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posted Aug 10, 2013, 7:33 AM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 10, 2013, 7:33 AM**]

The Phoenix and the Turtle

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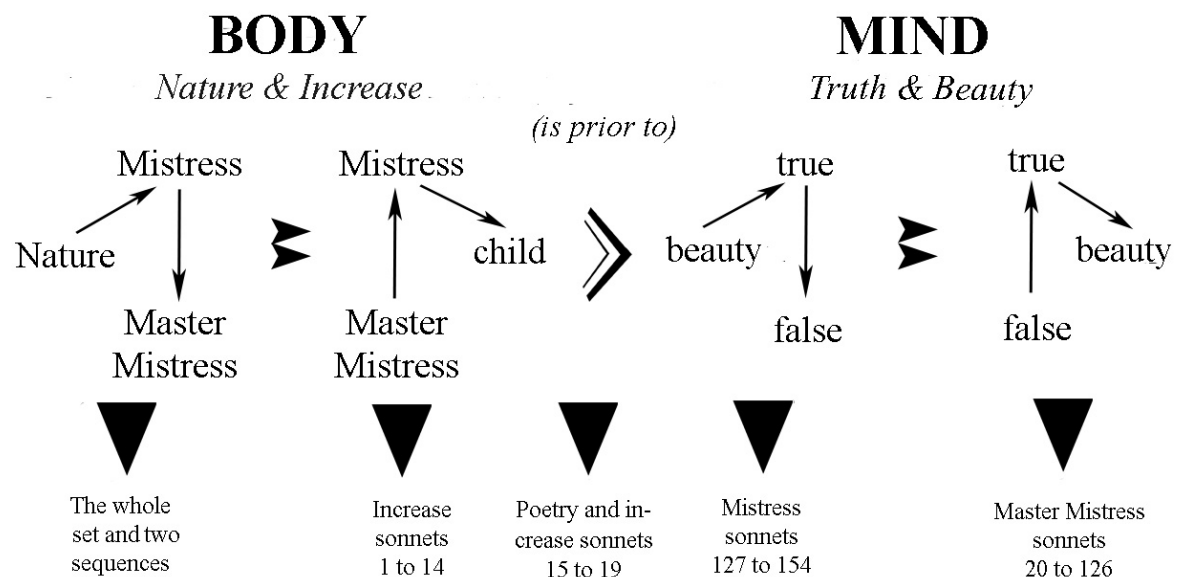
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MACBETH

OTHELLO

ROMEO AND JULIET

**Complete template (Sonnet numbers)**

The evidence for a consistent and comprehensive philosophy based on natural logic in the *Sonnets*, free of traditional philosophical dogma, suggests Shakespeare arrived at his understanding after profound reflection on his experiences. It seems that in the period before he began writing his plays he formulated a view of the world contrary to the received view. He constructed instead a comprehensive understanding built on what he refers to in *Love's Labour's Lost* as 'common sense'. Because the *Sonnet* philosophy is based on natural logic and provides a critique of previous philosophy, it has to be imagined that Shakespeare's exceptional intellect allowed him to supercede the traditional dogmas employed against natural logic.

To demonstrate the gradual development of Shakespeare's appreciation of natural logic, this volume has considered the role of the two long poems *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* as early essays specifically intended to express his understanding. Then, because *Love's Labour's Lost* was a play of his own invention, its role in further articulating the philosophy was considered. In each case, the elements basic to the *Sonnet* philosophy have been found to be the principal structural features of the works. And in each case the work exhibits a progressive exploration of the *Sonnet* elements.

Venus and Adonis argued that sexual division in Nature is logically dependant on increase

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and the priority of the female over the male. It considered the illogicality of idealistic expectations contrary to natural logic. *Lucrece* examined the male dynamic in terms of idealistic pride and possessiveness, and the consequences for the female when the logical role of increase is subverted by the female's ignorant servitude and the male's selfish pleasure. The extensive monologues and dialogues by male and female that address the consciousness of guilt and violation bring into greater focus the logic of truth and beauty.

In *Love's Labour's Lost* the primacy of Nature, the priority of the female over the male, the logical requirement to increase, the dynamic of truth and beauty and the logic of the eyes for the process of understanding are all considered. The status of the Poet, the illogicality of idealised conceits, and the need for the male to undergo a period of reassessment and adjustment to become mature enough to entertain the female, are further considerations that later find their definitive formulation in the *Sonnets*. The barely cryptic critique of biblical and Christian dogma also has its counterpart in the imagery of some of the sonnets.

