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REFORMATION APOCALYPSE IN SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

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The question I am interested in is the following: what is common between apocalyptic discourse, especially the Book of Revelation, and Shakespeare's great tragedies? Have the apocalyptic passages of the Bishop's Bible or the Geneva Bible inspired Shakespeare's imagination? Can Frank Kermode's statement "When tragedy established itself in England it did so in terms of plots and spectacle that had much more to do with medieval apocalypse than with the *mythos* and *opsis* of Aristotle"[1] be extended to Reformation Apocalypse? Have the apocalypse-minded reformers like John Bale, John Foxe or the Tomson/Junius version of the Apocalypse in the Geneva Bible directly, or, indirectly, any bearings on Shakesperarean tragedy? I suspect they do but how to establish evidence and how to prove this hypothesis? It could be tempting to try to establish similarities on the level of images following the footsteps of such scholars as Richmond Noble, Peter Milward or Naseeb Shaheen.[2]

1. INTRODUCTION: APOCALYPSE AND TRAGEDY

Before pointing out similarities between apocalypse and tragedy we should set them apart. Apocalypse is undoubtedly a religious discourse and tragedy is a literary genre. The subject of apocalypse is the suffering of the true people and their persecution by the false ones until the ultimate victory of the chosen people of God at the end of human history. The subject of tragedy is the ultimate mystery of human existence as it is reflected in the suffering of the hero. Tragedy, though rooted in history, is ultimately disinterested in the start or the end of history, by its nature it is ahistorical. Religion, which offers redemption, is thus incompatible with tragedy. The notion of salvation tends to destroy the sense of the tragic. Apocalypse is more communal and tragedy is more individual. Shakespeare, no doubt, was an artist and not an apocalyptic fanatic. But this should not mean that the

[1] Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theories of Fiction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 30.

[2] Richmond Noble, *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge and Use of the Book of Common Prayer*, London, SPCK, 1935, Peter Milward, *Biblical Influence in Shakespeare's Great Tragedies*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1987, Naseeb Shaheen, *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Tragedies*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 1987.

world of his tragedies could not have been informed or fed by apocalyptic imagery. We would even risk the hypothesis that it is this apocalyptic tradition, a by-product of the 1500-year-old Christianity, which makes Shakespearean tragedy so distinct from, for example, classical Greek tragedy.

Now, what is common between apocalypse and tragedy is that both genres have to do with conflicts and suffering. Human suffering is not accidental but has cosmic dimensions. Both genres suggest that apart from the reality we experience by our senses and reason there is another, more genuine reality which breaks through the contingencies of human existence. It is also a common idea that the world has become corrupt and rotten and thereby ripe for judgement. If the judgement is postponed into the future, whether imminent or distant, we have to do with apocalypse; if the judgement is not imminent but immanent and takes place in an eternal now, we have to do with tragedy.[3]

2. A SHORT REVIEW OF EARLIER SCHOLARSHIP

Apocalyptic imagery in Shakespearean tragedy was studied in *Antony and Cleopatra* by Ethel Seaton in 1946, in *Macbeth* by Jane H. Jack in 1955, in *King Lear* by Mary Lascelles in 1973 and Joseph Wittreich both in a shorter study and a book in 1984, and in *Hamlet* by David Kaula in 1984.[4]

Ethel Seaton's article on *Antony and Cleopatra* was indeed a pioneering one. She has pointed out the striking debt of the play's imagery to the Book of Revelation. What is common is not only the "new heaven new earth" motif right at the beginning of the play (1,1,17 cf. Rev. 21:1) but especially the idea that Cleopatra appears as the great whore of Babylon: "He hath given his empire / Unto a whore, who are now levying / The kings of the earth for war." (3,6,66-8 cf. Rev. 17:1-2, Rev. 19:19). Antony is being the great star that is fallen (3,13, 14547 cf. Rev. 9:1). "The star is fallen / And time is at his period." (4,14, 106-7 cf. Rev. 8:10: "There fell a great starre from heauen"). Cleopatra's description of the dead Antony for Dolabella is a direct echo of the tenth chapter of the Book of Revelation:

[3] In the 17th century Milton acknowledged the close relationship of apocalypse and tragedy. He studied David Pareus's dramatic commentary of the Book of Revelation and in the second book of *The Reason for Church Government* approvingly cites Pareus when he calls Revelation to be a Tragedy: "And the Apocalyps of Saint John is the majestick image of a high and stately Tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn Scenes and Acts with a sevenfold Chorus of halleluja's and harping symphonies: this is my opinion the grave autority of Pareus commenting that booke is sufficient to confirm." John Milton, *Selected Prose*, ed. C.A. Partrides, The Penguin English Library, 1974, p. 56

[4] Ethel Seaton, *Antony and Clepoatra* and the Book of Revelation", *Review of English Studies* 22, (1946), Jane H. Jack, "*Macbeth*, King James and the Bible", *English Literary History*, 22 (1955)

His face was as the heav'ns, and therein struck
A sun and moon, which kept their course, and lighted
The little O, th' earth...
His legs bestrid the ocean, his rear'd arm
Crested the world, his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends (5,2,79-84)[5]

