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Shakespeare's Festive Romance: Community, Ritual, and Genre

Anna'le Hornak

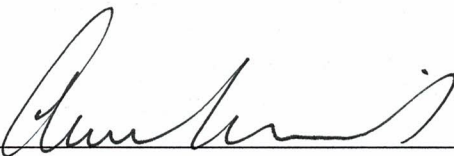
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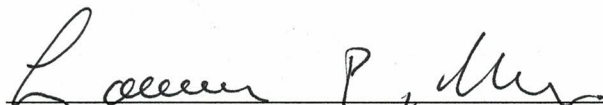
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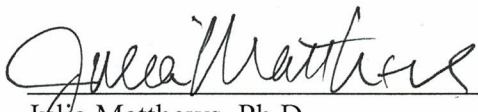
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

College Honors

Departmental Distinction in English



Alberto Cacicedo, Ph.D.

Lawrence Morris, Ph.D.

Julia Matthews, Ph.D.

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Shakespeare's Festive Romance: Community, Ritual, and Genre

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the means by which critics and theorists can analyze the genre categorization of Shakespeare's plays, specifically his romances – what criteria can we use to determine which plays are comedies, tragedies, romances, and so on? In order to answer this question, the analytical techniques employed by C.L. Barber and Naomi Liebler in study of the comedies and tragedies, respectively, are applied to the romance plays. The paper concludes that the romances can be classified based on their plots' relationships to the metaphorical sacrifice of the older generation and the transfer of authority to a younger generation, which represents a culmination of Shakespeare's approaches to genre in his earlier plays.

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INTRODUCTION

Theatrical performance has existed in Europe since around 700 B.C.E., when ancient Greeks honored Dionysus with performances of plays by writers and thinkers like Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus, and the tradition has developed significantly ever since. Throughout theatre history, various movements and styles have sprung up in an attempt to find an answer to a fundamental question: what is the nature and purpose of theatre? Further, what is the relationship between theatre and the community in which it is produced? As Augusto Boal says in his call for a consciously political theatre, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, “Should art educate, inform, organize, influence, incite to action, or should it simply be an object of pleasure?” (xiii). There are two broad answers to these questions: theatre meant to entertain, and theatre intended to challenge, inform, and create change. Many theatre theorists have worked with the concept of theatre for social change, which comes from the core belief that theatre is capable of producing change in the society in which it is produced. Determining the intention of theatre in a given historical period is essential to understanding the magnitude of its capacity for changing the social hierarchy, its assigned genre, and by extension its plot and the actions of its characters. In the era in which Shakespeare wrote and produced plays, theatre had the capacity to speak directly to lower-class people and demonstrate the effect of disrupting social rituals; this specific effect, in the romance genre, revitalized the relationship between man and the divine and emphasized the importance of the younger generation to the unity and renewal of communities as a whole.

In general, theoretical approaches concerned with theatre and its relationship to social change have become more integral to the study of genre. They have also given rise to the general approach utilized in C.L. Barber’s *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy* and Naomi Liebler’s *Shakespeare’s Festive Tragedy: The Ritual Foundations of Genre*, which are the theoretical

foundation for this study of Shakespeare's romances. While theatre focused on social change translates to contemporary society through plays about racism, gender, economic inequality, and other relevant issues, socially centered theatre historically has more to do with the role of the aristocracy and ruling class in suppressing revolution and dissent from the lower classes. When arts like theatre were patronized by the wealthy, the messages within plays presented to the public were regulated and calculated to preserve the social hierarchy within the audience. The issue becomes one of authorship; Michael Bristol states, "Authority ... is identified with the power to influence and to disseminate thought and opinion as well as feeling" (21). Whoever controls the theatre by writing plays has authority because they are in control of the moral and ethical messages sent to the society in which they live – the thoughts and opinions being disseminated in this specific case were often intended to reinforce the existing social order.

Theatre is a powerful social tool both because of its effect on the audience and the possibility of giving a mode of expression to lower classes – when authority is tied to artistry, any time a member of an oppressed class is granted representation in the theatre that class gains an opportunity to voice its concerns and question the hierarchy that oppresses them in the first place. Augusto Boal, for a modern example, defines the purpose of art in the Aristotelian approach as "[correcting] the faults of nature, by using the suggestions of nature itself" (9). When Aristotle describes art as imitation, he is referencing this correction – more precisely, by "correcting", he means re-creating the action art represents. Art, then, can be corrective in that its imitation of life could easily lead to recognition of problems in the society that art is imitating. Boal describes the Aristotelian system as coercive, however, because it refuses to provide lower classes an artistic voice and the only opportunity for correction is offered to the upper classes; he describes theatre as "a powerful system of intimidation" meant to perform a single task, "the

purgation of all antisocial elements” (46). In short, Boal believes that theatre is utilized as a means of suppressing revolution in lower classes, but his recognition of the power to renew and change their circumstances afforded people within a community when they are granted authorship and authority in the theatre is essential to understanding the relationship between plays and the community for which they are produced.

Part of the social power of theatre and the reason it has such a dramatic effect on the relationship between people and their social class comes from the fact that “the mingling of rich and poor, of gentlefolk and common people, contributed to the complex elaboration of dramatic form” (Bristol 108). In Shakespeare’s time particularly, the theatre provided something for everyone – ideas that spoke to a mix of different backgrounds, and an opportunity for the classes to experience something together. For example, Shakespeare’s plays often contained characters from a variety of social standings and subplots that appealed to a variety of classes. Art was made public and the potential for elitism in theatrical performance vanished as the “groundlings” were admitted to the same theatre as the aristocracy.

In the context of theatre as a whole, in fact, “The focus of tragedy is upon the action of the whole represented community: protagonist, antagonist, servants, soldiers, masters, leaders” (Liebler 49). This presents danger in terms of representation and authority because the lower classes subjected to a system that subordinates them are given an opportunity in the theatre to question sovereignty and authority; this in turn provides an outlet for the “unrest and class hostility that afflicted England sporadically throughout the reign of Elizabeth I” (Greenblatt 50). Thus, Boal’s concern for the oppression of the lower class was relevant even in the Elizabethan era. When an artistic form is used “in the reconciliation of differences [and] even in the ideological mobilization of common people”, it “represents a genuine rupture in the fabric of

social authority” (Bristol 109, 110). Theatre becomes a political threat due to its potential for sparking change in its audience, but at the same time it is essential because of this potential. Without an opportunity for people within a community to see their social hierarchy and the rituals governing their lives onstage, there would be little capacity for change within that community.

Genre becomes important when one considers the different effects a given genre has on audiences, and the development of genre historically. If theatre in general has a specific effect in terms of its relationship to social hierarchy, genre determines the specific nature of that relationship. The basis of most contemporary genre theory is Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which outlines the ideal structure and elements of a tragedy based on Aristotle’s observations of tragic plays in ancient Greece as a member of the audience. Theatre theorists tend to wholeheartedly accept or reject the theories outlined in the *Poetics*. Regardless of whether Aristotle’s theory is accepted or rejected, however, theatre is generally examined in terms of its connection to the audience and the way it affects a spectator. While the *Poetics* discusses ancient Greek tragedy exclusively, its ideas relate to several other genres and eras. In many theoretical approaches to the analysis of dramatic literature and performance, the *Poetics* provides a foundation for understanding the function of each element of a play, which then allows theorists to understand the function of these elements in terms of their effect on an audience and their place within a given genre.

The “rules” Aristotle creates within the *Poetics* are really observations concerning what will most effectively arouse pity and fear in an audience. Aristotle defines tragedy in the *Poetics* as “an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper

purgation of these emotions” (61). The basic requirements, then, are action embodied in language appropriate to the structure of the play, ultimately evoking a specific emotional response from the audience. Emotional response is essential in terms of understanding the social function of theatre – if part of the way tragic plays specifically are defined lies in their effect on the audience and that effect is focused entirely on the elimination of pity and fear, it follows that all genres can be defined by its effect on an audience. Theatre in general functions as an outlet for emotions and a surrogate for experiences, and adopting an audience-centric approach to genre analysis allows theorists to fully understand the implications of these emotions and experiences in the context of society as a whole.

The concept of purgation, more often referred to as catharsis, is the sensation that, ideally, is experienced as a result of viewing a tragic play, and can be considered the purpose of viewing tragedy from Aristotle’s perspective. Francis Fergusson defines this sensation’s effect as “like that which believers get from religious ceremonies intended to cleanse the spirit” (35). This link to religion is important – the catharsis described by Aristotle is also the outcome of religious ritual. Theatre and ritual are linked because mimesis of human action is by nature ritualistic and because human action itself tends to follow ritual. Disruption of these rituals causes conflict, and often, major conflict in drama arises from the disruption of ritual for characters in a play. Pity and fear themselves can be defined as the unity between character and spectator and the recognition of the cause of suffering (Fergusson 34). Thus, watching a tragedy and experiencing catharsis means one has absorbed and analyzed the suffering endured by the play’s protagonist and can in turn apply that experience to one’s own life, which on a large scale can lead to a redefinition and renewal of the community.

One of the first theatre theorists to attempt to radically break away from the Aristotelian system (although the extent to which he succeeded in differentiating his work from Aristotle's is debatable) was Bertolt Brecht. The major difference between what Brecht considered "traditional" theatre and his Epic Theatre was that Brecht "rejected the theatre as mere entertainment, and believed instead in its social function and the spectators' power to change the world" (Saddik 18). This was achieved by creating distance between the audience and the performance; actors would frequently step out of character, directly address the audience, or otherwise attempt to alienate the audience and remind them that they were observing something theatrical rather than something real.

Brecht was attempting to stimulate the audience intellectually and prevent any emotional connection to the plot or characters in the hope that intellectual engagement with a play about social issues would inspire the audience to create actual social change. Thus, Brecht also recognized in theatre the potential for the power to disrupt social institutions and create change. Additionally, his focus on alienation shifted the focus of experiencing theatre from the individual to the community in a way that enables theatre itself to have a lasting effect on the community for which it is produced (Liebler 28). Audiences of Brechtian theatre are better able to understand the situations in which characters find themselves and reflect on the presence of those situations within their own community, which in turn makes change and progress possible.