In the introduction to this volume it was suggested that, after *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare decided to use the format of a set of sonnets specifically to present his philosophy. While every play written after *Love's Labour's Lost* is based on the *Sonnet* philosophy, no play again attempts to emulate the experiment of *Love's Labour's Lost*. The only other work prior to the publication of the *Sonnets* that articulates the *Sonnet* logic and aspects of its structure is *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. Published in 1601, it provides a measure of the progress toward the definitive achievement of the *Sonnets*.

As marriage is understood by Shakespeare to be a conventional rite that of itself cannot guarantee the logic of increase, it is significant that *The Phoenix and the Turtle* was written as a contribution to a volume published to celebrate a wedding. It is not surprising that the content of Shakespeare's poem advises the loving couple that idealised love is void if it does not acknowledge the logic of increase and posterity.

This commentary will consider the presence in the poem of other elements from the *Sonnets* such as Nature, truth and beauty, and numerological relationships. And, as in the plays and *Sonnets*, it will consider the logical challenge to such traditional practices as 'chastity' and 'prayer'.

Analysis of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*

The first five stanzas of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* introduce the birds who attend the funeral for the two idealistically deluded love-birds, the Phoenix and the Turtle-dove. The first bird mentioned is the 'bird of loudest lay'.

To understand the role of the 'bird of loudest lay' it is only necessary to recall the logic of the *Sonnet* philosophy presented in Volume 1. The division of the sexes and the increase dynamic in Nature form the logical basis for the dynamic of understanding as truth and beauty in Shakespeare's philosophy. Consequently, the logical relationship between the sexual dynamic of the body and the erotic dynamic of the mind provides the basis for mythic expression.

It should not surprise, then, that the first line of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* brings all these concerns together in a single word. The bird of loudest 'lay' is equally the bird of loudest lyrics or strongest argument, the bird of greatest rejoicing when its lays its eggs, and the bird that most enjoys a good lay or sexual encounter.

Let the bird of loudest **lay**,
On the **sole Arabian tree**,
Herald **sad** and trumpet be:
To whose sound **chaste wings** obey. (1-4)

The 'bird of loudest lay' takes its place on the 'sole Arabian tree' that was inhabited by the Phoenix until its pointless death. The 'bird of loudest lay' gives 'sad herald' and final 'trumpet' to the two birds and any like them who 'obey' the 'sound' or call of 'chaste wings'.

The first stanza establishes the logical relation between birds that 'lay' and those who are tricked into pointless chastity. Shakespeare begins his wedding poem by stating the pivotal theme of the increase sonnets, the priority of increase over selfish 'niggarding'. 'Chaste wings' are opposed by the 'bird of loudest lay' or the bird that embodies natural logic.

Birds of chaste wing, according to the *Sonnet* logic, are 'fiends' that are 'augurs' of the world's end because they breach the logic of increase. The 'shrieking harbinger' or 'foul precursor' is the bird or entity that harbours and sanctions the regime of 'chastity'. Shakespeare's consistent critique of Judeo/Christian dogma as contrary to natural logic identifies the precursor as 'God' or his agents in the church. God, at least, is the precursor of the Devil or fiend.

But thou **shrieking harbinger**,
Foul precursor of the **fiend**,
Augur of the fever's end,
To this troop **come thou not near**. (5-8)

Whoever they are, the harbingers are forbidden by 'interdict' or decree to come near 'this troop' or those gathering to celebrate the passing of illogical chastity. Only one representative

of such 'tyrants' is allowed near. The Eagle, as the highest-flying bird who is the King of such tyrants, is permitted under the strict conditions of the obsequy or funeral rite.

From this Session **interdict**
Every foul of **tyrant** wing,
Save the Eagle feathered **King**,
Keep the obsequy so strict. (9-12)

If the 'Eagle' represents the Church of God, (and specifically the Church of Rome as the Eagle was the emblem of ancient Rome), the Church is specifically represented by the 'priest in Surplice white'. The 'defunctive' or now extinct 'music' of the Church is represented by the priest in the form of the swan noted for its capacity to sense the immanence of death. The Requiem would be lacking 'strictness' if God, in the form of his priest, were not present to witness the last rites for their illogical practices.