Naseeb Shaheen is most probably right when he says that "Shakespeare's use of the book of Revelation in *Antony and Cleopatra* is outstanding. The Apocalypse seems to have supplied him with some of the most vivid images in the play. Since only three chapters of Revelation were read during Morning and Evening Prayer in the Anglican Church (chapter 19 on All Saints Day, November 1, chapters 1 and 22 on the Feast of St. John, December 27) Shakespeare must have read privately much of Revelation shortly before or during the composition of the play."[6]

Macbeth's apocalyptic resonances are more than obvious because of the play's overwhelming obsession with evil. Macbeth's sentence: "...and mine eternal jewel / Given to the common enemy of man" (3,1,68-9) just as Banquo's question "can the devil speak true?" (1,3,107) are indirect allusions to Rev. 12:9: "And the great dragon, that old serpent, called the deuil and Satan, was cast out, which deceiueth all the world." Banquo's remark: "To win us to our harm, / The instruments of darkness tell us truths" (1,3,123-5) can be seen as a version of 2 Cor. 11:4: "For Satan him selfe is transformed unto an Angel of light." Jane H. Jack's merit is that she pointed to King James's sermon published first in Scotland in 1588 and again in England in 1603: *A Fruitful Meditation, Containing A plain and easie Exposition, or laying open of the 7.8.9.& 10 verses of the 20. chap. of the Reuelation, in forme & manner of a Sermon.* She is probably right when she says that "Shakespeare leant heavily on *Revelation* and James' commentary on it for the expression for his imaginative apparition of overwhelming evil."[7] The

[5] Cf: "And I sawe another mightie Angel come downe from heauen, clothed with a cloude, and the rainbowe vpon his head, and his face was as the sunne, and his feet as pillars of fire ... and he put his right foot upon the sea, his left foot on the earth. And cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth." (Rev. 10:1-6)

[6] Naseeb Shaheen, *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Tragedies*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, London, Toronto, 1987, p. 176.
Mary Lascelles, "*King Lear* and Doomsday", *Shakespeare Survey* 26 (1973), 69-79, Joseph Wittreich, 'Image of that horror': the Apocalypse in *King Lear* , in: C. A. Partrides, Joseph Wittreich, *The Apocalypse in Renaissance Thought and Literature* Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, Manchester University Press, 1984, pp. 175-206 and Joseph Wittreich, *"Image of that Horror" History, Prophecy and Apocalypse in King Lear*, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California, 1984, David Kaula, "*Hamlet* and the Image of Both Churches" *Studies in English Literature*, 21, 1984, pp. 241-255. See also: Helen Morris, "Shakespeare and Dürer's Apocalypse", *Shakespeare Studies* 4, (1968) pp. 252-62 and Clifford Davidson, "*Antony and Cleopatra* and the Whore of Babylon", *Bucknell Review*, 25 (1980), pp. 36-39.

Sermon is on the loosing out of Satan and his eventual casting into the lake of fire in Rev. 20, 7-10. James' paraphrase is this: "Sathan ... shall at last break forth again, and loose, and for a space rage in the earth more than euer before: but shall in the end bee ouercome and confounded for euer." This is rightly seen as an analogy of the end of Macbeth's reign in Scotland. Moreover, right before Duncan's murder is discovered Lennox's words: "The night has been unruely... the earth was fevorous, and did shake" (2,3,53-59) can be compared with Rev. 16:18: "And there were voyces, and thundrings, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake." Macduff tells Duncan's sons that this was "The great doom's image" (2,3,77). Apocalyptic images are evoked by the allusion to the "hideous trumpet" (2,3,82) as well as by Ross' dialogue with the Old Man, where in the "darkness does the face entomb" and Duncan's horses evoke apocalyptic passages, eg. Rev. 9:17-18. There is a sense of eschatological urgency throughout the play, and this is evident when Siward says in 5,4,17 "The time approaches." The end is at hand.

King Lear has been seen as the most obviously apocalyptic play of Shakespeare. It has been long pointed out that Gloucester's "pattern" of the tragedy in 1,2 "Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide ... there is son against father ... there is father against child" echoes Jesus' little apocalypse in Mk 13,12: "and the brother shall deliuer brother to death, and the father the sonne, and the children shall rise against their parents, and shall cause them to die." Joseph Wittreich has written both an article and a whole book on the relationship between Shakespeare's *King Lear* and the Book of Revelation.[8] The play's last scene's hint at the final judgement: "Is this the promis'd end? / Or the image of that horror" (5,3,263-4) makes the presence of apocalypse quite evident. Wittreich demonstrated that *King Lear* was performed before the King at Whitehall "upon St. Stephen's night" in 1606. In spite of the fact that Shakespeare put the plot of the play into a pre-Christian setting, Cordelia's death could be seen as the postfiguration of the Christian proto-martyr St. Stephen. It is not only the horror and judgement, but several other motives echo the Book of Revelation. The hypocrite daughters Goneril and Regan (both in love with Edmund) might correspond to the great whore. Moreover there are allusions to the seven stars, cracking thunder, eclipse of the sun and the moon, the black angel, the wheel of fire that all evoke the

[7] Jack, p. 186

[8] Joseph Wittreich, 'Image of that horror': the Apocalypse in *King Lear*, in: C. A. Partrides, Joseph Wittreich, *The Apocalypse in Renaissance Thought and Literature*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, Manchester University Press, 1984, pp. 175-206 and Joseph Wittreich, *"Image of that Horror" History, Prophecy and Apocalypse in King Lear*, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California, 1984.

