The Control of Time in Renaissance England: Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, and Donne.

Eric C. Brown
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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THE CONTROL OF TIME IN RENAISSANCE ENGLAND: MARLOWE, SHAKESPEARE, JONSON, AND DONNE

A Dissertation

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Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
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Eric C. Brown
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# Table of Contents

## Acknowledgments

## Abstract

### Chapter One: Introduction to the Control of Time in the Renaissance
- Classical Ideas of Time
- Medieval Developments
- The Renaissance Control of Time and Spenser's
  - *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*
- Notes

### Chapter Two: Violence, Ritual, and Time
  - in Marlowe's "Vast Perpetual Torture-House"
  - Violence, Ritual, and Time
  - *Tamburlaine the Great Part 1*
  - *Tamburlaine the Great Part 2*
  - *Doctor Faustus*
  - *The Jew of Malta*
  - Notes

### Chapter Three: Lotteries, Hope, and Persecuted Time
  - in *The Merchant of Venice*
  - History of the Lottery
  - Time and Hope in Shakespeare
  - "Time's Best Jewel": *The Merchant of Venice*
  - Notes

### Chapter Four: "These Two Short Hours We Wish Away":
  - The Control of Time in *The Alchemist*
  - Whipped Time
  - *The Alchemist*
  - Notes

### Chapter Five: "One Natural, Unnatural Day": The Conflict
  - with Time in Donne's *Devotions*
  - Notes

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six: Conclusion: The Control and Execution of Time</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: &quot;Like Men at Chess&quot;: Time and Control in <em>The Tempest</em></td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: The Lottery of Queen Elizabeth I and <em>Coriolanus 5.2</em></td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Abstract

While critics have much analyzed the idea of time, they have left largely unchronicled an important Renaissance conception. Time the destroyer or devourer and time the creator or revealer of truth are familiar early modern tropes. But the inversion of this power structure—humanity not controlled by but controlling time—was equally pervasive. Especially apparent are inversions in which time is acted upon as an instrument objectified for use and abuse. Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, and Donne all explore this notion of time as controllable instrument, alternately condemning or glorifying time's debasement, enfeeblement, subjugation, and manipulation.

For Marlowe, the control of time manifests itself in a series of mythic rituals, so that time is not only dismissed but violently done away with. His protagonists paradoxically both imitate and subordinate time. Similarly, in Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice characters vie for supremacy over time even as they embody certain avatars of time: Fortune and Hope. Portia and Shylock ultimately suggest Shakespeare's ambivalence over an important corollary of the control of time: the control of others through time. Jonson more visibly derides those who would control time. In his masque Time Vindicated, time is whipped by the figure of Chronomastix, while in The Alchemist, Jonson's "venture tripartite" revere time as little as they do their parade of dupes. Alternately, Donne's Devotions demonstrates that time can be used to transcend time.
itself. Time in the *Devotions* appears natural and unnatural both, and Donne embraces time only to voyage beyond it into contemplation and experience of the eternal.

These works emblematize broader cultural concerns that reveal the control, objectification, and even commodification of time. The first use of the time bomb in 1585, for instance, uniquely transforms time into a weapon, just as the growing preponderance of clocks and watches echo the changes in time from an abstraction beyond the scope human power to a concrete, personal possession. Finally, these reconfigurations of time remain potent influences on modern conceptions of time. Modern worries that respect for the inviolability of time has grown dangerously passé owe their genesis to these developments in the Renaissance.
Chapter One: Introduction to the Control of Time in the Renaissance

"Our history shall with full mouth
Speak freely of our acts"
-William Shakespeare, Henry IV

In 1866, the American outlaw Jesse James reportedly altered his usual modus operandi of never stealing from the priesthood, and waylaid a bishop on the road to Missouri. The object stolen from the cleric was a watch, and James justified his theft by quipping, "Well, Christ never needed one." A coarse theology, to be sure, but perceptions of time have indeed changed dramatically over the last two millenia. For instance, a gradual "quantification" of time, as Alfred W. Crosby recently put it, gathers momentum in the early modern period, and many of our own modern perceptions of time spring from this era. Adages equating time with money, for instance, are today commonplace, but they require first an understood acceptance of time as quantity or object. This equation has developed only gradually over the past four-hundred years. Stephen Greenblatt suggests that, in part, puritanical ideas contributed to a general "desacramentaliz[ing]" of time in the late sixteenth century. "Already campaigning vigorously against the medieval doctrine of the unevenness of time, a doctrine that had survived largely intact in the Elizabethan church calendar," he writes, the Puritans "sought . . . to discredit and sweep away the dense web of saints' days, 'dismal days,' seasonal taboos, mystic observances, and folk festivals that gave time a distinct, irregular
shape; in its place they urged a simple, flat routine of six days of work and a sabbath rest. Collective rituals, he argues, were in part displaced by an emphasis on individual attentiveness to time. This process mirrors a more overriding trend in Renaissance thought: the utilization of time for instrumental purposes. If the Puritans could separate time into periods of work and rest, mercantile systems in general were discovering new methods of distinguishing time. Time, in short, was not exclusively the "devourer of things" (tempus edax rerum) or the "revealer of truth"—the two polarities most critics suppose to be the sole avatars of Time—but equally an object of control. This control almost always includes a corresponding debasement or demotion of time from its position as a force outside the influence of humankind. For the objectification of time requires a denigration of time in the same way that many acts of human violence require a "dehumanizing" of their victims. So long revered, time becomes a quite different force in the Renaissance: often enfeebled, subjugated, and manipulated.

The idea of control preoccupies many of the writers of the period. In exploring the idea of time control, and in chronicling both its use and abuse, they alternately condemn or glorify it. Creative material was abundant. For example, although not accepted until later in England, Pope Gregory XIII's manipulation of the calendar in 1582 created a great deal of both confusion and resentment. (Much like Caesar's own creation of the Julian Calendar, which, according to Sigurd Burckhardt, "the Roman conservatives
felt . . . to be an arbitrary and tyrannical interference with the course of nature."\(^{1}\) While correcting miscalculations in the Catholic calendar's reckoning of days, his institution of the Gregorian calendar caused such oddities as the date of October 5, 1582 leaping ahead ten days to become October 15, 1582. Controllers and manipulators of time began to carve their niche in a previously inviolable temple, and the current effects of these changes are today vividly apparent. When we ask the simple question, "What time is it?," perhaps few individuals now picture anything but a mental clock, ethereal hands spinning, or a digital readout blinking in the dark night of a blind-drawn bedroom. No longer do the heavens provide images for time's passage, and the seasons only so far as they can be demarcated upon a calendar.\(^{4}\) Even the surfeit of cosmetic, age-defying products—from surgery to antioxidants—differs not so markedly from Ponce deLeón's extravagant quest for the Fountain of Youth. The idea of human influence over time has only intensified. And while time has long been the subject of extensive critical inquiry and philosophical debate, little inquiry has been made into the precise processes and manifestations of time control.

The *carpe diem* poets famously, and occasionally seductively, urged the seizure of opportunity, and Shakespeare's sonnets exemplify the traditional notion that love and poetry each have some authority over time. But with equal pervasiveness, a more sophisticated relation to time begins to emerge in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
Seize the day, certainly, but also anticipate, predict, and manipulate the future and past alike. In effect, the "control" of time might take two forms: first, a control of time itself as objectified instrument, and second, a control of others through time. (Amo Borst proposes that "Humans can contain and manipulate time within limits because they are the only creatures that actually perceive time." \(^5\) The control of others through time derives partly from the control of the self through time, a matter Gerhard Dohm-van Rossum helps put into context: "Around the year 1410, at the dawn of Europe's modern era, an anonymous author... described contemporary innovations in the ways people dealt with time. In his exegesis of the First Commandment, he... explained that just as the heavenly bodies did not rule the earthly creatures, clocks in cities large and small did not rule men. Rather, in cities and towns people ruled themselves by the clock." \(^6\) To that may be added the ruling of others by the clock, and that idea is put succinctly in a representative play of a later period, Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. "Barabas is born to better chance," speaks the title character of himself. "And framed of finer mould than common men, / That measure naught but by the present time. / A reaching thought will search his deepest wits, / And cast with cunning for the time to come" (l.ii.219-23). *Carpe diem* becomes *carpe futurum*. And instead of gathering rosebuds and flowers, figures like Barabas sow, Cadmus-like, fields of dragon's teeth. They cast with cunning for the time to come, and often that time is as full as Thebes of violence and domination.
By deferring rather than seizing opportunity, Barabas and his counterparts demonstrate that "Time's winged chariot" need not be evaded but can be commandeered.

Portrayals of time in the Renaissance were at best paradoxical, for while the image of time as Devourer was widespread (preeminently in Shakespeare's sonnets, and poems in the *carpe diem* tradition), time as Redeemer or Revealer was at least as routine.

In the former capacity, Shakespeare's sonnets remain the exemplary texts. As to the latter, many writers have regarded Time as the progenitor of Truth, "*veritas filia tempori*." Rabelais, for instance, wrote that "By time there have been and shall be brought to light all things which were hidden." These depictions have traditionally overshadowed the equally important conception of time as Instrument, an entity to be manipulated, controlled, and enthralled.

Of the Renaissance texts the present study will be examining, none may condense better this idea of control than Thomas Middleton's play of 1624, *A Game at Chess*. A wildly successful political satire, the play contains a relevant exchange between the two queens' pawns. As they converse upon the prospect of two potential lovers becoming further enamored, the White Pawn remarks that "The time, you see, is not yet come."

The villainous Black Pawn responds, "But 'tis in our power now / To bring time nearer--knowledge is a mastery--. And make it observe us, and not we it." The control urged by the Pawn succinctly articulates the idea of time as manipulable force.

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comment also introduces the temporal resonance of the chess-game, exploited by several writers as a metaphor for time and control.) An earlier non-dramatic text, one which Spinrad cites as the sign of old iconography about Death slipping, equally presents the transformation of Time the Devourer into Time the Abused.9 Published in 1606, Samuel Rowlands's *A Terrible Battell Betweene the Two Consumers of the Whole World: Time, and Death* depicts a Time figure whose sickle is losing its edge.10 After congenially talking over various exploits for the better half of the work, Death and Time are soon at loggerheads over utter supremacy. Death asks outright, "prethee tell me, what is he feares Time?" (p. 32). To which Time responds, "Death, th'art a lying fellow in this case, / I scorne thee I, for using Time so base" (p. 33). A war of words ensues, with threats of physical violence, until Death reaches the climax of his mockery:

But what art thou, a foule mishapen monster,  
Behind all bald, a Locke elle long before,  
With cloven feet, whereby a man may conster.  
C'aron from hell hath brought thee late ashore,  

......................  
Actaeons feet, (I would thou hads his hornes)  
Wing'd like an Owle, a Cat hath lent thee eies:  

......................  
And dost thou think ile pocket up disgrace,  
Of such a paltry rusticke peasant boore,  
Nay rather I defie thee to thy face.  

(pp. 37-8)

While Death and Time eventually reconcile, the rhetoric of Death's disparagement is revealing. He chooses to attack Time first as an icon: instead of a sage, sickle-wielding
patriarch, he finds him an ugly, misshapen demon from the Styx, a bizarre hodgepodge of harmless attributes. He subsequently attacks Time as an authoritative power. Death defies him to his face, and this susceptibility to defiance will plague Time throughout the works explored in this study. Often the subject of aggression, Time will lose as many battles as it wins.

Donald W. Foster is one of the few recent critics to focus on this notion of time. In "Macbeth's War on Time," Foster offers much useful commentary on the manipulation and control of time in Shakespeare. As a comparison, in Shakespeare and the Nature of Time, Frederick Turner delineates nine aspects of time in Shakespeare, although omitting instrumental time. While not noticing the widespread and violent subjugation of time, Ricardo Quinones states that in the Middle Ages, "life still had religious associations with the universe, [its] beginnings and [its] ends were in the hands of a providential and concerned divinity. . . . Neither time nor change appear to be critical, and hence there is no great worry about controlling the future. But for the new men of the Renaissance, time was not plentiful but rare and precious." A control over time and the future as well as a commodification of time, as Quinones intimates, become increasingly fundamental to Renaissance culture. Quinones has received criticism, rightly, for "consistently and disastrously play[ing] down . . . the whole theological dimension to the Renaissance understanding of time." However, he has pointed out the cultural impulse toward time
control that others have themselves downplayed. For with the commodification of time comes an ensuing alteration in the ways it is objectified and regarded as an instrument malleable to one's will. Shakespeare, Jonson, Marlowe, and Donne all exhibit this perspective on time, alternately complying with or resisting such treatment. Before detailing the particularities of their work, a survey of classical, medieval, and early modern attitudes toward follows in order to clarify both the uniqueness and complexity of their writings. So to paraphrase Shakespeare's *Henry V*, let history speak of their acts.

**Classical Ideas of Time**

What is time? When asking that question, critics commonly respond with the words of St. Augustine: "Provided that no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to an inquirer, I do not know." Importantly, though, Augustine was able to articulate what time was not: "I have heard a learned person say that the movements of the sun, moon, and stars in themselves constitute time. But I could not agree... If the heavenly wheels were to cease and a potter's wheel were revolving, would there be no time by which to measure its gyrations?" The equation of the celestial bodies and their cycles with the passage of time on earth may, nonetheless, be the best point from which to embark on a survey of ideas of time before the sixteenth century. Considerations of the relationship between the macrocosm of the universe and microcosm of man obviously continued throughout the Renaissance, even to the present day. Augustine's dismissal of the
Platonic model of time—stars and cosmic motion as time itself—actually begins to bring
time from the sidereal spheres to the world of the self, so much further elevated during
the Renaissance. As Cassius remarks in *Julius Caesar*, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in
our stars, / But in ourselves" (I.ii.140-1). Yet until Augustine's rebuke, paralleled in
many other writers, especially Plotinus, the motion of the heavens was the focus of time's
place in the cosmos.

The variations of day and night provide the most observable indications of
change, and the division of light and dark is of course one of the first works in Genesis.
According to Nilsson, "their fusion into a single unit, the day of 24 hours," happened only
after "primitive intellects . . . regard[ed] day and night separately."¹⁶ The sun, moon, and
stars—presiding bodies of each phase—carry logically enough the responsibility of
dividing time's passage. Dohm-van Rossum calls the measuring of the sun's shadow
"undoubtedly the oldest method for determining the time," with sundials in use "since the
third millennium B.C."¹⁷ Measuring by the sun's shadow does not disappear in the
Renaissance, but appears more as a metaphor than a tool. John Donne's "A Lecture upon
the Shadow" utilizes the conceit of shadows cast by two lovers to conclude, with a
definition by contrast, "Love is a growing, or full constant light; / And his first minute,
after noon, is night" (lines 25-6). The prevailing method of time measurement in
antiquity, however, was the water clock or clepsydra.¹⁸ Such devices were the precursors
of the mechanical clocks that so altered the mindset of civilization in the upcoming centuries, and their use underscores the philosophical importance of a Greek to whom they would have been quite familiar and with whom the Western tradition of time begins: Heraclitus.

When in schools of rhetoric "speeches were not made 'according to the time' but 'according to the water'," it is hardly surprising that Heraclitus would focus on the connections between elemental flux and time. In his *Fragments*, he writes famously that "it is not possible to step twice into the same river." That image—time as river, a confluence of mutability and stability—seeps Proteus-like into a variety of other texts. In fact, the four most important writers on time to follow Heraclitus—Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Augustine—all in some way return to it. Plato picks up the idea of time as motion, for instance, in the *Timaeus* when he calls it "a moving image of eternity." And in his *Cratylus*, he further cites the Heraclitean image. In a "swarm of wisdom," Socrates has a vision of the universe-as-river, and reports that "he who gave to the ancestors of the other gods the names 'Rhea' and 'Cronus'. . . gave both of them the names of streams." (Cronus, or Chronos, became of course synonymous with Father Time himself, an etymology of which Ben Jonson especially makes use in his plays and masques.) John F. Callahan, in the landmark *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*, offers the following summation of these writers: "time, which was treated metaphorically by Plato
as the moving image of eternity, physically by Aristotle as the number or measure of
motion, and metaphysically by Plotinus as the productive life of the soul, receives at the
hands of St. Augustine a new facet, the psychological. Such a gloss necessarily
simplifies the sophistication of these arguments; nevertheless, a survey of the foundations
of their ideas is also necessary preparation for the modifications in the ideas that
occurred in the early modern period.

Plato's overall important distinction between time and timeless eternity descends
through Aristotle, Plotinus, and Augustine. Sherover points out that the central question
of time argued by these philosophers was "whether we measure time in terms of motion
or motion in terms of time"; he concludes that for Plato "the prior being of space was
presumed" and "time . . . was a created mode of ordering spatial movement." Time
itself derives from the realm of the eternal, of which it is an imperfect mirror: what
Sherover calls "the living principle of the dynamic continuity of the visible world." Plato puts the matter more concisely: the eternal is "that which always is and never
becomes," while time, insofar as it is separable, "is always becoming but never is." Important for later considerations, Plato primarily thought of time as that which is
measured, not that which measures: the sun, moon, and planets "came into being to
define and preserve the measures of time." The shift towards seeing time itself as
instrument really begins with Aristotle.
Plato's pupil argued that time is foremost the measure of motion in the natural, experiential world, an idea reiterated by Donne in his _Devotions_. (Truly, much in the _Devotions_ concerning time is in part Aristolelean. One might suspect that Donne, surrounded by physicians, turned resultingly to the _Physics_.) Aristotle treats time foremost in a kind of dialectic. It had _substance_, a scrutable entity full of moments "like points on a line." divisible into sequential parts, and yet "no part of it exists." He argues against the idea that "time is thought to be most of all a sort of motion or change"; for "every change is faster or slower, but time is not: for the slow and the fast are defined in terms of time . . . but time is not defined in terms of time." Of time cannot exist without change." When there is no change in thought, there is no notice of time's elapse. (Such a case Rosalind illustrates, in _As You Like It_, "with lawyers in the vacation: for they sleep between term and term, and then they perceive not how Time moves" [III.ii.331-3].)

In his _Physics_, Aristotle also stressed the destructive qualities of time: what occasionally for Shakespeare was a devouring cormorant was for Aristotle alternately "the cause . . . of decay" and "the condition of destruction." One of his most interesting aspersions appears in a paraphrase of a Pythagorean. After Aristotle reiterates the conventional view of time as "the wisest of all things," since "all things which are generated or destroyed are so in time," he urges the contrary. "Paron the Pythagorean,
speaking more rightly," he continues, "called it 'the stupidest,' in view of the fact that we also forget in it." Finally what emerges from Aristotle's discussion is an almost playful mimicry of time itself, constant yet changing. Aristotle devotes a deal of attention to incrementalizing time, examining its components and exponents both. He maintains this dialectical approach in observing time's destructive qualities. His summation offers perhaps the first salvo against Time as Destroyer. "No thing is generated without itself being somehow in motion or acting, but a thing may be destroyed even if it is not in motion." he remarks, adding that "this [change] most of all . . . is usually said to be a destruction by time." And so most vividly in Shakespeare's sonnets, where the "rocks impregnable are not so stout. Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays" (65, lines 7-8). But Aristotle qualifies such deterioration, concluding that "it is not time that causes this either, but this change happens to come to be in time." The distinction is a subtle but critical one, for it is not only the image of Time as Destroyer that lends its influence to later ages, but time as a matrix in which events breed. This matrix shifts gradually to become the site of metaphorical control.

The dialectical reciprocity of time and motion was rejected by the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus, who sees motion solely as the measure of time, which itself held a separate reality, and not time as the measure of motion. He, too, stresses the distinction of time and eternity, and nicely defines the latter as "instantaneously infinite." But there
may be no philosopher who so sounded the inviolability of time itself. Plotinus plays off the correspondences between time and eternity to conclude. "Time can never be broken apart, any more than Eternity which, similarly, under diverse manifestations, has its Being as an integral constituent of all the eternal existences."\(^{15}\) The idea that time can be manipulated, then, runs quite askance of such Neoplatonic theory. The commonality between time and eternity stressed by Plotinus would condemn the future-gazing calculations of a character like Marowe's Barabas. For Plotinus, in "first and blessed natures . . . there is not any desire of the future: for they are now the whole, and whatever of life they ought to possess, they wholly possess, so that they do not seek after any thing."\(^{36}\) The loss of desire—so antithetical to many Renaissance protagonists—is crucial for Plotinus in order that one may turn to the immortality of the soul. The contemplation of this soul, "ever-existing" and "possessing a continuity of energy," independent of time,\(^{17}\) was an appealing and revealing idea to Augustine in the century following Plotinus.

Augustine's discussion of time in the *Confessions* later influenced a host of theological and philosophical conceptions.\(^{38}\) He begins by offering a Zeno-like paradox to prove that time does not exist in quanta (an idea that Crosby places later in the development of Western culture). Suppose that all units of time, argues Augustine, are divisible into components of past, present, and future. One century, one year, a month, a
day, an hour: all are composed of "fugitive moments" which fly "so quickly from future to past that it is an interval with no duration." Anything with apparent duration is so divisible, and the "smallest instantaneous moments," that which might be called "present," are really "moments" with no duration at all. (Again, here, Crosby offers that this "smallest moment" eventually did become defined in terms of quanta: the "duration between tick and tock." Time is instead participial: "when time is passing, it can be perceived and measured. But when it has passed and is not present, it cannot be." Coined by Augustine are three different ways of talking about time's stages. He replaces past, present, and future with "a present of things past, a present of things present, [and] a present of things to come." The sense of absolute presence, of course, is also an eternalizing of time, an effort to match the imperfections of time's mirror onto eternity. Polishing the lens of his own temporal Hubble telescope, pointed at the frontiers of the cosmos, Augustine determines that future gazing—the prediction and forecasting of events to come—and past gazing—the recollection of events through memory—are images of the eternal insofar as they embody imperfectly Plotinus' "instantaneous infinity."

Though past and future events do not exist, the present of past events and the present of future events do have a utilitarian existence in the human mind; memory and expectation, both, tell him that the glow of dawn forecasts a sunrise. An understanding of this is crucial for determining the sites of control in the Renaissance; the earlier discussion of
Barabas, who "measures not by the present time," is really an example of a character with a superior, if warped, grasp of Augustine. Whosoever can harness the future and the past and bring them into the present—refined memory, refined anticipation (both concomitant in Augustine with superior awareness of presence)—gains a measure of control over those who cannot. Crosby writes that with the advent of the mechanical clock, "Time, though invisible and without substance, was fettered." Such fettering, placed by Crosby in the late 1300s, is adumbrated in Augustine's yoking of the language of time into a new order.

As noted earlier, Augustine thought the motion of heavenly bodies to be irrelevant to any real notion of time. "Let no one tell me that time is the movements of heavenly bodies," he writes, probably in contention with Plato's *Timaeus*. As evidence, he offers this account: "At a man's prayer the sun stood still, so that a battle could be carried through to victory (Josh. 10:12ff.): the sun stopped but time went on. That battle was fought and completed in its own space of time such as was sufficient for it. I therefore see that time is some kind of extension." With Juliet he seems to say, "pay no worship to the garish sun" (III.ii.25). Nevertheless, the Plato-inspired contrary view informs a great deal of later literature. This very image, of the sun standing still, can be found on numerous occasions in Marlowe, for instance, as efforts to make time cease. The two yearly "solstices" are so named because they seem to be instances of just this "standing." The sun seems suspended, momentarily, as time fearfully hovers in the balance, usually
urged on by the corresponding festivals in summer and winter. For Augustine, control
over the heavenly bodies would in no way equate with control over time. Their
metaphorical importance, however, remained mostly intact, despite his caveat.

Augustine finally finds the question of time unanswerable—or at least
inarticulable. One of his closing prayers to God modifies the river image of Heraclitus:
"The storms of incoherent events tear to pieces my thoughts. the inmost entrails of my
soul, until that day when, purified and molten by the fire of your love, I flow together to
merge into you." What amounts to a disintegration of time must be ultimately redeemed
and unified in salvation, a release from the vicissitudes of mundane time. Similarly, in
_The Consolation of Philosophy_, Boethius seeks salvation through contemplation of the
 eternal. Echoing Plotinus, Boethius expresses his opinion that "Eternity, then, is the
complete, simultaneous and perfect possession of everlasting life: ... Whatever lives in
time exists in the present and progresses from the past to the future, ... [and] its life may
be infinitely long, but it does not embrace and comprehend its whole extent
simultaneously." But a more recent opinion may provide a rationale for the changes
that would occur in the early modern period. Cavadini paraphrases the close of
Augustine's discussion as follows: "I am continually attempting to 'stretch' myself out into
an eternity by displacing my awareness of time—in the first instance an awareness of
self—onto an illusory realm of past, present, and future in which, once it is established as
objective, I may then take some scant assurance of a claim about my own immortality."

Such a distension belies a sense of pride, of sin, that must itself be purged. The loss of this contrition was an element of later developments in time responding to the Middle Ages.

**Medieval Developments**

As Medieval culture develops, variations in the ways individuals might view time begin to emerge. In fact, Georges Poulet states that "to understand what time meant to men of the Middle Ages, we must strip ourselves . . . of our knowledge of ancient conceptions." Christian doctrine, in other words, dictated new ideas about the nature of time, history, and progress. Equally important are overall shifts towards a capitalist economy, requiring a more precise tracking of time's passage. Despite the church's predominance, time gradually could no longer be sufficiently accounted by the ringing of bells for Matins or Vespers. The consequent and pervasive emphasis on dividing time into as many profitable moments as possible (a drive nascent in Aristotle) was reflected in the invention of the mechanical clock, around the end of the thirteenth century. Lewis Mumford may have been one of the first critics to argue that as these devices evolved, "Eternity ceased gradually to serve as the measure and focus of human actions."

Natural, organic time began to dissociate from mechanized time. Jacques Le Goff, in fact, suggests an overall separation between "merchant's time" and "church's time." Part
of this separation arises from the notion of usury, defined by one fourteenth century
Franciscan as "demand[ing] a greater payment from one who cannot settle his account
immediately than from one who can."\(^{51}\) This "selling of time" finds extended treatment
most famously in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, but its earlier expressions
emphasize the merchant/church division overtly. As Anne Higgins summarizes,
"Christians were instructed to repudiate usury . . . not because it seemed a kind of
extortion, but because it was considered an attempt to sell time, which belongs only to
God . . . and freely given to all created things, is no one's to buy or sell."\(^{52}\) The mercantile
system depended on "assumptions of which time is the very foundation—storage in
anticipation of famine, purchase for resale when the time is ripe, as determined by
knowledge of economic conjunctures."\(^{53}\) These factors necessitated a greater precision of
time-tracking even as they began to conflate the metaphors for time and commodity. In
conflict with these forces were the slow theological acceptances of evolving economic
structures. No device manifested these conflicts as vividly as the mechanical clock,
which helped objectify and "desacramentalize" time, serving as a tangible representation
of time susceptible to instrumentalizing.\(^{54}\) If Augustine brought the question of time into
personal psychology, the clock helped put time into one's coat pocket. And when the
rudiments of this objectification are thus abstracted, drives to control time in other
venues become apparent.
The clock, as Crosby and others argue, is most importantly placed in the continuum of growing quantification.\textsuperscript{55} Put simply, "someone . . . wanted very much to track the time—not merely to know it, but to use it."\textsuperscript{56} To "use" time does not necessarily imply, as one critic has it, that the "advances of Western man have been made at the price of an increasing servitude to time."\textsuperscript{57} The use or abuse of time nearly always emphasizes not dependence upon or the necessity of time but the power of control in the first place. Perceptions of time develop explicitly around this latter emphasis: Dohrn-van Rossum's citation from the year 1410 clearly argues that "Light and time, the starry heavens, were meant to serve man, not the other way around."\textsuperscript{58} Le Goff adds a further corollary, namely that "The communal clock was an instrument of economic, social, and political domination wielded by the merchants who ran the commune."\textsuperscript{59} The growth of these "communal clocks" likely began in China, in the Sung Dynasty of the tenth century, where they were primarily astronomical observatories.\textsuperscript{60} There is little evidence linking the traditions of these clocks with those in the West, however; the Chinese clocks retained the use of a water flow escapement (and probably did so with greater accuracy), whereas the mechanized clocks of the West utilized a "verge-and-foliot." The latter interrupted a falling weight at regular intervals through an oscillating device, the literal "controller" or regulator in the clockwork. The oscillation (as Landes observes, a paradox if one considers time as "continuous, even, and unidirectional") turns wheels at a
stable rate, which for the Middle Ages—only just beginning to standardize the length of
the hour—was critical. It has been said that the "history of mechanical clocks is, to a
large extent, the history of the improvement in their escapements," although it seems
more certain that the controller, especially for modern physicists with atomic clocks and
quartz crystal oscillators, has been the real focus. These mechanisms made two
important strides: they were unaffected by frost, unlike water clocks, and they worked in
light and dark conditions, unlike the sundial. They also began the path towards size
reduction, allowing for the personal time pieces that began to proliferate in the
Renaissance. The initial clocks, however, were quite imposing, and these
communally-centered edifices gradually brought a new temporal awareness to
fourteenth-century Europe.

To convey the multifaceted adornments of the first "spectacular clocks," Crosby
writes that "To say that the city's clock told time and to say no more would be like saying
that its cathedral's stained-glass windows admitted light and saying no more." (And
indeed further, as Rifkin contends, "the grandeur of the Gothic cathedral had marked the
status of a community, but now the erection of the town clock became the symbol of city
pride.") A clock in Strasbourg, circa 1350, kept time in addition to having an astrolabe,
perpetual calendar, bells, statues, zodiacal tablets, and a mechanical rooster. But these
clocks more significantly reminded citizens on a regular basis that "invisible, inaudible,
seamless time was composed of quanta," the sort of "reification" of time that some critics (Bergson, for one) have lamented in Aristotle. Crosby equates this quantification simply with the desire for money, but one can overemphasize the role of Mammon in this work culture. Le Goff rightly balances the merchant's secularization and objectification of time by noting, "the ends pursued in the distinct spheres of profit and salvation were equally legitimate for him. It was this very distinctness which made it possible to pray to God in business." Secular and religious forces intersect in virtually all aspects of clock development. And this ongoing dialectic parallels the transformation of religious/secular and church/merchant time in other areas of medieval culture.

Unlike for Plato, or Hellenic tradition in general, "For the early Christians, eternity was not opposed to time . . . [but] merely the extension of time to infinity." Medieval exegetes expanded greatly upon this, complicating the early views of time further when taking into account the Incarnation. With this event, time manifested an historical dimension—the history of the past, before Christ, representing the history of salvation; likewise, the teleological extension of Christianity—gazing on time's eventual conclusion—looks forward to the final reckoning in which, as Augustine proposed, one might escape time and enter the eternal. As Poulet puts it, "the Christian of the Middle Ages felt a continuous orientation toward a spiritual perfection. Time had a direction. Time finally carried the Christian toward God." Time's linearity was in marked contrast
to earlier notions of cyclical time and "eternal recurrence," although Higgins points out the ways in which these geometric designs often combined in medieval thought. She writes, "The Middle Ages had . . . a number of competing notions of time," including three patterns of recurrence—natural (seasons), liturgical (calendars), and metaphorical (e.g., Fortune's wheel); the "predominantly linear" periodization of time into ages; and "figural interpretation"—where "past and present are fused in the figure." (Nevertheless, the "intense future-orientation of Christianity . . . is its most influential contribution to Western ideas about time.) Further, Le Goff notes that the resurgence of Aristotelian time—the "measure of motion"—in the Renaissance is confronted earlier in St. Thomas, who declares, "to pass from the potentiality to the act was necessarily in no way temporal." (This sentiment is almost surely echoed in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, when Brutus bemoans, "Between the acting of a dreadful thing / And the first motion, all the interim is / Like a phantasma or a hideous dream" [II.i.62-5].) In part, linear church time contributed to seeing time as a series of "nows," in which one ought to spend wisely the time one had. Again Poulet: "one felt then . . . the precarious and fugitive character of each lived moment: 'Every day, every hour, thus without ceasing / I must finish my life and recommence / In this death uselessly alive.' The culmination of these developments is perhaps the personal time-tracking revolution of the early sixteenth century, when the emergence of portable clocks and watches was made possible by the
innovation of the tiny coiled spring to replace the rather unwieldy falling weight of the
clock towers. If Heraclitus saw time as a river, not until the Renaissance would writers
fully explore the more Herculean labor of diverting this temporal river where one would.

Some seventeen-hundred years ago, Plotinus, after a series of digressions on time,
finally said "Enough. . . To traverse point by point the many opinions of our
predecessors would mean a history rather than an identification." The history of ideas
on time in this study likewise here gives way to the identification of a particular
perception of time in the Renaissance.

The Renaissance Control of Time and Spenser's Two Cantos of Mutabilitie

The conventional means of battling time are explicated most definitively by
Quinones and Anne Ferry. The former deals with the revival, primarily, of classical
concepts: "man must use conventional means of controlling it," namely "children, fame,
[and] fidelity in love." As Shakespeare claims in sonnet 12, "nothing 'gainst Time's
scythe can make defense: Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence" (lines
13-14); in sonnet 17, "You should live twice, in [your child] and in my rhyme" (line 14);
and in sonnet 15, "And all in war with Time for love of you. / As he takes from you, I
ingraft you new" (lines 13-4). Ferry is more concerned with the rhetoric of love poetry
than historical or philosophical context: she writes that "a lover writing a poem . . .
manipulates language in such ways that it calls attention to its creation of a nontemporal
order where sequence is ruled by verbal necessity rather than time.” Spenser offers his own version of artistic immortality in *The Ruines of Time*. Quinones claims for Spenser's *Cantos* both a "triumph of time" and a "triumph of eternity." According to a general Renaissance pattern, "[Spenser's] heroic strivings sought a victory over time through the avenue of succession, only to lose faith in the reliability and endurance of those rewards. He then must turn (or return) to a religious source for a more individual possession of being," a process Quinones also sees in Donne's *Anniversarie Poems*. While there is much in this reading, it passes too quickly over a debased conception of time that bridges older views with new. For Spenser's *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie* portray time in one of its most abused and enfeebled conditions. The metaphors of subjugation that Spenser elucidates herald a conscious confrontation between his contemporaries and new ideas about time.

Usurpation pervades the mythology of both Cantos. Tracing her lineage through Titan, and thus the ancient donnybrooks between the gods and their progeny, Mutabilitie's own aims are initially straightforward: "So likewise did this Titanesse aspire, / Rule and dominion to her selfe to gaine." This insistent pattern of usurpation begins with the ascent of Mutabilitie into "the Circle of the Moone" (VI.8.1). To enter the palace of Cynthia, she brusquely moves through those "silver gates (by which there sate an hory / Old aged Sire, with hower-glasse in hand, / Hight Tyme)... were he liefe..."
or sory" (VI.8.5-7). In a treatise on Father Time, Erwin Panofsky traces his development in Renaissance iconology. In ancient art, Time was most often represented as *kauros*, "the brief, decisive moment which marks a turning-point in the life of human beings or in the development of the universe."83 (This later metamorphosed into the common Renaissance figure of Opportunity, an ephemeral being with dangling forelock.) The Greek terms "Chronos," time, and "Kronos," the deity, later became conflated, and Time began to exhibit traits of the god—old age, the perilous scythe. As a gloomy, saturnine figure, Time also was seen with crutches in many depictions, a reflection on his melancholy decrepitude, and he often carried the *ouroboros*, as well—the snake or dragon devouring its own tail. Time as Destroyer or Revealer, Panofsky's conventional poles of Time iconography, thus dots the canvas of much Renaissance art—but not of Spenser's *Two Mutabilitie Cantos*. The image of Father Time is here utterly impotent in preventing Mutabilitie's entrance: she barges through "whether he like it or not." His very appearance is nothing more than an aside, a bare parenthesis in the torrent of lines devoted to Mutabilitie. In hand, Time has his hour glass (itself an antiquated, though of course not uncommon, icon), though his sickle is notably *in absentia*. Devoid of power to devour—a potency later invoked in Mutabilitie's behalf, when she argues with Nature, "who sees not, that Time on all doth pray [sic]?" (VII.47.5)—Time here is called "Sire" only in mockery. He is rather a vestige of her castrated Titan forefather, Uranus. Her
dismissal of him aligns her with both Cronus and Jove, on whom she ultimately has her sights, and leaves Time doddering along, an irrelevant avatar of dated philosophy.84

What makes this insurrection all the more resonant is Mutabilitie's subsequent call to Time's minions: the seasons, months, hours, day and night, life and death. In an earlier work by Petrarch, *Triumphus Temporis*, Chastity conquers Love, Death Chastity, Fame Death, and Time Fame, itself conquerable only by Eternity. In the second Canto, Mutabilitie assembles Time's underlings (Time himself is still, apparently, inert at the silver gates) to further corroborate her power over Chastity, Love, Death, Fame, Time, and Eternity all. She grants Time sway only to take it away: "Time on all doth pray . . . / But Times do change and move continually. / So nothing here long standeth in one stay: / Wherefore, this lower world who can deny / But to be subject still to Mutabilitie?" (VII.47.5-9). The solution to this adduction is offered by Nature, in a very Boethian return to Fortuna's illumination of the eternal. Nature invokes the Christian doctrine of linear progression, of "perfection by fate," but adds, "all things . . . are not changed from their first estate, / But by their change their being doe dilate" (VII. 58.2-5). All things maintain an essential, unchanging being. Further, "time shall come that all shall changed bee, / And from thenceforth, none no more change shall see" (VII.59.4-5). Ultimately, as with Augustine, eternity brings salvation. And so Nature dismisses Mutabilitie, *mutatis mutandis*. This conclusion is so seemingly conventional that it even restores the scythe to
old Father Time: "Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle" (VIII.1.9). But the initial subjugation of Time forecasts such diatribes as that in Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*, in which Time is "misshapen" (perhaps "out of joint") and "the ceaseless lackey to eternity" (lines 925, 967). The finale, as conventional as it might appear, is nevertheless qualified in large part by the treatment of Father Time in Canto VI.  

Spenser highlights a transitional phase in Renaissance literature. If Time is something of a eunuch in the *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*, aimlessly guarding the seraglio of the spheres, he is also, in the final canto, a Medieval icon of potent destruction. And in *The Ruines of Time*, Spenser bridges medieval Christianity and Renaissance humanism with even greater felicity: "All things doo change that under heaven abide, ... Therefore what ever man bearst worldlie sway, / Living, on God, and on thy selfe relie." To confront time and mutability, one has God and one has the self. In contemplation of Time's weaknesses and strengths both, Spenser shares much with Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, and Donne. As dramatists, the first three writers have added incentive to explore time. Around the time Spenser began work on the *Faerie Queene*, Sidney reminded England, in his *The Defence of Poesy*, of the classical constraints concerning time and place in drama. Aristotle, of course, proposed in the *Poetics* that "tragedy attempts, as far as possible, to remain within one circuit of the sun or, at least, not depart from this by
And Jonson and other neoclassicists expected a three hour play to cover the action of three hours. Sidney decries the plays of his day, in which "ordinary it is that two young princes fall in love; after many traverses, she is got with child, delivered of a fair boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get another child: and all this in two hours' space." My concerns are not with debates surrounding this unity of time, per se, in Renaissance drama. However, there are certainly dramatic and metadramatic implications for the control of time in a setting where this very control is an integral part of the genre: I will identify them when they arise.

For Marlowe, with whom this study begins, one can say of the protagonists in his two Tamburlaines, Dr. Faustus, and The Jew of Malta that they "effectively resist the encroachment of an alien time-world . . . through the fierce application of will and violence." The conjunction of violence and time is especially evident throughout these works: butcherings, poisonings, and the shredding of noted academics all intersect with temporal manipulations. Crosby writes illuminatingly on this congruence, remarking that in the same fifty year span (1275 to 1325), "Someone built Europe's first mechanical clock and cannon, devices that obliged Europeans to think in terms of quantified time and space." Rabelais, in The Histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel, mocks "soldiers who performed like 'a perfect clockwork mechanism'." but in Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, Mephistopheles speaks admiringly of a Roman castle, upon which "double cannons,
forged by brass, / Do match the number of days contained / Within the compass of one complete year" (III.i.42-4). It has long been noted that revenge has particularly time-oriented components, and for Marlowe, violence and warfare are perhaps the best possible human urges to inflict damage on time, which itself so damages humanity. Moreover, violence itself depends on this psychological battle with time.

Following this analysis of Marlowe's assaults on time, I will explore "the persecution of time with hope" in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. While Shakespeare's myriad treatments of time have been much analyzed by critics, the instrumentalization of time has been left largely unchronicled. Portia ably utilizes the lottery of the caskets, in much the same way that Queen Elizabeth had done earlier in the century with her own lottery, to seize control of hope, one of time's most potent expressions. In *All's Well That Ends Well*, Lord Lafew analyzes the convalescence of his king by noting that "he hath persecuted time with hope" (I.i.14-5). In *The Merchant of Venice*, the persecution of time with hope is ultimately both celebrated and denounced. Father Time makes an unheralded appearance, in the figure of Old Gobbo, and even as he is ridiculously spoofed and debased by his son, Launcelot, so too does Portia wrest control of time from her own father by exploiting the power of hope. The play becomes an arena of combatants struggling with each other for power over time. Those "who measure but by the present time" rely on and are susceptible to those who do not. The
idea of usury, well documented as a focal point in the play, should also be understood as partaking in the more pervasive theme of the manipulation and commodification of time.