Let the **Priest** in Surplice white,
That **defunctive Music** can,
Be the **death-divining Swan**,
Lest the Requiem lack his **right.** (13-16)

To complement the 'bird of loudest lay', in the company of the representatives of 'foul' chastity, the logical potential for increase is symbolised by the 'treble-dated crow' or bird of longevity who legendarily engenders its young with its 'breath'. Shakespeare uses a bird that exhibits the quality of understanding argued for in the poem and in his other works. He does not argue against chastity as a personal choice or for increase as a universal requirement. Rather his attack is against dogma that prioritises chastity over increase. The crow's breath represents the need for consistent understanding of the natural logic. The crow is welcome amongst the 'mourners'.

And thou **treble dated Crow**,
That thy sable **gender** mak'st,
With the **breath** thou giv'st and tak'st,
'Mongst our mourners shall thou go. (17-20)

With the introductions over, the Poet begins the 'anthem' or the funerary oration. If the 'obsequy' of the first five stanzas has been interpreted correctly, the anthem should read as a dirge on excessive idealistic expectations.

The Anthem begins with the stark statement that 'love and constancy' are dead. They are dead firstly, because the idealistic expectations of the Phoenix and the Turtle have died with them. They are dead in a more significant sense because by dying to themselves the Phoenix and the Turtle have killed the possibility of true 'love and constancy' through 'posterity' or increase. They have 'fled' like thieves in a 'mutual flame' from the logic of the world.

Here **the Anthem doth commence,**
Love and Constancy is dead,
Phoenix and the Turtle **fled,**
In a mutual flame from hence. (21-24)

The Phoenix and the Turtle are (or were) two birds that were 'one' only in 'essence' or ideally. But they remained 'two distincts' because they never considered the potential of 'division' or the production of a child. The possibility of 'number' or the progression from one to two to three has been 'slain' because the possibility of continuing to count is lost if logically there is no posterity through increase. *Sonnet* 14 states that increase is prior to truth and beauty or understanding. The logic of 'love' is 'slain' by the birds niggardly self-conceit.

So **they loved as love in twain,**
Had the **essence** but in **one,**
Two distincts, Division none,
Number there in love was **slain.** (25-28)

Because the love of the Phoenix and the Turtle is contrary to natural logic, their 'hearts' are 'remote' even though they stood physically close with no 'distance or space' between them. Their delusion is that they thought their relationship was 'a wonder'.

Hearts remote, yet not asunder;
Distance and no space was seen,
Twixt the Turtle and his Queen;
But **in them** it were **a wonder.** (29-32)

'Love' shone between them so that the Turtle 'saw his right' or justification 'flaming in the Phoenix' sight' or eyes. Compared with the 'eyes' in the *Sonnets*, or Berowne's references to 'eyes' in *Love's Labour's Lost*, in which the mind and heart of the others are seen, the eyes of the Phoenix merely reflect back the image of the Turtle, just as the idealistic King in *Love's Labour's Lost* wanted the Princess to see herself reflected in his tears. The selfishness is summarised by

the birds' inability to see each other as logically separate female and male individuals so that, 'either was the other's mine'.

So **between them Love did shine,**
That **the Turtle saw his right**
Flaming in **the Phoenix' sight;**
Either was the other's mine. (33-36)

'Property', or the type of possessive ownership (exemplified by Collatine and Tarquin and investigated so intensely in *Lucrece*) was 'appalled' that the 'self was not the same' or that male and female were patently distinct. The logical status of Nature (with a capital N in the original), in which 'one' is simultaneously 'two', is captured in the numerology of the *Sonnets* where Nature is assigned both the numbers 1 and 2. But the state of Nature was never 'called two or one'. The two birds, being one female and one male, could not presume to emulate the unity of Nature without also accepting their uniqueness and the logical requirement to achieve Nature's unity through sexual increase.

Property was thus **appalled,**
That the self was not the same:
Single Nature's double name
Neither two nor one was called. (37-40)

'Reason', or the thinking process called 'truth' or the dynamic of 'saying' in the *Sonnets*, is 'in itself confounded'. The *Sonnets* make the logical distinction between 'beauty' or sensations as singular effects, and 'truth' as the logical relation in language between 'true and false'. The sexual dynamic in Nature is the logical basis of the beauty and truth dynamic. So, when 'reason' sees two birds, one female the other male, each believing they are 'one', when logically they are two, the potential for 'division' or increase is 'confounded' in the 'simple' idealistic belief of unity without increase.

