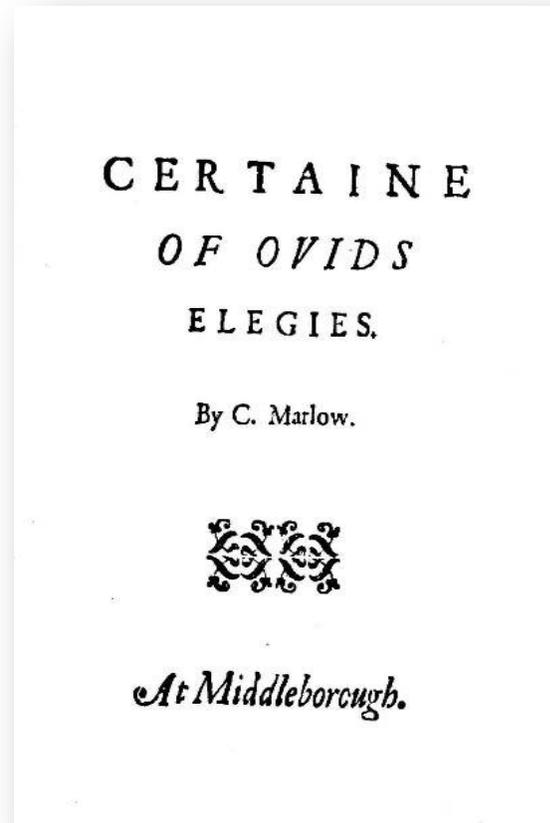


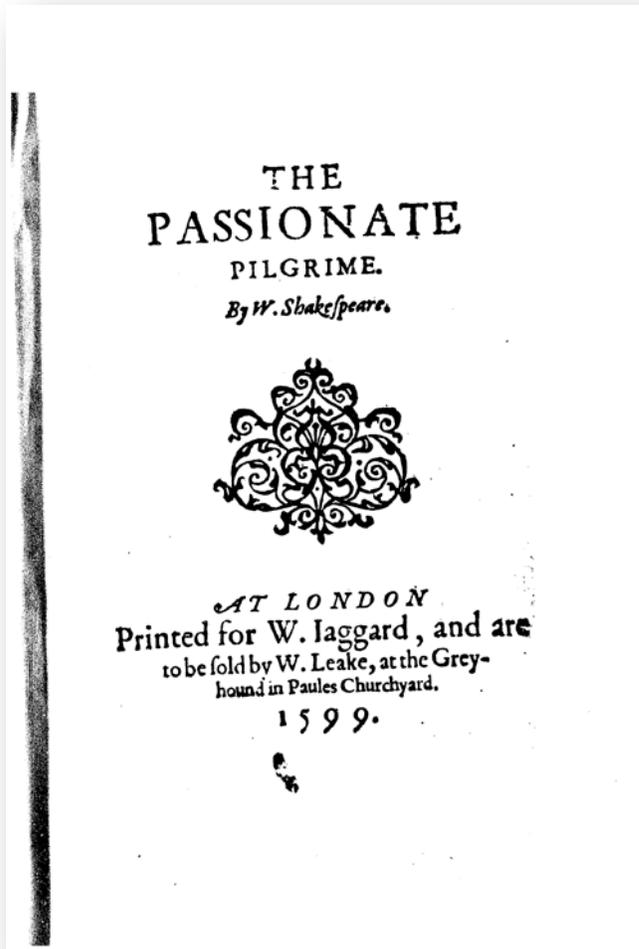
Let me begin with a confession. I attempted to demonstrate some years ago that Marlowe’s translation of the *Amores*, the *Elegies* (c. 1595), was one of the begetters of the ensuing *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609), which I based on the following arguments. Ovid’s multi-poem narrative in neoteric elegiac verse—which recounts the risible misadventures of an egotistical young man’s attempt to conduct an adulterous relationship with a married woman he names Corinna, perhaps after the Greek poetess (i.e., *Κόρινθα*, 500 BCE) who defeated *Pindar* in writerly competitions—probably seemed analogous to a sonnet sequence to medieval and early modern readers. Second, Ovid’s amorous sensibility as expressed therein by his persona, the *desultor Amoris*, informs most love lyric from *Guillaume IX* to *Rochester*, even in poetry written in spirited romantic Christian opposition to this rogue male perspective, such as *La vita nuova*, the *Rime sparse*, the *Amoretti*, and countless hymns to the Virgin (albeit charged with worldly eroticism). Third, Shakespeare, as profane heir to and sacred destroyer of these traditions, and avid reader of the *Elegies*, reanimates this *desultor* and his pseudonymous *domina* in the so-called Dark Lady sonnets (127-52). He strove, in the spirit of *aemulatio*, to out-Ovid not just the *auctor* of antiquity but his contemporary, the dead shepherd who wrote that horrifying line about loving at first sight.<sup>1</sup> However, I utterly failed to distinguish between the two divergent editions of this underrated, even scorned English *Amores* that the surviving poet certainly read. Was it a charred copy of *Certaine of Ovids Elegies*, the truncated, censored, and burned translation, or the relatively ignored sequel, *All Ovids Elegies*?<sup>2</sup> I also



<sup>1</sup> *Harmful Eloquence: Ovid’s “Amores” from Antiquity to Shakespeare* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996): 91, 116-19, 133-53.

