In all those conceits where the general is given a sort of sacred local habitation in a particular, so that this particular is made much more interesting than all similar particulars (absolutely more interesting, but with a rival suggestion of wit), and the others are all dependent on it, there is an implied comparison to the sacrificial cult-hero, to Christ as the Son of Man. To do this indeed was hardly more than to take personification seriously; it is incarnation already.

> If ever any beauty I did see,
> Which I desir'd, and got, 'twas but a dreame of thee.
>
> And therefore what thou wert, and who,
> I bid Love aske, and now,
> That it assume thy body, I allow,
> And fixe itself in thy lip, eye, and brow.

This at once leads to the dependence of the world upon the person or thing treated as a personification: 'This member of the class is the whole class, or its defining property: this man has a magical importance to all men.' If you choose an important member the result is heroic; if you choose an unimportant one it is pastoral. . . . [p. 138] Nobody pretends without purpose, so it is a useful trick of language. . . . [In love poetry of a sort] the root of the joke is that a physical desire drives the human creature to a spiritual one. . . . the process at its simplest involves desire and detachment, nature and sophistication; levels mysteriously interrelated which a sane man separates only for a joke. . . . [p. 139] Two ideas are united which in normal use are contradictory, and our machinery of interpretation so acts that we feel there is a series of senses in which they could be more and truly combined. This is clearest in what Mr. James Smith defined as metaphysical conceits, those that genuinely sum up a metaphysical problem. The top and next steps in the Aristotelian staircase about form and matter, for example, would be pure form and the material, already form, which it informs. Donne is using this when he calls each lover's soul the body of the other's; the fact that we do not believe that the lovers are in this condition does not keep us from a feeling of belief in the conceit, because we believe in the staircase which it defines; the lovers appear as conscious of the staircase and higher up on it than most. . . . A good case of a poem with some doubt about the staircase it requires is provided by Shakespeare's Phoenix and Turtle; it depends on the same ideas as Donne's First Anniversary, but gets very different feelings out of them. The entire flatness of the use of the convention makes it seem first an engagingly simpleminded piece of 'idealism' and then, since the union of the birds is likely after all to be of a simple kind, an expression of cultivated and good-humoured sensuality; this does not by any means destroy the pathetic dignity of the close. There is a suggestion that the author finds the convention fascinating but absurd, which he shows mainly by his sound-effects. This seems to me intentional, very delightful, and not a thing that Chapman (who has been suggested [p. 140] as the author)[1] could possibly have done. It is clear here that once you cease to impose a staircase the thing shifts from heroic to mock-pastoral. Some such idea needs to be added to

> Mr. James Smith's account (perhaps he would call it obvious) because otherwise there seems no way of putting in a judgement of value; on his account a metaphysical conceit is essentially a vivid statement of a puzzle, and in practice it is more.

It is, of course, more. But Empson has not provided the apparatus necessary to isolate the differences between a subjective critical response and one which deals with the criteria inherent in a recognized style. That is, he has classified and assigned "The Phoenix and Turtle" on the basis of his apprehension of the poem's tone, and not on its functional and modal traits. Perhaps this is the burden of his distinction in his final remarks; but if so, they are obfuscations of the obvious, and Empson is telling us here that we must be more subjective in our responses to a form. This is what Mr. James Smith would find "obvious."

There are illustrative references to "The Phoenix and Turtle" in The Intent of the Critic (Princeton, 1941). Editor Donald Stauffer (in his introduction, pp. 16-19) discusses the obligation of the critic, and on p. 18 he remarks that "parallels or varying shades of meaning in the works of contemporaries or of artists of like tempers may make more precise the thought expressed in the poem. Shakespeare uses the word 'true' in his poem (as, indeed, he uses it elsewhere) more to suggest eternal loyalty inspired by love than to suggest the veritas of the philosophers." Stauffer thinks that the following note concerning Truth might make "The Phoenix and Turtle" more significant:—

"Compare John Donne's 'The Dreame,' the entire poem, but especially in the first stanza the lines:

> 'Thou art so truth, that thoughts of thee suffice
> To make dreames truths; and fables histories.'"

It is really with the mid-1940's that a body of vital scholarly and critical attention to the poem begins to accumulate. It appears that perhaps four or five men, according to their statements, were thinking of somewhat the same interpretation of the poem at the same time, although the dates of their published essays cover roughly a decade beginning with 1944. It occurred to a non-scholar, the Anglican clergyman William Norman Guthrie,[2] that Shakespeare in the poem has in mind "the old doddering scholastic logomachy" (p. 13). Almost certainly, Guthrie had not read Empson's Some Versions of Pastoral, where Empson comes close to the notion,--but in another connection than "The Phoenix and Turtle."[3] Guthrie begins by affirming the need for a reasonable religion; and passes, by way of illustration, to his own experience with Shakespeare's poem: he had read an "exciting anonymous critic" (p. 11) in the T.L.S. of October 12, 1922 [John Middleton Murry] who had praised the poem, and had re-read his own Oxford Book of Verse by that light. But according to [Murry's] view--"absolute poetry is the direct embodiment through symbols that are necessarily dark, of a pure, comprehensive and satisfying experience, which we may call, if we please, an immediate intuition of the hidden nature of things.'"

> [p. 11] The remainder of [Murry's] closing paragraph is extraordinarily eloquent. But I note that by its standard the Nicene Creed should be reckoned supreme poetry of 'unearthly purity.' The paradoxes of Scholastics, of Boehme, of Giordano Bruno the Nolan, of Hegel, are all poetic super-masterpieces. No test is even suggested to exclude a paralyzing rebus concoction by some ingenious hoaxer!

These inferences (none stated by Murry) lead Guthrie to seek out a literary scholar, who gives Guthrie "a recent annotated edition" (p. 11).

> Then I discovered that the familiar Quiller-Couch reprint in my Oxford Book of Verse had blandly omitted a stanza, with no apologetic dots or asterisk, which stanza reads:
>
> > Two distincts, division none!
> > Number there in Love was slain.
> > So they loved as love in twain
> > Had the essence but in one.[4]
>
> Well, well, here was the long hunted clue to the poem's inmost meaning. Shakespeare had applied to the perfect lovers whom he conventionally bemoaned, the orthodox scholastic doctrine of the Blessed Trinity:
>
> > Three distincts, division none:
> > Number there in Love was slain.
>
> The 'wonder' (miracle) recorded in 'Hearts remote, yet not asunder: Distance, and no space was seen 'Twixt this turtle and his queen' is the dogmatic miracle of Father and Holy Spirit in union without confused identity, difference and distinction without essential separability.
>
> No wonder Shakespeare can record the cry of Reason 'How true a twain seemeth this concordant One!'
>
> The difference however between the bemoaned lovers and mystically united Father and Holy Spirit--appears in the poem's third section entitled 'Threnos.'
>
> > Leaving no posterity:--
> > 'Twas not their infirmity,
> > It was married chastity.

> Hence the elegy enigmatically concludes that 'Truth may seem, but cannot be,' while convening all lovers everywhere of Truth and Beauty:
>
> For these dead birds [to] sigh a prayer.

Guthrie's conclusions have to do with a modus operandi for the administrators of his faith; he plainly thinks that the mystical and suprarational aspects of the Christian religion will be the ones best perpetuated, whereas,

> [p. 12] the effort to get an abstractly rational adequacy for me into the quintessential statement of a creative faith seems doomed in advance and forever after to failure. . . . The supreme statement of any living religion must be super-rational. . . . [The Phoenix and Turtle] were double still, but they felt fused, which is different from being either single only or double. Now this very psychological paradox is what the Nicene Creed undertook thirteen centuries before to affirm concerning the Godhead. Our arithmetical notions just don't apply to socially and supersocially working doctrines of God. 'Number there in Love' is 'slain.'

And yet Guthrie does not conclude that Shakespeare's is a plainly Christian statement.

> [p. 13] So then, we conclude, as metaphysical poet, bold forerunner of John Donne the great dean of St. Paul's ere the annus mirabilis, Shakespeare performed this supreme feat of condensed verse expression, for whose mystery he left the key in a stanza cavalierly removed by the editor of the Oxford anthology.

According to his own account, Guthrie was fascinated by the opacity of the poem, and when Murry wrote that it was the most perfect short poem in any language, he gave it attention unusual in a theologian; when he belatedly saw the Christian nexus, it prompted his article concerning other ecclesiastical matters. He assigns the poem to the "metaphysical" style. Guthrie the non-scholar can be excused

certain inadequacies; he has unwittingly charted a course for later scholars.

In 1946, Ranjee's essay appeared.[5] It is an amplification and refinement of views already expressed in Towards the Stars (1931), some of them most perceptive.

> The aptness of this pagan legend [of the Phoenix] as an emblem of the mysteries of death and resurrection made a powerful impression on the faithful in the days of the medieval Church. But symbolist interpretation went further. The Phoenix was identified with the Virgin Mother. But meantime the anatomy of the bird had almost changed beyond recognition. Her one heart . . . had become two, but two that were still conjoined as if they somehow belonged together. . . . Here we have the first attempt that converted the pagan legend into something worthy of a niche on the high altar of a human sacrament--the story of the mystical dedication--two hearts that beat as one.
>
> The image was now ready for the acceptance of the Church and the gods. So it comes about that we can read in a Christian writer of the late sixteenth century such words as
>
> > These are the hearts of Jesus and his mother
> > So linkt in one, that one without the other
> > Is not entire.
> > Geoffrey Whitney, 'Choice of Emblems,' 1586.
>
> But this interpretation or translation, however worthy of our reverence, is not so easy to grasp as the more mundane application to two souls--the earthly bond that does exist (however rarely) on the despised human level. [p. 99]

Shahani throughout takes care to link the poem to pagan notions, some of them inherent in early Christianity; something of a mystic himself, he prefers the mystical and finds it congenially obvious; like most mystics, he has difficulty stating it plainly. The 1946 essay, however, is worthwhile and not as foolishly appreciative as Rollins

found Towards the Stars to be; and of course Shahani now thinks Shakespeare (not John Fletcher) wrote the poem. The September 7 installment reviews some scholarly opinion concerning the poem, and promises the interpretation that appears in the September 21, 1946 issue of Notes and Queries. Ranjee consistently flirts with the Christian aspects of the poem only to disdain them. For example, he refers (p. 101) to "the gracious [italics mine] import of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'"; however (p. 121), "There is no trace of Christian theology in the poem but a lovely saturation with pagan thought." In stanza 4, according to Shahani, the intention of the "session" (v. 9) is clearly indicated.

> It is the perfection of the requiem. The priest shall be the swan in its snowy plumage--fitting in such a celebrant. (Whatever defunctive music means according to dictionaries, whether funeral music or something else, it ought to mean music for the passing soul. The Church of Rome understands this well, and joins its paeans with the welcome that meets the soul at the portals of heaven.) [Stanza 6 quoted.] Now we face our problem--our threnody--our ode of lamentation. The divinity of love and constancy has passed beyond our ken. . . . But it is not two who have gone--it is one, and this is a sacrifice that the gods must receive at the hands of Fate. [p. 121]

Exactly how "the gods" and "Fate" enter in at this point is never explained. It appears to be a resolute reminder, on Shahani's part, that there is no room for a Christian interpretation.

> . . . the difficulty of interpretation really begins with the stanza [7] I am about to quote. . . . The word 'essence' is used in a special sense here. General literature borrowed it from Scholasticism. It means 'spring of existence.' Again, the words 'distinct' and 'division' in

> their antithesis are a feature of Scholastic thought. Like object and [p. 122] shadow they suggest thoroughgoing dependence: one can't be without the other. Finally, the last line shows kinship in thought with the dialect of Trinitarian Doctrine. It means: duality transcended into unity. [Stanza 8 quoted.]
>
> . . . The reference here is to sympathetic communion. This is a doctrine that is universal, though of course implicit, among all primitive peoples--a belief that things that have been intimately associated are mystically bound together even after separation and far removal. The fates of the two parts are interlinked. So distance and space do not enter into the question.[6]

After some attention to the diction of Stanza 9, Ranjee discusses Stanza 10, verse 37 in particular:

> 'Property' is a severely technical word. It suggests the scholastic doctrine which moderns might describe as a doctrine about quality. In strictness of subtle thought it is nothing of the kind. It had to do with existence in its metaphysical aspect. We are reminded of the medieval stream of thought that proceeded from the 'Isagoge' of Porphyry (fourth century A. D.?). Very likely there is an allusion here to the doctrine of the categories. This betrays acquaintance with the mode of thought--conventionalised Aristotelianism--then current in Europe.[7] So the words 'property was thus appalled' mean that there was a logical conflict with the very concept of 'proprium.' Existence in its metaphysical aspect was scandalised at this impossible condition.
>
> [p. 122] The paradoxes in our poem not only corelate with the subtleties of Scholastic thought but also with the stranger dreams of Hegelian speculation.
>
> Reason, in itself confounded,
> Saw division grow together,
> To themselves, yet either neither,
> Simple were so well compounded.
>
> Reason here means human intellect. The words 'simple' and 'compounded' are taken from alchemy. Now what does the stanza mean? Human intellect was perplexed by the paradox, 1 + 1 = 1. (This is so when the units are globules of mercury.) They were so conjoined that neither could distinguish itself from the other. (This is something

> like the case of identical twins.) They were two things but so mingled that distinction of parts was impossible. (All this is the language of the alchemists: the terms indicate acquaintance with the conceptions of physiology and alchemy.)
>
> [Stanza 12 quoted] Love has a logic of its own, if it should ever deign to mechanise its miracles into a technique. The principle of contradiction has no place in its deliverances. Even Hegel saw the truth of this on the torturous level of mere intellectualism--a level that love will have none of. For love speaks the language of the gods; and we are assured on good authority that the gods never reason. They despise the dialect of dialectics. [Stanza 13 quoted.]
>
> Reason, unable to understand the great paradox, makes a song of lamentation to honour the tragic memory of the perfect pair. [Stanza 14 quoted].
>
> All that we have loved and reverenced is a mere packet of ashes. This is the general sense of the stanza [14], but the words 'enclosed' and 'cinders' may conceal a subtle allusion to some theory of the relation between a combustible body and the ashes (cinis). This is quite possible in a period when alchemical research was rampant. . . . [pp. 122-123]
>
> We may . . . mention that many of the early Christian saints are credited with the same virtue of married chastity [that one finds in Stanza 16]. It is a union of souls that the poet describes. Marriage to him is a sacrament. . . .
>
> [The lines of Stanza 17] concentrate in one perfect crystal the mellow wisdom of a lifetime. The obvious scepticism of the poet is not untouched by a fitting reverence for the verities. He decries the futile identification of appearance with reality. . . . [p. 123]

One finds certain features of Shahani's essay unsettling. For one, it is neither fish nor fowl. We shall soon be discussing J. V. Cunningham's essay on the poem, and it will be found that Cunningham at least refers to the Aristotelian St. Thomas, that most synthetic writer, and ties many particularities of the poem to dogma. Whereas Ranjee's approach to the poem appears to swing between

eastern mysticism and a grudging acknowledgement of notions, taken over from paganism, that are fairly standard Christian concepts. He plainly wishes (p. 121) to disavow the Christian ("there is no trace of Christian theology in the poem, but a lovely saturation with pagan thought"); however, he soon speaks (p. 121) of Shakespeare using "defunctive music" as the Catholic Church understands it; of (p. 122) "the dialect of Trinitarian Doctrine"; and wonders (p. 123) if "married chastity" doesn't refer to the same virtue "that many of the early Christian saints are credited with"; marriage to Shakespeare is "a sacrament" (p. 123). I for one wish that Shahani had been openly eastern and discussed the poem as an example of "sympathetic communion" (p. 122); but it is probably true that the mystic takes refuge behind silence and an inability, or unwillingness, to communicate, as Lord Russell has said. (In the essay, Ranjee reproduces his remark from Towards the Stars, "To us the stanza [16] is perfectly clear, but directly an attempt is made to translate it into the dialect of thought called common sense, all meaning vanishes.") Nevertheless, Shahani's essay makes certain contributions. The reference to alchemical terminology is relevant; and so is the comparison to Hegel's notion of the dialectic, whose "staircase" (to use Empson's term) leads to the Absolute Idea, in which only the whole is true. One doubts that Shahani understood Hegel, but he usefully called him into the question. Hegel, because of his spiritual view of the

world, rejected the notion of contradiction in its everyday, factual sense. He was also inordinately fond of the number three. Ranjee stresses duality, but later critics were less shy of the Nicene Creed and perhaps some profited by implications Shahani chose to ignore. Ranjee's is an important essay.

Increasingly, as we have said, critics have sought to relate the poem to the metaphysical style and in particular to its exemplar, John Donne. Cleanth Brooks in The Well Wrought Urn (New York, 1947) turns to the poem after a study of Donne's "The Canonization," during which discussion he points up the importance to the poetic process of paradox, "with its twin concomitants of irony and wonder" (p. 16).

> For us today, Donne's imagination seems obsessed with the problem of unity; the sense in which the lovers become one--the sense in which the soul is united with God. Frequently, as we have seen, one type of union becomes a metaphor for the other. It may not be too far-fetched to see both as instances of, and metaphors for, the union which the creative imagination itself effects. For that fusion is not logical; it apparently violates science and common sense; it welds together the discordant and the contradictory. Coleridge has of course given us the classic description of its nature and power. It 'reveals itself in the balance of reconcilement of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order. . . .' It is a great and illuminating statement, but is a series of paradoxes. Apparently Coleridge could describe the effect of the imagination in no other way.

> Shakespeare, in one of his poems, has given us a description that oddly parallels that of Coleridge. [Stanza 11 quoted] . . . [p. 18] Certainly the poem is an instance of that magic power which Coleridge sought to describe. I propose that we take it for a moment as a poem about that power [of the creative] imagination; [Stanzas 7-8, 10 quoted] . . . . Precisely! The nature is single, one, unified. But the name is double, and today with our multiplication of sciences, it is multiple. If the poet is to be true to his poetry, he must call it neither two nor one: the paradox is his only solution. . . . [p. 19] [I]n Shakespeare's poem, Reason is 'in it selfe confounded' at the union of the Phoenix and the Turtle; but it recovers to admit its own bankruptcy:
>
> Love hath Reason, Reason none,
> If what parts, can so remaine. . . .
>
> and it is Reason which goes on to utter the beautiful threnos with which the poem concludes: [stanzas 14-15, 17-18 quoted]. . . . Having preempted the poem for our own purposes, it may not be too outrageous to go on to make one further observation. The urn to which we are summoned, the urn which holds the ashes of the phoenix, is like the well-wrought urn of Donne's 'Canonization' which holds the phoenix-lovers' ashes: it is the poem itself.

Thus Brooks identifies "The Phoenix and Turtle" with the creative imagination at work in the poetic process itself, all of which subsumes in an important way the rhetorical device we know as paradox. The new-critical emphasis on Coleridge is here well placed.[8] To T. W. Baldwin (Literary Genetics, 1950) "the anthem and the threnos are the usual Platonic subtleties of love and beauty. The love of the phoenix and the turtle was as but one essence in bodies twain, two hearts as one, eyes intermingling, so that Property was appalled and Reason confounded" (p. 374).[9]

The important views of J. V. Cunningham first appeared in Tradition and Poetic Structure (Denver, 1951)[10]

and subsequently in "'Essence' and the Phoenix and Turtle," ELH, XIX, No. 4 (December, 1952), 265-76. How indebted Cunningham is to Shahani, we do not know. But certainly Cunningham has the more muscular and scholarly approach, especially when one considers that he and Shahani are speaking of similar matters. Cunningham commits himself to the specific, whereas Ranjee is vague and desultory. He begins his essay by saying that "the use of some field or system of ideas in the writer's tradition" often serves as a principle of order, serving "as a scheme or paradigm by which material of another order is apprehended"; in this case, "the material of courtly love in Shakespeare's Phoenix and Turtle is treated in terms of scholarly theology" (p. 265).

> The characteristic feature of scholasticism for our purpose is its terminology. The whole system, in fact, may be said to be implicit in the definition of its terms. . . . Consequently, if we find that Shakespeare uses such a scholastic term as 'essence' in its technical sense and in a technical context we may presume not only that he was acquainted with scholastic notions but also that he was capable of thinking and feeling in those terms. [p. 265]

Cunningham then takes up the three occurences of the word "essence" in Shakespeare, the first being the reference to man's "glassy essence" in Measure for Measure, II, ii, 120.

> This is the scholastic notion in a scholastic context: man's essence is his intellectual soul, which is an image of God, and hence is glassy for it mirrors God. . . . It is not irrelevance that makes a phrase poetic. Shakespeare's is poetic in that it initiates a moment's reflection and invites the energy of a linguistic inference by which one sees that the phrase means 'image of

> God' through the ascending aspect of imaging rather than through the more customary descending aspect of being imaged. [p. 266]

This insight and clarification is followed by attention to the second occurrence, in Valentine's speech about Silvia in the Two Gentlemen of Verona (III, i, 170-84), a speech which

> begins on a relatively human level, for the assertion that Silvia is myself and the question, 'What light is light, if Silvia be not seen?' may both be taken sufficiently metaphorically. Nevertheless, Silvia is designated as perfection, for to imagine her present when she is absent is to feed upon the shadow, the image, of perfection. If she were here one would be in the presence of perfection. However, when a Christian of Elizabeth's time comes right down to it, there is only one true perfection, God, and only one set of terms in which to discuss it, the theological language of the Schools. And it is precisely in these terms that Valentine speaks. His language and thought are those, for example, of Hooker, except that Silvia is substituted for God. [p. 267]

Cunningham (p. 267) quotes Hooker (5. 56. 5)[11] to the effect that God's presence in essence is immanent, and essential to the existence (being) of all things. Silvia is equated with Love, perfection, God (p. 268). At this point the Summa Theologica of Aquinas is brought in by Cunningham with reference to l. 182 of Two Gentlemen, III, l.

> Apart from the blasphemy involved, there is only one difficulty in the passage: this resides in the proposition, She is my essence. The proposition is technically incorrect with regard to the relation of creature and Creator in the scholastic system, for it is manifestly false to say that the soul is of the substance of God. Although the soul is a simple form in its essence, it is not its own being but is a being by participation. Therefore, it is not pure act like God (ST, 1.90.1.c. and ad 2). For man is made to the image and likeness of God, but the preposition to signifies only a certain approach, as of

> something at a distance (ST, 1.93.1).[12] [p. 268]

At this point, Neo-Platonic terminology is introduced in a brilliant paragraph that sets the stage for "The Phoenix and Turtle."

> Valentine's relation to Silvia, it is true, conforms in general to the centuries-old scheme of courtly love: the lover is to the beloved as vassal to lord, or if the scheme be construed in Neo-Platonic terms, as it often was, as shadow to substance or as image to archetype. But the commonest and most available source of Neo-Platonic ideas in the sixteenth century was the scholastic doctrine of the Christian God, who is only protected from utter Neo-Platonism by an increasing vigilance in qualification. If one abandons the qualification, locates the infinite Idea in the finite beloved, maintains the theological language of the Schools regarding God's immanence and ceaseless providence and yet ascribes all reality to the Idea to the extent that the lover's essence is the Idea, he arrives at this passage. It is worldly Neo-Platonism [italics supplied], precipitated out of the latent Neo-Platonism of Christian dogma. However, there remain two difficulties for anyone familiar with these schemes of thought; (1) the analogical relationship of the derived and Underived is contradicted by the predication of identity of essence, and (2) the identity of essence takes the special form that the essence of the derived is the Underived.[13] [pp. 268-69]

Cunningham writes (p. 269) that difficulties of this sort "can be understood and their source located in the light of . . . the Phoenix and Turtle." He refers to the opening, "a kind of parliament of fowls," and quotes the seven stanzas (6-12) of the anthem proper. According to Cunningham (pp. 269-70), the poem "concludes with a threne over the urn where their cinders lie, to the effect that Beauty and Truth (that is, Love and Constancy) are now dead, for these were their ideal forms, the substances of

which any subsequent appearances are shadows."

> The central part of the poem [the anthem] quoted above refines in exact, technical, scholastic language the relationship of the lovers. They are Love and Constancy, Beauty and Truth, Phoenix and Turtle. The nature of their love was such that love in each had the essence (the defining principle by which anything that is, is what it is) only in one. Obviously, then, the effect of their love was unitive. But in terms of what scheme of ideas is this union conceived? It is not unlike, of course, the Neo-Platonic union, in which the soul, being reduced to the trace of the One which constitutes its resemblance to it, is absorbed, submerged, and lost in the presence of the One. There is no more distance, no doubleness, the two fuse in one.[14]
>
> But the language here is Latin and has passed, as had the doctrine of Plotinus, through the disputations of the Schoolmen: essence, distincts, division, property, single nature's double name, simple, compounded. Furthermore, the chief point of Shakespeare's poem is lost in the Plotinian formulation: for the central part of the poem consists wholly in the reiteration--line after line as if the poet would have you understand even to exhaustion--of the paradox that though identical the two are distinct; they are both truly one and truly two. Thus, for example, in the Plotinian union there is no interval between the two--And no space was seen--but the contrary element of the paradox--distance--is lacking.[15] [p. 270]

Taking Thomas Aquinas' doctrine on the subject of human love as "sufficiently representative of the scholastic position," Professor Cunningham, in the second part of his essay, paraphrases some of Thomas' major statements concerning union in love. (See ST, 1.37.1; 1-2.28.5; 1-2.28.1 ad 2).