Antonin Artaud, a theorist inspired in part by Brecht, also recognizes this potential and endows it with even more destructive power; the foundation of his theory is a comparison between theatre and plague. He states, "... if the theater is like the plague, it is not only because it affects important collectivities and upsets them in an identical way. In the theater as in the plague there is something both victorious and vengeful: we are aware that the spontaneous

conflagration which the plague lights wherever it passes is nothing else than an immense liquidation” (27). Artaud explains further: “If the essential theater is like the plague, it is not because it is contagious, but because like the plague it is the revelation, the bringing forth, the exteriorization of a depth of latent cruelty by means of which all the perverse possibilities of the mind, whether or an individual or a people, are localized” (30). Thus, Bristol, Artaud, and Boal agree in that they regard the nature of theatre as a weapon or destructive force – when wielded by the right person, it has the potential to create great social change.

All of these theorists, Aristotle included, believed in “a theater that shook people up and disturbed their complacencies” (Liebler 46). Artaud’s work is also significant in that it furthers Brecht’s concept of deflecting an audience’s concern from the individual to the community. He examines more deeply the specifics of how theatre affects one’s relationship to their community; Liebler explains: “In tragedy, when the ordered relations of a community are disrupted, the hero draws to herself or himself all of the ambiguity and crisis present in a community, just as an organism fighting a disease localizes antibodies at the site of infection” (9). This concept of plague employed by Artaud and expanded upon by Naomi Liebler can be found at the core of many plays and has a significant role in the way genre operates; although Liebler is concerned primarily with tragedy, the localization of crisis to a single person is present in several genres.

If theatre is inherently destructive and powerful, and theatre is used to influence the society for which it is performed, whether by suppressing discord or inciting it, the question of how precisely theatre accomplishes that mission remains. Many theorists have taken Aristotle’s work and considered the role of catharsis in comedy and the relationship between comedy and tragedy. From there, it is essential to determine how exactly to distinguish genres from one another beyond Aristotelian principles because Aristotle’s observations apply only to tragedy.

The means by which theorists can link Aristotle to the modern study of genre is through ritual. In recent years, the prevailing approach to analyzing theatre, and genre in particular, has been through the examination of ritual and its relationship to the plot of a given play because, if theatre is the imitation of human action and human action is organized by ritual, theatre must consequently also be organized by ritual. Questions of authority and social hierarchy are embedded in the rituals governing people's everyday lives, and the reason theatre can be so influential in terms of the thoughts or action it provokes is that oftentimes conflict in plays comes from the breaking or restoration of ritual. The spectator is invited to view a lack of ritual within the context of a play as a negative thing, and oftentimes characters onstage resonate with people offstage in a way that incites the sort of change in a community that theatre is capable of producing.

Mikhail Bakhtin, a notable genre theorist whose work focuses primarily on the novel rather than on theatre, believes that the Carnivalization of literature and genre provides a “‘second life’ or ‘second culture’” that “engages with and directly opposes the ‘official’ culture, both in literature and in the public life of the marketplace and city square” (Bristol 22). In other words, the art and language of authority are transformed into that of everyday life, of the common people. Bakhtin believes in the power and desire of the people, that is, the collective, to achieve a better and more communal life in the future – when literature becomes carnivalized, it gains “an indeterminacy, a certain semantic open-endedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality” (Bristol 22). Thus, Carnival represents an opportunity for a community to unify due to the dissolution of authority. Carnivalization is a means of disrupting ritual in a way that proves productive in terms of affecting a play's audience; this method is

identifiable in many of Shakespeare's plays and forms the foundation of C.L. Barber and Naomi Liebler's theoretical approaches to comedy and tragedy.

Michael Bristol's *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* discusses festivity and Carnival as a means of creating a sort of reversal of social hierarchy that places the plebeian culture in the dominant position for a temporary period. He quotes Le Roy Ladurie, who further defines Carnival itself as "a satirical, lyrical, epic-learning experience for highly diversified groups. It was a way to action, perhaps modifying the society as a whole in the direction of social change and *possible progress*" (qtd. in Bristol 50). In short, Carnival functions as an opportunity for modification of the social hierarchy and as a means for the preservation of community. Bristol asserts, "social harmony must be periodically renewed by the ritual intensification of collective experience" (25). Thus, the renewal of community that is the intended effect of theatre as defined by theorists like Barber, Liebler, Brecht, and Artaud is essential to the preservation of that community, according to Bristol. Carnival is a rebellion against class barriers and a temporary dissolution of hierarchy that is ultimately essential to maintaining social harmony because, when employed in the theatre, it creates a communal experience that renews the community to which the audience belongs.

Ritual is sociologically defined as "the formal structuring or ordering of the life of any community that seeks to perpetuate itself" (Liebler 51). In other words, ritual is the hierarchy and structure of authority that gives shape to a community. Ritual itself plays an essential role in the way drama is structured due to the fact that it creates recognizable patterns through which an audience can connect to and understand the action of a play and its significance – fundamentally, "ritual sets boundaries" within a community and creates an identifiable structure and organization for that community (Liebler 10). One ritual with significant impact on the catharsis

experienced by a play's audience is that of ritual sacrifice. René Girard relates sacrifice to the purgation of violence from a community through the sacrifice of a surrogate victim in the hope of protecting that community from further violence (4). This victim suffers all of the violence that would otherwise be inflicted on the community as a whole – this corresponds to Liebler's analysis of Artaud's comparison of theatre and plague in that Girard and Artaud both identify a central figure that attracts the violence and infection that threatens their community.

Girard specifically identifies communities struggling against what he terms a “sacrificial crisis”, or a general state of chaos that is ultimately threatening to the community as a whole (43). This crisis is resolved, then, through the identification of a surrogate victim or *pharmakos* that suffers the violence present in the community in place of its members. This concept is obviously essential to tragedy but represents a ritual structure that can be applied outside of a tragic context if the sacrifice is represented symbolically rather than literally. Often, the protagonist takes on the role of *pharmakos* in a more representative manner in that the communal conflict at the center of the play is centered on the protagonist and the suffering of the community is alleviated through that protagonist's fate in the play. The resolution of the sacrificial crisis threatening the community in turn provides the unity and renewal identified as necessary to communal harmony by Bristol.

Girard identifies the roots of the impurity and frustrations plaguing the community as the “dissolutions of distinctions between individuals and institutions” (55). This resonates significantly with Bakhtin's theories in that Bakhtin champions collective life and communal unity, but Girard here introduces the danger that springs from this second life. When social rituals and hierarchy are threatened by festivity and Carnival, sacrificial crisis follows and authority dissolves, as do “regulations pertaining to the individual's proper place in society”

(Girard 56). When regulations disappear, the community is threatened by the violence those regulations (which are, essentially, social class and hierarchy) prevented. The unified community is then renewed by collective violence against their chosen *pharmakos* – that community views the ritual sacrifice as “the source of all abundance” (Girard 94). There is still a movement toward collective action, as Bakhtin and Bristol conclude, but Girard defines that collective action more specifically as a movement toward collective violence that ultimately works in the best interests of the community by eliminating any threats to the general unity of that community.

This relationship between festivity, “second life”, and the ritual unification of community form the theoretical basis of several works that specifically analyze Shakespeare’s plays and the relationship of festivity to genre. C.L. Barber’s *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy* traces patterns of saturnalian activity, defined as movement “through release to clarification” in Shakespeare’s comedies and examines the relationship between social rituals associated with government, leisure, and pleasure and Shakespeare’s plays (4). In Barber’s words, “At high moments [Shakespeare’s comedy] brings into focus, as part of the play, the significance of the saturnalian form itself as a paradoxical human need, problem, and resource” (15). The festive comedies, then, examine specifically the effect of festivity on a community and often find unity and renewal at the end of the play.

Barber’s book analyzes different uses and depictions of saturnalia as a means of bringing about Bakhtin’s theory of Carnival or “second life”, particularly in moments of holiday or celebration, because saturnalia itself is placed at odds with the whole of life and culture itself due to the lack of a precedent for saturnalia in Elizabethan culture (Barber 239). The theatre, then, provides through Shakespeare’s festive comedy an opportunity for fuller examination of a life and culture that was not present otherwise in society; this in turn allows the audience to see the

implications of festivity and the overturning of social hierarchy without actually experiencing it. This separation of the “normal” from the saturnalian creates “an opportunity for a fuller expression, a more inclusive consciousness” (Barber 239).

This fuller expression is the clarification identified by Barber as the result of saturnalia and festivity in the comedies, and can be translated into the communal renewal discussed by Bristol and Girard. Above all, Barber emphasizes the creation of a sense of “people living in a settled group, where everyone is known” – in other words, the creation of a unified and inclusive community (110). When theatre is defined as fundamental and responsive to the needs of a community, the depiction of unity within a play’s community is essential in the comedic plays Barber examines. By extension, tragedy can be assumed to depict broken communities, and so on – Barber creates a connection between a play’s genre and its depiction of a community’s social life that can be applied beyond the festive comedy that is the focus of Barber’s study.

In specifically examining the comedies, however, he focuses on specific analysis of holidays and revels in the texts of plays like *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and the significance of rituals associated with such holidays in terms of how they reverse social hierarchies and disrupt the status quo, creating the “second life” craved by lower social classes in addition to discovering the extent to which festivity clarifies “the relation between man and ‘nature’ – the nature celebrated on holiday” (Barber 8). The clarification and renewal of community essential to Girard’s ritual approach to understanding the way societies function, then, occurs through the specific lens of man and nature in the festive comedies.

Barber’s main task in this text, is to examine festivity and the sort of carnivalized life presented in Shakespeare’s comedies rather than to define comedy itself; often this dovetails with discussion of how Shakespeare uses ritual in his plays, which leads to a further

consideration of the effect of the warping or interruption of ritual on the way drama is structured and understood:

The historical view expresses life as drama. ... Shakespeare's plays are full of pageantry and of action patterned in a ritualistic way. But the pageants are regularly interrupted; the rituals are abortive or perverted; or if they succeed, they succeed against odds or in an unexpected fashion. The people in the plays try to organize their lives by pageant and ritual, but the plays are dramatic precisely because the effort fails. (Barber 193)

Thus, the way a play is categorized generically has to do with its relationship to community, and the state of a play's community is based on the success or failure of the rituals associated with its everyday life. As discussed before, conflict in the theatre arises from the disruption of ritual, and here Barber defines the way ritual functions in Shakespeare's plays and further discusses the role of disrupting ritual. Drama in general has a transformative effect in that it is capable of redefining social ritual in a way that individualizes it "as the expression of particular personalities in particular circumstances" (Barber 220). Dramatizing ritual makes one aware of a given ritual's place in the wider framework of human experience, and the success or failure of that ritual within the play is instrumental in determining the wider effect of a given play on its audience.