Apocalypse. Lear's remark of the naked Edgar "unaccomodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art" might echo Rev. 3,17: "thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked." Cordelia's figure has long been associated with Christ – "O dear father / It is thy business that I go about" (4,4,23-24 cf. Luke 2:49) – as she "redeems nature from the natural curse / Which twain have brought her to" (4,6,205-7). The garment-imagery has a crucial function in the drama. The naked and mad Lear when at last in the company of benevolent powers receives a new garment: "We put fresh garments on him" (3,7,23). The new garment or raiment is also an apocalyptic image (Rev. 7:13-14) "Blessed is he that watches and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). In the great reunion of Lear and Cordelia in Act 4 Scene 7 Lear says: "Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray, weep not." (4,7, 71) In Rev. 7:17, we read that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." In the Book of Revelation, as in *Lear,* the true and good ones are always tried (or weighed) and even they are found wanting. They (Edgar, Kent) have to hide themselves in order to preserve themselves. Another apocalyptic image is that of the trumpet in *King Lear.* In the last scene when Edgar, his identity still being hidden, challenges his wicked brother Edmund to a duel five trumpets sound. "Only with the trumpet comes the possibility of the renewal of the world, a resurrection after death."[9] Wittreich's conclusion is interesting: "Apocalyptic reference, besides importing mythic dimensions to this play, also turns the apocalyptic myth against itself in such a way as to challenge received interpretations of it. Like the Lear legend, the myth of apocalypse is first ravaged, then created anew, and this is part of the larger ravaging of Christianity itself."[10]

In 1984, the same year Wittreich published his study and book on *King Lear* and Apocalypse, David Kaula published "*Hamlet* and the Image of Both Churches" arguing that "*Hamlet* contains more explicit references to doomsday than any other Shakespeare play – five in all."[11] Right at the beginning of the play Horatio alludes to the portents preceding the death of Julius Ceasar. He speaks of "stars with trains of fire and dews of blood", "Disasters in the sun" and the moon being "sick almost to doomsday with eclipse" (1,1,117-20) and this is nothing but recalling the apocalyptic word of Joel as quoted in Acts 2:20: "The Sunne shall be turned into darknesse, and the Moon into blood." In the same scene there is also a reference to another historical event, the birth of Christ: "that season comes / Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated." (1,1,158-64). According to Kaula the

[9] Wittreich, in Wittreich-Partrides *op.cit*, p. 188.
[10] ibid. p. 192.
[11] *op.cit.* p. 241.

"mightiest Julius" and the newborn Christ "form a kind of dyptich: one a prime exemplum of tragic downfall, the other of redemption."[12] For Kaula these are the basic dichotomies dominant in the play: Christ and Ceasar, Christ and Antichrist, Abel and Cain, Lamb and Beast, Bride and Whore, Hamlet and Claudius, Hyperion and Satyr, Priam and Phyrrus. I shall try to elaborate Kaula's insight when I come to discuss duplicity.

3. Topics Common in Apocalypse and Shakespeare's Two Great Tragedies: Hamlet and King Lear

I have chosen to focus on the apocalyptic elements in *Hamlet* and *King Lear* by selecting some topics that, in my opinion, are strikingly common in the genre of apocalypse and Shakespearean tragedy.

1. Protesting Sensitivity Towards the "Pseudo" and Deception

Throughout the New Testament there is a strong alarm not to be deceived by the fake, the false or the Pseudo. There are pseudo-brothers (2 Cor. 11:26), pseudo-apostles (2 Cor. 11:13) pseudo-teachers (2 Peter 2:1), pseudo-speakers (1 Tim. 4:2), pseudo-witnesses (Mt. 26:60, 1 Cor. 15:15), pseudo-prophets (Mt. 7:15; 24:11; 24:14, Mk. 13:22, Lk. 6:26; Acts 13:6; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Jn. 4:1; Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10), pseudo-Christs (Mt. 24:24; Mk. 13:22). The *Pseudo* is most frequenly translated as "liar". The Apocalypse is a vision where the Pseudo is most strikingly revealed to the seer. In Chapter Two of the Book of Revelation the Church of Ephesus is being praised by Jesus: "I know thy workes, thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evill, and has examined them which say they are Apostles, and are not, & hast found them liars (*pseudes*)."(2:2) or the Church of Sardis: "I know thy workes and tribulation, & pouertie (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemie of them, which say they are Iewes, and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan" (2:9) and the Church of Philadelphia: "Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which cal themselues Iewes, & are not, but do lie (*pseudontai*)." (3:9)

In Shakespeare's two great tragedies *Hamlet* and *King Lear* the young tragic heroes or heroines, Hamlet and Cordelia have, from the very beginning, been sensitive to the fake, falsehood or the Pseudo. Through their eyes[13] Shakespeare could show and express that the world, whether in the shape of

[12] *ibid.* p. 242.
[13] In the following passages I have used some material from my article: Tibor Fabiny: "'The Eye' as a Metaphor in Shakespearean Tragedy: Hamlet, Cordelia and Edgar: Blinded Parents' Seeing Children" in *Celebrating Comparativism Essays In Honour of György Mihály Vajda* eds. Katalin Kürtösi and József Pál, Szeged, 1994, pp. 461-478.