> From this much it is clear how carefully Thomas distinguishes and how painstakingly he points out that the effect of union in love, together with those other related effects which he goes on to discuss--a mutual inherence of one in the other, an ecstatic going out of oneself, and a zealousness

> in appropriating the good which one loves (1-2.28.2-4)--only take place in a certain sense. The love of desire, it is true, does not rest with attaining any external or surface enjoyment of what it loves, but seeks to possess it absolutely, penetrating as if to the very heart of the beloved (1-2.28.2). But it is only as if. For human love admits of no real identification. Though we desire it, if it were attained, one or both would be destroyed.[16]
>
> In Shakespeare's poem, however, the lover is identified with the beloved; the beloved is his essence; they become one and yet neither is annihilated. The lovers are of course destroyed in that they have passed in a mutual flame from this life, but clearly they have only passed into the real life of Ideas from the unreal life of materiality.

Cunningham then returns to Shakespeare's technical use of essence in the Two Gentlemen of Verona (see above), III.i.170-84, and asks (p. 272) if the relation of Valentine to Silvia here is not "that of the Beatific Vision, in which our love of God and God's love for us finds its ultimate fulfilment," thus suggesting a model or paradigm applicable to "The Phoenix and Turtle." He finds that this is not the case, for "even in that last eternal embrace, in which, no longer through a glass darkly, we see the essence of God face to face (ST, 1.12.1: 'We shall see Him as He is.' I Jn. 3:2), there is no absolute identification of essence." To make this point clear, Cunningham translates periphrastically from ST, 3.92.1. c. sub fin. The gist of the distinction is that some cognition of God's form will be necessary in order for us to perceive his presence; but whereas in natural, as distinguished from supernatural things, there is a fusion of form and matter, the presence of God will result in no fusion of the divine

essence and our intellect (in which case divine essence would be really the form of our intellect). To the contrary, there will be a proportion of the divine essence to our intellect on the analogy of form to matter. There will exist a proportionate relationship of the more perfect to the less perfect, like that of form to matter, but the analogy ends there.[17]

In the third, and final, section of his essay, Cunningham returns to Shakespeare's "grimly reiterated paradox" and extracts a reading that is in accord with the poem's "maximum of technical exactitude."

> The doctrine of the poem is not sanctioned by the scholastic doctrine of human love, nor indeed, so far as I know, by the facts of nature. It is not sanctioned by the doctrine of the Beatific Vision. Is there a source in the tradition from which is derived the structure of thought and the technical terms by which it is displayed? There is, in fact, only one model in the tradition[18] for the notion that distinct persons may have only one essence, and that is the doctrine of the Trinity. Not, of course, the Incarnation, for the two Natures (or Essences) of Christ are distinct (ST, 3.2). The relation of lover and beloved in Shakespeare's poem is that of the persons of the Trinity, and the technical language employed is that of scholastic discussion on the subject. With this clue, all the difficulties of the expository part of the poem are resolved, and if it still remains difficult to understand, it is no more difficult than the Trinity.
>
> The principal point of the doctrine of the Trinity in this connection is summed up in Hooker's Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity [5.56.2-3; Works, II, 246-7]:
>
> > The Persons of the Godhead, by reason of the unity of their substance, do as necessarily remain one within another, as they are of necessity to be distinguished one from

> another. . . . And sith they all are but one God in number, one indivisible essence or substance, their distinction cannot possibly admit separation. . . . Again, sith all things accordingly love their offspring as themselves are more or less contained in it, he which is thus the only-begotten, must needs be in this degree the only-beloved of the Father. He therefore which is in the Father by eternal derivation of being and life from him, must needs be in him through an eternal affection of love.

The Father and Son are distinct persons, yet one essence.[19] Furthermore, as the learned Doctors tell us, the Son proceeds from the Father by way of the intellect in that he is the Father's understanding of himself; and the Holy Ghost proceeds from both by way of the will in that He is the mutual love of both. But when anyone understands and loves himself, he is in himself not only through the identity of the subject, but also in the way in which what is understood is in the one who understands, and what is loved is in the lover. Thus the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the reciprocal relation of the Father and Son, is a distinct person, but is at the same time the bond between Them, inasmuch as He is Love (ST, 1.37.1.c and ad 3):

> So they lov'd as love in twain
> Had the essence but in one . . . [pp. 273-74]

In the paragraph last quoted, Cunningham demonstrates his awareness of the important Plotinian and Scholastic tenets, and his command of the differences, as they might apply to "The Phoenix and Turtle." For example, his statement that "the Son proceeds from the Father by way of the intellect in that he is the Father's understanding of himself" calls to mind Plotinus' Nous, but that is not what Cunningham intends to suggest: he has in mind the Scholastic and Christian notion of "the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the reciprocal relation of the Father and Son [as] a distinct

person": the Holy Ghost is "at the same time the bond between Them, inasmuch as He is Love." The personification, Holy Ghost, is most relevant to Cunningham's understanding of the poem because it describes a supernatural love relationship, rather than the more intellectual reflection-analogy governing Plotinus' One, Nous, and the Soul.

Cunningham's final explication (pp. 274-76) is, I think, brilliant:

> In the next line [v. 27]--Two distincts, division none--the terminology is obviously scholastic, and its context is the doctrine of the Trinity. 'To avoid the Arian heresy,' Thomas says, 'we must avoid the terms diversity and difference so as not to take away the unity of essence; we can, however, use the term distinction . . . . So also 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 . . . .' (ST, 1.31.2)
>
> Number there in love was slain, for plurality is always the consequence of a division, as Thomas points out; but the division of a continuum from which springs number, which is a species of quantity, is found only in material things.[20] But number in this sense cannot be applied to God. When numerical terms are used they signify only the things of which they are said, and so we may say one essence, signifying only the essence undivided, and many persons, signifying only those persons and the undividedness of each. (ST, 1.30.3). Hearts remote, yet not asunder repeats the central paradox. Distance, and no space was seen; the Son is co-eternal with the Father in order of time (1.42.2) and hence in order of space (1.42.1, and see 1.81. ad 3). But in them (and in God!) it were a wonder.
>
> The next stanzas are based on the scholastic distinction of proprium and alienum: what is proper is what belongs to the one, but not to the other; what is alien is what belongs to the other, but not to the one. The terms are contraries, and exclude each other. But in the Trinity the relations which constitute the three Persons are their several Properties. Though property is the same as person, yet in the Father and the Son, as

> there is one essence in the two persons, so also there is one property in the two persons (ST, 1.40.1). So also in the Phoenix and Turtle: love so shone between them (and Love is the relationship of the Father and the Son in the Holy Ghost--1.37.2) that the one saw what belonged to him ('his right': suum proprium in the sight of the other; but the other's sight was the instrument by which the second saw reciprocally what belonged to him in the sight of the first. Each was the other's 'mine': meum. No wonder Property was thus appalled: for property is the personification of proprium.
>
> Single nature's double name: Each of the Persons of the Trinity has His proper name, yet they are all of one nature, one essence (1.13; 1.33.2; 1.34.1-2; 1.36.1; and especially 1.39.2-7), and the name God stands of itself for the common nature--hence, Neither two nor one was called.[21]
>
> Reason, in itself confounded,--for reason is the principle of distinction and its method is division--Saw division grow together; each of the two was distinct (To themselves), yet neither one of them was one or the other (yet either neither). And the last line of this stanza repeats again the same paradox, and again by one of the common scholastic dichotomies: Simple were so well compounded. Any separated substance is simple; thus the Phoenix and the Turtle are simples, but are so compounded as to form a simple. Hence, at the final recapitulation of the paradox, Reason confesses its inadequacy to deal with the mystery of love: Love hath reason, reason none/ If what parts can remain unparted (can so remain). [pp. 274-275]

According to Cunningham (p. 276) "The relation of the Phoenix to the Turtle is now clear. . . . The Phoenix and Turtle are distinct persons, yet one in love, on the analogy of the Father and the Son in the Holy Ghost. If the reader does not immediately understand this mystery . . . true Reason is above it and is Love." It is certainly evident that Cunningham knows his Aquinas; and it is perfectly valid for him to equate St. Thomas with the Scholastic position

in large. I am not convinced that the notions of Plotinus, in their sparest form, might not serve as well: for example, stanza 9 is peculiarly Plotinian, it is almost a description of the basic relationship of Nous and the inner aspect of the Soul. Nonetheless, Cunningham's is the most carefully intellectual approach to the poem to date, and it has only one flaw. For all its brilliance, it omits treatment of the Threnos, and in particular stanza 16,

> Leaving no posterity:
> 'Twas not their infirmity
> It was married chastity.

Why need this be stated by Shakespeare? What was the poet's intention, if he had the model of the Trinity in mind? Chester had in mind procreation, one thinks, and Shakespeare pointedly denied it in his own poem, presumedly for some reason of his own--perhaps a new view of the world that did not accord with love and the growth of loving wisdom, concepts in which he had always believed. Shakespeare's Threnos is his afterword to Chester, one thinks, and while I am perfectly willing to accept Cunningham's view of the "anthem," his silence on the subject of the Threnos is significant, and I interpret it as an inability to square the one with the other. We shall have more to say about this matter in Chapter Five.

Also in 1952, Professor M. C. Bradbrook devoted pp. 32-34 of her Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry (New York: Oxford, 1952) to the formal aspects of "The Phoenix and Turtle." It is the one poem which Shakespeare "wrote

in a courtly kind" (p. 32).

> The union of natures which is Platonic love, Shakespeare [in stanzas 7-9], like Spenser, sees as a relationship between one immortal and another immortal, in which their mutual relationship, the third term, is the dominant, and not the persons themselves.
>
> But they, which love indeede, looke otherwise,
> With pure regard and spotless true intent,
> Drawing out of the object of their eyes
> A more refined form. . . .
> And then conforming it unto the light
> Which in itself it hath remaining still
> Of that first Sunne, yet sparkling in his sight,
> Thereof he fashions in his higher skill
> An heavenly beauty.
> (An Hyme in Honour of Beautie)
>
> . . . This great poem, Shakespeare's one work in the Platonic mode, might alone be taken as the justification of courtly poetry. Its concentration and simplicity show what can be achieved when the great artist finds the proper occasion to make full use of a great tradition. [pp. 33-34]

Bradbrook is on the same spoor as Cunningham when she remarks that the mutual relationship of the Phoenix and Turtle, "the third term, is the dominant, and not the persons themselves," and she usefully brings in Spenser. But she confines her remarks to stanzas 7-9 of Shakespeare's poem, and in general she is less sophisticated than Cunningham, and more concerned with a literary tradition in the manner of Fairchild (1904).

On the other hand, the German critic Heinrich Straumann seeks a truly synthetic approach to the poem in his 63-page monograph, Phönix und Taube (Zürich, 1953). Straumann categorizes previous interpretations of the poem's meaning into three approaches, "positivistic," "idealistic," and

"formalistic." The positivists view the poem as a personal allegory (e.g., Chambrun), the idealists as a symbolization of spiritual values (e.g., Charles Downing), and the formalists see in it a crystallization of literary conventions (e.g., Fairchild). Straumann links the three in his own interpretation, Mehrdeutigkeit or Vieldeutigkeit, which understands multiple planes of meaning but which is different from Empson's notion of ambiguity. On the first plane of meaning, Straumann suggests that we no longer know what persons are suggested; on the second, that the symbolization is of the eternal union of beauty and truth in love; and on the third, that the poem is a play on literary conventions, like certain mock elegies of Catullus (Lesbia's sparrow) and Ovid (Corinna's parrot) which also consist of an introduction, laudation, and a lament of consolation. Shakespeare's two top values, according to Straumann, are beauty and truth [in love]/constancy. These are exemplified by Julia and Silvia (Two Gentlemen), Juliet (Romeo and Juliet) and Helena and Hermia (Dream). Truth has recourse to guile in the cases of Portia, Nerissa and Jessica (Merchant); Hero (Much Ado); Viola and Olivia (Twelfth Night); and Rosalind (As You Like It). The critic must keep his eye on these two top values. Whereas Straumann does not insist that "The Phoenix and Turtle" is pivotal, he surely suggests it. All of Straumann's monograph, however, must be read before the reader sees that the final four paragraphs of Straumann's essay are the

fruits of a validity diligently tendered; otherwise they appear baldly uncompromising, and one thinks that too little has gone before.

> . . . We can say with certainty that from that time onward, when Shakespeare published his poem 'The Phoenix and Turtle,' he no longer considered a union of beauty and constancy or truth in love [italics supplied] to be possible in this world. The qualities as such show us here in highest artistic form that they are either represented as being inconsistent with each other, as in the characters Ophelia and Cressida--or if they do appear in pure union as in Desdemona and Cordelia, they are literally suffocated by the world: Desdemona and Cordelia, to whom the last variation of the top pair, namely, 'grace in all simplicity,' applies in a way in which it does to no one else.
>
> It is only in the three last fairy-plays [Märchendramen], i.e., from 1609 onwards, that these three values can be used again in a union. But it is a different world. It is a world in which poetic fantasy subjects reality to itself [to fantasy] at will. But even then Imogen in Cymbeline and Hermione in Winter's Tale scarcely escape catastrophe caused by the delusion of their husbands. And the happiness of Miranda in The Tempest can only be fulfilled by the protective magic powers of her father.
>
> Thus a decisive change of the poet's attitude toward a certain area of problems plainly coincides with the date of composition of 'The Phoenix and Turtle.' This area comprehends the question of a possible union of the values Beauty and Constancy or truth in love; secondly, the nature of men in whom this occurs; then another problem, the stability of such a union in this world; then another, the forces which obstruct; and finally its [the union's] final fate. We do not know what caused this change in the poet's views. We only know that he worked at the same time when he published this poem also at Hamlet, Hamlet who begins to doubt everything as a result of his knowledge of a crime and his mother's faithlessness, and the insincerity of his beloved woman.
>
> This survey of Shakespeare's work and especially of the dramas therefore confirms fully what our interpretation of the text has proven. The poem 'The Phoenix and Turtle' may represent a personal

> allegory on a first plane of understanding to which access is now barred to us. On the second plane it represents a skilled play on literarily actual conventions [of that time]. On a third plane which appeals most to a modern reader, it symbolizes the pure union of beauty and constancy or truth in love and their ruin [death]. And finally it may serve as an expression for the decisive and initiatory turn in the artistic credo of the poet. [pp. 51-52]

Straumann provides the reader with a useful survey of the scholarship concerning the poem, and in spite of the impedimenta of German scholarly prose, he moves along quite rapidly from point to point. He is thorough, just, displays considerable insight, and if he has overstated his case, it is nonetheless appealingly presented.

In his English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama (Oxford, 1959), first published in 1954, C. S. Lewis gives us (pp. 508-509), a brilliant evaluation of Shakespeare's achievement in the poem. Lewis finds that the poet

> celebrates the exchanged death, and life, of a fully mutual love. He is not writing 'metaphysical poetry' in the technical sense critics give to that term, but he is writing in the true sense, a metaphysical poem. Such a task leads some poets (Browning, for example) into a loose form and a style sermoni proprior. Shakespeare, on the other hand, gives us formality within formality, the threnos within the funeral poem, the conduct of his work ritualistic, his metres rigid, deliberately, hypnotically, monotonous. His supreme invention was the introduction of Reason as the principal speaker. The words which sum up Shakespeare's doctrine, 'Love hath reason, reason none' owe all their importance to the fact that it is Reason who utters them. In the mouth of a passionate lover or a passionate mourner they would be the stalest claptrap; one more expression of 'will' revolting against 'wit,'

> one more confirmation of the assumption, traditional since Chrétien, that Love and Reason are adversaries. But it is Reason who here exalts love above reason. It is Reason who has seen rational categories overthrown [see Cunningham, above]: 'distincts' becoming indivisible, propriety (proprium) 'appalled' by the discovery that the self-same is yet not the same (for of course the self in 38 does not mean 'the ego'), and something brought into existence which cannot be called two or one. It is Reason [in the threnos] who confesses that neither truth (which is Reason's natural goal) nor beauty is the highest good. For beauty is only a brag or a bravery, a sign or hint, of the true good: and truth 'cannot be,' it is not being, but only 'about' being. Reason, in fact, rationally recognizes what is beyond reason. [p. 509]

The distinction, in Lewis' last three sentences, is between the fact of incarnate truth and beauty, the Turtle and Phoenix, and their mundane forms. Ideal forms can merge and become one, and this is what Reason must acknowledge, along with the fact that the Phoenix and Turtle are ideal forms. Cunningham understands this in much the same way, in that he assumes (p. 269) that the Phoenix and Turtle are themselves "ideal forms, the substances of which any subsequent appearances[22] are shadows."

Another writer who thinks, with Cunningham, that Shakespeare might have been close to the Thomistic view of man, is M. D. H. Parker, whose The Slave of Life was published in 1955. The book's attention to the notion of justice in Shakespeare has frequent reference to Aquinas' concepts of reason and grace. Were they to meet, I am sure Miss Parker and Professor Straumann would find much to talk about, for Parker ties "The Phoenix and Turtle" to Troilus and Cressida, a play whose

> revelation falls into three, rather than two, separate exposés, each reinforcing the others in declaring, with The Phoenix and the Turtle, 'single nature's double name.' Romantic love is only lust, order is worldly wisdom, and honour, personal pride; not to the natural cynic terrifying or even remarkable conclusions. They disgust only the imaginative mind which could conceive their first names. Only such a mind could say of the single nature, 'This is, and is not, Cressid.' [p. 79]

Shakespeare turned from an attention to portions of life which seemed to indicate justice, thinks Parker (p. 86),

> to an examination of the whole texture and structure of reality. He found there the underside of his comic pattern, the universal corruption with which the redemptive values of grace and mercy had claimed in theology to deal. Not only human nature but all nature, time itself, is corrupt and corrupting:
>
> For beauty, wit
> High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
> Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
> To envious and calumniating time.
> One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.
>
> This time is the exact opposite of the time which, in The Winter's Tale, 'unfolds error.' It does not reveal, but forgets . . . . One thing only, this time will remember, to be tortured by the ideal. 'When time is old and hath forgot itself,' let them say still, 'as false as Cressid.'
>
> In 1601, probably between Troilus and Cressida and Hamlet, there appeared in Robert Chester's elegiac miscellany the strange metaphysical symbolism of The Phoenix and the Turtle, another variation, almost Athanasian in its reiterative subtlety, upon single nature's double name. Since his phoenix and turtle are childless, Shakespeare seems to have had little interest in the personal significance of his allegory, and in this poem, it is not one which is seen as two (as in Troilus) but two which are seen as one, the Phoenix and the Turtle, constancy and love: [stanzas 7, 10-12]. We may relate the Threnos to the Troilus and Cressida theme: [stanzas 14-15, 17]. So the apparent beauty is not real beauty, nor is the apparent truth, real truth. Can it be that Shakespeare meant that when love is no longer one with constancy or eternity (when 'love and constancy

are dead') being itself is disrupted? Valentine, the Gentleman of Verona, had cried,

> O heaven! were man
> But constant, he were perfect; that one error
> Fills him with faults; makes him run through all the sins:
> Inconstancy falls off ere it begins.

So in theological language, the soul's turning away from God is the beginning and constitution of sin and death, of imperfection.[23]

Yet The Phoenix and the Turtle has hope in its very title. 'Death is now the phoenix' nest,' and Pericles, though still in 'the muddy vesture of decay,' is to hear the music of the spheres. The redemption of love becomes in the last plays the redemption of being. But not yet. The lyric may short-circuit the problem; the drama does not. [pp. 86-88]

Parker is sharp when she observes that in "The Phoenix and Turtle," it is not one which is seen as two, as in Troilus and Cressida, but two which are seen as one. However, I confess that I do not understand her notion of "constancy or eternity." Straumann identifies constancy with "truth in love," and I find this more relevant to the poem. If constancy is eternity, the alternative speculations could reach infinity. It seems to me, instead, that Parker has in mind immutability, and I do not see that the "soul's turning away from God" has anything to do with the poem. I am not aware that Aquinas has linked constancy with eternity.[24] Miss Parker believes that

> the Shakespeare of Troilus and Cressida and The Phoenix and the Turtle saw already the antithesis between the world of appearance, a world of black and white, and the world of reality, a world of gray, that in Hamlet he saw that in its very horror the world of reality can be destructive both of action and of faith, that he knew this paralysis to be bewildering--even to the

> point of producing a conviction of cowardice in a brave man--and that, at this stage, he believed it soluble only in terms of accepting it (which Hamlet for nearly four acts refuses to do), and then, 'inoculated' but not complete with virtue, acting 'rashly' as the dispensation of event suggests. [pp. 107-108]

Thus Parker and Straumann are of a mind when they portray the Shakespeare of 1601 and his reservations concerning the world of "reality." They say that Shakespeare knew better about the possibilities of a worldly union of truth and beauty, and given the happy combination of Phoenix and Turtle (at the insistence of Chester) he escaped into the pure realm of the ideal. Although the birds personify human traits and characteristics, they are at a remove from all that is human. Shakespeare's mental processes at this point (imagined) with their later manifestations, are treated in much the same way by both Straumann and Parker. Both interpretations are sophisticated, inasmuch as they draw in general on the body of Shakespeare's work.

An important essay by Alfred Alvarez on "The Phoenix and Turtle" appeared in 1955.[25] One interesting aspect should be mentioned, and that is the fact that Alvarez says (p. 402 n.) that he read a draft of his paper to an Oxford seminar before Cunningham's essay appeared in 1952; both men point out some of the scholastic terminology in the poem. "But our paths do not cross unduly. Mr. Cunningham confines himself to the antheme and to Thomist doctrine, whilst I try to subordinate the theology of [to?] the human situation. Since then Professor C. S. Lewis has

written on the poem . . . in English Literature in the Sixteenth Century . . . . He remarks there on the song-within-a-song structure and the prime importance of Reason in the poem. I can only affirm that I had delivered this paper, and made those same points, at least two years before I read Professor Lewis's work." Alvarez does not disclaim knowledge of Guthrie's essay (1944) or that of Shahani (1946), but perhaps he was unaware of them. It indeed appears--as it so often happens in the history of inventions--that several people were thinking along roughly the same lines at the same time.

Alvarez begins (p. 397-98) by isolating various approaches to the poem. The first of these views the poem as a witty reworking of the old conceit of two lovers making one flesh, a line which at least emphasizes the human situation involved, but which fails to illuminate the introduction, the repetition of the conceit, and the Threnos. Alvarez finds the second approach, through religious symbolism, to be over-serious and too little heedful of the human; whereas the third or "poetic" approach--an aesthetic ordering of Love, Death and the Absolutes as themes--is limited but necessary. The fourth approach is "by way of knowledge"; that is, the poem is difficult because "we too often fail to understand the terms it employs. It is metaphysical in a more obviously intellectual way than most 'Metaphysical' poetry"; it states its problems "in the philosophical language of the time" with a

rigorous clarity. "One move towards understanding the poem, then, is to define some of its terms." These four ways of approach "merge and clarify each other," writes Alvarez, and he begins with the third and fourth approaches; his reading of the poem is new-critical, and yet it displays too much scholarship to be given that narrow a classification. There is abundant reference to Donne and the "Metaphysical" school.

> . . . Shakespeare was never so obviously 'knowing' with his metaphors as Donne. On the other hand, he rarely used them as sparingly as here. Increasingly throughout the poem concrete is evaporated into abstract--'Death is now the Phoenix nest'--or even into the flatly grammatical; for instance, in one of the few ambiguities, 'mine' in stanza 9, the choice lies between a concrete metaphor and a grammatical tool. Where the language is associational it leads to the realm of speculation, not of human particularity. This rarity of diction gives the poem the generalizable quality of philosophical discourse and it strictly limits your conception of the sort of love described. . . . [It] concentrates your attention on the poetic procedures themselves . . . . [pp. 398-99]
>
> The mechanics of the thing are important, complex and formally perfect. . . . [There is] the momentum of a catharsis, which unifies the actors of the three stages of the poem--the birds, the abstracts 'Love and Constancie,' and the other lovers who are 'true or faire'--and makes them all part of the same coherent dramatic movement. [p. 399]

The poem "refines and withdraws itself," stretching towards abstraction.

> At the same time the poem withdraws steadily into its own poetic elements. The antheme is sung by the invoked birds, themselves part of a literary tradition;[26] the Threnos, in turn, is composed by Reason, an abstract quality within the song sung by these characters, and composed, moreover, "As Chorus to their Tragique Scene'--a further

> distancing by theatrical metaphor. Although the N.E.D. will not allow theatrical overtone to 'Troupe' and 'Session' we are still left with a song within a song within a formal literary setting. [p. 399]

Alvarez then analyzes the language of the poem, in a preliminary way, concentrating on the imperative moods of the verbs used, certain words of command, and the religious overtones of the language (pp. 399-400). By contrast to Chaucer's Parlement of Fowles, Shakespeare does not make his birds "crudely self-explanatory. They are less symbols than literary properties" (p. 400), and the solemnity of his language contributes to a setting that is "regal and holy," so that the poem's "grand manner" is "purposeful, detached and moving" (p. 401).