<sup>2</sup> The *Certaine* text is in *Epigrammes and Elegies, By I. D. and C. M.* (At Middleborough: n.p., n.d.). The more complete version of the *Amores* is *All Ovids Elegies: 3. Bookes, By C. M. Epigrams by J. D.* (At Middleborough: n.p., n.d.). Lee T. Percy and W. B. Piper, respectively, remind us that Marlowe’s translation is not only the first rendition of the *Amores* into any modern language, but also the first extended use of the closed (“heroic”) couplet in

neglected to mention what must surely have occurred to those who know more about Elizabethan poetry than I do. In *The Passionate Pilgrime*, William Jaggard printed two Ovid-infused sonnets under Shakespeare's name that would be numbered 138 and 144 in the George Eld and Thomas Thorpe 1609 Quarto, "When my Loue swears that she is made of truth" and "Two Loues I haue, of Comfort and Despaire." Just as significant, this event occurred in the year of the [Bishops' Ban](#), in which Whitgift and Bancroft condemned the *Certaine* text and ordered the common



hangman toss it into the fire. 1599, it seems, was momentous for Shakespeare, as James Shapiro has demonstrated in his admirable book, but was also significant for Marlowe, at least for his publication history.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, *Certaine* and the two *Pilgrime* sonnets should at least be invited to the same wedding reception, or encouraged to drink heavily there together during the festivities. Hence the present essay and its theme of contrition.

This important and eventful year, 1599—of that ecclesiastical bonfire, the opening of the [Globe](#) in which Shakespeare had a controlling interest, the Second Armada Scare, the birth of Cromwell, the founding of the East India Company, the death of Spenser, and [Essex's catastrophic](#)

[failure in Ireland](#)—was also one in which Shakespeare wrote, produced, or published six of his greatest plays. Three of these, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Julius Caesar*, *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, and *As You Like It*,

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English. See Percy, *The Mediated Muse: English Translations of Ovid, 1560-1700* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1984), 34-37; and Piper, "The Inception of the Closed Heroic Couplet," *Modern Philology* 66 (1969): 306-21.

<sup>3</sup> *Hero and Leander* had been published the previous year (1598) and *Lucans First Booke* was in press (1600). For Shapiro, see *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), which discusses the political dimensions of the plays written and produced in that year.

contain some of the nineteen scenes in the canon made exclusively for women's roles, including the only extended locus in his works not written in his native language.<sup>4</sup> This would be, of course, *Henry V* 3.4, the amusing interlude in which the French princess Katherine is trying to learn English from her nurse, Alice, and which ends with either outrage or sniggering laughter, depending on the productions, the audience, or the commentators, one of whom refers to it as "agonizing" and "among the most embarrassing scenes in all Shakespeare."<sup>5</sup> The soon-to-be queen of England discovers that two terms in the tongue in which she is not proficient, "*Le Foot & le Count*" (i.e., *gown*, the voiced "g" and voiceless "k" consonants confused), correspond via homonym to *foutre* and *coun* (*con* in [Guillaume's \*langue d'oc\*](#), the 1600 Quarto of *Henry V*, and in Modern French slang), words in early modern French rarely used outside of tavern brawls or those explorations of (or interruptions in) domestic harmony. Far from a gratuitous moment in *Henry V*, this scene is the delta of the play's marital, martial, and sexual themes and imagery, e.g., the king's "Once more unto the breach" at the siege of Harfleur (3.1) and "Open your gates" (3.3) that immediately precedes the dialogue between the two women. Obviously, the princess—entirely befitting the immensely practical great-great granddam of a cunning queen—is thinking ahead. However, this is not all (by a long shot) on this theatrical score. The notorious shaggy-dog denouement of *Merchant* includes a caper involving a ring that Belmont Portia and Nerissa run on Bassanio and Gratiano to test the troth each bridegroom claims to have plighted. The anatomical significance of this metallic object, inherited from the folklore and fabliau traditions, clarifies itself as the scene progresses (5.1).<sup>6</sup> In *As You Like It* (4.1), Celia's declarative criticism of the disguised

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<sup>4</sup> See Carole McKewen, "Counsels of Gall and Grace: Intimate Conversations between Women in Shakespeare's Plays," in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 117-32.

<sup>5</sup> See John Julius Norwich, *Shakespeare's Kings: The Great Plays and the History of England in the Middle Ages, 1337-1485* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 212. Juliet Fleming also takes a negative view of these proceedings, but for entirely different reasons. In her opinion, Shakespeare humiliates his female character by compelling her to utter obscenities—many more than the two in question—thereby objectifying and sexualizing herself only to arouse the prurient interest of the heterosexual men in the audience. Katherine's verbal "unchastity, represented as being at once inadvertent and knowing, corresponds to the modern pornographic fantasy of a woman who somehow has been tricked into displaying her sensuality against her own will and without understanding or participating in its pleasures." Though she "believes herself in a private place talking to a woman in French, the audience hears her repeating words that she knows are 'non pour les dames d'honneur d'user,' and it is perhaps as a punishment for this that she is exposed in a London theater inadvertently confessing her sexuality in English as well." See "The French Garden: An Introduction to Women's French," *English Literary History* 56 (1989): 45; 19-51.