Reason in it self **confounded,**
Saw **Division** grow together,
To themselves yet either neither,
Simple were so well **compounded.** (41-44)

Reason, in disbelief, 'cried' that what 'seemeth' concordant is 'truly twain' or two. In the *Sonnets*, 'Love' is the precondition for reason. In the increase sonnets, sonnet 9 locates the

logical condition for love in the increase dynamic, before 'truth' is introduced in sonnet 14. Truth with beauty is then the logical focus of the remaining sonnets. Reason does not exist without 'love' or the logic of increase. So 'Reason' does not have 'love' ('none') because truth cannot exist alone. Reason cannot be reconciled to love if 'what parts', whether female and male, or true and false, 'remain' apart.

That it cried, **how true a twain,**
Seemeth this **concordant** one,
Love hath Reason, Reason none,
 If what **parts**, can so **remain**. (45-48)

Anticipating the third part of the poem, 'Reason' states the logical implications of the birds' expectations. Reason 'whereupon' makes a 'Threne' to the illogicality of the two birds. They had attempted to be simultaneously 'Co-supremes', or selfishly themselves, and 'stars of love' or united in a heavenly based delusion of unity. Reason, itself aware of its basis in natural logic, provides the 'Chorus' to the 'Tragic Scene'. The Tragedy, as in all Shakespeare's tragedies, is the consequence of the abrogation of the natural logic articulated precisely in the *Sonnets*.

Whereupon it made this *Threne*,
 To the *Phoenix* and the *Dove*,
Co-supremes and **stars of love**,
 As Chorus to their **Tragic** Scene. (49-52)

Threnos

Reason takes charge in the 'Threnos' because it is through words that the Poet conveys his ideas. (The logical function of poetry and argument or beauty and truth was examined in Volume 1 where sonnets 15 to 19 particularly present the role of the mythic Poet.)

'Beauty' and 'Truth' are mentioned first. Because, in 1601, Shakespeare had already begun to formulate the definitive version of his philosophy, it is not surprising that he identifies 'Beauty and Truth' as the logical components about which the two idealistic birds are so deceived. The third component, 'Rarity', criticises their preoccupation with individuality for its own sake rather than seeing individuality as a component of the logic of the sexual dynamic or increase.

So in the first line of the Threnos, Shakespeare identifies the logical components of understanding that were echoed later in the line 'here lives wisdom, beauty, and increase' from

sonnet 11. The second line identifies the basis of the problem for the two birds. Their delusion is due to 'Grace' or the belief in a simplistic rational unity of opposites, typical of the biblical faith. The consequence for the birds, who have immolated themselves in the belief of a higher unity, is that they are reduced ignominiously to 'cinders'.

Beauty, Truth, and Rarity,
Grace in all **simplicity,**
Here enclosed, in **cinders** lie. (53-55)

The 'Phoenix' nest', instead of containing an egg that would herald new life, has nothing but the emptiness of death. And, ironically, the 'Turtle's loyal breast' rests in unrelieved 'eternity'.

Death is now the *Phoenix* nest,
And the Turtle's loyal breast,
To **eternity** doth rest. (56-58)

The *Sonnet* logic does not state that every sexual being should increase. It says rather, for reason to be consistent, every sexual being should acknowledge the priority of increase over truth and beauty or the faculty of understanding. So 'leaving no posterity 'twas not (the birds') infirmity'. Instead 'it was married Chastity' or the belief that they could be united in marriage but deny the sexual dynamic by maintaining 'Chastity'. Shakespeare's target is not the logicalities of existence but the illogicalities of a faith that misrepresents the logic of existence.

Leaving no **posterity,**
'Twas not their infirmity,
It was **married Chastity**. (59-61)

For a believer, the word 'Truth' is ascribed to a transcendent God. Such an idealised entity can be called 'truth', but it will only 'seem' to be so. Similarly, the birds can 'brag' that a transcendent being epitomises 'Beauty', but despite their fervent hope, 'it is not she'. When the Phoenix and the Turtle committed fruitless suicide they 'buried' their 'Truth and Beauty' with themselves.

Truth may seem, but cannot be,
Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;
Truth and Beauty buried be. (62-64)

So the Poet, using his faculty of 'Reason', advises all those who are 'true or fair' or who have

a grasp of natural logic, to 'repair' to the 'urn' containing the birds' cinders, and for these poor birds, who are now so 'dead', 'sigh' an ironical 'prayer'.