In the next portion of his essay, Alvarez considers the intellectual difficulties presented by the rather obscure vocabulary of Shakespeare's anthem. For one, the moral judgement is absolute, rather than implicit (the latter being the usual case). Shakespeare's lovers are love and constancy,

> elsewhere they are incarnations of Platonic and Christian ideals, 'Beautie,' 'Truth' and 'Grace.' By these terms the Christian symbolist [Cunningham?] would throw a shaft of light on to the subject, which, for all its accuracy, does not illuminate the whole bulk and humanity of the love. The theme of the poem is the transcendence of Reason by Love. The great theological paradoxes are used--often, indeed, stated in specifically theological terms--because religion also rests on faith.[27] This does not necessarily limit the subjects of the poem; it only qualifies it.[28]
>
> The very difficulty of the antheme is that it will not rest in the power of faith to transcend

> Reason (and this makes me suspicious of a purely Christian interpretation); it sets out poetically and logically to prove its case. It uses the traditional means, the paradox, accommodated to a stringent logic; for if the poet is to go convincingly beyond Reason he must also include it. The simple paradox is not enough. It asserts only its own ingenuity and gives a temporary, unqualified perception. To prove its point, to outreason Reason, the paradox must be rationally accurate and sustained.

Alvarez then directs attention to the importance of numbers (as in vs. 39-40) to the development of the argument--they are an insurance of rational accuracy. The paradoxes of the anthem "balance and juggle technical terms from the metaphysics of Shakespeare's time . . . . Relentlessly, the constants of Reason are stated and then destroyed in exactly the language in which the philosophers would have upheld them. The terminology is rational, its application flatly anti-rational"[29] (p. 402). Alvarez's treatment of stanza 7 (vs. 25-28) furnishes an example of his habit of adding more weight until the subject expires: he defines "essence" (unfortunately missing the Thomist identification with "nature"), then turns to "Division" (v. 27) and "number" (v. 28):

> 'Definition, Division, Methodus,' says Miss Tuve, with her usual monumental authority, '. . . were cant therms; not only every budding schoolman but every youth of parts found himself constrained to learn how to define and divide.' The point, then, for the Elizabethans was obvious and pedantic. A contemporary handbook of logic [Thomas Wilson's The Rule of Reason, 1551] makes the paradox clearer: 'As a definition doth declare what a thing is, so a devision sheweth how many things are contained in the same.' Although the definition 'loue in twaine' would show 'two distincts,' the next step, 'Division,'

> is impossible because of the common 'essence.' Yet it is logically impossible not to be able to divide when you can distinguish. The basic tools and presumptions of Reason are rendered useless. The argument is pushed forward. 'Division' is a mathematical as well as a logical process:
>
> 'Number there in loue was slaine.'
>
> The range of the logic is wide, for by 'number' Shakespeare seems to mean both a rational skill, arithmetic, and an abstract concept, mathematics; for the force of the overthrow may be argumented by a mathematical dictum, 'One is no number.'[30]
>
> The logic, in short, is teased out with more pertinacity than is usual, even in Donne. For Shakespeare argued formally and in the abstract, from a single literary trope, the paradox. Donne, on the other hand, for all the logical 'business,' usually starts from an analogical hypothesis; he begins with an analogy and argues two parallel cases at once on the understanding that they are at most points convertible. Shakespeare, in this poem at least, is the more honest logician and not at all the Metaphysical poet. [p. 403]

"Distance" and "Space" are overwhelmed in Stanza 8, and then Shakespeare returns to his paradox and in Stanza 9 reveals its source, according to Alvarez, to be "accurate description":

> Effortlessly and without exaggeration the paradox holds for the particular act of love that the poem celebrates, the Phoenix's consuming fire. Not only is the love of God for man infinitely divisible yet always one, so too is the 'mutuall flame' in which the birds burn to their consummation. Donne, for instance, explicitly describes the rites of love in this way in his '<u>Epithalamion</u> . . . <u>on the Lady</u> Elizabeth, <u>and Count Palatine</u>';
>
> '. . . as one glorious flame
> Meeting Another, growes the same,
> So meet thy Fredericke, and so
> To an unseparable union growe.
> Since separation
> Falls not on such things as are infinite,
> Nor things which are but one, can disunite. . . .'

> (A few stanzas later he describes the lovers as two Phoenixes.) This is why there is so much stress on visual description: 'shine,' 'saw,' 'flaming,' 'sight.' Underlying all the logic is the certainty of accurate perception.[31] [p. 404]

Alvarez then analyzes and defines "mine" in v. 36 (a place, and a grammatical distinction of no relevance to the birds); and "Property" in v. 37 (the power of ownership personified, the Aristotelian quality common to a class, and "propriety" in the grammatical sense). The latter three are shown to be confuted, and confounded.

The last section of Alvarez's essay deals with the Threnos, "a series of powerful but bare assertions of abstract qualities," a forcing (as in the anthem) of "plain, dogmatic indicative statements on your attention" (p. 406). The poem does not celebrate Love in its generality, nor Love in the dubious particularity of a myth, but instead there is an emphasis on denial.

> The perfect achievement of love is union, complex in itself, but transformed by the purity of the birds into a deeper, a stranger complexity, resolvable only in death. [p. 407]

"Married chastity" is the only paradox in the Threnos, and the only positive value, the reason for the poem's existence. The Phoenix and Turtle are the values of love, and their vitality, "like their purity and their sacrifice, continues beyond them. The four approaches to the poem [above] at last merge as the tragedy is played off against the background of Christian assurance and poetic wit" (p. 407).

> The new generation may only be the bragging semblances of the old, but they are no less true and fair for that. And the old, in whom all the transcendental qualities of Love have so passionately existed, are seen, in turn, to be only a pair of 'dead birds,' not totally different from the other birds whose sighs end the poem as their laments had begun it. They are all, for their pomp and style, a little pathetic. [p. 408]

In a concluding paragraph, Alvarez tells us what the poem means, but the reader is little the wiser. In fact, except for his excellent close readings of the terminology of the anthem (and Cunningham there is superior), Alvarez is not as clear as he might be. One suspects that he approached the poem via Donne; his comparisons of the two poets are especially valuable. He is vague about contemporary "metaphysics" and "philosophers" of the period, and he does not once mention Neo-Platonism. He is aware that much of the anthem's vocabulary is scholastic but speaks vaguely of the "human situation" being overlooked, and he attempts to supply some of this emphasis in his intelligent close-reading of the poem in large. In spite of his great verbal skill, however, Alvarez is not always able to communicate a clear understanding of the human relevance of Shakespeare's lines. For example, he twice mentions the "tragic" aspects of the Threnos (p. 407), but does not elaborate on his own remark that the Threnos is the Phoenix and Turtle's "last tragic paradox of purity." Does the human aspect make purity "tragic"? Perhaps "absurd" would be the better word, for Alvarez (pp. 406-407) speaks of the "jauntiness" and "vitality" of the rhythm of the Threnos.

Walter J. Ong's essay, "Metaphor and the Twinned Vision (The Phoenix and the Turtle)," [32] also appeared in 1955. Ong approaches the poem by way of a discussion of the peculiarly human cognitive process implicit in metaphor. If we begin by defining metaphor "as the use of a term in a sense or signification improper to the term" (p. 193), the twinning aspect of metaphor is already implied, inasmuch as "improper" suggests a "proper" signification. But there is nothing wrong with the second, or "improper," signification:

> In metaphor, there is merely a signification which has a kind of priority, a prescriptive or presumptive right to the term for the simple reason that, in the hurly-burly of semantic activity, it somehow got prior hold of the term. In this sense, the second meaning has some of the disadvantages of an intruder. [p. 193]

In metaphor, "a term does not abandon one signification for another but rather stands related to two significations at once," writes Ong (p. 194).

> If the primacy of the original attachment is compromised, if the word becomes attached to the second meaning more or less directly so that the primary meaning is eliminated or at least is no longer effective--as when we speak of the foot of a mountain or the head of a table--the metaphor becomes spent, or even ceases to be a metaphor at all. [p. 194]

Ong (p. 194) thinks that "the doubling or twinning of two concepts" demanded by metaphor is a clue to its "psychological and linguistic importance"; for, "faced with an object, the human intellect is simply not equipped to assimilate it en bloc . . . . Man knows componendo et dividendo--by putting together and setting apart."

> Even after it has built up a reserve of symbols or concepts, if the mind is to get at the truth of a thing, it must always make two passes at it. . . . By manipulating two items so that one thus for a brief instant controls the other we 'know' in the full sense, we possess--for a brief moment--truth. [pp. 194-95]

It is Ong's belief that "the intellect must secure two separate footholds, one in the condition of subject, the other in the condition of predicate," for in terms of a simple concept, "we cannot even pose the question of truth or falsehood" (p. 195). And as a matter of fact, concepts "are destined to be coupled"; "for everything we represent to ourselves as a concept can only turn up as a potential member of a pair of concepts, a potential part of an enunciation or judgement" (p. 195). This binarism endemic in human intellection is awkward, even to intellect itself, which "yearns to reduce everything to one principle" (p. 196).

> It wants a plenary or elemental experience of truth which is absolutely simple, a one. Out of this compulsion, all the philosophies of idealism are born, from Plato through medieval idealistic philosophies, through Cartesianism, down to Hegel and our modern world. . . . Descartes' essay was indeed a dream, as it has been called, just as much, if not so overtly, as was Plato's theory of reminiscence. Any idealism is an escape from the real problem. . . . [Descartes'] ideas, like everyone else's, come two by two. [p. 196]

In the world of the human intellect, there are no monads, only dyads. We cannot conceive of the whole world of physics being summed up in one word, "let alone express it" (p. 197). Enunciations are by their nature binary. And yet there is a "persistent attraction of idealism for the

human mind" which amounts to "a curious nostalgia for something it has not really known" (197), and it is at this point that "metaphor offers its tantalizing consolations" (p. 198). That is,

> the mind feels the impact of . . . two terms as practically one. This creates the impression of extraordinary unity or condensation, and it accounts for the brilliance . . . which we sense in metaphor and which Quintilian long ago referred to as 'light.' . . . [p. 199] The metaphor is thus an intellectual monad and dyad all at once.

Ong (p. 199) sees in "The Phoenix and Turtle" a poetic apprehension involving the same sort of condensed and simplified awareness; it is a poem in which

> metaphor rules with particular insistence. The economy of the poem comes so far under the control of metaphor that, in a twinkling . . . the theme of the poem converts into a metaphor of metaphor itself. . . . The phoenix, as suggesting change which is both death and birth, and the turtle, symbol of devotedness moved by love, can be considered each as a metaphor with a particularly wide range of applicability--as potentially multiple metaphors. Like the archetypal symbols of Jung, these are capable of engaging reality at all sorts of levels simultaneously and indeterminately. . . . They can be metaphorical terms for persons, for philosophical abstractions such as love and death, for mind and body, for Christ and the Church. [pp. 199-200]

Shakespeare's "reader is not distracted by irrelevancies but encouraged to let the metaphor grow . . . without particular limit," and it is in this way that Ong arrives at his notion of the poem as metaphor of metaphor itself,

> for the union of these two divergent terms--the 'mutual flame' in which they are united--lends itself with surprising readiness to being taken as a symbol of the union of two terms which is the precise thing that metaphor realizes. [p. 200]

Ong quotes vs. 25-30, and relates them to his earlier remarks

on the nature of metaphor, and to the characteristic human search for unity, a difficulty that "lodges in the structure of human cognition itself" (p. 201).

> Hence it is not surprising that among the elemental, archetypal symbols he is operating with, Shakespeare encounters human reason itself, nonplussed by the divided unities and the united divisions with which it must deal: [vs. 41-46 quoted]. Although more explicitly focused on something else, this last phrase [". . . How true a twain/ Seemeth this concordant one!"] hits off the metaphorical situation to perfection, because it touches the depths of the human situation out of which the need for metaphor grows. [p. 201]

Ong's conclusion, that the human situation itself results in a need for metaphor, is not terribly exciting, but his exposition is perceptive and well-expressed. The patient reader with a good command of German will wish to compare Ong's article to Florens C. Rang's metaphorical approach to the poem [see Chapter Two, above]; there are many similarities, but Ong is characteristically clear whereas Rang is obscure. Ong concentrates on the psychological and linguistic bases of idealism, Rang on the allegory of expressionism.

One of the most capable of the modern commentators who have approached the poem is F. T. Prince. As editor of the Arden Shakespeare Poems (London, 1960), he wrote fully and sensitively on its merits; in his monograph Shakespeare: The Poems (London, 1963), his earlier comments appear in capsule. We shall be more concerned here with the former publication (pp. xxxviii-xlvi), in which Prince refers to "The Phoenix and Turtle" as a kind of poetry

"pure and concentrated," showing "unsurpassed musical imagination" (p. xliii). His remarks on certain Donne-Shakespeare likenesses usefully supplement those of Alvarez:

> The identity in love of the two dead birds is celebrated with a display of scholastic terms which gives a vague impression that the poem is 'metaphysical' in the manner of Donne. Nothing could in fact be further from the methods of Donne's love-poetry than the method of this poem. Shakespeare's use of analytic terminology here is free and rhapsodic, a kind of ethereal frenzy; in using it so lavishly, he may well have been influenced by fashion, and by the manner of his fellow-poets writing on this theme, which evidently to them suggested abstract sublimities and verbiage. Donne's analytic procedures are indeed not his personal property, coming to him as they do from Italy and France, and coming to many other learned poets of his generation; but they are distinguished by the concentration and deliberation with which he applies them to sexual experience, and this quality is certainly not paralleled in The Phoenix and Turtle. [pp. xliii-xliv]

Prince, in his emphasis on the poem's "pure" poetic qualities, is the legatee of John Middleton Murry (1924):

> In this curious poem . . . we see the imaginative power which charges one after another of Shakespeare's mature plays with inexhaustible suggestions of meaning. Nowhere else, however, have we an opportunity to see this power at work in isolation and in so small a compass. What we see in effect is Shakespeare's capacity for 'pure' poetry; and the poem must be placed in what may seem ill-assorted company, which includes Poe's Ulalume and Mallarmé's Prose pour des Esseintes. It is only in the nineteenth century, and particularly in France, that we find the conscious attempt to cultivate poetry in a 'pure' state. But the theories of Baudelaire and Mallarmé derived from Poe, and it is in the English Romantic School that we find the first glimpses of a poetry that is 'pure' in this sense. Kubla Khan, some of Keats's Odes, some of Tennyson's lyrics, provide more familiar examples than Poe or Mallarmé, whose work is for different reasons unlikely to fit into our current scale of poetic appreciation. Yet perhaps the suggestions of

> self-caricature in Poe, the rigorous self-consciousness and irony of Mallarmé, may also help us to approach The Phoenix and Turtle. For this element of irony, hyperbole, and high fantasy is generally missing in the Romantic and Victorian poets, unless we include in our survey the nonsense of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll: and it is precisely this element which gives the point of departure for Shakespeare's poem, and the convention which supports it throughout.
>
> For after all, the beauty of the poem consists in a marriage between intense emotion and almost unintelligible fantasy. It is inexhaustible because it is inexplicable; and it is inexplicable because it is deliberately unreasonable, beyond and contrary to both reason and nature. [pp. xliv-xlv]

Although Murry's account of the poem in Discoveries fails "to indicate the presence of this conscious self-caricature," and its use of a language cryptic in its finality, yet Murry "gives the 'feel' of the poem in as adequate terms as modern equipment has yet found" (p. xlv). I do not agree with Mr. Prince in this last regard, but I am one with his estimation (pp. xlv-xlvi) of Wilson Knight's contribution in The Mutual Flame. Prince, however, approves of Knight's analogy of Shakespeare in the poem and Shelley in the Epipsychidion, wherein the ideals of love "go far beyond the immediate realities of the situation" (p. xlvi).

> So it probably was with The Phoenix and Turtle. A chance conjunction of images precipitates a sudden intensity of emotion in the poet: thoughts and rhythms become the mysterious yet transparent expression of his deepest compulsions. The 'pure' poem is born, marked above all by its apparent remoteness from everyday experience. . . . [Yet,] into The Phoenix and Turtle, fantastic as it is, Shakespeare has compressed all his feeling for pure passion and loyalty in human love. [p. xlvi]

The poem had enjoyed a resurgence of critical attention by 1960, and thus one finds Professor F. P. Wilson

in his Seventeenth Century Prose (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960), discussing the new style, "by some called anti-Ciceronian," and mentioning

> the paradox, which now became so important that one hesitates whether to call it a figure or a form. The first year of the century saw the publication of one of the greatest of English poems that are built upon paradox: I mean The Phoenix and Turtle, a poem which suggests that if Shakespeare at the end of the century had turned from dramatic verse to nondramatic he might have been the greatest of metaphysical poets. [p. 12]

Not all would agree with his assignment of the poem to the "metaphysical" style, and certainly not Miss Helen Gardner, although she includes the poem in her book, The Metaphysical Poets (Oxford, 1961), pp. 9-12. She says in her introduction (p. xxviii) that she has begun "a little before Donne with poems which in some ways anticipate the metaphysical manner" as she defines it, and some of these do not qualify--as for example, "Shakespeare's strange celebration of married chastity in the most 'strong-lined' of all poems, if 'strong lines' are riddles." The style arrives with Donne, in her judgement, and the minute the reader reaches Donne, "he will have the same sense of having arrived as when, in a collection of pre-Shakespearian plays, we hear the voice of Marlowe." She has included poems by Ralegh, Greville, and Southwell which like Shakespeare's are disqualified: Shakespeare "is too remote, and too symbolic, creating a static world where Love and Constancy are deified." (Miss Gardner's remarks concerning the

poem's anthem are given as notes to her pp. 10-11.)

On the other hand, Daniel Seltzer thinks that "The Phoenix and Turtle" is "a Metaphysical poem par excellence," as he writes in his 1961 article.[33] The latter study deals almost entirely with parallels observed in the plays, and will be found summarized in part III of this Chapter (below). But Seltzer has this to say about the nature of the poem:

> A movement in the poem, actually born within individual words, and a specifically arranged 'scene' which may be observed by Reason (and the reasonable reader), are characteristics of a work in which the 'images (tropes, concretions, metaphorical epithets, descriptive definitions) are "arguments."' I have quoted Miss Tuve's descriptive summary of the influential Ramist concept which led to 'the dialectical toughness of the Metaphysical poem,' with its 'substitution of intellectual probing for rhetorical persuasion.'[34] At first glance, it would seem that 'The Phoenix and Turtle' is a poem greatly dependent on 'rhetorical persuasion,' but in fact its rhetoric is poetry of pure and unadorned statement. As Miss Tuve points out, it was an old notion that the poet should move from the specific to the general; but Ramist theory explicitly stated that ordinary poetic tropes could be arguments in themselves. This may help us understand Shakespeare's method. (I do not suggest that Ramist theories of any sort were actually in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote the poem.) 'The Phoenix and Turtle' seems to state the general in the first place, concretely, and without the 'help of earthly images,'[35] until we realize that the actors of the poem, including the 'abstractions' of love, constancy, and reason, are treated as though they were earthly realities, and that we have, as readers, followed them outwards to the generalities of nature, allowing them to lead us, in fact as 'arguments' of intellectual debate. Shakespeare does not 'add to what we see,' but amplifies through the intense purity of his vocabulary and by the repetition of the paradoxes of single two-ness. These suggest larger application to explicitly

> stated action, and Shakespeare uses them for this purpose instead of precisely detailed categories of imagistic allusion.
>
> Although a poet may describe the 'tragic scene,' he cannot ultimately reduce the tragic effect to the vocabulary of logic; the reasonable audience, left behind, celebrates and admires it, but it is beyond common emotional experience. This is why 'The Phoenix and Turtle' is a Metaphysical poem par excellence. To use Fraunce's fine phrase,[36] 'the motion of the mind' which encompasses Shakespeare's description of perfect (and, frequently, therefore, in his view, necessarily tragic) love, occurs within the very terminology which Cunningham calls--and which may be--scholastic in origin. The details of Trinitarian doctrine do not really enlarge the paradoxes of the poem for us as much as they themselves have the power to do. [pp. 96-97]

One appreciates Seltzer's Ramist suggestion, but most of his other observations are directed toward an overriding notion of the poem (in diction, form, and content) as peculiarly "dramatic"--that is, Mr. Seltzer identifies similar matters of theme, tone, and sentiment in Shakespeare's plays, and does so most convincingly. We shall discuss these views at the end of this Chapter.

In our previous Chapter devoted to source studies, we quoted rather freely from Robert Ellrodt's fine essay (1962). Let us now return to Ellrodt, and to his remarks concerning the modal nature of the poem. He begins (p. 99) by isolating some divergent views (Alvarez, Prince, Gardner) and mentions that "Henri Fluchère[37] would rank the poem 'in the highest tradition of "metaphysical" poetry.'" (Ellrodt seems to have missed Gardner's remarks concerning the differences between Donne the "metaphysical" poet and Shakespeare [Gardner, p. xxviii], and actually I find

Alvarez, Prince and Gardner to be generally in agreement--all seem to say that Shakespeare's poem is not typical of the metaphysical style.) Shakespeare follows the examples of Petrarch and Chester in making the Phoenix a symbol of the beloved, with emphasis on "beauty," and "rarity" or uniqueness, writes Ellrodt (p. 102),

> on the other hand, Shakespeare is at one with Donne in availing himself of the Phoenix symbol to celebrate a mutual flame rather than an unreturned passion. The lovers' union, however, in accordance with the allegory of Loves Martyr, is typified not by the 'neutral' bird but by the mating of a female Phoenix with a male Turtle. The insistence on the 'two-in-one' theme still reminds us of Donne's later poems, but the union achieved is only spiritual. [p. 102]

Concerning the purity of the union,

> 'married chastity' (l. 61) could mean faithful married love to an Elizabethan,[38] and the emphasis on chaste love may have no other meaning in Chester's poem, which seems to imply fruition and offspring. Physical intercourse is excluded in Shakespeare's lyric only by the assertion that ''twas not infirmity' that prevented the lovers from leaving 'posterity.' That chastity of this kind should be styled 'married' might still be puzzling. But the phrase can be understood in the light of sonnet CXVI: 'Let me not to the marriage of true minds Admit impediments.' [p. 102]

Shakespeare's bird symbolism, paradoxical even in its use of Turtle (love and truth) and Phoenix (maidenhead and "oneness"), becomes "the fitting expression of the tension created by a certain type of 'Platonic' love" (p. 103). In the fourth section of his essay (pp. 104-105), Ellrodt defines the limits of Shakespeare's Platonism:

> It invites no ascent along the well-known ladder leading up to the contemplation of the Heavenly

> Beauty, though a ray of it may flash through the flaming eyes of the Phoenix, her earthly reflection. The poet is concerned only with the perfect union achieved by the lovers' souls, an idea perhaps more closely related to Christian mysticism than genuine Platonism.[39] Though the 'two-in-one' paradox may have been handled lightly by many love poets, the topic itself was not 'far too slight,' as Alvarez claims (p. 14), to support 'the logical structure of the poem.' It had engaged the attention of the best minds, the most thoughtful poets, from Ficino to Donne. . . . [Shakespeare's] perception of the paradox achieved originality when he substituted an immediate apprehension of unity for the Neoplatonic argument based on the assumption that each lover died in his own person to live in the beloved. . . . His intuition of the lovers' oneness, free from any psycho-physiological support, is stated in logical and ontological terms. It is, in fact, far more metaphysical than Ficino's. It may be so because the symbolical Phoenix and Turtle stand for universals and absolute values as well as individual lovers. [p. 104]

But, writes Ellrodt (p. 104), in Shakespeare's poem there is no appeal to the timeless Platonic principles of the good, the true and the beautiful.

> The poet's theme is not the rational intuition of Platonism: it is the triumph of Love over Reason, as Lewis and Alvarez have noted. Shakespeare is not arguing. He flies in the face of Reason with the blind confidence of sheer faith, bypasses her in a flashing intuition of utter transcendence. On these heights the 'two-in-one' paradox has specifically Christian connotations. Indeed, some of Shakespeare's statements would correctly apply only to the relationship between the persons of the Trinity. [p. 104]

And yet (here Ellrodt agrees with Shahani) "no theological construction should be forced upon the poem" (p. 104), for Shakespeare "nowhere suggests an allegory of religious mysteries or even of divine love," an interpretation which "would be flatly contradicted by [the] actual death and

the sense of loss conveyed by the poem" (p. 105). Ellrodt demonstrates his command of Renaissance Phoenix symbolism by adducing Le Phoenix de Jan Edouard du Monin (1585), "the most ambitious philosophical poem inspired by the Phoenix myth" (p. 105), although he makes no claims for it as a source. In this complex work, "du Monin has fused Christian theology and Neoplatonic philosophy. His God is the one of Plotinus" (p. 105).