<sup>6</sup> See Karen O. Newman, "Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 (1987): 31; 19-33. See also Norman Holland's *Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare* (New York: Octagon, 1964), which contains an extended passage on rings and female sexuality, e.g., "They are symbols not only of faithfulness, but of the genital [sic] of the woman that Bassanio seeks to win" (232). The most telling analogue may well be the story "Of the iolous man" in *Tales, and quicke answeres, very mery, and pleasant to rede* (London: Thomas Berthelet, ?1532): "A man that was ryght iolous on his wyfe, dreamed on a nyght as he laye a bed

Rosalind's comic misogyny ends with a graphic pun, "we must haue your doublet and hose pluckt ouer your head, and shew the world what the bird hath done to her own nest" (F1, 220; R5v). The very title of *Much Ado about Nothing* may encode an inane play on words based on the slang of the time for such a nest as Celia mentions (i.e., *nothing* = *con*), which, given the idiocy of what Alfred Hitchcock would have called the play's McGuffin, the alleged unchastity of Hero, turns out to be prophetic indeed, since quite a great deal is made about nothing, that "o" without a figure, as Lear's Fool reminds us, that "fair thought to ly between Maids legs" that Hamlet describes to Ophelia in his oblique discussion of "Country matters" (3.2).<sup>7</sup> In *Julius Caesar*, Cato's daughter Portia recounts her wounding of her own tender matronly thigh to the anguished Brutus, an act considered so indecent in the history of Shakespeare criticism that no mention is made of it by any of the distinguished gentlemen in the line of Variorum editors between 1773 and 1913. Anna Jameson, who thought such manly daintiness as restrictive as the whalebone corset she was forced to wear, provides the first extended comment on it in her landmark study of women in literature and history.<sup>8</sup> This incident is cut entirely from the 1953 Joseph L. Mankiewicz film production of the play, since the actress playing the role, Deborah Kerr, could not utter a word such as *thigh* onscreen, according to the strictures of the 1930 Motion Picture Production Code—in spite of her [iconic rolling in the surf](#) with Burt Lancaster in *From Here to Eternity* in the same year, thighs exposed.

Perhaps this *fin de siècle* cluster of references is coincidental, or suggests that Shakespeare's sense of humor took a somewhat primal turn. Or maybe he was lonely, pining for the company of his lady wife in Stratford or a fair acquaintance in London who had gone on holiday by mistake and left him to his own devices. He seems much occupied with women and their parts, as many of his countrymen were in 1599. I mention this because the two poems that begin *Pilgrime* are devoted to each word and concept, and could be so subtitled. "When my Loue swears" (A3) with its pun on "lye," would be the *foutre*, and "Two Loues I haue" (A4) with the quibble on "hell,"

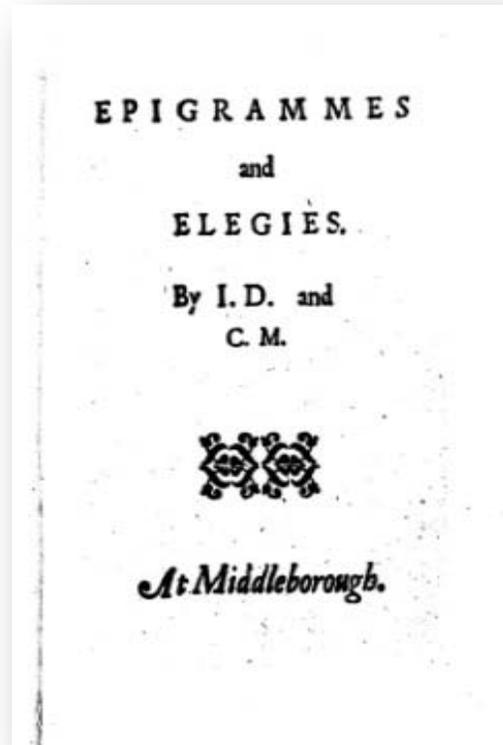
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with her aslepte, that the dyuell aperd vnto him and sayde: woldest thou nat be gladde, that I shulde put the in suretie of thy wyfe? yes sayde he. Holde sayde the dyuell, as longe as thou hast this rynge vpon thy fynger, no man shall make the kockolde. The man was gladde therof, And when he awaked, he founde his fynger in his wiues ars" (Bv).

<sup>7</sup> The most extensive excavation of this frequent pun known to me is Frankie Rubenstein, *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Puns and Their Significance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 8, 74, 147, 152, 164. See also Kristopher Paulson, "Pun Intended: Rochester's 'Upon Nothing,'" *English Language Notes* 9 (1971): 118-21 and Ros Ballaster, "John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650-1740*, ed. Stephen M. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 217; 204-25.

<sup>8</sup> Jameson argues that Brutus is not the only Stoic in the marriage, since "In Portia there is the same profound and passionate feeling, and all her sex's softness and timidity, held in check by that self-discipline, that stately dignity, which she thought became a woman 'so fathered and so husbanded.' The fact of her inflicting on herself a voluntary wound to try her own fortitude is perhaps the strongest proof of this disposition." See *Characteristics of Women, Moral, Poetical, and Historical*, 2 vols. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1833), 2:330.

would be the *coun.* (Please bear with me.) The pursuit of both certainly animates the *Amores*, as Ovid's *desultor* is happy to explain, and in either Marlovian manifestation, *Certaine* or *All*. Though most readers are familiar with Shakespeare's two sonnets in their 1609 form (proto-138 and -144), they may not be aware of the small differences in the versions published a decade earlier in *Pilgrime*. They are even less likely to know the constitution of the *Certaine* version of Marlowe's translation, since it has no critical tradition. Shakespeare was familiar with it, however, since just before Belmont Portia plays her ring trick, she quotes the salient part of a line from the controversial text, fittingly female-superior as well as mythological, word for word: "The