Denmark or Pre-Christian Britain, is rotten and maintained only by hypocrisy, flattery, corruption, by the law of sin. This diagnosis is perceived by the thinking and morally sensitive young people, who are men of intellectual integrity or women of pure heart. Hamlet and Cordelia are the ones who can see in [their] minds' eye. (H 1,2,186). They are the ones who can see, thereby also judge, the real state of the world, they are the ones who can distinguish between truth and falsehood, good and evil, authentic and fake, reality and appearance. Hamlet's "Seems Madam! Nay, it is; I know not 'seems'" (H 1,2,76) and Cordelia's "I cannot heave / My heart into my mouth" (KL 1,1,90-91) are signals that they are both straightforward to refuse the expected role-playing of society's rituals.

2. *Prophetic Souls*

The Book of Revelation is "prophecy" (1:3; 22:7, 10, 19) and it also speaks about the "spirit of prophecy" (19:10) and Hamlet claims to be a "prophetic soul" (H 1,5,40). In a sense these young people are indeed prophets, seers or *vates* i.e. people who are able to see when the rest of the world cannot see. Cordelia, having been banished, also utters prophecy: "Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides / Who cover faults, at last shame them derides" (KL 1,283-4). Prophetic souls are morally sensitive, poetic souls. This is reflected in their enigmatic uses of language or silences by which they conceal themselves in order to reveal themselves. That is why Hamlet is so fond of word-plays or puns. Role-playing (feigned madness) or disguise is a poetic activity of revelation by concealment. Hamlet the originally morally sensitive man gradually becomes a poet. At first he only suspects that the world is different from what it appears to be: "There are more things in heaven and earth" says Hamlet to Horatio, "Than are dreamt in your philosophy" (H 1,165-6). Cordelia calls herself "young" and "true" (KL 1,1,106) and she is being disinherited by truth being her "dower". (KL, 1,1,107) Her straightforward attitude to truth is also reflected in her use of language: her Protestant-Puritan-like "plain" style (KL 1,1,131,150) wants the "large speeches" (KL 1,1,183) of that "glib and oily art" (KL 1,1,223) of her sisters.

Hamlet and Cordelia, these "truth-minded" or "reality-minded" passionate young people are the ones who tend to spoil the festivities of this world by refusing its offered roles and expectations. These "other-worldly" princes or princesses are the eternal killjoys for the princes and the princesses of this world, they are the ones who overturn worldly rhythm and worldly rite. They are the ones who are awake and care while the insensitive men and woman infected by the world are asleep and drunk by wine or by power. According to the values of this world these children are seen as foolish: their wisdom is not

from this world. The music of this world is false and broken for Hamlet and Cordelia: "time is out of joint" (H 1,5,188). Unlike the rest of the court, Hamlet and Cordelia do not perceive harmony in this world, but only dissonance and discord. The world for Hamlet is "but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours", and man is not the beauty of the world but "this quintessence of dust" (H 2,2,229). The way Hamlet and Cordelia behave appears undoubtedly deviant for the chorus of the majority who unanimously affirms the rituals, the sounds and furies of this world.

3. *Duplicity*

Reformation apocalypse rediscovered the idea of dualism or duplicity inherent in the genre of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature. The idea of a double vision – juxtaposition of Christ and Antichrist, the lamb and the beast, the bride and the whore as applied to the true and the false church – has been an old hermeneutical tradition going back to Tyconius and St.Augustine.[14] Anti-Catholic polemic such as the little German tract