Jonson’s *The Alchemist*, considered next, provides one of the most useful explications of temporal tampering. As in Jonson’s masque *Time Vindicatetl*, in which he introduces the figure of Chronomastix, or “time whipper,” each of the three major characters in *The Alchemist* abuses time in one manner or other. Subtle’s pretensions of magic warp the fabric of time even as Dol Common’s babelish reinterpretation of the Ages of Man inverts its natural flow. Face is one of the most problematic of Renaissance characters, vindicated even as he employs the methods of his corrupted venturers. And perhaps no single metaphor renders time as malleable as the philosopher’s stone: like the time bomb, invented in Jonson’s lifetime (and referred to by Marlowe in *Dr. Faustus*), it is a device by which one can manipulate time. The explosive imagery in Jonson’s play engages in similar, “timed” pyrotechnics. There is little "attentiveness to the present moment" in the creation of mechanisms designed and oriented around an absolute future: teleology in *The Alchemist* is nearly overdetermined, such that one critic remarks, "each character is poised at the extreme edge of his present, straining towards a future in which all his desires will come true." But time also frequently threatens to grind to a halt, or accelerate mercilessly. In another Jonson play, *New Inn*, Lady Frampul pleads, “O, for an engine to keep back all clocks.” That engine nears fruition in *The Alchemist.*
Finally, I will consider how Donne's *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* exposes the paradoxes of time. In recognizing the divisions between time and eternity, Donne divides to conquer. He subverts the power of time even as he achieves a harmonious balance with "natural," observable time—the time of his illness. When he invokes the motion of the spheres, for instance, he does so with a sense of irony: the sun travels many miles in a minute, he writes, but faster still is the descent of his body to the earth. This is not so much Marlovian overreaching as a means of interrogating time and its importance for the human condition. The process of appropriation and manipulation of time mirrors the development of control in the earlier, dramatic works, but the language Donne employs elevates the process to an atonement with the eternal. He compares himself to a timepiece early on, one whose mechanisms are compelled through the grace of God. His metaphor releases clocks from time in the same way this entire treatise releases him from time's rule. As an "Art of Dying" tract, the *Devotions* makes manifest Montaigne's observation, that "He who hath learned to die, hath unlearned to serve." Though Donne prays that time may be swallowed in eternity, he also takes an active role himself, contending with time's vicissitudes and recalling Augustine when he calls it an "imaginary, half-nothing." The metaphorical richness of the *Devotions*, despite the overtly religious tone, combines the secular and divine dynamics of the Renaissance with a novel rereading of traditional considerations of time. Cyclical time,
linear time, the bells that toll, the passage of his sick days, and ultimately his attempt to
master and overcome time all play out in a work that reinvents the Renaissance control of
time.

This study concludes with a look at the way the control of time remains a cultural and
psychological drive today. Twentieth-century conceptions of time have greatly
diversified our constructions of temporal reality; if the power of time only to redeem or
devour insufficiently describes the early modern period, the term "control" seems
woefully to understate the axiomatic certainty with which we assert our modern
dominance over time. The trend that began in the early modern period has created, now,
something of a backlash. I discuss some of these forces generated against the control of
time—a reverence for natural time, or a demonizing of the clock—and situate the control
of time overtly in a culture that deals with time both violently and irreverently. The two
appendices which follow relate tangentially to the control of time. The first traces more
closely the ideas of time and control in the game of chess, and applies the chess metaphor
to Shakespeare's _The Tempest_. The second demonstrates the connections between the
lottery of Elizabeth, discussed in Chapter 3, and Shakespeare's _Coriolanus_.

Notes


2. In _Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare_ (Chicago: U of Chicago

3. Burckhardt, *Shakespearean Meanings* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968), p. 6. He also observes, p. 6, that "in 1599 . . . a situation existed in Europe exactly analogous to that of Rome in 44 B.C. It was a time of confusion and uncertainty, when the most basic category by which men order their experience seemed to have become unstable and untrustworthy, subject to arbitrary political manipulation."


7. For an early examination of this idea, see Fritz Saxl, "Veritas Filia Temporis: Philosophy and History," in *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936), pp. 197-222.


13. G. F. Waller, *The Strong Necessity of Time: The Philosophy of Time in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Literature* (Mouton: The Hague, 1976), p. 3. In a quite contentious and polemical preface, Waller fairly well dismantles not only Quinones but Turner, as well. (He calls the latter's *Shakespeare and the Nature of Time*, p. 1, "a superficial skim over a few philosophical commonplaces.") With Vulcan working the bellows, Waller's argument is nothing if not inflated. However, this text has probably been underrated in its importance as a supplement to both Turner's and Quinones' far more influential readings. An even more vilifying review of Quinones is that of Marvin Mudrick in the *Hudson Review* 26 (1973), pp. 219-24. Mudrick's assessment, mostly an idiosyncratic (if occasionally effective) bit of muckraking, finds little of value in *The Renaissance Discovery of Time.*


18. For a detailing of their use, see Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour*, pp. 21-8.


continuity of some core elements," so-called "mass terms" like air, earth, fire, or water do not. In short, mass terms "are not individuated wholes capable of being identified and reidentified as the same individual wholes over time," but the identity of, say, a horse—though it may interchange with its environment in minute ways—maintains a constant, appreciable core identity (and not to be conflated with the soul). Zembaty's subtle distinction points out that Plato's concerns have much to do with envisioning the human as a microcosm for time, even as time itself reflects eternity. See "Plato's Timaeus: Mass Terms, Sortal Terms, and Identity through Time in the Phenomenal World," in New Essays on Plato, ed. Francis Jeffry Pelletier and John King-Farlow (Guelph, Ontario: U of Calgary P. 1983), pp. 101-22.


27. Plato, Timaeus, p. 52.


31. Aristotle, Physics, p. 87.

32. Aristotle, Physics, p. 87.


42. Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 235.

43. Crosby, *The Measure of Reality*, p. 82.

44. Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 238.

45. Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 244.

46. A different rendering can be found in Patrick Grant's "Redeeming the Time: The Confessions of St. Augustine," in *By Things Seen: Reference and Recognition in*
Grant argues, briefly, that "it is also in history, in time, that man can find redemption. The second Adam, born into time, will redeem the sin of the first Adam, with which human history began" (p. 32). This concern with the Incarnation does not seem to me evident in Augustine's discussion of time per se. Of course, not unlike the ascent of Prince Hal, "redeeming time when men least think I will" (1.i.217), the development of the Confessions owes much to the idea of redemption in general.


54. See, however, Borst, *The Ordering of Time*, p. 92, who writes, "The prevailing notions of time and numbers were little altered even by the invention of the mechanical clock, whose revolutionary influence tends to be overrated by modern scholars." He is


57. Macey, Clocks and the Cosmos, p. 17.


59. Le Goff, Time, Work, and Culture, p. 35.


62. Macey, Clocks and the Cosmos, p. 20.

63. Landes, Revolution in Time, p. 8. See pp. 7-11 for a full treatment of these two devices. See also Carlo Cipolla, Clocks and Culture 1300-1700 (New York: Walker,

64. For approximate dating, see Lynn Thorndike, "Invention of the Mechanical Clock about 1271 A.D.," *Speculum* 16 (1941), pp. 242-3.


73. Higgins, "Structure of Time," pp. 227-50. Cf. Maurice Halbwachs, "La memoire collective et le temps," *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* (1947), pp. 3-31, who "asserted that there were as many collective notions of time in a society as there were separate groups" (Le Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture*, p. 38).


77. Plotinus, in *The Human Experience of Time*, pp. 73-4.

78. Quinones, *Renaissance Discovery of Time*, pp. 7, 16. Quinones notes one additional means, a "secular education," by which one could avoid, at least, "wasting time" (pp. 20-1).


84. Cf. the treatment of time in two bookending Elizabethan celebrations: "It was Time, with wings and hourglass, who at Cheapside in 1559 led his daughter Truth to the new Queen Elizabeth, and it was Time, wings clipped and hourglass stopped, who appeared at Harefield Place in 1602 during the old Queen's last pageant." Recounted by Edward W. Tayler in *Milton's Poetry: Its Development in Time* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1979), p. ix.

Hall, 1968), p. 173, says of the conclusion that Spenser, "Having oscillated between the elemental divisions of pagan pessimism and the organic harmony of medieval optimism. . . attains to a more complicated and dynamic equilibrium at the end, still looking backward, still thrusting forward, still revolving doubts."


89. Waller, *The Strong Necessity of Time*, p. 133. He here speaks of Macbeth, but as Foster's "War against Time" essay will help demonstrate, Macbeth seems a good initial study for these Marlovian figures.


Chapter Two: Violence, Ritual, and Time in Marlowe's "Vast Perpetual Torture House"

Critics of Christopher Marlowe have long noted his characters' hyperbolic strains towards the unattainable in their "mighty lines." Beyond bombast and exceeding exaggeration, they pursue both extreme and unquenchable desires. The practical effect of this "overreaching," as Levin termed it nearly fifty years ago, manifests itself in three ways: *libido dominandi*, *libido scientiendi*, and *libido sentiendi*.

These drives occupy, respectively but not quite distinctly, Marlowe's major triumvirate: the title characters in *1 and 2 Tamburlaine*, *Dr. Faustus*, and *The Jew of Malta*. As Garber puts it, this "dialectic between aspiration and limitation" produces Tamburlaine, who desires "infinite dominion," Faustus, who desires "infinite knowledge," and Barabas, who desires "infinite riches." And in traveling these paths, Marlowe's protagonists joined a wider European endeavor that, according to some, "seized, squeezed dry, and discarded . . . the world's resources." This drive to consume mimics one of time's most ubiquitous avatars, *Tempus Edax*, or Time the Devourer. In Marlowe's plays, with this role of time projected onto his protagonists, time itself is subject to such devouring. Indeed, the process is something akin to Melville's sharks in *Moby Dick*, who in "foamy confusion" eat their own "disembowelments . . . till those entrails seemed swallowed over and over again by the same mouth."

So Greenblatt writes that in Marlowe's plays generally, "the next
moment cannot be fully grasped until the last is destroyed. . . . [T]ime is something to be resisted and . . . fulfillment or fruition is impossible." The degree to which time is an obstacle and object of resistance, however, has never been properly explored. These Marlovian protagonists, as one critic has remarked of Macbeth, "effectively resist the encroachment of an alien time-world . . . through the fierce application of will and violence." Marlowe's plays provide an overabundance of ideas about the control of time, enough to spill over into the works of Shakespeare, Jonson, and later, because time is in fact the primary force against which the characters pitch themselves.

The harsh conjugation of time and violence most singularly identifies the temporal control in Marlowe's plays. The relationship of violence to time is partly illuminated by Crosby's remark that, in the same fifty year span (1275 to 1325), "Someone built Europe's first mechanical clock and cannon, devices that obliged Europeans to think in terms of quantified time and space." Though ostensibly less injurious than the cannon, the clock created no less anxiety, and forced battlelines no less imposing. Tracing the correlation between time and violence, this chapter will argue that Marlowe's characters not only wage a bitter battle against time, but inflict personal violence on others (and themselves) by using time as an objectified instrument, effectively replacing cannons with clocks.
Violence, Ritual, and Time

In The History of the Hour, Dohrm-van Rossum makes a startling statement altogether applicable to Marlowe's plays: "The limitation on the degrees of torture that was widely discussed in learned judicial tracts from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries also turns out to be the translation of material control problems into procedures of time control." Taking Crosby's notion of quantification one step further, Dohrm-van Rossum here supplies a gruesome example of how the tracking of time became conjoined with the methodology of violence. At the dawn of the inquisitorial trial in Europe, torture was an "initially unregulated and arbitrary practice," authorized for use in extracting confession by Pope Innocent III in 1215. But According to Dohrm-van Rossum, as trials became more legally complex, and torture more precise, "one way of compelling moderation, checking abuses, and making it possible to control both ... was the quantitative regulation of torture according to time." From the beginning of the sixteenth century, such excruciating penalties as "hoistings," in which the subject was suspended by both hands, tied behind the back, became delimited through time: a brief, "second degree" hoisting might run the duration of a Paternoster or Hail Mary. For a fourth degree, the duration might extend to a full hour. In 1548, an hour was in fact set by papal bull as the maximum length of torture for "normal" crimes. (For such extraordinary crimes as witchcraft and treason, no limits were set.) Sandglasses were
frequently employed, out of sight of the subject, for determining exactly how long a
subject had to remain. But it is not simply time's measurement or quantification alone
that is of interest here. The containment of violence in a ritualized setting, dictated by a
heightened awareness and use of time, pertains to the study of sacred and profane times
that critics have regarded as paramount to religious and secular rites alike.

Thomas B. Stroup has made a study of Marlowe's use of rituals, a term he extends
to "processions, prayers, oaths, betrothals, blessings, charms, challenges, catechisms,
coronations, curses, the holding of court, and the like." No other genre has more in
common with the idea of ritual than drama, itself sprung from the presentation of
religious occasions. But Marlowe's ritualizing of violence perhaps more vividly exposes
these religious roots: sacrifice, bloodshed, dismemberment, regicide. Much more than
blessings, charms, or coronations, the Marlovian ritual represents a mythic act of
violence that aims at containing and controlling time. As Eliade writes, "In the last
analysis, what we discover in all these rites and all these attitudes is the will to devaluate
time." The connections between ritual violence and time in the Western world might
well begin with the Greek Cronus, later conflated with Chronos as Father Time. Cronus
castrates his own father, Uranus, with the sickle that would become one of his most
visible icons as the manifestation of time. From the drops of blood thus spilled arose the
three furies, whom Freud aligns with the Fates—past, present, and future—in his essay on
the caskets in *The Merchant of Venice* (discussed in the following chapter). The myth, as
Robert Graves suggests, likely derives from the early Greek practice of ritual king killing;
"cronos," he reports. "probably means 'crow', . . . an oracular bird, supposed to house the
soul of a sacred king after his sacrifice."17 The myth conveys a sense of irony that
Marlowe will actively utilize: Cronus, Time, and the sacrificed king are at once the
subject and object of their own ritual. Cronus and Time wield their sickles in an event
whose ultimate purpose is to devalue time. Time, seeking sacrifice, participates in its
own loss. Further, "the bill-hook carried by Saturn, Cronus's Latin counterpart, was
shaped like a crow's bill and apparently used . . . to emasculate the oak by lopping off the
mistletoe, just as a ritual sickle was used to reap the first ear of corn."18 This sacrifice,
intended to fructify the land, was a widespread component of early agricultural societies.
James Frazer gives perhaps the most widely known summary of the phenomenon, and
comments, too, that vegetative ceremonies belong to a mindset in which one "sees no
limit to his power of influencing the course of nature to his own advantage."19 This
element is crucial for Marlowe's adoption of ritual violence: if the killing of kings, the
death of gods, was once supposed to bring rain, crops, and another day of sunshine,
Marlowe explores the ways in which such control of the natural world applies to the
violent control of individuals through time. Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas ritualize
time—that is, devalue time through mythic acts of violence—not to propitiate an external force, like nature, but to exert their own will.

Mircea Eliade describes the contrast of sacred and profane times as follows: "On the one hand, there are the intervals of a sacred time, the time of festivals . . . ; on the other there is profane time, ordinary temporal duration, in which acts without religious meaning have their setting." Rituals, he writes, allow "religious man to pass without danger from ordinary temporal duration to sacred time." For Eliade, sacred time is "reversible": any "religious festival, any liturgical time, represents the reactualization of a sacred event that took place in a mythical past." Implicit in this scheme is an eternal recurrence, a reactualization not only of the past but of a future already understood to be a continuance of the sacred, of that which has gone before. In this sense Marlowe's protagonists are active participants in a ritualistic time of their own. Hobbes wrote that "power" can be defined as "present means to obtain some future apparent Good," but Marlowe's characters invert that scheme: they use the future to obtain present Good for themselves. Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabbas all make reference to their far-gazing oracular vision, and usually couple their claims with assertions of the power such vision produces. To borrow again from Shakespeare, their sentiments often reflect Macbeth's claim that "letters have transported me beyond / This ignorant present, and I feel now / The future in the instant" (I.v.56-8). In their construction of rituals, and their devaluation
of time, they too feel the future in an instant. They participate in an eternal time uniquely their own, and do so with the express aim of controlling others, controlling reality. However, one might well argue that the ability to foresee the future in no way ensures control over that future. An essay by Primo Levi, "The Hidden Player," provides a useful metaphor for interpreting not only the Tamburlaine plays, but Doctor Faustus and The Jew of Malta, as addressing this very question.24

Does knowing the future allow one to escape or manipulate it? In an era when computer programs vie with Grandmasters for chess supremacy, Levi finds himself reluctantly seduced by his own processor-driven chess game. This "hidden mechanical player," Levi notes, may be assigned various skill levels. Unfortunately, he observes, "the more skillful your antagonist is, the longer he makes you wait for his move."25 Still, despite the calculating power of the machine, no computer plays unerringly; none can predict and anticipate every possible permutation. Yet such combinations are not infinite. It is reasonable to postulate a "hidden player," perhaps divinely cognizant, or superlatively wired, who would possess the requisite, nearly infinite prowess. This hypothetical player would also have, in concord with foresight, an infallible record at the game. It would never lose; its king would never die. Thus Walter J. Ong proposes that "In chess there is no chance whatsoever other than that of human error."26 For Tamburlaine, whose various military campaigns already suggest fittingly chess-like
strategies, such supra-human foreknowledge has been internalized and mastered. Throughout part one, he behaves as the hidden, hermetic chess player with infinite prowess. He can never lose, and he can never die. His vision of time equates with an absolute control over it. He eliminates possible futures, and engages others. No distinction exists between chronos and kairos, profane and sacred. Rather, all time becomes divinely charged with possibility, delimited only by Tamburlaine himself. Like Cronus in early Greek ritual, Tamburlaine is ironically both player and king at once. If Ong is also correct in stating that "chess qualifies superlatively as ritual contest." Tamburlaine is the king who finds proxies for his requisite self-sacrifice.27 He not only defers his own sacrifice with unerring strategy and mastery over time, but finds replacements to fulfill violently his own ritual desires. Chess has its etymological and strategical roots in regicide, with "chess" ultimately from the Arabic/Persian "shah mat." or "the king is dead." In the nearly infinite game played by Tamburlaine and his fellows—Faustus, Barabas—the king can not lose. The characters both become and slay time, even as they strive to avoid what this paradox seemingly entails—their own demise, and an end to the game.

That violence shares the altar with time in many rituals is clear. The question, however, of why violence exists in ritual, and bears an often overt reference to the role of time in human affairs—natural, sacred, or quotidian—is a difficult one to answer fully.
Heald suggests that in violent rituals, "three main psychological processes can . . . be usefully distinguished: catharsis: in which negative emotions are turned into positive ones; trauma: where the ordeal is seen to have a chastening or even a destabilizing effect on the individual, and is seen as an aspect of repressive socialization; battleproofing: which involves the use of violence to harden and prepare the individual for violence."^28 Possibly the most concerted efforts to understand the violence of ritual are those of René Girard, whose Violence and the Sacred contains much of general interest, though little about time specifically.29 Heald's last point is an extension of Girard's main thesis, that "violence is the continuation of mimetic desire by violent means."30 The role of the scapegoat, that figure which alleviates the tension of violence with its ritual demise, paramount for Girard, becomes in Marlowe time itself. Tempus edax, time the devourer mowing with his scythe or eating with his mouth, consumes its own sacrificial victims continually. But as a kind of king-god, time too must occasionally be sacrificed. The inclusion of violence in those rituals that, as Eliade has it, allow safe conduct from one temporal reality to another must derive from a primordial desire for yoking together time outside of one's control with time in one's control. Eliade's sacred time is not sacred for time at all; rather, it prepares for the devaluation of time that mimics the sacrifice of a dying king. Marlowe's protagonists demonstrate that time may be controlled through entrance into a self-made, sacred zone; but a return to the profane, once the death of time

51

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has been brought about, always threatens to restore time paradoxically to sovereignty. Thus their methodic violence against time, and against others by instrumentalizing time, is matched only by that wreaked upon them by time. When Faustus is told just before his death and dismemberment, a scene full of ritual violence, "let thine eyes with horror stare / Into that vast perpetual torture-house" (V.ii.115-6), he is not merely bade to stare into the Hellish jaws discovered on stage. He stares back and ahead at centuries of "perpetual" torture, contained in the form of ritual, that at once conquer and release time. So too Faust has done, conquering time only to be undone by its sonorous alarms at the close of his play; and so too Tamburlaine and Barabas, each of whom engages time through a ritual violence that both sustains and ends them.\(^{31}\)

_Tamburlaine the Great Part I_

In _"Macbeth's War on Time,"_ Donald Foster suggests that "when hermetic abstractions of Time-as-redeemer are set aside long enough for us to look at the actual language used, we find that Macbeth is plagued by a persistent though largely unconscious impulse to take revenge on time itself, as the chief obstacle to the human will, as the very devil from which man must be redeemed."\(^{32}\) An identical statement might be made about Christopher Marlowe's most puissant protagonist, Tamburlaine. Much like Macbeth, who would "entreat an hour to serve" (II.i.22), Tamburlaine seeks total dominion over time. And indeed, at least one critic has written of the two plays'
conclusion, "there is something more dreadful than the skeleton [Death] that is overtaking Tamburlaine, something that he has been fighting throughout both parts of the play: mutability. And 'fighting' is the operative word." I would argue that mutability, in both Tamburlaine plays, is rather a subcategory of violence. Change in these plays occurs with jarring collision, and violence acts as the generator of such change. The same violence that motivates a change from a profane reality to a sacred one--that sacrifices time by devaluing and so experiencing the loss of time--represents the violence that surrounds Tamburlaine, or in fact that Tamburlaine surrounds. At one point Marlowe describes the Scythian's ability to engulf within himself the natural trappings of time: "by curious sovereignty of art / Are fixed his piercing instruments of sight, / Whose fiery circles bear encompassed / A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres / That guides his steps and actions to the throne" (II.1.i.13-17). The projection of Tamburlaine's rule extends beyond the earthly territory, beyond even the celestial sphere--the realm his contemporaries would have used to reckon the passage of time. Unlike Prospero, who patiently awaits the moment of his star's zenith, Tamburlaine encloses his stars and his moments within him. (Shakespeare does echo the sentiment in Julius Caesar, when Cassius remarks, "Men at some time are masters of their fates. / The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, / But in ourselves" [II.i.145-47].) Tamburlaine achieves this position through ritual violence, drawing together time outside his control.
with that inside until they meld. He fights against time even as he represents and
reconceives it.

Interestingly, *Tamburlaine* begins much as Shakespeare's *The Merchant of
Venice*, with the self-questioning of a melancholic. The king of Persia, Mycetes, remarks
to his brother, Cosroe. "I find myself aggrieved, / Yet insufficient to express the same"
(I.i.1-2). Slightly later in the scene, he reiterates the possibility that, in his case, the cause
of his sullen mood is none other than time itself, albeit in the guise of Tamburlaine.
Confidently sending his chief captain, Theridamas, off to squelch the "Tartarian rout,"
Mycetes admonishes him, "Return with speed! Time passeth swift away. / Our life is
frail, and we may die today" (I.i.67-8). This sudden but rather conventional reminder of
time as devourer functions in at least two important ways. First, it ominously portends
the actual demise of the Persian host at the hands not of time but Tamburlaine. Second,
it provides the launching point for Marlowe's exploration of other perspectives on time.
If time passes swiftly by, like Occasion with her dangling lock of hair, then how does one
harness and rein it in? The limits of human will are at stake in the answer. While
Tamburlaine presents control, subjugating the stars within his physical form, while
Mycetes is helplessly anarchic. Cosroe tells him that "Cynthia with Saturn joined" to
shed their influence upon his birthday (I.i.13), the ever-changing moon an appropriate
goddess for one with, Cosroe says, a "fickle brain" (I.i.15). To deflect Cosroe's
insinuation that Mycetes is unfit to rule, he turns for authority to the character of Meander. "I refer me to my noblemen / That know my wit" (I.i.21-2), he says. Yet the name can hardly help but immediately conjure the exact image Mycetes wants to quash: an aimless, wandering river. Indeed, the rulership of Mycetes, as his following speech shows, threatens continually to run amok. He gives to Theridamas control of "this thousand horse, / Whose foaming gall with rage and high disdain / Have sworn the death of wicked Tamburlaine" (I.i.62-4). He does so because in his hands, the "high disdain" of the horses would match that shown to him by his own brother. Like the steeds of Phaeton's chariot (Plato's paradigm for self-government), the foaming horses must be turned over to another to function properly. In deferring the constraint of such wild disorder to Theridamas, he counterpoints his usurping brother, who thinks himself ready for the absolute control of the monarchy. But both figures here are really only foils for Tamburlaine. A shepherd turned warrior, Tamburlaine is an effective tamer of horses both literal and metaphorical, as he will prove when confronted by Theridamas and his thousand "milk-white steeds" (I.i.77). This domestication of discord mirrors Tamburlaine's ability to control other forces, including time, as well.

Upon Tamburlaine's entrance, his goals are clear. By "Measuring the limits of his empery / By east and west as Phoebus doth his course" (I.ii.39-40), he "hop'st to be eternized" (I.ii.72). He is unconcerned with exactly the fears admitted by Mycetes, fears
of swift time and consequently frail lives. He himself announces, "I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains. / And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about. / And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere / Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome" (l.ii.174-7). This evocation of the Phaeton-myth proper—the haphazard chariot of the sun god dangerously plummeting towards the earth—further distinguishes Tamburlaine from Mycetes and his ilk. As Ribner notes, "Tamburlaine . . . is a figure who controls completely his own fate. History is created by his strength and will . . . [and] Fortune's wheel, . . . with its emphasis upon submission to divine power over which man has no control, holds no terror for Tamburlaine." He is occasionally as hyperfaithful as lacking; even when his and his comrades' "bodies turn to elements," he proclaims, their "souls shall aspire celestial thrones" (l.ii.236-7). In his hopes to be eternalized, his talk of physical dissolution is prone to periphrasis. The setting sun, for the self-proclaimed solar deity, is only harbinger of a more glorious ascension the next morn. And so the vicissitudes of time, both profane and sacred, seem equally within his grasp.

Tamburlaine directs much of his aggression towards the staid rhythms of nature and the gods. He seeks to create, through his own violent ritualizations, a separate condition of time, one in which time becomes a mere vassal to his will. Like Mortimer in Marlowe's *Edward II*, whose "reasons make white black and dark night day" (*E II* l.iv.247), Tamburlaine "Shall threat the gods more than Cyclopian wars," and with his
"sun-bright armour" will "chase the stars from heaven" (II.iii.21-23). The alteration of night and day, the most primitive, perhaps, of time reckonings, situates Tamburlaine as a master of time if only as an extension of the natural world. As an expression of time control, the artificial transposition of day and night was especially important for Renaissance drama in general. (Artificial lighting of any sort, of course, is one of the great emblems of control that has remained constant to the present day.) Luckiesh opines, "the theatrical stage . . . owes its existence and development largely to [artificial light]," and the "controllability of artificial light makes it superior to natural light in many ways." When Tamburlaine aligns himself with those who would chase the stars with the sun-bright armor, and "make the dark night day," he offers a commentary on the state of affairs on the English stage, as well. If Portia can ask, with a quibble, "Let me give light, but let me not be light" (V.i.130), Tamburlaine hopes to both give and be his own illumination.

The subsequent destruction and humiliation of both Persian brothers, Mycetes and Cosroe, addresses directly the question of Tamburlaine's regard for time. At first fighting for Cosroe, and wrangling with Mycetes over the crown while on the battlefield, Tamburlaine bids him "to speak but three wise words" (II.iv.24). The king, echoing his initial sentiment as to the swiftness of time, retorts, "So I can, when I see my time" (II.iv.25). But Mycetes never realizes his time has come; needless to say, he offers not a
single wise word during the remainder of his petulant confrontation. Later Cosroe, bewailing his wounds and loss of empire, rails at Tamburlaine and Theridamas both:

"Even at the morning of my happy state, / Scarce being seated in my royal throne, / To work my downfall and untimely end" (II.vii.4-6). The recently crowned ruler sees his end as "untimely," wrought not by the natural course of events, but by the intrusion of "barbarous and bloody" Tamburlaine. In a very Faustian response, Tamburlaine places the emphasis rather on his "climbing after knowledge infinite" (II.vii.24). As with Faustus, the pursuit of knowledge infinite embraces, too, a mastery over and displacement of time. Tamburlaine's movements are "always moving as the restless spheres" (II.vii.25), and time becomes a tool that he wields like a sword. The ability to bring about "untimely" occurrences lies at the core of his power and success. Nor do Tamburlaine and his men show deference to the protocols of time; a breakfast of battles suffices to greet the morning of Cosroe's happy state, as Tamburlaine invents his own rituals.

When Tamburlaine defeats his next adversary, Bajazeth, Emperor of the Turks, and uses him and his wife for footstools, he announces simply that their "time is past" (III.iii.228). Similarly, the Sultan of Egypt is at a loss mostly for time when he is threatened by Tamburlaine's forces. As Capolin points out to him, "had you time to sort / Your fighting men and raise your royal host," he might defeat the invading troops. "But
Tamburlaine by expedition, "he concludes, "Advantage takes of your unreadiness"
(IV.i.36-39). Once again, Tamburlaine enforces a series of "untimely" situations, and here the ritual nature of Tamburlaine's violence both through and against time becomes clear. For nowhere is Tamburlaine's usurpation of time more evident than in his color-coordinated, spectral siege of the Sultan. An Egyptian messenger summarizes Tamburlaine's scheme:

The first day when he pitcheth down his tents,
White is their hue . . .
To signify the mildness of his mind . . . .
But when Aurora mounts the second time,
As red as scarlet is his furniture;
Then must his kindled wrath be quenched with blood,
Not sparing any that can manage arms.
But if these threats move not submission,
Black are his colours . . .
[and] menace death and hell.
Without respect of sex, degree, or age,
He razeth all his foes with fire and sword.

(IV.i.49-63)

Tamburlaine's use of time to hallmark his advancing wrath at once places him in synchrony with the advance of time and in position to manipulate time to his will. The sultan, and other besieged prey, are without the infinite skill of one who can control others through time. Their actions, short of abject submission, are irrelevant to the progress of Tamburlaine.

Warfare had become predominantly the art of the siege in late sixteenth-century Europe, due mostly to the advent and widespread use of the cannon. Two points are

59

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striking about this shift in tactics. The first is that the siege became a ritual with its own code and pattern, the *jus belli*. Deriving especially from Deuteronomy 20.10-18, this code establishes such parameters as the sparing of women and children and the proper retribution of attackers for varying degrees of obstinacy by the besieged. Rothschild discusses the ways in which this code, as carried out by Tamburlaine, "is allied to oath-taking, which attempts to invest the words of men with the inviolability of gods". Though Rothschild does not point out the connection with ritual, the sentiment is clear: Eliade’s denominations of sacred and profane are negotiated by Tamburlaine through the ritualized use of violence. The evidence of ritualizing the siege need not be limited to the early modern era; one need look no further than the besieging of Troy in Homer’s *Iliad* for the close relation of sacred ritual and the work of gods with siege warfare. One reason for this may very well be the specific relationship siege warfare has with time. In effect, no tactic utilizes time so instrumentally as the siege: natural rhythms of daily existence are disrupted and replaced with an imposed system of times. The progression of this system is given much colorful, if horrific, pageantry by Tamburlaine, with his coded days of white, red, and black—each a unique signifier in his personal ritual of siege. That a siege was an attack by time is emphasized by the tactics of early modern defenders, who were driven to implement time against their attackers. The first use of a
time bomb arose from the siege of Antwerp, a device and event to which Marlowe refers in *Doctor Faustus*. Further, Dohrn-van Rossum cites a treatise of 1568 that offers a perspective on the novel use of time as a device for pyrotechnic enthusiasts: "in cities, castles, and hamlets which one must abandon after a long siege, one can with such hidden, buried explosives throw such an obstacle in the face of the enemy so that within two or three days he will come to regret this conquest: namely by placing buried into the earth one great fireball . . . with a running clock attached . . . and set at such hour as one desires." Critically, Tamburlaine's siege of Damascus not only functions as a ritual of violence in which time serves as a tool, but even includes the gruesome sacrifice of the virgins on the walls. The latter serves as a necessary component of the religious ritual paradigm, as Tamburlaine needs a sacrificial scapegoat to take what might otherwise rightly be his role, a king slain to perpetuate the course of time.

The Sultan quips, upon hearing the color codes explicated, "The slave usurps the glorious name of war" (IV.i.67). Truly, much of *Tamburlaine I* is concerned with the idea of usurpation. Tamburlaine effects this most notably against time, but Marlowe's interests lie not only in the ways power maintains itself, pulls itself up by its own bootstraps, but how it gets a leg up from those below. Both trends come together in Tamburlaine's speech to Bajazeth in IV.ii. Revealing an attentive knowledge of time philosophies, the Scythian remarks, "The ages that shall talk of Tamburlaine, / Even from
this day to Plato’s wondrous year, / Shall talk of how I handled Bajazeth” (IV.ii.95-96).

Plato’s "wondrous year," detailed in the *Timaeus*, begins the absolute recycling of the cosmos, when planets and stars return to their initial coordinates, and time begins again.

That Tamburlaine should be familiar with Platonic notions of time helps determine his skill in controlling time—"knowledge is a mastery." But it also emphasizes what might be called his teleological aptitude, a future-gazing proficiency exhibited by Barabas and Faustus as well. Those who can see the future can control the present, if they are "seeking knowledge infinite." Other characters often attempt to turn the tables on Tamburlaine, usually forecasting with unfounded certainty his demise. These attempts set off Tamburlaine’s superior skill in such matters, and serve as foils to his gem-studded vision. The Sultan, for instance, suggests that "Tamburlaine shall rue the day, the hour, /

Wherein he wrought such ignominious wrong” (IV.iii.38-39), while the King of Arabia says merely, "My mind presage fortunate success. / And Tamburlaine, my spirit doth foresee / The utter ruin of thy men and thee” (IV.iii.58-60). That these men could be so devastatingly wrong highlights the unique perception of Tamburlaine. They know Tamburlaine is preoccupied with time, and try to inflict corresponding punishment with time as the symbol of infliction: one who battles time should rightly then be haunted, in loss, by not only the day but the hour. The fruitless attempts to turn time against
Tamburlaine, or at least to use time as he does, shows how little power over the temporal sphere they have.

When the final act begins, Tamburlaine's armies surround the city of Damascus. Already with "coal-black colours everywhere advanced" (V.i.10), he ensigning slaughters the four Virgins, who are sent as laurel-bearing emissaries from the city. This episode, apart from its sacrificial attributes, contrasts with his treatment of Zenocrate. He orders death for the virgins as a result of his "customs . . . as peremptory / As wrathful planets, death, or destiny" (V.i.127-28). His men, further, "on Damascus' walls . . . [hoist] up their slaughtered carcasses" (V.i.130-31). Amid the carnage and mayhem, their leader nevertheless offers a lengthy paean to his beloved, in which he affronts her beauty even as he elevates it. He begins by recasting Beauty instead of Mnemosyne, or Memory, as "mother of the muses." This Beauty "comments volumes with her ivory pen." and with such inspiration he delivers his praises in verse full of Marlovian "mighty lines" (V.i.144-73). The dismissal of Memory is at least as important as the invocation to Beauty. Tamburlaine can not be dictated to by memory, because he has no need of the past. Rather, he dictates to memory and anticipation both. He has already rejected the maidens' pleas to "pity old age" (V.i.81); he has no care for the ravages of time when his will is antipathetic. Yet he also eventually retracts as "effeminate and faint" his tribute to Zenocrate (V.i.177). "Virtue solely," he concludes,"is the sum of glory" (V.i.189). The
retraction occurs just as he imagines "all the pens that ever poets held" combining "in beauty's worthiness." This lapse into memory, domain of the past, snaps him from his reverie. If beauty, too, must remain tied to time, then he will yoke both at once. As he says, "I thus conceiving and subduing, both" (V.i.183). This entire episode inverts Marlowe's poem, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" in nearly as deliberate a fashion as Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd." "Live with me and be my love." he at first seems to suggest, and nearly pleads as pastoral lover to woo Zenocrate. But unlike Marlowe's passionate shepherd, Tamburlaine glances at his modest birth. and recoils. He declares,

That which hath stopped the tempest of the gods,
Even from the fiery spangled veil of heaven,
To feel the lovely warmth of shepherds' flames
And march in cottages of strewn weeds.
Shall give the world to note, for all my birth,
That virtue solely is the sum of glory
And fashions men with true nobility.

(V.i.184-90)

Not birth, memory of the past, nor beauty and the resplendent present can match the sum of absolute and conquering glory.

Coincidentally, Raleigh's nymph objects to the shepherd's seduction on the grounds of time's alterations, and the mutable nature of shepherds' tongues. "Had joys no date, nor age no need, / Then these delights my mind might move / To live with thee and be thy love," she ends. Zenocrate, in the finale of I Tamburlaine, compliantly becomes
queen for perhaps these very reasons. With Tamburlaine, time has become servile and powerless. His occasional dips into poetic courting, even as they surmount the passionate shepherd's, equally dispose of nymphian objections. As Anippe, Zenocrate's maid, contends, "Your love hath Fortune so at his command / That she shall stay, and turn her wheel no more / As long as life maintains his mighty arm / That fights for honour to adorn your head" (V.i.372-75). And no "cap of flowers" will this adornment be, but the royal crown. So the conquering of time in *Tamburlaine* allows the comic resolution, the marriage of Zenocrate and Tamburlaine. Both courtship and marriage are extensions of the ritualizing that has been taking place throughout the play. He fights for glory, he fights for marriage, he fights for all. Tamburlaine's victories having reached a pause, he addresses the Sultan's daughter by proclaiming, "let me find no further time to grace / Her princely temples with the Persian crown" (V.i.487-88). On one level, he of course means that there is no better time than the present, no sense in waiting. But the dismissal of time, once again, allows the will of Tamburlaine to extend itself, "As princely lions when they rouse themselves, / Stretching their paws and threat'ning herds of beasts" (l.ii.52-53). The war against time concludes with a final and convincing roar.

*Tamburlaine the Great Part 2*

The second part of *Tamburlaine* has occasionally suffered the malady of all sequels; once Marlowe used all the attractive details for his first play, critics argued,
there was little to distinguish the second. Helen Gardner was perhaps the first to issue a
defense of the play, somewhat reluctantly, as an entity unto itself rather than an extension
of a ten act tragedy. While the plot of the first, she argues, slopes ever upwards without
setback, and while Tamburlaine parades as warrior-lover, the plot of the second is full of
the clash between desire and limitation. 2 Tamburlaine revolves around the themes of
war and death, and strengthens many of the temporal themes of the first play. Leech
writes, "in the range of its effects and in the depth of its implication, the sequel has some
right to be considered the greater play." For the purposes of this argument, 2 Tamburlaine
operates also as a prelude to the control of time in The Jew of Malta and Doctor Faustus.

While 1 Tamburlaine began with usurpation and division, its sequel commences
with truce and confederacy. In the first scene, the Christian king of Hungary, Sigismond,
falls into league with the Muslim King of Natolia, Orcanes, in an initial attempt to deal
with the onslaught of Tamburlaine. In the second scene, Callapine—the son of dethroned
and brained Bajazeth—convinces his jailer, Almeda, to conspire with him in escape and
facilitate revenge for his father's death. Just before Tamburlaine appears, however,
Callapine reveals that the plots against him may culminate similarly to those of his
predecessors. Like Mycetes before him, impotent to challenge the ravages of time,
Callapine urges Almeda, "Then let us haste. / Lest time be past and, ling'ring, let us both"
(I.ii.74-75). And like Mycetes' ill-fated assertion that "Time passeth swift away," this perception of time portends destruction. One can anticipate that Tamburlaine's relation to time has remained the same from one play to the next: while others flee from it, he controls it. The real development, however, in 2 Tamburlaine is the characterization of Tamburlaine's three sons, Calyphas, Amyras, and Celebinus. They become the touchstones for their father's relation to time, a relation that does shift notably from the draconian manipulation in the first play.