Moone sleepes with Endemion euerie day, / Thou art as faire as shee, then kisse and play" (*Certaine*, F2v).<sup>9</sup>

Before I proceed, I offer a small diversion disguised as a caveat: it is unwise to conflate the *Amores* and either version of the *Elegies* or to discuss them interdependently, and not simply because of the alleged clumsiness or inaccuracy (overstated in criticism) of the English rendition of the Latin. They are not the same, thankfully, but analogous, which allows for more interesting types of ligatures than if they were identical. For one thing, Marlowe had a millennium and a half of Christianity preceding him, not to mention the *dolce stil novo* lenses of Dante, Petrarch, and their successors through which to view the sonnet's history; Ovid neither benefited nor suffered from these traditions.<sup>10</sup> Also, the young translator and playwright, without much practice in what court ladies from Alice Perrers to Camilla Parker Bowles have euphemized as something like gallantry, should hardly have been expected to

<sup>9</sup> Portia thinks of herself as the moon: "Peace, how the moone sleepes with Endimion, / and would not be awak'd" (Q1600, sig. I3, TLN 2442-3). For Marlowe's translation, I use signature numbers, and, when necessary, the moniker *Certaine*, as in the present example. To avoid confusing the two Shakespeare sonnets in *Passionate Pilgrim* with one another, with their later iterations in Q1609, and with the Ovidian elegies, I use the abbreviation *PP* and the appropriate signature number.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Orgel said of the *Elegies*, "In a sense, this is Marlowe's sonnet sequence, the psychomachia of a poet-lover whose love is both his creation and his ultimate monomania, frustration, and despair." Although this is an unparalleled generic description, I argue that the translation is analogous to a sonnet sequence: elegies and sonnets are clean different things. See *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Poems and Translations* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 233.

recreate the sybaritic milieu of Augustus's Rome before the enforcement of the Julian Marriage Laws (c. 18 BCE) that led to the ancient poet's own Pontic exile (8 CE). Truly, Marlowe's version of the *desultor* interacts physically and sexually with his married paramour, but is hampered by what might best be described as an aura of authorial inexperience. Those who recall the moment of consummation in *Hero and Leander* (781-84), with its simile of Hercules blundering into the orchard of the Hesperides and vigorously shaking the fruit from the golden tree, will know what I mean. It is as if this reconstituted Elizabethan *amans* were seeing nature through the spectacles of books, or taking a shower while wearing a raincoat. The more supercilious reader may also have the same sensation some cineasts have reported experiencing while watching Dirk Bogarde (Max) awkwardly cradle Charlotte Rampling (Lucia) in Liliana Cavani's *Il Portiere di notte*, or *The Night Porter* (1974). Neither the actor nor the character he plays seems to have held such a conventional object of the affections (a young woman) in his arms, even in a archetypal embrace that had long been memorialized on movie posters. You can't fool everyone.

Let me now turn to the more arcane version of the text in question, the one that has not had a critical tradition inflicted upon it. The editor of *Certaine* skilfully reorders ten of the forty-nine *Amores* elegies into a spare narrative (intended to complement Sir John Davies's preceding *Epigrammes*, the real target of the Ban) that provides an abstract of the the same surreptitious love affair with its continually halting and frustrating progress, ingeniously Ovidian.<sup>11</sup> The *auctor* himself structures the momentum of his love-oriented works (*Heroides*, *Ars amatoria*, *Remedia Amoris*) with rising-swelling / falling-shrinking action, appropriately and mimetically. He may thereby excite interest, delay gratification, or frustrate and disappoint, with occasional consummations of the expectations he arouses in his readers and satisfying, if not exactly fulfilling or sating, these alleged readers or their expectations that I here project upon them, one elegiac couplet at a time. Each legendary *herois* grieving the egregious wrong done her by the man she loves follows this pattern, as does the overconfident and clownish *magister Amoris* in the *Ars* and *Remedia*, and the *desultor* in the *Amores*, which the *Certaine* editor recognized, and from which Shakespeare and his earliest editors learned, in Q1609 and *Pilgrime* both.

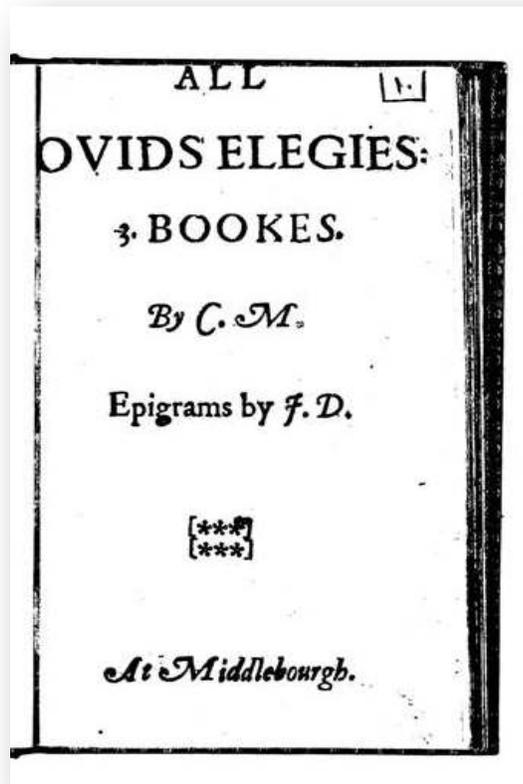
Again, the editor of *Certaine* reassembled the pieces judiciously so that anyone familiar with the *Amores* could see how well he had configured them in the rhythms of arousal and response. In addition, the ten poems naturally bifurcate themselves into two movements of five elegies, which correspond to each other in pairs. In the