In lyrical poetry, writes Ellrodt (p. 106), "setting aside epigrammatic riddles or flashing conceits, one discovers that Petrarch and Pontanus, Ronsard and Drayton," relied on features of the myth that were largely pictorial.

> Now, a concrete evocation, even when intended as an allegory, would stir the imagination hardly more than a Euphuistic simile. Even in Shakespeare's age the bird was held to be legendary . . . . Such incredulity would confine any pictorial treatment of the myth to rhetorical interest. But it would not affect Donne's 'metaphysical' handling of the 'Phoenix riddle,' which is a mere idea. The very turn of the paradox in The Canonization shows that the fusion of the sexes in a perfect being able to regenerate itself is thought of as a myth only turned into truth by the union of the lovers. In the 1613 Epithalamion the poet openly disclaims the ornithological marvellous and once more describes the experience of the lovers as a higher prodigy than the legendary bird. Yet it is not unimportant that the very existence of the Phoenix should still have been a matter of debate. Donne's open negation becomes a bold and modern assertion of the critical spirit. But, as a subject of controversy, the myth could still arouse perplexity and wonder. By calling in question the ornithological miracle, Donne himself used it as a foil to the human miracle. [pp. 106-107]

Shakespeare's handling of the paradox is relatively serious and philosophical.

> Yet the 'abstract allusiveness' of his approach (Alvarez, p. 13) brings him no nearer to Donne. In the poetry of Donne an immediate and particular experience is analysed abstractedly. In 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,' despite the dramatic setting, one almost loses sight of the individuals involved when their love is described: the attention is focused on universals. Intellectually, Shakespeare is less inventive, less witty than Donne: he rings the changes on one idea instead of striking out fresh conceits from the traditional 'two-in-one' paradox. Donne would have inserted it in a new line of argument to account for a personal experience. Shakespeare's dialectic approach is original in a different way, through its very imprecision and ambiguity, heightening the sense of mystery. The sensitive comments of Alvarez and Prince on this point hardly leave room for further analysis. Some awkwardness arising from compression may even be acknowledged: it is not infrequent in Shakespeare's rhymed verse of a more or less gnomic kind. The strange fascination exerted over the imagination by these abstract statements does not rest on intellectual power or penetration, but on their imperious finality. They evoke the inner response always awakened in the soul by an impassioned negation of duality. The Plotinian intuition of the One and the paradoxes of negative theology make a kindred appeal to the imaginative mind. In each case the sense of transcendence arises from an utter denial of common sense, an utter rejection of common experience. [p. 107]

Shakespeare could only maintain "this exalted pitch by ending the 'tragic scene' on a further negation in the Threnos," in which "any hint of survival in a world beyond, is withheld," and "the finality of death is consciously emphasized" (pp. 107-108).

> And since absolute Truth and Beauty are sunk below the furthest horizon of human ken, their withdrawal from this world must be total: 'Truth may seem, but cannot be: Beauty brag, but 'tis not she.' How shall we reconcile with this claim the final call to those that are 'either true or fair'? In this apparent contradiction lies the deeper meaning of the poem. Shakespeare has not been celebrating true lovers and beautiful creatures.

> He has been dreaming of Love and Constancy, Truth and Beauty, straining after the highest intensity, in which lies 'the excellence of every art' (Keats). [p. 108]

Ellrodt is especially knowledgeable on Renaissance poetic attention to the Phoenix myth, and of course, on the Donne-Shakespeare differences; his essay is an extremely balanced and sensitive approach to the poem, and his footnotes provide a whole history of related intellectual and philosophical concepts. (This feast of references often contributes to the reader's difficulty in identifying Ellrodt's points of view.) Certainly one is left with the impression that Ellrodt would not assign this poem to the "metaphysical" style as it is linked to Donne.

Ellrodt's article in SS appeared in 1962, along with a fine survey of "Phoenix and Turtle" scholarship by J. W. Lever (cited above), and we have already mentioned F. T. Prince's monograph of 1963 (above), the latter a refinement of views expressed earlier in his 1960 edition of The Poems. Prince has this to say in 1963:

> [p. 45] Shakespeare . . . has taken [the two birds] as an emblem of passion consummated in death . . . . [p. 46] Like some of the songs in the plays, The Phoenix and Turtle is an incantation, but longer, more sustained and intellectual. It creates a self-contained world, yet one with countless mysterious associations. The gathering of the birds brings overtones of folklore; the co-existence and identity of the lovers are expounded in terms which recall scholastic philosophy and medieval theology. There is an undercurrent of courtly Platonism. It is not surprising that some have thought that Shakespeare was here writing a poem deliberately in the Metaphysical manner, though his lyrical and rhapsodic use of the language of the schoolmen is very different from anything in Donne. The final impression is wholly

> Shakespearean: the freshness of language and imagery, the deep and overflowing human feeling. . . . [p. 47] He may have begun it as a freak of fancy, but if so, it took on a life of its own, and spoke with a new voice things which he found no means of saying in his other, direct and personal, love-poetry.

In William Shakespeare, A Biography (New York and Evanston, 1963), A. L. Rowse emphasizes (pp. 330-33) the emblematic nature of The Phoenix and Turtle, and links the poem to Loves Martyr on the one hand, and to Murry's notion of "pure" poetry on the other. What is the poem about?--

> It is Shakespeare's variation on the set theme of [Chester's] book, the chaste love of these two improbable birds, their immolation and identity in love and death, emblem of truth in love to eternity. . . . The subject became an emblem, and therefore a release for [Shakespeare's] deepest feeling, which could not be made too precise. For the subject is the death of love. [p. 331]

"But," writes Rowse (p. 331), "it is also [love's] celebration" now released into "a pure world of emblem-language."

> It is in fact poetry pure, the essence of poetry, like Valéry's Charmes or Rilke's Sonnette an Orpheus. Mallarmé erected it in theory, but it is strange, almost psychically strange, that Shakespeare should have provided a specimen of it centuries before, with that organ of intuition unexampled in literature. It is, in short, a surrealist, rather than a metaphysical, poem. [p. 332]

It will be remembered from our Chapter Two, that Rowse links the anthem of the poem to the Sonnets; but he makes no unreasonable assertions in that regard.

The year 1964 saw the publication of O. J. Campbell's edition of The Sonnets, Songs and Poems of Shakespeare (New York: Schoken Books). Campbell's notes on the poem

itself (pp. 338-40) are rudimentary and of no special help, but his remarks concerning the poem (pp. 335-37) are worthy of attention. "The Phoenix and Turtle," writes Campbell,

> is related to Chaucer's Parlement of Fowles and particularly to the abstruse symbolism of emblem literature which flourished during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in England and on the Continent. The distinctive characteristic of an emblem, usually an engraved figure, is that it has a meaning more general and abstruse than the representative significance of the drawing. For example, the figure of the turtledove was a time-honored emblem of conjugal love; while the phoenix was the emblem of something unique. Here it stands for the phoenix's absolute and eternal devotion to the turtledove. . . . [Shakespeare's] theme is the mystical union of the two. [p. 335]

Neither of the two lovers has remained a separate entity; thus the work "becomes a 'metaphysical' quibbling on the ideas of unity and disunity" (p. 335). Campbell thereupon gives a fine summary of J. V. Cunningham's article (above), speaks of Salusbury and Chester, and returns to his notion of the nature of the poem:

> [p. 336] Shakespeare's poem is experimental, not only in its application of a scholastic philosophy to its interpretation, but also in its formal respects. He uses a meter that he nowhere else employs, thirteen four-lined stanzas in trochaics.[40] The 'threnos' consists of three-lined stanzas, also in trochaic meter, each stanza having a single rhyme. [p. 337] The poem also marks Shakespeare's imitation of the technical methods and imaginative resources of the metaphysical poets who were his contemporaries--John Donne, for example.

Thus Campbell rather definitely assigns the poem to the "metaphysical" style.

In the opinion of Sister Mary Bonaventure,[41] the unity of Shakespeare's vision in the poem transcends Neo-Platonic philosophy and indeed has a Christian likeness not heretofore expressed; the Phoenix and Turtle are fused by a mutual flame

> which transforms them, raises them to a new level of being to which the terms of human individuality and unity do not apply. Or if they are made to apply, it can only be analogically, and hence can be expressed only by negation of logical meaning. The negation remains ontologically logical within the Christian concept of grace fundamental in Elizabethan thought. Through grace (the union with Christ by Divine Charity) man is reborn to a new life, a supernatural life in which he is 'one with Christ' yet retains his individuality of soul. Shakespeare's negation echoes that of St. Paul: 'I live now not I, but Christ liveth in me' [Galatians 2:20]. Shakespeare uses here the later technique of Donne's 'Canonization' in applying to concepts of human love the language of theology, but his purpose and vision rise above Donne's fusion of intellect and passion and reach a level of universal truth that remains uniquely his. [p. 75]

Sister Mary's use of the word "purpose," in the last sentence, seems to suggest a belief that Shakespeare's is a Catholic poem. (Perhaps in this respect I am reading in too much.) She moves (p. 75) resolutely to the Threnos, "with its contemplation of the transcendentals":

> The first triplet, in its enumeration of qualities, echoes tersely the idea of number--multiplicity--reduced to <u>simplicity</u>: [stanza 14 quoted]. The closing line of the third triplet [stanza 16] provides another atomic paradox: 'married chastity.' Chester's . . . poem may be trusted as a basis for reading here 'chaste love' . . . a love identified with fidelity or constancy. . . . To what degree Shakespeare's phrasing may have been prompted by the biblical thought that in the resurrection 'they shall neither marry nor be married' remains conjecture. In the metaphysical vein the phrase would permit of translation in

> terms of such love as that celebrated by Donne in his 'Valediction,' love so completely and purely a union of minds and souls that it rests not in physical union, which is the essence of 'sublunary love.' In this [Donne's] sense the term presents no paradox, only a literal statement of fact. [p. 75]

From this point on, Sister Mary is not as clear as she might be. She seems to place the inspired idealism connected with the birds in opposition to the merely human level "of those who approach their tomb" (p. 76). That is, in stanzas 17 and 18,

> The intellectual idiom and rational structure are set into double negation, drawing the reader's attention to transcendent values. Here the communication may appear anti-rational and even self-contradictory. But within the consistent context of Christian philosophy and theology there is no difficulty here in following Shakespeare to a consideration of absolute values in their transcendent relation, on an analogical but rational plane. [p. 76]

Thus the reader is left with "a note of triumph and universal hope," and there is nothing bleak about the Threnos, as communicated in "Shakespeare's unique metaphysical mode" (p. 76). Plainly, for Sister Mary, it is the suggestion of "the union with Christ by Divine Charity," or grace, that governs her conception of the poem's meaning, and she sees two analogical likenesses: man and God, man and woman. Shakespeare has suggested a human (man and woman) relationship and described it in the theological language of the man-and-God relationship. Sister Mary never quite describes how the two planes are merged into one. She raises one truly original point--the question of the degree

to which Shakespeare's phrasing in the Threnos may have been prompted by the biblical thought that in the resurrection "they shall neither marry nor be married"--and then timidly drops it. On balance, one thinks that Sister Mary believes Shakespeare's metaphysical mode to be "unique"--but not unlike the style of Donne. "One is drawn to echo F. P. Wilson's judgement that Shakespeare, had he turned from dramatic verse to nondramatic at the end of the century, might have been the greatest of the metaphysical poets" (p. 74).

Murray Copland's article on the poem appeared in 1965.[42] Copland is brash and occasionally colloquial, in the manner of Empson, but without Empson's saving depth of insight; some readers will find his breezy approach to the poem irritating. He emphasizes that in "the Phoenix and Turtle," human love is under discussion, and that Chester's notion of a pair of lovers so free from flaw as to seem virtually superhuman--a Phoenix, usually complete in itself, that requires a mate--"is not necessarily a muddling idea"; each bird, to Chester, is a poetic hyperbole, a compliment, and it is "on much these straightforward terms" that Shakespeare understands Chester's "brace of birds" (p. 279). Copland objects to certain editors' titling of the poem:

> Countless writers, even Wilson Knight among them, have committed the howler--for surely it is that--of referring to Shakespeare's poem as 'The Phoenix and the Turtle.' If, in Platonic terms, the Phoenix represents the 'idea' of female

> beauty and the Turtle the 'idea' of fidelity, mated they have grown into a third 'idea' which by virtue of its ideality will necessarily have to include these two. This is, of course, the 'idea' of human love--human love in its barely imaginable perfection. Now I take it that an idea cannot be a duality; it must be a unity.[43] Shakespeare appears to have called his poem The Phoenix and Turtle.[44] That is, the subject is one thing, not two.

"It is immaterial," writes Copland, "whether Shakespeare had two actual dead lovers in mind. . . . If such a man and woman could exist and love like this, then The Phoenix and Turtle would be their fitting elegy. . . . I am against overmuch mystifying of this poem, which critics have tended to etherealise out of existence" (p. 280). Shakespeare's acceptance of Chester's idea of a mated Phoenix results in a "natural and likely enough conceit to come upon in a late-Elizabethan Platonizing poem," an idea filched by Donne himself "for his own 'Parliament of Fowls' poem, the delightful St. Valentine's Day Epithalamion," in which the coupling of two Phoenixes is made explicitly human and sexual (pp. 280-81). And it is the "wild eccentricity of the notion" of "platonic love" which causes poets like Lord Herbert of Cherbury "to place such stress on the abstention from physical intercourse" (p. 281). This interesting view is probably original with Copland, who argues further that

> The Shakespeare stanza about 'married Chastitie' comes as a shock because Shakespeare meant it to be so. Poems in the 'metaphysical' mode characteristically proceed by shock tactics . . . . [p. 281]

Shakespeare was trying his hand within "the fashion of which Donne was the acknowledged leader";

> Place stanzas 7-12 of The Phoenix and Turtle beside stanzas 32-33 of Lord Herbert's Ode [upon a Question Moved . . .] and stanzas 9-12 of The Ecstasy and the community of ambition to be brilliantly intellectual and ineffably Platonic shines out. [p. 281]

But Lord Herbert may have been sincere about his conceits, and likewise Shakespeare (p. 283). As for the emphasis on immortality in the poem suggested by some critics,

> I cannot . . . admit that the poem is about immortality in any sense whatsoever, unless perhaps it was conceived as an attack on the belief in immortality.[45] [p. 285]

Copland (p. 285) thinks that Shakespeare's most original twist, in the manner of Donne, is to assert the final death of the Phoenix--all this within the "mischievousness brought in by the Cock Robin framework," of which the reader is reminded in the last line (v. 67),--and that Shakespeare in "The Phoenix and Turtle" was writing "metaphysical" poetry in the manner of Donne. Copland's remaining views (pp. 285-87) are related to the dramatic works of Shakespeare, and so will be found in the last part of this chapter.

According to J. C. Maxwell, editor of The Poems (Cambridge, 1966), "our interpretation must be within the poem itself . . . and it is significant that it should have grown in repute with the growth of interest in 'metaphysical poetry' on the one hand and 'pure poetry' on the other. These two affinities suggest rather different,

though not necessarily incompatible, ways of looking at the poem" (p. xxix).

> Certainly The Phoenix and the Turtle is not characterized by 'the dialectical expression of personal drama,' to borrow a phrase which J. B. Leishman regards as more aptly descriptive of Donne than 'metaphysical.'[46]. . What Shakespeare gives us is, in some measure, scholastic terminology, but without the scholastic argumentation of Donne: instead, we have charged, incantatory statement. [pp. xxix-xxx]

As to the question of "pure poetry,"

> The inclination to describe The Phoenix and the Turtle as 'pure poetry' may in part arise from a sense of the ways in which it is not 'metaphysical.' Yet the first critic to use this actual phrase, J. Middleton Murry, would perhaps not have sharply opposed the two. . . . It is with a somewhat different emphasis that F. T. Prince writes of it as 'pure' poetry in the sense of Poe and Mallarmé. The element of mystery and deliberate obscurity and compression of syntax certainly prompts such comparison. . . . [p. xxx]

At the same time, the framework of bird-ritual militates against over-solemnity, and Prince (see above) has spoken of its Cock-Robin homeliness "'fused with apprehensions of the mystery of death and the migration of the soul.'"

> Yet, is it 'migration'? One of the striking things about the poem is that it is not, in any obvious way, about immortality or re-incarnation. The miracle of love is hymned, the lovers 'are fled/ In a mutual flame from hence,' but though 'fled' may hint at another world, the stress of the poem remains entirely elegiac. . . . [p. xxx]

The notion of the after-life does not arise in "The Phoenix and Turtle" and this is one of the things that distinguishes it from such poems as Donne's Anniversaries,

> which also seems to assert that 'Truth and Beauty buried be,' but which superimpose

> ideas of a traditional heaven. There is, one might say, no longer any need for the death followed by resurrection of the traditional Phoenix. Shakespeare has in the fullest sense, as Helen Gardner says, 'created out of the myth a myth of his own.' The love-union of the Phoenix and the Turtle simply is their death--'the exchanged death, and life, of a fully mutual love' [C. S. Lewis (above)]--not something on which the death tragically supervenes, though within the conventions of the poem it has to be emblematized as a real death. . . . And it is a real death in so far as the experience shadowed forth is unique and inaccessible to all others: 'But in them it were a wonder.' [p. xxxi]

The Platonism ascribed to the poem "is certainly Platonism with a difference," writes Maxwell (p. xxxii), and he quotes approvingly from Ellrodt's p. 104 (see above, this Chapter) to the effect that Shakespeare "'is concerned only with the perfect union achieved by the lovers' souls, an idea perhaps more closely related to Christian mysticism than genuine Platonism.'" The following remarks are in Maxwell's own voice:

> A selection from the language of Platonism (or Neoplatonism) is, in fact, just one of the modes of expression that Shakespeare finds ready to hand. As in Antony and Cleopatra the use of apocalyptic imagery, analysed by Miss Ethel Seaton [Review of English Studies, XXII (1946), 219-24], does not make the play a religious allegory, but is rather a borrowing for Shakespeare's own purposes of a type of evocative language specially well adapted for conveying the relationship of the lovers and the significance of their fate, so in The Phoenix and the Turtle, in spite of Platonic echoes, and of a formulation reminiscent of the doctrine of the Trinity,[47] Shakespeare 'nowhere suggests an allegory of religious mysteries or even of divine love' [Ellrodt, p. 105]. It is just that such formulations give the nearest analogue to what can be said, or hinted, about this exemplary love. And in

> the upshot, the description 'metaphysical' is not, after all, so inapplicable, so long as we do not just take that epithet to mean 'like Donne.' To quote Ellrodt [p. 107] again, 'Intellectually, Shakespeare is less inventive, less witty than Donne: he rings the changes on one idea instead of striking out fresh conceits from the traditional "two-in-one" paradox.' [pp. xxxii-xxxiii]

II

It is noteworthy that, the more recent the article's date, the more frequently one finds its author pointing out fundamental distinctions between the "metaphysical" style of Donne and that of Shakespeare in "The Phoenix and Turtle." That is to say, the opinions of such commentators as Lewis (1954), Alvarez (1955), Gardner (1960), Prince (1960, 1963), Ellrodt (1962), and Maxwell (1966) cannot lightly be set aside by future commentators; and each of these scholars, thoroughly conversant with Donne's poetry, is at pains to suggest that Shakespeare, in "the Phoenix and Turtle," is not like Donne. There has been a narrowing of critical focus. On the other hand, many view Shakespeare's poem as a stylistic approximation of Donne: one has only to scan Rollins:

> [Frank] MATHEW (Image of Sh., 1922, pp. 114 f.) comments . . .'If Shakespeare wrote these beautiful verses he never wrote anything else like them. . . . He may have echoed Donne's brooding austerity. This is one of Donne's themes, as in The Relic, and in The Funeral in which he described himself as Love's Martyr'. . . . [J. Q.] ADAMS (Life, 1923, pp. 341 f.) . . . [suggests] that 'Shakespeare . . . wrote a graceful funeral song, in which, in the metaphysical style of John Donne, he played with

> the ideas that marriage makes two into one and that "one is no number."' [pp. 578, 577]

In the same camp, one finds Ryland (1934), Guthrie (1944), G. Wilson Knight (1955), Henri Fluchère (1959),[48] F. P. Wilson (1960), Daniel Seltzer (1961), O. J. Campbell (1964), Copland (1965), and Empson (1966), who in his essay (cited above) calls the poem Shakespeare's "only consistent use of the Metaphysical style" (p. 147). I prefer to align myself with those who see basic differences between the manner of Shakespeare in the poem and the usual emphases, stylistic and otherwise, of John Donne; these differences are well detailed by Alvarez, Gardner, Prince, Ellrodt, and by Maxwell in his summary. I have paraphrased some of the important points:

> Shakespeare is less obviously 'knowing' with his metaphors; the associational language leads to speculation, and not human particularity; Shakespeare argues formally and in the abstract from a single literary trope (paradox)--Donne usually starts from an analogical hypothesis and argues two parallel cases at once (Alvarez). Unlike Donne's similar usages, Shakespeare's use of analytic terminology is free and rhapsodic; Donne's analytic procedures are distinguished by their concentration and deliberation as applied to sexual experience (Prince). Strong lines are not enough, as riddles, to place Shakespeare with the Metaphysical poets stylistically; Shakespeare is too remote, and too symbolic, and the world of his poem is static (Gardner). The 'two-in-one' theme is used, as it is in Donne's later poems, but the union achieved is spiritual and not sexual; Donne uses the Phoenix myth in <u>The Canonization</u> and the 1613 <u>Epithalamion</u> to emphasize the sexual and human, Shakespeare's handling of the paradox is relatively serious and philosophical; Donne is abstract and particular, Shakespeare focuses on universals; intellectually, Shakespeare is less inventive, less witty than Donne,

> mining variations on one idea instead of providing fresh conceits from the traditional 'two-in-one' paradox, which Donne would have inserted into a new line of argument to account for a personal experience (Ellrodt). In Shakespeare's poem, there is none of the dialectical expression of personal drama characteristic of Donne; there is scholastic terminology without scholastic argumentation, and charged, incantatory statement; there is no appeal to the after-life--unlike the Anniversaries of Donne and their recourse to notions of a traditional heaven (Maxwell).

Murry's remark about "pure" poetry has led to observed parallels in the works of Poe and Mallarmé, by Prince; and even to A. L. Rowse's observation of likenesses in works by Valéry and Rilke. Indeed, according to Rowse (above), Shakespeare's poem is "a surrealist, rather than a metaphysical, poem." We do not have the space, unfortunately, to pursue these suggestions, and for the moment they must be labeled ipse dixit.

The last word on the subject of Platonism, or Neo-Platonism, in the poem, presumably belongs to Ellrodt (p. 104), who thinks that Shakespeare "is concerned only with the perfect union achieved by the lovers' souls, an idea perhaps more closely related to Christian mysticism than genuine Platonism"; and yet Shakespeare "nowhere suggests an allegory of religious mysteries or even of divine love" (p. 105). This sensible reading does not rule out the sound labor of Cunningham, nor even my own suggestion of Plotinian likenesses (note 13 to above); it simply qualifies any reading that fails to balance the tentative and divergent views found in this chapter. Modern

scholarship has shown what the poem could be, and what it is not; much remains to be said about what the poem *is*.

III

Let us now turn to the "dramatic" interpretations of "The Phoenix and Turtle," those which find certain matters of style and content to be common to the poem and the plays. Perhaps the first example of this critical tendency is met with in Charles Downing's article in *The Shrine* (1902),[49] in which Downing writes that

> the relations of the Turtle to the Phoenix inevitably suggest the relations of Orsino to Viola, of Ferdinand to Miranda, of Florizel to Perdita, even of Leontes to Hermione, and certainly of Posthumus to Imogen. And in all these cases it appears, upon examination, that the story of the Turtle and Phoenix, of the Idealist and his Ideal, is reproduced in human types. And the due consideration of these types, and of the plays in which they appear, leads to the conclusion that Shakespeare had not only an Ideal to which he was devoted, but that he thought much and long about it; that he had, in short, a philosophy of the Ideal, which in his works . . . he could only convey symbolically.[50]

In *The Imperial Theme* (London: Oxford, 1931), G. Wilson Knight (pp. 349 f.) followed much the same path. The following is Rollins' summary (p. 580):

> In Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* and *Antony and Cleopatra* 'extreme love-consciousness is considered a kind of death. . . . In death there is no unfaithfulness. Troilus forecasts the vision of *Antony and Cleopatra* in thus associating death and Cressida. . . . Moreover, this is the very theme of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. . . . . [It] and *Antony and Cleopatra* are reciprocally illuminating. . . . Their vision is . . . a "fearless, uncompromising assurance." It is an assurance of immortality, in terms of "death"

> and "love." These are shown as synchronized, mated in time.'