When established rituals portrayed onstage fail, audiences will perhaps begin to question the efficacy of that ritual in the first place. On the other hand, when rituals that are disrupted end up being completed at the end of a play, those rituals are affirmed and reinforced. As a whole, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* interprets the comedies as a series of interactions between festivity and normalcy. It concludes that festivity and saturnalia operate in the comedies as a means of uniting communities and redefining the rituals that set boundaries and rules for social life.

In response to Barber's book, Naomi Liebler wrote *Shakespeare's Festive Tragedy: Ritual Foundations of Genre*, which applies Barber's theories of saturnalia and festivity to Shakespeare's tragic plays despite the less obvious connection between festivity and tragedy. Her work draws on Brecht's Epic Theatre, Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, and Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed in addition to anthropological studies of ritual's place in society and the relationship between ritual and drama in pursuit of linking the festive approach to tragic plays. Liebler defines Shakespearean tragedy as "a celebration of communal survival, demonstrating what happens when a community violates or neglects the ritual structures that define and preserve it", which falls in line with Barber's assertion that in Shakespeare's plays rituals are rarely allowed to progress unimpeded (i). While the emphasis of Barber's text is renewal and clarification experienced by a community as a result of the disruption of an accepted social order, Liebler chooses to emphasize this unity as a result of actual violence and perhaps even sacrifice – rather than celebrating the completion of ritual and the opportunity for full expression of one's thoughts and feelings, characters in tragedy celebrate remaining alive at the end of the play.

In order to come to this conclusion, Liebler examines how the critical tradition of C.L. Barber and Northrop Frye, the New Criticism prevalent in the 1950s, ultimately allowed literary criticism to incorporate the cultural anthropology of writers like René Girard and Mikhail Bakhtin; in short, Liebler situates her work within the context of a new field of inquiry that takes a multidisciplinary and community-oriented approach to reading and interpreting Shakespeare's plays. While Liebler openly acknowledges the influence of sociology, anthropology, history, and literary criticism on her analysis, she also incorporates performance theory and as a result, her study addresses Shakespeare's plays as live theatrical experiences rather than as literature.

For example, Liebler discusses the impossibility of historicizing Early Modern ritual practice due to the nature of social ritual as a performance best preserved in memory and as something that is not recordable. If ritual and genre are intertwined, this presents a problem in terms of classification that requires critics to turn instead to the texts in order to make connections between them; this is Liebler's approach. In applying Barber's study of festivity to tragedy, Liebler finds that festive tragedy clarifies the relationship "between human beings and their own creations, the values that inform and sustain a civilization" (8). While the festive comedies tend to explore the connections between a community and nature, festive tragedy studies the community itself – how it is organized, what it values, and where the authority is. This resonates with the issue of authority and theatre as a whole, particularly when one considers the class tensions dissolved or emphasized by theatrical performance. She emphasizes that tragedy speaks directly to the principles that govern social rituals and are capable of most directly questioning the way society is organized because of how directly the plays address community and civilization.

Liebler's understanding of the nature and purpose of theatre is ultimately the most comprehensive, and contains elements of Boal, Artaud, and Bristol's definitions: theatre is a "representational [model] designed to express the complex relations of an exemplary society whose story is frozen for examination purposes at a particular moment in its fictionalized history" (13). Often these complex relations echo Girard's thesis concerning the sacrifice of a *pharmakos* on whom the collective violence building within the community is vented; Liebler explains the role of the tragic hero as resembling that of the *pharmakos*. The reason theatre speaks so directly to community, then, is because it offers an opportunity to examine social ritual and structure from the outside in a way that is impossible in real life. In tragedy, the sacrifice of

the *pharmakos* represents the same redefinition of ritual identified by Barber in the festive comedies: “Their removal, or sacrifice, in turn reconfirms or reinscribes the community in the image it has chosen for itself, or more accurately, in the image chosen by its particular surviving structures of authority” (Liebler 16). Girard proposes in *Violence and the Sacred* that this becomes an endless cycle of “differentiation, sacrifice, and reincorporation”; this in turn bleeds into significant patterns of imagery, like humanity consuming itself, and the general plot structure of tragedy in that often Shakespearean tragedies do not quite attain closure – the plays leave open the possibility for their events to reoccur (Liebler 17, 18). Above all, these relationships between the method employed by Liebler and Barber and the ritual sacrifice described by Girard’s text point to a significant relationship between specific elements of a Shakespeare play, the genre of that play, and the effect of that play on its audience.

All of this functions as a means of endowing theatre with the power to create social change (or reinforce the social hierarchy already in place) – as the communities in Shakespeare’s plays evaluate and redefine the rituals governing their lives, the audience is invited to do the same. The theatre provides a safe ground for exploration of that which is dangerous or impossible in real life, and the resonances of what happens onstage in turn affect human action and reaffirm the community’s trust in one another or create change that in turn unifies the community. All of this is accomplished via ritual because these patterns of action are easy to identify as an audience member because the rituals employed onstage echo those present in the community offstage.

In Liebler’s words, “... ritualistic action offers an economical analogue and an effective reminder of the volatile contexts surrounding social, political, and spiritual life” (31). Thus, theatre is a powerful unifying force because of the awareness it brings to its audience, and it

serves an essential social function; that function is in turn determined by its genre because of the unique way each genre interacts with the rituals it uses. Liebler proposes that tragedy forces its audience to reevaluate the existing hierarchy and reflect on the differentiation present within a given community, while Barber asserts that the festive comedies provide a ground for unity and celebration in addition to a temporary respite from the constrictions of hierarchy. The question follows, then – what is the function of Shakespeare’s histories and romances, which themselves are composed of a mix of comic and tragic elements?

Shakespeare’s plays are generally organized into four genre-based categories: comedy, tragedy, history, and romance. Often, these categories are also based in time period; Barber, for example, defines the festive comedies as being written in the period between 1594 and 1600 or 1601 (222). David Bevington develops this rough timeline further: “Shakespeare appears to have written one comedy and one history play a year at the start of his career and indeed down through the end of the 1590s, when he turned to problem plays, tragedies, and then late romances in the 1600s” (92). The late romances are grouped together primarily as the final four plays Shakespeare wrote (aside from later additions to this group such as *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VIII*). Connections between them in terms of what defines their genre are more difficult to identify in comparison to the festive comedies or the tragedies, which have more clear-cut similarities in terms of their engagement with ritual and their intended audience effect. However, the ritual-based approach employed by Barber and Liebler in their respective examinations of comedy and tragedy are effective in terms of clarifying that which defines a romance play and, further, could aid in identification of romance elements in plays currently classified as comedies or tragedies, like *Twelfth Night* or *Antony and Cleopatra* – the application of Barber and

Liebler's approach, hereafter referred to as the ritual approach, to these difficult-to-define late romances are the focus of this study.

In general, Shakespeare's plays are in part characterized by the mingling of genre modes and the adaptation of prose or poetry into drama – they tend to develop basic plots, characters, or events borrowed from other writers or dramatists into comprehensive explorations of human communities and experiences. Within the four major generic categories, there are further classifications that can apply ranging from revenge tragedy to problem comedy – these relate to the literary tradition employed by Shakespeare in writing the play and also have to do with the relationship between individual and community within the play. Here, then, genre is defined both by the action of the plot and the state of the community, which enable the identification of a sacrificial crisis and *pharmakos*.

Further genre complications within Shakespeare's plays involve the mingling of comic and tragic elements, at times defined as tragicomedy. This mix of tragedy and comedy is particularly prevalent in the late romances (*Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest* being the original four plays in this category), as “tragedy and comedy [are] available at almost every moment of the play, each tendency implicit in the other, producing a fullness of potentiality rather than a mere switcheroo” (Danson 102). Here, Danson is speaking specifically about *The Winter's Tale*, but this fullness is present in all four romances. Shakespeare creates an atmosphere in which stories that revolve around fantasy and adventure are capable of more breadth in their emotional and intellectual effect on the audience because they adopt the same sacrificial crisis identified by Liebler in the tragedies in a more symbolic way to depict the renewal of communities by a relationship with the higher powers present in the universe and the transfer of authority to the younger generation of each play.

In terms of the development of the romance genre, while the plays themselves are rooted in the prose romance tradition prevalent at the time the romance plays were written, it is also easy to trace the roots of the romances back even to Shakespeare's first play, *The Comedy of Errors*. In fact, the First Folio divides the late romances between comedy, history, and tragedy rather than separating them into a separate category. Perhaps this is because "virtually all of Shakespeare's plays are woven with the mingled yarn of romance, or tragicomedy; the mixed mode is the Shakesperean default mode" (Danson 102). The romances specifically can principally be defined as a mixture of comic and tragic elements, and all of Shakespeare's plays contain to some extent a mingling of comedy and tragedy.

The effect of genre mixing is significant in that it provides "a sense of radical undecidability" – the mingling of genre elements prevents the audience from fully predicting a play's outcome in addition to allowing each genre to bring out nuances in the other (Danson 106). Modern genre theory grapples with this issue and several related ones because the seemingly arbitrary division of the romances into a separate genre flies in the face of the prevailing critical understanding of what Shakespeare's intention in terms of his use of genre was. As Lawrence Danson says in his examination of the Shakesperean mixed mode, "why bother with distinctions in genre when Shakespeare's goal is, so often, to diminish or conflate those distinctions?" (102). The answer to this question of why genre distinctions are important have to do with the fact that, without genre distinctions, there would be no means of identifying comic or tragic elements because the categories of comedy and tragedy would no longer be relevant. Genre distinctions in and of themselves enable the mixing of genre elements.