Tamburlaine's increasingly exasperated relation to time unveils itself in Zenocrate's death scene. When he proclaims that "Black is the beauty of the brightest day," the sun having lost that which fueled and "inflamed his beams" (II.iv.1-4), he announces a shift within himself, as well. Long adorned as a solar being, measuring his dominion by the opposing horizons, the fire is ebbing from Tamburlaine. He wishes, summarily, "That this my life may be as short to me / As are the days of sweet Zenocrate" (II.iv.36-7). His prayers are telling; they reveal his preoccupation with time's malleability. Revealing, too, are his imaginations of her poetic influence, as in 1 Tamburlaine reaching back to encapsulate history: "And, had she lived before the siege of Troy, / Helen . . . / Had not been named in Homer's Iliads; / Her name had been in every line he wrote" (II.iv.86-90). But as when he retracts his "effeminate and faint" thoughts in the prior play, upon consideration of time's and beauty's failings, upon her
death he reverts to martial aggression. His desire to "wound the earth" and "hale the
Fatal Sisters by the hair" (II.iv.97-99) disdains time and fate alike. But as Theridamas
warns, "all this raging cannot make her live" (II.iv.120). Tamburlaine has power over
death, but he is confronted with the possibility for the first time that he holds no sway
over life. Of course, he resists. "Though she is dead," he continues, "yet let me think she
lives" (II.iv.127). He monumentalizes her with a statue, but refuses to bury her until he
too is dead. He memorializes her with a picture, pillar, pennon, and tablet, and perhaps
anticipating Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," he keeps next to him as well the embalmed
and gilded body. In a necrophilic address to the hearse, he remarks, "Thou shalt not
beautify Larissa plains,. But keep within the circle of my arms!" (III.ii.34-35). Marlowe
will reiterate a strategy of stopping time in Edward II, when Edward says, "Let never
silent night possess this clime: Stand still, you watches of the element: All times and
seasons, rest you at a stay,. That Edward may be still fair England's king" (V.i.65-68).
The faux-immortalizing of Zenocrate, creating a similar stoppage of time, takes place in
the pivotal scene of 2 Tamburlaine. In another attempt to embrace the warlike after
seemingly promising himself to the amorous, Tamburlaine turns to his sons after his
elegy and commands, "list to me / That mean to teach you rudiments of war" (III.ii.54).
The abrupt, funereal displacement of time's power meets, on this occasion, with
something of an insurrection.
Ricardo Quinones is certainly correct to suggest that in "the Renaissance war
against time even a biological function like procreation could become a conscious ideal.
energetically espoused. . . . The problem here is not whether man always begot
children—quite obviously he did—but whether he came to regard procreation as a valuable
and even necessary way of countering time, and to locate great hopes in such means."\[46\]
The perpetuation of the species reached, according to Quinones, a surpassing level of
self-awareness in the Renaissance. He acknowledges Plato's commentary from the *Laws*
in the matter, however, as beginning the reconciliation between "the here and the
hereafter": "'Now, mankind are coeval with all time, and are ever following, and will ever
follow, the course of time: and so they are immortal, inasmuch as they leave children
behind them, and partake of immortality in the unity of generation'."\[47\] If the cultural
trends toward lineage and generation in the Renaissance do attain self-conscious
elevation, then Marlowe's Tamburlaine at first seems exemplary. He first calls his sons
"more precious in mine eyes / Than all the wealthy kingdoms I subdued" (l.iii.18-19).
But he eventually charts a course all the more divergent in his personal battle against
time. For despite his own assertion that "'will' and 'shall' best fitteth Tamburlaine, /
Whose smiling stars give him assured hope" (*T* III.iii.41-2), his methods of capturing
and instrumentalizing the future are utterly unconcerned with progeny.
Tamburlaine's conference with his three sons—Calyphas, Celebinus, and Amyras—is ostensibly a bonding affair, a bloodletting ceremony, intended to school them in his image. He promises to teach them "how to make the water mount, / That [they] may dry-foot march through lakes and pools, / Deep rivers, havens, creeks, and little seas, / And make a fortress in the raging waves, / . . . / Invincible by nature of the place" (2T III.ii.85-90). This schooling is a microcosm for his overarching attitude toward time. So often emblematized as the coursing motion of streams and rivers, time's onslaught has been by Tamburlaine damned and dammed both. If he cannot stem the tide of time that has carried away the life of Zenocrate, he can nevertheless assert himself over the natural trappings of time, as he once enclosed the stars within his person. This water-image sequence is the capstone of his speech to his sons. Only when they are able to retard the flow of time, to shunt its rivulets according to their will, and even to freeze it absolutely, will they be "worthy sons of Tamburlaine the Great" (2T III.ii.92). Marlowe composes here a kind of _Iliad_, begun with his conflation of Helen and Zenocrate, and continuing with this speech that evokes Achilles fighting the river Scamander. And just as the Greek earthshaker, Poseidon, controls the waters, so too does Tamburlaine, who "with the thunder of his martial tools / Makes earthquakes in the hearts of men and heaven" [2T II.ii.7-8]. For Tamburlaine, the river is time. What begins as a scene suggesting a relatively traditional method of controlling time—extension of the self through
progeny—ends with Tamburlaine's immanent refusal to adhere to such methods.

Rothschild points out that Tamburlaine here "devotes two-thirds of his speech to besieging a city." Tamburlaine's ultimate legacy to his sons shall be the communication of this special temporal ritual of violence.

When battle is finally engaged, Calyphas's distance from his father and brothers becomes apparent. While the others fight in the field, Calyphas turns to recreation, believing his "wisdom shall excuse his cowardice" (IV.i.50). While "bullets fly at random," he instead lets fly a game of cards, a game of luck neatly counterpointing the random "chance" of the bullets. Marlowe's language in the scene also underscores a further counterpoint. The attendant, Perdicas, offers Calyphas "cards to drive away the time" (IV.i.61). In the wake of Tamburlaine's speech about controlling time with the artillery of combat, the paltry futility of cards to duplicate his power is magnified. In *The Tempest*, when Shakespeare has Ferdinand and Miranda play at chess, he chooses a game that coolly mirrors the time-oriented concerns of war that themselves mimic the warm wranglings of love. When Marlowe has Calyphas and Perdicas (ill-fated name) play at cards, the effect is staggeringly antinomic. So unlike Prospero's discovery of the lovers, Tamburlaine's discovery creates little harmony. Rather, he grabs Calyphas, "Image of sloth and picture of a slave" (IV.i.90), and presents him before his men. He curses him, and accuses the land of his inception to be "the shame of nature, / Which Jaertis' stream, /
Embracing thee with deepest of his love, / Can never wash from thy distained brows"

(IV.i.107-09). The stream image repeats here, just before Tamburlaine stabs Calyphas to
death and severs his lineage. The "effeminate brat," unlike Zenocrate (who bid her sons
"in death resemble me" [II.iv.75]), is immediately buried. Zenocrate spoke too accurately
when she claimed that Calyphas had his "mother's looks, " but his "father's heart"
(I.iii.135-36). What Tamburlaine attempts to discard here is that "effeminate" part of
himself, seduced to talk of love, history, beauty. He cares nothing for time, and casts
aside not only the representation of his image—the moving image of his own eternity—but
that part of himself that might perpetuate a care for time itself.

Time, in the end, exacts a measure of revenge upon Tamburlaine. Death is
emphatically not the conquering agent; even as he is dying, he claims power over it, "my
slave, the ugly monster Death, / Shaking and quivering, pale and wan for fear / ... Who
flies away at every glance I give" (V.iii.66-70). But Tamburlaine recognizes his passing.
His foe, as throughout, is time.50 The Physician diagnoses that "this day is critical,
Dangerous to those whose crisis is as yours," and informs him that "if your majesty may
escape this day, / No doubt you shall soon recover all" (V.iii.91-99). In fact, the day is
critical—and it is now Tamburlaine who must "escape" it. When he dies, he urges those
left behind to keep their thoughts "as pure and fiery as Phyteus' beams," since "the nature
of these proud rebelling jades / Will take Occasion by the slenderest hair, / And draw
thee piecemeal like Hippolytus" (V.iii.236-40). Finally, as his son Amyras closes the play, he eulogizes, "Let earth and heaven his timeless death deplore. 'For both their worths will equal him no more" (V.iii.252-53). The "scourge of God" dies; but to his descendants, to those left to conquer what he has not, his death is "timeless." Death, ironically, actually provides Tamburlaine with the opportunity to escape. The play's conclusion suggests the fruition of that initial hope of Tamburlaine: to be eternalized, to exist in a realm untouched by time. Spinrad summarizes well the matter of his demise: "Defeat is inevitable: but one cannot admit to defeat." Tamburlaine remains aloof from his adversary even beyond death.

**Doctor Faustus**

The idea of controlling time, history, and legacy in *Tamburlaine* seeps into *Doctor Faustus*, as well. Indeed, Greenblatt writes that "*Doctor Faustus* . . . does not contradict but, rather, realizes intimations about space and time in Marlowe's other plays." As with his sorcerous counterparts, especially Prospero in *The Tempest* and Subtle in *The Alchemist*, Faustus too uses magic to harness time. Eventually, and perhaps throughout, Faustus fails. He hopes to use time as an instrument, and as a weapon, but finally time is precisely what does him in.

Sitting in his study, Faustus begins the play by considering "the end of every art," an eschatological expedition that treks from Aristotle to Galen, Justinian, and St.
Jerome. This idea of future-gazing, immediately foregrounded, helps ironize his actual myopia. For as Spinrad argues. "Faustus cannot grasp what he cannot see. He is driven, by his need to visualize, into naming and placing things . . . . His replacement of real knowledge with learned facts becomes more and more evident as he discards, one after another, all traditional fields of knowledge, declaring them all easily learned and trivial while revealing his ignorance of each of them." However, his litany also sets the stage for the idea of time to which Faustus adheres—not "Che sera, sera" (I.ii.47) but instead whatever will be will be his. Time is only a means to an end. To complete Faustus' transformation of time into a means of commerce, he willingly trades his soul to Lucifer, "So he will spare him four-and-twenty years" (I.iii.88-89). But even before this transaction, Faustus makes an important reference to one of the most novel temporal devices of his day, the perfect embodiment of time as weapon.

While cataloguing the exploits of his soon-to-be-created spirits, Faustus reels off the usual Mammonic desires: "I'll have them fly to India for gold, / Ransack the ocean for orient pearl, / And search all corners of the new-found world / For pleasant fruits and princely delicacies" (I.ii.81-84). He imagines "strange philosophy," reigning as "king of all the provinces," and in one of the eeriest lines in all of Marlowe, forecasts his plan to "have them wall all Germany with brass" (85-93). Faustus ends his catalogue by alluding to a bizarre war machine newly arrived in the sixteenth-century arena: the time bomb.
For he concludes, "Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war / Than was the fiery keel at
Antwerp bridge: I'll make my servile spirits to invent" (94-6). Most commentators note
that this refers to the siege of Antwerp in 1585, when the city was surrounded by flotillas
of warships, and when to break the lines the besieged utilized a series of "fireships," sent
down the river against bridge and battalion alike. This incident, however, was only part
of the importance of those fireships, and in the wake of time's importance in Doctor
Faustus, it is probable that Marlowe knew the particularity of one quite novel naval
device.

The time bomb was really a war galley, conceived by a "Mantuan wizard" named
Gianibelli, with the help of a clock-maker, that amounted to a "floating volcano . . .
regulated by an ingenious piece of clockwork, by which, at the appointed time, fire,
struck from a flint, was to inflame the hidden mass of gunpowder below." The besieged
populace of Antwerp thus successfully destroyed a good portion of Spain's marine
blockade. This was the first use of mechanized time to coordinate an attack in military
history, and the idea that time could be so manipulated must have struck a resonant chord
in Marlowe. Faustus fits perfectly the characterization of other specialists in the use of
time as a weapon. The alchemist Roger Bacon is often credited as being among the early
discoverers of gunpowder, and later, Jonson uses an explosive gunpowder motif in his
depiction of Subtle, as well. So it is doubly fitting that Faustus "fling[s] firework[s]"
among the cursing friars in III.ii, and upon the soldiers in IV.ii.

The invention of devices that instrumentalize time helps establish the doctor in
Act I as one for whom time is a commodity to be produced and absorbed, bought and
sold. His contract in Act II seals this idea. With Mephistopheles as his witness, he
recites the terms thus: "I, John Faustus of Wittenberg, Doctor . . . do give both body and
soul to Lucifer, Prince of the East, and his minister Mephistopheles; and furthermore
grant unto them that four-and-twenty years being expired . . . full power to fetch or carry
the said John Faustus, body and soul, flesh, blood, into their habitation wheresoever"
(II.i.104-9). Importantly, Lucifer is here invoked as the Prince of the East, the
"light-bearer" from whence his name derives. That he will be for Faustus a different kind
of illuminator and enlightener—an illuminator of the dark arts—ironizes the pact. But the
"Prince of the East," upon whose oriental rising the day once commenced, and the hours
spun forth, now trades for time. What Lucifer can no longer dictate and control in angelic
form—the progress of time—he here deals with infernally. He grants Faustus not the
reality but the illusion of his lost angelic and celestial temporal powers, the very powers,
perhaps, that once lead to Lucifer's own cosmic fall and will so too eventuate the fall of
Faustus. Faustus trades his soul for time: exactly twenty-four years (echoing Lucifer's
reign over the twenty-four daily hours.) The bargain itself notably displays an utter
inconsideration for the eternal, an oversight on the part of Faustus that will plague him until the end of the play. By reducing time to a barterable commodity, at the outset, Faustus exhibits what will become a consistent relationship to time throughout, using it as an instrument for fulfilling his desires and exercising his will. To the devils, such a relationship presages damnation, where the absolute loss of control over time will work against Faustus for eternity. What the devils seem to know all the while, however, is that time is already a weapon in their concerted temptation of Faustus.

When Faustus begins to question Mephistopheles about the nature of the cosmos, the two further wrangle over time. The motion of the stars and planets, "both situ et tempore" (II.iii.43), begins their discussion, with Faustus claiming the devil's answers to be "slender questions Wagner can decide" (II.iii.47). He goes on to illustrate his own knowledge of the motion of the spheres: "Who knows not the double motion of the planets? / That the first is finished in a natural day, / The second thus: Saturn in thirty years, / Jupiter in twelve, Mars in four, the sun, Venus, and Mercury in a year, the moon in twenty-eight days" (II.iii.49-53). Their debate mirrors another debate taking place in the scene, that between the Good and Bad Angels. The quarreling over natural, astronomic time between Faustus and the devil cleverly distracts Faustus from considering the more important anagogical interpretation of time being discussed by the Angels. Their concern for his final condition sets off the mundane concerns of cosmos
and contract alike. When Faustus does realize the implications of his contract, he
exclaims, "O Christ, my Saviour, my Saviour, / Help to save distressed Faustus' soul!"
(II.iii.81-2). At this point, Lucifer and Beelzebub join the scene, and sway Faustus once
and for all. But what snaps Faustus from his reverie in the first place are the conflicting
notions of violence adduced by the Angels. The Bad suggests, "If thou repent, devils will
tear thee in pieces" (II.iii.79); the Good responds, "Repent, and they shall never raze thy
skin" (II.iii.80). The immanent violence behind the contract Faustus has signed manifests
itself at this point, and nearly functions as the conduit that will allow Faustus to pass
from one temporal reality to another, from profane to sacred. Only the arrival of the
diabolical potentates, and their ritualized pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins, returns
Faustus to their realm.

The time-as-weapon motif finds perhaps its most overt image in Act III.

Mephistopheles, describing Rome, tells Faustus.

Upon the bridge called Ponte Angelo
Erected is a castle passing strong,
Where thou shalt see such store of ordinance
As that the double cannons, forged by brass,
Do match the number of days contained
Within the compass of one complete year.
(III.i.38-43)

The Prince of Hell implies more here than simply the number of the cannons,
three-hundred and sixty-five. Faustus has just recited how he has "spent his time" before
arriving in Rome (III.i.1-20). This reminder of time's consumption fits well with the cannon image. Each day of the year that drifts by Faustus is a weapon pointed at his soul. The booming thunder of Act V will serve to echo these cannons, as days turn to minutes in the final scenes. It is not entirely coincidental that John Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, arms Lucifer with such cannons. The quest for knowledge is central to the latter work, of course, as in *Doctor Faustus*. In Milton's work, for instance, Raphael urges Adam not "To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope / Things not revealed, which the invisible king, / Only omniscient, hath suppressed in night" (VII.121-23). So Satan's "inventions"—cannons "of missive ruin . . . pernicious with one touch to fire, . . . disgorging . . . chained thunderbolts and hail / Of iron globes" (VI.519-90)—parody the thunder of divine retribution. In Marlowe, the cannons that number as the days rather resound than scorn the thunder that will meet Faustus at his demise. Intermingled with the sounding of the clock, the finale is forcefully foreshadowed in this scene: with Mephistopheles gleefully pointing out, appropriately, the machinations of warfare, and with the discharging days aimed seemingly at none but Faustus.

The cannons of Rome also prepare for the Pope's banquet, travestied by the invisible Faustus and Mephistopheles. As Bartels notes, they "disrupt the papal banquet by stealing the Pope's meat and drink (suggestive, of course, of the bread and wine of mass whose consecration and transubstantiation are enabled by his authority)." The
action of the scene parodies ritual and sacrifice throughout, not least by its violent
insurrections. The Pope, upon loss of his wine, declares to his friars, "find the man that
doth this villainy, / Or by our sanctitude you all shall die!" (III.ii.76-7). The threat of
death, authorized by the Pope's "sanctitude," combines ritual and violence in a quite
unholy alliance. This juxtaposition continues when the Pope crosses himself a few lines
later, only to be struck by the unseen Faustus. And abruptly, after the friars chant a dirge
to curse the soul who has committed these disturbances, they are beset with fireworks.
The inversions operating in the scene, popes and friars offering not benedictions but
maledictions, are summed by Faustus, in his nearly palindromic lines, "Bell, book, and
candle: candle, book, and bell, / Forward and backward, to curse Faustus to hell"
(III.ii.92-3). The sacred time of ritual has here been denigrated through violence. Time
is running in both directions, to and away from the sacred. And so too Faustus, in his
condemnation of the Catholic rituals, nevertheless speeds on towards hell.

Violence and warfare are repeatedly stressed throughout much of the following
two acts. From the flinging of fireworks at the close of III.ii, to the phantasmagoric "royal
shapes and warlike semblances / Of Alexander" (IV.i.15-16), to the assassination and
ambush attempt upon Faustus at the close of Act IV.ii, mayhem abounds. The doctor's
response to the destruction wrought by others upon him echoes the idea of time as
weapon yet again, but adds a touch of irony. After being decapitated by the vengeful
Benvolio, Faustus unexpectedly rises from the dead, and with his head regenerated, like a
travesty of Christian typology: John the Antibaptist, perhaps. He demands of the culprits.

Knew you not, traitors, I was limited
For four-and-twenty years to breathe on earth?
And had you cut my body with your swords,
Or hewed this flesh and bones as small as sand,
Yet in a minute had my spirit returned,
And I had breathed a man made free from harm.

(IV.ii.71-76)

Time seems to preserve Faustus like so much formaldehyde. But the reference to "flesh
and bones as small as sand" calls forth the image of the hourglass sands, steadily draining
the life from the doctor even as they number his days, his life, his very person. As he
meditates shortly after beating back his would-be killers, "What art thou, Faustus, but a
man condemned to die? Thy fatal time draws to a final end" (IV.iv.21-22). Faustus has
already been metaphorically pulverized into sand, from the moment his soul became tied
to time and the tides. In the process of inverted Christian symbolism, including the papal
banquet and recapitulation (not to mention Faustus consorting with the Antichrist), ritual
acts lose their direction. His resurrection, for instance, does not bear him into eternal life
but eternal damnation, and by the fifth Act his further disintegration has become
apparent.

Thunder and lightning begin the final Act, recalling the thunderous cannons and
forecasting the sonorous clock bell. Roy T. Eriksen further notes that the "twenty-four
years which begin and end at midnight in Faustus's study" parallel the hours in the day, an alignment that emphasizes just how self-conscious this play is about the patterns and uses of time. The ensuing entrance of the Old Man should, too, be considered as an entrance of a benevolent Father Time, bookended by Time's curtain-closing arrival in the form of the clock. When Faustus mocks the cry of Hell, "Thine hour is almost come" (V.i.53), this Old Man stays his suicidal hand, prolonging for a while the final demise. The Old Man, in short, gives him time. So the contrapuntal effect of Lucifer's entrance, and his proclamation that "The time is come" (V.ii.6), starts time ticking again. Thus the figures of Old Man Time and Lucifer wrestle over its pace, contending like the good and bad angels over Faustus' shoulder in the first Act. But after Faustus confesses his transgression to those gathered in his study, time reasserts a control that more than makes up for its prior manipulations. Faustus emphasizes the role of time in his tragedy by telling his friends, "For the vain pleasure of four-and-twenty years hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity. I writ them a bill with mine own blood. The date is expired. This is the time, and he will fetch me" (V.ii.64-67). The ambiguity of the antecedent in his closing line is important. Time, as much as anyone, will come to fetch Faustus. And when "The clock strikes eleven" (V.ii.131 s.d.), he appears.

Nowhere in the Marlovian canon does the idea of torture so pervade a scene as in V.ii of Doctor Faustus. In fact, he makes some mention of torture on four occasions in
this scene alone, and only nine (two of which are in this play) in all his other writings combined. The threat of torture preludes the eleventh striking of the clock, layering once again violence upon time. The Bad Angel, as the image of Hell is discovered onstage, menaces the Doctor,

Now Faustus, let thine eyes with horror stare
Into that vast perpetual torture-house.
There are the Furies tossing damned souls
On burning forks; their bodies boil in lead.
There are live quarters broiling on the coals,
That ne'er can die. This ever-burning chair
Is for o'er-tortured souls to rest them in.
These that are fed with sops of flaming fire
Were gluttons, and loved only delicates,
And laughed to see the poor starve at their gates.
But yet all these are nothing. Thou shalt see
Ten thousand tortures that more horrid be.

(V.ii.115-26, my italics)

To which Faustus replies, "O, I have seen enough to torture me" (V.ii.127, my italics).

The repeated stress on torture, coming as it does just before the penultimate stroke of the clock, supplants the looming of death itself. Not death but violence, and not mere violent aggression but the temporal violence of torture, dominates the play's close. And it is surely significant that his first sight of Hell is of the Furies, those triple goddesses sprung from the blood of the emasculated father of Cronus. As Freud has pointed out, they too embody the triple fates, who control the past, present, and future. But in hell, insofar as the Furies are remnants of time, they are time's violence perpetuated. Faustus, after
having ruled as a type of king for twenty-four years, that resonant number, has become the sacrificial victim in his own procession of rituals. The inversion of Christian ritual, but also the use of time to attempt a transcendence of time, mark the same conflation of sacred and profane times as accomplished by the ritual of myth. If torture depends on time, and on time as quantity or instrument—the same ideas of time Faustus has held throughout—he fittingly faces a hell that grotesquely mimicks his own pattern of sin, defiance, and control. And so it is not surprising that Faustus' last speech should culminate with a discussion of time even as it follows no "natural" course.

The speech, perhaps forty-five lines, occupies the dramatic space of an hour, from the eleventh to the twelfth stroke of the clock. The torturous violence upon which he has gazed, and has been gazing throughout the play, has transported him into a realm where profane time no longer applies. It is a ritual time, a time of passage from one state to another, that only his demise can conclude. Although the actual speech takes but a few minutes, "half the hour is past" when Faustus reaches the half-way point of his delivery.

So he begins with a plea:

Now hast thou but one hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually.
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease and midnight never come!
Fair nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
Rather than running slowly, however, time's velocity actually increases, as if in retribution for the mage's attempts at control. Like Tamburlaine, he can no longer will the spheres, no longer turn night into day. The very power he once relied on, not unlike the power of Lucifer as light bearer, has become the cause and effect of his punishment. (Or perhaps time is responding to the petitions of another now, akin to Juliet's contrary exhortations, "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steed, / Toward Phoebus' lodging. Such a wagoner / As Phaeton would whip you to the West / And bring in cloudy Night immediately" [Romeo and Juliet III.ii.1-4].). Indeed, while for Juliet, "in a minute there are many days," for Faustus, in an hour there are few minutes. The clock strikes twelve, and the battle against infinity, and damnation, is lost. "A thousand years. / A hundred thousand," he reckons, "O, no end is limited to damned souls." Time as weapon "strikes, it strikes!" (V.ii.178). And immediately the thunder is once again heard, and the devils appear, ready to rend their prey limb from limb, cell from cell. They do so, notably, "'twixt the hours of twelve and one" (V.iii.9). Even in his torturous finale, Faustus seems immured within the walls of a temporal prison.59 Marlowe concludes the play "Terminat hora diem; terminat author opus," and might well have appended "Terminat tempus Faustum." The ominous striking of the clock as the life of Faustus ebbs away
emblematizes the struggle that has existed throughout. In the case of Faustus, the bell tolls for him and him alone.

The Jew of Malta

Don Beecher calls The Jew of Malta "a ritual celebration of disorder recalling . . . the collegiate reigns of misrule. . . . Such a ritual provides not only a bizarre and spectacular drama, but a safety valve for society, a means for expressing aberrant impulses vicariously by projecting them into the play." Barabas, until his death, wields time more viciously than any other Marlovian character. He fittingly describes his own relationship to time early on: "Barabas is born to better chance / And framed of finer mould than common men, / That measure naught but by the present time. / A reaching thought will search his deepest wits, / And cast with cunning for the time to come" (I.ii.219-223). Such a statement finds analogue in Montaigne, who writes that "We are never in our selves, but beyond." But Barabas would disagree with Montaigne's further observation that "the commonest humane error" is that "feare, desire, and hope, draw us ever towards that which is to come, and remove our sense and consideration from that which is." Barabas rather embraces such "gaping after future things," like Levi's hidden player. He assumes a nearly oracular role in the first scene of The Jew of Malta, culminating in his "casting with cunning for the time to come." Throughout the play, Beecher's "ritual of disorder" asserts itself against those unable to control time. For
Barabas, who organizes deadly banquets and sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia-style, the ritual scenes and their concomitant violence embody his aggression towards and control over time, for the purpose of both displacing time's position and the positions of the numerous other characters he comes to despise.

When the three Jews enter, seeking from him to discover the meaning of the "fleet of warlike galleys . . . come from Turkey" (I.i.145-46), he responds with the confidence of one for whom the future is as clear as the present. (In a discourse on some philosophical links between time and violence, Piotr Hoffman writes that "My adversary in a life-and-death struggle imposes himself upon me as a power capable of bringing about my end; I thus first encounter him through a sense of the (finite) future.")

He tells them that the ships come neither for peace nor war, but rather en passant, ultimately destined for Venice. When he learns that he must give up the sum of his wealth as pelf to these Turks, he turns against time itself:

I . . . may curse the day,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
And henceforth wish for an eternal night,
That clouds of darkness may enclose my flesh
And hide these extreme sorrows from mine eyes.
For only I have toiled to inherit here
The months of vanity and loss of time.
And painful nights have been appointed me.

(I.ii.192-99)

This almost Oedipal call to blindness demonstrates first his awareness of time's import.
His remembrance of the "months of vanity" and "loss of time," as the primary summation
of his wealth, points out that for Barabas time is as much a commodity as his "Bags of
fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts, / Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds, /
Beauteous rubies [and] sparkling diamonds" (I.i.25-27). So too his only ship to be
named, the "Speranza," enforces the idea that hope—that gazing upon the future of time
in order to reap present rewards—is at the core of his particular libido. (A motif that will
recur in The Merchant of Venice, a play strongly influenced by The Jew of Malta.)

Secondarily, his wish for an "eternal night" functions in a now familiar Marlovian
fashion: as an assertion of control over temporal patterns. Like Tamburlaine, Faustus,
and even King Edward, he rails against the passage of day and night, and his urge to
dominate the order of things will continue throughout the play.

Barabas' relation to progeny is at least as problematic as Tamburlaine's. When in
the first scene he asserts, "I have no charge, nor many children, / But one sole daughter,
whom I hold as dear: As Agamemnon did his Iphigen" (I.i.134-36), the simile smacks of
irony. He too will ritually sacrifice his daughter, as Agamemnon did prior to the Trojan
War, and for utterly selfish purposes. He hopes not to procure a fair wind, but to
prevent disclosure of his crimes. The complete disregard for lineage is made even more
emphatic by Abigail's first entrance, for Barabas has just finished soliloquizing about his
"cunning for the time to come." The irony that begins with the Agamemnon metaphor

88
continues here; Abigail, instead of providing herself for Barabas' future line, will perish at his hands. This trope of temporal control and its misuse is repeated frequently during their first exchange. Barabas informs her that "time may yield us an occasion / Which on the sudden cannot serve the turn" (I.ii.240-41). And as final capstone, he again ironizes, upon hearing of the seizure of his home, "Think me so mad as I will hang myself, / That I may vanish o'er the earth in air / And leave no memory that e'er I was?" (I.ii.264-66). For Barabas will, in fact, leave behind nothing to carry on his name except the ignominy of his actions. Ultimately, he does indeed hang himself.

The subsequent scene between Barabas and his daughter continues to weave the threads of time and riches, and of the urge to control both. Having hidden substantial treasures behind a plank in his home before it was converted to a nunnery, he arranges to meet with Abigail early in the morning. He enters "like the sad presaging raven" (II.i.1), a perfect image for one whose fundamental power seems to lie in augury. Soon, he begins to castigate the time itself: "The incertain pleasures of swift-footed time / Have ta'en their flight and left me in despair, / And of my former riches rests no more / But bare remembrance" (II.i.7-10). These deleterious effects of time upon Barabas—its desertion—are important prefigurements of Abigail's own eventual flight. So too will her abandonment of her father cast him into despair, literally away from hope, and so too leave behind "but bare remembrance." So when Barabas tries to reassert control over
time—"let the day / Turn into eternal darkness after this. / No sleep can fasten on my
watchful eyes / Nor quiet enter my distempered thoughts" (II.i.15-18)—it is fitting that his
next move is to reassert control over hope itself. He finds it, importantly, not in the
arrival of Abigail, but in himself only: "For whilst I live here lives my soul's sole hope, /
And when I die here shall my spirit walk" (II.i.29-30). Such commentary, while Abigail
is dramatically hovering about the stage, a virtual phantom until spotted by Barabas,
emblematizes not only his lack of hope in lineage, but the fact that truly Barbas is never
in himself, but beyond.

In partly equating his control over time with his control over Abigail, Barabas
significantly uses his daughter as his first instrument in his temporal warfare. She
becomes the pawn in the revenge game against the son of Governor Ferneze, the man
who first demanded his wealth in order to pay the Turks. In an aside, Barabas reiterates
the sacrificial motif from earlier in the play when he says of Lodowick, "ere he shall have
her, / I'll sacrifice her on a pile of wood" (II.iii.52-53). But the language of his dialogue
with Lodowick a bit later even more effectively shows his relationship to time. As he
fawningly tells Lodowick that his father has brought him to "religious purity" by taking
his goods and home, the governor's son responds, "No doubt your soul shall reap the fruit
of it." Barabas retorts, "Ay, but, my lord, the harvest is far off" (II.iii.72-79). Again,
Barabas holds to form in gazing beyond the scope of others. His language, itself
duplicitious, compounds the splitting effect of his plans. Barabas is constantly and simultaneously moving through various realities. He is at once in the future and the present, but even in the present his actions are effectively split in twain. Deceit has a particularly temporal sway; Robert Penn Warren poeticizes, "Doubleness coils in Time like / The bull-snake in fall's yet-leafed growth." The maintenance and promulgation of two disparate realities lived simultaneously allows Barabas to manipulate the present through the future and also the present through the present. Thus the simple act of lying becomes as useful to Barabas and as pernicious to others as any act of violence. He mingles one time with another as he will later combine poison and soup.

When Abigail deserts her father, upon the death of Lodowick and Don Mathias, Barabas makes a second use of time as weapon. Learning of "false, credulous, inconstant Abigail" (III.iv.27), Barabas (now plotting her death) makes a passing comment directed at his servant Ithamore, but equally descriptive of himself. As Ithamore departs, Barabas remarks, "Thus every villain ambles after wealth, / Although he ne'er be richer than in hope" (III.iv.53-54). The continued conflation of hope and riches, hope and Abigail, marks the aside. For like "every villain," Barabas is forever beyond himself; his self-awareness of this projection generates much of his success, both economically and criminally. What underscores his attention to time, however, is the exact method of his murder of Abigail and her fellow nuns. Over all other methods, Barabas has a
predilection for delayed-action poison. As he informs Ithamore, "It is a precious powder that I bought . . . Whose operation is to bind, infect, And poison deeply, yet not appear In forty hours after it is ta'en" (III.iv.69-73). This recalls Faustus' plan to invent time bombs with the Antwerpian fire boats, and anticipates a similar time-bomb philosopher's stone in Jonson's The Alchemist. For Barabas, death by delay provides a grander satisfaction than any immediate demise: by the former, he bends time as well to his will, making it wait on him. Thus is revenge served cold. He sends Ithamore away with the pot of poisoned rice, a stratagem that further covers his tracks—temporarily—and soon the nunnery is no more.

Barabas treats Ithamore as both pupil and puppet, playing with him and his cronies on a slightly smaller stage than with some other characters. After the servant leaves him for Bellamira and Pilia-Borza, a carnivalesque inversion takes place. Barabas plays the fool, in the guise of a French lute-player, even as Ithamore plays Barabas. Sending Pilia-Borza to Barabas for blackmail money, and reclining in the amorous arms of his courtesan, Ithamore begins lyricizing on his future love. "We will . . . sail from hence to Greece, to lovely Greece," he coos, "I'll be thy Jason, thou my golden fleece" (IV.ii.88-90). The pursuit of the golden fleece parallels Barabas' own quest for riches, but more importantly, the close of Ithamore's seduction nicely forecasts the inversion so implicit in the upcoming scenes. Enchanting Bellamira with Grecian images, "meads,
orchards, and the primrose lanes," he finally swears (in an echo of Marlowe's shepherd to his love), "Thou in those groves, by Dis above, shalt live with me and be my love" (IV.ii.95-98). The invocation to "Dis above" of course inverts the proper placement of the underworld deity. While the effect is partly comedic, revealing the crudity of this blossoming tryst between Ithamore and Bellamira, the topsy-turvy effect helps emphasize Ithamore's new-found role as Barabas redux. So when the scene closes, Ithamore too offers such an attempt at controlling time, as he has witnessed repeatedly in his master: "O, that ten thousand nights were put in one, that we might sleep seven years together afore we wake!" (IV.ii.132-33). For Ithamore, as for Sir Epicure Mammon in Jonson's *The Alchemist*, the control of time in order to facilitate love-making is the ultimate manipulation. Unfortunately for him and his cohorts, the same is not true of Barabas, whose appearance as a musician spells doom for the trio.

Once again applying delayed-action poison, Barabas offers a malodorous nosegay to Ithamore, Bellamira, and Pilia-Borza. This action continues the motif of inversion, quite upsetting the tradition of *carpe florem* as much as it does *carpe diem*. Barabas seize not the day, but all days, all at once. His existence beyond himself runs contrary to the idea of existing in the present. "How sweet the flowers smell," utters Bellamira, to which Barabas responds aside, "The scent whereof was death" (IV.iv.38-41). In the world of Barabas, those who stop to smell the roses and seize the moment perish, while
those who consider not "by the present time" live on. And so, when ordered by
Ithamore, "Play, fiddler, or I'll cut your cat's guts into chitterlings" (IV.iv.43). Barabas
fiddles Nero-like while others burn, poisoned to death. He is restored to his proper
position as ruler of time, even as the miscalculation that allows Ithamore to live, long
enough to confess all, begins his eventual downfall.

When the final act begins, what Bevington and Rasmussen call a "theatrical
foreshortening of time" takes place. After being alerted to the murderous subterfuges of
Barabas, Governor Ferneze sends officers to "fetch him straight" (V.i.18). The editors'
observation, that the officers "complete in a few seconds a search for and arrest of
Barabas and Ithamore that would take hours," describes on one level a fairly
straightforward dramatic maneuver. However, the condensation of time in this manner
also points to the power exchanges in this final Act. Although Ferneze will later be
captured through Barabas' trickery, this initial display of temporal manipulation situates
the Governor as one who will eventually, as Hamlet says of Rosencrantz and
Guildenstern, "delve one yard below their mines, / And blow them at the moon" (Hamlet
III.iv.208). The shortening of time at the beginning of the Act, then, has the effect of
hinting at a transfer of power from Barabas. And although it is Barabas who "blows to
the moon" the Turkish troops, it is nevertheless Ferneze who undermines, quite literally,
the treacherous plots of his nemesis.
After Barabas escapes his imprisonment by feigning death (itself a cosmetic "foreshortening" of time), and opens the city to the attacking Calymath, he determines to reverse the situation yet again. Mulling over the situation, he plans to himself, "Barabas will be more circumspect. / Begin betimes; Occasion's bald behind; / Slip not thine opportunity, for fear too late / Thou seek'st for much but canst compass it" (V.ii.43-46). Interestingly, Barabas reasserts his casting for the time to come, as in the first Act, but the language has shifted slightly from hope to fear. His depiction of Occasion, iconographically "bald behind" since its swift passage allows only one shot at grasping its forelock, also reverts to more traditional carpe diem attitudes. From the mouth of Barabas, such ideas smack of desperation. Gone are the seemingly infinite considerations of contingencies and permutations; despite his claims to caution and circumspection, Barabas' control seems to be unravelling already. He concludes the scene, in fact, with his last demonstration of time control. He organizes his machinations as, "First, to surprise great Selim's soldiers, / And then to make provisions for the feast, / That at one instant all things may be done" (V.ii.118-20). Such conscientious attention to the instant prefigures the heedfulness of the (quite different) mages Subtle and Prospero. For Barabas, using the instant as a weapon backfires and fires back all at once.

In preparations that seem rehearsals for the infamous Gunpowder Plot of 1605, Barabas has workers prepare deadly contraptions for Calymath's Turks:
First, for his army, they are sent before,
Entered the monastery, and underneath
In several places are field-pieces pitched,
Bombards, whole barrels of gunpowder,
That on a sudden shall dissever it
And batter all the stones about their ears.
Whence none can possibly escape alive.

(V.iii.25-31)

As for their leader and his bashaws, a deep pit beneath the floor is built in order to plunge
them unsuspectingly to their deaths, as well. The timing of the events is critical, and
Barabas transfers the final power to Femeze when he hands him the knife with which "to
cut the cord" that will plunge his enemies into the trap. As he tells the Governor, "A
warning-piece shall be shot off from the tower / To give thee knowledge when to cut"
(V.v.39-40). The last twist of the knife, of course, drops not the unwitting Calymath. T.
S. Eliot once remarked of The Jew of Malta that its final act is "intelligible" only if taken
as a "farce of the old English humour, the terribly serious, even savage comic humour." Eliot was attempting to find some category into which the play fit, for it certainly did not seem a conventional tragedy, and there is undoubtedly something of the savagely comic in the ensuing and nearly buffoonish imperilment of Barabas. For upon hearing his own signal, a trumpet blare that also signals the cannoneer to blow up the monastery, Femeze promptly deposits Barabas into his own cauldron.

In Machiavel's introduction to the play, he refers to Phalaris, who "bellowed in a
brazen bull / Of great one's envy" (Prol. 25-26). The tale of Phalaris further contains the
story of Perillus, who invented the horrible device of execution—a roasting oven in the shape of a bull, with special acoustic ducts to magnify the last cries of its prisoners—only to become its premier victim. Both Phalaris and Perillus were thus done in by their own creations, and this irony is implicit in the death of Barabas, too. He dies mid-curse, after damning the "Christians, dogs, and Turkish infidels" (V.v.85). And his previously unassailable control of time, his own art of timing, is effectively usurped by Ferneze. In perhaps the final irony of the play, however, Ferneze gives thanks for his success "Neither to fate nor fortune, but to heaven" (V.v.123). After appropriating the methods of Barabas, Ferneze turns to divinity—and to a sacred sense of time that has been under attack for the better part of the play. While this last invocation ostensibly restores a sense of order to the disarray caused by Barabas, there is left little doubt that Ferneze, for one, has learned to use time as an instrument. His dismissal of "fate and fortune" seems a last bit of prestidigitation to draw Calymath's attention from the power of time, a distracting sleight-of-hand from one, like Barabas before him, whose reaching thoughts now search his deepest wits for the time to come.

* * *

In all these plays, Marlowe's characters show dangerous predilections. The violent aggressions of Tamburlaine, the diabolical dabblings of Faustus, and the merciless killings of Barabas all take their place in a concerted effort to test the limits of
human possibility against the constraints of time. To yoke these two forces together, to bring them together so that they may be tested at all, requires a certain attitude to time. This attitude—the ritualizing of violence to effect a reality in which the accepted traditions of time no longer apply—does not condemn Marlowe's protagonists to failure. Their respective conclusions are demonstrably problematic: although all these characters die, the attitudes that drive their assaults upon time remain intact. This transference of behavior may be as concrete as Tamburlaine to his sons, or Barabas to Ferneze. Or it may be more difficult to trace openly, as with the damnation of Faustus. It should be remembered that his death does not close the play: three scholars enter his study to find the mangled remains. And though his last words are "I'll burn my books! O, Mephistopheles!" (V.ii.185), he never does so. They survive in the study, ready to be pored over by any one of the newly arrived scholars, at least one of whom reveres the deceased doctor for his "wondrous knowledge" (V.iii.16). The play ends where it began, with the promise of another cycle yet to come, an eternal return propagated by the rituals of violence inherent in its structure. Indeed, ritual violence requires a sacrifice, a death, to perpetuate itself. The death of a king, a sacrificial victim, or a scapegoat does not represent the failure but the success of a ritual whose chief importance, suggests Eliade, is "the abolition of concrete time." They have held the power of time, and like time are ritually banished for the paradoxical purpose of restoring time to power, even as this
anticipates the cyclical devaluing of time once again. In this way, Marlowe has created
characters who do finally win out over time not in spite of their deaths but because of
them.

* * *

The next chapter assumes a different method of controlling time. Rather than
altering the contexts of time through violence in order to change its possibilities, the
concept of hope is explored as a means of manipulating, for better and for worse, both
time and other individuals.

Notes

1. An insightful look at Marlowe's rhetorical style can be found in John Russell Brown's
"Marlowe and the Actors" (1964), in Tamburlaine the Great, Edward the Second, and

2. See Harry Levin, The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge:

3. Marjorie Garber, "Infinite Riches in a Little Room: Closure and Enclosure in
Marlowe," in Two Renaissance Mythmakers Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson
(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1977), p. 3.

4. Stephen Greenblatt, "Marlowe and the Will to Absolute Play," in Renaissance Self-


7. Waller, The Strong Necessity of Time, p. 133. See also Quinones, Discovery of Time,
p. 3, who writes, "For the men of the Renaissance... victory over time is the measure
of their heroism: a need for special distinction, one which rises above the anonymity of the everyday, compels them to seek the arduous, the unusual."