"Knight's notion," writes Rollins (p. 580) is developed at length in a discussion of 'The Shakespearian Aviary' appended to The Shakespearian Tempest, 1932 (pp. 320-324)":

> 'I have observed instances where birds are metaphorically related to qualities specifically human. There is one instance where what must be considered a specifically human theme is given an exact and comprehensive "bird" formulation. I refer to The Phoenix and The Turtle . . . [which is] a compressed miniature of . . . [Antony and Cleopatra]. Its theme is the same: the blending of duality in unity, of life and death in love's immortality. . . . One of Shakespeare's finest visions is well embodied in The Phoenix and the Turtle. Our bird references will help our intuitive understanding of the poem. It is a vision of love's aspiring immortality, upwinging beyond the world of appearance and multiplicity to the air and fire and music of union, the empyrean of divinity. . . . [ll. 1-4 quoted] This opening stanza, perhaps, may be best explained by saying that it suggests the quality of the Romeo and Juliet vision. The detailed analogy, however, is not close or very valuable. Next, we have MacBeth. . . . [ll. 5-8 quoted] "Harbinger," "fiend," "augur," "fever"--all call to mind the same words in MacBeth; and "precurrer" also more indirectly recalls the play. Thus are our "evil" birds to be warded off, as evil forms of life are charmed away from Titania's bower, to give place to Philomel's music. Thus, in a Cymbeline stanza . . . . [ll. 9-12 quoted] I have already observed how the eagle is bird of grandeur. In Cymbeline he is very important, both as the Roman eagle and as Jove's bird, occurring in the Vision of Jupiter.[51] . . . [Cymbeline, V.iv.115-19, quoted] He occurs in other resplendent passages throughout the play. So all tyrannic birds are to absent themselves; even, perhaps, falcons, in so far as pride may be guilty and earthbound rather than pure air and fire. Next, we have the swan. . . . [ll. 13-16 quoted] "Defunctive music," "death-divining." Now we are in The Merchant of Venice:

> > Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
> > Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
> > Fading in music. (III. ii. 43)

> Music is truly "death-divining" in Shakespeare, especially in his final plays. The swan is indeed apt here: symbol of white purity and music-in-death. Next we have the "crow," often used as a symbol of blackness in Shakespeare, here placed, shall we say, in a Hamlet stanza. . . . [11. 21-24 quoted] "Mutual flame"--fire imagery is powerful here: so later we have love "shining" or "flaming" (33, 35), "stars of love" (51), "cinders" (55).' [Rollins, pp. 580-81]

The remainder of the 1932 Wilson Knight views summarized by Rollins are found in this Chapter (above).

Kenneth Muir and Sean O'Loughlin in The Voyage to Illyria (1937) do not neglect the dramatic parallels suggested by the poem. "The Phoenix and Turtle" was published in 1601:--

> About eight years were to pass before Shakespeare was able to embody these co-supremes in a play, but it was no longer a chaste union. The fidelity was founded on sexual love. The proclamation that 'Loue hath Reason, Reason none' foreshadows Antony and Cleopatra. To Reason, and, alas, to Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Antony and Cleopatra is All for Lust, and Antony sacrifices his honour for the sake of a harlot. To Shakespeare, that actuality was a ludicrous distortion of the reality behind it. He, like the priests, blessed Cleopatra when she was riggish, and Antony is hailed as the Arabian bird. It is noteworthy, too, that bird imagery is more frequent in this play than in any other. [p. 136]
>
> The Phoenix . . . is a symbol not only of immortality, but also of death, and the emphasis on death and mourning is a parallel to the thoughts of death in Julius Caesar and Hamlet. Shakespeare, at the turn of the century, stood on the threshold of the tragic period. The experience which finds expression in the poem enabled him to endure to the end. Love was the star that enabled his 'wandring barke' to survive the 'tempest.' In the plays that follow upon this new attitude, notably Antony and Cleopatra and King Lear, his concept of order in the Universe is expressed as a belief in constancy and faithfulness, a constancy and faithfulness that, in the tragedies, receives death as its reward, and is the antithesis

> of the betrayal that compassed the death of Caesar. [pp. 137-38]

Earlier in this Chapter we surveyed the views of Miss M. D. H. Parker, and her notion of the pivotal importance of Troilus and Cressida, a play whose revelation "falls into three . . . separate exposés, each reinforcing the others in declaring, with The Phoenix and the Turtle, 'single nature's double name'" (p. 79). Parker relates Shakespeare's Threnos (stanzas 14-15, 17) to the theme of Troilus and Cressida: in each, "the apparent beauty is not real beauty, nor is the apparent truth, real truth" (p. 87), leading theologically and philosophically to a state of imperfect being. Yet Parker sees hope in the very title of the poem--"The redemption of love becomes in the last plays the redemption of being. But not yet. The lyric may short-circuit the problem; the drama does not" (p. 88).

The attitude of C. S. Lewis in English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (1954) is more general:

> Approached, as we usually approach it, after long familiarity with the plays, 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' has . . . another interest. We feel that we have been admitted to the natura naturans from which the natura naturata of the plays proceeded: as though we had reached the garden of Adonis and seen where Imogens and Cordelias are made. [p. 509]

A far more detailed approach to the dramatic possibilities is provided by Ronald Bates in his 1955 essay.[52] After a long discussion of bird imagery in the poem, Bates turns to a likeness in Hamlet:

> As far as we know, Shakespeare was writing, had just written, or was about to write, 'The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,' when he wrote 'let the bird of loudest lay.' This, I feel, considerably strengthens the suggestion that the cock is the bird of stanza one. Furthermore, this leads us to the second problem with which I wish to deal. If we consider the proximity in time of the composition of Hamlet and 'The Phoenix and Turtle' it is not irrelevant to examine the grave-side scenes that are presented in the two works. Are there any similarities, other than what could be expected in a treatment of the particular situation, between Ophelia's funeral and that of our birds? [p. 26]

Bates notices that "the line referring to the swan priest: 'Lest the requiem lack his right,'" seems to be "a more weighted idea than the poem alone demands," and it reminds him of Ophelia's burial, "for in it there was a danger of the funeral lacking sacerdotal sanctification, because of the suspicion of suicide" (p. 26). He quotes from Hamlet, V. i. [in the Kittredge edition (1936), lines 241-42, 248-61] and calls attention to "obsequies" (249), "trumpet" (253), and "requiem" (260). "One notices at once," writes Bates (p. 26), "that Ophelia's 'virgin rites' lack a 'requiem.' There are other verbal links, besides 'requiem' (which is used by Shakespeare only these two times)--'obsequy' and 'trumpet.'"

> I hasten to add that I do not claim that the Phoenix is Ophelia, though I feel that almost as good a case could be made for her as for Lady Bedford or Lady Salisbury. What I do say, however, is that the verbal links between the poem and the play, particularly if we also consider the 'trumpet' link with the Ghost scene in Act I,[53] can scarcely be pure accident, though they may not necessarily indicate . . . a formal equivalence . . . the two works were

> written at approximately the same time, and both, moreover, are much concerned with 'constancy' and 'chastity.' [pp. 26-27]

There is something in the poem's tone that is "puzzling"; and Bates thinks Bonnard (see Chapter Two, above) correctly identifies "a mocking or comic tone"; however, as purveyor of the "dirty-joke" theory Bonnard "over-plays his hand," despite the fact that "there is more than a suggestion of the ridiculous in 'The Phoenix and Turtle,' particularly in the threnos" (p. 27). Verses 60-61 in particular

> sound almost like a Falstaffian quip at some over fanatic Puritan pair. The double-rhyme, extended for three lines, could scarcely help hovering on the verge of comic verse. An examination of the other uses Shakespeare makes of this kind of rhyme only confirms this. [p. 28]

In support of his remark, Bates (pp. 28-29) cites fifteen occasions in which the rhyming of three consecutive lines or more occurs in the plays, and links the occurrence to the ridiculous.[54]

> This kind of rhyme-scheme, then, has very definite associations in Shakespeare's work. Two general elements can be recognized--the comic, and the magical or proverbial. The second element, which is closely connected with some of the earliest types of poetry--for example, Old English riddle poems and Finnish runot-- has a serious poetic function in the threnos, giving it some of the objective, eternal qualities of an actual epitaph carved on the funeral urn. However, we cannot ignore the third stanza of the threnos, nor avoid putting it alongside the three lines from Hamlet [Kittredge III.ii.159-61, the words of Prologue]. When we do so, we are constrained to say, with Hamlet, 'Is this a prologue [or a threnos], or the posy of a ring?' [p. 29]

There is a mixture of "the profoundly serious and the

ludicrous," the latter "intrusive, if not disruptive," because there is a clash between Chester's notion of constancy, chastity, and love, and Shakespeare's attitude towards the same entities as expressed in Hamlet or Troilus and Cressida, writes Bates (p. 29).

> Bonnard says, 'All the poems that follow, by Shakespeare, Marston, Chapman, Jonson, and another poet who signs "Ignoto," refer, in accordance with the title, to the subject of the Turtle and the Phoenix: to their marriage, that is to the death of the Phoenix, to their constancy in love, and to their reward in a new little phoenix their daughter.' The point is, of course, that this, as regards Shakespeare's contribution, is wrong. The threnos says explicitly, 'Leaving no posterity.' There can be no doubt of this: Shakespeare on this point contradicts Chester and the others. [p. 29]

In Hamlet and Troilus and Cressida, plays of the period, the emphasis is on inconstancy, unchastity, and lust; and there is, "as critics have pointed out, almost unbalanced repugnance to the relation between the sexes" (p. 30).

> At this point in Shakespeare's career there is no place for a simple eulogizing of marital faith and love, particularly if the physical aspect of the relationship is considered. . . . It seems significant that the one place where the whole problem of the divergent attitudes is most obvious, the stanza where the two most important aspects of Chester's allegory--the consummation and the child--are denied, should also be the place where the ludicrous element intrudes. [p. 30]

"One final point about the poem as a whole," writes Bates (p. 30), "should be considered. We have seen that its structure is tripartite: the funeral party, the anthem, and the threnos. The progression of 'speakers' of the poem follows this division."

> Now, the manner in which these sections are spoken is dramatic, in a skeletal form. In a way, 'The Phoenix and Turtle' is the outline of a drama, or rather, perhaps, what is left when all action has been reduced to narrative or removed. The first five stanzas are part of a dramatis personae, the anthem gives the substance of the drama in a highly intellectualized and compressed form, while the threnos is the epilogue. That something of all this is in Shakespeare's mind is obvious, for Reason 'made this threne . . . . As chorus to their tragic scene.' It is scarcely surprising that the artist, who at the time is putting all his powers into the dramatic form, should make of a short poem, like 'The Phoenix and Turtle,' almost a tragedy--in the form of a posy of a ring. [p. 30]

I think that Mr. Ronald Bates has unduly emphasized the "posy of a ring" likenesses in Shakespeare's threnos, and has too often found quantitative parallels when qualitative ones were wanted. His over-lengthy bird discussion is tendentious. Nonetheless, this has too often been fobbed off as a "bird" article, and his suggestions of dramatic likenesses in matters of structure (see Bates' final paragraph, above) have been seriously entertained by Daniel Seltzer (see below). One may disagree with Bates' remarks concerning the threnos, but they usefully point up something anomalous about the Threnos as compared to what has gone before in Loves Martyr and in Shakespeare's own contribution: that is, the Threnos does not readily follow.

Professor M. C. Bradbrook's reply[55] rejects the ludicrous and the obscene overtones shadowed by Bates, and asserts that the poem is about birds:

> The idea of the human pair is behind the image: but the image of a human union is excluded. It is irrelevant to think in terms of Romeo and Juliet. That is why I find the suggestion of impropriety so surprising. For of course impropriety depends on the unexpected presentation of the human animal caught in a purely natural function. And to admit the human image here is, I must confess, to me a lapse not only in understanding but in taste. [p. 357]

"Married chastity" would not be associated with impotence or abstinence by an Elizabethan, writes Miss Bradbrook (p. 357), and "infirmity" had also "a spiritual meaning" (p. 358).

> The Phoenix and the Turtle do not propagate: the human lovers have not left their equal (it is only Marston, and neither Jonson nor Chapman, who suggests the possibility of a new Phoenix): Truth and Beauty do not make more than a fugitive appearance on earth. [p. 358]

One allows Miss Bradbrook a share of the argument on philological grounds, but it does not seem to me that the poem's statement can be divorced from its implicitly human reference; nor would we expect Shakespeare to make a poem that entirely forgets the human. In fact, <u>contra</u> Miss Bradbrook, it seems plain that all the contributing poets had some human reference in mind; and according to William Empson in his 1966 essay (cited above), the affair of the birds, if conducted by birds, would have been downright sexual. In general, I do not think Miss Bradbrook has thought about the poem a great deal; and in spite of the few excesses of his article, I think that Mr. Bates has.

The emphasis of I. A. Richards' 1958 article[56] is on a close reading of the diction, as might be expected, but

these matters are too explicit to be covered here. (Richards' article is "based on a talk in a series given during the winter 1957-1958 over WGBH-TV in Boston, and distributed nationally by the Educational Television and Radio Center" [p. 86 n.].) He is aware of dramatic analogies, and remarks that the poem as "choral service contains an anthem, a song of praise and gladness; a requiem, a solemn dirge for the repose of the dead; and a threne or threnos, a lamentation or dirge of honor" (p. 89).

> This singular involvement--each part of the poem being included in and produced by, put into a mouth created in the part before it--has a lot to do with the power and spring of this most concentered and compacted poem. [p. 90]

Reason, "in itself confounded," is made to speak in character; and, thinks Richards, the whole is "very Shakespearian, this dramatic actuality!" (p. 92). His concluding remarks emphasize the human relevance of the poem:

> This poem . . . is not about any such high and remote abstractions but about two people; two people, who may be thought to have been 'the very personifications, the very embodiments,' as we lightly say, of beauty and truth, though they are spoken of in the poem as two birds. That is how the poem feels, no doubt about it. But, as certainly, there is a religious quality in its movement, a feeling in it as though we were being related through it to something far beyond any individuals. This Phoenix and this Turtle have a mythic scale to them, as though through them we were to become participants in something ultimate. [p. 94]

Let us return to studies in which explicit parallels are made between the plays and Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and Turtle." The very title of Daniel Seltzer's 1961 essay,

"'Their Tragic Scene': The Phoenix and Turtle and Shakespeare's Love Tragedies" (cited above) suggests that Seltzer has taken a cue from Bates (above) and perhaps from others. Seltzer's method is made obvious on his first page:

> Juliet's 'What's in a name?' . . . draws attention to an aspect of literary composition which obviously intrigued Shakespeare throughout his career. Theseus describes it as part of the poet's function, as a challenge of articulation--to give 'to airy nothing/ A local habitation and a name' (Dream V.i.16-17). The tricks of 'strong imagination,' he goes on, demand a localization of emotion, so that capriciously 'imagining some fear' in a dark night, 'how easy is a bush suppos'd a bear!' In larger terms, Theseus' subject is the tenuous reliability of language to name something, whether Montague's son or the composite of emotions called love. . . . The deceptions and follies of comedy, even as they delight us in A Midsummer Night's Dream, are not distant from those frailties of human perception which, in Shakespeare's tragedies, frequently prevent distinction between good and evil by appearances alone. . . .[T]he horror Shakespeare desired to raise in Iago's 'I am not what I am' may have been greater than we realize. [p. 91]

"Again and again," writes Seltzer (p. 91), "characters probe into the defining characteristics of love, hate, beauty, or constancy--that which is 'in a name'--frequently to their own bewilderment." Seltzer provides examples (pp. 91-93) from Romeo and Juliet, Love's Labour's Lost, Hamlet, All's Well that Ends Well, and 1 Henry the Fourth, many of which contain terms found in "The Phoenix and Turtle." In the overblown speech of Romeo (I.i.182-88), he identifies "Shakespeare's interest in the paradoxical jointng of sometimes opposite properties, strangely altering themselves to form a new 'essence,' or remaining strongly

themselves--in either case, producing objectified qualities which invite moral analysis" (p. 92).

> These examples indicate that Shakespeare's interest in the vocabulary of definition was general and in no way systematic. Such definition may serve characterization or over-all theme; but, as in the cases of Juliet and Hamlet,[57] sometimes it appears simply as a protest of the difficulty or unreliability of descriptive definition (although this, in turn, may be highly important thematically). Occasionally, a character expresses a desire to analyze the mystery of human composition, and the articulate expression of inability to understand renders more powerful such speeches as Lear's 'Let us [sic] anatomize Regan. See what breeds about her heart' (III.vi.80). Not infrequently, however, this expression becomes more complicated, for a character will tell us, to his joy or despair, not only that identifying properties are hard to verbalize and trust, but that property itself can actually change--to paraphrase a line from 'The Phoenix and Turtle,' that the self will not be the same. [p. 93]

Seltzer provides just examples from Othello, Richard the Second, Hamlet, and As You Like It; and he isolates as peculiarly Shakespearian the sentiments of Sonnet CXVI, "Love is not love/ Which alters when it alteration finds. . . . But bears it out even to the edge of doom."

> The sonnet states the ideal . . . . Shakespeare's most powerful irony, pervading his tragedies of love--that the purity of love, while stronger than any other human achievement, cannot survive in the reasonable world--does not enter the last plays, where the power of love to cure folly is efficacious within the literary frame of the tragi-comic romance; but especially in Romeo and Juliet, Othello, and Antony and Cleopatra the irony is played out until 'Beauty, truth, and rarity' may be admired only in death, with 'nothing left remarkable/ Beneath the visiting moon.' Goodness may be born of evil when the decorum of the plot requires reformation, but it must have been one of Shakespeare's

> firmest beliefs that the constancy or metamorphosis of a human quality ultimately represented the power or frailty of man's will.
>
> Shakespeare's use of such terms as 'essence,' 'distincts,' 'division,' 'number,' 'simple,' and 'property,' in 'The Phoenix and Turtle,' is not unique in his works. Because the poem is so concise, such vocabulary is immediately noticeable, but neither the words themselves nor the poetic and moral interests behind them are different from the statement of such interests in the plays. [pp. 93-93]

Concerning the notion of Walter J. Ong (see above) that the poem is a metaphor for metaphor, Seltzer writes that

> Ong's approach is an instructive one, but we must remember as well that the story in the poem is set forth concretely and explicitly. It is charged with action which keeps not only the birds but also the abstracted qualities of constancy, truth, and beauty as discrete agents (actors might be the better word), which build, gradually, the total meaning. In this sense the whole movement of the poem, much as in the plot of a play, is a metaphor; and the movement is clear on a literal level, no matter how pregnant it may be with larger implication. [p. 94]

There is an "energetic action which runs through the poem," and it is based on "one of Shakespeare's favorite observations--the potential metamorphosis of an 'identifying' property." Indeed, "the way in which 'The Phoenix and Turtle' states the wonder of love is similar to that way in which the emotions of some of Shakespeare's tragic characters are played off against each other in the course of the plays." Seltzer's objection to Cunningham's study is that, with especial reference to verses 27, 29, 39-40, Cunningham hews too strictly to scholastic sources--"he illuminates the author's vocabulary, but does not fully make use of it" (p. 95):

> Shakespeare's terms are somehow active, as the courting, joining, and death of lovers in drama would be active. The scholastic doctrine of the union of the Persons of the Trinity, whether or not it was in the back of Shakespeare's mind, is a description after the fact, and is therefore as dramatically static as it may be, indeed, potentially poetic. All St. Thomas says about the Persons of the Trinity is that They co-exist in a certain relationship; in the poem, a coming together previous to union is emphasized as much as the wonder of the joining: 'Hearts remote, yet not asunder,' and [stanza 9 quoted].

This is most like "actors on a stage, moving toward death, their paths determined by the potential for metamorphosis within the fixed properties of love and constancy themselves." And whereas Cunningham writes that Turtle and Phoenix have passed "into the real life of Ideas from the unreal life of materiality" on his p. 272, it is Seltzer's opinion that "there is no mention or strong implication of an afterlife, platonic or Christian"; and he recurs to dramatic terminology, describing Reason as "the voice of a worldly 'audience'" in his discussion of "the sense of action implicit in the poem's concrete 'plot'" (p. 96).

Seltzer applies these "dramatic" concepts to the poem (pp. 96-97), using a variety of critical reference points: the poem's careful statement of "the nature of love to remain always itself, with a power stronger than the power of two identifiable ('propertied') individuals to remain separate and discrete quantities" is compared to similar statements in a variety of dramatic works:

> To achieve the stature of tragedy, the individual lover must remain a 'distinct,' even in the unification of love. This is why the

> emphasis on distance and distinction in 'The Phoenix and Turtle' is as strong as that on the merging--indeed, the maintaining of discrete actors causes the hyperbole of paradox in the anthem (stanzas 7-10). . . . Very early in Antony and Cleopatra, the hero embraces Cleopatra and states his disregard for Rome: 'The nobleness of life/ Is to do thus; when such a mutual pair/ And such a twain can do't' (I.i.36-38). Like the Phoenix, to which Antony is compared (III.ii.12), and the Turtle, he and Cleopatra 'stand up peerless,' and it is no accident that Reason's cry in the poem--'How true a twain/ Seemeth this concordant one!' (45-46)--is echoed in the play. . . . 'Antony,' like 'Romeo,' is a tenuous definition of the persistence of true love. [pp. 97-98]

Concerning stanza 16 of the poem and some of its critical attention, Seltzer refers to Ronald Bates' assumption of questionable overtones and to Miss Bradbrook's reply (see both above): "I agree that in the poem 'chastity' need not mean 'abstinence,' but that the reason for 'no posterity' is the inability of a Phoenix and a dove to mate," as Bradbrook has written, does not ring true" (p. 99). In most of the important respects, Seltzer goes along with Bates. His own opinion, however, is more derivative:

> What may still give confusion is 'married chastity' as a reason for 'no posterity.' But if the phrase means the state of married fidelity so complete and constant that lust is no part of it, a sexual level . . . is not excluded. In Shakespeare's poem there is 'no posterity' because no issue could possibly equal the lovers. 'To think in terms of Romeo and Juliet'--and of Antony and Cleopatra--is, I believe, entirely relevant [contra Bradbrook]. [p. 99]

That is, with respect to the poem,

> The merging of the lovers . . . actively defines love, for without the paradoxical union of constance and beauty there is nothing for Reason to observe which cannot be described in the ordinary words of the material world. . . . . We are told that Reason composes 'this threne. . . . As chorus to their tragic scene' (49, 52). Although no definition of tragedy precisely applicable to Shakespeare's plays had been formulated, it is doubtful, in a poem so deliberately planned and so carefully written, that Shakespeare would have used loosely the theatrical words 'Chorus' and 'tragic' although they might well have come to mind automatically. . . . We must remember that not only is the 'tragic scene' in the poem meant to be 'sad,' but that the 'scene' itself includes the action of the consummation as well as the passing away of the lovers 'in a mutual flame.' We know this because we are told that Reason sees it, and because we sense action in the paradoxes of the anthem.[58] [pp. 99-100]

Having pointed up certain key dramatic parallels (most of which we have not been able to quote), Seltzer concludes that "The Phoenix and Turtle" is

> a lyric statement of truths which the tragedies set forth dramatically, constructed so as to reveal not only the inevitable doom of 'the sovereignty of nature' when it achieves the pure essence of love, but also to describe in some measure the emotional effects of such action. Shakespeare invites an ideal audience, and, although it may appear a quibble, we may observe that Reason is moved. The [effect] of the Threnos . . . is similar to the concluding speeches of Fortinbras, Albany, Malcolm, Lodovico, and Octavius Caesar, which clear the air of confusion, but are not meant to remove the memory of death and sorrow. Perhaps most of all they command admiration, and none more than Caesar, the observing voice of Reason in Egypt: 'Come, Dolabella, see/High order in this great solemnity.' [p. 101]

One need not entirely agree with Seltzer to applaud his approach to "The Phoenix and Turtle,"--he studies the poem's diction, form and content and relates these to

dramatic theme, tone, and sentiment. It is an approach which does little to explicate the poem, but that is not Seltzer's intention. Seltzer shows us that the poem is peculiarly Shakespearean, and that it is representative of Shakespeare's major concerns. His is surely the most sophisticated of the "dramatic" approaches to the poem, drawing as it does, upon recent studies for background and making of divergent criticism a little amphitheater; while at the same time Seltzer follows up his own understanding of thematic likenesses in the plays, and creates of them a total suggestion.

Robert Ellrodt in his 1962 article (cited above) sees more usual connections with Shakespeare the dramatic artist:

> The very mood of the poem, the aching sense that 'truth may seem but cannot be' for 'Love and Constancy is dead,' would admirably suit the state of mind one can reasonably ascribe to Shakespeare in 1600-1. The latest commentators have hardly done justice to Heinrich Straumann's interpretation of the poem. His contention is that the union of Truth and Beauty achieved in the mutual flame of the Phoenix and the Turtle is contrasted with their present divorce in a world which may still hold lovers 'either true or fair,' but cannot allow 'the pure union of the two qualities in one and the same woman.' In such a mood did Hamlet send Ophelia to a nunnery. In a mood hardly different did the dramatist in his later plays lodge 'beauty, truth and rarity' in one woman, one Phoenix-creature, miraculously preserved from this world's taints, like Marina among the bawds, Perdita among her flowers, Miranda on her desert island.[59] [p. 108]

The same sort of passing attention to "dramatic" parallels is found in Sister Mary Bonaventure's 1964 article

(cited above):

> In the last decade . . . there have been heard no concerted denials that the poem provides a fascinating mirror in which the reader may catch reflections of the concepts and the idiom of Shakespeare's plays and sonnets: the 'marriage of true minds'; the 'pair of loving turtledoves/ That could not live asunder. . . .' in 1 Henry VI; Helena and Hermia living as though in one body in the romantic world of A Midsummer Night's Dream. [p. 72]

Murray Copland ends his 1965 article (cited above) with a comparison of the ending of the poem to the "drained, stunned close of King Lear. . . . The Phoenix and Turtle is genuinely a poem of mourning, a meditation on the hard fact of mortality. It is thus centrally, not peripherally, Shakespearian" (pp. 285-86).