The answer also lies in the use of ritual in the plays: distinguishing genres in Shakespeare is essential because the four genres are distinct despite their mingled use of comic and tragic

elements and the similarities they share – the way each genre uses ritual distinguishes it from the others. Danson argues that the genres “are not eternal verities about the way plays must work but rather historically variable markers of an era’s assumptions about its social constructions” (103). In other words, the way Shakespeare’s plays are grouped speaks to the hierarchies present in Elizabethan society and the function of theatre in disrupting or solidifying these hierarchies. In examining the relationship of each specific genre to the disruption or solidification of hierarchy, however, it is clear that the genres must remain distinct despite shared similarities.

The romance plays in particular are difficult to define because of the complexity of their composition, but Lawrence Danson cites Chris Baldwick’s working definition of romance from *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*: “a fictional story in verse or prose that relates improbable adventures of idealized characters in some remote or enchanted setting – a tendency opposite to realism” (qtd. in Danson 104). Danson defines it more specifically later as “an intrinsically mixed mode that holds in suspension tragedy, comedy, and even history” (116). In many ways, then the late romances are an excellent example of Shakespeare’s work with various genre elements and represent a mode that is expertly mixed in order to develop a plot from one generic tradition while allowing the potential of the other traditions to spill into the action – the potential of the comic to overwhelm the tragic and vice versa creates an unpredictability that defines the romance plays. Danson’s definition is accurate in terms of comparing the plots of various romance plays, but completely ignores the interplay between performance and audience. Despite the fact that romances tend to oppose realism, they interact with ritual and by extension with the audience’s understanding of their community in a way that is unique and significant because the plays combine festive comedy and festive tragedy’s approaches to ritual into something that, instead of examining the relationship between man and nature or man and

civilization, examines the relationship between man and the higher powers governing his life through a metaphorical sacrifice of each play's *pharmakos* that is ultimately interrupted by the presence of a younger and redemptive generation.

ANALYSIS

If the romance genre is at its heart a mixed mode that places comedy and tragedy side by side, it follows that the specific way comic and tragic elements are employed speaks to the way the play affects an audience. The four plays discussed here use comedy and tragedy in vastly different ways, but in all four cases there is a clear relationship to the other plays Shakespeare wrote in the way certain scenarios or plot elements are used in a way that sheds new light on them due to the genre implications of their place in a romance play. Stephen Greenblatt provides an extensive list of these scenarios or plot in the Norton edition's introduction to *The Tempest* (although many of these also appear in the other romance plays):

... the painful necessity for a father to let his daughter go (*Othello*, *King Lear*); the treacherous betrayal of a legitimate ruler (*Richard II*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*); the murderous hatred of one brother for another (*Richard III*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*); the passage from court society to the wilderness and the promise of a return (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*); the young heiress, torn from her place in the social hierarchy (*Twelfth Night*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*); the dream of manipulating others by means of art, especially by staging miniature plays within plays (*Henry IV*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet*); the threat of a radical loss of identity (*The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard II*, *King Lear*); the relationship between nature and nurture (*Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*); the harnessing of magical powers (*The First Part of the Contention* [2 *Henry VI*], *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*) (1321)

This is an overwhelming list of plot elements that are relatively common to Shakespeare plays, but the presence of all of these mark the romances as a sort of culmination of the different stories developed by Shakespeare in earlier plays.

Pericles employs both comic and tragic elements mingled together in a way that plays on the audience's experience of the play and manipulates their feelings about what the characters are experiencing, particularly because there are decidedly tragic sections like Pericles' wandering the seas at the assumption that his wife and child are dead while the audience knows that the women are alive and well. This balances the audience's experience and allows each genre to influence their experience of the other. Gower's opening section, for example, begins already to contrast comic and tragic elements as the plague infecting the community is introduced in a lighthearted, rhyming singsong, indicated not only by the rhyming couplets but also the short, clipped lines of song. The physical image of a row of heads introduced by rhyming verse creates Danson's undecidability – the audience is presented with simultaneous comic and tragic elements, neither of which overwhelms the other in a way that makes the monologue decidedly comic or tragic.

Many of Gower's speeches fit this same mold; often, they are accompanied by dumb shows that catch the audience up on action in between scenes. By using pantomime to communicate parts of the play's plot, Shakespeare is lessening the audience's emotional engagement with the action. Despite the fact that the audience sees the characters performing the action within each dumb show, there is no dialogue and no extended contact with the portrayed events – Shakespeare draws instead on overt theatricality. In fact, many directors “[resist] empathy and identification” when directing *Pericles*, in the tradition of Bertolt Brecht's pursuit of aesthetic distance (Cohen 995). The play is overtly ritualistic not only in the festive way outlined by Barber and Liebler but also in the somewhat repetitive adventures of Pericles – he visits a country, travels elsewhere, suffers, and washes up somewhere else. The cycle repeats

until the intervention of Diana, at which point the ritual is redefined in a way that alleviates the corruption and suffering introduced at the beginning of the play.

Another overtly theatrical moment of the play is the tournament at Pentapolis that leads to Pericles' marriage to Thaisa – the stage directions call for a procession of knights whose pages offer their shields to Thaisa before beginning the tournament. This is another example of the play's use of formal and repetitive ritual – she receives the shield, identifies their coat of arms and country of origin, and then greets the next knight. When Pericles arrives in mismatched armor and delivers his own shield to the princess, he redefines the ritual, which marks the significance of his arrival. The play is rife with these types of repetitive rituals, the disruption of which often marks the advancement of the plot. In general, the play portrays the revitalization of family and the relationship between man and the divine.

This mixed quality in terms of *Pericles'* genre has led directors and performers in vastly different directions in terms of producing the play; the plot has inconsistencies and the play is often considered absurd or difficult to understand and produce. In Walter Cohen's introduction to the Norton edition of the text, he briefly describes different approaches to the play:

Gower's role is thus made to underscore the play's theatricality: it has at various times been sung, treated as a voice-over, and played by a street performer. The dramatized action itself has been represented as street theater, as the work of a traveling troupe, as Chinese opera, as an African-American boatswain's sea chantey to his fellow sailors aboard ship, as a child's picture book, as events in an asylum, as the floor show in a gay brothel. One consequence of these techniques has sometimes been an ironic, farcical approach to the absurdities of the plot. The price, however, is the failure of the climactic recognition scenes, which thrive on psychological nuance. Similar problems may arise with overtly political interpretations, though a feminist or multi-ethnic perspective can be a highly suggestive response to the text. Perhaps the solution, in reading as well as performance, is to refuse to level the unevenness of the play, remaining faithful to its various and complex registers (995-996)

The breadth of these approaches signals the difficulty of precisely understanding the way the play (and the romance genre in general) uses genre to accomplish its aims because the balance of

comedy, tragedy, and history in its composition is at times uneven. The structure of *Pericles* is atypical – it consists of 22 scenes with no act designations, and the theatricality of the play is also rather unusual. Regardless, it marks a significant transition into the romance genre for Shakespeare and develops further the concept of revitalizing familial and religious ties through ritual and sacrifice found often in earlier plays.

In terms of *Cymbeline*'s revitalization of the relationship between man and higher power and by extension the use of comic and tragic elements, the Norton edition's introduction sheds more light on the way *Cymbeline* fits into the general trend of the romances in terms of their use of ritual and the divine: "... [*Cymbeline*'s] characters often understand so little about what is happening to them, and yet each appears to play out the part assigned to him or her by some higher power: Jupiter, destiny, time. In this regard, *Cymbeline* is of a piece with Shakespeare's other romances, plays in which a higher power often seems to steer all boats to shore and reunite long-severed families" (Howard 1237). The somewhat miraculous resolution of the play, which is enabled only in the penultimate scene, springs from the intervention of the divine and does precisely what Howard proposes in the above quote. This sort of miraculous coming-together of disparate plot elements not only echoes the intrinsically mixed nature of the plays' genre but also acts in all four plays as a means of introducing and justifying the magical and religious nature of many of the events. In the romance tradition in general the genre is identified with adventure and magic; this amplifies the way the plays address the divine and is made possible by the mingling of genre modes to create a unique effect on the audience.

In the Norton introduction to *Cymbeline*, Howard goes on to question to what extent the resolution of the play was a result of human action and agency rather than divine intervention – this is incorrect partially because Jupiter expresses his will clearly and despite the fact that this is

communicated somewhat cryptically to Posthumus, the audience understands in no uncertain terms that Jupiter wants Posthumus and Innogen to reunite because of the blessed nature of their union. Additionally, the miraculous nature and timing of events like the taking of the queen's poison and the arrival of Cloten as Guiderius exits the cave point to something beyond human power in charge of the play's progression – while the actual murder of Cloten is a human action, the opportunity to murder Cloten is the direct responsibility of fate rather than humanity.

The way higher powers in the play offer opportunity rather than action in pursuit of their ends echoes the way fate and time in *The Tempest* offer Prospero opportunities for exerting his own power. Howard asserts, “there is nothing either natural or inevitable about the familial and political arrangements that are repeatedly contested and reordered in this tragicomic play”, but the very fact that the family reunites unnaturally points to the influence of a higher power and Innogen's assertions regarding the value of her union with Posthumus in addition to Jupiter's approval of their marriage signal that, in fact, the resolution of the play *is* inevitable (1238). Without Jupiter or the influence of time and fate, the family would not have reunited and the community would not have been purged of its sacrificial crisis – when a play operates in pursuit of enacting the sacrificial crisis in order to purge a community of its corruption and its violence, the unification of the community is inevitable even though the means by which it occurs are unique to each play.

The Tempest, in terms of its relationship to genre, mixes several elements present in other plays from a wide variety of genres, and it balances comedy and tragedy between its subplots in a way that is more sharply divided than in *Pericles*, the subplots of which are less overt than in *The Tempest*. Stephano and Trinculo's drunken attempts to help Caliban murder Prospero provide revelry and comedy, while the punishment of Antonio, Sebastian, and Alonso takes a

more tragic turn. Meanwhile, Ferdinand overcomes trial after trial in order to win Miranda's hand in marriage in a subplot that is decidedly romantic in a sense associated with the festive comedies. In general, *The Tempest* recalls some of Barber's thoughts on the relationship between man and nature in that eventually man relinquishes his power over nature despite previously having command of it – in the play's final scene, Prospero decides that "I'll break my staff / Bury it certain fathoms in the earth, / And deeper than did ever plummet sound / I'll drown my book" (5.1.54-57). By offering his books to the waters he only a day ago stirred into a vicious storm, Prospero is acknowledging the power of nature. The play also resonates with the renewal of the relationship between man and civilization identified by Liebler in festive tragedy – Prospero is invited to reevaluate his place in the court at Milan and the hierarchy of power established on the island dissolves at the end of the play as Prospero relinquishes his art.