8. A quite different emphasis is offered by David H. Thurn, "Sights of Power in Tamburlaine," *ELR* 19 (1989), pp. 3-21. Thurn suggests rather that "Tamburlaine's power to organize the space of the stage" ratifies his authority (5). He does ultimately notice, however, that "Tamburlaine's words seem to have the power to banish the uncertain gap between present and future," and that "Tamburlaine controls both the temporal and spatial dimensions of the stage by making them fully present" (9).


14. For a full account, and summary of sources, see Dohrn-van Rossum, pp. 276-9.


31. See also Leslie M. Thompson, "Ritual Sacrifice and Time in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn',' *Keats-Shelley Journal* 21-2 (1972-3), pp. 27-9, for a glance at the literary connections between ritual violence and time.


34. Irving Ribner, "The Idea of History in Marlowe's Tamburlaine," ELH 20 (1953), p. 259. Ribner's subsequent point, that "Everything he will ever be, he already is at his first appearance" (263) I take as an index of Tamburlaine's resistance to the forces of time. I do not, however, agree that he is "fixed and changeless"; rather, he is able to assume time's mantle utterly, absorb it. He changes as he wills, but not by time's dictation.


36. The color scheme has received substantial critical attention. Levin, The Overreacher, writes that the "whole work is painted in this lurid color scheme, in the shades of love, war, and death, successively" (p. 49). John P. Cutts, "The Ultimate Source of Tamburlaine's White, Red, Black, and Death," N & Q 5 (April 1958), pp. 146-47, sees influence from the Book of Revelation. James Robinson Howe links Tamburlaine to the magus tradition in Marlowe, Tamburlaine, and Magic (Athens, OH: U of Ohio P, 1976). He argues that the color symbolism offers the besieged "a chance to choose the right allegiance" (p. 64)—allegiance to a divinely and hermetically enlightened leader. Rick Bowers, in "Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Great, Part One, IV.i.47-63," Explicator 48:1 (1989), pp. 4-6, offers an anthropological reading: the colors represent a "primal and terrible" initiation ceremony, from inexperience to struggle to death.


38. Herbert B. Rothschild, Jr., "The Conqueror-Hero, the Besieged City, and the Development of an Elizabethan Protagonist," South Central Review 3 (1986), p. 64. Gale H. Carrithers, Jr., and James D. Hardy, Jr., The Age of Iron (forthcoming Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1998), write similarly of the "finality, permanence, and commitment implied in personal troth-plight, or word as bond, in which the swearer was in an instant changed profoundly in relationship to the rest of humankind."


40. Levin, The Overreacher, p. 31, compares this episode to Herod's slaughter of the Innocents.

world of romance. . . . As both a poet and warrior, Tamburlaine . . . can make his world
into whatever ideal reality he chooses" (257).

42. Marlowe famously mis-created the origins of Tamburlaine as a simple shepherd.
Ironically, Marlowe himself became known as the "Dead Shepherd" in As You Like It
(III.iv.81-82) and elsewhere. For an inventory, see Douglas Bruster, "'Come to the Tent
Again': The Passionate Shepherd,' Dramatic Rape, and Lyric Time," Criticism 33:1

43. See Gardner's essay, "The Second Part of Tamburlaine the Great," Modern Language

44. Clifford Leech, "The Structure of Tamburlaine," Tulane Drama Review 8:4 (1964),
p. 46.

45. Garber makes several interesting points regarding "encapsulated artifacts" in
Marlowe's plays. She sees Zenocrate's coffin as the operative artifact in 2
Tamburlaine, and argues that Tamburlaine creates not "a memento mori, but instead . . . a memento
vitae . . . an emblem, deliberately fictive, of the eternity he somehow imagines will be
his" (17).

46. Quinones, Renaissance Discovery of Time, p. 17.

47. Quinones, Renaissance Discovery of Time, p. 17.

48. Levin, The Overreacher, p. 32, notices that Tamburlaine "is more classical than
Asiatic and in some traits is modeled on Homer's Achilles."


50. See, however, Ian Gaskell's "2 Tamburlaine: Marlowe's War Against the Gods,"
blasphemous, or at least hubristic, rhetoric reverberates within a larger context of
time control in the play. Tamburlaine's death is treated at length by Johnstone Parker in
"Tamburlaine's Malady" (1944), rpt. in A Casebook of Critical Essays, pp. 113-27.
Parker suggests that "the only appropriate conqueror of Tamburlaine should be
Tamburlaine himself" (115). His "distemper" is a result of his "fiery temperament." Cf.
Roy W. Battenhouse, "Tamburlaine, the 'Scourge of God'," PMLA 56 (1941), pp. 337-48;


58. Eriksen, "'What Resting Place Is This?': Aspects of Time and Place in *Doctor Faustus* (1616)," *Renaissance Drama* 16 (1985), pp. 49-74. Eriksen's essay usefully points to the influence of Tasso and Bruno on the temporal schemes of Marlowe's play. He further notes that the "diurnal cycle enclosing Faustus's twenty-four years in sin assumes particular significance in relation to scriptural exegesis," suggesting Marlowe displayed images of "a predestined universe rather than a providentially planned one" in fluctuating the light and dark aspects in the final act (55-58). He mostly provides a commentary on the dramatic uses of time and place--especially the unity or lack thereof--in the play.

60. In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 200, Greenblatt makes an insightful point about the finale of this play. "That the moments of intensest time-consciousness all occur at or near the close," he writes, "... has the effect of making the heroes seem to struggle against theatrical time. As Marlowe uses the vacancy of theatrical space to suggest his characters' homelessness, so he uses the curve of theatrical time to suggest their struggle against extinction, in effect against the nothingness into which all characters fall at the end of a play."


62. Cf. Douglas Cole's comment that Barabas "is a figure more grotesquely inhuman than Tamburlaine at his cruellest moments"; in "Barabas the Jew: Incarnation of Evil," reprinted in *Christopher Marlowe's The Jew of Malta: Text and Major Criticism*, ed. Irving Ribner (New York: Odyssey, 1970), pp. 128-45. Cole rightly observes that the play hinges on what Barabas "inflicts on others," not his own tragic suffering. And I must disagree with Alfred Harbage, who writes in "Innocent Barabas," *Tulane Drama Review* 8 (1964), that "the end-product of his villainy is more notable for quantity than quality... . He kills people in heaps, but is most remiss in administering mental and physical agony." Quite to the contrary, Barabas extracts a great deal of pleasure from the mental and physical agony *in potentia* of his victims, as he gazes with relish into their doomed futures. And in terms of pure trauma, the characters of both Femeze and Katherine are served an extended dose.


105
rampant in this play, helps call attention to "dramatic artifice," espoused in the play further by the lies and disguises of Barabas.


68. See Bevington and Rasmussen, p. 471n.


70. The role of Machiavel, and his inaccurate representation of Machiavelli, has been the subject of much debate. See especially N.W. Bawcutt, "Machiavelli and Marlowe's The Jew of Malta," Renaissance Drama 3 (1970), pp. 3-49; and a summary of various positions in Kenneth Friedenreich's "The Jew of Malta and the Critics," Papers on Language and Literature 13 (1977), pp. 318-35. Additionally, perspective on Machiavelli's own attitude to time can be found in Robert Orr's "Time Motif in Machiavelli," Political Studies 17 (1969), pp. 145-59. Orr's reading, however, stresses a sense of impotency in the face of time—"Problems and miseries stem ultimately ... [from] being a temporal creature living in a world of temporal events"—that Marlowe, whether accurately depicting Machiavelli or not, certainly questioned.


Chapter Three: Lotteries, Hope, and Persecuted Time in *The Merchant of Venice*

In *Shakespeare and the Nature of Time*, Frederick Turner catalogues nine aspects of time in the plays. They are worth recording, for they survey well the varied tradition of perspectives on this topic. As Turner sees them, the nine run as follows: first, historical or objective time, "a space in which events occur"; second, the "highly relative" personal experience of time, "the dynamic process of changing and becoming"; third, time as an agent, "the nurse of growth or the architect of decay"; fourth, time as a realm or sphere, "the secular . . . as opposed to and transcended by the eternal"; fifth, natural time, "the alternation of day and night, the turning of the seasons, the life cycles of animals and plants"; sixth, time as "the medium of cause and effect"; seventh, the "particular moments or periods of time," emblematized by the figure of Occasion; eighth, time as revealer, bringing "hidden things to light," the progenitor of Truth; and finally time as rhythm, as in "'keeping time', 'musical time'". Admirably, Turner here elaborates upon the traditional aspects of Devourer and Revealer (numbers three and eight, respectively). Turner omits from this otherwise encompassing enumeration, however, any mention of time as instrument. Most of his categories place time in an active rather than passive role; others group time into one matrix or another—natural time or historical time—in which events occur. Turner also never discusses the *Merchant of Venice*, perhaps because this play embodies a notion of time quite unlike his delineations.² In
other plays, Shakespeare renders time alternately as master and mastered. An early work, *The Comedy of Errors*, forecasts the use of the former trope when Luciana observes, "A man is master of his liberty: / Time is their master" (II.i.7-8). A representative example of the latter occurs when Hamlet wonders of the ghost, "What art thou that usurp' st this time of night . . . ?" (I.i.46). *The Merchant of Venice*, a play whose treatment of time has not often been chronicled by critics, expands greatly upon the idea of mastery over and manipulation of time. The play, especially in the figure of Portia, presents the idea that time can be manipulated through hope, itself a controllable and sometimes deleterious force. Time and hope both become commodified as the goods ultimately traded in Venice and Belmont.

The commodification of time, or what Sylvan Barnet called "the monstrous (to medieval and some Renaissance minds) conception that time can be sold." becomes more readily accepted only as the Renaissance progresses. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the introduction to England in 1566, by Queen Elizabeth herself, of the first government-run lottery. In *The Selling of Hope*, Clotfelter and Cook observe that "opposition to lotteries has been based on two arguments: gambling is morally wrong, and lotteries have harmful effects." Indeed, Chaucer's Parson remarks in *The Canterbury Tales*, "Now comth hasardrie with his apurtenaunces, as tables and raffles [a game played with three dice, not the current sense of raffle], of which comth deceite,
false othes, chidynges, and alle ravynes, blaspheymyng and reneïynge of God, and hate of
his neigbore, wast of goodes, mysspendynge of tyme, and sometyme manslaughtre." 5
(Of course, Chaucer's Pardoner also forbids gambling: "Hasard is verray mooder of
lesynges, And of deceite, and cursed forswerynges, / Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughtre,
and wast also / Of catel and tyme" [VI.591].) Perhaps these notions of "wasting" time
lent themselves to the construction of time less as an abstract matrix of events than an
objectified entity. For writers of the Renaissance, "harmful" effects of the lottery include
the often ambivalent force of control. A work of 1577, Treatise Against Dicing,
Dancing, Plays, and Interludes, summarizes a pervasive view on lots: "The lot is one of
the principall witnesses of Gods power . . . and therefore we maye not use lots so
triflinglie, as it were to tempt God, . . . but onely in matters of great importance, . . . as in
dividing goodes and choosing magistrates,. . . and not in sleyght things, as thoughe wee
woulde make God servant to our pastymes and sportes." 6 The subservience of time was
of equal interest to writers of the period. Shakespeare seizes upon the implications of
such controlling of time in The Merchant of Venice, using the scenes of the three caskets
to embody his own form of lottery. 7 And as Shylock himself will point out, the
characters trifle not God, as the Treatise Against Dicing might fear; instead, he says, "We
trifle time" (IV.i.294).
History of the Lottery

Ashton reports that "dice for the casting of lots have been found belonging to the Egyptians and Assyrians, in the tombs of prehistoric man, [and] were used alike by the refined Greeks and Romans, and by the barbarous northmen" (p. 2). Biblical allusions are among the earliest and most quoted references to lots. Solomon recommended lots to decide disputes: "The lot causeth contentions to cease, and maketh a particion between the mightie." In Numbers 26.55-56, one finds the suggestion, "the land shall be devided by lot . . . . According to the lot shall the possession thereof be devided betwene manie & fewe." Matthias, one of the apostles, was chosen by lot (Acts 1.26). And there are the famous casting of lots by the soldiers for Christ's garments and by Jonah's shipmates to seek the reason for a storm. The etymology of "lottery" itself appears northern European: Anglo-Saxon "Hlot" as opposed to Latin "Sors." But the Romans were nevertheless renowned for their various incorporations of the lottery for both entertainment and politics. During Saturnalia they presented Apophoreta, gifts presented by lot to guests at the table. Heliogobalus, at a banquet, supposedly presented one guest with a ticket for a gold vase and another for six flies. (Other booty included ten bears, ten pounds of gold, and ten ostriches; a thousand pounds or a dead dog.) Election by lot was a common practice in both Greece and Rome. Herodotus discusses the Greek king, Atys, who cast lots to determine the portions to be meted out during famine. And in the Iliad, Zeus,
Poseidon, and Hades divide up their portions of the cosmos through lot; later, there is the shaking of lots in the Helmet of Achilles. Cicero, for one, decried the casting of lots: "The whole scheme of divination by lots was fraudulently contrived from mercenary motives, or as a means of encouraging superstition and error." Despite his protestations, lots retained their popularity throughout the Middle Ages: in *The Canterbury Tales*, for instance, lots help determine the order of tale-telling.

The antiquity of the lot differs significantly from the relatively recent appearance of the lottery, however. The first probably took place in the Middle Ages in Italy. "The first lottery offering prizes of money was held in Florence in 1530, with proceeds going to the state," and so the Belmontian/Venetian setting of Shakespeare's play suits the appearance of the caskets and Portia's own lottery. The Italians brought lotteries to France in 1533, though they seem not to have been imported into England until 1566, and Queen Elizabeth's drawing of 1569. (Private and illegal lotteries did exist prior to Elizabeth's government-run lottery.) Interestingly, Ashton purports that "Venetian and Genoese merchants made use of the lottery as a vehicle whereby to dispose of their stale goods, or to get rid of a valuable thing for which they could not obtain a purchaser." Portia's father would not fit snugly into this coterie of mongers, though Portia is neither a stale good nor without her share of "purchasers." Bassanio remarks that "her sunny locks / Hang on her temples like a golden fleece, /... And many Jasons come in quest of her"
(L.i.170-72).\textsuperscript{15} (A sentiment that also echoes Marlowe's \textit{Jew of Malta}, an influence elsewhere on \textit{The Merchant of Venice}, as well: Ithamore croons to his mistress, "We will leave this paltry land / And sail from hence to Greece, to lovely Greece. / I'll be thy Jason, thou my golden fleece" [IV.ii.88-90].)\textsuperscript{16} Ezell additionally claims, "Venice went even further and created a government monopoly in lotteries which yielded considerable revenue."\textsuperscript{17}

The "considerable revenues" generated by European governments spurred on England to keep pace. The lottery of Elizabeth survives in a single record, here partly transcribed:

A verie rich Lotterie Generall, without any blancks, contayning a number of good prices, as wel of redy money as of plate, and certaine sorts of merchaundizes, having ben valued and priced by the comaundment of the Queene's most excellent majestie, by men expert and skilfull; and the same Lotterie is erected by her majesties order, to the intent that such commoditie as may chaunce to arise thereof, after the charges borne, may be converted towards the reparation of the havens and strength of the Realme, and towards such other publique good workes. The number of lots shall be foure hundreth thousand, and no more; and ever lot shall be the summe of tenne shillings sterleng onely, and no more. . . . Whoever shall winne the greatest and most excellent price, shall receive the value of five thousande pounds sterleng, that is to say, three thousande pounds in ready money, seven hundred pounds in plate gilte and white, and the rest in good tapisserie meete for hangings, and other covertures, and certain sortes of good linen cloth.\textsuperscript{18}

A host of other prizes existed, and each and every "adventurer" would receive no less than two shillings. One of the more notable aspects of this lottery was the anonymity of the entrants: "the competitors are only known by their mottoes, so every subscriber to this
lottery was to use a devise or posie" (Ashton, p. 17). One surviving "posie" reads in part,
"happie wee that haue, a Princesse so inclin'ide, / That when as iustice drawes hir sworde, hath mercie in her minde, / And to declare the same, how prone shee is to save" (quoted in Ashton, p. 18). Others included "I am a pore maiden and faine would marry, / And the lacke of goods is the cause that I tarry" (she lost nearly eight shillings), and "Although I can not wel see, / Yet will I venture in the Lottery" (he lost the same). Not everyone felt Fortune to be as blind as the last entrant. The threat of control, in this case fixing the outcome, was clearly a pervasive one, and provided perhaps the most residual sentiments regarding this first lottery.¹⁹

The scheme of anonymity was of primary disconcert to the populace, and so the Lord Mayor of London supplemented the Queen's proclamation with the following assurance: "Nowe to avoyde certaine doubtes since the publication of the sayde Lotterie . . . [the Lord Mayor etc.] doe signifie and declare to all people . . . [that] every person shal be duly answered accordyng to the tenour of hir highnesse sayd proclamation" (quoted in Ashton, p. 20). Indeed, the Lord Mayor's support kindled little fire in the people, and Elizabeth was forced to postpone the drawing for an entire year, ostensibly for reasons as various as, "the principal persons that were appointed to be the treasurers for the money that should be gathered . . . had not received their instructions and charge in due time . . . by reason that they were dead aboute the time of nomination" (quoted in Ashton, p. 21).
Truly, the lottery raised novel problems for the government, but when the drawing was eventually held, over a period of some five months, the Queen had won the monies she had hoped to procure.

The plaintive posies of the entrants mark well the grounds upon which they felt deserving. Hope in multiple manifestations became the *primum mobile* for the lottery's success. The idea that hope could be marketed in such a way was unique: the strategies of modern lotteries, with such testimonials as "I walk the streets of paradise / Just like the fella on 'Miami Vice'." fructify the seeds planted by the lottery of 1569. For instance, the earlier posie presents a woman who hopes to be married, but lacks the wealth to warrant a proposal. The lottery for the first time engendered the possibility of transcending these social and economic limitations, and with material neither from divinity nor the self, but from an institution. The lottery created buyable and sellable luck, manufactured it even. Recent psychologists of the lottery suggest that the human mind is incapable of grasping the absurd prospect of a lottery in which forty thousand chances were offered. (Modern lotteries, of course, are often ridiculously higher.) The citizenry grumbled about the fairness of the lottery, the shadowy obscurity of the winners, despite the gargantuan unfairness of the odds in the first place. But more than any other function, the lottery concretized hope. I quote the essayist Charles Lamb, who made the same observation some one-hundred and seventy years ago: "Which of us has not
converted his ticket, or even his sixteenth share of one, into a nest-egg of Hope, upon which he has sate brooding in the secret roosting-places of his heart, and hatched it into a thousand fantastical apparitions?"^21 Hope, for better or worse, becomes the sole cynosure of reality.

**Time and Hope in Shakespeare**

Many writers, critics, and psychologists are perhaps overly quick to adduce a theologically-influenced definition of hope, namely that it is a life-sustaining "emotion of elation."^22 However, as Godfrey helps to make clear in *A Philosophy of Human Hope*, "Some hope is harmful and some not; some is curse and some is blessing."^23 This is a fundamental and often neglected point: hope can be just as enervating as sustaining. Shakespeare was certainly aware of this former element of hope. In *The Rape of Lucrece*, for "Those that much covet" he concludes that "by hoping more they have but less" (lines 134, 137). And in *Measure for Measure*, a dialogue between Claudio, jailed and condemned to die, and the Duke Vincentio, disguised as a friar, puts the matter succinctly. "The miserable have no other medicine," declares Claudio, "But only hope: / I have hope to live, and am prepar'd to die" (III.i.3-4). The Duke responds, "Be absolute for death: either death or life / Shall thereby be the sweeter" (III.i.5-6). The Duke consoles Claudio by urging him rather away from hope; he employs a similar stratagem later with Claudio's sister, Isabella, remarking, "Do not satisfy your resolution with hopes
that are fallible" (III.i.168-9). The "that" here, in the wake of his just having effaced the concept in Claudio, suggests not particular hopes, which are fallible, but hope in general. Reliance on hope generates fallibility in virtually every character in Measure for Measure save perhaps the Duke, who orchestrates the action of the play in a nearly deified manner. These are not, then, the exhortations of Shelley's 19th century Demogorgon, who in Prometheus Unbound delivers his manifesto: "To hope 'til hope create / From its own wreck the thing it contemplates." Instead, the words of Burton in The Anatomy of Melancholy (1620) resound: "Hope and Fear. those two battering Cannons and principal Engines, with their objects, reward and punishment . . . now more than ever tyrannise."24 Hope paralyzes, and occasionally tyrannizes, partly because it partakes of time, as Shakespeare elsewhere demonstrates. Its poles, in The Merchant of Venice, are often Burton's "reward and punishment." For reading this play, then, a second point of Godfrey's is also helpful: he observes that "the context of hoping is essentially the future."25 Future-gazing, speculation, is a critical underpinning of The Merchant of Venice. The precise relationship between such speculation, hope, and time, and the manner in which each is used as an instrument to control another, in addition to the ways in which each is objectified for the purpose of debasement, can be glossed through a condensed survey of other junctures of time and hope in Shakespeare's work.

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116

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Shakespeare observes a relationship between temporality and hope throughout his poetry and plays. *The Merchant of Venice* is only the most realized endeavor. In *All's Well That Ends Well*, Lord Lafew analyzes the convalescence of his king by noting that "he hath abandon'd his physicians... under whose practices he hath persecuted time with hope, and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time" (I.i.13-6). Lafew here restates a notion directly relevant to *The Merchant*: pure hope itself can paralyze. When one lives distinctly in the future, the present becomes a time of inaction. Thus hope and time are closely entwined, like serpents on a caduceus. So Arragon's invocation, "fortune to my heart's hope" (II.9.20), does nothing but misdirect his thinking from the task at hand. Too much reliance on hope makes one susceptible, as well, to subterfuge. If the subtleties of manipulation are benevolent, as with Portia and Bassanio, then all may be well. But more often, hope and the hopeful are equally maligne. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus duplicitously urges Valentine to use hope as a crutch—"Hope is lover's staff" (III.i.248)—and to believe that "Time is the nurse and breeder of all good" (245). The Queen in *Richard II* might call such urgings "cozening hope" (II.ii.69), or hope that falsifies. For if Lady Macbeth can advise her husband, "To beguile the time, look like the time" (I.v.63-4), Valentine can similarly accuse Proteus in the last Act of *The Two Gentlemen*, "treacherous man, / Thou hast beguil'd my hopes" (V.iv.63-4). Both time and hope can be abused and manipulated.
The words of Lafew serve additionally as yet another instance of time's subordination: the persecution of time by hope includes the wasting of present time. The loss of all hope Dante addresses to denizens of hell, who dwell in a timeless, eternal state; for Shakespeare, time itself is instrumental in diminishing hope, as hope effects a loss of time.

The hope commodified in Elizabeth's lottery finds expression in Shakespeare's writings, as well. The speaker in Sonnet 29 wishes himself "like to one more rich in hope" (line 5), as if hope were in effect a coin that one could amass. The speaker ultimately exposes the superficiality of such designs when he concludes, "thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings / That then I scorn to change my state with kings" (13-4).²⁶ The hope represented by the lottery, and hope represented by love—perhaps the profane and sacred sides of the same coin—impart decidedly different implications.²⁷ These implications continue in The Merchant of Venice, especially in the interweavings of Portia and Shylock. They contest for control in the play, most often by the attempted ruling of hope and the future, and ultimately dissolve the dichotomies of sacred and profane into the application of power over time. In The Merry Wives of Windsor, Falstaff ponders a rendezvous with the object of his attraction after two drastically unsuccessful attempts: "This is the third time; I hope good luck lies in odd numbers. . . . They say there is divinity in odd numbers, either in nativity, chance, or death" (V.i.2-4). This familiar,
"third time is a charm" adage resonates with the triple caskets in *The Merchant of Venice*. For in this play (though unhappily for Falstaff, not quite in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*), divinity does reside in odd numbers. But it is a divinity ultimately at once cherished and displaced by Portia, who controls the action of the play much as Fortuna controls the fates, or Elizabeth her lottery.

"Time's Best Jewel": *The Merchant of Venice*

Stanley Kozikowski suggests that in *The Merchant of Venice*, "the lotteries seem to bear no obvious thematic relationship to the values of justice and mercy which serve to unify the play for many readers." However, while Kozikowski offers his own allegorical solution to the lottery, the caskets are more properly seen through the idea of hope, its commodification, and its teleological relationship to time. (Time and fortune were often iconographically related: an early Spanish copperplate (c. 1454) is entitled *Time Turning Fortune's Wheel*.) The theme of usury, so rampant in the play, can be comparably described and recall Higgins' remarks on the "selling of time," which rightly belongs only to God. Indeed, most studies of time in *The Merchant of Venice*, and there have been surprisingly few, concentrate on usury to the exclusion of other expressions. Shakespeare was certainly cognizant of the buying and selling of time itself; in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Ford offers, "There is money, spend it... spend all I have; only give me so much of your time in exchange of it" (II.ii.231–4). But for Shakespeare, the
past, present, and future each partakes of time in a different fashion, and each is liable to be controlled in its own particular manner. Those human drives that gaze upon the future—especially hope and fear—enable the sort of objectification represented in the lottery.

The lottery instituted by Elizabeth garnered an element of tribute later in her reign, a 1602 court entertainment by Sir John Davies entitled "A Lottery." In The Merchant of Venice, the figure of Portia somewhat anticipates the role of the Queen in Davies' work, in addition to reflecting the role of Elizabeth some thirty-five years earlier.12 "A Lottery" consists of thirty-four couplets, each bearing an inscription of particular relevance (by design) to whomever selected it. Elizabeth's, the first to be drawn, reads "Fortune now no more on triumph ride, / The wheeles are yours that did her chariot ride."33 Like Portia, Elizabeth displaces Fortune as controller of events. However, Shakespeare creates a more subtle relation between the lottery and its presiding power: as in the court entertainment, and the insinuations regarding the lottery of 1569, the casket scenes are "fixed." However, they are governed by (and are reifications of) hope's relation to time. Portia's deceased father, in "the lottery that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead" (I.ii.28-30), attempts to control time and fortune both. And indeed, the lottery is repeatedly associated with images of control. But as Portia says, with irony that recalls Davies' chanceless "lottery," "The lottery of my
destiny / Bars me the right of voluntary choosing" (II.i.15-6). With perhaps technique
learned from her father. Portia will later remark, "I speak too long; but 'tis to peise
[retard] the time, / To eke it and to draw it out in length" (III.ii.22-3). If Auden is correct
in making the analogy, "Belmont . . . is like one of those enchanted palaces where time
stands still," it is because of Portia's power to "peise." Her control of time surpasses that
of her father, and in fact that of any other character in the play. Her only real adversary,
Shylock with his usurious notions of bartering time, eventually yields to Portia's
systematic domination. And so when Bassanio finally "chooses" the right casket to win
Portia, he might triumphantly quote Shakespeare's sonnet 65, "Shall Time's best jewel
from Time's chest lie hid?" (I.10).

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The first scene of the Merchant of Venice anticipates the exploration of hope and
time throughout later Acts, and offers several instances where these forces are
concretized. Salerio remarks that Antonio's "mind is tossing on the ocean, / . . . where
your argosies with portly sail / . . . Do overpeer the petty traffickers" (I.i.8-12).
Montaigne writes that "We are never in ourselves, but beyond. Fear, desire, and hope
draw us ever towards that which is to come, and remove our sense and consideration
from that which is." Salerio and Solanio diagnose a similar condition in Antonio's
melancholy; in voyaging beyond himself, Antonio has lost control over time. Rather, that
which is to come—Antonio's own hope and fear—control him. Indeed, Solanio attempts to mollify the symptoms when he adds, "Believe me sir, had I such venture forth, / The better part of my affections would / Be with my hopes abroad" (I.i.15-17). And Salerio makes an important connection between the ships and the idea of time: "I should not see the sandy hour-glass run / But I should think of shallows and of flats" (I.i.25). The sands of time both conjure and assail the objects of hope: so Antonio's friends see it, at any rate. The ships at sea are Antonio's hopes concretized. They are not, however, the sole object of his hopes. As Antonio clarifies, he is not "sad to think upon his merchandise" (I.i.40). He is struck with a Burton-style melancholy that mixes "reward and punishment," nostalgia and apprehension, derived probably from his affections for Bassanio. When Solanio swears "by two-headed Janus" (I.i.50), one editor argues that this deity is "an appropriate god to swear by; one of his faces was smiling, the other frowning." But more appropriate than such ambivalence is the gaze of Janus itself: one face peering into the future, the other casting back into the past. In fact, Janus was an ancient incarnation of Father Time, an extension of Saturn/Chronus, an icon Shakespeare will toy with shortly in the play. The significance of this reference grows when one considers that Janus is invoked in only one other instance (by the duplicitous Iago) in the Shakespeare canon. Like Janus, Antonio is "never in himself, but beyond." This inherent tension in his character, pulled forward and back, parallels the near tug-of-war played between
Bassanio and Shylock over Antonio, each of whom seeks to influence and even control him, whether benevolently or malevolently. And attempts to control Antonio involve directly the use of time as an instrument for effecting such control.39

Ideas related to the lottery appear in two images in the scene. First, Antonio's comments about his fortunes bespeak a confidence, even a "fixing," in his hazardry: "My ventures are not in one bottom trusted, / Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate / Upon the fortune of this present year" (I.i.42-4). Antonio believes he has covered his bets. His assets are diversified in place as well as time. Notably, his fortune exists not in "this present year," but at some future point. Antonio's happiness and fortunes are always thus deferred as he lives not in himself but beyond. He believes himself to be in control of time, in control of his hopes; actually, his utter lack of control of his present prefigures the hazardous outcome of his merchant fleet. The second image appears when Bassanio describes the words of Gratiano, "an infinite deal of nothing," as like "two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search" (I.i.114-18). This needle-in-the-haystack metaphor suggests a kind of lottery in which winning tickets—the substance of value in what Gratiano says—are hidden by useless "blanks." The preponderance of the odds and the paucity of the reward here create a sort of anti-lottery, in which "winning" (i.e. discovering Gratiano's sense) really means "losing" (i.e. laboring and hoping all day for
nothing.) One spins the barrel, draws the winning ticket amidst an infinite deal of blank nothings, and gets the equivalent of a simple knock on the head. (This inversion of the lottery's rewards might be compared with Shirley Jackson's tale—more dismal, if by now overexposed.) The two images—ships and grain—are connected in that each expresses a lottery without a favorable outcome. In this way, they add counterpoint to the eventual success of Bassanio; moreover, they insist on an emptiness in expectation. The future seems to hold little of value, a notion those who are lost in time—here Antonio—fail to recognize.

The polarities of the play are nowhere more expressly stated than in the last speech of this first scene. Antonio crystallizes many of the play's concerns when he tells Bassanio, "Thou know'st all my fortunes are at sea" (an alteration of his previous assurance that he has not put his "whole estate upon the fortune of this present year"), "Neither have I money, nor commodity / To raise the present sum, therefore go forth / Try what my credit can in Venice do" (I.i.177-80). The commodification of hope unravels here and then is respun into a similar abstraction, perhaps fear. Antonio's naval commodities are now admitted to be outside his control. But he has become the embodiment of Bassanio's hope, now, and seeks to cash in his own hope Bassanio's sake. This trade will fittingly manifest itself in his own physicality, as Shylock will make overt; Antonio is hope incarnate, quite literally. So seizing upon this retranslation of Antonio
as hope, and warping hope into fear and anxiety, is Shylock—a type of Rumplestiltskin, spinning not straw into gold but the hope of gold into a pound of flesh. (Or as Mistress Ford plots for Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, "How shall I be reveng'd on him? I think the best way were to entertain him with hope" [II.i.66-7].) Shylock translates and refashions time's commodification. The importance of the bond, for him, is the commodification of Antonio, the figure of hope for Bassanio. He alters the condition of Bassanio's hope (Antonio's very person) even as the tumultuous seas wrack the hopes of Antonio (his argosies).

Shylock calculates the exchange as "Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio bound" (I.iii.9). The interrelations of time and commodity appear prominently in Shylock's equation. Not merely the amount of ducats are critical, but the time of repayment, as well. He knows all along that this future time of three months will torture Antonio much more than an instant of humiliation could ever aspire to. Similar equations lead some critics to propose that in *The Merchant of Venice*, "reification has reached a point where not only are people measured by their ships, lands, or ducats, but their proposed death is balanced against the recovery of material possessions (Shylock-Jessica) or time forfeit (Shylock-Antonio)."^ While Shylock's usury is his most obvious control of time, his sly forgetfulness of time—"I had forgot, three months" (I.iii.61) feigns a lack of control, and is intended perhaps to lull Antonio and Bassanio...
into greater confidence. In further contrast to Antonio, who has lost control, Shylock's adept manipulation recalls that of Marlowe's Barabas when he "casts with cunning for the time to come" (*Jew of Malta* l.ii.223). Thus W. H. Auden is only partly correct when he writes of the play, "the social conception of time . . . in a mercantile society . . . is conceived of as unilinear forward movement in which the future is always novel and unpredictable."{41} For Shylock, as for Portia, time can be mastered; those characters who can voyage beyond themselves and return to the present moment of action control the play.

\* \* \*

The ensuing scene between Launcelot and old Gobbo resonates vibrantly with the lottery/casket scenes, scoring in a minor key what Shakespeare later plays in a major.{42} Launcelot twice invokes Fortune as a woman (the nature of Fortuna is addressed throughout the play). Launcelot ponders "if Fortune be a woman" (II.ii.159), and the answer to his query arrives in the figure of Portia. But earlier he also makes an interesting invocation: in hyperbolic fashion, Launcelot tells his father that "according to Fates and Destinies, and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three, and such branches of learning . . . [Master Launcelot] is deceased" (II.ii.58-61). The reference to the Sisters Three as the manifestations of the fates powerfully implicates Portia as a controller of man's destinies. In Freud's essay "The Theme of the Three Caskets," the caskets
represent a tradition of "three sisters. . . . They are the Fates, the Moerae, the Parcae or the Norns." Inexplicably, Freud nowhere cites Launcelot's mention of the Sisters Three. He does, however, make an invaluable connection to the theme of time, for the "sister goddesses probably came about on the basis of other divine figures to which the Moerae were closely related—the Graces and the Horae . . . [who in Graeco-Roman times] retained their relation to time. Later they presided over the times of day, as they did at first over the times of the year." That Shakespeare's lottery of caskets should express the residue of time control is absolutely in line with the broader patterns of the play.

The three sisters were often depicted as blind, at least in a purely physical sense. Shakespeare comically reinterprets this in the figure of Gobbo. Old Gobbo claims that he is "sand-blind," and cannot distinguish Launcelot, his own son. Most editors annotate Gobbo's condition of "sand-blind" as, idiomatically, "partly blind." Launcelot himself coins the condition's intensification—"gravel blind"—but one should be reminded here of Salerio's comments one act earlier: "I should not see the sandy hour-glass run." Just as Salerio is blind to the sands of time, Gobbo too is sand-blind, even as his deified analogues, the Sisters Three, were so portrayed. Shakespeare, in fact, plays much with Old Gobbo as a decrepit Father Time. As in A Comedy of Errors, in which Dromio of Syracuse derides Father Time and his "plain bald pate" (II.ii.69-70), and in King John, in which Philip the Bastard calls upon "Old Time the clock-setter, that bald sexton Time"
(III.i.324), Old Gobbo here is aspersed. Such enfeeblement is reminiscent of Spenser's Father Time in *The Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*. When Launcelot says that "truth will come to light, murder cannot be hid long, a man's son may, but in the end truth will out" (II.ii.75-77), a Renaissance audience would immediately recall that the progenitor of such "Truth" was Time (*filia veritas tempons*). Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* demonstrates the currency of the thought: "The heavens are just, murder cannot be hid: / Time is the author of both truth and right, / And time will bring this treachery to light." But Launcelot's verbal acrobatics make such claims ironic. Gobbo may be Father Time, but he is Time "sand-blind," and his offspring is not Truth but Deception. Launcelot has toyed with the old man throughout the scene, relating his own death and offering his long hair as evidence of a beard. The latter jibe inverts the common Renaissance icon of Occasion with her lock: Gobbo blindly tugs upon Launcelot's hair, fuller "than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail" (II.ii.90-1). Launcelot's response, that "Dobbin's tail grows backward" (II.ii.93), continues the play on inversion here. (And not unlike the horse of Adonis, Launcelot here is "controlling what he was controlled with" [*Venus and Adonis*, line 270]—not his "iron bit," but his comic relations to time.) The scene might even be staged to contrast the hirsute Launcelot with a "bald pated" father. While the clown is later accused by Lorenzo of "quarreling with occasion," the travesty of squabbling really begins with his own father, himself a feeble caricature of a force under much assault in
the play. Launcelot's dangling hair, and old Gobbo's fumbling grope of the hair/beard/tail, mocks that metaphor important both in this play and in its Marlovian antecedent, *The Jew of Malta*. Occasion, with dangling forelock, appears in both: Antonio says "embrace th'occasion to depart" (I.i.64) and Barabas says that "Occasion's bald behind" (V.ii.45). Postulations not only of time but also of the abuse and manipulation of time abound in this scene. The ideas appear on a greater scale in the lottery scenes, where the idea of blindness to one's Fate is evinced by the closed caskets. The idea of blindness by one's Fate is appropriately burlesqued by Old Gobbo.

Launcelot's final revelation of truth is similarly imbued with significance to time:

"I am Launcelot your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be" (II.ii.81-2). Like the riddle of the Theban sphinx, the clown's assessment spans the past, present, and future. But even here, Launcelot inverts and plays with the traditions of time, placing the child in old age. While on one level yet another jab at Gobbo—the witticism evokes the idea of a second childhood in old age—the phrasing perpetuates the undermining of time's authority in the scene. When Wordsworth wrote "the child is father of the man," he captured something of the essence of this scene with Launcelot Gobbo. In modern iconography, the figure of Father Time has been joined, and often displaced, by the cherubic child—the "Baby New Year." Paralleling the change, Macey relates that in England between 1875 and 1885, "benevolent gift-giving Father Christmas" was replaced

129

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on cards by "titillatingly naked children." Launcelot posits himself in the ancestry of such figures—both the youth that will replace his own father (and old age itself), and the embodiment of time's usurper. His final question in the scene, whether "Fortune be a woman" (II.i.166), is answered later in the figure of Portia.

* * *

The casket scenes develop fully the idea of the lottery and the control of time. When Gratiano attempts to cheer Antonio in the first scene, he says, "You have too much respect for the world: / They lose it that do buy it with much care" (I.i.74-5). Nerissa echoes this when she suggests to Portia, world-weary like Antonio, that "they are sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing" (I.i.5-6). Portia's dejection stems from an explicit lack of control, in her case over the lottery and consequently over her future. She laments, "O me the word 'choose'! I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike, so is the will of a living daughter curb'd by the will of a dead father" (I.i.22-5). Anticipating the inverted exchange between the "dead" son, Launcelot, and the buffoonish father, Gobbo, an abstract and somewhat phantasmal father-figure here controls time in a way that the parody of Father Time in Act II will only hint at. (Old Gobbo's "basket" is also a tantalizing analogue to the "caskets" of Portia's father.) This summary of Portia's plight is immediately recast by Nerissa to refer to the caskets. The lottery is the centerpiece for temporal control. "The lott'ry that he
hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead," she replies, "will no doubt
never be chosen by any rightly, but one who you shall rightly love" (I.ii.28-32). Portia
implies here that she has no choice, Nerissa that choice is always subject to destiny, fate,
and true-love anyway. Expressly, temporum filia veritas, the daughter and handmaiden
of time is truth. In the ensuing litany of unsuitable suitors—from the coltish Neapolitan
prince and dour County Palatine to the drunken German nobleman—none contradicts
Nerissa's prediction. When she concludes that the suitors have conceded defeat, "unless
you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition," the play on words with
"sort" underscores the very premise of the lottery. Meaning both simply "manner" and
"casting of lots" (as in Troilus and Cressida, I.iii.376), "sort" here prepares the reader for
both random chance and the possibility of "other sorts"—perhaps those controlled by the
hand of Fortuna. Despite Portia's assertion, "If I live to be old as Sibylla, I will die chaste
as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will" (I.ii.102-04), her
behavior in the later casket scenes complicates the extent to which she adheres explicitly
to her father's will. She will demonstrate early on the slipperiness of rhetoric and
semantics so evident in the trial scene. For just as she offers Shylock "justice more than
thou desir'st" (IV.i.312), she will treat Bassanio to a "surfeit" of her father's will: not
chance alone, but destiny.
Portia's evocation of Sibylla is an important allusion at this point, and it is odd that critics have not made more of it. Most commentators note that the word signifies, generally, a prophetess. Coupled with the longevity of the Sibyl at Cumae, the oracular attribute mirrors Portia's own characterizations. Like the famed Sibyl, Portia might live out as many years as grains of sand on a beach, and still not be happy without compliance to her father's will. (Sibyl's plea in Petronius's Satyricon, made famous as Eliot's epigraph to The Waste Land, is for death, an end to her interminable years, for while she was granted by the gods near immortality, she was not favored with everlasting youth.)