> In the world of King Lear there is no revealed God, no saving Christ sent in from outside. If human beings want the amelioration of the Christ-function, they can have it only in so far as they are prepared to shoulder the burden themselves and become Christ to the extent that a human being is capable of doing this. Only human beings can 'show the heavens more just,' by enacting heaven in their own behaviour. [p. 286]

Shakespeare ultimately "insists on the illusoriness of consolations based on fulfilment anywhere but here, in this life"; approaching is "inevitable and total dissolution" (p. 286). "If The Phoenix and Turtle does not, after all, impress us as a work loomingly tragic in the manner of King Lear, that is partly because of the poem's most subtle paradox, slipped gently into the last two stanzas" (pp. 286-87).

> If, as we are told, Truth and Beautie are irrecoverably buried, who are these surviving

> 'true and [faire]' mourners who are invited to sigh a prayer--'bragging,' 'seeming' imposters? Obviously not. Human beings (or birds) may still be born who may be called true or beautiful, but we cannot believe, in this moment of particular grieving, that we shall ever want to revere them as the embodied 'ideas' of Truth and Beautie. . . . 'Ideas' are strange birds; and, poor birds, they're dead.
>
> Humorous or not, the paradox of these last stanzas is paralleled in the paradoxical closing lines of King Lear:
>
> > The oldest hath borne most, we that are yong,
> > Shall never see so much, nor live so long.
> > [p. 287]

The most recent editor of The Poems, J. C. Maxwell (cited above), does not mention Daniel Seltzer's study, and perhaps he would not agree with its premises. According to Maxwell,

> It is because just once in his life Shakespeare took, or made, the opportunity of fixing this 'utter rejection of common experience' [Ellrodt, p. 105] in a way that is excluded by the dramatic medium that his poem is both so utterly unlike anything else he ever wrote and yet, now that we have it, such a rare and irreplaceable possession. [p. xxxiii]

And yet surely Seltzer's is the best of the attempts to link the poem to Shakespeare's plays, and it is well worth the attention that has been given here.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

[1]See our Chapter One (above) for the views of John M. Robertson in Part III, pp. 105-12 of his Shakespeare Canon (1922-1932).

[2]"The Phoenix and the Turtle: A Liberal Plea for Symbolic Orthodoxy," Anglican Theological Review, XXVI (1944), 10-13.

[3]("Ranjee") Shahani (1946), J. V. Cunningham (1952), and Alfred Alvarez (1955)--each to be summarized below--address themselves to similar matters. However, J. C. Maxwell, editor of The Poems (Cambridge, 1966), p. 22, n. 7, names the earliest critic, presumably, to observe the same symbolical relationships seen by Guthrie 150 years later. That is, as Maxwell writes, "the contrast between distinction and division inevitably recalls the Athanasian creed, 'neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance,' as Walter Whiter (with some disquiet) noted . . . ."

In his Specimen of a Commentary on Shakespeare . . . . On a New Principle of Criticism, Derived from Mr. Locke's Doctrine (London, 1794), pp. 257-58, Whiter writes that

> There is . . . one very remarkable passage, which appears to have so direct a reference to a sacred subject, that our Poet cannot, I fear, be cleared from the imputation of profaneness, unless we should imagine that the powers of his fancy were seriously employed in the service of his piety, to explain or adorn the most profound and exquisite topic of theological subtlety. In our Poet, two only are described, as at once united and divided in the social bonds of separation. [Stanzas 7-13 quoted from The Passionate Pilgrim (p. 343 f.), in Edmond Malone's 1790 edition of the Plays and Poems.]
>
> If we can induce ourselves to believe that Shakspeare really intended a serious allusion to the great mystery of the Catholic Faith, we may 'accept without a blush' the assistance of a pious bard, who has at least enlivened the awful gloom by the embellishments of fancy, and rendered the obscurity luminous by the brilliant conceptions of a bold and fertile imagination.

[4]If these lines are accurately reproduced by Guthrie as printed, the editor has placed the last two verses of Stanza 7 before the first two verses of that stanza.

[5]Ranjee G. Shahani, "The Phoenix and the Turtle," N & Q, 191 (1946), 99-101; ibid., pp. 120-23.

[6]I consider sympathetic communion to be Ranjee's special contribution to the poem's attention. It is an over-riding mystical or animistic notion that probably accounts for the vagueness (to Western sensibilities) of his approach.

[7]Shahani's remark concerning Aristotelianism is useful. It is strange, however, that he never mentions Neo-Platonism by name in his essay. Porphyry, of course, was the pupil of Plotinus (204-270); and Porphyry may be responsible, as editor of Plotinus, for some of the mysticism surrounding his mentor's theory of ideas and for the consistent attention to certain Pythagorean myths found in Plotinus as we know him.

[8]Perhaps "Reason" in the poem plays the role of poetic shape, which is super-induced and external, as opposed to Coleridge's notion of the on-going, internal, and organic qualities of form. But one doubts that Shakespeare had that specific a notion in mind when he wrote the poem; although he may have had in mind one fully as sophisticated.

[9]See Baldwin's Venus and Adonis discussion, pp. 80-81, 83. These remarks, concerning Ficino, are not alone relevant to V & A, but also to "The Phoenix and Turtle."

[10]Cunningham's fifth book chapter (pp. 76-89) is entitled, "Idea as Structure: The Phoenix and Turtle." The pages cited below refer to the 1952 essay printed in ELH.

[11]Works, ed. John Keble, 7th ed., re. R. W. Church and F. Paget (Oxford, 1888), II, 247-48.

[12]This well-taken distinction, however, does not really have much to do with the poetic process. Shakespeare, if he was aware of the scholastic niceties, may have chosen to over-ride them in the manner of Donne for the sake of a new conceit.

[13]Cunningham is speaking very precisely of philosophical matters that must be accurately detailed if they are to have any relevance. I know of no better reading of the poem up to the Threnos. On the other hand, I believe that Shakespeare grasped these scholastic arguments in large, took from them what he would, and was not concerned to write a logical disquisition. And I would suggest an alternative influence--the reader will recall the trinity of Plotinus: The One, which is something like God; Nous, a sort of intellectual spirit whose function is to reflect The One in a self-conscious sense; and the Soul, a twofold entity whose inner aspect points toward Nous, and whose outer manifestation is its creative

role as arbiter of the world of sense. As Bertrand Russell writes, "On the question of immortality, Plotinus adopts the view set out in the 'Phaedo.' A man's soul is said to be an essence, and as these are eternal so is the soul. This is parallel to Socrates' account, where the soul is said to be on the side of the forms. Nevertheless, Plotinus' theory has a certain Aristotelian element in it. Though the soul is eternal, it tends to merge in Nous, and therefore loses its personality even if not its identity" (Wisdom of the West [London, 1959], p. 119). This latter description reminds us of the process described in Shakespeare's anthem. The souls of the Phoenix and Turtle merge in a love dimension very like Nous and become one soul (so far as personality is concerned) and yet each is identifiably "Turtle" and "Phoenix." The character "Reason" is of the world of sense, to which the outer aspect of the Soul is directed. "Reason" has claims, but they are not preeminent. (For my own view that "Reason" triumphs, however, see Chapter Five.) Shakespeare's poem--whether he drew upon Plotinus or Aquinas, or watered-down versions of them--is metaphysical.

[14]See A. J. Denomy, "An Inquiry into the Origins of Courtly Love," Medieval Studies, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, VI (1944), 175-260; especially p. 209.

[15]I appreciate Cunningham's distinction here, but do not fully understand why he makes it crucial. (See our note 13, above.) In the Plotinian account, the Soul, though eternal, inevitably merges in Nous, and thus loses its personality. It retains its identity, however, and in the Shakespeare poem, this is precisely what happens in the case of the lovers. The element distance is a truly Scholastic quibble, as Cunningham says, and I cannot see that it makes any difference to the Plotinian account or that it disqualifies or otherwise obviates Plotinus.

[16]See ST, 1-2.28.1 ad 2.

[17]Putting this more simply, the essential verities of the natural state no longer apply in the presence of the supernatural.

[18]That is, in the Christian tradition, whose doctrines have subsumed Plotinus. But there is also Plotinus--at least as we know him from Porphyry his somewhat Pythagorean (and hence mystical) editor.

[19]Cunningham uses "essence" as Aquinas does, to denote "nature"; and Aquinas (De Ente et Essentia, V) refers to quidditas aut natura generis aut speciei, or to the quiddity or nature in a genus or a species.

[20]Here again is the distinction between the natural and supernatural. Cf. ST, 3.92.1 c. sub fin.

[21]Cunningham does not say so at this point, but he suggests that Shakespeare postulates a third "name," a unity of love on the analogy of the Holy Ghost.

[22]For example, those "that are either true or fair" (v. 66), in the Threnos.

[23]Summa 2-2: (162:6:c, 162:7:c, 163:1:c) and 1-2:84:2:c.

[24]This statement is based on a rather thorough reading of the Benzinger (New York, 1947) version of the Summa Theologica, 3 vols. Thomas considers fortitude to be a genus, perseverance a species, and constancy a sub-species of perseverance that closely aspires to be a species. Fortitude is a "principal virtue."

[25]"How to Read a Poem (III). Shakespeare's The Phoenix and the Turtle," Mandrake, II (1955-56), 395-408. The same essay appears in Interpretations, ed. John Wain (London, 1955), pp. 1-16. See also A. Alvarez, The School of Donne (New York, 1961), pp. 20-21, concerning the differences between Shakespeare's formal verse and Donne's; and pp. 58-59 in re Loves Martyr and "The Phoenix and Turtle."

[26]Alvarez has in mind Fairchild's essay. See his Mandrake p. 400 and note 2.

[27]Neither Love nor Faith, however, requires formal underpinning.

[28]I do not understand what Alvarez means by "it."

[29]The "metaphysics of Shakespeare's time" and "the philosophers" are not named. Alvarez (and we shall see further examples) is not as specific as Cunningham--though more so than Shahani.

[30]Alvarez might have brought in the grammatical term number as well, for the Phoenix and Turtle are not plural but singular. (It is possible that they lost gender as well, judging from the results of their union.)

[31]One presumes that Alvarez is aware of the important implications of his observation, although he does not follow it up. I.e., that it is the "mutual flame" itself, love, which is the hero of the piece. And just as, in the myth of the Phoenix, it is the flame that changes one to one, so in the new myth of the Phoenix and

Turtle it is the flame that changes two to one: the flame governs all the logical contradictions. It is an intellectual concept that appears in many guises, as for example in the Dialoghi d'Amore (1535) of Leone Ebreo:

". . . With our eyes, we may behold in one intuition the highest beauty of the first intellect and of the divine Ideas. And in this perception we rejoice, and love is born in us. . . . That apprehended by sight is the image of the intellectual beauty because it consists wholly in light and is perceived through the medium of light. And you know already that the sun with its light is the image of the first intellect." This is a One-Nous-Soul relationship such as I have partially described in my note 13 (above) to this Chapter. (See The Philosophy of Love (Dialoghi d'Amore), trans. F. Friedeberg-Seeley and Jean H. Barnes [London: Soncino, 1937], p. 389.)

The Phoenix, of course, is the bird of the sun.

[32]Sewanee Review, LXIII (1955), 193-201.

[33]"'Their Tragic Scene': The Phoenix and Turtle and Shakespeare's Love Tragedies," SQ, XII (1961), 91-101.

[34]Rosamond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago, 1947), pp. 342-43.

[35]Henry Peacham's phrase, quoted by Tuve, op. cit., p. 155.

[36]Abraham Fraunce, The Arcadian Rhetorike (1588), ed. Ethel Seaton (Oxford, 1950), p. 63.

[37]Shakespeare, Poèmes (Paris, 1959), p. 24.

[38]M. C. Bradbrook takes a similar view on pp. 357-58 of her article, "The Phoenix and the Turtle," SQ, VI (1955), 356-58.

[39]In his edition of The Poems (Cambridge, 1966), J. C. Maxwell quotes (p. xxxii) Ellrodt with approval, adding: "For the view that this 'Ladder' is also absent in the most overtly 'Platonic' of major Elizabethan poems, see C. S. Lewis on Spenser's Hymns: English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (1954), pp. 374-7."

[40]See our Chapter Five (below). My own opinion is that the meter is not atypically Shakespearian, as Professor Campbell believes it to be.

[41]S. M. Bonaventure, "The Phoenix Renewed," Ball State Teachers College Forum, V, iii (Autumn 1964), 72-76.

[42]"The Dead Phoenix," EIC, XV, 279-87.

[43]Copland is apparently unaware of Walter J. Ong's notion that the birds may be taken as a metaphor for metaphor itself. (See above, this Chapter.)

[44]See William H. Matchett, "The Dead Phoenix," EIC, XVI (1966), 132; and J. C. Maxwell, ed., The Poems, The New (Cambridge) Shakespeare (Cambridge, 1966), p. xxxvi. In his letter concerning Copland's essay, Matchett writes that "the title now generally used was not attached to the poem until 1807 . . . . The poem is untitled in Loues Martyr: we thus have no evidence at all for such title as its author may or may not have given it." Maxwell in his Postscript adds that "the poem is untitled in Love's Martyr, but the main title-page has 'the Phoenix and Turtle' . . . and the separate title page for the additional poems refers to 'Diverse Poeticall Essaies on the former Subiect; viz: the Turtle and Phoenix.'" In Maxwell's opinion, Copland's remarks are "much ado about very little."

[45]Cf. J. C. Maxwell, The Poems, pp. xxx-xxxi (see below).

[46]The Monarch of Wit (1951), p. 18.

[47]Maxwell directs the reader to the Notes and his discussion (p. 221) of the poem's verse 27: "distincts separate things (here only). The contrast between distinction and division inevitably recalls the Athanasian creed, 'neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance,' as Walter Whiter (with some disquiet) noted (Specimen of a Commentary on Shakespeare (1794), pp. 257-8). For the relation of P.T. to scholastic tradition, see J. V. Cunningham, E.L.H. XIX (1952), 265-76, esp. 273-6."

[48]I have not seen Fluchère's edition of the Poèmes, but Robert Ellrodt (p. 99) writes that Fluchère (p. 24) accepts the poem as "metaphysical" in the manner of Donne.

[49]See our Chapter Two, above.

[50]Quoted by H. E. Rollins, p. 573.

[51]Cf. F. C. Rang's allusion to similar matters in our Chapter Two, above.

[52]"Shakespeare's The Phoenix and Turtle," SQ, VI (1955), 19-30.

[53]In a footnote (p. 27) Bates introduces some rather improbable connections between "the bird of loudest lay," which he takes to be the cock, and ghosts--"who could be considered chaste"--who must vanish with the coming of

day. "If we think of the trumpet of the last judgement," he continues, "which is referred to by the priest at Ophelia's grave, it is again the dead who must obey its call. That they will be chaste at this time is specifically noted by St. Matthew: 'For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven' (XX:30). This thought may be what Hamlet is half echoing when he says, 'I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live' (III.i.149-151)."

[54]Mr. Bates, if I may say so, has searched out the wrong examples; he has looked for triplets when he should have looked for truncated trochaic tetrameter, the seven-beat meter of the poem. In his lyrics from the plays and their related poetry, Shakespeare most often employs the meter with closed and open couplets. We shall have more to say about this in our final Chapter.

[55]"The Phoenix and the Turtle," SQ, VI (1955), 356-58.

[56]"The Sense of Poetry: Shakespeare's The Phoenix and the Turtle," Daedalus, 87, iii (1958), 86-94.

[57]Seltzer has in mind Hamlet's speech on man to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, which leads rhetorically to the phrase "quintessence of dust" (II.ii.322). Also III.iv.187-88.

[58]Seltzer, in a playful way, uses the word 'action' in the Aristotelian dramatic sense, and also to suggest that something is going on in the poem; he opposes Cunningham's reading and its emphasis on scholastic theology, because, in his opinion, it is all too static.

[59]"To read the poem in this perspective," writes Ellrodt (p. 110 n.), "would require a longer development than the scope of this essay allows. This evolution of Shakespeare's sensibility is sketched in the third volume of my Poètes Métaphysiques Anglais (Paris, 1960), pp. 57-62."

CHAPTER FIVE

A CRITICAL AFTERWORD

Prosody

In this, our final Chapter, we shall be re-examining certain critical and scholarly opinions concerning the poem's rhythm, melody and form, including its compression of syntax and idea, the mood of the verbs employed, and its effects of sound. We shall then apply these observations to a comparison of "The Phoenix and Turtle" and the songs from the plays, and entertain some original speculations concerning the poem's authenticity, date of composition, and meaning, with particular attention to the Threnos.

In his discussion of the meter, H. E. Rollins (p. 583) summarizes the following views:

> The P. & T., [Albert] FEUILLERAT (ed. 1927, p. 184) notes, 'consists of thirteen quatrains in truncated trochaics rhyming abba. The concluding Threnos consists of five three-lined stanzas, in octosyllabic trochaics, each stanza having a single rhyme.' [Sidney] LEE (Life, 1916, p. 272) had described it as 'untried metre' with 'the rhymes disposed as in Tennyson's "In Memoriam." The concluding "threnos" is in five three-lined stanzas, also in trochaics, each stanza having a single rhyme.' He observes that the threnos 'is imitated in metre and phraseology by [John] Fletcher in his Mad Lover in the song "The Lover's Legacy to his Cruel Mistress"' [Rollins, p. 579]. Trochaic octosyllabics in the In Memoriam rime-scheme occur in Jonson's lyric beginning 'Marble, weep, for thou dost cover' (SAINTSBURY, History of English Prosody, 1908, II, 156 n.); the same rime-scheme (but employing iambic,

> not trochaic, measures) was used also by Raleigh, Jonson, George Sandys, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and others (the same, II, 90, 131 n., 280 n., 333 f.).

There is little to dispute here, but the reader should keep in mind the likenesses drawn between a "song" by Fletcher, a Jonson "lyric," and Shakespeare's poem. The comparisons are peculiarly valid. To Rollins' summary may be added the remarks of Heinrich Straumann (Phönix und Taube, pp. 38-39)--"Trochaic tetrameters are relatively rare in English poetry. Their arrangement in stanzas of four lines within a rhyme scheme of ABBA appears to have been used at Shakespeare's time in only one other case. . . . [I]t looks as if the poet chose a special meter for the special treatment of his theme." The reader is aware of "a rhythmical movement which must appear strange to him since it is not part of his literary experience," and of a "strange atmosphere" apparent in the first stanza: "this meter shows something in its swift, harried movement, and a staccato type of urge, which does not seem to agree with the idea of a funeral procession; however, it does agree with the feathered creatures. In the second part, in which abstract elements are stressed more strongly, this movement shows especially in the stress of the concise, brief and elliptical." Shakespeare's meters in the poem, writes C. S. Lewis (English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, p. 509) are "rigid, deliberately, hypnotically, monotonous." Straumann (p. 39) finds the diction itself suggestive of worldly order superimposed on the theme of death, its solemnity amounting to something like a physical law in

its inevitability; so that Straumann and Lewis are not so far apart as it might seem from their different readings of the poet's metrical intent.

It will be remembered that Fairchild (cited above) in his essay on "The **Phoenix** and Turtle" thinks that the tradition of emblem literature explains Shakespeare's departure from his usual style, "as manifested in [its] peculiar Platonic and epigrammatic qualities . . . . Conciseness was the cardinal virtue of emblems . . . . No other poem by Shakespeare possessed the same peculiar epigrammatic quality; and none is so manifestly indebted to emblems for its suggestions" (383-84). One can say much the same for the casket songs in The Merchant of Venice. In the first two (II.vii.65-74; II.ix.63-72) the emphasis is on the emblematic and epigrammatic; whereas, after Bassanio has entered the competition, the emphasis is on the Platonic (III.ii.63-72; 131-138). [The Merchant of Venice was entered in the Stationers' Register on July 22, 1598, and again on October 28, 1600.] Since Fairchild's essay (1904), little more of substance has been written about the poem relating it to the emblem tradition. Perhaps this is because "while emblematic equivalences are certainly used, they are of a familiar kind."[1] The opening of the poem, according to Robert Ellrodt (p. 107), utilizes emblem imagery, but it is "also symbolic in a different way, more subtle than mere emblematic imagery." Nonetheless, Fairchild had spoken of something significant, and we must keep it in mind.

The poem presents itself as atypically Shakespearean upon a first reading. It remained so to Sir Sidney Lee (1898), who wrote (p. 183) that "happily Shakespeare wrote nothing else of like character"; Lee's guarded opinion, that it was Shakespeare's "alleged contribution" to Chester's volume, was amended in his subsequent editions. Most editors and commentators have come to believe it is Shakespeare's poem, and yet there is scepticism lurking beneath the surface of even the most recent attentions to the poem: to Professor O. J. Campbell (1964),

> Shakespeare's poem is experimental, not only in its application of a scholastic philosophy to its interpretation, but also in its formal respects. He uses a meter that he nowhere else employs [italics supplied], thirteen four-lined stanzas in trochaics. The 'threnos' consists of three-lined stanzas, also in trochaic meter, each stanza having a single rhyme. [p. 336]

J. C. Maxwell (1966) describes the poem as "utterly unlike anything else [Shakespeare] ever wrote" (p. xxxiii).

I do not believe this to be the case. In order to see the poem as typically Shakespearean, one must examine the likenesses found in the songs from the plays. There are many critical clues which lead one to such a conclusion. We have already mentioned Sir Sidney Lee's notion that the threnos "is imitated in metre and phraseology by [John] Fletcher in his Mad Lover in the song 'The Lover's Legacy to his Cruel Mistress,'" and George Saintsbury's observation that "trochaic octosyllabics [rhymed abba] occur in Jonson's lyric beginning 'Marble, weep, for thou dost cover.'" Rollins himself (p. 560) refers to "The Phoenix and Turtle"

as following "another untitled lyric of Shakespeare's" in the 1640 edition, where the poem appeared for the third time in print. For the critic, the words 'song' and 'lyric' should sound a special bell. M. C. Bradbrook in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry (New York, 1952) calls the poem a "lyric" (p. 247, n. 26); and in her SQ essay (VI [1955], 356-58) she acknowledges that to some critics it "appears the crown of Shakespeare's lyric" (p. 356). Daniel Seltzer (1961) thinks that Shakespeare's poem "is a lyric statement of truths which the tragedies set forth dramatically" (p. 101). It was a remark of Robert Ellrodt's, however, which first drew my attention to the song likenesses: in his essay (cited above), he finds that "some awkwardness arising from compression may even be acknowledged: it is not unfrequent in Shakespeare's rhymed verse of a more or less gnomic kind" (p. 107). This put me in mind of the Merchant of Venice casket songs, and led to considerable scanning of Edward Hubler's edition of Shakespeare's Songs and Poems (New York, 1959), where the songs are readily accessible, and to an affirmation of my suspicion that "The Phoenix and Turtle" is not atypically Shakespearean. I then became aware that F. T. Prince was of a mind with Ellrodt in this respect, for Prince in his 1960 edition of The Poems writes that "the magic of many of the songs in the plays is beyond praise, but we are fortunate in having here a somewhat longer, and independent, example of his powers of incantation" (p. xlii). Finally, in his compressed Shakespeare: The Poems (London, 1963), Prince makes the connection even more explicit: "Like

some of the songs in the plays, The Phoenix and Turtle is an incantation, but longer, more sustained and intellectual. It creates a self-contained world, yet one with countless mysterious associations" (p. 46). The word "incantation" is a help, in support of my own notions, and it enables one to glean what he will from earlier criticism; for example, in 1932 G. Wilson Knight appended his "Shakespearean Aviary" (pp. 320-24) to The Shakespearean Tempest, and when he discussed stanza 2 of the poem, he wrote that "thus are our 'evil' birds to be warded off, as evil forms of life are charmed away from Titania's bower, to give place to Philomel's music" (p. 323). And while I do not agree with all of the conclusions of Ronald Bates in his 1955 essay (SQ, VI, 19-30), I wholeheartedly agree with his statement that one of the associations of Shakespeare's rhyme scheme in the poem is with the "magical . . . which is closely connected with some of the earliest types of poetry--for example, Old English riddle poems and Finnish runot," so that the magical element "has a serious poetic function in the threnos, giving it some of the objective, eternal qualities of an actual epigraph carved on the funeral urn" (p. 29).