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<sup>11</sup> I.e., *Amores* 1.1., 1.3, 1.5, 3.13 (i.e., 14), 2.15, 1.13, 2.4, 2.10, 3.6 (i.e., 7), 1.2. *All Ovids Elegies* is relatively complete, containing forty-eight of the poems.

first set, the *desultor Amoris*, like Apollo in the later *Metamorphoses*, scorns and challenges Cupid and finds himself captive and bound by the little love-god (1.1). Accordingly, the lover vows his faithfulness and service to a woman in exceedingly (lower-case-"r") romantic fashion (1.3). In the next poem, he gives her the name of Corinna for the only time in this collection, describes her willingness to give herself to him, and rates each of her body parts that matters to him (1.5). In an amusing and not entirely ironic reversal, the next two elegies consist of a rant or tantrum in which the speaker berates the same woman who has just so agreeably molested him for her repeated infidelity with other, far more interesting men (3.13/14) and, appropriately, an apostrophe to Envy (2.15).

In the second set, the affair is apparently back on, because the *desultor*, like Juliet, begs the dawn to hold herself back so that his night with his married lady can continue into perpetuity (1.13). Yet in studied counterpoint to the second poem in the first quintet (i.e., the translation of *Amores* 1.3), he then reveals himself as one who is incapable of the faithfulness and service that many women require in a lover, especially in a high-risk relationship like the present one (2.4). Again, the editor's contrapuntal habit of mind apparently dictated to him that the next poem, like its fellow in the first set (i.e., the translation



of 1.5), should be another indulgence in nightmarish and naïve male fantasy, in this case, the foolish wish to conduct multiple *amours* that include sex, the lover unaware, it seems, of the emotional as well as physical exhaustion that is likely to ensue (2.10). Just as infidelity in the fourth elegy trumps seduction in the third in the first quintet, impotence (3.6/7) undercuts the bravado and unrealistic *puellae multae* scenario in the second group's corresponding fourth and third. Unwanted solitude is the fitting conclusion to this movement as the address to Envy was to the discovery of (*quel surprise!*) massive unfaithfulness by a woman who is already cheating on her husband, and a fine end to the miniature sequence itself (1.2). And, if one thinks of such matters as cyclical, or these ten

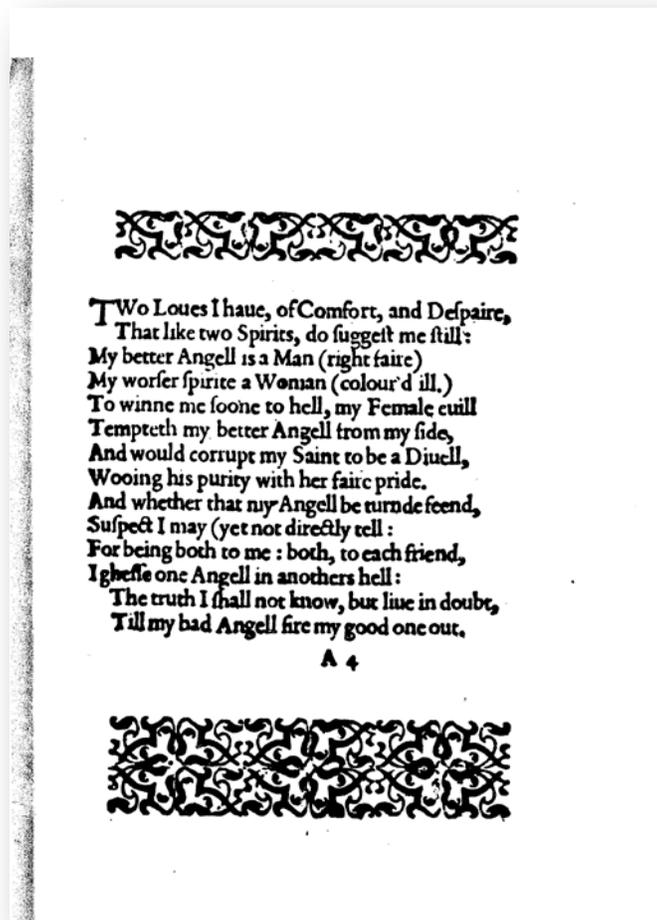
elegies as a *corona* of poems, this can lead back to the beginning of *Certaine* where the relationship pattern can renew itself.

The movement of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* strongly resembles this ending flourish, in which the *eros-anteros* Sonnets 153 and 154 conclude the sequence but then imply in general that since water cools not love, one can cycle back to Sonnet 1, in which beauty's rose may never die, since from fairest creatures we desire increase. And, more important, the two early versions of Sonnets 138 and 144 (i.e., "Iye"/ *foutre* and "hell"/ *coun*) in *The Passionate Pilgrime* contain virtually all the elements in the *Certaine* collection save one.