The role of time in this allusion is apparent: perhaps no concept renders time more subservient than that of immortality. But the role of the Sibyl as prophetess has not been sufficiently explicated in relation to Portia. That Portia should be able to see into the future, and act upon such divination, immediately places her with Shylock (and Barabas) as individuals able to wield some control over time. For while the role of seer does not necessarily impart the ability to change the future, this is less important to those figures than the subjugation of time as a metaphysical abstraction. One uses the future to change the present, in the same way that the lottery's commodification of hope, of future time, allowed Elizabeth and others to accumulate wealth in the present. Moreover, the Sibyls' method of augury bears relevance to Portia and the caskets. Sequestered in a cave, the Sibyl inscribed names and destinies upon leaves, which occasionally flew about.
haphazardly upon a rush of wind. In another legend, the Sibyl approached Tarquin first with nine books for sale, then six, and finally three books, which he finally purchased. They were kept in a stone chest, and were supposed to contain the destinies of the Roman state. Sibyl also guides Aeneas through the underworld in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Portia's own guiding hand seems more prominent when one recalls Sibyl's frequent advice to Aeneas, and the suggestive song that overlays Bassanio's later deliberations.

Before Bassanio chooses, however, Portia entertains the princes of Morocco and Arragon. A pun not noticed by many editors of the play begins Morocco's inclusion in the realm of chance as controlled by Portia. At their first meeting, he relates, "If Hercules and Lichas play at dice / Which is the better man, the greater throw / May turn by fortune from the weaker hand: . . . And so may I . . . die with grieving" (II.i.32-38). The Moor's fate is indeed in a "weaker hand," and he might not only perish with grief. Rather, his very involvement in the game will bring grief—he will "die" and "die" together. The inscriptions on the three caskets confront the Moor immediately: the "first of gold . . . bears, / 'Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire'"; the "second silver. . . carries, / 'Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves'"; and the third, "dull lead, . . . "Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath" (II.vii.4-9). These meditations of Morocco and Arragon have been much debated. The first episode provides several moments that contribute to the idea of time and control. Notably, Portia
finishes the scene with a couplet in stark contrast to the idea of the gold casket. Morocco seems to choose upon outward display, as the scroll scolds him: "All that glisters is not gold, / Often have you heard that told-- / Many a man his life hath sold / But my outside to behold,— / Gilded tombs do worms infold" (II.vi.65-69). Yet Portia twice remarks on the suitor's complexion, an insistent countercurrent that suggests Portia may not wholly observe her father's values. Her first such reference—"if he had the condition of a saint, and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me"
(I.ii.123-25)—controverts the gold casket's diatribe against superficiality. A more subtle equivocation to Morocco—"Your self... stood as fair / As any comor I have look'd on yet" (in other words, not fair at all)—reiterates the superficiality of the first. One might hardly wonder that the Moor falls into the judgment he does: Portia has not given any indication that she upholds values to the contrary. And as she tells Bassanio, she possesses the ability to "teach you/ How to choose right" (III.ii.10-11). She must also possess the ability to teach how not to. Indeed, were it not for the fact that two of Portia's comments are spoken outside the presence of the Moor, the assumption could easily be made that she intentionally misleads, or at least fosters error in, Morocco. But such overt sabotage would contradict both the power of the lottery and Portia's character. Rather, Shakespeare depicts Portia's own persuasive powers as neither overtly antagonistic nor, in exact terms of her father's strictures, illegal. Her curious later feigning in the
courtroom as not to know "which the merchant, which the jew," perhaps serves the same purpose as Shylock's supposed forgetfulness of the time for the bond. An ostensible lack of savoir faire in distinguishing outward show from inner worth belies a shrewd perception, one that she and Shakespeare both toy with in the scenes with Morocco.

Portia almost certainly knows the contents of the caskets beforehand. Although no prior suitors are mentioned as having taken the chance, there is first no reason to assume she would not know. Anticipating later manipulation of the caskets, she suggests that Nerissa "set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket" (I.ii.91-2), implying some apprehension of their contents. Also, her comment regarding the Neapolitan prince and County Palatine, "I had rather be married to a death's head with a bone in his mouth" (I.ii.49-50), evokes too nearly the contents of the golden casket to be mere coincidence. Morocco discovers, of course, "A carrion death, within whose empty eye / There is a written scroll" (II.vii.63-4). Thus Portia's initial comment is truly incisive: she would rather fail her very own test, losing all power and living in absolute sterility, than marry those beaux. Her foreknowledge, again emphasizing her Sibylline prescience, suggests the possibility that she can subtly manipulate the results of the casket trials as a derivation of her control over and insight into time itself. And it should be noted here that in one of Shakespeare's few other references to lotteries, in Troilus and
Cressida, the results are also fixed. Cunning Ulysses tells Nestor to "make a lot't'ry, / And
by device let blockish Ajax draw / The sort to fight with Hector" (I.iii.373-5).

The Prince of Arragon similarly fails, and with as much help from Portia as the
Moor has received. Unlike his immediate predecessor, Arragon is deceived by inward
merit. He correctly bypasses the gold casket, and "the fool multitude that choose by
show" (II.ix.26), but he misperceives his "desert" through his own lofty pomposity. The
prince chooses the silver casket, by which he hopes "to cozen Fortune" (II.ix.38). If
narcissism is part of Arragon's failing, as the phrase "Some there be that shadows kiss"
(II.ix.66) implies, then his hopes to cozen Fortune evince the same fault. He does not
realize his mistake, but in trying to outmaneuver Fortune, he instead outmaneuvers
Fortune's surrogate, Portia, and loses her in the process. Her terse comments to him
before he selects, "To these injunctions every one doth swear / That comes to hazard for
my worthless self" (II.ix.17-8), aid Arragon in his error. Her stress on Arragon's place
among the multitudes—every one swears the same injunctions—is particularly caustic to
his pursuivant manner of thinking. "I will not jump with common spirits," he boasts, "And
rank me with barbarous multitudes" (II.ix.32-3). To avoid the baseness of the multitudes,
he avoids lead by simple and dismissive logic, and also gold, with some transposition:
everyone would foolishly choose gold, so not Arragon. With a brief appeal to Arragon's
pride, Portia spins the wheels of his mind enough to spin the wheel of fortune as well.
To Portia, he is but a "deliberate fool" (II.ix.80). In his own words, he makes the important comment, and one that will recur in the trial scene, "How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!" (II.ix.57). Cozening hope has tripped up Arragon, even as Portia continually reasserts her governance over that same hope by mastering time—moving flawlessly beyond and back to the present—and so controls time, hope, and fate alike.

During the final lottery scene with Bassanio, Portia's control over time reaches its apogee. The scene begins with Portia wishing to Bassanio, "I pray you tarry, pause a day or two / Before you hazard" (III.ii.1-2). Shortly, she amplifies this request: "I would detain you here some month or two / Before you venture for me" (III.ii.9-10). Finally, in the same speech, she concludes, "O these naughty times / Put bars between the owners and their rights! Let Fortune go to hell for it, not I. / I speak too long, but 'tis to peise the time, / To eche it, and to draw it out in length, / To stay you from the election" (III.ii.18-24). The evolution in these lines is remarkable. Portia begins humbly enough—delay Bassanio a day or two—but ends by hoping to manipulate time itself, pulling and stretching as if it were salt-water taffy. Gratiano already has professed that "lovers ever run before the clock" (II.vi.4), as Shakespeare elsewhere portrays with greater attention. For instance, in sonnet 51, "Thus can my love excuse the slow offence," the speaker argues that in traveling to tryst with a beloved, "swift extremity can
seem but slow," and that "though mounted on the wind; / In winged speed no motion
shall I know." The expression of Portia's control culminates in the song:

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?

[All.] Reply, reply.

It is engend'red in the eyes,
With gazing fed, and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell.
I'll begin it. Ding, dong, bell.

[All.] Ding, dong, bell.

(III.ii.63-72)

The critical opinions differ widely on this matter of the song's influence, and Portia's
involvement with it; in the words of Donne, uncertain victory is still suspended "'twixt
two equal armies."51 Yet when Bassanio takes the lead, so to speak, there should be little
doubt that he harmonizes his actions with the music.

In the New Arden edition of The Merchant of Venice, Brown gives the following
arguments against the influence of the song in shaping Bassanio's decision.52 First, that
Portia "has said that she will not direct Bassanio," with the words "I could teach you . . .
but then I am forsworn. / So will I never be" (III.ii.10-12). Second, that "she believes the
lottery will find the right husband," as "If you do love me, you will find me out"
(III.ii.41). Third, that the stage direction indicates that "Bassanio comments to himself."
And fourth, that "it would belittle Bassanio and Portia and cheapen the themes of the
play. . . Granville Barker did not think that Shakespeare would use such a 'slim trick'."

As to the initial point, Portia often equivocates, and forsworn to teach nowhere equates with forsworn to hint. And if "to teach" signifies "to love," then has not Portia already overstepped the bounds? For as Nerissa and others continually reiterate, true love will conquer chance. Portia nearly swoons, "One half of me is yours, the other half yours" (III.ii.16) before Bassanio utters a single word. Only a half-hearted parenthesis,

"something tells me (but it is not love) / I would not lose you" (III.ii.4-5) keeps her verbally within the rules. And as to the value of those words, she herself admits, "a maiden hath no tongue, but thought" (III.ii.8). As for Brown's second point, the caskets have been subservient to, and in effect embodiments of, Portia's will from the onset. That the lottery will succeed, and that she might have a role in its success, are not at all mutually exclusive. The third point I find fairly irrelevant: whether Bassanio comments to himself or to Portia's entire train does not preclude the song from importantly shaping those comments. The last matter is more problematic. However, the so-called "themes of the play," as I see them, are only reinforced by Portia's behavior. She is entirely consistent in very delicately molding the outcomes of the lotteries. Further, to "belittle" Bassanio because of service in his behalf contradicts one of the most overt themes of the play: Antonio's bond for Bassanio's sake, and Portia's later eleventh hour appearance to rescue the same Antonio from a fate Bassanio is powerless to curb. The lottery is by its
very nature subservient to love, and that Bassanio has already eloquently professed (he avers that to " 'Confess and love' had been the very sum of my confession" [III.ii.35-6] ). Rather than cheapen their relationship, the love song glorifies it by placing it upon its proper altar (in that word's original sense): high above the vicissitudes of mere time and chance. If this trail of evidence were not enough, Bassanio's last words before making his choice are, "O happy torment, when my torturer [i.e. Portia] / Doth teach me answers for deliverance" (III.ii.37-8). So the song, with its often egregious rhymes on the word "lead"—"bred," "head," even "nourished"—and its urgent appeal to gaze deeper than what the eye might behold, to penetrate the veneer of Fancy, not only consummates Portia's control over time, hope, and fortune, but also her participation in the profundity of love. (And one might wonder, with Hamlet's Player-King, "Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love" [III.ii.203]. "Lead" is apparently in the middle of it all, at any rate.)

No critic has been blunter in assessing Portia's control than A. D. Moody, who writes, "She has transgressed her father's law and forced fortune to serve her will." The impulse to subjugate fortune and time, alike, reverberate with other father-son/daughter configurations in the play. Launcelot and Old Gobbo, as argued earlier, play upon the idea of Father Time as invalid. Waddington astutely perceives that "Old Gobbo is a comic embodiment of that Blind Fortune invoked by Morocco in the preceding scene." The will of fathers, their control over (or equation with) time, is constantly warped by the
will of their progeny. While Launcelot modifies the traditional genealogy of Time as father to truth, saturating his lines to his father with saturnine and deceptive irony, Portia subverts the genealogy altogether. She comes to represent both truth and time, dictating both over the course of the play. Or as Moody puts it, she "reveal[s] a quality . . . more creative and compelling than either law or fortune." Jessica and Shylock provide an intriguing instance of further familial subterfuge. Shakespeare prepares for the abuse of Portia's father as a representation of Father Time in the scene between the Gobbo's. The selection of a leaden casket acquires even greater resonance in light of this icon. Critics have noted that Bassanio's name, possibly from the Greek "basanos," for "touchstone," may have conveyed to a Renaissance audience Bassanio's eventual success. Holmer adds that the theory gains weight because "in this play, Shakespeare's specific use of minerals from the bowels of the earth—the precious metals (gold and silver), the precious stones (diamond and turquoise), and the base metal and stone (lead and touchstone)—fits a pattern of rich symbolism." The nominal connections between "Bassanio" and "base" (a word with which Morocco dismisses the leaden casket) are overt. But Shakespeare would also have known that ponderous lead was the associative stone of Saturn, god of Time. In sonnet 98, the speaker claims even "heavy Saturn laugh'd and leapt" (4), and in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Pirithous speaks of "Cold" and "old Saturn" (V.iv.62). By making the leaden casket Portia's father's choice, he further invigorates the trial with
mythic overtones. And it would be highly appropriate for Portia's mate to continue the lineage of Time with a name that reflected his inheritance.

* * *

In a hypothetical treatment of the lottery as a method of social reform, Barbara Goodwin offers several amendments to Chaucer's Pardoner's litany of the lottery's iniquities. A few are worth noting here, for in a final review of Shakespeare's use of the lottery, several seem also to have been considered (and substantially modified) by him. Goodwin observes that "the lottery neglects human need," "ignore[s] personal merit and desert," "is antithetical to personal freedom, and reduces people's control over their own destiny," "reduces the governor's control over the governed," "circumvents the processes of rational thought and deliberation to which we, as human beings, are committed," and ultimately "undermines human dignity" by creating a "cipher" rather than an "individual." 60 The list is astonishing in the degree to which it is almost entirely inappropriate to the lottery in The Merchant of Venice. In fact, critics have lamented the same failings in Portia's hints and control over the outcome (all decisively against the nature of a "true" lottery): that they create a "cipher" out of Bassanio and "cheapen" the themes of the play. It is remarkable that Goodwin can offer the same objections to an absolutely random lottery. And if Shakespeare wants only to show Bassanio's merit and desert, one might suggest that the lottery would not be the best means. Rather,
Shakespeare fittingly appropriates sentiments over the lottery in England to suggest that "control over the governed" is exactly what the lottery does produce. The commodification of an otherwise abstract principle provides sure opportunity to manipulate; he does not settle on a particular stance for such manipulation—Portia, Elizabeth, and Fortune are displayed less as tyrants than marionettists—but argues staunchly that the device of the lottery is utterly liable to control.

The encounter between Portia and Shylock denotes this play's convergence of the twain. As Boebel critiqued in a Canadian production of 1989, the "viewer . . . went away with a strong impression that Shylock and Portia were secret sharers of social position, of moral outlook, and of personality." Each has independently controlled forces in the play, not only seizing upon Occasion's flowing lock and making the most of their moments, but like Launcelot even "quarreling with occasion" (III.v.50). Their climactic wrangle over Antonio, still the fulcrum of hope and despair in the play, teeters precipitously for a bit, and finally lands solidly on the side of Portia. Shylock, in a stunningly ironic commentary on the protraction of the trial, remarks in the middle of the court, "We trifle time, I pray thee pursue sentence" (IV.i.294). The very "trifling" of time has been an *idée fixe* of Shylock's since his first appearance in the play. But Portia will supersede Shylock's trifling, again taking over as Fortune and dispenser of gifts, and leave Shylock—past, present, and future—utterly bereft.
When she enters, she asks, "Which is the merchant here? and which the jew?" (IV.i.169-70). The feigned indecision masterfully seduces Shylock from the onset, as Shylock has done to Bassanio and Antonio before. Girard rightly argues that throughout the play, the "ironic depth in The Merchant of Venice results from a tension . . . between those textual features that strengthen and those features that undermine the popular idea of an insurmountable difference between Christian and Jew." Nowhere is this more evident than in Portia's disarming query. (And her disguised role as Balthazar itself represents a similar tension; she is both man and woman, lawyer and lover.) In the ensuing trial, Shylock is condemned finally for "indirectly, and directly too, /... contriving against the very life / Of the defendant" (IV.i.359-61). To quote again Girard, "The man has done no actual harm to anyone." Here, however, a difficulty arises in Girard's "actual" and Portia's somewhat hazy distinction (as many of her distinctions have demonstrably been) between "direct" and "indirect." Again, like Marlowe's Barabas, he has all along "cast with cunning for the time to come." As a usurer, his concern for the translation of future time into present, objectified reality is explicit. In the trial, the future-orientation of Portia's power truncates Shylock's own. He is punished partly for what he is about to commit, what he will. Portia and Shylock both operate, then, with a different sense of "actual" than those who "measure naught but by the present time." His "indirect" contrivances mirror hers, but Portia ultimately presides.
Just as she has done with her father, not to mention the "offstage senex,"\textsuperscript{66} Dr. Bellario, and as Jessica has done to Shylock himself, Portia displaces another’s controlling persona with her own.

The displacement by Portia of Shylock becomes complete in the last act. She has lent to Bassanio a ring, while he has lent Bassanio ducats. The purpose of each object is, furthermore, to help secure Portia. And in each case, Antonio ultimately serves as the bond. "You shall be his surety," she tells Antonio, upon returning the ring to Bassanio (V.i.254). But unlike Shylock, whose "good news" concerns Antonio's "ill luck" and lost argosies (III.i.97-130), Portia restores hope with "better news." Indeed, Portia’s final action—her revelation of the success of Antonio's ships—concretizes and disburses hope.\textsuperscript{67} The ships are Antonio's lottery, the fleets his fleece.\textsuperscript{68} In first sending forth his argosies, he believes the chance of total disaster to be miniscule. Or as Menenius in Coriolanus puts it, "it is lots to blanks" (V.ii.10) that the diverse fleets will not all be lost.\textsuperscript{69} And thanks seemingly to Portia, he is right. The letter she proffers to Antonio reveals, "three of your argosies / Are richly come to harbor suddenly" (V.i.276-7). One ship, fittingly, serves for each casket in her own lottery. (Coincidentally, the lottery of Elizabeth I was explicitly proposed for the "safe upkeep of harbors.") As when, in the casket scene, Bassanio surmises that "ornament is but the guiled shore / To a most dangerous sea" (III.ii.97-8), and peers beyond to find refuge and salvation in Portia, the dangers of the
sea for Antonio are conquered by Portia. The "strange accident" (V.i.278) by which she comes upon the letter emphasizes her esoteric power over chance, accident, occasion, and fortune. In *Troilus and Cressida*, Nestor says that "In the reproof of chance / Lies the true proof of men" (I.iii.33-4). In *The Merchant of Venice*, none reproves chance more successfully than Portia.

Finally, the characters in *The Merchant of Venice* might well join in chorus with the speaker of Shakespeare's sonnet 58, who makes an appeal just as fitting for Portia as an anonymous youth:

that god forbid that made me first your slave
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
Or at your hand th'account of hours to crave
Being your vassal bound to stay your leisure.
O, let me suffer, being at your beck,
Th'imprisoned absence of your liberty,

Be where you list, your charter is so strong
That you yourself may privilege your time
To what you will . . .

(lines 1-11)

Certainly Portia "privileges" her time with "what she will," and often the time of others as well. They may seek, in thought, to control her time of pleasure, but are more vassals bound to stay her leisure. Like Elizabeth, who orchestrated a vast commodification of hope, Portia too dispenses the futures of the characters in the play, alternately giving and taking away. This reading of the play emphasizes the power struggles inherent in the
operations of both Belmont and Venice. Shylock manipulates others through
time—objectified or in the abstract—yet so does Portia. There exists less a moral finality
than a circulation of power. When this power snares time and hope, the results can be
troubling. In Greek mythology, it was Pandora who opened a casket (or a jar, in Hesiod's
account) and released, along with a horde of ills, hope into the world. The ills in The
Merchant of Venice—wanton profligacy, narcissism, the vengeful bond, the treatment of
Shylock in particular and those "Jewish gaberdines" (I.iii.112) collectively (to name but a
few)—are not necessarily released with the opening of the caskets, but hope is as surely
contained within. The Pandora myth is itself notoriously problematic: is hope another ill
along with its casket-mates, or is hope that which ills necessarily breed in the human
psyche? In a play so dominated by the question of hope and its susceptibility to
manipulation, both conceptions are ultimately possible and hardly mutually exclusive.
Hope, a kind of hand-maiden to Time, can notably make the same individual both happy
and sad (Antonio in general, or Bassanio in his "tortured" scene with Portia, for instance),
or different individuals happy or sad over the same event. Shakespeare does not so much
offer answers as questions, a glimpse or two into the box for a look at what hope can do
and what can be done to it. In The Merchant of Venice, Portia—not Pandora—controls
hope and time alike.

* * *

147
In his treatise of 1599 on *Daemonologie*, then King James of Scotland traces the etymology of the word "sorcery." According to James, "This word of Sorcerie is a Latine worde, which is taken from casting of the lot, & therefore he that useth it, is called a Sortiarius a sorte. . . . The cause wherefore they are called sortiarij, proceeded of their practique, seeming to come of lot or chance: Such as the turning of the riddle: the knowing of the forme of prayers, or such like tokens: If a person [diseased] would live or die."72 The connections between lots, lotteries, the art of sorcery in particular and magic in general have as their crux the controlling of time: that which is to come, or that which like hope, draws one perpetually into the future, informs and directs the present when conducted by characters as skilled in existing beyond themselves, and "casting with cunning for the time to come," as Portia or Shylock. Just as in *The Merchant of Venice*, in which time and hope are commodified and manipulated, so too the hoarding and monopolizing of time and hope as commodities articulates well the greediness of the characters in *The Alchemist*. And so Charles Lamb saw it, too, when he wrote: "What a startling revelation of the passions if all the aspirations engendered by the Lottery could be made manifest! Many an impecunious epicure has gloated over his locked-up warrant for future wealth, as a means of realizing the dream of his namesake in the 'Alchemist'."73 The next chapter examines *The Alchemist* as a play concerned not with lotteries but with a form of artificial sorcery that can control time—and others through time—equally well.
Notes


2. David Kastan, too, omits discussion of *The Merchant of Venice* in his book *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time* (Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 1982). His study gives greatest weight to time as a structuring element of stagecraft. He reformulates Quinones' idea of time's discovery by arguing that the "discovery . . . involves less theoretical redefinition than psychological re-orientation. Time . . . increasingly becomes a source of anxiety" (p. 5). I agree with his statement that for Shakespeare, "his efforts to organize the intensities of feeling and thought that emerge from the complex character time comes to assume in the Renaissance" are more important than a purely "theoretical position" (p. 6). However, his approach—to locate Shakespeare's "efforts to discover dramatic forms that will give adequate shape to man's temporal experience" (p. 6)—bears little overt semblance to my own. John W. Blanpied comes closer in *Time and the Artist in Shakespeare's Histories* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1983). He writes, for instance, that Richard II "appropriat[es] time itself as an artifact of his will" (123). His discussion touches upon the revenge of time upon those who malign or, like Richard, attack it. So too does that of Francois Maguin, "The Breaking of Time: Richard II, Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth," *Cahiers Elisabethains* 7 (1975), pp. 25-41. Maguin's thesis is that the "disruption of time is an essential element of Shakespearian tragedy" (25), but mostly explicates the role of music in forwarding this disruption. Wylie Sypher, *The Ethic of Time: Structures of Experience in Shakespeare* (New York: Seabury P, 1976), presents four "time schemes" for Shakespeare, with Richard III his paradigm. This play "has a kind of quadruple movement, shifting as it does between simple chronicle, the cycle of Fortune, a nearly Aeschylean time of retribution, and moments of psychic duration" (4).


7. In a strange textual turn-about, the words of Shakspeare were used to advertise a lottery in 1814. A handbill entitled "Shakespeare's Seven Ages. A Paraphrase" begins, "All the World's a Lottery, / And men and women mere Adventurers: / As planets rule, do mortals play their parts / Throughout life's seven ages." According to this versifier, the continuum runs from "the Infant— / For him, his mother anxious to obtain / An independence, buys a Lottery Chance, / And marks the Ticket with her darling's name," all the way to "no second childishness; to gain / A Prize that comfort yields—when age becomes— / Sans teeth—sans eyes—sans taste—sans everything." The handbill concludes, "Would every Age know Where, with prospect bright, / Of great success, is Fortune's fav'rite Fane, / FAME tells 'tis kept by BISH—who never fails, / In each new Scheme to Sell—PRIZES IMMENSE." As quoted in John Ashton's A History of English Lotteries (London: Leadenhall, 1893), pp. 200-03.


9. Cicero, De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Divinatione, trans. William Armistead Falconer, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1946), p. 467. Cicero also wrote, however, that "divination by lot is not in itself to be despised, if it has the sanction of antiquity" (263).


14. Ashton, p. 4. Future references to this work will be made parenthetically.

15. Elizabeth S. Sklar, "Bassanio's Golden Fleece," Texas Studies in Literature and Language 18 (1976), pp. 500-09, notices the importance of this sentiment when she writes, p. 500, "Bassanio shares Shylock's preoccupation with material goods, and is not always able to distinguish between worldly wealth and value of a higher order."


18. As quoted in Ashton, pp. 5-16.

19. In a notorious later instance of suspicious outcomes, Louis XIV and several members of his court dampened the popular enthusiasm for the government's lottery by actually winning the top prizes in the drawing. Under much pressure, the king later returned the money for redistribution.

20. As quoted in Clotfelter and Cook, p. 207.


22. See for instance Verena Kast, Joy, Inspiration, and Hope, trans. Douglas Whitcher (College Station: Texas A&M UP, 1991), from whom I borrow the phrase "emotion of elation." After a nod to French existentialists, who "waged a campaign against hope," she writes further, pp. 6-7, "Hope is the foundation for creativity, inspiration, joy, and all those emotions which allow us to transcend ourselves." See also Ernst Bloch's The Principle of Hope, trans. Neville Plaice et al., 3 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986). This extensive work offers, among a vast number of other things, hope's relation to utopian world visions and its kinship to the creative drive. For an examination of the theological contexts of hope, especially Augustinian, see Rose Bernard Donna, Despair and Hope: A Study in Langland and Augustine (Washington, D.C.: Catholic U of America P, 1948). She defines the concept, p. 74, as "a theological virtue by which man desires God and heaven, trusting to obtain them by cooperation with the grace of God."


26. The most comprehensive study of time in the sonnets is Anne Ferry's *All in War with Time: Love Poetry of Shakespeare, Donne, Jonson, Marvell* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1975), pp. 1-64. Ferry rightly remarks that the speaker's attitude sways between "challenging or lamenting time's power" (p. 3). Her thesis nevertheless presents a fairly traditional explication of time as destroyer, and the power of love and poetry to overcome time's constraints.

27. For some relations between death and hope, see Catherine I. Cox, "Horn-pypes and Funeralls": Suggestions of Hope in Shakespeare's Tragedies," *The Work of Dissimilitude: Essays from the Sixth Citadel Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, eds. David G. Allen and Robert A. White (Newark: U of Delaware P. 1992), pp. 216-234. Regrettably, Cox does not illuminate much in the way of hope and time, other than to say that in the tragedies, "The mistaken choices of the heroes and heroines have made their premature deaths unavoidable. With the knowledge of their errors and a consciousness of our own limitations, however, we hold the opportunity to shape our own futures" (p. 231).


31. Barnet's solid essay provides a representative paradigm of the focus on usury and time. As noted earlier, Kastan does not so much as mention the play, nor does Quinones.

32. See Mary C. Erler, "Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth," in *Modern Philology* 84:4 (May 1987), pp. 359-371, for other relations between the court entertainment and Elizabeth. Kozikowski supports the view of Portia as goddess of fortune, arguing she "is delineated with the secular eminence, dispensatory manner, flattering deception, and guileful withholding of favor which typified the unpredictable Goddess." He adds that Portia's "name derives from portio, for 'fate'" (p. 107). Also, he includes a note on Queen Elizabeth's "presiding over the lottery of Fortune" in Davie's work (p. 108). But despite flagging many of the same instances of Portia as Fortune, Kozikowski's view of Portia diverges from my own. He believes that "Portia clearly does not manipulate the lottery: she necessarily appears as Fortune to those who seek Fortune, and she comes forth as a modest 'maiden' in love before her humble lover" (p. 112). The linchpin of his contention, that Portia occupies the role of "Fortuna bifrons . . . who shows herself fair and yet proves foul to those who seek material advantage more than love" (p. 107), supposes a great deal more "modesty" and reserved passivity than Portia deserves. Further, Kozikowski dismisses too readily Bassanio's equation of Portia and material gain in the first Act. Love and marriage, for Bassanio, at least enfold the notion of a "get[ting] clear of all the debts I owe" (1.1.134) by means of Portia's riches. And she is, after all, repeatedly associated with the golden fleece. Kozikowski does not fully reconcile these strands and Bassanio's "humble love."

34. Auden, "Brothers and Others," p. 76.


38. See Macey, especially pp. 28, 41, for links between Janus and other "patriarchs of time." To underscore the connections between Janus and Saturn, one might briefly compare Antonio with Don John in Much Ado About Nothing (I.iii.1-18). John, too, is questioned by a companion, "why are you thus out of measure sad?" When John responds, "There is no measure in the occasion that breeds, therefore the sadness is without limit," his friend attempts to reason with him. The effort, the lack of empathy, surprises John, who answers, "I wonder that thou (being, as thou say'st thou art, born under Saturn) goest about to apply a moral medicine."

39. Too few critics have acknowledged the centrality of Antonio's character to the play; he is, after all, the titular figure. Alfred Harbage, in William Shakespeare: A Reader's Guide (New York: Noonday, 1963), p. 174, nearly whispers as an aside that "[we] should observe him with special interest." Bertrand Evans and James J. Lynch, eds., The Merchant of Venice and A Midsummer Night's Dream (New York: Macmillan, 1963), are among the few who see Antonio as singularly central to all the plot lines. In an excellent
essay on the play, René Girard ("To Entrap the Wisest: A Reading of The Merchant of
Venice," in Literature and Society, ed. Edward Said [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP,
1980], pp. 100-19) conceives Antonio's melancholy as the premier question for the play.

40. Avraham Oz, The Yoke of Love: Prophetic Riddles in The Merchant of Venice


42. Oz, The Yoke of Love, p. 161, makes the same point though for different reasons:
"Launcelot's scene (2.2), often regarded as a redundant diversion into low comedy, is, in
fact, perfectly in place as a comic anticipation of the play's major moral riddle."

43. Freud, "The Theme of the Three Caskets," in The Complete Psychological Works of
Sigmund Freud, vol. 12 (1911-1913), eds. James Strachey and Anna Freud (Hogarth P,

44. Freud, p. 297.

45. For an excellent account of Father Time's various representations, see Samuel L.
Macey's Patriarchs of Time: Dualism in Saturn-Cronus, Father Time, The Watchmaker
examines the figure of Father Time only through the conventional polarities of Destroyer
and Revealer, but does conclude, p. 152, that by the end of The Winter's Tale, "the simple
identification of time as either Revealer or Destroyer has been obliterated."

II.v.57-9. For some explications of Shakespeare, see Tibor Fabiny, "Veritas Filia
Temporis: The Iconography of Time and Truth and Shakespeare," Acta Litteraria

47. William Wordsworth, "My Heart Leaps Up" (1802), line 9, in The Oxford Authors:

48. Macey, Patriarchs of Time, p. 159.
49. Even Oz, *The Yoke of Love*, in his discussion of "prophetic riddles" mentions only that Portia "pronounces her commitment to her father's will in a ritual-like [sic] appeal to Sibylla, a female prophetic authority" (p. 151).

50. Robert McMahon, "'Some There Be That Shadows Kiss': A Note on *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37 (1986), p. 373, suggests that "Arragon and Narcissus . . . both fail, their desires frustrated by the misinterpretation those desires compel." McMahon believes Portia's father to be the figure of control in the casket scene, however, and does not suggest Portia's role in feeding Arragon's narcissism. A quite contrary reading is offered by Neil Carson, "Hazarding and Cozening in *The Merchant of Venice*," *ELN* 9 (1972), pp. 168-72, who suggests, p. 172, "Arragon's error . . . is also the error of believing in the power of human wit to pervert or cheat divine purpose." Arragon fails, but it is a failure to perceive exactly this sort of manipulation that undoes his suit.


52. Brown, p. 80n.

53. Lucking, p. 364, further asserts, "In view . . . of the recurrent allusions . . . to the story of Jason and Medea," one can see in Portia a type of Medea, since "Medea does disclose the secret of the trials her father has contrived for Jason." Additionally, Jessica's stratagems for escaping her own father "at least invit[e] . . . comparison with the situation of Bassanio and Portia." Finally, Portia's earlier comment, "the brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree" (I.ii.17-19), "may constitute an anticipatory admission of her readiness under certain circumstances to disregard her father's instructions, and she goes so far indeed as to suggest jocularly to Nerissa that she 'rig' the casket test so as to eliminate one suitor whom she finds particularly objectionable (I.ii.91-5)."


Names 25 (1977), pp. 55-62; Norman Nathan, "Bassanio's Name," *AN&Q* 24 (1986), pp. 1-3. Shakespeare's familiarity with Greek, not to mention his audience's, is a subject, however, of some dispute.

58. Holmer, p. 112. Cf. *Love's Labor's Lost* (II.i.56-65), in which the idea of lead as "a metal heavy dull and slow" is playfully inverted; the boy, Moth, proves to the braggart Don Armado that, in fact, lead is "swift," especially that "which is fir'd from a gun."

59. See Evans' *The Riverside Shakespeare*, Plate 18, for a list of the metals associated with the other planetary deities. Sarah Kofman notices the same connections, in *Conversions: Le Marchand de Venise sous le Signe de Saturne* (Paris: Galilee, 1987). She writes that "l'Age d'or, age mythique, paradisiaque, est aussi l'age de Saturne, le Temps, associé au plomb" (42). Further, she connects Saturn to Janus ("étroit parent de Saturne"), and argues that "Antonio et Bassanio . . . representent, chacun, l'une des faces de ce Janus double face qu'est le Temps" (47). C. S. Lewis, apparently, thought that "the real play is not so much about men as metals." Quoted in Mahood, "Golden Lads and Girls," p. 109.

60. Goodwin, *Justice by Lottery* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992), pp. 46-7. Recently, a great deal of controversy has resurfaced around the lottery drawings in England. Paul Mylrea, in a Reuter's report from October 24, 1995, cites the Church of England Bishop of Liverpool, David Sheppard, as saying, "Many of the people who are most vulnerable in our society, who can least afford it, are being sucked into going for these prizes week after week. They think there is going to be some very big win that is going to change their lives. That is a world of fantasy." Such a world, perhaps, as exists in Portia's Belmont.


62. Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, a cinematic excursion over some of the same territory that Shakespeare's play marks, offers this dry perspective: "it's a hell of a thing killin' a man . . . take away all he has, and all he's ever gonna have." Certainly, Shylock would be cognizant of such thoughts, and Portia's enforcement of the law upon Shylock and his goods, while less overtly mortifying, spans the same metaphysical principles.
63. I cannot agree with Waddington here, who suggests, "If Portia cannot distinguish between the two, it is her way of announcing that she will judge the case on its merits, impartially, without respect to the persons involved. She is acting as Blind Justice" (471). Portia's perspicuity, often molded upon a Boethian perspective of eternal vision, is a constant in the play. She may simultaneously profess blindness even when seeing further than any in the court. Cf. Harold C. Goddard, "Portia's Failure" (orig. 1951), in The Merchant of Venice: Modern Critical Interpretations, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1986), pp. 27-36.


66. An epithet for the learned lawyer borrowed from Blanpied, Time and the Artist, p. 23.

67. The later entertainment by Davies, "A Lottery," again bears note here, especially its initial invocation by a "Mariner with a box under his arm": "Cynthia Queene of seas and lands, / That fortune every where commands, / Sent forth Fortune to the sea / To try her fortune every way" (Rollins, vol.1, p. 242). The seas and carracks provided abundant metaphors for fortune's crests and troughs. (Compare, for instance, Othello's utterance upon arriving in Cyprus: "If after every tempest come such calms, / . . . let the laboring bark climb hills of seas / Olympus-high, and duck again as low / As hell's from heaven" (II.i.185-9). Davies' mariner, and indeed Shakespeare's Antonio, escape similar vicissitudes. Davies, interestingly, also offers for his final gift in "A lottery," after girdles, gloves, fans, bracelets ("Cupid's manacles"), and rings with inscribed posies ("As faithful as I find"), a "dyal," or clock. The correspondent couplet reads, "The dyal's yours watch time lest it be lost, / Yet they most loose it that do watch it most" (Rollins, vol.1, p. 246). An echo of Gratiano's advice to Antonio—"They lose [the world] that do buy it with much care" (I.i.75)—is also noticeable here.

68. The commodification of hope has a corollary: the commodification of fear. This appears most vividly in the development of insurance, and it should be noted that around the same time that Elizabeth's lottery took place, the rise of commerical insurance began. That by which Antonio might have most profited—marine insurance—gathers momentum in England during the sixteenth century. H.A.L. Cockerell and Edwin Green, The British Insurance Business 1547-1970 (London: Heinemann, 1976), p. 4, write that marine insurance has "been traced to thirteenth-century Palermo and Genoa, " though "it is unlikely that Italian traders introduced the practice to London before the fifteenth
century." They add, "In 1574, the sworn brokers of London numbered only thirty," but by 1576, "Richard Candler was permitted to establish a Chamber of Assurances . . . [which] was still in existence in the 1690s."

69. For the relevance of this allusion in Coriolanus to the lottery of Elizabeth, see Appendix B.


71. See Hesiod's Works and Days, trans. David W. Tandy and Walter C. Neale (Berkeley: U of California P, 1996), pp. 63-5. The "hope" which remains in the box / jar has caused much debate, a summary of which can be found in W. J. Verdenius, A Commentary on Hesiod, Works and Days, vv. 1-382 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985). Verdenius concludes that the Greek elpis ought to be translated "expectation" (i.e. of the evils released from the container), a conclusion followed by Tandy and Neale. The name of Prometheus, whose insolence sparked Zeus's creation of Pandora in the first place, is usually translated as "forethought," and so might mesh with either expectation or hope. Robert Graves, The Greek Myths, 2 vols. (London: Penguin, 1955), p. 1: 145, avers that after the release of "all the Spites that might plague mankind: such as Old Age, Labour, Sickness, Insanity, Vice, and Passion," only "Delusive Hope" remained, which "discouraged them [mankind] by her lies from a general suicide." Oz, The Yoke of Love, pp. 168-9, observes: "Shakespeare may or may not have been alert to the compatibility of his casket theme with Pandora's box, but he was certainly aware how readily involved was the forbidden knowledge hidden in the closed casket with the mystery of life and death." On Pandora's box in Elizabethan iconography, see Dora and Erwin Panofsky, Pandora's Box (New York: Harper, 1965), pp. 68ff.


73. Lamb, "Illustrious Defunct," p. 250.
Chapter Four: "These Two Short Hours We Wish Away": The Control of Time in *The Alchemist*

The power, as Middleton's pawn puts it in *A Game at Chess*, "To bring time nearer . . . / And make it observe us, and not we it," is of central importance to Ben Jonson. For no other Renaissance play provides a more paradigmatic instance of individuals using (and abusing) time than *The Alchemist*.\(^1\) And "if Jonson's characters are universals, comic versions of the ways in which the Renaissance sought power,"\(^2\) the Renaissance sought power through the control, and occasional stockpiling, of time.

Jonson examines the subjugation of time extensively in this play. Subtle, Face, and even Dol Common all attempt to manipulate time and, in the words of Middleton's Pawn, make *it* observe *them*.\(^3\) The rogues use careful, precise attention to the passage of time around them, as well as false promises of timelessness imparted through the philosopher's stone, in order to perpetuate their "gulling" and "cozening." Over the first four acts, Subtle pays the closest attention to time, and generally treats it as a commodity to be proffered or withheld, an empowering device for reorganizing the world as he chooses. His ambitions are ultimately to master time completely, but Subtle's plotting ironically breaks down just when his alchemical work seems to culminate. In the final act, Face forcefully assumes the mantle of time-controller previously worn by Subtle, and so problematizes the comic resolutions with which the play concludes.
The emphasis on dividing time into as many profitable moments as possible was reflected in the invention of the mechanical clock, but personal time-tracking became even more evident with the emergence of portable clocks and watches around the turn of the sixteenth century. The economic forces at work in *The Alchemist* depend, as noted above, on such precise tracking of time. But Jonson does not appear convinced the positive ramifications of this hyper-awareness. Jonson resists the dissociation of natural, organic time from mechanized time (a division that Donne will exploit in a quite different manner, occasionally denouncing both aspects of time for the sake of eternity.) Such a pliability in time is wholly unnatural, and Jonson's neoclassical predilection for the unity of time and space in his drama is consistent with such an attitude. Dapper's claim in Act I that "I had lent my watch last night, to one / That dines today at the sheriff's: and so was robbed of my pass-time" is as much a commentary on the slipshod way in which characters will treat time in the play as it is a statement of social affectation. Losing control of time in *The Alchemist*, like losing one's watch, creates a constant dramatic tension.