[14] Tyconius, the 4th century North African Donatist layman (ca. 330-390) the author of a lost Commentary of the Apocalypse and the first hermeneutical treatise in the Latin West was probably the first to offer the idea of the duplicity of the church as the second rule: "On the Bipartite Body of the Lord" of his manual, *Liber regularum*. Tyconius firmly believed that the bipartite body of Christ is composed of both true and false members, but he was also convinced that the "wheat and weeds" (Matt. 13:24-30) must grow together until the final harvest. "In addressing both comfort and warning to the Church through Scripture, the Spirit reveals the double nature of the Church as a community in which one part is already invisibly separate from their fellow Christians." (Pamela Bright) In the bipartite body there are two orders: the order of promise and the order of law. It is only in Rule III "The Promises and the Law" (*De promissis et lege*) where the two lines of the body of Abraham are discerned. According to Tyconius the double nature of the church was prefigured by the fighting of the twins Esau and Jacob in the womb of Rebekkah. The "two in one body" ("*duo in uno corpore*") are a "figure of the double line of Abraham's decendants". "Two peoples wrestling in the one womb of their mother, the church. The one, chosen on the basis of foreknowledge, is loved, the other by the choice of its own will, is evil." Tyconius then emphasizes that Jacob himself is again bipartite: he is both a deceiver and a loved one. The "doubleness" is not only a key-concept in Tyconius but it also appears in the style of his works: Tyconius's language abounds in word-plays, doublets and parallel constructions. We can raise now the question whether Tyconius's idea of the "bipartite body" (*corpus bipartitus*) has anything to do with Augustine's idea of the two cities (*civitates duas*) in conceiving the nature of the church. At the end of Rule III the fighting of Esau and Jacob in the womb of Rebecca is interpreted as the "two in one body" ("*duo in uno corpore*"), a "figure of the double line of Abraham's descendants" ("*Figura est enim duplicis seminis Abrahae*"). "Two peoples wrestling in the one womb of their mother, the church. The one, chosen on the basis of foreknowledge, is loved, the other by the choice of its own will,, is evil." We may conclude that Tyconius's vision of the double nature of the church is synchronic, the church as the body of Christ will always be mixed: good and evil members will simultaneously be present until the final judgement when the separation of the wheat and the tares will eventually take place. Tyconius's (in)carnational ecclesiology maintains the reality of

Passional Christi and Antichristi illustrated by twenty six woodcuts from Lucas Cranach (1521)[15] or Thomas Becon's *The Actes of Christe and of Antichrist*[16] usually contrasted the lives and doctrines of the two figures in several ways.

In England the most influential work of this kind was the first full-length commentary of the Book of Revelation in English, John Bale's *The Image of Both Churches* in 1545. The false church was represented by the Roman church while the true church was the Protestant one. Katherine Firth in her excellent book *Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1645* suggests that Bale "accepted the Joachimist vision of the Church as a progression through seven periods, from the death of Christ to the end of the world."[17] The main theme of the work was "the slow and secret advance of Antichrist in the Church."[18]

In his Preface to the Christian reader Bale says that:

> "Herein is the true christian church, which is the meek spouse of the Lamb without spot, in her right-fashioned colours described. So is the proud church of hypocrites, the rose-coloured whore, the paramour of antichrist, and the sinful sinagogue of Satan, in her just proportion depainted, to the merciful forewarning of the Lord's elect. And that is the cause why I have here entitled this book The Image of Both Churches... He that knoweth not this book, knoweth not what the true church is whereof he is a member. For herein is the estate thereof from Christ's ascension to the end of the world under pleasant figures and elegant tropes decided, and nowhere else thoroughly but here, the times always respected."[19]

the "body". He is not aware of any spiritual higher substance: his monistic view claims that the body is one though there are two antithetical parts in it: *duo in uno corpore*. Augustine in *De Civitate Dei* also gives a figurative, ecclesiological meaning to the stories of enemy brothers: Cain and Abel (Book XV.v.) and Esau and Jacob (Book XVI.xxxv.) However, Augustine uses a somewhat simplistic and dualistic typology. The elder brother represents the body, the devil the *civitas diaboli* while the younger one the spirit, the heavenly inclination, i.e. the *civitas Dei*. Moreover Augustine goes further than that: in the mystical prophecy Rebecca received "two nations are in your womb ... the elder shall serve the younger" (*due gentes in tero tuo sunt et duo populi ... et maior serviet minori*) is applied to the relationship of the Jews and Christians. Now as Cain was the symbol of the Jews who slew Christ (XV.v) the elder brother Esau serving the younger one likewise prefigures the relationship of the Jews and Christians. Similarly, Jacob's "crossed blessing" of Joseph's two sons Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 48:18) are given the same meaning: the elder typifies the Jews and the younger the Christians. Let us suffice to quote these examples, the dangers of the simplistic antijudaistic typology and Christian triumphalism seem to be evident.

[15] Lucas Cranach, *Passional Christi und Antichristi*. Hrg. Hildegard Schnabel, Union Verlag Berlin, 1972.

[16] Thomas Becon, *Prayers and Other Pieces*, ed. John Ayre, Parker Society Cambridge, 1844, pp. 498-539.

[17] Katherine Firth: *Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1645*. Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 41.

[18] ibid. p. 50.

Edmund Spenser also shared this dualistic image of the church in *The Faierie Queene*: Una is the true church who is identified with the woman "clothed with the sun" (Rev. 12:1). The false church is Duessa who plays multiplicity to Una's integrity: she is also the Whore of Babylon, the scarlet woman of Revelation 17 and also the church of Rome. Archimago is Antichrist, the beast from the land from Revelation 13, the papacy. Canto VIII decribes Duessa as follows:

> "And after him the proud *Duessa* came,
> High mounted on her manyheaded beast,
> And every head with fyrie tongue did flame,
> And every head was crowned on his creast,
> And bloudie mouthed with late cruell feast." (verse 6)