To this urn let those repair,
That are either **true or fair**,
For these dead Birds, **sigh a prayer**. (65-68)

The idea that those who are 'true or fair' should 'sigh a prayer' conveys the exasperation Shakespeare must have felt toward the illogicality of religious behaviour. The inability of modern editors to comprehend the content of the poem suggests attitudes have still not caught up with Shakespeare's breakthrough beyond the psychological entrapment of faith. Editors alter the punctuation of the original to lessen the effect of Shakespeare's critique of excessive idealism, and to foster the prejudice that the poem is a Platonic allegory. Such interference is opposed to the evident content, with its basis in natural logic.

Two significant changes still appear in most modern editions. Some alter the punctuation after 'posterity' indicating a discomfort with its intended meaning and nearly all remove the comma in the last line after 'Birds', again in an attempt to blunt the intended irony. And the removal of capitals from the original lessens the impact of words such as Nature, Truth and Beauty, Division that are basic to Shakespeare's philosophy.

The relation of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* to the Sonnet template

The Phoenix and the Turtle was published eight years after *Venus and Adonis/Lucrece*, and eight years before the publication of the *Sonnets* and *A Lover's Complaint*. By 1601 Shakespeare had written about half his 38 plays and was still to write the major tragedies. So *The Phoenix and the Turtle* provides an opportunity to assess the half-way point between the philosophy presented in the two long poems and the philosophy of the *Sonnets*. Its 67 lines act like a prism, focusing the light from the early work in preparation for the more complex prismatic structure of the *Sonnets*.

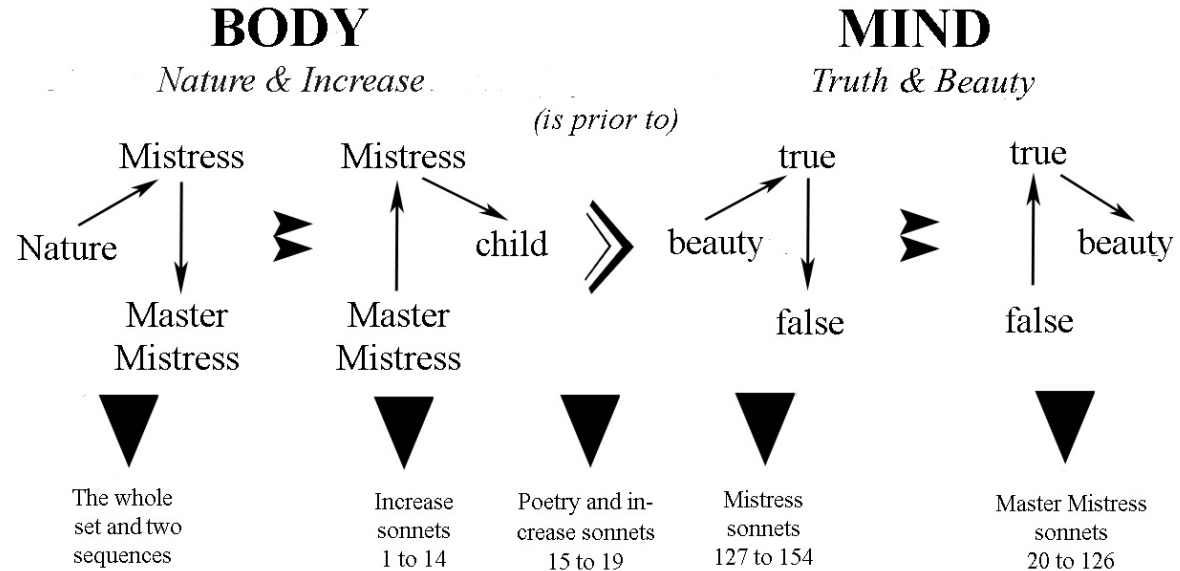
While *The Phoenix and the Turtle* has been generally admired for its intensity and suggestiveness, it has also been called incomprehensible, deliberately enigmatic, or at best an obscure Platonic allegory with irrecoverable content. This commentary demonstrates there is no mystery when the poem is read from the vantage of the *Sonnet* philosophy. Rather the poem is a deliberate statement by Shakespeare of the basic logic of life and its implications for traditional understanding and beliefs.