Nearly as constant a tension is the production of the philosopher's stone, and a final cultural innovation may have influenced, and certainly parallels, this dramatic device. The time bomb alluded to in *Doctor Faustus* is developed more fully in *The Alchemist*. (And in *Volpone*, Jonson will notably give the title character a pseudonym
similar to the "mantuan wizard" who conceived the bomb.) As a military device, the time bomb represents the same instrumental purpose as the alchemical stone: each provides a means of bending time to one's will. The sense of a dramatic time bomb in *The Alchemist*, the philosopher's stone brewing off-stage until the proper moment, palpably ticking away, might well find support in the incendiary imagery Jonson provides early in the play. The alchemist Roger Bacon is often credited as being among the early discoverers of gunpowder, and Subtle is often associated with explosives, as well. In fact, Face seems to intimate that Subtle's very person is gunpowder, "stuck full of black and melancholic worms, / Like powder-corns, shot, at the artillery yard" (I.i.30-31). Later in Act I, Face reiterates this metaphor, calling Subtle the "smoky persecuter of nature" (I.iii.100). Between these epithets, Subtle conceives that Dapper, upon receiving his familiar, will "blow up gamester after gamester, / As they do crackers, in a puppet play" (I.ii.78-79). This foreshadows the explosion of the works in Act IV, the puppets replaced by Subtle's own marionette dupes, the crackers by the flasks and limbecks of the alchemical works. And when Surly accuses the "sooty, smoky-bearded" Doctor of preparing "so much gold, in a bolt's-head, / And, on a turn, convey[ing] (i'the stead) another / With sublimed Mercury, that shall burst i'the heat, / And fly out all in fumo" (IV.vi.41-45), one recalls Gianibelli's own timed explosions. But more importantly, the impact the stone has on time, and its thunderous consequences, sound early in the drama.
Whipped Time

A later masque provides a useful gloss for Jonson's more extended treatment of the control of time in *The Alchemist*. In *Time Vindicated to Himself and to His Honours* (1623), Jonson chronicles the abuses of Time, both by the "eares," "eyes," and "noses" of a curious populace who "only hunt novelty, not truth," and by the supreme manifestation of time-abusers, the puissant Chronomastix. As the masque begins. Fame (Saturn's emissary) confronts the three representatives of the Curious. In an important conflation, Jonson unites Saturn and Time as one entity, based on Saturn's Greek appellation of Kronos. This conflation is critical to both the masque and *The Alchemist*: to the Curious, Chronos is the Devourer, a pagan god who "eates up his owne children" (28) just as in traditional Renaissance iconography Time the Devourer consumes all things. But for Jonson, Time represents a kind of solemn grandeur. "The Time," remarks Fame, "hath sent me with my Trumpe to summon / All sorts of persons worthy, to the view / Of some great spectacle" (37-40). The Curious anticipate merely a Saturnalia, an antimasque of licentious, rapacious decadence in which to frolic. Saturnalian revels, in fact, offered an opportunity for inversions of power of all sorts—"servants of their masters," and "subjects of their Soveraigne" (45-46)—as the Curious put it. However, rather than transpose the natural flow and prestige of Time, the true pageant of Saturn will unite Time and Love in blissful concord. The perception of Time as presiding over Saturnalia, rather than as a
divine ruler, mirrors the aims of the trio of gullers in *The Alchemist*, who seek to invert the power of time itself. When the Curious disdainfully accuse Fame of being nothing more than a Time-server, they deliver a defamation that might just as condescendingly have fallen from Subtle or Face. Beyond the remarks of the Eyes, Ears, and Nose, however, loom the peremptory boastings of the Chronomastix, or "Whipper of Time."

Herford and Simpson suggest that Jonson's "chief object of the antimasque is to castigate George Wither for attempting satire." Wither, in Jonson's words a "Selfe-loving Braggart" and "Mountebanke of witte" (97-98), was the object of derision primarily for a pretentious pomposity, evident in his dedication of satirical essays "To himselfe." But the antimasquers also provide an outlet for Jonson's condemnation of time control. As scourge-bearing Chronomastix, Wither's symbolic other announces "Lo the man, that hate the time, / That is, that love it not; and . . . / With this whip you see, / Doe lash the Time" (67-70). Like the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland*, accused by the Queen of murdering the time with jarringly unrythmic verse, Wither is satirized by Jonson as an ambling scribe who "talkes in verse, just as he writes" (117). He is also satirized in a manner that equates the most base of artists with a creature whose most pejorative feature is a hatred of time. The Chronomastix professes to Fame, "I revell so in rime, / . . . not for hope I have the Time / Will grow better by it. To serve Fame / Is all my end, and get my selfe a name" (92-95). He seeks vainglory in the same manner that
Subtle might seek a golden portage. Later in the antimasque, Jonson catalogues another abuse of time, the schoolmaster who forces his students to learn his own Latin works, and "hath painted / Time whipt, for terror to the Infantry" (176-77). These jibes by Jonson can be read on one level as directed against "wasting time," as when Fame dismisses the Curious' desires for the mischief of yet another antimasque: "These are fit freedoms / For lawlesse Prentices, on a Shrove Tuesday, / When they compell the Time to serve their riot" (253-55). But more overarchingly, those who seek to control time for their own ends are summarily exposed as either rabble or charlatans.

As a court masque, *Time Vindicated* celebrates the "great King, to whom the Time doth owe / All his respects, and reverence" (275-76). The vindication of time occurs when Saturn and Venus reconcile Time and Love, and a harmonious order is achieved. Thus, the remaining performances in the masque all pay homage to Time. The chorus sings "O, what a glory 'tis to see / Mens wishes, Time, and Love agree!" (313-14), and the goddess Diana descends in the final scene "To doe Time honour . . . and applaud / His worth" (489-490). Finally, the chorus urges an injunction fitting as a lesson to the characters in *The Alchemist*: "Man should not hunt Mankind to death, / But strike the enemies of Man; / Kill vices if you can: / They are your wildest beasts" (532-35). But the "day-owls . . . / That are birding in men's purses" (V.v.12)—Subtle, Face, Dol—do hunt Mankind; the vindication of time in *The Alchemist* is far more problematic.
In *The Alchemist*'s "Prologue," the narrator states that "Fortune, these two short hours / We wish away, both for your sakes, and ours, / Judging spectators: and desire in place / To the author justice, to ourselves but grace" (ll. 1-4). Interestingly, the manipulation of time is already beginning: these shall be two "short" hours. Such temporal parameters, enclosing both the spectacle and the spectators, are almost exclusively a property of dramatic discourse, in which the ratio of narrative time to narrated time is nearly one-to-one. Thus, throughout the entire course of the play, the characters are in a race against time both within the narrative and without. Just as the actors must complete their story before time runs out on them and the play ends, so too Subtle, Face, and Dol must enact their artifices and disguises at exact times during the plot of the play. Still, for the deceitful trio, time does not so much march on as stall in a series of undifferentiated moments, with one episode of treachery dissolving into the next. (A pattern again reminiscent of *Alice in Wonderland*, in which, as the Mad Hatter and March Hare relate to Alice during the mad tea party, "it's always six o' clock . . . it's always tea-time, and [there's] no time to wash the things between whiles."* Not only are they pressed by the possibility of Lovewit's return, which they incidentally mock at the beginning (Face remarks "Oh, fear not him. While there dies one a week / O' the plague, he's safe from thinking toward London. / He'll send such a word, for airing o' the house /
As you shall have sufficient time to quit it" [I.i.182-87]), but they also must be precise with their various deceits. They must make sure that they are never caught duping, for instance, Sir Epicure Mammon, while they forget an ensuing appointment with Abel Druger. Or as Surly puts it later in the play to Dame Pliant, "how near / Your honour was to have caught a certain clap / (Through your credulity) had I but been / So punctually forward, as place, time, / And other circumstances would ha' made a man" (IV.vi.2-6). Should Dapper arrive a minute earlier in Act I, he would witness Face waving his sword at Subtle, Subtle threatening Face with his explosive vial, and Dol throttling Subtle with her own hands. Which is to say, should he arrive a minute earlier, there very likely would be no plot at all. Sequence and consequence force themselves onto the gullers, and their ability to resist or redirect the encroachment of time's passage will spell their success. The alchemical motif, and especially Subtle's production of the philosopher's stone, allow Jonson to explore and speculate upon their treatment of time more deeply. Time becomes something of the quintessence, the fifth element encompassing all others; and like this elemental admixture, the frenetic pace of the play is comparably entwined in the style of its own narrative discourse.

The efforts to control and subjugate time begin almost immediately in the first scene. Jonson's play commences, like Shakespeare's / Henry IV, with an "intestine shock / And furious close of civil butchery," and the civil war between the "venture tripartite"
preludes the eventual collapsing of their work upon itself. Subtle reminds Face that he was "once (time's not long past) the good, / Honest, plain, livery-three-pound-thrum" (l.i.15-16), and in fact that the occasion is "Within man's memory" (l.i.20). Face, in turn, determines to remind Subtle of his own meager origins, when he was "like the father of hunger" adorned only with "the several rags / You'd raked and picked from dunghills" (l.i.27-34). The two are wrangling for control of the past, and in this first overt mention of time, the concept is already beginning to be maligned. Subtle's accusation implies that the time separating two points—and not necessarily two that are temporally close, only that are "within memory" of each other— is at best tenuously defined. All that separates Face from the gulf of his past, according to Subtle, is Subtle. The effect of his insult rests in the notion that two points of time, at each of which an individual may appear quite different, are only illusory in distinction. This is something of a medieval view, differing significantly from modern views in which the passage of time often equates with progress and overall evolution. It is also potentially alchemical, reminiscent of the act of sublimation in which a substance moves from a solid to a gaseous state without first becoming liquid, effectively transcending a middle state in the same way that the Gregorian Calendar leaped over ten days of time. (Subtle even claims of Face to have "Sublimed thee, and exalted thee, and fixed thee / I' the third region," the purest of the regions of air [l.i.68-69].) Both Subtle and Face here are relegating time to a level of
subservience. In this initial encounter, Subtle seems to come out on top, a position he maintains for most of the play. He emphatically declares to Face, "I will teach you how to beware to tempt a fury again / That carries tempest in his hand and voice" (I.i.60-62). The term "tempest" here resonates not only with the thunderous connections to storms, but with its Latin root, "tempestas," a word denoting both storm and time. Subtle stakes his territory as the (literal) manipulator of tempests, a mage who holds time in the palm of his hand.

The tendency for Subtle to manipulate the time is the most frequent use of the trope over the first four acts. When he proclaims in Act II that "lead, and other metals . . . would be gold, if they had time" (II.iii.135-36), it is tantalizing to read the utterance as self-reflective. Subtle can raise himself from meager, base beginnings to alchemical potentate (like lead to gold) only by possessing time. His stratagems are reminiscent of the title character in Jonson's Volpone, who in the guise of "Scoto Mantuano" says of "false" chemists, "when these practitioners come to the last decoction, blow, blow, puff, puff, and all flies in fumo . . . I rather pity their folly and indiscretion than their loss of time and money; for those may be recovered by industry" (my emphasis). To those "real" alchemists like Subtle and Volpone (as a "Mantuan wizard"), time is a commodity or medium of commerce, an ingredient as malleable to their will as quicksilver. Face seems initially unaware of its significance, ignorant of the possibility that time in the play
is running out and that his master might return, for he says "though we break up a
fortnight, 'tis no matter" (I.ii.186). Conversely, Subtle wastes no opportunity in quickly
asserting his role as time-keeper. When Dapper enters the picture in the second scene,
the clerk announces that he has lost his timepiece, carelessly "robbed" of his "pass-time."
And appropriately, for the remainder of the play Dapper waits and waits for his time to
arrive.13 (Face later urges Dapper to "keep nothing that is transitory about you" [III.v.30],
implying perhaps not only his quickly disappearing money, but time itself.) Indeed,
nearly all the characters are robbed by Subtle of their time. He controls Dapper's every
moment, informing him that "the Queen of Faery does not rise / Till it be noon"
(I.ii.146-7), and so he must "against one o'clock" (I.ii.164) prepare himself.

Abel Drugger next parades into Subtle's sphere, requesting to know "by
necromancy" (I.iii.11) in what manner to structure his new shop; Jonson does not allow
the spatial to dominate the play for long. Subtle quickly asserts his knowledge of
Drugger's past, confirming that he was "born upon a Wednesday" (I.iii.52). Explicating
Drugger's horoscope assures the dupe that the alchemist knows and can read time. If
there is significance to Abel's name, then perhaps Subtle is gazing back not only to the
immediate past, but to the beginning of Biblical history, as well. But Jonson does not
stop there. Drugger entreats a further favor, after learning that he must inscribe upon his
walls "the names of those Mercurial spirits, / That do fright flies from boxes," and bury a
lodestone beneath his threshold "to draw in gallants, that wear spurs" (I.iii.67-70). He asks Subtle to look over his "almanack, / And cross out [his] ill days" (I.iii.94-95), effectively begging Subtle to do what he does best: manipulate the time, in this case by blotting out the days of the calendar on which it would be unlucky for Drugger to bargain or "trust." The alchemist is empowered with the same influence as the Medieval Church, institutionally tracking time. Of course, Subtle's use of time is rife with lies and hypocrisy, but Jonson might well be carefully satirizing the same apparent arbitrariness in any institutional containment of time. Similarly, Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome are held in tether by Subtle's threats to use time against them. Exasperated with Ananias' sanctimonious digressions—and lack of funds—he first orders the deacon to return to his Elders and tell them that "All hope of rooting out the Bishops, / Or the Antichristian Hierarchy shall perish, / If they stay threescore minutes" (II.v.82-84). In order to "make 'em haste towards their gulling more" (II.v.88), Subtle not only imparts a deadline, but imbues the intervening time with a sense of urgency, effectively condensing the interval. This condensation is mirrored in the dramatic time of the play, for although only a single scene passes between Ananias' exit and reappearance at the beginning of act III, Subtle greets him and Tribulation with the words "Oh, are you come? 'Twas time. Your threescore minutes were at the last thread" (III.ii.1-2). And Ananias is faulted by Wholesome for upbraiding the alchemist with "what need we have to hasten on the work"
(III.ii.49-51), he responds revealingly.

"Verily, 'tis true," he begins. "we may be temporal lords ourselves, I take it" (III.ii.52).

He fails to realize that he already is dealing with a "temporal lord," one whose power derives not from the stone proper, but from the simple promise of it. Ananias is more contentious, jousting with Subtle over control and definition of time, just as he first attempted to hasten him only to be hastened and chastised himself. In answer to Wholesome's "how long time. / Sir, must the Saints expect, yet." Subtle makes the lunar calculation that in "some fifteen days, / The magisterium will be completed"

(III.ii.126-30). Ananias doublechecks the arithmetic: "About the second day, of the third week, / In the ninth month," (III.ii.131); he cannot, however, assert any more control than duplicating Subtle's own machinations. Subtle retards or accelerates time as he sees fit, as if he indeed possessed the stone all the while.

The last of the dupes to arrive in the first act, Sir Epicure Mammon, is even more closely entwined with the idea of time than his predecessors, since he too aspires to control and determine it. In an oddly moralizing speech. Subtle avers that Mammon will make "Nature ashamed of her long sleep: when art, / Who's but a stepdame, shall do more
than she, / In her best love to mankind, ever could. / If his dream last, he'll turn the age, to
gold” (l.iv.25-29). This last line is particularly telling: the return of the Golden Age was
a topic of much interest during Jonson's lifetime,\(^\text{14}\) and his masque *The Golden Age*
*Restored* (1615) suggests a sophistication in Subtle's argument. In the masque, Pallas
Athena descending in her chariot says that Jove shall return the earth to the "age of better
metal . . . ":

> Which deed he doth the rather
> That even Envy may behold
> Time not enjoyed his head of gold
> Alone beneath his father;
>
> But that his care conserveth,
> As Time, so all Time's honors too,
> Regarding still what heav'n should do
> And not what earth deserveth.\(^\text{15}\)

Jove's father was of course Saturn, or Kronos, whose reign was the Golden Age. As in
*Time Vindicated* ("Saturne! Chronos! and the Time it selfe!" [26]) and in a marginal note
to *Hymenaei* (1606), Jonson identifies Saturn explicitly with Time.\(^\text{16}\) If Mammon seeks
to restore such sovereignty to time, it is appropriate that Subtle should feel a hint of
threat. Mammon's dream must be, and is, out-maneuvered; in this play, it is Subtle who
rules Kronos, and a usurpation through Mammon's desires clearly is the stuff for
debasement. When Mammon relates to Surly that "the golden mines, / Great Solomon's
Ophir," have been reached not in the three years sail of Solomon but in a mere "ten
months" (II.i.3-5), he posits himself as a controller of time. His use of regal
metaphors—great king Solomon apparently governed his affairs with far less acumen than
Mammon—emphasizes the contestation in the rulership of the golden age, and thus the
disruption in the sphere of time. Yet this "golden age" is solely one of greed and
chicanery; the knight's idea of a Golden Age is, predictably, closer to a Gilded Age. It
will paradoxically be the destruction of the philosopher's stone that brings about true
harmony, even as it utterly ruins any hope for Mammon's utopian vision. (Mammon
phrases an unwitting irony towards this end, when he tells Face that in his future seraglio.
he "will have all [his] beds blown up; not stuffed" [II.ii.41].) Meanwhile, Subtle enforces
his dominance over Mammon as soon as he encounters him, criticizing him for haste and
impatience. "I doubt you're covetous," he accuses, "that thus you meet your time / I' the
just point: prevent your day, at morning" (II.iii.4-6). Mammon must temper his zealous
hope, his own perception of time quickened, and return to serving both Subtle and
Subtle's personal pace.

For the final gull, Kastril "the angry boy," Jonson marks further abuse of a
temporal consideration, that of cause and effect. The reversal of these sequential terms,
effectively disrupting order and flow, is apparent elsewhere in Jonson's writings. In his
ode "To the Immortal Memory and Friendship of That Noble Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and
Sir H. Morison," a half-born infant sees the violence being perpetrated during the siege of
Hannibal, and promptly crawls back in the womb to die. "Brave infant of Saguntum," Jonson begins, "... Ere thou wert half got out, / Wise child, didst hastily return, / And mad'st thy mother's womb thine urn." The conceit of death preceding birth is a startling one, and similar reversals of cause and effect arise in *The Alchemist*. As Subtle informs Kastril of the "true grammar" and proper logic of quarrels,

> You must render causes, child.<br>  > Your first and second intentions, know your canons,<br>  > And your divisions. modes, degrees, and differences.<br>  > Your predicaments, substance, and accident,<br>  > Series extern. and intern, with their causes<br>  > Efficient, material, formal, final,<br>  > And ha' your elements perfect—<br>  > (IV.ii.22-28)

While this is primarily confused jargon, the discussion centers on "That false precept, / Of being aforehand" (IV.ii.29-30). This polemic against the notion of being "aforehand" again demonstrates Subtle's manipulation of time as an entity. And like the infant of Saguntum reversing the temporal order of things, seeking to die before it is born, so too does Subtle deface the order of time by garbling the idea of what comes beforehand and what after. The whorls and eddies spun in the temporal matrix thoroughly confuse young Kastril. The inversion of time is comical, as it is when Dame Pliant proclaims her view of the Spanish— "Never, sin' eighty-eight could I abide 'em, / And that was some three year afore I was born, in truth" (IV. iv. 29-30). The distortion of time and the attempt to render it indeterminate are again visible; the reward for this manipulation occurs soon
thereafter in the form of an explosion. And even as cause and effect have been
demonstrably challenged, similar warps and inversions stem from the supposed
disintegration of the philosopher's stone.

* * *

The production of the stone is of paramount significance to the idea of time in
*The Alchemist*. This alchemical coup de grâce promises a sense of timelessness, in
which, as Epicure Mammon describes it, "In eight and twenty days, / I'll make an old man
of fourscore a child . . . / Restore his years, renew him, like an eagle, / To the fifth age"
(II.i.52-56). With such a device, Mammon might reverse the natural path of time, and
even "Cure all diseases, coming out of all causes, / A month's grief in a day; a year's in
twelve: / And of what age soever, in a month" (II.i.65-67). Both the reversal and
condensation of time that Mammon here discusses render time subservient: he can not
only enjoy all his decadent pleasures, but can enjoy them for as long as he likes, and at
whatever age he desires. Moreover, Mammon's Biblical allusions suggest that the stone
offers the power of divinity, as well. In Psalm 103, God as Love "renews youth like an
eagle's," and in the Book of Daniel, the fifth age is similarly the kingdom of God.

Mammon's hopes are lofty, indeed; he aspires to godhead, to an absolute, eternal control
over the forces of time. But the philosopher's stone, as Surly puts it, may be attained only
by an "*homo frugi*, / A pious, holy, and religious man, / One free from mortal sin, a very
The desires of Mammon, needless to say, are not those of an homo frugi. Mammon later attempts to seduce Dol with promises to "renew our youth, and strength, with drinking the elixir, / And so enjoy a perpetuity / Of life and lust" (IV. i.163-6). Ben Jonson's dramatic coup is that by definition, the success of the stone, a dramatic reality since the onset of the play, tinctures all things dross and base, whether of the body, soul, or material world, into their most exalted state. Thus it is ironically the success of the stone, its very completion, that will eliminate Mammon's ignoble hopes and change the course of the play. In its manifestation as the philosopher's stone, time finds the means to resist control.

As a constant dramatic reality in the play, the stone dictates characters' actions by their belief in its existence, and it is partly through use of the stone in potentia that Subtle is able to manipulate time. But there is a sense in the The Alchemist that the stone is in fact brought into being by Subtle and his cohorts, or that the play unwinds as if the stone had been brought into being, and not merely for the sake of gulling Sir Epicure Mammon. For evidence, one might first turn to Jonson's address to the reader. He declares at the onset that "I deny not, but that these men, who always seek to do more than enough, may sometime happen on something that is good and great; but very seldom. And when it comes it doth not recompense the rest of their ill. It sticks out perhaps and is more eminent, because all is sordid and vile about it" ("To the Reader,"
His referents here are not alchemists, but the hint that some artists unwittingly stumble on "something good and great" nicely parallels the work of Subtle and Face. Despite their hoodwinking mumbo-jumbo, they may in fact come upon something real—the stone—even (or especially) when they are at their worst. And later in the play, Tribulation does remark of the alchemists that "the children of perdition are, oft-times, / Made instruments of the greatest works" (III.i.15-16). Renu Juneja argues that "Subtle regards the winning of the philosopher's stone as a genuine possibility . . . [and] so, too, must the audience regard it if they are to respond to the irony of Subtle's elevating a confidence trick to the high science of alchemy." If Subtle is indeed more than simply a con-man, even if unwittingly so, significant impact is added to the scene of the explosion.

In the scene of the explosion, the flow of time is severely disrupted, and Dol's feigned insanity provides the first instance. Jonson stresses in the stage direction that she speaks simultaneously with Face and Mammon, as they carry on their conversation—the only point in the play at which the narrative time and the narrated time break apart so blatantly. As readers or audience, we cannot possibly decipher her speech at the same time that we attend to Face and Mammon's. The natural flow of the narration hits a roadblock: when all speech is simultaneous, time becomes unnecessary. More important than how Dol speaks in this scene, however, is what Dol says. First, the stone which
promises to reverse the natural aging process also may be seen to reverse the natural, divine order of the ages. The elderly will not only "grow young," but the ages of the world will also dissolve into their infancy. Mammon has stressed such powers before, but Dol links them overtly to the distortion of time with her haphazard chronology in Act IV.v. Her utterances are important not only in their demonstration of time's disruption, but also in the way they prefigure the ensuing incarnation of the philosopher's stone.

As Dol begins, her babelish depictions of "Gog Iron-leg and Egypt Iron-leg . . . then Egypt clay-leg and Gog clay-leg . . . / And last Gog-dust, and Egypt-dust" (IV.iv.6-10) mirror the deterioration of the ages of man from their edenic beginnings in the Golden Age. Critical to this understanding is the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, in the Book of Daniel. In the dream, a human statue is crafted whose head is fashioned of gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, and its feet half iron, half clay. And importantly in the dream, it is a stone that finally smashes the feet of the statue, which is disintegrated. The stone fills the entire earth, signaling the advent of the kingdom of the stone, and the obliteration of the statue by the arrival of the stone allegorically prefigures the redemption of sin through the Incarnation of Christ, as well as anagogically presenting the apocalyptic dawn of a "fifth age." Connections between Christ, the Filius Dei, and the philosopher's stone, or Filius Philosophorum, were conspicuous in the seventeenth century. John Donne's "Resurrection, imperfect"

180

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provides one example, a Christ who "was all gold when he lay down, but rose / All
tincture, and doth not alone dispose / Leaden and iron wills to good, but is / Of power to
make even sinful flesh like his."22 The imagery signifies the same metals that have
traditionally represented the sequence of ages in a declining world, poeticized by Ovid in
the Metamorphoses. But the very premise of the philosopher's stone, which could
transmute base metals like lead into gold on a myriad of symbolic levels, temporally
reverses this order. Rather than bringing true, eternal, heavenly bliss to earth, the
philosopher's stone would grant only the illusion of heaven, as it catapulted the cosmos
back to its origins. Dol's relation of the ages occurs, according to Mammon, after he
"talked of a fifth monarchy I would erect, / With the philosopher's stone (by chance) and
she / Falls on the other four, straight" (IV.v.33-36). And soon after Mammon mentions
that fifth age to Face, the destruction of the stone by the stone ensues. Jonson shows that
if the stone is to be used (and has been used by Subtle) for illusory purposes, detonation
is the only possible outcome.23

The incarnation of the stone, like that of Christ, brings about a divine shift in
reality, exploding the works and treacheries of Subtle and Face as the Christ-stone
exploded the metallic statue. The idea of divine intervention at this point is
foreshadowed by reference earlier in the act to "the art of Aesculapius, / That drew the
envy of the Thunderer" (IV.i.92-93); Aesculapius, a necromancer of sorts, was slain with

181

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a bolt of lightning by the god Zeus. Like Subtle, Aesculapius reversed the natural order of things, in his case by raising the dead. And in dramatic parallel to the Greek tale, the plans of Subtle are resoundingly disintegrated "As if a bolt of thunder had been driven through the house" (IV.v.67-68). He has attended to the temptation of overpowering time rather than the harmony of flowing with time, the way one who desires the philosopher's stone must. While he has possessed the immanent power of the stone throughout the play, with its destruction, whether by his own order or by its actual creation, all his artifice begins to crumble away. This is the catastrophic turning point of the play: as the Christ-stone in Daniel creates a fifth monarchy, so too the philosopher's stone causes a transmutation that prepares the play for its fifth act.

* * *

Immediately after the explosion, Face proclaims to Mammon that "My brain is quite undone with the fume, sir, / I ne'er must hope to be mine own man again" (IV.v.77-78). From that moment on, despite the comment's facetious appearance, Face displaces Subtle as the controller of time and events. He expeditiously dismisses Mammon and Surly, who has thrown off his Spanish disguise. "Come Subtle," he coaxes with a new-found confidence, "Thou art so down upon the least disaster! / How would'st thou ha' done, if I had not helped thee out?" (IV.vii.92-94). When Dol announces that Lovewit has returned, Face determines to transform "into mine old shape again, and meet
him, / Of Jeremy, the butler" (IV.vii.120-21). As Act V begins, Face once more is wrangling over the past, on this occasion with his neighbors. The first declares to Lovewit "Jeremy butler? / We saw him not this month." Others follow suit, each exerting their own meager control over time: "Not these five weeks, sir," says the fourth neighbor, while another chimes in "These six weeks, at the least" (V.i.27-29). Unlike in his initial battle with Subtle, Face peremptorily wins this match. The house has been shut up a month due to the plague, he has kept the keys at his side some twenty days, and "for these three weeks / And upwards, the door has not been opened" (V.ii.33-34). With that explanation, the neighbors are summarily dismissed. Lovewit remains however, and it is with Subtle-like seduction that Face appeases his master: "I'll help you to a widow, / . . . Will make you seven years younger" (V.iii.86). And so he does, until Lovewit eventually maintains "I will be ruled by thee in anything, Jeremy" (V.v.143). Indeed, Lovewit is convinced by Face of time's subservience even as he attempts to convince the audience: "think / What a young wife, and a good brain may do: / Stretch age's truth sometimes, and crack it too" (V.v.154-55). Significant is Lovewit's choice of language: age's truth may be "stretched," manipulated, and even "cracked" like the "great crack and noise within" that signals the destruction of the stone in act IV. Time and the stone are inextricably entwined, and control of time rests now in the hands of Face.24

183

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In the final confrontation scene between the three gullers, the scene which "Determines the indenture tripartite" (V.iv.131), Face reveals to Subtle and Dol that "my master / Knows all, has pardoned me, and he will keep" the trunks of illicit wealth (V.iv.126-27). He then adds, as a kind of revelation of his displacement of Subtle as controller of time, "Doctor. 'tis true (you look), for all your figures" (V.iv.128). Subtle's horoscopes are invalid in the wake of Face's arrogation. Face uses the knock of the officers at the door, "Hark you, thunder" (V.iv.137), as the linchpin in his domination of Subtle: the thunder, like that caused by the stone's destruction, and that which finished off Aesculapius, concludes Subtle's work in the house of Face. As Subtle before him in Act I, Face now "carries tempest in his hand and voice." Dol's last words put the matter most succinctly, however. As Face taunts her with recommendations to "Mistress Amo" and "Madam Caesarean," Dol tosses back, "Pox upon you, rogue. Would I had but time to beat thee" (V.iv.141-43). Unfortunately, Dol and Subtle both have been robbed of their time, along with their loot, and of their power over it.

Face's commentary on the dispersal of his accomplices, and his monopolization of time and money, in The Alchemist's final lines provides a last instance of temporal tampering. "This pelf," he says,"Which I have got, if you do quit me, rests / To feast you often, and invite new guests" (V.v.163-65). A sense of eternal recurrence reverberates in the lines' forecasting of future audiences. The dramatic moment becomes self-reflexive.
folding into itself an infinite loop of futures each ostensibly the same, audience upon
audience extending *ad infinitum*. Each in turn shall hear the same forecast of future
audiences, until Face's lines seem not unlike the lodestone Drugger is urged to bury under
his threshold—a bit of alchemical legerdemain designed to draw customers, but carefully
and paradoxically hidden in the exit that is also an entrance. Audiences will recur, as the
cyclical scenes of cozenings mirror, virtually at the behest of Face. His closing speech to
the audience might be profitably seen as a contrast to Prospero's in *The Tempest*, a play
written around the same time as Jonson's.23 Prospero also controls tempests and time,
often awaiting the exact moment, his "star's zenith" for instance, to engage in one of his
acts of conjuring. Yet Shakespeare's play ultimately absolves Prospero of temporal
corruption even as the mage forgives those who wronged him. His manipulation and
white magic end with the play. No such disavowal exists in *The Alchemist*. Face
forecasts the future of his subterfuges, saying that more audiences will follow when the
present one leaves, and thus harnesses a final yoke to time, who might have thought to
escape with the crowds. Time is under the control of a "two-faced" Janus figure, who
gazes both backwards and forwards with equal relish. (It is perhaps relevant that in *Time
Vindicated*, the Eyed figure was presented as having four eyes, "that is, the performer
wore a Janus mask."26 The conclusion moves without resolution into the matrix of time,
drifting off the page as Face exits the stage, but all the while advertising a self-reflexive awareness that Face holds the final say.

In 1628, approximately four years after *A Game at Chess*, and upon Middleton's death, Ben Jonson assumed the role of City Chronologer, a post that Middleton had held since 1620. That both writers should occupy the post of "writer of time" emphasizes, if somewhat coincidentally, the connection between the passage of Middleton's, and the play of Jonson's in which the sentiment is examined to its fullest. The servitude of time in the latter is perpetrated not by devious Pawns, but by the "venture tripartite." The idea of time's debasement had not disappeared from Jonson's writing in these later years. In *The New Inn*, Lady Frampul desperately complains.

O clip the wings of Time,
Good Pru, or make him stand still with a charm.
Distill the gout into it, cramps, all diseases
Tarrest him in the foot and fix him here:
O for an engine to keep back all clocks,
Or make the sun forget his motion!
If I but knew that drink the time now loved,
To set my Trundle at him, mine own Barnaby!"27

In *The Alchemist*, Jonson's treatment of time reflects both his own inherent search for ordered structure, a unity of time, and the struggle of the Renaissance to comprehend an ever-changing force. From the beginning of *The Alchemist*, and certainly in his masques, Jonson resists sanctioning attempts to control time. But Jonson's ambivalent conclusion—those who disrupt time are both rewarded and banished—marks a sense of
resignation. In a play that adheres to unity of time and place with so much
self-awareness, an overdetermination of sorts, Face’s final speech hauntingly evokes the
belief that such reverence for time is dangerously passé.

* * *

The following chapter discusses this notion of reverence in John Donne’s

_Devotions_, written within a decade of _The Alchemist_. Donne, too, devalues time. But in
his search for atonement with the eternal such a debasement of time must happen.

Natural time—the observable time of seasons and the cosmos—becomes both a source for
divine appreciation and a quality of time to be overcome. A sophistication in Donne’s
thought arises from his unique resituation of time and eternity; though there are parallels
to Augustine, Spenser, Herbert, and even Milton. Donne ultimately treats time in the

_Devotions_ as a paradox all his own.

Notes

1. Commentary on Jonson and time in general is unfortunately scant. Most focus on his
esposal of the classical unities of time and place; see for instance Mary C. Williams,
_Sources of Unity in Ben Jonson’s Comedy_ (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und
Literatur, 1972). On the poetry, see Ferry’s _All in War with Time: Love Poetry of
58-80, does discuss _The Alchemist_ briefly, but again primarily with regard to the unity of
dramatic time. He says only, p. 80, “In _The Tempest, The Two Gentleman, Lear, and The
Alchemist_, there are 783 time-references: all but 64 of them are used to mark off interest
units, add point and emphasis; provide distractions and emphasize intervals.” More
recently and precisely, Gale H. Carrithers, Jr., and James D. Hardy, Jr., _The Age of Iron_
moment, from carefully designed fraud to accidental and unanticipated truth, was engaged in the description of alchemy.


3. Carrithers and Hardy, *Age of Iron*, offer a somewhat generous reading of Dol's manipulations, arguing that "Of all the active characters in *The Alchemist*, Dol was by far the most honest, striving to keep faith though (perhaps) in a bad cause, while everyone else was a user of people, a cynical profiteer, and a liar."


5. See for instance William S. Dutton, *One Thousand Years of Explosives* (New York: Holt, 1960), p. 12. A monument (erected 1914) in the English town of Ilchester credits Bacon with the title "Doctor Mirabilis," who "first made known the composition of gunpowder." One of the most influential of modern conjurers, Jean-Eugene Robert-Houdin, from whom Harry Houdini derived his stage name, worked as a watchmaker before becoming a magician. His acts combined a variety of clockwork mechanisms aimed at producing special effects of various sorts.

6. Jonson's own possible interest in ill-timed explosives might well extend from the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. In addition to the widespread infamy of the event itself, Jonson was involved in the investigation. David Riggs (*Ben Jonson* [Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989], p. 127) writes that having "dined with Robert Catesby and Thomas Winter, two of the leading figures in the Gunpowder Plot, just a month previously," Jonson complied with a request "to track down a Catholic priest" implicated by the Privy Council. Riggs also notes (p.176) that Jonson made numerous references to the Plot in *Catiline His Conspiracy*, written around the same time as *The Alchemist*, including "many allusions suggestive of gunpowder and explosions."


188

10. The ensuing prostitution of time in *The Alchemist*, its commodification for scandalous purposes, is also reminiscent of *Henry IV*, and the Prince of Wales' remarks to Falstaff: "What a devil hast thou to do with the time of day? Unless hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs for leaping houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-color'd taffeta, I see no reason why thou should'st be so superfluous to demand the time of the day." See *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton, 1976), i.i.12-13 and i.ii.6-12.

11. See D. S. McGovern, "'Tempus' in *The Tempest*," in *English* 32 (Autumn 1983), pp. 201-14, for an explication of the ways in which Shakespeare may have used "tempest" in his own play as a signifier for the temporal forces at work on Prospero's island. B. J. Sokol ("Numerology in the Time Scheme of *The Tempest*," *Notes and Queries* 41 [1994], p. 52) further points out that "both Prospero's anxiety and the play's title depend on the so-called 'tempestivity of time.' This is the concept of *kairos*, holding that there are only rare moments of 'tempestuous' time uniquely predestined to enable weighty change." Attentiveness to the moment is clearly an alchemical imperative, as Subtle makes clear with regard to the projection of the stone. That *The Tempest* and *The Alchemist* bear other similarities is suggested by Frances A. Yates, *Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 117: "How extremely strange it seems that in the year 1612, the year in which *The Tempest* was acted before [Princess] Elizabeth and the Palatine, Shakespeare's friend, Ben Jonson, should have published a play satirising everything that *The Tempest* stands for, and which had been acted by Shakespeare's own company of players!" See also Harry Levin, "Two Magian Comedies: *The Tempest* and *The Alchemist,"* in *Shakespeare Survey* 22 (1969), pp. 47-58; and David Young, "Where the Bee Sucks: A Triangular Study of Doctor Faustus, The Alchemist, and The Tempest," in *Shakespeare's Romances Reconsidered*, eds. Carol McGinnis Kay and Henry E. Jacobs (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), pp. 149-66.

12. Jonson, *Volpone* (Il.ii.144-47), in *Five Plays*, ed. G. A. Wilkes. The marked contrast of Volpone's statement with so-called "commonplace" notions of time in the seventeenth century is best evinced by a comparison with a Puritan account of "wasting time": "To Redeem Time is to see that we cast none of it away in vain, but use every minute of it as a most precious thing . . . . Consider also how unrecoverable Time is when it's past. Take it now or it's lost for ever. All the men on earth, with all their power, and all their
wit, are not able to recall one minute that is gone." See Richard Baxter's *Christian Directory* (London, 1664).

13. In a recent edition of *The Alchemist* (New York: Methuen, 1987), p. 154, Peter Bement also finds significance in the watch beyond its traditional glossing as status symbol. He writes, "That the passage of time in the play is a complex experience is well illustrated by the case of Dapper, who, having entered the house without a watch, becomes suspended in the privy's unpleasant limbo for much of Acts IV and V. His enchanting in V.iv is invested with an appropriate feeling of timelessness, despite the frenetic activity that surrounds it." As to the operation of time in general, Gerard Cox ("Apocalyptic Projection and the Comic Plot of The Alchemist," in *English Literary Renaissance* 13:1 [Winter 1983], p. 70) argues that in *The Alchemist*, "each character is poised at the extreme edge of his present, straining towards a future in which all his desires will come true." The play as being primarily teleological does not fully account for the ways in which time frequently threatens either to grind to a halt or to accelerate rapidly, but does emphasize the pervasive thematic importance of time in *The Alchemist*.


16. In a footnote, Jonson informs the reader that "Truth is fained to be the daughter of Saturne: who, indeed, with the Ancients, was no other then [sic] Time, and so his name alludes, Kronos." See *Hymenaei* in Herford and Simpson, vol. 7, p. 233.


21. Richard Harp, "Ben Jonson's Comic Apocalypse," *Cithara* 34 (November 1994), p. 37, relates that "associations and verbal echoes of this sort between alchemy, biblical imagery, and the Lamb of God were not rare in alchemical literature, and some particularly striking ones were made around the time that Jonson wrote the play."


23. Cf. Cox, "Apocalyptic Projection," pp. 80-81. He notes that "Jonson has satirically conflated the attainment of the philosopher's stone with the attainment of the kingdom of
the stone prophesied in the second chapter of Daniel," and that "the stone was interpreted as Christ, who will come and destroy the fourth monarchy in the 'latter days' [Dan. 2.28]."

I would suggest that the conflation is not as satirical as it is dramatic: the "stone" causes a very real alteration in the world of *The Alchemist*. Harp, "Comic Apocalypse," p. 39, rightly remarks that "there is irony, too, in Face's saying to Mammon that his own hopes were also ruined. He did not mean it when he said it, but the thieves soon find out that their connivances were indeed to be destroyed by the return of Lovewit."

24. The notion that the ramifications of temporal control and attention extend into economic spheres is reinforced by Jonathan Haynes, "Representing the Underworld: The Alchemist," *Studies in Philology* 86 (1989), p. 39. "Face's real strength," Haynes says, "is his ability to participate in a comic settlement which reins in but does not reject the practices of a new social economy; . . . having mastered Subtle's skills Face is in possession of their entire capital." Face's roles in the final scenes are explicated extensively by G.D. Monsarrat, "Editing the Actor: Truth and Deception in *The Alchemist*, V.3-5," *Cahiers Elisabethains* 23 (April 1983), pp. 61-71. Cf. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980), p. 200, who makes an insightful point about the finale of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* that may apply well to Jonson's own mage-driven play: "That the moments of intensest time-consciousness all occur at or near the close," he writes, ". . . has the effect of making the heroes seem to struggle against theatrical time. As Marlowe uses the vacancy of theatrical space to suggest his characters' homelessness, so he uses the curve of theatrical time to suggest their struggle against extinction, in effect against the nothingness into which all characters fall at the end of a play."

25. For other similarities in these two plays, and a brief account of time in *The Tempest*, see Appendix A.


Chapter Five: "One Natural, Unnatural Day": The Conflict with Time in Donne's Devotions

Amidst the collection of dramas examined in this study thus far, John Donne's Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions may appear at first misplaced. This work follows the development of Donne's near-fatal illness of 1623 in a series of twenty-three "stationes," each subdivided into a meditation, expostulation and prayer. While critics have read the Devotions as an Ignatian meditation, an ars moriendi or "art of dying" tract, and as an expression of Pythagorean numerology, Patristic theology, or Christian mysticism, Donne's effort bears much in common with the drama of his day.¹ As one critic puts it, "Like the old Mystery, Miracle, and Morality Plays, intended to instruct but also to entertain, Devotions is part mummary, part declamation. . . . The plot lies in the occasion, the climax in the crisis of the disease. The characters, each true to his calling, enter, intone, gesticulate, and exit, leaving the protagonist at last alone with his thoughts."² Donne himself elsewhere recognized the pervasiveness of that common Renaissance trope, namely that "The whole frame of the world is the Theatre and every creature, the stage, the medium, the glasse in which we may see God."³ His writing need not be read as drama to elucidate its importance in rounding out the sculpture of time in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. But keeping in mind the dramatic aspects of Donne's Devotions helps contextualize the work not as an exception, but as a
part of a continuum of works concerned with the control of time. As a tract concerned
with both fatality and time, the Devotions can further trace its origins to Boethius'
Consolation of Philosophy. C. S. Lewis suggests that "Boethius wrote philosophically,
not religiously, because [he] had chosen the consolations of philosophy, not those of
religion, as [his] subject," since "Aristotle had impressed on all who followed him the
distinction between disciplines and the propriety of following in each its appropriate
method." The Devotions, while drawing from a wide array of influence, might be
considered, then, as something of a Consolation of Religion. (Donne employs three
distinct modes of discourse—Meditation, Expostulation, and Prayer, twenty-three of
each—while philosophy might have recommended a dialogue.) The Devotions
demonstrates a kind of metempsychosis, a progression of the soul, and the
self-questioning process becomes an interrogation not only of the self, but of time and its
relevance—or irrelevance—to human life.