This dichotomy of the true and the fake, the real and the false and the false pretending to be the true, the discrepancy between appearance and reality, the world turned upside down is nowhere more evident than in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. The murderer and usurper Claudius the "adulterate beast" (H 1,5,42) pretends to be the lawful king and the benevolent uncle, just as the "large speeches" (KL 1,1,223) with "glib and oily art" of Goneril and Regan are seen to be real rather than the "plain" and "true" language of Cordelia and Kent (KL 2,2,95-98). Concerning the authenticity of speech we may recall Chapter 13 of Revelation where we hear about the beast coming out of the sea that was given "a mouth that spake great things and blasphemies" (verse 5) "And it was given to him to make warre with the Saints" (verse 6). Commenting on verse 10: "Here is the patience and the faith of the Saints" John Bale writes:

> "Nevertheless to the Christian is persecution necessary. For here in this life is the patience of the saints proved, and their faith required... The rightious the Lord trieth as gold in the furnace. He chasteneth every servant that he loveth, and scourgeth every son that he receiveth. Only is it faith that all the evils of this world by patience overcometh, and so obtaineth the victory."[20]

[19] John Bale, *The Image of Both Churches* (London, 1545), reprinted in *Select Works of John Bale* ed. for the Parker Society by Rev. Henry Christmas, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1849. On Bale's reception see Claire McEachern, "'A whore at the first blush seemeth only a woman': John Bale's *Image of Both Churches* and the terms of religious difference in the early English Reformation" *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 25 (1995), 2, pp. 245-269.

[20] John Bale, *op.cit.* p. 436

In the same chapter there is, however, another beast, coming up out of the earth "which had two hornes like the Lambe, but he spake like the dragon." (Rev. 13:11) There is duplicity here too: the beast appears to be the Lamb's double as it imitates the Lamb but only his speech betrays that he is fake or Pseudo.

Bale comments on this passage as follows:

> "This beast had two horns like the Lamb at a blush, but all conterfeit and false in very deed; for he spake as did the dragon... They seem to be Christ's and are not these are the corrupted letter of the two testaments, falsely interpreted, and for carnal purpose alleged. And therefore it is but apparent, hypocritish, and deceitful... he is the verity and life ... this is but a fable or fiction. His word is spirit and life this is but a brass-pot sounding, or a Latin candlestick tinkling, fantastical and faint, sophictical and sleighty."[21]

The Tomson/Junius Geneva provides the following annotation:

> "That is, in shew he resembled the Lambe (for what is more mild or more humble then to bee the seruaunt of the seruaunts of God?) but in deede he played the part of the Dragon, and of the Wolfe, Matth. 7:15. For euen Satan changes himselfe into an Angel of light, 2 Cor. 11:14 and what should his honest disciples and seruaunt doe?"[22]

There is a striking apocalyptic parallel at the end of the first scene in *King Lear* that has not been noticed by Noble, Milward or Shaheen. France says to the disinherited, to the plain-speaking Cordelia: "thou art most rich, being poor" (1,1,249). This evokes not only 2 Cor. 6:10 as the Arden footnote mentions, but also the Letters to the Seven Churches in Revelation 2 and 3. There the persecuted but true church of Smyrna, one of the two churches that do not receive rebuking, is praised and comforted by Jesus as follows "I know thy workes and tribulation, & pouertie" (but thou art rich) (Rev. 2:9). The opposite, in a sense her negative double, is the church of Laodicea who claims to be rich and claims to see and therefore is thus rebuked by Jesus: "For thou sayst, I am rich and increased with goods, and haue neede of nothing, and knowest not how thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsell thee to buy of mee gold tried by the fire, that thou mayst be made rich: and white rainment, that thou maiest be clothed, and anoint thine eyes with eye salue, that thou mayest see." (Rev. 3:17-18)

[21] *op.cit.* p. 437-8

[22] Gerald T. Sheppard ed. *The Geneva Bible. (The Annotated New Testament, 1602 Edition)* The Pilgrim's Press, New York, 1989, p. 131

4. Duplicity on a Linguistic Level: the Role of Hendiadys

Duplicity or the double vision is, as we have seen, inherent in apocalyptic discourse. Moreover, there is one peculiar form of linguistic doubling recognized by ancient rhetoricians as hendiadys. The term means: one through two. It was used by Vergil: "pateris libamus et auro" meaning "we drink from cups and gold" instead of "golden cups". Shakespeare is not only aware of this figure but he uses it especially frequently in his tragedies, particularly in *Hamlet*, where it occurs 66 times, as has been pointed out in a scholarly and critically brilliant article by George T. Wright.[23] Some examples: "the shot and danger of desire" (1,3,15), "Angels and ministers of grace" (1,4,32), "youth and observation copied there" (1,4,101), "the book and volume of my brain" (1,5,103), "the expectancy and rose of the fair state" (3,1,160), "the hatch and the disclose" (3,1,174), "scourge and minister" (3,4,175), "sense and secrecy" (3,4,192) "chief good and market of his time" (4,4,34). These linguistic doubles reflect the well-known doublings, pairs, twinnings or mirror-images of the play: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Voltimand and Cornelius, Hamlet and Claudius, Old Hamlet and Claudius, Hyperion and Satyr, Hamlet and Laertes, Hamlet and Fortinbras, the Polonius-family and the Hamlet-family, substance and shadow, heaven and earth, reality and mirror, world and stage, man and woman, and so on. In the drama Shakespeare subverts, deconstructs, calls into question all these relationships, whether cosmic, familiar or gender. Shakespeare mocks all normal unions in the world. Wright says that Shakespeare's hendiadys "usually elevates the discourse and blurs its logical lines, and this combination of grandeur and confusion is in keeping with the tragic of weighty action of major plays ... In the great enigma of *Hamlet*, this perplexing figure serves to remind us, in comic as in tragic moments, how uncertain and treacherous language and behaviour can be."[24]