The implications of the romance genre's nature, its relationship to comedy and tragedy, and the means by which each play connects to its audience are identifiable through analysis of the four major romance plays via the ritual method employed by Liebler and Barber. In Shakespeare's romances, the sacrificial crisis is often resolved symbolically rather than with literal physical sacrifice, and ultimately the relationships renewed are those that exist between man and the higher powers present in the worlds of the plays. Additionally, the unification of each community is possible only when the older generation responsible for the community's corruption in the first place relinquishes control to their children, allowing the younger generation to take control. When the younger generation takes over, the ritual of sacrifice is radically redefined because those responsible for enacting the ritual have changed. These four plays are, at their core, plays about reuniting families – as these miniature communities are

pieced back together, the survival of that family's children in turn assures the survival of the community at large.

The question of community in *Pericles* is complicated by the presence of several distinct communities (Tyre, Tarsus, Pentapolis, and Antioch), but the general structure of the ritual approach defined by Barber and Liebler remains intact. The play begins with conflict between the hero and his community – Pericles visits Antioch seeking marriage to the king's daughter. Gower, the play's narrator, presents the peril Pericles finds himself in during an opening monologue:

The beauty of this sinful dame
Made many princes thither frame
To seek her as a bedfellow,
In marriage pleasures playfellow,
Which to prevent he made a law
To keep her still, and men in awe,
That whoso asked her for his wife,
His riddle told not, lost his life (1.21-38)

Pericles arrives in Antioch to try his hand at answering the riddle and winning the hand of the king's daughter and unwittingly stumbles into a site of corruption. The plague is released, so to speak, as Pericles reads the riddle aloud:

I am no viper, yet I feed
On mother's flesh which did me breed.
I sought a husband, in which labour
I found that kindness in a father.
He's father, son, and husband mild;
I mother, wife, and yet his child.
How this may be and yet in two,
As you will live resolve it you (1.107-114)

This is not a particularly difficult riddle to solve, and Pericles determines the answer relatively easily – Antiochus and his daughter have an incestuous relationship that poses a serious threat to the community as a whole. Upon learning about this incest, Pericles no longer wants to marry

Antiochus' daughter. He says, "Fair glass of light, I loved you, and could still, / Were not this glorious casket stored with ill" (1.119-120). Pericles describes Antiochus' daughter as, quite literally, infected with illness; this coupled with Gower's previous description of her as a "sinful dame" (1.31) creates a pattern of imagery that communicates fully the extent to which the community is threatened by symbolic plague.

Antiochus, understandably, reacts with anger – he cries, "Heav'n, that I had thy head!" (1.152). As a result of this reaction, Pericles is cast as the *pharmakos*, the surrogate victim on whom the violence building within the corrupted Antioch must be released. Although Antiochus is the actual perpetrator of evil, Pericles has the potential to release the information to society at large and is scapegoated by Antiochus as the origin of the corruption. In Antiochus' words,

“... He must not live
To trumpet forth my infamy, nor tell the world
Antiochus doth sin in such a loathéd manner,
And therefore instantly this prince must die,
For by his fall my honour must keep high” (1.187-191).

Here, Antiochus both takes ownership of his own sin and admits his intention to scapegoat Pericles as the figure of evil. When he entreats Thaliart to kill Pericles for him, Antiochus refuses to tell Thaliart the reason: "We hate the Prince of Tyre, and thou must kill him. / It fits thee not to ask the reason. Why? / Because we bid it" (1.198-200). Pericles is thus an object of hatred on whom violence must be vented for the sake of the community. To more fully understand Pericles' role in the play, it is essential to define more clearly what purpose the *pharmakos* serves; Naomi Liebler discusses the difficulty of isolating one definite meaning of the word *pharmakos* but instead embraces its oppositional meanings. In the ritual approach, "the *pharmakos* acts as both toxin and cure" (Liebler 37). In this instance, then, Pericles is identified as the "toxin", or the corruptive element, because he possesses the information potentially

responsible for ruining Antiochus' reputation. If Antioch learns about their king's incest, Pericles will have been the agent responsible for infecting the community by betraying the secrecy surrounding the affairs at court. At the same time, Antiochus identifies Pericles' death as a means of curing the infected community. Pericles, then, has the potential to be both toxin and cure, in line with Liebler's conclusion.

The infection of community extends beyond Antioch. Tyre itself is plagued with fear of war once Pericles returns; as he recounts what happened to his advisors, he laments,

How many worthy princes' bloods were shed
To keep his bed of blackness unlaid ope,
To lop that doubt he'll fill this land with arms,
And make pretence of wrong that I have done him,
When all for mine – if I may call – offence
Must feel war's blow, who spares not innocence ... (1.93-98)

Helicanus offers to take over Pericles' rule until Antiochus dies and the rightful prince of Tyre is safe again, ultimately depriving Tyre of its ruling body and fundamentally altering the authority present. Thus, Tyre is corrupted by the absence of its leader – again, Pericles is the toxin and the cure in that his decision to leave corrupts the community but his absence will ideally prevent Tyre from Antiochus' attack.

Another significant community corrupted in *Pericles* is Tarsus, which is plagued by famine and poverty despite a history of wealth and abundance. The governor, Cleon, describes in detail the hardships plaguing Tarsus:

So sharp are hunger's teeth that man and wife
Draw lots who first shall die to lengthen life.
Here weeping stands a lord, there lies a lady dying,
Here many sink, yet those which see them fall
Have scarce strength left to give them burial (4.45-49).

Within this passage the image of humanity devouring itself appears, more specifically as the image of one partner eating the other to combat the famine plaguing Tarsus. Further, this

suggests Girard's sacrificial crisis as people are driven to literal violence by the corruption of the community by plague and famine. Pericles, the play's *pharmakos* and by extension the curing agent, arrives with supplies to feed Tarsus' citizens; it is not until Pericles sends his newborn daughter, Marina, to Tarsus that he acts as toxin to that specific community. Dionyza, Cleon's wife, conspires to murder Marina in order to ensure that her own daughter's marriage prospects will not be threatened by Marina's beauty. This in turn corrupts Tarsus, as the upper tier of the social hierarchy is tainted with murder and jealousy. Thus, all of the major communities in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* are corrupted at the beginning of the play in a way that can be traced back to Pericles, on whom the violence building in these infected communities must be vented.

Cymbeline, King of Britain is another play known for its complex structure and tangled plots, and as a result tends to struggle with the same production problems as *Pericles*. In terms of the ritual approach to genre analysis, *Cymbeline* reaffirms the movement through release to clarification of man's relationship to a higher power. The cycle of ritual sacrifice begins within the first few lines of the play as a gentleman in Cymbeline's court proclaims that "Our bloods / No more obey the heavens than our courtiers / Still seem as does the King" (1.1.1-3). Cymbeline's court has become disconnected from the gods and from the system of authority, creating a collective struggle for certainty and a situation ripe for the enactment of collective violence on the protagonist and *pharmakos*, Innogen. The blame for the problems infecting the kingdom has been leveled onto her:

[Cymbeline's] daughter, and the heir of 's kingdom, whom
He purposed to his wife's sole son – a widow
That late he married – hath referred herself
unto a poor but wealthy gentleman. She's wedded
Her husband banished, she imprisoned. All
Is outward sorrow, though I think the King
Be touched at very heart (1.1.4-9)

In short, then, the audience is immediately invited to view Innogen as the toxin infecting the community at large and threatening the stability of the reigning power. The significant part of this introduction to Innogen as *pharmakos* is that the audience is not given an opportunity to see Innogen's actions and instead must trust the judgment of Cymbeline that her marriage is the source of corruption in the community. As the scene progresses, more threats to the community become apparent and several parties appear to be at fault despite the fact that only Innogen has been identified as a surrogate victim. Cymbeline's court is crumbling from within, Cymbeline's queen is plotting revenge on Innogen, and the courtiers actively reject the influence of the planets and gods; Britain is also facing war with Rome, so the community is faced with an outside threat. Although the most pressing threat to the community comes from an external force, Innogen is scapegoated for the sorrow facing the kingdom.

In marrying Posthumus Leonatus, Innogen also provides the cure – he “is a creature such / As, to seek through the regions of the earth / For one his like, there would be something failing / In him that should compare” (1.1.19-22). Innogen has created a match that will eventually heal the kingdom, and this is apparent both in Innogen's assessment of Posthumus' character and in the fact that the King himself “be touched at very heart” (1.1.9) when he learns of their marriage. Even Jupiter champions the match between Posthumus and Innogen via the tablet he leaves for Posthumus – the eventual union of Innogen and Leonatus and their rightful place in the court of Britain also represents the acceptance of the will of the divine in the ruling class of the play's community – again, the higher powers present in the play act as the engineers of the community's eventual renewal. Innogen is blamed for the kingdom's corruption but, as a member of the younger generation, contains in the same moment the capacity to renew the community, and the intervention of the gods merely acts as more solid proof that the younger

generation is the factor capable of renewing the community after it faces the threats posed from both inside and outside of the court. Unfortunately, this renewal must wait until the end of the play, when all of the riddles are unwoven and the war with Rome ends.

The final piece of the puzzle (and third major plot of the play) lies in the location of Cymbeline's sons, Guiderius and Arviragus, who were stolen from court at a young age and raised without knowledge of their status or their rightful status as Cymbeline's heirs. The court is fractured and the community is unstable as a result – without accepting the influence of the gods and the presence of the king's two sons, and facing the threat of Roman invasion, Cymbeline's court is plagued by a sacrificial crisis. This crisis is truly rooted in the fact that Cymbeline's heirs are alienated from court; when Innogen is driven to the mountains as well, hope for the renewal offered by the new generation is entirely lost. Cymbeline's family is fractured in a way that is seemingly irreparable, and the literal sacrifice of the *pharmakos* when Innogen is thought dead in this instance is a detriment to the community despite the fact that collective violence has been inflicted upon the surrogate victim. Healing is only possible through the intervention of the gods and the assumption of power by Innogen and Posthumus.