That, for Donne, conflict and time are in the same vein is not a new perspective
on his work in general. G. F. Waller, one of the few Donne scholars to have treated the
subject of time at much length, observes that "Donne came to react . . . violently" against
the "destructive, wearing aspects of time"; he further sees, in both the Devotions and the
sermons, the notion that "time is of value only as it can be negated or transformed from
without." How do these negations and transformations take shape? Kate Frost's reading
of the *Dévouons* as a spiritual autobiography helps to shed some light. For Frost, the "view of time in the *Dévotions* is, as in the Sermons, sacramental," inextricably linked with the liturgical calendar, particularly "Advent and Christmastide of 1623." Further, the extensive numerological aspects of the work link the *Devotions* with natural time: essentially Plato's consideration of time in the movement of heavenly bodies, extended to further include seasonal shifts, lunar phases, or any empirical correspondence of time in the "natural" world. Reading the work as a spiritual autobiography suggests, to Frost, James Olney's assessment of autobiography "in terms readily applicable to Donne." She passes over, however, what might be Olney's most "applicable" observation: his term "metaphors of self" includes "that by which the lonely subjective consciousness gives order not only to itself but to as much of objective reality as it is capable of formalizing and controlling." Frost, focused as she is on numerological structures, adds that for Donne, "meaning emerged not with perception of pattern, for pattern was a given." But part of Donne's treatment of time overtly involves his shaping of time into a pattern he can control—not a given, but a perspective reached through contemplation of the self, the soul, and the eternal. The Ignatian meditative tradition provides a similar framework, as Raspa proposes: "the powers of a man in meditation were the constellations of his private cosmology. This inner cosmology was a meeting point between the outer world of time and space and the eternal world of divine love and satanic hate. It was wholly
Manipulable for meditation between these two emotional poles of attraction."\textsuperscript{12} Objective reality—objectified time—begins to offer solace only as it becomes controlled, and the manner by which Donne effects this form of control can be contextualized by briefly comparing him with two of his contemporaries, George Herbert and John Milton.

In Donne's "A Fever," a poem from the \textit{Songs and Sonnets} resembling the \textit{Devotions} in name only, the speaker claims of a beloved, "I had rather owner be / Of thee one hour, than all else ever" (lines 27-8). The contrast helps bring the latter work into some relief. The exchange of eternity for an hour runs self-consciously against the tradition of adducing the opposite, a tradition Donne further develops in the \textit{Devotions}.\textsuperscript{13} Herbert and Milton, moreover, offer two poems on time that significantly illuminate the conventions of time and eternity. In "On Time" (c. 1631-3), Milton teases out time from eternity, as Donne will do repeatedly, in order to assert his own ascendancy through salvation in the eternal.\textsuperscript{14} "Fly envious \textit{Time}," he writes, "till thou run out thy race, / . . . And glut thyself with what thy womb devours. / Which is no more than what is false and vain, / And merely mortal dross."\textsuperscript{15} The ubiquitous "devourer" epithet, here undermined by Milton in ascribing to its digestion merely worthless entities, is further turned upon itself, since Time will have "last of all, thy greedy self consum'd" (line 10). When Time cannibalizes even itself, "Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss / With an individual [i.e. indivisible, everlasting] kiss" (lines 11-12). The divine union with the eternal here
eventuates in a "Triumphing over Death, Chance, and thee O Time" (line 22). As in
Spenser's *Cantos of Mutabilitie*, the express "triumph" of Eternity throws down yet
another gauntlet to Time. The challenging, confrontational tone of the poem—Milton
begins with some haughty imperatives—reproduces a stance Donne will often take. One
separates Time from Eternity in order to debase the former. As for the eternal, it is
something to be coaxed, caressed, and solemnly welcomed. Herbert's "Time," included
in *The Temple* (1633), creates a dialogue (really a remonstration) between the speaker
and Time, a "slack thing" whose "sithe is dull."16 For Herbert, the Incarnation and the
possibility of eternal salvation have changed Time's role substantially. As the speaker
informs his slack auditor, "thou onely wert before / An executioner at best; / Thou art a
gard'ner now, and more / An usher to convey our souls / Beyond the utmost starres and
poles" (lines 15-18). Though Herbert professes an advance for Time, from executioner to
gardener, gardener to usher, he nevertheless takes away the bite: the scythe becomes a
"pruning-knife" (line 11). Offering such promotions is like tossing a desk-job to Willy
Loman: they are meant in effect to sweep aside, if not under carpet. And so Time finally
realizes, remarking, "This man deludes: / What do I here before his doore? / He doth not
crave lesse time, but more" (lines 28-30). In the concluding paradox, Time, now
"chafing" (line 28), realizes he has been yoked all the while, and seems prepared, as
Milton might put it, to fly ensviously away so as to gorge on less pious matter. Donne,
too, seems to capture and detain time, both in the structure of the *Devotions* and in his own metaphors of imprisonment and enclosure. But what these poems present most succinctly is that, quite simply, time and eternity are not only decidedly different concepts, but concepts deserving of decidedly different treatment. This axiom likewise informs the *Devotions*, as Donne confronts Time without offending its divine sensibilities.

The kind of battle waged by Marlowe's protagonists—Tamburlaine, Barabas, and Faustus—finds a degree of resolution in the *Devotions*. In fact, their species of vices draw immediate commentary: "we beggared ourselves by hearkening after false riches, and infatuated ourselves by hearkening after false knowledge. So that now, [we] die by the torment of sickness." The question of this sickness, this infirmity in body and soul, alternately saddens, frustrates, and angers Donne. His reactions to its progress cause him to reflect upon the temporal matrix within which the illness functions; as such, he begins to contend not only with infirmity, but infinity as well. In this, he often seems not so different from a Tamburlaine, who would subjugate the stars themselves. "'The sun which goes so many miles in a minute, the stars of the firmament which go so very many more," he observes, albeit with a kind of ironic self-effacement, "go not so fast as my body to the earth" (13). In fact, Donne assumes a peculiar relation to time from the onset of the work, when he asserts in a dedicatory letter to Prince Charles, "I have had three
births; one, natural, when I came into the world; one, supernatural, when I entered into
the ministry; and now, a preternatural birth, in returning to life, from this sickness" (3).
The convolution of the time-line forecasts an ongoing paradox in the Devotions; both
reverent and militant, Donne ostensibly harmonizes with time and its motions even as he
often utterly subverts them. The progress of his work, his illness, and natural, observable
time are periodically in and out of conjunction, as with the sun and stars of the previous
quote, for instance, lagging behind Donne's vertiginous descent to death even as they
mark it. And so "natural" time, along with his "natural" birth, become merely the low
rungs in the ladder toward an atonement with the eternal. Natural time is necessary but
necessarily surpassable to reach the divine. The "preternatural" birth in the Devotions
requires a different sense of time, one that acknowledges not only its distinction from
eternity, but its distinction from that which moves beyond time even in mundane reality.
Always with a degree of veneration, he hopes like Boethius for divine perspective, "to
look forward to mine end, and to look backward too" (11). The grace of God becomes
the connective power linking him to time even as it helps him overcome it.20

* * *

The contention with time announces itself in the opening lines of the Devotions
themselves: "Variable, and therefore miserable condition of man; this minute I was well,
and am ill, this minute. I am surprised with a sudden change, and alteration to worse,
and can impute it to no cause" (7). No cause, that is, but time. The line resonates with the kind of Shakespearean grief found in *King John*, when Salisbury proclaims upon the demise of the monarch, "My liege, my lord! but now a king, now thus" (V.ii.66). If the same minute may mark both sickness and health, life and death, the power of time to act as a measurement of reality lapses. (It should be noted, too, that Donne's term "devotions" carries the twin senses here of *devotus*: both "faithful" and "accursed.") As in Spenser's *Cantos of Mutabilitie*, time here abdicates to spatial change and alteration.

In Donne's case, the sickness subordinates time to itself: "[man] hath enough in himself, not only to destroy and execute himself, but to presage that execution upon himself; to assist the sickness, to antedate the sickness, to make the sickness the more irremediable by sad apprehensions" (8). A famous zen koan states that every vase is already broken.

Such a realization of the fragility of the human form is less enlightening than troubling for Donne: to anticipate sickness, dissolution, and death is, as he puts it, to "look forward to mine end, and to look backward too." To be empowered with a self-awareness of one's end is only a short hop from perceiving that the curtain is always already dropped.

In such a reality, time matters little. Montaigne writes similarly in his essay, "That to Philosophie, Is to Learne How to Die" (a title drawn from Cicero). "To know how to die, doth free us from all subjection and constraint," he says. "He who hath learned to die, hath unlearned to serve." The yoke of time is cast off. To further demonstrate this,
Montaigne relates an Aristotelian account of "certaine litle beasts along the river Hyspanis, that live but one day; she which dies at 8. a clocke in the morning, dies in her youth, and she that dies at 5. in the afternoon, dies in her decrepitude, who of us doth not laugh, when we shall see this short moment of continuance to be had in consideration of good or ill fortune? the most and the least in ours, if we compare it with etemitie, or equall it to the lasting of mountaines, rivers, stars, and trees, or any other living creature, is no lesse ridiculous." What we might call no time at all in relation to the span of our own lives--so short as to be infinitely small--so are our lives in the context of the eternal. "No man is so little, in respect of the greatest man, as the greatest in respect of God; . . .

Proportion," Donne ultimately notes, "is no measure for infinity" (14). To "antedate" the sickness with "sad apprehensions" is to create a reality where time ceases effectively to measure change--the stages of his illness and decline--as well. Aristotle's account of time as the measure of motion, elsewhere questioned by Donne, begins in the first Meditation to lose its applicability.

The first Expostulation, his so-called "breath[ing] back" to God (9), also marks time as a subject of contention; setting the tone for the entire work, Donne's conceit of a timepiece both continues and defies tradition. The idea of the Watchmaker God is a prominent one in religious iconography, although most of the interest has been in Newton's mechanistic Watchmaker universe. The Greek Chronos, of course, also lent
his name and reign to time. Donne writes that the "pulse in our soul" and "voice in our conscience," the potential for self-awareness imparted by God, go too often ignored. He then observes, "But will God pretend to make a watch, and leave out the spring? to make so many various wheels in the faculties of the soul, and in the organs of the body, and leave out grace, that should move them? Or will God make a spring, and not wind it up?" (10). The grace of God, here conceived as a kind of *primium mobile*, contributes to the belittlement of time. Always under the control of another force, time becomes in the first Station the focus of Donne's questioning, even as the answers it provides grow ever more frail throughout the *Devotions.*

When Donne writes, "We have received our portion, and mispent it, not been denied it" (10), he is preparing for the second Station, one that consciously deepens the "sad apprehensions" of the former Meditation. "In the same instant that I feel the first attempt of the disease," he writes, "I feel the victory" (13). One of the most prominent ideas in the *Devotions* is that *parva non sunt parva*, "small things are not small." From this axiom, Donne argues that "how little soever I be, . . . who am as though I were not, may call upon God" (14). Those protestations to God continue to focus on time: "Thou stayedst for the first world, in Noah's time, one hundred and twenty years; thou stayedst for a rebellious generation in the wilderness forty years, wilt thou stay no minute for me?" (14). The attempted measurement of grace with time is eventually rejected, as it
must be in a reality where time holds no ultimate sway. Instead, for God, Donne notes that "thy summons, thy battle, thy victory, and thy judgment, all but one act" (14) provide a deeper beneficence. For one who is sick, and thereby brought to an awareness of his end, "the hand of death pressed upon him from the first minute." But with more astute eschatology, in the final resurrection, "all shall rise there in a less minute than any one dies here" (14-5). Why fear demise with the prospect of eternal life? This is a common enough placation for one facing death (also urged by Donne in his poem "Death Be Not Proud"). But the force of Donne's ruminations lies in their continual assault upon the rulership not only of death but time. This way of confronting time is explained by Donne more vividly in the third Station, when "The patient takes his bed" (17).

One critic points out the possible Latin pun in the title, "Emergent Occasions"—occasus in Latin meaning a death, in this case from which one may emerge reborn. If Donne does intend such a play on words, he is probably aware too of the common Latin idiom, "solis occasus," signifying the setting (dying) of the sun. The image is a fitting one for Donne, setting up the correspondent idea of a rebirth, a sunrise from that sunset. More importantly, the union of Donne's "occasus" with that of the sun maintains his union with the natural, harmonic flow of time even as he moves beyond it. His sunrises and sunsets are all uniform--his deaths emergent, his births occasi. His own "occasus" begins in the third Station with the observation, "When God came to breathe into man the
breath of life, he found him flat upon the ground; when he comes to withdraw that breath from him again, he prepares him to it by laying him flat upon his bed" (17). The pattern of descent and ascent, setting and rising, parallels Donne's "Hymne to God my God, in my sickness": "Be this my Text, my Sermon to mine owne. / Therefore that he may raise the Lord throws down." In the second Meditation, fever begins figuratively to melt down Donne's physical form, but "it does not only melt him, but calcinate him, reduce him to atoms, and to ashes . . . . And how quickly? Sooner than thou can receive an answer, sooner than thou can conceive the question" (12). The illness has begun a dissolution, a kind of alchemical reduction, which will eventually culminate in Donne's figurative death, one from which he is effectively reborn. He remarks, "my body falls down without pushing; my soul does not go up without pulling; ascension is my soul's pace and measure, but precipitation my body's" (12). The tension of direction, up and down, finds further expression in his ensuing allusion to Jacob's ladder, upon which "even angels, whose home is heaven . . . yet had a ladder to go to heaven by steps" (13). The angelic ladder is a fitting paradigm for Donne's conflict with time. As Georges Poulet remarks, "All, therefore, that was naturally spontaneous and instantaneous in spiritual life—the act of comprehending, the act of feeling, the act of willing or of enjoying—all of this was being achieved in man only through time, only with the help of time, only as if borne by time toward its completion. But in proportion as this act was
brought close to its point of perfection, in proportion as it approached its own completion in time, it tended to release itself from time. . . . 'It is then only . . . that the soul attains a uniformity which is like that of the angels'." Poulet speaks here of Christian medieval thought; the applicability to Donne's Devotions lies in the paradoxical reception and rejection of time. A uniformity like that of the angels entails, in Donne's case, both ascent and descent. Still, the linearity of Donne's intended progress, here made explicit, is nevertheless carefully coupled with a cyclical volition, just as the sun's cosmic progress throughout the year. As with Dante's Pilgrim, who descends to the infernal in order to ascend to the paradisiacal, but spirals upon a series of concentric circles, Donne matches his movement with sidereal cycles—like the fever itself, returning and dissipating in cyclical fashion. (This pattern is clearly established from the very first Prayer, when he writes, "O eternal and most gracious God, who considered in thy self are a circle, first and last, and altogether; but considered in thy working upon us, art a direct line" [11].)

Thus he draws together the forces at work: his physical motion of decline, the development of his sickness, and the progress of natural time all synchronize, even as they begin to dissociate. This harmonic convergence merely preludes the angelic perspective cited by Poulet, in which time is the low rung on Jacob's ladder, too.

Another "natural"act—breathing—importantly extends the countercurrent tendencies of time and the soul. Donne adopts metaphors of breath even as he hopes to
transform and surpass their quotidian function of suspiration. Donne believed he contracted the illness (most likely typhus—its meaning "smoke" or "mist") from a malignant "vapour," brought in through the lungs. When he writes that God breathes "into man the breath of life" at the creation of life and at death "comes to withdraw that breath from him again" (17), he places the human form in the same prostrate position, conflating once again space and time. The idea of God actually suspiring the life of his creations, exhaling at birth and inhaling at death, further creates a conceit in which human life itself becomes a timeless point of inertia, a node of apnea that recalls Donne's earlier comments on proportion and infinity. The line between breaths becomes that between life and death, sickness and health, time and eternity. The blurring of these lines—their difficulty in detection—is yet another recurring idea in the Devotions. During the eighteenth Meditation, Donne asks, when a man dies, "His soul is gone, whither? Who saw it come in, or who saw it go out?" (114). What instant defines the cessation of life and the inception of death? In a paradox reminiscent of Zeno, does such a moment even exist in the scope of an infinite division of moments? These are questions Donne asks repeatedly; their effect in the third Station is to express time's irrelevance. To break the recumbence of sleep, "we tell our servants at what hour we will rise," but on the death-bed and in the grave, "we cannot tell ourselves at what day, what week, what month" (18). What he here laments is an explicit loss of control not only over the self but
over time. Implicit in this loss is the notion that he ever had control, and what might at first be brushed aside as an example of death's power actually exemplifies time's subservient position throughout one's life. Until he should die, Donne dictates the hour of his rising. Time numbers among those other servants awaiting his command.

* * *

To distinguish eternity from time also entails a differentiation between the eternal and the merely infinite. Donne's conception of infinity is often a playful one. In "Loves Growth," he coyly delivers the paradox. "Me thinkes I lyed all winter, when I swore, / My love was infinite, if spring make'it more" (lines 5-6). And in the Devotions, Donne cannot resist a few similar sports. In the fourth Prayer, he writes, "if thou be pleased to multiply seven days (and seven is infinite) by the number of my sins (and that is more infinite), if this day must remove me till days shall be no more, seal to me my spiritual health" (29). Such computation leads Donne to note that "for the things of this world, their blessing was, Increase" (31). Division and multiplicity are the instruments of humanity: angels and stars, he says, may be fixed in number, but not so man. And both division and multiplicity are derivatives of Increase: division, after all, is only the inversion of multiplication, and neither could exist without the notion that if one thing exists, wo things can also exist. He contrasts the idea of the infinite, of endless Increase (not necessarily endless addition), with the idea of solitude—two notable polarities for
Donne's condition, a disease whose secondary symptoms include an increased awareness of being alone.

Upon the arrival of the Physician in the fifth Station, the conflict between Increase and Solitude begins to dominate the narrative, mirroring a conflict between the infinite and the eternal oneness of divine time. Donne expresses the conflict in a metaphor which links the rebirth and resurrection motif of earlier Stations in an allusion to the phoenix, the fabled bird which regenerates itself in a self-immolating cycle. Often a symbol for Christ in alchemical tradition, and a device Donne employs in "The Canonization" as an emblem of the union of the sexes, the phoenix appears in the Devotions as an image of the mythical solitary. As he writes, with perhaps effort at self-convincing, "there is no phoenix; nothing singular, nothing alone" (31). There is nothing which is not a part of some greater plurality, not in some way connected with the eternal. (Donne will return to this question in later stations, particularly when the asserting that "no man is an island.") The phoenix, moreover, symbolizes a recurrence of cycles, a series of rebirths matching Donne's own metaphorical progression. However, his disenchantment with the creature here marks the continued pattern of harmonizing with the natural (or in this case, perhaps supernatural) only to disavow it. As a necessary corollary of Increase, the infinite has utility; but the endless cycles of time are like the
dangerous whorls of a maelstrom when they are left without consideration of the eternal.

That which never increases becomes a greater blessing than increase itself.

The qualities of linear motion and progress coupled to cyclical time spiral through the *Devotions*. As noted above, this is in harmony with the natural course of time; yet Donne remains consistent in subverting this harmony by continually reasserting his supremacy over time. Culminating in the critical fourteenth Station, this paradoxical relationship to time might be pictured as a series of harmonious divergences. For instance, Donne has just finished remarking upon the blessings of Increase. He subsequently qualifies this statement when observing that "there is a growth of the disease then" (43). "Diseases themselves . . . conspire how to multiply," he writes, assigning his illness the same propensity for Increase he has early exalted in humanity. This growth of disease—an *accursed* increase to balance the *blessed* (as noted above, a condition inherent in the term "devotion")—is aligned with natural, in this case seasonal, time. "There must be an autumn too," he concludes, "but whether an autumn of the disease or me, it is not my part to choose" (43). Or so Donne claims. For he quickly adds, "My disease cannot survive me," although "I may overlive it" (43). Donne can maneuver through time in order to outlast and "overlive" the diseased natural time of his observable life, while his disease remains behind, sloughed off like old skin. His disease, in effect, is a parasite that may not kill its host without destroying itself. So too the
eternal subsumes, as host, natural time: "That time may be swallowed up in eternity, and
hope swallowed in possession" is a conclusive prayer in the Devotions (121). (And here,
the conclusion to Spenser's Two Cantos of Mutabilitie parallels the thought: "that same
time when no more Change shall be, / But stedfast rest of all things firmely stayd / Upon
the pillours of Eternity" [8.2.2-4].) Time cannot survive the eternal, though the eternal
outlives it. Thus time and disease become conflated: they are interwoven as dual entities
to be surpassed. To finalize the point, time and disease are equated by name in this same
Meditation: "age is a sickness, and youth is an ambush" (44). So Donne continues to
suggest a harmonious flow with time—or with disease—as both course towards the same
"autumn," only to subvert immediately this harmonious acceptance with an assault on
time's supposed indomitability.

Leading up to the fourteenth Station, other passages of "harmonious divergence"
exist. In the tenth Meditation, in which the "disease steals on insensibly," Donne draws
attention to the benefits of pre-determined cycles. "Though the dogstar have a pestilent
breath, an infectious exhalation, yet," he writes, "because we know when it will rise . . .
we shadow ourselves to a sufficient prevention" (64). Other astronomical phenomena
that disobey the cycles of nature, the measurements of time, fall into the sphere rather of
mutability, and "no almanack" (unless perhaps Subtle's in The Alchemist), "no almanack
tells us when a blazing star will break out" (64). Perilous secrecy, that which passes
observation, enjoys a greater potency than the visible, the predictable. Insofar as time expresses itself only empirically, it fails to gain the "secret of a higher sphere" (64). Thus Donne begins to lament the power of the infectious, invisible vapor at the root of his illness. In one of the most telling commentaries in the *Devotions*, he writes, "but that it is a half atheism to murmur against Nature, who is God's immediate commissioner, who would not think himself miserable to be put into the hands of Nature . . . ?" (77). After all, it is Nature's breath—not the breath of divinity respirating between God and his expostulator—that has brought him low. Donne's comment reveals an imperfectly repressed antagonism against the forces of nature, an antagonism that has been percolating since the onset. With regard to natural time in the *Devotions*, Donne's glass of atheism is always half-full. If one avoids the pestilence of the dog-star by tracking it, the vicissitudes of natural time can be overcome by the sort of meditative tracking Donne is charting in the *Devotions*.

* * *

Gerard Manley Hopkins once wrote, "Glory be to God for dappled things." One gets the sense that when Donne's "sickness declares the infection and malignity thereof by spots." he might not share Hopkins's sentiment. Meditation 13 is decidedly miserable, and he asserts at one point that if a mother "could prophetically read [her newborn son's] history, how ill a man, perchance how ill a son, he would prove," then the burden in her
mind would far outweigh that in her belly (84-5). Donne's "sad apprehensions" are returning. But in fact, to see his future prophetically, and his past, has been his agenda throughout. This Station prepares for the critical fourteenth Station, in which he confronts the role of time head on. And as if to arm himself for that melee, he finds eventually some solace—even of a Hopkinsian variety. Like Tamburlaine before him, whose eyes as "fiery circles bear encompassed / A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres, / That guides his steps and actions to the throne," Donne finally writes, "these spots upon my breast, and upon my soul, shall appear to me as the constellations of the firmament, to direct my contemplation to that place where thy Son is, thy right hand" (87). Here is literal evidence for Raspa's "inner cosmology" that "was a meeting point between the outer world of time and space and the eternal world of divine love and satanic hate." If the fault is not in the stars but in the self, the stars actually in the self betoken the possibility of overcoming time and sickness alike. As he has done repeatedly, Donne adopts the figures of natural time in order to rise above them.

Station 14 begins with the announcement, "The Physicians observe these accidents to have fallen upon the critical days" (88). This notification sends Donne into his most sustained treatment of time in the Devotions. Consistent with his pattern of lamenting time's function, he first asks, if we are obliged to "times, and . . . seasons . . . and critical days," how can we ever be happy? For "What poor elements are our
happinesses made of, if time, time which we can scarce consider to be any thing, be an
essential part of our happiness!" (88). But as he points out, time is merely the receptacle
for "those false happinesses" of mundane existence (88), the "mortal dross" of Milton's
"On Time." Its sphere of influence does not extend to the truly worthwhile: it is merely
in Aristotelian terms the "measure of motion" (89). This latter definition is an important
one, instrumentalizing time without granting it any actual relevance to the importance of
human life. It is more ruler-stick than ruler-ship. The demystification of time continues
in the remarks.

\[
\text{howsoever it may seem to have three stations, past, present, and future, yet the first and last of these are not (one is not now, and the other is not yet), and that which you call present, is not now the same that it was when you began to call it so in this line (before you sound that word present, or that monosyllable now, the present and the now is past.)}
\]

(89)

This Augustinian version of time, "this imaginary, half-nothing time," as Donne then
iterates twice, "is not so" (89). Eternity has nothing to do with this feeble portrait of
time, insofar as that, "If we consider eternity, into that time never entered: eternity is not
an everlasting flux of time, but time is a short parenthesis in a long period; and eternity
had been the same as it is, though time had never been" (89). A familiar concept since
Plato's idea of time as the moving image of eternity, Donne's separation and distinction of
time from eternity allows him to malign the former's existence (or non-existence) with
some degree more relish than his predecessors. Even infinity and increase are placed
above time in Donne's hierarchy, when he considers "not eternity, but perpetuity; not that which had no time to begin in, but which shall outlive time, and be when time shall be no more" (89). The path to enlightenment continues to lead Donne to the decision that time must be controlled: he ponders finally, perhaps with a bit of whimsy, "If happiness be in the season, or in the climate, how much happier then are the birds than men, who can change the climate and accompany and enjoy the same season ever" (90). The lure of such control has already been examined at length by Jonson in The Alchemist—Sir Epicure Mammon's desire for a "perpetuity of lust" being only one of the baits in the shop. Natural time rings with a falsity inherent in his earlier view of cycles without progress, or Increase without eternity. To partly solve this dilemma of how to live with a sense of eternity, to acquire divine perspective, Donne delivers the plan of his work in this Meditation.

If eternity encompasses the infinite, which in turn enfolds time, "How busy and perplexed a cobweb is the happiness of man here," asks Donne, "that must be made up with a watchfulness to lay hold upon occasion, which is but a little piece of that which is nothing, time?" (89). Here is Donne's program for what might be termed "occasional time." Recalling the Greek distinction of two different times, chronos and kairos, one secular and the other divine, and their various and meandering intersections as those moments in which the eternal is made manifest in the everyday, Donne's occasional time
marks the convergence of human control with that of the eternal, effectively leaping over mere "time" in the process. Donne's "Emergent Occasions" embody an extended paradigm for the "little of our life [that] is occasion, opportunity to receive good in" (89). This is decidedly not the Occasion of typical Renaissance iconography, shuttling by en passant with its dangling forelock, ready to be seized. Rather, it is to Occasion what the eternal is to the "everlasting flux of time." Occasional time "take[s] away all consideration, all distinction of days," even all distinction of the infinite divisibility of those days into such moments as Occasion represented. "from being of the essence of our salvation" (91). They are tools to use, not abstractions dictating human action. In such a system, occasion and time remain "for assistances, and for the exaltation of our devotion, to fix ourselves, at certain periodical and stationary times, upon the consideration of those things which [God] hast done for us" (91, my emphasis). So Donne's Devotions upon Emergent Occasions charts the "periodical and stationary times" for the purpose of personal devotion, simultaneously re-organizing time and refining periodicity with an eye to the eternal. If "a day is as a thousand years with [God]," Donne strives for a similar, microcosmic reality. He outlines "seven critical" days, and once again pre-empting time's sway, asks, "let, O Lord, a day be as a week to me," and "let me . . . judge myself that I be not judged by thee" (93). This pattern of days, delineated below, demonstrates further Donne's use of time to transcend time.32
First, "the day of thy visitation . . . thy visitation by sickness," and then, the
"second . . . the light and testimony of my conscience" (93) prompt Donne to see the
sadness of his sins in terms of evenings, his determination of those sins his mornings.
The "crisis and examination of [his] conscience" heralds the third day, as he prepares to
receive the "Son in his institution of the sacrament" (94). This day, despite "dark
passages and slippery steps," holds "light hours enough for any man to go his whole
journey intended by" (94). The fourth day marks Donne's "dissolution and transmigration
from hence," a death through which he passes to his fifth day, "the day of [his]
resurrection" (94). And "how soever thou make that day in the grave, yet there is no day
between that and the resurrection" (94). The resurrection leads some, those "who have
made just use of their former days," to be "superinvested with glory; whereas the others .
. . shall have nothing added but immortality to torment" (95). The sixth day, that of
judgment, is "truly, and most literally, the critical, the decretory day" (95). The seventh
is the "everlasting Sabbath," where Donne "shall live as long without reckoning any more
days after" (95). This sequence of time, culminating in the eternal, is central to the
*Devotions*, and accentuates the path by which occasional time—a time of segments
infused with divinity—leads to correspondence with the eternal. For while the seven days
are analogous to natural time, they each partake of something greater. This sense of
schedule continues in the following Station.
Unable to sleep either day or night, Donne asks, "if I be entering now into
eternity, where there shall be no more distinction of hours, why is it all my business now
to tell clocks?" (98). The insomniac's fitful frustration with time, ticking ever more
emphatically as a sleepless night wears on alarmingly, is clearly and sympathetically
expressed here. Not even eternity can provide him the pleasure of a soporific. But
Donne's commiserative question acts as the fulcrum for the preceding Station, replete
with its reconfigurations of time, and the upcoming series of Stations, dominated by the
ringing of the church bells. In these Stations, some of the most memorable in all the
Devotions, Donne indeed will be in the business of "telling clocks." For the ringing of
the bells, while overtly treated as auditory memento mori, in fact pertains to Donne's
vigorous treatment of time, stemming from his overall urge towards occasional time in
Station 14. The timing of church bells was, of course, for centuries the means by which
the citizenry segmented their days. As Donne puts it, their sound "never ceases, no more
than the harmony of the spheres, but is more heard" (102). His overreaching of the
natural order is exhibited once more here, as the bells magnify Donne's own relationship
to time: moving with it only to move beyond it. He notes foremost their powers of
prophecy, both solemnizing and forecasting death. And he underscores the religiosity of
their powers, as well, when he writes, "My God, my God . . . The sound of thy trumpets
thou didst impart to secular and civil uses too, but the sound of bells only to sacred"
They are both the tools and expression of Donne's time: in them, he continues to hear and see both the divine perspective he has sought, his beginnings and endings. The bells ring for the dead man in order, Donne says, "to convey him out of the world in his van, his soul," "to bring him in his rear, in his body, to the church." and interestingly, "this continuing of ringing after his entering is to bring him to me" (105). The ouroboric cycle of life and death becomes expressed through and in Donne himself, even as the natural cycles of time become engulfed in their divine sublimation, eternity. The bells—a traditional image of time's occasions recast—connect time to eternity in the same manner as Donne's own "inner cosmology."

In one of the most quoted of literary conceits, Donne stresses further the connective quality of the bells. "No man is an island, entire of itself," he observes, "every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. . . . [A]ny man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee" (108-9). But before this famous passage, Donne more precisely casts the pattern of occasional time in the bells:

The bell doth toll for him that thinks it doth: and though it intermit again, yet from that minute that that occasion wrought upon him, he is united to God. Who casts not up his eye to the sun when it rises? but who takes off his eye from a comet when that breaks out? Who bends not his ear to any bell which upon any occasion rings? but who can remove it from that bell which is passing a piece of himself out of the world?

(108)
The cyclical rising of the sun garners no attention from Donne; its ascension is like the bell that rings upon any old, stale occasion. The comet that breaks the familiar pattern draws the mind to heaven. Occasion must rather ascend to the eternal, to an absolute atonement. In the same way that Donne's continental metaphor proclaims a Pangaea-like oneness, his occasions, the kind of time he values, become wonderfully unified. The bells signal not a passage of time, but a passage to the eternal.

In Station 19, the illness and Devotions both undergo a sort of peripeteia. While throughout the entire work natural time has occupied a debased position, when "good signs" now appear in the "storm" of his illness, Donne experiences a literal and figurative purgation (122). Abruptly, he offers a paean to the indomitable virtues of Nature:

...we cannot awake the July flowers in January, nor retard the flowers of the spring to autumn. We cannot bid the fruits come in May, nor the leaves to stick on in December. A woman that is weak cannot put off her ninth month to a tenth for her delivery... Nature (if we look for durable and vigorous effects) will not admit preventions, nor obligations upon her, for they are precontracts, and she will be left to her liberty. Nature would not be spurred, nor forced to mend her pace.

(122-3)

The gentility of this praise contrasts markedly with what has gone before, illustrating just how much Donne's relationship to time has progressed. Still, the passage is primarily intended to set off the uncontrollability of his infirmity, since "It were scarce a disease if it could be ordered and made obedient to our times" (122). And his Prayer concludes by displacing nature for a higher power again, as he asserts, "if I... begin to say, all was but
a natural accident, and nature begins to discharge herself, and she will perfect the whole work, my hope shall vanish because it is not in thee" (130). Rather than a true reversal, Donne's recognition of nature's, and natural time's, place is simply more sophisticated. All along he has never rejected time, but rather overcome its constraint on his contemplation and experience of divinity. During the purgation, he further elucidates how such control is paradoxically an acknowledgment of nature's place. He writes of the physicians' current technique, "But what is the present necessary action? Purging; a withdrawing, a violating of nature, a farther weakening. O dear price, and O strange way of addition, to do it by subtraction; of restoring nature, to violate nature; of providing strength, by increasing weakness" (133). The periodic violating of natural time's place in the cosmos in effect strengthens the bonds that tie Donne to the eternal. His attention to time develops, but remains in its undercurrent a struggle to transcend its boundaries. For a greater good, Donne's embracing of time is really one of farewell.

Eventually concluding that "Many good occasions slip away in long consultations" (134), Donne approaches the final Station by bringing several of his temporal themes full circle. If the direction of the Stations leading up to the purgation seemed to be ever downward, and Donne's resistance one of upward mobility, the penultimate Stations turn the arc into one of ascension. He cautiously observes, able now to rise from his bed as a veritable "Lazarus out of tomb" (138), "O perverse way, irregular
motion of man; even rising itself is the way to ruin" (139). The "irregular" movement recalls the treatment of cycles, increase, and motion earlier, save that the direction has switched. Donne has risen, but now is "ready to sink lower than before" (140), anticipating the final Station's discussion of relapse. So, too, his depiction of the movement of man looks backward and forward, recalling his earlier observations and forecasting his upcoming ones:

as in the heavens there are but a few circles that go about the whole world, but many epicycles, and other lesser circles, but yet circles: so of those men which are raised and put into circles, few of them move from place to place, and pass through many and beneficial places, but fall into little circles, and, within a step or two, are at their end, and not so well as they were in the centre, from which they were raised.

(140)

The harmony and music of these spheres portray a macrocosmic model of Donne's own microcosmic perturbations. The cycles differentiate occasionally. Those that "pass through many and beneficial places" embody the kind of divine motion Donne hopes to capture in the Devotions. Returning to his earlier image, Donne once again invokes the mythical phoenix as the capstone to his argument. The "cauterizing" of the soul he has experienced creates a "kind of phoenix out of the ashes, a fruitfulness out of that which was barren before, and by that which is the barrenest of all. ashes" (147). A new phoenix has replaced the old. His third birth, a "preternatural birth, in returning to life, from this sickness," transcends the infinite cycle of increase-without-movement because it renews
itself not only from itself, but from something that it was not. He is interested in the
phoenix not for its singularity, and not for its immortality, but for the particularities of its
cycles, moving as they do through occasions of beneficence. His path lies not from ashes
to ashes, but ashes to a fiery enlightenment.

The final Station also mirrors the first, but having transformed in understanding,
the terms here are infused with new and deeper significance. The fear of relapse leads
Donne to consider how infirmity does indeed distort nature, as "when we must watch
through all those long nights, and mourn through all those long days (days and night, so
long as that Nature herself shall seem to be perverted, and to have put the longest day,
and the longest night, which should be six months asunder, into one natural, unnatural
day)" (153). The perversion of nature parallels the perversion of time here explicitly.
The harmonies of nature are susceptible to such assault, and are a fragile foundation upon
which to build one's reality. All of Donne's days have been "natural" and "unnatural"
both. Although Donne's cycle has attained a sense of closure, invigorated by his sense of
occasional time as defiance of closure itself, the fear of relapse with which he concludes
problematises resolution. "We have three lives in our state of sin," he says, "and where
the sins of youth expire, those of our middle years enter, and those of our age after them .
.. but the occasion of my fear is more pregnant than so, for I have had, I have multiplied
relapses already" (155). Again, "sad apprehensions" come to fruition; the struggle to
overcome temporal limitation and temporal enclosures—even those imaginary borders between "ages"—continues. So in the final Prayer, Donne's narrative orbits around to its starting point. "O eternal and most gracious God, who, though beest ever infinite, yet enlargest thyself by the number of our prayers," he writes. "Since therefore thy correction hath brought me to such a participation of thyself . . . as that I durst deliver myself over to thee this minute, if this minute thou wouldst accept my dissolution, preserve me" (158-9). The infinite is augmented by prayer, by devotion. (Without prayer, devotion instead "comes to indevotion and spiritual coldness" [155].) The pledge to deliver himself "this minute" recalls the opening line of the work, when he is both well and ill "this minute." He is now ill and, absolutely, well this minute: he has come through the passage, felt union with creation, and restored his sense of participation in the eternal. The apprehension of relapse wraps the work around on itself, as gazing back over his experience fuels his dedication to avoid such a consequence, even as its very possibility implies another series of occasions devoted even more fervently to overcoming it. "If my infirmity overtake me," he at last implores, "thou forsake me not" (159). But Donne has all along meditated on the contrary: his overtaking of disease, of time, of infirmity. This is a work that, despite its call for separation between Donne and the natural time he sees as evidence of temporal infirmities, ultimately calls for a union. In itself, the wrapping
around of the first and last Stations completes a union that represents Donne's own union with the divine, both despite and because of time.

* * *

Donne's control of time does differ from that expressed in the works of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson. If only in terms of metaphor, Donne never attacks time outright, at least not with much viciousness. Nor does his illness suggest to him that time should be whipped or warred against. Donne's sophisticated differentiation between natural time and eternal time also reaches heights not realized by the others. Still, the pervasive desire to overcome and enthrall time suggests similar changes in the way people were viewing the concept of time. Donne's uses of time—for divine union and perspective on the eternal—are somewhat more admirable than the characters who abuse time. And in this distinction may lie his most significant contribution to the control of time in the Renaissance. Alexandre Dumas, comparing Robespierre and Napoleon in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, once observed that "Robespierre represented a 'lowering' equality: he brought kings to the guillotine, while Napoleon represented an 'elevating' equality: he raised the people to the level of the throne." If Marlowe, Shakespeare and Jonson demonstrate how time can be brought to the guillotine, it remained for Donne to show how one could use time to reach the throne.
Notes


5. Donne's satirical poem, "Metempsychosis" (1601), which traces the transmigration of the soul in Eve's apple through such temporary lodgings as a fish, mouse and elephant, bears little overt similarity to the Devotions. Nevertheless, the quantified scheme of stations in the Devotions suggests something of the structure of the former poem, and something of the satirical does filter into Donne's religious writings. When in "Metempsychosis" the speaker remarks, "To an unfetterd soules quick nimble hast / Are falling stars, and hearts thoughts, but slow pac'd" (lines 171-2), there is a sense of ridicule at the whole concept of transmigration—a mobility that defies limit. A residue of these lines exists in the Devotions, when Donne asserts, "The sun which goes so many miles in a minute, the stars of the firmament which go so very many more, go not so fast as my body to the earth" (13).

6. Cf. Carrithers, Donne at Sermons, p. 188, who argues that "the recurring private devotional pattern of meditation, expostulation, and prayer . . . depends, in turn, not on the larger cycle of the Christian Year but instead on authorial will and natural history (the course of the illness, specifically)." Carrithers rightly stresses authorial will, as well as the importance of temporal structures, as prime motives in the text. The degree to which the history of the illness is "natural," however, may need qualification. On the cyclical and linear structures, see also Seelig, pp. 16-21.

7. Waller, The Strong Necessity of Time (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), pp. 169, 74. See also Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, "Time, Place and the Congregation in Donne's Sermons," in Literature and Learning in Medieval and Renaissance England, ed. John Scatteredgood (Dublin: Irish Academic, 1984), pp. 197-216. She observes that often in the sermons, "The time being contemplated here is not the Renaissance commonplace of Time as destroyer. Nor does Donne show interest in the pageantry of astronomical time—as finally as in 'The Sunne Rising' or 'Loves Growth' he declares the irrelevance, the non-inevitability of the succession of dawn and sunrise, spring and summer" (197).