We can, and have to, add two remarks to Wright's insights. First, the idea of doubling, as we have seen, is inherent in apocalyptic discourse. Second, apocalypse is perhaps the most deconstructive of all discourses as it subverts and deconstructs our sense of reality. "What is symbolized as that destruction of the order of nature is the destruction of the way of seeing that order that keeps man confined to the world of time and history as we know them ... The apocalypse is the way the world looks after the ego has disappeared."[25] Thus

[23] George T. Wright, "Hendiadys and *Hamlet*", *PMLA*, 1982, pp. 168-193.

[24] *ibid*, p. 171. and 176.

[25] Northrop Frye, *The Great Code. The Bible and Literature*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982, p. 136. and 138.

the hendiadys in *Hamlet* may help us to see that apocalypse and Shakesperean tragedy have indeed something in common.

5. Misogyny or Ab[w]horring the "Whored" of Babylon

Some words must also be said about the apocalyptic resonances of Hamlet's harping on his mother's sexual misbehaviour. Gender-symbolism is essential in the duplicity of the apocalyptic vision. The church is always represented as female: the faithful and persecuted church is depicted as the "woman clothed with the sun" in Revelation 12 and in Revelation 17 the false church appears as the great whore of Babylon "that sitteth upon many waters" "with whom haue committed fornication the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants of the earth are drunken with the wine of her fornication." John Bale speaks about her as the "mystery of counterfit godliness. Many outward brags maketh this painted church."[26] The counterfeit church of hypocrites commits not only fornications with the kings of the earth but also persecutes the true one. By showing us her mystery Bale promises us that "By this shalt thou know the true church from the false, the just preachers from the hypocrites, the sincere doctrine from their subtle sophisms, and their lawful authority from their cruelly usurped presumptions."[27]

Modern critics have frequently spoken about Hamlet's supposed misogyny concerning his behaviour with Gertrude and Ophelia. Could we say that Hamlet's (Protestant) protesting sensitivity towards the Pseudo is motivated by his abhorrence of the adultery i.e. corruption of his mother who, just as a church (mother-church), is supposed to be the ultimate home and reality for him as a human being? And if the ultimate home, whether the church or the mother, becomes unfaithful and commits adultery, whether spiritual or carnal, then time is indeed "out of joint".

Could we say that Hamlet's initial "Frailty thy name is woman" (1,2,45) and "pernicous woman" (1,5,105) is the expression of a passionate hatred of a vaguely supposed whore of Babylon? Whatever Hamlet's passion is being motivated by, the words of the Ghost and the rest of the play confirm that Gertrude is *not* the whore of Babylon. She is more of a passive victim than an active agent. Her fault is that she was not strong enough to resist the beast. It is confirmed at the end of the play when Hamlet sincerely reveals the cause of [illegible] of Claudius: "He hath kill'd my king and *whor'd* my mother, / [illegible] my hopes" (5,2,64). Thus Gertrude is not [illegible] she seems to be a whore [illegible]

of Claire McEachern's essay: "A whore at the first blush seemeth only a woman"[28] we may say: "Gertrude at the first blush seemeth only a whore" but turns out to be a mother. The discrepancy between appearance and reality or duplicity is also at work in the perception of Gertrude's character.

To substantiate this I briefly turn to Act III Scene IV which I analysed elsewhere.[29] My point is that Hamlet is not cruel but rather generous to his mother when he passionately holds up to her a looking-glass and tries to make her repent and confess her sins. Roland Mushat Frye in an article "Hamlet and the Protestant Confessional"[30] says: "Within the Protestant frames of reference of the sixteenth century in England, Hamlet's reproaches of his mother are skillfully designed to express the ultimate kindness, even through a seeming cruelty, or as he put it: 'I must be cruel only to be kind' (3,4,179). ... Shakespeare's dramatization of Hamlet's private consultation with his mother, in addition to its poetic qualities, provides a fine example of how the 'priesthood of all believers' was expected to operate at the end of the first Protestant century."[31] In this scene Hamlet is especially concerned with the opening of Gertrude's eyes. By showing her the pictures of Old Hamlet and Claudius Hamlet repeats the question: "Have you eyes? Have you eyes?" But Gertrude the spiritually blind is still reluctant to acknowledge her blindness. What Hamlet advises her is reminiscent of Jesus' rebuking advice to the lukewarm church in Laodicea in Rev. 3:18-19: "anoint thine eyes with eye salue, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." After this shock-therapy-like dialogue Gertrude can "see much black and grained spots" in her soul (3,4,89). In the final scene Gertrude, having drunk the poisonous cup, dies with "O dear Hamlet" on her lips. Hamlet's farewell, "Wretched queen, adieu", expresses more pity than condemnation. The once blinded mother and her seeing son embrace each other eventually in their deaths.