The poem resembles the earlier long poems where Shakespeare bases his logic in readily

identifiable figures from literature. He expressed his ideas first in the mythology of Venus and Adonis, then in the historical legend of Tarquin and Lucrece, and now in the mythical tale of two legendary birds, the Phoenix and the Turtledove. The significant change is from the discursive style of the long poems, with their narrative structure and visual settings, to an intensely cryptic perfunctory funeral rite for the two irredeemably dead birds.

The poem signals not just the death of overwrought idealistic expectations but an intensification of the poetic language to better convey the logic loaded into every word in the vocabulary and the meaning available in every line of grammar. The demise of the legendary Phoenix and Turtle prepares the way for the *Sonnets* with its purely logical characterisations of Nature, the Poet, the Mistress, the Master Mistress, the Rose, the Muse, and the rival poets.

In *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, the illogicalities of traditional belief are sharply contrasted with Shakespeare's natural logic. Shakespeare not only addresses the inconsistencies in traditional beliefs, he institutes in their place a logical attitude to life that avoids the inconsistencies. By the time he wrote the *Sonnets*, the critique of inconsistent beliefs, addressed persistently throughout the funeral rite of the short poem, is only peripheral to its precise philosophy. In the *Sonnets*, natural logic is given its definitive expression. The whole set is structured according to the dynamic of human nature and its logical relation to Nature.



Complete template (*Sonnet numbers*)

When the themes of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* are compared with the principal elements of the *Sonnet* logic in the template, there is a direct correspondence. Nature occurs near the centre of the poem, after the introduction of the birds and the consideration of the implications of their attempted unification, who do not respect 'division' or increase. Nature is the only logical entity capable of consistently appearing double while being single. Only by imitating Nature and increasing could the birds achieve the desired unity in 'twain'. As in the increase sonnets, 'Love' has 'reason' only when the birds conform to natural logic.

Increase, and the potential for love, provides the logical basis for the 'anthem' in Nature. Then it occurs as 'posterity' in the Threnos, where the birds are not so much accused of not leaving 'posterity' but of indulging in 'married chastity' which denies the logic of increase. The oath of marriage is an 'infirmity' when it is used to counter natural logic.

The first line of the poem, where the 'bird of loudest lay' replaces the deluded Phoenix, anticipates the logical role of the Poet of the *Sonnets*. The 'bird of loudest lay' acknowledges the logical relationship between a song or poem as an erotic event, the act of sex as a good lay, and the potential for offspring through laying an egg. The Poet understands the priority of increase in Nature, the priority of the female over the male, and the priority of increase over truth and beauty to enable the expression of the erotic logic of myth.

In the anthem 'reason', or the dynamic of truth from the Sonnets, is void if natural logic is denied. Love is not possible, and the logical understanding of Nature is sundered if reason is confounded. Because of their faulty logic the two birds are not able to achieve the desired 'beauty', or the sensation of unity. Instead they die of stupidity. In the Threnos, 'Beauty' and 'Truth' are mentioned throughout because the possible record of the birds' idealistic wish cannot even be written down as a poem if the death of the birds undivided leaves no posterity. The two birds have ignored the lesson articulated precisely in sonnet 14. Their fate is logically the fate of all who believe in idealistically conceived fantasies.

In *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, unity and diversity are logically consistent with Nature. Shakespeare's insistence on the significance of increase, his consciousness of the role of the Poet, and his consistent appreciation of the relation of reason and truth and beauty, combined with a devastating critique of over-wrought idealistic expectations, simplifies and clarifies the elements of the early poems and prepares for the definitive expression of the *Sonnets*.

As these commentaries continue, they will accumulate evidence in support of the arguments presented in Volumes 1 and 2, and demonstrate the ability of the *Sonnet* philosophy to explain works previously inscrutable to traditional explanation.

Analysis

posted Aug 10, 2013, 7:30 AM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 10, 2013, 7:30 AM**]

The Phoenix and the Turtle is the most ambiguous of the Shakespeare love poems. It was published in 1601 by Robert Chester as part of a collection called "Loves Martyr".

The format of the poem is as follows. It is split into two sections, the first section mourns the death of the two lovers, the Phoenix and the Turtle. This section has thirteen stanzas which are each four lines long. They have a rhyme scheme of (a-bb-a). The second section is called the Threnos and has five stanzas which are only three lines long. In this section the voice of reason also laments the death of the two lovers.