13. G. F. Waller, *The Strong Necessity of Time*, p. 73, writes of this change, "Donne's writings . . . progressively come to show his acceptance of the traditional Christian antithesis of time and eternity." The "antithesis" of time and eternity—theologically, a somewhat dubious dichotomy for Waller to propound in the first place—does not fully account for Donne's treatment of their paradoxical connections in the *Devotions*.

14. Frederic B. Tromly suggests that Milton, not known to have been significantly influenced by Donne, may have been thinking of him in this poem. See "Milton Responds to Donne: 'On Time' and 'Death Be Not Proud'." *Modern Philology* 80 (1983), pp. 390-3.


19. A sustained analysis of time in Donne is G. F. Waller's "John Donne's Changing Attitude to Time," in his *The Strong Necessity of Time*, pp. 67-78. While not treating the *Devotions* per se, Waller does point out relevant strains of time: "the dismissal of time as irrelevant because of the eternal importance of certain moments," "two means of facing time's progress . . . that of 'being,' contemplation, stasis, and that of 'doing,' activity, changing" (69, 70). He further argues that often in Donne's early writing, "time is something that must be used or exploited from within" (70). I would contend that this latter view is still evinced in the *Devotions*, and that time is a useful instrument for Donne in reconciling what Waller sees as his later "radical" and "Christian antithesis of time and eternity" (73).

227

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20. In a work that has otherwise little to do with Donne's concept of time, William Gifford, "Time and Place in Donne's Sermons," *PMLA* 82 (1967), pp. 388-98, does remark that "God, on a temporal level, may do wonderful things because, on an eternal level, all is one in His eye" (397).

21. Cf. Adam to Eve in *Paradise Lost*, IX.901, "How art thou lost, how on a sudden lost, 
/ Defaced, deflowered, and now to Death devote?"


25. For a look rather at spatial ideas, see Reinhard H. Friederich, "Expanding and Contracting Space in Donne's *Devotions*," *ELH* 45 (1978), pp. 18-32.


29. In an ingenious aside, D. W. Harding, p. 386, suggests that the twenty-three Stations may also be structurally synchronous, matching the hours of the day but falling short by one, "perhaps because he recovered and the last hour for him was still to strike." On this avoidance of Faustian fate, see "The *Devotions* Now," in *John Donne: Essays in Celebration*, ed. A. J. Smith (London: Methuen, 1972), pp. 385-403. Cf. Frost, p. 66 n. 86, who notes among other possibilities that "In his return from the harrowing of hell, Christ passed through twenty-three 'layers' of the universe to reach Paradise." For more symbolic significance in the number 23, see Frost, pp. 126-33.


32. Frost, Holy Delight, especially pp. 111-13, has drawn attention to the importance of the Biblical Hezekiah for the Devotions. His appearance in Isaiah is remarkably centered upon the idea of time and divinity, as Frost observes: "The iconographical tradition of Hezekiah gains substantial interest as it changes from a general visual shorthand to a complex involvement with the developing technology of time measurement" (p. 112). The figures of Temperance, usually associated with time management, and Hezekiah become conflated in much Renaissance iconography. Frost connects the story with the Devotions through "the winter solstice and his miraculous extension of life" (p. 122). I would rather emphasize that the account of Hezekiah includes an important instance of time manipulation. As a sign to the king of his promise to extend his life, God shifts the shadow on the "Dial of Ahaz," thus demonstrating both an ability to subjugate time, to move it either forward or back, and the subordination of time to the eternal.

33. In Donne's "A Sermon of Valediction at my going into Germany" (1619), a similar progression of days occurs. See The Sermons of John Donne, 2: 235-49. He uses the seven days of creation to describe the "many dayes, many lights to see and remember him [God] by" (p. 240). The progression of days differ notably in their professed intent. The sermon focuses on "the faculty that is excited, the memory," rather than the telos of the Devotions.

34. Seelig, p. 20, also notices a dramatic turn, but places it much earlier, writing that "the work rises to its climax at its midpoint in Meditation 12... and in Meditation 13... . Thereafter one has the feeling of having crossed a decisive border."

35. In his useful discussion of time in the sermons, Carrithers, p. 57, notes Donne's "conviction that time need be no bondage and indeed may be experienced best as the action of liberation."

36. Seelig, p. 33, comments on this phrase and its circular symmetry with the opening, itself an instance of epanalepsis (mirroring repetition, in this case of "this minute"). Her reading is insightful, as well, on time in general in the Devotions: she sees as one of its subjects "the consideration of time and of eternity and their intersection" (p. 35).
Chapter Six: Conclusion: The Control and Execution of Time

Throughout this work, I have referred to the use and abuse of Time as Instrument as the "control" of time. I include in this term not only the control of time itself as an objectified construction—a control whose manifestations include enfeeblement, debasement, violent subjugation, and other deleterious manipulations of time—but the control of others through the use of Time as Instrument. In the last analysis, what this term indicates might be expressed more concisely as an "execution" of time. For the latter encapsulates all strands of the above in its twofold meaning: both the act of being put to death and the "manner, style, or result of performance." Without forsaking the value of "control" as a term under which a perhaps broader scope of manipulation may be grouped, I turn to "execution" to help crystallize the preceding chapters. The execution of time throughout these works is exemplified by a kind of killing (certainly in many cases, even killings of a ritual sort): old manifestations of Time are replaced by new, and one reality of time dies into another. The execution of time also denotes the use or performance of time (the latter a refrain from the dramatic works, especially). Figures manipulate time and act as time. Punishment and performance are the poles of control, but they should not be equated with finality. For as surely as time is an instrument in itself, not merely the matrix in which events take place but an active ingredient and
catalyst, it is never rid of its own power as a controller. It does devour and it does reveal; neither, however, reigns supreme. Each mode continually usurps another.

A futility then exists in any attempt at categorizing representations of time. If, as Shakespeare's Rosalind remarks, "Time travels in divers paces with divers persons" (As You Like It, III.i.308-9), there may likewise be as many constructions of time as human beings. Which is to say, time not only travels diversely with diverse persons, but often travels not at all, or travels under an assumed verb-alias: devours, redeems, submits to, seduces, ignores, embraces, etc. Unfortunately, delineations of time such as Frederick Turner's inevitably suggest a certain exclusivity. Though he rightly perceives that dichotomizing Devourer and Revealer, the Scylla and Charybdis of Renaissance time scholarship, is insufficient and indeed misleading in describing the complexity of time or its epithets, he nullifies much of his progress by arbitrarily limiting time's aspects to nine rather than two. Certainly, some constructions of time are more apparent than others, elicit more commonality, and part of the purpose of this study has been to elevate the control of time to a position as recognizable as that held by devouring or redeeming time. But there is always, and probably preeminently, a sense, too, that the artist is the real manipulator of time, a postulate that suggests there may well be innumerable possibilities for portraying time.
A recent work of fiction by Alan Lightman called *Einstein's Dreams* may be the best exhibition of these artistic possibilities. This text includes some thirty vignettes, in each of which Time means something utterly different. Time might run backwards in one episode, cyclically in another. In one early chapter, Time runs more slowly at higher elevations, faster in the valleys, while in a later one Time is a nightingale. In all of these snippets, ostensibly the dreams of Einstein in the days leading up to the writing of his theorem on relativity, Time operates as a force of utmost concern to humankind. But what Lightman really demonstrates is that Time is always a pliable instrument for the artist. Thus Wilson writes, "Time . . . is always for Spenser a flexible instrument to be bent according to the demands of thought." Similarly, Outram writes of the dramatist in general, "the only fluid time is psychological time, which can only be controlled and manipulated through its sources, the mind and emotions." I hope, then, not to confine the possibilities of time's significance, but to show that approaches to time were manifold. And this, paradoxically, in itself demonstrates a drive to "execute" time.

Modern conceptions of time tend to speak with greater assurance as to the nature of physical time. But one recent critic has found the idea of time control in a modern setting, and usefully presents the longevity of the ideas I see generated during the Renaissance. In a fine essay, Milinda Schwab makes an intriguing commentary on William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily." Faulkner, himself nearly obsessed with time,
especially Bergsonian, writes that Emily carries around in a pocket an "invisible watch ticking at the end of [a] gold chain." Schwab demonstrates that the watch "illustrate[s] both her attempts to control the passage of the years and the consequences of such an ultimately futile effort" (p. 215). By placing the watch in Emily's pocket, Faulkner "demonstrates her effort to subjugate the clock to her own will." Schwab also draws a link to *The Sound and the Fury*, in which Quentin Compson "tear[s] the hands off his watch in a symbolic, and, of course, futile attempt to keep time from moving forward" (p. 216). Her conclusion, however, that the "attempt to halt the movement of time, like any such attempt, is doomed to failure" (p. 216) is not altogether accurate: certainly not all Faulkner's predecessors would agree as to the ultimate failure of control. Faulkner himself once remarked in an interview that "man is never time's slave," and for many writers during and since the Renaissance, this thesis was tested over and over.

In the last year, I have observed several cultural accessions to the control of time. In a 1997 commercial for a well-known brand of watch, three engrimed cyclists are pictured careening through mud, racing for a finish line. As the action grinds to a freeze-frame halt, a voice suggests confidently, "Time can be stopped. But Timex Iron-man Triathlon watches keep going." An infomercial first observed almost two years ago, but still ticking, features a gentleman who appears to have stepped from the pages of Jonson's *The Alchemist*. Divested of celestial robes or astrological sigils, and
clad instead in a business suit, the individual claims to have an almanac in which one can simply look up the right day to buy in the Future's market and the right day to sell. Based on the computer-generated analysis of centuries of probability data, the almanac reveals the percentage chance that, say, investing in corn on the twenty-third of November and selling exactly two weeks later would have resulted in the doubling of one's money. The foundation of this almanac is that seasons—natural, observable time—follow patterns relatively predictable—within a few percentage points, perhaps. The ubiquitous disclaimer, that results may vary significantly from those professed, does not seem to dissuade the shady star from assuming the kind of power over time Subtle would have greatly envied. (On that occasion when Drugger asks him "to look over, sir, my almanack, / And cross out my ill-days, that I may neither / Bargain, nor trust upon them" (I.iii.94-6), perhaps Subtle should have requested his fees in three equal, easy-to-pay installments.) The selling of both hope and fear, of course, continues unabated in the lottery and insurance companies. And Marlowe's secularized rituals of temporal violence resurface periodically in other literary works: Anthony Burgess, in his 1962 novel *A Clockwork Orange*, explores torture, violence, and aggression under the heading of clockwork time. Of his title, Burgess writes, "I mean it to stand for the application of a mechanistic morality to a living organism oozing with juice and sweetness."* The control
and quantification of time, the bifurcation of mechanized time and natural time, secular and divine, have become more and more an axiom of thought in the twentieth century.

Despite these extensions of the Renaissance's compulsion to control, at least one critic sees the pendulum swinging now the other way. Jeremy Rifkin acknowledges that "Modern man has come to view time as a tool to enhance and advance the collective well-being of the culture." However, he argues that "Advocates of the new time politics eschew the notion of exerting power over time":

small pockets of protest have begun to appear at scattered outposts along the way to wage battle against the accelerated time frame of the modern age. The new time rebels advocate a radically different approach to temporality. . . . Their interest is in redirecting the human consciousness toward a more empathetic union with the rhythms of nature. They believe that if we are to 'resacralize' life, we must first 'resacralize' time. It is by revaluing the time of each other and by understanding and accepting the inherent pace, tempo, and duration of the natural world that we can offer our species the best hope for the future.\(^9\)

Rifkin's work is interesting, if agenda-driven, in its focus on political power and temporal manipulation. He asserts that, just as clockwork-universe and watchmaker-God analogies legitimized a clock-oriented society, so too in the "Information age," a new cosmology is emerging that sees an "information universe." in which "time is information and continues to expand."\(^11\) For Rifkin, "the human race has passed into the fourth great era of time consciousness. . . . We have ordered our lives and our times by the seasons, the stars, the clocks, and now computers."\(^12\) Undoubtedly, computers, e-mail, the Internet—all have temporal ramifications, displacing in a way the power of heroes.
magicians, and politicians by democratizing the control over one's temporal sphere. Launching a call-to-arms against this "nanosecond culture," Rifkin urges a choice between "two very different futures. In the first we seek to control the forces of nature and the lives of each other. In the second we seek to integrate ourselves back into the temporal bonds of the larger communities of life that make up the biosphere of the planet. . . . The will to power, the will to empathy." I would argue that the choice, if it is one, between Rifkin's control and empathy reproduces much of the tension in the Renaissance exploration of time. Donne, for instance, saw natural time as something of an impediment. One cannot remain in empathy with what one must surpass. Jonson castigates his venture tripartite for their abuse of natural, ordered time. Still, his production creates an imaginative experience of time that creates and recreates the very possibility of its future abuse. Similarly, Rifkin seeks not "power over time" but power with time; yet in projecting this plan, he debases time by revealing its abject susceptibility to human manipulation.

Samuel Macey places the shift in control over time in the Romantic period, when humankind began to succumb to its own inventions in works like Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Hoffman's "Sandman." Macey, in fact, describes the shift from "Watchmaker God" to "Clockwork Devil," where the Devil is indeed in the details: "The same clockwork which during the horological revolution had symbolized the order needed by theologians,
philosophers, and poets alike was now becoming, for some poets, a symbol of the devil rather than of God.\textsuperscript{14} This diabolical mechanizing of time recasts what had been exploited by merchants in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Certainly, as much as Faustus commodifies time in trading it for his soul, Lucifer and his minions are the real merchants of time in Marlowe's play. Macey interestingly supposes, additionally, that "Poe is another of the dark Romantics who is fascinated by the very clockwork that he attacks."\textsuperscript{15} However, as with Poe's Renaissance precursors, and with Rifkin above, there is finally a strong ambivalence about the control of time long before the Romantic period and long after. One cannot rail against the debasement of time without reopening old wounds in Time's side.

This work began with a reference to an outlaw and a bishop. Anecdotes aside, similarly violent jarrings of secular and divine times do seem at the root of control in the writings of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, and Donne. Punishment and performance, violence and ritual, commerce and hope, natural and unnatural: all are uneasy partners in the process of confronting time. Such confrontation aims both to extend and reincorporate the borders and definitions of human possibility. When such shifts in reality occur, the results can manifest themselves in many ways—reluctance, ambivalence, celebration—and the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were perhaps
unique in the magnitude of these results. The writers of the English Renaissance executed Time as none ever had before.

Notes


14. Macey, Clocks and the Cosmos, p. 207. For surveys of some of the changing social, philosophical, and physical notions of time leading to our present day understanding, see.

Appendix A: "Like Men at Chess": Time and Control in *The Tempest*

When T.S. Eliot composed *The Waste Land* in the early 1920s, he had Shakespeare's *The Tempest* explicitly in mind. One of Eliot's excerpts from that play, "I remember / Those are pearls that were his eyes," is of course taken from Ariel's song in the first act; interestingly, the excerpt comes in the part of Eliot's poem subtitled "A Game of Chess." While Eliot hints that Middleton was the primary influence on the chess component of his poem, one can hardly ignore the echo of the chess scene from *The Tempest* in the lines "And we shall play a game of chess, / Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door."¹ (The players in Eliot are perhaps not unlike Ferdinand and Miranda, waiting for the inner-stage curtain to be thrown open to reveal their game.) Both *The Waste Land* and *The Tempest* are considerably attentive to the theme of time, and it may be for this reason that Eliot so copiously borrowed from the play for his poem. As a culmination of other magian figures—Faustus and Subtle, for instance—Prospero participates in a similarly controlling relationship to time. Northrop Frye suggests that "Prospero's magic is an identification with nature as a power rather than as an order or harmony, and is expressed in images of time rather than space . . . . Like all magicians, he observes time closely . . . and his charms are effective only if he follows the rhythm."² But Traister calls him "the last important magician in English
drama before the closing of the theaters in 1642,"^ and as such he controls time and
tempest perhaps more potently than either Faustus or Subtle. Though his relation to time
is also more cooperative (as Frye argues) the word "control" nevertheless appears more
often in *The Tempest* than in any other of Shakespeare's plays. The chess scene between
Ferdinand and Miranda contributes greatly to this idea of controlling time.  

*The Tempest*, unlike most other Shakespearean plays, maintains unity of both
place and time: the audience remains in the theater for approximately the same duration
that the court party peregrinates around Prospero's island. With regard to the play's
special relation to temporal functions, a few critics have additionally noted the
etymological significance of the play's title. Certainly the word "tempest" already
dovetails in meaning as both the harsh, elemental storm of the first act and the
tumultuous, abstract struggles in Prospero's mind. Northrop Frye's approach to time in
the "tempest" is fairly representative of the common critical view: "few plays are so
haunted by the passing of time as *The Tempest*: it has derived even its name from a word
(*tempestas*) which means time as well as tempest."^ Thus, it would seem that
Shakespeare, before the play even becomes enacted, prepares the audience for his
treatment of time as an underlying structure.

Frank Kermode, in his footnote to the stage direction "*Here Prospero discovers*
Ferdinand and Miranda *playing at chess*" (V.i. 171), mentions that the scene is "one of

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the relatively rare references to chess in Shakespeare," and in fact it is the only time the word "chess" is ever used explicitly in any play. The stage direction itself may point to a theatrical play on words, however, that propounds a deeper knowledge of chess in the mind of Shakespeare. A checkmate by "discovery," that is, by removing one piece in order to check by a previously "hidden" piece, was often considered the apex of chess acumen. Thomas Middleton concludes *A Game at Chess* with just such a mate, when the White Knight proclaims "we give thee check-mate by / Discovery, King, the noblest mate of all." That Prospero should "discover" Ferdinand and Miranda might very well imply that the two lovers are not the only players of the game, and that indeed it is Prospero who successfully and nobly "mates" the pair. On the island, Prospero frequently exhibits the sort of control that King James, in his *Speech to Parliament* of 1609, says all monarchs have: the "power to raise low things and to abase high things, and make of their subjects like men at Chess." This shifting of emphasis from Ferdinand and Miranda to Prospero is important, though not critical, in examining the correlations between chess and time in *The Tempest*. In the most expansive treatment of the chess scene, Bryan Loughery and Neil Taylor discuss a myriad of thematic significances, and rightly ask the question, "when Prospero draws back the curtain of the inner stage . . . why, at such a crucial moment, did Shakespeare choose to have these young lovers absorbed in chess?" The prevailing

243

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view of the scene is put forth by Kermode, who notes that "Ferdinand and Miranda are discovered in a situation which suggests the context of high born and romantic love." and that "chess-games between lovers are frequently represented on wedding chests and mirror-cases." The game is certainly on one level a reification of chaste lovers at play. But chess is also a game particularly relevant to discussions of time. Unlike one's decisions on a battle ground, to which chess is often compared, one's decisions in chess are often prolonged and emphatically disembodied. But most importantly, the game of chess structures time in a manner akin to that on Prospero's island. A player considers the future by contemplating permutation upon permutation of possibilities and contingencies: he considers the past by witnessing the tracings of positions that the board's pieces have left in time, as well as perhaps the remnants of captured pieces constantly in view at one's side; and he considers the present, by selecting one potential movement of a piece and enacting it on the board. The processes might be profitably compared to those in the Borges short story "The Garden of Forking Paths," in which an infinite number of pasts and futures emanate from an absolute present. As Borges writes, "in all fictional works, each time a man is confronted with several alternatives, he chooses one and eliminates the others; . . . He creates, in this way, diverse futures, diverse times which themselves also proliferate and fork." One's path of movement on a chess board eliminates a nearly infinite number of permutations, but connects to a nearly
infinite number of others. Such contemplative strategy is manifest in the figure of
Prospero, who pays more exact attention to the present, past and future times than any
other character in *The Tempest*.

After the initial storm scene, the play continues with Prospero's relation of the
story of his past to Miranda: as he says, "'Tis time I should inform thee farther" (I. ii.
23). But the past, as Miranda puts it, "'Tis far off / And rather like a dream than an
assurance" (I.ii. 45), and Prospero calls it "the dark backward and abysm of time" (I.ii
50). Much later in the performance, what Miranda has said of the past Prospero says of
the present: "We are such stuff As dreams are made on; and our little life Is rounded
with sleep" (IV. i. 156-58). The question of what is past and what is present becomes
quite muddled. The two in effect overlap— they are both the stuff of dreams, both having
a strange, residual ambience of being just beyond recollection and recognition. As is
typical of revenge drama, the remembrance of things past must generate the energy of
present action. The blending of past and present also entwines with future time, just as
Prospero's initial relationship with past events is always already affected by his very
name, "Pro-spero," one who puts forth hope or looks forward.

After relating the "dreamy" events of his extirpation from the dukedom. Prospero
suggests that Miranda succumb to her sleepiness. The irony of her entering into a
dream-state after ostensibly clarifying the dreaminess of her past is evident here, as is the
instance of yet another overlaying of dreaming reality with a waking reality. But the
sleep comes directly after Prospero gazes into the future:

... by my prescience
I find my zenith doth depend upon
A most auspicious star, whose influence
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes
Will ever after droop.

(I.ii.180-4)

A cycle of overlaying times, then, is completed upon Miranda's falling asleep. The
pattern repeats itself in the ensuing dialogue between Ariel and Prospero. Prospero first
asks "What is the time o' th' day?" (I.ii.238), and after hearing that it is "past the
midseason" (I.ii.239), informs Ariel that the future time "twixt six and now / Must by us
both be spent most preciously" (I.ii.240-1). Prospero's vision of the future is disrupted
momentarily, however, by Ariel's remembrance of the past, and of Prospero's promise
"which is not yet perform'd" (I.ii.244): to give Ariel his liberty after a year's service. But
Prospero, attentive to the moment, responds that the time of service is yet to "be out" (I
ii.246). He then retells Ariel's past, reminding his servant of Sycorax's torment and his
own benevolence, and reenvisions Ariel's future by threatening to entrap the spirit once
again in an oak tree. Prospero thereby controls not only the way in which the past and
future are perceived, but also gains control of the moment by squelching Ariel's brief
insubordination. With Prospero asserting control over the time of another, the exchange
is quite reminiscent of the encounter between Subtle and Face at the onset of Jonson's
The Alchemist. In just this brief encounter, the exact time of the day, the future four hours, the past year and the next "twelve winters" (1.ii.296) are all interwoven. Miranda then awakes. This framing of the dialogue with her sleeping and waking reinforces the connection of past, present, and future times blending with the parallel of overlapping dreaming and waking realities.

Attentiveness to an exact, absolute moment in time, in which divergent times become simultaneous, thus characterizes much of The Tempest, and much of chess play in general. In fact, at least one twentieth century study of chess psychology concludes that "the idea that chess players are of much higher intelligence [or] have a better memory . . . is not substantiated." Rather, the only significant areas of general intelligence in which chess masters out-perform "normal" players are precisely in "the ability to pay attention to several things simultaneously . . . and in abstract thinking."\(^{14}\)

Such timing would be of utmost importance to a mage like Prospero for any sort of incantation, just as it was to alchemists and astrologists. Noel Cobb adds that in The Tempest, just as in an alchemical work, "the various processes must happen in isolation until the exact moment when the ingredients can be brought together."\(^{15}\) Indicative of such momentous concerns, the word "now" appears again and again in The Tempest, about twice as many times in this relatively short play as in any other play in the canon. Prospero, for instance, tells Miranda that "The hour's now come; ' / The very minute bids
thee open thine ear" (I.ii.37). And while "Open-ey'd conspiracy" in the form of Antonio and Sebastian "His time doth take" (II.i.296-7), Gonzalo saves the king by shouting "Now" (II.i.302). In the latter scene, time as duration is juxtaposed with time as instant; he who controls the instant controls time, while time controls only those subject to its duration. Antonio and Sebastian do not have enough time to complete their treachery, but Alonso and Gonzalo have just enough time to save themselves.

By the time of the actual chess episode, then, the play is resonating with highly charged images of time, most of which emanate from either the blending of past, present and future, or the cyclical mirroring of those three divisions. The episode itself is fairly terse:

_Mir._ Sweet Lord, you play me false.
_Fer._ No, my dearest love,
      I would not for the world.
_Mir._ Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle.
      And I would call it fair.
_Alon._ If this prove
      A vision of the island, one dear son
      Shall I twice lose.

(V.i.172-7)

The concluding lines seem particularly indicative of more temporal blending. Alonso, maintaining the conceit of gamesmanship with his allusion to "losing," equates the "real" death of his son with the loss of Ferdinand, should he be nothing more than a vision. The disappearance of Ferdinand here would mirror his previous disappearance. But at this
point of culmination, the revenge cycle has reached its point of alteration with the past. Rather than causing Ferdinand to disappear, Prospero virtuously forgives Alonso with the ironic words "Let us not burthen our remembrances with / A heaviness that's gone" (V.i. 198-9). The past finally is sifted from the present, and consequently the future may proceed unimpeded. As Welsford writes, "the plot of The Tempest leads up, without hesitation or uncertainty, to that moment when Prospero gathers his forgiven enemies around him, draws back the curtain from before the inner stage, and 'discovers Ferdinand and Miranda playing at chess.' The game at that point is figuratively and literally concluded.

The exact outcome of the chess game has itself drawn much speculation. The specific result of the game, however, matters less than that the players have ceased to play. The conclusion of the chess game metaphorically signals a correspondent alteration of time in The Tempest. Previously blended and overlapping upon itself, the matrix of interwoven temporal energy now begins to differentiate and become ordered. Alonso anticipates the ordering Prospero soon offers when declares that "This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod; / And there is in this business more than nature / Was ever conduct of: some oracle / Must rectify our knowledge" (V.i.242-45). For Prospero will "resolve . . . / These happen'd accidents" with the story of his life, promising sequential narration, since "'tis a chronicle of day by day" (V.i.163). But this return to order is only possible
after the chess game; Ferdinand and Miranda are successfully "discovered" and "mated." the other players amicably checked. The "charms are all o'erthrown," and just as the audience may dispel the last of the illusions by bringing the play to an end, so too Ferdinand and Miranda, as well as Prospero, have stopped the chess game, and indicated an end to the temporal qualities it signified.

Notes


3. Traister, Heavenly Necromancers, p. 147.

4. Shakespeare's blending of the past, present and future on Prospero's island is characteristic of romance in general. Julian Patrick, "The Tempest as Supplement," in Centre and Labyrinth, ed. Eleanor Cook (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1983), p. 162, writes that "the conspicuous dominance of middle states in narrative and dramatic romance . . . tends to suppress what in other genres we recognize as the specific nature of beginnings and the finality of endings. Beginnings in romance are often resumptions, and endings are sometimes ironic or abrupt when they are not endless. In romance, past and future are continually being woven together in the present space of narrative."

Douglas Peterson (Time, Tide and Tempest [San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1973], p. 46) remarks that "time itself is tempestuous; the world is 'a lasting storm',' emblematic of the Fall. Observing that "tempestas [means] both time and storm in Latin," Patrick views the play partly as Prospero's organization and control of time through magical arts (p. 165). D. S. McGovern ("Tempus in The Tempest," English 32 [Autumn 1983], p. 213) argues that something of a splitting between physical and metaphysical realities may be implicit in Shakespeare's rich etymological use of "tempest," in that the first of six mentions of the word "storm" come from the Boatswain, and all others from Trinculo, while "the three instances of 'tempest' are spoken by Prospero." See also B. J. Sokol, "Numerology in the Time Scheme of The Tempest," Notes and Queries 41 (1994), p. 52. Sokol points out that "both Prospero's anxiety and the play's title depend on the so-called 'tempestivity of time.' This is the concept of kairos, holding that there are only rare moments of 'tempestuous' time uniquely predestined to enable weighty change."


10. Loughery and Taylor, p. 113. They additionally suggest that the chess scene resonates in two ways with the rest of The Tempest: first, that paradoxically "chess can be used to symbolize both conflict between states, and the functioning of an hierarchical yet harmonious society" (p. 115), perfectly apt for the warring and governing in Shakespeare's play. Second and most importantly, they propose that "the spare, yet cunningly interlocked, plot which Prospero presides over itself resembles the progress of
a game of chess" (p. 116). As a model for manipulation and calculation, one could hardly make a poor case for chess.

11. Kermode, p. 123 n. He adds that "it was even permitted to visit a lady in her bedchamber to play chess with her." Another suggestion is put forth by H. H. Furness in the The Tempest, A New Variorum Edition (New York, 1892), p.250; he notes that Shakespeare had Ferdinand, Prince of Naples, play chess since that city was at the time the world's chess capital. More recent criticism has developed further sophistication in the chess-scene. Gary Schmigdall ("The Discovery at Chess in The Tempest," ELN 23 [June 1986], p. 15) proposes that on the island, Prospero "exerts a kind of manipulative expertise and dexterity worthy of a grand master; indeed, he displays precisely the skills of 'study, wit, pollicie, forecast' that chessplay was supposed to sharpen." Schmigdall only briefly touches on the strong temporal consequences of the game, however, when he writes that "chess is an apt means for Shakespeare to show that Ferdinand and Miranda will rule with more 'forecast' than Prospero once did" (p. 15).


14. Reuben Fine, The Psychology of the Chess Player (New York: Dover, 1967), p. 3. In perhaps the most exhaustive study of chess psychology, Adriaan de Groot (Thought and Choice in Chess [Paris: Mouton, 1965], p. 2n, writes that "any player of master strength can play at least four blindfold games simultaneously," and reports one player able to complete as many as fifty. In The Murders in the Rue Morgue (1841), Edgar Allen Poe writes that with chess, "in nine cases out of ten, it is the more concentrative rather than the more acute player who conquers."


calling *The Tempest* "a play about men's present responsibility to the past on which their future prosperity must depend" (pp. 46-7).


18. Loughery and Taylor suggest that the discovery of the chess game "looks back to all the previous acts of interruption and abandoned intentions, and looks forward to the final act of surrender when Prospero abandons responsibility for the play to the audience" (p. 117). R. F. Fleissner, "The Endgame in *The Tempest*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 21 (Summer 1985), pp. 331-5, concludes that the "discovery of the young lovers . . . indeed refers to the endgame of the chess match . . . [and] to a stalemate" (p. 331). This result would be somewhat appropriate to the confluence of past, present and future into an absolute, frozen moment. But it is not necessary that the exchange between Ferdinand and Miranda imply such a result. Schmigdall contends that the lovers' chessmen "are a fine hint that the reign of Ferdinand and Miranda will be marked . . . by 'providence and attentiveness'" (p. 16) and makes a subtle point regarding the political undertones of the game: the future will be different both from the past, and from its own sense of future as it existed on the island.
Appendix B: The Lottery of Queen Elizabeth I and *Coriolanus* 5.2

The remarks of Menenius to the watchmen, in the final act of *Coriolanus*, have been the subject of some dispute. The sense seems, at first, obvious enough: Menenius proposes assuringly, "If you have heard your general talk of Rome / And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks / My name hath touch'd your ears" (5.2.9-11). Menenius hopes to parlay his once intimate standing into a sort of backstage pass. In fact, Kermode feels the line "lots to blanks" to imply an "absolutely certain" likelihood of Menenius' fame having reached even the Volscian guards. (Such a claim by Menenius echoes an earlier one by Aufidius: "O, doubt not that. / I speak from certainties" [1.2.30].) Nevertheless, exactly how Shakespeare conveys this sense, upon a second look, appears far less clear. Many editors, following Johnson, gloss "lots to blanks" as equivalent to "winning tickets to non-winning tickets," since "lots are the prizes in the lottery." (As corroboration, it is often mentioned that the French "lot" maintains this sense; *gros lot* signifies the "grand prize.") The main opposition to this reading was first put forth by Malone, who argues that "Dr. Johnson [et al.] here mistakes. . . . *Lots* were the term in our author's time for the total number of tickets in a *lottery*. . . . The lots were of course more numerous than the blanks. *If* lot signified prize, as Dr. Johnson supposed, . . . [then] Menenius must be supposed to say, that the chance of his name having reached their ears was very small." Menenius, surely, does not wish to scuttle himself that quickly. According to Malone,
then, the "lots" must be taken to mean the entire set of possibilities, both winning and
losing tickets, and the blanks as excessively numerous (the traditional ratio). Thus, the
difference between the "lots" and the "blanks" is negligible; there is nearly a one to one
ratio, a sure bet, that Menenius' reputation precedes him.\footnote{5}

Additional objection to the Johnsonian reading derives from the effect of simply a
large ratio of winning tickets to blanks— not particularly striking odds. Does Menenius
hope only to imply that the chance is "fairly good" of his being known? Chambers, in the
early Arden edition, also holds "lots" to mean "prizes," but escapes logical incoherence
by proposing a somewhat ingenious solution: "the point of the metaphor," he writes, "lies
not in the number of the lots, which is of course less than that of the blanks, but in their
relative value."\footnote{6} Brockbank further problematizes the issue, concluding that the
"evidence cited in O.E.D. suggests that lots sometimes included both prize-winning
tickets and blanks, but sometimes only winners."\footnote{7} In the recent Oxford edition, Parker
follows this reading, adding that the expressed "certainty" is "perhaps 'a thousand to one'
\textit{(OED, lot, sb. 5)}, according to whether 'lots' is understood as the winning tickets in a
lottery . . . or as all the tickets."\footnote{8} But Shakespeare's metaphorical lottery, one of several
references outside of the well-known caskets in \textit{The Merchant of Venice}, may very well
be an allusion to an historical lottery of Elizabeth I.\footnote{9} This possibility has not been
elsewhere suggested, and partly reconciles the various factions by its very particular
treatment of "lots" and "blanks."

It will be recalled from earlier discussion in Chapter 3 that in Elizabeth's lottery,
no difference existed between total lots and winning lots. Each and every "adventurer"
would receive no less than two shillings. And as "A verie rich Lotterie Generall, without
any blancks," this lottery provided a ratio of lots to blanks that was, of course,
unsurpassable (although most "winning" lots were nearly worthless). If Menenius means
to exude "absolute certainty," then Shakespeare should conjure the only positively
surefire lottery in his lifetime. Indeed, several editors compare the lines of Menenius to
those of the Duke of Gloucester in Richard III: "And yet to win her, --all the world to
nothing" (1.2.237). The ratio is perfectly paralleled in Elizabeth's lottery; lots to blanks
were truly "all the world to nothing."

Others have regarded the Queen's legacy as a shaping force on Coriolanus. But
if Shakespeare is alluding to Elizabeth's lottery, he would not be the first of his
contemporaries to have done so dramatically. The 1602 court entertainment by Sir John
Davies entitled "A Lottery" may have maintained the currency of the earlier lottery for
the subsequent Coriolanus. The role of the Queen in Davies' work notably suggests what
many assumed to be her role some thirty-five years earlier: Elizabeth presides over a
"fixed" lottery. While Davies would not draw overt parallels, the first governmental
lottery was rumored by many to be fixed. The entrants were completely anonymous, and were known only by a motto or posie. The threat of this fix, perhaps the most residual sentiment regarding this first lottery, rendered the lottery's "sure thing" a bit too sure.

Both the disgruntled outcries against the lottery and the widespread participation suggest Shakespeare's well documented attentiveness to the idea of the "mob" in *Coriolanus*.

Reminiscent of such activity was a later lottery, that of 1608, which has been described in comparable terms: "Multitudes crowd about the doors, and the room is continually filled with people, every mouth bawling for lots, and every hand thrust out to snatch them."

Rather than diluting or overshadowing the significance of Elizabeth's lottery, this instance, roughly contemporary with *Coriolanus*, instead displays its lingering prominence as a cultural phenomenon.

As a means of dating the play, Kemball-Cook proposes, "The Thames was frozen over during the Great Frost of 1607-8, and a great lottery was held in connexion with it. This may have suggested the references to 'the coal of fire upon the ice' . . . and 'lots to blanks'." Geoffrey Bullough suggests that Shakespeare may have known a standard account of the chilling phenomenon, *The Great Frost*—a work possibly by Thomas Dekker (1608). While the historicity of these claims is appropriate, the lottery of 1608 bears little resemblance to Shakespeare's metaphor. This "great lottery" offered "prizes all of plate as gilt spoons, cups, bowls, ewers and the like." But for each prize, "there are
put in some forty blanks; there are 7,600 prizes and 42,000 \[sic\] blanks.\textquotesingle\textquotesingle However, \textit{The Great Frost} contains an exchange that might easily have reminded Shakespeare of Elizabeth's "blankless" drawing. Prompted by the current events, two characters recollect how. "in the eleventh year of Queen Elizabeth, a lottery began here in London; in which . . . there were four hundred thousand lots to be drawn . . . and every lot was ten shillings."\textdagger\textdagger\textdagger Whether or not Shakespeare was actually familiar with the tract, the dialogue reflects the continued preoccupation, through the time of Shakespeare's play, with the lottery of Elizabeth.

The effect of Menenius' metaphor, based on either the 1569 or 1608 lottery, can hardly rest soundly on "winning tickets to losing tickets," especially in any conventional sense. Only Elizabeth's unusual system of altogether eliminating "blanks" allows the line to resonate with the certitude Menenius hopes to effect, and recollections of this lottery were surfacing around the time of \textit{Coriolanus}. The conviction in this speech of Menenius, then, warrants a somewhat greater ascendancy than critics have allowed. The boasts by Menenius that follow this initial feint, "Thy general is my lover . . . I have been / The book of his good acts" (5.2.14-15), help characterize him as something of a braggadocio. But it is his first claim of utter, incomparable certainty that sets the lofty trajectory for his tragic rebuff from \textit{Coriolanus}.\textdagger\textdagger\textdagger
Notes


2. Frank Kermode in The Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 1431, n. 10. Other references to Shakespeare’s plays are from this edition. Occasionally, milder interpretations have been rendered. In the Yale edition, Wilbur L. Cross and Tucker Brooke, eds., 40 vols. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1924), 5: 154, the meaning is merely “more likely than not.”


6. Edmund K. Chambers, ed., the Arden Coriolanus (Boston: Heath, 1900), 146. Cf. Rolfe, 308. “the reference is to the value of the latter compared with the former.”


9. Shakespeare’s other references to lots and lotteries occur in AWW (1.3.88), JC (2.1.119), Ant. (2.2.242, 2.3.36, and 2.6.61-2), Ham. (2.2.416), 2H4 (5.4.114), MV (1.2.29 and 2.1.15), Per. (1.4.46), R2 (1.3.85), and Tro. (1.3.373 and 2.1.128).

11. Stanley Kozikowski is among few critics to write extensively of Shakespeare's use of
the lottery, although he makes no mention of either Elizabeth's lottery or of Coriolanus.
See "The Allegory of Love and Fortune: The Lottery in The Merchant of Venice,”
Renaissance 32 (1980): 105-15. He points out that in Shakespeare's time, "Fortune's
dispensation of gifts by lottery was a popular presentational image.” In addition to
Shakespeare's own Merchant of Venice, Dekker, Chapman and later Jonson (in The
Alchemist), all provide analogues. In Dekker's Old Fortunatus, played at the court of
Elizabeth in 1599, Fortune provides a "deepe Lotterie" of six gifts, "Wisedome, strength,
health, beautie, long life, and riches" (1.1.211-17). See The Dramatic Works of Thomas
Dekker, ed. Fredson Bowers, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1953); Chapman's An
Humorous Day's Mirth (1597) yields, in the play's conclusive scene at court, a woman
disguised as Fortune "Dealing the lots / Out of our pots" (5.2.174-75). See The Plays of

entertainment and Elizabeth.

13. Examples are legion; see especially Brents Stirling, "Shakespeare's Mob Scenes,"
Huntington Library Quarterly 8 (1945): 213-40; Sidney Shunker, "Some Clues for
Coriolanus," Shakespeare Association Bulletin 24 (1949): 209-13; Norman Rabkin,
"Coriolanus: The Tragedy of Politics," Shakespeare Quarterly 17 (1966): 195-212; Paul
7-124; and Gail Kern Paster, The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare (Athens, GA:

14. As quoted in G. B. Harrison's A Second Jacobean Journal: Being a Record of Those
Things Most Talked of during the Years 1607 to 1610 (London: Routledge, 1958), 70.

15. Kemball-Cook, 10.

5: 560-63.

17. Harrison, 70.

(Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1928), 20: 515-16. Furness cites The Great Frost only to
help with the sense of "lots" as encompassing all tickets in a drawing, not drawing any

260
further comparison to the ratio of Menenius, and not noticing the important corollary of Elizabeth's lottery, the unmitigated absence of blanks.
Vita

Eric Collins Brown was born in Stoneham, Massachusetts, in 1971, soon after which his family moved to Maine. Brown grew up in Dover-Foxcroft, equidistant to Québec and Boston, and graduated from Foxcroft Academy in 1989. He attended the University of Maine on a full Presidential Scholarship, and graduated with one bachelor of arts in English, minoring in Latin, and a second bachelor's degree in zoology. In 1993, he joined the incoming graduate student class at Louisiana State University as a Board of Regents Fellow. Brown has since published in a variety of scholarly journals, including essays on Milton, Shakespeare, Dante, Coleridge, Melville, and T. S. Eliot. He currently resides in Baton Rouge, where he is an instructor in the Honors College, and plans to join his brother Shawn in Japan at some near-future date.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Eric C. Brown

Major Field: English

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Approved:

[Signature]
Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signature]
[Name]

[Signature]
[Name]

[Signature]
[Name]

Date of Examination:
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