The Winter's Tale's sacrificial crisis begins with Leontes' suspicion that his wife, Hermione, has not been faithful to him – cuckoldry and jealousy are the toxin poisoning the kingdom of Sicilia, and Hermione is immediately identified as the origin of this toxin and by extension the *pharmakos*. Leontes makes a public accusation:

You have mistook, my lady –
Polixenes for Leontes. O, thou thing,
Which I'll not call a creature of thy place
Lest barbarism, making me the precedent,
Should a like language use to all degrees,
And mannerly distinguishment leave out
Betwixt the prince and beggar (2.1.83-89)

This is significant in that Leontes dehumanizes Hermione by calling her a “thing” as he accuses her and deliberately isolates her as the agent of evil present in the community. He also explicitly defines the state of the infected community in an earlier passage: “It is a bawdy planet, that will strike / Where ‘tis predominant; and ‘tis powerful” (1.2.202-203). Hermione is thus identified as the cause of the threat to Sicilia and the root of the “bawdy planet”; at the same time she is identified as the cure, because in theory her execution would quiet Leontes’ fears.

At Hermione’s trial, the verdict is ultimately left in the hands of Apollo, which represents an appeal to a higher power and the dependence of man on the divine in addition to bringing absolute truth that, in theory, will resolve the sacrificial crisis appropriately. The truth conferred upon those assembled is a shock due to the steps taken by Leontes to absolve himself of blame and make his accusation sound reasonable, but the revelation that “Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, his innocent babe truly begotten ...” (3.2.131-133) ultimately causes Hermione’s death when coupled with the news that Mamillius, her son and Leontes’ heir, has died. This completes the sacrificial ritual, but the sacrifice itself is complicated by the fact that the surrogate victim identified by the community is proven innocent but sacrificed anyway.

The Tempest begins with a symbol of sacrificial crisis – in an act of revenge and punishment, the magician Prospero causes a shipwreck that strands the usurper of Prospero’s rightful throne and his conspirators on Prospero’s island. The plague afflicting the community in this play has to do with a lack of identity – traditional aristocracy dissolves and the chaos of the island reigns, with Prospero at its helm. In other words, “the tempest marks the point at which exalted titles are revealed to be absurd pretensions, substanceless in the face of the elemental forces of nature and the desperate struggle for survival” (Greenblatt 1322). In the absence of

titles, hierarchies, and definitions of the sort Alonso and company are accustomed to, they are forced to reevaluate their roles.

Stephano and Trinculo attempt to establish their own government within the corrupted community by naming themselves viceroys of the island and rulers over Caliban as Prospero seeks revenge on Alonso and Ferdinand courts Miranda, Prospero's daughter. Each character is attempting to restore the island to normalcy as they define it, but contrasting definitions prevent the establishment of a universal state of normalcy. In addition, Prospero creates an environment of instability and insecurity that force the shipwrecked men to question every moment. In 3.3, for example, Ariel lays an extravagant banquet for Alonso, Gonzalo, Antonio, and Sebastian only to take it away as they approach the table. Ariel defines himself as a "[minister] of fate" (3.3.61), suggesting that he is acting in his assigned role and fulfilling the task required of him by a higher power, in this case Prospero.

In all four plays, the action begins with the development of a sacrificial crisis from the actions of the older generation represented in the play – for example, Antiochus is the root of the corruption plaguing Antioch, rather than his daughter. The protagonist of each play becomes the surrogate victim on whom the community's fear of this evil must be vented, and in the case of *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, the *pharmakos* is a key member of the older generation. It is only through the intervention of their children that the sacrifice is not detrimental to the community and the rituals governing that community can be redefined in a way that ensures the continued growth of this newly unified community. In the case of *Cymbeline*, however, it is Innogen that must be sacrificed for the sake of the community – a member of the new generation, rather than of the old generation. Ultimately, the *pharmakos* in *Cymbeline* suffers in the same way as her older counterparts in other romances and is still responsible for

unifying the community through her marriage, but the way the violence of the community is unleashed onto an undeserving youth gives this play a more tragic tone that in turn plays more strongly against the riddles and miracles that form the bulk of its plot.

Once the *pharmakos* is established in each play, the next significant part of Girard's sacrificial model is the alleviation of the sacrificial crisis through the death of that *pharmakos*. In the romances, these deaths are symbolic rather than literal (when literal death *is* thought to occur, their death is reversed before the play's end) and the suffering inflicted on the *pharmakos* by the community is ultimately alleviated through the intervention of the higher powers prevalent in the play, ranging from gods and goddesses to forces like fate and time themselves. While the violence that causes each *pharmakos*' death (symbolic or otherwise) originates in the community, these higher powers are also often the engineers of the suffering the victims endure. However, the factor ultimately responsible for renewing and unifying the community in a way that repairs the ritual cycle that caused corruption in the play is the presence and intervention of the younger generation, more specifically the children of the major characters.

Throughout *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, Pericles suffers at what appears to be the hand of fate – he is often met with new hardships as soon as he succeeds, and for example appeals to “you angry stars of heaven” (5.41) to determine the reason for his shipwreck at Pentapolis. This cycle of success paired with failure elsewhere is exemplified in that he wins Thaisa's hand in marriage at the tournament at Pentapolis, but his seat at Tyre is at the same time in jeopardy because of his long absence. As Pericles succeeds, he also becomes threatened by the loss of something else. If Pericles acts as both toxin and cure to the ailing communities he visits, he himself also experiences both toxin and cure, often simultaneously. Ultimately, however, the

ending of *Pericles* is not tragic despite the suffering Pericles faces, and the reason lies in the function of the sacrificial crisis within the play.

If festivity in the comedies revitalizes the relationship between man and nature, and the relationship between man and the structure of civilization in the tragedies, then in *Pericles* it is clear that the relationship being focused on is that between man and a higher power. In this case, the goddess Diana ultimately makes the survival of Pericles and his family possible. When Marina is placed in a brothel in Tarsus so that Dionyza can pretend that she has died, honoring Diana prevents Marina from losing her virginity: “If fires be hot, knives sharp, or waters deep, / Untied I still my virgin knot will keep. / Diana aid my purpose” (16.129-131). Thaisa, upon washing up on the shores of Ephesus, takes refuge in the temple of Diana and finds new purpose there – Diana, in one way or another, saves both Marina and Thaisa. The guidance of the divine makes it possible for the community to be renewed and unified through the reunion of Pericles’ family – while the actual renewal is left to Pericles, without Diana’s influence his family would not have stayed alive to reunite with him.

Thus, Diana’s role in the play is enormous in that she is in some way responsible for saving each of the three members of Pericles’ family, and even physically appears to reveal Thaisa’s location to Pericles when he thinks all hope is lost. She gives him a task that pulls him away from revenge and towards the full restoration of his family; this is pivotal because rather than repeating the cycle of violence and suffering, Pericles seeks that which will truly alleviate his sorrow. Diana entreats him:

My temple stands in Ephesus. Hie thee thither,
And do upon mine altar sacrifice.
There when my maiden priests are met together,
At large discourse thy fortunes in this wise;
With a full voice before the people all,
Reveal how thou at sea didst lose thy wife.

To mourn thy crosses, with thy daughter's, call
And give them repetition to the life.
Perform my bidding, or thou liv'st in woe;
Do't, and rest happy, by my silver bow (21.224-233)

Within this passage, she does not explicitly tell Pericles that Thaisa is alive but rather offers him a clue to finding her. This proves that, while the relationship between man and the divine is strengthened significantly throughout the course of the play, it is a relationship defined by the higher power's guidance of man rather than through the explicit manipulation of man's actions. Pericles is responsible for taking Diana's advice but must have faith in what she recommends.

In order for Diana to redeem Pericles, however, the sacrificial crisis must be resolved and Pericles, the play's *pharmakos*, must endure the violence of the community. The point in the play at which Pericles is symbolically sacrificed is when he believes his daughter and wife to be dead, not knowing that both have survived their own trials – Pericles has lost his identity as father, husband, and ruler, and instead:

... in sorrow all devoured,
With sighs shot through, and biggest tears o'ershow' red,
Leaves Tarsus, and again embarks. He swears
Never to wash his face nor cut his hairs.
He puts on sack-cloth, and to sea. He bears
A tempest which his mortal vessel tears,
And yet he rides it out (18.25-31)

As he travels, he is unaware of Marina and Thaisa's survival and instead believes himself to be completely alone. He has finally been punished for the corruption of the communities he has visited, and the communities themselves have begun to heal. Religion and religious sacrifice ultimately alleviate the symbolic sacrifice suffered by Pericles and fully heal the communities corrupted at the beginning of the play.

Gower's final speech describes this healing; prior to this point, Antiochus dies, which fully eliminates the evil in Antioch, but Tarsus and Tyre are both still infected by the plague

unleashed at the start of the play. Gower later describes the method by which the other communities are healed:

In Antiochus and his daughter you have heard
Of monstrous lust the due and just reward;
In Pericles, his queen, and daughter seen,
Although assailed with fortune fierce and keen,
Virtue preserved from fell destruction's blast,
Led on by heav'n, and crowned with joy at last.
In Helicanus may you well descry
A figure of truth, of faith, of loyalty.
In reverend Cerimon there will appears
The worth that learnèd charity aye wears.
For wicked Cleon and his wife, when fame
Had spread their cursèd deed to th' honoured name
Of Pericles, to rage the city turn,
That him and his they in his palace burn.
The gods for murder seemèd so content
To punish that, although not done, but meant (22.108-123)

Thus, Antioch is purified by the death of Antiochus and his incestuous relationship with his daughter. Tyre is purified by Helicanus' loyalty and by Pericles' eventual return there to restore the system and regain his crown, suggested by Gower's "crowned with joy at last" (22.113). Finally, Tarsus is purified by the murder of Cleon and Dionyza. The ritual of sacrifice identified by Liebler has a symbolic hold on this play; only characters classified as "evil" die, but Pericles takes on the suffering originally borne by the play's various communities and cleanses himself via religious dedication to Diana. The preservation of Marina and her upcoming marriage represent hope for the next generation, and the death of those characters whose actions created further conflict in the play represents the fading of the older generation necessary to unifying the community. Pericles and Thaisa willingly retreat and turn responsibility for the community over to Marina and her husband, Lysimachus – at the end of the play, Pericles explains, "We'll celebrate their nuptials, and ourselves / Will in that kingdom spend our following days. / Our son and daughter shall in Tyros reign" (22.103-105). The *pharmakos*' children ultimately provide

hope for the community's continued survival after the resolution of the sacrificial crisis, and the reign of the younger generation represents the redefinition of society and its rituals necessary to preventing this sort of corruption in the future.