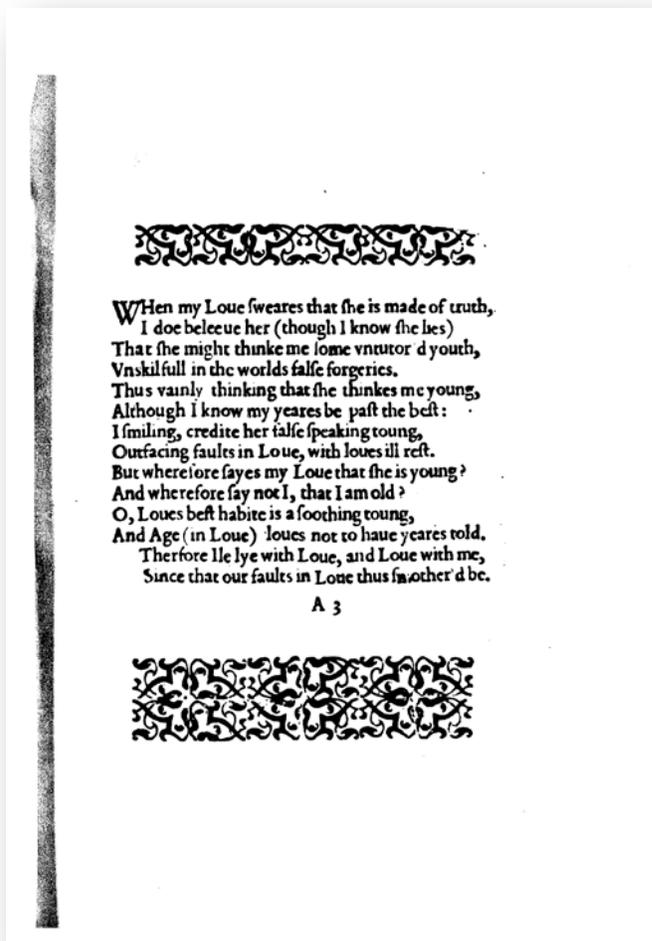
"When my Loue swears that she is made of truth" also recounts a worldly and "open" relationship between a man and a woman that depends entirely on mutual deceit, that love's best habit is in the seeming trust communicated by a soothing tongue. "Two Loues I haue, of Comfort and Despaire" in the following signature undercuts its predecessor by its speaker's suspicion that both people he loves, "a Man (right faire)" and "a Woman (colour'd ill)," are not just unfaithful to him but with each other.

(The one element not in *Certaine* is, of course, the same-sex relationship implied in proto-144.) Apparently, he thinks he is allowed to have more than one partner, but his partners are not. And who is to say that he is wrong?

A dominant feature of the *Pilgrime* sonnets, like the larger collection to which they eventually lend themselves and the Marlovian translation from which they seem to derive, is their tendency toward bifurcation, even bipolarity. Shakespeare's speaker demonstrates a perception that creates its own hypostatic union, with two loves of



comfort and despair, just as he attempts to comfort himself yet despairs that he shall succeed. He, like the *desultor*, comments on the two states of reality apparent to him—some readers sense that he himself is at least two people, and never the same person twice, at that. Unafraid to say “I know she lies” about the woman he claims to love, though she “swears that she is made of truth,” he willingly countenances that she is literally not who she says she is so “That she might thinke me some vntutor’d youth / Vnskilfull in the worlds false forgeries” (*PP*, A3; cf. Q1609, 11v, “Vnlearned in the worlds false subtleties”). That is to say, she allows him the falsehood of greater magnitude: that he is young and, even better, could never be his unregenerate, amoral self who cannot love anyone, and whose pontifications on life and love should be heeded. She, more generous even than this, in turn ignores what she must have known from their first meeting, that he is obviously not who he says he is, either, as the magnificently ironic line from Q1609 reads: “On both sides thus is simple truth supprest” (11v, cf. *PP*, A3: “Outfacing faults in Loue, with loues ill rest”). It is the sensibility of an older (and yet a goodly portly) man (i’faith) who has concluded what



everyone else already knows, that he is the monster in the mirror. Perhaps he is a wizened version of the untutored youth himself, the *desultor*, who still resists this conclusion because he does not yet understand how liberating it is to embrace it. “I barre not thy false playing,” he tells Corinna, “But let not mee poore sole know of thy straying” (*Certaine*, E4). At least in this early manifestation, Shakespeare’s speaker does not need to address his lady friend so bluntly. Since she tolerates his own absolute falsehood, he is grateful enough to “credite her false speaking tounge” (*PP*, A3), implying what the Marlovian *amans* says outright: “I will trust your words more then mine

eies" and "Graunt this, that what you do I may not see" (*Certaine*, E4v).