Before we consider specific parallels based on the songs from the plays, let us refer to the 1955 essay (cited above) of Alfred Alvarez, and his remarks on the language of "The Phoenix and Turtle":

> Any unfolding, however intensely linguistic, is a series of actions, and the action of language is expressed clearest through the moods of the verbs used. In the opening section all these are imperatives.[2] The authority of tone sets the poem

> in motion and creates a fitting atmosphere.
> 'Let the bird of lowdest lay'
> The heavily stressed imperative and alliterating superlative give the poem a great push forward into a rhythmical buoyancy which it never loses. It is this that gives the confidence which guides the poem through the badly mapped country of speculation, and helps the sureness of its final affirmations. But the imperatives also include a number of words of command, 'obay,' 'keepe,' 'interdict.' Deliberately and ceremoniously a setting is being invoked. Again it is a matter of purity. The birds are summoned to a 'requiem' mass from which 'tyrants,' 'the fiend' and his 'precurrer' are exorcised. [p. 399]

The word "exorcised" is justly used: it suggests the expulsion or driving off of an evil spirit by adjuration, frequently through the use of a holy name; and deliverance from an evil spirit. Let us tentatively place "exorcised" alongside "incantation" (Prince) and Ellrodt's remark about "gnomic verse." Incantation is the chanting of a magic formula over one; the use of spells or verbal charms, spoken or sung, as a part of the ritual of magic; and it is the verbal formula, itself, which is chanted or recited. It is etymologically related to the word "enchant," which is literally to sing against: to act on by charms or sorcery; especially, to lay under a spell. Gnomic, of course, has to do with the uttering of maxims or aphorisms. One thinks of a play which combines many of these concepts, A Midsummer Night's Dream; perhaps there are connections which can be made. But, for the moment, let us return to Alvarez, who remarks that the birds of Shakespeare's poem are

> provided with a full array of religious trappings: 'obsequie,' 'Priest in Surples white,' 'defunctive Musicke,' 'the Requiem,' 'his (the priest's or the

> requiem's) right' (also rite), the 'mourners.' Then there is the heraldic pomp of royalty: the 'herauld,' 'trumpet' and 'feath'red King.' And above all this there is the essential purity of the birds themselves, 'chaste,' 'strict,' 'white,' and the 'crow' who gains his place . . . for his quaintly pure way of propagation, 'With the breath thou giu'st and tak'st.' [p. 400]

In Alvarez' opinion, "much depends on the solemnity of the language to set the tone and qualify the subject. It makes the setting, like the love of the Phoenix and Turtle, chaste, regal and holy. It helps the poem to its grand manner, to make it so purposeful, detached and moving" (pp. 400-401). (Certainly it does that, but perhaps another dimension of the language, the magical, has not received due emphasis.) The poem is "detached" and "impersonal in a way Shakespeare is nowhere else," writes Alvarez (p. 406).

> The detachment is seen in the poem's climax, the Threnos. It is largely made up of a series of powerful but bare assertions of abstract qualities. You can see it, as in the antheme, in the verbs. Again and again rhyme and rhythm force plain, dogmatic indicative statements on your attention: 'lie,' 'is now,' 'doth rest,' 'Twas not,' 'It was,' 'cannot be,' 'tis not,' 'buried be.' Indeed, 'be'/ 'she'/ 'be' might seem to be slipshod writing without the purposeful air the Threnos exudes. The assertiveness is increased, moreover, by changing the already buoyant rhythm of the quatrains into triplets, their jauntiness exaggerated by the use of only three rhymes in fifteen lines. It begins to seem that so much vitality might be disproportionate to the abstraction and solemnity of the subject. [pp. 406-407]

On the other hand, the reader has seen abstraction and solemnity whirled together in A Midsummer Night's Dream, a play whose multiple actions are governed by exorcism, incantations, and gnomic verse. Perhaps William Empson was thinking of Dream when he writes in Some Versions of Pastoral (1935)

that "there is a suggestion that the author finds the convention fascinating but absurd, which he shows mainly by his sound-effects. This seems to me intentional, very delightful, and not a thing that Chapman (who has been suggested as the author) could possibly have done. It is clear here that once you cease to impose a staircase the thing shifts from heroic to mock-pastoral" (pp. 139-40). In his 1966 essay (cited above) Empson writes that

> Shakespeare's poem is a wide valley brimful of an unspecified sorrow, but one should also feel, before hearing any explanations, the gaiety inherent in its effects of sound. As the anthem of the birds reaches its severest exultation their tweeting modulates into the arch baby-talk of a dandling nurse; as we soar heavenward between the co-supremes, we mysteriously almost graze the Cow that jumped over the Moon.
>
> To themselves yet either neither,
> Simple was so well compounded. [p. 153]

There is a quality to Shakespeare's poem, one thinks, that Empson recognizes but cannot link to the dramatic works; a "gaiety" in the midst of "abstraction and solemnity" (Alvarez).

F. T. Prince as editor of The Poems (1960) writes of "the suspicion of irony which hangs about the whole publication [Loves Martyr], or at least about the contributions of Chester's literary friends" (p. xl). There was a "half-accidental" charm to Chester's myth, but the poets were also aware of its "absurdity" (pp. xl-xli). "These ambiguous undertones, the lurking impression that these poets were participating in a private joke, are worth seizing if they enable us to approach Shakespeare's contribution from a new

side" (p. xlii). Chester's volume may have been 'private joke' enough, and perhaps Shakespeare was content to use the familiar lyrical pattern of the songs from the plays in response to Chester's new myth. The sentiments of "The Phoenix and Turtle" are his own.

The songs from the plays, it can be argued, contribute to a distinctive tone that is inseparable from our apprehension of the work itself. The lyrics are much more, of course, but each is functional at this level. "The Phoenix and Turtle" does the same thing for the Chester collection, providing a distinctive tone or aspect that it would otherwise have lacked. Let the reader turn to a printed version of "The Phoenix and Turtle" and familiarize himself in general with its music--preferably G. L. Kittredge's one-volume Complete Works of Shakespeare (Boston: Ginn, 1936), p. 1528. (We shall have recourse to Edward Hubler's edition, Shakespeare's Songs and Poems [New York, 1959], and Hubler's line references are to the Kittredge edition.) Consider the gaiety amid great seriousness one finds in the song from Cymbeline (IV.ii.258-81) of Guiderius and Arviragus which begins "Fear no more the heat o' the sun" (Hubler, pp. 265-67) and which ends as follows:

> Quiet consummation have,
> And renowned be thy grave.

These lines are preceded by an incantation warning off exorcisers, charms of witchcraft, ghosts unlaid, and things "ill." Metrically, they are identical to those of our poem, and they

stress the imperative mood. Or consider the "pinching" song of the fairies from The Merry Wives of Windsor (V.v.97-106):

> Fie on sinful fantasy!
> Fie on lust and luxury!
> Lust is but a bloody fire,
> Kindled with unchaste desire,
> Fed in heart, whose flames aspire
> As thoughts do blow them, higher and higher.
> Pinch him, fairies, mutually;
> Pinch him for his villainy!
> Pinch him and burn him and turn him about
> Till candles and starlight and moonshine be out.
> [Hubler, p. 215]

The meter becomes pentameter in the final two lines, but certainly the previous lines illustrate the "incantatory" element spoken of by F. T. Prince, and they are "in truncated trochaics," to quote Feuillerat; they do not, however, rhyme abba, and none of our examples do. But the prevalence of the meter is what is important, as in the following lines from Much Ado About Nothing (Hubler, p. 209):

> Done to death by sland'rous tongues
> Was the Hero that here lies:
> Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
> Gives her fame which never dies. [V.iii.3-6]

The lines (abab) are labelled "Epitaph," and Claudio reads them from a scroll; the meters are varied in the remainder of the song, but we can isolate ll. 12-15, which rhyme aabb:

> Pardon, goddess of the night,
> Those that slew thy virgin knight;
> For the which, with songs of woe,
> Round about her tomb they go. [V.iii.12-15]

Once again, incantation. But it is also adjuration (with its vague suggestion of a curse), a solemn binding. If the reader will examine Much Ado (V.iii.3-23) he will see that in this short churchyard scene there are other metrical and tonal similarities to "The Phoenix and Turtle"; it is in its

entirety a piece of "defunctive music." Claudio ends his song thus:

> Now unto thy bones good night!
> Yearly will I do this rite [V.iii.22-23]

Much Ado About Nothing was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1600 (see Kittredge, p. 159). I find this significant, and shall return to the point.

Shakespeare used a seven-beat trochaic line, but in couplets, in Love's Labour's Lost (IV.iii.101-20), the poem beginning "On a day, alack the day!" "This," writes Hubler (p. 176), "the last of the poems from Love's Labour's Lost in which the young courtiers renounce study for love, was printed in The Passionate Pilgrim, 1599, and in England's Helicon, 1600." Without making any great claims for similarity to our poem, it can be remarked that some of Ariel's verses in the Tempest song (V.i.88-94) which begins "Where the bee sucks, there suck I" are in these truncated trochaics; and the same is altogether true of the song in Henry VIII (III.i.3-14) beginning "Orpheus with his lute made trees." So too for the gnomic little song "If a hart do lack a hind" in As You Like It (III.ii.107-18). Each, however, is rhymed aabbcc, etc.

The end-rhyme scheme, in my opinion, is incidental to Shakespeare's habit of invoking, lamenting, adjuring, and otherwise fitting out his incantations, enchantments, epitaphs[3] and gnomic verse with the sort of "truncated trochaics" one finds in "The Phoenix and Turtle." The practice is not obsessively uniform, but it is significantly

frequent. For example, in A Midsummer Night's Dream (II.ii.27-34), Oberon puts a charm on the sleeping Titania:

> What thou seest when thou dost wake,
> Do it for thy true-love take;
> Love and languish for his sake:
> Be it ounce or cat or bear,
> Pard, or boar with bristled hair
> In thy eye that shall appear
> When thou wak'st, it is thy dear.
> Wake when some vile thing is near.

This is an incantation, and an enchantment, a singing-against. The first three rhymes are identical, as are the last five; and of itself, the spell or verbal formula used must rely heavily on the imperative mood. When Oberon puts a charm on Demetrius (III.ii.102-109), there is identical rhyme couched in the same meter with heavy use of the imperative mood:

> Flower of this purple dye,
> Hit with Cupid's archery,
> Sink in apple of his eye.
> When his love he doth espy,
> Let her shine as gloriously
> As the Venus of the sky.
> When thou wak'st, if she be by,
> Beg of her for remedy.

Puck enters and speaks to Oberon; their conversation (III.ii. 110-21) is in the same meter, but without the imperative tone. It not only grows from 102-109, it suggests a characterization based on the magical and strange. If we must identify this meter and verbal mood with the comic, too, let us not be too quick to do so. There is nothing funny about the lines from Much Ado About Nothing, quoted above, but their solemnity is mitigated by dramatic irony: Hero is not dead. Puck's "Up and down" song is also linked to the magical:

> Up and down, up and down,
> I will lead them up and down:
> I am fear'd in field and town;
> Goblin, lead them up and down. [III.ii.396-99]

And Oberon, removing his charm from Titania (IV.i.74-77), sings:

> Be as thou wast wont to be;
> See as thou wast wont to see:
> Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
> Hath such force and blessed power.

Titania is restored, the action of the play forwarded, and Robin Goodfellow, Oberon and Titania soon recur to the same metrical pattern in lines 96-100, plainly in order to point up the magical and strange, as related to characterization.[4]

The Threnos

This is by no means a complete survey of the songs from the plays, and their attendant poetry, but I hope that it has served to place in doubt the assertions of commentators who claim that Shakespeare never wrote any lines that were remotely similar to those of "The Phoenix and Turtle." He wrote many such lines, as we have seen, whereas the ABBA trochaic pattern is unique. The "Threnos" of the poem offers special problems, however.[5] It is, to quote Feuillerat, "in five three-lined stanzas, also in trochaics, each stanza having a single rhyme." The seven-beat line is retained. Ronald Bates (cited above) believes that such "double-rhyme, extended for three lines, could scarcely help hovering on the verge of comic verse. An examination of the other uses Shakespeare makes of this kind of rhyme effect only confirms this" (p. 28). But Bates' examples (pp. 28-29) show also that "two general

elements can be recognized--the comic, and the magical or proverbial." Bates (p. 29) would put the third ("married chastity") stanza of the Threnos alongside those three-lined examples he finds scorned by the playwright himself--in As You Like It (III.ii.93-95) and Hamlet (III.ii.159-61); but his examples are not apt because they are syntactically and metrically dissimilar, and the first example uses a single rhyme that is not limited to three lines. Bates was much more to the mark with his allusion to "the magical and proverbial." If I were to seek out a meter of ridicule, I should isolate the dimeter "speeches" of Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream (see, for example, I.i.33-40).

One may more profitably speak of the compression of syntax found in the "Threnos." Sir Gurney Benham (cited above) believes that in stanza three of the "Threnos" Shakespeare "wished us to understand that this union of quintessence with quintessence, of transcendent perfection of spiritualized beauty with heavenly, pure and ideal love, was incompatible with ordinary human, mundane passions. To put this into three lines of eleven words involved obscurity" (p. 364)--Shakespeare had expressed the inexpressible.

On the other hand, in an oblique way Shakespeare may have been expressing a belief one finds evident in the plays--that it is the obligation, or natural duty, of humankind to have offspring. Read in this way, "Reason" (all that is not love and poetry, all that would deny the impossible) triumphs, solely because the Phoenix/Turtle unity fails to perpetuate itself. The Phoenix is legendarily immortal because

self-perpetuating; but the Turtle is mortal, and must die. The gloating threnos made by Reason singles out the most important failing of the lovers: they chose not to live on through the issue of their love. But the poet is the speaker of the first 13 stanzas, and he celebrates their ideal union for its perfection. Reason, which has had a close call, is content to acknowledge their momentary supremacy, for they are now "dead birds"--there will be another Phoenix, but never another Phoenix/Turtle unity to confound him. Thus there is irony in Reason's song of lamentation.

Let us make a skeletal explication of the poem to suit this view, while paying little attention to the bird-identities.[6] The poet sets and directs the scene (stanzas 1-5). Birds who augur death, in the manner of Reason (and perhaps for "fiend" in stanza 2 we should read "Reason"), are ordered away, as are birds "of tyrant wing" (stanza 3), who are like Reason. The Eagle, like the poet, soars above; the swan is the poeta vates, a singer who lives not by reason but by love; and the swan too is a traditional symbol for mated loyalty till death.[7] The crow's act of propagation is chaste, its act of engendering is as natural as breathing.

The poet, having called in all his mourners, announces the anthem, a series of metaphysical paradoxes that lead to the threnos. The discussion is of a fait accompli, and is a funeral sermon, a form of "flashback." The supernal love of the two birds (stanza 9) enables the Turtle--so he thinks--to gain the right to the immortality belonging to his lover;

that is, the traditional association of the Phoenix with the sun symbolizes the flame of love, mistaken for a patent of immortality by the Turtle. And it is, to the poet as singer of the first 13 stanzas; but not to Reason, who, at first dazzled like the rest of us, acknowledges defeat, but who comforts himself with ultimate victory in the Threnos. Ideal love not only lacks Reason, it gets along without and transcends it; still, there is a drawback to ideal love; and Reason, the victor by default, has earned the right to point it out: nothing is left behind. The self-regeneration of the Phoenix-bird is fated to go on; whereas the Turtle, who is clay, cannot be reborn. Their perfect love was empyrean, of fire and light, and is fit subject matter for poets. But Reason, who is of this world, has taken his own consolation, for the Phoenix and Turtle are "dead birds" now, and he can well manage the subsequent shadows of love and constancy, truth and beauty. The consummation in "mutual flame" (v. 24), however, like the unique union of the two birds, is to be marveled at.

I do not insist on this reading, I merely suggest it, but it seems to me that two interesting conclusions are possible from it: (1) that this is a poem about the making of a poem. For the "Phoenix" one can read "imagination" and for the Turtle, "form,"--form wedded to imagination, in Coleridgean terms. Imagination is foreover reborn, whereas form dies when the poem is finished. Or (2), that the poem is about the miraculous power of love as manifested in the female paragon or nonpareil,

a major theme in Shakespeare's comedies; if so, there is irony and implicit disapproval in Shakespeare's understanding of Chester's poem, for the resolution of the comedies is in marriage and the promise of offspring (cf. Dream [V.i.408-27]). However fanciful, the comedies take place in the real world--the "real world" being the world of nature, a word etymologically linked to the idea of birth. It is natural to reproduce one's kind, it is unnatural to withhold that possibility out of mistaken "platonic" notions. The familiar "two-in-one" paradox applies with equal force to a pregnant woman, in whom "number there in love was slain": that is, she is one, but she is also two.

In the parallels adduced above, the most interesting metrical and tonal likenesses exist in those examples from Much Ado About Nothing (registered in 1600) and those from A Midsummer Night's Dream (registered in 1600). This is a reasonable time for Shakespeare to have composed "The Phoenix and Turtle," and in light of my second suggestion (above), it is fitting to note Sister Mary Bonaventure's remark that "in the romantic world of A Midsummer Night's Dream," Helena and Hermia live "as though in one body."[8] "The very mood of the poem," writes Ellrodt, echoing Straumann, "the aching sense that 'truth may seem but cannot be' for 'Love and Constancy is dead,' would admirably suit the state of mind one may reasonably ascribe to Shakespeare in 1600-1" (p. 108). This is a sound reading. But I would prefer to tie the not-yet-tragical to the magical, making full use of the suggestions

of irony I have outlined in my discussion (above). That is, Shakespeare in 1600 had been writing in the "truncated trochaics" we have isolated from Much Ado and Dream, and had found them effective in suggesting the magical, ironic, musical atmosphere of the not-human world hovering over the human. He wrote his contribution to Chester's volume in this meter because what he had read of Chester's poem moved him to do so. And because he was obliged to follow suit, he allowed himself little comment, but rather entered into the spirit of the enterprise as he understood it, in the first 13 stanzas; those stanzas finished, he wished to make a statement of qualification in the Threnos. Salusbury and Chester would not understand, but the other contributors would, and so would any others whose opinions he valued.[9]

If "Reason" seems harsh and narrow, it is because he (or she) is placed against the ideal world beyond reason, so that "The words of Mercury are harsh after/ the songs of Apollo" (L.L.L., V.ii.941-42). As in the plays, Shakespeare has given us a character as he conceived him, to the tooth. And yet I must conclude that "Reason" is one of Shakespeare's personae in the poem.[10] The poet/ speaker of stanzas 1-13 cannot wholly approve of him, but the dramatist who speaks for him is at least partially sympathetic (stanza 16).

Shakespeare ends the Threnos safely, in accordance with his duties as contributor, and he passes with a sigh

(or a chuckle) from the pages of Chester's volume. Like some of the songs from the plays, his poem is almost unrelated to the work in which it appears, at least upon a first reading; like the songs from Much Ado and Dream, it reminds us of a formidable, non-human presence extant in the world that is arbiter of many of our values. (Perhaps Shakespeare was approaching his view in Hamlet that death, however significant, is simply a routine aspect of life.) The lyrics are a small part of each play, and yet they reinforce the dramatic whole in every case and strangely echo the theme. "The Phoenix and Turtle" does the same for Chester's collection. One thinks that, in this poem, Shakespeare tried to show that he could overcome the formal limits of a verse pattern that interested him, and of a theme which did not,--or one which, as he understood it from Chester, was uncongenial to Shakespeare's view of love's human purpose. The ambiguity of tone, the irony, results from Shakespeare succeeding so well in achieving the platonic and ideal, and yet undercutting his own efforts in stanza 16 of the Threnos.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

[1]J. C. Maxwell, ed., The Poems (Cambridge, 1966), p. xxviii.

[2]Daniel Seltzer (SQ, XII [1961], 91-101), referring to these words of Alvarez, thinks that "perhaps it is not too far-fetched to observe the similarity of the many imperatives in 'The Phoenix and Turtle,' and the phrasing of 'Here the anthem doth commence' (21), to the imperatives and occasional phrasing of some Elizabethan prompt-books" (p. 100 n.).

[3]His own epitaph (as ascribed to him) is in iambic tetrameter:

> Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
> To dig the dust enclosed here;
> Blest be the man that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones.

Perhaps when he intended high seriousness, Shakespeare separated his meters according to some internal notion of what was meet for the human, and for the non-human. There is no space for such an investigation; but one observes that the seven-beat trochaic line is used in the following song from a tragic play:

> Come, thou monarch of the vine,
> Plumpy Bacchus with pink eyne!
> In thy fats our cares be drown'd:
> With thy grapes our hairs be crown'd:
> Cup us till the world go round,
> Cup us till the world go round!
> [Antony and Cleopatra, II.vii.118-23]

[4]Many of the Fool's songs from Lear (entered in the Stationers' Register, 1607) are in this meter, but the Fool is of this world. There is nothing strange about the Fool's songs, and the mood of their verbs is not regularly the imperative. But consider Lear, III.vi.65-76, where Edgar (as Tom) warns away the "little dogs" that bark at Lear. "Tom will throw his head at them," Edgar assures the King.

> Be thy mouth or black or white,
> Tooth that poisons if it bite;
> Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
> Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,
> Bobtail tyke or trundle-tail--
> Tom will make them weep and wail;
> For, with throwing thus my head,
> Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.

Thus exorcised or enchanted by Tom's adjuration, the dogs presumably vanish. The song is funny, but it has a poignancy that comes from Edgar's tears, in the preceding lines, at Lear's condition.

[5]A number of commentators (especially J. V. Cunningham) have provided us with brilliant readings of the poem up to the Threnos. It seems to me that what is needed is an interpretation of the Threnos that explains it in the light of the assemblage of birds and the anthem, and which satisfactorily explains the awareness of irony apprehended by the reader, particularly in the Threnos. Our own effort (below) is no more satisfactory than other attempts, but perhaps it deals with an aspect which can be developed by abler critics.

[6]Concerning the "bird of loudest lay," I. A. Richards (cited above) likes best "the suggestion that the reborn Phoenix herself is here summoning the birds to the celebration of her own (and the Turtle's) obsequies. If so, this Phoenix this Queen, is perched on her own throne. . . . If so, she herself is Herauld sad and trumpet; and the sadness is for the Turtle--lost in the fiery rite required for the Phoenix' rebirth" (pp. 88-89). I prefer to think that it is the poet who is speaker, and that he conjures up the scene and its actors. M. C. Bradbrook in her essay (cited above) refuses to "admit the human image here" (p. 357); she writes that "'the bird of loudest lay' might have been an identification if the Elizabethans had any general belief in one champion shouter among the birds: but as they have left no evidence of this belief, the phrase becomes merely the proper qualification of any herald . . ." (p. 356). In the latter regard only, I lean toward Miss Bradbrook's interpretation. However, I think that the poem very definitely is about humankind.

[7]Cf. W. B. Yeats' poem, "The Wild Swans at Coole."

[8]Ball State Teachers College Forum, V (1964), iii, 72-76; p. 72.

[9]An alternative suggestion: for some reason, probably connected to a personal allegory unknown to us or to a vexed state of mind, Shakespeare allowed stanza 16 to stand after he had written it.

[10]For different reasons, William Matchett (cited above) in his 1965 book also believes that "through the introduction of Reason, Shakespeare devalues the platonic metaphors of the anthem" (p. 200). See his p. 199 f.

APPENDIX

THE HISTORY OF THE LEGEND OF THE PHOENIX

The history of the Phoenix legend is a long and complicated one. Traces or analogues are to be found in Arab and Persian literature, and, according to Mary Cletus Fitzpatrick, "There is a strong resemblance also to the 'burning bird' of Russian fairy tales, which swallows the dwarf who goes to steal its eggs. Similar features are also found in the féng-huang of the Chinese and in the hō-ō of the Japanese."[1] The earliest Egyptian accounts of the bennu, or benu, make the bird sacred to the sun god (either Ra or Osiris) and it is pictured on monuments as heron-like in appearance, having two long feathers trailing from the back of its head; its ultimate perch was on a sycamore tree in the courtyard of Heliopolis, the Egyptian city, before the sun temple. The bird was linked with the planet Venus from earliest times. Venus was considered to be the nocturnal abode of Osiris, and as such, the Phoenix acquired connotations of renascence. It was the rising sun,[2] and it also symbolized the 'returning traveler' in hieroglyphs, according to Horapollo (Hieroglyphica, I, 3, 35). According to Albert S. Cook, the bird derives its name "from a root meaning 'to turn,' so

that the bennu signifies, as it were, the returning traveler."[3] In certain Egyptian creation myths, the benu symbolizes the beginning of life and time. In The Book of the Dead, Chapter 17, the bird is linked to eternity (the day) and everlastingness (the night) [Cook, p. xli]. The bird's plumage was reputedly colorful, giving rise to later speculations of an ornithological nature--Cuvier thought of the golden pheasant (cited in Bostock and Riley's translation of Pliny, Historia Naturalis, 10.2.2). Near the end of its lifetime, commonly set at five hundred years, the bird built a pyre and by rather mysterious means engendered a new Phoenix. The new bird placed the dead parent's remains in myrrh, made test of its strength until it could fly with its burden, and then took the myrrh-enclosed body to Heliopolis, leaving it to be consumed on the altar of the Sun. No Egyptian sources, however, including The Book of the Dead, refer to the rebirth of the bennu by fire.[4]

Hesiod (c. 735 B.C.) is credited with introducing the Phoenix into the literature of Europe; he set its life span at 972 generations but gave no details of its life. Two centuries later, Hecataeus provided the details (as above) that were taken up by Herodotus in the following century. According to the account in Herodotus (History, II. 73), the bird's plumage is red and gold, and in size and shape it resembles the eagle. When it is about to die, the bird sings. [Later writers readily accepted this

aspect of the legend--Philostratus writes that "the phoenix which is being consumed in its nest sings funeral strains for itself,"[5] and Lactantius describes its peerless song:

> atque ubi Sol pepulit fulgentis limina portae
> et primi emicuit luminis aura levis,
> incipit illa sacri modulamina fundere cantus
> et mira lucem voce ciere novam,
> quam nec aedoniae voces nec tibia possit
> musica Cirrheis adsimulare modis;
> sed neque olor moriens imitari posse putetur
> nec Cylleneae fila canora lyrae.[6]

The poet Ezekiel probably referred to the Phoenix in his drama, Exodus, written more than one hundred years before the birth of Christ. He may have been an Alexandrian Jew, and, in turn, the Alexandrians may have introduced the notion, followed later by Lactantius, that the Phoenix (probably because of the likeness to the proper name 'Phoenicia') nested in Phoenicia. Other authors assign the bird's habitat to Arabia, most to a place farther east. At any rate, Lactantius in his de ave Phoenice seems to have been the first to connect the name Phoenicia with the word Phoenix.