Little is known about this Shakespeare love poem. It is not very long but is very vague in its description, making it difficult to interpret. Many scholars argue over what the poem means and its purpose. In fact, scholars once debated whether Shakespeare actually wrote the poem! Thankfully however, most people have now agreed that Shakespeare himself wrote this poem.

But despite its murky history and enigmatic nature, I will try and give my summary of this poem.

The main characters are the Phoenix (the female bird), the Turtle-Dove (her husband), and at the end there is the Threnos, who represents the voice of reason. The Phoenix and the Turtle-Dove love each other completely and truly, but times are changing, and their love is the last real true love. When they die, true love dies with them, and the poem symbolises the death of idealised true love in society at the time. Many other birds such as the crow and the eagle are then called to the funeral of the Phoenix and the Turtle, to mourn their deaths. The other birds represent the variety of normal people in society. The crow, for example, represents a common bird or a common person. The eagle may represent the sharp-minded and brave.

The next part describes how love makes two people become the same being. Shakespeare uses the line "Had the essence but in one" - their spirit had become one being. He then uses another metaphor for the power of love "Number there in love had slain" - making clear that love has killed the separateness of their souls.

The poem then describes how the two lovers slowly become more and more like each other until they are practically the same being. Reason is completely baffled by this - because love does not stand to reason.

The Threnos (the voice of reason) then makes its own observation on the phoenix and the turtle. It describes the couple as "Beauty, truth, and rarity. Grace in all simplicity". The couple die, leaving no children (the line the author uses is "Leaving no posterity"), because the couple were married but chaste. The Threnos has as great deal of respect for the phoenix and the turtle, and says that with their death, truth and beauty are buried with them, and ends the poem, with a plea to those who are true and fair, to pray for the couple who symbolise all that is pure in love.

There are many theories on what this Shakespeare love poem as a whole symbolises. One theory is that the characters in the poem each represent some of the Catholic friends that Shakespeare had at the time, and the poem is a message in support of Catholicism. Another theory is that the poem actually represents the relationship between Queen Elizabeth I and Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. Many scholars argue over the various aspects of this poem to this day

Nevertheless, It remains one of Shakespeare's most mysterious poems. For example, the line, "Property was thus appall'd, That the self was not the same" I think shows how vague and mysterious the poem is. I think Shakespeare himself probably meant it to be vague because the truth and beauty of the love he is trying to describe is quite intangible.

If you are looking for a more complex and interesting Shakespeare love poem to read and enjoy, the Phoenix and the Turtle is a great one to look at. Although there may not be many romantic descriptions or ideas in it, it is always nice to study the methods of the great romantic writers.

Hi, I'm interested in all things Shakespeare. Drop down if you want to read, browse, or discuss Shakespeare's love poems, or anything else for that matter.

[Shakespeare love poems](#)

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poem

posted Aug 10, 2013, 7:28 AM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 10, 2013, 7:28 AM**]

by William Shakespeare. First published in 'Loves Martyr' which was dedicated to Sir John Salusbury (d.

1612).

LET the bird of loudest lay,
On the sole Arabian tree,
Herald sad and trumpet be,
To whose sound chaste wings obey.

But thou shrieking harbinger,
Foul precurrer of the fiend,
Augur of the fever's end,
To this troop come thou not near!

From this session interdict
Every fowl of tyrant wing,
Save the eagle, feather'd king:
Keep the obsequy so strict.

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That thy sable gender makest
With the breath thou givest and takest,
'Mongst our mourners shalt thou go.

Here the anthem doth commence:
Love and constancy is dead;
Phoenix and the turtle fled
In a mutual flame from hence.

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

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

So between them love did shine,

That the turtle saw his right
Flaming in the phoenix' sight;
Either was the other's mine.

Property was thus appalled,
That the self was not the same;
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was called.

Reason, in itself confounded,
Saw division grow together,
To themselves yet either neither,
Simple were so well compounded,

That it cried, How true a twain
Seemeth this concordant one!
Love hath reason, reason none,
If what parts can so remain.

Whereupon it made this threne
To the phoenix and the dove,
Co-supremes and stars of love,
As chorus to their tragic scene.

THRENOS.

Beauty, truth, and rarity,
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclosed, in cinders lie.

Death is now the phoenix' nest
And the turtle's loyal breast
To eternity doth rest,

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

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

To this urn let those repair

That are either true or fair
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

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