Ovid's concept of the divided self implies that there is one of us to hate as well as to love: "odi, nec possum, cupiens, non esse quod odi" (*Amores* 2.4.5) [literal translation: "I hate myself, and though I wish it otherwise, I can only be what I hate"]; cf. *Certaine*: "I loathe, but after that I loathe, I runne" (F3)]. Similarly, the speaker who identifies himself as Will in Sonnet 135 of the Eld-Thorp quarto betrays extensive Ovidian self-loathing, an apparent refraction of the foolish overconfidence that the *Amores* persona expresses in his own fidelity and stability early on as a manifestation of his self-love. "Accept him that will serue thee all his youth," Marlowe's *desultor* tells Corinna, who surely knows better, having endured the untutored before, "Accept him that will loue with spotlesse truth" (*Certaine*, E3). Yet, in accordance with that text's hallmark duality, the torrents of "Heere I display my lewd and loose behaiour" (F3) wash this away, far from the "spotlesse life" or "Naked simplicitie, and modest grace" (E3) he posits for himself. Although he berates his paramour for her infidelity, he apparently thinks himself entitled, like the speaker in "Two loues I haue," to "twoo at once" whom he claims to love "equallie" (*Certaine*, F4). In yet another reversal, he concludes that those who resist the inevitable sense of captivity are less happy than "such as in their bondage feele content." It is easier, then, to admit to Cupid, "I am thy captiue I, / And hold my conquered hands for thee to tie" (G3). Where has this mature person come from, and how has he shed his rash youth? Perhaps it is not whence he comes, but where he goes, to the opening pages of *The Passionate Pilgrime*. Not quite aware of his own dubiety in his 1599 manifestation, nor as self-loathing as his later one in 1609, this speaker who will be Will makes several observations of similar Ovidian wisdom, as if he had read that famous line that T. S. Eliot paraphrases from Albert Einstein in "Burnt Norton," and which I will not quote here. First, and worst, people we love can betray us, sometimes even with each other: "For being both to me: both, to each friend, / I ghesse one Angell in anothers hell" (*PP*, A4; cf. Q1609, I3v, "But being both from me both to each friend, / I gesse one angel in an others hel"). We should not forget, however, the Ovidian canard that although everyone lies, it is hardest not to lie to oneself: "Ile lye with Loue, and Loue with me, / Since that our faults in Loue thus smother'd be" (*PP*, A3; cf. Q1609, I1v, "Therefore I lye with her, and she with me, / and in our faults by lyes we flattered be"). Obviously, then, as Shakespeare learned from the *magister*, "Loues best habite is a soothing tounge" (*PP*, A3; cf. Q1609, I1v, "loues best habit is in seeming trust"). When in doubt, shut your mouth, as the Pontic elegies tell us over and over again.

The divided Ovidian self as Marlowe and Shakespeare imagine it also mirrors the whiplash duality in the general debate about women, reflected in the 1599 London publication milieu in which *Pilgrime* and *Certaine* both appear. Such troublesome creatures and their issues—trust, lust, lying, tongues, and those gates to hell—were naturally of great concern. Sometimes the bird is made to foul her own nest. The anonymous domestic tragedy *A Warning for Faire Women* is a veritable dramatic treatise on the dangers that they can represent when left unmonitored, spoken most forcefully by the two scheming and treacherous Annes turned contrite, Drurie and Sanders, the accomplice in her husband's murder telling the witch who encouraged her, "O God that I was borne to be so vile, / So monstrous and prodigious for my lust," the conjurer responding, "Wee haue bin both notorious vile transgressors."<sup>12</sup> In what seems to be the comic doppelganger of this play, also built around a close, intense female relationship, Henry Porter's *The Pleasant Historie of the Two Angrie Women of Abington*, features something of a dogfight, with this proverb serving as theme: "Their tongues are weapons, words there blowes of war." The two combatants, Mrs. Gorsey and Mrs. Barnes, even trade punches: allegations of attempted man-stealing, cheating at backgammon, and depraved indifference to maternal duty and instinct, such as a failure to notice a daughter's fervent attempts to forego her chastity. The husbands despair of managing their wives, since this is proverbially impossible, as all married men learn quickly, and commiserate about with one other: "We knowing womens mallice let alone, / Will Canker like eate farther in their hearts."<sup>13</sup>

The appearance of the anonymous translation of Alexandre de Pontaymeri's *Paradoxe apologétique*, his academic attempt to resolve the ancient *querelle des femmes*, suggests a kind of counterweight to this misogynist *charivari* of the popular theater, especially in the virulence of its long title: *A Womans Woorth, defended against all the men in the world. Proouing them to be more perfect, excellent and absolute in all virtuous actions, then any man of what qualitie soeuer. Written by one that hath heard much, seene much, but knowes a great deale more.*<sup>14</sup> In Pontaymeri's spirit of invalidating the concept of extremes, *la bonte* versus *la mauuaisete*, or dispensing with "lye" / *foutre* and "hell" / *coun* altogether, Robert Greene's posthumous *Orpharion* mediates the kinds of divides that not Will and Marlowe-desultor express about themselves in relation to women. Mercury, appropriately, tries to harmonize these discordant extremes in his summary of the implied argument in the divergent tales of courtly Arion

<sup>12</sup> *A Warning for Faire Women* (London: Printed by Valentine Sims for William Aspley, 1599), F3v, Kv.

<sup>13</sup> Henry Porter, *The Pleasant Historie of the Two Angrie Women of Abington* (London: Printed for Joseph Hunt and William Ferbrand, 1599), B4, L4.

<sup>14</sup> (London: John Wolfe, 1599). For Pontaymeri's attempted resolution to the ancient *querelle des femmes*, see *Paradoxe apologétique, où il est fidèlement démontré que la femme est beaucoup plus parfaite que l'homme en toute action de vertu* (Paris: A. L'Anglier, 1594).

and miserable Orpheus, who rivals *Swetnam the Woman-hater*: "in my opinion, *Arions* tale paints out a paragon, a matchless mirror, as wel for constancy, as the other for cruelty: these extremes therefore infer no certain cōclusions, for they leaue a mean between both, wherein I think the nature of women doo consist, neither so cruel but they wil grant, nor so constant but they will yield, & rather oft-times proue too courteous then too vnkind."<sup>15</sup> There is no need for one angel to be in another's hell.