Pliny the Elder in his Natural History (X. 2. 2) gives an account of the first Roman concern with the legend--in the time of Sulla, the senator Manilius wrote out a version of the story. Ovid's, however, is the first consistent attention to the story of the Phoenix, and according to Fitzpatrick, "he is the first Greek or Roman author to mention the bird more than once in his writings. Ovid deviates from the accepted version in several respects.

First, he consistently refers to the bird as a female, while the earlier authors considered it a male. There is no mention of Arabia as the bird's home. In the Metamorphoses [XV. 393] he seems to believe her a native of Assyria, while in the Amores [II. vi. 54-55] she is one of the birds that dwell in the Elysian fields" (Fitzpatrick, p. 21). Ovid describes the bird's eating habits for the first time, tells of its nest of spices--how the nest is built, and how the bird dies in it--and connects the Phoenix with the palm tree (Metamorphoses, XV. 391-407). The Latin palma is equivalent to φοῖνιξ, the Greek word for both 'palm' and 'Phoenix.'[7] Both Ovid and Herodotus agree that the bird lives for five hundred years, and that the new Phoenix carries the remains of the old to the city of the sun, placing them there before the doors of the Temple of the Sun. Manilius, as cited in Pliny (Historia Naturalis, X. 2) is responsible for a further change in the legend: the Phoenix dies, and from its bones and marrow comes a worm that grows into the new Phoenix; it then carries the remains of the parent's body not to Heliopolis, but to the City of the Sun near Panchaia. Pliny also says that the ashes of the nest are used for medicinal purposes. He assigns as much as one thousand years to the bird's lifetime, as does Martial, but hedges concerning the truth of the legend: "haut scio an fabulose" (X. ii. 3).[8] Other first-century writers who refer to the Phoenix are Pomponius Mela, Lucan, Chaeremon (an

Egyptian tutor of Nero), Seneca, Statius, Martial, Plutarch and Tacitus.[9] Mela and Tacitus both thought that such a bird existed, and Tacitus is the first to mention that the Phoenix is accompanied by a flock of other birds--on its flight to Heliopolis, "multo ceterarum volucrum comitatu novam faciem mirantium" (Annales VI. 28). Martial's change to the legend is crucial: in the Epigrams (V. 7) he tells of a bird destined to live forever through periodic rebirths (he describes it as an Assyrian bird but it is usually agreed that he was speaking of the Phoenix), and compares the renewal of Rome under the Emperors to its fiery rebirth. The Phoenix, according to Martial, builds its funeral pyre in Assyria every thousand years and is consumed by fire only to be renewed.

In the second century, Lucian refers three times to the Phoenix, and seems to localize its habitat in India. It is interesting that Diogenes Laërtius (IX. 79) echoes Mela (III. 83-84) in noting that the Phoenix is a creature which multiplies without intercourse. [This is not a Roman innovation. Albert S. Cook, p. xlii, indicates that "on the coffin of Suti-mes in the Louvre, and similarly on the coffin of Tent-Amon in Berlin, 'the great god Phoenix' says: 'I am the Phoenix who begets himself, who gives incense to the Osiris.'" This aspect of the legend may be relevant to the "married chastity" line (61) of Shakespeare's poem.] St. Clement the Roman was a contemporary of Tacitus. His account of the legend (First Epistle to

the Corinthians I:25-26) makes use of the worm rebirth of the Manulius-Pliny version, reckons the bird's lifetime at five hundred years, as in early accounts, and has the new Phoenix returning to Heliopolis with its parent. To Clement, the bird is a sign given by God which presages the resurrection of the faithful; there is no mention of immolation. A similar version of the "worm story" is found in St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechesis XVIII. viii) and St. Epiphanius (Ancoratus LXXXIV).

Early in the second century, the Greek Physiologus became current (a yet earlier version may have been compiled before 150 B.C.). It is a bestiary, or collection of animal fables with Christian morals, which seems to illustrate many new features of the legend. The collection is important because it directs the Phoenix myth into Christian contexts. Unlike St. Clement's version, in the Physiologus the Phoenix is burnt and the new Phoenix arises from the ashes of its predecessor: the bird lives in India, comes to Mt. Lebanon every five hundred years, gathers spices and goes to Heliopolis; there it kindles a blaze and burns to death. Three days in all are required for the new Phoenix to show itself to the priests of Heliopolis--the first day's small creature develops wings on the second day, and on the third day becomes the new Phoenix. The story's emphasis is on death and rebirth: a nest of perfume and aromatic woods is constructed, and the dying bird sings a sort of funeral song. This is essentially

the account of the Carmen de ave phoenice by Lactantius and the Phoenix of Claudian. The feature of the bird springing up from her ashes is probably borrowed from Martial. The Physiologus collection was popular, and Ambrose, among other church fathers, made use of it; many Christian writers apparently used it to suggest the resurrection of the faithful at the Day of Judgement, as in Clement the Roman's version of the myth. The three-day rejuvenation period plainly owes its origin to the Gospel story; and the second-century Physiologus further underscores the Phoenix resemblance by describing the winged Christ as bearing fragrance which is returned in the spiritual fragrance that arises from praying hands. "The marvelous manner of the bird's birth, as well as its unique existence, fostered the application of such a symbolism. In Rufinus especially, we find the miraculous rebirth of the bird instanced in support of the virgin birth and incarnation of Christ. At a later date the Monophysites instanced the Phoenix as an argument for the doctrines peculiar to their system of belief, a thesis which was combated by Maximus Martyr. Nor were the Monophysites the only heretical sect to use this bird to illustrate their tenets. The Pelagians, through the pen of Vincent Victor, employed it to support their doctrine of the soul" (Fitzpatrick, pp. 26-27).

Also in the second century, the Pseudo-Oppian contributes to the legend's history by making the sun the

agent of the bird's immolation (De aucupio I. 28). He says, as does Lucian, that the bird lives in India. The moribund Phoenix builds a nest of spices on a lofty rock, seats himself in it, and bird and nest are set aflame by the sun's rays. Lactantius and other later writers adopted this innovation. The Phoenix was by now a frequent Christian symbol. According to Miss Fitzpatrick, "Early in the second century A.D. we read in the Acts of St. Cecilia that she had a figure of the Phoenix engraved on the tomb of Maximus, who was martyred along with her husband and his brother. The urn of Marcius Hermes, on either side of the inscription, shows a Phoenix on a funeral pyre. A picture of the creature which can be dated as belonging to the latter half of the second century A.D. is to be seen in the crypt of Ampliatus at Rome. Still another is found on the sarcophagus of St. Theodore, Archbishop of Ravenna, in that city. In the mosaic of SS. Cosmas and Damian (c. 350 A.D.) at Rome the creature is turned toward the figure of Christ ascending into heaven. Another mosaic, in the church of St. Prassede, shows the bird standing on a palm leaf. Still another adorns the tribune of the Lateran, and portrays a large cross beneath which is the New Jerusalem. In its midst stands a stately palm with a Phoenix on its top. A fresco in the old chapel of St. Felicitas was discovered at Rome in 1813 near the baths of Titus. This painting represents the martyr with her seven sons dying for the faith. There are in the

picture two palm trees, on each of which sits a Phoenix" (pp. 29-30). The bird was no less a pagan symbol. It is to be found on Roman cinerary urns, along with the familiar inscription D(is) M(anibus), and because of its connection with eternity, it was pictured on imperial money from the time of Trajan. Pernaps its most widespread use on coins was during the reign of Constantine the Great (323-337). In the fifth century it vanished from the coinage of Rome.

Perhaps some details concerning Firmianus Lactantius should be supplied at this point. Lactantius lived in the last half of the third century and the beginning of the fourth, and has been called the "Christian Cicero" for the purity of his Latin style. He was a learned rhetorician and tutor to Constantine the Great's son. Many scholars, among them Erasmus, believe him to be the author of the poem De Ave Phoenice, and the fact that St. Jerome (340-420 A.D.) omitted it in his catalogue of the works of Lactantius is no longer considered crucial by the majority of modern commentators. In the sixth century Gregory of Tours named him as the author of a work on the Phoenix. Moreover, the stylistic and grammatical similarities between the other works of Lactantius and De Ave Phoenice appear to be plain.[10] Fitzpatrick (pp. 35-37) sees obvious Christian parallels in the latter, but according to N. F. Blake, "Although Lactantius may well have been the author of the Carmen, it does not follow that he wrote it after his conversion. Several probable Christian passages

have been pointed out in the poem, though not all scholars are prepared to accept that they are in fact Christian. At most it can be said that Christianity is implicit in the poem."[11] Christian proponents, at any rate, argue that the passages of supposed sun-worship in the Lactantius poem are metaphorical for worship of God, and of Christ the Son. Claudian (c. 365-c. 408) imitated the poem in his poetically superior Phoenix. It is the opinion of a modern critic, T. W. Baldwin, that "in The Phoenix and the Turtle, Shakspere has taken his pattern from Ovid, Amores II, 6, some material eventually from Lactantius, and has put the whole into the setting of a contemporary funeral."[12] Baldwin considers Dominicus' Ovid commentary [Ovid, Amatoria (Basle, 1549)]--with its suggestion on pp. 299-300 to seek further in Lactantius--to have supplied the materials for the Shakespeare poem. Lactantius, however, has immediate chronological relevance at this point because his De Ave Phoenice was utilized by the author of the Anglo-Saxon poem, The Phoenix.

The Old English Phoenix was probably written in the ninth century. The area in which it was composed cannot be determined, and the Exeter Book, in which the poem appears, does not indicate its author. Many scholars have attributed it to Cynewulf; but modern studies tend to accept as genuine only those poems displaying his characteristic runic signature. "The Phoenix," as Blake notes, "is commonly divided into two parts (1-380, 381-677), the first

of which relates the story of the phoenix and the second supplies the allegorical interpretation. Although it is dangerous to emphasize this division in The Phoenix, it is helpful to bear it in mind when considering the sources of the poem. The Carmen de ave phoenice attributed to Lactantius is the source of the first half of the poem" (p. 17). The English poet, of course, was not the first to Christianize the Phoenix story, and showed no particular originality in doing so. Gregory of Tours in his De cursu stellarum, written before 582, "describes the wonders of the world, the third of which is quod de Phinice Lactantius refert" (Blake, p. 17). Gregory, after a somewhat inaccurate synopsis of the poem, "adds: 'quod miraculum resurrectionem humanam valde figurat et ostendit, qualiter homo luteus reactus in pulvere, sit iterum de ipsis favillis tuba canente resuscitandus.' Gregory in fact attaches the common Christian allegorical interpretation that the phoenix represents the resurrection of man, an interpretation which was common enough in the fathers" (Blake, pp. 18-19). In the second half of the poem, the allegorical interpretation, the Anglo-Saxon poet almost certainly used Ambrose's Hexameron, possibly certain passages in Job, and Carleton Brown has suggested that he made use of a work known as De trinitate or In symbolum apostolorum, formerly attributed to Ambrose.[13] The poet makes a Christian Germanic poem of the De Ave Phoenice and tries to relate it to the Old English heroic background; he omits most of the classical

references, and makes the bird a symbol of God's divine truth: its life, death and rebirth represent the life, death and future resurrection of man. The second half makes use of an elaborate and rather confused Christian allegory (see Blake, pp. 31-33) in which the Phoenix is first all men who will rise again on the last day, then all good men who will go to heaven, and at last the bird is Christ himself. Despite a failure to satisfactorily mate the legend to Christian allegory, Blake thinks the poem "has indeed a quiet charm and simple dignity which are not found elsewhere in the whole of Old English poetry" (p. 35).

The Arab geographer and naturalist al-Qazwini, who died in 1283--called the "Pliny of the Orientals"[14]--included the Phoenix fable in his Marvels of Creation and Peculiarities of Existing Things (I, 4, 20), and was apparently capable of believing far less likely stories: one of the manuscripts of the book pictures a bird armed with guns (Ali, p.157). The Anglo-Norman poet Philippe de Thaun includes the legend in his Bestiary,[15] which relies heavily on Ysidorus and the early Physiologus. De Thaun probably wrote the Bestiary within a few years of 1121. The fable also appears in the De animalibus of Albertus Magnus (1193-1280) [XXIII, cap. de Phoenice]. To Paracelsus (1493-1541) and the alchemists who preceded and followed him, the Phoenix was the very symbol of their trade. Astronomers from ancient times link the bird to various cycles, planets,

and to the solar revolution itself.

The popularity of the legend is observable in a sampling of European literature before the time of Shakespeare.[16] Dante (1265-1321) employs it in a simile[17] and Petrarch compares Laura to the bird in several sonnets.[18] The legend appears in Marco Polo's Divisament dou Monde and in Chapter 7 of the Travels of Sir John Maundeville,[19] probably written c. 1357. Maundeville makes routine use of the bird's 500-year lifespan (Herodotus and Ovid) and the worm story as in Manilius-Pliny, St. Clement the Roman, et al. Ariosto (1474-1533) mentions the legend in Canto XV of Orlando Furioso.[20] In German literature, the knight Hugo von Langenstein late in the 13th Century writes his prolix Heilige Martina, and, drawing on the Physiologus, makes use of the Phoenix legend.[21] In a similarly florid style, Konrad von Würzburg (c. 1220-1287) in Die Goldene Schmiede includes the legend while bringing together all the symbols and comparisons the Middle Ages used to describe the Virgin Mary.[22] In France, the Phoenix is central to much of the poetry of Philippe Desportes (1546-1606),[23] and Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585) trades frequently on the legend, as in the following sonnet:

> Voicy le mois d'avril, où nasquit la merveille
> Qui fait en terre foy de la beauté des cieux,
> Le mirouer de vertu, le soleil de mes yeux,
> Qui vit comme un phenix, au monde sans pareille.[24]

Cervantes makes brief reference to the tale in Don Quixote;[25] and in Germany, Kaspar von Barths drew heavily on Claudian

for his own Deutscher Phönix.[25] In England, John Leland (1506?-1552) had already succeeded in making King Arthur a protestant, and when Richard Robinson translated Leland's Assertio inclytissimi Arturii in 1582 as the Life, Actes, and death of Prince Arthur King of Great Brittaine, he regarded Elizabeth as the last of Arthur's descendants: 'the Phenix of feminine sex, our most . . . gratious souraigne Ladie Queen Elizabeth' (Sig. B).[27] It was commonplace to compare Elizabeth to the Phoenix, as she appears in the jewel now in the British Museum.[28] Thomas Churchyard's Challenge (1593) praises Elizabeth extravagantly by identifying her with the Phoenix in several poems.[29] Presumably Massinger has Elizabeth in mind when he refers to Pulcheria in the opening lines of The Emperor of the East (I. i), as does Peele surely in The Arraignment of Paris (V. i. 151). The Queen is compared to the Phoenix by Henry Lyte in his Light of Britayne (1588) and by Richard Harvey in Philadelphus, or a Defence of Brutes, and the Brutans History (1593).[30] Robert Chester's Love's Martyr (1601) depends upon an extended Phoenix allegory which may have Elizabeth in mind. Various contributing poets--among them Marston, Chapman, Jonson and Shakespeare--descant on the Phoenix theme. An emblem appearing in The Mirrour of Majestie by H. G. [Sir Henry Goodyere] (1618) pictures Anne of Denmark, queen to James I, as the new Phoenix replacing the old one, Elizabeth.[31]

In general, the legend enjoyed great currency in Shakespeare's time and afterward. Two popular miscellanies, The Paradise of Dainty Devices (1576-1606) and The Phoenix Nest (1593), each edited by Hyder E. Rollins in recent years, have recourse to it. In the latter (1931), Rollins considers it likely that the title comes from a poem by Nicholas Breton.[32] Included in The Phoenix Nest is a poem by Matthew Roydon, an elegy on Sir Philip Sydney, which partakes of the Phoenix matter. The Phoenix is apparent in Phineas Fletcher's Purple Island (1633) [Canto II, Stanza 4] as part of the poet's microcosmic allegory,[33] and Sir Thomas Browne mentions it among "mixtures inexistent" in Pseudodoxica Epidemica.[34] Milton refers to the bird in Paradise Lost V. 266-274, and in Samson Agonistes, vs. 1687-1707. Douglas Bush underscores the difference between the two treatments: in Samson, "The image . . . is apparently not here a Christian symbol of resurrection but is limited to human regeneration and earthly fame." [35]

NOTES TO APPENDIX

[1]Ed. and trans. Lactanti de ave phoenice (Philadelphia, 1933), p. 18. The Encyclopedia Americana (1943) also notes that "similar stories of birds occur in the Oriental mythologies, as, for instance, the myth of the Persian bird simorg and that of the Indian semendar" (XXI, 769).

[2]One of the most common and long-lived aspects of the legend. Sun associations are implicit in Thomas Middleton's play The Phoenix (1607) wherein 'Phoenix' is the Duke of Ferrara's son (I. i. 66-68), and in a work remote in time from Middleton's, the Pseudo-Baruch's account of the Phoenix in his Apocalypse, VI-VIII. See Jean Hubaux and Maxime Leroy, Le mythe du phénix dans les littératures grecque et latine (Paris, 1939), pp. xxvii-xxxi. These two examples are typical; others will appear in the text.

[3]Albert Stanburrough Cook, ed., The Old English Elene, Phoenix, and Physiologus (New Haven, 1919), p. xxxix.

[4]Detailed treatments of the Egyptian aspects of the legend can be found in Cook, Old English (cited above) and R. T. Rundle Clark, "The Origin of the Phoenix," University of Birmingham Historical Journal, II (1949-1950), 1-29, 105-40.

[5]Flavius Philostratus, The Life of Apollonius of Tyana, trans. F. C. Conybeare, The Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (London, 1912), I, 335 (Life, XLIX).

[6]J. Wight Duff and Arnold Mackay, trans., Minor Latin Poems, 2nd ed., The Loeb Classical Library, No. 284 (London, 1954), pp. 652-55 (De ave phoenice, vs. 43-50).

[7]The name, with its palm associations, appears several times in Greek mythology. See index (II, 405) to Robert Graves, The Greek Myths, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Baltimore, 1961).

[8]There are in all seven references to the Phoenix in Pliny's Historia Naturalis: VII. 49; X. 2; XI. 44; XII. 19; XIII, 4; XXIX. 1; and XXIX. 3.

[9]Fitzpatrick provides (pp. 12-15) a list of 128 passages in ancient literature which mention the Phoenix legend.

[10]See Fitzpatrick, p. 31 ff.

[11]N. F. Blake, ed., The Phoenix [Anglo-Saxon poem] (Manchester, 1964), p. 18.

[12]On the Literary Genetics of Shakspere's Poems & Sonnets (Urbana, Ill., 1950), p. 363.

[13]A discussion of these possibilities can be found in Blake, Phoenix, pp. 20-22.

[14]See S. M. Ali, trans., Arab Geography (Aligarh, 1960), Being the translation of Section II of M. [Joseph Toussaint] Renaud's Introduction Générale à la Géographie des Orientaux (Géographie d'Aboulféda, tome i). F. Wüstenfeld edited the works of al-Qazwini in 2 vols. (Gottingen, 1848-1849), the first of which, Kosmographie, or 'Aja'ib al-Makhluqat, contains mention of the Phoenix. Herman Ethe translated the first half of the Kosmographie (Wüstenfeld I, 1-208) into German as Die Wunder der Schopfung (Leipzig, 1868).

[15]Thomas Wright gives the text of de Thaun's Bestiary in his Popular Treatises on Science Written during the Middle Ages (London, 1841), reprinted London, 1965. The Phoenix material is on pp. 113-115.

[16]In addition to our discussion (below), the reader is directed to T. W. Baldwin's book (cited above), p. 377 n.; to William H. Matchett, The Phoenix and the Turtle . . . (The Hague, 1965), pp. 19 n., 21-22, 29; and to Robert Ellrodt, "An Anatomy of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,'" SS, XV (1962), 99-110, passim.

[17]Dante Alighieri, La Divina Commedia, ed. A. Momigliano (Sansoni: Firenze, 1957), pp. 182-83 (Inferno, Canto XXIV, vs. 97-111).

[18]Francesco Petrarca, Rime, ed. Siro Attilio Nulli (Milano, 1956), pp. 133, 148-49, 213 (Sonnets CLXXV, CCX, CCCXXI).

[19]Mandeville's Travels, ed. M. C. Seymour (Oxford, 1967), p. 34.

[20]Tutte le Opere di Ludovico Ariosto, ed. Cesare Segre (Arnoldo Mondadori Editore [Verona?], 1964) (Orlando, Stanza 39). The same stanza is numbered 28 in Sir John Harington's Translation of Orlando Furioso, ed. Graham Hough (London, 1962).

[21]Martina, Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, XXXVIII (Stuttgart, 1856), pp. 218-34 (87c, v. 41-93d, v.96, "Von dez Phenix Natvre").

[22]Die Goldene Schmiede des Konrad von Würzburg, ed. Edward Schröder (Gottingen, 1926), vs. 365 ff.

[23]See the following works edited by Victor E. Graham in the Textes Littéraires Français series, published in Geneva: Les Amours d'Hippolyte (1960), pp. 164-65, "Stanses sur les amours de Monsieur Desportes"; Diverses Amours et autres Oeuvres Meslées (1963), p. 198, "Stances"; Élegies (1961), p. 147, Élégie XIX; Cléonice, dernières amours (1962), p. 88, Sonnet LXII; Cartels et Masquarades Epitaphes (1958), pp. 23-24, "Pour les chevaliers du phenix" [see Graham's note 1, p. 23].

[24]Sonnets pour Helene, I, xxxvii, vs. 1-4.

[25]Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha (Ediciones Ramos: Madrid, 1955), p. 100 (Bk. I, Chapter 19).

[26]See Johannes Hoffmeister, Kaspar von Barths Leben, Werke und Sein Deutscher Phönix; mit einem Manulneudruck des Deutscher Phönix (Heidelberg, 1931). Hoffmeister's discussion usefully traces the legend's influence on German writers.

[27]See Thomas P. Harrison, "Love's Martyr, by Robert Chester: A New Interpretation," University of Texas Studies in English, XXX (1951), 74 (note 13). Also see The Famous History of Chinon of England by Christopher Middleton, ed. William Edward Mead, Early English Text Society No. 165, to which the Leland text and its Robinson translation are appended.

[28]See Elkin C. Wilson, England's Eliza (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), pp. 244-45 [including photographs of the Phoenix jewel], and notes 24-25 which discuss other Elizabeth-Phoenix references in Lyly, Churchyard, Richard Vennar, and Henry Roberts.

[29]These are discussed by the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart in his edition of Robert Chester's Love's Martyr, New Shakespeare Society (London, 1878).

[30]See Charles Bowie Millican, Spenser and the Table Round (Cambridge, Mass., 1932), pp. 41 and 84.

[31]See p. B3 of The Mirrovr of Maiestie: or The Badges of Honour, ed. Henry Green and James Croston, the Holbein Society (London, 1870). See also p. 81 of the T. P. Harison essay (cited above) wherein attention is directed to the similarity between the lines of H. G.'s poem and the "Ignoto" entry in Chester's Love's Martyr.

[32]Hyder Edward Rollins, ed., The Phoenix Nest (1593) (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), p. x.

[33]Giles and Phineas Fletcher, Poetical Works, ed. Frederick S. Boas, Cambridge English Classics, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1909), II, 26.

[34]The Works of Sir Thomas Brown, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1964), II, 380 (Pseudodoxia Epidemica, V, in the chapter "Of the Hieroglyphical Pictures of the Egyptians").

[35]The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton (Boston, 1965), p. 556, note to line 1699 S.A.

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[N.B. With several exceptions, the commentators included in H. E. Rollins' Variorum (1938) edition of the Poems, pp. 559-83, have not been listed.
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