[28] Claire McEachern, *op.cit.*

[29] Fabiny, *op.cit.* pp. 472-475

[30] Roland Mushat Frye, "Prince Hamlet and the Protestant Confessional", *Theology Today*, Vol. 39, 1982, pp. 27-38. Further studies on Hamlet and Protestantism (especially Lutheranism): Raymond B.Waddington, "Lutheran Hamlet", *English Language Notes*, [illegible]mber, 1989, pp. 27-42. and Richard Marius, "Fate and Providence: Hamlet's Take on [illegible] *The Harvard Divinity School Student Journal of Literature and*

6. Endurance – Hypomone

In the apocalyptic world of *Hamlet* and *King Lear* the true children – Hamlet, Cordelia and Edgar –, figuring as the apocalyptic woman clothed in the sun are persecuted by the counterfeit church, the false woman, the whore, the fake reality and the dragon and the beast. They can be compared to the white-robed martyrs whose crying from under the altar was heard when the fifth seal was opened (Rev. 6:9-11, Rev. 7:9-17 and Rev. 14:1-5).

We have already quoted Jesus' "little apocalypse" from Mk. 13:12 when Jesus envisages the great tribulation of the end-times: "Yea, and the brother shall deliuer the brother to death, and the father the sonne, and the children shall rise against their parents, and shall cause them to die." We should now add also verse 13: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but whosoeuer shall endure to the end, shall be saued."

The noun form of the original Greek verb is *hypomone* meaning patient endurance, steadfastness, perseverance, standing firm, holding out. The term frequently occurs also in Revelation (1:9; 2:2; 2:3; 2:19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12). I wish to emphasise that the word "endure" is also a key-word in *King Lear*. It occurs there eight times. Twice it is used in connection with nature (3,4,3 and 3,7,60). It is significant that Goneril and Regan are the ones who refuse to endure: "I shall *not endure* it" (1,2,6) Goneril says of her father and the riotous soldiers. And at the end Regan comments on Goneril: "I *never shall endure* her" (5,1,15). In the midst of the tempest-scene defying all his humiliation Lear stands firm: "In such a night / To shut me out? Pour on, *I will endure*" (3,4,18). Edgar preaches to his father about the necessity of suffering:

> "*Man must endure*
> Their going hence even as their coming hither" (5,2,9-10)

The dying Gloucester is said to have found out that Edgar "*so endured*" (5,3, 211) and eventually Kent says of the dead Lear: "The wonder is *he hath endured so long*" (5,3,316). Now this linguistic evidence (cf. Mk. 13:13!) seems to solve the age-old debate whether Lear was saved or not.

However, in my opinion it does not make very much sense to enter into a critical debate as to whether or not *King Lear* is a Christian drama, since whatever side we take usually depends on our own personal convictions. With regard to any of the plays, it is similarly futile, I think, to investigate whether Shakespeare was a Catholic or a Protestant, or both, or neither. What he has bequeathed to us is not an ideology, not even a faith but art and language. And language, at its best, always reveals.

"Bear Us Like the Time"

Time and Genre in Shakespeare-Fletcher: The Two Noble Kinsmen

Veronika Schandl

> "The glass is running now that cannot finish
> Till one of us expire."[1]
> (V, i, 18-19)

Around 1340 Boccaccio wrote a narrative entitled *Teseida della Nozze d'Emilia*, where two cousins fight for the love and acceptance of a young lady called Emilia, at the end of which one of them dies a sudden and horrifying death, while the other lives happily ever after with the object of their admiration. This story aroused the interest of an English poet a few decades later, and thus Geoffrey Chaucer made his Knight tell it *in The Canterbury Tales*. Almost three hundred years passed, and a young rising playwright joined another who was almost at the end of his career to reshape the tragic story of Arcite and Palamon so as to be suitable for the stage of the Blackfriars Theatre. Thus the drama entitled *The Two Noble Kinsmen* was born, a play co-written by William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, probably in 1613. Though on the title page of its first publication in 1634 it is entitled a tragicomedy, scholars still argue about its genre, and its place in the Shakespearean oeuvre. No wonder. Putting the story of the Chaucerian romance on stage resulted in something confused and confusing; a play difficult to evaluate and difficult to grasp. In this essay I try to walk around the topic of genre in connection with the usage of time, and thus hope to find a reason for the disturbing nature of the drama.

Before I begin to discuss the play itself I would like to enumerate some theoretical statements about the nature of time in Shakespearean drama, mainly following the argumentation of David Scott Kastan, outlined in his book, *Shakespeare and The Shapes of Time*.[2] We can all agree with Professor Kastan that the demands of time are one of – if not 'the' – ultimate truth of human existence. We are born, we die, and in the meantime we spend some time here on earth: what we refer to as human life. Time is an entity we are always confronted with, and thus it became a central topic of philosophy, and

[1] All quotations of the play are taken from the Arden Shakespeare edition, ed. by Lois Potter, 1997. Italics are always mine.
[2] David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time*. Macmillan, 1982.