Implicated as they are in this endlessly undulating *querelle*, how do the ten *Certaine* elegies and the two *Pilgrime* sonnets interact with each other and complement the contours of sonnetdom, circa 1599? Shakespeare seems to have learned a specifically Ovidian notion of sequence or story from Marlowe, halfway between meditation and narrative, fueled by the self-conscious cultivation of the speaker's dual personality, especially his studied unreliability, his egotism, and self-lacerating nature. He does not appear to idealize the she-subject, who seems counter to the Beatrices, Lauras, and Stellas, but who is equally beguiling, intriguing, difficult, and foreign to his own masculine temperament, which he, like Dante, Petrarch, and Sidney, mistakes as normative. This she, like all the other daughters of her Grandmother Eve, is almost too different for not-Will to understand, just as puzzling to him as the combative wives are to their husbands in *Two Angrie Women*. Perhaps a more rigorous line of inquiry should be pursued. Another (again, anonymous) publication in 1599 was a serious treatise indeed, intriguingly published in the shadow of the Blackfriars playhouse, perhaps available in a nearby bookstall. Someone gave it the long title *The Anatomie of the inwardst parts of Woman, very necessary to be knowne to Phisitians, Surgians, and all other that desire to know themselues*, the reflexive pronoun suggesting that all other might be women.<sup>16</sup> Those who subscribe to the theory that early moderns unilaterally endorsed a curious element of Galenic physiology, that women were simply inferior, underdeveloped versions of men, should give this one-page tract a good look: "here we will declare the situation and manner of such partes as are in a woman, different from the parts in a man." Someone has dissected a woman and striven in his or her findings to explain and champion these differences, after accounting for the important similarities. Men and women share a good deal of internal plumbing except for "the place and vessel to the which the flowers be deriued from the liuer," and since the floral euphemism signifies that a discussion of "menses" is to follow, the description sensibly continues in medical Latin. Yet the *Anatomie* triumphantly returns

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<sup>15</sup> *Greenes Orpharion, Wherin is discouered a muscally concord of pleasant Histories, many sweet moodes graced with such harmonious discords, as agreeing in a delightfull crosse, they found both pleasure and profit to the eare, Herein also as in a Diateheron, the branches of Vertue, ascending and descending by degrees: are counted in the glorious praise of women-kind* (London: Printed for Edward White, 1599), 57.

<sup>16</sup> (London: n.p., 1599).

to English for an extensive description of the ovaries and the fallopian tubes and conception and gestation, surprisingly accurate before [Robert Hooke's](#) contribution to microscope technology and the discovery of the cell, the egg, and spermatozoa. There is some folklore, of course. To gauge the sex of the child during pregnancy, one should examine (delicately, one assumes) the breasts of the expectant mother: "if the right be greater and harder then the left, it is a token of a man." Half the treatise is devoted to "A perfect and particular description of the secret parts of the body of woman," especially the *matrix* or uterus.

However, a girl or woman curious about her own body, not to mention a man more sensitive and empathetic than those whom Marlowe and Shakespeare fashion as speakers in *Certaine* and *Pilgrime*, as well as in *All Ovids Elegies* and *Shake-speares Sonnets*, would find one item given very, very short shrift. No account whatever is provided for "The priuie member of woman." It may not be that naïve to wonder why. Was it considered an undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns, like the northern coast of Ireland as depicted in various maps? Men like Shakespeare had their jokes and puns—purses, poplin pears, nothings, happy horses bearing the weight of Antony, the spoil of her honor, magic in the web of it, country matters—perhaps reflecting the storied (and cliché) masculine fear of this *terra incognita*. But what did women themselves actually think? Is this something they talked about? If so, what did they say, and how did they sound? There is fiendishly clever masculine ventriloquism, such as Chaucer's Alysoun come from Bath, and one fairly specific exchange, to which I alluded earlier:

*Kate.* Par la grace de deu an pettie tanes, Ie parle milleur

Coman se pella vou le peid e le robe.

*Allice.* Le foot, e le con.

*Kate.* Le fot, e le con, ô Iesu! Ie ne vew poinct parle,

Sie plus deuant le che cheualires de franca,

Pur one million ma foy.

*Allice.* Madam, de foote, e le con.

*Kate.* O et ill ausie, ecowte Allice, de han, de arma,

De neck, de cin, le foote, e de con.

(*Henry V* Q1600, C3v)

Shakespeare, the married man with two daughters, appears to have listened very carefully to what some women like to talk about, reflected in those aforementioned nineteen scenes, as well as many others in the plays. Therefore, we should not confuse him with his Marlovian sonneteer (the industrial-strength Q1609 incarnation, the character with the most lines in his canon, outdistancing Hamlet, Henry V, and Iago), who, like Cavani's Max, would never concern himself with feminine conversations unless they were specific to him. Who cares about such things? For an afternoon's theatrical entertainment, he would have much preferred watching them beat each other up, or implicate each other as murderesses. This supposition would obtain for any interest he might have in how women sound or what they might say when trying to discover what things are, what they are called. Again: who cares? Perhaps Shakespeare thought that his Will exemplified something else entirely on this score, which I will phrase in the form of a question. When men try to listen to women talking, what do they actually hear? Shakespeare's answer, apparently, is that whatever it is, it might as well be in a foreign language. Because it was.