The physical separation of people from one another is essential to *Cymbeline*'s action, which is a sort of dissembling and reassembling of Cymbeline's family. When Posthumus places a wager on his wife's fidelity and Giacomo cheats by sneaking into Innogen's bedroom to win the bet, Posthumus renounces Innogen and that match becomes separated. Cymbeline's queen sends her son Cloten to pursue Innogen, creating physical separation between them. Finally, Innogen herself escapes to the mountains and despite the fact that she takes refuge with her brothers, they are not aware of their relation and as a result are still separated. When families are separated thus, the community is fractured in a way that seems irreparable, particularly because the youth within the court and by extension the future of Britain are gone.

This separation and Innogen's banishment represent the collective sacrifice – she is rejected by everyone she knows and is driven out of the community to become an outcast in the mountains. She is pursued and becomes the object of personal as well as communal hatred as Cloten asserts that:

... I love her therefore; but
Disdaining me, and throwing favours on
The low Posthumus, slanders so her judgement
That what's else rare is choked; and in that point
I will conclude to hate her, nay, indeed,
To be revenged upon her (3.5.74-79)

This quote in particular affirms Innogen's role as *pharmakos* because it so clearly states Cloten's intention to inflict violence upon Innogen in return for a perceived insult. Although those she encounters in the mountains accept Innogen, she encounters suffering that continues until she returns to Cymbeline's court – she finds a man she believes to be Posthumus dead, and is

discovered by the Roman army covered in his blood. The Romans then bring her back to court as a page – Innogen here dies a symbolic death through the assumption of a new identity. This completes the cycle of sacrifice and begins to unify the community again. The purging of true evils from the community has begun with Cloten's death at Guiderius' hand, and the court has begun the process of reassembling. Posthumus believes Innogen dead, Innogen believes Posthumus dead, and Cymbeline believes Guiderius and Arviragus dead – many riddles remain to be untangled, and the threat of Rome still looms.

The element that ultimately makes reuniting these fragments possible is the intervention of the divine, although the Roman army is also instrumental in the creation of this unity, particularly because they bring Innogen back to court. The most significant event in terms of renewing the relationship between man and the divine occurs in 5.5, when apparitions of Posthumus' family appear while he is asleep. They entreat Jupiter to relieve Posthumus of his suffering, and the god himself appears in a manner similar to that of Diana's appearance in *Pericles*. Jupiter takes pity on Posthumus:

Whom best I love, I cross, to make my gift,
The more delayed, delighted. Be content.
Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift.
His comforts thrive, his trials well are spent.
Our Jovial star reigned at his birth, and in
Our temple was he married. Rise, and fade.
He shall be lord of Lady Innogen,
And happier much by his affliction made.
This tablet lay upon his breast, wherein
our pleasure his full fortune doth confine (5.5.195-204)

Jupiter makes possible the true union of Innogen and Posthumus and gives Posthumus the hope of reuniting with his wife without the scars of his previous mistrust. Jupiter specifically identifies the trials undergone by Posthumus, and even asserts that these trials have strengthened the bond between he and Innogen. This links Jupiter to the crisis and suffering inflicted on the characters

within the play, further cementing the concept that, in the world of the romance plays, the divine act as the engineers of sacrificial crisis and for the renewal of community. Additionally, this monologue of Jupiter's affirms Innogen's earlier assertion that Posthumus is the best man alive and that the union between Posthumus and Innogen is capable of providing the unification the community needs.

The appearance of Jupiter is significant also in that it marks a turning point in the dialogue – prior to this scene, the language referencing gods like Jupiter referred specifically to a lack of divine influence. For example, in an exchange between Cloten and Innogen in which Innogen asserts that “Wert thou the son of Jupiter, and no more / But what thou art besides, thou wert too base / to be [Posthumus'] groom” (2.3.120-122), she is identifying a lack of Jupiter's power and influence in Cloten, using the lack of a relationship between them to insult him. In this play, divine beings are associated with goodness and togetherness – the opposite of the selfish, evil Cloten. Alternately, the final lines of the play, which bring about peace between Britain and Rome, bring the characters back into contact with the divine. Cymbeline says, “... And in the temple of great Jupiter / Our peace we'll ratify, seal it with feasts” (5.6.482-483). As in *Pericles*, the acceptance of the influence of a higher power coincides with the renewal of the community and its renewal through the reign of a younger generation. The sacrificial cycle has healed the community by reuniting Cymbeline's family and renewing the court's relationship with the gods, similarly to the renewal of family and the divine in *Pericles*. In this play, however, the plot evolves to become more complex as even more riddles and dramatic irony obscure the characters' understanding of the world around them and the events taking place.

In *The Winter's Tale*, redemption and the unification of family and community are only possible when the injustice of Leontes' false accusation is corrected and hope is restored via the

recovery of an heir to Sicilia and Hermione's forgiveness. Her resurrection is also the most significant example of the work of some kind of higher power in the play; she appears first as a statue, eventually brought to life by Paulina:

Music; awake her; strike!
'Tis time. Descend. Be stone no more. Approach.
Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come,
I'll fill your grave up. Stir. Nay, come away.
Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him
Dear life redeems you (5.3.98-103)

This is a moment of undeniable magic; at the very least, it is perceived as magic by the onlookers and is treated as a genuine return to life, particularly as Paulina offers to fill Hermione's grave.

The play centers on the relationship between the older and younger generations as Leontes and Polixenes are brought back together by the marriage of their children, Perdita and Florizel. In summary, then, the sacrificial crisis in *The Winter's Tale* is created by Leontes' jealousy, which in turn causes other complications, including the banishment of Perdita and the death of Mamillius, Leontes' only heir – this specific event infects the community further as hope of future stability disappears.

In general, the corruption in the play really stems from the instability within the court caused by Leontes' suspicion and the suffering experienced by the community is in part the result of the loss of the kingdom's heirs. Hope is lost for the community as the potential for renewal by the younger generation disappears, but when Perdita is recovered and the two kingdoms are reunited, Florizel and Perdita are themselves the unifying agent for Bohemia and Sicilia. Additionally, Hermione asserts that "... I, / Knowing by Paulina that the oracle / Gave hope thou was in being, have preserved / Myself to see the issue" (5.3.126-129) – if the reason she has remained alive is specifically in the hopes of seeing Perdita again, then it is clear that

Perdita (and by extension the new generation) is directly responsible for redefining the sacrifice begun by Leontes into something symbolic and redeemable through her marriage to Florizel.

Hermione is originally labeled as the *pharmakos*, and her death and resurrection finally heal the communities of Bohemia and Sicilia, brought about by the growth of a relationship between the kingdoms' heirs, Florizel and Perdita. The intervening hands of fate and time create a situation in which this healing can occur by keeping Perdita alive despite her abandonment, bringing Perdita and Florizel together, and allowing Leontes time to understand his wrongs fully. At the end of the play, Leontes directly acknowledges the place of the characters as a whole within a predetermined plan: "Lead us from hence, where we may leisurely / Each one demand and answer to his part / Performed in this wide gap of time since first / We were dissevered" (5.3.153-156). This follows a general trend of openly acknowledging the influence of a higher power on the actions and fates of man within the romance plays. Leontes gives up his power and by extension the power of the older generation; instead, he finally accepts the role assigned to him by the universe, instead of struggling against it as he does at the start of the play.

The genre interactions between different sections of the play accompany this resolution to the sacrificial crisis – the wrongful accusation of Hermione and belated unification of the community represent comic and tragic halves of *The Winter's Tale*. The play draws on festive and pastoral traditions mixed with tragic elements in a way that is similar to those found in plays like *Measure for Measure*, an earlier comedy often classified as a "problem play". In fact, the play addresses itself to holiday in much the same way as many of the festive comedies discussed by Barber, particularly in terms of their relationship to the natural world. Many of the play's interpreters view the seasonal progression and the festivity present in the latter half of the play as a cycle of Christian holidays in line with the liturgical calendar (Howard 1149). In general, this

connection to Christianity ties into the fact that *The Winter's Tale* addresses itself more generally to the concept of a higher power rather than to a specific deity, playing primarily with the influence of time and the question of our helplessness regarding life and death rather than to a specific deity, as in *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*. It creates a cycle of holiday and deprivation that seems endless.

The pastoral section of the play manifests most directly in the sheep-shearing festival in 4.4, which is not only an obvious representation of festivity itself but also represents the reversal of social roles and blossoming of young love common in the festive comedies. The role of the festive section of the play can be summarized by a section of Polixenes' dialogue as he attempts to interfere with the growing relationship between his son Florizel and Perdita, disguised as a mere shepherdess:

Say there be,
Yet nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean. So over that art
Which you say adds to nature is an art
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentler scion to the wildest stock,
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race. This is an art
Which does mend nature – change it rather; but
The art itself is nature (4.4.88-97)

While the metaphor he employs is truly an attempt to stop his son from marrying below his station, his assertion that “the art itself is nature” (4.4.97) is significant to the genre implications of this section of the play. It echoes Barber's thoughts on the role of festive comedy in revitalizing the relationship between man and nature and speaks to the way a relationship with the natural world in the setting of Bohemia will eventually cure the community in Sicilia.

The structure of *The Winter's Tale* is more formally a tragicomedy than the other romance plays discussed – the first three acts are in themselves tragic, and the final two acts are

structured as a comedy. To frame it slightly more metaphorically, “the play is a diptych of winter and summer, hinged by the appearance of Time” (Howard 1149). Comedy and tragedy accompany the two major events concerning the younger generation that will eventually renew the community and bring about a true resolution to the sacrificial crisis present in the play. At the close of the tragic half of the play, Mamillius is discovered dead and Perdita is sent away to be abandoned in the countryside, and throughout the comic half Perdita is restored to her rightful place beside her family and in the aristocracy, signaling the coming renewal of the community. At the end of the third act, this switch from tragic to comic is signaled by dialogue between the Old Shepherd and the Clown in which the shepherd exclaims, “Thou metst with things dying, I with things new-born” (3.3.104-105) – the presence of death in the play has been left behind in Sicilia as Antigonus leaves the stage pursued by a bear, and the discovery of Perdita by the man who will eventually raise her as his child represents renewal and rebirth.

Although the comic and tragic events are relatively clearly separated, resonances of tragedy pervade the comic section and vice versa – audiences are forced to pay as much attention to what is not present in terms of genre as they are to what is present. While *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest* present the comic and tragic somewhat simultaneously, *The Winter’s Tale* is arguably more effective in its mixing of the comic and tragic modes in that the audience is able to compare the two against one another because of the way they are isolated.

In *The Tempest*, it is difficult to determine a *pharmakos* because so much of the information necessary to understanding the conflicts in the play is presented as exposition, but the toxin and cure for the island’s sacrificial crisis is Prospero – he causes the tempest and shipwreck, and ultimately engineers the happenings on the island in a way that results in the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda, the fulfillment of his promise to Ariel, and the renewal of

his relationship with Alonso. The beginning of the sacrificial crisis in this play, however, occurs offstage in Milan. At the beginning of the play, Prospero tells the story of his usurpation and exile on the island to Miranda, beginning with a condemnation of the traitorous actions of his brother, Antonio:

... He being thus lorded
Not only with what my revenue yielded
But what my power might else exact, like one
Who having into truth, by telling oft,
Made such a sinner of his memory
To credit his own lie, he did believe
He was indeed the Duke ... (1.2.97-103)

As a result of Prospero's focus on study rather than ruling Milan – as he says, "... my library / Was dukedom large enough" (1.2.109-110) – Antonio plots to take over as Duke of Milan and exiles Prospero with the aid of the kingdom of Naples. Antonio identifies Prospero's fixation on accumulating knowledge as a corruptive force in the community of Milan because of the relationship between knowledge and authority emphasized by Shakespeare, and the banishment of Prospero serves as a sort of symbolic sacrifice meant to save the dukedom. The missing piece in terms of Girard's sacrificial method and the ritual approach is the reconciliation of the two brothers and by extension the unification of the community, which does not occur until the close of *The Tempest*. The betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda offers renewal to the broken dukedom in Milan and the elimination of the corruptive anger present on Prospero's island. Prospero himself states that he will "... retire me to my Milan" (5.1.313), effectively removing the influence of the older generation from the community and allowing the younger generation to rule as Prospero realizes the destructive power of his "art" and willingly puts it aside for the sake of renewing his community.

The community on Prospero's island is thus unified at the close of the play, and the ultimate cure to the corruption facing the island is Prospero's final act on the island – the renouncing of his art, made possible by Prospero's ability to retire and give his authority over to his daughter and son-in-law:

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint. ...
... Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;
And my ending is despair
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults (Epilogue 1-3, 13-18)

He places himself at the mercy of the theatre audience themselves and gives up his power – this completes the resolution of the play's sacrificial crisis as the possibility of the kind of manipulation that caused the play's events to occur disappears and the younger generation has effectively renewed the relationships corrupted by Antonio's usurpation of Prospero's seat of power.

The Tempest's higher power is Prospero himself, or, more precisely, his "art" – the magic that enables him to control nature and the elements. Aside from the tempest itself, the other significant example of Prospero's use of his art can be found in 4.1 – he sends Ariel to summon all of the islanders "for I must / Bestow upon the eyes of this young couple / Some vanity of mine art" (4.1.39-41). The rest of the scene is an elaborate masque of goddesses, including Iris, Juno, and Ceres, meant to bless the union of Ferdinand and Miranda. In summoning the goddesses, Prospero intends to impress the two young lovers with a display of significant power and accomplishes this mission – Ferdinand exclaims, "Let me live here ever! / So rare a wondered father and a wise / Makes this place paradise" (4.1.122-124). Ariel acts as a sort of

engineer of Prospero's power, which is a much different sort of relationship than that of, for example, Pericles and Diana. Prospero directly rules over Ariel after saving him from Sycorax's prison, and, while Ariel represents the influence of a sort of higher power, it is more directly under the influence of the play's protagonist and the play's resolution comes about in a way that feels less miraculous and organic than the other romances due to the way Prospero manipulates his surroundings through Ariel.

Prospero also acknowledges the influence of fate and fortune on his ability to enact his revenge on Antonio and Alonso; as he tells Miranda why he raised the tempest, he expresses that "my zenith doth depend upon / A most auspicious star, whose influence / If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes / Will ever after droop" (1.2.182-185). Thus, without the intervention of the heavens, the auspicious star, Prospero would not have had the opportunity to exercise his power. In this romance play, Shakespeare has granted the characters, particularly Prospero, more agency, but all in all they are still to some extent dependent on a higher power to provide them situations in which to practice this agency. The ultimate solution, as it turns out, is in the relationship between Miranda and Ferdinand, which is itself orchestrated by Prospero – this demonstrates further the agency exercised by *The Tempest's* characters, but without the intervention of fortune, none of the play's events would have been possible.

This dependence on a higher power for the opportunity to complete the resolution of the play's sacrificial crisis recurs at the end of the play when Prospero subjects himself to the power of the audience in the theatre itself – he pleads, "But release me from my bands / With the help of your good hands. / Gentle breath of yours my sails / Must fill, or else my project fails, / Which was to please" (Epilogue, 9-13). He here admits to his reliance on a higher power, and the way these passages describing the most auspicious star and the power of the audience begin and end

the play suggest that through the course of the play itself Prospero forgets this reliance, but the resolution of the play renews the relationship between Prospero and fortune as Prospero realizes that “The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance” (5.1.27-28) and he must use his power more responsibly. This renewal, however, is only possible through the union of his daughter and Alonso’s son because hope for the younger generation heals the wounds inflicted upon the older.

There is no longer pressure on Prospero to be a firm ruler and the old jealousies have faded away, leaving Prospero free from the anger that drives his actions. In a sense, the way that Prospero relinquishes his art and by extension his power makes his sacrifice more real, as opposed to being purely symbolic as the sacrifice is in the other romance plays. Many other *pharmakos* experience loss, but Prospero willingly gives up the power that to some extent caused the conflict in response to Antonio’s betrayal in Milan. In the other romances, loss manifests in a way that is beyond the characters’ control; Hermione loses Mamilius and is convinced that she has lost Perdita as well, Innogen finds what appears to be her husband’s dead body, and Pericles spends a significant portion of the play mourning his family, not knowing that they are all alive. Prospero, however, ends *The Tempest* with a larger family than he began the play with and has experienced no real loss. He chooses to release Ariel and break his staff and as a result chooses to experience loss, perhaps in recognition of the necessity of allowing the younger generation to hold power.

CONCLUSION

In the context of this analysis of Shakespeare’s plays, the intention of theatre can be defined as the providing of an opportunity for members of a community to reevaluate the rituals and hierarchies that govern the way people interact with one another. Theatre is capable of

redefining rituals and opening a path for social change through offering its audience a place to objectively examine the way their community is structured. Genre is essential to understanding the specific lens through which an audience is invited to study social rituals because the treatment of ritual in each genre is vastly different, and the effect of each genre's study of ritual is different. The approach to analyzing ritual employed in this specific paper takes René Girard's concept of the sacrificial crisis and applies it in a symbolic sense to Shakespeare's romances, modeled after C.L. Barber and Naomi Liebler's analysis of the comedies and tragedies via a similar method. Due to the fact that romance is in and of itself a tragicomic genre, their study of comedy and tragedy is applicable to the romance plays.

The ritual approach employed in this analysis of each romance is in and of itself a mark of the extent to which the romance genre is a mixed mode. The mingling of comic and tragic elements into something that interacts uniquely with audiences is capable also of highlighting the character of comedy and tragedy themselves. The concept of corrupted community appears prominently not only in the tragedies but also in several of Shakespeare's plays that are deemed "problem plays" because they are classified as comedies but in fact are truly tragicomic. *Measure for Measure* takes place in a city riddled with sin and venereal disease, *All's Well that Ends Well* in a community at war and ruled by a weak and emasculated king, and *Troilus and Cressida* in a community torn apart by lengthy war caused by an adulterous relationship. The *pharmakos* in each play is easy to identify, and the sacrificial crisis and its resolution is equally simple to find in each play.

The core difference between the problem plays and the romances is the introduction of fantasy and the improbable to the romance plays, but at their core both are tragicomic in their exploration of human relationships in light of a community that is infected by a plague that

affects the well-being of all. With that said, the core difference in terms of genre also lies in the way the plays interact with ritual and the way each community is redeemed at the end of the play. In the problem comedies, the status of each community at the end of their respective plays is still in question, whereas the romance plays conclude with the takeover of the younger generation and the redemption of a community that was initially corrupted. Rituals are redefined in a way that allows for continued prosperity in the context of the romance plays. Romance as a genre can be considered fundamentally tragicomic, but that definition can be developed in light of the approach taken by C.L. Barber and Naomi Liebler that focuses on the role of the disruption of community and hierarchy in relation to the way a given genre affects its audience. The romance genre must be defined as a mixed mode in which the strange and improbable occur in response to the corruption of a community until the play's protagonist, acting as both scapegoat and savior, sets in motion the process of healing and the trusting relationship between the characters and their gods, fate, and the power of time itself is renewed.

If communities require periodic renewal in order to remain afloat, the romance plays are adept at providing this opportunity for renewal because of the way the cycle of sacrificial ritual is interrupted by the rise and transfer of authority to the younger generation in each play. Youth offers hope to the communities watching the romance plays, and that hope in turn revitalizes the audience – when theatre and genre are defined by their intended effect on an audience, it becomes clear that the romance genre must be defined by its redefinition of ritual by a higher power like fate, time, or a chosen deity, and by the unification of community by a younger generation that helps erase the sins of its parents and heal its community.

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